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Mike London, Head Coach,
William & Mary

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AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION

100 Legends Lane, Waco, TX 76706
Phone: 254-754-9900
Fax: 254-754-7373
Email: membership@afca.com

AFCA STAFF

Todd Berry, Executive Director
Gary Darnell, Associate Executive Director
Janet Robertson, Managing Director
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Mike Muto, Graduate Assistant
Maura Walsh, Graduate Assistant



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Todd Rank, Publisher
Mike Podoll, Associate Publisher
Paul Markgraff, Managing Editor
Adam Reed, Associate Editor
Jim Rank, National Account Representative
Phone: (877) 906-7462
Email: info@threecyclemedia.com

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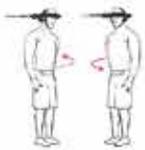
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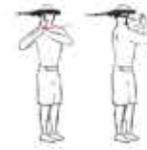
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From The Desk Of

COACH BERRY



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

Welcome To The AFCA Convention

We've all heard the old adage, "You get out of life what you put into it." The reason we have heard that over the years is that it is a true statement.

I wanted to use this opportunity to give you more insight on what's happening at the 2019 AFCA Convention in San Antonio, Texas. We have changed a few things over the last two years with the idea to give our coaches the best opportunity to get engaged.

Sunday, January 6, 2019

Sunday is a huge day for our high school coaches as we recognize that many cannot stay for the duration of the Convention due to their academic schedule. This day will feature outstanding high school speakers from around the country. Sunday is also the day when our specialized committees meet. We have so many coaches that volunteer on these committees who make sure our coaches have a great experience during our four-day convention.

Our AFCA Board of Trustees meets on Sunday morning because they have oversight of these committees and responsibilities to their divisions. At this same time, I have asked a group of special teams coaches from the NFL and collegiate ranks to discuss the kickoff play. We now know, without question, the kickoff play has a disproportionate number of major injuries and we must continue to address this play or others will. They will report to our Rules Committee, which meets on Sunday afternoon, with any findings.

Our Ethics Committee will also meet with the NCAA on issues from this past season. We should all continue to strive for integrity and character, as these are the foundational values that are emblematic of our Association.

Sunday afternoon also features our headline Kickoff Speaker, presented by Sparta Science. In the Exhibit Hall, we will have our popular Skills And Drills Field, presented by VICIS. The Skills and Drills Field features individual coaches moving through their on-field teaching progressions in a "hands on" format. On Sunday evening, our popular Buzz Sessions will feature position coaches at every position talking about the specifics to success with their schemes. And don't forget, Sunday is also the first day of our Trade Show.

Monday, January 7, 2019

Monday morning is when our Divisional Business Meetings begin. These are important meetings as it gives

insight into what is significant at each level. Discussions on rules changes from Sunday will be addressed, and NCAA rules changes will be debated, culminating in a vote. This is the opportunity to get truly engaged at a 30,000-foot level.

Monday's Honors Luncheon, presented by Amway, celebrates special accomplishments from the season and notable career accomplishments. Monday afternoon features our General Session speakers, the 2018 Power Of Influence Award, presented by Team Snap, and many of the top coaches in the profession talking about their successes. A continuation of the Skills And Drills Field, presented by VICIS, will feature for the first time a strength and conditioning segment in the afternoon, sponsored by Rogers Athletic. These sessions are followed by the Tailgate Party, sponsored in part by FieldTurf, where anyone can watch the FBS National Championship game. Food and drink are provided along with expert analysis by the thousands of coaches in attendance. And again, don't forget to walk the AFCA Trade Show floor and learn about the companies that support our game and our Association.

Tuesday, January 8, 2019

The entirety of Tuesday features General Session speakers, presented by VICIS, and Breakout Sessions that cover a wide range of subjects which influence our lives. Tuesday morning begins with a half day of the AFCA Trade Show, and Tuesday night culminates with our Awards Presentations as we honor your choices for Coach of the Year at all levels. Tuesday night also concludes our showing of past Conventions on our AFCA channel in the hotels.

Wednesday, January 9, 2019

During the Wednesday morning Chalk Talks, prominent staffs in all phases of the game will discuss how they work together for their success.

Our FBS head coaches will meet Wednesday morning and hear the outcomes of the Monday Divisional meetings. They will discuss, debate and vote on the same topics. This is followed by our post-Convention press conference to announce our coaches' votes and suggestions for the upcoming year.

With over 180 speakers and functions, this should be a Convention to remember. Have an enjoyable and productive four days! 



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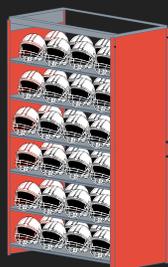
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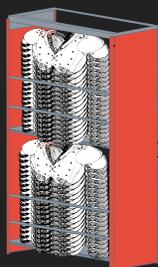
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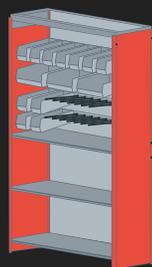
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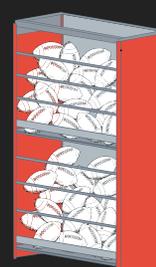
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Shaping Leadership

Mike London leads a life defined by significance. However the win and loss columns shake out, he's a coach whose success is reflected in the integrity of his players and the influence of his staff, and he wouldn't have it any other way.

By Paul Markgraff

It's not often that turning points in our lives stand out so brazenly from the background of our everyday grind that we can immediately recognize them for what they are.

The turning point in Mike London's life arrived at the business end of a handgun and the quick pull of a trigger.

But, we'll get to that later. First, it's important to understand a little bit about Mike London's formative years and their association to the game of football, a game that he would play and coach at the highest levels, and still coaches today as the brand-new head coach at William & Mary.

London "lived all over" in his early years. His father is a veteran of the United States Air Force — now retired in Hampton, Va. — who was a navigator on C-110 aircraft. In fact, he had the distinction of bringing late Arizona Senator John McCain back from Vietnam after he was a prisoner of war.

"Growing up, I lived all over the world," says London, who was born in West Point, New York. "Africa, Germany, California, Hawaii, all over. My dad, he fought in the Vietnam War, and he's alive today. He's battling some of the effects of fighting in the Vietnam jungles, Agent Orange, things like that. It's tough to watch, but at the same time, his opportunities and my opportunities were extended just by having an expanded world view, making friends and losing friends and making new friends, really just being adaptable to where you are and making the best of it."

London knew early in life what he wanted to be when he grew up. He recalls early childhood memories of seeing the president speaking at Air Force bases.

"I noticed these guys standing behind him," he says. "They had the earpiece in their ears, the wind was blowing and this guy's coat blew back and there was a machine gun hanging under his coat. I didn't know what they were doing, but I wanted to do that. Seeing a guy sworn to protect the president of the United States, sworn to protect life and liberty — I grew up around that — that's what I wanted to do."

As London grew, so did his athletic prowess. He played football for the University of Richmond from 1979–1982 as a defensive back before going pro at the same position for the Dallas Cowboys in 1983. His career with the Cowboys was short-lived, and so London had a decision to make.

He enrolled in the police academy of Richmond, Va., which at the time was located at Virginia Commonwealth University. He remembers fondly this period in his life.

"If you can imagine it, I was cut from the Cowboys and I was a corner/safety, so I'm all rocked up," he says. "I'm lifting, I'm training. They were fitting me for my Kevlar vest and they want to know if I want it loose, and I'm like, no, I want it really tight. I got my uniforms tailored to show off my 'other guns.'"

He was all set and ready to make a difference for his community.

A New Chapter

It was a new beginning in London's life, and he embraced it. London began his police work as a patrolman in Richmond, working traffic stops and writing parking tickets. Not long after, the Richmond Police Department launched a new program called the Selected Neighborhood

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Mike London's journey from Richmond patrolman to Head Coach at William & Mary may have been unusual, but the life experience he gained gives him a unique perspective.

Action Patrol (SNAP). It aligned perfectly with London's idea of the type of police work he wanted to do.

"It was plain clothes, you ride around in unmarked cars, you could grow your Michael Jackson afro, earring in the ear, all that stuff. I was like, 'Sign me up.' That's what I wanted to do."

London worked maybe a year in the SNAP program doing "neighborhood action patrol." Then, he was promoted quickly to detective in Richmond's street crimes unit. It was London's chance to get closer to working with the FBI, the Secret Service, and the Department of Treasury.

The street crimes unit introduced London to an extremely dangerous lifestyle. If someone was a serial bank robber or burglar, it was London's job to follow the individual.

"It was kind of hairy, because we knew he was going to break into a house or rob a bank, but we had to follow him knowing that lives may be on the line," he says. "After they'd make the attempt, we'd rush in to apprehend the suspect or get him coming out. Then we'd use the forensic evidence based on what we collected at that crime scene and try to match it to other crime scenes based on what the individual may have left behind.

"We followed around the worst of what people did. They were murderers, robbers, burglars, drug dealers. We followed career criminals. We got involved in foot chases and fights. I've seen the worst of what human beings do to each other, from homicides to assaults, just so many things. But you just gotta be Batman."

It was one of those nights, sitting in an unmarked car on the side of the road with his partner, Craig Johnson, that London's life was about to change. Little did he know, but he was about to come to a crossroads of his own.

When Time Stops

The call came in at around midnight. A KFC had just been robbed "somewhere in south Richmond," says London, recounting a situation that has obviously played repeatedly in his mind for years.

"The call comes out that individuals were just involved in a robbery and we get a description of the vehicle," he says. "My partner and I are in an unmarked car. There's no traffic around, but there's a van stopped at a traffic light."

The description of the vehicle matched the van London and Johnson stared at from their unmarked car.

"We're calling for other officers in terms of marked cars to pull the van over, and the van kind of took off," he says. "We followed behind it. It sped up, we sped up. It slowed down, we slowed down."

Eventually, it became clear that the individuals in the van had figured out something was wrong with this car following them. The van pulled into a driveway and then turned all the way around, facing out toward the street.

"We pulled into the driveway ourselves," says London. "My partner was driving, I was in the passenger seat. We got out of the car and had our guns drawn. We said, 'Police officer. Let me see your hands.' As we approached the van, the driver in the van smashed on the accelerator and the car started to kind of fishtail. Obviously, they were trying to get by us or through us to get away. I don't know [if it was] training, or stupidity, whatever it is, I jumped into the front window — the driver's window — and I'm wrestling with the driver."

"We're going back and forth, and all of a sudden the driver pulls out a handgun and points it at me, points it at my face and he pulls the trigger. I heard a click.

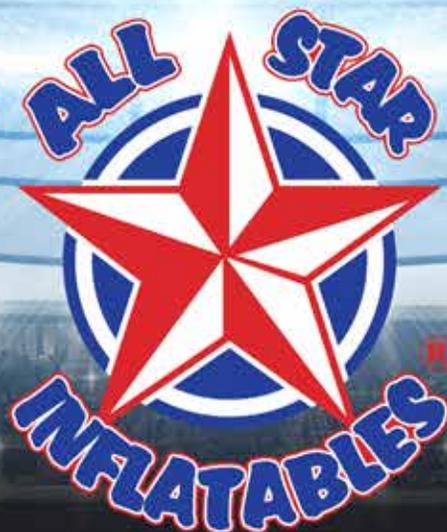
"I don't know, like a moment in time just froze. When that happened, I thought about everything, my parents, my family. Time just stopped for that moment. Thank God the gun didn't go off so, I let go and the van got in front of us and got away."

The van was stopped by police officers a mile or two away and the individuals were apprehended. They were charged with armed robbery, commission of a felony with a firearm, and attempted capital murder of a police officer.

While this seemed like an open-and-shut case at the time, it didn't turn out that way.

- The individuals at the restaurant who could finger the two people in the van decided not to testify. No eyeball witnesses would come forward.
- Police were unable to find a gun in the van. As it happened, during the time between nearly killing two police officers and being apprehended by other police officers, the two in the van drove past a ravine, giving them an easy opportunity to ditch a gun. So, no gun.

"It came back down to myself and the other officer involved. When they got away from us, they got rid of the handgun. So, when it came down to us it's like, 'All right. Detective London, where's the gun? We couldn't find the gun and without having the gun, the aspect of attempted capital murder, we can't convict on that," he says. "The only



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In spite of all the different professionals London has worked with over the years, his father's example remains the biggest influence on his coaching philosophy to this day.

thing those kids were convicted of was trying to run me over with a car, and they got probation.”

It was a low point in London's life and it forced him to reconsider what he wanted to do with the second chance at life he'd been granted.

Back To Basics

The turn back to football was a natural one for London. In 1989, he was hired as a linebackers coach at the University of Richmond, where he played his college football. He later coached the defensive line at William & Mary (where he was hired as head coach in November 2018), Boston College, the Houston Texans and the University of Virginia, twice.

In 2006, London was named defensive coordinator for the University of Virginia. He replaced Al Golden at the time. In January 2008, London was named head coach at Richmond. After a slow start to the season, the Spiders won nine straight games, culminating in a 24-7 victory over the Montana Grizzlies in the NCAA FCS National Championship Game. Since then, London has been head coach or assistant head coach at the University of Virginia, University of Maryland, Howard University and now William & Mary. He was named AFCA FCS Coach of the Year and Black Coaches & Administrators (BCA) National Coach of the Year in 2008. He was named ACC Coach of the Year in 2011.

The journey that London made over the last 30 years in the coaching profession stems from his roots growing up the son of an Air Force veteran. His father coached all the teams he played for growing up: football, baseball and basketball.

“He would coach the little league teams, and my mom would coach the cheerleading teams,” says London. “My dad became the model of coaching and teaching, affecting and changing lives. He never said a curse word. His curse word was, ‘You numb-ball.’”

London saw how he made other kids feel. Maybe they weren't the most talented players, but they gave a lot of effort, and he saw that if a coach infuses positive characteristics into young people, what comes out can't be measured in a 40-yard dash or on the weight bench.

“I wanted to affect lives and be an asset to the FBI or whatever law enforcement I got into,” he says. “When that door closed, I knew I could still affect lives by drawing on the inspiration and the example that my father set.”

Mission Possible

When London took over the head coaching position at Howard University in 2017, the team was 3-19 overall, and 1-11 on the road. London quickly turned the team around, getting a major FBS road win vs. UNLV as a huge underdog. He finished the 2017 season with a 7-4 record, with four of those losses coming at less than a touchdown's difference.

The secret to quick success is no secret at all, London says.

“First of all, you surround yourself with really good people,” he says. “I had really good coaches and I was able to hire all of them myself without any other issues involved. They're great teachers; they're role models and mentors. We adopted the philosophy of ‘Mission Possible.’”

The standards he set for the team were straightforward:

- Go to class. You must do this to become an educated man.
- Show class in how you handle adversity and success.
- Treat people with dignity and respect.

“The last one really was based out of being a police officer,” says London. “I learned that, being a police officer, what comes out of your mouth has the opportunity to escalate or de-escalate a situation. It comes from having to ask tough questions and diffusing volatile situations. You can encourage and discourage people with what you say to them. Treating people with respect is critical.”

In 2019, London will open the regular season in his new role as head coach at William & Mary. He's a coach who was forged at his father's knee, on the football fields of his youth, at Richmond and with the Dallas Cowboys. He's a coach who's persevered through assistant coaching positions, coordinator positions and head coaching positions for almost three decades after leaving law enforcement. He's a coach who knows what defines us as human beings, and it rarely comes down to wins and losses.

“People don't care about how much you know until they know how much you care,” says London. “It's tough being in this profession when people associate you with wins and losses, but if you let that define you, then it destroys you. But if you just pray for a stronger back to carry more people, give them a sense of solace, a sense of direction, a sense of hope, if you can demonstrate that, then that's servant leadership, and its impact is significant.” 

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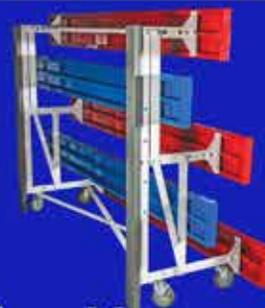
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Storage Solutions

As football programs continue to grow, so does the demand placed on equipment managers to organize and store all of the equipment that makes a successful program tick. Many equipment managers have turned to high-density storage to help their cause.

By Paul Markgraff

Up until a few short years ago, the equipment room at the University of Wisconsin looked much like the vast majority of equipment rooms across America. It was dominated by ad-hoc shelving and cabinetry.

The Badgers faced the same issues as other football programs using this sort of storage approach. Items were getting lost, stolen or simply misplaced, and those weren't the only problems.

The number of coaches, the amount of equipment dedicated to individual players, the variation in that equipment, all of those things have continued to grow. But for most equipment managers, the space in which they store the equipment has not grown along with it.

"More and more sports teams are growing in roster size, and the number of coaches is growing too," says Sam Wrobel, equipment manager for the Wisconsin Badgers football program. "The apparel contracts are better and allow us to get more and more for our athletes. We have so many items we can provide for

athletes that having the actual storage space for them is really crucial.

"There was a time when we'd get just a couple pair of shorts, a couple t-shirts and a single set of sweatpants for an athlete. Now, it's four or five pairs of shorts, six or seven t-shirts, cleats, socks, pretty much whatever they need. Having the space for all that is critical."

Several years ago, the Badgers installed a brand-new Montel high-density storage system for their football equipment room, and access to equipment — plus the security of that equipment — has never been better.

"We installed 12 high-density storage units — six on each side of our equipment room — to create an aisle," says Wrobel. "Our campus is landlocked, and it wasn't designed with a huge equipment room space in mind. We have to make do with the space we have. Thankfully, the new installation has saved us probably 50% of our available storage space."

Build To Suit

Perhaps one of the more underappreciated aspects of

Wisconsin's new equipment storage was their ability to customize storage specifically to their needs.

"When we were preparing to do this, we met with the manufacturer and designed each aisle specifically for what we wanted," says Wrobel. "We customized each aisle to maximize storage. The helmet aisle has all the slots for each helmet to go into, so we're not just throwing them in there. Every aisle essentially has the functional purpose so that we can get the most efficient use of space from it."

That customization makes it not only easier to organize specific equipment types, but it helps when managing student equipment managers as well.

"We have five student workers that help [head football equipment manager] Jeremy [Amundson] and me," says Wrobel. "Even if we need to have them get a specific pair of cleats for a linebacker, it's easy for them to do it. It's easy to explain it. We're able to have everything organized by size, and more or less by what position. So

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Jim Moran, Head Coach, Dobbs Ferry HS



High-density storage units not only help equipment managers save time and space, they can also increase the longevity of a program's equipment — saving them money as well.

even if Jeremy or I can't get back there to grab a specific item, we can easily explain where it is.

"Plus, it's all neatly organized. There's nothing just randomly thrown in a corner."

This customization not only looks great, but it saves equipment managers time. The fact is, it doesn't matter how much work piles up, there are only so many hours in the day. It's critical to be streamlined and efficient if you want your equipment room to run smoothly.

There are other aspects to storage that aren't readily apparent to coaches unless they've been spending a lot of time around equipment rooms. For example, eliminating sharp corners and exposed edges can save programs money. Rounded edges prevent accidental ripping and tearing.

"All of our edges are rounded on our high-density storage units," says Wrobel. "When we're talking about storing t-shirts or compression shirts, we're talking about storing hundreds of



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them. Even if you're getting a few of them caught on corners and ripping, you're losing inventory and you're losing money."

Now, extend that across not only the football program, but equipment storage for multiple sports and you can begin to understand how something as simple as rounded corners can keep an athletics department from throwing money down a hole.

"Obviously, we budget for extra items in certain areas, but there are some things that we don't order a ton of extras," says Wrobel. "Most schools don't have the ability to order lots of extra items in general. Rounded corners and soft edges are simple, but they're effective."

The Badgers also looked closely at the finish of their new storage units. They wanted a smooth, powder-coated finish that would be well-ventilated. This wouldn't necessarily occur to most coaches or administrators, but a

smooth, clean, well-ventilated finish keeps equipment dry and in the best-possible shape.

"Often, we'll get shirts or sweatshirts in that aren't going to be used for months, even until the next season, and so of course, we'll store these items in back of the equipment we're using right now," says Wrobel. "So, we wanted to make sure that everything was well-ventilated.

"If we have it on a well-ventilated shelf, then it's not getting moldy or sitting in the back corner of some closet. When we do issue it, it comes out looking brand-new. A properly finished helmet-storage unit means we aren't putting a ton of helmets one on top of the other. Each one has its own cubby. This absolutely prolongs the life of the equipment we use."

Equipment On Demand

Equipment storage is one of those things that occurs in the background of every program, but it is absolutely essential for success. If you don't

notice how your equipment storage works, it is likely your equipment manager is doing his job well. It's one of those jobs that, when done well, disappears from sight.

Proper equipment storage is also a major consideration during practice and on game day. There is certain equipment that is completely necessary and requires a backup plan for on-demand distribution.

"We have about 10 equipment trunks that travel to games with us, essentially serving as a travelling equipment room," says Wrobel. "When we're on the road and someone breaks a shoelace, or forgets to pack a knee pad, we need to have replacements ready. It's not good enough to not have an item that needs replacing. We have backup cleats for essentially everyone who's playing. If we do have an issue, we can usually get a player a pair of new cleats so they won't be missing any playing time." 

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Safety, Testing Crucial In New Equipment Selection

By Paul Markgraff

Photo: Grace Brethren (Calif.) High School

The No. 1 rule for football coaches at every level of the game doesn't show up in your typical rulebook. Rather, it's a rule that every coach believes more important than that.

The rule is, keep your players safe.

Whether they're playing youth football on the local pee-wee fields or running out of their college tunnel on Saturday, players deserve the best equipment available.

Josh Henderson, head coach of Grace Brethren (Calif.) High School, knows his priorities when it comes to student-athlete safety, and when he finds equipment he likes, he goes all the way in.

For the 2018 season, the entire program at Grace Brethren switched to XTECH shoulder pads and VICIS helmets.

"When I saw the VICIS helmet, the way it was made, it was really revolutionary with the way it handled all different types of impacts," says Henderson. "XTECH came in and showed us their testing compared to the slope of the other shoulder pads we had. We tried them out. The price tag was steep on those two items. But here's the thing. Safety is a big deal, and it's always easy to do the right thing when it comes to safety."

For Henderson, seeing the appropriate testing is critical to new equipment selection.

"When you're making equipment decisions like this, for us, we are a private school, so it's not entirely my decision," he says. "It has to go to the school board first."

Having the ability to clearly and concisely explain how different products work and why they're necessary for student-athlete safety is highly important to coaches, because those coaches often need to sell the concepts behind the equipment to the school board or other interested parties.

Henderson also researches who works for the product suppliers. Certainly, a good equipment salesperson or dealer can make any product sound great, but for Henderson, it's

important to see the right kinds of experience in everyone at the equipment supplier, from the CEO to product engineers to research and development and other areas. This is research he conducts on his own while deciding whether to purchase products program-wide.

"When companies have the right people with the right backgrounds and educations in the right positions, it makes it easier to trust their results," says Henderson. "You're getting the right expert at every level of the VICIS organization."

"In this day and age, as coaches, we do not make any medical decisions on the field anymore here in California. We don't want coaches in that position. When we can see the research from the equipment suppliers and understand it, it makes it easier to understand whether we want to put every young man in our program into that equipment."

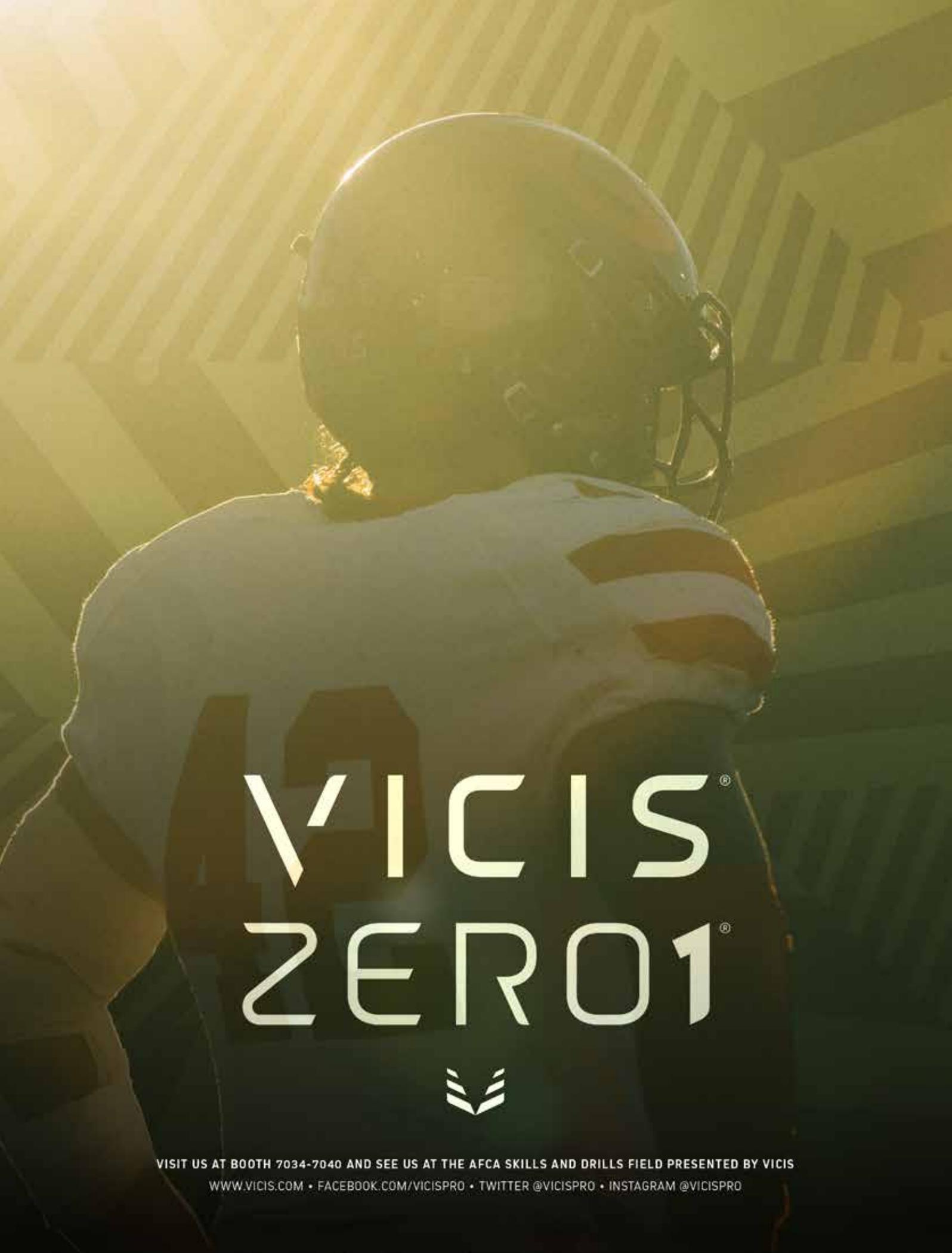
Understanding whether a certain piece of equipment actually leads to more wins is a tough correlation to make, but Henderson says that certain assumptions can be made.

By the time this article was written, Grace Brethren won California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Division 4, California Regional Division II-AA, and was preparing for its California State Championship matchup.

"Certain equipment helps in terms of a player's mindset," says Henderson. "When they know that they're investing to benefit them and keep them safe, it helps their mindset when they play. It costs us a lot of time and money, not to mention all of the discussions we had. But I think the mindset that we're always pushing, always growing, it's something that permeates throughout a winning program."

The second element is more practical. The new VICIS helmets expand a player's vision horizontally. The shoulder pads are more protective. The number of injuries are reduced.

"So, not having kids out because of injuries, that's a benefit to everybody," says Henderson. 



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Photo: Veterans Memorial High School

Saddling Up in San Antonio

Veterans Memorial High School head football coach Richard Mendoza led his team all the way to the Texas 5A playoffs in its first year competing, and his journey has taught him what it takes to build a team from the ground up.

By Adam Reed

Four years ago, Veterans Memorial High School (VMHS) in San Antonio, Texas, did not exist.

The brand-new school in the Judson Independent School District opened its doors before the 2015-2016 school year. The Patriots' athletic offerings have remained a work in progress since its start, with the school's first athletic coordinator and head football coach Richard Mendoza working tirelessly to offer students all the opportunities they would find at a school with a well-established athletics program.

A homegrown product, Mendoza played quarterback for the Judson Rockets in high school, and has been coaching and involved in the local community ever since. Mendoza was part of two 6A State Championship teams at Judson, both as a player in 1995, and as a member of the staff in 2002. He coached at Wagner High School and East Central High School, returning to Wagner in 2015 before taking on the tremendous task of building a new athletics program at VMHS.

“I don't care if they're 15 or 18, they're still kids. We're here to teach them the fundamentals of the game and how they apply to everything else around us...”

Getting an athletics program off the ground, even within the framework of a school district that Mendoza is intimately familiar with, challenged him in ways most

coaches don't have to worry about. From fiscal concerns to staffing concerns and hiring decisions, Mendoza has worked hand-in-hand with the principal to offer a full menu of athletic programs.

As a football coach, his experience over the last three years taught him several lessons he will carry with him for the rest of his career. Establishing a successful team

without the foundation of tradition and history to build on is daunting, but when it's done correctly, offers rewards well worth the struggle.

Fundamental Purpose

Of all the lessons Mendoza learned during the process of starting the VMHS football program, the one that looms largest in his mind is an appreciation for the fundamentals.



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Coaches set expectations for their program every year, but most are unlikely to realize that their expectations are based on fundamentals already built into their programs. These fundamentals span more than X's & O's, though that's certainly a part of it. The average established football program has a certain basic understanding of how business should be conducted that a new program like Mendoza's does not.

"Never take for granted the basics of the game, and don't outpace yourself, because they're just kids," Mendoza says. "I don't care if they're 15 or 18, they're still kids. We're here to teach them the fundamentals of the game and how they apply to everything else around us."

Mendoza nails the ultimate goal of every coach, instilling fundamentals and applying them, both to the game, and of course, to life. As for their application on the field, the importance of fundamentals cannot be overstated. Every football play consists of some combination of all 22 players applying, or failing to apply, the fundamentals of the game successfully. In Mendoza's case, the players needed to be taught the fundamentals of the game, and not just blocking and tackling. They had to be taught how to practice, how to be coachable, how to take care of their bodies — a number of simple concepts the average coach may take for granted every day.

With so many bases to cover, Mendoza was forced to simplify his decision-making process. In order to instill these fundamental habits in his young players, he fell back on the fundamentals of how to lead a program.

"A lot of decisions have to be made when you open a school, from what kind of uniform, to what kind of equipment, to who to hire and how to interact with your colleagues," Mendoza says. "You've got to keep these two things at the forefront: Is it best for kids and is it the right thing to do?"

"It's not about the what, everybody knows the what. What are we trying to do? Well, everybody knows we're

trying to win a football game. It's more about the how and the why for us."

The purpose of the football program informs the program's goals. The purpose for the Patriots to do what they do on a week-to-week basis, and in a larger sense, the purpose for why the program exists in the first place, was the first question Mendoza had to answer.

"Our goal is to win as many games as we can. That's our goal, but it's not our purpose," Mendoza explains. "Our purpose is to help young people become better people first, better students second and better athletes third."

"Are we trying to win games so that players can go get a scholarship? Are we trying to win games so that we can go win a state championship? Or, are we trying to win football games so that we can represent who we are and where we come from? Because I think if you put that first, then all those other things will come a little bit easier."

Indeed, answering the other questions did become much easier once Mendoza established the purpose of the program. Setting expectations for their first year became a simple byproduct of this big-picture reason for competing in the first place.

"The expectation that I have is we're going to go out, we're going to compete, and we're going to represent our school and our community in a positive light," Mendoza says. "Play with passion, enthusiasm and energy. Hustle on the field; hustle off the field. Play with class."

Mendoza admits it hasn't been an easy process. After just two years of junior varsity football, the first season saw their first playoff appearance and their first playoff win.

As exciting as it's been for the head coach to see his team achieving their goals, the real reward stems from the team fulfilling the purpose of the program. The players who lacked fundamentals suddenly seem to be representing their school and community with the work ethic, passion and class of a seasoned team.

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“Seeing the growth from our kids, from day one to now, it's exciting,” Mendoza says. “I get goosebumps thinking about it, because I don't think some of them knew they were capable of doing some of the things that they're doing.”

Community Leaders

With the Patriots' early success comes a whole new set of challenges for the first-year head coach. Not only does he have players who are new to handling their on-field success, Mendoza must also educate his players

on the serious responsibility that comes with being in the public eye.

“Athletics is such an important part of the fabric of the community because all it takes is one time for someone to go watch a high school football game to get hooked,” Mendoza says. “All of a sudden, they're there every Friday night, or I've known people in our community who go to everything. They go to football, they go to basketball, they go to soccer, and they're just bleacher creatures, for lack of a better term.”

“Then that transcends into the community. They see them at the grocery store, they see them at a restaurant, and I think what that does is two things: it brings those communities together, but it also gives our kids a sense of their influence on the community. All of a sudden, they're no longer just another person in our community. They're a leader; they have to model certain behaviors.”

Mendoza's son reminds him of this simple truth on a regular basis. Even as a five-year-old, he has already begun to follow in his father's footsteps. He loves to put on his iPad headset and imitate his father coaching. He watches his attitude. He hangs on every word. He follows his example.

Mendoza carries that life lesson with him to the locker room. In heart-to-hearts with his players, he does his best to emphasize how important their behavior is both on and off the field.

“I talk to my players about what they are doing when they think nobody's watching,” Mendoza says. “There is a little kid in the bleachers watching you, who wants to be just like No. 1. He wants to be just like No. 13. In his backyard, or in his driveway, he's emulating everything that you do; the good and the bad.”

“Being an athlete is not fair. You might as well get used to it now, because if you're not doing the right things in the community, if you're not doing the right things in the hallway, or in the classroom, you're going to get twice as much attention. You can make it for good, or for bad, but that's your choice.”

When In Doubt

In spite of making it look easy, Mendoza and his staff have faced their share of adversity. Mendoza recalls sitting with the principal repeatedly during his first year, lamenting that he had only 30 players for freshman and junior varsity competition.

Adversity comes with the territory, Mendoza says. It is a crucial part of the formula when trying to create something worthwhile. Having never started a program before only added to the challenge, eliciting feelings of doubt that every coach can relate to at some point during his or her career.



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"I would be lying to you if [I said] there wasn't some doubt that came into my mind," Mendoza says. "Anybody in a leadership position at times will have that thought of, what's going to happen next? I think that's natural."

Mendoza could combat his feelings of doubt by leaning on his support network. Hiring a staff of quality men who share in the struggle and have a common vision goes a long way toward relieving the pressure that comes with being the head coach, especially a new head coach.

Coaches seldom find answers for doubt by looking outside of their program. At VMHS, Mendoza says focusing on what's going on within the program was a message everyone from the administration all the way down to the players had to embrace to be successful.

"Everybody wants the Judson Rockets tomorrow, right?" Mendoza jokes. "One of the biggest things that I told our staff and our kids was, 'Don't worry about what you don't have, just take care of what you do have, and let's make it better.' When we focused on what we did have, rather than what we don't have, the focus became on us improving, and us creating an identity."

While focusing on the internal support they had, Mendoza and his coaches naturally found themselves focusing on the purpose of the program as a guiding light in times of doubt or indecision. With the players at the heart of every decision, coaches can feel confident in their choices no matter how difficult circumstances may be.

As the head coach and leader of the team, Mendoza takes a step back from time to time to consider how each decision he and his staff have made affects players. Running every decision through the filter of the program's purpose in this manner leaves little room for doubt to creep in.

"It's not my job to worry about my job," Mendoza says. "My job is to address our kids, to make sure that we try to create an environment that is conducive to learning, conducive to competing and conducive to creating great people. That's my job, and I think looking at it that way helped alleviate anxiety when that doubt came."

The future certainly seems bright for the Patriots young program, and the doubt about whether or not Mendoza and his staff could quickly field a competitive team have faded with each victory. Still, the nature of the coaching profession makes one reality certain for every coach — uncertainty.

Maybe Mendoza will still be at VMHS in 20 years, with several state championships, All-Americans and Division I scholarships to his credit. Maybe he will move on to

bigger and better opportunities at the college or even professional level. There's simply no way of knowing. But if he continues to keep the purpose for his profession at the heart of everything he does, there's no doubt he'll continue to find success.

"We have such an influence on young people," Mendoza says. "If I'm getting up every morning, and I have an opportunity to change a young person's life for good, even if it's one, then that's a pretty powerful purpose that's worth coming to work for." 

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Living Legend

At 83 years old, national hall of fame coach and long-time civil rights activist Oree Banks is still working hard to close the gap in racial disparity among the game of football's leadership.

By Paul Markgraff

In 1965, one year after President Lyndon B. Johnson signed The Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. standing at his side, Oree Banks took over as head coach of South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, S.C.

Born in 1936, his lifelong journey to that particular coaching position, and his well-deserved Hall of Fame status among football coaches and educational institutions, was guided in part by what he learned beginning in his childhood hometown and on the high school football fields of Newton, Miss.

“We really experienced some hard times, but we experienced some good times, too,” says Banks of growing up in Newton with his parents, sister and brother. “We were well known in the little city of Newton. My daddy knew practically everybody. Our family was well-thought-of in Newton, among blacks and whites. We lived a good life.”

Banks joined the U.S. Army after high school graduation, playing for the Army football team for two years.

“I didn’t [enlist] during the time that people were going overseas and fighting,” he says. “I hooked up in terms of ‘special service’ — that’s what it’s referred to — and I was assigned to a medical unit. I was also in the medical corps. I was a venereal disease lab technician.

“I was very fortunate. I was participating in football and track when I wasn’t in the lab diagnosing various types of diseases such as gonorrhea, syphilis and diseases of that nature. I was very fortunate that I was able to stay in Fort Hood my entire career. I spent three years in the military. It was a wonderful experience and I had some great moments there at Fort Hood, Texas.”

After being discharged from the Army, Banks says he couldn’t make up his mind what to do. He launched his college education at Indiana University, where he played freshman football. A year later, he accepted a scholarship and transferred to Kansas State University. There, he lettered in football and earned his bachelor’s degree and master’s degree.

Banks took over as head coach of Coahoma Community College in Clarksdale, Miss., in 1960. From 1960 to 1964, his teams won the Southern Intercollegiate Athletic Conference title each year, either as champions or tied. During his four-year tenure, his program compiled a four-season record of 27-7-1 with only three losses in conference games.

“I was very successful at Coahoma,” says Banks. “Then one day, here comes a legend, who recruited some of our junior college players, Eddie Robinson. I couldn’t have been more delighted in my life. He shows up and he talked to me. Before he left, he was saying, ‘Now, I’m going to be getting in touch with you after this season and ask you how you

feel about joining my staff.’ That’s what kicked off my career in terms of coaching, being with him.”

Banks spent 1964 as an assistant coach under Robinson at Grambling State University after leaving Coahoma.

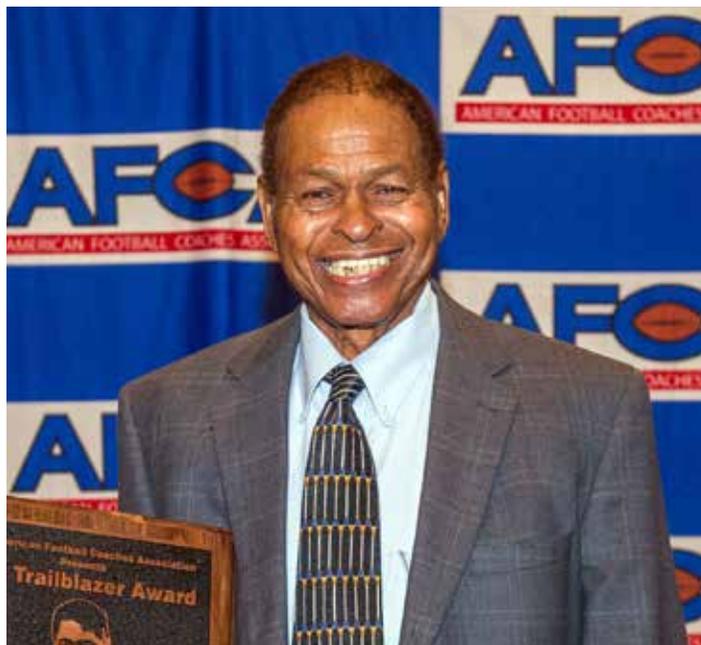
From 1965-1972, he had a highly successful run as head football coach at South Carolina State. The first five years at South Carolina State, he compiled a 34-9 record for a .784 winning percentage, ranking fourth in the nation in the college division in winning percentages among active coaches. He would go on to coach at other storied

institutions, including the University of Wisconsin, the University of South Carolina, the University of Virginia and West Virginia State University.

“I’ll never forget, 1965 was my first American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) meeting,” says Banks. “I got some money together and flew to Chicago, and I’ll never forget that. I haven’t missed too many of them since.”

Character Under Pressure

Winning isn’t the only measure of Banks’ success in life and in coaching. Beyond the innumerable honors he has received over his career — too many to name in these few pages — his is a life defined by his character, his constant striving for excellence in the youth of our nation, and the



2016 AFCA Trailblazer Award recipient Oree Banks led the development and introduction of the award between 2001 and 2004. The AFCA Trailblazer Award was created to honor early leaders in the football coaching profession who coached at historically black colleges and universities.”

foundation of love and learning that he passes along to virtually anyone who spends time with him.

These are values forged in the crucible of a fight for equality and civil rights for the citizens of our nation and the world. At South Carolina State during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Banks occupied a role as head coach under severe pressure. Football coaches at black colleges during that period faced an extreme tension, pulled in one direction by the white governors and lawmakers who administered their employment and the other direction by the righteously indignant student bodies brought up and educated amidst segregation, Jim Crow laws, Brown vs. Board of Education (1952-1954), the Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955-1956), the March on Washington (1963), assassinations of political and civil rights leaders, and so very much more.

Banks navigated these turbulent waters as though destined for it. Beginning in 1965, his program achieved a record of 22-4 in his first three seasons at South Carolina State, which secured his job from both performance and management perspectives. At the same time, Banks also offered tacit approval to student-athletes who were attracted to the campus protest movement. He walked this tightrope with precision, joining both the N.A.A.C.P. — membership of which had been outlawed in some states at the time — and the AFCA during that same year.

To this day, he is a man who is comfortable in uncomfortable positions, a trait football coaches continue

to constantly seek in their student-athletes. And, his drive remains as consistent as ever.

“Unity, to me, is the greatest thing in the world,” says Banks. “For us not to be together like we should, that presents a problem. I’ve been one of those individuals who has been very involved in making sure that we share our ideas and our thoughts in terms of making the American Football Coaches Association a better organization among both black and white coaches.

“I grew up in Mississippi, and I know what segregation is about. I worked hard over the years to try to make sure that blacks are just as important as whites, just as important as anyone in making this country a better country, in making sure that our profession — coaching football — not only involves one race, but all races.

“I’ve just been one of those guys that felt that we cannot stand back. We must be accountable when it comes to making this sport one of the greatest in the world. That’s been my position all these years. You have to join the AFCA and you have to volunteer and be on these AFCA committees. We have made a lot of progress over the years, but we are still not there yet.”

Understanding The Numbers

The reality is, according to an annual report from The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport (TIDES) at the University of Central Florida, the statistics validate Banks' words. The data referenced below comes directly from what's

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For most coaches, the word “analytics” conjures up images of databases, computers, and a foggy and unknown world dominated by number-crunchers. While analytics is a very broad term, coaches should stop thinking about it in terms of data and start thinking about analytics in terms of decision-making.

Case in point. The Philadelphia Eagles are faced with a decision in Week 6 of the 2017 regular season. With 4 minutes to go until halftime, on the Carolina Panther’s 3-yard line, down 10-3, looking at a fourth-and-1, the Eagles wave off a high-percentage field goal and go for it, simply because the decision to go for it increased their Game Winning Chance (GWC) by 2.9 percent. Three tries later, the Eagles score a touchdown. The final score of the game? 28-23, Eagles over the Panthers.

The point is, analytics are about so much more than the acquisition of data.

Frank Frigo, co-founder of EdjSports, says it’s important for analytics to impact what’s most important to a coach, which is winning a game. It’s important for data to transform into actionable information and help coaches optimize their own decision making.

“The metric that really matters, the one that helps coaches, is GWC, or Game Winning Chance. Think of this as win probability,” says Frigo, who is also a world backgammon champion. “We can measure GWC pretty accurately for two custom teams through modelling and simulation. We’re going to understand risk and how multiple factors affect risk and decision-making. How does ball position affect win probability? What about change in personnel or change in score or clock changes? Once you can measure these elements accurately, you can start to examine how different variables impact GWC and how sensitive GWC is to those changes.”

At the heart of EdjSports’ analytics platform is a “simulation engine.” It’s the engine that is constantly making

calculations about all different aspects of a team and its performance. Its calculations make use of virtually anything that can be measured to derive GWC: penalties, turnovers, injuries, route accuracy, player spacing, the list is exhaustive. If it can be measured, it affects GWC.

“But here’s the big distinction,” says Frigo. “Traditional modeling and analytics use look-up tables. How does this situation we’re examining look like something that happened in history? How often has it occurred? Our simulation engine is much more dynamic. We use 20 years of play-by-play data that informs how our simulation runs. But when we do an analysis, it’s actually very forward-looking. We’re saying, we’ve done a lot of work to describe who these two teams are. And now when we want to assess a particular decision or the impact of some situation, we’re actually simulating it going forward and we’re doing this virtually. We run that scenario literally millions of times to understand the statistical

significance of our decision making.

“There’s an astronomical number of variables that you can describe in a football game that define a given situation. That’s the beauty of having a tool that can simulate and control what that looks like. We can model that situation and choose which plays from scrimmage we might try. How do those decisions affect GWC? It’s an approach that has been used with great results in financial markets, healthcare, education and sports.”

The Philadelphia Eagles certainly agree, and coming off their Super Bowl LII win against the New England Patriots, their reliance on analytics will no doubt grow.

Now, EdjSports is bringing an NCAA solution to the table that borrows heavily from its NFL product, but also seeks to account for the wildly varying disparities and levels of skill inherent in the college game. **For coaches who’d like more information about the EdjFootball platform, they can visit www.EdjFootball.com or call (502) 208-4088.**



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become known as the “Racial and Gender Report Card: D1 FBS Leadership,” produced by TIDES. These reports are available at www.tidesport.org.

In 2009, 93.3 percent of FBS school presidents were white. In the fall of 2018, 85.5 percent of FBS school presidents were white, with white men holding 73.1 percent of the 130 available positions. During the same periods, 3.3 percent of FBS school presidents were African-American in 2009, while 3.8 percent of FBS school presidents were African-American in 2018.

In 2009, 86.7 percent of FBS athletic directors were white. In the fall of 2018, 84.6

percent of FBS athletic directors were white, with white men holding 76.9 percent of the available positions. Comparatively, 9.2 percent of FBS athletics directors were African-American in 2009. The percentage remains the same in 2018.

In 2009, 92.5 percent of FBS head coaches were white, compared to 85.4 percent of FBS head coaches in 2018. Comparatively, 5.8 percent of FBS head coaches were African-American in 2009, while 11.5 percent of FBS head coaches were African-American in 2018.

When it comes to FBS assistant coaches, comparison is more difficult because the reports categorize assistant coaches differently based on job type. However, if we look at the total number of offensive coordinators, defensive coordinators and assistant coaches in 2009, we see that 28.7 percent were African-American. In 2018, 33.8 percent of assistant coaches were African-American.

Finally, when we look at the racial categorization of FBS student-athletes during the same two periods, we see that African-Americans numbered 50.4 percent in 2009, increasing to 54.3 percent in 2018.

For Banks, who has strived toward visibility of these disparities for decades, the numbers are problematic to his goal of unity.

“It is disturbing to me,” he says. “We are not moving in the right direction. I’ll tell you one thing that’s going to have to happen, and that’s bring it to attention. It’s the most important factor that can ever be put on the books. We have to make people aware. The thing that causes a lot of problems, people don’t make other people aware of what’s going on. As I keep saying to people, look at the number of African-American players, then look at the coaches. It doesn’t add up.

“The thing that causes a lot of problems, people don’t make other people aware of what’s going on. As I keep saying to people, look at the number of African-American players, then look at the coaches. It doesn’t add up...”

“That’s my whole thing. Let’s put something together here. If we can perform, we can sure manage. It’s just a matter of black coaches getting an opportunity. Now, a lot of people tell me, all the black athletes who play ball, all they care about is the NFL. That’s not true. There’s a lot of black coaches out there that want to get involved in coaching and yet they’re not given that opportunity.

“So, I just feel it’s a two-way street here. Just like we encourage [African-American student-athletes] to play football, we need to encourage them to get involved in coaching. Nobody’s bringing it to their attention. But, I think this is where our leaders should make sure that they’re aware. Hey, you can be a head football coach. Or, you can be a coordinator. As I’ve said, the step that I think is so important is to be a coordinator. Because that leads to the head job.”

Getting Involved

Above all else, Banks believes

that open and honest communication — and visibility of African-American pioneers in the field of coaching — are key to creating a rising tide that will carry all ships.

Banks led the development and introduction of the AFCA Trailblazer Award, which was created to honor early leaders in the football coaching profession who coached at historically black colleges and universities. He spent the greater portion of 2001 and 2002 conversing with coaches, faculty members, administrators and sports enthusiasts throughout the United States, seeking their input as to whether the creation, development and implementation of an award to recognize the contributions of African-American coaches was needed. In November 2002, Banks contacted former AFCA executive director Grant Teaff with a proposal to recognize former coaches from historically black colleges who were overlooked years ago due to segregation and the slow progress in integrating. The proposal was submitted to the AFCA on behalf of black coaches and administrators who were in agreement.

“I said, ‘We’re concerned,’ and they said, ‘We understand,’” says Banks.

The award was first presented in 2004. Each year, the AFCA selects a coach from numerous nominations provided by historical black colleges, choosing a coach from between 1920 and 1970.

In 2018, the AFCA selected former Morgan State University head coach Earl Banks — no relation to Oree — as its recipient. The award will be presented, posthumously, during the AFCA Honors Luncheon on Monday, January 7, at the 2019 AFCA Convention in San Antonio, Texas. In 1960, Earl Banks took over the head coaching position at Morgan State from 2011 AFCA Trailblazer Award winner Edward Hurt.

The AFCA Trailblazer Award remains one of the most important awards the association gives, and the AFCA named Oree Banks its recipient in 2016. In his opening remarks at the 2014 AFCA Convention General Session, Teaff described the opportunity to select a recipient and present the award as “one of the [opportunities] that I deem most important.”

“I just felt very strongly that we needed to look at — not only the present situation — but all those individuals who provided leadership years ago and have not been recognized in the coaching profession,” says Banks. “The AFCA bought into it without any hesitation. I felt that it was important that we highlight these individuals even though they’re no longer living or no longer in the coaching profession.”

Banks says that along with visibility, open dialogue is what can ultimately eliminate the racial disparity among the leaders of our great game.

“Communication is the greatest thing in the world,” says Banks. “As I tell the black coaches, when you go to the AFCA Convention, don’t go there for entertainment. Go there to network. Get involved in the committees. This

coaching profession is a very small operation but we need to make better contact with other coaches.”

There’s an old bit of wisdom that can help clarify the dialogue that must take place among all coaches if the game of football, and its internal constituents, want to take an active role in knocking down the walls that keep us all apart.

“Real boats rock.”

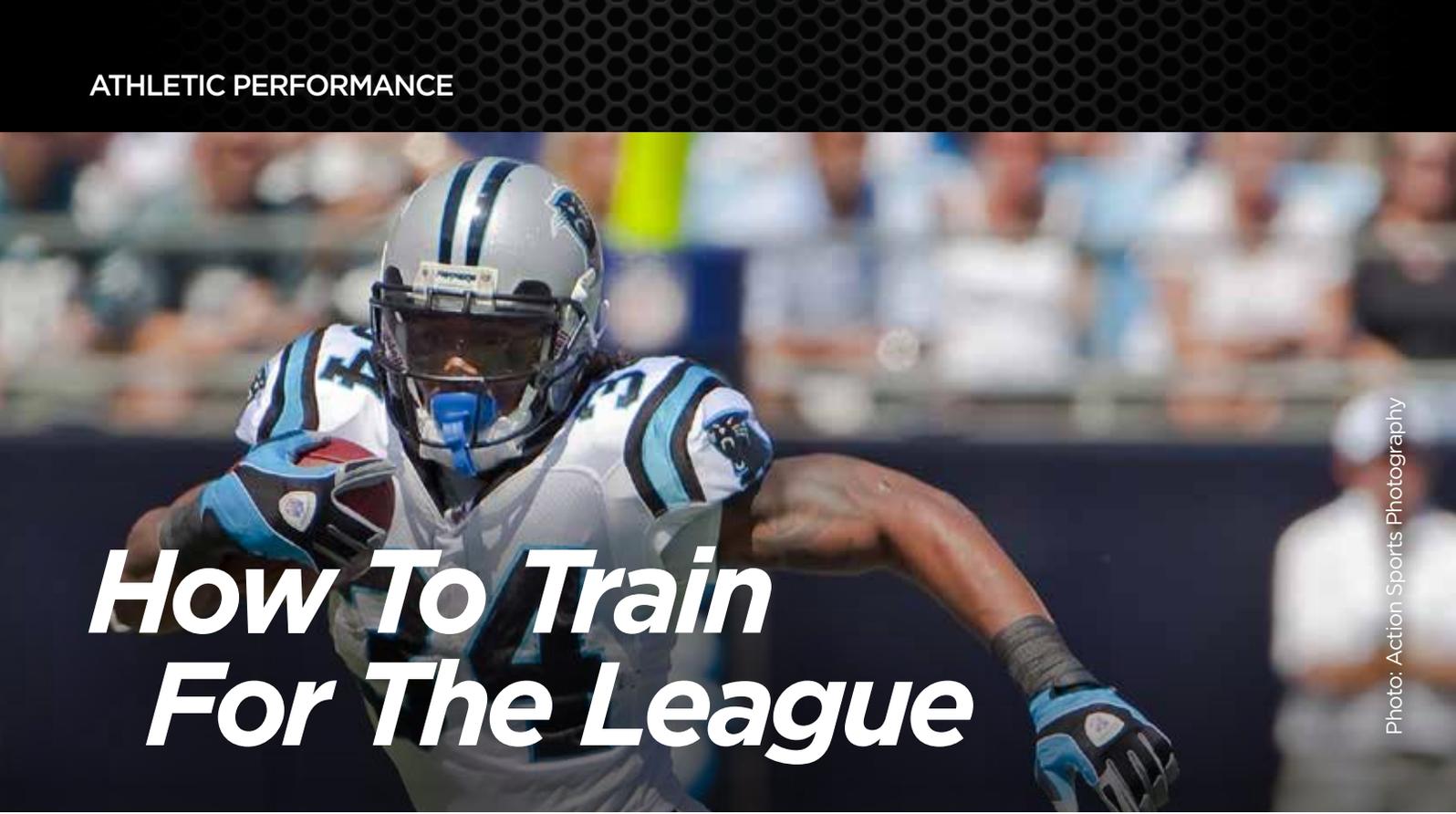
The kinds of conversations necessary to produce much-needed equality in our great game are often difficult and can force people out of their comfort zones. The words don’t come easy at times. To be honest with oneself about our present situation requires a degree of introspection that will leave many shaken, because it requires human beings to evaluate long-held personal beliefs and values around which they’ve shaped their lives. But, in the words of some of the best football coaches in the nation, it’s time to get comfortable being uncomfortable. It’s a demand coaches make of their student-athletes to help them perform beyond their own expectations. Perhaps if more people were to turn that demand inward upon themselves, we would all be surprised at what we could achieve, together. **AFCA**

To learn more about how to get involved, attend the AFCA Minority Issues Forum, January 6, 2019, from 8:00–9:50 pm at the 2019 AFCA Convention in San Antonio in room 214CD of the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center. All AFCA Convention attendees are welcome.

Paul Markgraff is the managing editor of AFCA Magazine. If you have questions or comments, he can be reached at (608) 423-2703 or pmarkgraff@threecyclemedia.com.

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How To Train For The League

Photo: Action Sports Photography

In his eighth year with the Carolina Panthers, head strength and conditioning coach Joe Kenn gives an inside perspective on the most critical attributes today's players need to become an NFL athlete.

By Adam Reed

Year after year, high school football participation numbers exceed all other sport participation numbers by a wide margin. According to data provided by the National Federation of State High School Associations, over 1 million young people play 11-man tackle football in high school every year.

In contrast, only 2,016 players currently hold a job in the NFL. The math isn't complicated. With 32 teams maintaining a 53-man roster and a ten-man practice squad, roughly one in every 500 high school players will have the privilege of competing at the highest level of football in the world.

In spite of these daunting odds, high school and college coaches are inundated every year with the same sentiment from their players: "Coach, I want to make it to the League."

Dreaming big is admirable, and coaches are great at helping athletes to find and pursue their passions. But when it comes to reaching the ultimate goal of making it to the NFL, coaches are left with little to offer in response other than, "You better work really hard," or "It's a long shot, but you can do anything you put your mind to."

Unfortunately, advice like this, while true and well-intentioned, provides little real insight into how young players can put themselves on the right path to making their dream a reality.

Joe Kenn, head strength and conditioning coach for the Carolina Panthers, knows a few things about what it takes to be one of the world's most elite football players. During his eight years in Carolina, he's worked with players like Cam Newton, Luke Kuechly, Julius Peppers and scores of other athletes who are heroes to an entire generation of NFL hopefuls.

"They're highly skilled, and they're genetically gifted," Kenn says. "We've got the best of the best. Everybody else washed out."

Through his explanation of how his players conduct themselves, he paints an increasingly clear picture of common attributes NFL players share. Examining his process and considering the shortcomings he addresses can unlock valuable lessons for coaches, who will in turn be armed with much better advice the next time a player expresses his desire to make it to the NFL.

Incomplete Athletes Need Not Apply

NFL teams go to extraordinary lengths when evaluating the athletic prowess of those they consider drafting. Scouts painstakingly evaluate athletic potential, poring over film to find their lateral speed, straight-line speed, explosivity, vertical leap, ability to flip their hips, twitchiness and several other characteristics, all aside from evaluating their skill at their given position.

NFL players have to be excellent in every category, because they will be tested in every category. It's not enough just to be strong or fast or explosive, they must be all three simultaneously.

It shouldn't come as a shock then, that Kenn built his entire training philosophy around the concept of what he calls, "whole body training." He and his staff work hard at ensuring every player has a comprehensive training regimen.

Kenn accomplishes this by including three major movements in every single training session. Kenn says he has



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three primary training sessions each week, and rotates each of the following three types of movements into every session:

- 1. Total-body movements.** These movements represent the different variations of Olympic lifting and are predominantly movements that are hip-hinge dominant. Deadlifts and hip thrusts are great examples of this type of movement.
- 2. Lower-body movements.** These movements are knee-dominant. They are primarily composed of bilateral and unilateral squat patterns, lunges and step-up work.
- 3. Upper-body movements.** These movements consist of vertical and horizontal pressing.

Kenn prioritizes these three movements as the most critical to building a complete athlete.

“It’s a structured rotation of those movements that gives each session a specific priority, and a unique flow of exercises,” Kenn says. “The majority of every workout we do on our base template is always going to include a total-body, lower-body, and upper-body movement. And that’s where we get our whole-body approach.”

In addition to these three movements, he also ensures his players integrate neck training, core training, and the posterior chain. While he considers these separate, they must not be neglected. Each of these ancillary movements can make or break a player’s career all by itself.

“Obviously training the neck is important,” Kenn says. “We specifically look at things that generally occur from a health standpoint. That’s critical for football. Posterior chain and hamstring development are also critical, and more critical for your speed positions.”

An NFL career takes a toll on a player’s health. Whether it’s focusing on neck training in an effort to safeguard the head or giving extra attention to the glutes and hamstrings used more intensely by skill players who have a need for speed, each player must take the necessary steps in the weight room to make sure they have prepared themselves completely for the rigors their body will be put through.

Be Prepared To Keep Pounding

Most everyone who follows the NFL is likely aware of the Carolina Panthers’ mantra, “Keep Pounding.” The phrase originated from a 2003 speech delivered by former linebackers coach Sam Mills, who was battling intestinal cancer at the time. His inspiring words stuck with the franchise long after the awful disease stole him from this world in April of 2005.

The mantra serves as a reminder for every player to continue to push forward and pursue the ultimate goal — a world championship. Staying healthy and preventing injuries are crucial factors in any team’s pursuit of the Lombardi Trophy, especially considering that at the NFL level, the preseason to the Super Bowl spans about half the year.

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The last thing players need to be thinking about every down is how tired they are. Fatigue is a mind-killer and leads to mental mistakes, poor technique and injuries. Players can give themselves greater chances at success by training for superior endurance.

“The biggest compliment you can get is at the end of the year, a player saying, ‘Man, I appreciate it. You kept me out there,’” Kenn says. “For us, a huge goal for these guys is to play all 16 games.”

But it’s more than just injuries that prevent young players from being ready to help their team pursue greatness. Kenn has seen far too many players who show up to rookie minicamp with cardiovascular performance that leaves much to be desired.

“A lot of times guys are not prepared for that from a conditioning aspect,” Kenn says. “It’s very, very important that as soon as your combines and pro days are over, that you are back preparing yourself from a football standpoint, versus like more of a track and field/decathlete athlete, where you’re specifically training for certain drills and skills that you’re getting evaluated on.”

Athletes can spend a lot of time and energy worrying about improving their personal best on major lifts, increasing their vertical or decreasing their 40 time. And they should, as all of these things are critically important if they want to have a real shot to be one of the chosen few. But Kenn stresses the importance of remembering to focus on conditioning.

Far too often, conditioning is treated like the less important half of strength and conditioning. And yet, poor conditioning makes it much more difficult for players to perform the simplest football plays and can also contribute to an inability to make good decisions in the critical moments of a game.

“Young NFL players don’t really truly understand how complex the game is, from the standpoint of scheme, speed and violence,” Kenn says. “Then the longer they’re in, the more they know how to prepare from a conditioning standpoint, to be ready for the specific task that they’re asked to perform during training camp, preseason, and then the regular season and playoffs.”

The game moves fast at the NFL level, and players are asked to make split-second decisions involving complex schemes on every single play. The last thing players need

to be thinking about in these situations is how tired they are. Fatigue leads to mental mistakes, poor technique and injuries, so the player who wants to give himself a fighting chance at the highest level must have superior endurance.

Kenn recommends coaches individualize their players’ conditioning whenever possible. At the very least, coaches should tailor conditioning for different position groups, to set players up with a more realistic approach to preparing for what their cardiovascular system will require of them during competition.

Players shouldn’t have the same cookie-cutter conditioning work. Take for instance the cardio demands of a defensive back. The repetitiveness of the high speed running that DBs participate in over the course of a game differs vastly from the short, explosive movements of one of the players on the line. Why then would coaches ask them to perform identical conditioning workouts?

When Kenn was coaching at the college level, he armed himself with actionable insights from GPS data. GPS provides valuable insight into running durations and the speed at which players are running so that coaches can write training programs that truly prepare players for the demands of specific positions.

“From a volume standpoint and a yardage standpoint, when we started getting GPS data, I felt really excited about being on the right path as I was writing college summer programs,” Kenn says. “Now I would have specific yardages per position group, where they were running at high speed. You’re training a wide receiver who may have 500 yards per day of high-speed running, versus an offensive lineman who only has 200. So now your conditioning programs can be more conducive to what the data’s telling you.”

GPS adds an objective method for coaches to confidently tailor training to position, or better yet, the individual athlete. But, the more important takeaway for the player with his sights set on the NFL is to never shortchange conditioning. The ability to keep pounding could be the difference in whether or not he makes it.




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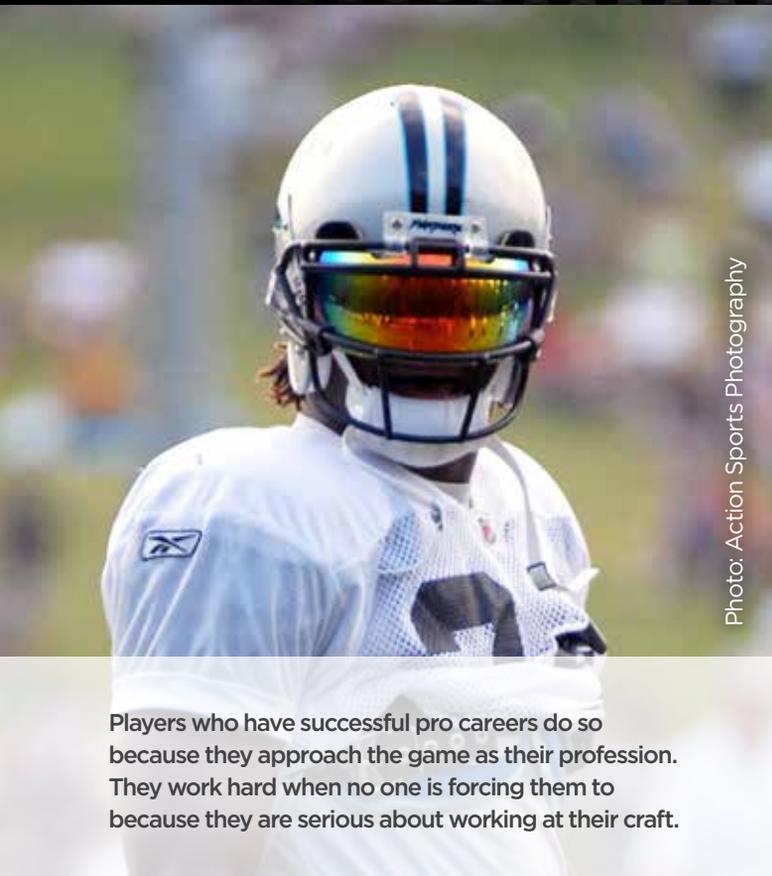


Photo: Action Sports Photography

Players who have successful pro careers do so because they approach the game as their profession. They work hard when no one is forcing them to because they are serious about working at their craft.

Overcoming Human Nature

The final and likely most critical attribute all NFL players share involves a particularly difficult coaching challenge. Coaches are proficient at getting results from players, identifying weaknesses, turning those weaknesses into strengths and always demanding accountability.

The problem arises when players have to start doing this for themselves — and successful NFL players do.

“When I started in college, and no one stayed the summer, you wrote this 12 week, 15 week strength training program, and you hoped 50 percent of the guys did 50 percent of the work,” Kenn remembers. With this memory as a point of reference, he wonders how many players would still be training if they weren’t forced to.

It comes down to one unfortunate fact of life in Kenn’s opinion, “Human nature is to chill.”

Players who want to be the best cannot afford to “chill.” Sooner or later, every single NFL player must overcome this instinct and become a self-starter, or they either won’t make it to the NFL, or won’t last long once they get there.

“The rules are very, very unique here. We have a very limited time when we can get our guys on campus, so to speak,” Kenn says. “Fortunately for us, we’ve averaged daily attendance over 98 percent a day. So, our guys are committed to staying on campus.

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“Because of the rules, we really stress to our rookies, this is the first time in their careers that the onus of preparation lies on them. They have the ability to choose when they want to train, where they want to train and how they want to train. That’s the uniqueness of being a professional athlete.”

Players grow accustomed to structured routines in high school and college. They are told when they need to be somewhere, what to bring with them, what to eat beforehand and what to expect when they get there. But when they get to the NFL, the concept of choice is introduced when it comes to improving as a football player. Some players do well with that freedom, and others fall flat on their face.

“We try to educate our athletes during the five-week period we have them from the draft to when our program is done with our rookies,” Kenn says. “Preparing them to understand that this is the business of the game you’re in. And pretty soon, the onus is going to be on you.”

“A lot of talented guys sometimes lose sight of that, and then they come back unprepared, and then they want to know why their careers were so short. I don’t think people even think about the fact that these guys have been told what to do for so long, when it comes to training, and that’s not part of the deal in the NFL.”

From a coach’s perspective, it can be a difficult challenge to give players more freedom, especially at the high school level. Coaches experience a lot of pressure to win games and

may feel obligated to err on the side of taking more control away from the players.

Then again, many successful football programs find a way to make player leadership a fulcrum for their success. Finding a balance between demanding accountability and encouraging players to take ownership is a best-case scenario for both coaches and players, and particularly for players with aspirations of going pro.

Ultimately, players who have successful pro careers do so because they approach the game as their profession. They work hard when no one is forcing them to because they are serious about working at their craft. They will likely never be famous for their work in the weight room, and few will ever understand how many long hours they put in when no one is looking, but they do it anyway, because that’s what it takes to be great.

Coaches can help players begin to set themselves apart from their peers by stressing these three attributes as fundamental to the makeup of a pro player. Even though the odds are 500-to-1, players will be much better prepared to capitalize on opportunities if they heed Kenn’s advice.

“Keep your head on straight,” Kenn says. “Don’t get too high on the highs, don’t get too low on the lows; just stay flat-lined. It only takes one team to give you a shot. Whether you’re a free agent, or whether you’re one of their draft picks, it only takes one, and then you must take advantage of it.” **AFCM**

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The Evolution of Shoulder Tackling

Photo: RoadTripSports.com/Chuck Cox

Tackling, unlike many aspects of football, hasn't seen significant change over the years. But the advent of shoulder tackling provides new perspective on one of the foundational elements of the game.

By Adam Reed

This year, for the first time ever, Texas high school and junior high coaches were required to become certified in teaching tackling as part of their official University Interscholastic League (UIL) Certification Program.

The Texas High School Coaches Association (THSCA) worked hand-in-hand with the UIL to pass this new legislation which holds coaches accountable for how they are teaching tackling, primarily because of rising concerns about player safety and the potential impact of concussions on the future of the game and the future of its participants.

"You're coaching those kids up, and you're coaching them to be tough, and they just didn't have the awareness of the hazards of concussions, and because of that, coaches didn't respond," longtime THSCA Executive Director D.W. Rutledge says about the decision to make tackling certification mandatory statewide. "Once we started having more professional development lectures and talking more about hydration and more about concussions and trying to find a protocol for sending them back into the game and started developing some of those things, there was so much more awareness in the coaching profession, and I think that awareness has helped the game."

The need for reducing the risk of concussions in order to keep players safe played a huge part in Rutledge's support of this legislation, and in the midst of all the focus on player safety, shoulder tackling has emerged, both in Texas and across the country, as an excellent option for minimizing helmet contact.

While the THSCA has mandated certification training for its coaches through a particular training platform called Atavus, Rutledge acknowledges that many organizations have taken up the mantle of educating coaches on shoulder tackling. Relatively new on the scene is USA Football's

Shoulder Tackling Tackling System. Plus there are a variety of equipment suppliers serving football coaches with equipment specific to teaching shoulder tackling.

"There are several groups out there that do tackle training and have been working on trying to take the head out of the game," he says.

The emphasis on studying tackling for safety reasons has shone a light on how few coaches take a comprehensive approach to teaching tackling. While the move to shoulder tackling as a response to player safety concerns seems to be an appropriate step toward a safer game, the evolution of tackling that has resulted provides reason for excitement.

"Frankly, that's something that we've never done, going through it and really evaluating exactly how you're tackling," Rutledge says. "It used to be, 'put your eyeballs on the numbers' or 'square your hips,' just catchphrases like that, but now we're teaching how to track a ball carrier. How do you track him? How do you get body position on him? What's the head placement on different positions? You still see some really aggressive tackling going on. It's not like it's backed away from that."

"Coaches have done themselves a disservice by not taking the time and really evaluating and discussing and working through how are we teaching tackling. What are the progressive steps? What's the system that we want to put in place to teach tackling? It just hasn't been done in a lot of places."

Rutledge raises several questions that many coaches may have never even considered. Whether coaches believe in shoulder tackling or not, every coach can benefit from a deeper analysis of the concepts surrounding the shoulder-tackling style, and hopefully become not only a safer team, but a better tackling team as well.



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National governing body USA Football is demonstrating an approach to shoulder tackling that helps coaches learn why it's important and teaches student-athletes how to safely perform a shoulder tackle. Their steps include:

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- 2. Install** – Learn how to implement the system with instructional drills. These drills progressively build upon one another and develop the fundamentals critical to the Shoulder Tackling System.
- 3. Troubleshoot** – Installation goes beyond just coaching your players to use the proper techniques. Included within the system are key coaching points and resources to help you troubleshoot common problem areas.
- 4. Assessment** – Check your understanding of the fundamentals, techniques and theories behind the system through knowledge checks.

Time For Change

Rex Norris, head of football at Atavus, is an active coach with over 25 years of experience, and nearly two decades of experience as a defensive coordinator. Coaching runs in the family for Norris. His father, Rex Norris Sr., had an impressive coaching career including stops at Texas A&M, Oklahoma, Arizona State, Florida, Tennessee and Texas at the college level, as well as four stints as a defensive line coach in the NFL for the Lions, Broncos, Oilers and Bears.

Norris sees the evolution in tackling as a natural response to ever-changing offensive schemes. Unfortunately, while coaches have become more and more creative with the advent of more complex route trees, RPOs, different personnel groupings and exploiting one-on-one matchups, tackling has not kept pace.

“The way in which the game is played and the way in which offenses attack the defense has produced a greater understanding of space and time,” Norris says. “They have created more space for the offense and less time for the defense. The types of tackles players are engaging in, the type of contact they are experiencing and the angles they are taking have all changed.”

For Norris, it's peculiar to see coaches failing to take a more comprehensive approach that is one of two foundational components of the game. The phrase, “It comes down to blocking and tackling,” continues to be parroted by coaches, and yet, only half of that duo seems to be given the appropriate attention.

“Football coaches have done a great job of analyzing blocking,” Norris says. “But when it comes to teaching tackling, it's almost just a check in the box.”

Perhaps coaches view tackling in a violent, helmet-first manner as inseparably tied to the identity of the game. Perhaps they have simply taken it for granted for far too long.

Whatever the excuse, Norris has some pretty strong feelings about the need for a change in the way tackling is taught, practiced and executed sport-wide. “You either love winning so much you are willing to change, or you hate change so much you are willing to lose,” he says.

Some may assume that because of his position, Norris is a huge believer in technique above everything else. To the contrary, Norris believes in understanding and teaching concepts before technique even comes into the equation. Technique alone isn't the answer to poor tackling.

“You've seen some crazy tackles out there, but no one taught them that technique,” Norris explains. “The reason their technique looks like that is because they are uncomfortable.”

In order for coaches to effectively implement any technique, including shoulder tackling, they must instill the requisite concepts surrounding why the technique is effective and how the technique should be executed. This proves impossible until coaches understand the concepts surrounding tackling from snap to whistle and not simply where contact is made.

It should be no surprise then that the onus falls on coaches to familiarize themselves with how players are making contact within their defensive scheme, why they are failing to be effective, and how they can put them into a position in practice that will teach them to be more effective in the game.

“Coaches make a mistake when they look at technique as the only answer, but then only look at the part of the technique that involves making contact,” Norris says. “You have to look at pre-contact technique just as much as contact technique. We have players who track very well but aren't confident in hitting, and we have other players who love to hit but aren't comfortable in space.”

Norris teaches tackling in a three-phase process that accounts for everything the defensive player will encounter

from the moment the ball is snapped until the ball carrier is successfully tackled. The first phase involves the evaluation process, where the defensive player must determine if they will have an opportunity to be a tackler.

Teachable components during this phase include proper pursuit angles and how to disengage from, shed or avoid blockers. At its heart, this phase of the tackle involves getting players into the right place at the right time, putting them in a position to make an effective tackle.

In the next phase, players must make sound, split-second decisions. While maintaining proper leverage, defenders must know their aiming point for where to hit the ball carrier, as well as the portion of their body they are going to make contact.

Only when players are comfortable with all these concepts will the act of actually executing contact come into the equation. Far too often, coaches skip the first two phases of what players experience every down, but then expect players to be excellent at executing this final phase.

As part of executing contact, Norris says proper timing in coordination with footwork is the most under-coached aspect of effective tackling. Players need to maintain momentum and power throughout the tackle by ensuring they take what Norris calls a “proper power step into contact.”

A good example of this concept would be the boxer who throws their whole weight into a punch. The difference

between a glancing blow and a vicious knockout often comes down to the fighter’s footwork.

To drill these concepts, Norris recommends coaches change their mindset about tackling expectations. Viewing tackling success by simply analyzing a player’s or a defense’s made tackles vs. missed tackles should be avoided.

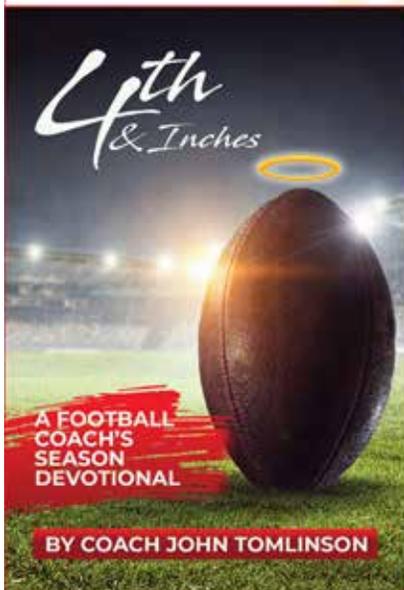
“Everyone wants 90 to 100 percent accuracy in their tackling,” Norris says. “But when we put players in a decision-making drill, that’s not what we are asking for. We’re actually trying to challenge their decision-making while they execute. So, we’re not looking for 90 to 100 percent accuracy. We want a competitive drill that puts them under pressure.”

If coaches focus on achieving improvement by placing players in uncomfortable scenarios, they can continue to elevate the bar for tackling efficiency indefinitely. 100 percent consistency won’t ever be achievable, but drilling tackling in this manner provides far superior results versus training to a minimum standard in practice, only to find out on a game day that the tackling still needs work.

Coaches often speak about getting better every day. Shoulder tackling may not be the silver-bullet solution to every team’s tackling woes, but at the very least, it provides an excellent framework for an evaluation that may be long overdue.

Editor’s Note: *The American Football Coaches Association does not endorse one type of tackling over any other type of tackling system* .

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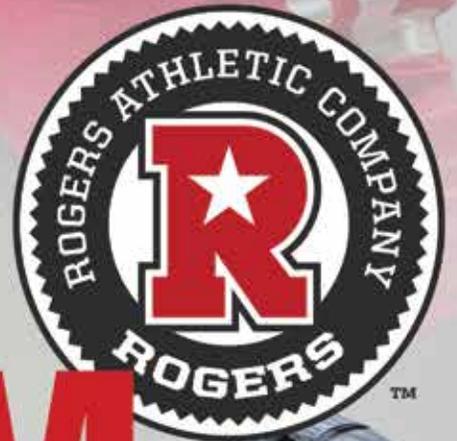
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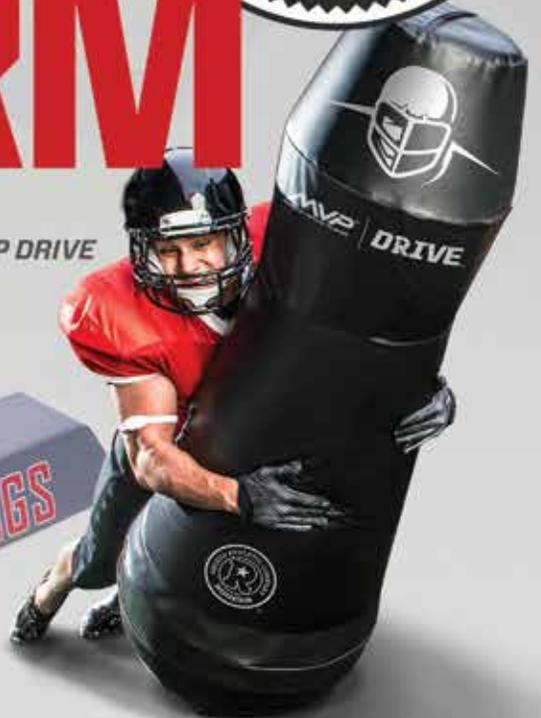


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Convention Guide

THE AFCA CONVENTION IS FOR MEMBERS ONLY, BADGES ARE REQUIRED FOR ADMISSION.

An AFCA Convention Badge will be REQUIRED for admission to all AFCA sessions (beginning Monday at 8 a.m.), including ticketed events. If you do not have a badge, you will not be allowed to enter the meeting room or banquet hall – even if you have purchased a ticket. Lost badges can be replaced at AFCA Registration with Photo ID.

WELCOME TO THE CONVENTION

The following pages will help guide you through the 2019 American Football Coaches Association Convention held at the Henry B. González Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas.

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 Hall 2 of the Henry B. González Convention Center.

REGISTRATION TIMES

Sunday, January 6, 9am-5pm
Monday, January 7, 9am-5pm
Tuesday, January 8, 9am-Noon

IMPORTANT UPDATE

MEMBERS REGISTERING ON SITE:

- If you actively coached during the 2018 season, you will register according to the division of your school.
- If you actively coached during the 2018 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 2018 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

Georgetown College head coach Bill Cronin led the American Football Coaches Association (AFCA) as its president in 2018, succeeding outgoing 2017 AFCA President Rich Rodriguez, who was the head coach at the University of Arizona.

In 2019, Ohio University head coach Frank Solich will be the AFCA's new president. After earning All-Big Eight honors as a fullback at Nebraska, Solich began his coaching career with the Cornhuskers as Freshman coach in 1979. He added the title of running backs coach in 1982 and remained in that position until 1990.

In 1991, Solich was named assistant head coach at Nebraska under legendary head coach Tom Osborne. From 1994 to 1997, Solich helped guide the Cornhuskers to three national titles, two Big Eight Conference championships and the program's first Big 12 title. When Osborne retired following the 1997 season, Solich was named head coach.

Solich guided Nebraska to a 58-19 overall record in his six years as head coach, earning Big 12 Coach of the Year honors following the 1999 and 2001 seasons. Nebraska played for the national title in 2001 under his leadership.

After Solich spent the 2004 season away from football, he was named the head coach at Ohio University on December 17, 2004. After a rebuilding year in 2005, Solich led the Bobcats to its first Mid-American Conference East Division title in 2006 and a berth in the GMAC Bowl. He has added two more MAC East Division titles to Ohio's trophy case in his 14 years as head coach, along with nine bowl berths and three bowl victories. He has a 163-94 overall record in his 20 years as a head coach.

Solich was elected to the AFCA Board of Trustees in 2008 and served as first vice-president in 2018. He has served as chairman of several AFCA committees during his time on the Board of Trustees.

REGISTRATION

Registration and ticket pickup are located in the Registration area in Exhibit Hall 2 of the Henry B. González Convention Center.

- All **PREPAID** members may print credentials at any time in the Quick Pass or Mobile areas of Registration.
- **Life Members** may register any time through the Life Member Line in the Quick Pass area.
- Members paying on site:
 - If you actively coached during the 2018 season, you will register according to the division of your school.
 - If you actively coached during the 2018 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 2018 season, you will register through the line marked "Other".

Ticket sales are located at the AFCA Information Desk in the Main Lobby of the Henry B. González Convention Center.

LOST AND FOUND

Bring all lost items to the AFCA Information Desk located in the Main Lobby of the Henry B. González Convention Center. If you have lost an item, please check the Information Desk.

THE WYNDHAM JADE HOUSING DESK

Agents from Wyndham Jade, the official housing agent of the American Football Coaches Association Convention, will be available Saturday through Wednesday, January 5-9, 2019, at the AFCA Information Desk in the Main Lobby of the Henry B. González Convention Center.

SPOUSE EVENTS

American Football Coaches Wives' Association registration begins Sunday, January 6. The complete AFCWA schedule of events can be found on page 56.

STAY CONNECTED WITH THE AFCA MOBILE APP!

The AFCA mobile app is the easiest way to navigate the countless speakers, panels, and educational opportunities while at the Convention.



It features the most up-to-date information on scheduling and locations, and serves as a hub for sharing with fellow coaches and Convention attendees.

To download the mobile app, scan the QR code with your smart phone or search for AFCA in your app store.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES

Convention attendees can earn professional development hours by participating in the Professional Development Series (PDS) and/or the High School Coaches Academy.

An attendance verification system will keep track of lectures attended. Those who attend the required number of lectures receive a Certificate of Completion identifying the number of professional development hours earned.

This year, participants will enter their PDS attendance verification codes online or through the mobile app. With this new and improved system, coaches will be able to access their certification immediately following the Convention. The transition to digital verification is part of the AFCA's shift toward making online PDS certifications a possibility.

The Professional Development Series covers every lecture at the Convention and all attendees may participate.

Sessions available for PDS Certification include:

- High School Coaches Academy
- Buzz Sessions
- General Sessions
- Graduate Assistants/Career Forum
- Breakout Sessions
- Chalk Talks
- International Sessions
- Skills and Drills

BALLROOM LEVEL

Stars at Night Ballroom
HemisFair Ballroom
Meeting Rooms 301-305



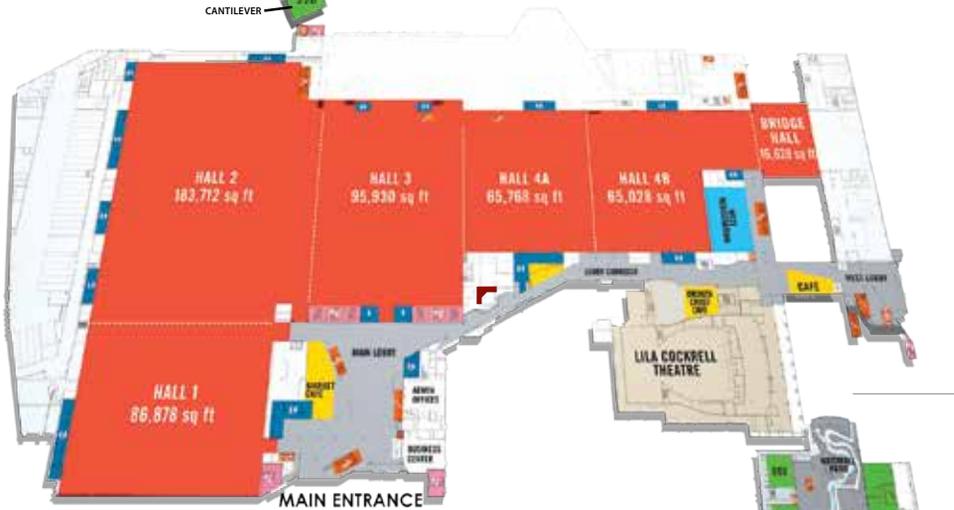
MEETING LEVEL

Meeting Rooms 205-225
Cantilever Room
O’Gorman Terrace



STREET LEVEL

Exhibit Halls 1-4B
Bridge Hall
Lila Cockrell Theatre
Main Lobby/Business Center
West Lobby
Lobby Corridor



RIVER LEVEL

Meeting Rooms 004-008
The LDR
Grotto
Merida Plaza

LEGEND	
■	Exhibit Halls
■	Meeting Rooms
■	Ballrooms
■	Prefunction
■	Restrooms
■	Food Service
■	Stairs/Escalator
■	Nursing Room
■	Emergency Exits

MARKET STREET



2019 CONVENTION SCHEDULE

For the most current information and room numbers, please check the AFCA Website or download the AFCA Mobile App.

All events held at Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center unless otherwise noted under Venue.

GH = Grand Hyatt (600 East Market Street) MRC = Marriott Rivercenter (101 Bowie Street)
MRW = Marriott Riverwalk (889 East Market Street)

SATURDAY • JANUARY 5

START	END	EVENT	ROOM	VENUE
AFCA RESOURCES				
8:00 AM	05:00 PM	Media Office Open	221B	
10:00 AM	05:00 PM	Information Desk Open	Main Lobby	
MEETINGS & FORUMS				
4:30 PM	06:00 PM	NAIA Football Officers' Meeting	211	

SUNDAY • JANUARY 6

START	END	EVENT	ROOM	VENUE
AFCA RESOURCES				
7:00 AM	9:30 PM	Information Desk Open	Main Lobby	
7:00 AM	8:00 PM	AFCA Resource Center Open <i>provided by Coaches Choice</i>	Main Lobby	
8:00 AM	5:00 PM	Ticket Sales (at Information Desk)	Main Lobby	
8:00 AM	5:00 PM	Media Office Open	221B	
9:00 AM	4:00 PM	Exhibit Hall Concessions	Exhibit Hall 2	
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Exhibit Hall Open	Exhibit Hall 2	
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Foundation Booth	Main Lobby	
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Registration for All Members	Exhibit Hall 2	
MEETINGS & FORUMS				
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Assistant Coaches Committee - NAIA	303	
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Exhibits Committee	Exhibit Hall 2 at Exhibitor Check-In Booth	
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Foundation Booth Committee Meeting	Exhibit Hall 2 near Registration	
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Registration Committee	Exhibit Hall 2	
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Kansas Collegiate Athletic Conference Meeting	Conference Room 5	MRC
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Mid-States Football Association Meeting	Conference Room 12	MRC
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	North Star Athletic Association Meeting	Conference Room 6	MRC
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Heart of America Athletic Conference Meeting (Private Function)	Conference Room 7	MRC
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Great Plains Athletic Conference Meeting	Conference Rooms 1-4	MRC
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Mid-South Football Conference Meeting	Grand Ballroom C	MRC
10:00 AM	2:00 PM	Empire 8 Head Coaches Meeting	Conference Room 8	MRC
11:00 AM	11:50 AM	NAIA Assistant Coaches Forum	207	
12:00 PM	1:50 PM	NAIA Caucus Meeting & Ticket Distribution	207	
12:00 PM	5:00 PM	Miami-Dade Football Coaches Association	Conference Room 15	MRC
12:30 PM	4:30 PM	Rules Committee	221C	
1:00 PM	1:50 PM	Convention Services Committee	304A	
1:00 PM	1:50 PM	High School Committee	303	

1:00 PM	1:50 PM	Meeting Room Committee		302
1:00 PM	1:50 PM	Professional Development Series Committee		301BC
1:00 PM	4:00 PM	Pioneer Football League Coaches Meeting	Conference Room 6	MRC
1:00 PM	5:00 PM	Athletic Equipment Manager's Association (Open Event)	Conference Room 13-14	MRC
2:00 PM	2:50 PM	Awards/General Session Committee		304A
2:00 PM	3:50 PM	Assistant Coaches Committee - Division II		302
2:00 PM	3:50 PM	Assistant Coaches Committee - Division III		303
2:00 PM	3:50 PM	Assistant Coaches Committee - Football Bowl Subdivision		301BC
2:00 PM	3:50 PM	Assistant Coaches Committee - Football Championship Subdivision		304B
2:00 PM	4:50 PM	Division III Football Council		304C
2:30 PM	4:30 PM	Great American Conference Meeting	Conference Room 5	MRC
3:00 PM	3:50 PM	NJCAA Coaches Forum		207
3:00 PM	3:50 PM	Program Committee		304A
4:00 PM	4:50 PM	ACC/FCA Coaches Forum		207
4:00 PM	4:50 PM	Assistant Coach of the Year Committee		301BC
4:00 PM	4:50 PM	Honors Luncheon Committee		304A
4:00 PM	4:50 PM	Minority Issues Committee		302
4:00 PM	4:50 PM	Technical Manual Committee		304B
4:30 PM	5:30 PM	Colonial Athletic Association Head Coaches Meeting	Grand Ballroom J	MRC
5:00 PM	7:00 PM	Division II Coaches Advisory Board	Conference Rooms 17-18	MRC
6:00 PM	7:50 PM	Assistant Coaches Committee Chairmen Meeting		303
6:00 PM	10:00 PM	High School Executive Directors Forum	Alamo Ballroom D	MRW
8:00 PM	8:50 PM	Strength and Conditioning Coaches Forum		206
8:00 PM	9:50 PM	Minority Issues Forum		214CD

SPEAKING SESSIONS & EVENTS

7:00 AM	8:30 AM	NAIA Rater's Breakfast	Bowie A	GH
9:30AM	5:00 PM	AFCFA Skills and Drills PDS <i>presented by VICIS</i>	Exhibit Hall 2	
10:00 AM	11:15 AM	Fellowship of Christian Athletes Worship Service		006AB
2:00 PM	2:50 PM	High School Coaches Academy HSCA		214
3:00 PM	3:50 PM	High School Coaches Academy HSCA		214
3:00 PM	3:50 PM	High School Coaches Academy HSCA		217
4:00 PM	4:50 PM	High School Coaches Academy-National High School Coaches Forum HSCA		214
4:00 PM	4:50 PM	First Timers' Meeting		217
5:00 PM	5:50 PM	Kickoff Speaker PDS <i>presented by Sparta Science</i>	Lila Cockrell Theater	



5:30 PM	7:30 PM	NAIA Awards Banquet	Lone Star Ballroom AB	GH
6:00 PM	6:50 PM	Chalk War PDS	206	
BUZZ SESSIONS <i>presented by</i> Sports Attack		Coordinators Philosophy – Defense PDS	214CD	
		Coordinators Philosophy – Offense PDS	Lila Cockrell Theater	
		Defensive Backs PDS	217AB	
		Defensive Line PDS	216	
		Kicking Specialist PDS	209	
		Linebackers PDS	205	
		Offensive Line PDS	212	
		Quarterbacks PDS	214AB	
		Running Backs PDS	207	
		Special Teams PDS	210	
		Strength & Conditioning PDS	211	
		Tight Ends PDS	213	
		Wide Receivers PDS	217CD	
	7:00 PM	7:50 PM	Coordinators Philosophy – Defense PDS	Lila Cockrell Theater
BUZZ SESSIONS		Coordinators Philosophy – Offense PDS	214CD	
		Defensive Backs PDS	217AB	
		Defensive Line PDS	216	
		Kicking Specialist A PDS	206	
		Kicking Specialist B PDS	209	
		Linebackers PDS	205	
		Offensive Line PDS	212	
		Quarterbacks PDS	214AB	
		Running Backs PDS	217CD	
		Special Teams PDS	210	
		Strength & Conditioning PDS	211	
		Tight Ends PDS	213	
		Wide Receivers PDS	207	
	8:00 PM	9:30 PM	AFCWA Couples Ice Cream Social <i>presented by The Jason Foundation</i>	006CD
8:00 PM	10:00 PM	AFCA/NCAA 35 Under 35 Coaches Leadership Institute Reception (Private Event)	004	
9:00 PM	10:15 PM	Fellowship of Christian Athletes Coaches' Huddle	006AB	

MONDAY • JANUARY 7

START	END	EVENT	ROOM	VENUE
AFCA RESOURCES				
6:00 AM	7:00 PM	Information Desk	Main Lobby	
7:00 AM	8:00 PM	AFCA Resource Center - <i>provided by Coaches Choice</i>	Main Lobby	
8:00 AM	12:00 PM	Ticket Sales (at Information Desk)	Main Lobby	
8:00 AM	5:00 PM	Media Office Open	221B	
9:00 AM	4:00 PM	Exhibit Hall Concessions	Exhibit Hall 2	
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Exhibit Hall Open	Exhibit Hall 2	
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Foundation Booth	Main Lobby	
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Registration for all Members	Exhibit Hall 2	

MEETINGS & FORUMS

7:00 AM	8:50 AM	Football Championship Subdivision Executive Committee	209
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Division II Assistant Coaches Forum	302
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Division III Assistant Coaches Forum	303
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	FBS Assistant Coaches Forum	301BC
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	FCS Assistant Coaches Forum	304
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Registration Committee	Exhibit Hall 2
9:00 AM	10:30 AM	NAIA Coaches Business Meeting	207AB
9:00 AM	10:50 AM	Division II Coaches Meeting	302
9:00 AM	10:50 AM	Division III Coaches Meeting	303
9:00 AM	10:50 AM	Football Championship Subdivision Coaches Meeting	304
9:00 AM	11:00 AM	Polynesian Coaches Association Meeting	Grand Ballroom D MRC
9:00 AM	5:00 PM	Canadian Football League Meeting	Conference Room 6 MRC
12:00 PM	5:00 PM	Miami-Dade Football Coaches Association	Conference Room 15 MRC
1:00 PM	5:00 PM	Athletic Equipment Manager's Association (Open Event)	Conference Room 13-14 MRC
1:15 PM	3:00 PM	Great Midwest Athletic Conference Meeting	Conference Room 12 MRC
1:30 PM	3:00 PM	Conference USA Head Coaches Meeting	Conference Room 5 MRC

SPEAKING SESSIONS & EVENTS

6:30 AM	7:45 AM	Fellowship of Christian Athletes Breakfast	Stars at Night Ballroom 3
8:00 AM	10:50 AM	High School General Session PDS	Lila Cockrell Theater
8:00 AM	10:50 AM	International Session PDS	216AB
8:00 AM	10:50 AM	Junior College General Session PDS	214
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Friends of Bill W. & Dr. Bob Coffee Break	Valero MRW
9:00 AM	10:50 AM	Graduate Assistants/Career Forum PDS	217
9:30 AM	4:00 PM	AFCA Skills and Drills PDS <i>presented by VICIS</i>	Exhibit Hall 2
10:15 AM		Honors Luncheon VIP Check In	Stars at Night Ballroom 1
11:30 AM	1:00 PM	Honors Luncheon <i>presented by Amway</i>	Stars at Night Ballroom 3
1:30 PM	5:00 PM	General Session PDS <i>sponsored by TeamSnap</i>	Hemisfair Ballroom
6:30 PM	End of Game	Tailgate Party <i>presented in part by FieldTurf</i>	Stars at Night Ballroom 3

TUESDAY • JANUARY 8

START	END	EVENT	ROOM	VENUE
AFCA RESOURCES				
7:00 AM	6:00 PM	Information Desk	Main Lobby	
7:00 AM	7:00 PM	AFCA Resource Center <i>provided by Coaches Choice</i>	Main Lobby	
8:00 AM	5:00 PM	Media Office Open	221B	
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Exhibit Hall Concessions	Exhibit Hall 2	
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Exhibit Hall Open	Exhibit Hall 2	
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Foundation Booth	Main Lobby	
9:00 AM	12:00 PM	Registration for All Members	Exhibit Hall 2	
SPEAKING SESSIONS & EVENTS				
8:30 AM	10:00 AM	Friends of Bill W. & Dr. Bob Coffee Break	Valero	MRW
8:30 AM	11:50 AM	General Session PDS <i>sponsored by VICIS</i>	Hemisfair Ballroom	
12:00 PM	1:30 PM	Club 35 Lunch & Reception	304	

12:00 PM	1:50 PM	NCAA Rules Seminar	217
1:00 PM	1:50 PM	Special Session - Dr. Hainline	214
2:00 PM	3:50 PM	Breakout Session PDS	214
2:00 PM	3:50 PM	Breakout Session PDS	217
2:00 PM	3:50 PM	Breakout Session PDS	Lila Cockrell Theater
4:00 PM	4:50 PM	Victory Formation Speaker PDS	Lila Cockrell Theater
8:00 PM	9:30 PM	American Football Coaches Awards	Stars at Night Ballroom 3

WEDNESDAY • JANUARY 9

START	END	EVENT	ROOM	VENUE
AFCA RESOURCES				
6:30 AM	Noon	Information Desk	Main Lobby	
7:00 AM	12:00 PM	AFCA Resource Center <i>provided by Coaches Choice</i>	Main Lobby	
8:00 AM	12:00 PM	Media Office Open	221B	
SPEAKING SESSIONS & EVENTS				
7:00 AM	11:00 AM	Football Bowl Subdivision Head Coaches Breakfast & Forum <i>presented by XOS Catapult</i>	220	
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Chalk Talk – Defense PDS	217	
8:00 AM	8:50 AM	Chalk Talk – Offense PDS	214	
9:00 AM	9:50 AM	Chalk Talk – Special Teams PDS	217	
9:00 AM	9:50 AM	Chalk Talk – Defense PDS	214	
10:00 AM	10:50 AM	Chalk Talk – Offense PDS	217	
10:00 AM	10:50 AM	Chalk Talk – Special Teams PDS	214	

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AFCWA 2019 Convention Events Schedule

All events at Marriott Riverwalk unless otherwise noted.

HBGCC = Henry B. González Convention Center



SUNDAY • JANUARY 6, 2019

TIME	EVENT	ROOM	VENUE
8:00 am - 8:50 am	AFCWA Trustees Meeting (<i>Trustees only</i>)	Travis	
9:00 am - 11:50 am	AFCWA Board of Directors Meeting (<i>Board Members only</i>)	Alamo Ballroom EF	
10:00 am - 11:15 am	FCA Worship Service	006 AB (River Level)	HBGCC
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	AFCWA Registration/Hospitality Food and Drinks provided by Northwestern Mutual	Alamo Ballroom Salon C	
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	AFCWA Marketplace	Alamo Ballroom Salon C	
2:30 pm - 2:45 pm	New Member Welcome	Alamo Ballroom EF	
2:45 pm - 4:00 pm	Seasoned Wives/New Wives Group Meeting	Alamo Ballroom EF	
8:00 pm - 9:30 pm	AFCWA Couples Ice Cream Social Presented by The Jason Foundation	006 CD (River Level)	HBGCC
9:00 pm - 10:15 pm	FCA Coaches Huddle	006 AB (River Level)	HBGCC

MONDAY • JANUARY 7, 2019

TIME	EVENT	ROOM	VENUE
6:30 am - 7:45 am	FCA Breakfast*	Stars at Night Ballroom 3	HBGCC
8:00 am - 8:50 am	AFCWA Hospitality Breakfast provided by Boerman Moving and Storage	Alamo Ballroom Salon C	
8:00 am - 10:00 am	AFCWA Registration	Alamo Ballroom Salon C	
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	AFCWA Marketplace	Alamo Ballroom Salon C	
9:00 am - 9:50 am	Buzz Session 1: For the Love of the Game <i>Panel of coaches and wives from various levels discuss it all!</i>	Alamo Ballroom Salons EF	
10:00 am - 10:50 am	Buzz Session 2: Married to Coach, Submitted to Both <i>Author, Cecelia Simon speaks about being your coach's biggest supporter</i>	Alamo Ballroom Salons EF	
10:00 am - 10:50 am	Buzz Session 3: Game Day Style and Football Must Haves <i>Fashion with a twist!</i>	Travis	
11:00 am - 12:15 pm	Buzz Session 4: Divisional Breakouts	Alamo Ballroom Salon C	
12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	AFCWA Luncheon* Presented by Talley Foundation Featured Speaker - Author, Jessica Turner	Alamo Ballroom Salon D	
2:15 pm - 2:45 pm	Q&A with Author, Jessica Turner	Alamo Ballroom Salon C	
2:45 pm - 3:30 pm	AFCWA Business Meeting (<i>All members welcome!</i>)	Alamo Ballroom Salon C	
3:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Taste of Texas Social** <i>Enjoy drinks and great conversation with your friends! Coaches welcomed too!</i>	Riverview Room	
6:30 pm	Tailgate Party	Stars at Night Ballroom	HBGCC

TUESDAY • JANUARY 8, 2019

TIME	EVENT	ROOM	VENUE
7:30 am - 10:30 am	AFCWA Board Meeting (<i>Board Members only</i>)	Alamo Ballroom EF	
10:45 am - 12:15 pm	Hospital Visit - Children's Hospital of San Antonio	Meet in Marriott Riverwalk Lobby	
12:15 pm - 4:45 pm	Progressive Lunch* <i>We are heading to The Pearl to enjoy food, wine and shopping!!</i>	Meet in Marriott Riverwalk Lobby	
8:00 pm	American Football Coaches Awards	Stars at Night Ballroom 3	HBGCC

Wives with an AFCWA name tag are encouraged to visit the AFCA exhibit hall.

**AFCWA Luncheon, Progressive Lunch and FCA Breakfast require a ticket.*

***Taste of Texas is a cash bar featuring local wines, beers and spirits*

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0 30 40 50 40 30 2

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2019 CONVENTION EXHIBITORS

2 Minute Drill

Booth: 2002

Virtual reality film study

8K Solutions

Booth: 6095

AV audio

99Pledges

Booth: 1058

Online fundraising platform

Academic Gameplan/Jill McBride Baxter, Sports Law

Attorney

Booth: 3060

Program to lay foundation for success in school/representation for coaches, players, media, Ads

Accusplit

Booth: 2072

Stopwatches, timers

ACE Sports

Booths: 7115-7117-7119

LED signage, scoreboards & custom electronic facility services

Active Network Jump Forward

Booths: 2087 & 3086

Software

adidas

Special Area 1023

Sporting footwear and apparel

AEMA

Booth: 5123

Air Planning, LLC

Booth: 3122

Charter flights and athletic transportation services



Booths: 2117 & 3116

See our ad on P. 13

All-Star Inflatables

11120 Grader Street

Dallas, TX 75238

888-349-4386

www.all-starinflatables.com

Inflatable team entrances, inflatable incline training



Booth: 4126

Allstate

9115 Harris Corners Parkway, STF 550

Charlotte, NC 28269

704-589-0447

www.allstate.com

Insurance - Sponsor of AFCA Good Works Team

Amazing Stim

Booth: 1104

Tens EMS Micro Current



AFCA Booth

American Football Coaches Foundation

100 Legends Lane

Waco, TX 76706

254-754-9900

www.afcf.us

Foundation

Andy Talley Bone Marrow Foundation

Booth: 5071

Non-profit

Anthony Travel

Booth: 1024

Collegiate team travel management

ARMS SOFTWARE

Area 4097

Athletics management software - recruiting/team/communication



Booths: 3107-3109 & 4106-4108

See our ad on P. 2

AstroTurf

1601 Mary's Ave., Suite 2-G10

Sharpsburg, PA 16055

800-723-8873

www.astroturf.com

Manufacture, install and repair synthetic athletic turf



Area 4111

See our ad on P. 43

Atavus

1560 1st Ave S

Seattle, WA 98134

206-695-2605

www.atavus.com

Data-driven tackling improvement



Booths:

4114-4116-4118

See our ad on P. 18

The Athletic Edge - Pivotal Health Solutions

3003 9th Ave SW

Watertown, SC 57201

800-743-7738

www.athleticedge.com

Augusta Sportswear Brands

Booth: 3117

Team sports/fanwear

B Sport Lockers

Booths: 5063-5065

Athletic lockers

B' Warmer - Earth Groove

Booth: 7107

Head to toe outdoor wear: hand warmer muffs, LS tops, tights, etc.

Balfour

Booths: 7021-7023

Championship rings



Booth: 6087

Baron Championship Rings

12274 County Rd 42

Tecumseh, ON N8N 2M1

1-866-944-4089

www.baronrings.com

Championship rings

Battle Front Software, LLC

Booth: 3092

Recruiting & team management software

Battle Sports

Booths: 3110-3112

Football - uniforms & accessories

Big Game USA

Booths: 2077 & 3076

Leather game balls/display balls

BigSigns.com

Booth: 3069

Stadium graphics

Brent's Uniform Factory

Booth: 2119

Uniforms, sportings goods fundraiser

BSN Sports

Booths: 3068-3070

Sports apparel & equipment

Buck's Bags

Booth: 3081

Team & individual bags, practice and game uniforms

Case Systems

Booths: 2047-2049

Athletic lockers, athletic taping stations, casework

Championship Analytics, Inc.

Booth: 4096

CAI game book and football strategy services



Booth: 6060

See our ad on P. 26

Cliff Wade Coaches Directory

PO Box 177

Cassville, MO 65625

877-386-4840

www.coachesdirectory.com

Publisher - directories & newsletters



Special Area 4085

See our ad on P. 11

CoachComm

205 Technology Parkway

Auburn, AL 36830

800-749-2761

www.coachcomm.com

Coaching headsets and practice management systems

Cold Daddy

Booth: 1100

Cold water therapy

ColdTub

Bay 5035

ColdTub

Collegiate Sports Data

Booth: 6114

Recruiting data

Collegiate Sports Travel

Booths: 7061-7063-7065

Sports travel

Columbia Lockers

Booths: 6084-6086

Manufacturing lockers and toilet partitions

Complete QB/Complete Wideout

Booth: 5085

QB/WR training

Concord Hospitality

Booth: 3082

Sleeping rooms/meeting space

Concordia University Irvine

Booth: 3121

Masters degree



Booth: 1093

See our ad on P. 63

Concorse Team Express

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San Antonio, TX 78249

855-397-8170

www.teamexpress.com

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Conference Direct

Booth: 1062

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CryoUSA

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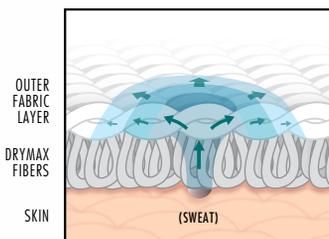
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drymaxsports.com

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CytoSport
Booths: 4038-4040
Muscle Milk

DC1
Booth: 2095
Defensive analytics and charting software

Digital Scoreboards, LLC
Booth: 3002
Refurbished all-digital scoreboards with multi-sport capability including live video feed, instant replay, animation and more. New video displays and scoreboards

DJO
Booth: 6122
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Douglas Pads & Sports, Inc.
Booths: 5117-5119-5121
Football protective and 2UDR

Dragon Seats
Booth: 7029
Heated and air-conditioned benches

Dream Seat/Seating Solutions
Booth: 3106
Interchangeable logo furniture, locker rooms

Booths: 4078-4080-4082
See our ad on P. 61



Drymax Technologies
PO BOX 2500
Atascadero, CA 93423
844-239-2555
www.drymaxsports.com
Socks, arm sleeves, Chinsavers & accessories

DVSPORT
Special Large Bay 6077
Video & data software

Dynamic Fitness & Strength
Booths: 1063-1065-1067 & 2060
Strength equipment manufacturer

Eastbay
Booths: 2079-2081
Footwear, equipment, apparel

edjfootball
Booth: 3037
See our ad on P. 31

EdjSports
732 Fast Market Street
Louisville, KY 40202
502-510-1505
www.edjsports.com
EdjFootball

Edward Jones
Booth: 7087
Financial Planning

The Emblem Source
Booth: 6064
Embroidered emblems for uniforms

Endzone Video Systems
Booths: 4122-4124

Enhance Mats, Inc.
Booth: 7092
Branded flooring, locker rooms, track covers, sideline covers

Equipcheck
Booth: 6039
Equipment inventory software

Booth: 1098
See our ad on P. 67

eTeamSponsor
1390 Willow Pass Road, Unit 210
Concord, CA 94520
888-842-8220
www.eteamsponsor.com
Crowdfunding software

Fairlife, LLC
Booth: 1116
Core Power (high protein milkshake)

Booth: 3057



Fellowship of Christian Athletes
8701 Leeds Road
Kansas City, MO 64129
800-289-0909
www.fca.org
Sports ministry

FieldTurf
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Artificial turf sports fields

FirstDown Playbook
Booth: 4036
Digital football playbook and drawing tool

Fisher Athletic
Booths: 2107-2109-2111-2113
Football equipment and sports equipment

FITLIGHT Corp & Gforce Tracker
Booths: 3045-3047-3049

Formetco
Booths: 1120-1122-1124
LED Video Scoreboards

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Booth: 3000
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Booth: 4105
BullFrog total body training system

Front Rush
Area 6101
College athletics management software

Game Day Vision
Booth: 7081
Facility enhancements - bleacher wraps, windscreens, graphics

Gamebreaker, Inc.
Booths: 2035 & 3034
Soft shelled headgear

GameOut Solutions, LLC
Booth: 3041
Laundry chemicals & programs, sales & service



Booth: 3090

GameStrat
2594 Half Moon Bay
Ottawa, ON K2J 0Z1
800-783-1968
www.gamestrat.com
Sideline instant reply for coaches



Booths: 4046-4048-4050
See our ad on P. 65

GearBoss By Wenger
555 Park Drive
Owatonna, MN 55060
800-493-6437
www.gearboss.com
Athletic locker and high density storage

Gilman Gear
Special Large Bay 1083
Football field equipment



Booths: 6078-6080

Glazier Clinics
1880 Office Club Pt.
Colorado Springs, CO 80920
719-536-0069
www.glazierclinics.com
Coach education

Global Football
Booths: 3035 & 4034
Travel - events

Go Army Edge
Booths: 5107-5109 & 6106-6108
Training app

Go Rout
Booth: 4120
Wearable practice technology

Greenfields USA
Booth: 2091
Synthetic sports turf



Booths: 4066-4068

Guardian Caps
3044 Adriatic Court
Peachtree Corners, GA 30071
770-667-6004
www.guardiansports.com
Soft-shell football helmet covers



Booths: 4056-4058-4060-4062
See our ad on P. 23

Hadar Athletic
P.O. Box 218
Humboldt, IA 50548
888-655-1606
www.hadarathletic.com
Football practice equipment and padding

HAPQZ
Booth: 3043
Digital communication screen

Hawk Tackle, Inc.
Booth: 7089
Tackle dummies

Healy
Booth: 6116
Design and manufacture sports helmet decals and awards

Hellas Construction
Booths: 1077-1079-1081-2076

Helmet Tracker
Booth: 5087
Helmet/equipment inventory tracking application

HelmetFit LLC
Booth: 4088
Device that establishes and maintains a proper fit for each player's helmet by measuring air pressure

Hi-Pod Inc.
Area 4067
Endzone tower

Honey Stinger
Booth: 6082
Honey based energy food

The Hotel at the University of Maryland
Booth: 6093
Hospitality - Hotel

Hudl
Area 4077
Video analysis software/tools

Hydralyte LLC
Booth: 7111
Electrolyte solution

Hydro Graphics, Inc.
Booths: 2083-2085
Finishing company - chrome, hydrographic film dipping, painting



Booths: 7083-7085

Insane Impact
4673 121st Street
Urbandale, IA 50323
515-221-2924
www.insaneimpact.com
LED screen rental and sales

Inside Edge
Booth: 1073
Statistics and analytics

Integrated Bionics, Inc.
Booth: 3108
GPS Sensor

Integrated Sports Specialties
Booth: 2071
Athletic laundry detergent, laundry machines & locker room cubbies



Booth: 3115
See our ad on P. 7

Iron Neck
1114 W. 5th Street
Austin, TX 78703
509-312-0416
www.iron-neck.com
Concussion prevention

Islide
Booth: 6120
Customizable footwear

Itouch Relief
Booth: 2067
EMS Devices

J. Lewis Small Co., Inc.
Booth: 7096
Championship rings

The Jason Foundation
Booth: 7069
Youth suicide prevention

Jawku
Booth: 3119
Fitness Wearable Technology

JLB Investments - Hidow
Booth: 3089
Medical FDA muscle & nerve stimulators



Booths: 5079-5081-5083
See our ad on P. 59

Jostens
7760 France Ave. S., Suite 400
Minneapolis, MN 55435
952-830-3300
www.jostens.com
Champions rings & jewelry, Heisman

Jugs Sports
Booth: 6098
Pitching machines



Booths: 4098-4100
See our ad on P. 79

Just Play Sports Solutions
2233 Rodeo Drive
Lawrence, KS 66047
785-764-9620
www.justplaysolutions.com
Play diagram/Game preparation software

Kabuki Strength
Booths: 1042-1044
Proprietary strength equipment and education

Keiser
Booths: 6056-6058
Fitness/performance equipment

Krampade, LLC
Booth: 1054
Anti-cramping sports drink

Krausko Sports
Booth: 2037
Football training equipment



Booth: 4084
See our ad on P. 30

Laundry Loops
PO BOX 5167
Bozeman, MT 59717
888-246-5667
www.laundryloops.com
Laundry loop with Sock Snare/Laundry Loop Plus with Double Sock Snare



Booth: 6041
See our ad on P. 89

Lazser Down
11201 E. 83rd Street
Raytown, MO 64138
816-645-6151
www.lazserdown.com
Electronic down and distance market that provides real time feedback in yards, feet or inch.

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Booth: 1096
Interactive playbook learning platform

Legend Fitness
Area 1107
Commercial-grade strength equipment

Legend Rings
Booth: 3052
Championship rings

Legends Lockers, LLC
Booth: 1064
Wood lockers

Life Fitness/Hammer Strength
Booth: 6057
Fitness equipment

Lift-A-Thon
Booth: 2053
Fundraising

Light Helmets
Booth: 2097
Football helmets

Lineman Performance Association
Booth: 6091
Strength equipment

Liquid Grip
Booth: 1040
Strength & conditioning powder alternative

List Industries
Booth: 2070
Lockers

LM Cases
Booths: 3097-3099-3101
Equipment trunks/cases

Longhorn Lockers
Area 6109
Premier custom lockers

LSI Graphics
Booth: 1114
Custom signage & facility branding & design

Manduu Sports and Commercial, LLC
Booth: 3040
Manduu whole body electrical muscle stimulation

Marriott International
Booth: 7093
Hotels & lodging



Area 4035
See our ad
on P. 4, 5

Matrix Fitness
1600 Landmark Drive
Cottage Grove, WI 53527
877-259-1528
www.matrixfitness.com
Fitness equipment



Booth: 4086
See our ad on P. 67

Maverick Awards
610 Coit Rd, Ste. 100
Plano, TX 75075
469-374-9000
www.maverickawards.com
Jacket manufacturer, framed awards, blankets

MaxPreps
Booth: 6118
Free high school management systems



MAYFIELD ATHLETICS

Mayfield Athletics
126 South Main Street
Mount Clemens, MI 48043
937-750-6535
www.mayfieldathletics.com
S.A.F.E. Clip, Zuti Facemasks, B.I.G. Apparel

Booth: 3038
See our ad on P. 36

Mental Rep
Booth: 3066
Playbook simulation technology

Mercury Luggage - Seward Trunk
Booth: 7067
Custom coaching bags & luggage/briefcases



**Booths:
4042-4044**

Monarc Inc.
1920 McKinney Ave
Dallas, TX 75201
563-581-0972
www.monarcsport.com
Robotic football pitching machine

National Preps
Booths: 7073-7075
Scouting service

Nautic Devices - Yapalong
Booth: 7091
Sideline communication system

Nordic Naturals
Booth: 7090
Supplements

Oakwood Sports
Booth: 7088
Custom wood lockers

OES Scoreboards
Booth: 1068
Scoreboards, videoboards, scoring & timing equipment,
LED video

ORBI, Inc.
Booth: 2065
360 degree video recording helmet

OX Sports
Area 6123
Team management software/mobile app

P.C.C., Inc. Air Purification

Booth: 6126
See our ad
on P. 85

PCC Air Purification
P.O. Box 22294
Little Rock, AR 72221
501-221-0361
www.activtek.net/pccinc
Air Purification Systems

Perform Better
Booths: 3123-3125
Functional training equipment

PLAE
Booth: 3087



Booth: 6066
See our ad on P. 36

Pocket Radar, Inc.
3535 Industrial Drive, Suite A4
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
888-381-2672
www.pocketradar.com
Radar gun, training aid, coaching tool



Booths: 3071 & 4070
See our ad on P. 69

Porta Phone
145 Dean Knauss Drive
Narragansett, RI 02882
800-233-1113
www.portaphone.com
Wireless football coaching communications



**Booths: 5089-5091 &
6088-6090**
See our ad on P. 3

Power Lift
PO BOX 348
Jefferson, IA 50129
800-872-1543
www.power-lift.com
Strength training equipment

PrepTracker
Booth: 6037

Prevent Biometrics
Booth: 3060
Impact monitoring mouthguards/Head impact sensors

Prismview - A Samsung Electronics Company
Booth: 3059
LED Video Boards



Booth: 3036
See our ad on P. 83

Prismatic Solutions
411 Hackensack Ave., Suite 200
Hackensack, NJ 07601
201-247-2274
www.prismaticusa.com
Tackle training equipment

Pro Football Focus
Booth: 3050
Football data services

Pro Quick Draw, LLC
Booth: 3063
Microsoft Visio add-in to help with drawing playbooks faster

ProCom Headsets
Booths: 1069-1071
Coaching communication headsets



Booth: 1045
See our ad on P. 40

ProVectra
1102 Green Hill Terrace
Tallahassee, FL 32317
850-545-5339
www.pro-vectra.com
Sports vision training

Rae Crowther
Booths: 7121-7123-7125-7127
Football sleds & strength equipment



Booths: 5125-5127
See our ad on P. 62

Rally Athletic Bags
PO BOX 1150
Jenks, OK 74037
800-932-3290
www.rallyathleticbags.com
Football bags, capes, rain jackets

Rapid Reboot
Booths: 2121-2123
Pneumatic compression system and attachments

Recoup Fitness
Booth: 2099
Cold massage

Red Zone Reconditioning
Booth: 2069
Football Helmet & Facemask Reconditioning Services

The Rod, LLC
Booths: 7017-7019
Football blocking system

SchoolPride
Booths: 5067-5069
Helmet decals, goal boards, facility graphics

REGUPOL AMERICA Booth: 3044-3046
See our ad on P. 39

Regupol America
11 Ritter Way
Lebanon, PA 17042
800-537-8737
www.regupol.com
Athletic Flooring

Special Plaza 6027
See our ad on P. 35, 46



Rogers Athletic Company
495 Pioneer Parkway
Clare, MI 48617
800-438-4499
www.rogersathletic.com
Football sleds, shields, dummies, Pendulum weight machines and racks, medical tables

Schutt Sports
Booth: 3048
Football, baseball, softball, lacrosse helmets and equipment

Schutt Sports
Special Area 4045
Football, baseball, softball, lacrosse helmets and equipment

ScoreVision
Booth: 3127
LED jumbotrons/scoreboards

Shaw Sports Turf
Booths: 5097-5099-5101
Artificial turf

Shield Lockers
Booths: 7097-7099
Lockers, taping stations, and athletic furniture

SHIELDS Designs
Booth: 6100
Laser engraving, awards, celebration graphics

Shock Doctor, McDavid & Cutters
Booth: 6117
Padded apparel, lip guards, mouthguards, football gloves

Reveal Suits
Booth: 1108
Custom suits

Riddell
Booth: 7079
Helmets

Riddell
Special Plaza 6061
Helmets, pads

RII Sports Technology
Booth: 4064
Analysis - code-breaking & intel

ROUTE
Booth: 3051
Data analytics and recruiting decision support web and mobile app

Royal Case Company
Booth: 2063
Custom ATA cases

Run Rocket
Booth: 3001
Speed training equipment

Area 1099
See our ad on P. 24



Sideline Power
P.O. Box 192
Greenwood, NE 68366
800-496-4290
www.sidelinepower.com
Coaching headsets, endzone cams, sound system, drones, timer

Ripon Athletic Booth: 6035
See our ad on P. 55



Ripon Athletic
290 Junction Street
Berlin, WI 54923
920-361-1500
www.riponathletic.com
Custom uniforms & jackets

Booth: 2003
See our ad on P. 30



Salsbury Industries - Lockers.com
1010 East 62nd Street
Los Angeles, CA 90001
800-562-5377
www.lockers.com
Lockers and storage solutions

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Saddleback College
\$21,600 Raised



Briar Cliff University
\$21,700



Butler Community College
\$12,800 Raised



West Virginia State University
\$14,000 Raised

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Booth: 4000
Pro-Posts - a device for kickers to practice in a smaller area

Skillshark Athlete Evaluations
Booths: 3118-3120
Athlete evaluation software

SkyCoach, LLC
Booth: 7071
Sideline replay/video exchange

SMG Equipment
Booth: 1060
Tools and equipment for the installation and maintenance of synthetic turf and running tracks

Sorinex Exercise Equipment
Booths: 1034-1036-1038
Strength and conditioning equipment

Southwest Host Services
Booth: 6096
Hotels for team travel & recruiting



Spacesaver

Booth: 3079
See our ad on P. 9

Spacesaver Corp.
1450 Janesville Ave.
Fort Atkinson, WI 53538
800-255-8170
www.spacesaver.com
Compact mobile shelving systems for athletic equipment storage.



SPARTASCIENCE

Booth: 1050

Sparta Science
165A Constitution Drive
Menlo Park, CA 94025
650-833-9324
www.spartascience.com
Force plate software

Sport Scope
Booths: 2039-2041
Endzone camera and instant replay



Booths: 4090 & 3091
See our ad on P. 25

Sports Attack
PO BOX 1529
Verdi, NV 89439
800-717-4251
www.sportsattack.com
Football Machine

Sports Laundry Systems
Booth: 2045

Sports Standardized Athletic Testing LLC
Booth: 2068
Analytical recruiting software

Sports-O-Zone, LLC
Booth: 3084
Sanitizing systems

Sportsbeams Lighting, Inc.
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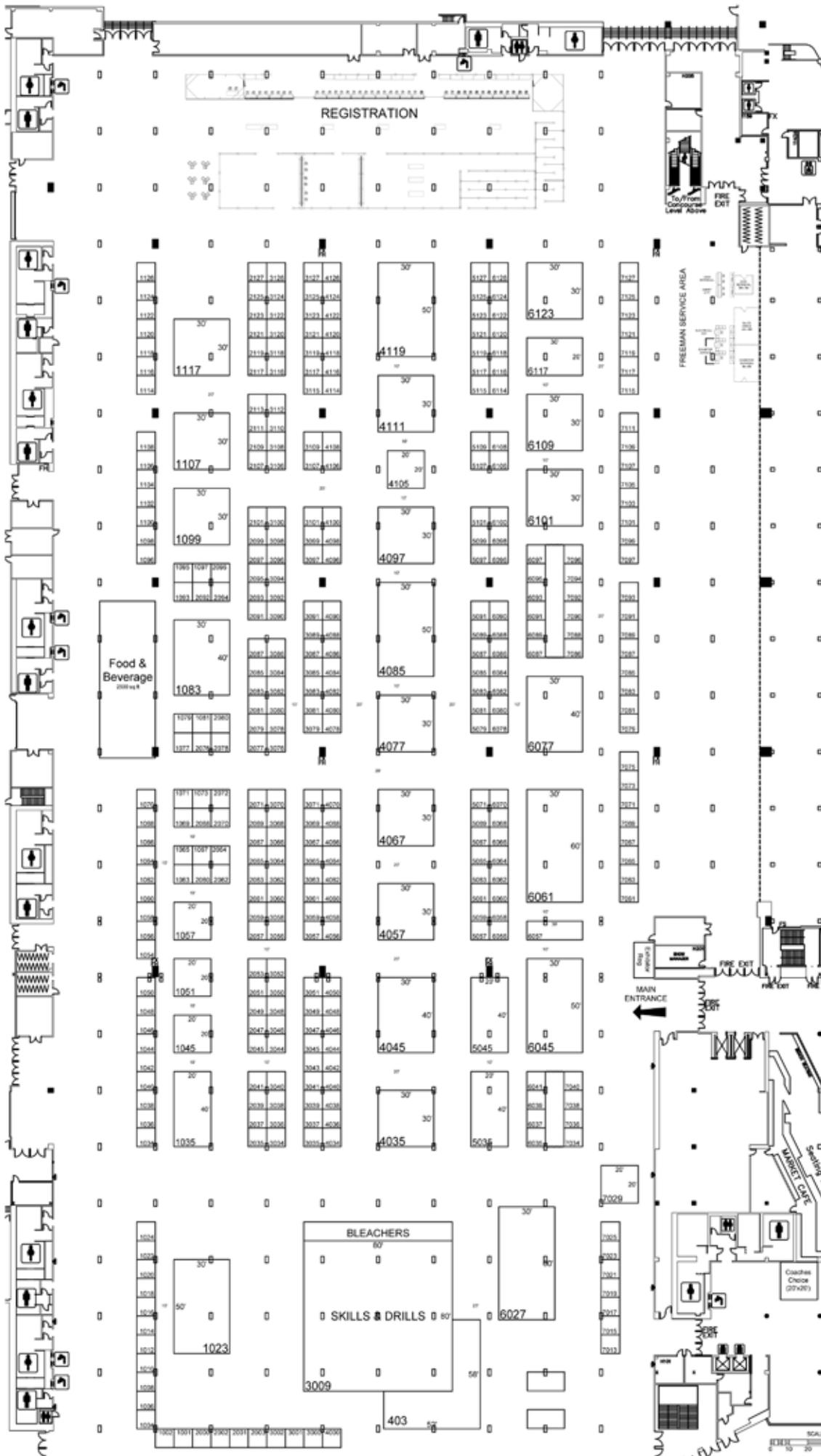
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**BOOTH MAP
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Amway is a U.S.-based, global, direct-selling consumer products company that has been empowering people to own their own businesses for nearly 60 years. Now in the fourth consecutive year as the exclusive sponsor of the Amway Coaches Poll and presenting sponsor of the AFCA Coaches' Trophy, they are seeking a select number of Spanish speaking coaches to share their stories with some of Amway's top business owners. The teachings of AFCA coaches transcend coaching boundaries — tackling tough issues like perseverance, recruitment, leadership, discipline, teamwork and goal setting. And since the beginning of their partnership in 2014, the AFCA and Amway have arranged more than 80+ coach speaking appearances where coaches have inspired business leaders on these such topics.

As the partnership grows, so does their need for multicultural coaches to speak to their diverse, business-owner audience. If you are interested in becoming a driving force for positive change, or if you or someone on your staff speaks fluent Spanish and is interested in learning more about speaking opportunities available through the Amway Coaches Poll program, please contact Gary Darnell at gdarnell@afca.com for more information.

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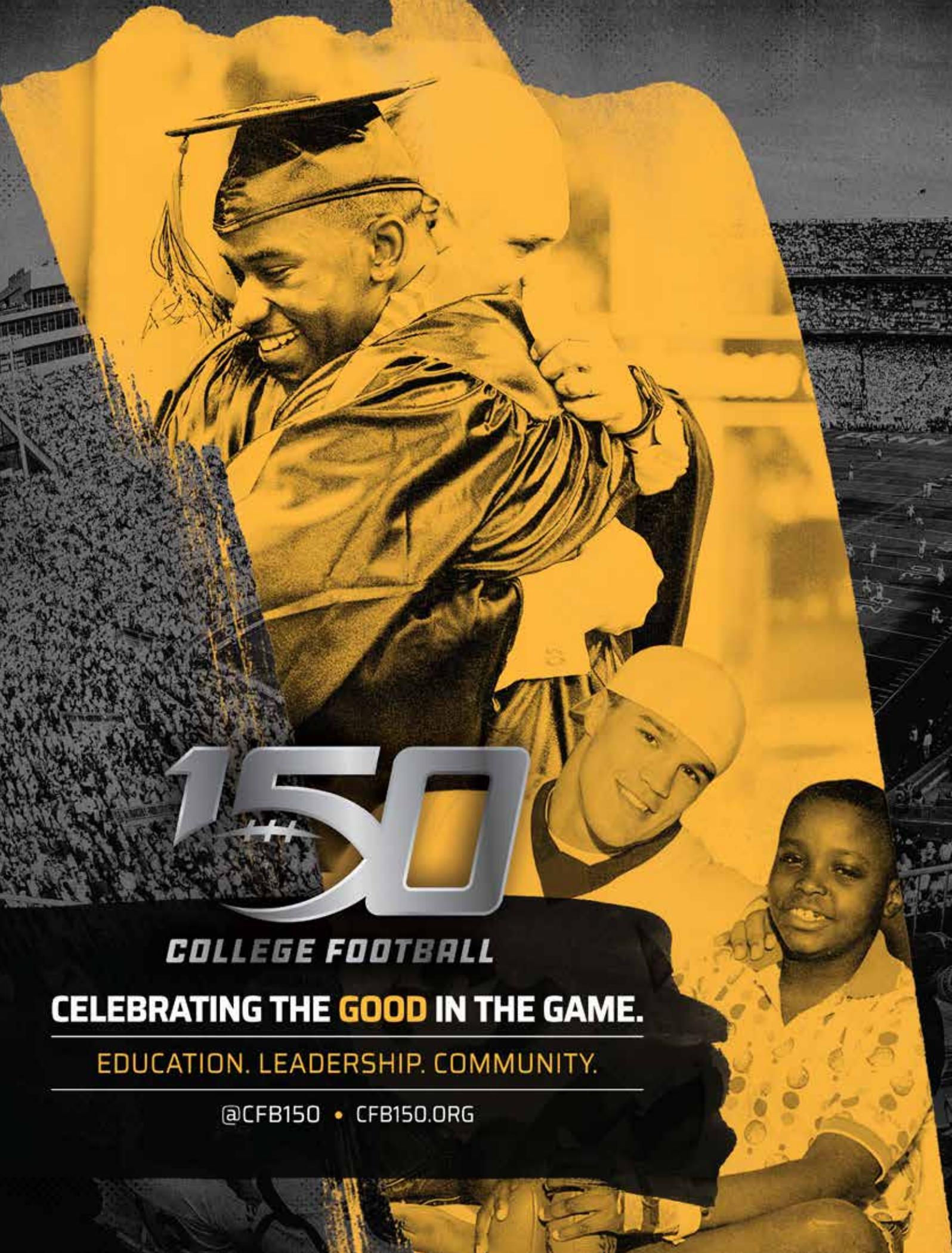
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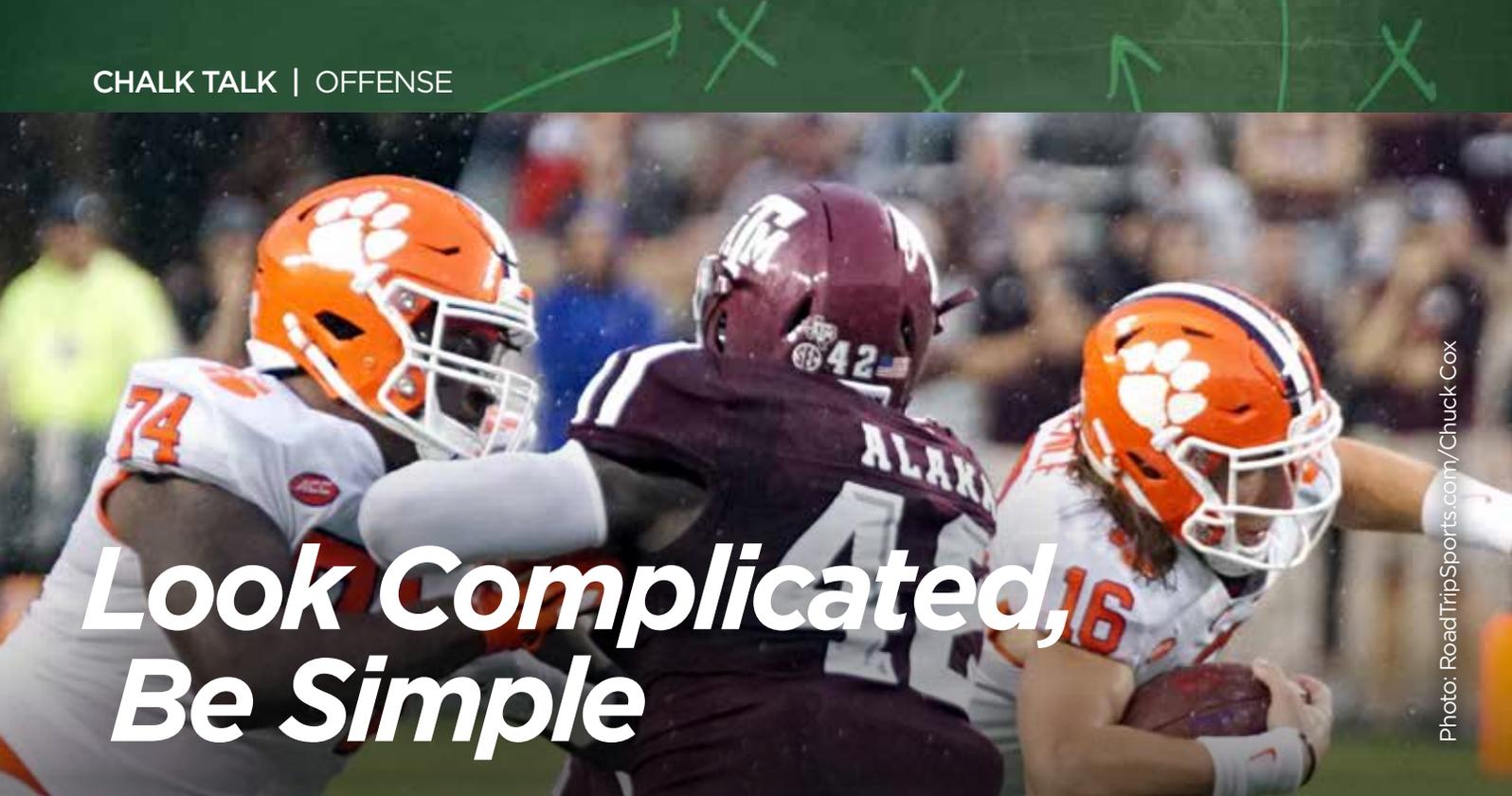
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Look Complicated, Be Simple

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By Doug Samuels, Head Coach, Ravenna (Mich.) High School

For as long as I've been coaching, I have been obsessed with the concept of efficiency. It started with squeezing the most possible reps out of an individual period as an assistant and has carried over to my time as a coordinator, and now as a head coach at Ravenna High School in Michigan.

When I took an assistant coaching job at Holland West Ottawa (Mich.) High School – a school of about 2,500 students – I had about a 20-minute drive from my home office to the high school every day and really dug into some podcasts that ended up exploring the science of how the brain works and how it recalls information, and while listening I couldn't help but get excited about how that translates into the field of coaching.

When starting to build out our offensive scheme and trying to find ways to improve on what we did the year before I took over the offense, I had a few main objectives. Being a power, counter, and buck sweep oriented team, I wanted to build in ways that we could invest more heavily in those schemes with more practice reps. While the offensive line did the exact same thing up front, the action in the backfield would be completely different. Same play up front, different backfield action would allow us to look complicated, but be simple, which is a value I've held for as long as I've carried a whistle.

With a very basic understanding of how the brain recalls information from listening to those podcasts, I knew that building on our current verbiage that our kids already understood was going to be paramount to getting them to pick up on the new wrinkles we were looking to put in. The neural pathways in their brain have already been formed as a way to store and retrieve the language we already use, so building onto that language in a way that our players

can easily associate with became something I took very seriously. The more the verbiage we can create that can be associated with the neural pathways they've created (or already formed), the easier the learning curve and stronger the recall.

For example, all of our run plays are named after cities, and the first letter of those cities is associated with the blocking scheme (Pittsburg = Power, Cincinnati = Counter, Boston = Buck Sweep). Very simple.

Our quarterback communicates the blocking scheme to the line every play in our no-huddle, so us sending in the signal for Pittsburgh would warrant a pre-snap "Pitt" call followed by the direction from our quarterback.

With Pittsburgh being our downhill power play, and Pittsburgh Read as our power read variation, and wanting to invest in the power scheme more, we added two variations to really double down: Power Toss Read and a Power Swing Read variation. Again, to help in the retrieval of the scheme information, we decided to be smart about what we ultimately decided to name the play. We could call it "Apricot," but without a reason behind it, it becomes much more difficult to recall, and therefore more difficult to execute. You need to build on the neural pathway already created.

Since the Power Toss Read would require an underhand pitch, we decided to name it after the baseball team in Pittsburgh: "Pirate."

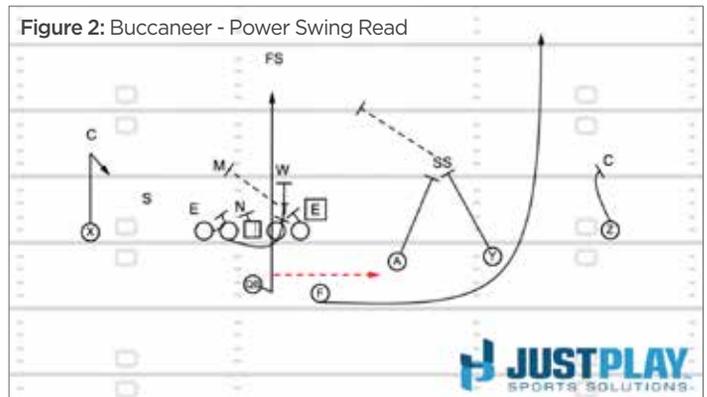
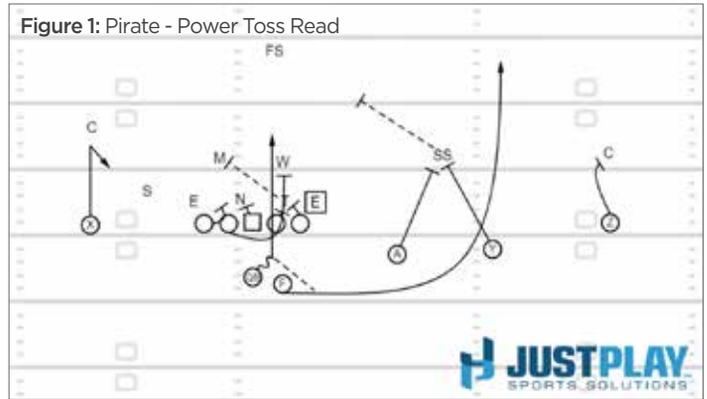
Now, by seeing the signal we send in for Pirate, an association is easily drawn between the Power scheme, and baseball equals pitch, so we're running the Power Toss Read.

- Q** One shuffle step to make read. If C gap defender pinches OR stays put, then pitch to the F. If C gap defender flies out, then tuck and run power A gap out.
- F** Line up directly behind the guard. Burst out flat as you see the quarterback secure the ball, keeping shoulders square to the LOS and eyes back on QB. Don't lose any ground. Pitch must be forward. Catch pitch and run the alley on perimeter.
- PST** B gap to second backer in the box.
- PSG** A gap to second backer in the box.
- C** Pin back on the nose vs. Even. Base to choke play-side vs. Odd.
- BSG** Skip pull for first backer in the box.
- BST** Aggressive hinge technique to prevent B gap run through.
- X** Run stop.
- Z** Stalk No. 1 most dangerous.
- Y** Stalk No. 2 most dangerous with eyes to 1-high.
- A** Combo No. 2 most dangerous to 1-high.

When we add the Power Swing Read portion, I always ask the kids what another name for a Pirate is, and they quickly answer "Buccaneer."

Buccaneer being a longer word than its Pirate counterpart, we use that fact to remind our running back that he will align much wider out, this time straddling the outside leg of the play side tackle.

- Q** One shuffle step to make read. If the C gap defender pinches OR stays put, then throw it out to the F (a throw to the right will require a quick flip of the hips and throw) leading him slightly downhill as if you're throwing a bubble. If the C gap defender flies out, then tuck and run power A gap out. This is much easier for a right-handed quarterback to go to the left with.
- F** Line up directly behind the guard. Burst out into the flat for five steps as you see the quarterback secure the ball, keeping shoulders square to the LOS and eyes back on quarterback. Don't lose any ground. The throw must be forward. Catch just as you start to come downhill and run the alley on perimeter.
- PST** B gap to second backer in the box.



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- PSG** A gap to second backer in the box.
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- X** Run stop.
- Z** Stalk No. 1 most dangerous.
- Y** Stalk No. 2 most dangerous with eyes to 1-high.
- A** Combo No. 2 most dangerous to 1-high.

- BST** Aggressive hinge technique to prevent B gap run through.
- X** Run stop.
- Z** Stalk No. 1 most dangerous.
- Y** Follow in guard's footsteps, coming inside their kick out block and block the first linebacker in the box.
- A** Run Pop screen

Both Pirate and Buccaneer are the same exact blocking concept for the offensive lineman up front, and the receivers on the perimeter. The running back's alignment changes slightly, and the biggest tweak is the delivery system we use to get the ball to the edge.

One of the final variations we added to this was a quarterback counter out of 11 personnel that looks like Pirate. Counter for us is "Cincinnati," and since it is off our pitch action (and pitch being associated with baseball) we use "Reds" as the signal and play call to stay with the association scheme we've already established.

To be completely transparent, we decided on the second layer of our play calls to be baseball related for two reasons:

1. Its association with pitching and the toss.
2. We had so many dual-sport kids that are also baseball fans.

It made sense for us. For other coaches who may happen to read this, it may be a food association, or mascots, or anything else that speaks to the kids you have, the demographic you're working with, or the town you're in. The possibilities are endless, you just have to find something that connects with your kids that they can easily draw an association to.

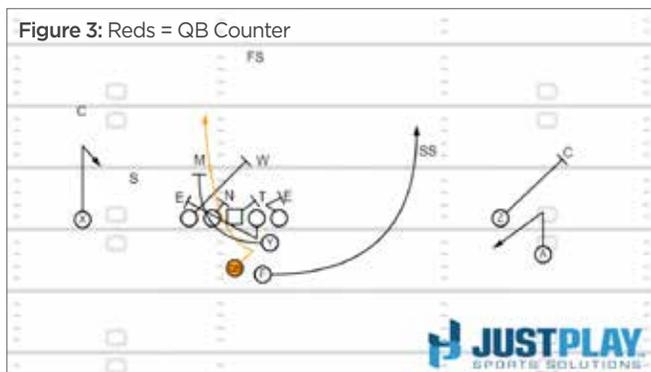
Investing in the power and counter schemes up front and changing up what we did in the backfield was instrumental in leading us to the best season in school history. It allowed us to get countless more reps running the same schemes up front while still presenting the defense with a ton to prepare for, ultimately leading to the first outright conference title in school history, and the first district title and deepest run for the football program while setting numerous offensive records.

In my experience, I have found that what we decide to name stuff as coaches has a huge effect on retention, recall and execution. By understanding some basic psychology, we can put our kids in much better positions to be successful.

"Look complicated, be simple" is a philosophy that a lot of coaches have, but by becoming obsessive about it and harnessing the power of how the brain processes information, we were able to invest in a few core schemes, sprinkle in some creativity, and get some remarkable results. It's an idea I'm fired up about sharing with other coaches and is a philosophy that goes well beyond how we decided to use it.

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- Q** Take one step toward the F and fake the pitch aggressively. Load off the backside foot and get shoulders square to LOS, carrying the ball A gap out.
- F** Fake Pirate Read opposite the play call side.
- PST** B gap to second backer in the box.
- PSG** A gap to second backer in the box.
- C** Pin back on the nose vs. Even. Base to choke play-side vs. Odd.
- BSG** Pull flat and kick out the C gap defender.

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The Art Of Pass Rushing

Photo: RoadTripSports.com/Matthew Postins

By Carlos Perez, Jr., Defensive Ends Coach, McNeese State University

Not every move will work for every player, but everything else leading up to the initial move and after the move is what makes a great pass rusher. Understanding how to attack the man in front of you, being explosive from your first step, forcing your offensive lineman to his heels, having great flexibility/mobility, knowing when to throw your move, and being relentless on point of attack are all focus points for developing effective pass rushers.

The following coaching points will help put each player in a position to be successful in the pass rush game. Here, we'll focus on getting off the ball, hand/eye coordination, incorporating flexibility and mobility into drills, and creating the good habit of finishing.

Stance And Get-Off

I am not heavy on which stance to use; it's more about the player being more comfortable in his stance and understanding what we are trying to accomplish coming out of the stance. The only thing that changes with our pass-rushing stance is we want to recognize it's a pass rushing down and elongate our stance just a little bit.

This means we want to bring our foot that is staggered back inside a bit, almost looking as if we are track runners getting ready to fire out of the blocks. No matter what stance my guys choose to be in — whether two-, three-, or four-point — we preach the same coaching points.

Next, we get right into training the get-off. I can't explain to my guys enough how important getting off the ball is to a great pass rush. A great get-off creates chaos with the offensive lineman and forces him to lose his technique or make a bad decision.

Your first focus should be getting off that ball as quick as you can so you can close down the gap between you and the

offensive lineman with the goal of throwing your move. If you never close down that space, then you will never have a chance to beat your man or even make a move.

Once you begin to effectively get off the ball, you can make inside moves and begin to play games with the offensive linemen.

We have a few drills where we train the mindset of getting off the ball, making sure we are exploding off the ball and taking longer steps to close the space between the pass rusher and the offensive lineman.

Get-Off Drill No. 1

For this drill, you will need either a 6-inch speed hurdle or two cones. You want to place the speed hurdle about 1–2 yards in front of your inside foot and get into your stance having the hurdle between your feet and hands.

In the first sequence, you raise your inside leg while in your stance and move on ball key, keeping all the weight on your opposite leg and exploding through your hips while exaggerating that first step and gaining as much ground as you can. This sequence will give you a feel of how to distribute your weight when coming off the ball.

Then, do the same thing with both feet in the ground and moving on the ball key. Make sure to rep this coming out of a left and right stance. There should be no popping up out of your stance. Instead, the rusher must drive out like a track runner driving out of the blocks. The rusher must key the ball and keep his eyes on his target, and exaggerate gaining ground with that first step.

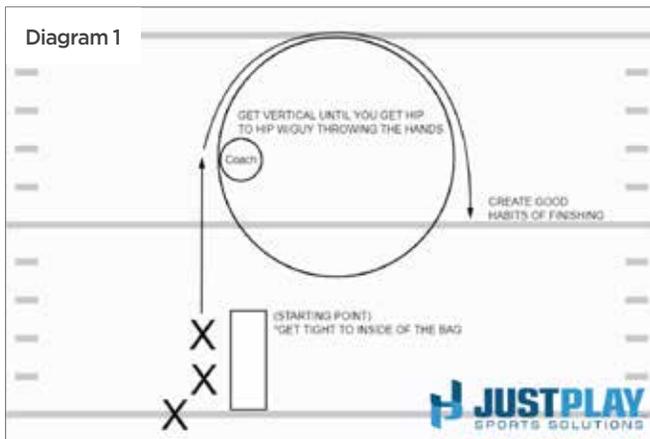
Get-Off Drill No. 2

Once guys understand the get off concept, we put it together in this next drill. For this drill, you need a hoop,

an agility bag, and some forearm pads. Set the hoop down, place the agility bag on one side or the other, have the bottom of the bag even w/ the curve of the hoop, but 1-2 yards away from the hoop. (See Diagram 1)

This drill can also go off ball key or command. Have your player start at the top of the bag away from the hoop. Depending on which side you are working, you want to be as tight as you can to the inside of the bag.

During this drill, focus solely on coming out at your hips, taking that big first step, and closing that space between you and the offensive lineman (person holding forearm pads).



Get in the habit of coming out of your stance at full speed, low and hard, and staying vertical until you reach that point of attack. Some players develop the bad habit of floating off the line and already having their hips flipped. Doing this exposes your chest and makes it easier for the offensive lineman to get his hands on you. Drive out of your stance like an Olympic track runner, low and fast.

Once the athlete closes the gap, the coach with forearm pads shoots his hands low, working the chop with the inside hand and club with the outside arm to finish the move and get his hips turned inside toward the hoop (quarterback). Once the move has been made, finish with a sense of urgency and big explosion. Finish strong!

Hand-Eye Coordination/Flexibility And Mobility

The next group of focal points consisting of hand-eye coordination and the flexibility/mobility aspects can be worked in all pass rushing drills. I'm a firm believer in training the eyes and showing players exactly what to focus on. Young players tend to have bad habits of watching the quarterback throughout the whole process of pass rushing. If I'm staring at the quarterback the whole time, then I have no clue what the player in front of me is doing.

Players need to understand that they should have their eyes in the right place and transition their eyes from focus point to focus point just like a quarterback. As a defensive lineman, I want to have my eyes scanning the guy in front

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of me as I'm coming off the ball, looking for his hands and when they are being thrown.

Young defensive linemen tend to come off the ball throwing moves at air and landing nothing. For me to throw a successful move, I must see his hands thrown. If you saw in Get-Off Drill No. 2, we added the hands being thrown, and it's not the focus point in that drill, but you are training the eyes as well.

The second part to this topic is the flexibility and mobility focal point. The best defensive linemen can change directions with fluidity, bend with no problem, and transition through situations without stopping.

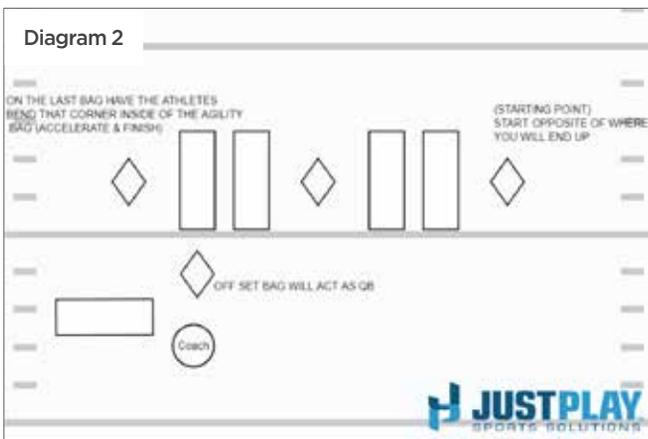
Throughout most drills, I try to incorporate some type of transition that helps with flexibility and mobility. I do this because in every play, you must change directions at some point. It also helps create a good habit of staying active through the whole process.

This takes time to develop. The only way to develop it is to maximize reps as much as possible, creating muscle memory where it becomes a reaction. Here are three drills that work all the focal points or at least one of them.

Agility And Pop-Up Bag Drill

For this drill, we will use four pop up bags and five agility bags. We set up the station as shown in Diagram 2 with two bags in between each pop-up. You can see at the end of the last bag we have one more agility bag that leads to one more pop-up that is acting as the quarterback.

Athletes start on either the left or right of the first bag, chopping the feet and having active hands. The hands should be in a constant tight movement close to the chest.



With any of these drills involving pop-ups or forearm pads, it's possible to change the move on each bag. For this drill, we could work the jab and swim/rip, club and swim/rip, or even the spin move. So, if I go to the left of the first bag and make my move, then I will stay left leading with the left foot and transitioning to the opposite of the next bag now leading with my right foot. At the end, the player throws his move, bends and accelerates through the last bag, which is the quarterback.

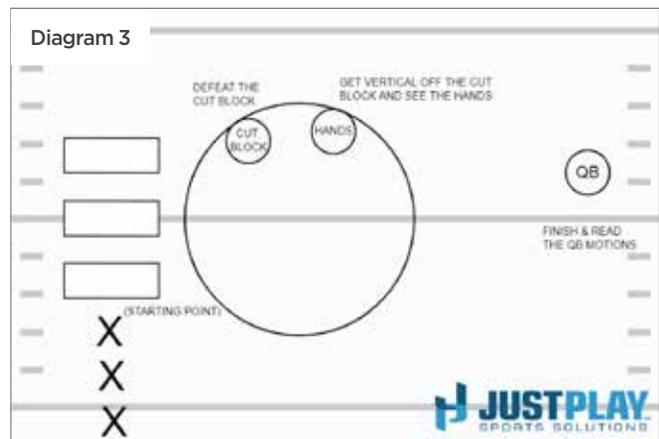
This drill works the little things in rushing the passer such as having active hands, not letting your arms just be at your side, and working same foot/same hand when throwing your move. It also focuses on flexibility, mobility and hand-eye coordination. We train our guys to go through bags without looking down. They should be able to see the bags through their peripheral vision while focusing on timing up to the next bag.

Transition Drill

For this drill, we use about five agility bags, a cut-block ball, forearm pads and one ball. The hoop is optional; it helps set the drill up. It is set up just as you see in Diagram 3.

Athletes start on the open-end side, transitioning through the agility bags laterally, defeating the cut block, then getting vertical and transitioning eyes to forearm pads to make a move. Last, once they make their move, they snap their eyes to the quarterback as they finish.

On the finish, we use someone with a ball as a quarterback and the players must react to what they see. If the quarterback breaks his hands and opens up, then our



guys are taught to jump straight up to try and deflect a pass without roughing the passer. Do not jump to the side. If the quarterback sits there or steps up, then they run through him.

This drill is another one that focuses on being active continuously, having your eyes in the right places, works on agility and footwork, and learning how to read a QB when finishing.

Bend Drill

For the Bend Drill, we will use four pop-up bags and two cones. We use four bags because we will set up both sides at once so we don't waste time setting up drills. On one side of the top bag, set the cone about 3 yards off from the start. (See Diagram 4)

Players start at the cone in their preferred stance and fire out on the ball key. Players must come out of their stance low and hard, then as they approach the bag hip-to-hip, we want to chop down as if we made contact with the offensive lineman's arms. As the player begins to bend the corner on the bag, you want to exaggerate the rip-up, finishing the move and keeping the reduced pad level during the move.

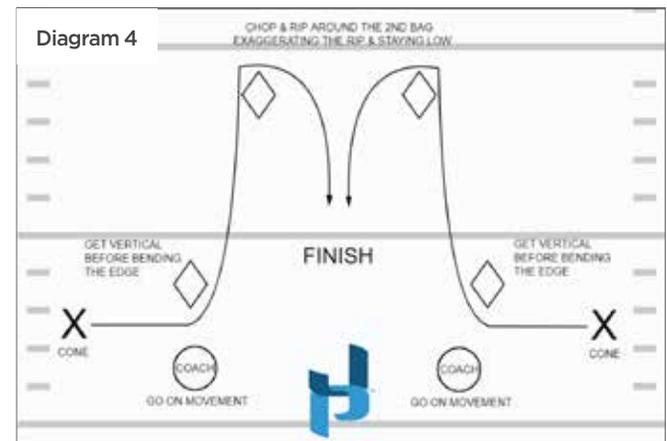
As the athlete goes through the second bag, he should have a full speed burst as if he were finishing through a quarterback.

This drill is big for working on flexibility and staying low the whole way through the bend, as well as finishing the move and accelerating through the quarterback.

These are just some of the techniques and drills I have found helpful. Pass rushing happens within about 7-8 yards and you must be able to react to many variables and transition your body through different positions to be successful.

By maximizing reps and staying detailed with your players throughout the drills, you can give them a sense of urgency and focus through the process. **AFCA**

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Directional Punting For Effect



Photo: RoadTripSports.com/Matthew Postins

By Ray Guy, Former Punter, Los Angeles Raiders, and Rick Sang, Veteran Kicking Coach

For the punter to perform at optimal level, he must identify each punt's objective and adapt his kick to the game situation. Every time the football is punted, he must have a purpose.

Determining And Communicating Objectives

By knowing the objectives of each punt, the coverage team will be prepared and markedly more effective. This being the case, the purpose of every punt needs to be communicated, usually via the coach to the punter and then via the punter to the rest of the team.

Through practice and preparation, the entire punting unit can anticipate the objective of each situation. Sometimes the punter has the option to change the direction of the punt based on the rush. He might change the punt from the line through communication calls just prior to the snap.

Some type of rush toward the punter should be expected at all times. For the punt-blocking unit, the rush is not only an attempt to block the punt, but the unit is also anticipating a mishandled snap, trying to identify any attempt at a fake by the punting team, and ensuring the punter doesn't intentionally delay getting the punt off. If the punter is allowed to take more time getting the punt off, the coverage, the outside gunners, will have more time to get downfield and cover.

The closer the punter punts from his own end zone, the more he can expect to experience an intense rush. The proximity to the end zone magnifies the rushing team's objectives and adds the incentive to hurry the punter's get-off time and rhythm in hopes of forcing a bad punt so they gain an advantage in field position. Even worse, the rushing

team might score a quick touchdown after a blocked punt or mishandled snap.

The closer the punter is to the 50-yard line, the less likely the opponents will aggressively rush, in part because they are leery of a possible fake by the punting team.

Punting for Direction

Situation

The football is in the open-field area, usually between the 20-yard line and the 50-yard line. (See Diagram 1)

In general, the return team focuses on returning the punt. The punter can expect a moderate to heavy rush.

Objective

To optimize hang time and distance while placing the football in a position that minimizes the coverage area.

Always be prepared to direct the flight of the ball to a particular spot to minimize the coverage area and allow the cover team to quickly blanket the return man. Take advantage of the closest sideline when the ball is placed on or near the hash mark. Remember that when you combine precision placement with maximum hang time and optimal distance, your coverage team can cover the entire field effectively.

If the ball is in the middle of the field, or any time there's an overload or the punter feels there's too much pressure coming from the outside (the direction he intends to punt), then he needs to immediately consider changing the strategy by punting the ball straight downfield with maximum hang time and optimal distance. By punting straight downfield, the punter can stay well within the center of his protection. This places him in the safest position to get the punt off successfully.



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Every time a punter punts the football, he performs a directional punt, directing the football to its destination. When referring to the strategy of directional punting, it's most important that the punt accomplishes a purpose that minimizes or virtually eliminates any return and gives the punting team an advantage in field position. In general, directional punts are performed in the open field all the way to or just across the 50-yard line. In this area, it's crucial for the punter to obtain optimal hang time and distance, enhancing the success of the coverage team and maximizing the distance the opponent must go to score.

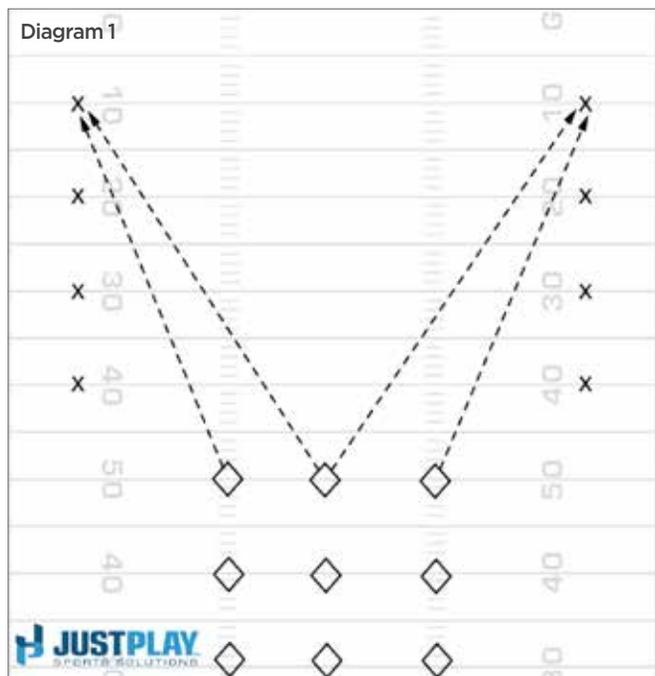
By selecting an exact target, the punter can focus his entire punting motion in that direction, thus optimizing hang time and distance.

Coaching Points

Beginning with the initial step, everything — steps, hips, shoulders, leg swing, punting foot, and follow-through — should be done in a direct line with and square to the target. The forward motion of the body moving in a direct line ensures the generation of maximum power and control. Proper mechanics can also be achieved when the punter aligns with his target from start to finish.

Some punters, particularly at the professional level, occasionally adjust their alignment in a slightly offset position to compensate for the direction they'll be stepping in their approach. This offset pre-positions them, so by the time they complete their approach and kick the football, they're better aligned within their punt protection.

For instance, if the punter is attempting a punt toward the right, he might adjust his stance slightly offset to the left outside of the stance of the long snapper. This adjustment is so subtle the snapper has no problem snapping the football slightly to the left. This simple adjustment allows the punter



to receive the snap, complete his approach, and successfully punt the football to the right while maintaining a safe position well within the center of protection.

Punting to the Corner

Situation

The football is near the 50-yard line. (See Diagram 2)

Because the football is near midfield, an intense punt rush by the return team is less likely because of the increased probability of a fake punt by the punting team.

Objective

The punter wants to angle his punting approach toward either sideline at a point between the 10-yard line and 5-yard line markers to place the football inside the opponent's 20-yard line at a position nearest the goal line.

The coffin corner is either corner of the playing field formed by the sideline and just in front of the end zone. A punter might try to place the ball so that it lands and goes out of bounds or is downed near the corner, thus forcing the receiving team to play very close to its goal line and maximizing the distance the receiving team must travel to score.

Coaching Points

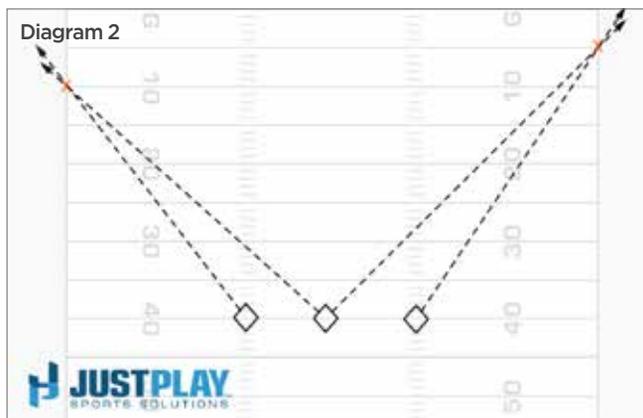
The coffin corner punt is a controlled drive punt normally driven at a lower trajectory out of bounds with the intent to pin the opponent deep in its own territory. The punter tends to hold the football on his approach slightly lower and longer before the drop. This natural adjustment produces more of a drive punt that's more proficient in accuracy and distance.

Because the objective is to have the football land completely out of bounds and off the field of play, minimal hang time is needed (because there's no threat of a return).

Sometimes a punter attempts to punt for the corner when he's outside of his range; in this case, the ball might simply roll dead deep in the opponent's territory before going out of bounds. This might prove effective, but the coverage team must be alert in case of an attempt to return the football.

Right-Corner Punting

When punting to the right corner, the right-footed punter needs to consider aiming at a particular point out of bounds that's closer to the goal line, preferably the 5-yard line.



When punted correctly by a right-footed punter, the ball will spin clockwise and tend to fade to the right as it noses over. By aiming tighter to the goal line, the punter plays the natural fade and allows room for the punt to be effective.

For example, if the punter truly aims at a point directly over the 5-yard line, as the football turns over and begins to fade, it should go out of bounds within the 10-yard line, well within the 20-yard line objective.

By aiming over the 5-yard line, the punter gives himself a 5-yard cushion to either side. This allows him to play it safe and keep the football out of the end zone, avoiding a touchback. This strategy enables him to place the football well within the 20-yard line and actually closer to the 10-yard line.

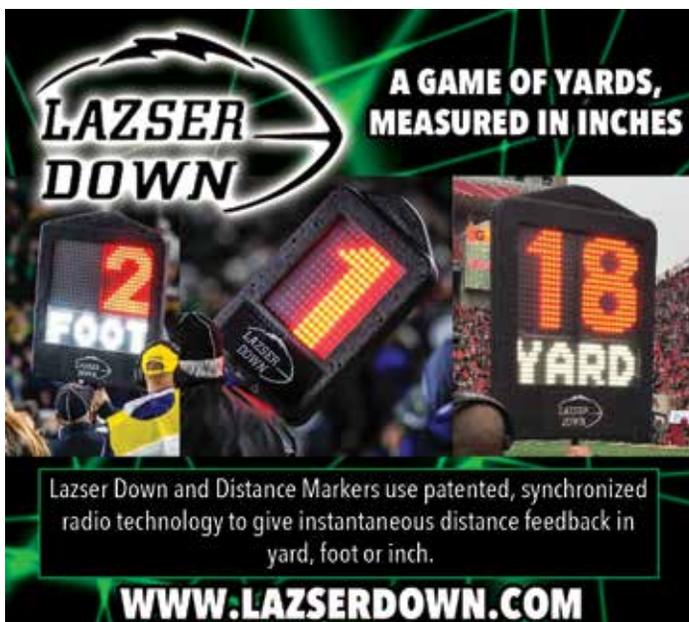
Left-Corner Punting

When punting to the left, the right-footed punter considers aiming at a particular point out of bounds that's more away from the goal line, preferably the 10-yard line. Again this allows him to play the fade. As it noses over, the punt will fade naturally toward the right and go out of bounds, ideally near the 5-yard line mark or even closer.

A left-footed punter will need to reverse these instructions. The football will spin counterclockwise, tending to fade to the left as it noses over. This means a left-footed punter will need to aim closer to the goal line over the 5-yard line when going for the left corner and aim more toward the 10-yard line when going for the right corner.

This article was excerpted from Football Kicking And Punting, by Ray Guy and Rick Sang, published by Human Kinetics. To purchase the book, please visit <https://us.humankinetics.com/>. 

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Move The Chains

By Mike Podoll, Associate Publisher

Running Game Far From Being Obsolete, Outdated

In an era of shotgun, no-huddle, spread offense, those who have written the eulogy for running the football may have been premature. If you're paying attention, you'll find plenty of examples of coaches who have stuck to their own tried-and-true strategies and found success.

Ken Krause, head football coach at Muskego (Wis.) High School is a prime example. Coming off an undefeated 14-0 season, capped off by winning the Division I (large-school enrollment) WIAA 2018 State Championship, the Warriors' head coach found the formula to his team's success came via the Wing-T Offense.

Through 14 games in 2018, Krause's Muskego team rushed for 4,752 yards (a 339 yards per game average) with 60 rushing touchdowns and averaged 40 points per game, all while playing in arguably the toughest conference (the Classic 8) in Wisconsin.

Krause doesn't see himself as a throwback. Rather, he sees his success as being a matter of focusing on an offensive system he believes in – one predicated on physical football.

"I played in the Wing-T Offense back in high school," says Krause. "Years later, when I became a head football coach, I felt comfortable running that offense. Over the years, I made it a priority to learn the intricacies, nuances and twists to the offense, so I immersed myself in it. I flew to Wing-T clinics all over the country and spent time talking to other Wing-T coaches to learn what they were doing."

At Muskego High School, the coach says that the body types and the mentality of the student-athletes are a perfect match for his style of play. "Players at Muskego are big, strong, physical and tough," says Krause. "Those attributes fit well into my vision for the Wing-T Offense."

The success of up-tempo spread offense isn't an accident, though. Predicated on offensive balance, mismatches and keeping opposing defenses on their heels, the spread has proven to be the next step in explosive offensive football.

According to Krause, though, the widespread growth of the spread offense has actually turned into an advantage when it comes to running his Wing-T Offense.

"Everybody is running a spread offense these days," says Krause. "Our Wing-T Offense gives us a huge advantage over opponents, primarily, because teams never face it anymore. They're not familiar with it and never practice to defend it."

"All year long, nearly every team prepares each week to face a spread team. And when it comes time to play us, suddenly they need to prepare for an offensive style of football that's foreign to most players."

"Especially with the way we mix things up – lining up with one or two tight ends, the way we use fakes, deception and our wide-array of counter plays – they're all something that other high school teams just don't prepare for these days."

"In one week, it's hard for a high school team to adequately prepare for an intricate Wing-T Offense that's physical and aggressive. Maybe the only time all year they'll see a Wing-T."

Krause, who's teams have a 46-15 record over the past five seasons, says that it's not a matter of spread offense being better than a Wing-T Offense, or vice-versa, but rather, it's utilizing a system that works best for your team.

"Any type of football offense works — no matter what style of play," says Krause. "But you need to immerse yourself in a system that you believe in."

Specifically, however, Krause sees several ancillary benefits from successfully running the football.

"Teams who are good at running the football, also often have good defenses," says Krause. "By playing physical, aggressive football, and utilizing a successful run game, good defense often becomes a byproduct of that style of play."

"It's not a coincidence that the two are often linked. There's a physical component to football that breeds success in both the running game and defense."

Teams who successfully run the football also often have fewer turnovers. This is a fact that cannot be overstated, says Krause.

"In 2018, despite a large number of rushing attempts in our Wing-T Offense, our four primary running backs only had *three fumbles* in 450 rushing attempts combined," says Krause. "We only had five turnovers total in 14 games."

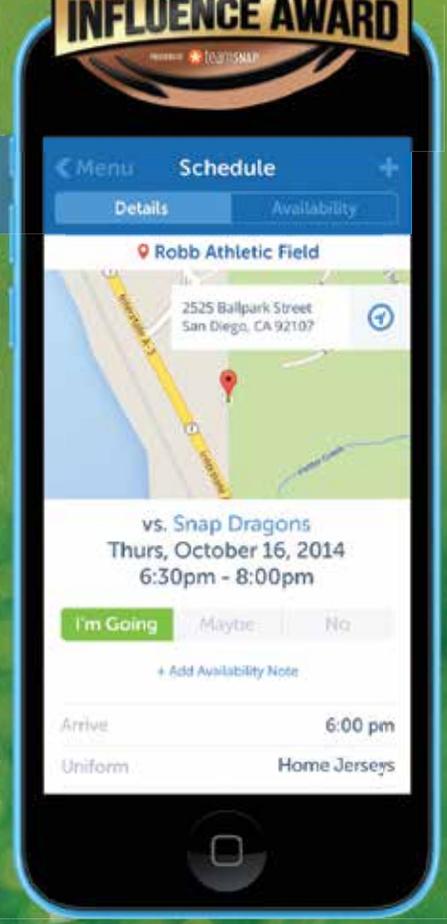
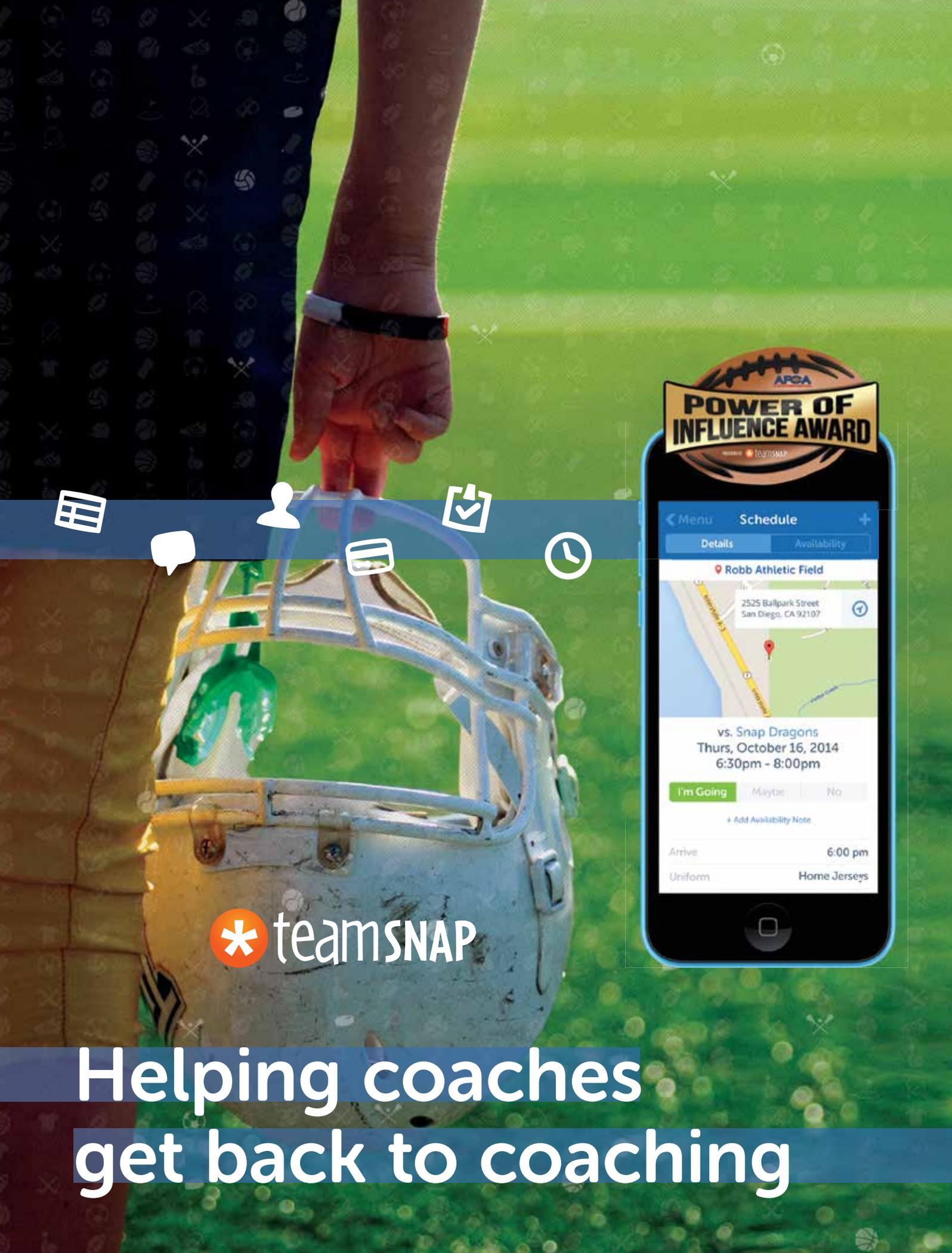
"If you're going to run the football, then as a team, you'd better not fumble. As a result, we work on our fumble circuit to begin practice every, single day. And that includes our Thursday walk-through practices. Preventing turnovers begins by emphasizing it every day."

Krause says that it takes some time to perfect the nuances that make the Wing-T Offense special, but it begins and ends with fundamentals. "As much as we need to prepare for whoever our next opponent might be," Krause says. "We spend the majority of our practices working on the things that we need to do to execute the Wing-T."

"We focus on core fundamentals. Things like protecting the football, blocking with the correct first step, communicating the exact way to block a particular play, executing great fakes, working on our second-level blocks every day, all that kind of stuff — those things that may seem like minutia to others — to us, they are the key to our success."

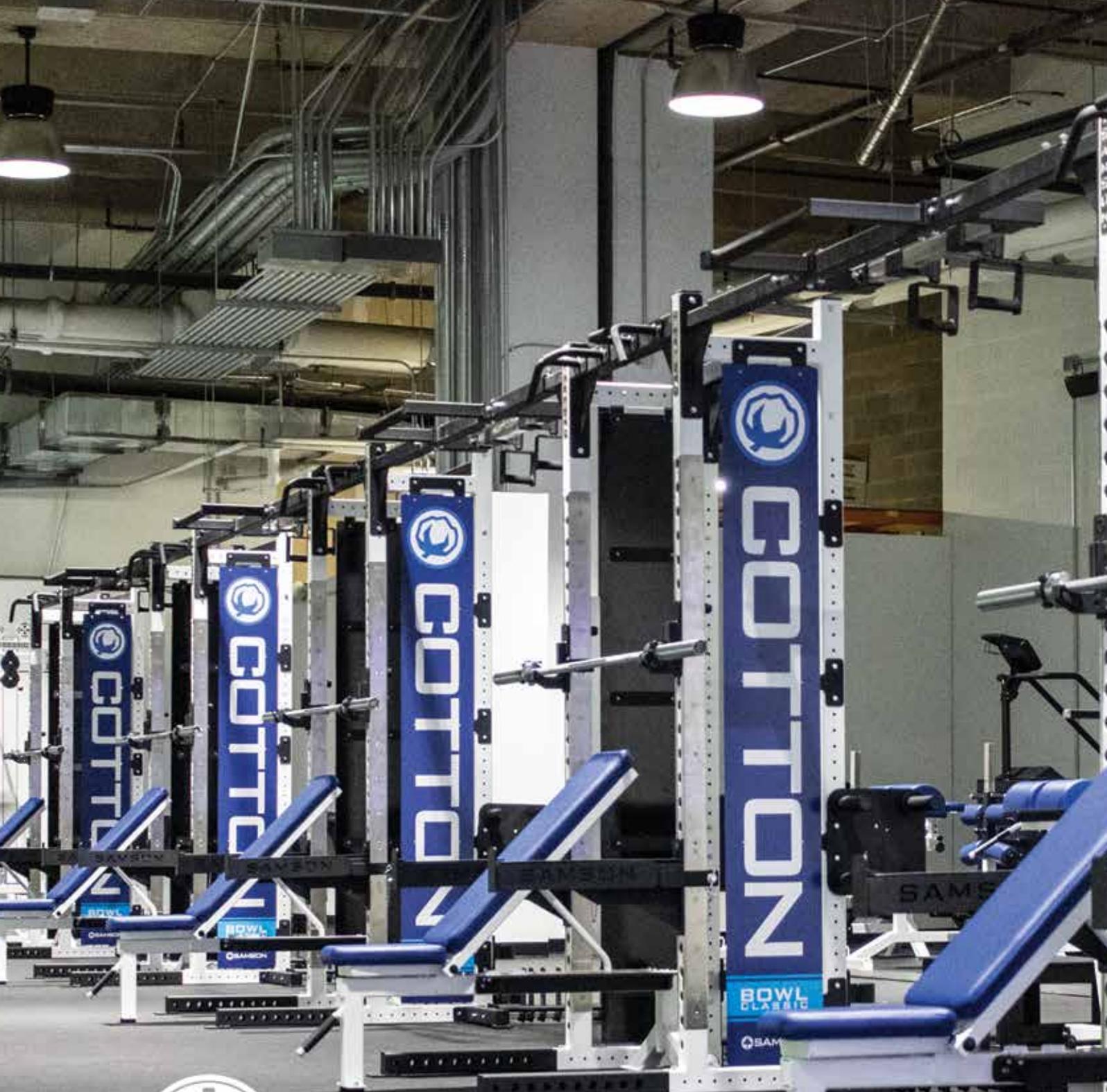
"When you play great opponents who are well coached, it's the details within the execution that help you overcome adversity and win close games." 

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