No Huddle No Mercy

A complete A-Z guide to implementing and installing a fast paced, high scoring no huddle offense in American Football. Coach Liotta provides the intricate details and secrets of his decades of successfully coaching the no huddle at the high school, college, and professional levels that will allow you to turbo-charge your offensive system. He unlocks the vault for you in this incredibly detailed manual that will benefit a veteran coach searching for new ideas to jump start their offense or a young football coach just starting out in the industry.



About the author

Shawn Liotta will be entering his third season as the Head Football Coach at Burrell High School (PA) in 2020. Liotta is a veteran of 22 years of coaching experience at the high school, college, and professional level where he has consistently overseen record setting offensive units while implementing his fast break no-huddle attack. During his tenure as a Head Coach or Offensive Coordinator; Liotta's teams have won 5 championships, 7 division or conference titles, and he has coached in 26 playoff games. Coach Liotta spent 2014-2015 as the Offensive Coordinator at Clairton High School (PA) where Liotta's "No Huddle No Mercy" offense became one of the most prolific in the history of high school football, averaging over (58) points per game, shattering the all-time PIAA scoring record, and becoming the second highest scoring team in the history of high school football with (958) points in 2014. Coach Liotta is a consultant to programs across the country, and a national clinic speaker who has presented at the Nike Coach of the Year Clinic, Glazier Clinics, Gulf Coast Coaches Clinic, and Ottawa Football Coaches Clinic and is a member of the editorial advisory board of American Football Monthly.

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A Complete Guide to Installing the No-Huddle Offense

Shawn Liotta



Foreword by Coach John Jenkins

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SHAWN LIOTTA

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FOREWORD



THE EVOLUTION OF THE PASSING GAME & THE HURRY-UP NO-HUDDLE OFFENSE

COACH JOHN JENKINS

NO HUDDLE NO MERCY

PLAY FAST - WIN BIG

FOREWORD

It is with great enthusiasm and excitement that I provide Coach Shawn Liotta's intro of his new book, "No Huddle No Mercy". Naturally with a title that is about as self explanatory as any coach can describe this material, puts our current era of football's offensive cycle back out in front as defensive coaches once again are put into a chase mode in an attempt to head off football's ongoing offensive innovations. Coach Liotta has got this informative book loaded with coaching points that will not only allow your team to drive down prior to the end of a half for additional points or near the end of the game to win it all in the closing seconds. This book by Coach Liotta will provide you with an outstanding plan and related coaching points that will enable your offense to go at it "full – throttle" all throughout the game and run your opposition into the dirt ; definitely my brand of football for decades now!

Prior to my lengthy expression toward one of the games bright young coaches in Shawn Liotta, I feel that it is necessary to educate our youthful readers somewhat in the evolution of the Passing Game, right on through to the early success of what was once regarded as the "2 Minute Drill" and then some first - hand early case examples of how up-tempo offenses got going into a full sprint in the beginning stages, right on up to our current era. I suppose that back in the Stone Age, when the Cave Men were trying to beat each other deep down the sideline with rocks there was probably no thought of an emergency plan of implementing a "2 Minute Drill". In all seriousness, as a long- time dedicated student of the game I first became aware of a top notch pass oriented coach by the name of Eddie Cochems, who back in 1906 at a place called St. Louis University sported an undefeated season of (11-0) while out scoring his opposition 407- 11. This outrageous innovative coach boasted that he used 64 different pass plays during that season that provided a huge tremendous edge and subsequent domination over his opposition. Any late game emergency need for some type of two minute drill over at St. Louis University back then? ——— I think not !

It took the coaches in pro football a while to warm up to the idea of actually throwing the ball down the field and over the heads of the opposition, rather than running into each other with their foot soldiers to the tune of making sparks fly for two yards per carry. The Canadian League version of Pro Football actually adopted the rule allowing the use of the forward pass back in 1929 and the NFL got into the act in 1933. Let's accelerate this movement of high level passing into a period of time when the popularity of our game really started to take shape.

In what has been regarded over the many decades as the "Greatest Football Game Ever Played "the 1958 NFL Championship Game was won by the Baltimore Colts over the New York Giants by a score of 23 to 17. In this year of the 100th year of celebration of the existence of the NFL (2019) the legendary status of this specific championship game remains as a result of confirmation by a nationwide media poll in which a overwhelming number of media numbers still vote this title game as the very best in the history of the leagues' 1st 100 years. This specific football game established the start of the NFL's popularity explosion and their rise to the top of the sports market in the USA. This game, which was televised on national television by NBC, also enabled the nation's viewers to witness a rarely used strategy in the last two minutes of regulation play. It was called the "2 Minute Drill". During the game this strategy began with the Colts taking the ball on their own 14 yard line and trailing the Giants by a score of 17-14 with just under two minutes left. Johnny Unitas, the quarterback of the colts, engineered this "2 Minute Drill" which called for a "No - Huddle and Hurry – Up" approach, as they were 86 yards away from their goal line. By whatever method of quickly getting the plays in and out and called at the line Unitas rapidly moved his Colts offense down the field by executing precision pass play completions to the leagues' top receiver, Raymond Berry . Berry finished this game with an all-time receptions record in championship games by pulling in 12 catches during the game. These 12 catches in the NFL title games (or what is now referred to as the Super Bowl) stood for 55 years until it was finally broken. The fast paced execution enabled the NFL Colts to get in position tie the game with a last second field goal and to take this 17 - 17 comeback and then march into the very first sudden death

overtime period in NFL history. The Colts continued their momentum off of their 2 Minute Drill success by marching down for a touchdown in the overtime period to win the NFL Championship over the New York Giants.

I can still remember, as a little boy, seeing the finish of this game on our black and white television in my home out in the windy and dusty high plains town of Pampa, Texas. I was so impressed with this two minute drill and the outcome of this sudden death overtime that I immediately went outside with my football and fantasized about being Johnny Unitas and Raymond Berry after the conclusion of this game. The future use of this so called "2 Minute Drill" did not actually catch on and become a frequent weapon around the NFL for a number of reasons ; reasons by way of decisions of the many closed minded coaches who were operating at this time. Speculation had it as if there was some type of unwritten agreement or unwritten law among the NFL coaches that the No - Huddle and Hurry - Up approach would only be used out of dire desperation, only under the last two minutes remaining in a game. It was unheard of back then that this tactic would even be used occasionally right before the half, in order to possibly get in position for at least a field goal attempt. Shortly after this 1958 "showcase game" came the expansion of the American Football League (AFL), which operated throughout the 1960's. This is about the time that my always wandering mind became highly attracted to the Passing Game. I became a product and strong advocate of the Coach Sid Gillman passing system through Coach Don Breaux, who was my college offensive coordinator at the Arkansas Razorbacks. Coach Breaux was a backup quarterback for Sid Gillman during Sid's San Diego Charger Days. So once again, I became a young product of the Sid Gillman system, through Don Breaux.

The American Football League was much more wide open and "free – wheeling" than the competing NFL back in the 1960s. The Sid Gillman passing "5 Out Series" system was certainly more advanced than anyone during this time. Coach Sid Gillman (now a historic Pro Football Hall of Famer) is known today as the Father of the Modern Day Passing Game. I got the opportunity to meet Coach Sid Gillman personally when I was a young college coach and

consequently spent a lot of valuable time with him conversing about the attack on various defenses. So looking back ——— I was on the cutting edge of wide -open football, even as a young college player. However, as advanced as my national championship caliber team was back then I do not ever recall being prepared for any type of a so called "2 Minute Drill" in the event of a desperate needed comeback that may exist under two minutes left to play in a game. Perhaps Sid's confidence in his own system, back in the 1960's, had him feeling that he would never be trailing an opponent with less than 2 minutes remaining in a game?

Both the NFL and the AFL were followed for a brief two years in the mid 1970's by a competing league that shook and rattled the NFL briefly that called themselves the World Football League (WFL). Here, rules and coaching methods pretty well remained the same as throughout the NFL. The WFL did a lot to rob the NFL of their players whose contracts were expiring. This brought a lot of media publicity, but this upstart league fizzled out quickly in only two years.

Then in the mid 1980's along came another competitor to the NFL ———- The United States Football League (USFL). This league offered a new idea of having pro football revealed in the springtime. Many NFL free agents jumped to this new league as well as overzealous USFL executives being quick to secure many of the top talented college players well before they even examined and entered the NFL spring draft. So, if you will imagine and visualize, fast forward from 1958 to the training camp of the USFL Houston Gamblers. At this time I explored and attempted something unique and very different. I constructed an unusual and most unique offensive approach of practicing as one method of accomplishing superior early season conditioning, in addition to my strong belief of player learning and execution through the use of using high repetition. Being elevated up as Head Coach, Jack Pardee's Offensive Coordinator, I became convincing in our early pre - camp staff meetings by allowing Coach Pardee to let me use 20 minutes of 7 on 7 as well as 20 minutes of offensive team rather than the customary scripted list of 15- 20 plays max. My reasoning was that I felt that by using the Hurry - Up / No - Huddle in practice

continually and repeatedly that my Houston Gamblers offense would accomplish the following:

1. Actually PLAY and PERFORM our offensive players into game shape without wasting time at the end of practice running endless sprints or gassers. For players such as slot receivers, wide receivers and running backs in this type of offense the decision to "play" them into "game shape" with this method turned out to be exactly what I had hoped for, which I will explain soon in regarding the game conditioning objectives. Additionally, as mentioned previously, my strong belief in high reps had me feeling as if I could reel off twice as many practice plays, rather than the slow - methodical 15 to 20 normally scripted plays. This would in turn heighten our overall offensive execution.

2. Prepare our offense for a late possession run, right before the end of the game in the 2 Minute Drill, as we would need to be proficient at this in coming from behind. Naturally we would have to practice this at some point. Due to the complexities and vital points of the Hurry - Up & No - Huddle there would need to be more than a few mere reps at this to become effective and well-polished. Coming from behind for any team is something that needs to be taken seriously and with full preparation and composure by everyone involved. It is going to occur to all teams so why not be fully prepared and confident when it does.

3. I have always been a coach of accomplishing great things from my players by exercising high repetitions in practice. My idea of achieving exceptional results or possibly accomplishing rare feats is to put in high reps to accelerate their learning as well as building the well-oiled precision in execution that we all strive for in our coaching. Again, my belief is that this is done through high reps in practice ——not merely going through the talking points in meetings and assuming that it is going to obviously transfer to success on the field with only a few minimal reps.

The "creation" of the FULL GAME No- Huddle, Hurry - Up actually occurred initially not by my designed plan, but out of desperation. It was not calculated on my part until it actually

occurred once I realized in the heat of a game that it was most necessary to make this move. This move or this "creation" of the full game No - Huddle Hurry - Up Offense was made on the opening day of the season in 1985 at the Los Angeles Coliseum vs. Steve Young's LA Express. Some of the critical elements of this historic game is as follows: Our Houston Gamblers jumped out to a 13 to 0 lead over Los Angeles on our first 2 possessions. My Quarterback, Jim Kelly (Future Hall of Famer) and our speedy receiver crew got out to a quick start in separating away from the man coverage attempts of the LA Express. We actually had a touchdown called back due to a penalty early in the 2nd quarter that would have made this a 20 to 0 burst. Should this touchdown not have been called back it could have changed the complexion of how I called this game anyway, rather than going into the eventual "fast break" Hurry - Up Attack. Los Angeles got on the board right before the half to cut the lead to 13 to 7.

In the 3rd quarter Steve Young (a future Hall Of Famer also) got a hot hand and put some quick scores on the board with his talented scrambling and possession passing. Early in the 4th quarter Jim Kelly got a flat pass picked off by defender, Troy West, who took it back for a touchdown. Just like that our impressive start was now looking like a disaster at 13 to 33 with nearly 10 full minutes left to play in this game. As Jim Kelly came off the field immediately after this pick 6, I took him to the bench and gathered the entire offense, explaining that from this point I would put them into our full sprint, No - Huddle , Hurry - Up. I went over rules with our guys again, such as reminding them that incomplete passes would stop the clock, otherwise they would stay at the line, as well as many other coaching points pertaining to the No - Huddle. I reminded our offensive players that I would continue to signal the plays to Jim Kelly, but at this point they would all be at the line. He would in turn quickly call out my signaled hand sign "codes" of our plays and we would be off and running with very little time expiring.

Amazingly, my fast break approach at this time was a thing of beauty to witness. My Houston Gamblers receivers were in remarkable condition, as this is all that they had prepared for during our training camp. At this time they began flying past the tired and weary Los

Angeles secondary as if their feet were dipped in thick concrete mix. This fast breaking No - Huddle adjustment, combined with my multiple - adjusting route design, along with a rejuvenated - highly enthused Jim Kelly, hit the Los Angeles secondary with an avalanche of aerial verticality that this game had ever seen. Admittedly, our Houston defense certainly did their job also by registering a number of repeated 3 - and - outs. We took the lead 34 to 33 and still had over 2 minutes left in this game. Once we got our hands back on the ball again we simply killed the clock. Our players, staff and entire organization were ecstatic! Additionally, when the "dust cleared" on this one it was announced that Jim Kelly had set an All - Time Pro Football Record of passing for the most yards in a single game in American pro football, breaking Norm Van Brocklin's passing yardage mark that was established in the 1950's. The media concentration was all about this record performance by Kelly. I don't think any of these media members even realized how and why this occurred. However, there was one very sharp observer in attendance that day that knew exactly what historic event had happened. It was the legendary coach, George Allen. Coach Allen was actually there to do a USFL radio spot on the day. Television was not in play as the USFL decided to put Mr. Donald Trumps' team (the New Jersey Generals owner) instead as they were breaking out another new rookie star, Doug Flutie, in his pro football debut.

In our dressing room after the game, upon the near conclusion of our celebrations, I saw George Allen talking with his long- time veteran linebacker and now our Head Coach, Jack Pardee. I witnessed their brief exchange with each other and I saw Jack point toward me, as I sat quietly at this time by my locker. At this point George Allen came over to me, congratulated me on our win and began asking me many questions about what he had seen during our unusual early use of the Hurry - Up session, throughout most of the entire 4th quarter. George told me that he was going to research this but he said that he was sure that my decision to utilize the No - Huddle, Hurry - Up at that point in the game was the very first time that this strategy was ever used outside of the normal last 2 minutes of the game. He told me that he was going to do extensive research on this and call me back during our next week of preparation for our upcoming Tampa Bay game. After this game my head was spinning with creative and

innovative thoughts. I could not get the views of our receivers flying by the tired Los Angeles defensive backs out of my head. It looked even more glaring on the film once I got back to Houston and was able to put the game film on my projector. I knew I was onto something incredibly rare and certainly game - changing!

When our team plane landed back in Houston I quickly began my own research related to this matter. I studied some of the innovations of legendary coach, Paul Brown. Coach Brown is actually the guy responsible for the importance of the 40 yard dash recordings. He also equated this to the normal rest period that players would obtain while in their huddles, prior to the next play. I was all over this material, as I knew that in my studies of the effects of "lactic acid effect", the need for athletes (and lightning fast cheetahs) to have proper recovery time in between 40 yard bursts, the extreme detrimental effect of a player who is robbed of this necessary recovery time in between plays, the extreme detrimental effect on an athlete's body with the normal rest in between plays, etc.

I obviously realized that my entire training camp process had been initially geared for acquiring superior conditioning for my receiving corps. My gosh, were they ever in supreme playing shape! These guys had gone through a month of being used to No - Huddle, fast breaks in practice. Humans are all creatures of habits. This is what my guys were now geared and conditioned for; full games of No - Huddle, Hurry - Up action against all defenses! I was now realizing the negative effect that defenses were going to have if I went the entire game using this method ——- no normal substitutions, no normal rest - recovery by huddling in between plays, their lack of preparation in practices against us, nothing but extreme chaos, as defenders would be "sucking air" all day long. I could not wait to unleash this approach again against our next opponent in Tampa, Florida!

The phone call that I received from Coach George Allen that next week was extremely enlightening. He reiterated that he was correct, as a result of his extensive research and that I was the very 1st coach in the history of pro football to utilize the so called "2 Minute Drill" outside of the customary two minutes of a game. I had been a solid

admirer of Coach George Allen for years. I studied his unique approach to the game, his ingenious use of off season tryout camps, his theory of going for moderate talented veterans over highly talented rookies, his innovative defensive schemes, etc. I was finally able to meet him personally in the spring of 1978, when I was a young coach for the Arkansas Razorbacks. Coach Allen had just been hired to return to the Los Angeles Rams after doing a great job for the Washington Redskins, taking them to the Super Bowl once. I spent 3 days with Coach Allen and the Rams staff back then. He could sense my sincere dedication to this game and took a real liking to me. I quickly learned what a shrewd businessman and unique coach George Allen was. It was at this time (1978) that the NFL took drastic measures to improve the offensive output of their teams. It was at this exact year (1978) that the "5 Yard Jam Rule" was put into effect ——— all because of the effects that George Allen's innovative designed defenses have had on receivers over the years by employing techniques of what he referred to as "butching, axing, and absorbing" their routes at the important break- points of their patterns over the years. George Allen had also brought in another brilliant minded defensive coach, Bud Carson, to assist him with his "2nd Version" in coaching the LA Rams, where he had been highly successful during his 1st Version throughout the 1960's. Coach Carson had been the brilliant defensive mind behind the Pittsburgh Steelers trips to the Super Bowl in the early to mid 1970's.

Getting back to the follow up phone call to me by George Allen, he talked to me candidly and in confidential- classified fashion about my future intentions of my expansive Hurry - Up No- Huddle approach. I confided in Coach Allen, telling him that my players were trained well for this departure from "normal football" and I intended to now go full games of "fast break football". Coach Allen then told me that he knew that something like this would come along eventually to change the ordinary path of how football would be played. He told me that when he first met me back in 1978 he knew that I was clearly an "outside the box thinker", a coach that would eventually be looking to propel beyond the ordinary methods of coaching. He said that I was now in position to disrupt defenses in the game like they have never been negatively impacted, ever in the history of the game! We went on to discuss the "offensive and defensive cycles" of the

game over the years and how and why these cycles occurred. He said that this action, on my part, would definitely catapult offenses into an upward trajectory in the future.

As far as the " immediate future " my immediate concern was a talented team that Coach Steve Spurrier had on his hands in Tampa Bay, waiting for our arrival. However, after a spirited week of practice back home in Houston, we could not wait to get to Tampa! My Houston offense unleashed a whirlwind attack on Spurriers 'hapless defenders. Our full game of Hurry - Up relentless passing offense had rolled up a near 60 points on his team before the end of the 3rd quarter. However, something of a severe negative nature occurred to us during this offensive outrage vs. Tampa Bay. That was the cheap shots that an underachieving safety, Zac Henderson, repeatedly took at the knees of our receivers, due to his continual reactions of always showing up a couple of steps late after their receptions. Consequently, he was eventually able to "cut - down" one of my talented receivers, Ricky Sanders, late in the game and sent him to the operating table, thus having our team now lose him for most of the season. Our remaining cast of speed receivers picked up the slack, but a rash of injuries is something that can quickly derail a great plan of going full game Hurry - Up.

After our first 5 games of the season in being undefeated, running defenses into the dirt with outrageous offensive scores and yardage gains the national media became nearly unanimous about our USFL Houston Gamblers as being the most outstanding and entertaining team in ALL of pro football, which made everyone around our league, not to mention all of those in the NFL, furious. As a result of our rare early season results one national well known sportswriter projected Jim Kelly's season ending totals to end with something like 80 touchdown passes, massive amounts of passing yardage that looked like typographical errors, etc. Some of the "old school warrior coaches" in the NFL dismissed my approach of going full game Hurry - Up as "Bush - League" and for it to never work smoothly in their league.

It wasn't until a sharp coach, such as Sam Wyche, first began using this method in 1988 at Cincinnati in the NFL. Not surprising, he led

their league during this time in offense. Additionally, at the repeated and convincing urging of Jim Kelly (I am sure of), Coach Marv Levy of the Buffalo Bills came to me with an offer to join them there and naturally implement my Hurry - Up Design. I graciously declined knowing that my developing momentum at Houston was about to hit a "fever pitch "with the progress of my offense. I naturally questioned the brutal outside winter elements of Buffalo, as well as other parts of the north, in being able to effectively adapt to this with consistency and success. Evidently I was wrong, as Jim Kelly, already highly spoiled to the end results of our previous USFL attack, became instrumental on his own to Coach Levy and his companion NFL staff members in implementing what became widely known around the NFL and the entire football world as the "K - Gun Offense". Jim Kelly and the NFL Bills reeled off 4 straight AFC championships in the early 1990's, which to this day has not ever been matched by another NFL team, not even with the dynasty dominance of the Belichick- Brady's New England Patriots.

As for myself, once the result of the NFL - USFL lawsuit concluded with a jury finding the NFL guilty of major antitrust litigation, but the judge surprisingly awarding no monetary damages, I returned again to the major college ranks. As fate would have it, future President of the USA, Donald Trump, then owner of the USFL New Jersey Generals had purchased our Houston Gamblers in a merger to combine with his team in the New York City area. As his handpicked selection of being his offensive coordinator of the "Super Dream Team Offense" he was counting on forcing a merger of our Generals into the NFL, much the same as the AFL was absorbed back in the late 1960's. In the installation of my Hurry - Up Offense with then owner, Donald Trump's Generals, I had an assembly of talent like that of never before being witnessed on the pro level. Future NFL pro bowlers filled my roster with the likes of Jim Kelly, Doug Flutie, Herschel Walker, Ricky Sanders, Clarence Verdin, Gerald McNeal, Richard Johnson, Kent Hull, and many more talented players. Confidential viewers who I invited to our workouts, mini - camps, etc. told me that my offense resembled that of a "fast break NBA basketball game". Interesting note is that if this judge had not taken the action that he did and we were indeed absorbed into an NFL merger I would bet that President Donald Trump would

have had the same increasing value to his New York City Area team as Jerry Jones' Dallas Cowboys. As much as he loves football he would probably not have ever gotten steered toward the political arena. Unfortunately for all of the radical liberal objectionists that President Trump now battles on a daily basis the judge did not award any high dollar damages which was expected after the jury's determination. Witnessing this exceptional group of offensive personnel that we had assembled to eventually shred NFL defenses all of a sudden be sent into an emergency supplemental cast - off to NFL teams, as the USFL folded up, was enough for me to crawl off and throw up for days. However, no time for self - pity and self - destruction! I worked the phones for days until we got every one of our USFL Generals players signed by NFL teams; every single one of them! Then I began to start looking after myself. Amazingly, Coach Mike Gottfried, who in the winter of 1986 just took the job at the University of Pittsburgh (who I had helped with some selective play selection to beat Oklahoma one season when he was at Kansas), was quick to call and offer me a challenge to come in and put in my offense for him at Pittsburgh. Never mind that he was opening the season in about 2 weeks. I would absolutely have no thought of installing my Hurry - Up offense under these circumstances. ——- But this is another story that could fill up a couple volumes of books on their own.

Getting a fresh start going into the 1987 season I was determined to establish and introduce the same identical innovative design on the major college level that I had created in pro football. Upon my arrival to the University of Houston Cougars, as offensive coordinator, I carefully calculated my initial offensive design. During the first portion of this 1987 season I was extremely careful NOT to implement my Hurry - Up Design right away, due to the lack of talent that was present and due to the rebuilding effort that we, as a coaching staff, had in front of us. The previous staff had finished their last season with a 1 - 10 record in addition to having severe depleted personnel offensively. Additionally, the NCAA was promising to come in soon with a serious probation due to previous years of violations and many of the alumni and faculty were seriously discussing dropping the sport of football.

This is one thing that must be quickly acknowledged, as Coach Shawn Liotta makes note of in this book, and that is if your talent is sub-par then you need to be calculated in applying a No - Huddle, Hurry - Up approach. Therefore, there needs to be an adequate degree of offensive consistency produced initially; one that can put a number of first downs back to back, producing some big plays out in the free - wheeling zone of the field. Otherwise you will have a "Hurry - Up and Punt" type of offense on your hands and all of your special teamers and defense will have severe leg cramps before halftime! In this specific book regarding this fast - paced No - Huddle approach Coach Liotta will guide you through the pitfalls and adversity that you will need to be prepared to overcome. Coach Liotta's expertise and high degree of management skills will assist you along the path to success.

Regardless of my patient calculations on the implementation of any type of No - Huddle offensive design it is to always acknowledge that the teaching and the learning process of base play design should be implemented with exact relative fundamentals initially. Most extreme importance, having a solid understanding of all of the defensive confrontations must be well understood before there is any conversation and discussion of offensive football. As mentioned previously, this was the initial theme in the early foundation being laid back in 1987 on the major college level. Once our players worked themselves past the learning process, back in the early stages of the 1987 season, then I was able to ease in and incorporate aspects of the fast break No- Huddle. Once I was able to realize some adequate degree of consistent execution and witness the imperative quarterback - receiver chemistry then we were able to move on with the fast break. Although in my overall assessment of this situation, we were still working with moderate receiver talent, as I was working diligently and with great determination to convert and develop a couple of track sprinters and a baseball player, who could really run the bases, as football players. We finally arrived at an explosive point offensively around mid-season when we played the Texas Longhorns in this opening year of ours in 1987, as we erupted for a 60 point outrage against them for a strong power - packed victory in our Houston Astrodome.

In my 2nd season (1988) our QB's and 2nd year receivers were ready to "go fast" all of the time. Consequently we rolled up scores of 69 to 0; 86 to 28 (which was actually 75 to 0 at the end of 3 quarters) and in a rematch with the Texas Longhorns we punished them once again to the tune of 66 to 15 in front of their own packed house in Austin, Texas. Actually, it was packed until halftime. A couple of memorable points about this day is that of the old school theory of dominating time of possession in order to achieve victory? On this day my offensive charges scored so fast and so often that on this day the Texas Longhorns overwhelmed the clock theory by edging us by way of 42 minutes to our 18 minutes in the game. Yet in our fast break No - Huddle we had them down 31 to 3 at the half in cruising to our 66 to 15 victory. Most satisfying was the fact that my starting quarterback on this day was a player who the Texas Longhorns refused to give an opportunity to play quarterback for them, insisting that he would be much better as a defensive back in college. This player was Andre Ware, who rolled up huge numbers as my quarterback on the Longhorns every time he played against them. Andre won the Heisman Trophy during his junior year for me at Houston in 1989.

I have often been asked over the years if there was an opposing coaching staff who played us smart and well against my No - Huddle approach. My answer comes back to again, that 1988 season vs. Wyoming. Paul Roach's Wyoming came into this Thursday night ESPN game with a top 10 ranked team sporting a 10 - 0 record against our own national ranking. Coach Roach had his defensive secondary and backers come out early to open the 1st quarter showing me a pre - snap coverage look. Once I glanced it over and made my call to quarterback, Andre Ware, and upon Andre making the code call up and down the line the Wyoming defense quickly checked out into a completely different defense. My receivers still read and reacted well to their coverage upon the snap but after two early 1st Quarter possessions of facing this I instructed our players on the bench, prior to the next possession, that we would execute our "two consecutive calls at the line. What this involved was simply running the play call on the 1st play. Then on the 2nd play we would run a pre-designed play on the 1st sound. This caught the Wyoming Cowboys completely off guard on this 2nd play as we beat them deep

and this was the last that we saw of their jockeying of disguises for the rest of the game. We built a dominating 34 to 3 lead against a very good football team to close out 34 to 10 once we cleared the bench in the 4th quarter.

There is nothing better than experience and carry - over of top notch football players in this style of offensive design. My 1989 and 1990 teams were a very experienced, very smart, very fast and talented record-breaking crew who believed strongly in what I believed in! As a result, these two offenses registered the top total offenses in the history of college football. Banners all over the world famous Astrodome stadium read "College Footballs' Greatest Show", and it indeed was! Over 300 all-time major college records were established and re-established over and over during this time by this group of players.

I continued to move and advance my no-huddle approach around with varying change ups over the years, just as Coach Liotta is doing currently, which he explains is important throughout this book. During this period of time I believe a few things remained constant with all of the defenses that I have gone up against and that is as follows:

1. The opposition had no clue of how to prepare their defenses against our multiple - adjusting play design.
2. The opposition had no preparation of readying their defensive players against the onslaught of rapid-fire plays coming at them in a fast pace Hellfire fashion!

3. The opposition had no chance of giving their defenders constant and much needed substitutions during a full game of "fast break football" that I was always very anxious and ready to unleash on them.

4. The opposition scout teams would not be able to show any resemblance of the relentless speed in which we would come after them with, not to mention that their card plays would be totally inaccurate, due to the adjusting of routes that would be revealed vs. their categories of pass coverage.

5. The opposition would have no answer to my wave of prized "Red Receiver Corps" as well as the entire intent and well calculated play selection that these groups of players would have on them as they would quickly substitute in and out on the opposition at varying points during the game.

***** The above misfortunes that the opposition has to adjust to leaves these concerned defenders in a state of horrible "internal chemistry shutdown". In more simplified terms this offensive strategy quickly and quite simply "warps" the defenses will to win as their extreme fatigue takes over their bodies!

I could go into an endless list of case examples that re-enforces the effect that defensive players have continued to suffer from. In the 1989 pounding of the Texas Longhorns one of their talented pro bound linebackers, Brian Jones, was quoted after the game in saying that he could hardly remember all of the touchdowns and big plays that they gave up. He went on to say that he was so tired and weary, trying to stay up with our offense, that the entire game seemed like a big ugly blur to him. This was precisely my intention!

The master technician of my hurry-up attack in the early 1990's was quarterback, David Klingler, owner of numerous all-time major college passing records; many of which still remain today after 30 years. After making his presence known in the NFL upon becoming one of the top picks in the 1st round of the NFL draft, today David Klingler has a Dr.'s Degree in Theology. Consequently, I have continually joked with him that any and all defensive backs who attempted to get in the way of our No - Huddle fast paced offense during his time, in playing for me, faced a more horrible sensation than that of the wrath of the Old Testament!

As the years and decades roll on I have ushered in more and more star-studded quarterbacks, running backs, and receivers, who have been great committed performers in my "Multiple - Adjusting Pass Offense". Naturally the hell-bent fast breaking No - Huddle Hurry - Up has been a predominant feature of all of my offenses over the years, once I have gotten them through the initial learning process

and they have begun to reveal supreme degrees of execution. Some of these additional all-time record breaking quarterbacks who flourished greatly under my direction in this system are as follows: Doug Flutie (topping over 50 TD passes in a single season); Jon Nielsen, who like David Klingler, tipped the scales with 11 TD passes in a single game; Anthony Calvillo (becoming the All - Time Career Passing Yardage leader in all of pro football), Kerwin Bell, becoming the CFL All - Time Record holder (during one point) for completion percentage in a season; Matt Dunigan, joining David Klingler as a 700 plus yardage passer in a single game; young Jimmy Klingler, who also was an NCAA passing champion as a sophomore in college for me and had his own day vs. those Texas Longhorns by rolling up a Longhorn school record of near 800 yards of total offense on them on one fine afternoon of work; Todd Dillon, David Dacus, Donald Douglas, Eric Crouch , Kliff Kingsbury, Casey Weldon, Stanley Jackson, Jimmy Kemp, and a number of others.

As the years and decades have continued to roll by, as I stated previously in this introduction, football has and will continue to go into cycles —— offensive and defensive cycles. However, I am kind of wondering if the next defensive cycle intends to ever show itself again during my lifetime. Ha! Throughout the years other teams and coaches have joined in and followed suit in the hurry - up , no - huddle rage such as Coach Archie Cooley, on the small college level at Mississippi Valley, during his showcasing of Willie Totten and Jerry Rice; Coach Mike Leach, who has fully declared himself for years at Texas Tech, recently at Washington State and now is off to the SEC, who will now get a taste of his own specialized No - Huddle cooking; Coach Gus Malzahn, who has revealed his No - Huddle style of offensive attack, currently at Auburn over the years, but may have shown his very best work in this style of operation about 15 years ago at Tulsa, which seemed to go unrecognized; Coach Chip Kelly, who began speeding up things out on the west coast at Oregon, beginning in 2007 and then revealed his similar version to the NFL with the Eagles briefly; my young pupil, Kliff Kingsbury, who went back to his West Texas hitching post of Texas Tech to give defenses fits and now enters into the NFL and now- ———- Coach Shawn Liotta, who I have regarded for some while as truly, one of the top young coaches and teachers in our current game. Coach Liotta's dedicated

efforts, knowledge and insights combined with his relentless work ethic toward this specific type of offensive operation always on the edge of new, fresh breakouts.

Over my many decades of coaching football every now and then I have come across a small number of coaches who really catch my attention due to their genuine dedication and respect to this great game of football; a few coaches who I know are in this profession for the right reasons; a small number of coaches whose lessons to their players have applications that reach far beyond the line of scrimmage in the no-huddle offense; a small number of coaches who have that "winning edge" about them in just about every tactical move that they make. Coach Shawn Liotta is one of these few coaches who I am referring to.

This book by Coach Shawn Liotta will certainly assist and propel any coach on any level to help their teams reach their next level of success. Thinking of every level of football is what impresses me greatly about Coach Liotta. Here is a guy who has made all of the sacrifices of the hard work required in high school coaching. He has elevated himself up and through the ranks. His enthusiasm for the game and his players are the same, regardless whether they are seasoned pros, who he has coached to great success in arena football, or adolescent youths looking for an impacting positive leader, such as himself, to give them positive direction and continual enthusiasm in life. His energy and positive demeanor is the same for all levels of football that he coaches!

Every chapter and every section of this book by Coach Shawn Liotta delves into the critical factors of elevating the aspects of the no-huddle & hurry-up attacks to new success levels. This book will be essential in staying ahead of those "defensive cycles" that I have made brief reference to. Many of my previous remarks throughout this introduction may perhaps appear as if I have little regard for the dedicated defensive coaches of the world. In all seriousness it is just the opposite! Good, experienced, dedicated defensive coaches do not take the same whipping by the same offensive coaches year after year! In coaching, as in life, for every corner you turn there are ambushes awaiting you. Life is a series of ambushes! Do you have

answers and positive reactions to thwart the next set of ambushes when they hit you? The outstanding energy flowing from the pages of this book, by Coach Liotta, certainly gives me fresh desire to thwart the next set of attempted ambushes that come my way ——— in football and in life!

This No Huddle No Mercy Offense of Coach Shawn Liotta has chapters of key loaded material that will inspire and clarify many of the specific issues, concerns and questions that you may have regarding your own hurry up attack; chapter material such as being able to quickly codify and get those calls out to the players in rapid - fire fashion; the critical keys of success in playing fast; the progression of installation during the off - season development; varied troubleshooting issues that can be anticipated and solved before they come up; the critical game day coordination, staff organization and methods of operation from the opening kick- off to the final whistle and more!

Hey! After reading this book from this bright young coach, who is on the move, I am sure that key elements and material from these pages will enlighten and stimulate your own thinking and possibly propel your own creative ideas to utilize within your own program. This is what we, as dedicated coaches, refer to as valuable experience!

Upon the conclusion of your reading here you must also examine and ask what direction is this game - changing strategy of many decades heading now and where is the exact future of the no-huddle, fast break offensive movement? Naturally we are all aware of the current utilization of radio transmissions from coaches to the quarterback headgears. I can assure you that the receivers - backs and probably even the offensive linemen will be in line for this service as well. So we can put our color coded play calling poster boards up on the shelves, as well as our use of the "old school" hand signals naturally. Also, for all of you guys who are so full of yourself that you continue to copy each other by covering your mouth with your play - calling charts, as if the opposition is reading your lips, you can "get off that stick horse" right now!

Future movements? As mentioned, Coach Shawn Liotta is on the move! This explicitly detailed book will get you going in that direction also and it will offer you many formulas for victory! As for me? I am currently heading into my 8th pro football league and I have some serious No-Huddle activity on my mind; this, as well as me spontaneously going outside, tossing the ball around and continuing to fantasize about being John Unitas or Raymond Berry, going down the field in that two minute drill with about 40 seconds or so remaining in the game? How about that? Some of us just never seem to grow up!

Coach John Jenkins
Veteran Professional & Major College Coach of Over 45 Years

CHAPTER 1

PHILOSOPHY OF THE NO-HUDDLE ATTACK



PHILOSOPHY OF THE NO-HUDDLE OFFENSE

Over the past twenty two seasons I have had the privilege to coach the greatest game in the world. I have been able to be a part of championship teams at the College, High School, and Professional levels and have been able to implement and develop a no-huddle system during this journey that has established school, league, state, and national records. It has been a blessing to be able to coach with and learn from so many excellent coaches through the years, many of their ideas that I have utilized will be found contained in the pages of this book. I have had the good fortune of coaching so many talented, smart, and hardworking players at all of my coaching stops who have bought into the system that they were taught and worked hard to execute at a high level. As you read through the pages of this book I hope that you will find some source of inspiration for ideas that will take your offense to the next level, but always remember this game is about players and not plays. Find ways to isolate your best players on your opponents worst players, be disciplined, teach outstanding fundamentals, get your players to believe in your plan of attack, and you will enjoy outstanding offensive success. I hope that this "No Huddle No Mercy" book becomes a great reference tool for you whether you are a veteran coach or a new coach just starting out in the coaching profession.

The material that will be presented in this book is designed to give you a complete overview of how to install a no huddle mentality within your program from A to Z. Whether you choose to implement the no huddle as a full time method of attack or as a change of pace to your offense, you will find all of the necessary information and guidance in this book to do so. This book is not a collection of plays, but a complete and thorough examination of how to take your offensive system and turn it into a fast paced no huddle attack that will move the chains, pile up yardage in chunks, and light up the scoreboard. You will be provided with all of the details needed to take this information and quickly apply it to your individual program with great success. It does not matter if you are a spread team, wing-t, flexbone, run and shoot, single wing, or pro-style offense; I have helped coaches across the country implement

this no-huddle mentality to their current situation that places their kids into the best situation for success.

Play Fast- Generate Excitement in Your School and Community

I have had the pleasure to coach many outstanding offensive units while operating from a No-Huddle mindset. In 2014 as the offensive coordinator at Clairton High School in Pennsylvania we took an extremely talented unit and turned them into a complete buzz saw against all competition on our way to a state scoring record with 958 total points scored. This point total was good for second all-time nationally despite the state of Pennsylvania having a "mercy rule" where the clock ran continuously in the second half when a team is leading by 35 points or more. The "No Huddle No Mercy" moniker was actually born at this time as the Clairton fans created T-Shirts, Signs, Towels, and various other items that could be found in the stands at our games each Friday night. This program was used to winning having previously won 66 straight games, however became energized with this new up-tempo style of attacking offense.

During my coaching career I have also had the challenge of taking over many down-trodden programs that have been saddled with some losing seasons. These are often the most rewarding situations as your staff works hard to change the fortunes of a program. The "No Huddle No Mercy" offense has been critical in helping us to turn around the fortunes of programs while increasing interest and excitement in the community. We have been able to increase roster numbers, on-field success, and shattered school records at every stop while implementing this system.

It is important to stay with the process as you install the system at a school that has historically struggled. In my last two coaching stops I have experienced this first hand as in 2016 during our first year of installing the system at my previous coaching stop we were defeated by a historically strong program 49-6, only to turn around and register one of the largest upsets in district history the following season 28-27. Our players were not better athletically than the opponent in this situation, however the no-huddle system, and the

belief and execution of our players put us in a position to pull off a gigantic upset on the road. This became a signature win for our program and generated tremendous amounts of enthusiasm, interest, and support for our turnaround efforts.

We are currently enjoying this success at Burrell High School as in our first year with the program we took over a program that had not had a winning season since 2012, and had only won one game the year before our arrival. During our first season we implemented this "Play Fast" philosophy on offense and finished the season with at times 18 players at a Class 3A school while winning two games. This past season we were able to double our roster numbers, shatter school offensive records, finish with the first winning season in nearly a decade, and enjoyed the biggest single season turnaround in our classification from 2018-2019. This was a direct reflection of our second year in the offensive system and getting our best athletes in the district to come out for football. A big part of that was how much FUN our players were having in our style of play offensively.

The System is Fun for Players and Fans

This "No Huddle No Mercy" style of play is without question FUN for your players and fans. Practices no longer feel like work, but are fun as players are invested in the process of playing fast. In our style of offense we spread the ball around to as many players as possible and on most of our plays multiple players have the ability to potentially touch the football. This breeds a team-first concept and allows players to be more engaged, work harder, and enjoy seeing the success of their teammates. It is much easier to get your players out there on the field to work hard for two hours and stay alert in meetings when they feel that they have the opportunity to contribute and ultimately score on any snap. This makes practices more FUN and less like work. How we practice and implement the system helps to accomplish this goal, as you will read further in later chapters of this book.

Your fan base will become energized with this "Play Fast" mentality as your team will always be attacking, and ultimately your games will feature more actual game play. I am a big believer in the more snaps

that you get during a ballgame will greatly increase your opportunities to put points on the scoreboard. Fans want to see offenses move up and down the field scoring often at a breakneck pace. This is the game that is seen every Saturday in college football and Sundays in the NFL. Attendance at your games will increase and you will see enhanced media exposure for your program as you begin to do things just a little outside the box. All of this equates ultimately to a fun environment for everyone involved with your football program. Your offensive success could create unique problems for your athletic administration, for example during our past seasons successful run we actually ran out of room in our schools press box due to the media coverage and interest in our program.

Fun Football = Roster Increase

One of the benefits to operating with a "No Huddle No Mercy" mentality is that you will see an increase in your roster numbers. As the word spreads about how you plan to operate on the offensive side of the ball interest in your program will increase. Multiple sport athletes will want to get involved and players who may have been reluctant about investing the time to play football previously will be quickly brought into your program as they hear their classmates talk of how much FUN football is and they see the records being set and different players getting the opportunity to contribute on the field on Friday nights. From year one to year two you will generally see a significant roster increase as your players become the best ambassadors and recruiters for your program as they hit the hallways of your school encouraging all of the top athletes to join your program. A key factor in the success of any program is your players wanting to be a part of a winner and to have FUN. If you are able to create an atmosphere in your program where both of these variables occur you will see an increase in your numbers as well as getting the best athletes in your hallways into your program, and as I indicated earlier this is the key as this game is about players not plays.

Establish The Tempo of the Game

"Playing Fast" will allow you establish the pace of play and dictate the tempo to the defense. By having the opportunity to have an immediate snap at all times you will force the defense out of their comfort zone. You will have the ability to lengthen the game by being able to run more plays during the game time. This allows you to have more opportunities to "hit a home run". An analogy that I commonly use was think of the game as a home run derby. If one batter has 40 pitches to hit and another has 75 pitches to hit, which one do you believe is going to "hit more home runs"? I will take my chances with the 75 pitches. This same philosophy applies to a fast paced hurry up no huddle approach.

By having the threat of an immediate snap you will place a tremendous amount of stress on the defense and the defensive coaches. What makes this most effective is you will control the tempo for the game. If you want to go fast you will just continue to call plays and roll along. If you want to slow the tempo down with a check with me or what we call our "freeze cadence" you have the ability to do that also. By utilizing a sugar huddle or our "scatter" package you will further dictate the pace and tempo of the game to your opponent. We will examine all of these tempo changes in greater detail throughout this book.

The key is to always have the ability to play as fast as possible. As a play caller you can control the tempo to go as slow or fast as you want, but it is critical that the defense feels the threat of an immediate snap at all times. This is why I do not believe a no-huddle system that constantly is using a check with me with all players looking to the sidelines for the "perfect play call" truly affects the defense in the same manner. This slower no-huddle tempo employed by many teams will just allow the defense to operate in much the same manner as they typically do. Also more and more teams are running a "generic" spread offense with one tempo such as this that is not truly a hurry up no huddle system but more of a mill around at the line of scrimmage use 20 seconds or so of the play clock and then snap the ball. In my opinion defenses have become conditioned to this style

of play and it does not stress them in the same manner as the constant threat of a fast break no huddle attack.

Offensive Goals

1. Play Fast- We want the defense to always have to be prepared for an immediate snap of the football. This is the entire basis of our system. Get lined up, get the play call, and be ready to execute your assignment. Make things simple for your players but appear difficult to defend for your opponent.

2. Make Defense Defend Entire Field (Horizontally and Vertically)- We want to spread the ball around and attack the defense from sideline to sideline and goal line to goal line.

3. Utilize Formations, Motions, and Shifts to Create and Attack Space- We will present the defense with a variety of looks offensively each will that will window-dress our base concepts and create opportunities to gain a numbers or leverage advantage at the point of attack. We will teach our quarterback how to find space in the defense and attack that space.

4. Create Defensive Conflict Through Tempo, Formations, Motions, and Shifts- We will present exotic looks and formations to the defense that will force them to spend preparation time to be aligned properly to defend without giving up a cheap touchdown. This takes time away from the defense preparing to stop our base concepts.

5. Always Attacking – Expectation to Score on Every Possession- We will have supreme confidence through our preparation that we will score on every possession, and no matter what the defensive look that is presented to us we will have a plan to attack it effectively. With our quick strike capability on offense we will never feel that we are "out of a game". When we have the lead we will not revert to a conservative approach however we will keep attacking in the manner that brought us the lead in the first place.

Implementing the "No Huddle No Mercy" with your Feeder Systems

As I discuss our offensive system with coaches across the country I am often asked the question of "can I run this with my middle school program"? The simple answer is yes, I have helped countless programs implement this at their middle school level and even throughout their youth programs. Remember that playing fast is a mentality, and not a collection of plays. Many of the play concepts that we run at the Varsity and Junior Varsity level do not translate well to players at the middle school and youth levels. However what does translate and is often even harder to defend is applying extreme tempo. By playing fast at the youth level or middle school level you are really putting opponents in a bind schematically and from a preparation standpoint.

I host clinics every year with my feeder programs where we share the basics and details of our system and I have seen first-hand how these coaches have been able to adapt the concepts to the lower levels with great success. This helps to build the No Huddle culture throughout all levels of your program and gets players ready for the expectation of playing at the tempo we require at the Varsity level. The most important thing at these levels is teaching kids fundamentals and a love for the game of football so that they want to continue through the program and join us under the Friday Night Lights one day. These programs can implement the no huddle strategy with the offensive systems that they currently use that are designed to fit their age level and talent.

For example one youth team in your feeder program of 8-9 year olds may base their offense out of a power I. Once you add the element of a no huddle to that, it is amazing how difficult it can be for a defense to get properly aligned against unbalanced formations, not to mention the fact that many times it is very difficult for kids at this level to get aligned even with a slower pace and being able to huddle. This creates an extraordinary advantage for the offense and allows all of the players moving through the ranks in your community to see the value of playing fast and lighting up the scoreboard.

I would suggest as a Varsity Football coach doing everything in your power to work in collaboration with your local youth leagues and feeder system to teach them the basics of your offensive and defensive systems and fundamental drills. We host a coaches clinic for our local youth league coaches each season, run an "Air Raid" Flag Football Camp during the spring free of charge for all youth in our district that is hosted by our local youth organization, and we even bring our Varsity team down to the youth league field during our pre-season camp to hold a joint practice with our local youth organization. The more you can do to teach the game of football to young people in your community and grow the game, the more successful your program will be in the long run.

CHAPTER 2

PUTTING THE PEDAL DOWN

"THE KEYS TO PLAYING FAST"



Putting the Pedal Down- Keys to Playing Fast

As we continue to examine the no huddle offensive attack, let's take a look at what is important as you set the foundation for implementing a "play fast" mentality. Many of you reading this book may already be currently running similar systems and having great success with your way of doing things. I ask you to review this material with open eyes as I believe you will find some ideas that you may adapt or tweak to your current situation that will propel your program even further offensively. If you are a coach that is completely new to running this type of attack, I urge you to carefully review this material to ensure that you understand all of the details necessary to be successful with this style of play. No two football programs are the same, each school or team that you coach at will have its own sets of challenges when installing this philosophy, however I believe most of what I will cover in this chapter has application to most programs from coast to coast.

Developing a "Play Fast" Culture

Everything that we do as a program revolves around a "Play Fast" culture. We even have shirts made that have this slogan on it that the players wear, it appeared on the front of our game program that was sold in our stadium this past season, it appears in our weight room, simply put you cannot look anywhere and not see this "Play Fast" logo. This trickles down to everything we do from our off-season program right up until the ball is kicked off on a Friday Night. You have to believe in this style of attack in-order to have a complete buy-in from your players, coaching staff, administration, and community. I believe there are three key elements of trust, communication, and structure that must be established within your program to foster a "Play Fast" culture.

It is extremely important that if you plan to go to this style of system on a full time basis that you commit fully to it. You will experience setbacks and there will be growing pains, much the same way that anything worthwhile in the world is built. Success does not happen overnight in anything, particularly with all of the moving parts necessary to assemble an efficient American Football offense. You

and your coaching staff must be 100% committed to the system and understand how to troubleshoot issues as they present themselves. If you believe in the system and have a complete understanding of how to teach and implement your concepts then your players will believe in the plan of attack and will fully embrace the "Play Fast" culture.

If you are able to get your players to have a complete understanding of what you are teaching you will be successful with any style of system you choose to operate. On the opposite end of that spectrum if there is doubt that exists in their minds and you do not have a total and complete buy in from your players and coaching staff, it will be difficult to be successful if you are running the Wing-T, Spread, or any other offense that has ever been drawn on a whiteboard. There must be trust, communication, and structure to any offensive strategy that is introduced. The fast paced no huddle attack is no different, and in reality as I will illustrate throughout the pages of this book, often require more advanced planning and preparation to implement properly. Your players must TRUST that you are going to put them in the best possible chance to be successful each and every week, and that you will have schematic answers to handle defensive adjustments to your offensive attack.

Organization and Codification of Your Offense

A critical component of developing your no-huddle attack is organizing your attack and properly codifying the offense so that it can be easily understood by your players through multiple means of communication (signals, verbal, signs) in a rapid fire manner. I will take a deep dive into the element of how to properly organize and create a "language" for your offense that can be easily communicated to your team, hard to decode by the defense, and most importantly easily learned by your players. The key to playing extremely fast is to be able to have a system of quickly relaying your play call and allowing your players to "play fast". I am a firm believer that if your players are thinking they are not playing fast, therefore we make every effort through the codification of our offense to make it very easy to learn for our players.

The other challenge for you as a coach is to determine the scope or overall "menu" of your offense. You will only have time to teach, install, and run a set number of plays during the week as you get ready for the game. This necessitates the importance of paring down your offense to a manageable number of plays that will allow you to get a ton of high repetitions of each play during the week at practice. As I will detail in depth in a later section of this book, we install our offense using a 3 day schedule. This means that we rotate the concepts that we get high repetitions of every 3 days.

A sample single installation day could consist of the following:

(1 or 2) Base Run Concepts

(1 or 2) Quick Game (Run Game Relief Concepts)

Choice Routes (Daily)

(1 or 2) Base Pass (Drop Back)

(1 or 2) Screens (Run Game Relief Concepts)

(1 or 2) Gadget or Exotic Play Concepts
(1 or 2) Shot Plays/ Play Action Pass

That will give us anywhere from 7-10 Total Play Concepts that we will be installing on any given day. This installation process begins in the spring and will continue through fall camp and the regular season.

There are also some concepts that we will drill and work on every single day at practice throughout the year. These concepts are typically our "choice" routes or multiple adjusting route concepts. Because our players are making decisions based on the leverage and technique of the defensive coverages this requires our receivers and quarterback to be in total synergy, which necessitates that we practice these concepts daily. As you work through your own offensive system, you will certainly uncover similar concepts in your offense that are considered "expensive" plays that will require a large amount

of practice repetitions to master them. On the other hand you may have other more basic plays in your offense that are "cheap" installs such as a gadget or trick play that you may only devote a few repetitions to each week.

As you begin to outline your offense it is important to always try to keep plays that work in conjunction with each other on the same day. This can greatly simplify your installation and teaching time. I will provide you with our full 3 day sample installation schedule later in this book but for the time being let's take a look at a few examples of pairing installation concepts together. For example on Day 1 of our install schedule we will put in the "Inside Zone" run concept. On the same day we will put in our "Fast Screen" to an outside wr, and our "Stick" concept to an inside receiver. Both of these concepts can be utilized as stand-alone plays or paired in conjunction with the "Inside Zone" run play as what we term a run game "relief". Many coaches refer to these as Run Pass Options (RPO) or Screen Run Options (SRO). By installing these concepts on the same day it allows them to be easily paired together which reduces the overall teaching time.

Considerations When Adding a New Play Concept

Another important consideration is that as the season goes along you will be tempted to add plays to your "menu". When you get the need to add a new concept, and what I mean by concept is a complete new play and not a variation or window dressing of a current play- You must take something out. If you are truly maximizing your reps and practice time and you are adding a play concept that you must teach to your players then you must remove a play from your menu. It's the same concept as the large restaurant menu that you look at when you are out to eat. Everything on it looks good and probably tastes good, but IS IT GOOD FOR YOU.

When adding a play to the offense I always consider the following factors

1. Does it bring value to you as a football team
2. Does it fit our overall scheme and talent on THIS team

3. Is it an "Expensive" Install or a "Cheap" one
4. Does it build off of something we already do offensively
5. Will it give us a schematic advantage on Friday night due to our opponents alignments and personnel matchups
6. Does it "fix" an issue or contingency situation for us; examples- short yardage, long yardage, edge pressure, interior pressure, man under coverage.

If we evaluate the concept and believe that it will benefit us in more than one of the above areas, we will add it to the schedule for that week. Now if there are several play concepts under consideration simply use the checklist above to select the one that meets most of the criteria above. Remember it's not about putting in some cool, flashy play concept- It is about doing what puts you in the best opportunity to win on Friday night with YOUR team and YOUR personnel.

Practice Organization and Structure

One of the critical components to being effective installing a fast paced no-huddle system is how you practice the offense. This is the "secret sauce" of being a great no huddle team as you will segment your practice in such a manner that each and every period will utilize tempo or will be focused on skill development and the constant and never ending improvement of your players. This is not a situation where practice schedules are "grab bag" scenarios where you are constantly implementing new ideas or periods into your practice schedule. As the godfather of the Air Raid offense Hal Mumme has stated many times "you must have a great capacity for boredom" to become a great offense. What that means is your players have to get used to doing the same drills, techniques, and refining the same plays each and every day. In later chapters of the book we will detail our practice organization and structure from the winter through the regular season. You will do the same things over and over until they become second nature to your players. Everything that you do at practice must revolve around "Playing Fast", and that will have some effects on how your coaches will coach the players which we will discuss in greater detail later in this book.

Playing Fast - Game Day Communication

Probably the biggest question that I receive from coaches across the country over the years is "how do you get your offense to line up and play so fast"? Obviously that is the goal of any coach implementing a hurry up procedure is to get the play called, relayed to your players, and the ball snapped in a rapid fire manner, regardless of it being a 2 minute drill type of scenario or a full game fast break pace of play. I have been tinkering with our operation of the no-huddle since I became a high school head coach in Pennsylvania at age 23 in 2004, and I believe we have been able to refine and optimize how we execute our no huddle procedures. Let me take a few moments to talk about the different types of communication that we have utilized with our no huddle over the years and some of the pros and cons of each approach in my opinion.

Wristbands

A strategy commonly used by coaches in a no huddle scenario is to put all of their players in wristbands. These wristbands will contain the offensive play calls and some sort of signal system will exist to get the players to read the specific call on the wristband and execute. When I first installed the no huddle offense I used a wristband communication system and continued to do so on and off for a number of years. I will explain how it worked for us and also why I recommend that this is not the method of no huddle communication that you utilize.

In 2004 as the Head Coach at Line Mountain High School in Pennsylvania I quickly installed a no huddle attack using a wrist band communication system. There was a coach that I had studied intensely by the name of Manny Matsakis who is currently the Head Coach at Defiance College (OH) who had previously deployed a "Triple Shoot" no-huddle offensive system that allowed his teams to pile up massive yardage totals. Manny was combining the run and shoot with a speed sweep series that he termed his "belly series" that allowed his running back Brian Shay to win the DII Harlon Hill trophy at Emporia State which was a DII school in Kansas. I was impressed by the balance that Coach Matsakis teams were able to

enjoy while also being a run and shoot team and operating from a no-huddle at the line of scrimmage. Through my study of Coach Matsakis teams at Hofstra, Emporia State, and the University of Wyoming I was able to learn how he was able to get all of his players on the same page at the line of scrimmage.

The first thing that Coach Matsakis did was to put two different wristbands on each of his players' wrists. These wristbands would correspond with a respective color and number that would indicate the play to be called. The wristband cards were removable and could be replaced with a new sequence of color and numbers in the middle of a quarter or game if needed to keep the defense on their toes. The at the line of scrimmage procedure would be to signal the formation in with a series of hand signals, and then on the sideline there would be two large signs each depicting a color such as red, green, blue, white. One of these signs would be live and one would be dead but two different colors would be displayed at all times. There would be another signaler who would hold up a large number that could range from 1-50. By combining the live color and the number the player would then look down at the wristband and know what play to execute.

We implemented this attack with great success, being one of the only no-huddle teams in the area it gave us a great advantage as teams were not accustomed to defending this style of attack. We only utilize one wristband and we used a series of both colors and numbers and NHL, NBA, NFL team logo signs that would also take the place of the color as an indicator. You can see an example of one of my original wristband cards below. Each of the numbered columns were color coded running vertical on the band and the NFL, NBA, and NHL teams ran horizontally as you will see in the following example I dug out of my archives.

1	25 Power	1	34 Veer	1	35 Veer	1	Ram 121 Naked	1	Loop 24 Z-Reverse
2	22 Iso	2	Loop 122 Race	2	24 Wham	2	Early F-Vegas Odd	2	River 15 Gator
3	YoYo 24 Wham	3	25 Wham	3	Ram 28 Stretch	3	Ram 24 Power	3	6
4	24 Power	4	28 Stretch	4	YoYo 25 Wham	4	23 Iso	4	90 Z Shallow
5	River 25 Power	5	24 Tag	5	24 Veer Load	5	25 Tag	5	98
6	YoYo 25 Power	6	29 Stretch	6	6 Comebacks	6	Z-Jet 14 Power	6	6 Switch
7	20 Zone	7	6 Z-Sit	7	Lion 29 Stretch	7	Ram 25 Wham	7	99
8	15 Power Read	8	YoYo 24 Power	8	Lion 24 Veer Load	8	Loop 21 Zone	8	Ram 20 Zone
9	Lion 24 Wham	9	River 34 Veer	9	Lion 25 Power	9	96	9	25 Veer Load
10	21 Zone	10	Stretch Choice	10	92	10	14 Power Read	10	90 H Shallow X-Post
11	River 34 Reverse	11	Z-Jet 14 Power Give	11	Ram 25 Veer Load	11	Rodeo	11	Lion 21 Zone
12	Z-Jet 49 X Rev.	12	Ram 20 Zone	12	F- Jet 14 Power Read	12	30 Wedge	12	618
NFL									
1	Vegas Sucker Odd	3	River 34 Reverse	5	65	7	H-Jet 148 Wheel	9	River 134 Seam
2	Vegas Even	4	Vegas Odd	6	60	8	121 Naked	10	Lake 24 Power
NBA									
1	Nevada Even	3	Nevada Odd	5	Ford	7	Nevada Odd Sucker	9	Honda
2	122 Z-Slant	4	F-Jet 49 Stretch	6	122 Ford	8	Liz Early 28 Stretch	10	66 Smash
NHL									
1	Ram 25 TAG	3	122 PIG	5	Z-Jet 49	7	128 Z-Go	9	H-Jet 15 Power
2	Rip Rodeo	4	Z-Jet 49 X-Rev. Pass	6	H-Jet 48	8	H-Jet 148 Seam	10	Lake 35 Veer

With our wristband fueled no-huddle attack we were putting up big numbers and really felt like we were on the move! But as we went along deficiencies in this mode of operation would become apparent and would push us in the current direction that we have operated with for years to really push the tempo and attack a defense.

Let's examine some of the issues that you will encounter by using wristbands to call your no huddle.

1. Wristbands actually slow down your operation at the line of scrimmage- In my opinion wristbands actually slow you down as the workflow involves the play caller deciding on and calling the play. Then the designated signal system must be used. Then your players must look over to the sideline and recognize the signal system and find the corresponding play on the wristband. Simply put - This takes time. You think you are going fast (I know I did) but to get every player to find the play on the band and get lined up after getting your players or coaches setting up the signals just simply takes too much time. If you are trying to really go fast this is not the way to go in my opinion.

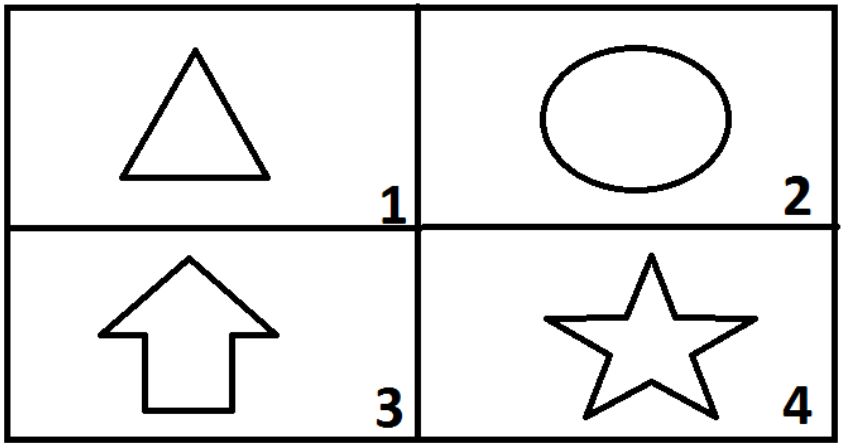
2. Cost of the wristbands- Simply put these are expensive to outfit every player on the team in a wristband. Then the factor of wear and tear, cleaning, sanitary issues we spent an insane amount of our football budget on wristbands alone each year.
3. Issues with creating the wristbands- These are an incredible pain to print out, laminate, cut and hand out each week during the season. Then you have to ensure that your call sheets, practice scripts all match to the corresponding wristband numbers and colors. This takes time away so that you can be preparing and making your team better each week. Then you have to take time to create the signal cards or train the signalers on how to properly signal the play in, make dummy calls, all things that are taking away from you teaching your team how to actually play the game of football. No player or coach wants to spend a bunch of time holding up cards or colors or numbers during a game or at practice.
4. Other Issues- You will find that each game a player will have the wrong wristband in his wrist sleeve or that the sleeve will get wet or the window will get foggy and he will not be able to see it. Yes this will absolutely happen. You will make the print on the wristbands so small that certain players will have to look very hard to read the play call, or worse yet look at the wrong corresponding play. You will have ten players running play white 5 and one running yellow 5 and that is going to be a major issue.

If you are currently using wristbands to execute your no huddle my hope is that you will immediately put them in the donation box or the trash. They are slowing you down. You want to play fast, not have eleven guys staring at the sideline and then their wrists for 12 seconds. Wristbands WILL slow you down. Your assistants will also thank you after they no longer have to laminate, cut, and print out wrist cards each week or hold up large sign boards at practice.

Signs

A tactic that has become extremely popular is the creation of full poster board size signs that are held up on the sideline that typically

feature four different pictures and there is some sort of indicator given that will tell the players on the field which "picture" is the play call. For example in the picture below there is a sign board with four different pictures (shapes) in each quadrant which I have numbered one through four. If you wanted to call the play in quadrant one (the triangle) you would have your signaler hold that sign up with his hand clearly holding the sign at the top of the sign in quadrant one. This will tell all of your players that the "Triangle" is the play call. Now you will see teams have a lot of fun with this placing various pictures into these boards such as athletes, actors, and pop stars. I do believe that these signs have some value, however I do not believe you can run your entire operation off of these.



In my opinion this is obviously faster than the wristband operation, but still takes a bit of time to get the sign held up properly after the signal from the play caller. As a tip an easy way to accomplish this is to have exactly the same thing placed on the front and the back of the sign so that the signaler does not have to flip the sign over to see what quadrant he needs to place his hand into. Some of the same issues will occur however as players will misread the sign, there is significant cost and time involved in setting up and printing the signs. You have to have your signalers coached up on holding them the correct way. Probably the biggest issue is the sheer number of signs that you would have to have made to be able to entirely run your offense, and the factor that these pictures will leave you no

ability to make play-call variations. You would then have to add a signal or code word to your operation.

Signals & Verbal Communication

Now let's take a look at another commonly used means of communication and one that we currently utilize. Each of our formations and play concepts has a corresponding hand signal. These are often used as a stand-alone signal or in conjunction with a verbal play call. As you can see in one of our play call code charts from 2019 you will see that our shallow cross concept had a hand signal that corresponded to the verbal code words. This allows us to have a ton of versatility in how we called plays as a 52 verbal call would be the same as the play caller hitting his fist off of his head and holding up two fingers. Each of these would quickly get us into the same play in a very fast and efficient manner.

Play Concept	To The Left	To the Right	Signal
Shallow Cross	51, 53, 55, 57, 59	50, 52, 54, 56, 58	Fist off Head – with Fingers

What has been our secret sauce in being able to play fast has been the use extensively of verbal play call communication. The play call code words which we will dive into great detail in the next chapter are communicated directly from the play caller who is located on the sideline and onto the field of play. This play call is then echoed across the field and will always be shouted twice in each direction to the offensive line. This is by far the fastest mode of operation as our players simply focus on getting aligned in the called formation first and then hear the play call and get ready to roll. Our linemen focus on quickly finding the football and getting locked into their stance over the ball reading the defensive alignments. There is no looking over to the sideline for the signal or verbal call as the quarterback will relay the play call to them prior to the snap. The key to relying on mostly verbal calls is to ensure that you have a wide variety of codes that will apply easily to each play.

One disadvantage to utilizing a mostly verbal system of play calling can occur if you are playing in an extremely loud environment. In this scenario I would rely on hand signals and the quarterbacks verbalizing the call to the offensive line. We have not had any issues with crowd noise and our verbal communication and we have used this in State Championship games and district championship games in an NFL Stadium. Most recently I installed this verbal play calling method with the USA Football Under 18 National Team in our win over Team Canada that was played in the stadium of the Dallas Cowboys with no issues at all. This is why you want to make sure that you do have hand signals taught for each play as well in the event you are having a difficult time getting the verbal signals relayed quickly. A key coaching point on this when verbally calling the play is that your players will echo the call from sideline to sideline and I believe if you really want to go fast then your play caller must be on the sideline and not in the press box. There is no faster operation than the play caller on the sideline "shouting" the play out to the team. You can even use a megaphone if needed in order to further project your voice, however I have never needed to do so.

I am excited for the future possibility of coach to player helmet technology being legalized. There are companies such as ProCom based out of Lower Burrell, PA that have developed communication receivers that fit in the players helmets that allow a coach to speak directly into the ear of the player while they are on the field. I have witnessed the technology first hand and while it is not currently legal to use during games in our state association if that ever changes at any point in time that will be a game changer for playing fast.

Pre-Snap Goals

It is important as you implement the no huddle attack to set expectations for your players prior to the ball being snapped. I learned these from the legendary offensive innovator Coach John Jenkins who wrote the forward of this book and gave you a great history lesson on playing fast. These non-negotiables will help you regardless of the offense that you run and whether you employ a no huddle mindset or slowdown tactics to shorten a game. These four keys each snap requires nothing but individual effort, require no

talent to do them, and the defense cannot dictate these whatsoever. They are 100% in our control each and every snap.

Pre Snap Responsibility

1. Get Aligned Quickly and Properly in a Position to Receive the Play Call
2. Stance- Get Aligned in a Perfect Stance Each and Every Play
3. Keys- What are my keys on the play? What defenders am I responsible for reading, blocking, ect.
4. Responsibilities- Get yourself in position to execute your assignment properly, take the correct first step, departure angle, ect.

Alignment Drill

This is a drill that we do in the offseason, spring, and even the summer when installing the offense to quickly teach our players the pre-snap operation of getting aligned quickly in the proper formation, learn the play calls, and explode off of the football. This drill can be done without a football, in a gym or indoor facility, and will quickly allow your players to start to condition themselves to how fast we have to be ready to execute each snap in this system. A coach will signal or call out a play and the players will quickly get aligned into the formation, echo the play call, a snap will be simulated and all players will sprint for 10 yards. A coach will then "spot" a new ball and the players will get the formation, personnel changes, play call and get aligned and get the ball snapped within 10 seconds from the previous snap.

This drill serves a few purposes, first and foremost it will condition your players to the speed and tempo that you want to operate at. Secondly the 10 yard sprints after the play will get their bodies into "football" shape, and they will quickly learn all of your signals and play calls. We do not want to incorporate a football into this drill because it is not about the ball in this drill. It is about conditioning your players to the tempo you want to operate at while they are learning their plays and visualizing their keys and responsibility of each play.

Attention to Detail

We strive to be very detail oriented in everything we do in our offense. This means our installation to our players is detailed and no stone left unturned. As coaches we also must be extremely detailed in our practice organization and teaching as the time will progress very quickly through our practice periods and we need to ensure that we have everything scripted and that we are following the proper teaching progressions daily.

No Pre-Snap Penalties

Simply put as I stated earlier in the chapter we believe that we can completely control what happens prior to the snap. With that said we expect no mental errors or pre-snap penalties such as false starts, illegal shifts, motions, ect. This is why we put so much time into coaching and using that alignment drill. We also have some mechanics in place that helps to cut back on any potential pre snap penalties. For example our quarterback is responsible for making sure that all players are stationary prior to the snap. The quarterback is also responsible for starting any shifts or motion and making sure that all players are properly set prior to motion or shifts beginning and the snap of the ball. I have provided for you in the final chapter of this book a series of helpful documents, one of which is the pre-snap checklist for our quarterbacks from our quarterback manual. It is also important to have a call that will reset the formation if multiple players happen to go into motion at the same time. For example when running a jet sweep if players on both sides start in jet sweep motion thinking that they are the "guy" rather than get hit with an illegal procedure penalty or taking a timeout our quarterback will simply say "EASY ,EASY" this will reset the formation to the original alignment. The quarterback will then give the indicator to the proper player who was supposed to go into motion and the play can be correctly run. Having a call like this in your offense is a great way to avoid penalties and save timeouts for having too many men in motion at the snap.

First Downs

If you are going to run this type of fast paced no huddle system you must be able to get first downs. We want to gain at least one first down on every drive. A three and out can be devastating on our defense and the key to starting to wear down the defense is to make them have to consistently get aligned properly to our fast paced tempo. This can be easy for them to do on play one or two of a drive, but after they have to run and chase for three, four, five, or six snaps it will begin to have a drastic effect on them. Picking up first downs is critical to really squeezing the life out of the defense and leaving them gassed. This is why as you will see in our game planning and play calling section we will have several drive starter plays each week that are designed to put us in a position to pick up a quick first down to start a drive.

Developing optimum mental and physical conditioning

To run an up-tempo style of attack your players must be in supreme condition. Your practices must be properly segmented so that each period will build off of another. This will allow you to be able to properly rep each of the play concepts daily that you are focusing on while getting your players conditioned to the tempo that you will employ on Game Day. Through our use of tempo during all of our practice periods our players will become supremely conditioned during that 2 hour window that we are practicing. We will also utilize extreme tempo periods at the end of our practice that will test how our players will handle the adversity of being physically and mentally tired at the end of a game. We will create situations where our players will have to execute at an extremely fast tempo while tired to ensure that we are staying both mentally and physically disciplined.

Conditioning is done through how we practice- no sprinting after practice.

During our practice sessions we never utilize a static stretch or a conditioning period at the end of practice. In our program the only time we will have players running sprints after practice is for a

violation of team policies. We call this period a "Late Squad" and this occurs after the conclusion of our practice schedule for the day.

Playing Fast is Fun

Simply put this style of play is fun for your players, coaches, and fans. When I watch a team that does not operate at a fast tempo I often find myself getting bored. Your players will love coming to practice and getting better each day because it does not feel like work. This offense is about having fun, attacking the defense each and every snap, and getting multiple players involved on every snap. For example in 2019 alone we had 10 different players score touchdowns, 8 different receivers catch passes, and 10 different players carry the football. By creating an extreme tempo and getting more snaps each game you are creating extra opportunities for your players to excel. Your players will love coming to practice each day and working hard to get better and make their teammates better.

Offensive Goals

As we install and design our offense these are the critical components that we must ensure are in place each and every season. I will touch on all of these points throughout this book, but I wanted to provide you with a brief overview of some of the critical keys to being successful running a fast break mentality on offense.

1. Play Fast- We always want the immediate threat of the ball being snapped. This is not a check with me or stand around the line of scrimmage type of no huddle. We are a fast paced attacking unit. This places immense stress on the defense and the defensive play caller. When we are operating at optimum speed we want the ball snapped within 10 seconds or the previous snap if using a 40 second clock or within 5 seconds or the ready or play signal if using the old NFHS play clock rules.
2. Limited Line of Scrimmage Checks- we want to have built in answers and adjustments to our base concepts that will allow us to recognize and attack weakness in defensive structure or

technique rather than having to audible to another play. These "relief" concepts are often built into our base play call.

3. Wear Down Opponent Mentally and Physically- Get the Defense to Play a Base Alignment. Force them into auto checks by formation. Physically and mentally wear them down in the second and fourth quarters.
4. Increase Number of Play Opportunities Per Game- more plays equals more opportunities to hit a home run.
5. Shorten Overall Practice Time- through our high tempo practice schedule our players will have more repetitions in a shorter amount of time, allowing them to get off of the practice field earlier each day. Our practice periods are streamlined to ensure optimum repetitions for all players.
6. Limit Wear and Tear on Offensive Line- they simply have to worry about finding the ball, getting locked into their stance, and awaiting the play call from the quarterback. No more unnecessary jogging back and forth 6-10 yards each snap to break out of a huddle.

Offensive Keys To Success
(I believe these pertain to any offensive system)

1. Must Be in Top Condition

Regardless of the system that you employ you must be in top physical condition. By preparing and practicing to play fast and developing a "Play Fast" culture at your school you will ensure that your athletes are in top condition.

2. Make Defense Defend Entire Field

We want to force the defense through our formations and play design to defend the entire field from sideline to sideline and end zone to end zone.

3. Have the Ability to Attack Entire Line of Scrimmage in the Run Game

We must have an ability when establishing our offensive menu to attack the entire line of scrimmage through our run game (A, B, C, D, Gaps) each and every game. We will utilize both zone and gap run schemes in our offense.

4. Have the Ability to Execute Multiple Adjusting Routes vs Any Defensive Coverage

We spend significant time teaching our quarterbacks and receivers how to read coverages and defeat individual defensive techniques. By doing this and running multiple adjusting routes we can effectively attack any defensive coverage without the need to add extra play designs as "coverage beaters".

5. Screens and Reliefs as Extension of Run Game

Spend time on our screen package as we value it as a third of our offense. It is critical for us as a standalone play or paired with our run game as a relief or (SRO) Screen Run Option. Many times a coach will only practice a slow screen to the running back 2 times a week at practice and will then wonder why it does not work in the game. At the same time coaches will throw a perimeter quick screen to a receiver and a defensive back will blow it up for no gain and the coach will stop calling it. My response to these two situation is would you practice your base run play two times all week and expect it to be successful in the game on Friday night- No. Likewise would you stop running your base run play for the entire game if it was stopped for no gain on the first play of the game- Absolutely Not!

6. Have the Ability to Handle Pressure and Protect the QB

If you want to effectively throw the football at the high school level you must spend time on your pass protection daily. We will have pass protection and blitz recognition and pick up periods daily in our practice schedules. You must also have a plan to handle protection each week through protection adjustments, uncovered air-shot throws, screen package, and moving the quarterback launch point.

7. Have Answers to Defensive Adjustments

As a coach you must recognize your deficiencies offensively. Each and every team will have them in terms of personnel matchup, schematic advantage, ect. It is important to have built in answers for your offense that will handle any defensive tactic you will face on Friday night. This is difficult to pre-plan and is often the result on an in-game adjustment you will make.

That's why it is critical to focus on situational football at practice such as backed up, long yardage, blitz pickup. During these periods I do not script or have scout cards for what the defense is going to bring at us. It does not matter the front, coverage, or blitz. Let your assistant coaches be creative and try to find ways to attack you at practice. As a coach don't get upset and say "they will never run that blitz in a game". You have no clue as a coach what your opponent may be cooking up particularly against a high scoring fast paced offense in their attempt to slow you down. These practice sessions are where you and your staff will tweak your play design to handle these situations and have answers when unforeseen problems arise. I call this the tool box approach as you add ways to fix things that become broken in your offense. This is no different than the new homeowner who starts out with a simple tool box with a hammer, nails, and a few screwdrivers but as things quickly break down in the home that require fixing this homeowner will soon have a workshop of tools that would rival Tim the Tool man. The same holds true for us as coaches, as we encounter and learn how to fix things in our offense we are better prepared to attack these reactions from the defense.

Statistical Goals For Each Game

These are the standards that we use to measure our performance as an offensive unit each week. The number one goal is the most important and that is to simply score enough points to win the football game.

1. Score Enough to WIN
2. Average 7.5 Yards per Play
3. Average 5.0 per Carry
4. Convert 4 out of 5 Short Yardage Situations
5. Less than 1 Turnover a Game

6. Never put our Defense on the field with less than 50 yards of operating room

CHAPTER 3

CODIFICATION AND ORGANIZATION OF YOUR OFFENSE



Codification and Organization of Your Offense

The importance of streamlined communication

Probably the greatest source of questions that I have received from coaches over the years in regards to the no-huddle offense revolves around communication. "How do you get lined up so fast", "How do you call plays", "How do you get all of that information communicated to your players so quickly at the line of scrimmage", are just a few of the common questions that I have heard from countless coaches over the years. This chapter will deal specifically with the communication process in the no-huddle attack, and how you can apply it to your own offensive system to allow your kids to put the pedal down and "Play Fast".

The secret to doing this is to take your entire offensive system and create a "language". This language must allow you to codify all of your offensive play calls in a manner that you can use different terms to identify your core play concepts. For example in our offense we may have up to 30 different words or numbers that could be used to signify an Inside Zone run concept to the left. Now this may seem complicated, but to our players it is second nature because they understand our "football language".

The Code Only has to Make Sense to Your Staff and Your Team

As you begin to layout the design of your play calling code it is important to remember that the code only has to make sense to your staff and your kids. Just like any language in the world your "play calling code" will be learned in the manner that it is taught. Many coaches struggle with this part of the process because they want the play calling code to share a common nomenclature. This is often a mistake, as we want our code words to make sense to us but to be very confusing to your opponent.

We also teach our code from day one during installation with our players. For example our players do not know the inside zone run play as inside zone. They know it by a code word such as Red or

Black. This is all they know. When teaching your "football language" to your players I do believe that it is very important to not bog your players down with extra terminology that will not ultimately apply to your offense. Your players do not have to know what you would typically call a three level flood route concept for instance, but they need to know only that you call it River and Lake for example.

Creating Your Play Calling Code

As you begin the process of mapping out your play calling code, there are many factors that you must consider. First is that you want to make it very easy for your players to learn. If your players are thinking they are not playing fast. Make every effort to create code words in your system that will allow your players to quickly learn and retain the information. By teaching this code from day one as I earlier indicated, you will engrain this "language" into your players and will make your installation much smoother.

As you create your code you will have your most success if you are able to place all of your play calls into either a number, color, word, or a combination of all of those. Each of these code words will also have a corresponding hand signal. Begin your installation process by making all of your play designs into one word or number calls. Remember it does not have to make sense to anyone but your staff and your players. Red could be a pass or Red could be a run, it does not matter as long as your kids know what that color means in your offense.

This will make things very easy for your players to quickly learn and be able to execute the play called at a fast tempo. By using word association on play concepts you can quickly group common words together that will make sense to your players. This will allow you to quickly call plays and execute at a very up-tempo pace offensively.

All In One Calls

As you organize your offense into code words you will have success if you are able to combine the formation, motion, and play call into

one simple word or number. Now this is not always possible, but I have been able to do this for the past decade with no issues and it really has streamlined our communication and allowed us to play faster. The thought process behind this is as follows. At a fast food restaurant they will typically have value meals that are numbered such as #1, #2, #3. If you say I want a #1 you are ordering a hamburger, French fries, and a medium drink. By just saying that you want a #1 you are able to combine five or six words into one number that represents all of those. A #1 by itself says nothing about hamburgers, French fries, or soft drinks, however because that is the "language" used by that restaurant they will know exactly what you are trying to communicate. The same holds true in play calling.

Let's say we have a jet sweep play call that would typically be called as (Formation)= Base, (Motion)= Jet, (Play Call)= Sweep, (Direction)= Left. So in this very elementary play call to communicate this play design the quarterback would have to call Base,Jet, Sweep, Left. This could all be combined into a one word play call such as DELTA. Delta is a jet and the L in delta signifies that it is being run to the "left". The more play calls in your offense that you can successfully codify in this manner the faster you will be able to communicate and crank up the tempo.

Word Association

From the previous "Delta = Jet Sweep" example you can see the power of word association. Other examples of how these word associations can branch off would be if you were calling your "Sail Route" passing concept. Here are a few examples of how it could be communicated with some word association that will make sense to your team but will be complicated to the defense.

Sail Route= Code Words = Directions Such as North, South, East West.
So one way to call sail would simply be to say a direction such as "North".

Sail Route= Code Words= Columbus

Another way to call sail would be Columbus, because Columbus "Sailed" to America

Sail Route= Code Words= Ohio State, Buckeye
Another way to call sail would be Ohio State or Buckeye as Ohio State University is in Columbus, Ohio

This is just one example where you could quickly use word association have seven ways to call the same Sail Route concept in your offense.

Let your players create some of the code words

I suggest letting your players come up with some of the code words or signals that you will be using. This gives them some ownership of the offense and allows them to have some fun coming up with names for the plays. Remember it does not matter what the play is called as long as everyone understands the same language. I cannot stress this enough, you are simply creating your own football vocabulary for your program.

If we are installing a new concept I will typically ask the players in our installation meeting, "hey what do you guys want to call this concept". You will get some crazy answers initially but some will start to make sense as the players understand the word association concept through your other play designs. For example one year we installed a new screen play, our players at this particular school wanted to name it after hip hop stars. So for that season this screen play was called "Birdman", "Drake", "Wayne", and "Cash" or "Money". This used the word association of Birdman, Drake, Lil Wayne all being a part of the "Cash Money" record label. Fast forward two seasons at another school when installing this play our players wanted to name it after major league baseball teams so it became known as; "Yankee", "Royals", "Mets", "Dodger", "Fastball". Just through these two examples you can see how you can quickly name a new play concept with word association that will make sense to your players.

Dummy Calls

While we are communicating many things quickly at the line of scrimmage to play fast we do want to have the ability to utilize some "dummy calls" into our offense. These calls will have no meaning whatsoever for your players. Some examples of this would be using a dummy color such as "Silver". This means anytime that silver is used with a play call it means absolutely nothing to our players. You could do the same thing with numbers, so any 200's number could be a dummy call such as 201, 250, 275. This allows you to add a bit of meaningless garnish to a play call at the line of scrimmage to cloud any attempts by the defense to try and get a line on your play call mechanics throughout the game. Because we use so many colors and numbers in our offense I would highly suggest always having a dummy color and a dummy series of numbers that you can use at any time.

Freeze Calls

While we are always having the threat of an immediate snap on the defense we want to have the ability to take advantage of those defenders who are becoming conditioned to our quick pace and snap count. We want to use the snap count to our advantage to stop them from trying to anticipate and get a "jump start" on the play. We will utilize this "freeze tempo" usually 10 or 12 snaps per game. We will create several code words that will indicate that no matter what else is communicated at the line of scrimmage there will be no snap of the football. After the quarterback goes through his cadence he will look over to the sideline to receive a new play call and will restart the snap count. Usually you will get the defense to jump off-sides multiple times during the game. In addition to gaining the free 5 yard penalty, possibly even more advantageous is that you will slow down the get-off of those defensive linemen in trying to time up the snap count. Here is an example of the mechanics of a freeze call.

Code Words For "Freeze" = No Snap = Green or 99
In either scenario if during the game "green" or "99" is called with any play there will be no snap.

QB will get to the line of scrimmage with the play call code "Green 5, Green 5"...he will begin his snap count mechanics… Down..Set..Go...Go Go..Go If the defense does not jump offside the quarterback will look to the sideline for a new play and will begin the new snap count and execute the play that has been signaled in or called.

This is also a great way to force the defense to "show their hand" with any potential defensive line stems, blitzes, or coverage rotations just prior to the snap. Remember the defense does not know that we are going to freeze them and they are conditioned to preparing for the immediate snap of the football. One suggestion on this I will make is that you not make your "freeze" call have anything to do with cold, or ice, or freezing. Use words and numbers that the defense will not associate with a "freeze play".

Special Calls

We will have terms or codes that we consider to be special calls in our offense. These may be different for your own individual offensive system but the premise will hold true regardless of the system that you are running schematically. We want to have the ability to use one word to quickly tell all of our offensive players to execute something very quickly and efficiently. Here are a few example calls that I believe you need to create and have as a part of your "offensive language"

QB Wedge- We will have a code word that will immediately tell us to get lined up in the same formations and personnel grouping and for our quarterback to get under the center and run a quarterback wedge (qb sneak). We will typically use this on the goal line or in short yardage to quickly get the ball snapped prior to the defense being able to get their goal line or short yardage personnel or play call on the field.

Repeat Same Play- After you gash the defense for a huge gain you want to have the ability to immediately line up and run the exact same formation and play call as fast as possible. As a play caller at the high school level particularly coaches will at times out-think

themselves in play calling. If something is working because you have the defense caught in a bad alignment or simply they just cannot stop it at the point of attack with their current personnel, run the play until they stop it. Force the defense to have to adjust before they find themselves down by multiple touchdowns. This necessitates the need to have a few code words in your arsenal that will tell your players to line up and do exactly the same thing as fast as the referee will allow. Use a term that does not mean to repeat or copy. Some teams will use words such as Xerox, ext. and I believe that is a mistake. Use something like "Steeler" or "Pittsburgh" to indicate that you are going to repeat the same play.

Flip The Direction of the Play- This is often used after the initial play call is signaled in when you do not like the alignment at the point of attack and simply want to change the direction of the play. Come up with a series of code words that will tell your players to flip the direction of the play but run the same concept. I would suggest avoiding terms that are obvious such as "mirror" or something of that nature. If you want to get creative use something that flips such as "pancake". So if you called your jet sweep to the left but wanted to flip the direction to the right you could call "pancake" and the exact same play would be run only to the right instead of the left. Nothing further would need to be communicated, as your team would know that the "pancake" call was flipping the original direction of the play.

Double Snap Count- There are times in our offense that we are going to shift or use some sort of deceptive motion or shift that we will use two snap counts. We have a code word such as "Purple" or "Barney" that will tell all players that there are two snap counts. Typically each week the "Purple" and "Barney" call will involve a special pre-packaged multiple shift or motion concept designed to draw the defense off-sides. I will discuss these types of deceptive shifts in later chapters of this book. The mechanics for this would be as follows

1. "Purple" Call is made
2. Players align in predetermined formation
3. Quarterback begins the 1st snap count… Down …..Set-Go

4. On "Go" our players will move or legally shift into new formation being careful of doing so in a smooth manner and not jerking so that we get a penalty for simulation of the snap.
5. After this if the defense has not jumped our offense will have shifted into a new formation and will be ready to run the play concept called
6. The QB will start the second snap count ….Down…..Set-Go and the ball will be snapped at this time.

Hold the Snap, Reset, Restart the Snap Count- With all of the motion and shifting in our offense there are times where a player will be confused and move when he is not supposed to do so. An example of this might be on the jet sweep where even though the quarterback is giving the indicator as to who is supposed to go in motion, both slot players will start moving towards the quarterback prior to the snap. An "Easy" call can be made that will tell all players to stop what they are currently doing, reset themselves in the formation called for one second and then the quarterback will send the appropriate player in motion. This is a little trick that will save you from having to call a timeout or getting an illegal procedure penalty that will bring back a long play. Having a troubleshooting call such as this in your offense will prove to be invaluable to saving precious timeouts because you are going to get called for an illegal motion or shift prior to the snap.

Examples of How to Codify and Organize an Offensive System

I hope that this chapter has been beneficial to you in finding ideas on how to codify and organize your offense. I am going to leave you with a few examples of how you could quickly and simply codify your offense to play fast.

Here are some much generalized examples using a basic offense for reference.

Concept	Direction to the Left	Direction to the Right
Inside Zone Run	Black, Blue, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29	Red, Brown, 20, 22, 24, 26, 28
Power Run	Philly, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49	Panther, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48
Counter Run	Cleveland, 91, 93, 95, 97	Country, 90, 92, 94, 96, 98
4- Verticals Pass	LA, 1, 3, 5, 7, 9	Charger, 2, 4, 6, 8
Shallow Cross	Lake, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59	River, 50, 52, 54, 56, 58
Sprint Out Protection	31, 33, 35, 37, 39	30, 32, 34, 36, 38

Each of these play-calls would have a corresponding hand signal. In addition to the above play-call codes you can implement a series of tags that will add potential run pass options or screen run options that may not be included in the original play call. Here are a few examples of combining a number and a word to create a play call.

Concept	Play Call
Inside Zone Left + Pop Pass	"25 Rocky" (Rocky = pop pass)
4 Verticals + Comeback Tag Outside	"6 Jordan" (Jordan led comebacks)
Sprint Out Right Protection + Sail Passing Concept	"32 North" (North = Sail Concept)

These are just a few brief examples of how you can take your codified language and combine words and numbers together to create tags, adjustments, and run pass options or screen pass options to all of your base play calls. And remember once again this is your language that you are creating to allow your team to play fast. It does not have to make sense to anyone but you, your coaching staff, and your players.

Re-codifying the Offense

There are times that exist where we will re-codify the offense. When changing schools particularly if you are in the same conference or region, it may be a good opportunity to re-codify your offense. Also if one of your assistants takes a job at another school that you have on your schedule would also necessitate the need to re-codify your system. This can easily be done by changing your code from day one of your initial installation. By having multiple ways to call your specific concepts it will allow you to be flexible with your play calling code. For example one year your "shallow cross" series may have been called with 90's codes and your "power" run game may have been labeled 20's series. You could simply switch the two around to where the 90's were now the "power" run series and the 20's are now the shallow cross series. This is very easy to do and will provide some flexibility to keep the defense always guessing and back on their heels while you attack.

CHAPTER 4

THE EFFECT OF PLAYING FAST ON YOUR OPPONENT

THE EFFECT THAT PLAYING FAST HAS ON DEFENSES

Despite what many defensive coordinators may tell you when an offense utilizes extreme tempo it changes how they are able to operate as a unit. They must develop a plan to become a "no-huddle" defense and have a way to effectively communicate their front/coverage/blitz and alignments against the various formations the offense will present. This takes time and planning by the defensive coaching staff that will take away time that they can be using on the practice field to work on stopping your base offensive play concepts. We will stress the defense by using multiple tempos, motions, shifts, and our "scatter package" throughout the game. I cannot stress enough though that a critical element of being successful with this type of attack is always having the threat of an immediate snap on every play! The defense must feel the threat that the ball could be snapped at the moment the official sets it down and backs out of the way. This will force the defensive play caller to always have to have his call ready to go immediately after the play. He will not have time to think in-between plays, recognize personnel groupings, or take an analysis of his own defensive personnel for a few seconds after every snap. They must be ready to play fast right now as a defense and as we will dive into further detail in this book will give the offense a great advantage as you will tend to see very basic looks from the defensive unit.

Now, the better coached teams will have a very good plan of attack going into the game without question, however much of their time will be spent with communication and getting their players properly aligned prior to the snap. Other defenses will simply play you in a "static" defensive look in an attempt to quickly get their players aligned and to avoid having players out of position and giving up a huge play on a busted coverage or getting gashed in the run game because players are not fitting properly. In the screenshot below you can see the defensive confusion that can occur despite the offense being aligned in a base formation. There was nothing we were presenting the defense from a formation or motion standpoint on this play. We were simply going very fast which caused communication breakdowns from the defensive sideline to the field of play. This is why you will see many defenses vs an up-tempo

attack go to a "static" defense or will "auto check" to defensive alignments when facing certain formations.



(Note the defensive communication confusion in the screenshot above as we are about to attack)

Freeze Tempo

We will consistently employ our "Freeze Tempo" during a game by using one of a series of code words such as "Yellow" we are telling our players that there will be no snap. We will get quickly aligned and the quarterback will go through his cadence.
Down…..Set..Go...Go..Go...Go If the defense does not jump we will look to the sideline and get another play. Remember we have all the time in the world to do this due to our fast tempo and all of the time that will be remaining on the play clock. The freeze tempo accomplishes two goals for us. The first is to try and get free yardage from the defense in terms of an offside penalty and to force them to stay honest with the snap count. The second is to use formations and motion with the freeze call to get the defense to "tip their hand" of what their defensive alignment or coverage rotation may be against a particular motion, allowing us to get into a play call that will rip them for big yardage.

More Snaps = More Opportunities to Hit a Home Run

I have used this analogy many times throughout this book that our style of play will simply give more opportunities to make something happen. This stresses the defense by making them defend more plays

per quarter and per game. By doing this you are giving your players more opportunities to "hit a homerun". By gaining more snaps per game and lengthening the game we are inherently creating more opportunities for different players to get involved in the offense, pile up yardage and score. This goes back to the concept of FUN football.

Very Difficult to Prepare for and Scout Teams to Emulate

Any coach who has ever tried to organize a scout team will know that it is hard enough to often get them into a huddle, read a scout card and get aligned properly. Now you factor in our tempo, motions, shifting and it becomes an even taller task to draw up let alone get your younger players to align properly. I have heard of teams taking their scout players on the field early to practice this for the week, or utilizing a two team scout huddle system where one unit will run a play followed by another unit breaking a huddle and lining up right behind them. The bottom line is that in a one-week time frame your opponent will never be able to replicate the speed and precision that you will give them on Friday night. This takes a tremendous amount of coordination and prep time by your opponents to get ready to attempt to simulate your attack. Time and time again through the years, opposing coaches would tell me after the game that "we just couldn't simulate how fast you guys went", or "we had never faced a no huddle team that operated at such a fast tempo".

Another issue that defenses face is that often when they are scouting your film that you exchange they have no clue of how fast your tempo actually is. Without sending a scout in person to evaluate they will be left with nothing but the exchange video which is intercut to only show the offense over the football and the play being run. Because the video is "cut" after the play is over and does not start until the offense is over the ball, the defense has no clue of actually how fast the offense is operating. This is why we will often film for our own personal use with a continuous camera so that we can evaluate our own tempo and operation with a continuous running film of each offensive drive.

Sudden Change and Momentum

When defending an up-tempo attack the defense will be extremely susceptible to sudden change situations where they may be getting "gassed" defending play after play and then their own offense quickly turns the ball over and they have to get back out on the field. These are great opportunities as a play caller to incorporate one of your "shot-plays" or as we will discuss later in the game planning section of this book one or our sequential packaged play designs.

Defensive Communication Issues

Things have certainly changed over the years at the high school level, where now many teams incorporate some sort of tempo or no-huddle into their offensive design. This has caused defenses to become "no-huddle" defensive units. With that said there are still many communication issues that must be overcome by a defense when they are facing an extreme up-tempo team, or one as I indicated that will give the threat of an immediate snap on every play. This will force the defense to have their own "code", signals, wristbands, ect. Often they will come up with "auto-checks" against various offensive formations and motions you will show them on film. The problem will arise when you give them a look that they have not seen on film, or a motion or shift they have not seen on film. If they are game plan checking or auto checking there will exist the opportunity for a defensive communication breakdown leading to a big play for your offense. This is why if you play at this tempo you will see so many "static" defenses.

Limits Blitzing and Coverage Structures and Disguises

With this up-tempo approach to offense, the defense will be rendered helpless to attempt to utilize a complicated blitz scheme. Our constant formation movements and shifts will create coverage and alignment issues that will attack holes vacated by defensive pressure. This is one reason we see very limited blitzing in our attack. The challenges of getting the blitzes called are massive when faced with the up-tempo pace where the defensive play caller is now "on the clock". Then factor in the element of the defensive blitz having to

"fit" with their front and coverage, these blitzes often simply are "called off" at the line of scrimmage by the defense because we have presented them with a look that they simply cannot effectively pressure.

Defensive coverages face a similar problem as there is limited time for them to disguise their coverage alignments and intentions prior to the ball being placed and snapped. This often times turns the secondary into a "shooting gallery" for your quarterback as he will face the same coverage snap after snap.

We do spend extensive practice time each week in preparation for the blitz. We ensure that all of our packages and protections are sound and have answers against any sort of defensive blitz structure we may see. During the "Blitz" period of practice I will allow our scout team coaches to send any sort of blitz combination and coverage that they want. We do not draw up blitz scout cards during this period that correspond with our offensive play call script. Nothing frustrates me more than to see coaches script a blitz period during practice where they will card up the blitz and then run a play specifically designed to attack that blitz. In the game your opponent is not going to give you a card before you call your play to tell you what blitz they are sending at you- I certainly wish they would! For this reason I like to see a variety of pressure structures during this period. It frustrates me when you hear coaches say "hey they will never run that in a game"- how do we know that? We have to be prepared to see anything and everything from a pressure standpoint. This becomes a great incubator for ideas on how your plays will stand up against various pressures and the creation of adjustments and "answers" to put into your personal "tool box" to handle and attack these blitzes. At the conclusion of this period our offensive line will have a group period typically with our running backs where they will go through a "blitz clean-up" and review any adjustments or issues technique-wise that we experienced during the blitz period.

Order-Up the Defense (Line of Scrimmage Defensive Identification)

One of the biggest advantages from an offensive perspective is the way that playing fast affects the ability of the defense to bluff or give disguised fronts or coverages. This will be different from offense to offense but with our system and the fact that we will utilize one-back, two-back, and no back formations without an inline tight end we can easily categorize all of the different defensive looks that we might see on a Friday night. Ultimately against our base formations there are only so many fronts and coverage structures that defense may employ and still be sound by covering all of our eligible receivers. In our offense we have built in ways to get the football immediately to any potential "uncovered" receiver through our screen game and use of "on-air" shots. By doing this we force the defense to have to be sound across the board in their alignments.

Is the Middle of the Field Open or Closed

The very first thing that we will have our quarterbacks and receivers identify at the line of scrimmage as we are attacking is if the Middle of the Field is open or closed. This means are there safeties on or near the hash or is there one single high safety. With the spread of our base formations we can quickly diagnose defensive coverages after locating the safety location. If we locate that there are no safeties in the middle of the field we are expecting the defense to potentially bring an extra rusher in a blitz front.



(In the screenshot above the defense is in a 42 interior box with the Middle of the Field Closed)

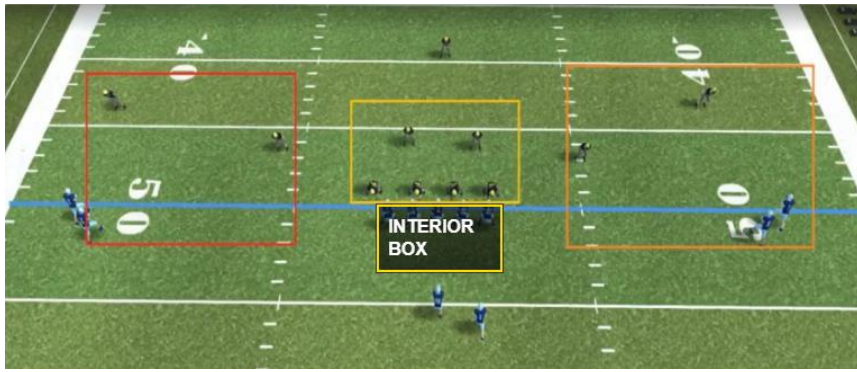


(In the screenshot above the middle of the field is "open" as the safeties on or near the hash)



(In the above screenshot the defense reveals itself as a Blitz Front with No Deep Safeties)

Interior Box



As the quarterback quickly scans if the middle of the field is open or close he will then move his eyes quickly to the interior box for any necessary "alarms" that are triggered by the defensive alignments that will require an adjustment to our base concept called. We consider the interior box to extend 3 yards outside of our tackles and to a depth of six yards. We have our offensive linemen responsible for making box counts and setting off alarms to the quarterback. For example if our tackle is covered and there is a defender walking up to his outside he will make a bandit or raider call. These calls serve as "alarms" for the quarterback and alert him that we may have a potential unblocked edge defender on the front side or the backside or the play. If the alignment does not dictate a change in the play or protection the quarterback will simply ignore or "snooze" the alarm and just continue on with the play. We have various other calls such as a box number call where if we have a "light" box our center will make a call to alert the quarterback that we have advantageous numbers in the box to potentially audible a pass to a run.



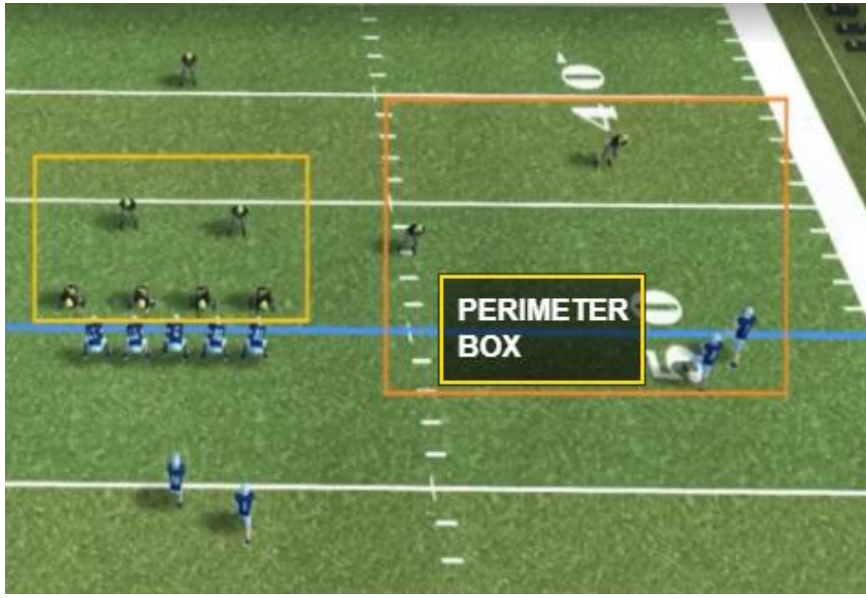
(Here is an example of a "light" interior box numbers vs one of our two back deuce formations)

Perimeter Box

After our quarterback and receivers find the deep safeties, they will evaluate the positioning and leverage of the immediate defender aligned over them in the "perimeter box". We will force the defense to cover all of our spread receivers to keep the defense honest. If you do not have built in ways to attack the defense immediately for leaving your receivers uncovered with on-air shots you are giving the defense the license to load up the interior box or cheat with extra safeties over the top. We will have extensive reliefs built into all run and pass game concepts to take advantage of these situations and punish the defense for not playing us straight up on the perimeters. Another important area of emphasis is that you do not allow the defense to apex your receivers and the interior box, or in simple terms we cannot let the defense cheat inside to help out in the interior box. If you consistently allow the apex players to split the difference of the wide split of our inside receivers in a zone coverage without attacking his leverage, then we are in essence allowing the defense to play with an extra defender.



In the above example the defense is in an open coverage with two high safeties and has matched up our spread receivers in the perimeter boxes. This necessitates that the defense is now "light" in the interior box as we face a 41 interior box alignment.



(Example of Apex defender refusing to expand with the wide split of our receivers)

Defensive Identification Grids

On the next several pages you will find copies of our Master Defensive Identification Grid that we give our quarterbacks in their quarterback manual each year. We will examine all defensive coverages and fronts in great detail during our off-season quarterback school. These charts provide an easy reference for how we quickly identify and classify defensive coverage and front structures. We will not examine those in this book as that is a novel in and of itself to properly teach the identification and weakness of these defenses. As coach John Jenkins has told me repeatedly and referenced in the forward of this book any talk about play design or offensive scheme is useless without a complete and thorough understanding of the defense. You can easily create and categorize your own defensive identification grids by applying these principles to your own offensive system. Just remember that the more multiple of an offense you employ (multiple tight ends, fullbacks, ect) the more complicated your defensive identification will be as the defense will be able to present you with more varied and multiple defensive looks.

There are only so many ways in which the defense can align vs. our offensive attack. While they may attempt to disguise there intentions to make themselves look more complicated or multiple than they are. All defensive attempts will fall into one of the areas below. Use the following cheat sheet as you use this manual as a tool to determine how the defense is aligning to our various formations, shifts, and motions.

MASTER DEFENSE ID GRID
VS. BASE PERSONNEL (1-BACK)

MIDDLE OF FIELD	BOX #	FRONT	COVERAGE
OPEN (2 HIGH SAFETY)	5	41 32	COVER 2 COVER 5 4- ACROSS /QUARTERS COVER 3 BUZZ COVER 3 CLEO
CLOSED (1 HIGH SAFETY)	6	33 42 51 41 (B)/(R)	COVER 1 COVER 3
BLITZ	7	33 (B)/ (R) 34 43 42 (B)/(R) 52	COVER 0



MASTER DEFENSE ID GRID

VS. DEUCE PERSONNEL (2-BACK)

MIDDLE OF FIELD	BOX #	FRONT	COVERAGE
OPEN (2 HIGH SAFETY)	6	33 42 51 41 (B)/(R)	COVER 2 COVER 5 4- ACROSS /QUARTERS COVER 3 BUZZ COVER 3 CLEO
CLOSED (1 HIGH SAFETY)	7	33 (B)/ (R) 34 43 42 (B)/(R) 52	COVER 1 COVER 3
BLITZ	8	33 (B)& (R) 44 42 (B)&(R) 43 (B)/ (R)	COVER 0

MASTER DEFENSE ID GRID

VS. EMPTY PERSONNEL (NO-BACK)

MIDDLE OF FIELD	BOX #	FRONT	COVERAGE
OPEN (2 HIGH SAFETY)	4	31	COVER 2 COVER 5 4- ACROSS /QUARTERS COVER 3 BUZZ COVER 3 CLEO
CLOSED (1 HIGH SAFETY)	5	41 32	COVER 1 COVER 3
BLITZ	6	33 42 51 41 (B)/(R)	COVER 0

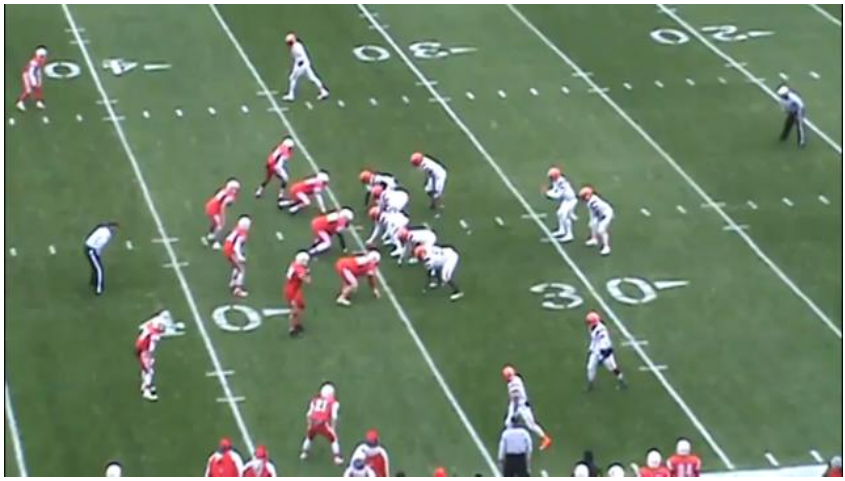
Force the Defense into Auto-Checks and Static Alignments

As a byproduct of playing fast offensively you will inevitably force the defense into "auto checks" or automatic alignments against your basic offensive formations. If you utilize shifting and motion you will add an extra layer of this to the defense as they will at times have to check multiple times into new defensive alignments and coverages or risk being hung out to dry in an unsound defensive front or coverage. This is why the faster you play and the more diverse you are in terms of using multiple back to no back formations the greater the odds are that you will see a "static" or base defensive alignment all game long as they struggle just to get lined up.

We will use our shift packages to give the defense formational looks that will necessitate a check into a base alignment. We will often use our two back deuce personnel and align in an empty formation with no backs pre-snap getting the defense to make their check vs empty and then quickly shift into a two back alignment that will necessitate another defensive alignment check. This is all built into the play call in most instances and allows us to play extremely fast and to truly have the chalk last. In the screenshot below you will see us start the play in an empty 4x1 formation and quickly shift into our two back deuce formation.



Pre-Shift 4 X 1 Empty Alignment



Post- Shift into a Two Back Alignment

More difficult for the defense to attack tendencies

By playing extremely fast the defense will have a harder time triggering their defensive calls off of the field position, hash, and down and distance as we are typically snapping the football before they can even process all of this information. You would need a supercomputer on the sideline to go through all of these analytics defensively and then get your defensive call properly communicated before we snap the football. Defensive coaches will not have time on the sideline or press box to leaf through pages of tendency data with the limited amount of time you are giving them in between plays.

As a play caller in this offense it is important however to conduct a self-scout of your tendencies particularly if they are formation based or in critical situations such as long yardage, short yardage and area of the field. We will cover these critical play calling situations in a later chapter.

Unsound Defensive Looks and Attempts to Stall Your Offense

One challenge to playing extremely fast while presenting the defense with some unique and exotic formations to defend is that you will at times face unsound or junk defenses. Sometimes these alignments will be by design as your opponent attempts to become more than a speed bump on your way to the end zone, and at other times they are simply alignment issues. As I expanded on in earlier chapters when players become tired they have a tendency to have mental breakdowns and will often line up in the wrong spot, defensive line technique, abandon their run fits, or just be so plain physically tired that they cannot get aligned properly before the snap. As you get good at implementing this tempo you will have this occur even against very disciplined and well coached football teams. The 3 technique defensive lineman will suddenly align in a 1 technique, a linebacker will abandon his responsibility, a big defensive lineman who has been running sideline to sideline chasing our receivers and ball carriers desperately needs to get a breather but our tempo does not allow it. When you combine all of these factors as the game progresses it is inevitable you will see players not getting into their stances on the defensive line prior to the ball being snapped.

Once you have the momentum and have the defense on the ropes they will do anything in their power to try and stop your momentum such as calling timeouts or worse yet even going to the ground with a "leg cramp" to stop play and attempt to stall your momentum. When this starts to occur you want to further crank up your tempo as you players will be like sharks smelling blood in the water ready to attack the opponent's defense relentlessly.

Coach, they are picking up on our calls (codes, signals)!

Inevitably you will hear at some point during the year that your kids will say that they believe the opponent is picking up on the play call coding. I can tell you that because we utilize a vast array of verbal codes and signals for each play this is very difficult for a defense to do. Often this will be said during a time when your offense is

struggling to move the football. Stay the course- if you are codifying your offense correctly they are not picking up on your play calling code. There simply is not enough time to "sign steal" our offensive tempo and get a counter defensive play call effectively communicated to the defense in-time to have an effect. When implemented correctly this simply will not happen. Just tell your players to keep executing and playing fast. Even if the defense knew where the play is going we are snapping the ball so fast that they could not possibly make a call to effectively counter our play call prior to the ball being snapped. Remember these are 14-18 year old kids that are out there on the field executing, not the defensive coaching staff. Now certainly as I explained earlier we will tweak some of our codes and signals if playing a familiar opponent or facing a team that has a former member of our staff on their coaching staff.

CHAPTER 5

OFF-SEASON IMPLEMENTATION & DEVELOPMENT



Off-Season Implementation and Development

Become a No-Huddle Program

The off-season is critical to installing the no huddle attack. This is the time that you will be turning your program into a "play fast" culture where players will start to become accustomed to the up-tempo nature that you will operate at practice when you are able to get onto the field. It is important that you implement a strength and speed/conditioning program that will develop and strengthen your athletes year round.

I am a big fan of our players participating in multiple sports in addition to participating in our off-season program. In addition to the competitive benefits of participation in multiple sports your players will remain in great physical condition year round. I have mentioned that we do not run sprints or traditional conditioning during our practice sessions and much of the same is true during our off-season program. We implement football specific conditioning or speed training exercises to improve our speed and agility. The same holds true for our strength program as we focus on our core lifts in small groups while constantly rotating the groups from station to station. We will also implement a brief dynamic "burst" of a conditioning drill in between sets and then have our players begin their next set of lifts. This starts to condition the athlete to have to work hard "while they are tired".

In the winter months while we are confined to our gymnasium for conditioning work we will begin to implement drills such as our "alignment drill". In this drill we will quickly get aligned into a called formation and then come off the ball with the snap count and burst for 5 yards. The ball will then be quickly placed in another area of the gym and we will quickly align into the formation and get ready for the play call and repeat the same process again. This drill accomplishes many things to help in the development of our offense.

1. We are conditioning players without them even realizing it is a football activity

2. We are conditioning our players for the demands of a 5-10 second burst of a football play, and not a 100 yard sprint or gassers in the gym
3. Players are working on getting aligned properly and learning our base formations
4. Players are focusing on getting into a "perfect stance"
5. Players are forced to think while tired as the drives extend and they need to find the ball, get aligned, get the play call and attack (sprint)
6. This is also a great time to develop your multiple snap counts and the discipline involved there in not getting a penalty

No Football Needed

We will accomplish many of these alignment and assignment drills without the use of an actual football. The same holds true for the training of our passing attack while in the gym. We will use different techniques such as stressing receiver releases, finishing steps of a route, and drill our players on how to defeat individual defensive techniques on our multiple adjusting routes. All of these factors can be accomplished in a high repetition manner in the gym with no football.

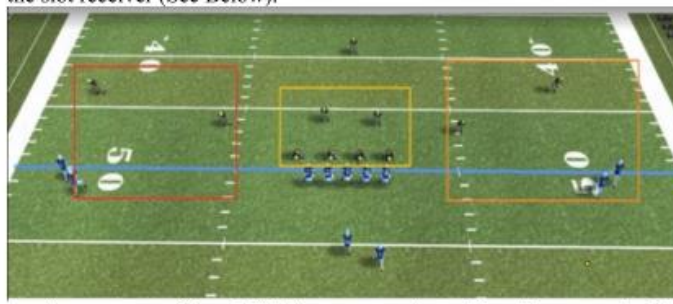
Terminology and Teaching Progressions

It is imperative to begin to teach your players the offense during the off-season. The days of teams taking the field in August and installing their offense for the first time are long gone. The more knowledge that you can impart into your players prior to getting on the actual field in the spring or summer will put you ahead of the curve. There are many ways over the years that we have worked to facilitate this learning environment. How you structure your off-season development program will depend on your schools resources and the regulations regarding off-season activity in your state. Even if you are in a state that does not have spring ball (we do not in Pennsylvania), or does not have an athletic period during the school day (we do not) there are ways to get this process ramped up for your players.

Quarterback School

Our quarterback school is held each off-season (Jan- May) with our quarterbacks and at times our wide receivers and running backs as well. During this period we are in a classroom setting and each of our quarterbacks receives a large binder that will contain the units for each lesson that is being taught. During this process we will advance through a complete quarterback syllabus that will teach each quarterback the complete ins and outs of how to be a quarterback in our offense, reveal and teach our play design in great detail, but most importantly how to identify and attack the weakness in each defense we will face. As coach John Jenkins indicated to you in the foreword of this book, any talk of offensive football or play design without first having a complete and thorough understanding of defenses is completely useless. This is where we teach our quarterbacks everything that they need to know about reading defenses. I have included a few examples of our quarterback manual in this chapter. As our quarterbacks work through each unit I give them a test on the material that they must complete. I will then go over the results of the test with them prior to the next unit. Remember that ultimately as coaches we are teachers and we need to understand that our players will have different learning styles. This is why it is important to utilize handouts, video, and written exams to ensure that we are able to properly instruct each varied learning style. I have included a sample of one of these quarterback school unit tests in the back of this book for your review.

receivers and we have effectively pulled the linebackers out of the box against teams who instruct those players to "Split the difference" between the tackle and the slot receiver (See Below).



Another way we will exploit this coverage attempt is with our constantly changing formations, shifting and motions. In the example below we shifted from a three back alignment to a quads alignment and you can see the stress that this has placed on this coverage attempt.



As shown below even a simple Trips Alignment will cause a three on two numbers advantage for us in the perimeter box area. This should allow us to steal yardage with our screen package and relief attachments to our base run game.

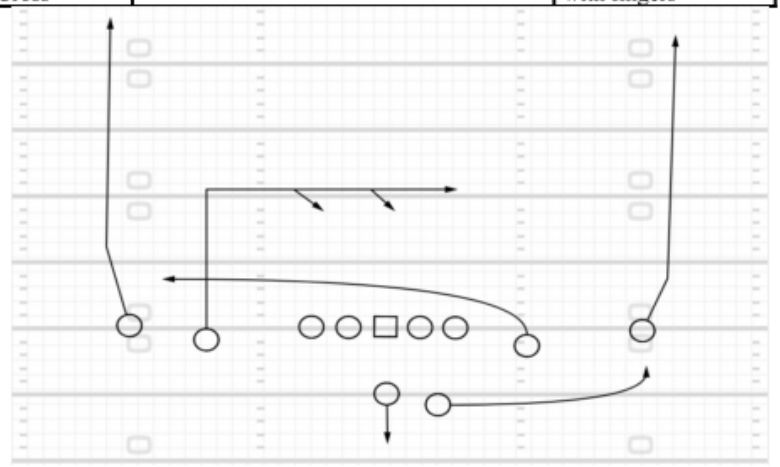
Above you will find a sample page from our quarterback manual detailing how to identify and attack a particular defensive coverage. Both diagrams and screen shots of our opponent's defense will be used as a teaching aid. We breakdown each and every single one of the coverage category that a quarterback may face in this offense, along with how to identify and attack its weakness. You can see in the example above how valuable this information is in the teaching progression for your quarterbacks.

Shallow Cross

Our shallow cross concept allows us to attack the defense with a horizontal and vertical stretch. The shallow cross in the Burrell Bucs offense is a very versatile play that allows us to have success against both man, zone, and blitz defensive coverage attempts. As a quarterback we will be taking a three step drop in the shotgun and our initial read will be the Area Outside (A.O.) defender who is aligned to the side the shallow cross is running towards. We will talk further in this chapter about a few of the variations that we have to our shallow cross to provide us with answers to attack any defensive coverage that is deployed against our offensive attack.

Here is how we will call the Shallow Cross in 2019

Concept	Code Words	Signal
Shallow Cross	Lt=51,53,55,57,59 Rt=50, 52, 54, 56, 58	Fist off Head then # with fingers



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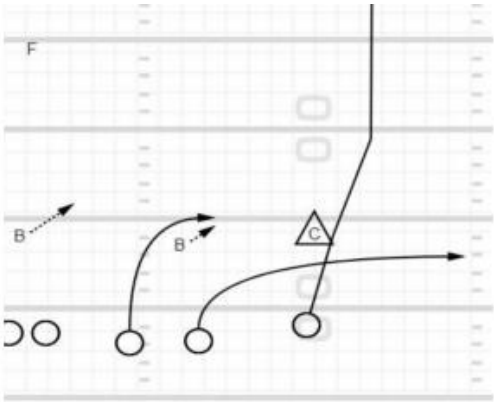
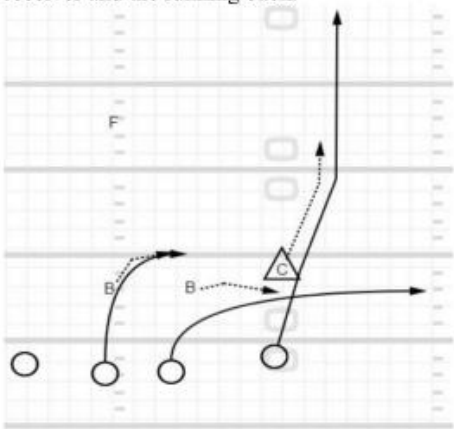
Burrell Bucs Football

In our off-season quarterback school we divide up each portion of the offense that will be covered in this extensive quarterback manual. The off-season is a great time to really give your quarterbacks every single scenario and reaction that they could face from a defense and how to attack it on each play in your system. This provides a great

reference point for your quarterback and one that he can refer to as the concepts are actually installed on the field in the summer. The page above from our quarterback manual details the shallow cross concept in great detail including; play design, philosophy, code words, and hand signals for the play. We do this for each and every single play in the offense.



If man to man coverage is recognized or the read becomes cloudy the qb should work the backside with the slant or slant/swing combo weak with the single receiver and the running back.



Trips Rt Lightning vs. Man to Man coverage

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Burrell Bucs Football

(Above is a sample page from our quarterback manual detailing the quarterback reads against a specific defensive alignment)

Pre-Season Practice Sessions

Getting out on the Field

Once the winter weather breaks here in Pennsylvania and Spring is in the air we will start to incorporate outdoor field work into our off-season strength and skill development program. Players are usually chomping at the bit by this point to get out there on the field and start to throw the football around and begin to get in more football specific training. Our spring and summer program focuses on the following pillars.

1. Strength Training- We will still continue to lift 3 days per week as we do all year long with the focus on explosive strength development for football.

2. Speed and Agility- We will incorporate drills that will focus on speed and agility training, while at the same time conditioning our players for the rigors of playing fast for 48 minutes a game.

3. Fundamentals and Skill Development- The majority of our on-field "practice" time in the summer is focused on the development of our player's individual skills and fundamentals. We will use most of our on-field time in individual positional teaching periods or small group periods.

4. Scheme Installation- We will begin to install our offensive scheme both on the field and in the classroom through the use of our video playbook teaching tapes. We install our entire offense in a 3-day cycle that I will go into greater detail in the next chapter of this book.

5. Competitions- It is imperative in my opinion to give your athletes the opportunity to compete as much as possible during the summer months. Seven on Seven competitions and Lineman challenge activities provide an excellent chance to reward your players for their hard work by allowing them to get out and compete. Specifically with our up-tempo no huddle system the seven on seven tournaments provide us with an excellent opportunity to get reps for

our passing game against a variety of defensive looks and teams. The other bonus is the conditioning that your players will receive competing in the heat of the summer for several seven on seven games in a single day. These "game" competitions provide a great chance to play fast and learn all of the required signals and code words for the offense.

Sample Summer Practice Weekly Outline

Monday
6:00pm-6:30pm- Lift (OL) Meeting/Film (Skill)
6:30pm-7:00pm- Lift (Skill) Meeting/Film (OL)
7:10pm-8:30pm- Skill Development/ Install Day #1

Tuesday
6:00pm-6:30pm- Lift (Skill) Meeting/Film (OL)
6:30pm-7:00pm- Lift (OL) Meeting/Film (Skill)
7:10pm-8:30pm- Skill Development/ Install Day #2

Wednesday
6:00pm-8:00pm- Skill Development/ Install Day #3
*Possible 7 on 7 Day
If 7 on 7 - Day 3 Install will occur on Thursday

Thursday
6:00pm-6:30pm- Lift (OL) Meeting/Film (Skill)
6:30pm-7:00pm- Lift (Skill) Meeting/Film (OL)
7:10pm-8:30pm- Skill Development/ Install Day #1

*When the schedule resumes the following Monday we will be on Day #2 Install

Below is an example of a basic summer offensive practice schedule outline. Please review this after you read the chapter of this book on how we practice, where I will go over all of our practice periods in great detail.

Time	QB/RB/WR	Offensive Line
10	Pre Practice, Settle and Noose, Net Drills	Pre Practice - Agility Drills
10	Mesh Drill	Individuals
25	Individuals	Individuals
15	Choice Drill - QB & WR	Pass Pro - OL & RB
20	Group Period	Run Game Teach Day 1
10	Team Tempo	Team Tempo

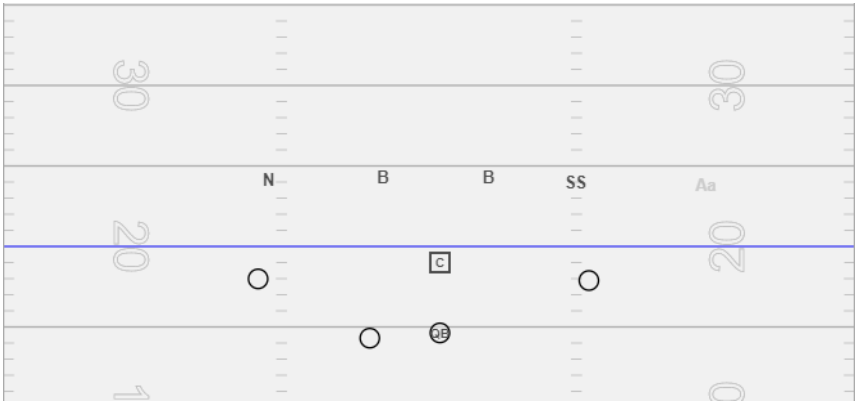
Practicing in the Summer with Limited Roster Numbers

If you have spent any time coaching in a small school setting you have probably encountered a problem that many schools face; a lack of numbers. These low numbers can be even more glaring in the spring and summer months while you athletes juggle other interests, multiple sports, summer vacations, and summer work schedules. I have been in this situation many times during the course of my career and because of this we had to look at ways to get quality reps and teaching done when we were not able to get to another school for a seven on seven event.

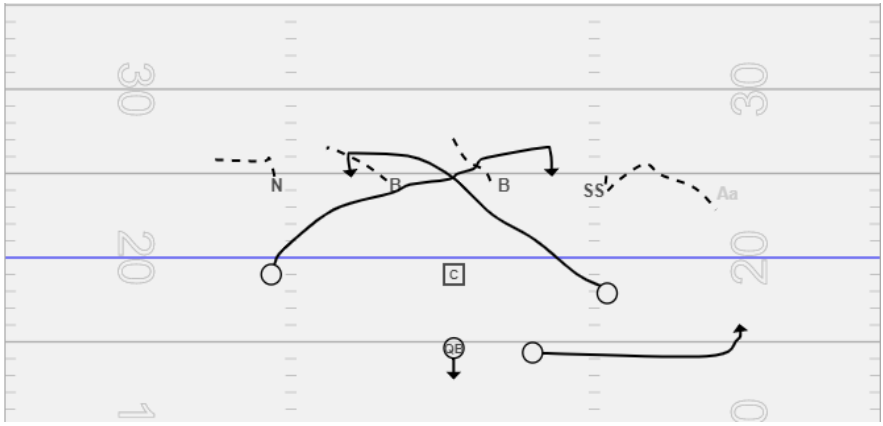
The following two drills for your passing game will allow you to utilize a group of players as small as 8 and get in quality reps for your passing game. We will use these group periods as a way to drill both our inside and outside passing attack while trying to get a "best on best" situation where our players are facing the best possible competition as we can facilitate at practice.

Inside 4 on 3 Passing Game Drill

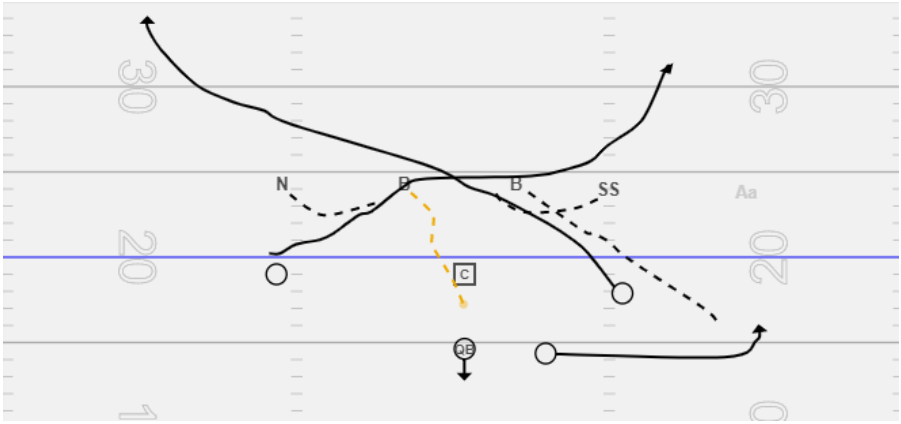
This drill is useful for our quarterback and receivers reading and executing our "mesh" route. On each play we will involve both of the crossers with the running back against four potential defenders consisting of two inside linebackers and two area outside defenders.



We will then call and execute one of our mesh concepts with the quarterback going through his progressions while the defense plays a man or zone coverage technique and the receivers adjust their routes accordingly. This is a great way to get a high number of quality reps in teaching a specific segment of the passing game while hampered with low numbers of players. This is the passing game answer to the "half line" run game drill commonly used by teams to drill their running game in a best on best situation.

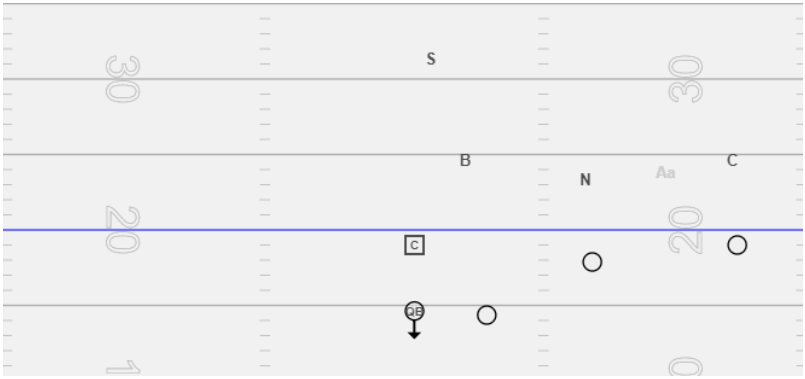


The above diagram illustrates our offense executing "mesh" while the defensive under coverage drops into zone responsibility. In the diagram below you will notice our receivers adjust their routes when presented with a man to man coverage read by the defense. It is critical that you have the defense continually switch up their looks from man to zone during this period. This is also a good time to have linebackers blitz to test your running backs recognition of his check release responsibility in the passing game.

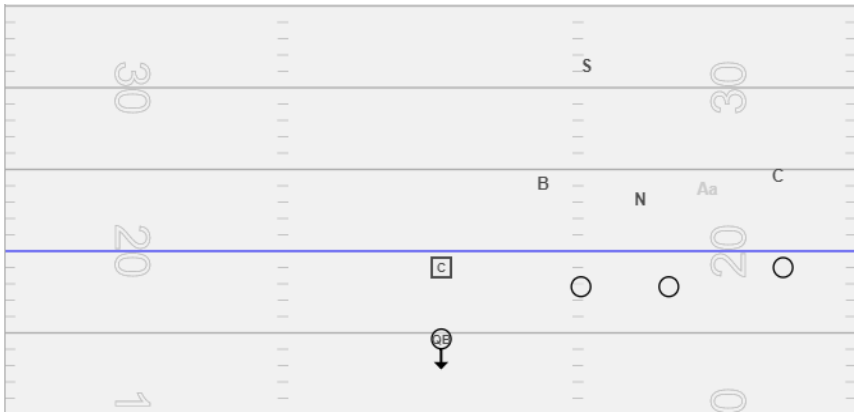


Outside 4 on 3 Perimeter Passing Drill

We will apply the same principles to our outside passing game with a 4 on 3 perimeter passing drill. In this drill we will align with 3 potential eligible receivers to a side against 4 defenders. The alignment of the drill can feature a 1-high or a 2-high safety look with a safety in the middle of the field or aligned on or near the hash as illustrated in the diagrams below.

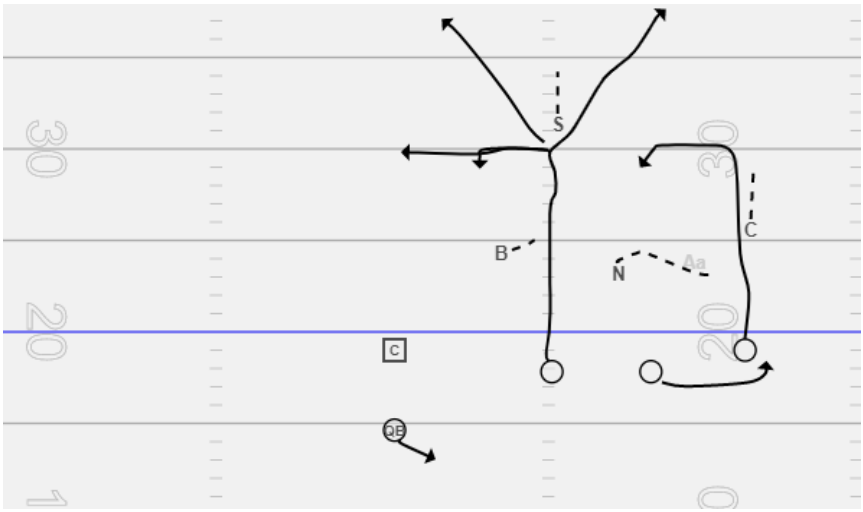


Outside 4 on 3 Perimeter Passing Drill vs. 1 high defense

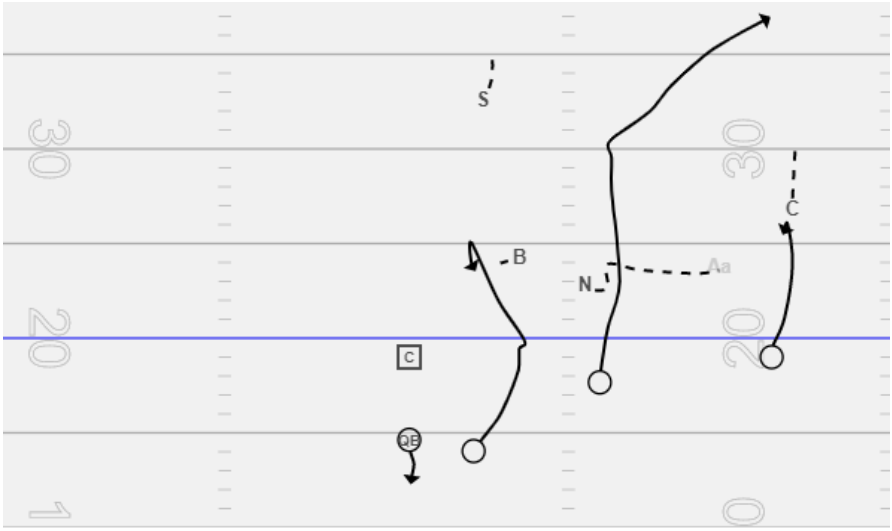


Outside 4 on 3 Perimeter Passing Drill Simulating 2 high safety with safety on the Hash

This drill will operate in the same manner as the interior passing drill with the defenders applying man to man or zone coverage technique and leverage. This will allow our quarterbacks and receivers to get a high number of reps in reading the coverage and executing a number of possible multiple adjusting routes as shown below vs. both man and zone coverage.



3 on 4 Perimeter Passing Drill vs. a Zone Coverage Category



3 on 4 Perimeter Passing Drill vs Zone Coverage Category with two receivers and a back

By being creative and applying drills such as the two I have illustrated above, you will have the ability to effectively drill your passing game during the spring and summer months when you may be forced with low participation numbers. The key is to get your players a high number of reps facing quality defensive looks that will allow your quarterback and receivers to get on the same page.

This period will also provide your defensive players with an excellent opportunity to work on their techniques and coverage skills. We want to use a high tempo with this period and we will usually use an 8 play rack that will consist of 8 consecutive snaps. At that time we will rotate the personnel to ensure that all of our players are getting a quality number of reps. As I have expressed many times throughout this book however one mistake that coaches make in practicing a no-huddle system is rotating players in and out during drills. We want to keep our players in for 4 to 8 play racks so that they get used to the type of conditioning necessary to play at a high level during the game at the extreme tempo that we will demand for four quarters.

CHAPTER 6

PRACTICE IMPLEMENTATION



In-Season Implementation and Practice Schedules

It is imperative when implementing an up-tempo no-huddle system that you are very organized in how you practice and install the offense. As I have expanded upon several times in this book, at this point we have worked to create a "play fast" culture throughout our program. This will never be as apparent as when we hit the practice field for training camp. Every single period of our practice is geared towards getting our athletes ready to play fast and win big on Friday nights.

How We Practice to Play Fast

When initially utilizing this mindset to your practice structure it may be a shock to the system for some. Both players and coaches may be used to the traditional sense of practice where often times players will stand around while a coach calls a play off a long script, then call the play in the huddle and then execute the play. This process during a team period of a traditional practice is often repeated time and time again as the coach shouts out "run that one again", or worse yet the entire practice is stopped while an offensive line coach goes on a 10 minute dissertation with one of his players about a missed block. If you stand back and evaluate how you are using your practice time you will probably realize that you are wasting a lot of your time out on the practice field, standing around, talking, and not getting your team better at football which is the ultimate goal of practice. Efficiency, organization, and setting a pace for your practices will allow you to be able to get an increased amount of reps for your players in a shorter amount of time.

Shorter Practices

If you are able to enhance the tempo of your practices and make them more efficient, you will in-turn be able to shorten the overall length of your practices. This allows your players to have fun and practice and makes them feel less like work. Our players enjoy coming out to practice every day because we are providing a fun learning environment for them. By incorporating our conditioning into the pace of our practice, there is no more lining up to run sprints

or gassers at the conclusion of practice. Music blasts from speakers at our practice field, players smile, laugh and learn. Simply put, we try to foster a fun environment that kids want to be a part of every day. The shorter practices allow your players to enjoy a life outside of football, have more time at home for homework, get home to have dinner with their families, and not feel like attending practice is a chore or a punishment despite the hard work that is taking place.

Coach on the Move

We never want our coaches standing around at practice. To maximize how you need to practice this system your coaches will have to coach up on the move. This means potentially jogging back to the line of scrimmage with a player in between plays and utilizing film and meetings as a teaching tool. When we are in any kind of a group or a team period we do not want to stop the entire period and slow things down to make corrections. Our practices are structured so that our coaches will take notes of any mistakes and will "clean-up" those mistakes during their next individual or group period at practice. If a period is a 5 minute blitz period running 3 (4) play racks of plays (12 plays). That is the number of plays we want to have executed in that period good or bad. We will use time later in the practice session to correct mistakes made during this period. We do not want the period extended or delayed for any reason. The practice schedule needs to continue to flow with our tempo.

No Playbooks

We have no actual physical playbook in our offense, and these often find their way to a desk drawer or scattered on the floor of your locker room. Simply put I have found that players do not study them as much as we think that they are. An extensive manual for our quarterbacks exists that I revealed to you in an earlier chapter, but that book is more of an examination of defensive alignments. We will give our players handouts and ask them to complete pre-game tests at times. We do provide our players will receive blank sheets of mechanical graph design paper that they can take notes during meetings to compile their own notebooks on the offense. These mechanical graph sheets will allow players to be very detailed and

specific in their alignments and responsibility as each of the blocks on the mechanical graph paper are 1 square yard. The entire field dimensions and landmarks are mapped out on this paper so that players will have a complete understanding of their alignments and the landmarks of the field.

Our players also have access to a video playbook that consists of the entire offense in a video format that they can access and view cut ups of all of the plays that are being run. I believe that this is important for players that are visual learners to be able to have this resource to study. As coaches we have to understand the importance of teaching to our players who have grown up in a video game era. They are used to consuming and digesting media in this type of format rather than on a static piece of paper and we need to utilize this as a teaching tool to our advantage.

The teaching process for our offensive installation will include meeting time with potential handouts and note taking. This includes a complete review of the video playbook installs for that day including cut-up teaching video. We follow this up with on-field run through of the play concepts being installed while we are physically out there on the practice field. This allows us to reach players who have varied learning styles through written, visual, and physically running through all of the play designs.

There are modern innovations that can even further increase the learning process for your players such as VAR Football which allows you to teach your players in 360 degree virtual reality video. This outstanding product is the brainchild of Austin James Smith who is currently the Wide Receivers coach of the Houston Roughnecks of the XFL. Coach Smith has designed a program that will allow you to take your repetitions and teaching of your quarterback to the next level by allowing them to don a virtual reality headset and gain countless practice reps in a virtual reality setting. I highly recommend that your program research this product and find a way to get involved with this cutting edge teaching tool (virtualcoachfootball.com).

Practice at Such a Pace the Game Feels Slow

We will practice at such a breakneck pace that often our players will feel that the game feels slow on Friday nights. We will constantly be ready to go with the next play-call and the ball spotted ready to attack. This allows players to get conditioned to operating at an extreme up-tempo pace. Remember it is always easier to "slow down" the pace then it is to "play fast". Set an extreme pace and if you need to "pump the brakes" a bit during a period to slow the pace of practice down you will be able to easily accomplish that.

Substitutions

During practice we prefer our players who are rotating in and out with substitutes to remain in the drill or period for 4 or 8 play racks. This means we do not want players to sub themselves out after one or two plays even if they run a deeper pass route. We want them to get their bodies conditioned to playing fast and the only way to do that is to continuously move as they get repetitions at a game-like tempo that we are setting at practice. By ensuring that your players remain in the drill for 4 or 8 consecutive snaps or reps of a drill, you are conditioning their bodies for the rigors of Friday night football in our system. Also any personnel substitution that is being done needs to be handled from the sideline to simulate a game situation. During games we cannot substitute players from behind the offense, therefore we do not want to get into a habit of doing that during our practice sessions.

Spot the Ball

Probably one of my biggest expenditures on my equipment budget each year are new footballs. We must have 20-30 practice balls on the field with us at all times to practice at the tempo that we are expecting to operate at. We always want each of our drills and periods to be set-up prior to the drill beginning and this needs to be handled by our managers or coaching staff. We do not want the

period to begin and then be looking for our footballs, cones, chutes, or whatever else is needed for the drill. These items need to be in place ready to go prior to the start of the practice period. This takes some planning and organization as a coaching staff.

During our periods we also do not want to worry about chasing footballs down as that will waste time and slow our pace. This is why we need a large number of footballs so that our players can focus on handing or tossing the ball to the nearest official while our coaches or managers have the ball spotted for the next play immediately. Remember as I indicated earlier a key to practicing to play fast is operating at such a fast tempo that the games will seem slow to your players.

By setting such a consistent extreme practice pace we are not only properly conditioning our players but we are forcing them out of their comfort zone. It is often an adjustment early in the season when installing this no-huddle system for players who are simply not used to the pace. They will be pushed to the limit as they adjust to consistently attacking the defense in this manner. During this period of time particularly during training camp they will feel physically but also mentally exhausted. As coaches we want to stress the need for the players to remain disciplined mentally despite their body being tired. This will prepare them to not make mental mistakes during a game if they are dealing with issues such as extreme heat or fatigue. We want to apply the pace so that our opponent is completely gassed in the 2nd and 4th quarters.

Setting Your Offensive Menu

One of the major advantages to running an up-tempo no-huddle system is the simplification that will occur in the number of schemes that you will need to carry each week. By playing fast you will force the defense into "static" defensive fronts and coverages as they are forced to become a no huddle defense. Often times your opponent will be doing everything in their power just to get lined up correctly. This will allow you to get very proficient at a smaller number of play concepts while having the ability to appear very multiple by running them from varied formations, shifts, and motions each week.

Run What You Practice & Practice What You Run

This sounds like a very simple statement but is one that we place extreme importance on as we plan our practice sessions. Simply put in the game on Friday night we want to be running plays that we effectively drilled and repped at practice all week (season) long. We believe that by getting very good at the execution of these streamlined plays we will be able to execute at a higher level than our opponent will be able to defend them. Avoid placing your team into a situation where you are trying to implement or draw plays in the dirt that you have not properly practiced or have maybe only got 2 or 3 repetitions all week long at practice. In my opinion when coaches attempt to do this they are setting their team up for failure. We will not run a concept in a game that we have not spent extensive time practicing that week. Full scale in-game or half-time play adjustments where coaches are grab bagging plays out of a hat because they believe they will work screams of panic and is typically not very successful for the offensive unit. The more you are able to practice your system the greater sense of confidence that will exist from your players.

Obviously from week to week play designs will be added to your arsenal. They may be in the form of a play variation or a new gadget or exotic play design. I will caution that if you are implementing an entire new "play" for the week such as putting in an inside trap run, then the only way you can expect your players to execute that play at a high level will be to get a high number of repetitions at practice. This will obviously lead to another "core" play concept getting fewer repetitions at practice. Even with our up-tempo practice style and the increase in the total number of plays that we will be able to practice, time spent installing a new concept properly will take away from the practice time available to refine and existing concept. Because of this situation we try to have a rule that if a new play is being installed into the game plan, then an existing play has to be taken out of that week's game plan. This is the only way that you can ensure that you are devoting enough time to get your offense ready to execute efficiently that week. Remember confusion and lack of preparation will SLOW your offensive unit down as your players will

be thinking instead of playing fast. We want to drill all of our play concepts so many times that by the time they are executed in a game situation each of your players know them like the back of their hand.

In the next chapter I will focus specifically on the game planning process and how you can structure your plan to attack defenses, but it is important as a coach that you are organizing your practice schedules and scripts to get significant repetitions for all of the concepts you plan to run in any given game. We begin that process by asking ourselves what are the key concepts that we are going to have in for that week's game plan. Those schemes for us do not change from week to week and that is what allows us to perfect them through high repetitions. Our schemes also utilize multiple adjusting routes that allow us to have the ability to attack any defensive structure that we may face. It is extremely important to establish a manageable number of play concepts that you will be able to effectively practice each week.

An example of streamlining your offensive attack into a three day installation cycle can be seen on the following pages. I hope that these examples show you how a three day install cycle can be built out to allow you to have maximum practice reps, while adding some additional flavor to the offensive menu each week to attack weaknesses of your opponent. Through this three day installation schedule we will continue to repeat and refine our teaching of these base schemes throughout the season. Consistency is key as we will practice in the same format from the start of training camp through the week of the state championship. Through this our players will develop an expectation for what is expected from them during practice, and they will see the fruits of their labor each and every Friday night.

On the next three pages of this book you will see an example of an actual 3-Day Installation Schedule.

3- Day Installation

Day #1

Run Game

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Inside Zone		

Choice Routes (Every Day)

Concept	Code Words	
Deep Outside Choice		
Deep Slot Choice		

Drop Back

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Shallow		

Zone Boot		

Quick Game

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Stick		
Qk Out		

Screen

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Swing Screen		
Fast Screen		

Gadget

- Suckers
- Scatters Intro
- Green, Orange/Thursday (Snap Count)

Day #2

Run Game

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Counter		
QB Counter		

Choice Routes (Every Day)

Concept	Code Words	
Deep Outside Choice		
Deep Slot Choice		

Drop Back

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Sail		

P/F		

Quick Game

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Slant		
Hitch		

Screen

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Slow Screen		
Double Screen		

Gadget

- Double Pass
- P/F hook n lateral
- Scatters

Day #3

Run Game

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Outside Zone		
Jet Sweep		

Choice Routes (Every Day)

Concept	Code Words	
Deep Outside Choice		
Deep Slot Choice		

Drop Back

Concept	Code Words	Tags
Mesh		
Jet Boot- Jet P/A		

Screen

Review All - (Packaged Shifts)

Gadget

- Scatter Dino
- Tony Disco
- Scatters
- Reverse
- Short Yardage

Practice Periods

Organizing your practice time efficiently is probably the most important factor in preparing your players to play fast. As I have mentioned at several points throughout this book, how you structure and organize your practice sessions will hold your keys to success throughout the season. By implementing a well-planned, and organized practice routine that allows your players to refine their skills daily, you will enjoy much success in building your program. An emphasis has to be placed on player development during practice from your starters to the last player on your sideline.

Practice segments in an up-tempo no-huddle need to be focused on developing your players to compete at a high tempo. Each practice segment should be focused on building skills and techniques to execute play design on game day. We do not just go out on the practice field and run through a script of plays. There needs to be teaching done each and every day from the ground up on all of the skills necessary to be a successful offensive unit. By having consistency in these drills and doing the same fundamental drills each and every day we are "sharpening our sword". We will stress effort, hustle, tempo, and execution in every single drill and period that we have. Throughout our practice sessions we will always focus on mental discipline, zero pre-snap penalties, ball security, alignments and assignments. These areas will constantly be coached up as we believe that they will hold the keys to victory for us each and every week.

Let me take you through a typical offensive practice schedule with a focus on each of our individual periods in great detail.

Period- Pre-Practice
Frequency: Daily
Time: 10 Minutes
Breakdown: QB/WR/RB- Settle and Noose & Net Drills
OL- Agility/Footwork

This period begins our practice each and every day with a series of drills designed to build football skills and get our players warmed up

at the same time. We begin on the sideline with all of our wide receivers and running backs participating in a "settle and noose" drill. The drill begins with a receiver moving at one quarter to half speed tempo and settling near a cone (see below). The receiver will then give the noose to the quarterback who has taken a snap and going through his progressions in his three step drop. This drill is also a great time for quarterbacks to redirect their feet in the pocket prior to the throw. The Qb will hitch up and deliver the ball to the receiver who has settled near a cone. The cones are placed five yards apart and are designed to simulate defenders. The quarterback will deliver the ball to the receiver's shoulder away from the nearest cone and the receiver will watch the ball into his hands, secure the football, drop step and burst directly up the field for five yards. This will continue with all of our receivers and running backs cycling through both of the stations with both quarterbacks throwing at the same time.



Example of the Pre-Practice Noose Drill

For the final five minutes of the individual period the receivers and running backs will move into our net drills. In these "net drills" we will focus on our players catching a high number of balls and most typically bad balls such as low balls, high balls, and back shoulder balls. The focus is on the receivers getting both hands on the ball and securing the catch. Do not have your quarterbacks throw this drill. You want to save their arms for the workload that they will be facing in practice. Have a coach throw the balls for this drill as he

will only align himself about 10 yards directly away from the net. The receivers will jog across in a variety of fashions at about half speed while the balls are delivered in a rapid fire manner.



Example of a receiver catching a ball thrown behind him in our net drills



In the above photo you can see one of our receivers extending to catch a ball over his head in our Net Drills.



The focus of our net drills are for our receivers to develop their ability to catch bad balls with their hands. The only way to get better at catching the football is to simply get out there and catch the ball. It is important to cycle through this period in a rapid manner with your players getting a wide variety of difficult catch opportunities. You will be shocked by doing this simple drill each and every day how you will develop the hands of your receivers. Again do not have your quarterbacks throw these "net drills' ' and do not use a Jugs machine. Have a coach throw the ball for these drills as he will only be stationed about 10 yards away from the net.

For the ten minutes that the skill position players are doing the noose drill and net drills our offensive linemen are in there area of the field starting to warm up as well. We begin our offensive line getting into a perfect stance and taking vertical pass sets. After several minutes of taking pass sets down the line, our offensive line will go through a series of footwork drills that will serve the purpose of helping to get them loose as well as helping to develop their footwork and coordination.

Period- Flex (ACL Prevention)
Frequency: Daily
Time: 5-10 Minutes
Breakdown: Full Team

Following our pre-practice warmup period we will enter a dynamic warmup period that focuses on ACL prevention. At the conclusion of this 5-10 minute period our players will now be effectively warmed up and ready to go for practice. We do not utilize any form of a static stretch period at practice.

Period- Mesh Drill
Frequency: Daily
Time: 10 Minutes
Breakdown: QB/WR/RB + 1 Center- Mesh Drill OL- Indys

Our mesh drill is a daily group period that we use to focus on several important fundamentals in one period. We begin the drill by having one center per day snap for the drill. We will switch the centers daily so that they are all getting reps snapping the ball in the shotgun. The primary focus on this drill is to time-up our jet sweep motion, but will also focus on the run game mesh between the quarterback and ball carrier and all of the fundamentals of giving and receiving a hand off.

The drill begins with a bag of footballs and the center with two orange cones placed on both sides of the center to simulate the outside leg of the tackles. This is important because this is the landmark that our quarterback will use to time up the snap so that the jet sweep man is at proper location at the snap. We have two PVC Chutes that we place in the A-gaps and two PVC Chutes that are placed about 5 yards downfield in the B-Gap Area. These are used for the running backs to run through and are used to simulate their running lanes and cutback lanes on whatever run scheme is the focus for the day. In the photo below the drill is set up for inside zone.



Mesh Drill Set-Up

The receivers will then align on both sides of the quarterback and will take turns getting sent into jet sweep motion by the qb who will then time up the snap and flash fake the ball while meshing with the running back on the inside zone play. As we progress in the drill we will then hand the ball off to the jet sweep man and then run a live zone read mesh with the quarterback and the running back reading a defensive key. The key to this drill is stressing the timing of the snap and the speed of the motion, as well as ball handling and mesh. At the end of this period we may use the last 3 minutes to review new motions or shifts for the week with this group of skill players.


QB and RB Mesh on Inside Zone during the Mesh Drill

During this mesh drill period our offensive line will have begun their Individual drills period that will last for typically 30-35 minutes each day.

Period- Offensive Individuals
Frequency: Daily
Time: 20-25 Minutes
Breakdown: QB, WR, RB, OL

This is where your positional coaches will have the opportunity to teach fundamentals and techniques with their individual group for a 20-25 minute period. It is important that each positional coach has drills that they incorporate into their individual time as well as drills that are set up to build upon the skills that will be needed for that particular practice day. For example if we are installing a gap scheme that day our offensive line will be working on down blocks, double teams, and pulling. And if we are installing a fast outside receiver screen the quarterbacks and receivers will get together for the last 5 minutes of individual time to work on a "rapid fire" screen drill that we use to refine that concept.

Period- Choice Drill / Pass Protection
Frequency: Daily
Time: 10-15 Minutes
Breakdown: QB/WR- Choice Drill RB/OL- Pass Protection

Our choice drill period is probably one of the most important daily group periods that we have as it is critical for getting our quarterbacks and receivers a high number of reps attacking different defensive alignments. With our multiple adjusting route packages it is important that we are able to get a high number of reps to get the quarterback and receivers on the same page as our routes adjust on the move according to the coverage. To accomplish this we will take one of our choice route concepts and have our receiver's pair up with one on offense and one on defense.



Our receivers will take their proper split and attack the coverage technique of the defense while making the correct route adjustment. The quarterback will deliver the ball on time and the next receiver will quickly jump up into the drill with another receiver serving as the defensive back. This will continue on until we cycle through the group multiple times before changing sides of the field and changing the individual route. We need as many reps as possible in this 10-15 minute period. We will run this drill each and every day to refine our adjusting routes.



Our receiver attacks the defensive technique in the choice drill shown above



Once our receiver gets to his break point he will execute his adjustable route based off of the coverage

While our daily choice route period is taking place, our running backs will travel down with our offensive line for a pass protection period. During this time our protection unit will work each of our pass

protections against a variety of fronts. It is important that we not focus singularly on what we believe the opponent will run. It is important to get work protecting even, odd, and blitz fronts each and every week.

Period- Group- Inside Period- WR - Blocking/ Route Focus
Frequency: Daily
Time: 15-20 Minutes
Breakdown: QB/RB/IR/OL- Inside Run WR- Blocking/ Route Focus

During this daily group practice period we will have our inside hull period where we will be focusing primarily on our inside run for that day but we will also include a few of our run game reliefs such as the pop pass. While we are running our run game script our outside receivers will be working on blocking and whatever the route focus of the day is. If we were for example going to have a red zone or 2-pt situational that day they may be focused on a fade or fade pile-on route concept. For this period we will have our starting quarterback handle the inside run portion until the midway point. During this time the outside receivers are working on individual blocking. We will then send the starting quarterback down with the receivers to work on that day's route focus while the backup quarterback gets his reps in inside run.

Period- Team - Situational #1
Frequency: Daily
Time: 5 Minutes
Breakdown: Team Situational Period- Blitz (12 plays in 5 minutes)

During this period we will execute a five minute situational period typically featuring extensive blitzing by the defense. We will run 12 different plays and we do not want to script our plays against a specific defensive look. This is a time where we want our defensive scout team to be creative and send not only blitzes that are utilized by that week's opponent but several exotic blitz looks as well. It is important that you do not script your offensive plays to be run against a specific blitz look from the defense. I do not believe on

Friday night your opponent is going to reveal to you where and who he is going to be blitzing on a given play and allow you to diagram and call a perfect play to beat it- So do not do that in this period. Put your kids in a game like situation and force them to face some adversity. It will be a great learning experience for your offensive unit and it will put you in a position where after a few weeks your kids will believe they can handle and shred any potential defensive blitz attempt.

Period- Team - Pass Skelly / Blitz Cleanup
Frequency: Daily
Time: 15-20 Minutes
Breakdown: QB,WR, RB- Pass Skelly, RB/OL Blitz Clean-up

At the conclusion of our blitz period there will be some things protection wise that our offensive line and running back in the protection unit may need to review and clean up. During this period our starting running back and the offensive line will enter a blitz clean up period where they will walk through the blitz period calls again and fix any issues. In the meantime our skill position players will be going through the entire passing game against a variety of defensive coverage looks. During this pass skelly period we will also implement situations that will force the quarterback to escape the pocket to a side and trigger our "scramble rules" for our receivers. It is important that you practice with your athletes what the rules are in the passing game when the quarterback is forced to get out of his launch point in the pocket.

Period- Team - Situational #2
Frequency: Daily
Time: 5 Minutes
Breakdown: Team Situational Period- 2-pt Conversion (12 plays in 5 minutes)

This second team period is used to practice 12 plays in a five minute period that will be used in a special situation during the game. Some examples of potential situations that could be practiced on any given day would include;

1. 2-pt Conversions
2. Red Zone
3. Short Yardage / Goal Line
4. Backed Up Offense
5. XXL Yardage to Go Offense
6. Sequenced Plays and Gadgets
7. Last Drive of Half or Game

Period- Team - Screen/ Run Game Reliefs
Frequency: Daily
Time: 10 Minutes
Breakdown: Full Team vs Opponent Scout Defense

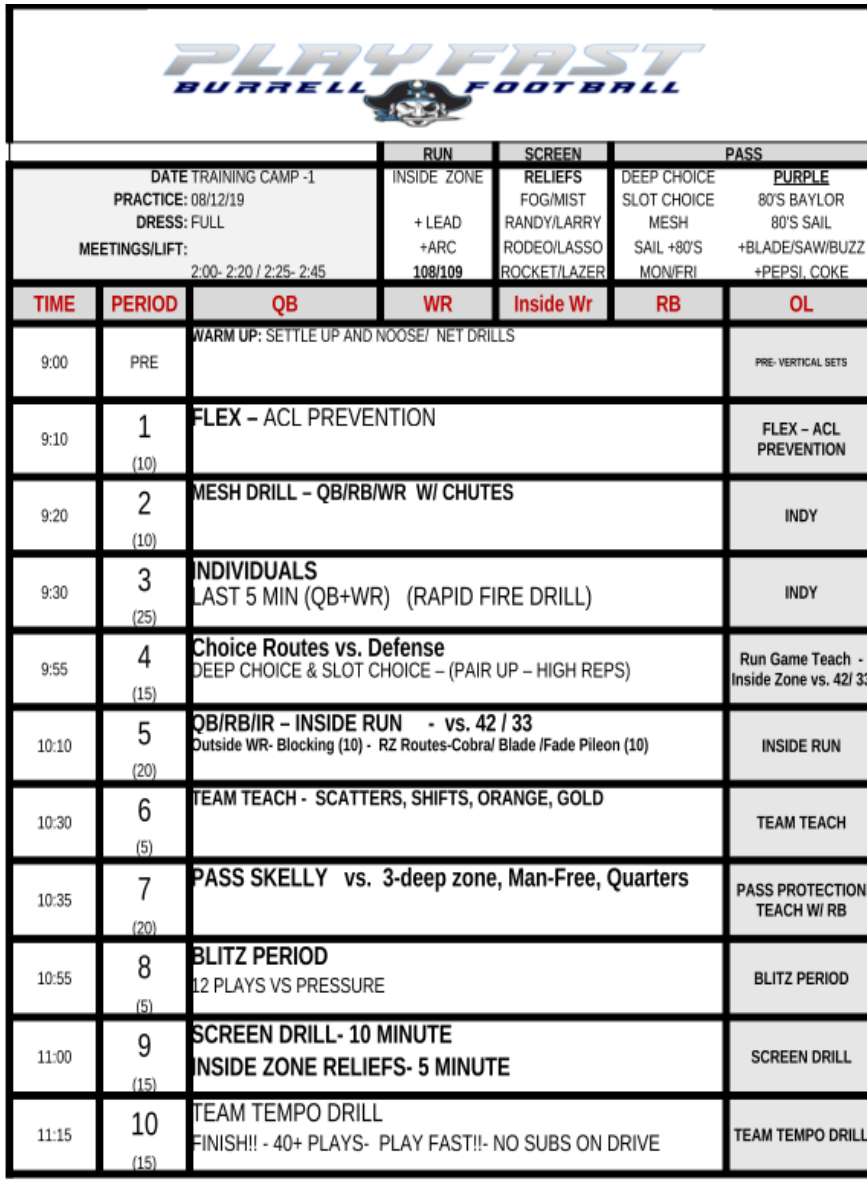
During this period we will work our entire screen game scripts as well as our run game reliefs for this week's game plan. This will include our Run Pass Options (RPO), and Screen Run Options (SRO). We will also review all of our gadget and trick plays for the week during this period against a full scout defense.

Period- Team -Tempo Drill
Frequency: Daily
Time: 10-15 Minutes
Breakdown: Full Team vs Opponent Scout Defense

We will always end practice with our team tempo drill. The setup of this drill is the same as a game situation. The ball will be spotted by coach in an area of the field. The coach will vary where he puts the ball and how far he advances it. For example the ball will start coming off the goal line. On the second play the coach could spot the ball on the minus 15 yard line on the right hash. The on the following play the ball could be at the minus 23 on the left hash. Then on the fourth play the ball could be placed at the plus 20 on the right hash. The focus of the drill is for the offense to quickly find the

ball spot, get aligned in the called formation properly and effectively execute their assignment with no mistakes or pre-snap penalties. This is all done in an extremely up-tempo manner and we expect the ball to be snapped within seven seconds of being placed ready for play by the coach spotting the football. No players may sub out during the drive as we want to maximize conditioning. Once the offense drives down the field to the end zone we will practice celebrating the score with their teammates and then another group will get ready to re-start the drill 1st and 10 coming off of the goal-line . This drill serves several purposes including allowing us to simulate extreme game tempo, work our game day play calling mechanics and substitution patterns from the sideline, and allows us an excellent conditioning opportunity. We want to execute at such an extreme pace during this period that we will often get nearly an entire game worth of snaps in a 10 or 15 minute period. You want to stress getting aligned, getting the play call signal or code words echoed and getting the football snapped as quickly as possible, while finding the nearest referee (coach) to get the ball to once the play is blown dead.

Example Daily Practice Schedule - (Training Camp Session)



PLAY FAST
BURRELL FOOTBALL

			RUN	SCREEN	PASS	
DATE TRAINING CAMP -1			INSIDE ZONE	RELIEFS	DEEP CHOICE	PURPLE
PRACTICE: 08/12/19				FOG/MIST	SLOT CHOICE	80'S BAYLOR
DRESS: FULL			+ LEAD	RANDY/LARRY	MESH	80'S SAIL
MEETINGS/LIFT:			+ARC	RODEO/LASSO	SAIL +80'S	+BLADE/SAW/BUZZ
2:00- 2:20 / 2:25- 2:45			108/109	ROCKET/LAZER	MON/FRI	+PEPSI, COKE
TIME	**PERIOD**	**QB**	**WR**	**Inside Wr**	**RB**	**OL**
9:00	PRE	**WARM UP:** SETTLE UP AND NOOSE/ NET DRILLS				PRE- VERTICAL SETS
9:10	1 (10)	**FLEX –** ACL PREVENTION				FLEX – ACL PREVENTION
9:20	2 (10)	**MESH DRILL – QB/RB/WR W/ CHUTES**				INDY
9:30	3 (25)	**INDIVIDUALS** LAST 5 MIN (QB+WR) (RAPID FIRE DRILL)				INDY
9:55	4 (15)	**Choice Routes vs. Defense** DEEP CHOICE & SLOT CHOICE – (PAIR UP – HIGH REPS)				Run Game Teach - Inside Zone vs. 42/ 33
10:10	5 (20)	**QB/RB/IR – INSIDE RUN - vs. 42 / 33** Outside WR- Blocking (10) - RZ Routes-Cobra/ Blade /Fade Pileon (10)				INSIDE RUN
10:30	6 (5)	**TEAM TEACH - SCATTERS, SHIFTS, ORANGE, GOLD**				TEAM TEACH
10:35	7 (20)	**PASS SKELLY vs. 3-deep zone, Man-Free, Quarters**				PASS PROTECTION TEACH W/ RB
10:55	8 (5)	**BLITZ PERIOD** 12 PLAYS VS PRESSURE				BLITZ PERIOD
11:00	9 (15)	**SCREEN DRILL- 10 MINUTE** **INSIDE ZONE RELIEFS- 5 MINUTE**				SCREEN DRILL
11:15	10 (15)	TEAM TEMPO DRILL FINISH!! - 40+ PLAYS- PLAY FAST!!- NO SUBS ON DRIVE				TEAM TEMPO DRILL

Small School vs. Big School Practice Schedules

I have had the unique experience of having served as a head coach or offensive coordinator at every level of high school football in Pennsylvania. I have dealt with the challenges of organizing and planning practices at both the big school and small school level. At my current school Burrell High School we are a Class AAA school which falls around the middle of high schools in Pennsylvania. We have a current roster of around 35 players on the Varsity level and we were able to implement this practice schedule and practice plan without issue. During my first season when the numbers were lower and during my time as a coach at the lower classifications with lower numbers you are at times forced to be creative with how you practice.

If you notice the design of how we practice it is really tailored for the coach at the small school level with all of our individual skill and group practice periods. I am not a big believer in doing a lot of extended full team periods with the exception of our situational periods. The offensive team tempo drill that we run at the end of practice can be and is often ran without a defense on the field, so much of this will apply to a coach who is in a situation with a small roster. If a coach is blessed to be at a larger school with a larger roster or even a two platoon situation, you will certainly be able to implement everything that has been covered in this section. I have included several resource items at the end of this chapter that I believe will benefit the coach who may be at the mid-size or small school level in implementing this system with their program.

You will find on the following pages an example of how I organize my entire practice week, an overall training camp outline, and three different practice schedule outlines that represent our three day installation schedule. I hope that you will find these resources beneficial as you develop you own practice plans to play fast.

Sample In-Season Master Practice/Meeting Schedule

Monday In-Season Schedule
• 2:50- 3:10-Offensive Line (Lift)
• 2:50-3:10- QB/RB/WR (Positional Meetings)
• 3:15-3:35-QB/RB/WR (Lift)
• 3:15-3:35-Offensive Line (Positional Meetings)
• 3:35-4:00-Dressed and Taped for Team Meeting
• 3:55- Captains Meeting with Coach Liotta
• 4:00- Team Meeting
• 4:10-5:55-Practice

Tuesday In-Season Schedule
• 2:50- 3:15-Study Table/ Character Development
• 3:15-3:35-Team Film Review
• 3:35-4:00-Dressed and Taped for Team Meeting
• 4:00- Team Meeting
• 4:10-6:05-Practice

Wednesday In-Season Schedule
• 2:50- 3:10- Defensive Line/ Linebackers (Lift)
• 2:50-3:10- Defensive Backs (Positional Meetings)
• 3:15-3:35-Defensive Backs (Lift)
• 3:15-3:35-Defensive Line/ Linebackers (Positional Meetings)
• 3:35-4:00-Dressed and Taped for Team Meeting
• 4:00- Team Meeting
• 4:10-6:15-Practice

Thursday In-Season Schedule
• 2:50- 3:15-Study Table/ Players Turn in Weekly Grade/Behavior Sheets
• 3:15-3:50-Team Film Review
• 4:00-5:15-Practice (Pre-Game) (Helmets & Shoulder Pads)

Friday (Game Day) In-Season Schedule
• Players Report- TBA
• Pre-Game Meal- TBA
• 7:00pm – WIN

Saturday In-Season Schedule
• JV Report for Game - TBA
• 9:00am-11:00am - Varsity Film and Lift

Sample Training Camp Practice Outline (2- Practices Per Day)

Monday August 12th
Doors Open 8am
On Field 9am-11:30am (Practice #1)
Lunch 12:15pm- Puckety Church
2:00pm- Lift – Linemen / Skill- Meeting
2:20pm- Lift- Skill /Meeting- Linemen
3:15pm-5:30pm (Practice #2)
5:30pm- Players Dismissed

Tuesday August 13th
Doors Open 8am
On Field 9am-11:30am (Practice #1)
Lunch 12:15pm- High School
2:00pm- Team Meeting- Team Stretch
3:15pm-5:30pm (Practice #2)
5:30pm- Players Dismissed

Wednesday August 14th
Doors Open 8am
On Field 9am-11:30am (Practice #1)
Lunch 12:15pm- Puckety Church
2:00pm- Lift – Linemen /Skill- Meeting
2:20pm- Lift- Skill / Meeting- Linemen
3:15pm-5:30pm (Practice #2)
5:30pm- Players Dismissed

Thursday August 15th
Doors Open 8am
On Field 9am-11:30am (Practice #1)
Lunch 12:15pm- Puckety Church
2:00pm- Team Meeting- Team Stretch
3:15pm-5:30pm (Practice #2)
5:30pm- Players Dismissed

Friday August 16th
Doors Open 8am
On Field 9am-11:30am (Practice #1)
Lunch 12:15pm- High School
2:00pm-3:30pm(Practice #2)
3:30pm- Players Dismissed

Saturday August 17th
Doors Open 9am
All players report by 9:30am
Home Scrimmage vs. East Allegheny 11am

Example Day 1-3 Practice Schedules

Below you will find some sample outlines of a typical one week cycle of installation schedule during training camp and the regular season. You will notice how on certain practices defensive periods are inserted into the schedule. This same philosophy holds true on a defensive practice day. There will be offensive periods inserted into that practice schedule. This allows us to spend some time on each side of the ball every day and keep our players more engaged who are potentially only playing on one side of the ball. These periods may be situational in nature or a fundamental focus for the day or particular week.

	RUN	SCREEN	PASS	
DATE Heat Acc #1 **PRACTICE:** 08/05/19 **DRESS:** UPPERS **MEETINGS/LIFT:**	INSIDE ZONE + LEAD +ARC +FLASH/ ZIP **108/109**	**RELIEFS** FOG/MIST RANDY/LARRY RODEO/LASSO ROCKET/LAZER	DEEP CHOICE SLOT CHOICE MESH MON/FRI	**PURPLE** 80'S BAYLOR +BLADE/SAW/BUZZ +PEPSI, COKE

TIME	PERIOD	QB	WR	Inside Wr	RB	OL
5:00	PRE	**WARM UP:** SETTLE UP AND NOOSE/ NET DRILLS				PRE- VERTICAL SETS
5:10	1 (10)	**FLEX –** ACL PREVENTION				**FLEX – ACL PREVENTION**
5:20	2 (10)	**MESH DRILL – QB/RB/WR W/ CHUTES**				**INDY**
5:30	3 (25)	**INDIVIDUALS** LAST 5 MIN (QB+WR) (RAPID FIRE DRILL)				**INDY**
5:55	4 (15)	**Choice Routes vs. Defense** DEEP CHOICE & SLOT CHOICE – (PAIR UP – HIGH REPS)				**Run Game Teach - Inside Zone vs. 42/ 33**
6:10	5 (20)	**QB/RB/IR – INSIDE RUN - vs. 42 / 33** **Outside WR- Blocking (10) - RZ Routes-Cobra/ Blade /Fade Pileon (10)**				**INSIDE RUN**
6:30	6 (5)	**TEAM TEACH - SCATTERS, SHIFTS, ORANGE, GOLD**				**TEAM TEACH**
6:35	7 (20)	**PASS SKELLY vs. 3-deep zone, Man-Free, Quarters**				**PASS PROTECTION TEACH W/ RB**
6:55	8 (5)	**BLITZ PERIOD** 12 PLAYS VS PRESSURE				**BLITZ PERIOD**
7:00	9 (15)	**SCREEN DRILL- 10 MINUTE** **INSIDE ZONE RELIEFS- 5 MINUTE**				**SCREEN DRILL**
7:15	10 (15)	TEAM TEMPO DRILL FINISH!! - 40+ PLAYS- PLAY FAST!!- NO SUBS ON DRIVE				**TEAM TEMPO DRILL**
7:30	11 (30)	**DEFENSIVE INDYS**				**DEFENSIVE INDYS**

	RUN	SCREEN	PASS	
DATE Heat Acc #2	30'S	YANKEE	DEEP CHOICE	PURPLE
PRACTICE: 08/06/19		FOG/MIST	SLOT CHOICE	80'S BAYLOR
DRESS: UPPERS		RANDY/LARRY	SAIL	80'S SAIL
MEETINGS/LIFT:		RODEO/LASSO	80'S P/F	+BLADE/SAW/BUZZ
	108/109	ROCKET/LAZER	MON/FRI	+PEPSI, COKE

TIME	PERIOD	QB	WR	Inside Wr	RB	OL
5:00	PRE	**WARM UP:** SETTLE UP AND NOOSE/ NET DRILLS				PRE- VERTICAL SETS
5:10	1 (10)	**FLEX –** ACL PREVENTION				FLEX – ACL PREVENTION
5:20	2 (10)	**MESH DRILL – QB/RB/WR W/ CHUTES**				INDY
5:30	3 (25)	**INDIVIDUALS** LAST 5 MIN (QB+WR) (RAPID FIRE DRILL)				INDY
5:55	4 (15)	**Choice Routes vs. Defense** DEEP CHOICE & SLOT CHOICE – (PAIR UP – HIGH REPS)				Run Game Teach - 30'S vs. 42/ 33
6:10	5 (20)	**QB/RB/IR – INSIDE RUN - vs. 42 / 33** Outside WR- Blocking (10) - RZ Routes-Cobra/ Blade /Fade Pileon (10)				INSIDE RUN-COUNTER (30'S)
6:30	6 (5)	**TEAM TEACH - SCATTERS, SHIFTS, ORANGE, GOLD** INTRO – FUZZY, SCATTER DINO, RABBIT				TEAM TEACH
6:35	7 (20)	**PASS SKELLY vs. 3-deep zone, Man-Free, Quarters**				PASS PROTECTION TEACH W/ RB
6:55	8 (15)	TEAM TEMPO DRILL FINISH!! - 40+ PLAYS- PLAY FAST!!- NO SUBS ON DRIVE				TEAM TEMPO DRILL
7:10	9 (25)	**DEFENSIVE INDYS**				DEFENSIVE INDYS
7:35	10 (25)	DEFENSIVE INDYS (SECONDARY ONLY) DL/LB – RUN FITS/ BLITZ INSTALL				ALIGN/ RUN FIT/ BLITZ INSTALL

TIME	PERIOD	QB	WR	Inside Wr	RB	OL
5:00	PRE	**WARM UP:** SETTLE UP AND NOOSE/ NET DRILLS				PRE- VERTICAL SETS
5:10	1 (10)	**FLEX –** ACL PREVENTION				FLEX – ACL PREVENTION
5:20	2 (10)	**MESH DRILL – QB/RB/WR W/ CHUTES**				INDY
5:30	3 (25)	**INDIVIDUALS** LAST 5 MIN (QB+WR) (RAPID FIRE DRILL)				INDY
5:55	4 (15)	**Choice Routes vs. Defense** DEEP CHOICE & SLOT CHOICE – (PAIR UP – HIGH REPS)				Run Game Teach - 60'S vs. 42/ 33
6:10	5 (20)	**QB/RB/IR – INSIDE RUN - vs. 42 / 33** Outside WR- Blocking (10) - RZ Routes-Cobra/ Blade /Fade Pileon (10)				INSIDE RUN- BUCK (60'S)
6:30	6 (5)	**TEAM TEACH - SCATTERS, SHIFTS, ORANGE, GOLD** 2PT- SCATTER DINO, RIP ALPHA				TEAM TEACH
6:35	7 (20)	**PASS SKELLY vs. 3-deep zone, Man-Free, Quarters**				PASS PROTECTION TEACH W/ RB
6:55	8 (15)	TEAM TEMPO DRILL FINISH!! - 40+ PLAYS- PLAY FAST!!- NO SUBS ON DRIVE				TEAM TEMPO DRILL
7:10	9 (25)	**DEFENSIVE INDYS**				DEFENSIVE INDYS
7:35	10 (15)	DEFENSIVE INDYS (SECONDARY ONLY) DL/LB – RUN FITS/ BLITZ INSTALL				ALIGN/ RUN FIT/ BLITZ INSTALL
7:50	11 (10)	**DEFENSIVE PURSUIT DRILL**				PURSUIT DRILL

CHAPTER 7

GAME PLANNING & GAME DAY OPERATION

Game Planning and Game Day Operation

Each and every week it is important to do a thorough evaluation and analysis of your upcoming opponent. The challenge when it comes to the game planning process is to work efficiently to establish an effective plan of attack that will be easily digested by your players, and that you are able to effectively practice and prepare each week. As coaches we tend at times to think that we can win the game on a whiteboard with our unbeatable schemes. Reality will soon set in that as coaches we are only successful with what our players are ultimately able to digest and execute. This is an important footnote to always keep in mind as you go through your game planning process. Is this "too much offense", and "can we effectively practice this plan" should always be at the forefront of any offensive game planning conversation. Remember it all looks good on paper, but how will your players execute it when only given limited reps during the week at practice. Also your plan must take into consideration your offensive personnel. A well timed double reverse pass is useless if ran by a receiver who cannot throw a football ten yards. All of these factors must be taken into consideration when laying out the initial game plan.

Initial Film Review of Opponent

We begin the game planning process with an initial film review or our opponent. We will ask the following questions each and every week to get a total picture of "who is our opponent".

1. Who are they (Defensive Front/ Coverage Category)

a. Are they an Odd or Even Front
b. Are they an attacking or read and react run fit
c. Do they use man or zone coverage principles or a combination
d. Do they reveal uncovered shots on our receivers with their alignment

2. How do they align to our base formations

a. Have they faced similar formations this season- how have they aligned
b. How do they adjust to motion and shifting

3. Pressure Package
a. What are there pressure packages against our formations
b. Are they a man or zone pressure team
c. Have they shown any simulated pressures
d. Line Stunts and Twists
e. Will they show zero coverage pressure

4. Substitution Tendencies
a. Will they keep the same defensive personnel on the field regardless of our package
b. What are their substitution tendencies (hard to pick up on film)
c. Have they previously faced an up-tempo team this year
d. What is the overall condition of their players

Examination of Defensive Personnel

Now that we have established an outline of who our opponent is defensively, we will begin to further evaluate the film to take a closer look at the defensive personnel. This is probably the most important aspect to game planning at the high school level in my opinion. Our offense is not trying to attack an entire eleven man defensive structure on each play. We are trying as much as possible to isolate and attack the weakest part of the defense. This could be a weakness in coverage or defensive alignment or quite simply attacking the worst players on the defense. We want to attack PLAYERS not ENTIRE DEFENSES. The key is to find those matchups and getting your best players into position to be able to attack the worst players on the defense.

The first thing we will examine is what their strengths are, and does their personnel dictate that we will need to game plan specifically to handle that individual player. We will breakdown the defense at all three levels.

1st Level= Defensive Line
2nd Level= Linebackers, Strong Safety, Nickle
3rd Level= Corners, Safety

As we examine these areas we are looking for player's at all three levels that we must plan for. It is important to understand that this is not a video game. This is high school football and their best players may simply be too much of a match-up problem for our players unless we plan accordingly and give help when needed. For example do they have a defensive linemen who is a complete match-up problem that in passing situations we will need to give help in protection by chipping him with a running back or another adjustment. Or do we need to check away from him in the run game. These are all questions that you must ask yourself when facing a dominant defensive lineman. Do not let this player wreck your game plan by constantly putting him in one on one situations with an offensive lineman that simply cannot block him. If left unaccounted for on an island this player will ruin your entire game plan.

We will then take a look at them at the second level. First at their alignments, depth to the line of scrimmage, and how they key and run fit. Are they keying guards, do they attack downhill. Are they a man to man team, and if so how do they handle empty, do they banjo coverage on a back out of the backfield. Are they aggressive against the run, can we RPO or pop pass any particular linebacker. If a zone coverage team are there any uncovered shots on the perimeter. Do they apex their linebackers to the number two receiver in zone coverage.

Finally we will examine the personnel on the back end of the defense by reviewing their corners and safeties. We begin by looking at the depth and leverage of those players in each of their coverage categories. We will look to see if there are any potential alignment tendencies if the defender is aligned into the boundary or the field. We will find out who their best cover corner is. Does he stay on one side of the field or does he "travel". What I am referencing by this is does he always align on a team's best wide receiver, strength of formation, field/boundary, or is he always just aligned on the right or left side. Does he every play slot corner if we place our best receiver inside. If he is matched up on our #1 receiver how does he adjust if a player goes in motion outside of him (can we force him to expand out to the new #1 wr or will he stay at slot corner). We will look for

ways to formation and create potential matchups. We will then examine the location and depth of the safeties in relation to our formations and field landmarks such as the hashes. Then take a look at the overall aggressiveness of the secondary in regards to who can we double move and can we take advantage of play action or sucker plays to exploit their aggressive nature defensively.

Once we have identified who we want to "avoid" on their defense and if we need to design a special plan to handle that player, we begin the process of identifying and attacking the worst players on their defense. Who can we run by, who can we run at, who does not want to run fit. Those are really the three simple questions that we will ask ourselves as we identify the worst three players at all levels to attack. Now some defenses will be harder than others to find a weakness but every team has one somewhere that you can attempt to exploit. As we identify these players we will start to sketch out how we can best utilize our formations, motion, and shifting for the week to isolate and attack these players.

Self-Scout of our Own Offensive Tendencies

Now that we have given an in-depth review of our opponent's scheme and personnel, it is important that we take a look at ourselves offensively. As part of the on-going self-scout process we will break down our own offense in the same manner as our opponent. What are our situational play calling tendencies? Have we created a situation where we have become predictable in a particular area that we can use to our advantage this week as a tendency breaker in a certain situation or area of the field? Have we shown any glaring weakness in a particular area that our opponent will try to exploit. It is important to assume that our opponent is going through the same game planning process that we are in evaluating our personnel for strengths and weakness that we can attack. A form that we use to chart our self-scout tendencies is included in the back of this book for your review.

The Game Plan Outline

After we have established who the opponent is defensively and what their strengths and weaknesses are we will begin to lay out our offensive play menu for the week. As I have said countless times throughout this book, it is important that this menu is laid out in a very deliberate manner with thought towards how we will use utilize and tweak our existing schemes while adding potential new concepts and adjustments that can be efficiently practiced during the week prior to the game.

Weekly Offensive Menu

1. Base Run

a. What are our Base Concepts for the Week
b. How will we formation and window dress these base concepts
c. How are we putting the defense in conflict with attached reliefs (RPO and SRO)
d. Are there any variations or adjustments to our base blocking schemes needed
e. What is our best short yardage run this week
f. Play-Action and Boot Game

2. Base Pass

a. How are we protecting the quarterback, protections, multiple launch points
b. Quick Game
c. Base Pass - Multiple Adjusting Routes
d. Potential New Pass Install or Adjustments
e. Plan for Pressure
f. Plan for Press Man Under Coverage

3. Behind the Line Throws

a. Fast Screens
b. Slow Screens
c. Key Screens (Double Screens)
d. "Sucker" plays off of Screens

4. Exotics
a. Exotic Formations, Motions, and Shifts
b. Scatter Package
c. Gadget Plays (4 Total)

Situational Planning

The next step in our game planning process is to start to place our offensive menu into situational areas. We will put plays into categories or buckets according to many different areas that we will be faced with on game day as a play caller. We begin by taking our entire offense and looking for play concepts that we will want to execute according to "field zones" or location on the field. Here are some examples of how we categorize plays by yard line.

Field Attack Zones in Game Planning

Green Zone GL- - 15
Yellow Zone -15 to -30
Open Field -30 to +20
Red Zone +20 to GL
Money Zone +5 to GL

Situational Categories

The next step in placing our offensive menu into situational categories is to take a look at play concepts that we want to run in certain situations. Some examples would be as follows

1. Hash
2. Down and Distance
3. Short Yardage (Goal Line)
4. Long Yardage (XXL)
5. Exotics and Gadgets

Sudden Change

This is an area where we want to make turnovers count. I always want to have some play calls that will be triggered following a momentum swing in the football game. In this area I will always have a script of some downfield "shot" plays or an off-tempo exotic gadget play that can really break the defenses will with a big play. It is important to recognize the body language of your opponent following a turnover or sudden change of momentum swing. This will give you a great opportunity to be like a shark to blood in the water and attack the defense at their weakest point mentally.

Special Contingency Planning

These are areas that you may not ever need to call upon, but a solid plan of attack that your players can execute is absolutely necessary. You must have a plan for situations that will arise that will cause adjustments to your plan of attack. These may occur due to an extreme situation in the game, weather conditions, an injury to a key player, or a very untimely penalty. It is important to have some contingency plan in effect in the event of the following situations.

1. Potential Extreme Weather Conditions
2. Plan for your Backup QB (Wildcat)
3. Last play of Half or Game
4. Extreme Penalty Situation- an example of this could be you score a touchdown with no time on the clock to pull within two points however your team is flagged for a celebration penalty on the touchdown that forces the pat attempt back to the 18 yard line. You must have a plan in place to run a 2-pt play from the 18 yard line to tie the game. If you have practiced this play with your players in advance you will not be simply grab-bagging a play and they will have confidence that they can execute effectively.

Drive Starters

We do not script our first 10 or 15 plays of the game like many teams will attempt to do. I will script what I refer to as "drive starters". This is the first play called off of the sideline to start an offensive

drive. These play calls are great opportunities to break know tendencies offensively, and to provide the defense with some exotic looks by starting in one formation and quickly shifting to another. This pre-snap shift serves two purposes. It will allow us to see how the defense aligns to two of our different formations and it will reveal if the defense is using auto checks to align to our offense. These drive starters are also great opportunities to get your quarterback into a rhythm early on the drive by getting the ball out of his hand quickly on a high percentage quick throw or a behind the line throw. These are also great opportunities to flood a defense with a formation into the boundary and see how the defensive alignment adjusts to this situation.

Plan for Pressure

We enter each game assuming that every team will bring blitzes with zero across man to man coverage. We must have a plan for this and our players must be confident in attacking the pressure. Our team should invite and get excited when a team plans to bring pressure and play us in man to man coverage with no safety help. As I have revealed in our practice planning we will spend time each day in a blitz period to prepare for potential situations where we will be seeing pressure. We will have our concepts game planning accordingly with specific "blitz beater" play designs that we practice each week. As part of our plan for pressure, we will spend significant time teaching our receivers how to defeat man under coverage. It is important that you spend time each day on releases and getting open against this category of coverage, and we will have corresponding play calls in our game plan menu that we will use to attack any man under coverage attempt that we will face.

Presenting the Game Plan to Your Players

Now that we have established our game plan outline the time has come to present it to your players. As I have indicated previously we want to be able to present this information to our team through a variety of media. We will have a written or downloadable "scouting report" that will typically feature the following:

1. Last Week's Clean-up (Positional Tip Sheets)
2. Examination of Opponent Personnel
3. Opponent Base Fronts/ Coverages
4. Opponent Pressures and Tendencies
5. Screen Shots of Defensive Alignments by Formation
6. New Install for the week and Potential Play Design Adjustments

Hudl Scout Tapes

We will create Hudl scout tapes that will be shared with each of our players that will have our opponent film cut-ups organized by situational categories. Below is a screen shot of some of the categories we may share with our players on a given week.



Call Sheet Organization

The call sheet is simply as tool- avoid the pitfalls of getting slowed down as a play-caller by looking down at a massive call sheet the size of a restaurant menu. Over the years I have used many different versions of a game day play-call sheet. I will often only look to this sheet in certain situations as I believe as a play caller in an up-tempo no-huddle system trying to go as fast as possible you must be looking at the defense and not a sheet of paper. I will use this sheet as a reference in certain situations and definitely in-between drives. I

have compiled a very condensed version of a call sheet that I have used over the past several seasons. I have provided a blank example for you in the chapter of this book. As you look at the call sheet you will recognize many of the situational and contingency planning scenarios I have covered in this chapter. On the call sheet if there are two side by side columns plays that are listed in the left column would be executed from the left hash and vice versa with play calls in the right column.

I view the call sheet as my list of items in my tool box. It is imperative that we have tools in our tool box to handle the different problems or situations that we will face during the course of the game. This is where this sheet becomes an invaluable tool to keep you on track as a play caller. You will experience your most success as a play caller when you are rolling through the flow of the game and "attacking what you see" with your own eyes as opposed to looking down off a sheet for the entire game. Remember that we want to push the tempo and play fast.

An exercise to prepare yourself for this would be to watch the full game copy of your upcoming opponent or even a TV copy if available and take yourself through every situation you may be faced with during that game in real time. This will give you great practice to get yourself trained to call your plan of attack effectively in the correct situations. I would recommend that any coach who has the opportunity to get this opponent film to watch the entire game in real time while making your simulated play calls based on the situation (down and distance, hash, field area, sudden change). This will allow these calls to become second nature for you on Friday night. I will try to typically do this at least two nights a week prior to the game when I am at home for the evening.

Call Sheet Front

BASE RUN			

SCREENS			

PASS ATTACK			

	LAST PLAY OF HALF/GAME		MONEY DOWN
+30		4TH 1-2	
+20-GL		4TH 3-6	
+10-GL		4TH 7-14	

	ONE PLAY TO WIN		GADGET/ EXOTIC
+5			
+10			
LONG			

2-PT PLAYS	

Call Sheet Back

3RD - 3	3RD - 3
3RD - 7	3RD - 7

MOMENTUM CALLS

SHOTS/ SUDDEN CHANGE	SHIFTS/ EXOTICS

BACKED UP – COMING OFF

SAFE		SAFE		
SHOT		SHOT		
-5		-5		
-10		-10		
-15		-15		

MUST CALLS	DRIVE STARTERS	SEQUENCED CALLS	PACKAGED PLAYS

REDZONE

	+20	
	+20	
	+15	
	+10	
	+10	
	+5	
	+5	

SHORT YARDAGE/ GOAL LINE

GOAL LINE/ SHORT YARDAGE	LONG YARDAGE

Game Day Staff Responsibilities

In setting up your game day coaching staff operation it is important to have defined roles and goals that you wish to accomplish. Each individual staff strength and weaknesses are different, therefore you will organize your sideline and press box personnel to best suit your individual program. I will provide for you some guidance and suggestions on how to create a very streamlined process that will allow you to push the tempo on game day.

Where is the Primary Play-Caller Located?

If you really want to "Play Fast" your play caller must be located on the field. I know coaches will argue about the benefits of the play caller being in the box to have a better view of the defense, however if you are really interested in fast tempo he must be on the sideline. Nothing happens quicker than a play call or signal coming directly from the play caller immediately following the play on the sideline. There is no communication that has to occur on a headset being relayed from up top and then relayed onto the field by another coach, and no change of something being "lost in translation". If you choose to have your play caller in the booth that obviously can be done but it just will not happen as fast in my opinion.

Staff Responsibility on Game Day

Here is a quick breakdown of how you can organize an average staff at a small to medium sized school on game day.

Play Caller = On the Field, responsible for coordination and play calling
OL Coach= On the Field will chart the interior box, relay field zone to play caller, who made tackle
RB Coach= On the Field, Personnel Substitutions, Relay hash to play caller, Responsible for Interior LB Pressure Chart
WR Coach= On the Field, Personnel Substitutions, Responsible for Secondary to our bench
IWR Coach= In the Press Box, Down and Distance to Play caller, Responsible for Secondary to the side away from our sideline.

Communication with the Play-Caller

As a play caller trying to go fast I want as little interaction with the staff while I am calling plays as possible. It can be very difficult to think with a million voices in your head making suggestions, and giving you useless information or even useful information. There is information that I like to receive each play and that is the hash, down and distance, and yard line. Other than that unless I ask for something as a play caller I do not want other communication as the play is being called.

In-Game Adjustments

Each and every game despite your work in creating an extensive well thought out game plan, there will be times that you are forced to make in-game adjustments. It is important that once you have identified an issue you work to "fix" the problem as quickly as possible. You cannot rely on waiting until you get to halftime to make these adjustments or you will quickly find out the game is over by halftime. Between series is when as a play caller I will review my play call sheet and confer with our offensive coaches on what the defense is doing against our offense. If you have sideline replay video available to you this is a great opportunity to review this with your players. If you school does not have this tool, or if you are at a small school where most of your offensive players are also playing on defense this will be limited to mostly your staff reviewing the video.

Here are a few very specific things to look for during the first half of the game

1. Are there any defensive alignment adjustments to our base formations= Are they who we thought they were?
2. What has been there plan for pressure/ coverage behind it
3. Are they making "auto-checks" to our formations when faced with extreme tempo or our shift packages
4. Have we slowed their charge down with our "Freeze Tempo" to take advantage of them starting to try and time up the snap count

5. Are we wearing them down in the second quarter. Can we start to see our tempo affecting their ability to get lined up quickly.
6. Who is making the tackle? A good way to track this is to simply have one of your assistants write down the number of who has made the tackle each play. If we are seeing that the same player is consistently making the tackle, we may need to make some sort of adjustment to how or who we have assigned to block this player.
7. What is not good for us today? Every single play design we have into the game plan will not be a good fit for how the defense has chosen to attack us. Quickly recognize this and eliminate these plays from the game plan. It is as simple as crossing them off of your game plan sheet as a play-caller.

Halftime Adjustments

Absolutely the most over-rated area of football. Many fans think that teams go into halftime and make all sorts of adjustments and that is simply not the case. There may be a situation where we get to the half and realize that we need to run a particular play more frequently, or that we are mis-reading an adjustable route, or blocking a front incorrectly. What we do not do is create new play concepts at half-time that we will run in the second half. This is no different than drawing plays up in the dirt and will not be successful for your team as you will have not had any time to practice and refine these concepts. Stay with your plan in the second half, tweak as needed to best attack the defense, and more importantly use your "tools" in the toolbox that you have practiced all week long to attack in the second half. Have confidence in your plan of attack and all of the hard work that your kids have put in all week and you will enjoy great results. The last thing that you want to do as a coaching staff is to get into the half and start scrapping your entire plan or trying to run an "offense of the week". This will not work and your players will lose all confidence in your coaching staff. If you believe, then they will believe that you will win the football game- you must exude confidence.

CHAPTER 8

TEMPO TIPS AND TRICKS

Tempo Tips and Tricks

In this chapter we will examine some tempo tips and tricks that will help to jump start your fast paced offensive attack. Regardless of what type of offensive system that you are applying an up-tempo methodology to, I want to provide you with some ideas that you may find helpful in the execution of your system. We will utilize most of these "tempo tricks" each and every week and I do believe that they are essential to forcing the defense to have to spend extensive time in their game planning process each week.

The Snap Count

You must utilize the snap count as an offensive weapon. By having the ability to snap the ball quickly but also use different snap counts you will keep the defense on their heels and not allow them to time-up or get a jump on the snap. As I detailed in an earlier chapter of this book utilizing the following will allow you to force the defense to be disciplined and stay on-sides or risk giving your team free penalty yardage.

1. Freeze Tempo- Code word to indicate that there will be no snap on the play. Quarterback will execute a "hard count" if the defense does not jump off-sides a new play will be called. This is also great to use in an attempt to get the defense to reveal their adjustments to a particular formation or motion.

2. Double Snap Count- Code word used to indicate that there will be two different snap counts on the same play. The first snap count is typically used in conjunction with a pre-snap shift or movement that will occur during the first snap count. If the defense does not jump offside the play called will be executed off of the second snap count cadence.

Special Code Words

It is important to have a series of very special code words that will alert your players to execute something in a very rapid fire manner

without having to signal or call another play from the sideline. We will utilize code words or signals that will tell us to do the following each week.

1. Repeat the Play- We will have a code word or signal that will tell our players to align in the exact same formation and run the exact same play that was just called as quickly as possible.

2. Flip the Play- We will have a code word that will tell our offense to run the play that was called but to flip the direction of the call. For example if the play called was a run to the right side, this flip call will put the direction of the play to the left.

3. Re-Set the Formation and Snap Count- We will have a call at the line of scrimmage that will allow us to reset to the original formation and restart the snap count. This is used when we may potentially have two players moving at the same time or some other confusion that might result in a pre-snap penalty. This call allows our offense to reset and run the correct play without the risk of a penalty or having to use a timeout.

4. Qb Wedge- We have a call that tells our quarterback to get under the center and run a quarterback wedge (sneak). This is used in a short yardage situation where we want to quickly get the ball snapped before the defense has an opportunity to adjust or bring different personnel into the game.

Alarms

As we push the pace and play fast we need to have things in place that will alert the quarterback to potential situations where we need to slow down a bit and adjust to the defense. For example in our offense we have a word that is said by our offensive tackles when they are covered by a defender and there is a walked up defender who is an immediate threat to them outside. Our tackle will make this particular alarm call and that will alert the quarterback to look at the situation and then execute whatever game planned adjustment he needs to make. The same holds true with an uncovered receiver who can give an alarm call to the quarterback to alert him to a potential

on-air shot situation to take advantage of the defense being in an unsound look.

All these "alarm" calls do is to serve notice to the quarterback as we are playing at an extremely fast pace to identify a potential issue to the success of the play. The quarterback can then make an adjustment or choose to just "snooze the alarm" if he does not believe that it will potentially impact the play in a negative manner if he does not make an adjustment. Only the quarterback has the ability to change the play, protection, or route in any manner with a call at the line of scrimmage. These other calls that are made are simply "alarms" to him to quickly identify a potential situation.

Sequenced Plays

Sequenced plays are concepts that will be game planned each week to establish and break tendencies that we are creating. These concepts will be practiced in this manner and will be sorted on the game day call sheet as a reminder that we need to call these plays in a particular sequence. An example of a play sequence would be that we want to run a fast screen to a trips formation into the boundary first to "set-up", calling a pump fake of that screen and sending a receiver deep down the field later in the game.

Packaged Plays

Packaged plays are different from sequenced plays as a sequenced play could be called in the first quarter and the second play called in the fourth quarter. Packaged plays are designed to be executed off of one or two code words and ran back to back. Here are a few examples of how these can be implemented into your weekly game plan.

Week #2
Situation =3rd and 1
Code Word= Green Baylor

We will quickly align in a trips formation into the boundary and the quarterback under center running a quarterback wedge. After picking

up the first down we will immediately line up in the same formation and the quarterback will throw a fast perimeter screen to our trips receivers in a wide bunch alignment.

Week #3
Situation =3rd and 1
Code Word= Green Waco

We will quickly align in a trips formation into the boundary and the quarterback under center running a quarterback wedge. After picking up the first down we will immediately line up in the same formation giving the defense exactly the same look that we showed them the week before in the same situation. The quarterback will then throw what appears to be a fast screen out to the trips side of the formation, however it will end up being a double pass taking advantage of the defensive recognition of the formation and situation and trying to jump the screen pass.

Remember in these scenarios we want to CREATE a tendency. It will help you greatly if you make this very obvious to your opponent. For example we are never under the center in this formation except in the exact scenario that was created in the example above. That creates a very specific tendency that the opposing defensive coordinator will have his players ready to recognize and attack in a similar situation. This is a great way to use your opponents scouting and preparation to your own advantage by creating big play opportunities off of packaged play calls from week to week.

Exotics & Gadgets

It is important to have a few gadget or trick plays ready to go each and every week. We will typically practice 2-4 trick plays each week at practice. Once we use one of the trick plays we will then "put it away" and bring out a new trick play. We will recycle the trick plays later in the season but we will typically not run a particular trick or gadget play in back to back weeks. It is important that you design your trick plays to look like things that you do on offense and not "stand-out". We want these plays to blend in with the crowd so to speak, not stick out like a sore thumb to the defense. This will allow

you to force the defenders eyes to be wrong and be caught off guard when you dial up a trick or gadget play during the flow of the game. Your players will love these trick and gadget plays and you can use them to introduce some fresh energy and excitement into your practice sessions.



Above is an example of an Exotic Formation with one of our receivers snapping the ball to the QB

Circus

We are constantly looking for ways to appear more multiple to the defense and force them to "defend ghosts". By aligning in exotic or off-tempo formations, you will force defensive coordinators to have sleepless nights as they run through all of the possibilities that they will have to defend our of these "weird-looking" formations. These defensive coordinators will be seeing ghosts as they scurry to line-up properly and have proper coverage and run fits against all of these varied alignments you have shown them on film. I call these defending ghosts because you may not actually have many plays triggered off of these formations, but because you have shown it in a game the defense has to prepare for it. This wastes valuable defensive preparation time that they could be devoting to defending your basic schemes.

Circus is a concept that your players will love that when it is called will allow them to align in any position they want on the field prior to shifting into the proper formation and executing the play called. The

only rule is that if they are a player who is aligned on the football that they stay on the football and if they are a player lined up off the line of scrimmage they do that. There exact alignment is up to them and will create various funky "junk formations" that defensive coordinators will waste time preparing for that they will never actually see run in the game. When you pair this with the exotic formations that we will actually run, this can create some preparation nightmares for your opponents.



Above is an Example of a "Circus" Pre-Snap Alignment

Pre-Snap Movement

Each week we will utilize several different pre-snap movements and shifts into our offense. This will allow us to potentially out leverage the defense with our post shift alignment and motion. The second benefit to shifting is that we can see how the defense will align to two of our different formations in one single play call. We will commonly use these in conjunction with our drive starter calls. With extended use of pre-snap movement and shifting, coupled with the threat of an immediate snap at all times with our tempo will force the defense into "static alignments". Defensive units will often use "automatic formation checks" to get aligned to our various looks we will present to them.. Once we are able to identify this we can further attack the

weakness that they are presenting to us. For example every single team will usually have a few checks to a no-back empty formation. We will pre-snap align in and empty formation with our two back personnel and then quickly shift into a two back formation and run the play. This will necessitate the defense to make a second formation check just prior to the snap or run the risk of being badly outnumbered at the point of attack. By doing this you will force the defense to be extremely basic as they are just trying to match and get lined up with your quick formation change. This will limit their ability to call blitzes, stunts, and games upfront with their defensive linemen.

Scatter Package

Our scatter package is our version of a sugar huddle. In this situation we will line up over the ball as indicted in the screen shot below with our center and left guard and left tackle aligned over the ball with all of the other offensive players aligned in a cluster behind them. The quarterback will then give an indicator and all of the players will burst out or "scatter" into the formation and play called. This is a great way to quickly get aligned before the defense can adjust. Some advantages of the scatter package are;

1. Very difficult for the defense to get aligned to exotic or unbalanced looks
2. Great way to "hide" your best player in the final formation
3. Can easily create packaged plays and tendency breakers
4. Fun for your players and presents the defense with unique looks
5. Changes nothing about the execution of your base plays



Scatter Package Prior to the Shift



Scatter Package after the Shift


Scatter Package Prior to the Shift


Scatter Package after the Shift

Run Some Plays Only One Way

With limited practice time and the fact that we want to get maximum repetitions of our play designs in practice we simply cannot run each and every single play in both directions and get the proper practice time. Therefore we have plays in our offense that we only run in one direction. This could be a particular screen pass that we only run to the left side, or reverse that we only run to the right side. Factor your personnel into the decision making process when deciding which plays to only run and practice in one direction. An example would be if your left guard is the better puller and your right guard cannot pull, then maybe you only want to run your inside trap play to the right

with the left guard pulling. Maximize the talent of your personnel with these one way play calls.

Hang-Outs

A hang out is a call that will allow a receiver on the backside of the play to "hang-out" or essentially take the play off. All we ask from the player on a hangout is to get aligned properly and simply walk off the football. This is used to help our players to get a break when playing both ways in an up-tempo offense such as ours. The fact that he is not running full speed downfield on this particular play concept will have no impact on the play as he is not in the progression of the read. There are very select plays where we can give a receiver a hang-out route, but it is one that we will use to allow our two way players to have a little more gas in the tank when we need them to fly down the field.



You can see our backside receiver executing a "hang out" route while our receivers on the front-side furiously attack the coverage downfield

CHAPTER 9

TROUBLESHOOTING ISSUES IN THE NO-HUDDLE ATTACK



Troubleshooting Issues in the No-Huddle Attack

As with any offensive system or philosophy there will be some potential roadblocks and bumps in the road on your path to success. It is important to recognize and have a plan to attack these potential pitfalls before they become a critical factor that will inhibit your success. I will take you through a few scenarios that you must be aware of as you implement an up-tempo no huddle system.

Overall Talent Level at My School

The first area you must always take into consideration when designing your offense is "what is the talent like at my school". You must be honest with yourself as you go about designing and implementing your offensive strategy that you are not attempting to pound a square peg into a round hole. If you want to design your offense to be a wide open passing attack but you currently are lacking a quarterback who can pass the ball greater than five yards then you are going to struggle. If you want to line up with two tight ends and a fullback and play smash-mouth football but you lack a strong offensive line and running back, then you are going to struggle to move the ball. For most of us at the high school level we do not get to recruit or pick our talent from year to year to fit a particular system. We have to coach-up the kids that we have and fit the system around them. That is why it is important to tailor your play design around the players that you currently have on your roster and coming up through your school system.

School Size/ Roster Size

I have successfully utilized an extreme hurry up tempo at large schools with big rosters and the small school level with roster size in the low twenties. I actually believe running an up-tempo no-huddle system at the small school level can have some definite advantages. If your players are both playing on both sides of the football at that level, there is a good chance that your opponent is going to be in the same situation. With the proper implementation of this system as outlined in this book, your players will be in top physical condition and will certainly wear down and out-last your opponent who may be

used to more of a slower tempo, particularly if they are a huddle team. They will not be properly conditioned to handle your up-tempo attack.

I do caution you to one situation where it may not be advantageous to operate at an extremely fast tempo. In a scenario where your conference consists of mixed classifications of teams where you may be a small school of a 28 man roster being forced to play teams with 80 man rosters. This is rare but does happen in areas around the country. I would hesitate to operate at an extremely fast pace when facing an opponent that is completely two platooning their offense and defensive units against your players who are going both ways. Fatigue will quickly become a factor as their waves of fresh players will have a decided advantage over your players who are never coming off of the field during the game.

Creating a Buy In

As with any successful offensive or defensive strategy your players and coaching staff must be one hundred percent committed to your plan of attack. You must stay true to your plan with the belief that the results of your hard work will pay off. Success does not happen overnight in anything, it is a process to become great and your players and coaches need to have this mentality and belief in the system.

Can't Focus on Time of Possession or Defensive Statistics

You must change your mindset around time of possession and defensive statistics, at least in the traditional sense. Because you will be getting more snaps offensively and piling up more yardage, and points; your opponent will in-turn get more opportunities with the football. The key metrics to focus on are three and outs and turnovers. Those are what we like to focus on with our defense. The opponent is going to get yardage on you and they may score some points, the key is winning the game and your defense will have the opportunity to provide opportunities for you to do that. In the 2019 season alone we recorded two shutouts in a season for the first time at our school since 2006, so those kinds of opportunities for your

defense to make an impact will exist. The other bonus is that your defense will not feel the pressure to hold the opponent out of the end zone on every single possession as you are piling up points on your end of the scoreboard.

Time of possession is another factor that will certainly swing in your opponents favor. The time of possession is not a metric that we care about as we will be trying to score in often a minute or two as we move quickly up and down the field. We focus on our total number of offensive snaps and yardage per play.

Physical Condition

I cannot overstate this enough- You must be in better physical condition than your opponent to play at the tempo we want to operate at for four quarters. I have discussed how to ensure that you are getting your team ready to play fast and in optimum condition to execute an up-tempo attack. If you do not do this you will not be successful with this style of play.

Something Goes In - Something Comes Out

As I have discussed in detail throughout this book, keep your core menu of plays small. You must be able to practice your plays with high repetitions during the week. Get very good at a small number of concepts rather than have 50 plays that you cannot execute properly or your players are confused on. If they are thinking they are not playing fast. Simply put when you insert a new play into your game plan something should have to come out of the game plan for that week.

Do Not Run Plays You Do Not Practice

I cannot stress this enough. If you did not properly practice the concept throughout the week and you feel very good about your players executing the play properly. Do not run it in the game, you will not experience success. I have seen it time and time again where a coach will say to me, "I can't get our slow screen to the running back to work". I later find out that they only run the play three times

all week in practice during a team period. This play has no chance to work during the game because it has not been properly taught and the players have not had enough repetitions to execute it at a high level in a game situation. It is entirely ok as a coach to say "hey, you know what we are going to scrap this concept for this week because we are not ready yet". You will have much more success in executing concepts that your players believe in and have a high level of confidence executing.

Have Answers and Be Able to Adjust to the Defense Each Week

In the design of your offense each week you need to have ways to "fix" issues that will arise against defensive adjustments. This means that your plays have to have answers to the defense or be good against any coverage or you have to have ways to get into a better play call through game planned audible. We design our offense in such a way that it does not matter what defensive alignment we face, our players are taught how to adjust their responsibility to attack the weakness in the defensive structure. This will allow you to not get "caught off-guard" when a defense has shown you a particular front and coverage structure on film, but gives you an entirely different defense on Friday night. You should enter each and every game being able to accomplish the following three factors with your offensive play design.

1. Run plays should be good against most front variations with simple blocking rules for your players to adjust to the defensive alignment.
2. Pass plays should be designed to have answers to all defensive coverage and have multiple adjusting route concepts that will force the defense to always be wrong regardless of their coverage and alignment.
3. Pass protection should be designed to have answers to keep the quarterback clean with max protection adjustments, ability throw hot to uncovered receivers, slide the protection, and the ability to move the quarterback launch point

Don't have to always be in a "Perfect Play"

In our no huddle system we do not want to be a constant " check with me" team where the entire offense is constantly looking over to the sideline as the play caller attempts to put the offense into a better play call. We want to " play fast" and attack defenses, not stand at the line of scrimmage for 30 seconds trying to find the "perfect play call". Defenses can only do so many things and by slowing your tempo down as an offense you are playing into their hands to allow them to also make adjustments. Remember we want to always be attacking and with the threat of an immediate snap force the defense into static alignments as they are scrambling before the snap just to get lined up.

Defeating Goliath

Coaches will often ask, is playing fast a good strategy for an underdog? Certainly, we have won many games over the years with this system when we were playing a superior opponent. This offense can be an equalizer and you force the defense to adjust to your tempo while having the ability to attack the entire field. Prepare your kids to win and believe in the system, and "playing fast" can be your sling-shot against a "Goliath" opponent.

Teams Playing Keep Away

Often times when playing an inferior opponent their strategy will be to shorten the game and attempt to have ball control and keep your offense off of the field. This sounds like a good strategy in theory, however it still requires your opponent to be able to consistently make first downs to keep you off of the field. For games like this you have to condition your team to focus simply on scoring on each possession and not the total amount of points that you will score as your opportunities will be limited. Do not allow your players to get frustrated with the opponents keep away efforts as a 28-7 win is just as good as a 60-7 win.

Is weather a factor?

Another common detractor to the offense you will hear from critics is "you can't run that offense in bad weather". Well I have spent my entire coaching career running this offense in the northeast of the united states where we deal with all four seasons. It is extremely hot at the start of training camp and if we are fortunate enough to play deep into the playoffs and a state championship we will have snow on the ground. We have thrown for over 400 yards in the remnants of a Hurricane, and broke the state scoring record in temperatures that were below 20 degrees. You can have success in any weather condition with this offensive system it has been proven time and time again.

CHAPTER 10

SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

PLAY FAST
BURRELL FOOTBALL

QB LINE OF SCRIMMAGE TIP SHEET

1. GET PLAYCALL COMMUNICATED (YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR GETTING US LINED UP AND READY TO PLAY QUICKLY)
2. MIDDLE OF FIELD OPEN OR CLOSED
3. CHECK PERIMETER BOXES- ARE THEY PLAYING US “PERFECT”
4. IDENTIFY YOUR KEY OR READ FOR THE PLAY CALL
5. MAKE SURE ALL PLAYERS ARE SET FOR ONE SECOND PRIOR TO STARTING ANY MOTION OR SHIFT
6. EXECUTE SNAP COUNT

Quarterback School- Test #1

Name:_____

1. Circle the Potential "Area Outside" defenders in this diagram

2. Is the middle of the field open or Closed? Circle the Area Outside Defender to your right

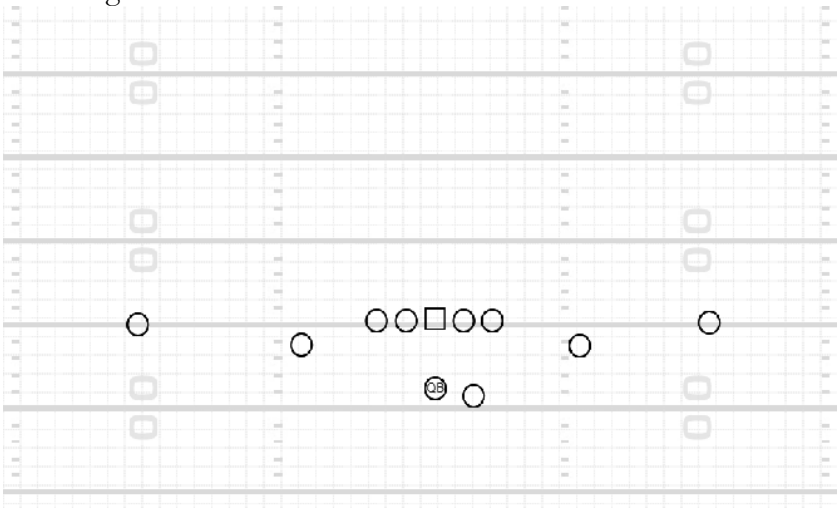


3. When the Middle of the Field is Closed what are the only two coverages we can see

4. Is Cover 3 a Zone or Man to Man Coverage

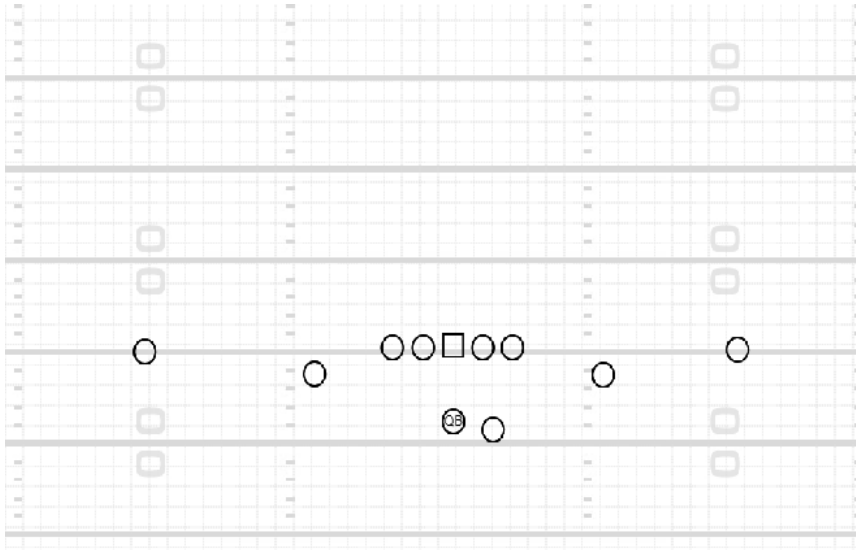
5. Describe 3 Pre-Snap Indicators of Cover 3 Coverage

6. Diagram Cover 3 vs. our Base Formation Below

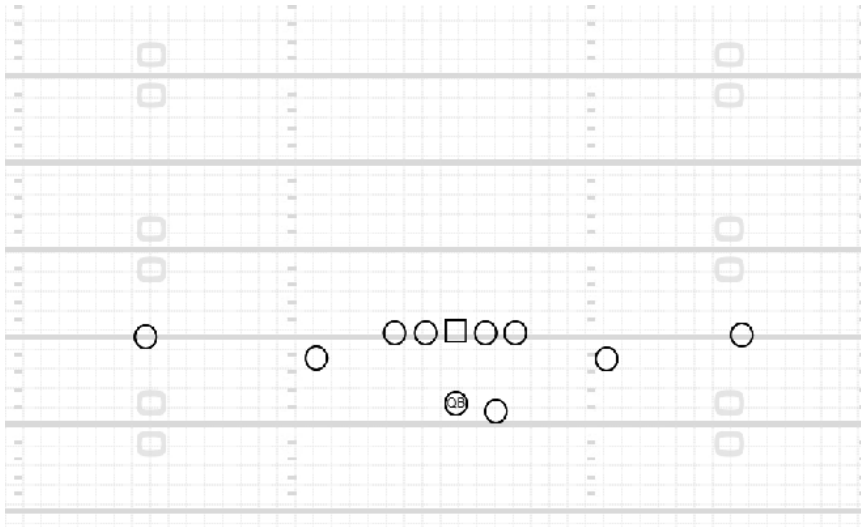


7. In the Diagram Above Circle the weak areas of Cover 3 we want to attack

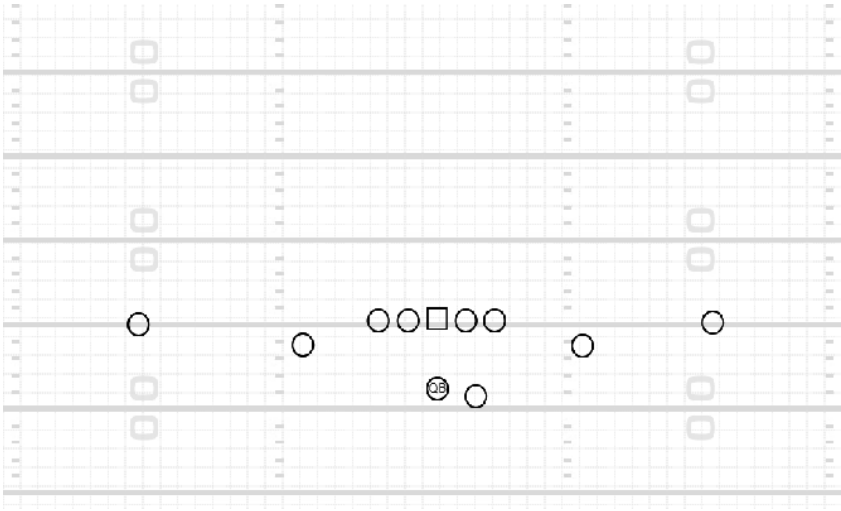
8. Vs. Trips Diagram 3-Deep Zone if the Defense has 6 defenders in the interior box



9. vs. Trips Diagram 3-Deep Zone if the Defense has 5 defenders in the interior box



10. If we put a receiver in motion against Cover 3 Defense what will we see from the defense?



Head Coach - Pre-Game Meeting with Officials
No Huddle Checklist

- Always address officials initially with Yes Sir, and No Sir
- Get the Card with their names on it so you can personalize your conversations with the officials on your sideline
- Explain the fact that you are an up-tempo team and would generally like to go as fast as possible.
- Indicate that you respect that the game officials will dictate the mechanics of how quickly the ball is placed ready for play.
- Inquire as to what this officiating crew's mechanics will be for getting the ball ready for play so that you can alert your quarterback and center (I have even had my quarterback and center conference with the umpire on this in pregame)
- Thank them for their efforts in keeping the pace of the game moving and indicate what resources you have to assist them, such as your players handing the ball to the officials, and the use of multiple sideline ball boys/girls.
- Tell the officials that should they need anything else in game to simply ask
- Review any potential issues on your opponent that you would like the officials to keep an eye on. Do not focus on saying things like "this team is really dirty- watch the late hits". Always lead off the discussion when the officials ask you about the opponent with "Oh they are a very well coached team, and I have a ton of respect for Coach SoandSo, and then hit them with the specific issue such as I have noticed their left linebacker #43 will almost tackle the slot on pass plays could you guys keep an eye out for that. Then of course thank them in a very cordial manner.
- Go over any plays or formations that may be exotic in nature, gadget plays, and trick plays. If we are doing something particularly unique I will have a HUDL clip of it on my phone and actually show the referee in this pregame meeting so that he is aware of what we are doing. Inform the officials that you will let the official on your sideline know of any special plays coming his way, onside kicks, ect before the play so he can be alert.

Weekly Menu Grid- By Formation					
	Run Game	Pass Attack	Screens	Reliefs	Exotics
Formation & Motions					

LT HASH	FIELD ZONE ATTACK SCRIPT	RT HASH
5	GOAL LINE	5
10	GREEN ZONE	10
20	RED ZONE	20
5	COMING-OFF	5

Field Zone Attack Chart

The chart above can be used for several purposes in the game planning and self-scouting process. This chart will provide you with an opportunity to script your entire call sheet by field zone and hash. This can be valuable in creating tendencies. I have also used this chart to "self-scout" what we are actually running to identify and set up potential tendency breakers for the following weeks game plan.

THE AUTHOR

SHAWN LIOTTA



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Shawn Liotta will be entering his third season as the Head Football Coach at Burrell High School (PA) in 2020. Liotta is a veteran of 22 years of coaching experience at the high school, college, and professional level. Coach Liotta spent 2014-2015 as the Offensive Coordinator at Clairton High School (PA) where the Bears captured two consecutive WPIAL Titles and compiled a (28-2) record. Liotta's "No Huddle No Mercy" offense became one of the most prolific in the history of high school football, averaging over (58) points per game, shattering the all-time PIAA scoring record, and becoming the second highest scoring team in the history of high school football with (958) points in 2014. In addition to his tenure at Clairton, Liotta has served as an assistant at Springdale High School, Yough High School, Saltsburg Area, and McKeesport High School in addition to serving as the head coach at Albert Gallatin High School, Line Mountain High School and West Shamokin High School. Shawn Liotta was the running backs coach at Duquesne University in 2003 helping the Dukes capture the NCAA D1AA Mid-Major National Championship, and spent nine seasons as a Head Coach at the professional indoor level most recently with the Erie Explosion where he led his team to two league titles and was a two-time league coach of the year. During his tenure in Erie, Liotta's teams led the league in scoring and total offense 5 times, had 3 different quarterbacks named league MVP, and established the all-time indoor/arena football scoring record for points in a single game (138). During his tenure as a Head Coach or Offensive Coordinator; Liotta's teams have won 5 championships, 7 division or conference titles, and he has coached in 26 playoff games. Coach Liotta has additional experience in the USA Football National Team program having served as the Offensive Coordinator of the Under 18 US National Team. Coach Liotta is a published author, consultant to programs across the country, and a national clinic speaker who has presented at the Nike Coach of the Year Clinic, Glazier Clinics, Gulf Coast Coaches Clinic, and Ottawa Football Coaches Clinic and is a member of the editorial advisory board of American Football Monthly. Shawn Liotta is a 2002 graduate of Robert Morris University, and resides in Lower Burrell, Pa with his wife Allison and daughter Liliana.

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