LINEBACKERS
As most of you know, there is a fine line between good and great! Linebacker play is very important for any defense. Linebacker play is so important because they are involved in every play. The following points, if read, digested, and practiced will make the difference.

1. Know the Defense and your responsibility at all times.
2. Read and key the big picture.
3. Proper footwork, specifically the first step.
4. Locate the ball.
5. Attack the LOS to your fill, work downhill.
6. Inside leverage on the ball always staying inside out.
7. Anticipate the blockers, know who can hurt you at all times.
8. Play with your hands. Do not use flippers.
9. Be great at backside linebacker play.
10. Somehow, some way, get to the football.
11. Be a great tackler.
12. Play from sideline to sideline.
13. Be a football player, not a robot.
15. Play with your EYES!
16. PLAY WITH CONTROLLED AGGRESSION!
LINEBACKER CHARACTERISTICS

1.) **Coachable Attitude**- We have taught you what you know about the game, so listen when you are being coached and corrected.

2.) **Competitive Personality**- Everything we do is about winning. If you are not this type of animal, you are in the wrong place.

3.) **Great Leadership Ability**- Lb's are the quarterbacks of the defense.

4.) **Self Discipline**- Take care of your business. Do what you are suppose to do.

5.) **Consistent Personality**- Nobody likes a fake.

6.) **Reliable**- If coach can't trust you, how can he play you?

7.) **Self Motivated**- Don't rely on external variables and others around you to push your hot switch.

8.) **Play With Great Intensity**- Players who competed in a controlled rage reach their goals and produce the most.

9.) **Student of the Game**- Know as much about the enemy as possible. Repetition of all your techniques creates habit.

10.) **Great Football Savvy**- Great players have instinct.

A Bearcat Linebacker is tough, aggressive, and confident. He motivates his teammates by his desire to be the best player he can be. Bearcat linebackers give great effort on game day, practice day, and workouts involving the weight room and conditioning aspects. Give your best even when no one is watching.
PRI NCIPLES OF LI NEBACKER PLAY

A.) STANCE

1. Two point stance.
2. Feet Parallel, armpit width, heels out.
3. Weight on inside balls of feet.
4. Heels slightly off ground.
5. Knees bent, level and flexed.
7. Shoulders in front of body- square.
10. Head and eyes up hard focus on keys.

B.) ALIGNMENT

1. Toes at 4 yards from LOS.
2. Mike 20I technique. Buck 30 Technique, if you have a TE expand to 40I. Keep outside leverage on far back set. We will also back up a full step with twist calls.
3. Mike goes to call (rip/liz). Buck aligns away.
4. 11 Front: Tite rules (rip/liz). Both LB’s align in 30/40 techniques.
5. 33 Front: Tite rules. Both LB’s align in 20I techniques.
6. Cobra Front: Tite rules and alignment.
7. Cover down rules: Expand so your inside foot is on outside foot of DE. Rd Backer off #3/ away backer off #2.

C.) FUNDAMENTALS OF LB PLAY

1. Run at daylight.
2. Strike at darkness.
3. Do not follow same color jersey.
4. Scrape for skin - anytime you scrape, stay as tite as possible, forcing a one way go for ball carrier.

D.) MOVEMENT PRINCIPLES

1. Leverage Shuffle: Lateral movement not crossing feet, hopping or raising up from football position.
2. Play Action Technique: Hold for run until ball passes deepest back.
3. Blitz: Pushing off ball of foot (no back step) running through designated gap, avoiding blockers and keying ball.
**E.) BLOW DELIVERY**

1. Strike
2. Punch
3. Cross face
4. Butt

**F.) BLOCK PROTECTION**

1. Rip block protection:
   - Attack outside half of blocker with shoulders square.
   - Make contact with inside shoulder.
   - Accelerate through block by driving inside arm and knee up to sky.
2. Cut and low block protection:
   - Keep hips and pads low.
   - Elbows close to body core and keep hands below knees.
   - Deliver blow with heels of hands and extend arms.
   - Push blockers head and shoulders out and away in order to keep feet free, give ground laterally.
3. Reach or cutoff block protection:
   - Maintain football position.
   - Violent hand punch and shuffle to ball or assigned gap.
   - Extend and shed across blocker while keeping feet active.

**G.) PURSUIT**

It is important that every defensive player understands the importance of taking the correct angle when approaching a ball carrier. Proper angles neutralize the speed advantage a back may have and will prevent a small gain turning into a big play. When pursuing a ball carrier, coaching points are:

1. Keep runner on outside shoulder.
2. Never allow runner to cut back behind you.
3. Force ball carrier to run sideways. Do not get pushed past the ball.
4. Flatten angle of pursuit if ball breaks force.
KEY PROGRESSION

KEYS: KEY PROGRESSION

PRIMARY KEYS: Both backers’ initial keys are Offensive Line. We will read the triangle. A gap defender will read the C/G. B or C gap defenders will read the T/G

PRIMARY KEYS: 1st element – Blocking Scheme.
2nd element – Backside G/T
3rd element – Ball

Away side backer – cutback.
Away side backer – stack
Split flow: Both LB’s hold assigned gap integrity.

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1. Down or scoop block
2. Drive block
3. Out block
4. Pull away from center
5. Pull across center

1. Flat
2. G-T angle
3. Trap angle

INITIAL KEY: OFFENSIVE LINE ANGLE WILL GIVE YOU THE INITIAL POINT OF ATTACK.

CLEAR FLOW: BACK AND O-LINE GIVES THE SAME PATH SUCH AS ZONE OR TOSS.

CLUTTERED FLOW: BACK GIVES ONE DIRECTION AND O-LINE GIVES ANOTHER SUCH AS COUNTER, TRAP, BOOK, ETC.
PRE - SNAP KEYS

RUN
1. Linemen have weight forward on their hand.
2. Larger splits by linemen.
3. Guards have deeper alignment (pull).
4. Running backs lean or point toward designated hole.
5. Quick huddle.
6. Down and Distance.
7. Offensive formations.

DRAW
1. Running back stands up from his stance to take ball.
2. Uncovered linemen block downfield, covered linemen block out.
3. Lineman standing straight up.
4. QB shows back of helmet. No pass read vision by QB.

COUNTER
1. Guards or tackles have deeper alignment.
2. Guards or tackles have more weight on their feet so as to pull.
3. Backs may align or lean to side they are faking/pulling.

PASS
1. Linemen sitting with less weight on their hands.
2. High helmet at snap.
3. QB’s habits – licking fingers, toweling hands.
4. Tighter splits by linemen.
5. Running backs widening alignment position to get easier release.

SCREEN
1. QB takes excessive drop, gets too deep too quickly.
2. Linemen slip block and leave escort.
3. Poor effort by backs to pass block.
4. Backs slip block.