

Offensive Line Manual



Southwest Baptist University Football

2008

Coach Ben Blake

“Grab your hard hats and lunch pails, its time to go to work!”



“RTB”

Coaching Philosophy

I believe very strongly that winning does not “just happen.” It is not a coincidence that the same teams and the same coaches to win every year. These “winning” programs are successful because they have a comprehensive 365-day-a-year plan they believe in. You must have a consistent plan to make your program consistent. *Consistency = Winning.*

I Believe in one must spend a tremendous amount of time on the fundamentals of football. A team will improve every day by working diligently on blocking and tackling. You must attempt to cover every possible situation that may arise in a game and instruct the players on how to react. There are not many secrets to the game; you have to build a football team that is fundamentally sound and a team that is in excellent physical condition.

The ultimate key to success is to develop a team that possesses great confidence in everything it does. This is gained through hundreds of reps and a commitment by the coaches and players. The end result is a team that goes on the field every week with the attitude that it is *going* to win; that it *expects* to win. A confident team will find a way to win. It *never gives up*. This is the attitude that one must strive for.

"If you don't invest very much, then defeat doesn't hurt very much and winning is not very exciting."

- Dick Vermeil



“RTB”

Offensive Line Philosophy

We are the most important position on the field. We are the wheels of the car. No matter how big the engine is, it is not moving without the wheels. Without a great offensive line no matter what offensive is run it will not be effective. Too many people believe the offensive line is a passive position. I do not believe this to be true! We will be the most “controlled” aggressive position on the field. The offensive line is to be feared by defensive front. We play to the whistle. We “block forever” and “finish all blocks!” We must keep a great base underneath us on our opponent to ensure that we keep face by not giving any soft body part to the defender. WE ARE THE AGGRESSOR!



“I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweet.”

- Winston Churchill



“RTB”

Terms and Rules

- **Ace** – Double team between center and guard
- **Deuce**- Double team between guard and tackle
- **Trey** – Double team between tackle and tight end
- **Bring it** – Call made by PST to alert guard and center of outside walk-up defender. This allows FS to block overhang and de on FS of play
- **LOS** – Line of Scrimmage
- **FS** – Front-side
- **BS** – Backside
- **PS** – Play-side
- **Uncovered** – Lineman that has a head up or BS LOS defender on run play
- **Covered** – Lineman that has a FS LOS defender on run play
- **Backer** – Defender at least 2 yards deep behind LOS defender
- **Trap** – Technique used when pulling lineman is blocking LOS defender out
- **Log** – Technique used when pulling lineman is blocking LOS defender in to seal edge
- **Wall** – Technique used by pulling lineman on baker to seal gap or edge
- **Seal** – Term used for blocking defender out to stop penetration of gap or to ensure edge pressure
- **Bird Dog** – Technique used for pulling lineman
- **Grab Grass** – Technique used by pulling lineman to get up-field to block down-field defender
- **Target Point** – Area in which lineman should focus on to guide head and/or hands on defender
- **Back Door** – Term used when defender tries to cut underneath block
- **Over the top/Front door** – Term used when defender tries to make play by going over the front of the lineman's block
- **Head in Hole** – Phrase for pulling lineman to get proper head placement on defender
- **Cover Up** – Getting hands on defender and maintaining leverage and coverage
- **Squat & Pop** – Technique used when lineman is at a disadvantage during a bull rush to regain leverage and control
- **High Hat** – Quick pass set where lineman shows hands and pops up to give a false read to defender
- **Danger** – Call made by tackle to alert line and back of outside walk-up pressure for overhang player
- **Switch** – Call made by lineman when LOS defender goes backside on run play to alert inside lineman to pickup LOS defender and that he will block crossing defender
- **Loop** – Made by BS lineman when BS defender stunts to FS or made by FS lineman when FS defender stunts to BS
- **Twist** – Alert call to inform lineman that LOS defender is attempting stunt with near LOS defender
- **Base** – Call made by lineman on DBL team if backer walk-up becomes another LOS defender to alert DBL team is off and both lineman must base block LOS defenders
- **Stake** – Technique used on BS of zone or both FS and BS of outside zone run plays



"RTB"

Prototypical Offensive Lineman

An offensive lineman needs to be an athlete that can run and move both for line of scrimmage contact and open field contact. They must have a great concept of teamwork due to the fact that the offensive line is the only position on the field that must work together to achieve a common goal. i.e. one offensive lineman cannot do his own thing on the field and still have a successful play. Togetherness is important. The offensive line is a unit that must have cohesiveness to become a great entity. With that comes trust. Each offensive lineman must trust the guy next to him to do his job to create a successful play or to know that he can lean on him for help during a play especially during pass protection. An offensive lineman must realize his role in the offensive and know that he will not be the glory man, but will produce the glory man.

❖ Great Feet

- An offensive lineman must have a great base underneath him
- His "FEET" are the most important aspect of his body everything starts from there.
- He does not ever cross the midline of his body or click his heels
- Works to get his cleats in the ground with proper technique
- Must be able to run effectively for pull tech and screens
- Be able to move and stay "controlled" aggressive in open field

❖ Hands

- An offensive line man must have great hand – eye coordination to shoot hands effectively.
- Be able to control punch on pass protection "pin point accuracy"
- Be able to fire hands for proper placement on zone technique
- Must have great strength in hand grip for success in technique execution

❖ Flexibility

- An offensive lineman must be able to bend and move to get into the proper positions for excellent technique
- Must be able to get into a proper stance
- Be a "knee bender" not a "waist bender"
- Be able to invert back to produce proper angle on pass protection
- Be able to create the "Z" in the knees and ankle for power producing angles

❖ Strength

- An offensive lineman must be able to with-stand and finish blocks
- Explosion is key in creating successful blocks
- Strength is the key to with-staining blocks

❖ Intelligence

- An offensive lineman needs to be one of the most intelligent players on the field
- The ability to make protection calls and play recognition is a must
- Needs to be able to know what the guys next to him does to have an understanding of the offense
- Must be able to adapt on the fly during pressures of the game
- Must be able to recognize fronts and blitzes and be able to translate them during game/practice/meeting
- Understand why he is doing what he is doing to be able to effective do it

❖ Body Type

- An offensive lineman must be able to effectively move and create leverage on the opponent
- Offensive tackle need to be the taller athletes on the field
- Offensive guard can be a little shorter than tackles
- Offensive center can be a little shorter than guards
- 6'4 or better for tackles – 6'2 or better guards – 6'0 or better center minimums
- Weights is dependent on the athlete, must be able to accomplish what is asked of him physically



"RTB"

2008 Goals

- ❖ Score enough to win
- ❖ Average 34.38 per game
- ❖ Average 400 yards per game
- ❖ No off the field issues
- ❖ Dean's list for whole group
- ❖ Complete 65%
- ❖ No Sacks



"RTB"

- What WE Live By -

We are as blue collar as it gets on the football field. We serve and work for the guys behind us telling us what to run when to run it. It is the grunt work. We are sure to sweat and bleed everyday we are on the field working. It is at times a grind and for sure most people don't want to, or cannot do what we do. No one will know your name or who you are when you walk by. Your name will not be in the paper, but you will be the reason that SBU is in the paper. When we step on the field it is time to go to work and just bring it all day, everyday.

“Grab your hard hats and lunch pails, its time to go to work!”



“RTB”

The Basic Fundamentals – “THE LITTLE THINGS”

- ❖ PACE: We are a no huddle team. There are three different modes: Regular, Look, and Nascar. We will always get back to the line ready to go after each play. This is our on one cadence.
- ❖ Regular: Center will get set down on ball, guards and tackles will get set on center. The play will be called, ball snapped and go.
- ❖ Look: Is the same as regular except we will give a “set go” command and then look at sideline for play. Then we will get set and go. (center is always set and down on ball in this mode) This is our on two cadence.
- ❖ Nascar: Is “SPRINT” to the line get set, get play, and go. This is our first sound cadence.

It is extremely important the we understand these modes. Knowing the snap count and where the ball is going are our biggest advantages against the defense. We must know the PACE and fire off together as a unit to create a start of a successful play.

- ❖ Stance: We are a 2 pt team
 - Base: A little wider than hips. This will never be wider.
 - Feet: “Toes” pointing in with heels slightly kicked out. This position will force your power thru the inside of the knee to the balls of you feet.
 - Stagger: Our stance will never be stagger more than instep except for tackle which may get toe to heel stagger but never farther.
 - Power producing angles: The stagger of the feet places the up foot in a position to create power producing angles in the ankles and knees. This is called “Z” in the knee. To get this position, slightly roll knee forward to the front of your foot so that it is **OVER** the toe. This will place the weight on the balls of the feet – heels slightly off the ground.
 - Arm & Hand: The up foot arm should be placed with the forearm on the thigh. The other arm should be placed with the hand on the thigh having a 90° bend in the elbow. This is the set position.
 - Shoulders/Back/Tail: Shoulders square to L.O.S. ; with a negative bend/arch in the back. The tail should be pushed out to create the “Z” angles we are looking for.
 - Initial Movement: We will explode out of our stance with a position set that allows us to move forward not upward.
 - WE WILL NEVER TELL YOU TO BLOCK OR TACKLE (LEAD WITH) YOUR HEAD! LEAD WITH YOU HANDS.
 - Arm action on the initial step, hands should strike the opponent first with speed. We are trying to get our hands on the defender ASAP! The proper target for the hands are the inside bicep and outside chest plate of the defender. The second step then follows. As you drive your hips should work forward with continued leverage.



“RTB”

- ❖ Center's Stance and Exchange: The stance that we will teach our offensive center is a 3-pt. with the weight evenly distributed on the balls of both feet with a little weight placed on the ball itself.
 - Base: Slightly wider than hip width with feet perpendicular to the L.O.S.
 - Feet: Want the feet parallel, no stagger.
 - Shoulders/Back/Tail: Shoulders must be square to the L.O.S. with the back parallel to the ground. We want the tail to be at least as high as the shoulders (this will keep the hips up) to facilitate the snap.
 - Initial Movement: We want to explode out of our stance with back parallel to the ground. We will step with our near foot when exploding out of block. Do not anticipate the count. Snapping the ball early penalizes the rest of the offensive lineman.
 - Position of the Ball: The ball should be placed slightly to the right eye (right handed) left eye (left handed) and forward above your head. Extending the ball in front of you will give you better cut off angles because the defenders will not be as close to you or the rest of the lineman on the L.O.S.
 - The Grip: The football is placed so that the laces are facing up. Grip the ball by placing your right thumb between the second and third lace nearest to the front end of the football. The fingers and palm of the hand will grip the ball on the side so as to have complete control of the ball. The arm should be extended with your wrist straight.
 - Effecting the Snap: Snap the ball by a natural turn to simulate putting your thumb up your butt. Snapping and stepping with the proper foot should be one continuous movement. The shotgun snap is performed by shooting the ball back to the quarterback. This can be done one of two ways by finding a follow through spot on your butt (slap your butt) or implementing a stopper on the thigh with your forearm.

The center must be the leader of the offensive line. In our system, you will be responsible for making a number of line and protection calls. In order to do this you must have a clear understanding of the concept of plays we will use. When making calls, make them loud and clear. Make them as soon as possible. Do not be afraid to use false calls. Never make calls without first seeing the alignment of the defense.



"RTB"

❖ Blocking Progression

- Split – Proper alignment is 2 foot splits
- Stance – As mentioned above
- Approach – Proper footwork
- Contact – Proper Placement
- Follow Thru – Proper Leverage/Coverage
- Finish – “Block forever” and “finish all blocks”

❖ Pass Protection: Eight teaching progressions steps

- Stance:
- Squat: (Hitting position)
- Shuffle: (Power step/ Kick Slide)
- Target: (Aiming point)
- Jam: (Punch and lock-out)
- Timing the Jam: (Anticipation and strike)
- Set: (Initial movement from stance to squat)
- Alignment reads and sets: (Head up, inside-outside shade, loose, gap)

Stance: A correct stance will not only provide for excellent take-off, but also, allows for quick transition to a set position for pass blocking. To be an effective blocker an offensive lineman must develop a sound stance for proper execution and performance. Without the proper stance, it is difficult to start with speed, power, leverage, or maintain a consistent effort after the initial movements have been made. A correct stance will not only provide for excellent take-off, but also promote the use of a balanced blocking position at contact.

The stance we use is a 2 pt stance with the weight distributed 60/40 over the front and back two points of contact. This stance gives our offensive lineman the best opportunity for:

- ❖ Equal movement in all four directions (Rt, Lt, Forward, and Back/Vertical Set)
- ❖ Excellent execution of their assignments, mechanics, and techniques
- ❖ Common Faults
 - Toes pointed out - straight ahead
 - Weight back on heels instead of on balls of feet
 - Not balanced – too much forward or back (telegraph run or pass)
 - Head down – not straight ahead with eyes on target
 - Knees not in line with ankles and feet
 - Tail too high or low



“RTB”

- ❖ Squat (Sit – Down Position): The Squat Position is established from the Set technique. The squat is one of the most important fundamentals involved in pass protection. A blocker must develop the ability to assume a good sit – down position commonly referred to as the Set.
 - Base: Hip wide or slightly wider
 - Feet: Staggered, toe to heel relationship between up foot and back foot
 - Up Foot: Post Foot/Leg (Inside and nearest the center)
 - Back Foot: Support Foot/Leg (Outside and away from center)
 - CP: Toes perpendicular to the L.O.S. The toes pointing down field and knees in line with inside of feet weight on front foot and heels slightly off the ground.
The base and feet position are the keys to good pass protection
 - Knees: should be flexed at a angle where they will be slightly aligned over the toes for greater strength and balance (always bend in the knees no the waist)
 - Upper Thighs: Weight is placed in Quads and Hams, must be able to accept and retain this position with good muscle endurance
 - Arched Back: Pull shoulders back and push butt out in a squat position forming a bowed back
 - Head and Shoulders: Pull the shoulders back, turn chin in, eyes on target
 - Head and arms: Elbows are bent and squeezed in at rib area, the hands are held close and in at chest-shin level
- ❖ Shuffle (Power Step & Kick Slide): The method of moving the feet with the defender is a shuffle technique involving a power step – kick slide action. It is critical that one foot remains in contact with the ground stepping with foot to defender’s direction and sliding the remaining foot to maintain proper Squat and Base control. It is very similar to guarding an opponent in basketball. Shuffle quickly, never cross your feet, keep your feet hot, base travels with the hips and shoulders, maintain stagger, shuffle on the balls of the feet and stay between the man and QB.
 - Power Step: is picking up and pounding down quickly the **UP/POST-FOOT** into the ground while moving laterally RT or LT or maintaining frontal position on the defender
 - Kick Slide: is the direction and velocity of the **Staggered/Support-Foot**; the back foot kicks and slides very quickly in alignment and unison with the power step, maintain proper width staggered and weight distribution to battle the defender.
 - CP: The feet must move according to the target of the defender and must adjust to him throughout the protection period of time.
- ❖ Target: On all pass blocks, the blocker must concentrate on a specific spot or target for proper contact and positioning on the defender. The middle of the numbers is our target, so eyeball the middle of the defender’s numbers. **(AIM SMALL MISS SMALL)**
 - CP: The whole target is the numbers – The Bullseyes – is spot in middle of numbers



“RTB”

- ❖ Jam: In order to jolt and stop the pass rusher, and force a separation, it is imperative that the blocker develop a strong punch
 - Hands are raised and placed close to chest – chin level
 - Punch up and through target
 - Keep hands inside on the numbers/pecs
 - Maintain lock-up and pressure\

- ❖ Timing the Jam: Is anticipating and striking the opponent with proper timing and engagement. There is a spot in front of the protector called the cushion area 10-16 inches out in front of the blocker. As the defender enters the area the pass blocker uncoils to deliver the punch with maximum force for restriction and separation without losing balance and control
 - Punch too early – lean forward
 - Punch too late – on heels

- ❖ Grading: You will be graded on a +/- scale on three different areas:
Assignment/Execution/Technique
 - Assignment: This is basically the mental section on did you or did you not do what you were supposed to do on that specific play
 - Execution: Did you get what you where suppose to do done (make the block)
 - Technique: Did you use the proper technique in getting to and maintaining the block

“Football lineman are motivated by more complicated, self-determining series of factors than the simple fear of humiliation in the public gaze, which is the emotion that galvanizes the backs and receivers”

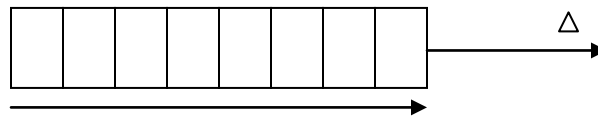
- Merlin Olsen



“RTB”

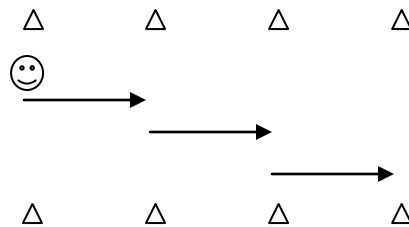
Everyday Pass Drills

- ❖ Ladder Drill: This is used to increase footwork speed
 - One Foot, Two Foot, Shuffle, Dance Through, Reverse Dance Through
 - CP: Start slow and increase speed as footwork improves
 - Hands up, thumbs together
 - Bend in knees and hips low
 - Eyes up as much as possible
 - Sprint through cone



- ❖ Stance Drill: This is used to maximize repetition of getting in a proper stance
 - CP: Focus on stance not steps

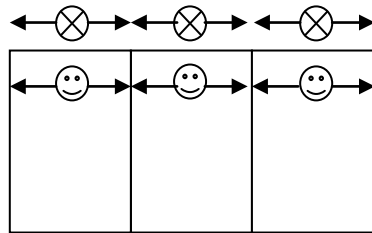
- ❖ Set Drill: To develop proper vertical set
 - CP: Step with inside foot first
 - Long steps, get deep quick
 - Exadurate depth (5 yards)
 - Finish by punching and lowering hips



"RTB"

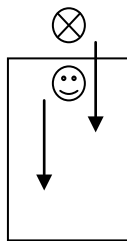
❖ 5 yard squares: Practice reacting laterally to a defender's movement

- CP: Always use yard line
- Don't crossover, click heels, or hop
- Bend at the knees, not the waist, keep hips low
- Keep shoulders and head back
- Don't lean forward



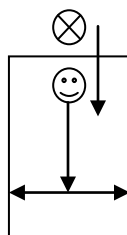
❖ Set Punch: To work on pass sets and practice timing a punch

- CP: Make sure players take proper set
- Focus on target to punch – aim small miss small
- Head back, hand up and together
- Thumbs up and elbows tight to body
- Punch numbers, extend arms, lock out



❖ Combo Drill: To Combine the requirements of the “set punch” and “5 yard square” drills

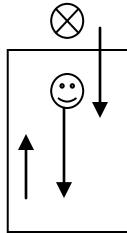
- CP: Coach the techniques of both drill used



“RTB”

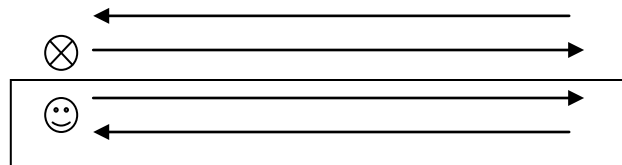
❖ Bull Rush Drill: To learn to stop a bull rush while maintaining proper balance

- CP: Keep inside “post” foot forward
- Keep outside “support” foot back
- Have defender go half speed



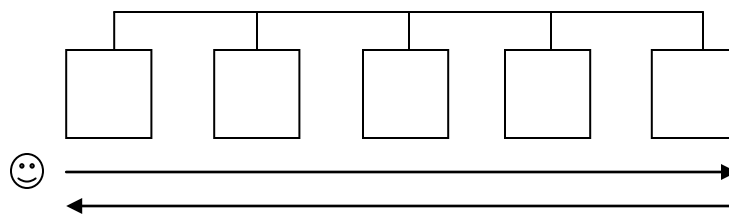
❖ Spin Drill: To practice countering a spin move by a defender

- CP: Maintain proper body position
- Keep arms extended as much as possible
- Keep defender within the framework of your body
- Have defender lean into the blocker



❖ Sled Punch: To increase speed and power in the punch while maintaining proper body position

- CP: Coach from side of sled to see body position
- Hips low, head back
- Hands in proper position before and after punch
- Lock out after punch



“RTB”

Everyday Run Drills

- ❖ Zone Drill: To work inside zone technique for run game
 - CP: Get hands cocked and shot immediately
 - Take a good position step (first step)
 - Take a good drive step (second step)
 - Get two steps down before contact
 - As 2nd step hits ground so should hands hit defender
 - Hot feet, great base to control base

- ❖ Stretch Drill: To work outside zone technique for run game
 - CP: Take a position step (first step)
 - Take a cross over step (second step)
 - Reach with outside hand to gather defender
 - Rip with inside hand to get pressure underneath and position
 - Once you get there get hips around and through (swing hips)

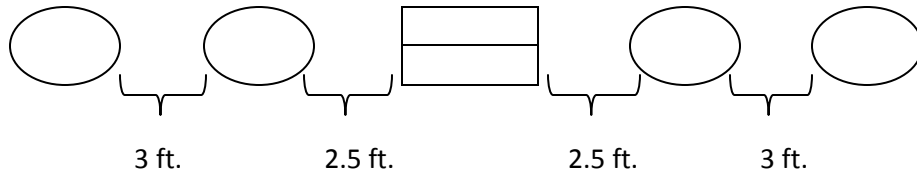
- ❖ DBL TM Drill: To work dbl team to combo up to 2nd level
 - CP: Post-man take a position step while Drive-man take a down step
 - Post-man take a drive step with Drive-man (second step)
 - Both players should grab with both hands to defenders bicep
 - Post-man will slip to LB while drive man will over take to control L.O.S.

- ❖ Sled Drill: To condition and work punch and drive on zone
 - CP: This is a good conditioning drill
 - Can punch and drive then release and sprint out
 - Can punch and drive then pull left or right to simulate screen
 - Make sure they sprint through you



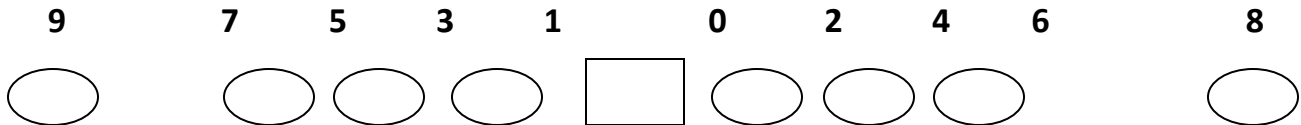
"RTB"

Normal Split Alignments



Split alignments may vary according to play. I will advise you on split variation according to scheme and play. This being consistent will enable us, offensively to stretch or condense the defense.

Hole Numbering System

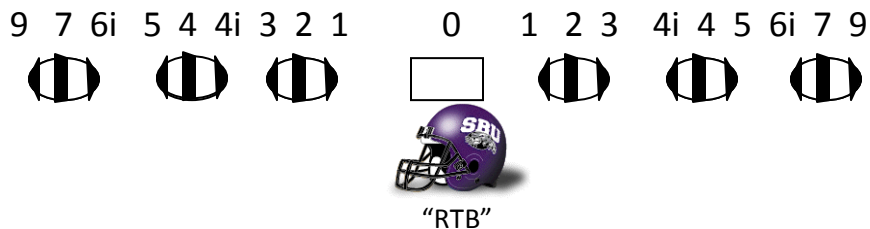


Odd Numbers: Left

Even Numbers: Right

Defensive Recognition

Below are the alignments of on line defenders and how we recognize and communicate on the L.O.S. You will understand that this is how we block according to defensive alignments. Everything is mirrored to both sides.



DO WORK!



"RTB"