Position Manual: Linebackers

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Start
Table of Contents:

Fundamentals

Tackling

Run Defense

Pass Drops

Reads

Next
It starts with stance

When you’re coaching any position, but especially Linebackers, everything starts with your stance.

Coaching Points:
- Tits - Knees - Toes
- Flat backs
- Eyes on your read
Read steps put Linebackers in the position to make a play

If you’re an inside LB you’re probably reading guard to near back, outside tackle to near back.

Coaching Points:
Good stance
Short, quick, jab steps
Stay low - eyes up!
Scrape steps keep LB’ers from over running the ball

Go back and watch film of Brian Bosworth, the guy has the most Muhammad Ali like footwork and it’s all predicated on a great scrape

Coaching Points:
Stay low
Stay parallel
Work downhill
Follow the ball is a great way to keep eyes up.

Follow the ball drill is a great way to ensure stance, read steps, and scrapes are being done and done in a controlled environment.

Coaching Points:
Scrape fluidly, not stiff
Don’t over pursue
Eyes up, chest square to the line of scrimmage
Heads Up Tackling

I believe in tackling from the ground-up.

Tips:
Eyes to the sky
Shoot the hips
Throw the hands
Drive for 5
I believe in tackling through steps and procedure

Tips:
Eyes to the sky
Shoot the hips
Throw the hands
Drive for 5
Hawk Tackling

Again, I believe in tackling from the ground-up.

Tips:
Head behind the tackle
Eyes to the sky
Shoot the hips
Throw the hands
Drive for 5
Hawk Tackling

To learn the hawk tackle you have to go over it and teach it

Tips:
Head behind the tackle
Eyes to the thighs
Shoot the hips
Throw the hands
Drive for 5
Another form of finish is the Hawk & Roll or Gator Roll as some call it. This is a great drill to get larger tacklers to the ground.

Coaching Points:
Head behind the ball carrier
Eyes to the thighs
Grab the thighs and roll
Wax on / Wax off

There are 3 parts to making a play at LB. The first part is to rip the hands of a blocker off of you. I teach it like Karate Kid, wax off Daniel Son!

Coaching Points:
Get in your GHP or Good Hitting Position
Rip violently
Stay square
Fill him with 55%

Block destruction is a huge part of linebacker play and learning to fit a fullback on inside runs, kick outs, or guards on trap is vital.

Coaching Points:
Win the battle of leverage
Give him 55% of the body
Same Shoulder / Same Leg
Run Defense

Fit him up for the finish

Part 3 of rip, fit, finish is the finish. You have to secure the tackle in order to find success. We use the “Hawk Tackling” technique of Pete Carroll.

Coaching Points:
Head behind the ball carrier
Eyes to the thighs
Drive for 5
Run Defense

A-B-C Drill

After practicing each of these parts separately, we incorporate them together into the A-B-C Drill. This drill teaches the linebackers to rip, fill, and fit with minimal contact and a little conditioning throw in if you can rotate quickly!

Coaching Points:
- Take read steps
- Stay low
- Finish strong but safe
The X-Y-Z Drill is a complement to the A-B-C Drill. XYZ will teach the linebackers how to get off a cut or just over some bodies that have been knocked around. It’s great for work on getting their eyes back up to the play.

Coaching Points:
- Punch the cut guy into the ground
- Return your eyes to the fill
- Finish strong but safe
A great pass drop drill that teaches back pedal, 45 degree drops, and opens the hips is the W-Drill. It’s great for LB’s and DB’s.

Coaching Points:
Take your read steps
Feel the field/cones, don’t look
Open your hips for cross-over run
Secure the interception and finish through
Line drill is another pass drop drill and is great for pre-game warm-ups. Line drill teaches LB’s (and DB’s) to take read steps, react to the QB’s shoulder, and hit their drops and make a play.

Coaching Points:
- Take your read steps
- Open your hips and run
- Catch the ball at the highest point
I like the phrases “To” “At” and “Away” for my linebackers

Above- use the MLB as an example (Triangle on him)

“To” would be in your direction, but not directly to you
ex. Iso for an OLB, or toss for an ILB

“At” would mean directly at you
ex. Iso for an ILB, toss for an OLB

“Away” would mean away from your side
ex. Toss left and you’re the right ILB or OLB
Inside Linebackers

ILB in the 4-2-5 will read shotgun backs as cross-reads

As my opposite back comes inside, I will have to play into my gap after my reads and assume it’s coming “at” me.

Still know your personnel and situation- is it a running QB? A primarily blocking FB? A TB that likes to cut back?
Inside Linebackers

I teach my Mike and Will (in a 4-2-5) to read the guards to the near back. We read to and away for flow.

Reads:
- At- the OL or FB comes directly at you
- Pull- You see your OG pull to your side or away from your side
- Pass- pass set with head back, arms extended, feet horizontal
- Down/Combo- Combo to 2nd level
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When I ran a 3-4 or 4-4 with true OLB’s, I would teach them to read the tackle and watch for to and away flow.

Reads:
At- The OT comes right at you
Pull- You see your OT pull away
Pass- Pass set/kick slide
Down/Combo- watch for kick
Outside Linebackers

When I ran a 3-4 or 4-4 with true OLB’s, I would teach them to read the tackle and watch for to and away flow.

Reads:
- At- The OT comes right at you
- Pull- You see your OT pull away
- Pass- Pass set/kick slide
- Down/Combo- watch for kick
Click the link here to watch my video on Tackling Drills

Click the link here to watch my video on Linebacker Drills
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