

## **Coach and Athletic Director**

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# **Defensive Line Techniques and Drills from the 43 Defense, Part 1**

*By Greg Crum, Defensive Coordinator, Worcester (MA) Polytechnic Institute*

Coaching is a world of give and take and I know that in my last years as a coach, I have certainly bent the ears of many great coaches in developing my philosophies and techniques of defensive line play.

Allow me to present a few of the coaches with whom I have really enjoyed spending time with over the years: Steve Tirrell (U-Mass); Jerry Azzinaro (Duke); Joe Cullen (Detroit Lions); Keith Willis (Boston College); Sean Spencer (U-Mass); Scott James (Northeastern); Dwayne Brooks (Yale); and Frank Chimienti (C.W. Post).

Plus ... special thanks to Head Coach Don Brown and Defensive Coordinator Keith Dudzinski of the U. of Massachusetts for allowing me to spend countless hours watching their team practice and learning from their successful program.

Coaches are the greatest people and I have been fortunate in finding the ones who are always quick to offer up their time and knowledge.

I would like to start with the way I preach my version of the 10 commandments and then insert them into my practice plan in the following order:

- 1. Alignment**
- 2. Assignment**
- 3. Stance**
- 4. Get-off/Snap reaction**
- 5. Ground-to-pads/Target**
- 6. Key reads**
- 7. Separation**
- 8. Escape**
- 9. Pursuit**
- 10. Tackle**

**Evaluation:**

1-3 requires zero talent. 4-8 requires countless hours of practice. 9&10 require effort.

In our practice schedule every day, it is imperative for the Defensive Line coach to implement all 10 commandments into his daily practice plan. We will combine several of them into one drill to minimize the use of precious time in the preparation of our big men for Saturday.

### **Definition of Terms:**

A stretch or exercise that is too long or not easy to reproduce and perform correctly will have poor compliance by the athlete and will ultimately become useless.

Flexibility is termed as the ability to move a joint or series of joints throughout a full range of motion. Range of motion is the movement at a joint and is determined by a number of factors, such as connective tissue structure, the athlete's activity level, age, and sex.

Improvements in range of motion as a result of stretching are primarily due to the connective tissue adaptations.

Two types of stretching techniques are generally used: (1) ballistic, or dynamic stretching, the use of muscle contractions that create a bouncing type movement in which the endpoint is not held, and (2) static stretching, where the muscle is placed

If we start with an agility drill and have our d-line run over the bags, we will always set up a line of cones or pop-up bags about five yards apart and have our d-line run over them.

We will have them complete one of the following: a burst (teaches pursuit), bend, or a pass rush move vs. a pop up bag.

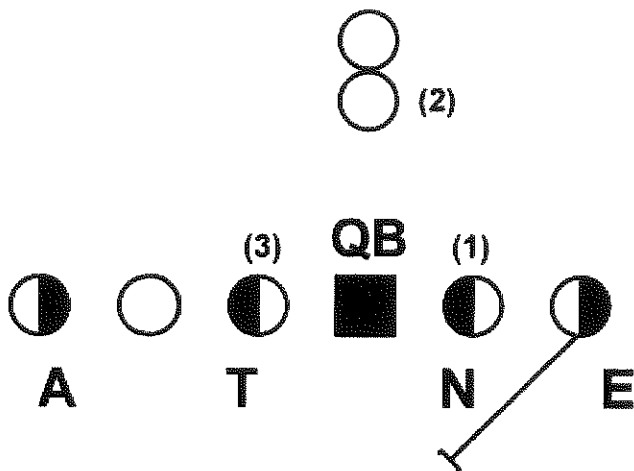
On certain days we will have our players come off the last bag and execute a fumble drill, knock down a low pass, angle tackle, or convert several of them into a simple multiple drill.

**Alignment and Assignment.** We cover this in meetings and a period we refer to as "Cans", in which we use trash barrels to simulate the five offensive linemen.

TE is relegated to one of five service players who make up the rest of the offensive formations we will face every week. We usually dedicate at least 10–15 minutes of defensive practice on proper alignments and assignments depending on the formations and motions that we will face each week.

We play a multiple front 43 at WPI and use many different looks to hinder the offensive-line blocking schemes. We will always start in our base front, which we term 72, and move to whichever front alignment we feel will help us.

The first number tells our guys we will be in a 43 look (4 down lineman + 3 backers) and the second number will tell us where the nose guard will align.



DIAG. 1, VISUAL & PRESSURE KEYS

**ANCHOR Vis. Key (TE) Pres. Key (T)**

**TACKLE Vis. Key (G) Pres. Key (T)**

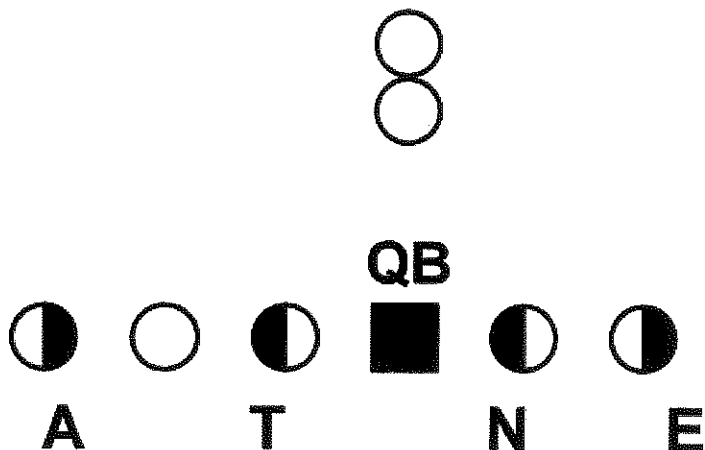
**NOSE Vis. Key (G) Pres. Key (C)**

**END Vis. Key (T) Pres. Key (Progression)**

It is also a period that we can use to evaluate each lineman's stance and get-off, paying close attention to the proper hand down and foot back and making sure that each player brings the back foot up first.

A lot of coaches claim that they don't emphasize this in their daily teaching. I feel this is a mistake because everything we do as a defensive lineman starts with a proper stance.

My philosophy on stance is that I want it to be uncomfortable for them, make it the only thing they will be about—getting out of it and engaging their man on.



## **DIAG 2, DEFENSIVE ENDS' PROGRESSION**

**As soon as the end gets a veer release, his progression will be (1) near guard, (2) near back, and (3) back-side guard.**

Our guys will always start from a 4-stance to get their feet and hands set properly in an attack position. Once they are comfortable, they simply pick up their off hand to be ready to strike.

I want them to keep their backs flat with a slightly elevated butt so that their first step will get them underneath the blocker. All of their weight should be on their toes, while paying close attention to the heels. We want the heels pushed out so that our first step is forward, not at an angle.

Our down hand is a few inches in front of our hat and the off hand hangs close to the ground, ready to strike the offensive lineman. The off hand close to the ground ensures us of not turning our shoulders, but keeping them squared up to our man.

The only disparity that I have in teaching stance is that I won't have a guy use a hand down based on man or gap if it slows his get-off.

There are many thoughts on which hand should be down and the only guy whom I allow to play with his gap hand down is our 3 technique because of the high number of double teams he will face, particularly with the 2 back offensive sets that use a TE.

My other lineman will normally always play with his shade hand down. Our stagger is toe-heel with both feet under our hips. We never have our feet wider than that because it will slow down our get off.

When facing a passing down, we will elongate our stagger to increase the length of our first step. If we will also be slanting, we will even our stagger, allowing us to step with either foot effectively.

We also make sure that all of our big men are shooting their hands as they begin their first step. This is the hardest aspect of defensive line play to teach, especially with young players who may have never used this technique. We call this ground-to-pads.

As we recognize movement and begin to take our first step toward the LOS, we want to lead with our hands and strike our opponent hard or "shock" him. A defensive lineman's hands will tell him all he needs to know about his opponent's intent.

For instance, if we are getting a drive block and our opponent gets into our grill immediately, our hands will surely strike very quickly.

This will alert us to a drive block and we will progress out of it by keeping our pad level low, rolling the hips, and running our feet in order to put the offensive lineman back on his heels and control the LOS. I think the drive block is the hardest block we will face and I put a lot of emphasis into taking it away.

Our guys know that a double team can easily be neutralized if we get a great strike on the drive block, forcing the second man to adjust because we have negotiated the LOS.

Some of the drills I use to defeat the drive block are set up in a progression, which takes my guys through the different skills necessary to achieve success.

The first drill is meant to get them used to leading with their hands. I use agile bags or shields to simulate offensive linemen and start our guys from a 6-point stance (Hands, knees, and toes on the ground).

Using a ball or my foot to simulate movement, our linemen will "shoot" their hands to the target as fast as possible and return to the starting position until movement triggers them once more. We will have them shoot their hands 10 times quickly for two sets.

Next, we will move the bag off about two yards and I will key the bag-holders to simulate a drive block. The defensive linemen who are still in a 6-point stance will now shoot their hands to the target and dig their toes into the ground as the man with the bag tries to run them over.

This automatically engages the defensive lineman's hips. As he rolls forward to prevent getting run over, he will pop out of his 6 point stance and run his feet to gain control of the blocker.

This has been an excellent drill for teaching our guys to utilize their hip power to defeat an opponent's drive block and gain separation.

The only time we really use the hip roll is to defeat a drive because the other blocks are less aggressive and we rely more on foot speed to get out of the block.

We will then run a live drill from a 3-point stance (both guys) and have them execute all the key components we just worked on separately, vs. the drive block. This will give them an opportunity to put it all together and allow the coach to see each player's weakness.

Initially, it is almost always the player's first step and use of his hands. Whenever, we find a problem area, we will use the "fit" drill principle to help our players improve anything they are having trouble with.

"Fit" means starting a drill from a position (stance) out of which you have already taken your first step.

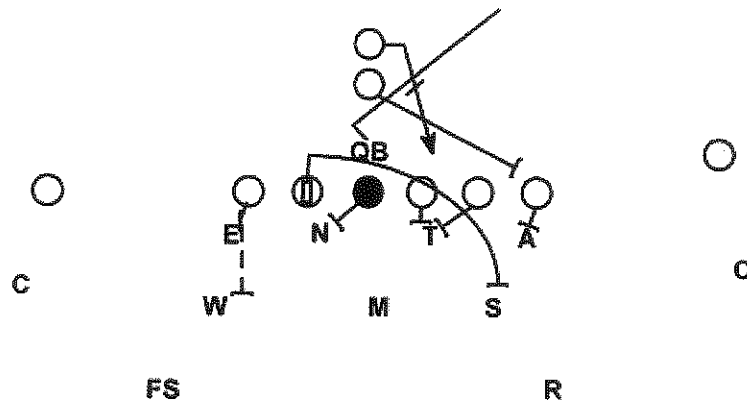
For example, if working the drive block, we will have our defensive lineman start the drill with his hands in a good strike/contact position and his hat below the offensive lineman's pad level.

On the whistle, he continues on and defeats the drive by rolling his hips until he puts the offensive lineman back on his heels again.

Once this happens again, we will complete the drill with a good press and break down to find the ball carrier. We can also include a tackle drill with any of the "fit" drills to work the multiple techniques into a simple drill.

The progression and "fit" drills have to be instrumental in developing our defensive linemen.

This brings us to the teaching of key reads from the 10 commandments. We call all of our man blocks "Battle of the One" Keys. They are Drive, Reach, Cut-Off, Veer, and Pull Sets.



DIAG. 3, BATTLE FOR ONE KEYS & TECHNIQUES, I

**E – Drive, Drive**

**N– Pull-Down Block, Cross-Face, or Follow**

**T – Double, Drive**

**A– Veer w/Tackle Down, Down to Spillbox**

When teaching your players how to defend “the battle of one” keys, it is important to tell them that their hands must always adjust to the blocker. A term I use is “eyes in the palm of your hands.” This refers to the target from the 10 commandments. We are always attempting to strike our opponents shade-side armpit area and shoot our inside hand across his facemask to the opposite breast plate.

We will always “grab cloth” whenever our hands come in contact with the offensive lineman. This enables us to gain control of our blocker, no matter what block he is attempting. Whenever we tell our guys to get their inside hand to the middle of the offensive blocker, we are giving the offensive man the advantage on certain blocks, especially drive and cut-off.

Getting back to our first step always being straight up field, we are teaching our people that no matter what battle of one key they are getting, the first step must always look the same.

If we are getting a reach block, for example, our second step will come close to our first in order to push out toward the reach and allow us to penetrate the LOS and work our hips up field so that we may escape and force the stretch play back inside where our help is.

The defender’s hands will adjust to the block as he takes his first step and uses a power arm technique to get his hips outside the O-lineman in preparation for escaping.

Power arm technique involves your gap hand pushing the shoulder and you’re inside hand pulling cloth (push-pull).

If we get a cut-off block and the offensive lineman is trying to seal us to our shade, we will simply squeeze him down the LOS, using his body as half a defender and converting our power arm. This will give us the opportunity to “see through our gap.” To convert the power arm, we simply push with the inside hand and pull with the gap hand.

We never want to cross-face unless the ball carrier has chosen his path. To defeat the cut-off, we use our second step to push inward toward the offensive lineman to squeeze him down.

Again, as with drive and reach, the first step is always up field and the second enables us to get out of the block.

Another block we have to face is called a veer block (trap, power, counter, option). This is where our man on will not want to engage us and will take a lateral step away from our shade to climb up on a backer.

When we get a veer, we cannot possibly get both hands on our blocker but again, our hands are assisting us in recognition and allowing us to play out of it with our second step.

As with the cut-off, we will push toward the blocker and jam him inside and move laterally to seal off the area he is leaving.

We expect something to come at us, whether it's a backside guard (Trap or Counter for DE's) or fullback (freeze option for Tackle or Power for DE's) and look to take on the next blocker.

Defensive ends will often see this block when facing power and option teams. We will discuss the DE's progressions with veer later on.

Another man block to watch is Pull. Again, you can't expect your lineman to get hands on, but he can recognize direction and play out of it. The only rule in Pull is to stay home and read near block.

If the back is downhill, it's an influence trap. If he is out, it's most likely a toss and your 3 tech will get a down block from his near lineman or pressure key.

If we see pull inside, we will try to get to the hip of the pulling lineman to avoid the down block from the near lineman.

If we are inside shade on a pulling lineman and the down block comes quick, we will cross face vs. the down block to add on to the play.

The last man key is pass, and we will read the set of the lineman to determine if it's 3-step or 5-step. We refer to this key as "high hat." As we take our first step and shoot our hands, we will not engage an aggressive blocker. Our hands will be the first to "feel" this.

We use this to help us distinguish between run or pass. We will evaluate our opponent every week to determine any "tells" in their passing game. Offensive lines use many protection schemes for 3/5/7 step, bootleg, and sprint pass.

As a result, we will work on our opponents' schemes every week to prepare our defensive line. One point we work on religiously is the handling of hard-setting offensive linemen who punch and otherwise abuse people on the LOS.

You will be ineffective if you try to bull-rush them. Their set position will allow them to take a power position quickly. So we must get to our half man as soon as possible, with our hands up into the throwing lane and take away the short ball.

If we get a soft set (kick slide), we will have more options in our arsenal to call upon. The bull-rush is certainly one of the moves we will work out of.

Many of the great defensive line coaches with whom I have worked have talked about “stopping the run on the way to the QB!” This method of teaching your players to take the same first step, no matter what the man on key gives you, illustrates our philosophy because that first step is always toward the QB. If you stress the second step as the escape step, your defensive lineman will always have the opportunity to react to whatever his battle of one is giving him.

You should use the fit/progression drills to help your team learn how to play out of each man block. You can again add a tackle drill, fumble drill, or pursuit drill to the end of each unit to extend the multiplicity of the single drill and save time.

Another drill we use every day to prepare for their battle of one keys is called the “Giant Drill.” You don’t have to have full pads for this drill because it starts out at half-speed and progresses from there.

I use it in both spring and fall practices. We pair up our players (offense vs. defense) using shields or pads—they produce the same results.

The first time we introduce this technique, we call it “predicted,” meaning we will tell them what type of block we are trying to defense.

We teach the players how to handle each type of man block before enabling them to distinguish one from the other. We will eventually progress to full speed, and once we have gone through all the different types of man blocks (drive, reach, cut-off, veer, pull, pass), we will run the same drills, but this time they will be “unpredicted.”

In this version, the coach signals to the offensive man what type of block to use, as well as the count.

It is always interesting to see how that first step is no longer up field vs. the different blocks as it was when they knew what was coming in the predicted drill.

This is where your players will learn that with an aggressive first step, they may not be in great position vs. anything other than the drive, but the second step will always play you out of it and gain control of the blocker.

In-season, this is a great time to bring the offense line down and run the Giant Drill.

Another drill we use to prepare our people for their Battle of One Keys is set up in much the same way, but the defense will always “slide” down to a different lineman after each rep to get an opportunity to play against different O-linemen with varying degrees of experience.

We call this the “Gauntlet Drill” and it assists us in getting our guys in great game shape because they must face five O-linemen in succession. This gives us the opportunity to see which part of their technique will become lax when they get tired. You will almost always see the stance go south until they play into shape. This is where you get to evaluate all 10 commandments in one drill!

#### **DE’s Progressions, II; 14:**

You must dedicate time in your weekly practice plan to teach the defensive ends their progressions whenever their man on (T or TE) doesn’t engage them (veer). Against technique (inside shade vs.

TE), our visual key is the TE and our pressure key is the tackle. This means we are emphasizing a great strike on our man on (TE), but seeing the pressure key (Tackle) to determine where our fit is.

Any time we see the tackle down; we will automatically control the C-Gap and look to find something coming at us, whether it's FB, B.S. Guard, or ball inside (dive option). Once the tackle is down, we play the same technique as the open-side defensive end in following our progression rules.

If we have engaged the TE and read the tackle, whether it's a combo block or a fold block, we will work to defeat the TE to his outside and escape, forcing the wide play back underneath. It is important for your players to understand that the reason we are playing outside vs. the tackle is because the LB's will work to replace our C-Gap once we do this. We will use our DE's and LB's in half-line drills to work the different schemes involved in the Power, Counter, Option, and Outside game to help them understand where the help is on defense. This gives them the confidence necessary to play aggressively to either block.

### **DE Keys from a 7 tech:**

As a defensive end, whenever you get veer, there is always another key to take you to your "fit". We work our progressions from the front side guard (1) to the fullback (2) and the backside guard (3).

Note: FB also gives us our "ball inside" read if it's dive option. Our defensive ends will bend to the dive.

If we are facing one back offenses, our defensive ends use a technique called "Claw." This allows them to read the "mesh point" that helps take away the zone read play that many teams run out of the spread offense. We have our ends recognize whether or not the ball is in the belly of the back.

Most QBs, when giving the ball to the tailback in the home position, will use only one hand and leave the other hand visible. This is a "tell" that we will look for in film evaluation to assist our guys in reading the mesh point.

If the QB is truly running a read play from the gun position, we must see the ball in order to make our next move. The only coaching point that must be emphasized is that the defensive end can never turn his shoulders. He must keep them square to be able to react off to the QB on a keep play.

Claw technique is described as using your inside hand to push the veer block inside and keep our shoulders square while taking a couple of shuffle steps to the inside, which allows us to get our read vs. one back sets, particularly if the QB is in the gun position. If the back is home and the QB is under center, this is where we are able to read the off hand to assist us with the zone boot read.

### **Next Month: Part II**

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## Coach and Athletic Director

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# Defensive Line Techniques and Drills From the 43 Defense, Part II

*By Greg Crum, Defensive Coordinator Worcester (MA) Polytechnic Institute*

There are four basic combination blocks that we cover in our daily practices. Depending on the type of offense we face each week, we determine which ones to put more emphasis on: double team, scoop-on, scoop-off, and pull with a down block.



As in our battle of one key, the emphasis on teaching our players how to read each block is determined by what our man on does.

We use the terms visual key and pressure key in assisting our guys to recognize which combo block they are getting.

The visual key is always the man on and the pressure key is the closest lineman to our shade.

For example, our man is a 3 technique tackle and we get a double team, our battle of 1 (guard) or visual key, will give us a drive block and our pressure key, near gap lineman (tackle) gives us a down block. We will concentrate on putting the drive block back on his heels and getting our hat into the crack and sitting on the near lineman (pressure key).

You will often find this combo block easier to defend if your lineman is aggressive to the drive block from his man on. As I mentioned last month, we will always have our 3-technique play with his gap hand down and gap foot back to help him defeat the double team.

Because his gap foot is back, his first step will allow him to sit on the double team more effectively, when it is already inside the tackle's down block.



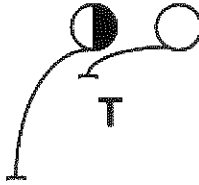
We separate zone blocks into scoop-on and scoop-off to further assist us with our progressions in recognizing and stopping an offensive play. Most inside zone teams will utilize two offensive blockers to work against a defensive lineman and a linebacker. Vs scoop-on, our battle-of-one is going to give us a cut-off block as he punches our inside breastplate and looks to find the second level player.

**Diag. 5, Combo Blocks**

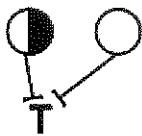
**SCOOP-ON**



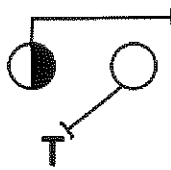
**SCOOP-OFF**



**DOUBLE TEAM**



**PULL/DOWN BLOCK**



**Scoop On: An inside zone play**

**Scoop-Off: A stretch play (outside zone)**

**Double-Team: A hard drive block by our man-on**

**Pull-Down Block: Executed mostly by our interior linemen**

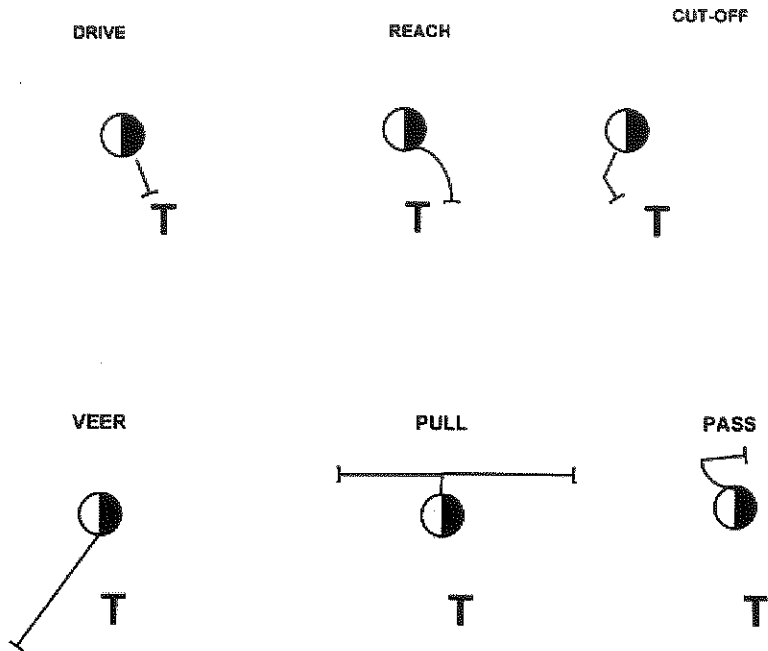
If we attack this with our man on keys, we can squeeze him down the LOS and make it difficult for him to come off to the backer. This will force the pressure key or near lineman to attempt to come off to the backer. It is not what they want to do and it increases our success against the zone play.

Teams who run toss or the outside zone play (stretch) will attempt to get up to the second level quickly, leaving the near lineman to overtake our defensive lineman. This is easily recognizable by the flat step of our man on, similar to a veer block, except that our pressure key is coming quickly to overtake us (veer = no pressure key).

We will attempt to grab the cloth of our man on and turn our shoulders in the same direction, opening up our hips to the play and giving our pressure key our back.

From here we will rip the pressure key, using our outside arm, and pursuing down the LOS to the ball carrier, gaining depth as we do.

**Diag. 6, Another "Battle of One" Keys**



**It's a "Battle of One" but deliciously done...to Drive, Reach, Cut-Off, Veer, Pull, and Pass, or not to Pass?**

The last combination block we will spend a lot of time on vs two back teams is the pull with a down block. The reason I refer to this as a combination block is because we are incorporating a pressure key and must work against two linemen to simulate this block.

As mentioned before, we will always use the pulling lineman's direction to initiate our next move. I will use the 3 technique tackle most of the time to get him used to feeling where the down block is in relation to his shoulder and hip.

The coaching point here is to determine whether or not to stay on the pulling guard's hip (inside pull only) or cross face vs the centers down block. If we get a good get-off and the center's weight is on our hip (behind us) we will continue on our path behind the puller to the ball carrier.

If the center takes a good step and we feel his weight on our shoulder (front), we will drop our inside hand and cross the center's face to run down the ball carrier.

In the 43, we will always have a backside LB to account for cutback. That is the reason I allow our players to cross face.

As with the man on blocks, we will use a progression and a "fit" principle to teach our defensive linemen how to recognize and defeat the different combo blocks.

It is extremely important to use the predicted vs unpredicted method mentioned earlier in teaching how to defend combo blocks.

For example, with scoop-on, we will set up a defensive lineman in a "fit" position against his man on in a cut-off block simulation and have the pressure key (near lineman) already in a scoop position.

On the whistle we will tell each offensive lineman to attempt to continue the block and at the same time have the defensive lineman try to defeat what his man on is giving him.

In this case, it is a cut-off that will squeeze down his man on pressure key and prevent him from climbing to the second level.

**Note:** This is much different from a double team. You should not teach your lineman to treat it the same way because the man-on can climb much easier if you sit the pressure instead of squeezing the man-on.

We will then run the predicted drill at half speed vs the scoop-on and progress to full speed until the kids can properly recognize and defeat the block.

We will use this method for all of the combo blocks. Once we have covered the “fit” drill, predicted – we will continue with the unpredicted drill and show them all four-combo blocks.

Again, you can incorporate another drill at the finish, whether it’s an angle tackle, fumble, or finish through to a cone (pursuit).

Repetition is the key to success with the big men on the defensive line and it is our job as coaches to implement and change drills daily—preparing them for what schemes they will encounter on game day. I cannot stress enough the importance of playing with your hands and keeping your pad level lower than your opponent in order to achieve success vs the run.

### **Pass Rush**

Quoting one of my defensive brethren, Joe Cullen (Defensive Line Coach, Detroit Lions), “The greatest play in defensive football is the sack-forced fumble!”

We use this mentality at WPI because we all know how important momentum is to the game. Nothing can change the tempo of a game more than a hit on the playmaker and force him to turn over the ball at the same time.

It is equally as damaging to your opponent in terms of momentum, which is why we stress this every day with our pass-rush drills.

In order to achieve this, no matter what you teach in terms of pass-rush techniques, you will notice that the great pass rushers somehow find an extra gear to turn on as they burst through to the QB.

No matter what the drill is, we will always emphasize a great finish such as a five-yard burst to a pop-up bag or cone to simulate this aspect of our pass rush.

It’s easy for a guy rushing the edge to almost back off because of the separation from his man, only to find that the offensive lineman has moved his feet and re-set his hands or the QB feels pressure and leaves the pocket. You find you have a lot more work to do.

Just as with the run game, our beginning in teaching pass rush is the get-off. We will use two drills to warm up for our pass rush progressions.

The first is a “Jet drill” and the second a “Rabbit drill”. In the Jet drill, we start two guys off with a hand down and the same foot back, elevated off the ground to just above their hips.

On movement, they will drive the up-leg forward and see if they can get their foot a few inches past where the down hand had been. This is, of course, an exaggerated first step, but it gets them thinking about getting a jump on an O-lineman in a passing situation.

The Rabbit drill involves the use of one of our four blocks to simulate an offensive lineman in a 2-point stance two yards off the LOS. Our defensive linemen are reacting to the movement of the offensive man who is attempting to backpedal for five yards without the defensive lineman touching him. We want our lineman to take a great first, up field step and get to a half-man on the O-lineman with both hands to the outside shoulder before he gets to five yards.

Again, we're teaching the lineman to have a much longer first step vs high-hat pass sets. From here, we will begin the fit and progression period of our pass rush. We use several different moves with counters built in, and I think it is the coach's responsibility to find which move works best for each individual and have him perfect it.

Our ends or edge rushers will always set up their pass rush off their speed rush-mentality, and our inside big men will set up their pass rush off the bull rush. This fits into one of the most important aspects of being a great rusher – how to get the offensive lineman out of his power position.

In other words, what are we going to do to get an offensive lineman off his heels, turn his shoulders, move his feet, and lean or lunge. I only know of two methods...speed and power!

The speed rush we teach is the Tomahawk speed. We will flex our ends outside the blocker about a yard and on the snap, have them drop to about 4.5 – 5 yards back and drive their inside hand down on the outside hand of the offensive lineman—simulating a “chopping” motion and dropping their shoulder to the hip of the O-lineman and ripping hard up with their elbows high and driving into the back or side of the O-lineman.

We will use the fit drill to finish the last part of this rush by placing a defensive lineman into either a man or a shield with his inside hand down and the same shoulder on the hip, or hip height of a shield.

On the whistle, the defensive lineman will finish the remainder of the move by ripping his elbow high, leaning on his man or shield and finishing with a five yard burst to a cone, pop-up bag, or coach holding a ball for a strip drill finish.

It is important to teach your players to go for the ball with their up field arm and secure the sack with the other. Use a pop-up bag for the QB and hold a ball out opposite the bag so that the player can run through the bag as he knocks down the ball.

We will sometimes run the same drill from the other side and have the rusher “scoop” the fumble, again, incorporating more than one aspect in a drill to save time.

This is an example of how you can teach your defensive lineman to get an O-lineman out of his power position because he must move his feet to accommodate for your speed.

The counter to the Tomahawk speed is the “Ninja” spin and we will use the same fit drill only this time having the defensive lineman in a defeated position on the man or shield (QB or bag is underneath our path) and finish through the counter with the same burst drill at the end.

**Coaching points:** Sitting on the O-lineman's hip and throwing the outside hand back around and grabbing the inside leg to push us through to the finish.

Watch for players who want to spin first before getting pressure up field. The counter is used only if we get too far up field or are in a bad position on our man.

If you spin too shallow, you will give the QB the outside lane to either run or pass outside of your rush.

The power move we teach is called the Club/Flip—an attempt to get to the half-man and take him out of his power position. But we are using brute force to accomplish this.

We also use a Fit/Progression drill to teach this move. We start with the defensive lineman in a right or left shade on the O-lineman, who has his inside hand on our shoulder (right shade defense = left arm of offensive lineman is on the left shoulder of the defender).

From here, we will knock the arm of the O-lineman off with either a cut or swipe move of our inside hand. (Cut is under to away and swipe is over to away) pictures.

As we do this, we will start to flip our hips, pointing our butt to the backfield and clubbing the outside shoulder of the man until we are perpendicular to the O-lineman and stop.

Here is where you can coach the kids up on particular techniques. Go twice to each side and rotate. Next, do the same movements except to continue to either shuffle our feet or reverse carioca past the O-lineman so our butt is facing the QB and stop. **Coaching technique:** Do twice to a side and rotate.

Next, execute the finish from the end of the last progression with a rip or punch to separate from the O-lineman.

Lastly, we will do all three parts of the move at once again finish with a burst to a bag, cone, or coach for five yards. Use the same finishers as with the Tomahawk to work strip, sack, or fumble.

The counter we use for the Club/Flip is the Club Back to the inside. **Note:** if your people have gotten to the rip or punch portion of the move and are either still engaged or by the QB, they're counter will be the Ninja spin.

We will now use another fit drill to coach the counter whenever we have our players half-way through the rush move with their hips flipped and hand to the shoulder of the O-lineman, only this time, on the whistle the O-lineman will shuffle his feet to cut off the move and force the defensive lineman to use his inside hand to Club Back the opposite shoulder of the O-lineman and flip his hips back to the inside and rip or punch to escape.

You can get pretty creative with both of these drills on how you want to set up the Fit/Progressions, depending on what aspect of the moves your players are struggling with.

Very important: With any pass rush move you teach, you must always coach your players to have a plan for every down in case they get a high-hat read. Since they must already have a plan of attack, they need not hesitate. One second of hesitation could mean the difference in a QB having the necessary time to throw downfield and hurt you.

So emphasize this in every drill in which they are reading a man on. This includes the team part of your practice as well as the individual periods.

It is always a good idea to teach pass-rush moves off a bull rush for your nose guard, as his man on will most likely get the help of a center and you will want the middle of your rush to stay on course and not get washed.

We use a lot of hand-to-hand combat drills for this as well as a "Butt-Bull" technique. The Butt-Bull starts out from the bull rush, but as the O-lineman starts to take away a side of your rush lane, you should use a similar technique defeating a reach block.

Use your power arm technique to turn the hips of the O-lineman and flip your hips at the same time, you should shuffle your feet to get beyond his hip and finish with a rip or punch to the QB.

Use the Fit/Progression techniques for teaching this move as well.

You have now given your players a couple of techniques with built in counters to pressure the QB. Work them everyday and your people will become great rushers.

Remember, if your opponent throws the ball 10 times a game and you're bringing four, that's 40 opportunities to make a big play and change the tempo of a game, increasing your chances for success.

Daily coaching points emphasized by Our D-Line:

1. Stop the run on the way to the QB.
2. Always be prepared to take away a drive block
3. Always have a pass rush plan if you get a high hat.
4. First step is always up field unless you're slanting.
5. Man on key is referred to as "Battle-Of-One".
6. Play with your hands
7. Eyes in the palms of your hands.
8. Even up your stagger when slanting.
9. Elongate your stance if it's a passing down.
10. Always allow your second step to take you out of a block.
11. Win and look through your gap.
12. Never rush the passer with your shoulders square to the LOS.
13. Finish every play.
14. Always go for the ball if you're the second guy in on a tackle.
15. Study your opponent on film and look for "Tells".