



**PRINT n' GO**

# **FOOTBALL**

**PRACTICE PLANS**

**RUNNING GAME DEVELOPMENT**

**17 Skill-Building Drills for a  
Dominant Running Game**



**Includes 5  
Printable Practice  
Plans**

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# INTRODUCTION

Hello, and welcome to Print n' Go Football Practice Plans - Running Game Edition!

One of the most difficult parts of running a football practice is finding ways to keep the entire team engaged at the same time. Not only that, but with so many different positions, it can be difficult to find drills and setup a practice plan that works on the large variety of skills needed to succeed.

One of the best ways I've found to combat this problem is using a station based practice. Instead of running one drill, and having the 3-4 players working, while everyone else on the team watches, we setup 3-4 drill stations concurrently, so that every single player is getting meaningful reps from the beginning of practice to the end. And the better you can practice, the better you can play.

One of the other benefits of running a station based practice is that it allows you to use parents and other volunteers much more effectively. You will need to set up the station and explain the drill the first time, but once the players have learned it, parents can be a big help by simply keeping a close eye and reinforcing the fundamentals as the players progress through the drill.

In this eBook you'll find 17 drills and an additional 5 practice plans focusing on the running game. We've included drills for speed and agility, blocking, handoffs, ball security, evading defenders and breaking tackles. Essential skills that every young player should learn!

Now enough talk - let's get to practice!

# LEVELS OF CONTACT

At the top of each page, you will notice one of the 5 icons below. They each designate a different level of contact for that specific drill.

By designating each drill a specific level of contact, coaches are able to plan practices in advance and ensure players spend the right amount of time in pads.

USA Football recommends no more than 30 minutes per practice of full contact, and no more than 90 minutes per week during the season, while during the preseason 120 minutes per week is acceptable.



## **Air. Intensity: 1**

Drill is run unopposed and without contact

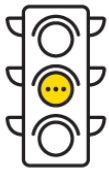
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## **Bag. Intensity: 2**

Drill is run against a bag or soft-contact surface

---



## **Control. Intensity: 3**

Drill is run at an assigned speed until the moment of contact with one player as the predetermined winner. Contact is above the waist, and players stay on their feet

---



## **Thud. Intensity: 4**

Drill is run at competitive speed through the moment of contact. There is no predetermined winner. Contact is above the waist, players stay on their feet, and a quick whistle ends the drill

---



## **Live. Intensity: 4**

Drill is run in game-like conditions. This is the only time players are taken to the ground.

# DYNAMIC WARMUP

Complete each exercise for 2 sets of 10-20 yards



High Knee Run



Buttkicker Run



Frankenstein Walk



Walking Lunge & Twist



Walking Knee Hug



Straight Leg Run

# BALL EXCHANGE RELAY



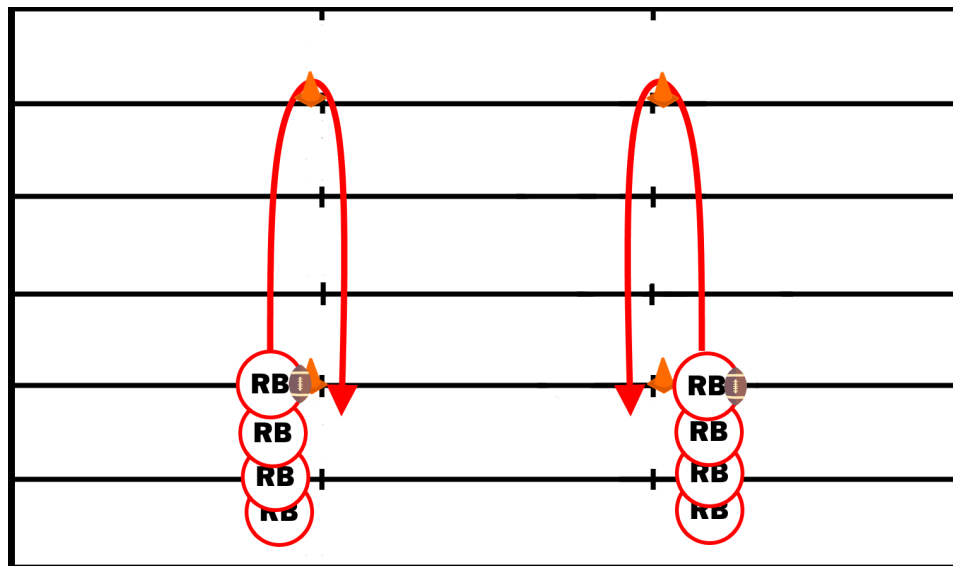
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To get players loose, work on conditioning and how to take a ball handoff securely.

## SETUP:

Divide the team into two groups, and have them form two single file lines. Place a cone directly in front of each line, with another cone 15 yards down field. The first player in each line should have a football.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the 1st player in each line will hand the ball off to the 2nd player in line.
2. The ball carrier will run down and around the far cone and back, handing the ball off to the next player in line as they cross the start line.
3. First team to get through all their players wins!

## COACH'S CORNER

- You'll want to get in close and watch as players take handoffs and make sure they are using the correct technique.
- They should have their inside arm up, bent at the elbow, with the outside arm underneath, forming a breadbasket that clamps down around the ball right after the exchange.

# LOOP THE TIRES



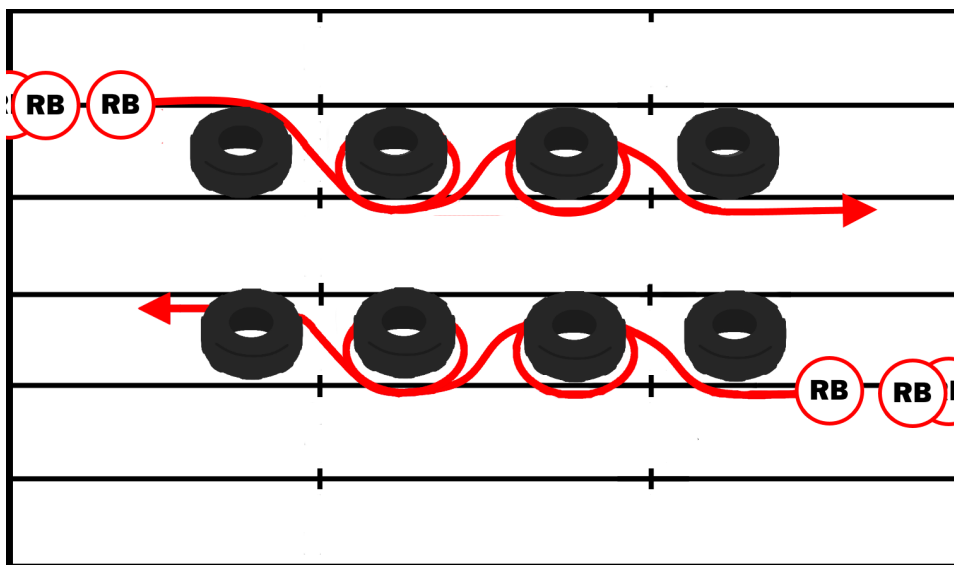
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To work on agility, balance, and acceleration.

## SETUP:

You'll need 4-8 old, large, tires. In a pinch, a hula hoop or any kind of ring will do – but a large tire is ideal. Place 4 tires in a row, with about 3-4 yards between them. Have the players form a line at one end, each with a football in hand.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the first player in line will take off, sprinting past the first tire and looping down and around the 2nd, and then the 3rd tires.
2. The player will then run outside the last tire and accelerate for 5-10 yards, queueing the next player in line to begin.

## COACH'S CORNER

- If you do have tires, encourage players to run their hand alongside them as they sprint, as it will allow them to get an even better lean as they bend around the tire.

# 5 YD SHUTTLE



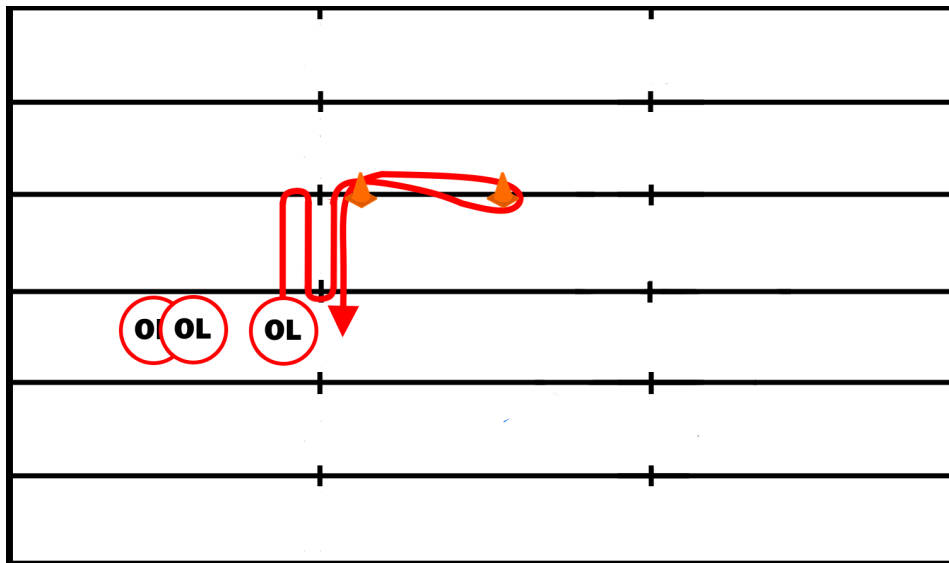
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To work on short area agility and explosiveness.

## SETUP:

Have the players form a single file line. Place a cone 5 yards directly in front of the line, and another 5 yards to the right of that cone.



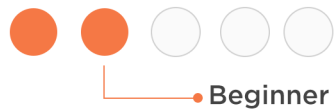
## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the first player in line will sprint forward 5 yards, then turn and sprint another 5 back to his starting point.
2. The player will then sprint forward back up to the cone, looping around and taking a right.
3. The player will run around the far cone to the right, come back around the close cone, and sprint through the start line to finish the shuttle.

## COACH'S CORNER

- When skill players are doing this drill, you can add in a cone touch as well to increase the difficulty.

# CUT FOOTWORK



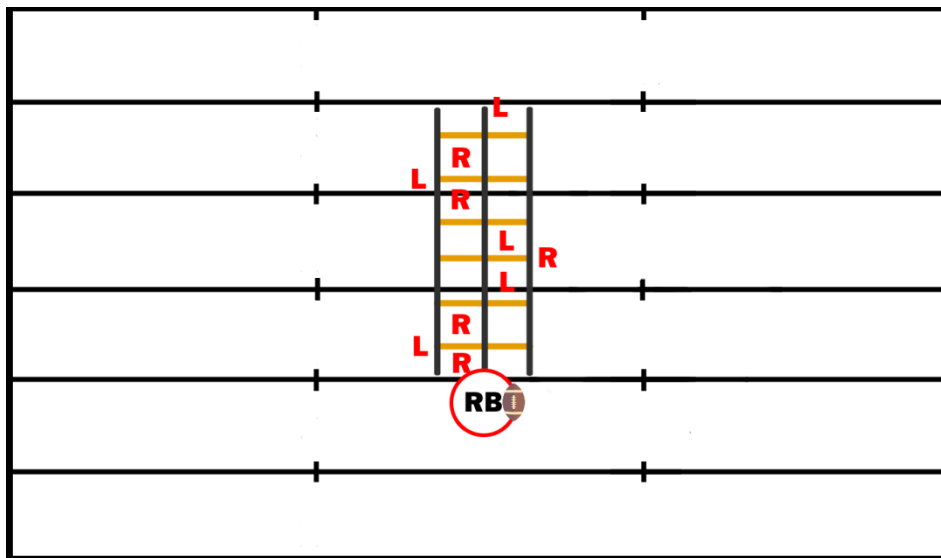
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To work on coordination and agility while getting players loose.

## SETUP:

If you've got a rope ladder, great! Otherwise, you can make one of your own pretty easily with a quick trip down to the hardware store for tape, rope, and scissors. Players will form a line at the end of the rope ladder.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the first player in line will proceed through the ladders, planting right and left feet in the order shown in the illustration above, planting and cutting across each time they get to one side of the ladder.

## COACH'S CORNER

- You can have players go through once or twice at a slower pace to get the hang of the footwork, but the drill should be done at full speed and players should be imitating their natural running motion and keeping the ball secure.



# DRILLS

# GOAL LINE DRILL



Contact Level

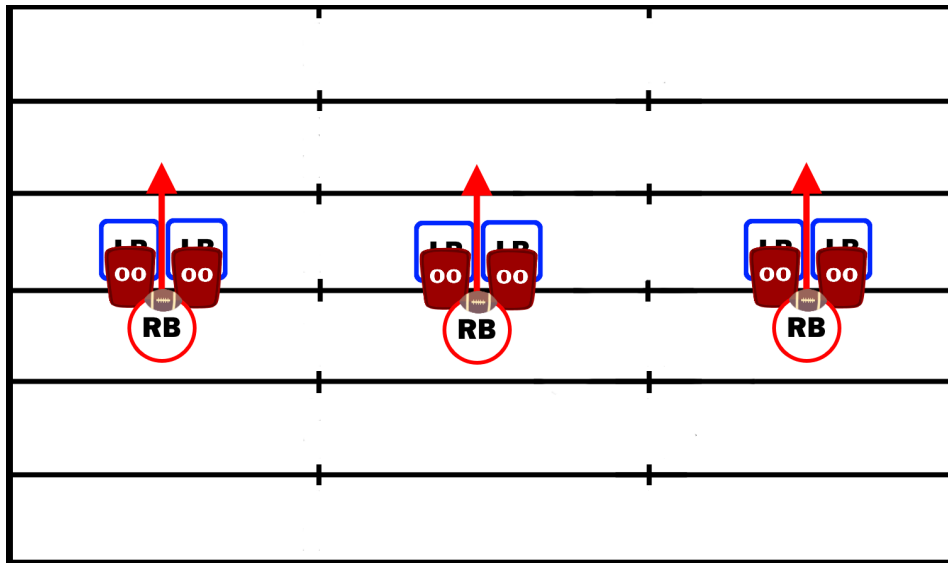
## PURPOSE:

To teach players how to run with power and control and finish off runs at the goal line.

## SETUP:

You can have multiple groups running this drill at the same time, or just one. Either way, you'll need two blocking bags, a football, and 3 players per group.

The two defenders will stand side by side holding the blocking bags, while the ball carrier begins 3 yards in front of them.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the ball carrier will explode forward with both hands securing the ball as they pump their feet and burst through the defenders.
2. After each rep, rotate one offense to defense so that all players get reps.

## COACH'S CORNER

- You can have the defenders start down on a knee to really emphasize the need to get low to maintain leverage for the ball carrier.

# JUMP CUT DRILL



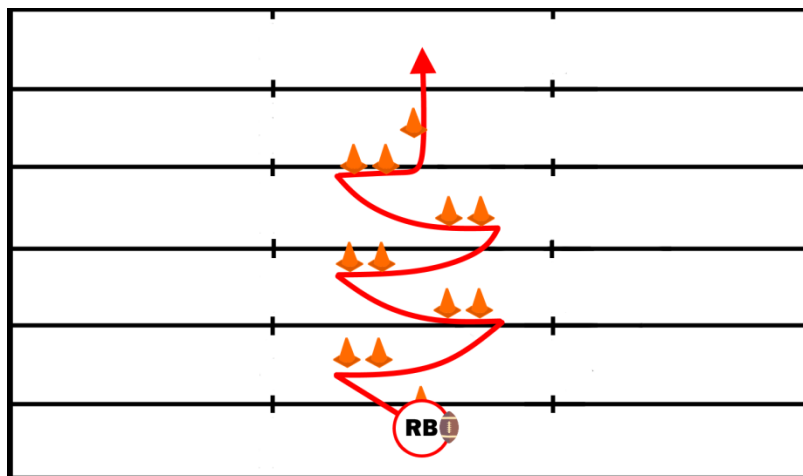
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To improve agility and to teach ball carriers the proper footwork for making jump cuts.

## SETUP:

You'll need 12 cones. Place one cone down, then continue to place cones in pairs, 3 yards apart, as shown in the illustration below. The last cone will be placed 5 yards after the last pair. The ball carriers will form a line by the first cone with a ball in hand.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player in line will explode forward out of their stance.
2. The player will run at a 45 degree towards the outermost cone, then plant, and make a lateral jump cut inside the innermost cone.
3. He will then repeat, proceeding through the drill until they finish on a sprint past the last cone.

## COACH'S CORNER

- The key is to emphasize that the player maintain center of gravity and keep their shoulders square as they plant off the outside foot.
- You can also add a QB-RB exchange at the beginning of the play , giving players a chance to work on both receiving handoffs and keeping their eyes downfield and reacting to the defense.
- Get players to watch RBs like Lesean McCoy and LeVeon Bell – they are masters and maintaining balance and exploding off the plant step.

# STEP OVER BAG



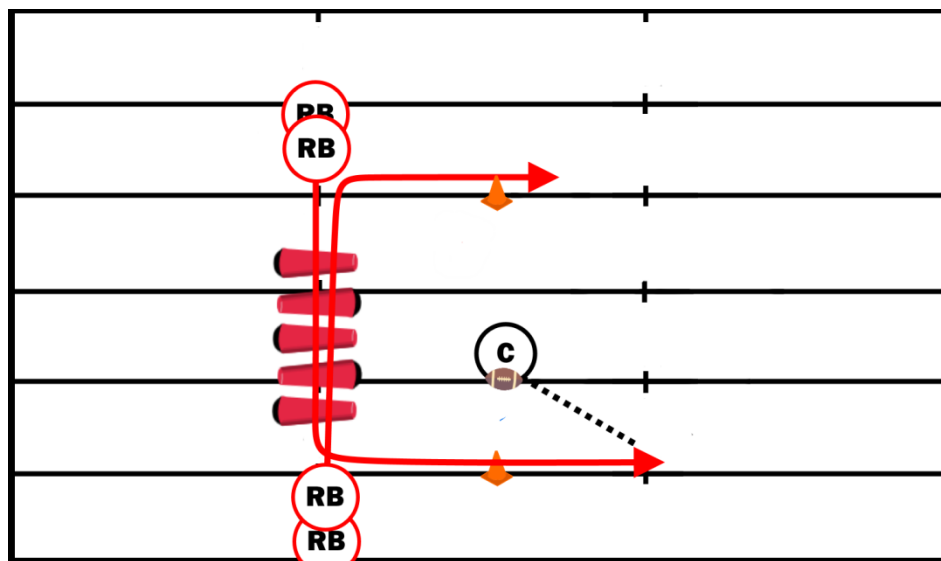
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To work on coordination, agility, and field awareness.

## SETUP:

Setup 5 agility bags about 2-3 yards apart. You'll also want to setup 2 cones about 7 yards away from each end of the line of bags, with a coach with a bucket of footballs in the middle. Players will form a line at each end of the bags as well – see the illustration below for reference.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Alternating one at a time, the players will sprint through the bags, then plant, and turn upfield toward the coach.
2. They will then sprint past the cone, looking to receive a pass from the coach.

## COACH'S CORNER

- Emphasize high knees and quick feet!

# READ & GO DRILL



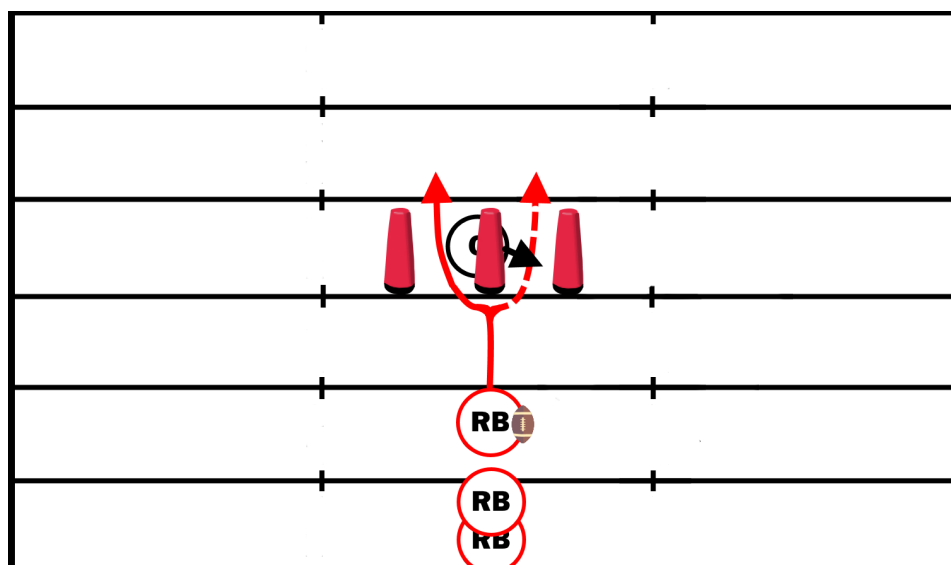
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To work on a ball carrier's vision, agility, and reaction time.

## SETUP:

Set up 3 dummy bags, about 3-4 yards apart, and have the players form a line of ball carriers 5-7 yards in front of the middle bag. Get a coach or a player to stand behind the bag in the middle, holding it.



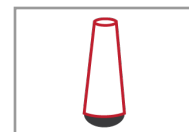
## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The first player will explode forward, directly towards the middle bag.
2. As the player approaches the bag, the coach will lean the bag to either the right or left.
3. The player will react and cut through the opposite lane, switching the ball to the outside arm on the cut.

## COACH'S CORNER

- At first, you'll want to make it clear and obvious early which way the bag will lean. But as players progress, you can wait longer and longer before committing to a side.

# BARREL DRILLS



Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To teach lineman how to fire out and drive low and in control.

## SETUP:

You'll need a barrel or a large garbage can. Have the player get in 3 point stance directly in front of the barrel.



**Figure 1:** Triangle Drill

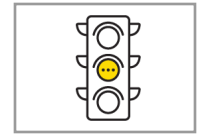
## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the lineman will fire out and fit up on the barrel
2. If performing the fit correctly, the player should slide the barrel back without knocking it over.

## COACH'S CORNER

- If a player knocks the barrel over, it is because they are hitting the barrel too high. They need to spread their base and keep their hips low as they fit up onto the barrel – they need to focus on keeping their center of gravity underneath them.

# HIT THE HOLE DRILL



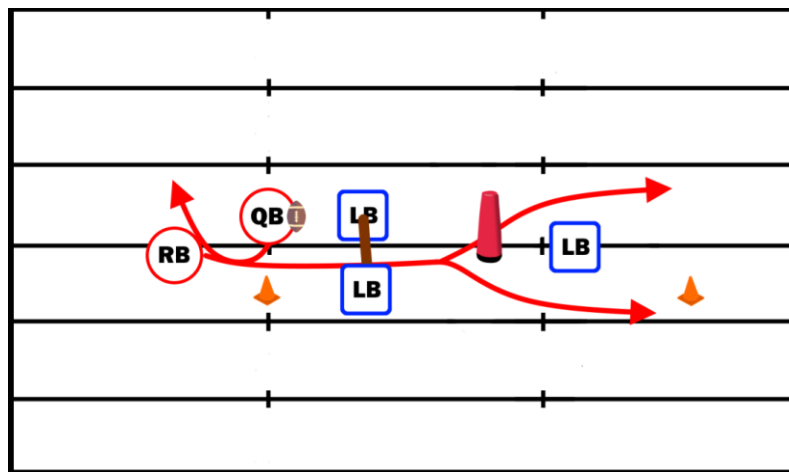
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To get players reps taking a handoff and exploding through the hole and out into the 2nd level of the defense.

## SETUP:

You'll need 2 cones, a dummy bag, a broom stick (or something you can make a light horizontal barrier out of), 3 defensive players, a QB with a ball, and a line of ball carriers. 2 of the defensive player will line up 5 yards after the first cone, holding the broom stick at a height that will force the RB to run low. The dummy bag will be another 3-5 yards downfield, with the third defender 3 yards behind the bag. The last cone will be down about 7 yards after the dummy bag.



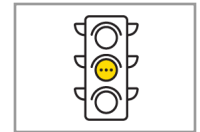
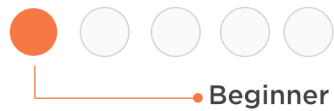
## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The QB will snap the ball, pivot and hand it off to the RB.
2. The RB will take the handoff, staying low as he runs under the first obstacle.
3. He will then break either left or right off the dummy bag and try to beat the last defender to the last cone.

## COACH'S CORNER

- Make sure to emphasize that the RB run low, keeping his eyes downfield and keeping the ball secure.

# TWO HIT DRILL



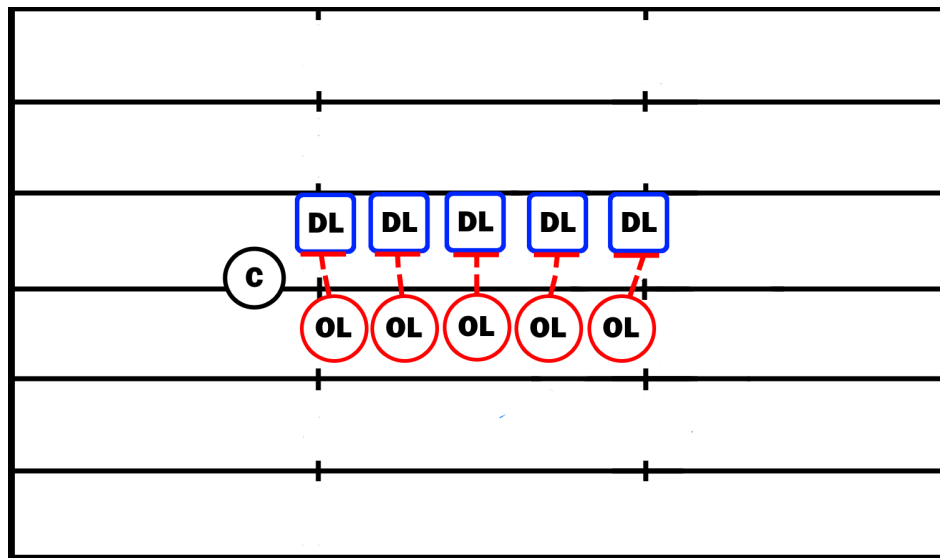
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To work on stance, footwork, and fit position for offensive linemen.

## SETUP:

You'll need 5 offensive linemen and 5 defensive linemen, all on the line of scrimmage about a yard or two apart, with the coach standing in between them on one end.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, all 5 offensive linemen will take their first step out of their stance.
2. Coach will evaluate to make sure players are balanced, then give signal for second step, and evaluate one more time.
3. If all players are able to take their steps, stay in control, and be technically sound and ready to make the block, blow the whistle, and let them finish the blocky getting into fit position, rolling hips, and driving the defender back.

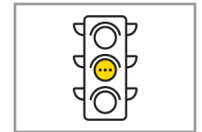
## COACH'S CORNER

- Make sure the offensive linemen does not rise his hips to get into the fit position – they will lose their leverage and power before they've even made contact with the defender!
- Be sure to switch up the defensive alignment – heads up, and both inside and outside shades.



# GAME PREP

# BREAKTHROUGH



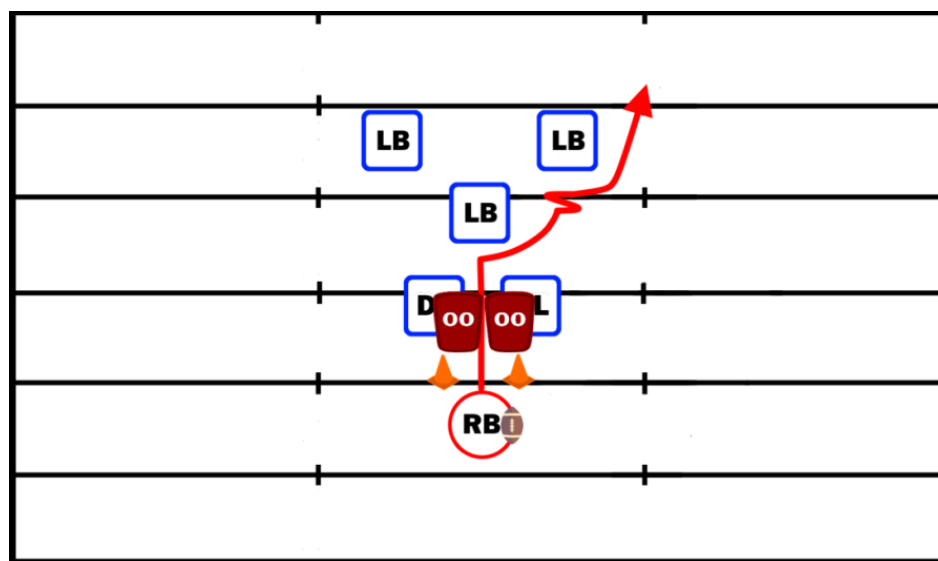
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To get players reps running in a game like situation, emphasizing the importance of staying low, strong, and running on instincts.

## SETUP:

You'll need five defensive players – two standing side by side with blocking shields, another 3-4 yards behind in the middle, and two more 3-4 yards behind and 5-7 yards apart at the 3rd level. The ball carriers will form a line in front of the first level of the defense.



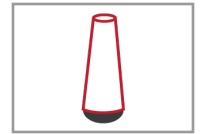
## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the ball carrier will explode form and through the blocking shield wall of the first two players.
2. At the 2nd level, the LB will commit either left or right – the ball carrier must recognize and react, running the other direction.
3. And at the 3rd level, the ball carrier has the choice to perform the move of their choice – juke, spin, whatever they've got in their bag of tricks – to beat the last defender.

## COACH'S CORNER

- Make sure players are finishing the drill hard – it's not showtime, we want to see which players on the team can make a move and beat a man in the open field.

# PUNCH DRILL



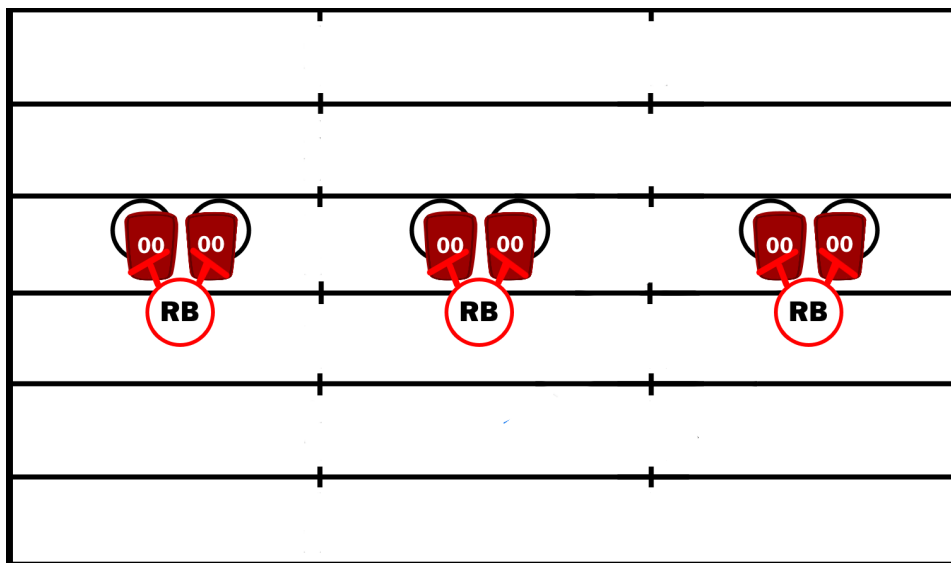
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To teach and reinforce the proper blocking technique when in pass protection.

## SETUP:

Have players get into groups of three, with each group grabbing two blocking shields. The two players with shields will stand arms length away on either side of the blocker.



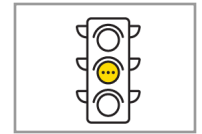
## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the blocker will punch the bag on his left, immediately retract the punch, reset, and punch the bag on his right.
2. The player will continue, alternating bags for 30 seconds or until the coach's whistle.

## COACH'S CORNER

- The two biggest keys to delivering a strong punch, are for the play to pivot his feet, and keep his thumbs up and his elbows in. This will allow him to maintain a powerful base and stay in a low, strong athletic stance without losing balance.

# GAUNTLET



Contact Level

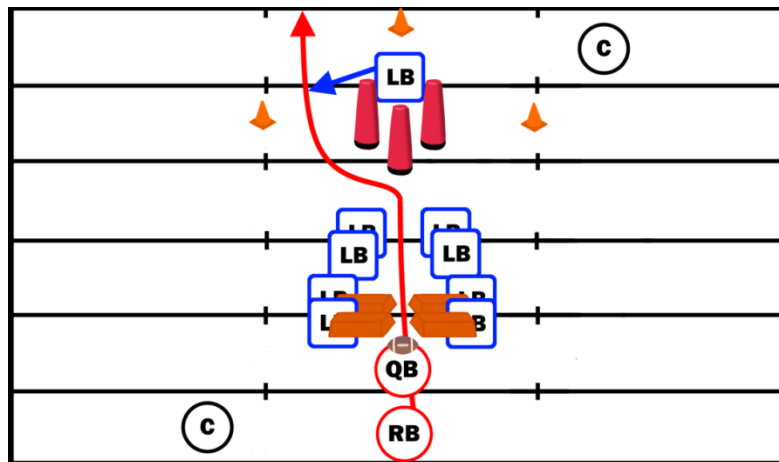
## PURPOSE:

To emphasize ball security and running with power and balance.

## SETUP:

You'll need 9 players to help, a QB, and a line of ball carriers. The first 4 players will all be 5 yards apart holding blocking bags. The next 4 will be closer together, a couple yards apart. Next you'll need to create some kind of barrier – 3 dummy bags to form a triangle works best. Place cones on both sides, about 5 yards out.

The last defender will be behind this triangle, and there will be one final cone 5-7 yards behind him.



## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. The QB will take the snap, and pivot to hand the ball off to the RB.
2. The RB will burst through the first 4 defenders who will hit him with their bags as he runs through.
3. The next 4 defenders will all try to strip the ball out of his hands as he runs past them and towards the triangle.
4. The ball carrier will then cut either right or left and try to beat the last defender past the last cone.

## COACH'S CORNER

- The beauty of the gauntlet drill is that you can adjust it however you see fit – as long as it provides a test of balance, power and ball security for the ball carrier.

# BLITZ PICKUP



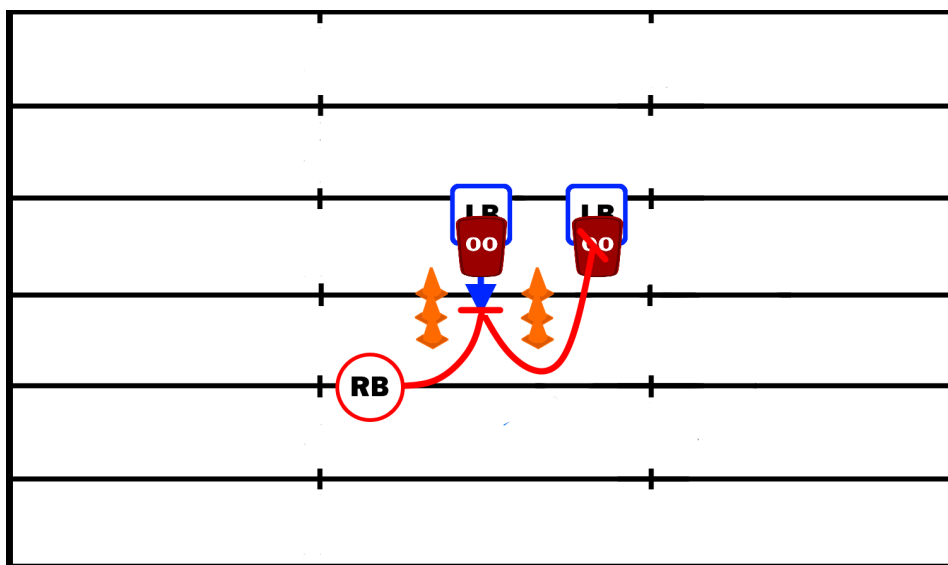
Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To teach players how to slide and pick up a defender on the move to protect the QB.

## SETUP:

You'll need either cones or agility bags to create two lanes, each with a player holding a blocking shield at the end of them. The blockers will all line up 3-5 yards away from the first lane.



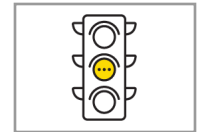
## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. On the coach's signal, the blocker will step up into the first lane and meet the blitzer, delivering a strong two hand punch on the numbers.
2. The player will then backpedal, slide, and meet the second blitzer as they come through the 2nd lane.

## COACH'S CORNER

- Make sure to work this drill coming from both sides.
- The blocker must maintain a low, powerful base, allowing them to deliver a strong block and stay balanced.

# RUN PLAY REVIEW



Contact Level

## PURPOSE:

To teach, run, and perfect your favorite running plays.

## SETUP:

You can put out either a full lineup, but since we are only calling running plays, the most essential players are the QB, offensive line, and RB.

PLAY CALLING CHART			
MONEY PLAY 1	MONEY PLAY 2	RUN PLAYS	ZONE
		Power Counter Sweep Dive Option	Cover 2 Cover 3 Cover 4 Cover 6
		<b>SHORT PASS</b>	
		Drive HB Angle Stick Scat	Nickel Blitz Cover 0 Cover 1
		<b>SPECIALS</b>	
		Punt Fake - FB Dive Punt Fake - P Pass	

## INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Have the offense huddle up, give your QB the play, and have him call the play to the huddle.
2. The offense will then break to the LOS and run the play.
3. Keep a close eye on all players, and make sure to they are running the play exactly as designed.
4. Bring the offense back to the huddle, and call another play.

## COACH'S CORNER

- Can be run against a half speed dummy defense, or even no defense at all.
- Remember – running 3 plays extremely well makes for a much more effective offense than running 10 plays okay.



# PRACTICE PLANS

# 60 MINUTE RUNNING BACK WORKOUT

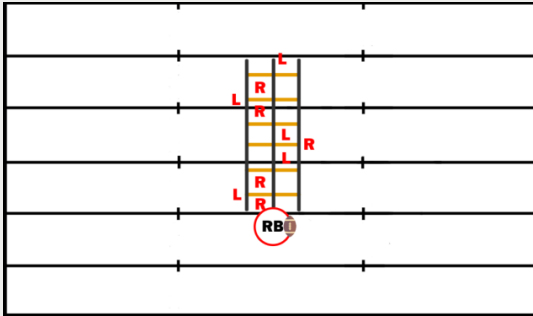
Required: 2 Coaches, Footballs, Stand Up Dummy

## Warmup:

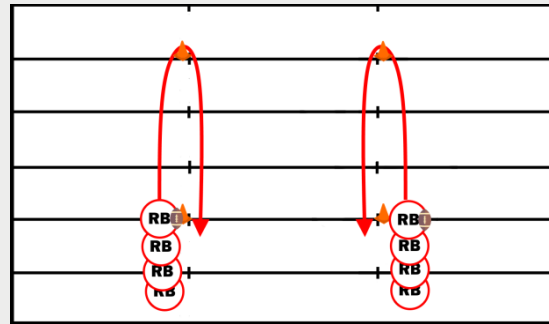
15 Mins (Full Team)

**Dynamic Warmup:** 5 mins (High Knees, Buttckickers, Frankensteins, Lunge & Twist, Knee Hug, Straight Leg Run)

### Cutting Plant Steps - 5 mins



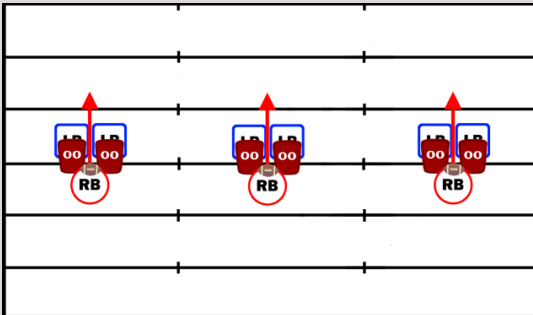
### Relay Exchange - 5 mins



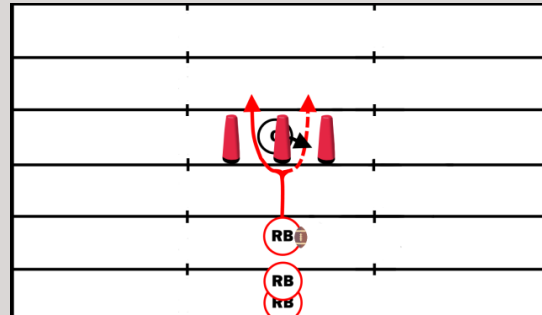
## Station Block 1:

20 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

### Goal Line Drill - 10 mins



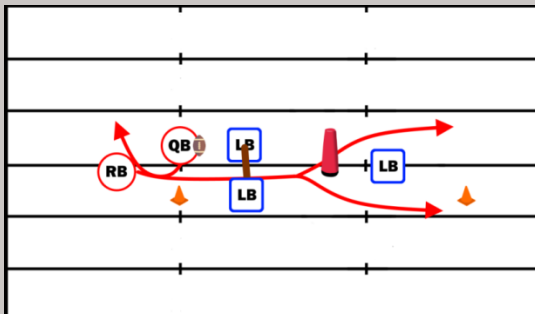
### Read & Go Drill - 10 mins



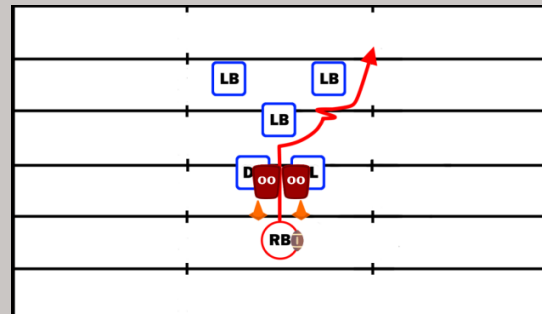
## Game Preparation:

20 Mins (Full Team)

### Hit the Hole Drill - 10 mins



### Breakthrough - 10 mins



# 60 MINUTE O-LINE WORKOUT

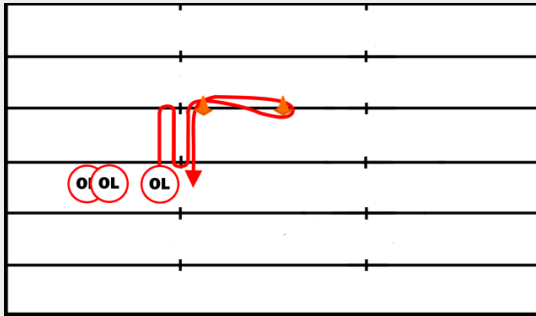
**Required:** 2 Coaches, Footballs, Cones, Shields, Barrel, Ladder, Stand Up Dummies

## Warmup:

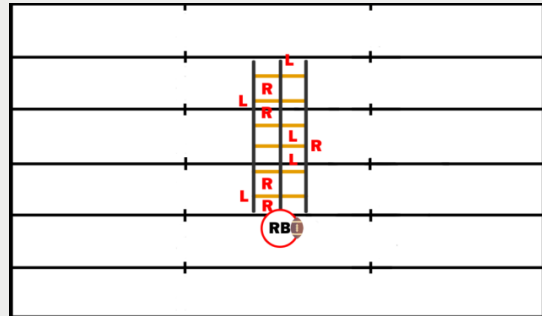
15 Mins (Full Team)

**Dynamic Warmup:** 5 mins (High Knees, Buttckickers, Frankensteins, Lunge & Twist, Knee Hug, Straight Leg Run)

### 5 Yard Shuttle - 5 mins



### Cutting Plant Steps - 5 mins



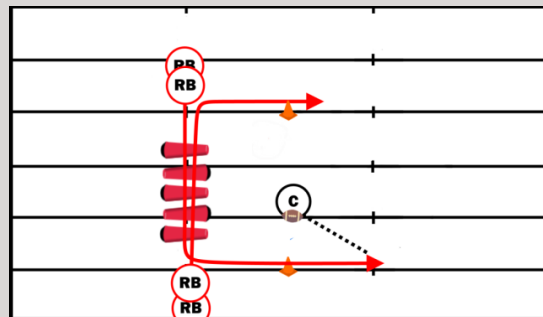
## Station Block 1:

20 Mins (Split Team Into Two Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

### Barrel Drill - 10 mins



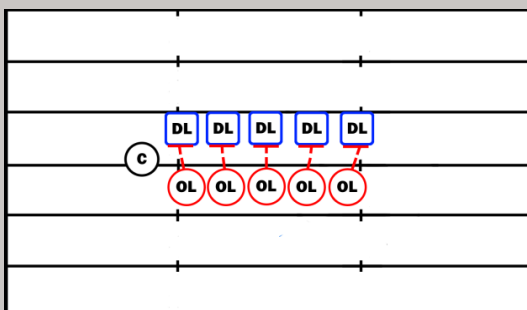
### Step Over Bag Drill - 10 mins



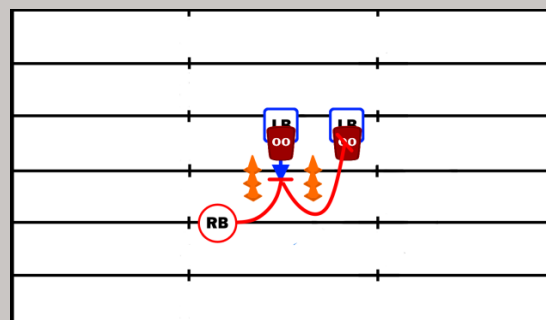
## Game Preparation:

20 Mins (Full Team)

### Two Hit Drill - 20 mins



### Blitz Pickup - 20 mins



# 90 MINUTE RUNNING GAME PRACTICE

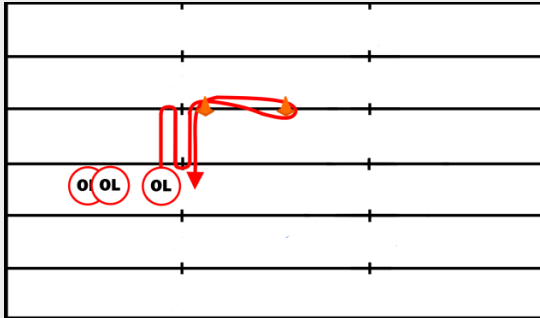
**Required:** 3 Coaches, Footballs, Cones, Shields, Stand Up Dummies

## Warmup:

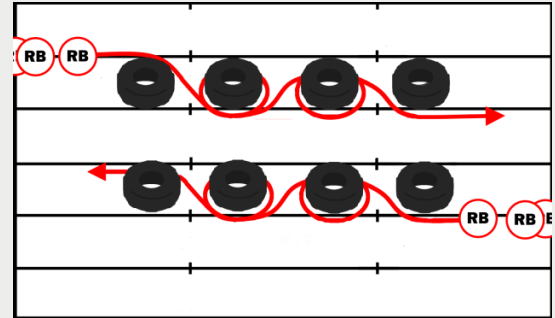
15 Mins (Full Team)

**Dynamic Warmup:** 5 mins (High Knees, Butt-kickers, Frankensteins, Lunge & Twist, Knee Hug, Straight Leg Run)

### 5 Yard Shuttle - 5 mins



### Loop the Tire Drill - 5 mins

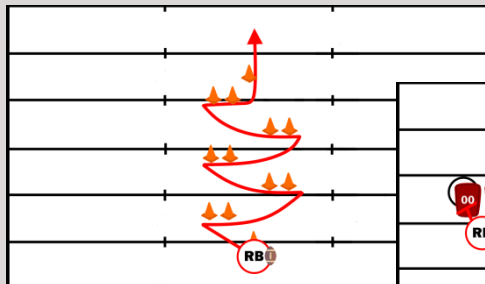


## Station Block 1:

30 Mins (Split Team Into 3 Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

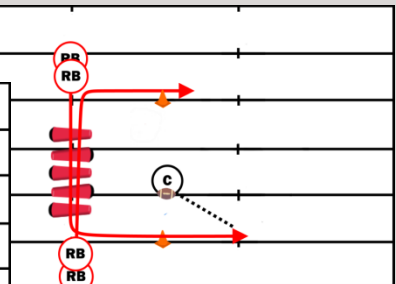
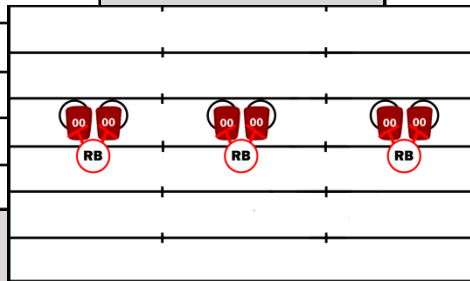
### Two Punch Drill

- 10 mins



### Jump Cut Drill

- 10 mins

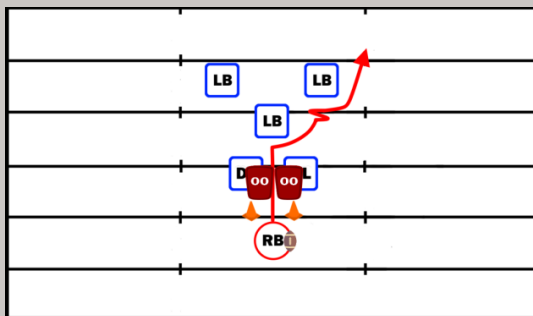


### Step Over Bag Drill

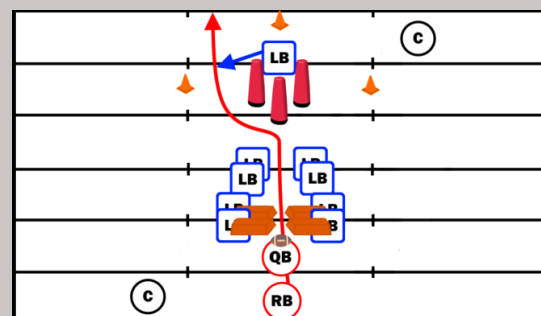
- 10 mins

## Game Preparation: 30 Mins (Full Team)

### Breakthrough - 15 mins



### Gauntlet Drill - 15 mins



## Run Play Review - 10 Mins

Practice your offensive plays at half speed against a dummy defense. Then full speed against a "Control" defense.

# 90 MINUTE RUNNING GAME PRACTICE

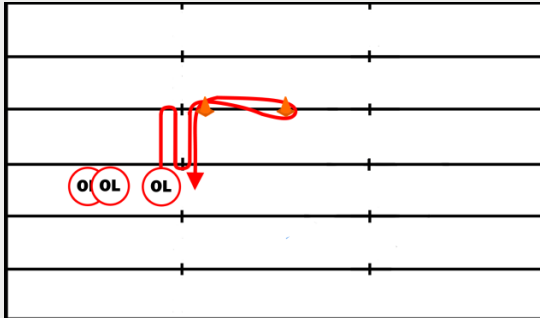
**Required:** 3 Coaches, Footballs, Cones, Shields, Stand Up Dummies

## Warmup:

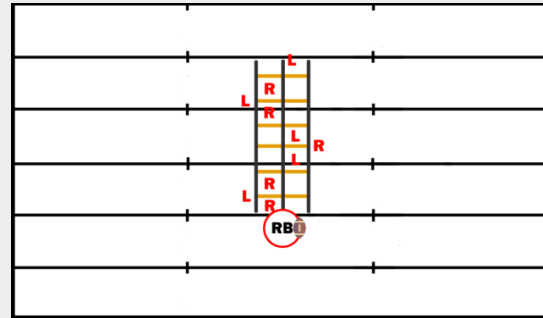
15 Mins (Full Team)

**Dynamic Warmup:** 5 mins (High Knees, Butt-kickers, Frankensteins, Lunge & Twist, Knee Hug, Straight Leg Run)

### 5 Yard Shuttle - 5 mins

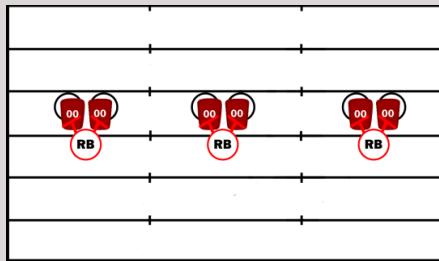


### Cutting Plant Steps - 5 mins



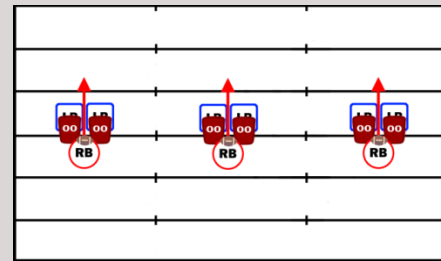
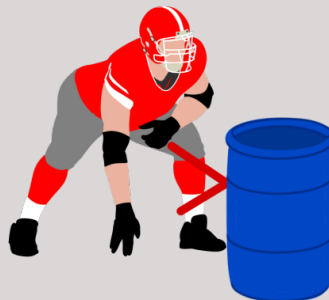
## Station Block 1:

30 Mins (Split Team Into 3 Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)



**Two Punch Drill**  
- 10 mins

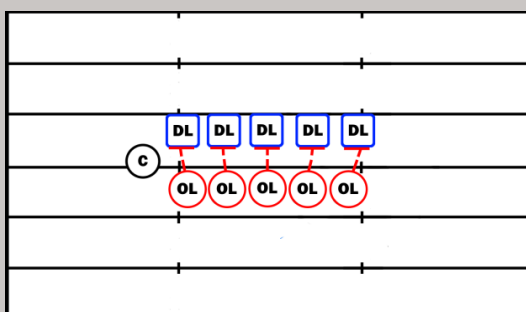
### Barrel Drill - 10 mins



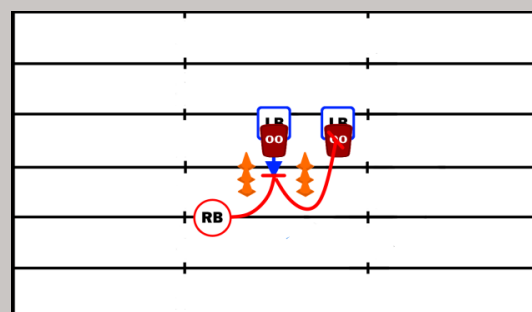
**Goal Line Drill**  
- 10 mins

## Game Preparation: 30 Mins (Full Team)

### Two Hit Drill - 15 mins



### Gauntlet Drill - 15



## Run Play Review - 10 Mins

Practice your offensive plays at half speed against a dummy defense. Then full speed against a "Control" defense.

# 120 MINUTE RUNNING GAME PRACTICE

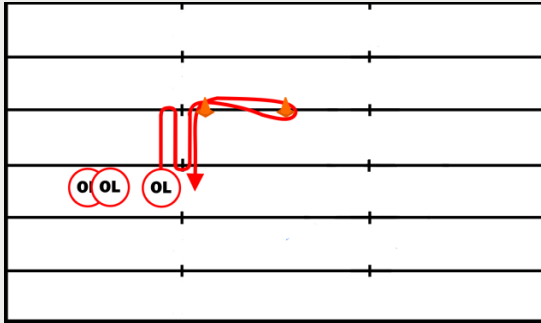
**Required:** 2 Coaches, Footballs, Stand Up Dummies, Cones

## Warmup:

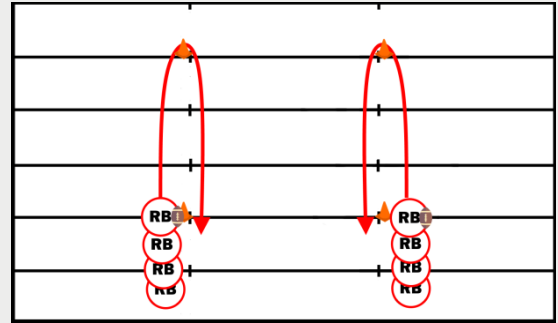
15 Mins (Full Team)

**Dynamic Warmup:** 5 mins (High Knees, Butt-kickers, Frankensteins, Lunge & Twist, Knee Hug, Straight Leg Run)

### 5 Yard Shuttle - 5 mins



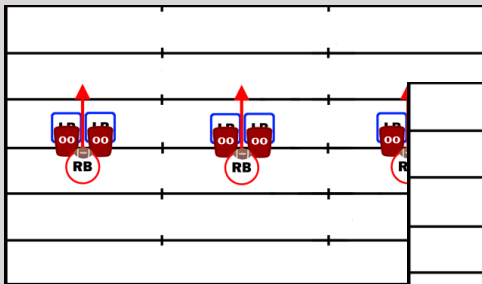
### Relay Exchange - 5 mins



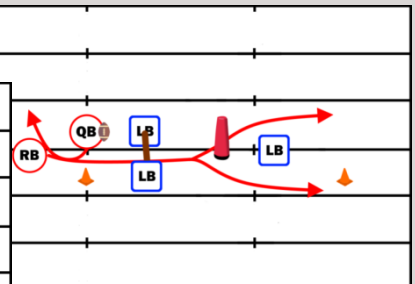
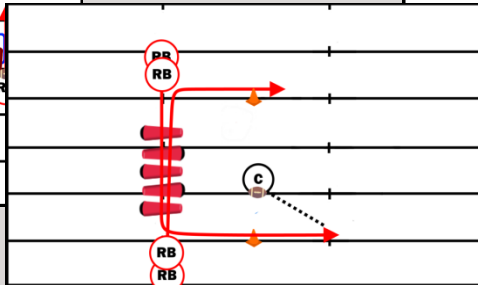
## Station Block 1:

30 Mins (Split Team Into 3 Groups and Rotate Through Each Drill For 10 Mins)

### Two Punch Drill - 10 mins



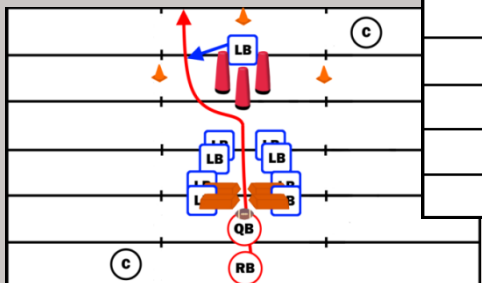
### Goal Line Drill - 10 mins



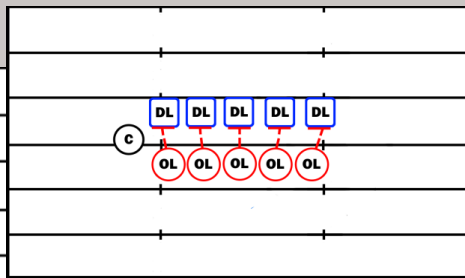
### Step Over Bag Drill - 10 mins

## Game Preparation: 45 Mins (Full Team)

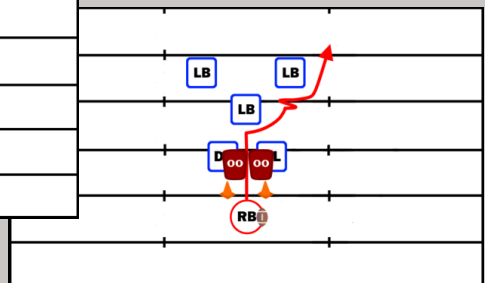
### Gauntlet Drill - 15 mins



### Two Hit Drill - 15 mins



### Breakthrough - 15 mins



## Run Play Review - 20 Mins

Practice your offensive plays at half speed against a dummy defense. Then full speed against a "Control" defense.