

FUNDAMENTAL QUARTERBACK *DRILLS*

27 SKILLS & TECHNIQUES FOR AGES 8 TO 18



FUNDAMENTAL QUARTERBACK DRILLS

3 STEP DROP DRILL



Equipment: Each player will need a football.



Setup: Players will spread out across the field with at least 10 yards between them and a football in hand.



Purpose: To practice the fundamentals of the 3-step drop.



Beginner

1



Passer executing drive-out step after snap.



Passer at the end of the drop pointing their front toe at the throwing target.

SCREEN DRILL

about 20 square yards of



Beginner

the LOS with the ball in hand, on one side, and a receiver on the other side.

Force the correct technique for safely completing the screen pass.



QB using a soft touch pass over the defense's hands as they backpedal away.

PRINTABLE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Ball Handling Circuit.....	pg. 3
Follow Through Drill	pg. 4
Wrong Foot Drill.....	pg. 6
3 Step Drop Drill.....	pg. 7
5 Step Drop Drill.....	pg. 8
5 Step + Hitch Drill.....	pg. 9
Snap the Hips Drill.....	pg. 10
Continuous Drop Drill.....	pg. 11
One Knee Drill.....	pg. 12
T-Step Drill.....	pg. 13
Sprint Progression.....	pg. 14
Skeet Shooting Drill.....	pg. 15
Hot Plate Drill.....	pg. 16
Quick Crossover to Throw Drill.....	pg. 17
Blindfolded Drops.....	pg. 18
Hit and Throw Drill.....	pg. 19
Hit, Double Hitch and Throw Drill.....	pg. 20
Screen Drill.....	pg. 21
Goal Post Drill.....	pg. 22
QB Wave Drill.....	pg. 23
Void Drill.....	pg. 24
Option Series.....	pg. 25



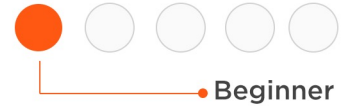
Equipment: Each player will need a football.



Setup: Players will spread out in the field with a football.



Purpose: Players will work through a series of drills designed to improve their ball handling and ball security.



Player passes ball around leg in circular motion.



Player switching hands from front to back before ball touches ground.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Each technique should be practiced for 30 seconds to a minute before moving on to the next one.
2. Players will start by bending over and passing the ball around their right leg, then left leg, then doing a figure 8 between both legs, and finishing at the waist.
3. Next, they will hold the ball between both legs, low to the ground, with their right arm in front and their left arm behind their leg. They will then switch, flipping their right arm to the back and left arm to the front and catching the ball before it hits the ground.



Player palming, dropping, and catching the football.



Player squeezing ball as hard as they can.



Partner attempts to rip football away while QB secures ball.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Next the player will hold the ball out with their throwing hand, palming it from above. They will then drop the ball, catch it, squeeze, and repeat., before switching to their off-hand.
2. To build up forearm strength, next we will do squeezes – have the player stand in throwing stance with one hand, and attempt to squeeze the air out of the ball for 10-15 seconds. Then have them repeat with their off-hand.
3. Lastly, have the players partner up, and have one player tuck the ball under their armpit as firmly as they can, and have their partner try to whack and punch it out. Switch arms, then give the partner the ball and repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- Make sure the players are keeping their heads up the whole time – you can even hold up numbers with your hand and force them to count them out as they do the drill.



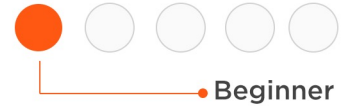
Equipment: Each player will need a football and room to throw at a brick wall



Setup: Players will stand 20-25 feet in front of a brick wall with a ball



Purpose: To practice and reinforce proper arm mechanics during the throwing motion.



Passer ready to throw while coach examines stance.



Player stepping forward to throw while coach reviews mechanics.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Before beginning, quickly review players stances before beginning the drill: players will begin the drill in their ideal throwing stance
2. They should have their throwing shoulder, hip, knee, and ankle perpendicular to the wall.
3. Their knees should be slightly bent, and their weight loaded on the ball of their back foot, shoulders relaxed, and pressure on the ball with their front hand – not their throwing hand.
4. Once players are in their stance, have them throw at the wall.
5. If the player is throwing correctly, when the ball is travelling through the air, the tip of the ball will be pointed up and tailing off slightly to the right.
6. If the ball bounces down and to the left – the ball was thrown correctly.

COACHING TIPS

- Release fingers in: 5,4,3,1,2 order, and lead with the elbow
- If the ball is bouncing upwards, that means the player is cocking their wrist and 'spilling' the football too late – remind them to keep their wrist relaxed and begin their follow through earlier in the stride



Equipment: Each player will need a football.



Setup: Have players pair off with a football and stand 15-20 yards apart.



Purpose: To teach and reinforce the correct footwork for throwing on the run.



Passer in starting position for the drill with wrong foot forward.



Passer stepping forward and uncorking the weight off their right foot.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The passer will start with the ball cocked and their weight loaded up on the right leg.
2. The passer will then throw to their partner, step forward with the left foot, and release the ball at their target.
3. The passer will take a few steps forward as they release, then return to their starting position to receive the pass back from their partner.

COACHING TIPS

- Left-handed players should throw off their left foot, and right-handed players should throw off their right foot: whenever you throw on the run, you want to throw off the same foot as your throwing hand.
- When done correctly, the players momentum should carry them forward a few steps after the release.



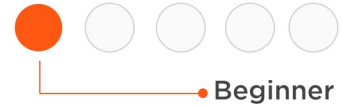
Equipment: Each player will need a football.



Setup: Players will spread out across the field with at least 10 yards between them and a football in hand.



Purpose: To practice the fundamentals of the 3-step drop.



Passer executing drive-out step after snap.



Passer at the end of the drop pointing their front toe at the throwing target.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Players will start in a simulated snap, with the ball extended in front of them and in a low athletic stance with both feet shoulder width apart.
2. Before each rep, the coach will indicate whether the target is middle, right or left.
3. On the coach's signal, the players will snap the ball and execute a 3 step drop, ending with their front toe pointing at their target and their back foot perpendicular.
4. The player will end their drop holding the ball high and tight ready to throw in the target's direction.
5. Players return to line of scrimmage and repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- When performing the 3 step drop, a right handed player will begin by taking a 'drive-out' step with their right foot, pushing out hard to distance and momentum backwards.
- The 2nd and 3rd step will be short steps, quickly re-establishing a strong foundation underneath the passer and putting them back in the throwing position. The ball should out in about 1.2 seconds.
- Depending on where the passer's target is, they should adjust the angle of their backfoot accordingly – the instep of their back foot should be pointed towards the target, with the heel of their front foot pointing at the instep.



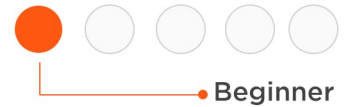
Equipment: Each player will need a football.



Setup: Players will spread out across the field with at least 10 yards between them and a football in hand.



Purpose: To practice the fundamentals of the 5-step drop.



QB executing the 3rd and 4th step of the quick 5 step drop.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Players will start in a simulated snap, with the ball extended in front of them and in a low athletic stance with both feet shoulder width apart.
2. Before each rep, the coach will indicate whether the target is middle, right or left.
3. On the coach's signal, the players will snap the ball and execute a 5 step drop, ending with their front toe pointing at their target and their back foot perpendicular.
4. The player will end their drop holding the ball high and tight ready to throw in the target's direction.
5. Players return to line of scrimmage and repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- The 3 step and quick 5 step drop are very similar – the 5 step drop is essentially just the 3 step drop with the player repeating the footwork twice instead of just one time.
- Instead of ending the drop after the 3rd step, the passer will take another 2 short steps, still quickly re-establishing that base to get the ball out with speed – around 1.8 seconds.
- We are aiming for around 6 yards of depth on this dropback but remember that it is more important that our QB is dropping back with speed and balance rather than trying to hit an arbitrary dropback yardage.



Equipment: Each player will need a football.



Setup: Players will spread out across the field with at least 10 yards between them and a football in hand.



Purpose: To practice the fundamentals of the 5 step drop with a hitch. mechanics during the throwing motion.



QB planting and beginning hitch at the end of 5 step drop.



QB pointing the toe at the target and throwing the pass off the hitch.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Players will start in a simulated snap, with the ball extended in front of them and in a low athletic stance with both feet shoulder width apart.
2. On the coach's signal, the players will snap the ball and execute a 5 step drop with a hitch.
3. The player will keep their head high and their eyes downfield the entire drop, ending with the ball held high and tight ready to throw in the target's direction.
4. Players return to line of scrimmage and repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- The main difference between the 5 step and hitch and the quick 5 step drop is that instead of steps 3 and 4 being a series of quick short steps, the passer will take essentially a 2nd drive-out step where they would normally end their 3 step drop.
- After that, they will take two shorter steps to re-establish the base, then hitch forward with the back foot, and deliver the pass to the target.
- Whereas on the 3 step and quick 5 step drops the passer will often be throwing to their 1st read at the end of the drop, during the 5 step drop the QB will need to go through their entire 3 read progression – they have about 2.8 seconds to do so.

SNAP THE HIPS DRILL



Equipment: Each pair of players will need a football.



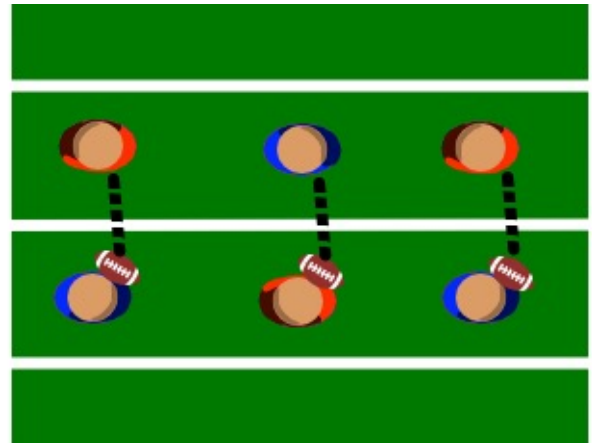
Setup: Players will split off into groups of two and stand about 5 yards apart, facing each other.



Purpose: To practice quickly getting into throwing stance out of the shotgun.



Player receives shotgun snap and gets into throwing stance in one motion.



Players paired off and practicing snaps with a teammate.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The players will start off facing each other, feet shoulder width apart and in an athletic stance.
2. The player with the ball will 'snap' the ball to their partner.
3. As the ball is in the air, the player receiving the ball will snap their hips and get into a throwing stance.
4. The goal is for the player to catch the ball, ready to throw the target, without taking any steps after the catch.
5. The player will then reset and throw the ball back to their partner, who will do the same.

COACHING TIPS

- The players front shoulder, hip and knee should all be pointed at the target, with their weight loaded on the ball of their back foot, and their shoulders relaxed.
- Make sure players practice snapping their hips in difference directions.
- This can be done with partners for more experienced players, or you can have the players line up and look at their footwork one at a time.
- The no step drop on the shotgun is the equivalent of the 3 step drop from other snap, but we can also use this drill to work on the 3 step drop out of the gun, and a step drop with a hitch out of the gun.



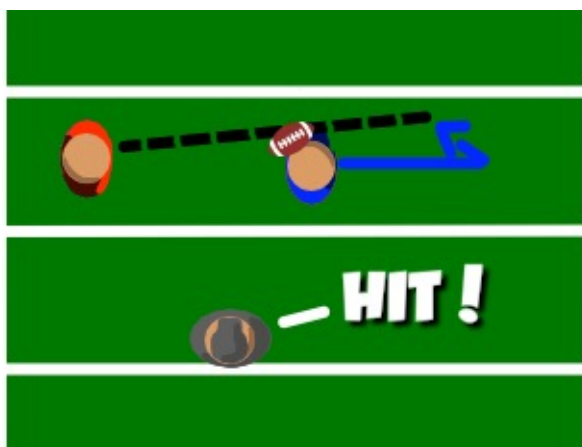
Equipment: A football and plenty of field.



Setup: Passer starts in stance, with receiver 5 yards in front of him and coach off to the side.



Purpose: To emphasize the importance of staying balanced and ready to throw through the entire drop.



Coach calling out 'HIT' and QB executing a plant and throw.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Coach will give signal and player will begin a continuous dropback.
2. When the coach calls out "HIT!" the passer will stop their drop, plant, and deliver the pass to their receiver.
3. The QB needs to focus on recoiling their weight onto the ball of their backfoot and get the ball out as quickly as possible.

COACHING TIPS

- Make sure to vary the time you are calling out HIT as a coach – short, medium and long – emphasizing the importance of balance.
- If the passer stops and is off-balance, that means they are overstriding and are off-balance during their dropback.
- This is a great way to improve a passer's body awareness, reactions, and balance through the finish of the passing motion.



Equipment: Each pair of players will need a football.



Setup: One player will start down on one knee, with their partner standing about 10 yard away.



Purpose: To reinforce proper upper body mechanics.



Passer makes throw off one knee to partner.



Back view of passer making throw off one knee to partner.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The player down on a knee will push the ball back, keeping front hand pressure on the ball, and lead with their elbow, throwing to the target.
2. The receiver will throw the ball back to passer and continue the drill.

COACHING TIPS

- There's no such thing as throwing the ball too 'high' or too 'low' – the player is either releasing the ball too early or too late. If the ball is sailing above their receiver, they need to stay on top of the ball and make sure they drive through the ball towards the target.
- Emphasize the importance of releasing the fingers in the correct order: 5,4,3,1,2.
- You can add a couple variations to this drill – throwing with both knees down, the left or right knee up – and even starting with the ball on the field and the QB picking it up and throwing in one motion.



Equipment: The passer will need a football.



Setup: QB will be at LOS ready to snap the football with the coach over center.



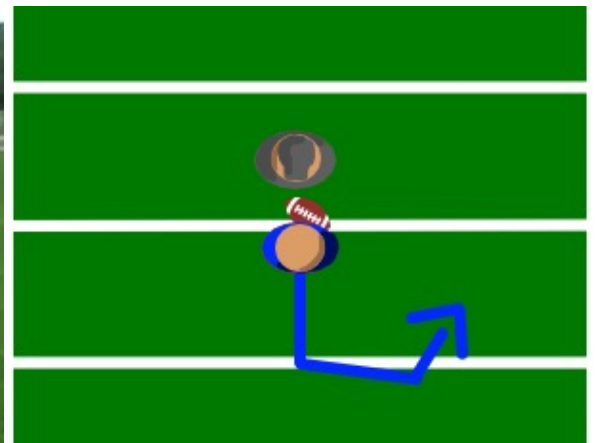
Purpose: To teach and reinforce the proper foot work for the t-step when scrambling out of the pocket.



QB begins rolling out of the pocket.



Passer plants back foot and then points the front foot perpendicular; the t-step.



Bird's eye view of QB rolling out and t-stepping upfield.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The QB will snap the ball and immediately sprint out wide.
2. When the coach claps, the player will 't-step' planting their backfoot and pointing their front foot downfield towards their throwing target.
3. The QB will throw on the run to the target downfield.
4. Before If the ball bounces down and to the left – the ball was thrown correctly.

COACHING TIPS

- The key to the t-step is to rotate the hips and get that front foot pointed at the target – the QB will take another few short choppy steps before throwing, but this footwork will pivot them in the right direction with speed and balance.
- The handedness of the passer doesn't matter - when rolling to the left, you plant with the left foot and t-step with the right, and when rolling to the right, you plant with the right foot and t-step with the left.



Equipment: Each pair of players will need a football and at least 30 yards of space.

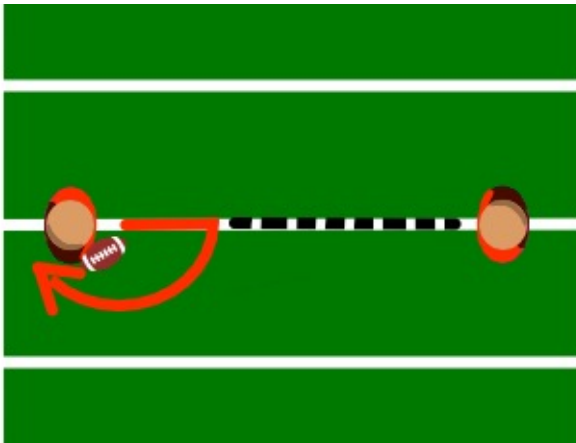


Setup: Players will stand about 20 yards apart, facing each other, one starting with the ball.



Purpose: To get practice and reinforce the correct mechanics when throwing on the run.

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Intermediate



1st Player makes sprints forward to make pass before returning to start position.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. To start, the first QB will walk towards their partner, throwing on the 'run', before returning to his initial spot.
2. The partner will do the same and throw the ball back.
3. After a few reps, we will have the QBs pick up speed, jogging towards their partner and throwing on the run like that.
4. After a few reps jogging, we will have the QBs in a full sprint before throwing the ball to their partner.

COACHING TIPS

- Remember the rule of thumb for throwing on the run – throw off the same foot as your throwing hand.
- To begin have the QBs making straightforward throws, but eventually you can begin to work more horizontal movement in, incorporating sprint-outs and moving targets.



Equipment: You will need a football and/or a tennis ball.



Intermediate



Setup: Player will stand 5 yards in front of the coach in a ready stance. Coach will start with the ball.



Purpose: To improve the QB's vision and field awareness out of the shotgun.



Coach prepares to snap ball to QB while holding up a number.



Player receives snap, snaps hips and gets into throwing stance, and calls out number on coach's hand.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The coach will start the drill by snapping the ball to QB and holding up a number with their offhand.
2. The QB will snap their hips and catch the ball in their throwing stance while keeping their eyes on the coach.
3. The player will call out the number as they receive the snap.
4. Repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- One of the biggest drawback of the shotgun offense is that the QB needs to take their eyes off the defense to secure the snap – but a way that you can mitigate this is by drilling the QB's ability to both receive the snap and keep their eyes downfield.
- This drill does a great job of reinforcing those abilities in your passer – and if you want to increase the challenge, you can even sub out the football for a tennis ball!



Equipment: A football.



Setup: Player will start with a football in throwing stance, with a receiver 10 yards downfield.



Purpose: To work on footwork and specifically to emphasize the importance of driving off the back foot in the throwing motion.



Passer with 'hot feet' quickly running in place, staying on the balls of their feet.



Passer planting the back foot and driving towards the target.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. On the coach's signal, the passer will begin to chop their feet as quickly as they can.
2. The coach will call out 'HIT' and the player will immediately plant the backfoot and drive out, pointing their front foot at the target and delivering the pass.
3. Receiver returns the ball to passer. Repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- The player should be springing off of the back foot – like they're stepping on a 'hot plate' and springing forward directly to the target.
- This is a footwork drill – it will test the players muscle memory and comfort with getting into a throwing stance quickly from an unsettled position.
- You can also eliminate the receiver, the throw, and even the football, allowing players to use this as a warm-up while simultaneously working on their footwork.



Equipment: Each pair will need a football.



Setup: Players will pair off and stand 10 yards apart.



Purpose: To improve body control and awareness.



Passer begins by cross their feet.



Continuing the drill, they will criss cross them back the other way.



Once the coach calls 'HIT' player re-establishes base and begins throwing motion.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The passer will start in the throwing position.
2. On the coach's signal, the passer will begin to criss cross their feet back and forth as quickly as they can.
3. The coach will then call out 'HIT' and the QB will re-establish their base and throw to the target.
4. The receiver will return the ball to the passer, and repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- Players should not be bobbing and weaving and shifting all over the place – they should aim to maintain control and be ready to plant and throw at any moment.



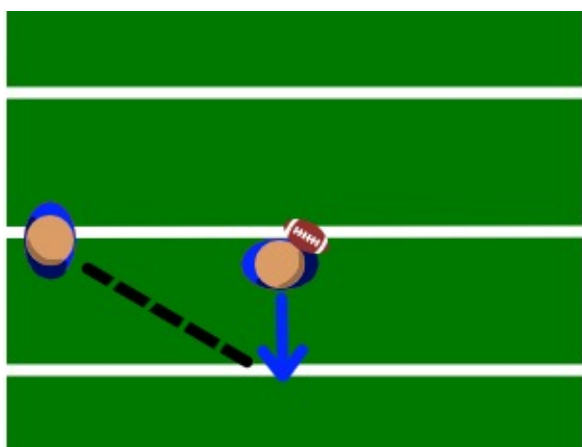
Equipment: Passer will start with a football



Setup: QB will start under center with a football, with a receiver out wide in the flat.



Purpose: To build up a QB's mental awareness, balance and confidence.



Passer executes a 3 step drop with closed eyes before opening them to deliver the pass to receiver.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The QB will step up to the LOS and take visual note of where the receiver is.
2. On the coach's signal the QB will take their normal dropback – except with their eyes closed.
3. The QB will hit the end of their drop (with their instep pointed at their target) open their eyes and deliver the throw.
4. Repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- Much like its more difficult to keep your balance wit your eyes closed, it is much more difficult to execute a balanced drop back and deliver a throw on time with your eyes closed – but with some practice it gets easier.
- A QB isn't always going to be able to rely on their eyes – sometimes they have to throw to a receiver they can't see, based on timing and muscle memory.
- This drill can and should be used to work on all drops 3 step, 5 step and 5 step with a hitch drops.



Equipment: Each player will need a football.



Setup: Players will pair off with a football and stand about 20 yards apart.



Purpose: To reinforce the importance of quick small steps and good balance at the back end of the drop.



Starting position for Hit and Throw drill, with back foot wedged in front of front foot.



Passer uncorking the back foot, planting, and throwing to the target in one motion.



INSTRUCTIONS

1. The player will start in their throwing stance – except they will have their feet crossed over, with their lead foot crossed back over their back foot.
2. Everything else should remain the same from the hips up.
3. On the coach's signal, the player will uncork their backfoot, getting it underneath them and driving their weight off and through the ball to their target.
4. Repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- Have the players change the passing angles, and practice getting out of the crossover position into their stance to throw a pass to the left, right and center. Their instep of the backfoot should be changing based on the direction they are throwing.
- As a variation, we can also change this drill to work on the 5 step drop with the hitch – simply have the players uncork, hitch, and then throw.



Equipment: Each player will need a football.



Setup: Players will pair off with a football and stand about 20 yards apart.



Purpose: An advanced footwork drill that sitting in the pocket and going through your progressions.



Advanced



QB at the end of the 1st hitch, setting up footwork for 2nd hitch.



QB begins the 2nd hitch, getting the instep of his backfoot pointed at the target.



QB pushing off back foot, pointing front toe at target, and delivering pass.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The player will start in their throwing stance – except they will have their feet crossed over, with their lead foot crossed back over their back foot.
2. Everything else should remain the same from the hips up.
3. On the coach's signal, the player will uncork their backfoot, getting it underneath them and driving their weight off and through the ball to their target. Repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- This drill functions the same as the hit, hitch and throw drill, but simulates a quarterback looking off a receiver and going over to his next read when the pass off the first hitch isn't there.
- For a lot of QBs, hitting that rhythm throw to their first option is very easy, but having to readjust in the pocket will cause them to lose their composure – make sure to emphasize the rotation of the hips, the yes downfield, and the weight on the ball of the back foot.
- Instead of having their partner stand still, you can have them provide a moving target to increase the difficulty of the drill even further.



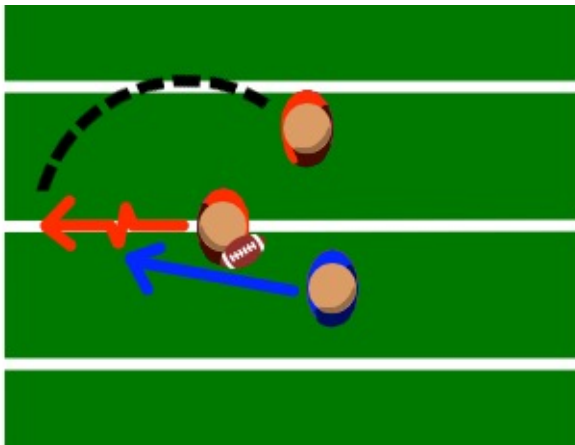
Equipment: A football and about 20 square yards of space.



Setup: The QB will start at the LOS with the ball in hand, with a rusher just off the line on one side, and a receiver just off the line on the other side.



Purpose: To teach and reinforce the correct technique for luring the defensive line and safely completing the screen pass.



Bird's eye view of screen drill with QB luring the defensive line before backpedaling away.



QB using a soft touch pass over the defense's hands as they backpedal away.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. The QB will snap the ball and take a 3 step drop, with the rusher attacking.
2. As the defense closes, the passer will backpedal and throw a touch pass over the rusher's hands to the receiver.
3. Return to the LOS and repeat.

COACHING TIPS

- When first teaching this drill, you may want to have a coach play the rusher – this way you can mix up the rushes more effectively and test the QB's ability to read, react, and stay composed.
- While ideally the QB will sit and hold, drawing the defensive line to attack before throwing the screen pass, there may be situations where the pass protection breaks down and the QB needs to backpedal away.
- However, make sure the QB isn't just backpedaling right off the snap every time, giving it away to the defense that the offense is trying to setup the screen.



Equipment: You will need a goal post and a football.



Advanced



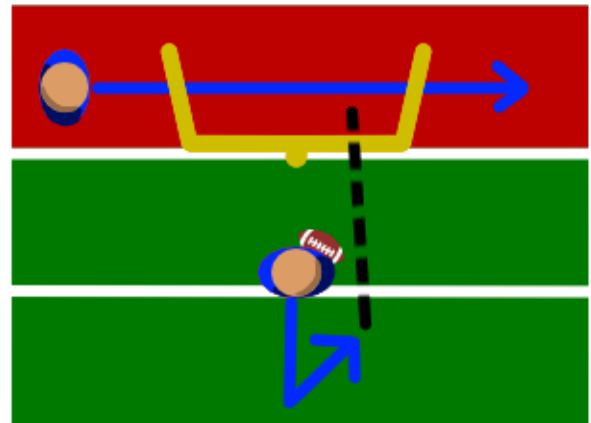
Setup: The receiver will start about 5 yards behind the crossbar, with the QB lined up with a ball 10-20 yards away.



Purpose: To work on a QB's ability to make touch passes and throw timing routes.



QB delivering the pass to a stationary target behind the goal post.



QB snaps ball, drops back and hits receiver on crossing route over the crossbar.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. On the coach's signal, the QB will snap, take their dropback and deliver the pass to the receiver.
2. Ideally, the QB will deliver the pass just over the crossbar and into the hands of the receiver.

COACHING TIPS

- You can adjust this drill to work on a variety of mechanics – 3 step and 5 step drops, sprint outs, or even simply out of the hit and throw position.
- While we want to start with a stationary target, we can change the angles and have the passer hit the receiver on crossing routes, up the seam – any kind of route and throw combination you can think of.
- Emphasize mechanics – don't get caught up watching how close the ball is to the crossbar.



Equipment: Player will start with a football.



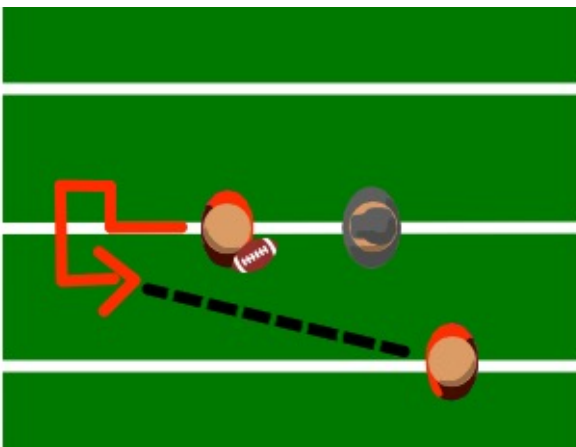
Advanced



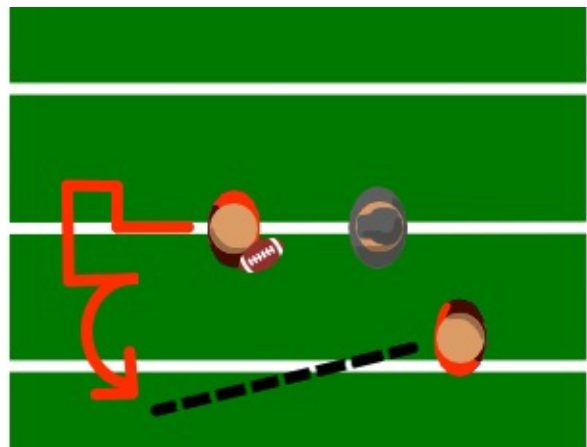
Setup: QB starts at LOS with the coach over center and a target/receiver 10 yards downfield.



Purpose: To work on a QB's footwork, agility and movement in and out of the pocket.



QB going through Wave drill before passing to receiver.



QB going through Wave drill variant with escape and throw on the run.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. On the coach's signal, the QB will execute a 5 step drop with a hitch.
2. The coach will then point in one of four directions, with the QB moving in whatever direction the QB points.
3. When the coach claps, the QB throws to the target.

COACHING TIPS

- For the 1 step version, the QB will take just to one step in whatever direction the coach points – this is to focus on small minute adjustments in the pocket.
- For the continuous version, the QB will continue to move in whatever direction the coach points – this is to simulate a collapsing pocket, and a with a greater emphasis on mobility. We can also add a scramble or escape at the end of the play for more advanced players.
- For single steps, the QB should focus on pushing off with their front foot and stepping with their right foot.
- When the QB is escaping they need to keep in mind that they will spin out from backside pressure, but sprint around front side pressure.
- Make sure the QB is always standing tall and balanced in the pocket, not teetering back and forth as they try to react to your pointing – this indicates sloppy footwork.
- There are 3 versions of this drill – 1 step, and Continuous and Continuous with Escape.



Equipment: A football and 20-30 yards of square field.



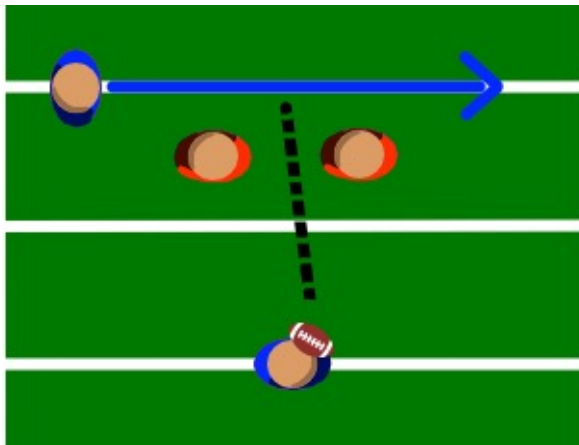
Advanced



Setup: QB will start at the LOS, with 2 defenders 10 yards downfield, and a receiver 15 yards downfield.



Purpose: To teach QB's how to throw the receiver open and anticipate throwing windows.



QB splits the LBs and hits the receiver on the crossing route in the throwing window.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. On the coach's signal, the receiver will begin to jog across the field.
2. The QB must read the receiver's path and split the 2 LBs, passing into the 'void'.
3. The QB must throw the pass before they're open, anticipating the moment they will be between the 2 defenders.

COACHING TIPS

- One of the biggest hurdles for young QBs is learning to trust their instincts and throw with anticipation. At the higher levels, throwing to a receiver by the time they're open is often too late, and getting them accustomed to throwing to the receiver before they're open will see a huge impact on gameday.
- To start, have the defenders a reasonable distance apart, but as the passers get more comfortable with the drill, you can shrink the throwing window to really test their skills.
- Make sure to work on both crossing routes behind the LBs and seam passes underneath the safety.
- If you are short on players, you can always use tackling dummies or any other obstacle to create the throwing window.



Equipment: Agility Bags/Obstacles (Garbage cans), Football.

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Intermediate



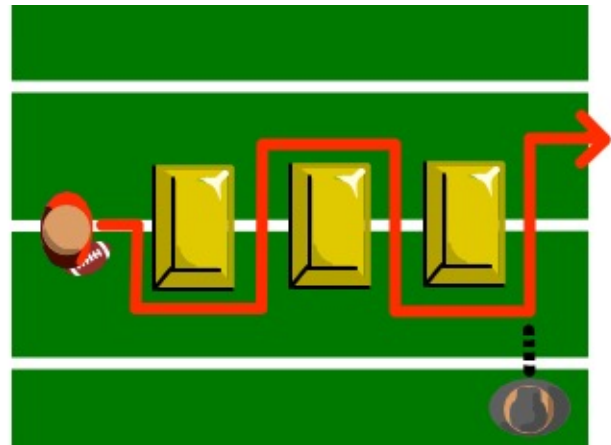
Setup: Place 3-5 agility bags one after another with about 3 yards between them. Have the players form a line at one end, each player starting with a football.



Purpose: To work on the fundamentals of the option; footwork, ball security, and pitch technique.



Player demonstrates ideal pitch technique, with thumb down on release.



QB weaving around agility bags before delivering pitch to the coach.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. QB will run through the agility bags holding the ball chest level with two hands.
2. At the end, they will pitch the ball to the coach, circle around, grab their ball and head to the back of the line.
3. There are multiple variations of this drill: 1 step between each bag, 2 steps between each bag, zig zagging around the bags.

COACHING TIPS

- The key to a good pitch is for the QB to end with the thumb pointing down, and a snap of the wrist.
- A great warmup drill is to pair the players off and have them stand 5 yards apart and run downfield pitching back and forth to each other – this will give them plenty of reps and get them comfortable handling the ball in that situation.