



ROOKIE AND 11-PLAYER PRACTICE PLAN



American Development Model / 2018 National Opt-In

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE

- Designing quality practice is the most basic of all coaching activities and essential for optimal learning of skills and game tactics along with physical and mental conditioning.
- A quality practice nurtures athlete motivation and maximizes skill development.
- Some athletes are not motivated by practice and will complain about it and give poor effort during practice thinking they should save energy for competition.
- One of the primary reasons athletes think this way and devalue practice is because they have experienced poorly designed practice sessions.

COACH JOHN WOODEN'S EIGHT PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE PLAN DESIGN

1. Fundamentals before creativity
2. Use variety
3. Teach new material at start of practice
4. Quick transitions between activities
5. Increase complexity from practice to practice
6. Conditioning for learning
7. End on a positive note
8. Avoid altering the plan during the lesson

PRACTICE GUIDELINES: FREQUENCY AND DURATION BY AGE GROUP

AGE GROUP	NUMBER OF PRACTICES	DURATION OF EACH PRACTICE
Less than 6 years old	1 to 2 days per week	45 to 60 minutes
Less than 8 years old	2 days per week	60 to 75 minutes
Less than 10 years old	2 days per week	60 to 90 minutes
Less than 12 years old	2 to 3 days per week	75 to 90 minutes
Less than 14 years old	3 days per week	75 to 90 minutes

“Long practices are neither desirable nor particularly beneficial.”

- NFL championship coach Tom Coughlan

One of the most common errors is practice sessions run too long. This leads to a loss of focus.

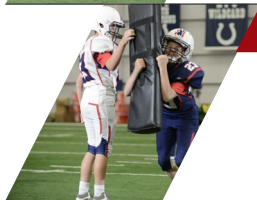
Replace “How will I fill the practice time?” with “How can I use the least amount of practice time in the most efficient way?”

LEVELS OF CONTACT



0 - AIR

Players run a drill unopposed without contact.



1 - BAGS

Drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface.



2 - CONTROL

Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact. One player is pre-determined the “winner” by the coach. Contact remains above the waist, and players stay on their feet.



3 - THUD

Drill is run at full speed through the moment of contact. No pre-determined “winner.” Contact remains above the waist, players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill.



4 - LIVE ACTION

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

FULL CONTACT “ON THE CLOCK”

FOOTBALL SKILLS

QUARTERBACK

- Stance
- Receiving an under-center snap
- Receiving a shotgun snap
- Making a handoff
- Throwing mechanics
- 3-step drop
- 5 step drop
- Play-action fakes and passing

RUNNING BACK

- Stance
- Directional steps
- Taking a handoff
- Evasive running
- Run blocking
- Pass protection

RECEIVER

- Stance
- Route running
- Catching a football
 - Above number
 - Below number
 - In front
 - Behind
- Over the shoulder
- Stalk blocking (Rookie and 11-player Tackle)

OFFENSIVE LINE

- Stance
- Blocking fundamentals (see pg. 7)
- Run blocking
- Pass protection
- Pulling to block
- Screen blocking

DEFENSIVE BACKS

- Stance
- Shoulder tackling (see pg. 7) or Flag pulling
- Backpedal
- Backpedal transitions
- Zone drop principles
- Man-to-man principles
- Defeating a block

LINEBACKERS

- Stance
- Shoulder tackling (See pg. 7) or Flag pulling
- Defeating a block
- Lateral and downhill shuffle
- Zone drop principles
- Man-to-man principles

DEFENSIVE LINE

- Stance
- Shoulder tackling (see pg. 7) or Flag pulling
- 2-point stance (Rookie Tackle)
- 3 and/or 4-point stance
- Defeating a block
- Rushing the passer
- Block recognition

COACHING CONTACT SKILLS

BLOCKING

- **Body position.** Correct body position leads to safer contact. Poor body position can make the head and neck vulnerable to injury.
- **Aiming points.** The head should never be used to initiate the block. Disciplined eyes give blockers the correct aiming point and direction of movement to initiate contact.
- **Strike.** Strike the opponent with the hands or surface (front of shoulder, top of upper arm and forearm) when making all blocks. Never strike with the helmet or facemask.
- **Gain movement.** Use the snap of hips and continue footwork through contact to move the defender on run blocks or stop his charge and stay in-front of him on pass protection.

SHOULDER TACKLING

- **Dominate your leverage.** Depending on the position on the field and play call, players will either be assigned an inside-out or outside-in responsibility. They will dominate this leverage by tracking the near hip and eliminate the ball-carrier's ability to run in the other direction.
- **Swoop to near foot position.** As players enter the contact area, they will shorten their stride, lower their centers of gravity and get the leverage foot forward to prepare for contact.
- **Shoulder tackle:** Athletes tackle with their shoulders, making contact at the proper aim point for the type of tackle being executed. Players keep their heads to the leverage side and make contact with near foot and near shoulder.
- **Wrap, squeeze, finish.** On contact, all players secure the tackle, squeeze the ball-carrier and finish the tackle. The finish could be "drive for five" or a roll depending on the type of tackle.

GENERAL TEMPLATE FOR PRACTICE

- ☐ **Overview and life skill** – 2 to 5 minutes
- ☐ **Warm up/athletic development** – 10 minutes
- ☐ **Water break** - 2 minutes (small groups)
- ☐ **Individual skill period** – 40 minutes
 - ☐ Center/QB exchange – 5 minutes
 - ☐ QB/RB handoff – 5 minutes
 - ☐ QB/RB pitch – 5 minutes
 - ☐ Passing and receiving – 10 minutes
 - ☐ Tackling circuit – 10 minutes
- ☐ **Water break** - 2 minutes (small groups)
- ☐ **Team period** – 30 minutes
 - ☐ Offensive formations – 10 minutes
 - ☐ Competition – 20 minutes
- ☐ **Review and life skill** – 5 minutes

**FAILING TO PREPARE IS
PREPARING TO FAIL!**

