

RIVER FALLS
WILDCATSTM
Youth
FOOTBALL

*2020 RFYFA
Coach Resource Guide*



Help kids realize a passion for the game and enhance knowledge/skills in a fun environment.



The River Falls Youth Football Association exists for the purpose of teaching each child the fundamental skills and concepts of the game of football while having fun.

Strong positive leadership from every coach is required at practices and games.

Coaches must focus on teamwork, fair play and provide a framework for the wholesome participation at each child's playing ability.

Continue to remind players of the "3 Rules":
SHOW RESPECT, PLAY HARD & HAVE FUN!

Grade 1/2 Coaching Highlights

- Offensive Positions
 - Center, Quarterback, Running Back, Wide Receiver, Flanker
- Defensive Positions
 - Middle Linebacker, Defensive Back, Safety
- Offensive Formations
 - Twins and Balanced
- Defensive Formation
 - Cover 1
- Basic Running Plays
 - Sweep
 - Pitch
 - End-Around
- Basic Pass Routes
 - Slant
 - Curl
 - Square In
 - Square Out
 - Go
- Proper angles and swarming on defense
- Tracking ball carrier's hips and pulling flag near hip
- Catching with Hands
- Proper Handoffs
- Proper Pitches

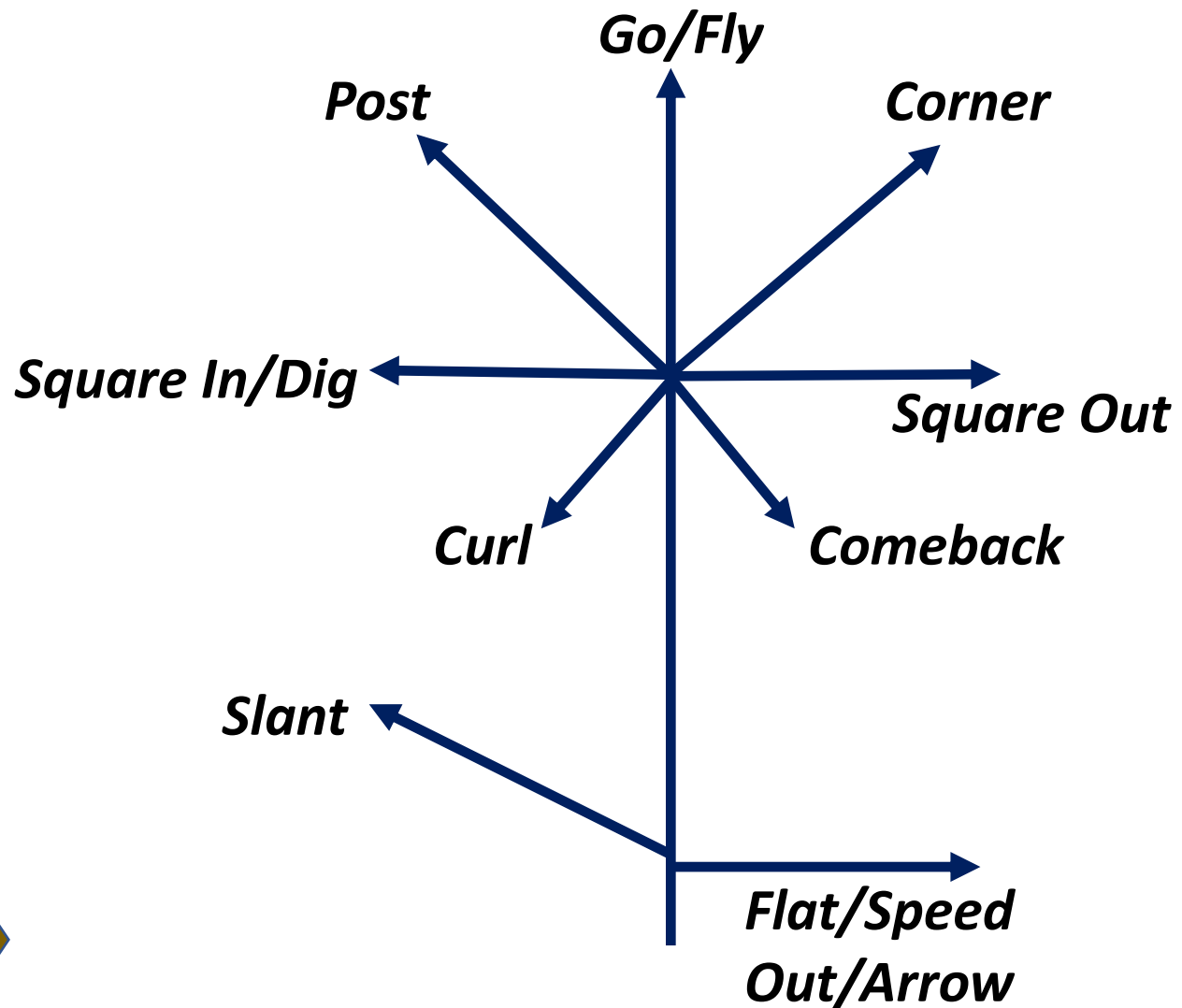
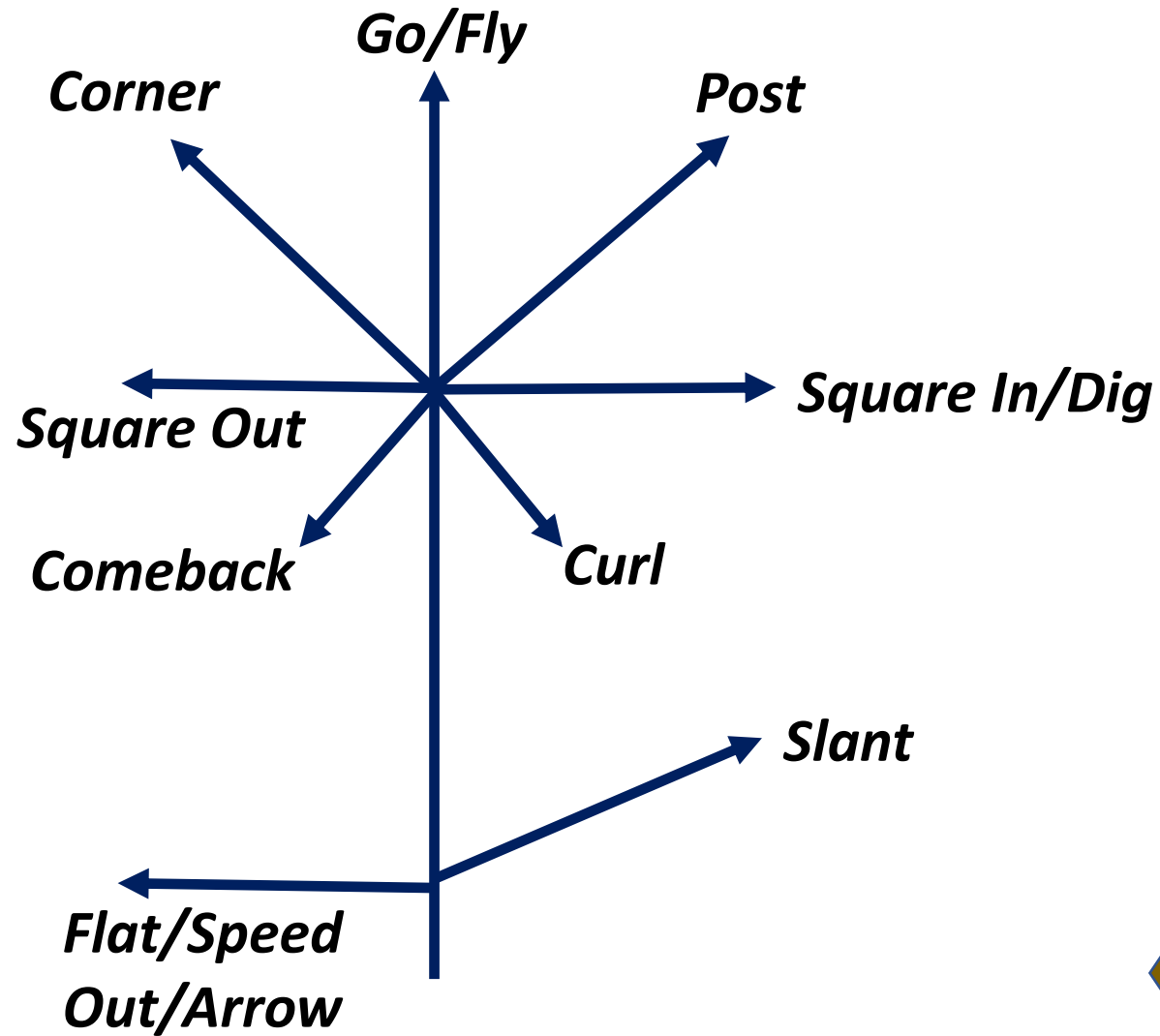
Grade 3/4 Coaching Highlights

- Offensive Positions
 - Center, Quarterback, Running Back, Wide Receiver, Flanker
- Defensive Positions
 - Middle Linebacker, Outside Linebacker, Defensive Back, Safety
- Offensive Formations
 - Trips, Doubles (2x2)
- Defensive Formation
 - Cover 1 and Cover 2
- Basic Running Plays
 - Sweep
 - Pitch
 - End-Around
 - Jet Sweep
 - Reverse
- Basic Pass Routes
 - Slant
 - Curl
 - Square In
 - Square Out
 - Post
 - Corner
 - Go
- Proper angles and swarming on defense
- Tracking ball carrier's hips and pulling flag near hip
- Catching with Hands
- Proper Handoffs and Pitches
- Proper Throwing Technique and Three Step Drop

Grade 5/6 Coaching Highlights

- Offensive Positions
 - Center (C), Quarterback (Q), Running Back (T), Wide Receiver (X), Flanker (Z), Tight End (Y)
- Defensive Positions
 - Middle Linebacker, Outside Linebacker, Defensive Back, Safety
- Offensive Formations
 - Trips (3x1), Doubles (2x2), Empty (3x2)
- Defensive Formation
 - Cover 1/Cover 2 Zone, Cover 1/Cover 2 Man
- Basic Running Plays
 - Sweep
 - Pitch
 - End-Around
 - Jet Sweep
 - Reverse
- Pass Routes
 - Complete Receiver Route Tree
- Remember plays and responsibilities
- Proper angles and swarming on defense
- Tracking ball carrier's hips and pulling flag near hip
- Catching with Hands
- Proper Handoffs and Pitches
- Proper Throwing Technique, 3 Step Drop and 5 Step Drop
- Defensive Back backpedaling and proper coverage technique
- Outside Defender contain to stop outside runs and reverses

Route Tree



Offensive Position Designations

- (Q) Quarterback – Receives plays from coach, initiates action and handles the “snap.” Q either hands the ball to the running back or passes the ball to a receiver. The Q must be able to throw the ball with power and accuracy.
- (T) Running Back - Also known as a Tailback or Halfback. This player lines up either behind or beside the quarterback. T runs and catches, and throws a pass from time to time.
- (C) Center – Player focused on a quality “snap” of the ball to the QB. After snapping ball between legs to QB will go out for a pass route.

Offensive Position Designations

- (X) Wide Receiver – X receivers are known as pass catchers, but will occasionally take a handoff. They start plays split out wide from the rest of the formation and typically on opposite side of the field as the Z receiver.
- (Z) Flanker - Z receivers are known as pass catchers, but will occasionally take a handoff. They start plays split out wide from the rest of the formation and typically on opposite side of the field as the X receiver.
- (Y) Tight End – Y is a hybrid between a receiver and an offensive lineman. Generally, Y is the receiver that lines up closest to the football. The Y runs routes like an X or a Z.
- (H) H-Back - The H-Back is a cross between the tight end and full back positions. The H runs routes like an X or a Z.



Playbook Overview

Trips Formation

- Trips means there are three receivers (Y, H, Z) together on one side of the Center (C)
- The X receiver will line up on the opposite side of the center as the trips receivers
- The Running Back (T) will line up to the left of the Quarterback (Q)
- QB will be in shotgun formation
- On running plays all other players should run a “Go” route or “run off” the defenders in their part of the field

Doubles Formation

- Doubles means there are two receivers (X, H) together on the left side of the Center (C) and two receivers (Y, Z) together on the right side of the C
- The Running Back (T) will line up to the left of the Quarterback (Q)
- QB will be in shotgun formation
- On running plays all other players should run a “Go” route or “run off” the defenders in their part of the field

Empty Formation

- Empty means there are three receivers (Y, H, Z) together on the left side of the Center (C)
- One receiver (X) and Running Back (T) line up together on the right side of the C
- QB will be in shotgun formation
- On running plays all other players should run a “Go” route or “run off” the defenders in their part of the field

Quarterback Drills



Coaching Points for Throwing a Football

Focus on GRIP, BODY ALIGNMENT and THROWING MOTION

- Hold the ball towards one end of the football
- Tips of fingers on the laces, with the middle finger and thumb aligned
- Shoulder facing the target (left shoulder if right handed)
- Football is held comfortably chest height prior to throwing, with the non-throwing hand helping secure the ball
- Front foot steps forward (left foot if right handed) and bring throwing arm back so it is parallel with the ground until it makes an “L” shape
- Rotate hip towards target (right hip if right handed) and let the arm follow with the elbow ahead of the ball
- Release the ball above the head and follow through with a flick of the wrist that allows the pointer finger to be the last to let go of the ball

Quarterback – Center Exchange Drill

Line up three players at the Center position. They should be 3-4 yards apart from each other.

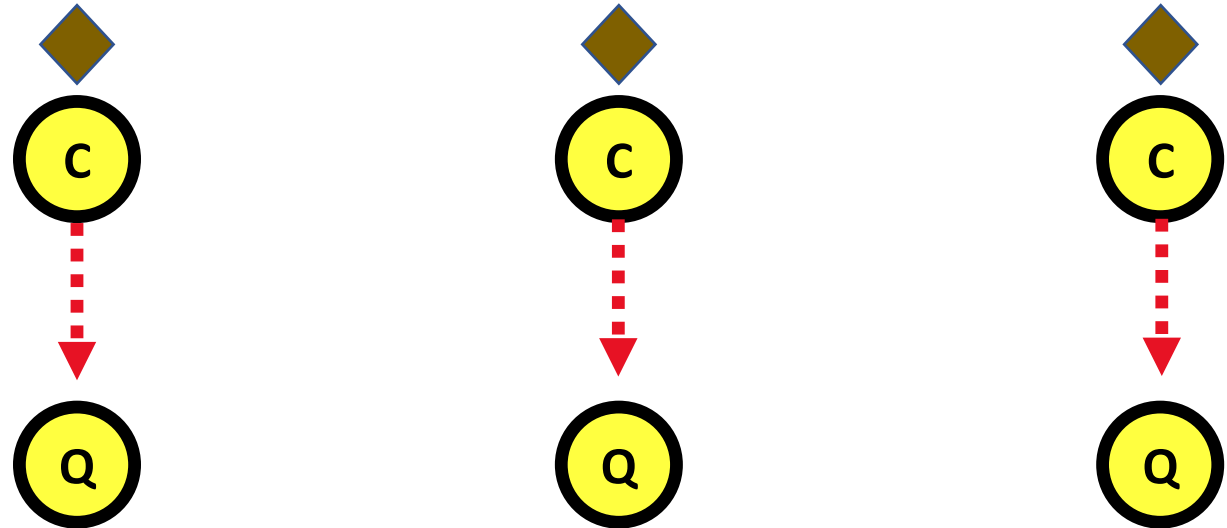
One Quarterback will line up 2 yards behind each Center in shotgun formation.

The Quarterback's knees should be bent so that they stay low and their hands should be ready to accept the football. They need to make a "U" shape with their hands to give a target for the Center.

Grade 3/4 centers may snap for the side of their body, while Grade 5/6 centers must snap the ball between their legs.

Quarterback will give cadence "Ready, GO." The center will snap the ball to the quarterback on "GO."

Centers should focus on a clean snap that is not too slow and not rushed. Center needs to aim for the Quarterback's chest/shoulders. You will want to have all players practice snapping.



Quarterback – Running Back Hand-Off Drill

Practice both Sweep Right and Sweep Left.

Line up three players at the Center position. They should be 3-4 yards apart from each other.

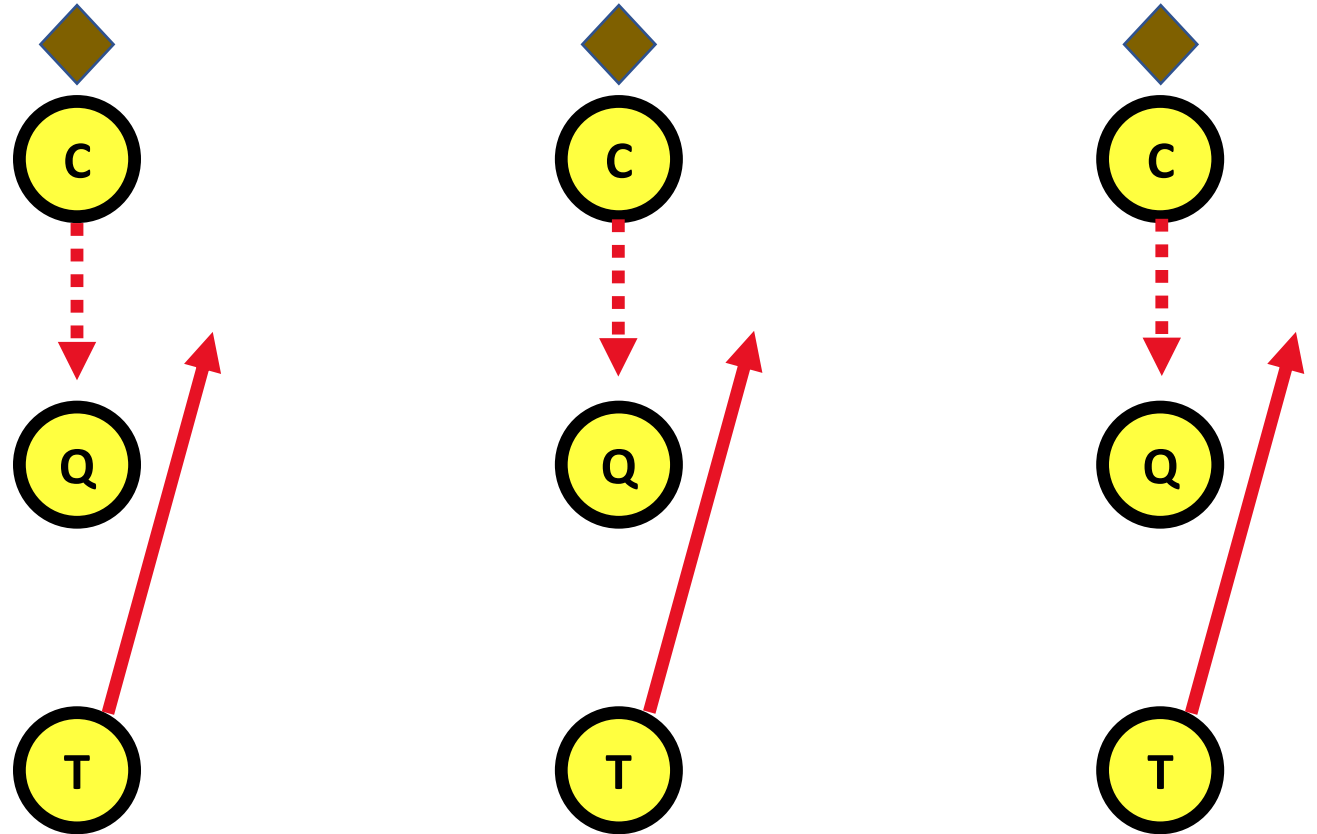
Grade 3/4 centers may snap for the side of their body, while Grade 5/6 centers must snap the ball between their legs.

Quarterback will give cadence “Read, GO.” The center will snap the ball to the quarterback on “GO.” At that moment the Running Back will start their motion to the right (or left) of the Quarterback.

Quarterback will pivot to the right (or left) and keep their eyes on placing the ball in the Running Back’s stomach.

The Running Back’s inside elbow that points toward the Quarterback will be the arm that is above their chin and the other arm will be below waste level.

Quarterback will place the ball between the Running Back’s arms and the Running Back should NOT grab the ball during the exchange. Emphasize RB keeping the eyes forward (not looking down at the ball) when it is being handed off.

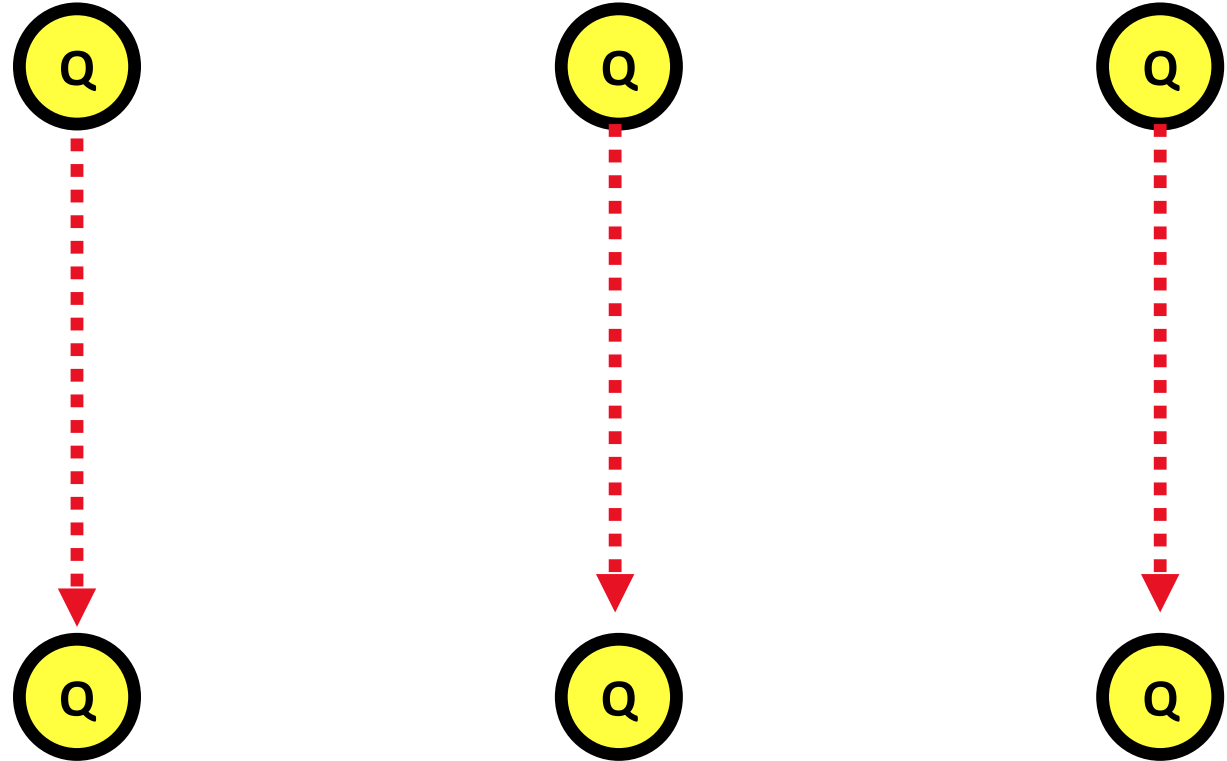


Quarterback Kneeling Throw Drill

Have three players take a stance with 1 knee on the ground (the same knee as their throwing arm, i.e. right handed thrower places right knee on ground). Each player will have a partner that is also kneeling and facing them from 5 yards away.

The players will throw the ball to a each other. Players must stay tall as they throw and should not be hunched over.

Emphasize proper grip, holding the ball high (over shoulder by ear), throwing motion, flicking the wrist and following through (throwing thumb pointing to target after release of ball).



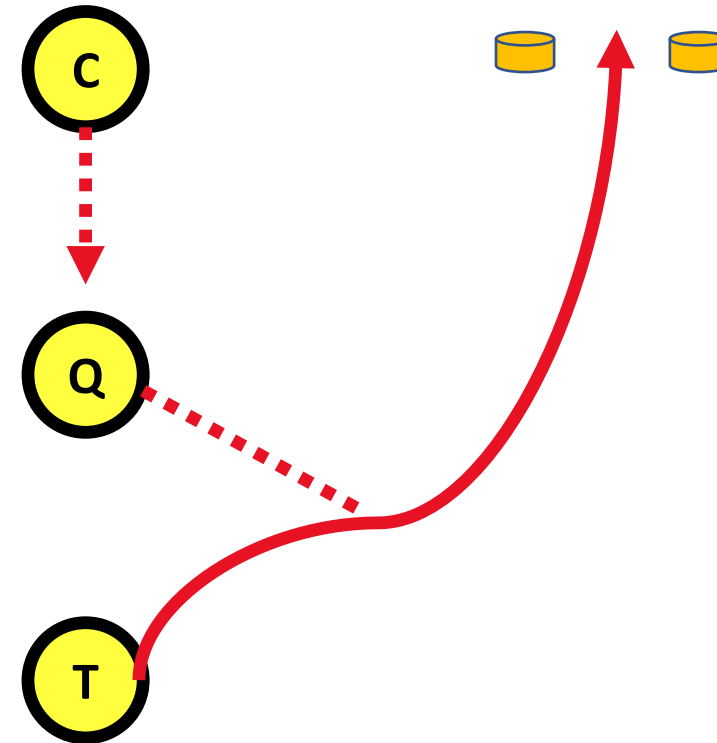
Quarterback - Running Back Pitch Drill

Set up a pair of cones 5-8 yards to the side of the Center. This is the area that the Running Back should run through.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will pitch the ball to the Running Back when they are behind and to the side of them. The Running Back will then cut up field and through the cones.

Quarterback should aim for the Running Back's shoulders and the Running Back should catch the ball with their hands.

You can add complexity by adding cones and a defender. Doing so will make the Running Back decide which area to run through in order to beat the defender.



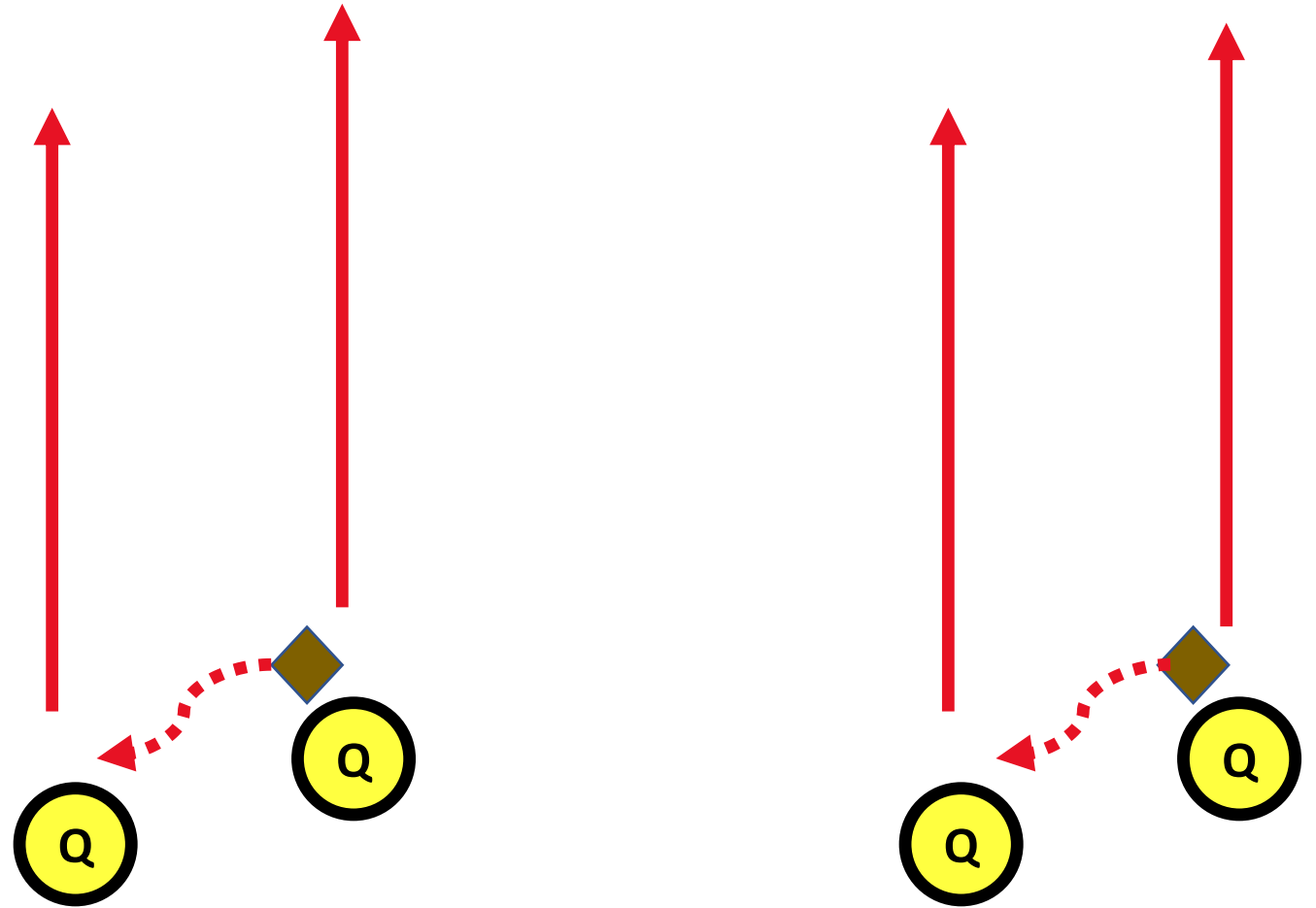
Partner Lateral Relay

This drill is done in pairs and can be done as part of a relay race.

Each pair starts facing each other and approximately 1-2 yards apart.

One player from each pair has the football. At the coach's command, the pairs start to run downfield and lateral the ball back and forth to each other as they move downfield.

Players should concentrate on making good laterals, keeping their eyes on the ball, and properly catching/receiving the lateral, all while running downfield.

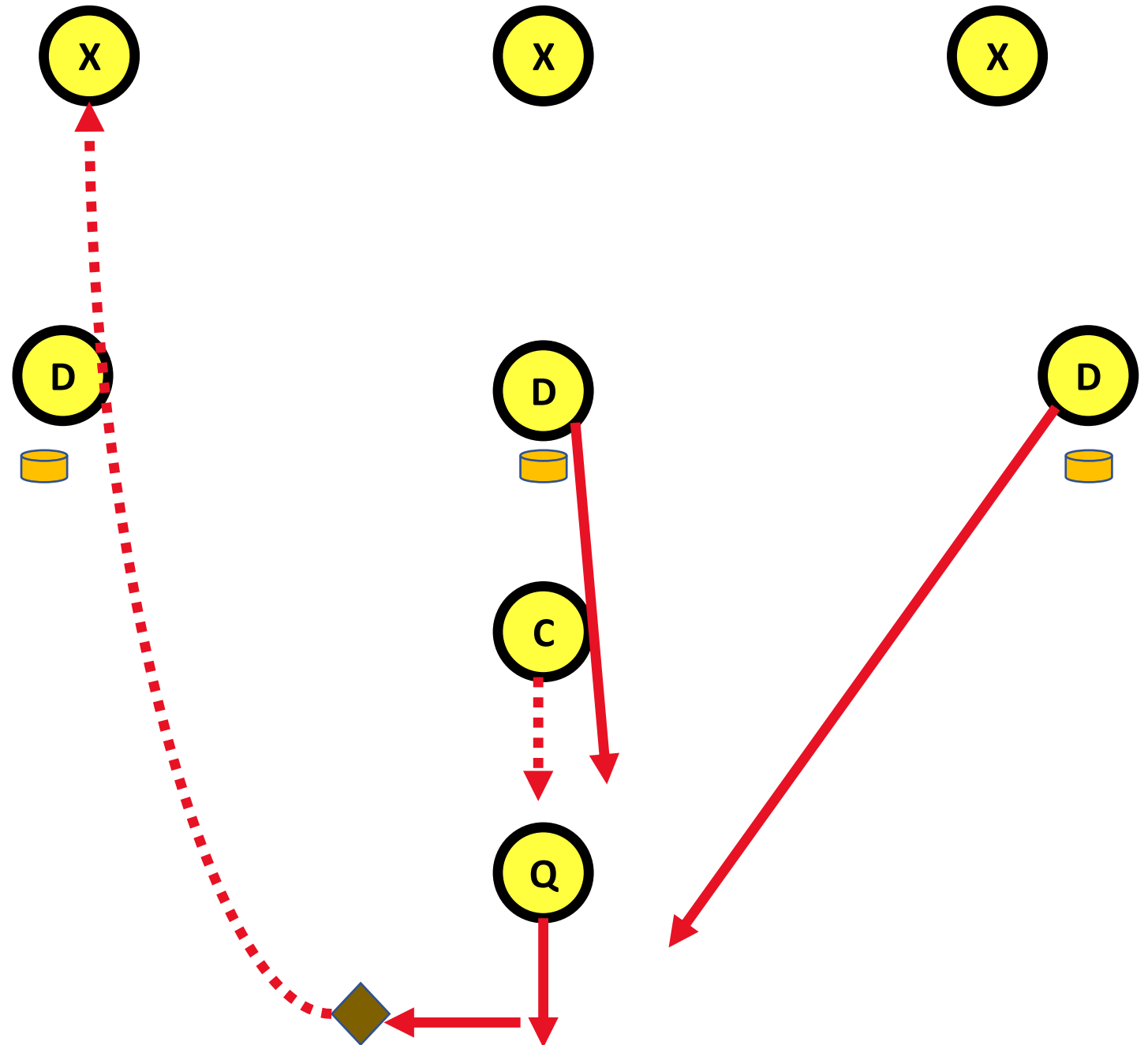


Quarterback Scramble Drill

Set up 3-4 cones 5 yards apart and 7 yards from the line of scrimmage. Have a Linebacker at each cone. The coach will tell quietly tell the defensive players which Linebacker will blitz. Three Receivers will be lined up 10 yards away from the Center and will be stationary during this drill.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will do a 3-step drop. They should either roll to the right, the left or step up in the pocket – depending on where the blitz is coming from. If they have time they can remain stationary and throw the ball without scrambling. The Q should have a good throwing base prior to throwing to the closest receiver. Q must keep eyes downfield while scrambling.

You can add complexity by have the blitz start closer to the line of scrimmage. You can also have the non-blitzing Linebacker fall back into coverage.



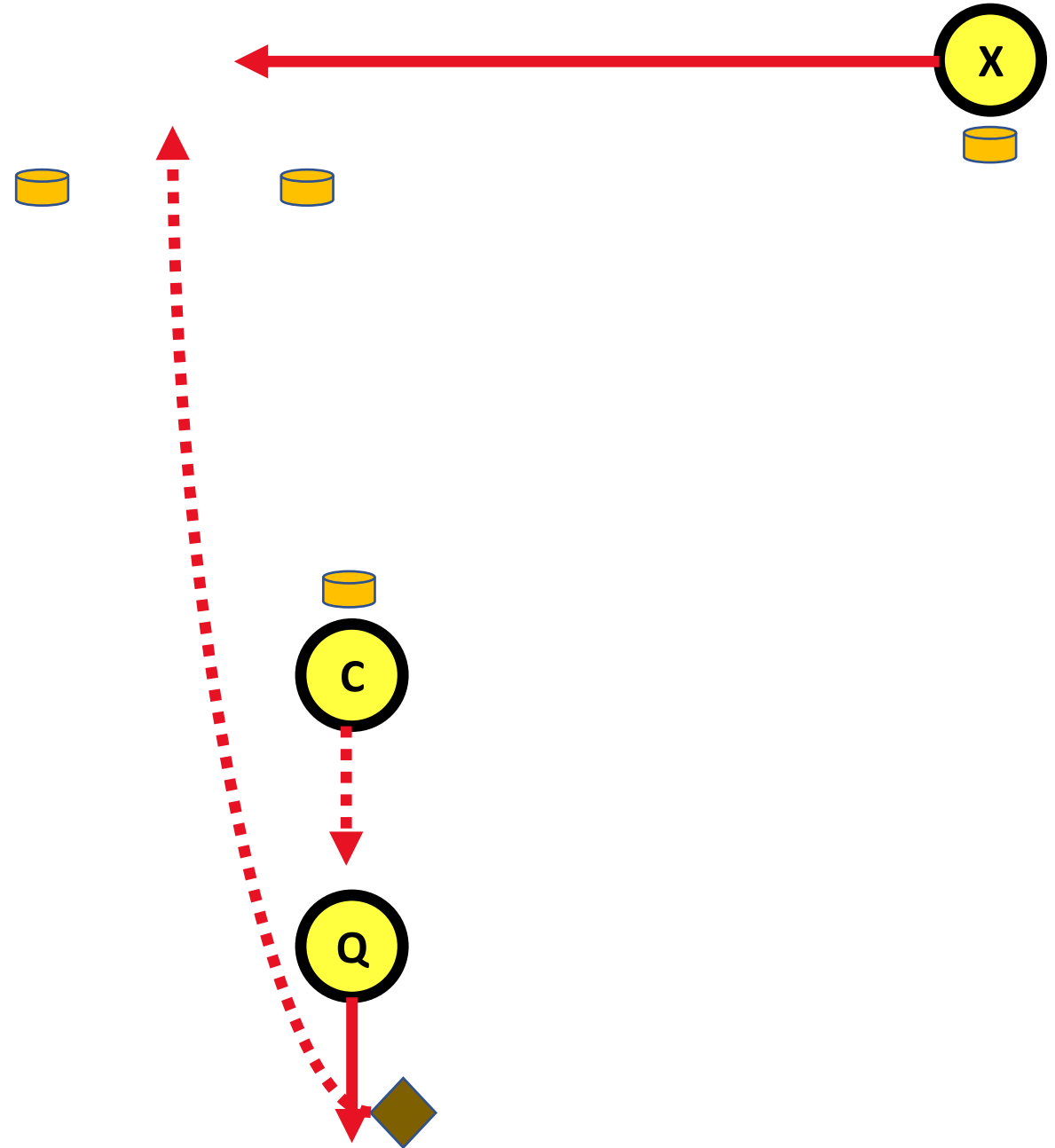
Over The Middle Drill

Set up two cones in the middle of the field that are 2 yards apart. A receiver will be lined up 10 yards away and parallel to the cones.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will do a 3-step drop. The receiver will run at three quarters speed towards the cones.

The Quarterback needs to lead the receiver so the ball is in the air prior to the receiver getting to the cones. The ball should be caught in the 2 yard cone area in the middle of the field.

You can add complexity by going at full speed and even having a defender blitz the Quarterback.



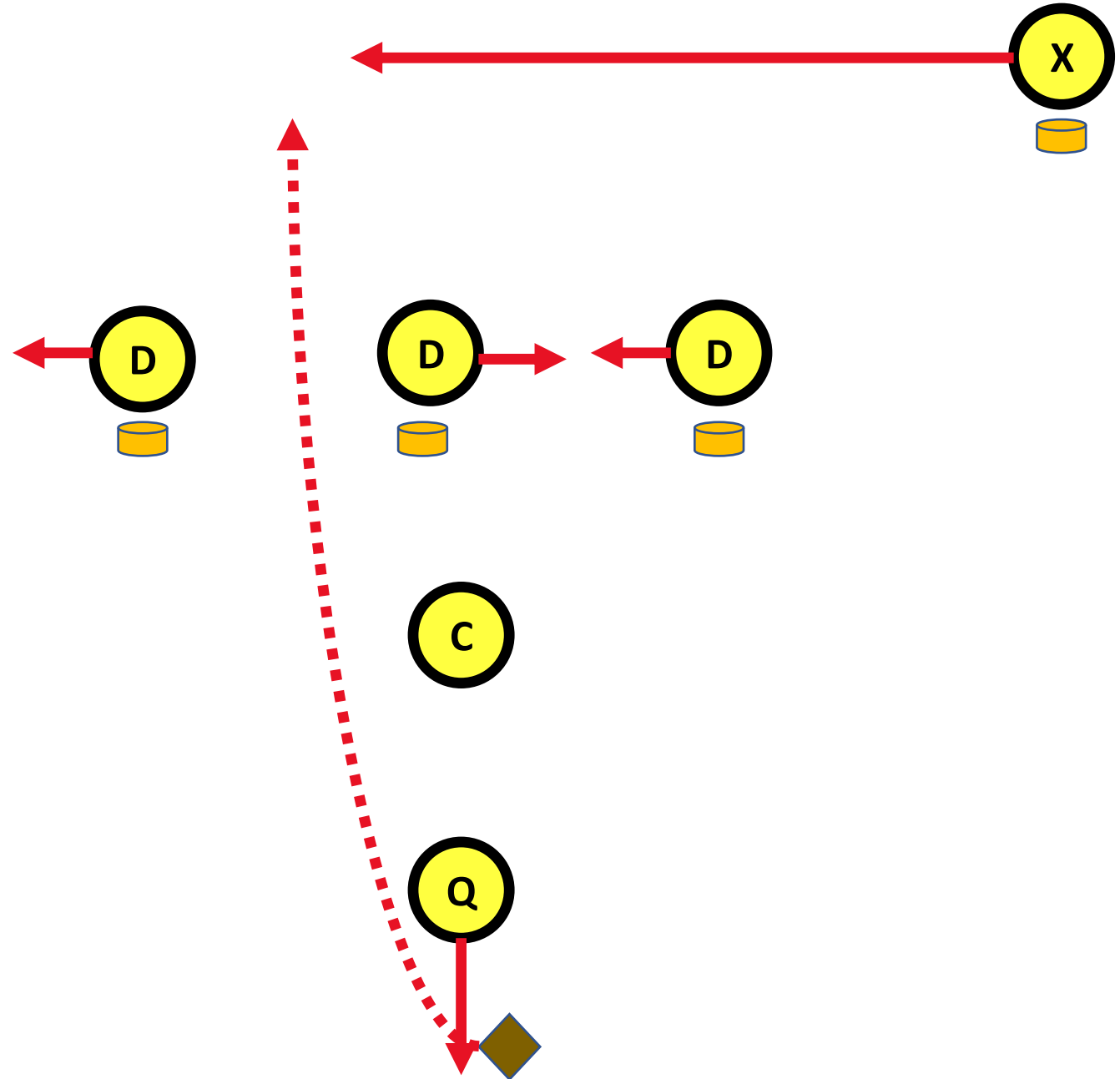
Find the Window Drill

Set up 3 Linebackers 5 yards apart and 1 Receiver lined up to the side and 3-4 yards behind the Defense.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will do a 3-step drop. The Linebackers will take one large step at random to the right or left. The Receiver will run parallel to the line of scrimmage.

The Quarterback should look for the best throwing window and complete a throw to the Receiver. The Linebackers can move their hands but their feet should remain stationary.

You can add complexity by having a fourth Linebacker blitz the Quarterback.



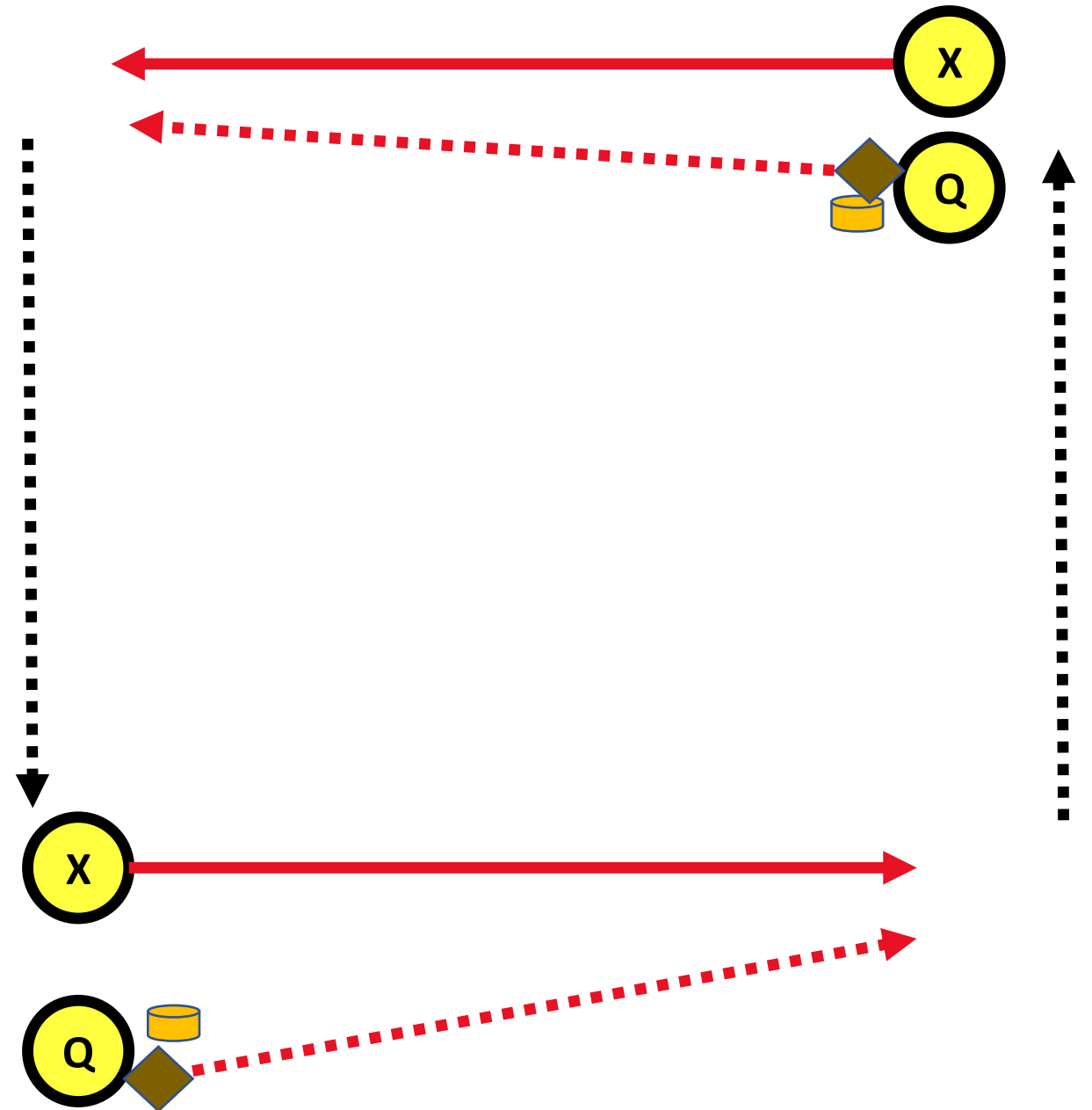
Pat 'n Go Drill

Two Quarterbacks will line up 10-15 yards apart facing each other with a line of receivers to their right.

When the Quarterback pats/moves the ball the receiver will run a fade route. It's important that the QB does not call

As the receiver runs his fade route the QB will throw the ball to him. The exact type of throw can vary but it should be high enough that the receiver can work on running under the ball and adjusting to it in the air.

When the receiver has caught the ball he will hand it to the opposite QB and get in that Quarterback's receiver line.



A photograph of three young boys playing flag football on a grassy field. The boy in the center, wearing a yellow t-shirt with 'LAKE FALLS WILDCATS' and dark shorts, is running forward while holding a football. He is being pursued by two other boys in dark blue jerseys and shorts with yellow flags. The background shows a brick building and a chain-link fence. The text 'Running Back Drills' is overlaid in white in the center of the image.

Running Back Drills

Coaching Points for Catching a Football

Focus on ARM POSITION, RECEIVING HAND-OFF, HIGH & TIGHT

- Prior to taking hand-off the Running Back should be in an athletic position – feet shoulder width apart, bent knees, bent slightly forward at the waist, and hands relaxed on the thighs/knees
- On “GO” the Running Back will run to the right (or left) of the Quarterback
- Quarterback will pivot to the right (or left) and keep their eyes on placing the ball in the Running Back’s stomach
- The Running Back’s inside elbow that points toward the Quarterback will be the arm that is above their chin and the other arm will be waist level
- The Quarterback will place the football between the Running Back’s arms and the Running Back should NOT grab the ball during the exchange
- Running Back must always keep their eyes up and looking straight ahead
- Emphasize holding the ball high and tight under one arm after the handoff

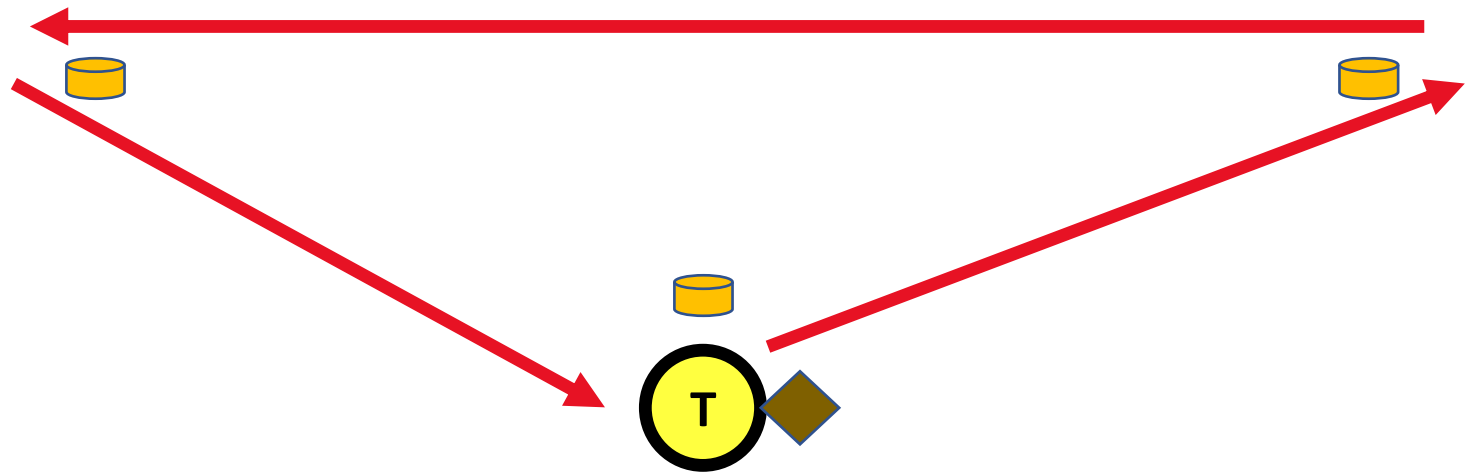
Ball Security Drill

Explain the 5 points of pressure:

- Fingertips placed on tip of call. They must “claw” the ball is placed between the middle and index finger.
- Palm should close on the football so weight is evenly distributed between the left and right side of the hand.
- Forearm & Bicep pressure is one of the most important pressure points.
- Pressure against the chest prevents the ball from leaking out.

Split the players into two groups and run the drill at the same time. Set up three cones (as shown) and have players sprint to the first cone and touch the cone while pivoting to the left. They will spring to the next cone and do the same. Have the kids then go the opposite direction the next time through the line.

Coaches can make it fun by having the players from the two groups race.



Team Hand-off Exchange Drill

Divide players into 2 lines approximately 10 yards away from each other.

A player from one line starts with the ball. On the coach's signal, the player with the ball races downfield (maintaining the proper grip on the football). Once the player reaches the 1st player in the other line, the player with the ball hands the ball off to that 1st player.

That player is now the ball carrier and races downfield towards the other line.

Emphasize holding the ball properly when running, good hand-off exchange (hand-off acceptance target, and good hand-offs into target). Make sure they are keeping their eyes up when receiving the hand-off.



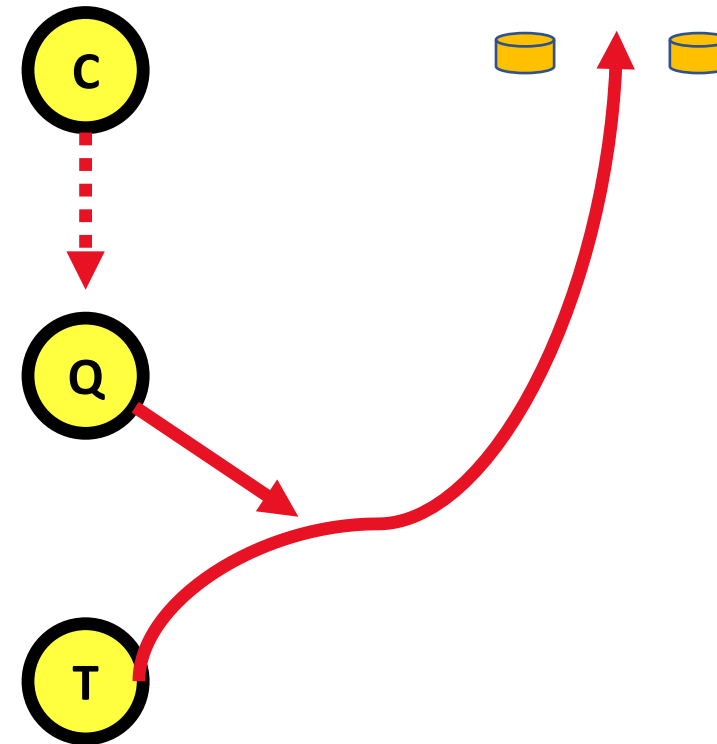
Quarterback – Running Back Sweep Drill

Set up a pair of cones 5-8 yards to the side of the Center. This is the area that the Running Back should run through.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will handoff the ball to the Running Back when they are behind and to the side of them. The Running Back will then cut up field and through the cones.

Quarterback should pivot and take one step to the side they are handing off the ball.

You can add complexity by adding cones and a defender. Doing so will make the Running Back decide which area to run through in order to beat the defender.



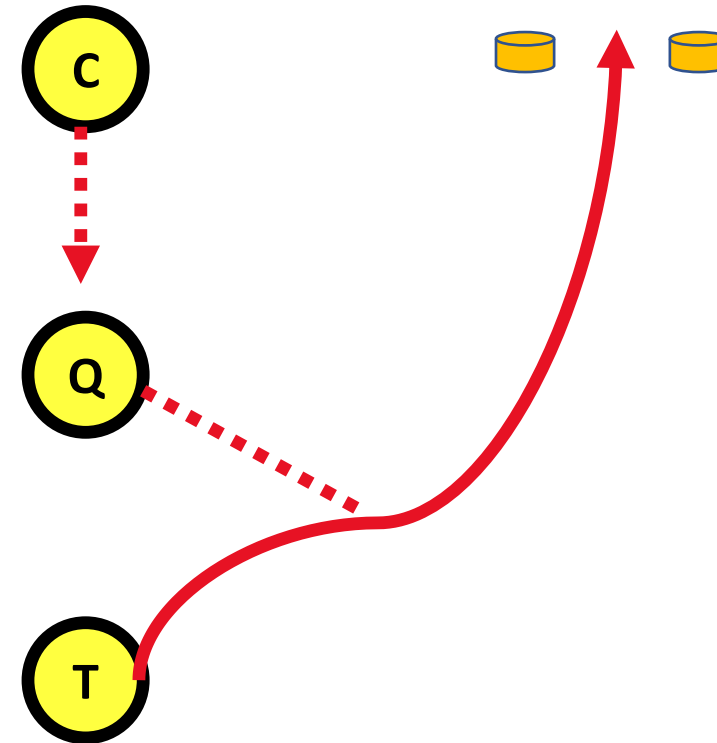
Quarterback - Running Back Pitch Drill

Set up a pair of cones 5-8 yards to the side of the Center. This is the area that the Running Back should run through.

At the snap of the ball the Quarterback will pitch the ball to the Running Back when they are behind and to the side of them. The Running Back will then cut up field and through the cones.

Quarterback should aim for the Running Back's shoulders and the Running Back should catch the ball with their hands.

You can add complexity by adding cones and a defender. Doing so will make the Running Back decide which area to run through in order to beat the defender.



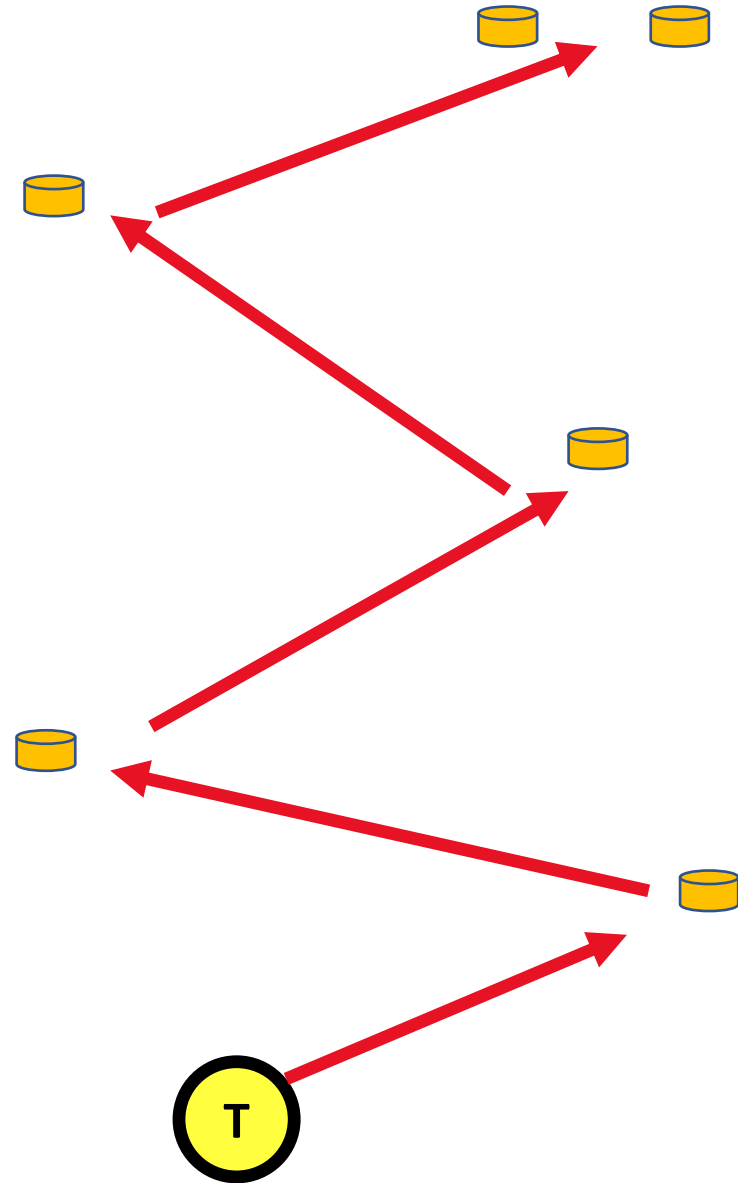
Jump Cut Drill

Set up a pair of cones that are 5 yards apart and zig zagged down the field.

At the snap of the ball the coach will handoff the ball to the Running Back. The player will then cut up field and jump cut at each cone.

Running back should hold football high and tight under their arm. The jump cut should be explosive and the outside plant foot should push them towards the next cone. They must keep shoulders facing forward and maintain good balance. They must sprint through the finish.

You can add complexity by having a stationary defender at each cone.



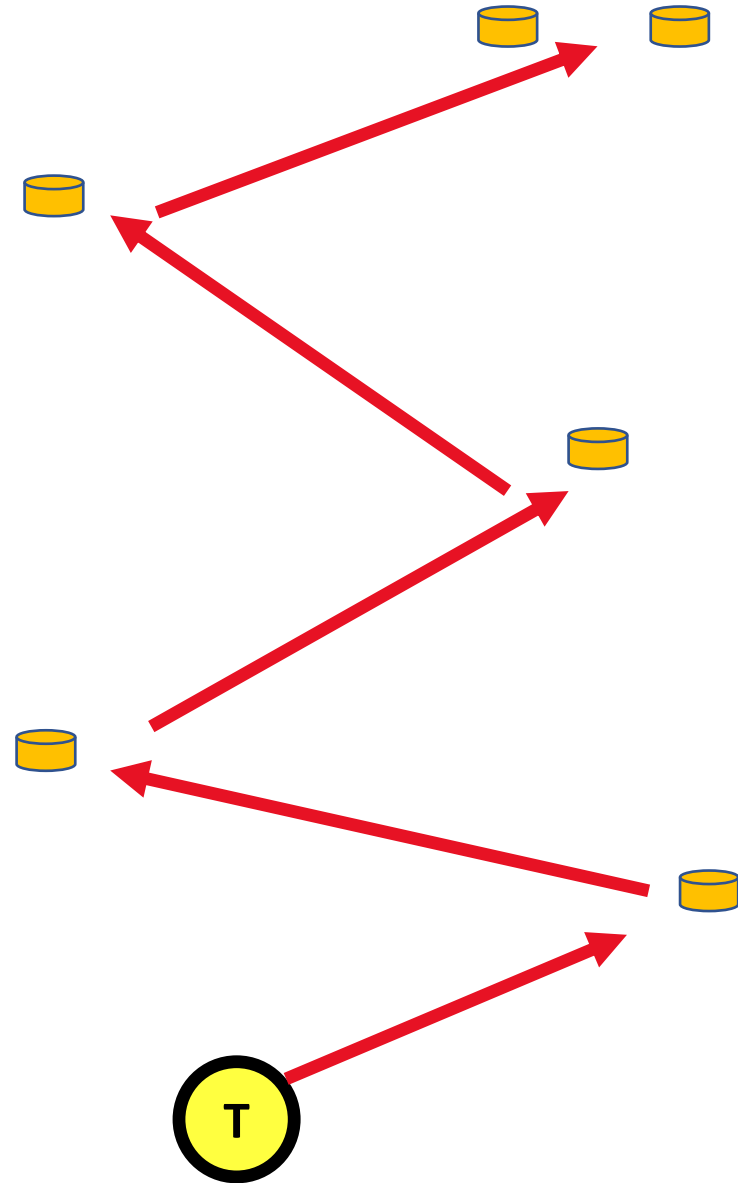
Get Skinny Drill

Set up a pair of cones that are 5 yards apart and zig zagged down the field.

At the snap of the ball the coach will handoff the ball to the Running Back. The player will then cut up field and “get skinny” at each cone.

Running back should hold football high and tight under their arm. By getting skinny they will slide to the side like a pencil and suck in their waist. They must maintain good balance and sprint through the finish.

You can add complexity by having a stationary defender at each cone.



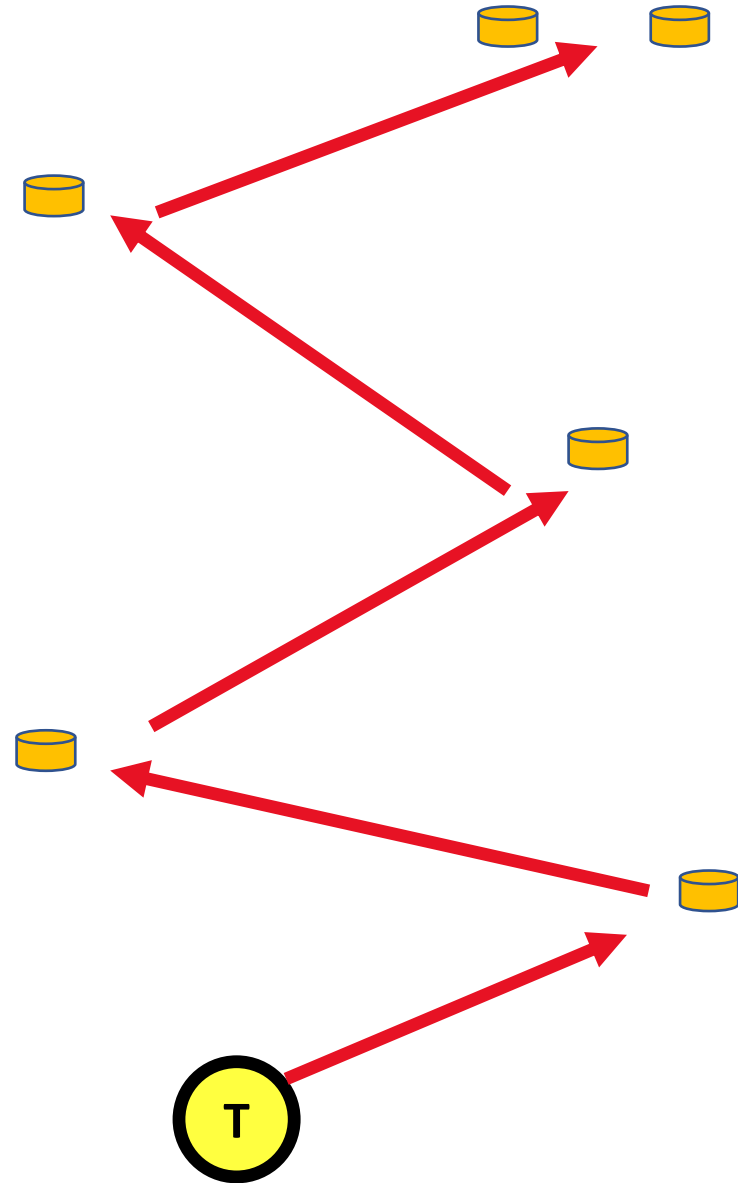
Dip Drill

Set up a pair of cones that are 5 yards apart and zig zagged down the field.

At the snap of the ball the coach will handoff the ball to the Running Back. The player will then cut up field and “dip” at each cone.

Running back should hold football high and tight under their arm. By dipping they will get low to avoid flag pull. They must maintain good balance and sprint through the finish.

You can add complexity by having a stationary defender at each cone.



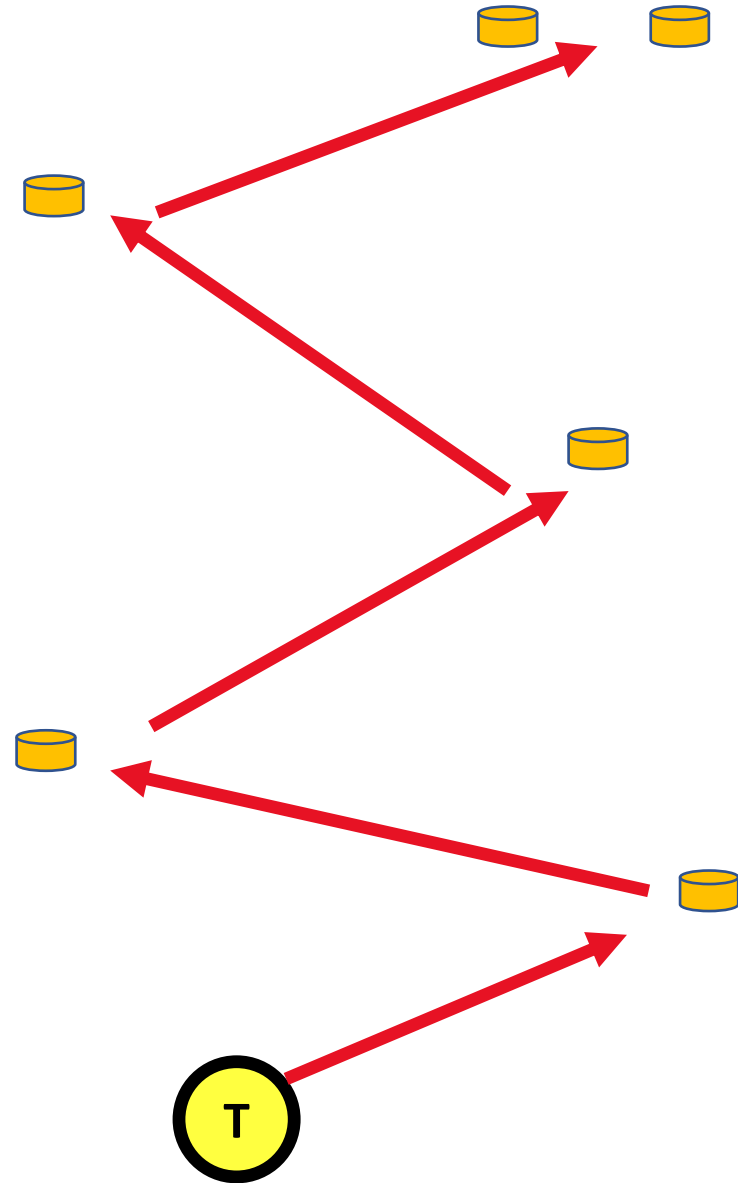
Perfect Spin Drill

Set up a pair of cones that are 5 yards apart and zig zagged down the field.

At the snap of the ball the coach will handoff the ball to the Running Back. The player will then cut up field and “spin” at each cone.

Running back should hold football high and tight under their arm. The “perfect spin” is a jab step toward defender and pivot with opposite foot away from defender. They can also plant their foot, shake, cut toward defender, spin away, and accelerate. They must maintain good balance and sprint through the finish.

You can add complexity by having a stationary defender at each cone.



Out of the Backfield Receiving Drill

A short pass to the Running Back coming out of the backfield can be very effective.

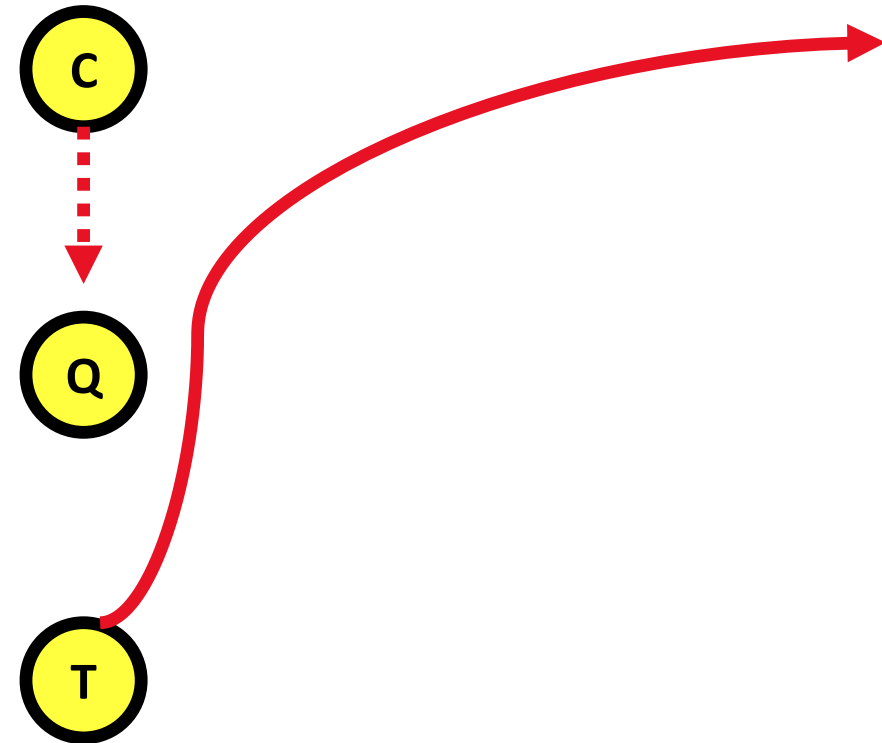
For this you will have 1 or 2 Quarterbacks throwing to 1 or 2 groups of Running Backs.

The QB will go through the signals and fake a hand-off to the Running Back. After the fake, the Quarterback will set up for a pass downfield.

The Running Back will then run an arrow pattern into the “flat” (around the line of scrimmage by the sideline).

The Quarterback will then throw a pass to the Running Back.

Emphasize the importance of the fake hand-off, the Quarterback looking downfield and then a pass to the Running Back.



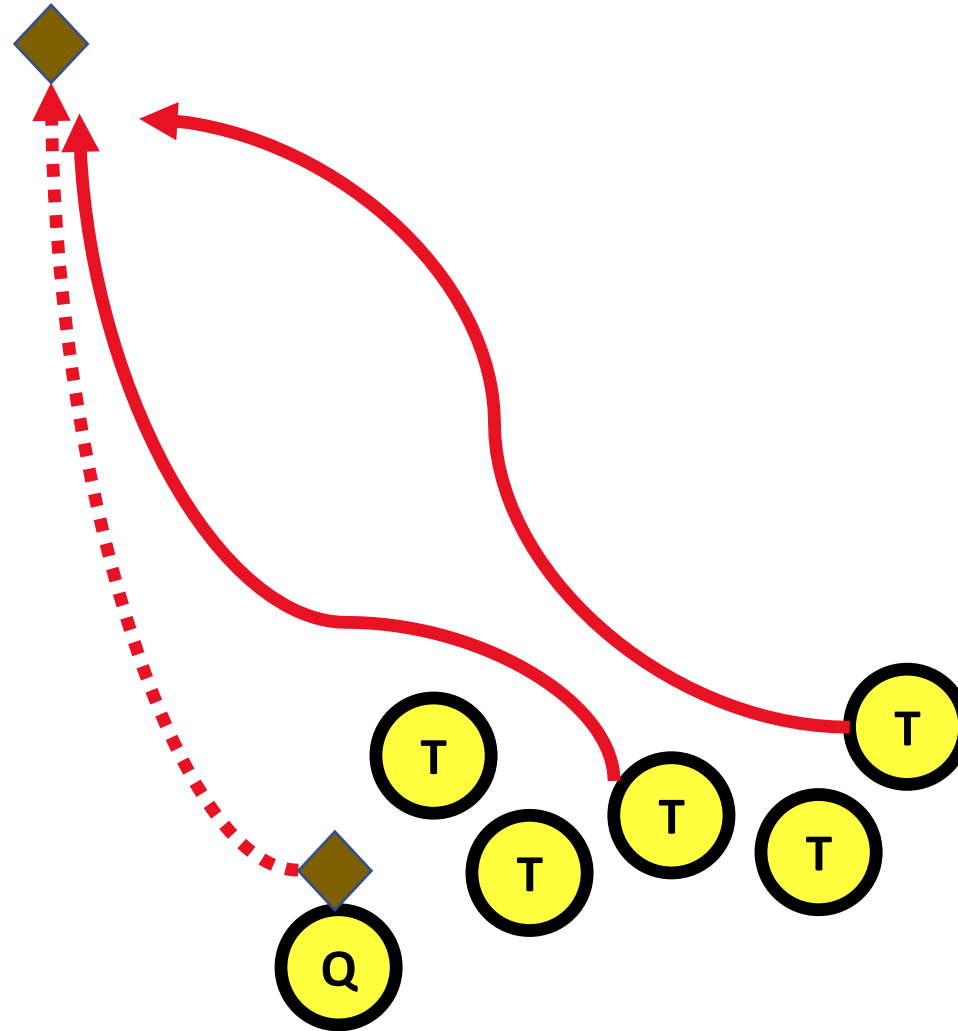
Get It Drill

The game starts again with the players standing in an area next to the coach.

The coach throws a football to another area on the field. As the coach throws the ball, he calls out 2-3 player names.

Those players must run and retrieve the ball. The player that initially retrieves the ball is on offense and the other players are on defense.

The object of the offensive player is to run back to the coach with the ball. The object of the defensive player is to grab the offensive player's flag.



Receiver Drills



Coaching Points for Catching a Football

Focus on NOT FEARING BALL, DISTANCE, HAND POSITION and USING HANDS

- Initially, younger players may be scared of the ball, so work on them catching gentle throws from a close distance - celebrate the “wins” of catching the ball, and slowly move further away
- Once the player is comfortable work on having them use their hands to catch, which starts with them making a “U” shape with their hands in front of their chest with the palms facing out and thumbs touching
- As the ball hits their hands they should work on having “soft hands” and letting the ball be absorbed and pulled into the player’s body
- Throws below the player’s waist should be caught with the hands using a “V” shape as a result of the pinkies touching
- As the player gets more comfortable catching you can move further away, use a larger/harder ball, and focus on them bringing the ball high and tight into their armpit after the catch

Receiver Stance Drill

Explain proper receiver stance in order to minimize “false steps” (wasted step).

Players should have their feet shoulder width apart and stand in a relaxed athletic position. The front foot should be pointing straight ahead, flat on the ground. The heel of the back foot should hover about an inch off the ground. Players need to have hands in a relaxed position, sink their hips and bend their knees. They should then shift 70% of their weight over their front knee and keep eyes and head looking inside toward the football. A receiver's first movement is when the football is snapped.

Line up two groups and run the drill at the same time. Have two cones 5 yards apart. Have a line on each side of the ball and the players should run to the cone ahead of them when the ball is snapped.

In this drill focus on the player pushing off on their front foot and NOT stuttering or leaning on the back foot before releasing. **Reinforce this during all pass route drills.**



Receiver Route Drills

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

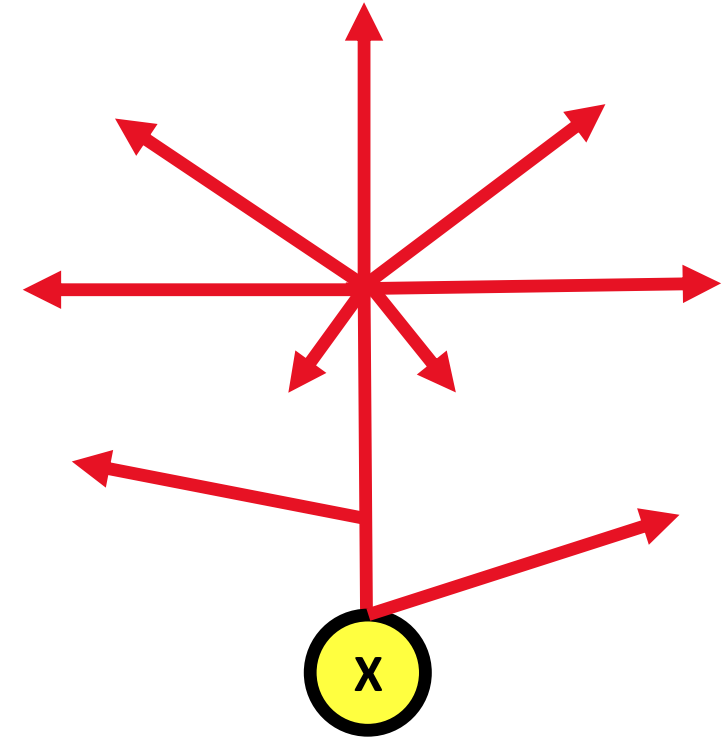
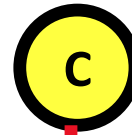
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks. Each line should work on various pass routes (vary the routes so that all are worked on).

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Receiver runs the ball back to the line of scrimmage and hands the ball to the Center.



Out 'n Go Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

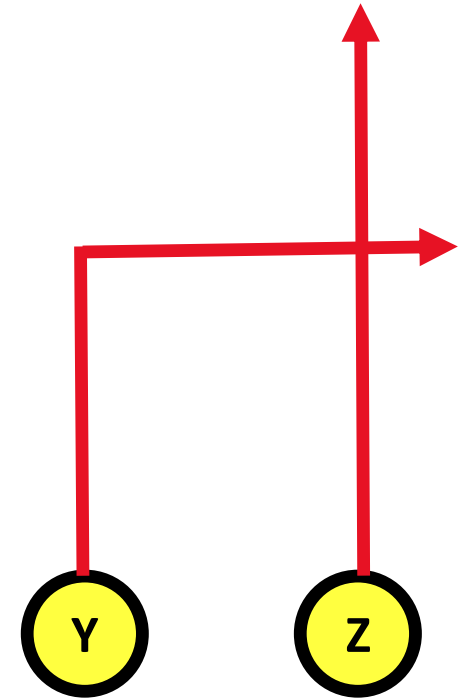
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the “Out” to the Y receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Post Corner Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

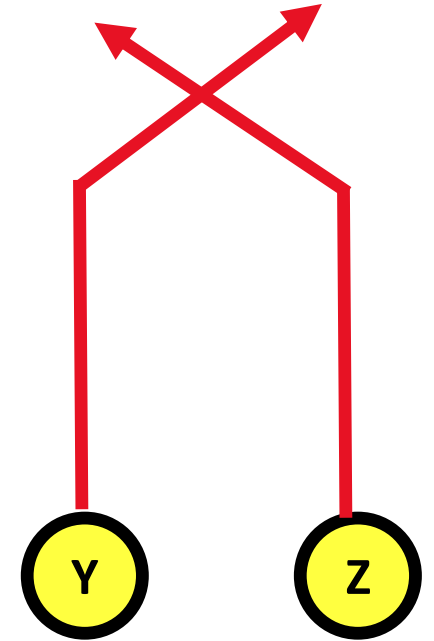
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the "Corner" route by the Y receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Slant Arrow Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

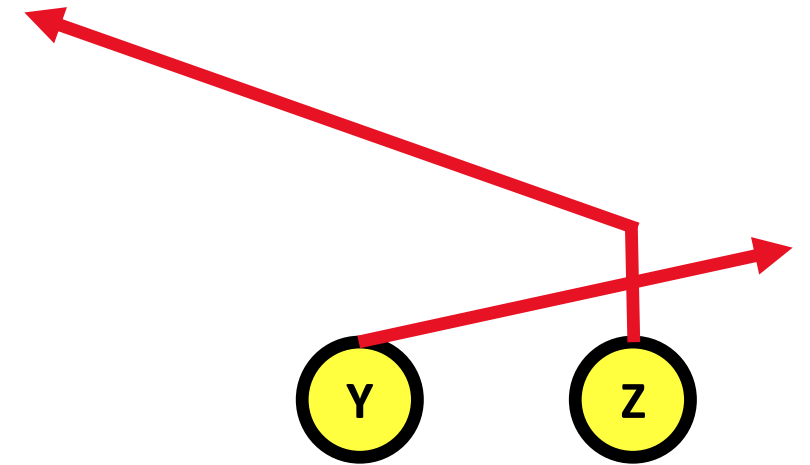
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the "Arrow" route by the Y receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Corner Arrow Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

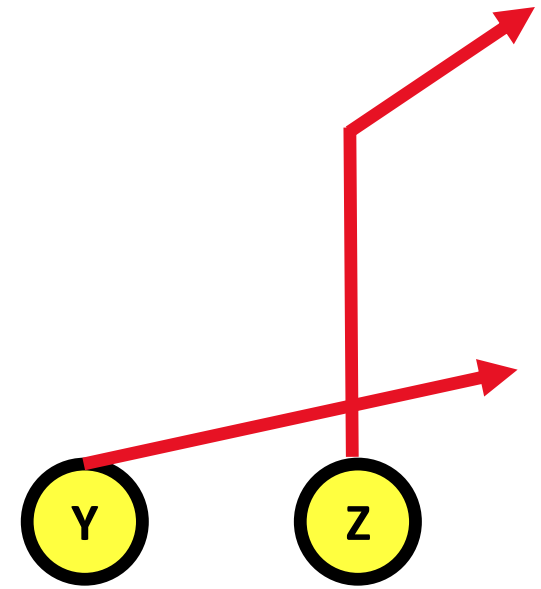
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the “Corner” route by the Z receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Post Arrow Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

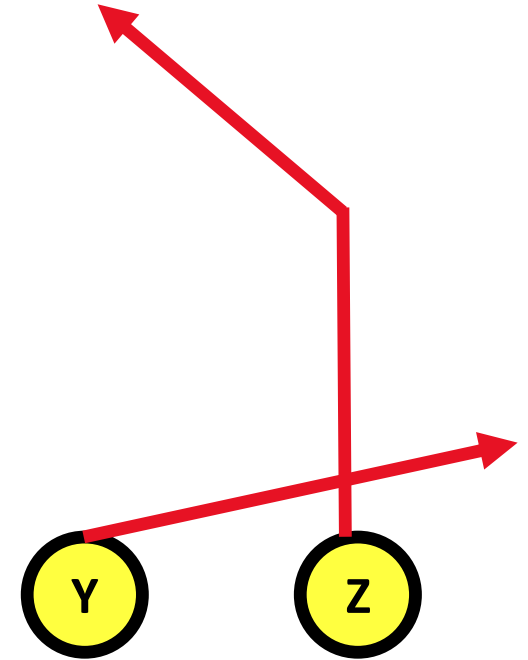
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the “Post” route by the Z receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Switch Route Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

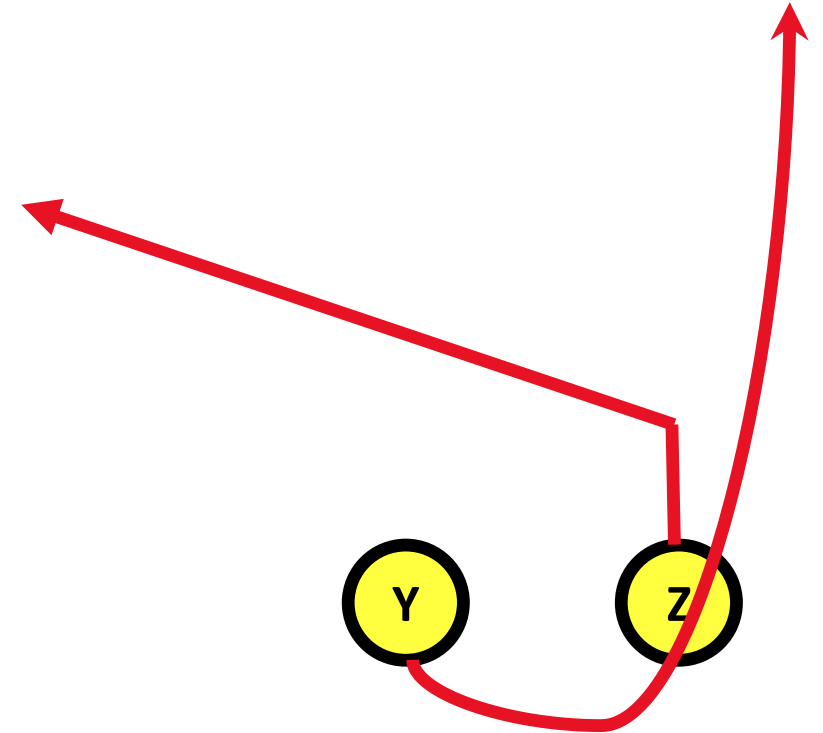
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the “Wheel” route by the Y receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



Dagger Combo

This is a simple drill that works on Receivers running of proper pass patterns, QB set up and throwing, and Receiver catching skills.

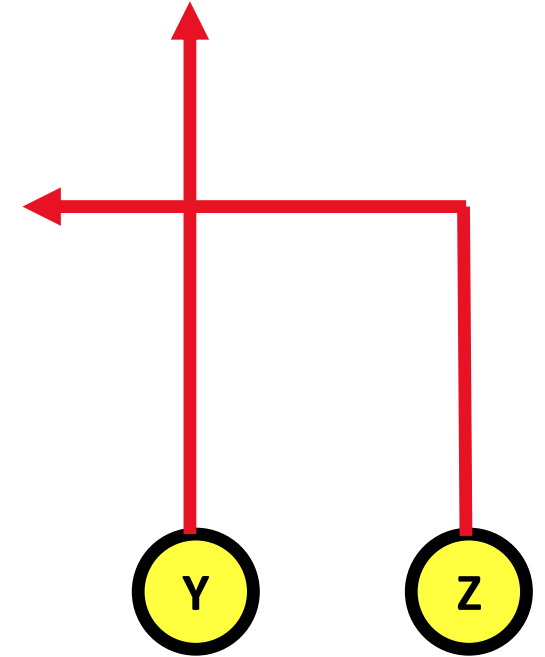
Set up 2 lines of Receivers and 2 Quarterbacks.

Early in the season you may want to place cones that show the Receiver where to run the route.

Quarterback should do a 3 step drop once the snap is received. Number 1 option is the “Dig” route by the Z receiver.

Receiver must focus on catching with hands and not the body. Upon catching the ball the Receiver should always tuck the ball under their arm before running upfield five steps.

Make it more challenging by adding 2 defensive players that cover the receivers man-to-man.



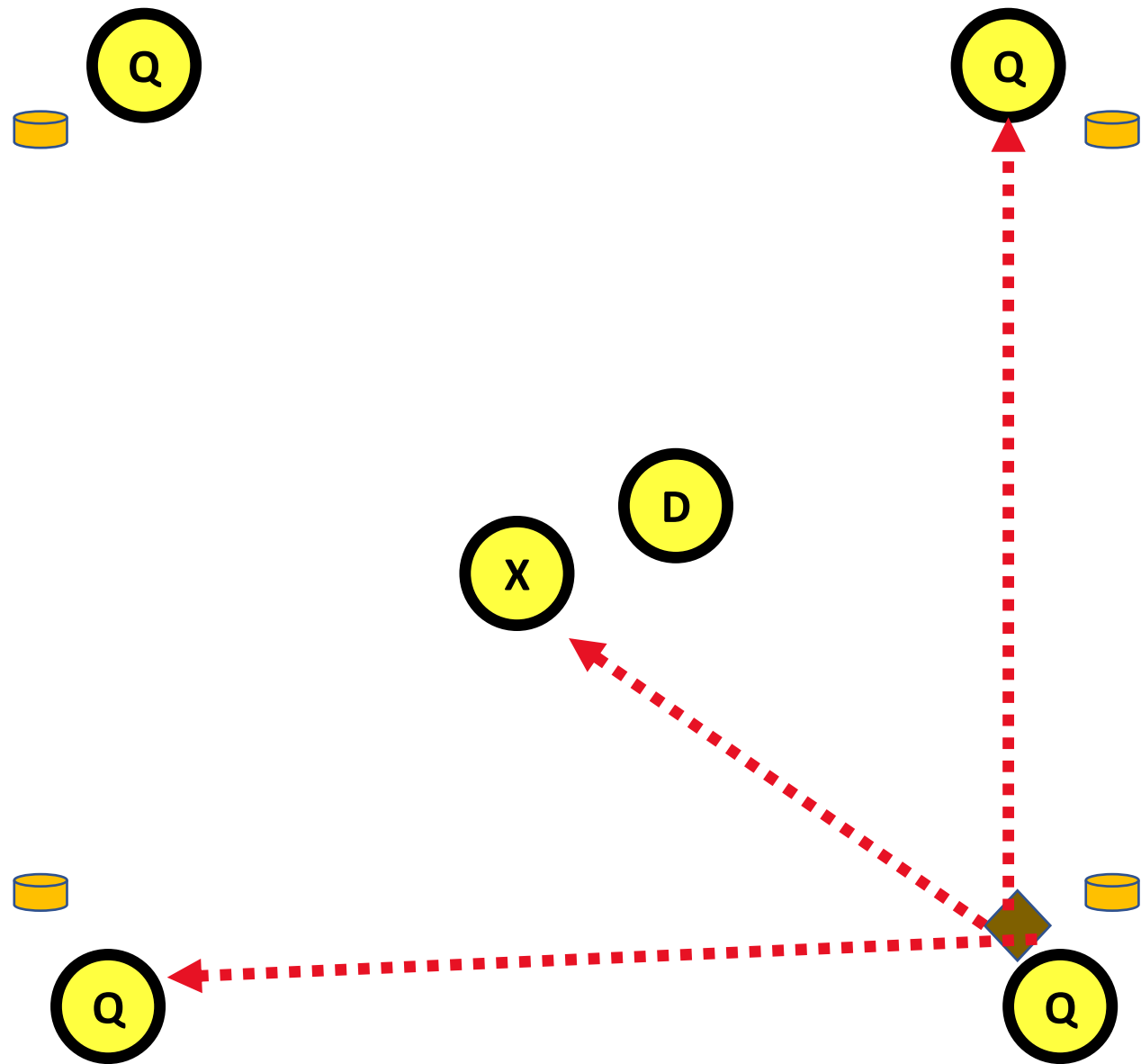
Receiver in the Middle Drill

Use cones to set up a 10 x 10-yard area. There will be one Receiver in the middle of the square, as well as a Defender. Station four players in the corners of the box. One football is needed per group.

4 quarterbacks pass the football around until an opportunity arises to throw the football to the Receiver. The length of the drill is 30 seconds. Six points are awarded for each reception and the defense is awarded three points for an interception.

Quarterbacks and Receiver should be communicating and the Defender should be focused on the Receiver's hips.

You can increase difficulty by adding an additional defender.



Over The Shoulder Drill

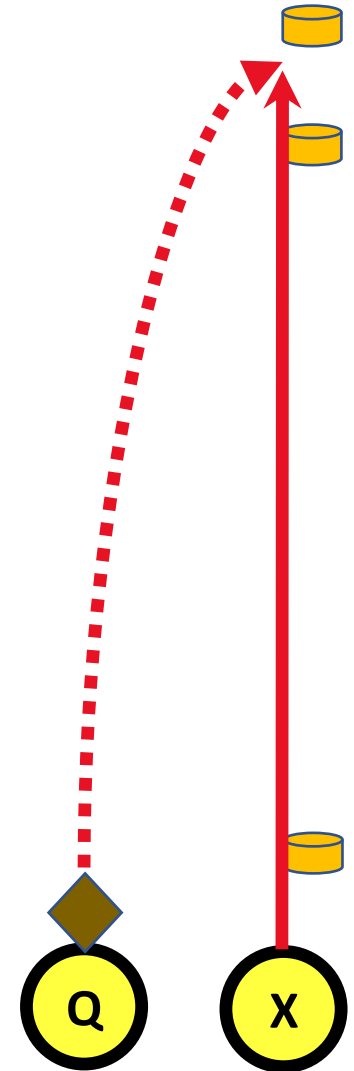
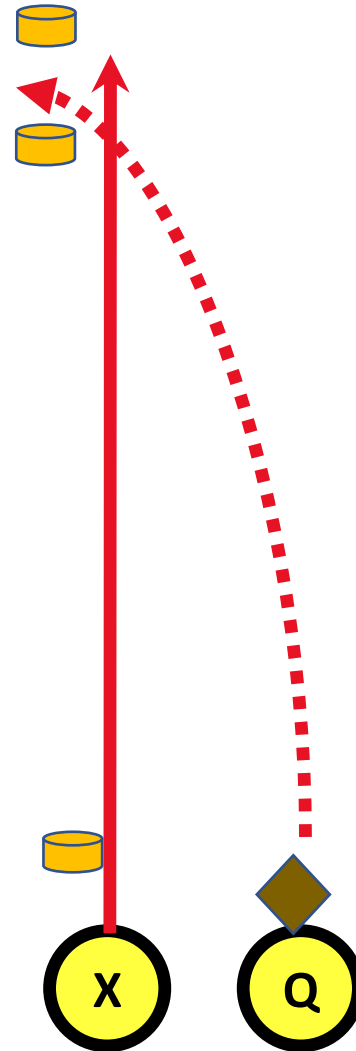
Set up two cones two yards apart along a sideline.

A Receiver will be aligned near that same sideline and the Quarterback will be two yards to their side.

When the Quarterback says "GO" the Receiver will go 50% on a fly route along the sideline.

The Quarterback's goal is to throw the ball over the Receiver's outside shoulder so it is caught over their shoulder in the area marked by the two cones. The coach can also be the Quarterback for this drill.

You can difficulty by having the Receiver run at 100%. You can also add a Linebacker on the Receiver.



Toe Tap Drill

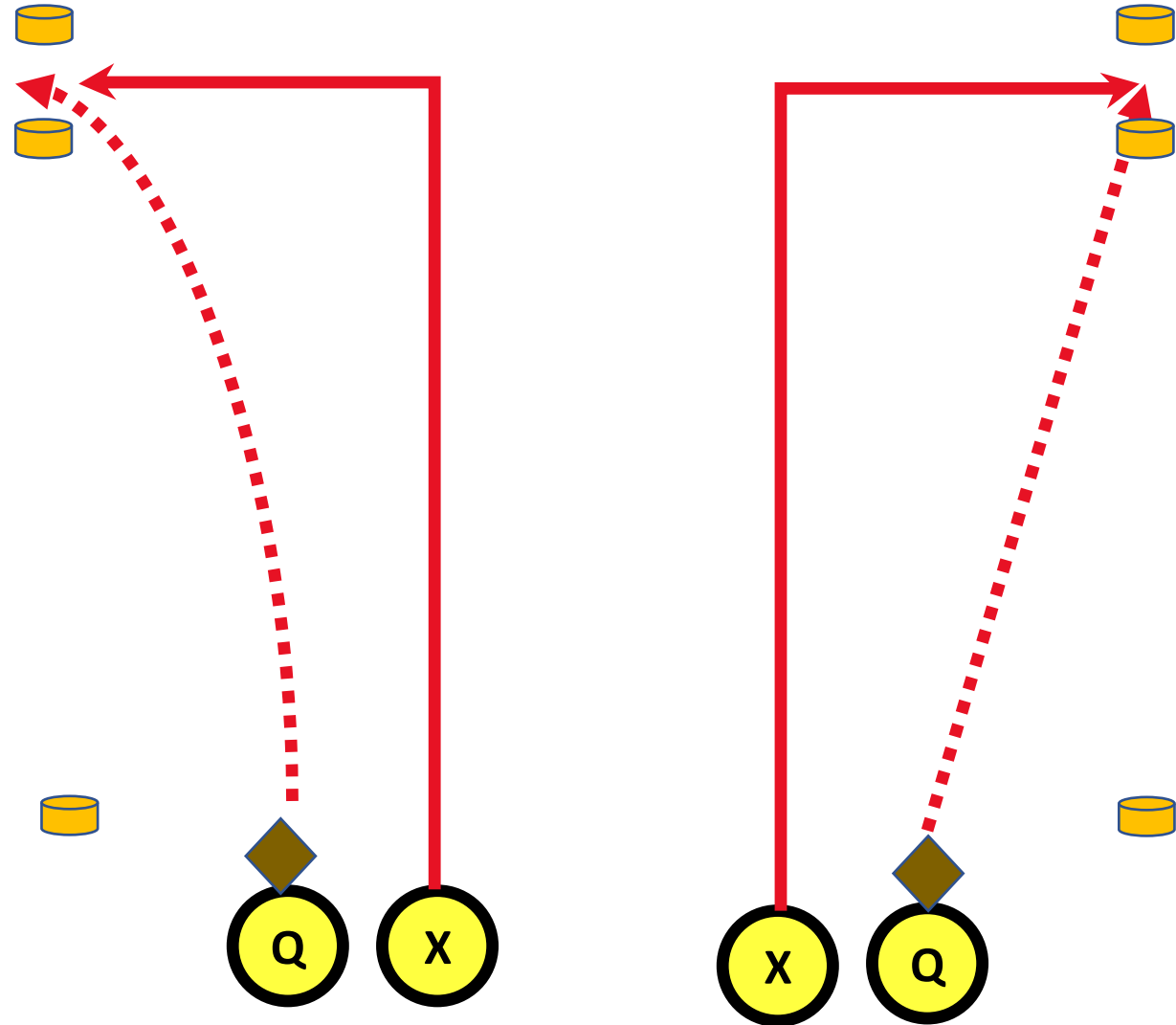
Set up two cones two yards apart along a sideline.

A Receiver will be aligned to the side of the Quarterback away from the sideline. The Receiver will be two yards to the side of the Quarterback.

When the Quarterback says "GO" the Receiver will go 50% on an "out" route towards the sideline.

The Quarterback's goal is to throw the ball so it is caught in the area marked by the two cones. The coach can also be the Quarterback for this drill.

You can difficulty by having the Receiver run at 100%. You can also add a Linebacker on the Receiver.



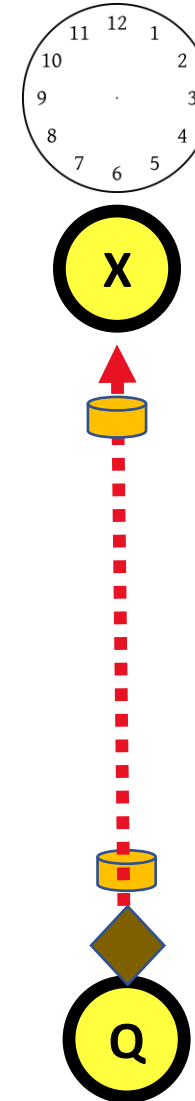
Clockwork Drill

Have two players partner. They should be 5-10 yards apart.

Have one player throw the ball at all hands of the clock in a clockwise direction. They should aim to throw the ball so the receiver's arms are fully extended when they catch it.

Start at 12 o'clock (above head), then 3:00 (side), then 6:00 (knees), and finish with 9:00 (side).

To advance the drill, the receiver can have their back facing the Quarterback, and looking back at them over their shoulder.



Half Turn Drill

Have two players partner. They should be 5-10 yards apart.

Have the receiver turn their back to their partner. The receiver will turn their head and look over their left shoulder.

The Quarterback will throw the ball towards the receiver's left shoulder. The receiver should catch with their hands.

After 5 reps to the left, have the receiver do the same drill looking over their right shoulder.



Advanced Half Turn Drill

Have two players partner. They should be 5-10 yards apart.

Have the receiver turn their back to their partner. The receiver will turn their head and look over their left shoulder.

When the Quarterback releases the ball the receiver will snap their head to look over their right shoulder.

The Quarterback should throw the ball just outside the receiver's right shoulder.

After 5 reps to the left, have the receiver do the same drill by looking over their right shoulder before the throw.



Lying “U” Drill

Receiver lays on back with hands on their thighs.

A coach or another player throws the football to the receiver. Receiver should quickly lift up their arms to catch the ball with their hands using the “U” technique. This means the thumbs are touching and the two hands together make a “U” shape.

The receiver should watch the ball into their hands and have some give as the ball hits their hands.

Count how many are caught in a row.

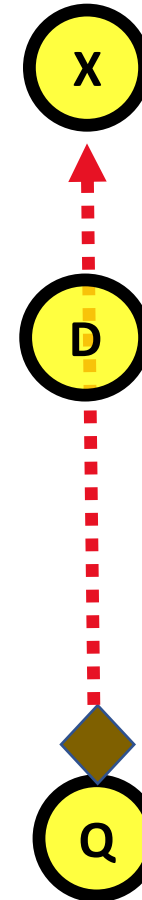


Hands Up Drill

A receiver and defender face each other from two yards away.

When the Quarterback says “go” the receiver jogs backwards while the defender follows with their hands in the air. Defender’s back should be to the quarterback.

The Receiver needs to catch the ball while being distracted by the defenders arms in the air.



Squat Catch Drill

Receiver lines up 5-8 yards away from the Quarterback.

The Receiver faces the passer, starts in a squatting position and springs up to catch each pass.

As the exercise progresses, the passes can be thrown higher and in more difficult locations.

Coaches can find a fun way to track how many can be caught out of ten throws.



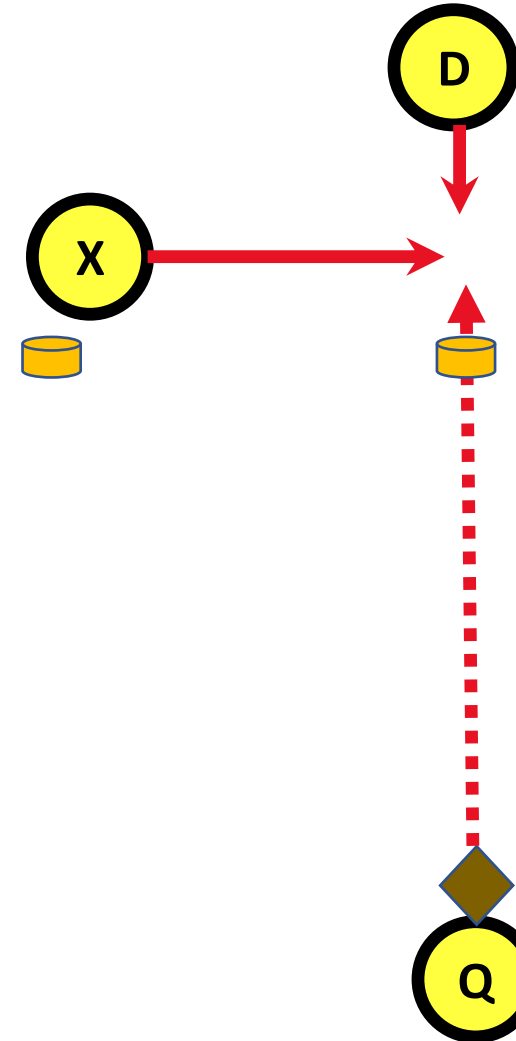
Contact & Catch Drill

Set up two cones three yards apart. A Receiver is lined up at one of the cones and a coach/defender is set up a yard behind the other cone.

When the coach says “GO” the receiver will burst towards the opposite cone, pivot and face the Quarterback with their hands in the air giving a good receiving target.

As the ball is thrown the coach/defender will irritate the receiver by tapping his shoulders/back/arms.

The receiver should maintain concentration and catch with their hands.



Flip 'n Catch Drill

Set up two players 5-10 yards apart. The player with the ball is the Quarterback and the other player is the receiver. The receiver will have their back facing the Quarterback.

When the Quarterback says "GO" the receiver will quickly turn around with their hands in the air ready to catch the ball. As the receiver is turning around the Quarterback will throw the ball.

The receiver should maintain concentration and catch with their hands. Once the receiver has the ball, the players will switch roles.

This drill can be made more challenging by having the Quarterback randomly throw high or low or to the side.

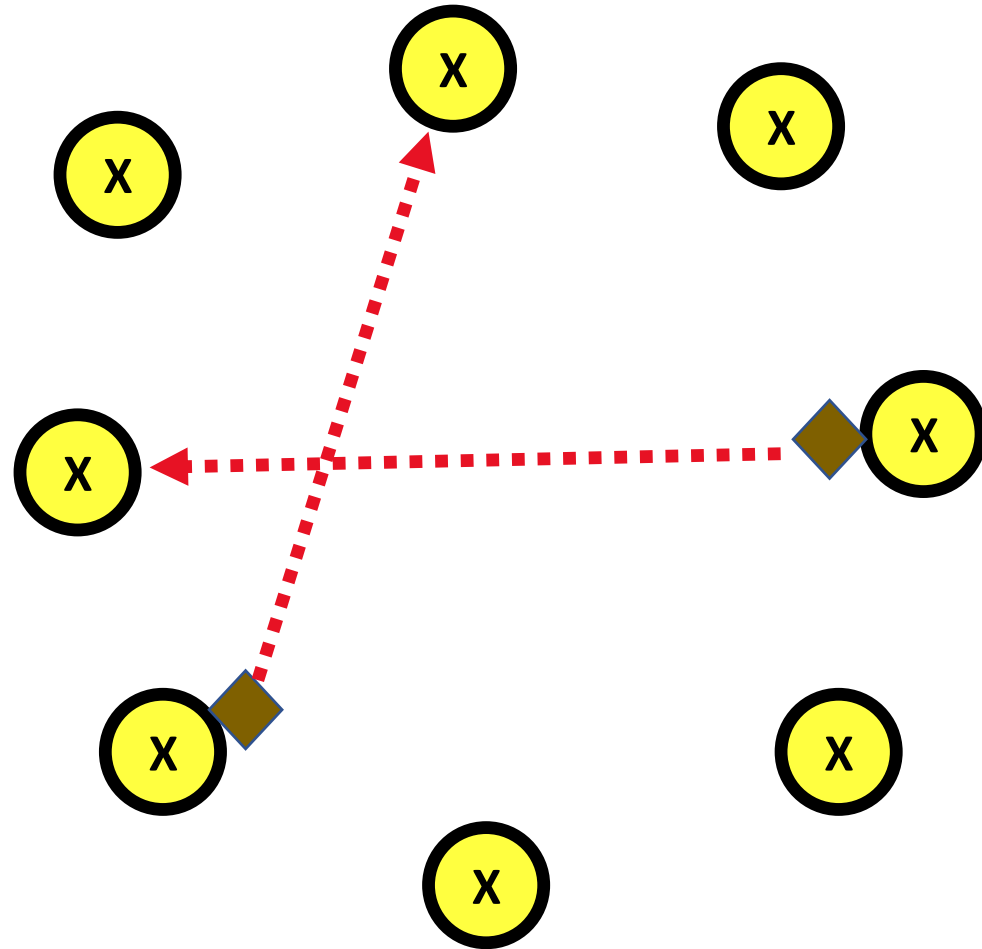


Globetrotter Drill

Have the players huddle up, then all take two steps back to get a nice big circle.

Now give one player a football, and have them throw it back and forth in the circle, throwing to any other player at any time. It's important that these are soft, catchable passes and the players aren't just whipping the ball at each other.

Once they've gotten into a rhythm, throw in a second football and watch things really heat up.

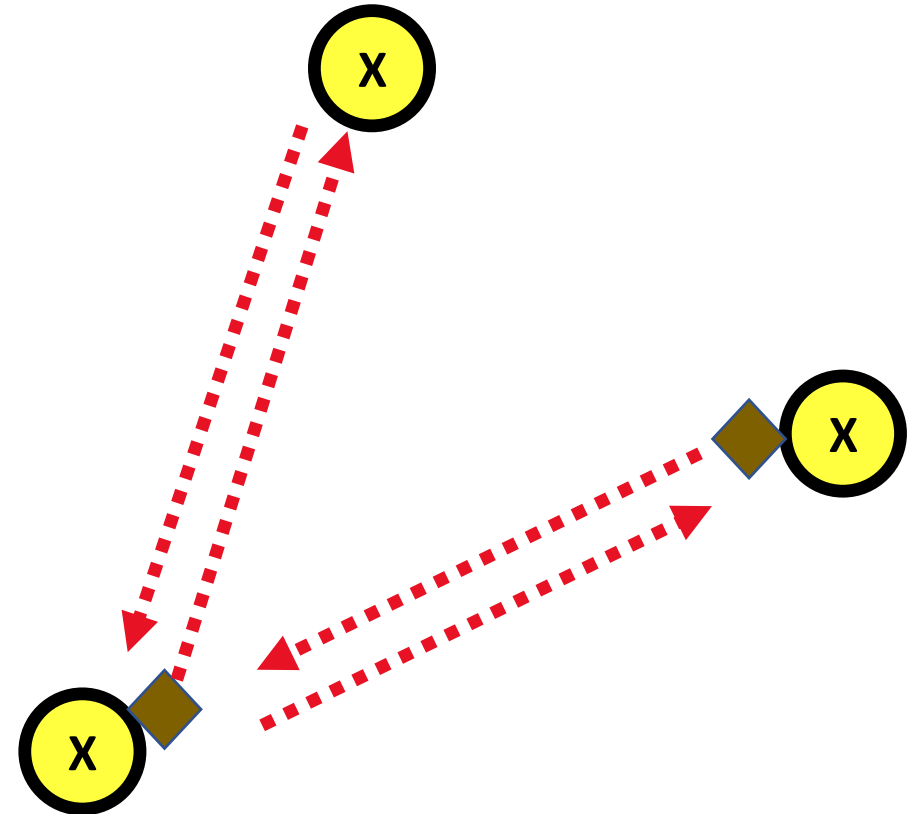


Machine Gun Drill

This drill needs two footballs and three players. Configure the kids in a triangle. The player at the top of the triangle will have a football and will face the two other players. One of these athletes will also have a football.

The player on top of the triangle begins this drill by tossing the football to the kid that does not have a football. Once this football is released, the athlete with the other football will toss it to the athlete that just released his football. He must immediately toss that football to the athlete that is empty handed.

This process continues until the athlete on top drops a football. Your receivers will become machine gun fast with the footballs as they come at them in an alternating fashion.





Defense Drills

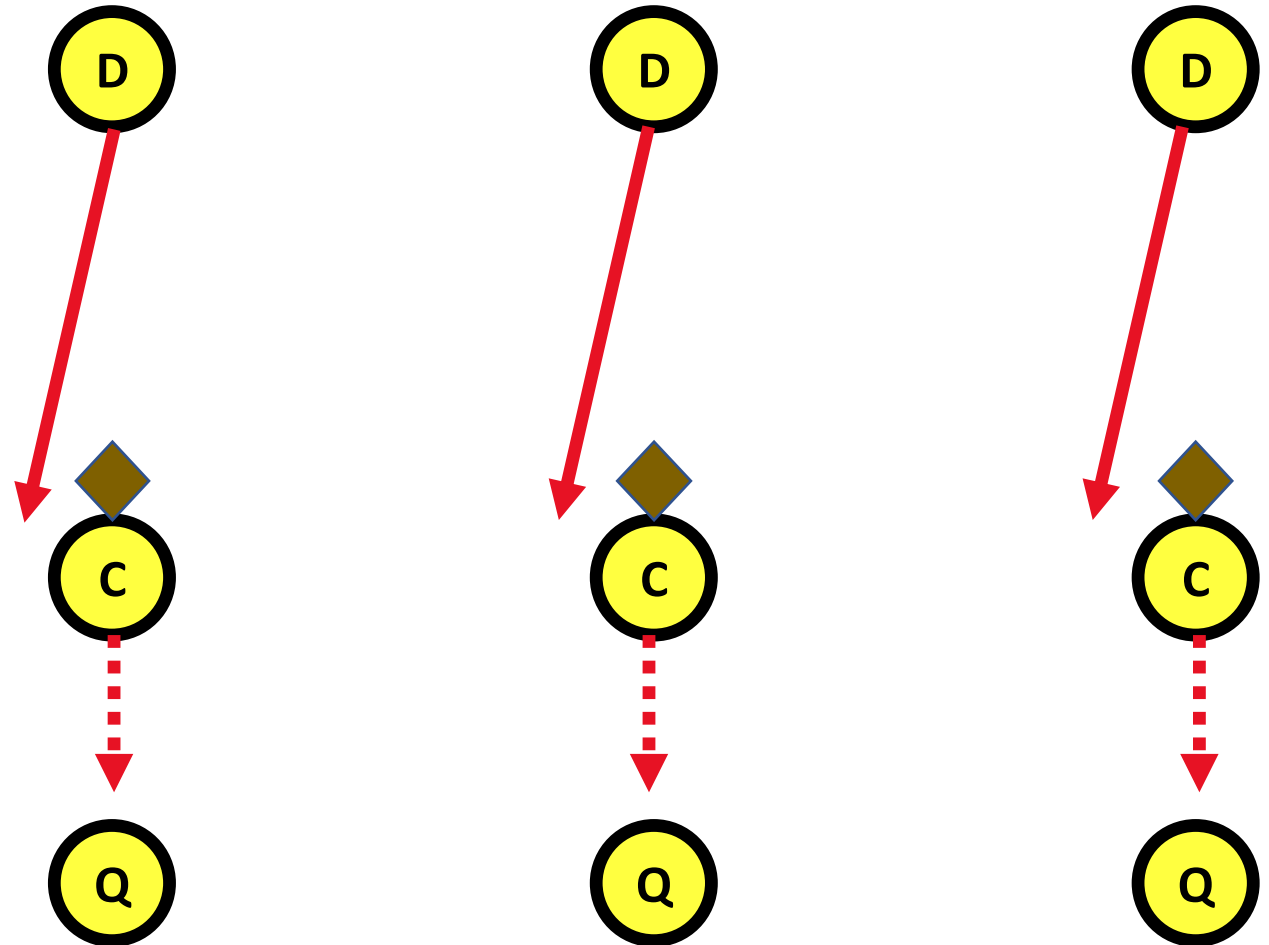
Explode Off the Ball Drill

Many young players react only to the movement of the offensive player in front of them. The Defense should be trained to react to the movement of the ball not the player.

For this drill, have your players in the proper 2-point stance with an eye looking in on the ball.

When the ball is snapped, the Defense should react, crashing in on the ball. In this drill the Coach or Quarterback should vary the snap count and even use a silent snap count.

Emphasis should be on ball movement.



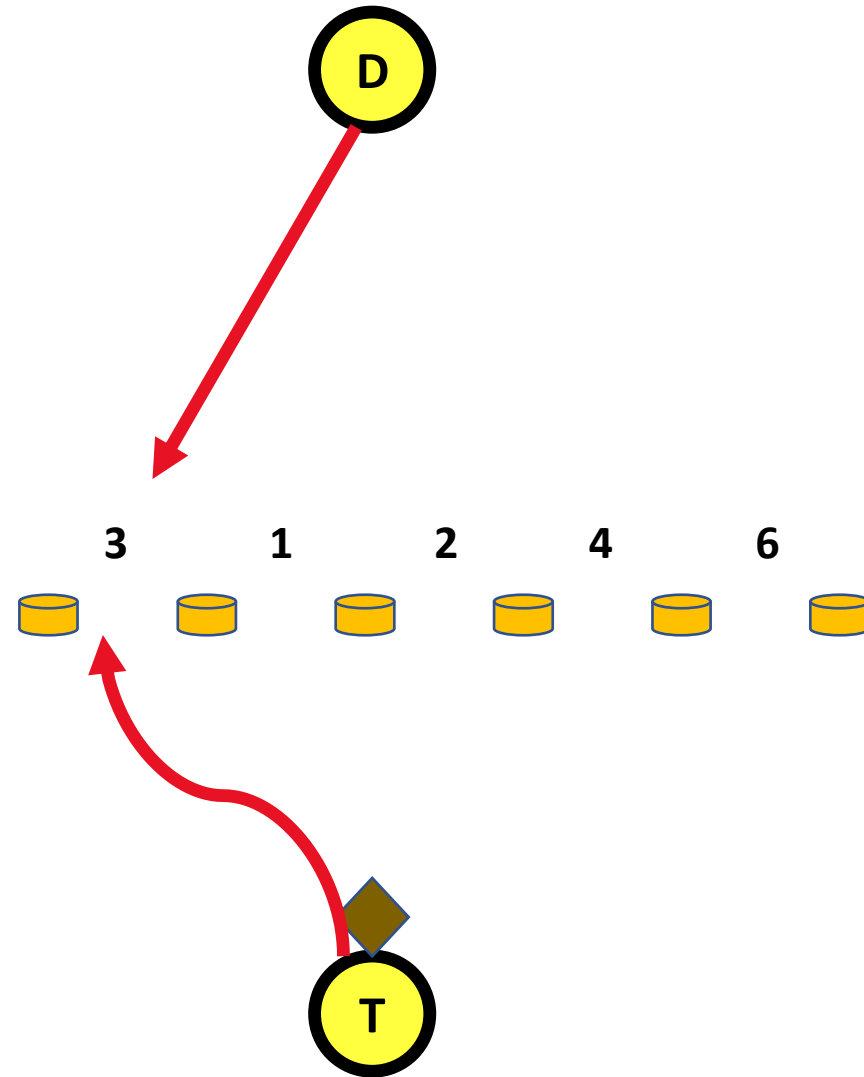
Linebacker Reaction Drill

Linebackers need to quickly read the play, react to the play and move into the proper position (anywhere on the field) to make the tackle.

For this drill set up 5- 6 cones that represent the offensive players. There should be enough space between the cones so that your Running Back can run through them.

Have your Linebacker position themselves 4-7 yards off the line of scrimmage. Before the play starts the coach can tell the Running Back know what hole (between what cones) they are to run. Before they run through the cones, the Running Back should “fake” running thorough a few other sets of cones.

The Linebacker should keep their shoulders parallel to the LOS while following the Running Back and then “fill” the hole where that the Running Back runs through, grabbing the Running Back’s flag.

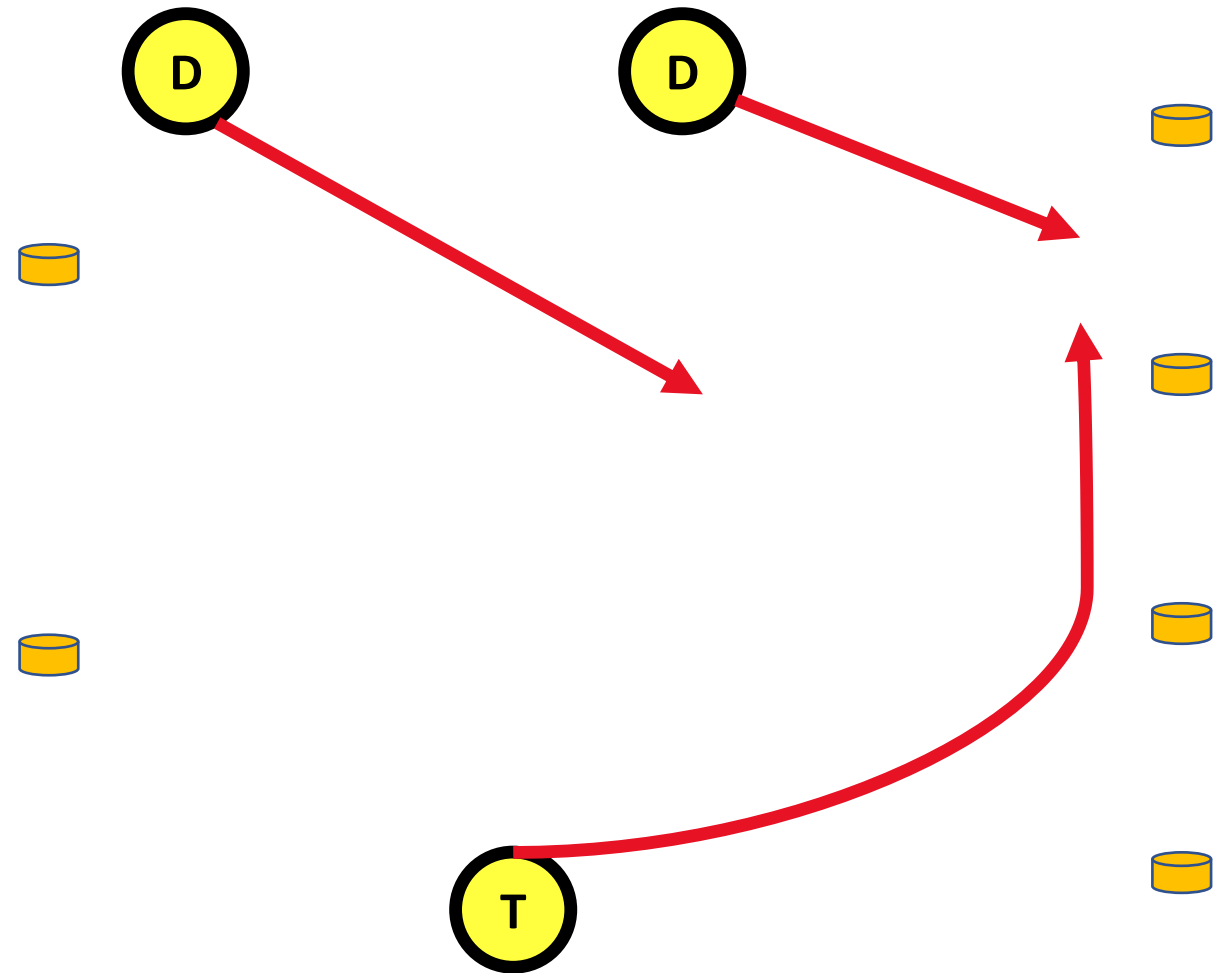


Sideline Funnel Drill

The sideline can be looked upon as an extra defender. If you get the ball carrier close to the sideline, you limit the number of directions the ball carrier can run.

At one side place a couple cones and the sideline (or more cones) should be used as the other boundary. This is the area that the runner is restricted to.

This drill is performed with 1 ball carrier and 2 or more Defenders. On the coach's command, the ball carrier should start downfield. It is the defenders' job to cut off the ball carrier's running lanes, forcing the runner towards the sideline. The Defense is essentially cornering the ball carrier.



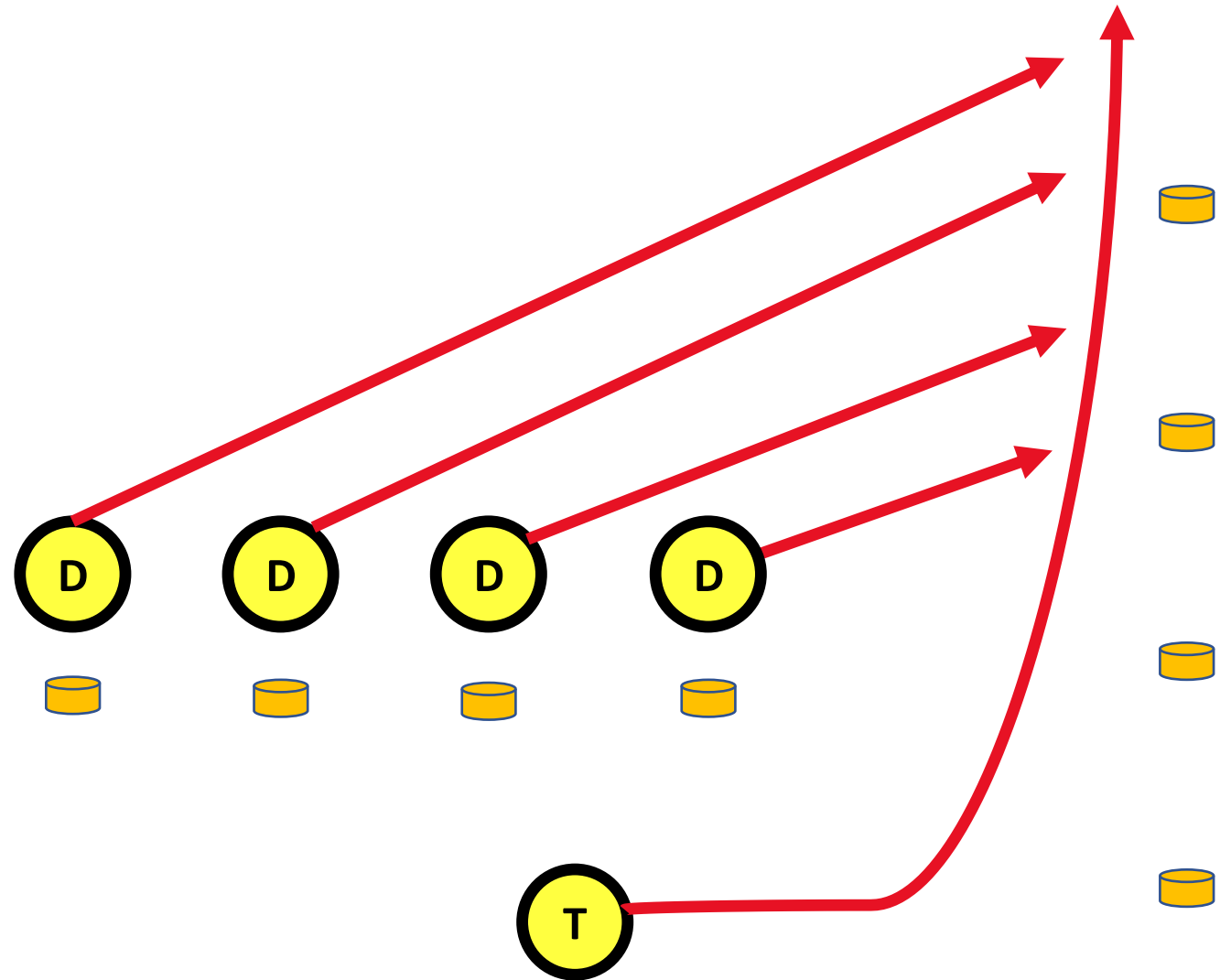
Angle of Pursuit Drill

It's very important to teach your defense the proper angle of pursuit. Many young defenders will simply chase a ball carrier from behind, leaving you with 11 players lined up behind the ball carrier all the way down the field. For this drill explain the importance of the angle of pursuit.

First walk your players through their pursuit. Players furthest from the ball carrier will take the largest angle to the play (see diagram). Emphasize that the players should be running to where the ball carrier will be (not where the ball carrier is now!).

After walking your players through their angles, set up the drill at full speed. This drill can be done with 3-6 defenders. At the coach's command the defenders should begin pursuit of the ball carrier.

For this drill the defenders should simply touch the ball carrier. The ball carrier continues down the sideline until all players have touched him. Defenders should be tracking the backside of the running back's hip.

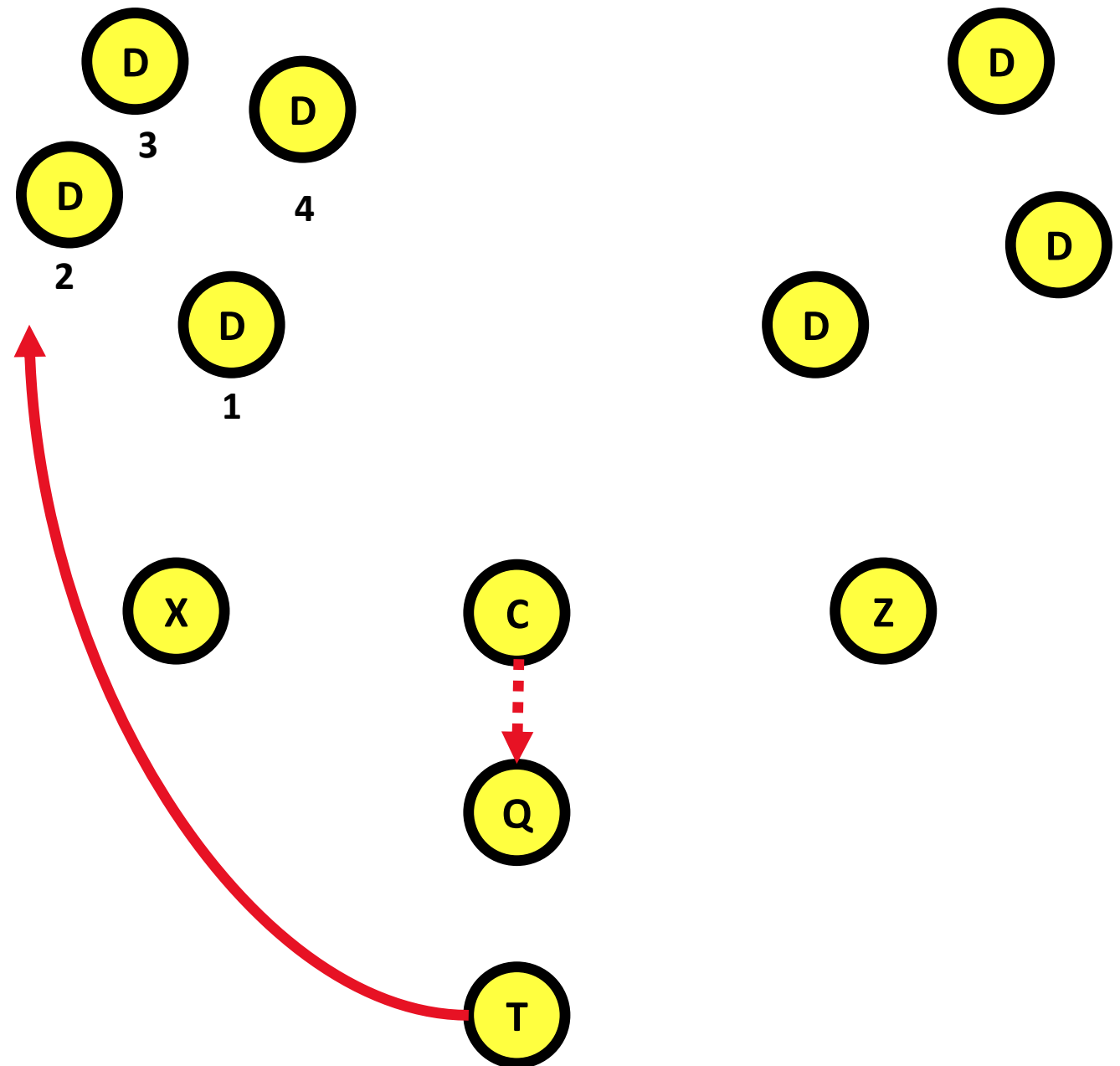


Swarm Drill

Explain to your team that a good defense is like a swarm of Bees around a Hive. Instead of Bees around a Hive, you want your Defense swarming around the ball carrier.

This drill can be done with the entire defense versus a skeleton offense. At the snap of the ball the offense starts the play.

When a defender grabs the ball carriers flag instruct all your players to "FREEZE!" Go around and count how many players are around the ball carrier. You want to avoid 1 on 1 play (only 1 player making the tackle is around the ball). There should be a number of players surrounding the ball carrier.



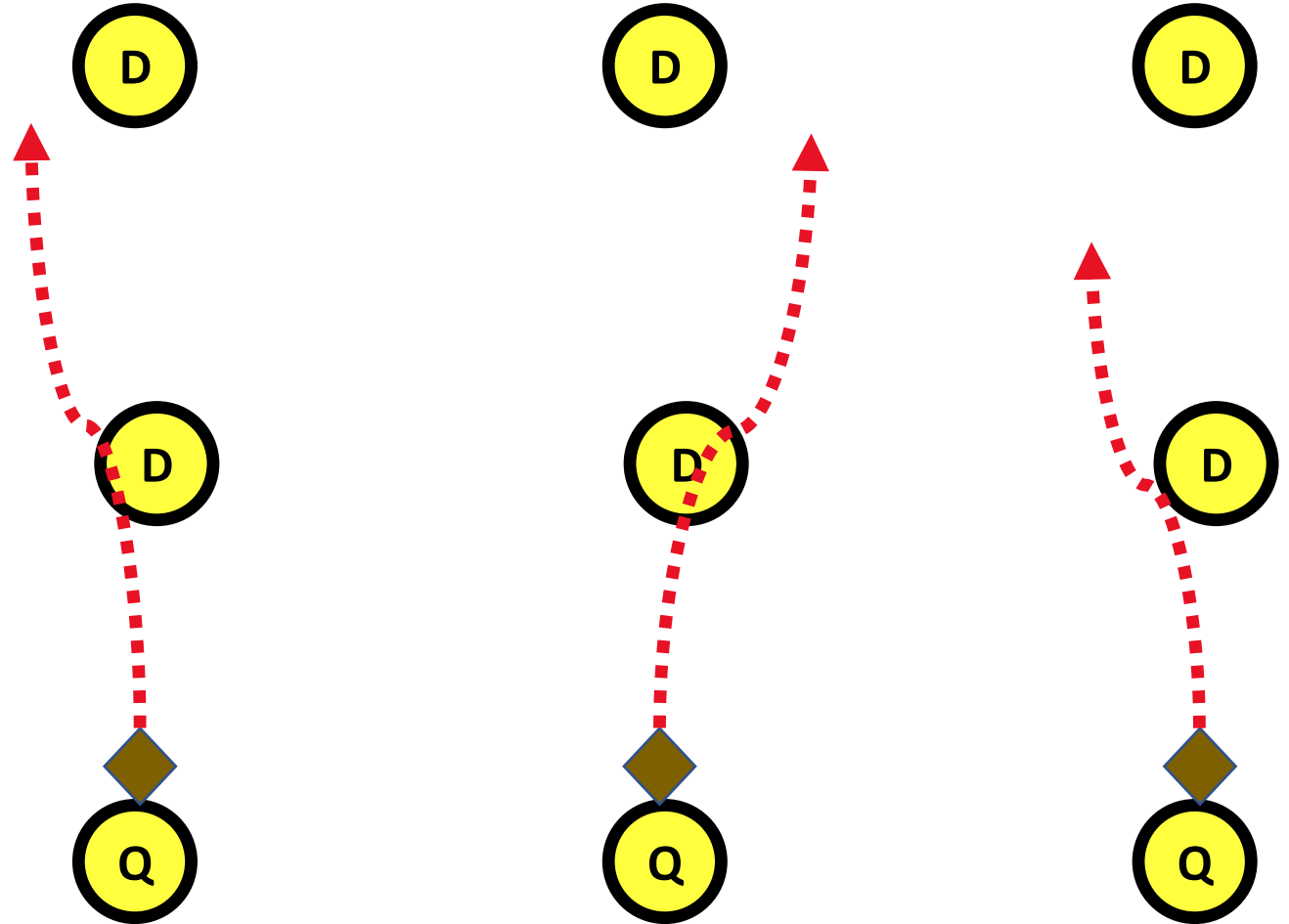
Tip Drill

The purpose of this drill is to get players to react to a tipped ball during games.

For this drill, have groups of 3 players.

They will each be 5 yards apart. The Quarterback should throw the ball just above the middle defenders head. The middle defender should tip the ball into the air. The back defender must try to catch the tipped ball.

Make sure the players are rotated so the same player is not always the middle defender.



Pass Coverage Read/React Drill

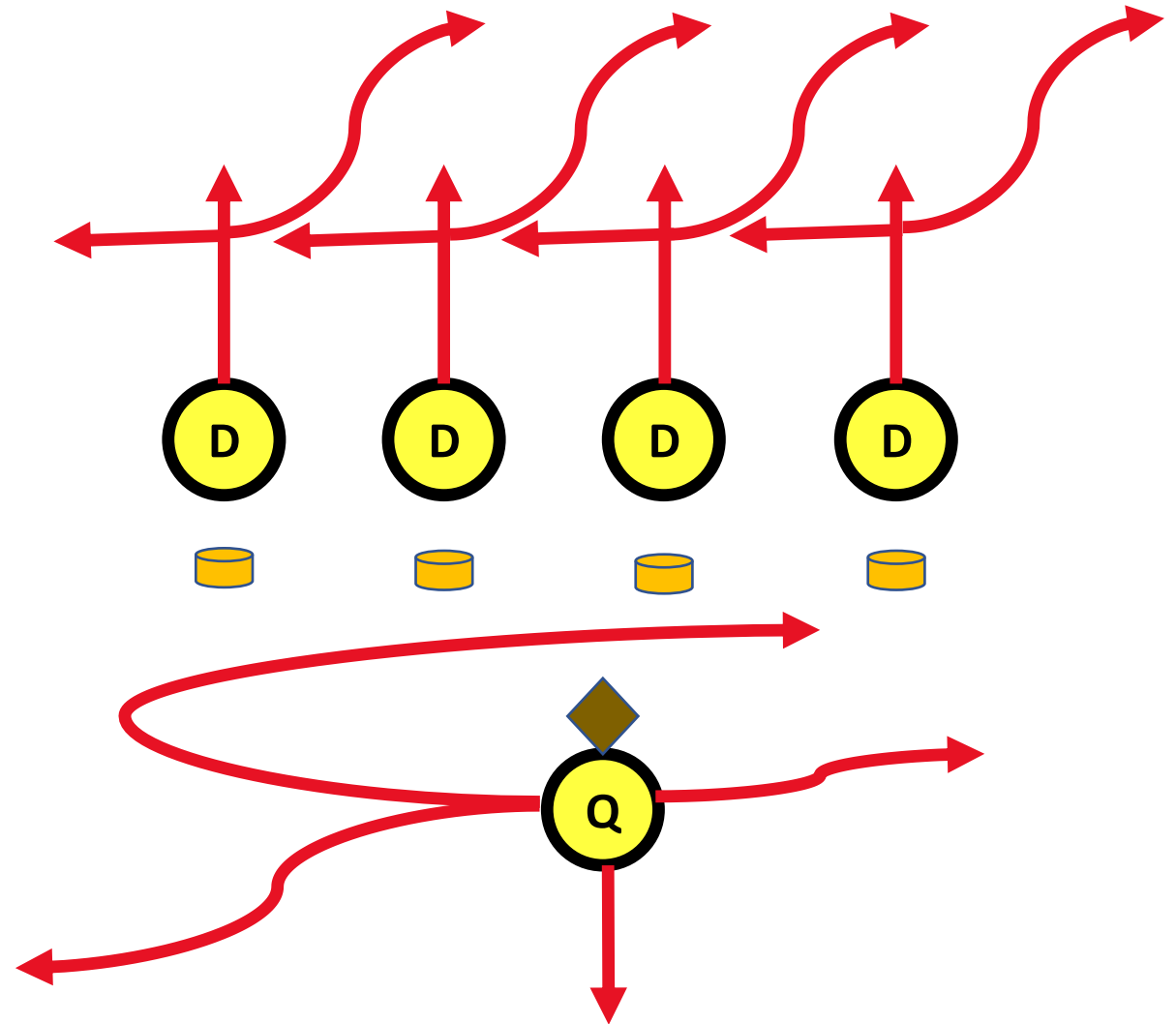
Defensive players need to be able to read the play as it's developing and react accordingly.

In this drill a coach plays the role of Quarterback. The players line up in a proper 2-point stance position.

After the coach (Q) says "GO" the players must read the play and react.

The coach should vary the play:

- Q fades back to pass = D goes into pass coverage
- Q keeps the ball and runs = D comes up and attacks the run
- Q rollout right/left = DBs start back in pass coverage and roll to follow Q



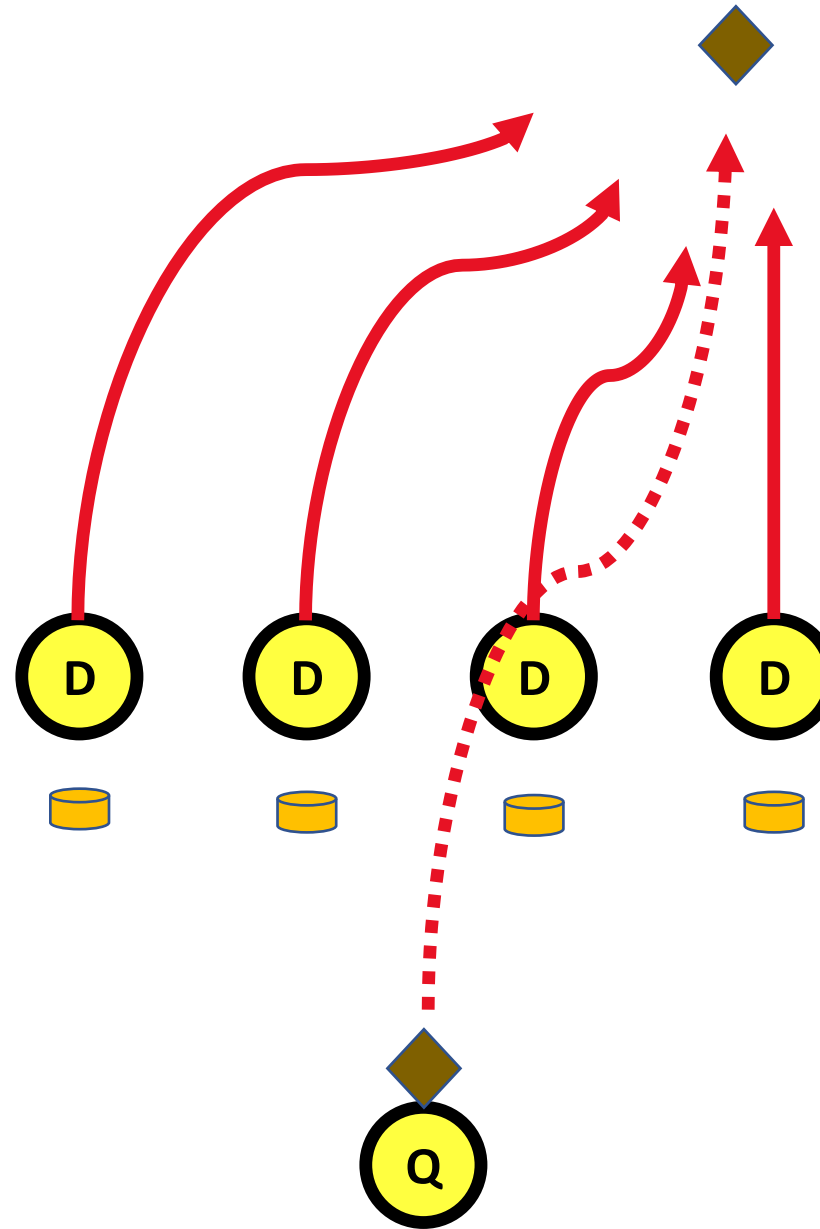
Defensive Back Pass Coverage Drill

This drill works on good pass coverage fundamentals.

The drill start with 3-4 defensive players lined up in the 2-point stance ready position.

As the coach/Quarterback drops back to pass, the defense quickly backpedals into coverage.

As the Q turns and throws, all the Defensive Backs react and run to the area where the ball is thrown, attempting to catch the ball.



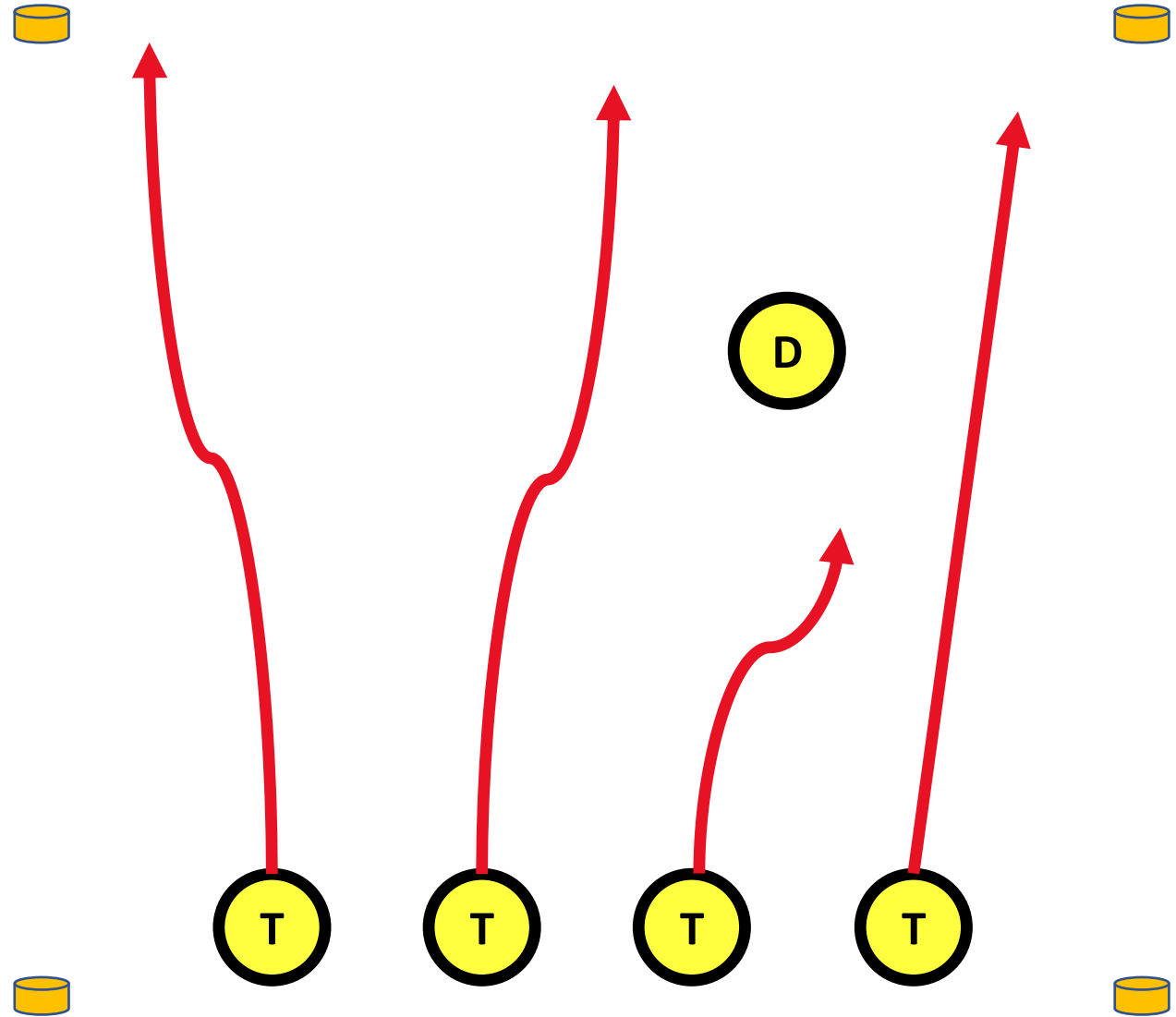
Sharks vs. Minnows - Flag Grabbing Drill

Designate an area on the field for play. All players must stay within this designated area.

Start with one or two players designated as the "Shark(s)." The rest of the players are the "Minnows." The "Shark" is to grab the flag of the "Minnows."

Once a "Minnow" has their flag grabbed, they then become a "Shark", and attempt to grab the flag from the other "Minnows" the next time.

At the start of the game the "Minnows" should be on the run trying to avoid the "Sharks". The game ends when there is only 1 "Minnow" remaining.



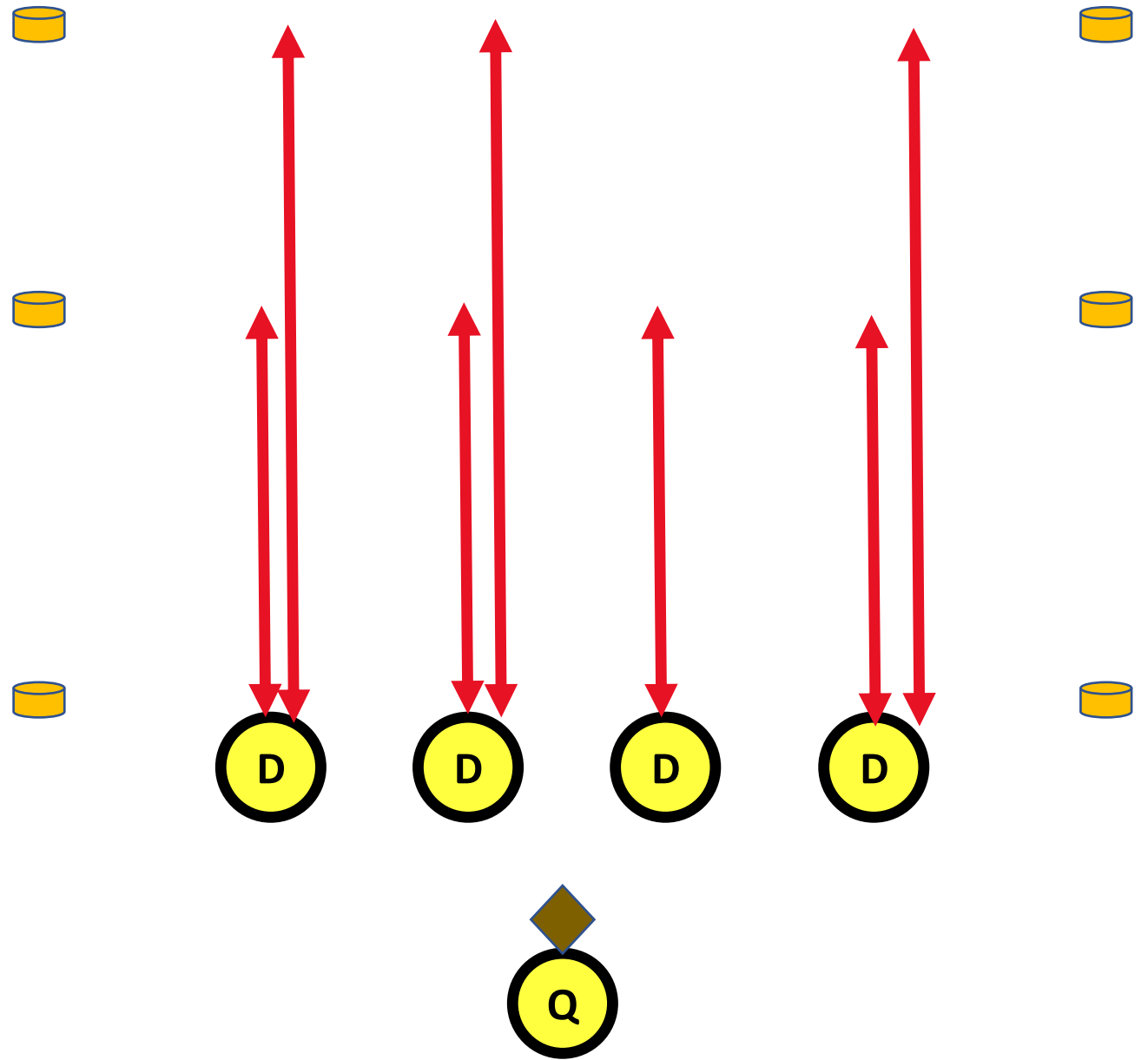
Backpedal Drill

The drill start with 3-4 defensive players lined up in the 2-point stance ready position.

As the coach drops back to pass, the defense quickly backpedals to the middle line of cones. They then sprint to the starting cones.

The players will then backpedal to the back cone line. Lastly, they will sprint forward back to the line of scrimmage.

Coach on keeping balance and effort.

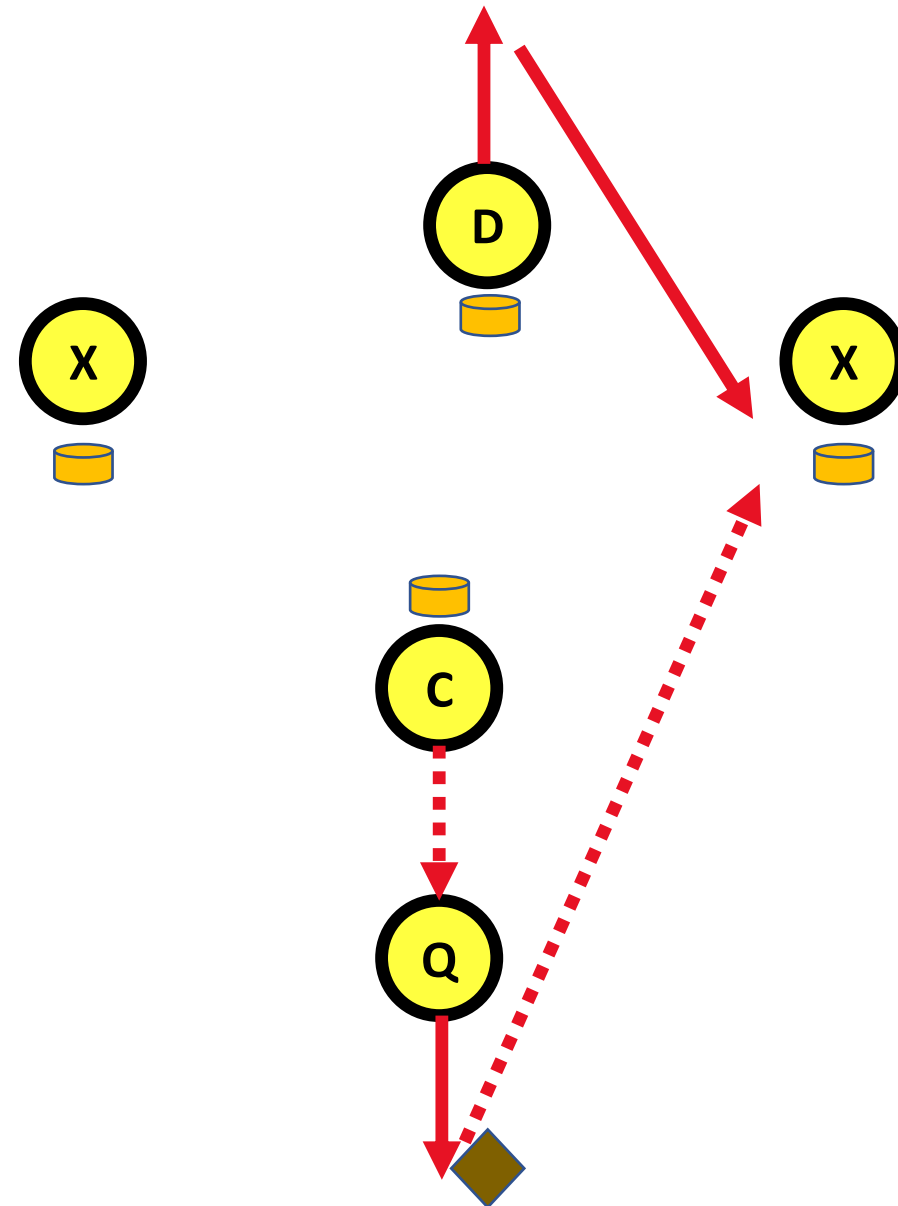


Zone Coverage Drill

This drill allows players to get comfortable covering two receivers in the same zone area. They will work on their backpedal, reading the quarterback and exploding to undercut the ball and getting an interception.

Line up two stationary Receivers that are 5-7 yards apart. A Linebacker will line up between them.

Upon the snap of the ball the Quarterback will do a 3-step drop and the Linebacker will backpedal. Within two seconds the Quarterback will throw to one of the stationary receivers. The Linebacker will drive on the ball, intercept it and run it back to the coach standing next to the Quarterback.



Zone Box Drill

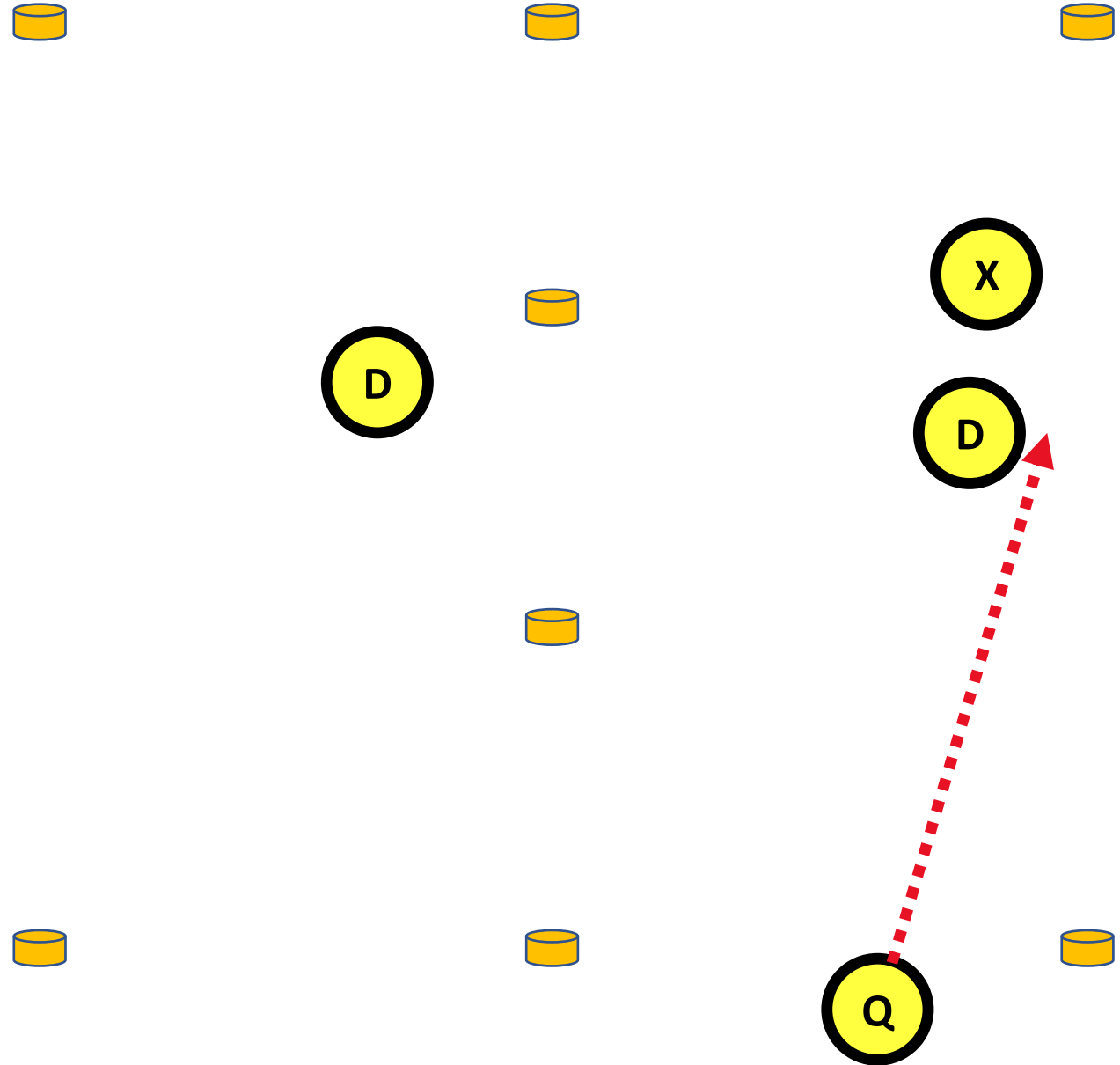
Designate a 10x10 area on the field and mark with cones. Split the area by placing cones down the middle of the square. One Linebacker will be positioned in each of the two “zones.” They cannot leave their zone during the drill.

Start with one receiver that is able to scramble anywhere in the box to get open.

When the coach says “GO” the Linebackers will defend their zone area and prevent a completion. Coach the kids on communicating and keeping a head on a swivel between the receiver and the Quarterback.

The Quarterback or coach has 7 seconds to throw the ball.

You can add a second receiver to this drill.



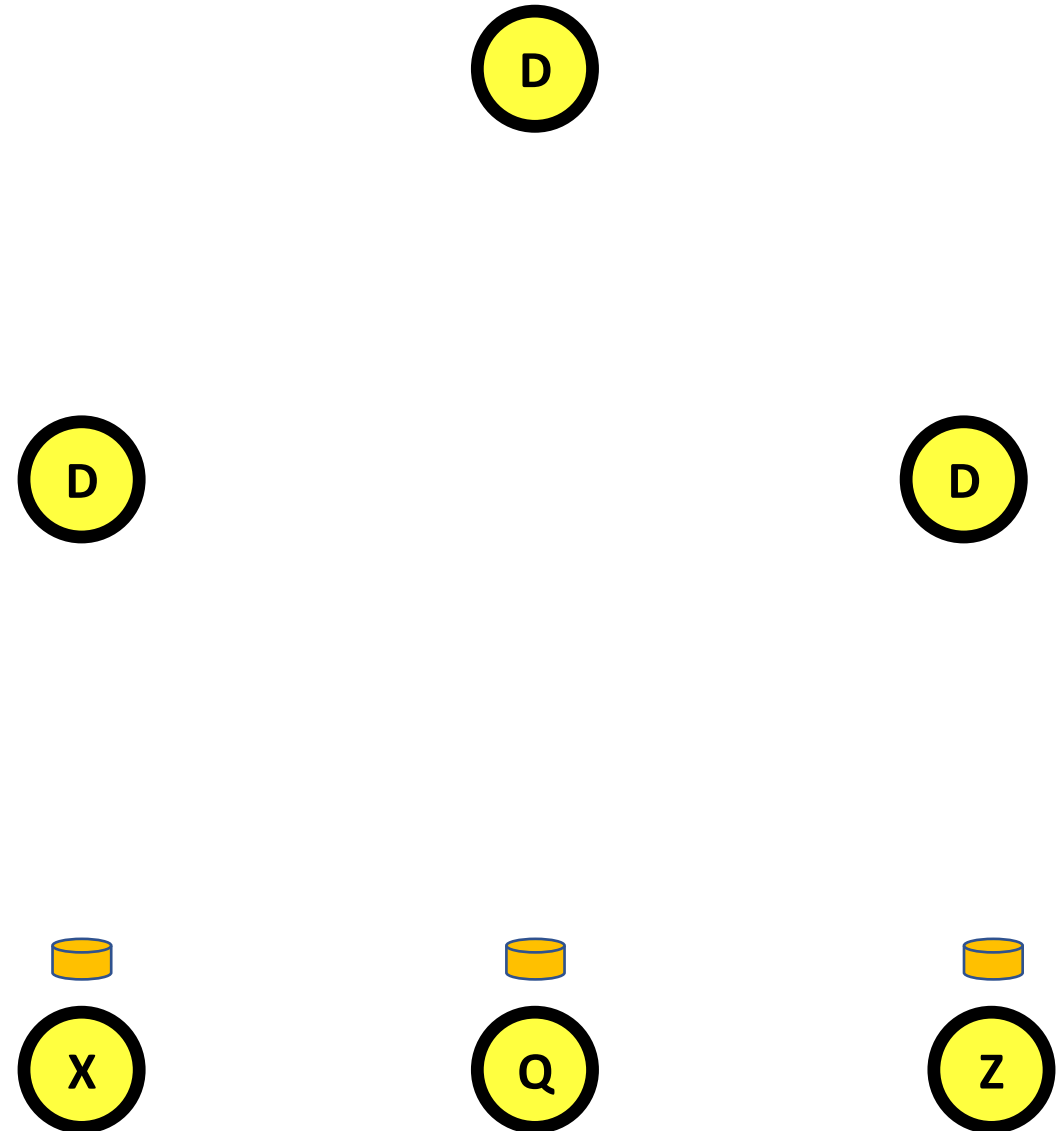
3 on 3 Zone Drill

Once the players understand basic zone concepts you can have them run the 3 on 3 drill. There will be two Defensive backs splitting the field in half. A single high safety will be back them up.

When the coach says “GO” the receivers will run crossing patterns. They will need to scramble to open areas to get open.

Coach the kids to communicate and stay in their zone. The Safety should never allow someone to get behind the defense.

The Quarterback or coach has 7 seconds to throw the ball.



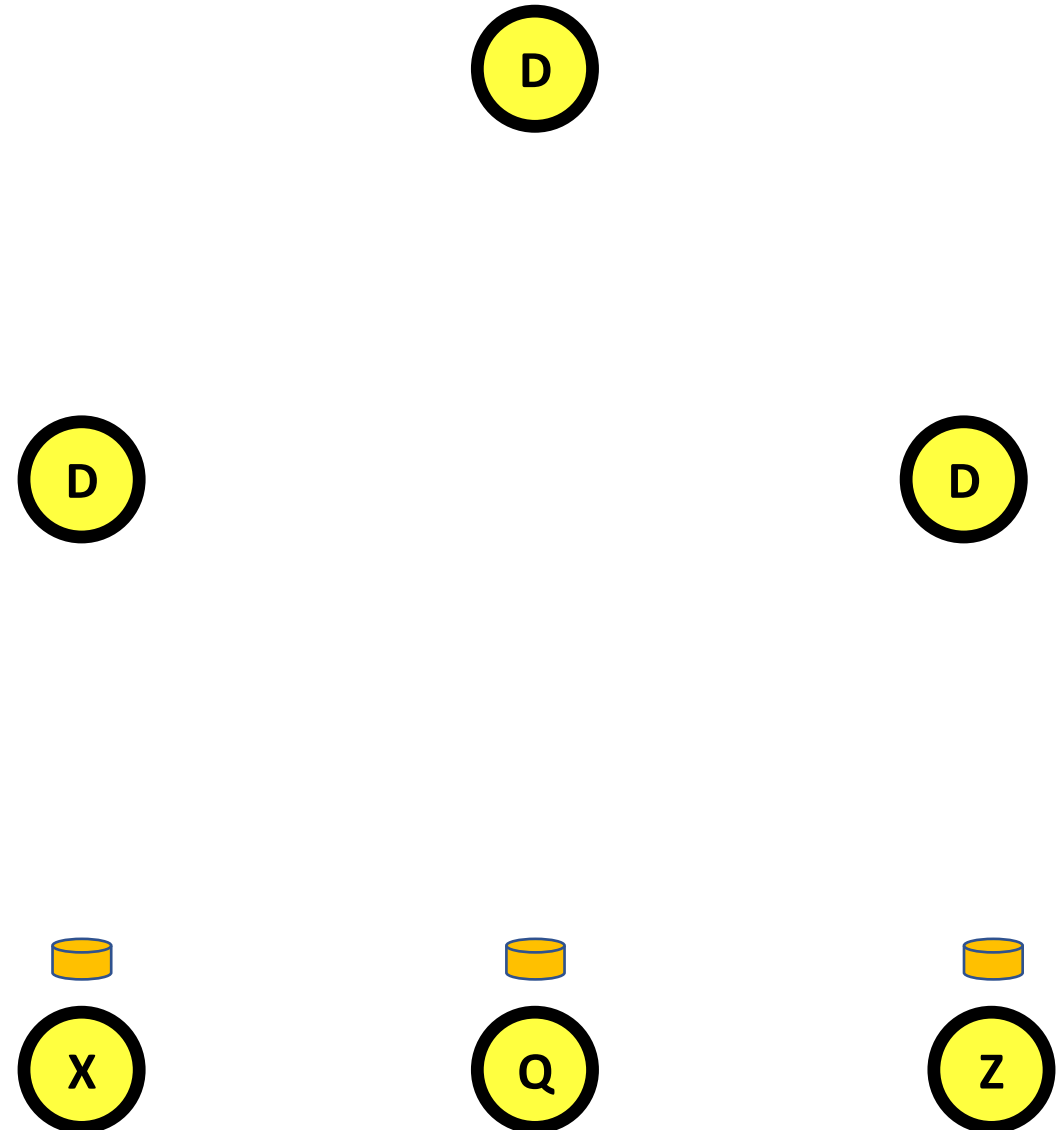
3 on 3 Man to Man Drill

Once the players understand the difference between zone and man concepts you can have them run the 3 on 3 man to man drill. There will be a Defensive Back covering each receiver. A single high safety will be back them up.

When the coach says “GO” the receivers will run crossing patterns. They will need to scramble to open areas to get open.

Coach the kids to communicate and stay in their zone. The Safety should never allow someone to get behind the defense.

The Quarterback or coach has 7 seconds to throw the ball.

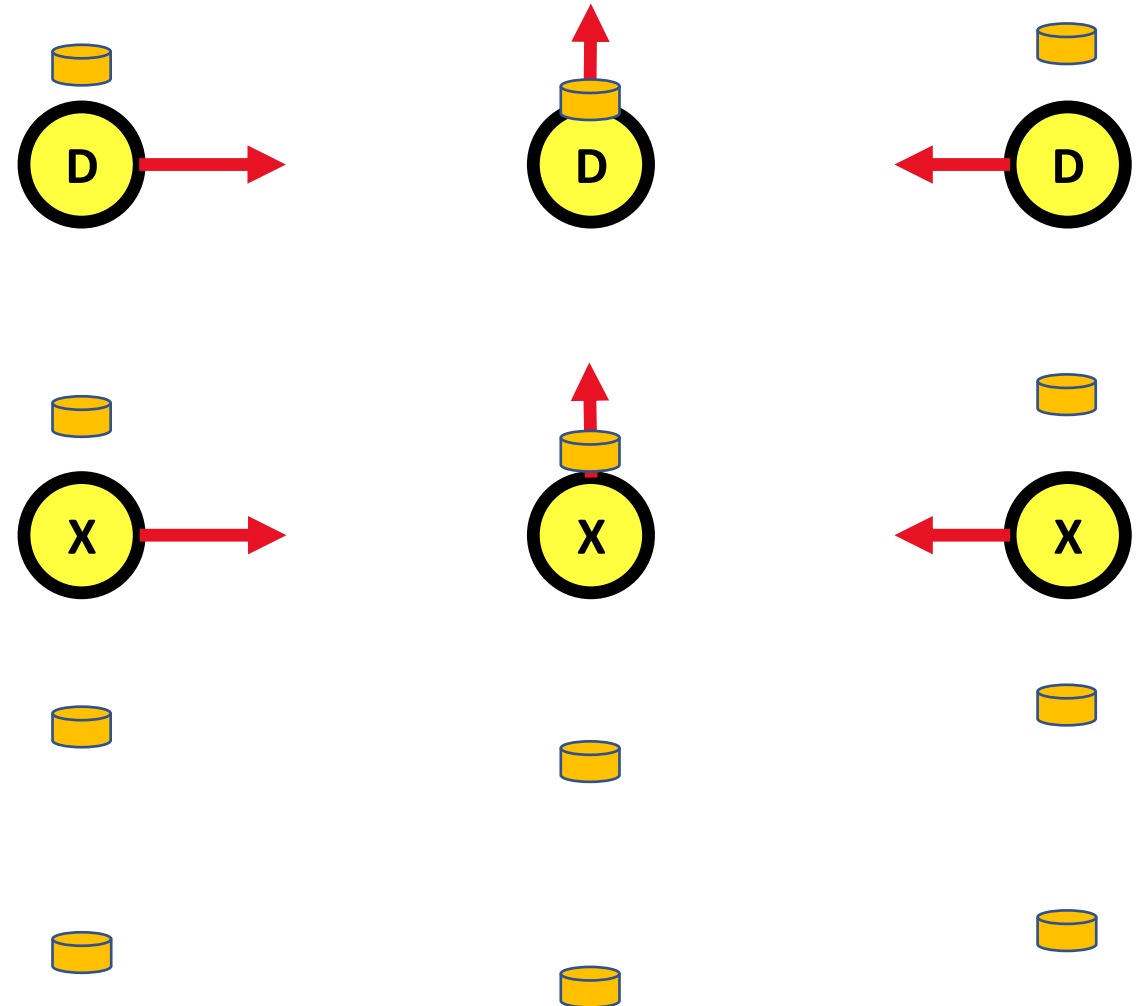


Defense Mirror Drill

This drill teaches defensive players to sink their hips when a receiver does.

Defensive player is 6 yards off the line of scrimmage. Receiver steps towards the defender and the defender back pedals. Coaches can set up more than one line of kids.

Receiver drops hips and chops feet every few yards, and that action should be matched by the defender. Also, the receiver can break in or out of the line as they go down the field. The defender should also mirror this action by the receiver.



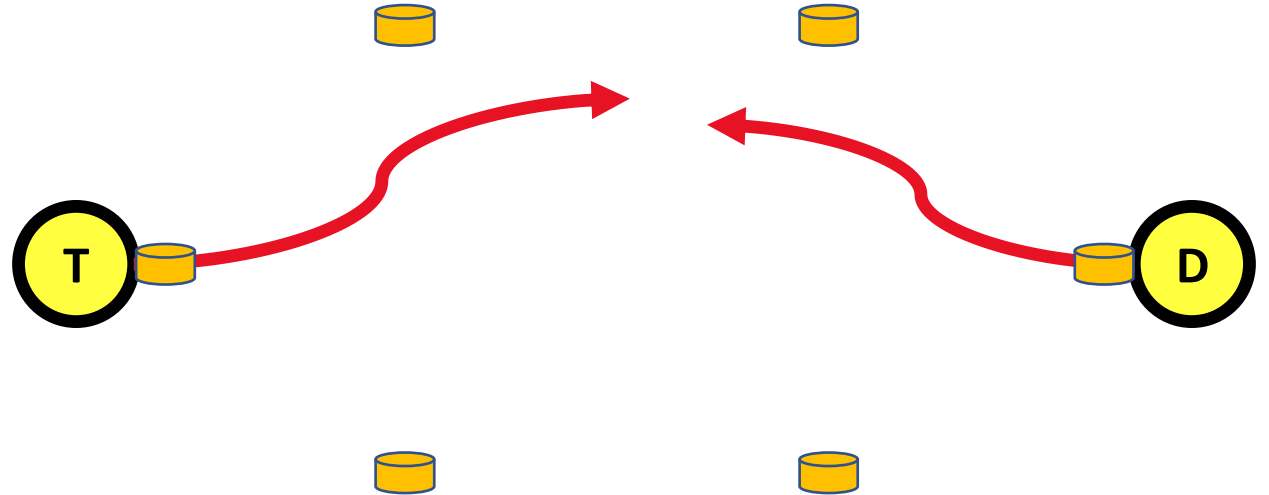
Oklahoma Drill

You will have 1 Running Back and 1 Linebacker for this drill.

Set up a pair of cones 2-3 yards apart - this is the area that the Running Back needs to run through.

At the coach's command, the Running Back will attempt to run past the Linebacker before their flag is pulled.

You can add complexity by having both players start the drill by laying on their back.



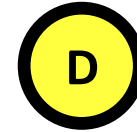
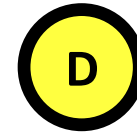
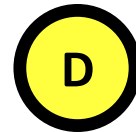
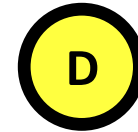
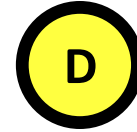
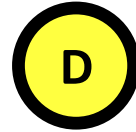
Last Kid Standing Drill

Designate an area on the field for play. All players must stay within this designated area.

When the coach says “GO” the players will try to pull off other player flags while trying not to get their flag pulled.

A player is out of the game once their flag is pulled.

The game ends when there is only 1 player remaining.



Near Hip Drill

Place 4 cones in a 10 by 10 yard square. The Linebacker should align with the ball carrier on one cone and the Running Back is on the cone next to them.

The Running Back will follow the line towards the cone in front of them at about 50%. While the ball carrier is running at the cone across the square the Linebacker should be closing in.

The defender needs to stay balanced and keep eyes on the backside of the near hip of the ball carrier. When he gets to the ball carrier he needs to tap off with two hands and finish the drill.

To add complexity you can have the ball carrier drop their hip while jogging along the line. If the Running Back drops a hip the Linebacker must come to balance and stop pursuit until there is a change of direction. By tracking the back side of the near hip the tackler is prepared to adjust to any moves from the Running Back.

