

Coach T Newsletter

Dedicated exclusively to youth football

July 2008

The response to last week's newsletter tells me everyone is excited for football season to begin. I got quite a response from coaches on the quotes I included. Not a lot of you liked the idea of having the team yell "reverse" on a fake reverse. I don't teach that but someone out there does. It appears the TE drag route is very popular as a goal line or extra point play. Anyone go to a 3-3 defense? How's that working for you? Keep the ideas coming in.

Let me again thank all of you for your support of the Coach T Newsletter. For those of you who have visited my web site at <http://www.coacht.tv/> to inquire about my DVD series "How to Coach Youth Football," I'd like to thank you as well. <http://youtube.com/watch?v=XuxO1jxoCkE>

I received a lot of response from people who have received my DVD on "Offensive Line." A couple of things I have to add about that particular DVD. First, in my mind, coaching the offensive line correctly is critical at the youth level. You'll notice that there are so many different kinds of blocks and drills included in that DVD. It is the longest chapter in the series. A word of caution, it's not how many different blocks your team uses, it's how well they execute each step of each particular block. If your third grader hasn't mastered the drive block, you don't want to move onto cross blocks or down blocks. Be patient, take it one step at a time. Here are some initial thoughts in teaching offensive linemen.

Stance

Proper stance is the foundation from which a good offensive lineman must operate. It's vital that the weight of the lineman is evenly distributed so that he remains balanced. Too much weight forward makes it hard to pass block. Too much weight behind will not get a fast power step/quick step charge off the line.

Splits & Alignment

Proper splits for linemen are vital to stretch the field and provide good blocking angles. A common mistake in youth football is bunching linemen together, foot to foot. For 8, 9 and 10 year olds a good distance between the center and the guards is one foot. Between the guards and tackles, a foot and a half. For older players, a good split is two feet between the center and the guards and three feet between the guards and tackles.

Also, get your linemen to have their toes line up with the center's heel. Or, their helmets should line up with the center's shoulder pads. Get them to line up straight across, avoiding the "V Formation".

One final point, most centers don't realize that they can line up offside. Their helmet cannot encroach past the ball. Get them used to snapping the ball with their snapping hand outstretched in front of them.

Firing Off the Line

Firing off the line is a science. The first part is the power step - the first play side step that occurs following the snap of the ball. The power step is the offensive lineman's free step; the step advantage the offensive lineman

gets because they know the snap count. The second step is the quick step. This step occurs following the power step and will happen when the defense reacts to the snap of the ball. The third part is the attack; the lineman's hand contact to the chest of the defender. These three parts to firing off the ball must be repeated over and over again. A rhythm should develop.

I try to instill values in my youth athletes. One of the fun drills I do is one on trust, trust between fellow teammates... in this case, with offensive linemen. Check my clip on youtube.com:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_ikfXjlgZc

It's been great traveling around the country and seeing all the kids and their parents as we learn and have fun playing football. The Coach T camp made it to the great state of Iowa. My heart goes out to all the folks who lost their homes and, in some cases, have to rebuild their entire communities. Yes, believe it or not, there are things more important than football.

Finally, thanks to all who support youth football. Thanks also to all who find my newsletter and DVDs to be useful tools. Also, please feel free to request any of the Coach T newsletter back issues. You can also download them off the Coach T website.

Send me any suggestions, comments and questions you might have to me at coacht@coacht.tv. Also, send in your favorite resources for books, drills and plays. I'd love to share them with everyone on the Coach T network.

You can also see if one of my youth football camps will be in an area near you by visiting my web site at: <http://www.coacht.tv/>

I'd love to hear from you!
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