

Football Idea Swap #1

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-Football Idea Swap! -

Idea Sharing With Like-Minded Coaches

From Noel...

As a youth football coach for the last 8 years I have coached ages as old as 14 and as young as 7. The very first thing I notice about a good team from a bad team is how quickly the linemen get off. For the last couple of years I was trying to find a good progressive drill to use that is competitive for the kids. I was shown the tennis ball drill, I've done that with a little bit of success, then the attack drill , similar to the tennis ball drill, but with tackling dummies to knock over. Then one day as I was cleaning out my garage I came across an old Baseball Tee. Instantly I thought about using it in the tennis ball drill.

I have the players line up 5 yards behind the Tee, but in front of a board. The coach will give them a signal to go on. (a whistle a football with snap count or on ball movement.) The players will fire out from their stance across the board and grab the one tennis ball of the Tee.

I use this drill in a four drill daily fundamental rotation. We use a scoring system to have things become competitive. If the ball is grabbed and secure the player receives 2 points, the player who grabs or touches the ball, but cannot secure it gets 1 point, and if a player who did not get the ball first knocks it out of the other player's hand also receives 1 point as does the other player. Always award a point to the player who gets their first.

Once the players become very advanced now it the time to add some defenders or blockers set them with Linebacker pads, tackling dummies, ect. in the middle of the board. Get a player with equal size and strength to hold the bag or dummy. Now the players follow the same scoring system, but now can learn how to apply it to an opponent. Follow the same steps as above.

I try not to go 100% live one on one hitting for confidence building for the weaker players.

At the end of practice the top 3 players get a candy bar, soda, ect. and get a chance to pick the conditioning game for the practice. (I also have a conditioning games rather than just boring sprints) If they can't decide together than I pick. ;)

I definately saw some serious improvement and I got a lot of, "How in the hell do you get your kids off the ball so darn fast?" The kids love it and can't wait to get to that station. This can apply to both sides of the ball too!

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From Jim...**SCOOPING TENNIS BALLS**

Here is one of my favorite Defense Line drills. It is for shooting gaps, but also helps I guys stay low.

3 cones(or dummies) in a line. Depending on size of players varies to spacing. The dummies represent O line guys.

2 Tennis balls 1 each placed in gaps.

D Line man lines up head up on center dummy. To shoot the gap we ask our plyers to be low and get "small".

If we are asking our player to shoot the gap to the left, he stays low, rotates right shoulder 90, scoops tennis ball with right hand as he proceeds through gap. Reverse to other side.

Its also easy to remind plyers during game times that we need them to scoop tennis balls, If we see poor technique.

--/--

From Dave...

I have head coached high school football and asst. coached Tier 1 (21 years old max).

I now find myself coaching my grandson's Pre-Atom team (ages 7-10) and it's got a lot of different challenges.

The main challenge is to develop team progression for competing in games whilst at the same time developing individual player fundamentals of all players for all positions. The aim is to ensure they get at least a small taste of everything right from the start of their football careers, regardless of their body types and abilities. love for the sport.

To do the latter, I do two things:

1) Currently 22 players ~ bought 22 footballs...all players carry one in tuck/secure mode in most sprints and for all laps, regardless of whether they confit into lineman or other non-ball handling slots.

2) We find time at practices for all players to get at least a small taste of each position even though they may never play it. For example, we lined up all 22 footballs on the ground then all players marched up to them, and went through the basic snap process (sans QB).

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From Steve...

Tip: Get defensive players to attack the ball, as well as the ball carrier.

Any drills to work on stripping the football from the ball carrier will pay huge dividends. You can design special drills that focus on ball stripping techniques, or stress to defensive players, *in any tackling drill*, to work the ball loose.

This accomplishes a couple of things. Defensive players, when tackling, will tend to keep their eyes up more and don't dip their head, essential in proper, safe tackling.

Secondly, it will force your offensive players to hold onto the ball better! If they know that someone will always be ready to knock the ball out, they will work on holding it tighter, switching it to the correct hand, etc.

It's a little thing, but fumbles and turnovers are, in my opinion, the biggest plays that can be made on the football field.

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From Steven...

Aloha Steve,

I have been using this drill for my linebackers & secondary. Quite simple:

-Objective (working on basic footwork-back pedaling-opening up 45 degree to your right & left-adding a lateral movement- ending with adding coming forward for run force.

-Equipment needed(1 football) (3 cones stationed at your start point/2nd cone 45 degree right/3rd cone 45 degree left

-Area used (football field 20 yards deep and width of field

Have player facing the coach waiting to react to the ball/player reacts to the coaches motion of the ball-backs pedal approx. 5 yds. opens 45 degree to his right(moving to the 2nd cone as a landmark)coach redirect ball movement to player leftside-now player moves lateral to cone #3-coach brings the ball down to his waist(alerting player RUN FORCE)player breaks and attack run force sprinting pass the coach(end of drill).

The purpose of the drill:

- 1.)Eye on the ball
- 2.)Know your depth and width
- 3.)Rely on your tech
- 4.)Change of direction on the move
- 5.)Angles of pursuit
- 6.)Be in your proper coverage for pass
- 7.)Stopping run force

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From Tom...

TRY THIS:

Four down linemen.

Two offense Two defense/ one running back, one linebacker, two coaches.

One coach behind the defense instructing the offense what to do with blocking and the RB to run.

The defense coach behind the offense.

After the drill, the coaches do their corrections.

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From Cedric...

We ran a drill last year that made running sprints it also built a sense of team.

What we did was line the kids up in a single line (we had a baseball diamond that we used. It gave us somewhat of a circle to run around) and what we did was start the kid in the rear once he gets half way around the other players the next player starts on so on. As this is going the entire team is going around the diamond at a trot pace. Once the last player goes we trot for 30 seconds then start it over. While we are doing the coach has a chance to do some motivation. We try and do it military style keeping the line strait keeping the kids off the grass etc.

This is a great way to make running fun.

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From Rick...

ONE OF MY FAVS IS WORKING WITH MY LINEMEN.

LAST YEAR I MADE 3 LINEMEN SHOOTS ,THIS YEAR IM UPGRADING MY SHOOTS TO 7 , THESE SHOOTS MAKE IT SO MY LINE STAY LOW . ONE DRILL IM USING IS PUT ALL LINEMEN INTO THE SHOOTS IN FRONT OF THE SLED AND WE KEEP FIRING FROM THE SHOOTS TO THE SLED (MAKE SURE THE SLED DOES NOT MOVE) THIS DRILL DOES 2 THINGS IT KEEPS MY LINEMEN LOW & IT KEEPS THEM HITTING LOW WITH THEIR HEADS UP. MY LINEMEN SHOOTS I MADE OUT OF PVC PIPE YOU CAN BUY THE SHOOTS FOR AROUND 150.00 OR MAKE THEM FOR AROUND 10.00 EACH... ONE PLAY I REALLY LIKE IS THE REVERCE FLY PASS ..PLAY TWO IS THE DOUBLE REVERSE ON THE KICK OFFS

WORKS WELL .

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From Dean...

Tip: With young kids (I'm working with 3rd graders), we tend to forget that football concepts we're so used to don't necessarily register with them, like the importance of knowing down and distance on every play. If they don't pay attention to it, they may take a play off and don't think about it. They do that on 3rd and 1 on offense, now you're left with 4th and 2. One way to cut down on the number of times their heads go elsewhere is to have the QB or Center (middle linebacker on defense) get in the habit of announcing the down and distance in the huddle every play. Simple, I know, but simple things that adults take for granted aren't so simple to an 8 year old sometimes.

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From Reginald...

Hey this a great drill to develop straight in forearms and shoulders,

I have been using a 75 lbs. punching bag hanging between the goal posted. You can have it on a 3/8 chain or I use a cable pulley system, this will give me a north - south deliver, it's great for Both side's of the ball.

Coach, you'll find out using a punching bag, the forearm shiver will much force full DELIVERY WILL EVERY SEE..

1. start w/2 point stand's
2. firm foundation
3. elbow's in tight to waist
4. hand's open

BEFORE THIS DRILL HAVE THE PLAYER'S TAPE UP.

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From Scott...

Pass Rush Drill

First line up 2 cones about 5 yds apart . Have an OL and DL square up between the cones. Then have a Tackling dummy or coach if dummy is not available. On the whistle the DL has 5 sec to get to the dummy or coach in the backfield.

Rules:

Players must stay between the cones

Benefits Both OL and DL

Can be run as a competition

Also can done as 1 on 1 , 2on 2, etc,

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From Bob...

TACKLING DRILL—

LAY 5 BLOCKING DUMMIES ON THE GROUND, SIDE BY SIDE. HAVE 1 PLAYER STAND IN FRONT OF THE BAGS TO BE TACKLED, ONE PLAYER WAITING TO TAKE HIS PLACE. THE REST OF THE PLAYERS ARE THE TACKLERS. THE TACKLER RUNS 5 YARDS FULL SPEED AND MAKES A RIGHT OR LEFT SHOULDER TACKLE. THEN HE BECOMES THE WAITING TACKLER AND SO ON.

YOU CAN USE THIS DRILL WITHOUT PADS BY PUTTING A STAND UP DUMMY IN PLACE OF A PLAYER. I HAVE DONE THIS IN THE SPRING AND IN THE FALL.

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From Ron...

I mainly coach young football players and one thing that i stress over proper technique is endurance. I figure that even if we are not the best, biggest or fastest team we can beat most other teams in the fourth quarter on endurance alone. I love it when my guys are looking fresh and full of energy when the other team is gasping for wind because their coaches thought that pure talent would get them through the games.

It's hard to motive kids to do wind sprints after practice and other endurance exercises. I find the best way to 'hide' this is to break the team into 4 groups at the end of practice and instead of wind sprints or similar drills we do route running with coaches throwing the ball. We make a competition out of it - keeping score of total catches per group. Before they know it, the kids have run 15 to 20 sprints. They are having fun and don't even realize the benefit they're getting.

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From Anthony...

I thought some health and safety tips could be needed

What Coaches Should Know

A concussion is any change in an athlete's behavior, awareness, and/or physical feelings caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head.

Any concussion has the potential to be a serious injury.

Before letting an athlete go back to play, a concussion should be evaluated by a doctor.

An athlete should never return to play while exhibiting any signs or symptoms of a concussion either at rest or with exertion. When in doubt, sit them out!

There is an increased risk of suffering subsequent concussions after a first concussion.

Any head injury associated with loss of consciousness must be treated as a suspected head, neck, or back injury.

The only instances in which an athlete's helmet and shoulder pads should be removed is when a medical authority believes that it is necessary for the care of the athlete, or if the equipment interferes with the rescuers' ability to provide required CPR.

If necessary to provide care for life-threatening conditions, it is recommended that the facemask be removed rather than the whole helmet. A tool to remove the facemask should be in the first aid kit.

For any head injury, activate the Emergency Action Plan and follow the emergency action steps, Check-Call-Care.

When a player is hit, he may receive a blow to the head and become unconscious or demonstrate changes in behavior. If the player regains consciousness, seems to be alert and oriented, and is eager to play, a coach may feel the player is fully recovered and allow him back into the game or practice. However, the player has suffered a concussion. Failure to recognize a concussion can potentially lead to coma and death particularly if a second impact occurs. Coaches need to be aware of the signs of concussions and treat the situation properly.

Concussions are caused by a force being transmitted to the head. The force may be caused by any direct or indirect hit to the head or body and can cause changes in behavior, awareness, or physical feeling in the injured person. Concussions often go unrecognized by coaches because they are underreported by athletes who want to continue competing. Athletes often will minimize or deny symptoms. Maintaining a high level of suspicion and having some knowledge of the individual athlete's personality helps coaches in early detection of the signals of concussion. This awareness can prevent additional concussive injury, potential long-term brain damage, or other possible catastrophic outcomes.

On-The-Field Evaluations

If there is a forceful blow to the head, with or without loss of consciousness, the coach should suspect a head injury and also be concerned that the neck or back has been injured. When caring for the player on the field, tell him not to nod or shake his head

during the assessment, but to say yes or no. The player's helmet should also be left in place. The goal is to minimize movement. If the head impact has caused the player to become unconscious or show the signs of concussion listed below, activate the Emergency Action Plan and follow the emergency action steps, Check-Call-Care. Check the scene for safety and check the ill or injured athlete, Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number when needed, and Care for the injured player until EMS personnel arrive.

To Care For Serious Injuries To The Head, Neck, And Back:

Follow basic precautions to prevent disease transmission.

Minimize movement of the player's head, neck, and back by putting your hands on both sides of the player's helmet or head. Maintain an open airway using a jaw-thrust maneuver. Have the player remain in the position that you found him until EMS personnel arrive and take over.

Monitor the player's airway, breathing, and circulation.

If life-threatening symptoms are present, it is recommended that the facemask of the athlete's helmet be removed, rather than removing the entire helmet. This will allow access to an airway should the athlete stop breathing.

A tool for removing the facemask should be in the team's first aid kit.

The coach should evaluate the symptoms listed below if he suspects a player may have a concussion requiring immediate care.

The only instance in which an athlete's helmet and shoulder pads should be removed is when a medical authority believes that it is necessary for the care of the athlete, or if the equipment interferes with the rescuers' ability to provide CPR.

Symptoms that require immediate activation of the Emergency Action Plan and immediate removal to a medical facility are:

Period of unconsciousness;

Confusion, disorientation to time and place;

Severe headache or vomiting;

Appears sleepy, pale, and is sweating;

Blurred vision, slurred speech, and muscle weakness;

Neck pain.

Checking For Concussion

If the player is removed from the field after receiving a head impact, it is important to continue evaluating the player every five minutes for at least 30 minutes.

Look at the facial expression of the athlete.

Does the athlete have a vacant stare or a confused facial expression?

Check the athlete's behavior.

Is the athlete easily distracted or slow to answer questions or follow directions?

Does the athlete display unusual emotional reactions, such as crying or laughing?

Does the athlete have a headache or complain of nausea?

Is the athlete irritable and easily frustrated?

Does the athlete appear unusually anxious or depressed?

Does the athlete appear sleepy?

Does the athlete have significantly decreased playing ability from earlier in the contest?

Check the athlete's orientation and memory.

Is the athlete aware of the time of day and date?

Is the athlete generally confused? Questions to ask

Which quarter or period is it?

Where are we? Which field or arena?

Which team are we playing?

Which side scored the last points?

Which team did the athlete play in the last game?

Did the athlete's team win or lose in the last game?

Check for posttraumatic amnesia (the athlete's ability to remember events after the injury).

Ask the athlete how he got injured?

Ask the athlete the first thing he remembers after the injury?

Ask the last thing the athlete remembers before the injury?

Medical attention is required if the athlete's expression, behavior, or memory is affected. Attention should be immediate if symptoms show a deteriorating situation. When an athlete has had a concussion, he should not be allowed to return to the current game or practice, and should not be left alone. Medical evaluation following the concussion is required before a return to participation is permitted.

Postconcussion syndrome

After a player is removed from the field, he may develop symptoms of postconcussion syndrome. This can occur immediately after the injury or many hours or days later.

Symptoms of postconcussion syndrome include:

Blurred vision

Fatigue

Ringing in the ears

Trouble falling asleep

Dizziness

Sleeping more or less than usual

Headache

Increased sensitivity to light and noise

Nausea and vomiting

Feeling more emotional than normal

Poor coordination or balance

Difficulty concentrating

Increased irritability

Difficulty remembering

Slurred speech

Feeling dazed or stunned

Seeing stars or flashing lights

Having double vision.

From Terry...

We like to run the following conditioning drill. The boys run twenty yard sprints, run around a cone to some tackling dummies where they have to fight off two blockers to get to a ball on the ground. Great conditioning and gets them to go after a fumble.

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From Larry...

SOME TIMES IN YOUTH FOOTBALL THE KIDS COME IN FLAT BEFORE THE GAME. LAST YEAR I USED A DRILL I CALLED "THE SAMURAI".

I DIVIDED MY 36 KIDS INTO 4 GROUPS OF 9. I GAVE THE LAST KID IN EACH LINE A FOOTBALL; THEN PULLED THE FIRST KID IN LINE OUT 5 YARDS, AND HAD HIM FACE THE REST OF HIS LINE. HE WAS THE "SAMURAI". I HAD ALL THE KIDS START PUMPING THEIR LEGS AND AFTER EACH BLOW OF THE WHISTLE, WOULD DELIVER A BLOW TO THE SAMURAI. HE WOULD BE IN A LINEBACKERS POSITION, AND HIS RESPONSIBILITY WAS TO RETURN THE FAVOR AS WELL AS SHED THE BLOCK. I WOULD BLOW THE WHISTLE IN ABOUT 5 SECOND INTERVALS.

AFTER TAKING ON THE FIRST 8 MEN, HE FINALLY GOT THE REWARD OF TACKLING THE LAST KID IN LINE. HE WOULD THEN GO TO THE END OF THE LINE.

REPEAT THIS DRILL THROUGH THE ENTIRE LINE SO EVERYONE GOT A CHANCE TO BE "THE SAMURAI"! HALF-WAY THROUGH THE SEASON.

DOING THE SAME BORING CALESTENICS AND STRETCHES BEFORE EACH GAME, WE NEEDED SOMETHING TO FIRE THEM UP AND IT WORKED RATHER WELL.

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From Jonathan...

I coach a spring football team so when the fall ball season is over that is when we begin our madness. Here is our drill.

"Instead of running wind sprints during any part of practice we have team A-D we mark it out 50 yards and A races B C races D.

The winner of both teams then races each other; the losers race each other twice giving them a chance to get in the winners bracket. They race the first winners. You can do many things with that till its endless. We found that the kids look forward to team racing rather than individual running. Also we assign the teams to keep it fair.

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From Chris...

One of the drills that I like to do is called Jump Ball.

It is a simple drill.

You'll need your QB and a line of receivers on the right or left.

The QB calls the cadence and snaps the ball.

The receivers heads downfield parallel to the sideline looking over his inside shoulder..

The QB throws the ball high and outside on purpose so the receiver must leave his feet to get the ball.

The receiver makes the catch but must be aware of where his feet come down.

The object of the drill is to get the receiver to be aware of where he is in relation to the sideline and to come down with the ball inbounds.

This is also a good drill for the QB. It gives him the practice of putting the ball where the receiver can get it, and the defender can't..

I usually start this drill at half speed until the players get it, and then we turn up the speed. You can also add in a defender once everyone is on the same page.

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From Duane...

Take a baseball bat.

Have all players or running backs line up in 1 line.

The player will lean his helmet on the top of the bat as the base of bat is on the ground.

He must spin 3-4 times around the bat the let go of bat and the sprint 20yards.

We all have a good time and it teaches them balance and how to keep focus if they spin out of a tackle.

--/--

From Phil...

Two Drills I use for the defense is the Bone and Monster drill. I have a piece of wood but it could be a thick piece of rope like a dog rope toy. Two players lie face down helmet to helmet gripping one end of the rope or stick that we call the Bone and they fight for possession of the bone hitting or using any tactics to win possession. It is a great drill to get the defensive or offensive line fired up.

The monster drill you probably use or have heard about already. About 15 yards away, I place one cone and my designated player becomes Monster. The other 12-15 players go rapid succession to run, block monster before he hits the last player whom has the ball. Monster has to form tackle the ball carrier. After doing this drill the first day and teaching the proper form of a running block and staying low, hitting with the shoulder on the up and running right through everyone. Our team learned not only how to take a hit but how to give a hit. If they can do this all at once with 15 people and survive then they can get through an entire game. Our defense is now hitting harder than any other team and I give the results to the above mentioned drills and the confidence the drills have instilled in our team.

--/--

From Steve...

I coach 7 and 8 year olds so keeping their attention and interest is tough. We try to make it fun for the kids by having races which includes different drills. By breaking them into different groups and having relay races carrying the ball through the different holes to help the kids learn the hole numbers. example... we call different holes and the kids have to run to the right hole, if they go to the wrong hole we tack on 5 yards to the race etc..

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From Jim...

The number one thing that I am trying to with my boys is a total dedication to being their best. We will be implementing a simple accountability system every day of practice and at every game. We will pick a different partner every day as we take the field, look each other in the eye and promise to give everything that we have. After practice we will look each other in the eye and ask our partner if they feel we gave our very best effort. After a game, the coaching staff will ask them to reflect on their effort.

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From Keith...

As the President of a youth football team my job is to create unity among my coaches, parents and players. One tool we use is a chapter wide cookout. Before the beginning of each season we have a chapter wide cook out. Each division is responsible for providing something for the cook out. The board is responsible for the meats, Hot Dogs, Hot Links, Hamburgers.

All the players and their family are invited out, we play various games, three legged race, water balloon toss etc. and have a coaches verses parents softball game.

Coach Steve in one day with one event a bond takes place that lasts the entire year.

Yes it's lot of work, but as we tell our kids Hard Work Pays Off.

--/--

From Joseph...

I have one drill for my LB'S AND DB'S.I don't have a name for it but here it is:

1. I set up 4 cones,in a square, about 15yds. apart
2. 1 player at a time
 - A. sprint from the first cone to the second
 - B. carioca from the second to the third
 - C. backpedal from the third to the fourth
 - D. once at the fourth cone the player will sprint to last cone

--/--

From Joyce...

Here's mine, it's a pass play I don't have a name for it. But here's how it's run.

You have a 7 men front which includes the split end, left and right guards, the left and right tackles, the center and the tight end. Then you have four men in the back field with the flanker lined up in the left slot between the split end and the left tackle, your half back will be on the left side of the quarter back and the full back will be on the right side. On the snap of the ball the flanker reverses the field to the right side of the line hands in the air calling for the pass. The quarter back fakes the pass to the flanker and passes to the split-end on a 15 yard slant pass play. You have to try this play because it will work.

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