



PAD LEVEL- Playing With Your Shoulder Pads Under The Opponents Is Important!

It does not matter if you are blocking, shedding or tackling or even trying to break a tackle, the top of the shoulder pads should be below the top of the shoulder pads of the bad guys. If you can get your pad tops into his chest plate or ribs, all the better- that creates the leverage and lift required to MOVE the opponent. It creates the leverage and lift required to HOLD YOU'RE GROUND and RUN THROUGH BLOCKERS on defense. Our kids are shown film where our linebackers have shed lead blockers so violently that the lead blocker has tackled haw own man. It's quite convincing. Sadly, I can admit that I also have some video of our fullbacks being stood up and driving into our own power alley as well. That twice as convincing and underscores the importance of proper TECHNIQUE to support the as and so.

Now,

to further accentuate LIFT the forearm - should be ripped and thrust upward and under the pads as well.

We use shields quite a bit to teach shedding, blocking and even at times tackling. Without a doubt we should increase our time on man to man low pad level drills. We understand that these kinds of drills need to be done prudently or injuries will wipe the team out completely. There is great need for teaching FIT and where the pads should be on contact, again, regardless of block, shed or tackle...the fit, proper hat placement and PAD LEVEL need to be emphasized DAILY and early in the season, particularly for those who are new to your program, it should be harped on CONSTANTLY.

Just yelling LOW MAN WINS isn't enough. I think fit and freeze drills, slow motion pad level, half speed pad level and then full speed drills that emphasize low pad level (i.e. BERMUDA TRIANGLE) will sink it all in for the players.

One of the most important improvements we made at Old Town this year was the way in which we taught contact, using SHOULDER PADS AND FOREARMS and not hands and dancing around blocks etc. We wanted to become more physical and win those battles.

Film analysis of the leagues top defense shows that their kids were SUPERIOR to ours in terms of getting their pads low, standing us up and driving us back at times. I saw their corners get under our fullbacks and abs and stand them up at times. I saw their defensive linemen get into and under our oline at times. Wed gets lower and have superior hat placement and we would win those battles.

This is where TECHNIQUE defeats jimmies and Joes as well as and so.

PAD LEVEL IS A TECHNIQUE IN ITSELF AND WE WILL SPEND A GREATER AMOUNT OF TIME ON PAD LEVEL ALONG WITH BALL

SECURITY.

This brings me to PAD LEVEL for runners, a low hat, i.e. looking at the grass while running the ball is TERRIBLE and leads to missed alleys and missed long runs. That said, the shoulder pads must be low with proper body lean while the HAT IS UP, EYES ARE UP AND THE BALL IS SECURE.

On contact, a runner should lower his pads UNDER THE DEFENDER and truck him. The forearm and also be thrust up and under the defenders pads as elevation is forced.

Notice, runners, blockers, shedders, tacklers....all of them...NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT LOW PAD LEVEL.

*** THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXTREMELY EASY PAD LEVEL DRILL FOR TEACHING AND EMPHASIZING THE FIT AND CONTACT ALONG WITH THE FOREARM RIP AND SHIVER.**

---X-----X-----X-----X-----X-----X

---O-----O-----O-----O-----O-----O

place the players in your five yard grids (use cones) and have them walk toward their opponent and bend the knees, ankles and waist properly, while keeping the head and chest up, getting the shoulder pads under the bad guy, then dipping and ripping with a forearm shiver through the opponent.

you can do this with one side being dummies, or both sides working to get under the other (start with half speed though, trust me, the players will amp it up on their own rapidly)- careful not to turn this into a running start 8 or 9 yards apart or you'll be in court trying to

defend yourself.

Teach the approach, mechanics, fit and explosion (i.e. hip roll) and follow through.

Obviously this can be a mutual shed drill, a tackling drill, a blocking drill and even a runner's drill.

After working head on (be sure to instruct players USE RIGHT SHOULDER or USE LEFT SHOULDER so that they don't go hat to hat) - work at angles for tackling and shedding to tackle.

I am convinced that the best players are better at pad level skills. I am convinced that the best teams have players who are superior at pad level skills as well.