

Practice Organization in Youth Football

“Getting More Done”



President, Great Plains Youth Football

“A leader's job is to look into the future and see the organization, not as it is, but as it should be.”

*~ Jack Welch
Former CEO General Electric*

Session Agenda

- From the Beginning
- Practice Planning
- Running A Great Practice
- Ongoing Analysis & Adjustments
- Questions / Comments



Why This Topic Is Important...

- Better Question.....What is wrong with some (many) football practices???



Topic Goals

- Have a Better, Stronger Understanding of Practice Planning
- Have a Solid Understanding of Drills to Teach
- Understand How To Better Utilize Your Time, Your Coaching Staff's Time, and Your Players Time.

“Our goals can only be reached through a vehicle of a plan, in which we must fervently believe, and upon which we must vigorously act. There is no other route to success.”

~ Pablo Picasso



Digging In...



- What types of practice preparation do you use?
 - Take 1 minute and consider/identify 2 or more ways you prepare for a football practice.

From the Beginning....

- What is your coaching philosophy?
- Why develop a coaching philosophy?
 - Your coaching philosophy has an effect on virtually every aspect of your program or team.
 - Your goals and belief about football and life affect everything you do...from interacting with players and parents, to playing time, to the type of offense you run....to the type of practices you run!

Developing a Coaching Philosophy....

- Ask yourself these questions...
 - Why do I coach?
 - What are my objectives in coaching?
 - What do I get out of coaching?
 - Why did I get into coaching?
- Now...write down your coaching philosophy.
- This can translate into your teams identity!!!
- Review and Refine Your Philosophy Periodically.

The Next Step...

- Now that you understand and know your philosophy and identity...set goals.
 - Get to know your staff and players...identify talent and strengths.
 - Put coaches and kids in the right position to succeed.
 - Never assume!

Practice Planning

- Upfront Planning & Preparation
 - Break Down by Week, By Practice, By Minute
 - Coaches Goals & Practice Plan
 - Delegation of Responsibilities by Head Coach
- Develop a Practice Agenda at least 24 to 48 hours prior to every practice.
 - Communicate the agenda to the entire coaching staff.
 - Get their input as well!
 - Assign coaching responsibilities.
 - Train Assistants
 - Have a defined stop and start time for every facet of your agenda goals.

Upfront Planning & Preparation...

- Different for each stage of the season?
 - Stages include: Pre-Season, Early Season, Mid-Season, The Finish.
 - Pre-Season: Conditioning, Offense, Defense, Special Teams, etc.
 - Early Season: Adjustments to personnel/positions, identifying areas of improvement.
 - Mid-Season: Staying sharp, continuing to improve, fun stage.
 - The Finish: Playing and executing at a level that is in direct relation to your philosophy, practice habits, goals, and fundamental teaching....PERFECTION!

My “Golden Rule” of Practice

- Treat every practice like you own the company and it is a work day!
 - Treat your players like you are paying them to be there!
 - You don’t want players showing up late or mentally checking out early.
 - You don’t want players standing around.
 - You don’t want players with not enough to do.
 - You don’t want players taking shortcuts.
 - You don’t want players watching others do the work.

Practice Agenda

■ Talk To the Team

- Every practice needs a goal. It's the coach's job to state that goal and keep the team on point. If it's your first practice, for example, your goal is to evaluate your players' abilities. Take a few minutes to introduce yourself, hand out schedules and explain that you'll be watching to figure out which players are good at which skills.

Practice Agenda

- What do you want to achieve?
- Tell a story.
 - Defining memories
 - War stories
 - Life stories

Practice Organization

■ Basic Organization Rules...

- Keep a constant structure so that players become comfortable at practice and focus on learning.
- Establish a set pattern so that your players know what to expect and where to go and what to do.

Practice Organization

- **How you divide your team for practice will depend on:**
 - # of assistant coaches.
 - Number of players at each position / area.
 - The time you have to practice each week.
- **If things get confusing, simplify. If players have trouble grasping something, cut back, review, avoid piling on more information.**

Practice Organization

- **Introduce offensive plays, as a whole, to the entire team, before breaking off and working on individual assignments.**
- **Then...bring it all together.**

Practice Organization

■ Typical Practice Breakdown

- Stretching & Warm-Up
- Team Talk
- Introduction of goals, new plays or concepts
- Breakout sessions and individual skills
 - Keep drills fast and engaging
 - Try to afford maximize player participation

■ Bring in all together

■ Wrap it up with energy

Getting Started

■ Get to Work!

- **If you're coaching youth football, your job is to get players comfortable playing the game. It is not to win. Every practice should be dedicated to incorporating new skills**

Skills = Fundamentals

■ What to teach?

- Responsibilities on plays / position
- Fundamentals

■ Break Out Sessions

- By position...

- QB's
- RB's
- Recievers / TE's
- Lineman
- DB's
- LB's
- D-Line
- Snappers

Quarterback Fundamentals

- Stance
- Taking a Snap
 - Under Center
 - Shotgun
- Gripping the Ball
- 3-Step Drop
- 5-Step Drop
- Pre-Passing Position
- Throwing Motion
- Touch Passing
- Sprint / Roll Out
- Bootleg



Running Back Fundamentals

- 2-Point Stance
- 3-Point Stance
- Taking a Handoff
- Receiving a Pitch
- Lead Blocking
- Cut Blocking
- Pass Blocking
- Wrapping the Ball Up
- Timing



Receiver Fundamentals

- 2-Point Stance
- Stem Routes
 - Passing Tree
 - Reading the defender
- Receiving a Pass Above the Numbers
- Receiving a Pass Below the Numbers
- Swim Release
- Rip Release
- Tip Drill
- 4-Corners Drill



Offensive Lineman Fundamentals

- 2-Point, 3-Point Stance & 4 Point Stance
- Drive Block
- Reach Block
- Zone Block
- Duck Walk
- “OIL” Concept
- Angle Block
- Double Team Block
- Footwork
- Pulling Footwork
- Pass Blocking
- Building a Pocket



Defensive Fundamentals

■ For the ENTIRE team...

– Form Tackling

■ Front Tackle

■ Angle Tackle



Defensive Line Fundamentals

- 3-Point & 4-Point Stance
- Defeating the Drive Block
- Defeating the Reach Block
- Defeating the Angle Block
- Defeating the Double Team Block
- Reading the Offensive Lineman
- Swim Move
- Rip Move
- Spin Move



Linebacker Fundamentals

- Stance
- Reading & Reacting
- Defeating a Lead Block
- Defeating a Pass Block
- Pass Coverage



Defensive Backs Fundamentals

- Stance
- Zone Pass Coverage
- Man Coverage
- Jamming Receivers
- Running & Angles
- Run Force
- Tip Drill
- 4-Corners Drill



Don't EVER Forget Special Teams!

“ In a game involving two hard hitting, physical football teams built alike, you just know it's going to come down to something unique.”

- Brian Billick

Don't EVER Forget Special Teams!

- Every 1 out of 5 Plays Happens Here!!
- Every practice, in either physical or mental aspect.
 - Blocking a Punt
 - Snapping the Ball
 - Protection
 - PAT
 - Onside Kick
 - The Wall and Wedge
 - Punt Coverage
 - Kick Coverage



Preparing for Your Opponent

■ If You Scout...

- Be Specific
- Put It in Writing or Video
- Review Before Last Practice of Game.

Practice Planning Resources

- Manuals – NFL Coaching Academy Playbook
- USA Football
- Google / Internet
- Network Other Coaches

Ongoing Analysis & Adjustments

- Never stop looking for ways to improve.
- Never stop coaching fundamentals.
- Never stop improving.

“ We would plan to practice being behind by two touchdowns, or being ahead by two touchdowns. We would practice how to use the clock, how to save time...whatever contingency that we felt important and practice it.”

- Bill Walsh

Coach-Player Communication

“ Communication isn’t all about talking. Just as much, it’s about listening.

- Mike Shanahan



Coach-Player Communication

- When speaking to your players:
 - Be credible and trustworthy
 - Speak Clearly
 - Convey direct messages
 - Focus on one thing at a time
 - Reinforce with repetition
 - Be a good listener
 - Provide relevant and useful information
 - Convey messages high in information
 - Be sincere

Coach-Player Communication

- If your players buy into you, and know you care, they'll give you everything they have!



Thank You!

