

AMERICAN MONTHLY FOOTBALL

The Fundamentals of Combination Blocks

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This month's drill is from Joe Gilbert, Offensive Line Coach for the University of Central Florida. Last fall the Golden Knights engineered the greatest turnaround in Division I-A football. From an 0-11 season in 2004 and a string of 17 consecutive losses, UCF rebounded to an 8-3 regular season, hosted the Conference USA Championship Game and earned a trip to the Sheraton Hawaii Bowl.

In Gilbert's first season at UCF in 2004, he coached the nation's youngest offensive line that started two true freshmen and three sophomores. Prior to UCF, Gilbert helped develop one of the nation's top offensive lines at Toledo. In 2002, the Rockets ranked fifth in the nation in total offense and 11th in scoring. He also coached at Maine, Northeastern, and Pennsylvania. He was a four-year starter at Hamilton College and became the first Hamilton player, as a senior, to earn first team All-American honors.

Coach Gilbert's drill teaches the fundamentals of combination blocks. Included with this drill are double team drills, drive blocks on a double team, blocking the second level linebacker, and taking over the down defender.

Combination Blocks

Combo Drill:

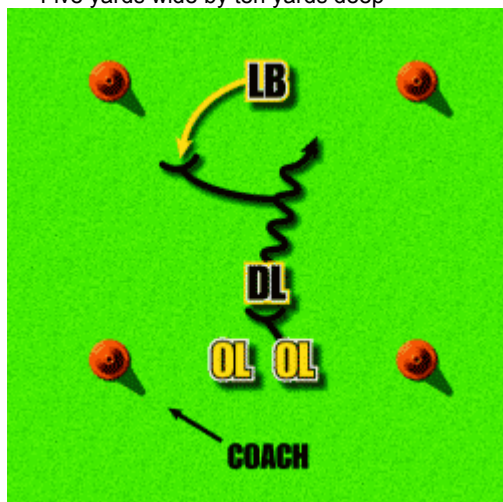
This drill teaches offensive linemen the fundamentals of all combination blocks. This will help train your offensive linemen from the double team or zone combination at the line of scrimmage to the blocking of a second level linebacker.

Equipment:

- Four players – two offensive linemen and two defensive players
- Two hand shields... If you are in no pads for defensive players
- Two cones

Area Needed:

- Five yards wide by ten yards deep



Drill Techniques

A. Double Team: The first phase of the drill is the double team between the two offensive linemen on the defensive linemen.

Teaching the Fit: Start the two offensive linemen in a two-point stance hip-to-hip. Their inside arms/hands with thumbs up should be on the bottom of the north of the defenders. Jersey outside arm is free and tucked next to fellow linemen.

B. Double Teams (cont.): The offensive lineman should be in a good position with power angles in ankles, knees and hips. Make sure their eyes are focused on the linebacker aligned at five yards depth. Have the offensive line drive the defender off the ball and stay in a tight hip-to-hip fit with eyes up. When the offensive line understands the fit position you can start to teach them from a three-point stance to a full contact double team. On the snap, emphasize leg drive.



Review:

- Hip- to hip
- Eyes up
- Good fit position on contact
- Good leg drive

C. Drive Block on Double Team: The offensive line must learn to drive the down defender off the ball and not work against each other. As they drive the defender off the ball, they must keep their eyes on the linebacker who will now scrape one way or the other to force them off the double team.

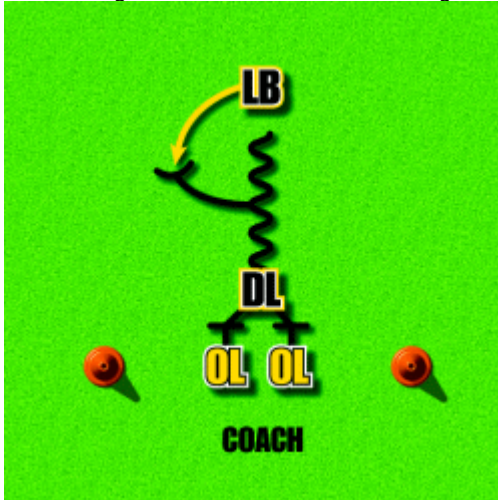


Review:

- Leg drive
- Work together
- Hip to hip

D. Blocking the Second Level Linebacker: Based on which side the linebacker will scrape will determine which offensive linebacker will come off to the linebacker and who will take over the down defender.

Linebacker Scraping: The offensive lineman must have a target of playside number that he will try to put his eyes on as he works up to the linebacker. As he comes at the down defender he wants to open up near hip in order to reach his target. On contact he should dip his hip, strike with both hands the playside number target at linebacker and drive his legs on contact.



Review:

- Eyes up
- Playside number target
- Open near hip
- Dip-stroke-drive

E. Taking Over Down Defender: The offensive lineman who will stay on the down defender must see the linebacker scrape away first. He will then open up near hip and begin to slide (helmet /away ear hole) to the playside number of defender. The defensive linebacker will continue to punch with inside arm but now take the outside hand and work it inside. The offensive line must continue with great leg drive during this entire drill.



Review:

- See linebacker scrape
- Open up hip
- Work for playside target
- Great leg drive

Finish:

Always have a cone that the offensive line must drive the defenders to in an effort to attain the linebacker scrapes. This will train the players more to finish their blocks to the whistle.

Important Points:

1. Double Team Sets

2. Eyes on second level (he determines blocks – not down defender)
3. Targets on defenders
4. Leg drive on double and single blocks
5. Always finish

This is the third installment of American Football Monthly's featured drill. Each month the latest and most innovative drills will be presented by Rogers Athletic Co..

Coach Wayne Anderson is the Football Drills Editor for American Football Monthly. Anderson has coached at the high school, collegiate, and international level for 17 years. We welcome your suggestions and comments. He can be reached at WayneAnderson@AmericanFootballMonthly.com