



Developing Defensive Backs

PATRICK DABERKOW

HEAD FOOTBALL COACH

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

General Philosophy on Football:

- ▶ **Special Teams: The best players play, regardless of starter/back up**
 - ▶ No charity reps (leave those for WR... then run to the other side of the field)
- ▶ **Offense: You're going to be as good as your offensive line regardless of what scheme you run**
- ▶ **Defense: Recruit and Develop Cornerbacks who can cover in space**
 - ▶ Move the strongest/most physical to LB
 - ▶ Move the smartest to safety
 - ▶ Keep the quickest at CB

What we'll talk about today...

- ▶ Why we feel this is the most important position in football
- ▶ How our players acquire skills through randomized drills and practice
- ▶ Deconstructing coverage Skills
- ▶ How we teach them
 - ▶ Simple directives... don't talk too much
- ▶ How easy these principles are to adapt

Why it's most important... With a fully developed defensive backfield you can:

- ▶ 10x your capabilities
- ▶ Load the Box on run downs
- ▶ Send Heat on pass downs
- ▶ Handle odd ball formations/motions with ease
- ▶ We believe that defensive back play is the most critical aspect of defensive football
- ▶ You'll never beat an offensive guy on a white board. You'll always beat them with your players.
 - ▶ Jimmy's and Joes > X's and O's
 - ▶ There is no RPO answer for great man coverage

Build aggression:

- ▶ There is no such thing as a finesse DB
- ▶ Err on the side of more aggressive coverage
 - ▶ Aggressive yet technical.
 - ▶ Most calls occur when aggression goes outside of technique
- ▶ Make the refs make decisions
- ▶ If WR's in practice aren't complaining about getting held, you're probably not being aggressive enough
- ▶ Use your fingers! Quick tugs/grabs rarely get called

Deconstructing Coverage skills

- ▶ Stance
- ▶ Release
- ▶ Transition
- ▶ Finish

Stance

- ▶ Hands on hips, jump and hold
- ▶ Butt down
- ▶ Back flat
- ▶ Eyes up
- ▶ Sink the hips



Release (where are their eyes?)

- ▶ Eyes are the most important aspect of release
 - ▶ You must consistently coach this, and get to an angle where you can see their eyes
- ▶ Stay with in the framework of your body
- ▶ Pad level shouldn't raise from where your stance was at
- ▶ Elbows should be tight to the body, locked at 90 degrees
 - ▶ Upper body rhythm should match lower body rhythm
 - ▶ Ski or Running arms
 - ▶ Usually the reason back pedals are choppy can be traced back to the arm movement, and the elbows being out of 90
- ▶ Rhythm of release will be established by the WR or the Drop if you're employing zone coverage
- ▶ Nose over Toes

Transitions

- ▶ Backpedal to break
 - ▶ Eyes must be disciplined
 - ▶ Pad level shouldn't raise
- ▶ Key Phrase: "Plant, Gather, Go"
 - ▶ Feet should never come parallel
 - ▶ Always be firing like pistons
 - ▶ Toes will lead you where you're going
 - ▶ Encourage 0 degree angle steps out of breaks to ensure that they aren't rounding breaks and wasting time/space/movement
- ▶ "shot out of a cannon" when coming forward

...Transitions

- ▶ Back pedal to bail
 - ▶ Only transition when appropriate
 - ▶ Maintain Pad level
 - ▶ Three Step transition
- ▶ Key Phrase "Tilt-Point-Drive"
 - ▶ Tilt – (example with a zone turn) outside foot (foot A) points to QB/45 degrees inside
 - ▶ Point – point your inside foot (foot B) to the opposite sideline
 - ▶ Drive – Foot A is now pointed the other direction, completing the turn
 - ▶ You can teach them to throw their elbow, but I've found that this puts them out of sync more often than it helps them. Focus on keeping the elbow tight
- ▶ This is best drilled while staying on a yard line

Finish

- ▶ In Phase/out of phase
- ▶ In phase is the goal
 - ▶ Defined: your shoulder is locked in front of the WR's shoulder, and you are running in step
 - ▶ Only when you're "in phase" can you look back for the ball
 - ▶ Your body tilt will cause you to lose the WR if you look back before you are in phase
- ▶ Out of phase
 - ▶ Defined: you are not shoulder-locked and in-step with WR
 - ▶ When you are out of phase, your only goal is to get in phase
 - ▶ Eyes are locked to near hip, and you are sprinting to get in phase... NEVER looking back

... Finish continued

- ▶ Fade, or over shoulder/in stride catch:
 - ▶ Don't teach arms up and through when finishing on a fade
 - ▶ Not a practical technique
 - ▶ Makes sense when you're walking and coaching, but doesn't correlate to game scenarios
 - ▶ Once in phase, look while putting pressure with near hand on the WR
 - ▶ Drill, drill, drill the finish... there is no ONE way to do it
- ▶ Back shoulder/End Zone jump ball with your back turned
 - ▶ Play hands
 - ▶ Aim for far hand
 - ▶ Your hand covering up as much of the surface of the football as possible

Drill philosophy

- ▶ Motor learning emphasis... learn by doing
 - ▶ Train Ugly – Trevor Ragan
 - ▶ Block vs Random
 - ▶ No Cute Drills
 - ▶ Pottery examples
 - ▶ Optimal Minimalism – Tim Ferriss
 - ▶ Players should know your key phrases
 - ▶ Repeat yourself often... use the same coaching points
 - ▶ This allows them to diagnose and trouble shoot themselves
 - ▶ Eventually you want to just ask them “what did you do wrong there”... they should know the answer right away
 - ▶ To be great at Jiu Jitsu you don’t need to learn 4,000 moves, you need to practice 4 moves 1,000 times
- ▶ Explain drills in meetings so you don’t lose valuable practice time once you’re out there
- ▶ Establish a practice environment where no one is afraid to fail

Drill Philosophy

- ▶ Skill acquisition CAN happen in 20 hours
- ▶ “20 Hours – Learn Anything Fast” by Josh Kaufman
 - ▶ 5 rules for learning something new
 - ▶ 1. Set a goal
 - ▶ 2. Deconstruct the Skill
 - ▶ Divide Skills into sub skills and drill accordingly
 - ▶ 3. Research JUST ENOUGH
 - ▶ Optimal Minimalism ~ they should know the coaching points
 - ▶ Give them just enough information to practice properly
 - ▶ Then get out of their way and let their body figure it out
 - ▶ 4. Remove Barriers
 - ▶ Make practice practical... don't spend all your time setting up and tearing down elaborate drills.
 - ▶ 5. Pre-commit your time to the skill acquisition
 - ▶ 60 minutes per day = 20 days

Drills for learning these techniques:

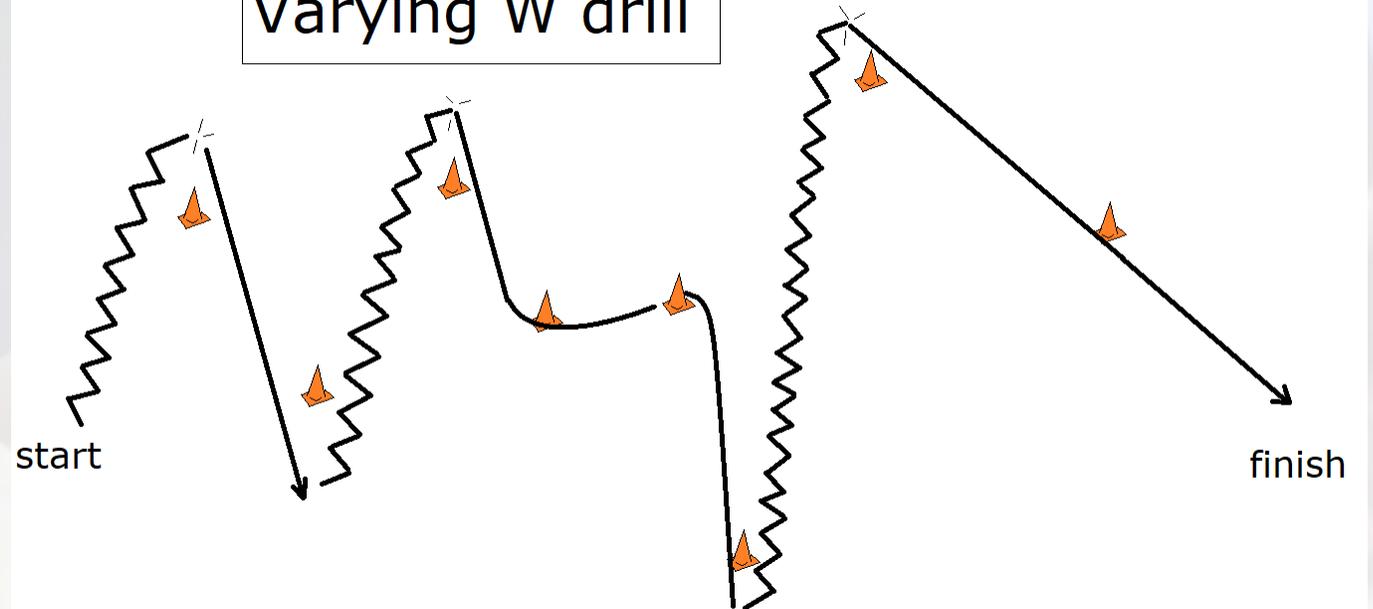
- ▶ (transition) Tilt-point-drive & varying W drill pre-practice/on your own
- ▶ (discovery) WYO drill
- ▶ (transitions) Recover drill
- ▶ (total) Confidence drill
 - ▶ Progression of fade, comeback, post, corner, & "Get Open"
- ▶ (transitions) Hip Swing Drill
- ▶ (finish) Deep ball Drill
- ▶ (transition) Turn and Burn drill
- ▶ Other Drills:
 - ▶ Figure 8 tackle
 - ▶ Clinch Tackle
- ▶ *All drills are secondary teachers to 1 on 1 / skelly & live team reps
- ▶ You get better at playing football by actually playing football.

PRE PRACTICE DRILLS

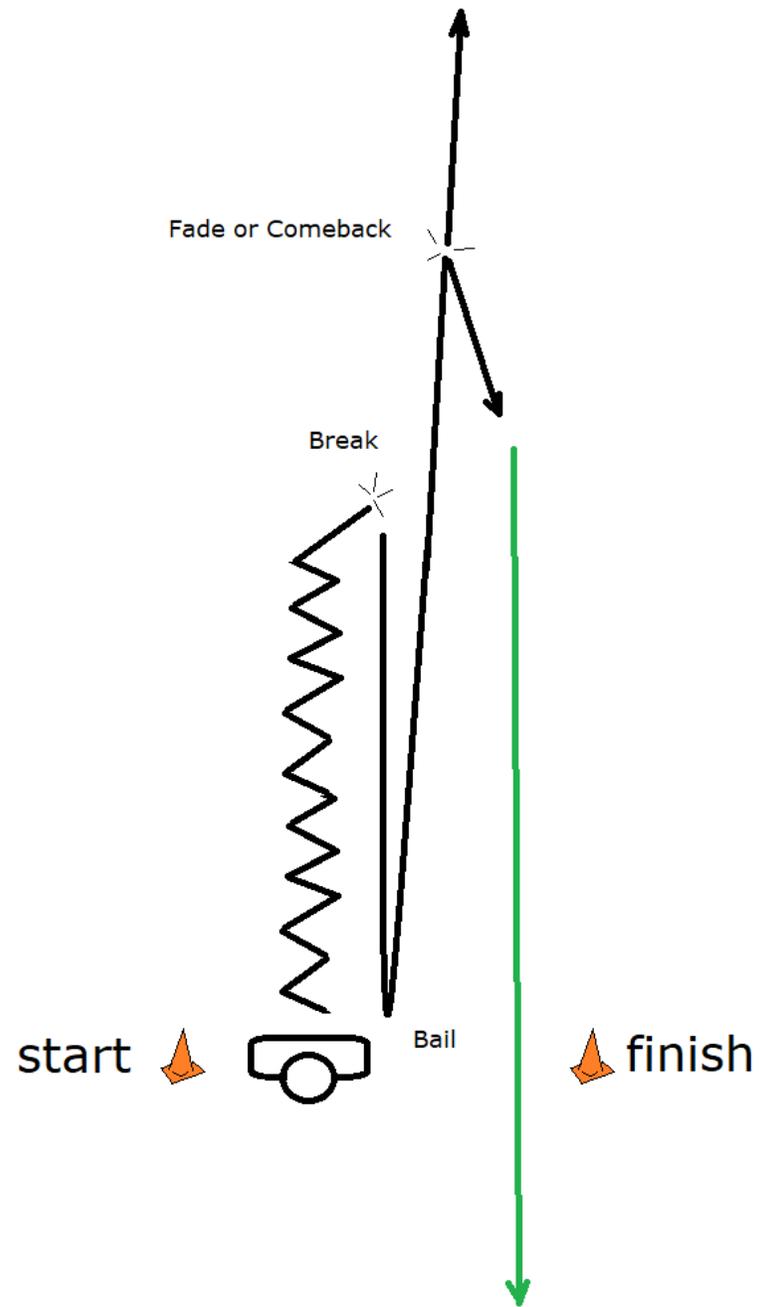
HIP SWING



Varying W drill



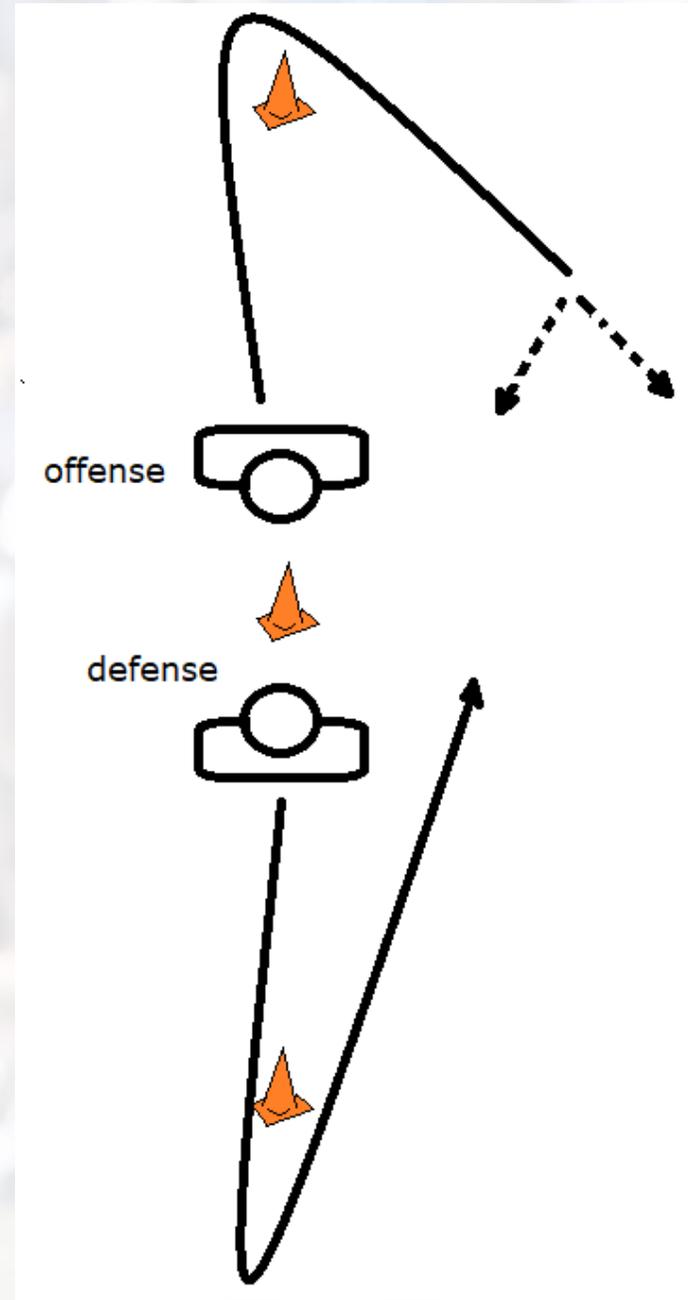
Recover Drill



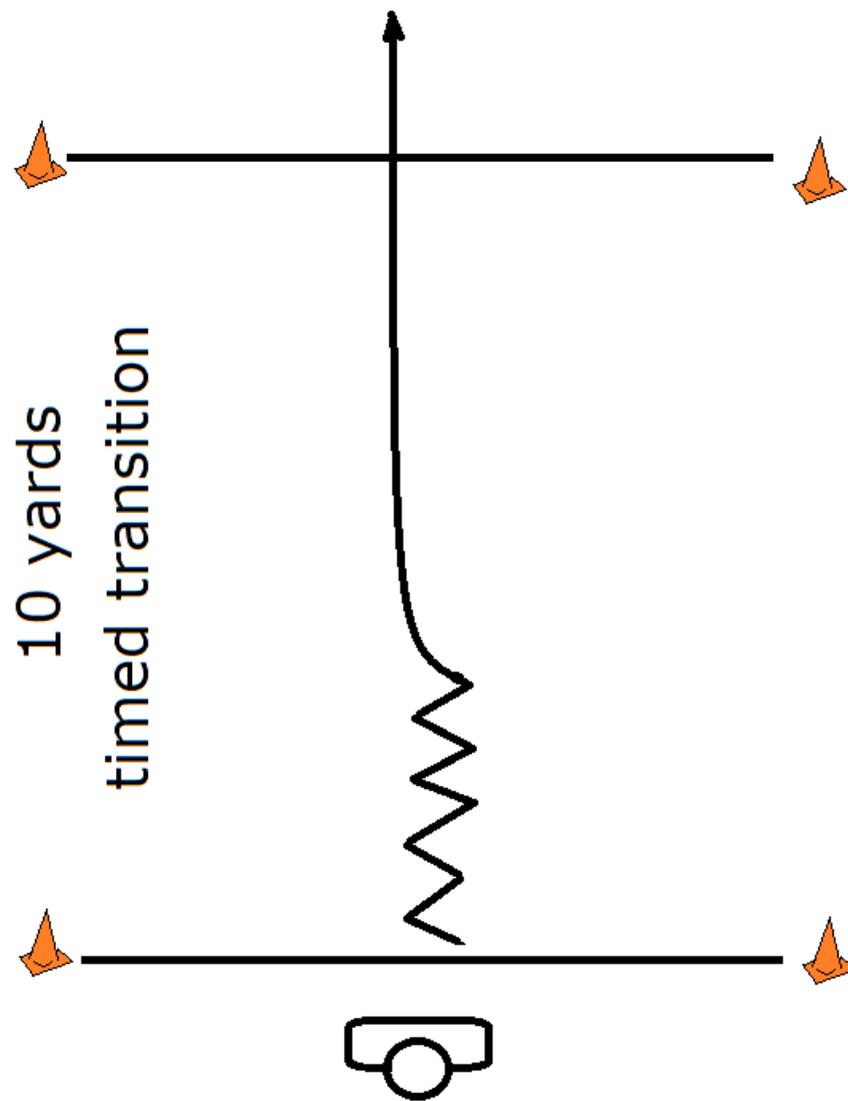
Confidence Drill

- ▶ Progression:
 - ▶ Fade
 - ▶ Hitch
 - ▶ Post
 - ▶ Corner (double move)
 - ▶ “Get open”
- ▶ Let them know the order... helps him to cognitively connect the technique to the defense of the route
- ▶ See video

Figure 8 Tackle

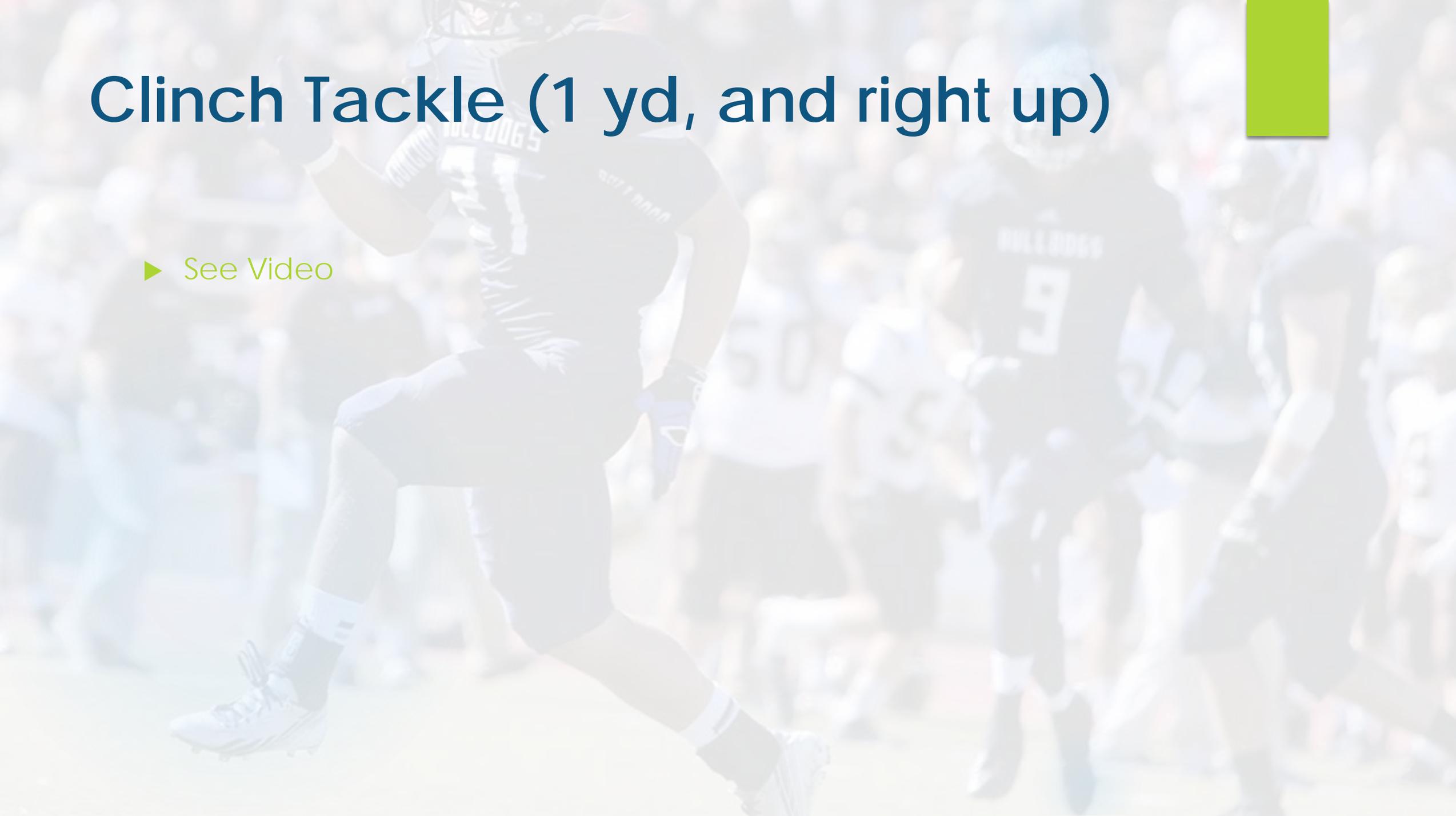


Turn and Burn Drill



Clinch Tackle (1 yd, and right up)

▶ [See Video](#)





Practice and Game Film Examples:

Review:

- ▶ Find and place your best athletes at defensive back
- ▶ Deconstruct coverage skills in this way:
 - ▶ Stance
 - ▶ Release
 - ▶ Transitions
 - ▶ Finish
- ▶ No cute drills, train ugly, and randomize to maximize
 - ▶ Players should know your coaching points
- ▶ Make it about the Players. You rarely win because you as a coach outsmarted a guy. Tough, well trained, disciplined athletes win games