

10 SIMPLE WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR DOUBLE WING ATTACK

- 1) Improve execution and performance by utilizing practice time wisely.**

Eliminate all drills that are not directly related to what your athletes do on the field. (Have you ever seen players do “Monkey rolls” on the field?) Prioritize drills and give more time to the skills and drills that make the plays work. For example, your qb and center should get many reps in the exchange. Spend less time on calcs and agilities and more time on blocking, faking, timing, alignment, assignment, tackling, creating takeaways and ball security. All coaches are blessed with the same amount of time to prepare for the season. Our use of time is the one thing we can control. Go into each practice with a scripted plan. I suggest making a schedule where each practice is broken into increments of 5 minute periods...a 2 hour practice will have 24 periods. Have drills planned and equipment gathered before hand. Have water bottles at the drills stations so that players don't need scheduled (wasted time) water breaks...they can drink in line between the many reps. Design drills and utilize coaches and captains to minimize a lot of standing around by second and third teamers. (use trash cans and cones instead of bags and bag holders when you can) Increase the amounts of reps you do on the core plays (your bread and butter) and decrease wasted practice time by eliminating “junk plays” from your playbook. By definition a junk play is any play that you spend valuable practice time on but end up running one or two times a season.
- 2) Know what to practice.** A wise man said “A coach who scrimmages a lot doesn't know what to practice”. I suggest 10-20 minute scrimmages and this does not have to be full contact. It recommended that you go thud tackling but live blocking to save time that would otherwise be spent on un-piling. Use a quick whistle and coach on the run. Time in the huddle should be absolute minimal, say 5 seconds. Coach one or two points and move on...further teaching should be saved for run/pass skeleton time. Without a doubt the single most useful coaching aid is a white board. A close second to that would have to be a video camera. Video doesn't lie and while coaches can catch and correct a lot of things, the double wing offense has details that must be coached up. Video review of scrimmage time is extremely useful to the players and staff. Scrimmage hard, coach hard, teach on the run...review the scrimmage footage and pick 2-3 things to really focus on the following day. Think of scrimmage time as a quiz before your weekly test (game). Each scrimmage should test the offense in a different manor, for example, one night use crashing wrong arming defensive ends, the next night use crabbers and grabbers and froggers diving into your olinemen. Make sure that you mix in blitzers and stunts to keep your olinemen awake for that inside gap protection. Do not scrimmage live before your team is ready! Build confidence, don't destroy it. Typically defense moves along faster than offense and many young DCs will want to prove what great coaches they are by stuffing the dw early. Once you have the core plays in and running well, that same

DC will be embarrassed. No live scrimmaging until power, sweep, counter, trap and wedge are all installed and well oiled. Don't dilute the double wing with a lot of nonsense.

- 3) **Absolutely run "power hour" at least once a week for each week before your season begins.** Power Hour is just what the name implies, your team runs nothing but powers left and right, live, with the video camera going for one full hour. Set up the offense at the 3 yard line and line up every able body you have for the defense. For some of you, you will need to put half a defense on either the offenses left or right and they a) know its coming and b) have to stop it. Others will have 15-20 kids that the can put on defense...yup, put em all out there and get them fired up to try and stop the power plays before a score. The offense will learn to trust the power plays, learn the true grit behind it and the kind of determination it must have to get those 3 yards every time. Try for at least 90 reps in that hour. (that does allow for time for coaching...the powers must go or the double wing is dead)..again, build confidence, don't destroy it.
- 4) **Perfect play drill** - Run your offense against trash cans or cones or a defense made up of bag holders and shields, walk thru the play, jog thru it, then run it. When it looks perfect, rep it 5 times then move to the next play. Keep the tempo fast overall. Once a week, make sure you do this drill with the "second O". They too must be battle ready.
- 5) **Teach the backs to be their own blockers** – You absolutely must have tough runners. They don't have to be overly big or strong or fast but they must be taught to use the stiff arm or a forearm to deflect would be tacklers. They simply must be taught to get ONE MORE YARD on contact. Design drills to reinforce this concept. Insist that each back make one man miss on each carry.
- 6) **Teach the backs to "block two" by making great fakes** – I stress to the wings and fullback that they "block two" players by making a great fake when they are not carrying or blocking. They are encouraged to and rewarded for faking until the echo of the whistle. The difference between making the playoffs and taking home the trophy can be the amount of attention placed on faking. Simply put, good double wing teams hide the ball and carry out fakes. Poor teams don't do those things.
- 7) **Teach your backs to sustain their blocks!** – We have all seen fullbacks kick out a defensive end only to see a long run stopped by the same defensive end chasing the runner down. We have all seen 3-4 yard runs that would have otherwise been touchdowns if a wing had been able to VELCRO himself to the linebacker for one more step. Stress the "Velcro block" until the echo of the whistle.
- 8) **Know what to key...**- Most coaches will (unfortunately) call a play and become a spectator. As a double wing coach it is most beneficial if you are able to call a play and know exactly what to look for. If you have called a power play you will want to focus on the point of attack to see what the fb/de collision looked like as well as getting a good look at the movement placed upon the defensive tackle. It is also extremely beneficial to have a good eyed assistant looking at the backside cut block and pursuit. Read your key just as you'd expect your defenders to read a key. This key will help you with your next play call. Resist the temptation to call plays based only on the outcome of the last.

- 9) Keep defenders in conflict** – This really ties in with #8, if you are reading your key well you will call plays that target and victimize select defenders. Perhaps you see that a defensive end continually moves upfield...don't sweep him and make him look like a superstar due to your poor play calling, run inside of him and kick him out and use his charge against him. When he cheats inside and becomes concerned with the power, that's when you call the sweep...conflict. Same thing with the defensive tackle. If he is slow off the ball and you are blowing him into the linebackers laps with double teams, don't allow him to make a play by calling trap when he is not trappable! When he begins to fight and strain to hold his ground, only then will the trap break his will completely. He will also likely lose trust for his very coaches who screamed at him to hold his ground.
- 10) Don't panic** - This I cannot stress enough. A two yard gain on a power play is not grounds to believe that "they are stopping the double wing, we need to spread them out!" The double wing power plays are designed to pound and pound and pound on a defense until the defenders are worn down and out. The dam will break and the defense will in the end, give up. You must be willing to pound the power play over and over again. Commit to 4 downs to get those 10 yards. Impatience and panic are two very big enemies to the double wing coach. When you call a play, have an assistant standing next to you. If you call anything other than a power to the left or right, have him ask you "why?". Always remember that you are coaching against the kids on the field. Don't be too hasty to give them too much credit. Finding the ball, shedding a block and making a tackle is a tall order for the average player. Make them do it more than once.

There are many other things a double wing coach (or any football coach) can do to improve his teams for success but I had just picked a few that seem to come up more frequently.