

FOOTBALL



HELP DESK

'Helping Coaches Helping Kids'

BIRDDOG / GREYHOUND DRILL

In my never-ending pursuit of ways to coach more efficiently, I ran across this drill at a USA Football Clinic in 2007. Jerry Horowitz was speaking about practice organization and one of his drills that really struck me was something he called the 'Rabbit Drill'. Now we had practiced pursuit angles before but never in a high-repetition, fast-paced manner like Coach Horowitz was explaining. His explanation got me to thinking about how we could use this drill to not only work on taking proper pursuit angles, but also how we could incorporate conditioning into the same drill to kill two birds (rabbits) with one stone. The result of all this is what we call our Birddog / Greyhound Drill. We try to do this drill at least once a week near the end of practice as a 'combo' drill. It is a combination of bird-dogging our defensive steps with pursuit angle work and conditioning.

We line up 2 or 3 defenses (depending on number of kids) and we take whoever is left and they will be our 'rabbits'. Ideally we want at least 4 'rabbits' so we can have 2 on each side. We place at least 1 'rabbit' on each sideline and on each side of the Coach. Coach gets to be the QB and call the snap count (don't let them move until the ball moves). As the ball is snapped, the Coach will watch the defenders take their first 2-3 steps and then point to one of the 'rabbits'. If it is a 'rabbit' on the sideline, he will take off for the endzone as fast as he can run. If it is a 'rabbit' beside the Coach, he will take off for the sideline like a Sweep play. The defenders must turn and pursue the play using good angles so that as many defenders as possible touch the 'rabbit' before he gets to his destination.

If we can get 6-8 defenders to touch the 'rabbit' before he gets to the endzone, I know we have a very, very fast defense. We are looking for 3-4 defenders on the sideline run. If a 'rabbit' reaches his target without being touched then the whole defensive unit in the drill owes some form of punishment.

We run this with a pretty quick pace so be sure to have plenty of 'rabbits' to rotate and make certain the next defense gets in and set in their stances while the previous defense is chasing. Then after the drill the defenders who just ran must jog back up the sideline AROUND the drill and back behind the Coach so they can be ready to step in for their next turn. Three defenses is ideal for this if you have enough kids (they don't have to be full eleven man defenses). But the idea is to get them to sprint and work hard and take good angles. Watch the guys on the backside away from the 'rabbit' to see who is hustling every time.

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