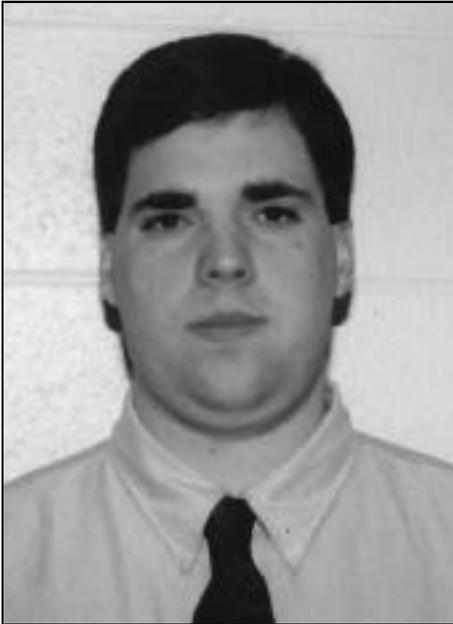


## Drilling the Wing-T Lineman – Pioneer Style



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On behalf of the football staff at Northland Community and Technical College, I would like to say what a privilege it is to contribute to the American Football Coaches Association's *Summer Manual*. Hopefully, we are able to add something beneficial to your program by the way we drill our offensive lineman.

At Northland, we have been running the Wing-T for the past two seasons and have had great success with it. We usually have the smallest line in the conference, yet over the past two seasons we were able to finish tenth and seventh in the nation in rushing and average 257.3 yards on the ground per game this past season. The reason we run this offense is it is very conducive to small linemen. Because we are a small school in northwestern Minnesota, we are unable to recruit bulky athletes to play in the offensive line for us. Our guards are always pulling, so they need to be quick and aggressive. They don't need to be large, for they will be blocking cornerbacks, outside linebackers or trapping defensive ends. Our tackles are always angle blocking. We feel a small lineman can handle a big lineman if he is blocking him at an angle. Our tackles need only to get in the way of the person they are assigned to block. Also, due to our location, it can be very difficult to find a drop-back type of passer. We do like to run the ball first; however, we do feel that we have an excellent passing game because the passes are set up by the run.

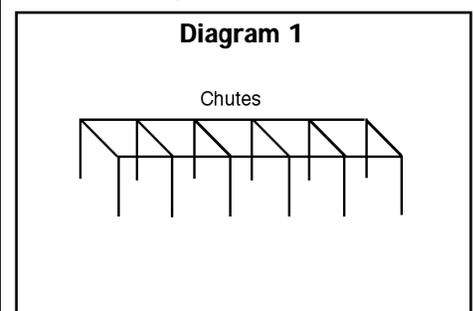
Before we get into the way we drill our linemen, I want you to know that we still block with our shoulder. We feel with all the angle blocking that our linemen are required to do, that shoulder blocking helps in denying any penetration by defensive linemen. We also feel that we get a much tighter fit and our linemen are much more aggressive when allowed to block with the shoulder.

We begin our daily routine with starts. We start by coming off the ball hard and fast with a quick six-inch step with the right foot called the drive step. The second time through, we will step with our left foot and so on. The second start we use is an angle step. We work on a six-inch step taken at a 45-degree angle to the right and the left. As a coach, you need to make sure that the toes of the linemen are pointing straight ahead. You do not want them to point their toes at a 45-degree angle when stepping. We use this step when we need to get at

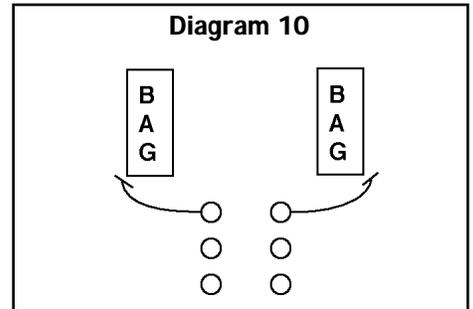
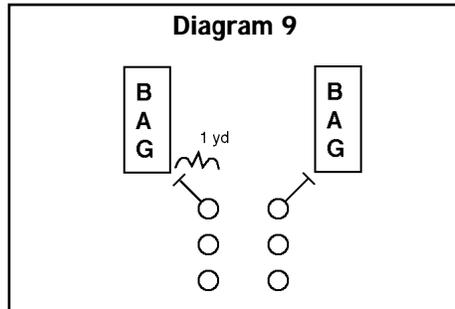
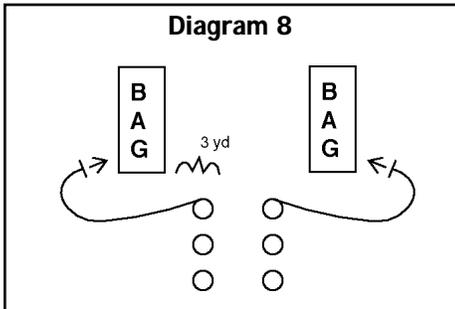
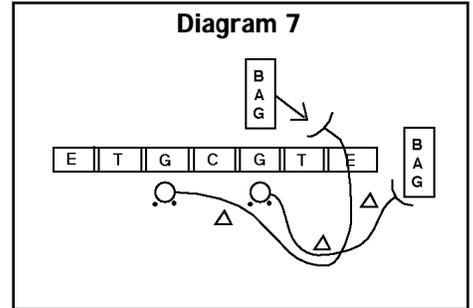
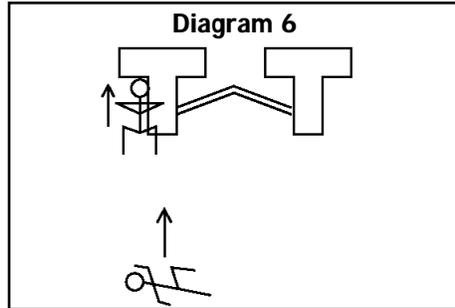
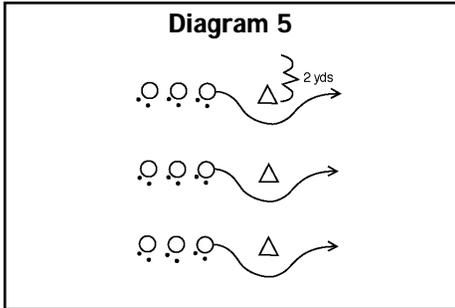
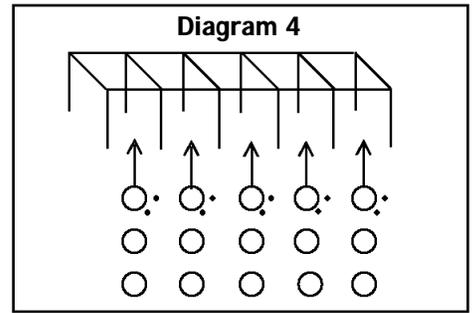
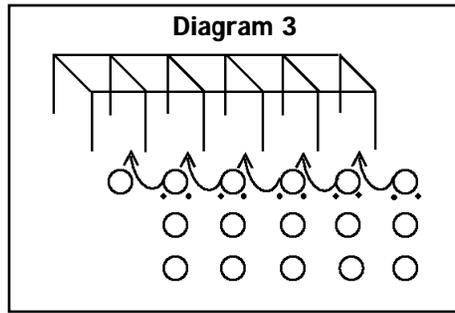
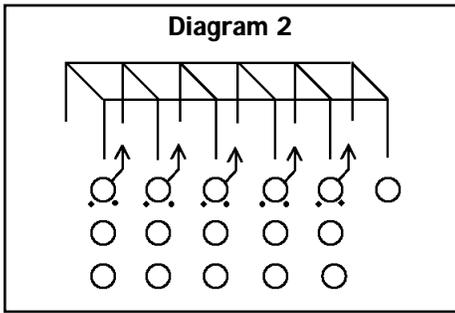
linebackers playing to the inside of us. It is a very important step for the tackles and tight ends. The third step we use is a reach step. This is a six-inch, 90 degree angle step. It is used to reach block a defender. It is a very important step for linemen away from the point of attack.

In the early stages of the season, this footwork progression takes about 10 minutes. When we start to get these steps down, it will only take five minutes. We need the 10 minutes in the beginning of the year because we are a junior college, and these techniques are new to most of our athletes. After performing each step, the linemen will work straight up the field for five yards, staying as low as possible.

After these steps, we move to the linemen chutes. Chute work is very important because our linemen are so small. We feel they can defeat the bigger defenders by staying low. We have a set of five chutes that are connected (Diagram 1). We will start with the drive step first, going through the chute hard, fast and low, making sure that the arms are pumping. We will then move onto the angle step. We will align slightly, offset to the opening of the chute and take our angle step and fire through the chute (Diagram 2). Next is the reach step. We will align across from the next chute over, take our reach step and fire through the adjacent chute. (Diagram 3) Finally, we practice our short pulls that we use for trapping. We align perpendicular to the chute and we use a good short pull technique, making sure to open our lead foot at a 90-degree angle to the direction we are pulling. We also make sure to drive our pull-side elbow back to our hip. This helps turn our body quickly by opening up our hips and shoulders toward the direction of the pull (Diagram 4).



Once we complete our chute work, we move on to deep pulls. This is the pull technique that we use on our sweep. We run this drill three at a time. The first step taken is a deep step almost straight back, so is the second step which takes us around a



cone (Diagram 5). The third step helps us gather our body to give us a base. After these steps, we run through the rest of the pull.

Our two-man sled skills start with a six-point explosion. We feel this helps us with rolling our hips into the block. From six-point explosion, we move to the two-step drill. We fire out at the sled for two steps. We want to make contact as our second step hits the ground. After we make the contact, we have our linemen frame up to a solid fit position. Next, we work at driving the sled. This is the hard work of the two-man progression. We will drive it for seven yards and come to a fit position that we hold when we are done moving the sled. Finally, we will perform the short pulls that we use for trapping. The linemen will align perpendicular to the two-man about four yards away from the sled, perform a short pull and drive the sled with their inside shoulder (Diagram 6). We feel this helps to get your linemen driving the defenders they are trapping, instead of going to the block, making contact and not finishing off the defender. This has made our down and trap plays very successful.

The sweep drill is a big part of our drill

progression. We use just the guards for this drill however, we have incorporated our tackles down blocks into the drill as well as all the running backs and center. First, we set up a line tape and align cones to the play side. One cone is placed behind the centers right foot, or one yard behind the outside tip of the centers play side foot. Another is placed two yards behind the outside tip of the tight end position on the line tape (Diagram 7). On command, the play side guard pulls for the cone that is behind the tackle spot. He works around the first cone leading to the second cone; this cone simulates the wingbacks block. We want our play side guard to stay tight to this cone, turn and kick-out the contain bag. The backside guard will pull flat until he is past the first cone. This keeps him from colliding with the fullback. After passing the first cone, he will immediately get depth and go around the second cone and head up field to wall off the pursuit bag.

Finally, we end up with our bag drills. We will start with two lines and have two linemen perform at the same time. First, we will pull and log block the bag, making sure

that we quickly turn our hips (Diagram 8). Second, we will down block on the bag, working our angle step and driving on our down blocks (Diagram 9). Finally, we will work on our reach step by reaching the bag and blocking it with the opposite shoulder (Diagram 10).

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