

CHARACTERISTICS OF A CHAMPIONSHIP DEFENSE

I. DEFENSE MUST BE A TEAM EFFORT

- THE FIRST AND FOREMOST PRINCIPLE OF DEFENSE IS TO PREVENT A TOUCHDOWN OR SCORE. IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEFENSIVE TEAM IS MEASURED BY THE NUMBER OF POINTS SCORED AGAINST IT
- EACH MAN MUST KNOW HOW HIS INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY ON EVERY DEFENSE AND PLAY HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY EACH AND EVERY PLAY
- HE MUST CARRY OUT HIS ASSIGNMENT POSITIVELY IN ORDER THAT THE DEFENSE CAN FUNCTION AS A "TEAM". PURSUIT AND GANG TACKLING ARE A VITAL PART OF TEAM EFFORT. BE IN PROPER POSITION FOR TACKLING. MOST MISSED TACKLES ARE FROM USING ARMS ONLY AND DUCKING YOUR HEAD
- ANY GAMBLING BY AN INDIVIDUAL CAN ONLY LEAD TO A BREAKDOWN OF THE "TEAM" AND CAUSE A LONG RUN OR PASS AND POSSIBLY A SCORE. OUR DEFENSE IS BASED ON EACH MAN CARRYING OUT HIS OWN ASSIGNMENT COMPLETELY.
- THROUGH TEAM EFFORT WE WILL KEEP THE GAIN DOWN TO A MINIMUM AND PREVENT THE LONG RUN OR PASS FOR A SCORE

II. TEAM RUN DEFENSE

- DEFENSIVE LINE — LINE UP IN EXACT LOCATION OF ALIGNMENT CALLED. TAKE OFF ON SNAP OF BALL MOVEMENT OF OFFENSIVE MAN. IF IN STUNT, YOU MUST GET TO THE STUNT AREA... IF NOT IN A STUNT YOU MUST DEFEAT BLOCKER BY PROPER ESCAPE TECHNIQUE, MAKE A TACKLE AT POINT OR TAKE PROPER PURSUIT ANGLE TO BALL
- LINEBACKERS — LINE UP IN EXACT LOCATION OF DEFENSE CALLED. MAKE PROPER ADJUSTMENT TO FORMATION OR AUDIBLE CALL TO DEFENSIVE LINE AND KNOW HOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF DEFENSE CALLED. ONCE THE PLAY STARTS, YOU MUST READ YOUR KEY AND PROGRESSION. REACT TO BLOCKING COMBINATION BY FILLING HOLE AT POINT OF ATTACK OR BY USING PROPER SHEDDING TECHNIQUE AND TAKING CORRECT PURSUIT ANGLE TO BALL. ALWAYS KNOW TYPE OF FORCE TO BE USED WITH EACH FRONT ALIGNMENT CALLED
- SECONDARY — YOU MUST BE IN PROPER ALIGNMENT FOR DEFENSIVE COVERAGE CALLED. YOU MUST KNOW TYPE OF FORCE CALLED. READ KEY AND CARRY OUT RESPONSIBILITY OF FORCE CALL. IF FORCE MAN, USE PROPER PURSUIT ANGLE AND ELIMINATE LONG RUN

III. TEAM PASS DEFENSE

- **DEFENSIVE LINE – MUST CONTINUOUSLY PUT PRESSURE ON THE PASSER. BY RUSHING IN YOUR OWN PRESCRIBED LANE WITH CONTINUOUS EFFORT, YOU WILL GET TO THE PASSER. BY STAYING IN YOUR PROPER RUSHING LANE, YOU WILL CONTAIN THE PASSER, THEREBY PREVENTING HIM FROM RUNNING WITH THE BALL AND THROWING OUTSIDE THE POCKET**
- **LINEBACKERS – MUST BE TOUGH AT HOLDING UP THE OFFENSIVE ENDS, COVERING YOUR ASSIGNED MAN AND DROPPING TO YOUR PRESCRIBED DEFENSIVE POSITIONS FOR A PASS. IF A BALL IS CAUGHT AROUND YOU, CONVERGE; DISLODGE THE BALL WITH A JOLTING TACKLE. MAKE HIM REMEMBER YOU AND NEVER WANT TO CATCH ANOTHER BALL IN YOUR AREA AGAIN. LINEBACKERS MUST GET DEPTH, TACKLE AND COVER GROUND Laterally; Giving our secondary deep backs all the confidence to do their jobs. Disrupt any crossing receiver**
- **DEEP BACKS – MUST LEARN THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND TECHNIQUES TO CARRY OUT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES. THE SECRET OF COVERING ANY RECEIVER IS CONCENTRATION AND DESIRE. IF YOU ARE IN MAN COVERAGE, CONCENTRATE ON THE RECEIVER. WHEN THE BALL IS THROWN, HAVE THE DESIRE TO GO THROUGH THE MAN TO THE BALL. IF IN ZONE, DROP TO YOUR PRESCRIBED POSITION, MATCH OFFENSIVE PLAYER IN YOUR AREA (#), AND REACT TO THE QUARTERBACK AND BALL. ANY BALL THAT IS IN THE AIR IS YOUR FOOTBALL**

IV. VARIATION ON DEFENSIVE DESIGN

- **OUR DEFENSES ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE OUR FRONT LINE WITH SOUND VARIATION IN LOCATION AND INTENSITY OF CHARGE AND ALSO VARIATION IN NUMBER OF RUSH MEN**
- **OUR SECONDARY IS ALSO PROVIDED A VARIATION OF PATTERN. PASS DEFENSE INCLUDES MAN FOR MAN, ZONE AND COMBINATION COVERAGES. IF OUR BACKS EXECUTE OUR COVERAGES PROPERLY, WE WILL PRESENT PROBLEMS TO THE OFFENSIVE QB'S AND RECEIVERS. WE EXPECT THAT BY PERFORMING THESE DIFFERENT MANEUVERS, WE SHALL CREATE DOUBT IN THE PLAYERS MINDS AS TO THE TYPE OF COVERAGE TO EXPECT; THUS REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PASS PATTERNS THAT A QB HAS CONFIDENCE IN USING. WE SHALL ALSO VARY OUR SUPPORT PATTERN ON RUNNING PLAYS. BY DOING SO ENABLES US TO DESTROY THE ORGANIZATION OF A RUN; THUS CAUSING CONFUSION WHICH CAN CAUSE AN OFFENSE TO LOSE ITS POISE AND ASSURANCE**

V. ATTITUDE

- **WE MUST DEVELOP AN ATTITUDE THAT NOTHING WILL KEEP US FROM BECOMING THE “BEST”. WE AS A TEAM WILL DO “WHATEVER IT TAKES” TO ACHIEVE OUR GOAL — WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP. WITHIN THE PATTERN OF OUR DEFENSE, YOU... MAKE THE PLAY THAT SETS THE TEMPO FOR OUR DEFENSE. TO BE THE BEST, WE HAVE TO BE AGGRESSIVE. BUT IN DOING SO WE HAVE TO HAVE AN INTELLIGENT APPROACH. WE MUST BE A TEAM THAT ATTACKS AND FORCES ERRORS BY RELENTLESS PURSUIT. WE MUST PUNISH THE BALL CARRIER BY CONVERGING AND SWARMING**
- **FOOTBALL IS A TEST OF A MAN’S MENTAL AND PHYSICAL TOUGHNESS. ABILITY ALONE IS NOT ENOUGH. THE SUCCESS OF OUR DEFENSE REQUIRES YOUR DEDICATION, CONCENTRATION AND A PRIDE IN OUR UNIT. MAKE A COMMITMENT TO THESE GOALS AND YOU WILL BE PART OF A GREAT DEFENSE**

VI. DEFENSIVE SCORING

- **THE MARGIN OF WINNING IN MANY CLOSE GAMES HAS BEEN THE RESULT OF THE DEFENSE SCORING BY:**
 - **INTERCEPTING A PASS AND RETURNING IT FOR A TOUCHDOWN**
 - **RECOVERING A FUMBLE WITH A RUN BACK FOR A TOUCHDOWN**
 - **A SAFETY**
- **TO INTERCEPT A PASS OR RECOVER A FUMBLE CLOSE TO THEIR GOAL LINE MEANS THE DIFFERENCE IN A CLOSE GAME. TO HAVE THEIR OFFENSIVE PLANS BACKFIRE CAN BE A DAMAGING BLOW TO A TEAM, AND SOMETIMES LEADS TO A TOTAL COLLAPSE. WHEN THE TURNOVER RATIO IS ON THE PLUS SIDE, YOU ARE PLAYING WINNING FOOTBALL. THE GREATEST CONTRIBUTION OF DEFENSIVE UNIT CAN MAKE TO THE TEAM IS TO CREATE A TURNOVER AND SCORE; OR AT THE VERY LEAST, CHANGE THE MOMENTUM OF A GAME IN OUR FAVOR**

VII. TROUBLE SITUATIONS

- **IN VIRTUALLY EVERY GAME, OUR DEFENSE WILL BE FACED WITH SEVERAL DIFFICULT SITUATIONS. WE REFER TO THESE AS “TROUBLE SITUATIONS” AND THE WAY WE HANDLE THESE THREE OR FOUR PLAYS, PERHAPS SERIES OF PLAYS, WILL USUALLY DETERMINE THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME. THESE “TROUBLE SITUATIONS” FALL INTO SEVERAL CATEGORIES:**
 - **OUR OPPONENT IS MOVING THE BALL AGAINST US AND APPEARS TO BE GAINING MOMENTUM**
 - **OUR OPPONENT HAS POSSESSION INSIDE OUR 15 YARD LINE**
 - **OUR OPPONENT HAS GAINED POSSESSION IN EXCELLENT FIELD POSITION THROUGH AN INTERCEPTION, FUMBLE RECOVERY, LONG RETURN OR BLOCKED KICK (SUDDEN CHANGE)**
 - **THE LAST TWO MINUTES OF THE HALF OR GAME AND WE ARE PROTECTING A LEAD**
 - **“SUDDEN DEATH”, THE OVERTIME PERIOD OF A GAME THAT ENDED IN A TIE**
- **THE WAY A TEAM RESPONDS TO THESE SITUATIONS IS AN INDICATION OF AN ATTITUDE. OUR APPROACH WILL BE TO ACCEPT THESE TROUBLE SITUATIONS AS A CHALLENGE AND AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW OUR DEFENSIVE GREATNESS. THROUGH CONCENTRATION AND A MEANINGFUL PLAN, WE WILL BE ABLE TO OVERCOME THESE “TROUBLE SITUATIONS” AND CONTROL THE OUTCOME OF THE GAME**
- **OUR PLAN FOR HANDLING “TROUBLE SITUATIONS” SUCCESSFULLY WILL COMMONLY BE REFERRED TO AS “ONE PLAY AT A TIME”**
- **IN A “TROUBLE SITUATION” THREE ELEMENTS APPLY TO INSURE THE SUCCESS OF OUR ENTIRE DEFENSE**
 - **“ONE PLAY AT A TIME” – EACH INDIVIDUAL ON DEFENSE MUST PLAY THE NEXT PLAY AS THE MOST IMPORTANT PLAY OF THE ENTIRE GAME. TO PREVENT THEM FROM SCORING REQUIRES YOUR TOTAL CONCENTRATION AND INTENSITY ON THE NEXT PLAY ONLY**
 - **ASSIGNMENT – EACH PLAYER MUST KNOW THE SPECIFIC DETAIL OF HIS ASSIGNMENT WHEN HE LEAVES THE HUDDLE**
 - **ALIGNMENT – EVERYONE MUST LINE UP EXACTLY WHERE OUR DEFENSIVE CALL REQUIRES THAT YOU BE**
 - **AGGRESSIVENESS – ON THE SNAP, CARRY OUT YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AGGRESSIVELY. DO NOT BE CAUTIOUS AND CONCERNED THAT YOU MIGHT BREAKDOWN AND HURT THE DEFENSE AND YOUR TEAMMATES**

VIII. OUR GOAL

- **PREVENT TOUCHDOWNS. KEEP SCORING DOWN TO THE MINIMUM.
ELIMINATE LONG PASS OR RUN**
- **TO GET FIELD POSITION AND TO CREATE AS MANY TURNOVERS AS POSSIBLE**

IX. CONCLUSIONS

- **PAY THE PRICE TO BE A WINNER. DESIRE IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF WINNING. EACH AND EVERY DEFENSIVE PLAYER MUST HAVE PRIDE AND PERSONAL AMBITION TO BE A WINNER. YOU MUST “PAY THE PRICE” WITH THE EXTRA WORK, STUDY AND CONDITIONING TO BE A WINNER**
- **WITH TEAM EFFORT, PASS DEFENSE, RUSH DEFENSE AND NO MENTAL ERROR, WE WILL REACH OUR GOAL**
- **WE WILL REPEAT THESE POINTS TIME AFTER TIME UNTIL THEY BECOME PART OF YOUR WAY OF LIFE. REPETITION MAY BE BORING BUT THROUGH THIS METHOD YOU WILL BECOME A GREAT DEFENSIVE TEAM**
- **A GREAT DEFENSIVE TEAM WILL NEVER LOSE ITS POISE. IT WILL ALWAYS STRIVE TO TURN A BAD SITUATION INTO A BIG PLAY AND TAKE THE MOMENTUM AWAY FROM THE OFFENSIVE TEAM**