

# Special Teams Coaching Tips

## **Blocking**

Most blocks by inexperienced teams occur due to breakdowns in the D gap by the wingback. A typical defensive play is to have one defensive player run a diversionary route outside of the wing back. The wing back blocks the diversion player, leaving a hole to the real blitzer. Carefully pick your wing backs, and coach them to block the D gap first.

Another blocking technique is to turn lineman opening holes to blitzers. Teach your linemen to stay square to the line of scrimmage. This should keep the front wall solid.

## **Kickers**

Coaching kickers is difficult because they have to learn two exclusive skill sets. First, they have to learn the basic physical, muscle memory kicking technique. Secondly, they have to learn the mental aspect of performing cold. The best synonymous sports example is shooting free throws. Once getting into the shooting rhythm, basketball players can go 90 of 100. But coming off the bench to go 2 for 2 with the game on the line is a very different experience and skill set. The best coaches understand this dichotomy and practice both aspects.

## **Mental Aspect**

Put your kicker and the rest of the kicking team in pressure situations. You should put something on the line with the field goals. For example, have the kicker kick 5 field goals, and for every field goal he misses, have the entire team do a suicide run. Time each kick, and count any kick slower than 1.5 seconds as a block to put some pressure on the holder and snapper. After a couple of these sessions you will know whether or not to go for it on 4<sup>th</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> or to trust your kicker.

## **Practice Schedule**

The snapper, holder and kicker should practice together at least twice a week in season. Kickers should never do more than 30 full kicks a day in season and almost none the day before a game. Like a golfer, a lot of work can be done on the putting green with drills while saving the legs.