Coach

DRILL: 6 – 4 – 2 Progression

Team divides into 5 lines (or as many as you want/have dummies for).

First progression of drill: First person in line holds dummy, the next in line starts in a “6 point” stance: hands, knees and feet/toes with a distance of about 6 inches from the dummy. As in ALL drills, player keeps head up; On coach’s command, player fires out, sliding head to the side of the dummy and contacts dummy with shoulder. No need to use arms to wrap up in this stage of the drill as this will help keep them on all 6 points and firing out low and using their hips and legs. Can repeat this stage as many times as desired, we go through at least twice, switching the side of the dummy we slide the head.

Next progression; player starts in a “4-point” stance: hands and feet/toes with a distance of 6 inches from dummy. On coach’s command, player fires out, sliding head to side of dummy, contacting with shoulder. (Start this stage of the drill with NO hands to keep them from coming up out of their stance to early) Again repeat desired amount of times.

Final progressive stage: player starts in a “2-point” stance: feet parallel and about 2 feet from the dummy (athletic stance). On coach’s command, player steps out low and to the center of the dummy with opposite foot of the side the head is sliding to (if head slides right, step with left foot). In this stage we will wrap with the arms and take the dummy to the ground, using what we call our Hit, Lift, Stick form (making sure player “rolls the rump”). Once again, repeat desired amount of times with head going to both sides of the dummy.
DRILL: Partner Form Tackling, Straight On
(Utilizing our high jump pads)

Have players pair up (as best you can) according to size and weight. Divide them among the number of pads that you have access to. This is also the final stage of the 6 – 4 – 2 drill, only using players instead of the dummy.

One player stands with their back to the pad and feet about one foot from the edge of the pad. They tuck a football into one arm as a ball carrier would. Tackler is about 2 feet from the “ball carrier” in their “athletic stance”. As in ALL drills, player keeps head up; On coach’s command, player steps up with the foot opposite the football and places their foot between the “ball carrier’s” legs, slides their head to the football side and utilizes the proper tackling form of lowering the hips and driving up through the “ball carrier”, the “Hit, Lift, Stick” method or, (“rolling the rump”). Tackler takes the “ball carrier” to the pad. Rotate to the next pair as quickly as possible and the previous pair goes to the end of the line switching positions.

**Can move the tackler back 2 or 3 steps so they get used to breaking down with movement, keeping head up and still rolling the hips through.**

We utilize the pads in this drill, and the next, as it keeps the players from having to hit the ground in a vulnerable state. The “ball carrier” knows the tackler is working on form and when he hits the “ground” it will be softer landing.
DRILL: Partner Form Tackling, Angle
(Utilizing our high jump pads)

Have players pair up (as best you can) according to size and weight. Divide them among the number of pads that you have access to. This drill is to progress in our tackling with movement, working to get the tackler’s head across the body of the ball carrier. *Note: we do this drill at half speed to keep players on the pad AND because the ball carrier is in a vulnerable state.

The ball carrier stands off the side of the pad about 3 yards with a ball and the tackler lines head up with the ball carrier about 2 yards away. As in ALL drills, player keeps head up; On coach’s command, the ball carrier runs at half speed parallel with the pad. The tackler takes a proper angle to the ball carrier. As he approaches the ball carrier, the tackler breaks down into a proper tackling form, slides their head to the football side and drives the hips up through the ball carrier with the “Hit, Lift, Stick” method or, (“rolling the rump”). Tackler takes the ball carrier to the pad. Rotate to the next pair as quickly as possible and the previous pair goes to the end of the line switching positions. Go through drill as many times as desired. Switch sides with ball carrier so both angles are used.

Again, we utilize the pads in this drill as it keeps the players from having to hit the ground in a vulnerable state. The “ball carrier” knows the tackler is working on form and when he hits the “ground” it will be softer landing.
DRILL: “Roll and React”

Have players pair up (as best as you can) by size, weight and ability. Divide the teams into as many groups as you have dummies for.

Players lie on their backs with their heads touching, between two dummies that are used as the boundary for the drill. (They are placed about 2 yards apart) One has a ball and is the ball carrier, the other is the tackler. On the coach’s command, both players roll over to their feet as quickly as possible, reacting to each other. The ball carrier tries to advance the ball to the end of the dummies, while the tackler tries to tackle him. As in ALL drills, players need to keep their head up during contact. This drill allows for minimal contact, but requires the tackler to get to his feet as quickly as possible, find the ball carrier and make the tackle. Emphasis is placed on finding the ball carrier and getting him to the ground. There are times in a game when the players are being blocked/knocked to the ground and we want them to be able to find the ball and be involved in the tackle whenever possible.
DRILL: “Down the Line”/”Fill the Gap”

Have players pair up according to size, weight, and ability as best as possible. Divide the team in as many groups as you can depending on the amount of dummies (or cones) as you have available.

Set the dummies up in a line, with about one yard between them and the players on opposite sides of the dummies right at the edge of the first one. On the coach’s command both players react. The ball carrier moves down the line and picks which gap to cut up in. (We begin this drill with NO option of cutting back by the ball carrier. Also we tell the ball carrier which gap to go through in some situations as well). The tackler moves down the line with the ball carrier, mirroring him as he moves. We emphasize that the tackler keeps his shoulders parallel to the “LOS” and stay on the backside of the ball carrier, so as to not over-run the play. When the ball carrier makes his move to a gap the tackler reacts at the same time, filling the gap with proper tackling technique, making sure that he slides his head across the body and exploding up through the ball carrier. (Again, we emphasize to both players to keep their heads up). We remind the tackler that the last dummy in the line represents the sidelines as is essentially an additional tackler, since the ball carrier can not go outside of it.

We will vary the number of dummies that we set up depending on the number of gaps we want to have available for the ball carrier to have to choose from. When we allow the ball carrier to cut back we do cut down number of gaps down to 2 instead of 3.
**DRILL: “Team Tackling/Goal-Line”**

Have players pair up according to size, weight, and ability as best as possible. Divide your team into as many groups as you want. We will keep them altogether for the most part as we keep “score” and the winning team does NOT have to run a lap around the goal post.

Place the dummies 5 yards apart with the ball carrier starting on one end of the dummies and the tackler on the other. On the coach’s command both players react. The ball carrier tries to get the ball over the “goal-line”, while the tackler tries to keep him from advancing beyond the end of the dummies, the “goal-line”. The back can try any form of running to score, while the tackler attempts to use proper form for tackling, but essentially the object is to keep him from getting across the “goal-line”. The runner has to stay between the dummies. *(Once again, emphasis for both players is to keep their heads up while making contact.)* Which ever player is “successful” he scores a point for his team. After the coach blows his whistle to at the end of the “play”, the players go to the end of the lines on the opposite side, switching roles.

After each player has had the opportunity to both carry the ball and tackle, the score is totaled and the “losing team” has to run a lap around the goal posts. The players really enjoy this drill and there is excitement and support created each time we run this drill.
## DRILL: “BAMA”/Team Tackling

Divide the team into as many groups as you can with 4 players on one team to compete against 4 on another. (Keep the teams as equal as possible by ability, as this simulates a game situation) Set the cones up 5 yards wide by 10 yards long. We run the drill a timed amount, 10 minutes and try to get in as many possessions as we can.

The rules of the drill for the offense: no passing, snap the ball back to the “ball carrier”, either under “center” or shot-gun. Ball carrier calls the cadence and has to carry the ball, no hand-offs. The “offensive team” has 4 downs to advance the ball the 10 yards to “score a touchdown”. Rules for the defense: game situation rules. Have to stop the offense in 4 downs. Switch sides after 4 downs. **As in all drills, players keep their head up during contact.**

We want the offensive team to switch the ball carrier around so all “team” gets a chance to carry the ball. It allows them to “find out what is like for each of the different positions to see how the other functions”. We will also vary the drill. Sometimes we will put only 3 on the “D” vs. 4 on the “O”, so they have to shed a blocker and make the tackle as well.
Coach

**DRILL: Strip the Ball Carrier**

Another “station” we use during our tackling drills we work on stripping the ball from the ball carrier. Have players partner up according to size, height and weight as best as possible. Line the pairs up about 5 yards apart from each other and place the ball carrier with a ball, 2 yards in front of the tackler.

On the coach’s command, the ball carrier takes off at half speed (to start with) with the tackler pursuing. When the tackler catches the ball carrier he uses the arm opposite the ball side to begin securing the tackle, while using the ball side hand to try and strip the ball. The tackler can either punch through to the ball trying to knock it our, or come over the top, trying to rip the ball out of ball carrier’s possession. If the strip is unsuccessful, the tackler lets go at this point of the ball carrier. (This is done because the ball carrier is only going half speed and we don’t want them hurt). We switch roles on the way back. When we begin to grasp the understanding of this drill, we step up the speed of the ball carrier (shorten the starting distance, or give the tackler a little head start) and if the strip is unsuccessful, the tackler has to bring the ball carrier to the ground.

We get in as many repetitions as possible within the 5 minutes during this station drill. We will also off set the tackler to both sides to simulate him coming from the side and trying to strip the ball. **As in all drills, players keep their head up during contact.**
5 Things You Need To Know About Football Tackling Drills

1. Common Fundamentals in Football Tackling Drills: Whatever football tackling drills you choose to use, there needs to be some common fundamentals in any drill. First, the drills have to maintain and reinforce the fundamentals of tackling. Things such as balance, wrapping up, keeping the head up and finishing the tackle should be staples in any tackling drill. In addition, any drill should emphasize safety first. Improper tackling form can lead to serious head and neck injuries.

2. Use the Lower Body: The most common error for tacklers is that they believe the tackle is the function of the upper body, when, in reality the power and explosion in tackling originates in the lower body, legs and hips. So, with any drill you choose, concentrate on lower-body movement. Getting the players to understand the importance of balance and exploding through the tackle is of primary importance.

3. Tackling for Dummies: Use aides in tackling drills to reinforce the live-tackling drills and reduce the risk of injury. Tackling dummies and pads are useful tools for tackling drills. They not only allow the players to be more aggressive, they save the team from unwanted injury when players are tackling each other.

4. Build from the Basics: If you are teaching younger players to tackle properly, you need to start out with the basic tackling movements and stay away from full contact drills until the young players understand the basics of tackling. Without a basic fundamental tackling knowledge, you are risking injury especially in those players whose bodies are still growing and are more susceptible to concussions or other head injuries. Just take it slow and err on the side of caution with any tackling drills with young tacklers.

5. Demonstration: Demonstrate how to perform each tackling drill and do not just tell the players how to do each drill. Most people learn by example and if they do not see something done correctly first, then chances are they will not learn the drill and there could be a chance of injury. Too many times, a coach or instructor will just assume players understand what they are saying. There needs to be a clear and concise instruction for each tackling drill to make certain the athletes understand exactly how to do it. Because not only can this result in injury, it can also lead to bad tackling habits.