

Defensive Line Pass Rush Technique and Drills

Denny Marcin - New York Jets Consultant

“Defensive Line Pass Rush Skills and Drills.’ Denny Marcin, Consultant for the New York Jets, gives a lot of detail on pass rush, defensive line drills, and more. Good stuff from the 2009 Harrisburg Glazier Clinic.”

Key Words of Pass Rush

1. *Attitude*
2. *Plan:* Have a plan before the snap.
3. *Key the Ball:* One eye on the ball at all times
4. *Sprint*
5. *Every Step is North:* Always be working toward the target, don't give ground.
6. *1/3 of the Body:* Attack the edge of the body. Don't rush in a phone booth.
7. *Execute a move:* Don't need lots of moves, just two good moves.
8. *Leverage:* Must gain leverage.
9. *Cloth:* Use the Offensive man's cloth. In the NFL you can't get ahold of cloth, but in high school you can. Use it to move him.
10. *3 yards - No Man's Land:* If you don't get 3 yards, its a minus. Never ask a guy to take on two guys.

Somewhat Random Side-Note #1

3-Tech rushes B-Gap, and works to the A-Gap. The Nose rushes A-Gap and works a 2-way go on the Guard. The integrity of the lanes stays the same. The Quarterback steps to a natural hole in the defense. Take that hole away. Use a counter move to work from B-Gap to A-Gap (3 tech). Its not a line game - that is your rush lane. If you get a rush through B-Gap take it, if not work your move.

11. *3 Seconds*
12. *Stay Alive*

13. *Finish!*

14. *Blind Side: Think Ball - Strip!* Never go for the sack from the blind side, go for the strip. If you're on the hash or the boundary, don't worry about contain on the Quarterback.

15. *Give me 5 Yards After the Throw - FINISH!*

16. *Have a Ball!*

Most pass rush drills are usually done wrong.

Common Errors in Pass Rush

1. *Not Getting a Good Jump*

Somewhat Random Side Note #2: On 3rd & 5, play pass, if they run then run to the ball. If there's a bad blocker, go after him.

Somewhat Random Side Note #3: Start with a 4-man rush. If you can't get to the passer, bring 5. Still can't get there, bring 6. If you still can't get there, rush with 3. (*my note: That is true wisdom.*)

2. *Don't rock backwards to go forwards:* Weight forward in the stance.

Somewhat Random Side Note #4: Visited with Parisi, the spring coach, who said that if sprinters could not use blocks, they would go from a 2-point stance. They just have to have their weight forward. Coach Marsin points out that you need to make sure your hat is behind the ball when you do this.

Defensive Line Drill: Line up 3 yards from player in stance. Hold a tennis ball out at arms length (do two players, two tennis balls). Drop the ball, the players take off and try to catch it before the second bounce. Then back them up to 4 yards. Do it as a competition. Simeon Rice was the best, he could get it from 7 yards!

3. *Enjoy Practice!*

4. *Executing a Move too Soon:* Get your guy to take one false step and you've got him. You have to sprint north first. Know the launch point of the Quarterback. Identify his launch point in practice - put a target on the ground using a towel or a small cone. You can't get to the launch point by going in a straight line.

Defensive Line Drill: Batted Ball Drill. Guys up front need to know the coverage, and know when the offense is going to pass. Mirror the Quarterback's hand. If his right hand goes up, your left hand mirrors. Let the Defensive Lineman run at the coach, and make him keep both feet on the ground. Only leave your feet if you're engaged with a blocker. Otherwise the QB will duck you. You need to practice the batted ball drill.

Things to Consider

1. *Role Players* - Don't be afraid to switch personnel.
2. *Certain Fronts for Pass Rush*
3. *Perfect no more than 2 pass rush moves.*
4. *Speed Rusher / Power Rusher*
5. *Widen Outside Rushers* - but not too wide!
6. Inside Rush into the boundary for "T" (*my note: not sure what this means - any explanation is welcome.*)

Somewhat Random Side Note #5: His players considered Jake Plummer to be the toughest Quarterback scrambler.

Bull Rush Technique

1. Accelerate across the Line of Scrimmage with leverage.
2. Attack with fists in a wedge, right through his chin. If he's going backwards, take him backwards.

Defensive Line Drill: Offensive Lineman with his helmet on, Defensive Lineman with his helmet off and blindfolded. Fit into the OL. OL backpedals 3-4 steps, when he stops, DL makes his move. Or have the OL move left or right after 3-4 steps, and DL make the move the other way.

Defensive Line Drill: Biggest mistake coaches make in drilling vs. bags is making the move a yard in front. You cannot start your move until you are even with the hip. Put the foot outside of the bag and make a move.

3. Only two moves to bend the angle to the Quarterback, after you've executed your initial move: either plant the outside foot and go, or use the karaoke drill (grab with the hand, karaoke the back foot, and go).
4. Make your move and get eyes to the Quarterback, don't look at the guy you've made the move on. When you see him go into his throwing motion, eyes go to the football.

Rip Technique

1. Accelerate across the Line of Scrimmage, working half a man.

Defensive Line Drill: Start on knees, pull down and rip, then go to a 2-point stance, step hip & foot even with him, pull down and rip.

2. Always rip & lean. Rip from Florida to Maine - not from Cuba!

3. Rip through the blocker's surface, with the inside arm. Grab the shoulder with the outside arm.
4. Do it again if necessary.

Swim Technique

See what a guy can do, and coach off of that. Don't force it - see what he's comfortable with, and make it better. Let them be creative in developing their moves. They'll figure out if it doesn't work.

1. Accelerate across the Line of Scrimmage working half a man.
2. Grab the outside shoulder with the outside hand.
3. Punch the arm over the outside shoulder.
4. Get hips beyond his, and drive down hard with the inside arm, while maintaining cloth. Use the same drills as the rip technique to teach swim technique.

Somewhat Random Side Note #6: Put the ball on the ground for fumble drills. Don't make it bounce all over the place. Fall on it if there's any doubt at all about whether to scoop or fall on it.

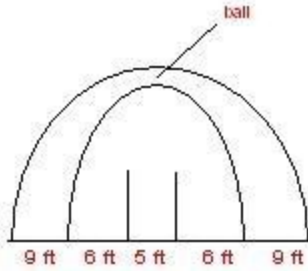
Somewhat Random Side Note #7: Two big points of emphasis - crawl on's (get to the pile), and effort plays.

Somewhat Random Side Note #8: If you keep a chart, for god's sake, keep up with it.

Spin Technique

1. Accelerate across the Line of Scrimmage.
2. Sell the outside or inside move, depending on which way you are spinning.
3. Get the inside arm beyond the hips, drove low and hard with the outside arm and leg all the way across the body.
4. Gain ground on the Quarterback. Never spin away from him. Sit your butt back into the blocker.

Pass Rush Lanes Drill



Work 3 lanes vs. 3 offensive players. Have them pass set. One on one rush, go good on good, 2 days per week. Use a towel or a live man as the Quarterback. If you're playing a scrambling Quarterback, have someone back there to scramble.

Egg Beater

Inside arm down, outside arm up. Inside hand is strong arm for OL, knock that hand down & up.

Chest and Arm

Leverage point is underneath the elbow, knock it up and put the other arm through the chest. Use the wrist if you can't get to the elbow. You have to be strong to execute this move.

Hand Slap

See what the Offensive Lineman is doing with his hands, and slap them down. Any time they quick set, you use finesse moves.

Cross Hand

Reach all the way across and club.

Working Pass Rush Moves vs. Coach (arm pads)

Coach puts his hands up, react to them and get past the hips. Do them fast, for quickness - not for length. Get 4 - 5 good reps. Work just the left hand vs. left hand, right hand vs. right hand, etc.

Defensive Line Pass Rush Drills

- Take-Off
- Tennis Balls
- Circle Drill - turn the corner.
- Back Foot Carioca
- Batted Ball
- Blind Fold
- Machine Drills?