

Stalk Block Alley

Set Up:

Equipment: Eight cones or vests

Personnel: Coach, receiver, defensive back, running back, and football

Create "alley" fifteen yards long by three yards wide with the cones or vests. (Place two cones on the goal line, three yards apart. Place two more on the five yard line, three yards apart. Place two more on the ten yard line, etc.)

Have a receiver align himself on the goal line, at the entrance to the "alley". Have a defensive back take his proper stance over the receiver, and IN the alley, at a six yard depth. The coach sets up behind the receiver, with the running back four yards behind the coach.

Procedure:

On the snap of the ball (coach's command) the receiver takes off towards the defensive back. He is trying to either run the defensive-back "off", while gaining position for a stalk block, or he is going deep for a pass. This depends on what the coach has told him prior to the repetition.

The coach will do one of three things: Pass the ball to the receiver on a deep route, hand the ball to the running back, or play action the running back and throw deep to the receiver.

The running back and ONLY the running back is required to stay in the "alley". The defensive back can go anywhere to make the tackle on the running back. Additionally, the receiver may stalk block the defender in any direction possible, even if that is outside the "alley".

Coaching Points:

Is the receiver making the proper body reads on the defensive back (when the feet stop, where the defender's eyes are [that's where the ball is], which way are the defender's hips pointed [that's the direction the defender will go])?

Is the receiver breaking down properly? Are his hips low? Are his hands inside the defender's armpits, not outside his shoulders? Is his facemask lined up with the V of the defender's jersey? Is his base wide, allowing for better lateral movement? Do his feet go dead, or are they continually moving? When the defender chooses a direction, does he drive the defender where the defender wants to go?

Objective:

The objective of the drill is for the receiver to stalk block the defender long enough and

powerful enough for the running back to make it through the "alley". We start the year off with a fifteen-yard-long "alley", and then lengthen the "alley" to twenty and twenty five yards as the season progresses and receivers improve their blocking techniques. If you want to instill some competition, divide the receivers up (say, split ends vs. flankers). If the defender makes the tackle or defends the pass, that's one point for his team. If the receiver blocks long enough for the runningback to make it through the "alley", or if he catches a long pass, that's one point for his team.

Like most teams in Nebraska, we RUN the football. Our receivers are really just fast linemen. We tell our receivers that if they want to catch the ball, we have to establish the RUN first. For that to happen, they have to block first, catch second.

The idea is to give the receivers as many reps stalk blocking as possible. As coaches, you are going to hand the ball off to the running back most of the time in this drill. The vertical pass route by the receiver is really just to keep the defensive back honest.

The beauty of the drill is that it gives your secondary people a chance to work on their reads WHILE you are working on offensive techniques with receivers.

I've found that this drill helps our kids get excited and proud about perimeter blocking, especially when we install the element of competition. I hope it works for you too. Good luck.