

GRIDIRON

Coach

Volume 9 • Issue 1

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Creatine and the High School Athlete

**Wide Receiver Pass Routes
and Adjustments to the
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Teaching Long Snap Fundamentals

By Michael Groisne
Head Football Coach,
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It is obvious that without a good long snapper you're going to have a long night. Every successful kicking play, except the kickoff, begins with the long snapper.

Like in every other position, the long snap isn't a skill that is natural, it must be learned. You have to teach your long snapper good fundamentals. If you don't, your special teams and particularly the punt team will become your nightmare on game day. You can have a Tom Dempsey and a Ray Guy at the kicking position, but if you don't have a good snap, they will never get a chance to kick the ball.

Selecting the Long Snapper

It is a mistake to think that your regular center has to be your long snapper. A hand to hand snap requires a different technique than long snap. It is often a better strategy to use two different snappers, so that the snapper concentrates on the proper technique.

Other than being able to snap the football, the long snapper should have the following qualities: He must be extremely COACHABLE. He must be able to BLOCK, to THINK to COVER and TACKLE and he must be CALM under all circumstance (you don't want him to panic in a close game).

The most important skill of a long snapper, however, is the ability to make an ACCURATE SNAP to the punter.

Fundamentals

A lot of bad punts are caused by bad snap and most missed field goals are caused by a bad snap. With this in mind it should be easy to sell the importance of the long snap to young players.

Stance

- Take the same basic stance as the center will take for a hand to hand snap, with feet slightly wider than shoulder width. Feet are parallel to each other.
- You should place your head just over the ball.
- The butt is above shoulder level.
- Knees slightly turned to the outside, directly above the feet, they should be bent so that the knee pads are parallel to the ground.

- Heels are on the ground.
- Look directly at the punter or holder's hands.

Grip

- The ball should be tilted almost vertical, the more vertical the ball, the more power you will have and the lower the snap will be. Grip the ball exactly the same way as a quarterback.
- With the right hand (for right handed snappers), place your fingers on the laces.
- Turn the wrist so that the laces are facing the ground.
- Place your left hand on the ball with the seam opposite the laces between your index finger and middle finger.
- The thumb of the right hand is inside the thumb and index finger of the left hand.
- The left hand serves as a guide for the ball.

Throw

- Just before snapping, turn the wrist so the top of the ball turns slightly to your left.
- Bring the ball off the ground and slightly forward before literally snapping it backward using punter or holder's hands as an aiming point.
- Make a slightly but violently down up with the hips, extend the knees at the same time you get your hips up.
- A slightly move backward with the feet will help with the velocity of the snap (it also will avoid a lot of high snaps).
- Throw with the fingers.
- Point your thumbs at the punter or holder's hands.

Follow Through

- The arms must be bent, the hands must be open, facing the sideline, thumbs up pointing your aiming point.
- If you have problems with follow through, hold your hands in the follow through position after each snap.

Coverage

- Release with the swim or rip technique.
- Sprint downfield directly to the ball.
- Break at five to seven yards from the returner, come under control then make the tackle high.
- If you are the first player to the ballcarrier, TACKLE, the other team members will try to force a fumble.

Coaching points

- Always warm up by snapping a distance of less than 10 yards.
- Sometimes, snap the ball as hard and as far as you can.
- Stretch arms and legs.
- Practice with a wet ball.
- Always warm up on 3rd down (on the sideline) whenever possible.

For Field goal and PAT

- Snap without too much speed but with a perfect spiral, for FG.
- Generally the fingers are closer together.
- Do not attempt to block, just stay big and down, do not show your chest.

Problems and Solution

Problem: High snaps

Solution: Keep your butt down, and start with the ball more verticals.

Problem: Low snaps

Solution: Follow through, start with the ball more horizontal and do not roll the ball.

Problem: Snaps to right

Solution: Too much pressure with the right hand.

Problem: Snaps to left

Solution: Too much pressure with the left hand, and no follow through.

Problem: Weaving snaps

Solution: Bad hand placement and you should move both hands at the same time.

Remember the 3 keys to a good snap

- Is my butt low enough?
- Is my wrist properly cocked?
- Is my weight on the back of my heels?

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