

Coach's Corner
Training Tips - Quarterback Fundamentals



Quarterback is one of, if not, the most difficult positions in all of sports. The amount of information that you need to process alone would make it one of the most difficult. Add that to the speed that you need to process it at, leadership, toughness, physical tools, and intangibles, well you get what I mean. It is often said that playing QB is 90% mental and 10% physical, this is not always true as sometimes the physical skills can be so incredible that they can cover up part of the mental side of the equation but, the mental skills will always outweigh the physical side. That being said, without the physical skills, you won't ever get the chance to develop the mental skills in-game because you won't see the field. So, in this Coach's Corner we will be going over a variety of physical skills to build some of the fundamentals necessary for playing Quarterback.

Mechanics:

Every physical skill starts with mechanics of key movements related to that skill. Obviously, the big important skill for playing QB is throwing:

Grip: Grip the ball near the top (holding the ball up and down) of the football so we have control and the ability to spin a tight spiral. **Two fingers off of the laces (index and middle), and two fingers (ring and pinky) on the laces. DO NOT** grip the ball in the middle with all 4 fingers on the laces.

Stroke: Move the ball away (behind you) in a 'J-stroke' motion. This makes sure we don't end up pushing the ball when we throw it. It also allows us to snap the ball and use our wrist to create a tight spin.

Rotation: Most of our power comes from our core and driving through our back leg. We **cannot** throw with an open chest. Rotate your non-throwing shoulder away from your target so we **create tension between our hips and our core.**

Stride: Have a compact stride at your target. This is **not** like pitching in baseball. As a QB we operate on a flat surface and don't need or want to create downward action with the ball. **Stay level through your rotation and have a compact stride.**

Footwork: Quick, Smooth, and Balanced

Our footwork, commonly called a 'drop' as we 'drop-back' away from where we receive the ball, allows us to be on-time and in-rhythm when we throw. Everything in the passing game is timing based. Our drop matches the depth and timing of the receiver's routes. The deeper the route, the deeper the drop. The biggest thing to remember with our drop is **do not** try to be fast during it. The most important thing is that we are balanced and ready to throw at the top of our drop. If we are, we are able to get the ball out quicker and we are more accurate.

Throwing on the Run (O-T-R): Attack - Chop - Rotate - Drive

Most of the same principles from throwing in the pocket apply to throwing OTR. We need our feet underneath us, we still need to rotate our upper body, and we still need to drive off of our back leg. The difference in driving off of our back leg is now, because we are running, we drive off of our right foot (for right-handed QB's) as we roll through our toes. We want to be running at our target (attack), the same way we want to stride at our target from a stationary position. We bring our feet underneath our body (chop), we rotate as this is happening (rotate), and we drive off of our right toe (drive) as we let the ball go.

Pocket Movement: Step and Slide

When we move in the pocket we want to make sure we aren't running when we move. We want to step or slide (depending which direction) so that we can set and throw quicker than if we were running. Step = when we are moving laterally in the pocket. Slide = forward and backwards in the pocket.

Escape and Scramble: Protect the Ball - Sudden + Explosive - Calm in Chaos

When the time comes, and it will, and we have to escape the pocket there are three big keys to remember:

Protect the ball: keep two hands on the ball at all times

Sudden + Explosive: be sudden with your movements and explode when you choose to escape. Change of speed and change of angles are your biggest allies so don't think that you have to be going 100 mp/h at all times.

Calm in Chaos: once you have escaped the pocket, you have to be able to get calm and under control to make an accurate throw. This does not mean you have to slow all the way down. If you can be under control at 95% speed then that's great, if it's 75-80% then that's what you're looking for. Get under control, for however brief of a time, and make an accurate throw.

To see all the drills and demonstrations for these skills check out our Coach's Corner videos on our Stadium Programs webpage or visit our Stadium Programs instagram page.