**5th and 6th grade football**

1. **You will have a set of plays given to you at the football coaches clinic that will be all the players need to have and will give you the opportunity to make them better football players. ---** At this level, technique and getting better is what it’s about. This is not about who can make the best scheme to fool somebody. Youth football is about making them better so they are able to adapt as the game moves on because they have an unbelievably strong foundation of football to work from.
2. **Receivers should learn to try and catch the ball above the waist with the their thumbs together** --- They all want to underhand catch everything and use their body…It will be hard at first, but they have to learn to go get the ball and to make the triangle with their hands and catch the ball with their thumbs together. Start the good habits now.
3. **Learn the concept of North and South football** --- Even though this states the obvious, the endzone is straight ahead and not towards the sideline. Embrace offensively cutting back and getting north and south…getting every yard they possibly can get…I know you will have your kids that can run around everybody, but that kids never amounts to much when kids hit puberty and can run with them as they get older….Also, defensively, they have to learn that they want the offense to go sideline to sideline.
4. **Put decent athletes at offensive Guards and pull them ---**  That is the ultimate way to make being a lineman fun is give the kids a chance to hit people on the run
5. **Resist putting your best defensive kid at defensive end and put him at linebacker –** Get them used to running people down and doing things inside out….I know everyone wants to stop sweep so they put their best guy at defensive end, but make him work a bit….Let him run and teach everything the right way…A defensive end running straight upfield is a really bad habit to teach as they get older, plus we never use the word contain at the varsity level at all! It’s too passive…We say they are a ‘force’ player and they attack the point of attack with their outside arm free, making the play have to bubble around them not cut up the field.
6. **Quarterbacks will learn to throw a 3 step route pass pattern and work on throwing on the run** --- There is a rhythm to throwing a 3-step route pattern…even at this age, start to teach them the timing of the throw, even on the deep ball…many of them can’t throw it that far anyway, so throw it quick…Also, they have to start to learn to throw on the run and that involves throwing off of the wrong foot…there are easy drills to teach this but in our offense, kids have to be able to throw off of the run…start it early, and there is a correct way in doing it.
7. **Start speaking in the terms that will be in the glossary at the back of your playbook that you get;** I am a big believer that kids begin to absolutely love football the more they are able to understand it. It’s a wonderful game, and them simply knowing the term “power” is fun for the kids...Don’t dumb it down for them, smarten it up…talk to them in football terms and they will start talking right back to you in the same terms and be excited about it.
8. **Teach defensive backs to melt on the fade** --- This is an age where they can start to learn to push their hips outward when their head looks inward. Many times they can just throw the ball straight up in the air and defensive backs at this level get lost….They will not be good at it right now, but it can be introduced…they will learn it.
9. **Create games in practice ---**  This seems to be the age where we start to lose some players for many different reason…Practices have to be well organized…Teams should co-exist and help each other out with scrimmage opportunities, drill opportunities, and competition opportunities. 5th and 6th graders like to keep score…Make practices competitive and find ways to make every practice something to describe to mom and dad when they leave. That usually comes from games not simple drills.
10. **Teach defensive angles to the kids and pursuit to the correct hip at the point of attack. –** Defense really has an easy rule, either you are and inside-out player, or an outside-in player…Usually, there is one outside-in player on the field and he is who you many times call the “contain” player. They always attack the outside hip of the ball carrier and they always will be in good shape….The rest of the tacklers attack the inside hip of the ball carrier to stop the cutback and their angle should be down towards the line of scrimmage and then inside out…not sideways, rounded and then to the ball carrier…They always lose their leverage on the correct hip when they do that….The word DOWNHILL needs to start being common…DOWNHILL means toward the line of scrimmage to us…We are a downhill defense!