**Top 3 Keys to Defense:**
1) Great Tackling
2) Proper Pursuit (“Smart Swarm”)
3) Gap Responsibility/Integrity

**Main Plays to Stop in Youth Football**
1) Sweep
2) Off-tackle
3) Boot/Counter/Reverse
4) Half-back or PA Pass
5) Wedge (SW/DW teams)

**Defense Fronts**
5-3:
- ✓ Base Defense
- ✓ Coverage: Cover 3
5-2-4:
- ✓ Pass defense (3\textsuperscript{rd}/4\textsuperscript{th} and long) or vs. spread formations
- ✓ Coverage's: Cover 2, cover 3 sky, or cover 3 cloud
5-4-2
- ✓ Goal Line or short yardage defense
- ✓ Coverage: Man
5-3-3 Base Defense vs. Balanced (Double Tight)

**Base Alignment:**
- NG: Head up on Center (0 Tech) or shade (1 Tech)
- DT: Head up Tackle (4 Tech) Alternate: 3 or 5 Tech
- DE: Outside Shoulder of TE (9 Tech)
- OLB: C Gap, 3-4 yards from LOS
- MLB: Stack NT, 3-4 yards from LOS
- CB: 3x5 or wide as WR
- S: 9-11 yards

**Primary Run Gap Responsibility:**
- A Gap: NT
- B Gap: DTs
- A Gap MLB
- C Gap: OLBs
- D Gap/Force: DE and CB
“X” Right Gap Responsibilities

DE Crashes
OLB Has Force

“X” Left Gap Responsibilities

DE Crashes
OLB Has Force
Aligning the Defense to an unbalanced formation:
1) Draw Line through the Center
2) Count number of people to left/right of line (on the line is ½ right and left)
3) Count number of defender on the right and left of the line
4) Difference on either side should be no more than +/- 1 defender (ideally +/- ½)
Cover 3

- Deep 1/3: CB
- Curl/Flat: OLB
- Middle 1/3: S
- Middle/Underneath: MLB
- Curl/Flat: OLB
- DE
- DT
- NT
- G
- T
- TE
- WR
- QB
- RB
**DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT (GAPS OR “TECHNIQUE”)**

5-2-4 Base Defense vs. 2x2

**Base Alignment:**
- NG: Head up on Center (0 Tech) Alternate: shade (1 Tech)
- DT: B Gap (3 Tech)
- DE: Outside Shoulder of end man, slightly off the ball
- LB: Stack DT, 3-4 yards from LOS
- CB: Widest WR 5 yards
- SS/FS: 11 yards, split distance between inside WR and T

**Primary Run Gap Responsibility:**
- A Gaps: NT
- B Gap: DTs
- C Gap: OLBs
- Straight Line to QB: DE
- Alleys: FS/SS
Cover 2

Deep 1/2

Right Half Deep

FS

Deep 1/2

Left Half Deep

SS

Flat/Curl

LB

Middle

DE

DT

NT

DT

DE

WR

CB

WR

5 3 0 3 5

C

QB

RB

WR

WR

WR
DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT (GAPS OR “TECHNIQUE”)

5-4-2 Goal Line Defense vs. Balanced (Double Tight)

Base Alignment:
NG: Head up on Center (0 Tech) Alternate: shade to strong or wide side (1 Tech)
DT: C Gap/Off-tackle (5 Tech)
DE: Outside Shoulder of TE (9 Tech)
OLB: Head up on TE (60 Tech), 3-4 yards from LOS
ILB: Head up on G (20 Tech), 3-4 yards from LOS
CB: Lined up head up on widest man (WR) or outside (5 x 5)

Primary Run Gap Responsibility:
A Gaps: NT
C Gap: DTs
A,B, & C: ILBs
C&D Gap: OLBs
D Gap: DE and CB
Man Coverage

Vs. Pro Set
CB man to man on #1 (farthest outside eligible receiver)
OLB man to man on #2
ILB man to man on RBs
OLB man to man on #2
CB man to man on #1 (farthest outside eligible receiver)

Vs. Trips
CB man to man on #2
CB man to man on #1
ILB man to man on #3
OLB man to man on RB
CB man to man on #1 (farthest outside eligible receiver)
5-4-2 PURSUIT DRILL - SWEEP RIGHT

BACKSIDE CB
ANGLE TO CENTER WITH EYES IN BACKFIELD
WATCH FOR BOOT, COUNTER, REVERSE

BACKSIDE LB
ANGLE TO CENTER WITH EYES IN BACKFIELD
WATCH FOR BOOT, COUNTER, REVERSE & CUTBACK

PLAY SIDE LBs
ATTACK DOWNHILL
STAY ON INSIDE HIP OF RB
PRESS THE HIP

PLAY SIDE CB
ATTACK OUTSIDE-IN
TWO STEP READ DROP CHECK
FOR PASS THEN ATTACK RUN

BACKSIDE DE
WATCH FOR BOOT, COUNTER REVERSE

DE

DT

NT

LB

LB

LB

LB

PLAY SIDE DE
SET THE EDGE
PENETRATE ON STRAIGHT LINE
DEEP AS DEEPEST BACK
ADJUST DEPTH FOR OFF TACKLE

DT & NT
PENETRATE 1 YARD THROUGH GAP
FIND THE BALL AND PURSUE
5-4-2 PURSUIT DRILL - SWEEP LEFT

**PLAY SIDE CB**
ATTACK OUTSIDE-IN
TWO STEP READ DROP TO CHECK
FOR PASS THEN ATTACK RUN

**PLAY SIDE LBs**
ATTACK DOWNHILL
STAY ON INSIDE HIP OF RB
PRESS THE HIP

**BACKSIDE LB**
ANGLE TO CENTER WITH EYES IN BACKFIELD
WATCH FOR BOOT, COUNTER, REVERSE & CUTBACK

**BACKSIDE CB**
ANGLE TO CENTER WITH EYES IN BACKFIELD
WATCH FOR BOOT, COUNTER, REVERSE

**PLAY SIDE DE**
SET THE EDGE
PENETRATE ON STRAIGHT LINE
DEEP AS DEEPEST BACK
ADJUST DEPTH FOR OFF TACKLE

**DE**
**DT**
**CB**

**Q**
**B**
**D**
**C**
**A**
**B**
**G**
**D**

**DT & NT**
PENETRATE 1 YARD THROUGH GAP
FIND THE BALL AND PURSUE