

FREE COACHING RESOURCE

COACH SELL

OLB GAME-READY CHECKLIST

Six things every outside linebacker
has to own before Friday night.

ALIGN • KEY • LEVERAGE • STRIKE • FINISH • TALK

Pregame self-check. Position-meeting handout. Weekly teaching tool.

EVERYBODY TALKS OFFENSE. I COACHED THE OTHER SIDE.

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HOW TO USE THIS

SIX QUESTIONS. EVERY SNAP.

This isn't a scheme sheet. It's the six things an outside linebacker has to answer before every snap, no matter what defense you run. Hand it out Monday. Check it Thursday. Grade it Saturday.

THE ONE-SENTENCE RULE

If your player can't answer it in one clear sentence, the rule isn't simple enough yet. Fix the rule before you blame the kid.

Standard	What he has to know	Can he say it?
1. ALIGN	Be right before the snap. Get to your landmark fast, without waiting on a teammate to fix you. Know how it moves with surface, split, strength, and motion.	"Versus this surface, my landmark is ____."
2. KEY	Eyes create speed. Know exactly what your eyes see first, second, and third. Eyes on the key, not the football.	"On this call, my first key is ____."
3. LEVERAGE	Know where the ball can't go. Know your help, know your job (force, spill, box, contain, or inside fit), and never open the lane the call says you own.	"My help is ____, so the ball can't go ____."
4. STRIKE	Don't catch blocks. Close space under control, hands first, keep your base, separate, find the ball, escape the way the ball tells you.	"Versus a ____ block, I use ____."
5. FINISH	The rep isn't over when the ball goes away. Right pursuit angle, near hip, safe and violent tackle, strip only after the tackle is secure. Play to the whistle.	"Flow away, my job before I chase is ____."
6. TALK	Say it before the snap. Call strength, surface, motion, crack, and back release early, loud, and in the same words every day.	"When I see ____, I call ____."

THIS WEEK

Opponent _____

Top 3 surfaces we'll see _____

My first key _____

My force / spill / box job _____

Two techniques I have to win _____

1 ALIGN

Be right before the snap.

- ☐ I can ID the surface and strength fast: open, TE, wing, nub, trips, reduced split.
- ☐ I know my base landmark and how it changes with motion or a formation change.
- ☐ I get lined up on my own. Nobody has to fix me.
- ☐ My stance lets me play run, rush, or drop without tipping the call.

COACHING POINT Bad alignment is bad leverage before the ball is even snapped.

2 KEY

Eyes create speed.

- ☐ I know my first key on every call we have in this week.
- ☐ My eyes stay on my key until it declares. I don't chase backfield action.
- ☐ I know what TO, AWAY, and AT look like, and my first step for each.
- ☐ I can go from key to ball without losing my leverage.

COACHING POINT Guessers look fast once in a while. Readers play fast every snap.

3 LEVERAGE

Know where the ball can't go.

- ☐ I can say where my help is before the snap.
- ☐ I know if I'm force, spill, box, contain, or an inside fit on each call.
- ☐ I attack the blocker without opening the escape lane.
- ☐ I keep the correct arm free for the technique we're playing.

COACHING POINT Leverage is a team concept. One guy loses it and ten guys pay for it.

4 STRIKE

Don't catch blocks.

- ☐ I close space without overrunning the blocker.
- ☐ I strike first with my hands inside and my feet under me.
- ☐ I separate before I look for the football.
- ☐ I have an answer for stalk, kick-out, lead, arc, and down block.

COACHING POINT Hands buy vision. Separation buys time. Time lets you finish.

5 FINISH

The rep isn't over when the ball goes away.

- ☐ Flow away, I clear counter, boot, and reverse before I pursue.
- ☐ I take the angle my position requires and never run behind the ball.
- ☐ I track the near hip, wrap, run my feet, and keep my head out of it.
- ☐ I strip only after the tackle is secured. I play through the whistle.

COACHING POINT Great OLB play shows up away from the ball. Film doesn't lie about effort.

6 TALK

Say it before the snap.

- ☐ I call strength and surface every snap.
- ☐ I alert motion, crack, and receiver reduction before the snap.
- ☐ I call out back release and peel when it happens.
- ☐ I echo the call so my teammate knows I heard it.

COACHING POINT Silence creates hesitation. If you saw it and didn't say it, you missed it.

PREGAME

FRIDAY NIGHT SELF-CHECK

Read it in the locker room. Every box should be a yes before you walk out.

- ☐ I know the call and my job before I worry about anyone else's job.
- ☐ I know my landmark versus every surface we expect this week.
- ☐ I know my first key.
- ☐ I know my leverage and where my help is.
- ☐ I know my answer versus motion and shifts.
- ☐ I know my fit on run to me and run away from me.
- ☐ I know my rush and coverage jobs.
- ☐ I know the two techniques I have to win with this week.
- ☐ I will talk early and loud.
- ☐ I will play the next snap no matter what happened on the last one.

ALIGN

KEY

LEVERAGE

STRIKE

FINISH

TALK

KNOW YOUR JOB. TRUST YOUR TECHNIQUE. TALK. PLAY FAST. FINISH.

WANT THE REST OF THE ROOM?

This checklist tells your OLBs **what** to know. The **OLB Development Guide** shows you **how** to teach it: field diagrams, a 15-drill library, 5/10/15-minute indy periods, a game-week plan, and a grading sheet that uses these same six standards. Get it at coachdsell.com.

ABOUT COACH SELL

Texas high school defensive coordinator and assistant head coach. Twenty years on the defensive side of the ball, plus years coaching throws and teaching in the classroom. Everything in here was built to run a real position room on a real practice schedule. No fluff. No clinic talk that dies on Monday.

coachdsell.com @coachsell_75 on TikTok

Scheme-neutral on purpose. Plug in your own calls, terms, and position rules.