

GRIDIRON GENIUS NOTES

An obsession with perfection

Hacksaw Reynolds brought a box of sharpened pencils to every meeting so that everyone could take accurate notes

Culture eats strategy for lunch

How do champions behave

Don't allow administration to undercut decisions made by the program

Learn the whole game, not just offense or defense. Learn the entire program!

-As I have gotten older, I would rather teach someone my system, then let their creativity take over.

The problem is never how to get new, innovative thoughts into your mind, but how to get the old ones out.

In a new place, you have to have immediate buy-in to your new culture and system

Coaches are first and foremost great leaders. In the ultimate team sport, real success doesn't depend on tactics or discipline or order. It always comes down on how well a coach leads.

-Every move made by the leader is analyzed by the team, and any of them can have far-reaching consequences

-Players can't accomplish anything unless they can visualize the path

-Once you have their attention, you can explain to them how you are going to help them get better and how you intend to win games.

-When rules don't apply to everyone, the ensuing chaos collapses whatever foundation a leader has tried so hard to build

Personal accountability is the ultimate sign of strength

Ego is the leading cause of unemployment in the coaching world. Rare are coaches who can admit that they're wrong. You have to have the ability to say "I screwed that up"

All early songs are bad. That's why you keep writing songs until they become good songs. Just keep writing.

"Vienna problem": A little of this, a little of that . . . it won't help you win. Only being an expert in one thing. The coaching staff needs to be united.

Coaching seminars

Confirmation bias is absolutely insidious in my field even though it breaks the first rule in scouting: Never begin with the end in mind.

- Certain coaches, for instance, have a particular weak spot for players with "football intelligence" and let that overshadow actual talent level. I call those guys "bus drivers" because they can master the route to the stadium perfectly but they can't do anything once they've arrived. They can't adjust.

You can't bull shit a locker room. When a head coach stands in front of his team and supports a player- quarterback or otherwise- who doesn't deserve it, the rest of the players are almost assuredly mumbling their doubts under their breath to one another, and this lack of integrity and transparency erodes team chemistry faster than anything else in the game.

Character assessment is the hardest challenge for team builders.

"Basketball character"

- Practice hard
- Knows your assignments
- Not disruptive in the locker room
- Plays through pain

No one is "grandfathered" onto next year's team

Each positional coach assessing each player in his unit

- Strengths
- Weaknesses
- Relevant medical history
- Projected role for the upcoming season
- What do they need to work on in the off-season, and how do we help them?

Belichick can connect emotionally with players as a coach in a way that extracts their very best on the field, but then he can go upstairs, put his GM hat on, and make cold-blooded financial decisions regarding that same player without so much as a second thought.

Team building is a never ending process.

Players:

- Do they play with abandon?
- Do they play physical?
- Emphasizing special teams toughness helps instill an “all-in” vibe up and down the roster

GREAT TEAMS AREA ALL IN!

Special teams t-shirts: Strike Force

Use your defensive knowledge to help design your offense

- Preferably an offense like the West Coast offense, where it requires the quarterback who can instantly react, without thinking, to any of the dozen or so twists and disguises a defense throws at him before and after a snap

7 Qualities of an ideal quarterback

1. Find winners
2. Have thick skin and have people that can overcome adversity
3. Have a tremendous work ethic
 - Your best player has to set the tone for intolerance for anything that gets in the way of winning.
4. Football smarts
 - You also need to have a work ethic strong enough to develop your football IQ
5. Innate abilities; the “It” factor
 - Born with it; can’t develop it
6. Carriage: they have to give a shit
7. Leadership
 - Is the team willing to go to war with him?

“The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn’t exist.”

- Verbal Kint, “The Usual Suspects”

Disguise your schemes to look like it is a lot more than it really is

- Belichick, as defensive coordinator, ran 3-4 Cover 2, but he ran the same thing out of multiple looks to make it look like it was a lot more complicated than it really was

- Joe Gibbs had a 13 page playbook (3 runs, 10 passes). The Redskins, however, were executed (and disguised by) myriad formations, looks, shifts and personnel groupings that turned 13 vanilla plays into 130 complicated and mysterious plays

- Everything else was window dressing used to keep defenses in the dark and on their heels, constantly worried that the devil they didn't think existed was actually playing tricks on them

To "own" an offense, first you have to know how it works

To teach coaches the game as young coaches, force them to watch film. This is the best way to learn their craft.

Blackboard coaching is a killer. Doodles usually don't translate, but teaching always does.

Make the other team play left handed; make your opponent do something that they are not comfortable with

Disrupt your opponent's timing

- Bump cutters/ deny passing angles

Belichick prefers to work with few checks and adjustments because above all he wants his defense playing fast. He wants them doing, not wondering what to do.

Win the four point plays; don't give up touchdowns, give up field goals

Belichick opponents at EOQ/EOH

Pepper your meetings with "gotcha" questions to keep your players on their toes

Tackling= closeouts

ID the most important special teams plays

Need to find ways to create negative plays for the opponent

Familiarize yourself with the opponent's best lineups.

Game plan the competition backwards → start at the end

“Practice execution becomes gameday reality.”

Patriot of the Week/ Practice player of the week

Special teams set the physical and emotional tone of the team and the pace of preparation

“Gotta Have It” plays

“Opportunity Periods” → times when JV/Frosh are playing against older players or against each other; gives them an opportunity to have reps against starters

-Also gives them a chance they might not normally get to prepare themselves for their time in the spotlight

Consistent emotional demeanor and tone; excited but not anxious. Focused but not tense.

Hydration prevents soft muscle injuries

Visual how the game will play out before it even happens

Show the team short clips/hype videos to focus on things that we have done correctly

Stay in the moment/ “Go out and win the game”

See the whole field

2:00 Drill → YOU NEED POINTS!!!!

Teams that win the turnover battle win 80% of competitions

Missed FG in football = Missed FT in basketball

“Battleship” playcalling: Randomly probing for a play that might work, and when they find one, they repeat it again and again, sometimes disguising it with a different formation or look.

- Probing or guessing from play to play doesn't allow a team to gain control of a game. Adjustments are necessary, but it shouldn't be haphazard attempts to fix what isn't working or find an opponent's weaknesses. Teams need to have back up plans long before kickoff.

Report on every returning player

- Strong points
- Weak points
- Summary
- Injury History
- Playing time
- Special teams role
- Other school activities involved in

Give everyone on staff special assignments to keep their focus and help keep moving the program forward to make it better.

“To live in the past is to die in the present.”

Reading and research is the best remedy for boredom.

“I have two kinds of problems; the urgent and the important. The urgent are not important, and the important are never urgent.”

Take your time making a decision, but once the decision is made, we don't look back.

Bill Walsh on decision making

- Firmness
- Fairness
- Fast

Have “realistic optimism”: see yourself as a teacher and therefore believed to be positive with your pupils, building them up rather than breaking them down. Still, you are too well-informed not to understand that trouble is always lurking.

- A realistic optimist may seem a crank to casual observers, but in actuality, he's quite content.

