WIDE-TACKLE SIX - JERRY CLAIBORNE, MARYLAND (who learned it while coaching under Bear Bryant at Kentucky)

"THEY CAN'T LET ANYBODY RUN BETWEEN THEM. THIS IS THE KEY TO THE DEFENSE."

"The tackles use what we call a 2 technique. We don't give them a definite distance to be apart. Basically we tell them to line up where they can touch their hands.

The better football players they are, the wider apart they can be. The poorer football players they are, the closer together they have to be.

"We tell them they have 50% outside responsibility and 50% inside responsibility, but never get beat in the middle.

"Everyone starts running at our tackles. We tell these guys you have to be tough sons of guns. You have to line up there and on the snap of the ball you have to tee off and beat that guy. If opponents can control the ball here, they won't leave the area, but if we discourage them in a hurry from running the middle, then they have to move out, and then we feel we have them.

We don't think they have to be quite as mobile as the other people. They have to be good and strong, and they must be able to deliver a blow. They may not have good ground speed, but they should have quick feet, because when they stunt we think quick feet and quick hands are important.

WE USUALLY START THEM BACK 3 FEET OFF THE BALL
As they get better we want them as close to the line of scrimmage as we can get them, but the closer you get, the more vulnerable you are to the cross block.

YOU HAVE TO BE A PRETTY GOOD FOOTBALL PLAYER TO GET RIGHT UP ON THE BALL AND BE ABLE TO PLAY CROSS BLOCKS OR THE DOWN BLOCK
Against certain teams that like to cross block, trap block or block back and trap the tackle, we are going to move the tackles back a little bit.

IT IS JUST COMMON SENSE THAT YOU CAN READ BETTER IF YOU ARE FARTHER OFF THE BALL BECAUSE YOU HAVE BETTER PERIPHERAL VISION
The first thing we teach the tackles is to deliver a blow. We get in a six-point stance, hands and knees and toes on the ground, and we just lay out and fall on our belly and explode with our tail and hit that machine as hard as we can. We learn to deliver a blow with our shoulders and forearm.

Then we'll get into a four-point stance, tuck our tail, and fire out and deliver a blow putting all the weight of our butt into it. We are trying to raise that machine. It weighs a whole lot, but we try to explode and raise that machine off the ground. When we are teaching them to explode, we want them to let everything go and hit and fall flat on their stomachs, because we want them to learn that they have to bring their tail underneath them and throw the head up to really get maximum lift. After we learn to do that, we become more controlled and hit that lick under control by bringing our feet under us and throwing the head up.

The tackle's assignment is to KEEP THE INSIDE FLIPPER FREE.

IF WE ARE NOT GOING TO LET ANYBODY RUN BETWEEN US, THEN WE MUST KEEP OUR INSIDE FLIPPER FREE
"In their stance, the tackles keep their tail a little lower than their shoulders.

WE WANT OUR HEADS UP SO WE CAN SEE
We want to be able to hit that lick and look inside, so we don't want our tail up too high.

WHEN THE FLOW GOES, IT'S LATERAL PURSUIT
THEY CROSS THE FACE OF THE OFFENSIVE MAN AND COME RIGHT DOWN THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE.

If the flow is pass, one man has whip his man and go. The other man has draw. They call draw responsibility before every snap, no matter what. If it's sprint out, we want to get into the backfield with the backside tackle. The frontside tackle has lateral pursuit and then works upfield.

"Another coaching point for the tackles is to KEEP THE INSIDE HAND ON THE GROUND AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

They have to be able to stop the trap. When the center blocks back, our tackle must be able to move laterally and get across the center's face. We tell them to keep the inside hand on the ground as long as they can. But by this I don't mean to sit there and sleep on it.

"WE INSIST ON A NARROW STANCE. Our stance is parallel, the weight is on the toes, and the feet are no more than shoulder width apart.

I'LL BET IF YOU GO AND CHECK YOUR FILM, 9 OUT OF 10 OF YOUR FOOTBALL PLAYERS HAVE TOO WIDE A STANCE. We emphasize keeping a narrow base.

IF YOU ARE IN A STANCE THAT'S TOO WIDE, YOU CAN'T MOVE UNTIL YOU TAKE A FALSE STEP. We have some linemen that line up with their feet less than 18 inches apart. They really blow off that football. If they have to step laterally, they can step laterally.

"We narrow that base and bend those knees and our tail is a little bit lower than our shoulders. Our shoulders are square, and our hands are right in front of our toes. On the snap of the ball, we keep that inside hand on the ground as long as we can. They take that short step and look inside and feel the guard. He's right there in front of us, but we want to see the G-C-QB-RB triangle. Our tackles do this until it comes out their ears. They can do it in their sleep, because this is the key to the defense.

"They need to know what the center and QB are doing and all they have to do, as they make their short step, is to TAKE A QUICK LOOK INSIDE, and that tells them what to do on the next step.

"THE TOUGHEST THING WE HAVE TO TEACH INCOMING FRESHMEN IS TO STAY ON THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE, AND THAT'S ONE OF THE TOUGHEST THINGS OUR PLAYERS HAVE TO UNLEARN WHEN THEY GO ON TO PLAY PRO BALL."  

"WHEN WE GET BIG SPLITS INSIDE: That's the first thing some people will do. We will either back off the line of scrimmage, or we will jump in there and stunt and penetrate your line of scrimmage. Sometimes we back off the line and play technique, and the next time we'll try to cause a bad play by penetrating. I'll tell you, you get out there some day on a one-on-one with just an offensive man and a defensive man. Let that defensive man stunt and see how many times he gets blocked. I know it's a good offensive theory to split them out but you put that guy head on him and one time he tees off and one time he goes inside and one time he goes outside - and that offensive guard has problems!

TACKLES - "KILLER TOADS"
(1) HIT A LICK AND LOOK INSIDE!
(2) KEEP THE INSIDE FLIPPER FREE
(3) KEEP THE INSIDE ARM ON THE GROUND AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

ALIGNMENT-
2-3 FEET OFF THE BALL
OUTSIDE EAR HOLE ON GUARD'S INSIDE EAR HOLE
(IF HE SPLITS MORE THAN 2 FEET, MOVE INSIDE, TO HIS SHOULDER)
C.P. - "LINE UP WHERE YOU CAN TOUCH YOUR OTHER TACKLE'S HANDS"

STANCE-
4 POINT STANCE-
HEAD & EYES UP, TAIL DOWN
KNEES UNDER BODY, TOES CLOSE TO HANDS
ANKLES BENT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
NARROW STANCE - FEET ONLY SLIGHTLY WIDER THAN SHOULDERS
HANDS JUST SLIGHTLY AHEAD OF SHOULDERS

RESPONSIBILITY- CONTROL THE "A" GAP BUT DO NOT PENETRATE
(1) DO NOT GET TRAPPED
(2) DO NOT GET REACHED BY THE CENTER
(3) DO NOT RUN AROUND ANY BLOCK
(4) DO NOT BE DRIVEN BACK BY A DOUBLE-TEAM
(5) SHED BLOCKERS, PURSUE AND TACKLE ALONG THE LOS
(6) PASS RUSH THROUGH THE A GAP, ALERT FOR A DRAW
(7) ON SPRING-OUT TO YOUR SIDE- WIDEN FIRST AND GET IN FRONT OF THE QB

BE IN YOUR STANCE AND YELL "BALL" AS SOON AS THE CENTER PUTS HIS HANDS ON IT

MOVEMENT - BE COCKED AND READY!
MOVE ON THE SNAP OF THE BALL!
BE FIRST TO THE POINT OF CONTACT - MIDWAY BETWEEN YOU AND THE GUARD
IF YOU GET THERE FIRST, THE BATTLE IS HALF WON
STEP FIRST WITH YOUR OUTSIDE FOOT- DON'T OVERSTEP
USE SHORT, QUICK STEPS - THAT IS THE KEY TO QUICKNESS ON THE LINE
IT PREVENTS YOU FROM OVEREXTENDING
IT PERMITS YOU TO CHANGE DIRECTION QUICKLY
NEVER RAISE UP - "STAY IN YOUR STANCE"
KEEP YOUR INSIDE HAND ON THE GROUND AS LONG AS POSSIBLE
STAY SQUARE AT ALL TIMES

KEYS - GUARD/CENTER
GUARD FIRES AT YOU - "BLAST AND GRAB"
BLAST YOUR FACE MASK JUST PAST HIS FACE MASK
NEXT, GET "OPERATING SPACE" BETWEEN YOU AND THE GUARD
GET YOUR HANDS UNDER HIS SHOULDER PADS
HANDS LESS THAN SHOULDER WIDTH, ELBOWS LOCKED IN
SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM THE GUARD
YOU MUST KEEP HIM AWAY FROM YOUR LEGS
KEEP YOUR SHOULDER PADS IN FRONT OF YOUR KNEES
STAY SQUARE TO THE LOS- DO NOT GET TURNED
DO NOT LOOK INTO THE BACKFIELD UNTIL YOU HAVE DONE THIS
IF THE GUARD PULLS OPPOSITE, FIGHT ACROSS THE CENTER'S FACE
IF THE GUARD PULLS OUTSIDE, FIRST LOOK INSIDE FOR THE TRAP
THEN FIGHT ACROSS THE TACKLE'S FACE

ENDS- 7 TECHNIQUE vs a TE
STANCE- 4 POINT STANCE- HEAD UP, BUTT DOWN
OUTSIDE FOOT BACK, KNEES UNDER BODY
ANKLES BENT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE
FEET ONLY SLIGHTLY WIDER THAN SHOULDERS
HANDS JUST AHEAD OF SHOULDERS

ALIGNMENT- 1 YARD OFF THE BALL
YOUR OUTSIDE EAR HOLE ON THE TIGHT END'S INSIDE EAR HOLE
(IF HE SPLITS MORE THAN 3 FEET, MOVE INSIDE AND PLAY A "GHOST" TECHNIQUE)

MOVEMENT- "MOVE BEFORE YOU READ" - MOVE ON THE BALL
BEAT THE TIGHT END TO THE POINT OF CONTACT - MIDWAY BETWEEN YOU AND HIM
STEP FIRST WITH YOUR OUTSIDE FOOT
DON'T OVERSTEP AND DON'T RAISE UP
USE SHORT, QUICK STEPS - THIS IS THE KEY TO LINE QUICKNESS
IT PREVENTS YOU FROM OVEREXTENDING
IT PERMITS YOU TO CHANGE DIRECTION QUICKLY

CONTACT- BLAST YOUR FACE MASK JUST PAST HIS FACE MASK
HIT HIM WITH YOUR OUTSIDE FLIPPER - KEEP YOUR INSIDE FLIPPER FREE
STAY SQUARE TO THE LOS - DO NOT GET TURNED
KEEP HIM OFF YOUR LEGS

DO NOT LOOK INTO THE BACKFIELD UNTIL YOU HAVE MADE CONTACT

RESPONSIBILITY- CONTROL THE C GAP, REACT DOWN THE LINE TO THE INSIDE
(1) HOLD YOUR GROUND AND FIGHT AGAINST THE TE'S BLOCK ON YOU
(2) NEVER BE TURNED OUT BY THE TE
(NEVER ALLOW HIM TO RELEASE INSIDE YOU)
(3) NEVER WIDEN MORE THAN THE 1 STEP NECESSARY TO CONTACT TE
(4) IDENTIFY AND DEAL WITH THE FIRST THREAT TO THE C-GAP
   TACKLE A VEER DIVE
   TACKLE THE OPTION QB HIGH, READY TO SLAP THE BALL
   BLOW UP THE KICKOUT BLOCK
   ATTACK THE OPTION QB
     HIT HIM HIGH, ATTACK HIS DEEP SHOULDER, BAT WITH YOUR OUTSIDE HAND
     NEVER BE REACHED BY THE OFFENSIVE TACKLE
(5) PASS PLAYS - CONTAIN RUSH BUT DON'T OVERPENETRATE
(6) ON PLAYS AWAY - "MENTAL TRAIL" - ALERT FOR BOOTLEG

ENDS - GHOST TECHNIQUE vs AN OPEN TACKLE (NO TIGHT END)

RESPONSIBILITY- C GAP, OUTSIDE CONTAIN

STANCE- 2-POINT
   SHOULDERS SQUAQR TO THE LOS
   OUTSIDE FOOT BACK
   KNEES BENT ("VEES IN THE KNEES")

ALIGNMENT- ONE YARD OFF THE BALL (BUT NEVER IN THE NEUTRAL ZONE)
   ALIGNED ON THE INSIDE EYE OF THE TIGHT END'S GHOST

MOVEMENT
   STEP AT THE OFFENSIVE TACKLE WITH YOUR INSIDE FOOT

KEY - THE TACKLE
(1) TRIES TO GET OUTSIDE YOU -
   NEVER LET HIM CROSS YOUR FACE
(2) BLOCKS OUT ON YOU -
   SQUEEZE DOWN- STAY SQUARE AND KEEP YOUR OUTSIDE LEVERAGE
   DO NOT RUN AROUND HIM
(3) BLOCKS TO THE INSIDE -
   CLOSE HARD DOWN THE LINE TO CLOSE THE C GAP
   IDENTIFY AND DEAL WITH THE FIRST THREAT TO THE C-GAP
   TACKLE A VEER DIVE
   TACKLE THE OPTION QB HIGH, READY TO SLAP THE BALL
     HIT HIM HIGH
     ATTACK HIS DEEP SHOULDER
     BAT WITH YOUR OUTSIDE HAND
   BLOW UP THE KICKOUT BLOCK
(4) PASS BLOCKS -
   LOOK IMMEDIATELY FOR A QUICK PASS AND THROW YOUR ARMS HIGH
RUSH YOUR PASS LANE BUT DON'T OVERPENETRATE
NEVER DUCK INSIDE HIM OR ANY OTHER BLOCKER
NEVER PENETRATE DEEPER THAN THE BALL
DRIFT WITH ANY BACK THAT DRIFTS OUT AS YOU RUSH
(5) BALL GOES AWAY, "MENTAL TRAIL", ALERT FOR BOOTLEG

INSIDE LINEBACKERS

HEAD UP ON THE TACKLE, 3 YARDS DEEP, SQUARED UP

LOW IN YOUR STANCE, LOOKING THE TACKLE IN THE EYE - DO NOT LOOK AT THE PLAY

IMMEDIATELY IDENTIFY THE MOST DANGEROUS RECEIVER

ALWAYS STAY SQUARE - STOP RUNS AND MEET BLOCKERS WITH YOUR INSIDE SHOULDER

FIRST MOVE: ALWAYS STEP HARD AT THE TACKLE WITH YOUR INSIDE FOOT

KEY: THE TACKLE

HE DRIVE BLOCKS
   KEEP COMING AT HIM - ATTACK HIM, YOUR INSIDE PADS UNDER HIS PADS
   STAY SQUARE AND KEEP YOUR HELMET OUTSIDE HIS HELMET
HE BLOCKS DOWN
   REDIRECT YOUR CHARGE AND SCRAPE TO D GAP (END COVERS C GAP)
HE BLOCKS OUT
   KEEP COMING TO THE INSIDE - BLITZ THE B GAP
   MEET ANY LEAD BLOCKER WITH YOUR INSIDE SHOULDER
   MEET HIM BEFORE HE GETS TO THE HOLE
   ATTACK HIM AND SQUEEZE HIM TO THE INSIDE
HE PULLS - EITHER WAY
   REDIRECT YOUR CHARGE -
   GET IN HIS BACK POCKET AND RUN WITH HIM TO THE PLAY
HE PASS BLOCKS
   PLANT YOUR INSIDE FOOT & PUSH OFF,
   TURNING YOUR SHOULDER & HEAD TO THE OUTSIDE
   GET DEPTH WHILE YOU LOCATE THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN
   RECOGNIZE WHAT HE’S DOING
   (1) TE/SLOTBACK DUMP
   (2) TE GOES OUTSIDE, LOOK FOR WIDE OUT SLANT OR CURL, NEAR BACK
   (2) NO TE - LOOK FOR WIDE OUT SLANT OR CURL, NEAR BACK
HE SCOOP-BLOCKS YOUR TACKLE
   HUSTLE TO PLAYSIDE, PREPARED TO DEFEAT CENTER OR GUARD
HE TRIES TO REACH YOU
   FIGHT ACROSS HIS FACE

(We teach the tackles four ways to stunt.
(1) the Run-Around. We only use this when we are head-up on someone. WE step at a 45 degree angle and look to the man who can block down on us. If I am the left tackle, as I step toward the tackle and the guard is trying to get his head to the outside and block me, I'm going to go right through his head and pursue the football laterally. If I step [and the tackle is blocking down on me, I flatten out and go right through his head. If the guard is going away from me my next step is to go right back down the line of scrimmage and chase the football. WE DON'T WANT TO GO WAY INTO THE BACKFIELD. We work and work on misdirection and changing direction!

(2) the Shoulder Turn. This is one of the most effective stunts. On the snap he takes a 45 degree angle step with his outside foot and hits the shoulder pad, then swims the inside arm over and just kind of steps across the line of scrimmage. THIS IS NOT GOOD AGAINST A DOWN BLOCK IF WE ARE ANTICIPATING A DOWN BLOCK BY THE TACKLE OR THE CENTER. Otherwise it is an excellent stunt because the tackle can re-direct
immediately.

(3) the Shoulder Scoop. With this stunt we try to penetrate. This is a short yardage situation and we don't want to stand up. If the handoff comes, I want to be in a low, hard position to make the tackle for no gain. On the snap, I take the same 45 degree step and scoop the shoulder and we get as small as we can. We scoop that shoulder and drive off the back foot, and we penetrate and square right back up, then we re-direct and pursue. You can see that if we are getting a down block, we are at a disadvantage.

(4) the Step-Aside. If we are anticipating down blocks, we do what we call the step-aside. On the snap of the ball, I step sideways. I take a parallel step down the line of scrimmage. I am still in a good football position, and as I step, if that tackle or center is blocking down on me, I try to cross his face. If the tackle and guard are firing out, I re-direct. If I am stepping out, somebody is going back in that hole. Either the linebacker or the other guard is slanting in toward me. Somebody is protecting to the 9inside. We use this mostly when there is not a big split. Our tackles do the shoulder turn better than anything else. They are quick, and they are through there and sitting in the backfield. People aren't even hitting them. When they get into a game, they use whichever stunt is most practical to use in a given situation.

But I want you to know that first our tackle gets their guard's attention by unloading on him - tucking that tail and really stinging him. If I'm whipping him one-on-one, then he's going to come off harder, and when he does, we just give him that little shoulder turn and he goes shooting right past, and I'm sitting there waiting for the ball carrier. Number one, we play one-on-one, we deliver a blow, and after we whip them, we give them that little wrinkle. That's what makes it tough for those offensive linemen - they don't know whether we are going to tee off on them or whether we are going to do a little stunting.

We have a coach working our tackles and a coach working our ends, and we always have a ball carrier back there. Every time we work a drill we have a ball carrier back there, and we tell our tackles that if they are not on their way to the ball on their second step, they are doing a poor job of stunting.

We have seven posts in the ground that we use more than anything else. They're just like seven offensive linemen. We get our tackles on these posts and pursue to the ball carrier. We carry out our stunts and penetrate the line of scrimmage, then go to the football. With the posts, we can use all of our techniques and then go to the ball. Redirect! We really emphasize going to the football on the second step!

WE DON'T TEACH OUR LINEBACKERS A WHOLE LOT OF TECHNIQUES. WE TEACH THEM TO SHED BLOCKERS AND GO TO THE FOOTBALL!