

CHARACTERISTICS OF WIDE RECEIVERS' FEINT MOVEMENTS IN AMERICAN FOOTBALL

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Introduction

In American football, wide receivers (WR) use a tactic known as a “release” to dodge defensive players. In international competition, however, Japanese wide receivers often have difficulties dodging larger opponents, especially after physical contact. As a result, a critical factor in successful release skills is the development of good feint movements to open up gaps between wide receivers and opposing defensive players (Okamoto, 1992). Thus, the aim of this study was to determine the most efficient feint movements for this purpose.

Methods

Data were collected in 2009 from 212 plays in 7 randomly selected games of the National Football League (NFL). For each play, the following points were analyzed: 1) Distance of the WR from the defensive player; 2) Stance of the defensive player; 3) Position of the defensive player relative to the WR; 4) Each step of the WR; 5) Type of feint; and 6) Frequency of feints.

Results & Discussion

The distance of the wide receiver from the defensive player and the stance of the defensive player emerged as two important points in feint movements. That is, feints were often performed at a distance of one yard from the defensive player or within two yards if the defensive player was in a lunge stance. At two yards, feint movements also involved several back-and-forth movements of the body, but in both cases, feints were done to avoid hard physical contact with the defensive player. Furthermore, the best feint movements were done in two steps, as this allowed the wide receiver to get open or reach the end zone without spending excessive time dodging the defensive player.

Conclusion

Feint movements used by wide receivers to dodge defensive players can be grouped into three categories. These categories are: 1) Feint movements to move defensive players; 2) Feint movements to elude defensive players; and 3) Combinations of the two.

Reference

1. Okamoto, N. (1992). *Japan J Phys Educ*, 37: 195-202.