

BARTON FOOTBALL ACADEMY – Bits and Pieces

By Greg Barton
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Top 12 Quarterback Tips

1. **DEVELOP STRONG HANDS:** You must have strong hands to be a quarterback. Gripping the ball, passing a wet ball, getting hit from your blindside are just some pretty good reasons to have strong hands. My suggestion is simple; when you wake up in the morning do 25 finger tip pushups and just before you go to bed at night do 25 finger tip pushups. Before you begin any workout get in a habit of doing 25 finger tip pushups. Then as you finish a workout do another 25 finger tip pushups. I believe if you are doing this everyday your fingers and hands will become very strong.

One other suggestion to all quarterbacks; when you are standing in line waiting for your turn in practice, “dribble the ball” with your throwing hand. This will help you develop strong fingers on your throwing hand.

2. **BE A LEADER:** Leaders are quarterbacks who make good decisions on and off the field. They are good listeners and work hard to motivate their teammates. They show passion in everything they do. Leaders are loyal and honest. They have a great work ethic and an even better character. They look you in the eye and respect others for who they are. They are coachable and have a positive attitude. They show a positive body language and they stay positive.
3. **DEVELOP GOOD FEET:** Quick feet are essential for quarterbacks. Do the drills that you have been taught that help develop your feet. Jump rope and play other sports. Basketball is a great sport for improving your feet. Do Speed and Quickness work and drills. Footwork is the foundation of a good quarterback.
4. **KEEP YOUR THROWING ELBOW UP:** One of the most common habits of untrained quarterbacks is to drop the elbow of the

throwing arm. This causes the ball to be thrown “side arm”. Work to keep the elbow above the shoulder through the release. Dropping the elbow can increase the chances of developing a sore arm especially in the elbow joint. In addition it is difficult to pass the ball with accuracy when the elbow drops.

5. **PRACTICE ACCURACY:** Accuracy should be your number one goal with every throw. Always concentrate on accuracy whether you are simply warming up or throwing deep passes. Practice drills which test and improve accuracy for all the types of throws you make.
6. **STRENGTH:** You can never be strong enough. Get in the weight room and lift the iron. Follow your coach’s instructions. Do not lift to show off; lift to improve your strength. Quarterbacks must develop strong abs, obliques and hips. These are the core areas of the body. Work on strengthening your neck. The core and your neck will help in developing explosiveness to your throwing.
7. **BE A COMPETITOR:** Work hard to be the best you can be in everything you do. In practice learn to make one play at a time. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes; be afraid of not wanting to compete.
8. **HEAD STEADY AND EYES FOCUSED:** While you certainly don’t want to broadcast to the defender where you want to throw, once you’ve located your man, zero in on the target. Keep the head steady, your eyes focused (and not blinking) and deliver the pass.
9. **WARM-UP GRADUALLY:** The shoulder and elbow joint are extremely susceptible to injury. Make sure you warm up properly before each workout.
10. **EXPLODE AWAY FROM THE CENTER:** Practice makes perfect. Work on your drops everyday. Never go half speed in practice. Concentrate on your footwork and drops.
11. **FUNDAMENTALS ARE IMPORTANT, BUT DO NOT BECOME A ROBOT:** Once you have mastered good fundamentals you must now mix those fundamentals with your athleticism. Quarterbacks do not want to become robotic. They must play with athleticism. As you do your drills think “smooth”.

Be athletic in everything you do.

- 12. GREAT ATTITUDE:** It's pretty simple, you either have a good attitude or a bad attitude. Think positive. Turn negatives into a positive. Respect your coaches and teammates. While privately you may not agree with something your coach says, never openly challenge him in front of others. There is always a time and place to discuss disagreements with your coaches. Use body language that says you are a winner, alert and open to coaching and constructive criticism. Show a high energy level and a passion for the game and your team.
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Just For You to Know

Kellen Clemens is playing quarterback in the National Football League for the New York Jets. Kellen was a 3-year starting quarterback for the University of Oregon. He will enter his 3rd season in the NFL this fall.

So how did Kellen become so good? What did he do that was so special? Well let's begin with this; Kellen grew up in Burns, Oregon. Burns is a ranching town and the high school is small. We were introduced to Kellen when he was a 6th grader at our Spring Portland QB-Skill Camp.

My first impression was good. He worked hard and above everything else, he was a great kid. After the camp he walked over to all the coaches and shook their hands and thanked them for the great experience. I walked out to the car with Kellen and his father and that's when I found out that they were about to drive 6 hours to get home. I starting thinking about this; they drove 6 hours to get to Lewis and Clark College for a 10 a.m. camp and then immediately jumped in the car for a 6 hour trip home. I remember thinking, "What a great kid and dad, I hope I see them again someday."

The next Sunday when I arrived at 8 a.m. to set up the camp, guess who was sitting in their car waiting for the camp to begin? Kellen jumps out of his car and offers to help me move hurdles off the track, soccer goals off the field, and anything else we needed to do. Most kids are tired on a Sunday morning at 8 a.m. Kellen was fired up and ready to go.

Kellen missed very few Barton Football Academy camps or events from 6th grade through 12th grade. There were times he took the bus from Burns, Oregon and after the camp he took the bus home. That is along time for a young kid to be on a bus.

During his career at the University of Oregon, Kellen always made sure to make a few camps each year. Instead of showing up wanting to “coach” he signed up as a camp participant and was fired up and going hard for the entire camp. The young players absolutely were in awe of Kellen. He showed them time and time again what the term “work-ethic” means.

During the summers before Kellen would report to two-a-days at the University of Oregon, he would come in and train with Taylor Barton for a couple of days. Those workouts were intense and that is why Kellen was there. He wanted to be prepared mentally as well as physically.

The workout I enjoyed the most was when Kellen got married and he and his wife were driving from Eugene on their way to the coast. Behind them were four and five cars with mom’s and dad’s and other relatives. They were going to celebrate the marriage and enjoy the beach. We had lined up a workout at Beaverton High School on a Saturday morning at 11 a.m. and Taylor calls Kellen to see what he was doing. Taylor comes back laughing and telling everyone that Kellen said, “Heck we are driving down the freeway right now and we’ll slip over to Beaverton and get a good workout in.” An hour later the cars come pulling into the Beaverton High School parking lot and out comes Kellen jogging to the field. The cars empty out and the entire Clemens party is now sitting in the stands watching a workout. He told his wife that he would be done in two hours and they would immediately leave for the remainder of their trip. This is no exaggeration; it was “who’s who” of the Northwest in regards to the top high school kids in Oregon and Washington that day. You want to talk about intensity and competition; it was really fun to watch. After 2 hours, Taylor says, “We have 15 Quarterbacks and 30 Skill Position players. We hit 30 passes in a row and we are done.” I look down at the Clemens family and I could tell they wanted to get back on the road. They didn’t realize that they would be sitting on hard wooden benches for “another 2 hours.”

Well it turned out to be very interesting. It took that long for the Quarterbacks and Skill players to complete 30 passes in a row. Taylor was not helping out much as he was all over these guys. It was intense and it

made for a long day for these guys. This was one of the most competitive 4-hour workouts I have ever been around.

Kellen was entering his senior year of football at the University of Oregon; John Durocher was competing for the starting QB job at the University of Washington; Cody Kempt, now a QB at Oregon was about to be a senior at Westview and Kevin Riley would be a senior at Beaverton High School that fall. Kevin is now a QB at the University of California. Brett Elliott who started at the University of Utah under Urban Meyer and then moved to Linfield College was also there. The year before, he set NCAA records by throwing 66 touchdown passes as a junior at Linfield, leading them to the National Championship. I can go on and on about the names who were there that day.

It is really fun to see young kids grow up and somehow, someway reach their dreams. On paper, Kellen had a lot going against him. But his heart and mind would never quit competing and the rest is history. Kellen is a good person, with tremendous morals and values in his life. We are proud that we had an opportunity to share in his life.

Bits and Pieces

Austin James, a 6'4 and 300 pound OG/OT and DT just signed with Western Oregon University. Austin played at Columbia River High School in Vancouver, Washington.

Austin is a great young man with a good future in front of him. Austin has been a loyal participant in our Offense-Defense Lineman Camps in Portland for years. Coach Baker feels that Austin will develop in college and has a chance to become a real good college player.

Austin comes from a wonderful family and his high school coach is John O'Rourke.

Bo Bergstrom was an outstanding quarterback at Reynolds High School in Portland. Bo has been attending the Barton QB Camps for years. Bo just

signed with Southern Oregon University where he will play for Steve Helminiak.

Bo has always worked hard and shown us a very strong arm. The Barton Academy wishes Bo the best and we are confident that he will do a great job with the Raiders.

Questions for the Barton Football Academy

“What are your thoughts on small college vs. Division 1 football?”

Greg Barton says:

Most kids grow up dreaming of playing for Oregon State, the University of Oregon, Tennessee, Florida, Notre Dame and the other D-1 schools that they see on television on Saturdays. I think D-1 football is great. If a young man has an opportunity to play at the D-1 level, I say “go for it”. Heck, it’s the American Dream. I was fortunate enough to be able to play at that level and it was a great experience for me. My son played at the D-1 level and it was a great experience for him also.

One of my disappointments regarding the college recruiting process is that so many young men and parents feel, “If I’m not good enough to play D-1 football, then I will just go to school as a student.” I also hear a lot of parents say, “If my son does not get a D-1 offer, he can always go to a small college, it’s just an extension of high school.” When I say “disappointment” I mean I am disappointed in just how many people are just so uneducated about small college football.

My twin daughters played D-2 Volleyball at Western Oregon and they both had a good experience and played at a very high level. My wife and I enjoyed the games and the experience of small college a lot.

Regarding small college football; it is NOT an extension of high school. In Oregon we might have 6 to 10 players move on to play for a D-1 school. Think of our All State Teams, whether it is First Team, Second Team or Honorable Mention players. There are a whole lot more representing these teams than 6 to 10 players. Most will go on to play small college football. That means most of the top players in the state move on to small college football. Think of some of the top players in the state that did not make the

All State teams; they will also move into small college football. So when the dust clears, the majority of our top players in the state will end up playing small college football. In Washington there might be 10 to 20 players move on to play D-1 football. The rest of the top players will surface at the small colleges.

I like and respect all the colleges that offer football. I know one thing for a FACT, any player that is good enough to play high school football at the varsity level is GOOD, no question about this. Now anyone who moves to the next level, whether it be to a big school or to a small college; I have nothing but respect for them as they have joined a very small select group of young men in our country that are good enough to play beyond high school. My hat is off to all of these kids.

“What are your thoughts about Erik Ainge as an NFL prospect? Did he ever come to the Barton Camps? My 11 year old son dreams about becoming the next Erik Ainge. I grew up in Tennessee and we are big Vols fans.”

Greg Barton says:

Yes, Erik Ainge is an NFL prospect. He never got an opportunity to redshirt and I think that hurt him a little bit at Tennessee. Erik is a great young man who comes from a good family. He has the size, arm and athleticism to make an impact in the NFL.

Erik played for one of my favorite Oregon high school football coaches; Craig Ruecker at Glencoe High School in Hillsboro, Oregon. Coach Ruecker is now at Redmond HS where he is doing an excellent job. Coach Ruecker did a lot for Erik Ainge as a person and a quarterback.

Erik did train with us in the Barton Football Academy. Taylor and I have some great memories of Erik in our camps. Taylor has developed a good friendship with Erik over the years. I think Taylor really helped Erik get ready for his first summer at the University of Tennessee. We trained over at Southridge HS in Beaverton that summer and Taylor put Erik through some pretty hard workouts. He really pushed Erik to the limit and I believe that got him mentally ready for his introduction to Tennessee football.

I watched Erik grow up playing basketball and baseball as a young kid. I actually coached against him in youth baseball. I have always liked him as a person, a competitor, and an athlete. Something to note; Erik was an Honor

Roll student throughout his high school days. I believe in high school he was just over a 3.9 GPA. His mom and dad did a great job in raising him and his dad was his youth coach.

It's funny how this football thing works. I respected Tennessee for years, but once Erik got there, I have hardly ever missed a game he has played on TV. Once he gets in the NFL I will keep a close eye on that team. I have gone through this with Aaron Rodgers (grew up in Beaverton, Oregon, played at the University of California and is now a backup QB to Brett Favre with the Green Bay Packers); Derek Anderson (Scappoose HS in Oregon, played at Oregon State, and is now the starting QB with the Cleveland Browns); and Kellen Clemens (Burns HS in Oregon, the University of Oregon, and now a QB with the New York Jets). They have all been in the Barton Camps and Taylor and I sure have great memories of each and everyone of them.

It's fun to see high school coaches drop by to watch workouts. Anthony Stoudamire, the Head Football Coach at Jefferson HS is at our Portland workouts almost every Sunday. He did a great job at Jefferson last season turning the program around and more important, getting the kids in his program really excited about the game.

We saw George Crace yesterday. Coach Crace is the Head Football Coach at Horizon High School. Coach Crace did a great job at both West Linn HS and Wilsonville HS before coming to Horizon HS. His son Spencer has done a great job playing QB at Puget Sound University. Spencer was in our camps a lot as a young kid. I have always liked the kid and feel good about his success at Puget Sound University.

Diallo Lewis used to coach in our Barton Camps. He is now the very successful Head Football Coach at Grant High School. Diallo was a very good quarterback at Jesuit HS under Ken Potter. Coach Lewis has turned Grant into a power in the state of Oregon.

Speaking of high school coaches, we sure have some great ones in our Barton Camps.

Shaun Tarantola coached in Seattle at Evergreen High School for a number of years. Taylor Barton has always talked about Shaun's passion for the game.

Shaun developed Luther Leonard as a quarterback at Evergreen. Luther just received a football scholarship to the University of Washington. I remember the day I met Shaun and he told me about a young 9th grade quarterback he had named Luther, who he felt had some real potential as a QB. Shaun went on to have a lot of success at Evergreen developing many college players.

Shaun just left Evergreen and accepted a new Head Football coaching position at Juanita High School in Washington. Shaun will do a great job there. All of us in the Barton Football Academy wish Shaun the best in his new job.

Mike Pluschke is the Head Football Coach at Redmond High School in Redmond, Washington. He, like Shaun Tarantola, has been a terrific coach in the Barton Academy. Coach Pluschke has done a great job at Redmond HS. He is an outstanding football coach. Taylor Barton says Coach Pluschke can coach any position on the field. Two years ago, he did a terrific job with the offensive lineman at Redmond. He did a great job of getting them in the weight room and they came out as seniors averaging about 280 pounds from tackle to tackle. We are fortunate to have Coach Pluschke with us.

Not every "Washington coach" is coaching in Seattle. We have Aaron Hazel in our Portland Camps. Coach Hazel is one of the top young assistants in high school football in the Northwest. Coach Hazel is an Assistant Football Coach, under Head Coach Steve Kizer, at Skyview HS in Vancouver, Washington. Coach Hazel will become a successful Head Coach in the years to come. He loves the game and can coach on both sides of the ball.

His brother is Adam Hazel who is the Offensive Coordinator and Quarterback Coach at Menlo College in California. Adam played his high school football at Roseburg HS in Oregon and was a participant in the Barton Camps for years.

We will highlight our other coaches in the next few weeks.

Taylor and I spoke at the Glazier Coaches Football Clinic in Redmond, Washington this past weekend. We had some excellent quarterback demonstrators. Connor Johnson, a 7th grader from Pendleton High School in Oregon was our youngest player. Connor has been coming to our Portland workouts for 2 years and he is one of our favorites. His father is Walt Johnson, the Head Football Coach at Pendleton High School. Aaron Rodriguez is a freshman QB at Foster HS in Washington. He did a great job. Another freshman QB was Victor Evans. Victor has been training with us for years and he brought a lot to the table with his enthusiasm and effort. We had 3 excellent sophomore QBs. Jake Heaps did a wonderful job. Jake, who is from Skyline HS, is an old pro with these clinics. He helps us in both Seattle and Portland at the clinics we that we are involved in. Jake takes everything he does very seriously and his performance this weekend was excellent. Connor McCormick is a QB from Eastside Catholic HS. Connor did a terrific job in the clinic. This is the first time I have seen him since last year and he looks great. He is growing and I was impressed with his skills. Taylor Barton has been talking to me about Andy Gay from Jackson HS. Taylor has been impressed with his skills and work ethic in the Seattle Indoor Camps. This was my first experience with him and I was impressed. Andy is mature for his age and a very good quarterback.

Our next clinic will be in Portland on March 8 at the Nike Coach-of-the-Year Football Clinic.

Our last Winter Indoor Camps will be held this weekend in Seattle, Washington. The camps have been great. Taylor Barton has been happy with his coaching staff and the players in the camp. We just can't thank the University of Washington enough for giving us the opportunity to hold on Winter Training in the Dempsey Indoor Facility.

Keep working hard in school

Greg Barton