New dog, old tricks

Rookie coach gets tips from master

T WAS JUST after 7:30 a.m. Monday when I got my first coaching and when I got my first coaching and still occupied to the state of the

"Duty calls," I responded in a slumberous tone.

"Well, it'll get you home early at night," Conley said.

I made a note of that.

Tip No. 2 came in the coaches' office. While Brewer was taking care of the final paper work of the morning, I noticed a small sign on the wall, which read, "And remember that football develops individuality, initiative and leadership. Now get out there and do exactly as I tell you."

I made a note of that, too.

I made a note of that, too.

I DID OBSERVE TIP, No. 1 Sunday night. I was home and in the sack early, full I couldn't get to sleep. I was a little nervous, but more anxious than anything else. Coaching football, as I mentioned in my first article, was a dream for me. Ironically, I couldn't even close my eyes to dream anymore. It was becoming a reality.

I found out I wasn't alone in my restlessness. Brewer, who's been in this coaching business at Avondale for 15 years, says each first day of practice is as exciling as the first, first day can remember 16 years ago I couldn't sleep, said the head Rhiho. I can remember 16 years ago I couldn't sleep, said the head Rhiho. I can remember 16 years ago I couldn't sleep, said the head Rhiho. I can remember 16 years ago I couldn't sleep, said the head Rhiho. I can remember 16 years ago I couldn't sleep, said the head Rhiho. I can remember 16 years ago I couldn't sleep (before the first day of practice). Me and Tom (Mindee) were assistant coaches, and we stayed up the whole night making sure we knew what we were doing."

For those unfamiliar with first prac-

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tices, they can be quite mundane. It's the teaching phase of the season — learning blocking schemes, pass routes, running directions and the mechanics of ball exchanges, just to name a few Repetition is the for jusquent heads, the most season is in the season of the form of the for

"THE THING you'll see, especially with the younger kids, is the progression they make in those drills. This is fun for me. This is when the fun starts."

Assistant coach Tony Messina, who took a year off last season after 12 years coaching at Avondale, explains his love for coaching. "That's why I'm back. It's still exciting. If you talk about the time and money you put in, it's not worth it, but that's not why you coach.

it's not worth it, but that's not why you concern with the properties as a coach. The players take about winning the league and the state, but as a cach, although you hope for all the best, there's still unknown quantities — you don't really know what you have until you get out there.

"Here, you get all the learning things out of the way, then you work to perfect everything, and that's the part I like. The games are the things I really like. It's like your report card. We referred to it (games) a few years ago as pay day. If you work hard, you'll be rewarded."

So this is the work that comes before pay day, and its a long time before the first check — Sept. 6 to be exact.

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In the list in repetitions efforce the gram. Noboly left.

You assignment was to work with the receivers. It didn't take long before I

felt part of the program. Coaches Brewer, Coaley, Messina, Keith Gust, Marc Kuney and Mark Fisher helped, but it was the players who convinced me I was part of the coaching staff. Although I was a rookle on the staff, they didn't question my authority. They treated me with respect, listened to my instruction, and asked my advice on various aspects of their position.

Tin No. 2 worked. Tip No. 2 worked.

AS WAS CUSTOMARY when I was a player, there're a few who need to be pushed. And there're a few who need some priorities straightened out. I'm sure every coach has been ap-proached by a player with some sort of

excuse as to why the player can't make practice or why they are late for prac-

the first practice, and he had some excuse," he laughed. "The next day, he was late again, this time, with a different excuse. Before the third practice, I was asking the coaches what they thought his excuse would be today. I said, "He'll probably tell us his dog died."

thought his excuse would be today. I said, 'He'll probably tell us his dog died.'

"Sure enough, he showed up late again, and I said, 'What happened, did your dog die?' He said, 'No, my cat.'

It seems if it's not one thing, it's another. Case in point was Monday's practice. It's not surprising to lose a player with a groin pull, a turned ankle or blistered feet from new football shoes. Insidead, we lost a coach.

Conley, instructing a player how to work out shin splints, turned his knee and was unable to straighten the lame limb. "It just went pop," he said. There's Tip No. 3. Nobody is free



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Cali me 'Coach'

This is the second in a series of articles by Observer & Eccentric sports writer Jim Hughes as he works as assistant junior vareity football coach at Avendale High School in Auburn Hills.









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