

Catlike Instincts
By Lee Taft

I can remember being young and teasing my cat “Pooner” (My sister named the cat-wasn’t me). I used to wait for her to walk into the kitchen, which had a slick floor surface, and I would jump out at her. She would react so quickly and take off like she was shot out of a cannon. But again, the floor was slippery, and she would take roughly 84 steps and not move an inch. Funny thing is her feet were moving 100 miles an hour. She would react so quickly it was amazing to watch.

Fast forward to yesterday when I was checking the updates on all the football games from the weekend on ESPN, and I saw a move that was completely reactionary and incredible.

This particular highlight happened so quickly I didn’t catch the player or team. I do know it was a running back, and I do know he scored. Let me set the play up as best as I can remember.

The team was inside the 20 and the back ran an outside stretch play. He was able to turn the corner and get past the first line of defense. As he was heading up the sideline the defensive back closed the sideline off so the back quickly planted to cut inside, but as soon as he cut inside another defender filled the lane the back was running in. Then he pulled off the most incredible cut I have seen this year. He immediately planted his outside leg and changed his direction by almost 45 degrees but never lost speed. He went back toward the sideline and darted into the endzone.

Now, I am not doing this move justice the way I explained it, but to me someone who studies movement and loves to see displays of pure athleticism like that, it was amazing. But what was so remarkable is how this athlete never adjusted his speed, he just adjusted his direction of travel by using amazing cuts, and it was all **instinct**. He had no time to set these moves up. When a defender jumped in front of his path he adjusted and accelerated in a new direction.

The great thing about his play was he used all the innate abilities athletes have. In my new Ground Breaking 2 (www.GroundBreaking2.com), I go into great detail on how to evaluate this type of ability. You see, all athletes have the ability to pull off great movements like the one this running back did, but too many athletes do not get their bodies in the correct positions to allow their natural abilities to take over. This is why I constantly preach the importance of these key points:

1. Make sure athletes understand “Playing in the Tunnel” so they can make great moves instinctively.
2. Get the shoulders in the correct posture so the rest of the body can be positioned correctly.
3. Move the feet from under the center of mass; do not move the center of mass over the feet.

There certainly are other important components but if these three are emphasized the athlete is set up to be successful.

So even though my cat didn't move very far due the slippery surface, she instinctively reacted and moved her feet correctly. As humans, we have the same abilities; we just need to know how to evaluate when it is done incorrectly and how to correct it with proper cueing, modeling, and shaping. If you want to take your coaching ability up a notch, you really should check out Ground Breaking 2 at www.GroundBreaking2.com. It will give you the information you need to have a power system to coaching multidirectional speed.