WEST COAST OFFENSE

CONTROLLING THE BALL WITH THE PASS Bill Walsh

My philosophy has been to control the ball with the forward pass. To do that we have to have versatility-versatility in the action and types of passes thrown by the quarterback.

Dropback Passes

We like the dropback pass. We use a three-step drop pattern, but more often we will use a five-step drop pattern of timed patterns down the field. From there we go to a seven-step drop. When our quarterback takes a seven-step drop, he's allowing the receivers time to maneuver down the field. Therefore, we will use a three-step drop pattern when we are throwing a quick out or hitch or slant which, by and large, the defense is allowing you to complete by their alignment or by their coverage.

The five-step drop pattern for the quarterback calls for a disciplined pattern by the receiver. He runs that pattern the same way every time. He doesn't maneuver to beat the defensive back.

Too often in college football, either the quarterback is standing there waiting for the receiver, or the receiver has broken before the quarterback can throw the ball. These are the biggest flaws you will see in the forward pass. Now when the receiver breaks before the ball can be thrown, the defensive back can adjust to the receiver. Any time the quarterback holds the ball waiting for the receiver to break, the defensive back sees it and breaks on the receiver. So the time pattern is vital.

Play-Action Passes

You can't just dropback pass. You have to be able to keep the defense from zeroing in on your approach. That's why the play pass is vital. By and large, the play-action pass will score the touchdown. The dropback pass will control the ball.

For play-action passing, we have certain blocking fundamentals that we use. We will show different backfield actions with basically the same offensive line blocking. We will go to the play pass as often as we can, especially as we get to the opponent's 25-yard line.

Action Pass

The third category of pass that most people use is what we call the action pass, where your quarterback moves outside. There are a couple of reasons for moving outside. One certainly is to avoid the inside pass rush. For a dropback passing team we'll sprint-out "waggle" as we call it-outside to avoid blitzers who approach straight up the field on us. The other advantage is to bring yourself closer to the potential receiver.

We'll get outside to throw the ball and get ourselves closer to the man we want to throw to. When you can get outside, the trajectory of the ball can be flatter because normally there isn't a man between you and the receiver.

The versatility also includes changing your formations. We continuously change receiver width and spacing. We seldom will line up our receiver with the same spacing on two or three plays in a row. If we want to throw the ball to the outside, we will reduce the split of the receiver. We need running room to the outside. We don't want the ball in the air very long. If we want to throw inside, we will extend the split of our receivers, so that there is more maneuvering room to the inside, and spread the defense. Our backs, as many teams know will cheat to get where they have to be. We know that if we throw to backs, the first thing on their mind is how to release out of the backfield. We are quite willing to move the man to get the release and sometimes telegraph what we are doing. We are quite

willing to do that with the idea that when we want to break a given tendency, we simply line them up there and run something else.

We will vary the split of the receivers according to the pattern and the coverage and, of course, to add versatility. The biggest problem you will have in the forward pass is when you have to throw the ball a number of times and, with a very limited inventory, you begin to throw the same pattern over and over. You get into trouble.

The argument that you will throw the interception has to be qualified with how much you know about the forward passing game versus the running game. In our last game, our opponent fumbled five times, and we threw no interceptions. That might have been the difference in the game.

Play Selection

One of the factors involved with our success years ago with the Cincinnati Bengals was that we would begin to set a game plan for the opening of the game. We continued that at Stanford. In a given game, say, for instance, against Southern California, we ran the first 12 plays we had decided on in order. Of course, we ran out of lists because the first 12 worked and none worked after that. But the point is we went 12 plays in order, right down the line. We went eight straight games scoring the first time we had the ball. By the time we have completed 8 to 10 plays, we've forced the opponent to adjust to a number of things. We've kept him off balance with the type of thing we were doing, and we pretty much established in a given series what we would come to next.

That's a good approach to offensive football. It forces you to go into that game with a certain calmness. You know where you're going, rather than having to say, "What in the hell do we do now?" Occasionally planned plays don't work, but we keep going. We don't change; we don't worry about it. We try to create an effect on our opponent. The effect is that he feels he has to adjust. We present different looks and dilemmas. We run the ball right at him. We throw the ball over his head. Meanwhile, because we know what the play is, we readily see what their adjustments are. We try to get a line on their first down defenses, but we take it from there.

In Scoring Territory

I have seen many teams march the ball beautifully, but right around the 15-yard line, they are already warming up their placekicker, because right at that point defenses change, the field they can operate in changes, and suddenly their basic offense goes all to pieces.

My contention is that if we are on their 25, we're going for the end zone. Failing at that, we will kick a field goal. In an evenly matched game, I don't want to try to take the ball from their 25 to the goal line by trying to smash it through people, because three out of four times, you won't make it. Unless you are superior, of course, if you are vastly superior it makes very little difference how you do it.

Why? First, every defensive coach in the country is going to his blitzes about right there. The pass coverage, by and large, will be man-to-man coverage. We know that if they don't blitz one down, they're going to blitz the next down, automatically. They'll seldom blitz twice in a row but they'll blitz every other down. If we go a series where there haven't been blitzes on the first two downs, here comes the safety blitz on the third down. So we are looking, at that point, to get into the end zone.

By the style of our football, we'll have somebody to get the ball to a little bit late-just as an outlet to get 4 or 5 yards, to try to keep it. But from the 25 to the 10, we're going for the end zone.

Midfield

Between our own 10-yard line and the opponent's 25, we operate our field offense. We know that on first down our ball-control passing is vital. By and large, on first-and-10 you'll get a 2-deep zone -

zone-type defense. We can drop the ball off to a back late and still make 4 to 5 yards. Those 4 or 5 yards are as important to us as some other team making the same on an option play.

You often will see us run with the ball on second-and-10, because we want 5 yards. If you run a basic running play, you can get your 5.

At third-and-5, we are right back with a ball-control pass, dumping to a back, and we're making it. If we can make 30 first downs a game, we'll win.

Short Yardage

We have standard passes to throw against a goalline defense. Too often people try to go in there and butt heads with good linebackers on the goal line. Too often they don't make it.

If we get inside that 5-yard line, half the time we are going to throw the ball. Now, if you're marching through somebody, you can just close your eyes and hand the ball off but when it's very competitive, that goal-line pass is vital. So we have a series of those. We never call them anywhere else on the field.

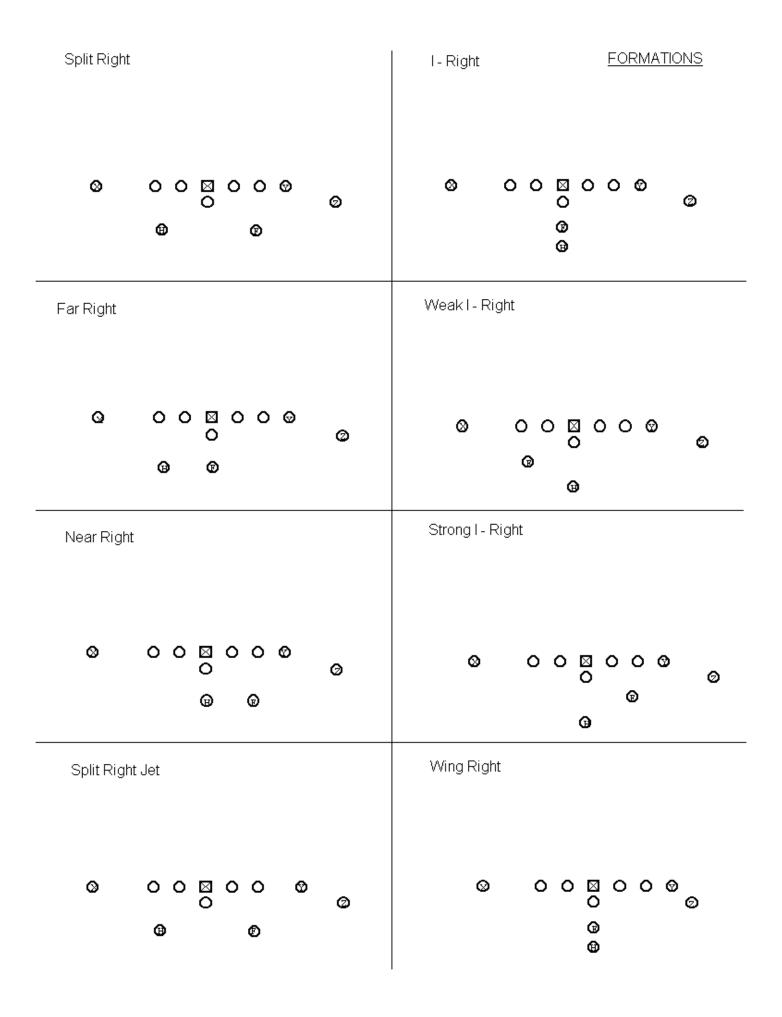
When we are around their 35-yard line in a short-yardage situation, if we don't see somebody standing deep down the middle, we're probably going to go for the six points.

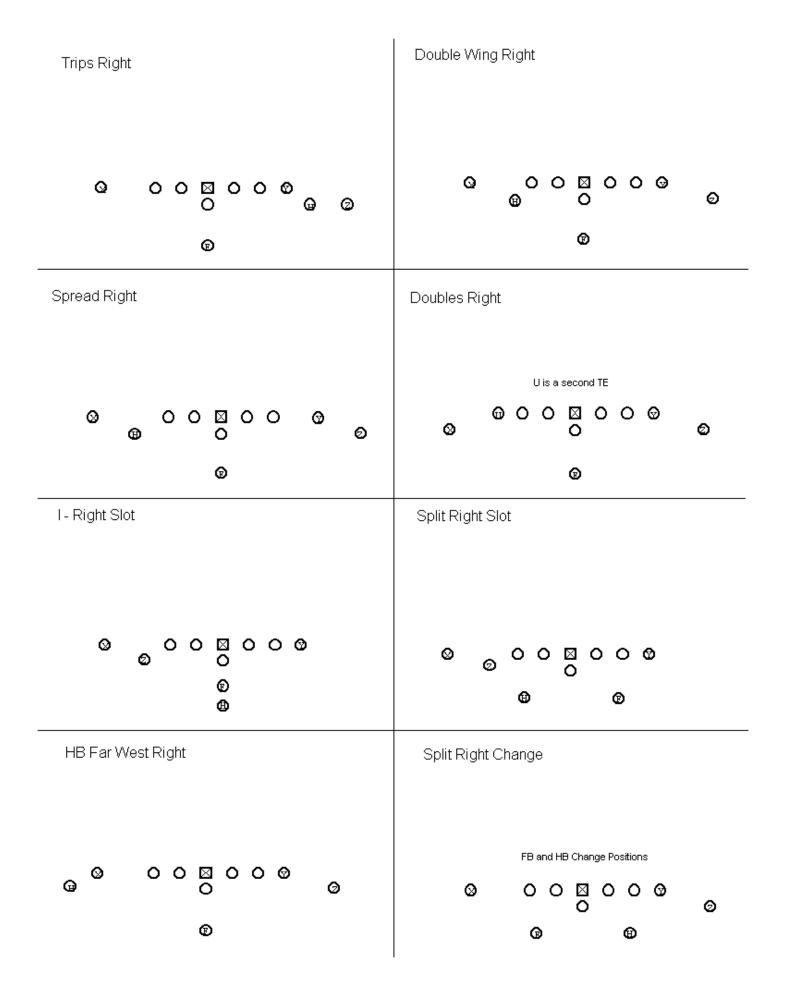
To make it on third-and-1 we will often throw to a back out of the backfield. Third-and-3 is the toughest of all to make. We have a certain list of runs and a certain list of passes. When we have a third-and-3, we don't grope. We go to it.

Ball-Control Passing

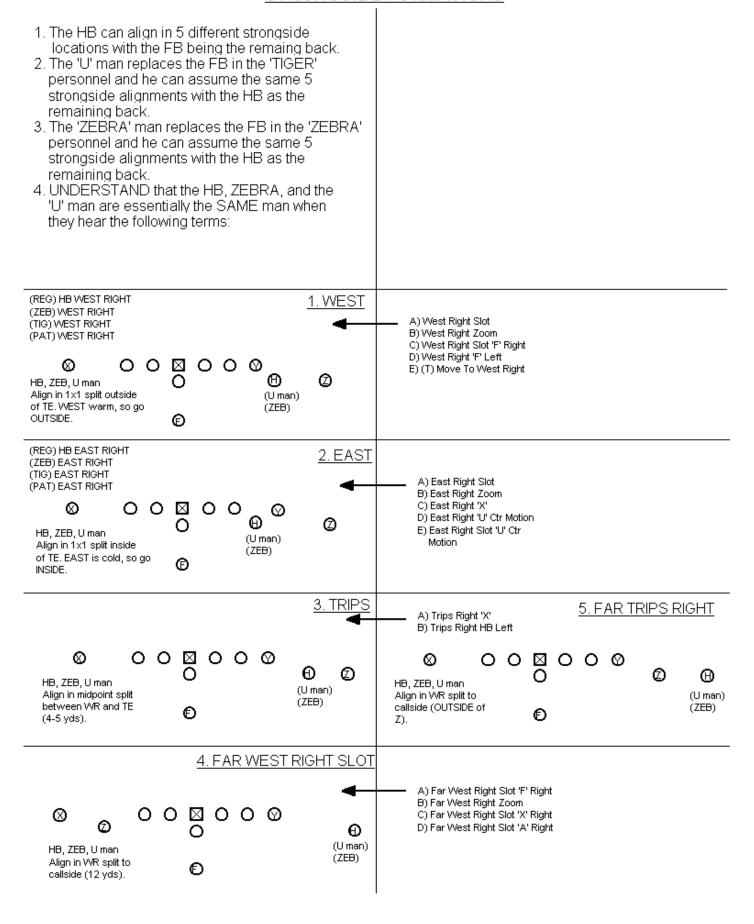
Don't isolate throwing the forward pass to a given down and distance. If you are going to throw the ball, you must be willing to throw on first down, not a token pass hoping for the best, but a pass that is designed to get you a certain amount of yardage.

In our ball-control passing, we will use the five-step drop pattern on first down, because we know through the drilling of our quarterback, that we can get 4 or 5 dropping the ball off to a back, who is an outlet, or to a tight end. So we are quite willing to throw a ball-control pass on first down, and then go to our seven-step drop maneuvering pattern on third down. As you can see, most of our offense is based on ball-control passes, no matter what the situation.





STRONGSIDE FORMATIONS



WEAKSIDE FORMATIONS

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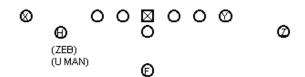
1	.The	${\sf HB}$	can	align	in 5	diff	eren	t w	eaks	ide	locati	ions
	with	the	FΒΙ	being	the (rem	nainir	ng I	back			

- The 'U' Man replaces the HB in 'TIGER' personnel and he can assume the same 5 weakside alignments with the HB as the remaining back.
- The 'ZEBRA' Man replaces the FB in 'ZEBRA' personnel and he can assume the same 5 weakside alignments with the HB being the remaining back.

Double Wing Right Lurk puts the HB/ZEB/U Man in a split ONE yard deep and ONE yard outside the OT on the weakside...He 'LURKS' in a postion where the defense doesn't know if he's a protector or a free release man...

1. DOUBLE WING RIGHT

4. NORTH RIGHT



Double Wing puts HB/ZEB/U Man in a midpoint split on the weakside between OT and WR.

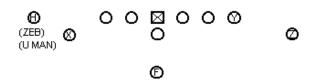
A) Double Wing Right 'X' B) Double Wing Right HB Right C) Double Wing Right 'F' Short



North is an automatic tight SLOT on the weakside. X is automatically in a 3 yard split and the HB/ZEB/U Man lines up inside of him. It's a weakside version of EAST. Cold in north so go inside.

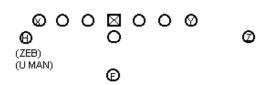
FAR DOUBLE WING RIGHT

5. SOUTH RIGHT

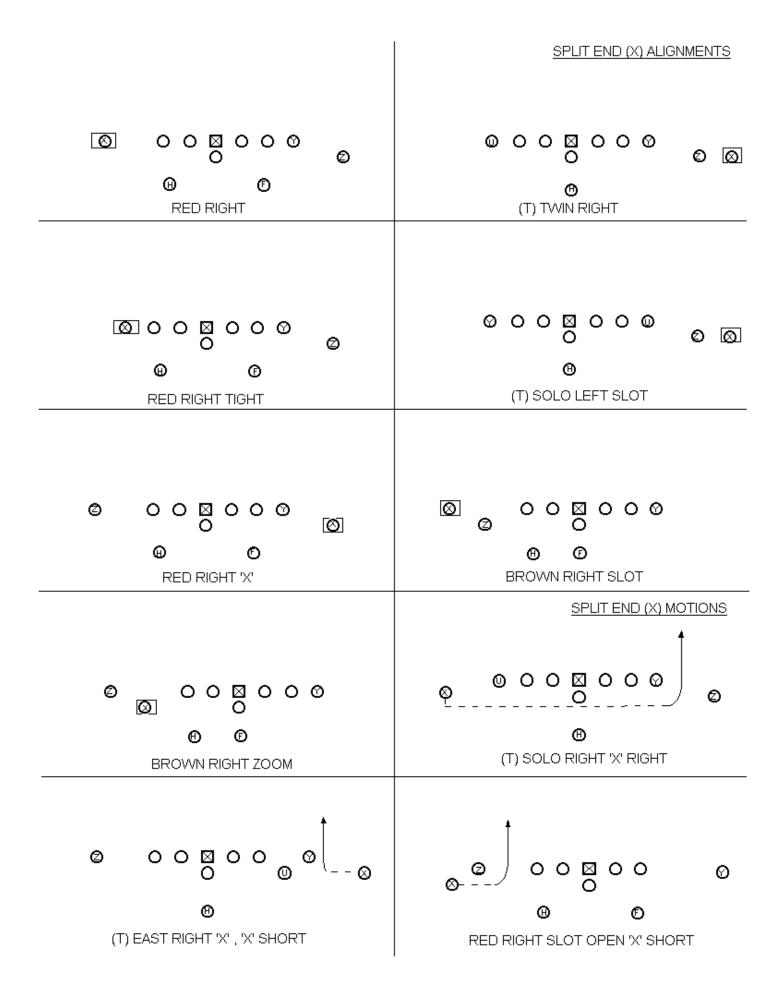


Far Double Wing Right puts the HB/ZEB/U Man in a 'FAR' split outside of the WR at a location on or outside the numbers.

A) Far Double Wing Right 'X' Right B) Far Double Wing Right 'A' Right C) Far Double Wing Right 'F' Left

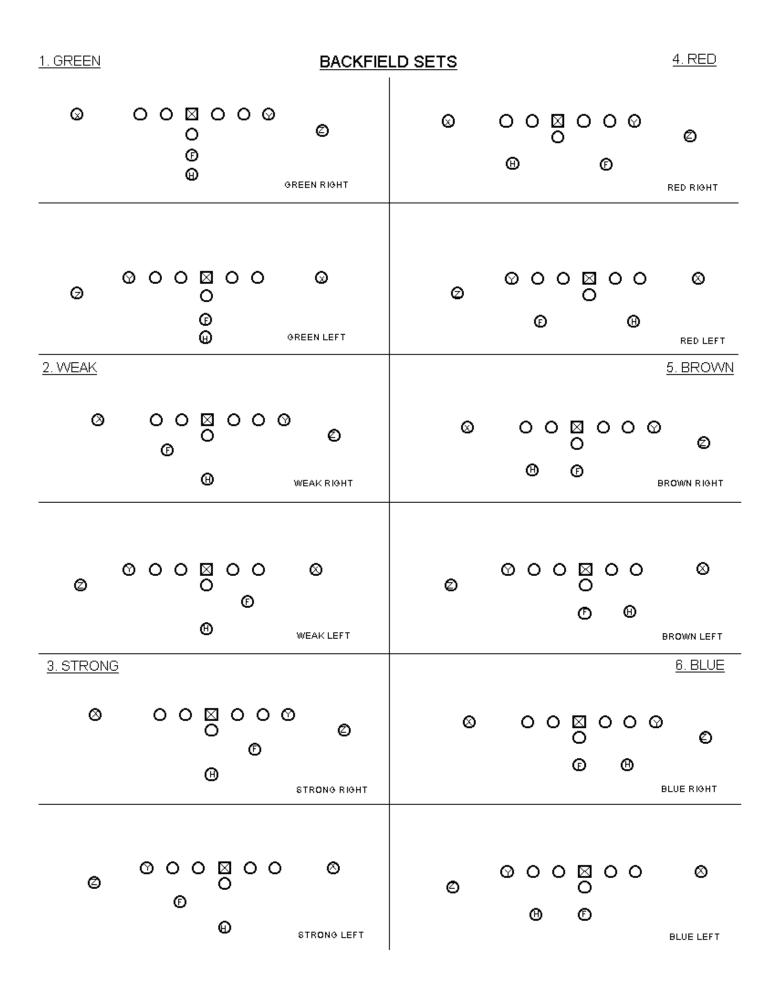


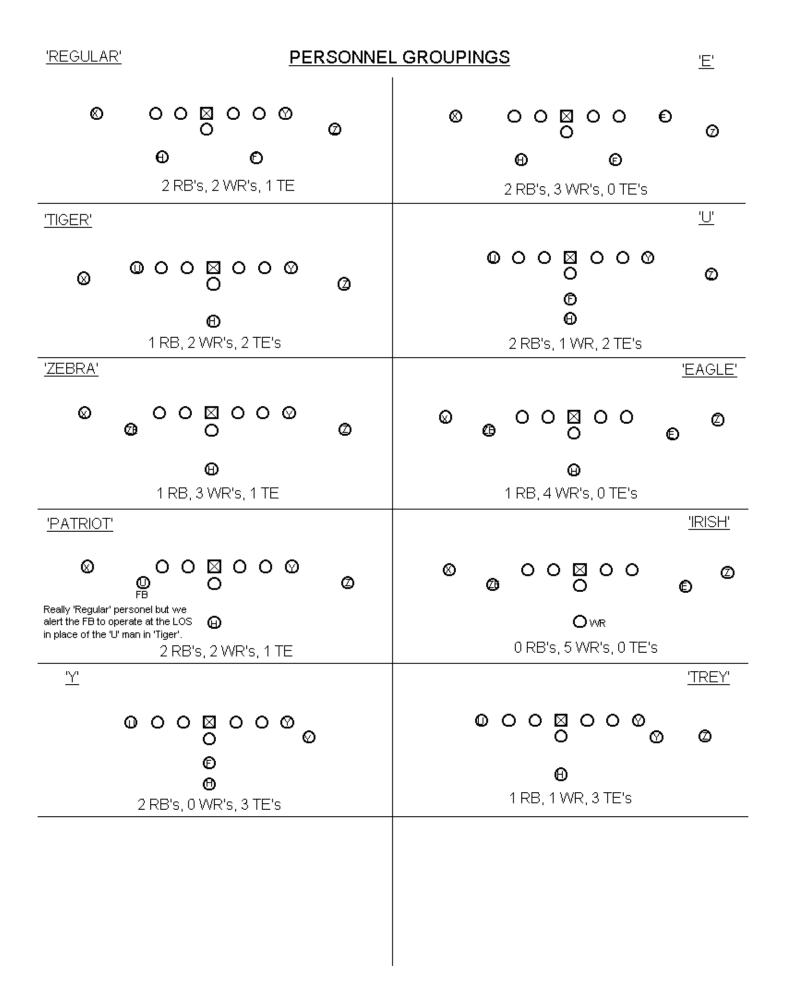
South is an automatic tight SLOT on the weakside. You will see us use in Nickle situations. X is automatically in a tight split between 2-3 yards and the HB/ZEB/U Man lines up outside 1-2 yards. Warm in the south so go outside.



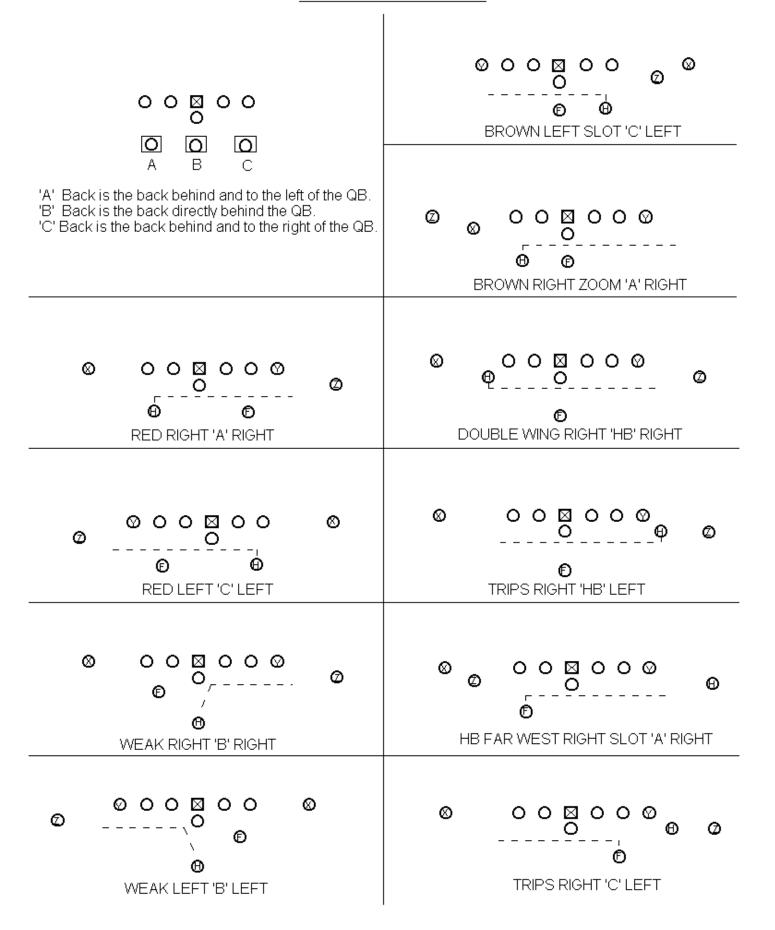
(T) WEST RIGHT

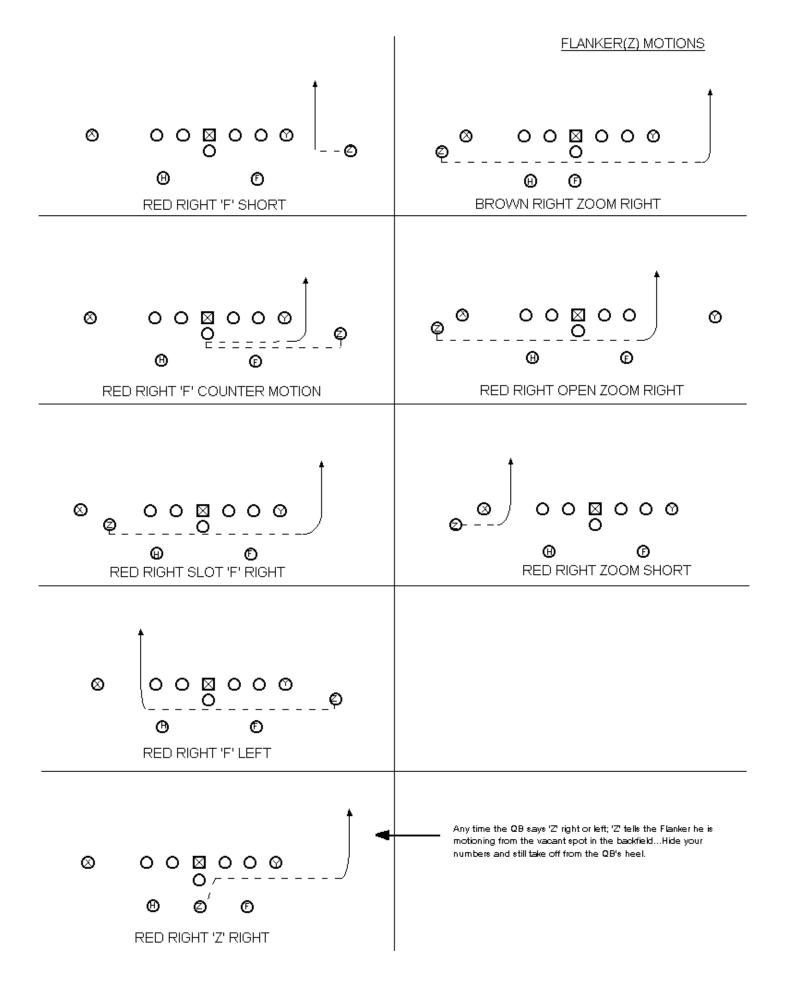
⊕ (ZEBRA) DOUBLE WING LEFT





BACKFIELD MOTIONS





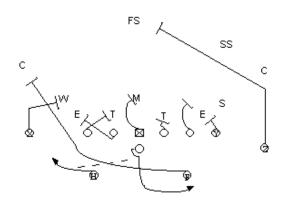
(T) SOLO RIGHT 'U' COUNTER MOTION

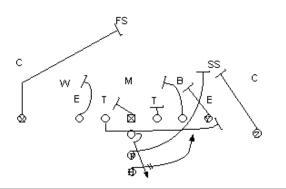
(T) EAST RIGHT 'U' MOTION

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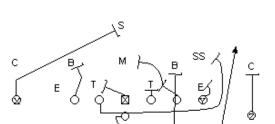
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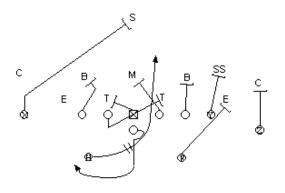




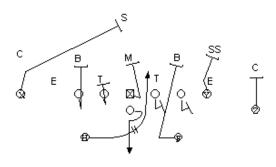
Split Right - Strong Sweep



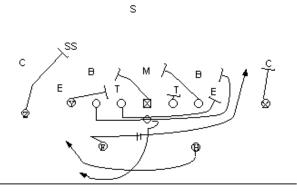
4 Split Right - Slice Trap



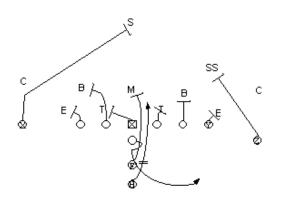
Split Right - Lead Draw



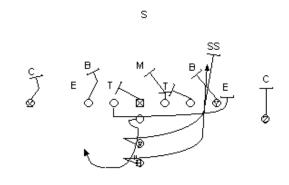
6 Split Left - GT Counter

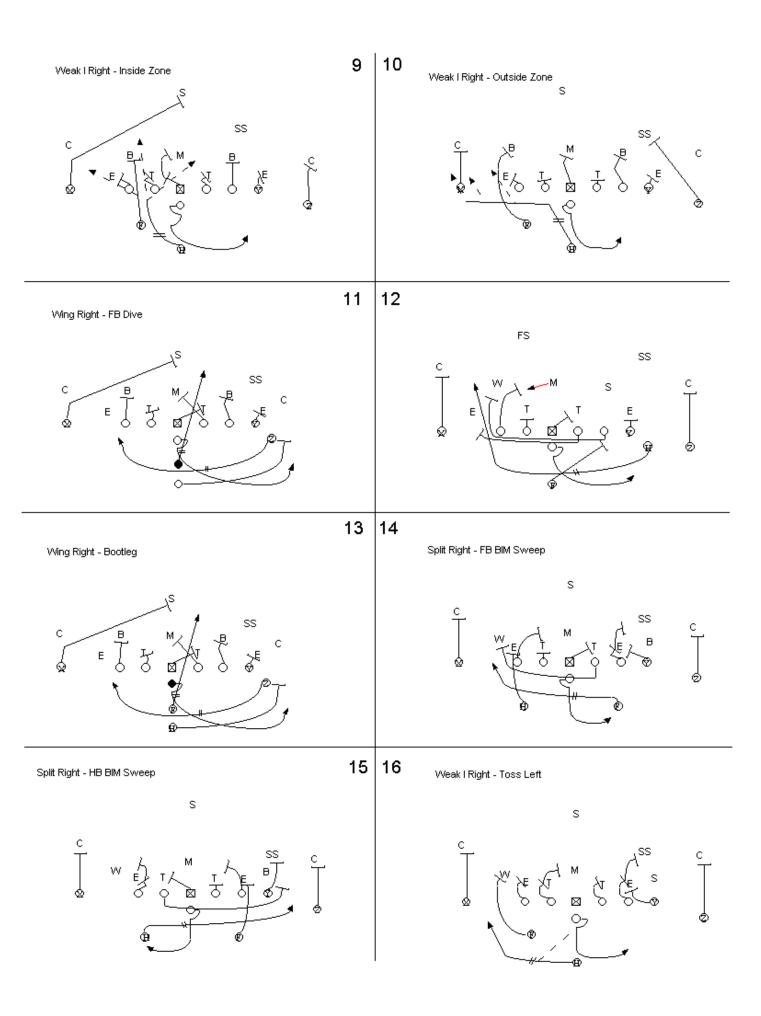


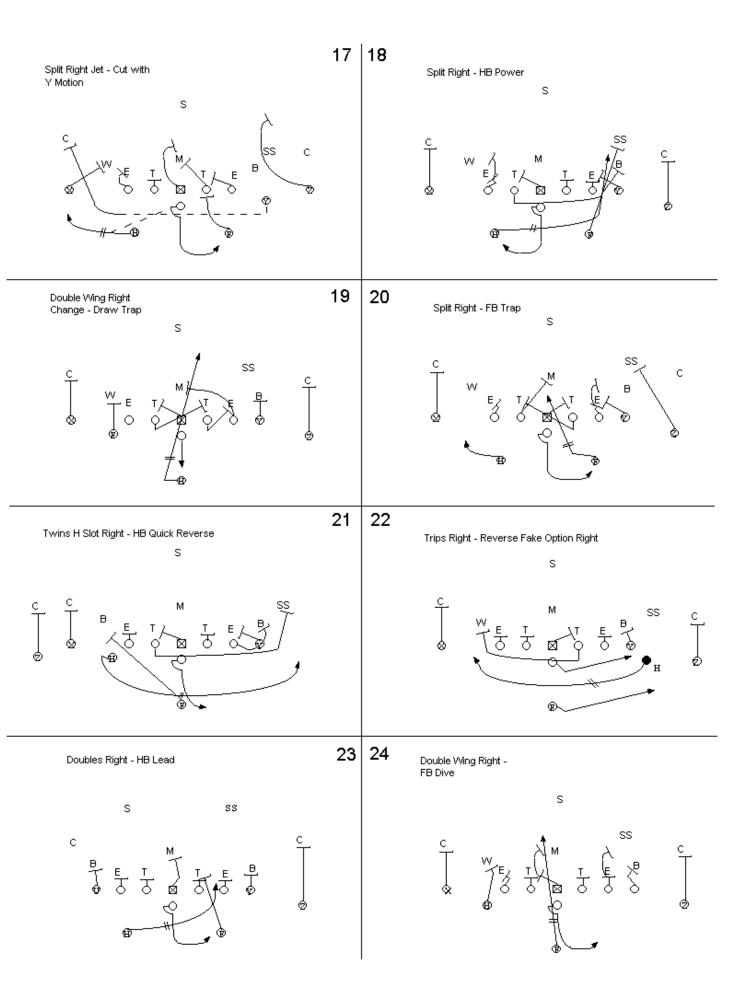
l Right - Iso



8 I Right - Counter

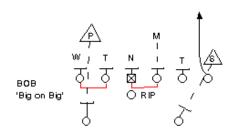






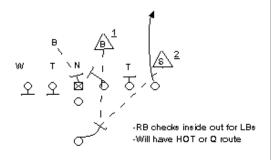
Base Man Protection vs ODD (7 man protection)

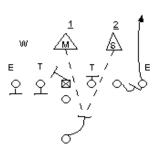
Base Man Protection vs EVEN



SLIDE Protection vs ODD (6 man protection)

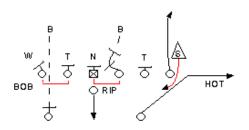
SLIDE Protection vs EVEN

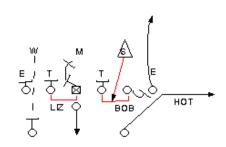




SCAT Right Protection vs ODD (6 man protection with free release of RB)

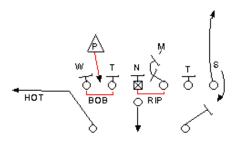
SCAT Right Protection vs EVEN

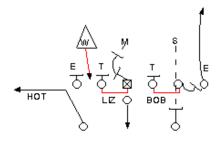


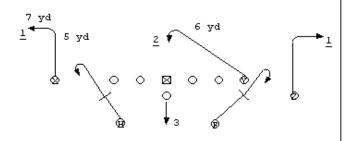


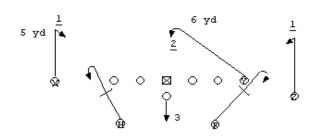
SCAT Left Protection vs ODD

SCAT Left Protection vs EVEN







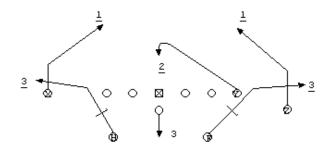


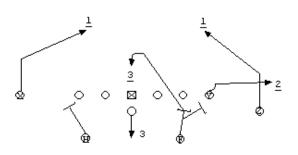
Split Right - 384 'DENVER'

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Split Right - 384 'DRAGON'

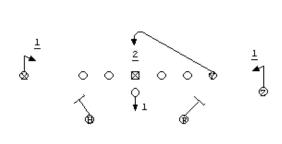




Split Right - 384 'TRAIN'

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6 Split Right - 384 'SMOKE'



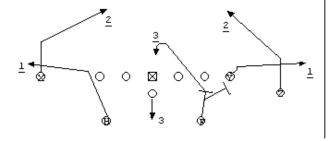
Split Right - 360 Drag-Slant

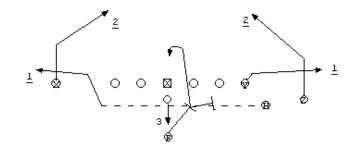
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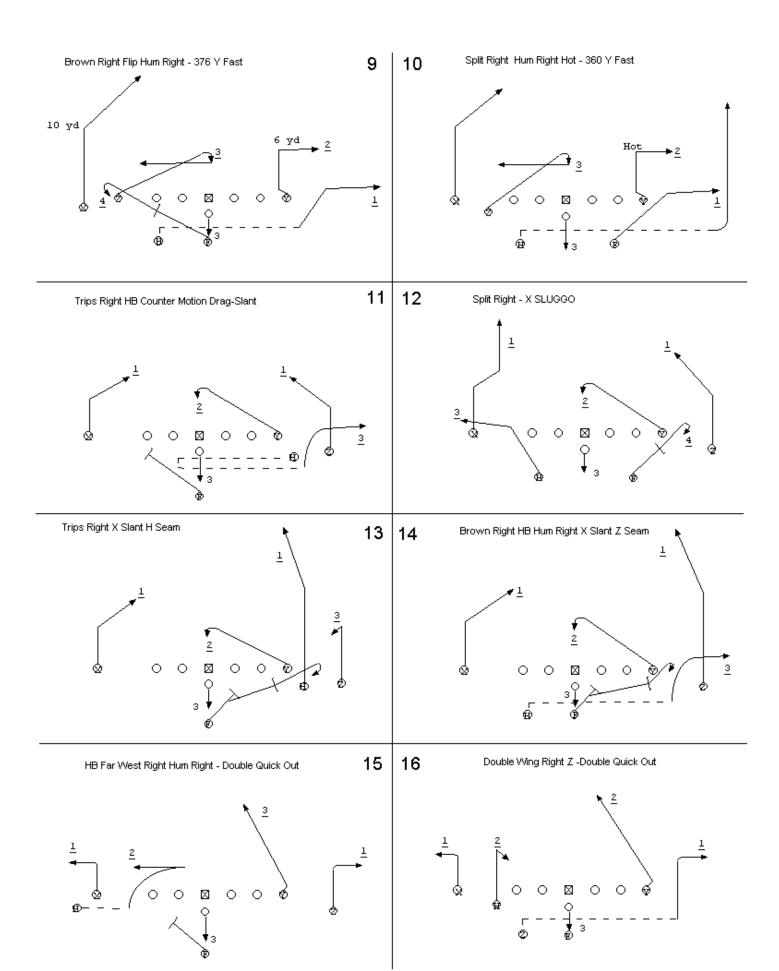
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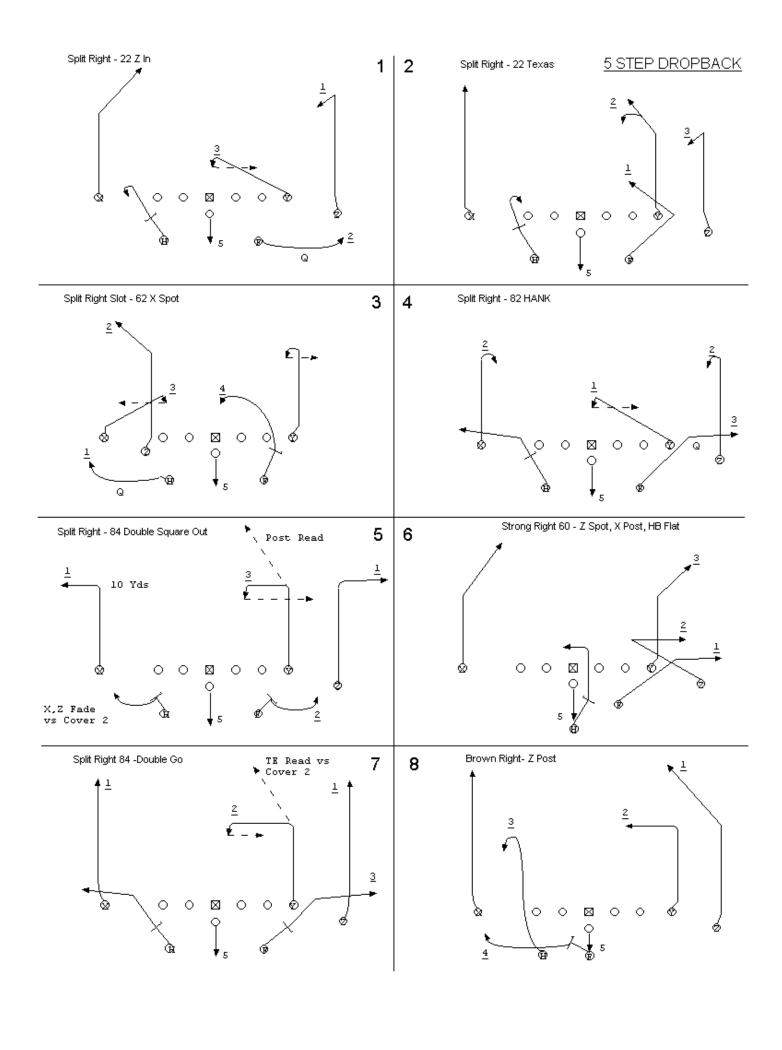
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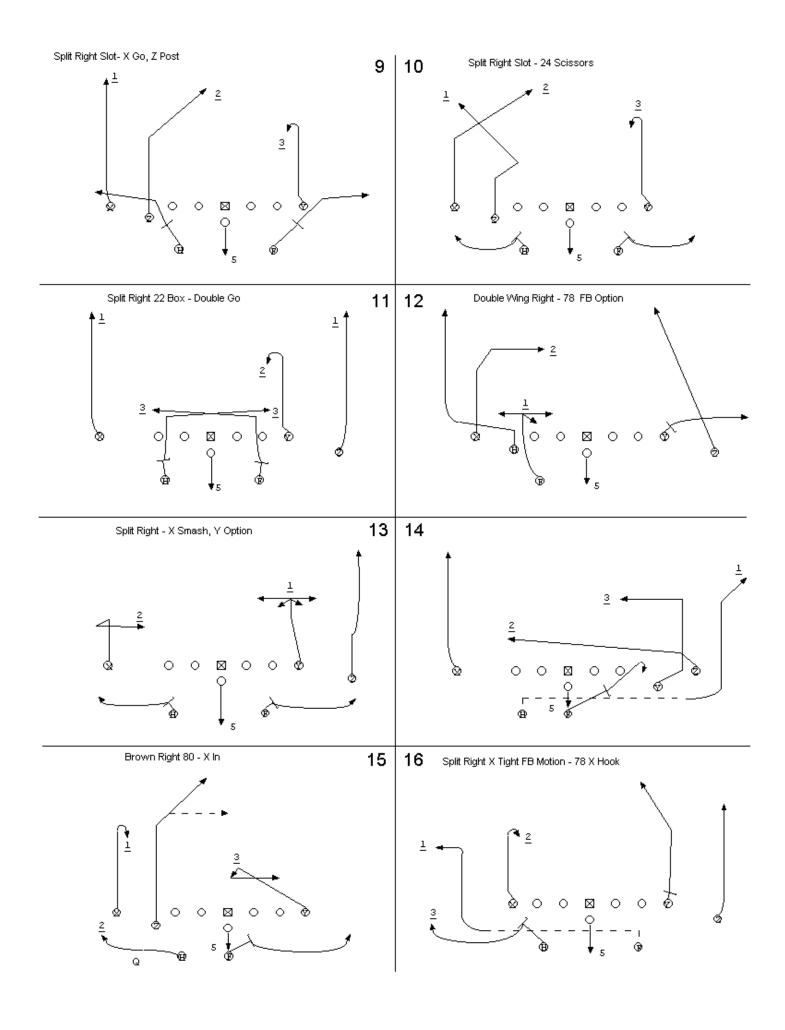
Trips Right Hum Left - 360 Drag-Slant

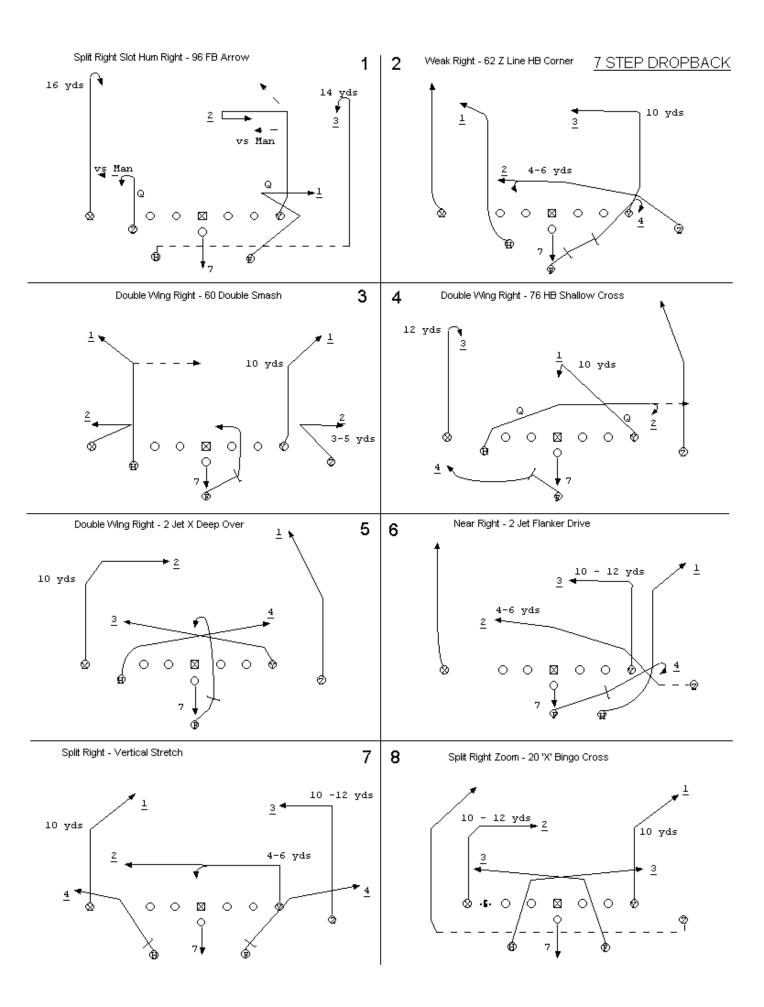


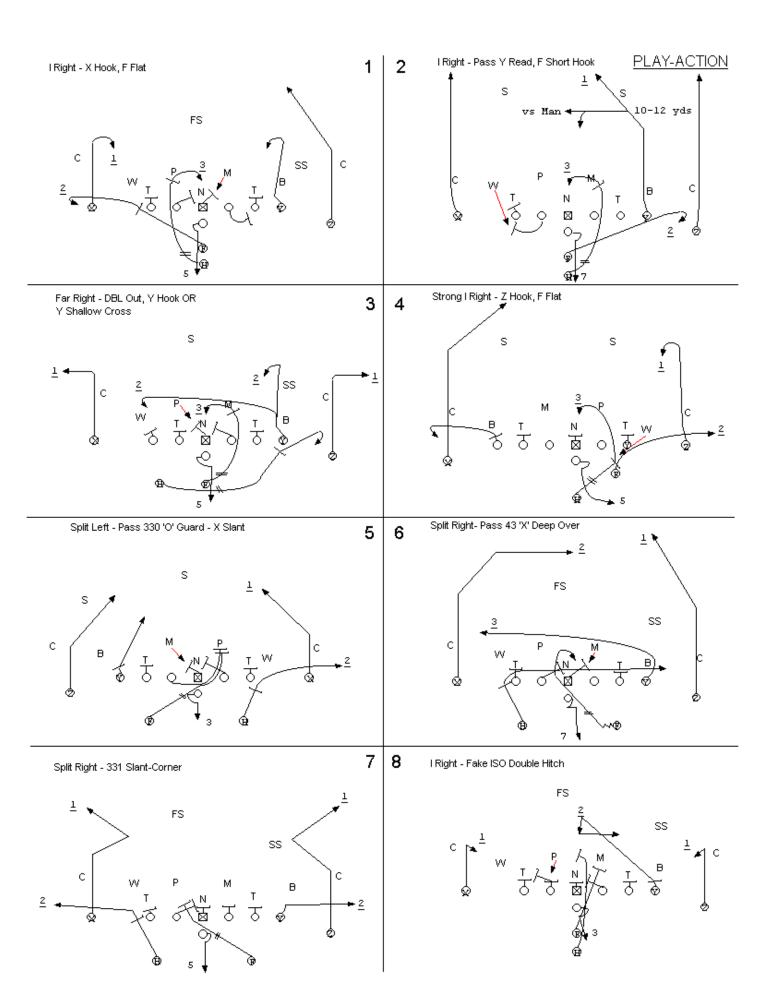


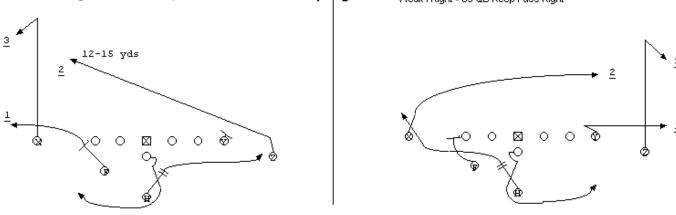


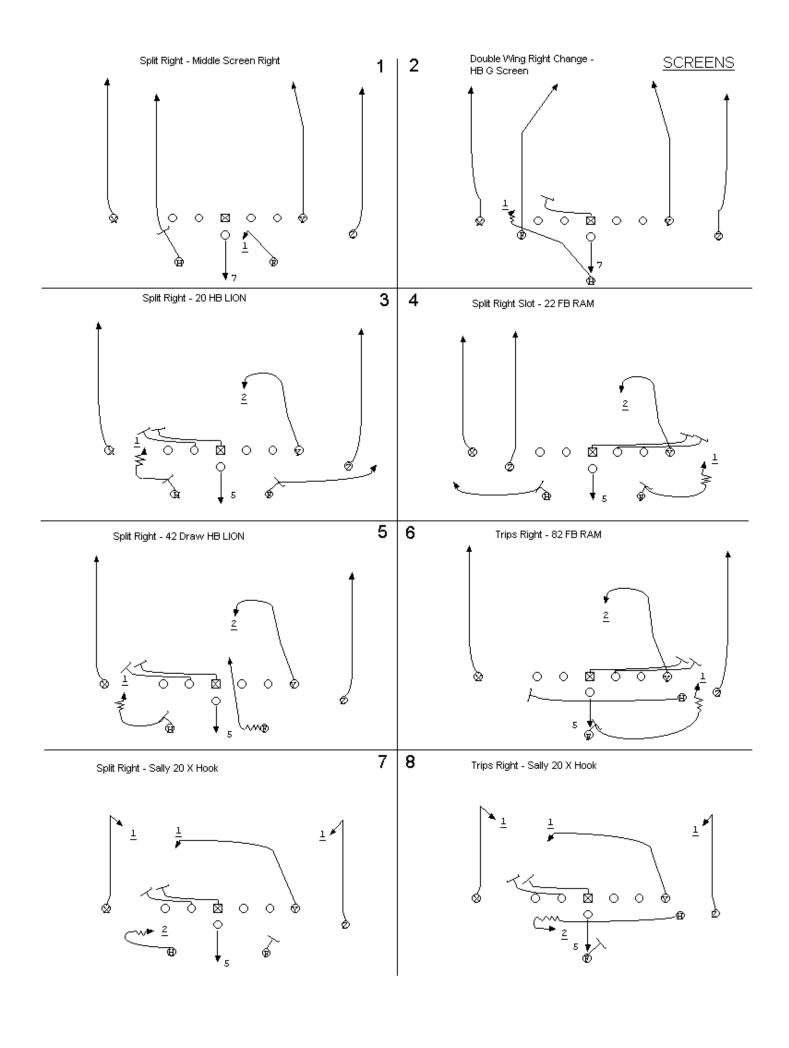


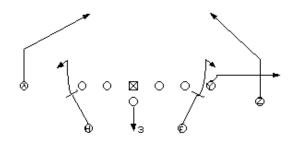






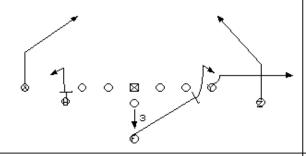


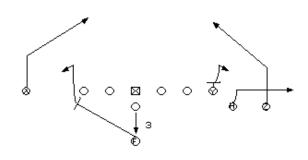




DOUBLE WING RIGHT - AUDIBLE vs Blitz

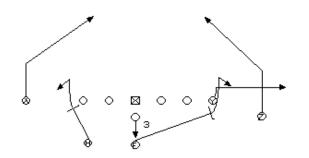
TRIPS RIGHT - AUDBLE vs Blitz

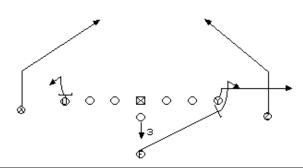




FAR RIGHT - AUDIBLE vs Blitz

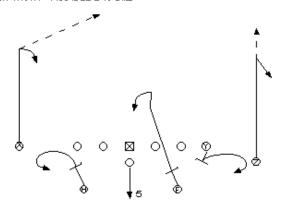
DOUBLES RIGHT - AUDIBLE vs Blitz

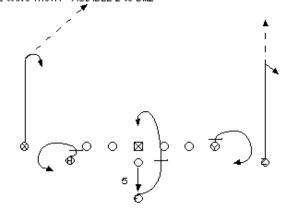




SPLIT RIGHT - AUDIBLE 2 vs Blitz

DOUBLE WING RIGHT - AUDIBLE 2 vs Blitz

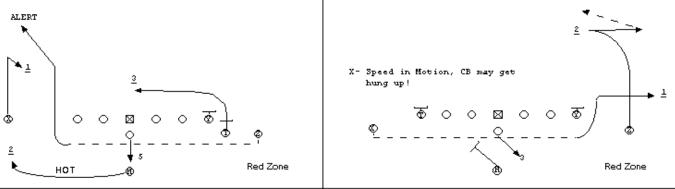




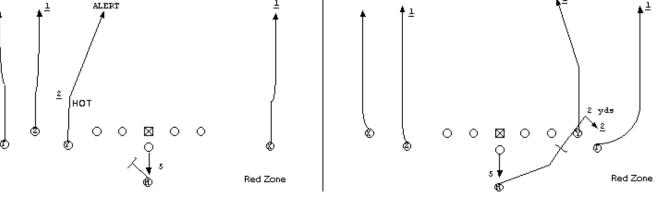
RED ZONE

Red Zone

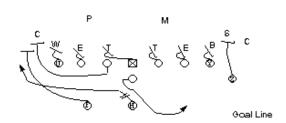
Red Zone

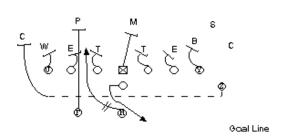






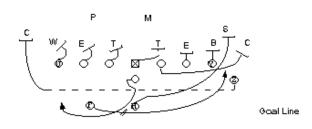
U Far Right 'Z' Left - 65 Lead

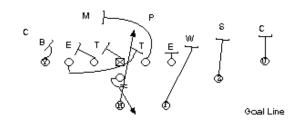




U Far Right 'Z' Left - 16 '6' Lead

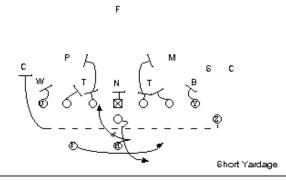
U Far Left Slot - 60 Tackle Trap

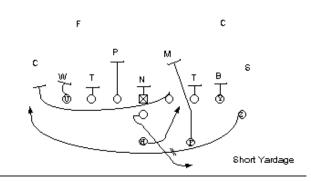




U Far Right 'Z' Left - 93 Counter

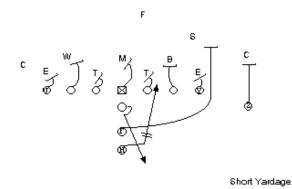
U Near Right -'Z' Around

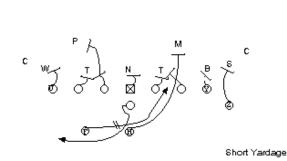


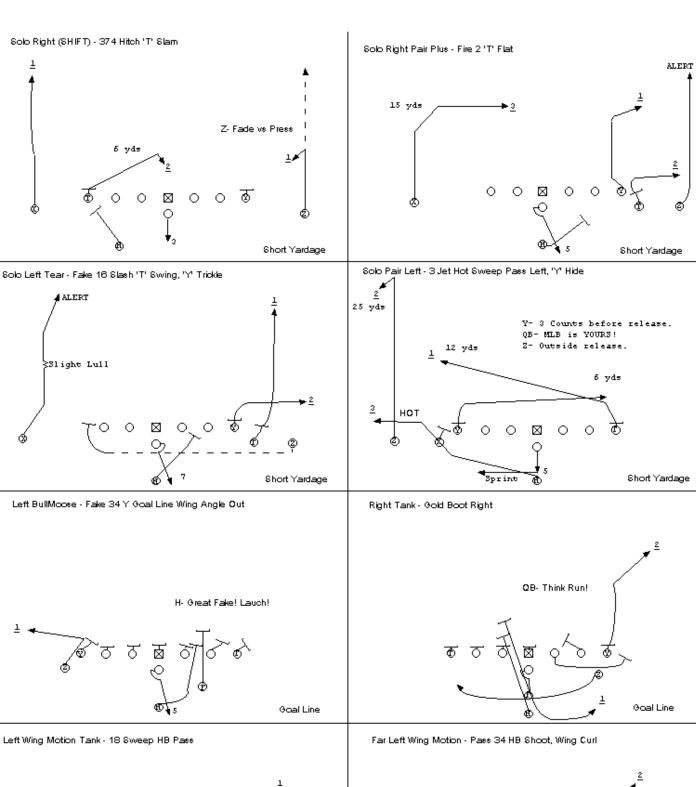


U I Right - 14 Y

U Far Right -14 Lead









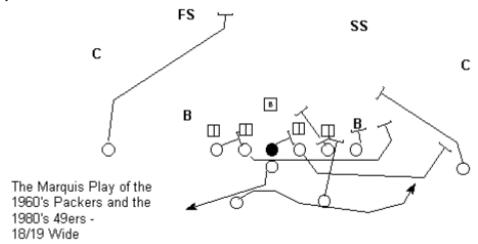
18 / 19 WIDE (THE "LOMBARDI POWER SWEEP") John Anderson

The Power Sweep has long been the Marquis running play for the 49ers, especially since Bill Walsh was the Head Coach. It has allowed the 49er staff to set up numerous play action possibilities.

The Power Sweep has also long been my personal favorite as well. Ever since I began coaching offense, it has been an effective play for us.

In the West Coast Offense, the Sweep play is called "18/19 Wide". It carries the same rules and responsibilities since it was used by Vince Lombardi and the, then, World Champion Green Bay Packers. Walsh believed that he could gain good match-ups on the corner with the sweep, and that it allowed him to dictate some mismatches against some Nickel and Dime defenses that may have been on the field at the time. The Sweep basically is designed to get a Back with good vision on the edge with two quick Offensive linemen in front of him, and to seal the rest of the defense inside. You may have heard Chris Berman of ESPN playfully mocking Lombardi's explanation of the play with his, "Seal here, and a seal here. And we run the ball …through the alley".

Below is the basic diagram for 18/19 Wide.



One of the things that Lombardi and Walsh both liked about this play, was the ability of the play to be executed against any defense, even or odd. And this play was run against virtually every defense imaginable.

The one who makes the decision as to how it is blocked is usually made by the Center. He will make the appropriate call when he examines the defense by checking as to its alignment. If the defense is set up in a 3-4 alignment, he will make an "Odd: call, which is also appropriate versus a "Under" or "Frisco" defense in our terminology. If the defense has aligned in a "Over" defense, or "Ram" defense in our terminology, he will make an "Over" call, and the quarterback will have the option to call an audible, or go with the original call. The "Crowd" call will be explained later.

Here is a quote from the book, "Packer Dynasty", in which Lombardi Explains Vince's view on this play:

"Theoretically, the play is designed to go around end. But, I don't expect it will have to go that far if our linemen do their job properly and our backs learn to watch for daylight. The opening should develop back inside someplace, sometimes considerably inside. It's going to look to some people like a different play every time we use it, But pretty soon they'll be able to recognize it....by watching the official for the first-down signal"

In order for the power sweep to become established as the corner-stone of the ground game, each of the offensive coaches had to study the techniques and prepare to help the veterans as well as the rookies learn much of their trade over again. I was charged with anticipating the reaction of our opponents and advising Vince on adjustments and further innovations. "We may not know any more about football than most of the other coaches in the league," Vince suggested after a particularly exhausting day-long planning session with play charts and the overhead projector. "But if we can put everything we know together so that it makes good basic sense and then drill-drill-drill it into them..." He began straightening the piles of charts, and it appeared he had no intention of completing the thought, when suddenly he jerked his head up to unleash that characteristic grinding smile punctuated at the right corner with a glimmer of gold. "...That kind of coaching, gentlemen, can make winners out of losers".

Now, lets go through the assignments. Keep in mind that the Centers call will also determine the block of the Onside Tackle, and the Fullback as well. I will list what Lombardi's coaching point was for the play, and add some of my points in there as well afterward.

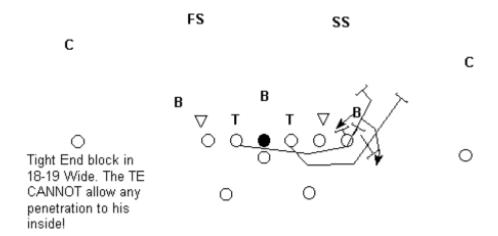
Tight End

Lombardi wanted his Tight End to split from 6-9 feet from the Offensive Tackle. I never really wanted our Tight End to do that because it might tip off the play by is alignment. I told my Tight Ends to align the regular 4-5 feet.

The Tight End is told to get into whoever is covering him and instruct him to do one of two things;

- a) Cut off any inside penetration,
- b) If he chooses to charge hard to the outside, then to simply turn him upfield as if he were a pass rusher and take him out of the play. This would allow the ball carrier to cut inside of him.

Lombardi's Coaching Point: We tell the Tight (Y) End that under no circumstances should he allow penetration to his inside. We do not care how much penetration the defensive man gets to the outside. There is a particular technique which we ask the Y end to use here. We tell him to set up as if he were protecting the passer. We ask him to put his weight on his inside foot, keeping his eyes right on the numbers of his defensive man so that if the defensive man does come quickly to the inside, the Y end, with his weight on the inside foot, can drive that defensive man down the line.



The best case scenario is to seal that defender inside, if the charge of the defender does come outside, we just ask him to wheel block him to the outside, so that the back can come inside. We know through experience that very seldom will the defender try to come directly over the Tight End. About 55% of the time, this play will go inside the block of the Tight End. About half of that, the play will go way back toward the Center.

Onside Offensive Tackle

His responsibility will change with any call by the Center. On an "Even" call, the Tackle drives the man that directly over him. This does NOT count the fact that the defender may be shading his outside shoulder, in which case he drives that defender for an instant to set up the fullback block, and he will then continue on to find the Middle Linebacker to block him.

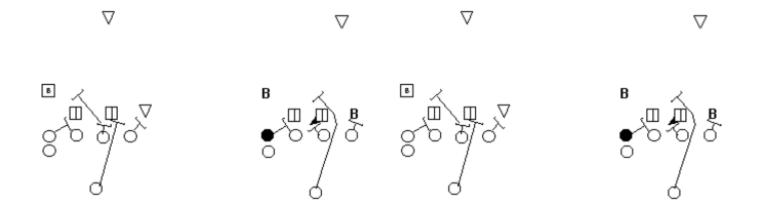
Fullback

The Fullback works in tandem with the Offensive Tackle. He drives the first man outside the Offensive tackle, usually a defensive end. If the Defensive End should charge inside, he will simply go by that End, and continue on to find and seal the Linebacker inside.

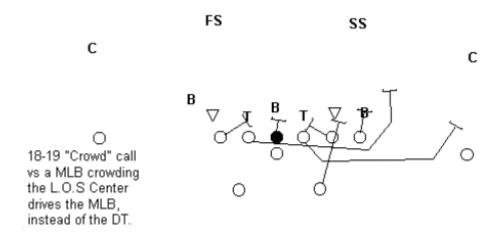
Lombardi's coaching point for the Fullback – The fullback must make a direct attack almost over the outside leg of the offensive tackle. The Fullback drives right at the first man that shows; I mean, the first defensive man the fullback sees. If no one shows, in other words, the defensive end has moved inside the offensive tackle, the fullback seals inside for the middle linebacker.

Lombardi's second coaching point for the Fullback – The fullback is to take a direct approach, a straight-line approach at that defensive end. A very common error that we find even in the professional is that most of the fullbacks try to take a roundabout approach or a circle approach. As a result, the defensive end can make a quick penetration coming way inside the fullback and knocking off the guards. Penetration here by the defensive end is as bad as it is by the outside linebacker. So we ask the fullback to go as fast as he possibly can in a straight approach, a straight line to make his block. In fact, we even tell him, if necessary, to try to cheat upon the line a little-bit, to move up to toward that end before the ball is snapped. We don't care who knows it or sees it. The reason, of course, is so that he can make that block as quickly as possible. Penetration is one thing we do not want on this play.

My Coaching point for the fullback – Cheat up! Cheat up! Then we want him to "Chop" or "Break" the outside leg using his inside shoulder to the thigh pad on his leg. This will either stop him from penetrating or knock him off his legs altogether.



In the case that the Center should make a "Crowd" call, this will affect both the Tackle and Fullback. On a "Crowd" call, even on an even defense, means that the Center feels he cannot make the onside block on the defensive tackle. In this case, he will now make his call "Crowd", making the cutoff block now on the middle linebacker. This informs the onside tackle that he must perform the cutoff block to the inside on the defensive tackle. It also tells the fullback that right now he's got the defensive end.

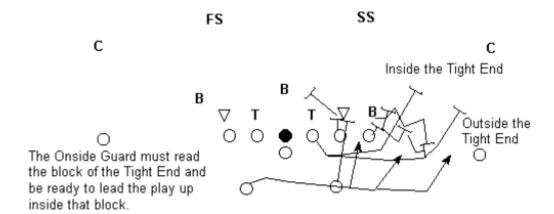


Onside Guard

A rule for the onside guard, or right guard, in this case, is to pull outside and drive the first man outside the block of the tight end. The guard's technique is to pull on a 45 degree angle. His first leg or his lead foot will be at a 45 degree angle as he leaves the line of scrimmage (LOS). He must be aware of the fullback passing in front of him. He allows the fullback to pass in front of him and he quickly pulls behind him. He does this by gaining depth to give the fullback time to get by him.

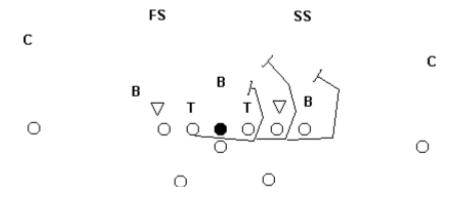
One of the common errors, of course, is that the guard is so quick to pull to get out there that he cuts off the fullbacks block. So, he must come behind the fullback. The fullback comes up in block to the outside of the tackle, and the guard comes behind him. Preferably, we would like for the guard to continue to the outside of the tight ends block. And the reason for this is that it forces the defensive man, the outside linebacker (or man playing outside the tight end) to also continue to the outside. Later on, as the guards become more experienced, we will sometimes allow them the freedom to come inside the block of the tight end and go outside after the block on the Cornerback.

The main thing we want the Guard to do is to drive this man, either upfield, or toward the sideline. If he drives him to the sideline, then I always teach him to play off the defender with his hands, and then as the defender eyes the Back coming toward him, he is to "Cut" him off of his feet. Only twice have I seen a defender get back up to make the tackle once he had been cut, and only then when the play had been bottled up.



Offside Guard

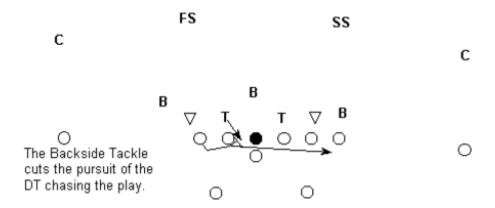
My coaching point for the offside guard position is to pull flat down the LOS. I have seen far too many times in practice and in a game situation where the guard pulled too deep. This caused a tangle of feet with the quarterback, and the play was a disaster. His first step is flat. By flat, I mean he pulls down the LOS. After the guard clears the quarterback, he will pull again to gain depth to clear the pile-up. He continues to look inside and he is instructed to take the first hole of daylight he sees. He will then turn up into that hole and he, too, will seal inside, looking for the defensive pursuit.



Offside Tackle

This position either has the easiest or the most difficult assignment on this play. What he must do is to prevent any kind of plugging by the first man , usually the defensive tackle on the backside of the play. This means that that his technique will be to pull deep. One of the most common errors is to pull too flat. His pull is in direct opposition to the offside guard. If he pulls too flat, the defensive tackle has a great opportunity to in which to pursue the ball carrier because of the opening by the pulling guard. So we ask the offside tackle to is to pull as deep as possible, almost the same technique as onside guard uses in pulling for that cornerback. The deeper the offside tackle pulls, the better his position for this block.

If the defensive tackle were to go in pursuit of the LOS, the offside tackle to take the first hole and seal it just like the offside guard. However, usually what happens is that the defensive tackle comes into the hole to chase the ball carrier from behind: and now we're in position to make the cutoff block on him or to run-up his back, which is perfectly legal since all the action takes place on the LOS. This even includes falling on the back of the defensive tackles leg, which drives them stark raving mad!



Split End (Weakside End)

The Split End, or weakside end, is taught to release for the weakside safety, or just a straight release, and sometimes he may be in a "Near" position which is about 3 - 4 yards from the tackle.

Flanker

The flanker's technique on this play is to drive off the Cornerback back away from the LOS. If the flanker can delay the corner from coming up to meet the play, the better the run will work. So, his technique is to come off the line and to simulate a pass so as to drive the Cornerback back.

The flanker must be aware of the position of the near safety as well. If the safety comes up hard to stop the run, the flanker will have to break off the fake and take on the safety, and seal him from forcing the play outside.

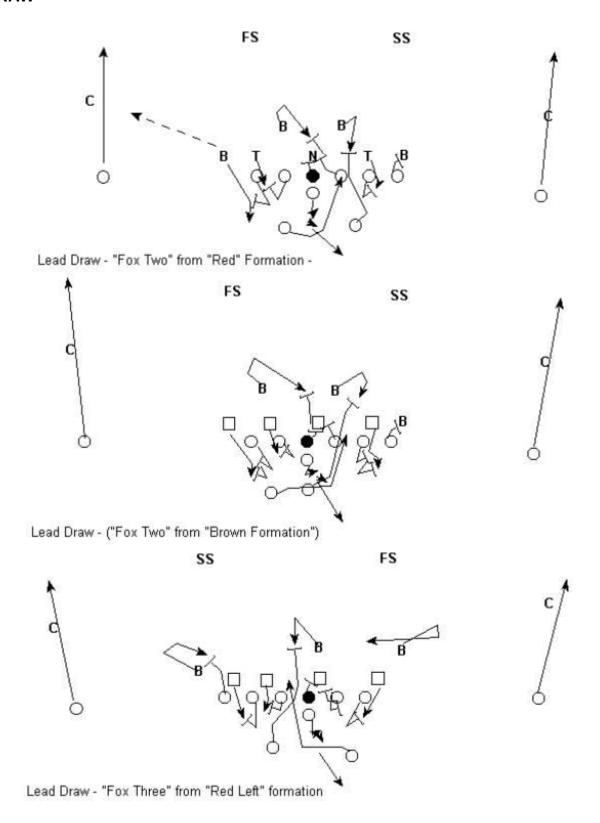
Running Back

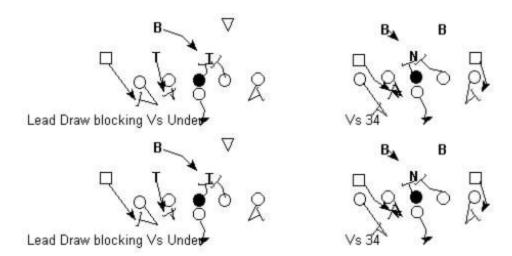
The running back for this play must have good balance and good vision to effectively run this play. He comes forward at the snap and received the handoff, and bows his path out just as the pulling guards do. This gives him depth to effectively read the play and react to find the proper course.

Quarterback

The quarterback open pivots to handoff the ball to the running back. After he executes the handoff, he must carry out his fake and speed out to the sideline. This may draw the containment in his direction. If he continuously breaks containment, then this will set up the reverse, the bootleg, and the FB slide pass.

So, in conclusion, this play became the focal point in which the Packers under Lombardi, and the 49ers under Walsh, depended upon in which to execute the running game. The Power Sweep was so variable, and so effective, that it was copied by nearly every team in the league. Lombardi's new type of co-operative blocking scheme is now common place in the playbook of every team trying to run a complex professional style scheme.





THE "TEXAS" CONCEPT IN THE WEST COAST OFFENSE M. Soliman and J. Hillebrand

In the San Francisco and the Green Bay Offense, the main goal, philosophically is to control and move the ball on a consistent and orderly basis using the forward pass in an intelligent manner. By placing an emphasis on ball control, it is then required for such passes to be very reliable regardless of the variation of defensive coverage. In this offense the pass exemplifies the ball control high percentage philosophy such as that of a running offense. The west coast offense uses the pass as it would a run, making it a high percentage offense. This offense can execute against any defense if you just be patient, and pay attention to the details in the coaching of this offense. One of the main concepts in this offense was the Texas concept. This concept is a delay that takes advantage of drops and holes within the hash.

This concept was made famous by the Green Bay Packers and Mike Holmgren. Holmgren and the Packers used this play exclusively against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers throughout Holmgren's stay with the Packers. The reason this play was made famous vs. the Buccaneers was because of the coverages they ran, cover two and cover four. These are the main coverages for which this concept was developed. But it was successful against the Buccaneers for another reason, the use of their middle linebacker. The Buccaneers defense was mainly cover two, but with a twist. From film study the middle linebacker would drop right away to a depth of about 15 - 17yds deep, essentially playing a "robber" position. The other linebackers had the usual hook zone to defend, leaving the middle open for the Packers. Holmgren found this hole and exploited it with precision, gaining five to seven yards a pop when running 'Texas'.

Basic Rules of 'Texas':

Playside:

#1 Receiver (usually Z) - Run a hook pivoting at 12yds

#2 Receiver (usually Y or slot WR) - Take an inside release run a post/seam route breaking at 10yds

#3 Receiver (usually FB) - Run a Texas route driving to a point 3yds outside the tackle and breaking inside at a 45 degree angle

Backside:

#1 Receiver (usually X) - Run a go route clearing the outside

#2 Receiver can run a variety of routes depending on the Pass Protection scheme, (usually in "22/23" Protection scheme is a base BOB Big-On-Big with a Scat Back (the playside #3 Texas) the opposite back (assuming its split back) will read the Will and then release on a swing.) *Note; Bill Walsh had the HB curl up on a hook.

Cover 2:

In cover two supposedly, strength of the coverage is delaying the receivers and funneling them inside to the waiting linebackers and safeties. This coverage is one that Bill Walsh thought of his chief zone opponent, and one he worked long and hard against to defeat. The main rules of cover two are the safeties align on or outside their hash and have any deep responsibility to that side. Cornerbacks will play a hard press technique with their eyes peaking into the backfield, they have flat responsibility. The main job though of the cornerback is to delay the receiver coming off the line, and force him to the inside. Outside linebackers have hook responsibility that is they open to the outside and drop at a 45 degree angle taking away the hook pass. The middle linebacker drops back to a depth of about

ten to twelve yards and has the middle of the field taking away any cross by the tight end or 'Z' receiver.

Cover 4:

The pre-snap alignment of cover two and four look almost exactly alike which make it tough to read pre - snap. But to read it pre -snap a key is the alignment of the free safety, is he on or outside the hash? If he is outside then you can read it as cover two, if he is on the hash you can read it as cover four. To get a read on it post - snap the quarterback will key the strong side linebacker and his movement. If he moves horizontal its cover four, if he opens his hips outside its cover two. Now in cover four the coverage responsibilities are different, but look like cover two. The FS is now reading the #2 receiver to his side, if #2 goes flat then he doubles the #1 receiver. If #2 comes vertical then he has #2 man to man. The same is for the SS if #2 goes vertical he has him man to man, he crosses over the middle he lets him go. The outside linebackers have flat responsibility and rush to the flat at the snap. The middle linebacker walls off anything in the middle, essentially he is a "lurk" defender on the quarterback. The corner backs have their receivers man to man.

Quarterback read:

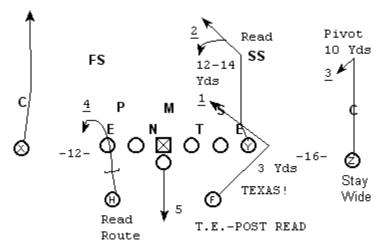
The quarterback's read on Texas is the middle linebacker, he goes opposite of his movement. Or key his shoulders. If the middle linebacker's shoulders open then the quarterback should look for the fullback. If the middle linebacker drops straight back leaving his shoulders square then the quarterback should look for the tight end. The quarterback's drop is five big steps and hold. The quarterback's progression is F, Y, Z, H.

Attacking cover 2: Red Right 22 Texas

This concept wants to stretch the zone of the linebackers in this coverage, and force "dead" areas for the receivers to run to. The main formation of this play is split back (Red) set. Now in a Red Right (TE aligned right) v. a 43 cover two concept, this play is tough to stop.

Let's go through the routes, the Z runs a In route at ten yards, and on this pattern the In route must be run with great precision. Against a Cloud (Rolled) corner, he releases into the defender's technique, pushes off, and runs at a slight angle to his depth and turns in. If he encounters a rolled corner, he must think its zone so when he makes his In cut, he must find the seam in the zone and get in the view of the quarterback's eyes with maneuvering. The tight end takes an inside release off the LOS and runs a 10yd post / seam route just inside the safety over him. But the main coaching point is you want him to release clearly, he can't be held up at the LOS! As the tight end pushes vertically up field he wants to get great arm drive and threaten the strong safety deep. Key point for the tight end is to get his head around quickly to the quarterback. He is on a seam route and should be ready to get the ball quickly in stride for a big play. The fullback runs the Texas route wanting to get underneath the linebackers drops. Backside the halfback will read the weak side linebacker and then release on a swing, and the X is clearing out with a go route. Bill Walsh in his version of "Texas" had the HB curl up on a hook route; I believe he did this for two reasons:

- a) Keep the rules simple as in "HB Curl" the FB would run a hook and the HB would run the angle in route.
- b) To keep the weak side linebacker (plugger) from coming back inside.



RED RIGHT 22 TEXAS

Attacking cover 2: Red Right Open Slot 22 Texas

The next formation 'Texas' is effective from is 'Red Right Open Slot.' The only new adjustment in this formation is that now the tight end is split outside at a distance of five to six yards from the tackle. This gives the offense an advantage if you have a big tight end that be a force over the middle, and become a big target. Second it makes the quarterback read a little easier by opening up the "dead" zones in the defense. And third this formation is a essential part of other plays in the offense such as we can run the smash concept, or sprint right option from this set. The new coaching point with this formation is the release of the tight end. Since now he is in a split position he has a little more room to maneuver, but the defense has more room to bump him. Coaching point here, the tight end must not be held up at the line of scrimmage he is a MUST GET OFF! You still want him to take an inside release depending on what the linebacker does over him. If he is playing press then the tight end can use anymore he wants to get by him, shuffle, rip, swim, or just drive at the defender. If he drives at the defender he should take a slight angle inside and rubbing off the linebackers inside shoulder. If the linebacker is playing off the tight end uses the same drive technique, he wants to get and inside release and rub on the linebackers inside shoulder. Once he clears the linebacker's depth he needs to get his head around quickly to the quarterback. As stated before this formation opens up the "dead" areas in the zone, creating passing lanes for the quarterback. Since the tight end is split at five to six yards we have created a natural lane for the quarterback to throw too, between the middle linebacker (MIKE) and strong side linebacker (SAM).

Quarterback read:

The quarterback read is still the middle or MIKE linebacker. Quarterback reads his shoulders and goes opposite of them. In the slot formation the quarterback's read gets a little easier and now he has a better throwing lane to the seam / post route. The quarterback when he sees the lane to the tight end needs to hitch up and fire the ball on rope through the window of the SAM and MIKE. The quarterback should never throw over a defender, for risk of an interception or deflection. (Advanced) Coaching Point TE: Read middle of field (MOF); if open run a post route, or settle over the playside guard at a depth of 12 - 14 yards make yourself and big target; if closed run seam route and look for the ball quickly.

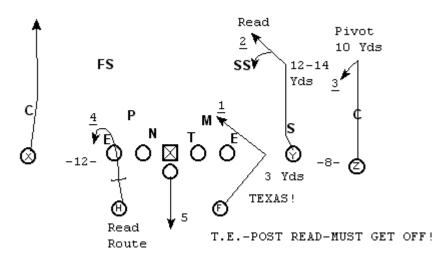
Attacking cover 4: Red Right Open Slot 22 Texas

Versus cover two 'Red Right Open Slot' is another way to get a good match up against the defense. You can get a mismatch with a linebacker pressing your tight end. And you can get a good mismatch on the strong safety (SS) because he is now playing the tight end man for man and is in chase mode. The key for the tight end is again is his release; he must get off the LOS! Since it is cover four he shouldn't have much of a problem because of the outside linebackers rushing to the flats. As the tight end releases vertical he wants to get great arm drive and press hard at the SS, staring at point on his

helmets to make him freeze for a split second. Since its man to man you want to make sure that the tight end understands that now he can't settle over the guard, he must keep running the seam. But if you have a big enough tight end and a strong arm quarterback who feels confident he can try it, but in practice first! Now the MIKE linebacker will tend to drift towards the TE because of the threat of him coming over the top. This opens the underneath for the fullback and the 'Texas'. Now is where I think the halfback hooking up backside is useful. Since the WHIP is running to the flats the halfback is check releasing to a hook route. He flares up to about three or four yards and settles in the "grass" left by the vacating WHIP, this is a good check down throw for the quarterback if they keep giving it to you.

Quarterback read:

As usual it is the same read for the quarterback the MIKE's shoulders, go opposite of them. I have seen teams game plan 'Texas' by telling the MIKE if he sees the TE go vertical to jump the FB right away. There are a few things you can do to defeat this. One you can tell the TE to settle and find a area between the MIKE and SAM, and make himself a big target for the quarterback. Second we will go to '22 Texas Y Cross' now the TE is crossing over the ball at 10 - 12 yards looking for a zone to sit in. The Z receiver is now running a post route trying to smoke the cornerback for a big gain.



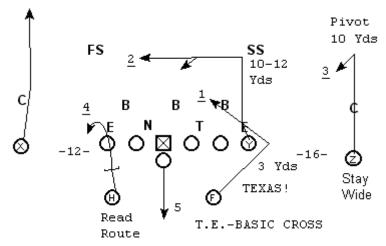
RED RIGHT OPEN SLOT 22 TEXAS

Variations of 'Texas':

Red Right 22 Texas 'Y' Cross:

The main variation of 'Texas' is '22 Texas Y Cross', now the TE instead of running his post / seam pattern he will run a basic cross at 10yds. He will take his usual inside release and drive up field with great arm drive. At 10yds he wants to plant with his outside foot and cross over the ball. If he sees zone coverage with the linebackers the TE will find open "grass" between them and throttle downs his speed. He then turns to the QB and makes eye contact with him, letting him know he is open. Against man to man coverage the TE must make a great break, he should shake one way and go the other. The TE should make himself a big target over the middle on this play; he needs recognize zone/man coverage. For this we tell him to watch if the linebacker over if he opens and drops its zone, if he backpedals it's man to man. And we drill this into the TE during 7 on 7 or any other passing drill. Now the only one other route changes and that is that now the Z will run a 10yd post route wanting to smoke the safety.

The QB still has the same read the MIKE linebacker, but what makes this play so successful is its use vs. cover four. This play picks on the MLB as to what he is going to do, will he sit for the FB or will he drop and take away the cross? Whatever the MLB does he is wrong.



RED RIGHT 22 TEXAS 'Y' CROSS

Strong Right Z Close 2 Jet Z Drive Texas / Brown Right Slot (A Right) 2 Jet Z Drive Texas:

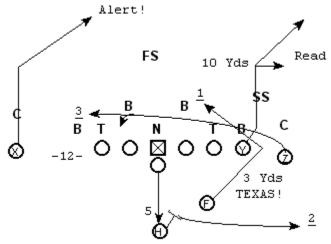
While the basic "Texas" Package with its multiple front side options presents answers against nearly all standard coverages, an excellent adjustment to this base play is to infuse another highly effective west coast concept: the "Drive". In a drive concept, we are allowing the 'X' or 'Z' receiver on either side to be aided by a "pick" by the TE for the purposes of cleanly and clearly driving across the field, uninhindered by the coverage man and driving into an area while the linebackers are chasing into the opposite area via the backfield flow and protection scheme. Similarly, the opposite #1 receiver runs either a Post or Fly pattern to clear out the underneath area and attempt to influence the safety to his route and not the underneath dragging pattern. Against Man Under defenses, this concept is extremely effective.

While there are multiple variations to both the Texas and Drive plays, for the purposes of this treatise, I will focus on Flanker Drive Texas. These plays, in the opinion of this author, are probably among the handful of best ball control passes I have ever seen. In both an X Drive and Flanker Drive Texas, we are incorporating a delay route (Texas) to attack zone coverage drops within the hashes, and an TE Option route to take advantages of the weakness outside the hashes. Against man under we go with the drive pattern off the pick. As a secondary route against Man the Delay is also effective.

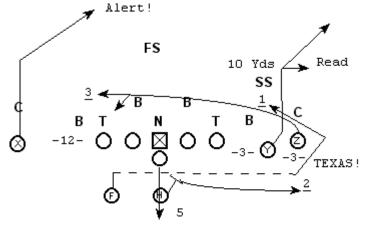
Let us look at Flanker (Z) Drive Texas. A common formation used for this effective pass play is Strong Right, (Offset I to the Strong Side). Usually we would use a Z Short motion (not across the field, but rather to a point about 2 feet by 2 feet outside of the Tight End. On the Snap the Tight End, which would be the number two receiver on the play side in this play takes an Outside release. This is very important because it allows for the Z to slip under the outside release, and cross through across the field without having to beat, or stem the defender at the LOS in any way. The Z drives across the field at a depth of 4-6 yards and stays under the Linebackers. If the Linebackers are chasing laterally to the Strong side, the Z continues dragging across and begins to look back at the Quarterback. If the linebackers drop into Zone, the Z finds the open area just inside the numbers and "sits down" pivoting and showing the QB his numbers. The TE, after taking his outside release (and aiming his release directly at a 45 degree angle thus blocking the Corner from chasing), finds and bursts up the hash giving his defender the impression of a post. At 10 yards, the TE reads the area between the hashes, if the Middle is Open, he presses inside then cuts back and out to a Corner Route, driving into the open grass outside of the hash at a 45 degree angle after creating the initial separation from his move. Usually this situation would mean the coverage would be a two deep man under coverage, a man-blitz coverage, or a two deep zone coverage. The Corner route is effective against all three. If the Middle is closed, however, the TE curls to the outside of the hash and finds the underneath seam. Usually, in Middle Closed situations, the defense is playing a version of the three deep four under zone. The FB, who is offset in this formation, runs the Texas Delay route aiming for an area outside of the TE of three yards at the maximum, as if to sell the Flat. Similarly, it is imperative for the FB run his initial shoot pattern past the crossing Z receiver in order to get the Middle linebacker to be chasing strongly in a lateral direction. At a depth of three yards outside the TE, while selling the Shoot/Flat, the FB should plant for one count and then cut inside to the open area. Against Zone, the FB after planting and reading hits the window, against man, he accelerates back inside the hash to the open area vacated by the linebackers chasing laterally in the strong side direction. The HB, who is directly behind the quarterback, plays an important role in the protection of this play. In this play we use 2 Jet protection, (A Six man blocking scheme that uses slide protection opposite the strong side). While the Texas route runner, (the FB in this case) has scat, or no pass block responsibility, the HB checks from MIKE to SAM and then releases on a swing route strong side. Thus, the WHIP and MIKE backers are both chasing strong side on the Delay (appearance of an initial shoot) and the checkswing route. The X in this play runs a Post at 10 yards, to which he must attack the FS and bar him from jumping on the Drive route. The X also clears out the Weak side corner and against a man-blitz, this Post serves the purpose of being a Safety blitz beater.

For the first two steps the QB looks straight down the field disguising his read as not to immediately tip off defenders and allow them to get an early jump on the ball. An added advantage of this "lookoff" is that our read in this play, linebacker movement to middle of field allows the quarterback to both engage in a look off procedure as well as get the basic reads uninhindered of the linebacker lateral or vertical motion and safety rotation simultaneously because he does not have, a corner, or specific safety read (in some cases, with "Smash" passes for example, quarterbacks often turn and read a corner or slide their shoulders and projection to a 45 degree angle reading for example, exclusively SS or FS movement). The QB drop on this play is 5 BIG (5, step up and throw). The read is MIKE Linebacker to Middle of Field. If the linebackers chase strong side laterally, its man underneath and the Z driving across will be open for a big play. If the MIKE drops back weak (it is probably a version of three deep), however, just to be sure, whenever the MIKE is dropping back, read the middle. If the Middle is open, you have the Y Corner attacking the opening outside the hash between the Deep half safety and rolled corner, and you have the delay inside the hash attacking the window. Against a closed middle (three deep variation), you have the inside delay and the outside curl pattern by the Y attacking the seam between the Hook/Curl backer and Hook/Flat Safety. This is an excellent play and a great tag for the basic Texas play.

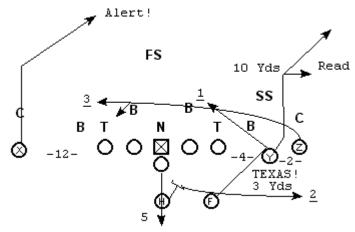
This Texas/ Drive variation can be run from a multitude of formations. For example, the Z receiver can be brought across in a slot formation and you can run an X Drive Texas utilizing the HB as the delaying player and the Y(who can be split wide) as the clearing out receiver with the Post. Similarly, the OL scheme would be Slide Protection to the other side.



STRONG RIGHT Z CLOSE 2 JET 'Z' DRIVE TEXAS



BROWN RIGHT SLOT 'A' RIGHT 2 JET 'Z' DRIVE TEXAS



BLUE RIGHT SLOT 2 JET 'Z' DRIVE TEXAS

In sum, however, Texas as a concept can be used in multiple ways allowing for adjustments like this to change and enhance the personality of an already effective base play. Using proven ball control passing schemes, adding effective adjustments from other useful base passes, and accounting for multiple coverages are essential in creation of successful drives using the West Coast Offense.

"Z - IN" John Anderson

Every Coach has a play that they "Hang their hat on". It's the basis for each coaches individual philosophy. There is, at some, moment in every game that is so crucial that the coach will fall back on what he feels will be his best play depending on his personnel, and on his scheme. That Coach will put his faith on the execution of that single play in that critical space in time. I know I have relied on a single play at times. Lombardi relied on the execution of his "Power Sweep" as many as 15-18 times a game, with phenomenal results. Switzer relied on the triple option, and MacPherson used the "Freeze Option".

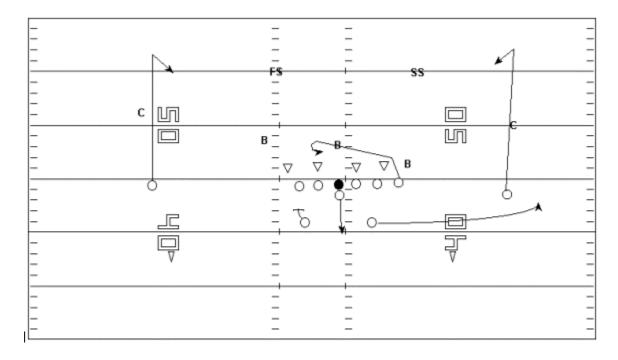
In the case of the West Coast Offense (WCO), Bill Walsh, Mike Holmgren, Mike Shanahan, among others, all applied their fortunes on plays they had confidence in. The WCO was originally designed to defeat Two Deep & Three Deep Zone coverages. These were the predominate coverages of that time period. Walsh had originally developed plays that would breakdown these two coverage groups. But, as defenses changed & and became more complex, the WCO had to adapt as well. Not since the advent of the Single wing, the "T" formation, and the Wishbone had a style of offense created so many problems for defenses.

One play that I have seen over and over again is one that Walsh introduced back at the beginning. Holmgren and Shanahan have both used this play and have introduced different formations and personnel packages to disguise it with.

The subject of this article is known as "22 - Z IN" or also "Z IN". This play embodies all that the WCO incorporates. The timed pass routes, timed drops, flexible blocking schemes, and the repetition that is evident in the "Bread & Butter" pass pattern.

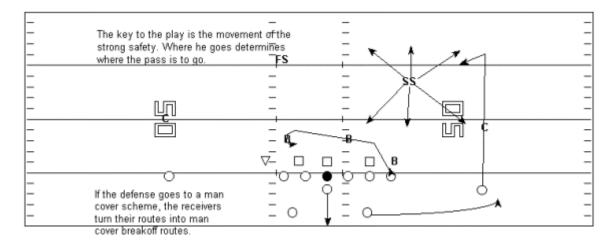
"22 - Z IN" was designed for the Running Backs to get to the corner versus the slower Linebackers. It developed into putting their athletic Wide Receivers on hook routes versus Zone and Man coverages.

According to Walsh, Sid Gillman may have developed this route some time ago, but the reads may be somewhat different in the route is executed.



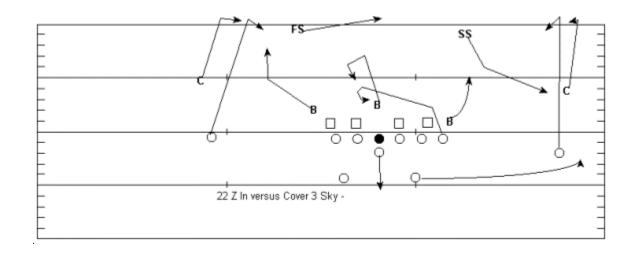
The play is designed to key the Strong Safety, and take advantage of his reactions. By keying on the Strong Safety, Gillman and Walsh felt that the integrity of the Zone Defenses could be exploited due to the fact that the Defense couldn't be strong everywhere.

If the Strong Safety drops back in Two Deep zone coverage, then the offense would make an adjustment to the route to take advantage of what the defense was giving them as a direct result of holes in Zone coverages. If he comes up into the flat to take away the Fullback, then he leaves a hole behind him to the Flanker. So, it's this mindset that the WCO operates under.



As I mentioned before, the WCO was designed to defeat the concepts of Cover Two and Cover Three. Versus Cover Three, the Flanker has more room I which to work with, but he needs to utilize the inside position that most Cover Three defenses provide. Most Cover Three schemes will tell their Corners to funnel their receivers to the middle of the field where they have Safety help. On 22 Z In, the Tight End is the secondary receiver, and is the shortest throw for the Quarterback to make. This pass will generally be made as the Linebackers or Safety has left their short zone responsibilities to take away the Hook route.

The Tight End executes his crossing route at 4-5 yards, and comes to a stationary position over the backside Guard. If he has a defender on his shoulder, the Tight End is instructed to execute a "Spot" or "Whip" route. This instructs him to collision and turns a 180 degree turn to front side of the play. This is so that he can derive separation from his defender.



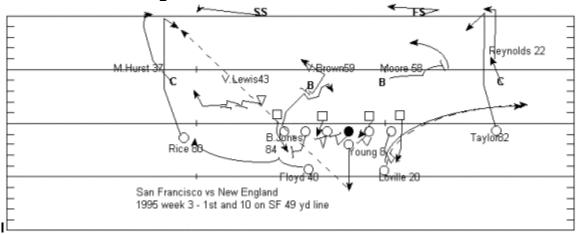
In 22 Z In, the Running Back (FB) is the safety valve in any check down type of pattern in the West Coast Offense. The FB executes a "Wide" route that takes him outside the numbers, where he can catch the ball at the line of scrimmage, but never more than two yards past the Line of Scrimmage. The ball should be thrown at a point 12 inches in front of his numbers, so that the FB can catch the ball in stride and not have to slow down to catch the ball. This will result in more cases than not, give him the opportunity to pick up more yardage after the catch. What the FB is taught is to go for sideline, because this area of the field will be "Soft" anyway. He is taught to take it down the sideline for yardage after the catch. The theory is so that the defenses are dropping to take away the Hook route, and the "Spot" route by the Tight End, and there will be a crease at the sideline for additional yardage opportunities.

When 22 Z In is run against Man or Combination coverages, the routes will be adjusted to take advantage of the coverages. For Example, the Flanker will not run a hook, unless specified, but will run an out route at 12 yards or run his pattern across the field. This follows the principle of "settling in Zone coverage and running away from Man coverage".

The Quarterback will execute a five step drop and a hitch step to settle himself and make his throw. His mind must be made up as his fifth foot hits the ground. I have seen a number of times in the past where Joe Montana, Steve Young, Brett Favre, and Elvis Grbac, have sat in the pocket waiting for someone to come open, and turn and fire without looking to the Running Back in the flat, without looking at him first. They all know where they are supposed to be, this is drilled on countless times in practice.

In speaking of knowing where you are supposed to be, there is something to be said of having knowledge of coverages, and how your route will need to be adjusted to the coverage in question. On our next diagram we will see how WR Jerry Rice adjusts his route to the coverage.

23 Z in versus Cover 2 Coverage



The New England Patriots are playing a Cover Two Zone out of their Nickel Personnel package. Rice and QB Steve Young both see this by their pre-snap reads, that it will be a Cover Two Zone (Or Two deep zone coverage). Rice will adjust his route to the defense. In Cover Two Zone, the Corners are taught to keep outside position and force the receiver to go inside into his help, which in this case is the Safety in Two deep coverage. Rice knows this, and reacts accordingly.

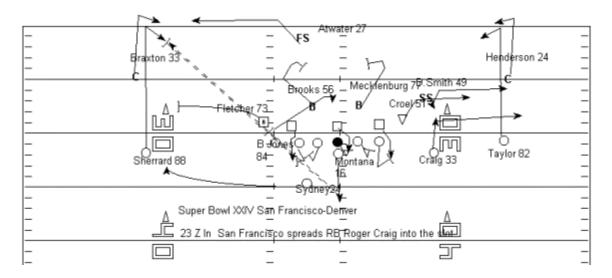
His adjustment calls for him to drive hard outside, aiming for the outside shoulder of the Corner, and driving him outside to keep his outside position. This adjustment does two important things:

(a) It provides more room for his inside curl in the area of the zone being attacked

(b) Moves him away from the Safety who is responsible for the for the receivers inside breaks on this inside-outside coverage.

And, what's more important is that it gives the quarterback more room, and a better path to throw the ball on timing.

Bill Walsh, Mike Holmgren, and Mike Shanahan, all took a number of plays and them to spread formations to help disguise their intentions. This play is no exception.

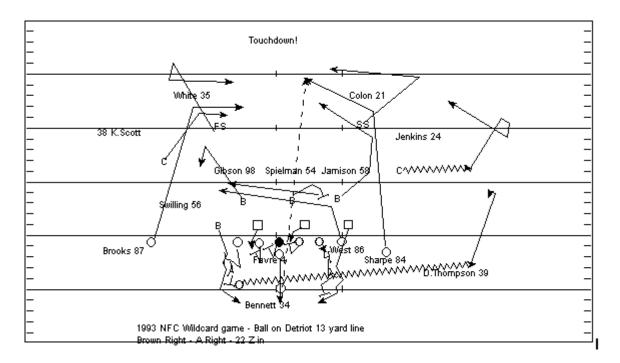


The 49ers line up RB Roger Craig in the slot, inside of WR John Taylor. QB Joe Montana sees Free Safety Steve Atwater in the middle of the field, giving a pre-snap read of Cover 3, with both Corners in outside technique, 6-7 yards off the line of scrimmage. Montana will flawlessly read the coverage, and make the proper throw. A throw he has made thousands of times in practice.

LB Simon Fletcher releases flat to cover RB Harry Sydney, and the ball is in the air, even before CB Tyrone Braxton has turned around to make any effort to defend the pass. LB Michael Brooks was taken up by the route of the Tight End, and F/S Steve Atwater is simply too far away to give any help to Braxton. The Cover 3 Zone structure cannot defend this route without giving the Corner any help. The Niners ran this route all day from different formations, and won big!

Another variation for the 22/23 Z in route, is to motion a back to the side of the call, or even pre-set him outside the tight alignment of the WR. This is done by initially aligning the WR to a spot four yards outside the alignment of the Tight End, and off the line of scrimmage. The play gives the options of either motioning the RB out to the numbers, or presetting him there by alignment. What this does is to allow the RB to all ready be in position for the valve pass, while he runs a four yard stop route.

What the WCO looks for here, is to see if the defense will bump a defensive Back out to cover the RB, and if they do, it may open an opportunity to provide for a mismatch with the Tight End inside or the Wide Receiver. If a mismatch can be found by the WR on a linebacker or on a Strong Safety, then the purpose will be to take advantage of the mismatch.



The Packers send RB Darryl Thompson (39) in motion to the wide side of the field, and outside of the alignment of WR Sterling Sharpe. This gives the effect of a pre-alignment, and gives a slightly different dimension to the appearance of the play. The Packers by film study and by game planning know that the Lions defense will account for the extra receiver outside by "Bumping" the CB Melvin Jenkins outside to cover the Running Back. This puts Sharpe on Strong Safety Harry Colon (21) and giving underneath help by LB George Jamison. This adjustment by the Lions also sets LB Chris Spielman (54) on Tight End Ed West. Looking to the Weakside of the formation, WR Robert Brooks (87) is across from CB Kevin Scott (38). Scott is in inside technique on Brooks, and aligned 7 yards deep off the line of scrimmage.

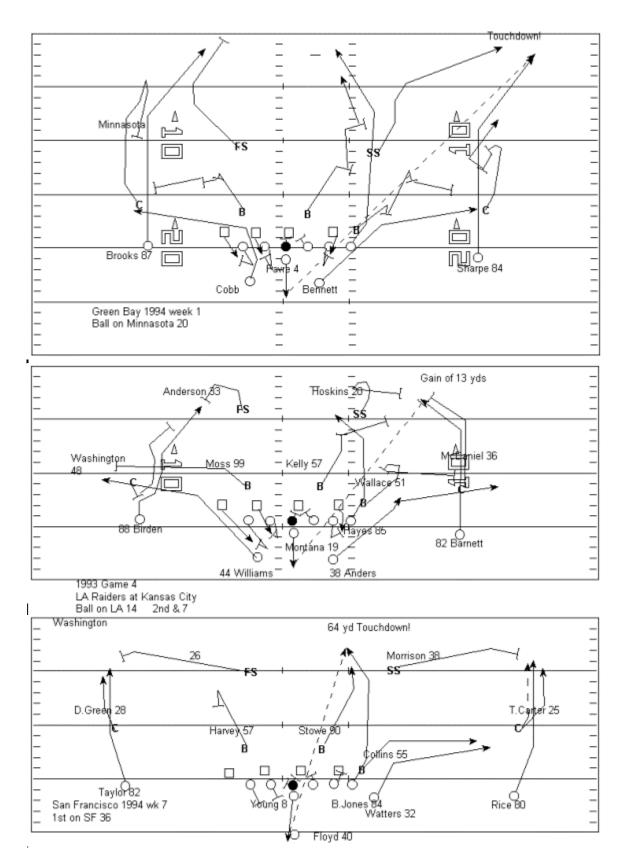
You will see that the backside receiver is directed to get inside position on the CB, He must drive on the inside shoulder, and try to get inside position, and then hook up at 12 yards. But since Scott is in tight coverage, Brooks converts his route into a crossing route trying to come open.

At the snap, on the front side of the play, CB Melvin Jenkins sits on the stop route by Thompson, effectively covering him. WR Sterling Sharpe will bend his route in the middle of Cover Two, trying to angle into the seam in between the Safeties. Safety Harry Colon backpedals into his deep half zone responsibility, and spreads outside too far. This is the classic weakness of the Two Deep Zone. LB George Jamison is in tight "Trail" technique, covering Sharpe underneath and attempting to force him into the deep Safety. But Sharpe is just too fast. Sharpe will get behind Jamison and inside Colon, and score from 13 yards out.

Tags

Tags are routes that notify a player that he is to execute another assignment and disregard his original assignment.

An example would be to instruct the Running Back to run a shoot route instead of the wide route on this pattern. So the call is now "22 Z-IN, FB Shoot".



We see that there are times when the rules for the route are adjusted to fit the situation. Here we see the Tight End adjusting his route to settle down in the underneath seams in the short zones. I have seen on one occasion where the Tight End comes off the ball immediately looking for the ball in the midst of a blitz, this one that was game- planned and executed well, obviously as a result of film study.

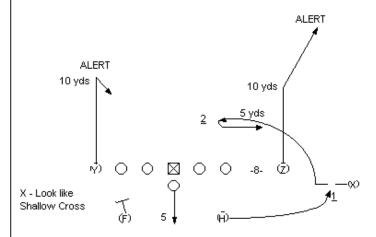
In Conclusion – the flexibility that comes with the offense is one that is done by design. It has rules for everyone on the field, and what they must do in certain situations. Recognition and adjustments are the keys to success when defenses give you different looks. The addition of alternate routes by use of "tags" allows even greater flexibility in attacking various defenses.

"SPOT" ROUTE IN THE RED ZONE

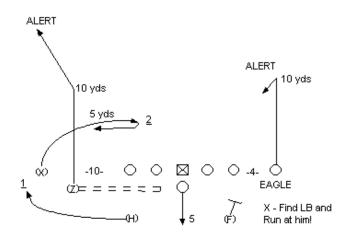
ALERT ALERT 10 yds 5 yds 2 -10 10 yds X - Find LB and Run at him!

RED RIGHT SLOT - 20 'X' SPOT HB SWAY

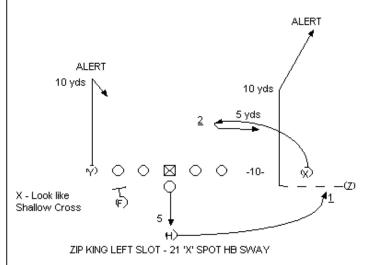
X & Z SPOT

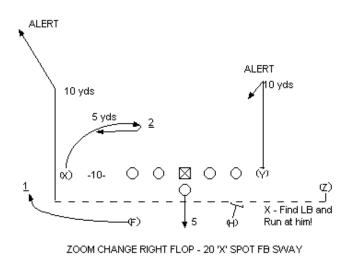


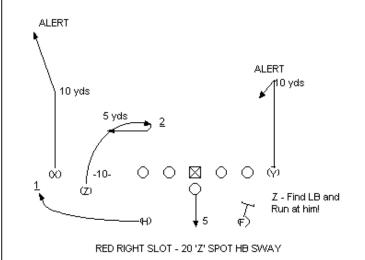
RED LEFT SLOT 'X' SHORT - 21 'X' SPOT HB SWAY



ZIP ZAP RED RIGHT OPEN SLOT - 20 'X' SPOT HB SWAY (EAGLE)







We all have seen the "Spot" pass from the "Bunch" sets in the past. But, let's look at this same route concept from another perspective using formation and motion variations. By changing the formations, and disguising the intentions, we will see how to use the same play again and again with a little window dressing.

Scoring in the Red Zone

The 49er offense going back to Bill Walsh has always been an offense that was built on the timed passing game and on the ability, and techniques of the receivers to gain separation from the defenders. The Quarterbacks in the offense work constantly on throwing passes in rhythm to a spot on the field.

Rules in the "Spot" Concept

- X Corner at 12 yards; adjust in Red Zone to the Out route. Inside break and bend against Zone. Try to gain the outside edge against the rotating Safety. If the Corner drops in Cover 2, try to occupy him. Crack on inside-out pursuit.
- Z Spot at 3-4 yard deep, trying to first impede next defender inside, or whip around to find the seam. Against man coverage, try to impede, and whip hard.
- RB Swing route, expect ball over inside shoulder, turn up the sideline for additional RAC. You are the "Hot" receiver. Expect the ball as you reach the numbers.
- QB Five quick steps, Key two outside defenders, this will tell you where to throw the ball. Example corner up, safety inside. Read Spot through the Corner, and be ready to throw hot. This is a Front/Back read, if the Corner drops back and the pick takes place this will leave the RB open. If the front/back option is closed, then the third option may be that the Slot WR could come clean inside as he comes across the QB's face. (See examples below). The QB must be accurate with the football, due to the decreased amount of space in which to work.

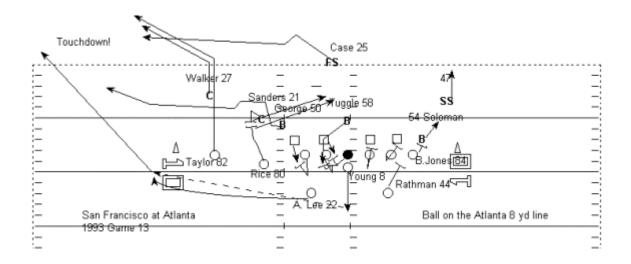
The advantages are good with this scheme. Though, the QB doesn't provide excellent protection to the call side, the QB does have a hot route on the play side. However, the scheme does:

- 1) It has a deep route to the boundary that does provide an option in the defense gives up the corner.
- 2) Wide/Shoot route outside the numbers, which also acts as outlet valve.
- 3) A built-in Pick play on the defender covering the Shoot/Wide route, that also provides an option inside underneath coverage.
- 4) Additional blocking to the QB's blind side.
- 5) Gets the ball off quickly in rhythm (with proper execution).

Practical Application

Through the Eighties and early Nineties, the Niners have enjoyed great success against their division rival Falcons. The Niners averaged over 40 points a game, while allowing an average of nearly 14 on defense. The Falcons tried blitzes, zones, man coverages, and other things, but could never really stop the Niners, with the exception of isolated games.

In this 1993 game, during week 13, the Niners have the ball on the Falcon eight yard line. The 49ers line up in "Red Right – Slot", (in our offense, we called this "Red – twin left. The emphasis was on the slot or "twin" side of the formation). WR John Taylor (82) lines up at Split End on the far left. WR Jerry Rice (80) lines up in the slot inside Taylor. RB Ricky Watters is lined up in the backfield on the inside shoulder of the left tackle.



Atlanta has CB Deion Sanders (21) aligned over Jerry Rice at four yards deep, and head up. CB Walker is lined up over WR John Taylor, also head up. Taylor on Clark is a mismatch that favors the 49ers. The head up technique shown by Atlanta is a good indication of "Man" coverage by Atlanta in the Red Zone. LB Ron George (50) lines up across from RB Amp Lee. This is a power mismatch that favors the 49ers, both have good speed.

On this play, Taylor drives up field and runs a corner route. But, the Red Zone adjustment dictates for Taylor to run an out route due to the short field.

Rice runs the "spot" route (this has also been referred to as the "swirl" or "whip-read"). This is also a "Pick" possibility.

RB Amp Lee executes the swing route to a point just outside the numbers.

QB Steve Young (8) executes a flawless five step drop and reads the defense in the process of his drop. In my studies, Young executes the proper read and throws about 96 percent of the time. For 96 percent, I'll take those percentages. (I have seen him occasionally try to force the ball to Jerry Rice, and miss the open swing route. But, this isn't one of them).

Atlanta's CB Walker plays Taylor's out route flawlessly and pins Taylor to the back boundary. Only a high throw and catch here has any chances at success. But, this option is covered.

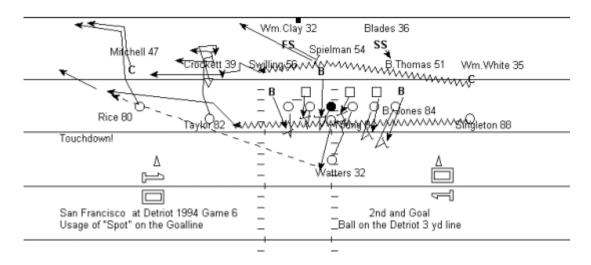
Jerry Rice executes his cut at three yards and cuts inside with Sanders right on his shoulder in perfect coverage. The "Spot" route has the chance of creating a pick in man coverage, which is exactly what happens here. Rice reads "man" coverage, which forces him to adjust his route to first disrupt the path of the LB to get outside. Once he attempts this, he crosses the formation to try to run away from Man coverage. This is the path of LB Ron George. It forces George to go around both Rice AND Sanders, which creates the separation necessary for Amp Lee. The result is a 49er touchdown.

In Figure 2, the 49ers encounter a different scheme in the Red Zone.

The Detroit Lions match up well against the 49ers in the running game, with the addition of LB Pat Swilling from the New Orleans Saints. But, the Lions don't match up well against the 49ers in the passing game. The 49ers have too many size mismatches, and speed mismatches for the Lions to contend with.

On this play, the 49ers have the ball on the Lions three yard line. The 49ers show WR Jerry Rice to the left, and WR John Taylor in the slot. WR Nate Singleton is to the right, with TE Brent Jones at tight end on the right. RB Ricky Watters is in the backfield behind QB Steve Young (This was "Gold" formation in our offensive package).

The Lions are normally a Zone coverage team. They will rarely go into Man coverage with the exception of a blitz. With the 49ers on the Detroit 3 yard line, the Lions elect to go with a blitz. They will try to disguise their intentions of going to Man coverage due to their disadvantage. But the motion of Singleton tips off Young as to the defense.

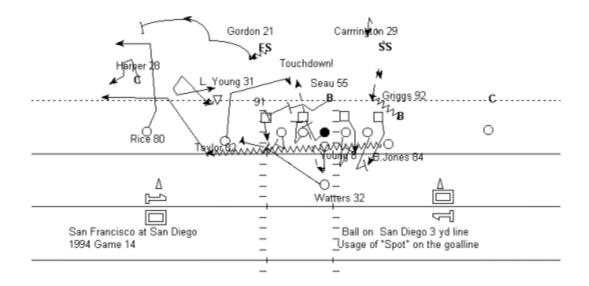


Again, the 49ers Jerry Rice will bend his corner route into an out route due to limited distance in the end zone. WR John Taylor executes his "Spot" route flawlessly. He manages to get a pick on DB William White and slow his pursuit of Singleton (whom he has man Coverage on. DB Ray Crockett (39) has man coverage on Rice has Rice covered, and DB Ryan McNeil has Taylor covered as well. Nate Singleton gains separation with Rice's pick.

Looking at the pass protection, the Detroit blitz scheme has six men coming on the rush, which is picked up by 49ers offensive line (which includes TE Brent Jones and RB Ricky Watters. The Left Tackle, Steve Wallace picks up Swilling coming off the corner and negates his rush.

With this much time to through, Steve Young can make rhythm throws like this and allow the athleticism of the 49ers to do the rest. This short out route is basic to the 49ers offense, which contributes the RAC (Run after catch) yardage by clearing out the defense and allowing the receivers to utilize their speed advantage.

In 1994 week 14, the 49ers are in the Red Zone against the Chargers. The 49ers have the ball on the 4 yard line of San Diego, and lined up in a three receiver set. WR Jerry Rice lines up at the far left of the formation, with WR John Taylor lined up in the slot. WR Nate Singleton lines up to the wide right of the formation, with TE Brent Jones lined up on the right wing, off the line of scrimmage. San Diego lines up with their Nickel Personnel (five defensive backs), showing that they are expecting pass.



The Chargers run their Zone Defense in repetition to try to execute their defense flawlessly, then otherwise trying to run many defenses and not have the execution.

The 49ers bring TE Brent Jones in motion to the slot side of the formation. This shows "Trips" to the left side. The Chargers adjust by sliding their Safety Darrien Gordon to the trips side to account for the third receiver. But, the breakdown in the coverage begins with LB Junior Seau. Seau is one of the best linebackers in the NFL, but he makes a mistake on this play. It begins with his lack of adjustment to the trips formation as a result of Jones motion. LB David Griggs makes the adjustment, but Seau does not. His adjustment calls for him to change his alignment to the back of the outside shoulder of Charger Right defensive tackle Blaise Winter (96). This leads to a breakdown of the Charger defense, and Defensive Coordinator Bill Arnsparger's plan in the Red Zone.

At the snap, the 49er protection does its job against one of the leagues best Defensive lines. The 49er O-line holds the Chargers front four without additional help. This allows the 49ers to put five receivers into the pattern. WR Jerry Rice will run the Red Zone adjustment to the corner route, which is the Out route in the back of the end zone. WR John Taylor has the responsibility of the "Spot" route, and its adjustments. TE Brent Jones will run the "Shoot" route, or the short out route. RB Ricky Watters will chip block on the Chargers defensive end, Leslie O'Neil (91). Watters will separate himself away from the line and back pedal to make himself available to Steve Young as a Safety valve. This Chip block and valve responsibility is what attracts Seau's attention. Seau comes over and up field on a flat angle, disregarding his Hook Zone responsibility, and breaks down the Chargers interior zone coverage. DB's Dwayne Harper and Lonnie Young execute their responsibilities perfectly. They have Brent Jones taken away from the pattern, while Safety Darrien Gordon has inside leverage and depth on Jerry Rice. A perfect throw to Rice would score, but Seau's breakdown is read by both Taylor and Young. Taylor runs his route properly and to the proper depth, and just simply hooks up behind Seau. Young executes his five quick step drop and drills the ball quickly into Taylor. This is simple pitch and catch. Seau's mental breakdown results in seven points for the 49ers.

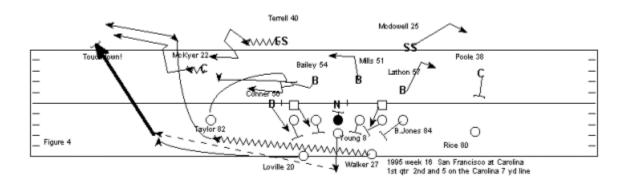
In week 16 of 1995, the 49ers went to Charlotte to play the Carolina Panthers. The 49ers have the ball on the Carolina seven yard line in a second and five situation.

The 49ers line up in their "Red" formation, which is split backs, with their Base personnel. WR John Taylor is seven yards off his offensive tackle, Steve Wallace, and split to the left side. WR Jerry Rice is split to the right side. This is a basic formation, everyone team shows it in their playbook. The same play is shown here in figure 3.

The problem that will be illustrated here will be late recognition by the defense, and great execution by the 49ers.

The Panthers defense is experienced and their Zone Blitz scheme gives the 49ers a lot of problems. But, the 49ers also know that the areas of the Zone Blitz begin in the flat area. CB Tim McKyer will line up 5 yards deep and play outside technique on Taylor. Free Safety Pat Terrell is 8 yards deep aligned off the outside shoulder of the offensive tackle to his side. OLB Darrien Conner is playing against air due to the fact that there is no Tight end to his side. ILB Carlton Bailey (54) has short zone responsibility and aligned 4 ½ yards deep from the Offensive Guard.

Before the snap, FB Adam Walker goes in motion to the weak side of the formation, to a point that stacks him directly behind WR John Taylor. Carolina adjusts well, with Safety Pat Terrell adjusting to the outside with Walker. This places two defenders playing Zone Coverage on two receivers. Carolina shows in their adjustment, "Whip Firezone – Cover Two". This is a rush by OLB Darrien Conner, and playing two deep zone coverage, with five underneath zones. This is a coverage the 49ers have seen countless times before, and this time, they are ready for it.



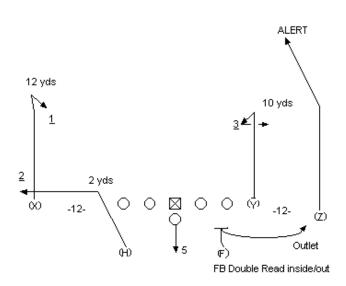
At the snap of the ball, Conner rushes upfield taking an inside angle trying to gain the edge. Left Tackle Steve Wallace slides over to pick up Conner and turn him outside, and carries him upfield. Left Guard Kirk Scrafford (a converted tackle) slides his block outside also to pick up the DE Gerald Williams. If LB Carlton Bailey were to rush up the inside gap, he would be QB Steve Young's responsibility. Young would have to utilize his "Hot" read, and get rid of the football. But, against this coverage, Young can read his pass progression and make his decision and make a pass in rhythm.

Looking outside, Walker comes from behind Taylor on an outside break, and runs the Red Zone adjustment to the corner, the Out route. Carolina's McKyer plays outside technique against the stack beautifully, and blankets Walker to the outside and the back boundary. Terrell initially performs his technique well in picking up Rice and taking him to the inside, into the LB Bailey. But, this is where the breakdown in the coverage begins. Bailey sees that RB Derek Loville runs a swing route to the slot side of the formation, and starts to get outside quickly to cover the swing route. Terrell is too deep to stop the swing route, and is doing a good job of staying with Rice by staying right on his shoulder. But, the pick portion of the "Spot" route by Rice is about to unfold again. Rice executes his pick responsibility by trying to impede the inside defender from getting outside. He can't get his full body in the way due to the depth of his route and the flat course taken by Bailey. But, Rice does manage to impede Bailey just enough to make him alter his course enough to slow him down from getting to the outside on time. With Terrell on Rice's inside shoulder,

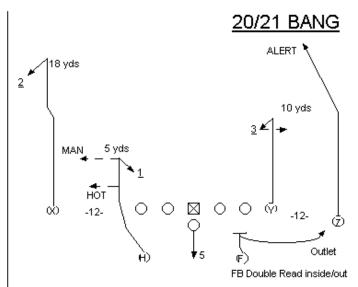
Rice simply throws his hips back as he stops his route to prevent Terrell from getting to the outside to help Bailey as he reads the ball in the air to the outside.

Terrell is now picked, Bailey was delayed, and McKyer does not even see the ball is in the air. McKyer's late recognition costs Carolina due to his inability to react up field. If he had of, Loville may not have scored, but would have gained the first down.

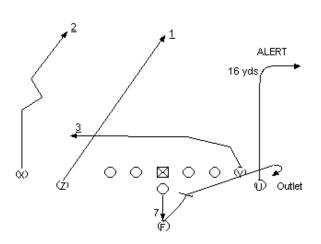
It has been my wish to show this play as to how it has worked against several different defensive structures to give you an idea as to how the design of this pass pattern works. This offense has several different pass patterns that work with a myriad of pass protection schemes, and show great flexibility.



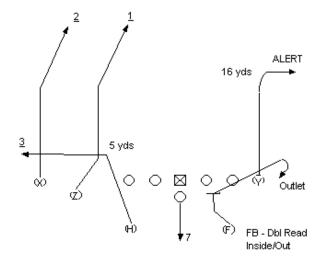
RED RIGHT- 20 'BANG' X/Y HOOK HB SHOOT



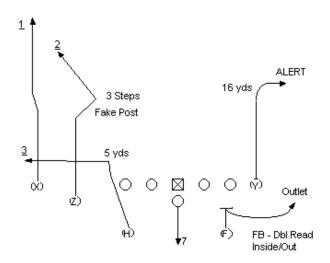
RED RIGHT - 20 'BANG' HB READ



SOLO RIGHT PAIR SLOT - 2 JET DINO 'U' DEEP OUT

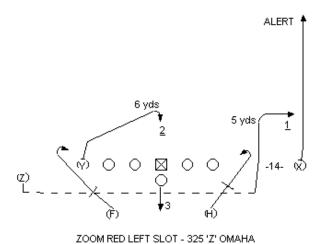


RED RIGHT SLOT - 2 JET PEPPER HB FLAT



RED RIGHT SLOT - 20 'BANG' SCISSORS HB FLAT

324/325

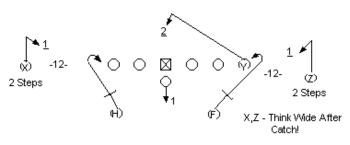


RED LEFT - 325 OMAHA

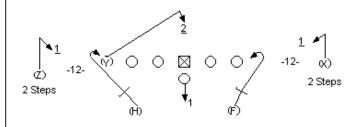
7 yds

X ,Z - 6 STEPS

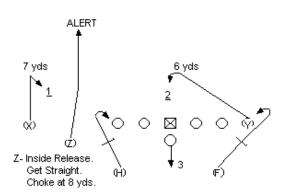
7 yds,



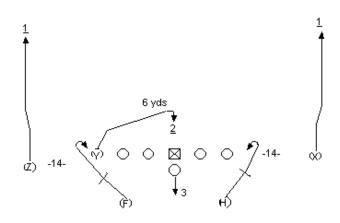
RED RIGHT - 324 SMOKE



CHANGE LEFT - 325 SMOKE



RED RIGHT SLOT - 324 CAMEL

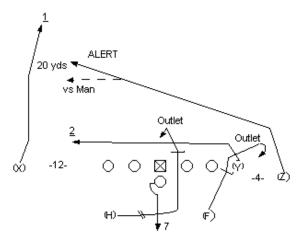


RED LEFT - 325 HEAT

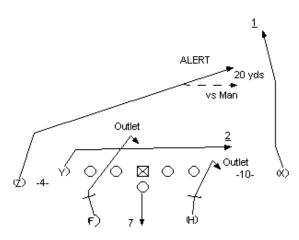
ALERT 20 yds vs Man Outlet Outlet (F) 7

MOVE SOLO RIGHT PAIR CLOSE - HORSE 2 COWBOY PASS

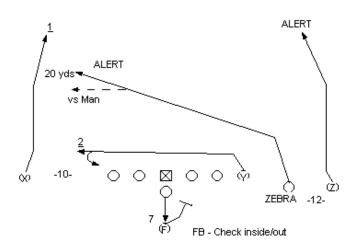
COWBOY PASS



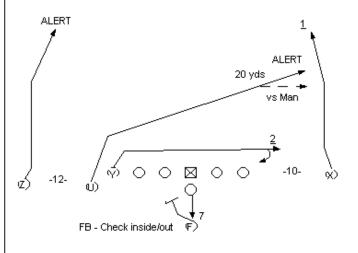
RED RIGHT CLOSE - HORSE 2 COWBOY PASS



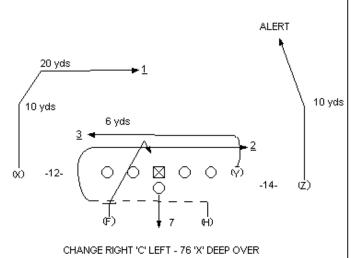
RED LEFT CLOSE -55 COWBOY PASS

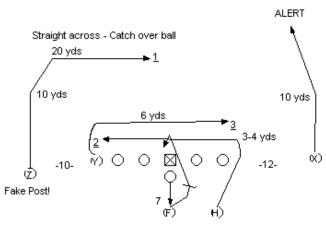


SOLO RIGHT PLUS - 2 JET COWBOY (ZEBRA)



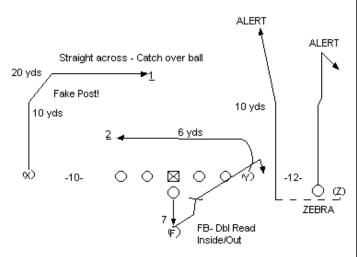
SOLO LEFT PAIR - 3 JET COWBOY (TIGER)



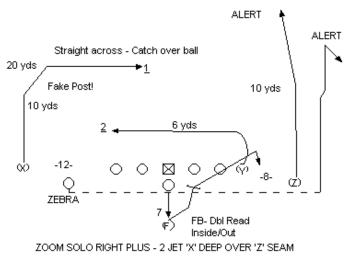


DEEP OVER

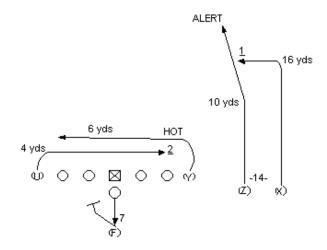
BROWN LEFT - 77 FLANKER DEEP OVER



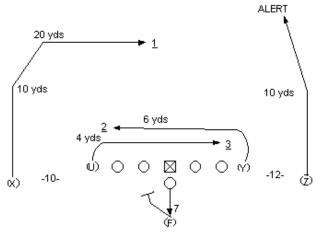
SOLO RIGHT PLUS ZIP - 2 JET 'X' DEEP OVER 'Z' SEAM (ZEBRA)



(ZEBRA)

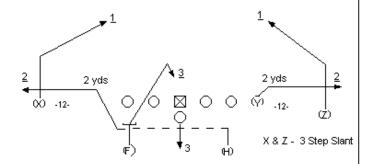


SOLO RIGHT TWIN - 76 CRISS CROSS DAGGER (TIGER)

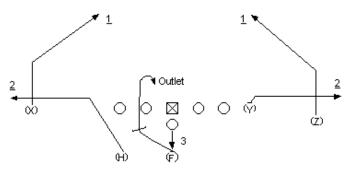


SOLO RIGHT - 76 'X' DEEP OVER (TIGER)

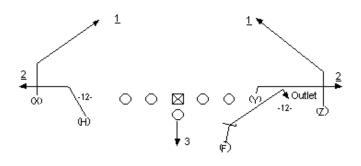
DRAG SLANT



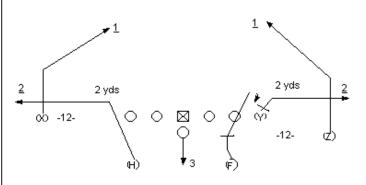
CHANGE RIGHT I'C' LEFT - 376 DRAG SLANT



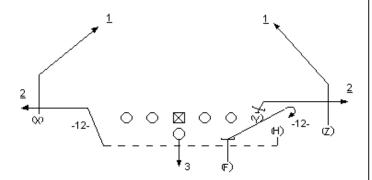
BROWN RIGHT - 376 DRAG SLANT



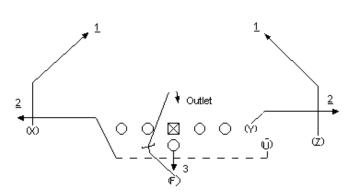
WIDE RIGHT- 200 JET DRAG SLANT



RED RIGHT - 200 JET DRAG SLANT

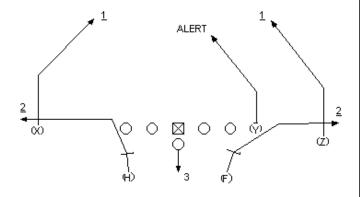


STRONG RIGHT 'H' LEFT - 200 JET DRAG SLANT

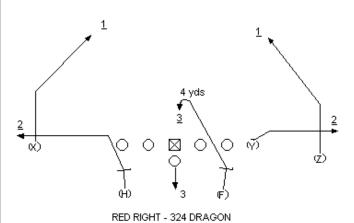


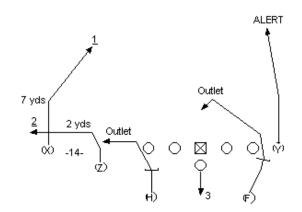
MOVE SOLO RIGHT - 376 DRAG SLANT (TIGER)

DRAGON / DENVER

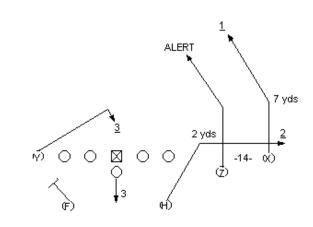


RED RIGHT - 324 DENVER

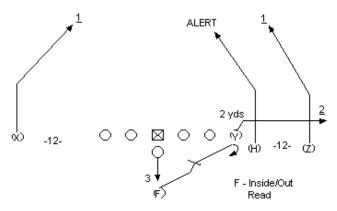




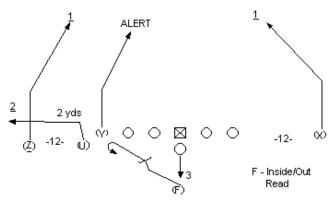
RED RIGHT SLOT - 354 DRAGON



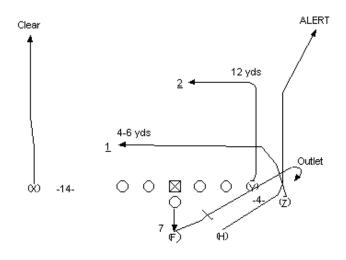
RED LEFT SLOT - 321 DENVER



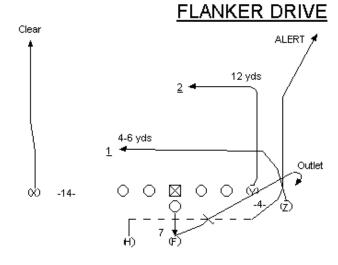
SET RIGHT - 200 JET DENVER



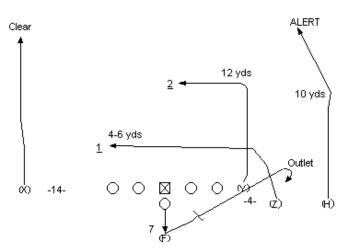
SOLO LEFT PAIR - 300 JET DRAGON



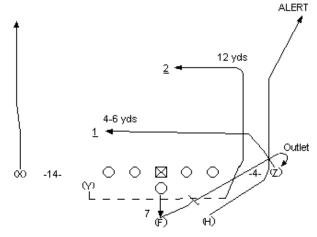
ZIP BLUE RIGHT CLOSE - 2 JET FLANKER DRIVE



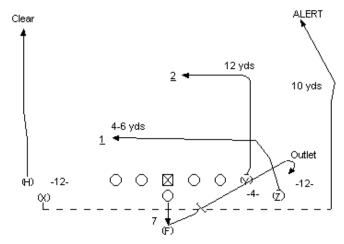
BROWN RIGHT CLOSE 'A' RIGHT - 2 JET FLANKER DRIVE



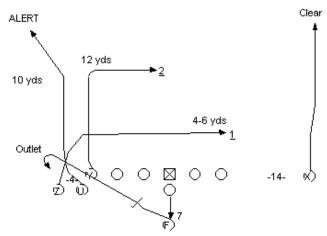
STRONGER RIGHT CLOSE - 2 JET FLANKER DRIVE HB POST



TEAR BLUE RIGHT CLOSE - 2 JET FLAKER DRIVE

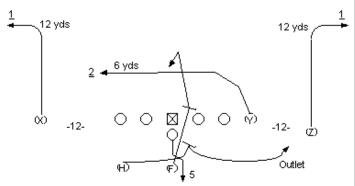


EXIT WIDER RIGHT TWIN - 2 JET FLANKER DRIVE HB CLEAR

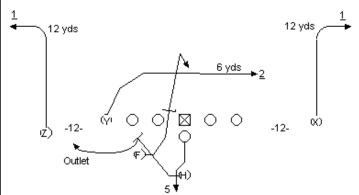


ZIP SOLO LEFT PAIR CLOSE - 3 JET FLANKER DRIVE (TIGER)

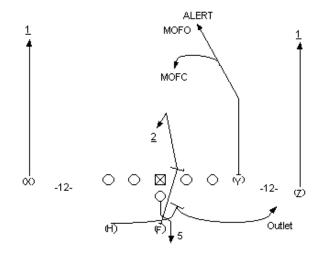
FOX 2/3



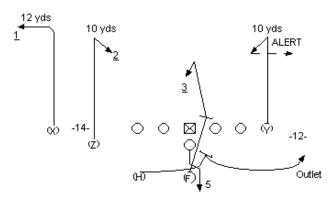
BROWN RIGHT - FOX 2 DOUBLE SQUARE OUT



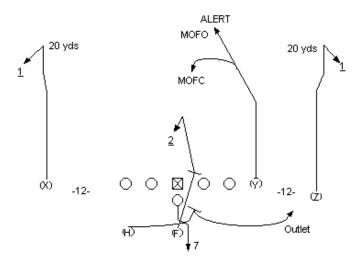
KING LEFT - FOX 3 DOUBLE SQUARE OUT



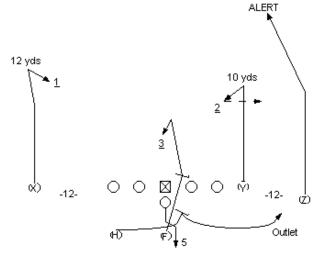
BROWN RIGHT - FOX 2 DOUBLE GO



BROWN RIGHT SLOT - FOX 2 WINSTON

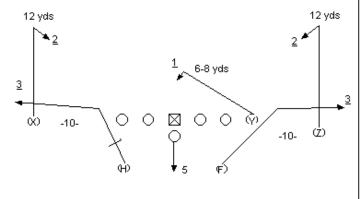


BROWN RIGHT - FOX 2 DOUBLE COMEBACK

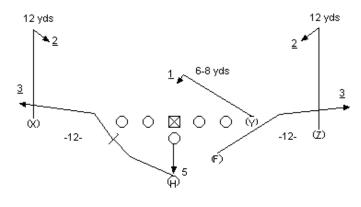


BROWN RIGHT - FOX 2 'X' & 'Y' HOOK

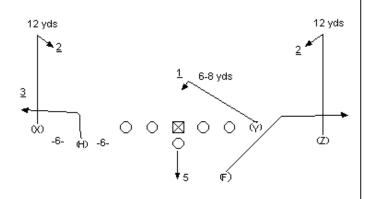
HANK



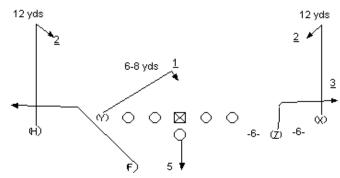
RED RIGHT - 22 HANK



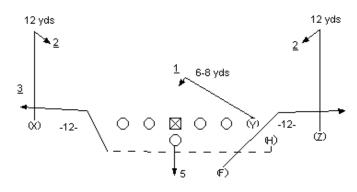
KING RIGHT - 22 HANK



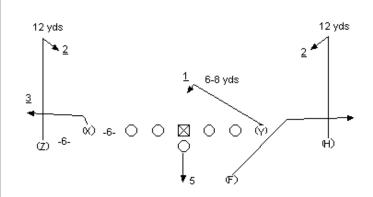
WIDE RIGHT SCAT - 22 HANK



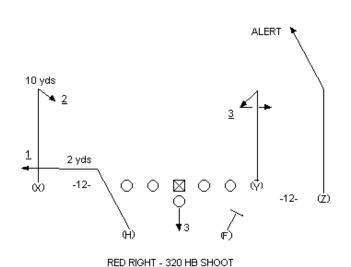
STRONGER LEFT SLOT SCAT - 23 HANK



MOVE SOLO RIGHT SCAT - 22 HANK



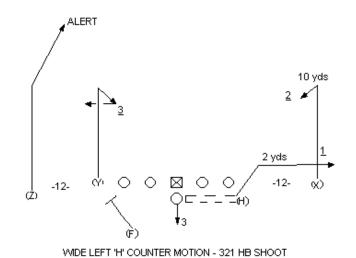
STRONGER RIGHT FLOP SCAT - 22 HANK

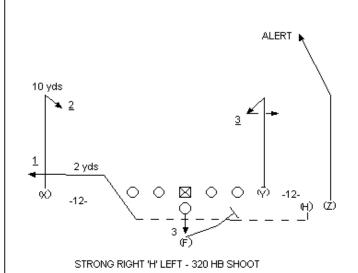


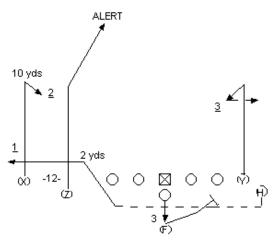
10 yds 1 2 yds 0 -12 1 - 2 yds -12 7

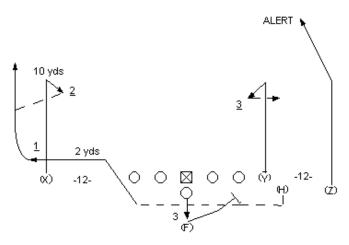
BLUE RIGHT 'C' LEFT - 320 HB SHOOT

HB SHOOT



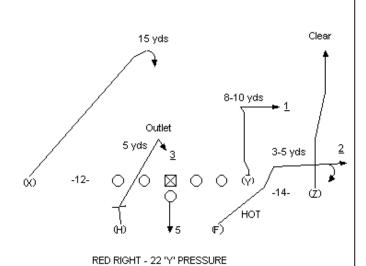


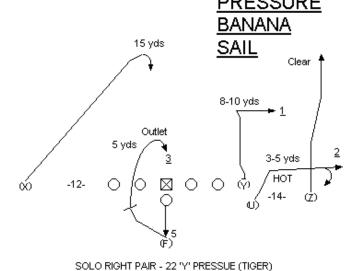


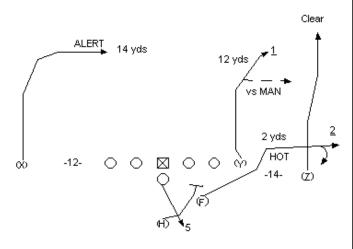


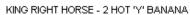
SET RIGHT SLOT 'H' LEFT - 320 HB SHOOT

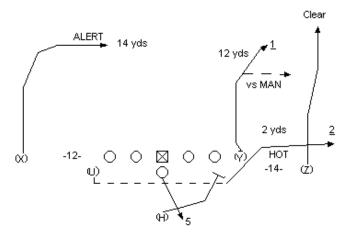
SET RIGHT 'H' LEFT - 320 HB SHOOT (HOOK & LATERAL)



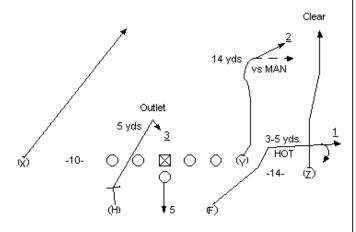




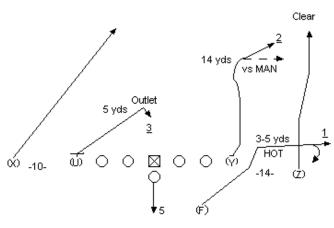




MOVE SOLO RIGHT PAIR - HOUND 2 'BRONCO' 'Y' BANANA



RED RIGHT - 22 'Y' SAIL (FB FLAT)

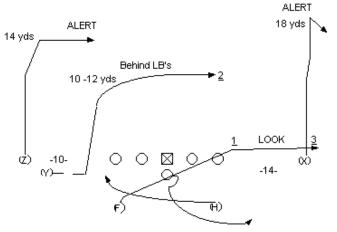


SOLO RIGHT - 22 'Y' SAIL (FB FLAT)

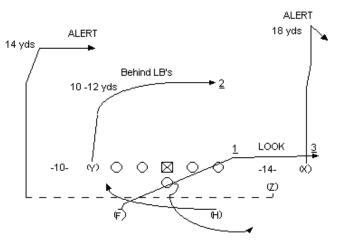
ALERT 18 yds Behind LB's 2 Behind LB's 10 -12 yds -14 -10 (Z)

RED RIGHT - 18 SWEEP (QB) KEEP LEFT 'FB' SLIDE

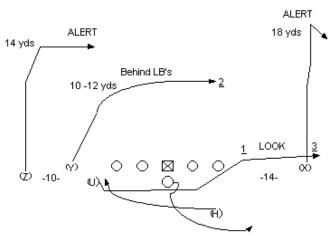
SWEEP KEEP



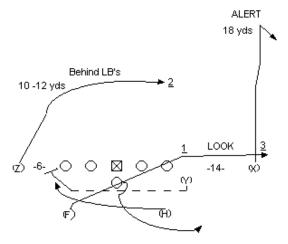
TIP RED LEFT - 19 SWEEP (QB) KEEP RIGHT 'FB' SLIDE



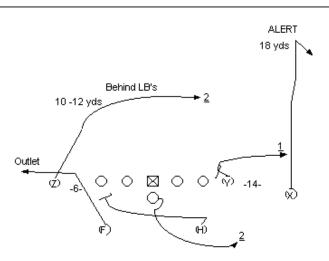
ZOOM RED LEFT - 19 SWEEP (QB) KEEP RIGHT 'FB' SLIDE



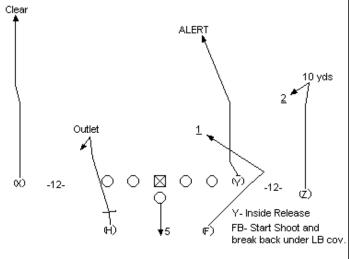
SOLO LEFT FLEX - 99 SWEEP (QB) KEEP RIGHT 'U' SLIDE

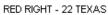


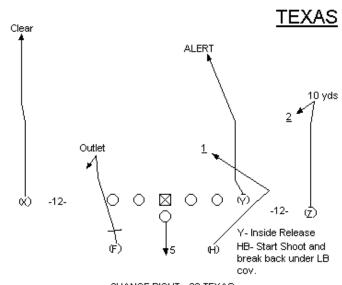
TEAR RIGHT LEFT - 19 SWEEP (QB) KEEP RIGHT 'FB' SLIDE (Z CROSS)



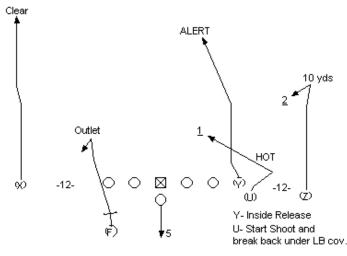
RED RIGHT - 35 COUNTER NAKED 'Y' LATE (Z CROSS)



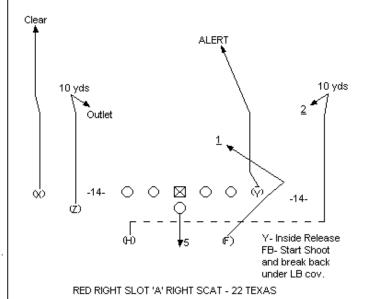


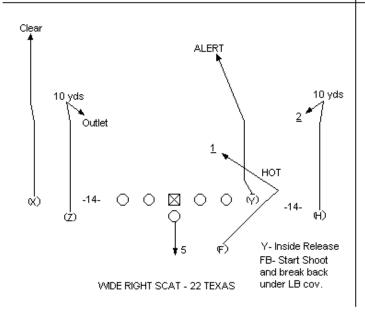


CHANGE RIGHT - 22 TEXAS

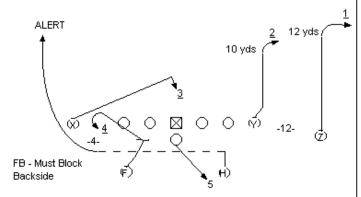


SOLO RIGHT PAIR - 22 TEXAS (TIGER)

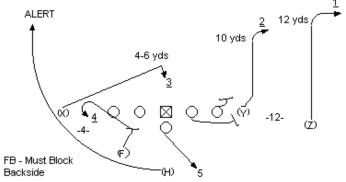




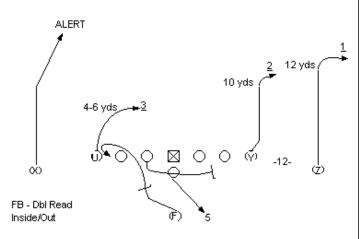
WAGGLE



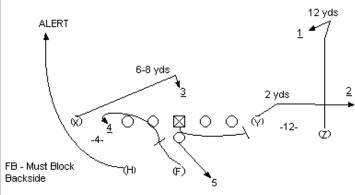
CHANGE RIGHT 'C LEFT' - WAGGLE RIGHT SQUARE OUT



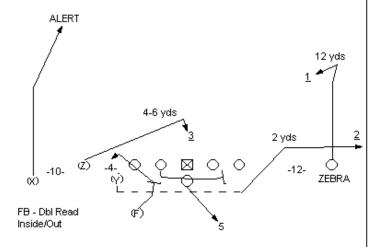
QUEEN RIGHT - WAGGLE RIGHT SQUARE OUT



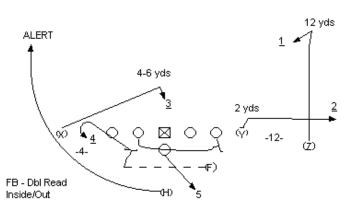
SOLO RIGHT - WAGGLE RIGHT SQUARE OUT



BROWN RIGHT- WAGGLE RIGHT DRAG HOOK

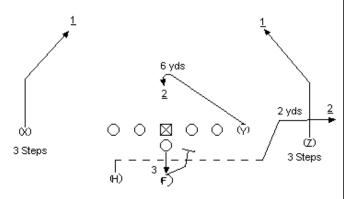


SOLO RIGHT (ZEBRA) - WAGGLE RIGHT DRAG HOOK

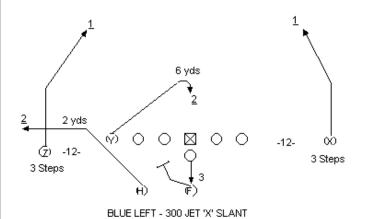


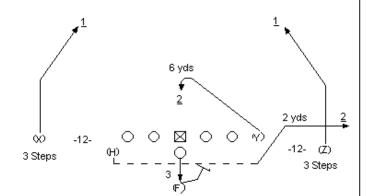
KING RIGHT FUZZ - WAGGLE RIGHT DRAG HOOK

X SLANT

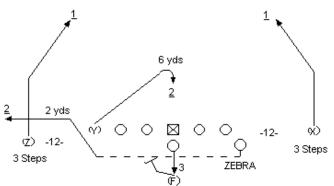


BROWN RIGHT 'A' RIGHT - 200 JET 'X' SLANT

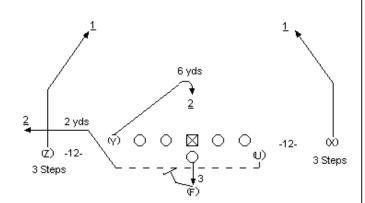




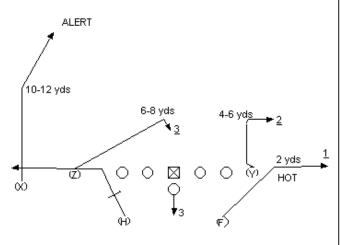
WING RIGHT 'H' RIGHT - 200 JET 'X' SLANT



MOVE SOLO LEFT PAIR - 300 JET 'X' SLANT (TIGER)

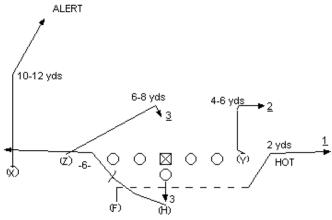


ZOOM SOLO LEFT PLUS - 300 JET 'X' SLANT (ZEBRA)

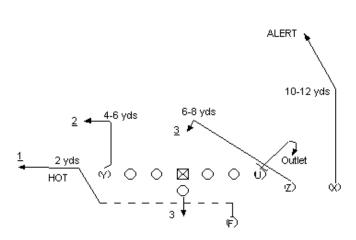


RED RIGHT SLOT - 322 'Y' STICK

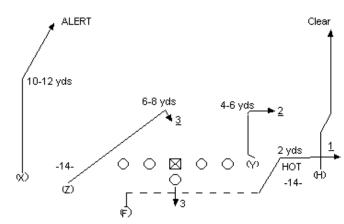




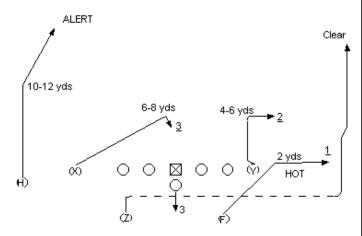
CHANGE BROWN RIGHT SLOT A RIGHT - 322 'Y' STICK



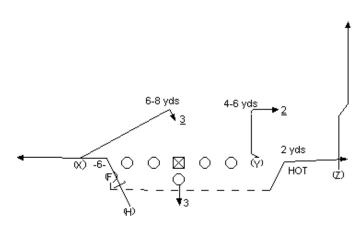
SOLO LEFT SLOTIC LEFT- 323 'Y' STICK



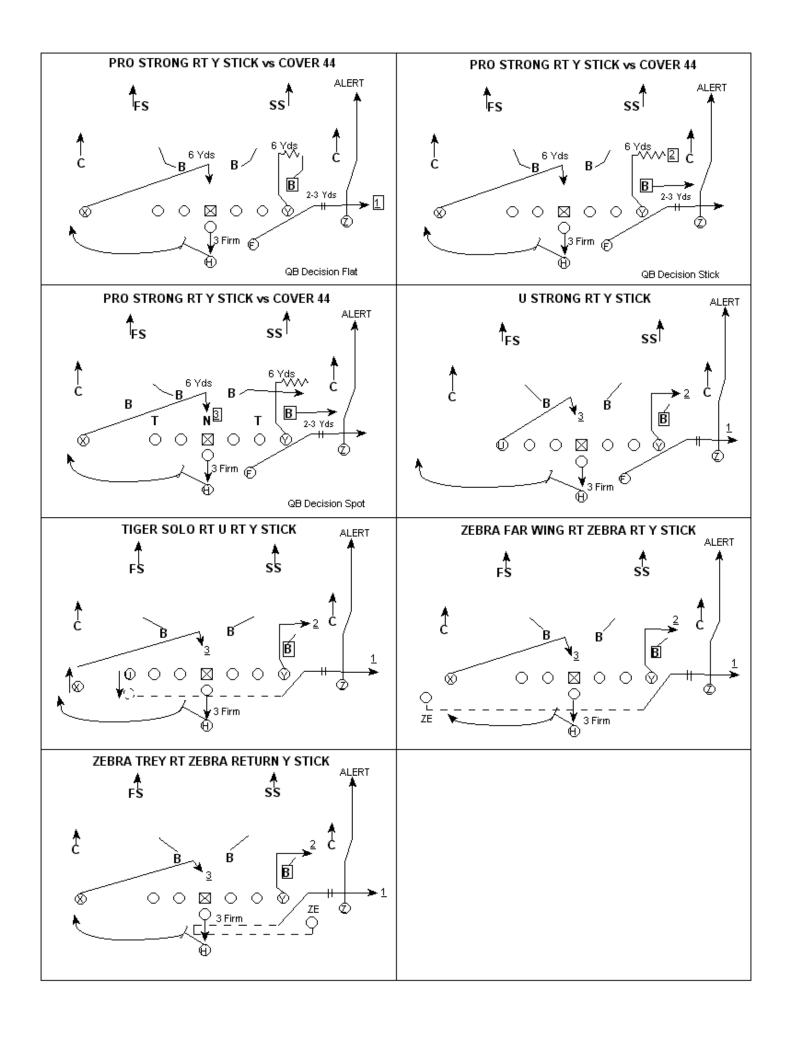
STRONGER RIGHT SLOT A RIGHT SCAT - 322 'Y' STICK

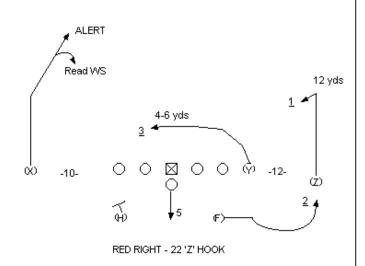


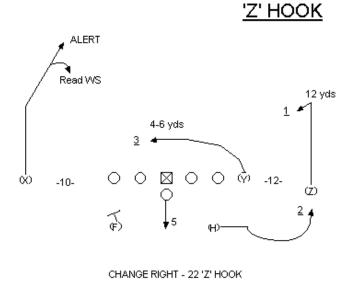
FULL WIDER RIGHT SCAT - 322 'Y' STICK

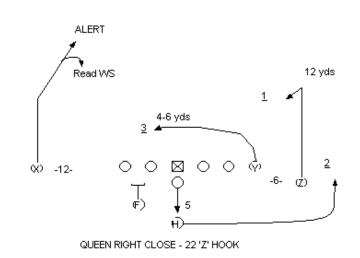


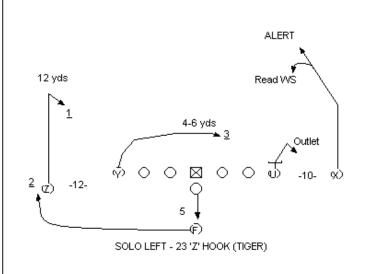
MOVE SOLO RIGHT PAIR - 322 'Y' STICK

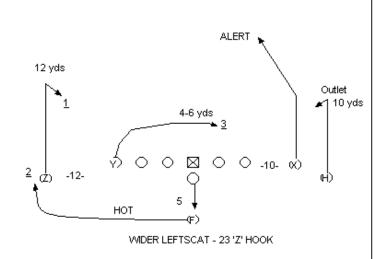


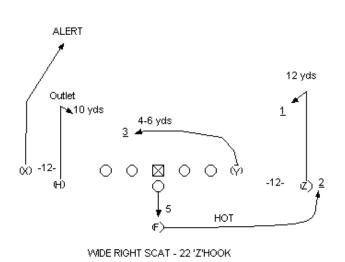








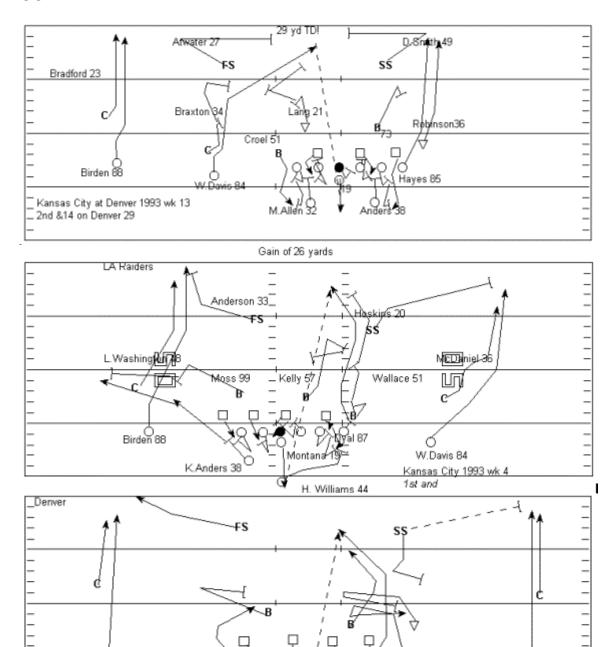




DOUBLE GO

San Francisco 1995 Pre Season played in Tokyo 1st and 10 on Denver 46

J. Willis 41



Grbac 18

Walker 27