

TRIPS COVERAGES

Trips formations can present a headache for defenses, whether it be trips open or closed. It is even more of a headache when teaching your players to pattern read, as these schemes are based on only 2 receiver's to a side. In this chapter I am going to present 5 ways to defend trips, **but I do NOT recommend running all 5**. Our game plan will always include multiple ways to attack what the opponent does best. The magic number for us is 3.

Against a zone read team, we want 3 ways to defend it. We'll carry 3 variations of zone blitzes for a drop back passing team. And for teams that run trips formations, we will always have 3 different looks to give them. The 3 looks that we use will not always be the same, but there are 3 zone coverage looks we can give teams who are aligning in trips formations on a large percentage of downs.

Let's start with the classic QUARTER QUARTER HALF coverage, which is our default Trips coverage. When we send our coverages in from the sideline, there are TWO numbers. The FIRST number is for the READ side (FS, SPUR, CB) and the SECOND number is for the AWAY side (WILL & CB). After the numbers is a word for which Trips Coverage we want if the offense comes out in Trips (Roll, Solo, Special, or Survivor). **If we do not send in a word, then we run QUARTER-QUARTER-HALVES. We call it our "Rattle" coverage because we read #3.**

RATTLE: Quarter-Quarter-Halves

TCU calls this Roll. It can be used against trips open or closed. The read side of the defense is in 1/4's zone coverage, while the away side of the defense is a deep 1/2's coverage. If it is our first year putting the defense in, then we zone drop, however, after a year or two or running the defense, we will pattern read like TCU does. Here are the rules if you don't want to pattern read:

- Trips Corner- Deep outside 1/4, (Don't Get Beat Deep).
- Free Safety- Deep inside 1/4, (Don't Get Beat Deep).
- SPUR- Flat
- Backside Away Corner - Deep 1/2.
- WILL – Flats.

We can also play our Away, backside CB in man coverage on the single receiver, but that is our SOLO Trips Coverage. Also, if your WILL is very athletic, play him as the deep player and give the flats to the Corner. We normally drop our WILL underneath to the single receiver so that he can get involved in weakside run support more easily.

Rattle Technique

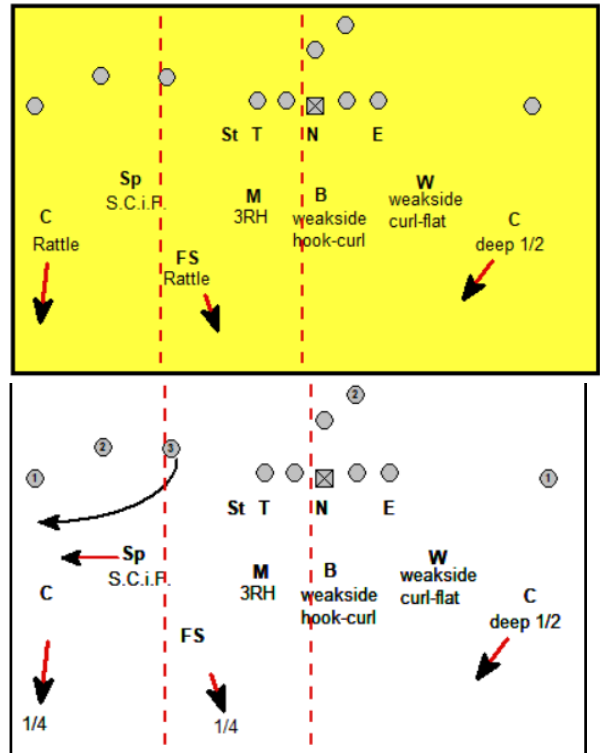
The Corner to the Trips is using Rattle technique. Rattle stands for Read Three. Corner is aligned 1x7 inside of #1 tilted. He is reading QB for quick game to #3.

The FS is also using Rattle technique (reading #3). The FS is aligned at 10-12 splitting the difference between #2 and #3. His initial footwork is a controlled pedal.

If #3 releases outside the FS will squeeze his coverage to #2, while the corner will squeeze outside to #1.

If #3 releases inside or vertical the FS will work to the middle 1/3, squeeze #3, and the corner will squeeze #2 while playing the outside 1/3.

If #3 is vertical the Mike collisions #3 if possible and will work to a max depth of 12. If #3 is vertical there will be a middle 1/3 safety so the Mike does not need to carry #3 vertical down the field.



SCiF Technique (SPUR)

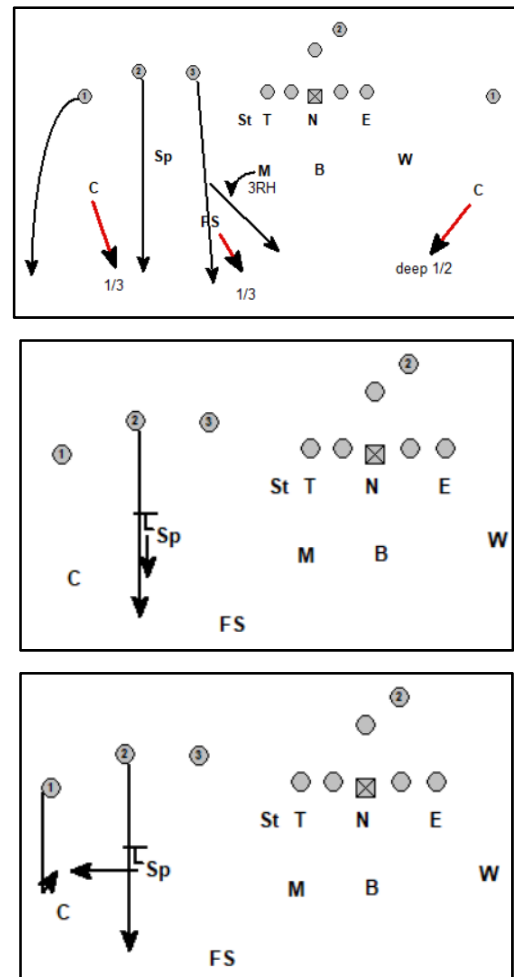
The SPUR is aligned at 5 yards between #2 and #3. On the snap the SPUR will pop his feet and read through the EMLOS to the QB. His drop is SCiF (Seam-Curl-Flat). The SPUR has quick game routes to #2.

Against drop back pass if the #2 releases vertical the SPUR will stay square and collision #2. After collision the SPUR will pedal to a depth of 12 in the seam (2 yards outside the hash).

While pedaling the SPUR will have his head on a swivel looking for the QB and receiving threats. If the QB tries to throw the ball on a line to #2 in the seam the SPUR should be able to make the play.

The SPUR will expand to the Curl and Flat if necessary.

If the #1 receiver is running a curl the SPUR should expand to cover him. The SPUR will only know to expand if he keeps his head on a swivel while pedaling. Also the Corner should give the SPUR an "IN" call.



If the #3 receiver is releasing outside the 3RH dropper (here the Mike) makes a "Push" call. The "Push" call pushes the SCiF dropping SPUR from Seam to #1's Curl and he should be ready to break to the Flat on the throw.

If #2 is inside immediately the SPUR will make an "Under" call and get depth in the seam.

If #2 is outside immediately the SPUR will top the flat route expanding from the Seam to the Curl and breaking on the throw to the flat.

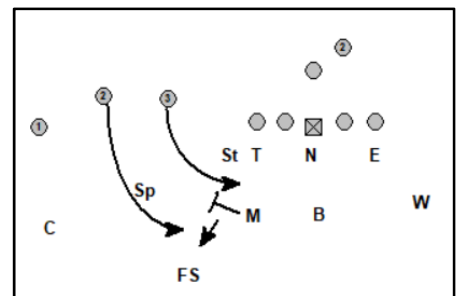
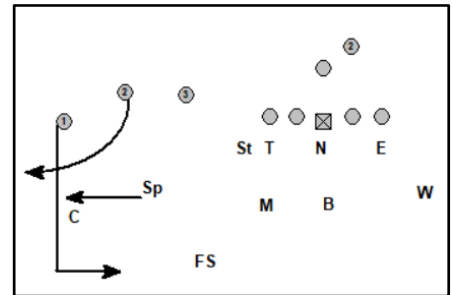
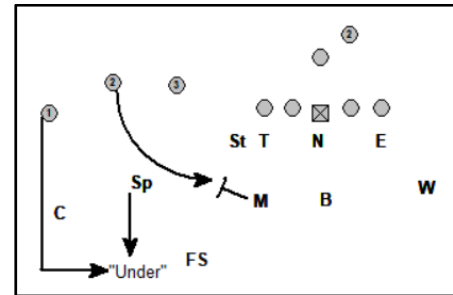
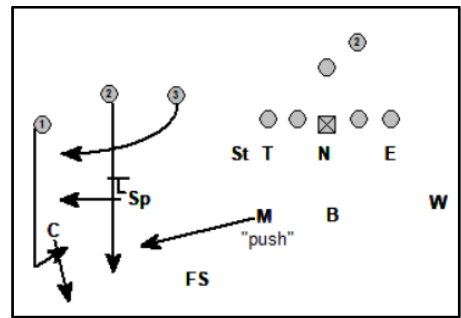
3RH Technique

The Mike is a 3 Receiver Hook (3RH) dropper and drops to #3. The Mike has quick game routes to #3.

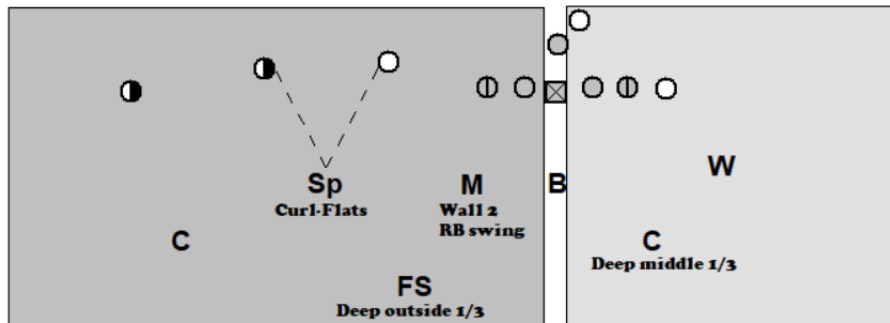
If #3 is out immediately the Mike pushes the SS and expands looking for a route to cover coming back inside.

If #3 is inside immediately the Mike walls #3. If the #3 is under 5 yards the Mike calls "Under" and gets depth to 12 with his head on a swivel for new routes entering his zone. The Mike can pass the under because the Will is in the weak Hook-Curl and should be ready to break and tackle any throw to #3 on the under.

If #3 tries to work to the backside hash the Mike will wall him. The Will is in the weak Hook-Curl to force the ball over the top where the FS and the backside Corner should have a play on the ball.

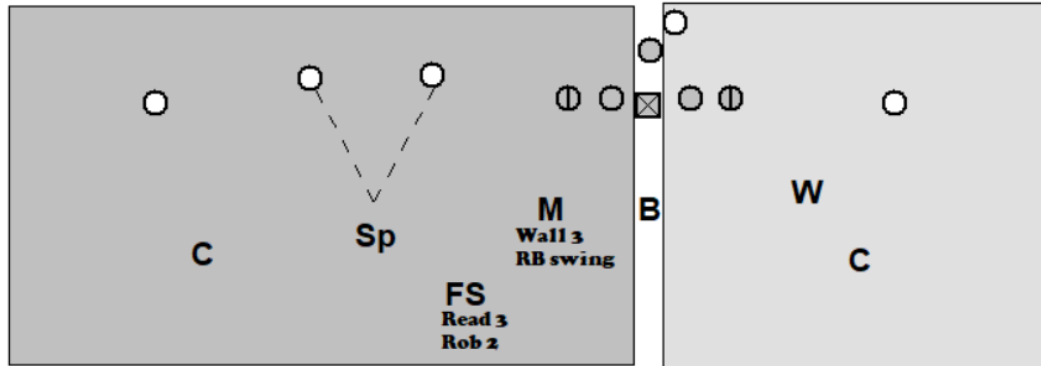


CHECK TRIPS vs Closed Set



CHECK TRIPS

Our normal TRIPS coverage has CB, SPUR, F reading #3.
 If #3 swing/flat/shallow = F squeeze #2 and CB squeeze #1
 if #3 vertical = F squeeze inside #3 and CB squeeze #2.



READ side

CB	Split #1 & #2. Squeeze 2 if 3 vert. Squeeze 1 if 3 shallow
Sp	Sink the hips. Expand on 2 or 3 to the flats
F	10x2 inside #3. Buzz feet while reading #3 Squeeze 3 vert. Squeeze 2 if 3 shallow.
M	1 yd outside Tackle. Wall inside routes & 3 Vert. RB swing out of backfield & QB sprints

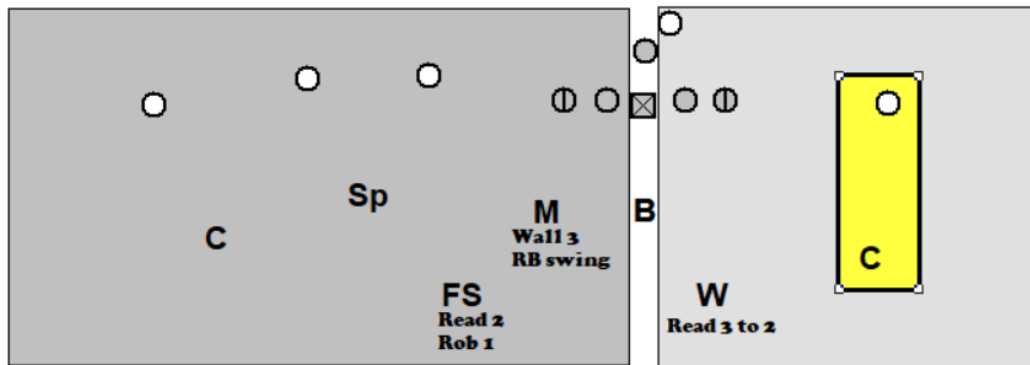
AWAY side

We normally play our Cover 3 rules on the Away side so Will can help guard #1 and offer strong weakside run support. We will play 2 Cloud if away side is in the boundary.

Twins on the backside (empty) is cover 4 (quarters)

CHECK TRIPS SOLO

Man on the backside allows WILL to help FALCON with #2 and #3 deep middel routes.



READ side

CB	Split #1 & #2. Squeeze 2 if 3 vert. Squeeze 1 if 3 shallow
Sp	Sink the hips. Expand on 2 or 3 to the flats
F	10x2 inside #3. Read 2 to 1
M	1 yd outside Tackle. Wall inside routes & 3 Vert. RB swing out of backfield & QB sprints

AWAY side

Playing Man to man allows WILL to help the trips side. If #2 or #3 don't run a post, then drop middle and help AWAY side post routes.

Trips Solo

Solo locks the backside corner on the single receiver in man coverage. We give him the option of playing press coverage or off man, but he will always play with inside leverage. The BULL linebacker has man coverage on any #2 receiver (the running back) releasing to his side.

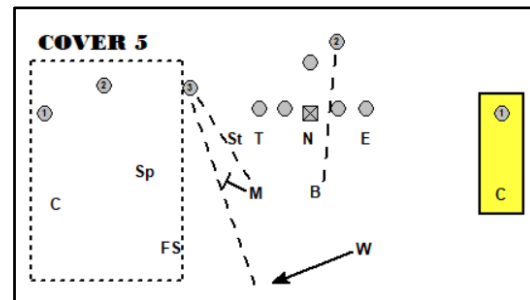
Solo coverage brings WILL over from the Away side to help on #3. On the Trips side, the CB, FS, and SPUR can focus on #1 and #2:

- CB: Key #2 receiver. If #2 releases in or vertical, lock on #1. If #2 releases out, stay over #1 until the receivers cross (vertical line rule) then pass off #1 to the safety and lock on #2.
- FS: Key #2 receiver. If #2 releases in or vertical, lock on #2. If #2 releases out, stay over top and take eyes to #1. When receivers cross (vertical line rule) pass off #2 to the corner and lock on #1.
- SPUR: Key the backfield. On pass read, drop on #2 receiver to #3 receiver. Wall #2 on inside breaking routes.

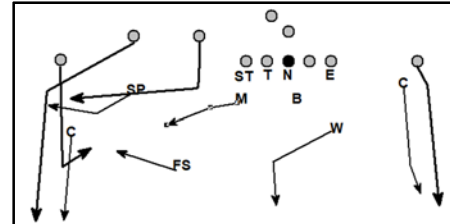
MIKE and WILL in the Solo Check are now responsible for the #3 Receiver.

- Mike: Key the backfield. On pass read, drop on #3 receiver. Wall #3 on inside breaking routes and force him to go over top of you.
- WILL: Key end man on the line of scrimmage for run/pass key. On run, you are the force player on the weak side. On pass, get over top of #3 receiver.

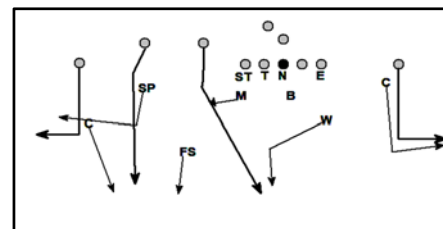
This is an example where running 2-Solo is perfect. The FS sees #2 release out and then robs the curl of #1. The SPUR drops to the flat and picks up #3, and the corner is deep to handle the wheel route by #2. If the QB is reading the corner and SPUR he will throw to the curl not realizing the FS is getting underneath it.



On the read side the FS makes a "Push" call and takes #2. The SS gets under #1, and the WS sprints across the field and takes #3. Below is another example.



We do work on passing off deep scissors routes by the #2 and #3 receivers between the safeties. This is not easy but comes with work, experience, and communication between your defenders.



Solo, in my opinion, is very simple to teach. One of the major coaching points is disguise, so the away side corner will stem late to an inside position on #1, and the WILL will slide from 2 yards outside the end man on the line of scrimmage (EMOL) to in the away side B gap.

Solo does have some glaring weaknesses though. The backside CB is man on their best receiver. Also, the WILL has a long way to go to cover #3 vertical, while still being the run force player to the away side. This is not a big deal if the AWAY side is in boundary, but middle of the field (MOF) requires the WILL to travel farther. He should be able to get over top of #3 because most of the deeper routes we are concerned with are coming all the way across the field. 4 vertical concepts from trips will bring the #3 receiver across to the opposite hash.

TRIPS 2

There are times when we do not want to take our eyes off the quarterback. We also may want to give more help to the single receiver side. It is not uncommon for teams to try to isolate a 1-on-1 match-up on the single receiver side in Solo.

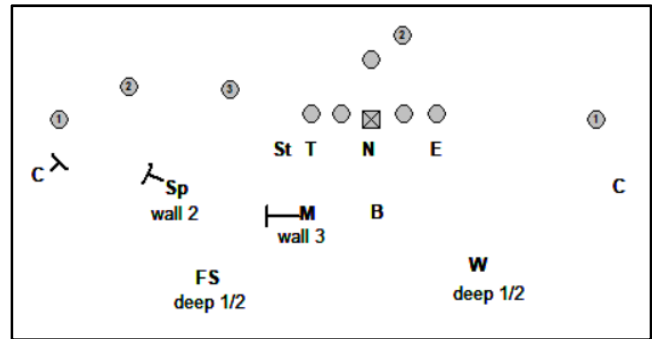
To accomplish these goals, we can use cover 2. The Corners have outside leverage and become your force players vs run. Whether they are press or 5yds off, the corners cannot give up an easy outside release. They need to funnel the receivers into the deep 1/2 safeties.

Likewise, the outside linebackers need to wall any inside breaking routes by the #2 receiver, funneling him to the deep 1/2 safety as well.

The Mike linebacker will deepen his drop to ensure that he walls any route by #3 that attacks the hole in the middle of the field. This is not a true Tampa 2 drop, just enough to let the safeties get over the top of his release.

The corners will release #1 after disrupting his route and drop off to the top of the numbers at 12-14 yards deep. The outside linebackers are dropping to the hashes and the Mike drops to the low hole.

Since we do not play a lot of Cover 2, we teach this as a spot drop.

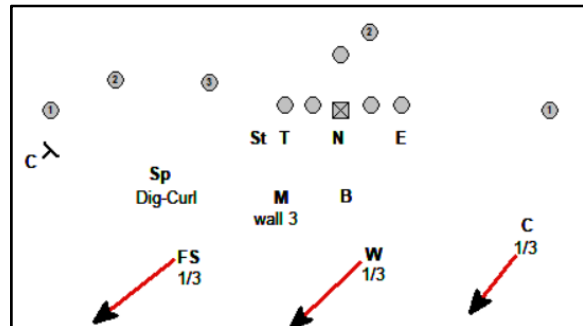
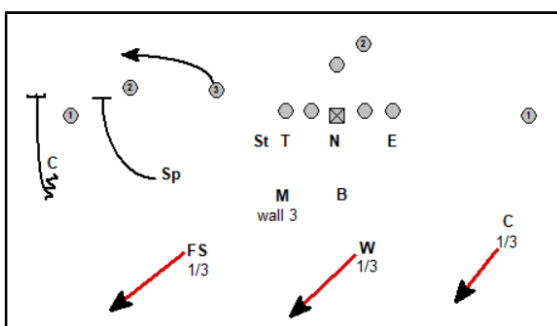
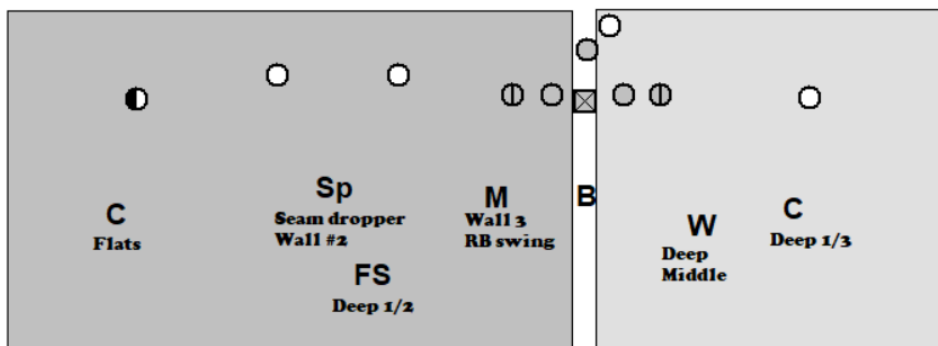


TRIPS ROLL

We run this when teams have a dangerous short game out of trips. Bubbles to #3 and Quick Screens to #1 can be dangerous versus Quarter-Quarter-Halves. Here the Trips CB and SPUR can be very aggressive versus these short, quik throws.

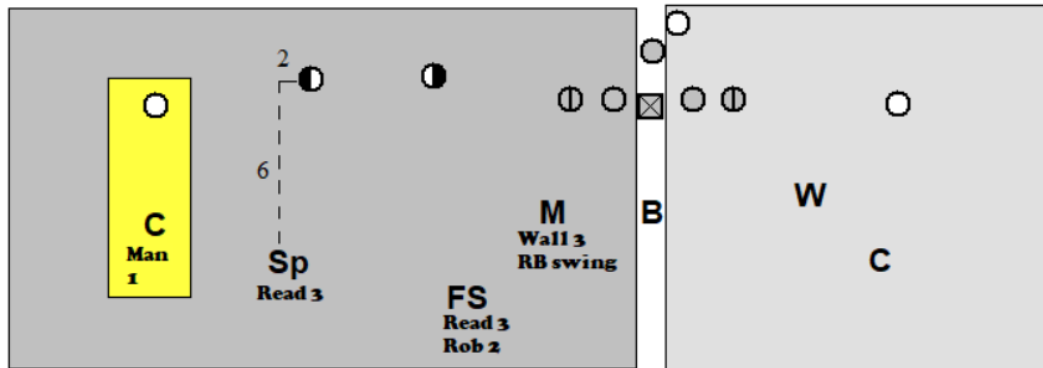
CHECK TRIPS ROLL 2

Good versus teams that like swings & quicks to Trips side.



CHECK TRIPS SPECIAL

Our "X" out concepts vs trips is playing man vs #1 (special) or #3 receiver (survivor), leaving only 2 receivers to guard. This means the Will hybrid does not have to come over to help on deep verticals by #2 or #3.



READ side

AWAY side

CB	Man vs #1. Depth depends on down & distance
Sp	6x2 outside #2. Read #3. Jump #3 out. vs #3 vert or in, take #2 man except shallow cross
F	10x2 inside #3. Buzz feet while reading #3 Man vs 3 Vertical. #3 out or in, rob #2.
M	1 yd outside Tackle. Wall inside routes & 3 Vert. RB swing out of backfield & QB sprints

SPECIAL turns trips into TWINS.

Allows WILL & CB to play "under/over" versus backside.

TRIPS SPECIAL

While most teams put their best receiver on the backside of Trips, they also put their worst receiver on the outside of the Trips. These teams tendencies are to never throw to the #1 receiver on the Trips side. So Trips Special locks up on that receiver to allow the rest of our defense play Cover 5.

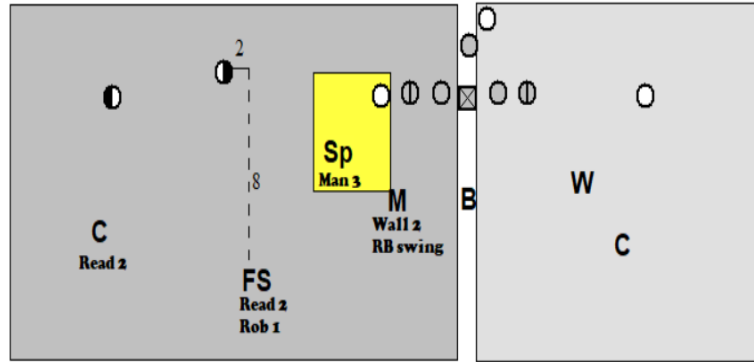
Our corner is locked on the #1 receiver on the trips side. We put the SPUR outside shade of #2 and the SPUR and FS play Cover 5 on the two inside receivers. This lets gets both of our Inside Backers back into the box. On the Away Side, the WILL can help on a quick throw to the single receiver in the flats. The corner on that side is playing a deep zone technique.

The major weakness in Special is finding time in practice to teach SPUR the corner's Cover 5 reads. This is not good in high school because of limited time with our players and need to squeeze every ounce of productivity out of them we can. The solution to this problem is Trip Survivor.

TRIPS SURVIVOR

The SPUR must stay in a low, inverted, alignment, and play man coverage on #3. This allows the FS and corner on the Trips side to only focus on #1 and #2, turning Trips into Twins. This is an automatic check against Trey sets.

CHECK TRIPS SURVIVOR



Disguising Coverages

Having multiple answers for trips formations is not enough against some teams. If you sit in the same coverage too long the offense will eventually attack the open side. That means disguising your coverages. Many coaches make disguises too complicated. This is not a mystical concept. It is as simple as telling your defenders, "Never look like what it is."

That is a hard concept for coaches who want their defense to look like it does in the playbook before every snap. If your players understand their jobs, and understand leverage, they should be able to disguise coverages until late in the quarterback's cadence without any problem. It can cause us to panic because we think a kid doesn't know the call. Learn to trust your players and have confidence in their ability to apply what you have taught them to the field!

At the very minimum, I think a DC should **use both Solo and Special** in his arsenal. These coverages go hand-in-hand, and have the ability to make opposing offensive coaches pull their hair out attempting to figure out what coverage you are in. By utilizing these coverages it allows your defense to stay in a pattern reading coverage, by eliminating the threat of the additional receiver to the read side.

CHANGE OF STRENGTH (COS)

Motion that change the read side are troublesome to deal with but the presence of a third safety makes adjustments easier than a 4-3 or 3-4. If the read side changes the FS moves to the other side, and the SPUR and WILL swap responsibilities.

The read side flips to the right. The FS and WILL play cover 2 and the SPUR checks his side into SOLO.

The beauty of this is the adjustments were made by the secondary. The linebackers don't really have to move, only change responsibilities.

