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## CHAPTER 11



### Live Pass Pro

My philosophy of pass protection is to be very aggressive and solid at the guard and center positions. The tackles must keep the outside edges strong. I have a saying about how fast the linemen need to get set on pass protection: “They can’t get set fast enough.” However fast they can get set, it is not fast enough.

The coaching staff actually works backwards when deciding how to teach pass blocking. First they need to decide which pass plays will be ran that season. Once the type of pass plays have been determined, then protection schemes can be drawn up, which then tell the line coach what skills will need to be mastered. Caution: remember what was discussed in Chapter One: Don’t be a jack of all trades and a master of none. On paper the coaches can draw up a very impressive passing attack, however, a pass play is only as good as its protections. The major factor that decides what the pass attack will be is practice time.

With that said, this book will cover all facets of passing because it is impossible for Coach Stewart to know which facet of the passing game will fit the many different coaches who will read this book. In other words, just because all of these techniques and protections are in this book, does NOT mean that Coach Stewart is suggesting that you try to run all of them. All pass plays fall into these basic categories:

**Play action:** (Belly, Down, and GO pass)

**Quick Pass Game:** (Purple). This would be 3-step game if under center.

**Sprint-out:** (Red & Blue): QB can sprint towards sideline or setup slightly past the offensive tackle.

**Screen Pass Game:** (Silver): Two blocking schemes that allow 5 different screens.

**Drop Back Pass Game:** (Yellow & Gray): This would be 5-step game if under center.

The protections for the sprint-out game and play-action attacks use the run-blocking techniques already discussed in Chapters 4 through 7. Therefore, the passing section of this book will focus on the skills & techniques needed in a dropback passing attack. All of these drills and protections can be skipped if your passing offense is only going to play-action, sprint-out, and screen pass.



## DEFENSIVE RUSH LANES

Figures 101 show the rush lanes of the defensive linemen. As the release point of the quarterback changes, so does the protection. Your linemen need to understand where the quarterback will be when throwing the ball and how that release point correlates with protection. The protection that you use needs to be functional for the desired drop of the quarterback.

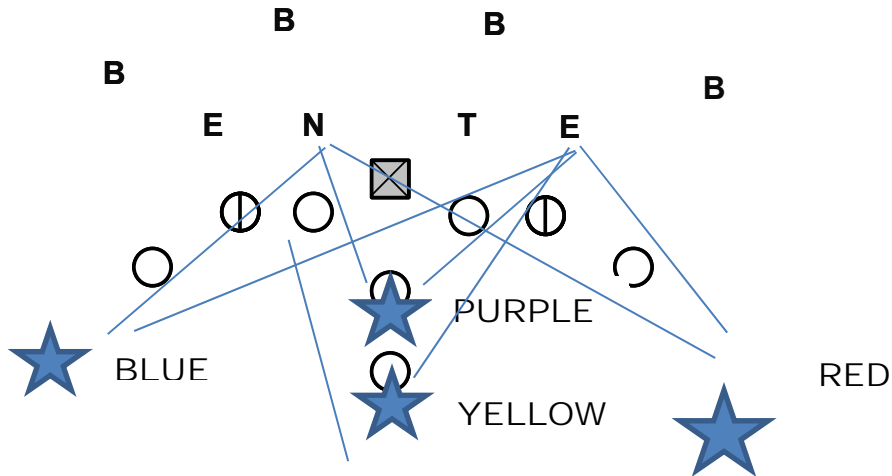


Fig 101: Defensive Pass Rush Lanes

## PASS SETS

After taking a look at the various release points and corresponding rush lanes, you can shift your focus to concentrate on the pass sets involved with the dropback passing game. The alignment of the defender will determine the pass set of the offensive lineman.

The key in the pass set is for the lineman to position his body as if he were going to "urinate" on the defender's rush lane. Although graphic, this phrasing seems to stick well with players and this concept is key to understanding the pass set.

### TYPES OF PASS SETS TO USE BASED ON ALIGNMENT

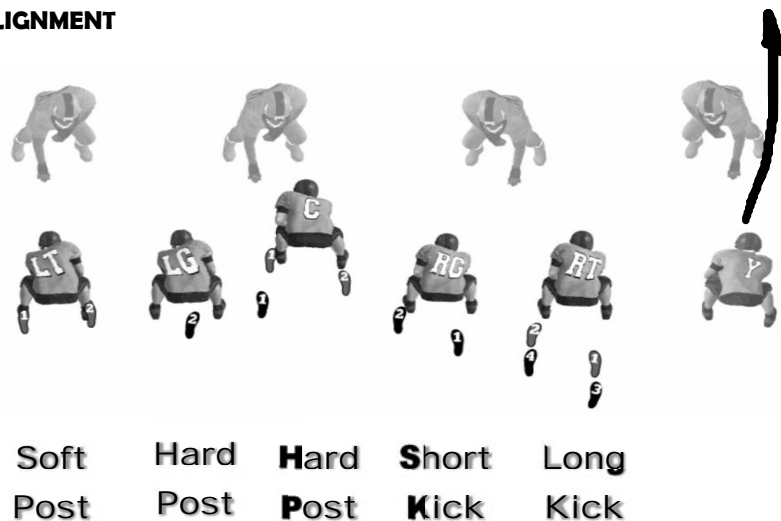


Fig 102: Types of Pass Sets



***Hard Post - vs inside shade defender***

- Push off outside foot, lead with your inside foot.
- Feet stay in close contact with turf. Set inside. Steps are quick, hard, jab steps
- Uncovered Guard vs offset/shaded NG use these steps but keep outside arm free. Shoulders square.
- 90° lateral step inside. 2<sup>nd</sup> foot also follows laterally.

***Soft Post - vs headup defender***

- Pickup both feet and put them down in same place as quickly as possible
- Allows blocker time to rise out of stance and get in a balanced 2-point set.
- The head up defender is a threat to both gaps, so blocker is cognitive that he cannot get beat inside.

***Soft Kick - vs outside shade defender***

- Kick outside foot back and out at a 45° angle.
- Don't lunge. Keep weight on inside foot.
- Attempt to get outside leg even with defender's crotch, covering up the inside of the defender.
- Shoulders square until moment of impact.

***Long Kick - vs very wide outside defender. Tackles only.***

- Kick straight back with outside foot, keeping shoulders square until just before the moment of impact.
- If shoulders and hips open too early, vulnerable to inside move.

The types of blocks are briefly described here so that you can understand why we are doing certain drills:



## GROUP WORK

No substitute exists for live work in the area of pass protection. The defensive line may want to get a full-speed rush look, and practicing that live tempo against the offensive line allows both parties a chance to get better. One drill can be done in a live situation that will create on-the-job training. It is important that this session be filmed so that the line coach can accurately evaluate talent and not have to slow down the drill to teach too many of the fine details.

### 2 ON 2 – OL vs DL

The last part of the pass-blocking progression is called stunt pickup. You use four players to do this drill. The two pass rushers can do any stunt or twist that they want. The rusher on the outside, a defensive end, for example, may come crashing down inside; as he crashes, the inside man takes a step forward and then loops to the outside.

You coach two ways to pick up these kinds of stunts. The first way is to **man the stunt**, which implies the blockers are going to block their man, regardless of where he goes. In order to do that, one of the pass blockers has to get a little deeper than the other. They have to be able to switch men and not run into each other.

The way that we prefer to block is to zone protect. When you zone, you are going to pass the stunt off. In order for two linemen to zone off a stunt, two things have to happen.

1. Blockers must communicate when they see their man loop somewhere else.
2. Pass blockers must block until they hear the call and until they are knocked off their man.

What happens is, as the penetrator comes down inside, the outside man keeps pass blocking him. As the inside man sees the loop, he yells, “Outside, outside!” and steps right through the hip of his adjacent blocker. He will knock him off and will take the block over, forcing the outside blocker to pick up the loop.

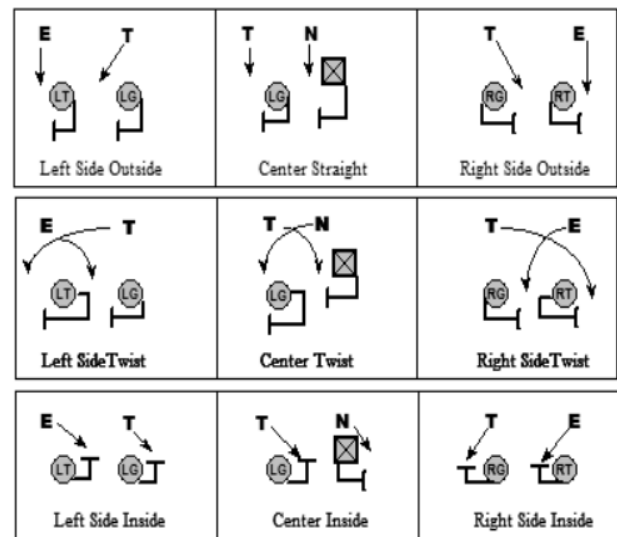


Fig 100: Types of 2 vs 2

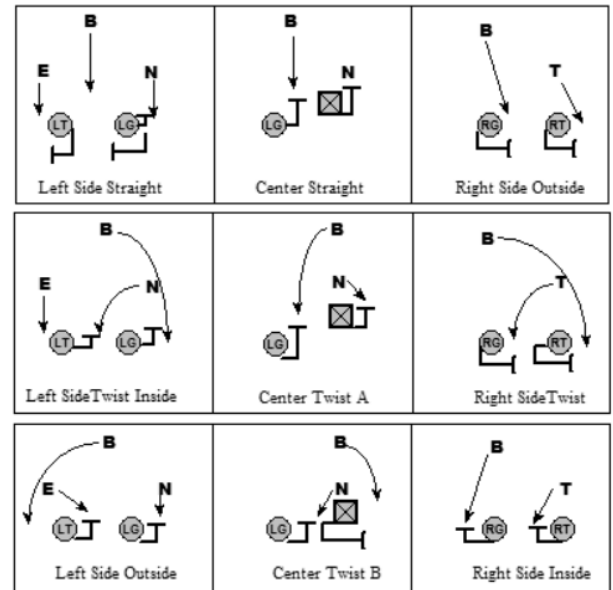
Two things are important. One man must recognize and call the loop. Then, he must turn and knock the other blocker off the penetrator so that blocker will know he is to pick up the looper. You must be careful to stop the penetrator first, because you have plenty of time to come off on the loop. The middle row twists are examples of this.

The defense does not have to run a stunt. They can pass-rush straight up the field. The pass blockers must always be prepared to block the man on them. They have to block the man on them and be honest about that block until they hear the call and feel the bump. The blockers must not anticipate and leave early.



### 2 ON 2 – OL vs DL+LB

This drill is a little more challenging than the previous 2 on 2 drill. In some cases, then blocker has to know if he is getting help before picking up the Linebacker. In the “LEFT SIDE STRAIGHT” example, the LG cannot leave without Center help. In “LEFT SIDE TWIST” the LG already is post stepping since the NG is inside shade. He shouldn’t chase the NG slanting away because his head is up and he will see the blitz coming. In the “RIGHT SIDE TWIST” example, the RT cannot leave the slanting DT to pickup the blitz until he is sure that the LG is ready to take over.



### 3 ON 2 – VERTICAL SETS

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### CALL OUTS

*Description:* The objective of this drill is to teach the proper pass set during each repetition and to teach proper dropback pass protection to the one lineman who is "live." The linemen are organized in their basic offensive formation, covered by a defensive front. All five offensive linemen assume their stances and the coach calls a desired pass-protection scheme. The line coach then points to one of the defensive players, who will execute a full-speed pass rush to the blocking dummy set up at the release point of the quarterback. On the cadence, and without the offensive linemen knowing which of the defenders will rush, each of the linemen take the proper footwork in preparation for a live rush. After the first two steps, only the assigned defender will follow through with the pass rush and attempt to get to the blocking dummy.



## HALF LINE

This is the next step from the drills we just did. In the Figure, the left side of the line is simulating a 4-3 look and the right side simulating a 4-4 look. You also need to expose your line to odd front blitzes, especially the 3-3 stack. The key is that a blocker cannot leave a D-Lineman to pick up a blitzer until he feels his teammate “bumping” him off the block.

The tough scenarios are the Outside blitz vs the 4-3 and the Twist Blitz A vs the 4-4. In the 4-3 scenario, the Guard has to see the LB blitz and “pull” to help. Of course he needs to know the protection behind him because there might be a RB that can pick that up. In the 4-4 Twist Blitz A example, the RT is short kick sliding towards the edge, but he also needs to be eyeballing the LB out of the corner of his eye.

