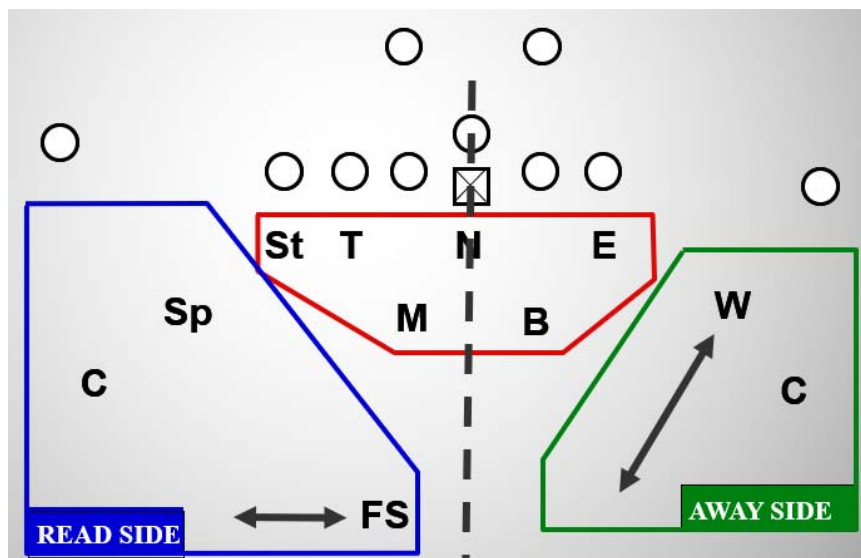


SECONDARY



On paper, the 4-2-5 Defense will look like the 4-4 defense while in Cover 3 and the 4-3 Defense while in Cover 4. The difference is in the PHILOSOPHY of treating the outside linebackers as defensive backs.

In the READ & REACT defense the OLB are just as important as the safeties in the 4-3, but perhaps a tad bit more physical since they will play up as OLB. However, they do not have to be as big as the 3-4 OLB, who are asked to come up & play on the LOS vs TE sets. They can be overmatched in this scenario.

The SPUR and WILL are critical to the defense and we identify them early in the spring. Ideally, we will put 5 to 6 kids there and “coach ‘em up”, making final decisions after spring and summer workouts. In a perfect world we would like to have 2 Seniors, 2 Juniors, and 2 sophomores on our varsity /JV depth chart so we aren’t starting over every year.

The challenge for a high school defensive coordinator is finding the practice time to teach these hybrids all the run-stopping techniques of Outside Linebacker and the pass-defending techniques of a safety.

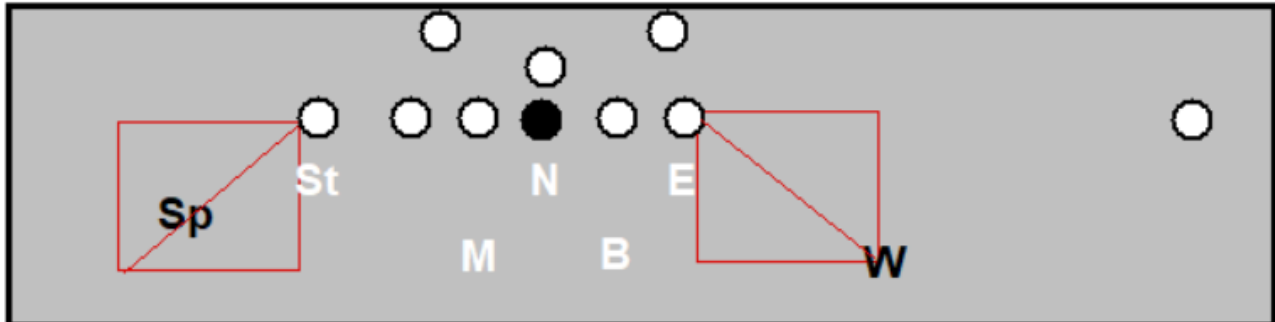
The FALCON is not the stereotypical free safety. We call this position FALCON because they are hunters like the bird of prey. Our FALCON would play linebacker if he weighed just a little bit more and we want him to be the 3rd leading tackler on the team. He also is the smartest defensive player who studies tons of film because he has to quickly recognize the offensive formations to get the secondary lined up. He is also the ultimate blitz adjuster on Smoke and Dog blitzes.

Our Corners are “lettuce eaters”. They are the 10th and 11th worst tacklers on the team and we jokingly tell them that the only reason that their momma had them was to defend the pass. Their job mantra is:

“GET BEAT DEEP, TAKE A SEAT”.

HYBRID-SAFETY ASSIGNMENTS

Squeeze the Window



STANCE

Inside foot back, tilted 45 degrees towards the QB

ALIGNMENT

Move along the diagonal. Closer to LOS as pass threats disappear

ASSIGNMENT

RUN: Contain. Squeeze the window that the RB can run up into.

Has pitch man on option

PASS: Flat-wheel defender. Re-Route #2 and pattern read #1

TECHNIQUE

Take all blocks on with inside shoulder.

Do not let any runners outside you. Funnel it back inside.

PASS drop is tough because back is to the QB.

RUN READ

EMOL reach blocks: Get 1-2 yds across the LOS and squeeze the window

EMOL pulls away: "Stack & Stay" on top of DE looking for counter-boot-reverse

EMOL base block: Flow Away = Stack & Stay

Flow To = Squeeze the Window

EMOL inside release to LB: Flow Away = Stack & Stay

Flow To = Squeeze the Window

PASS READ

EMOL pass blocks:

vs Pro or Single: Turn & drop to top of numbers, 10yds from LOS.

vs Twins: Re-Route #2 inside receiver

vs Trips: Buzz feet with eyes on #1 and #2.

If #1 WR hitch: sprint towards him;

If #2 runs out: Go with him to Flats

If #1 slants: Sit QB eye of sight

If #2 slants inside: Drop to #1

If #1 runs vertical, keep dropping until #2 breaks out.

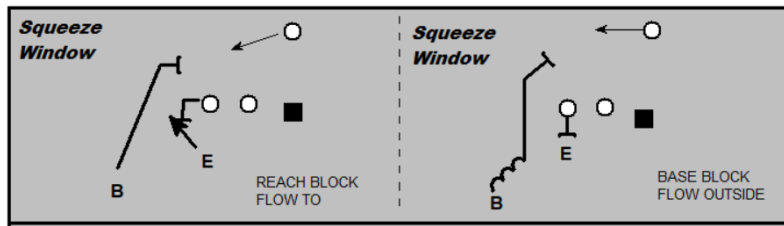
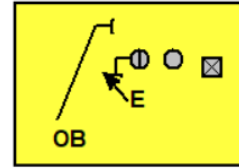
The reason we want OLB wide in 4x4 instead of 2x2 is angles. The closer you get to the box, harder it is to contain. Also, edge SMOKE blitzes come at angle. When blitzing an OLB from a 2x2 alignment, they are going to run upfield first and then “turn the corner” to get to the QB.

Run Defense With 1 WR On Their Side.

This puts them in a 2x2/3x3 alignment off the Tackle or Tight End.

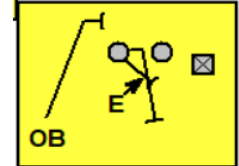
1. Contain vs sweeps/toss/Jet Sweep:

- The initial read should be End Man on Line of Scrimmage (EMOL) is a reach step. After getting this initial read, eyes snap to backfield to see full flow coming at you.
- “Set the Boundary”: Attack LOS but never go more than 2yds across unless you are sure you can make the tackle. If RB gets outside you, you WILL COME OUT. This is non-negotiable. Turn it back inside.
- Take on all lead blockers with your inside shoulder. Cut blockers in half. Do not try to go around...”ripping” through blockers sideline shoulder is OK if RB is trying to get outside.



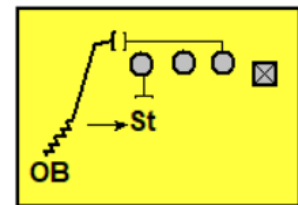
2. Option At You:

- The initial read should be EMOL releasing inside. End is squeezing down hard. Flow at you.
- This ASSIGNMENT is same as “Set the Boundary”, however there is no lead blocker, just a pitch man.
- The TECHNIQUE is to slow play the QB. Come at him to get him to make a decision early, but keeping an angle so that if he pitches it you can get the pitch man without the pitch man getting around you.



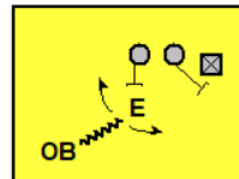
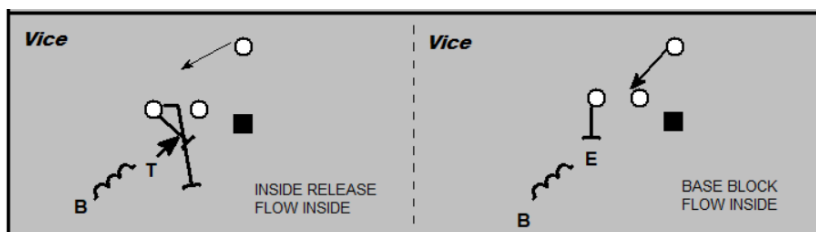
3. The Contain on the Edge vs off tackle:

- The initial read is EMOL is a base blocking. Might get pulling G trying to kick out. Flow coming at you.
- “Squeeze the Window”: Attack LOS while coming towards the RB. Don’t come upfield & give the RB a window to cut up into & then bounce.
- Take Lead Blockers on with inside shoulder. Match their angle...if you drew a straight line between you & the blocker, then travel on that line full speed with the intent of knocking the blocker back into the RB.
- You cannot commit inside or cross face the blocker until the RB has 100% cut up. When you get the RB to cutup, the ILB & F will probably make the tackle.



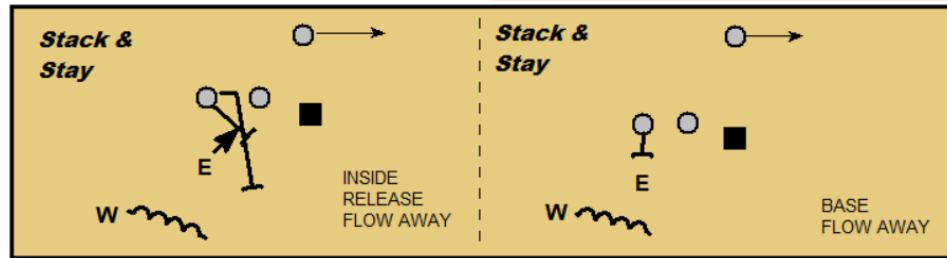
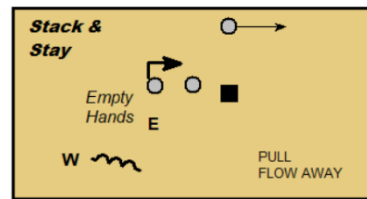
4. Fold Inside vs Belly type plays to their side:

- The initial read should be EMOL is a blocking End out. Backfield flow inside the tackle.
- “VICE”: Sit at a 1x1 off the DE hip. You cannot commit to the TB/FB inside because the QB can pull & run around the edge. When you see QB “empty hands” then go full force for the tackle in the b-gap.



5. CBR (Counter-Boot-Reverse) on **flow away**:

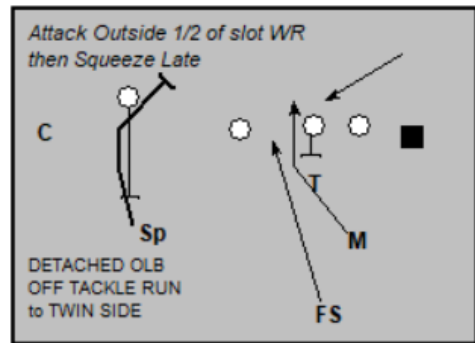
- Initial read is EMOL with backfield flow away.
- “**STACK & STAY**”: Stack 5yds behind the DE. Find WR/Wing on opposite side of formation. Look for pulling OL from other side. Make sure QB has “empty hands” on his boot path.
- Backside OLB and DE are the only players responsible for CBR. The other 9 players pursue flow.



Run Defense With 2 WR On Their Side.

4x1 on the #2 slot receiver in Cover 3 and 4 so that we can VIOLENTLY re-route vs pass. Split the difference between EMOL and #2 WR in cover 5.

But they still have all the run responsibilities previously mentioned from a landmark that is farther away.



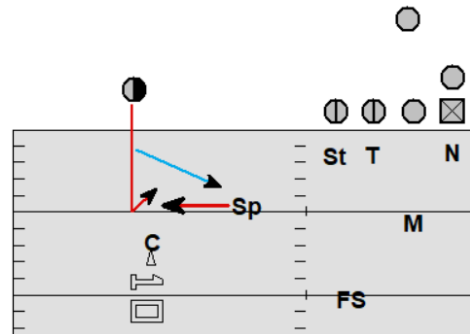
Pass Defense With 1 WR On Their Side.

1. **PLAY ACTION.** EMOL run blocks. Backfield is play action faking.

- If the playside Tackle/Guard really sell their run blocks, then you have to honor the run. A give away might be back coming out of backfield. Film study is crucial here.

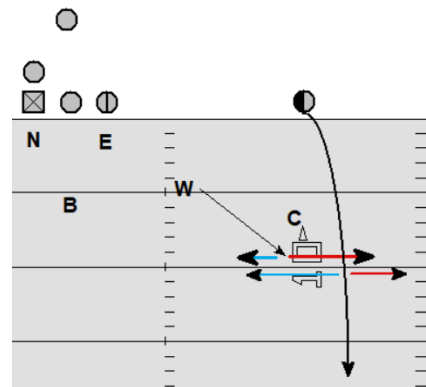
2. **QUICK PASS:** EMOL fires out. QB in 1-3 step drop.

- “**Find #1**”. Turn and get eyes on #1 WR while understanding that your landmark is 10yds deep, top of numbers. The #1 WR route will 99% of the time stop you from reaching this landmark.
- **QUICK/HITCH:** run at him. Do not look for ball. Separate him from ball when you arrive. “Show up with a headache”
- **SLANT:** sit on slant route & find QB. Think of yourself as a soccer goalie getting in the line of sight between QB & WR.
- **FADE:** head on a swivel. Continue dropping, but looking for RB/TE out of backfield.



3. **DROP BACK PASS:** EMOL pass drops. QB in 3-5 step drop.

- “**Find #1**”. Turn and get eyes on #1 WR while understanding that your landmark is 10yds deep, top of numbers. The #1 WR route will determine the actual drop.
- **OUT:** get under the man so the QB has to throw over.
- **IN:** Dig/Curl. If there is a #2 threat from a TE or RB, pass it off to ILB...otherwise sit underneath the Dig/Curl. “Squeeze the Zone” if nobody is in your zone (flats)
- **DEEP:** Continue dropping, but looking for RB/TE out of backfield.



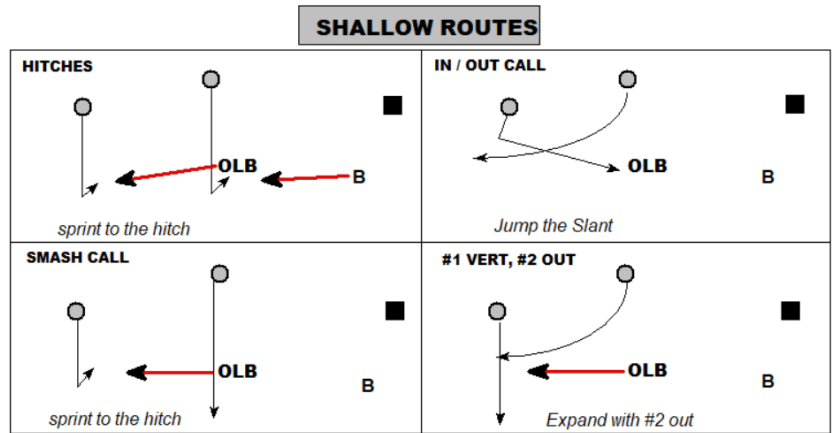
4. **SPRINT OUT PASS:** EMOL reach blocks. Drop to flats. ILB has the QB.

Pass Defense With 2 WR On Their Side.

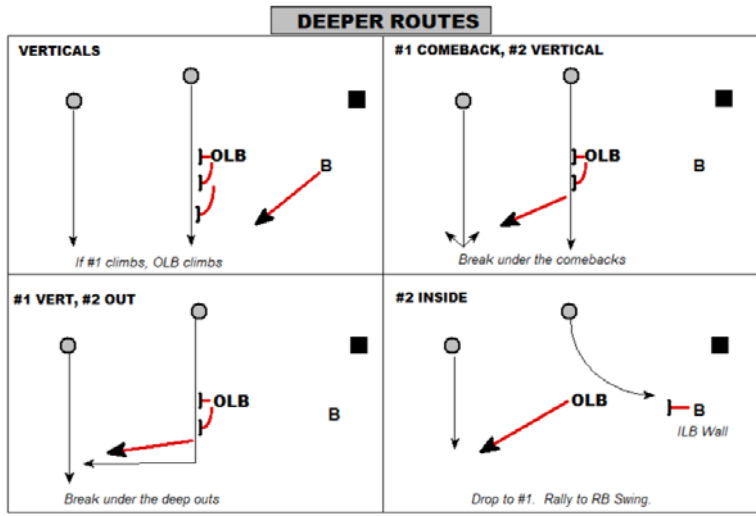
OLB is in a 4x1 re-route alignment in Cover 3 and 4. Split the difference between EMOL and #2 WR in cover 5.

- If EMOL/QB gives pass read, turn all attention to the #2 slot receiver. He has to come to you. Do not attack or lunge. If #2 WR gets to you (4-5 yds), then the goal is to put him on the ground or out of bounds.

1. **PLAY ACTION.** EMOL run blocks. Backfield is play action faking.
 - If the playside Tackle/Guard really sell their run blocks, then you have to honor the run. A give away might be back coming out of backfield. Film study is crucial here.
2. #2 breaks inside underneath 4 yards.
 - “Find #1”. Follow same rules as 1-WR. A #2 shallow route inside is ILB problem. However, be an athlete & break on ball if QB has quick release.
3. #2 breaks outside underneath 4 yards:
 - “**FLATS**”. Break out with #2 receiver but stay on top of him with a 2yd cushion.
 - Don’t be a “**HUGGER**” because of wheel and your flat zone extends 10yds deep. Break on “palm off”
 - If you get an “IN” call by CB, then sit on slant by #1 while CB jumps the out by #2.



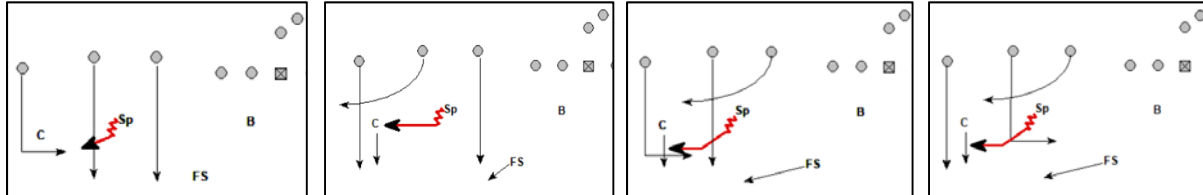
4. #2 gets to your 4yd landmark: violent re-route.
 - “**EYES ON #1, HANDS ON #2**”. If either one stops in the flats (hitch by #1 or breaks out) disengage from re-route and sprint to the threat in the flats.
 - If #1 breaks in on deep dig/curl...you should sit on it but make sure CB gives you an “IN” call so you know CB/F have #2 deep.
 - If both continue vertical (post/seam/fade) stay inside of #2 so the QB has to throw it over you, giving FS time to get there. Also have CB help on 2-verts because CB is closer to #2 than #1.



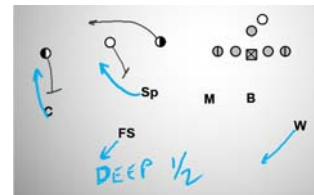
Pass Defense With 3 WR On Their Side.

TRIPS involves no re-routing because you can't cover #3 speed out while re-routing #2. We have a couple of trips calls:

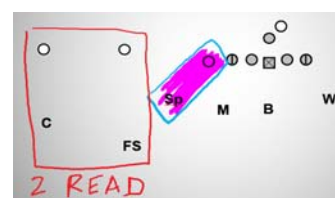
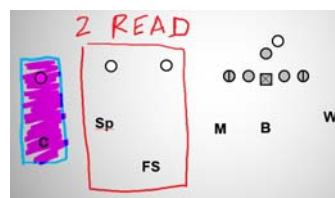
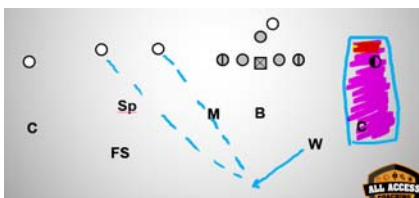
1. **RATTLE:** Traditional $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{2}$ vs trips.
 - OLB is Flat-Curl-Seam. Slow backpedal, breaking on any out routes by #1, #2, or #3.
 - Collision #2. Backpedal to 12yds. Deny seam to #2.
 - #1 breaks in: "IN" call from CB with no flat threat from #2 or #3: OLB expand under #1 dig.
 - #3 breaks out: "PUSH" call from F. OLB drop to #1, break on flats
 - #2 breaks out: OLB mirror flat route, over top while staying in seam as long as possible.
 - #2 breaks in: Seam drop. Get #1 dig or break to flats if #3 out (#3 to flats is an "PUSH" call from F)



2. **ROLL:** Trips side CB rolls down to play flats. F, W, & backside CB are deep $\frac{1}{3}$ defenders. Good vs bubbles & perimeter runs to trips side.
 - OLB is Curl-Seam. Sits on digs, inside comebacks. Make QB throw over head on seam routes.



3. **SOLO:** Backside CB plays man v single WR opposite trips. Will OLB drops to deep middle, reading #3. Allows F to read 2 to 1.
 - OLB reads 2 to 1. Cover 2 puts OLB closer to box, splitting #2 & #3 or even getting inside #3. Cover 4 puts Spur OLB in flats
4. **SPECIAL:** Trips side CB plays man vs #1 WR. F & Spur OLB play 2-read off #2 & #3. Will helps backside CB on solo receiver.
5. **SURVIVOR:** Spur plays man on #3 trips receiver. F & CB play 2-read on #1 and #2. Will helps backside CB. Mainly for Trey sets.



RUN STOPPING DRILLS

Stopping the run is crucial for any linebacker. Good run defense starts with good fundamentals. An outside linebacker is given keys to focus on, and it is important that they read them correctly and are in the right position.

Proper pursuit is also important. Using the right technique to shuffle and then sprint when the back makes a cut helps to limit the running game. The pursuit angle is crucial here, which is why that is such a popular drill.

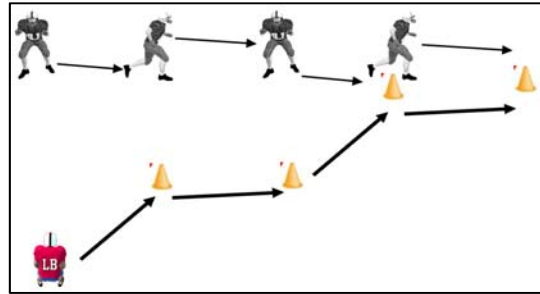
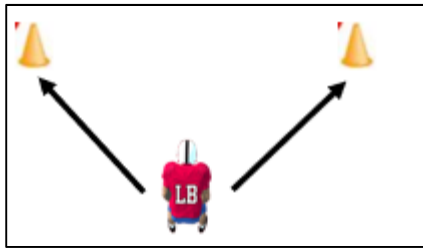
Gap control and block shedding are also important. If given a gap responsibility, the linebacker has to plug that gap so the running back can't get through it. This will most likely require some kind of block shedding to get around or through the offensive lineman, tight end, or lead fullback who is blocking on the play.

Shuffle, Read, Run

The shuffle, read, run drill is designed for the linebacker to use solid fundamentals in the running game. The backer finds the ball, shuffles towards line of scrimmage where the ball is headed, and then sprints towards the ballcarrier when he takes off.

It is very important to remain in a good position and to shuffle, with no crossing over of the feet. Notice in the video below how the athlete is always in a good stance, with his eyes on the ball. He doesn't get his feet tangled up and is able to chase the back down the line of scrimmage.

The linebacker always stays one step behind the running back, so he has the proper angle to make a tackle if the back cuts up the football field. When doing this, it is important to not let the back get any further ahead than necessary.

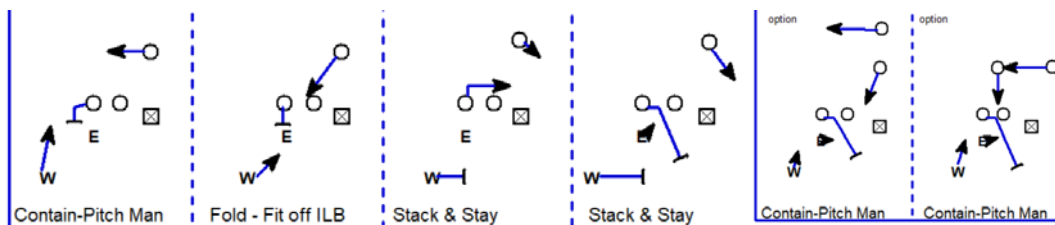


Gaining ground towards the ball carrier while keeping shoulders square to the back. If the defensive player turns his shoulders and the back changes direction you eliminate yourself. Do not cross your feet over each other.

When the RB turns and sprints, the OLB cannot gain ground. Turn and run towards the sideline. The only time to close ground on the RB is when you are shuffling. Stay 1 step behind the ballcarrier.

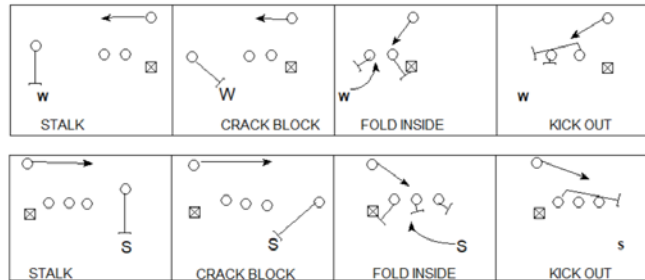
Triangle Reads

Start off with just the Hybrid OLB and an offensive tackle, who does a reach step, inside release, and a pull. Then add a Running Back, and then add a lead blocker.



Block Shedding

Go through all the blocks that has to be defeated.



ReRoute

Start with 1-on-1 partner to teach proper leverage. The nose of the Hybrid should be lined up with the nose of the slot receiver being re-routed. Then have the receiver run 5 yds to the Hybrid. After mastery of re-routing is accomplished, add a #1 receiver who runs hitches, deep outs, and fades.

Pass Coverage Drills

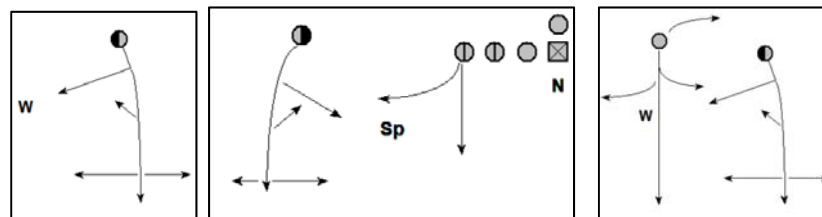
Pass coverage is very important for Hybrids and is challenging because they often have to match up with tight ends, fullbacks, and running backs over the course of a football game. While speed is great, the proper technique is what will allow linebackers to matchup. It is important to use both man and zone outside linebacker drills to work on coverage skills.

Man Coverage

The Hybrid is lined up 5 yards away from the line of scrimmage and is matched up man-to-man with the tight end. The backer is in a good stance, backpedals a couple yards, and sticks on the tight end's hip when he makes a cut. Hybrids will cut under the receivers when getting in phase.

Zone Coverage

Start off by having the Hybrid just drop to #1 receiver, who runs slants, hitches, digs, 10-yd outs, and fades. They have to train themselves to not look back for the ball and let the WR tell them when the ball is in the air. After mastery of angles, then start throwing a ball to #1. Then add a Tight End, and finally add a #2 slot receiver.



Pass Rushing Drills

Proper technique includes a quick first step, an explosive punch to engage the blocker, and a good mix of speed and power moves to get to the quarterback. It begins with getting around the blocker with zero contact, and then advances to defeating the blocker. They can rip or swim around the blocker. In the outside rush version, the backer will use speed and only make contact with the offensive lineman if necessary. Add a RB to teach PEEL technique.