



**EVERYTHING
ENCOMPASSING
CALLING THE PLAYS**

CALLING THE PLAY

- I'm not going to pretend that I have come up with some genius manner of communicating plays to our kids, because I haven't. I utilize Wristbands as the primary method of communication because they are simple to read and the way we structure them makes them easier for us as coaches to deal with.
- All of our core formations are essentially one word and included in that word is the formation strength, this makes it very easy for us to communicate the formation as I will simply yell it out to the kids. In the cases when we want to include our tags I will simply add those on following the core formation.
 - Ex) BRONCO OPEN 6
 - Ex) COWBOY WEAK OPEN 5
- On our wristband we just write out the play concept and play strength. To articulate what play I want to run I just follow up the formation with the corresponding Wristband Number or Letter. In situations when I am calling the letter I will use phonetics. So for example if I wanted to run Play G I would yell out 'ACE GOLF, ACE GOLF' or 'ACE GEORGIA, ACE GEORGIA'
- For play when I want to tag a certain WR in our spread package I would just yell out the formation and the corresponding letter followed by the WR's number
 - Ex) ACE FOXTROT 3

AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT OUR WRISTBAND WOULD LOOK LIKE

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------------------|-----------|-----------------------|----------|-----------------|
| 1 | WEDGE LT | 2 | WEDGE RT | A | SCOOP RT |
| 3 | ISO LT | 4 | ISO RT | B | SCOOP LT |
| 5 | SWEEP LT | 6 | SWEEP RT | C | HOUSTON |
| 7 | ACTION LT | 8 | ACTION RT | D | CHICAGO |
| 9 | WEDGE LT SNEAK | 10 | WEDGE RT SNEAK | E | SEATTLE |
| 11 | REVERSE LT | 12 | REVERSE RT | F | INDIANA |
| 13 | ISO LT T | 14 | ISO RT T | G | OAKLAND |
| 15 | ISO LT FLASH | 16 | ISO RT FLASH | H | |
| 17 | TOSS LT | 18 | TOSS RT | I | |
| 19 | Q SWEEP LT | 20 | Q SWEEP RT | J | |
| 21 | PITCH PASS RT | 22 | THROWBACK RT | K | |

CALL SHEET

| LEFT HASH | | MOF | | RIGHT HASH | |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| COWBOY | | EAGLE | | INDIAN | |
| 2 | WEDGE RT | 1 | WEDGE LT | 1 | WEDGE LT |
| 4 | ISO RT | 2 | WEDGE RT | 3 | ISO LT |
| 6 | SWEEP RT | 5 | SWEEP LT | 5 | SWEEP LT |
| 8 | ACTION RT | 6 | SWEEP RT | 7 | ACTION LT |
| 10 | WEDGE RT SNEAK | 7 | ACTION LT | 9 | WEDGE LT SNEAK |
| 12 | REVERSE RT | 8 | ACTION RT | 11 | REVERSE LT |
| COWBOY OPEN | | 11 | REVERSE LT | INDIAN OPEN | |
| 6 | SWEEP RT | 12 | REVERSE RT | 5 | SWEEP LT |
| 8 | ACTION RT | 17 | TOSS LT | 7 | ACTION LT |
| 12 | REVERSE RT | 18 | TOSS RT | 11 | REVERSE LT |
| COWBOY WEAK | | HAWK | | INDIAN WEAK | |
| 1 | WEDGE LT | 17 | TOSS LT | 2 | WEDGE RT |
| 3 | ISO LT | 18 | TOSS RT | 4 | ISO RT |
| 5 | SWEEP LT | 19 | Q SWEEP LT | 6 | SWEEP RT |
| 7 | ACTION LT | 20 | Q SWEEP RT | 8 | ACTION RT |
| COWBOY OPEN WEAK | | 1 | WEDGE LT | INDIAN OPEN WEAK | |
| 5 | SWEEP LT | 2 | WEDGE RT | 6 | SWEEP RT |
| 7 | ACTION LT | 7 | ACTION LT | 8 | ACTION RT |
| A | SCOOP RT | 8 | ACTION RT | B | SCOOP LT |

- Like I said before there is nothing innovative about how I call plays. The wristband is really simple, and in using the wristband I can easily craft my call sheet.
- I use an excel sheet and create three columns. On the farthest left is my left hash calls, in the middle is generally where I keep the balanced sets (Hawk, Eagle, House), and on the right is just the inverse of the left column.
- I use colors to highlight the formations because I find it helps my eyes find the certain things I want faster. And below each formation is every play we can run out of that formation.
- Very seldom will there be any changes made to the initial call sheet, which is why I will usually laminate the first call sheet and use it throughout the season.

THE WRISTBAND

| | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1 | WEDGE LT | 2 | WEDGE RT | A | SCOOP RT |
| 3 | ISO LT | 4 | ISO RT | B | SCOOP LT |
| 5 | SWEEP LT | 6 | SWEEP RT | C | HOUSTON |
| 7 | ACTION LT | 8 | ACTION RT | D | CHICAGO |
| 9 | WEDGE LT SNEAK | 10 | WEDGE RT SNEAK | E | SEATTLE |
| 11 | REVERSE LT | 12 | REVERSE RT | F | INDIANA |
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| 21 | PITCH PASS RT | 22 | THROWBACK RT | K | |

- Any coach who has used wristbands knows that they can be really annoying to use, especially if you are trying to jam loose-leaf paper into the plastic window. Now factor in having to do that every time you need to clean the wristbands and it gets even more tiresome.
- How I have combatted this is by putting all of our plays on the wristband and laminating the bands from the start. Laminated sheets can be easily inserted and removed from wristband window which will make your life a lot easier.
- On the functional side of the wristband I want to make sure they are as easy to read as possible. I try and do this by using as large of a clear and legible font as I can, I prefer Arial. Additionally, I like to try and create some difference in the columns to make them easier to read, in the example above I have alternated between a light gray and a white background. This in my opinion makes it easier to quickly identify the plays as it keeps things from blending together. In the grey columns I have also **BOLDED** the text with goal again of making it easier to differentiate from the other lines.
- I should note that in our offense all 11 players on the field will have a wristband, and ideally so will our top subs on the sideline. I have found that 15 wristbands is a solid number to have.

ALTERNATE PLAY CALLING PROCEDURE

- I realize that some coaches may not want to deal with using wristbands and would prefer signals, below I have listed some basic signals and other ways to communicate the play.
- Code Words
 - Coding plays can be a good way to articulate the play call to your kids. I would recommend if you are going to verbally call in your plays that you really strive to make the codewords deceptive, as well as have a few ways to call each play. So don't call your sweep play 'Broom' or 'Brush', instead maybe call it Karate (like sweep the leg) and a secondary codeword could be Miyagi.
 - As for calling the direction of the plays you can either use a secondary word to denote play direction or build the direction into the codeword.
 - Ex) Karate Hot could be Sweep RT, where as Karate Cold would be Sweep LT
 - Or you could use, Oregon for Sweep LT, and Ducks for Sweep RT, etc
- Hand Signals
 - If I were to use hand signals I would use very simple signals that I can do multiple times without confusion, and then use a separate signal to indicate play direction.
 - For example if I wanted to signal in our Toss play I might mimic throwing a rugby ball and then follow it up with a thumbs up, or thumbs down. Thumb up meaning to the RT, thumb down meaning to the LT.
- Again this isn't ground breaking stuff, I'm just trying to illustrate that you can communicate in a variety of ways and still execute the offense effectively. I will say that I know some coaches prefer hand signals because it is the 'fastest' but I will say that in my experience we have used wristbands and are often times already aligned and have the play call in before the refs have even spotted the ball.
- Repeat plays
 - I felt that I should also include a little bit about repeat play procedures. I'm sure that you already have some form of repeat plays in your offense, whether it be 'COPY' or 'XEROX' or whatever words that you use. I think that repeat words are a really great tool to use following explosive plays to help you take advantage of some momentum as well as play even faster. Two very simple ones that we use are..
 - "SALT" which stands for SAME AS LAST TIME. This is our repeat the exact same play word.
 - "PEPPER" just means run the same play we just ran but in the opposite formation and direction
 - If our last play was 'COWBOY WEDGE RT' and we say PEPPER, then our offense knows to align in INDIAN and run WEDGE LT.

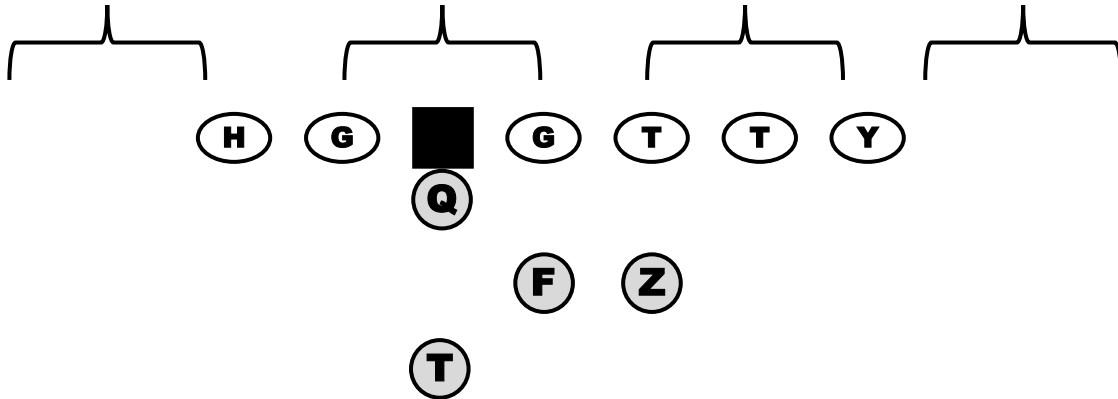
POINTS OF ATTACK

MISDIRECTION

GCG

OFF TACKLE

EDGE



GCG

The GCG area is our A-Gap run game, the GCG stands for Guard-Center-Guard.

The primary play we utilize to attack this area is our WEDGE play.

A secondary play we utilize to attack this area is our SCOOP play.

OFF TACKLE

The Off-Tackle area is for our runs that hit inside of the Tight End, but outside of the GCG area.

The primary play we utilize to attack this area is our ISO play.

A secondary play we utilize to attack this area is our TOSS play.

EDGE

The Edge area is any run that attacks outside of the TE.

The primary play we utilize to attack this area is our SWEEP play.

Additionally, we will attack this area with our PA Passing Game, primarily the Action Pass, but also with our Pitch Pass.

MIS - DIRECTION

The Misdirection area is any thing that creates false flow or attacks the short side of our unbalanced formation.

The primary play we utilize to attack this area is our REVERSE play.

A secondary play we utilize to attack this area is our SNEAK play. We will also use our THROWBACK pass play to attack this area.

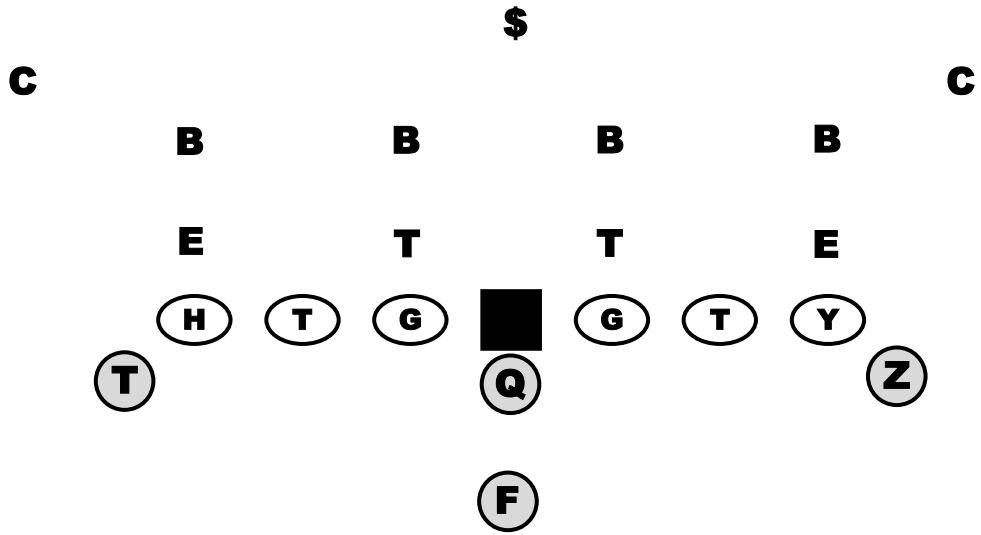
IDENTIFYING FRONTS

- When calling the game I don't really care the exact type of defense that our opposition is running, chances are very high that they will be in a 'Defense of the Week' against us and their looks will be somewhat random. To ease the burden of trying to ID the fronts we see I have boiled everything down to being either one of two looks. A STACK front or a FENCE front. In answering the question of what front the defense is in I very quickly have an idea of how I want to attack them, I will discuss this on a following slide.
- A STACK defense is easy to identify because of the second level defenders. If a defense has three or more 'LINEBACKERS' than I would consider that a Stack look. Another easy way to ID this type of front is to look at the first level of the defense, if they have five or less defenders on the LOS then they are in a stack look by default. On the following slides I will illustrate some examples of a STACK defense.
- A FENCE defense is also quite easy to identify, and can be done in a similar manner to that of the STACK fronts. If a defense has six or more defenders on the LOS, or two or less 'LINEBACKERS' than they are in a FENCE front. On the following slides I will illustrate some examples of a FENCE defense.
- When I look to attack a defense I will tell you I really only focus what their front is because when we are in our 32 Personnel sets I am trying to run the ball, however, it is also important to examine the back end of their defense in order to try and figure out if the passing attack out of these formations is optimal. On the following slides I will illustrate the three basic looks you will see from the pass coverage defenders, specifically the Corner Back.

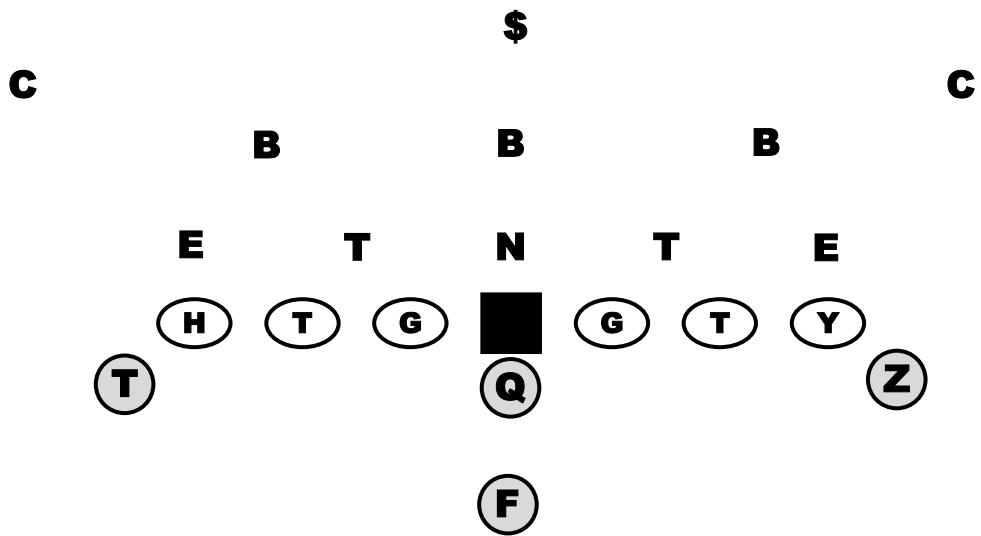
STACK FRONT PLAY CALLING

- On the following slide are three examples of a STACK front versus our balanced double wing set, however, the basic premise for attacking the STACK front from double wing will carry over into our unbalanced sets as well.
- First and Foremost when you see a STACK front you should start thinking about attacking the edges, primarily with the usage of the Sweep play. Because a defense has committed to stacking their defenders inside the box this means that their Corners are now the primary edge run fitters. This is great for us because Corners are usually not the most physical kids and we can now get our big guys on them and really make them hesitant to fit up.
- My Second thought when I see a STACK front is to attack the Off-Tackle area. The reason for this, as can be seen on the following slide is because stack teams will generally leave the Offensive Tackle uncovered and as a result of this makes for a good point of attack. To attack this area from the Double wing set I love our Toss play because of the angles it creates at the Point of Attack. From our unbalanced sets I would utilize the ISO play again for the angles it creates.
- The third way I will look to attack a STACK front is with our misdirection plays, in particular the Reverse play. As mentioned above when a team commits to stacking defenders in the box they leave their Corners on islands to fit the edge. With our Reverse play we can create false flow to account for the Linebackers and we can get our playmakers out in space and usually with a convoy of blockers.

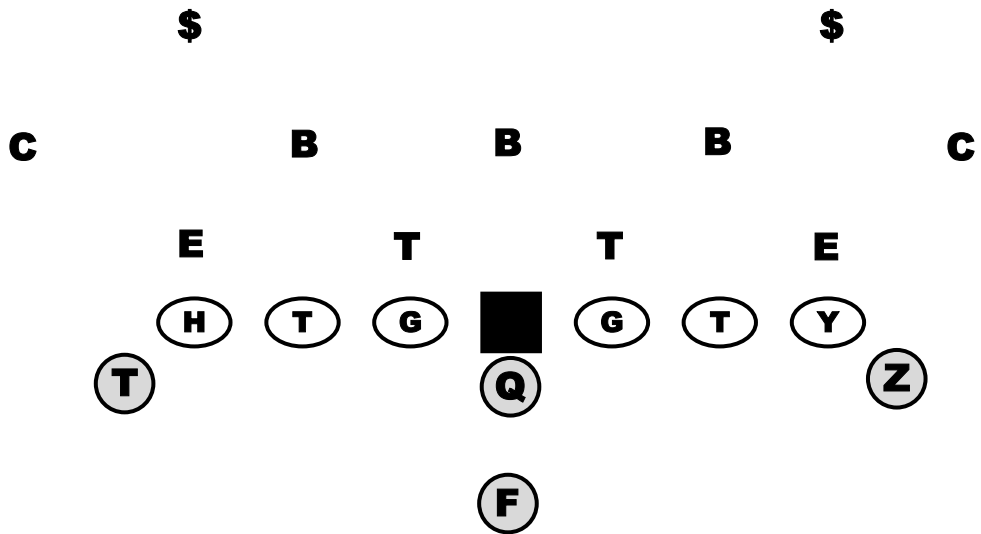
STACK FRONTS



4-4



5-3

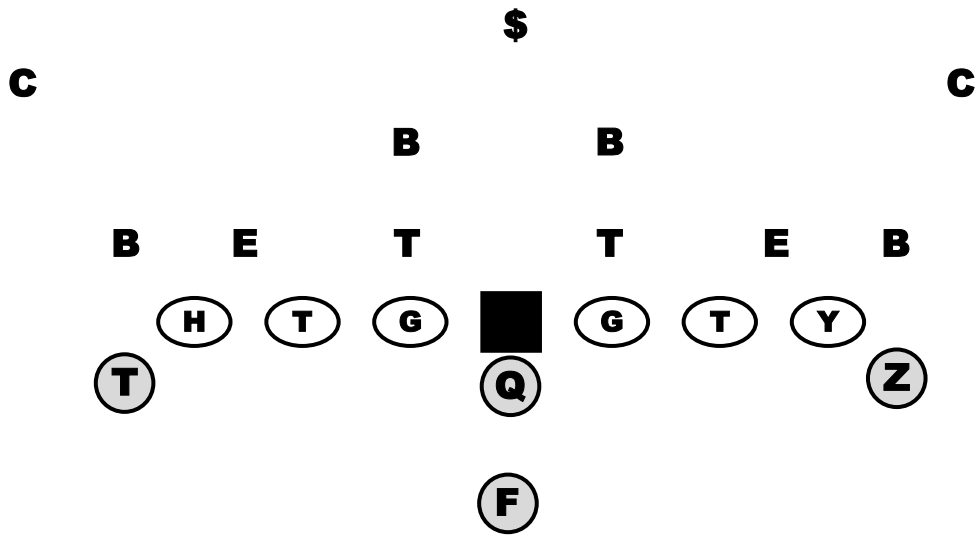


4-3

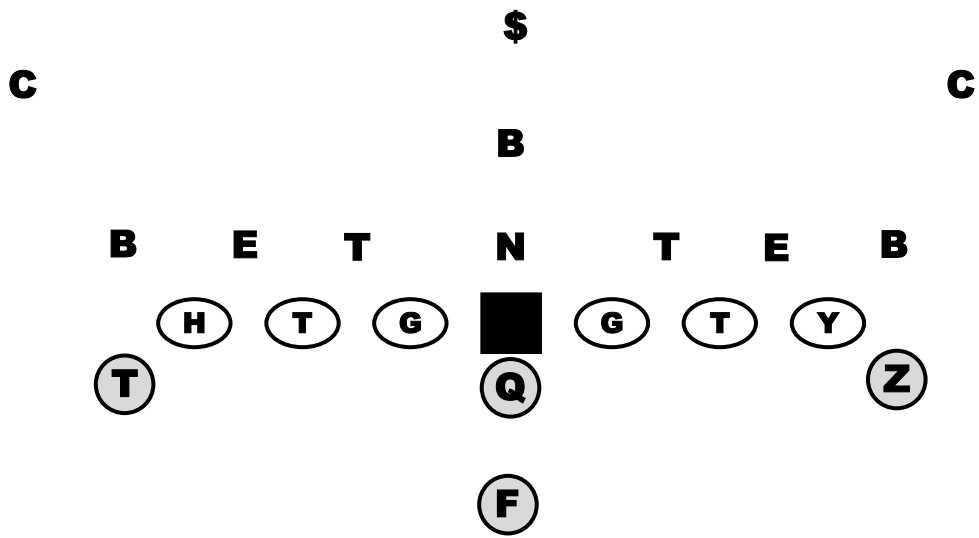
FENCE FRONT PLAY CALLING

- On the following slide are three examples of a FENCE front versus our balanced double wing set, however, the basic premise for attacking the FENCE front from double wing will carry over into our unbalanced sets as well.
- First and Foremost when you see a FENCE front you should immediately think to run Wedge. Because of the lack of Stack defenders the Wedge play is one cut away from popping out and becoming an explosive play. Think of a Fence front as thinning out the defense, when they Fence themselves out they are trying to take away our sweep play, in doing this they become vulnerable to attacks up the middle.
- My Second thought when I see a FENCE front is to attack Off-Tackle. This is essentially the same as the way to attack a STACK front. The reason for this is in relation to what the defense wants to take away. As mentioned above a FENCE defense is trying to take away the Sweep play, with this in mind if you can attack inside of their edge defenders you will have a chance at getting some good yardage because they lack the needed amount of second level defenders to account for our attack. The primary means of attacking in this way are utilizing the Toss play from double wing sets, and the ISO play from unbalanced sets.
- The third way I will look to attack a FENCE front is through the air. Because the defense has decided to remove a second level defender and add him to the LOS they have also eliminated or at the very least reduce the effectiveness of one of their pass defenders. It is tough for an OLB to both set the edge in the run game and carry a TE/WR vertical in the pass game. Because of this the defense is forcing the CB to cover an entire third of the field by himself. As a result of this the Action Pass will put this Corner in a bind by placing a route behind him (Corner Route) and in front of him (Flat Route).

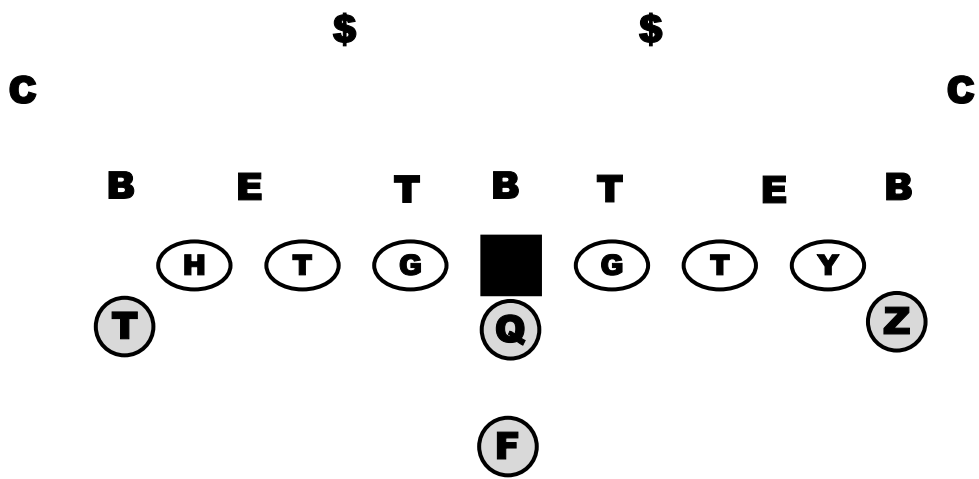
FENCE FRONTS



6-2



7-1



7-0

ALIGNMENT OF THE CORNER BACK

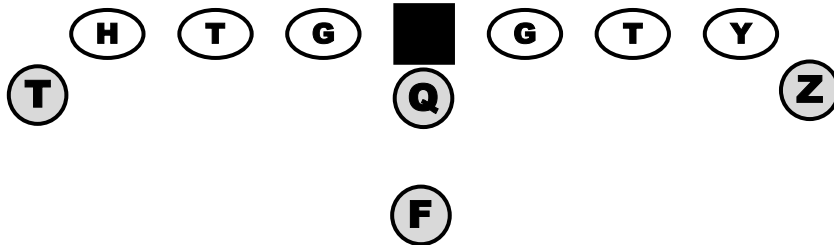
- On the following slide are three examples of how a Corner Back will generally align. The slides will not contain any first or second level defenders because they are irrelevant for what we are trying to accomplish in the pass game.
- OFF CB
 - An OFF CB is one playing at or around the level of the deep Safety. For ease of explanation I would say that an Off CB is any CB who aligns eight or more yards off the LOS.
 - If a CB is playing this far off of the LOS he is telling you that the pass game (or at the very least the Corner Route will not be open). However, when a CB is playing that far off he is decreasing his effectiveness in defending the run.
- UP CB
 - An UP CB is a corner back that is playing up on the LOS. However, for ease of explanation I would say that it is a CB who is playing anywhere from zero to four yards off of the LOS.
 - If the CB is playing UP on the LOS this means he is trying to be an edge setter in the run game and as a result is leaving the defense susceptible to the pass. If I see an UP CB I am far more likely to pull the trigger and call our pass plays.
- MIDDLE CB
 - As you might assume a MIDDLE CB is one who is playing in the depths between the two aforementioned locations, anywhere from five to seven yards.
 - A MIDDLE CB is usually the most frequently seen because it allows the CB to defend both the Pass and the Run. A MIDDLE CB is still susceptible to the passing attack but it requires more feel for how each CB is playing.

CORNER BACK ALIGNMENTS

C

\$

C

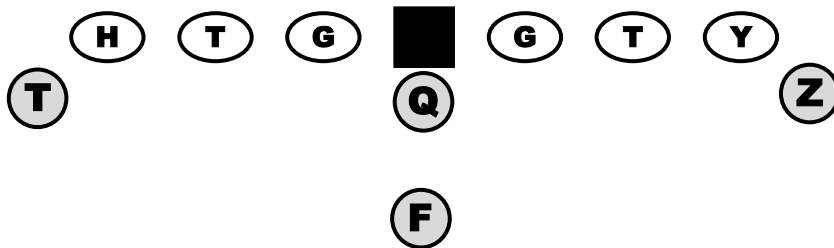


OFF

\$

C

C

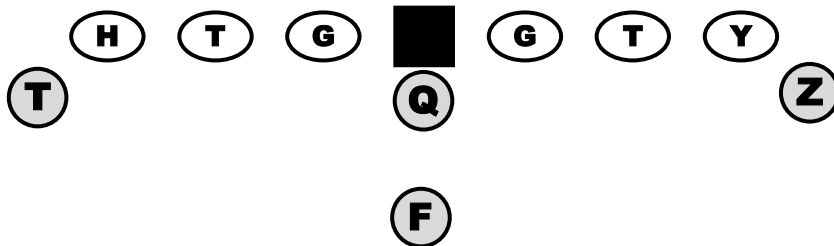


UP

\$

C

C



MIDDLE