
CHAPTER 1



The Wing T Offense

A MESSAGE FROM COACH STEWART

Football is a game that can be very complex with its 22 moving parts while at the same time being so simple. This paradox of learning all of its interconnected layers while not forgetting the simplicity of its fundamentals makes coaching football a great challenge. The successful coaches all have one thing in common: single-mindedness. They have bought into something that they really believe in and became an expert at it.

“Name an offense or defensive scheme and I’ll find a coach who went 10-0 running it”

I have seen to many young coaches who have not yet decided which direction they want to go on offense, defense, or just general coaching philosophy. Experimentation is good, but it can be painful and I have seen programs crumble or at the very least have stunted growth while the head coach is searching for a single, sound concept. I encourage shopping around—calling, writing, and visiting coaches you admire. Investigate all aspects of their attacks. Talk it over with your coaches and mentors, think it through. But once you decide, lock on and stick with it through the rough waters that definitely will come as your entire program is learning it.

In my experience, the biggest tests will come from within the inner circle of your program from people who believe they have the program in their best interest. These are people that you trust and they are not intentionally being disloyal, but they were not with you at every step as you formed your vision. You need to have a “contagious” confidence that comes from knowing you have a sound product. The hidden fears of uncertainty will be diminished by the knowledge that is gained by your staff and players as you shape and develop it.

It is OK to add your personal touch in many areas, in fact it is imperative that you take ownership and make it your own. The head coach must remain true to himself and not try to be someone or something that he is not. The following



statement is true in all areas of life, not just football: “Be Yourself, not your idea of what you think somebody else's idea of yourself should be.”

As you take in all of our X's and O's, our techniques, and drills....please remember the most important job that you have as coach: To teach your players to be better sons, husbands, and fathers.

Wing t philosophy

The Wing-T offense is so much more than just a formation. In fact it is a BUNCH of formations, all designed to outnumber the defense at the point of attack and confuse defenders in regards to what technique they should use versus each alignment. The PISTOL WING T also sprints to the line of scrimmage and snaps the ball in under 4 seconds which makes it even harder for the defense to line up correctly. These formations help the linemen by allowing them to gain leverage against a mis-aligned defender.

"The Wing T Offense is NOT just a formation"

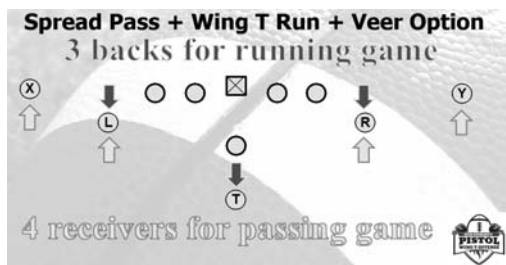


Figure 1: Four RB or Four WR

Another key component to the Wing-T is the wing backs being both a threat as a running back as well as a receiver. The PISTOL WING-T has two wings which forces the defense to respect a 4-WR passing game in addition to a 4-back power running game. This helps the linemen because the defense cannot “load up the box” with 10 men. Having three running backs also allows the use of misdirection to its fullest. Figure 2 below shows how the Belly family has the ability to attack inside, outside, and backside. Threatening these attack points and also using misdirection slows down the defensive pursuit which aids the linemen

"A big part of misdirection is forcing your QB to run his fakes out to threaten the flank"

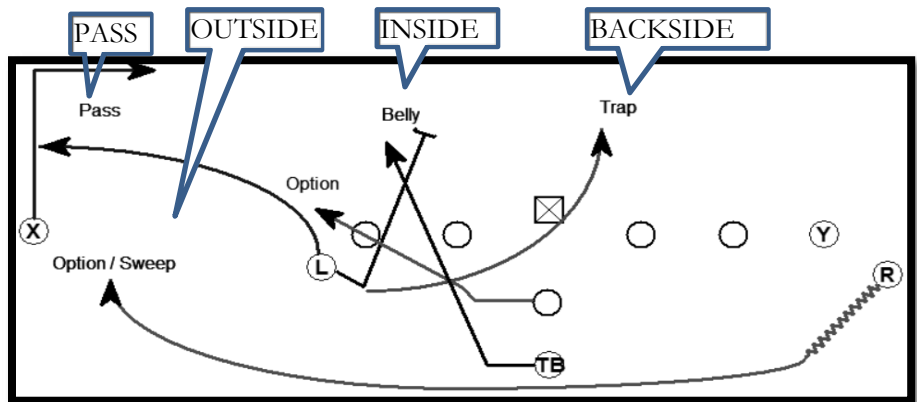


Figure 2: Attack Points of the Belly Family



LOOK-A-LIKE BLOCKING

The Wing-T also uses similar blocking schemes with different backfield families which create conflicting reads for the defense. These defensive conflicts are independent of the backfield action. The blocking style is designed so that as a defensive man reacts to the blocking in his area to stop a particular threat, he will be placing himself in jeopardy for a companion play. In other words, the Wing T has an answer for whatever technique the defense is using and uses that technique against the defender. Figure 2 shows some of these conflicts in both the Down and GO families.

The keys to creating conflicts in all four plays are: (1) the down paths by the tackle, TE, and wing; (2) the pulling action of the G; (3) the use of motion by the LW.

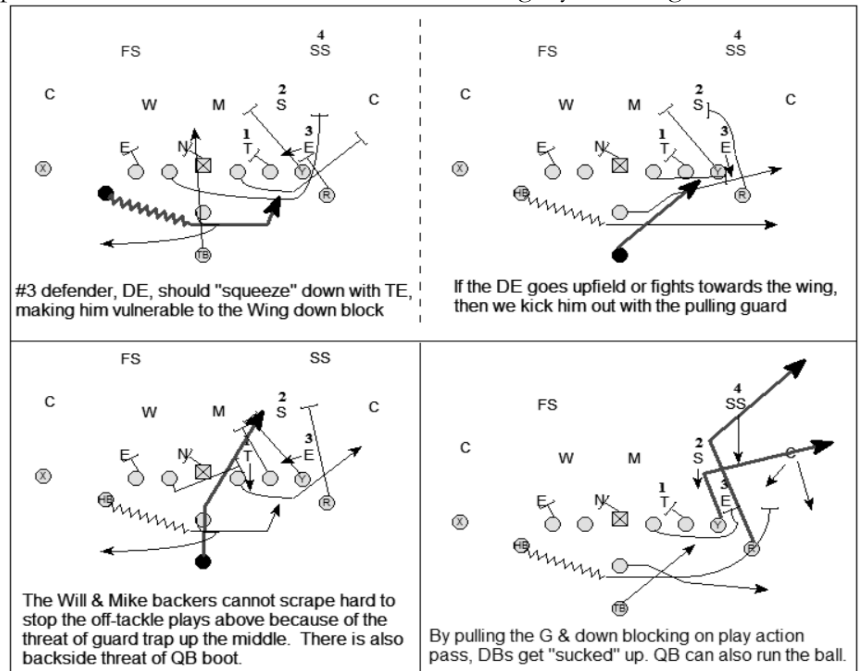


Figure 3: Look-A-Like Blocking Examples

BUILDING WALLS

A basic premise for the blocking is to create a wall with a kick out block for the running back to run through. While the line is "building walls & kicking out"...the backfield is working hard to take defenders away from the point of attack with great run fakes. The fake is used to take out a defender versus lead blocking most of the time, which is ideal when your backs are smaller than the linebackers that you play against.

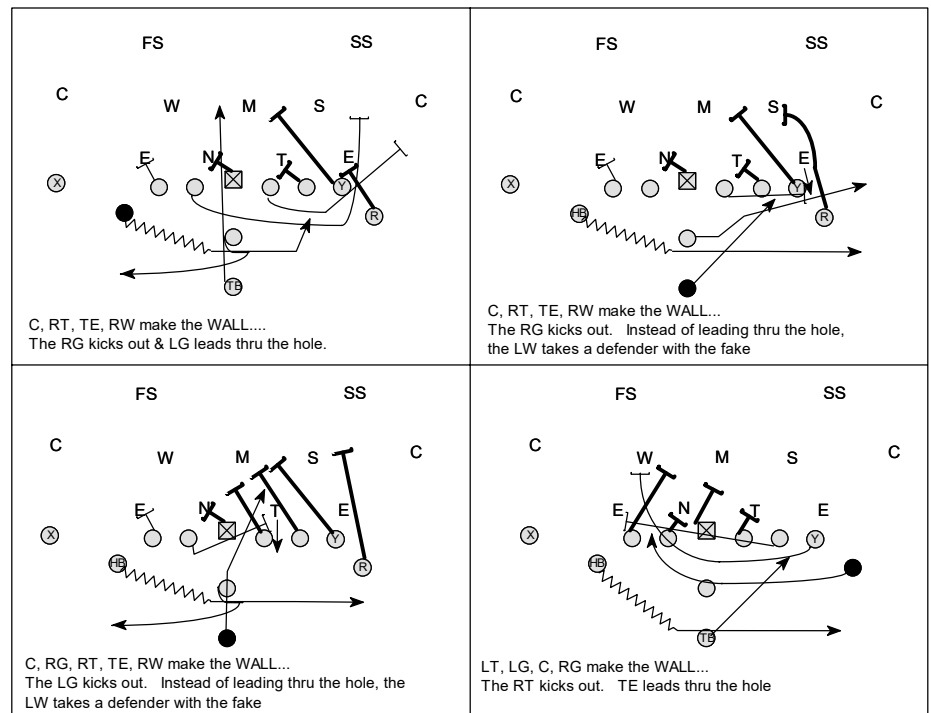


Figure 4: Setting Walls and Kicking Out



BASIC PRINCIPLES

The Wing-T is a multiple formation, four back running attack that depends heavily on play-action passing and misdirection. It utilizes Look-A-Like backfield action and Look-A-Like blocking schemes to place defenders in conflict. The PISTOL formation allows a much more sophisticated drop back passing game to complement this already potent running attack.

- Designed for consistency, strength, and ball control
- Does not depend on one star athlete, allowing you to adapt to year-to-year personnel changes due to graduation.
- The offense is designed in complete backfield families, each of which presents multiple threats to the defense on each play
- The alignment of the wings allow them to be a dual-threat as both a running back and receiver.
- Misdirection, faking, and motion allow smaller backs to take larger linebackers out of the play
- Angle blocking, pulling, & reading unblocked defenders allow smaller linemen to be successful

TEAM MORALE: 4 backs will get carries, QB throws 20 passes, multiple WR catch the ball

GROUND ORIENTED

The objective of offense in football is to move the ball and score. So every coach has to figure out how to do this most efficiently. Practice time and personnel should drive the ratios of run and pass, but often times coaches try to force more run or pass plays on a team that is not capable to do so. The PISTOL WING-T would like to throw 20-25 passes per game but is primarily a running attack and strives to run the ball 40-50 times per game.

- A powerful ground game builds a desire to dominate the opponent physically and this carries over to the defense. The physicality required in practice to successfully run the offense builds a tougher brand of player.
- During a high school game, each team will get the ball 8-10 times per game. If we can keep the ball longer by getting first downs while the clock runs, then we might get 10 possessions and our opponent only gets the ball 7-8 times.
- A consistent ground game increases the number of opportunities to enter the all important four-down red zone.
- The running game is better suited to severe weather problems
- It is easier to replace an injured running back than it is to replace an injured QB.
- Year in and year out, a high school team will always have good running backs. The Wing-T offense does not require great running backs, just hard nosed players with 4.8 speed.
- A team that is dependent on passing game cannot be successful with an average QB and most schools only get great quarterbacks every 4-8 years.



BALANCE OF PASSING

No offense can operate effectively without a passing game. The threat of the pass must always be present to prevent safeties from filling the alleys aggressively and corners from screaming off the edge. The presence of the two wings forces the defense to respect 4 verticals and often times will give the offense a 2-safety look, which leaves 7 men in the box. A good play action passing game creates conflicts for linebackers, especially outside backers who have to seal the edge while also defending the flats. Bottom line is that the passing game is needed in order to have a more effective running game.

MULTI-FORMATIONAL

Sprinting out of the huddle and snapping the ball within 3-4 seconds makes it very difficult for the defense to line up and almost impossible for the 17-year old linebacker to make any calls or checks. The position of the wings makes them a running, receiving, and blocking threat. The offense is most potent when you can find a player who can play both tight end and receiver. He doesn't have to be great at either position, just average, because the defense still has to line up on him. Putting both wings on the same side of the formation gives Trips Open, Trips Closed, and Trey looks. And it is very important that you put both offensive tackles on the same side as well as run unbalanced sets. The Tackle Over and Unbalanced sets really give the offensive line huge advantages in their blocking schemes.

SYSTEM OF ATTACKING

The Wing-T has a systematic way of attacking the defense with a basic philosophy of trying to put defender's in conflict. The scope of the offense offers misdirection, power, counter, option, play action, and dropback capabilities. It easily adjusts to the gifted players that you have from year to year and does not require large, dominant offensive linemen. It is a complete system that coaches can become comfortable and find confidence with. Teams have had success at every level of football from NCAA Division 1 to youth.

In summary, here's why you should run the Wing-T:

- **Allows multiple players to be involved.**
- **Very tough to defend multiple formation, misdirection, and fakes.**
- **Every play attacks backside, middle, outside, and secondary.**
- **Win with undersized linemen.**
- **Makes your team tough and physical.**



The Pistol Wing-T System

The PISTOL WING T makes it easier for the QB to read unblocked defenders. This is advantageous to the linemen because it allows us to not block a superior defender rather than letting him defeat our smaller blocker. Additionally, the lineman who would have futilely tried to block him is now free to block another defender.

We use the following numbering system:

- First Numbers: Fake Hole & Back (not always used)
- Second Number: Back carrying the ball
- Third Number: The attack hole

For example: **“33-22 Trap”** tells the Tailback, or 3-back, to fake in the 3 hole while the Left Wing, or 2-back, is getting the ball in the 2 hole. The Word tells the Left tackle to pull.

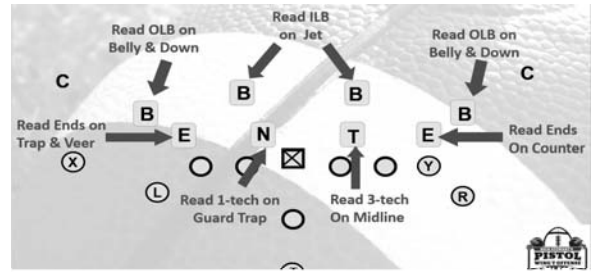


Fig 5: Unblocked Defenders QB reads after the

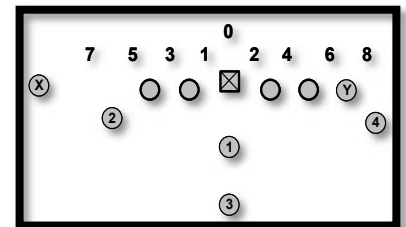


Fig 6: Back & Hole Numbers

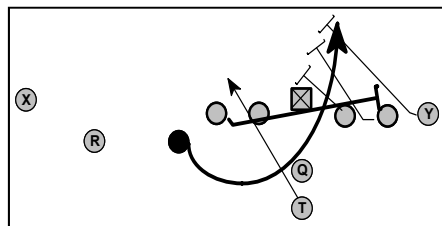


Figure 4: Tight Trips Left 33-22 Trap

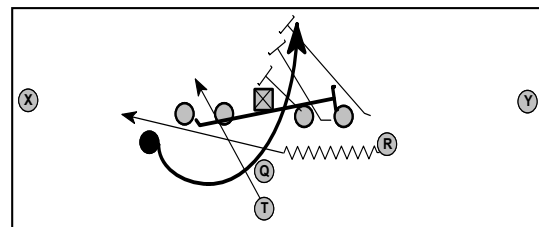


Figure 3: Loose Rip 33-22 Trap

The plays in the PISTOL WING-T are grouped according to Look-A-Like backfield action, which are called families. Every family has an inside play, an outside play, a counter, and a play action pass. So there are 19 total plays in the 5 families, but in reality this is reduced down to 15 plays because G, Trap, and Counter are duplicate plays ran in multiple families. 31 & 32 G in both the GO and Liz families are the same play for linemen. Same with 22 & 41 Trap in both the Belly and Liz families. Ditto for 24 & 43 Counter in the GO and Down families.

Table 1: Listing of All Run Plays

	GO Family	Belly Family	Down Family	Liz/Rip Family	Option Family
Inside	31/32 G	33/34 Belly	35/36 Down	31/32 G	11/12 Army 13/14 Baylor
Outside	26/45 G.O.	33-47/34-28 G	35-47/36-28 O	28/47 O	15/16 Cal
Counter	24/43 Counter	22/41 Trap	24/43 Counter	22/41 Trap	
Play Action	17/18 GO Pass	33/34 Belly Pass	35/36 Down Pass	17/18 GO Pass	12 Army Pass



Play Action pass plays end with word “PASS” but have no color because colors to indicate the protection scheme:

YELLOW: Drop back cup protection; **PURPLE:** Fire out for QB 1-step quick pass game
RED/BLUE: Sprint Protection **SILVER/GOLD:** Screens **SALLY:** Draw

Another reason that Play Action has no colors is because of our SNAP COUNT rule: “Run plays are on 1st sound and Pass Plays are on Set”. Play action passes are snapped on 1st sound so that they look like run plays.

Remember, the PISTOL WING T is a systematic way of doing things and every year you can emphasize certain plays while ignoring others without having to change the system. The plays that you emphasize will depend upon your personnel and your program’s experience running the WING-T. In other words, one year the GO family might be your bread & butter and you run zero option because your Wings are studs but your QB is young. The following year you may never run 26 or 45 G.O. but just run the Belly, Down, & Option families because your TB has matured into a stud. The 3rd year your young QB is now a 3-year varsity starter and you can throw the ball 30 times a game.

MULTIPLE BLOCKING SCHEMES

“Jack of all Trades, Master of None”

Whenever you have a large number of plays, then there comes a large number of blocking schemes, and then there are blocking variations inside each scheme. These variations can be endless. Multiple blocking schemes gives the offensive line multiple techniques and footwork to teach players. Be careful when installing all of these plays & variations because you will end up practicing so many different things that your players never become proficient at anything.

Therefore, you need to keep three things in mind when designing your offensive gameplan for the upcoming season:

1. Addition & Deletion to the playbook is always based on what the line can & cannot handle
2. Use the same words to describe the technique, the block, and the play that go together.
 For example: "REACH" describes the first step ("reach step"), the block, and the play (Liz 28 Reach).
3. Is there enough practice time to be really good at it?

How we call a play

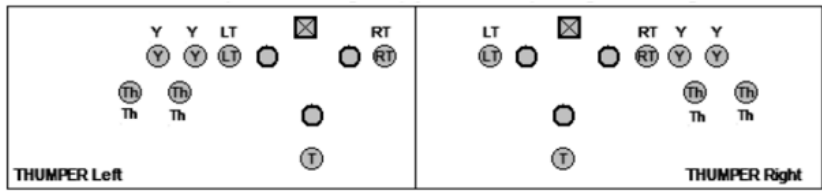
All plays start by telling the offense whether we want to huddle up or run the play without a huddle. Built into the Huddle/No Huddle call is also our tempo, which indicates how fast we want to snap the ball. After the TEMPO call comes the FORMATION call to tell the players how we want to line up. **The PISTOL WING T can run a total of 95 formations**, but Figure 9 summarizes the formations that the linemen need to worry about....

Table 2: Huddle / No Huddle Tempos

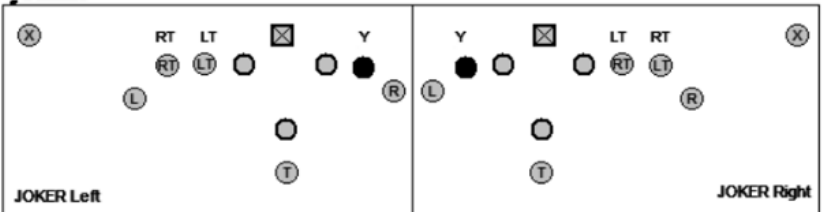
HUDDLE TEMPOS		NO HUDDLE TEMPOS	
<i>Freeze</i>	<i>Break huddle, let pressbox see how defense lines up, then get play call by hand signal.</i>	<i>Look</i>	<i>Line up without getting in a huddle. Let pressbox see how the defense lines up, then get play call by hand signal from the sideline</i>
<i>Check With Me</i>	<i>Get play call in huddle but let the QB give the direction of the play (left or right) at the LOS.</i>	<i>No Huddle</i>	<i>Get play call from sideline and snap the ball as soon as the ref puts the ball in play.</i>
<i>Sprint</i>	<i>Call play in huddle, sprint to the line and snap the ball 3 seconds after breaking the huddle.</i>	<i>Mustang</i>	<i>Plays are assigned “Mustang-1”, “Mustang-2” etc. These change every week.</i>
		<i>NASCAR</i>	<i>Same 4 plays, ran in same order all year long. Sideline yells “NASCAR” and the offense runs those 4 plays as fast as possible.</i>



THUMPER Replaces Wings with physical blockers & puts 2 TE in the game.



JOKER Puts both tackles on same side, but defense calls strength to the TE.



TUBBY Puts both tackles & TE on same side.

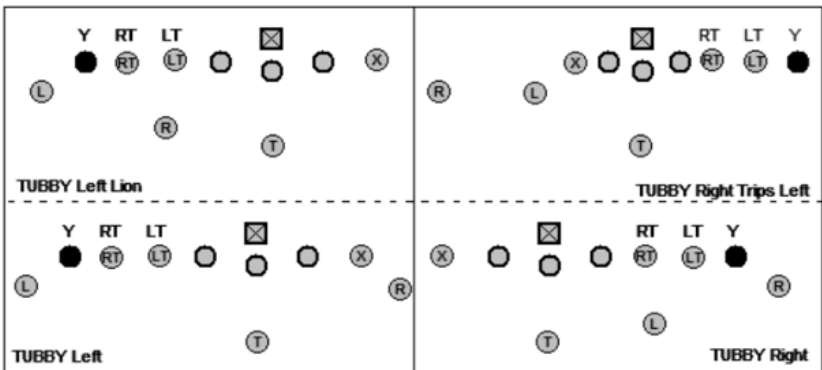


Fig 5: Lineman Formations 1

After the TEMPO and FORMATION calls, we have to tell the backfield what to do. First, the play call has to indicate if the play is a run or a pass. Run plays start with naming the family or the fake hole, which tells the backs *not* getting the ball what to do. Then we call the number of the back carrying the ball followed by the number of the attack hole. The last word in the *run play* call is the blocking assignment for the linemen.

All the linemen have to hear is the attack hole and the blocking assignment.

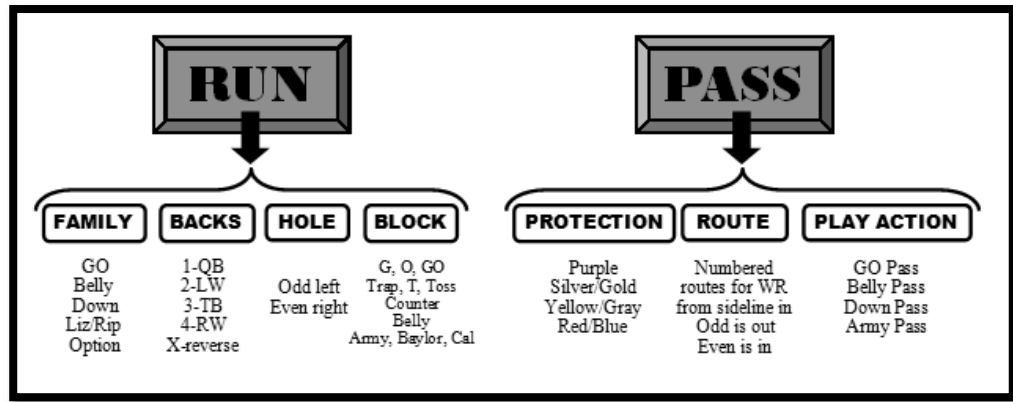


Figure 5: How A Play Is Called in PISTOL WING T



The part of this system that I love the most is that the lineman only have to learn the last digit and their blocking assignment. We joke in practice by having the linemen cover their ears and mumble "blah, blah, blah" until the last number and word after it is called. For example, we can run Guard Trap (32-G) out of 26 formations and when you add the different motions, there are 31 ways that we can run 32 G, but all our linemen hear on ALL 32 PLAYS is "2-G". That's right, all they hear are the words "TWO G".

	<u>X/Y</u>	<u>Backs</u>	<u>Motion</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Back</u>	<u>Hole</u>	<u>Blocking</u>
QB SAYS:	Tight Heavy	Left	"L"	GO	3	2	G
QB SAYS:	Loose		Liz	---	3	2	G <i>figure 7</i>
QB SAYS:	Tight		"L"	GO	3	2	G <i>figure 8</i>
LINEMENT HEAR	Blah	blah	blah	blah	blah	2	G

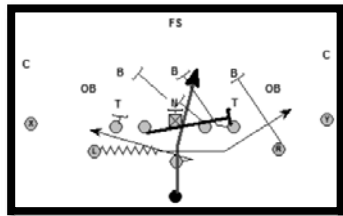


Fig 6: Loose Liz 32 G

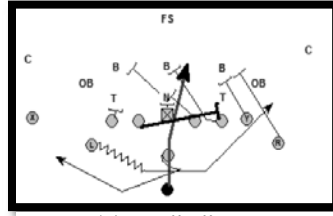


Fig 7: Tight "L" GO 32 G

In both examples (Fig 11 and Fig 12) of Guard Trap, all the linemen have to hear is "2 G".

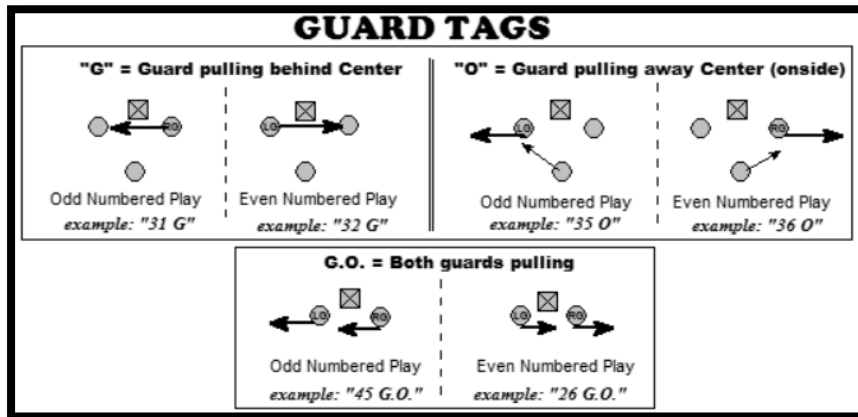


Figure 8: Tag Words Telling Guards to Pull

	<u>X/Y</u>	<u>Backs</u>	<u>Motion</u>	<u>Family</u>	<u>Back</u>	<u>Hole</u>	<u>Blocking</u>	
<i>Belly Sweep</i>	<i>Doubles</i>	<i>Left</i>	<i>NoMo</i>	<i>Belly or 34</i>	2	8	G	<i>Backside Guard Pull</i>
<i>Down Rt</i>	<i>Tight Heavy</i>	--	<i>Liz</i>	<i>Down</i>	3	6	O	<i>Playside Guard Pull</i>
<i>Down Lt</i>	<i>Over</i>	--	"R"	<i>Down</i>	3	5	O	<i>Playside Guard Pull</i>
<i>Down Sweep</i>	<i>Over</i>	--	<i>NoMo</i>	<i>Down or 35</i>	4	7	O	<i>Playside Guard Pull</i>
<i>Buck Sweep</i>	<i>Nasty</i>	--	"L"	--	2	6	G.O.	<i>Both Guards Pull</i>
<i>Power</i>	<i>Tight</i>	<i>Right</i>	<i>NoMo</i>	--	2	6	G-Lead	<i>Backside Guard Pull</i>

All the linemen heard on the above plays was the Hole Number and the Blocking assignment. In other words they heard "8-G" for the Belly Sweep play, "6-0" for Down Right, "5-0" for Down Left, and "7-0" for Down Sweep



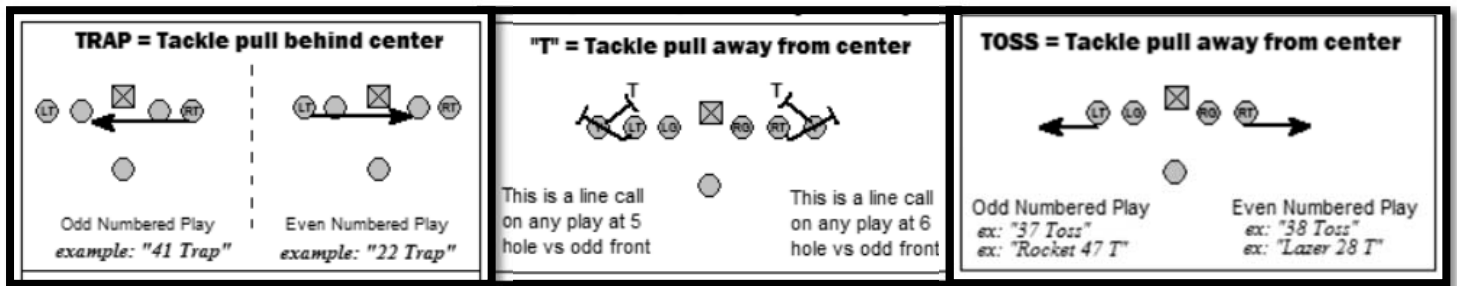


Figure 9: Tag Words Telling Tackle to Pull

	X/Y	Backs	Motion	Family	Back	Hole	Blocking
Tackle Trap	Tight	Trips Lt	NoMo	Belly or 33	2	2	TRAP
Down Rt	Tight Heavy	--	"L"	Down	3	6	Tee
Rocket Toss	--	Empty Rt	Rocket	--	4	7	Toss

Backside T Pull
 Playside T Pull
 Playside T Pull

Figure 9 and the table above give examples of plays when the TACKLE pulls. Once again, none of the linemen only need to hear the HOLD and the BLOCKING assignment. The tackle trap counter play off of Belly is simply, "Blah, Blah, Blah 2-Trap". The "TEE" call is simply a Tackle-TE cross block that we run on Down and G.O. vs odd fronts.

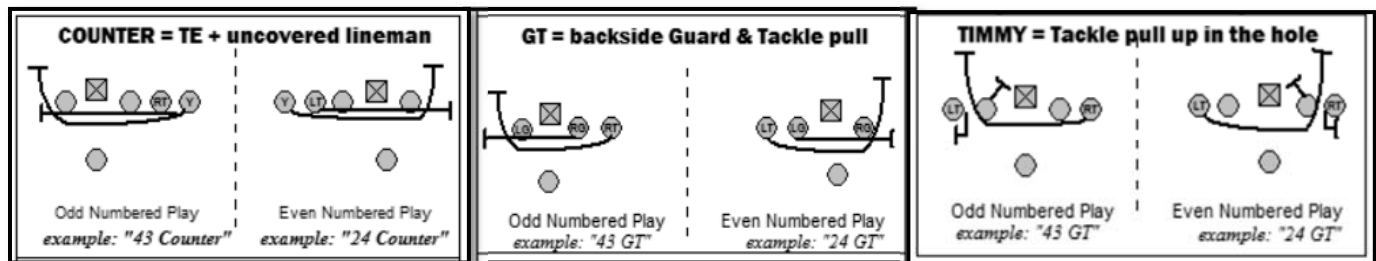


Figure 10: Counter Tag Words involving Backside Linemen.

	X/Y	Backs	Motion	Family	Back	Hole	Blocking
Counter off Down	Tight	Right	NoMo	Down or 36	4	3	Counter
Counter off G.O.	Tight Heavy	--	"L"	GO or 26	4	3	Counter
Counter w/o TE	Loose	Empty	Rip	33	2	4	GT
Tackle Lead	Loose	--	"R"	33	2	4	Timmy

Tackle + TE pull
 Tackle + TE pull
 Tackle + G pull
 Backside T Pull

Figure 10 and the table above give examples of some of our COUNTER plays. We prefer to pull the Tackle & Tight End since defenses are taught to read Guards. If there is no Tight End we can pull our backside Guard and Tackle on counters and we also do this on a designed Belly windback play called: "Belly 34 G.T." On this play our TailBack does his 33 Belly (Belly Left) steps only to wind it back to the right with the Left Guard kicking out to the right and the Left Tackle leading up into the hole. "TIMMY" is an influence play that makes the End think pass rush so that the pulling tackle can pull up into the hole as a lead blocker for the Wing Back.



When we call “33 BELLY” or “34 BELLY”, the word Belly triggers several blocking options for the playside Guard and Tackle. The FAN block are On blocks vs a 5 or 4-tech and an A-gap player. The TUG block is the traditional Belly cross block and is an acronym for **T**ackle-**U**nder-**G**uard. We make this call vs a 2, 3, or 4i tech. The GUT block is an acronym for **G**uard-**U**nder- **T**ackle, which means the Guard goes first and blocks out vs a 4 tech/NG front (odd front). However, if the odd front is a 3-4 and the OLB is walked up on the line of scrimmage, then we make and OUT call.

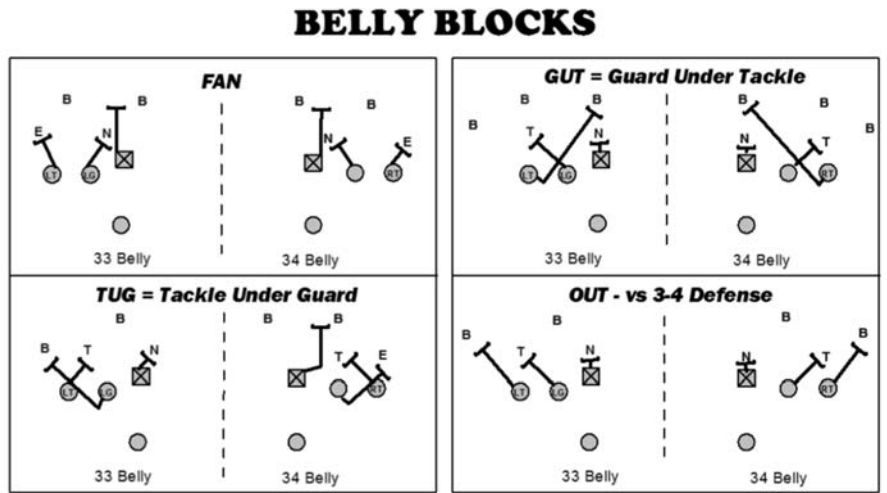


Figure 11: Belly Blocking Rules

HOW WE CALL PASSING PLAYS

We have close to 50 different passing plays to run at a defense, but all the linemen know is "Blue", "Red", "Yellow", "Purple", and "Silver". The colors not only are our pass protections, but they also mean that we are snapping the ball on “SET”. Our play action passes always end in the word “PASS”. So once again both categories of passes continue to follow our “blah, blah, blah” principle.

PLAY ACTION PASS EXAMPLES

X/Y	Backs	Motion	Family	Back	Hole	Blocking	
Nasty	---	“L”	---	1	7	GO Pass out	Fig 12
Tight	Right	---	---	3	6	Down Pass	Fig 13
---	Slot Left	“R”	---	3	3	Belly Pass	Fig 14

*no family required on play action

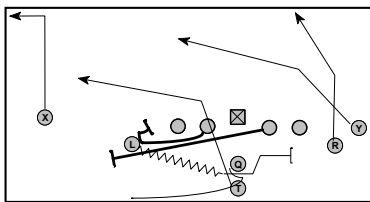


Fig 12: Nasty L 17 GO Pass

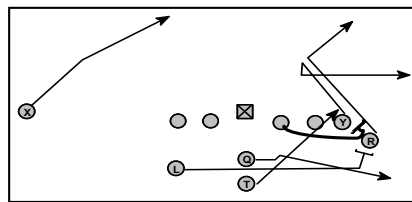


Fig 13: Tight Rt 36 Down Pass

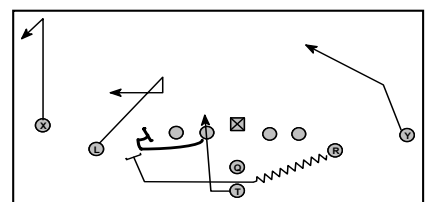


Fig 14: Slot Lt R 33 Belly Pass Scat

On all three of these examples, all the linemen need to hear is: “7 GO

“PASS”, “6 DOWN PASS”, and “3 BELLY PASS”. Play Action passes do not use a color because of our SNAP COUNT rule: all colors are on SET. Since we want Play Action to look like run, the SNAP COUNT is on READY for Play Action. Also, by not using a color, it reinforces to the linemen that we need run blocking aggression.



PASS EXAMPLES

X/Y	Backs	Motion	Family	Protection	Route	Route	Route	
---	Bunch Left	---		Blue	7	5	Flat	Fig 15
Over	Trips left	---		Blue	7	5	Flat	Fig 16
---	---	Rip		Blue	7	5	Flat	Fig 17

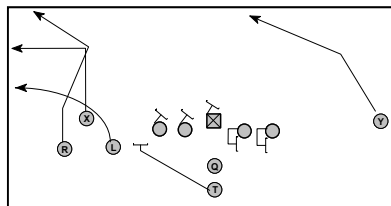


Fig 15: Bunch Lt Blue Pass 75 Flat

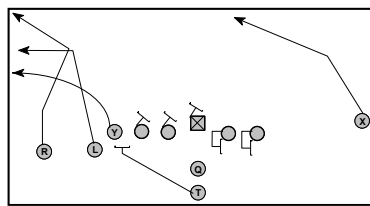


Fig 16: Over Trips Lt Blue 75 Flat

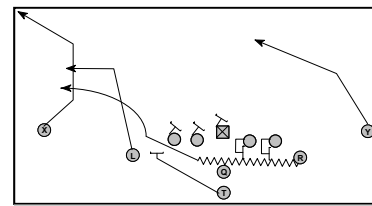


Fig 17: Loose Rip Blue 75 Flat

Our pass protections (further explained in Section Six) are:

- BLUE and RED: Sprint Left and Sprint Right protection.
- PURPLE: 1 and 3-step fire out, quick pass protection
- YELLOW, GRAY, WHITE: Traditional 5-step, cup pocket protection
- SILVER & GOLD: Screen passes

HUDDLE

“A BRIEF, EFFICIENT BUSINESS MEETING”

Center sets the huddle 4 yards from the LOS. He calls the down & distance. Tackles stand behind the Guards so that they can line up in Tackle Over Calls faster. Tight End stands behind the center to make it harder for the defense to make their strength calls. Nobody takes even an inch forward until the clap. We have to really coach our players on this, because they will start leaning and inching forward before the clap.

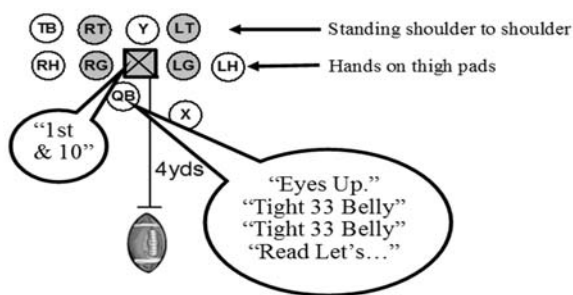


Fig 18: Huddle Alternative

While sprinting to the line of scrimmage is very confusing to the defense, it also prevents our linemen from making any line calls. A solution is to have everyone's back to the defense and let the linemen leave after the QB says the play the first

time. Then the Backs, TE, and Receivers get the play call TWO more times before sprinting to the line. This gives the 1-2 seconds to identify the fronts and make their calls as they wait for the backs.

Snap Count

Our snap count is READY – SET – HIT – HIT and is embedded, or “married” to the play call:

- FIRST SOUND: All run plays are snapped on the “R” in ready. Also all play action passes.
- ON SET: Any color pass protection. Any shift, L-stop, or L-Twirl motions.
- ON TWO (2nd Hit): Special plays, maybe some trick plays. Eyes Closed. Check with Me plays.

