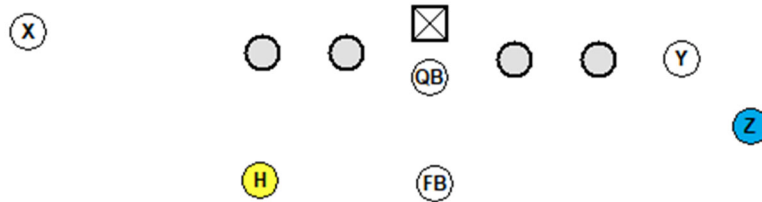

CHAPTER 2

Selecting Personnel



PHILOSOPHY

We “cross-train” all of our players because in high school football injuries happen and we seldom have 4 good players at any position. So our depth chart will have 3 tackles, 3 guards, and 2 centers and 2 TE’s. We will have 3 Halfbacks, 2 Fullbacks, and 2 QB’s.

Selecting where to use your personnel in the Wing T can be as important as the fact you are choosing to run this offense. I want to have a reason as to why we place players in their positions and not just do it based on what the kid wants to do.

With over 40 years in running the Wing T you start to figure out a little bit about the things that you’re looking for in your kids and trying to place them in the right positions to make your offense the most successful that it can be. Here are the things that we’ve come up with over the years. In our thoughts with the Wing-T offense or any offense for that matter, big plays are going to happen on the perimeter. You can win football games and control the clock and do all those types of things by running the ball in the interior, but, for the most part, all big plays are going to happen when the ball gets outside on the perimeter or when the ball ends up being thrown over the top of the secondary.

We believe in the Wing-T offense you can no longer line up and run the very basic Wing-T offense, meaning the Buck series, the Down series, the Belly series from one or two formations and with only 1 or possibly 2 basic blocking schemes for each play.

Dublin Philosophy in Wing T Offense

- ▶ Big plays happen on the perimeter, place your personnel to get the ball there.
- ▶ You can no longer line up and use base Wing T plays and score enough points. You need multiple formations to include unbalance formations. You need the ability to throw the football or run the option to neutralize the ability of the defense to play man coverage and get everyone on the defense within 5 yards of the line of scrimmage.
- ▶ Build your offense around the ability of your QB. Can he run the option, can he throw the football, can he do both.

Fig 2-1: Holmes Wing-T Philosophy

In order to be successful, we think you've got to have multiple formations that are going to include all different types of unbalanced formations. You need the ability to do one of two things: you either have to be able to throw the football or you've got to be able to run the option. The purposes of those two things are to keep the defensive defenders from being able to line up within five yards of the line of scrimmage, play man coverage, and get involved in our run game. We want to create as much turmoil for the defense as we can.

As far as the unbalanced formations, what I have determined is the fact that every defense that was ever invented was invented with the thought processes of facing a balanced offensive formation. With this understanding it has helped us understand why and when we will use unbalanced formations to help us. We'll talk about it a little bit more in our game planning chapter, but obviously the multiple formations are causing your defensive fronts to make adjustments. We want to be able to take advantage of what they give us.

For us, in selecting and looking at placing personnel for the Wing-T we understand that big plays are going to happen on the perimeter. What happens in the Delaware Wing-T offense, which is a different philosophy than what we have? Delaware always believed that you'd take your best running back and you put him in the Fullback position. My Wing T philosophy does not adhere to that philosophy because I believe that big plays occur on the perimeter much more often. There are no plays for your Fullback in the true Delaware Wing-T offense to get the ball on the perimeter other than throwing it to him in the flats. As we get into this selection of personnel, that's a little bit of difference in our philosophy and the guys with the Delaware Wing-T.

Well for us we cannot create enough big plays in our Wing-T offense, the explosive plays, by lining up and running the Buck series, the Down series and the Belly series, while using only a couple of balanced formations and no unbalanced lines, no option game, and no passing game.

SKILL POSITIONS

QUARTERBACK

I think the next most important thing for us is to build our offense around what our Quarterback can do. Every year that's kind of the hard thing in high school football, is finding that kid to be your Quarterback.

We believe, in order to be successful running the Wing-T today, you've got to be able to do one of two things. You either have to be able to throw the football effectively or you have to be able to run the triple option, which is the inside veer or the midline option. Now obviously you still would have the Down Option and the Belly Option, which would be a part of what you are trying to get accomplished.

In the years when we've been the most successful, we've had a Quarterback that's been able to not only throw the football but run the triple option. We had a Quarterback here in 2000, 2005 and 2006 that was capable of doing both those things. We were able to throw the football, we were able to run the Midline, we were able to run the Veer. That football team set the state scoring record of all-time in the state of Georgia with 549 points in 10 games.



We turned around in 2006 and our 15 game schedule, which included the state championship game, we broke the all-time scoring record in the state of Georgia with 682 points. That would've never happened if we weren't able to throw the football or we weren't able to quite simply run the option game. Those helped us keep the DBs out of the run game.

It's pretty simple to us. All of our Quarterbacks are placed into three categories, this is how we judge them. Number one, there's a Quarterback that will get you beat. That's the kid that turns the ball over, has unforced fumbles, will pitch the ball on the ground when you're running the option, make high risk passes, or he throws the ball up for grabs when you get the pressure on him. The reality of it is, that kid can't play Quarterback for us, he just can't do it. There are too many negative things to happen.

The next type of Quarterback is the kid that won't get you beat. We have a lot of those. That kid they won't get you beat is the type of kid who is not going to throw interceptions, he's not going to make too many high-risk plays, and he has the knowledge and understanding of the game. He is able to check off plays and change the direction or choose between one of the two best plays that you want to run. He's also the type of kid that is disciplined, will carry out his fakes and execute. But the reality is he's not going to beat anybody with his legs, he's not going to beat anybody with his arm, but he's going to give us a great opportunity to win, so that's the kid that won't get you beat. If he is the best option for us we believe we can have a great season with him in the Quarterback position.

Then the third type of Quarterback is a type of kid that will win the game for you, those are few and far between folks. I've been coaching a long time, that kid when it's third and 10 and the balls got to be delivered on time and on the money. When you get in those big-time games, those championship level games, and you're going to find that you're going to get those types of things two or three times. If you've got that type of Quarterback or he's an exceptional runner, elusive in the open field or makes people miss tackles, that kid can win the game for you.

Those are the three types of Quarterbacks that we want to deal with. We just got done talking a little bit about our Quarterback, so here are the three things that we think are extremely important when you're looking to find your Quarterback. To me, number one: he's got to be a leader, he's got to be a competitor, he's got to be a kid that's going to be the first one on the field, he's the last one to leave, he's got to have the ability to learn your system, and he's got to have the ability to make simple checks at the line of scrimmage.

Selecting your QB

- ▶ Young man must be a leader. He needs to have the ability to learn the offensive system and be able to make simple checks at the line of scrimmage.
- ▶ We would like for him to be a good runner that can execute the mid-line and veer option.
- ▶ We would like for him to be able to throw the football off play action and on the run.

Fig 2-2: Selecting Your QB



Folks, I can play and have won a lot of games with a kid that only has that first trait. Now, we'd like for him to be the type of kid that can line up, execute, run the veer, run the sideline option because those two things, we look at in young man can open up our offense greatly.

Then obviously we'd like for him to be able to throw the football off a play-action pass. He's got to be able to throw on the run and if he can be a pocket passer, that only helps us and what we're trying to get out of our Quarterback. Number one, again, most importantly, he's got to be a leader. You don't want a kid that you're worried about whether he's going to be an in-school suspension or something on Monday thru Thursday. Make that the highest priority and the rest of these things will end up taking care of themselves.

RUNNING BACKS

When we start looking for our Wingbacks' (H Back & Z Back) the first thing you must evaluate is determine what is your personality as a play caller. It has become evident that I tend to look at things in my mind's eye from a Strong Right view. By knowing this about myself I have determined that my HB (aligns on our left side) must be a young man that does not mind running between the Tackles with the Counter, he needs to be physical enough to run the Buck and Power Sweep and willing to block on the Ride (Belly) Series for us. Speed is important but not our highest priority for our HB.

Our ZB must be willing to block and be physical because of the Buck & Power Sweep. He has to be willing to attack Linebackers on the Belly (Down) and he will get more outside run opportunities than our HB with the Speed Sweep and Ride Sweep. Over the years he has had the opportunity to catch more passes than our HB so we also take into consideration his ability to catch the FB.

It is great when you have two young men on your team that have the abilities to be effective with all the skills needed for both the H & Z position, but if not then match them to how you tend to call formations and plays.

Selecting your Wingbacks

- ▶ **Our LHB (HB) is normally our dominate back. I have a tendency to use formations that have the strength to the right. He will not have to be quite the blocker as the one on the right side. (ZB)**
- ▶ **Our RHB (ZB) will be our best blocker of the 2 WB. He will normally have excellent hands. He tends to have the most receptions of all our backs.**

Fig 2-3: Selecting Your Wing Back

As I have mentioned I have a little different philosophy than the guys at Delaware, we do not put our best back or home run hitter at the Fullback position. When my statistics come back at the end of the year, our Fullback still has the most carriers. He's going to touch the football more than the left half, more than the right half, but less than those two



guys combined. He's going to get a little more than a third of the carries as we go through the season. They're tough yards and there are some big plays in there for him, but generally, what happens at the end of the year, the Fullback is going to average somewhere between five and seven yards per carry.

Those Halfback positions, usually average somewhere between seven and ten yards per rushing attempt, based on the number of big plays that happen. When we look at it, we're looking at two types of Fullbacks. We've had success over a lot of years with the smaller, quicker, more elusive Fullback. He's a better Trap runner, he does a little better job for us on the Belly and those types of things with his ability to bend and cut back inside and back outside.

I guess the last thing is occasionally the last couple of years, our Fullback has been about six-two and 225 lbs. He was more of a power pack. He was a guy that gave us the opportunity with that football team to be a much better Power Sweep offense with the Fullback leading and kicking out is more so than being a great Bucksweep team with both guards pulling.

We've got the same tempo, we've got the same process, but our Fullback brought that to the table, making it a much better situation. Selecting that Fullback has been a really good thing for us over the years. We talked about obviously again,

Selecting our Fullback

- ▶ Our Fullback will often determine the series we are the most effective with in our Wing T. We have played with smaller quick players that can run trap and belly. We have had FB's that are good power backs for Veer and Down. Our FB's must be good blockers. Pass catching ability is the lowest on his evaluation. We often will use the power sweep as apposed to the buck sweep when our FB is a physical blocker.
- ▶ We understand this is different than Delaware but as we mentioned before we think big plays happen on the perimeter and the Wing T does not have perimeter plays for the Fullback.

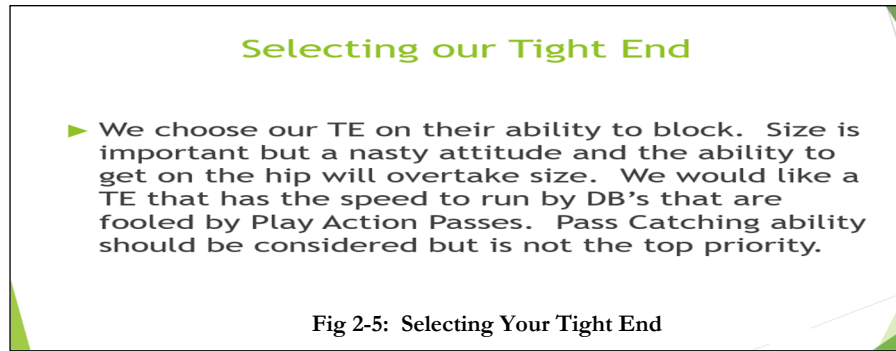
Fig 2-4: Selecting Your Full Back

we don't put our best player there. Now, it's good when he's just as good as the other one, but the reality is if we're having to choose between the two, a home run hitter is the Left Halfback, the next good runner but also a good blocker will play Z-back (the Right Halfback) and our Fullback is our more powerful dominant guy.

THE WING-T TIGHT END

The next position that we want to look at obviously for us is our Tight End. We're choosing our Tight End on their ability to block. Not so much their ability to catch the football, but we do want an athlete there that can catch the football. Size is important but a nasty attitude and the willingness to get on the hip and be a great down blocker is as important to us as it is about physical size. We need a young man that has enough speed that if a Defensive Back gets too involved in the run game our TE will have enough speed to run past him for a cheap touchdown. We always want to have two young men at the TE position. Perhaps both of them will start for us on defense and can rest each other on offense, but when we face teams that try to shade their fronts, we want the ability to go with 2 TE's and force the defense to balance up or simply check our plays and run away from their shade.





WING-T LINEMEN

We do not flop our linemen because we believe it slows down the tempo and gives the defense tendencies. Coaches will argue that flopping provides a shorter learning curve, but even if this were true, it is negated when a left guard has to play right guard due to injury. However, our WING T is so versatile that we run Belly away and to the TE side. We will run Buck. Away from the TE side. We will run counters and traps to both the strong and weak sides as well. Flopping the line would require each lineman to be proficient at angle blocking and pulling in both directions, which is difficult to do. Also, we run so much unbalanced, it would cause more confusion for our linemen.

GUARDS

When you're choosing your pulling guards with this Wing-T, It's the most important position other than the Quarterback. We tell our young men that if we ran the I-formation offense, you would play Fullback for us. They've got to be the type of kid that because of all the pulling and blocking they've got to do in space, that they have the athletic ability to change directions and still be physical enough to put his nose in there.

Our Right Guard normally is a little bit thicker, one that is in the 220 to 230 lbs. range. Why? Because as I've mentioned before, I am a right formation dominant guy. Now we run everywhere, the hit chart is balanced but I tend to stay in the right formation probably 85% of the time.

With that being the case, he's the one that's kicking out the 9-techniques on the Down play. He's your kick out guy on the Bucksweep. He is the bigger, more physical guy plays on our right side.

Our Left Guard will normally have a little more agility than our Right Guard as he will have more times when he must lead through the hole and look for Linebackers and he must be able to get the skate step in on that pull which takes some agility.



These young men are vital to success in any Wing T Offense and don't get all hung up on size as a player with great technique and a little less size will serve you well in this offense. We have had several guards play that weighed 180 lbs. or less over the years and been a very effective offense.

Offensive Guard Selection

- ▶ This is our most important position other than our QB we believe. We tell our young men and believe that if we ran the I Formation they would play the Fullback position.
- ▶ They must have the ability to change direction and block in space. We would like to have an OG on our Right Side that weighs at least 220 but that often is not the case.
- ▶ Our Offensive Guards must be the type of player that can be taught technique. Our Guards do not have to be tall.

Fig 2-6: Selecting Your Guards

SELECTING THE WING-T CENTER

For us, we want to have a bigger kid playing Center. We want somebody with long arms, so when he gets in his stance, he's able to extend the ball out in front of his face. The more he can extend the football out in front of him, the more distance we have between the Defensive Line and our Offensive Lineman. This helps us because a lot of people believe that penetration is a key to stopping the Wing-T.

Most defenses out there today don't play much read technique anymore. When the ball snaps, they're getting upfield. Well, in order for us to be a good down blocking football team, we need space between the down blocker and the D-line. We're selecting a Center; we don't want him to have short arms. We want a kid with long arms that can expand the football and create more space between the Offensive Line and the Defensive Line.

We want somebody that can handle the Nose by himself on occasion. I will discuss in the Mid-Line chapter how a lot of people say, "well do you run the Midline against an Odd Front?" You're dadgum right we do and it's one of our best football plays. We need a Center that can cover up the Nose and not get knocked back. If the nose is a little quick kid and slanting in each direction strong, weak or whatever, fine. Let him run himself out, the Center will just take him the way he wants to go, and now the Midline becomes a great football play for us.



Most of the time our Center is either blocking man or blocking back. He does not have to be the best kid at getting to the second level. A bigger body kid at Center for us tends to help, but it needs to be obviously a solid football player.

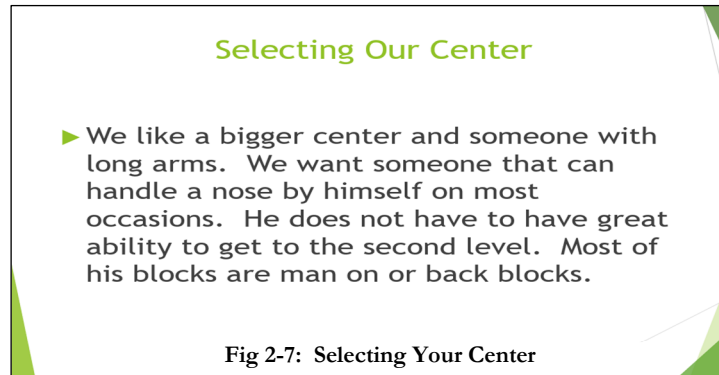


Fig 52: SELECTING YOUR CENTER

SELECTING THE WING-T OFFENSIVE TACKLE

I think Delaware talked about the Offensive Tackle was their last pick. He doesn't have to be as athletic as your Guards, he doesn't have to be as big as the Center in what we're trying to do. However, the key is, because of how many times in this offense that Offensive Tackle has to be able to get to a second level defender, because of all the traps. He's got to be able to release and climb and get to the Linebackers. We need a kid that has a little more quickness than what we have in the Center.

In our offense, the Right Tackle tends to be a little bit bigger, stronger kid than our Left Tackle, again, because we're a right-handed formation football team. The Left Tackle for us is our more athletic Tackle of the two because of the Tackle Trap, we tend to run it probably more to the right than we do the left. He's bigger, not quite as athletic as the Guards, but we need him to reach on the Speed Sweeps, and obviously, he's blocking the backside of a right handed Quarterback and we needed him

SUBSTITUTIONS

All of our players will go both ways and we will often have a least 6 players that start and go both ways during a given year. I believe that you must always have your best players on the Defensive Side of the ball during a close game. With this understanding we will as a staff make a determination which side of the ball we will normally give our player a break during a close game. The player is aware which side of the ball we want to rest him and will let us know when he needs a break.



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