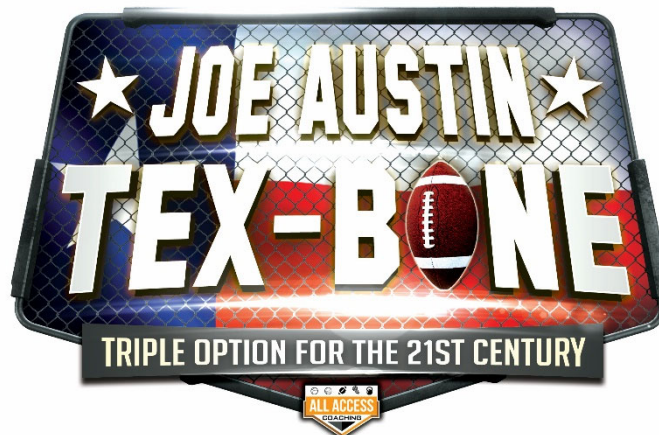# SECTION FOUR

COACHING THE TEX-BONE

17. **Wing & Perimeter Blocking**
18. **Offensive Line Blocking**
19. **Running Back, Quarterback & Receiver Drills**
20. **Practice Organization**
21. **Game Plan Considerations & Ready List**
22. **Game Day Coaching Roles &**

CHAPTER 17: WING & PERIMETER BLOCKING

INDIVIDUAL TECHNIQUES & BLOCKING COMBOS

This chapter explains the blocking techniques and rules we follow before presenting an overview of combination blocking concepts.

BLOCKING PHILOSOPHY

The first blocking rule players learn is "get the ball behind you." This is similar to the basketball concept of staying between your man and the basket. Staying between the defender and the ball puts offensive players in an advantageous blocking position.

Our aiming point on the second and third levels of the defense is always inside-out to the outside number. By staying inside-out our linemen take a position of not allowing a defender to cross the blocker's face in pursuit of the football. In working to the outside number we remain able to reach block at the point of attack. Through practice our players learn to react to forced kick-out situations.

The second blocking rule players learn is "do not let the defender cross your face." With inexperienced players this happens frequently because they stop their feet at the point of attack. Make sure newer players learn to accelerate through contact in order to avoid this critical mistake. We want our players to be proactive—not reactive in blocking situations. We want to establish angles that do the work for us. Our players learn to trust their angles and accelerate at the point of attack by working inside-out to the outside number with the ball behind them.

We do not teach mirror-dodge blocking. We also do not use the term "stalk blocking." We talk about blocking with "no breaks just the gas pedals". The closer we get to the point of contact the faster we move. A mirror block (commonly known as a stalk block) is a reactive block. Our goal is to get the ball behind us, establish an angle that the defender cannot get to the ball without going through us, and then accelerate through contact to the outside number.

Lastly, we want to strike the defender with our thumbs up at the point of attack. This punch provides the best opportunity for sticking the block to the breastplate of the opponent.

2-MAN OPTION BLOCKING RULES

Base Blocking Rule

We establish that the pitch key is, by default, the outside linebacker on the play side of the formation. As a rule we must block any safety on the play side of the formation. The play slot or wing blocks the play side safety in the diagrams of Figure 196 because leaving him free threatens the play.
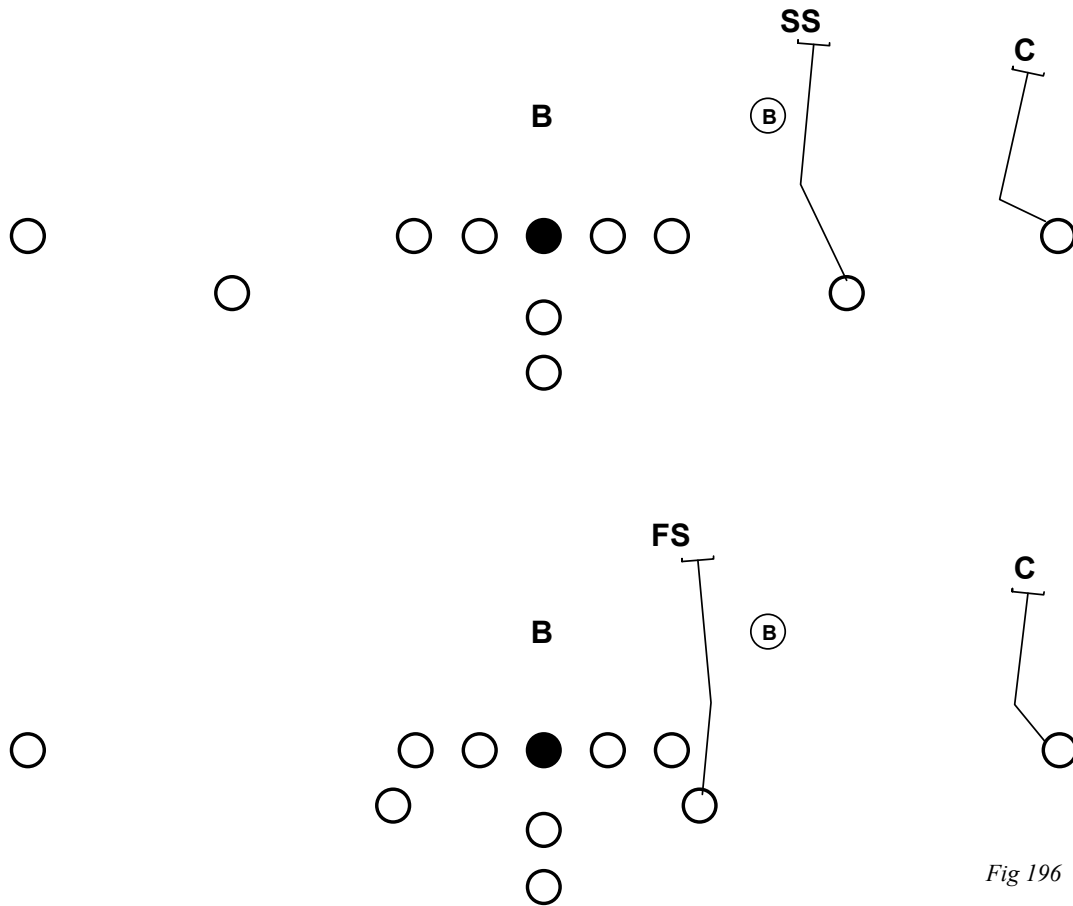
Versus two high safety defenses the play side wing or slot goes directly to the play side safety.

Single high safety defenses put an additional linebacker in the box. Scraping linebackers that leave the box to chase down the pitch phase become a blocking priority for the wing or slot. In Figure 197 we must check for a scraping linebacker before working to the single safety. The wing or slot takes longer to reach the third level when facing a single safety. This gives the wing/slot the ability to look for scrapers before working to the safety.
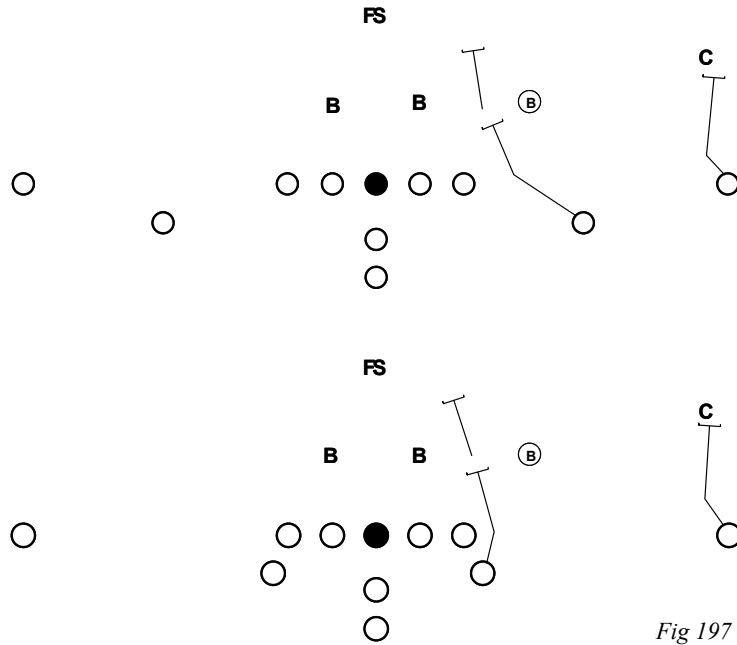
Fig 197

Cross Blocking

Cross blocking is usually an excellent choice because it allows the split end to block any of the defenders usually assigned to a slot or wing. Figure 198 shows cross blocks from a Shotgun Flex-Bone formation and a 2x2 Open formation.
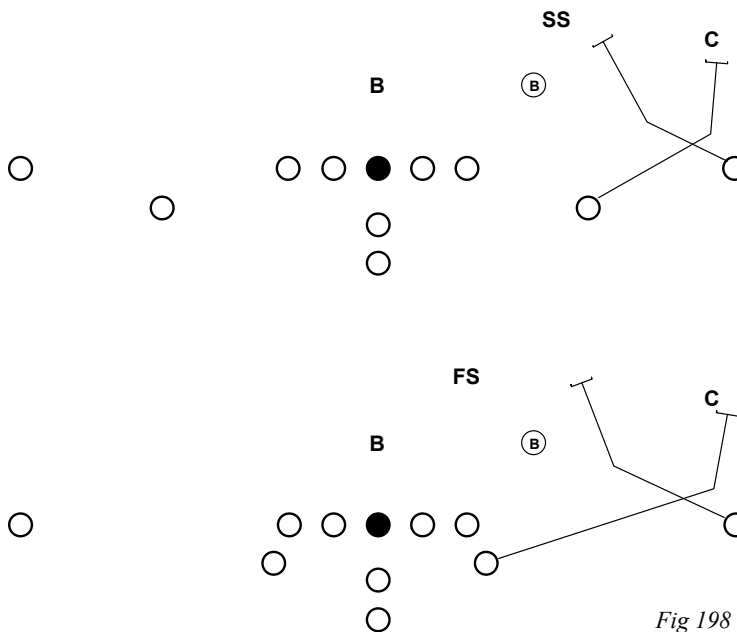
Fig 198

The play side receivers trade responsibilities in both diagrams of Figure 198. The split ends executes a crack block to the safety. Both receivers work flat before gaining ground as they approach the target and accelerate through contact. This block cuts off the defender's outside number and prevents them from

getting to the point of attack. The inside player (whether a slot or wing) uses an arc release to reach the corner.

Several defenses (including Cover 0 and Cover 4) put defenders in a situation where they must chase these cross blocks. When the split end leverages inside the corner squeezes down with him. This squeeze makes the arc release and reach block easier for the inside receiver to execute.

The next illustration (Figure 199) shows cross blocking with three receivers. Choosing a two or three-man cross-blocking scheme is predicated on the defense. The split ends leverages inside to crack block the safety and the middle receiver arc releases to the corners. It is important to remember that some defenses make these blocks easier by squeezing the corner down to match the crack block path of the split end.
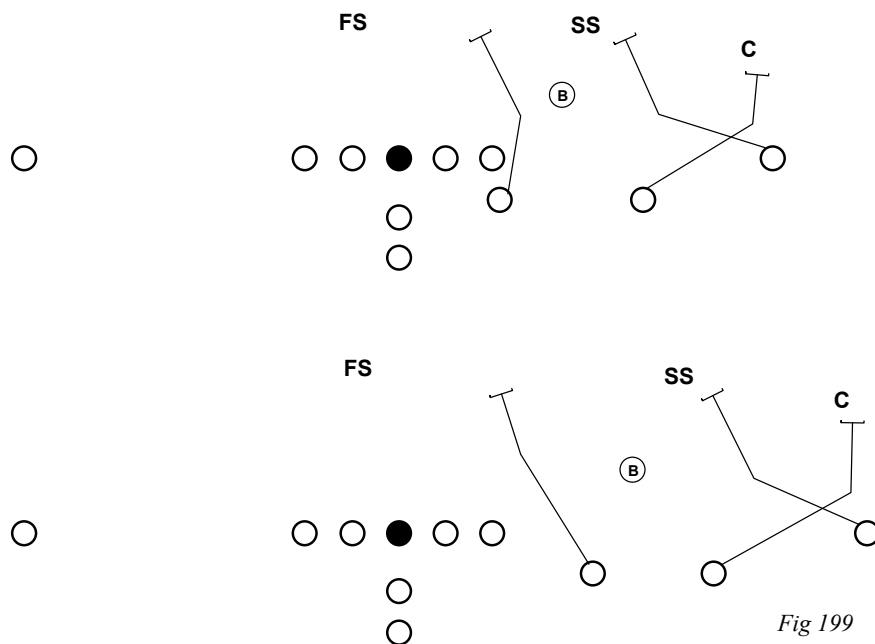

Fig 199

The inside player follows the normal rule of working to the backside safety regardless of whether he is a wing or slot receiver. There is no need for the third blocker to work to the front side safety because the split end already accounts him for. Option teams create three receiver blocking surfaces by using unbalanced formations or by running speed option.

Making the Corner the Pitch Key

There are times when it's advantageous to block the outside linebacker and make the corner the pitch key. Making this change requires a call telling the split end to work down to the safety and the inside receiver to block the outside backer (the typical pitch key). These two instructions (we make the call a single word) now designate the corner as the pitch key (see Figure 200).
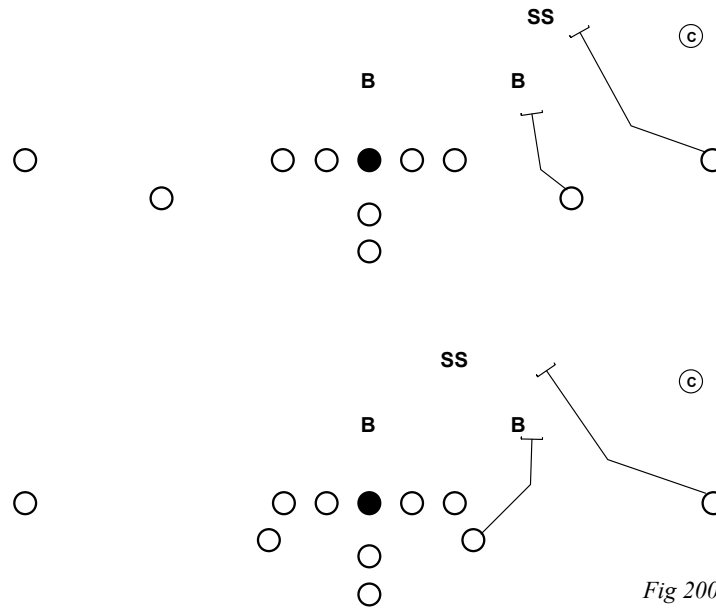
Fig 200

3-MAN OPTION BLOCKING RULES

Base Blocking Rule

Figure 201 shows option blocking with a three-man surface to the perimeter. In both cases, the outside linebacker is the pitch key. All players follow their one or two high safety rules when base blocking. The inside wing checks for a scraping linebacker before working to the single backside safety. With three blockers on the play side the next threat on the backside is most likely the corner chasing the play. Making the outside linebacker the pitchman tells the number two receiver to work straight to the single safety. The split end is then man-to-man on the play side corner.
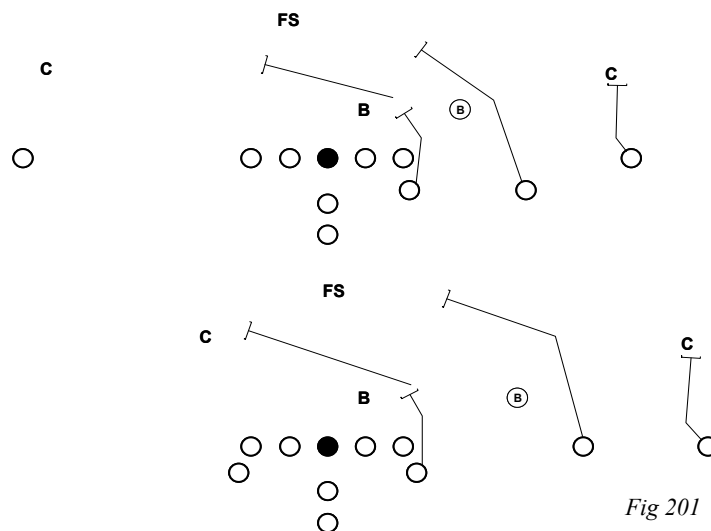
Fig 201

Figure 202 shows the same base blocking scheme against a two high safety defense. We declare the outside linebacker as the pitch key against both single high and two safety high defenses. In both cases the split end is man-to-man on the corner and the slot receiver still works to the nearest safety. The third blocker follows his two high safety rule—whether the player is a wing or a slot. Against two high safeties he works directly to the safety. Notice how the wing/slot in the illustration below works to the backside safety because the second receiver already accounts for the field side safety.
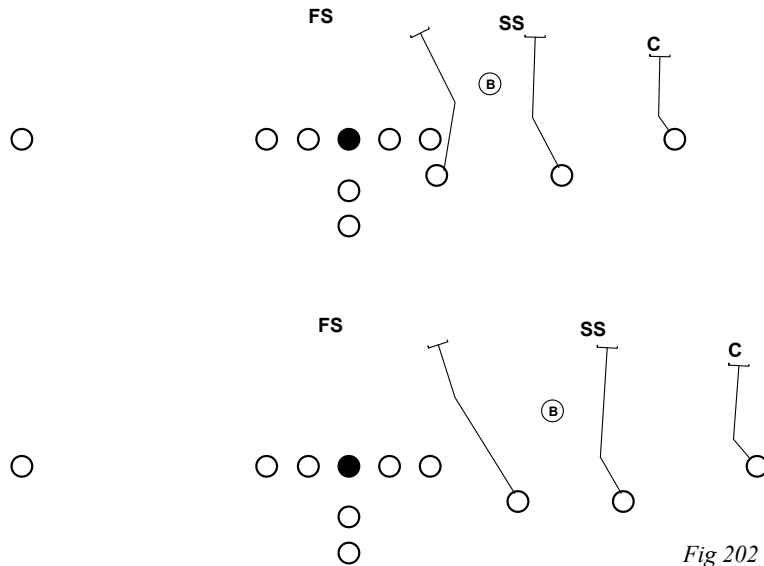
Fig 202

3-MAN SPREAD BLOCKING RULES

Figure 203 show spread blocking rules. There are no players left to option in each illustration. Because of this situation we plan to block all three play side perimeter defenders.
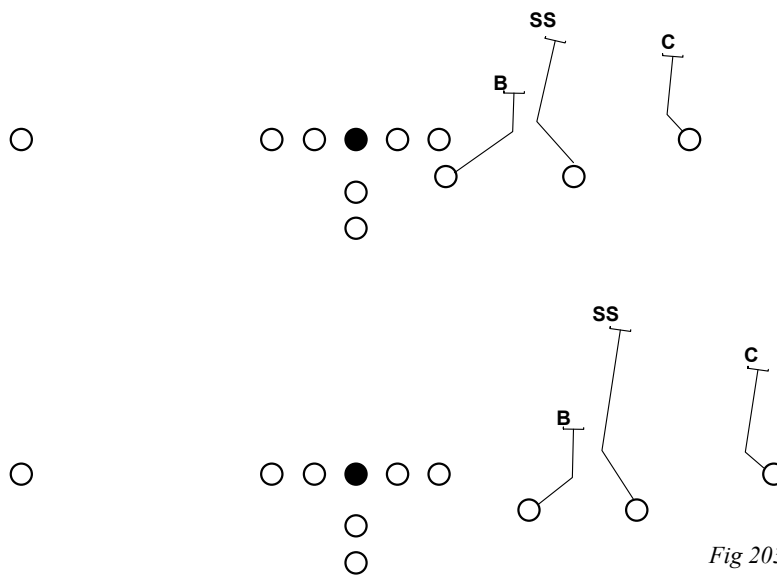
Fig 203

The diagrams in Figure 203 show the split ends working inside first. The diagrams frame the importance of the split end working inside to get the ball behind him. The split end is in an inadequate position to block the corner if the ball isn't behind him. The same is true for the middle receiver. He must work to get the ball behind him prior to working towards the assigned safety.

The ball is already behind the inside slot or wing player by the formational alignment. This is why he begins with an arc block to the assigned outside linebacker.

Cross Blocking

Cross blocking in the spread running game and the option running game are similar. The next illustration (Figure 204) shows cross blocking with two inside receivers.
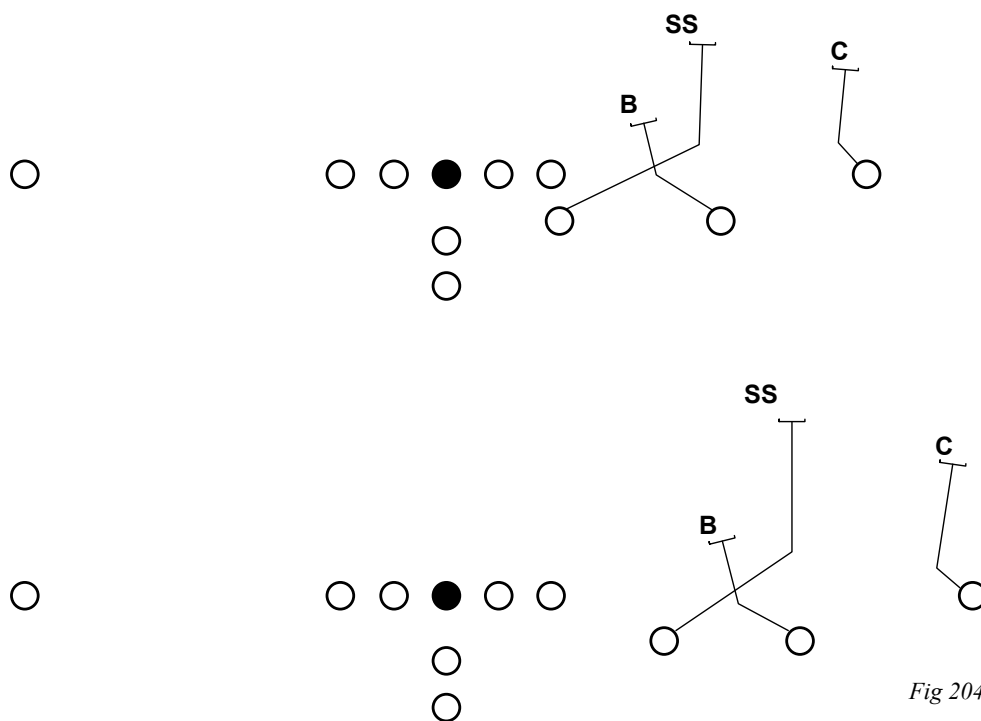

Fig 204

Figure 205 shows a three-man cross blocking scheme. The two outside receivers execute crack blocks on the safety and outside linebacker. The inside receiver then works to the corner. The path of the inside receiver looks odd because he first checks to make sure the outside linebacker and safety are secure before working to the corner.

An added benefit to this path is that the block on the corner is well timed with the play. If the inside receiver works directly to the corner he most likely gets there before the ball does. Blocks become more difficult the longer a player must sustain it. This is true for players inside the box and on the perimeter.

The inside receiver should get to the corner just as the ball is reaching the outside by first securing the linebacker and then the safety. We always want our blocks to engage the defender right as the ball is getting there—not beforehand. This securing makes sure the block is well timed.
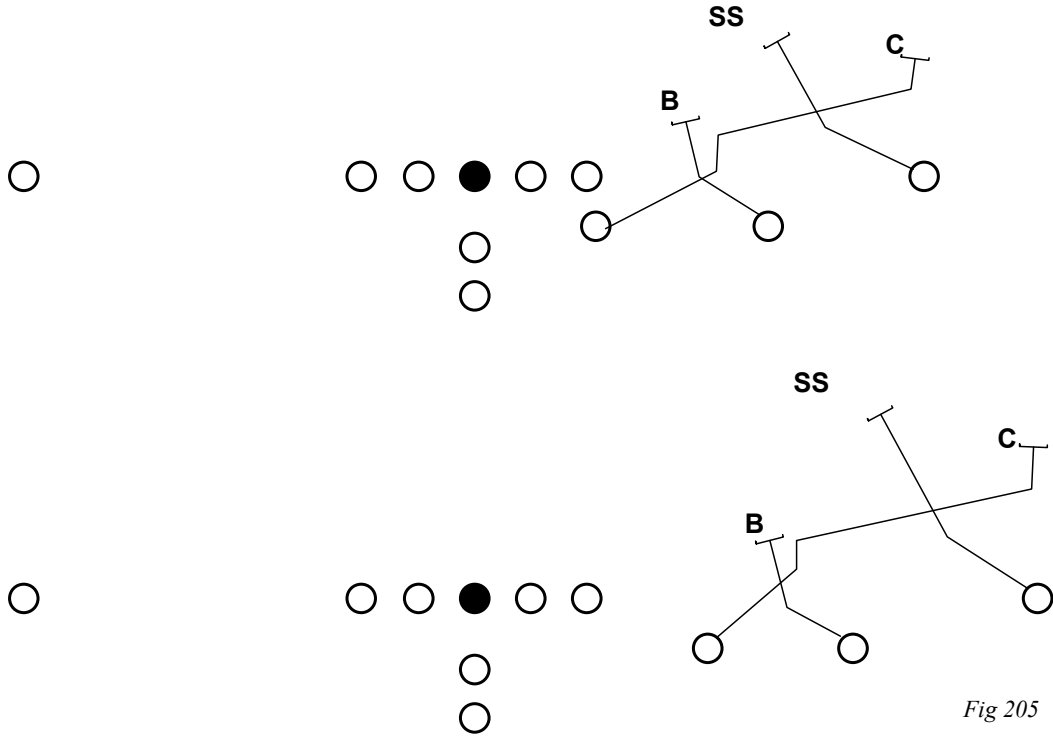
Fig 205