
CHAPTER 23



Game Planning with Balanced & Unbalanced

Keeping the Wing-T ahead of Defensive Adjustments

- You must have multiple variations in your blocking schemes.
- Use multiple formations, both balanced and unbalanced.

The third area I think is essential to be successful in the Wing-T is **finding a soft edge**. Again, find the edge where one of the defenders is not only responsible for setting the edge, but he's also responsible for defending the deep third. If you can put a guy into that scenario, now you've got a situation to place that Defender in conflict and his conflict is where you can create a soft edge and that's where you want to run the football. We attempt to do this by using formations and play conflict.

The fourth thing in the key to being successful in Wing-T is I believe you have to be able to do one of two additional things. You either have to be able **to run the option**, which is the veer and the midline, or you have to be able to **throw the football**. Now the key is, what can your quarterback do? If you've got a quarterback who can throw the football, but he doesn't run very well, you can still be successful in this offense because you can keep the secondary backed off because of the threat of the play-action pass.

If he can't throw the football very well, but he can run the option, again by having the inside veer, mid-line and the load option you are able to keep people's secondary from being able to walk up into the box by playing man coverage, because all you do is run off the people that are responsible for the pitch contain.



Keeping the Wing-T ahead of Defensive Adjustments

- Find ways to establish a soft corner.
- Either run the triple option or throw the football. If you can do both then the offense will flourish.

Game Planning when running the Wing T Offense to me is different than game planning for other type of offenses. For us we often will get teams that change from their normal defensive alignments and often will not have the same philosophy on how to defend the Wing T as opposed to other Offenses. It used to be much easier to determine or predict what you would see as you would have in your film exchange 1 or 2 teams that ran the Wing T, however today you are lucky if your opponent has faced the Wing T at all that season. Now that can be to your advantage also as they are trying to adapt their defense to something their team has not seen in a 3-day work week. We will certainly go back and study film from our previous meetings if we have any history vs the opposing Head Coach or the Defensive Coordinator.

If you are a Wing T Coach already and you understand the Offense, then you are aware that calling plays in this system is about taking advantage of how the defense is reacting to your series. It is about creating conflict for a defender and then taking advantage of how he reacts. Example would be when the 9 tech. on the TE side is squeezing hard with the down block of the TE on the Belly G, then you will want to run the Belly Option and log the 9 technique. Now you are putting the Pitch Contain player in conflict as he is responsible for the pitch and now must take the QB. When you see this you know the deep defender must be taking the pitch and you go to the Belly Pass.

The point I am trying to make is we don't break down film on down and distance tendencies for the opposing Defense as many teams do and we do not come up with a play sheet that is broken down with offensive calls base on down and distance based on our break down of the defensive tendencies we have gathered in our film breakdown. We do use this part of the breakdown to anticipate when the defense may change to a short yardage look or blitz based on down and distance.

These are the things we are looking for and I will try to explain why each is important.

- 1) Are they basing their Defense from an Odd or Even Front?
- 2) We want to determine are they working from an Eight man or 7-man front. This tells us if they are running a 3 deep secondary - cover 3 or man coverage.
- 3) We want to know if they are a 3 deep or 4 deeps secondary.
- 4) Do they flip their personal with a strong side and weak side. If they do, we will shift and trade to force them to play both sides of their defense vs all our offense. It also allows us to run plays at defenders who are less physically prepared
- 5) Do they slant and in which direction? (strong, field, or with motion).



- 6) We must determine regardless of odd or even front are they a balanced defense or unbalanced defensive look. If you draw a line right down the middle of their formation, do they have more defenders on one side of the formation? Most 8-man fronts are balanced and most 7-man fronts are unbalanced with the extra defender from the secondary aligning on the strength side. Our philosophy is we run UN-balanced formations at a balanced defense, and BALANCED formations at an unbalanced defense. We also will check plays at the line of scrimmage and run to the side where they have the least number of defenders.
- 7) How do adjust to unbalance? It is hard for the defense to have multiple ways to defend multiple unbalanced looks. For example if you use 2 to 4 unbalanced (East) and different SE over unbalanced looks (North, Northern, Delaware etc) and then on top of that now you go unbalanced and offset your backs to or away from unbalance.

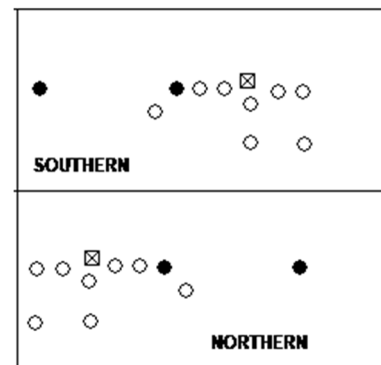
ADJUST TO UNBALANCED

I have found over the years that teams will only adjust to unbalance in one of the following ways and we will develop our play sheet based on the way the defense chooses to adjust. The 5 ways are as follows.

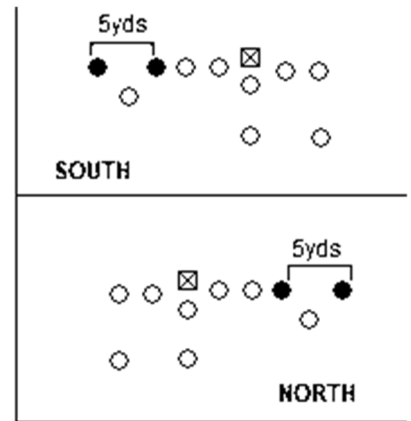
1. They will **do nothing**. *We gained an additional gap they must fit with the same number of defenders as before.*
2. They will **slide down their front** over one man. This makes it more difficult to fit for the defense with only limited practice. If you slide an Odd front 1 man now you are in an Even front and sliding an Even front puts you in an Odd front. When an Odd front slides, the NG will have trouble with trap. Also, this is why we keep the Veer in our offense as it changes all the option responsibilities for the defense.
3. The 3rd choice for the defense and we often see this with the Even fronts is they will **bring one defender over** which is normally the OLB. When this happens, we have eliminated their pitch/contain player on the back side and opens the Speed Sweep and pitch man on the Veer on the backside.
4. Teams will **roll their secondary** to the side of the strength and when this is an Even Front defense, they now will be playing Cover 2 in a defense that normally plays Cover 3 or Man coverage. This will help our Passing Game by attacking Cover 2 when they almost always play from a 3 shell.
5. Teams will only **slide the Linebackers** and leave the front and secondary as normal. This has helped us with versus the 3-5 stack, because normally they out number us in the tackle box. When they slide the LB's it now becomes a 3-4 look and we are back to 5 on 5 in the box. When the 4-4 teams slide the LB's it now becomes a 4-3 and all the fits become different in the 4-3 than they were in the 4-4.

SPLIT END OVER

When you have a team that has a safety sitting over the top of your tight end/wing reading when they block down. The minute they block down that safety is downhill in the run game and you cannot block him because the scheme does not account for a safety. Then you must use **Northern and Southern** formations. This will bring the wide receiver over and the defense will have to adjust and bring either the safety or corner out over the wide receiver. Even if they do bring the corner out now the safety's responsibilities have changed.



Now the team we are facing has a phenomal inside linebacker. The linebacker is going to a Power 5 school. The lienbacker is sitting there reading your guards pull, scraping, and getting downhill destroying your strongside running game. You look at the stat sheet and the he has made 70% of the defensive tackles. He is a problem for you and your offense. We are going to be bring the wider receiver over in a crack alignment in the North or South formation. We may even slip our second tight end to wide receiver position just to get a bigger body on the linebacker. Now the wide receiver nows that any play that we run from the tackle wider he has one task and that is to crack the inside linebacker. Now we have brought another hat ino our box and given the linebacker something different to try to defend.

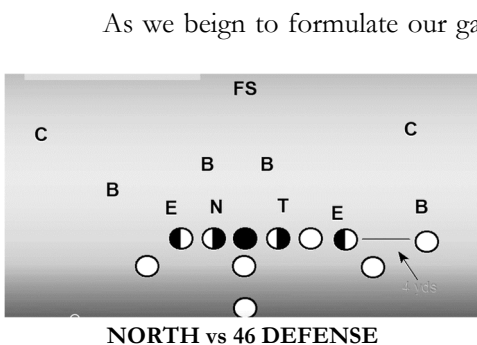


Now we are facing a defense that has an 8-man box. It does not matter to us that have 8 men in the box. We are still going to run the football and they are still going to have to defend both the strong and weakside. We do like using the Delaware formation. Now we are double wing and can run both to the strong and weakside. We have taken out the tight end and brought in twin wide receivers and we are unbalanced. Now we have pulled the outside linebacker out of the box. It has now opened up the off tackle power, veer, and bucksweep.



Teams will start trying to cheat the outside linebacker in so that he can play the run. Since our inside receiver is ineligible to go down field on a pass the outside linebacker will play half and half. Teams will squeeze the outside linebacker in to play the off tackle plays, they will turn the outside linebacker so we cannot crack him on the Jet sweep, or they will do both. How we counter this is by shifting into our trips look. Now the backside wing will be the tight end and the inside receiver will take a step back. We have created conflict for the outside linebacker. He now has responsibility in the passing game when we run bootleg. The outside linebacker must play the run and the pass.

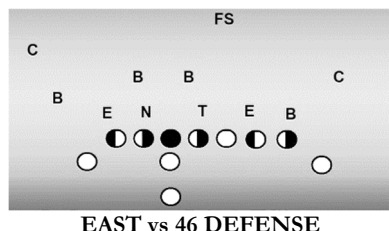
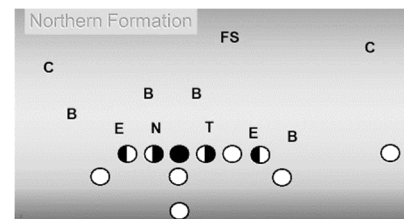
It also reduceds the 7-technique to a 5-technique. This gives the angles that we are looking for in our Wing-T offense. The defense adjusts and widens the 5-technique back out to a 7-technique. That is fine with us. We have the veer and we will run the veer all night long. No matter what the defense does, we have the answers.



As we beign to formulate our game plan versus and 8-man front, we start looking at unbalanced formations and determine what advanatages we can gain by creating a flank. If we are facing a 4-6 defense, then we are going to use the North formation. With the North formation, the outside linebacker has to widen out and cover up the wide receiver at 4-yards. If the the outside linebacker does not widen, then the defense is left vulnerable and the speedsweep becomes very lethal. The outside linebacker job is pitch and contain. He is now in conflict.



The next look we can give is going Northern formation. If we go Northern formation, we are taking the defensive back out from run support. The corner can no longer give support to our off-tackle power, power sweep, or bucksweep. He has been removed from the equation.



We will get in the East formation to create a flank to the tight end side. With the East formation, we have taken out the wide receiver and installed an additional tight end or offensive tackle. Now the outside linebacker is out flanked and has lost contain. We can block the outside linebacker with a down block from the wing back. If the outside linebacker widens then we can run our veer game.

We are trying to identify who the problem is for us. If it is the safety, then the answer is to bring the wide receiver over and place him out wide. If the inside linebacker is the problem, then we will bring the wide receiver into the crack alignment and in tight. You must be able to identify and solve the problem as a playcaller to be successful.

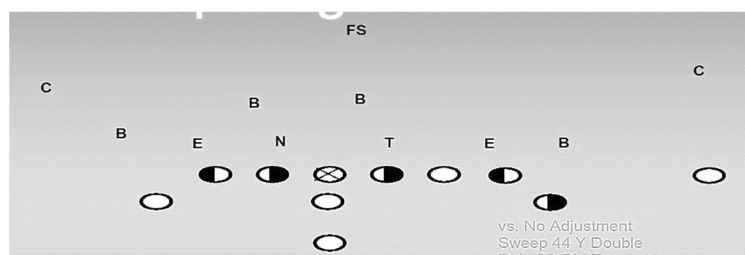
STAFF PREPARATION:

On Sunday we look on film to identify how we believe a team will adjust to our unbalance formations. Often we will have to go to our previous years films as there are not as many teams running the Wing T now. We will need to make an educated guess as to how they will play us based on the success they had the year before. If we got 40 they will probably try one of the other 4 adjustments. If we had trouble moving the football, then they will probably keep the same philosophy. Once we have an understanding of their defensive philosophy for unbalanced formations we will begin formulating our game plan.

We have 2 Offensive Coaches in the Pressbox on Friday Nights and one is a Wide Receiver Coach and the other is our T/TE Coach. They are well versed in the 5 ways to adjust and they will communicate that to me very quickly. We will script 4 plays normally to start the game and 2 of those will be from some type of unbalanced formation.

We will then take their base defensive front and put it on our whiteboard and look at the defense with each of the 5 adjustments and narrow down the plays we want to run vs each look. This is very beneficial as we start to put together our scripts for practice each week and keeps us from losing reps against looks they have an advantage against us.

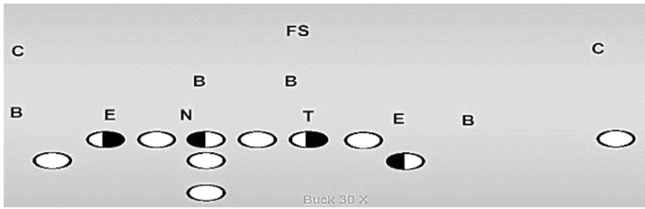
Here are a couple examples of how this will look on our board.



Now we come in on Sunday and we draw up this formation. The first thing we draw up is the defense making no adjustment to our unbalanced look. From the call sheet, we feel like we can run 44 Y Double which is the power sweep, Ride 36 GM Turnout which is the wing belly, Bama which is our inside veer, Counter 40 W

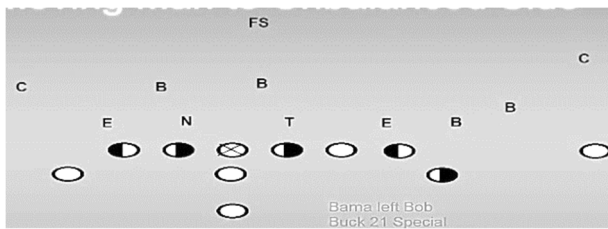


which is our tackle trap, Speed 42 G which is our speedsweep to the strength, Belly Pass 34 which is our belly pass with a curl flat or any combination that puts outside linebacker in conflict, and we like motioning to Trips and running 2-90 Pick which is our pick route. These are the plays we will run in our team script at practice.



The next adjustment we think the defense will make is sliding down one man. When the defense makes this adjustment we feel we have the angles and can run Buck 30 X which is the fullback trap, Buck 39 X which is the weakside trap, Con Speed

21 G Lead which we offset the fullback and run the weakside speedsweep, Sweep 46 Y Team Boss which our power sweep, Belly 34 G BOB which is the weakside Belly, Midline Lead, Buck 46 GX which is the bucksweep, and Con Toss 21 M Lead which is the weakside toss sweep. These are the plays we feel we can take advantage of the defense. We do not have time to practice our whole offense just the plays we feel like we can be successful running on Friday Nights.



The other adjustment we think the defense will make is moving the outside linebacker over to the unbalanced side. We like Bama Left BOB which is our veer to the weakside and the defense does not have an answer for it, Buck 21 Special which our bucksweep,

Con Toss 21 M Lead which is our toss sweep, Roll 15 Bat M Keep which is our option, Counter 40 W which our tackle trap, Speed Ride 35 Belly M Stretch which is the speed and running the belly off the speed motion, Ride 35 M which is our belly, and Ride 36 GM Turnout which is our belly play. Again we look at the defense and determine which plays can they not defend on paper. Your players still have to go out an excute on Friday Nights.

Sweep 44 Y double
Speed 42 G (lead)
Speed Ride 36 GM Turnout
Speed Belly 34 pass Switch
Counter 40 W

ML Right
ML Right Lead
ML Left Lead
Bama Left Bob

Plays vs Cover 2 Look

Again we draw it up to a Cover 2 look. These are the plays that look good on paper versus a 4-3 Cover 2 look. From our Northern formation we can run the plays in the figure.

Now on Friday Nights the coaches in the box will help you determine how the defense adjusted. You will have one coach in the box in looking a the secondary. He sees the defense adjusted by bring the outside linebacker over and he will call down on the headsets what he sees. I know now that I need to call plays off how the defensive adjusted. We have a coach watching the defensive front. He sees the defense adjust by sliding down a man and he will radio down what he is seeing. I will then call plays from the script the we have practice all week. We are able to use electronic devices in the state of Georgia and as soon as the play is over I have coaches looking at it with iPads. The coach can say they slide one man over and now I turn to see what my playcard sheet says.



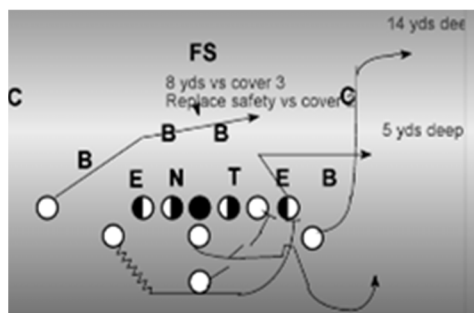
THROW THE BALL VS. 8-MAN FRONTS

When looking at throwing the Football vs 8 man fronts we want to put the # 4 defender in Conflict by running Play Action Passes. Force him to defend the option and flat with the Belly and Ride Series. We also have had success creating conflict by using Speed Motion.

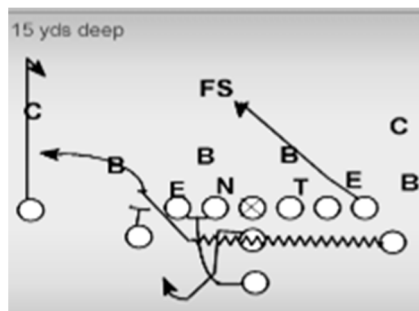
- Force the # 4 Defender to play in **Conflict** by running Play Action Passes.
- Force him to defend the *Option and Flat* with the Belly & Ride Passes.
- Create conflict by using speed motion.

PLAY ACTION

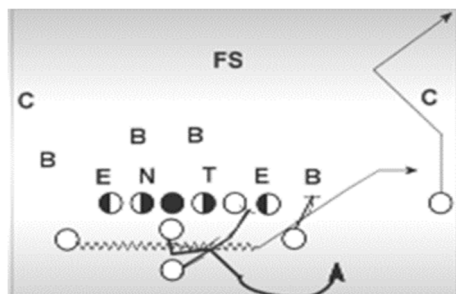
Game playing wise we want to force #4 defender to be the guy that is in conflict. He's an edge setter, he has pitch contained and also has to cover the flat. We also know that we would get a 3-d man coverage 90% of the time. We want our #4 defender to be able to defend the option, take the flat and the pitch man on the belly and ride option. Also at the Wing-T stuff, where the ball is in a play-action fake going on 3 yards in the backfield also, there's a motion guy coming that looks like an option but there's a guy running in the flat.



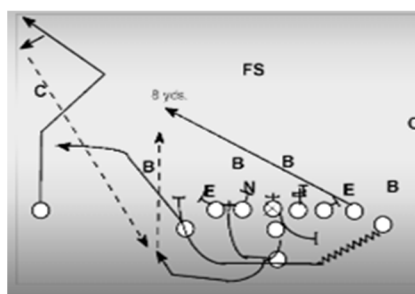
BELLY 34 PASS



RIDE 35 SWITCH CURL FLAT



NORTHERN BELLY 34 PASS SWITCH



RIDE 35 PASS

Our belly 34 pass off the belly fake is different from that of Delaware. We want to arch-release our wing and go block the hatfield/high-field safety. That is how we like to run the belly out of an unbalanced or balanced look. The minute they have to get involved in the run-game, they will have problems covering the deep pass. So, against an 8-man front, we will be faking belly, tight-end down block release then reverses back in the flat 5 yards deep. We want to keep the corner guy out, because, we at this point in the fake, must know if it is an option or a pass -- because the outside linebacker would be responsible for the pitch man and until he turns up to log, he can't start bellying into the flat.



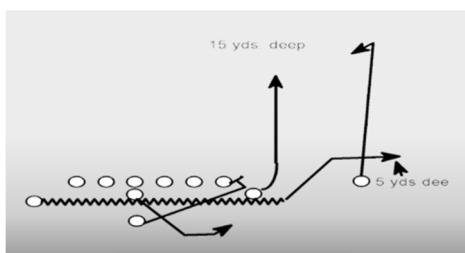
SPRINT OUT

- Motion to Trips and Sprint out to avoid all Blitzes from the inside.
- Run Pick Routes off Speed Sweep Motion. This is tough on the # 4 defender and is a great man to man beater.
- Run 3 step passing game vs Cover 3 or Cover 1

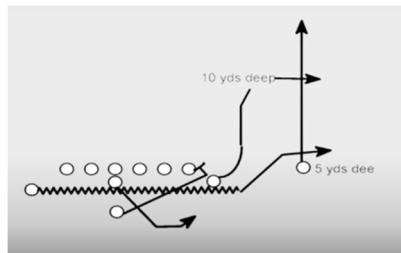
We are not into a deep well defined, pass, throw, kick, slide, vertical sets and you can't be a great running team or predominant run team and have enough time in your offensive passing game to be a great protection team, and handle all the blitz pick-ups, and where your QB throws hot, etc.

We want to use motion to trips and use our 90-passing game. This allows us to avoid all the internal blitzes that eight-man front teams use. We like to use the speed motion and throw our pick routes as the # 4 defender will have a hard time because of the threat of the speed sweep.

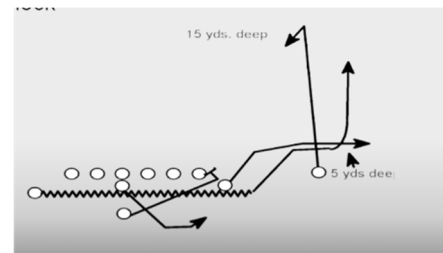
For us, we want to go **unbalanced, motion the trips and then sprint out:**



2-95 FLAT SEAM



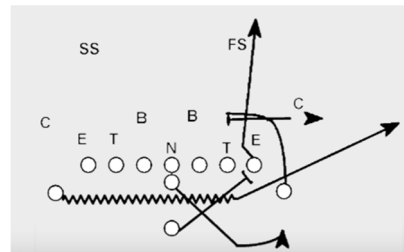
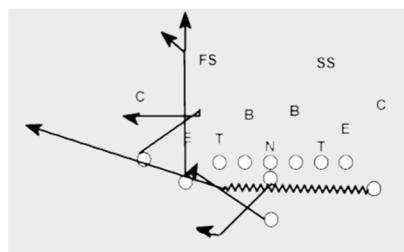
2-90 FLOOD



2-95 FISH FLAT

The 2-95 Flat Seam holds the Free Safety in center field and keeps him from robbing the curl. On any of our pass plays, the TAG **"Firm"** holds the playside Wing Back in to block.

We also, want to **run pick routes off of the speed motion** which is very tough for our #4 defender. So, we want to pick on the #4 defender. Note, #3 is whoever on the tight-end and #4 is the first man past that, with the exception of SPEED SWEEP.



PICK ROUTES

We also want to run a **3-step passing game** because your opponent is in either on cover 3 or man coverage. We think our 3 step (70's) are always a good answer. Run the thing off on a sticky foot then turn around and catch a 5-yard hitch, or run a slant. Fades aren't good.



CALLING PLAYS IN THE WING-T IS DIFFERENT THAN THE SPREAD

I do call the plays in our offense. My coaches on the sidelines and in the box are encouraged to make comments or suggestions. However, the problem in calling plays in the Wing-T are different than calling plays in the spread offense. Down and Distance are not a factor in the Wing-T offense. In the Wing-T offense, you call plays on what the defense gives you, how they stopped what you did, and have the next play ready.

I do script the opening four plays. Of those four plays in the opening script two of those plays are unbalanced. I do not have a script for first downs or second downs. Again, I base my play calls on what the defense is doing. I do have a script for goalline, shortyardage, and 3rd and long.

We've already discussed game planning and how we go into the game. Now we discuss how to handle half-time adjustments. There's going to be some sort of adjustment made in the half-time and how we are supposed to handle those adjustments.

A guy, we owe a lot of credit for this talk, one of the great WING-T coaches of all time, taught us this and we stayed with it: A half-time is 20 mins total, and we all know this from the beginning. Our kids play both sides of the football. So, the moment we come into the locker room, the first 4 minutes from the time you left the field is when the officials start counting the 20 minutes.

“FIRST 4 MINUTES MEET WITH COACHES OUTSIDE THE LOCKER ROOM”

The first thing I do is to meet with my offensive coaches and we will again make sure that all the adjustments we saw were correct. This is actually the best time to flip through and take a look at all the videos from the end-zone to see what we need to see. While this is happening, any of our players that are hurt, injured or beaten up will be seeing the athletic trainer or some may need to go the restroom.

After that 4 minutes, we all come back in and sit down with our kids. We will have 11 chairs in the first row across the front where all our 11 players will sit in these chairs by position. The next row will have 11 chairs for the back-up players for the people on the first row. The third row would be the same as the second row.

The first three rows are set up for the 3-D on the offensive side of the ball. The beauty of this, is that for example, if your right guard is hurt, then the number 2 guard would automatically know, as the seat in front of him is empty that he should be locked in and ready to go because he's likely one play away from having to play. It's likely creating your defensive chart right there and then.

We would spend the next 4 minutes, going over on the board, and talking about any adjustments that we may need on the offensive side of the ball. This may not be a lot but it is enough. If you got to make too many adjustments you're likely already behind and getting kicked in anyway.

What does this do with our defense, that is where most of your adjustments have got to be made.



My defensive coaches now have had 8 minutes to meet and review all the videos, see anything they need like all plays that hurt our team in the first half and make sure that there wasn't any other cause or reason that it happened other than poor execution on our part.

Then, in the next 4 minutes the players will then meet with the defensive coaches and discuss. Then after this, the kids go back and change their seats according to what was discussed. In that time, the defensive coaches would have about 4 minutes to put their thing out, like all their adjustments and/coaching done.

Needless to say, while all these are going on, the kids are hydrating or drinking fluids and already been seen by the athletic trainers, and when they have any question for us, that's when they would raise them.

So by this time we are 12 mins in (4mins to get started, 4 mins with offense, 4 mins with the defensive coaches) in from our 20-minute half-time mark. While defensive time was going on, the offensive coaches have gone back now and have had 4 more minutes to check and see if there's anything we've missed.

Then we go back in and spend the next 4 minutes to discuss any offensive adjustments and the next 2 minutes for any defensive adjustments.

By the time this is done, we've already spent 18 ½ minutes and it's now time to go back to the field.

The organization and routine we do during that half-time is a very solid thing for us, Dublin Highschool Football team. This has been noted by a lot of people as they say that we've done a good job as anybody in making adjustments during half-time.

Our fans believe that once we get out of half-time, then the other team would be in trouble. When our fans believe this, then the players believe this. Also, if your players believe that what you're doing during half-time gives them a chance to win, then you're doing a great job.

STAY IN GAME BECAUSE WING-T HAS ANSWERS

We do talk to our players about this and I think this is something that you need to be able to instill with your own guys. We tell them that, Guys, we need you to do something for us. **Battle your hearts out and stay in the game.** We have answers. We got answers.

They come out and they start giving us something completely different than what we've looked at and have seen. It might be the middle of the first half, middle of those halftime adjustments, or middle of the third quarter before we finally get honed in and get it.

But, you gotta **keep playing, keep battling and keep playing hard** and eventually you're going to find that answer you need to help you be successful in this. It's all part of having to play it.



UNDERSTAND WING-T PHILOSOPHY

If you do as much as we do offensively, you run so many different series, so many different blocking variations, the 100's of different formations we can line up in, and trying to get all the smoke and mirrors out there for the defense to see becomes a big problem. At some point, you have to be able to game plan all the different looks and series, and put into some type of organizational thought process to give you an opportunity to narrow down your practice and game plan. In this chapter, we are going to talk about how we go about game planning each week, how we break down our opponent's film, and how we determine what we want to do offensively to make our kids successful on Friday nights.

First you have to have an understanding that in Wing-T offense what you want to get done and for us we are a ball control team. What we are able to do depends on the quarterback. We have had all types of quarterbacks throughout the

- Ball Control Offense designed around what your Quarterback can do.
- Assignment conflict for the Defense
- Deception
- TE and SE side Running and Passing Game that are Versatile

What Does WingT Offer On Offense?

years. We have had “game manager” type quarterbacks that cannot run or throw very well, but we can still win with this system. If your quarterback can run, then you need to run more option. If you your quarterback can throw, then you need to throw more. However, if you can find a quarterback that can throw or run then you are going to be able set State scoring records.

You want to place the defense in conflict. You want to take what the defense is coached well to do and use that against them. The Wing-T is built on deception. If you have the right backfield action the ball becomes difficult for the defense to find. You can stop the defense from fast-flowing to having to play a more basic responsibility to react to your offense.

The last for this offense has is balance and versalitie. We have a split end side run game and a tight end side run game. We have a split end side passing game and tight end side passing game. We are creating balance so the defense cannot focus on just one side or one concept that we do. We have balance all the way across our formation making us hard to defend.

When we have a running quarterback, we have the ability to excute the inside and outside veer, and the mid-line

- Ability to execute the Inside & Outside Veer and Mid-Line Option from base formations.
- Passing game with the threat of four quick receivers.
- Threat of multiple formations both Balanced and Unbalanced

What Does the Wing T Offer?

option from our basic formations. People assume that the Paul Johnson flexbone is a Wing-T offense. The Paul Johnson flexbone is not a Wing-T system, it is a triple option offense. The Wing-T system is not a triple option offense. However, the veer and mid-line are phenomal additions to our Wing-T system.



In the passing game, we have the ability to release four wide receivers into their routes quickly. Our four wide receivers are line-up with one yard of the line of scrimmage. We have the ability to get deep on the defense very quickly. We can be like a spread team and throw the ball when necessary.

We have the threat of being multiple formations that can be both balanced and unbalanced. With our formations and everything that we do we are creating conflict for a defense staff. The defensive coordinator must decide how he is going to defend you. We always want to have an answer to make the defense wrong.

In a standard game plan philosophy for us, when we are facing an odd defensive front then we want to have balanced

- When facing Odd Front Defenses use Balanced Formations.
- When facing Even Front Defenses use Unbalanced Formations.
- When facing teams that Flip their Defensive Personnel use Shifts & Trades.

Game Plan Philosophies

formations. When we are facing an even defensive front then we want to give them unbalanced formations. When we face a team that flips their personnel meaning they have a strongside and a weakside then we are going to trade and shift. We will shift or trade our tight end, now the weakside defenders now have to be able to defend the strongside runs. Then the strongside defenders have to be able to defend the weakside runs. If they have not practiced them then it

becomes a huge advantage for our offense.

When you face an 8-man front defense they are give you a balanced attack. They will have the same number of defenders on the strongside, as they do the weakside. The only difference will be where they offset the free safety. 90% of

- They give you a balanced look to attack.
- They will normally use a Cover 3 or Man to Man.
- It is difficult to find two Seven Techniques that can handle two good TE's.

General Statements About 8-Man Fronts

the time these teams will either be in Cover 3 or Man-to-Man defense. We are seeing some 8-man fronts roll their secondary into a Cover 2 look. Generally, a 4-4 or a 3-5 defense will give you a 1 high safety look. In an 8-man front it is hard to find two legitimate 7-techniques. We are going to do double tight and we are going to figure which 7-technique cannot play versus a good tight end.

