

Why The Pistol Wing-T?

This is the million-dollar question. And you need to bounce this off your coaching staff and be very, very honest with yourself: Don't run Wing-T out of the PISTOL formation because *you* want to change it up...examine your Quarterback position before deciding.

The Pistol QB has to possess great game instincts and quickness. Pure, raw athleticism helps, but there has to be discipline and intelligence. While he doesn't need Olympic gold medal speed, he needs to have quick feet and above average change of direction. When he decides to pull the handoff and keep it, his first steps have to be very quick so he can hit the hole or the edge before the defense reacts. And the last, but very important quality, is unselfishness. This offense gives him the green light to run, but he has to possess patience and great decision making skills.

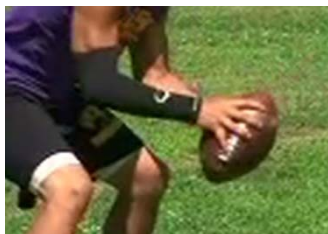
If you have the typical Wing-T quarterback who is highly intelligent, but not a great athlete. He is a leader who understands the importance of deception then I would talk you into staying under center.

TRADE OFFS of GOING TO PISTOL

- ◆ Loss of deception is offset by opportunity to read unblocked defenders;
- ◆ TB Trap & Midline hit slower with TB at 5 yards, but option is better as "ride" is longer;
- ◆ Backside Tackle has to stay home and block before releasing, losing our favorite block across the field on the play side Corner.
- ◆ Center has to learn the 3 yard snap.

KNUCKLE BALL SNAP

The center will hold the top cone of the ball while the bottom cone sits on the ground. The laces will face outward to the right if the QB is right handed. He will snap the ball so that it does not spin or rotate, but "knuckle ball" so that the laces land on the fingertips of the QB right hand. The center cannot flex, or snap his elbow or wrist. He keeps his entire arm solid as he releases the ball at "calf length".



KEEP UNDER CENTER ALIGNMENT

There will be scenarios when your backup center or quarterback has to go in the game. You might be playing in heavy rain or snow, especially come playoff time. For these reasons, I have designed the backfield action to make it very easy to run plays from both under center and out of PISTOL.

Having the ability to be in both alignments also puts more pressure on the defensive coordinators. They will stay up all weekend trying to find tendencies, which is why it is very important to not have any. My quarterback and I go off gut feeling week to week as to how much Pistol vs under center we will run.

BACKFIELD ACTION AND FOOTWORK

The Pistol formation keeps the TB directly behind the QB, which severely minimizes changes to RB footwork and landmarks. A disadvantage to Shotgun Wing T is having to offset the TB to the side of the QB, which necessitates more changes to backfield footwork.

- *Easier for the QB to run every play from both under center and in Pistol.*
- *Younger teams stay under center for easy transition to Pistol at older levels.*
- *Zero changes to wing back footwork & motion landmarks.*
- *Only difference to TB footwork is always having midline GO family.*

Regardless of whether a team runs the Wing T out of Pistol or Shotgun, the QB is going to have very different footwork compared to being under center. But these differences between Pistol and direct snap are far less than direct snap and shotgun.

CHANGES IN BACKFIELD STEPS

My original intention was to make Buck Sweep (G.O.) & Jet Sweep (Liz & Rip) to look the same. This was a mistake and we went back to traditional Wing T steps.

- a) *Liz & Rip motion (our version of Jet) is in front of QB. This allows the QB to read ILB or DE with the option of keeping the ball; makes it easier to run Belly & Down under the motion; the sweeping wingback hits the flank faster.*
- b) *Buck Sweep (G.O.) is still ran behind the QB, however, the TB goes first, followed by the Half back....just like the traditional Wing T buck sweep.*

EASIER TO PASS

There is something to be said about the defense being more worried about the passing game when the QB gets into Pistol or Shotgun alignment. Whether it is consciously or subconsciously, backing the QB away from center makes the defense think about the threat of the passing game.

There is more to this however. The farther away from the LOS that the QB gets makes it easier for HIM to read the defense and find his pre-snap reads. Furthermore, he can get to his landmark and setup quicker than having to “drop back” five yards.

ALLOWS PRE-SNAP & POST SNAP READ PLAYS

While passing the ball is easier from the Pistol formation, the hidden advantage is in the running game. The 3 yard alignment and facing the defense gives the QB more time to read unblocked defenders without sacrificing the quick hitting run game that is lost by backing all the way up to 5 yards.

“The 3 yd alignment is a “happy medium” between under center (allowing TB to hit the LOS the quickest) and the 5 yd alignment (giving QB most time to make his reads).”

PRE SNAP READS:

AUDIBLES: These “check with me” scenarios are covered in Ch. 3.

PASS-RUN OPTIONS: Pass plays are paired up with run plays such as hitch, swing, & arrow routes. Not only can QB read these easier, but angle of throw is better. (Ch. 11).

COMBO PLAYS: Left half of the offense runs Play A and right side of offense runs Play B. The QB decides which side is better. These are covered in Ch. 11.

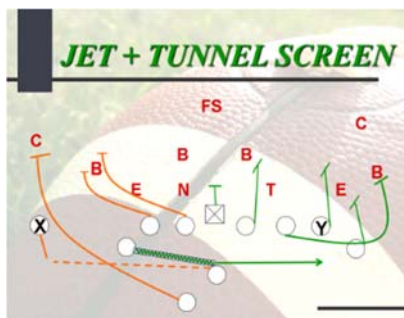


Fig 19: Combo Play example

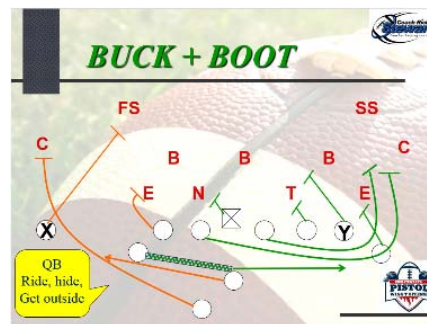
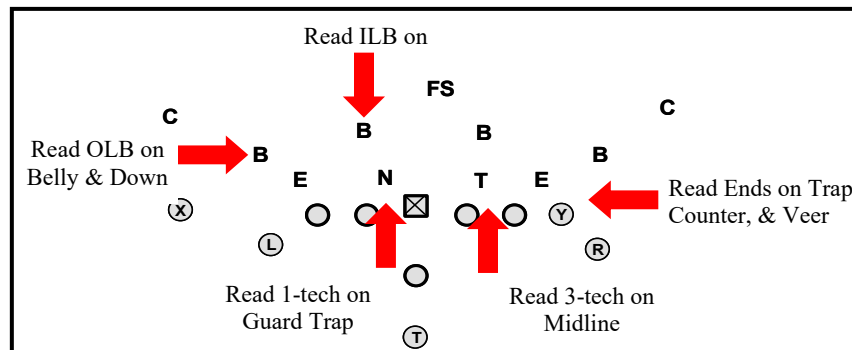


Fig 20: Combo Play example

POST SNAP READS:

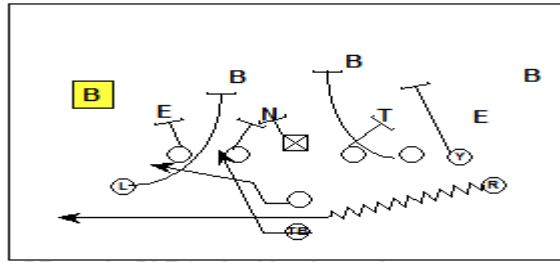
A basic premise of option football is lengthening the time that the QB has to “ride & decide”. Obviously putting the QB at 3yards instead of at the Line of Scrimmage will give the QB more time to decide whether to give the ball to the RB or keep the ball and run. This longer faking action also freezes defenders which allows the lineman to gain better angles and more leverage. Again, putting the QB at 5 yards allows even more time, but the tradeoff is that the back also takes longer to get to the LOS.



POST SNAP READS:

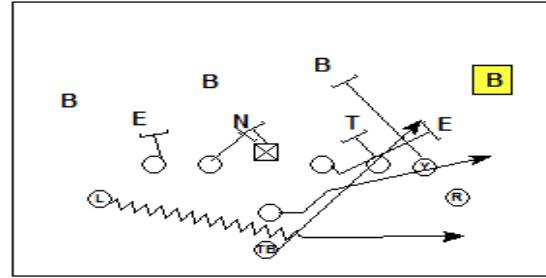
BELLY & DOWN Read the OLB

33 BELLY



- QB reads OLB to decide give or keep.
- If keep run option with motion man.
- vs. 0-tech NG, QB does not shuffle into LOS.
- Still reads OLB for keep

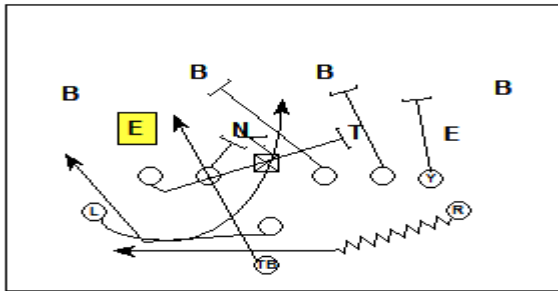
DOWN 36 O



- If End squeezes hard, the PSG logs him, QB keeps
- QB read/pitch off OLB
- Problem will be when DE upfield and OLB folds inside
- QB will keep, "follow" TB through hole
- TB blocks OLB in that case

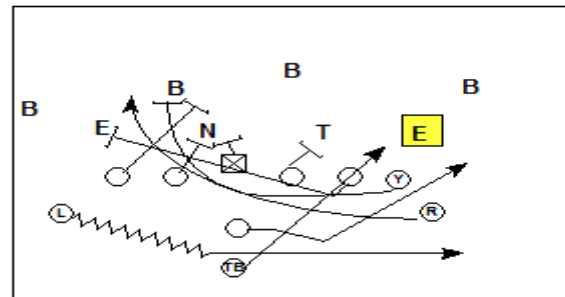
TACKLE TRAP & COUNTER Read the backside DE

BELLY 22 TRAP



- QB read DE to decide give to LW or keep
- If keep, pitch off OLB

DOWN 43 COUNTER

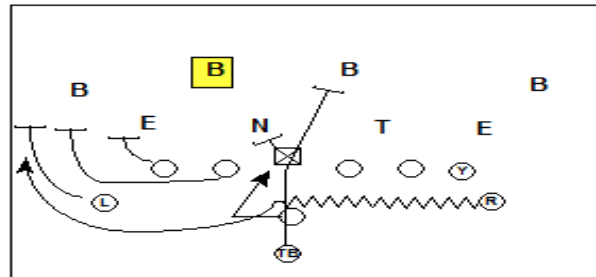


- QB read DE to decide give to LW or keep
- If keep, pitch off QB

JET

Read ILB if Guard pulls;

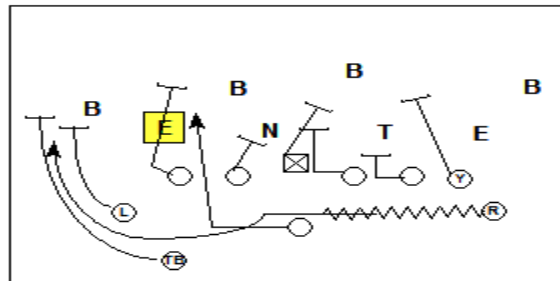
RIP 47 O



- QB read ILB to Liz and Rip if we pull PSG

Read Playside DE if Reach blocking

RIP 47 REACH

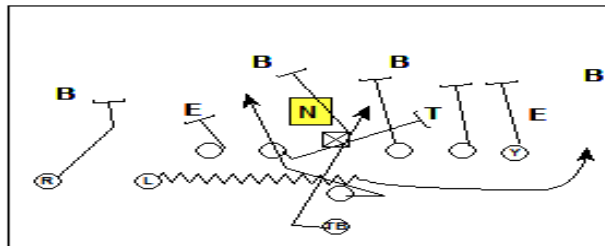


- QB read DE on Liz & Rip if we are reach blocking

GUARD TRAP

Read the 1-tech

LIZ 32 G READ



- Have to formation OLB out of box or he will tackle QB
- QB reads 1 tech
- TB jab step left to give QB time