
CHAPTER 12



Attack the Edge with Speed & Rocket

Alright, folks, we're going to talk now about, I guess we could say one of the new things in the Wing-T although it's been around a while; we call it the Speed Sweep, some of you guys probably call it the Jet Sweep, some people might call it Fly Sweep. My understanding of this play is it originated in Crestview, Florida in a high school that was a Wing-T football team. It eventually left Crestview, went to Mississippi, a coach from Mississippi gave it to a coach in the state of Tennessee, and my mentor Herschel Moore took the Speed Sweep and started running it, started developing more ideas and thoughts about the Speed Sweep. Then he left and went to Cumberland University and from Cumberland University being a college program running the Speed Sweep, Delaware then added it to their Wing-T package and I guess the rest of its kind of history as it's gone on.

Speed sweep, what makes this play interesting is this: It is legitimately a football play, that if it's timed out right, executed right, it is a play that will gain four yards and not have any other issues.

I think that no matter what you're doing in your offense, but when I look at plays, I want to know the percentage of time that the play gains four yards or more. So what I'm trying to tell you is when you look at the end of your season, it does not matter what a play averages per attempt, because in reality if you run a play 7 times and you get one yard, one yard, two yards, four yards, three yards, five yards, and 70 yards, you look at that at the end of the year and it looks like that play averaged 8 yards a carry. But in reality, only two out of 7 times did that play gain four yards or more for you. This means the play was only successful only 28% of the time you ran it by our standards.

The Speed Sweep play for us is a play that averages that four yards or more over 75% of the time year in and year out. So it's a great football play. The other side of that is now this play has become so popular, that defenses are starting to catch up with it and some of the things that we're going to talk about is how we are gaining numbers to run the Speed Sweep, and how to use formations to get done what you want to get done running the Speed Sweep.



I often get asked do I like to run the Speed Sweep or the Rocket Sweep better. To be honest both have their strengths and I feel the need to have both in my system. For us the Speed Sweep is a better play because we can run 90 percent of our offense with speed type motion, and it still turns out to be the same play. So we're going to take a look at the Speed Sweep, I think you'll find some ideas here that will help you make the Speed Sweep a great play.

We got reasons that we feel like we need to be able to run the Speed Sweep. We're going to talk about some musts that we believe are necessary to run the Speed Sweep. But number one, we like to run it because we really only need to block two people. There are not many plays in our offense where you only had to block two people to get that successful play, that's a four-yard gain.

The Speed Sweep also has helped us gain one of the things we believe are essential in running the Wing T Offense. The thing we gain because of the threat of the Speed Sweep is the fact that many teams are now rotating a Safety down to our Split End side when using a 4-man secondary. What this does for us is it puts the edge defender to our TE side being responsible for setting the edge and also covering the deep 1/3 on pass.

We can use the Speed motion by our Wing Back and still run the following plays or series in the Wing T: Trap, Bootleg, Counter Criss-Cross, Down, Belly and Ride Series. We even have added some Mid Line Lead with the Speed Motion. The threat of the Speed Sweep also tends to make the 5 and 9 techniques play a little wider and helps when we are releasing inside to get up on Linebackers.

I have been told by Coaches that they don't feel they have the speed at the Wing Back positions to be running the Speed Sweep. If you are of that belief I want you to think of this, the back receiving the ball is already moving and we all know you can run a much faster flying 40 than from a standing start. As well as you are adding to the ball carrier's speed while the defenders are standing still. I argue that this is actually improving your team speed.

The following things must happen for successful Speed Sweep!

- The handoff must occur in the play side A Gap.
- You must use formations that allow you to have a hat for a hat with the defenders on the perimeter.
- You must allow your Quarterback to check the play to the opposite side as needed.
- You must use a snap count that allows your Quarterback to snap the ball when the running back is in a particular spot for timing.

When we are running the Speed Sweep we tell our Offensive Line that we are not blocking any level one defenders aligned from the B Gap in that has his hand on the ground. Notice I said with his hand on the ground. We have found if a Linebacker walks up into the line of scrimmage anywhere from A Gap to B Gap and because he is standing his vision allows him to see the Speed motion coming he can adjust and sometimes make the play. We will get into the blocking shortly but we will always pull our play side Guard on the Speed Sweep unless the Linebacker is walked up and then we will reach him.



We will use multiple formations when running the Speed Sweep with unbalanced lines and backs offset or in empty looks to force the defense to adjust. We always give our Quarterback the ability to check the direction of the Speed Sweep to take advantage of the adjustments the defense makes to our formations.

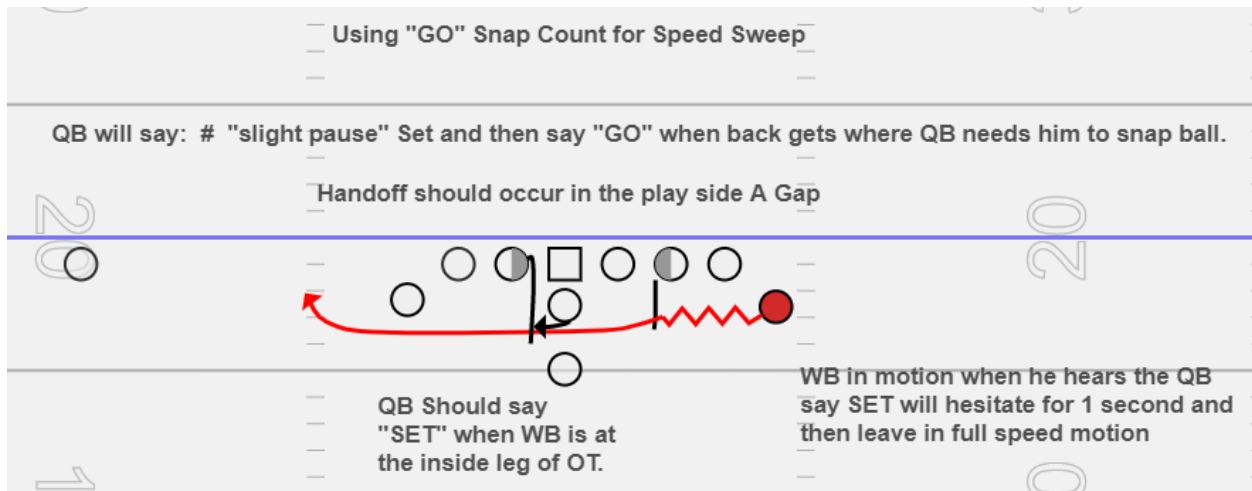
Normally when running the base Wing T plays we always use a rhythmic snap count for motion timing. However, we will use our non-rhythmic snap count for plays that are using extended motion or our Quarterback must snap the ball when the motion man is at a particular spot like on the Speed Sweep is our "Go Snap Count". The snap count is: # Set Go. The number can be used to determine the direction of the play if we have called both ways in the huddle. For example, we call Speed 42 or Speed 21 G at the line of scrimmage. By saying at the line of scrimmage we are alerting everyone that the QB will determine which way we are running the play by how the defense adjust. If that number was 1, we are running Speed 21 and if it were 2 we would be running Speed 42. The QB should have a pause after calling the number to allow for everyone to make need calls and secure their assignments in the mind before the snap. We have also found that our WB must hesitate for 1 second after the Set is called in the snap count and then take off in full speed motion. The QB will snap the ball when the Wingback is on the inside foot of the Offensive Tackle on the side he left in motion from.

The timing for the handoff is probably the most critical of all things. Your Quarterback is setting on the Midline to receive the snap. Let's say the Speed Sweep is going to our left. When our Quarterback is receiving the snap on the Speed Sweep, we want our Quarterback as he's receiving the snap, to be taking a lateral slide step down the line of scrimmage to his left when receiving the snap. The Quarterback will reverse pivot down the line of scrimmage, we want him to have his back turned completely to the line of scrimmage, the handoff must occur in the play side A-gap. As mentioned earlier we're not going to block anybody from the B-gap in that has their hand on the ground when we run the Speed Sweep. Our film has shown over the years that anytime we get caught on the Speed Sweep from an interior defensive line is because **the Quarterback turned around and handed the guy the ball, right behind him.** The key, slide step, reverse pivot and hand the football off in the play side A-gap. That is a must.

And then we got to use formations that allow us, a hat for a hat. We never run the Speed Sweep anymore, that we don't allow our Quarterback the ability to check at the line of scrimmage, which way we're going. We used to call it in a huddle which way we were going. We have progressed now to the point, because of all of our formations and what we do, our Quarterback has the ability to check the Speed Sweep whatever direction the defense is giving to us. And I think if you're not giving your Quarterback that ability, you're stalemating yourself a lot in what you want to do.

When the Wingback is leaving in motion, from the Split End side, and because our alignment is 1 yard by 1 yard from the end man on the line which in this case is the Offensive Tackle and we know the ball has to be snapped when the motion guy hits the inside leg of the Tackle on his side. That's when you want your Quarterback to snap the ball. So he says, "one, set", the Wingback, in his mind, says "one Mississippi" and he takes off as hard as he can go. Our QB will say, "go" when he hits the inside leg of the tackle. It will time out for you without any problem. Where we got in trouble was when our back was motioning from the Split End side and our QB would say, "One, set," and that Wingback would take off as he's hearing set and he would be at the Guard before the Quarterback could say go and receive the snap. So that delay in that motion smoothed out all of our timing. And again, you've got to allow your Quarterback to check the direction of the Speed Sweep to be the most successful.





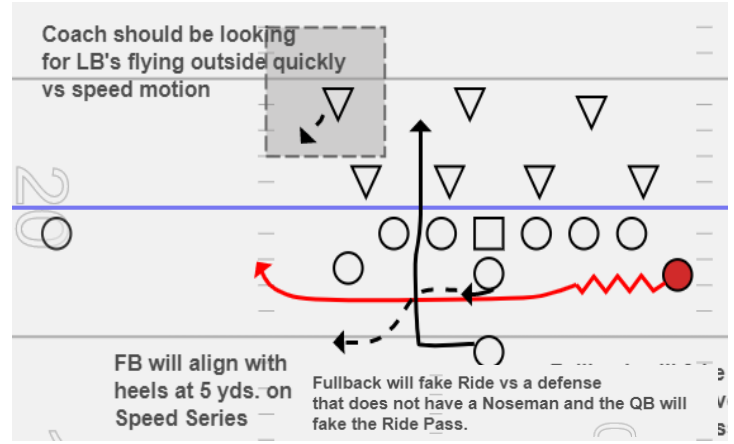
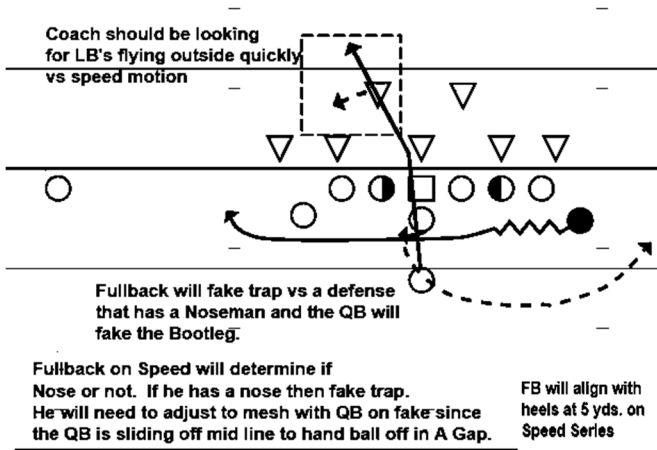
BACKFIELD BLOCKING RULES AND TECHNIQUES

Quarterback: Snap count must be on “GO SNAP COUNT” and the ball should be snapped when the back hits the inside leg of the Tackle. You will have the ability to check the play to whichever side we have the advantage by numbers. Handoff must occur in the play side A Gap. As the QB is receiving the snap we want him to be taking a lateral slide step of about 1 foot in the direction the play is going, as that foot hits the ground we want him to reverse pivot off the foot he took his lateral step with. He should open 180 degrees and have his back to the line of scrimmage. He will hand the ball to the ball carrier by placing it on his belt.

The QB and FB must know if the defense they are facing has a Noseman or not. If they do the QB will then step to meet the FB and flash a hand fake for the Fullback trap and then fake the Bootleg away from the direction of the Speed Sweep. If there is not a Noseman the QB will continue to fake the Ride with the Fullback on the same side as the Speed Sweep is being run, and then continue on outside faking Ride Pass.

Fullback: The Fullback in his base formation without any tags will be aligned behind the QB and on the Speed Series we want his heels at 5 yards deep. He will determine if the defense has a Noseman or not. If there is a nose we want our FB to fake the trap. Now he must adjust a little to the QB moving off the mid line for the handoff on the speed sweep. The trap has been our best internal run play vs odd front defenses with speed motion. If the defense does not have a Noseman we want our Fullback to fake the Ride to the play side of the Speed Sweep. The Ride play has been our best internal run play vs the even front defenses. Often the Fullback will be offset in Pro or Con or in some type of Empty tag and will then be involved in the perimeter blocking.





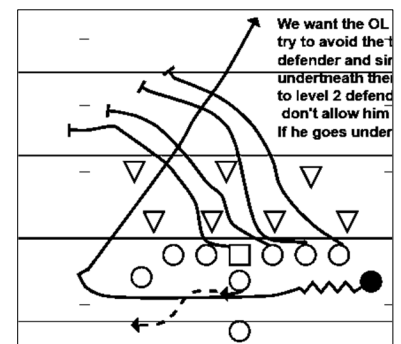
Ballcarrier: The back receiving the handoff as mentioned before will count “1 Mississippi” in his mind after the QB says “SET” in the snap count. We want him to leave full speed and receive the handoff in the play side A Gap. He will take the handoff as we do with any play going parallel to the line of scrimmage by placing both hands at his belt line and the QB will place the ball in his hands. We do not want the back to bubble into the backfield at all unless he is forced to do so by penetration of the defense. We coach him to take the ball and try to circle the defense and take the ball up the sideline. When we first put this play in 30 years ago you could do this sometime, but as defenses have gotten used to having to defend it versus every offense today they will normally force the back to turn up.

We want him as he is going full speed to the edge to be looking for someone coming from outside in or someone working down from the secondary to contain him. As he sees either of these we ask him to begin to slow down and allow the pulling guard to catch up and kick out. The ball carrier as the Guard passes will duck under the kick out and get north and south for all he can get. He often can cut it back across the grain for a big play.

Other Wingback: Will be involved in blocking and we will cover him during the blocking rules.

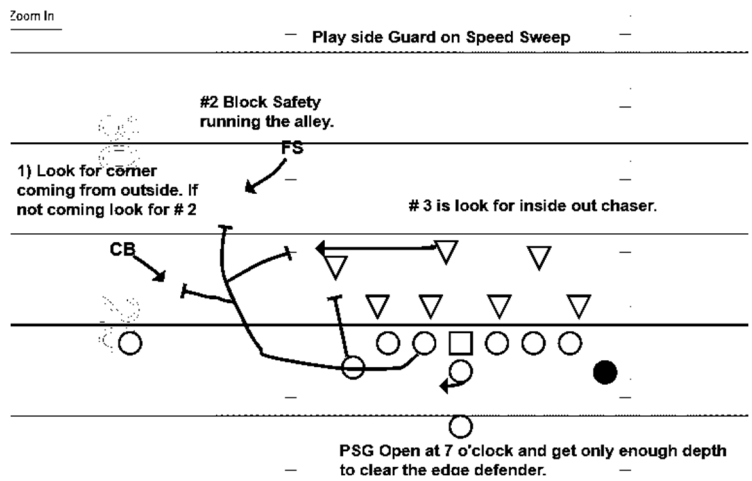
BLOCKING THE SPEED SWEEP:

Center and all backside blockers: we want them to take a big scoop at a 45-degree angle to avoid all level 1 defenders. We then want them to go across the field to “get their picture in the paper” as they are going to get their picture in the paper we tell them if you engage a level 2 defender do not allow him to go over the top. If he wants to go behind you let it happen as he is giving up his pursuit angle. Now as they go across the field it is important to know that if the ball carrier cuts it back across the grain you will be building a wall much like a punt return wall and this is when you “Get your Picture in the Paper”.



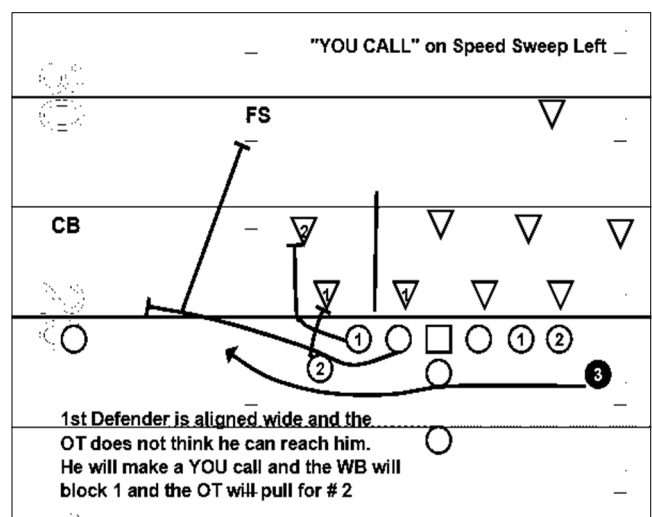
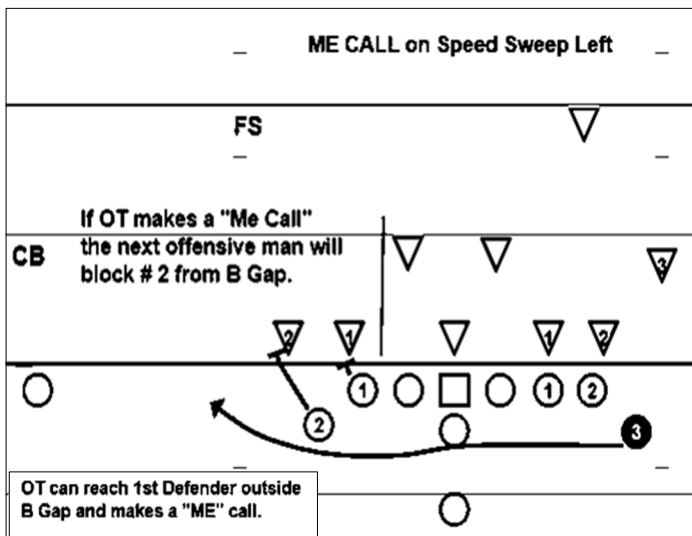
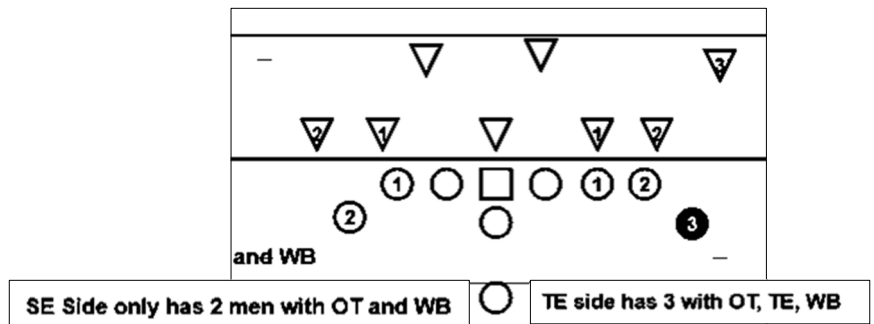
When blocking the Speed Sweep we always will pull our play side Guard unless he has a defender walk up in a 2-point stance on the line of scrimmage in the A or B gap and then the Guard will take him and not pull.

PS Guard: As I just mentioned we want him to pull and he is looking outside first and if nothing shows we want him to look for alley runner to inside. We have had many Guards that can get in front of this play over the years but their technique is important. When pulling to the left they will open at 7 o'clock and we tell them to not get any more depth than required to clear the block on the edge defender. As the guard clears the edge defender he is looking for a corner screaming inside to kick out. If he does not see this, we want him to begin working up the field looking for a Safety running the alley. If he sees this, he will kick the Safety.



Offensive Tackle: The play side OT is where the blocking scheme will develop. We could run this play 3 times in a game and all three times it could look like we blocked it different. Our base rules are, PST has first defender past B Gap, the next offensive player will take # 2 from B Gap and if we have 3 people when running to the TE side then the wingback will have the # 3 Defender.

Now as we have said the OT is responsible for the 1st defender outside the B Gap and he will make a call to the offensive player aligned outside of him if he can reach that defender. If he can do this, he will make a call "ME" meaning he will block # 1 and then the person outside will take # 2.



If he feels he cannot block the # 1 Defender because his alignment is wide or because he is slanting outside when we have motion his way the OT will make a call of “YOU” and this call tells the person outside to block # 1 and then the OT will pull for # 2.

Split End: Always will block the man aligned on him. We want him to attack the outside shoulder of the person he is blocking to force him if he is responsible for contain to widen. If the defender crashes inside let him go and climb to the next level. In some formation especially when we are using our Fullback as a lead blocker we will tag the Split End with calls of Push Crack or Crack.

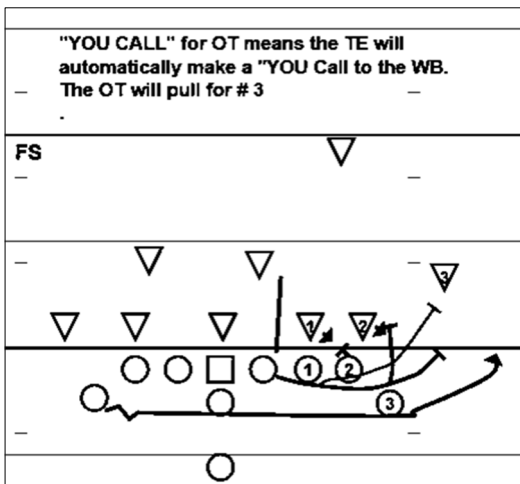
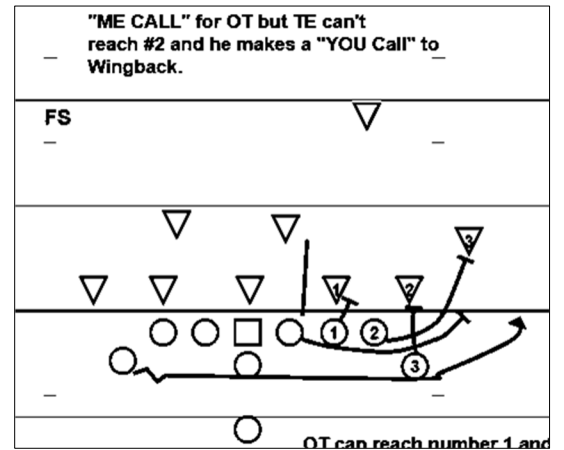
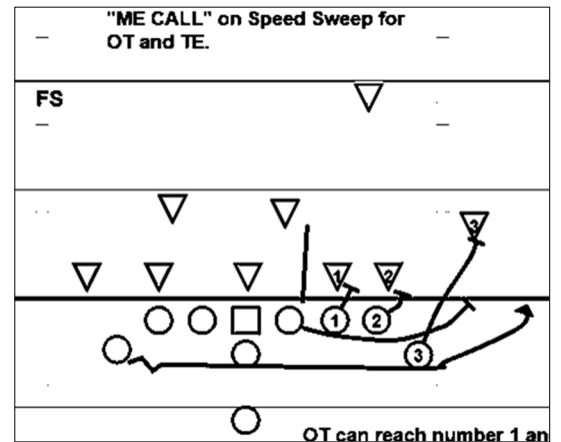
BLOCKING SPEED SWEEP TO TIGHT END SIDE

Let’s look at the TE side, the first call again will be with our OT and he will communicate to the TE. The TE then will communicate with the WB. So you can get up to three different looks to the Tight End side.

- If the Tackle can reach number 1, he calls “ME”
- If the Tight End can reach #2, he calls “ME”
- Wing has #3

We often face teams that will play their 9 technique wide. He may be aligned on the inside shoulder of our Wingback. In this case the OT can reach # 1, but our TE can’t reach # 2. The TE will make his call to the WB to block # 2 and the TE will pull for # 3.

Often we will play teams that will slant their front to our TE and Wing side unless we have motion to the weak side. In this case the OT will not be able to reach the 5 technique and will ask the TE to block down on # 1. Anytime our TE receives a call to block down he will echo the same call to our WB to block down and the OT will pull for # 3 defender.



The block for our Wingbacks is very important to the success of the speed sweep, his block is normally responsible for the edge defender so we coach our Wngbacks on the technique we need to be successful on this block. The Wingback is to aim for a point that is one-yard outside the person that he has to block. The Defender is probably reading the hat of

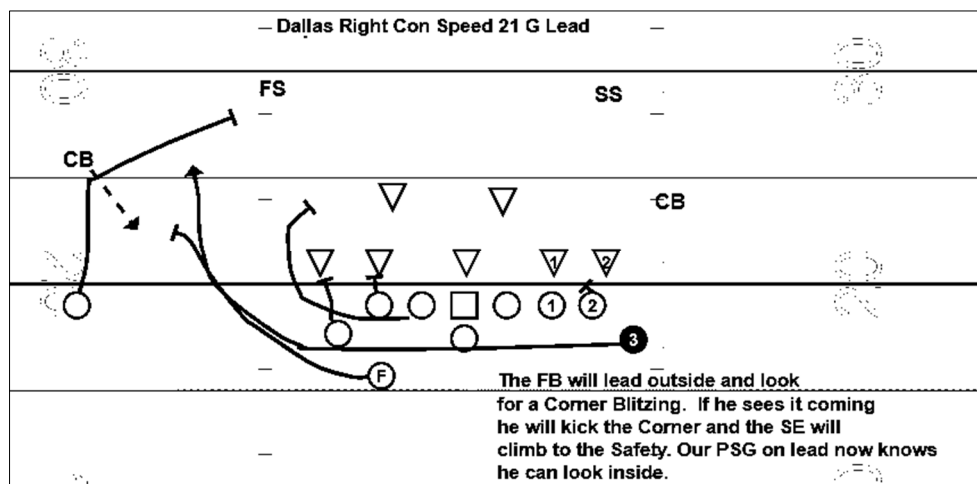
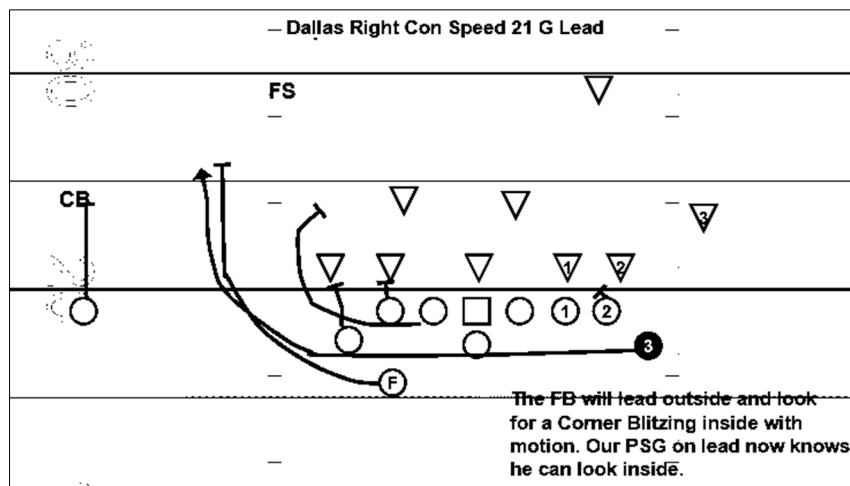


the Wingback and trying to widen a little bit. When the Wingback takes his second step, we want him to put his facemask right on the Defenders outside breastplate. The Wingback now should take his outside hand, and shove it right through his outside shoulder. And the moment the Wingback makes contact with his outside hand he should immediately start working his butt to the outside to secure the edge for the ball carrier. If the defender continues to widen then we tell the Wingback to block him to the Sideline and we will want the Guard and ball carrier to turn up inside.

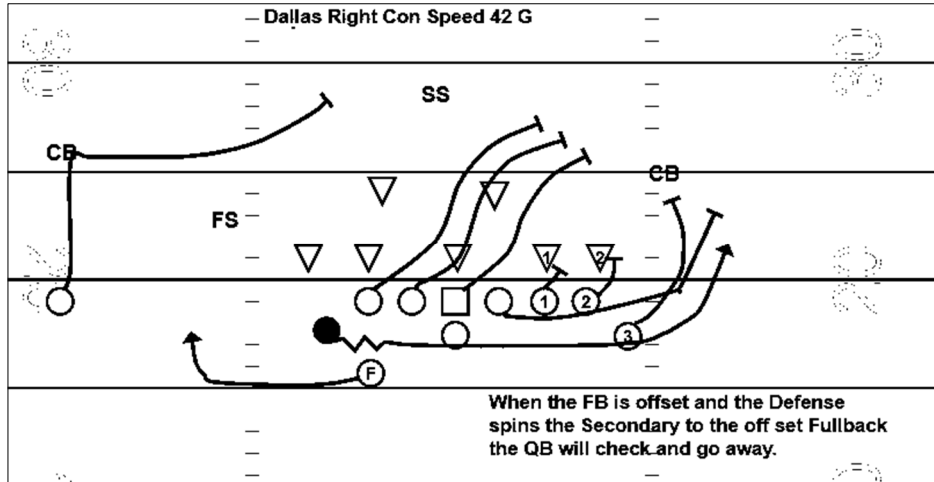
GAINING NUMBER

One of the things that has been good for gaining numbers is to offset the Fullback. By offsetting the Fullback on the Speed Sweep he has the ability to get in front of the play and be an additional blocker to the play side. The other side of this of course if the defense makes an adjustment to the side the Fullback is offset we have gained numbers away from him and we will go that way. We can also offset the FB to or away from unbalanced. Speed out of Empty is also great.

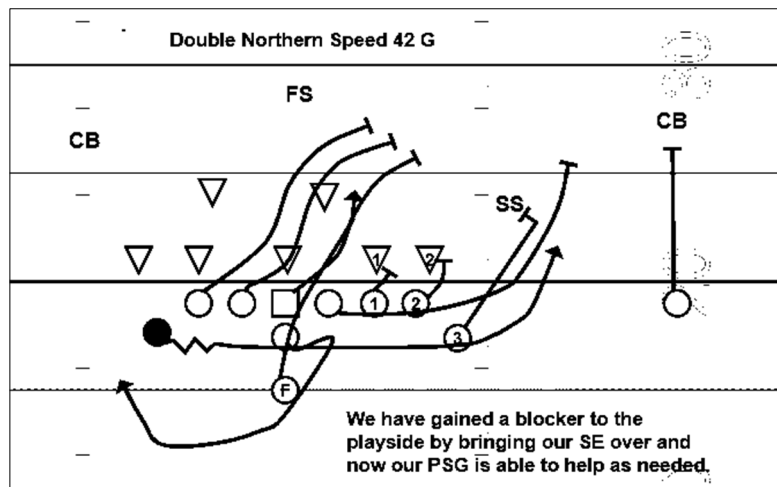
We will look into some of that as we go. Nobody's blocking rules change. Everything is still the same. So it's simple in making this happen and teaching.



We have been able to take advantage of the defense because we have an additional blocker in the 2 drawings above. They make an adjustment by rotating the secondary to the offset Fullback. By allowing our Quarterback to always check the direction of the Speed Sweep he can now change and go to the TE side.

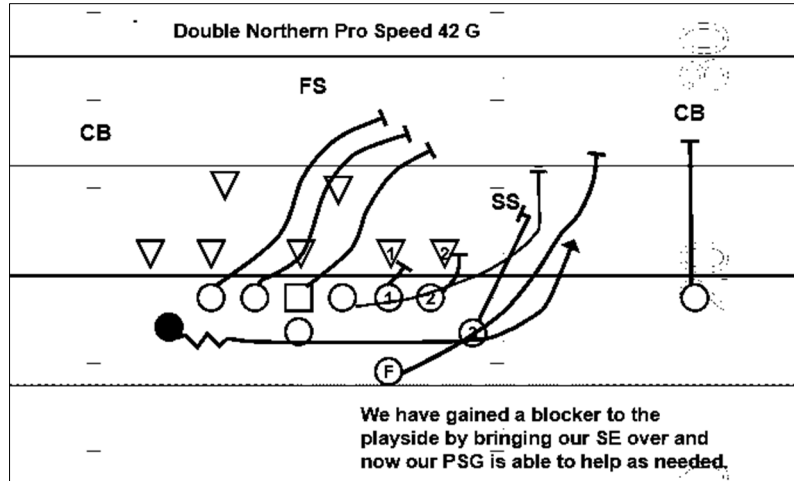


Using unbalance formations to gain numbers is the next way we have found to take advantage of defenses. You will learn in our Game Plan chapter that defenses will adjust in one of 5 ways and we want to be able to take advantage of their adjustments. Let's take a look at going unbalanced by bringing our Split End over and the defense making no adjustments other than just widening the Corner.

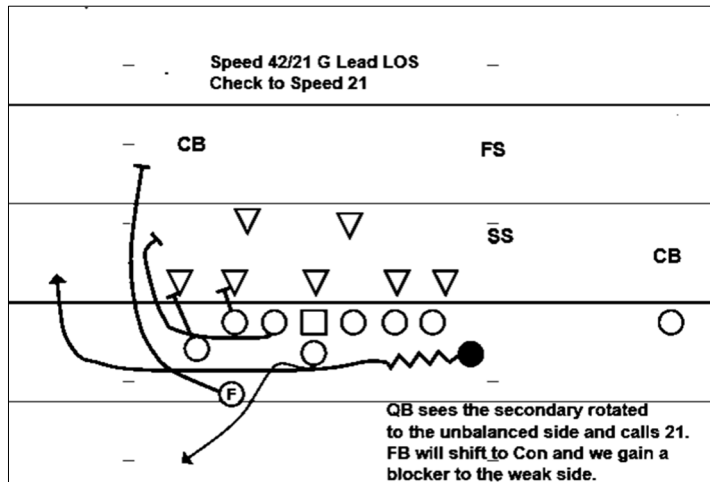


By calling Speed 42-21 G Lead at the LOS in the huddle we will align our FB in his normal position and when the QB gives him a 1 or 2 call he will shift to Pro/Con alignment and lead the play and add a blocker to the play side.





Sometimes they make an adjustment to our unbalanced. They rotate the Corner down, pull the Safety across, and they push the coverage to the unbalanced. Our Quarterback simply says, “check opposite” or “speed”. If I call 42-21, he can say “twenty-one”, the Fullback will shift to Con, and we are going out the back door. So they rotated the secondary to gain them an extra player to the field. We simply follow our rules up front. Tackle says “me”, he has the 5-tech. Wingback’s got two, now the Fullback leads for the deep half corner and the Playside Guard is pulling.



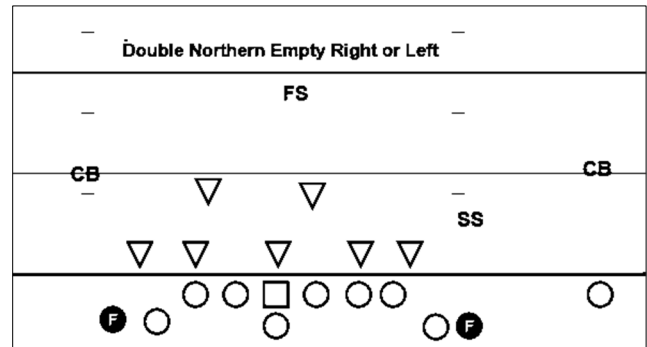
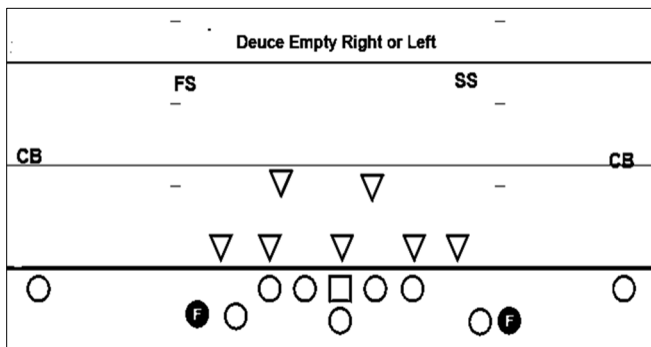
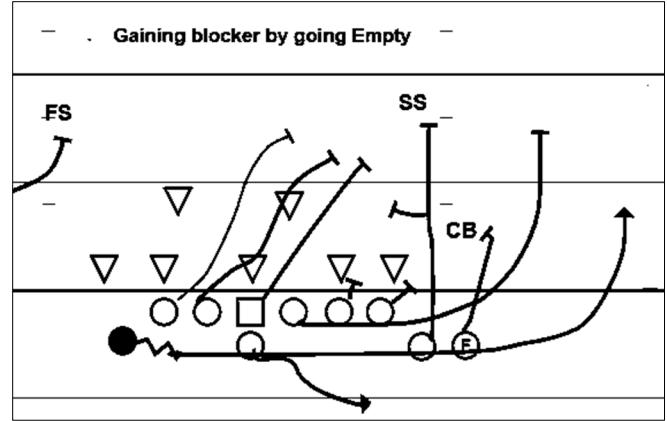
This is our empty set, Dallas Right, and we took the Fullback and we put him in the Empty Right. They have made no adjustments. They have to stay balanced because the Speed Sweep can go either way. I have got a “ME CALL” from both the Tackle and Tight End. The Fullback now goes and blocks the man on him, the Corner. Wingback can go backer to safety and the guard pulls. Force them to make some type of adjustment.



You can use any type of formations to gain an advantage with numbers by going Pro/Con, Empty or Empty Wide. Fullback empty allows himk to block the first defender from the sideline. This allows the Wingback to look for LB or safety.

A few other formations we like to use to gain numbers are:

One of our best plays from Empty is the QB running the Trap off Speed Sweep fake. Teams will void the middle because they don't feel a threat with the Fullback removed. You can use Empty Right or Left from our Delawary formations



ROCKET SWEEP

The Rocket Sweep has been a great addition to our offense. I normally like to run the Rocket to a Tight End. When executed properly the Rocket will get the ball to the perimeter faster than the Speed Sweep. The downside for me is it does not allow you to run the complimentary plays in the Wing T.

When we run the Rocket we use the philosophy that we do not want to block any defender from the C Gap inside. We do not believe that if this play is executed properly they can make the tackle.

The first adjustment we have found to be essential to a successful play is we will cut our Tight End's split to a maximum of 1 foot. This will allow our OT to have the opportunity to reach the first defender outside the C Gap.

When teaching this play we work hard with our TE and PST on the techniques we want on this play. Again we will cut the split of the TE down to 1-foot maximum and ask the TE to attack through the outside shoulder pad tip of the first defender outside the C Gap. We want our OT to step down the line of scrimmage toward the TE and place his helmet on the near hip of the TE. We tell him we want him to push the TE to the next level as he works to complete a reach block on the first defender past the C Gap. As the TE feels the OT engage with him then we want the TE to climb to level 2 and cutoff the Linebackers that will be chasing from inside out.



We will coach our QB that this play will be on our “Go” snap count as was with the Speed Sweep. We want our QB to turn his head toward the Wingback that will be going in motion to receive the ball and to look out the corner of his eye, when the motion man leaves his vision then the QB will call for the snap.

The ball carrier will receive the pitch if timing is correct at about the spot of the Tight Ends alignment on the play side. As with the Speed Sweep want to allow our QB to check the direction at the LOS. We often will run from 2 TE sets.

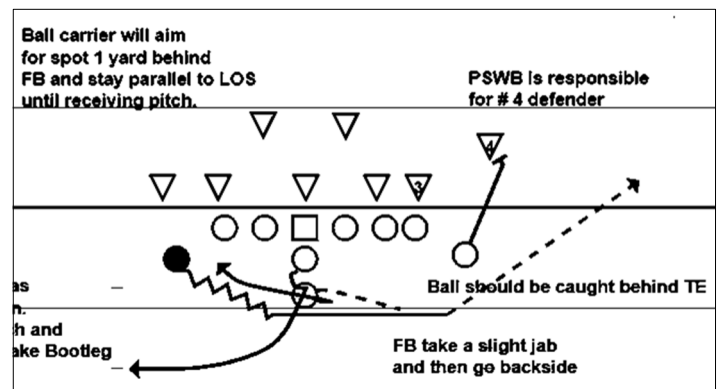
BACKFIELD TECHNIQUE AND RULES:

PS Wing Back: Block the # 4 defender by going for a spot 1 yard outside the # 4 defender’s alignment. We want to place our facemask in the outside breast plate and then shoot our outside hand and work our tail to the sideline. If the # 4 defender widens then just turn him to the sideline and the ball carrier must make you right.

Fullback: The Fullback is coached to take a jab step the direction the play is going and then go backside. This is important as you do not want him to get in the way of the pitch or interfere with the ball carrier who is in motion. We also will do this with the Fullback in empty formations.

Wingback (Ball carrier): As with the Speed Sweep we want the Wingback to have a 1 second delay when the QB calls “Set” in the snap count. The ball carrier will go in his normal motion path for all other plays and he should aim for a spot 1 yard behind the Fullbacks alignment in his stance. When the back reaches the spot behind the Fullback he should remain parallel to the line and be ready to receive the pitch at the spot the TE aligned in. He should anticipate taking the ball wide to the edge and only cut up if forced to do so by a defender.

Quarterback: The ball must be snapped using our “Go Snap Count”. We want the QB to look at the Wingback during the snap count and when he sees the back leave in motion and the second he leaves the QB’s eyesight call for the snap. This will be about the time the motion man reaches the Guards alignment. As the QB receives the snap he will reverse pivot and pull the ball with both hands to the hip opposite the direction the play is going. This is important in the ability to pitch the ball with some velocity to get the pitch wide. The other important thing we have found in the pitch technique is the QB as he releases the ball on the pitch should never have his hands go higher than his chest. We teach the QB to see the pitch in the hands of the ball carrier for fear of a fumble and then carry out a Bootleg fake to the backside.



BLOCKING THE PLAY SIDE OF ROCKET SWEEP:

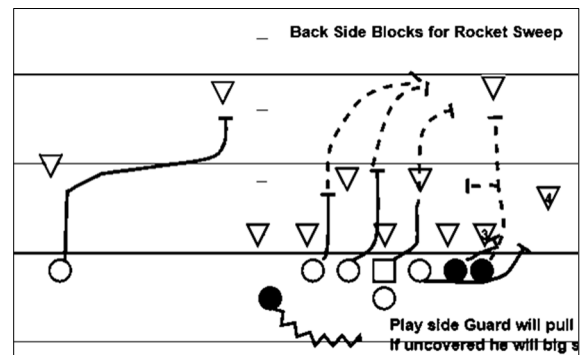
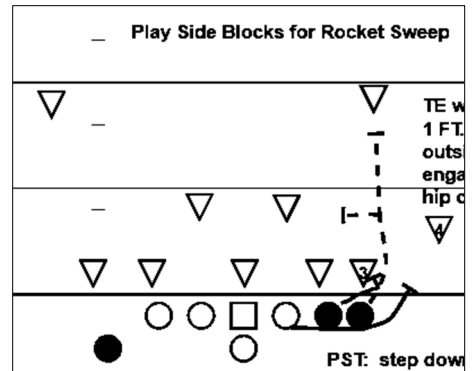
As mentioned earlier we will not block any defender from the C Gap inside. The first block play side will be on what we call # 3 and that is the defender that is aligned in a 6,7, or 8 technique on our Tight End.

Tight End: Maximum spit of 1-foot, we want the TE to attack through the outside shoulder of the # 3 defender and allow time for our offensive Tackle to overtake the # 3 defender with a reach block. As the OT has engaged the # 3 defender we now want our TE to climb and look for a level 2 Linebacker coming from inside out. If he does not see a level 2 defender, then continue to level 3 defensive back. If # 3 works outside to defeat your reach maintain the block and the OT will climb for lever 2 Linebacker.

Playside Tackle: Step to the foot of the TE and place head on hip of TE. Forcing your way to a reach on the # 3 defender. As you step and the # 3 defender is working outside to defeat the reach adjust and climb to level 2 for Linebacker.

Playside Guard: We will pull the PSG to look in the alley for DB's or scrapping LB's if he does not have a level 1 defender aligned on him. If he is covered then we will have him big scoop and avoid all level 1 defenders and work across the field to cutoff chase and allow the ability to cutback as covered in the Speed Sweep.

Center and Backside Blockers: We want all to big scoop at a 45-degree angle and work to cut off level 2 defenders. If they do not engage a level 2 defender, they will continue across field to build a cutback wall for ball carrier.



INTERNAL RUNS

Now, the Speed Sweep by itself is not going to just be the answer. You have to have internal run plays with Speed Sweep motion. You can't just give the defense the ability to fly outside when they see speed motion coming. So we run speed motion with the Trap, Counter Criss-Cross, Bootleg Pass in the Buck Seies. We run our Belly and Belly Pass in the Belly Series, We have our Counter with Speed Motion and use a QB Trap and Mid Line Option with Speed Motion



SUMMARY

Speed Sweep!

- The handoff must occur in the play side A Gap.
- You must use formations.
- Quarterback must be able to check the play to the opposite side as needed.

BLOCKING THE SPEED SWEEP:

- **Center and all backside blockers:** Big scoop at a 45-degree angle to avoid all level 1 defenders.
- **PS Guard:** Pulls unless he has a defender walk up in a 2-point stance on the line of scrimmage in the A or B gap. Look outside first for Corner to kick out. If nothing shows find the alley runner to inside. Open at 7 o'clock to no more depth than required to clear the block on the edge defender.
- **Offensive Tackle:** Has first defender past B Gap and he will make a "ME" call to the offensive player aligned outside of him if he can reach that defender. If OT cannot block the # 1 Defender he will make a "YOU" call and this call tells the person outside to block # 1 and then the OT will pull for # 2.
- **Split End:** Always block the man the outside shoulder of the man aligned on him. If the defender crashes inside let him go and climb to the next level. Can use Push Crack or Crack TAGS.
- **Tight End:** Gets a call from the OT and then the TE communicates with the Wing.
 1. If the Tackle can reach number 1, he calls "ME"
 2. If the Tight End can reach #2, he calls "ME"
 3. Wing has #3
 4. If D-End lines up inside shoulder on Wing, the OT reaches #1, Wing blocks down on D-End, & TE pulls.
 5. If slanting to TE/Wing flank, the OT cannot reach the 5-tech. Both the TE & Wing will block down and the Tackle will pull.
- **Wing:** Aim one-yard outside the person he has to block, placing facemask on defenders outside breastplate. We want the Wing to hook the force defender, but he can block him to sideline.

