

CH 2: FORMATION FAMILIES & PERSONNEL

FORMATION FAMILIES

The Tex-Bone is based on four basic formation families:

1. The Shotgun Flexbone (available with or without a tight end)
2. The Empty Flexbone (available with or without a tight end)
3. 2x1 Open with a wing (aligned to the strong or weak side of the formation)
4. Spread family of formations: 2x2, 3x1 (both open or with a tight end)

Other empty spread formations are also used (3x2 and 4x1) in the Tex-Bone. Most of the spread empty formations we use are game plan specific. These spread empty formations are considered cousin to the 2x2 and 3x1 formation family.

Figure 7 shows base Shotgun Flexbone. There are multiple ways to run the Flexbone with different personnel from this standard set. The basic personnel grouping in Shotgun Flexbone includes two running backs at wing, a fullback behind the quarterback, and two split ends. Players are referred to as wings when their alignment splits the outside leg of the tackle. When players move to a slot position there are no changes in their assignment. The Shotgun Flexbone is discussed again several times throughout the rest of the book.

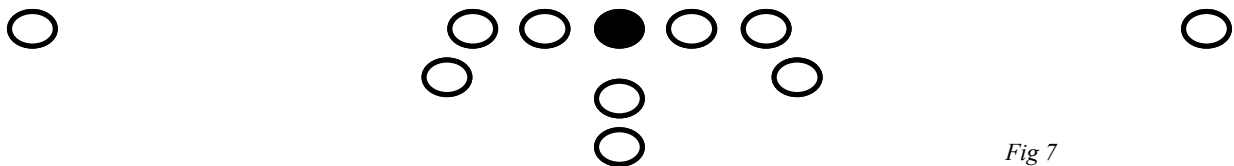


Fig 7

As mentioned before, we play from the Flexbone with three running backs (two running backs in the wing position and one running back as a fullback behind the quarterback) as shown in Figure 8. This is not the only personnel choice however.

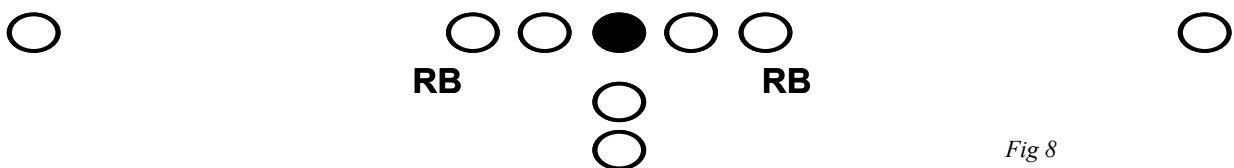


Fig 8

We also play from this formation with four wide receivers. This allows us to put two wide receivers as wings and two wide receivers as the split ends (see Figure 9).

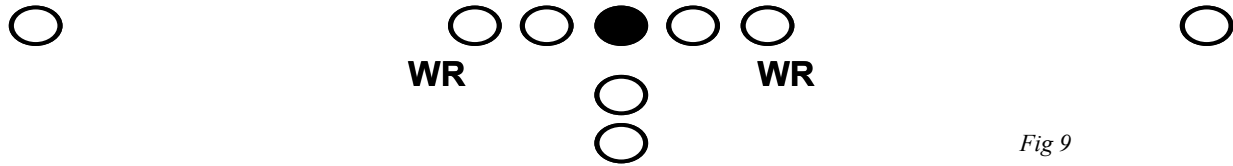


Fig 9

We also run a combination of personnel with one running back at wing and one wide receiver at wing. Figure 10 shows of one receiver and one running back at wing.

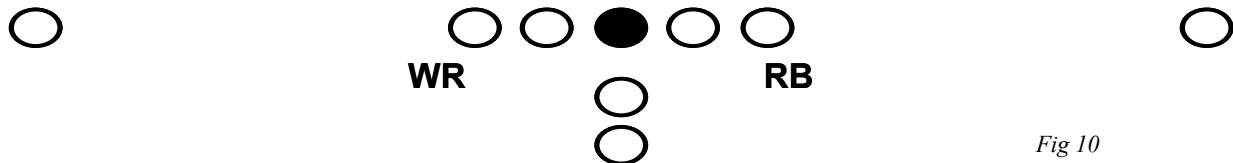


Fig 10

We also create a personnel group that inserts an extra running back as a split receiver (as shown in Figure 11).

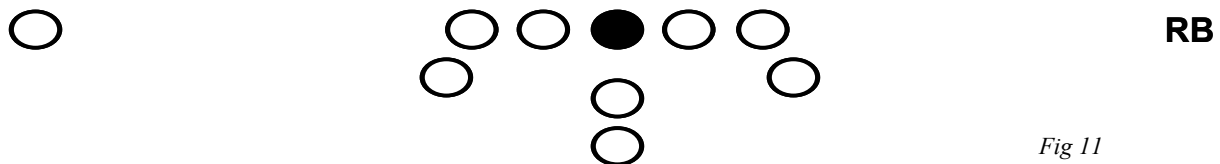


Fig 11

The key is using your personnel to do the things they are best at. When considering player strengths as a qualifying factor for constructing personnel groupings you instantly notice the new luxury the Tex-Bone provides in terms of building a wide variety of personnel groupings.

The Empty Flexbone (see Figure 12) is another formation the Tex-Bone uses frequently. Personnel in the Empty Flexbone are amendable—just like the Shotgun Flexbone. We are also able to run this formation with or without a tight end. A coach is able to put running backs or wide receivers at both wing positions. An additional option is to deploy one receiver and one running back at the wings. What a coach chooses depends on the play call and players designated as best suited to execute the play.

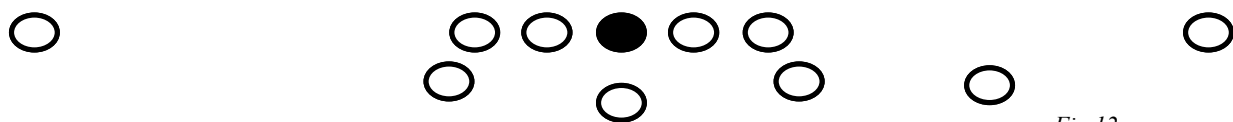


Fig 12

The 2x1 Open formation (in this case with a wing to the weak side in Figure 13) is the first example of a spread formation in the Tex-Bone. The basic way to run this formation is with two running backs (one as the fullback behind the quarterback and one running back at the wing position) with three receivers (two as split ends and one at slot receiver).

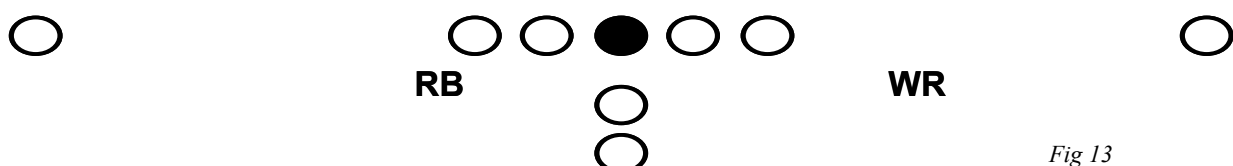


Fig 13

There are other options as to how you can run this formation however. 2x1 Open is also available with a three running back look in Figure 14.

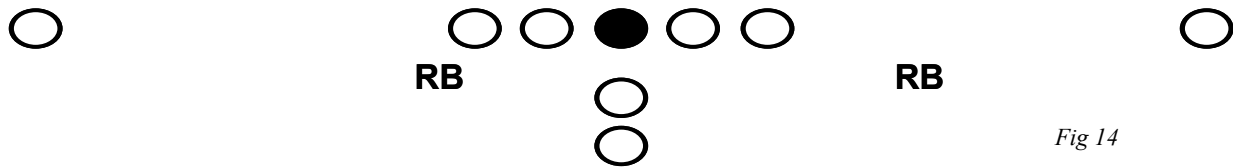


Fig 14

2x1 Open is also available in a four wide receiver look in Figure 15 if preferred.

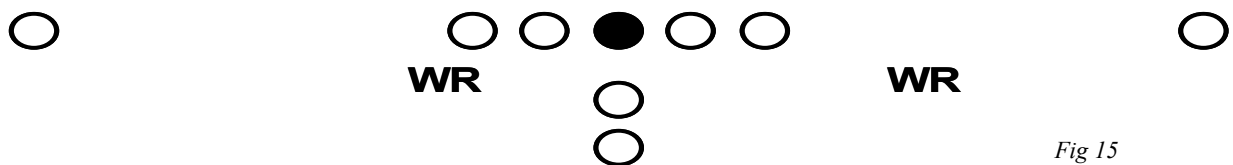


Fig 15

Mix-and-matching running backs and wide receivers are easily done from both looks.

A final option places an additional running back as a split wide receiver (Figure 16 creates the potential for four running backs on the field).

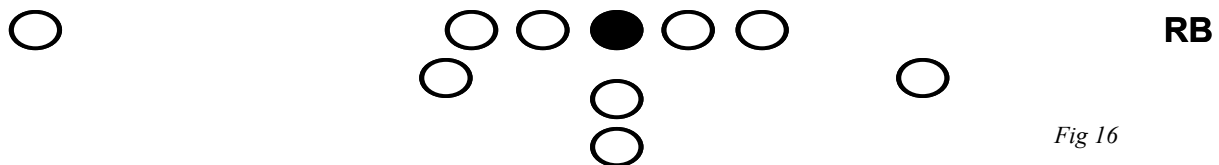


Fig 16

The key is to utilize personnel in their best positions based on ability and the requirements of your plays.

We are also able to run 2x1 Open with a wing to the strong side as in Figure 17. 2x1 Open with a wing maintains the same versatility as standard 2x1 Open in terms of the number of running backs and wide receivers available for specific plays or needs. We make decisions regarding where we want to deploy our personnel as the offense is installed at the beginning of the season and again as game plans are implemented from week-to-week.

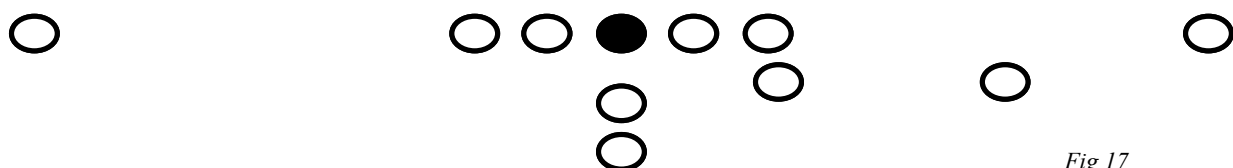


Fig 17

The 2x2 Open formation (shown in Figure 18) demonstrates the same versatility. The basic way to do this is with four wide receivers and one running back in the backfield (see Figure 19).

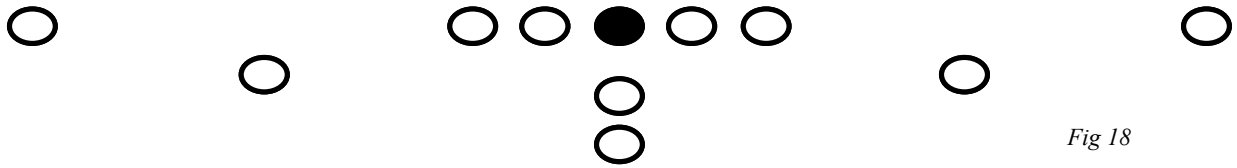


Fig 18

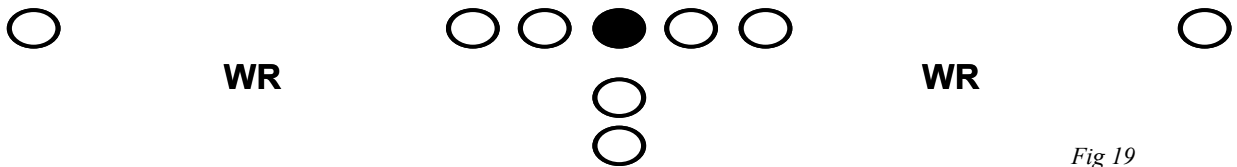


Fig 19

2x2 Open is also available with three running backs and two receivers (Figure 20).

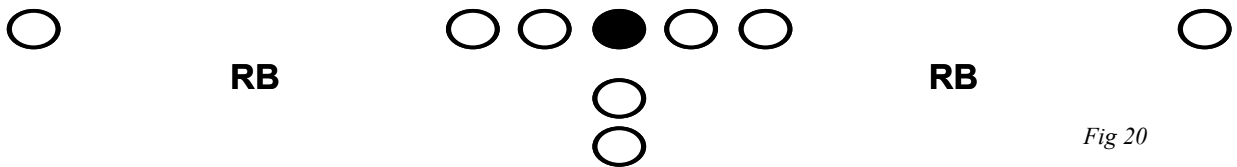


Fig 20

Figure 21 shows how 2x2 Open looks with three wide receivers and two running backs.

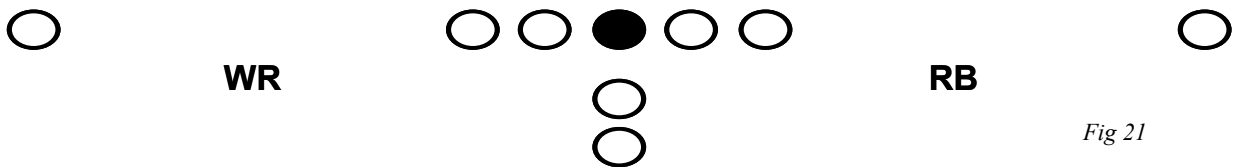


Fig 21

Figure 22 shows how 2x2 Open looks with an additional running back at the split receiver position.

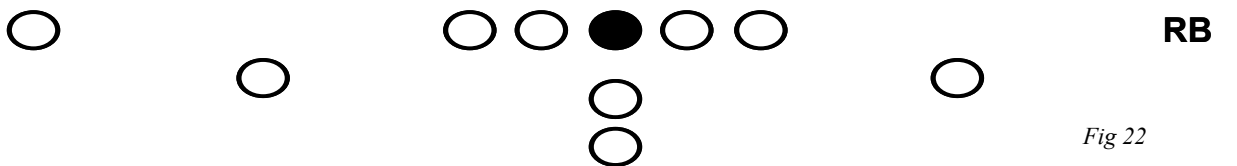


Fig 22

A 2x2 Tight set provides the same opportunities to mix and match personnel. Figure 23 shows that a running back or a wide receiver is able to line up in the slot. A receiver or running back is also able to line up at the flanker position.

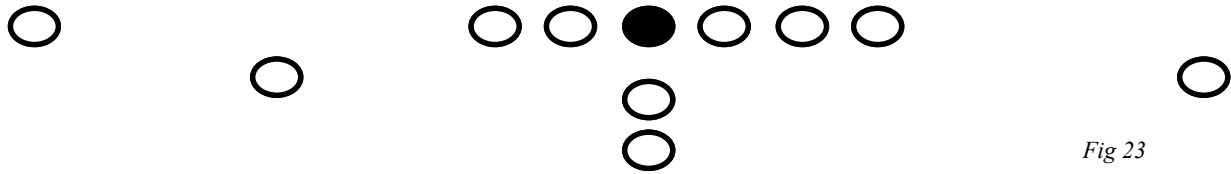


Fig 23

The versatility continues with the 3x1 Open set shown in Figure 24. The base look for 3x1 Open is with four wide receivers and one running back. But the possibilities do not end there. The 3x1 Open is also available with three running backs and two receivers. Coaches are best served to set their personnel based on individual needs.

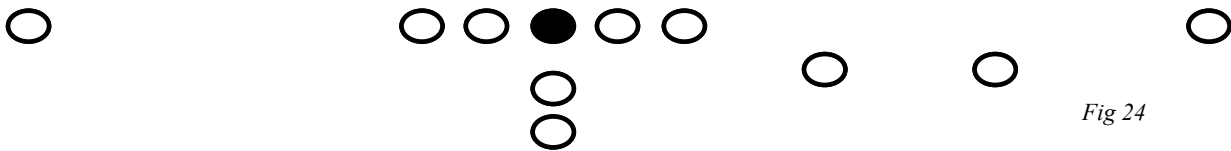


Fig 24

The same thing is true with the 3x1 Tight set in Figure 25. 3x1 Tight features three running backs and one wide receiver or three wide receivers and one running back. Teams are also able to run the set with two wide receivers and two running backs.

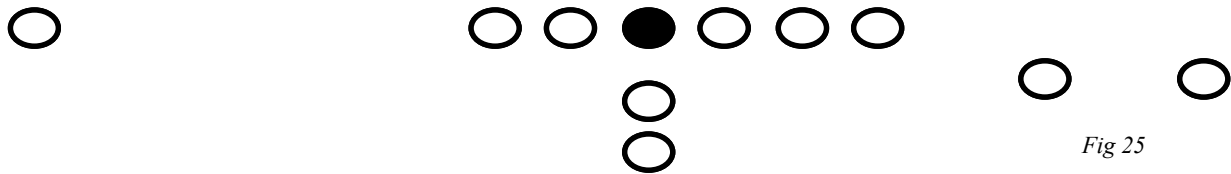


Fig 25

Coach's note: while a "Pistol" alignment is the Tex-Bone default, we will frequently off-set the running back to run dives and plays such as Power Read.

PERSONNEL

Let's discuss personnel in greater detail. The discussion of formations on previous pages highlight the flexibility the Tex-Bone offense creates in terms of personnel deployment. The following are some additional considerations regarding personnel.

Wing/slot combinations are ideal. Players that are able to line up at both wing and slot are extremely useful. Players like this eliminate substitutions based on formation. It also makes run and pass plays seamless in terms of appearance (setting up play action) and reduces predictability based on personnel grouping.

It is important to remember that the job of the wing and slot player is identical in the Tex-Bone. There is no change in assignment—run or pass—based on a wing or slot alignment. Schematically they are the same position. This does not mean that their roles are always executed the same however. There are differences in roles and responsibilities between the wing and slot alignment. For this reason players that execute efficiently from both positions are diamonds.

Just because wings and slots are schematically the same doesn't diminish the advantage of taking a wing and moving him out to slot. The advantage lies in the change of formation from an option to spread look. When moving to a spread formation defenses then line up in familiar sets that are more easily exploitable.

Substituting and specializing is strongly suggested. Offenses are well served to use players in roles that fit their skill set and then substitute them out of roles that do not fit their skills. The Tex-Bone is no different. If a player is excellent at receiving the pitch but less adroit at other aspects of the offense it is advisable to just use them on the pitch exclusively until more skills develop.

Multiple personal options for the same formation are a defensive headache. Accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative. Ask players to do what they are good at even within the same formation. Do not ask them to do things they are not good at. This doesn't mean that player skill development is less critical—this simply means you don't pick the fruit until it is ripe.