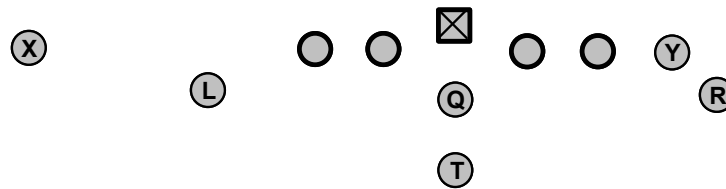


CHAPTER THREE

Huddle or No Huddle

PERSONELL



LT	Quicker of the two tackles
LG	Great feet; Quick; Shorter is better; Would be FB in I-back offense
C	I hide my worse lineman here;
RG	Same as LG; Stronger of the two
RT	Strongest lineman

X	Wide Receiver
Y	Can be a 3rd tackle with 80 number but a Tony Gonzalez type is ideal
RH	Right Half. Quick & can catch.
LH	Left Half. Quick & can catch
QB	Quarterback
TB	Tailback. Best player. Tough with thick legs; Takes a pounding.

We “cross-train” all of our players because in high school football injuries happen and we seldom have 4 good players at any position. So, our depth chart will have 3 tackles, 3 guards, and 2 centers. We will have 3 Halfbacks, 2 Tailbacks, and many times only 1 QB.

Quarterback: This paragraph right here is the key to the vault. 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.

Offensive Line

We do not flop our linemen because we believe it slows down the tempo and gives the defense tendencies. While flopping provides a shorter learning curve, we believe this is negated when a left guard has to play right guard due to injury. To make the down blocking easier our linemen get in left handed stances on the left side of the line and right handed stances on the right side of the line.

Tackles: Our Tackles are the larger players on the team. The only player larger might be our Defensive Tackle.

The size is necessary for the Down Blocks, however, they need to have some agility because they have to pull and escape to Backers. The Left Tackle should be the better pass blocker if you have a right handed QB.

Guards: Our Guards would play fullback for an I-back team. They have to be quick and have good lateral agility because they are asked to root out larger DT and NG while also pulling to block players in open space. They can be your weakest pass protectors. They have to be smart football players because they have the most to learn with the exception of the QB.

Center: Making the snap is the most important aspect. Durability and dependability are the next most important characteristics. Shorter players, with strong legs are good so a strong NG does not drive him back. Of the 5, your center can be your weakest player because he can chop block a dominant NG or 1 tech. It could be argued that the C should be your best player since he has so many 1 on 1 blocks and that the middle of the offense (C, QB, TB) should be your strength.

Running Backs

Tailback: The best offensive player on your team should be the Tailback. Although the flexibility of the offense allows you to focus on a talented Halfback or throw more when you have an exceptional QB, it is easy to get the Tailback carries because he is the only position who can run the same play right or left. The Tailback carries the ball on Belly, Down, and Guard Trap which attacks the middle of the defense and can open up the Counters, Sweeps, Options, & Play Action pass when the TB is earning the tough yards inside. For those reasons the TB should be the largest back and very durable.

Wingbacks: Can be smaller, but tough enough to block inside linebackers and defensive ends. They should be quick as their carries come on counters and sweeps attacking the edge of the defense. They are also integral to the passing attack as receivers.

Ends

The offense is very difficult to stop if the Tight End (“Y”) can be a physical down blocker as well as being an effective split-end Wide Receiver. If we don’t have a player at TE, then our blocking TE is our 3rd best tackle wearing an 80’s number. We cross train all of X’s to play both sides so when we take the TE out, we simply yell “Two X’s” and our 2 best WR enters the game.

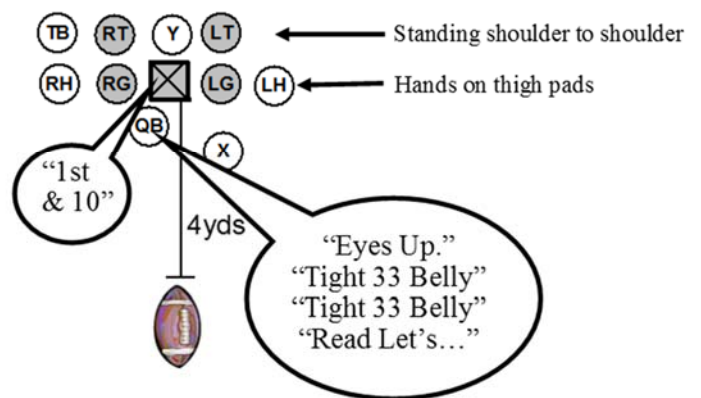
HUDDLE

We will huddle approx. 4 yards from the ball with everyone facing the ball. We have signaled and ran plays in and both methods work well. Whether I am running plays in or signaling from the sideline, the QB has a wristband with all the plays that have over 5 words on it.



THE HUDDLE: “A BRIEF, EFFICIENT BUSINESS MEETING”

- Center sets the huddle 4 yards from line of scrimmage. Calls Down & Distance.
- Substitutes coming in yell out the personnel group or names of players that need to leave.
- TACKLES stand behind the guards to make Tackle Over Calls faster.
- Quarterback takes control of the huddle by saying “eyes up.”
- QB says the play the first time standing in front of the Right Halfback.
 - > At this point the “X” wide receiver and center leave the huddle.
 - > If the “Y” tight end is lining up as a wide receiver, he also leaves the huddle at his point.
- The QB then steps to his right, standing in front of the Left Guard and repeats the call.
- If anyone is unclear on the play, they say “CHECK”.
- QB should remind everyone what the snap count is, but this is not necessary since every play has a snap count associated with it.
- QB steps back, making eye contact and says “READ LET’S...”
- All eleven players say “SCORE” in unison and clap. They sprint to the line.
- Lining up at 4 yards allows the QB to just turn around & already be at 3 yards.



It is very important that nobody move as the QB steps back, looks everyone in the eye with confidence, and they all clap in unison. Nobody takes even an inch forward until the clap. We have to really coach our players on this, because they will start leaning and inching forward before the clap. It is also important that the "Y" hides behind the Center to minimize defensive strength calls.

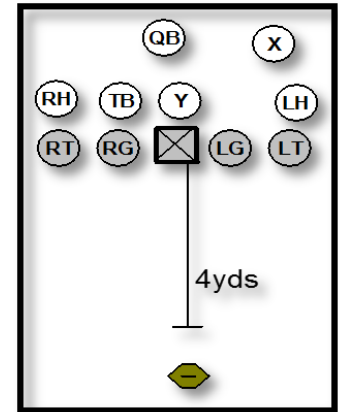
After the clap the entire team sprints to the LOS and immediately gets into their stances. Our goal is to snap the ball before the 17-year old defenders can make their calls, checks, and adjustments.

IMPORTANT that the TE hides behind the Center so the defense cannot make an early strength call. If there is no “Tight”, “Over”, or “Nasty” call, the TE leaves with the X after the QB says the play for the 1st time.

Also, notice the Tackles hiding behind the Guards. This makes it easier to do our Tackle Over calls.

Huddle Alternatives

While sprinting to the line of scrimmage is very confusing to the defense, it also prevents our linemen from making any line calls. A solution is to have everyone's back to the defense. The linemen are four yards from the ball, looking in the opposite direction of the defense. The backs and receivers are standing in front of them, 5 yards from the ball, and their backs are also towards the defense. The QB is facing the defense and the offensive players, standing in front of the backs at approximately 6 yards from the ball.



The backs have their hands on their knees so that the QB can tell the linemen the play. The linemen leave after the QB says the play the first time, hustle to the line, and start making line calls based on the defensive front. There may be a last second shift once the defense determines where the TE lines up, but the line can quickly make an adjustment call.

The Backs, TE, and Receivers get the play call TWO more times before sprinting to the line. We want to snap the ball 3 seconds after the backs/receivers break the huddle.

Audible

We do not like to audible for two main reasons:

- 1) It slows down our tempo; We go on first sound so no room in cadence for audibles.
- 2) Not comfortable letting a 17-year old QB call the plays;

With that said, there are three ways that we audible AFTER we break the huddle:

Non-Verbal: The QB & WR can signal a 1-step pass play, such as fade, quick, hitch, or slant. This is done by grabbing the facemask, tapping the helmet, or maybe pounding the chest. We will still snap the ball on 1st sound and the linemen might be firing out if a run play was called in the huddle. The QB must get rid of the ball very quickly.

Check With Me: The QB only calls the *direction* of the play called in the Huddle.

Raider / Bengal Packages: This is a special formation we get into & let the QB call the play. It is discussed in great detail in Chapters 4 and 11.

Check With Me Plays

We will call a play in the huddle followed by the word "Audible". For example, the QB would say "Midline Audible on Set." At the Line of Scrimmage the QB will indicate the direction that we will run that play. The following is a list of our "Check With Me" plays:

- ◆ Midline: Run it at the 3 tech
- ◆ Down: Out of 2 TE sets
- ◆ Inside Veer: Run it at the 1 tech
- ◆ Jet: Out of Empty Formation

There are many ways that the QB can indicate the direction of the play.

- ◆ Red is right; Blue is left
- ◆ Mascot of the team whose sideline we want to run towards
- ◆ Any even number is right; Any odd number is left
- ◆ East is right; West is left

NO HUDDLE

The No-Huddle has many uses, including wearing a defense down, speeding up play, and reducing the defense's ability to change and adjust.

Considerations

- ◆ Smaller package of plays. (if 5 or more words are needed, then we Huddle up).
- ◆ When you snap the ball faster, you can also give the ball back to other team faster;
- ◆ Players have to be in great shape
- ◆ Offensive coordinator has to call plays quickly

Why Use No Huddle

Effect on Opponent Defense

- ◆ Wear out your opponent, both physically and mentally
- ◆ Limits defensive substitutions and defensive blitz calls from sideline;
- ◆ Harder for defense to prepare since their scout offense can't simulate the speed.
- ◆ No time for defensive celebrations or emotion slapping between snaps.

Changes to Your Offense

- ◆ More snaps per game thereby increasing your chances to score;
- ◆ Easier to run 2-minute offense
- ◆ Extra time for QB to make pre-snap reads
- ◆ Can change the play at the line of scrimmage after defense lines up.
- ◆ Fun for the players and fans

Changes the Way You Practice

- ◆ Practice becomes a 2-hour conditioning drill;
- ◆ Kids will run No Huddle at full speed. They won't condition at full speed.
- ◆ Conditioning simulates game situations. Gassers & stadium runs do not.
- ◆ Forces position coaches to make corrections on the fly.
- ◆ Players hear coaching corrections at game speed.
- ◆ Get more reps in practice

During practice we went from running 2 plays per minute to running 3 plays per minute using our No-Huddle system. Even if you are going to Huddle up during the games, run the No-Huddle system in practice and at the very least you will have a 2-minute package ready to go.

To run a No-Huddle system, your coaching staff needs to decide how you will communicate the following: Formations; Motions; Play Name; Direction of play; and Snap Count.

Formations are not a secret because the defense will see it once you line up. Using "Left" and "Right" words might cause confusion, so you could say "Trips OVER THERE" or "Twins OVER HERE". Also, motions are part of the play call and not signaled in.

Get Play In: Signals vs Boards vs Wristbands

Boards: Fast, but very limiting to number of plays.

Flip Charts: Build using PVC pipe and laminated card stock.

Can be combination of numbers & letters.

Signal: This is the fastest, but requires memorization.

Can use hand signals or boards; Can signal to all 11 players or just eligible receivers

One coach signals in the actual play and another coach signals in a "dummy" play. Coaches can switch at quarters or halves, or use indicators such as a certain wristband or turning his hat backwards.

Wristband: This is the easiest way to get the play in and there is no confusion but is slower. Also players will not learn plays and become dependent upon the wristbands. Wristbands have to be collected & changed every week; Some coaches change wristbands at half time.

We use a hybrid of all three of these. We signal most of our plays in with hand signals but the players have wristbands for plays requiring 5 or more words to call. We do not use the boards, but we do have some dummy boards made up that we hold up on every play along with our 2 signalers.



Wristband Examples

Put all the formations on the front card and all the plays on the 2 cards under the wristband flap. You could just signal or yell a letter with a number.



FORMATIONS on front card	
A	Loose
B	Tight
C	Over
D	Tight Trips Right
E	Over Trips Right

RUN PLAYS on inside card	
1	33 Belly
2	34 Belly
3	35 Down
4	36 Down
5	31 G

PASS PLAYS on inside card	
81	Purple Arrow
82	Purple Swing
83	Purple Quick
84	TE Silver
85	Red 75 Flat

This next example uses a “coordinate” system. “20-3” is the play 32-G. Color coding the columns gives you different ways to call each play: “3-20” / “Yellow-20” / “20-Yellow” all mean 32 G. List the plays that you call a lot in several places so that “10-1” and “100-4” and “200-5” all have 33 Belly in those coordinates.

	1	2	3	4	5
10	33 Belly	41 Trap	31 G	33 B. Pass	47 G
20	34 Belly	22 Trap	32 G	34 B. Pass	28 G
30	45 G.O.	43 Counter	31 Gut	35 D. Pass	47 “O”
40	26 G.O.	24 Counter	32 Gut	36 D. Pass	28 “O”
50	35 Down	GO 43 Ctr	31 G Read	17 GO pass	47 “T”

In this example all the odd rows (10, 30, 50, 90) are plays going to the left. Also similar plays are listed in the same columns (play action passes in column 4). Another possibility is to list 1st down plays in column one, 2nd down plays in column 2, etc.

	One / Two	Three / Four	Five / Six	Seven / Eight		
B	0	Tight 33 Belly	Liz 28-D		Belly 47-G	0
	1	Over 35-D	Over Dwn 43 Ctr		Belly 22 Trap	1
	2	Trips Rt Rip 47-D	Tight 26 G.O.		Tight 17 GO Pass	2
A	3					3
	4					4
	5					5
C	6					6
	7					7
	8					8
K	9					9
	A					A
	B					B
S	C					C
	D					D
	E					E
	F					F
	G					G
	H					H
	I					I

Yellow Cells tell WR to crack block

Green Cells are MUSTANG tempo

Red Cells are LOOK tempo

Black Cells snapped on 2nd Hut

“10” or “20” = Tight 33 Belly
 “72” or “82” = Tight 17 GO Pass

The example wristband above gives you 76 possibilities (4 columns, 19 rows).

	One / Two	Three / Four	Five / Six	Seven / Eight		
L	0	33 Belly	Liz 28-D		47-G	0
I	1	35-D	43 Counter		22 Trap	1
	2	47-D	26 G.O.		17 GO Pass	2
	3					3
	4					4
	5					5
	6					6
	7					7
	H					H
	I					I

Print your wristbands on laser printer. Inkjet will smudge and smear with moisture. If you don't have enough wristbands, you could print them on 9x12 laminating film sheets. They will cost \$20 for a box of 50 which will yield 100 wristbands. These sheets can be taped to the players wrist or tucked in their pants.

I sell an Excel based program that generates your wristbands, game sheets, and practice scripts in minutes. (<http://www.championshipfootballvideo.com>). Templates of these excel sheets are on the CD-Rom as well as in the Appendix. A list of hand signals are also in the Appendix.

Play Calls

You can do a combination of things. Be thematic and put common plays in the same group or category. Name all the run plays after cars, pass plays after cities, and use colors for snap counts/ audibles. For example, use birds for all shotgun plays since birds are shot with a gun. Or use fruits / food for all TRIPS formations since you make a "trip" to the store to get those items.

Cars: Mustang, Fusion, Expedition can all be plays in the Belly family. Ford can be Belly pass.

Cities: Anything associated with that city can be that play.

New York/Yankees/Manhattan would all stand for the same play.

States: , Colleges, Planets, Animals: can all be used also.

Have quick terms for "REPEAT", "REVERSE", "NO-PLAY", "BEST PASS"

Another way to code your plays is to assign every play a number. Each number stands for both a run play AND a pass play. Letters indicate if it is a run or pass play. A, B, C indicates run → X, Y, Z indicates pass

"A311"=Buck Left		"B912"=Buck Right		"Z113"=Swing Pass Lt		"X116"=Swing Pass Rt	
A	Run	B	Run	Z	Pass	X	Pass
3	Dummy #	9	Dummy #	1	Dummy #	1	Dummy #
1	Buck Sweep	1	Buck Sweep	1	Swing Pass	1	Swing Pass
1	Run at 5 hole	2	Run at 6 hole	3	Left	6	Right

Play Codes are held up on a white board or using an Etch-A-Sketch type of toy called the MagnaDoodle. You could also use flip charts. If a player can't see the board or misses the signal, a neighbor player just repeats the code. There are 500 different combinations to call plays.

Snap Count

Build Into Each Play: Certain plays have the same snap count every time. For example all down plays are on first sound, but all belly plays are on second sound. This is discussed later on in Ch 4.

Can make the snap count based on the hole that you are attacking. Even number holes are on set, while odd number holes are on one.

QB Gives Count at Line of Scrimmage: Can use colors (“red-white-blue”). Red is first sound, white is on set, and blue is on two. The QB can have “hot” colors or numbers that tell everyone that the ball will be snapped on the next sound after the hot call. You can also combine colors and numbers, making colors “hot” during 1st and 3rd quarters, and numbers “hot” during 2nd and 4th quarters.

Silent Count: There is no snap count. Everyone goes on ball movement, but the QB has to signal to the center (verbal, clap, or foot) that it is OK to snap the ball.

Direction of the Play

You really only have two choices here: Embed the direction into the play call or have the QB tell the team the direction at the line. If your play calling system uses numbers be careful of odd-left and even-right calls since a lot of teams use that system. We use numbers a lot in both run and pass plays, so we found two numbers that were not connected to ANY of our plays to use for our right & left calls.

The QB could give the play direction using “East-West” or “Boy-Girl” words. He could also use the mascots of the team bench you want to run towards: For example: your team is the Lions and you are playing the Warriors. If the QB yells “Lions” (or any cat), the play is ran towards YOUR sideline. If he yells “Warrior” (or any of their colors or their city) the play is ran towards THEIR sideline.

Tempos

These tempos are listed in order from slowest to fastest.

HUDDLE TEMPOS

1. “Freeze”. QB only gives formation in Huddle and sideline signals in the play after seeing the defense.
2. “Check with Me”. QB calls one play in huddle, but audibles right or left at the line.
3. “Sprint”. QB calls the play in the huddle, team sprints to line and snaps ball in under 4 seconds.

NO HUDDLE TEMPOS

4. “Look”. A formation and play is signaled. After lining up and sending someone in motion, all the players slowly look to sideline, and are told to run the original play or they get a new play.
5. “No Huddle. Get signal from sideline and run the play as soon as referee puts the ball in play.
6. “MUSTANG”. Our best plays every week are assigned “Mustang-1”, “Mustaing-2”, etc.
The sideline screams the Mustang call and we run play as soon as ball is in play.
7. “NASCAR”. These are the same 4 plays, ran in the same order, in the same direction all year long.
For example: Jet, Belly, Swing Pass, and Guard Trap is NASCAR 1.
If NASCAR is called, players continue to run until sideline tells them to Huddle up.

A team with the lead will run “TANK” which does not snap the ball until there is 5 seconds left on the play clock. Players do several shifts & motions before snapping the ball to wear defenders out chasing them and also to indicate to the pressbox the defensive coverages.

The referees will slow you down while they spot the ball and move the chains. You could have your players motion while waiting, but we just “SOFT HUDDLE” until the refs are ready.

Tips to Go Fast

Players need to hand the ball to the referee. Player running deep route on incomplete pass continue running to get the ball and immediately head to sideline. The ball boys should have got a new ball to the referee already.

SUBSTITUTIONS

- ◆ Wide receivers automatically sub in for anyone running deep routes.
- ◆ Offensive linemen who also play defensive line will be subbed out on Defense when they starting inside their 30-yard line. Also 3rd and long plays.
- ◆ Have 2 complete sets of running backs that alternate series in the 2nd quarter.

Another tip: Trim your exchange film so the other team cannot scout your tempos.

HAND SIGNALS

FIRST We signal (sometimes yell) the tempo.

HUDDLE	Hands clenched in a fist above the head		NO HUDDLE	Both hands spread apart above the head
Freeze	Cross arms after giving formation		Look	Same binoculars as Check signal
Check	Two OK signs put over the eyes		Mustang	Verbal plus board
Sprint	No signal. We do this 50% of the game		Nascar	Verbal plus board

So the players get a HUDDLE or NO HUDDLE signal first. If it is a Huddle signal, we pause our signals as they form a Huddle. They can all look at signal, but QB is going to call the play. We Huddle when the play call is long or involves special instructions. A No Huddle signal is only followed by the play or a Look sign.

SECOND Formations + motionTHIRD Actual Play

WRISTBAND: tap our left forearm with right hand & signal numbers using body clock + fingers. Odd numbers point away from body; Even numbers touch the body. 2 touch left shoulder, 3 point straight out, 4 touch rib cage.

DIRECTION: Run play to the left by flexing left bicep. Run play to the right by flexing right bicep.

Loose	No signal. Base formation	26/45 G.O.	Antlers on the head
Tight	Hands clasped over chest	26/45 G Lead	Salute
Over	Basketball traveling call	32/32 G	Shaking dice
Nasty	Pinch nose	GO Pass	Kick with a boot
Heavy	Hands over a Pregnant belly	GO Counter	Stop sign+4 finger claw
Doubles	Miami hurricane	Down Counter	Down sign+4 finger claw
Left	Make wing w/Lt hand in rib cage	35/36 O	Hands in downward motion
Right	Make wing w/Rt hand in rib cage	Down Pass	Horns on head
Spread	Hands start at chest and widen	33/34 Belly	Rub belly
Slot	Pull a slot machine handle	22/41 Trap	thumb & pinky in air (hang loose sign)
Trips Rt or Lt	Left or right 3 fingers in air	47-G / 28-G	Flex in bulldog stance
Bunch Rt or Lt	Shake 5 fingers side of body	Belly Pass	Lasso above head
Stack	Fist on top of other	28-0 / 47-0	Liz/Rip sign+make "O" with one hand
Empty	2 palms facing up, holding a plate	28-T / 47-T	Lazer/Rocket sign+timeout
Liz ² / Rip ²	Flat motion across body with Lt or Rt hand	11/12 Army	Hands over head, form an 'A'
Lazer / Rocket	Touch left/right chest	33/34 Baylor	2 OK signs with both hands
X	Cross arms into an X	35/36 Cal	"C" cup with both hands
Y	Rt fist in Lt forearm. Sideways "T".	Wraparound	Hug body
L	"L" loser sign with left hand	Silver/ Gold	Fingers to mouth like eating a sandwich
R	Right fist straight out	Purple	Tap top of head
TB	Both hands behind your back	White/Gray	Raise the roof with both hands
		Red / Blue	Twirl rt or lft hand past shoulder
Formations said in the Huddle	Thumper, Jailbreak, Joker, Tubby, Wildcat	Plays only called in Huddle	combo plays; Influence; Opposite, Sucker; Read; G-Away
Formations on Wristband	5 Left, Elly, ER, Lion, War	Plays on Wristband	All pass plays; Criss-cross; Belly GT; Belly/Down Option; Reach; Toss
Wrist Motions	Stop, Twirl, All shifts (wristband)	Part of Play	Tail/Tar; Near/Far; L/R (part of play)
Formations yelled fr sideline	Raider; Nascar; Mustang	Plays yelled from sideline	Crack, load, arc, insert blocks

¹ L & R motion are part of most plays and not signaled. If it is not part of norm ("L Belly 41 Trap"), we put it on wristband

² Liz & Rip motions are part of 28-0 and 47-0. Only need signal if running flat motion on belly, down, or G plays.

³ Pass Plays are on the wristbands. We have signals for play action pass tags (slant, wheel, post, out) that can be used.

Practicing the Hurry-Up, No Huddle Offense

COACHES

Coach on the fly. Need buzzwords. Film every practice & coach players during film review.

Somebody has to simulate the referee on all team/7on7/inside run periods.

Signal in everything, even during individual periods. Or use the same words the QB will use at the line to call plays.

PRACTICES

It is OK early in the week to slow it down so offense gets a good look from scout defense.

Have system to get a ball ready to snap. Ball boys/equipment managers/injured players.

Run offense hash to middle to hash to middle and back to original hash.

SCOUT DEFENSE

No time for defensive scout cards. Teach the Scout Team the basic structure of the Defense for that week. Have to yell out fronts & coverages.

Scout Defense will “steal” the signals & become scout team all-leaguers

HIDDEN TIMES

QB warm up arms doing mechanics drills during dynamic warmup period.

Work on timing of routes during spring, summer, special teams, & inside run periods