

Option Football - Veer

By Malcolm B. Robinson, Jr.

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This is meant to be a brief course on option football, and the Veer in particular.

The option (the very simplest of options - the "double" option) was invented by someone who knew that the QB's job was generally used to hand or toss the ball to another backfield player. After that his mission was usually done.

Some other person later discovered that if the QB pulled the ball and moved toward the end man on the line of scrimmage (LOS) and then either tossed to ball to the other back, or kept it himself, the team could execute the play and could eliminate that end of line defender without having to block him. The offensive team could then use the blocker normally assigned to the end man on the LOS, somewhere else. This freed up an offensive player to either double-team someone at the LOS, or release and block a LB or secondary defender.

Another discovery was made that expanded on the double option concept and resulted in the "triple" option, which really came into its own in the 1970s. The concept built upon the concept of eliminating defenders w/o having to actually block them.

In short, the triple left two playside on-the-line defenders unblocked as the QB rode the ball in the stomach of the first back through -usually the fullback. The QB "read" the first down defender who was head-up or outside of the playside OT. The QB either gave or kept off the action of that down defender. He next moved to the defender on the end of the LOS for his next option. If the QB had given to the dive back, then he would simply proceed down the LOS as if he still had the ball, to carry out the remainder of the play as a fake, to hold defenders as the dive back ran inside with the ball.

Had the QB disconnected from the dive man, then he would attack the end man on the LOS and keep or pitch off the end defender's reaction. More on the specifics of the actual techniques later.

The two diagrams that follow (Diag 1 & Diag 2) show the double and triple options against a base 50 defense, and then a 4-4.

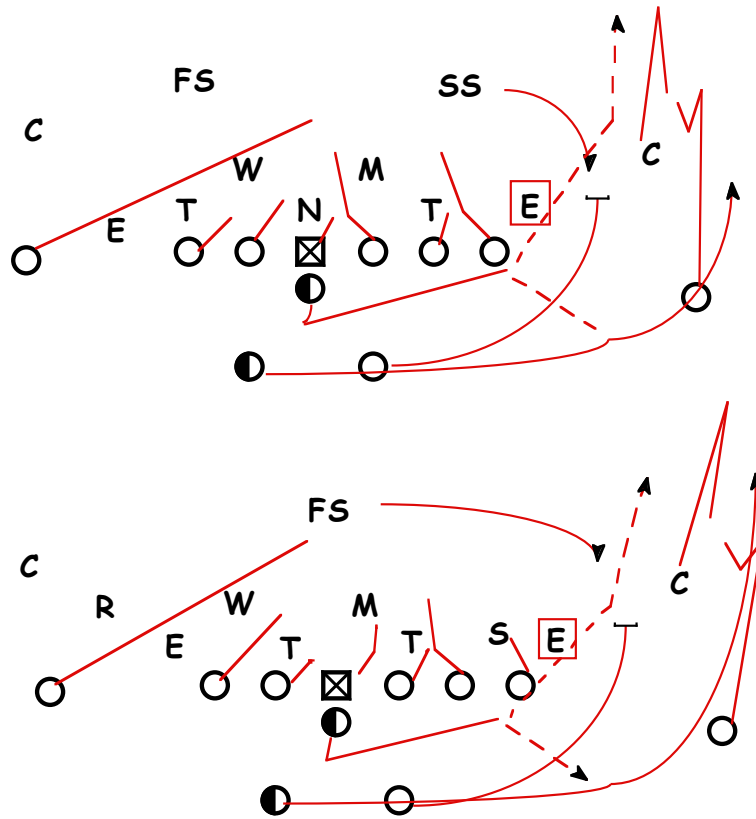


Diagram 1 - Double Option vs. Base 50 (5-2) and Split 40 (4-4)

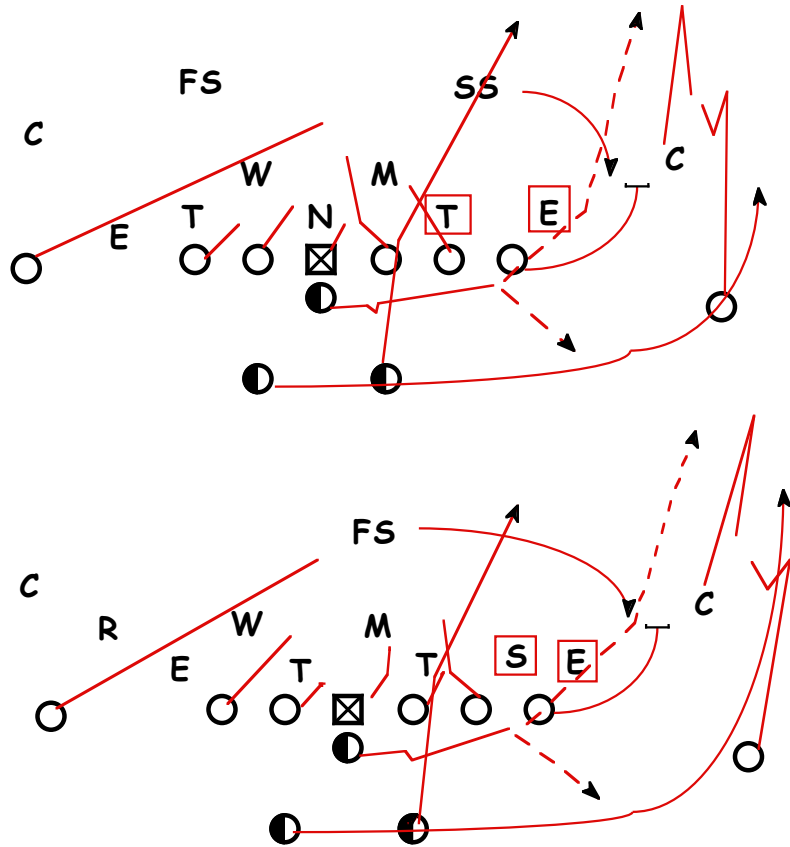


Diagram 2 - Triple Option vs. Base 50 (5-2) and Split 40 (4-4)

Before we go further should be said here that there are basically two (2) types of option plays:

a) the double option - where there is no dive, only a keep or pitch off the end man's action; and there are two of these types:

- i) lead option with a lead back ahead of the pitchman;
- ii) speed option, no lead back - only a QB and pitchman;

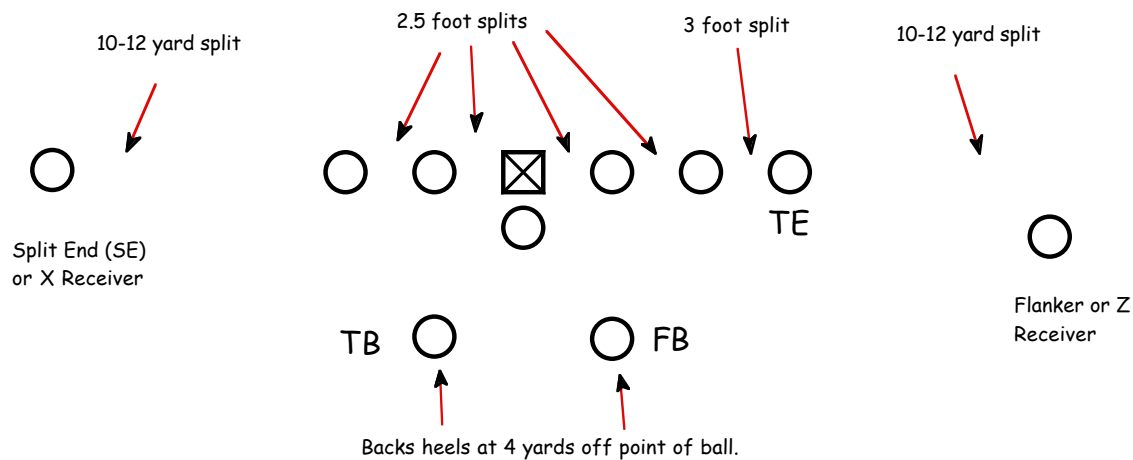
b) the dive option - where there are 2 backs plus the QB - where the QB rides the first back into the LOS, and either gives or keeps, then goes to the next read - the end-of-the-line defender- to either keep or pitch to the trailing back.

The Veer

The option from the split back set is often called the Veer offense for short, and more traditionally, the Houston Veer. However, dive options from other formations also refer to their plays as "Inside" and "Outside" veer.

This style of the option has 2 backs - usually a FB type and a TB type aligned generally behind the OGs. The classic Houston Veer is run with one TE and a SE and a flanker, as shown in **Diagram 6**. Of course, there are other sets from which this offense can be run.

Diagram 6 - Basic Split Back Veer Set

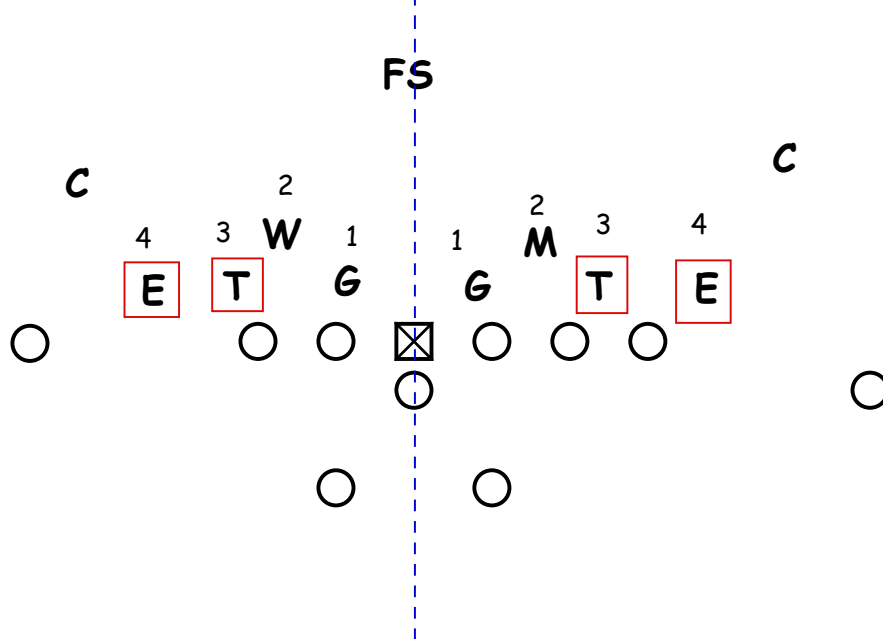


The base play of the Houston Veer is the triple option (the INSIDE Veer - there is also an OUTSIDE Veer triple option play that will be described later).

The beauty of the set and the inside veer play is that it can be run to either side of the offense- to the TE or to the SE. An additional benefit of the play is that no one - either offensive player, and surely not any defensive player, knows where the ball is going before its snapped. Even the QB doesn't know who will get the ball or whether the play will go inside or outside until the defense makes a reaction to what it sees after the ball is snapped.

The concept of the triple option requires that the offensive line block the playside defenders except for the first defender head-up or outside of the playside OT and the end man on the LOS. See **Diagram 7** for a depiction of this offensive concept.

Diagram 7 - Inside Dive Keys & Outside Pitch Keys to either side vs. Wide Tackle 6 (6-2) defense.

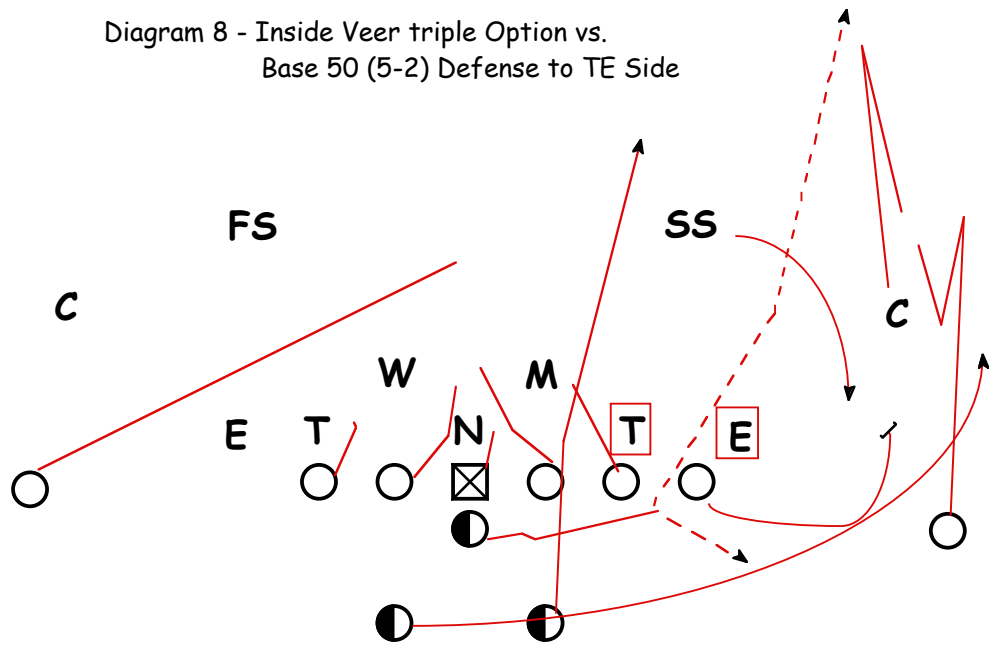


A simplified method to determine who should be blocked and who should be read or optioned, is shown in **Diagram 7 above**. Note that, in general, counting from the inside-out, defenders #1 and #2 are blocked, while defenders #3 and #4 are not. If this were a double option, defenders #1, #2 and #3 are blocked, but #4 the EMLOS, is not.

If there is a defender aligned on the center, he is designated as "zero" in the counting process.

In **Diagram 8** the inside veer triple option is shown to the TE against a base 5-2 defense (Cover 2).

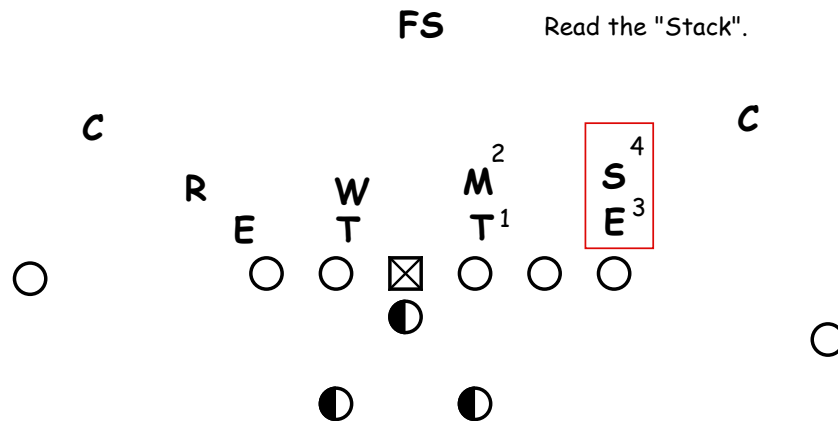
Diagram 8 - Inside Veer triple Option vs.
Base 50 (5-2) Defense to TE Side



There are times when the counting method for the inside veer (triple option) runs into problems and we must revert to the basic blocking rule for this play. Diagram 9 above is a good example. If we followed the rule that we block #1 and #2, read #3 and option #4, we would find this didn't work here. In the above diagram the dive key has to be the first down defender head-up or outside of the playside OT and the pitch key is still the end man on the LOS

A real problem area for the QB who is "reading" defenders is the stacked defense. Note the 44 Stack in **Diagram 9**.

Diagram 9 - 44 Stack Defense



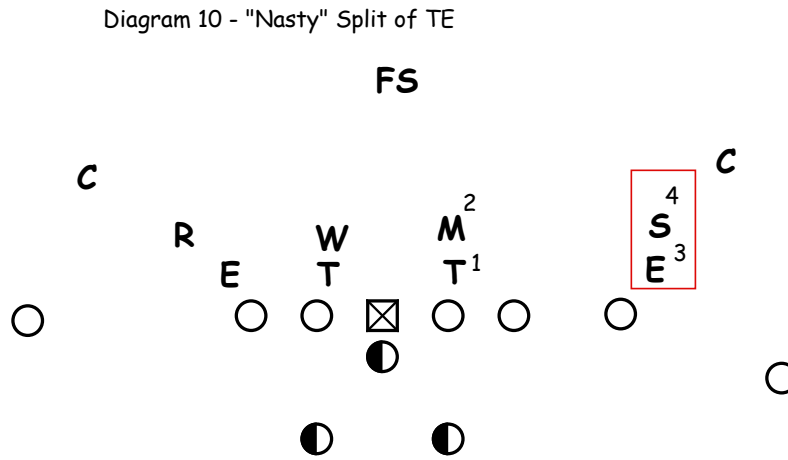
Here we are running the triple to the TE. Counting the inside two defenders is easy. The DT and ILB stacked over the OG is a no-brainer. But, what about the outside stack over, or outside, the TE? We tell the QB to read the "stack". But this does not always work. Consider:

- a) if the DE attacks the dive back, it should be a "give" 100% of the time. The distance the DE has to travel to get to the diving back is too great for that DE to really put a stop to the play;
- b) if the OLB attacks the dive back, it should also be a "give". Again, the distance the OLB has to travel is considerable. When the dive back hits the outside leg of the OG and breaks to the open area between the CB and S, the OLB is almost powerless to stop this without some reasonable gain by the offense. However, not knowing which one of the two stacked defenders will attack the inside portion of this play can cause confusion and resultant problems can arise.

The inside veer to the SE side should not be a problem as most 44 Stacks "walk off" the OLB toward the SE, giving the QB a clean read of the #3 defender.

If the 44 Stack becomes a problem to the TE side, the offense can make adjustments to force the defense out of the stack look.

The TE takes a "nasty" split and moves another 3 or 4 feet wider. See **Diagram 10.**



This makes playing the outside stack that far outside quite foolish. If the defenders in the stack should go with the nasty split, this makes the give a winner every time the ball is snapped. There would be no need for a "read" here as the QB would make an easy give to the dive back who would have a field day against this alignment. The defense would have to adjust out of the stack and mover someone inside to fill that huge void. (Note: Split control theory would dictate that the defense simply put someone reasonably close to the OT who would penetrate across the LOS at the snap. This defender would cause sufficient havoc that the offense would be forced to re-position the TE to block this player).

A note here about this offense and any triple option scheme. The theory of attacking the defense in this way assumes that your offense will be able to consistently block the inside two defenders (#1 and #2). If your offensive linemen continually get beat because they cannot handle the inside defenders, the play will not be successful. However, because the play hits so quickly, the offensive linemen don't have to block those defenders for a very long time at all. That's why we say we will take a stalemate in the blocking of these first two defenders. If they can fire out and smack those defenders with a good hard, quick pop, and not get knocked backward, the dive back is gone before they can do much about it. Many times the back will pass right next to a defender, but because the blocker has made good square contact

with the defender, the defender cannot disengage from the block to get to the dive back.

The backside of the triple is blocked using the same counting method - numbering the defenders with the OG taking #1 to the backside, and the OT taking #2, etc.

I am attaching copies of selected chapters from two books on option football. They are;

- a) The Explosive Veer Offense For Winning Football by Jim Wacker & Don Morton;
- b) Installing Football's Wishbone T Attack by Pepper Rodgers & Homer Smith.

In these chapters there are discussions about counting defenders and 'scoop' blocking. Some of this information may raise more questions. If so, just email the questions and I'll see if I can answer these.

Here is a further note on "counting" the defense. Whatever defense you draw up (5-2, 4-4, 5-3, 6-2), whatever - if you draw a line right through the middle of the offense and the defense, through the center and the QB (**Diagram 11**), you will usually find at least one defender aligned on, or very near the mid-line. Some defenses, like a 5-3 for example, might have more than one defender on the mid-line.

5-2 Showing Mid-line Defenders

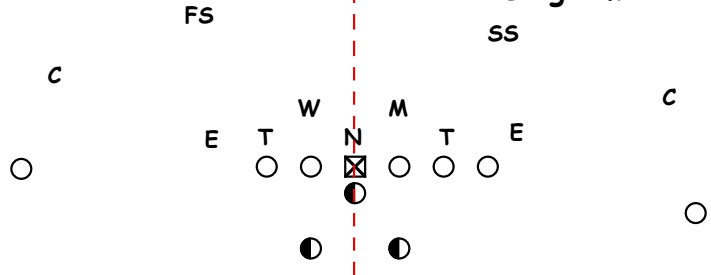
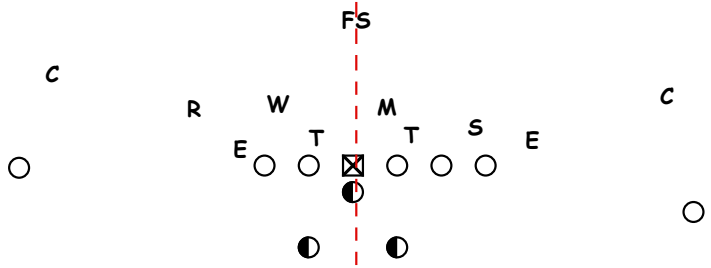
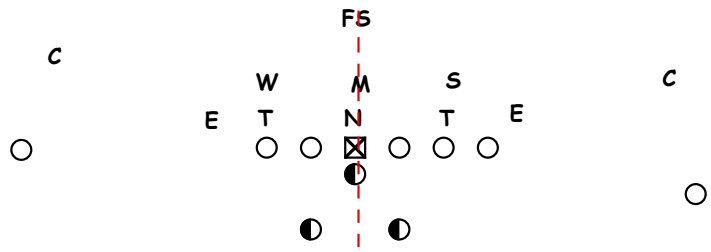


Diagram 11 Showing Mid-Line

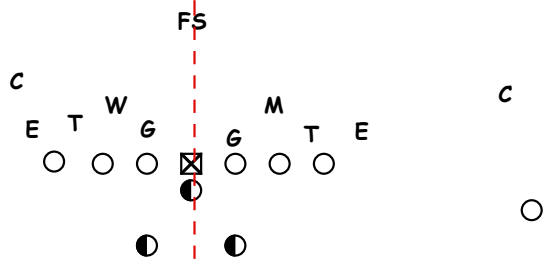
Split 40 Showing Mid-Line Defender



5-3 Showing Mid-Line Defenders



6-2 Showing Mid-Line Defender



In an odd defense (5-2) it's the nose guard. In an even defense the mid-line player is usually the FS. If the FS was off-line only a yard or two we would still consider him a mid-line player.

The importance of this "counting" method comes into play when we use it to learn how many defenders are on either side of the mid-line, and whether the defense has over-loaded one side or the other of the offense.

Usually there are 5 defenders on each side of the midline. This gives the defense balance and allows it to have a chance to stop triple option teams.

Because the offense can give the ball to the dive back, the QB or the pitch back, the defense must assign specific defenders to each of those three possibilities. Therefore, before the snap, there are five defenders on each side of the ball assigned to one of these potential threats.

Usually two defenders are assigned to the dive portion, one to the QB and one to the pitch man. Add to this the threat of a fake option play and a pass to the Flanker or the SE. In essence this gives the offense a fourth potential threat and the CB to either side has to be assigned to the WR to his side.

But back to the counting. The purpose of this counting discussion is to state how important it is to be alert about the defense over loading one way or the other. If they should do this, a check off at the LOS (check-at-the-line) system is required to change the play to attack the side with the fewest defenders. When the defense slides a 6th defender one way or the other, you must be ready to attack the side with only four (4) players.

Side Note - Obviously good play action passing is key so the offense might take advantage of CBs who would attack the LOS and abandon the deep threat of the WRs.

Also, the player on the mid-line can "read" the play and then quickly (as a FS, for example) run downhill to provide run support against the play the offense has just "shown". However, if the play only looks like the usual option play, that mid-line FS may play himself out of position and allow a back side receiver to run into the void he vacated to complete a medium range pass with big YAC potential. Your QB does not have to have a long-ball arm. Short to medium range ability is all that is required. Of course, a long rang missile attack is nice to have and the stronger your run game, the more likely your chance will arise for the Flanker or SE to catch a ball up the rail as that CB gives up on pass to protect against the run.

LINE BLOCKING BASICS

The offensive linemen have to be able to execute the following blocks:

- a) base block (one on one vs. a defender - ether down lineman or LB);
- b) double-team (both a post blocker and drive blocker);
- c) reach block (sometimes called a "scoop" block, especially if its on the backside);
- d) combination blocks (combos) between 2 adjacent linemen on down defender and LB to the inside;
- e) pulling to trap or lead block;
- f) aggressive pass blocking;
- g) sprint-out pass blocking (step/hinge technique);

QB & DIVE BACK TECHNIQUE

I'll jump right over the basics of taking the center QB exchange and go right into the mechanics of the QB in running the Inside Veer Triple Option play. (the Outside Veer will be discussed later).

Assume for this discussion that the play was Inside Veer to the QB's right. In our terminology this would be 12 Veer, but many have other names for it.

The dive back's target or point of aim, is the outside hip of the playside OG (here the right OG). The FB is aligned with his heels at 4 yds off the front point of the football basically right behind the OG. The dive back's path takes him in a straight line with the middle of his body (his belly button) passing over the OG's outside foot. He hits as quickly as he can physically get there. He times his arrival to the mesh point and drives his inside elbow

upward to about chin height to make the pocket for the QB/Dive back mesh. The thumb of the inside arm is down as this allows the elbow to lift higher and easier, making a nice open front side for the QB to insert the ball. The outside arm is under the inside arm with the hand at the belt buckle area in an open palm position. As the QB inserts the ball into the dive man's "pouch" for the ride to the LOS, then dive back places a soft fold over the ball. The dive man must not place too much pressure on the ball as the QB may wish to "pull" it to disconnect on his path toward the end man on the LOS for the option decision.

The dive back does not slow down while this mesh and ride takes place. He must maintain his speed and he accelerates into the LOS. Quickness is key and helps the offensive line with its blocks and allows the QB (if he pulls the ball) to get to the perimeter faster. Remember the defense expects option and has 5 defenders assigned to each side of the mid-line waiting to see what side the offense will attack. For the defense to be successful it must get pursuit to the attack side so as to outnumber the offense and to smother the play. So the quicker the offense hits the LOS, the less time the defense will have to send help to the playside.

If the dive man does not get the ball he should accelerate as if he had it with his arms folded over the "ball". His objective is to be tackled. If he is not brought down, he should block the first LB he meets, or, if allowed to get to the secondary, the nearest safety.

If the QB "gives" to the dive back, he should clear LB level and veer sharply to the playside corner of the end zone. If the play is to the TE side we have the TE "arc releasing" (more on this later) into the secondary to block the playside S (or FS, alley run support defender, in a cover 3 look). The dive back wants to make a cut off the TE's block of this guy. If the play is to the SE (or open) side of the offense, there is no TE to block the S and the dive back may be able to work his way over the top of an aggressive S.

Now for the QB: The QB assumes a stance with his feet reasonably close together. They should not be any wider than his hips. We want his feet under his hips because of the footwork required in the mesh and read with the dive back. At the snap the QB pushes off his left big toe and slide steps to his right (in this example). He steps flat down the LOS, but his right foot

hits a bit deeper than where his right heel was originally aligned. In other words, we want the QB to gain some depth on his first step on the mesh/ride process.

As the QB's hips and body turn 90 degrees toward the sideline, the ball is extended back toward the oncoming dive back somewhat. The QB has his arms extended and elbows locked out as he "reaches" the ball into the dive back's stomach. There won't be too much rearward extension because the back ought to be at the mesh point right now. We want the QB to "hook-up" with the dive back and to place the ball into the pouch made by the dive back. As the QB steps slightly rearward and down the line, he places most of his weight on the right foot (rear foot).

Coaching Point: the QB cannot step into the path of the dive back as a collision here will ruin everything. Also, he cannot allow his feet to become entangled with the FB's feet either. So, he must step toward the path of the dive back, but he must drop his tail, squat and reach the ball into the pouch for the mesh and ride.

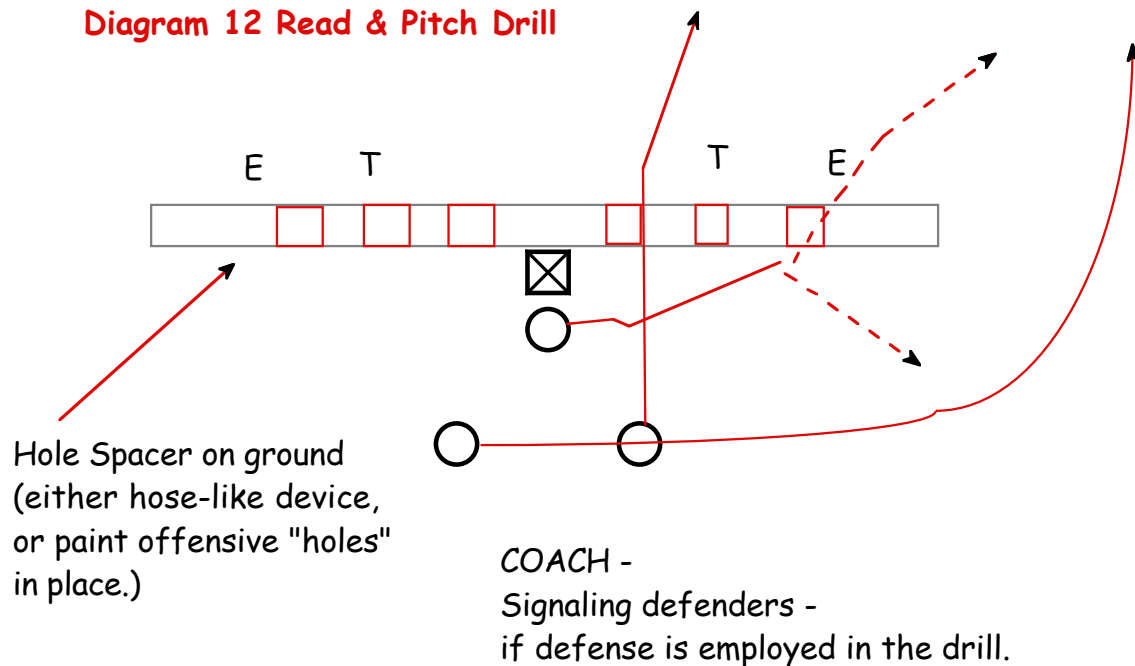
Almost instantly as the mesh occurs, the QB has to transfer his weight into the LOS with the dive man, sweeping the ball ahead of him. All the while he does this the QB cannot directly look at the dive back. He must "feel" this hook-up and ride while he "reads" his dive key. Again, the dive key is the #3 defender from the midline, or the defender head-up or just outside of the playside OT.

This is by far the most difficult of the techniques the QB must learn. The keep or pitch decision the QB makes on the DE is a snap compared to the inside read of the triple option. Also, because of the quickness of this portion of the play, the QB has precious little time to execute the mechanics of the mesh/ride and to make his decision.

Diagram 12 shows a simple dive read drill that is all important to run, especially at the beginning of the season when installing the offense. This drill can be used dry, with no defense at all, or with only an inside dive key, or with both a read key and an option key. It can be run at half-speed or full speed. It can be run against defender with shields, or defenders in a full contact mode. The drill can be used with or without offensive linemen. (In

the early going the OL should be left out as the back all learn their proper paths. However, it should not be run until the QB is reasonably comfortable with the raw mechanics and can execute the footwork and the ride action with his arms and hands quite smoothly.

Diagram 12 Read & Pitch Drill



Inside Veer can be run to either right or left side - with or w/o defenders - half speed or full speed.

When we ran the wishbone we used a drill we called the "A Frame Drill". It was a section of the field where we had put down chalk lines depicting the paths of the backs - FB and each HB, both left and right. The chalk lines began at the spots where each of the backs lined-up. So we would simply have the 4 backs assume their positions on the on-field diagram, and then we would run the play. First we ran it dry - with no one on defense. We repped it countless times until everyone was very sure of what they were doing. Then we added first a dive key. The coach would stand behind the backs and hand signal to the dive key, telling him what to do on the coming play. He was directed to come straight across the LOS, giving the QB an easy "give" read. Next he might be signaled to attack the dive back, giving the QB an easy

disconnect read. Or he might be told to simply stand still and let the play come to him - for which the correct read by the QB would be a give.

Even later, a second defender would be added - at the end of the line - a DE type. Now the coach would first signal to the dive key, then to the pitch key - telling each what to do on the play. Most of the second read emphasis was on forcing the QB to pitch under a variety of actions by the DE. The thinking was that the keep was mighty easy to execute, but the pitch could cause serious damage to the offense, therefore it needed to be repeated often.

This drill has been improved from its crude beginnings and has evolved so that a coach will stand just past the dive back's path with a ball so he can hand the QB a second ball after the QB has made the "give", so that he can follow through with the second phase of the play and execute both actions on the very same snap of the ball. This drill is a mechanics only exercise and does not allow the QB a true read as the drill expects a give and a new ball for the keep or pitch portion of the play.

Remember, so far all we are discussing is the Inside Veer. Once the mechanics are grounded for this play, the other plays will appear to be kindergarten level in simplicity.

Back to the QB's technique:

The QB sweeps the ball forward along with the dive back but only as far forward as his front knee. By the time the ball gets that close to the LOS a decision should have been made whether to give or to pull (disconnect) the ball from the dive back.

If the QB decides to give he should slide his rear hand (the one closest to the dive man's belly) out first. Then, he should apply ball pressure with his front hand to the belly of the dive man to give him a signal that the ball is his.

This has to be practiced and repped many, many times until it's smooth and seamless. The greatest chance of putting the ball on the ground occurs here.

If the QB makes the "give" he pulls his hands out and puts his hands back together as he continues with the play to the end man on the LOS as if he still had the ball. He accelerates at the DE (at his inside hip) to force the DE to honor the possibility that the QB actually has the ball. In this way the DE cannot simply fall off and pursue the ball. The QB should expect the DE to hit him every time he goes that way. Therefore, to protect himself, the QB should dip his near shoulder and get his flipper under his arm pit and against his ribs to cushion the pop. Rib protector s are a good idea, too.

If the QB disconnects and does not allow the dive back to get the football, he does so by sweeping the ball ahead of the dive man and he pulls the ball back to his mid-section as the dive back passes. Because the QB has transferred his weight to his foot nearest the LOS, he can now step with his rear foot (here his right foot) and accelerate down the LOS toward the inside hip of that end-of-line defender (usually DE). We want the QB to attack the inside hip of the DE to force that defender to decide as soon as possible whether he will choose QB or pitch back. We cannot allow the DE to "slow play" the QB and to delay the QB's decision. If that happens the play breaks down and we do not get on the perimeter as quickly as we might and the defense can get more defenders to the playside than we can block or option.

The QB, as soon as he makes the mental decision to disconnect and pull the ball, he must quickly shift his eyes to his pitch key (DE). The defense may have the DE assigned to crash hard at the QB as soon as the DE sees the play coming to his side of the ball. If that happens, the QB must be ready to squat and make an immediate pitch to the trailing pitch man.

When the defense utilizes this "hard end" to pressure the QB, we have a counter to it and this is the "Load" option. More on this later.

The QB is told that if he can read both jersey numbers of the DE he should pitch. If he can indeed read both numbers, the DE has turned into the QB and will not be able to redirect to get the pitchman. If the DE gets depth across the LOS, slides even a bit wider, or simply hesitates, the QB can turn up-field sharply right through the C gap on his route toward the playside corner of the end zone.

If the QB reads that the DE is on a path toward him, he immediately squats and makes a 'thumbs-down' pitch to the pitch man. The technique of this pitch is as follows:

THE MECHANICS OF THE OPTION PITCH (thumbs-down, one-handed pitch).

As the QB steps off as the dive back passes he is now facing the inside hip of the defender he will option (usually the DE, but more correctly the EMLOS - end man on the LOS). He approaches that defender at about 2/3 speed, keeping his eyes on his pitch key.

Both hands are on the ball and the ball is carried at sternum level. The QB has to attack the inside hip of the pitch key to force HIM to decide so the QB can decide ASAP. The secret to the play is to make the pitch (or the keep) as soon as possible to allow the ball to get on the edge before the defense can outnumber the blockers.

The pitch is made by pushing the ball to the pitchman with an action that uses the thumb as the force lever - if you will. The action of the hand and forearm moving in the direction of the back helps give force to the pitch, but the thumb is actually the thing that drives the ball. The QB should take a short direction step (jab step) toward the pitchman just to add some body momentum. So its a combination of the jab step, the swinging of the hand and forearm toward the receiver and the thumb action.

The hand should finish with the thumb down and all 4 fingers pointing straight up. The palm should be open and facing the pitchman.

A common mistake is that the QB (especially young kids) will swing the ball across his chest in a pendulum action, allowing the ball to drop down below his waist, almost under handing the pitch. Avoid this and stop it right away before he develops this into a habit. The ball goes from sternum level straight out, on the same level, outward to the pitchman, with the thumb imparting force. Some QBs will get a bit more oomph on the pitch if they attempt to pop their pitch hand elbow to a locked out position.

All of this is very easy to demonstrate, but somewhat tough to put into words.

An analogy would be the 2 handed pass in basketball (chest pass or bounce pass) where the hands begin behind the ball and where the thumbs are used to force the ball to the receiver. In effect, the hands are turned inside out and the thumbs end up basically down with the fingers pointing straight up. The action of the option pitch is the same, but one-handed.

The Pitch Path:

The pitch back (usually the TB, but not always), aligns pre-snap at about the same depth as the dive back. His alignment is basically behind the OG to his side of the ball. From time to time it may become necessary to adjust this alignment to provide for better timing on the dive portion of the play, or to move one or the other of the backs slightly wider or deeper, to make the play more efficient.

At the snap (again the Inside Veer is to the offense's right) the pitch back steps first with his right foot and pivots on the ball of his left foot. The second step is with the left foot. The pitch back takes 4 or 5 steps parallel to the LOS toward the playside sideline, sprinting hard to get out ahead of the QB. It is hard to explain the to the pitch back just exactly where he should be, but we tell him to get to a spot that is gives him about a 45 degree angle to the QB, and to be somewhere between four and one-half and five and one-half yards away from the QB's outside hip.

An analogy we use is to have the pitch back imagine that the QB's outside hip and his inside hip were connected by a pipe that was only that long. We tell the pitch back that he is the one responsible for maintaining this 45 degree, 4.5 to 5.5 yard relationship with the QB, no matter what the QB does or how the QB changes direction. We explain to the pitch back that the QB must make adjustments in his up-field path as he moves and thus cannot be responsible for keeping in the proper mode with the pitch man. The onus is, therefore, on the trailing pitch back.

Another point is that the pitch can come at any time; that the pitch back must be ready for the pitch when the QB is forced to make it. It could happen only after the pitch back gets a step or two into his course toward the sideline. Toward that end, we also tell the pitch back that not all pitches will be perfect. He must, therefore, keep his back elbow relaxed and not drive his back arm forward, as he might in normal running motion. In this way, if the pitch is behind him, he may still be able to get his rear arm and hand in position to make the catch, whereas if his rear arm is forward of his body he has no chance.

The pitch back must turn up-field with the QB if the QB makes it that far before making the pitch. If for some reason the pitch key disappears

(unlikely, but possible), then the QB will attack the next defender up-field. Therefore, an up-field (or as some would call this, a "down-field" pitch) pitch is possible. Depending on your personnel, such a play might best be handled by advising the QB not to make the pitch once he crosses the line of scrimmage simply because the pitch relationship can be bent out of shape so badly that the pitch becomes foolhardy. This becomes a philosophical decision that each coach must handle on a team-by-team basis. Some years you may feel confident in allowing your athletes to execute this, and other years you may not.

PERIMETER BLOCKING

The blocking of the WRs is very important to the success of the option offense. Because the WR is a threat to receive a pass anytime he leaves the LOS, the defense must assign a defender to him. Usually this assignment falls to the CB. This especially so in an eight man front, three deep secondary. The safety is in the middle of the defense and has too far to travel to cover the Flanker or the SE who might hug the sideline and run a streak or go route to the end zone. However, against a 7 man front, 4 spoke secondary, the defense can sometimes attack the LOS with the CB and allow the Safety to rotate to the WR on that deep route up the sideline.

But, first things first. The offense will assign the WR to the playside the job of blocking that CB. The simplest way to handle the CB is to expect that he will cover the WR and have the WR "run him off" the LOS as far as he will go with the WR. At some point, however, the DB will realize that the play is not at all a pass play and he will make an attempt to come back toward the LOS to help out on the run defense. At this point the WR must maintain outside and front side leverage on the DB, squeezing the DB to the inside.

The WR cannot see who has the football at this point, but he must assume that it is the pitchback, and that the pitchback is on a path up the sideline toward the end zone with only this DB in the way. The WR must work his butt to the sideline and work to keep the DB to his inside. The block used is called a "stalk block" and the WR does not have to really block the defender, only to shield him and to prevent him from escaping to the outside. He does this by "breaking down" and chopping his feet while he keeps his eyes on the DB's mid-section. Each time the DB makes an attempt to move one way or the other, the WR simply shuffles his feet and keeps that outside leverage

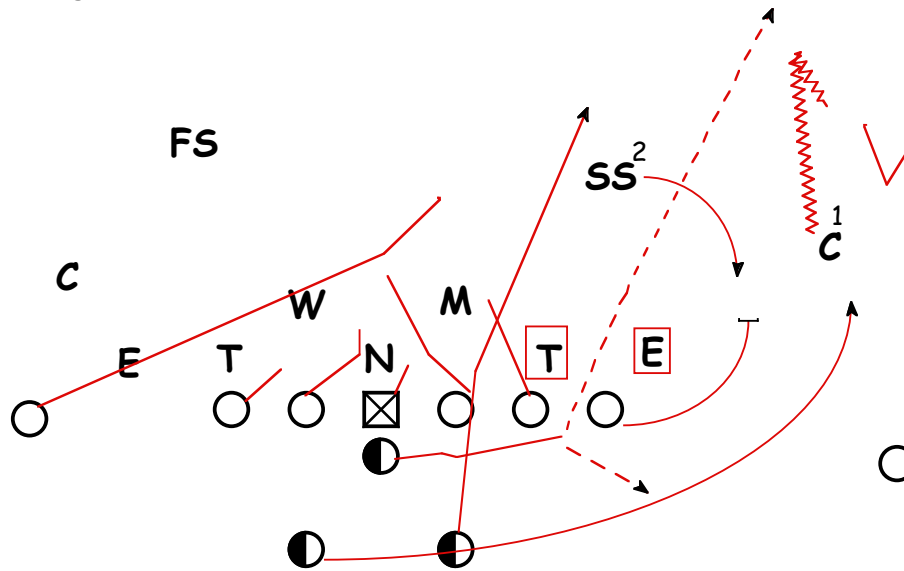
position. If the DB does not want to make contact with the WR, the WR should simply hold his position, feet chopping in the break down mode. Sooner or later the DB will make an attempt to get to the ball carrier, and when he does, the WR can now throw a block, chucking the DB at the chest late area and extending his arms in a pressing action. After this "chucking" action, the WR recoils and resets, waiting for the DB's next attempt to get past or through the WR to the ball carrier. The longer the WR can maintain this technique and position, the better. If the WR focuses on the DB and lets the ball carrier do his job, the block will work and the ball carrier will make the proper cut as he "reads" the WR's block. Obviously the WR cannot turn his head to locate the ball carrier, as he will lose contact with the DB and the block will fall apart.

This is not a very difficult blocking skill to master, but it does take repetition in the open field. The DB can be given a hand shield at first and this can be done a half speed to teach the basics of the block. Should the WR lose outside leverage all is not lost. If the DB fights his way to the sideline, the WR should then squeeze him there and not allow him to get back toward the middle. The ball carrier (b/c) then can see this and make the instinctive cut off the adjusted block of the WR.

TE's Arc Release and Perimeter Blocking:

When the Inside Veer Triple Option is run to the TE side, the TE is usually responsible for the #2 DB from the sideline - the safety. Since the #1 DB in from the sideline (the CB) usually covers the WR as a pass threat and not the outside pitch portion of the option, the Safety has to run downhill and become the run support player. See **Diagram 13** for a depiction of that Safety responsibility from a 3 deep defense and a 4 deep defense.

Diagram 13 - TE Arc Release to SS



The TE has to get outside leverage on that alley player. Therefore, he must release flat along the LOS and take an arc-like path to the outside shoulder of this Safety. The above diagram also shows the TE's path to the sideline.

It is much more important that the TE gets width, rather than depth across the LOS. So, at the snap,, the TE takes at least 3 steps straight to the sideline before he makes any attempt to get up-field. Of course, he should eye-ball his assignment immediately to allow him to gauge his path to this defender. Should the safety take a narrow inside course to the LOS, the TE can easily adjust his path inside to pin the S there while the pitch back or the QB takes his route to ward the near corner. If the S takes a collision course with the pitch back, this course will pass right through the TE, setting up the TE's block. The block does not have to be a killer block - a simple mild collision will force the S out of the play and allow the pitch back to continue on up-field.

Should the Safety fight hard for the outside and actually succeed in crossing the face of the TE on his arc path up-field, the TE simply engages the Safety and now blocks him to the sideline. The b/c now makes his natural adjustment to the block ahead of him and continues on toward the goal line.

This completes the primer on the Inside Veer.

We have yet not covered the Outside Veer, or any of the play-action passing, the sprintout passing or the quick - 3 step passing game. Nor have we discussed any of the other split back veer offensive plays - like:

- HB Counter (double dive);
- Counter Option;
- Lead Option;
- Isolation (lead) Play;
- Power play (C Gap);
- Trap Play;

OUTSIDE VEER

This may be the best play in all of football. These are not my words, but appear in the much sought after book (now out of print) titled *The Explosive Veer Offense for Winning Football* by Jim Wacker & Don Morton.

The outside veer is also a triple option play, but it hits in the C gap off the outside leg of the playside offensive Tackle (OT). The QB must come further down the line of scrimmage (LOS) to the mesh point. The dive back aligns on the outside leg of the playside offensive guard (OG). His aiming point of the outside foot of the playside OT. He strives to run his belly button over the outside foot of the OT. He hits the hole as fast as possible and does not wait for the QB. Repetition and footwork get the timing right. The QB comes down the LOS with two flat steps first, then on the third step, the QB steps back slightly to meet and mesh with the dive back. The third step takes the QB both further down the LOS and back some. As the QB nears the dive back's path he extends the ball forward into the dive back's "pouch" as he rides the dive back into the LOS. All the while the QB is doing this he must keep his eyes on the end man on the LOS. For now we will refer to this defender as the defensive end (DE), but in certain alignments the DE could actually slide inside some and the defender at the end of the line could be an outside linebacker (OLB) or strong safety (SS).

The QB "reads" the DE and either gives the ball to the dive back, or keeps the ball himself. If he keeps, the QB should turn up sharply toward the secondary and angle more or less toward the corner of the end zone. If the QB gives to the dive back, he should still continue with the play action, carrying out the remainder of the play in case there is a defender assigned

to him. This will force that defender to move with the QB and prevent that defender from falling back inside to help out defending the dive portion of the play.

If the QB disconnects from the dive back and keeps, he could option the next defender (usually a safety assigned to cover the QB) and possibly pitch to the trailing pitch back. This pitch back (the other back of the two split backs), begins the play by taking two flat steps toward the playside sideline, then gaining some depth with his next several steps as he works his way to the outside as the potential pitch back for the third option in this triple option play. The pitch back is responsible to maintain the proper pitch relationship between himself and the QB as the play develops. The ideal relationship is a 45 degree angle from the QB's outside hip and at a distance of four and a half to five and a half yards away from the QB. Because the QB cannot control his path into the secondary after a disconnect (as the defense may force him this way or that), the pitch back must adjust his course to keep the right relationship with the QB. The pitch can be made at any time (or not at all) and the pitch back must be in the proper spot when the pitch is actually made.

At the youth level we usually coach the QB to avoid the pitch portion of the outside veer play and tell him to just get as much yardage as he can without making a pitch. We do this to cut down on the coaching time this phase of the play would require and to eliminate putting errant pitches on the ground.

The QB's "read" of the DE is relatively simple. We tell him that he should give the ball to the dive back if the DE:

- freezes;
- comes upfield;
- widens; or
- backs up.

We tell the QB that if he sees the DE's head coming toward the QB-Dive back mesh point, that this is a disconnect read and that he should disconnect and step around the impending collision between the DE and the dive back. We actually can show the QB that the DE's read may come very early (especially if this is the 3rd, 4th or 5th time you have run the play at this DE), and that you need not even actually mesh with the dive back. If the DE has

declared himself, simply step around and hit upfield; don't wait for the collision to get to you.

A simple rule of thumb on the blocking rules for the outside veer is that we block everyone but the end-man-on-the -LOS. That defender we eliminate by our read. In other words, we block 1-2-3 and read #4 (or if there is a nose man - we block 0-1-2-3 and read #4). Of course, we would like to get a double-team with the tight end (TE) and the OT, but against some fronts this is not possible.

Diagram 14 a)- Outside Veer versus base 50 (5-2), then against 5-3 and Split 40 (4-4).

Diagram 14 - Outside Veer Triple Option vs.
a) Base 50 (5-2) Defense (must run TO a TE)

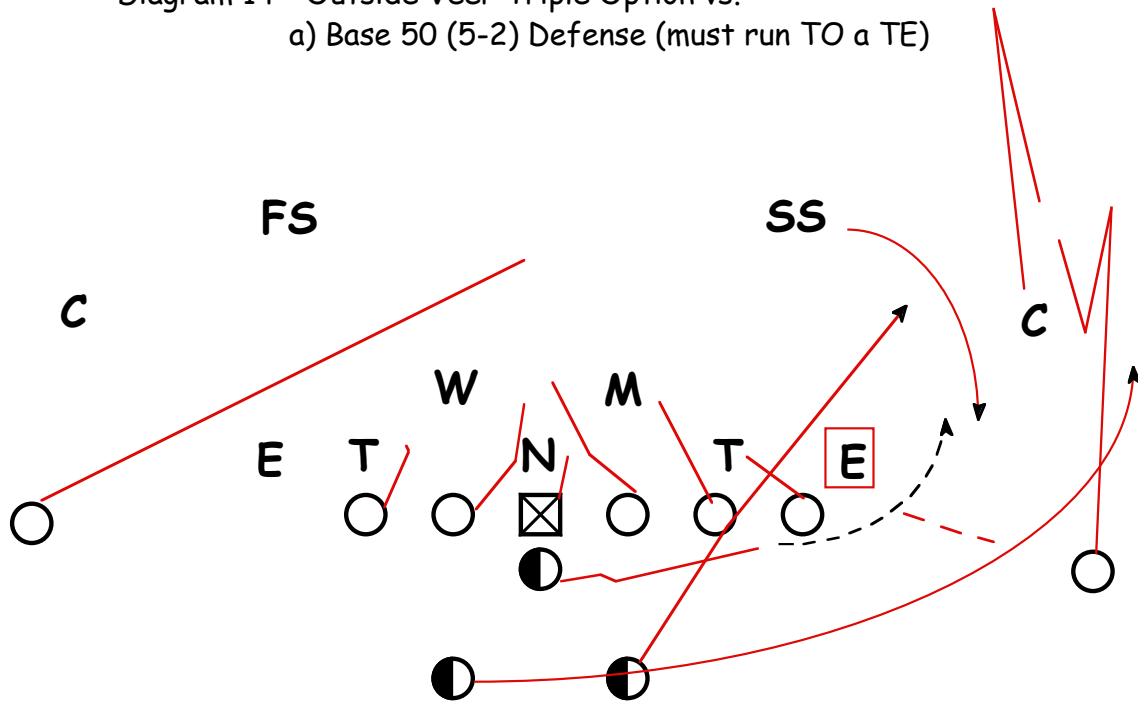


Diagram 14 - Outside Veer Triple Option vs.
 b) Base 5-3 Defense (must run TO a TE)

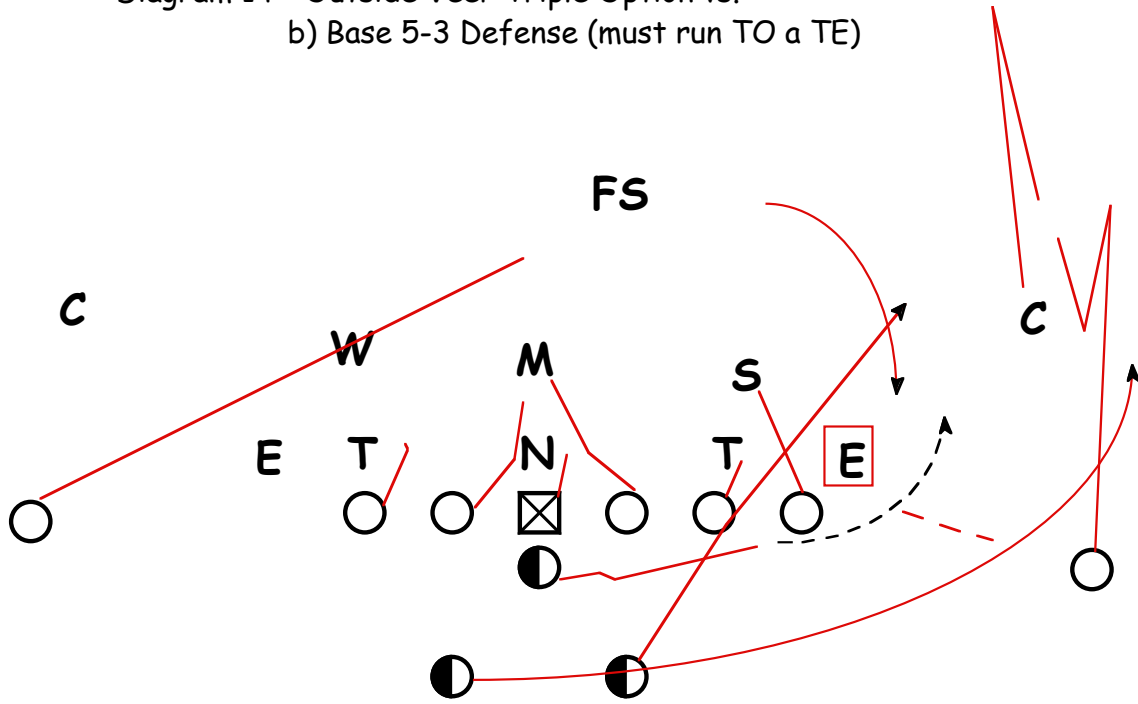
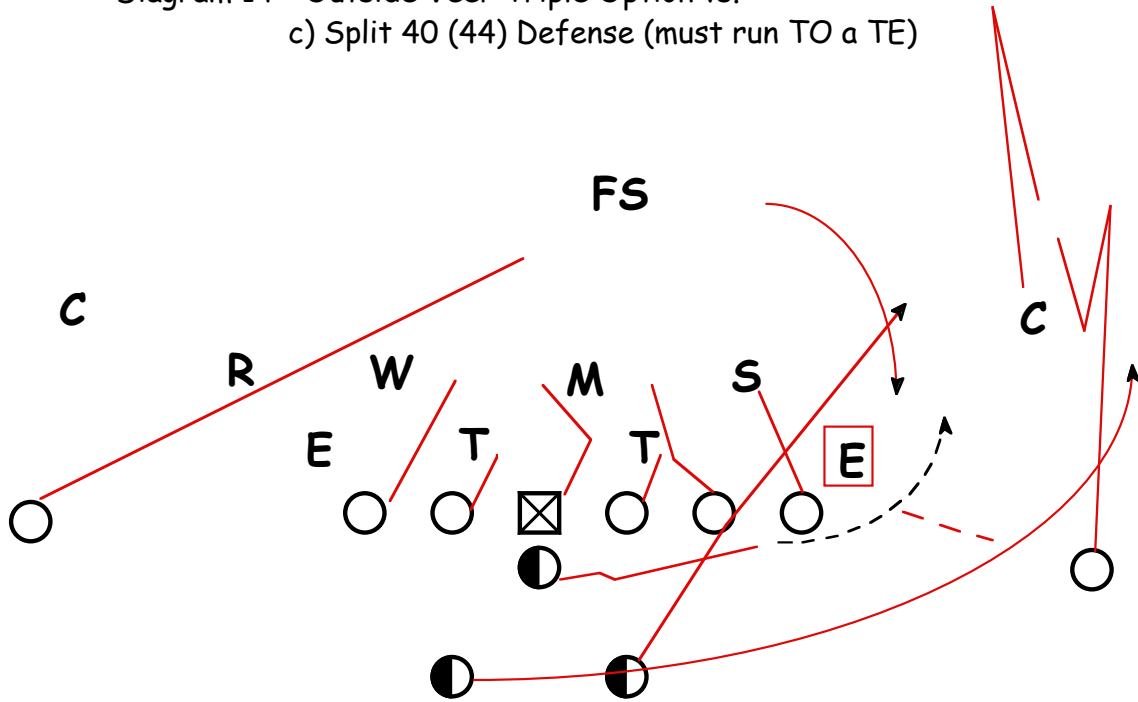


Diagram 14 - Outside Veer Triple Option vs.
 c) Split 40 (44) Defense (must run TO a TE)



As was stated earlier, there are many companion plays that can be run with this offense that are not option in nature. They are:

- **Isolation or Blast** plays with the FB usually lead blocking for the TB;
- **Power** (off-tackle) plays with FB usually kicking out the DE or lead blocking for the TB;
- **Trap** - either the traditional guard trap, or tackle trap, with either back carrying from the split back alignment;
- **Toss** or sweep play with FB leading for the TB - (but this is a somewhat slow developing play when the ball carrier is not behind the QB to begin with);
- **Quick Pitch** to TB to open side of offense. This is an underhanded toss that looks somewhat like a "bowling ball " delivery, where the ball is spiraled to the TB, who moves immediately at the snap to get some depth and width, gaining the edge as quickly as possible;

The pass portion of the offense includes all of the play action passing that utilizes the option-look action to bring up the secondary on run support while the pass routes and remainder of the play is executed. These include:

- TE Dump pass (frontside);
- Backside TE dump pass;
- Backside post to SE off front side option action;
- Front side post to Flanker off frontside option action;

Also, the offense can include bootleg action passes off power running action. This would amount to a "waggle" type play for the wing-t enthusiasts.

Further, there are the quick three-step drop passes that can be hitches, slants and go routes run off the quick release three-step action.

Lastly, there is the sprint-out series of passes either to or away from the TE. These can be floods, Smash routes, etc. These are easy to teach and implement and get the QB away from most of the rush, allowing him to deliver the ball safely.

The offense can also be run from a "Twins" look by moving the Flanker to the SE side of the ball. This should force defensive adjustments and make the

defense honor the 2-receiver side, keeping them from loading-up on other things. Obviously, if they fail to honor the 2-receiver side, the offense must have a course of action available to punish this inability or reluctance to cover the "twins" side of the ball.

Motion can be used to move the flanker (Z receiver) to or away from the TE side to the open side. This motion may at times catch a team unprepared and provide an advantage to the offense which might break a big play for that game-winning touchdown.

The article is by no means complete. It does not discuss the companion plays to the triple option - the option related companion plays and the non-option companion plays. There is no counter play - counter option or regular counter, for example.

Then there is only mention of the passing offense, with no descriptions or diagrams.

OTHER NOTES ON RAINING THE QB TO RUN OUTSIDE VEER:

The first phase is the step away from under center. The QB cannot play with a wide stance. His feet have to be fairly close together. This is because he must make a long first step toward the mesh point. That step is parallel to the LOS, as is the 2nd step. The 2nd step carries him further down the LOS - but not much further. The 3rd step is the move that gets the QB a bit of depth, to allow him to extend the ball and mesh with the dive man. The 4th step is basically a weight shift from the foot that took the 3rd step, into the LOS with the dive back. By the time the back gets to the QB's front hip the decision to give or keep should be made and executed.

The first few times this is taught, the QB should work steps only, with no dive back. Walk through, then half speed, then faster, until the footwork is good. Add the dive back and work his steps. Don't make it difficult. Just tell him to run the middle of his body over the OT's outside foot and not to wait for the ball. The back should drive his ball-side elbow and arm up to a parallel position with his thumb down and hand open. The outside arm should be placed at belt level with palm flat and open and fingers spread - all to better receive the ball.

The QB, when he gives to the dive back, should remove the hand closest to the back's belly first, sliding it out while attempting to give some ball pressure to the back's belly with the front hand. This last technique is nice to have, but not essential. The dive man has to be taught to fold over the ball and to assume he will get the ball. The QB is also told that if he gets a good, quick read from the DE, he should not even mesh with the dive back. he should retract the ball and step around the collision between the DE and the back.

After several times with the dive back and the QB working on the mesh, and the mechanics begin to look good, add a DE and stand behind the backfield and signal to the DE before the snap what he is to do. Give the QB easy reads at first. Have the DE come across the LOS quickly, allowing the QB to make the correct read and to make the easy give.

As his confidence grows, you can then allow the DE to attack the mesh point so the QB can see what this is like. And, of course, "repetition is the mother of learning" (which I think was said by Ben Franklin).