

GEORGE CURRY

USING FORMATIONS TO SET UP PROTECTION SCHEMES

BERWICK AREA HIGH SCHOOL, PA.

This is like church, guys. Be sure to leave before mass is over. It is a pleasure to be here. I like to lecture at clinics because it motivates me. I am honored to be here. It is nice to see all of the coaches from different parts of the area. I know this involves giving up a weekend and this tells me something. This is why this profession motivates me. You do not see the other teachers in your school giving up a weekend to become a better teacher. Most teachers run a 4.2 forty yard sprint at 3:00 p.m. each day. They get the hell out of the building. I really do admire the young guys that are here today. I am at the end of my career but it does me good to see you here today.

I am talking on offensive line blocking and pass protection. I am going to talk about fool proof pass protection schemes. They do not just work once in a while, but on every down. I am going to share with you our system and how to protect from the spread formation. I will talk about using formations to give you a blocking advantage.

If you are a defensive coordinator you should be in this room today. The defense is trying to kick our butts every down and the offense is trying to do the same to the defense. If you are a defensive line coach, a coordinator, or a quarterback coach you should be in this room. We all have to understand the game. If you are a defensive coach you had better know what the offense is doing. If you are an offensive coach you better know what

the defense is doing. With that in mind, let's get into the lecture.

First we must set the stage. What are the two toughest positions in football to coach? In my opinion the toughest position to coach is the offensive line. The second toughest position to coach is the secondary. These positions are the most visible. They require the most communication. To play these positions you have the most to learn. I had a kid come up to me the other day and asked if he could come out for football. He is going to be a senior. He will never be able to learn to play the offensive line in one year. He can't do it the way the defenses are playing today.

I am not here talking to you as a coach that has all rocket scientist on my team. I have some slow learners on our team. I have one kid that thinks there are 16 inches in a foot. I asked him how tall he was and this is what he told me. "I am 5'14" coach, honest." That is what he told me. This is why we must keep it simple. You must get a good system where the kids understand what you are trying to accomplish.

I have the utmost respect for football line coaches. In my opinion the best coordinators are the offensive line coaches. If the coordinator is not a line coach he better understand offensive line play.

Here is what the agenda is for the day. This is what I want to cover. Every pass play must be blocked properly every time. I am not

talking about sometime, or part of the time, I am talking about every time. You must shoot for that goal. I do not care what type of pass you run and I do not care what type defense you face.

All formations must be tempo creating tools to give the offense the advantage. I want to show you how formations can give you blocking advantages. It is more important than anything else on offense. I want to show you how blocking schemes can dictate the pass and how blocking schemes are the most vital part of any offensive system.

I am sure everyone here has an offensive system. I want to talk about those systems. Some of you run Wing-T; One-Back; Veer; Three Backs; and you name it. Those are systems. Today I am talking about a system for blocking. You must have a system that covers everything the defense can throw at you.

Before we can talk about pass protection we must determine what the defense does against the offense. What do defenses do to try to humiliate an offense? First, they use multiple fronts. They give you all kinds of multiple fronts today. The defense uses shifts and blitzes. They disguise their coverage. They try to create mismatches. They use your offensive tendencies to embarrass you on a play. They scheme to take your bread and butter plays away. All defenses do that today.

Here is the question you must answer. Can your system deal with all of these things? We do not want those "Oh Shit" plays. That is where the offense breaks the huddle and comes up to the line of scrimmage and sees that the defense has lined up in a defense that you are not expecting. That is when the backs look up and say, "Oh Shit." You must have a system that can handle all situations.

The most important part of any offensive system is "Blocking." If you can not block the plays in your playbook against all defenses you can take that playbook and throw it in the trash can. You can have all of the other things that go with a good offense such as hot receiver packages, audibles, check with me, shifts and motions, and shotgun formations, and anything else you want, but if you can't block the plays those things will not help you. You can have a two-minute-offense and you can use trick plays. If you do not have a blocking system that can take care of all situations, you can forget those offensive gimmicks.

Go back to your school and look at your films. Put all of your bad plays on one film. We do that. In our weight program I make our kids watch those bad plays. I ask the players why we had those bad plays. Is it because the other team was just better than we were? If that is true there is something you can do about it. The thing we ask is this. Did we get beat because our system could not handle what the defense used against us? That is what I want to go over with you. Put those bad plays on a tape and study them. You will be surprised what you can learn. That is one of the best coaching tools you have.

Let's get into formations. Football to me is a chess match. I want to give our kids the best chance to win as possible. If you do not have superior players, it is all the more reason to use a lot of formations. By using a lot of different formations it gives you a blocking advantage. It is a chess game! Stay with me on this. You must use whatever you can to give your kids an advantage on pass blocking. I will go over our different types of passes. I will show you our protections. I will cover our philosophy and I will show you how

our different formations give us a blocking advantage. Using a lot of formations gives you advantages including blocking angles.

Formations play a major role in our passing schemes. Formations are vital in today's offenses. Every formation that we run is set up to give us an advantage. Every formation has a philosophy in itself as far as dictating to a defense. I could talk all day about one formation and give you the value of the formation and how we use it to our advantage. If you use a number of different formations the defense can not jump all over your offense. If you run a vanilla offense with one or two formations the defense will jump all over you.

Every formation must be understood by the entire team. Every blocking scheme must be understood by the entire team. We work on this all year long. Last week I had my three quarterbacks come into my office to see me. Each Wednesday is our "Brain Day" for quarterbacks. Here is what we do as a team. We lift on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. We call the Wednesday practice "Football Study." I show our quarterbacks our pass protection and they must know the blocking schemes. The quarterback needs to know the blocking schemes. If the quarterback is going to check off, he better know the blocking scheme, don't you agree? If he checks to a pass play he better tell the line who to block on the play and he better call out the scheme to be used. All of the players must know the blocking scheme when the quarterback checks the play off. Our fullbacks, quarterbacks, and tight ends need to know the blocking schemes on all formations. If they don't know them they are not going on the field for us. They better know everyone's assignment.

Formations, if used to your

advantage will increase your passing percentage. Formations can increase the amount of time you have to throw the ball. That is what we are looking for. Formations can cover up for a lot of weaknesses, blocking wise.

Next I want to cover the basics. This is where the formula for everything we do comes from. If you get anything out of this lecture, make sure you know these basics.

1. Know your formations potential blockers. This is what you must understand. You can have different Man Protections. You can have a number of formations.

Man Protection

8 man protection
7 man protection
6 man protection
5 man protection

Number of Routes

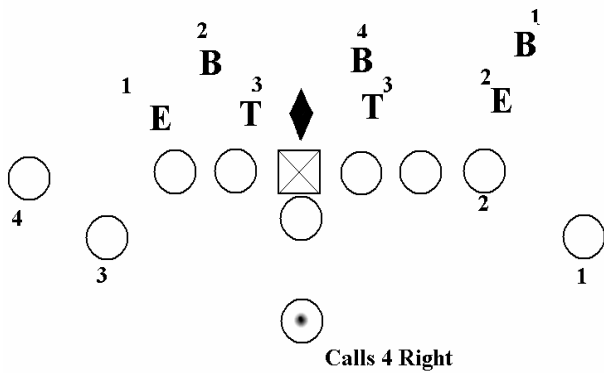
2 man routes
3 man route
4 man routes
5 man routes

2. You must be able to count. My kids may not be the smartest kids in the world but they can play football. They can count the number of defenders in the "BOX." *We want to know how many defenders they can bring.*
3. Next we need to be able to count the number of defenders on each side of the football. Football is a counting game. Against the eight man front we use a two back offense. If we see a seven man front we use three receivers in our offense.
4. We package the offensive plays

to get the best deal with the points above.

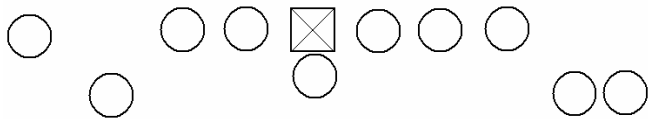
- All eleven players on the field must know and understand the playbook.

Let me explain the concept on the overhead. Let's look at the 4-3 defense. We send out three receivers because the defense has seven men in the box that are potential rushers.



7 BLOCKERS - 3 RECEIVERS

Here is another look. This time we have only five blockers with five receivers. If the defense does not cover the five receivers we have someone open and we get him the ball immediately.

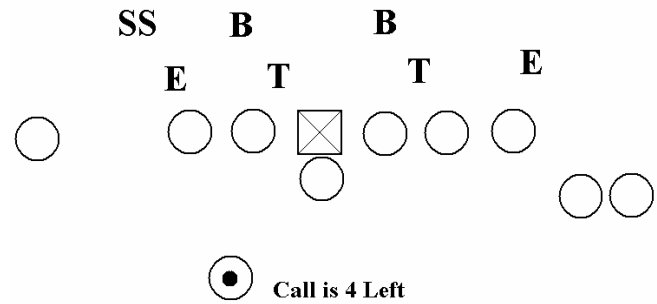


5 BLOCKERS - 5 RECEIVERS

If the defense shifts four defenders to our split end side of the formations we can only use three receivers because they have seven defenders in the box.

Our deep back must call the protection direction. As soon as he sees the defensive alignment he calls the direction of the four defenders. If the defense had four defenders to our right hand side he calls out **"Four Right."** When the

defense overloads on the split end side he calls **"Four Left."** He must line up on the split end side before the ball is snapped.



This is the most important thing we are concerned with when we break the huddle and come up to the ball. Everyone is looking at the defensive alignment. The linemen make their blocks on the line by counting the defenders. They hear the blocking call by the back and then make the blocks. We count from the outside to the inside. The fullback calls the direction and the linemen count the defenders and then block them. We are not trying to fool anyone on this.

On the basics we must know the formation. You must decide on how many blockers you want on the formation. You must check the number of defenders in the box.

Here are our Formations and Blocking Schemes Situations. This is how many defenders you can expect from the defense.

PROTECTION SCHEMES

- 2 Man Routes - 8 Man Protection
- 3 Man Routes - 7 Man Protection
- 4 Man Routes - 6 Man Protection
- 5 Man Routes - 5 Man Protection

DEFENSIVE RUSHERS

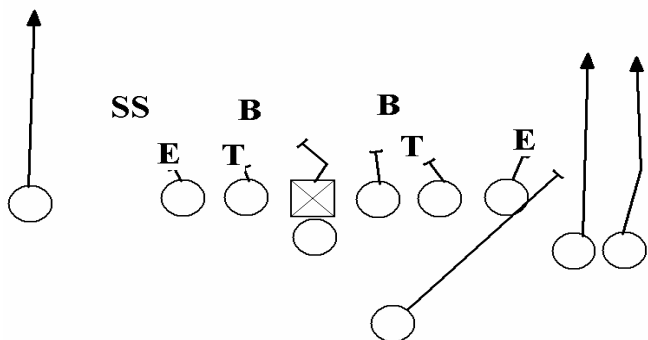
- 2 Receivers - 9 Defensive Rushers
- 3 Receivers - 8 Defensive Rushers
- 4 Receivers - 7 Defensive Rushers
- 5 Receivers - 6 Defensive Rushers

If you have two backs the defense

back to help on the on backside.

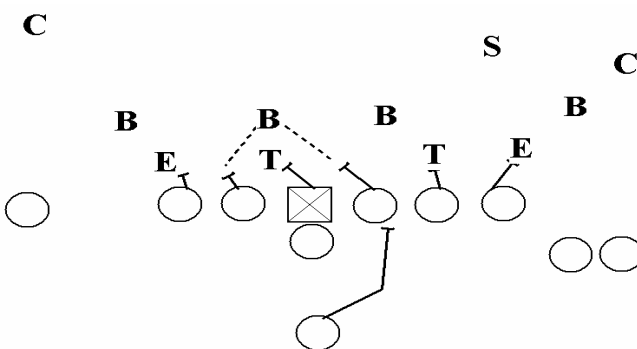
How many of you have small fullbacks? This past year we had a horse at fullback. But there have been times when we did not have a big fullback. This is one of the reasons I went to this protection scheme. If we have a tight end that is 6'3" and weighs 230 pounds and our fullback is 5'10" and weighs 170 pounds we do not want to release the tight end to have the fullback block on the big defensive end. It is tough for that fullback to block that big defensive end. If the tight end is strong he can be more effective as a blocker instead of trying to use the fullback.

If we come out in a one-back- set with four receivers, we can block with the tight end on the defensive tackle. If the defense aligns in an over-shifted 4-3 alignment we send the fullback on the outside linebacker.



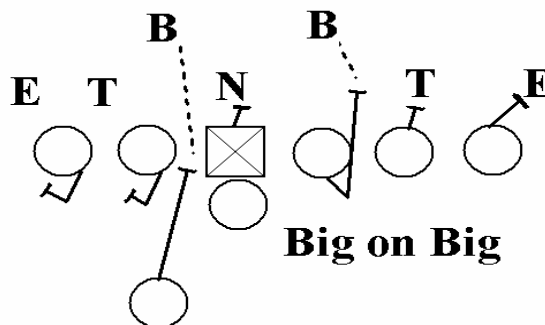
There are all kinds of combinations that you can use to mix the blocking up against the defense. You can block Big-on-Big and still have the end block on the outside man. The back comes inside and picks up the linebacker if he comes.

Our 60 and 70 Protection is our Slide Schemes. If we call 70 we are going to our left side. If we call 60 we are sliding to the right side.



The deep back will have the number one man and we slide the line. Sometimes the back has a duel read. That means he must read two defenders. If we are in Six Man Protection the blocking back has the duel read. If your fullback can not block don't use him. Use the tight end to block the number one defender.

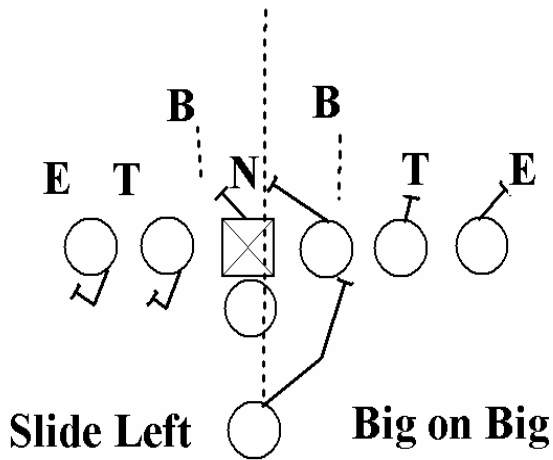
Next we talk about our Big-on-Big Protection. That is our Man Protection Scheme. We call it our 55 protection. We have five blockers on the five defenders on the down line. If we are in a two back set the backs have the linebackers. If we are in a one back set the defense can bring seven defenders so we have to keep the tight end in to block.



From the one back set we can go Big-on-Big on the tight end side and half slide on the backside. The deep back calls "55 - 55" and he blocks the linebacker. We slide on the back side. Now the back has to pick the inside linebacker up if he comes.

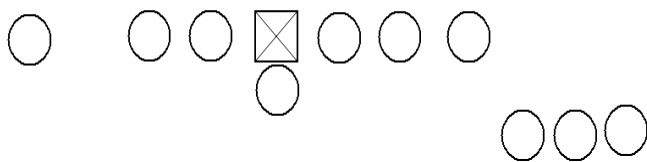
On our protection we can run our All-Slide Protection right or left,

which we call 60 or 70. We run our all Big-on-Big which we call 55. Then we can use the half slide and Big-on-Big on the other half of the line. It all depends on the front as to how we are going to pass block. The formations really help us in our pass protection.

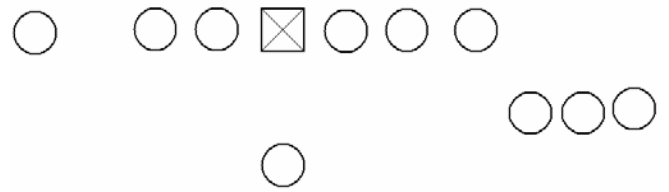


One year we played a team that no other teams were able to block their blitz. They would bring eight men on the rush or they would bring seven on the rush. They would cover with three and send defenders from the edge even when the offense ran the spread formation.

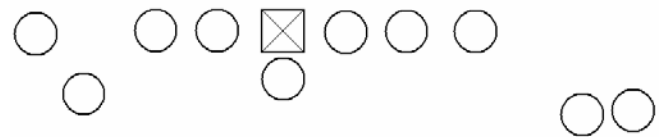
I got our kids together and I told them we were going to run our "Empty Formation" against this team. We call it our Quad Formations. We used several formations against them. We lined up with three backs to the tight end side. If we want the quarterback under the center we call it T-Quad Formation.



We used the same set with the quarterback in the shotgun.



Then we went with two wide receivers to each side with one tight end. That would be our Green Formation.

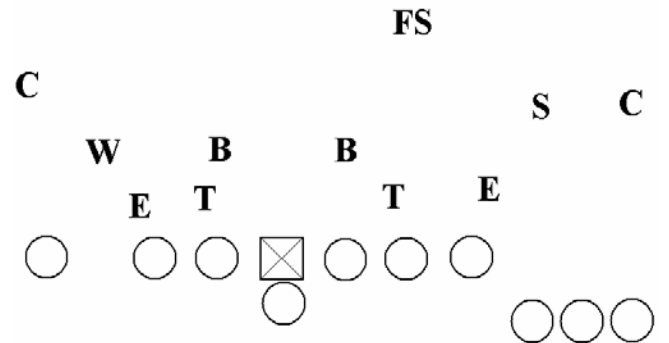


Next we used two tight ends with three wide receivers to one side of the formation. That is our Double Tight End Formation.



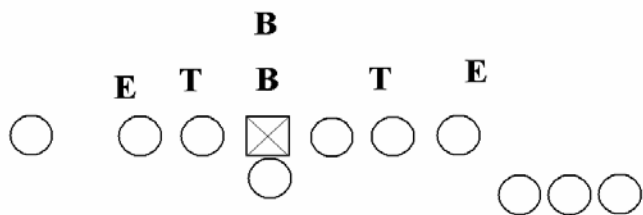
How many receivers do we have in these formations? We have five receivers. How many defenders can the defense bring? They can only bring six rushers.

The defense used a basic 4-4 alignment. They had to cover our tight end. We could motion across the formation to get a mismatch. We used six protectors against the alignment. We used slide protection the whole game.

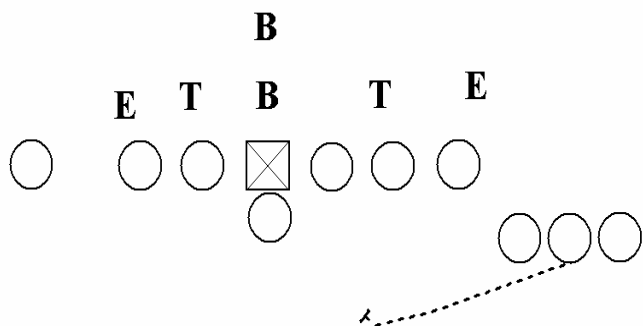


The other thing the defense tried against us was to take the linebackers and stack them over the center. One linebacker got down over the center and the other linebacker stacked behind him.

It all goes back to what we covered earlier. Count the defenders they can bring. They did not sack our quarterback one time in that game. It was because of the system we used. We got what we wanted in the box. We used our tight end to pass block. We did not have a big fullback to block with. Formations can give you an advantage.



If we have five receivers the defense can only bring six rushers, right? You can take the fullback or any other player that can block and line him up in one of the wide positions. Then you motion him back to the fullback position and set him up there. By doing this you have changed your protection from a six man protection to a seven man protection by formation.



This gives you another blocker. Now you have seven blockers on his six rushers. If the defense does not blitz you end up with seven blockers on his four rushers.

The point we are making is that we are going to use our tight end to block. We may not have the big fullback. I have taken guards and put a tight end number on him and used them as a fullback or tight end. We may put a 90's number on them to make sure they have a legal number. But they can block from the tight end position or they can block from the fullback position. They can get the job done for you if you will be patient with them. They can play tight end or fullback.

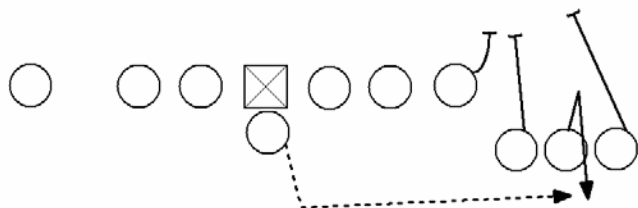
If the defense gets to the point they think we will not throw to the tight end we keep them honest by throwing to him. We have hit our tight end for some big plays. We can use a lot of different plays to get him the ball. We can block the three wide receivers down inside and get him the ball behind them. It is just like taking candy from a baby. It is the system that beats the defense.

When we use the empty formation and use two tight ends we have seven protectors. The defense can only send five rushers. If the defense is playing zone coverage they can only bring six rushers. We still have them out numbered. We have seven blockers on six rushers. I am telling you it all comes back to the numbers game. Our kids are good with the numbers.

I will ask our quarterbacks to give me our top four empty formations by names. We name them after continents. We have Asia, Africa, and all of the other continents. We have so many formations we ran out of continents, and other names. You do not teach these formations over night. We teach them a couple formations in the 9th grade and a couple more in the 10th grade. By the time they get to us on the varsity level they know the formations.

Again, your linemen must know these formations. Why? Because formations

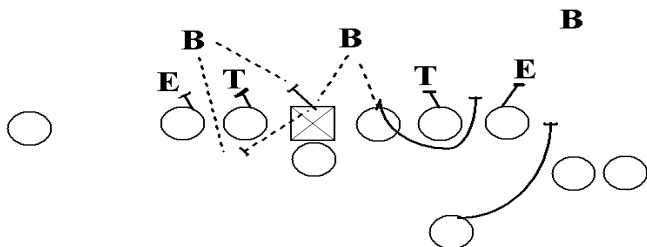
tell the linemen how many potential blockers we could have on a play. That is what the game is all about. If we are in an empty set the defense can bring six defenders. We have five receivers and they can bring six rushers. What must we have if the defense brings six rushers and we only have five blockers? "HOT!" Right! You guys are sharp. All you have to do is to make the call "Hot" and run the play.



You can run a lot of different hot routes in this formation. And we can motion one of the wide receivers back to the fullback position so we have six protectors instead of only five blockers.

So don't limit your formations. Use formations to give your team the blocking advantage. Use the tight end to block on pass protection. This is fun for the players and it is fun coaching them. Remember what I said. It is a chess game.

Here is how we run our sprint out series. If we line up in this set and the defense is in a 4-3 look this is how we block them.

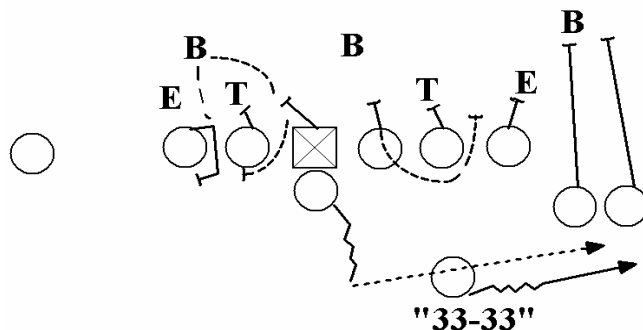


When our tight end stays in to block we have a call for him. The fullback makes the call on the defense. Here they have four defenders on the tight end side and three men on the

split end side. When the back makes the call the entire line knows the tight end is staying in to block. Here the back calls "43 - 43." The linebacker will be on the outside against the trips set.

The strong side guard will check the linebacker to make sure he is not coming in the A-Gap. If he does not come the guard comes around the tackle to check the linebacker if he comes in the B-Gap. This gives us time to complete the pass because we have the advantage in the protection.

We can take that blocking back and motion him behind the two wide receivers and hit him on the hitch route. Now the call is "33-33." The back goes in motion and looks for the pass on the hitch route. Our kids understand numbers on offense.



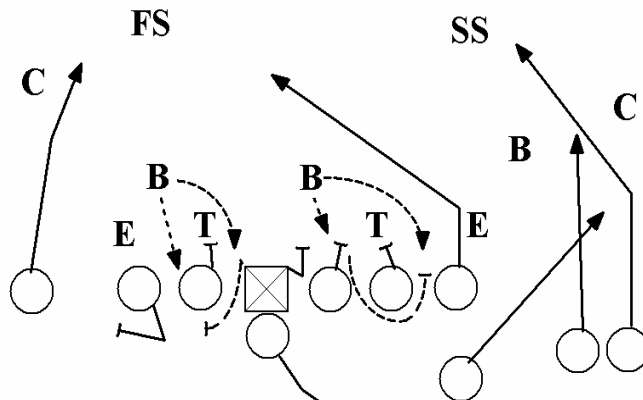
It is tough to teach you this in the short time that I have today. Our 18 and 19 Protection is Sprint Right or Sprint Left. I am sure most of you are doing the same things we are using. Our terms may be a little different but basically we are doing the same things. The big thing is this. Don't be afraid to put in a formation and put players in position to give you an advantage. Don't limit your formations.

Our philosophy on defense is this. We put our best defender at defensive end. We tell our defensive end to run through the blocking back on pass plays. We tell him to rip

his head off. There is no back in high school that can block the good defensive ends on the pass rush. So that is the reason we keep our tight end to block on that defensive end. I would rather have the offensive end block that defensive end for one reason. If the defensive end lines up on the outside shoulder of the tight end he only gets one step before contact. If the back has to block that end he gets five or six steps head start on that back. The impact is not as hard for the tight end to block the defensive end.

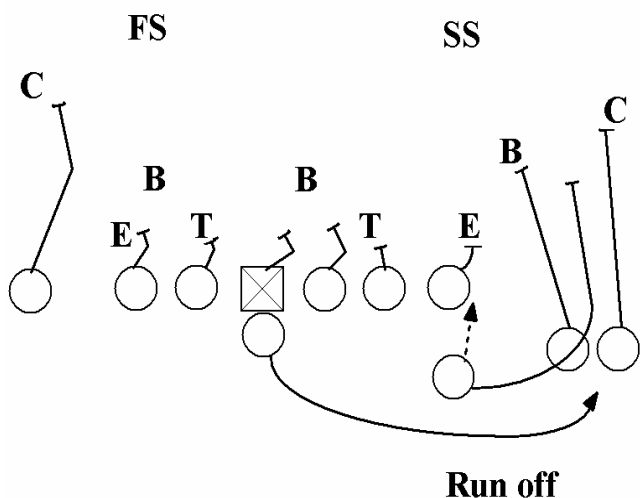
On the Sprint Out blocking we number the defensive men. When we are in our slide protection we are really going half and half. We do not really run all slide protection. If we had a great fullback we may use all slide, but we have not had those big fullbacks. When we check to decide what protection to use the first thing we must check is how many receivers we have that can go out on a pass. We call that "US First." Next we count the defenders they can rush. We call that "Them Second."

run and can get rid of the ball on the hot routes. They can not be a "prima donna." You can have some big plays but the quarterback better be good. It is the system that makes the plays work.



When we are in five man protection we have two hot receivers. When we are in six man protection we have one hot receiver. When we are in seven and eight man protection there are no hot receivers.

We can run all formations with this protection. We can run the 3, 5, and 7 Step Drop passing game. We can run the sprint out game and we can run the play action passes. I do not have enough time to cover all of the formations but this gives you an idea of what we can do in the passing game with our formations.



If you go with five man protection schemes you better have a big, strong quarterback. If the defense brings the linebacker they are going to put the quarterback on his back. You can run the five man protection if you have a quarterback that can

We package our plays which helps us in the passing game. If the defense is in a zone defense we have a Zone Package. If the defense is in a Cover 3 look we have a Cover 3 package. We have a Cover 2 package, and our Quarter Coverage package. Our two important packages are very simple. If the defense is in straight man coverage and brings everyone we have a Man Package to attack the defense. About ninety percent of our game is called at the line of scrimmage. The things I have covered today, 60 and 70, 55, and 18 and 19, are our protection schemes. Now all of the other terminology kicks in. This includes the hot, the packages we use, and the audible.

We have hand signals. The quarterback calls pass plays with his hand signals. Then he will call out the schemes: "70-70 - Set Hut!" That is the way we run the play. I do not have time to get into the play action passing game. Let me show the film of what we have just covered. There is some good stuff on this film. (Film)

Hey guys, listen! Don't be afraid to move people around in different formations. Use your tight end to pass protect. I do not care how crazy the formations may be; give the kids a chance to win. To do that you must give the quarterback time to throw the football.

I admire all of you that are here today. I wish the other teachers would do their part to become better. They need to get off their butts and work hard like football coaches do. Good luck to you and I hope you win them all next year.