

TEACHING PASS PATTERNS AND DRILLS

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

Thank you very much. It is a pleasure to be here. Every time I've been to Hawaii, about six months later I want to come back.

I don't know whether I was fortunate or unfortunate to be the offensive coordinator at UTEP for four years. The best part of that job was that you got to come over here and play the Rainbow Warriors. Our head coach was smart; he always came on Wednesday so we could spend a little time. It is certainly a beautiful place.

We have recruited over here. I have Mike Fanoga on our staff. His wife is from Hawaii, and he came over with us. If you have any good players who want to play in the SEC, be sure to call us and let us know about them.

In the Kentucky offense, we have five drop-back passes, which we stole from BYU. We have added our wrinkles to them, but it is basically the same passing game that Coach Edwards has been using for quite a while. We have about 10 other passes that we throw. That includes our quick-series, screen, naked, and play-action passes. We have four running plays. That is our whole offense.

We try to be good in the limited things we run. We have a lot of sets that we use. I don't know how many we have, but during the course of the year, we limit them down to about 15 sets.

What I thought I would do is take two of our best pass plays and show you how we teach them. I'll show you how we break them down in our individual drills.

To start with, I'll show you five plays from our highlight film. It will give you some idea about our offense.

The first play was Craig Yeast catching a curl route against Florida, the second was James Waylan catching a crossing route against LSU, the third was

Derrick Homer running a draw play against Mississippi State, the fourth was a vertical route against Vanderbilt, and the last was a corner route against LSU.

We put this attack in at the high school level in Texas. We used it at the NAIA level at Iowa Wesleyan. We ran it at the NCAA Division II at Valdosta State. Now we have put it in at Kentucky. We have run the same thing at all those places. We are getting a lot of publicity now because of Tim Couch. He will be the first player taken in the NFL draft. He is a great player. Tim Couch is the fourth quarterback we've had in this offense who has made All-American.

We teach the system, and the older guys teach the younger guys. We try to make football fun for the kids. We try not to practice more than two hours, unless it is a scrimmage or something like that in the spring.

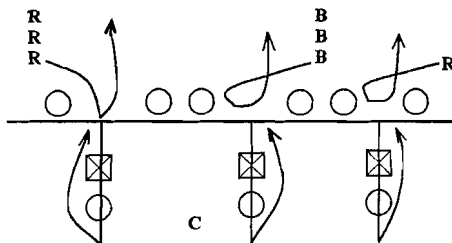
We try to keep our workouts short. One of the things we do, which is probably unusual, is that we don't spend a lot of time stretching. We do have warm-up drills. We tell our kids when they come out to practice that there are certain drills that they go to immediately. First is a catching drill. Everyone who catches the ball goes to this drill. We bring our centers out to snap to the quarterbacks. The drill is called "noose and settle up." This is a quarter-speed drill. We set up three or four sets of two dummies about 5 yards apart on the sideline. We have a center and quarterback 4 to 5 yards from the dummies in the middle of them. The quarterback coach is with the quarterbacks. The receiver coach is on the side with the receivers. We warm up very slowly in this drill for about 20 minutes. This is teaching time for our coaches.

If you think about the first play on that video, it is Craig Yeast going for a touchdown against Florida on a simple curl. Granted, Craig is one of the fastest receivers in the SEC, but he is being chased by some of the fastest defensive backs in the SEC. He caught

the curl route and turned straight up the field, and everyone missed the tackle on him. He ran about 60 yards for the touchdown. We work on that very move every day.

The quarterback coach gives the quarterbacks a drop. It could be a three-, five-, or seven-step drop. The quarterbacks take their drops. The receivers jog at about one-quarter speed in between those dummies. They settle down between the two dummies, closer to one than the other, and noose their hands. That means they get their hands together. The quarterback tries to throw the ball at the number on the receiver's jersey that is away from the dummy. It is not a hard throw or an overly soft throw. It is a firm, warm-up throw. The receiver nooses the ball, puts it away, and turns straight upfield. He turns to the side where he caught the ball. He jogs about three or four steps upfield, returns the ball, and gets into another line. We do this for two to three minutes.

NOOSE AND SETTLE UP

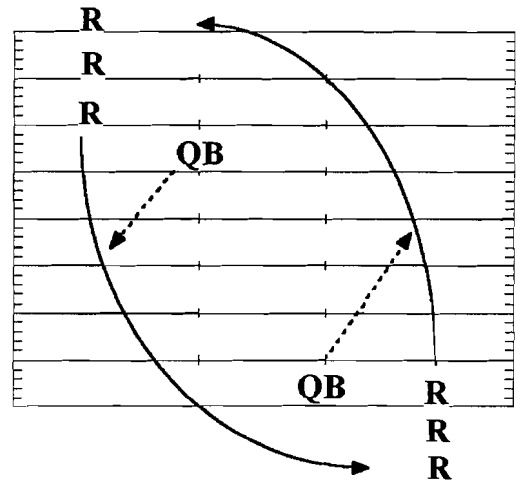


The next thing we do is what we call "pat and go." This is for all running backs, wide receivers, and tight ends. This is a hot-route type of throw. We run the receivers down the numbers. The quarterback pats the ball and throws it over the receiver's outside shoulder. We want air under the ball so that it drops down over the outside shoulder. The quarterback should visualize throwing the ball into a barrel. What we are working on is pinning a defender inside and working away from him. This drill is only about half speed. We work both sides of the field at the same time, with the receivers working in a circle as they change lines.

As we get to the end of the period, we put a coach on the receivers and let them practice their releases and work the drill full speed. The quarterback takes a five-

step drop and throws further down the field, but he is practicing the same type of pass.

PAT AND GO



If you add up the time, you have about 20 minutes. We have gotten everyone loose and had no pulled muscles. I made up my mind when I became a head coach that I would do our warm-ups like this. We have corresponding drills for the line and defense, but this is what the quarterback, centers, backs, and receivers do to warm up. There are a lot of benefits to this. We don't fumble exchanges between the center and quarterback. We spend time working on all our snaps before practice. It is a good way to warm up, and the kids like it better than that other stuff.

After that, we have some individual periods for our backs, receivers, and quarterbacks. Then we come together for what we call "routes on air." This is a really good way to take a single route and drill it. I'm going to draw up this route and then show you how we drill it. The first pattern we teach is called "Y cross." Our base set is a pro set with an open backfield. Our tight end is flexed 3 to 4 yards, and the backs are setting behind the tackles. The flanker is called Z. The split end is called X, and the tight end is called Y. We have a fullback to the tight end side and a halfback to the split end side. The backs are anywhere from 4 to 6 yards deep, depending on the play.

We really work hard on fundamentals like stance and release. I'll draw up this play against an even front with a four-deep secondary.

HAL MUMME

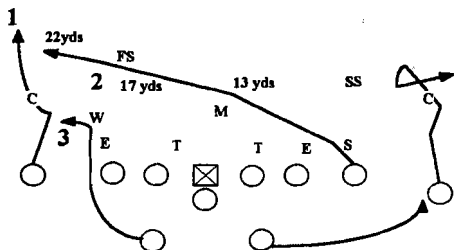
On this play, the X is going to be the hero. He is the one who is going to score. He is going to run an up route, just as we worked on in the "pat and go" drill. On occasion, we let him run the skinny post. The Y releases inside of the Sam linebacker and over the Mike linebacker. He is going to run a crossing route. When he gets over the ball, he will be about 13 yards deep. As he crosses the hash mark, he will be about 17 yards deep. If he ran out of bounds at the sideline, he would be 22 yards deep. After he crosses the ball, if it is zone coverage, he has the freedom to hook up wherever he can find a dead area.

On the back side, the Z starts a good post route. He turns the route into a post curl, and a lot of times, he takes it back outside.

We have only one pass protection. We block man-on-man. We ask the center to locate the Mike linebacker. The center, fullback, and halfback are responsible for the linebackers. The halfback checks the Will linebacker and releases out on an option route off the linebacker. His pattern is about 4 yards deep. The fullback checks the Sam linebacker and runs a swing route.

The quarterback takes five long steps and two short steps in his drop. It is a seven-step drop. The difference between a five- and seven-step drop is not very much. If you have a weak-armed quarterback, it doesn't matter. I've had plenty of weak arms throw this play. The up route is only about a 35-yard throw on the outside shoulder. The skinny post would be thrown on the inside shoulder. That is where we are trying to go with the ball first. When the quarterback hits his fifth step, he knows where he is going with the ball. He is going over the top to the X, taking the Y coming across the middle, or hitting the back on the option route. He has a 1-2-3 progression on the three-receiver side and a curl-flat progression on the two-receiver side.

Y CROSS

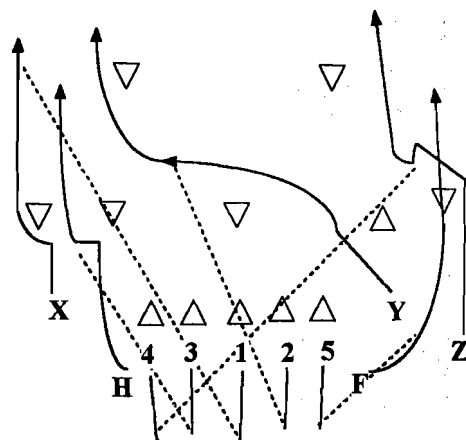


We take this pattern and practice it using what we call "routes on air." We have taken big, tall dummies and placed them on the field in positions to indicate defensive drops. In 15 minutes, we can go through all our routes and really rep them hard. You can set the dummies up any way you like, but I'll show them with a two-deep and five-under zone.

We take five quarterbacks. They each have a read to throw. One quarterback calls the cadence. They all drop at the same time and go through their reads. Each quarterback has a different read. As the balls are thrown, you should be able to tell where the reads are. The first ball thrown should be the throw to the X. The last ball thrown should be to the swing route to the fullback. We want the quarterback in a tight situation when he is throwing the ball. That is why they are all in the same area. It gets tight in the pocket sometimes.

This is also a great conditioning drill. We don't run sprints after practice at our place. When practice is over, it's over. This drill is thrown from about the 40-yard line going in. One every play the receiver has to score. In fact, from this drill on in every drill we have, the receivers or backs have to score. In this drill, the receivers catch the ball, noose it, tuck it away, and score. Also you can watch all your quarterbacks at once.

ROUTES ON AIR



Sometimes it doesn't matter how well the pattern is run; you get flushed out because the protection breaks down. We never give up on a play. We have just as good a play off the scramble as we do on the called

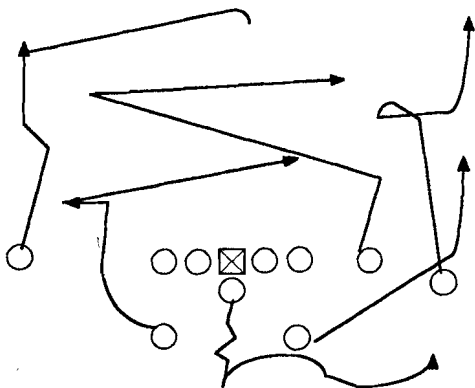
HAL MUMME

pattern. The reason we do is because we work on the scramble play.

This past year was kind of a typical year for us. We threw for 4,500 yards with 40 touchdowns and 16 interceptions. About half the touchdowns didn't come off of stuff the way you draw it up. You work really hard with your quarterbacks' and receivers' footwork and then plan the scramble.

The deepest receiver to the side where the quarterback scrambles goes deep to the flag on that side. The deepest receiver away from the scramble goes to the goalpost but not across it. Everyone else is going to try to get outside the throwing hand of the quarterback, whichever direction he is going. Even the backside swing pattern sprints and tries to get outside the throwing hand of the quarterback. The receivers know that if the quarterback is scrambling left, he has to square his shoulders to throw. That is why they are trying to get outside his throwing hand.

SCRAMBLE DRILL



The quarterback has to keep the ball up in throwing position all the time that he is shuffling and trying to find a receiver. He has both hands on the ball and never drops it down. If he keeps the ball up, he can get rid of it. If he drops the ball down, he can't. The offensive line blocks all the way to the whistle.

Think about practices you've seen. The offense is running a pass shell against the number 1 defense. The offense calls a play, and the defense does a great job and covers the pattern like a blanket. What

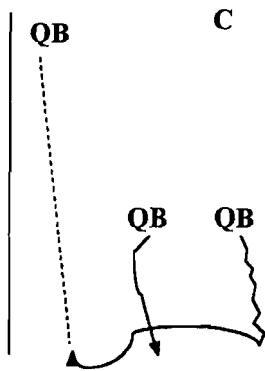
generally happens? The coach blows a whistle, and everyone goes back to the huddle. We don't do that. Our quarterback drops; if at the end of three seconds he has not found a receiver, he shuffles and buys time. After that, he scrambles, and everyone breaks their pattern and goes to the scramble routes. We end up throwing a touchdown, and the play may have taken 10 seconds, but we don't give up on any play. Maybe no one comes open, and he has to throw the ball out of the end zone, but we never quit on a play. Everything we do we are going to practice to the end of the play.

If the receiver catches the ball, he is going to score. The defense is going to pop him, but he is going to score. We practice scoring. There is a reason we have led the SEC in scoring the last two years. We practice it. We like to score.

Our defensive secondary coach had been at Tennessee before he came with us. When I showed him how we were going to run this drill, he didn't like it. But after a week of doing the drill, he changed his mind. He found that his defensive backs stayed in coverage when the ball started to move. We are not great on defense at Kentucky. We are just now getting young players who are going to be good. We are going to be great some day, but we're not there yet. One thing we don't do is give up the cheap touchdown. How many times have you seen a play where the quarterback seems hopelessly down? All of a sudden, he breaks free and throws an end-over-end pass to a receiver standing wide open in the end zone. We don't give up those types of plays. We practice that all the time.

On Thursday we do this drill. We take one quarterback down the field on the sideline. We have one quarterback playing the contain end and rushing upfield. One quarterback snaps the ball. The coach stands downfield and gives directions. The quarterback taking the snap takes his drop. He hitches up and shuffles in the pocket. The coach gives him a command, and he scrambles out of the pocket. He has to duck around the contain end. He dips inside to get by the end, then comes up, squares his shoulders, and throws to the quarterback on the sideline. We do it three or four times with each guy left, and then we do it right.

SCRAMBLE FOR QUARTERBACK



We do this drill every Thursday during the season and every night in two-a-days. After the second practice, we bring our quarterbacks in for about 30 minutes of individual drills. This is one of those drills.

Our Thursday, practice goes something like this. After our warm-up drills, we spend about 20 to 25 minutes on special teams. At the end of practice, we have a big team period where we go over team game plan. It is with helmet and shorts against the scout team. They are barely moving. They just line up. We run our entire game script, which consists of 85 plays. We script the whole game. We are going to run it perfectly. If they don't do it right, we do it over. We really don't know how long this period is going to take. Theoretically, we can run those 85 plays in 40 minutes. We do that now. The first year, this period took about two hours because they didn't do it perfectly.

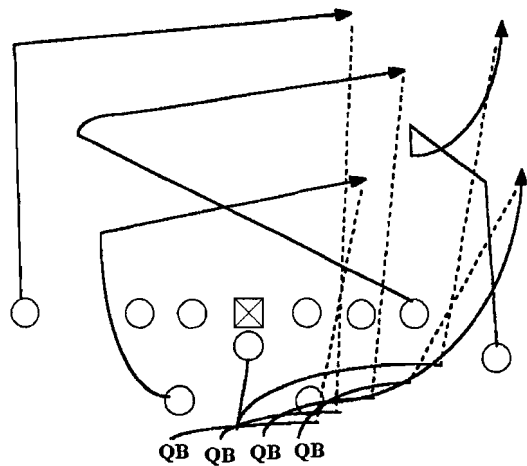
Between the special period and the game plan period is a five-minute team scramble drill. This drill is a morale booster for our offensive line. Those guys work their butts off. Basically, what we tell them is that in our offense, you are going to have a street fight about 50 times a game. They are going to have to fight a guy who is faster and stronger than they are. He may not be as big as they are, but he is madder than they are. They can't lose any of the fights. They have to win all 50 of them. They have a tough job.

We line up our team offense on the 30-yard line going in. The starting quarterback takes the snap. The other four quarterbacks are standing to the side. The line coach takes the second O line and lines them up as defensive linemen. They jog through the defensive line

stunts we expect to see. All the receivers know that they are out because there are no linebackers. Before The quarterback the play tells the rest of the quarterbacks which way he is going to scramble. He doesn't tell the receivers.

The quarterback takes the snap, sets up in the pocket, and scrambles. All the quarterbacks follow him. The receivers go to their scramble routes. The quarterback scrambles right. We are going to throw five balls. All the balls have to be perfect and have to be caught. The offensive linemen have finished their little deal and are watching. If we catch all five balls, they clap one time in unison. If all five balls are not caught, the offensive linemen ride the receivers and quarterbacks out.

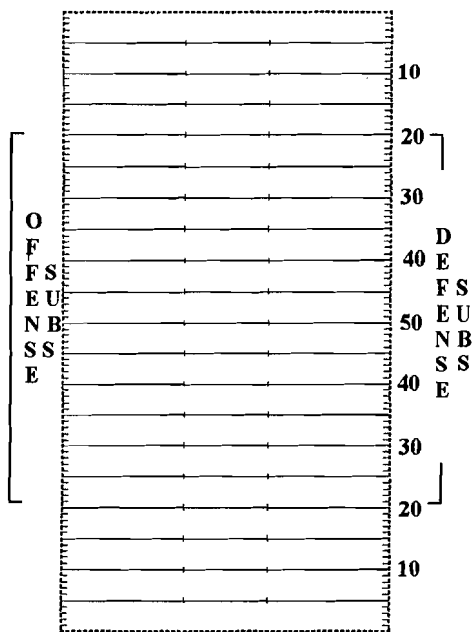
TEAM SCRAMBLE DRILL



We do a "bandit" drill. This is a good thing and can be put into any offense. We mark the practice field including the coaches' box. We get our offensive subs on one side and the defensive subs on the other. A manager spots the ball each time, moving it from hash to middle to hash mark, all the way down the field. We are going to run 10 plays as fast as we can. There is no huddle for the offense or defense. The defense can strip the ball from the receivers if they can get close enough. Otherwise, it just touches football. We do this all the way down the field. In a 15-minute period, you can get about three sets done. In our two-a-days, we go number 1s against number 1s twice and the number 2s once. It is a good way to train the quarterback to see if he can run the offense quickly.

You can practice your two-minute drill and learn when to spike the ball. You get a good picture of how the defense is going to react to your offense without getting anyone hurt.

BANDIT DRILL



I've got a question about the halfback option route. The first thing you want to do is get a good outside release. He has to get around the drop of the offensive tackle and defensive end. The release takes about three steps. He comes up the field to 4 yards. If he sees a zone coverage, he settles down, and the quarterback throws the ball to the outside number because he has more room to run there.

If the halfback reads man-to-man, he freezes the linebacker and breaks out. When the linebacker starts running hard to get to the outside, the halfback brings the route back inside him on the angle and undercuts him. I got this from Coach Walsh a long time ago. "Don't throw option routes to backs who can't run with the ball after they catch it."

Let's go on to "Y sail." It is interesting the way this play developed. We don't flip all of our receivers. The X is always on the left, and the Y is always on the right. We move the Z and the backs around. When we started doing that in 1993, our completion percentage

went up 5 percent. It really helped our receivers. From 1986-92, our completion rate was 60 percent. In '93 when we stopped flipping the X and Y, it went to 65 percent.

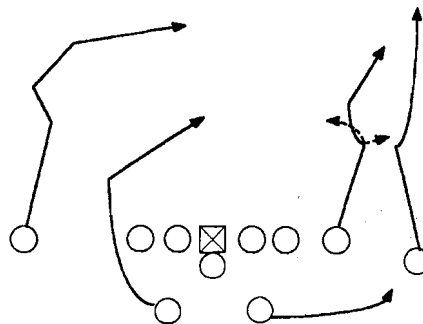
The Z receiver is thinking touchdown on this play. He is running the up route or the skinny post. The Y pushes 10 yards down the field, puts his left toe in the ground, and goes from a sprint to a walk. He is moving at a 45-degree angle. He is going to read the coverage. If it is man coverage, he turns the pattern into an out cut. If he sees zone with bodies outside him, he settles up to the inside. Sometimes he continues on the angle.

The fullback runs his check swing route. The halfback runs his option route or angle. The X receiver has several options. What we really like is the dig route at about 15 yards, but we also have run the post-curl as we did on the Y cross.

The progression for the quarterback is the same. The Z is first. The tight end is second. The fullback is the third option. To the back side, he has the X and the halfback as his first and second choices.

We have the ability to flip our backs. That lets us put the halfback on the angle to that side. If you have two backs who can run those patterns, you don't have to flip them. We had one. He led the SEC the last two years in receiving for backs. He was second overall in the conference this year. He caught 120 passes the last two years.

Y SAIL



Gentlemen, I appreciate the opportunity to be here. It has been a pleasure. I'll be around if anyone wants to talk to me. Thank you.