
SECTION THREE

COVERAGES

6. Robber & Man Rules
7. Zone Coverage 2, 3, 4, 5
8. Trips Coverage



***“WHEN YOU PLAY GOOD DEFENSE, YOU GIVE YOURSELF A CHANCE TO BEAT TEAMS.
WHEN YOU PLAY BAD DEFENSE, YOU GIVE YOURSELF A CHANCE TO LOSE TO ANY TEAM”***

SECTION THREE

ROBBER & MAN RULES

We number our receivers from outside in. Starting from the sideline, so receiver closest to the sideline is #1.

ROBBER COVERAGE

TCU runs a Robber coverage that they call Cover 2. This is a "cheat half" principle by the corner, who will play half the field, the SPUR OLB plays number two to the flat, and the free safety handles number two vertical and "robs" the threat of number one on a curl route. The safety and corner read the #2 receiver, typically a slot receiver or tight end.

- #2 runs route deeper than 8 yards, safety man on 2 and CB man on 1.
- #2 runs inside or outside route in front of Linebackers, Safety "Robs" the #1 receiver
 - "Robbing" means read the QB eyes to break up or intercept any inside curl or post route.

We don't have a "Robber" coverage. We teach our Safeties the above "Robber Concepts" that they can run in Cover 3, Cover 4, and Cover 5.

- COVER 3: Rob versus any 2-RB sets. Sometimes vs 1-RB sets with a tight end.
- COVER 4: Always Rob. Falcon robs read side and Will robs away side.
- COVER 5: Basically robbing.

When executing the ROBBER techniques, the WILL or FALCON safety will do the following:

1. Get in free throw shooters stance and buzz feet, (do NOT backpedal);
2. Read uncovered Offensive Lineman for run-pass read.
3. PASS READ: Eyes immediately go to the #2 receiver.
4. If #2 runs any route deeper than LB depth, safety starts his drop and establishes inside leverage.
5. If #2 runs a shallow out route in front of the linebackers, then the eyes go from #2 to the #1 WR.
 - a. Play curl to post, keying the hips of the receiver. Sinking hips means he is going to stop
 - b. Immediately jump this route. If the hips don't sink, then the safety goes to a junction point to intercept the post route. He does not run at the receiver.

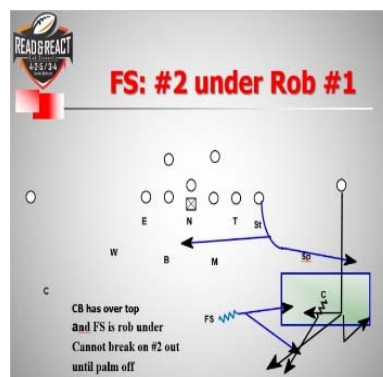
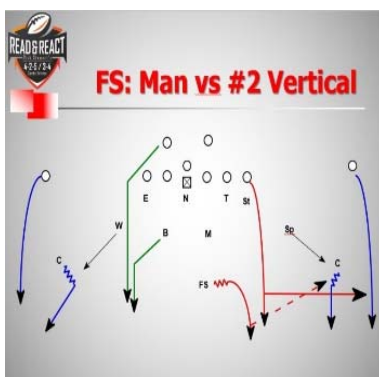
WHEN ROBBER

COVER 3

- > ALWAYS: 2-RB sets; Trips Closed
- > TENDENCY: Trips Open; Twins + Pro

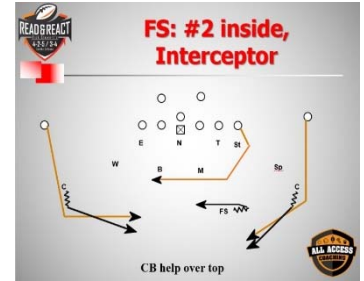
COVER 4

- > ALL formations
- > Twins + Pro
- > 2 x 2 sets



SECTION THREE

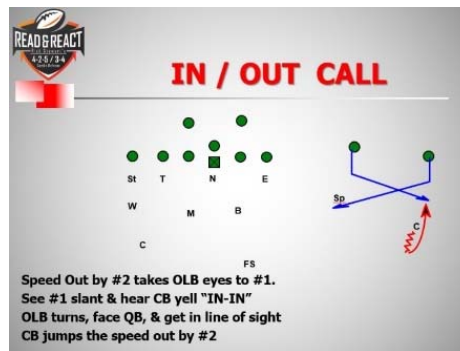
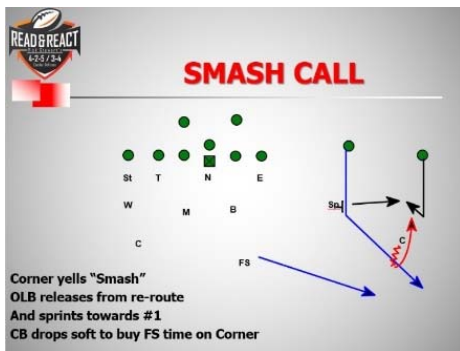
A couple more thoughts on the ROBBER reads. If #2 goes over the middle, at a depth between Linebackers and Safety, the rule is that the Safety has him. However, get in QB eyes. Don't let the Crosser run the safety one way so that they can isolate #1 on the CB. If the QB looks or rolls opposite the crosser, then the Safety needs to play off the crosser and start in a direction to help the CB.



CORNERBACK

Play half the field, **1x7 inside of the number one receiver. Has deep post, fade, and outs deeper than 10 yds by number one.** On the snap, flip hips to middle of the field and get on hash.

Our CB helps the safety by making vocal calls. A shallow slant is an “IN” call which is actually talking to the SPUR, because our CB and OLB switch on shallow slant/arrow routes. The SPUR is responsible for all routes in front of him (approx. 5 yards) by #1 or #2.

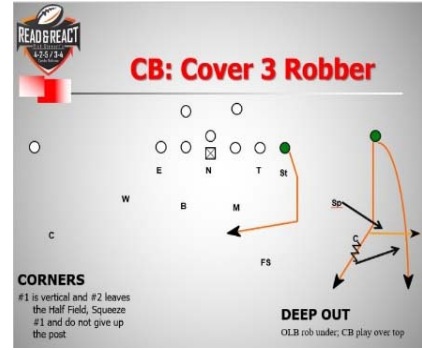


A 5yd hitch is a “SMASH” call, which tells the SPUR to sprint at #1 and the FALCON is helping the CB on over the top routes by #2. The CB cannot break towards the smash hitch route by #1 until he see QB take his “PALM OFF” the ball. That is a basic rule for our CB: “Palm Off”. Our Safeties cannot break until the arm action or actual release of the ball.

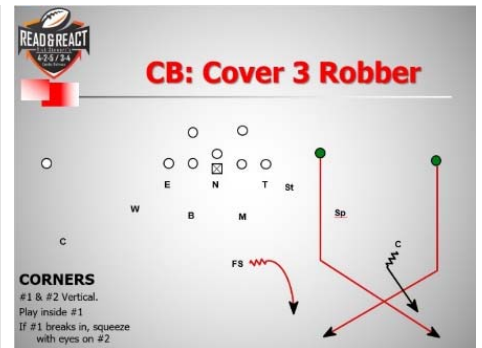
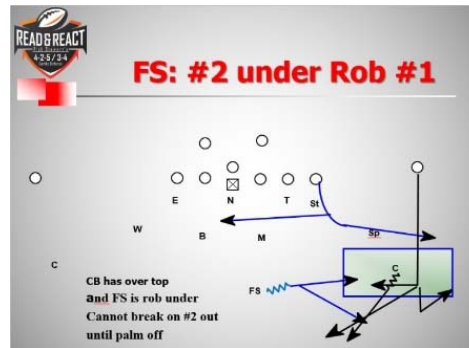
The FALCON also helps the CB with his calls by yelling “wheel” on shallow out routes by #2. That call tells the CB he has an outside route coming at him, and his eyes should go to #2. The CB continues to squeeze #1 to the FALCON.

In Cover 3 and 4, the CB only takes the wheel route early vs 2-RB sets, otherwise he doesn't come off for the wheel route until the quarterback's eyes and “palm-off” action takes him there. In Cover 5, the CB has flats and wheel no matter what, so he wouldn't even squeeze the post by #1.

If #1 receiver runs a post, fade, or deep out, the CB has him. It doesn't matter what the #2 receiver does.



If #1 runs a shallow route underneath the Linebacker, the CB helps the Safety with #2. But he has to watch QB, because he breaks on any PALM OFF. So QB quick throws to #1 on slant, speed out, and hitch will have CB help pretty fast since these are 1-3 step drop throws. It's not like the CB is going to be running towards #2 and be 12-15 yards off when the quick throw is made to #1.

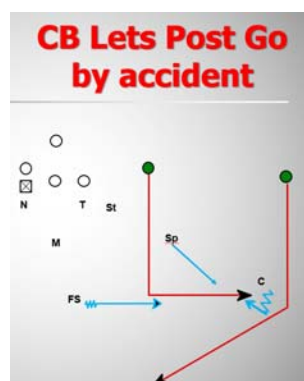
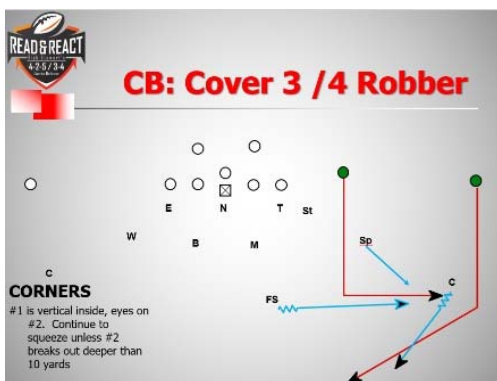


On deep routes by #1, the CB will yell “POST-POST” to the FALCON, while still running in-phase with #1 on top of the WR upfield shoulder. A deep receiver can never get behind a CB in Robber. If the FALCON has his eyes on #1 because of a shallow route by #2, then the #1 WR will be double teamed by both the CB and FALCON. If the #1 and #2 WR run deep crossing routes, both the CB and FALCON make an “SC” call, which tells them to switch routes.

The college playbooks say that the Safety and CB play lock man on all deep routes and there is not switching. Our talent level was never good enough to do this. Remember, I have never coached a scholarship kid, but have defended Marquis Wilson (2013-14 Chicago Bears), Virgil Green (NFL 2011 – 2020), two other D-1 receivers, and three D-1 Quarterbacks. While we could play man on the teams we were SUPPOSED to beat, we always devised our training and playbooks for the teams that we NEEDED to beat. So we were not going to waste practice time on man-to-man when that was not going to help us beat the giants on our schedule.

The problem with switching was this route. A deep out (10-15yds) by #2 with a post by #1 looked very similar to a deep Post-Corner combination. We did not see deep Post-Corner combinations very often and when we did, their QB was usually sacked before he had time for those routes to develop.

It was the deep out by #2 / Post by #1 route combination that gave us problems and we repped a lot in practice. We wanted our CB to stay on the top of the Post, our FS to run on top of the out, and our SPUR to drop under the out. If the Safety lets the Out go by accident, we still have the SPUR dropping under the out and the CB breaking on Palm Off. BUT under no circumstance can we let the POST GO. The CB has to be very, very sure about switching with FALCON.



OLB IN ROBBER

SPUR has flat responsibility or "swing deep of number three" meaning the out route of the number three receiver. Align 4x4 off the tight end and 4x1 off slot receiver. The SPUR is responsible for outs by #2. If FS is taking #2 vertical, he yells "Push, Push" to the SPUR, which tells him to drop under #1.

INSIDE BACKER IN ROBBER

The Inside Linebacker to the Robber side or the "read side" of coverage reads 2 to 1, Walls off any crossing route by #2, and is a 3 Receiver Hook (3RH) dropper and drops in relationship to #3. He has #3 vertical. If the #3 (Running Back) swings or attacks the flats, he pushes that to the SPUR, and expands looking for a route coming back inside.

The other Inside Linebacker is actually playing Robber rules. He has to take the RB vertical and drop to #1 if the RB blocks or runs a swing/flat route.

AWAY SIDE

On the weak AWAY side, the corner only has underneath safety help in Cover3. We don't like running Cover 4 on the AWAY side vs Twins, but if we were, the CB has to be cautious about jumping out routes because the CB has the wheel route in Cover 4 and 5.

SUMMARY

Robber coverage can be employed against a number of different formations. However, its most effective against the tight end and double-tight formations. Robber allows safeties to walk down into the box, creating an 8-man front to help stop the run and creating various opportunities to pressure the quarterback.

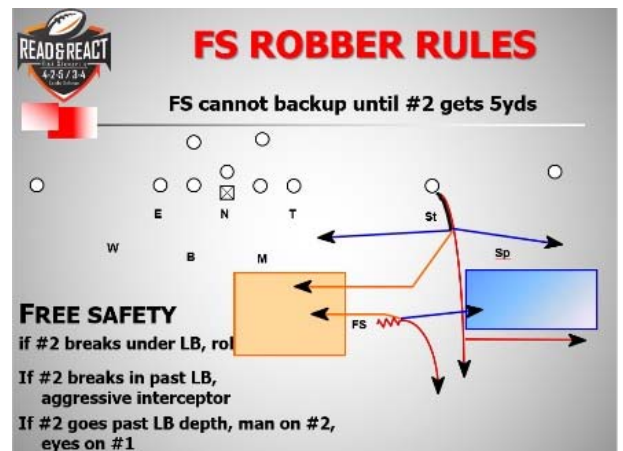
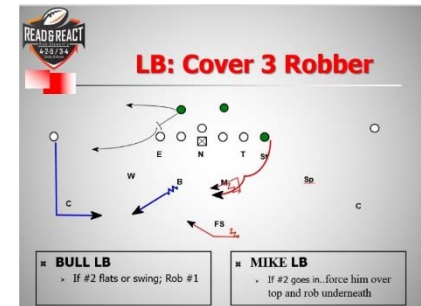
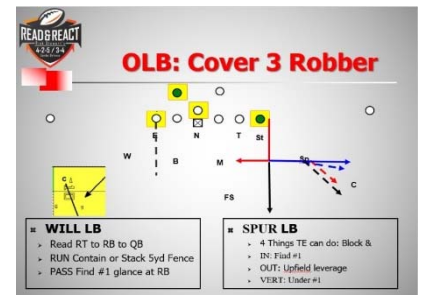
Robber occupies zones with unexpected defenders, helping the zone-blitz packages and creating the impression of a man blitz, which would typically vacate the underneath-middle zone of the field. However, with the safety free to roam that area, it adds a defender to a zone where the quarterback likely did not anticipate there being one.

Strengths:

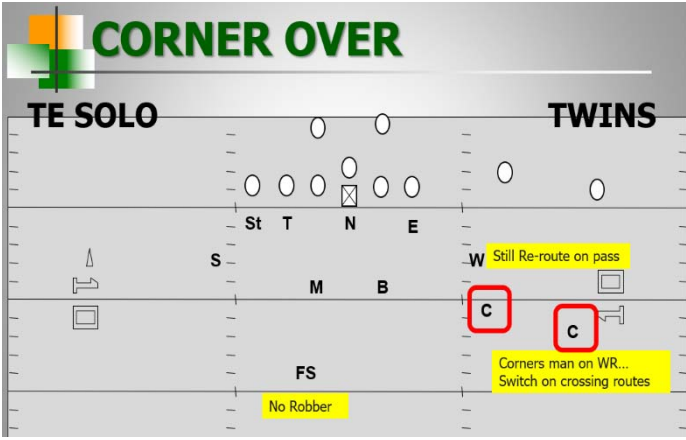
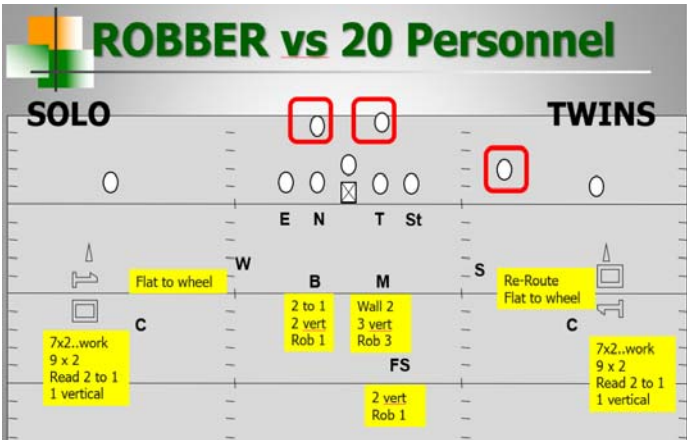
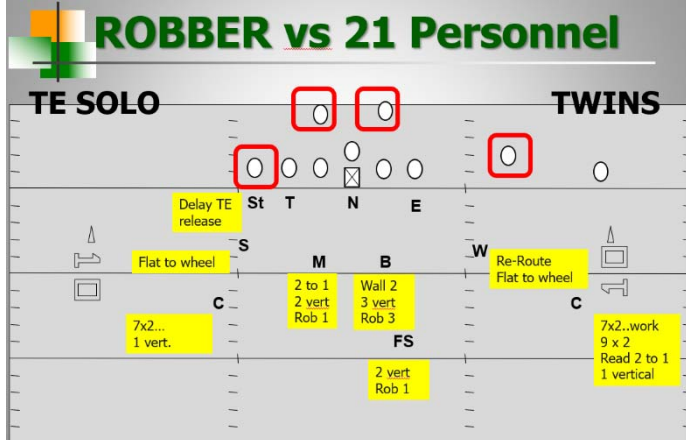
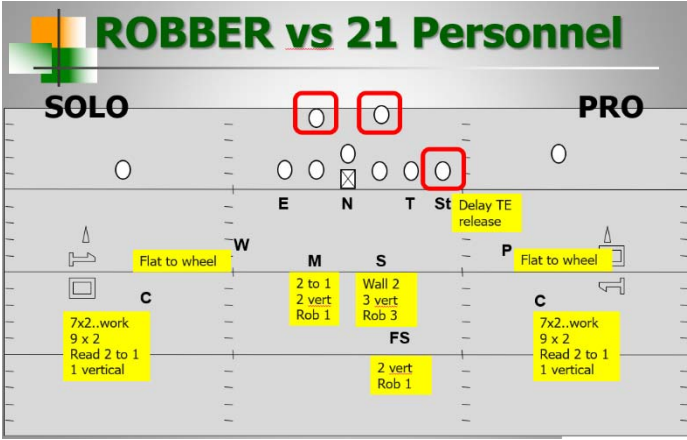
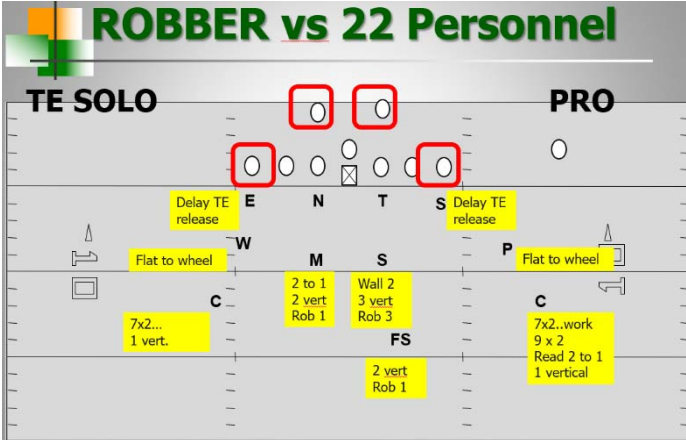
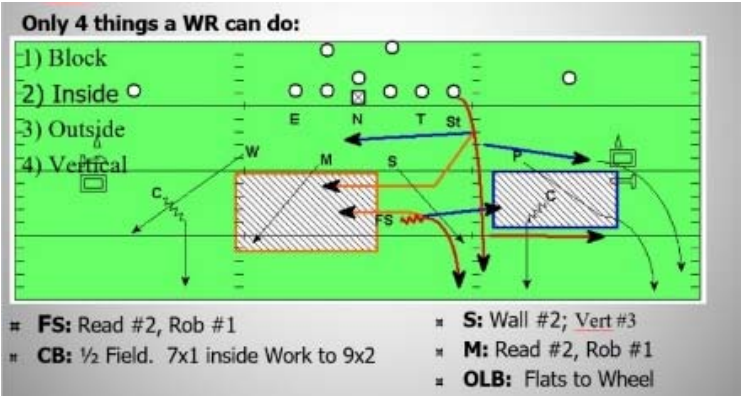
- With the addition of the Free Safety, the ability to place up to nine defenders in the box against the run game.
- Direct support to the strong side flat with the presence of the strong safety.
- Good against short passing game such as the strong side hook to curl area because of the presence of the free safety.

Weaknesses:

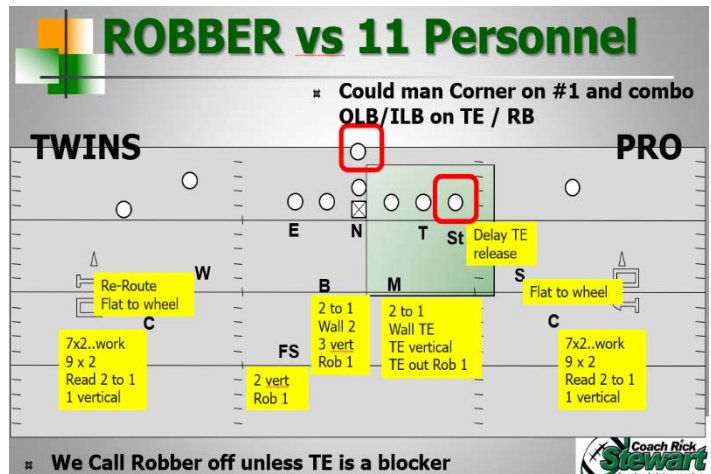
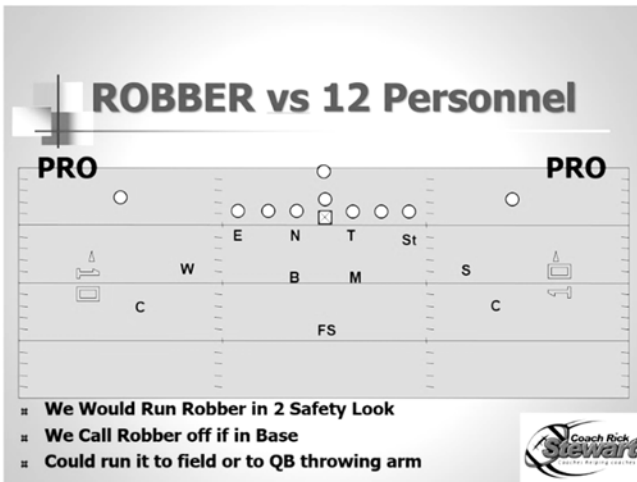
- Cornerbacks can be left one-on-one on an island with wide receivers.
- Weak side of coverage is vulnerable to flat area if WILL is back.
- #2 vertical to occupy FS. #1 runs deep out or comeback that the backpedalling CB cannot come up to defend.



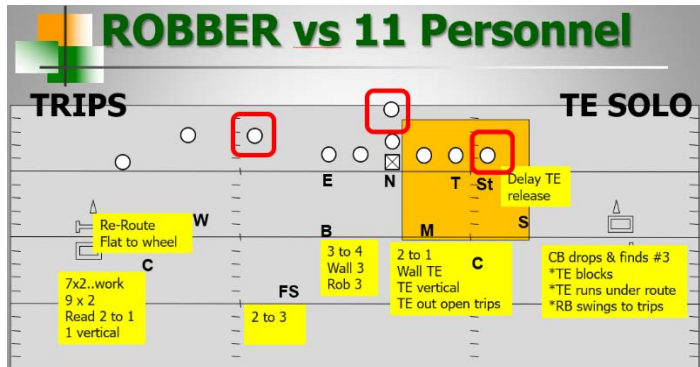
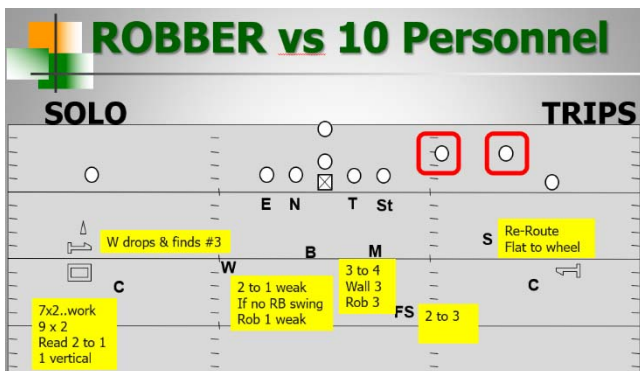
ROBBER ALIGNMENTS



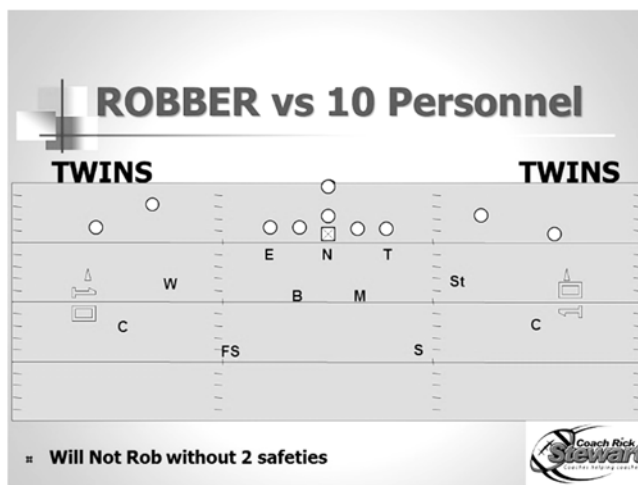
ROBBER ALIGNMENTS



As a rule we will not let our FALCON use his Robber rules if there is only 1 running back. However, many high school teams do not use their TE in the passing game and when this is the case, we would let our Falcon rob the Twins side. That leaves the Corner and the SPUR to guard the solo receiver and back out of the backfield. The MIKE would help if the TE surprised us by going out for a pass.



We would NEVER rob vs Trips. What we do with the WILL depends on the type of Trips coverage.

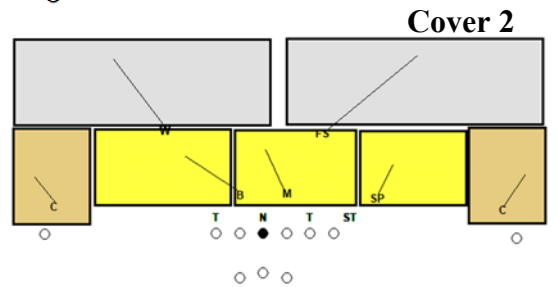
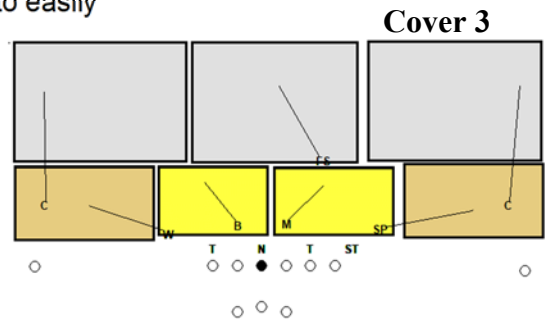


ZONE COVERAGES

Due to its similarities to the 4-4, the most basic coverage in the 4-2-5 scheme is the “bend-but-don’t-break” cover 3. The base alignment of the 4-2-5 makes playing cover 3 a natural fit for the scheme. The presence of five defensive backs makes it possible to easily transition into “Cloud” and “Sky” variations of the coverage as well.

The traditional cover 3 scheme has the Outside Linebackers guarding the flats in a “Sky” variation and we use it mostly to the AWAY side of the field. We don’t use the word “Sky”, we simply call “Cover 3” to the side that we want the Corner deep and the SPUR/WILL underneath. This is good when blitzing because it puts a defender in the throwing lanes to the flat areas, taking away sight adjustments and hot reads that might negate the blitz.

In “Cloud” coverage, the cornerbacks have the flats and the safeties play over the top of them. Again, we don’t use the word “Cloud”, it is part of our Cover 5 coverage and can be played on both sides of the field simultaneously, but it is our majority coverage on the AWAY, or backside. We hardly ever play traditional Cover 2, running Cover 5 instead.



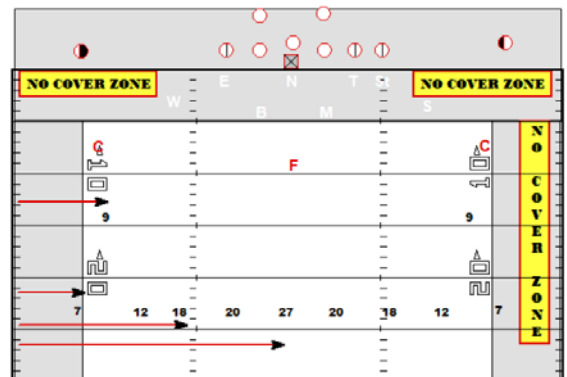
Spot Dropping

The READ & REACT believes strongly in pattern matching because it eliminates defenders “guarding grass” and once the DBs make their reads, becomes man-to-man. However, initially teaching “SPOT DROPPING” is much easier to teach, especially at the lower levels and in the first year of a program build.

We start by breaking up the field. “No Cover Zones” are any routes under 5 yards and in the area between the numbers and the sideline. Quick routes with 1 and 3 step drops will be made before we have dropped to our zones, giving us time to rally to the ball. We react to QB shoulders and palm off and usually break on these out of our read steps.

The No Cover Zone down the sideline is bottom of numbers to the sideline, which is 7 yards wide. These are difficult throws to complete and the trajectory and time the ball is in the air allows our Corners to get to the receiver at the same time as the ball.

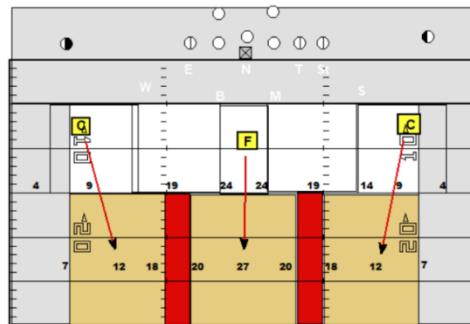
A football field is 9yds to top of numbers, 18yds to the hash, and 27yds is the middle of the field. We reduce the 54 yard field to 40 yards because of the No Cover Zones on the sidelines.



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Next we create 10yd by 10yd “boxes” and we train them to drop to the middle of the box as quickly as possible so that they only have to defend 5 yards to any side.

The deep outside 1/3 boxes go from bottom of numbers to the hash. The deep middle box is just inside the hashes. This does leave a small “overlap” of 2yards that both the CB and FS have to cover. So each corner has a 10yard wide zone from bottom of numbers to 2 yards outside the hash. The Free Safety has a 10yard wide middle zone inside hash to inside hash.

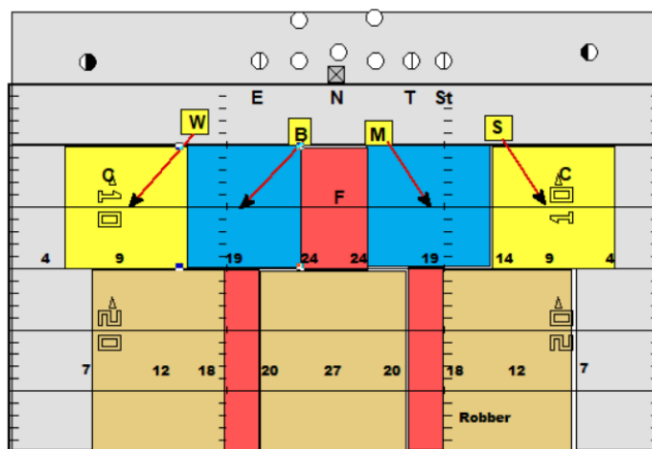


The thing that hurts cover 3 the most are the seams marked in red, so we give that zone to both players. We define these OVERLAP ZONES as 2 yards on each side of the seam and our corners and safeties know that they both are responsible for this weakness of the defense.

The four underneath boxes covered by the Linebackers are then defined. The WILL and SPUR drop 10yds to the top of the numbers. The MIKE and BULL drop 12yds to the hash. This will create their boxes, with a “overlap gap” of 6 yards in the middle of the field. This is a difficult throw and we call it our KILL ZONE. Anybody who is thrown a ball here is treated like a person trying to steal our Christmas presents.

While this is easy to teach and it is what I installed in the first year of all three of my turnarounds, there are limitations. The offense will complete easy throws underneath, so you need great pursuit and be great open field tacklers.

Some Cover 3 teams rotate and change their coverage so much that the players get confused. Cover 3 Free, Cover 3 Roll, Cover 3 Sky, Cover 3 Cloud. We have never ran any of those coverages.



READ & REACT COVERAGES

TCU runs three zone coverages in the secondary, a Robber coverage they call Cover 2; a traditional two-deep zone they call Cover 5; and a Quarters coverage they call Blue. With the split field concept, that really gives them nine coverages. They also teach PATTERN MATCHING, where the cornerback, free safety, Spur, and Will read the receivers to determine each defender’s assignment.

Cover 3 Pattern Match-Robber

Our FALCON free safety is not a deep middle player in Cover 3. He only worries about the READ side and plays Robber versus 2-RB sets. Against 1-RB sets he may still rob vs TE sets (11 personnel), but even when he isn’t Robbing, he only breaks to the AWAY side if the QB takes him there.

Our SPUR will re-route #2 with eyes on #1. He will run at #1 if he runs a hitch. He will run at 5yd depth versus any out/bubbles by #2. If #2 runs in front of him, he passes that off to the MIKE and drops to wherever #1 receiver is.

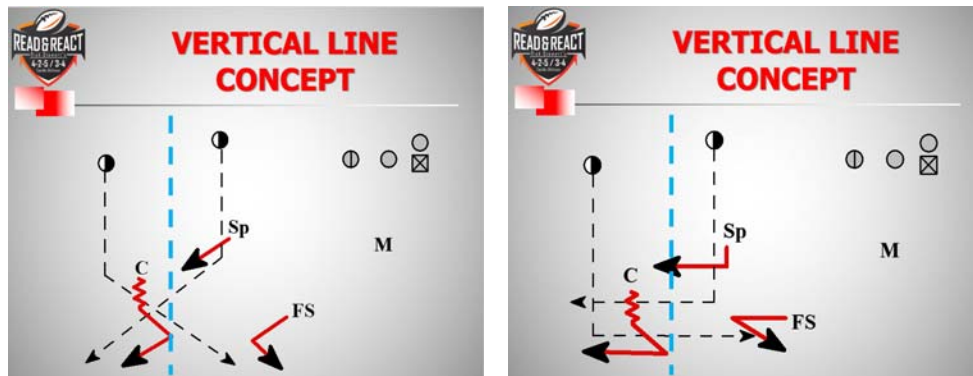
Our CB has his eyes on both #1 and #2. We want him wait as long as possible before turning and running. “Don’t Go Till You Know”...however, our corners are our deep players and under no circumstances can let a WR behind them.

On the AWAY side, the WILL and CB will “Banjo” in Cover 3. WILL takes all the shallow routes by #1, especially slants and hitches. “As 1 climbs, he climbs”, meaning he will continue to drop as long as the WR is running a deeper route. Basically, the WILL takes shallow and inside routes by the WR, the CB takes deep and outside routes. The BULL Inside Linebacker is responsible for the RB.

Cover 4 Quarters

In cover 4, the Will and Free Safety are both ROBBING. We play Cover 4 as much as we play Cover 3, but can only play it on one side in the 4-2-5 Scheme. In our 30 Front, we play Cover 4 to both sides. The 2-safety alignment frees up the SPUR to matchup with a slot receiver in either zone or man coverage, essentially becoming a nickel back. Due to his inherent athleticism as a defensive back, this makes aligning to three and four-receiver sets (especially to trips) much more effective than in a 4-3 or 3-4 scheme, where you likely would be asking a linebacker to engage in coverage.

If both #1 and #2 receiver goes vertical, the colleges lock up man-to-man. Due to our DBs usually running 4.9 forty times, we teach the “vertical line concept”. An imaginary line is drawn between the two receivers and the CB takes whomever breaks out over the line and the Safety (WILL or FALCON) takes whomever breaks in. If both receivers break in (Post + Dig), the CB “squeezes the zone” and will cross the vertical line. Same for the Safety if both receivers break out (Fade + Out).



Cover 5 (2-Read)

Blue coverage, known as 2-Read or Palms in the NFL, looks essentially identical to Quarters coverage if the no. 1 and 2 receivers run vertical; again, it's man coverage. But if the no. 2 breaks his route short, the coverage morphs into traditional Cover 2 coverage, with the cornerback coming up to defend any speed out or bubble by #2 and any hitch by #1. The safety rotates to defend any downfield route by the receiver who is running any deep route (fade, post, post corner).

Bronco

In recent years, Patterson has also added a hybrid man/zone concept called Bronco, in which the corner plays man on the no. 1 receiver and the safety plays man on the no. 2 on any vertical or outside-breaking route, but if the no. 2 receiver runs inside on a slant or short crossing route, the safety lets him go and becomes a Robber. Bronco allows TCU to keep its linebackers in the box to stop the run even if the offense is in a spread formation. Finally, Patterson also features an extensive man-to-man blitz package that allows him to call essentially any blitz or stunt at any time.

Safeties Aggressive Mentality

Just because Patterson's defenders are reading the offense doesn't mean they're passive, though. "Where we are different from other teams is our rule for our safeties: 'Don't go till you know,'" Patterson said at a 2015 clinic. "Other teams have their safeties backpedal, but we sit there and flat-foot shuffle. We want you to try to throw vertical. I was a front coach for many years before I became a secondary coach. There is nothing worse than a secondary coach who is always worried about getting beat deep. We want to take away the short game, we want to take away combination routes, and we want to stop the run." TCU's defense does all three.

Our Coverage Call: First digit is Read side, Second digit is Away side. Then there is a word for Trips. So “45 Solo” means: Cover 4 on Read Side; Cover 5 on Away Side; Solo if they come out in Trips

COVERAGE SUMMARY

	READ CB	FALCON	SPUR	WILL	AWAY CB
Cover 0	#1 receiver	blitz adjuster funnel technique man free	#2 WR outside tackle box	#2 WR outside tackle box	#1 receiver
Cover 5	2 vert/in: man 1 2 out: jump flats has 2 wheel	2 vert: man 2 2 out: rob 1 2 in: QB eyes	Wall #2 eyes on #1 #3 flats / wheel	2 vert: man 2 2 out: rob 1 2 in: QB eyes	2 vert/in: man 1 2 out: jump 2 has 2 wheel
Cover 2	Jam #1 inside Trail #1 Flats/Force	Deep 1/2 player reading 2 to 1	Wall #2 eyes on #1 #3 flats / wheel	Deep 1/2 player reading 2 to 1	Jam #1 inside Trail #1 Flats/Force
NOT A READ SIDE CALL					
Cover 3	Deep 1/3. 2 vert: split 1&2	Deep Middle vs 1-RB sets Rob vs 2-RB	Curl/Flat/Swing #2 #2 wheel Re-Route vs Twins	Curl/Flat/Swing #2 has #2 wheel Re-Route vs Twins	Deep 1/3. Split two vert
Cover 4	1 out & 1 vert 1 in: zone 1/4 #2 wheel vs 2-RB	2 vert: man 2 2 out: rob 1 2 in: QB eyes	Curl/Flat/Swing #2 #2 wheel Re-Route vs Twins	2 vert: man 2 2 out: rob 1 2 in: QB eyes	1 out & 1 vert 1 in: zone 1/4 #2 wheel
TRIPS: Rattle	3 out: squeeze 1 3 vert/in: squeeze 2	3 out: squeeze 2 3 vert/in: middle 1/3	Flat-Curl-Seam	COVER 3 vs 1 WR Backside COVER 5 in boundary COVER 2 READ vs TWINS	
TRIPS: Roll	Start at 7 yards Jump any outs by #2 or #3	Outside 1/3	Curl-Seam	Middle 1/3	Outside 1/3
TRIPS: Solo	CB, Sp, F read #1 & #2 COVER 2 puts SPUR closer to box COVER 4 puts SPUR in the flats			Takes #3 Vert. #3 out: help Away side CB	Man on 1
TRIPS: Special	Man on 1	COVER 2	COVER 2 SPUR acts like CB	COVER 3 vs 1 WR Backside COVER 5 in boundary COVER 2 READ vs TWINS	
TRIPS: Survivor	COVER 2	COVER 2	Man on 3	COVER 3 vs 1 WR Backside COVER 5 in boundary COVER 2 READ vs TWINS	

Non-Trips COVERAGES

Cover 0	Man Coverage.
Cover 5	Soft Cover 2 that puts the hybrid safety closer to the box to help with run. Becomes Cover 2 with early, outside release by #2 and Cover 4 vs #2 vertical
Cover 2	Hard Cover 2 where CB is outside flats, re-routing #1 to the middle Safety is deep 1/2 player. Will only run to Away side and in the boundary.
Cover 3	Traditional 3 deep by CB and Falcon. Linebackers are spot dropping while pattern reading. Falcon will play robber to the Read side versus 2-RB sets.
Cover 4	Quarters concept with CB, F, & Will reading #2 release.

READ SIDE COVERAGES

1 WR (solo)	Cover 0 or 4
1 WR + TE (pro)	Cover 3, 4, or 5
2 WR (twins)	Cover 3, 4, or 5
3 WR (trips)	see Trips packages

AWAY SIDE COVERAGES

1 WR (solo)	Solo, 3, 5
1 WR + TE (pro)	Cover 3 or 4
2 WR (twins)	Cover 0, 2, 3, 5
1 TE (tight)	Solo, 3, 5

TRIPS COVERAGES

Our automatic check to Trips is Quarter, Quarter, Halves (RATTLE).

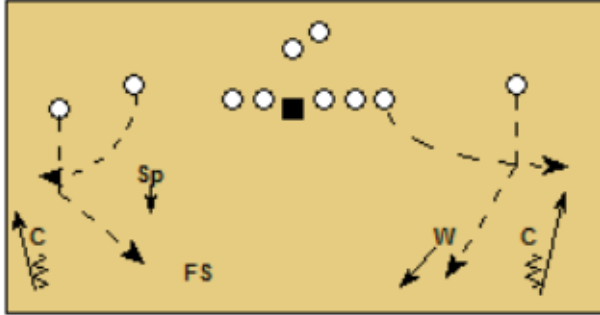
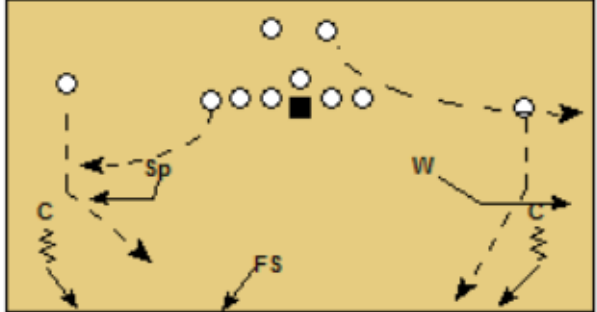
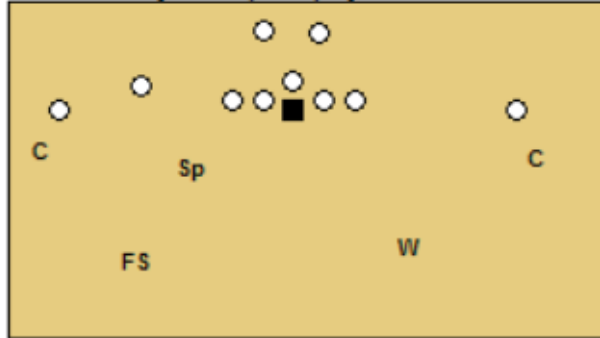
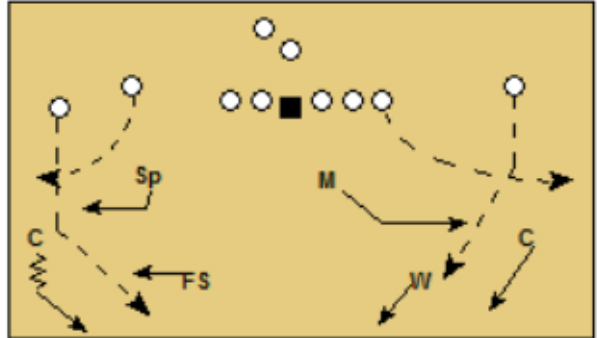
If we want to run any of the other 4 Trips Coverages, it is at the end of our coverage call.

Our main 3 are Rattle, Solo, and Special. Film scout and personell dictate which one we run more. Roll is for teams that run alot of bubble & slip screens out of trips.

TRIPS: Rattle	Conventional 1/4, 1/4, 1/2 with no backside help from Will Hybrid "Rattle Read" is the CB & Falcon reading #3
TRIPS: Roll	Trips side CB rolls down to play flats & Spur pedals back to hook-dig zone Falcon, Will, & backside CB cover the deep 1/3's
TRIPS: Solo	Backside CB plays man vs single receiver opposite the trips. Will post snap rolls to middle & takes all deep post routes, allowing F to read 2 to 1
TRIPS: Special	Trips side CB plays man vs #1 trips receiver. F & Spur play 2-Read off #2 & #3 Will helps backside CB on the solo receiver.
TRIPS: Survivor	Spur plays man on #3 trips receiver. F & CB play 2-Read on #1 and #2. Will helps backside CB. Mainly run this vs Trey (TE trips) formations

BASIC COVERAGES

These are detailed in great detail in Chapter _____

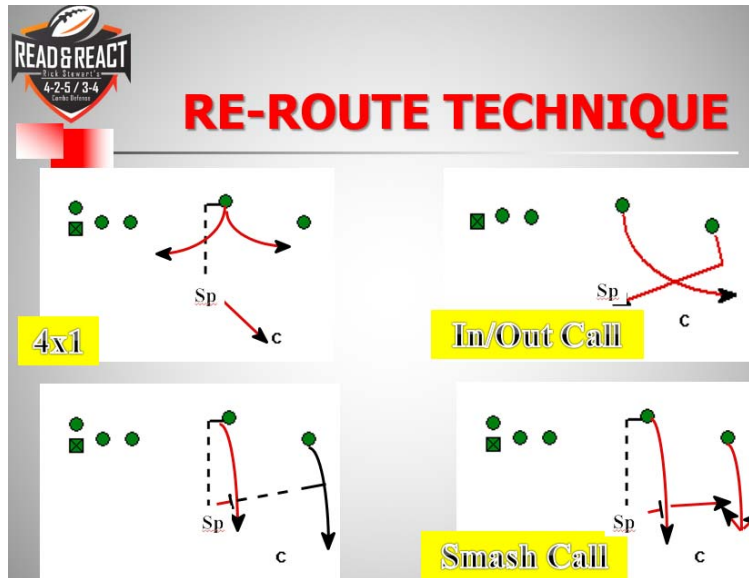
<p>COVER 5</p> <p>Soft Cover 2 that puts OLB closer to the box to help with run. Becomes Cover 2 with early, outside release by #2 and Cover 4 vs #2 vertical</p> 	<p>COVER 3</p> <p>Traditional 3 deep by CB and Falcon. LB spot drop while pattern reading. Falcon plays robber to the Read side vs 2-RB sets</p> 
<p>COVER 2</p> <p>Only run to AWAY side</p> <p>Hard Cover 2 where CB is outside flats. re-routing #1 to the middle. Safety is deep 1/2 player.</p> 	<p>COVER 4</p> <p>Quarters concept with CB, F, & Will reading #2</p> 

TRIPS

TRIPS: Rattle	Conventional 1/4, 1/4, 1/2 with no backside help from Will Hybrid READ #3 by CB & Falcon ("Rattle Read")
TRIPS: Roll	Trips side CB rolls down to play flats & Spur pedals back to hook-dig zone Falcon, Will, & backside CB cover the deep 1/3's
TRIPS: Solo	MAN Backside Single receiver by the CB. Will post snap rolls to middle & takes all deep post routes, allowing F to read 2 to 1
TRIPS: Special	MAN #1 Trips Side receiver by the READ CB. F & Spur play Cover 2 vs #2 & #3 Will helps backside CB on the solo receiver.
TRIPS: Survivor	MAN #3 Trips Side receiver by the Spur. F & CB play Cover 2 on #1 and #2. Will helps backside CB. Mainly run this vs Trey (TE trips) formations

OLB TECHNIQUE

We Re-Route in Cover 3 and Cover 4



RE-ROUTE

The OLB (most of the time the SPUR), aligns outside eye to inside eye of the slot receiver. His inside foot is at 4 yards and outside foot at 3 yards. He is reading the EMOL and when he gets high hat pass from the Tackle or Tight End, he pivots on the inside foot so that the outside foot is not at 5yds. He is facing the sideline and waiting for #2 receiver to come at him.

While Re-Routing, he has to have his eyes on #1. If the outside, #1 WR breaks off a hitch at 4, 5, or even 10yds, the SPUR immediately stops re-routing and sprints to #1 WR. He cannot look back at the QB or he will never get to the Hitch in time. He sprints, even yells, at #1 and if ball arrives before he does, he needs to “SHOW UP WITH HEADACHE”....in other words, separate the ball from that receiver.

We want the SPUR to re-route as long as possible and keep getting depth as long as #1 WR is running deep. “If HE CLIMBS, I CLIMB”. Quit re-routing at any point #1 receiver sinks the hip (10yd dig, 12yd out) and pass #2 off to the safety. If the #2 receiver escapes the re-route, then drop to wherever #1 is.

CAN'T RE-ROUTE

If the #2 receiver breaks off an inside OR outside route under 4 yards, he does not re-route. This is important that he waits to re-route so that the Safety can make a clean ROBBER read.

If the receiver breaks in, then SPUR drops to #1. If the receiver breaks out, then SPUR goes with him, but runs at 5yd depth towards sideline since he has the wheel also. If the receiver breaks out, and #1 breaks in, the CB yells “IN-IN-IN” and the SPUR stops to pick up the slant. The CB takes #2 on the out and on the wheel.



COVER 3 RULES

Read CB	2x7 inside #1	Deep 1/3. Split 1 & 2 versus two verticals vs 1-RB sets On top & over #1 vs 2-RB sets. Defend the post
Falcon	C gap at 8yds ("C8")	Deep Middle vs 1-RB sets. Rob vs 2-RB sets
Spur	4x4 off TE 4x1 vs twins	Curl-Flat-Swing. Eyes on #1 WR; expand with #2 Re-route vs Twins. Has #2 wheel.
Mike	20 tech	Wall Player. Eyes on #2 receiver as drop to hash Has #3 (RB) swing & out of backfield
Bull	20 tech	Wall Player. Eyes on #1 receiver as drop to hash Has #2 swing
Will	4x4 off TE 4x1 vs twins	Curl-Flat-Swing. Eyes on #1 WR; expand with #2 Re-route vs Twins. Has #2 wheel.
Away CB	2x7 inside #1	Deep 1/3. Split 1 & 2 versus two verticals vs 1-RB sets On top & over #1 vs 2-RB sets. Defend the post



GENERAL RULES

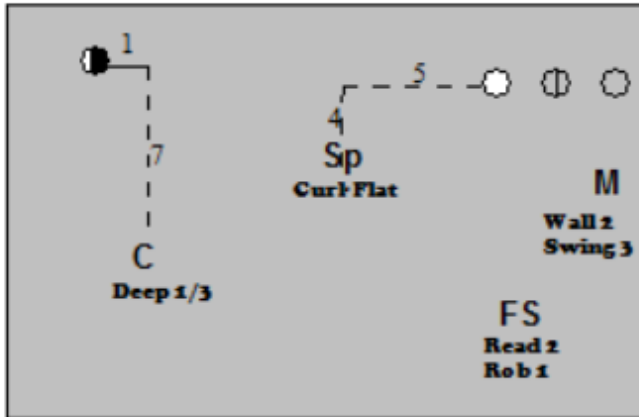
- ‡ **FALCON follows robber rules. Read 2, rob 1**
 - CB: #1 shallow slant
 - "IN" call to Spur. Stay in zone (double move/wheel)
 - CB: #1 out/hitch under LB depth
 - "OUT" call to Spur. Slow drop & help Sp & F'
 - CB: #1 Vertical.
 - Man if no call/switch from F. (vert line concept)
 - OLB has wheel with CB help



COVER 3 to Read Side

Traditional Cover 3 vs 1-RB sets. Robber on READ side vs 2-RB sets

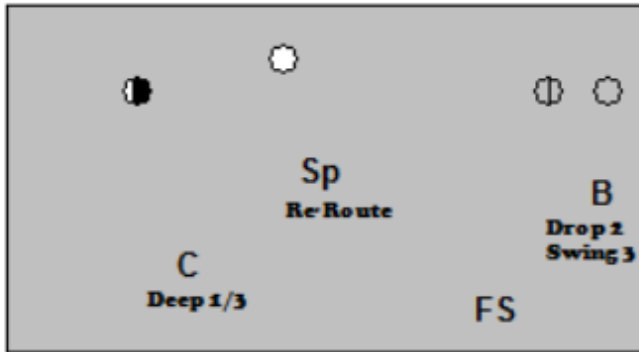
PRO



CB	Split 1 & 2 vs two verticals vs 1=RB sets. On top #1 vs 2-RB sets. Defend post.
Sp	Curl-Flat-Swing. Drop to #1, Expand with #2.
F	Deep middle vs 1-RB sets. Robber vs 2-RB sets
M	Drop to #2. Wall player. Take RB swing out of backfield

Remember, the STUD ends job is to make sure TE doesn't release into his route.

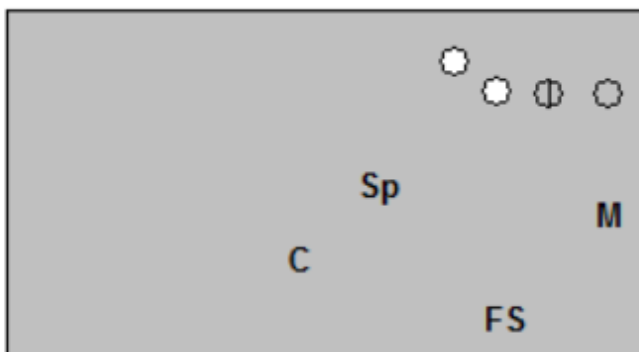
TWINS



CB	Split 1 & 2 vs two verticals vs 1=RB sets. On top #1 vs 2-RB sets. Defend post.
Sp	Re-Route #2. Seam drop until #1 or #2 threaten flats
F	Deep middle vs 1-RB sets. Robber vs 2-RB sets
M	Drop to #2. Wall player. Take RB swing out of backfield

MOF: Twins is the Read side.

WING



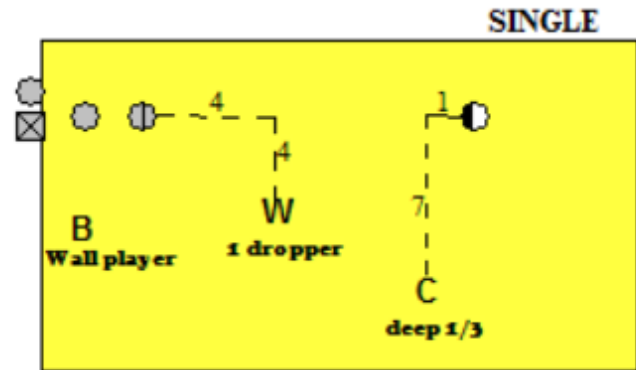
CB	Take TE or Wing on deep sideline routes.
Sp	Aggressive on run. Has flats, but CB will help flats on play action
F	Cannot rob. More focused on run fits.
M	Drop to #2. Wall player. Take RB swing out of backfield

SPUR may bite on play action, so CB will be aggressive on any routes to the flats.

COVER 3 to Away Side

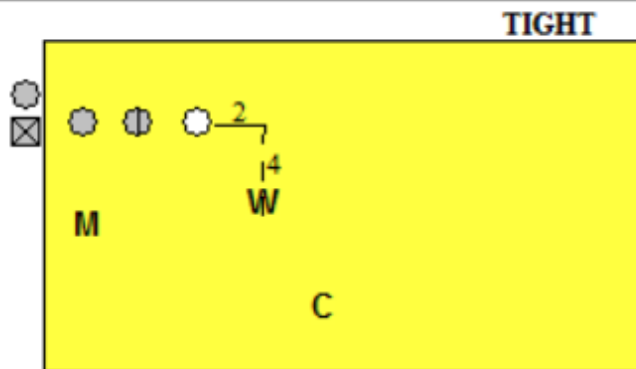
W	Curl-Flat-Swing. Drop to #1.
CB	Deep 1/3.
B	Wall 1, Swing 2.

WILL & BULL spot drop while reading #1 & #2 routes. WILL drops under 1 with CB over the top.



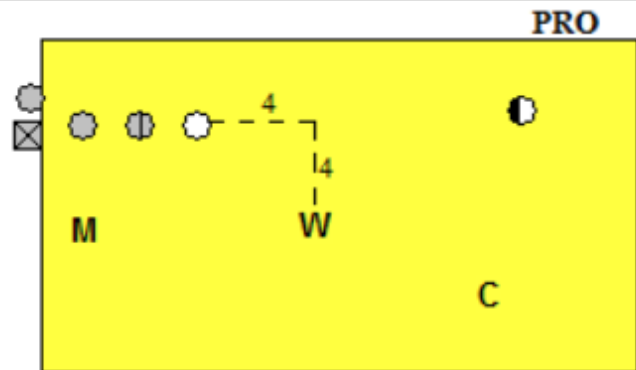
W	Flat-Swing.
CB	Deep 1/3.
M	Wall 1, Swing 2.

Since TE gets re-route by STUD, Will can really focus on run support



W	Curl-Flat-Swing.
CB	Deep 1/3.
M	Wall 2, Swing 3.

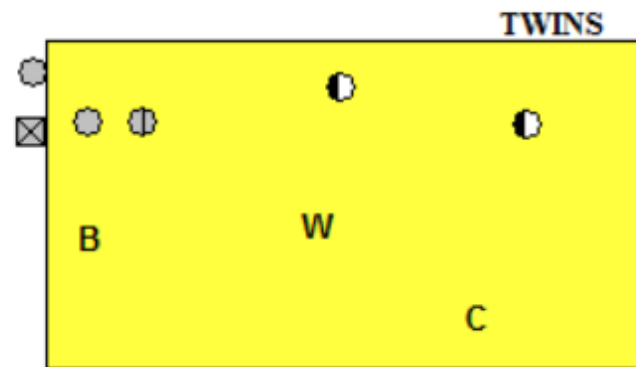
WILL drops to #1. Has 1 hitch or TE out.



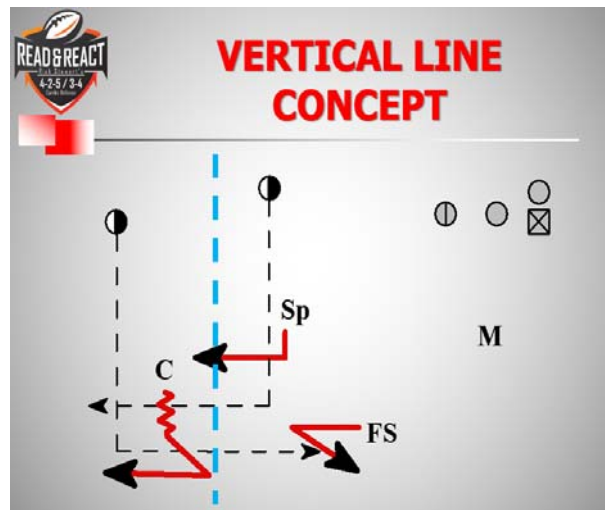
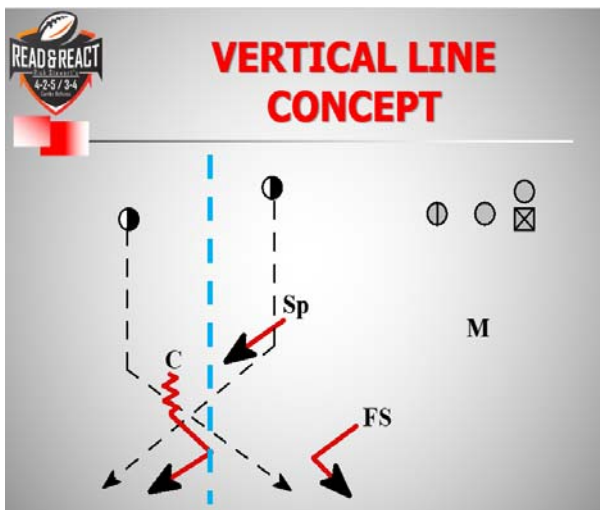
Can only have PRO if TWINS on other side

W	Re-Route #2. Seam drop until #1 or #2 threaten flats
CB	Deep 1/3. Zone turn. Split #1 & #2 on the drop.
B	Wall 2, Swing 3.

WILL has in/out & smash calls during re-route. Keep re-routing if #1 & #2 vertical.



 <h1 style="text-align: center; color: red;">COVER 4 RULES</h1>		
Read CB	2x7 inside #1	Deep 1/4. Take #1 past LB depth on outs & verticals
Falcon	Split EMOL & Spur At 10yds	#2 past LB depth: Vertical Line Concept #2 out: Rob 1. #2 in: QB eyes
Spur	4x4 off TE 4x1 vs twins	Curl-Flat-Swing. Eyes on #1 WR; expand with #2 Re-route vs Twins. Has #2 wheel.
Mike	20 tech 10 tech vs 2x2	Wall #3 vertical and play hook zone in coverage
Bull	20 tech vs tite/single 40 tech vs twins	Wall #2 vertical. Take #2 to the flats
Will	2x8 off EMOL Inside eye vs Twins	#2 past LB depth: Vertical Line Concept #2 out: Rob 1. #2 in: QB eyes
Away CB	2x7 inside #1	Deep 1/4. Take #1 past LB depth on outs & verticals



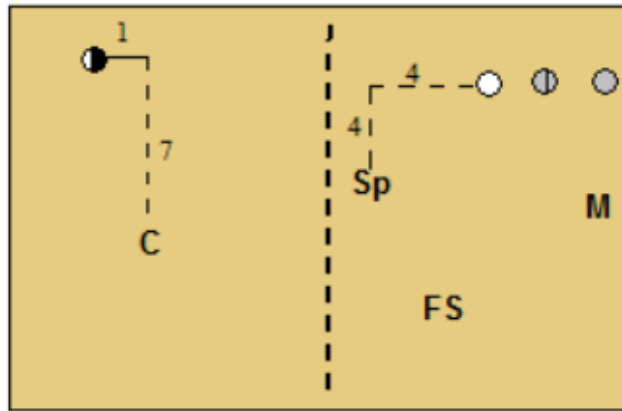
This VERTICAL LINE CONCEPT mans the Corner and Falcon “switch” all deep routes. The call is “**SC, SC**”. This has to be repped because 10-15yd outs by #2 receiver will trigger this call but we cannot have the Corner jumping these deep outs while the Falcon is still guarding the same receiver man-to-man. This will allow the #1 receiver to run free for a long TD pass and not the other team’s band is playing.

QUARTERS COVER 4 to Read Side

Cover 4 is good vs perimeter runs, bubbles, quick hitches by #1. Spur is flat so CB & F can double deep routes. Spur has wheel if 1-RB and 3 swing vs 2-RB.

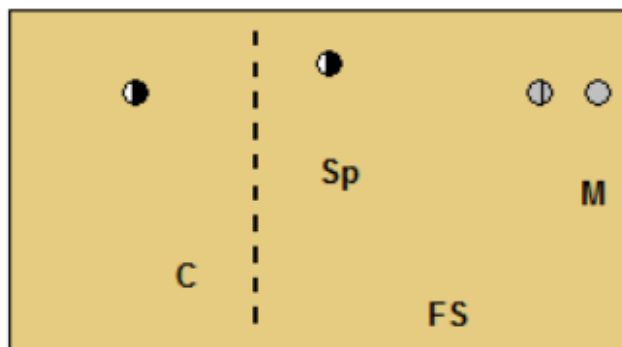
VERTICAL LINE CONCEPT: CB has routes left of the line past LB depth. F has routes right of line

PRO



CB	7x1 inside #1. Outside 1/4 offfield Man on 1 while reading 2 Vertical Line Concept Wheel routes if 2-RB backfield
Sp	4x4 off DE. Curl-Flats Drop to top of numbers, reading #1 Wheel routes if 1-RB backfield
F	Split difference SPUR & EMOL 10yd, no backpedal. Middle 1/4 offfield. Read 2, rob 1 (vertical line concept)
M	Hook-Curl-Swing by 3. Drop to hash reading #2 receiver Wall all inside routes.

TWINS MOF: Twins is the Read side.



CB	7x1 inside #1. Outside 1/4 offfield Vertical Line Concept Wheel routes if 2-RB backfield
Sp	4x4 off DE. Curl-Flats Jam 2 on vertical release. Expand vs 2 out; Drop to 1 vs 2 in
F	Split difference SPUR & EMOL 10yd, no backpedal. Middle 1/4 offfield. Read 2, rob 1 (vertical line concept)
M	Hook-Curl-Swing by 3. Drop to hash reading #2 receiver Wall all inside routes.

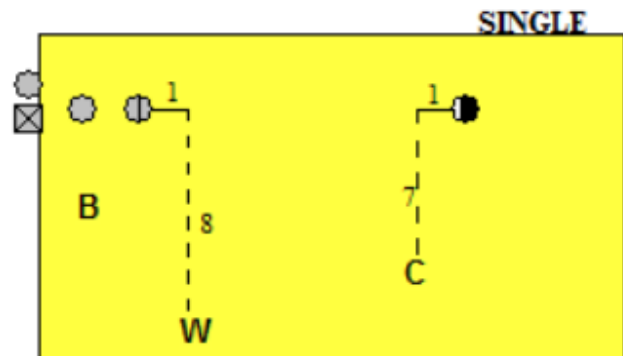
Cover 2 is preferred coverage vs Twins

FALCON	SPUR	CORNER	MIKE
<p>Free throw shooters stance No backpedal. "buzz the feet" while reading #2</p> <p>Read #2 WR: --> if #2 breaks under LB depth, rob 1. --> If #2 deep middle cross, follow the QB eyes --> If #2 vertical, take #2</p>	<p>Drop to top of numbers, 12yd depth while reading #1 WR. Sit on shallow slant by #1 Sprint to hitch by #1 RB swing if 2-RB</p> <p><u>vs Pro:</u> Listen for out call from Mike. Expand over top on shallow TE outs. Expand underneath on deep TE out routes.</p> <p><u>vs Twins:</u> inside eye of #2. Jam inside shoulder of #2 WR.</p>	<p>Inside foot back, take 2 read slide steps while reading EMOL for run/pass read. Backpedal while reading #2 receiver.</p> <p>Man 1 past 5yards Help 2 if 1 shallow Jump 2 out if 1 slant</p> <p>Wheel routes if 2-RB in backfield.</p> <p>Man on #1 if sprint pass to or boot away.</p>	<p>2 read steps forward. Outside, then inside.</p> <p>spot drop to hash with eyes on #2 receiver.</p> <p>Wall any shallow crossing routes.</p> <p>Take RB (#3) out of the backfield).</p>

QUARTERS COVER 4 to Away Side

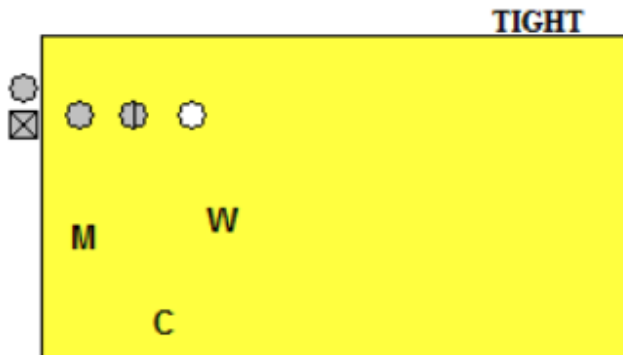
W	Rob 1. CB/B has RB out of backfield
CB	7x1 inside shade.
B	Hook-Curl. Wall all inside routes.

CB aggressively takes shallow routes by #1. Has to come off #1 if RB out of backfield. WILL basically has #1 deep. Look for crossing routes if #1 shallow.



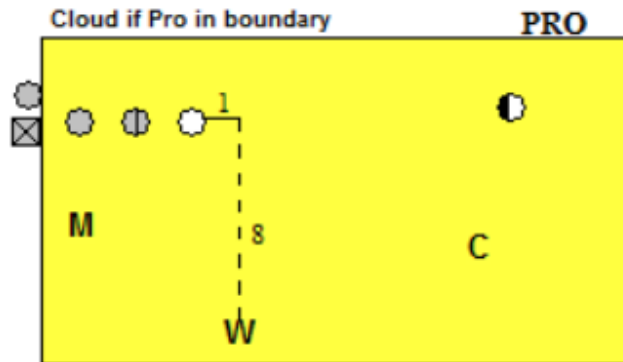
W	4x2 off TE. Jump outs by #2
CB	C-8 alignment. TE past LB depth
M	Wall 1, Swing 2

Automatic SKY alignment vs TIGHT since Will is a better run support player.



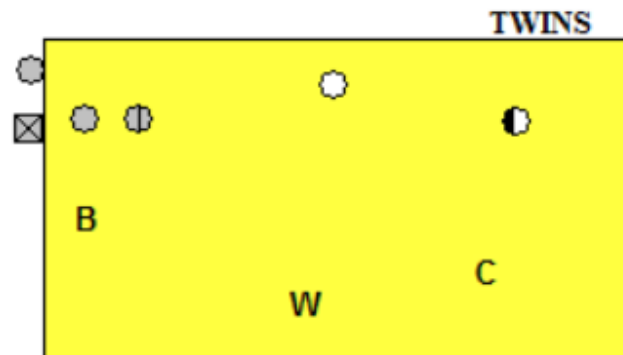
W	Read 2, Rob 1.
CB	7x1 inside shade.
M	Wall 2, Swing 3.

VERTICAL LINE CONCEPT
 CB has any route to the right of his line past LB depth. CB aggressive on hitch by #1 and outs by #2.
 W has routes to left of the line.




W	Read 2, Rob 1.
CB	7x1 inside shade.
M	Wall 2, Swing 3.

VERTICAL LINE CONCEPT
 CB has any route to the right of his line past LB depth. CB aggressive on hitch by #1 and outs by #2.
 W has routes to left of the line.



j



COVER 5 (2 read)

Read CB	7X1 inside #1	Read #2 receiver. If #2 out during read steps (before QB 3 rd step): take him man. #2 <u>vert</u> or in, eyes on 1. Sit on hitch/out
Falcon	10x1 inside #2	If #2 quick out/arrow/bubble, get eyes to #!. Take #2 vertical. If #2 in, find QB eyes. Vertical Line concept if #1 deep
Spur	4x4 off TE apex vs twins	Wall #2 (does not cross face). Take #3 swing/flats.
Mike	20 tech	#3 dropper. Match #3 vertical.
Bull	20 tech	Wall Player. Eyes on #1 receiver as drop to hash Has #2 swing
Will	4x4 off TE apex vs twins	If #2 quick out/arrow/bubble, get eyes to #!. Take #2 vertical. If #2 in, find QB eyes. Vertical Line concept if #1 deep
Away CB	7x1 inside #1	Read #2 receiver. If #2 out during read steps (before QB 3 rd step): take him man. #2 <u>vert</u> or in, eyes on 1. Sit on hitch/out

COVER 5

Teaching the reads is the most important part of any pattern reading defensive scheme. While not as easy as spot dropping, it doesn't mean it has to be complicated. Keep it as simple as possible when teaching to the players.

The Cornerback's Reads and Responsibilities

#2 breaks out – Man #2
#2 does anything else – Man #1

Both the CB and FS read the #2 receiver. The #2 receiver can be in the backfield, a wing, a slot, or a tight end. Basically the #1 and #2 receiver can only do 1 of 4 things: block, go inside, go outside, or go vertical. Before getting into any reads, preach to the CB to expect to play #1 man to man, with no help.

#2 releases outside –

This tells the CB that the safety will take #1 but he doesn't leave #1 right away. While looking for the throw to #2, he stays with #1 to buy the safety some time. The reactions are as follows:

- 1 is inside - Squeeze 1 & break on the throw (to 1 or 2). Do not let 2 cross your face because CB has wheel by #2. Squeeze 1's route, until 2 will no longer allow you to do so. Make an "IN" call.
- 1 is vertical - CB becomes squat 1/2's coverage but he HAS to carry and "trail" #1 to the safety. This allows the safety to come off his read of 2 and get to 1. The corner settles his feet and gets ready to break on the throw to #2 when the non-throwing shoulder of the QB crosses his face. If the CB leaves #1 too early he leaves the safety on an island with a huge void to cover (fade route).

#2 Releases inside/vertical/or stays-

Corner locks on to #1 man to man. There are some specifics though that you must teach your corners when they get this read.

- #1 and 2 run shallow crossing routes – CB gain depth and think "post-corner". Beat the WR to the ball on this particular route.
- #2 inside, 1 runs a post - Keep "high shoulder" on the post route, NEVER coming under any post route. The same can be said of the dig route.
- #2 is vertical, #1 is short - The corner yells "smash-smash-smash". Stay outside and over the top of 1, and outside and underneath of the route by 2. Rally to the throw to 1, while playing off enough to help with the corner route. They can intercept the corner route by undercutting #2.
- #2 and 1 are vertical - Man 1 and keep inside leverage to "wedge the fade". This is important as he has no inside help from the safety on this particular route combination.

So, that does it for the corners. In a nutshell, teach the corners to break on throws instead of chasing routes.

Safety's Reads and Responsibilities

The safety is the toughest position to play in Cover 5. This athlete must be able to cover ground, make checks, read opposing offenses, cover man-to-man, and tackle in open spaces. The safety has to love putting his nose in run plays, and be an athlete who can run with WR's in space.

2 is vertical- Man 2.

2 is outside/inside/under or stays and blocks- Get to #1.

2 Releases outside

- 2 releases outside, 1 runs a slant- Safety's eyes immediately go to 1, settle feet and drive to the upfield shoulder of the WR. Collision or an interception.
- 2 releases outside, 1 run a curl - Work to stay inside and over the top of 1 and break on the throw to 1. This is "banjo" and prevents pick & rub routes.
- 2 releases outside, 1 is vertical - turn and run to the inside shoulder of #1. Has no help. This is the toughest route combination the safety will have to defense in Cover 5.

Safeties buzz their feet on the snap and once they see that #2 is not a threat, they turn and open to #1, thinking "1 is vertical". This way they are always prepared for the worst case scenario.

- 2 outside, #1 outside - drive for the deepest shoulder and squeeze the WR to the sideline.

2 Releases inside and underneath

- 2 is inside and 1 runs a post - The safety should undercut and get in the throwing lane of the post route. Man turn and be on the inside shoulder of the WR. The same may be said of the dig route.
- 2 Releases vertical - man coverage.
- 2 is vertical and out - drive through the upfield shoulder of #2.
- 2 runs a post - work to inside leverage on #2.
- 2 Stays in to block - get eyes to #1's hips and decipher the route, thinking #1 vertical.

It takes more time to type the reads as it does to teach them. Start with the simple reads and then break down the individual reactions to the various routes and route combinations that you will see. Then put all these back together to formulate the answer to the simple reads!

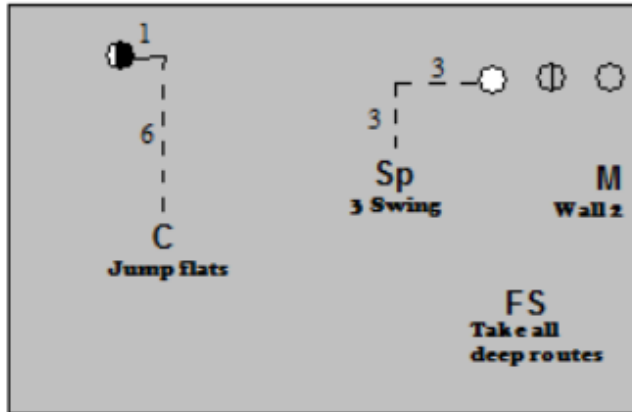
COVER 5 to Read Side

Cover 5 puts the HYBRID closer to the box to fold in on inside runs.
He only has flats if #3 (RB) threatens. Spur can support inside run better.

CB jumps any routes to the flats (cover 2).

If both #1 & #2 go vertical this turns into Cover 4.

PRO

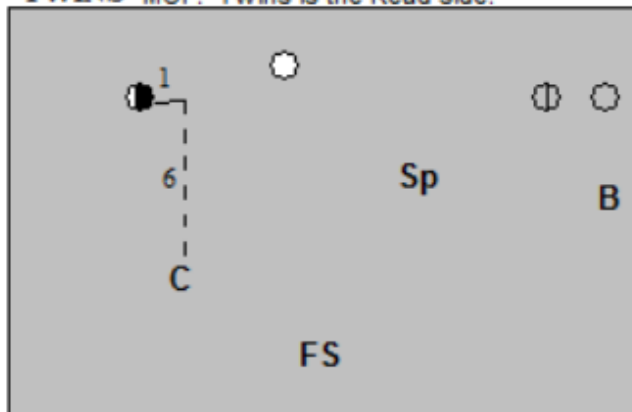


CB	Take 2 on shallow outs. If 2 vert or in, take #1.
Sp	Seam dropper. Take RB out of backfield
F	inside shade #2. If 2 out, rob 1. If 2 inside follow QB eyes.
M	Drop to hash, reading #2 Hook-Curl-Swing by 3. Wall inside routes

CB jumps quick routes to flats (hitch or arrow). F takes #2 deep, incl 10-15yd outs. CB has #1 deep. They can switch on deep #1 post / #2 corner

Quarters is preferred coverage vs Pro

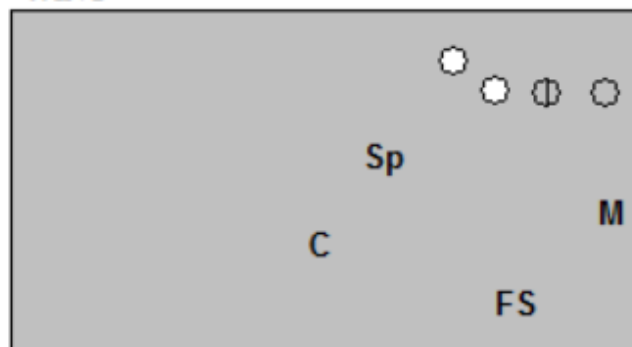
TWINS MOF: Twins is the Read side.



CB	Take 2 on shallow outs. If 2 vert or in, take #1.
Sp	Split EMOL and #2. Curl-RB Swing
F	inside shade #2. Read 2, rob 1.
M	Hook-Curl. Wall all inside routes.

SPUR does not re-route. Seam drop on pass, take RB out of backfield

WING



CB	6x4 off DE. Jump quick routes to flats
Sp	2x2 off DE. Curl-RB Swing
F	C-gap, 8yds (C8). Read 2, rob 1.
M	Hook-Curl. Wall all inside routes.

Good call vs Wing T team if you want Spur focused on run. Play Action taken by CB & F

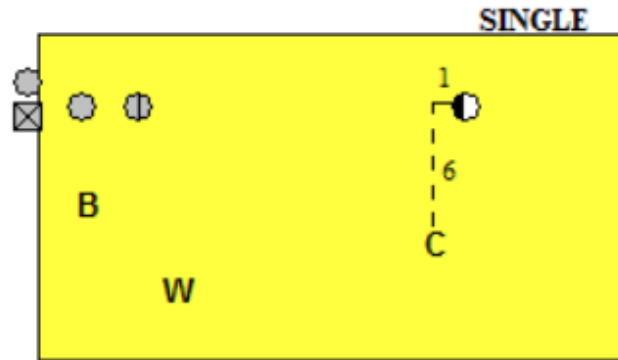
COVER 5 to Away Side

On the AWAY side there is no difference between Cover 4 and Cover 5

W	Deep 1/2 player
CB	Jump flats
M	Wall 1, Swing 2.

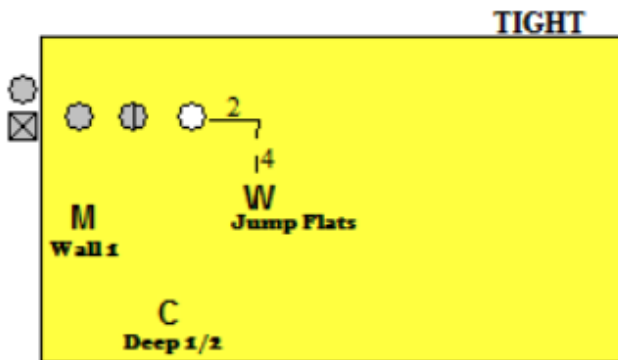
CB takes RB swing or flats. If no RB out of backfield, then take #1 man to man. WILL has #1 deep.

Don't like Cover 5 vs SINGLE



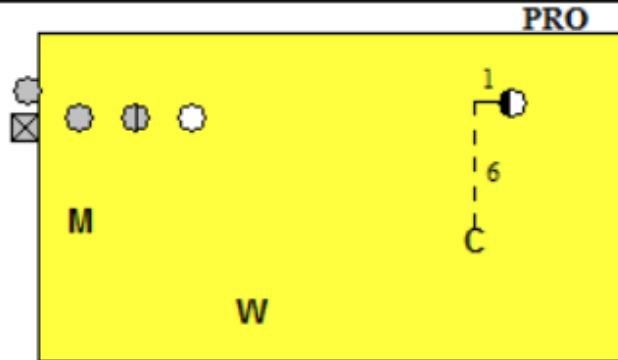
W	4x2 off TE. Jump outs by #2
CB	C-8 alignment. Take TE deep
M	Wall 1, Swing 2.

Automatic SKY alignment vs TIGHT since Will is a better run support player.



W	Read 2, Rob 1.
CB	#2 out/swing. Otherwise take #1
M	Wall 2, Swing 3.

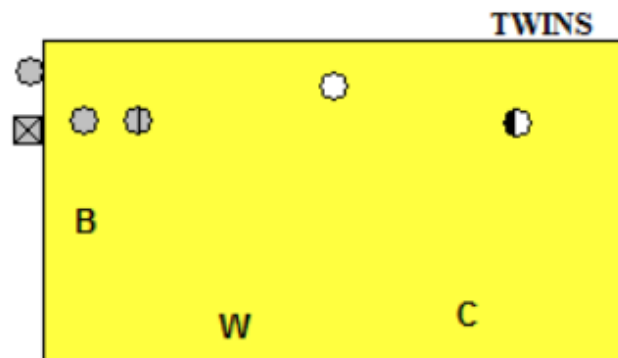
VERTICAL LINE CONCEPT
 CB has any route to the right of his line past LB depth. CB aggressive on hitch by #1 and outs by #2.
 W has routes to left of the line.



W	Read 2, Rob 1.
CB	#2 out/swing. Otherwise take #1
M	Wall 2, Swing 3.

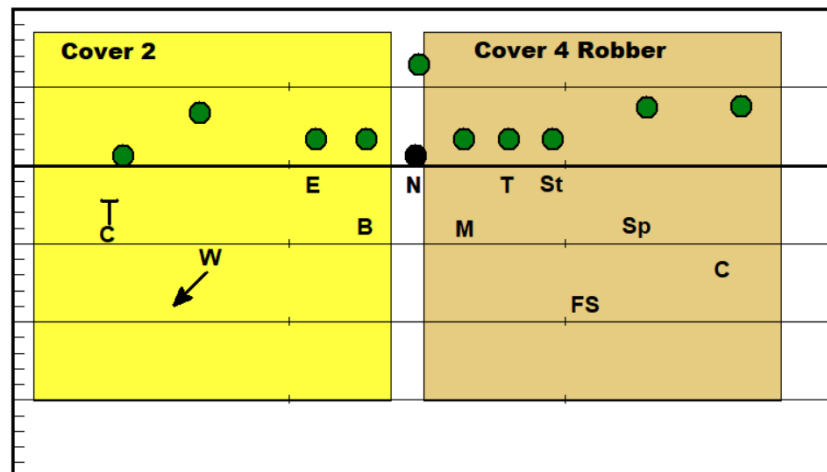
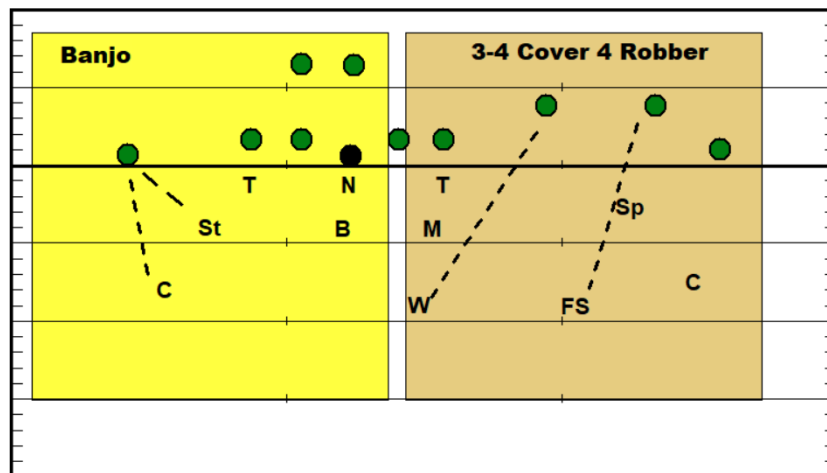
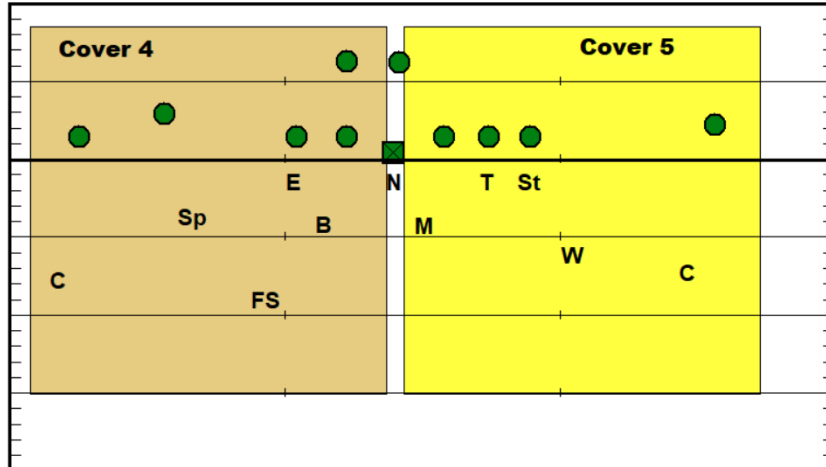
VERTICAL LINE CONCEPT

Like Cover 5 vs TWINS on away side



MIXED COVERAGES

Our Coverage Call: First digit is Read side, Second digit is Away side. Then there is a word for Trips. So "45 Solo" means: Cover 4 on Read Side; Cover 5 on Away Side; Solo if they come out in Trips



TRIPS COVERAGES

Trips formations can present a headache for defenses, whether it be trips open or closed. It is even more of a headache when teaching your players to pattern read, as these schemes are based on only 2 receiver's to a side. In this chapter I am going to present 5 ways to defend trips, **but I do NOT recommend running all 5**. Our game plan will always include multiple ways to attack what the opponent does best. The magic number for us is 3.

Against a zone read team, we want 3 ways to defend it. We'll carry 3 variations of zone blitzes for a drop back passing team. And for teams that run trips formations, we will always have 3 different looks to give them. The 3 looks that we use will not always be the same, but there are 3 zone coverage looks we can give teams who are aligning in trips formations on a large percentage of downs.

Let's start with the classic QUARTER QUARTER HALF coverage, which is our default Trips coverage. When we send our coverages in from the sideline, there are TWO numbers. The FIRST number is for the READ side (FS, SPUR, CB) and the SECOND number is for the AWAY side (WILL & CB). After the numbers is a word for which Trips Coverage we want if the offense comes out in Trips (Roll, Solo, Special, or Survivor). **If we do not send in a word, then we run QUARTER-QUARTER-HALVES. We call it our "Rattle" coverage because we read #3.**

RATTLE: Quarter-Quarter-Halves

TCU calls this Roll. It can be used against trips open or closed. The read side of the defense is in 1/4's zone coverage, while the away side of the defense is a deep 1/2's coverage. If it is our first year putting the defense in, then we zone drop, however, after a year or two or running the defense, we will pattern read like TCU does. Here are the rules if you don't want to pattern read:

- Trips Corner- Deep outside 1/4, (Don't Get Beat Deep).
- Free Safety- Deep inside 1/4, (Don't Get Beat Deep).
- SPUR- Flat
- Backside Away Corner - Deep 1/2.
- WILL – Flats.

We can also play our Away, backside CB in man coverage on the single receiver, but that is our SOLO Trips Coverage. Also, if your WILL is very athletic, play him as the deep player and give the flats to the Corner. We normally drop our WILL underneath to the single receiver so that he can get involved in weakside run support more easily.

Rattle Technique

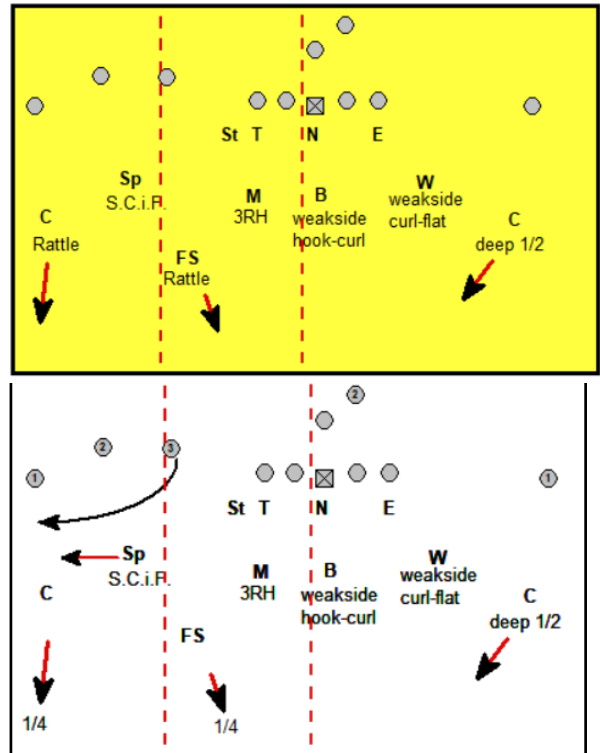
The Corner to the Trips is using Rattle technique. Rattle stands for Read Three. Corner is aligned 1x7 inside of #1 tilted. He is reading QB for quick game to #3.

The FS is also using Rattle technique (reading #3). The FS is aligned at 10-12 splitting the difference between #2 and #3. His initial footwork is a controlled pedal.

If #3 releases outside the FS will squeeze his coverage to #2, while the corner will squeeze outside to #1.

If #3 releases inside or vertical the FS will work to the middle 1/3, squeeze #3, and the corner will squeeze #2 while playing the outside 1/3.

If #3 is vertical the Mike collisions #3 if possible and will work to a max depth of 12. If #3 is vertical there will be a middle 1/3 safety so the Mike does not need to carry #3 vertical down the field.



SCiF Technique (SPUR)

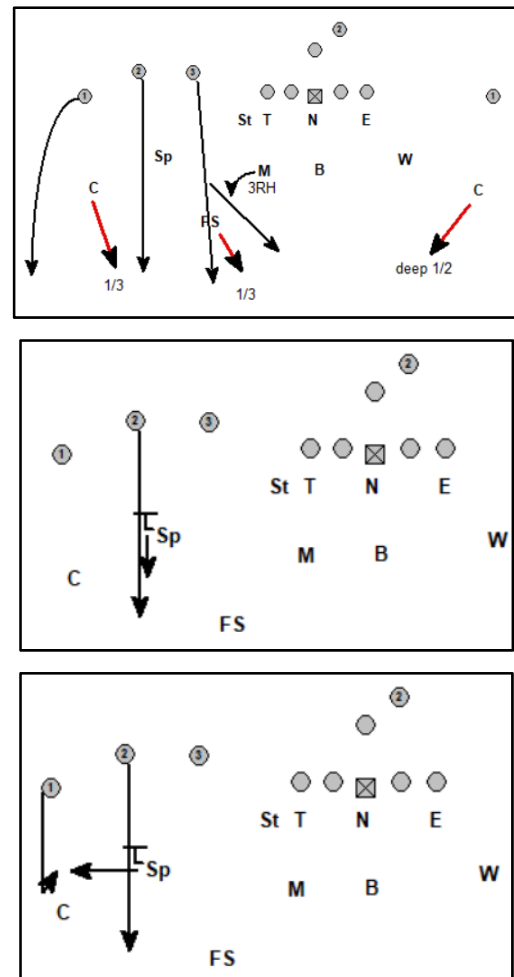
The SPUR is aligned at 5 yards between #2 and #3. On the snap the SPUR will pop his feet and read through the EMLOS to the QB. His drop is SCiF (Seam-Curl-Flat). The SPUR has quick game routes to #2.

Against drop back pass if the #2 releases vertical the SPUR will stay square and collision #2. After collision the SPUR will pedal to a depth of 12 in the seam (2 yards outside the hash).

While pedaling the SPUR will have his head on a swivel looking for the QB and receiving threats. If the QB tries to throw the ball on a line to #2 in the seam the SPUR should be able to make the play.

The SPUR will expand to the Curl and Flat if necessary.

If the #1 receiver is running a curl the SPUR should expand to cover him. The SPUR will only know to expand if he keeps his head on a swivel while pedaling. Also the Corner should give the SPUR an "IN" call.



If the #3 receiver is releasing outside the 3RH dropper (here the Mike) makes a "Push" call. The "Push" call pushes the SCiF dropping SPUR from Seam to #1's Curl and he should be ready to break to the Flat on the throw.

If #2 is inside immediately the SPUR will make an "Under" call and get depth in the seam.

If #2 is outside immediately the SPUR will top the flat route expanding from the Seam to the Curl and breaking on the throw to the flat.

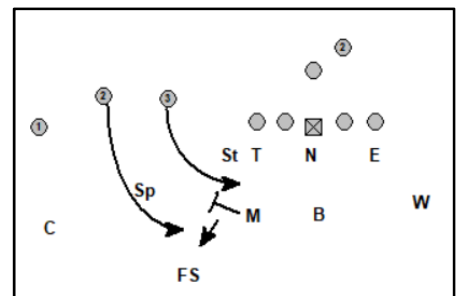
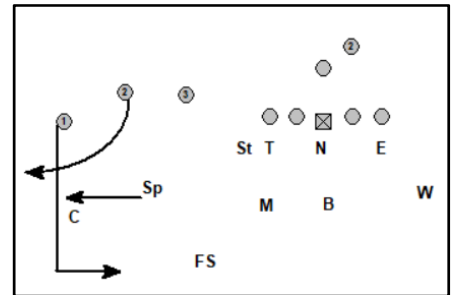
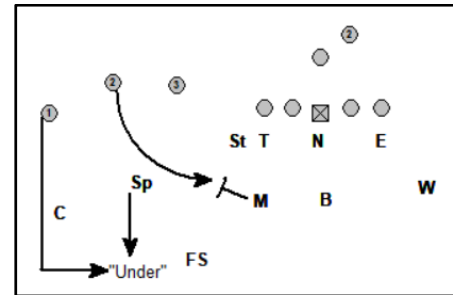
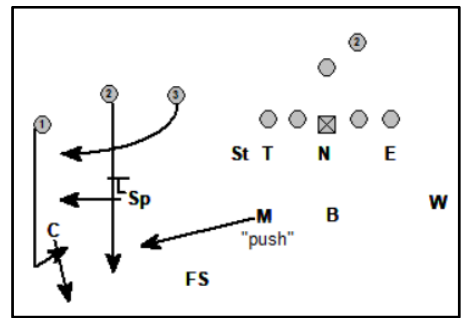
3RH Technique

The Mike is a 3 Receiver Hook (3RH) dropper and drops to #3. The Mike has quick game routes to #3.

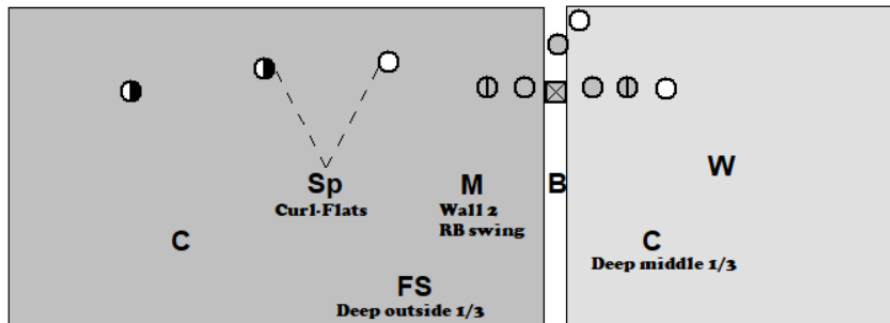
If #3 is out immediately the Mike pushes the SS and expands looking for a route to cover coming back inside.

If #3 is inside immediately the Mike walls #3. If the #3 is under 5 yards the Mike calls "Under" and gets depth to 12 with his head on a swivel for new routes entering his zone. The Mike can pass the under because the Will is in the weak Hook-Curl and should be ready to break and tackle any throw to #3 on the under.

If #3 tries to work to the backside hash the Mike will wall him. The Will is in the weak Hook-Curl to force the ball over the top where the FS and the backside Corner should have a play on the ball.

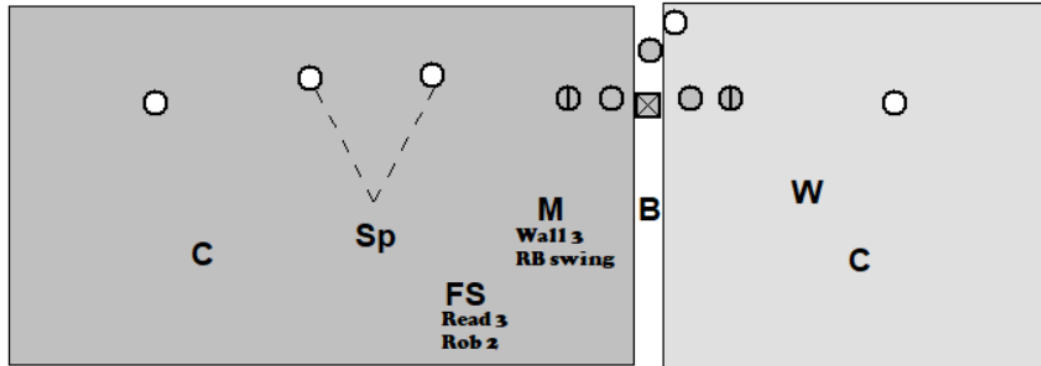


CHECK TRIPS vs Closed Set



CHECK TRIPS

Our normal TRIPS coverage has CB, SPUR, F reading #3.
 If #3 swing/flat/shallow = F squeeze #2 and CB squeeze #1
 if #3 vertical = F squeeze inside #3 and CB squeeze #2.



READ side

CB	Split #1 & #2. Squeeze 2 if 3 vert. Squeeze 1 if 3 shallow
Sp	Sink the hips. Expand on 2 or 3 to the flats
F	10x2 inside #3. Buzz feet while reading #3 Squeeze 3 vert. Squeeze 2 if 3 shallow.
M	1 yd outside Tackle. Wall inside routes & 3 Vert. RB swing out of backfield & QB sprints

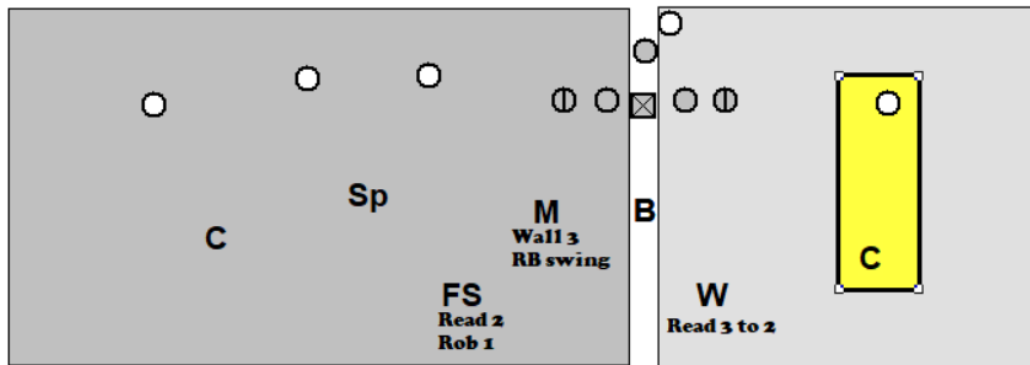
AWAY side

We normally play our Cover 3 rules on the Away side so Will can help guard #1 and offer strong weakside run support. We will play 2 Cloud if away side is in the boundary.

Twins on the backside (empty) is cover 4 (quarters)

CHECK TRIPS SOLO

Man on the backside allows WILL to help FALCON with #2 and #3 deep middel routes.



READ side

CB	Split #1 & #2. Squeeze 2 if 3 vert. Squeeze 1 if 3 shallow
Sp	Sink the hips. Expand on 2 or 3 to the flats
F	10x2 inside #3. Read 2 to 1
M	1 yd outside Tackle. Wall inside routes & 3 Vert. RB swing out of backfield & QB sprints

AWAY side

Playing Man to man allows WILL to help the trips side. If #2 or #3 don't run a post, then drop middle and help AWAY side post routes.

Trips Solo

Solo locks the backside corner on the single receiver in man coverage. We give him the option of playing press coverage or off man, but he will always play with inside leverage. The BULL linebacker has man coverage on any #2 receiver (the running back) releasing to his side.

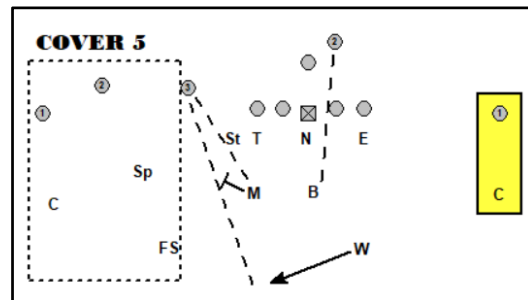
Solo coverage brings WILL over from the Away side to help on #3. On the Trips side, the CB, FS, and SPUR can focus on #1 and #2:

- CB: Key #2 receiver. If #2 releases in or vertical, lock on #1. If #2 releases out, stay over #1 until the receivers cross (vertical line rule) then pass off #1 to the safety and lock on #2.
- FS: Key #2 receiver. If #2 releases in or vertical, lock on #2. If #2 releases out, stay over top and take eyes to #1. When receivers cross (vertical line rule) pass off #2 to the corner and lock on #1.
- SPUR: Key the backfield. On pass read, drop on #2 receiver to #3 receiver. Wall #2 on inside breaking routes.

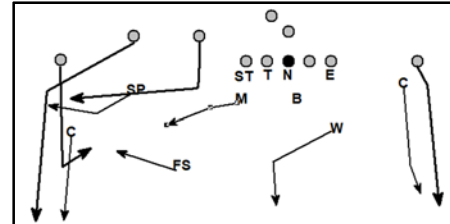
MIKE and WILL in the Solo Check are now responsible for the #3 Receiver.

- Mike: Key the backfield. On pass read, drop on #3 receiver. Wall #3 on inside breaking routes and force him to go over top of you.
- WILL: Key end man on the line of scrimmage for run/pass key. On run, you are the force player on the weak side. On pass, get over top of #3 receiver.

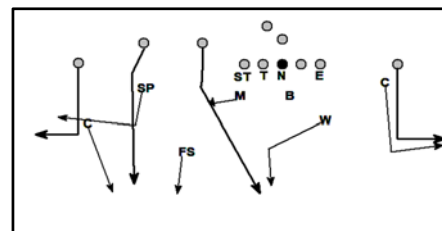
This is an example where running 2-Solo is perfect. The FS sees #2 release out and then robs the curl of #1. The SPUR drops to the flat and picks up #3, and the corner is deep to handle the wheel route by #2. If the QB is reading the corner and SPUR he will throw to the curl not realizing the FS is getting underneath it.



On the read side the FS makes a "Push" call and takes #2. The SS gets under #1, and the WS sprints across the field and takes #3. Below is another example.



We do work on passing off deep scissors routes by the #2 and #3 receivers between the safeties. This is not easy but comes with work, experience, and communication between your defenders.

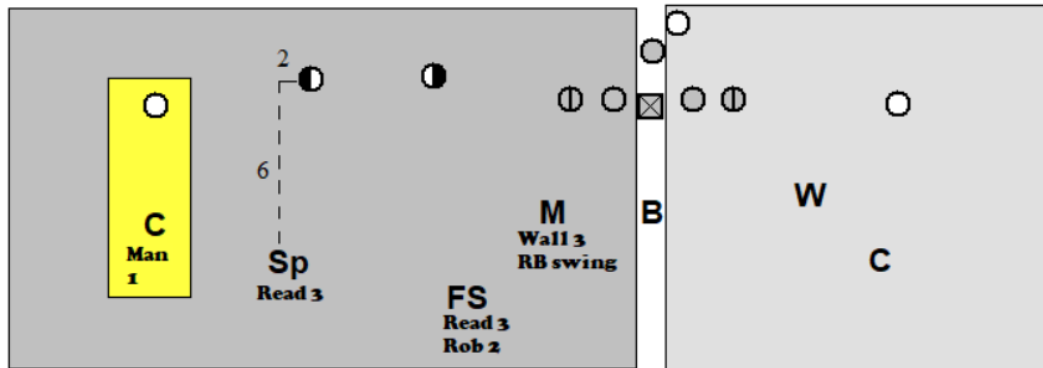


Solo, in my opinion, is very simple to teach. One of the major coaching points is disguise, so the away side corner will stem late to an inside position on #1, and the WILL will slide from 2 yards outside the end man on the line of scrimmage (EMOL) to in the away side B gap.

Solo does have some glaring weaknesses though. The backside CB is man on their best receiver. Also, the WILL has a long way to go to cover #3 vertical, while still being the run force player to the away side. This is not a big deal if the AWAY side is in boundary, but middle of the field (MOF) requires the WILL to travel farther. He should be able to get over top of #3 because most of the deeper routes we are concerned with are coming all the way across the field. 4 vertical concepts from trips will bring the #3 receiver across to the opposite hash.

CHECK TRIPS SPECIAL

Our "X" out concepts vs trips is playing man vs #1 (special) or #3 receiver (survivor), leaving only 2 receivers to guard. This means the Will hybrid does not have to come over to help on deep verticals by #2 or #3.



READ side

AWAY side

CB	Man vs #1. Depth depends on down & distance
Sp	6x2 outside #2. Read #3. Jump #3 out. vs #3 vert or in, take #2 man except shallow cross
F	10x2 inside #3. Buzz feet while reading #3 Man vs 3 Vertical. #3 out or in, rob #2.
M	1 yd outside Tackle. Wall inside routes & 3 Vert. RB swing out of backfield & QB sprints

SPECIAL turns trips into TWINS.

Allows WILL & CB to play "under/over" versus backside.

TRIPS SPECIAL

While most teams put their best receiver on the backside of Trips, they also put their worst receiver on the outside of the Trips. These teams tendencies are to never throw to the #1 receiver on the Trips side. So Trips Special locks up on that receiver to allow the rest of our defense play Cover 5.

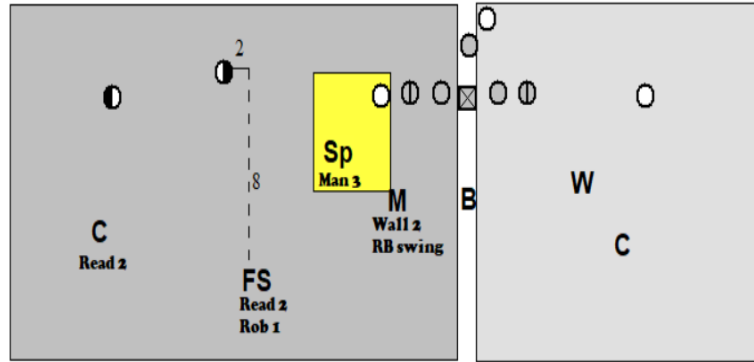
Our corner is locked on the #1 receiver on the trips side. We put the SPUR outside shade of #2 and the SPUR and FS play Cover 5 on the two inside receivers. This lets gets both of our Inside Backers back into the box. On the Away Side, the WILL can help on a quick throw to the single receiver in the flats. The corner on that side is playing a deep zone technique.

The major weakness in Special is finding time in practice to teach SPUR the corner's Cover 5 reads. This is not good in high school because of limited time with our players and need to squeeze every ounce of productivity out of them we can. The solution to this problem is Trip Survivor.

TRIPS SURVIVOR

The SPUR must stay in a low, inverted, alignment, and play man coverage on #3. This allows the FS and corner on the Trips side to only focus on #1 and #2, turning Trips into Twins. This is an automatic check against Trey sets.

CHECK TRIPS SURVIVOR



Disguising Coverages

Having multiple answers for trips formations is not enough against some teams. If you sit in the same coverage too long the offense will eventually attack the open side. That means disguising your coverages. Many coaches make disguises too complicated. This is not a mystical concept. It is as simple as telling your defenders, "Never look like what it is."

That is a hard concept for coaches who want their defense to look like it does in the playbook before every snap. If your players understand their jobs, and understand leverage, they should be able to disguise coverages until late in the quarterback's cadence without any problem. It can cause us to panic because we think a kid doesn't know the call. Learn to trust your players and have confidence in their ability to apply what you have taught them to the field!

At the very minimum, I think a DC should **use both Solo and Special** in his arsenal. These coverages go hand-in-hand, and have the ability to make opposing offensive coaches pull their hair out attempting to figure out what coverage you are in. By utilizing these coverages it allows your defense to stay in a pattern reading coverage, by eliminating the threat of the additional receiver to the read side.

CHANGE OF STRENGTH (COS)

Motion that change the read side are troublesome to deal with but the presence of a third safety makes adjustments easier than a 4-3 or 3-4. If the read side changes the FS moves to the other side, and the SPUR and WILL swap responsibilities.

The read side flips to the right. The FS and WILL play cover 2 and the SPUR checks his side into SOLO.

The beauty of this is the adjustments were made by the secondary. The linebackers don't really have to move, only change responsibilities.

