

# SECTION THREE

## KEEPING DEFENSE HONEST



CH 11: COUNTER SERIES WITH UNLIMITED BLOCKING

CH 12: ATTACK THE EDGE WITH SPEED & ROCKET

CH 13: MIDLINE AND VEER IN THE WING T

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CH 16: EASY TO INSTALL PASS PROTECTIONS



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## **CHAPTER 12**



### **Attack the Edge with Speed & Rocket**

Alright, folks, we're going to talk now about, I guess we could say one of the new things in the Wing-T although it's been around a while; we call it the Speed Sweep, some of you guys probably call it the Jet Sweep, some people might call it Fly Sweep. My understanding of this play is it originated in Crestview, Florida in a high school that was a Wing-T football team. It eventually left Crestview, went to Mississippi, a coach from Mississippi gave it to a coach in the state of Tennessee, and my mentor Herschel Moore took the Speed Sweep and started running it, started developing more ideas and thoughts about the Speed Sweep. Then he left and went to Cumberland University and from Cumberland University being a college program running the Speed Sweep, Delaware then added it to their Wing-T package and I guess the rest of its kind of history as it's gone on.

Speed sweep, what makes this play interesting is this: It is legitimately a football play, that if it's timed out right, executed right, it is a play that will gain four yards and not have any other issues.

I think that no matter what you're doing in your offense, but when I look at plays, I want to know the percentage of time that the play gains four yards or more. So what I'm trying to tell you is when you look at the end of your season, it does not matter what a play averages per attempt, because in reality if you run a play 7 times and you get one yard, one yard, two yards, four yards, three yards, five yards, and 70 yards, you look at that at the end of the year and it looks like that play averaged 8 yards a carry. But in reality, only two out of 7 times did that play gain four yards or more for you. This means the play was only successful only 28% of the time you ran it by our standards.

The Speed Sweep play for us is a play that averages that four yards or more over 75% of the time year in and year out. So it's a great football play. The other side of that is now this play has become so popular, that defenses are starting to catch up with it and some of the things that we're going to talk about is how we are gaining numbers to run the Speed Sweep, and how to use formations to get done what you want to get done running the Speed Sweep.



I often get asked do I like to run the Speed Sweep or the Rocket Sweep better. To be honest both have their strengths and I feel the need to have both in my system. For us the Speed Sweep is a better play because we can run 90 percent of our offense with speed type motion, and it still turns out to be the same play. So we're going to take a look at the Speed Sweep, I think you'll find some ideas here that will help you make the Speed Sweep a great play.

We got reasons that we feel like we need to be able to run the Speed Sweep. We're going to talk about some musts that we believe are necessary to run the Speed Sweep. But number one, we like to run it because we really only need to block two people. There are not many plays in our offense where you only had to block two people to get that successful play, that's a four-yard gain.

The Speed Sweep also has helped us gain one of the things we believe are essential in running the Wing T Offense. The thing we gain because of the threat of the Speed Sweep is the fact that many teams are now rotating a Safety down to our Split End side when using a 4-man secondary. What this does for us is it puts the edge defender to our TE side being responsible for setting the edge and also covering the deep 1/3 on pass.

We can use the Speed motion by our Wing Back and still run the following plays or series in the Wing T: Trap, Bootleg, Counter Criss-Cross, Down, Belly and Ride Series. We even have added some Mid Line Lead with the Speed Motion. The threat of the Speed Sweep also tends to make the 5 and 9 techniques play a little wider and helps when we are releasing inside to get up on Linebackers.

I have been told by Coaches that they don't feel they have the speed at the Wing Back positions to be running the Speed Sweep. If you are of that belief I want you to think of this, the back receiving the ball is already moving and we all know you can run a much faster flying 40 than from a standing start. As well as you are adding to the ball carrier's speed while the defenders are standing still. I argue that this is actually improving your team speed.

### **The following things must happen for successful Speed Sweep!**

- The handoff must occur in the play side A Gap.
- You must use formations that allow you to have a hat for a hat with the defenders on the perimeter.
- You must allow your Quarterback to check the play to the opposite side as needed.
- You must use a snap count that allows your Quarterback to snap the ball when the running back is in a particular spot for timing.

When we are running the Speed Sweep we tell our Offensive Line that we are not blocking any level one defenders aligned from the B Gap in that has his hand on the ground. Notice I said with his hand on the ground. We have found if a Linebacker walks up into the line of scrimmage anywhere from A Gap to B Gap and because he is standing his vision allows him to see the Speed motion coming he can adjust and sometimes make the play. We will get into the blocking shortly but we will always pull our play side Guard on the Speed Sweep unless the Linebacker is walked up and then we will reach him.



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# **CHAPTER 13**



## **Midline and Veer in the Wing T**

Every coach must develop a philosophy as to why they want to run or pass the ball, how often they want to do either

I'd like to take a look at the Midline and Veer. I understand those aren't traditional Wing-T plays, but because of all our unbalanced formations and the way people defend the Wing-T, some of the best things we've got going are the Midline and Veer. I want to tell you this upfront, if you're a Veer guy, I'm probably not helping you much at all. In the sense that we are a Wing-T football team that runs the Veer. And the Veer has been very good to us. I mentioned in one of our other chapters that I tell our kids all the time "Coach Holmes does not call any bad plays." We all know that's not necessarily the case, but I tell them that the Ride Option for example, is a guess play. I think the Defensive End is going to react a certain way. He's going to close down the inside, and we're able to get to the edge to run the option. Well, guess what? Now it's 3rd and 3, I called the Ride Option, he gets uphill, boom, we're tackled in the backfield, had to pitch it early, don't pick up first down, that was a bad call on my part.

We want to run the Veer and if we execute it properly, we're going to have the opportunity for sure to pick up that four yards or whatever we need to get that first down. When we started looking at the Veer, we asked why did we want to use the Inside Veer in the Wing-T.

### **Why the Inside Veer fits into the Wing-T**

- 1) Gives you a great Outside Run to the Split End side.
- 2) Allows the guess factor to be eliminated from the Ride (XB) series to the SE side.
- 3) Makes it hard for people to play man coverage versus the Wing-T.
- 4) Makes defenses play assignment football,
- 5) Defenses like to get up field against the Wing-T. "hard to block easy to read".
- 6) Giving the Ball to the Fullback gives you a quick hitting play in the Wing-T





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# CHAPTER 14



## Play Action Pass, including Draw

Alright, folks, it's time to talk a little play-action passing game and I know this is hard to believe, a Wing-T guy is going to talk about throwing the football, but you will notice that this talk is about play action. My teams have been very effective throwing the football over the years. It depends on who our Quarterback is, obviously. Most of our Quarterbacks that we've had over the years, if they've started for us at least two years, in their second year they've thrown for more than 1000 yards, that's pretty standard.

If our Quarterback is an average to an above-average Quarterback, we're going to throw the football on average about 13 times a game. We want to throw the football but what I mean by that is, we want to throw the football when we want to throw it. We don't like to be in 3rd and long a great deal, because we're a run-first offense. But we've come up with some things over the years that are a little bit different, a little bit unique and I think you're going to find some pretty good concepts here as we move forward.

Simple rules for our passing game. This is this just standard for us. Number one, Quarterback, never throw the football to somebody you could have run it to. You get out on the edge and you could run to the guy you're going to throw the football to pull it down and run it, that's rule number one. All the bad things that can happen when you throw the football: you might throw a bad pass; he might drop one that is right there for you.

The second thing we want our QB's to master is throwing on the run. We work hard with our QB's understanding that to be an effective QB throwing on the run that they must be able to get their shoulders pointed at their target. We practice with our QB's throwing on the 5-yard stripes going across the field. We want them to jog across the field and with their hips and shoulders we want them to rotate if the QB is right-handed until the left shoulder is over the line in front of the QB and the Right shoulder is over the 5-yard line to the back of the QB while he is jogging down the line. The QB

### Simple Rules For Passing Game

- A) Never throw the ball to a man you could have run it to.
- When throwing on the run the quarterback should always throw and chase the ball.
- Avoid taking high risk while throwing the ball. Know where to miss.



releases the ball while jogging down the line and his shoulders should rotate along with his upper body so that he finishes with his Right hand and shoulder pointed directly at his target and his left arm will be now at his back, we want the QB's body to continue moving in the same direction down the 5-yard line. This will allow for accuracy as far as right or left of the target and the release point will control the height of the throw.

We also teach our QB's where to miss on throws: example if you are throwing a curl or dig route then as a QB you must miss low. Overthrows have a much higher risk of interceptions. Out cuts then we teach the QB you must miss low and away.

## BOOTLEG

### PHILOSOPHY

Let us talk about the bootleg pass and the philosophies of the bootleg. Some people call it Waggle, to us it is the bootleg. For us, the Quarterback, number one, this is a run-first, pass second play. The Quarterback has to approach it with that in mind. If you get the corner and you can run the football, run the football. Put the defensive team in conflict. Do I stay back and defend the throw, or do I come up to attack the run? RPO, everybody now is into the RPO. That is what the Waggle pass has been for the past 60 years. It's a run-pass option and the Quarterback has to be willing to run.

Alright, the next rule that we have got: a standard rule. Never run the bootleg pass into an inverted safety. If a team is rotating the safety down to the Split End side, we want our Quarterback to say, "Check opposite". If I call the boot into the inverted safety side, he will say, "Check opposite" and the boot goes away from him, immediately.

Quarterback is going to read the defender that is responsible for the deep outside third, the direction that we're running the bootleg.

So three simple rules: Run first, pass second, never run the bootleg pass into an inverted safety, check and go the other way. The Quarterback knows that I am going to read the defender that's responsible for the outside third, the direction we're running the bootleg.

We want to throw the ball to the Split End versus Cover three or man coverage. If the Defensive End gets up field, makes the Quarterback pull up, look deep and then find the Tight End crosser. If I'm forced to pull up, check deep, find the crosser or pull it down and run. Do not try to throw over a Defensive End to a guy who is in the flats. Never throw the backside post without the call coming from the bench. And if you throw the backside post, it's got to be thrown now, you can't hold it and sprint all the way out and throw the ball back across the field.

### Bootleg Pass Philosophy

- Run first and pass second. The QB must run the football if he gets the corner.
- Never run the Bootleg pass into an inverted safety. Check and go the other way.
- Read the Defender responsible for the deep outside 1/3.

### Bootleg Pass Philosophy

- Try to go to the SE vs. Cover 3 or Cover 1.
- If the DE makes you pull up, Look deep and cross. Don't try to go to the flat.
- Never throw the Backside post without a call from the Bench!



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# CHAPTER 15



## Sprint & Drop Back Pass Plays

Every coach must develop a philosophy as to why they want to run or pass the ball, how often they want to do either one, and select plays that match their players genetics. The Wing-T coach is committed to running the football and therefore should develop a passing philosophy that makes running the ball easier.

- Passing out of multiple formations can disguise your running game.
- Lots of formations leads to confused defenses.
- Passing the ball spreads out the defense and stops them from “crowding the box”
- Threat of 4 verticals forces 4 defensive backs to defend receivers first before helping on the run.

All of these reasons make the job of the offensive line easier in regard to run blocking. The Wing-T philosophy is to create confusion and put players in conflict. This philosophy needs to also happen in your passing attack. Mixing drop back with sprint out and short pass with screens puts a lot of pressure on an opposing defense that only has 3 days to prepare. But just like in the run game, don’t try to do much because you don’t need a lot of pass plays to keep the defense honest.

When a team predominantly throws the ball by dropping back, the defense can regulate its coverage since they only have to mirror the drop-back depth with its own drop-back. Adding sprint-out passing forces the defense to rotate which leaves gaping holes in the coverage zones. Having both sprint-out passing and drop-back passing keeps the defense confused and uncertain as to whether it should rotate or drop back, cover pass or defend the run.

My philosophy of pass protection is to be very aggressive and solid at the guard and center positions. The tackles must keep the outside edges strong. I have a saying about how fast the linemen need to get set on pass protection: “They can’t get set fast enough.” However fast they can get set, it is not fast enough.

All pass plays fall into these basic categories:

**Play action:** (Belly, Down, and Counter pass)

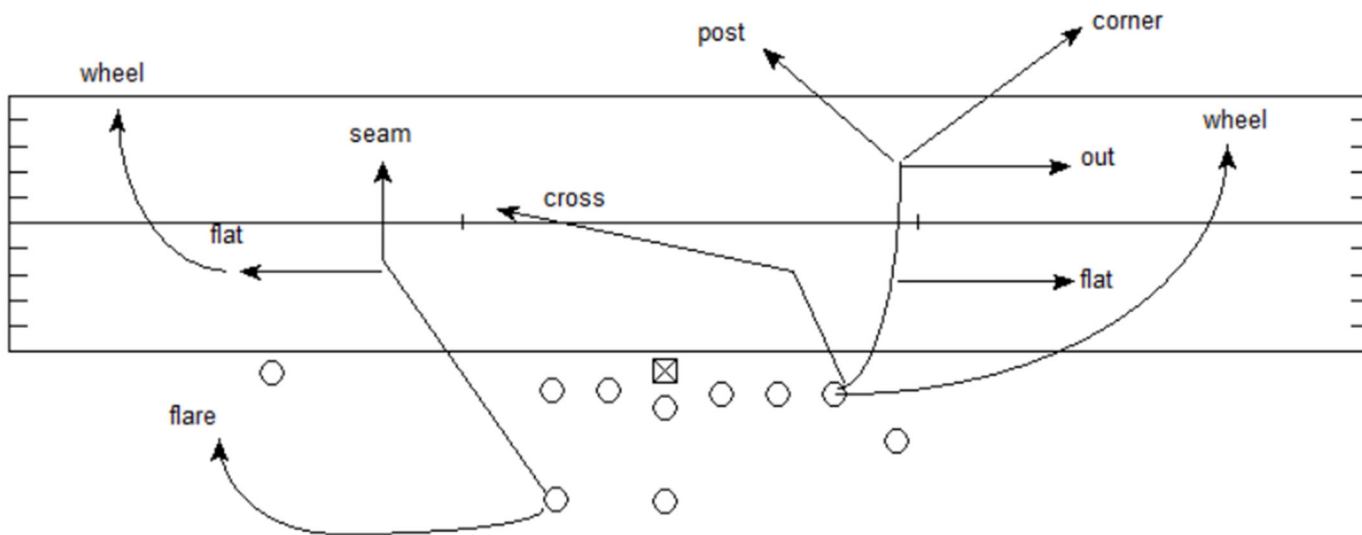
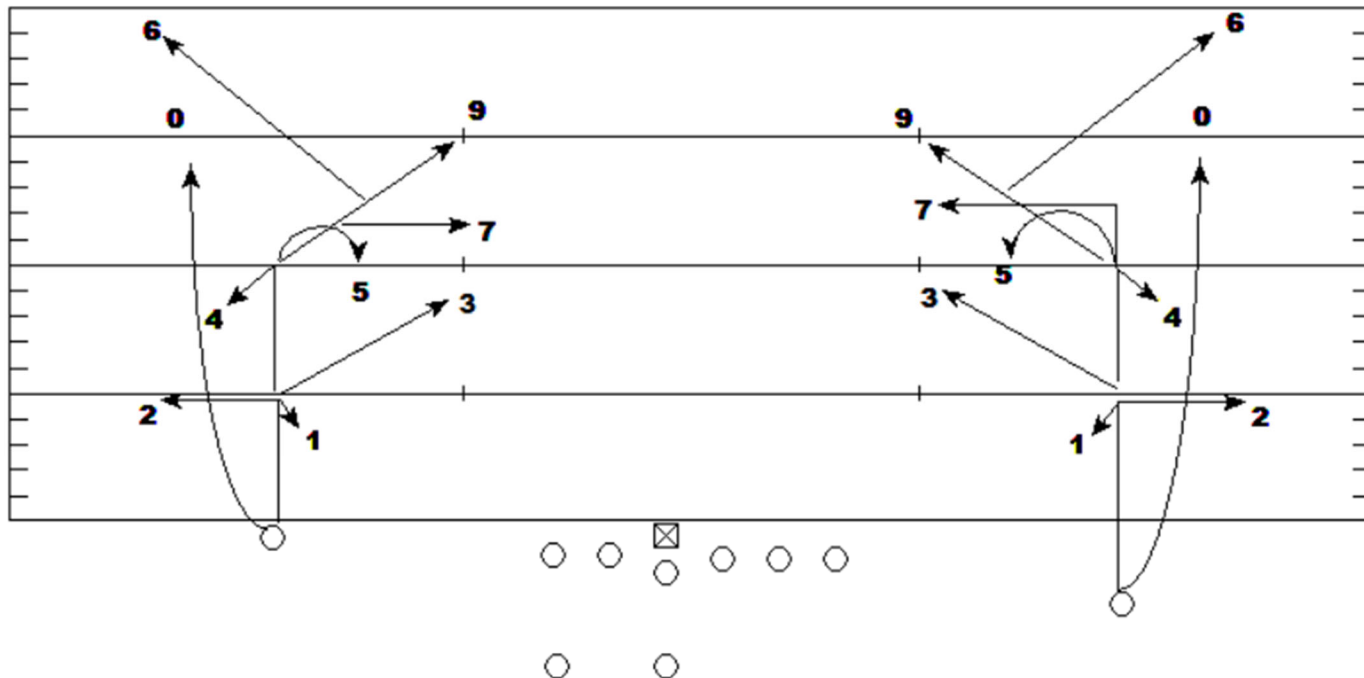
**Quick Pass Game:** (70’s): This would be 3-step game if under center.

**Sprint-out:** (90’s): QB can sprint towards sideline or setup slightly past the offensive tackle.

**Screen Pass Game:** (Called Screens): Two blocking schemes that allow 5 different screens.

**Drop Back Pass Game:** (60’s): This would be 5-step game if under center.





We do not run all these routes in a season. In fact, some of these routes we have never ran. But we have them in the playbook as a reference because when your offense is truly a “SYSTEM”, you have answers to whatever you need to do.





## SPRINT PASS

Our 90 passing game is our sprint out passing game. Sprint out passing forces the defense to defend both the perimeter-run as well as the entire field against a good passing attack. When the QB sprints out, the defense must rotate quickly so that he will not get outside the coverage zones. The secondary rotation often leaves the backside vulnerable to screens and draws.

While having a running QB makes sprint out even more dangerous, all you really need is an athletic QB who can get 5 yards to make the defensive coordinator sweat. Additionally, the QB run threat forces one LineBacker to commit to run and not drop back to a zone. Also, the moving pocket forces the pass rush and coverage to move also.

Sprint out passing lessens the burden on the offensive linemen when it comes to blocking for the pass. The sprinting out foreces the pass rushers to go in one precise direction, and since the blockers know which way the QB is sprinting, then can expect the rushers to charge a specific way. The techniques of pass blocking become greatly simplified, often times the same techniques used in Reach run blocking can also be used in sprint protections.

We like to sprint out vs 8-man fronts that blitz often. Most of the Blitzes will come from the interior and we can handle this much easier with our lack of time to spend on blitz pickup with our indepth running game.

We will almost always go to a SE over unbalanced look (Northern or Southern) to utilize our Sprint Out game.

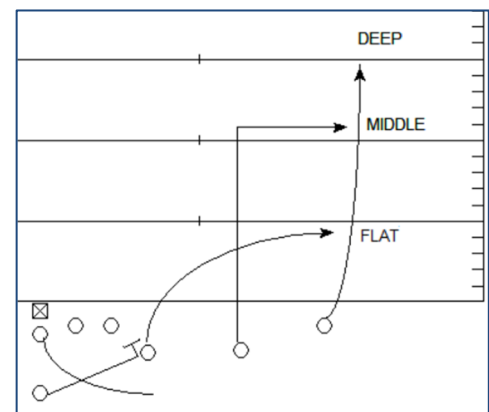
## FLOOD

The Flood concept is an attempt to get more receivers in a specific area of the field than the defense has to cover them. We are trying to get a 3 on 2 ratio by getting 3 receivers into 2 zones.

1. The outside receiver runs the deep third or deep half defender out of the play. What cannot happen is we let the outside deep third defender stay in his backpedal because the #1 receiver is not running the route hard enough.
2. The middle or intermediate receiver (#2) finds the “hole” in the coverage at 8 to 12 yards and runs the out pattern.
3. The 3<sup>rd</sup> receiver (flat receiver) must release quickly to get the width he needs. He wants to be at 4 yards when he reaches the top of his route.

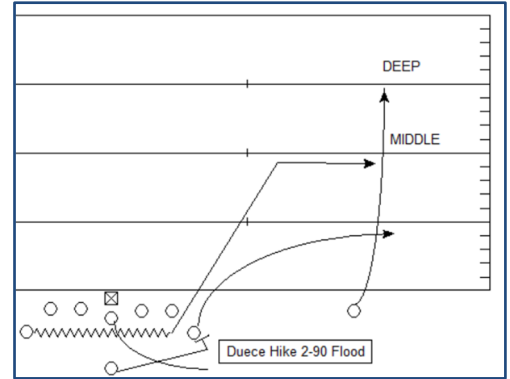
The QB read progression is to look over the top for the deep receiver, then look for the flat defender, and finally look for the Middle Out...since that comes open last.

This is a great route to beat Cover 3 and teams that defend trips with the “Quarter-Quarter-Half concept. We have found the that the middle receiver is always open.



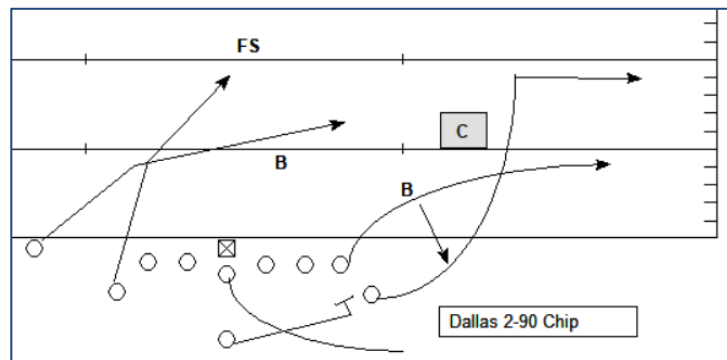
Here is 2-90 Flood in our Duece formation and using speed sweep motion. Remember, any formation starting with the letter “D” means two wings. Since H-I-K-E has four letters, this tells the Halfback to get past the QB before the ball is snapped. If the Z-Back went in motion to the left, we would call that Z-I-N-G motion.

If we tagged this play with “SWITCH”, the motion man would run into the flats and the Z-back would run the 10-yard out.



**HIGH LOW**

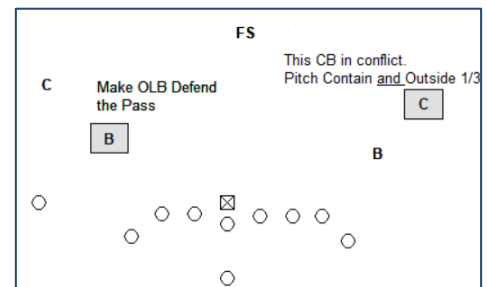
This is the High-Low principle where we have a receiver behind and in front of a defender, putting a vertical stretch on his coverage. In our Sprint Out Vertical concept, we are putting the corner in conflict.



The backside post by the Left Wing holds the safety. The sprint out action by the QB often times forces the Outside Linebacker to come up, ignoring his defensive coaches pleas all week telling him to stay in the flats. This puts the Corner in a bad conflict. Let’s say the OLB is disciplined and goes to the flats like he is supposed to. This means the playside Inside Linebacker has QB. We have our Split End in a “C” (crack) alignment so that he can drag across the field into the area vacated by the Playside ILB, getting almost to the hash when the QB is ready to throw. The Backside ILB is responsible for this crossing route, but his eyes and movement is following the QB, making it impossible to see the crosser coming from his backside.

**3-STEP DROPBACK PASS**

The 70 passing game is our 3-step passing game and is thrown with timing. When I first became a Head Coach, I determined that we needed to force teams to defend the curl flat area to our split end side. With this understanding we worked very hard at our 3-step game and especially the slant to the split end side. In our system, we run both the Speed Sweep and the inside veer, forcing teams to defend the pitch. The 3-step game gives us answers to aggressive corners who are focused solely on containing the



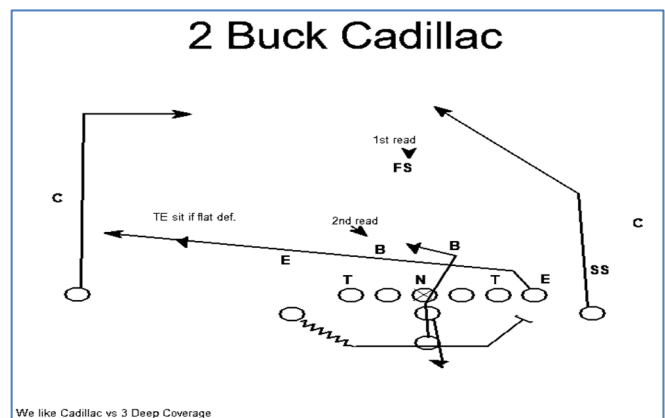
## 5-STEP DROPBACK PASS

### CADILLAC

The next thing I want to get into is something that's not Wing-T, but it has been phenomenal for us. Years ago, we were sitting in a Glazier Clinic down in Florida, or Atlanta, and Florida State was there speaking. They were the Sprint Draw passing team back then and they ran what they call 344 Cadillac. The Cadillac for them was what other people started calling the universal route. It's the shallow cross by the Tight End, deep dig by the Split End with a post down in the middle of the field. I really, really, really loved the concept, but I wanted to find a way to put it into our Wing-T offense, because about every pass that we throw, the Quarterback is always sprinting out. We did not have a straight drop-back pass in our offense, where it was a pocket pass, we were not rolling the secondary. So what we did was we simply came up with the Cadillac out of our Wing-T system and this for us is 60 protection.

Here are your routes, Split End we would like to run a 14-yard dig.

Florida State ran a 16, our receivers are not as fast as Florida State and my Quarterback doesn't have as good of an arm, so we have found that 14 for us is good. The Split End, you always align on the numbers whenever we run the Cadillac. If this ball is completed, it should be completed right on the hash mark.



Tight end you are running a shallow drag. This is the most important thing about this. You must be underneath the Will backer. If you're running deeper than the Will backer, the play will not execute properly. If you'll release, and you're never going to get deeper than five-yards deep, but you must go underneath the Willie. As you start across the field, you need to look and determine, is there a flat defender? If there is a flat defender, squat the route. Your job is to hook up right between the Outside Linebacker and the corner. So, as I'm running my crossing route, I'm not catching the ball in among the linebackers. As I am running back crossing route, if there is no flat defender, keep running. As I am running my crossing route, if the flat defender is squatting, I'm going to go halfway and turn and hook up.

Wingback your job is to run a post right down the middle of the field. My Quarterback is told when I come out of my Bucksweep fake, as I am hand faking, I want my head around right now, eyeing the Free Safety.

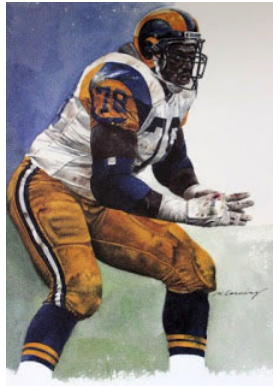
Here comes the Bucksweep action, head around, and from here we do not teach a seven-step drop, but we teach three-step drop. So from here, its 1, 2, 3 step drop, which he's taught in his quick passing game. That is going to put him at seven yards deep, right behind the Center. We tell him, as soon as you hand fake, to get your head around to the Free Safety. If the Free Safety is downhill at all, throw the post deep over his head right now.

Everybody because of our run game, they are trying to get these DBs involved in the run game. We believe, even if we missed that post route over the top, as soon as that DB goes to the sideline, the DB coach is going tell him, "Son you



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# CHAPTER 16



## Easy to Install Pass Protections

Your linemen need to understand where the quarterback will be when throwing the ball and how that release point correlates with protection. The protection that you use needs to be functional for the desired drop of the quarterback. The alignment of the defender will determine the pass set of the offensive lineman.

The key in the pass set is for the lineman to position his body as if he were going to "urinate" on the defender's rush lane. Although graphic, this phrasing seems to stick well with players and this concept is key to understanding the pass set.

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### ***CARDINAL RULE OF PASS BLOCKING:***

***Make the pass rusher go around you to get to the QB***

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Our protections fall into these categories.

- BOOT PASS
  - We can pull both guards (Special), backside guard (X), or no guards (Max).
- 80
  - Belly, Down, and Counter Passes
- 70 PROTECTION
  - 3 Step Passing Game
- 90 PROTECTION
  - Sprint Out Passing Game
- 60 PROTECTIONS
  - Cadillac and Cadillac Flood, and Passes from Gun Empty



going is responsible for the “C Gap” on the backside and will not go into a route. He will step down inside just as the OT on that side. If we are throwing away from the TE then he will set inside and if we are throwing the 70 game to the Tight End side the WB on the backside will step inside and not run a route.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS ON PASS PROTECTION**

If the concept of rule blocking is taught in the correct way, it can be easily understood. No substitute exists for repetition when the offensive line is first trying to learn or completely understand the schemes in the Wing-T.

Your offensive linemen must understand that they can depend on the rules of each specific play. No matter what the defensive alignment, the rule progression will take care of their assignment. Linemen need to know their rules to be completely effective on game day. It is the job of the coach to prepare the offensive line to play against each defense anticipated, and no situation should arise during a game for which your linemen are unprepared.

We are not into a deep well defined, pass, throw, kick, slide, vertical sets and you can't be a great running team or predominant run team and have enough time in your offensive passing game to be a great protection team, and handle all the blitz pick-ups, and where your QB throws hot, etc.

With the challenge of time constraints and the amount of knowledge that the Wing-T line coach must teach to his players, the pass-protection drills may be tough to fit in. It is the job of the coach to avoid using the limits of time as an excuse, but instead to be creative with his use of time and combine drills as frequently as possible. The mirror progression could be taught in a pre-practice segment, while the kick-step and power-step drills could be used as a conditioner. Again, know what the run-to-pass ratio will be in your offense and plan accordingly.

