

# Playbook

*For index to this play book- see final page.*

(For other details see NFL Strategy Player Aids by Ron Post on Vasselengine)

## Running Plays:

## 20 Quick Trap



On this play we are looking for a few yards right up the middle. Our center and left guard try a "trap block" up front and our halfback hits the hole quickly.

**Strength:** This quick hitter is good if we need a yard or two for a first down, and once in a while we will break it for more.

**Weakness:** We are not likely to get more than two yards on this one.

## Zip 42 Wedge



This play gives us another way to pick up the first down. Our lineman push forward and our fullback goes airborne if needed to get a yard or two.

**Strength:** We can get one or maybe two yards consistently with our big back.

**Weakness:** Not going to help us much if we need more than two yards.

## 20 Fold



We get the same trap block as on the 20 Quick Trap, but now we lead our halfback through the hole following our fullbacks tail. Our right guard pulls to make room for the fullback, hopefully he will influence the defensive front.

**Strength:** This one is best against a 4-3 front when there is no lineman over the center. It gives us a good chance for a nice run against a blitz.

**Weakness:** Over, Under, and 4-2 defenses clog this one up.

### 45 Drive

45 Drive



Our fullback heads off tackle to the weak side on this one. Our lineman block straight ahead and our halfback leads the fullback through the hole.

**Strength:** This run gives us a chance for several yards to the weak side, and if we catch them shifted "over" we will make a real dent in them up front.

**Weakness:** Not our quickest play. We have trouble, and we're not going to get much if the defense is crowding the line of scrimmage.

### Ace 26 Float Power

Ace Float 26 Power



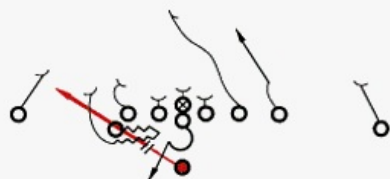
Our 2-back, or halfback, hits the six hole with power here. Our tight end blocks down and our left guard pulls to combine with our fullback to lead the way.

**Strength:** We can build a running game with this bread-and-butter play. On first down or in short yardage situations, this will help us.

**Weakness:** If the defense is shifted over we won't find much room. Plus, we aren't going to break it big very often.

### Ace Flutter 37 Slant

Ace Flutter 37 Slant



Here is another solid running play. Our halfback leads the fullback on this one which attacks the weakside of the defense.

**Strength:** If we catch them shifted over we'll get a good chunk of yardage, and if we need a yard this one's a good bet against a tight defensive front.

**Weakness:** The fullback needs to go north and south when he hits the line of scrimmage. Several defensive looks will string this one out for a short gain.

## Shotgun 24 Trap

Shotgun 24 Trap



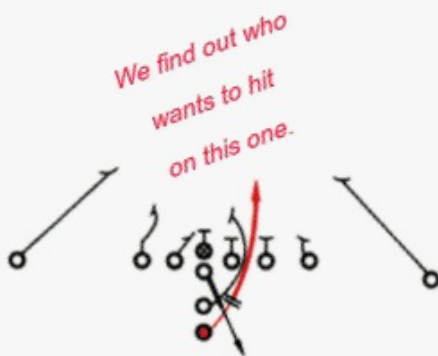
Our 24 Trap gives the halfback a chance to pop one. Our right tackle blocks down leaving the man over him unblocked. Hopefully this defender will penetrate and our pulling left guard will kick him out.

**Strength:** We can get some nice yardage on this one. Especially if their lineman, or Sam and Will are charging.

**Weakness:** Our timing is important here. We have a lot of traffic at the point of attack. If we can't get them to move a little, this one will bog down.

## 24 Slam

24 Slam



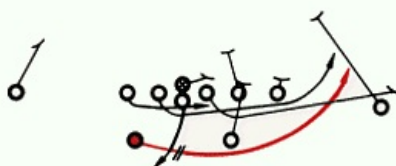
They better be ready for us on this I-formation play. Our fullback leads the halfback through the 4 hole with a quick burst of strength.

**Strength:** We can do some damage on the strong side here. Like the 26 Power this one will give us a chance to establish the running game. Good choice for short yardage situations, also.

**Weakness:** If they are looking for the run, or sending the big blitz we will have trouble getting much.

## 28 Sweep

28 Sweep



We have three ways to get our halfback around the corner, and we start with our traditional 28 Sweep. Two guards and our weak tackle pull to pack this play with power. Our 2 back needs some patience to wait for the blockers, but then he has to turn it north and south.

**Strength:** We have the opportunity to pick up sizeable gains. If the defensive line is in a stunt our back will be in their secondary before he meets resistance.

**Weakness:** It takes us awhile to get around the corner, so if our blockers can't seal off the line, then they will get us in our own backfield.

## 28 Toss Sweep

28 Toss Sweep



This I-formation play sweep gets us to the corner a little quicker than the 28 Sweep. We rely on our flanker to seal the corner with a strong block on the linebacker, and our fullback leads the 2-back to the strong side.

**Strength:** Again, a good chance for big gains if we can seal the line. If we can slow their lineman on a stunt we are gone.

**Weakness:** Another high risk/reward run. If their lineman blast through, our halfback better high tail it to the corner or we lose big.

## Ace 29 Quick Pitch

Ace 29 Quick Pitch



This quick hitter gives us a way to attack the weak side with speed. Our split end's crack back block needs to seal the defensive corner, and the halfback needs to move.

**Strength:** If the defense is sitting back for a pass or shifted over we can hurt them deeply with this run.

**Weakness:** If they are ready for the run we are going to be left with our halfback's creativity to come up with a decent gain. And if their linebackers beat our blockers to the punch we will lose several.

## 49 Sweep Weak

49 Sweep Weak



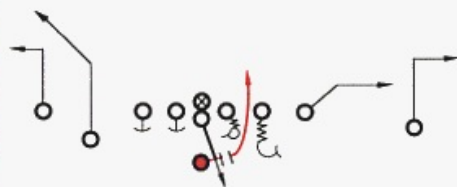
**Strength:** If we can buy enough time to get the big guy up to speed this one will do well for us.

**Weakness:** However, if they blitz, or if we're too slow we are looking at second or third and long.

This draw play to the halfback is quicker but a bit more complicated. We are looking to influence several defenders with the quarterback's short drop, and then slip our halfback up the gut on them.

## Ace Wide 34 Draw

Ace Wide 34 Draw



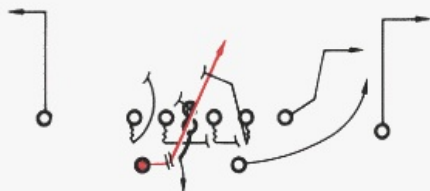
We have a draw play for each back. The 34 Draw is based on the premise that we can influence their pass rushers to take a course away from the four hole, and then slip the fullback past them after a short delay.

**Strength:** If they are looking for a pass and their linemen are charging or shifted to the weak side, this play will leave them red in the face.

**Weakness:** It takes a while for this one to develop, and it can look pretty bad if the defense doesn't bite on our pass action. We are going to get stuffed at times.

## 20 Trap Draw

20 Trap Draw



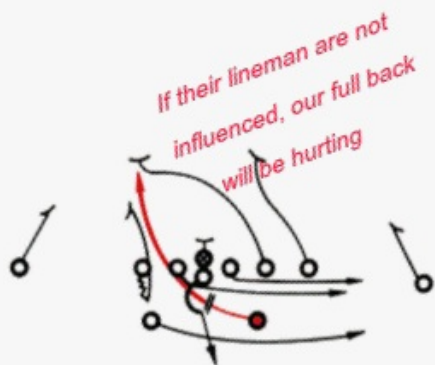
This draw play to the halfback is quicker but a bit more complicated. We are looking to influence several defenders with the quarterback's short drop, and then slip our halfback up the gut on them.

**Strength:** This draw will hurt them if they stunt, and it has better success against their blitz package.

**Weakness:** If they aren't fooled, we won't get much here. However, we won't lose quite as much on this draw when it fails.

## 45 Give

45 Give



To conclude our run package we have a couple tricky ones. First, the 45 Give relies on the influence of our sweep action to get the defense moving to the strong side, then we send our fullback against the flow back to the weak side.

**Strength:** We are looking for a "keying" defense, a basic pass rush or a simple blitz. If we get one of these we can take advantage of their pursuit and surprise them.

**Weakness:** If they don't bite there is no plan B. Our fullback has no blockers, so stunts, maximum blitzes, and weakside run defenses mean yards lost and a sore running back.

## U Reverse Left

Y Reverse Left



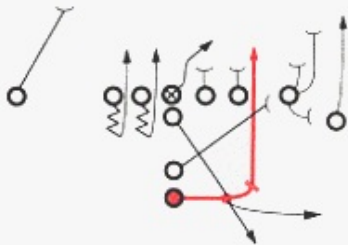
Finally, we will give our *back* a chance with the ball on this mis-direction play. Our backfield shows 26 Power motion while our strong side tackle and weak side guard lead the reverse to the weak side.

**Strength:** If they are "keying" and/or shifted to the strong side this play can give us a sizeable gain. Plus we have a chance to break even if they figure out what we are up to.

**Weakness:** Our *back* is not going to get us a lot on his own so our reverse action needs to help us. Blitzes and weak side defenses are bad news for us.

## 26 Sprint Draw

26 Sprint Draw



On this strong side draw our halfback takes the ball off right tackle. Blitzes can mean lost yardage, and an over shift is tough to penetrate, but we will be in good shape if they favor the weakside, or if their line is charging hard.

## I-25 Lead

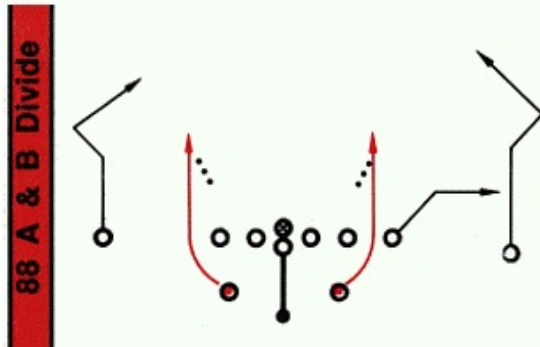
I-25 Lead



Now we head to the weakside with our fullback leading the way for the "2" back. Tight run defenses will stack us up, but if they are playing the strong side, we will hurt them on their back side.

## Passing Plays:

### 88 A & B Divide

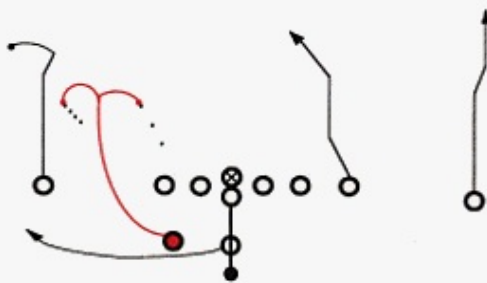


We start our drop back passes with four short pass plays. The A & B Divide gets our backs out in a simple pattern just outside the tackles. The quarterback takes a short drop and picks the best target.

**Strength:** We can get 6 to 8 yards against a lot of defenses with this little pass play. If they play man-to-man, blitz, or sit back in a zone they are going to have a tough time picking up both of our backs.

**Weakness:** Any time we throw over the middle there are a lot of hands that can nab the ball. This pass is especially dangerous if they are playing up close and looking for the short pass. Mombo's and Combo's often mean interceptions on this one.

### 89 A Choice

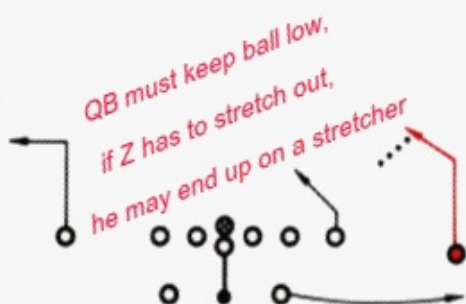


This is a weak side pass to our halfback who runs a simple hook pattern about 6 yards down field. Our fullback's pattern to the flat will help us spread the defense, and our QB needs to deliver a catchable ball quickly.

**Strength:** We can pick up some consistent gains on the weak side against man-to-man defenses and when they are favoring out strong side, even against a Mombo. This can also be successful in short yardage situations.

**Weakness:** The weakside pass defenses, especially the X Combo is very tough on this one, if not dangerous. Blitzes give us some trouble here also, though we do a chance to break this if they gamble too many times.

### 82 Z Slant

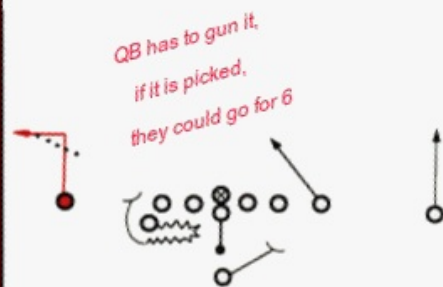


This strong side pass to Z is a quick hitter that can get us a first down in traffic. Z makes his cut at five yards and our QB needs to hit him on the numbers in stride between the linebackers.

**Strength:** Man-to-man and a weak side zone will leave them vulnerable, and if they blitz our Z receiver will find room to run after the catch.

**Weakness:** Strong side zones will stifle us on this one, and if they are double teaming Z an incomplete pass may be a relief.

## Ace Flutter 50 X Quick Out



**Strength:** We should be able to sting them here if they have any kind of strong side defense or man-to-man.

**Weakness:** A weak zone or double coverage on X will shut us down. And, if their defense back is cheating and steps in front of X for an interception, then there will be nothing but open field in front of him.

## 83 X Hook



**Strength:** We can pick up 10 to 15 yards or more with this weak side pass if we catch them favoring the strong side.

**Weakness:** Our QB needs some time so a blast or blitz can be difficult to handle. And, if they double cover X or play weak zone we need help.

## Ace Float 84 U Stralght

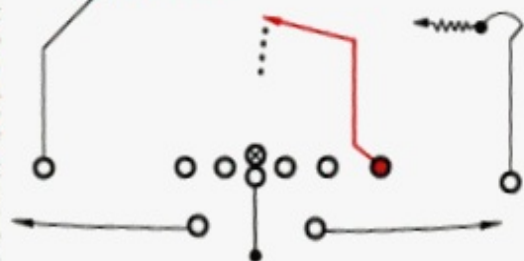


**Strength:** This one is designed to exploit both strong and weak side zones, and to burn them if they forget about our **back**. If things go right we will pick up a big chunk of yards.

**Weakness:** 's pattern is not going to fool anyone, so if they are in a Combo, Mombo, or a man-to-man defense with some pressure on the QB they could put the hurt on us with an interception or sack.

## 80 Y Cross

*Dangerous to throw across the middle*

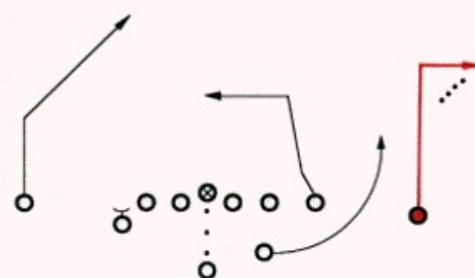


Here is another medium length pass to Y. He takes an inside release and looks for the ball over the middle 10-12 yards down field.

**Strength:** If they double X and Z or play short on the weak side we can pick them apart. Their big blitz and regular man defense will leave us open, too.

**Weakness:** Pressure on our QB combined with either a zone or man defense will put the pinch on this play. Several other defenses will give us a chance, but will also give them a pick-off if our QB isn't careful.

## Shotgun 84 Z Square Out

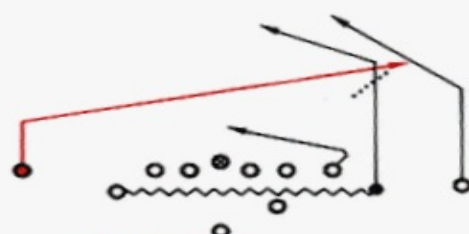


Our medium range drop back passes conclude with this pass to Z. Our flanker runs a 12-15 yard route with a sharp out cut. QB- get back five steps and deliver the ball so Z gets it on his break.

**Strength:** This pass is tough to stop cold. If we do our part right we can beat most defensive sets. However, we will do best if we have plenty of room on the strong side, and they are in a weak zone or a straight up man.

**Weakness:** If we are throwing to the short side of the field, we will have a chance, but not great. The Mombo and full blitz are the toughest on us.

## Shotgun X Cross



*It is tough to stop this play if our pass-blocking holds up*

This play is in a category of it's own. Our formation has A as a slot back and our QB in the shotgun. A goes in motion and X heads down field 5-7 yards and cuts from one side of the field to the other. Our QB needs to find a gap in the defense and get the ball to him on a rope.

**Strength:** Though this play isn't our longest pass we can get 20+ yards. It is tough on man-to-man, and even a double coverage can fail since the defense has to chase X all the way across the field through traffic.

**Weakness:** We need room on the strong side to succeed. And if they get a big pass rush, especially with a strong zone we have problems.

(The next six plays are additional passes added in newer versions)

### 85 H Corner

This pass play features a slot back (H) to the weak side, and it can be very effective if we have room to maneuver. Strong side zones will be hurting on this one, and if we are in the “blue” even weak zones will leave us open. The best defense on this one is man coverage, better yet if they put pressure on our QB.

### Shotgun X-In

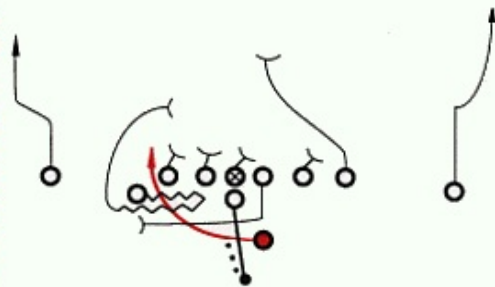
We can pick up third and long and maybe break it for big yards across the middle with this route. To be most effective we need room to run across the field from the weakside. If that is the case we will devour a basic man coverage, the KC zone, and get the best of a mombo, and combo. Also, double coverage on our wide outs leaves the middle open for secondary receivers. A hard pass rush is necessary to limit our QB's options and to stifle us on this one. In fact, if we drift one across the middle it could easily be going the other direction.

### Fake 21 Roll Strong

A play action pass fake and a pulling guard give the QB some extra time on this strong side pass. If we pick up the pass rush and have room to stretch the defense, we will beat zone defenses hard with this play. Blitzes, the blast man to man, and the mombo will shut us down.

## Ace 37 Shovel

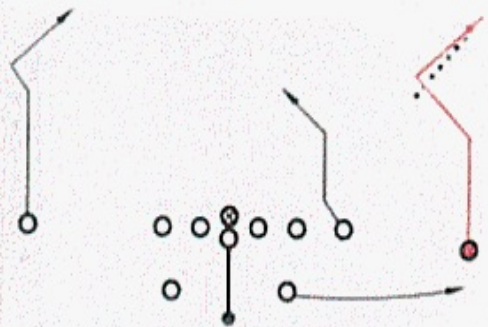
Ace 37 Shovel



Here is a slight of hand play that gets the ball to our big back. It acts like a draw play which heads off the weak side tackle. We will give them some pain if they are playing pass defense to the strong side, or if they are in man coverage with the linebackers back in coverage. Because timing is so important on this play, a blitz can put a severe hitch in our gitty up.

## 82 Z Corner

82 Z CORNER

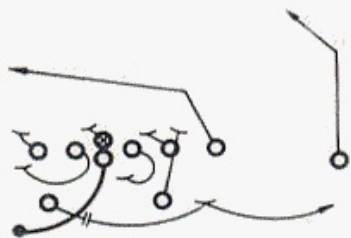


We can pick up 20+ with this corner pattern. We would like to catch them in a man to man coverage on this one. Then, if we can provide enough pass protection to give Z time to get to the corner we can sting them. Another factor for success is having enough strong side room in which to operate. We'll have trouble against a strong side zone and a weak zone too, if they get a rush on us.

## Pass 28 X Fly

PASS 28 X FLY

Not To Be Used Within Opponents  
20 Yd. Line

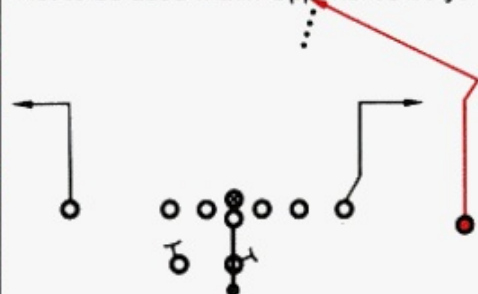


We fake our sweep action and roll the quarterback to the weak side. Meanwhile, X beats it deep down the sideline. We want to catch them favoring the strong side in order to burn them. If they are sitting back in a zone, or if the backside pass rush is coming, an incomplete pass may be a welcome sight.

## 50 Z Post

50 Z Post

Not to be used within Opponent's 20 yd. line.



We have three ways to get behind the defense with a drop back pass and we start with this pattern to our flanker. Z takes it up field a good 12-15 yards and cuts up the middle. Our QB must lay it out to him in between the safeties.

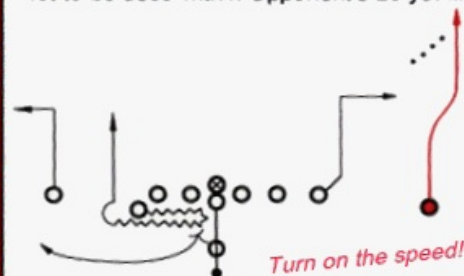
**Strength:** If they are crowding with a Mombo or Combo we will burn them. Otherwise our best success will come on a man-to-man.

**Weakness:** If they play zone or double Z there is not much hope.

## Ace Flutter 85 Z Fly

Ace Flutter 85 Z Fly

Not to be used within Opponent's 20 yd. line.



Here we give Z a chance to put on his track shoes and fly. Our QB drops and throws deep, Z should adjust to the ball and position himself for the catch.

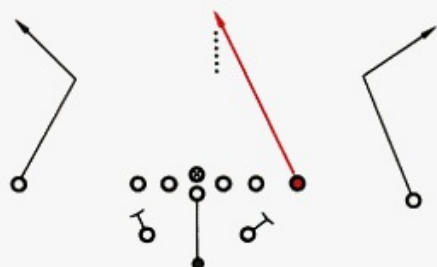
**Strength:** If Z has room on the strong side we will give him a chance regardless of how they are defending us. Our best chances come when they are in Mombo, Combo or man defenses.

**Weakness:** This is never automatic, and if we don't have room to the strong side it only gets tougher.

## 54 Y Go

54 Y Go

Not to be used within Opponent's 20 yd. line.



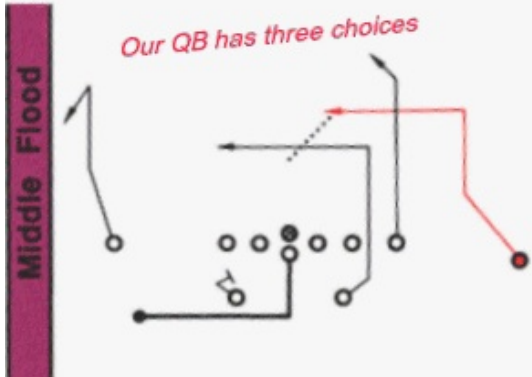
Y gets a shot at glory on the Go. He releases inside and takes it up the heart of the defense. Our QB leads him deep down the middle.

**Strength:** If they insist on doubling our wide outs we will teach them a lesson with this deep pass. Otherwise, if we catch them cheating up or in a man defense, we will have a decent shot.

**Weakness:** Zone defenses puts Y up against a lot of athletic defense backs jumping up for the interception. Not real good odds for us.

# Specialty Passes:

## Middle Flood

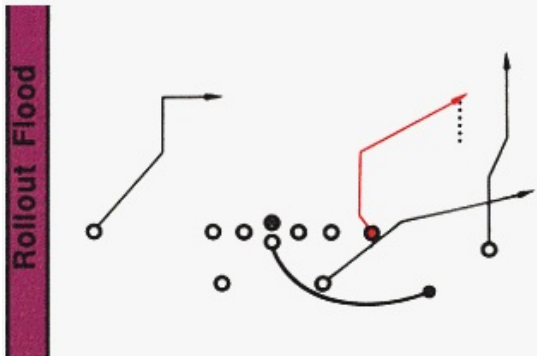


We saturate the middle of the field with three receivers on this play and give ourselves a tough medium range pass play. Our QB rolls to the left and chooses between Z, Y, and B.

**Strength:** Zone defenses have trouble with this one because we have so many targets in one area. Also, if we have room to throw on the weak side we will do well against Double, Combo, and Key Man-to-Man.

**Weakness:** Not much pass blocking, so a hard rush will create a problem for us. A sack or interception across the middle are definite possibilities.

## Rollout Flood

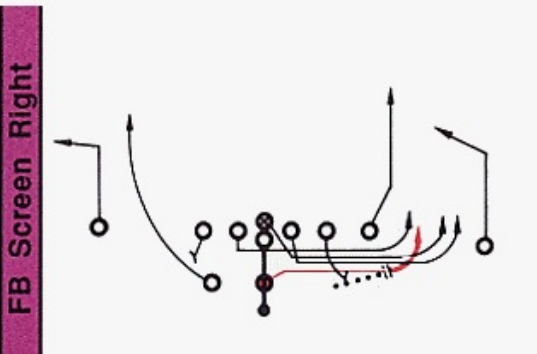


We put a lot of pressure on their strong side defense with a short, medium, and long route. Our QB rolls right and looks for Y first 12-15 yards downfield. B is a 5 yard option and Z tries to get behind the DB.

**Strength:** We want a zone defense or double coverage on our wideouts and we will sting them. Not bad on Mombo and Combo.

**Weakness:** Again with our flood we don't have reliable pass blocking. A strong rush will detour our plans. Man defenses give them three defenders in a small area to clog up the airways.

## FB Screen Right



Here we lure the defensive line in to the QB, and dump the ball to our fullback in the flat. We give them a downfield pass look, then B takes the pass after a short delay, and follows a group of pulling linemen.

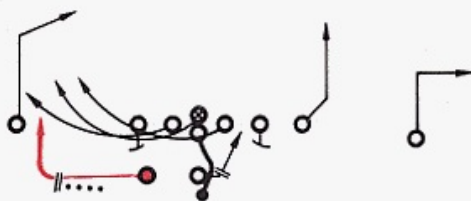
**Strength:** If they insist on playing pass defense and sending their linemen at our QB, we will slow them down with this play. And, if they are shifted to the weakside we will roll still further.

**Weakness:** If they blitz everyone on this play our success ratio plummets and our losses stack up. Also, Mombo and Combo defend us well.

## Quick Screen Left

Quick Screen Left

*We can burn the blitz with this one*



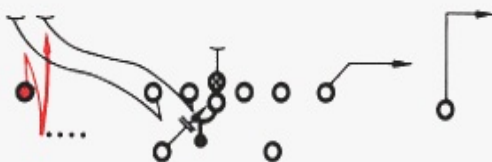
We will embarrass a lot of pass defenses with this quick screen to A. Our QB looks downfield, our O line holds their pass blocks a moment before sliding into the weakside flat to lead block for our halfback.

**Strength:** This screen isn't as powerful as the FB Screen Right, but its quickness beats even a Maximum Blitz. If their defense is shifted to the strong side they won't have enough men on the weakside to stop us.

**Weakness:** Short pass defenses, especially the X Combo shut this play down. Under Key Double and the 4-3 Man-to-Man will slow us, also.

## X Screen

X Screen



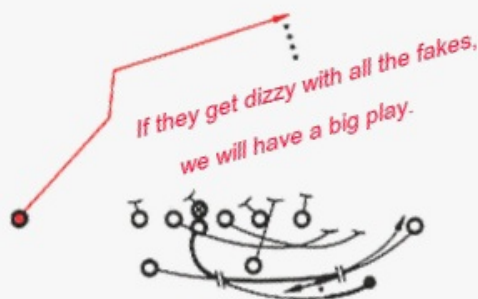
Another screen option to the weakside gives X a chance to get into the open field. He must drive the defense back with two hard steps, retreat back to receive a hard throw from our QB, then follow our weak side guard and tackle downfield.

**Strength:** We want them covering the strong side and going after our QB. If they are, X will make them pay.

**Weakness:** Weak side defenses plug us up whether they are in zone, double, or X Combo.

## Flea Flicker

Flea Flicker



*If they get dizzy with all the fakes, we will have a big play.*

This trick play gets X deep from the weak side. Our 2 back takes a hand off, but gives it to Z coming on a reverse, who in turn laterals it back to our QB. If all works well X will be open deep.

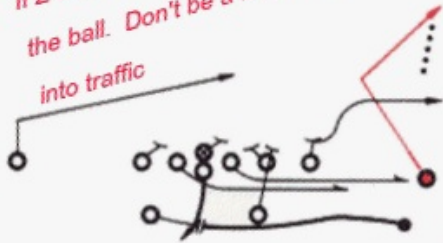
**Strength:** If they are up tight with Combo or Mombo this one will give us a great shot to get past the defense and to the end-zone. Also, this is our best chance to get deep from the weakside late in the half.

**Weakness:** We need time for our razzle-dazzle, so a Max Blitz blows our cover here. Also, double coverage will leave us no one to throw to. We can lose significant yards on this baby.

## HB Option Pass Right

HB Option Pass Right

If Z is covered the halfback should run the ball. Don't be a hero and throw into traffic



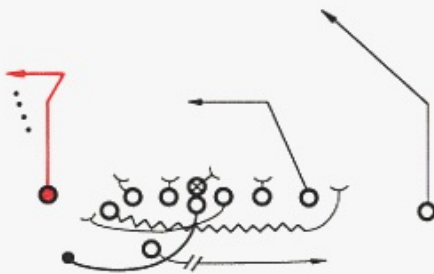
Another sleight of hand play- our 2 back takes the hand-off with sweep action, but pulls up and looks to throw to our flanker. Z blocks down before releasing in the pattern and hopefully gets behind the defense.

**Strength:** We do best against a weak zone, X Combo, and 4-3 Man. We can also surprise a short yardage formation and make big gains.

**Weakness:** If they have Z covered with a Mombo, Over Key Strong Zone, or a Double we are in danger. A man defense with a good rush will stop us, too. Since our 2 back is throwing we are risking the interception.

## Ace Float 28 X Square Out

Ace Float 28 X Square Out



We have 5 options in our play action pass package, and we begin with this medium range pass to X. We fake our 28 Sweep and roll our QB left with a pulling guard. X breaks to the sideline at 12 to 15 yards.

**Strength:** We like keying defenses which will respect our run action. If they are keying, they better double team X or we will expose them. Good against strong zones, too.

**Weakness:** We don't have much protection for our QB and this play develops slowly, so if they are blitzing or rushing right at us we have problems.

## Pass 49 Throwback

Pass 49 Throwback



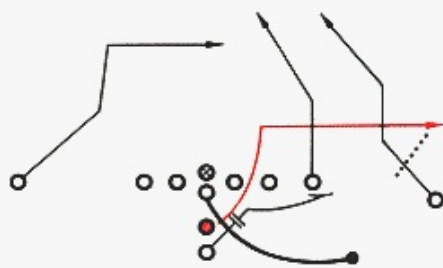
Here we fake our weakside sweep, roll our QB to the strong side and then throwback to the weakside. In effect we have another flood pass with three receivers to look at, but B is the primary target.

**Strength:** If they are favoring the strongside we will be open. We can also make sizeable gains against a weakside zone or when they double our wideouts.

**Weakness:** No protection and play-action delay makes us vulnerable to the blitz and a straight blast. X-Combo stifles us, too. If we force this into coverage and they pick it off we will pay dearly, maybe with six points.

## Pass 24 B Delay

Pass 24 B Delay



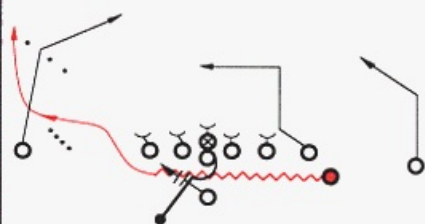
This time we fake our 24 Slam and slip our fullback into the right flat for a short pass. Our QB rolls right and releases it to B quickly.

**Strength:** We want to find them keying and back in pass coverage. Also, because of the quickness of this puppy, we can handle a blitz better and pop B for some extra yards. Good for picking up a short first down, too.

**Weakness:** Pressure up front makes it difficult for B to get into the pattern, and if they are sitting on a short pass we won't have much to work with. Throwing on the run is never easy, sometimes we run out of room and when accuracy decreases turnovers increase.

## Ace Float 37 U Shoot

Ace Float Pass 37 U Shoot



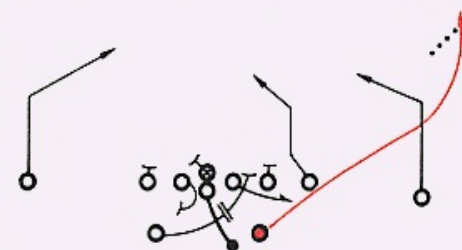
Now we fake our 37 Slant and get A into the flat quickly. Our QB fakes to the 3 back on a reverse pivot, comes to a stop, and fires to A in stride.

**Strength:** First this quick hitter gives us a nice short yardage option on the weakside. Next, we can beat the blitz and the blast to the punch and get the ball to A to see what he can do.

**Weakness:** We aren't often going to get a bundle, and we won't get much at all if they have extra people on the weakside.

## Pass 24 U Fly

Pass 24 B Fly



Not to be used within Opponent's 20 yd. line

Our final play-action pass is also our final long bomb. Our fake is the 2 back through the 4 hole, and our target is the U back long, out of the backfield, down the side line.

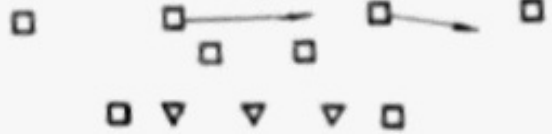
**Strength:** We want man-to-man coverage with their Sam linebacker having to chase after B. We can beat the X Combo and Double, and we can handle the blitz if we get the ball airborne and let U catch up to it.

**Weakness:** U isn't X or Z so if it comes down to zone coverage we are not going to win many jump balls. The Mombo will shut us down cold, also.

## Defense:

### 3-4 Key Mombo

*We have three D-backs  
working the strong side*



**Formation:** Our 3-4 set gives us a lineman over their center and one over each tackle. 4 linebackers give us a lot of quickness on the field.

**Key:** Our men up front are reacting to the offensive movement--"keying". They interpret the flow of the play and react accordingly.

**Mombo:** Our safeties roll to the strong side to provide strong side run support and combination coverage on Z and Y.

**Characteristics:** Overall the Mombo gives us average run defense which is better to the strong side. We don't have that much bulk up front with only three linemen, but our 4 linebackers will chase down a lot of sweeps. Mombo gives us good coverage on short passes (esp. To Z) and on medium passes to both Z and Y. Because we are "keying", play-action causes problems, and we are up too tight to cover long passes well.

### 4-2 Key Safety X Combo



**Formation:** We call this formation 4-2 because we have two linebackers in the gaps between our tackles and ends and no middle linebacker. Sam our strong side linebacker plays head up on Y. We are "keying" up front.

**Safety X Combo:** Our weakside safety rolls up on the weakside to assist with run support and to combine with our corner back on X, helping underneath.

**Characteristics:** With X Combo we are really crowding the line of scrimmage, and playing tough pass coverage up tight. We do well against a variety of running plays, short passes, and most throws to X. The deeper their pass routes the weaker our coverage becomes, we are poor on passes across the middle, and because of a slow pass rush and tight coverage up front, we are especially vulnerable to deep passes.

### 4-3 Key Man to Man



**Formation:** Here is our most basic formation with four interior linemen, three linebackers, two safeties, and two corner backs.

**Man-To-Man:** Our corner backs are man up on X and Z, our strong safety has Y, Sam and Will have A and B respectively, and our free safety and middle linebacker lend pass coverage support.

**Characteristics:** Our run defense is not strong in this set. We are especially vulnerable to mis-direction plays because we are keying on their initial movements. Our pass defense is not exceptional, but we do a pretty good job on long balls with the 4-3 Man. This defense is not going to stuff them many times, but it keeps us balanced and it does a pretty good job of preventing the big play.

## 4-3 Over Key Strong Zone



*There are seams in the zone which can be exploited.*

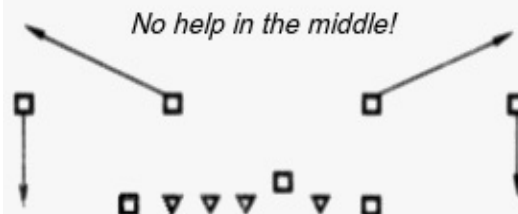
**Formation:** Our "Over" set is created by shifting our defensive line over to the strong side. As a result we have a nose tackle over the center and a tackle and end on the offense's right side. Then, we have two linebackers to the left of the center and one to the right.

**Strong Zone:** Our safeties rotate to the offense's strong side and our right corner plays the strong side flat. Our backside linebackers try to help cover on the weakside.

**Characteristics:** We will do well on strong side runs, but poor when they head to the weakside. Our strong zone pass defense gives us a lot of positives. We take away their long ball, cover Y across the middle, and make it difficult for them to utilize Z. However, we have a tough time with X and A on the weakside, and the Y Straight will find the seams in our coverage. Flood passes and play-action are also problematic.

**Formation:** We call this a 3-4, but a 3-3 would be a better name. We remove one lineman so we have three big guys up front, supported by three linebackers, and then add a "nickelback" so that we have 5 DB's.

## 4-3 Under Key Double



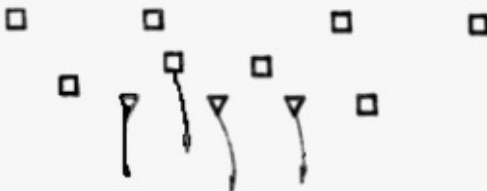
*No help in the middle!*

**Formation:** Now we are going to shift over to the weakside-"Under". We have three linemen and a linebacker up on the line to the offensive left side. On the strong side we have a down lineman and another linebacker crowding the line.

**Double:** This is a unique pass coverage where we "double" both X and Z with a corner back and safety. We leave Sam with the responsibility of staying with Y.

**Characteristics:** Our run defense is good weakside, but exposed strong side. In pass coverage our success is somewhat predictable. If they go to their wideouts they're going to have company around the ball. But, if they are looking for A,B, or especially Y, then they'll have us in a mismatch. Our under shift gives us help in the weakside flat, but it leaves us wanting on strong side play action and flood patterns.

## 3-4 Blast Man to Man

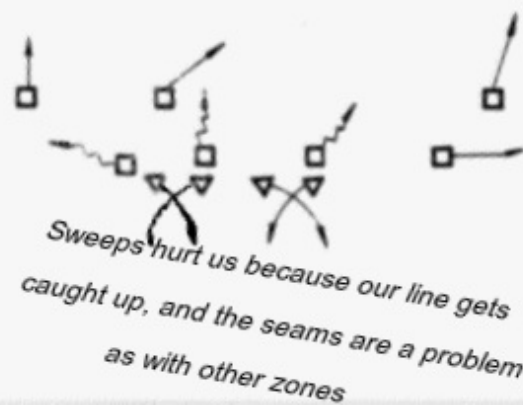


**Formation:** Our basic formation with man-to-man pass defense

**Blast:** Our linemen come off the line of scrimmage on the snap and "blast". They are looking to penetrate and put pressure on the QB first, and react to the run second.

**Characteristics:** Unless our penetration catches them in the backfield we get burned by the run on the blast. We won't get to the QB fast enough on short passes and screens, but our pass rush gives us a lot of advantages. We cover them deep, we do pretty well with medium range passes, and we have an answer for the flood package with this defense.

## 4-2 Nickel Twist Strong Zone

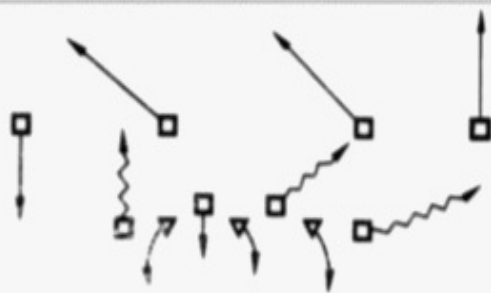


**Twist:** Our defensive line goes after the quarterback with a "Twist" stunt. Our ends take an inside path and our tackles loop to the outside. We hope to lose a blocker or two in the mix-up and break someone free onto the QB.

**Characteristics:** If they are running the ball we hope they pick a hole that one of our tackles are hitting, otherwise we have problems. If they sweep we are going to be slow getting to them because our linemen are tangled up. This pass defense is good against any type of long pass. We stop the tight end and the flood across the middle, and cover Z- short, medium, and long. The Y Straight and screen passes hurt us, and short and medium weakside throws will be tough to defend.

**Formation:** Our basic formation with man-to-man pass defense

## 3-4 Plug Weak Zone



**Formation:** We bring in a fourth linebacker and show them a 3-4 with a weakside zone.

**Plug:** We send our linemen and one linebacker in hard to "plug" the gaps and get after the QB with a strong interior rush.

**Characteristics:** We handle their weakside running game well with this defense, but it is another story on the strong side of the ball. In pass coverage we handle the weakside well, and the middle pretty well, but we have trouble on the backside of our zone with Z, the rollout flood and the fullback screen.

## 3-4 Linebacker Blitz



**Formation:** A 4-3 with man pass defense.

**Sam-Will Blitz:** A blitz is when we send our linemen and linebackers after the QB. Sam is the strong side linebacker over the tight end, and Will is the weakside backer.

**Characteristics:** This isn't our best running defense, but it is not too bad. We will bottle up a lot of sweeps because our outside linebackers will disrupt them in the backfield. Our pass rush with man coverage pays off on rollouts and floods. We compete hard with medium and most long routes, but we have trouble with B and Y going long. The Z Slant and screen passes can hurt us if we don't get enough pressure to the QB.

## 4-2 Nickel Max Blitz

*We only have three guys in coverage*



*We will pressure them in the backfield*

**Formation:** A 4-3 with man pass defense, but we only keep 3 defenders back.

**Maximum Blitz:** This is the ultimate pressure defense as we send our linemen, all three linebackers and our weak safety hard into, and hopefully through their line to their backfield.

**Characteristics:** We will smash a lot of runs before they get started, but we can get hurt, too. Draw plays, quick end runs, and quick runs up the middle can allow big yardage. We will beat their pass plays if it takes them long to deliver the pass. We are tough on long bombs, but if they get a little time they will run a long way. We do well with medium throws except for Y across the middle. On short passes we will get some sacks, but we will allow sizeable gains, too. We have the most trouble with Z on the slant. With play action we are pretty tough, but again they can hurt us, too. If we don't get to the QB on screens we will pay big time. We will usually get to him on the fullback screen, but not on the quicker one to the halfback.

## 3-4 Nickel Prevent



**Formation:** We call this a 3-4, but a 3-3 would be a better name. We remove one lineman so we have three big guys up front, supported by three linebackers, and then add a "nickleback" so that we have 5 DB's.

**Prevent:** "Prevent" describes our goal here. We want to prevent the long pass play. We will give them stuff underneath, but we don't want them to get deep on us.

**Characteristics:** We will use this late in the half when they need a lot of yardage quick. Therefore, we are not concerned that they will run the ball for 6, 8, 10+ yards on us. Also, screens, play action, and short passes will get them their yards, so we need to be patient and stop the big play. They will pick up 10-20 yards on medium passes, though we will take away the middle flood. Even with the long bomb they will have some success, but we will catch it as often as they will.

## Short Yardage

*We put alot of toughness up front*

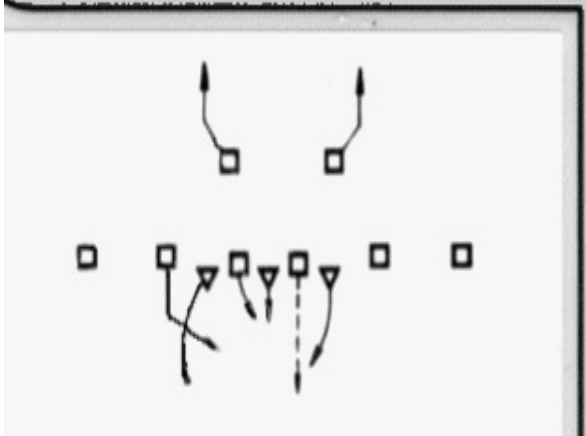


**Formation:** Six interior lineman pack each gap and Sam is head up on Y in our short yardage set. We have two more linebackers to support on the run, and our two corner backs are playing very tight on their wideouts.

**Use:** By rule we can only use this set on third or fourth down and one or two yards for a first down. Or, anytime they are on our three yard line or closer.

**Characteristics:** Unless they come quick and with power they are going to have trouble getting a yard or two. They are not going to do much better with drop back passes. Shorter play action passes will give them a good success ratio, and they can pick up some big numbers if they execute a HE Option or the Flea Flicker.

## 3-4 Buck 1-2 Yale M / M



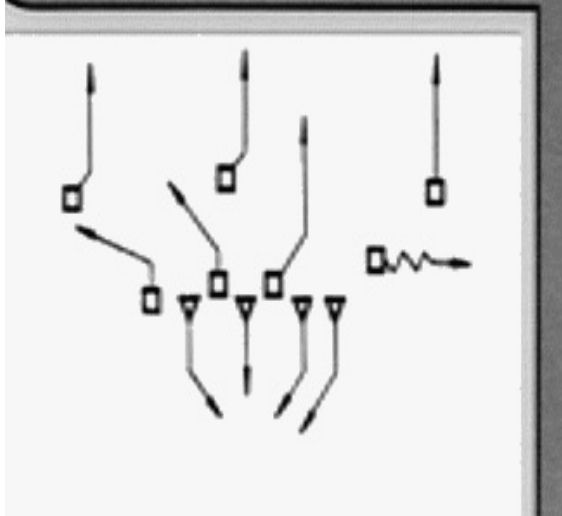
**Formation:** A 3-4 front with our corners up tight.

**Characteristics:** Solid run defense up and down the line, but the 20 Draw can hurt us up the middle. Good against short passes including screens, not bad on deeper routes as well. Vulnerable on the sidelines and deeper corners. Z and H Corner give us problems. B Fly is a handful, and the B Delay is trouble.

**Comparison to 3-4 Line Backer Blitz:** LB Blitz is tighter on runs, especially around the end, but the 3-4 Buck gives us an advantage against many passes.

**Comparison to 3-4 Blast Man-to-Man:** Buck is much better against the run, but the Blast gives us much better pass coverage in the middle and deep secondary.

## K.C. (Front) Strong Zone

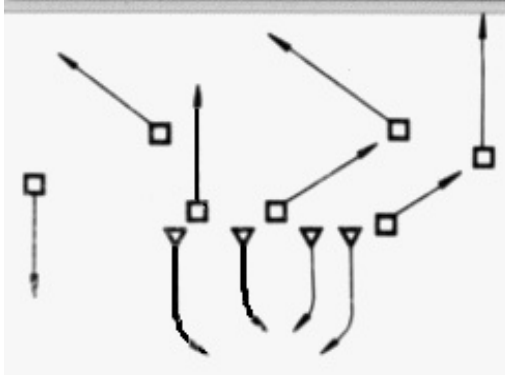


**Formation:** Our "KC" Front has four lineman and a linebacker up close in a 3-4 set-up, along with our strong safety cheating up.

**Characteristics:** This is a solid defense against strong side runs, but vulnerable to the weak side. Our pass defense is somewhat risky with our tightly packed front, and stunts. We do well on short passes to the strong side, and especially against the A/B Divide. Also, we will pick off our share of deep balls. However, we have serious issues with the H Corner, Shot Gun X-In, other mid range passes across the middle, and with short passes to the weak side.

**Comparison to Over Key Strong Zone:** On the run the KC Front has an advantage over the Over Key on the 20 Fold only. On the other hand, the KC Front is inferior on runs at the 4 and 6 holes. The KC give us a few advantages over the Over Key Zone on passes. From the "black" it handles the X-Hook well, and the Y Straight won't hurt so much. From the "blue" the KC Front gives us some tight coverage when the offense tries to slip one in on the short (right) side of the field. However, X can hurt us bad on the Hook and the In. In the "red" the KC Front has trouble handling the variety of options the offense has, and the Over Key covers better on the Y Cross, Z Out, X Hook, X Cross and Y Straight.

## 44 Weak Rotation



**Formation:** Base 4-3 set-up

**Weak Rotation:** Secondary rotates to the weakside, and brings weak side cornerback up on run support

**Characteristics:** Decent run defense between the tackles, with extra support on weakside sweeps. Pass coverage is strong on weak side, but handles the middle well when the ball is on "blue" hash mark. We have trouble with H Corner and Z Corner, as well as other strong side passes to Z.

**Comparison to 3-4 Plug Weak Zone:**

Better on many runs than 3-4 Plug because we are not over shifted. Generally weaker than the Plug against the pass. In the "blue" we cover the middle better, but the sidelines worse. In the "red" the Weak Rotation is very vulnerable to Z, but it does handle the Shot Gun X-In better than the Plug.

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### Also: Defense Short Summaries (after index)

## Defense Short Summaries

**Key Mombo:** Average run defense, good on short passes (esp. to Z) and on medium passes to Z and Y. Below average on long passes and play action.

**Safety X Combo:** Good defense against the run and on short passes (esp. to X). Good on medium passes (esp. to X), but poor on floods and long passes (esp. to Z).

**4-3 Key Man-to-Man:** A basic, balanced defense. Not strong against runs and especially vulnerable to misdirection. Average pass defense, best against X and long ball.

**4-3 Blast Man-to-Man:** Poor against runs and below average on short passes and screens. Good on longer passes and flood package.

**4-2 Nickel Max Blitz:** Risk- reward defense. Very good on most runs, and good on medium and long passes. However, quick hitting runs and short passes will hurt us. Plus, if they do complete longer passes they will go along way.

**3-4 Linebacker Blitz:** Average on runs, better against sweeps. Above average on medium and long passes including floods and roll outs, below average on short passing game and against Y.

**3-4 Buck 1-2 Yale Man-to-Man:** Another stunting defense. Good against most runs, best on weak side, worst up the middle. Tight pass coverage short, plus strong pass rush. Poor against corner routes.

**4-3 Over Key Strong Zone:** Runs- good on strong side, bad on weak side. Good pass coverage against Z and very good on longer balls. Trouble with “Straight”, floods, play action, and weak side passes.

**4-2 Nickel Twist Strong Zone:** Poor on most runs, especially sweeps. Tough on Z, most strong side passes and all long balls. Vulnerable to “Straight”, short passes, and play-action.

**KC (Front) Strong Zone:** Average run defense, better on strong side. Tough against short passes except to weak side. Not bad against long ball, but very shaky against mid range passes.

**Under Key Double:** Good against weak side runs, but not strong side. Tough pass coverage on wide-outs X and Z, but leaves Y, A, B with room to catch and run, especially on strong side.

**3-4 Plug Weak Zone:** Good against weak side runs- strong side is another story. Tough pass coverage on weak side and on long range passes. Floods, play action, and short passes to strong side are trouble.

**44 Weak Rotation:** Run defense good on weak side edge, decent between tackles, and wanting on strong side edge. Pass defense is solid on weak side, but has trouble with Z and corners on both sides.

**3-4 Nickel Prevent:** Good on long passes when they are in a hurry. Vulnerable to runs, medium passes.

**Short Yardage:** Very good on runs and short passes, and not bad on medium and longer passes. Can be beat with play action, and beat bad by some trick plays (See limits to use of this defense).

