

## **Stressing the Line of Scrimmage with a Multiple 4-3 Defense**

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University of North Carolina  
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It is a great honor and privilege for our defensive staff to be asked to speak at the American Football Coaches Association convention. We appreciate the opportunity to represent the University of North Carolina and Head Coach Mack Brown. Coach Ron Case, our secondary coach, Kenny Browning, our defensive tackle coach, Donnie Thompson, our defensive end coach, and Carl Torbush, (who coaches the linebackers and coordinates the defense) hope we can share a few thoughts, ideas, and philosophies that you can integrate into your defensive package.

There is no question the reason for our defensive success at Carolina is that we have great athletes. They have excellent size, strength, quickness and speed. Plus they have a tremendous desire and pride in being successful.

At the University of North Carolina, we attempt to "stress the offense" by placing as many defensive players at or around the line of scrimmage as possible. To do this we place a great deal of confidence and pressure on our cornerbacks to play man coverage.

Before getting into our defensive scheme I would like to share our defensive philosophy with you. In developing a philosophy, we believe you must want to be known for something. We want to be known for being relentless. Our defensive philosophy has 13 points we feel are important.

### **Carolina Defensive Philosophy Relentless**

1. "Stress the Offense" mentality pressure and attack defense.
  - A. Stem
  - B. Disguise
  - C. Blitz
2. Look complicated with multiple fronts and disguises, but be simple with technique, alignment and assignment.
3. Stress the importance of "three and out" series and getting off the field.
4. Do not give up a touchdown after sudden change situations.
5. Get the most productive speed and ability on the field.
6. Disrupt the offense with aggressive vertical take-off.
7. Have a great awareness of run/pass down situation.
8. Create turnovers.
9. Dominate, make the big play with consistency.
10. Create indecision by the offense by pressing and stressing line of scrimmage. and receivers.
11. Isolate the offense's individual liabilities and emphasize our strengths.
12. Develop "win every play" mentality ... urgency.
13. Play with excitement, enthusiasm, effort ... have fun ... enjoy the game.

After developing your philosophy as a defensive staff we feel it is important to have a teaching defense that will enable you to progress to multiple defenses. At Carolina we have practice objectives that we strive to accomplish each fall and spring.

### **Theory of Carolina Multiple Defense**

Our teaching defense will be an eagle with a two-deep (seven-man front) concept using a three-deep (eight-man front) concept using a three-deep (eight-man front) concept as a change-up. 60-75 percent of our coverage package will be man.

#### **A. Eagle**

1. Must have a defense that is sound regardless of the formation and type of offense you are playing.
2. Gap control/option responsibilities are predetermined before the snap of the football.
3. Able to teach stance/alignments/ assignments and good solid technique as a defensive unit.
4. Continue to be an aggressive, attacking defense, but still sound against the option attack.
5. Able to become multiple after we learn our base one gap control defense.

#### **B. Progression to Multiple Front**

1. Gives us an opportunity to put our players in the best position for success.
2. Keeps us from getting consistently outmanned.
3. Eliminates multiple blocking schemes.
4. Gives us the ability to adjust to any type offense. Two-back: veer, wishbone, trap, power, pass. One-back: zone, traps, draws, pass.
5. Cuts down on play selection.
6. Have the ability to be gap control, but also upfield aggressive.

**C. Practice Objectives**

1. Know each player's and position's abilities — what they can and cannot do well.
2. Play with excitement, enthusiasm, and great effort every play. Run to the ball.

Practice stunting full speed so that it is a natural reaction.

3. Teach great technique.

- A). Stance
- B). Movements
- C). Tackling

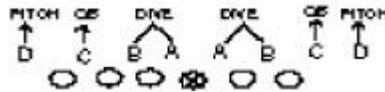
4. Have a good understanding of our scheme gap control/align — assignments.

5. Solid two-deep at each position.

6. How much man-to-man can we play when needed? Would like 60-70 percent man.

7. Leave each practice with great confidence and excitement about playing defense at Carolina.

We will always be a gap control defense and have option responsibilities on any defense we play.

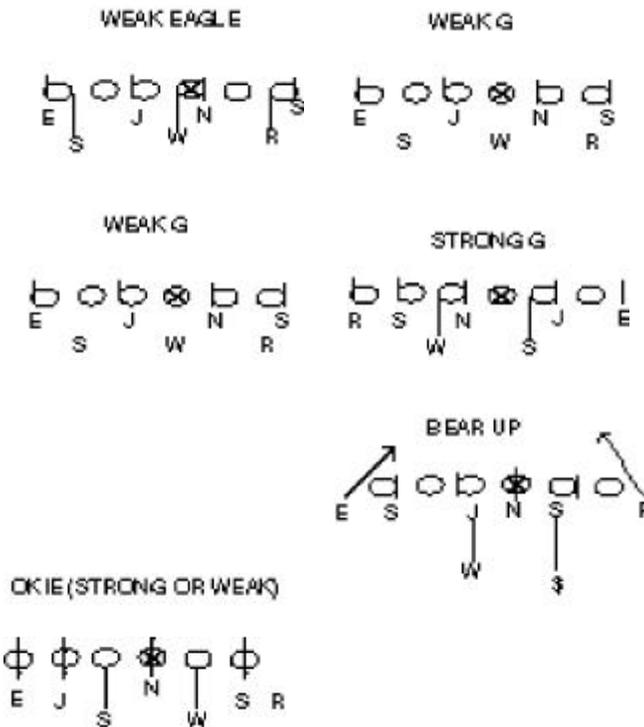


As you can see from the diagram above if you are aligned in the A or B gap, you have dive; if you are aligned in the C gap, you have the quarterback; if you are aligned in the D gap, you have pitch. Exception: Loose six tech will be a quarterback/alley player not a pitch player).

We flip our entire front. The nose (tackle), stud (end), and rover (outside linebacker) always go to the call side. The junk (tackle), Ed (end) and Sam (outside linebacker) go away from the call. The Willie (middle linebacker) makes the call (right or left) and aligns accordingly.

**Multiple Fronts**

We have four base fronts that we use. These four fronts, with the ability to penetrate or cross face from each position, give us a very multiple package from which to pull a game plan.

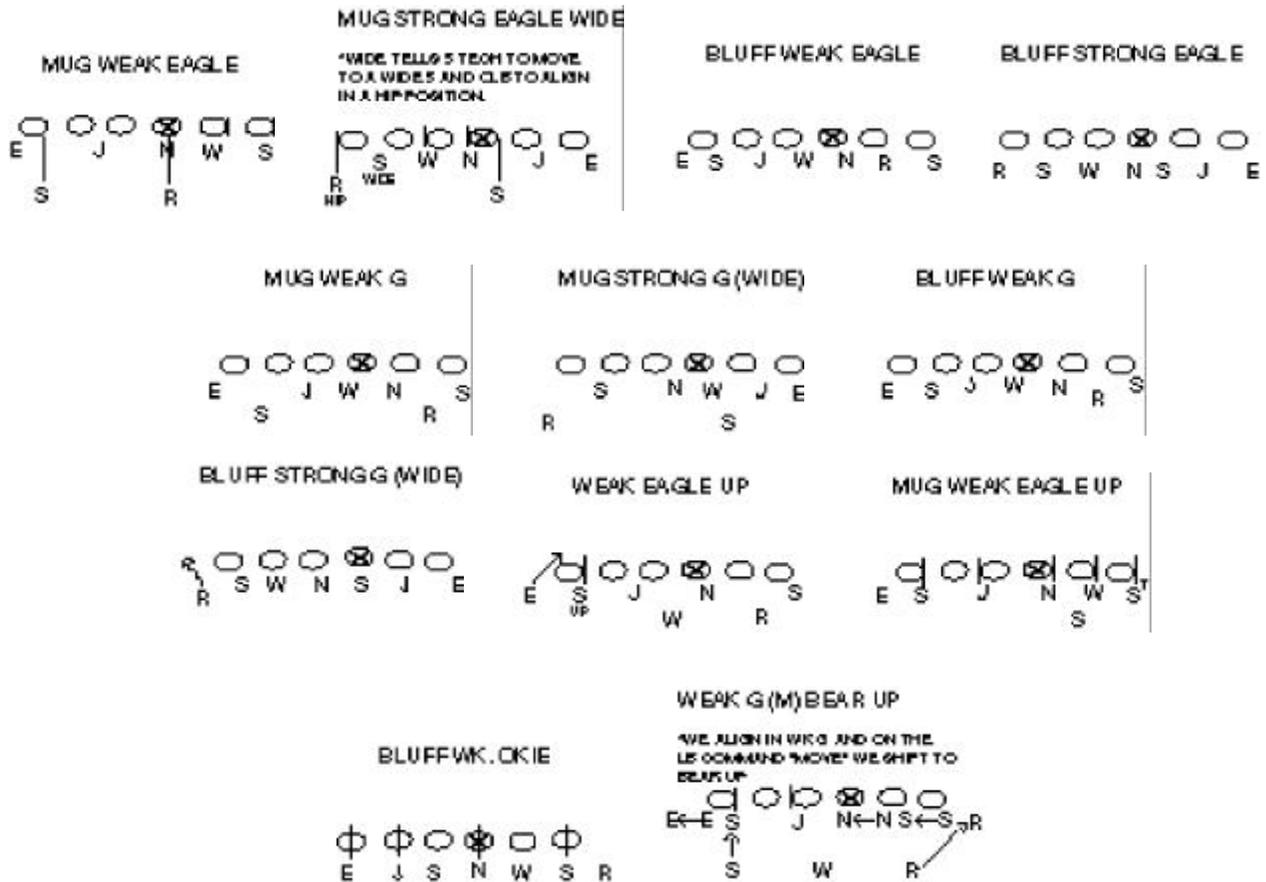


To truly stress the line of scrimmage we have the ability to move our linebacker to the line of scrimmage. We do this with disguise calls. By moving our linebackers to the line of scrimmage, we always have the possibility of stunting. This really stresses the quarterback and offensive line.

**Bluff:** Tells all three linebackers to press the line of scrimmage basically in their strongside gap control. As they gain experience and knowledge, they can vary their alignment depending on sets and coverage.

**Mug:** Tells the middle linebacker (Willie) to “mug” or line-up on the uncovered guard or center. The outside linebacker to that side will slide inside.

**Up:** Tells the outside linebacker to the tight end side to line up (outside eye to inside eye to eye) on the tight end. Also tells defensive end to tight end side to move out wide.



As you can see, the ability to get in four different fronts, the ability to give multiple movement off of each front, the ability to stress the line of scrimmage with the linebackers creates tremendous stress and pressure on the offense.

### Cover-One Description (Man Free)

**Technique:** Man (Hands/Switch)

**Stance:** Feet inside your shoulders/ cocked (Tight end)

**Alignment:** Head up/three and five (Tight end)

**Key:** Tight end/Wide receiver

**Responsibilities:** Run strong, support the D-gap. Run weak, check No. 22 for pass (play-action), cutback and pursuit.

Pass: **Switch call vs. pro set (tight end). Tight end releases outside, the strong safety will take him.**

Free safety is free.

Tight end release inside, the free safety will take him.

Strong safety is free.

On twins, we play cornerbacks over to match skill on skill and put the strong safety on the weak tight end. Free safety is free.

Twins open (two backs) we match up cornerbacks on the wideouts and strong safety on No. 2 (inside). Free safety is free.

One-back sets, we match up our best skill with their best.

### Free Safety

**Technique:** Switch/Free

**Stance:** Feet inside shoulders (switch) and staggered.

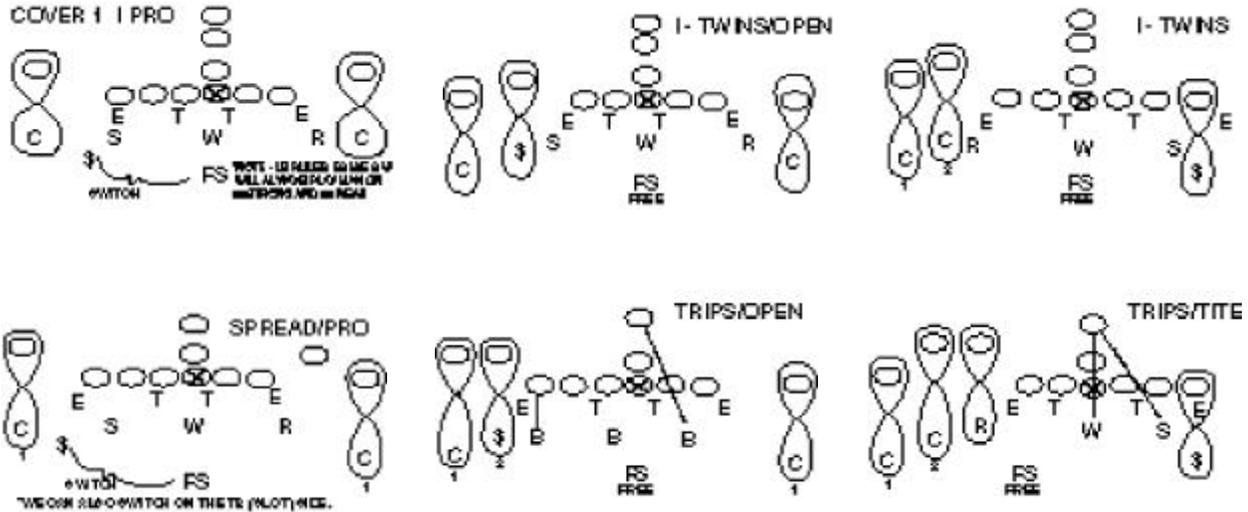
**Alignment:** A gap (weak) A-B-C (strong) 10-12 yards deep.

**Key:** Quarterback/Tight end

**Responsibilities:** Run strong alley pursuit. Run weak alley D-gap.  
 Pass Switch call vs. pro set (tight end). Tight end releases, inside free safety will take him.  
 Strong safety is free,  
 Tight end releases outside, strong safety will take him.  
 Free safety is free.  
 On twins (two backs) or any one back sets the free safety is free.

**Cornerbacks**

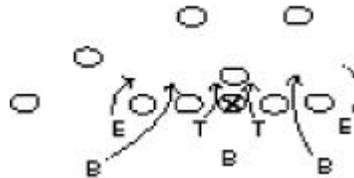
**Technique:** Man (hands).  
**Stance:** Feet inside shoulders.  
**Alignment:** Head up.  
**Key:** Wide receiver.  
**Responsibilities:** Run, wide receiver blocks me — contain. Wide receiver cracks inside — replace.  
 Pass — cover your man!!



The attacking pressure philosophy of our defense has been enhanced by the ability of our secondary to play man coverage. We have used a variety of base five- and six-man pressures, playing man free and straight man behind them. If we do not blitz, we often show blitz and play different combinations of man from our zone coverages.

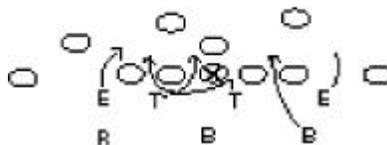
Some of our five and six and stunts involve line twists or deals and may be run with the linebackers on or off the line of scrimmage. The system for calling the pressures is simple but gives us much flexibility in our stunt game.

**Example:** Tex. Sends both outside linebackers through the B gap. May be used with or without a twist between the defensive tackles.

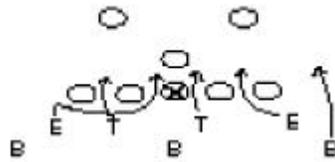


Obviously, a Tex stunt to either outside linebacker can be called to create a five man stunt.

**Example:** Sam Tex/Twist.

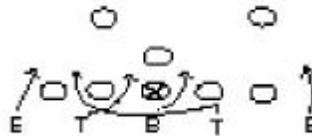


**Example:** D. Sends both outside linebackers outside as D gap rushers. The D stunt may be used with or without a line stunt by the defensive ends and tackles.



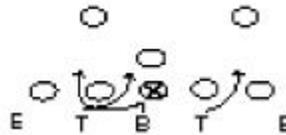
The middle linebacker can be involved with a number of inside stunts involving the defensive tackles also.

**Example:** Twist.



The middle linebacker and three technique penetrate the A gaps while the two technique flashes to the opposite B gap.

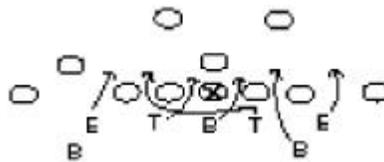
**Example:** Trade Blaze.



The defensive tackles use a cross face movement and penetrate the A and B gaps respectively, while the middle linebacker flashes to the B gap vacated by the penetrating three technique.

All of these stunts have been effective for us when used as single stunts or when used in combinations.

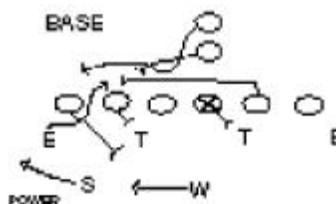
**Example:** Twirl/ Sam D.



**Defensive End: Base, WAR, Wide Techniques vs. Power Run Game in C-D Gap Area of our Defense**

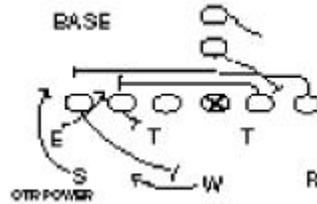
**Base Techniques:** Block protection vs. counter power blocking schemes we face here at UNC. In our defensive end's teaching progression, we talk in terms and coaching points of inside and outside leveraging of blocking schemes, i.e.: Going under the blocks, make the ball bounce vs. boxing the play or containing the ball.

Base rule for our five technique or nine technique end on the tight end or offensive tackle down block are the same. Defensive ends will attack the inside "V" of the offensive lineman or near-back neck area, on all gap schemes.



**Block Schemes We Face vs. the Power Off-Tackle or Counter Power.**

**Coaching Point:** We friction tight end, we want to flatten tight end's blocking angle on middle linebacker first. With our hands, run over tight end's rib cage, attacking inside "V" of next inside threat. Vs. the power play, that is backside offensive guard.

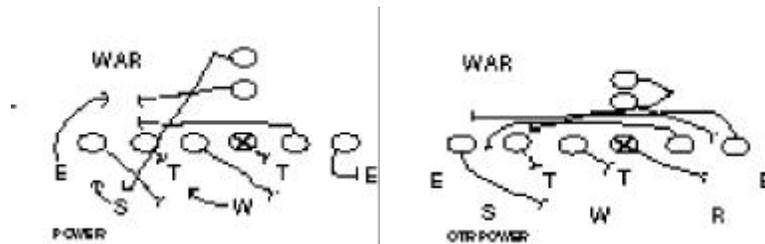


**Defensive End Teaching Progression**

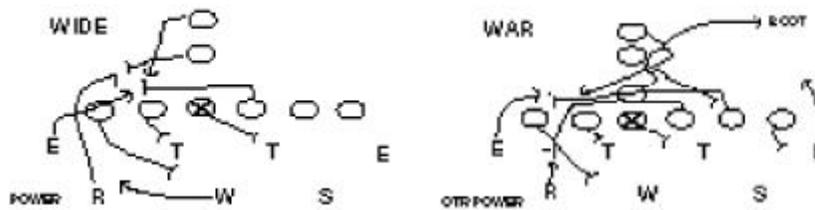
1. Friction tight end.
2. Attack inside threats.
3. Go north to ball.

**WAR Technique:** Goes hand in hand with base five tech and nine tech for our ends. WAR means Widen And Rush, WAR gives our ends freedom to be more athletic.

1. WAR allows them to attack the line of scrimmage vertically.
2. Alignment is wider than base.
3. Their target and keys are near back or triangle in backfield and not tight end or offensive tackle as in base technique.
4. Assignments must maintain outside leverage on all block schemes.



**Wide Tech:** Is an integration of WAR tech and base tech for defensive end's end. We show offenses a WAR alignment, but we play base assignment.



**Coaching Points**

1. Defensive end aligns wider on offensive tackle or tight end.
2. Defensive end's target, or key, is the offensive tackle or tight end for block scheme, the same as in base techniques but from a WAR alignment.

In conclusion, at UNC we keep it simple for defensive ends but make it look multiple for the quarterbacks and offensive coordinators. With base, WAR, and wide tech we feel we have to change up the corner to make the offense guess which we are playing. We like to dictate instead of anticipate!

As you can see, the ability to get into four different fronts, the ability to stress the line of scrimmage with our linebackers and the ability to give multiple movements and stunts gives us an unlimited package from which to pull out the best "stress" defense for each opponent. Hopefully, you have been able to pick up several thoughts and ideas that you can incorporate within your scheme. All of us at Carolina thank you for the opportunity to share. Good luck and God bless in 1997.