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“There is no last move in strategic and military competition.”

- Professor Colin S. Gray

## INTRODUCTION: Adapting the Wing-T to Youth Football

I have written this brief playbook in answer to a number of requests for a good, sound system of Wing-T football for youth players. I have tried to make this offense a true "sub-system" of the classic Delaware Wing-T offense as it has been adapted over the years, using formation terminology and play numbering consistent with those used by most Wing-T coaches who have followed the Delaware system.

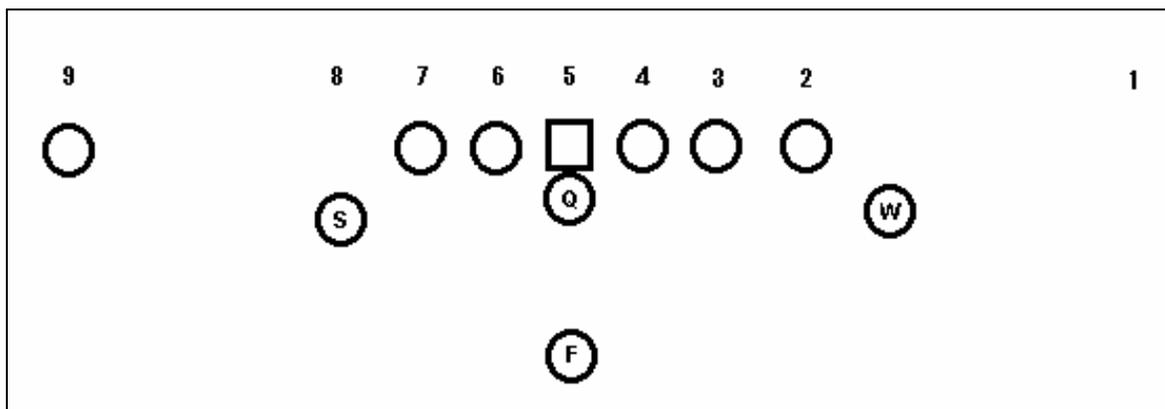
I have also, however, made use of two of the most important offensive innovations of the last several decades -- the Jet Sweep series and the Rocket Sweep series. Older teams may decide to run both series as part of an expanded Wing-T attack, but I strongly recommend that youth coaches who are looking at this playbook do so with the intention of using EITHER the Jet OR the Rocket as their "speed sweep" series. For this reason, I have numbered both the Jet and the Rocket series in this playbook as the "20" series. Again, for youth coaches this should be an either/or proposition.

The rest of the offense includes the classic Delaware 80 series, in this case including both the Belly and the Down sequences of plays, allowing coaches to attack off-tackle either to the TE/WB side or the Slot/SE side of the formation. In both cases, I have added recent innovations in the form of the Belly Sweep and Down Sweep as used by Washington's Bellevue High School and other leading practitioners of the modern Wing-T. These plays allow you to get outside when defenses squeeze down on the C gap from outside, just as the complements to the Jet and Rocket sweeps allow you to attack inside when the defense tries to stop the speed sweep.

Finally, the passing game is a simple one, but can be expanded as desired. I urge coaches to install and perfect the plays which appear here before they start broadening the playbook too much, however. The plays listed in the 10 (Sprint) series will go a long way toward defeating opponents without adding anything else, and focusing your passing game and pass-action runs (13 Down Special, p. 32; 16 Belly, p. 33; and 18 Down, p. 35) on so few plays will allow you to perfect the other aspects of your offense.

In all, I recommend these 13-15 plays to you as a complete, powerful youth offense. Again, teach them well and you will go much further than teams which try to install 50-60 plays without mastering any of them. The premise behind the Wing-T is that series-based football keeps the defense guessing for that crucial half-second after the snap as to the eventual location of the football. If you teach perfect execution of these plays, the offense and its decades of refinement will take care of the rest.

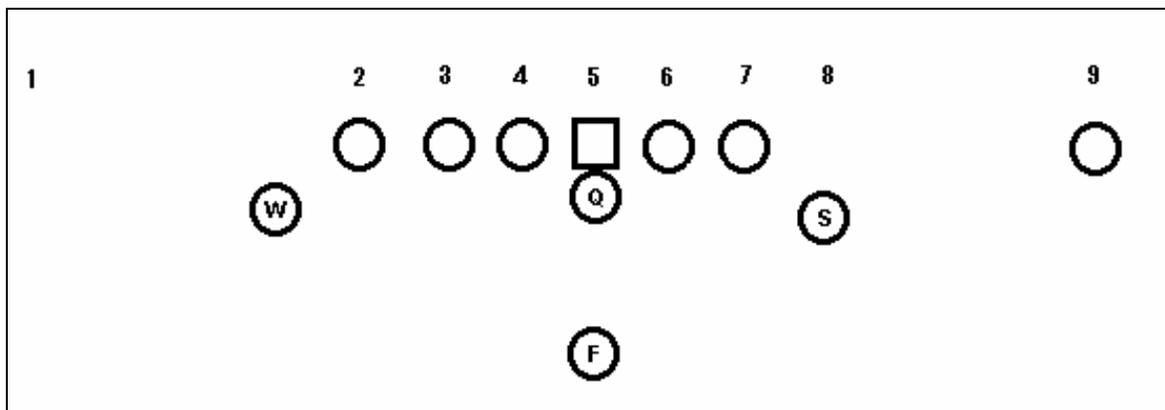
## THE WING-T SYSTEM



RED FORMATION

Although the modern Wing-T system is a multi-formation complex, I strongly recommend that youth coaches stick with one formation, known universally as Red (when the TE and WB are aligned to the Right) and Blue (when the TE and WB align Left). This will allow your players to adapt to and learn the system much more quickly, without causing you any additional problems such as giving away useful keys to the defense.

I also recommend that coaches above the 7-8 year old level install both Red and Blue formation, and that they do so by flipping all personnel except the Center, QB and Fullback to the other side of the formation. This way players stay in the same relative alignment to each other, and, more importantly, cut their play learning task in half. It is much, much easier for the 3 Tackle (who always line up inside the TE) to learn how to block the same play to his right in Blue formation and to his left in Red formation than it is for him to always remain the Right Tackle and have to learn different assignments for blocking the same play from Red and from Blue formation. If you use both Red and Blue, flip-flop your personnel. (Note: I have diagramed all plays in Red formation for the benefit of those coaching the "bobbleheads.")



BLUE FORMATION

Since there is only one formation in use, coaches can omit the first digit in the classic Delaware Wing-T numbering system, which stands for the formation. This means you can either call "Red" or "Blue" in the huddle, followed by a two-digit play number, or else you can just decide that you will set either the TE or the SE to the width of the field, and just call the two-digit play number. This latter system is especially useful if you are using a no-huddle system.

Plays are numbered by series in the Wing-T, and the plays in this book follow suit:

<u>10 (Sprint) Series:</u>	<u>Page</u>
11 Flood	30
12 Fade	31
13 Down Special	32
16 Belly	33
17 Go	34
18 Down	35
19 Stick	36
 <u>{20 (Jet Sweep) Series:</u>	
21/29 Jet Sweep	8
24/26 Jet Dive	10
28 Jet Waggle	12
23/27 Jet Slam	13
22 Jet Reverse	15
 <u>20 (Rocket Sweep) Series:</u>	
21/29 Rocket Sweep	16
22/28 Rocket Belly Sweep	18
23/27 Rocket Belly	20
24 Tackle Trap	22
25 Waggle	23}
 <u>80 (Belly/Down) Series:</u>	
80 Down Pass	29
81 Down Sweep	28
82 Down	27
84 Tackle Trap	26
87 Belly	24
89 Belly Sweep	25

Youth teams that choose either the Jet Sweep or the Rocket Sweep as their 20 series will therefore run a total of 13-15 plays. Older teams that choose to use both will have a 19-play repertoire, and of course can also choose to expand the passing game (i.e., both the 10 series and play-action passes for each of the three run-based series).

## PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS

Split End: This is ideally not a position for Smurfs -- the split end should have a bit of size and blocking ability, as well as the kind of football quickness that will help him gain separation from man defenders. He will normally split from the OT by about 10-12 yards (although we can line him up as close as 1 yard outside the OT, and can even replace him in that position with a second TE).

Tight End: A prototypical tight end, big, strong and a good blocker with hands. Not too many deep pass routes for him, but plenty of angle blocks on linemen and backers in the defensive core.

Wingback: Speed kills. This should be the fastest man on your team who can catch a football. I believe fast people can be taught how to run the speed sweep well, but you can't teach good runners speed. Like the SE, the WB must be able to block downfield, although he is called on more often to drive a defender deep, then screen him off from the ball once he reacts up to the run.

Fullback: The key to your running game. Once defenses unbalance themselves to shut down the speed sweeps, you have to be able to hurt them with dives and traps up the middle and off-tackle to the FB. He is also the heart and soul of the 80 series, so choose carefully. Smaller and quicker can work as well as bigger and stronger, but you want that great forward lean when running with the ball, as well as someone who "smells the goal line" when you get down close to the end zone.

Slotback: A good, tough runner with a bit of speed fills the bill very nicely. Good hands are a big advantage as well.

Quarterback: Lots of faking and ball-handling, and some passing. If you have a good runner who is also your best passer, you can play him here -- but if your best and fastest runner can pass a bit, put him in at wingback and install an option pass for him.

Tackles (3 and 7): Rarely asked to block more than one gap over (down blocks and cut-offs), limited pulling or trapping (24/84 Tackle Trap). Should be your biggest, strongest linemen.

Guards (4 and 6): Your premier pullers and trappers. Should be big and strong enough to serve in the middle of the wedge with the Center. They should also master down and cut-off blocks.

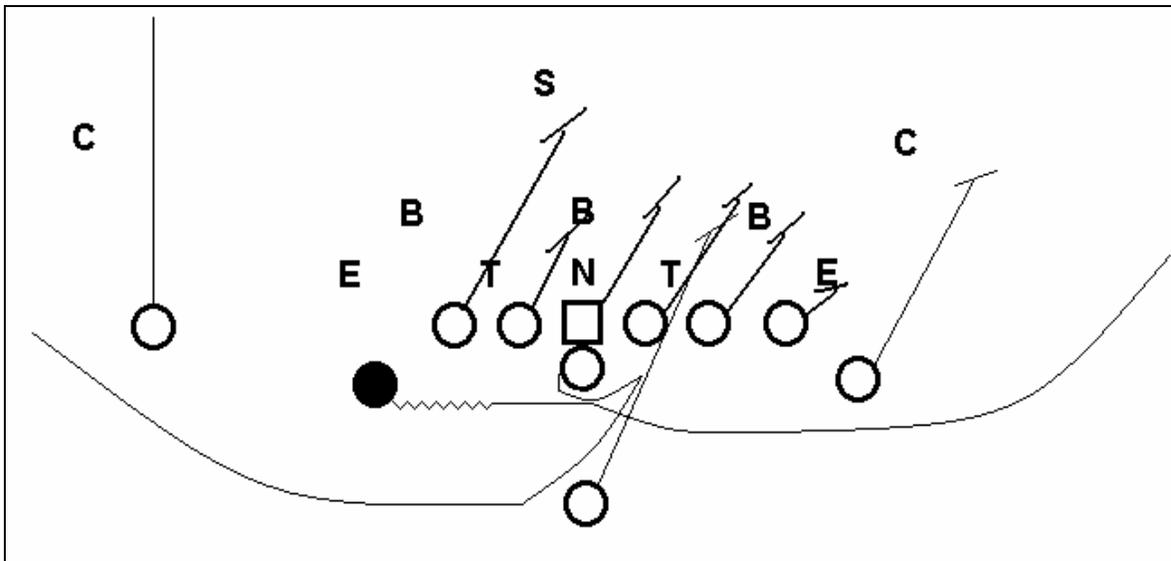
Center: Must be steady, willing to work hard to master the art of snapping and then blocking either gap or straight ahead.

Line Splits: I recommend one-foot line splits all the way across. The TE can split 2 to 3 feet, depending on his ability to block his inside gap -- the slower he is, the tighter he will have to align to the 3 Tackle.

The Wingback lines up a yard outside and a yard behind the TE. The Slotback lines up a yard outside and behind the 7 Tackle. The Fullback's heels are 4 yards deep, directly behind the Quarterback. You can line him up in either a two-point or a three-point stance.

## THE RUNNING GAME: 20 (Jet Sweep) Series

### 21 Jet Sweep



7 Tackle: Run your track playside; if someone crosses your face hard, block him in that direction all the way to the sideline. Otherwise, reach first bad color in second or third level.

6 Guard: Run your track.

Center: Run your track.

4 Guard: Run your track.

3 Tackle: Run your track.

TE: Reach the end man on the LOS (EMLOS).

SE: Drive your Corner deep.

WB: Drive deep for the Corner and reach him if possible -- if not, push him to the sideline.

SB: Fly motion to near B gap, take hand off and slide step a yard farther away from the LOS. Then run to hashes, numbers, & sideline.

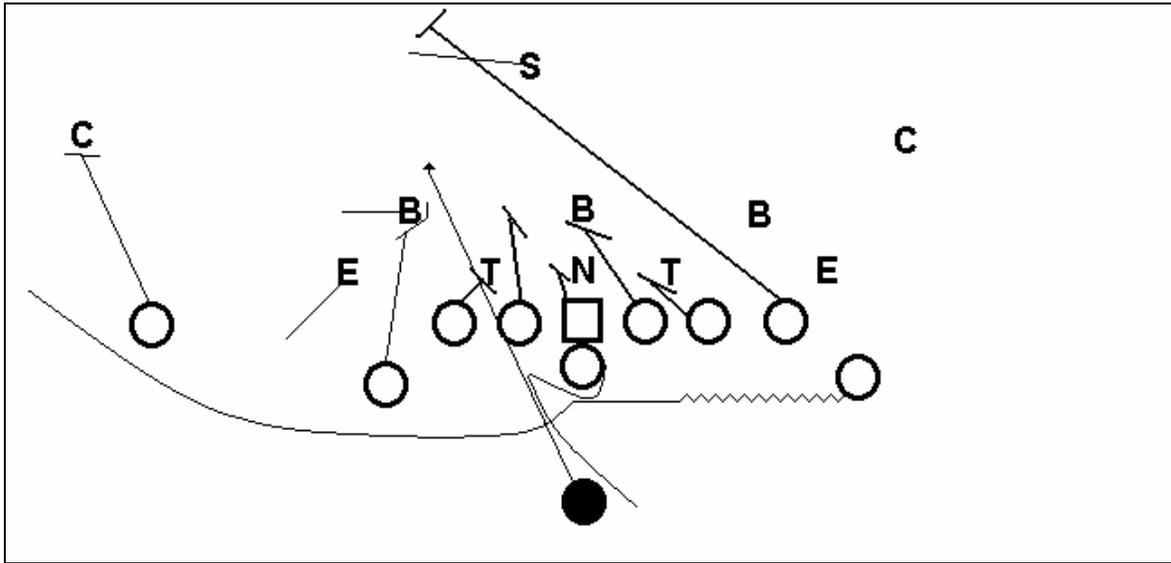
FB: Fake 24 Jet Dive. Tell coach when defenders stop tackling you.

QB: Reverse pivot, hand to SB, fake to FB, then boot away from sweep. Read EMLOS on Boot side to see if he is following you. Tell coach when he stops following you.





## 26 Jet Dive



7 Tackle: Outside Gap, Over, Inside Gap, Linebacker.

6 Guard: Playside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

Center: Playside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

4 Guard: Run your track playside; if someone crosses your face hard, block him in that direction all the way to the sideline. Otherwise, reach first bad color in second or third level.

3 Tackle: Run your track.

TE: Pizza block.

SE: Stalk your Corner.

WB: Fake 29 Jet Sweep.

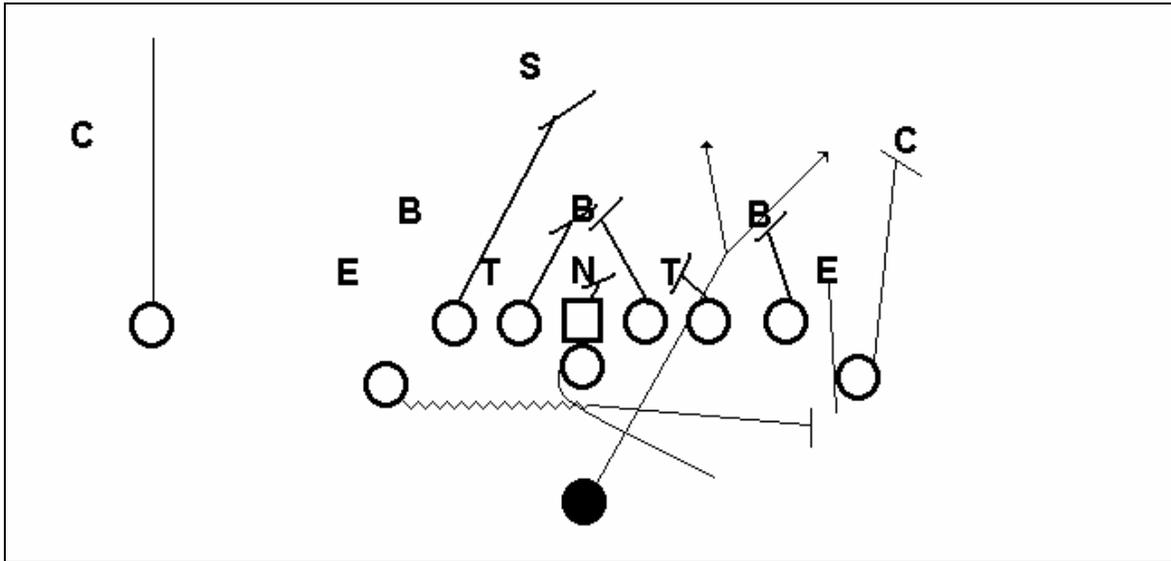
SB: Outside Gap, Over, Inside Gap, Linebacker.

FB: Take hand-off, read 7 Tackle's block & cut off his butt.

QB: Fake hand-off to WB, hand to FB, then drop to fake pass.



## 23 Jet Slam



7 Tackle: Playside Gap, Cut-Off.

6 Guard: Playside Gap, Cut-Off.

Center: Playside Gap, Over, Down.

4 Guard: Inside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

3 Tackle: Inside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

TE: Inside Gap, Linebacker.

SE: Drive your Corner deep.

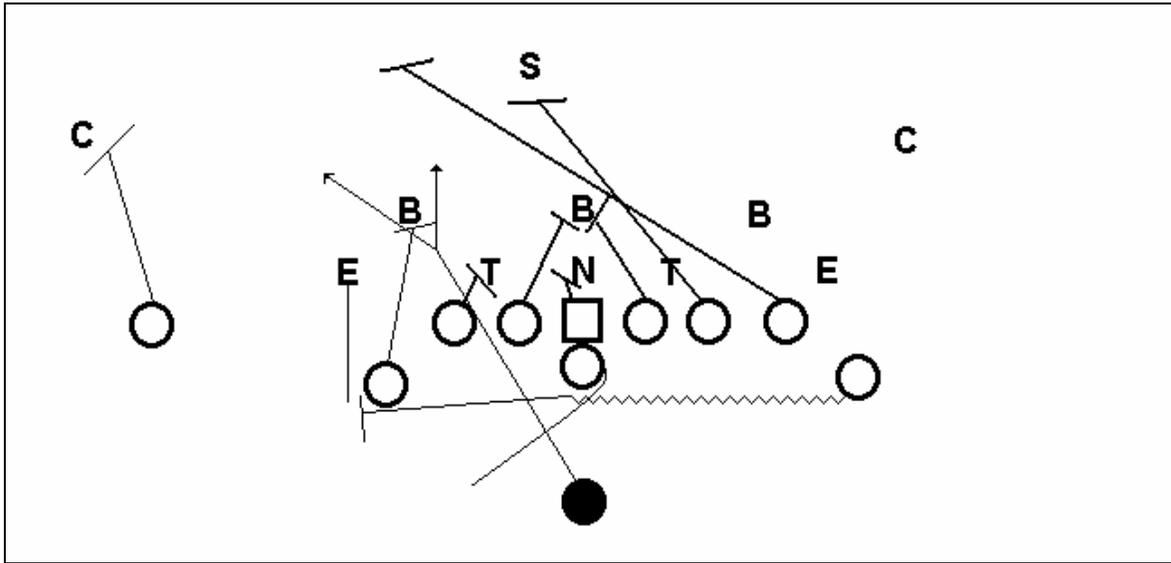
WB: Drive for the corner, push him to sideline.

SB: Go in Jet motion until behind QB, block out on playside EMLOS.

FB: Take hand-off, read block of TE and cut off his butt.

QB: Reverse pivot, hand deep to FB, continue outside faking Sprint pass.

## 27 Jet Slam



7 Tackle: Inside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

6 Guard: Inside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

Center: Playside Gap, Over, Down.

4 Guard: Playside Gap, Cut-Off.

3 Tackle: Playside Gap, Cut-Off.

TE: Pizza Block.

SE: Stalk your Corner.

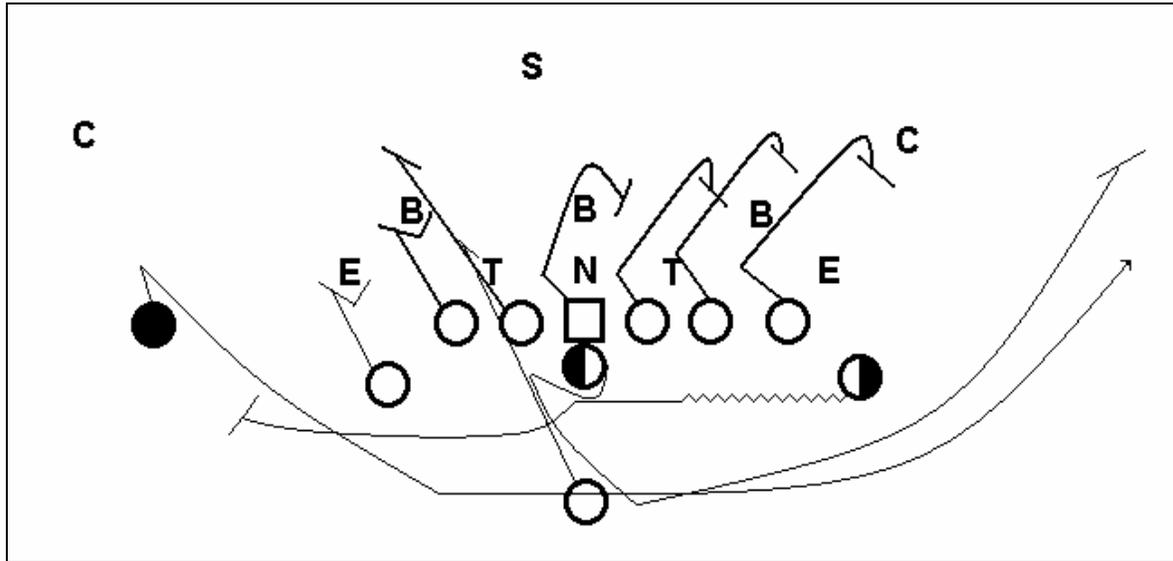
WB: Go in Jet motion until behind QB, block out on playside EMLOS.

SB: Inside Gap, Linebacker.

FB: Take hand-off, read block of SB and cut off his butt.

QB: Reverse pivot, hand deep to FB, continue outside faking Sprint pass.

## 22 Jet Reverse



7 Tackle: Outside Gap, Over, Linebacker -- drive toward SE.

6 Guard: Outside Gap, Over, Linebacker -- drive toward SE.

Center: Step toward SE side, then circle around and pick off first bad color.

4 Guard: Step toward SE side, then circle around and pick off first bad color.

3 Tackle: Step toward SE side, then circle around and pick off first bad color.

TE: Step toward SE side, then circle around and pick off first bad color.

SE: Release downfield with outside foot, pivot and come back underneath WB.

Take hand-off and head for TE side. Read block of QB - if he pushes contain main toward sideline, cut in; otherwise take hashes, numbers, sideline.

WB: Take 29 Jet Sweep hand-off from QB, hand ball to SE, continue outside (block anyone pursuing SE).

SB: Outside Gap, Over, Linebacker -- drive toward SE.

FB: Fake 26 Jet Dive, drive bad color toward SE.

QB: Hand ball to WB, fake 26 Jet Dive, then boot toward TE side and block first bad color to show past TE.





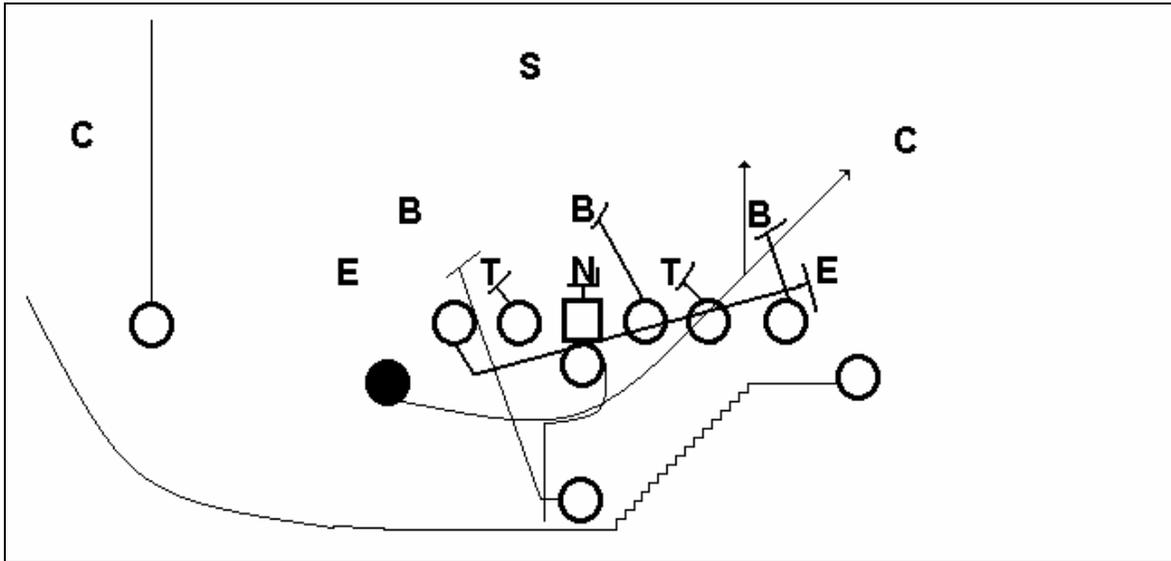








## 24 Tackle Trap



7 Tackle: Pull and trap first bad color past 3 Tackle.

6 Guard: Backside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

Center: Backside Gap, Over, Down.

4 Guard: Backside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

3 Tackle: Inside Gap, Down, Linebacker.

TE: Linebacker, Outside Gap.

SE: Drive your Corner deep.

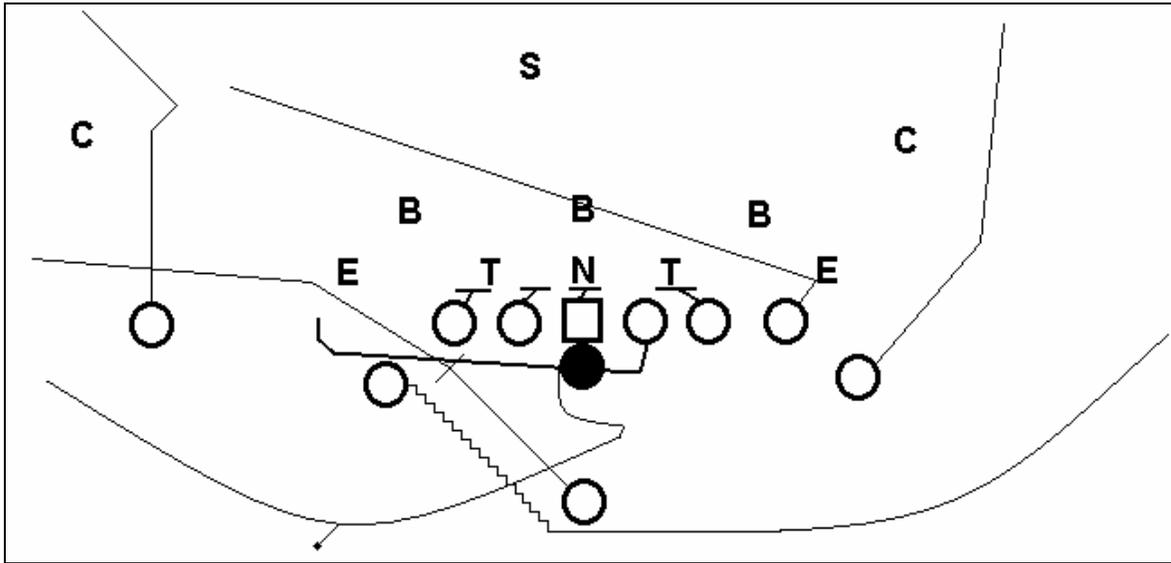
WB: Fake 28 Rocket Belly Sweep.

SB: Drop-step with inside foot, take hand-off from QB and look for first hole past 3 Tackle.

FB: Fake 27 Rocket Belly, block first bad color past 6 Guard.

QB: Reverse pivot, hand ball to SB, drop back to fake pass.

## 25 Waggle



7 Tackle: Outside Gap, Over, Inside Gap.

6 Guard: Outside Gap, Over, Inside Gap.

Center: Playside Gap, Over, Backside Gap.

4 Guard: Pull deep, look for first bad color past 7 Tackle; log if possible, if not, drive to sideline.

3 Tackle: Hinge backside, protecting Inside Gap first.

TE: Shallow Cross route after slamming EMLOS defender (if he is close enough to hit on first step). If not, release immediately on Shallow Cross route.

SE: Run Corner route, cut on fifth step.

WB: Slant out for first four steps, then cut straight downfield and stare at the Corner to hold his attention.

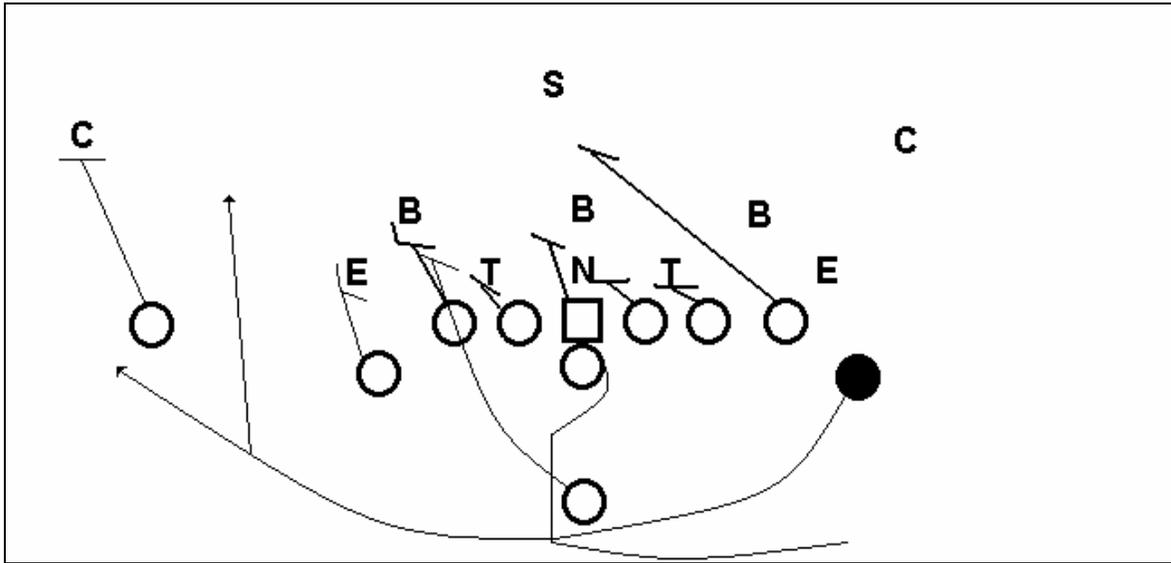
SB: Fake 21 Rocket Sweep, then turn route into Wheel downfield.

FB: Fake block on SE-side EMLOS defender, then slip out into Flat and look for ball right away -- snap your head and shoulders around to look for the ball as soon as you head for the sideline. If you get a hard edge rush or blitz, stay in and block.

QB: Reverse pivot and fake 21 Rocket Sweep, then boot to SE side. Options are: 1) SE's Corner route; 2) TE's Shallow Cross route; 3) FB's Flat route, or, if he doesn't release, run for first down marker. WB's and SB's routes are only for use as a special "throw-back" variation.



## 89 Belly Sweep



When they start to shut down the Belly from outside by making an unsound adjustment with their force and contain players, run the Belly Sweep with or without motion and catch them by surprise.

7 Tackle: Reach.

6 Guard: Reach.

Center: Reach.

4 Guard: Reach.

3 Tackle: Reach.

TE: Pizza Block.

SE: Stalk your Corner.

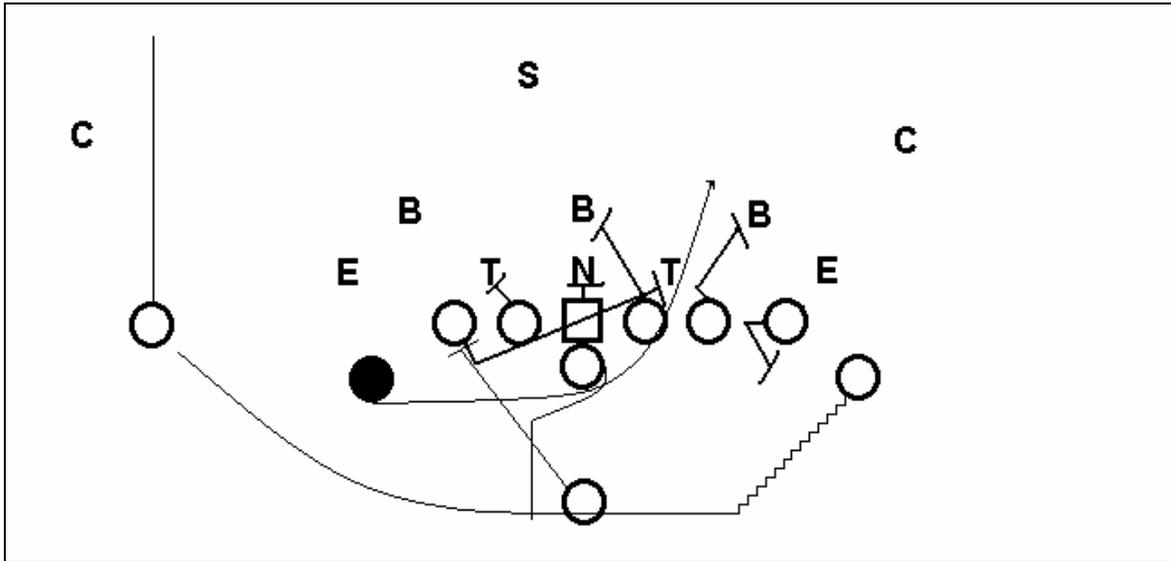
WB: Run Sweep path behind FB's heels, take hand-off from QB, read block of SE and cut off his butt. (If using motion) shuffle for first few steps after snap to time up hand-off, then run play as described above.

SB: Reach.

FB: Fake 87 Belly.

QB: Reverse pivot, fake hand-off to FB, hand to WB, then boot away from sweep.

## 84 Tackle Trap



One of the best misdirection plays in all of football. The harder the inside linebackers and defensive backs pursue the Belly, the more yards the Tackle Trap will gash them for.

7 Tackle: Pull and trap first bad color past 3 Tackle.

6 Guard: Backside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

Center: Backside Gap, Over, Down.

4 Guard: Backside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

3 Tackle: Inside Gap, Down, Linebacker.

TE: Linebacker, Outside Gap.

SE: Drive Corner deep.

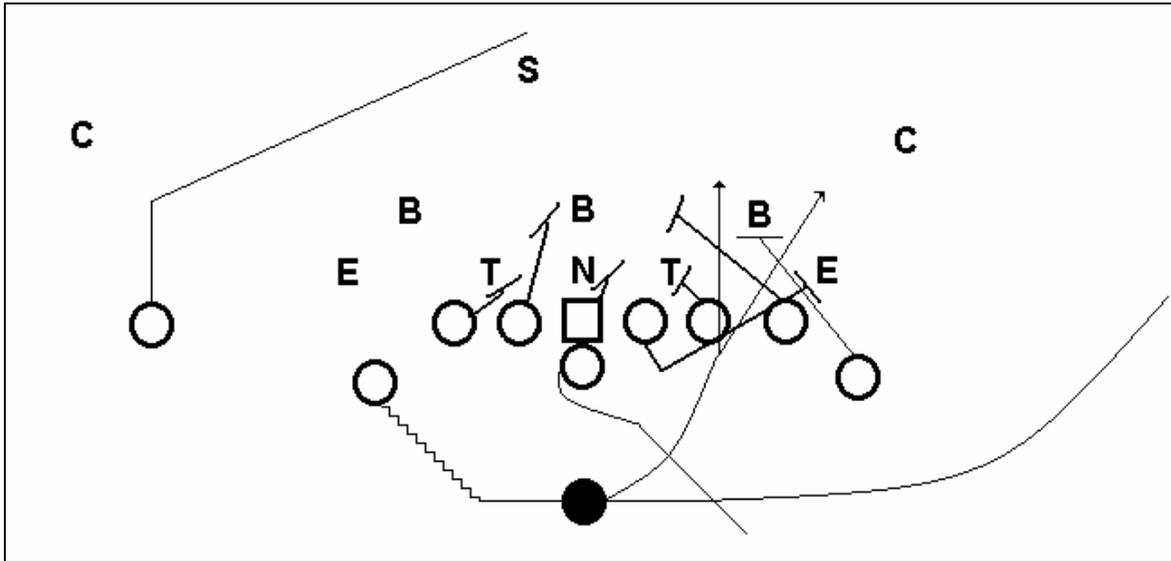
WB: Fake 87 Belly.

SB: Drop-step with inside foot, take hand-off from QB and look for first hole past 3 Tackle.

FB: Fake 87 Belly, block first bad color past 6 Guard.

QB: Reverse pivot, hand ball to SB, drop back to fake pass.

## 82 Down



7 Tackle: Reach, Cut-Off.

6 Guard: Reach, Cut-Off.

Center: Playside Gap, Over, Down.

4 Guard: Pull and trap first bad color past TE.

3 Tackle: Inside Gap, Down, Over.

TE: Inside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

SE: Quick Post route, cutting on third step.

WB: First Linebacker inside.

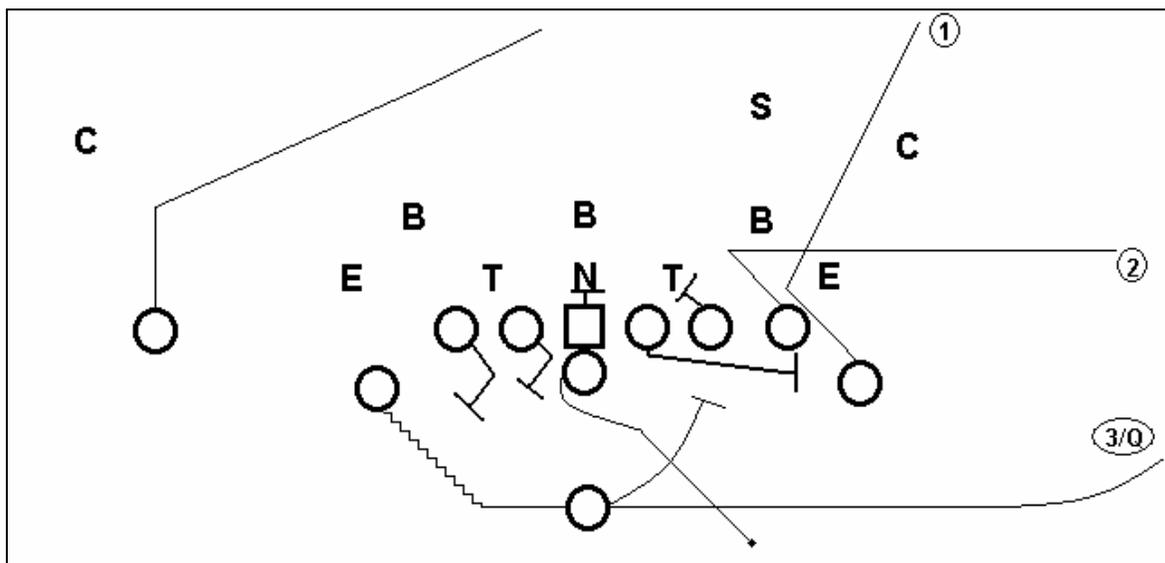
SB: Fake 81 Down Sweep.

FB: Step directly toward 3 Tackle's outside leg, take hand-off from QB, read block of WB and cut off his butt.

QB: Reverse pivot, hand to FB deep, fake 81 Down Sweep to SB, then drop to fake pass.



## 80 Down Pass



7 Tackle: Hinge backside, protecting Inside Gap first.

6 Guard: Hinge backside, protecting Inside Gap first.

Center: Odd: Reach; Even: Hinge.

4 Guard: Pull and block EMLOS defender past TE.

3 Tackle: Inside Gap, Down, Over.

TE: Step inside as though blocking Linebacker; on third step, cut sharply for sideline and look for ball immediately.

SE: Quick Post route, cutting on third step.

WB: Step inside as though blocking Linebacker; on third step, cut for Corner.

SB: Go in motion, fake 81 Down Sweep, then look for ball as outlet receiver.

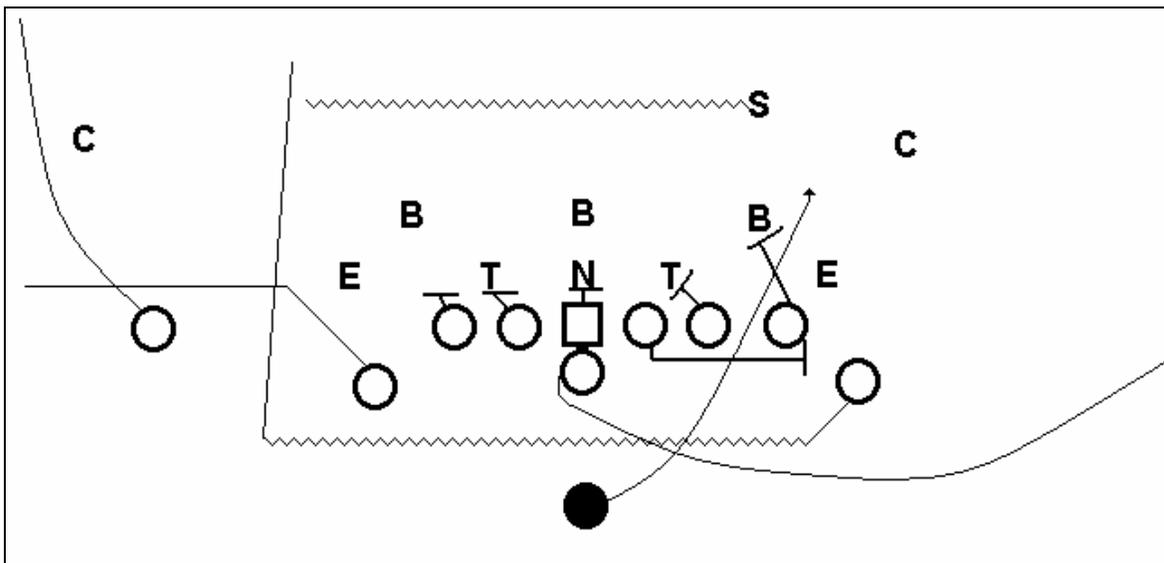
FB: Fake 82 Down, block first bad color from A gap to C gap.

QB: Reverse pivot, fake 82 Down and 81 Down Sweep, then drop and set up behind 3 Tackle. Options: 1) WB's Corner route; 2) TE's Flat route; 3) SB's Swing route or else run the ball. SE's Slant route can become a "throw-back" option later in the game when he tells coaches no one is covering him.





## 13 Down Special



7 Tackle: Reach away from the play.

6 Guard: Reach away from the play, but protect inside gap first.

Center: Reach away from the play, but protect playside gap first.

4 Guard: Pull and trap first bad color past TE.

3 Tackle: Inside Gap, Down, Over.

TE: Inside Gap, Over, Linebacker.

SE: Outside Vertical route.

WB: Go in flat motion to a spot 3 yards past the SB, then run Seam route.

SB: Run Shoot route to +1 yard deep.

FB: Step directly toward 3 Tackle's outside leg, take hand-off from QB, and read 4 Guard's block -- inside DE if 4 Guard traps him, outside if he logs him.

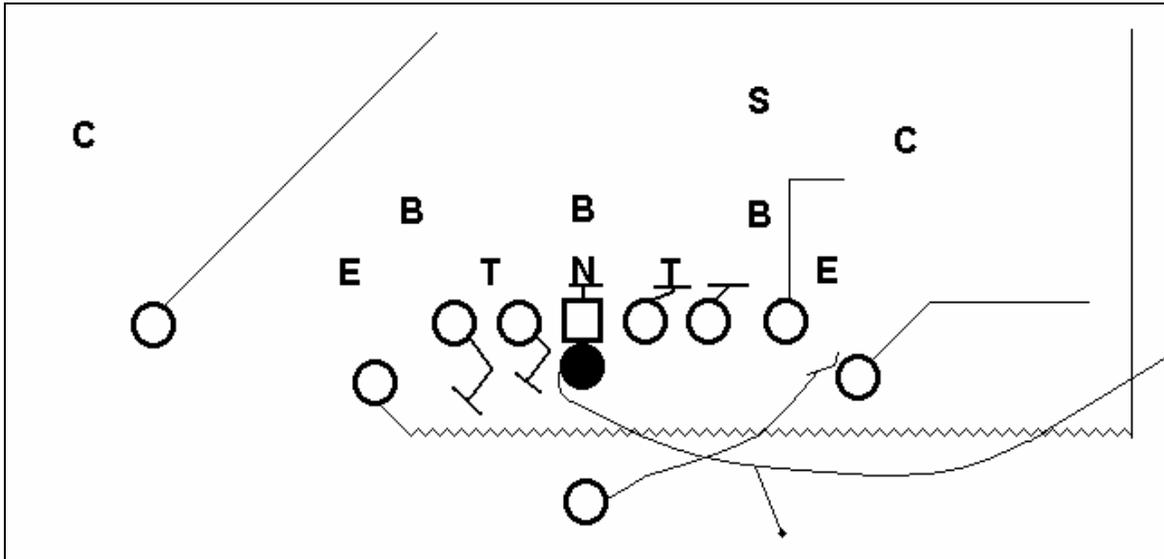
QB: Reverse pivot, hand to FB deep, then continue outside faking Sprint pass.







## 19 Stick



7 Tackle: Hinge backside, protecting Inside Gap first.

6 Guard: Hinge backside, protecting Inside Gap first.

Center: Odd: Reach; Even: Hinge.

4 Guard: Reach.

3 Tackle: Reach.

TE: Run Stick route, cutting outside on sixth step.

SE: Slant route.

WB: Shoot route.

SB: Motion to agreed spot outside WB (depends on situation -- may be far numbers) and run straight downfield, looking for ball over inside shoulder.

FB: Block first bad color past TE.

QB: Reverse pivot, sprint outside looking first at SB. If wide open, throw him the ball. Then come down to TE; if open, throw; if not, hit WB. Running is always an option.

## ATTACKING WITH THE YOUTH WING-T

Why are the Wing-T plays in this brief playbook organized into series? Simple -- to allow you to create a game plan for every opponent. Each series has a core play or two, and every other play in the series in some way acts as a complement to a core play. When the defense starts to unbalance itself to stop the core play, you spot what they are doing and call the appropriate complementary play.

Example: You call 87 Belly, and the defense reacts by:

A: Crashing the Defensive End and Outside Linebacker in toward the C gap to shut down the FB.

You respond by: Calling 89 Belly Sweep and running outside the crashing End and OLB.

B: Sprinting the entire defensive core toward the 7 hole, leaving the rest of the inside undefended.

You respond by: Calling 84 Tackle Trap and gashing the defense right up the gut. When they do something unsound to stop a core play, you hit them with the right complement.

The Jet Sweep series is the perfect example of this strategy, and I recommend it to youth coaches as the better choice of speed sweep series if you must choose between Jet and Rocket. The core Jet Sweep threatens to get the ball outside quickly, and forces defenses to react and unbalance their defense to slow down the Jet Sweep. So when they counter, you counter their counter:

You are running 21/29 Jet Sweep and making good yards (5-8+ per play).

### Defense does this:

### You call this:

Stops tackling your FB

24/26 Jet Dive

Rotates secondary/shifts LB toward Jet motion

28 Jet Waggle

Sends EMLOS defender hard upfield to cut off sweep

23/27 Jet Slam

Unbalances secondary and LB's to flow toward sweep

22 Jet Reverse

## THOUGHTS ON FOOTBALL STRATEGY AND HOW TO APPLY THE WING-T:

1) Don't Fight Fair! Strength-on-strength contests always, only go to the strong -- and they tend to exhaust even the strongest. Instead, focus your strength on your opponent's weakness:

- If his strength is lateral speed, attack him head-on
- If his strength is mass, outflank him and take him deep
- If his strength is mass AND speed, open your bag of tricks -- deceive him to lead his pursuit astray, spread him to negate his mass advantage

2) Disguise your weaknesses. If you can't throw deep, throw enough play-action passes at your opponent to keep him off balance. Move the pocket with action passes to keep pass rushers off balance and to bring your QB closer to his receivers. Feature the short pass, but build deep passing routes into your ball-control packages -- in short, replicate what Bill Walsh did out of necessity with the Cincinnati Bengals in the 1970's.

If you can't run the ball inside (small, weak, inexperienced line, or ineffective backs), run the ball wide (Jet or Rocket Sweep series), throw action passes that make your QB a run/pass threat on the defensive flank (Sprint series), and throw play-action off your wide run threats (80 Down Pass).

If you can't run or pass, don't give up hope -- it's never too late to start coaching soccer...

(Seriously, you need certain basic qualities to run the Wing-T, but it IS adaptable to talent.)

3) The Wing-T lends itself to strategic analysis -- its weapons interlock, suggesting tactics instantly based on defensive reactions. You don't have to reach into a "grab bag" of plays and hope the one you pull out will work:

- Attack the flanks first -- Sweeps, Bootlegs, passes to the flats
- Have a vertical threat built in to your ball-control passes to keep the secondary deep
- When the defense widens to counter your first threats, run inside
- If they start off wide (as the result of scouting your previous games), begin your attack inside
- Have good play-action route packages for every major run play -- if the secondary comes up to stop the run, throw over their heads

4) Use a "toolbox" approach (as espoused by Coach Bill Cronin of Georgetown College in Kentucky). Have a tool for every defensive problem/coverage/front/blitz package that you can reasonably expect to face. Do this planning well before the season starts and you will keep surprises to a minimum.

For coaches at higher levels/older age groups: The offense in this playbook is a bare minimum, skeleton installation of the Wing-T. Obviously it can be expanded to meet your needs, without getting away from the essential series-based organization of the offense as a whole. You can install more play-action passes off the core runs; you can add a 3-step or even 5-step game to the sprint-out passing in this playbook; and you can install screens and draws very easily. Even within the sprint game, you can look at motioning the WB across the formation to the SE side and using some more of the excellent Run and Shoot pass route packages (like Go) such as Smash and Slide. In short, look at this as the basic outline for a powerful, effective Wing-T attack at the middle school and high school levels.

Finally, for coaches at all levels, but especially my brothers-with-clipboards who are coaching the younger players: If you would like more information on installing the offense, feel free to e-mail me at seayee AT hotmail DOT com. I can provide you with detailed explanations of how to teach some of the skills listed in this playbook, such as pulling and trapping by the linemen and stalk-blocking by wide receivers. In particular, I have some very good drills for your backfield to help install the Jet and Rocket Sweep plays.