1958

Flank formation football; stress: defense

Bill Walsh
San Jose State College

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses

Recommended Citation

Walsh, Bill, "Flank formation football; stress: defense" (1958). *Master's Theses*. 9.
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.ern7-jtcj>
https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/9

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@sjsu.edu.

1958

Flank formation football; stress: defense.

Bill Walsh

San Jose State College

Recommended Citation

Walsh, Bill, "Flank formation football; stress: defense." (1958). *Master's Theses*. Paper 5.
http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/etd_theses/5

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Master's Theses and Graduate Research at SJSU ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of SJSU ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cbakke@sjsu.edu.

**Bill Walsh,
Coach of the SF 49ers,
1979 – 1988**

This is his master's thesis,

**Flank Formation Football
Stress: Defense**

January, 1958

FLANK FORMATION FOOTBALL

STRESS: DEFENSE

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Men's Physical Education

San Jose State College

SAN JOSE
STATE COLLEGE
LIBRARY

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

William E. Walsh

January 1958

209438

S. J.
1958
W 228g

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF MEN'S PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Robert H. Brongson
Dean Holbrook

APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE STUDY COMMITTEE

James W. Brown

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to state my continued appreciation for the guidance and professional training rendered me throughout my college career by Mr. Bob Bronzan and Mr. Bill Perry. Their ethical standards have been a guidepost for myself and hundreds of others.

It is my ultimate goal to become as valued and respected in the coaching profession as they.

W. E. W.

April 5, 1957

I have had the opportunity of examining the thesis written by Bill Walsh concerning flank formation football. After carefully reading and analyzing, I consider this an exceptionally fine piece of work that should serve as a valuable source of reference for coaches at all levels. It is organized and written in an easily comprehensible form that reveals the basic theory and principles behind offensive and defensive flank formation football. The specific defensive maneuvers offered are sound and competent.

I consider Bill an extremely well informed young coach; this thesis is an example of his technical capacity.

Charles Taylor
Head Football Coach
Stanford University

June 17, 1957

The professional quality of this paper adds testimony to the abilities and insight into the game of football possessed by William Walsh.

It has been my privilege to have known the author as a student, varsity football player, and assistant coach. In each of these situations he has demonstrated his interest and capability as a coach.

The organization, contents, and basic theories represented in this paper are of the highest order, in my opinion.

Robert T. Bronzan
San Jose State College

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
SECTION I. GENERAL EXPLANATION AND ORGANIZATION	1
I. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION	2
Power cycle	4
Deceptive cycle	4
Isolation cycle	6
Newest trends	7
II. DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION	12
Similarity to warfare	12
Physical explanation	18
Alignment classification	21
Field zoning	29
SECTION II. FLANK TYPE OFFENSE	34
III. PRINCIPLES OF A FORWARD PASS	35
Physical advantages	36
IV. SPECIFIC PASSING WEAPONS	48
Flood pattern	48
Concentration pattern	49
Hook and sideline pattern	53
Flank pass	57
Delayed pattern	60
V. FORWARD PASS POSITIONING TECHNIQUES	64
Drop back	64

CHAPTER	PAGE
Jump maneuver	64
Deceptive	66
Option	66
Option: roll out	67
Option: halfback toss	69
VI. PASS PROTECTION	71
VII. RUNNING ATTACK	74
Assets and liabilities	74
Running attack breakdown	75
Blocking principles	76
Backfield pattern design	79
Integration	88
VIII. GENERAL BREAKDOWN OF FLANK OFFENSE	90
Formations featured	90
Split-Wing, Double Split-Double Spread	
passing attack	90
Running attack	91
SECTION III. DEFENSE	92
IX. OVER-ALL EXAMINATION	93
X. DEFENSIVE TRENDS	96
Secondary defenders	97
Intermediate defenders	100
Primary level defenders	101
XI. POSITIONING POLICIES	106

CHAPTER	PAGE
XII. SPECIFIC DEFENSIVE TACTICS	111
The forward pass	112
Man to man	112
Strict zone	114
Combination zone-man to man coverage . . .	115
XIII. ROTATION AND ADJUSTMENT	123
XIV. PASS RUSHING TECHNIQUE	133
Normal pressure	133
Stunt pressure	134
Load pressure	139
Gap pressure	141
Specific assignment protection	143
Area protection	144
XV. COUNTERING SPECIFIC WEAPONS: FORWARD PASS . . .	147
Flood pattern defense	147
Concentration pattern defense	153
Hook and sideline pattern defense	156
Flank pass defense	162
Delayed pattern defense	166
Diagnosis of passing maneuvers	172
XVI. COUNTERING SPECIFIC WEAPONS: POSITIONING	
TECHNIQUES	174
Drop back pass defense	174
Jump maneuver	175

CHAPTER	PAGE
Deceptive technique	175
Option pass-run maneuver	177
XVII. GENERAL RUNNING ATTACK DEFENSE	193
Area control primary level defense	197
Man to man primary level defense	197
Outermost primary level defenders	199
Personnel strategy	199
Gap and penetration primary level defense . .	201
Stunting defenses	203
Downfield reinforcement adjustments	204
Adjustment when facing two flankers to same side	206
XIX. COUNTERING SPECIFIC WEAPONS: RUNNING ATTACK . .	209
Defense of direct type blocking	209
Defense of formed type blocking	209
Defense of deceptive backfield patterns . . .	210
Defense of the forced reaction maneuver . . .	211
Defense of power type backfield patterns . .	211
Defensing specific areas at the primary level: inside	213
Defensing specific areas at the primary level: outside	216
Secondary level defense against the running attack	218

CHAPTER	PAGE
XX. BASIC FORMATION DESIGN	221
XXI. INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLES	226
Primary level	227
Specific responsibilities	227
BIBLIOGRAPHY	230

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Set T	26
2. Split Left	26
3. Spread Left	26
4. Wing Right	27
5. Split Wing	27
6. Double Split 15-Spread Gap Left 5	27
7. Split Right-Divide Outside Right	28
8. Spread Left 20-Wing Left 10-Split Right 15	28
9. Horizontal Field Division	31
10. Vertical Field Division	32
11. Set T Disadvantage	37
12. Downfield Access of Flank Formation	38
13. Backfield Disadvantage of Set T	40
14. Backfield Advantage of Flank Formation	40
15. Passing Angle of Set T	42
16. Passing Angle of Flank Formation	42
17. Spread of Secondary Defenders vs Set T	44
18. Spread of Secondary Defender vs Flank Formation	44
19. Passing Barriers vs Set T	45
20. Passing Barriers vs Flank Formation	45
21. Flood Pattern	50
22. Flood Pattern	50
23. Concentration Pattern	52

FIGURE	PAGE
24. Hook Pattern	55
25. Sideline Pattern	56
26. Flank Pattern	59
27. Option Type Flank Pass Maneuver	59
28. Swing and Sneak Patterns	62
29. Screen Maneuver	63
30. Drop Back Positioning	65
31. Jump Maneuver	65
32. Deceptive Positioning	68
33. Roll Out Positioning	68
34. Halfback Toss Maneuver	70
35. Specific Assignment Protection	72
36. Area Protection	72
37. Typical Direct Blocking Pattern	80
38. Typical Direct Blocking Pattern	80
39. Typical Formed Blocking Pattern	81
40. Typical Formed Blocking Pattern	81
41. Typical Deceptive Type Backfield Pattern	83
42. Typical Forced Reaction Maneuver	85
43. Typical Power Maneuver	87
44. Typical Outright Maneuver	87
45. Three Deep Secondary	99
46. Four Deep Secondary	99
47. Early Defensive Alignment	102
48. Modern Intermediate Level Alignment	102

FIGURE

PAGE

49. Early Penetration Tactics	103
50. Controlled Penetration	104
51. Control and Pursuit Tactics	104
52. Utility Defense	109
53. Utility Defense	109
54. Man to Man Secondary Alignment	113
55. Three Deep Man to Man Secondary Alignment	114
56. Four Deep Zone Alignment	116
57. Three Deep Positioning	119
58. Secondary Level Reaction to Receivers	121
59. Four Deep Positioning	122
60. Shift-Out Adjustment	125
61. Semirevolve with Shift Out Left and Linebacker Adjustment right	126
62. Positive Rotation	128
63. Negative Rotation	129
64. Loosening with Double Shift-Out	130
65. Wide Six Adjustment	132
66. Five-Three Adjustment	132
67. Normal Rush	135
68. Directional Stunt	137
69. Cross Stunt	138
70. Cross Stunt	138
71. Outside Load Maneuver	140

FIGURE	PAGE
72. Inside Load Maneuver	140
73. Gap Positioning to Defensive Right	141
74. Gap Positioning to Defensive Left	142
75. Cross Stunt vs Specific Assignment Protection. .	143
76. Load Maneuver vs Area Protection	145
77. Rush from Outside	146
78. Retreating Linebackers vs Flood Pass Maneuver .	149
79. Retreating Linebackers vs Flood Pass Maneuver .	149
80. Drop Off of End vs Flood Pass Maneuver	150
81. Lateral Movement of Linebacker vs Flood Pass Maneuver	151
82. Secondary Adjustment vs Deep Flood Pass Maneuver	152
83. Three Deep Rotation with Outside Linebacker Deep	154
84. Loosened Secondary Defender, Head To Head Detainment, Exaggerated Angle of Pursuit . . .	157
85. Outside Linebacker vs Sideline Pattern	159
86. Outside Linebacker vs Hook Pattern with a Sideline and Down Pattern	160
87. Strong Intermediate Level Defensive Alignment .	161
88. Outside Linebacker vs Flank Pass	164
89. Inside Defensive Alignment vs Flank Pass Maneuver	165
90. Lateral Movement of End vs Swing Maneuver . . .	168

FIGURE	PAGE
91. Adjustments to Meet Option Run-Flank Pass	
Maneuver	169
92. Inside Linebackers Keying Set Back to Front vs	
Passes in Flank Areas	170
93. Angle of Pursuit at Primary Level vs Screen	
Pass Maneuver	171
94. Four Deep Secondary with Rotation	179
95. Three Deep Secondary with Rotation	180
96. Drop Off Coupled with Standard Three Deep	
Secondary	182
97. Adjust Out with Four Deep Rotation	183
98. Double Adjust Out to Same Side	185
99. Primary Level Reaction to Option Run-Pass	
Maneuver	187
100. Four Deep Rotation with Adjust Out vs Roll-Out	
Option Run-Pass Maneuver	188
101. Three Deep Regular with Drop Off vs Roll-Out	
Option Run-Pass Maneuver	189
102. Three Deep Regular with Combination vs Roll-Out	
Option Run-Pass Maneuver	189
103. Three Deep Rotation with Adjust Out vs Roll-Out	
Option Run-Pass Maneuver	190
104. Defense Designed to Specifically Challenge	
Option Run-Pass Maneuver	191

FIGURE	PAGE
105. Direct and Lateral Containment	195
106. Area Control Defense at Primary Level	198
107. Man to Man Play at the Primary Level	198
108. Gap Alignment with Penetration Assignments . . .	202
109. Four Man Primary Level	205
110. Defensive Alignment vs Two Flankers to Same Side	
111. Defensive Tactics vs Two Flankers to Same Side . .	208
112. Defensive Tactics vs Forced Reaction Maneuver .	212
113. Defensive Alignment Designed to Specifically	
Meet Outside Attack	213
114. Outside Linebacker Shifted in to Meet Inside	
Attack	215
115. Both Outside Linebackers Shifted in to Meet	
Inside Attack	215
116. Defensive Design vs Outside Attack	216
117. Defensive Design vs Outside Attack	217
118. Inside-Out Defensive Reaction of Halfback . . .	219
119. Outside-In Defensive Reaction of Halfback 1 . . .	220
120. Split-Spread vs Three Deep Utility	221
121. Split-Divide vs Four Deep Five Inside	222
122. Double Split-Wing Gap Right vs Four Deep Five	
Inside	222
123. Double Split-Double Spread Gap vs Four Deep	
Four Inside Three Outside	223

FIGURE	PAGE
124. Split-Spread Gap Right vs Three Deep Utility	
Inside	223
125. Split-Wing Slot Right vs Three Deep Seven Inside	224
126. Split Ten-Wing Fifteen vs Three Deep-Wide Six	
Inside	224
127. Five Deep Alignment	225
128. Gap Seven Alignment	225
129. Example Defense	226

SECTION I

GENERAL EXPLANATION AND ORGANIZATION

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION

American football, like any complex activity that engages in direct competition, grows more technical with age. From its crude conception that involved only courage and sheer strength football has become a highly scientific, tactically involved, athletic contest.

Game principles, both offensive and defensive in nature, are in a process of continual evolution. With the tremendous number of coaches and athletes participating yearly this evolution is so rapidly changing that basic principles of the game have been altered or completely replaced many times. New innovations are constantly being contrived and initiated, some effective, others ineffective, but each contributing to the game's complexity. By multiplying the individual doctrines of the thousands of coaches in the field by the innumerable variables existing an astronomical figure is produced that well illustrates the complexity of modern American football.

Football's continual evolution may be generally classified into major cycles. And, in turn, these major cycles evolve from a series of inner cycles. These inner cycles occur in the following manner: to be successful the offensive team must consistently advance the ball toward the

opponent's goal; this is accomplished basically by continually revising to take advantage of existing defenses. But, by the same token, to be successful the defending team must neutralize the opponent's strength. This is accomplished by altering or redesigning the defense to effectively challenge this strength. Each time this occurs an inner cycle has evolved. Major cycles result when the inner cycles have brought about a complete change in basic offensive and defensive theory. Major cycles in the past forty years have been power, deception, and isolation.

Since its early beginning football has seen many major cycles. The number of participants, size of field, the ten yard first down and other rule changes had much to do with bringing about major cycles. But, without a doubt, the most revolutionary cycle change was brought about by the effective use of the forward pass. The successful employment of the forward pass by Knute Rockne and Gus Dorais that resulted in Notre Dame's 35-13 victory over Army in 1913 did more than any other event to change football from a contest of strength to a contest of strategy. A whole new horizon was given the game--one that, in all probability, has been the prime reason for the game's survival and tremendous popularity. But, although the forward pass has been utilized effectively it has not been until recently that its full potential has been realized.

I. POWER CYCLE

During and for years following the founding of the forward pass the major offensive weapon was sheer power. The mass interference type maneuver was the universal form of attack. Defenses were more or less constant with eight and nine men deployed as rushers and those remaining deployed to protect against a sneak pass. In the early 1930's offensive manipulations that utilized deceptive play series and more strategical use of the forward pass were initiated. Offenses were organized that differed in appearance and structure from each other. Formations such as the single wing, double wing, and short punt became popular.

Defenses began to utilize six, seven, and eight men on the front line. Free lancing linebackers were utilized. Pass defense became organized.

II. DECEPTIVE CYCLE

In the early 1940's the T formation was revived, and with it a way was found to take advantage of the large front line defenses. The deception of the T formation when employed with a premium on speed was found to be very effective. Havoc was raised with the then penetrating, easily **mised** defenders. Because of its ability to strike the inside areas quickly, defensive linemen were forced to

congregate there. With this situation the offense then faked to the inside and ran outside or faked to one man inside and gave to another on a trap type maneuver. Defenses then adjusted by utilizing more linebackers that could play to the inside or pursue to the outside. The 5-3-2-1 and 6-2-2-1 became very popular.

The forward pass was becoming an increasingly more potent weapon; the deception of the T when utilized in conjunction with it made the pass a very difficult maneuver to defend against. The man in motion, then introduced, made it even more dangerous by forcing the defense to adjust. And for some time this adjustment, either inadequate or unorganized, was a point of offensive abuse. The offense was not hindered, but actually strengthened by utilizing it while the defense had to spend many practice hours in preparing for it.

Throughout these years of continual evolution and consequential advancement many offensive alignments were initiated. Among these were alignments that spread two, three, or four participants from its main body. From this formation the forward pass was employed as the major weapon. It was hoped that this spread would catch the opponent by surprise and without an organized defense for it. It met with early success because of this, but as time passed it

lost its consistency as defenses caught up. Its failure usually resulted because the offense did not spend enough time perfecting it, because the coaches and participants had little faith in it, or because the available material was not the type necessary. Also, the really effective maneuvers of the forward pass had not been sorted from those that were potentially less effective. This took time, only recently have consistently effective passing maneuvers been produced.

III. ISOLATION CYCLE

In the late 1940's the split T was designed by Don Farout, and with it the present major cycle of isolation. Isolation may be defined as the separation of an individual defender or group of defenders by physical or mental means, then the exerting of tremendous pressure on this individual or group. The desired result is a mental error or indecision. The advent of the split T attack with its spreading effect has brought about the formation of this new cycle. Its ability to effectively isolate at the primary level has been the key to its success. Against the eight man front defenses, which were utilized when the split T was first initiated, this new form of attack had unusual success.

After three years of unheeded success the split T was challenged; a method was found to overshift the defense

to the side of the field being attacked. This was accomplished by stationing nine of the eleven defenders within two yards of the line of scrimmage. The outermost defenders to either side (wing) were coupled with the two remaining defenders (safeties) who were stationed eight to ten yards deep opposite the offensive ends. These four defenders would then rotate in the action of a wheel toward the swing of the opponent's backfield. The wing to the side being attacked could count himself to the running maneuver in a containing action. Meanwhile the wing to the offside would rotate into a position that formed a regular three deep secondary with the safeties. The extra defender at the line of scrimmage made it much more difficult for the offense to isolate individual defenders.

IV. NEWEST TRENDS

In all probability an inner cycle has commenced through variations developed to compensate for the nine man fronts and to take advantage of their inherent weaknesses. The development of the belly series and other manipulations outside the offensive tackle have come into being. By striking outside the tackle position the offense can strike at defenders farthest spread from their teammates making the chances of defensive error higher, and more **disastrous**. To best compensate for this newer defenses are more individual

in nature with members of the defending team carrying out their assignments by reading and reacting to movements by the offense. In this way the defender can be led to the point of attack and best exert himself in a productive manner.

Obviously, the farther apart the offense can separate individual defenders the more prone they are to make mental and physical errors. Because the defense must adjust its alignment to that of the offense, individual defenders can be spread by being forced to adjust to offensive spreads. If defenders do not adjust they become liable to blocking angles and impossible defensive maneuvers.

With this in mind spreading offensive formations are being utilized that force the defenders to leave their nine man front and spread themselves.

Because more and more stress is being applied on defenders farthest separated from their teammates, the forward pass is being integrated into the attack in a manner that best takes advantage of this situation. The passing game has evolved with a direct correlation to the forementioned cycles; it was used only as a trick or last resort maneuver during the power cycle, as an integral part of the T's deception, and as a corrective maneuver when part of the split T attack.

When facing the spread or flank type offense the

individual defender is now faced with the following threats: a direct running thrust, an option run, a deceptive or delayed run, an option run or pass, a direct forward pass, a forward pass thrown from a running fake, and a flood type drop back pass. This should well illustrate the consequences that develop through a defensive miscue such as improper field adjustment, indecision, or unpreparedness.

Obviously, the forementioned explanation is only the general trend, there will always be a percentage of coaches in the field who retain elements of past cycles in their philosophies or who utilize personal innovations; but by and large the isolation theory is utilized by the large majority, either in its entirety or in part.

Consequently, when confronted with a spreading type offense, the coach must be prepared with an adequate well-organized defensive system that can be easily understood, retained, and manipulated by participants. Because this style of offensive play has so many formations, methods of attack, and areas being struck, and because it offers such a potentially wide open threat, it is very difficult to defend against. Without a definite understanding of this style of offensive play and an extensive knowledge of its threat, the defending coach is at a distinct disadvantage. But where is a coach to gain the required knowledge to adequately understand this offensive style and the defensive manipulations

that best challenge it? It is hoped that this paper will satisfy a certain amount of this necessary knowledge.

The spreading type isolation offense most prevalent at this time is that utilized by the professional teams. Its formation features a semitight inner line with either one or both ends split three to fifteen yards, depending upon the game situation. The quarterback is stationed in the customary T position behind the center, one or two backs are positioned in winging or flanking positions, and the remaining back or backs behind the inner linemen.

Presently this system of play is utilized exclusively by the professionals, in whole by a number of college teams and in part by most, and sparsely at the secondary level. Although a definite major cycle has not evolved around this type of play a minor one has, and in all probability this system will bring about a major cycle in five or six years just as the split T has. As stated before, the defense cannot adjust adequately to effectively challenge it. The unrestricted isolation type offensive presently has this advantage at the college and secondary levels, and it will be even more accentuated in the next five years. This will occur because the majority of coaches are relatively unfamiliar with it and methods of defending against it. It is the purpose of this project to organize and classify the physical structure, potential strengths, and underlying

foundation of the flank type attack. Methods of defending against this method of attack will then be offered on both theoretical and practical levels.

It is hoped the author and any individual interested may then have a point of reference from which to attack this problem. The entire explanation will be general in nature; because of the complexity of this topic ten volumes could be written concerning its different aspects and it still could not be thoroughly covered.

CHAPTER II

DEFINITION AND CLASSIFICATION

I. SIMILARITY TO WARFARE

The dictionary definition of flank is as follows: A flank is the right or left extreme of a fortification or command.¹ If, then, the flanks were to be defined in a certain specified area they would be located at the outer extremes of that area.

Everyone has heard the word flank used pertaining to war. Comments such as "Our right flank needs reinforcements," or "A weakness was found at the left flank," are common during any conflict. Statements such as these are realized because in warfare, as any other activity where there is a certain barrier that must be passed or crossed, it has been found that, in many instances, it is easier to assault the barrier's flanks than its usually strong center or heart. The hypothesis of this theory is explained with this statement. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to spread a specified commodity, human or otherwise, over a specified area that can at any point with strength equal that of the defending force without being weakened in a

¹Webster, Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1951), p. 320.

certain area or areas. And, more often than not, this weakened area is at the outer areas, or flanks, of the area being defended.

(If a battle situation in which one group was forced to defend and their enemy forced to attack was isolated, the following assumptions could be made.)

In war to compensate for this natural disadvantage the defending force will usually congregate its strongest force in an area that is most likely to be struck or at a point from which this central group of strength can be quickly dispatched to any area that is being struck. Meanwhile, smaller units are established at alternate positions along the line of defense to act as absorbers that slow an assault until major assistance arrives.

On the other hand, the assaulting force may meet strength with strength, attack quickly in an effort to gain an irrepressible advantage before defensive assistance can arrive, or feint an attack at one position hoping to attract the enemies' strength then attack in force at another position. They also may utilize airborne troops or close air support to cut supply lines and occupy a large number of enemy that are needed elsewhere. All or part of these modes of attack can be utilized simultaneously.

All of the above possibilities depend largely on knowledge of the enemy. This knowledge is gained through

the intelligence branch of the attacking force.

The defending side's strength, to have access to all areas in their defensive perimeter, would logically be stationed in the center of the area being defended. And, consequently, the attacking side would strike at the flank areas provided they could reach the scene and prepare for attack before enemy intelligence had knowledge of their actions and could warn their allies.

But what if the attacking force spread its strength over the entire area being defended with larger groups located at either flank? The defending force would then have to balance its strength to correspond with that of the attackers to compensate, and if they did not compensate for enemy shifts they would be in serious trouble. This type of attack is utilized constantly in war, the advantage going to the attacking force because of the possibility that the defending force would not compensate adequately to stop one of the attacking units; the chances of a perfect compensation becoming smaller with the larger the spread of the offensive force. The weakness of the spreading attack is that the spreading force may weaken itself to such an extent that they are rendered ineffective along the entire front.

The general over-all strategy of football correlates closely with that of warfare.

The line of defense in warfare could easily be

compared with the line of scrimmage. The boundaries of such a line could have the same effect regardless whether they be natural terrain, **or** the sidelines and end lines of a football field.

The defending and attacking forces face the same situations, the attacking or offensive team may utilize the forestated possibilities of attack strategy as utilized in warfare. They may attack the opponent's strength with a direct power play, they may attack their opponent's flanks with a quick sweep or highly mobilized, mass interference end run. They may fake attacking at one position and attack in force in another; trapping and deceptive faking maneuvers make this possible. They also may attack behind their opponent's strength with the forward pass.

The defending team also utilizes the same theory as a defending force in warfare. They will align their strength in a corresponding position with that of the offensive team. They will utilize outposts of defense in the wing and safety positions. Their chief doctrine is to react to offensive movements and be at the point of attack in strength when the thrust reaches the line of scrimmage (defense line). This reaction or pursuit is usually formulated before the contest through knowledge of the opponent's strengths, weaknesses, and style of attack. This is advanced knowledge procured in the same manner by scouting

as by an intelligence unit in warfare. With knowledge of the opponent's offensive threats the defense is set to best meet these threats, if not directly or equally, then by overcompensation. For example, an offensive team with a strong outside attack could be met with strength by placing more men in the area of stress, such as with the eagle type defense. They also may be met by assigning individual defender's opponents to "key" or "react" to, and in this way be led to or notified of outside thrusts. This procedure would be overcompensation.

Adjustments in football are very similar to those in warfare. The defending team must adjust and physically compensate for any offensive alignment. If the offensive alignment is tight and compact the defending team also may close itself. If the offensive team spreads its strength evenly, such as with the split T attack, the defense must adjust to this spread. Of course, in all field adjustments knowledge of possible offensive manipulations must be taken into consideration with each adjustment.

If the offensive unit separates individuals or groups of individuals from its main body and places them in the flank areas, the defending unit must likewise separate to compensate. And what was mentioned in regards to warfare concerning adjustments holds true in football. The defending team must adjust properly to offensive alignments and

manipulations could result to adequately defend itself. The offensive theory behind such separations refers directly to the general theory utilized in warfare. It is basically very simple. Defensive adjustments cannot be flawless when facing the many possible manipulations a spreading or flanking offense possesses.

Also, as previously stated, the attacking unit may spread itself too thin and consequently lose its strength. This holds true in football; the offensive team can limit its effectiveness by spreading too thin. It has been found more effective to deploy offensive individuals in spread positions to force individual defenders from their main strength. With this accomplished these isolated defenders are forced into difficult adjustments, then forced into error. These errors are best taken advantage of if they are forced before the main defensive force, or pursuit, can reach the scene. Methods of bringing this situation about are the forward pass, quick sweep, or by utilizing spread individuals as blockers that cut off the main pursuit with strong angle blocks from their flanking positions. Also, when adjusting to spread opponents the defensive team must not "over-adjust" with too much strength. If this situation occurs the remaining offensive strength may then take advantage of the smaller defending force with inside maneuvers.

Because the spreading offense stresses attack at the flank areas, it is most appropriately referred to as a flank type offense.

II. PHYSICAL EXPLANATION

Because football is a conditioned activity in that specific manipulations can be undertaken only by individuals designated by game rules, alignments are, to an extent, restricted. These alignment restrictions are especially important regarding the flank type offense.

To maintain desired pressure on certain defenders the flanking positions must be assumed by individuals eligible to receive the forward pass. According to the Official NCAA Football Handbook, the following offensive participants are eligible:

1. Each player who is in an end position on his scrimmage line, unless he is a Center, Guard, or Tackle in such position while a teammate is in a position which is outside of and behind him.
2. Each player who is legally in his backfield and who is not in position to receive a hand-to-hand snap.²

The number and position of potential receivers at flank stations depends on coaching philosophy and game strategy.

²1956 Rules Committee, Official NCAA Football Handbook (New York: The National Collegiate Athletic Bureau, 1956), p. 33.

This phase will be covered extensively in a later chapter.

To effectively maintain an adequate number of defenders in the inside area the offensive alignment must feature at least two, and usually three backfield men in this area. These individuals must be stationed in this area to threaten and maintain a running attack and to act as second line protectors and delayed, inside receivers when the forward pass is being utilized. Obviously, one individual must be employed as the ball carrier or passer, and to be optimally effective, this individual should be complemented by another back. An effective running attack requires either a deceptive fake or additional blocker; the effective passing attack requires an additional pass protector or delayed receiver as forestated.

The five interior linemen are stationed in tight or semitight group positions in the central area balanced to either side of the ball's preliminary position. Tight minimum spacing is utilized to offer the penetrating primary defenders a seamless front when the pass is utilized. It also forces those defenders assigned to the central area to close into a compact group or be vulnerable to inside angle blocking ground thrusts. With this central group of defenders forced into a compact area more stress can be placed on the isolated defenders in the flank areas. It also offers more maneuvering area in the flanks.

The initial ball handler, the quarterback in this instance, is stationed beneath the center in the customary T formation position. The placing of the quarterback beneath the center better facilitates a faster hitting, more coordinated running attack, and a more deceptive passing attack. The passer is not hindered as commonly assumed in being forced to retreat to the optimal throwing position. The time taken by an adequate quarterback in retreating to a protectable position that offers good observation of the entire field of play is only slightly longer than that taken to center the ball free flight to an individual stationed in the optimal passing position. The time taken for a pass pattern to develop allows the passer to reach his throwing position, set, and throw with two or three seconds to spare.

By maintaining a possible fast-hitting ground threat the defending primary defenders must control their assigned areas before attempting to rush the passer. This delay allows pass protecting, inner linemen to assume their best protecting positions.

The short passing attack can be more effectively operated with the quarterback originally stationed beneath the center because the ball can be thrown from a position closer to the potential receiver and can consequently be thrown more quickly and accurately.

Obviously, the principles of physical alignment just

mentioned are very general in nature. Many flank type alignments are designed differently, yet maintain these desired principles. The following explanation will illustrate and classify these alignments for quick identification and simple verbal explanation.

III. ALIGNMENT CLASSIFICATION

With its large playing area and relatively large number of participants controlled by specific rules and regulations, football, by its very nature, is a highly complex activity. Within its complex limits are an unending number of possible alignments and manipulations. This is evidenced by the vast number of offensive formations that have been utilized through the years. And, because all activity originates from these formations, it is essential to those involved with the game to be familiar with them. Being concerned only with offensive formations related to the basic set T an attempt will be made to specify those only. So, before continuing with specific manipulations and their execution, the basic flank formation alignments will be identified, and to make this recognition as simple and concise as possible a set of illustrative terms will be offered. By utilizing these terms any T formation alignment variation may be readily identified and made reference of; Figures 1 through 8 will offer a visual explanation of

the following terminology.

The basic set T formation will be used as a starting point; all other alignments mentioned will originate from it. All terms will refer to any alteration from the set formation. The term set refers to an individual, or individuals, stationed at their original T formation positions. Figure 1 illustrates the basic set T formation; any individual stationed within one yard of his illustrated position is considered in a set position.

All formations are identified from left to right offensively. In most cases, therefore, the words left and right are not included, but whenever any confusion is possible they are inserted.

All variations within the line are termed splits. These splits among interior linemen seldom exceed the set limits. Therefore, when the term split is used it will refer to the split of the end when over two yards. Because, through practical application, the splitting of one or both ends has proven quite advantageous it is a common procedure of teams employing individuals in the flank areas. When specific details are necessary the split may be accompanied by the distance of the split from the set position. The splitting of both ends is referred to as a double split. An example of a split is given in Figure 2, and a double split in Figure 6.

Three methods can be utilized in the flanking of backs. Each has specific advantages and disadvantages; which is most efficient is best determined by personal philosophy.

The stationing of a halfback in a flanked position to the same side of the field as his set position is referred to as a spread. This term covers any positioning over one yard from the set position regardless of depth or stance.

The stationing of a halfback in a flanked position to the side of the field opposite his set position is referred to as a wing. This term is utilized only when the other halfback remains in the normal set position. If both halfbacks are removed, one to each side of the field, it is referred to as a double spread. If technical details are necessary the spread or wing situation may be accompanied by the distance from the offensive set end position. An example would be Spread 10 or Wing 15. An illustration of a spread may be seen in Figure 2 and a wing in Figure 3. With all formations identified from left to right offensively, an example could be Split-Wing or Split 5-Spread 10.

The flanking of the fullback is referred to as divide. This situation exists when no offensive back is positioned behind or to the inside of either offensive guard. The only exception that could be made is in the instance where both remaining backs are positioned behind or

to the inside of the guards. In some instances the side that the divide flanker is positioned will not have to be referred to, such as Split-Divide. But in situations in which the Divide is the only flank maneuver employed it is necessary to state which side of the field he is located, such as Divide right, or Divide right 15. Note Figure 7 for an illustration.

In some instances a flanked back may be located in a position in which he may be utilized as part of a double team block on the defensive tackle or end, and is in position to run a quick inside or outside reverse. This is possible whenever the flanked back is located three yards or less outside the set offensive end similar to the wing back of the single wing. When located here he is referred to as being in the slot position. This situation exists only when the end to his side is in the set position. Slot, when identified, will be noted following the type of flank utilized (split-wing slot). Figure 5 illustrates the slot situation.

In many instances two flankers are utilized to same side of the playing field. Therefore it is necessary to be able to recognize and identify it when it occurs. In almost every alignment of this nature the end is utilized as one flanker in conjunction with a back flanked to either his inside or outside. The term utilized here will be

associated with the location of the flanked back. When the back is positioned inside the split end he is termed as being in the gap. When positioned to the split ends outside he is termed as simply outside. Here again the gap man's location may be specified by stating his distance from the position of a set end. The gap or outside situation is stated following the type of flank being utilized; Split-Spread gap right, or Double Split-Double Spread outside, are examples. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate two gap and outside situations.

Figure 8 denotes a highly improbable alignment but demonstrates the effectiveness of term identification.

Obviously, certain flank type formations are employed more universally than others. And, although the potential effectiveness of any one alignment is judged according to the game philosophy of the individual coach, there is some agreement as to a general alignment design.

Among teams that employ their entire attack from a flank type formation there appear to be four major alignments employed more universally than all others. Of course, the exact positioning of individuals may differ with each team, but these four alignments presently appear to be most popular. They are the Split-Wing Split-Spread, Split-Divide, and Double Split-Spread, or Wing gap right or left. These alignments appear to offer the offensive team more

FIGURE 1

SET T

FIGURE 2

SPLIT LEFT

FIGURE 3

SPREAD LEFT

FIGURE 4
WING RIGHT

FIGURE 5
SPLIT-WING

FIGURE 6
DOUBLE SPLIT 15-SPREAD GAP LEFT 5

FIGURE 7

SPLIT RIGHT-DIVIDE OUTSIDE RIGHT

FIGURE 8

SPREAD LEFT 20-WING LEFT 10-SPLIT RIGHT 15

potential weapons with higher possible effectiveness. This in turn makes the problem of defending them proportionately more difficult. Because of this more emphasis is applied to these four alignments than others. In a later chapter the assets and liabilities of each will be stated specifically and an attempt shall be made to offer defenses designed to challenge these assets and take advantage of the liabilities. Any receiver flanked over five yards is considered a true flanker.

IV. FIELD ZONING

To recognize and identify the many possible offensive and defensive alignments, and to simplify the explanation of potential manipulations from these alignments, the field of play will be sectioned off as to depth and width. Also, to offer a concrete reference as to the area of attack and the consequential defensive responsibilities, specific terms will be offered to illustrate the physical location of the participants.

Offensively and defensively, as to depth, the field is divided into three sections: the primary level, the intermediate or first down level, and the secondary level. The primary level is the area from one yard beyond the line of scrimmage to offensive team's goal line. The intermediate level is a ten yard area from the primary level boundary

to eleven yards past the scrimmage line. The secondary level is the entire area from the deep boundary of the intermediate level to the defensive team's goal line.

The deep boundary of the intermediate level will vary according to the tactical situation. In certain situations defenders regularly assigned to protect at this level are issued assignments adjustable in nature. They are told to adjust the depth of their protection level according to the yardage necessary for the first down. This is termed the first down level.

The width of the field is sectioned into two major divisions, the outside and inside. The outside is the area from the set end position to the sideline. The inside is that area between the set ends. When it is necessary to be more specific the outside division can be broken down into two subdivisions, the shallow area and the wide area. The shallow area is from the set end to five yards and the wide area from five yards to the sideline. The inside division can be broken into the middle area, between both set guards, and the central areas between the outside foot of the set guard to the set end on either side. Figure 9 offers a divisioned view of the playing field.

Using the center as a dividing line, the side being attacked will be termed the onside and the side not being attacked called the offside. Delayed thrusts such as

reverses and counter are classified as offside maneuvers.

FIGURE 9

HORIZONTAL FIELD DIVISION

Defensively, definite sectioning or zoning at the intermediate and secondary levels is extremely important. Therefore, definite zones will be organized at these levels. All boundaries shall remain constant, but each section shall be specified. All reference shall be made defensively from

left to right. Depthwise the terms intermediate and secondary shall remain; added will be left, right, and center to specify width. Figure 10 offers a visual explanation of defensive zoning.

FIGURE 10

VERTICAL FIELD DIVISION

The intermediate level includes the entire area behind the line of scrimmage when a pass maneuver is involved. Passes thrown behind the scrimmage line are termed as being

thrown into the subintermediate area.

Defensive secondary level zones may be altered according to the field position of the ball. This will be discussed at some length in a later chapter.

SECTION II

FLANK TYPE OFFENSE

CHAPTER III

PRINCIPLES OF A FORWARD PASS

The importance of the forward pass has increased through each evolving cycle. Presently it has become a highly strategical, constantly employed weapon that demands first priority in defensive planning and organization. The philosophy of the forward pass has developed from one of hit and miss into a highly technical and exacting science. It has developed from a two man affair in which only the passer and receiver were involved into a highly coordinated team effort in which every team member is given a specific responsibility of vital importance. No longer is a single receiver told to go downfield and get into the open; present strategy calls for as many as four receivers downfield, each given a specific pattern, all extremely important. The pattern of each receiver has become one part of a coordinated effort that is designed to bring about specific, desired, tactical advantages. And through this continual advancement the forward pass has consequently become a dangerous, consistently effective offensive weapon.

Because the forward pass has been found to be such a potentially effective weapon with an endless number of possible variations, new innovations are continually being initiated. Through these innovations the present flank type

offense has evolved. Through practical application the flanking of pass receivers has been proven to increase the potentiality and efficiency of the passing attack.

In this chapter an attempt will be made to explain and illustrate the physical advantages regarding the employment of the forward pass from the flank type offense. Also, an attempt is made to categorize in a general manner the present tactical methods utilized and the defense problems that result. Each tactical method is covered very generally for simplification. The pattern type has been broken down into five categories: flood, concentration, hook, flank, and delayed. Throwing techniques are broken down into four categories: immediate, jump, deceptive, and option.

I. PHYSICAL ADVANTAGES

An offense featuring one of more flanked receivers maintains certain physical and strategical situations that are very important assets to an effective passing attack. There are also certain disadvantages in a flank offense passing attack. First, the major assets will be explained.

The spread, or flanked, receiver has a ready access downfield. By separating from the main body a pass receiver has more territory in which to escape to his downfield assignment. Receivers stationed in the normal closed positions are restricted by their relative position with

teammates and opponents. Teammates restrict the tight ends releasing area; he can release only to the outside because of the tackles alignment to his inside. Because of this the defender assigned to delay the end has a relatively simple assignment of containing his end to the inside. Note Figure 11 for a visual explanation.

FIGURE 11

SET T DISADVANTAGE

With the simplicity of this assignment the defender can carry it out, and at the same time control his assigned area against a possible thrust.

On the other hand, the split end or flanked back has adequate territory to either right or left in which to

escape and release downfield. Even with a defender assigned specifically to detain the receiver at the line of scrimmage, the receiver, if of comparable ability and determination,

can consistently elude the defender and escape. Also, a defender assigned to delay flanked receivers is forced to devote all of his attention on the receiver and is therefore handicapped when faced with an outside running thrust into his area. Figure 12 illustrates this situation.

FIGURE 12

DOWNFIELD ACCESS OF FLANK FORMATION

The normal T formation back is even more restricted in finding an avenue downfield than is the tight end. Being stationed behind the offensive tackle the halfback does not have access to a direct route downfield. To escape he is assigned to take one of two routes. He can attempt to slip through the in-line congestion or swing around it to the outside. In attempting to slip through he may be caught and held up indefinitely, or delayed and rendered ineffective. By swinging the normal T formation back uses valuable seconds that, in most cases, restrict his ability to penetrate very deep into the defensive secondary.

On the other hand, the flanked back has all the advantages as previously mentioned regarding the split end. Figure 13 illustrates the set T back while Figure 14 illustrates the same back in the flank type alignment.

It may also be noted in Figure 14 the immediate access downfield that is offered the closed back when the end to his side is split. The splitting of the end eliminates part of the in-line barrier normally present. This is another advantage for the flank type offense passing game.

An important physical advantage in passing to receivers stationed at flanking positions is in the angle at which the passer must utilize in throwing to his receivers. Obviously, the fewer variables the passer must compute the easier it will be to throw accurately. The optimal

FIGURE 13

BACKFIELD DISADVANTAGE OF SET T

FIGURE 14

BACKFIELD ADVANTAGE OF FLANK FORMATION

situation would be throwing at a motionless or fixed target such as the receiver of a hook pass. The only computation needed here would be the distance factor. With the target in motion the passer must compute his speed and path angle. The closer to ninety degrees the easier the computation. In other words, the smaller the change in distance the more accurately the pass can be thrown. Passes thrown at more than a ninety degree angle can be less accurate because the receiver can better change direction and physically adjust when facing the oncoming ball. The flanking of receivers offers the passer better passing angles in almost every situation. Figures 15 and 16 best illustrate this situation.

As stated earlier, the defense is forced to spread itself to compensate for the spread of the offense. Because the secondary is the last line of defense and any physical or mental lapse will result in disaster, this situation magnifies the importance of proper physical adjustment to offense spreads. The three or four men that are given the secondary assignments must cover an area forty-five yards wide and an area ten yards behind the line of scrimmage to their own goal line. This is obviously a difficult job, it is one that requires infinite knowledge of one's assignment and complete organization and cooperation within the secondary unit.

With the defensive secondary spread the offense can

FIGURE 15

PASSING ANGLE OF SET T

FIGURE 16

PASSING ANGLE OF FLANK FORMATION

better point its attack at specific secondary individuals. By being separated the defenders are not able to provide immediate assistance to those attacked. The only answer the defense is able to offer is to delegate more personnel to the secondary level. Defensive tactics such as this in turn may weaken the primary defense against the running attack.

Note Figures 17 and 18, the defensive halfbacks when facing the set T are faced only with situations in which receivers enter their zone from the inside out. While when facing a flank type offense receivers may enter their zone directly, from the outside in, or from the inside out.

With his receivers stationed in spread positions the passer has certain advantages he does not possess when utilizing the normal T formation. As stated before, he is able to throw more accurately because of the angle of the receiver's path.

When throwing from the tight T formation the quarterback, the majority of the time, must throw the ball over the heads of charging defensive linemen. This occurs because most pass patterns from this formation culminate at points requiring it. On the other hand, the flank type offense relieves this situation in that most passes are thrown to points to the outside of penetrating lineman. Figures 19 and 20 illustrate this point.

FIGURE 17

SPREAD OF SECONDARY DEFENDERS VS SET T

FIGURE 18

SPREAD OF SECONDARY DEFENDER VS
FLANK FORMATION

FIGURE 19

PASSING BARRIERS VS SET T

FIGURE 20

PASSING BARRIERS VS FLANK FORMATION

Of course this holds true only with passes medium to short in nature. This type pass can be one of the most effective that can be utilized. But, its effectiveness is definitely reduced when it must be thrown at a high, lofting arch over the outstretched arms of charging linemen.

The trajectory of the ball is of prime importance in passes of short to medium length. A flat trajectory is necessary when throwing to receivers in a stationary position, crossing, or running a short diagonal pattern in nine situations out of ten. All patterns of this nature require accurate passes that reach the receiver as quickly as possible; this is accomplished by throwing the ball on a direct target making this possible.

Working hand in hand with this the passer also has better visual access of his receivers and their routes downfield. One of the more difficult aspects of passing, especially from a closed formation, is the problem of spotting the receiver behind the interior line action. Because flanked receivers are separated from the main body they become easier to spot and visually follow. By being able to follow them the passer can throw at the moment they break free or any time the passer himself is forced to because of rushing pressure. By the same token, the receiver, when running his pattern from the flanked position, can follow the ball from the passer's hand. The receiver in this

situation has more opportunity to adjust his field position to the flight of the ball.

CHAPTER IV

SPECIFIC PASSING WEAPONS

I. FLOOD PATTERN

To efficiently protect their territory, especially the vast secondary area, the defensive team will usually section off specific areas and assign them to specific individuals. In this manner the entire defensive field of play can be protected. But even this type of organization can be taken advantage of.

With one defender assigned to each area or zone the offensive team can simply flood any one zone with two or more receivers. Of course, any organized defensive group has knowledge of this and will attempt to compensate by utilizing intermediate level defenders in the short secondary or by rotating from their zones as receivers leave them. But, by the same token, compensations of this nature may be partially or fully rendered ineffective. By threatening the primary assignment of probable compensating defenders, the defenders cannot immediately assist their teammates. Figure 21 offers a visual explanation of this situation.

Flood type patterns in which two, three, or even four receivers are sent into one defensive zone can be employed very effectively from a flank type formation. With the defensive secondary spread a zone can be flooded effectively

with knowledge the defense cannot rotate or retreat intermediate defenders readily. Figure 21 illustrates a simple flooding of the center secondary zone. Figure 22 illustrates a flooding of the right intermediate zone. Note Figure 21, the flanked receivers make preliminary movements simulating a strike into the left secondary zone by driving directly into it, this forces defender 3 to retreat. The receivers then cut a sharp angle into the center secondary zone, with defender 3 isolated by the spread and forced deep by the fake defender 2 cannot receive immediate assistance. By flooding the center secondary one receiver will break free. Theoretically the linebackers should retreat into the area of the short receiver, but by driving straight downfield the receivers leave the linebacker's line of vision. The swinging back will add to the situation by attracting the retreating linebacker's attention.

II. CONCENTRATION PATTERN.

In certain situations it is desired to concentrate or direct the attack at specific individual defenders. A singled secondary level defender is tactically isolated from his teammates and forced into physical or mental error. The concentration type pass pattern is designed to accomplish this end. As forementioned, defensive mistakes at the secondary level can easily result in disaster, making this

FIGURE 21

FLOOD PATTERN

FIGURE 22

FLOOD PATTERN

type pattern highly dangerous especially when utilized from the flank type offense. With its natural defensive spread individual concentration can be much more effective from the flank formation.

The concentration type pass pattern is designed in the following manner: one or more pass receivers are sent into each secondary zone and in certain situations into first down zones. This forces the defender in each zone to pick the receiver in their particular area of responsibility. The receivers take a path that will lead these covering defenders to the farthest point from the area in concentration. The receiver in this area must then contend with only one defender.

With these circumstances existing the receiver in the concentration zone has only to outmaneuver his covering defender to take a pass for a long gain or score. The diverting of neighboring defenders offers the predetermined receiver a vast area in which to outmaneuver the defender in concentration. Recovery and pursuit by the diverted defenders is largely minimized by their diverted positions. Figure 23 illustrates a concentration type pattern.

Note the large maneuvering area available to receiver one. This type pattern offers the offense an opportunity to concentrate on the weakest defender and/or to take advantage of a superior receiver on an individual basis. Obviously,

positive results can readily be obtained by challenging a weak defender with a superior receiver.

FIGURE 23
CONCENTRATION PATTERN

III. HOOK AND SIDELINE PATTERN

Undoubtedly the two most effective pass patterns in modern football are the hook and sideline. Their potentially high completion percentage gives the passing attack a consistent yardage maker. And because of this percentage, many times defenders will overcompensate to check them. This in turn weakens protection against other pattern types.

The hook pattern is quite simple; the receiver drives directly downfield a predetermined distance and turns or circles back to face the line of scrimmage. After circling back the receiver then jockies for a position free of covering defenders and on an open line with the passer.

The difficulty in covering this maneuver is that the secondary level defenders, in maintaining a position behind potential receivers to cover the deep pass, offer the receiver an opportunity to stop in front of them and receive the pass. And at the same time those defenders responsible for the intermediate zones either visually lose potential receivers or cannot retreat fast enough to challenge.

The flank type offense greatly increases the potential effectiveness of this maneuver. By spreading the defenders the receivers have a larger area to free themselves. Also, the receiver has better opportunity to spot himself in a location clear of obstacles between himself and

the passer. The passer, as forementioned, can better follow the receiver's route downfield and throw at the proper instant.

With more territory under attack when facing the flank type attack the secondary defender is forced to cover receivers in his zone looser than when facing closed receivers. In covering the receiver tight any mistake would be **disastrous**. Being naturally separated from his teammates the covering defender is the last possible line of defense.

Because the hook type pass is employed in front of, and between secondary defenders, it thrives on loose coverage. Figure 24 illustrates the hook type pattern employed from the flank type attack.

Note how the receiver leaves linebackers A and B's line of vision and at the same time forces secondary defenders 1 and 2 deep. He then circles back into the open area.

The sideline pattern employs the same strategy as the hook. It is completed in front of, and outside of the covering defender; a successful execution is dependent upon the receiver's ability to force his covering defender to retreat. By breaking toward the sideline the receiver gains an area to his front free of defenders and is thus able to receive the pass over his shoulder free of any defensive obstruction.

FIGURE 24

HOOK PATTERN

In being positioned in the flank area the receiver can execute the sideline maneuver automatically free of any defenders to his front. To liquidate this maneuver's effectiveness the covering secondary defender would have to align himself at the sideline facing in and concentrate on defending the outer perimeter of his assigned zone. But obviously

this is impossible since he would then leave the inside area of his zone unguarded. Figure 25 is an example of the sideline pattern. Note the pinpoint accuracy and perfect timing that are necessary for its completion. Without this accuracy and timing this maneuver is useless.

FIGURE 25

SIDELINE PATTERN

IV. FLANK PASS

One of the most effective short yardage manipulations through the years has been the flank pass (jump or quick pass). This maneuver best takes advantage of teams that vacate their intermediate zones by utilizing large primary level defenses, that utilize penetrating linebackers, or against inadequate linebacking. It is effectively utilized on short yardage situations or any time the first down zones are left unguarded. By the same token, it tends to keep first down level defenders from closing into the scrimmage line to challenge ground thrusts. This maneuver is especially effective when employed from the T formation because of the quickness of its completion.

Although the flank pass is an effective weapon of the tight T offense it becomes even more potent when employed from a flank type offense. From the tight T the pass must be thrown over the outstretched arms of opposing linemen and sometimes to an end in an area congested with retreating linemen and linebackers. Factors such as angle, trajectory, and releasing area as mentioned previously make the spot or flank pass from the tight T far less effective than from a flank type attack.

When employed from the flank type offense the flank pass has an important place in the over-all strategy.

Because a pass of this nature can be thrown with a flat trajectory, at a good angle, and usually without obstruction, it can be completed with high consistency. Conscious of these factors the defending team must at all times be prepared to defend against it.

Theoretically the flanking of a receiver should be defensively compensated for with one man. Because there is only one receiver in his immediate area the defender should, theoretically, be in good position to cover. But, because the flank pass can be thrown quickly it can be completed in front of the defender. Of course the defender could play the receiver tightly or come up quickly, but this would leave him vulnerable to the deep pass. Consequently, two defenders must be assigned to the flanked receiver. One is assigned the normal secondary position and the other the outside intermediate zone. The advantage gained by the offense then is obvious. Two flanked receivers demand coverage by four defenders; with this situation existing the remaining nine offensive players have a definite advantage when facing only seven defenders. Figure 26 illustrates what can occur when the flanked receiver is covered by one defender. Figure 27 illustrates adequate compensation.

The pattern itself can be run in three different manners. The receiver can simply angle in; normally referred to as a come in pattern. He can remain in his

original position if the defender plays him deep. Or he can drive downfield a short distance and pivot back toward the passer; this is referred to as the stop pattern. It is similar to the hook pattern except there is no jockeying and it is thrown very quickly. Any of these patterns may be run, the one employed depends upon the defensive alignment.

FIGURE 26

FLANK PATTERN

FIGURE 27

OPTION TYPE FLANK PASS MANEUVER

The flank pass may also be combined with a forced reaction running maneuver (Chapter VII). The pattern remains the same, but the quarterback operates down the line of scrimmage. He is given the option of passing, keeping, or tossing to the swinging back according to the reaction of the outside linebacker and outermost primary level defender. If the linebacker comes up the pass is thrown. If he does not the option is off the primary level defender.

V. DELAYED PATTERN

When confronted by a consistently effective passing attack the defensive team will commonly compensate in three ways. They will loosen up the secondary defenders, either loosen up or shoot their linebackers, and penetrate their immediate primary level defenders. The delayed type pass maneuver is designed to exploit this situation. With the secondary defenders stationed or retreating excessively deep, the linebackers leaving their first down zones, and the immediate primary level defenders charging recklessly, an area becomes exposed in the proximity of the scrimmage line. It is in this area the delayed pass maneuver is executed. If the defensive reaction mentioned does not occur a maneuver of this type has little chance of success.

To gain this reaction the actual pass is delayed. During this delay the attacking team attempts to simulate

a regular pass maneuver that will bring about the desired defensive adjustments.

Two techniques are commonly utilized to produce this desired effect. The simpler, more dependable, but least dangerous is the swing or sneak maneuver. The ends will usually carry out a normal pattern and the interior linemen employ normal pass protection blocking. At the snap of the ball a back normally assigned as a blocker will swing into either flank or attempt to sneak between interior linemen into the central first down area. The quarterback throws from his normal position five to six yards behind the scrimmage line. Figure 28 illustrates a swing pattern with back A and the sneak pattern with back B.

The second and more dangerous delayed pass technique is commonly referred to as the screen pass. This is a coordinated team maneuver; because of its physical nature a miscue on the part of any team member will result in its failure. Its success relies upon the rush of the opposing linemen and the retreat of the opposing linebackers. Three or more opposing linemen are allowed to penetrate to the fleeing quarterback. Certain offensive linemen then set up a blocking wall for the receiver who simulates a normal pass protection block before positioning himself. The quarterback then flips the ball to the receiver over the heads of the penetrating defenders. Meanwhile, the normal receivers

FIGURE 28

SWING AND SNEAK PATTERNS

drive downfield to force secondary and intermediate level defenders to retreat. It is obvious then, that every member of the offensive team must simulate a regular passing manipulation. Figure 29 is an example of a common three man screen maneuver.

In most situations the flank type offense is not suited for delayed pass manipulations because they usually strike in the flank areas and it is in these areas that

defenders have compensated. Yet this technique has become an integral part of the flank type offense. Because the flanking of receivers adds to the efficiency of a passing attack the defense must concentrate on stopping it. And, in so doing the delayed type pass becomes an effective weapon. By the same token, in being watchful for the delayed maneuver the defenders are not able to concentrate their efforts on the regular passing attack.

FIGURE 29

SCREEN MANEUVER

CHAPTER V

FORWARD PASS POSITIONING TECHNIQUES

I. DROP BACK

In certain tactical situations, such as long yardage or shortage of playing time, the defensive team will automatically align and commit itself to protect against the seemingly obvious pass. And when employing specific pass manipulations in which success depends upon the passer's ability to hit a receiver the instant he breaks free, such as the hook or sideline pattern, there is little need to conceal the intent to pass. Therefore, the quarterback simply retreats quickly to a position five to six yards directly behind the center and sets himself. Figure 30 illustrates this movement.

II. JUMP MANEUVER

This technique is utilized in conjunction with the flank pattern. The quarterback simply jumps over the outstretched arms of the interior linemen and fires the ball on a line to the receiver. There is no retreat, the quarterback jumps from his location behind the center. Figure 31 illustrates this movement.

FIGURE 30

DROP BACK POSITIONING

FIGURE 31

JUMP MANEUVER

III. DECEPTIVE

The action of the quarterback before passing has a definite effect upon the reaction of the entire defensive team. Because all offensive manipulations originate from this position considerable defensive attention is directed toward it. For a ground thrust to materialize the quarterback must deliver the ball to the assigned carrier or act as the carrier himself. In passing the quarterback will, a vast majority of the time, act as the passer. Consequently, defenders are prone to watch the quarterback's movements for an indication of the play's nature.

It stands to reason then, that by disguising a pass maneuver so as to appear as a running thrust the defensive team can be **misled**. This is a universally applied technique.

The quarterback fakes delivering the ball to one or more backs running a regular ground maneuver before positioning himself to pass. Interior linemen simulate ground thrust blocking. Flood, concentration, hook, or delayed pattern types may be utilized. Figure 32 is an example of a flood type pattern employed from a simulated off-tackle thrust.

IV. OPTION

One of the most difficult maneuvers to defend against

in modern football is the option run or pass. It is designed to exploit any defensive reaction that it faces. The vulnerable flank area is struck; defenders located in these areas are forced to commit themselves to either the pass or run. If they commit to the run the pass is utilized and vice versa.

Option: roll out. Two quite different techniques are utilized to bring the desired pressure to bear on the flank areas. Probably the most effective is the roll out maneuver. Here the quarterback is the ball carrier with the option; he simply receives the ball from center and rolls out to his right or left, usually behind two pulling guards and a blocking back. As he travels into the flank area he concentrates his attention on the defender with containing and first down zone responsibility. If this individual attempts to contain the quarterback passes over his head into the first down zone. If the defender protects against the pass the quarterback runs behind the interference. The secondary defenders are forced from the area by deep receivers. Of course, if a secondary defender attempts to assist in the first down area the deep pass can be completed. Figure 33 illustrates a common roll out maneuver utilizing a flood type pattern.

Option: halfback toss. The second pass-run maneuver is thrown back to the halfback. It is designed and employed with the same philosophy as the roll out maneuver, but the techniques utilized differ greatly. Although it is usually not as consistent as the roll out it can be a "game breaker" if employed strategically.

An option run-pass of this type depends on its deception, on the most part, to make the outside defender commit himself. This maneuver is designed to defensively appear as an outside ground thrust, thus bringing defensive commitment to it. Then, at the last instant, the ball is thrown over the opponents' heads. This is the common execution although it can and has been executed in an obvious fashion similar to the roll out type with success. Figure 34 illustrates the deceptive type halfback toss option utilizing a concentration type pattern.

FIGURE 34
HALFBACK TOSS MANEUVER

CHAPTER VI

PASS PROTECTION

Protection for the passer is probably the most important single aspect of the passing attack. More time is spent on perfecting this phase of the attack than any other, for if it breaks down the entire attack fails. Even if one protector fails the chances the maneuver will succeed drop drastically. Because of this it is the aim of all defending teams to break it down.

There are three distinct pass protection techniques, specific assignment, area assignment, and a combination of both.

The specific assignment involves the assigning of each protector to a specific defender. The protector then is responsible to restrict his defender's penetration. In most cases the protector is positioned opposite the assigned defender. In case the defender does not attempt to penetrate the protector picks up any free defender or assists a teammate. Figure 35 illustrates specific assignment protection.

Area protection involves the assigning of each protector to a specified area. Any defender that attempts to penetrate in that area is then picked up. If no defenders enter the zone the protector assists a teammate. The zone

each protector is held responsible for is usually located in the area of his preliminary alignment. Figure 36 illustrates this.

FIGURE 35

SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT PROTECTION

FIGURE 36

AREA PROTECTION

A combination of specific and zone assignments can be and is utilized with pass maneuvers of the deceptive and option type. In a situation of this type the onside protectors could be given specific assignments while the offside protectors are given area assignments. Interference type protectors employed with an option maneuver can be assigned a particular defender in the option area or assigned to take the most dangerous man.

Remaining backs can be given combination assignments; they may be assigned to take a specific defender or to clean up a specific zone or the entire area to ~~the~~ **their** front. At least one and usually two backs are utilized as protectors.

CHAPTER VII

RUNNING ATTACK

I. ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

The employment of the running attack from the flank type formation has definite advantages and definite disadvantages. Certain manipulations can be executed from it as well or better than from the set T while other manipulations cannot be executed as well. Because its physical nature has been altered the flank formation does not offer the same line blocking or backfield pattern possibilities. For by removing one or more potential ball carriers the flank type formation obviously eliminates certain ground attack manipulations. But, on the other hand, as forementioned in Chapter I, the placing of potential blockers in flanking positions offers the offensive team maintains certain advantages especially concerning ground thrusts in the central and outside zones. Because of this it is the conviction of a large number of authorities that the advantages gained more than offset the disadvantages.

The flank formation running attack can become an extremely potent weapon if complemented with an effective passing attack. Because the potential effectiveness of the pass is greatly increased when utilized from a flank

formation the defending team must concentrate its efforts on neutralizing it, consequently the running attack is given only secondary defensive attention.

Because of this defensive alignments and individual assignments are designed to first defend against the forward pass and second to meet the ground game.

The success or failure of any running attack depends upon the speed at which it can generate its maneuver and the speed at which it consequently strikes. This is especially important regarding thrusts to the outside because of the distance traveled before an attempt is made to pierce the defense. The time needed to cover this distance also offers the defense an opportunity to shift its strength to the area being attacked. Success or failure depends upon who gets there first.

II. RUNNING ATTACK BREAKDOWN

Two methods can be utilized in breaking down a running attack. The first would be to take specific plays or series of plays and explain the assignment and its execution of each individual. This involves a vast amount of technical knowledge but covers only the specific manipulation in point. The second, and most applicable here, would be to attempt to break down an entire running attack and gain knowledge of the theory or philosophy behind its design and

organization.

By understanding this basis or underlying foundation the individual involved in defending against it can organize his defenses to not only challenge a specific play or series of plays but the entire attack. Of course a number of running attacks presently employed are a combination of theories. One series may be structured entirely different than another. Yet when facing this situation an understanding of the different foundations of each is a definite asset. Of course any team that employs a combination of offensive philosophies is at a loss as none can be mastered.

To gain an over-all understanding of the theories presently employed the running attack has been broken down and classified into general categories. The two basic components of the attack will be separated. Basic principles of modern blocking techniques will be examined followed by the foundations of T formation backfield manipulations. The two will then be combined and basic running attacks will be discussed.

Blocking principles. Modern blocking design and organization can be split under two headings: direct and formed. The direct type involves blocks, individual, and local while formed blocking involves mobility and team coordination; direct is vertical in nature while formed is horizontal in nature.

Direct type blocking is based on the premise that one blocker can continually defeat one defender. Theoretically, through practice repetition direct type blocking is mastered; because of its simplicity the individual is able to accomplish this. Each offensive lineman is given the assignment of blocking the defender stationed directly opposite him or within a specified area to his front. He is to drive out from his position, gain contact and maintain it. To make this technique consistently effective the offensive lineman must control his assigned defender. Certain physical advantages are gained when employing direct type blocking maneuvers. Because the blocking is immediate and localized in nature the offensive linemen are able to spread themselves which consequently forces defenders to spread and isolate themselves. The ball carriers are then able to burst through these gaps. To challenge this defenders may station themselves in these gaps but then offer the blockers effective angles. A short gain of three to four yards is assured when direct blocking is successful.

Direct type blocking is employed very effectively from a flank type offense. With certain defenders removed by the flankers the remaining defenders are sometimes left outnumbered. Usually intermediate defenders are those removed. With this situation existing quick bursts in the middle and central areas between isolated primary level

defenders can result in long runs. On the other hand, when defenders are brought in to challenge these thrusts the flankers are freed.

Formed blocking consists of any block employed against defenders in an area apart from the offensive blocker's original alignment. It relies on its ability to create good blocking angles and have more blockers at the point of attack. It is also able to employ two blockers against one defender. It accomplishes this by pulling blockers from another area to the point of attack. Offside or/and onside guards are usually given this assignment. With this situation existing blockers in the area being attacked may team together on individual defenders or utilize their blocking angles.

Theoretically, formed blocking is superior to direct type, good angles are enjoyed, and more blockers are available. But, because blocking patterns are more complex and individual assignments are more technical the formed type becomes more difficult to learn and master. Two patterns are utilized with formed blocking, the power and trap. The power technique utilizes the added blockers at the attack points and seeks to overwhelm defenders stationed there. The trap technique seeks to deceive penetrating defenders with its misleading movements assisted by a deceptive back-field pattern. Formed type blocking patterns develop slower

than direct type offering the defensive team an opportunity to pursue to the point of attack. On the other hand, while formed blocking can operate against superior manpower the direct type, in most cases, will break down.

Formed blocking is definitely advantageous when utilized with a flank type offense because a large percentage of the ground attack from a formation of this type strikes in the outside areas. Because thrusts in this area take longer to materialize defensive pursuit can congregate to meet it. The mobilizing of blockers to the attack point compensates for this. The success or failure of a maneuver of this type depends upon the ability of the blockers to reach the attack point before defensive pursuit. The threat of the forward pass, if effectively executed, will accomplish this. Figures 39 and 40 illustrate typical formed blocking patterns. Figures 37 and 38 illustrate direct blocking patterns.

Note how the formed blockers attempt to drive defenders apart horizontally or parallel to the line of scrimmage while direct blockers move defenders back vertically.

Backfield pattern design. The backfield pattern will be classified in three categories: deceptive, forced reaction, and power. Each can be employed individually or in

FIGURE 37

TYPICAL DIRECT BLOCKING PATTERN

FIGURE 38

TYPICAL DIRECT BLOCKING PATTERN

FIGURE 39

TYPICAL FORMED BLOCKING PATTERN

FIGURE 40

TYPICAL FORMED BLOCKING PATTERN

combination with another. In many situations one pattern or series accomplishes the desired effect of all three pattern types, but one affect is always stressed.

The deceptive pattern is based upon the simulation of one maneuver and the actual execution of another. The maneuver actually executed is expected to take advantage of defensive reaction to the simulated one. The simulated maneuver is interchanged with the executed maneuver according to the situation. Consequently, the defense must react to the threat of any offensive strike simulated or otherwise. Of course if a simulated maneuver is poorly carried out in an unrealistic manner it will bring no defensive reaction and those individuals involved are wasting themselves. Best advantage is taken of defensive reaction when the simulated maneuver takes place in an area in the facsimile of the real strike. A consistently effective play when utilized as part of a series of this type tends to increase the effectiveness of other plays of the series. Defensive reaction to the strong play tends to open the others.

When utilized with the set T this pattern type has proven to be consistently effective. With three backs available play series are utilized with two simulated maneuvers complementing the actual execution. Tremendous pressure is brought to bear upon the defense when a series

of this type is employed in realistic fashion. When utilized from a flank type formation in which one or more backs are removed from their set positions and placed in the flank areas, the possible deceptive type patterns that can be employed are reduced. Obviously, with one or more potential ball carriers or fakers removed only certain deceptive maneuvers are available. Most flank formations utilize two remaining backs, therefore when employing a deceptive pattern one simulates and the other acts as the ball carrier. Figure 41 offers a visual explanation of a deceptive type backfield pattern from a flank type formation.

FIGURE 41

TYPICAL DECEPTIVE TYPE BACKFIELD PATTERN

The forced reaction pattern type attempts to bring about mistaken defensive reaction just as the deceptive pattern does, but it attempts to do this in a different manner. While the deceptive pattern attempts to deceive the opponent the forced reaction pattern forces the defender into error. The popular split T and belly series are forced reaction patterns. Concentration is put on specific defenders, in most instances located in the central and shallow outside zones. More than one potential ball carrier is sent into an area assigned to one defender; the defender is forced to commit himself to one. The other is then able to receive the ball freely. Defenders in surrounding areas are not able to assist the defender forced to react because a simulated strike is usually sent into their area of responsibility also.

The quarterback, in most instances, is utilized as the ball carrier that forces the defensive reaction with a set back acting as the other potential carrier. This maneuver may be executed with only two potential ball carriers, but its effectiveness is increased with the addition of the other backfield members.

With defenders naturally spread this pattern type is a major weapon of the flank type offense. Because defenders in the outside zones are spread and defenders in the central zones are outnumbered the effectiveness of a forced reaction

pattern is increased. Note Figure 42, defender A is forced to react to the ball carrying quarterback. The ball is then pitched to the swing back who has a clear field behind the split end's block.

FIGURE 42

TYPICAL FORCED REACTION MANEUVER

The power pattern employs a different theory and design than the deceptive and forced reaction types. With this pattern type backfield members are utilized as blockers. Although in certain situations the same affect is attempted as with the other pattern types it is not of major importance. Usually the maneuver attempted is obvious to the opponent, but because of the blocking power generated it is

able to nullify defensive reaction. At the same time it is also able to move any defender stationed in its path. Blocking backs are given specific assignments or told to take the most dangerous defender. Thrusts in the middle zone cannot be made with power blocking because of the congestion that would occur, therefore all power patterns strike in the central and outside zones.

With a potential blocker in a flanking position the power type pattern becomes extremely strong. This is especially true when the flanked individual is a split end. In most cases a defender is released from the inside area to compensate, thus offering the offensive team an opportunity to skirt to the outside more quickly. A power pattern is offered in Figure 43.

One maneuver, although not a distinct pattern type, must be included because of its universal use and universal effectiveness. Actually it can be and is utilized as a part of all three pattern types. It will be termed an outright maneuver because it is performed immediately at the snap of the ball. No real deception is involved, no forced reaction, nor any power. The speed of its execution and its ability to pierce an opponent's weak spot make it successful. Figure 44 illustrates an outright backfield maneuver.

V V V V 87

FIGURE 43

TYPICAL POWER MANEUVER

FIGURE 44

TYPICAL OUTRIGHT MANEUVER

III. INTEGRATION

When integrating the backfield pattern type with a line blocking principle certain combinations complement each other much better than others. Although both direct or formed line blocking can be utilized with all pattern types they are more usually combined with a pattern theory similar in nature.

Direct type blocking is utilized with forced reaction backfield patterns in almost every instance. Because both are founded upon isolating and then concentrating upon individual defenders they integrate well. Direct blocking is occasionally employed with deceptive and power patterns, but is usually not as effective as formed type blocking. Form blocking works hand in hand with power and deception because of the similarities in the natural make up. Deceptive patterns in deceiving the opponent leave him liable to blocks from unexpected angles; the trap play is an example of this. Power patterns utilize formed blocking within themselves and their effectiveness is grossly increased when complemented with mobile blockers from the line. The outright maneuver, because of the speed necessary, utilizes only direct type blocking when employed in its true form.

A single play or series of running attack plays could then be stated as utilizing direct type blocking with a deceptive type backfield pattern, or formed blocking and a

power pattern. A modern running attack may feature a number of running plays or series. Each founded upon different principles. An attack may feature formed blocking and utilize all three pattern types. It may feature both blocking types and only one pattern principle or, it may, and normally does, operate with a combination of blocking and backfield principles.

CHAPTER VIII

GENERAL BREAKDOWN OF FLANK OFFENSE

With both the passing and running attacks broken down individually and terms given their basic maneuvers, a complete flank type offense can be identified and the foundations of its running and passing attack explained. The following will be a breakdown of a hypothetical offense.

I. FORMATIONS FEATURED

Split-Wing, Double Split-Double Spread passing attack.

Approximately 70 per cent of the passing attack is employed from the Split-Wing and 30 per cent from the Double Split-Double Spread. In long yardage situations the latter formation is employed.

Both concentration and flood type patterns are employed. The concentration maneuver is executed against the safety man. Two basic flood patterns are utilized; one in the outside secondary zones and the other in the outside intermediate zones, two receivers are employed. The roll out option maneuver is utilized in conjunction with the flood pattern in the intermediate zones. Hook and sideline patterns are utilized from both offensive formations. The drop back technique is utilized at all times. Delayed passes are

utilized to either side in the subintermediate areas.

Running attack. Approximately 90 per cent of the running attack evolves from the split-spread formation.

The outside attack is stressed; a forced reaction pattern combined with direct blocking, and a power pattern with formed blocking, are utilized. The central and middle areas are attacked with deceptive patterns coupled with direct and formed blocking. They stress their direct blocking and forced reaction backfield maneuvers. Outright maneuvers are utilized to the outside and in the middle zones.

Obviously, more information than the above is necessary to adequately defend against a well-organized offense. But with knowledge of what the above terms and information involve, a defense can be designed and organized to offer over-all protection against them, or can be designed to specifically protect against strengths and/or take advantage of weaknesses.

SECTION III

DEFENSE

CHAPTER IX

OVER-ALL EXAMINATION

With the potential weapons of the flank type offense examined and categorized an attempt will now be made to defensively challenge them.

The same procedure will be followed in specifying defensive theory, organization, and techniques as was utilized with the offense. First, an over-all explanation will be offered; second, general alignment policies will be examined; third, defensive countering tactics will be offered that challenge previously examined offensive weapons; and fourth, general alignments and individual assignments will be offered.

Because the flank type formation contains so many potential weapons, and because these weapons can be designed to complement each other, the defense will vary according to the knowledge of the coach, team and individual strength, and the weapons which the offensive team can employ most effectively.

Coaching knowledge is a major factor. The common, universally employed defenses cannot be utilized in their basic form; some defensive adjustment is necessary. And, as forementioned, if this adjustment is inadequate the offensive team enjoys a natural advantage. Consequently, the

defensive knowledge of the coach becomes quite obvious when his team takes the field against an opponent that employs a flank type formation. His charges will be at a definite tactical disadvantage if not completely prepared. Only with superior manpower will they have a fighting chance.

The strengths and weaknesses of a team are important factors, especially when faced with the job of challenging the flank type formation. The qualified coach will attempt to align his team in such a way as to make the most of his assets and compensate for possible weak points. Because weak points can become highly magnified against a well-drilled flank type offense they may play an important part in the contest's pattern of action and its final outcome. Also, with the flank areas brought under severe stress the placing of capable participants in these areas becomes extremely important. The strengths and weaknesses of offensive individuals bares extreme consideration in defensive planning. The defending coach must place his participants in such a way as to meet the potential threats as previously examined; the flank type offense offers its manipulator a large arsenal of running and passing weapons.

Theoretically, any team may effectively employ every weapon at its disposal, but obviously this is nearly impossible. To enjoy success consistently with every potential weapon perfectly matched material for each position would be

necessary. Therefore, certain manipulations are naturally more effective than others because of physical restrictions. On the other hand, consistent effectiveness can be maintained as physical assets permit. With this situation existing the defending team, if properly prepared, is aligned, and individually assigned, to challenge and combat these effective weapons. The more effective weapons maintained by the offensive team the more difficult is the assignment of defensive planning. The perfect offense could be challenged only by the perfect defense.

CHAPTER X

DEFENSIVE TRENDS

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, defensive theory is continually being altered to meet offensive changes. Major offensive alterations have brought on major defensive alterations. And, as time has passed, football like any other activity dealing in direct competition has become an exacting science. It may be taken for granted that the game and the theories behind it have improved. Just as the automobile industry, through the tremendous competition developed between different producers, has produced a finer, more efficient product, so has football improved.

When the inside running attack has been stressed defenders have been grouped in the inside area; when thrusts in the outside areas have been stressed they have been defensively reinforced. And so the continual evolution has transpired.

The flank type formation has currently come into its own and a basic offensive type has evolved. Consequently, defenses are also becoming standardized in nature. It will be the purpose of this section to examine the basic theory and foundations of these basic flank formation defensive alignments.

As previously illustrated and explained in section

two, there are a number of potential weapons available from a flank type formation. The purpose of the basic utility alignment is to challenge all weapons with one set of individual assignments from a standard location.

The author will now examine and illustrate basic alignment principles followed by defensive counters for weapons offered in section two. It is hoped that these counters will act as tools which the reader may make use of in designing his own particular defenses.

I. SECONDARY DEFENDERS

As universally recognized, the primary responsibility of these individuals is the forward pass. Only after the threat of it has passed can these defenders carry out their assignment against a ground thrust. It goes without saying that these individuals must be extensively prepared and rehearsed before actually facing a flank type offense; because they are separated farther than normal from each other mistakes are magnified.

Two distinct defensive secondary alignments are currently being utilized: the three deep, and the four deep. Their basic foundations, assets, and liabilities will now be examined. The more recent umbrella alignments feature the so-called nine man front; in most cases this consists of simply an overshifted line. Once the ball has been put in

play the rotation employed changes the defensive assignments into the standard three-deep arrangement.

The most universally accepted secondary alignment is the three deep. Through the years it has been found that three men at this level have been adequate for defending against the medium to long forward pass. The major factor that has brought about its design and acceptance has been the ability of the offense to employ only three pass receivers immediately into the secondary area. The remaining seven offensive players, plus the passer, have been utilized as protectors; seven are necessary because most defensive alignments feature seven potential pass rushers.

This situation also stands both offensively and defensively in reference to the flank formation. Figure 45 illustrates this situation. It should be apparent that the placing of two defenders in the secondary area would be disastrous and that four, in most instances, would be wasteful. The added defender at the secondary level would theoretically weaken the primary level.

The assigning of four defenders in the secondary has evolved into a rather common procedure since the development of the consistent forward pass completion. Many coaches have felt it necessary to add a defender in the completion zone and eliminate one potential rusher. Figure 46 illustrates a four deep situation.

V
1

V
2

99
V
3

FIGURE 45

THREE DEEP SECONDARY

V
1

V
2

V
3

V
4

FIGURE 46

FOUR DEEP SECONDARY

There have been defenses employed against the flank formation passing attack with five secondary defenders, and some success has been realized, especially when facing a rather inaccurate passer; of course primary level pressure is minimized. In certain isolated instances two deep defenders have been employed with seven or eight rushers.

II. INTERMEDIATE DEFENDERS

Early defenses usually employed only one intermediate level defender, and never more than two. At that time defenders were stacked at the primary level with an emphasis on penetration. The plan was to stop the running thrust before it developed and for a time this theory was sound.

Constant evolution brought about offensive speed that took advantage of penetration; linebackers then became extremely important. Two, three, and sometimes four linebackers (intermediate level) were utilized. These defenders then roved behind the scrimmage line and attempted to "smell" the play and meet the ball carrier at scrimmage or knife between linemen and make the tackle.

The same number of linebackers are presently utilized, although the principle responsibility of the linebacker has changed.

The present linebacking theory is one of keyed reaction in which the linebacker is given a preliminary area

to control, then the job of reacting to the action of a specified offensive man. The advent of the consistent forward pass has given these linebackers or intermediate level defenders an extremely important added responsibility. They must react immediately and positively to their key and, in the case of a pass, retreat to a specified position to protect an outlined area or take a rehearsed path to the passer, according to the design of the defense. And, as previously stated, those intermediate level defenders stationed in the flank areas are put under tremendous stress. Figure 47 illustrates the normal number and positioning of intermediate level defenders when employed under earlier defensive theory. Figure 48 illustrates a modern intermediate area alignment against a flank type formation.

III. PRIMARY LEVEL DEFENDERS

As previously stated, the number of defenders stationed at this level fluxuates according to the offensive theory of the time. A large number of penetrators were utilized when facing the mass interference, power type offenses. The quick-hitting T forced the use of more linebackers and controlled penetration. The presently popular Split T has brought about defensive control at the line of scrimmage with quick lateral pursuit by all primary level defenders. The flank type formation has not changed this

situation although stress has been put on penetrating to the passer after the running threat has been eliminated. Figure 49 illustrates early penetration tactics, Figure 50 controlled penetration, and Figure 51 the control-pursuit theory. Obviously, there has always been much overlapping of these defensive tactics, but very generally they appear as follows.

FIGURE 49

EARLY PENETRATION TACTICS

FIGURE 50

CONTROLLED PENETRATION

FIGURE 51

CONTROL AND PURSUIT TACTICS

Thus, modern defensive theory generally calls for a three deep secondary, from two to four keying and reacting intermediate defenders, and from four to six primary level defenders that control and force or pursue laterally. The individual location of each defender depends entirely upon the judgment of the coach involved. There are certain aligning policies that are adhered to almost universally by informed coaches. These necessities will be examined in a general manner in this chapter and more thoroughly in the section concerning specific counters for basic offensive weapons. Figure 48, page 102, offers a standard (utility) defensive alignment that features the general requirements just mentioned.

CHAPTER XI

POSITIONING POLICIES

The location of individual defenders at specific points before the ball is put in play is extremely important, especially when facing the highly dangerous potential of the flank type formation.

Those defenders located in the secondary must station themselves at a point from which each may have quick access to his entire zone of responsibility. These defenders must also be conscious of the positioning of potential pass receivers. Adjustment must be made for any receiver that locates himself in a position with immediate access to a corner of a zone, or who is capable of running a specific pattern difficult to cover, such as the hook, sideline, or spot. Also, of obvious importance is the depth adjustment of secondary defenders according to the tactical situation. Minimum and maximum depths are visually set. Depth is normally regulated fairly deep against the flank formation because of the usually extensive employment of the forward pass.

In the case of man to man protection, to be examined in a later chapter, the basic alignment procedures just mentioned will hold true, although more emphasis is given to positioning in accordance to assigned pass receivers.

There are an unending number of primary and intermediate level alignment possibilities; many are ineffective and others effective only against specific offensive manipulations. A few appear to be universally employed, and those that are have a number of basic fundamentals in common.

The first fundamental is that of containment. One defender is placed at a point on each flank of the offensive team; from this position they will attempt to contain any outside running thrust. Basically the assignment is to keep the offense in a vise from which it cannot escape. All outside maneuvers are theoretically forced to the inside and met there by defensive pursuit. The defenders given this responsibility in the past were always primary level defenders, but with the advent of umbrella rotation defenses and the flank type offense the individuals given this assignment have become intermediate level defenders. This has occurred because more potent offensive football has forced the devising of defenses with individuals given more than one responsibility.

In the case of the flank type offense the defender assigned to contain is usually assigned to protect the outside-intermediate zone also. Consequently, he must locate himself off the scrimmage line. From this position he must react to his key or the swing of the play immediately to

contain effectively. The exact positioning of these defenders will be examined in a later chapter.

Other intermediate defenders are currently being placed in an area with a clear front to the offensive formation; this is being done because linebackers are given an area to control just as primary defenders. Also, the open front offers the linebacker better visual access to his "assigned key." Normally he is positioned in an area directly to the front of his key. Depth is normally adjusted to the tactical situation; inside linebackers are also assigned to definite middle intermediate zones. Of course, the above-mentioned fundamentals are commonly utilized but not exclusively.

Primary level defenders are currently being placed in positions from which they may slide and pursue to either direction; this usually means directly opposite or on the outside shoulder of the offensive linemen. Present theory involves the stationing of one defender in the area to the front of each offensive lineman to offer a solid defensive front. When this principle is not followed defenders are usually assigned to revert to it as the ball is put in play by looping or stunting. Exact positioning depends upon the tactical situation. Figures 52 and 53 illustrate two currently employed utility type defenses.

Note the alignment at each defensive level. Defenders 1 and 2 are intermediate level containers; note their immediate access to assigned pass defense zones. Defenders 3 and 4 are placed in positions from which they may key the guard and/or back to their front, control their assigned area, and consequently slice laterally or retreat to their assigned downfield zone. Primary level defenders are in a position to control, pressure the passer, or pursue laterally. Secondary defenders have not been outflanked and can cover their zones immediately.

CHAPTER XII

SPECIFIC DEFENSIVE TACTICS

Thus far all explanation has been of a theoretical nature; the information offered has formed a basic foundation for the specific defensive alignments, strategy, and counter adjustments that will be examined in this chapter. The basis of the flank type offense, its assets, weapons, and over-all potential have been discussed. Present defensive alignment theory and universal necessities have also been offered. It is hoped that the method of classification utilized in organizing and offering said information will prove beneficial here. First, basic defensive principles will be examined, then counters will be offered for offensive weapons examined in section two. It is hoped that this method of examination will enable any reader the opportunity of sorting information from the contents that is applicable to his particular needs, situation, or philosophy.

The utilization of the following counters is only productive when the defending team is fully cognizant of the opponent's offensive structure. This involves knowledge of his most effective weapons, his personnel, tactical trends, and ability to capitalize on defensive adjustments.

I. THE FORWARD PASS

Three methods can be utilized in the downfield defense of the forward pass; they are man to man, zone, and a combination of both.

Man to man. This method involves the assigning of defenders to individual potential pass receivers. The defenders then cover their assignment wherever he goes, regardless of field position. This method theoretically is fool proof, all receivers are covered regardless of their routes downfield, faking attempts, or their original position. With outstanding secondary and intermediate level defenders this defensive plan can be initiated effectively, but difficulty arises when individuals of poor to average ability are given this assignment. The obvious difficulty of maintaining a position four yards to the rear of an opponent who can change direction at any time requires outstanding ability and an extremely extensive amount of training and experience. Problems of a physical nature constantly arise from a man to man secondary defense; pass receivers with an outstanding asset such as great speed or deception may be pitted against defenders of lesser ability. This situation can be disastrous. It occurs most frequently when a three deep secondary is used and a four deep concentration pattern is employed offensively. The extra receiver is

usually covered by a naturally handicapped linebacker; coverage of this type is very difficult.

On the other hand, by carefully matching man to man defenders with specific receivers so that each defender is definitely superior to his assignment an unequalled pass defense can be put into operation. Speed is a definite prerequisite to this form of protection.

Apparently the best man to man alignment is a four deep arrangement with each defender positioned six to eight yards from his assigned receiver and as directly to his front as possible. The fifth receiver stationed in the inside area is taken by a keying linebacker. Obviously, defensive capability against the running attack is reduced. Figure 54 illustrates this alignment arrangement.

FIGURE 54

MAN TO MAN SECONDARY ALIGNMENT

A three deep man to man alignment is featured in Figure 55. Linebackers A and B would take the first remaining back downfield to their side.

FIGURE 55

THREE DEEP MAN TO MAN SECONDARY ALIGNMENT

Strict zone. The strict zone defense can be called a safety type coverage. That is, it can be penetrated but has the ability to contain the offense short of the goal line. This defense is utilized, in the majority of cases, when the pass has become obvious and the offense is attempting to score spontaneously from a point over thirty yards from the goal line, such as being behind in the waning moments of play. The job of the defense then, is to give yardage, make an organized retreat, yet use valuable time and stop the

opponent short of the goal line.

The individual secondary and intermediate level assignments are extremely simple, yet very important. Normally, a four man secondary is utilized with two or three defenders stationed in the deep intermediate zones. Defenders remain in their assigned zones and retreat according to the depth of the deepest receiver.

Secondary defenders must maintain a distance safely behind any deep receiver; at the same time the linebackers retreat with and pick up receivers that enter their zones with a man to man coverage. Obviously, defensive stress is put on the deep receiver. All secondary defenders are free to watch the flight of the ball and immediately converge to its landing point. Figure 56 illustrates the strict zone alignment and consequential reaction and convergence.

Combination zone-man to man coverage. The best overall downfield pass defense system is the combination. This system maintains the best utility and consistency. It appears to be the best system yet devised that maintains an adequate degree of effectiveness regardless of the tactical situation and the specific offensive weapon being faced.

Basically, combination protection is the assigning of a zone to each downfield defender; the defender is then assigned to "pick up" any receiver that enters the zone and

FIGURE 56

FOUR DEEP ZONE ALIGNMENT

cover him man to man while he remains in it. As the receiver leaves one zone and enters another, one defender releases him and another picks him up. The defender that releases then takes the next receiver into his zone. If there are none he is then given the assignment of either waiting or assisting a defender in an adjoining zone.

Of course there is more to combination coverage than

this. First the basic three deep will be examined. The zones utilized will be those offered in the chapter concerning field zoning. The defensive halfbacks will occupy the left and right secondary and the safety the center secondary. The intermediate zones will be occupied by three linebackers: two outside and one inside. These linebackers, or first down defenders, will normally protect that area from scrimmage to ten yards deep, but in many situations will be assigned to protect areas in front and to the rear of these normal zones.

The preliminary positioning of each downfield defender is extremely variable; the tactical situation may call for linebackers to align themselves at the line of scrimmage or as deep as eight yards. Normally inside linebackers are from one and one-half to two yards off the ball, while outside linebackers are from two to five yards deep depending upon the lateral split of the offensive flanker. The wider the split the deeper the linebacker. Secondary defenders will position themselves at a minimum of six yards with no maximum; the normal depth would be eight to ten yards.

As far as lateral positioning is concerned general rules can be offered. Inside linebackers alter their lateral location only when shifting out because of immediate running attack commitments. Linebackers located in the

outside areas normally split the distance between the closest primary level defender and the flanker to their side. In certain situations they are located directly opposite the flanker to attempt a detaining action.

The defensive halfback when facing a set formation to his side will align himself from three to seven yards outside the set end according to the distance from the sideline, the farther the distance the wider the alignment. When faced with a flanker the defensive halfback will station himself from three yards to the flankers outside to a point directly opposite; a directly opposite relationship will be held if the flanker is within six yards of the sideline. The halfback should never let the flanker get an outside position. If two flankers are employed to one side the halfback will always play the outside man.

The safety must jockey his position according to the location of potential pass receivers. The normal three front line receivers featured by a flank type formation obviously station two receivers to one side of the field with immediate access downfield. The safety adjusts to this; depending upon the position of the inside receiver, he will split the area between the center and said receiver. If four receivers are in position to drive immediately downfield the safety then plays directly over center. The safety also is adjusted slightly to a situation shown in

Figure 57. The offensive left halfback must be taken into consideration. In this situation the safety splits the distance between the two outermost inside receivers.

FIGURE 57

THREE DEEP POSITIONING

These tentative positioning rules are designed to offer the downfield defenders the best opportunity to cover their assigned zones and pick up the most probable receivers. Of course, if reaction is poor after the ball has been put into play it makes little difference how the preliminary alignment is arranged.

Specific individual downfield pass defense techniques will not be examined thoroughly here as they in themselves could be the subject of a large volume. The important factors are as follows.

At the snap of the ball, or as the passing maneuver is diagnosed, each downfield defender immediately begins to retreat and at the same time strives to visually locate potential receivers. As a receiver enters their zone they pick him up immediately, maintaining a position four yards behind him. This yardage ratio is kept until the receiver leaves the zone. As this occurs an audible signal is given the defender receiving the opponent and the next receiver is picked up. A defender without an occupied zone may be assigned to assist in another zone if the defensive team has had prior information concerning the opponent's pass patterns. This is risky, usually defenders in this situation are told to hold fast until the ball is in the air.

Combination zone-man to man pass coverage demands good organization, preparation, knowledge, and confidence on the part of both players and coaches. But, without a doubt, it is the best pass coverage system available. Figure 58 illustrates the movements of a group of downfield defenders when reacting to a theoretical pass maneuver.

The four deep combination type coverage entails the same basic fundamentals as the three deep. The only real

alteration is made in zoning. With a four man secondary the field is divided into four sections laterally. A standard method of organizing is to divide in a less defined manner.

FIGURE 58

SECONDARY LEVEL REACTION TO RECEIVERS

In other words, the secondary is defended in general areas rather than specific zones. Intermediate level assignments concerning pass coverage in this situation usually do not change.

The great asset of the four deep is its ability to rotate into an optional or flood type pass and to form a solid front against hook and sideline patterns. These assets will be examined at some length in the chapter concerning defensive counters for specific offensive weapons. Figure 59 illustrates a four deep alignment and its dimensions.

FIGURE 59

FOUR DEEP POSITIONING

CHAPTER XIII

ROTATION AND ADJUSTMENT

Many current teams now combine a set T formation with a flank type T. And, naturally, adjustments are necessary. Although this project is not necessarily concerned with this situation, a general examination will be made concerning these adjustments.

So-called eight man front defenses that feature a natural three deep secondary require only field adjustment within the secondary. This adjustment is referred to in a general manner in Chapters XI and XII. The defender must station himself in a position with immediate access to his assigned zone and in relation to the potential path of the flanked receiver. Adjustments to flankers at the intermediate level require the transferring of a defender from the inside area to a point from which he may contain quickly, and either detain the flanker or retreat to effectively defend against the pass in the outside intermediate zone. He also must be able to pursue to the inside quickly. To compensate for the removed defender each remaining inside defender to the side involved moves one position to his inside. This is commonly referred to as shifting out; this situation will be examined more extensively later in this chapter.

Nine man front adjustments against combination set T and flank formation offenses require extensive preparation regulated by specific rules. A complete volume could be written concerning this subject because of its importance and complexity.

Normally the rotating procedure is as follows: the four members of the secondary (two wings and two safeties) regulate their alignment according to the number of receivers to either side of the offensive center. When the situation is unbalanced (three receivers to one side), the rotation is automatically to the offensive strength. This brings about an overshift with a three deep secondary. This situation is fairly obvious.

Effective primary level compensation is sometimes made to the defensive weak side by shifting out. This is illustrated in Figure 60 along with rotation to the three and one situation. The shifting of the linebacker to the outside facilitates pass coverage in the flank area. It also offers a better front against the inside belly maneuver and the option, or forced reaction, maneuver, to the outside. The inside maneuver, ~~with~~ defenders located on the scrimmage line[†] becomes more difficult to detect or deceive them, the linebacker is in a better position to string out outside maneuvers and assist to the inside.

FIGURE 60

SHIFT-OUT ADJUSTMENT

If the opponent strikes more effectively or more frequently to the outside a standard alignment may be used with the linebacker moving directly behind the defensive tackle. Note the right defensive side in Figure 61. This eliminates the offensive left guard as a potential direct blocker on

the linebacker.

The more difficult rotation problem is that of a flanking two and two situation in which a balance is held yet the flanker is utilized. Two procedures can be used when faced with this situation.

when faced with this situation.

SEMIREVOLVE WITH SHIFT OUT LEFT AND
LINEBACKER ADJUSTMENT RIGHT

SEMIREVOLVE WITH SHIFT OUT LEFT AND
LINEBACKER ADJUSTMENT RIGHT

The first is a semirevolve; rotation here is incomplete yet compensation is made to challenge the flanker. The adjustment usually covers about half the distance normally covered with a three and one situation. From these positions the umbrella group will maintain their normal rotation with the swing, or specified key. The advantage of the semirevolve is that it facilitates rotation against possible passing maneuvers to the flanked side and still maintains an ability to come back to the set side. Figure 61, page 126, illustrates the semirevolve with a shift out to the set side.

The other method of combating this situation is referred to as a complete revolve. Two types of complete revolve can be utilized when facing the two and two flanker situation. They are positive rotation and negative rotation.

Positive rotation involves the committing of defensive strength to a flanked back regardless of the potential receiver balance, such as a two and two situation. In other words, rotation is toward any flanked back. This sets up a three deep secondary and overshifts the primary level toward the flanker. This overshift increases the defenses' ability to challenge the forward pass to the side of the flanked back which is a common offensive maneuver. Figure 62 illustrates positive rotation toward a two and two flanked back.

The shift out is employed to the defensive split side.

FIGURE 62

POSITIVE ROTATION

Negative rotation involves a complete rotation toward the set side or away from the flanked back. This rotation is illustrated in Figure 63. The rotation is an overshift toward the offensive strong side to meet running strength there. A shift out is common to the flanked back in this situation.

The shift out is utilized to the weak side of the

defense to facilitate containment and outside pass coverage.

FIGURE 63

NEGATIVE ROTATION

When faced with a set backfield and one or two split ends a shift out is normally employed to the split side. One split end is usually adjusted to by either a negative rotation or semirevolve. A semirevolve to the split side with a shift out to the set side, or a semirevolve away from the split and a shift out with it can be utilized. Two split ends can be met with the loosening of both wings and a shift out to both sides. Figure 64 illustrates defensive

adjustment to a double split.

FIGURE 64

LOOSENING WITH DOUBLE SHIFT-OUT

Adjustment to the flank formation from a standard eight man front is relatively simple. Adjustment at the secondary level is offered in this section, Chapter IV. Normally the defensive ends are given the responsibility to move into the flank areas to compensate for offensive placement in these areas.

The standard wide six adjustment to a split end is one of dropping off the end and moving in the defensive tackle

into a tight six position on the outside shoulder of the offensive tackle. The linebacker to that side locates himself as illustrated in Figure 65. The alignment of set or remaining backs regulates this, if strength is to the split side he locates himself behind the tackle; if a balanced, or divide, situation exists he locates himself behind the guard; if strength is to the opposite side he locates himself directly over the center, the near back or guard is usually keyed. The set side plays their normal wide six assignments.

The standard five three defense usually drops off an end or employs a shift out to the split end or flanked back. Figure 66 illustrates a drop off on the flank side and a shift out on the split side.

If a drop off is utilized to a split end, the outside linebacker can be positioned on the outside shoulder of the offensive guard, and the middle linebacker shifted to a corresponding position on the other guard (5-4 aligning) or the outside linebacker can be moved up on the line of scrimmage opposite the offensive guard.

CHAPTER XIV

PASS RUSHING TECHNIQUES

Without a doubt, effective pressure is the best defensive weapon available to minimize the forward pass. While the downfield area is being defended against enemy attack the primary level takes the attack to the offensive team.

Four methods of bringing about this pressure will now be examined; they are normal, stunt, load, and gap. These classifications are general in nature; they can be, and are integrated and employed in conjunction with each other.

The extent of the effectiveness of the rush is dependent upon the number of rushers made available by the design of the defense, the ability of the downfield defenders to cover potential receivers, thus forcing the passer to hold the ball for a longer period of time, and the ability of the defense to detain potential receivers at the line of scrimmage. Of irreplaceable importance is determination that is consistent in nature.

I. NORMAL PRESSURE

The normal rush is the method that develops from the standard utility alignment. It develops from any defense that utilizes fundamental defensive play and is not designed

specifically to rush the passer. After the passing maneuver has been diagnosed through offensive movements or if the tactical situation calls for a pass, the rushing maneuver is executed.

The normal rushing method could call for from four to six assigned rushers according to the design of the defense. The two rushers at the outermost points of the rushing force are given the job of containing the passer. He must not be given room to maneuver or escape. These rushers should commit themselves from the outside, preferably from an angle at the same depth as the passer. Those assigned to rush to the inside must use all of the strength and determination they can muster and drive on a direct line, or as close to it as possible, to the passer. These individuals should never veer their rushing course over one yard. If this one yard alley is exceeded other rushers will be cut off or forced to change their path. Also, valuable time is lost if a direct route is not followed. Figure 67 illustrates a normal rush.

II. STUNT PRESSURE

The stunt will be referred to in this situation only as a pass rushing technique. Its application against the running attack will be examined in a later chapter although the stunt normally is employed specifically to challenge

certain aspects of both the air and the ground attack.

FIGURE 67
NORMAL RUSH

Two distinct methods of stunting are available: the loop and the angle charge. The loop entails the circling around a designated opponent to either side, while the angle charge is the directing of the charge over the original position of an opponent's head. The author is among that group that considers the angle charge superior because it is less dangerous, accomplished more quickly, and easier to

to teach and master. Therefore, the angle charge will be the technique involved in the stunting type pass rush as examined here.

The stunt can be employed from a standard utility defense or can be employed from alignments devised specifically to increase its effectiveness. Stunting from the standard alignment calls for the exchanging of assignments between specified defenders. Two methods can be employed here: directional and cross. The directional calls for all defenders to stunt in the same direction, while the cross is self-explanatory. Stunting of an isolated nature may also be utilized; in this situation only isolated pairs or groups of defenders will stunt.

The basic rushing rules of containment and direct route are followed after the stunt has occurred. Those individuals located at the outside points of the rush after the stunt has occurred will contain, etc. In most cases linebackers will be involved; they will actually take part or will compensate. Figure 68 illustrates a directional stunt from a standard alignment with a compensating linebacker.

Certain defensive formations are devised to make the most of the stunt maneuver. These defenses will nearly always use the cross technique. Normally linebackers are used in conjunction with primary level defenders, and to

facilitate this these linebackers are usually positioned directly behind or in the same proximity of the individual they are to cross stunt with. This type maneuver can be highly effective, but also can be highly dangerous as defenders at the intermediate level are sacrificed in the stunt. Figures 69 and 70 illustrate cross stunts from defenses designed for the stunt. More information concerning the stunt is offered in Chapter XVII.

FIGURE 68
DIRECTIONAL STUNT

FIGURE 69
CROSS STUNT

FIGURE 70
CROSS STUNT

III. LOAD PRESSURE

This rushing technique is designed to simply outman a segment of the offensive pass protection wall. The theory here is to employ four rushers against three blockers, etc. The obvious drawback of this technique is that the extra rusher at the load point must be taken from another area, consequently weakening that area. Is it worth it? In some cases, yes; in others, no. The tactical situation, physical implications, and the offenses' ability to adjust are important considerations. The same load maneuver cannot be employed consistently, and the offensive team could note this to take advantage of the physically weakened area.

Any area can be loaded, but in most instances the middle zone or the area outside the offensive tackles is chosen. The middle zone offers a direct path to the passer and cannot be readily reinforced. The shallow outside areas are usually protected by backfield men, also the load can be hidden until the last second by utilizing outside linebackers that shift up on the line.

The term red dog denoting the rush of a linebacker is a load situation. Linebackers take a rehearsed path to the passer, and normally the section that is penetrated is also being loaded. The intermediate level is obviously weakened by this maneuver. From one to four linebackers may be red dogged; the more that take part the weaker the intermediate

level coverage. Normally one or two will rush and the remaining will compensate. Figures 71 and 72 offer two load maneuvers; the former an outside load and the latter a middle zone rush.

FIGURE 71

OUTSIDE LOAD MANEUVER

FIGURE 72

INSIDE LOAD MANEUVER

IV. GAP PRESSURE

If primary level defenders are considered mobile enough they may be positioned in the gaps between offensive linemen. From these locations they attempt to burst between protectors and penetrate to the passer before the protectors can position themselves. This may be done to either side or in the middle area. It is seldom attempted across the entire front. Too many defenders would be needed to fill every gap. For if every gap is not occupied the offense could drive through the free areas by utilizing the resulting blocking angles, note Figure 73. Because the angles are present in gap type defenses a shift from normal head to head locations into the gaps may be utilized to delay offensive detection.

FIGURE 73

GAP POSITIONING TO DEFENSIVE RIGHT

The area in which the gap alignment is employed is actually being loaded, note Figures 73 and 74. The former is a gap to the defensive right and the latter a gap to the defensive left. Chapter X offers more information concerning gap defense.

FIGURE 74

GAP POSITIONING TO DEFENSIVE LEFT

An attempt will now be made to offer techniques that best capitalize upon the possible weaknesses of particular pass protection methods discussed in Section II, Chapter VI.

V. SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT PROTECTION

This protection type appears to be somewhat vulnerable to cross stunting. Because protectors are assigned to restrict a specific assigned opponent, the crossing of these defensive opponents may cut off and confuse the protectors. If possible, these stunts should be designed to exploit weak protectors. That is, protectors diagnosed as weak links should be forced to bear added difficulty of adjusting to a defender penetrating into another area difficult to reach. Figure 75 illustrates an example of this situation; offensive lineman A is forced to make an extremely difficult adjustment in blocking defender B.

FIGURE 75

CROSS STUNT VS SPECIFIC ASSIGNMENT PROTECTION

If a weak link is not found, more than one is present, or adequate information of the opponent is not available, a standard procedure of cross stunting into the middle zone should be utilized. This area is chosen because a direct path can be taken to the passer, the center is a naturally handicapped pass protection blocker, and blocking assistance from outer linemen cannot be fast enough to be effective. Also, pass protecting backs tend to look to the outside for rushers.

VI. AREA PROTECTION

The best method to defeat area assignment pass protection is through the use of load type rushing. With each protector given an area, the rushing of two or three defenders in one area makes the protecting job extremely difficult. This loading can be employed in any area of the line depending upon offensive weaknesses both individual or team in nature. In some instances the formation utilized may be vulnerable. Formations such as Split-Wing as illustrated in Figure 76 are potentially weak to the split side, note only two protectors are immediately available. A gap load with the outside linebacker shifting up and rushing can be extremely effective if employed in the right tactical situation.

FIGURE 76

LOAD MANEUVER VS AREA PROTECTION

The shifting of both outside linebackers up on the line to rush at the last moment can disturb and confuse offensive protection assignments, especially when remaining or set backs have been given a downfield pass pattern. In facing an offensive formation that features two flanked backs the rushing of outside linebackers can be very effective if employed strategically. Figure 77 illustrates this situation.

FIGURE 77
RUSH FROM OUTSIDE

CHAPTER XV

COUNTERING SPECIFIC WEAPONS: FORWARD PASS

Specific countering tactics for passing weapons offered in Section II, Chapter IV will now be examined. Because of the complexity of each maneuver to be offered only a general explanation will be given.

I. FLOOD PATTERN DEFENSE

A large number of basic pass patterns currently used are based upon the flood principle. Patterns that use crossing receivers, streaking receivers, cross field routes, etc., in many cases employ the principle of dispatching more receivers in an area than there are defenders. The flood principle is employed both at the secondary and intermediate levels. Because the secondary is the last line of defense adjustment is much more critical at this level. The resulting stress calls for reinforcement.

Two basic techniques can normally be applied to bring about this reinforcement. Defenders from the intermediate level can be given added responsibilities or secondary adjustment can be utilized. Knowledge of the opponents' patterns can result in a definite choice of the most adaptable technique. Each has distinct advantages and disadvantages.

Intermediate level adjustment is as follows: linebackers, in diagnosing the impending pass, retreat at top speed either in a backward or side run, but always with the attention focused on the field of play. This retreat is carried to a specific point, either to the deep boundary of their zone, or to a point rehearsed to meet a specific pass pattern. While retreating the linebacker observes the action to either side to note any receiver driving down-field. Because the flood pattern usually employs a crossing receiver the linebacker can at any time expect a receiver to cross into his zone. If, through knowledge of the opponent, it is found the crossing receivers run their patterns deeper than the linebacker's zone boundary, the linebacker must retreat farther to cover them. Figures 78 and 79 illustrate typical flood patterns challenged by deeply retreating linebackers. Note Figure 78, linebacker A retreats immediately to the deep boundary of his zone as the play develops. As receiver X enters his zone he picks him up and remains with him even though he drives slightly deeper than the intermediate level boundary. Note linebacker B, he observes receiver Y driving deep and extends his retreat to meet him. Figure 79 illustrates the same situation.

Flood type patterns that develop at the intermediate level are met in the same manner, linebackers always cover the deepest man in their area. Those linebackers stationed

FIGURE 78

RETREATING LINEBACKERS VS FLOOD PASS MANEUVER

FIGURE 79

RETREATING LINEBACKERS VS FLOOD PASS MANEUVER

to the outside must recover immediately after dropping receivers that cut to the inside. Figure 80 offers an intermediate level flood pattern. Note the defensive end dropping off laterally to cover the swinging receiver. This technique will be explained more thoroughly in a later chapter.

FIGURE 80

DROP OFF OF END VS FLOOD PASS MANEUVER

If the opponent floods one side of the field with three immediate receivers an inside linebacker may be given the assignment of adjusting laterally with the set back and assisting in covering the outside intermediate zone. Figure 81 illustrates this situation.

LATERAL MOVEMENT OF LINEBACKER VS
FLOOD PASS MANEUVER

Secondary adjustment against deep flood type maneuvers is the only possible compensation. Patterns that feature two extremely deep receivers in one zone force a defender in an adjoining zone to assist. This is possible only if

secondary defenders react immediately to the developing pass and retreat to points from which they may observe the patterns as they develop. Assisting defenders may then visually note the necessary adjustment. Figure 82 illustrates this situation.

FIGURE 82

SECONDARY ADJUSTMENT VS DEEP FLOOD PASS MANEUVER

Only by attaining immediate depth at both levels as the pass maneuver develops can the flood type pattern be effectively challenged. As long as this depth is maintained defenders are able to switch receivers as they leave and enter zones and are capable of observing and reacting to any offensive maneuver in a safe manner.

With only three secondary defenders the defense is at a physical disadvantage when faced with a four deep pattern. The answer to this situation is knowledge of the opponent before the actual contest. Defensive design can then be altered accordingly. A four man secondary, rotation with a linebacker going deep (illustrated in Figure 83) or a load type rushing maneuver are possible counters. These defensive techniques can then be employed when the tactical situation calls for their employment. The loss of a pass protection blocker plus the relatively long pattern developing period are weaknesses of the four deep pattern that can be exploited. Figure 83 illustrates this, six protectors are available to restrict seven rushers. A linebacker rotating deep is utilized.

II. CONCENTRATION PATTERN DEFENSE

As noted in Section II, Chapter IV, the concentration pattern is theoretically not difficult to defend against. Its strength lies in the physical ability of the defender in

FIGURE 83

THREE DEEP ROTATION WITH OUTSIDE LINEBACKER DEEP

in concentration and the related receiver. Regardless of the downfield defensive principle, whether it be man to man or combination, assistance cannot be rendered the defender in concentration.

Yet, although this situation exists certain compensations can be initiated. Here again, forehand knowledge of the opponent is extremely important.

In that offensive strategy calls for pitting the best receiver against the weakest defender, corresponding defensive strategy can be to pit the strongest defender against the strongest receiver. Through scouting reports the best

receiver can be found and the defense designed accordingly. Because concentration patterns usually strike in the area local to the assigned receiver, the best defender may be stationed in this area to offer a formidable front.

In situations in which prior knowledge is not obtained and defenders cannot be arranged to compensate a simple rule can be observed. The defender in concentration can be loosened up to avoid a disaster. He may be stationed ten to twelve yards deep and ordered to maintain a position six yards to the rear of the receiver. Short passes will be completed, but not touchdown passes. Whenever it is felt that a receiver is vastly superior to a defender the defender should be loosened up.

There has been some use of two defenders against outstanding receivers. Although success has been attained in certain situations the author feels that this arrangement has as many liabilities as assets. The assigned defenders can get in each others way, be faked overzealously into a collision, and obviously the extra man must be taken from another area consequently weakening that area.

Two other techniques may be utilized. Detainment at the line of scrimmage may be stressed and the angle of pursuit increased. The effective detainment of the strongest receiver by one or two defenders can ruin the timing of this pattern type. Normally defenders in the intermediate flank

zones are placed in the gap between the receiver and the main body; in this situation this defender may be placed head to head on the receiver and detain him. His assignment would then revert to the standard maneuvers. If it is felt that two defenders are necessary in this flank, the innermost will contain and cover the inner part of the downfield zone, and the outer defender will detain and cover the outermost part of the zone. This is covered more extensively in Section III, Chapter XVII.

Normally defenders react to the ball as it is thrown. If it is offensively received defenders then alter their paths to intercept the ball carrier at a point upfield. In the concentration pattern situation, in which the receiver is a superior football player the defenders will aim for a point farther upfield to be positive of cutting the receiver off. Figure 84 illustrates a loosened up secondary defender, a head to head detainment, and an exaggerated angle of pursuit.

III. HOOK AND SIDELINE PATTERN DEFENSE

If the opponent has shown an ability to consistently complete this passing maneuver defensive adjustments must be made to counteract it. Obviously the adjustments cannot be so extreme as to seriously weaken the defenses' ability to meet other maneuvers. Consequently, defenders involved in

challenging the hook and/or sideline maneuvers must also be available to meet other maneuvers.

FIGURE 84

LOOSENED SECONDARY DEFENDER, HEAD TO HEAD DETAINMENT,
EXAGGERATED ANGLE OF PURSUIT

Intermediate level defenders are extremely important in this situation. They must be given the responsibility of actually defending against the pass before it is thrown. They can be used as detainers at the line of scrimmage, physical forcers downfield, and actual downfield defenders.

If these patterns have shown to be consistently

effective linebackers may be stationed head to head on flanked receivers to detain them. And as the receiver drives downfield these defenders will stay with them, colliding and bumping with them along the way. By doing this it is hoped that the receiver will be too preoccupied to run an effective pattern. As depth increases the linebackers position themselves between the passer and receiver to form a visual and physical obstacle. As the receiver attempts to hook and slide, the linebacker covers him, and at the same time faces the passer, waving his arms to attract his attention to maintain the barrier. These linebackers tightly cover their receivers until they hook regardless of depth. Normally receivers will go for the first down plus three or four additional yards. This is why linebackers are sometimes referred to as first down defenders.

Outside linebackers, in defending against the sideline pattern, may offer a momentary obstacle then retreat on an angle toward the sideline to a point from ten to fifteen yards deep. After reaching this point they face toward the playing field. In doing this they locate themselves in a position to meet the receiver as he breaks out to the sideline. If the receiver hooks or breaks to the inside the linebacker is still in a position to recover and may receive assistance from teammates. Figure 85 illustrates the path of an outside linebacker in covering a possible sideline

maneuver. Figure 80, page 150, illustrates the path of the same linebackers covering the hook pattern.

FIGURE 85

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER VS SIDELINE PATTERN

It is apparent that both defensive tactics cannot be employed simultaneously by the same defender. The choice as to which to utilize depends upon the opponent's past preference. Both forms of coverage can be effective against either pattern, yet each is designed as a specific counter.

Secondary defenders must not commit themselves to

hooking or sidelining receivers until the ball has been thrown. Because patterns have been devised that stem from the original hook or sideline that break deep secondary defenders must maintain a position four to six yards to the rear of potential receivers. Of course, as the ball is thrown all defenders converge to the receiver at top speed. Vicious, hard tackling from the rear by secondary defenders may tend to reduce the receiver's ability to confidently receive the ball. Figure 86, receiver X, illustrates the sideline and down pattern that must be covered by secondary defenders.

FIGURE 86

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER VS HOOK PATTERN WITH A
SIDELINE AND DOWN PATTERN

Defensive alignments may vary according to the effectiveness of these patterns; intermediate levels of four and five man are not at all uncommon. Obviously it is more difficult to run the pattern into an area crowded with defenders. Of course an adequate rush is also necessary and should not be weakened to a point of futility. It is recommended that four linebackers be utilized to counter a consistent hook and sideline opponent. The defensive alignment offered in Figure 87 is designed to meet these pass patterns, yet is still able to meet other offensive maneuvers.

FIGURE 87

STRONG INTERMEDIATE LEVEL DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT

Inside linebackers A and B retreat to cover the hook maneuver, and outside linebackers C and D retreat at angles to meet the sideline maneuver as it develops. A balanced four man primary level is utilized with a three deep secondary.

IV. FLANK PASS DEFENSE

Here is another maneuver that is the basic responsibility of the intermediate level defenders. To be effective the flank pass must be thrown quickly, consequently receivers never leave the intermediate level. As stated in Section II, Chapter IV, this maneuver forces the defense to position a man in the flank areas. If a defender is not positioned in these areas the flank pass can be completed consistently.

The defensive problem is in being forced to employ a defender in each flank; in doing this it cannot adjust its manpower to meet offensive strength to the inside.

The covering of the receiver by the flanked defender is relatively simple if the defender involved is alert and aggressive. The defender (outside linebacker or wing) is normally positioned at a point between the flanked receiver and the main body, two to five yards off the line of scrimmage depending upon the width of the flanker. The linebacker faces slightly in watching the flanker peripherally while observing the field of play. As the ball is put in

play the linebacker physically forces the flanker out with a chest block or shiver. The flanker must not be allowed to cut directly to the inside; if he cannot immediately free himself this maneuver has little chance for success.

If the receiver drives directly downfield the linebacker notes the type of play developing and reacts by retreating with him. If a drop back pass is observed retreat should be immediate and at top speed.

In defensive alignments that position outside linebackers head up with flanked receivers the linebackers must detain the receiver, harass, and cover him closely as he cuts to the inside. The linebacker must maintain a position in front of the receiver; the pass is very short and can consequently be very accurate. Therefore, the defender can not stop the completion unless he is between the passer and receiver or close enough to grapple for it. Figure 88 illustrates the action of an outside linebacker reacting to the flank pass. Linebacker A is playing from the standard location while linebacker B is reacting from the head up position.

If the flanked receiver simply turns to the inside to take the pass the defender holds his position until the ball is thrown. He then converges directly to the receiver and grapples for it; he should never attempt to intercept unless the ball is well within his reach.

FIGURE 88

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER VS FLANK PASS

If the receiver drives a short distance downfield and stops the defender should diagnose, retreat, and position himself between the passer and receiver with his arms held over his head. This forces the passer to throw with a higher arch, slowing the ball's flight, thus giving the defense valuable time to converge.

Primary level defenders can do more to stop this maneuver than linebackers if they are alert. In noting the passer preparing to jump and throw to the flanked receiver these defenders should raise up immediately and extend their arms over their heads. This obstacle forces the passer to hold the ball or loft it; either alternative destroys the maneuver's effectiveness.

In certain situations it may be considered advantageous to locate outside linebackers in the central areas. This offers the offense an opportunity to complete the flank pass with little trouble. It may be considered more important to stop certain inside running maneuvers and give the opponent the flank pass.

A certain degree of compensation can be attained by having these inside defenders note any action by the passer to jump and throw; if this occurs the defenders then jockey between the passer and receiver with arms upstretched to create a visual and physical barrier. They then react to the ball in flight. This situation is illustrated in Figure 89.

FIGURE 89

INSIDE DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT VS FLANK PASS MANEUVER

V. DELAYED PATTERN DEFENSE

The success of this maneuver depends upon defensive reaction to the downfield pass. If this desired reaction does not occur the delayed pass maneuver will lose much of its effectiveness. As noted in Section II, Chapter IV, by bringing about defensive reaction to a simulated downfield pass the delayed pattern can be employed effectively.

The solution then lies in the defense's ability to diagnose or sense the impending maneuver and react to it. Specific defensive counters will now be offered.

The swing and sneak patterns are the responsibility of intermediate level defenders. The problem of the swing pass is that outside defenders sometimes commit themselves too far to the inside or are slow in coming up to meet the ball after it has been thrown. In covering a receiver to the inside limits of his zone the outside linebacker should return at top speed to the deep center point of his responsibility. As he observes the swinging receiver he should follow him laterally from a point directly to the receiver's front. As the ball is thrown the defender should react immediately, but under control. He must contain the receiver or force him to the sideline. The linebacker must never have to chase a swinging receiver.

Although the sneak pattern will free a receiver if

inside linebackers are rushing, it should not be successful if they do not rush. By simply being alert to the inside these linebackers can observe a delayed receiver entering their zone of responsibility and cover him. And, as stated earlier, defensive depth is necessary to observe the field of play and react effectively and safely. If this pattern is employed frequently, primary level defenders can be given the assignment of tackling any back attempting to drive into and through the middle or central areas.

Defensive ends (outermost primary level defenders) can be used in conjunction with outside linebackers or singly to combat the swinging receiver. This tactic can be very effective against intermediate level flood passes. The end notes the swinging back and reacts by sliding with him laterally on a slightly rearward angle. He must never chase the receiver, but cover at an angle that offers him an opportunity to make a safe tackle at the line of scrimmage. If the swing maneuver is expected frequently the end should be given the responsibility of moving laterally with any back moving to the end's outside. Figure 90 illustrates this maneuver.

As mentioned in Section II, Chapter IV, this passing maneuver is sometimes employed in connection with the forced reaction running maneuver (option play). Because it is felt that the pass portion of this offensive maneuver is its most

dangerous weapon it will be given consideration here.

FIGURE 90

LATERAL MOVEMENT OF END VS SWING MANEUVER

Two techniques can be utilized. Both depend upon the outside linebackers (wing) ability to react according to the flanked receiver. To adequately defend against this maneuver the defender must be given the assignment as offered. As the receiver drives downfield the outside linebacker retreats with him without losing visual contact. The running portion of this maneuver can be met by giving outside containment responsibilities to the defensive end and tackle responsibility (the quarterback in this case) to the inside linebacker who is keying the back to his side through the offensive guard. Figure 91 illustrates this defensive technique. The assignments of the inside linebacker and end may be traded if the keep is considered the most dangerous

aspect of this maneuver.

FIGURE 91

ADJUSTMENTS TO MEET OPTION RUN-FLANK PASS MANEUVER

The utilization of inside linebackers to cover down-field patterns into the flank areas has met with some success. The center zone becomes vulnerable to attack in this situation and herein **is** its weakness. It is extremely effective against patterns that attempt to flood the outside zones. Figure 92 illustrates inside linebackers keying the set back to their side.

The screen maneuver demands the same intermediate level attention and reaction. All defenders at this level must observe the development of any pass maneuver. If they note offensive linemen protecting passively they should

direct their attention to possible screen pattern receivers in the flank areas. And, obviously, if they observe a screen forming they must get to the scene immediately.

FIGURE 92

INSIDE LINEBACKERS KEYING SET BACK TO FRONT VS
PASSES IN FLANK AREAS

If the defensive end meets only a passive block from a protecting back he should drop off laterally as illustrated in Figure 90, page 168. The same holds true with defenders rushing in the middle zone. If protection is passive and a back is noted attempting to slip upfield these defenders should tackle him immediately.

Primary level defenders should at all times be aware

of possible screen maneuvers, especially when tactically probable. If passive blocking, a retreating passer, or delayed backfield movement is noticed, primary level defenders must cease their pressuring action and follow offensive linemen as they form their screen. At all times they must pursue at a realistic angle, they must never chase. Verbal signals should be used by any defender sensing or diagnosing a screen maneuver. Figure 93 illustrates the proper angle of pursuit of pressuring linemen.

FIGURE 93

ANGLE OF PURSUIT AT PRIMARY LEVEL VS
SCREEN PASS MANEUVER

VI. DIAGNOSIS OF PASSING MANEUVERS

One of the most important aspects of defending against the forward pass is immediate diagnosis. The faster the pass is diagnosed the faster the reaction to receivers and pressuring of the passer.

Flanked receivers are the first key for downfield defenders. Attention should be directed to these potential receivers; if they drive downfield they must be covered. If they take any action that resembles a pass pattern they must be covered. Another key is offensive tackles or free line-men (no primary level defender to their front). If these individuals are observed assuming pass protection responsibilities a pass maneuver is probable. Remaining backs may also be keyed when noted taking a pass protection stance. The quarterback himself may also be keyed as he positions himself to throw. Of course if an interior lineman is observed downfield a pass maneuver is eliminated.

Primary level defenders and inside linebackers can diagnose a pass by observing the offensive lineman to their front. If the opponent assumes a pass protection stance or retreats, the pass is imminent. Of course certain trap type running maneuvers can stem from this movement, but alert, informed defenders are able to analyse this also.

These keys may vary according to the offense faced. With forehand knowledge of the opponent defensive keys other

than those mentioned may be utilized.

CHAPTER XVI

COUNTERING SPECIFIC WEAPONS: POSITIONING TECHNIQUES

Specific countering tactics for pass positioning techniques offered in Section II, Chapter V, will now be examined. Because of the complexity of each maneuver to be offered only a general explanation will be given.

I. DROP BACK PASS DEFENSE

This is an obvious passing maneuver; defensive reaction should be immediate and positive. Delayed maneuvers such as the draw play or screen pass can stem from this positioning technique, but alert defenders should diagnose them.

Downfield defensive action should be at its best when met with direct maneuvers such as this. All available keys should make this maneuver obvious.

Those defenders assigned to pressure the passer after keying opposing linemen should carry out their assignment as explained in Section III, Chapter XIV. Those rushing from the outside should contain the passer by driving to a point two yards outside him at his depth then pressuring laterally. Those rushing from the inner areas should take a path as direct to the passer as possible. If they find there is no attempt made to block them, they should be aware of a

possible delayed maneuver such as a draw play or screen pass. That defender stationed over the center is normally held responsible for the draw; because of this he usually will rush cautiously.

As rushers near the passer they should raise their arms over their heads, if possible, to create a visual and physical barrier. All tackling should be around the shoulders.

II. JUMP MANEUVER

The universally employed jump maneuver is normally utilized in conjunction with the flank pass. As mentioned earlier, upon diagnosing the play linemen should time the quarterback's jump with the outstretching of arms over their heads to form a barrier. This defensive tactic can be very effective. Usually, in attempting to knife through and tackle the passer defenders are playing into the offenses' hands. But, if a delay is forced by creating a barrier and the play timing is ruined, defenders should pressure the passer.

III. DECEPTIVE TECHNIQUE

Defensive reaction to this positioning technique depends entirely upon the proper reading of given keys. Diagnosis by watching the ball is nearly impossible. The

standard keys examined in the previous chapter are important in this situation. The flanked receiver, set receiver, interior linemen, offside linemen, specified backs, and sometimes the quarterback are normally all valid diagnosing tools. Only two or three are given the team for one particular contest, then they are to be followed in a definite order. Secondary and outside linebackers, in standard situations, key as follows: first, attention is directed at flanked receivers; second, at the action of the offensive tackle to their side; and third, to offside linemen. In most instances the motive of the offense becomes obvious before all keys have been read. Consequently, by reading assigned keys, defensive reaction can be positive and correct regardless of offensive simulation of a running thrust.

Outside linebackers, because of their location and assignment of containing plus protecting a downfield zone, must read and react to their keys immediately and positively. Their standard assignment usually is as follows: Note the flanked receiver, If he drives toward you, meet him and at the same time note the action to your inside. If the ball is moving toward you or a lineman has pulled toward you, contain immediately. If not, control your downfield zone and play the ball. Two other assignments can be given. They will be examined with the topic of optional passes. Primary level defenders play the lineman to their

front, their reaction is regulated by this opponent, and the running thrust is always this level's primary responsibility.

IV. OPTION PASS-RUN MANEUVER

Because a maneuver of this type can bear such tremendous stress on the outside areas some type of defensive rotation or zone adjustment is necessary. In most instances an option pass features a flood pattern to the outside area being struck, plus the potential run of the passer. Consequently, without some assistance to the area, it is theoretically impossible to stop.

Two compensating devices can be employed from either four or three deep secondaries to meet this maneuver: secondary rotation and intermediate level adjustment to the outside. The device utilized depends upon the opponents and defending team's individual and team ability.

To reinforce the outside areas a four deep secondary or a four man intermediate level can be employed advantageously. The use of these large downfield levels depends upon other offensive strengths. If this maneuver is considered to be the most dangerous, large downfield strength may be warranted. But, if other weapons are considered justly important, a three man secondary and intermediate level may be all that is available.

Regular zone defense can be utilized in the standard

fashion against the option run-pass maneuver, but because it has already been examined only rotation will be covered here.

Secondary rotation is carried out through the use of a backfield key. Normally, if the quarterback rolls out laterally the rotation takes place. With some offenses a remaining back may be keyed. Rotation is with the back (in the same direction as his movement). To the right it is counter clockwise, and to the left it is clockwise.

With a four deep the outside secondary defender, if the rotation is to his side, moves up into the intermediate zone. If rotation is away he remains to the outside and takes the last receiver to his side of the field man to man. The safeties rotate one zone toward the movement. Figure 94 illustrates this rotation. Note the strength to the side of the rotation.

The three deep rotation is identical with each back moving one zone toward the swing or movement of the key. Instead of remaining in his zone the safety rotates to the outside, the onside halfback moves up into the intermediate level, and the offside halfback takes the last receiver to his side of the field. Figure 95 illustrates this situation.

If the situation calls for rotation this rotation must be immediate and positive in nature. As the rotation is taking place secondary defenders should be visually picking

up receivers as they enter the downfield areas.

FIGURE 94
FOUR DEEP SECONDARY WITH ROTATION

FIGURE 95

THREE DEEP SECONDARY WITH ROTATION

Defense at the intermediate level can utilize three techniques: drop off, adjust out reaction, and a combination of both. The drop off technique is stronger against the pass, but weakens itself against the run. The adjust out

reaction is strong against the run, but tends to be vulnerable to the short outside pass. The combination technique is the strongest possible against the pass, but also is weak against the run.

The drop off method relieves the outside linebacker of containing responsibility. He reacts only to the flanked receiver to his side. If the receiver drives downfield the linebacker retreats to the deep boundary of his zone regardless of the swing of the play. Only if the flanker attempts to block to the inside will the linebacker close and contain. Inside linebackers, with this coverage technique, will retreat immediately, checking offside interior linemen for notification of a running attempt. If an inside linebacker is stationed adjunct to a receiver he should physically detain and disrupt his path downfield. The drop off method is especially strong against option pass-run maneuvers that feature a receiver in the center intermediate zone.

The outermost primary level defender is given the responsibility of containing. This is the weak point of this defensive technique. Direct containment should be utilized if possible, but lateral containment may be necessary. This type of containment is examined in Section III, Chapter XII. Figure 96 illustrates a drop off coupled with standard zone secondary coverage. Lateral containment is utilized. A standard quarterback option run-pass featuring

a sideline pattern is offered.

FIGURE 96

DROP OFF COUPLED WITH STANDARD THREE DEEP SECONDARY

The adjust out reaction features normal containment by the outside linebacker, and normally rotation in the secondary. The adjustment to the outside is made by the first inside linebacker. He keys the quarterback and remaining back to his side. If the quarterback drives or rolls out and the remaining back to his side moves in the

inside linebacker adjusts out and takes the shallow area. The outermost primary level defender contains either directly or laterally. The offside linebacker shifts a zone toward the swing of the play. Primary level defenders, after carrying out their first assignment of controlling, penetrating, etc., should move laterally toward the swing of the play. They must never chase the passer from behind.

Another possible tactic is the maintaining of two inside linebackers. This is possible by employing an end as an outside linebacker. With this alignment better lateral pursuit is facilitated. The inside linebacker to the side being attacked may be assigned to pursue and assist in a lateral containing action while the offside linebacker is assigned the adjust out reaction. Figure 98 illustrates this alignment and resulting assignments. The assignments of the two inside linebackers may be switched. If it is noted that the pass is employed in preference to the run the onside linebacker may have to take the adjust out assignment.

The possible weakness of this defensive alignment is in its ability to pressure the passer. It may be noted that only four defenders are in position to pressure immediately.

The pressure and containment of the passer is extremely important when facing an option pass-run maneuver. The difficulty of covering receivers downfield can be

appreciably relieved if the passer is forced to throw wildly, hurriedly, or is muffled completely.

FIGURE 98

DOUBLE ADJUST OUT TO SAME SIDE

The task of obtaining this pressure is far more difficult than pressuring the drop back or deceptive positioning techniques. With the quarterback rolling out and making the decision to pass or run in the wide outside areas the primary level rushers are theoretically bypassed. And, unless these rushers react immediately and with proper techniques, they will be rendered ineffective. The defensive

task then, is to maintain pressure even if the passer removes himself from the immediate area.

This is accomplished by moving laterally with the passer and applying pressure when he readies himself to pass, and/or cut him off if he attempts to run. Actually the procedure employed to accomplish this is very similar to standard offside pursuit. Primary level defenders control their man and/or area then move laterally at top speed with the ball-carrying quarterback. But, instead of losing ground as in pursuit, they remain as close to the line of scrimmage as possible. In reaching an intersecting point with the quarterback these linemen should attempt to pressure him in the standard manner.

The container should drive up immediately to a point approximately one yard outside and in front of the quarterback. This is the most important single defensive action to a maneuver of this type. The other rushers should take routes in relation to their original assignments, never following in each other's footsteps, etc. By following this procedure the quarterback is faced with a solid front where there will be no avenue of possible escape. Of course, in many instances this pressuring tactic cannot be employed in its entirety because of individual delays, etc.

Normally, a defender may be assigned to trail the play to challenge reverse maneuvers. This is necessary with

this maneuver; the trailer will be the outermost pressuring defender at the primary level. Figure 99 illustrates action and reaction against the option run-pass at the primary level. In this instance a three deep rotation is accompanied with an adjust out reaction.

FIGURE 99

PRIMARY LEVEL REACTION TO OPTION RUN-PASS MANEUVER

The rotating four deep employed with an adjust out reaction appears to be the strongest defense against the option run-pass maneuver. Of course, defensive strength is taken from the inside division; in this lies the weakness of this defense. This is another factor that illustrates the

importance of gaining forehand knowledge of the opponents' strengths and weaknesses. Figure 7, page 28, offers the recommended defensive setup to challenge the option. Figures 100 through 103 illustrate the four common methods of countering the roll out option run-pass. Obviously, other combinations of the devices offered are possible.

FIGURE 100

FOUR DEEP ROTATION WITH ADJUST OUT VS
ROLL OUT OPTION RUN-PASS MANEUVER

FIGURE 101

THREE DEEP REGULAR WITH DROP OFF VS
ROLL OUT OPTION RUN-PASS MANEUVER

FIGURE 102

THREE DEEP REGULAR WITH COMBINATION VS
ROLL OUT OPTION RUN-PASS MANEUVER

deep rotation is employed with a load type rush. All four middle area defenders key the guards and react as illustrated. If the offensive guards were to take standard pass protection action the four middle area defenders would then operate a load type stunt in that area.

FIGURE 104

DEFENSE DESIGNED TO SPECIFICALLY CHALLENGE OPTION RUN-PASS MANEUVER

The techniques offered in defending against the roll out option run-pass can also be applied to the halfback toss option. But, because only two receivers are usually employed

with the halfback maneuver, and the halfback is usually considered a more dangerous runner, defending tactics should maintain strong containment and a stable secondary. Therefore, the strongest defense against this maneuver would be a standard three deep with an adjust out reaction.

CHAPTER XVII

GENERAL RUNNING ATTACK DEFENSE

Those components of a flank formation running attack offered in Section II, Chapter VII, will now be considered defensively. But first, general alignment procedures at the primary and intermediate levels will be examined.

Certain aligning techniques are almost universally employed because of their obvious necessity. One defender must be positioned in a flanking position to either side of the offensive central body to contain any outside running thrust. This defender should be positioned at a point from which he may penetrate to a depth of up to five yards and meet outside thrusts before blockers can arrive at the scene. If the defender is positioned too tight or too wide he may not be able to penetrate to a good containing position fast enough to be effective. The ideal containing position is from three to four yards outside the set end; but because outside linebackers are also assigned to defend against the flank pass they cannot align themselves at this location. Consequently, a position is usually taken that compromises both possibilities. The outside linebacker splits the distance from the flanked receiver and the main body. His depth fluxuates according to the flanker's width. The ratio is roughly one yard depth to every four yards

split. This compensation must be made to better cover the flanker's movements to the inside and because the wider the flanker splits the longer it will take him to block in on the linebacker or end.

In some instances defenders assigned to contain are positioned out head up on the flanker to detain him. From this position containment is difficult and certain defensive concessions are automatically made. In other instances containment is made by defenders located in tight positions. Direct containment here is sometimes impossible and lateral containment must be used.

Although not as strong or direct the lateral type can be effective. This calls for the defender to move laterally to a position from which he may meet the ball carrier as he reaches the line of scrimmage. Figure 105 illustrates lateral containment by defender B.

The actual step by step action of a containing defender cannot be covered here, but generally speaking, he immediately penetrates as the swing of the play comes. He attempts to position himself one yard outside and in front of the ball carrier and physically meet pressure. He then strings the play out until assistance arrives. Figure 105, defender A, illustrates direct containment.

FIGURE 105

DIRECT AND LATERAL CONTAINMENT

The number of primary level defenders utilized varies according to the need and the physically capabilities of the participants. In some cases six or seven men are employed at this level, when reinforcement is necessary downfield only four may be employed. The ideal situation would be the stationing of one defender opposite each offensive linemen with linebackers backing these defenders up. But, because the flank formation generates such effectiveness at the intermediate and secondary levels this is impossible. The best balance is attained with defenses that match the offense man for man with the primary level and intermediate levels. These defenses may be referred to as utility defenses. Utility refers to the defenses' general ability to meet an offensive thrust of any type in any area. In other words,

the defense is designed to meet an entire offense with no special attention given any specific phase of it. These defenses feature a defender positioned in the same proximity of each offensive lineman, either head up or on the outside shoulder. This forms a solid defensive wall across the entire front.

In the event extended offensive line spacing threatens to take inside defenders more than one and one-half yards (arm's length) from each other the defenders must drop their head up relationship and maintain the arm's length relationship. The utility type defense theoretically matches offensive strength in all areas and at all three levels. Primary level strength of the offense is counteracted, the flank areas are protected, and a three deep secondary is maintained.

Normally one inside linebacker is employed with a utility defense, his assignment against a running thrust differs from primary level defenders in that he is located slightly farther off the ball and in a better position to pursue laterally.

General assignments for these inside defenders are to defeat and control their individual opponent then protect an area or play this opponent according to the defensive theory utilized. As the play develops they pursue laterally. If a pass maneuver develops they pressure as examined in Section III, Chapter XIV.

I. AREA CONTROL PRIMARY LEVEL DEFENSE

In protecting an assigned area defenders control their individual opponent through techniques such as the rip up or shiver. They must always be able to slide to either side. If the opponent leaves the area as in formed blocking (Section II, Chapter VII), the defender maintains a low position at the line of scrimmage and defeats any blocker entering his area. Penetration is very dangerous when employing these tactics. He must not leave his assigned area until the possibility of a running thrust through it has been eliminated. If he cannot maintain this position because of a two on one blocker, he should give ground vertically and not horizontally (straight back instead of to either side). After this occurs he takes up lateral pursuit. Figure 106 illustrates area control defense. The defensive left tackle reacts to a two on one block.

II. MAN TO MAN PRIMARY LEVEL DEFENSE

The playing of the opponent consists of defeating him if he attempts to block the defender or slide with him laterally if he leaves the area to block as in formed blocking. This lateral movement must be positive, immediate, and aggressive. In reacting in this manner the defender eludes the blocker assigned to take him and is led directly to the

point of attack. Figure 107 illustrates this defensive tactic. Note the defenders move laterally, they do not lose ground or penetrate; as their opponent initiates a block they slide in behind it.

FIGURE 106
AREA CONTROL DEFENSE AT PRIMARY LEVEL

FIGURE 107
MAN TO MAN PLAY AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL

III. OUTERMOST PRIMARY LEVEL DEFENDERS

Because the outside attack is extremely important from an offensive standpoint those defenders outermost at the primary level must take action so as to never be blocked in (hooked). To make sure of this they must react immediately and sometimes even give ground as shown in Figure 107, page 198. These defenders must never penetrate unless pressuring the passer. They are usually blocked by pulling linemen or flankers.

If an outside maneuver is noted the end can expect to be blocked by the flanker; he must peripherally observe the flanker. If it appears the end can penetrate to the ball carrier before the flanker can initiate a block, he should do so. If he cannot, he should pursue to the outside toward the flanker and dodge the block.

IV. PERSONNEL STRATEGY

The ability of defensive personnel should be the prime factor in considering the type of primary level defense to utilize. It should be apparent that the area control type calls for stronger, heavier defenders while the man to man type requires agile, highly mobile individuals. With a heavy, massive group the area defense can be very effective and offensive blockers will have extreme difficulty in moving these defenders. Mobile defenders, if quick

in reaction, may congregate at the point of attack even before the ball carrier arrives when man to man tactics are employed.

Of the two standard types of primary level play the man to man appears to be the stronger. Its ability to take advantage of formed type blocking gives it a distinct advantage. But, on the other hand, zone defense is easier to master and tends to minimize mistakes, especially among inexperienced and the physically less capable.

The most important single factor of both tactics is no penetration unless a passing maneuver has been positively diagnosed. By not penetrating defenders are able to minimize formed blocking maneuvers, such as trap plays, and can give immediate and effective pursuit to the point of attack.

The location of the inside linebacker or linebackers is another important factor. If a key is employed the linebacker should be placed as close as possible to the keys' front, this facilitates pursuit in either direction. If the quarterback or fullback is being keyed the linebacker should be placed over the center. If the guard is being keyed the linebacker or linebackers should be placed directly opposite them. Otherwise, the single linebacker should be located in accordance to the strength of remaining offensive backs; or if detainment is necessary he should be placed opposite the set end. Of course, the shift out removes the linebacker to

the outermost station among inside defenders.

V. GAP AND PENETRATION PRIMARY LEVEL DEFENSE

In certain instances primary level defenders are positioned in the gaps and assigned to penetrate. This may be attempted for two reasons: first, to improve the pass rush, and second, to catch the running play before it develops. In certain situations this can be extremely effective; if defenders are small and fast, and/or offensive linemen are ponderous and slow, or if the offense is definitely outmanned, penetration may be the answer. Also, in situations where the defense is outmanned to a large degree, gap penetration may be a last resort tactic. If it is felt that the offense cannot adjust mentally to gap alignments they may be advantageous.

On the other hand, penetration can be disastrous if the offense is able to cut off defenders by using natural blocking angles that become available. Defenders may also be trapped in the act of penetrating; also, since pursuit is almost eliminated because of this penetration, a maneuver that passes the line of scrimmage may go all the way. Formed line blocking or outright backfield maneuvers (Section II, Chapter VII) can raise havoc with penetrating defenses.

As stated in Section III, Chapter XIV, penetrating

defenses are usually masked by the utilization of defensive line shifts until an instant before the ball is put in play. This tends to disrupt offensive assignments and lessens the chance of being **taken** advantage of through the use of automatics (offensive signal calling at the line of scrimmage). Individual assignments can be line up, or shift, directly in the gap and fire through it at top speed. Penetrate two yards, look, and go to the ball. Figure 108 illustrates a defense employing a shift to the left side with penetration assignments. Figures 71 and 73, pages 140 and 141, also offer gap type primary levels.

FIGURE 108

GAP ALIGNMENT WITH PENETRATION ASSIGNMENTS

Defenses that feature loading techniques always employ penetration in the loaded area. Individual assignments of other defenders can be of any type although they are usually in an area which offers some type of pursuit and lateral sliding.

If maximum pressure on the passer is attempted primary levels of seven or eight men are sometimes employed. Defenders are usually placed in the gaps. Individual assignments concerning the running attack with defenses of this type employ the same techniques just mentioned.

VI. STUNTING DEFENSES

The chapter concerning pass rushing tactics offered a general explanation of these techniques; necessary additions will now be offered.

To confuse, disorganize, and clog offensive line play looping or angle charging may be employed. Both call for the exchanging of assignments after the ball has been put into play.

Looping can be a team or isolated group effort. It is always used in conjunction with penetration. That is, after looping into gaps defenders penetrate with the same tactics just mentioned. If employed with speed and determination looping can raise havoc. If not, the cutting off of one defender will create a natural hole, for the adjoining

defender will loop himself out of contention. Also, the liabilities connected with penetration also hold true.

Angle charging is normally a team maneuver and is used in conjunction with the area control technique. Here again, if one defender is cut off a natural hole is created. But, if employed aggressively with speed the angle charge can be very effective against either formed or direct blocking.

VII. DOWNFIELD REINFORCEMENT ADJUSTMENTS

When it is necessary to reinforce the intermediate or secondary levels the primary level must suffer the consequences. Normally, one man is taken leaving the defense outnumbered. To make the most of the remaining five defenders they must be placed strategically.

Because the central areas are always under stress by strong off tackle thrusts and forced reaction maneuvers one defender must be placed head up or on the outside shoulder of the outermost offensive lineman in the inside division. From this position he must meet any ground thrust in this area. These defenders play area control. To defend the middle area a man is placed head up on each offensive guard. From these locations these defenders can pressure the passer directly and control the middle area. The remaining defender, normally a linebacker, is placed according to the

positioning of the remaining offensive backs. If a spread is met he plays to the side of the set back. If a divide is faced or only one back remains he plays directly over the center. If offensive keys are utilized this linebacker is given the assignment. Figure 109 illustrates a four man primary level. A weakness of this alignment lies in the gap in which no defender is stationed. Note the two innermost defenders are stationed slightly (one yard) off the ball; this increases the defense's ability to pursue. This is a common tactic utilized with defenders in the middle area.

FIGURE 109

FOUR MAN PRIMARY LEVEL

Defenders in the middle area are sometimes shifted one man to the set side with the linebacker placed opposite the set side guard (5-4 minus split side LB). The same type of play is utilized, but strength is shifted to the set side. The weakness lies along the right middle and central zone.

VIII. ADJUSTMENT WHEN FACING TWO FLANKERS TO SAME SIDE

Whenever two flanked receivers are stationed to one side, as in Figure 110, two defending alignments can be utilized. Either one defender can be stationed in the flank, head up on the gap flanker or splitting the distance from the outside flanker and the central body, or two defenders can be stationed in the outside intermediate area, head up to each flanker. The former is better for over-all utility, while the latter is better adapted to delay receivers and meet power type outside maneuvers.

The use of one outside linebacker requires normal assignments from all concerned except the three deep safety must move head up to the offensive tackle on the flanked side to better defend against possible flood pass maneuvers. If a double flank to both sides is employed the safety must position himself in the center of his zone. Normally a four deep should be utilized against this.

FIGURE 110

DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT VS TWO FLANKERS TO SAME SIDE

The use of two linebackers to the outside calls for dual defense of the outside intermediate zone although the innermost linebacker should retreat behind the central zone. Against outside running thrusts the innermost linebacker contains while the outer linebacker attacks the play from the outside in. Figure 111 gives an illustration of this. The outermost linebacker usually positions himself one yard to the front of the outside flanker.

FIGURE 111

DEFENSIVE TACTICS VS TWO FLANKERS TO SAME SIDE

CHAPTER XIX

COUNTERING SPECIFIC WEAPONS: RUNNING ATTACK

Defensive counter measures for running attack techniques will be offered. Only general explanations can be given because of the tremendous expanse of this topic. A set of volumes could be written on this area of the game.

I. DEFENSE OF DIRECT TYPE BLOCKING

This blocking principle can best be countered with area control and, in most cases, man to man play. Both call for defenders to control their opponent if he attempts to block straight ahead, then to slide laterally to the point of attack. Because direct blocking is commonly combined with forced reaction maneuvers, and forced reaction maneuvers usually option off the outermost defender at the primary level, area control is preferred. With his opponent driving downfield or to the inside the man to man defender would unknowingly open his area by moving with his opponent.

II. DEFENSE OF FORMED TYPE BLOCKING

As stated earlier, man to man play is the best counter for this blocking principle. Although both area control and penetration may be adequate, it is felt that man to man play actually takes advantage of formed blocking in

that defenders are led to the point of attack.

Final decision as to the type of primary level defense to employ rests upon the coach's analization of his personnel, the opposing **personnel**, the type of line blocking faced, and the most dangerous weapon in the opponent's arsenal. If the forward pass is considered the basic threat it should be given prime consideration in primary level alignment and play design. If both types of line blocking is faced defensive play should be designed to challenge the strongest and at the same time give consideration to the less effective.

III. DEFENSE OF DECEPTIVE BACKFIELD PATTERNS

This pattern type should have no effect upon primary level defenders regardless of the form of play that is met; if the defenders carry out their specified assignments and do not attempt to visually diagnose they will not get into trouble. If man to man defenders move with their specified opponents, if area control defenders control their area until there is no possibility of a thrust through it, or if penetrating defenders take paths in relation to each other so as to offer a solid front, the deceptive movements of the offensive backfield will be of no avail.

IV. DEFENSE OF THE FORCED REACTION MANEUVER

To challenge this maneuver defenders at the point of attack must control their area and let the ball carrier come to them. In doing so the ball carrier may not be thrown for a loss, but the sought after forced reaction will not occur either. Defenders simply take the ball carrier as he enters their area. Lateral pursuit is extremely important here because these maneuvers are usually to the outside where defense is thin and isolated. Normally, on thrusts to the outside, the container takes the swinging back while the outermost primary level defender takes the ball carrier. By remaining in his zone and letting the ball carrier come to him the defender forces the exchange. As the ball is tossed or handed off the primary defender pursues laterally to assist to the outside. Note Figure 112 which offers an illustration of reaction to the forced reaction to the outside.

V. DEFENSE OF POWER TYPE BACKFIELD PATTERNS

These maneuvers usually are coupled with formed blocking; they can be very dangerous if not reacted to immediately. If executed with speed and determination power thrusts demand prime defensive consideration.

Because power maneuvers outnumber defenders at the point of attack, man to man tactics and quick lateral pursuit

are necessary. See Section II, Chapter VII, for an explanation. This maneuver always offers some key which should be taken advantage of; usually guards or the fullback are consistent diagnosing tools.

FIGURE 112

DEFENSIVE TACTICS VS FORCED REACTION MANEUVER

In that power maneuvers strike in the outside areas it may be advisable to strengthen them. Defenders regularly positioned in the middle area may be moved to the central areas. From these positions they have quicker access to the outside. See Figure 113 for an illustration. By keying the

guards defenders can still move back to the weakened middle area.

FIGURE 113

DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT DESIGNED TO SPECIFICALLY
MEET OUTSIDE ATTACK

VI. DEFENSING SPECIFIC AREAS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL: INSIDE

A powerful, consistently effective running attack to the inside sometimes necessitates defensive reinforcement in that area. Obviously, the secondary level requires at least three defenders at all times, therefore, outside intermediate level defenders can be given the only consideration. One is usually taken, but in certain situations both are

needed.

When one must be shifted to the inside he is usually taken from the defensive right side because most outside running and passing plays hit the defensive left side. Or, the remaining outside linebacker may be placed to the wide side of the field to better protect the wide flank area. Regardless of which outside linebacker is shifted in the offense is given the flank pass and any outright maneuver, such as the quick toss, to the weakened side. The shifting of both linebackers to the inside seriously weakens the flanks, but if necessary the adjustment is made. Compensations such as lateral containment, visual barriers to the passer, and immediate reaction to keys can relieve this weakness somewhat.

If the inside attack is considered too dangerous to cope with by employing utility defenses then, by all means, this area must be strengthened. Figure 114 illustrates one linebacker shifted in and Figure 115 illustrates both shifted in.

When absolutely dependable keys are available that foretell an outside thrust the flanks may be left open providing defensive reaction to them is positive.

FIGURE 114

OUTSIDE LINEBACKER SHIFTED IN TO MEET INSIDE ATTACK

FIGURE 115

BOTH OUTSIDE LINEBACKERS SHIFTED IN TO MEET INSIDE ATTACK

VII. DEFENDING SPECIFIC AREAS AT THE PRIMARY LEVEL: OUTSIDE

The outside areas can be reinforced in two ways. Both can be effective if reaction is immediate.

The loosening of inside defenders as illustrated in Figure 116 facilitates outside pursuit. The alignment offered here is designed specifically to counter outside maneuvers. The graduated or circle-like positioning increases the efficiency of lateral movement to the outside. Note the defensive ends are located outside to eliminate any possibility of being hooked.

FIGURE 116

DEFENSIVE DESIGN VS OUTSIDE ATTACK

Obviously short yardage is forfeited in the middle zone. Another method of outside reinforcement is through the use of assignment exchanges between inside linebackers and ends. The linebacker is told to react to his assigned key. If an outside maneuver is diagnosed the linebacker protects the area normally assigned to the end. The end is freed to pursue immediately to the outside. Figure 117 illustrates this defensive technique. The defense offered features inside linebackers stationed directly behind the tackles. This eliminates a possible direct type block from the offensive guard.

FIGURE 117

DEFENSIVE DESIGN VS OUTSIDE ATTACK

VIII. SECONDARY LEVEL DEFENSE AGAINST THE RUNNING ATTACK

Commitment to a ground thrust by secondary level defenders should occur only after all possibility of a forward pass is exhausted. By utilizing keys or after observing the ball carrier cross the line of scrimmage secondary defenders can confidently and safely commit themselves to a running thrust.

Keys, as examined in Section III, Chapter XV, offer the defender a diagnosing tool. If a flanked receiver blocks in, if the set end blocks solid, if offside linemen cross the scrimmage line, or if no receiver whatsoever drive downfield a running thrust is imminent.

The defender that assumes the central safety position, through rotation or directly, is not concerned with keys. He plays for a pass until the ball carrier crosses the line of scrimmage; after this occurs he takes up a position directly between the ball carrier and his goal line. He must not attempt the tackle until it is the last resort. His correct path is offered in Figure 118. Note how he moves parallel to the line until he commits himself.

Defensive halfbacks in a three deep situation read their keys, diagnose the run, then attack the ball carrier. If it is a thrust to the inside they drive under control directly at the ball carrier. Of course, the proper angle of pursuit is always utilized.

If it is a maneuver to the far side of the field the halfback pursues at an angle well ahead of the ball carrier. If it is an outside thrust to their side the defensive halfback attacks it from the inside out. This term refers to attacking the play inside the container then pursuit to the outside if necessary. Figure 118 illustrates the inside out principle. Note how it challenges any break upfield to the container's inside.

FIGURE 118

INSIDE OUT DEFENSIVE REACTION OF HALFBACK

Defensive halfbacks and rotating safeties from a four deep alignment follow all procedures mentioned in the above paragraphs. Safeties rotating to the deep outside zone enter outside plays to their side from the outside in. That is, they come up from outside the container and pressure the ball carrier from this position. Figure 119 illustrates this. The halfback that rotates up to the intermediate zone enters the play from the inside out; this is executed in the same manner as a three deep halfback. Note both Figures 118, page 219, and 119.

FIGURE 119

OUTSIDE IN DEFENSIVE REACTION OF HALFBACK

CHAPTER XX

BASIC FORMATION DESIGN

To offer the reader something to base future defensive organization upon general offensive formation designs that are most commonly utilized will be illustrated along with possible defensive alignments for each. Figures 127 and 128 offer two strategic defenses designed for specific purposes. Figure 127 is designed to challenge the forward pass exclusively with downfield coverage while Figure 128 is designed exclusively to pressure the passer and challenge the running attack.

FIGURE 120

SPLIT-SPREAD VS THREE DEEP UTILITY

FIGURE 121

SPLIT-DIVIDE VS FOUR DEEP FIVE INSIDE

FIGURE 122

DOUBLE SPLIT-WING GAP RIGHT VS FOUR DEEP FIVE INSIDE

FIGURE 123

DOUBLE SPLIT-DOUBLE SPREAD GAP VS FOUR DEEP
FOUR INSIDE THREE OUTSIDE

FIGURE 124

SPLIT-SPREAD GAP RIGHT VS THREE DEEP UTILITY INSIDE

FIGURE 125

SPLIT-WING SLOT RIGHT VS THREE DEEP SEVEN INSIDE

FIGURE 126

SPLIT TEN-WING FIFTEEN VS THREE DEEP-WIDE SIX INSIDE

FIGURE 127

FIVE DEEP ALIGNMENT

FIGURE 128

GAP SEVEN ALIGNMENT

CHAPTER XXI

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLES

To offer the reader an example in individual assignment distribution with simplified verbal terminology a standard utility defense will be examined. The offensive formation is one of the most common flank types in use today.

FIGURE 129

EXAMPLE DEFENSE

The following general tactics will be employed:

1. Man to man primary level play
2. Three deep rotation
3. Direct containment with a shift out
4. Standard intermediate and secondary positioning

I. PRIMARY LEVEL

Play the opponent to your front. If he blocks directly, defeat and control him with rip up, pursue laterally. If he pulls or crosses to another area, move laterally with him, never crossing scrimmage; as he initiates block fill behind him. If he pass protects pressure in as direct a path as possible.

Specific responsibilities.

1. Middle Area. Be conscious of inside; responsible for draw maneuver; if pass protection is passive be alert for draw or middle area screen maneuver.
2. Central Area. Outermost defenders do not get hooked; note passive protection to diagnose outside screen maneuvers, contain passer, and trail plays to offside.
3. Intermediate Level. Inside linebacker--if center blocks directly defeat and control. Key quarterback--move laterally with him. Adjust out with

option run-pass. Take center intermediate with drop back pass maneuvers; favor left side of zone watching set end in hooking maneuver. Flood type patterns are employed; leave zone if receivers continue downfield. Outside linebackers--key near set back; if he comes, contain. If he goes retreat, diagnose, pursue. Keep split vision on flanker; if he drives inside restrict before containing. Drop back, pass, retreat on angle for sideline cover. Attack all inside running thrusts from outside in. If the flanker drives downfield you must retreat with him.

4. Secondary: Rotation. Safety key quarterback--if he moves positively rotate with him taking outside secondary zone; watch flanked receiver streaking directly downfield. Drop back maneuvers--retreat quickly ready for deep crossing flanked receivers. Running maneuvers--move laterally playing between ball carrier and goal line. Halfbacks--key quarterback; if he moves positively rotate to outside intermediate zone. Watch for set end sideling. If rotating to offside take flanked receiver to your side man to man. Running attack--note general keys; attack from inside out. Standard zone--remain in zone

until general keys are diagnosed. Halfbacks take
outside in assignment against running attack.

Safety--regular assignment moving laterally.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Webster. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary. Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1951. P. 320.

1956 Rules Committee. Official NCAA Football Handbook. New York: The National Collegiate Athletic Bureau, 1956. P. 33.