

This season turned out to be one of the most productive years in quite some time for the Texas Tech Red Raiders. Offensive production was at an all-time high in an offense that has been highly successful at all levels of football. Our main offensive objective is to get the ball to all five skill positions as many times as possible throughout the course of the game. We feel that if we evenly distribute the ball to all skill players, this will stress the defense and force them to account for the entire field. We keep a close eye on how we are distributing the ball both during the game and throughout the season.

Our quarterback is also well aware of the importance of proper ball distribution and is informed of how we are doing. The five skill positions in our offense are as follows:

- "F" Runningback
- "H" Inside receiver/H-back
- "Y" Inside receiver/Tight end
- "X" Wide receiver
- "Z" Wide receiver

The Three Main Categories We Focus On Are

1. Total Touches: The amount of times the entire position touched the ball throughout the course of the game either by rushing the ball or catching the ball. Naturally the "F" position will handle the ball the most because the majority of the rushes will come from this position. Also, it is easier to get him the ball because he is closer to the quarterback. The "H" and "Y" positions typically will touch the ball a little more than the "X" and "Z" positions because of proximity to the quarterback. During the course of a game, it is important that we sustain drives and get first downs. The most devastating thing is to go three and out. We also want to get between 60-65 touches in a game spread out between the five positions. Our quarterback accounted for 6.6 touches a game which is 11 percent of the total touches due to sacks, scrambles and sneaks. The others are:

F – This position averaged 21.5 touches a game and accounted for 34 percent of the total touches over the course of thirteen games.

H – This position averaged 10.6 touches a game and accounted for 16.5 percent of the total touches.

Y – This position averaged 7.3 touches a game and accounted for 11 percent of the total touches.

X – This position averaged 8.5 touches a game and accounted for 14 percent of the total touches.

Z – This position averaged 7.6 touches a game and accounted for 13.5 percent of the total touches.

2. Total Yardage: The amount of yardage the entire position accounted for either by rushing the ball or receptions. Here, again we want the yardage distribution to be as evenly as possible with "F" getting a few more yards due to the proximity to the quarterback. Also the wide receivers, "X" and "Z," should get more yards as they are more of a deep threat than the inside receivers. Due to the fact that we got sacked only 26 times in 806 attempted passes, our quarterback ended up with positive rushing yards accounting for two percent of the total yards.

F – This position averaged 148 yards a game and accounted for 25.5 percent of the total yardage over the course of thirteen games.

H – This position averaged 104.1 yards a game and accounted for 18 percent of the total yardage.

Y – This position averaged 86.7 yards a game and accounted for 14.5 percent of the total yardage.

X – This position averaged 122.3 yards a game and accounted for 21 percent of the total yardage.

Z – This starter averaged 111 yards a game and accounted for 19 percent of the total touches.

3. Total Touchdowns: We want to keep track of who scores our touchdowns and make it as competitive as possible. We try to teach our players to know where the end zone is in proximity to where they are at on the field. Our quarterback accounted for five touchdowns on quarterback sneaks. We feel we can always get a yard from the quarterback.

F – This position scored 21 touchdowns and accounted for 29 percent of the total touchdowns over the course of thirteen games.

H – This position scored 11 touchdowns and accounted for 15 percent of the total touchdowns.

Y – This position scored 12 touchdowns and accounted for 16.5 percent of the total touchdowns.

X – This position scored 14 touchdowns and accounted for 19 percent of the total touchdowns.

Z – This position scored 10 touchdowns

Texas Tech Vertical Passing Game



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Chalk Talks

Wednesday, January 7

AFCOA
AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACHES ASSOCIATION

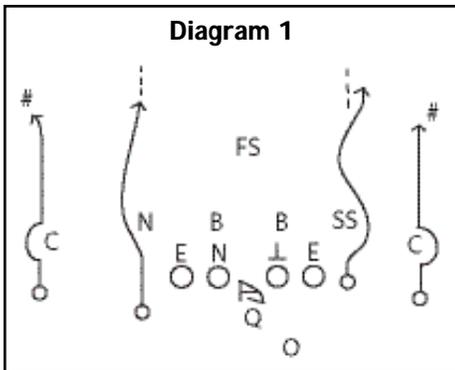
and accounted for 13.5 percent of the total touchdowns.

Vertical Game

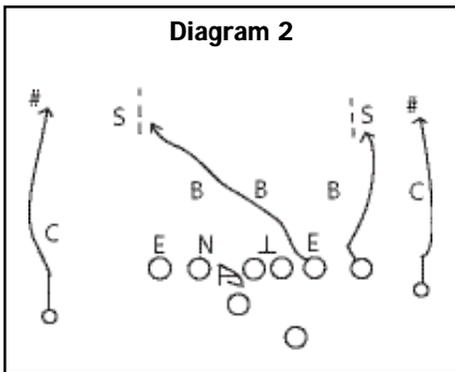
One of the most effective plays that we have at Texas Tech is the all vertical route. We choose to talk about this because it is a route that everyone in all levels of football have and use. There might be some slight differences in scheme and technique, but we feel like the biggest difference is how committed we are to both working this route and calling this route.

The biggest coaching point from a scheme standpoint is teaching landmarks. We break the field down into four sections: left numbers, left hash, right hash and right numbers. We want our four receivers to be at these landmarks as the routes are being run. We can run this play out of all our sets and teach the skill players to recognize how many receivers are outside of them which tells them which landmark to go to.

In a 2x2 set, all receivers basically go straight up field (Diagram 1). In a 3x1 set,



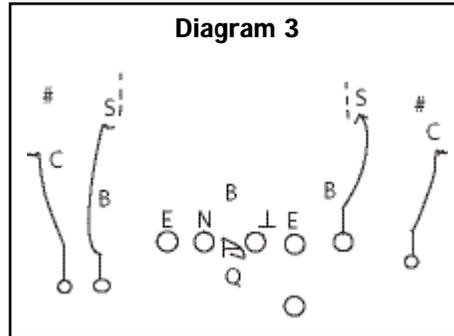
the No. 3 inside receiver knows there are two receivers outside of him and now must work across the field (Diagram 2). A general rule for all receivers is to outside release all routes both in man coverage and zone coverage. This puts little doubt in



the quarterbacks mind to where the receiver is headed. It also widens the gaps in coverage when the defense is dropping

into zone coverage. After the receivers get their outside release, each of them will get to their respective landmarks. We work hard on our receivers being able to recognize man coverage or zone coverage.

If they read man coverage, we encourage them to get up field as fast as they possibly can on their landmark and expect the ball. If they read zone coverage, they now have the option to sit in zones as they see fit (Diagram 3). We would like for them to



be at least 10 yards up field before they sit down. A lot of times it ends up being 15 yards because of the depth of the defenders drop. A key coaching point to install in all of your receivers minds is to look for the ball at all times and to sit in the hole in zone coverage.

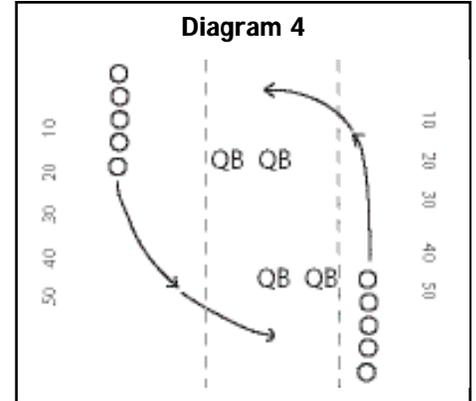
Blitz should trigger this as most receivers should understand that if the defense is blitzing, the quarterback will more than likely have to get rid of the ball, but even if there are no blitzing defenders they need to get their path and get their eyes on the quarterback. We tell the quarterback to use this route to attack man-blitz, especially in press coverage. We have enough confidence in both throwing this ball quickly and running these routes correctly to complete enough to be successful. Coincidentally, it also has become one of our better zone beaters as well.

Quarterback and Receiver Drills in the Vertical Scheme

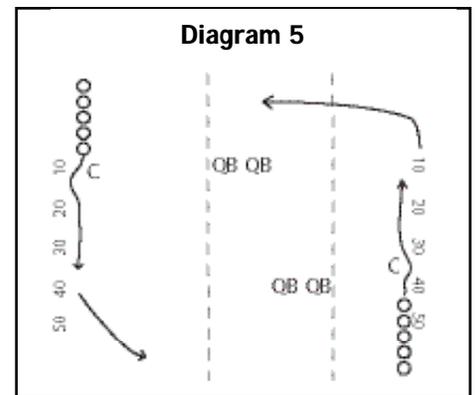
One of the main drills we do on a daily basis, regardless of what type of practice we are having is the Pat-N-Go drill. This is a 10-minute drill at the beginning of each practice that accomplishes a number of things. We use this drill as a warm up for the rest of practice. We want to get the players ready for full speed drills while we work at improving some aspect of the game of football. We are believers that the best way to improve technique is to work technically sound drills. Stretching and running for 15 minutes a day might do the

body some good, but it does not make you better fundamentally.

The quarterbacks and all skill players split in half facing each other, 25 yards apart. The quarterbacks are on the hash mark and skill players are half way between the hash and the numbers (Diagram 4). Every other day we switch which side we



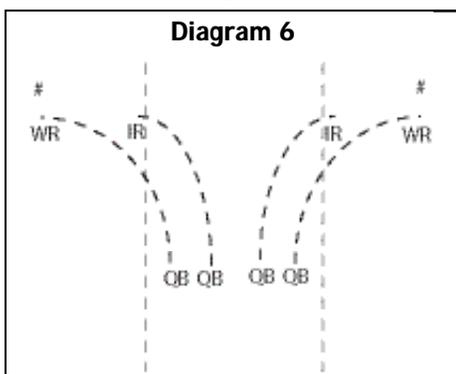
work, either right side or left side throws. During the first five minutes of the drill, the quarterback pats the ball to put it in play and takes a one-step drop. At this time, the skill player works their proper stance and starts coming off the ball with his eyes on the quarterback. This works quick throws that might happen in a game during hot throws or uncovered looks as well as slant throws to outside receivers. The second five minutes, we are working more downfield vertical throws. The quarterbacks now take a three-step drop and work on putting the ball 25-30 yards downfield with plenty of air under the ball, half way between the numbers and the sidelines. The skill players, who are now aligned at the top of the numbers, will work a detailed release on a defender or stand up dummy from a proper stance (Diagram 5).



One key coaching point we focus on at this point is for the skill players to get back to the top of the numbers by squeezing the defender after working the outside release. This leaves plenty of room to separate from

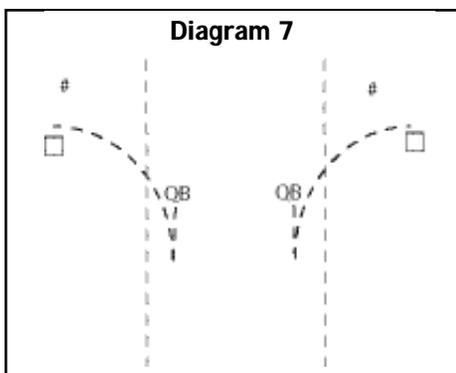
the pinned defender and catch the ball on the outside shoulder. By doing this, it really does not matter how tight the coverage is, he uses his body to protect the ball from the defender.

It takes a lot of time and practice to get good at the skill of catching the ball over the shoulder, which is why we came up with the Over-the-Shoulder drill. If quarterbacks are available, it benefits them to get used to the concept of ball placement, but a coach can do the same for the receivers. We get the receivers in close proximity to where there are at on the field, such as outside receivers on the numbers and inside receivers on the hash mark and get them running in place around 15-20 yards up field. The quarterback will be in the middle of the field and will place the ball over the receiver's outside shoulder a few yards in front of them (Diagram 6). This gets

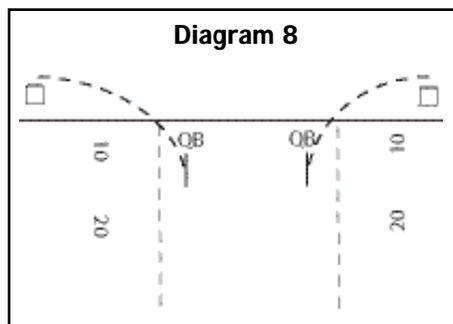


receivers used to keeping their body inside and adjusting to the ball being outside. You can get a lot of repetitions in because there is not much running involved.

The one individual drill we work with the quarterbacks is the bucket drill. The first part of this drill is working on fade throws. A regular sized trash can is placed approximately 25 yards up field, half way between the numbers and the hash marks. The quarterbacks will take a three-step drop and try to place the ball into the trash can (Diagram 7). This forces them to put air under the football, otherwise the ball has no

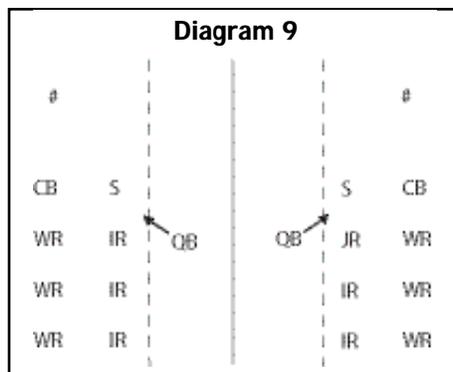


chance to get in the bucket. We want this throw in a game because it reduces how accurate the throw needs to be. By putting the ball up in the air, it gives the receiver a chance to adjust to the ball to make the catch. The second part of this drill is on the goal line. We adjust the quarterbacks to around the five yard line and the bucket to the back corner of the end zone. The quarterback now takes a one step drop and again throws the ball with enough air to make the ball go into the bucket (Diagram 8). Typically after practice, all the quarter-



backs will get together and compete against each other to see who can make the most throws into the bucket.

Most of the practices we have will involve a 10-minute, one-on-one period with the defensive backs. For the first five minutes, we work open field routes in which we encourage as much vertical routes as possible. The receivers align as close as they can to where they will be aligning in a game to get them comfortable with their surroundings (Diagram 9). The second five



minutes, we move the entire drill to the five yard line to work on goal line routes. The routes typically stay the same, we just want everyone to get used to a shorter field. Again we encourage as many vertical routes as possible.

Runningbacks Role in the Vertical Scheme

The runningback at Texas Tech has to have the ability to effectively block (pass

protect), catch the ball and run the ball. On 95 percent of our pass plays, including the four verticals, our back has a protection assignment and route assignment. The most important thing to our offense from the back position is that he be able to identify fronts, recognize blitz and use proper technique to pick up the blitzing linebacker or defensive back. The back also has to have the ability to see whether the defense will blitz very quickly. The quicker he recognizes that there is no blitz, the quicker he can release and stretch the defense. On our four vertical passing game, the back will first check his assignment and then release and run a five-yard option route.

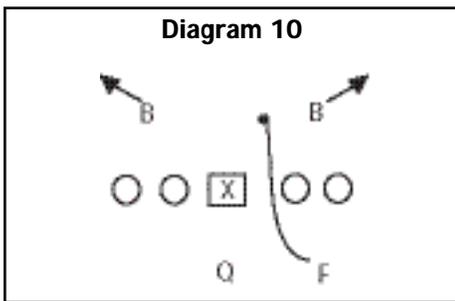
Since we are a team that throws the ball, our back has to excel in pass protection. Our runningbacks use almost the same principles and techniques that our offensive linemen are taught. If a running back uses the proper technique, it does not matter how big he is, he can get the job done. There are five things that have to be done in order to ensure that our running back can pick up the blitz.

1. Step up and get inside leverage.
2. Keep head up.
3. Use your hands.
4. Keep a base.
5. Move feet.

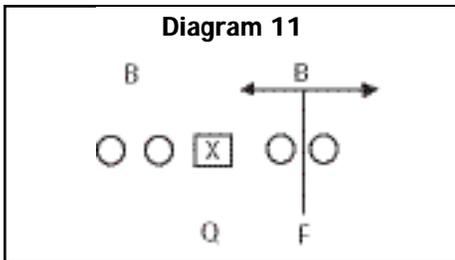
If our running back can execute these five techniques, we feel that he can be successful in picking up the blitz.

On the four vertical routes, if the back gets no blitz, he will release to a five-yard option route. There are basically three things that can happen when the back releases. The defense will drop into zone, play loose man, or play tight man. The back has to recognize what the defense is playing because in each of the different coverage's, the back has to make slight adjustments to the route. If the back recognizes zone coverage, he will release to five yards, turn back to the quarterback and sit down. If he stays uncovered, he will not move and wait for the quarterback to throw the ball. If the quarterback throws him the ball, he will tuck the ball and get straight up field (Diagram 10).

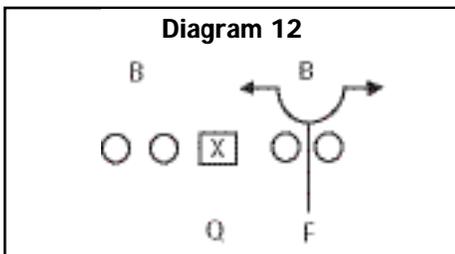
If the back recognizes man coverage (or the backer just sits), he will run right at the defender and try and step on his toes. He wants to make the defender think that he will run by him and hopefully this will loosen him. As he breaks the cushion of the defender, he will stick his toe in the ground and break either in or out. The back needs



to make sure that he does not round off the route. He wants to stay at five yards. After he catches the ball, he needs to turn straight up field (Diagram 11).



If the back recognizes tight man (or the backer jumps him and tries to grab him), he needs to run right at the defender, try to get his hands off of him and then get up field to five yards. Once he gets to five yards, he will stick his toe in the ground and break away from the defender (Diagram 12).



The four vertical routes has been a very effective way for us to get the ball downfield or to get the ball to the back in space. The running back has to be able to recognize the blitz and be able to use proper technique to pick it up. If he gets no blitz, he will release to a five-yard option route. After his release, he must make the right decision on whether to sit down or keep running based on the coverage that is being played.

Offensive Line Protection in the Vertical Passing Game vs. Defensive Line Twists

We believe that to be successful on offense, you need to focus on developing your players to be good fundamentally. We also believe that any success on offense starts with the offensive line. The attitude towards practice, the intensity of a game,

and the offensive tempo starts with the line. Pass protection is the key to any successful passing offense. The two main areas we work on daily in practice is: 1) How to get the offensive line to play together at a high level, and 2) Pass protection fundamentals.

How to get the offensive line to play together at a high level?

Paramount to any offensive scheme's success is to be good up front. To do this, your offensive line must be able to consistently play at a high level. So the question is, how do you get the offensive line to play well together on a consistent basis? I don't know that there is a clear cut answer to this question that fits all situations. All I can do is share with you what has helped us at Tech.

1. Keeping the group together under one roof. Don't fragment this group. Keep the group together and make them strong together. They need to rise to challenges together rather than as individuals. My goal is to foster the mentality that "group productivity" is more important than any individual's achievement. The challenge with the offensive line is that you succeed or fail as a group. All it takes is one guy to breakdown and the whole play could possibly be ruined. Challenge the guys as a group, reward them as a group and discipline them as a group. By keeping them as a group, they will grow and strengthen as a group.

2. Another thing we do at Tech to get our offensive line to play at a high level is to find and play the best guys. I try to find seven to eight guys that we can win with. Find these guys and rotate them. If they have earned their way, don't keep them off the field. Two benefits here first, if you average close to 90 plays per game, you need a rotation to keep guys fresh and playing at a high level. Secondly, you are going to have injuries throughout the year. This helps you suffer through those injuries without much loss of production.

3. Grade and challenge them. Grade every play in the game. Let them see their grades. Make their grades easy to evaluate (A, B, C, D, and F). Grade their practice. Let them know if they have let down the group in practice. Set goals for improvement in the off-season, spring ball and summer workouts.

4. Develop a sense of pride in the group. Pride and identity are things that come from the offensive coordinator and the head coach. If this group is treated right, they can assess great pride and tradition. Don't

make the mistake of using the offensive line as a whipping boy for the offense. Challenge the group, be tough with the group, but in the end, this group must have a huge sense of pride and identity.

I believe that two of the most important fundamentals on offense are blocking and ball security. Both of these are prime responsibilities of both the offensive line and the entire offense. Each play starts with a center-quarterback exchange. This is the first area of ball security that you need to be sound. On most offensive plays, three different players touch the football and all three are responsible for the security of the football. The Center needs to secure the snap, the quarterback needs to secure the hand-off or direct the throw, the runningback or wide receiver needs to secure the gain.

Blocking is the other basic offensive fundamental. Because of time, I will focus the remainder of my remarks to pass blocking fundamentals. I believe the first fundamental of pass protection is to stay between the defender and the quarterback. As you leverage yourself between the defense and the quarterback the next step is to offer enough resistance to form a pocket. Centers and guards keep the pocket tight to the line of scrimmage. Tackles keep the pocket wide to the quarterback. Pad level and a powerful punch are the tools used to offer resistance to the defense.

In the course of doing this, there are occasions in which you need to switch guys. It is our approach that all first level guys that twist should be switched-off. When picking up the twist, you use the same fundamentals you would if you were blocking individually up until that point where you bump hips, then simply switch guys and continue to protect.

The basic idea of picking up the twist is that you have to set the drive guy first. Once you have set the drive guy, the freed-up lineman needs to trap his helmet into the drive guy. This force alerts the lineman next to him that he needs to switch.

There are basically three types of twists. Two-man, three-man and four-man twists. Everyday, we work on picking up the twists during individual period. We later go on to pass rush with the defensive line and work on picking up the twist also. We view picking up the twists as fundamental as pass blocking an individual rusher. If you are to be successful in picking up the twists, you must devote practice time.