

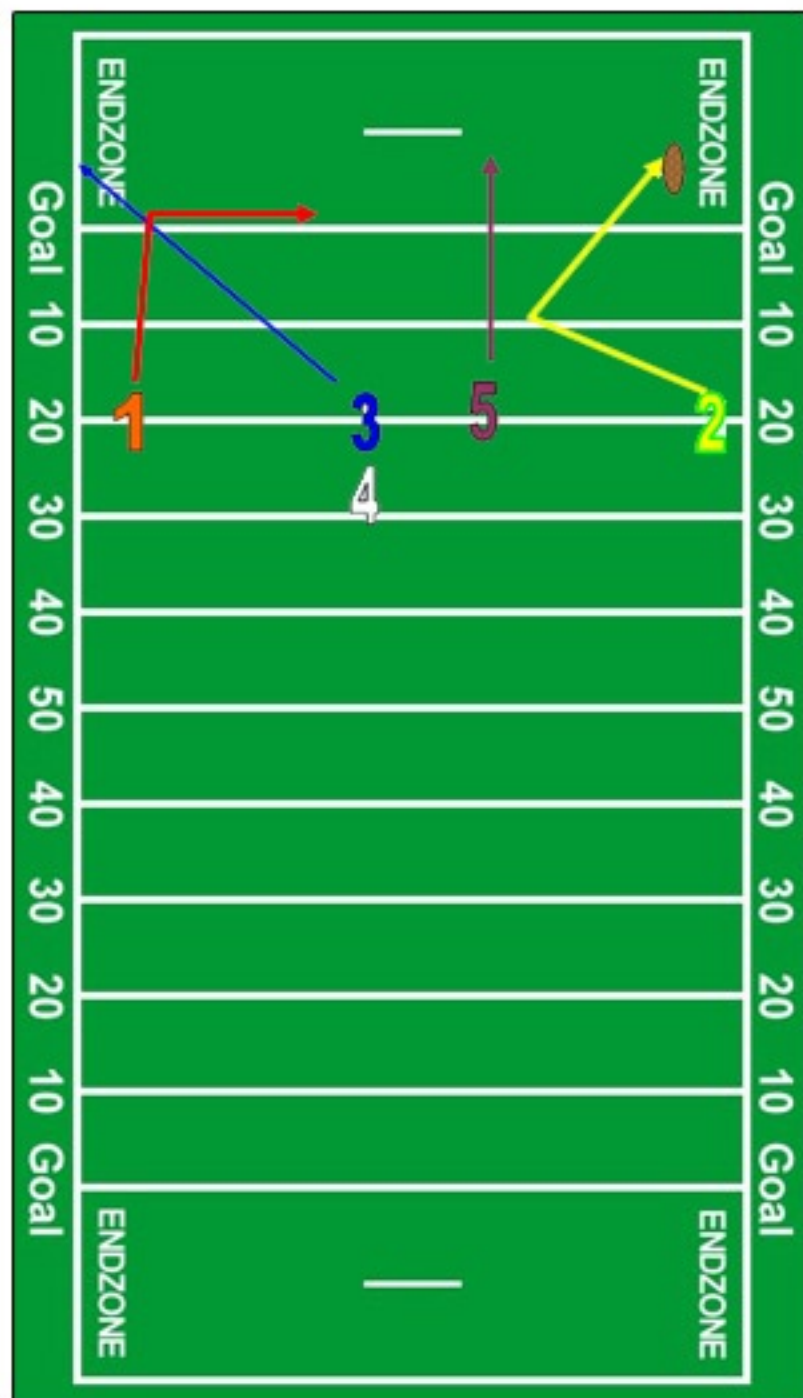


USAFLAGFOOTBALL.COM

5-MAN PLAYBOOK

Copyrights and Trademarks: The documents and information in this product are copyrighted materials of VSG Marketing. Copyright information contained in this product may not be reproduced, distributed or copied publicly in any way including Internet, e-mail, newsgroups, or reprinting. Any violator will be subject to the maximum fine and penalty imposed by law. Purchasers of our product are granted a license to use the information contained herein for their own personal use only. Any violators will be pursued and punished to the fullest extent of the law. By viewing and/or purchasing our materials, you agree to be bound by these copyright terms.

Need assistance? Contact our customer service department at info@usaflagfootball.com



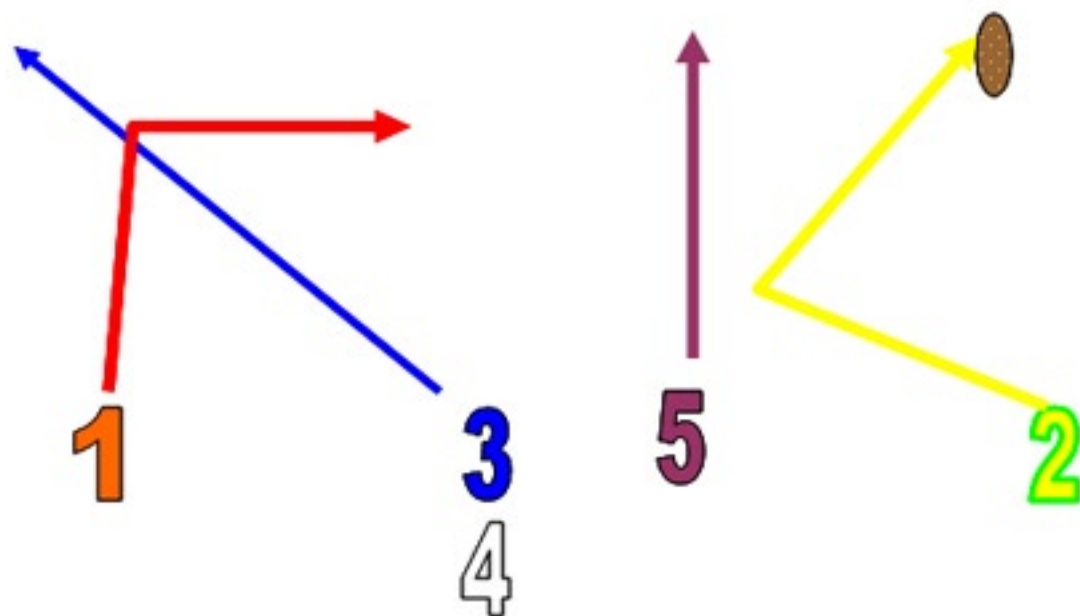
001 HOT POST CORNER

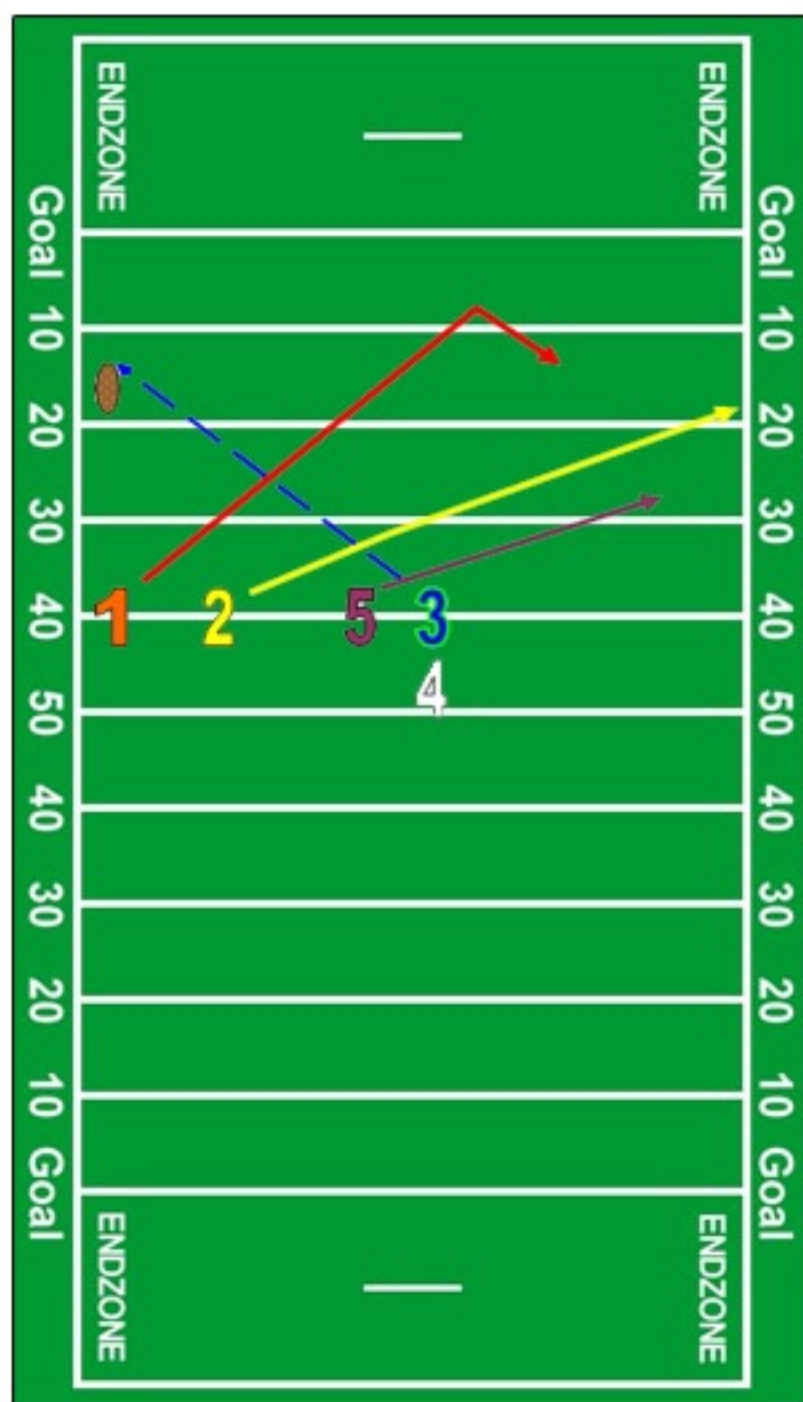
This is a red zone play to run against zone defenses. The center (3) sprints to the corner looking back the whole way after the ball is snapped. The QB (4) looks to the left to draw the safety. Receiver (1) WR sprints then squares along the goal line. Receiver (2) is the hot receiver that posts corner. Receiver (5) sprints to the back of the endzone and spies the QB.

If everyone executes the play properly this should be the team's "go to" play in the red zone for a TD.



HOT POST CORNER



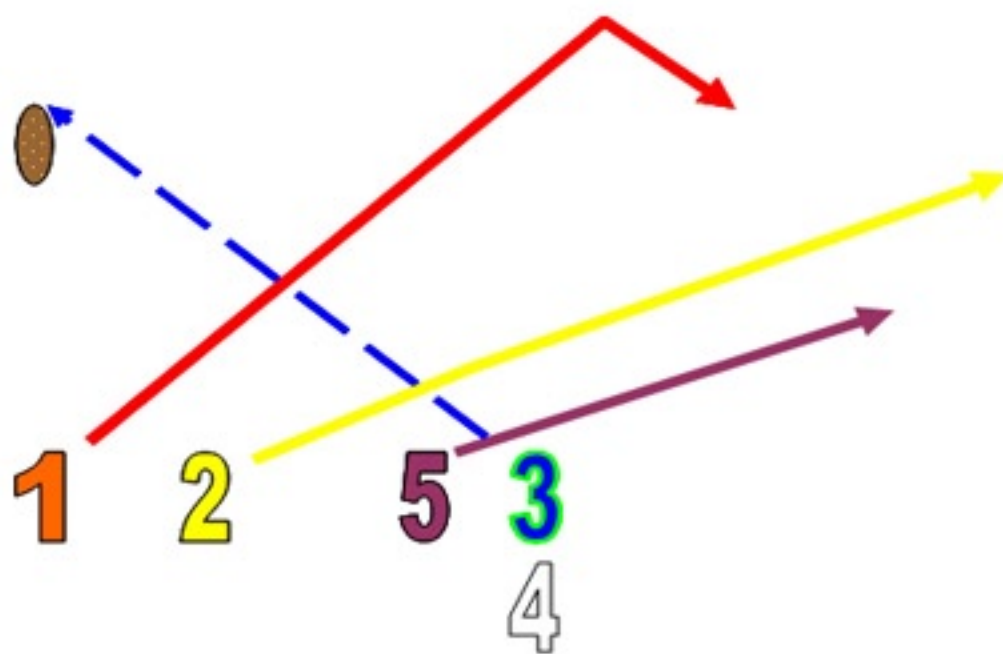


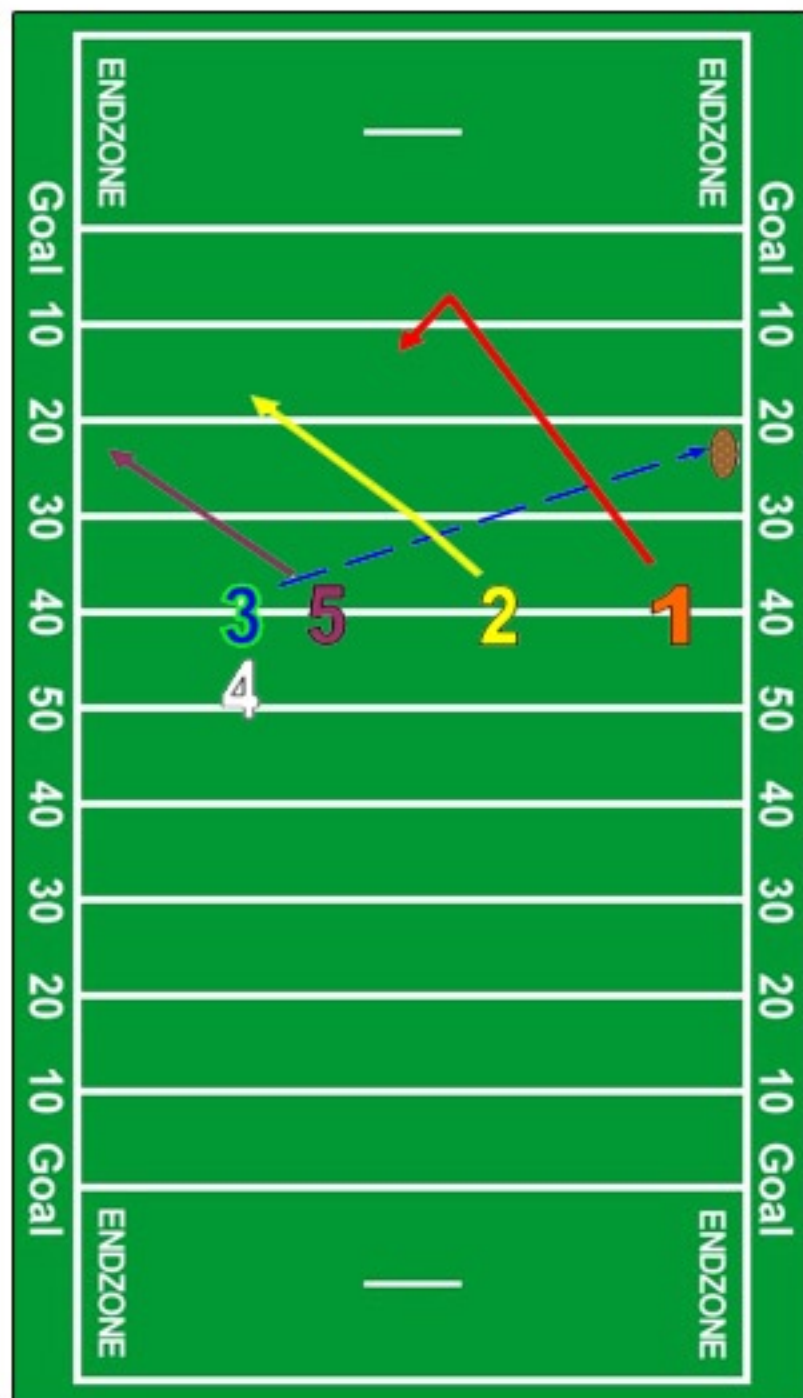
002 Extra Point Trips Left

This is a great extra point play or short yard first down converter. It works when the defenders are in a man to man. The center (3) delays after the ball is snapped allowing receivers (1) (2) (5) to slant to the right. After the receiver clears, (3) the Center sneaks to the goal line. The (4) QB looks left to draw the safeties. Player (1) WR delays or waits for the play to develop.



Extra Point Trips Left



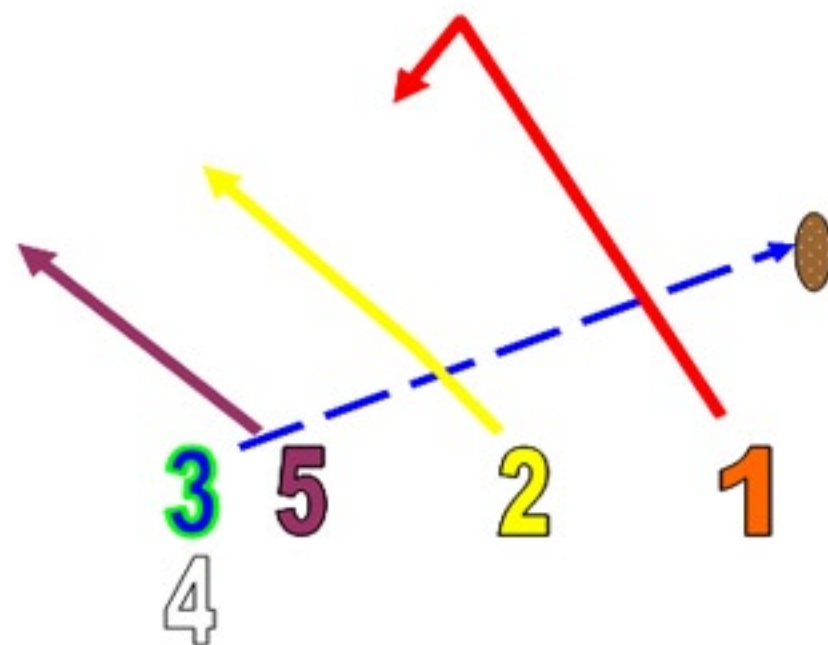


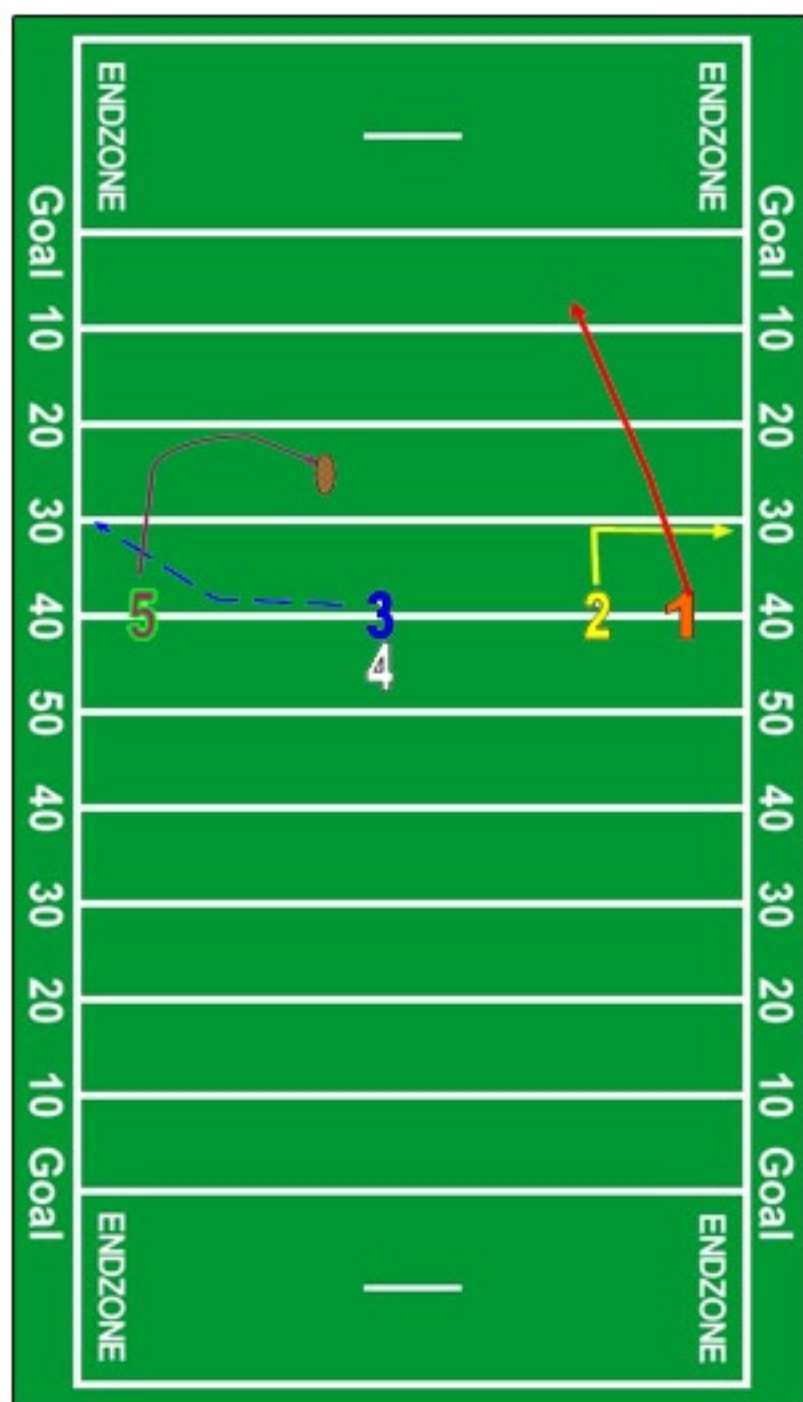
003 Extra Point Trips Right

This is a great extra point play or short yard first down converter. It works when the defenders are in a man to man. The center (3) delays after the ball is snapped allowing receivers (1) (2) (5) to slant to the right. After the receiver clears, (3) the center sneaks to the goal line. The (4) QB looks left to draw the safeties. Player (1) WR delays or waits for the play to develop.



Extra Point Trips Right



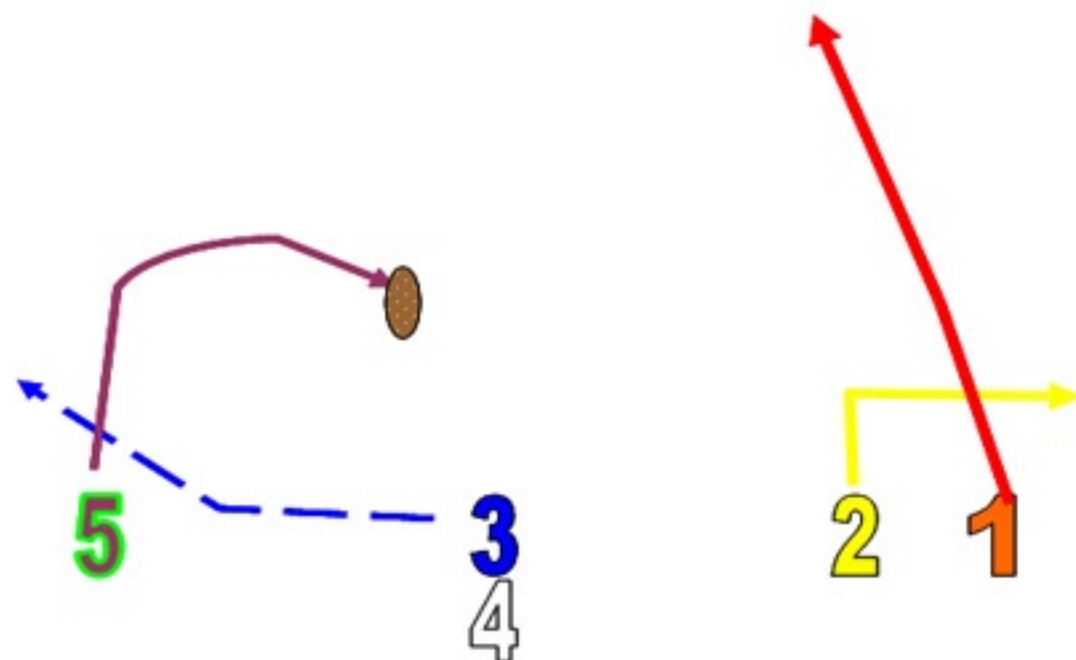


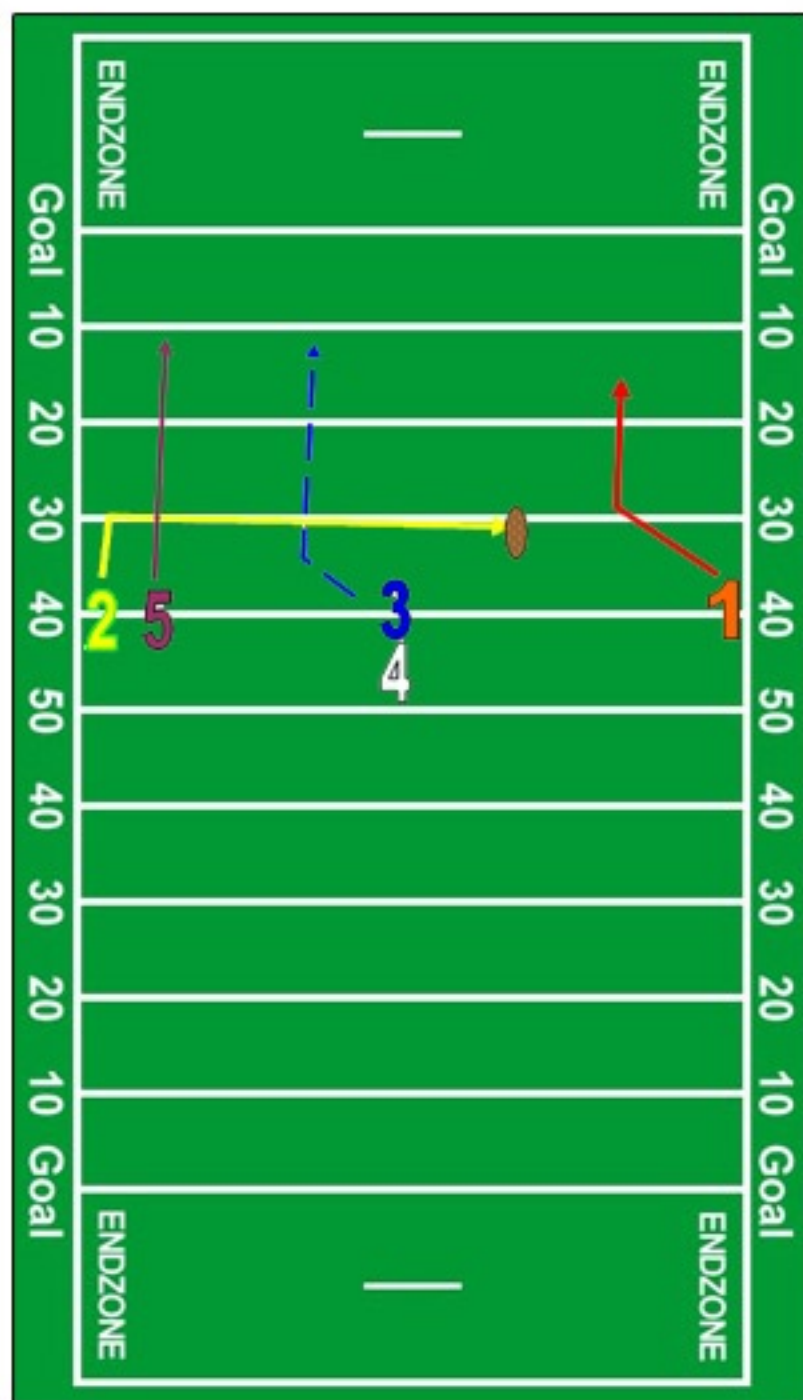
004 Clear Out Curl

This is a great first down call against zone defense. The center (3) snaps the ball and delays, then peel off to the side-line looking back the whole time. The (4) QB looks right. Receiver (1) WR does a skinny post. Player (2) delays, allowing the play to develop then sprints out to right. Receiver (5) WR curls to center of the zone. This is a great first down play or to setup something deep to the (1) receiver.



Clear Out Curl





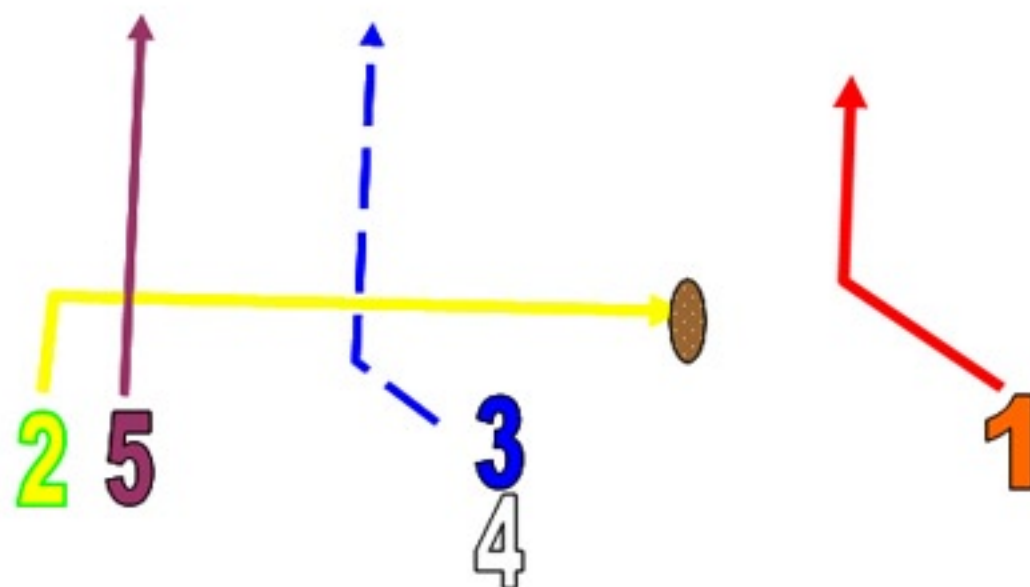
005 Across the Zone

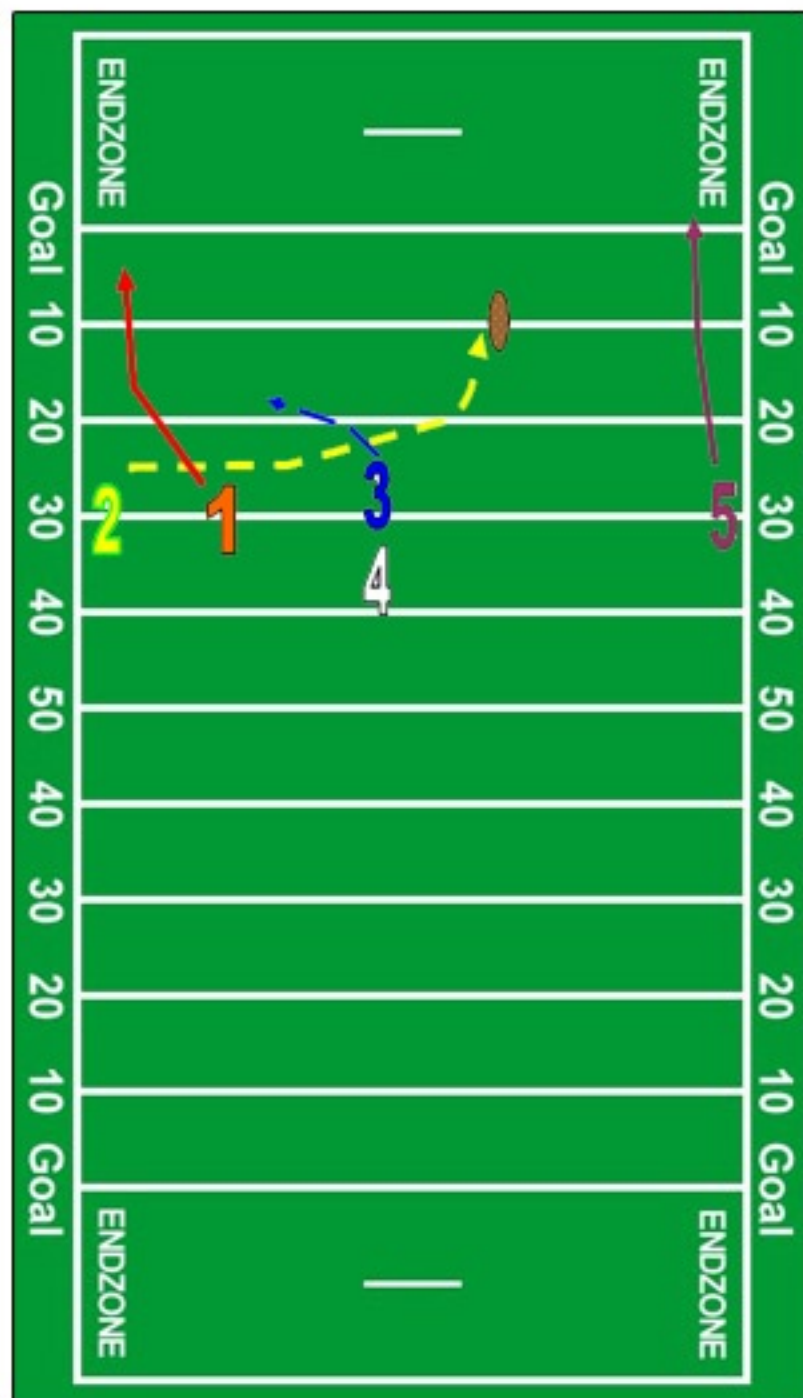
This is a quick hitter to run against aggressive defensive teams. It's a great setup play or first down pass. The center (3) snaps the ball, delays off the line and shadows the QB. The QB (4) passes quick to Receiver (2). Receiver (1) delays or waits for the play to develop. Receiver (2) should sprint hard off the line slanting to the left in order to clear the defenders.

The QB (4) pitches or throws the ball to the Center (3). The Center quickly pitches to the receiver (1) slanting in then sprints up deep. This play should be used in "zone" situations.



Across the Zone



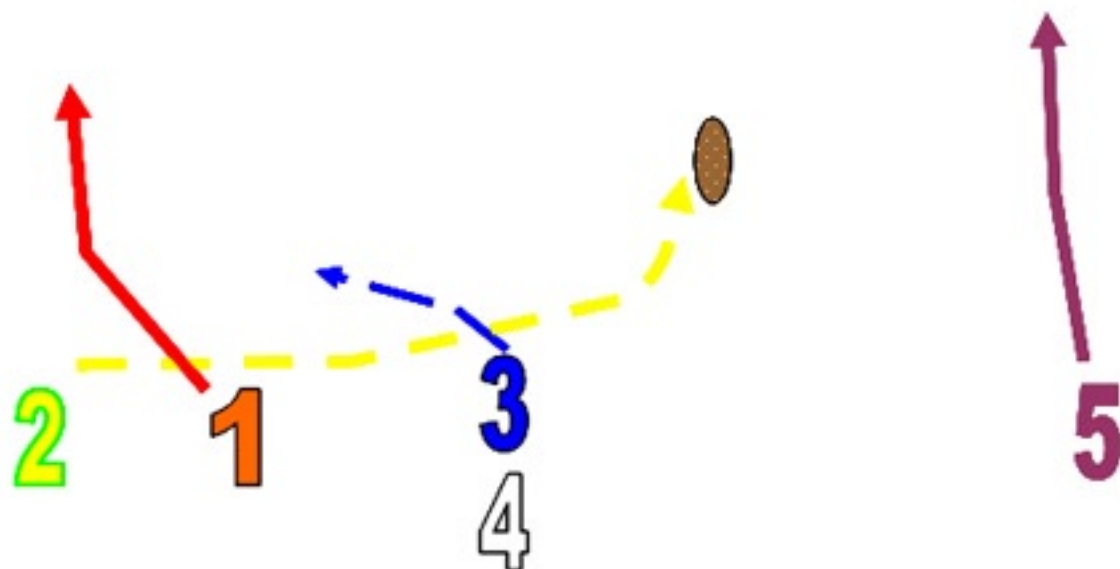


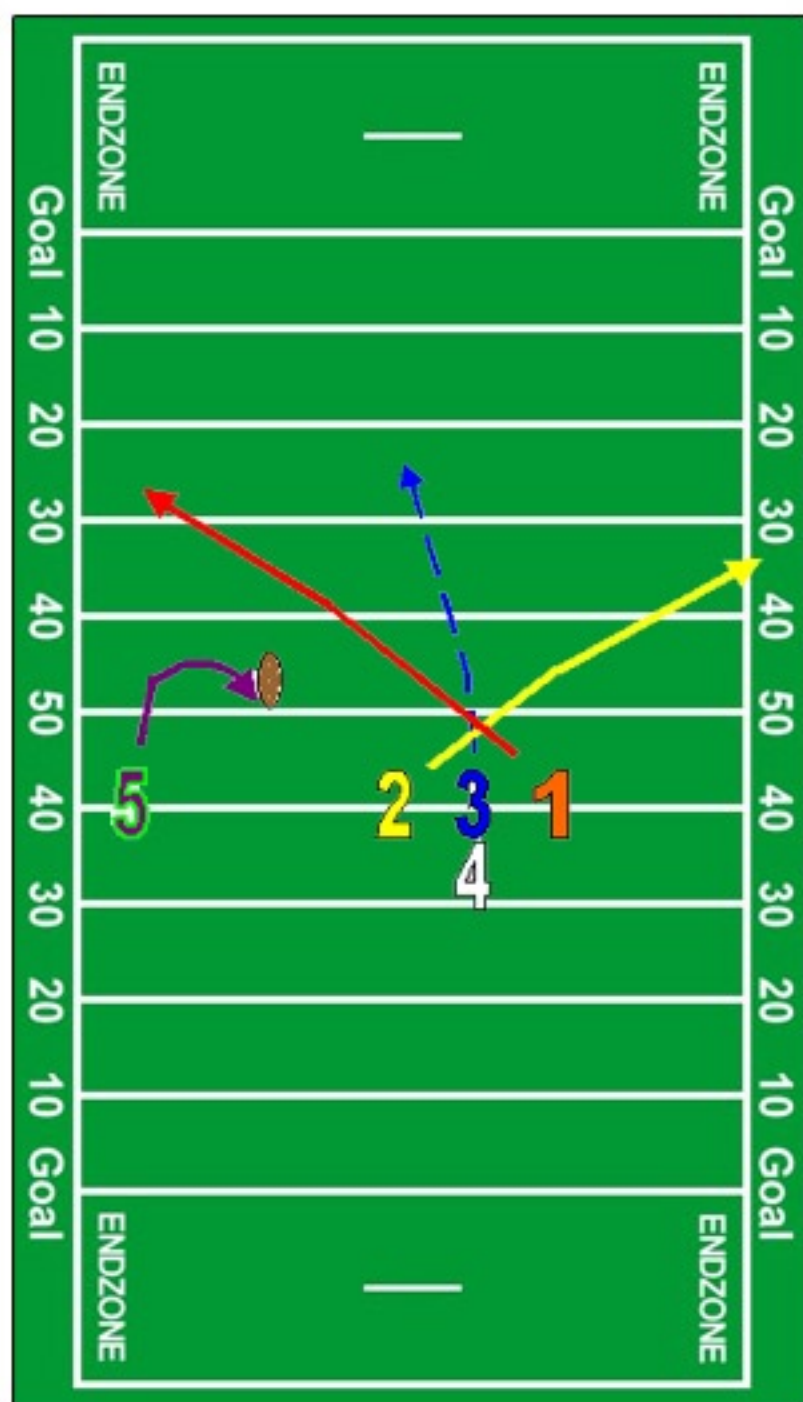
006 Two Man Pick.

In most leagues this is an illegal play. If it's done correctly and not too often you might get away with it. The Center (3) delays and runs left "picking the defender shadowing the Receiver (2). The Receiver (2) runs the defense into the path of the Center (3). This should take out two defenders. The QB (4) drifts back to the left to draw the rushers. Receiver (1) sprints off line. Receiver (5) should sprint hard off the line.



Two Man Pick



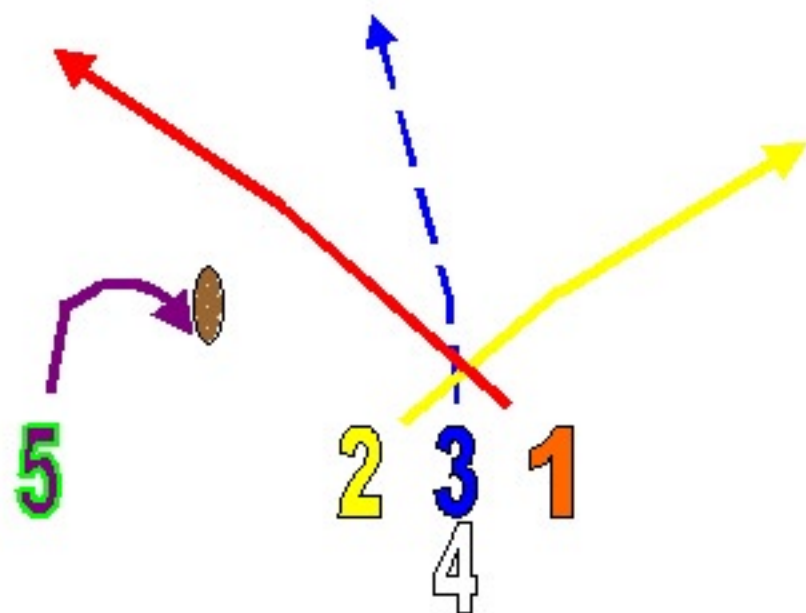


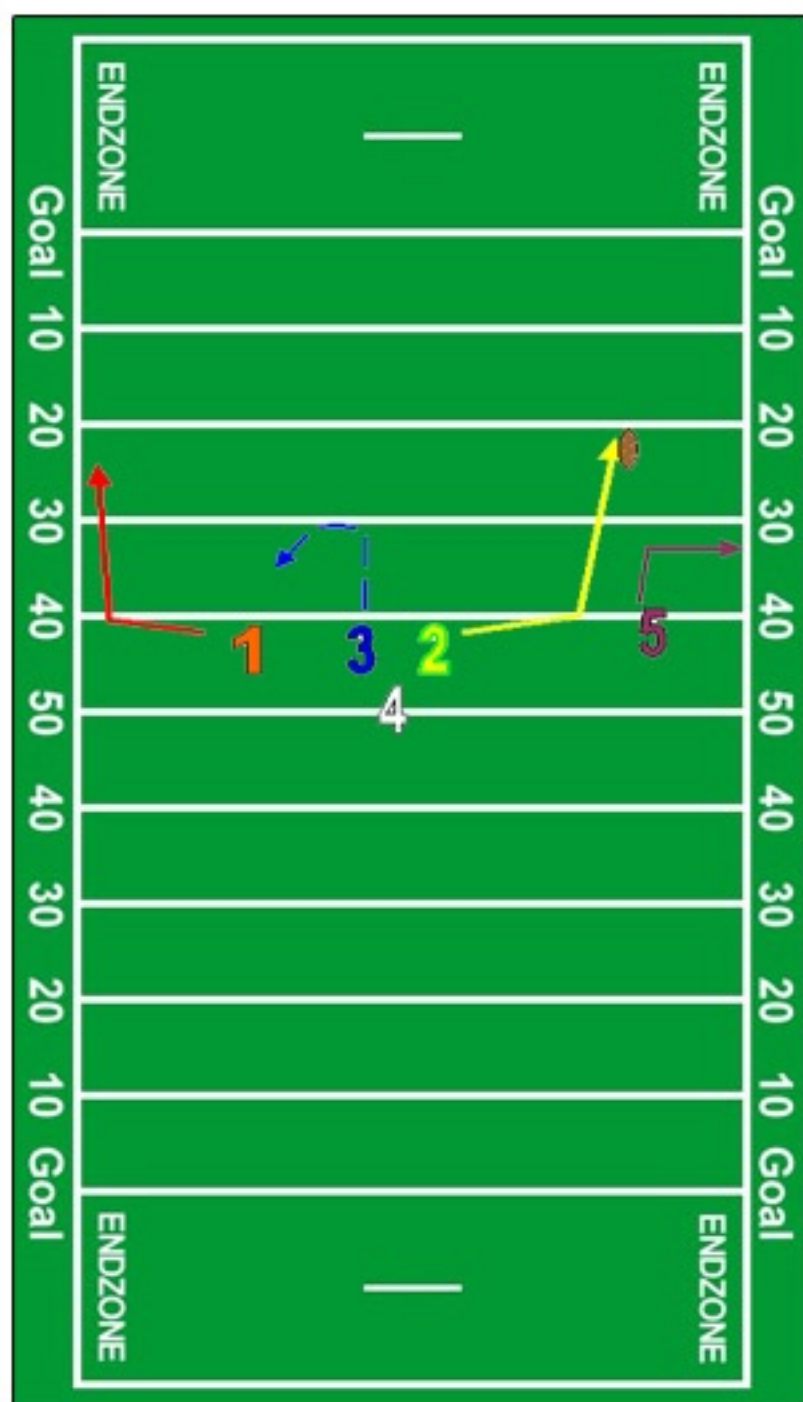
007 Quick Hit Curl

This is a quick hitter to run against aggressive defensive teams. The Center (3) delays off the line while looking back. Player (1) WR crosses off line to sideline. Receiver (2) should cross hard off the line to the right side line. The Receiver (5) curls to get the first down.



Quick Hit Curl



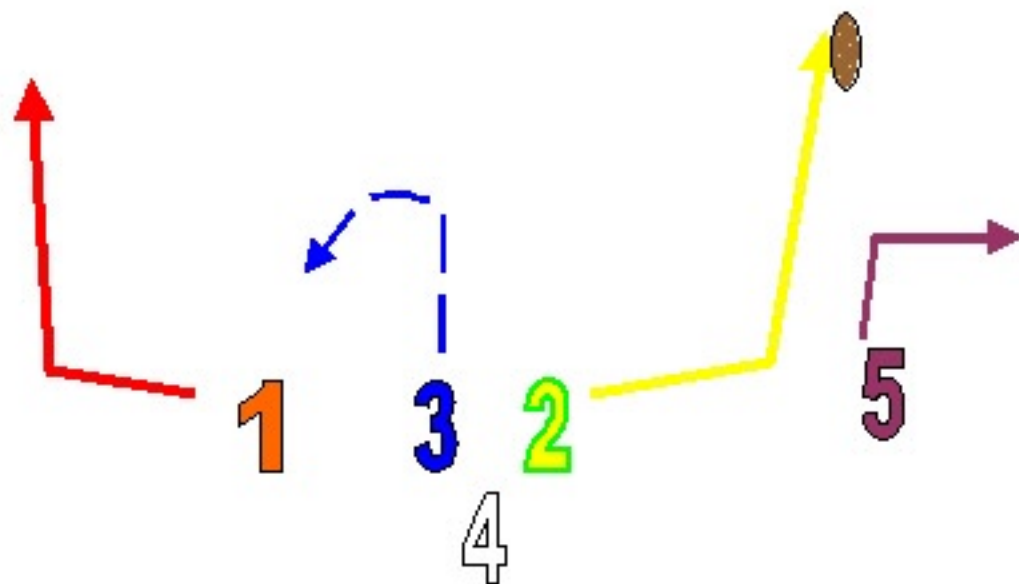


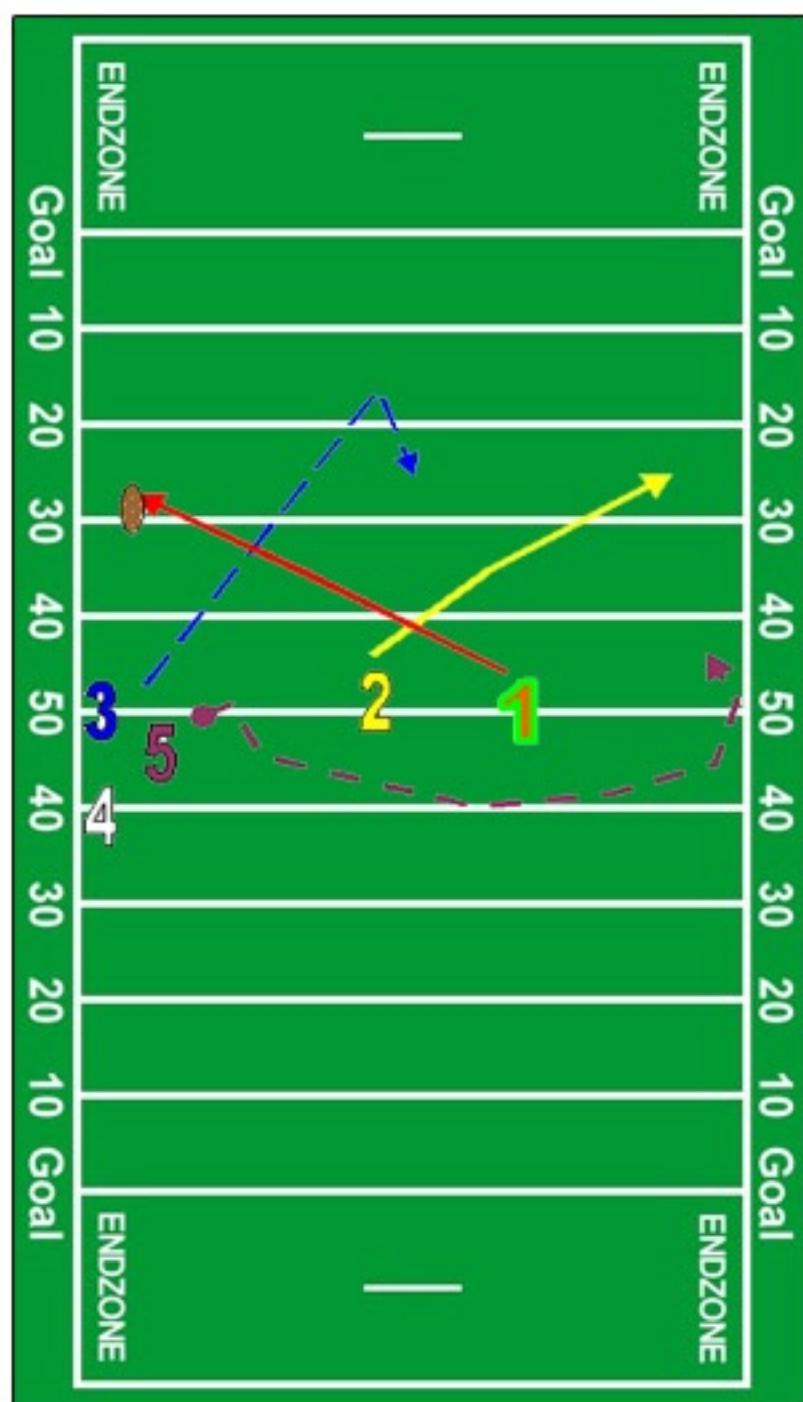
008 - Out And Up For 2

Works against Man defenses . The Center (3) center snaps and curls. Receiver (1) sprints out and up deep. Receiver (2) runs out and up deep. The Receiver (5) runs five yards out. Be sure to sell that you're going deep. The QB (4) reads at the snap. If the defense is in zone, then it probably will be better to throw to Receiver (5) or Center (3)



Out and Up For 2





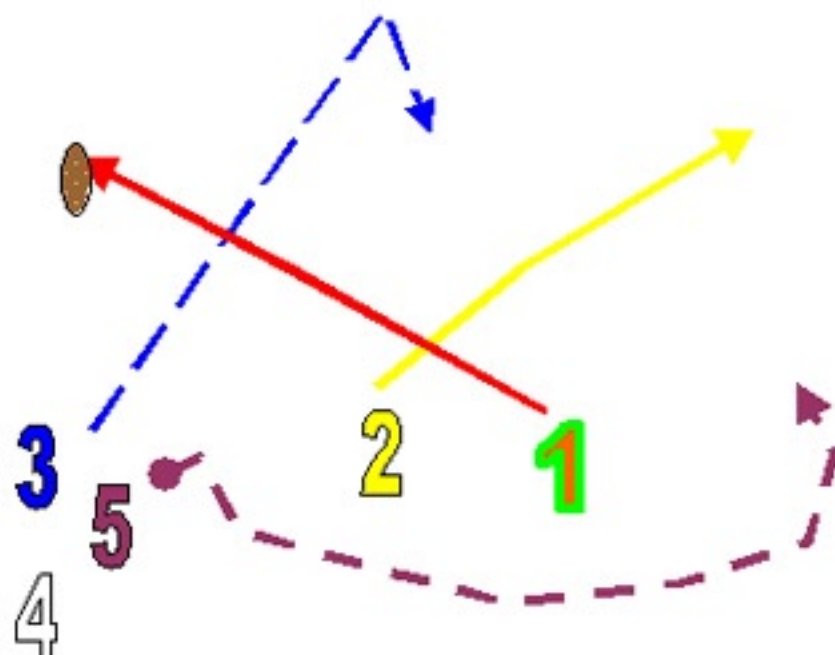
009 Weird Left

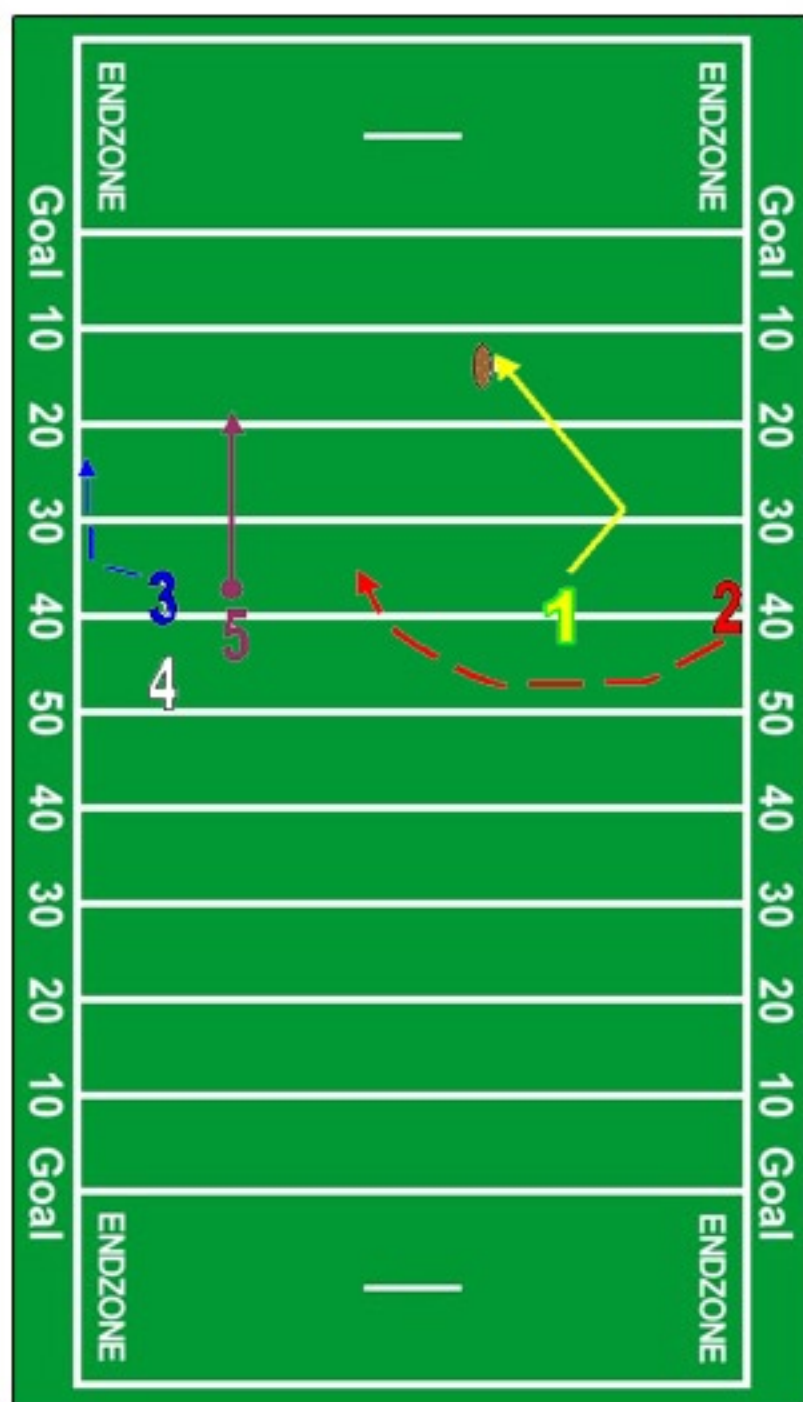
Run against man defensive teams. The QB (4) lines up over the Center (3) over near the left sidliner. If you're a better thrower from the other side, then reverse the formation. Receiver (1) slants to the left corner. Receiver (2) should slant hard off the line slanting to the right. The Receiver (5) screen blocks and drifts to the right.

The QB (4) pitches or throws the ball to the Receiver (1) in a man to man. Throw to the Receiver (5) in a zone.



Weird Left





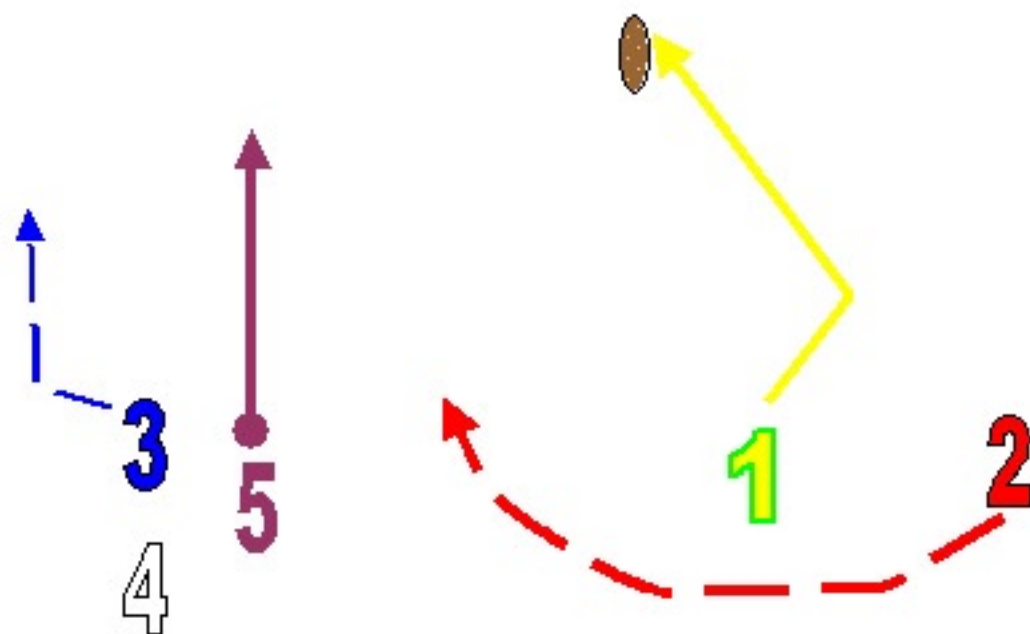
010 Weird Left Dump or Deep

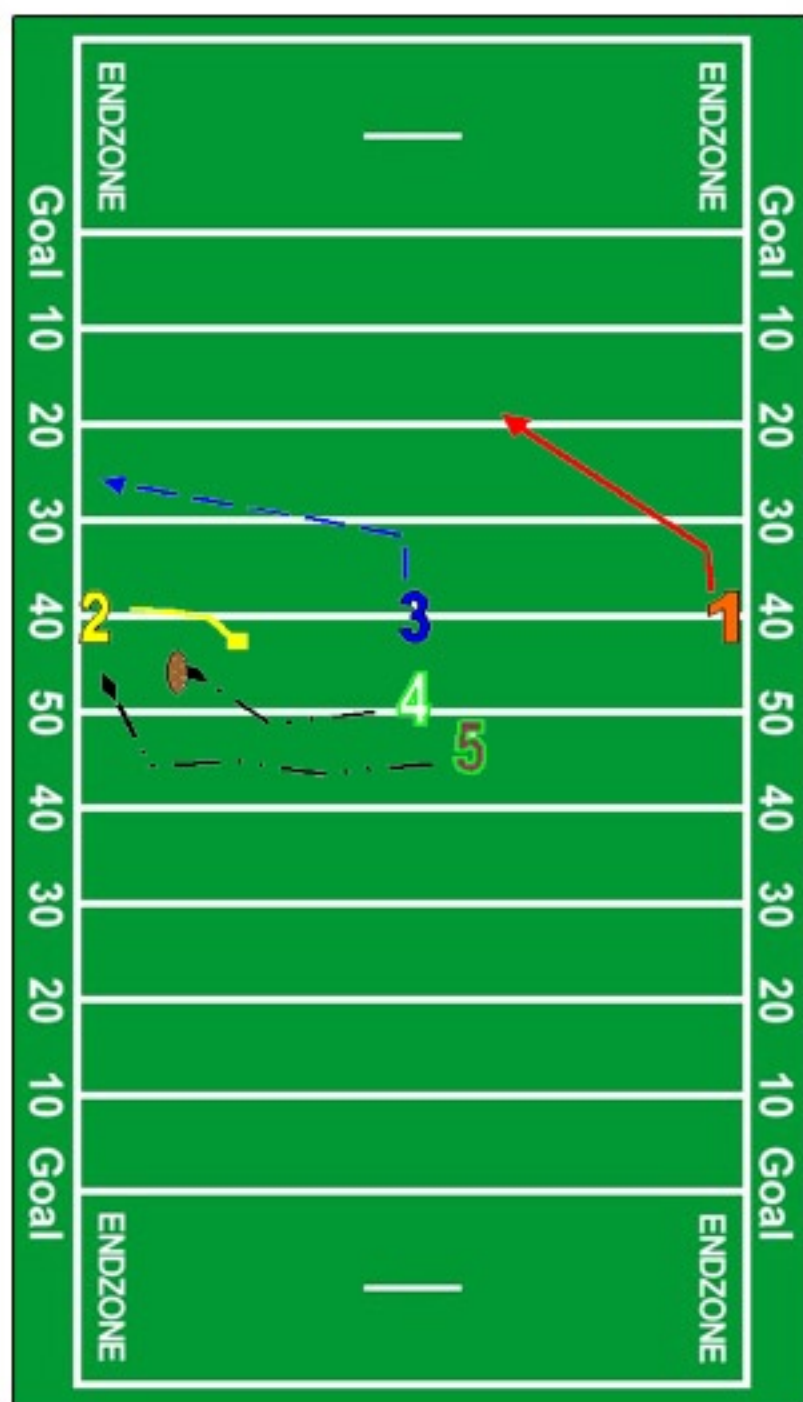
Run against man defensive teams. The QB (4) lines up over the Center (3) over near the left sideliner. If you're a better thrower from the other side, then reverse the formation. Receiver (1) slants corner to post. Receiver (2) should delay off the line and run to the left. The Receiver (5) screen blocks and sprints deep.

The QB (4) pitches or throws the ball to the Receiver (1) in a man to man. Throw to the Receiver (2) in a zone.



Weird Left Dump/Deep





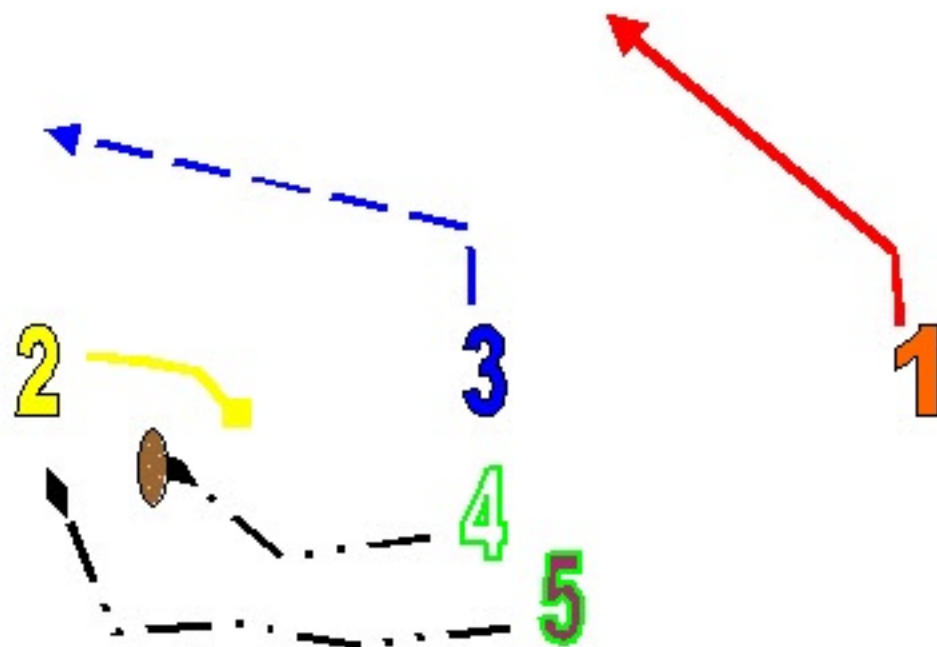
011 Option Left

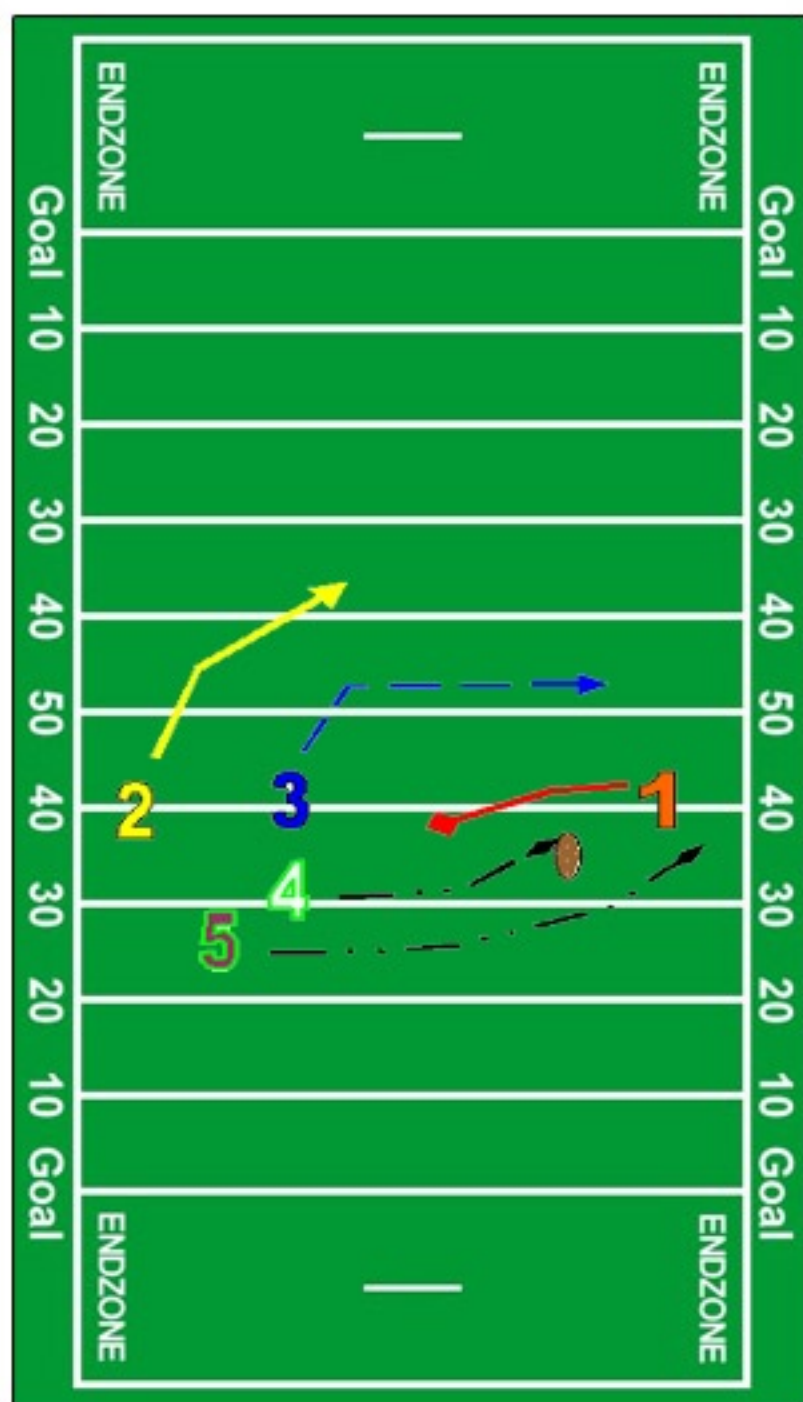
Run against man defensive teams. The Center (3) snaps and drifts over near the left sideliner. Receiver (1) posts left. Receiver (2) screen blocks. The receiver (5) rolls to the left and waits for pitch.

DO NOT PITCH THE BALL BEHIND THE LINE OF SCRIMAGE. REPEAT DO NOT PITCH THE BALL BEHIND THE LINE OF SCRIMAGE. It's ok to fake the option and throw to the (1) Receiver.



Option Left





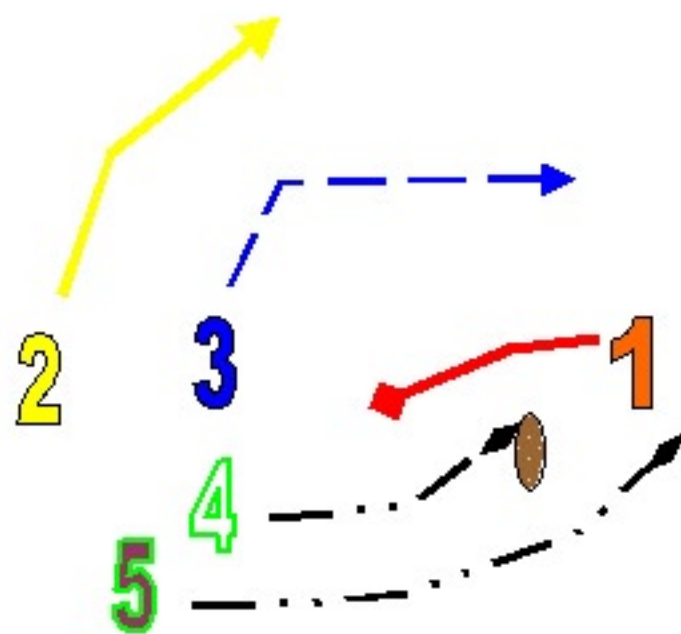
012 Option Right

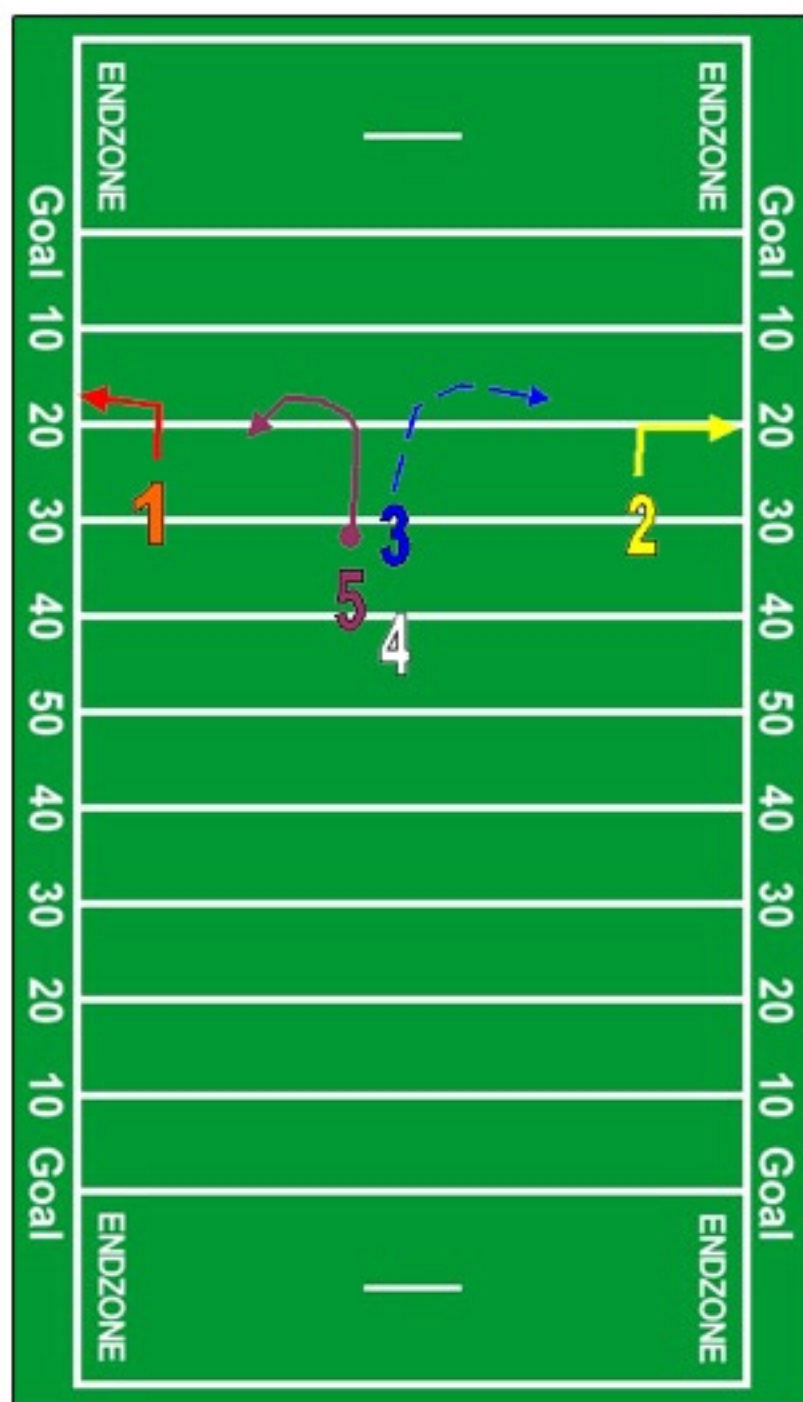
Run against man defensive teams. The Center (3) snaps and drifts over near the right sideline. Receiver (1) screen blocks down. Receiver (2) posts to the right corner. The RB (5) rolls to the right and waits for pitch.

DO NOT PITCH THE BALL BEHIND THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE. REPEAT DO NOT PITCH THE BALL BEHIND THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE. It's ok to fake the option and throw to the (2) Receiver.



Option Right



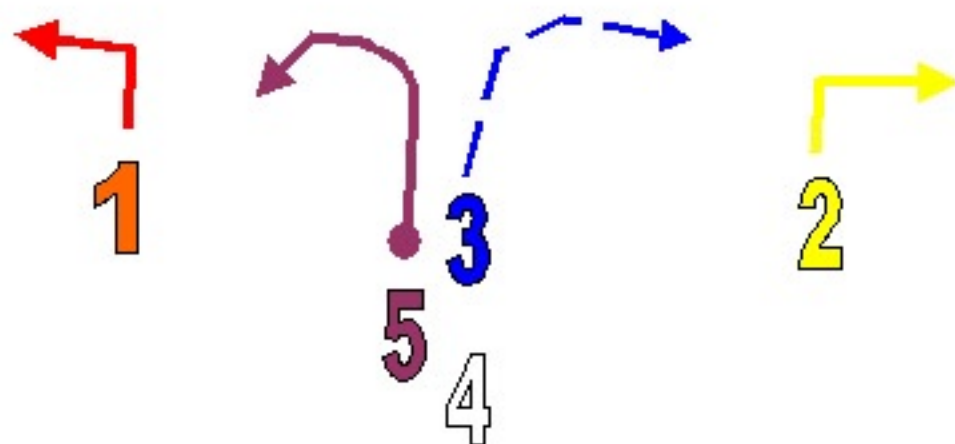


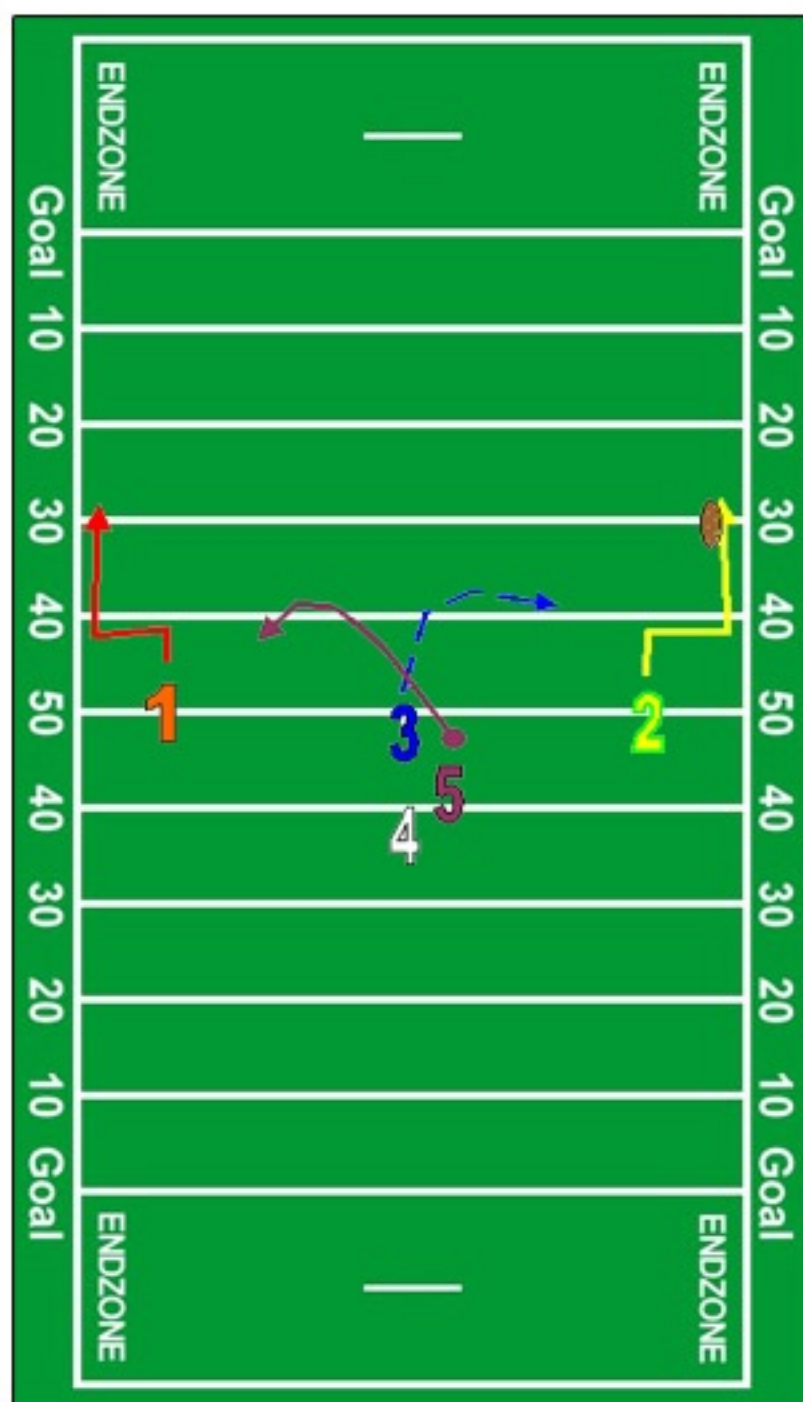
013 Read It Quick

Run this against zone defenses. The Center (3) snaps then curls right. Receiver (1) sprints five yards and out. Receiver (2) runs five yards and out. The receiver (4) reads before the snap to decide which guy is open before the snap. If the defense lines up man, audible the Receiver (5) & Receiver (3) to cross.



Read It Quick



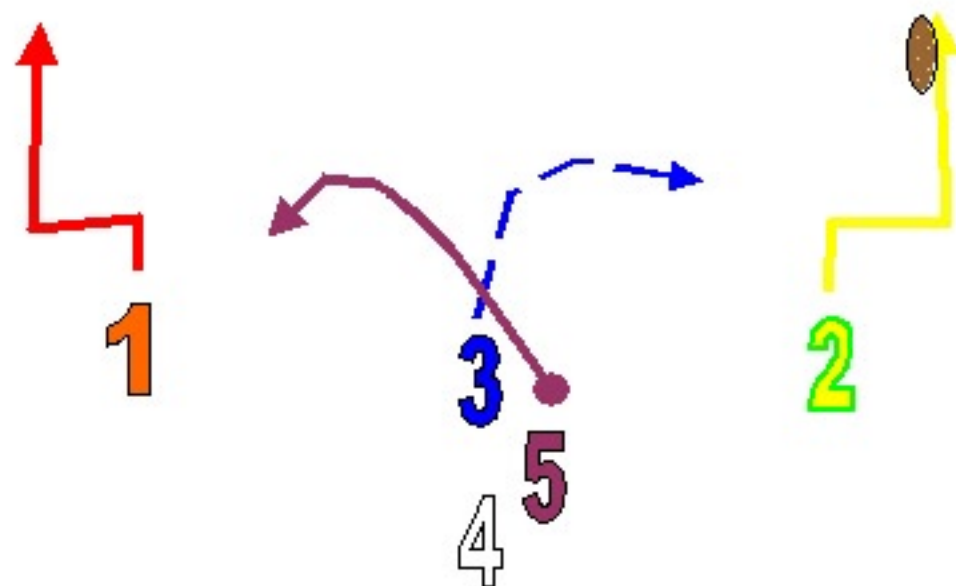


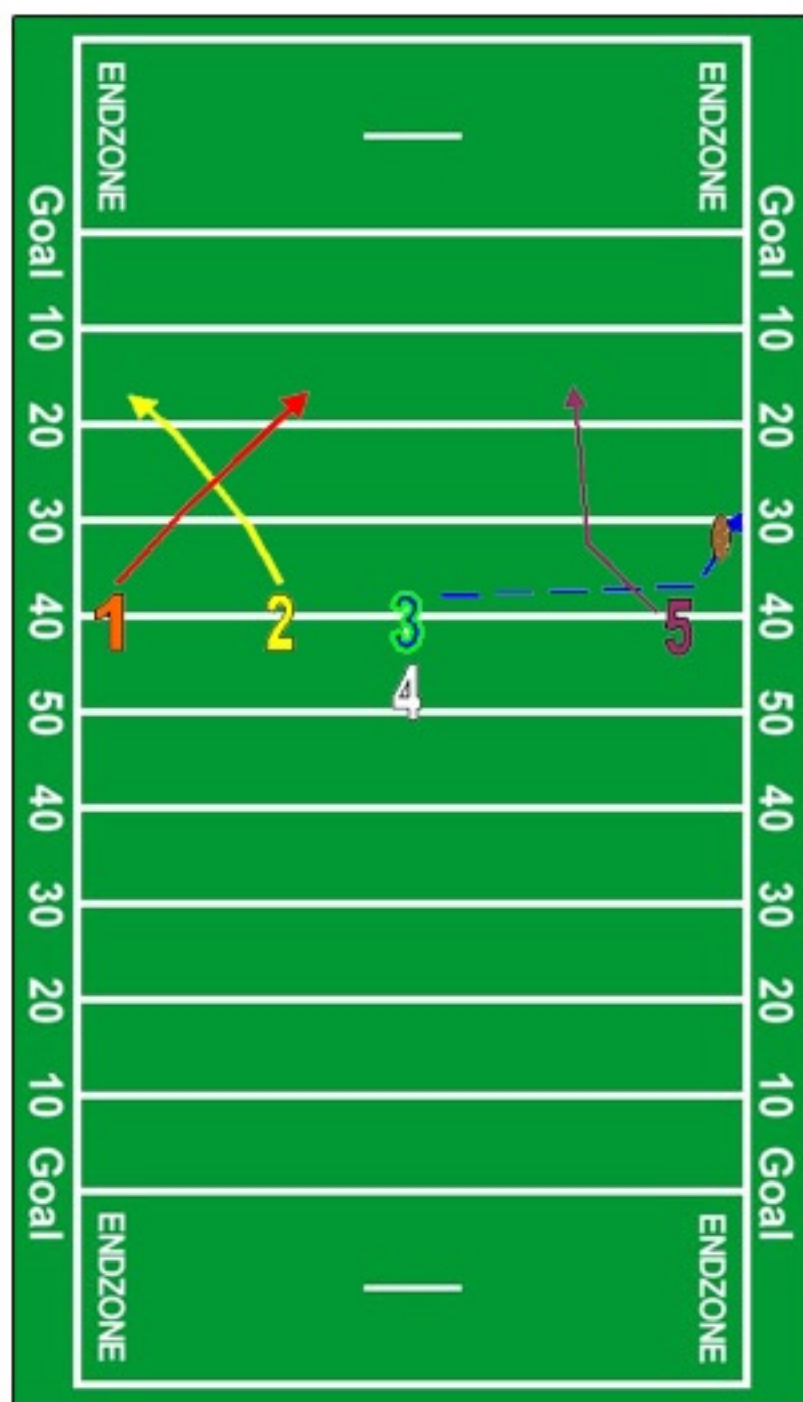
014 Read It Quick Out and Up.

Run this against zone defenses. The Center (3) snaps then curls right. Receiver (1) sprints five yards out and up. Receiver (2) runs five yards out and up. The Receiver (4) reads before the snap to decide which guy is open before the snap. If the defense lines up man, audible Receiver (5) & Receiver (3) to cross. Pump right then throw right.



Read It Quick Out/Up



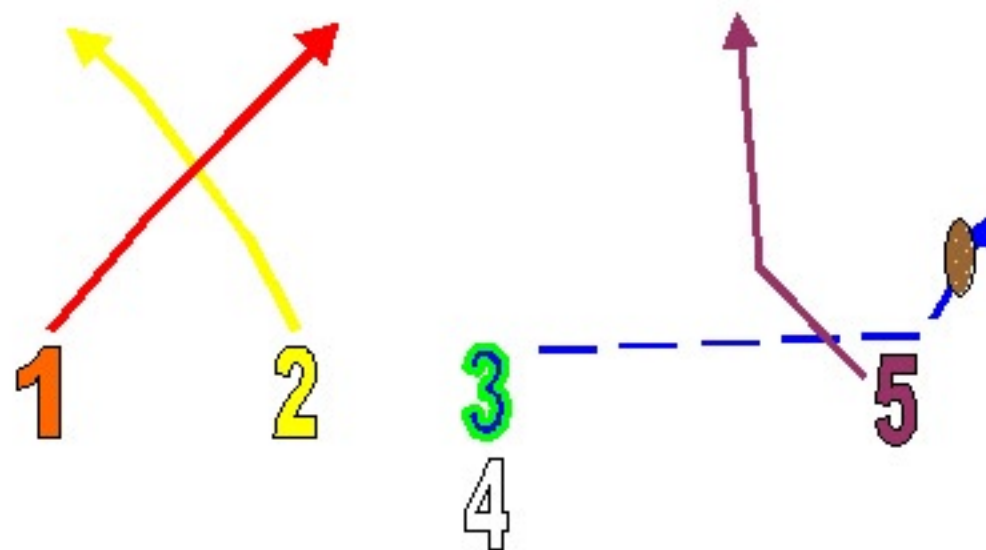


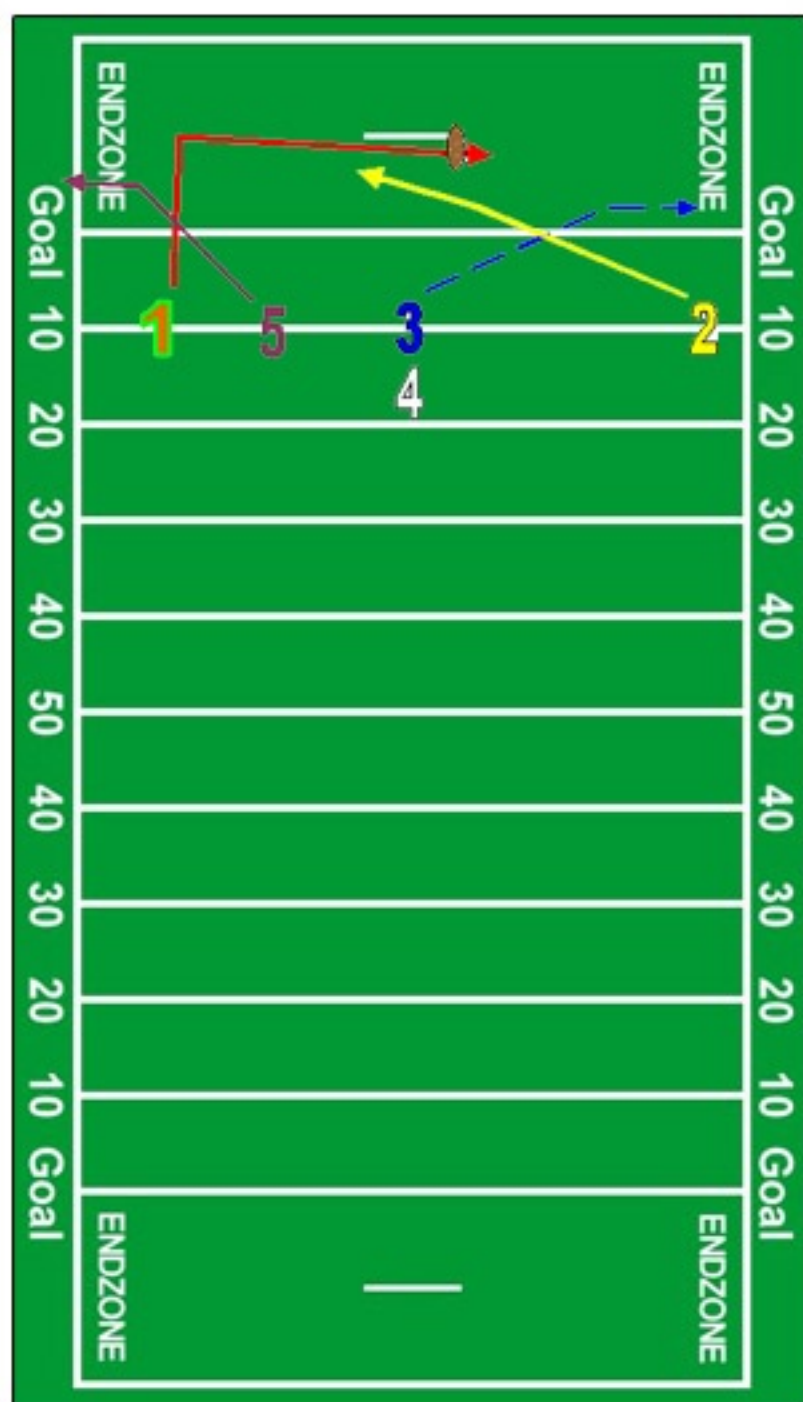
015 Man to Man Cross

This Play is to be run against man to man. The ball is snapped and the Center (3) peels right then crosses with Receiver (5). Receiver (1) WR crosses with Receiver (2). Audible this play whenever the defense is in man to man .



Man to Man Cross



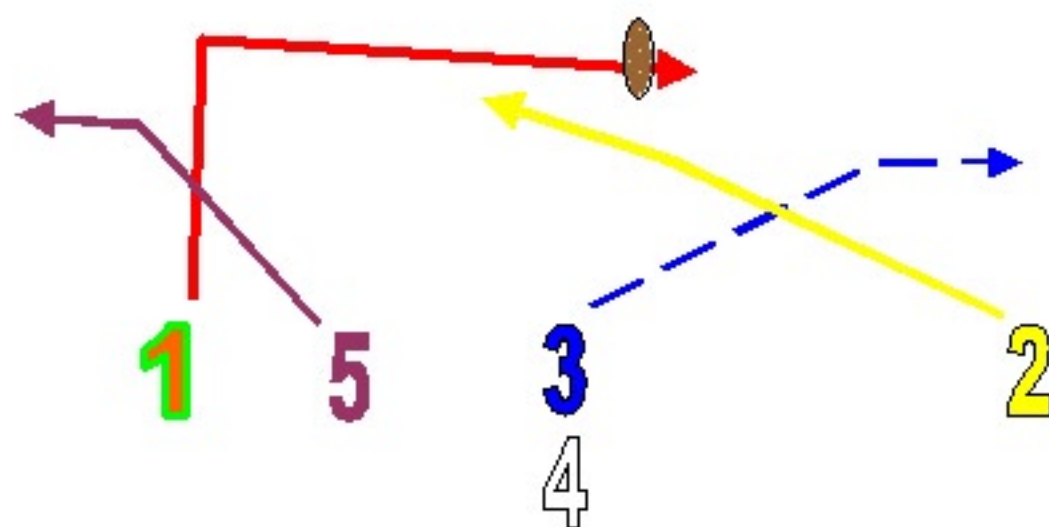


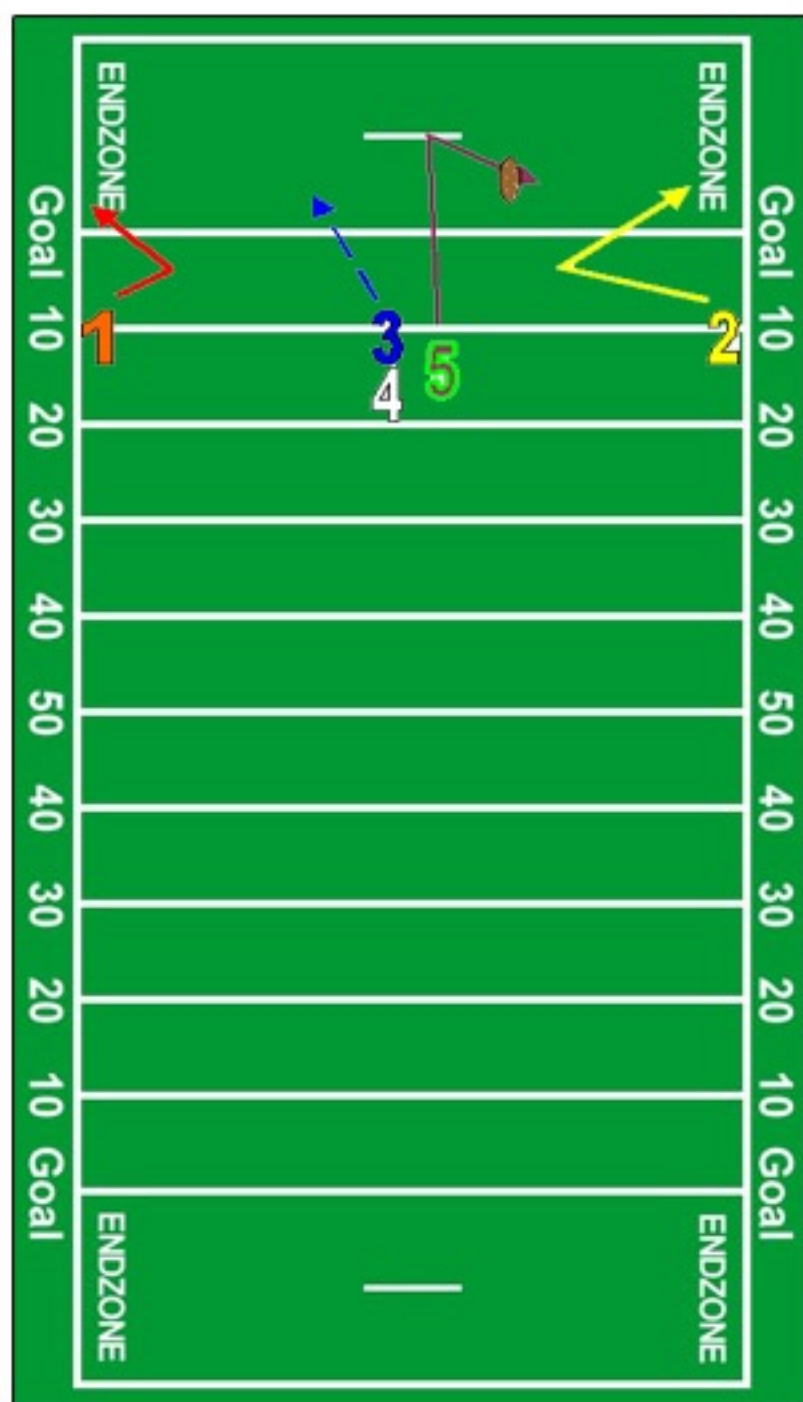
016 Front and Back

This play is to be run against zone. The ball is snapped - Center (3) peels right and crosses with Receiver (2) along the front of the endzone. Receiver (1) WR crosses with Receiver (5) along the back of the endzone. Audible this play whenever the defense is in man to man .



Front and Back



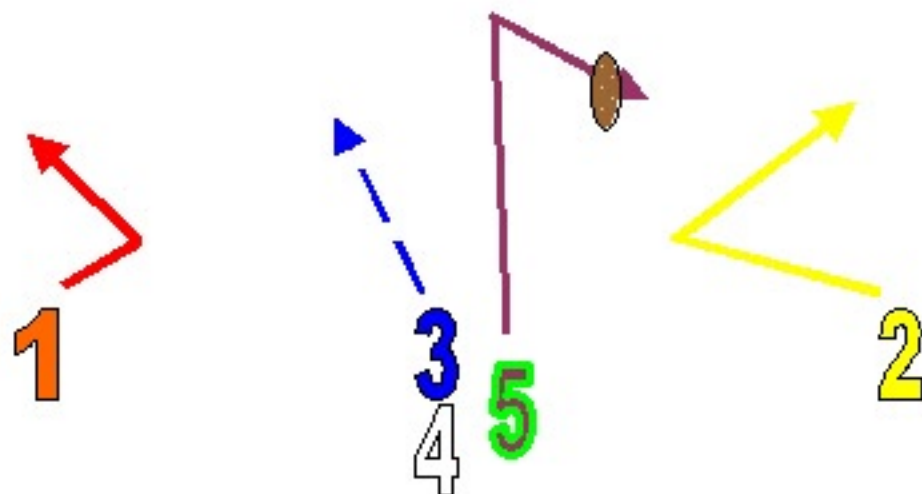


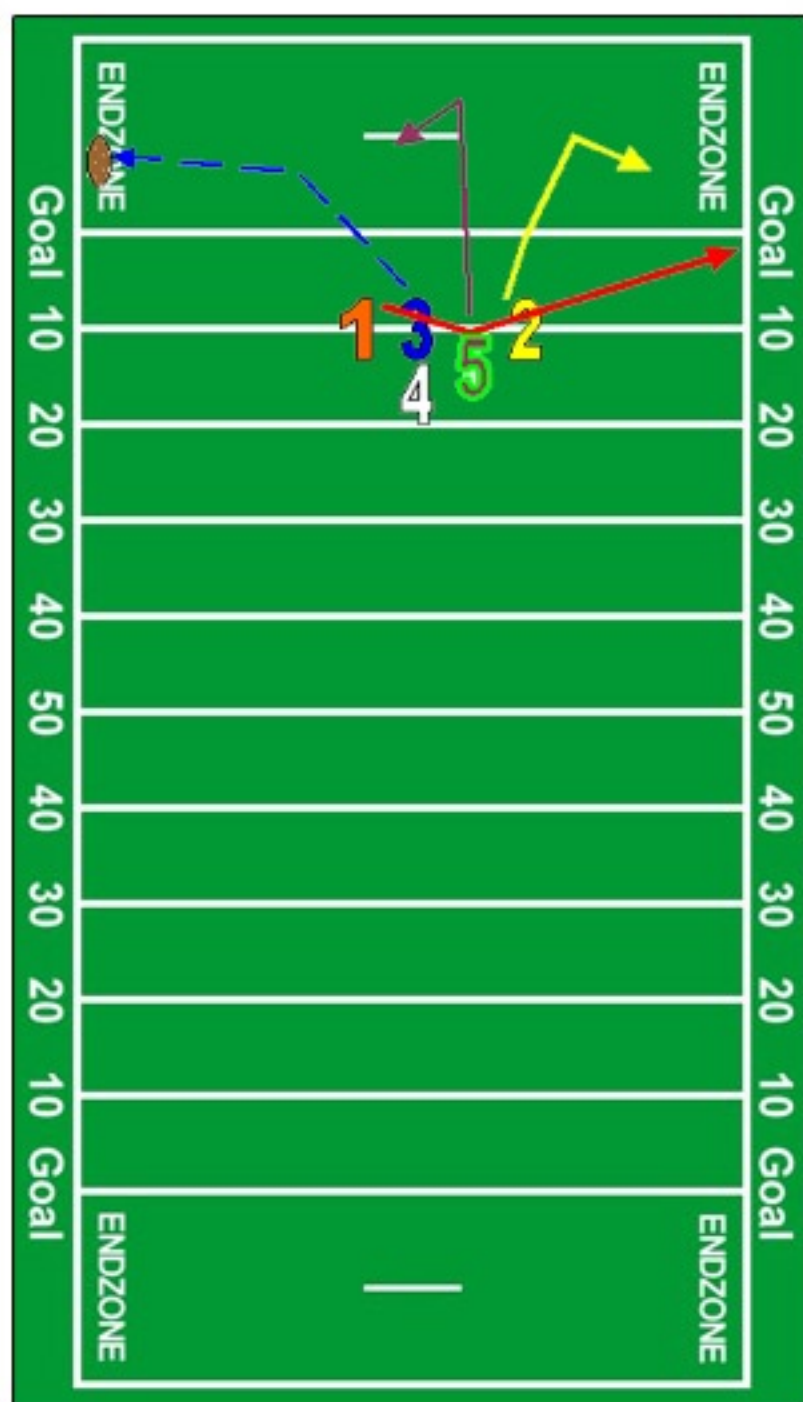
017 Man To Man Cross II

This play is to be run against man to man. The ball is snapped - Center (3) peels right and crosses with Receiver (5). Receiver (1) crosses with Receiver (2). Audible this play whenever the defense is in man to man .



Man To Man Cross II



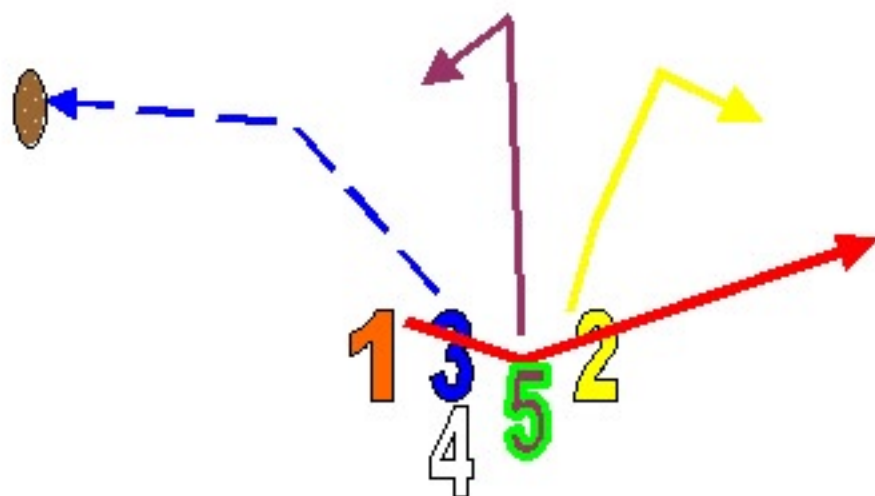


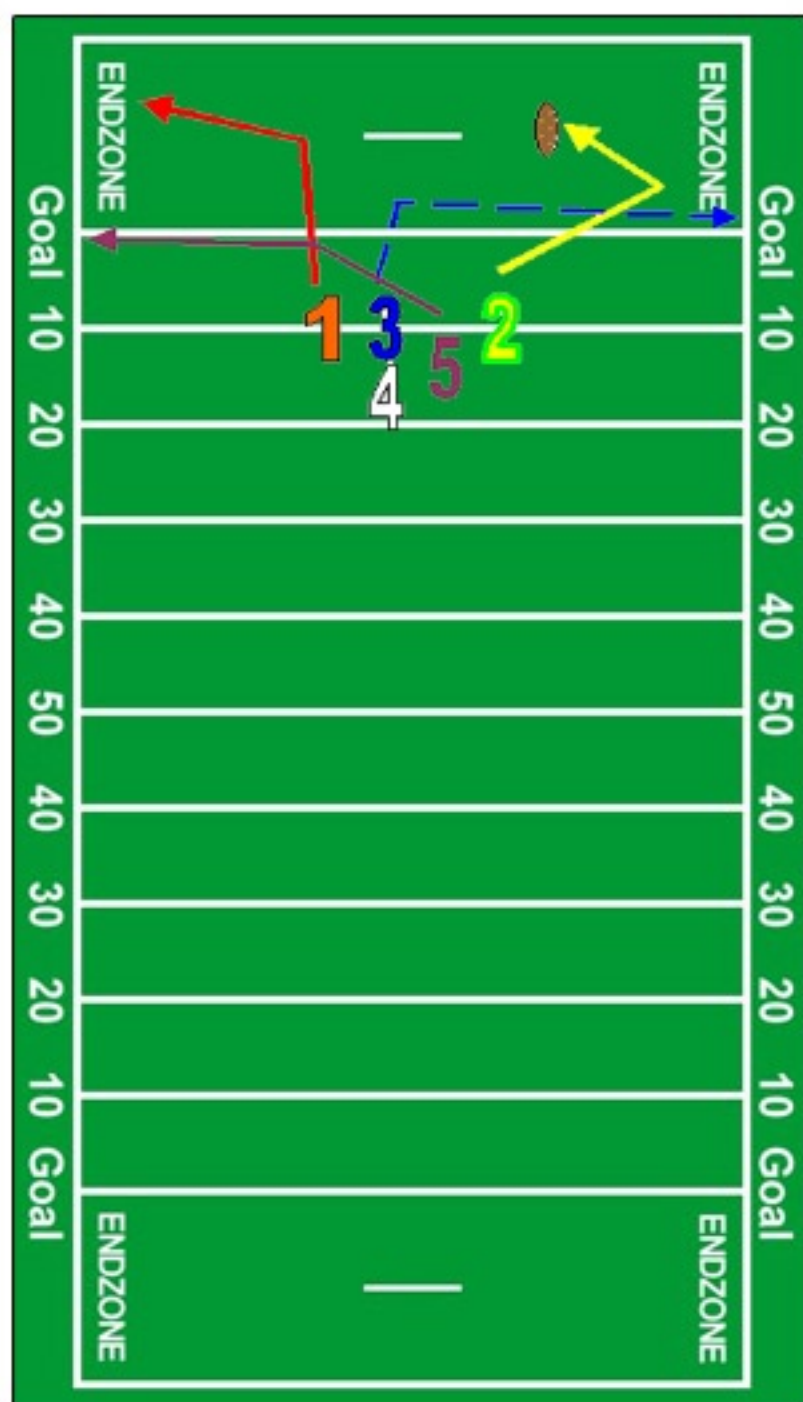
018 Goal-Line Crowd.

This play is to be run against man to man. The ball is snapped - Center (3) peels left the corner. Receiver (5) sprints back to the endzone and bounces back. Receiver (1) crosses with the Center (3) underneath. The Receiver (2) runs to the corner. The QB (4) looks right the tosses to Center (3) in the left corner of the endzone.



Goal-Line Crowd



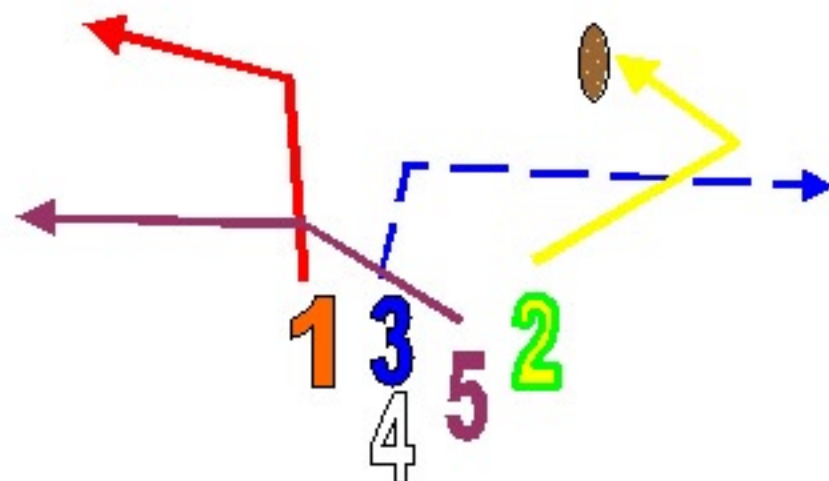


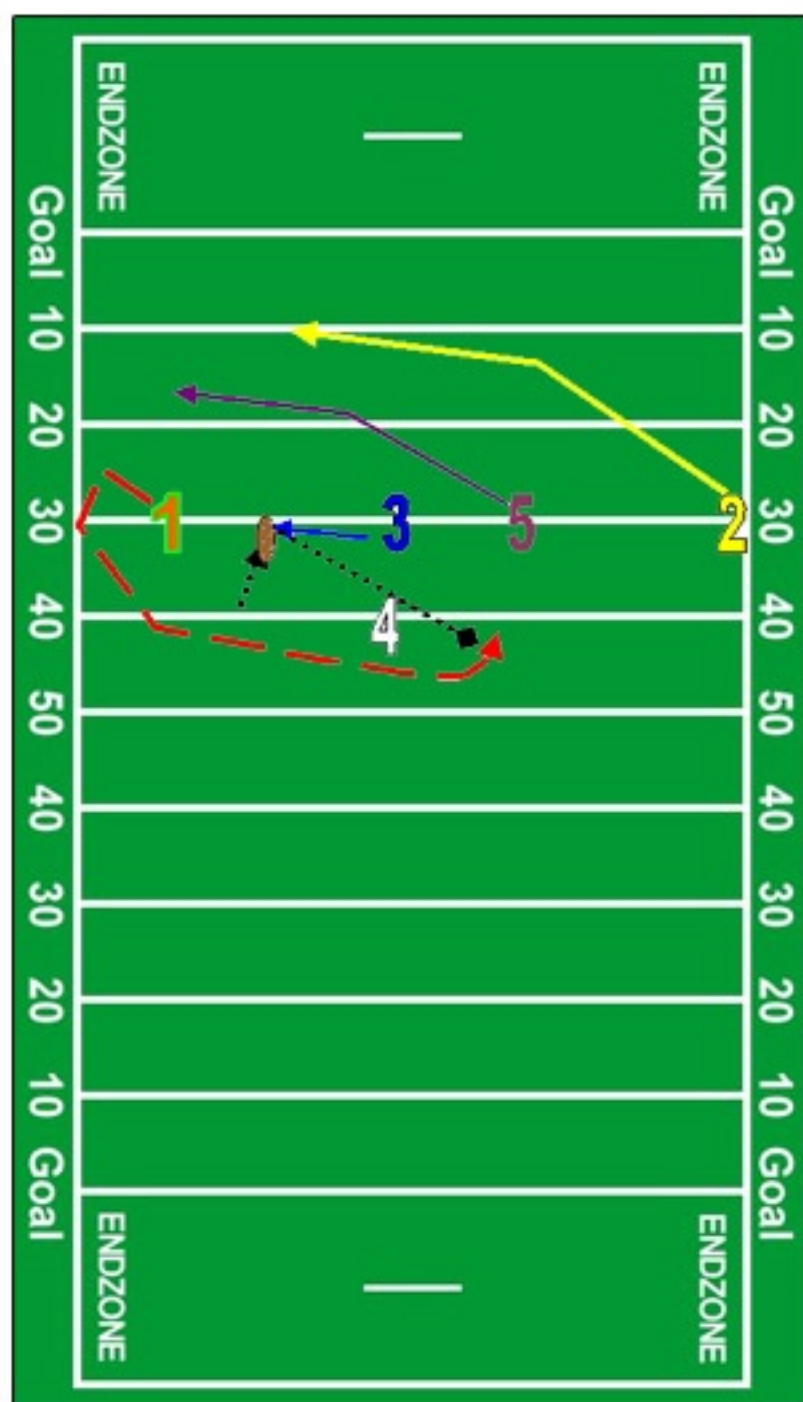
019 Corner Post Timing.

This play is to be run against man to man or zone. The ball is snapped - the Center (3) peels right along the front of the endzone. Receiver (5) crosses in front the Center (3) of goal-line. Receiver (1) WR crosses with the Center (3) underneath. The Receiver (2) corner posts. The QB (4) looks left then tosses to Receiver (2) to the post. This is a timing routine so practice makes perfect.



Corner Post Timing





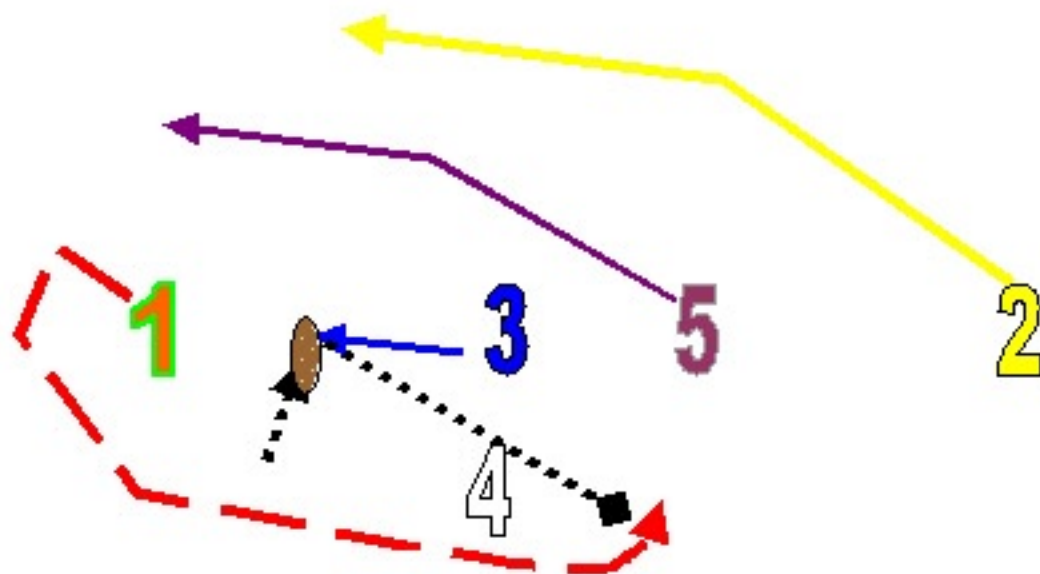
020 Center Hook and Ladder Reverse

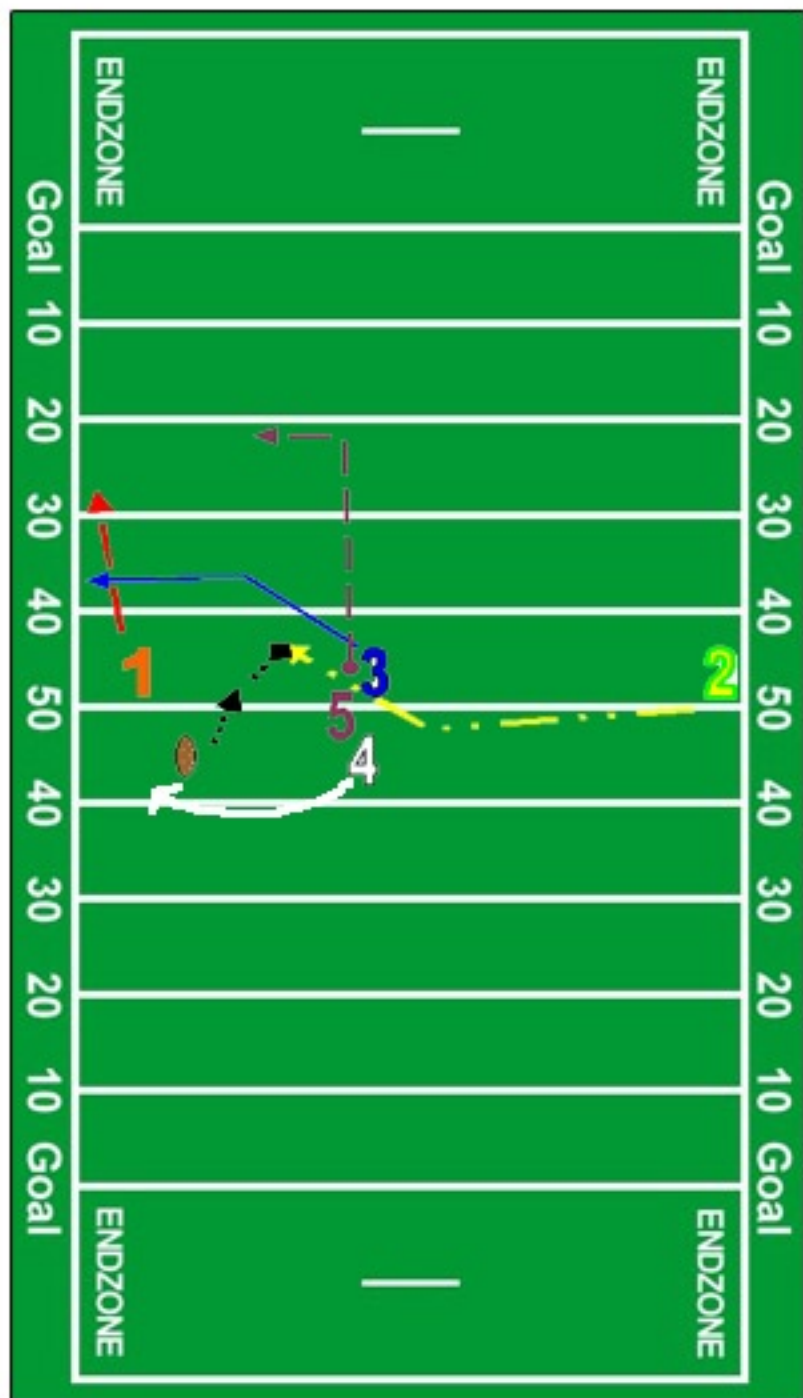
This is a quick hitter to run against aggressive defensive teams. It's to be run similar to half back screen. The ball is snapped - The QB (4) drifts back to the left to draw the rushers. The Receiver (1) delays or waits for the play to develop. Receivers (2) & (5) should sprint hard off the line slanting to the left in order to clear the defenders.

The QB (4) pitches or throws the ball to the Center (3). The Center (3) quickly pitches to the Receiver (1) coming around on the end. If everyone executes the play properly there should be a big gain or TD. This play can also be used in "hail mary" situations.



Center Hook/Ladder

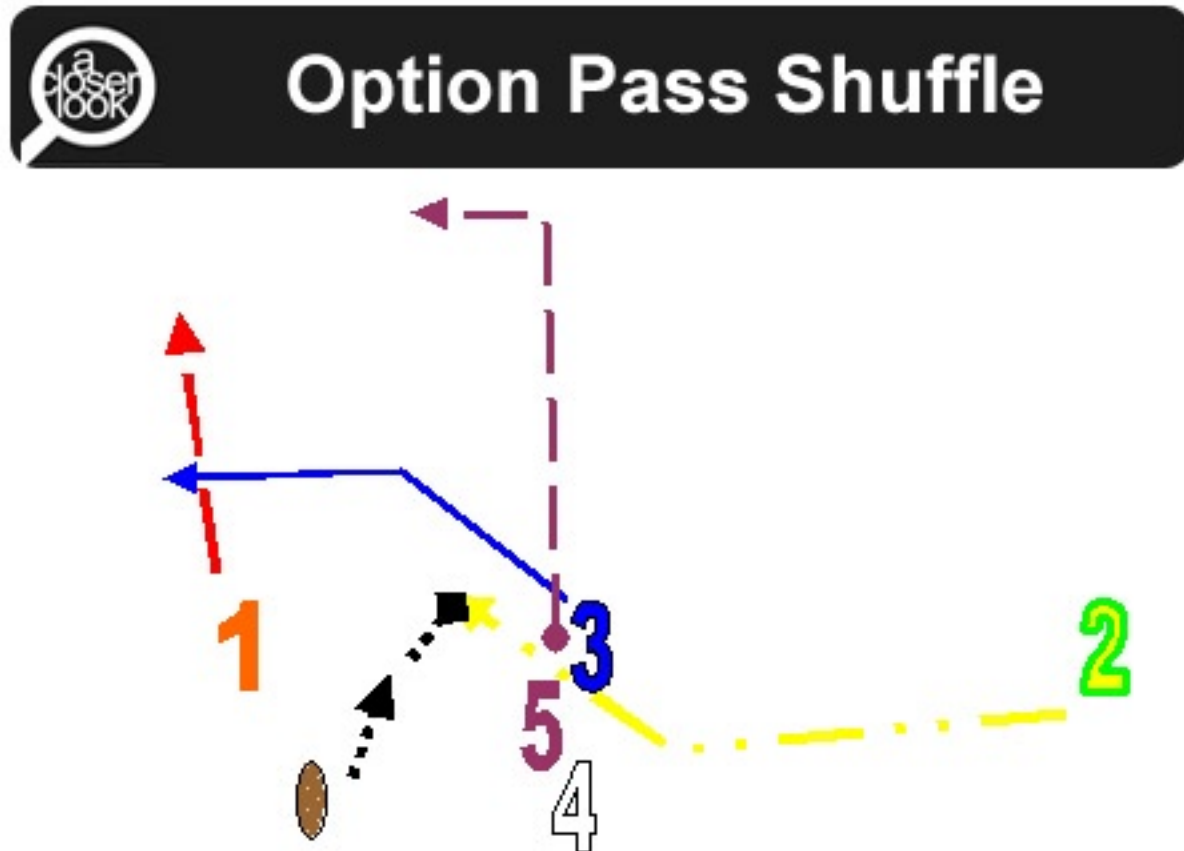


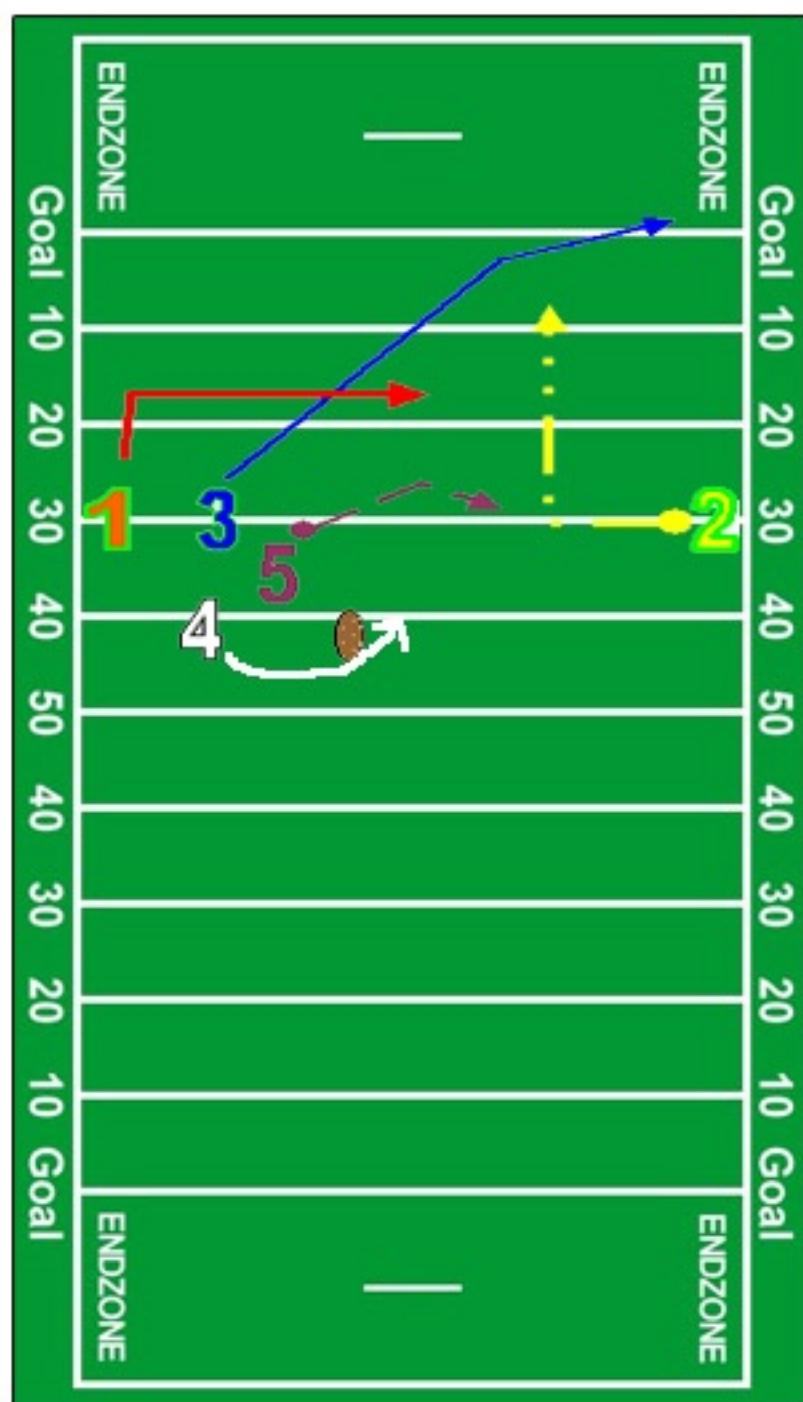


021 Option Pass Shuffle

This play is to be run similar to half back screen. The ball is snapped - The (4) QB drifts back to the left to draw the rushers. Receiver (1) WR delays or waits for the play to develop. Receivers (2) (5) should sprint hard off the line slanting to the left in order to clear the defenders.

The (4) QB pitches or throws the ball to the (3) Center. The Center quickly pitches to the (1) WR coming around on the end. If everyone executes the play properly there should be a big gain or TD. This play can also be used in "hail mary" situations.



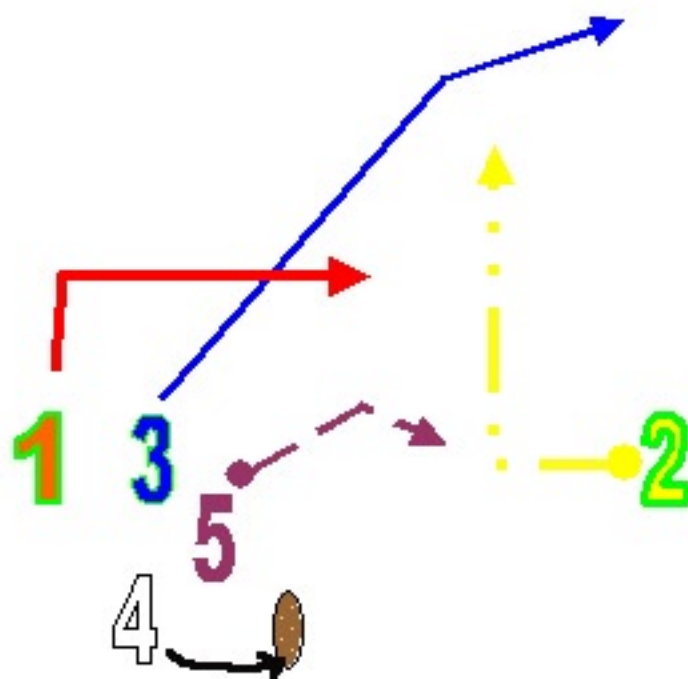


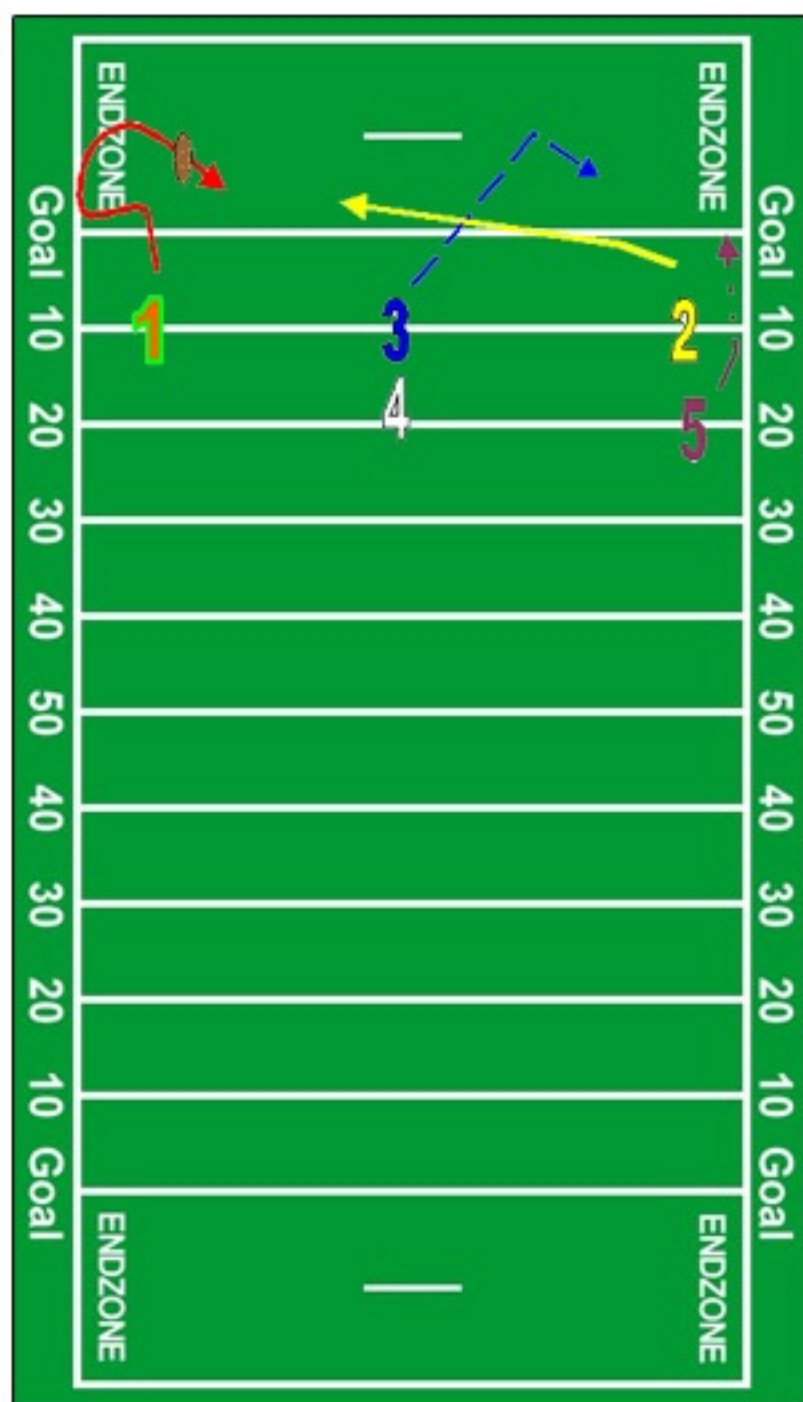
022 QB Run or Roll

The QB (4) runs right. The Receiver (2) motions left then waits to screen block for the (4) QB. The QB (4) can either run or throw to the Receiver (1) (3) or (2) if there is time. The Receiver (5) screen blocks.



QB Run or Roll



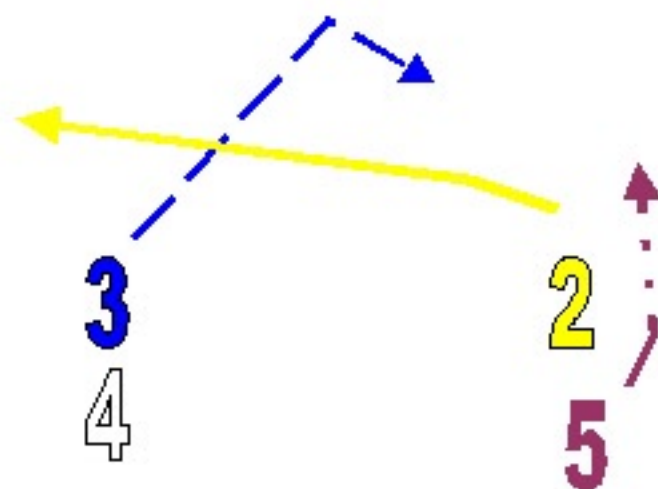


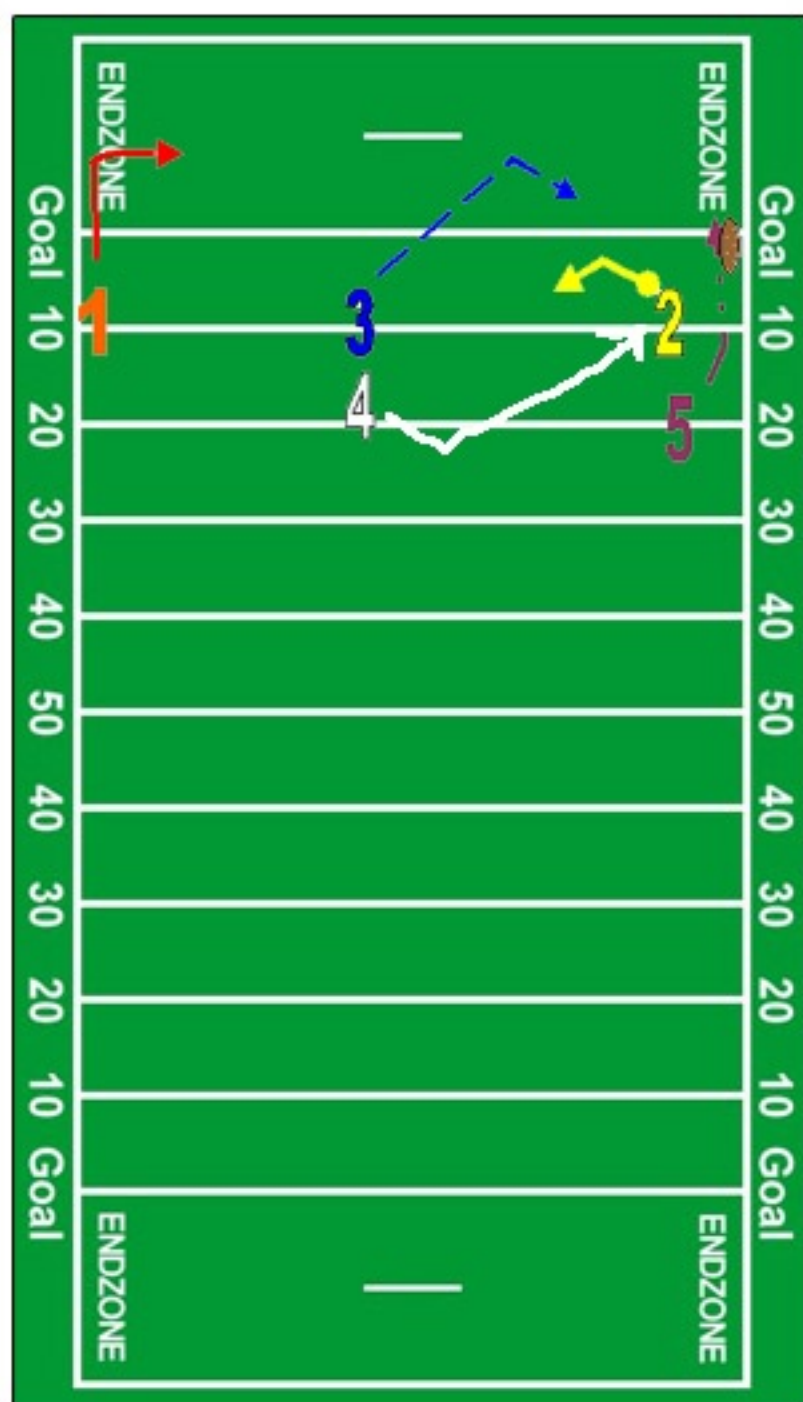
023 Front and Back II

This play is to be run against zone. The ball is snapped and the Center (3) peels right then crosses with Receiver (2) along the front of the endzone. Receiver (1) crosses with Receiver (5) along the back of the endzone. Audible this play whenever the defense is in man to man.



Front and Back II



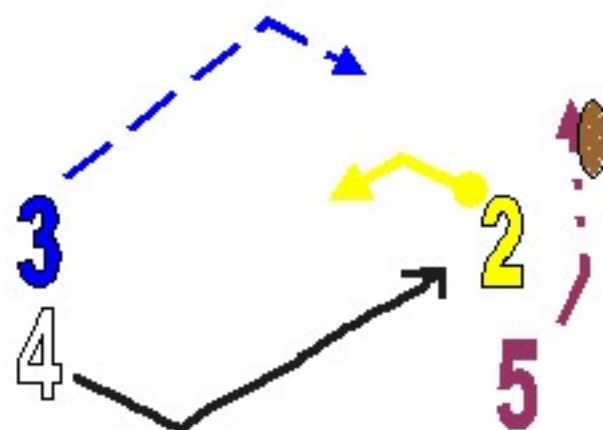


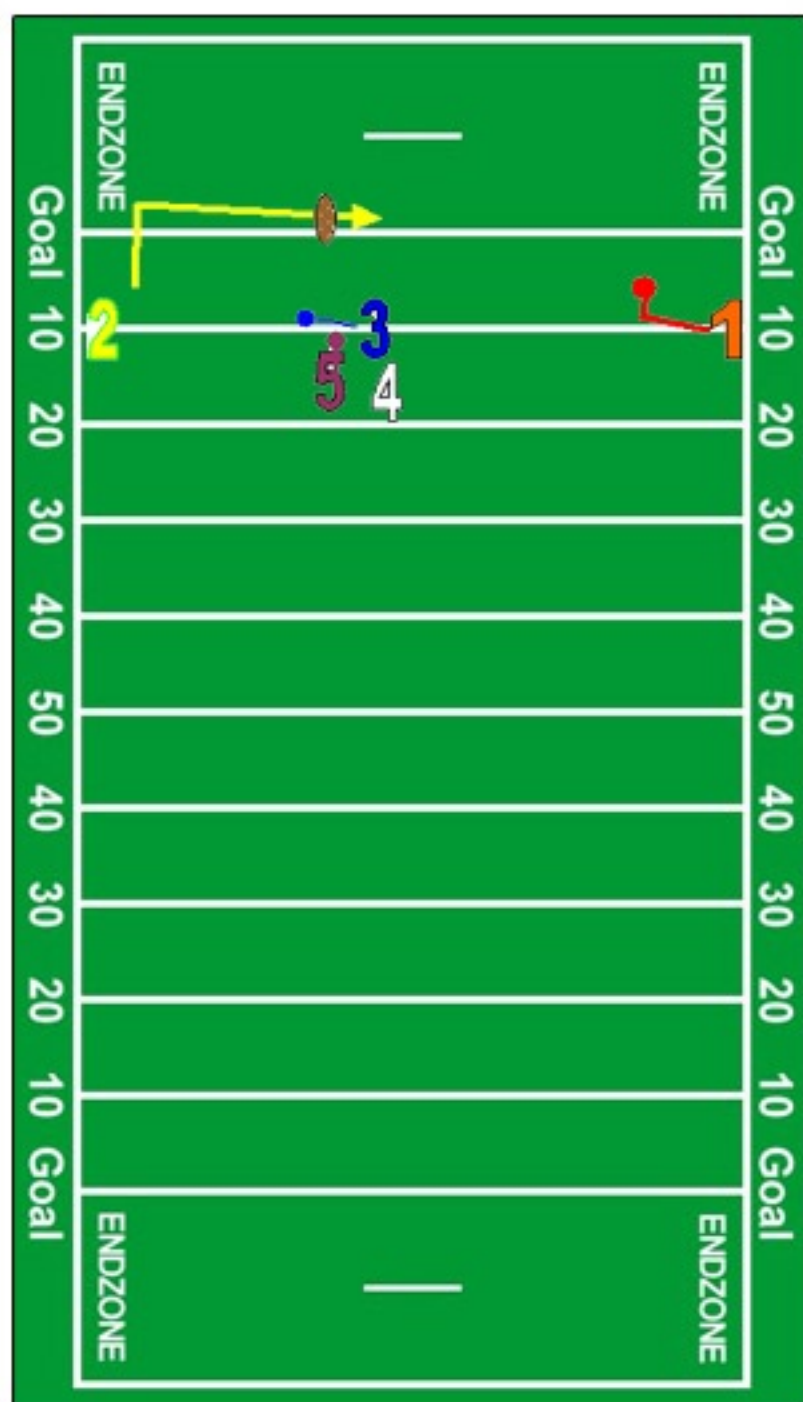
024 QB Sweep Right.

The ball is snapped - the Center (3) delays, runs right then comes back for pass. The Receiver (2) screen blocks. Receiver (1) WR sprints five yards and squares in. The Receiver (5) waits and reads the QB (4).



QB Sweep Right



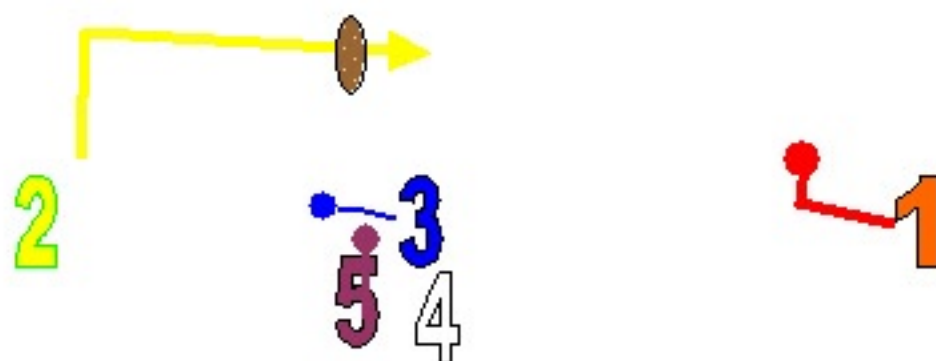


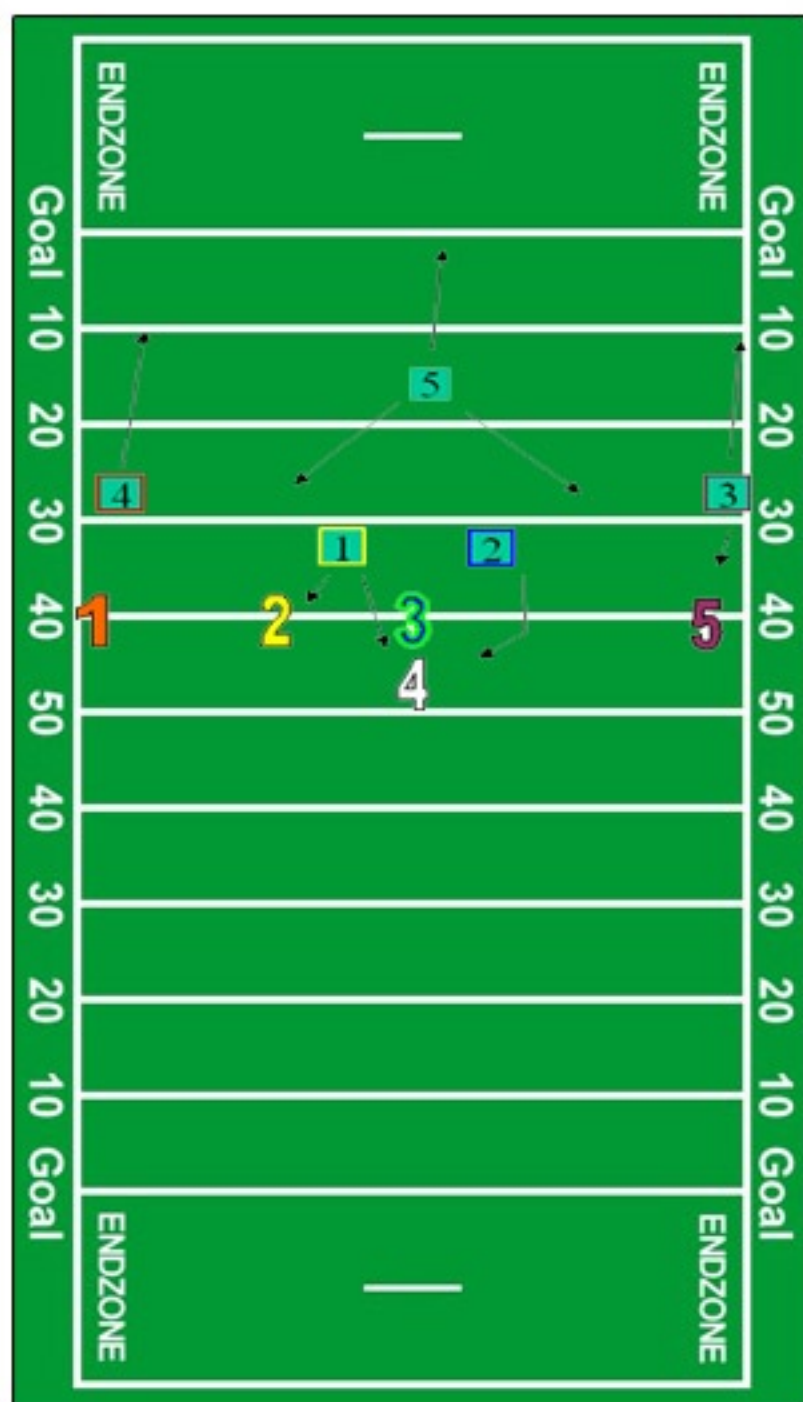
025 The Lonely One

This play works every time. I designated the (1) Receiver but it can work with any player on the team. AS LONG AS THE OTHER RECEIVERS DON'T MOVE.



The Lonely One



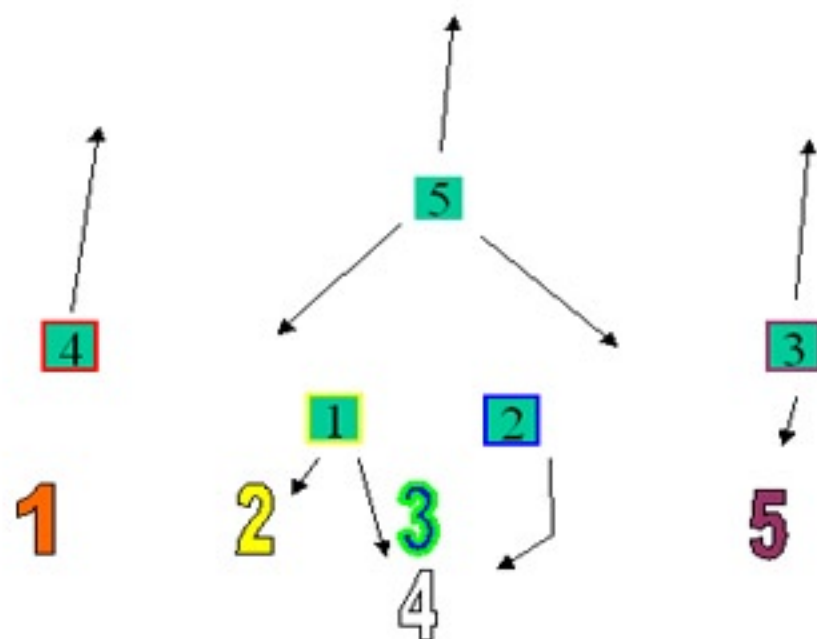


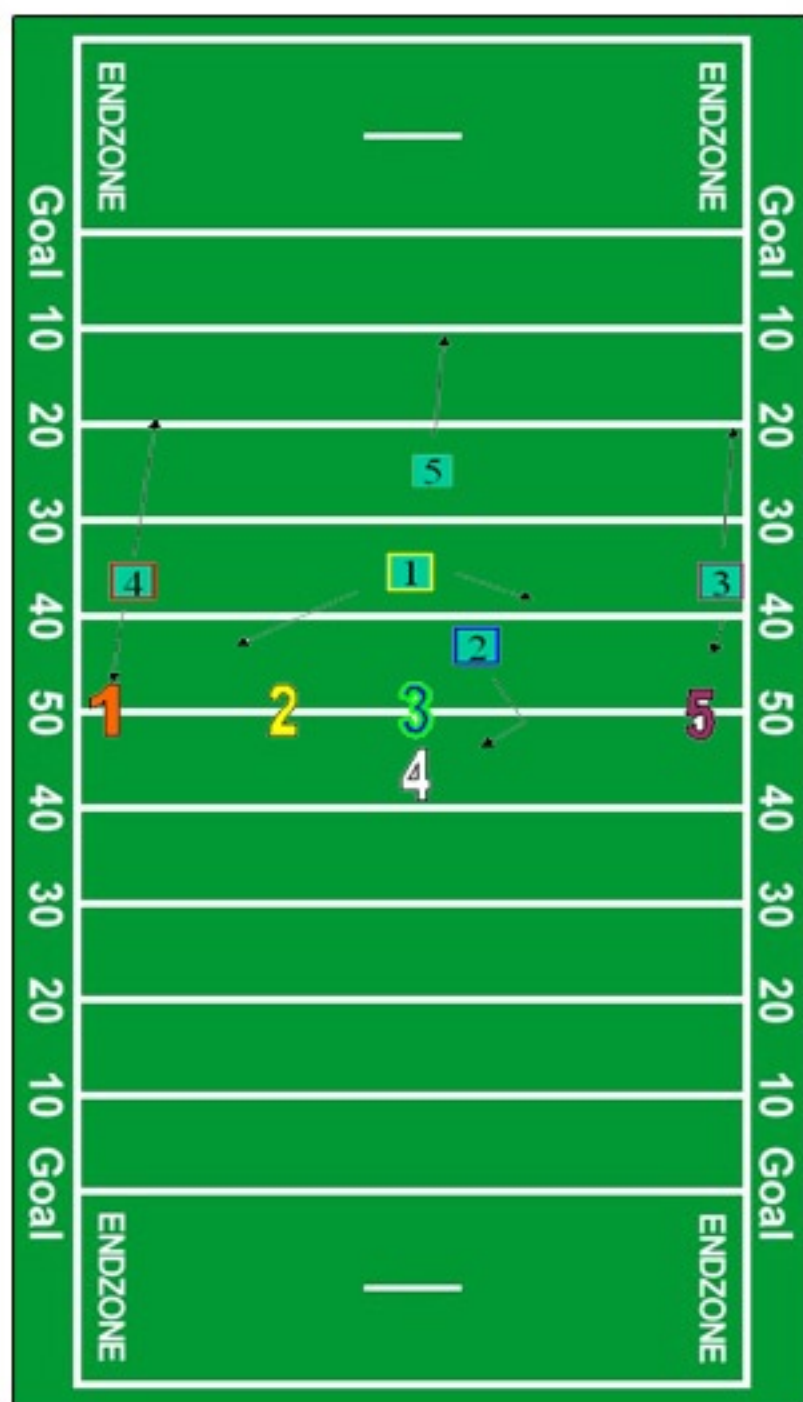
DEF-001 2/2/1 Zone

This is my favorite defense. It's the safest and it's gamble free. The rushers 1 & 2 blitz hard. Defenders 4, 5 & 3 divide the field up into thirds. Play a pressing zone never to cross into the other defenders third zone area. The 5 starts deep and don't let anything behind him. Bend but don't break. The rush should force the QB to make quick throws. The safety cannot make mistakes nor can he ever miss flags. Most team have their slowest guys rushing. I think that's a big mistake. If you give any QB time, they will make plays.



2/2/1 Zone



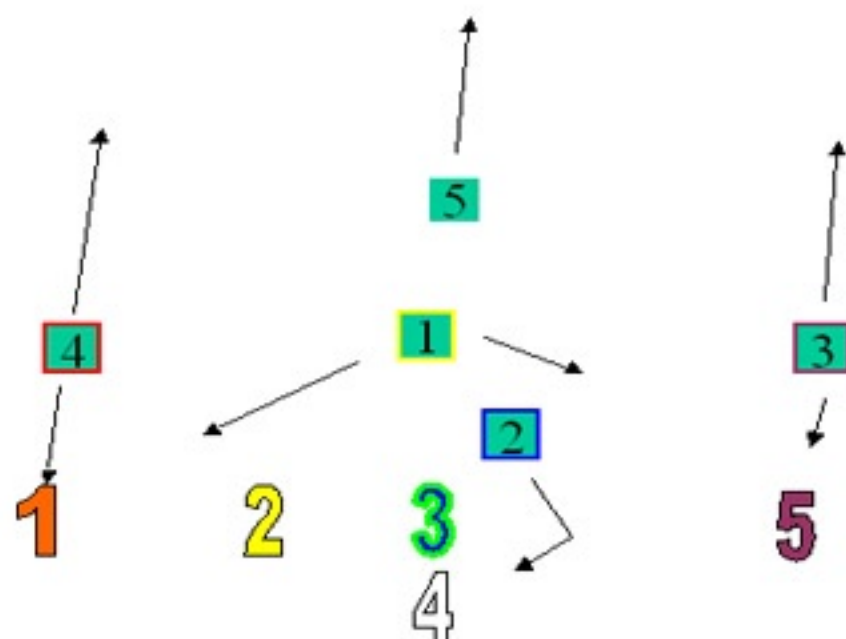


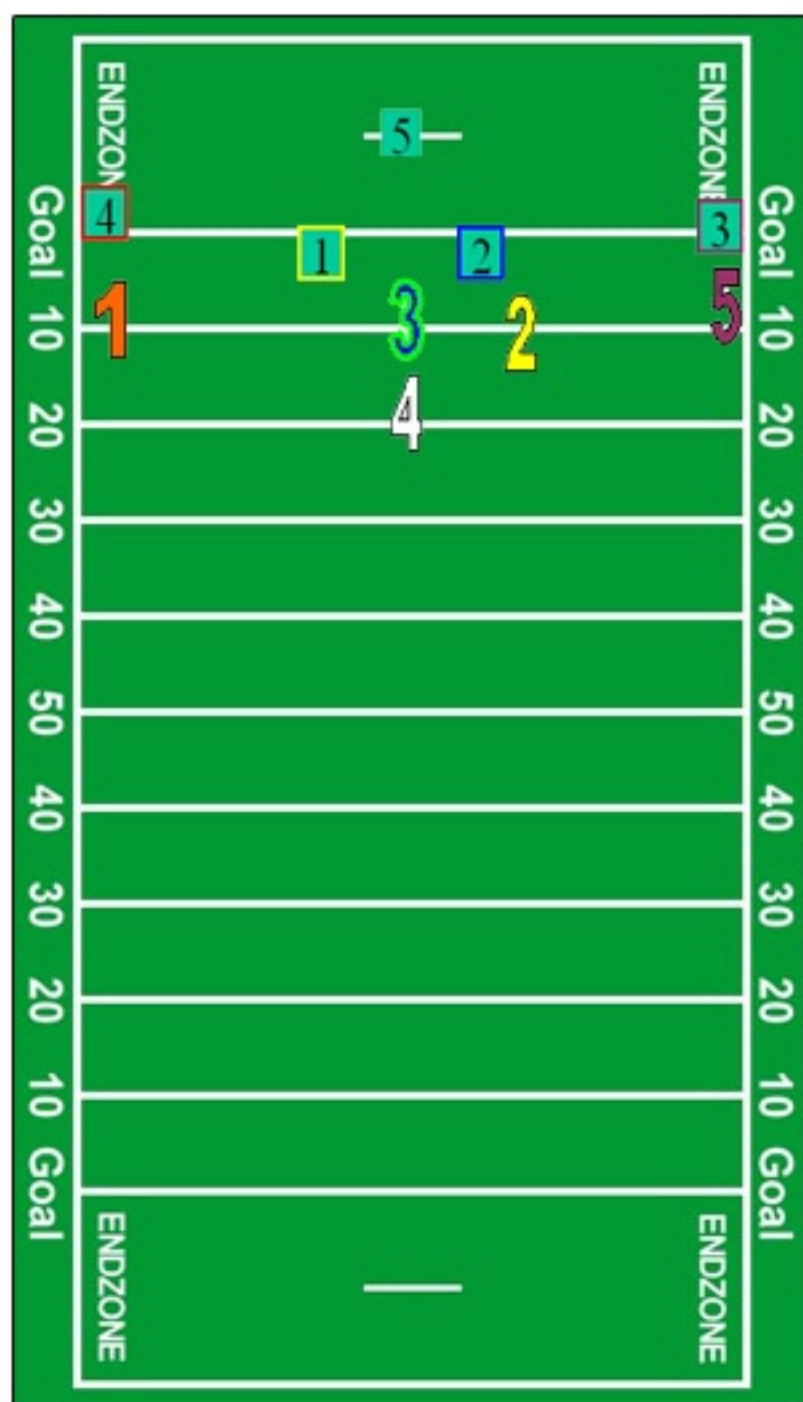
DEF-002 1/3/1 zone

This is safest defense to play if you have a fast athletic rusher. The rushers 1 or 2 blitz hard. FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. If the opposing QB is right-handed pressure on the left side of the center. This will force the right-handed QB to his left. If he's a left-handed QB force him to his right. Most sandlot QB's cannot consistently make that throw. Play a pressing zone never to cross into the other defenders third zone area. The 5 starts deep and down - let nothing behind him. Bend but don't break. The safety (5) and MLB (1) cannot make mistakes nor can he ever miss flags. Most teams have their slowest guys rushing. I think that's a big mistake. If you give any QB time, they will make plays.



1/3/1 Zone



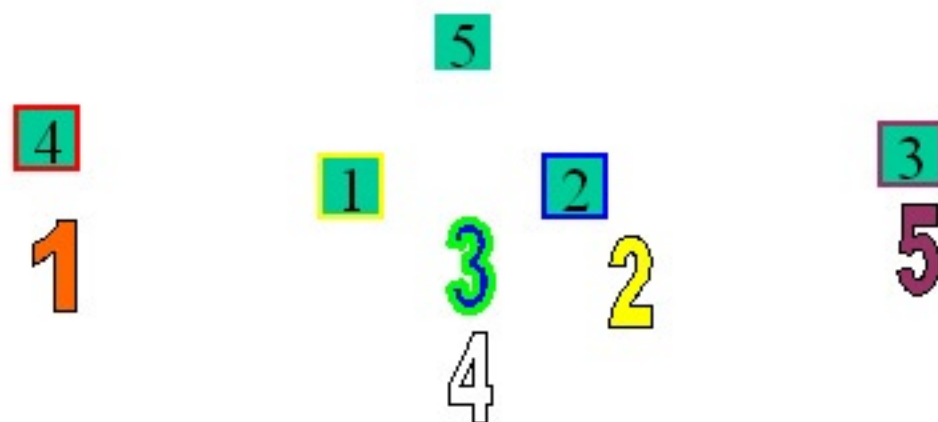


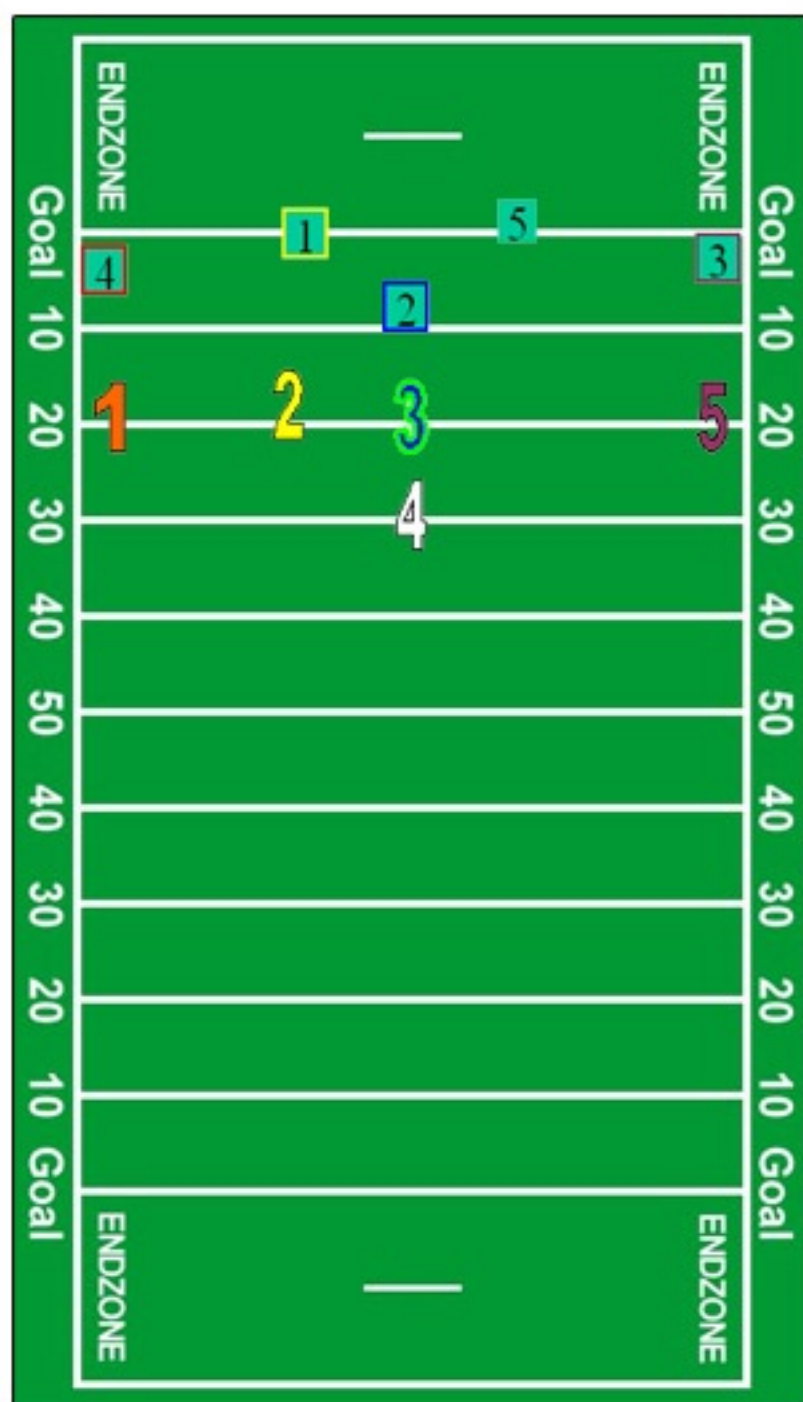
DEF003 4/1 Zone Man to Man

This is a man to man goal-line defense. Four Defenders across. I prefer the CB's stay in the corners and cover anything that crosses out to the corner. Don't be tempted to cover the offense guys all over the end zone. Only the middle guys match up man.



4/1 Zone Man to Man



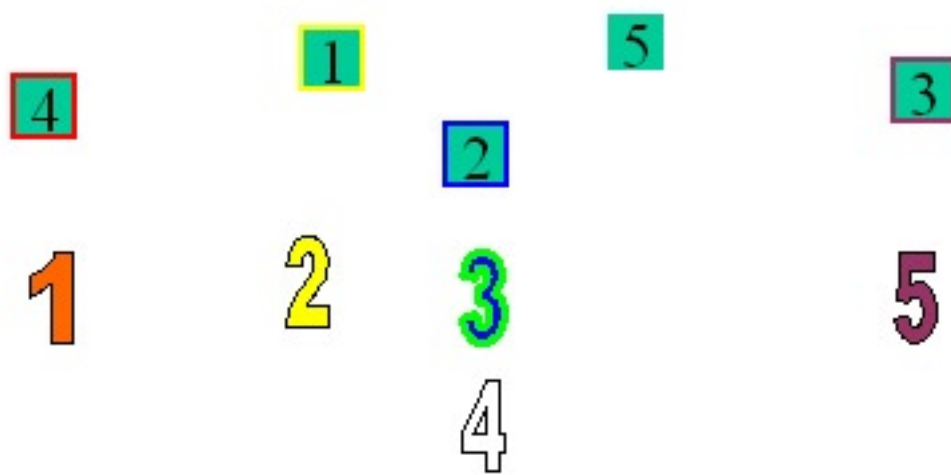


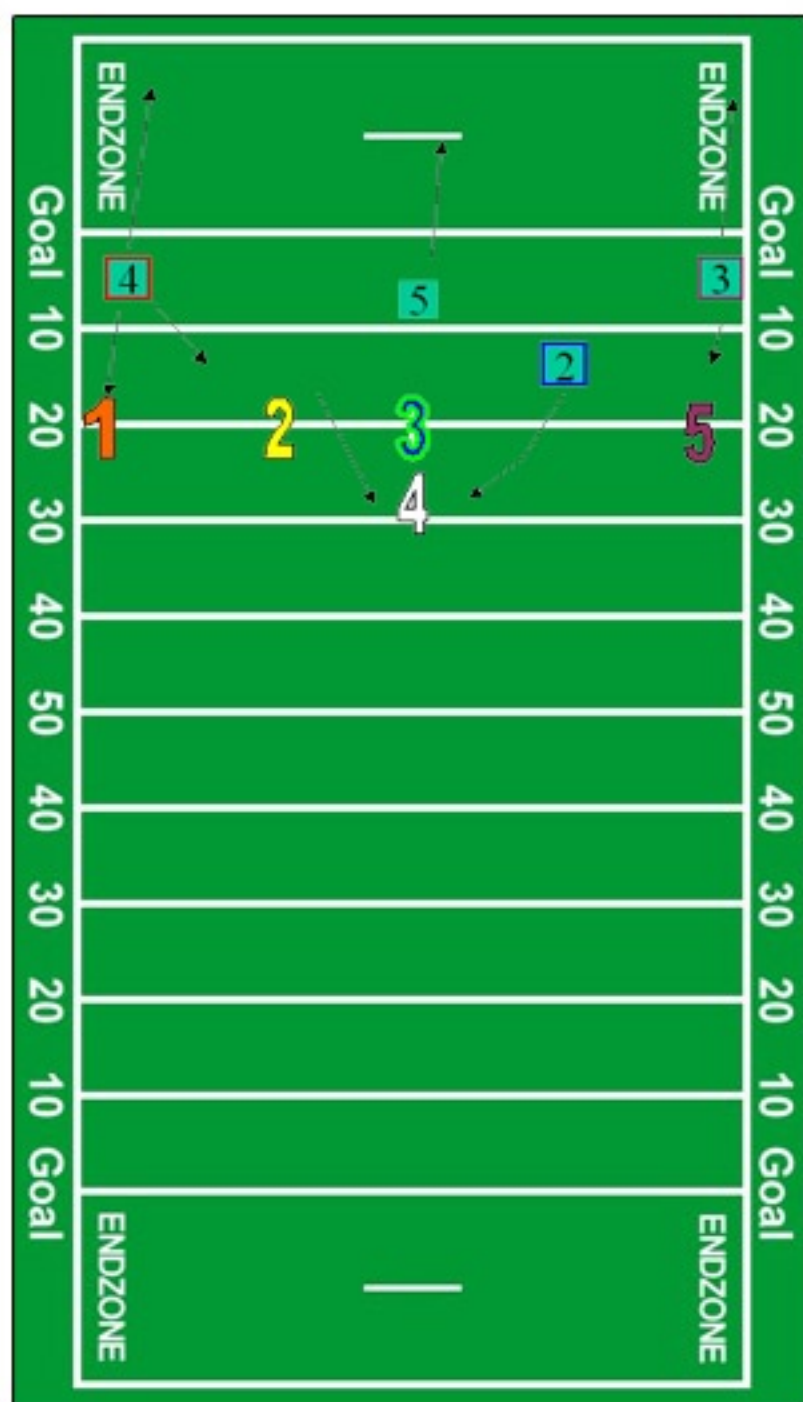
DEF004 1/4 Match Up Man

I'm one to never play man to man defense. Every so often I get a few egos on the team willing to give it try at the goal-line. If you are going to play it, here's a tip: Match up with the man in front of you. Most good teams will recognize that you are in man to man and run crossing patterns. As long as you don't go with the crosses and stay in your area you can hope to make a play or the QB makes a mistake. The rush should always make the QB throw the opposite of his throwing hand. My advice again don't ever play man.



1/4 Match Up Man



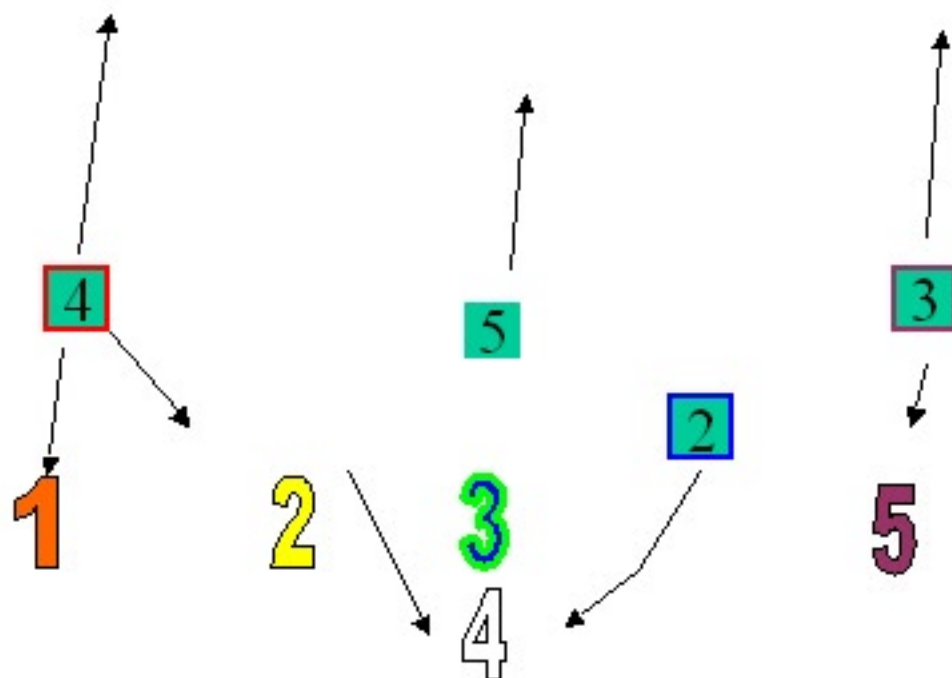


DEF005 3/2 Blitz

I like to blitz on first down. The rushers 1 or 2 blitz hard. The safety (5) lines up close. IF your leagues does a bump 'n run, hold up the Center. FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY. If the opposing QB in right handed stack on the left side of the center. This will force the right-handed QB to his left. If he's a left-handed QB force him to his right. The corner (4) is key, he has to jump the quick pass. Most sandlot QB's cannot consistently make that throw. Play a pressing zone never to cross into the other defender's third zone area. The 5 starts deep and doesn't let anything behind him. Most teams have their slowest guys rushing. I think that's a big mistake. If you give any QB time, they will make plays.



3/2 Blitz





usaflagfootball.com / PO Box 61052 Raleigh NC 27661-1052 / info@usaflagfootball.com

Thank you for your purchase! You are now on your way to having a better season. It doesn't matter how successful your team was last year, this year you have to do something different to improve. These plays should help your team improve. Also, included with your purchase is a subscription to our newsletter "First and Goal". The "First and Goal", newsletter is an information resource for beginning and veteran flag football players alike. In it you'll find tips, drills and ideas to make you flag football participation more enjoyable. Come to our website www.usaflagfootball.com often to view savings on football supplies and equipment. Our website is a resource for everything related to flag football.

As you begin to examine these plays I have designed, you may find some are easier to follow than others. Keep in mind that these plays should be use similar to a road map. A road map is only a guide to get you from point "A" to point "B". A road map does not take into account what kind of car you drive, road terrain, time of day or traffic conditions. It is only designed to get you from here to there. It's up to you to decide which route is the fastest to take.

Now here comes the find print. These plays will not work if you do not study and rehearse them. **PRACTICE – PRACTICE – PRACTICE.**

Once your team get use to understanding these plays the chemistry will fall into place. I recommend that you only use 5 – 10 plays per game. Good teams only need about 3 or 4 good plays to dismantle a defense. Your team can literally run one play over and over until the defense stop it. If one play works, repeat it until the opposing team stop it. Flag football is about rhythm execution. Running different plays every time not only confuses the opposing defense but your team as well.

I could go on and on about my philosophy using these plays while playing flag football. However it really does matter. These plays don't take into account the talent of your team. Some of these plays work better with quarterback who is more mobile. While others works better with teams with a quaterback who's better in the pocket. My recommendation is to practice one play at a time. Don't attempt to learn all 100 plays. Take time to learn 1- 5 plays at a time. Each play has 6 routes, therefore that's 6 options per play. This playbook has 600 options! Even though my team has access to over hundreds of plays, we only use the ones that work with the talent of the team. Our team has about 3 plays that work every time. The other 97 plays are only setup plays. Find your 3 best plays and use the others to setup up the better ones.

If your guys have little time to practice here is what I suggest, arrive a minimum 30mins before game time. Take out one play and rehearse it before the game. This play should be the first play you run in the game. If it works, that's great you now have one play in your game plan. Use half time to make adjustments and run the same play at the start of the second half. If you play a 10 game season you will have mastered 10 plays for the playoffs.

I'm now in preparation for writing "The 20 rules to managing a championship flag football team". This book has taken me 20 years to develop and each year I add another year. Every year I meet new people like your self and I learn new things every year. Thanks again for your purchase and email me from time to time to tell me how things going with your team. I'll be happy to help out all I can. Good luck this season!

Travis
The Future Hall of Famer

Men's/Women's (7 Players) (For Co-ed. scroll down)

This is designed as a teaching tool for learning the basic fundamentals of flag football. It is not designed to guarantee success, but hopefully by reading this document you will become more familiar with some of the strategies involved in playing the game. However, the information presented will not be effective if your team does not practice and work together. History has shown that all of the successful teams practice routinely, with some beginning as early as mid-July, for the fall semester.

The 80-yard flag football field is divided into four zones and two 10-yard end zones. There are two goal lines, two 20-yard lines and the 40-yard line (midfield). The object of the game is to advance the ball (passing or running) to the opponent's end zone. Each team has a set of four downs (plays) to advance the ball from one 20-yard zone to the next while on offense. Hence, the closer a team can be to the next zone line, the better. Each 7-person team is required to have four people on the line of scrimmage at the snap of the ball. All seven players may start the offensive play while on the line but most teams utilize the flexibility of positioning the players in the backfield or slot positions. All players are eligible to throw or receive a pass and are not restricted by positioning. Only one player may be in motion prior to the snap. For specific rules on flag football please review the web site: <http://www.purdue.edu/recsports/im/im.html> and go to flag football rules.

Terms to be used throughout:

QB = Quarterback RB = Running Back WR = Wide Receiver DB = Defensive back

Flag Football Strategies:

Most successful teams have a system rather than outstanding athletes. Certainly players with superior speed, agility and talent will help the flag football team, nevertheless teams with organization and basic fundamentals tend to progress far into the post-season playoffs. We encourage you and your team to seek whatever strategy works best.

Practice, practice, and practice - The stronger teams practice twice a week for a couple of hours; maybe once on the weekend, and once during the week. Sometimes they will set up scrimmages with random teams that are practicing alongside them. This enables teams to practice plays and work on timing drills, and give them "a look". Smart teams know they cannot simply walk onto the field and win the game.

Defense

Basics – The best teams pull flags on defense. When attempting to pull someone's flag, try to pull from the flag belt, and not the actual flag. This gives you some room for error (as you can grab the flag if you miss the belt) and a constant target (even if the player

spins, the flag belt will still be in the same spot). The better flag-pulling teams will rake the opponent's back with the fingers. Once minimal contact is established, the hands move down the back and grasp hold of the belt, to make the pull. The disadvantage to pulling for the flag belt is grabbing on to the player's shorts or shirt, possibly resulting in a holding penalty. Occasionally that will occur, but the raking technique is still recommended.

A great flag-pulling practice drill is to get your teammates in a single file line, acting as the ball carriers (X). Have one person act as a defender (D) about five yards away from that line and facing back toward it. Then, the first ball carrier in the single file line runs toward that defender, and at the last step, cuts to the right of the defender. The defender reaches out and pulls the flag. The next ball carrier in the single file line does the same thing; only this time cuts to the left of the defender. Again, the flag is pulled. Now, the ball carriers begin speeding up the process. Running back cuts to the right, the next to the left, the next to the right, and again to the left. The defender does not have much time to think, only to react by pulling the flag belt. Now switch and let another player try it. Many teams will practice this in the few minutes before a game, to warm up and prepare.

X X X X X X -----(D

Ball carriers (facing East)

Defender (facing West)

Another drill is to practice as a defensive back. While the defensive back is standing still, have the receiver run a route and catch the ball right in front of the defender. The receiver has a sure touchdown, and the only thing the defender can do is react and pull the flag belt. The DB makes a quick flag pull to save the touchdown. This drill is helpful because the DB is somewhat stationary, and the pressure to prevent the touchdown falls solely on the flag pull, not the defender's speed.

The Rush:

Probably the most underrated aspect of a solid defense is the rush and placing pressure on the QB. Your rusher should be one of the quicker players on your defense, so they can keep up with the quarterback in check – usually a quick offensive player in flag football. Though quickness is important for a rusher, it does not compare to the significance of breaking down, forcing the QB to one side and pulling the flag or forcing a quick throw. No matter how quick your rusher is, if they cannot effectively put pressure on the QB and pull flags, your defensive strategy will become unraveled.

One or two rushers:

There are obvious advantages and disadvantages to both; one rusher allows your team to have more coverage defenders, but it may be difficult to sack the quarterback. However, if your lone rusher can flush the quarterback to one side of the field, it may eliminate some of the choices for the offense. A rule of thumb is to force the QB to the opposite side of his/her throwing arm, thus preventing a cross-field pass even for the strong-armed QB's. Two rushers may inhibit the QB rush, as well as prevent the quarterback from

scrambling to buy more time. Nevertheless, a two-person rush defense can be picked apart if significant pressure is not placed upon a good QB. Many teams will use a lateral pass to an alternate QB to buy additional time if two rushers are used. Again, keep in mind that more rushers result in less defensive players to guard the potential receivers.

Man v. Zone:

In 7-on-7 flag football, man-to-man defense is rarely used. The main reason for this is that all players are eligible receivers. In man-to-man defense, if one of your defenders gets beat, the offense will have an open receiver. Furthermore, if the QB escapes your rusher, they could have more running room than you can afford to give up. Since there is a lot of ground to cover on a football field, the longer a QB can scramble, the longer you ask your players to stick to their man. The two main advantages to man-to-man defense are that it eliminates any "holes" in your defense, and it is also easier to apply (just cover your man!). If you try to play a zone defense with a couple of people who don't understand the concept, your defense will get eaten alive.

The Zone (quick version):

The idea of playing zone defense is just that... stay in your zone! Regardless of what type of zone defense you play, almost every inch of the field should be covered up to about 30 yards. Let's consider the zone from the middle linebacker's perspective in a 2-3-2 zone. First off, the middle linebacker's area of coverage is in the middle of the field (divided length-wise between them and the two cornerbacks), roughly from the line of scrimmage to 15 yards back. If a receiver enters your zone, it is your responsibility to cover them until the play is over, the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, or the receiver leaves your zone. It is very important to consider two words – anticipation and perspective. Try to anticipate where the receivers are going, especially those not in your zone. Good offenses will use timing patterns which could result in players catching the ball in your zone though they were not there just two seconds ago. This is where a good rusher can dictate the flow of the defensive strategy. If the QB is flushed out right against his/her arm, they are unable to throw the ball to the left side of the field. A good defensive zone will evaluate the QB and determine if they have the capability to throw the ball across the field and then adjust accordingly to anticipate the probability of the pass in their zone. As for perspective, just remember that a portion of your area of coverage may be behind you.

Note: Some teams will play a combination of both. Perhaps one play will feature man-to-man defense, and the next will feature a zone. Additionally, some defenses will use a 2-4-1 zone, but with man coverage on the outside, or man coverage on one particular receiver.

Types of Defenses:

2-4-1 Zone

Basics: Two rushers, two linebackers, two cornerbacks, one safety

Advantages: More pressure on the quarterback and/or running back; effective against the short play

Disadvantage: Long pass plays are open, especially if your safety cannot recover quickly.

1-5-1 Zone

Basics: One rusher, three linebackers, two cornerbacks, one safety

Advantages: short to medium range passes, as well as running plays, are virtually impossible against this type of defense

Disadvantages: The long pass is an option for the offense, and can only be contained with a very fast and skilled safety. Also, rushing one player could give the offense enough time to get the deep pass off. Therefore, this defense relies on two fast players (rusher and safety), while most others can get away with one.

2-3-2 Zone

Basics: Two rushers, one linebacker, two cornerbacks, two safeties

Advantages: Probably the easiest defense to use, as it utilizes two rushers for added pressure on the quarterback, as well as two safeties for added protection to the deep threat.

Disadvantages: There are some short yardage holes in the defense, as only three players are asked to cover the short to medium range passes. Though you are rushing two players for added pressure, an offense can send three deep and create problems for slower safeties.

1-3-3 Zone

Basics: One rusher, one linebacker, two cornerbacks, three safeties

Advantages: With one solid rusher, this defense can eliminate the deep threat for the offense and force them to work the ball down the field. When offenses become impatient, they will try to go deep on this type of defense, and usually fail.

Disadvantages: There are some short yardage holes in the defense, as only three players are asked to cover the short to medium range passes. Also, only one rusher could give the offense more time to pick apart the first line of defenders. A team with patience, skilled receivers and an accurate quarterback could slowly but surely move the ball on this defense.

Offense

Flag football differs from tackle football in that it's strictly a speed game; however, a team does not need the most athletic or fastest players to have a successful team. It is vital that everyone on both offense and defense know their role on the team, as well as understand the system being implemented. The QB (quarterback) should know where each player is supposed to be on every play; however it is best for all players to know where everyone should be on each play. Very rarely is a team successful when its' offense consists of drawing plays in the dirt. Thus, the most successful teams have an array of plays, most with multiple options, and then practice them.

Teams should have a basic understanding of plays or routes that are designed to isolate the receivers. Perhaps a play has two receivers running routes that clear a zone area. Then another receiver comes behind and “fills” that zone area. The QB throws it to that open receiver for a positive gain.

The Quarterback:

The game of flag football is designed for the offense to score every time it touches the ball. With that in mind, your quarterback must be able to not only run the offense effectively, but also adjust to changing defensive schemes. The quarterback must be able to scramble, as well as have a quick first step when avoiding a rusher. Although a scrambling QB will also keep the linebackers and cornerbacks honest, he/she can be most effective if the blocking backs understand how to force the rusher to one side or the other. The blocking backs (usually right and left of the center) should know which way the QB is intending to roll (right or left) or straight drop back. The initial fake (or juke) by the QB can buy more time for the receivers to complete their routes as the play intends however the initial movement of the blocking backs can buy a few seconds for the QB. A good quarterback also has the ability to look off the intended receiver and “know where they are” rather than “staring down the receiver”. Though this technique is probably the most effective way to have open receivers, it is the hardest to master during an entire game. Remember, since all receivers are eligible, there are six options (seven in co-ed.) for the QB to use.

The Snap:

The recommended distance for the quarterback behind the center is five to seven yards, depending on the defensive alignment. If your quarterback has a strong arm or if the defense is giving you plenty of pressure, you may want to consider taking a few more steps away from the center. In flag football, the center is one of the most important positions on the field. While a quick, accurate snap can give your quarterback all the time they need, a sloppy snap could turn a second-and-ten into a third-and-twenty.

Receiver Routes:

Generally, flag football is a game of intermediate routes, ranging from 5-15 yards downfield. From there, receivers use their athletic ability, speed, and other ball carriers to advance into the next zone-line-to-gain or the end zone. In other words, after the catch, turn and run. The ball carrier should be aware of his/her teammates and look for a teammate, who may be able to make additional progress. If the ball carrier’s flag belt is about to be pulled, consider a pitch to a teammate, who can now take it the rest of the distance.

Good routes to practice are 5-7 yard hooks/curls; 5-10 yard slants; 5-10 yard squares (in and out); 15-yard posts, corners, comebacks and flies. Usually most teams do not throw deep often. However, a team may go deep just to keep the defensive safeties honest. If a team notices a safety playing close to the line of scrimmage, or consistently “cheating” on out patterns, that offense may decide to throw deep – sometimes on an “out and up” pattern to see if the safety “bites” (thinks it will be a shorter pattern and attempts to make the interception). If the safety bites on the fake, usually the result is a touchdown. The

key is for the receiver to find the hole in the defensive zone and for the QB to get the ball there each time. It becomes a simple game of pitch and catch down the field. An effective play, which is rarely used, is the double down and out. The receiver lines up tight to the blocking backs, runs a 3 yard down, out and up and then breaks out a second time (usually for a first down marker). The defensive back is most likely fearful of the touchdown and will unprepared to guard the second out thus resulting in an easy 20 yd + first down. Since this play takes a few seconds to develop the QB should take a deep snap or juke to the non-throwing side to allow more time for the receiver to make the two cuts.

A Few Extra Pointers:

1. Since there are no fumbles in flag football, as a receiver gets close to the “zone line to gain”, he/she should always hold the ball out while running, especially for a first down or touchdown. This stretches the forward progress another yard, which could be critical for the offense. Remember, the defensive team cannot knock/slap the ball out of the receiver’s hands – it’s a defensive penalty.
2. Though a play may seem complete, do not stop running until the whistle is blown. A player running with the ball will feel the opponent’s hands reaching for the flag. Too often, the runner will stop, thinking the flags were pulled, when in reality, the defender missed the belt. Also, just because a flag is thrown does not mean the play is instantly over, your team may decide to decline the penalty.
3. The ability to pitch the ball is a definite advantage to an offense, especially without the concern for fumbles. Good teams will design plays featuring players down the field in “lanes”, with the ball being pitched multiple times during one play. As you begin looking at the plays, you’ll notice that many times once a receiver catches the ball, there are two, three or sometimes four other receivers running in stride with him/her. Thus, they are available for a backward pitch (or lateral), which helps keep the play moving and advancing toward the opponent’s goal line. Just be careful the pitch is not intercepted in the air.
4. Be sure to recognize your location on the field, and watch out for tricks. On offense, if your team has first down from it’s own 15-yard line, the defense may “accidentally” jump offside. Don’t fall for this. Defensive encroachment is a 5-yard penalty. An inexperienced team will take the penalty and move forward five yards to it’s own 20-yard line. Although you gain five yards, it’s now first down and 20 yards to go (a first down is now at the 40 yard line). Instead, it is recommended to decline the penalty and keep it first down and five yards to go (to the 20 yard line). The same holds true on an interception or a punt return. After the change of possession, find the first down zone lines. If the ball carrier believes he/she can make it for a touchdown, then keep running. Otherwise, try to stop just short of the next zone line. Now it’s first down and short (maybe only 1 or 2 yards) for another first down. Thus, the offense has many options including one or two attempts at a long pass.

5. Read and react. Read the defensive rusher and try to adjust to his/her progress. Again, a good team will force the rush to one side or the other by encouraging the rusher to choose a particular route to the QB. If the rush comes from the right side, anticipate that your offensive play will be most successful to the left, and vice versa.

6. Audible – The ability to improvise at the line of scrimmage can be a great advantage. If you see that the intended play will not work, have some type of simple audible system. It may mean the play needs to go left, instead of right, or the play needs to have short routes, instead of deep ones. Your opponent may try to learn your audible system. If that's the case, have a decoy audible available.

7. Though kickoffs are removed from flag football, there still are occasional plays for the punt returns. Certainly, if a team has someone with speed, that player should be the main punt returner. One strategy includes stacking the line of scrimmage, with only three receivers back deep. Once the ball is kicked, the linemen run toward the goal line being defended. As this confusion sets in, the field tends to become very spread out, increasing the chances for a big play. (This was used in co-ed a few times at tournaments and was very effective.) An additional deceptive strategy has the punt returner run with the ball just short of the first down line. The player keeps his/her hand on the ball and appears to down the ball at the spot. An inexperienced defense may stop defending the play and the punt returner picks up the ball and runs for a touchdown. Players should continue to pull the offensive ball carrier flags until the whistle is blown.

8. A catch requires possession of the ball and one foot on the ground. Some very athletic teams have a play designed as a quick slant. The ball is thrown high, and the receiver jumps in the air to catch it. While the receiver is still in the air, he/she then throws the ball forward again to another receiver. Usually this play works for a big gain, because the defense is paying attention to the first receiver. As long as the first receiver is still in the air, the ball has not legally been caught, and thus the "second shuffle pass" is legal. This requires some serious athleticism, but can be done effectively. Other teams may use a similar play with a deeper route for the first receiver. Again, it's not a legal catch until there is possession with one foot on the ground. Thus, this type of play was born. It's this way of thinking that might separate the great teams from the above average.

9. QB's should utilize the pump fake when possible. The defense will either bite on the fake, or not respect it. Either way, the offense should take what is given them. For example, if the QB notices a DB that is trying to cheat on an "out" route, a pump fake followed by the WR streaking toward the end zone will work for a big play. The same is true on a scramble. If the QB is running toward the line of scrimmage and a defender is nearby, the QB can fake a quick toss. The defender will usually stop/freeze, to try and defend against this pass. Now the QB, still in full stride, runs by the defender for a positive gain.

10. Offensive teams are allowed one forward pass per down. Many do not realize that the QB can run beyond the original line of scrimmage, and then run back behind the line of scrimmage and throw a forward pass. This is a legal play. The key is the QB's feet must

be behind the original line of scrimmage at the time of the throw. Otherwise, it's an illegal forward pass. Another variation is for the QB to run beyond the line of scrimmage and then pitch/lateral the ball to a RB in the backfield, who throws a forward pass to another WR downfield.

11. Using blockers to "buy" the QB time to throw – Certain plays are designed to give the QB extra time to throw the pass. Generally, when all of the WR's run routes, the QB is left with a short time to throw, and the deep route is eliminated. Keep a few WR's in for blocking (non-contact) purposes. A good blocker can steer or guide a defensive rusher in a certain direction. If the blocker knows which way the QB will roll, the blocker can set-up as the shield, and provide the QB with extra seconds to complete the pass. Sometimes, just one extra second is the difference between a complete pass and an incomplete pass. Additionally, sometimes the blockers can run routes, and the slot receivers actually set a block, as the QB rolls that way. Don't make the mistake of letting the blockers leave immediately each time. That will not help your QB throw deep when necessary.

Copycat:

A great way to learn strategies of both the 7 on 7 and the coed game is to watch what other teams do. Come out some evening and watch the better teams execute their game plans. Look for strategies the successful team does that your team may be able to do. Sometimes you can see exactly how a team runs the offense, and can adapt that system for your team. Whether it's a 3-Quarterback system, a spread offense, or the option, all of them can be successful if you have the appropriate team members. Teams even try to use the varsity Boilermake football plays. However, what works for one team may not work for another. Some quarterbacks have stronger arms; some are able to throw on the run better while others are pocket passers (think West Coast offense). One team may have players taller than 6'4", and thus, throw lobs to use the height advantage. Another team may be quick and use a lot of shuffle passes. The same is true on defense. Watch teams and learn what they do, then try to modify the strategy to fit your team's strengths. The great teams tell their opponents the plays they run and adopt a "can't stop us" attitude. Having a team's playbook will not earn your team the victory – you still have to execute.

Co-ed. (8 Players)

Offensively, try to always keep the play "open". An open play means a male thrower may complete a pass to a male receiver. Defensively, try to force the play to become "closed". A closed play means a female must be involved in the throw or catch for positive yards. On a closed play, once a female gains positive yards, via throwing or catching, the play is open again. If the defense can force a closed play, with a male QB, they can enforce tougher coverage on the female receivers. If it's a closed play, and a female QB, the defense is still forced to play "straight-up".

On closed plays, all males cover the females when there is a male QB. If it's a female QB, play your regular defense. Philosophically, if the opponent uses a male QB, let them complete passes to male receivers, and pull the flag belt. Now the play is closed and strategically, your team should have more defensive options. If you're going to do this however, it's important that once the male receiver catches the pass, the flag belt is pulled. Do not let that receiver score.

Defense

2-4-2 Zone – two rushers, four middle linebackers and two safeties

1-5-2 Zone – one rusher, five linebackers; two safeties

If you have one particularly fast player, use him/her as a free safety to rove the entire field. The rusher must be quick and able to pull flags as well as “flush/guide” the opposing QB to the weak side. Weak side is defined as rolling to the left or right, whichever the QB struggles throwing from. If the opponent has one very good female player – the defense may want to consider locking her up with double coverage. The following is a breakdown of various coverage schemes.

Cover 1

- *Man to man coverage*
- *3 guys & 2 girls cover their girls 1 on 1*
- *Used on closed plays with male at QB*
- *If in this coverage, and a girl becomes QB, shift to cover 2*

Cover 1 Double

- *Man to Man with double coverage*
- *2 males and 2 females cover their outside girls*
- *Used on closed plays with male at QB if your team is getting picked*
- *If in this coverage, and a female becomes QB, shift to cover 2*

Cover 2

- *Zone coverage with 2 deep*
- *Used on short to mid-range plays*
- *Middle line must stay 3-7 yards from line of scrimmage*

Cover 3

- *Zone coverage with 2 deep*
- *Used on short to mid-range plays*
- *Middle line must stay 5-10 yards from line of scrimmage*

Offensive Philosophy

Read and react to the defensive rusher. If the rush comes from the right side, anticipate that the offensive play may be most successful to the left, and vice versa. Always try to keep the play open (male QB, find a female receiver) to allow all passing options. Common strategy – male receivers lineup outside and run deep patterns to occupy the safeties. If the safeties come up toward the line of scrimmage to protect against the short play, your QB should throw deep (provided he/she can throw it that far). However, if the safeties stay with the deep receivers, something short should be available. Have the center (male) run down the middle of the field to clear out that area. Now simply find the open female receiver. Once the female player catches the pass, the play remains “open”. From there, the pitches and laterals can start to happen (remember: In co-ed. with a male QB put the ball in motion, not in the QB’s hands). Thus, the opposing defense is forced to play the team “honest” on each play.

If a male receiver catches a pass and is about to score, he should look for a female receiver in the area. Remember, female touchdowns are worth 9 points, and male touchdowns are only worth 6 points. Many times in co-ed. the male will lateral to a female receiver, who scores a “more valuable” touchdown.

Copycat (again) – A great way to learn strategies of both the 7 on 7 and the coed game is to watch what other teams do. Come out some evening and watch the better teams execute their game plans. Look for strategies the successful team does that your team may be able to do. Sometimes you can see exactly how a team runs the offense, and can adapt that system for your team. Whether it’s a 3-Quarterback system, a spread offense, or the option, all of them can be successful if you have the appropriate team members. Teams even try to use the varsity Gator football plays. However, what works for one team may not work for another. Some quarterbacks have stronger arms; some are able to throw on the run better while others are pocket passers (think West Coast offense). One team may have players taller than 6’4”, and thus, throw lobs to use the height advantage. Another team may be quick and use a lot of shuffle passes. The same is true on defense. Watch teams and learn what they do, then try to modify the strategy to fit your team’s strengths. The great teams tell their opponents the plays they run and adopt a “can’t stop us” attitude. Having a team’s playbook will not earn your team the victory – you still have to execute. If you participate in a tournament, you should know something about your opponent to improve your chances of being successful.