

Merging the Triple Option and the Run-and-Shoot Has Created the Multiple Delaware Wing-T

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If it's true that there's nothing new in offensive football, and I continue to see novel ideas, then there must be a great deal of recycling or plagiarizing. The merging of concepts to adapt to defensive trends and to accommodate the offensive skill of players is a common technique. Our own Delaware Wing-T had its beginning by creating an offense with a mix of Fritz Crisler's Michigan single wing, the original T of Clark Shaughnessy and the unbalanced wing-T of Rip Engle at Penn State.

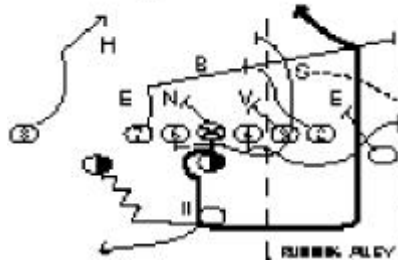
The Delaware Wing-T has performed well for us, probably because of its unique three-back attack, the threat of several points and the relationship of blocking schemes creating defensive conflicts. However, an offense that remains without change becomes far too familiar. In addition, we find that the typical wing-T formations tend to restrict the ability of wideouts and the passing game. These things have created a mandate for growth and change.

Although we have retained many of the basic principles of the original wing-T, we have gradually expanded to meet the challenge of defensive trends and to accommodate the ever-increasing skill of modern players. This requires the spread of eligible receivers. We also found that the addition of option blocking to our offense created defensive conflicts and enhanced the effectiveness of the wing-T. We wanted to retain the three-back offensive concept and still have the advantage of spreading receivers. We didn't think our line was strong enough to handle the zone blocking of a one back offense and, above all, we wanted to be different.

The result is that the Delaware Wing-T has merged effectively with the concepts of the triple option and the passing game of the run and shoot. I had been told that we would not be able to use either one of these ideas without making a total commitment to them. Now, however, I find that we can throw effectively to spread receivers and successfully read the triple option in addition to our basic wing-T, probably because the defense cannot settle in on any one problem. I believe that because we have not made a total commitment to any of these concepts, our wing-T offense is now more effective. Each of the three, the wing-T, the triple, and run and shoot passing, have merged well and enhanced each other.

Our offense still includes the buck sweep with both guards pulling. The fullback game up the middle, the tackle trap counter and the belly continue as staples. In addition, we still throw action passes both to and away from the flow. We run some wing-T plays from the new spread formations in addition to, the triple option and a drop back passing game with no tight end.

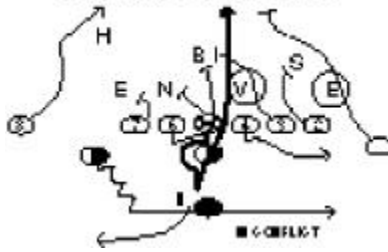
Diagram 1: Red 21



Let's review the basic buck sweep as an introduction to the principle of creating defensive conflicts, which continues to be an important part of our offense.

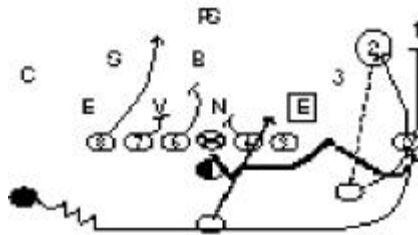
The right halfback blocks the first free man to his inside, someone that he has an angle on. We never ask a player to do something that he can't do. The tight end and tackle both block gap-down-linebacker. This may mean that the right halfback will end up blocking up on the linebacker. The right guard pulls, gets two-and-a-half yards depth and blocks out on the first man on the outside of the right halfback's block. The center blocks the attack side gap or in this case, the nose man on his left shoulder. The left guard pulls, blocks through the hole and in. The backside tackle runs at the cut-off and blocks out. Now you can see a running lane produced by blocking in at the hole and out at the hole. The quarterback reverse pivots with his back to the point of attack, hands the ball off to the left halfback and fakes a bootleg away from the play. This sweep may be run to a split end as well, and from unbalanced, but we like the change up of the option when running to the spread flank.

Diagram 2 Red 24 Gut



I would like you to recognize the conflict of both the defensive end and tackle (encircled). They are both outflanked and if they react to that threat, we will run inside of them. If the defensive tackle comes upfield, or the middle linebacker chases the guards, we will give the ball to the fullback up the middle, with "gut blocking" as diagrammed. Everyone blocks the same as the sweep, but the backside guard pulls around the center and blocks up on the linebacker. These two plays, the sweep and the gut, demonstrate the idea of related blocking and the threat of several points of attack at the same time. The quarterback bootlegging away introduces a pass from the same action. We still throw the waggle pass from this buck sweep action. In addition, we run the belly inside of the end, if he works his way out to our wing. Naturally, these plays can be mirrored.

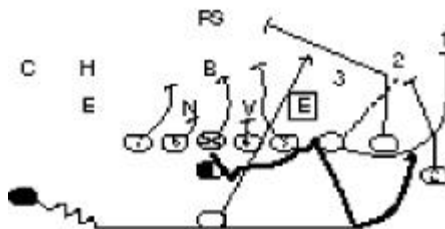
Diagram 3 Blue 41 Opt



We number defensive players from the outside in, to facilitate our blocking assignments. No. 1 is the widest defender, No. 2 is the primary support of the flank, and No. 3 controls the quarterback, keeping the ball.

The play begins with the release of blocking into the secondary. The split end cracks No. 2, if possible. If not, he calls to the wingback and releases upfield to stalk No. 1. The wingback flares, checks the block on No. 2, then stalks No. 1. The right tackle blocks gap-bump-lead-linebacker. The right guard blocks gap-on-lead. The center blocks reach-on-linebacker, while the left guard and left tackle both reach. The quarterback steps back with his right foot getting as much depth as possible, then rides the ball to the fullback. The quarterback reads the first man on or outside of the defensive tackle. He will make a decision to give or keep during his ride step (this player is in the box). The decision must be made as he brings his weight to his left foot. The fullback dives for the outside hip of the right guard and either accepts the hand-off or fakes, blocking through the area.

Diagram 4: LO RT TRA 41 OPT



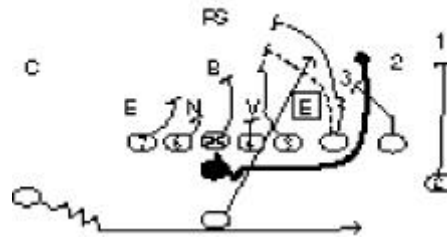
I would like to add that to simplify this read, we have encouraged the quarterback to keep the ball, if possible, under certain conditions, or give the ball, depending on the relative skills of these two players.

To create a loose formation, we have added a split end and removed the tight end. The normal split end will be referred to as SPR and the additional split end will be referred to as X. When referring to defensive men, the No. 1 is the widest, deepest defender, No. 2 is the support of that flank, and No. 3 is the man who controls the quarterback on the option.

Let's take a look at the loose formation, which gives us a spread flank on either side. Now if we go unbalanced putting both spread receivers on one side, it creates an ineligible receiver without adjusting either wing. Here's LO RT TRA: The right halfback is ineligible, but the formation creates a release of three blockers on the secondary or the linebackers. When running the option to this spread flank, the SPR and right halfback will block exactly as they did from BL. X is now an

addition, and sets up No. 2 by running at him, then releases inside and blocks the free safety. It is important, when running the option, that the quarterback confronts the third man at the flank before he pitches it.

Diagram 5: X Load

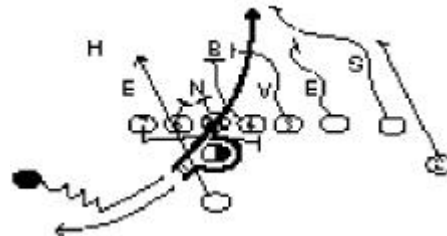


The position of X and the ineligible right halfback lends themselves to blocking flexibility at the flank. For example, X may load on the linebacker, while the right halfback takes his block on the free safety, while the SPR stalks No. 1. It is important when running a loaded option (where No. 3 is blocked) that the quarterback must get beyond him before pitching the ball.

We may also use the right halfback to wall the inside linebacker off, in addition to X loading on the outside linebacker (dotted line of right halfback in Diagram 5 shows wall x load).

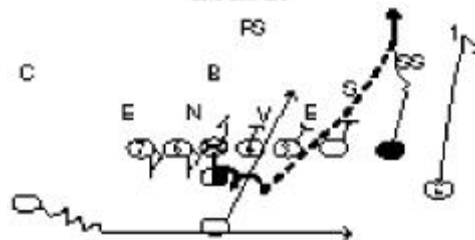
The 34 CT (tackle trap) (Diagram 6 above) from the TRA formation is an example of combining a basic wing-T play with our spread formations. It originates from the single wing and provides a strong double team, a solid block adjacent to the double team, and a trap. It is still a staple for us and is run from every formation.

Diagram 6: LORT TRA 34 CT



The right guard blocks gap-lead-linebacker-influence. That is, if he can't lead or get to the linebacker, he will block out faking pass protection to influence. The center blocks post or lead while the left guard blocks area-post. The left tackle traps, and the right tackle blocks the first linebacker from the C. From this formation, the right halfback will move upfield to prevent the strong linebacker from falling back into the hole. The left halfback, who is the carrier, leaves in motion, which is timed with the snap to place him in his original dive position. The fullback drives to check the first things outside of the left guard hip. The left halfback should receive the ball just as he clears the fullback.

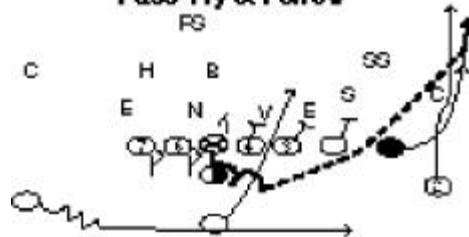
Diagram 7: LO RT TRA 41 OPT Pass Look-In



In keeping with our wing-T philosophy, we like to pass from every successful action. The motion of the left halfback and the release by the ends into the secondary place the strong safety and corner in conflict. The backfield pattern is exactly as when executing the option, initiated with the left halfback leaving in motion to the pitch position. The on-side guard and tackle block gap-on aggressively and low preventing defenders from reaching up to block the pass. The center, left guard and left tackle all block reach-on-area, but stay on the line and are conscious of not giving the pass away.

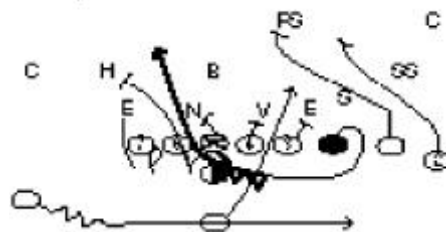
The quarterback takes the passing grip as he rides the ball to the fullback and immediately looks for X who releases directly for the strong safety as though blocking for the option. He then slides into the seam between the strong safety and free safety. He may go either in front or behind the strong safety. The split end releases as though he were stalking the corner, then breaks out at 12 yards. The quarterback drills the ball to either after his fake of the option.

**Diagram 8: LO RT TRA 41 OPT
Pass Fly & Follow**



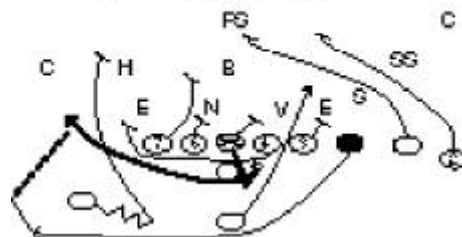
If the defensive secondary defends this formation with a 200 secondary (two-deep), the look-in pattern may be altered to fly and follow. The split end flies up the field, while X flares and follows about ten yards behind. The corner is now in conflict, if he covers the split end deep, he leaves the follow pattern open. If not, the fly is open. The outside linebacker should be frozen by the option threat.

Diagram 9: LORT TRA 41 SAL-7



In keeping with our wing-T philosophy, every play has a counter play. We have two from option action, one inside and a counter option outside. The sally counters inside and is executed as follows: The left halfback, fullback and quarterback execute their option pattern. You will recall that in the TRA formation, the right halfback is an ineligible receiver, who is to become the carrier on this play. To comply with playing rules, he must turn completely around and lose two yards as he moves into position to receive the hand-off. The quarterback, after faking to the fullback, gets two steps of depth and hands off inside to the right halfback, who will run to daylight at the weak side. The fullback aborts his fate, and blocks either a stunting linebacker or anything chasing the right halfback. The blocking for this play is as follows: The front side of the line, guard and tackle, block gap-on-linebacker aggressively. The off-side line, center left guard and left tackle, all step and cup as though blocking pass protection. They will move defenders in the direction they choose to go. One or more is then able to release after a two second count to block linebackers.

**Diagram 10: LO RT TRA
49 Counter Option**



Here is the outside counter (Diagram 10). The play begins with the left halfback leaving in motion, but will reverse and wall-off at the flank. The fullback and quarterback fake 41 option to the strength. The quarterback abbreviates his ride then steps back to the opposite flank. The right halfback leaves on the snap and sprints to a pitch relationship at the left flank. The left tackle will block gap-bump-lead-linebacker as he does on all options to his flank. The left guard blocks gap-on-lead, the center post-right. The right guard pulls left and logs or kicks out the first man that shows at the flank. The right tackle will pull and check behind. The left halfback will wall-off on the first linebacker he has an angle on. This action sets up a series of throwback passes.

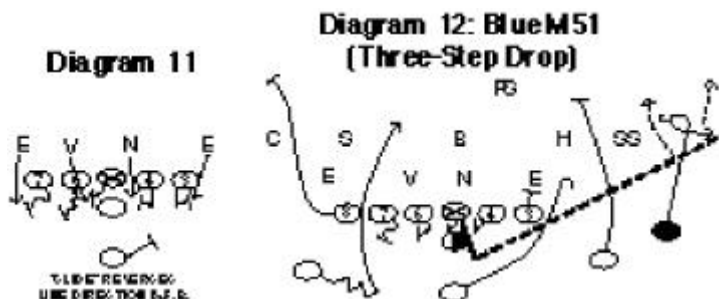
Passing Attack: Adapting Some Run and Shoot Principles

We have thrown play-action passes since the beginning of time, but haven't until recently depended upon drop back passing. As I mentioned earlier, it is extremely important to take advantage of our receiver's skills and give our offense the

advantage of spreading the defense across the field. I don't want to give you the impression that we have a complete run and shoot attack, we just want to do a few simple things.

I know you know a lot more about passing than I do, but I do feel strongly that you should do anything possible to create confidence in your quarterback. Throwing the ball is an anticipatory skill. I don't want the quarterback tied up with a lot of details he can't use, and stress just a few things. First, that he develop a consistent release of the ball, thrown from a consistent grip, and that whenever throwing, either during warm-up or to a receiver in a game, that he has an exact target in mind. When throwing under normal conditions, I would like him to use his shoulders in the throwing motion. In addition, he should be very conscious of his release spot to complete the protection efforts of his line.

Because we are doing a lot of things, we have created a system of pass protection that is used for several types of passes. Here are our basic assignments that are applied in principle to some action passes as well as, drop back protection: The attack side tackle is assigned to block gap-on-outside. The guard next to him blocks gap-on-inside. The center, the backside guard and tackle all step and cup and block away from the call (this looks like sally blocking). This provides three blockers to the back side, and with the fullback blocking strong, three to the front side (Diagram 11). We may, at times, "slide" this protection towards the call for certain problems. That is, step and cup on the front side, with the fullback becoming the fourth blocker to that side. In this case, we may tighten the offside halfback and assign him to block.



The quarterback gets the passing grip immediately from the center and takes three steps (right foot, left foot, right foot), in preparation to throw. It is important that he gain ground with each of these steps and is ready to throw with his weight on his right foot following the third step, directly behind the inside foot of the right guard. He should be pass without shuffling forward and should be able to predict his receiver's intention with a pre-snap read. The pattern gives the spread receiver some options. He will look for a loop out at six yards, but has the option to release either inside or outside if the cornerback plays him tight. The quarterback may verbalize and "in cut", that will call for the split end to run and "in" at six yards or, he may call for the fly, fade or post. The right halfback will run look-in and the quarterback may hit him from one step if no one covers him. With a call of "M" the left halfback begins his motion, creating a sweep or option impression, then reverses his direction, and will either block off the back side or slide into a drag pattern over the middle. The tight end will stay and block with the threat of pressure, or will release to hook at four yards of width and 12 yards of depth. The fullback checks the first inside linebacker, then the outside linebacker. If the outside linebacker drives, the fullback will flare. If he drops, the fullback will hook up short in the area that linebacker has vacated. This same pattern may be executed from LO RT TRA with the right halfback blocking.



Look at this trips formation to the wide side. I think that it's important here to tell you that we will run the option to the weak side if an exaggerated adjustment is made to our trips. We can also run the sally back to the strength and of course, the counter option. I think that it is important to mention at this time, that we will move our halfback's and our split end on and off the line to create last minute formations.

With the ball on the hash, the split end will widen to the head of the field numbers, X will take his position four yards inside of the split end and the right halfback is normally three yards outside of the tackle. The left halfback's width will vary with protection problems and may be anywhere on his side from tight to a spread of six yards. The 60's give us 5-step drop

with deeper pattern possibilities. The line's protection is the same as 50's, but ready to give a great deal more ground. The split end runs the three-way read at a depth of 14 yards (i.e. in, out, or up). X has a two-way read of in or up and must stay near the hash. The right halfback also has a two-way read of in or up and must stay well to the inside of the hash. The left halfback, depending upon his position, will block or drag when tight or run a three-way read when split. The quarterback now has a five-step drop and is encouraged to sprint away from the line saving time for the all-important release of the ball. He will set up behind the right guard and may now shuffle up inside the protection if necessary. The fullback will block the inside linebacker if he comes, then check the outside linebacker before he releases into a short pattern. The 60s lead to a plethora of patterns that may be called and not read.

In closing, let me say what a special thrill this has been for me to have an opportunity to speak at our national convention. This is not the first time I have spoken, but at my stage, being a dinosaur of sorts, it's a special honor and privilege.