Marrying the Downhill Run Game with The Spread From The Pistol

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How We Got Here

• In the mid 90’s we were an option based offense running midline, load, and veer.
• In ‘99 began running zone read from the gun
• In 2003 and 2004 began toying with the pistol
• As we evolved to the pistol we went from 25% pistol to 75% pistol by 2007
What is the Pistol

• The Pistol puts the T or F, or any other player directly behind the QB.
• Can also put the back next to the QB.
• Can put a second back in the backfield next to the QB.
• Can put two offset backs next to QB with third back directly behind.
Why the Pistol?

• Teams could no longer game our zone read concepts
• We could run our downhill run plays
• We didn’t have to jump under center then back into the gun
• Consistency in performance
• Ability to be diverse on offense
• Simple concepts that could be run multiple ways
Under Center

Defense has Loaded the Box
Safety plays at 7 yards
Against Same Team in Gun

Box has been vacated
QB has depth in pass game
In The Pistol

We have numbers inside the box
One Back Pistol
2 X 2 Pistol
Evolution

- Started with what we knew
- We ran zone read from gun and zone from under center-
- Installed Zone
- Installed Power
- Installed Toss
- Installed Trap
- Installed Counter
- Installed Jet Sweep
- Also: Belly, Buck Series (Trap, Sweep, Waggle)
Formation Concepts

- Rip/Liz = Y with hand down
- Ron/Lou = Y aligned in a twin
- R/L = Y aligned in a slot (1x1)
- Rex/Lex = Bunch
- Randy/Larry = Twins Closed
F Alignments

- Number the alignment of the F
- Even to Right Odd to Left
- 0 and 1 align him as a sniffer 1 yard behind OL between G and T. Zero to Rt, 1 to left
- 2 and 3- Over tackle at QB depth
- 4 and 5- Slot (1x1) on EMOL
- 6 and 7- Twin Split Distance
- 8 and 9- Aligned as widest receiver
By addition a number to our formation call we can adjust the alignment of the F.

This allows us move our F around.
X and Z Align 2 yards inside the top of the numbers.
Our F and Y align 5 to 7 yards outside the tackle.
Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
X and Z Align 2 yards inside the top of the numbers.
Y aligns as traditional TE.
Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
F splits distance between X and open tackle.
Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.

Our offensive line will have 2 to 2.5 foot splits.
Queen Pro (Rip 3)

- X and Z Align 2 yards inside the top of the numbers.
- Y aligns as traditional TE.
- Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
- F aligns over the open tackle at QB depth.
- Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.

Our offensive line will have 2 to 2.5 foot splits.
X and Z Align 2 yards inside the top of the numbers.
Y aligns as traditional TE.
Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
F aligns over the tight side tackle at QB depth
Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
- X and Z Align 2 yards inside the top of the numbers.
- Y Aligns as a Twin
- Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
- F aligns over the tight side tackle at QB depth
- Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
X and Z Align 2 yards inside the top of the numbers.
Y splits distance between tackle and Z.
Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
F aligns over the open tackle at QB depth
Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
Trips Open (Ron 4)

- X and Z Align 2 yards inside the top of the numbers.
- Y splits distance between tackle and Z.
- Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
- F aligns in a 4 position
- Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
Y aligns 1 yard OS tackle on LOS.
X is 1 yard outside Y and 1 yard off LOS
Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
F aligns in a 5 position
Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
- Y aligns with hand down on left side
- X is 1 yard outside Y and 1 yard off LOS
- Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
- F aligns in a 4 position
- Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
Y aligns with hand down on left side
X and Z align to same side as twins
Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
F aligns in a 3 position
Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
Y aligns with hand down on left side
X aligns ins a slot and F aligns in a 6
Our QB aligns 4.5 to 5 yards behind the center.
Our T Back aligns 7 to 8 yards off the football.
Ron 3 Bone

- Bone puts two offset backs in backfield with T behind QB
- Number still places F
- Can personnel or stay with base personnel group
- Simple way to get into the pistol bone
Rip puts the Y on the line of scrimmage to right.
Number still places F
Now the Z moves into the backfield
Simple way to get into the pistol bone
Liz 3 Bone X Over

- Unbalanced look with 3 backs
- Number still places F
- Can personnel or stay with base personnel group
- Forces defense to adjust
Versatility

- You can run virtually any formation from the pistol
- You can adapt the pistol to nearly any system
- You can run any play series from the pistol
- Adapt what you already run to the pistol
Motion Concepts

• Zip/Zap/Zop
• Yip/Yap/Yop
• Fip/Fap/Fop
• Motor/Motel
• Taxi
• Bump
• Trade
• Ap- Across, ip- Into, op-Out- Motor- Motion out rt, Motel- Motion out left
Option Concepts

- Can run any option concept
- Midline, Load, Veer, Lead, Speed, Shovel
- Zone Read Concept
- Frontside Read Concepts
Installing The Midline Option

- Attacks the Midpoint of the defense
- Gives us a chance to attack the A gap, B gap, and C gap in one play
- Simple read for the quarterback
- Opportunities for Multiple Complimentary plays
Midline Option

- We Install The Midline Option First As It Is The Easiest Read For The QB
- The Midline Attacks The Middle Of The Defense
- Forces The Defense To Reduce Their Front
- Reduction Of The Front Opens Up The Perimeter
- Complementary Plays Answer What Defenses Do To Take Midline Away
- Complementary Plays Allow You To Dictate Who Carries The Football
Midline Option: The Mesh

The QB Will Push Away And Step At Six
On The Push Away Step, The QB Brings
The Ball To His Third Hand (Belly)
As He Steps At Six, The QB Will Reach
The Ball Deep and Snap His Eyes To His
Read

The A back aims for the crack of the
center’s butt

The FB must make a deep, soft pocket
In the pistol you don’t have to motion the backside slot to become the pitch man on any option play.
The Base Scheme allows the midline to be run against a 3 and a nine technique. The fullback will lead up on the Sam.

The F will lead up on the Sam if the QB gets a pull read.

Queen Pro 10 Midline
We can run midline weak versus a reduced front. The FB will become the second tracker for the Mike to FS.
Installing The Inside Veer

• We will read a frontside player
• Our offensive line will utilize zone combination blocks
• We can run the inside veer from multiple formations
• The inside veer is an aggressive downhill run play.
Option Plays From Our Veer Scheme

- 12-13 Veer
- 14-15 Shovel
- 18-19 Speed

Each Option Play Has A Series Of Complementary Plays Designed To Take Advantage of Defensive Adjustments
Installing The Inside Veer

• Hits the B, C, and D Gaps
• Simple read for the QB
• Downhill action stresses the playside linebacker
• Eliminates the defensive end
• Can eliminate stunts
• Gives you an opportunity to hit the perimeter
• Allows us multiple option concepts with one blocking scheme
Inside Veer Option: T Mesh

The QB will take a flat step with his outside foot.

He will get his second step into the hole.

His eyes snap to the C gap.

The back will take a short drop step to the QB.

He will make a deep soft pocket and work downhill.
Our tackle has a DL in the B gap. He will alert the PSG they will combo to the PSLB.
• We would tag cowboy to have the inside man in our bunch become the pitch man.
• We can motion our outside receiver into or away from the bunch.
• We maintain our same reads.
Inside Veer From Offset

- The T back is now our dive back.
- The F is now our pitch back.
- The QB can run the play either way regardless of back alignment.
• The T back is our pitch back
• The F is our shovel back
• The QB will take a slide step then attack the DE. If the DE comes upfield, shovel, if the DE squeezes, attack the force player for your pitch read
Inside Zone/Zone Read

- Inside Zone and Zone Read are one concept for our offensive line
- The blocking stays the same regardless of whether we are running the zone to the frontside with no read, or we are reading a backside defender
- We use covered/uncovered principals
- You are blocking gap to man
- Color shows, block color
- Color goes away, climb to backer
Our Inside Zone and Variations

- Inside (Traditional IS Zone)
- Inside Lead (Bob, Boss)
- Seal (Split Flow Zone)
- Bend
- Bison
- Inside Read (Reading Backside Defender)
• Center: Playside A Gap (0)
• PSG: Playside B Gap (1)
• PST: Playside C Gap (2)
• BSG: Backside A Gap (1)
• BST: Backside B Gap (2)
• TE: Frontside D Gap #3
• F: Frontside #3 or #4 or Backside #3
• Our landmark is the playside Jersey number.
C | Identify Mike as 0, Combo with RG, combo 3 Tech to Mike
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LG | Covered, Listen for combo call, DT is 1, combo 1 tech to Will
LT | Identify Will as 2, make combo call, combo 1 tech to Will
RG | Identify 3 Tech as #1, listen for combo call, combo 1 tech to Mike
RT | Covered by #2, make solo call, you have 2 to yourself
TE | Covered by #3, make solo call as you and RT are covered
Covered/Uncovered Zone Concept

This is an example of an Ace call on Zone Right. The RG is covered with a 3 tech, and the Center is uncovered. The RG and Center take their playside zone step with eyes to their gap.

The uncovered player must have his eyes in his PSG. In the case above, the 3 Tech slanted inside and the Center has to pick him up. The RG sees him go away and now works to the player filling the B gap.

If the Mac were to step up to blitz, the Center would make a base call. This would eliminate the combo call and put both lineman on a base block.
Inside Zone Rules QB FW

- QB will take the football through the 3rd hand, open at 45 to the call side, and reach the ball deep.
- The QB is responsible for the handoff reaching the navel of the running back.
- The QB must be soft with the handoff.
- The QB will boot fake after giving the football.
Inside Zone Rules TB Footwork

- The Tailback will take a zone step to the playside and ensure the QB secures the snap.
- The tailback will rollover his outside foot and make a deep soft pocket with his top palm out.
- The tailback’s eyes are reading the 1 to 2 Aiming Point is IS Leg of PST
- The tailback must burst on first daylight.
- Coaching Point: The tailback’s shoulders must be parallel to the offensive line.
TB Eyes on IS Zone

If 1 is out, I’m in
If 1 is in, I’m out
Read 1 to 2 to go
TB Eyes on IS Zone

If 1 is out, I’m in
If 1 is in, I’m out
Read 1 to 2 to go
Inside Seal

Diagram of a football formation with labels E, T, W, M, T, E, and S.
Inside Bend

Bend allows us to stay solid on the backside.
Zone Lead Concepts

- Boss- Back on Strong Safety
- Bob- Back on Backer
- Bomb- Back on Mike Backer (vs. 3-3-5)
- Bison- Backside Iso
Inside Lead Play (BOSS)

- Boss allows us to account for 4 Strong Defenders
- The F will block the #4 player
- The TB reads stay the same, 1 to 2
• BOB puts the F on the PSLB
• The PST and PSG will now double the 3 tech
• The TB will run the V
• The TB will read off the Mike.
Inside Lead Play (BOMB)

- BOMB is a call traditionally versus a 3-3
- BOMB puts the FB on the stacked Mike
- The PSG and PST will combo the DE to the Sam
Bison alerts the F he will block the backside inside.
Bison tells the tailback he will follow the F backside.
The TB will read tighten his path slightly to bend.
Fake Z Reverse

- We want the Z to hold the backside DE
- The FB will read the flow of the end (Upfield or Squeeze)
- The back is looking for our natural cutback lane
- We use Zip Motion
42 Inside Seal Fake Z PreSnap
42 IS Seal Fake Z
42 IS Seal (Mesh)

FB Should work upfield as the DE is gaining depth
42 IS Seal (Burst)
Inside Read Game

- From the Pistol we can incorporate the zone read game.
- This allows us to read a defender rather than block him.
- Your QB can be average speed and be effective with the zone read.
- Great change-up to account for a backside defender.
Zone Read Footwork

• The QB will step off the midpoint
• He will push to the play 6 inches
• And step at 4 or 8 o’clock
• He will reach the ball deep for the mesh
• The back will take three steps downhill slightly off the midpoint
• He will pivot and make a deep soft pocket as he works across the bow of the QB.
• The back will keep his palm up and get his eyes to his read.
QB/TB Footwork Illustrated

Zone Read to the Left
QB: Push To, Step at 4

Zone Read to the Right
QB: Push To, Step at 8
Squeeze and Chase, Pull and Replace

If the player we are reading chases the back, the QB will pull the ball and replace his read. In the case above the defensive end chases the back, so the QB pulls and replaces.

If the defender does anything else, give the football to the back. In the case above the defensive end does not chase, so the QB gives the football.
The offensive line blocks the zone the same way.
The QB will read the EMOL
The back will read the backside A to 2 to 1
Reading The 1, 3, and PSLB

- We can tag any play to read another player
- We can tag Tuna to read the tackle
- We can tag Bama to read the backer
- This allows us to neutralize a player we may not be able to block
- Takes advantage of defensive players who are not used to being read
Tuna tells QB we will read the tackle.
This becomes a downhill run for the QB if he gets a pull read.
The back will read the backside A to 2 to 1
Trap Concepts

• The trap play can be run as a downhill play or as a read play. (We run mostly as a read play)
• We trap the first player past the PSG.
• We can run trap with a variety of looks.
• It’s one concept for the offensive line, but very multiple for the skill guys.
✓ We trap first man past the guard
✓ The QB reads the EMOL.
✓ The back has a one way go- Eyes to trapper
✓ Bama - Read the backer.
✓ This becomes a downhill run for the QB if he gets a pull read.
✓ Back has a one way go- eyes to trapper
Tuna tells QB we will read the tackle.

This becomes a downhill run for the QB if he gets a pull read.

The back must find the trapper
We can also trap with the tackle
The QB will read the end.
The back must find the trapper
Tuna tells QB we will read the tackle.
This becomes a downhill run for the QB if he gets a pull read.
The back will read the backside A to 2 to 1
Wham says we will trap a nose or 1 tech.
We run this to the backside of an under front.
This is a very fast quick hitting play.
Other Trap Concepts

- We can run the trap off jet sweep action
- We can run QB trap
- We can run trap lead to the tailback
- We can run trap off of sprint out action
Power Concepts

• Power tells our offensive line we are not blocking the playside end man on the line.
• The frontside will power down on all two back kick power concepts
• The backside guard will wrap through the first frontside window.
• We will either read the playside end man on the line, or kick the end man on the line with the F or another tagged player.
• We can also run power with a backside read.
Power Concepts

- Two Back Power
- One Back Power
- One Back Power Read
- Frontside Power Read
- Shovel Read
Two Back Power

- F kicks the end.
- QB opens at 45 and rolls the ball back
- Tackle Blocks MDM

- [Checklist]
  - Frontside Powers Down
  - F kicks the end.
  - QB opens at 45 and rolls the ball back
Two Back Power

- Frontside Powers Down
- F kicks the end.
- QB opens at 45 and rolls the ball back
One Back Power

✓ The frontside stays base
✓ Backside guard pulls to PSLB
✓ QB opens at 45 and rolls the ball back
Backside Read

- The frontside stays base
- Backside guard pulls to PSLB
- QB opens at 45 and rolls the ball back
Power with Frontside Read

- Frontside Powers Down
- Read the Frontside End
- QB is shuffle-shuffle-shuffle-shuffle
Power with Frontside Read vs. Odd Stack

- Frontside Powers Down
- Read the Frontside End
- QB is shuffle-shuffle-shuffle-shuffle

Tackle Blocks MDM
Power with Frontside Read

- Frontside Powers Down
- Read the Frontside End
- QB is shuffle-shuffle-shuffle-shuffle

Tackle Blocks MDM
Power with Frontside Read

- Frontside Powers Down
- Read the Frontside End
- QB is shuffle-shuffle-shuffle

Tackle Blocks MDM
Two Back Power with Backside Bama Read

- Frontside Powers Down
- F kicks the end.
- QB reads backside defender

Tackle Blocks MDM
Truck Concept

- Truck is a tackle wrap concept
- The backside tackle will wrap through the first frontside window
- He will block the first frontside backer
- We can read any backside defender
- The PST will base the frontside defensive end.
- The PSG will base if covered, and clamp if uncovered
- The Center will clamp a 0 or shade.
- The BSG will Clamp if covered, and climb or cut based on the call
Counter Concepts

• The frontside lineman will zone away
• The backside G and T will pull to the frontside
• The backside G will kick out the EMOL
• The backside tackle will wrap to PSLB
• The QB will read the backside DE
• We can tag another player to either kick out or lead through
Ron 7 46 Counter Read
Belly G

- Frontside guard will pull and kick out the end man on the line.
- Frontside blocks down
- Backside is zone to the call
- QB will reverse out and work to LOS on mesh
- Back will J step and attack inside leg of PST
- The PST must get movement on the 3 technique.
- The Center must cut off the PSLB.
- The guard must find the inside number of the DE.

The Qb will use belly footwork.
Review

• Pistol can be adapted to any system
• Allows you to marry the traditional downhill run game with the spread and option games
• Offense can be simple yet diverse
• Multiple ways to run a single concept
Contact

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