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## CHAPTER 8



### Blocking Terminology

The Wing T lineman, just like in any other offense, has an individual assignment on every play. Inside each assignment is a set of rules, actually a progression of choices, and the lineman must decide which choice, or rule, to use depending upon the defender's alignment.

Once the choice is made, then that triggers which technique to use and most of this book thus far has centered on these techniques. In traditional Wing T the name of the technique does not match the rule, which in turn doesn't match the name of the assignment. For example, on Buck Sweep Right, the Right Tackle is supposed to down block, which might mean using a GAP technique. In my 14 years of running this offense with special ed and english language learners, I found that this was very confusing.

So at the risk of having my decoder ring taken away and no longer being taught the "secret handshake", I changed the terminology drastically from a tradition of Wing T excellence that goes back to the 1950's. While it makes it hard to communicate to coaches across the country, I will take the tradeoff in that my kids understand the terminology and I can teach the entire offense in one weekend. Now don't misunderstand me, they can't master the techniques and footwork in even one season, but they can learn the language in a few days.

Here is my basic premise of the PISTOL WING T terminology:

- Name of the PLAY matches the name of the RULE.
- Name of the CHOICES matches the name of the TECHNIQUE
- The drill to teach the technique is also the same.

For example: Buck Sweep is re-named "26 G.O." The "G" tells the backside Guard to pull and the "O" tells the Onside guard to pull. The traditional "Sweep" drill was renamed the "GO Drill".



I wanted to name the deep pulls used on this play the “G” and “O” pull, but we pull the backside Guard (32-G, 28-G, 34-GT) and Onside Guard (36-0, 28-0) on many plays so I still haven’t figured out a way to take it that far.

I also use a lot of acronyms and tag words that have actual meaning. When teaching low level high school students learning english as a 2<sup>nd</sup> language calling a play “Buck” or “Jet” triggers pictures of a male deer or airplane in their head. We had the same challenges with all of the different blocks within the Belly play, so the acronyms “TUG” “GUT” “TED”, and “COG” were born.

The downside to having a very logical system of terminology that offers great flexibility is that the play call can get very, very verbose. In other words, some play calls can require 8 or 9 words. The PISTOL WING T playbook addresses this with a hybrid system of wristbands and hand signals, but bottom line, the lengthy terminology is something that I continue to address every year.

This chapter will be broken up into two basic groups:

1. Rules that do not require thinking
  - a. Escapes and pulls.
2. Rules that require thinking
  - a. On-Down-Backer; On-Reach-Backer; Down-Double-Backer, etc.
3. Rules that require another offensive linemen.
  - a. Doubles, Scoops and Reaches

As the name implies, escapes and pulling have no progression, interpretation, or choices to make. The lineman just does it. However, there are even scenarios in which a pull can be cancelled or voided. Most of this chapter will be spent explaining the rules that require thinking. These rules are more complex, as the lineman must use a progression to determine which defender he needs to block. The doubles and scoops were explained in great detail in Chapter 7 and will be mentioned in this chapter, but not explained.

There is no doubt that the Wing T offense is a thinking man’s offense. It is for the coaches and players who love a great chess match. Gladiators who thrive on winning with intellect and scheme as much as sheer talent. I have always said that this offense is NOT for the lazy coach. The spread coaches enter the game with 3-4 run plays and a few passing concepts, gambling that their D-1 back or receivers that can dunk will simply run by you. I am not that type of coach and have never had that type of athlete, so my goal is to beat you at a game of chess instead of 1 on 1 basketball.

While I have tried to make the terminology easy to understand, my players with low football IQ’s play mostly defense because the Wing T lineman has to understand the game. Understand the objective of the play. Some of this comes naturally while the rest of it is grinded in them with intense summer sessions on the field and in the film room.

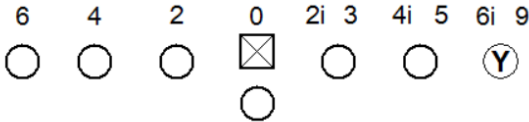


**DEFENSIVE ALIGNMENT**

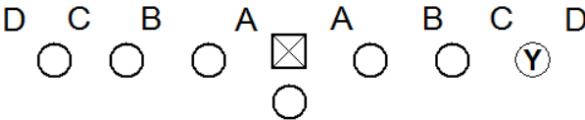
Figure 8-1 shows the system that is used to identify how the opposing defense is aligned. We do not require our players to learn this, it is more for coaches to communicate with each other. Even numbers identify a head-up defensive alignment, while, with the exception of the tight end alignment, the outside shades are identified by an odd number and the inside shades are identified by adding an "i" to the head-up alignment.

The gaps are identified as letters and are consistent on both sides. The A gap is always the gap between the center and the guard on either side. The same holds true for the B, C, and D gaps.

When talking to our players we usually say "...is he on you, inside or outside shade?" The players will tell us that the player is "...in the B-gap on the guard" or "...he is in the C-gap".



*Even numbers, 0, 2, 4, and 6 are used for "Head Up" alignment on any offensive linemen.  
A 2 technique is head up alignment on either the Right or Left Guard  
The other numbers such as 2i, 3, 4i, 5, 7, and 9 are used for shades on any offensive linemen*

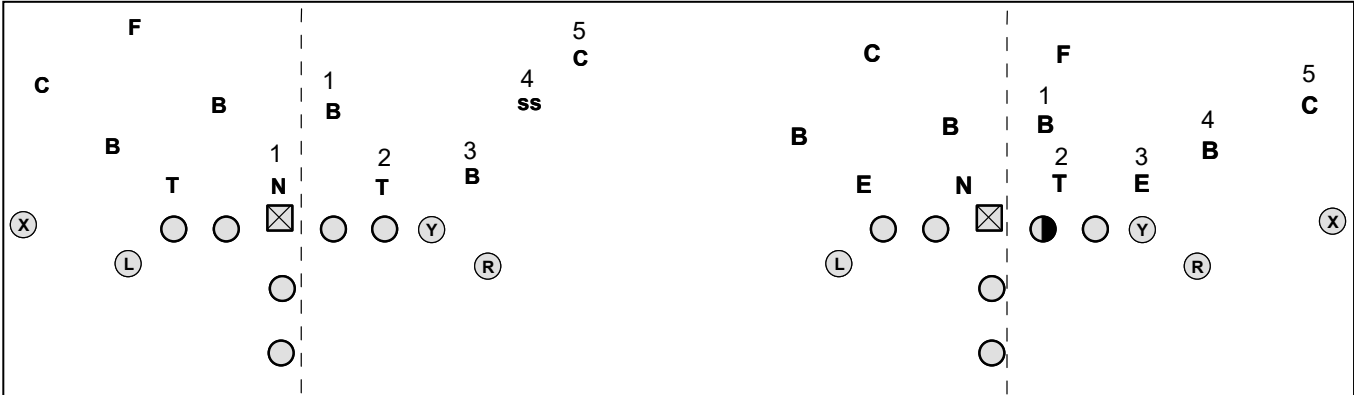


*We use letters to identify the Gaps in the offensive line*

**Fig 8-1: D-Line techniques and Gaps**

**NUMBERING DEFENSIVE PERSONNEL**

Again, numberin the players is way more useful for the coaches than the players, although our QB will use this system to make audibles. It hardly ever applies to our linemen, but I am putting it in here as a form of communication between the author (me) and the reader (you).



**Fig 8-2: Counting Defenders**



## LINE COMMUNICATION

With our high tempo no-huddle and sprint out of the huddle pace, it is hard for our linemen to make calls at the line of scrimmage. As I suggested in Chapter One, you could turn the huddle around so that everyone's backs are facing the defense. The 5 linemen are four yards off the ball with the backs standing in front of them at five yard depth. The QB says the play once, linemen sprint to the line, while the backs get the call from the QB one or two more times. This gives the line a few seconds to make line calls as they wait for the backs to line up.

My hesitation of doing this is that it will mess up our timing of going on first sound. The obvious answer is to have the QB say something before snapping the ball, but this will also cue the defense. So now we would have to assign different snap counts to the plays. Not a hard task, but just a new trick for this old dog to learn.

If the line has time, whether it is in the huddle or at the line, they need to make two calls: How the defense is lined up (front) and which rule progression/choice is going to be executed. So an example might be:

- 1) "ODD-ODD". This signals a headup NG and headup DT on our offensive tackles. Applies to everyone.
- 2) "GUT-GUT". A call made by the playside linemen on Belly. Only applies to Guard & Tackle.
- 3) "TED-TED". A call on the backside by tackle and tight end. Only applies to them.

The one thing that I love about Wing T line play is that is a system of rules that never allows the defense to be right. Since there are 2-3 rules within each assignment, each lineman has an answer for whatever the defense is attempting to do. Therefore an excessive system of line calls is not necessary. No matter what the defensive surface, the rules take care of everything. Figure 8-3 shows how we identify the basic fronts. The rest of this chapter will explain individual rules.

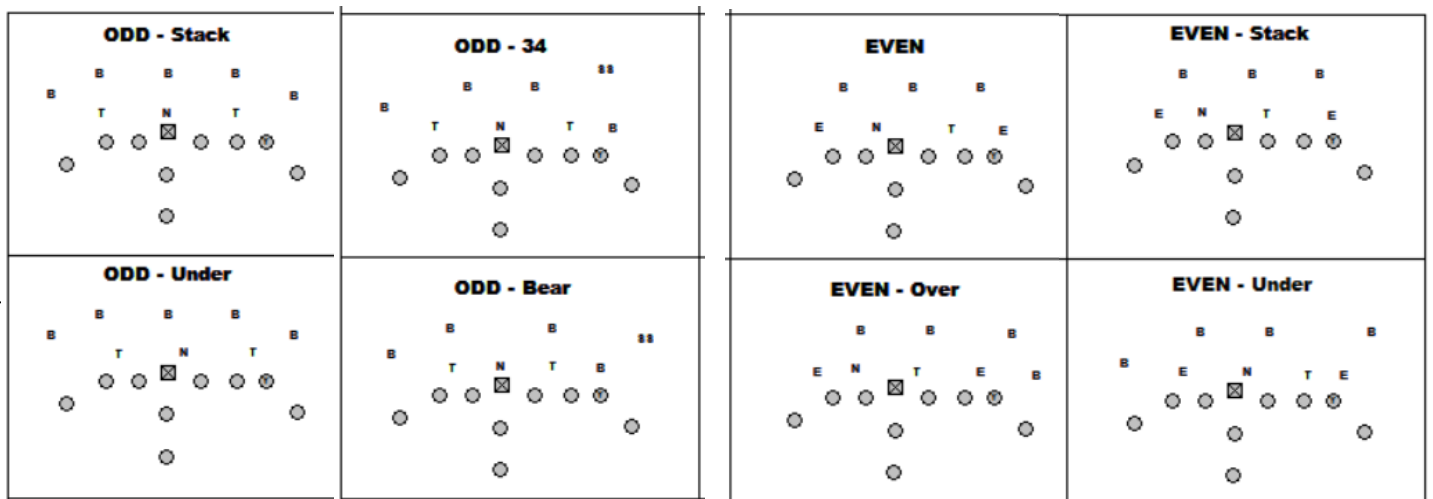


Fig 8-3: Identification of Basic Fronts

As with most offenses, the center initiates these calls since the NG dictates most of the fronts. If there is time, we want the Guards and Tackles to "echo" the call, especially versus ODD fronts because a head NG would trigger an "ODD" call from the center but the Tackle could then yell "BEAR" if his man is inside or echo the ODD call if his man is in a 4-tech headup alignment.



### DOMINO CALL

This call is made at the line of scrimmage based on defensive actions. If there is a double team rule (Down-Double-Backer for Right Guard and On-Double-Away for center) on an assignment, say 32-G or 22-Trap, the “DOMINO” call tells the Down blocker that he is blocking by himself. In Figure 8-4, the Center’s DOMINO call tells the Right Guard that he is blocking the NG by himself because of the Linebacker showing blitz before the snap.

The example on the right of Figure 8-4 is actually a STAY call on 26 G.O. or 18 GO Pass. If the NG was headup on the Center, then the Right Guard would be yelling DOMINO to tell the Center that he is on his own.

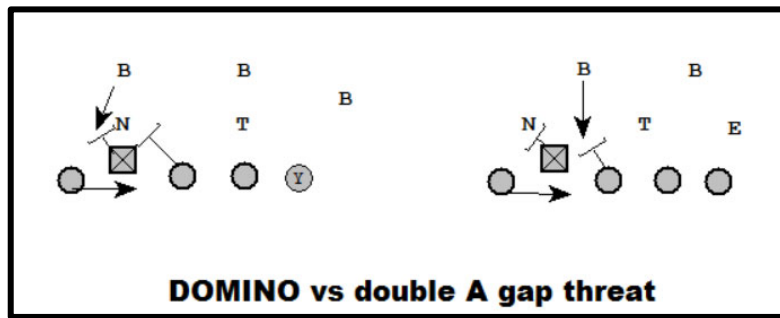


Fig 8-4: Domino & Stay Calls

There are some rare cases of DOMINO calls by Guards & Tackles on Baylor and by the Tackles and Tight Ends on Cal and G-Lead. But most of the time is when we are double teaming a NG.

### TEE CALL

Another call that is made at the line is the TEE call. This is made on Down 36/35-0 and on 25/45 G.O. Normally the playside Guard is pulling on both of these plays, but this leaves a gap that an aggressive inside Line backer can shoot through in odd defenses, especially the 3-3 stack.

So when we get a true odd defense with 0-tech headup NG and 4-tech headup DT, the offensive tackle makes a TEE call. This tells the Guard to Reach along his playside Gap-Highway to the ILB while the Tackle & Tight End cross block.

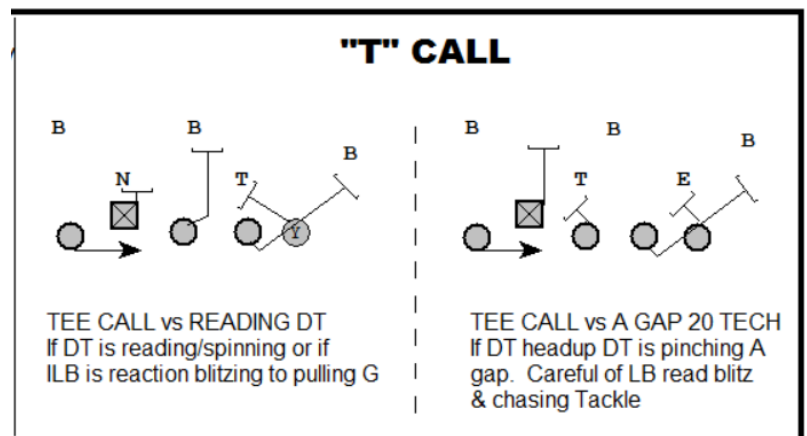


Fig 8-5: Tee Call



## RULES WITHOUT THINKING

### PULLING

As described in Chapter 6, there are 2 basic pulls: Flat and deep. The hole number tells the lineman which type of pull to execute: If the attack hole is 1, 2, 3, or 4...then it is always a flat pull.

*32-G, 31-G, 22-Trap, 41-Trap, 43-Counter, 24-Counter.*

If the attack hole is a 7 or 8...then it is always a deep pull.

*28-G, 28-0, 37-Toss,.*

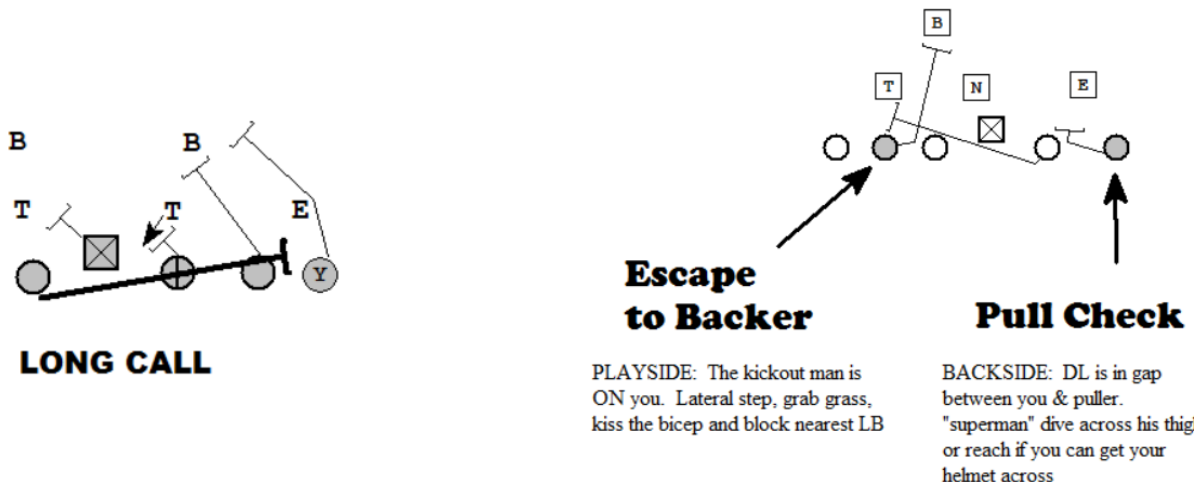
If the attack hole is a 5 or 6:

- Flat pull by Onside Guard if he is the only puller. *Down 36-0*
- Deep pull by Onside Guard if his backside partner is pulling. *26 G.O.*
- Always a deep pull by the backside Guard to a 5 or 6 attack hole. *26-G Lead.*

Chapter 6 also explained that a LOG is actually the exact same technique and path as a deep or flat pull, however, the lineman uses the wrong shoulder. This can be a reaction to a hard squeeze or an actual hard & fast rule, such as Belly and Down Pass. The Hook Block is a special pull that only applies to 17/18 GO Pass (Waggle).

### ESCAPE TO BACKER

Also described in Chapter 6, this rule doesn't change and is hardly ever over ruled. The only time that a player doesn't escape is when the D-Lineman slants so hard that his helmet crosses the blockers chest, forcing what we call a WASH. The blocker that was trying to escape drives the slanting D-Linemen, (who was supposed to be kicked out or read on Option) as far down the line of scrimmage as possible. The puller has to recognize this and do what we call a LONG PULL, which means kicking out the next defensive lineman. If the washed DL is being read by the QB, then obviously it is a pull-keep by the QB.



### BACKSIDE RULES

On the belly play there are backside rules that require thinking and interpretation, however, in our Option family and Down 35/36-0 the backside rule is simple: GAP-HIGHWAY.

It is pretty simple and kids understand. I tell them you are one of those asphalt machines with the huge roller on the front. You are laying an asphalt road between you and the blocker to your inside. Any defender that is on your road, or “highway”, becomes road kill.

Sometimes it is obvious before the snap who the defender that you supposed to block and other times you will not know who you are blocking until the play develops.

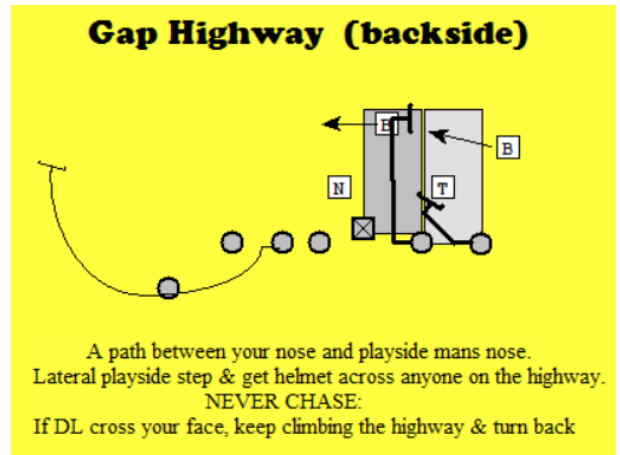


Fig 8-6: Gap Highway

### RULES REQUIRING THINKING

#### DOWN-BACKER

Traditional Wing-T calls this “Gap-Down-Backer”, but we have shortened it to just a DOWN block. That makes sense to our kids, block in a downward path all the way towards the NoseGuard. Block anyone on your path, whether it be a 3-tech D-Lineman or a blitzing backer. If nobody shows on your path and you can see the Centers helmet between you and the NG, then climb to the backside Backer.

The decision the blocker has to make is where to place his helmet. As discussed in Chapter 6, the two techniques inside the DOWN rule are helmet in the back versus a Penetrator and helmet in the back versus a Reader.

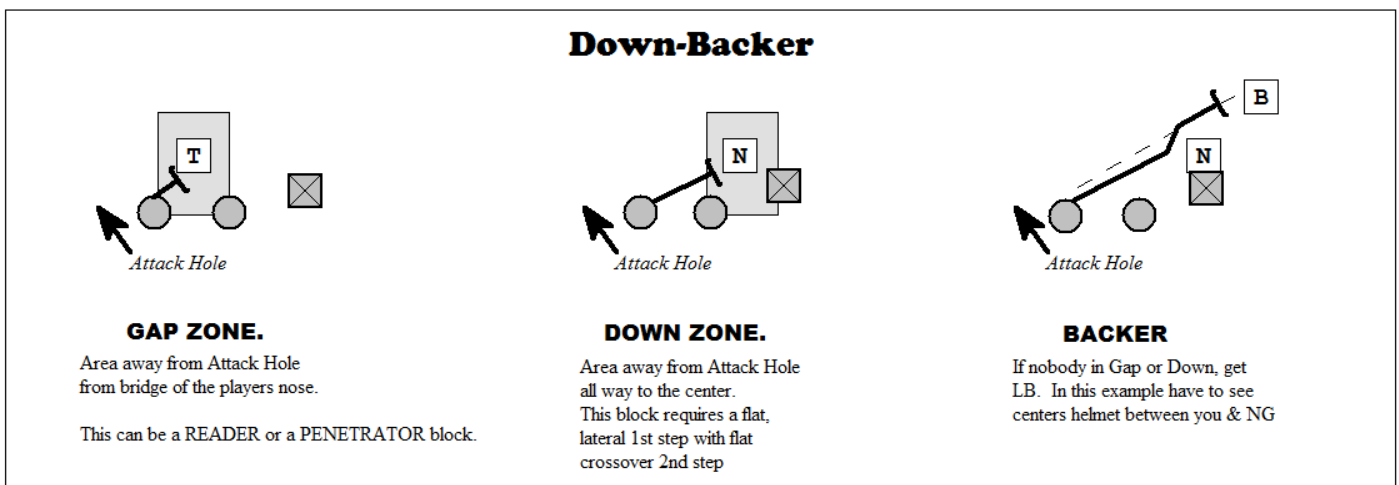


Fig 8-7: Gap-Down-Backer Explanation



### DOWN – DOUBLE - BACKER

This rule kicks in when we want the Down Path but the inside man is not pulling. The Inside blocker will have the rule: ON-DOWN-BACKER, which is the Left Guard in the Figure 8-7 example. Remember, if a Line backer shows blitz before the snap, he is treated as a D-Lineman and the Left Tackle will block him if his blitz takes him on the Down path.

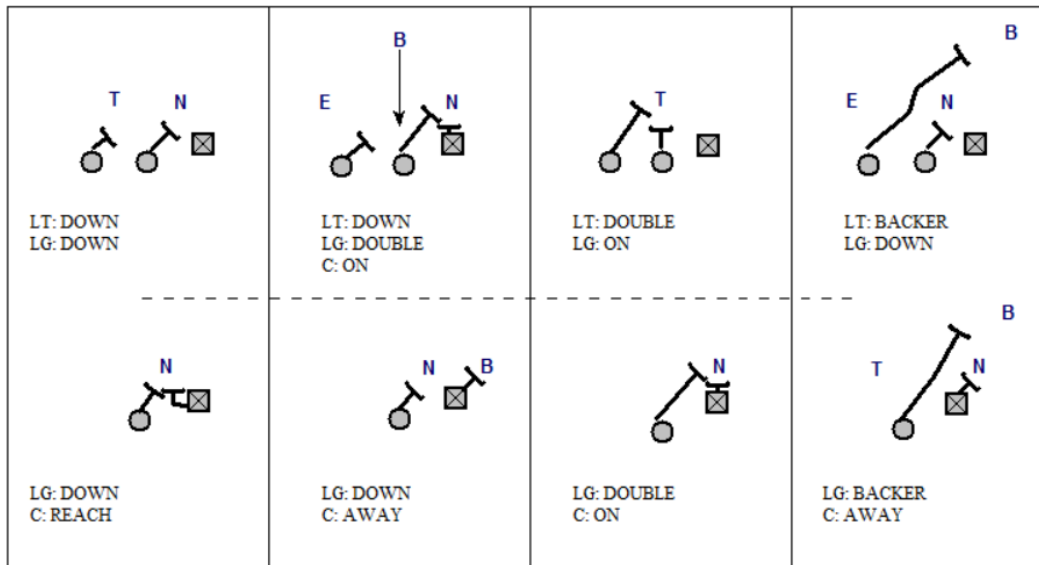


Fig 8-8: Down-Double-Backer

### REACH-ON-DOWN-SCOOP

This was covered pretty extensively in Chapter 6 on page 75. Obviously this is a play that is trying to get outside and would be the rule for the playside linemen. Backside linemen would not have this rule, they would have the next rule: “REACH-ON-AWAY”. If a lineman has defenders in both gaps but the next blocker on his outside has nobody, then they would both down block. If a lineman is reaching and the next blocker on his outside has nobody to reach or on block, this would turn into a Scoop block. This is shown in the last box in Figure 8-7, as the Left Tackle has nobody on him or outside him, so his “DOWN” rule would trigger a SCOOP technique with Left Guard if the LG did not have anybody on him or in the A-gap.

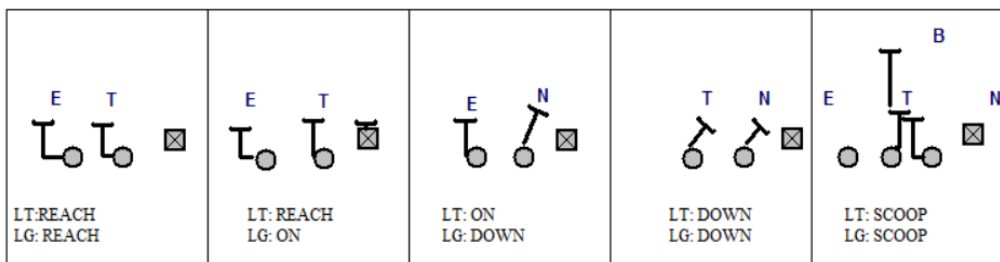
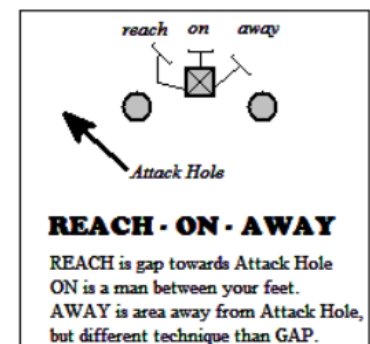


Fig 8-9: Reach-On-Down

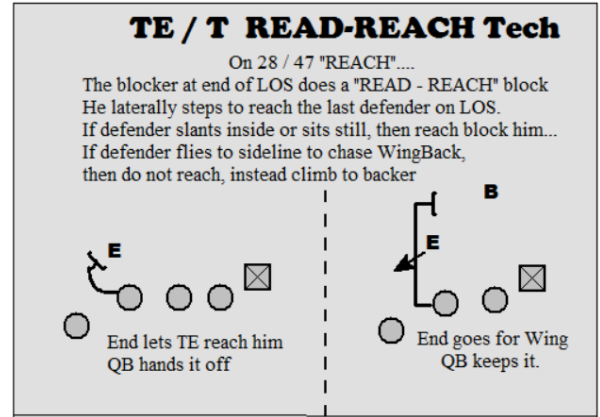
### REACH – ON - AWAY

Same as REACH-ON-DOWN rules except on the backside.



### READ - REACH

This block is in our JET Family when we run “Liz 28-Reach” or “Rip 47-Reach”. The QB is reading the last defender on the line of scrimmage to decide whether to handoff or keep the ball. The Tight End or Tackle takes a 90-degree lateral step to try to reach the defender. If he can reach him then continue with reach block by stepping in crotch with 2<sup>nd</sup> foot, helmet across the chest, and right shoulder block. This would trigger a QB handoff to the Wing in Liz or Rip motion.



If the End moves laterally down the line because he is influenced by both the motion and the lateral step by the blocker, then the blocker punches the end with outside arm and climbs to block the inside Backer. This triggers the QB to keep the ball and follow the Tight End or Tackles second level block. The TB will probably be also lead blocking.

### REACH – YOU/ME CALL

This call happens on a couple of plays:

- Liz/Rip 28 or 47 Read-Handoff;
- NoMo 28 or 47 G (Belly Sweep);
- Lazer/Rocket 28-47 Toss;
- 37 or 38 Toss;

Basically this block is made on perimeter plays where the Defensive End is not being read and there is no Wide Receiver on the edge. The first rule is for the Wing & Tackle or Tight End to reach both the End and the OLB. However if the End cannot be reached by the Tackle or Tight End, then we want the Wing to down block and the Tackle/TE “wrap around the wing to block the OLB.

This is only on Wing-Tight End flanks. If there were a Wide Receiver on that side, then the WR and the Wing would be making the “YOU-ME” call and the Tackle or Tight would have to reach the End no matter what.

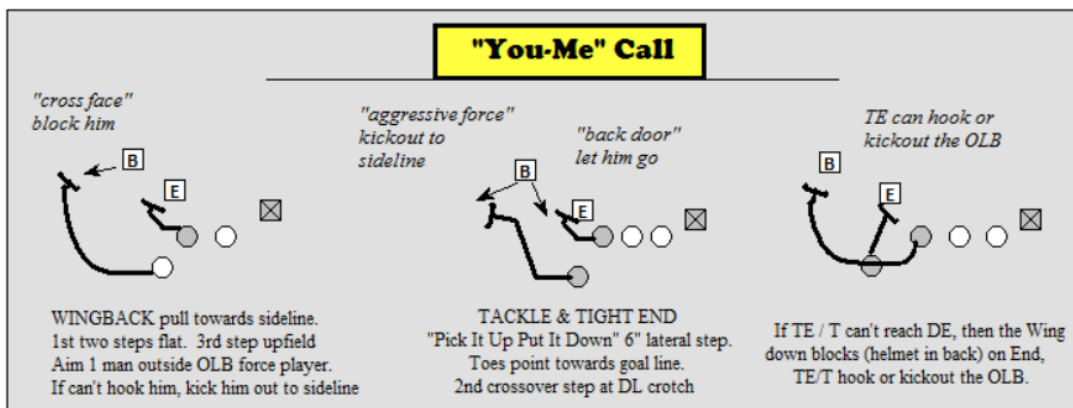


Fig 8-10: Wing-TE You-Me Call



## SETTING THE WALL

This is a very important rule when running Guard Trap (31 or 32 G) and Tackle Trap (41 or 22 Trap). It is very important for the blocker to understand their blocking paths and to stay on those paths, even when a scraping defender tries to go around, or over the top of the block. Our coaching buzzword for this is:

“Stay on Your Tracks, Trains Don’t Turn”

“Don’t chase cowards”

What we mean by don’t chase cowards is when a Linebacker tries to avoid the block by going around the block, the blocker cannot turn his body or change his “tracks” to try to block him. The insert picture is what NOT to do.

## PLACE HOLDER

This

### Setting the Wall

