Vertical Concepts

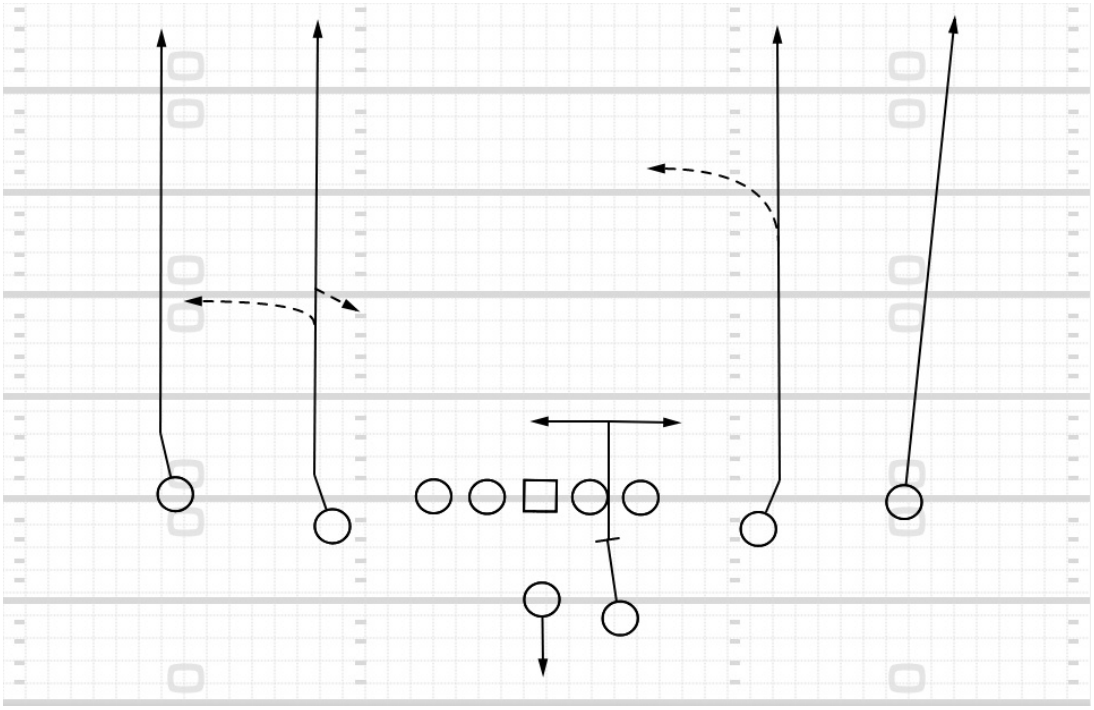


Verticals

Our vertical passing attack will allow us to effective stretch and attack defensive coverage attempts with up to four potential immediate vertical stretches. This concept will allow us to attack a multitude of defensive coverage attempts and will truly force the defense to have to defend the entire football field. It is important as we work through this chapter that you have a complete understanding of the routes, multiple adjusting routes, and how we will attack unsound defensive coverage attempts to have the touchdown cannon at Buccaneer stadium firing consistently. Here is how we will call our vertical route in 2019

Concept	Code Words	Signal
Verticals	Bulls, Magic, Celtics, Piston Wizard, Clipper, Warrior, Blaze	Thumbs Up

Concept	Code Words	Signal
Vertical with comeback tag	Kobe, Jordan	Dribbling Basketball



Landmarks

It is important to understand our landmarks on this route and how we want to stretch the field. When running a pure 4-vertical attack at the defense we want to force stretch points to the under-coverage and over the top coverage by attacking very specific areas. Our outside receivers will be attacking the area outside the bottom of the numbers and our inside receivers will be attacking 2 yards outside the high school hash mark as their general landmarks.

Protection

We want to protect our 4 vertical concept with our Rodger and Louie protection in a six man unit to allow us to potentially push the football down the field. If our running back does not have a linebacker to pick up in his protection responsibility he will run what we call a "box" check down route. He will run through the line of scrimmage to a depth of 3 yards and vs. zone will find a window to the quarterback. If the running back feels man coverage he will "get covered to get open" allowing the linebacker to invert to him and then burst away from him in the opposite direction staying on the move.

QB Drop and Read Progresson

Our quarterback will be taking a three step drop in the shotgun. The first thing our quarterback will do is to make sure that he does not have any pre-snap audible opportunities that we have built into the play. We want to make the defense defend us "Perfectly" and lineup appropriately to all of our potential vertical receivers (See Below for a perfectly aligned defense)



We will discuss later in this chapter potential pre-snap checks against un-sound defensive alignments that either uncover receivers or provide too much of a loose cushion. If we decide to proceed with the play as called your read as a quarterback will be as follows.

Quarterback read progression will be from **left to right**.

1. Peek at the outside Wr to his left
2. Slot Receiver to the Left
3. Slot Receiver to his Right
4. Outside receiver to his Right
5. RB Box Route (If QB feels pressure from a defensive lineman breaking free he may accelerate his read to the back)

Now lets take a look at each individual component of the base play. We will start with the outside receiver to the left who is running vertical up the bottom of the numbers. We want the best release possible and to BMMD (Beat My Man Deep). If this is not a clear touchdown shot due to mismatch or coverage we will work to the second progression in the read which is the left slot.
The slot receiver will stretch the under coverage to a decision point of 8-10 yards. If there is no safety aligned on the hash mark over the slot and he has effectively stretched the under coverage he will continue vertical 2-yards outside the hash expecting the ball.



If as the slot receiver works up the hash he can not win deep or there is a safety over the top he will execute one of two option routes at 8-10 yards depth.



The example above illustrates two safeties high on the hash marks. If this remains the same post-snap the quarterbacks second read will either be a pressured out or a sit route by the left slot.

If as he climbs vertical the area outside defender over him spot drops across his face and into the area outside of him. It is zone and the wr will sit the route down on his stem and find an immediate window to the quarterback. Below is an example of the slot receiver sitting in a hole on the hash.







You can see in the above example from the quarterbacks viewpoint that Area Outside defender spot drop across the slots face. The slot will simply find a window inside to the quarterback because he can not continue to work deep up the has vertically because there is a safety there.



If as the slot climbs vertical he feels a defender pressure him and get hands on him attempting to wall him off from the inside out he will run a pressured out by leaning into the defender and breaking outside sharply at depth of 8-10 yards.



Here is an example of the slot receiver running the pressured out vs a defender who is walling him off or carrying him up the field as he stretches him in almost a man

to man technique. The receiver will lean into the defender and separate by breaking sharply outside towards the sideline.



It is critical that the slot receiver not get jammed inside or slowed down in his release. This receiver must threaten the hash immediately. If this does not occur as a quarterback work to the backside or your read progression. (See Below for an example of the left slot receiver getting jammed inside and the quarterback having to get off of him as a read quickly.)



Now we will take a look at the route of the right slot receiver. He will also stretch the area 2 yards outside of the hash defeating the defender over him with the best release possible while getting on his landmark. If as he gets to a point of 12 yards there is no safety on the hash he will continue vertically outside the hash expecting the football.

Now you can see as a quarterback how this progression of your eyes will influence a single high safety defense. As you work left to right with your eyes as you eye the left slot receiver that single high safety my attempt to work over the top to cover the man deep going up the hash-That will then allow you to get your eyes to the backside hash as our right slot streaks up the hash for a touchdown. You will have completely influenced him with your eyes.

If as the right slot works up the hash mark there is a safety high over the top of him he will work a bender route with a speed cut in at a depth of 12-14 yards. See Example Below.



You can see in the above example the right slot receiver can not win vertically up the hash due to the alignment of the safety over the top of him. The receiver bends his route inside to the void in the middle of the field at a depth of 12-14 yards. Notice how the quarterback releases the ball before the receiver gets to that point. Remember you know he will be open in that void. If you wait to throw it he will be covered you will give the defenders an opportunity to break on the ball and make the play. If your read takes you to the backside slot on the bender the ball must be thrown on time and decisively (See example below).

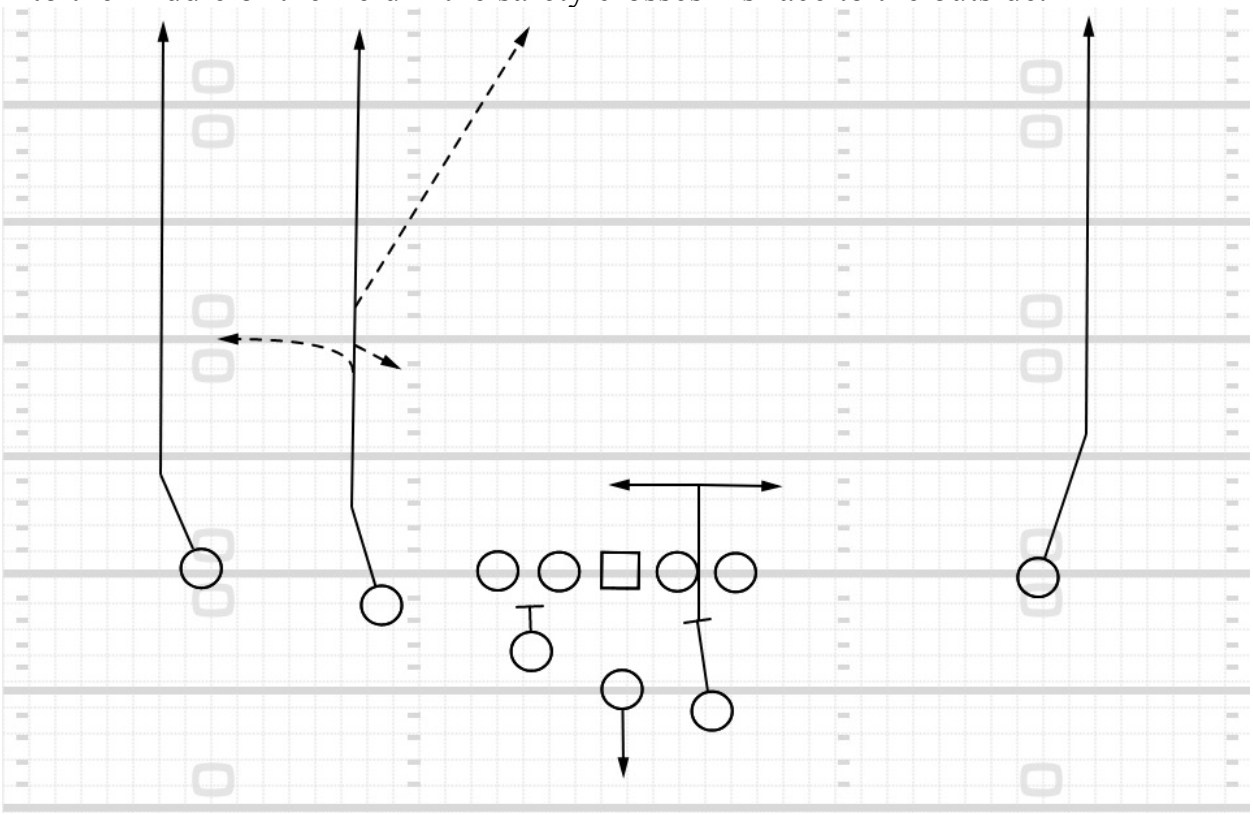


It is important that this route climb to the outside of any underneath coverage defender aligned over him that may be in man coverage or using a walling off technique. When we get in behind a defender it is tough for him to feel where we are and gives the receiver the opportunity to break open into the void in the middle of the field behind the spot dropping linebackers and the safeties defending the hash.

Our backside receiver has the same responsibility as the frontside outside receiver to stretch the defense vertically outside the numbers and to B.M.M.D (Beat My Man Deep).

3-Man Vertical Concept

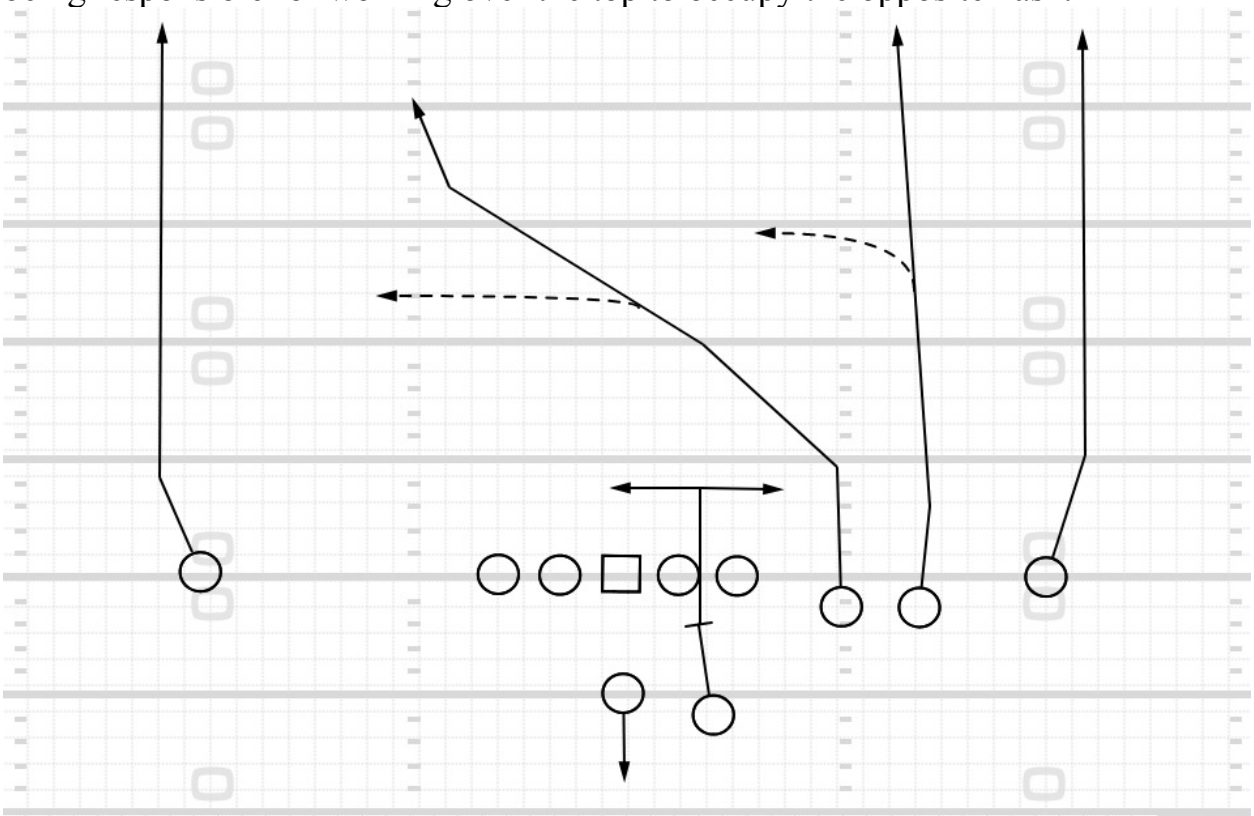
When we run the vertical concept from a two back formation with only 3 receivers the rules will remain the same with the exception of since we do not have a receiver stretching up the backside hash we will give the slot the option to break into the middle of the field if the safety crosses his face to the outside.

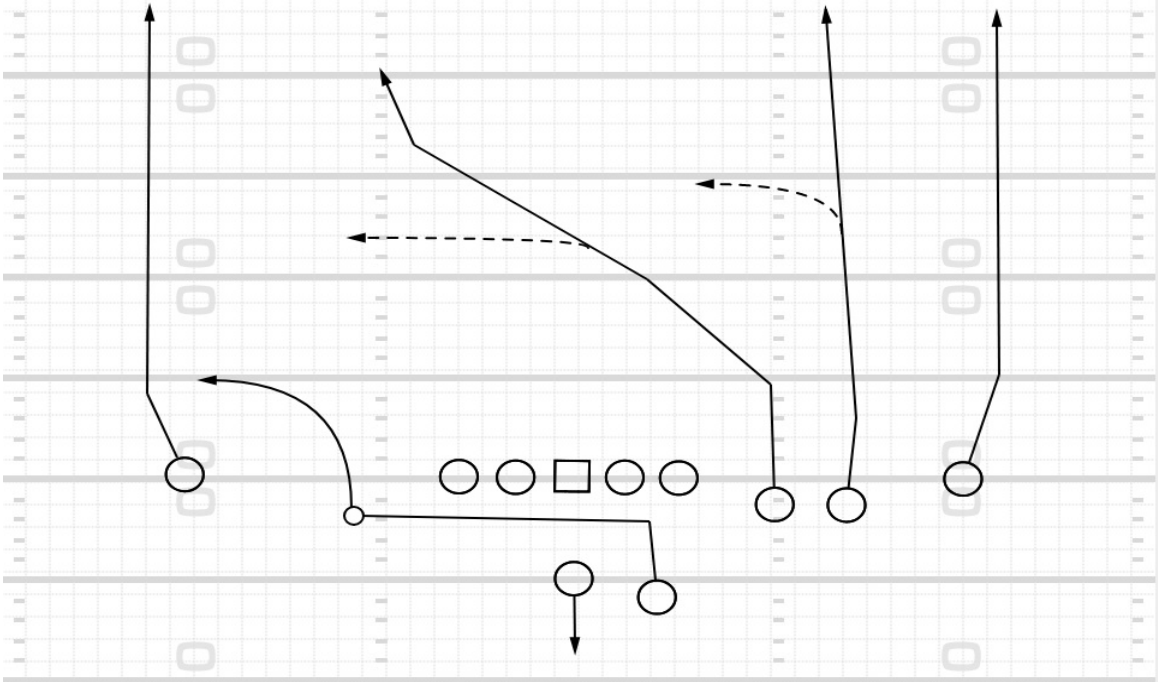


Deuce Left Bulls

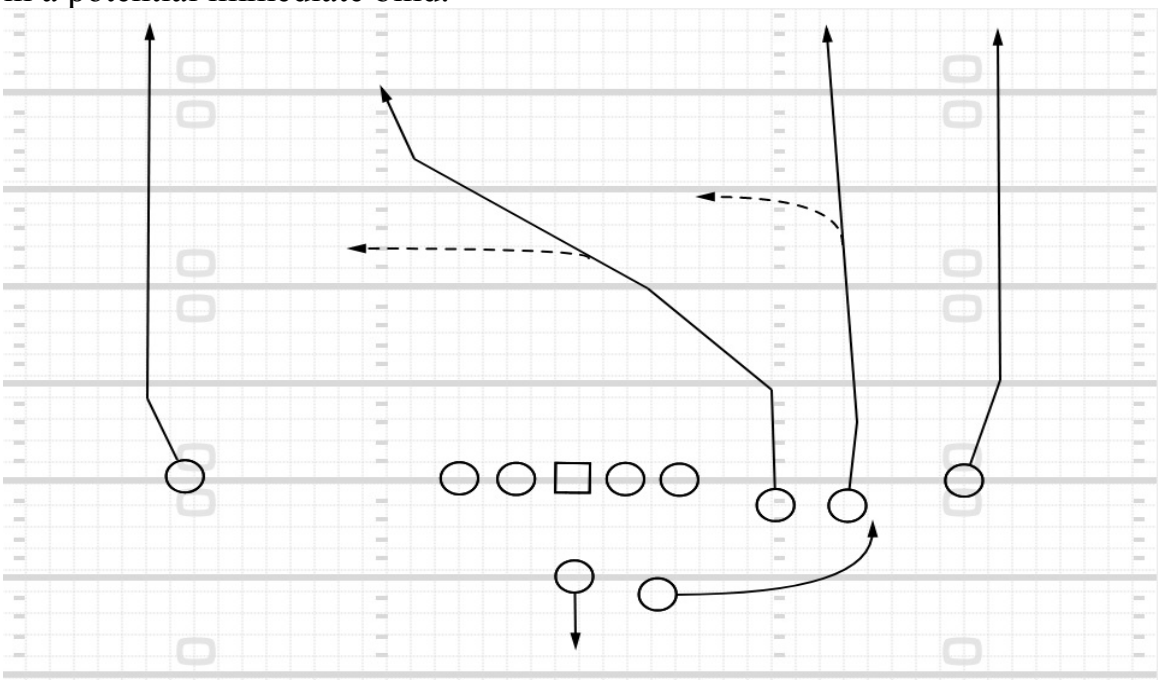
Variations

When running verticals from trips the same rules will apply with the inside slot being responsible for working over the top to occupy the opposite hash.

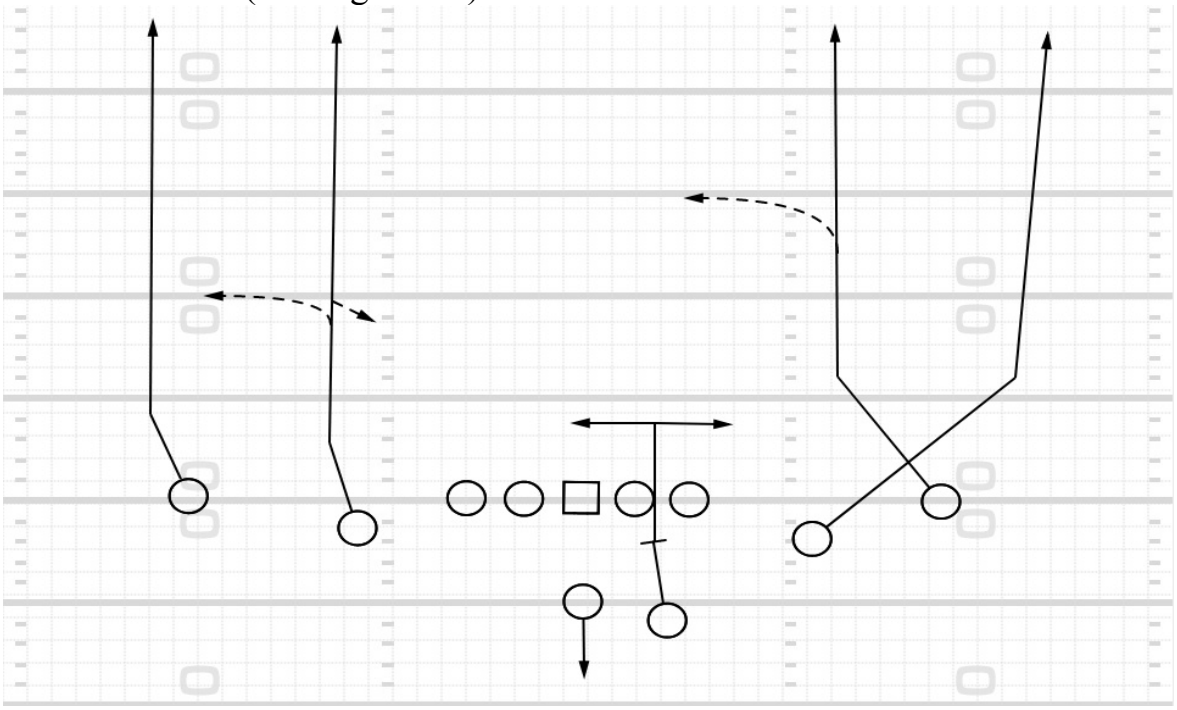




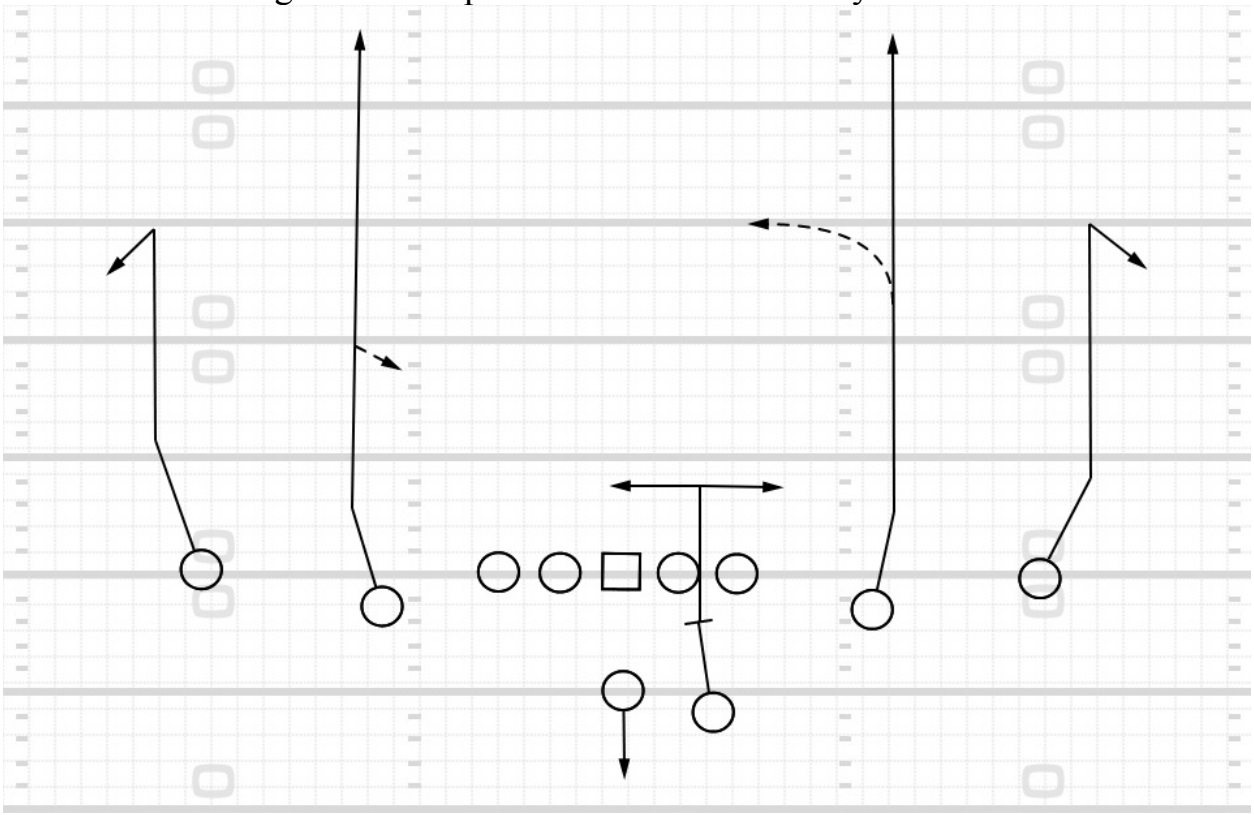
We will also add a “Rim” tag for the running back which will put him on a Rim route further stretching the hash to the trips side putting the area outside defender in a potential immediate bind.



We will also use the term “sonic” which will have the outside and inside wr exchange their route responsibility on a “Switch” route. The reads for you as a quarterback will remain unchanged. Note that we will only be switching the backside routes (our Right side).



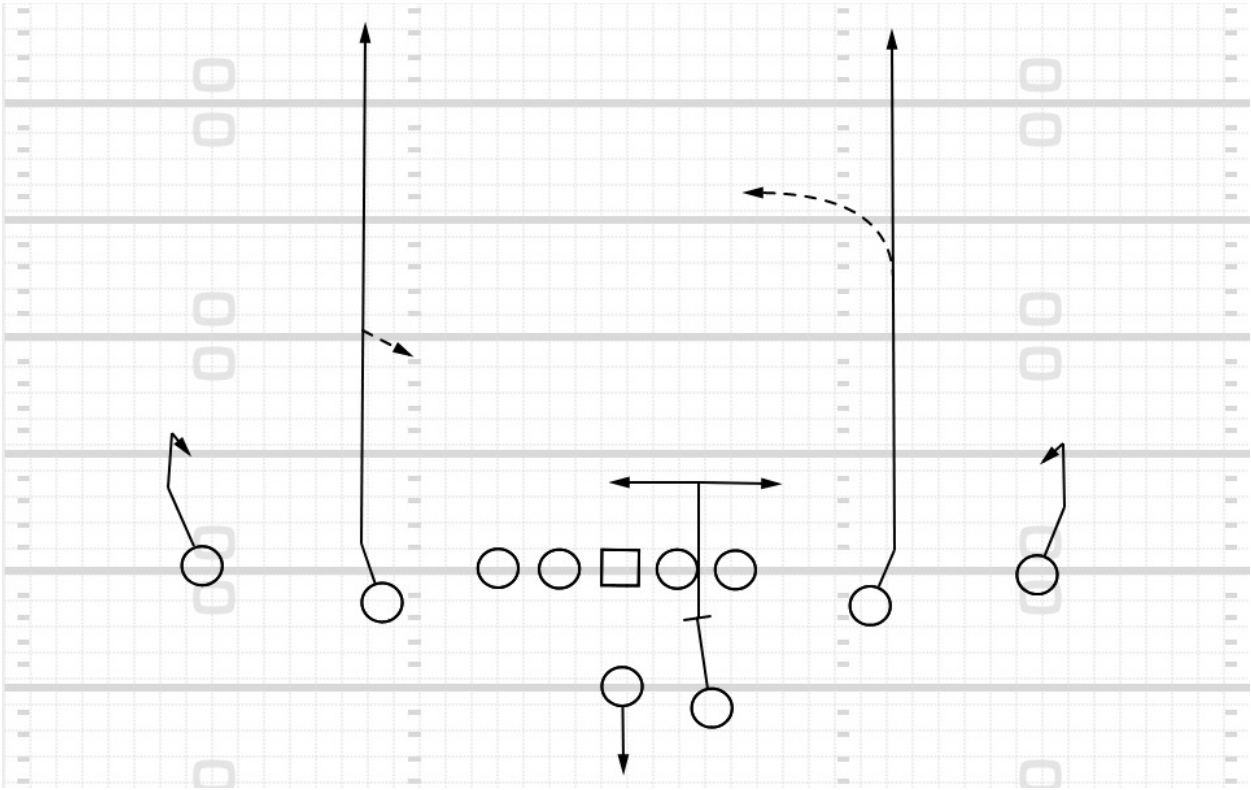
Now we will examine potential pre-snap tags that we will add to a vertical concepts to take advantage of defensive alignments or unsound coverage attempts. The first situation we will look at is when we want to add a 14 yard comeback (Kobe/Jordan) to both outside receivers. When this is done it is important to note that as a quarterback our initial first read in the progression may change. For example if we are on the right hash and call "Magic Jordan" our first read will be the outside receiver closest to us or the Right outside receiver. We would then progress to the left slot, right slot. We do not throw comeback routes all the way across the far hash so the outside left receiver would be "dead" to us in this scenario. We like to run the comeback vs. Man Coverage, vs. Corners that bail out hard, and Quarters coverage teams. Just remember if the ball is on a hash. It is the closest outside receiver who is the initial read. Another important note for the left slot receiver is on any tagged route such as the comeback by and outside receiver the left slot no longer has the option to break out at 8-10 yards.



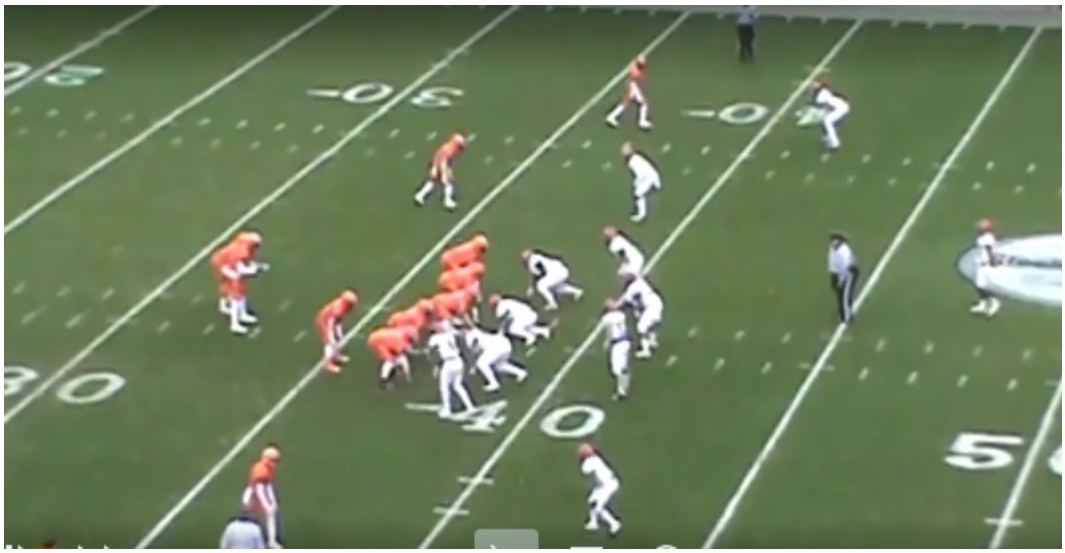
Above you see an example of Bulls Kobe out of our base formation. Both outside receivers are executing 14 yard comeback routes. When the comeback tag is added to the play that takes away any potential outside break choice for our inside slot receiver. As you can see in the diagram above because of the Kobe tag the left slot can ONLY run vertical 2 yards outside the hash or sit in the hole at 8-10 yards.

Loose outside coverage- Potential Checks

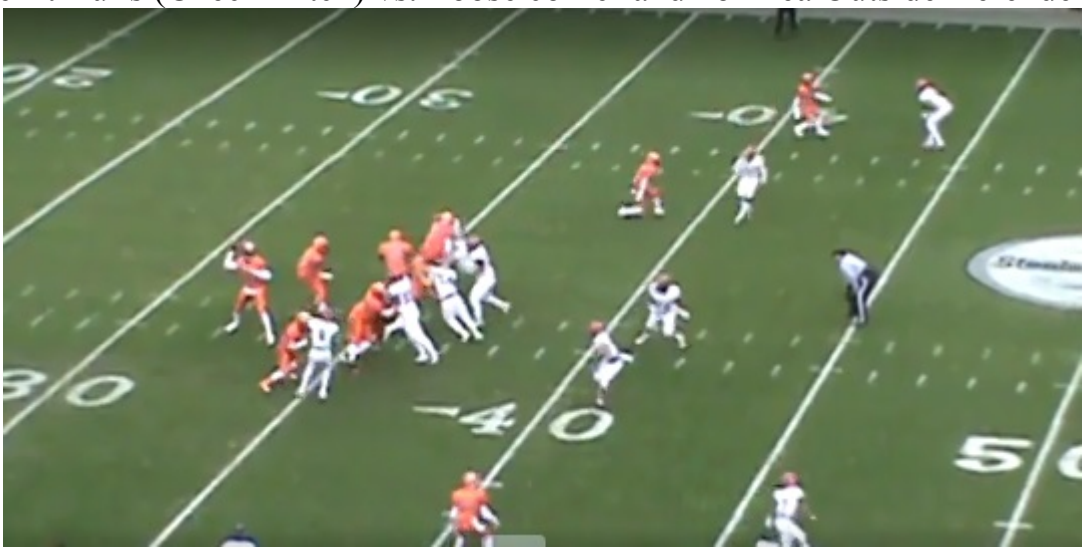
Lets take a look at a few defensive alignments where we would want to potentially call a pre-snap check to take advantage of how the defense is lining up. Remember we want to force the defense to "play us perfect" and respect and align on all of our eligible receivers. If they do not it is imperative that we have a plan in place to quickly attack those holes in the defense.



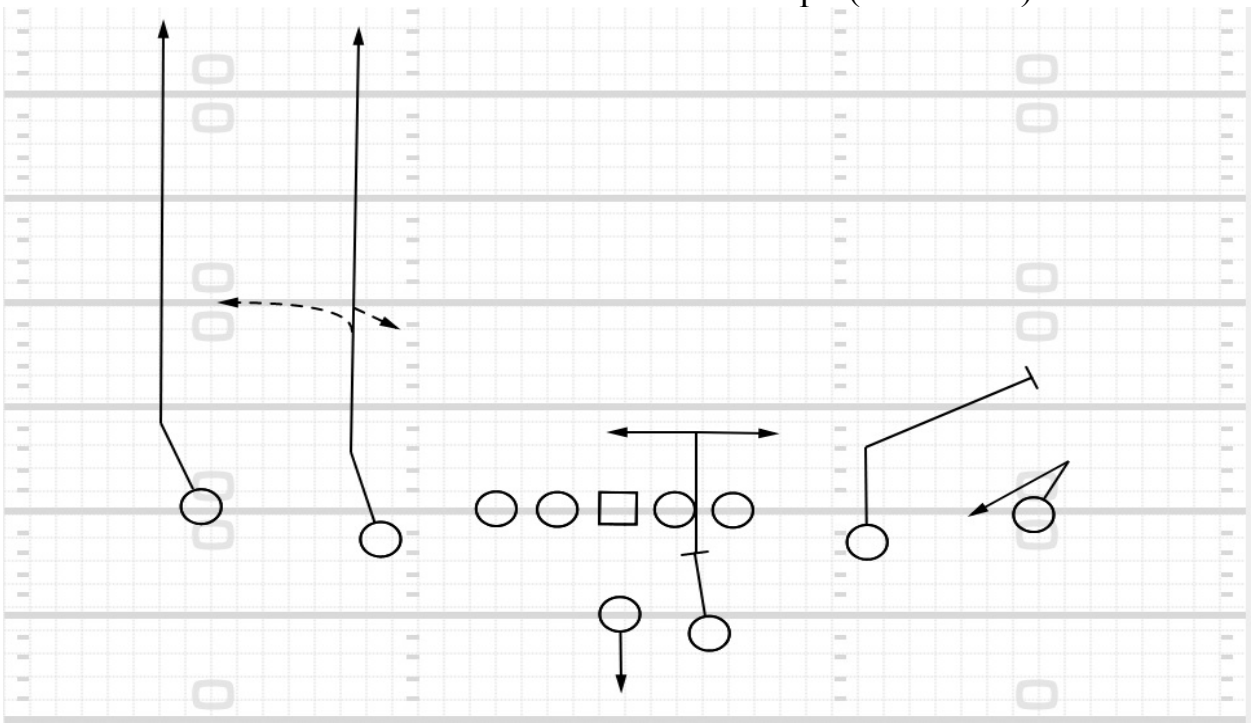
One of the most simple checks that we will have vs a loose corner is to run a 3-step hitch by our outside receivers. This is checked from the sideline prior to the play. You can see in the diagram below the loose pre-snap alignment of the cornerback and the effect of checking to the 3-step hitch on the outside.



Deuce Lt Bulls (Check Hitch) vs. Loose corner and no Area Outside Defender



The next potential outside check involves tagging a fast screen to either side. In this situation we have a numbers and leverage advantage to the right side so we add a Randy tag or a 40 tag at the line of scrimmage. This tells the receivers to that side of the formation to execute our fast screen concept. (See Below)



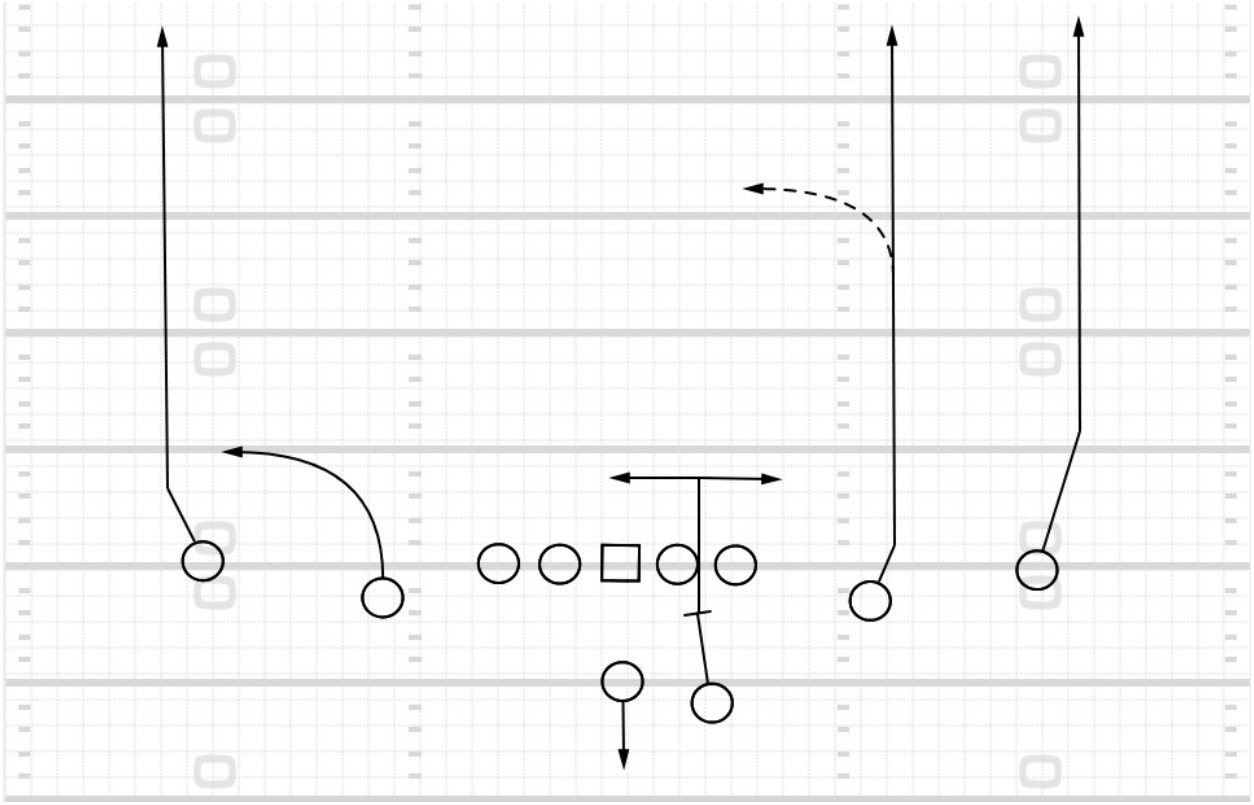
Magic Randy

Uncovered inside receivers- Potential Checks

Many defenses will attempt to not respect the alignment of our slot receivers. Or they will attempt to sneak extra defenders into the perimeter box for run support. When we are in a balanced 2x2 formation and the defense wants to run an open coverage with 2 safety high over the top they simply can not have 6 defenders in the interior box without leaving one of our slot receivers uncovered. What many 4-2-5 defensive teams will attempt to do is to place a six man box with two high safeties over the top with the Nickle defender aligned to the strength or “wide” side of the field. They will then essentially leave the slot receiver uncovered with a safety over the top of him at 8-10 yards.

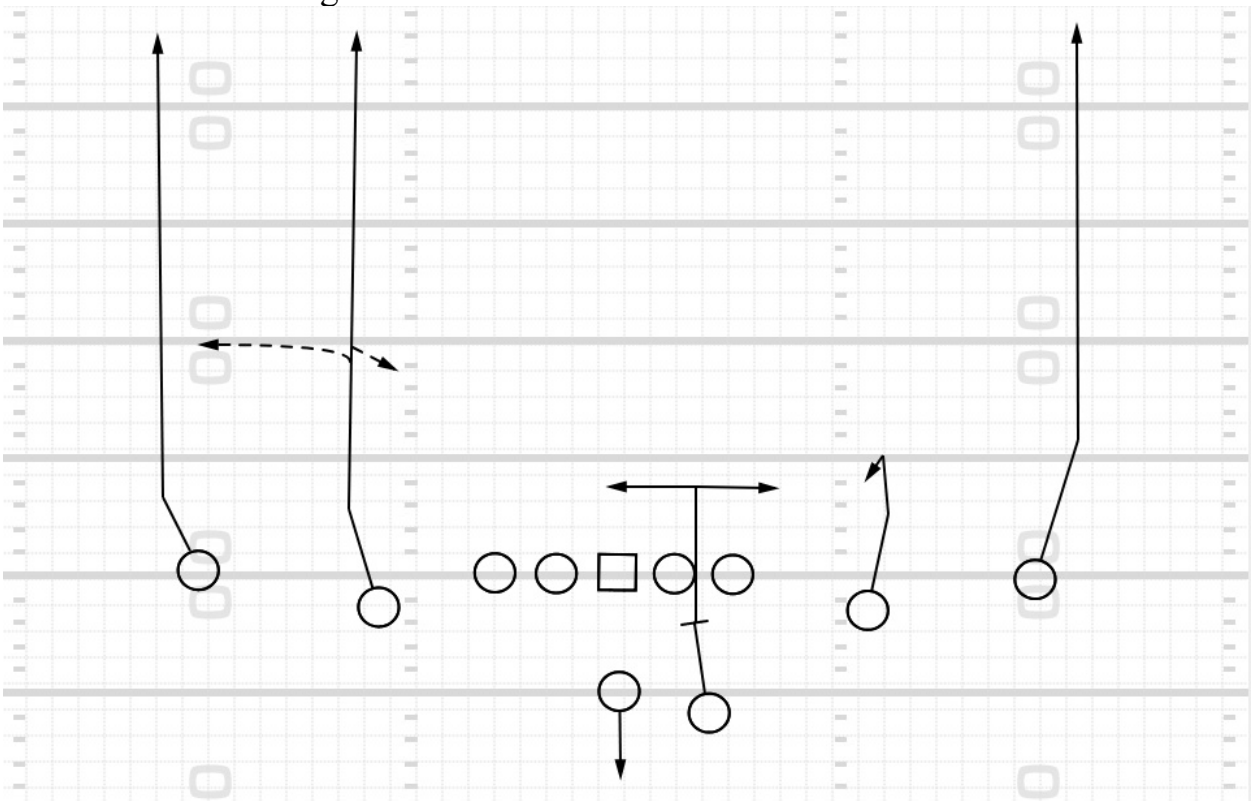


In the above screen shot you can see how the slot receiver to our left is "uncovered" and has outside leverage on any potential area outside defender with only a safety over the top of him at a depth of 10 yards.
One easy pre-snap check we can make to take advantage of this defensive alignment is to check to our quick out concept to that side of the field. In the example below you will see we have a "base" vertical call where we have checked "Out" at the line of scrimmage which puts the left slot receiver on a 3 step speed out.



Bulls w/ Out Tag

Another way that we can take advantage of an uncovered inside receiver is to simply tag a stick route (3-step hitch) to the uncovered receiver. Below you will see an example of a Vertical Call where we have tagged a stick route by the inside slot receiver on the right side of the formation.



Celtics with “Stick” tag



Quarterback recognizes that the left slot receiver is uncovered in this defense. The safety is simply too far off with no immediate area outside defender present so he wants to quickly get the ball into his hands by executing a “stick” tag (see below).



If we have checked to take advantage of this alignment the quarterback must get the ball out of his hands quickly to take advantage of the defensive alignment. We should also have an understanding of situational football (3rd, 4th Down, Yardage) when executing this concept. We do not want to check to a 5 yard hitch on 4th and 12.