

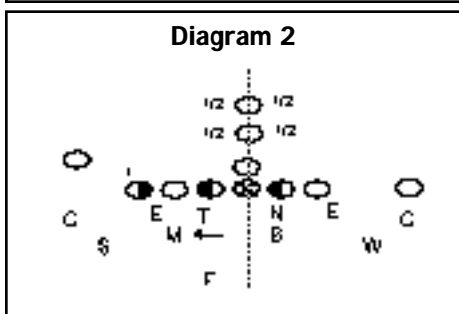
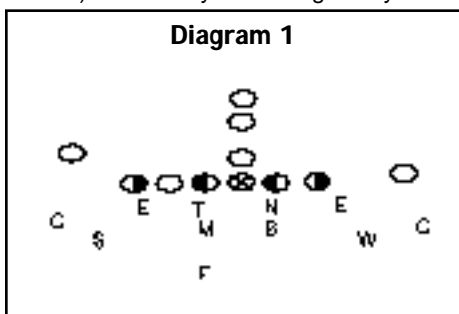
In the 2001 season, our defense had 92 tackle for loss, 32 sacks and 28 turnovers with the attacking style 4-2-5 defense. We use this 4-2-5 defense for five basic reasons.

1. It fits our personnel. At our level it is difficult to find a true Mike linebacker and two good outside linebackers, but it is a little easier to find a strong safety and weak safety position and two inside linebackers.
2. It allows us to adjust quickly and easily to multiple formations and/or motions that the offense can show.
3. The five secondary defense also allows us to give the illusion of having 8-9 guys in the box on the quarterback's pre-snap read.
4. It puts more speed on the field to help against today's spread offense.
5. It allows us to put more players in a threat position (or a position to blitz from).

In this article we will discuss our base alignments and our combination blitz package with man and zone coverage concepts. Keep in mind that our blitzing philosophy is that the threat of the blitz is more dangerous than the blitz itself, so our defense will continually stem and move around on the field to keep the offense off balance.

Base Alignment

In our scheme, the front six (four down linemen and the two inside linebackers) always set to the run strength (tight end side) denoted by the Mike linebacker with a rip/liz call and our back five (secondary) set to the passing strength (most quick receiver side) denoted by the strong safety with a



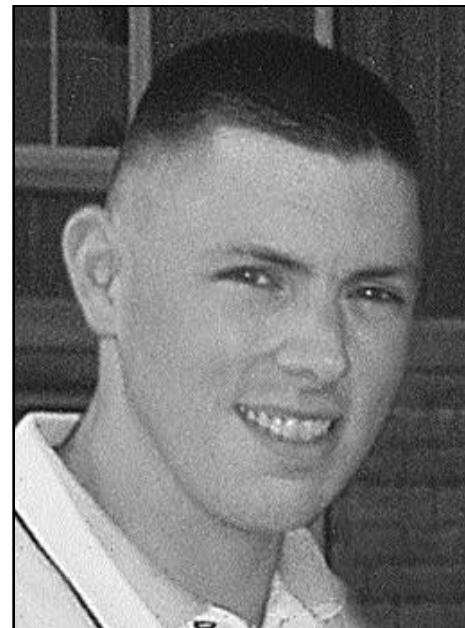
right/left call. Setting the front and back independently allows us to call the best front and stunt to stop the run and the best coverage to defend the pass.

Against a base 21 personnel (two backs one tight end) as seen in Diagram 1, our mike linebacker will set the front with a Liz call setting the weak end to a five technique (outside shade of the tackle), nose to a 21 technique (inside shade of the guard), tackle to a three technique (outside shade of the guard) and our strong end to a seven technique (inside shade of the tight end). We will align our linebackers using a point system. They begin in a stack alignment behind the defensive tackles and then count the three closest eligible men to the quarterback. In this case, the two backs and the tight end. If the backs are stacked behind the quarterback each backer assigns him 1/2 point, if a man is set to strong side completely the M assigns him one point, if a man is set to the other side the B assigns him one point. In any case, there will never be more than a total of three points assigned. In this formation the M has two points (FB- 1/2 TB- 1/2 TE- 1) and the B has one point (FB- 1/2 TB- 1/2). Our rules are simple. If the M has two points or more, he slides one big step to the strength, otherwise he stays stacked. If the B has 1.5 points or more he slides one big step away from the strength, otherwise he stays stacked. So in this example the B stays stacked and the M slides over (as seen in Diagram 2). We do this because we have found it helps align our linebackers in a more of a power position and in scraping over the top to make plays.

Again in Diagram 1, our strong safety will set the passing strength with a Left call. Our base rules for the alignment of the strong safety and weak safety are two yds wide x seven yds deep of the end man on the line (EMOL). Our free safety will align 10-12 yards deep over the guard to the passing strength and our corners will align anywhere from six yards to a press alignment, inside or outside shade of the widest receiver. This base alignment will change according to formations, opponent and tendencies.

Now when the run strength and passing strength are not the same we call this a "bastard" set (Diagram 3). The M will set the front with a Liz call. The front four will align the same, but now the alignments of the inside linebackers are a little different. The M and B both have 1.5 points to their

Quincy University's Attacking 4-2-5 Defense

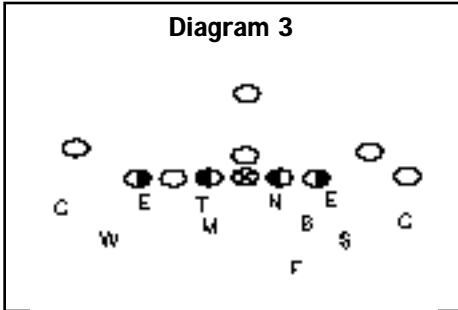


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sides. So the mike linebacker will stay stacked and the B will widen his alignment by a step.

The strong safety will set the passing strength with a right call. The strong safety will now play inside leverage of the No. 2 receiver (slot) still about seven yds deep. The weak safety will play 2x7 off the tight end. The free safety will now get 12-14 yards deep over the strong guard. The corners will play same alignment as before.



Blitz Package

We feel that the toughest blitz for the offense to pick up is a blitz in which four guys come to one side. When we call an overload blitz (linebacker and safety to the same side) we use the term dog (safety outside) or dig (safety inside). There are six ways we denote where the overload blitz will come from. If we are concerned about blitzing in reference to the run strength we will call thunder or lightning. Thunder means to the tight end side (run strength) and lightning means to the split end side (away from the run strength). If we are concerned about blitzing with reference to the passing strength we will call strong or Weak, for obvious reasons. If we are concerned about blitzing in reference to the field or boundary we will call wide or short, wide meaning to the field and short meaning to the boundary. These six tags allow us to easily dictate where the blitz will come from and allows us to adjust our blitzes to the different tendencies we will see in the course of a game and a season without having to teach different blitzes or techniques.

With each blitz we run we will have a man coverage and a zone coverage to play behind it. In our man coverage (man coverage blitzes are shown in diagrams 4-7), the corner has No. 1 to their side, the free safety has No. 2 to the blitz side, the safety not blitzing has No. 2 to their side and the linebacker has No. 3. The blitzing safety will peel off any man crossing his face. When the blitz is away from the tight end, the non-blitzing safety and linebacker will "Banjo"

the tight end. This call means if the tight end releases out or vertical the safety will take him man to man and the linebacker will take the back out of the backfield. If the tight end releases inside the linebacker will take him man to man and the safety will take the back out of the backfield, as shown in Diagrams 4 and 7. Again, we will stem our defensive backs to help disguise the blitz and coverage on every play.

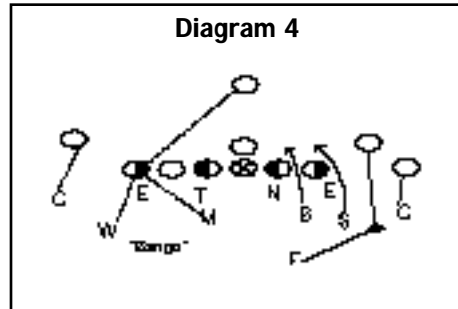


Diagram 4

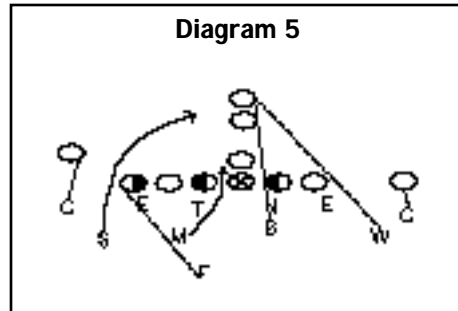


Diagram 5

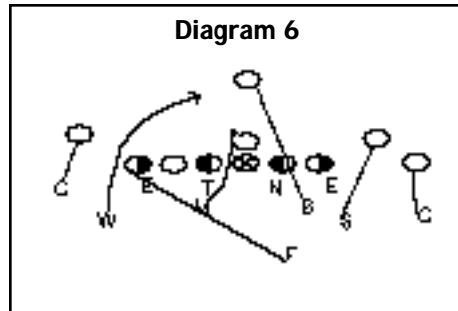


Diagram 6

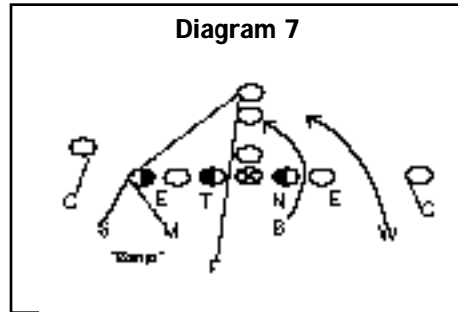


Diagram 7

In our zone coverage, we will call zone heat. Heat tells our weak end to attack up-field three steps and drop 45(to the curl/flat). Zone tells our free safety to make the best coverage call for their alignment. In an odd set (2x1, 3x1) we will call Cover 3 and roll one of the safeties into the strong curl while the other plays a deep third. If it is an even set (2x2) we will call our Cover

8, which is our 1/4's coverage- the two safeties will play curl to 1/4 while the corners play deep 1/4 to 1/2. Our non blitzing linebacker will cover the quick hot and middle (this can be seen in Diagrams 8-11).

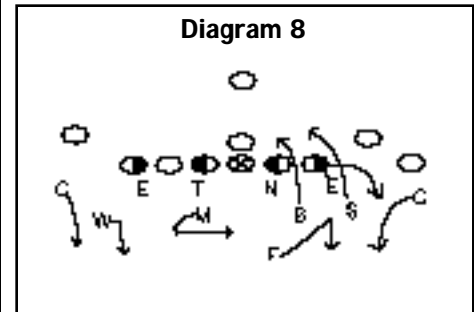


Diagram 8

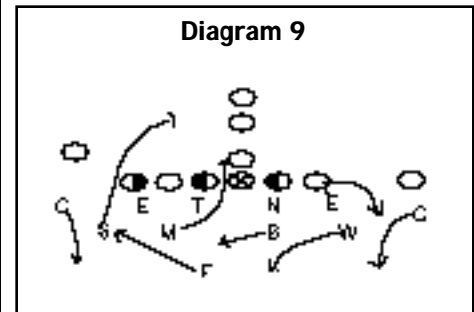


Diagram 9

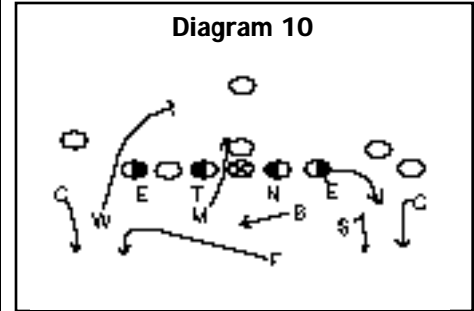


Diagram 10

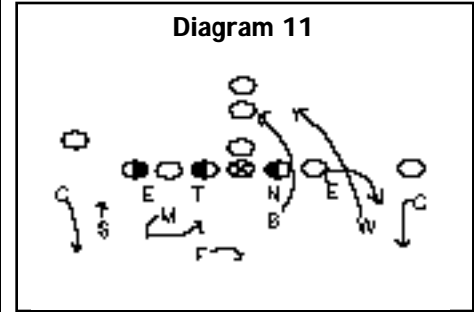


Diagram 11

Blitz Technique

The techniques for the dog blitzes are very simple and easy to coach. We teach our edge rusher to step to and rip tight to the EMOL using speed to beat him. We teach our ends to shortened the corner and attack the inside number of the EMOL. This causes a 2-on-1 situation on the edge. After passing the EMOL, the edge rusher now attacks the outside number of the widest and deepest threat- this puts him a great situation to peel on a swing route and take on a cut block. We teach them to attack this way because we feel it makes

the runningback declare what he is going to do. If the runningback is going to block and go, the attack of the edge rusher will slow his release down tremendously. If the runningback is going to block, it allows the edge rusher great power to collapse the pocket and beat the block. The edge rusher's aiming point on the quarterback is the back number. We use that as the aiming point for two reasons. That is the arm where he is holding the ball, and if for some reason we do miss the sack- it should force the quarterback to step up into the pocket to the rest of the pressure.

If the rusher aims for the upfield number, the quarterback may spin out and cause the defense to lose contain. We always strip the quarterback from top to bottom- if the quarterback's back is to the rusher we want him to club the back arm of the quarterback with his outside hand to force a turnover and secure the tackle with the other hand. If the quarterback is facing the rusher, they get their hands up, run through the quarterback, and strip him from top to bottom.

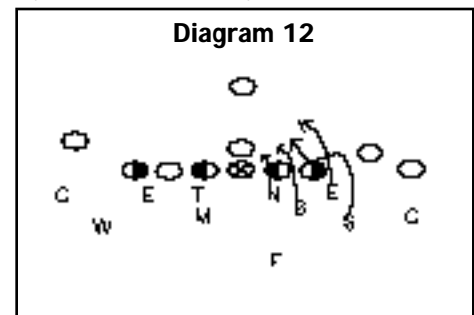
We teach our inside linebackers two techniques, a pause blitz and timing blitz.

On a pause blitz we want the offensive line to get engaged with the defensive line before they blitz. In this technique we are trying to also get the runningback to step out to protect the edge rusher, allowing an open inside blitz. On a timing blitz we want our linebackers to split the gap they are blitzing on the snap of the ball. In this technique we are trying to force a quick pass, force to runningback to step up and block to linebackers, or confuse the offensive line by allowing someone to leak free.

With the basic understanding of the dog blitzes and the techniques used, we can easily incorporate our dig blitzes (Diagram 12). The dig blitz allows us to adjust to a team who has widened their splits or uses their back to block the edge rusher. We now widen the defensive end and show an edge rush with the safety. On the snap of the ball our defensive end and safety rush off the edge and the linebacker blitzes using a paused technique. The safety- after three steps past the line of scrimmage, will knife underneath the defensive end and offensive tackle to the open B gap, trailing the linebacker. The defensive end will now have "peel" responsibility. This overload

blitz in the B gap allows us to put a lot of pressure on the offensive guard and tackle. We will call the dig blitzes with the same strength calls as we did for the dog blitzes. We will also run the same man and zone coverages behind the dig blitzes, the only difference being the defensive end will "peel" instead of the safety.

With these combination blitzes and coverages, we are able to easily adjust and show many variations. Offenses today are getting faster and more spread out, we feel that the blitz and more importantly, the threat of the blitz is a great way to counter their attack. This blitz package is very simple to teach and install and is easy to adjust and customize to your own coaching styles, beliefs, and players. Good luck!



Don't Predict Game Winners

The AFCA Ethics Committee reminds members that predicting game winners is a violation of the AFCA Code of Ethics. Many times, this occurs on coaches' shows or at the request of the news media.

In addition to providing an expert's opinion to gamblers and others, selecting game winners also creates bad feelings among fellow coaches.

Requests to pick winners of football games can be deflected with a simple, "Our AFCA Code of Ethics does not allow us to predict game winners."

NCAA Rule Regarding Tobacco Products

NCAA Bylaw 11.1.7 Use of Tobacco Products. The use of tobacco products is prohibited by all game personnel (e.g., coaches, trainers, managers, and game officials) in all sports during practice and competition. Uniform penalties (as determined by the applicable rules-making committees and sports committees with rules-making responsibilities) shall be established for such use. (Adopted: 1/11/94 effective 8/1/94; Revised: 1/10/95, 1/14/97 effective 8/1/97.)