



8-1-1966

Modern Trends in the theory and Teaching of Pass Defense in Football

K. DeWayne King

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MODERN TRENDS IN THE THEORY AND TEACHING
OF PASS DEFENSE IN FOOTBALL
GRAND FORKS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA

by

K. DeWayne King

B.S. in Education, University of North Dakota

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

Grand Forks, North Dakota

August
1966

448196

This thesis submitted by K. DeWayne King in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Committee under whom the work has been done.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study is a condensation of a book written by the author. For more extensive information please refer to "JERICHO-A MODERN SYSTEM OF PASS DEFENSE" written by DeWayne (Dewey) King, published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey in July 1963.

It has been my good fortune to work for such outstanding head football coaches as Richard Miller, at my Alma Mater, the University of North Dakota; Clarence L. "Biggie" Munn at Michigan State University; Steve Sebo at the University of Pennsylvania, and now Dr. John F. Bateman at Rutgers University. In addition to these head coaches, I have worked with such fine assistant coaches, many of whom have become head coaches, as Frank Zazula at North Dakota; Duffy Daugherty, Earle Edwards, Dan Devine, Robert Devaney, Don Mason and John Kobs at Michigan State. At the University of Pennsylvania our staff included C. A. (Tim) Tamerario, to whom I owe very much, Paul Riblett, George Terlep, John W. Butler, Bernie Lemonick, Robert Graham and the aforementioned John Bateman. Fellow staff members at Rutgers are Matthew Bolger, Warren Schmakel, Frank Burns and Robert Naso. The author is indebted to all of these men because each one has contributed something to the knowledge, philosophy and teaching techniques used and embraced by the author.

In addition to these men I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Walter Koenig and Dr. John L. Quadey for their help in adapting my book into thesis form.

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ABSTRACT

This study is a condensation of a book written by the author. For more extensive information please refer to "JERICHO-A MODERN SYSTEM OF PASS DEFENSE" written by DeWayne (Dewey) King, published by Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey in July, 1963.

The subject of this thesis is pass defense in football. After an introductory chapter the author writes about pass defense in its entirety. Chapter II is devoted to The Theory of Pass Defense; where the three types of pass coverage are described and the five measures that can be used to combat a good pass offense are discussed.

Chapter III deals with the Psychological Factors in Pass Defense. The author writes concerning a philosophy of pass defense--"Playing pass defense is very important and a singular honor." "It is a challenge and it is fun." The coach must "Build a belief and develop an esprit de corps" amongst the pass defenders.

The Basic Principles of Pass Defense are covered in Chapter IV. The ten principles are:

1. Know alignment and stance.
2. Identify opponent's formations.
3. Know adjustments to opponent's formations.
4. Know who the potential long receivers are.
5. Know the keys.
6. Know what flow means.
7. Know what pre-determine means.
8. Know what eye-control is and what responsibilities are.

9. Know what the maze is.

10. Maintain verbal communication.

The cardinal rule of all pass defense is: No one gets behind you.

Chapter V is devoted to Three Deep Pass Defense Coverage. The ten basic principles are covered in relation to three deep coverage. Also, the responsibilities of the defensive backs against the running game, from three deep alignment is explained in detail.

The final chapter of the thesis concerns itself with a summary and recommendations regarding the teaching of pass defense.

A Glossary of Terms at the end of the study concludes the thesis.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Pass defense is a much-discussed subject among football coaches. There are many ideas and concepts regarding the subject, dealing with the theory, type, philosophy and methods of teaching. It is a challenging and extraordinarily frustrating phase of football to teach. The writer personally enjoys teaching pass defense and has received a tremendous amount of satisfaction from the results of his work.

The writing of this thesis was accompanied with a deep sense of humility yet with strong convictions concerning the pass defense that is used. This includes the theory of pass defense, the psychological factors so deeply involved in it, the basic principles that are taught and three-deep coverage. All these areas will be discussed in this thesis.

The writer welcomes the opportunity to share some ideas and beliefs about this controversial subject. The purpose of this thesis is not to sell any particular theories or methods. This is what the author believes and the way it is taught and it has been successful. As a result, this type of pass defense is believed in one hundred per cent.

These thoughts on pass defense are offered with the hope that some one thing or part of these beliefs will be of aid to a fellow coach who takes pride in coaching pass defense.

CHAPTER II

THE THEORY OF PASS DEFENSE

Every year, since the introduction of the forward pass in football, pass defense has occupied an increasingly important place in the overall defensive planning of every football team.

Pass defense and all that it involves is an exacting and time consuming task. There are many factors involved in developing and perfecting a sound defense against passes. First, it is important to have boys who possess the fundamental skills necessary to play good pass defense. In addition, the boys must have or the coach must instill a burning desire to excel at this phase of football. When these two qualities are found in a boy, it then takes continuous systematic practice to build a strong pass defense unit.

It is the writer's personal belief that good reactions are more important than unbridled speed in the development of a good pass defender. Speed is important, when playing defense, but it is not the most important quality a boy should possess to excel at pass defense. A boy who has tremendous speed will rely on that speed to get himself out of a jam after he has been derelict in his duties and made a mistake that got him into trouble. A boy of this type must have his speed disciplined and his ability harnessed so that he can best use his God-given talents for pass defense.

The pass defender who has developed good footwork, which includes the ability to maintain body balance, agility in movement and good reactions--plus mental discipline, develops into a much better defender against passes than the boy who depends on speed alone.

Experience makes a good pass defender outstanding. Assuming that he possesses the aforementioned qualities, then experience will make the difference between a good pass defense man and a great one.

The basic concept of pass defense is to put pressure on the good passer but not on the poor passer. The inferior passer should be allowed to throw the ball and put it into the air. He will, without pressure from linemen, over-throw and under-throw his intended receivers a certain percentage of the time--and that percentage works for the pass defense. The pass defense wants to provide him with the opportunity to pass--so that it can intercept and get possession of the ball. Also, by allowing him to pass the defensive linemen are free to act as interference when the secondary gets the ball.

Against the fine passer, great pressure must be generated and maintained. Coverage alone will not hold up against the top passer (later, in this chapter this thought will be developed further). There are three types of coverage used in pass defense, but regardless which type is used, whether it is zone, man-for-man or a combination of these two, there is one paramount truth--there is no defense for the perfect pass. When the pass is thrown accurately and the receiver makes a good catch, the pass will be completed.

To the pass defense coach or the boy who takes pride in playing it, this statement would be a morale-shattering thought were it not for

the fact that five specific measures can be taken to keep the number of pass completions to a minimum and prevent a team from breaking open a football game.

There are five methods in an overall pass defense plan that will successfully check and contain the opponent's passing game. No one of the methods can do the job alone, although outstanding success is sometimes realized with a specific maneuver against a particular opponent. Such a situation would be the continual red-dogging of a quarterback who, when being rushed, is relatively ineffective. This fact will emerge when scouting a team or studying their movies.

It is always sound football to use scouting reports to ascertain tendencies of individuals and teams. From these tendencies the types of defensive maneuvers that will best counteract what the opponent likes and does best can be planned and utilized.

The five factors that can give the pass defenders the edge in the continual battle between the pass offense and the pass defense are:

1. Put pressure on the passer.
2. Delay the potential receivers.
3. Develop good coverage.
4. Vary the defenses, utilize a combination of the first three methods.
5. Play for and make pass interceptions.

Put Pressure on the Passer

Putting pressure on the passer is the best pass defense. There is nothing that disrupts and destroys a pass offense quicker and more

FIGURE 1

TEAM INTER-CEPTIONS	PLAYER	INDIVIDUAL INTER-CEPTION	OPPONENT	COMBATS			OUR YDS		-WE-		-THEY-					
				YDS	ATT	TD'S	YDS	RETURNED TD'S	INTER YDS	RETURNED TD'S	ATTEMPS	YDS GAINED	TD'S			
1	MUDIE	1	SIWASH	3	11	27	0	3	28	1	3	28	1	11	27	0
2	DEBELLING	1	TECH													
3	BOLDEN	1														
											INTERCEPTIONS: 3 OF 11 = 1 OF 3.7					
4	YAKSACK	1	NORTH	4	16	48	1	3	21	0	6	49	1	27	75	1
5	HANLON	1	DAKOTA													
6	TERPAK	1														
											INTERCEPTIONS: 6 OF 17 = 1 OF 4.5					
7	LOWE	1	PAINTED	0	9	0	0	3	29	1	9	78	2	36	75	1
8	YAKSICK	2	POST													
9	BOLDEN	2														
											INTERCEPTIONS: 2 OF 21 = 1 OF 4					
10	DOELLING	2	SILVER	7	21	81	1	4	47	1	12	125	3	57	156	2
11	BYRD	1	SPRING													
12	RIEPL	1														
											INTERCEPTIONS: 12 OF 57 = 1 OF 4.7					
13	RIEPL	2	ST.	2	12	14	0	2	4	0	14	129	3	69	170	2
14	FRAUENHEIM	1	ANDREW													
											INTERCEPTIONS: 14 OF 47 = 1 OF 4.9					
15	KOWALSKI	1	PACIFIC	14	34	181	2	1	32	1	15	161	4	103	351	4
											INTERCEPTIONS: 15 OF 82 = 1 OF 6.9					
16	KROLL	1	LUTHER	1	21	8	0	5	164	1	20	325	5	124	359	4
17	CHAMPION	1														
18	MUDIE	2														
19	COFFIN	1														
20	MUDIE	3														
											INTERCEPTIONS: 20 OF 121 = 1 OF 6.2					
21	PARKS	1	PENNSYLVANIA	4	18	30	1	2	11	1	22	336	6	132	439	5
22	KOLE	1	TECH.													
											INTERCEPTIONS: 22 OF 126 = 1 OF 6					
TOTAL - 35 132 439 5 22 336 6 INTERCEPTIONS: 22 OF 122 = 1 OF 6																

effectively than strong pressure on the passer. There must be seven or eight men involved if the pressure is to be effective. If fewer men are involved, the offense can block the rushing linemen--then there is neither pressure nor coverage.

Most teams possess a boy who can pass reasonably well when allowed to "sit in a rocking chair" and throw with no pressure put on him. But it is a different situation when hundreds of pounds of rampaging baby-beef bear down on the passer with the avowed purpose of putting him on his back. It is impossible for a boy to throw from a prone position looking skyward, so an integral part of a good pass defense plan is to force the passer to "throw from the cellar window" so to speak.

It is important to find out whether the "patter of little feet" bothers the passer. His reaction to pressure will determine the selection of defenses for the balance of the game or so long as that particular quarterback is in the game.

When the rush is on, it is necessary to continually drill into the players that the passer must be tackled for a loss or forced to throw the ball hurriedly. This will force him into mistakes, such as throwing off balance, and, as a result, he will deliver an inaccurate pass. Make the passer do something he does not want or like to do--and cannot do well.

The passer must be gang-tackled and gang-rushed. As the would-be tacklers "zero-in" on the passer they must get their hands in the air, but never leave their feet unless the passer has thrown the ball--and then only in an attempt to block the pass. Force the passer to throw over the out-stretched arms of the rushing tacklers. During the

hard-rush maneuver the linemen must always keep under control so the passer cannot fake a pass, then step around the leaping linemen and deliver the ball. The linemen must make sure when tackling. Sureness is more important than how hard the passer is hit.

There is a point to stress concerning rushing linemen. If the passer is facing away from the side of the charging linemen there is no need to raise the hands in the air with the resultant loss of speed. In this situation the linemen must be taught to keep "pouring on the steam," continue to rush and penetrate, then bury the shoulder in the passer and put an enthusiastic tackle on him.

When the passer is facing the rushing linemen and plugging linebackers, they should tackle the passer high, from the top down, so that he cannot get rid of the ball. The men involved in the rush must be aggressive and tenacious--but always under control. In meeting blockers, they must be taught to use head, body and feet fakes in the running battle to get to their quarry. They must make contact with the offensive blocker, then get rid of the blocker by controlling his head.

Ends (or men with outside defensive responsibilities) must approach from the outside in and always keep leverage. Woe be to the team if the opponent's passer can fake a pass, tuck the ball under his arm and take off for daylight to the outside.

Tackles and guards must be conscious of the draw play, screen pass, Statue of Liberty play and the fake-pass run. An experienced line will handle the changing situations with their quick reactions and football sense. If experienced linemen are lacking, then good drills simulating game problems will help inexperienced boys gain the necessary poise to handle the situation.

A well trained, disciplined line that charges hard is the best pass defense. Success in rushing defense usually means success in pass defense and vice versa. They complement each other.

When pressure is put on the passer one or more of the linebackers must be involved. But they cannot put heat on the passer and also provide coverage; they must do just one or the other. Someone else must assume their coverage responsibilities when they are part of the rush.

Coaches must make players understand that when extreme pressure is being put on, with seven or eight men, coverage is sacrificed for the hard rush. With linebackers rushing, a secondary receiver may be open temporarily, but an end is assigned to cover him in this situation. Also, with eight men putting pressure on the passer they are expected to tackle the passer before he throws the ball or at least force an inaccurate pass.

In summation, when putting pressure on the passer, there are four objectives:

1. Hurry the passer, force him into mistakes.
2. Block the pass.
3. Tackle the passer, with the ball, for a loss.
4. Get the interception.

Delay the Potential Receivers

The rules allow the defense to block, jam or shove the potential receiver until the ball is thrown. The specific defensive men involved in these maneuvers must jam the offensive end and force him to the

outside. This prevents him from getting downfield quickly against the deep secondary defender. It also helps take away the quick or diagonal pass.

It is easier and more effective to hold up ends from either an inside or outside position rather than head on. Delaying the ends, in this manner, cuts to a minimum the opportunity they have to fake the defensive man. Lining up on the inside means the linebacker takes a position on the inside shoulder of the offensive end. An outside position means the linebacker assumes a defensive stance on the outside shoulder of the offensive end.

All offensive personnel are potential blockers, until the ball is thrown, and defensive men are thus permitted to use their hands against them. The man on defense cannot hold--but a good jolt will disturb the balance of the potential receiver and will help upset the pattern he wants to run. It will also ruin the timing of the play by costing him at least one step. Regardless whether the potential receiver is on the line of scrimmage or downfield, he must be played aggressively, until the ball is thrown--then the pass defender must "fly to the ball" with equally as much tenacity and aggressiveness.

A word of caution regarding delaying receivers. It is difficult for one man to delay an end for any length of time. It is impossible, in fact, if the end is put out wide as a spread end. This should be considered when making defensive plans to delay receivers. The maneuvers necessary for delaying receivers, other than spread ends, include line loops, slants, pinching ends and eagle-type linebackers. Eagle linebackers, of course, are those that line up either "head-on" the end or

on either shoulder and give the end a jolt as he attempts to go out for a pass. If the available material cannot execute any of these specific maneuvers properly, then it is best to discard these particular movements and concentrate on other methods of delaying the potential receivers. This is done, of course, until the men involved in these maneuvers can be taught to execute properly. The linemen and linebackers need not be perfect at specific techniques such as slants and jamming ends before using them.

It is questionable whether linemen are more effective at delaying the receiver or concentrating 100 per cent on getting to the passer with reckless abandon. They cannot do both simultaneously--either one or the other must be stressed on a specific maneuver or defensive game. It is difficult to delay smart and clever receivers without holding them. It requires an excellent defensive man to play against a clever offensive performer and achieve the desired results. The decision regarding what to do or stress must be dictated by the personnel available.

Eagle-type linebackers can get so involved in delaying a receiver they forget their own pass coverage responsibilities. This will allow a back, on a pass pattern away from the strength or flow, to run loose. This must not happen.

All these factors must enter into the decision whether or not to delay the receivers, and if so, how much.

Develop Good Coverage

Regardless of the type of coverage used, in order to contain good receivers and a good passer, both pressure on the passer and good coverage must be used. It is unwise to rely solely on coverage when

playing against a good passer. Pressure must be put on him also. There are three fundamental types of coverage in pass defense:

1. Zone
2. Man-for-Man
3. Combination of Man-for-Man and Zone.

The theory of each coverage has been dealt with briefly as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

Zone

The strength of zone coverage is against deep passes; very few long passes are completed against it. Also, a slower boy can do better in the zone than in man-for-man coverage.

In the theory of zone coverage each defensive man has a particular territory to cover against passes. The defensive men key the uncovered offensive linemen. Once the ball is snapped, the linemen will show immediately whether or not it is to be a pass by their blocks. On a running play the linemen fire out and block aggressively. On passes they pull back to protect. When it is a pass, the defensive backs will drop into the middle of their respective zones, all the while watching the passer. The receivers coming downfield are not as important to the defender as the passer with the ball. In straight zone coverage, the defensive man never leaves his zone to cover a man. He only leaves it to go for the ball. When the ball is thrown, he gives it his undivided attention. He becomes a centerfielder. Very good reaction to the ball is of utmost importance in developing a strong zone pass defense. Zone coverage succeeds or fails on the ability of the pass defenders to anticipate the pass. They cannot wait until the ball leaves the passer's

hands to react--they must be on their way by then. Consequently, zone defenders are taught to watch the passer's eyes. Where he looks he will throw. Very few passers can look in one direction and throw accurately in another.

Against flanked backs or spread ends the straight zone coverage can still be used. When defending their own goal line most zone pass defense is converted to man-for-man coverage.

The weakness of the zone pass defense is that it can be exploited by putting three or four receivers into the same zone. If no help arrives, then one defender must cover all four men. Also, in zone coverage it is difficult to cover the flat, short and hook passes. When deep men drop back immediately to cover passes, and the linemen are rushing the passer, the middle area is exposed to hook, crossing and square-out patterns.

Another zone weakness shows when the passer has plenty of time to throw. The zones become too large for one man to cover. In fact, when the offensive pass protection holds up, there is actually no such thing as a zone defense. The longer the passer is able to hold the ball the farther away and apart the receivers spread as they run their patterns. Now the zone defenders are forced into man-for-man coverage because they react only to the ball and it is still in the passer's hands. When potential receivers run thru the zones, the defenders must pick them up and cover them. The defenders are forced, under these circumstances, to forget their zones and cover the men. Also, when no receiver comes into a defender's zone, he is wasted because the zone defender reacts only to the ball.

In zone coverage the men involved do not have specific responsibilities; therefore, they should not and cannot react to fakes too quickly.

When throwing against the zone, the passer must be aware that he is attempting to beat the defense and not the individual.

Man-for-Man

Each player involved in man-for-man coverage is assigned to a specific potential offensive receiver. He covers that individual wherever he goes. The assignments are clear-cut and specific. There must never be any doubt regarding responsibilities or coverage. No defensive man should ever be fooled as to who his man is. In this type of coverage no one is wasted in an area where there are no potential receivers. When playing man-for-man, it is possible to get more men rushing the passer. Under most circumstances it provides a greater number of defenders to play the ball. Another strong point is that it is possible to put the best pass defender against the opponent's top receiver.

There are certain inherent weaknesses in man-for-man coverage. First, there are only a limited number of defensive performers who possess the ability to cover one man all over the field. A good receiver can be pitted against an inept defender. Even more of a problem, a clever receiver has the opportunity to out-manuever an individual pass defender despite the fact he might be outstanding on defense. In man-for-man coverage, it is imperative to be constantly aware of the crossing patterns and decoy routes that the receivers will attempt to establish.

In all pass defense, and particularly in man-for-man coverage, the defensive man must play the pass first and the run second. If the

actions of the pass receiver, even on the running play, indicate a potential pass, the pass defender must respect this maneuver and stay back. As a result he cannot react fast enough to be of help against the run.

When the opposing end blocks, the defender cannot "fire up" to the line of scrimmage to make the tackle. If he does, he will be beaten deep on the next play by an alert offense when the end blocks for three counts then releases for the deep pass. This will happen when the defender reacts to the block too quickly and comes up to make the tackle. On pass defense, it is much better to stand still rather than commit too fast.

Anyone playing man-for-man should and must know that the passer is attempting to beat an isolated man and not the entire coverage. Due to the nature of the coverage, the offense will attempt to isolate one man and beat him rather than attack the entire man-for-man coverage with specific patterns.

Combination Man-for-Man Coverage

There are several types of combination pass defense coverage. Certain combination defenses will have specific defenders cover man-for-man while simultaneously the other defensive man will play a zone. Another type is to have man-for-man responsibilities within the framework of a zone. Still another combination coverage is to start with a zone and have man-for-man responsibilities within the confines of a zone.

Needless to say, this type of coverage gives the pass defenders various and alternating responsibilities. Combination coverage requires poise, cleverness and ability to adjust rapidly to a given situation. The defenders must be able to react quickly to avoid confusion and must

possess a thorough knowledge of their assignments and responsibilities, which comes with experience. When the pass defenders are sure of their specific duties and principles, the combination man-for-man and zone coverage is the soundest and most effective type of pass defense.

Vary the Defenses, Utilize A Combination of the

First Three Methods

Within the framework of the total team defense there must be games devised to:

1. Put pressure on the passer.
2. Delay the receiver.
3. Get single and double coverage.

This is done to accomplish what is needed in a specific situation. The defense cannot rely 100 per cent on any one of these three maneuvers but must always keep mixing up the defensive calls so that the pass defense coverage will not be readily discernible to the opponent. The opponent must not know what to expect; he must be kept guessing.

Against these continually changing defensive calls, the opponent must guess the type of coverage being used on a coming play, probe the coverage to find the weakness, then they must catch the defense in the one they hope to defeat. When this is accomplished, the opponent then must determine how to attack the coverage with the passes they have at their disposal--then they must get the correct passes called and executed properly--all at precisely the right time!

The percentages are in the favor of the defense. This fact should be exploited.

Play for and get Interceptions

Great emphasis must be put on getting interceptions. The pass defense cannot be content just to knock the ball down. Interceptions are stressed to the extent that the pass defenders are taught to intercept usually on fourth down and always on third down. The ball cannot be knocked to the ground on third down only to see, on the next play, a long pass completed for a touchdown. This has happened!

Many passes are completed for touchdowns and long yardage on an "obvious punt situation." Consequently, it is necessary to go for third down interceptions and take that punt situation away. The defense wants the ball--always and anywhere. Until the pass defenders acquire the habit of intercepting, they must be taught to intercept every pass they can possibly get near, regardless of the tactical situation or field position. When going for the interceptions there can be no "mental stuttering." Get the football.

Once a pass defender acquires experience and good football sense, then he can be allowed to use his judgment about intercepting on fourth down situations. The deployment of his own teammates at the time of the interception, position on and condition of the field are other factors that enter into his decision whether to intercept or knock the ball down.

Interceptions can and do win football games. They do more to break a team's morale than any one factor in football. In 1961, Rutgers defeated Colgate 26-6. Three of the four touchdowns that Rutgers scored were made or set up by pass interceptions. Safetyman Sam Mudie returned two for touchdowns of fifty-two and thirty-eight yards

respectively. His third interception was returned twenty-seven yards to the Colgate two-yard line. Rutgers scored two plays later. With the one hundred seventeen yards he gained, on his three interceptions, Mudie had the leading single game performance of any defensive back, in the nation, for the 1961 season. Pass interceptions do win football games.

They also can be and often are turning points in football games.

An interception can equal fourteen points. Take the situation where an intended receiver is in the open and ready to catch a sure-fire touchdown pass. At the last instant, a defensive back intercepts the ball and returns it for a touchdown. This is an interception that is worth fourteen and possibly sixteen points. Interceptions are equal to blocked punts and also take away punts. Tactically speaking, a blocked punt is worth forty yards and possession of the ball. An interception can result in the same advantage to the defensive team.

Once the ball is in the air--it belongs to the defense. After it has been thrown, the pass defenders must "fly to the ball." It is the only one in the game, and once it is thrown it will not change direction.

When making the interception, great stress is put on going for the ball, with both hands and arms fully extended. The defenders are told, "Never put the hands on the opponent's body." Using this technique makes it impossible to be called for pass interception.

During the actual intercepting of the pass, the following points are emphasized:

1. Go through the man to get the ball.
2. Look the ball into the hands.

3. Catch the ball at its highest point.
4. After the ball is caught, call out the oral signal, and put it away.
5. Dig hard for three steps and head for the goal line.

When the passer throws the ball and the interception is made, every team member, except the man blocking the potential receiver, sets up a running course so he will be in position to form interference for the interceptor. An example of this happened in the Rutgers-Bucknell game of 1961. Safetyman Bill Speransa returned an interception fifty-five yards for a touchdown. When he crossed the Bucknell ten-yard line he was escorted by six of his Rutgers teammates.

Considerable time is devoted to blocking for the interceptor following an interception. Drills are devised to simulate game conditions so that all team members will react immediately, in a positive manner, to an interception. Particularly is it emphasized that the man nearest to the interceptor block and knock down the intended receiver. This is done for a particular reason. A survey conducted revealed that on 90 per cent of the interceptions, the man making the interception was tackled by the potential receiver, thus destroying any opportunity for a long return. The potential receiver must be eliminated once the interception is made.

Everything possible is done, on every forward pass that is thrown, to encourage all eleven defensive men to be alert to the possibility of a pass interception. In the event they are unable to tackle the passer, it is imperative that all rushing linemen always turn and

follow the flight of the ball. They must be ready to block when the interception is made.

When the ball is thrown to the left, the linemen move to that side; when it is thrown to the right they move in that direction and when it is thrown down the middle they turn and start throwing blocks. The boy making the interception will make the decision where to run. Basically, a threat to the inside is established before going for the sidelines. There is a defensive weakness in this area. Touchdowns scored here are easy scores because the defenses are loosely organized. Naturally, if an interceptor "sees daylight," he will disregard the rules and run for the obvious open area.

The pass interception must be used as an offensive weapon.

CHAPTER III

PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS IN PASS DEFENSE

A Philosophy of Pass Defense

Playing pass defense is very important and a singular honor. The boy who has the opportunity to play pass defense must know it is a privilege to be a part of the defensive unit. It is a challenge to play defense and it is fun.

These facts must be instilled into the boy who desires to be a pass defender. It is a challenge because backs are chosen first for their offensive ability--they must learn defense. Some boys have a particular ability for defense. Their ability must be harnessed and disciplined. Others have little or no adeptness for defense. The challenge here is to develop these boys into strong pass defenders by hard work. If they have a burning desire to excel at pass defense it can be done.

Defensive players must have a deep-seated drive from within to be outstanding pass defenders. They must take the job seriously and do everything possible to improve themselves in mastery of fundamentals and precise execution.

It is mandatory that each individual involved in pass defense seek to improve himself. He can do this by working on fundamentals, agility, reaction, self-discipline and body position on the potential receiver.

It is the writer's personal opinion that the true measure of good pass defense is the number of interceptions, yards gained on interceptions returned, and touchdowns scored compared to the yards gained and touchdowns scored by the opponent on pass offense.

Build a Belief

The positive approach is used concerning pass defense. Build a belief amongst the boys concerning the type of pass defense that is used. There are no negative thoughts about "holding them" on pass defense. An aggressive, positive attitude is needed to sell the boys and this should be done very strongly.

No one is going to win games by throwing on the pass defense. If they do connect for one, then hope that they throw again--so the defense can get the ball.

The pass defense men are told quite accurately that they will not face many top-flight passers in college football. When an exceptionally good passer is faced, he will pass the ball perfectly only six or seven times in a game. He may "hit" a certain percentage--but when one bad pass comes, the defensive men must intercept and get the ball. The pass defense must intercept at least one of every eight passes thrown at them.

Maintaining poise is all important when playing pass defense. The pass defenders must be taught that nothing can happen on the football field that they cannot handle. Individual pass defenders or the entire pass defense never can lose confidence and poise--regardless of what happens. When the pass defenders begin to worry about or doubt any one segment of pass defense--the next step is to tense up and "Freeze."

When this happens the pass defense men will not be able to react properly to the ball, and, as a result, the pass defense will disintegrate and it is doomed.

Building a belief concerning pass defense is important. Dare the opponent to throw--so the defense can get the ball.

To aid in building a belief in the pass defense and also to challenge the pass defenders, it is necessary to have an INTERCEPTION CHART. The chart, shown in figure (1) is placed on the wall of the dressing room at the beginning of each football season. The following items are listed on the chart.

1. The interception goal for the season.
2. The player making the interception, the opponent--his number of pass completions, attempts, yards gained, touchdowns scored on passes.
3. Tabulate the interceptions, yards gained on returns, and touchdowns scored against the opponent's attempts, completions, yardage, and touchdowns.
4. Cumulative statistics are kept on all facts that appear on the chart. A quick look at the chart can reveal:
 - a. The total number of interceptions, yards returned, and touchdowns.
 - b. The interceptions, yards returned, and touchdowns scored versus each specific opponent.
 - c. Which players have made the interceptions.

- d. How many each player has made.
- e. Each opponent's pass attempts, completions, yards gained, and touchdowns.
- f. The opponent's total in all the aforementioned categories.
- g. Opponent's total attempts and the home team's total interceptions. (The goal is to intercept 1 of every 8 passes thrown.)

A statement of challenge to the pass defense--"You must intercept 1 of every 8 passes thrown at you"--is at the bottom of the chart.

Develop an Esprit De Corps

All great fighting units have a strong esprit de corps. Every player must take personal pride in playing and having success on defense. It is a privilege and honor to play pass defense.

The purpose of playing defense is to get the ball. (In 1961, Rutgers opponents gained 884 yards passing--Rutgers returned interceptions for 405 yards.) It is important to build a "bond of loyalty" amongst the pass defense men. It takes a good man to play in such exclusive company. Once a player becomes a part of a pass defense unit that possesses this spirit, he too feels and acts this way. Build a strong esprit de corps. It leads directly to a feeling of cohesiveness and strength. This is what is wanted.

Sell the players on the idea that good pass defense is actually an offensive weapon. Playing pass defense with a defensive unit that has a strong esprit de corps is a privilege and each boy who becomes a part of this tightly knit group senses this fact. It permeates him.

He loses himself in something that is bigger than himself.

There are several factors involved in building a sound pass defense--but none is more important than the psychological factor. The boys must want and be ready to play at game time.

Two things have been done that have helped significantly in attaining this important psychological goal which, in turn, has helped the pass defense to achieve the success which has been realized.

1. A star is given to each player and pasted on his helmet for every pass that he intercepts.
2. A unique word was adopted for an oral signal, discussed later in this chapter, which is shouted out when a player gets a pass interception. The stars are kept on the sidelines during the game. When a player makes an interception, the star is pasted on his helmet, by the student manager, the next time he comes out of the game.

Awarding stars for interceptions has been a motivating influence in getting more interceptions and also a strong morale factor. The actual awarding of stars may be original but the concept was borrowed from the pages of the glorious history that General Clair Chermault and his Flying Tigers wrote during their air battles with the Japs in the skies, over Burma and China during the early days of World War II.

When a Flying Tiger shot down an enemy plane, a miniature Jap plane was painted on the fuselage of his plane. Major Gregory "Pappy" Boyington and his "Black Sheep" squadron followed this practice as did

many others later.

It was the writer's thought that if painting a miniature enemy plane on fuselages for each enemy shot out of the skies in wartime was good, then a star pasted on the helmet of each pass defender getting an interception in football during peace time would also be good. It has been.

The writer believes in psychological warfare.

"JERICHO"--The Oral Signal for Pass Interceptions

In Chapter II it was stated that great emphasis was put on getting pass interceptions.

Pass defense can be an offensive weapon when the defense concentrates on getting interceptions. It is a firm conviction of the writer that, until a team develops an intense desire to intercept the ball and takes pride in how many they intercept, a team will not get many interceptions. Getting the ball must be paramount in their minds. In everything that is done on defense, the stress is put on getting interceptions. Once the stress on getting interceptions was begun, it was necessary to have an oral signal to alert the team that an interception had been made and that now the defense was on the offense. This means every team member must immediately begin throwing blocks for the interceptor.

A word was needed that would be emphatic, easily pronounced, and would have a "ring of positiveness." Most important--a word was desired that would be a "battle cry." After considerable thought a word emerged that possessed all the previously stated characteristics.

The word was JERICHO. It is a Biblical term and that is as it should be because the Bible is read daily in the home of the writer.

The story of Joshua and the Battle of Jericho closely approximated what was wanted for a word that would be a battle cry. Hebrews 11:30 says "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down..." The writer wanted to instill exactly this positive thinking into the pass defense personnel. They must have faith that they will get interceptions (Jerichoes), must have faith that they will return them for yardage and touchdowns.

The word "Jericho" was added to the pass defense nomenclature. It immediately caught on. The players took to it, as did the newspaper writers. In a short time the word interception disappeared from the squad's vocabulary and JERICHO replaced it. No one on the football team refers to interceptions as anything but a JERICHO. When the players watch a football game and someone makes an interception--invariably the comment is made "he got a JERICHO."

The word has become an important symbol. It points up the precept of the writer regarding the importance of intercepting the ball when playing pass defense. In all the pass defense work, be it drills, practice, or in a game, whenever a player gets his hands on the football he calls out "JERICHO." This is so deeply imbedded in him, through constant drilling, that shouting the word is a reaction.

A drill was devised and named for the word. The JERICHO drill is one of the best and most used drills. It helped immeasurably in establishing a nation-leading 1961 total of 405 yards and 4 touchdowns on JERICHO returns.

In the drill, the importance of knocking down the potential receiver is stressed once the ball is JERICHOED. The defender nearest

to the interceptor throws the key block.

Eventually, the word JERICHO permeated the vocabulary of the student body. In the past year the applicants for Scarlet Key, an honorary-service fraternity at Rutgers, were surprised to find that one of the questions they must answer in order to be accepted in this exclusive group was: "What is a JERICHO?"

Suffice to say the word has been good for the pass defense. Call it a gizmo or whatever you wish--it has done and is doing the job the writer wanted it to do. That, of course, is to help the pass defense get more JERICHOES!

CHAPTER IV

TEN BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PASS DEFENSE

The pass defense that the writer teaches is a combination man-for-man and zone coverage. Everyone involved in the pass defense has definite responsibilities from the instant the ball is snapped.

Actually individual man-for-man defensive fundamentals and techniques within a zone are used. This not only strengthens the zone but also makes it possible to use a man-for-man coverage when it is wanted and needed. It is the writer's humble opinion that man-for-man pass defense coverage is absolutely necessary in the development of good pass defenders. This is true as long as the point is stressed that the defender must cover the offensive man until the ball is in the air--then play the ball 100 per cent.

The thoughts expressed here regarding pass defense have developed and evolved over a twenty year period. The ideas are expressions of theory which embody practicability. They have been hammered out on the "anvil of experience." Experience is the best teacher. Experience is a hard teacher because it gives the test first, the lesson later. Something learned from actual experience has a tendency to be retained. Particularly is this true when that "something" is learned in the heat of battle.

The pass defense has been developed in accordance with ten basic principles. Everything that is done on pass defense evolves from these

principles. Following are the ten principles that are taught and the order in which they are used.

1. Know alignment and stance.
2. Identify opponent's formation.
3. Know adjustments to opponent's formation.
4. Know who the potential long receivers are.
5. Know the keys.
6. Know what flow means.
7. Know what pre-determine means.
8. Know what eye-control is and what responsibilities are.
9. Know what the maze is.
10. Maintain verbal communication.

Remember the cardinal rule of pass defense--NO ONE GETS BEHIND YOU.

In Chapter V which is devoted to three deep coverage, these principles have been discussed in detail. This chapter covers the ten principles in relation to the overall aspect of pass defense.

Alignment and Stance

Both three deep and four deep types of pass defense are taught and used by the writer. This is done because it is felt that both are necessary to have complete pass defense coverage. Four potential long receivers demand four deep defenders to cover them. There are some pass patterns that three deep coverage can not cover adequately such as a double hook, double swing pattern. Also, there are certain pass patterns that three deep coverage will cover better and with more definite responsibilities. Both types of coverage are needed.

It is necessary at this time to emphasize a point regarding the pass defense. The secondary defense is deployed in two fundamental alignments (three and four deep) but three types of coverages are used. The words secondary and alignment are not synonymous.

Every player involved in pass defense is taught a specific stance that he uses in each of the two pass defense alignments that is taught. Stance will be covered in detail, in chapters five and six, where the two pass defense alignments are discussed. Basically the writer teaches the parallel stance for inside linebackers and safety men in both three and four deep, because they need to move laterally on their first move. A parallel stance permits the lateral move without taking a false step first.

The defensive halfbacks (three deep) and corner linebackers (four deep) are taught to keep their "outside leg free"--which means the outside leg is back and the inside leg is up toward the line of scrimmage.

A defensive man must never have his hands on his knees or be standing erect when the ball is snapped. Never does he "anchor himself to the ground," by putting weight on his knees, through the simple and sometimes subconscious maneuver of putting his hands on his knees.

An important part of pass coverage is position on the receiver regardless of the alignment, stance, or coverage used. The pass defenders must be taught never to line up "head on" an offensive back or end. Lining up head on gives the offensive man two directions he can go. The defenders must position themselves so they are on either the inside or outside shoulder of the potential receiver. By positioning themselves either inside or outside, the defenders limit the direction

that the intended receiver can go. Field position will dictate whether to be in an inside or outside position.

The six yard sideline rule is also taught. No defensive back assumes his stance closer than six yards to the sideline--regardless of where the potential receiver for whom he is responsible stations himself. It is imperative that the defender has good position both before and after the ball is snapped. He must line up correctly, then, when the ball is snapped, keep himself in a position to look through the receiver to the passer. Keep leverage on the potential receiver. Leverage means getting and maintaining good vertical and lateral position on the intended receiver. This way he can do a better job of playing the ball and getting the all-important interception. A defender who plays the ball when it is thrown, can frequently cover up an error in alignment and/or stance by either himself or a fellow pass defender.

All three types of pass defense coverage mentioned in this chapter are taught, practiced and used in games. It can, has been, and is being done.

Identify the Opponent's Formations

After the opponent has set himself in a specific formation at the line of scrimmage--the safetyman, who is the offensive quarterback, repeats the pass defense coverage aloud, then identifies the opponents' offensive formation, and the direction of the formation (right or left).

The quarterback and no one else has this responsibility. He is the captain of the pass defense. What he calls is correct. In the

system of formation identification that is used, the safety man identifies the offensive backs first and, if need be, the line second. To avoid confusion, no one else calls out any words. It is extremely important that the safety man make specific adjustments, depending on his call, to each offensive formation.

Following is a chart (Figure 2) showing different offensive formations and the word that is used to identify each. These formations are taught to all pass defenders and particularly to the safety-man, on the field.

Know Adjustments to Opponent's Formations

Once the defensive signal caller has called the defense and the safety man has identified the offensive formation, then the defensive personnel make their adjustments.

Each man involved in pass defense learns a set of principles, from each of the three fundamental defensive alignments, that he reacts to when making adjustments against different offensive formations. In addition to the adjustments the defense makes from a particular defense, they also learn the ratio that a specific adjustment is to be used. This again is part of the overall defensive planning, which includes playing percentages.

Basically the adjustments are: backs adjust to backs, linebackers and ends to ends. The adjustments from both the three and four deep secondary alignments will be discussed in the ensuing chapters.

Pass defense men, including linebackers, ends, and "invert" men must know the equi-distance position and rule. An invert man is an inside safety in a four deep secondary alignment that positions himself

FIGURE II

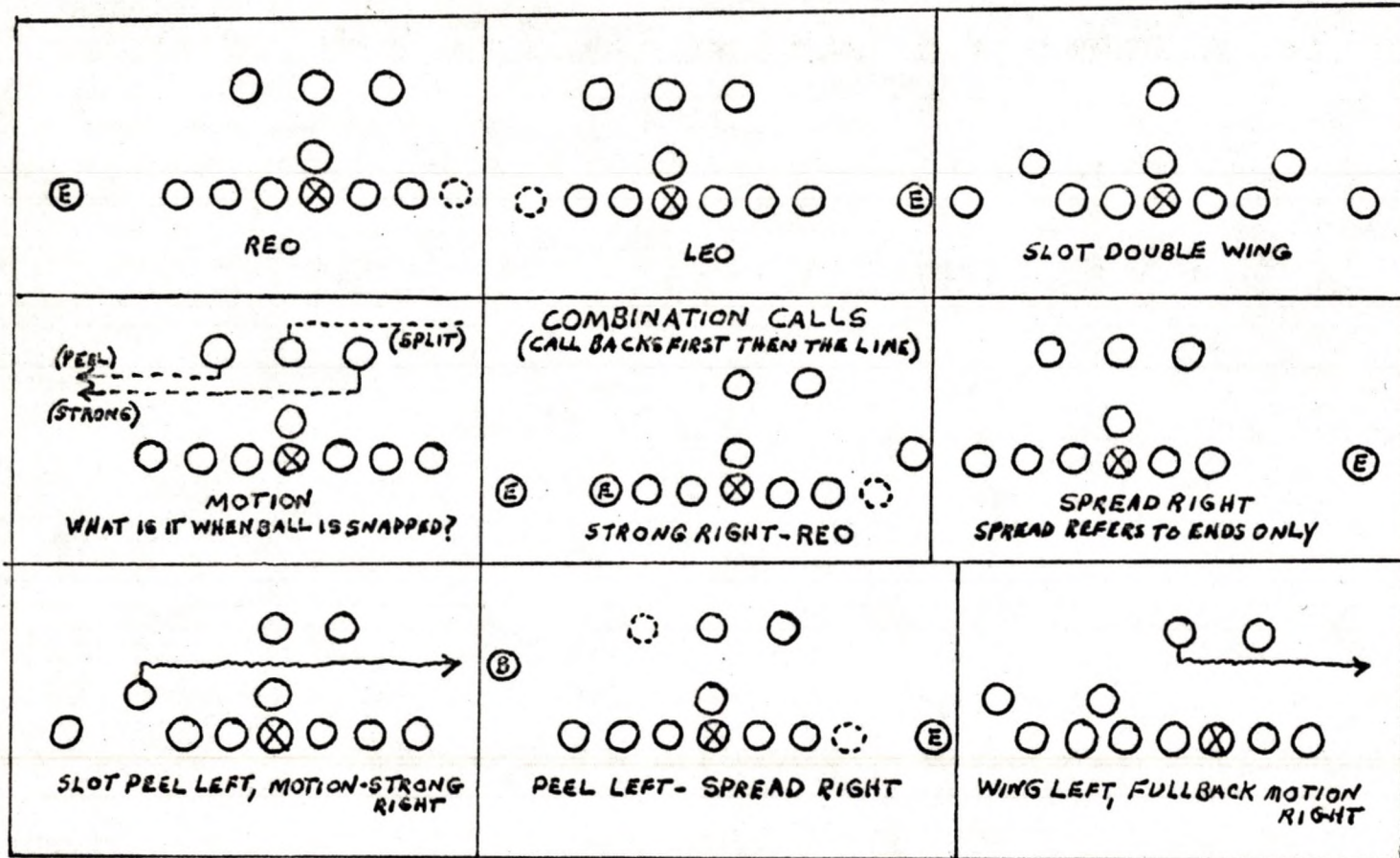
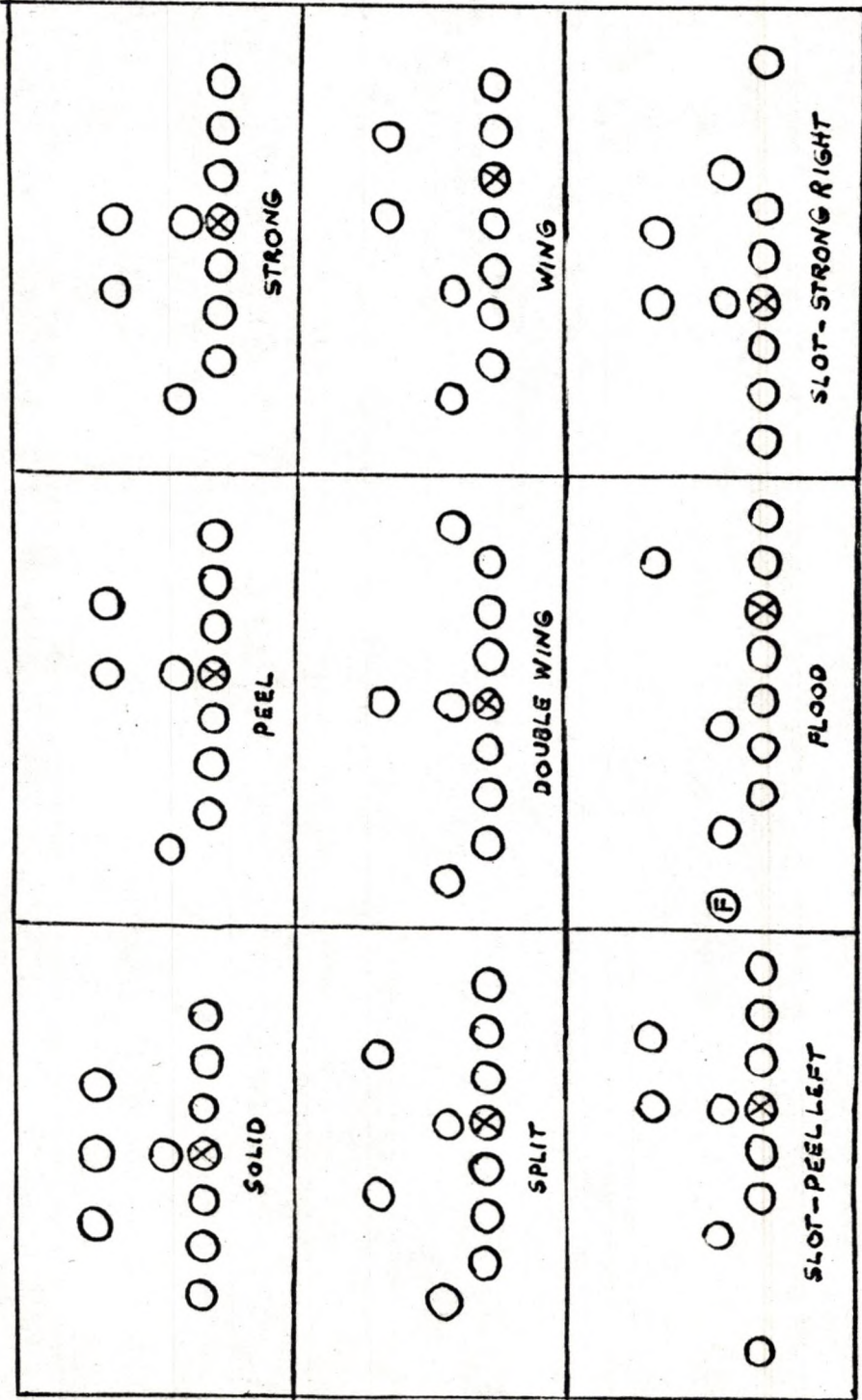


FIGURE II (CONT.)



at four yards from the line of scrimmage rather than the customary eight. The equi-distance position is the spot a defensive man stations himself when an offensive end is spread or a back flanks four yards or more from the end man on his scrimmage line. The defensive man positions himself laterally half way between the widest offensive receiver and the receiver's teammate lined up closest to him on the line of scrimmage. After the defender takes this position, he backs off to a point three yards or more off the line. This places him vertically at a forty-five degree angle to the inside of the widest potential receiver. This is the equi-distance position which all pass defense personnel must learn and know.

The single most important rule, regarding adjustments, is that pass defenders must talk to each other. They must continually reaffirm their responsibilities from their different coverages against the opponent's offensive formations. The defensive personnel will seldom make mistakes in making adjustments if they talk to each other at all times.

Know the Potential Long Receivers

The deep pass defenders must develop a "sense of security" against long passes. Knowing who the potential long receivers are helps provide the secondary men with the feeling of security that is needed. Depending upon the type of coverage--be it three or four deep-- the pass defenders must know who the potential three or four long receivers are.

Regardless of the coverage that is used, the offensive ends are automatically two of the three potential long receivers; the third

would be the first back out of the backfield. He could come from a flanker position or from a solid formation. The three deep secondary men must be taught that they are responsible for the three potential long receivers.

It is necessary that the pass defenders know the difference between the number of potential long receivers when using three deep coverage in contrast to four deep.

In four deep coverage the four potential long receivers--two of which are the offensive ends--belong to the four deep defenders. There can be no doubt or indecision about the defenders responsibilities in both coverages, regarding who are the potential three or four long receivers.

Know the Keys

The offensive backs are the keys for the pass defense. The backs will show immediately whether it is a solid or flanker formation and what type of flanker formation. The pass defenders must always know which alignment and coverage they are in and using--plus the opponent's formation.

This is mandatory because the pass defenders have different and specific keys--from the three types of coverage that are used--against the opponents' solid and flanker formations. Keys are important to some types of pass defenses because they give the pass defender a "jump" in ascertaining whether the play is a pass or run. The pass defense must react to all plays as passes until the run is definitely established--consequently this type of keying is not as important to this type of pass defense as it is to others. It is necessary to determine

immediately the direction of the offensive backs' first two steps. It is for this reason that offensive backs are keyed very hard.

Know What Flow Means

Flow is played when the offense is in a solid formation. Flow is determined by the direction the offensive backs (whom the pass defenders are keying on) move. The pass defense keys for flow against the solid formation from both the three and four deep coverage, but the keys are different in each coverage that is used. Determining flow is very important to the pass defense because of the flexibility in responsibilities that is wanted in the coverage. Do not be forced into the situation where the pass defense must commit itself--before the ball is snapped--as to how the opponent's passes are being covered. Therefore it is necessary to play flow and have specific keys that determine this for the pass defense.

Know What Pre-Determine Means

Pre-determine means that the strength of the defensive secondary alignment has been decided either right or left--before the ball is snapped. It is possible to pre-determine strength based on personnel, field position, or formation strength on a call from the pass defense captain. Whichever situation prevails, the strength of the formation has been "pre-determined," and the defensive secondary will make the adjustment accordingly. When the pass defense pre-determines against a particular formation, flow is ignored. In the past it has been possible to pre-determine against a solid formation, using an oral signal, in addition to flankered formation--but, in present day football, pre-

determine is used only against flanker formations. The decision to pre-determine depends on the type of pass patterns the opponent runs from a particular flanker formation.

Know What Eye-Control is and What Responsibilities Are

Eye-control is the self-discipline a pass defender must force on himself to focus his eyes on the backs that are being keyed. When the keyed backs move, the defensive man must react to what his eyes tell him and assume his specific responsibilities. Direction is determined when the offensive backs move two steps either right or left. Once direction is established, the defender need no longer focus on the offensive backs.

Mental discipline develops eye-control; eye control indicates responsibilities. Once responsibilities are indicated, the defensive man must assume them. This prevents the potential receiver from "sneaking up on" the pass defender and besting him on a long pass.

Eye-control also prevents "star-gazing" by the pass defenders. Star-gazing is watching the keys after they have established their direction. Once the keys have indicated direction, there is no reason to watch them unless they are the responsibility of the defensive man who is doing the star-gazing. When direction is determined--the eyes must go to the man for whom the pass defender is responsible--then give that offensive man complete attention. The coach, working behind the demonstrating team, can readily discern by the movement of the defender's eyes and head whether he is using proper eye-control.

Star-gazing can get the pass defender in serious trouble. While he continues to watch the keys longer than is necessary, the potential receiver for whom he is responsible is running toward him with the intentions of beating him on a long pass. Every additional second the defender ignores the potential receiver--for whom he is responsible--and watches the offensive back--for whom he is not responsible--he is allowing the receiver to get closer and closer. When the potential receiver reaches a point three yards from the defender--it is too late. The offensive man has the defensive man licked. An effective pass defense will not include "star-gazers."

Playing pass defense and having run responsibilities puts a lot of pressure on the deep defenders. A mistake in the secondary can cost the team six points. Because of this ever prevalent fact, it is stressed continually that the deep backs must "stay honest." The pass defender must stay honest and take care of the man and the area he is responsible for before committing himself to help elsewhere. When an offensive end blocks, the defensive man responsible for him does not "fire-up" to the line of scrimmage and leave him uncovered. He must stay with the end until the football, either in the ball carrier's arms or through the air, crosses the line of scrimmage. A blocking end does not release a secondary man of his responsibilities. A defensive back cannot leave his man quickly. He is told to take care of himself first--then help out his teammates.

Ends are not keyed for the reasons outlined in the previous paragraph and specifically because of what Pete Pihos--the one time great pass catching end of the Philadelphia Eagles--was able to do. He

blocked a defensive back beautifully--for three counts--all the while watching the defensive back. When the back reacted to the block, by firing up to the line, Pete released from his block, ran downfield, and caught a touchdown pass.

The secondary men are taught to key backs, to use eye-control, to pick up their respective responsibilities--then react to what their keys tell them. If the pass defender's responsibility is an end and he is blocking, then the pass defense man "lays-off" and plays an area until the ball is thrown. Under no circumstances should the reaction of the pass defender be predicated upon the action of an offensive end.

Defensive backs should not be making tackles on the line of scrimmage. Defensive backs cannot defend against passes and also stop the opponent's running game. They must be responsible for either one or the other--not both. If the deep secondary backs are making a large number of tackles, the overall defense is not fundamentally sound. Anytime a deep halfback or safety man makes a tackle on or within three yards of the line of scrimmage, he is courting trouble. That trouble will be forthcoming shortly in the form of a long pass--usually good for six points.

The deep back must defend against the pass first and the run second. Please do not get the idea that the backs do not tackle. They do--as witnessed by these facts: Sam Madie (safety man) made thirteen tackles against Princeton, Bob Yaksick (defensive halfback) got fourteen tackles against Connecticut, and Pierce Frauenheim (defensive halfback) made twelve against Delaware. They tackle but not on the line of scrimmage.

A deep pass defender should never attempt to recover a fumble in

the opponent's backfield. The defender does not have the remotest possibility of recovering the fumble so he should not attempt to get the ball. When a fumble occurs he must stay alert--not relax but not attempt to recover the ball.

Regardless of what happens in the opponent's backfield, the secondary man must stay with potential receivers when they are coming down field. This fundamental football truth was driven home very forcibly to the writer in the 1957 Pennsylvania-Princeton football game. The Princeton fullback fumbled the ball on their patented reverse pass. The Penn safety man reacted to the fumble, momentarily leaving the Princeton left end open. Their wingback continued on his reverse course, picked up the fumbled ball, stopped and threw the ball--alley-oop style--downfield to the waiting left end for a long and important pass completion. This completion led to Princeton's winning touchdown in a 13-9 defeat for Penn.

The deep defenders have a hard and fast rule they can never break. That rule is: number one is the pass--number two is the run. They must always obey this rule.

In the theory of defense developed here, the linemen's responsibility is 100 per cent against the running game, the linebackers' responsibilities are divided equally--50 per cent against the runs, 50 per cent against passes. The deep secondary backs' responsibilities are 100 per cent against passes.

Know What the Maze Is

The maze is a teaching aid. It is the area, laterally, between the offensive ends and, vertically, from the line of scrimmage to a

point eight yards beyond the scrimmage line.

The maze is diagrammed in Figure (3). The grounds keeper lays out the maze on the practice field before the fall practice begins so it will be ready for the opening day of drills. It is used all during the fall practice sessions. Pass defense practice is always conducted with the maze.

Using the maze develops a "sense of security" in the deep pass defenders regarding pass receivers in the eight yard area, which lies directly in front of them. The deep defenders know that, basically, the maze is the linebacker's responsibility.

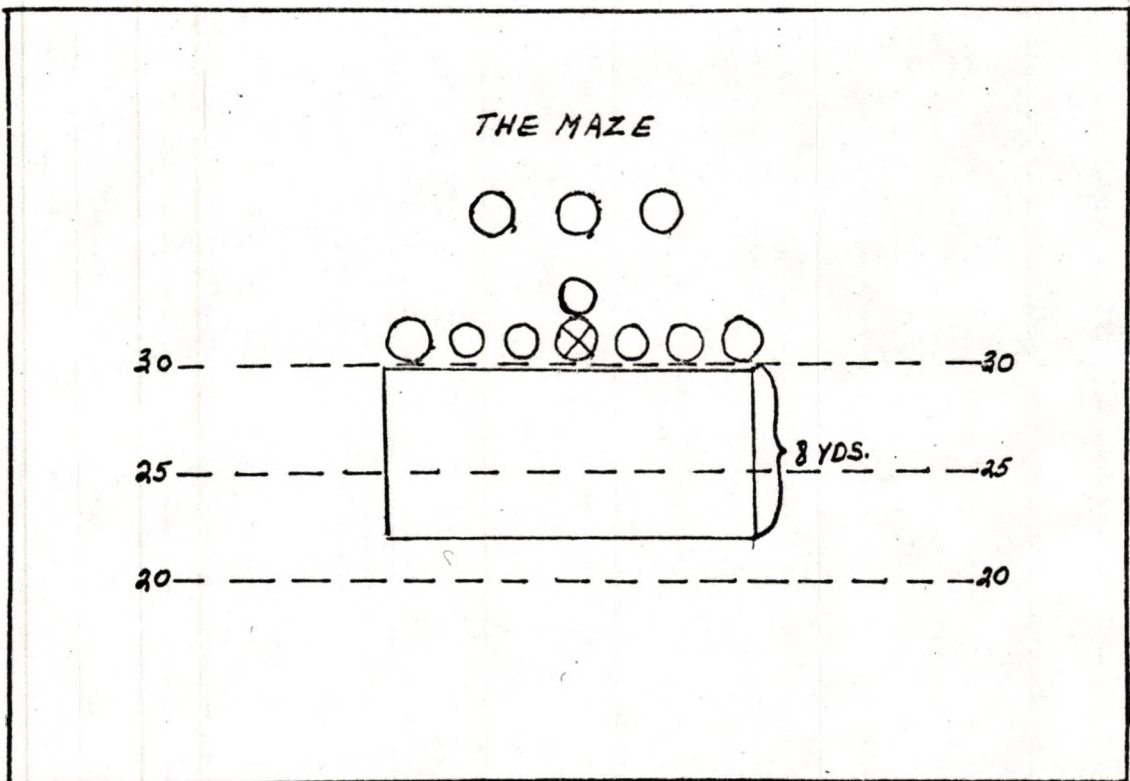
The linebackers must be cognizant of hook passes, crossing ends, delayed passes of all types, and backs circling in the maze. Linebackers must use their peripheral vision in this eight yard area to combat passes. They must "feel" potential receivers coming into their territory and learn to bump them off stride.

Deep pass defenders do not commit quickly when a potential receiver is in the maze. Their primary responsibility is that receiver who passes through the maze and continues on a deep pass pattern. Simultaneous tackles are wanted from the deep defenders on receivers catching hook passes in the maze. A hard, sure tackle many times causes the pass receiver to "turn the ball loose."

Utilizing the maze to build a feeling of security has nearly eliminated the effectiveness of the hook and go pass pattern against the pass defense.

The deep pass defenders know they have some one in front of them to help on short passes and the linebackers know they have the deep

FIGURE III



defenders who will help on any passes thrown in the eight-yard area known as the maze. This has strengthened the pass defense.

Maintain Verbal Communication

Defensive backs must maintain direct voice contact with each other at all times. It is imperative that they talk to each other about:

1. The tactical situation.
2. Opponent's personnel. (Passer and receivers)
3. Their own responsibilities against any situation that can be expected.

Only by maintaining verbal communication with each other will the pass defense get cohesion and the ability to anticipate.

Talking to each other is particularly important when a crossing pattern is anticipated from two potential receivers. A "switch" can be called in certain situations against two receivers attempting a crossing pattern. Only the safetyman can call "switch"--but any back can and must call out a warning to his fellow pass defenders when a single receiver is establishing a crossing pattern. The warning system the writer uses is described thus:

The defender from whose area the crossing receiver is leaving calls out the boy's name and word "crossing" into whose area the potential receiver is going. If a potential receiver were crossing from Joe Kowalski's area to Pierce Frauenheim's territory Joe would call out-- "Pierce, crossing." Once the crossing man has left the original area, that defender "stays at home," plays honest, and watches for any other eligible receiver coming across from the opposite direction. He does

not go chasing across the field to help someone else and leave his own area unprotected until he has taken care of his own responsibilities first.

Once the ball crosses the line of scrimmage, either via the air or being carried, he then can release, fly to the ball, and help out his fellow pass defenders.

Cardinal Rule of Pass Defense: No One Gets Behind Him, Ever

The cardinal rule of the pass defender is never to let anyone get behind him. If a mistake is made--make it for depth. Under no circumstances, in no situation can a defensive back let an offensive man get behind him.

CHAPTER V

THREE-DEEP PASS DEFENSE COVERAGE

Three deep coverage is the oldest and most fundamental type of pass defense coverage used in football.

It is the easiest to teach and the easiest to learn because the three potential long receivers always belong to the three deep secondary pass defenders. A linebacker or end, depending on the situation, has the second man out of the opponent's backfield. The pass defense assignments and responsibilities are clear-cut and precise. Using three deep coverage the pass defenders should have no doubts or hesitation.

Three deep coverage gets maximum coverage with a minimum of thinking. Keep it simple so that reaction is quick and positive.

The first step in teaching the three-deep alignment is discussed in detail with the pass defense men. A particular point is made of explaining its inherent strengths and weaknesses and also why the personnel are placed where they are in the three deep alignment. This gives the defensive men complete understanding of both the strong and weak aspects of the alignment, and enables them to play the defense.

The pass defense--as stated in Chapter IV--is built on a set of principles. These principles provide the foundation on which the pass defense is constructed. Beginning with the most fundamental principles (alignment and stance) the principles are taught in progression.

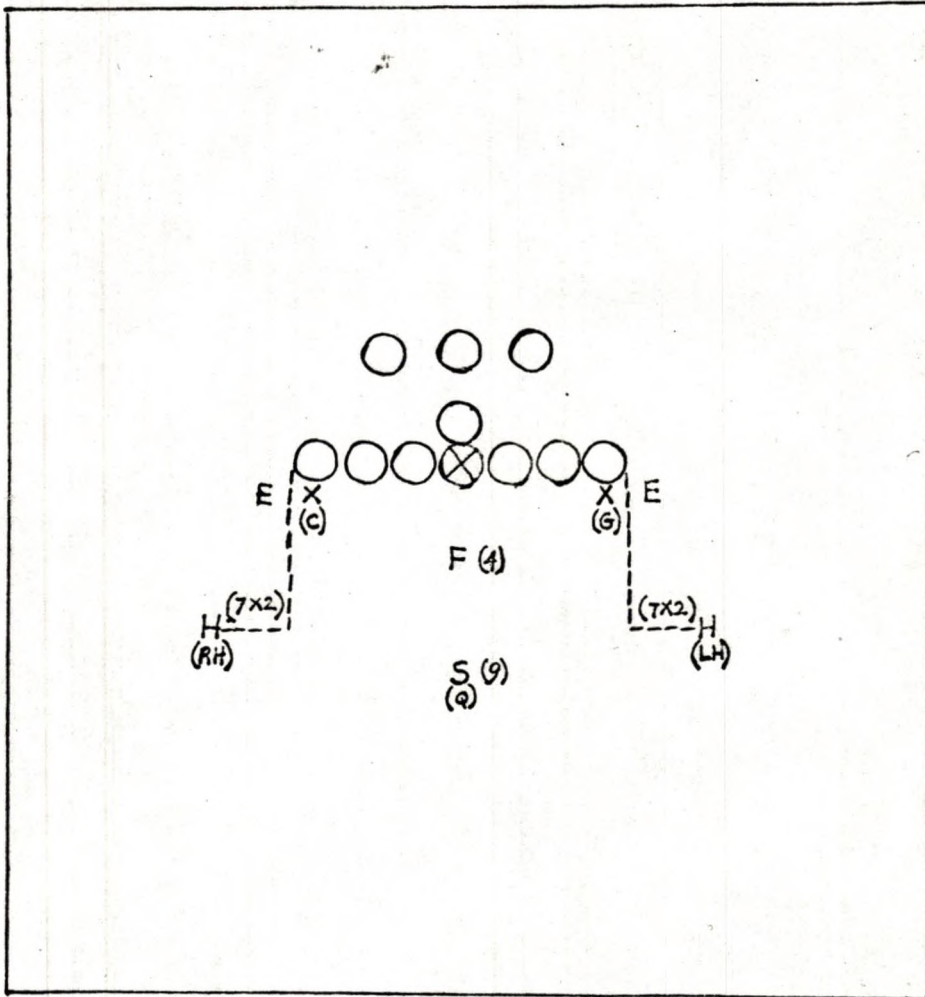
Personnel Placement

Figure (4) shows the three-deep alignment. The personnel are placed where they are for particular reasons. Men are placed on defense by offensive position rather than by individual skills. In the over-all plan of building a football team, offensive abilities take precedent over defensive skills; therefore a back is placed offensively first and defensively second. The fullbacks play middle linebacker, the left halfbacks are the right defensive halfbacks, the right halfbacks play left defensive halfback and the quarterbacks are the safetymen in the three-deep alignment. This is done for ease in training and substitution. The writer does not teach one quarterback the safety position and another the left defensive halfback simply because of a slightly greater aptitude for those positions.

The fullback is the middle linebacker because he must be a "heavy-duty" defensive man and has only secondary pass defense responsibilities. The center is placed to the opponent's right, where most teams prefer to run, because the centers are usually bigger than the guards, who are the other linebackers. Centers stand up better against the power of a concerted off-tackle running attack. The guards, smaller and quicker, can cover passes, handle reverses and react to screen passes better than the larger, less mobile center.

In the deep secondary, the offensive quarterback is taught the safety-man's position. This is done because he should be--and usually is--the most "knowledgeable" football player on the squad. He must know the offense (especially all pass patterns) and other formations thoroughly. The writer capitalizes on this training and ability by

FIGURE IV.



placing him at a strategic position on defense.

The offensive left halfback is placed at the right defensive halfback because he usually is the best and most versatile offensive back, possessing agility, quickness and good speed. He is placed where he is because he will be pitted against the players who are usually the opponent's prime receivers--their left ends.

This leaves the offensive right halfback playing the left defensive halfback. Over the years, this position has provided the writer with some of the most consistent and best pass defenders. Most teams tend to set flankers to their right more than to the left, consequently the left defensive halfback must be a steady and alert pass defender because of the variety and complexity of the pass patterns that will be run against him. Because of this, it is imperative that the left defensive halfback, above all other pass defenders, must ignore fakes and must not commit too fast.

Stance

Safetyman and all three linebackers use a parallel stance. They must be ready and able to move laterally in either direction, backward and forward.

The defensive halfbacks use a staggered stance with the outside leg back. Other than the foot position, all pass defense men are taught the same stance. Their knees are bent, ankles flexed, body and trunk lowered, shoulders forward, arms hanging loose (never do they anchor themselves to the ground by placing hands on knees) eyes focused on the offensive backs. Both mind and body must be keyed to a "state of readiness." The pass defenders should not raise their heels off the ground--

but they should "feel their toes in their shoes." Be ready.

Identification of Opponent Formation

It was stated in Chapter IV that the safetyman (quarterback) is responsible for identifying the opponent's offensive formation. It is not necessary to rediagram and identify all the formations again except to reiterate that correct formation identification is very important because the entire defense makes specific adjustments predicated on the safetyman's call.

Adjustments

The most important single aspect of pass defense is proper position on the potential receiver, both laterally and vertically. In this adjustment rules the writer teaches the pass defense personnel this is always paramount--the pass defender must always get and maintain good leverage on the potential receiver through proper position.

Figure (5) shows the adjustments that the entire defensive personnel make against specific formations. Against the Double Wing formation the Four-deep coverage is used. It is impossible to cover four potential receivers with three deep pass defenders.

In addition to over-all team adjustments, pass defense men are taught individual principles regarding adjustments.

Defensive halfbacks learn that they are always "wider than the widest potential receiver." They line up seven yards deep and two yards wide (outside) the offensive end, or the widest potential receiver.

The safetyman aligns himself in the middle of the offensive formation and nine yards deep. His lateral position will vary, of course,

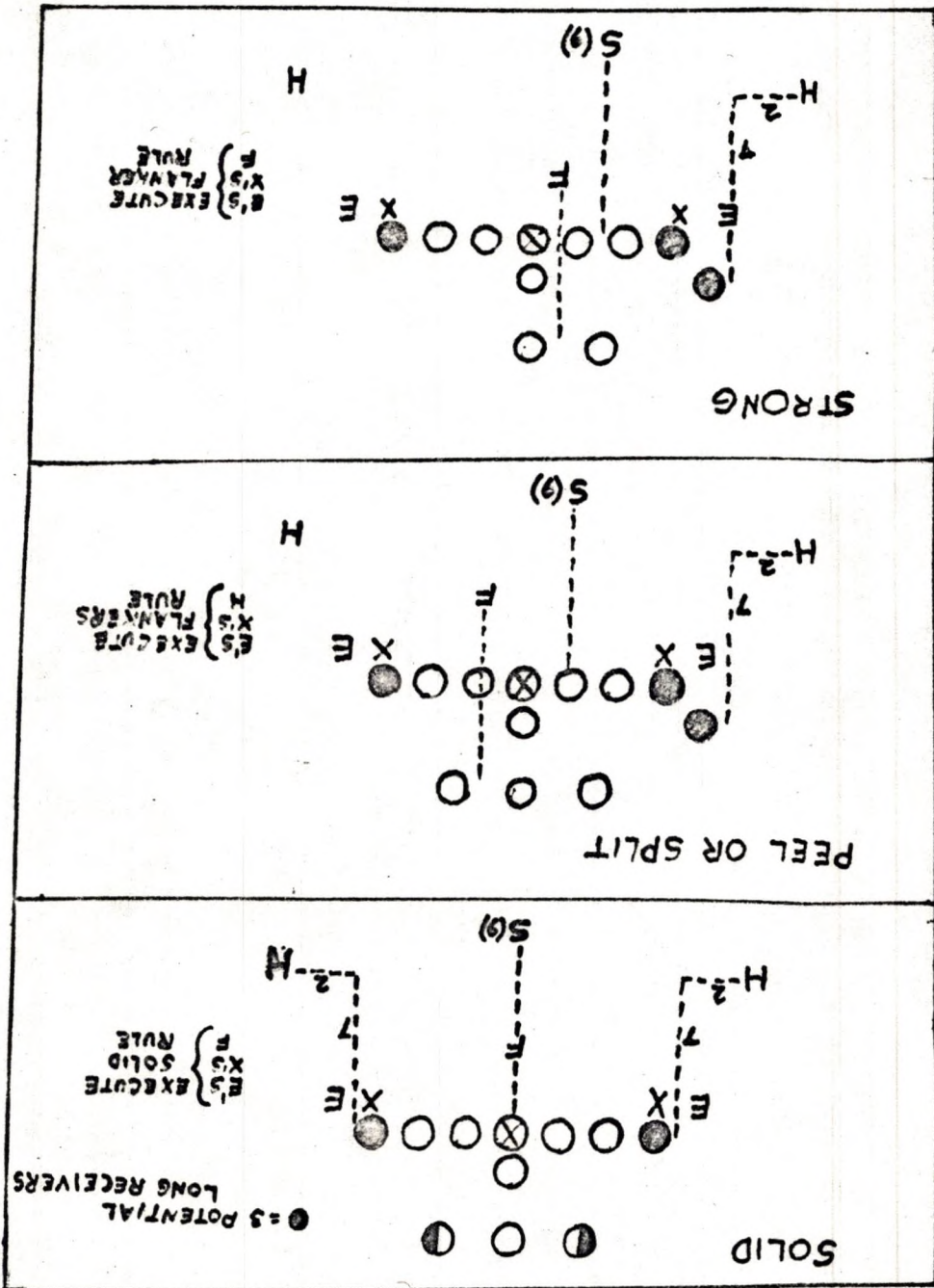


FIGURE V

depending upon how wide the spread end and/or flanked back position themselves.

Deep secondary men are taught the six-yard sideline rule. This rule states that they never line up closer than six yards to the sideline. This gives the pass defender the leverage he wants when he is playing the open side of the field. Using the six-yard sideline rule along the sideline will sometimes put the pass defender in an "inside-out" position on the intended receiver. In this situation he uses the sideline to help him.

In all the adjustments taught, the pass defenders are expected to do some "instinctive thinking."

Know the Three Potential Long Receivers

Once the opponent sets in his offensive formation, it is imperative that the deep secondary pass defenders determine the potential three long receivers. They are the three receivers who by reason of their offensive position can get downfield the quickest and consequently are the clear and present danger to the defense.

The three potential long receivers always belong to the three deep pass defenders. Knowing this instills a "sense of security" amongst the deep secondary men, because they know exactly for whom they are responsible.

The ends are two of the potential long receivers. The third will be determined by the offensive formation. If the opposition is aligned in a solid backfield the first man out of the backfield will be the third potential long receiver. If the offense is in a flanker formation then the flanker back becomes the third potential long receiver.

These three deep receivers always belong to the three deep secondary pass defenders. Any other receivers coming out of the backfield belong to linebackers or ends, depending upon the pass defense responsibilities specified in the team defensive game that has been called.

Following this principle eliminates any possibility of a defensive halfback thinking he covers the second man out of the backfield or a linebacker believing he is responsible for an end running a deep pass pattern. The only time a defensive halfback would cover the second man out of the offensive backfield is if one of the three potential long receivers does not come out for a pass. This relieves the deep man of his primary pass defense responsibility and now he can help cover the second man out on his side or a receiver crossing from the opposite side. The deep defender leaves his primary responsibility only after the ball has been thrown--never before.

"Motion" has come into football again in recent years. It has been the source of defensive problems just as it was in 1940 when the Chicago Bears exploded it on the football world. When the opponent uses motion the defensive men are told to adjust using this rule:

"What is the formation when the ball is snapped?"

A solid backfield formation can become a "peel," "strong," or "split" formation depending on which back is in motion and in what direction he goes.

The adjustments to motion are based on rules and the aforementioned principle that all pass defenders learn--WHAT IS IT WHEN THE BALL IS SNAPPED? The writer has found this approach to the motion problem helpful and satisfactory.

Know the Keys

The keys (that determine flow) in three-deep coverage are the offensive backs going in the same direction.

Against a solid backfield it is possible to key for flow or pre-determine. Doing this, the defense determines the formation strength before the ball is snapped and ignores flow. The defense can pre-determine on a call by the safetyman. Against a flanker formation it is possible sometimes to pre-determine and at times to key for flow, depending upon the opposition's offense.

This method of keying gives the flexibility that is wanted and needed in the pass defense coverage. Having this flexibility prohibits the opponent from dictating--by formation, personnel or field position--to the defense what must be done in three-deep coverage. The pass defense cannot be forced into a particular coverage for purposes of exploitation.

Developing Eye-Control and Knowing the Resulting Responsibilities

Developing eye-control, in pass defense, is very important. A large amount of time is devoted to teaching this aspect of pass defense.

Through eye-control, the deep secondary men will move to their responsibilities once flow is established. The first move that the secondary pass defenders make, when flow is determined, is out at an angle, then back.

It is necessary to move back but only after moving out first. The defensive back gives ground at an angle using the "footwork" maneuver. He should run in a manner that allows him to keep vision on the potential receiver while looking through him to the passer. This

is known as keeping leverage on the intended receiver and keeping good leverage on the receiver is constantly stressed.

Never should the pass defender make an inside move first. When the defender moves back first and the potential receiver breaks out, the receiver will usually be open for the pass. For this reason emphasis is placed on the importance of making a move to the outside at an angle first--then back.

When the potential receiver has made his first move downfield, it is stressed very strongly that the pass defender must "keep his eye on the opponent's belt buckle" while looking through him to the passer. Where the belt buckle of the adversary goes--he must go also!

Following the belt buckle eliminates the possibility of the defender being fooled by head, shoulder or eye fakes. While the intended receiver is going through his faking ritual, the pass defenders are taught to watch him, ignore his fakes and all the while keep dropping off, maintaining proper leverage on him. Doing this prevents any receiver from getting close enough to the defender to beat him on a long pass.

The potential receiver's intense efforts at faking prevents him from getting downfield for a long pass. A receiver in high school and college football seldom can do a good job of faking and also be sprinting at full speed downfield.

Pass Coverage Responsibilities

Versus Solid Formation

Safetyman

When playing against a solid backfield formation, the safetyman

is responsible for the right end when flow goes right and the left end if flow goes left. His eyes must move to the right or left once his "keys" have moved two steps in the same direction and flow has been established.

Defensive Halfbacks

Against a solid formation the defensive halfbacks are responsible for the end away from flow. When flow is toward him, he has the first back out of the backfield. When flow is determined, his eyes must immediately focus on the end or offensive halfback who is his responsibility.

Linebackers

Linebackers have important responsibilities in the pass defense coverage. Their ability can make the difference between weak, ordinary or good pass defense.

Contrary to what is taught the deep pass defenders, the linebackers watch the passer's eyes. They are close enough to the passer to see his eyes and get the direction that he intends to pass. The passer will usually pass in the direction he looks.

The middle linebackers, ends and outside linebackers have two rules regarding their pass coverage duties. One is a "Solid Rule" (for use against a solid formation), and the other is a "Flanker Rule" (to be used against flanker formations).

Establishing a set of rules concerning pass defense responsibilities has cut errors to a minimum. There is no guess work: It becomes a matter of getting good execution.

Middle Linebacker

The middle linebacker (fullback) lines up, against a solid back-field, head on and as deep as the offensive fullback. He has specific responsibilities against runs. When a pass shows he follows his "Solid Rule" which says: "I cover the offensive fullback man-for-man. If he blocks, I drop off and cover the middle area in the maze."

Outside Linebackers and Ends

The two outside linebackers (center and guard) and both ends have pass defense responsibilities in the defensive alignment when three-deep coverage is used.

The end and linebacker playing alongside each other never have pass defense coverage duties simultaneously. The linebacker or the end has run responsibility in each defensive stunt called. Whoever has run responsibility has none for pass coverage. Whether they have run or pass responsibilities, they go first to their point of defensive responsibility, then react to the ball. They must carry out their primary responsibility first! Their second--against passes--is next!

Pass Coverage Responsibilities

Against Flanker Formation

When the opponents line up in a flanker formation, they immediately establish for the defense the three potential long receivers. This makes the deep pass defenders' jobs simpler.

Deep Secondary Defenders

The safecman and defensive halfback on the side of the flanker

are responsible for the flanker and the end closest to him. The defensive halfback must always be aware of his rule: "Line up as wide as the widest potential receiver."

Safetyman and Halfback Toward Flanker

The safetyman and defensive halfback--who are responsible for the end-flanker combination--are taught three rules regarding their coverage against this two-man combination.

First, they must cover "long and short" on the end-flanker combination. The defensive halfback covers the receiver who runs a "short" pass pattern, while the safetyman is responsible for the receiver who establishes a "long" pass pattern.

The second rule for coverage when playing against an end-flanker combination is the "inside and outside" principle. The safety has the inside receiver of the two while the defensive halfback has the receiver who runs an outside pattern.

The third rule the two secondary pass defenders have is the "change for depth" principle. This is used when one receiver precedes the other by an appreciable distance or with greater speed. In this situation the two defenders are taught to go with the two men they are responsible for, playing them man-for-man, but anticipating a "switch" call. When "switch" is called, the deepest of the two defenders will assume responsibility for the deepest receiver. The other deep defender will cover the short receiver.

This adjustment is required when the opponent sets a wide flanker, spreads an end wide, and sends one receiver down quick and the other delayed. In this situation it is most important that the deep defenders

do not commit too quickly. It is better to stand still than to react too fast.

If a "switch" call is necessary, only the safety man calls it. In effecting a "switch," the distance between receivers and comparative rates of speed must be considered. When both receivers come out at the same relative depth and width, there is no problem. Deep pass defenders must see potential receivers coming into their areas without more than a glance at them. They can thus anticipate a "switch" and be ready to react when it is called.

In the theory of pass defense developed here, a specific defender is responsible immediately for each potential receiver. He is charged with that responsibility until the ball is passed or someone else assumes responsibility for him. This can happen on a "switch" call by the safetyman. The pass defense does not turn a man loose when a potential receiver leaves an area. They do not change responsibilities in "mid-stream" just because the potential receiver has passed through a certain area or crossed an imaginary line. The writer wants specific defensive responsibilities for each offensive pass receiver at all times. Another pass defender must pick up the intended receiver and call out "I have 87, Joe," then assume the responsibility of covering him--before the original defender is released of his responsibility.

Defensive Halfbacks Away From Flanker

The defensive halfback away from the end-flanker combination covers the end on his side man-for-man. His job is to maintain outside leverage on the end and cover him wherever he goes. If "his" end

spreads wide the linebacker will make an adjustment and the defensive halfback will have help in covering him. Should the end cross shallow, in the maze, the defensive halfback will follow his rule regarding crossing ends as discussed in Chapter IV.

If the opponent should line up in a flanker (end-back) formation and then put the flanked man in motion back across the offensive formation between the line of scrimmage and the offensive backs the pass defense would follow their motion rule: "What is the formation when the ball is snapped?"--and play it accordingly.

Another point concerning the responsibilities of the three-deep secondary men against passes. They must learn to diagnose quickly whether a potential receiver is attempting to run a "deep" or "short" pass pattern. This is readily discernible by watching closely the first four steps the receiver takes. A player going deep will show this immediately by the quickness with which he gets away from the line of scrimmage. A "short" receiver usually will not fire out from his offensive stance but will go at half-speed to set-up the proper timing on the pass pattern. These points are important for deep pass defenders to know.

It is also necessary for deep secondary defenders to know the personnel they are playing against. They must know whether the left end is a 5'10", 175 speedster and if the right end is a 6'2", 210 pound "tackle-type" end. It makes a difference. Pass defenders play various receivers in different ways depending upon size, speed and type. The smaller end will be played as a "long" receiver while the bigger end will be treated as a "short" receiver and be watched for button-hook, square-out and crossing patterns.

Middle Linebackers

Against a flanker formation, the middle linebacker (fullback) lines up midway between the two backs remaining in the opponent's backfield, and four yards deep. From this vantage point he carries out his responsibilities against runs. Against passes, he follows his "Flanker Rule"--which is: "I take the first of the two remaining backs--if they divide or cross--I take the halfback." If neither of the backs go out for a pass, the middle linebacker drops back, covering the middle territory. Following this rule, it is possible to end up with double coverage on a receiver but this is not disastrous. A verbal signal is used to release one defender to other duties.

Outside Linebackers and Ends

When the pass defense faces a flanker formation and the opponent attempts a pass, the outside linebackers and ends follow the "Flanker Rule." This rule states: "I take the second of the two remaining backs. If he does not come, I drop to my hook area or play the short-flat--depending on the situation." Against runs, they go to their points of defensive responsibility dictated by the game that has been called.

In the 53 defensive alignment, linebackers and ends are taught principles which they follow in adjusting to spread ends and flanked backs.

If an end spreads more than three yards, the linebackers and ends will adjust to an equi-distant position. (This position was discussed in Chapter IV.) The linebacker or end who has pass defense responsibilities, in the defensive game called, will be the equi-distance man.

The linebackers should assume this responsibility 90 per cent of the time. They keep their same responsibilities against runs and passes but from the equi-distance position.

In three-deep coverage it is particularly important to stress the significance of the maze. The area most vulnerable to exploitation in three-deep coverage is the short flat territory in front of the defensive halfbacks. It is the linebacker's duty to help out in this area. Halfbacks should not be unduly concerned about this short area and compensate by making tackles on the line of scrimmage.

The Responsibilities of the Deep Secondary Against Runs

The final portion of this Chapter will be devoted to the responsibilities the three-deep secondary men have against the running game.

The three men are assigned specific patterns of approach when coming up to meet a ball carrier with blockers preceding him.

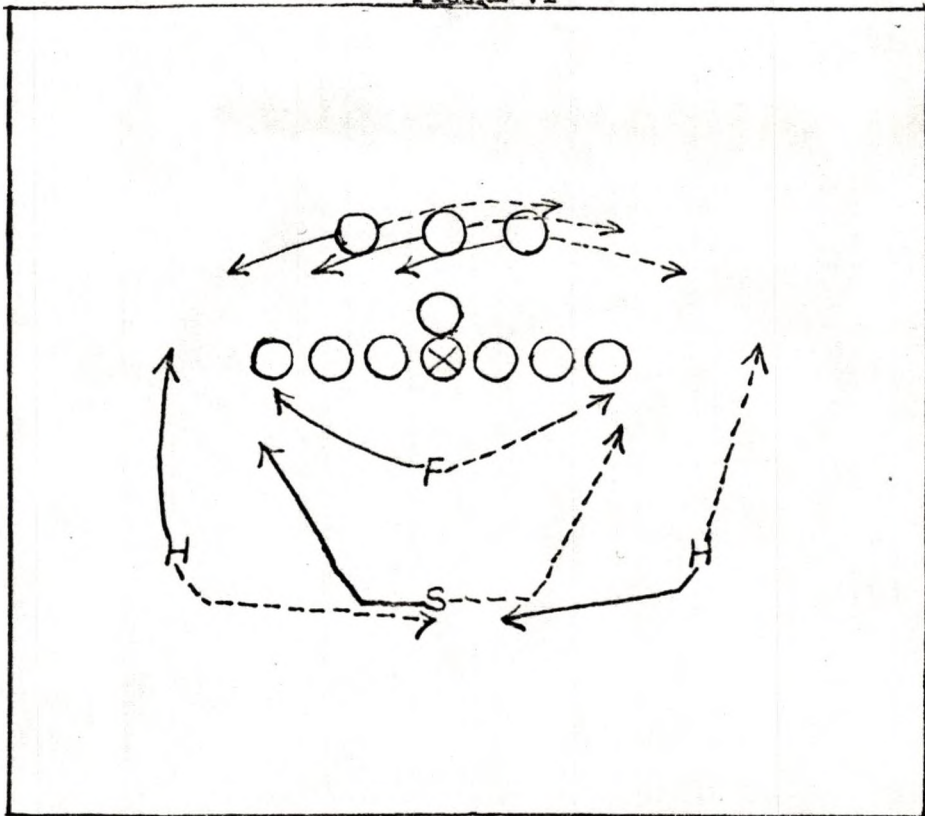
Figure (6) shows the routes the defensive halfbacks and safetyman are taught to follow when meeting a running play.

First, the deep secondary must establish the fact that the play is definitely a run. This is done by watching the correct keys, checking the action of the offensive backs, and following eye-control to see what the potential receivers are doing. After doing this, if there are any remaining doubts they must "play the pass first and run second."

Defensive Halfbacks

When the defensive halfback is attacked by a running play, he

FIGURE VI



approaches the play but keeps himself wider than the widest man (be he blocker or ball carrier) coming out of the opponent's backfield. When coming up to make the tackle the halfback should be aggressive but under control. His job is to turn the play in or make the tackle from the outside. He never allows the ball carrier to get outside of him. The defensive halfback takes care of his territory first, then helps his fellow defensive backs.

When the play goes away from the halfback he is a "conservative" halfback. He does not chase wildly and attempt to make the tackle across the field. When the play is definitely going away from him, the defensive halfback moves to the area vacated by the safetyman. He plays football from there, watching for trick plays, naked reverses, transcontinental (across field) passes and delayed plays of any type.

Safetyman

The Safetyman--when the play is definitely established as a run--moves laterally in the same direction that the ball is going.

He moves as fast as the ball but a step behind. When the ball carrier turns upfield, the safetyman approaches him from an inside-out course at a 45 degree angle on a straight line. The safetyman is responsible for any "cut-backs" by the ball carrier and must never overrun the ball.

He takes care of his own territory first and only on long runs should he ever be forced to make tackles across the field. His job is to prevent touchdowns--not first downs.

The safetyman's approach to the ball carrier in the open field is a "conservative" one--slide, jockey for position and, if need be, retreat.

Delay the runner's advance until help comes from teammates. Make use of the sidelines.

The safetyman must always be under control. He approaches the ball carrier conservatively and makes tackles with sureness and confidence.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A good pass defense is built in early season practice. Like a house, pass defense must be built on a good foundation, so utmost care must be given to the building of the foundation; everything that follows will be dependent upon a solid foundation of fundamentals, principles, belief and execution.

Pass defense is always taught on a lined field. This gives the defenders perspective regarding field position, which is very important to learning good pass defense. Players must always know where they are in relation to the sidelines and goal line. A team that practices pass defense on an unmarked field is wasting valuable time.

Simplicity must be stressed and maintained during the important phase of teaching pass defense (the first days of spring or early season practice). All learning must take place in progression. Duplication of terminology must be avoided. For instance, a back is always referred to as a flanked back, an end is always referred to as a spread end. These terms are not inter-changeable.

Basic principles and responsibilities taught during early season practice must be lucid and remain constant. The coach uses a positive approach in all his teaching methods--there can be no fluctuating. When teaching a specific point the coach cannot allow himself to say "if this happens-et cetera." He must say "when this happens, you do

this-et cetera." The negative approach of teaching causes doubt, then hesitation and will lead to a breakdown of the pass defense.

Pass defenders must learn by doing. The writer believes in the ten to one ratio when teaching pass defense. Tell the players once and have them execute the instructed maneuvers ten times.

Maintaining verbal communication between defenders is stressed from the outset of practice. By talking to each other, the pass defense men gain cohesion, avoid confusion and reduce mistakes. The importance of talking to each other was amplified in Chapter IV under basic principles of pass defense. It is repeated here because of its importance.

The writer does not believe in over-coaching the individual in pass defense--particularly the good ones. The challenge facing the coach, when teaching the adept pass defender, is to harness and channel his aptitudes so he is executing correctly and getting maximum performance from his innate abilities.

The real test of a coach is to build a boy who is not endowed with any appreciable aptitude for pass defense into a strong pass defense man. This is the real satisfaction in coaching--to build a weak spot into a strong point, then see him perform and experience success.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- CROSSING PASS PATTERN.** . . Two or more pass receivers run a pass pattern requiring them to cross in front of, or behind, each other.
- DRAW PLAY.** . . An offensive play designed to look like a pass that evolves into and terminates in a running play.
- FLANKED BACK.** . . An offensive back who assumes a position behind the line of scrimmage, four yards or more to the outside of his nearest teammate on or behind the line of scrimmage.
- FLAT PASS.** . . A pass thrown from behind the line of scrimmage to a receiver stationed in the area either to the left or right and three yards beyond the line of scrimmage.
- HOOKE PASS.** . . A pass thrown to a receiver who runs straight downfield, stops then pivots around quickly and is facing the passer when the football is thrown to him.
- LINE LOOPS.** . . The maneuver when the defensive linemen move from one defensive spot to another in a looping or semi-circular action.
- LINE SLANTS.** . . The maneuver when the defensive linemen move from one defensive spot to another in a straight line.
- PINCHING ENDS.** . . A defensive end who drives down hard to the inside and behind the offensive line from his original position at the end of the defensive line of scrimmage.
- PLUGGING LINEBACKER.** . . The same as a Red Dog linebacker with a different descriptive term.
- RED DOG LINEBACKER.** . . A linebacker who runs through the defensive line of scrimmage, between his own linemen, attempting to get into

the offensive backfield.

SCREEN PASS. . .A pass thrown, either to the left, right or middle and behind the line of scrimmage, to a receiver who has a "screen" of blockers lined up in front of him.

SECONDARY. . .The defensive backs who station themselves six to nine yards behind the line of scrimmage.

SPREAD END. . .An offensive end who assumes a position, on the line of scrimmage, four yards or more to the outside of his nearest teammate on the line of scrimmage.

SQUARE OUT PASS PATTERN. . .A receiver runs straight downfield, plants his inside foot and runs away from the line of scrimmage on a straight course to the sideline on his outside.

STATUE OF LIBERTY PLAY. . .A running play designed to fool the opponent because of the immobility or "frozen-faced" countenance of the faking back. Hence the name, Statue of Liberty.