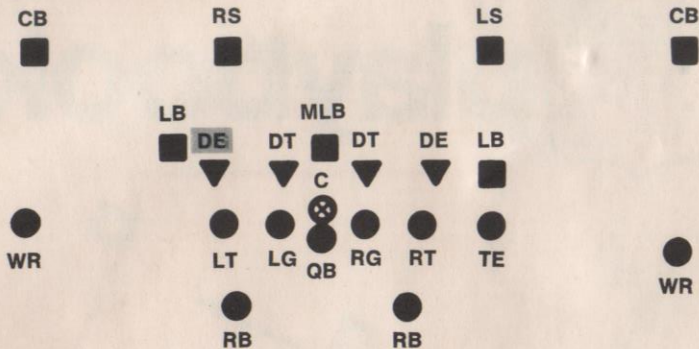




playbook





THE LINEUPS:

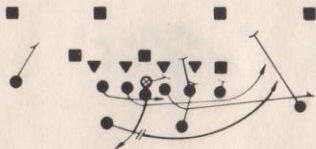
OFFENSE: The usual pro lineup is balanced for both running and passing. There are two running backs (RB) and two wide receivers (WR). The tight end (TE) is an important blocker on runs and receiver on passes. There are five linemen, two tackles, two guards and a center.

DEFENSE: A pro defense has four linemen, two defensive ends (DE) and two defensive tackles (DT) who stop runs and rush the passer. There are three linebackers (LB), who are big enough to play against the run and fast enough to run back to cover passes. There are four defensive backs (DB), two cornerbacks (CB), and two safeties (S) who chase receivers and stop passes.

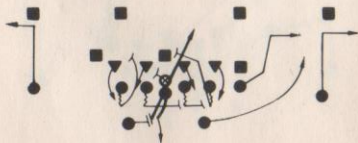
DIAGRAM NOTE: As you can see, in a football diagram all eleven offensive players are represented by circles. On defense, the four linemen are represented by triangles and linebackers and defensive backs are represented by squares.

DEFENSE

4-3 KEY MAN-TO-MAN



4-3 KEY BLAST MAN-TO-MAN

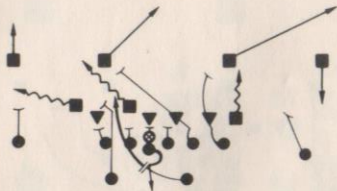


This is the most basic pro defense. The numbers "4-3" indicate that there are four linemen and three linebackers, and that these men line up in an evenly balanced formation. The word "Key" means that the four linemen will "Key" their blockers, that is, watch what their blockers do, before they rush in. When linemen do this they are under control to stop running plays, but they are slow at rushing in to get the passer. The words "Man-to-Man" indicate that the defensive backs will each take one of the offensive receivers and follow that receiver wherever he goes—"Man-to-Man" (dotted lines indicate which receiver each defensive back takes).

This defense is basically like the one on the left with one important exception. The defensive linemen are no longer "Keying" their blockers before they react. On this defense, they "Blast" right in as soon as the ball is snapped. This means that they have a better start at rushing the passer, although certain types of running plays will be hard for them to stop. The defense on the left, the "Key" defense, might be used on first and ten when the defense is expecting a running play. The defense above, The "Blast" defense, might be used on third and eight when the defense is expecting a pass.

OVER KEY STRONG ZONE

4-3 MAXIMUM BLITZ



This defense is a common variation, and is deliberately more solid against plays on the side where the tight end lines up on the offense. The word "Over" means that three of the defensive linemen overshift towards the tight end, making it difficult to run to that side. The words "Strong Zone" indicate that the defensive backs are each going to cover a zone on the field instead of a special man, and that they will run towards the "Strong" side (the side where the tight end lines up) to go to their assigned zones. Against this defense, it is very hard for the offense to either run or throw to the strong side—the right side in the diagram above).

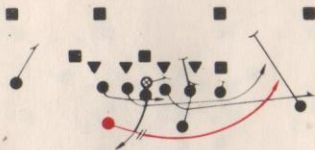


This is the most dangerous defense in football, both for the offense and the defense. The defense lines up in a standard "4-3" but when the ball is snapped eight men "Blitz" in to rush the passer. This is the maximum number possible since three defensive backs must stay back to cover the three offensive receivers. All four linemen, all three linebackers and one safety are part of the rush. The maximum blitz is a big gamble for the defense. They are taking a chance that they can overpower the offense and trap the quarterback for a long loss. If the quarterback does manage to pass the ball however, there is almost no one left to stop the play and many large gains can result.

OFFENSE

28 WEEP

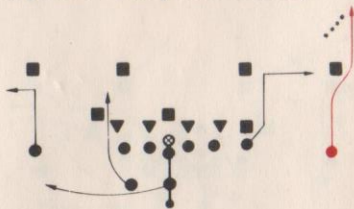
(against 4-3 Key Man-to-Man)



The power sweep is a solid running play that should gain some yardage even if the defense is "Keying" against running plays. There are two important parts to the play. First, the right-hand running back must block the defensive end and the tight end must block the linebacker. If either the defensive end or the linebacker moves forward into the play, the sweep will not work. Second, both guards must pull back and run out wide to the right, to block the defensive backs. This means that although the guards are big men, they must also be fast. The left-side running back carries the ball wide around the right end (red line).

85 Z FLY

(against 4-3 Key Man-to-Man)



If the defense is keying against the run, then they will not rush the passer as hard. This is a good time to throw a long pass because the quarterback will have more time to throw. On this play, "Z" (the wide receiver on the right) will "Fly" straight down the sideline. He is being covered Man-to-Man by the cornerback, and so it is a footrace between the two men to see who can get the ball. A fast receiver has a good chance to make the catch. A "Fly" is not so good against a "Zone" defense, because in a "Zone" one defensive back runs into the deep area on the right as soon as the play starts and is waiting for the pass to get there.

20 TRAP DRAW

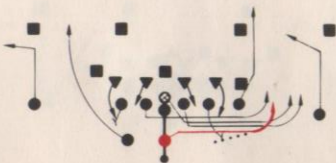
(against 4-3 Blast Man-to-Man)



When the defensive linemen are "Blasting" in it is a good time to use delayed plays which will fool them. If the quarterback tries a normal pass play, he may be dumped before he can throw. On a "Draw" play, the quarterback goes back as if to pass, and this "Draws" the defensive linemen after him. Then the quarterback slips the ball to one of his running backs who runs up the center. The offensive linemen back up a little as they do on a pass, then turn and "Trap" the defensive linemen from the side as they are rushing in. A quarterback will call this play on, say, second and ten, hoping to make six or seven yards so he can run on third down.

FULLBACK SCREEN RIGHT

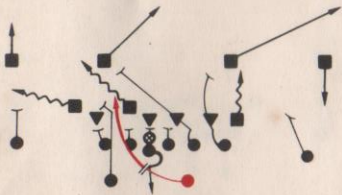
(against 4-3 Blast Man-to-Man)



This is another delayed play to use against a "Blast" defense. On this one the quarterback again drops back as if to pass. His linemen block for him for about three seconds, then three of them run off to the right to form a blocking "Screen". One of the running backs also stands as though he were going to block, then he runs out to the right behind the "Screen". The quarterback throws the ball to the runner, who then follows his "Screen" down the field. Since the runner usually catches the ball with no defenders around, this play has a very good chance of making a lot of yards.

45 DRIVE

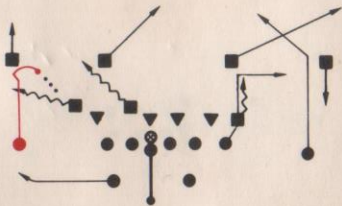
(against Over Key Strong Zone)



An "Over" defense has the linemen overshifted to the strong side (on the right in this case). That means that the offense will want to run back to the left in most cases. One running back "Drives" into the hole between the left guard and the tackle, and the other back follows him with the ball. This is a power play aimed right at the weakness of an "Over" defense: the big space between the three linemen shifted to the right, and the one lineman remaining on the left. Although there is a linebacker in the hole, he is back away from the line about a yard, and the play gets a head start.

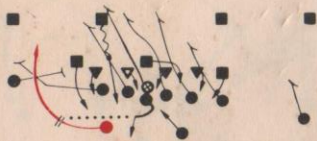
83 X HOOK

(against Over Key Strong Zone)



When the defense is using a "Zone Pass Defense" that rotates towards the "Strong" side (the right side in this case), the offense will often throw the ball back to the left. On this play, "X" (the wide receiver on the left) runs downfield fifteen yards and then "Hooks" back toward his passer. Since the safety on the left runs away to the right in a "Zone" only the cornerback is left to stop the pass. But the cornerback also must drop back to cover the deep zone on his side. This leaves "X" alone for an instant in a crack between the zones, if the quarterback can throw the ball straight and on time.

29 QUICK PITCH (against Maximum Blitz)



Often if the defense is going to run the "Maximum Blitz" some of the defensive people will chest up to the line before the play starts. A smart quarterback will see them moving up, and call out a new play to his offense. One play he might try is a quick pitch-out. On this play the quarterback takes the ball and immediately tosses it to the left-side running back who is running around the left end. With eight defensive men charging up the center, the running back may escape around the end and down the sideline with very few men left to stop him.

82 Z SLANT (against Maximum Blitz)



Another play that the quarterback could call out is a quick pass to his wide receiver. The important thing against a "Maximum Blitz" is that the quarterback must not hold the ball long, or the "Blitzers" will get him. On this play, "Z" (the wide receiver on the right) takes two or three steps downfield and then quickly "Slants" to his inside. The quarterback drops back a couple of steps and fires the ball. "Z" catches the ball at full speed and if the corner man, who is supposed to be chasing him, misses the tackle, "Z" has a good chance of going the way for a touchdown.