



A Guide to the Game
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from **Touch Football Ontario**

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SEVEN A SIDE TOUCH FOOTBALL

THE OFFICIAL CANADIAN GAME OF TOUCH FOOTBALL

Introduction To Touch Football

Touch Football has achieved a high level of popularity in Canada. It is enjoyed as a purely recreational activity at the neighborhood park, as part of school intramural programs, and on a more competitive level within organized leagues. The game is a simplified version of tackle football and provides participants with the opportunity to develop many of the same skills, tactics and strategies of regular football without the body contact. Economically, equipment costs are minimal – a suitable football and some form of standard team color identification are all that are necessary. As well, it is an enjoyable means of developing and maintaining physical fitness, which makes touch football ideally suited to men, women and children alike.

Who Can Be Involved?

Players, Coaches, Officials, Administration, Spectators, Men, Women, Girls and Boys.

What Do You Need?

A field – size is flexible, regulation is 110 yards long by 65 yards wide with at least 10-yard end zones.

A football – appropriate size for players.

Object of the Game!

Score Points

- 6 for a touchdown**
- 1 or 2 for a convert**
- 2 for a safety touch**
- 1 for a rouse**

Three downs to gain 10 yards on offence – defense tries to prevent this.

Offence consists of a quarterback who must be at least 5 yards behind the line of scrimmage and receivers who may be on the line of scrimmage or moving around.

The Offence uses strategies – plays, patterns and the quarterback may run!

Defense consists of DB's and a Rusher(s).

The rusher must line up at least 5 yards from the line of scrimmage, at least one yard away from the center.

Other Defenders may come within 1 yard of the line of scrimmage.

Defense must touch the offensive player that has the ball (one hand) to stop the offence from gaining yards or create a turnover – punt-interception.

Defensive Strategies – Types of Zones and Man-to-Man.

Things To Keep In Mind

- Everyone is an eligible receiver
- Onside passes are legal anywhere in any amount
- The game is non-contact, one hand touch – not push or shove!
- There is no blocking!
- The game is basically aerial, although any player may run with the ball
- Only one forward pass allowed per play
- Be a sport and have fun !!!

Touch Football Rules

1. Player/Equipment

Each team has seven players on the field. All players are eligible receivers. There is no blocking or tackling permitted. No protective equipment (helmets, pads, etc.) is permitted. Running shoes and cleats may be worn. For safety purposes, no one should play while wearing watches, rings or jewelry.

2. Timing

There are four quarters of 20 minutes each or 15 minutes in tournaments. The first and third quarters are running time. The second and fourth quarters are 17 minutes or 12 minutes in tournament play of running time then 5 plays. Each team is permitted one time out (60 seconds) per half as well as one 20-second time out to be used anytime throughout the game. The offensive team has 20 seconds to call the play in the huddle and snap the ball. This twenty-second count begins when the official whistles the play in.

3. Boundary Lines

All boundary lines are considered to be out of bounds. If a player steps on any part of the boundary line, the player is considered to be out of bounds. The goal line is considered to be part of the end zone. Thus, if any part of the ball touches the goal line, the ball is considered to be in the end zone. For catches to be considered in bounds, the receiver has to have possession of the ball, then at least one foot must touch the ground in bounds prior to stepping on the line or going out of bounds.

4. Kickoff

The game begins with a kickoff from the kicking team's 45-yard line or 10 yards back from center on non-regulation playing fields. The receiving team must be at least 20 yards back from the point of kickoff. The kicking team does not have to give "yards" on the kick off, the players can simply down the ball to end the play. The kicking team cannot recover the ball on a kickoff except in the rare instance when the ball might strike a receiver and rebound to a member of the kicking team without touching the ground.

Once again, there is no blocking permitted on the kickoff. If the ball is kicked out of bounds on the kickoff, the receiving team has the option to take the ball where it went out of bounds or have the kicking team re-kick five yards back.

5. Scrimmage

The offensive team has three attempts or downs to advance the ball 10 yards. The play is stopped when an opponent touches the ball carrier.

The first down markers can be the traditional yardsticks on the sidelines or they can be “bean bags” that are placed on the field and moved by the officials.

The quarterback must stand at least five yards behind the line of scrimmage to receive the snap. The defensive player who pursues the quarterback (the rusher) must line up five yards from the line of scrimmage and cannot begin to rush until the ball is snapped by the offensive center. This rusher cannot be blocked or impeded by any member of the offensive team. A team may decide to rush more than one player. In this case all rushers must have unimpeded path to the quarterback. However, the rusher or rushers must line up laterally, within 5 yards of the center. They cannot line up wider and still be given an unimpeded path to the quarterback.

All players on the offensive team, except the center, can be in motion prior to the snap. The quarterback can run or throw. The quarterback is also permitted to throw a lateral to a halfback who could then run, throw a forward pass or throw another lateral. There are no fumbles in touch football therefore when a ball carrier drops the ball and it touches the ground, the play is dead. However, on bad snaps when the quarterback cannot catch the ball, the play is still live.

6. Punts

A punt can occur anytime during the game. When a ball is punted, players on the punting team must remain 5 yards from the punt receiver prior to the ball being touched. Players on the punting team cannot recover punts unless the ball hits the punt receiver and rebounds to a defender before the ball hits the ground.

If a ball is blocked on an attempted punt and the ball hits the ground, the play is whistled dead and the defending team gains possession of the ball at the point the ball was blocked. If the punted ball is simply deflected and continues toward the opponent’s goal line, the punt is considered legal and all rules apply.

If the punt receiver muffs the punt and the ball hits the ground behind the receiver, the play is live. If the ball goes forward after being muffed, the play is dead.

7. The Touch

Players can use one or two hands to make a touch. The touch must be deliberate and must be made with the hand (not a leg or arm, etc) anywhere on the ball carrier or the ball itself.

Players cannot bobble the ball to avoid the touch – the play will be whistled dead. Ball carriers can concede a touch by placing one knee on the ground and by making no attempt to advance the ball. If a defender attempts to avoid a collision by jumping over a fallen ball carrier, a touch is awarded as a safety precaution.

8. Scoring

A touchdown is worth six points. A convert may be attempted from the five-yard line for one point or from the ten-yard line for two points. There are no field goals permitted and the convert cannot be kicked.

A safety touch occurs when the offensive team causes the ball to enter its own end zone and the offensive player is touched there. This results in two points being awarded to the opposition team.

Following a safety touch, the team that gave up the safety touch must kickoff from its own 35-yard line.

Rouge occurs when a team is unable to legally bring the ball of its own end zone following a punt or a kickoff by the opposition. One point is awarded to the kicking team and the receiving team will scrimmage at its own 35- yard line. The receiving team must have the opportunity to bring the ball out of the end zone. Thus the ball cannot be kicked over the boundary lines in flight.

9. Illegal Acts

The ball carrier is not permitted to extend a ball forward in an attempt to gain extra yards. The ball carrier is not allowed to dive forward into the path of the opposition players. These are safety precautions.

The following acts are considered to be objectionable conduct and will result in a ten yard penalty: use of profane language; intimidating acts; persistent arguments; deliberate delay of game and faking and injury.

The following acts are considered to be a personal foul and will result in a fifteen yard penalty: rough touch; contacting the passer, punter or receiver; tripping; piling on; charging and attempts to strike a player.

The striking of an opponent or an official with the deliberate intent to cause bodily harm of any act of roughness or unfair play considered by the Referee to threaten the safety of any participant, is a major foul and will result in the ejection of the team member involved.

10. Pass Interference

Pass interference occurs when the player takes away an opponent's positional advantage. If the infraction occurs in the area where the ball was thrown (target area), the offensive team is given a first down at the point the infraction occurred or 10-yards ahead of the line of scrimmage, whichever is greater. If the infraction was a receiver not involved in the play or occurred before the ball was thrown (remote area), then the penalty is 10-yards from the previous line of scrimmage. If the defense commits target area pass interference in the end zone, the ball is awarded to the offense on the opponent's one yard line.

If a member of the offensive team commits pass interference, the defense is awarded possession of The ball at the point of the infraction.

11. Application of Penalties

The team that did not commit the penalty has the option to accept or refuse the penalty.

On scrimmage plays, if the foul occurred before a first down was gained, the penalty is applied from the line of scrimmage. If the foul occurred after a first down was gained, the penalty is applied from the point the ball was held when the foul occurred.

Objectionable conduct fouls and personal and major fouls are applied as dead ball fouls, that is, the yardage is simply tacked on from the point the ball becomes dead. The only exceptions are: roughing the passer or kicker and tripping the ball carrier. These three are applied as live ball fouls or regular fouls.

If a foul occurs during the last five plays of a half, the play will not count if the penalty is accepted. The only exceptions are if the penalty occurs after a first down is made or an offside pass is thrown. The play would count in these situations.

If the application of a penalty results in the goal line being reached, a first down is awarded at a point halfway between the goal line and the previous line of scrimmage.

OFFENSIVE THEORY

A. Introduction

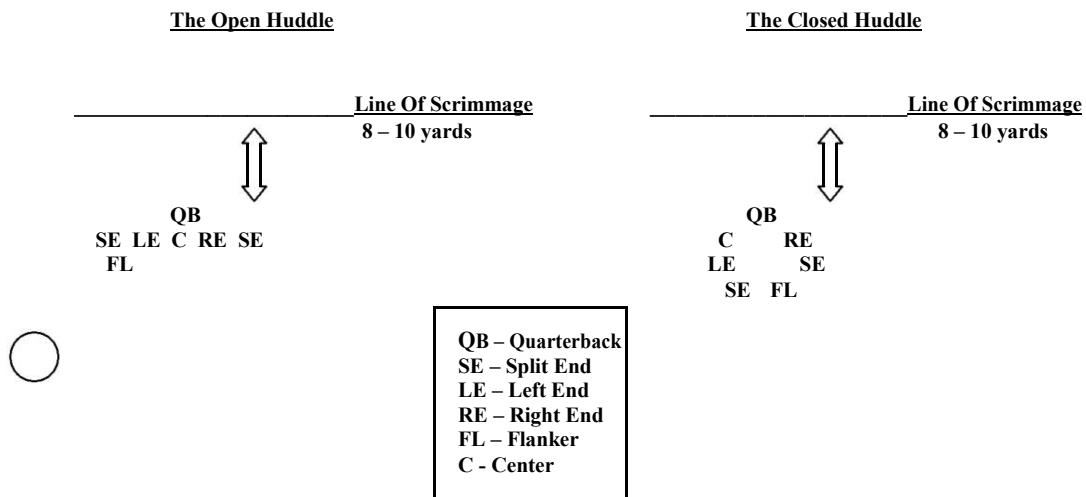
To the uninitiated, touch football can be a confusing game. The many and varied offensive systems used by teams at all levels of touch football demand an understanding of general offensive principles.

When developing a sound offensive system for a team, the coach is faced at once with a number of basic challenges. Seven players must be deployed in some order from the huddle to the line of scrimmage, having a clear understanding of their alignment, type of play to be run, individual responsibilities, point of attack and the snap count. One person must convey all this information to the huddled players within twenty seconds in a concise, logical and computer-like manner.

A simple system must be devised that can be easily understood by the coach, quarterback and players.

B. The Huddle

Although there are many huddle formations possible, two basic huddles are diagrammed. Selection of a specific type is arbitrary and a case for one over the other may be based on personal preference.



One possible advantage of the Open Huddle, particularly for younger players, is that all the player, other than the quarterback, are facing the line of scrimmage. This provides them immediate right-left orientation to the play called the huddle.

OFFENSIVE THEORY

Offensive systems in most cases are built around a number of logically integrated series of complimentary pass patterns. ("Series" can be defined as patterns or prescribed routes used to get to a specific point of attack.) A team may have one basic series, which can be run to the right and

left, or a number of varying series. It is important though, that the total offensive system is flexible enough to be consistent with the skill of the personnel available to make it function.

The Quarterback

In touch football the offensive strategy relies to a great extent on the abilities of the team's personnel and in particular – the Quarterback. A quarterback's ability is the most important because it is this individual who not only selects the plays but also provides the direction and leadership needed for any offense to be successful. However, no matter how much physical talent he or she may possess, the quarterback is only as good as his or her receivers. It must be emphasized that teamwork is the single most important factor in the makeup of the offense. Once this attitude is developed, the offense is well on its way to perfecting a solid unit.

Quarterback Tips

1. Keep the defense guessing when and where you are going the throw.
2. Throw to where the receiver is going, not where the receiver is.
3. Throw the shorter pass harder. Long passes should be thrown softer and in more of an arc.
4. Be in good balance when you set up to pass.
5. Keep your eyes on the receiver.

Pass Route Technique

Due to the nature of the game, pass receiving is an integral element in touch football. As most offensive yardage is gained through the air, the passing attack is essential for success. Therefore, the pass receiver must make a point of developing his/her technique to the best of his/her potential.

The basis of the passing game is the acquiring of good fundamentals. Elaborate offensive strategy is useless unless the basic requirements of consistent passing, accuracy and reliable pass catching ability can be established. The quarterback and the receivers must work together to build a successful relationship.

1. Stance

The two-point stance often affords the best maneuverability for the receiver, although some individuals may prefer the three-point stance. Regardless of the type of stance used, the receiver should make a point of setting up in such a way to take advantage of the basic principles of even weight distribution and proper foot placement. Thus the stance must be the catapult for a quick, explosive release.

2. The Release

Depending upon the type of defense being played, the receiver may wish to vary his or her release in a variety of ways:

- a) **Releasing Against a Zone Defense:** If the receiver comes up against a zone defense, the release off the line of scrimmage should allow the receiver to follow his/her designated pass pattern as efficiently as possible. The receiver should explode off the line of scrimmage in order to get to the reception point as quickly as possible. Unnecessary fakes should be avoided.

b) Releasing Against a Man-to Man Defense:

- i) Loose Man-to-Man: When a receiver notes that his/her defender has lined up over him/her at about 6 to 8 yards in an obvious man-to-man situation, every effort should be made to shake off the defender through the use of fakes. The fake will hopefully put the defender in a bad situation of which the receiver may take advantage. These fakes will give the receiver that extra time needed to get open.**

- ii) Tight Man-to-Man: often a defender will line up over (directly opposite) the receiver, a yard off the line of scrimmage. This is a tactic used to break up the timing of the pattern. When faced with this situation the receiver may use one of two releases. The receiver can either take a quick step outside and around the defender or he/she may fake outside and release inside (or vice-versa).**

3. The Pass Pattern

It should be remembered that any of the receivers are potential quarterback targets. Therefore, in order to keep the defense guessing as to who the primary receiver is, all of the receivers should be working to get open.

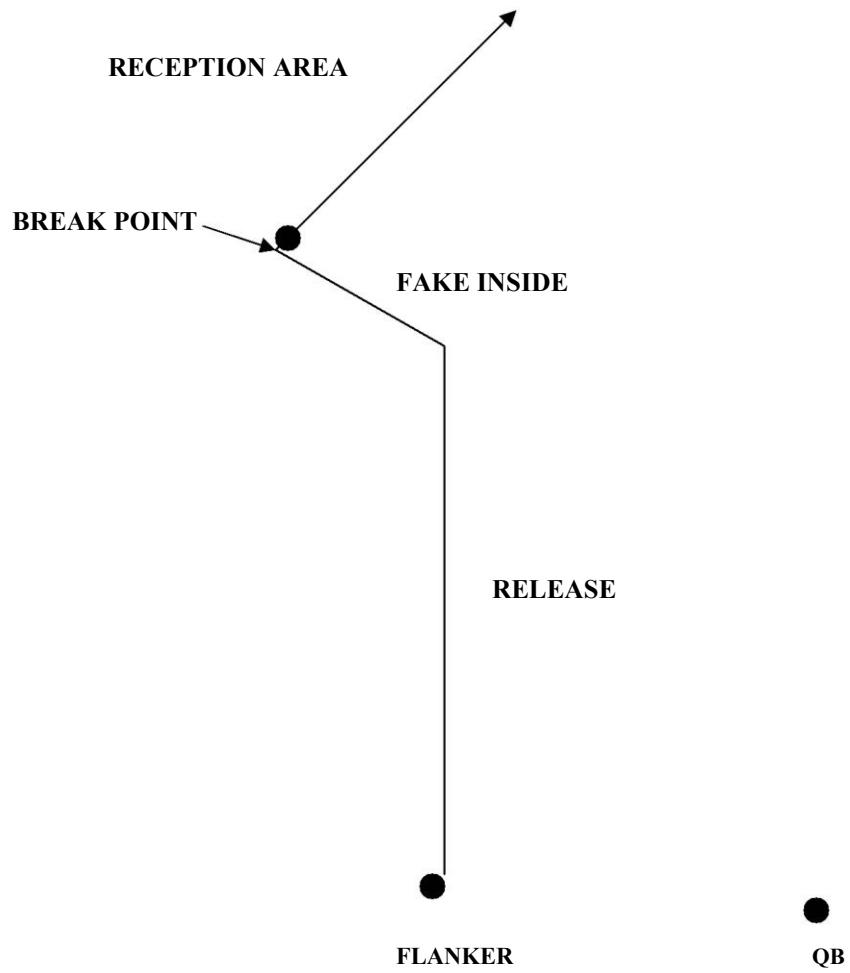
One of the keys for success in the passing game is the consistency of the pass route. The receiver should practice running pass routes to the point where he/she can run those routes in the same way each time. Running the assigned pattern is essential.

The point at which the receiver finishes the release and makes the required cut for the designated route is known as the break point. As soon as the receiver has made the cut at the break point, he/she should immediately look for the ball. The receiver should actually be prepared to catch the ball at the break point. This requires the utmost concentration on the part of the receiver.

Catching the ball cleanly is the primary responsibility of the receiver. It is only after the ball has been caught securely and tucked away under the arm for safety, that the receiver should attempt to gain any additional yardage.

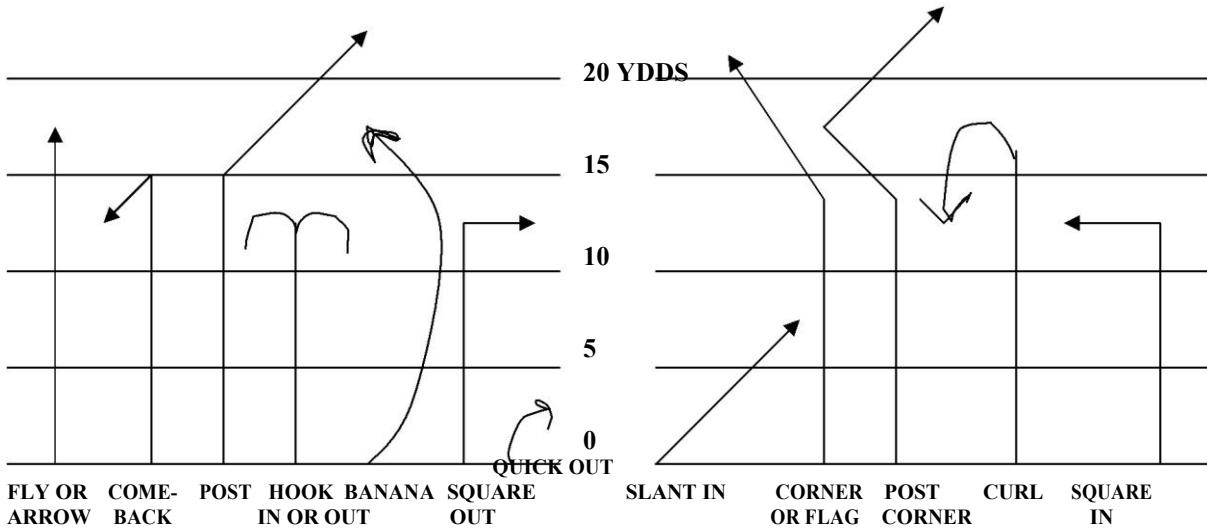
OFFENSIVE THEORY

Mechanical Breakdown of a Pass Pattern (e.g. Post Route)



Pass Routes

There are many passing patterns and all have their particular advantages. Also, certain combinations can make some patterns even more advantageous against certain defenses. Illustrated below are some of the basic cuts a receiver can make. Each cut can be made to either side.



D. Formations

There are innumerable methods of putting order into an offensive system. The following definition of a “formation” outlines the most commonly used denominator from which an orderly communication system can be developed.

A “formation” deals with the position of players relative to each other at the line of scrimmage. The words LEFT or RIGHT are added to give a specific direction to the formation.

Formations are usually designed by the position of the flanker. For example, A Flanker Right formation would be:

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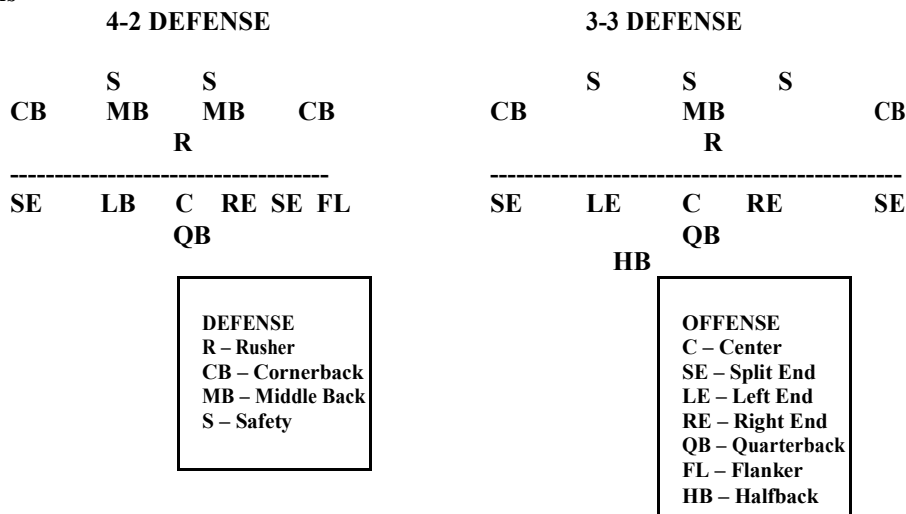
      SE    LE    C    RE    SE
                QB                FL
    
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A Flanker Left Formation would be the mirror image.

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      SE    LE    C    RE    SE
    FL                QB
    
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Basic Formations



E. Offensive Strategy

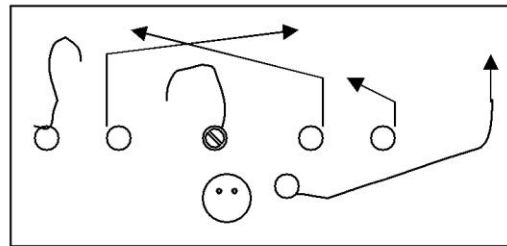
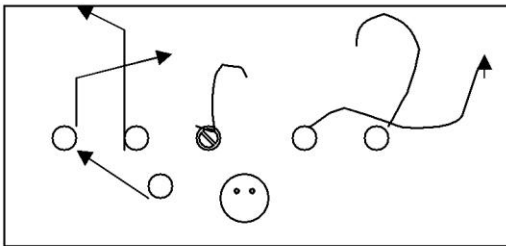
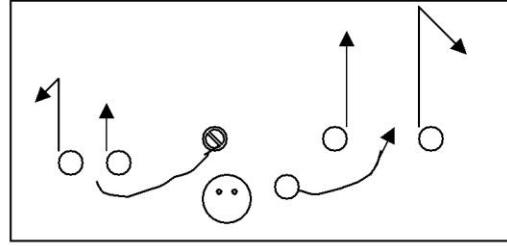
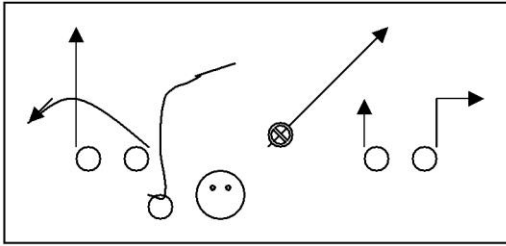
Introduction

The principal objective of any offensive football system must incorporate the following:

1. **Ball control and field position**
2. **Consistent yardage gains**
3. **Minimum predictability of point of attack, which keeps the defense off balance and guessing.**
4. **The ability to score.**

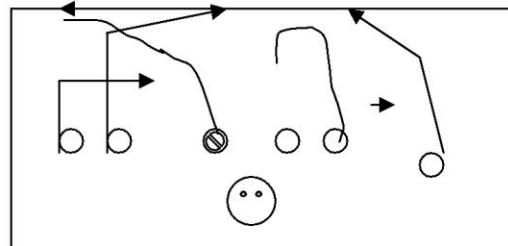
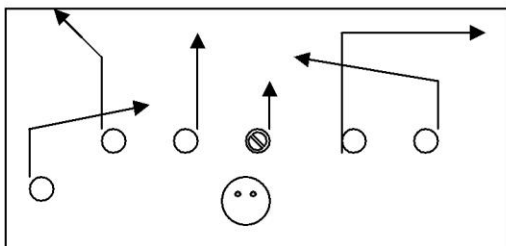
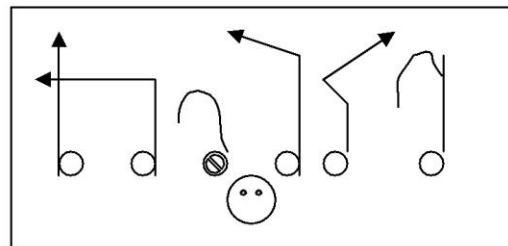
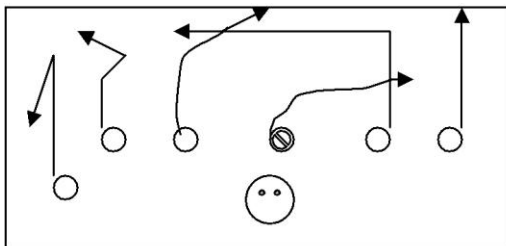
Offensive formations and the tactics used vary from team to team, however, all systems should evolve from sound, basic and fundamental aspects of football. Simplicity is the key; complex systems breed confusion.

Basic Offensive Plays



○ - Quarterback

⊘ - Center



Attacking a Zone Defense

The defense in touch football no longer just use the basic “man to man” coverage but now employ a few zone defenses as well. The two most commonly used are the 3-3 and 4-2.

Attacking a 3-3

When an offense is confronted with a 3-3 zone (meaning the defense has elected three defenders to protect against the deep pass routes and three defenders to do likewise with the shorter routes) the two most effective ways to move the ball on them are:

1. To select what is called intermediate pass routes (10 to 15 yards) for your primary receiver. These intermediate pass routes are run deep enough to elude the short defenders but not deep enough to be picked up by the deep defenders. These routes are usually run into what are referred to as the seams (the area between) the defensive backs. It is these areas that the offense tries to direct its attack. Running the pass routes effectively, an offense can move the ball with a fair amount of success.
2. To flood the zone and outnumber the defenders in the area. By flooding one of the zones, a defensive player will be forced to choose between the receivers, usually leaving one receiver open.

Attacking a 4-2

The final zone defense “is 4 short” 2 deep. It is usually called in short yardage situations to prevent the offense from making a first down. With this in mind the offensive team must attack this zone in the deeper manner. Even though the percentages are lower in completing the pass, the coverage will not be as extensive.

Golden rules for any offense is always attack the defense at its weakest point and never force the issue with the defense.

A good strategy for any offense is to examine the opponent’s tendencies and personnel with the aim of developing a plan, which attempts to exploit their weakness.

DEFENSIVE THEORY

A. Introduction

Every defense has aims and objectives similar to those listed below:

1. To prevent the opponent from scoring, particularly the long, easy touchdown.
2. To gain possession of the ball by:
 - a) Intercepting a pass:
 - b) Preventing the opposition from making a first down; and
 - c) Blocking a punt.
3. To score by:
 - a) Intercepting a pass and returning it for a touchdown:
 - b) Returning a punt for a touchdown; and
 - c) Touching the opponent behind the goal line (safety touch).

The opposition can only score by running, passing or kicking. Whenever the defense is able to score, it gains a tremendous psychological advantage and many times during a ball game the team is able to rally and move on to victory.

Regardless of the defensive alignment employed, there are basic principles that must be adhered to if a sound defense is desired. Accordingly, a complete defensive system must provide the flexibility necessary to cope with varying situations that occur during the course of a game. Factors such as, personnel, field position, down and distance, time left in the game, score and weather demand a varied defensive attack.

In touch football, just as in tackle, there are two basic pass defensive coverage: man-to-man and zone defense. In man -to-man, each defender covers a specific player on pass plays. In zone defense, a pass defender has an area of the field to cover rather than a specific player.

The Rusher

Defensively, the Rusher is the most important player. He or she is the first player on his/her team to cross the line of scrimmage and whose assignment is to tag the Quarterback or force him/her to throw in a hurry. In this position, speed and agility are essential. Every split second that the quarterback has to throw just makes it that much more difficult for the defensive players to cover their “man”.

Rusher Tips

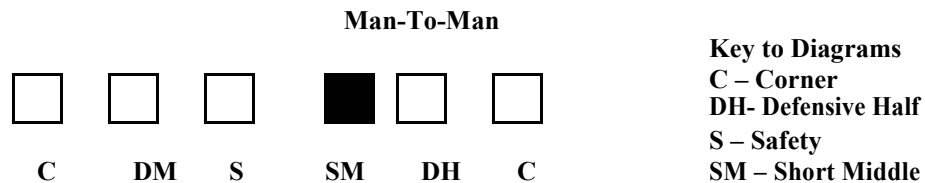
1. Take a stance at least 5 yards from the ball and to one side of the offensive Center.
2. On the snap, dash straight ahead toward the Quarterback. Don't break stride or change direction.
3. Look at the chest to contain the Quarterback but aim your attack at a point just outside the Quarterback's non-throwing shoulder.
4. Don't jump in the air to block a pass unless the Quarterback has committed himself/herself to release the ball, otherwise the Quarterback has an opportunity to beat your rush.

B. Defensive Strategy

As on offense, there are many defensive formations. Both offense and defense have become more complex in touch football, but in order to run variations in both formations, you must start with the basic fundamentals.

The basis formations on defense are:

1. Man-To-Man
2. Four-Two
3. Three-three



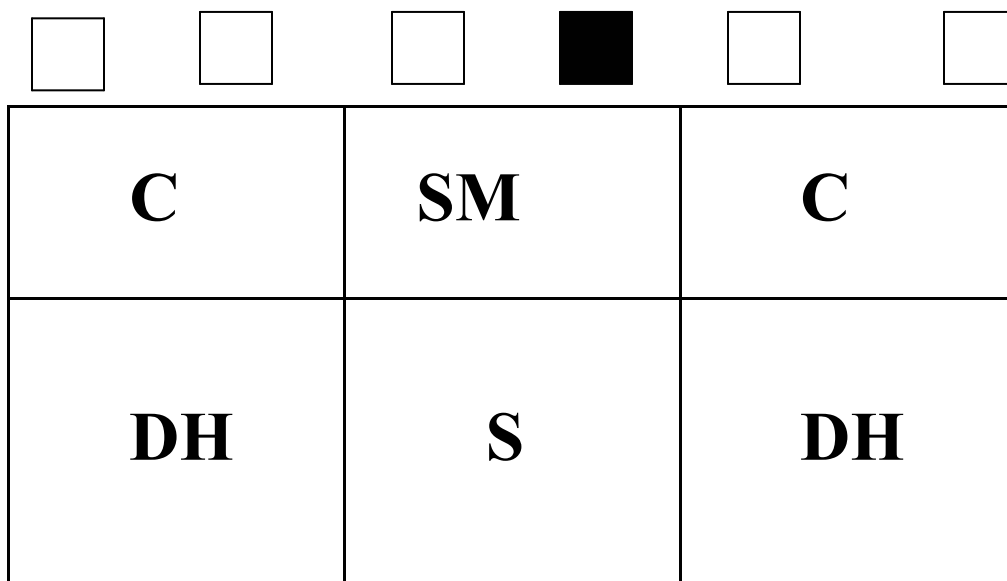
- C's and DH's should play inside shade
- SM on Center, S on third receiver to the one side
- Play normal depth; M-M "Tight" means 1-2 yards off receiver for short yardage situation
- If HB, SM on HB and S on center SM can choose to go in on snap or after ball is thrown to HB (however, rusher must cross line first unless SM 5 YDS from line of scrimmage on snap)

4-2 Basic



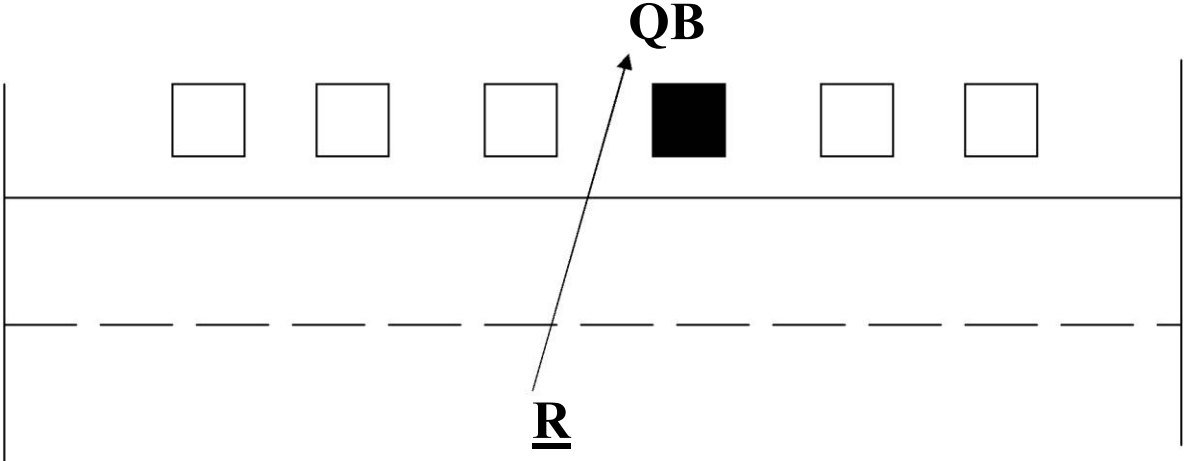
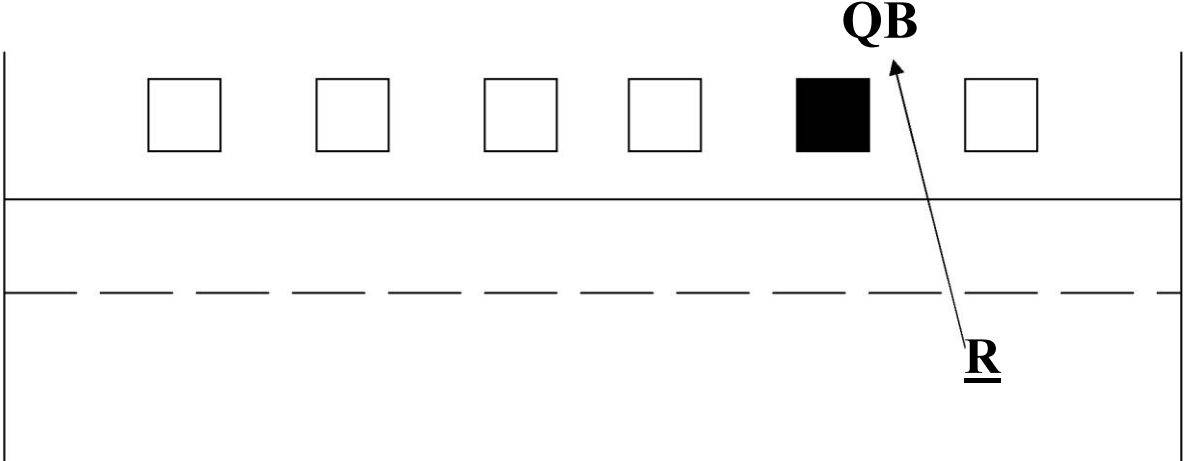
- Designed for short yardage situations, uses four short zones
- S moves up to short weak side; S and SM can switch sides at their discretion so as to give a different look
- DH has to split deep halves

Basic 3-3

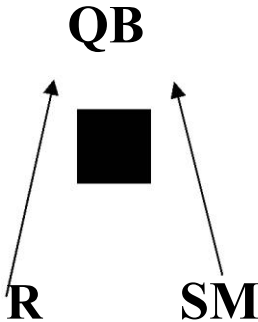


Three Short Zones, Three Deep Zones

Rusher Angles



Double Rush



- R and SM coordinate sides so that the QB cannot get outside
- Always stay on outside shoulder of QB

DEFENSIVE THEORY

Defending a Short Pass Offense

Although a “three-three” defense is a good sound formation to cover both the short and long ball threat, good teams find its vulnerability. There are teams that run a very disciplined short pass offense. In cases of such teams, the “4-2” and “man-to-man” are probably the best defenses.

In “man-to-man”, the key is having the personnel to be able to carry out this coverage. Each defensive player simply lines up on the inside or outside shoulder of the offensive player he/she is covering and never lets that player get more than three steps away. Position is key on this coverage.

Defending the Long Pass Offense

Again, there are teams that have Quarterbacks with strong arms and good receivers. These teams like to exploit the deep backs of defense. Often the “3-3” gives the deep protection needed to curtail the long pass.

The three short players in the “3-3” also have an important role. They may be considered rovers, in that they read the Quarterback who may be trying to find his/her secondary receivers underneath, if the deep receivers are covered.

Playing the Zone Defense

Teamwork is the key on zone defense. Each individual is given responsibility for a certain area on the field. It is important the defenders know which receivers are utilizing their zones at all times.

Communication is very important. Each defender must give verbal signals to the other defenders as to where the receivers are and where they are going.

Often the offense will send more than one receiver into a particular zone. In this case the defender must be in a position to react to a ball thrown to either of the receivers. If the defender commits himself/herself to one receiver, the other receiver will be wide open. Therefore, the defender must be prepared to react to the ball after it is thrown and not before.

A good way for a defender to play his or her zone is to play as deep as the deepest receiver in that zone. (A receiver should never be allowed to get behind the defender). By doing this, the defender is attempting to force the Quarterback to throw to the short patterns. With the deep pattern covered, the defender can then move up on the short pattern receiver to limit the play to a minimum yardage gain.

Playing the Man-to Man Defense

In man- to- man defense, the defenders are assigned to cover specific receivers. In order for this type of defense to be effective, the defender must closely cover the receiver no matter where that receiver goes on the field, and should continue this coverage until the ball is thrown since all receivers are potential targets. It is extremely important for all the defenders to know whom they are responsible to cover. This should be determined before the snap of the ball.

Often, an offense will employ some kind of crossing pattern when they recognize that they are facing a man-to-man defense. In this situation, defenders must not get caught up in traffic. Before a play begins, the defenders may decide that if the receivers they are covering cross, they will switch and cover the receiver moving toward them. This helps to avoid confusion in the coverage.

The particular stance and alignment a defender assumes when playing man-to-man coverage will depend on a variety of factors: the defender's own skill and speed; the receiver's skill and speed; offensive tendencies and the game situation (i.e. down and distance, field position, etc). As the defender gains experience, these things will become second nature. Usually, however, a staggered stance is preferred with either the inside or outside foot forward. The alignment is usually such that the defender is either slightly inside or slightly outside the receiver.

As the receiver comes off the line of scrimmage, the defender should begin backpedaling. The defender's eyes should focus on the waist of the receiver and while moving backward the defender should keep his/her shoulders down and over the feet in order to ensure a balanced base of support. Leaning back should be avoided.

The defender should always attempt to keep a 3 to 4 yard cushion between himself/herself and the receiver while backpedaling. At about 8 to 12 yards off the line of scrimmage, the defender should be prepared to react on the break taken by the receiver. At this point it is important to get as close as possible to the receiver in order to defend against a potential pass.

If possible, the defender should attempt to intercept or knock down the ball. If circumstances don't permit this, the defender must then make the tag on the receiver.

No matter which receiver catches the ball, regardless of the type of defense being played, all of the defenders should pursue to make the tag. It should never be assumed that someone else would make the tag.

Defending Against the Roll-Out Quarterback

Rollout running quarterbacks pose a great deal of problems to a defense. Normally, a defender can cover his or her or zone for three to four seconds, just enough time for a rusher to put pressure on a quarterback. However, if the Quarterback eludes the rusher, then he/she has one of the following three options:

1. The quarterback can cause the short zone player or come up to cover him or her, thereby allowing the quarterback to throw into the zone the defender has vacated;
2. If the short player does not respond to the quarterback, the quarterback may run for a long gain; or
3. If the quarterback eludes the rusher, he/she has a very good chance of finding a receiver who has broken open downfield for a long gain.

In all cases the defense is at the mercy of the quarterback.

The rusher is the key player on defense. His or her speed and quickness can make it a lot easier for the rest of the defenders, especially when it pertains to a rollout quarterback. An alternative is the double rush (two rushers). By using this method you keep the quarterback's running to a minimum and may cause him/her to throw the ball prematurely.

Defensive Tips

1. Move to make the ball carrier declare his or her direction
2. Observe the offensive formation and position of the players
3. Watch for clues and tip-offs to the play.
4. Vary your rushing routes.

Downing the Ball Carrier

In touch football, the tackle is replaced by a “touch”. This is the contact made by an opponent with any part of the hand on any part of the ball carrier’s person, or the ball in the carrier’s possession. It must be clearly seen by an official to be considered a touch.

Touching

- 1. Move to the ball carrier with maximum speed and body control.**
- 2. When close to the ball carrier, reduce speed, crouch to lower your center of gravity and spread your arms. Be prepared to react in any direction.**
- 3. Keep your head up; your eyes on the ball carrier.**
- 4. Watch for any fake movement and don’t get caught off balance by following a fake. Watch the hips, not the eyes of the ball carrier.**
- 5. Get close enough to the ball carrier so you don’t have to leave your feet.**
- 6. Tag the ball carrier anywhere to the rules permit.**

C. FOOTWORK FACTS AND TECHNIQUES (Defensive Back – Advanced skills)

Footwork is a vital skill that every good pass defender must master. In covering a receiver, the deep back uses every type of footwork he/she can possibly come up with.

Most defensive backs will start off running backwards. By learning to run and move backwards, the defender will be able to cover a break by the receiver in either direction.

An individual receiver runs a designated route. A defensive back must try to keep that receiver a distance of three yards away (maintain a cushion) until the receiver makes his/her break. Once the break is made, the defensive back must change direction and run with the receiver. It is important that the defender avoids crossing his or her feet, stumbling, or taking extra steps when changing direction.

The toes, by controlling the angle the hips may be turned during the back pedal, allow the defender to change direction as desired. It is vital to understand at what angle the toes must point in order to plant the ball of the foot and push off on that foot to gain ground in the shortest time without loss of motion.

90 Degree Break

While backpedaling, if the defender is required to make a 90-degree turn, the toes opposite the desired direction must be turned out slightly. If the toes are allowed to turn inside, this will inevitably open up the angle of the defender’s hips causing him/her to take a false step, deeper than desired to close the opponent.

