



## Strategy Guide Contents

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# Offense

Miami Offense		Standard	Special Plays	Quick Calls
Pro 1 Basic	RB Csonka	<b>Draw</b>	Short-Cross	Medium-Out
Pro 2 Basic	RB Morris	Dive	Short-Slant	Medium-Fly
Pro 3 Basic	WR Briscoe	Trap-Left	Short-Hitch	Long-Cross
3 Wide - 1 Rb	WR Warfield	Trap-Right	Short-Out	Long-Slant
3 Wide - 2 Rb	TE Mandich	Off Tackle-L	Short-Flat	Long-Hitch
4 Wide	QB Griese	Off Tackle-R	Short-Quick	Long-Out
5 Wide	Formation	Sweep-Left	Screen	Long-Fly
Dble TE - 1 Rb	Standard	Sweep-Right	Medium-Cross	Bomb-Post
Dble TE - 2 Rb	RB Csonka-wide	Pitch-Left	Medium-Slant	Bomb-Fly
Triple TE	RB Morris-wide	Pitch-Right	Medium-Hitch	<b>Combo Pass</b>
Fullhouse	TE Mandich-wide	Shotgun	QB Must Pass	Pass Safe
Pro Blowout	Extra Pass Blockers	QB Rollout	Head OB	Run Safe
Audible(5)	Csonka	Play Action	Stay In	Strong-Right
Timeout	Morris	Run Counter	Motion	No Huddle
Punt	Mandich			
FG (0%)				
<b>CPU</b>				<b>Clock Stopped</b>

*Offense Play Calls*

## Calling Offensive Plays

There are three basic steps involved in calling offensive plays:

1. Set your offensive personnel and formation. Click the name of the desired formation from the list on the left side of the play calling box (Pro Basic, 4 WR, etc). Other formation options, such as the I-formation, trips, and single wing may be selected from the formation drop-down list. Running backs and tight ends can be split out wide or held in to block by clicking the labels below the formation drop-down box.
2. Select any desired offensive options by clicking on their labels at the bottom of the play call box. These include play action, QB rollout, run counter, extra pass blockers, and head out of bounds, along with many other options.
3. Call a play. Clicking on a play opens a list of players that the play can be run to. Select a ball carrier or primary receiver from the list to call the play. Alternatively, plays can be called by first clicking a player. This opens a list of the main play calls for that player. Click on a play to call it.

## Offensive Formations

To select a formation, click the name of the formation from the list on the left side of the play calling box. The personnel in each formation is set from the roster form, which can be accessed in game by clicking the team name on the scoreboard. Substitutions can also be made by clicking a player's name on the field, and selecting a player from the quick sub box. When the "Global Substitutions" option is checked, any substitutions made will replace the player in every formation he is in. When unchecked, the substitution will apply only to the selected formation.

Additional formation options may be selected using the formation drop-down list and the labels below it. These include the following:

**I-Formation** – The fullback lines up in front of the tailback to provide extra blocking. This slightly increases the average gain and gain percentage on runs by the tailback. The I-formation is slightly less effective for pass plays, especially on passes to the backs.

**Trips Left/Right** – Trips formations put three receivers on one side of the field. This can overload a zone defense on that side of the field. Trips formations work best against zone defense but are poor against man to man. By forcing a defense into man coverage, however, the offense might be able to exploit favorable matchups. Interceptions are increased from a trips formation, since throws will generally be made to a more congested area of the field.

**Unbalanced Line** – The entire offensive line lines up right or left of the center. This increases rushing effectiveness to the strong side, but greatly decreases effectiveness to the weak side. Defenses can generally counteract this by slanting the defensive line, but unbalanced lines can sometimes create mismatches. Passing is also more difficult from an unbalanced line formation.

**RB Snap** – The running back takes the snap, and the quarterback is placed in the backfield.

**WR Snap** – A wide receiver takes the snap, and the quarterback is placed out wide. This can be used to set up formations such as the wildcat.

**RB-Wide** – Clicking the "RB-Wide" label for a player moves him out of the backfield and into a wide-out position. This allows more pass routes to be run, and increases the effectiveness of passing to the running back. Rushing effectiveness out of the formation is reduced.

**TE-Wide** – Clicking the "TE-Wide" label for a player moves him to a wide-out position. This reduces run blocking, slightly reduces pass blocking, and increases the receiving effectiveness of the tight end.

## Offensive Options

There are a number of options that may be added to any offensive play call. These are listed on the lower area of the offensive play call box. When selected, they are highlighted in team colors.

**Shotgun** – The shotgun formation moves the quarterback about five yards behind

the line of scrimmage to receive the snap. The shotgun is a passing formation which will usually result in slightly more completions. Because running is less effective from the shotgun, defenses put more focus on defending the pass, resulting in a slightly lower completion percentage per pass. However, the quarterback will be sacked less often and will attempt more passes, which generally means more total completions. There is also an increased chance of a fumbled snap.

**QB Rollout** – Rolling the quarterback outside gets him away from pressure from the defensive line, resulting in fewer sacks. However, passing effectiveness is reduced as he sprints outside the pocket. The quarterback is also more likely to run when rolling out. This may be an effective option for mobile quarterbacks behind a weak offensive line, or up against a strong pass rush.

**Play Action** – Play action is a fake handoff to a running back. Play action passes are effective against run defense, or when running backs are keyed. Otherwise, passes become less effective, since defenses that are not expecting a run will not bite on the fake.

**Run Counter** – Counter plays make it appear that a run is going the opposite direction that it goes. On an off tackle left, for example, the running back will start out to the right, and then reverse direction to the left when receiving the handoff. Counters are effective against aggressive defenses and line slants. The off tackle left counter, for example, will be especially effective against a defensive line slanting to its left (the offense's right).

**QB Must Pass** – When this option is selected the quarterback will always throw to the primary receiver, even if it means forcing the pass into coverage. He will not dump off to another receiver or attempt to run. This usually means more completions to the primary receiver, despite a much lower completion percentage. Interceptions are also more likely.

**Head OB** – This instructs players to try to get out of bounds to stop the clock. Average gain and breakaway chance are reduced since the ball carrier will focus on getting out of bounds instead of getting up field.

**Stay In** – This instructs players to stay in bounds to keep the clock running. Like "Head OB", average gain and breakaway chance are reduced.

**Motion** – Sending a man in motion increases completion percentage against man defense, and decreases it against zone. Motion also slightly reduces the average gain.

**Pass Safe** – Pass safe instructs the quarterback not to take any chances. Both completion percentage and interception percentage are significantly reduced. Outside of the opponent's 20 yard line, rolling out makes the pass even safer, since the ball can then be thrown away out of bounds. Inside the 20, the pass can be thrown out the back of the end zone.

**Run Safe** – Run safe instructs ball carriers to protect the ball. Average gain and breakaway chance are significantly reduced, but so is the chance of a fumble.

**Hard Count** – Use a hard count to attempt to draw the defense offsides. A false start call is equally likely, so it is best used when five yards gained means more than five yards lost. For example, when going for it on 4<sup>th</sup> and short, an offsides call would result in a first down, but a false start would just result in a punt.

**Strong-Left/Right** – Change the side the tight end lines up on.

**Audible** – Read the defense for an audible opportunity. See the section on audibles for more information.

**Extra Pass Blockers** – Selecting an extra pass blocker keeps the player in the backfield to block. The chance of a sack is reduced, especially against a blitz. Dump-off effectiveness is reduced, since the pass blocker would have been a potential receiver. Keeping a potential receiver in the backfield also frees up his coverage man to help out against other receivers, which reduces the completion percentage to the primary receiver as well.

## Clock Management

Managing the clock is a key to pulling off wins in close games, and can also be a part of an overall game strategy. There are several tools available for managing the clock on offense.

**Offensive Pace** – Offensive pace options are located on the bottom right of the play calling screen. Pace determines how long it will take in seconds for a play to begin. After a play, the scoreboard clock displays the time remaining at the end of the play. When the clock is stopped, the pace selection box will display "Clock Stopped." When it is running, the available pace options are given along with the approximate range of time it will take to get the play off. When the next play begins, the clock changes to show the time at the snap, and then changes again at the end of the play. The following pace options are available when the clock is running:

**Normal Pace** – When no pace option is selected, the offense will proceed at a normal pace, normally using about 30 to 40 seconds of a 40 second play clock. The approximate range of time is displayed at the top of the box (ex. Clock 34-40). Normal pace produces the best play results, since the offense is not rushing to start a play or becoming predictable by using the entire play clock.

**Hurry Up** – The hurry up offense gets a play started as quickly as possible. The amount of time it may take is shown next to the check box (ex. Hurry 12-18). This varies according to the previous play result. For example, after a 50 yard gain it will take longer to line up and snap the ball than after a three yard gain. No offensive personnel changes may be made from the previous play when running a hurry up offense. The defense cannot change players either, so the offense can use this to its advantage by keeping favorable match-ups on the field. Because the offense does not huddle up, the available play calls are limited. For example, most trick plays as well as combo passes are not available. Plays called in a hurry are less effective than those called at a normal pace from the huddle, so it should only be used when time makes it necessary, or to keep a defense on the field. Note that it may take slightly longer than the displayed time to bring a field goal or punt unit onto the field. Field goal percentage and punt average are reduced by a small amount in the hurry up offense.

**Slow Pace** – Slow pace uses the entire play clock, running as much time off the clock as possible. It is best used when protecting a lead late in a game. The slow down offense makes the snap count more predictable, since the

defense knows that the ball must be snapped before the play clock reaches zero. Because of this, the defense can usually get a better jump on the play. Slow pace can also be used by an over-matched team to “shorten” the game by reducing the number of plays. This strategy should be considered carefully, however, because of the penalty to the offense’s effectiveness.

**No Play** – Whenever the time remaining on the play clock is greater than the time remaining in the quarter or until the two minute warning, the offense has the option to let the clock run without calling a play. To do this, click the “No Play” button at the bottom right of the play calling screen. On defense, a red label appears to indicate that the offense is not lining up to run a play.

**Spike Ball** – Spiking the ball stops the clock while using a down. It takes slightly less time to line up and spike the ball than to run a hurry up offense. To spike the ball, click the quarterback’s name on the play calling screen and select “Spike Ball” from the list. Spike ball is not available when it is not allowed in the league rules, when the clock is stopped, and on fourth down.

**QB Kneel** – To call a kneel down, click the quarterback’s name and select “QB Kneel” from the list. QB kneel is not available when it is not allowed in the league rules.

## Audibles

**Miami Audible?**

**Defense: 4-3 Basic, short/tight coverage, showing blitz.**

RB Csonka	RB Morris	WR Briscoe	WR Warfiel..	TE Mandich	QB Griese
Draw Dive Sweep-L Sweep-R Screen Short-Flat	Draw Dive Sweep-L Sweep-R Screen Short-Flat	Short-Quick Short-Slant Medium-Hitch Medium-Fly	Short-Quick Short-Slant Medium-Hitch Medium-Fly	Short-Hitch Medium-Hitch	Draw Sneak Bootleg

**Double-click to call a new play.**

:13

Continue With Original Play Call..

Timeout

A well timed audible can be an excellent offensive tool for taking advantage of an aggressive defense. On the other hand, an offense that uses audibles too often can be vulnerable to deception tactics by the defense. The number of audibles per half that can be used by each team is set on the game preferences form (Setup/Game Preferences from the opening screen).

When an audible opportunity arises, the offense is given the chance to either choose a new

play from a limited list of options, continue with the original play call, or call a timeout. Information is given about whatever aspects of the defense the quarterback is able to read at the line of scrimmage. These might include formation, tight or loose coverages, blitzers, or coverage information such as swapped cornerbacks or a free safety in run support. If a call is not made within the 15 second time limit, the play will proceed with the original call. There are two types of situations in which audible opportunities may arise. These include the following:

**Selecting the audible option when calling an offensive play.** Selecting this option instructs the quarterback to take an extra moment to read the defense before the ball is snapped. After the defense makes its play call, the offense gets a chance to call an audible based on what the quarterback sees. One audible is used whether or not a new play is called. Also, plays are slightly less effective when using this option, whether a new play is called or not.

There are at least a few situations where this could be useful. For example, in a short yardage situation, a running play could be called along with the audible option. If the defense shows tight coverage, a formation designed to stop the run, or a free safety in the box, you might take a shot deep instead of running the original running play. The option to call a timeout instead of an audible can also be useful. For example, you might choose to go for it on fourth down, but leave yourself the option to call a timeout and punt if you don't like the look you are getting from the defense. These are just a few ways to use the audible option, but there are many more possibilities. Be especially aware of this ability against defensive coaches who "guess" too much and often make aggressive play calls that are designed to stop one particular type of play.

**Automatic reads by the quarterback.** Occasionally, the quarterback will get a particular look from the defense that prompts an audible opportunity. This can happen on any play, but is more likely the more the defense deviates from a standard setup. Tight or loose coverage, blitz, free safety in run support, swapped corners, or formations that do not closely match defensive backs with wide receivers (4-3 vs. a 4 WR set, for example) all increase the chance of an audible opportunity. Any time a goal line defense is called outside of the 20 yard line, an audible chance happens. One audible is used only if a new play is selected.

Here are a few more important things to consider when using audibles:

- A play called as an audible is less likely to succeed than the same play called in the huddle. If they are not used in the right situations, audibles can hurt more than help. Of course, catching the defense at the right times can more than offset this effect. For more information on exactly how potential results differ for audibles versus normal play calls, use the play analysis form in the game (select "Reports/Play Analysis" from the opening screen.)
- The read you get along with an audible chance may not be entirely accurate. Defenses can use deception tactics such as showing blitz to lure the offense into bad audibles. If audibles are used too aggressively, smart defensive coaches may notice and exploit this tendency. For more information, see the section on defensive deception tactics.

## Offensive Plays

To call an offensive play, click the play and then select a ball carrier or primary receiver from the pop-up list. Alternatively, clicking a player opens a list of plays that can be run to that player. For example, the quarterback sneak play is available by clicking on the quarterback. Plays may be called from three different tabs.

**Standard Plays** – 30 of the most common plays, including both runs and passes.

**Special Plays** – 30 plays including lesser used running and passing plays, as well as trick plays.

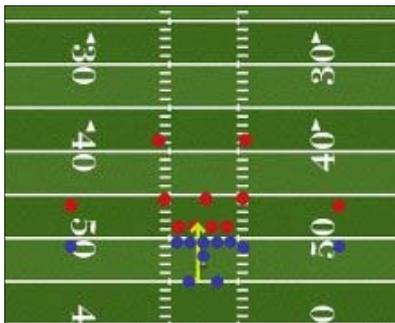
**Quick Calls** – Quick calls offer simplified play calling options. The user selects the basic play type, such as an inside run or medium pass, and lets the computer select the specific route or running play. Optionally, the computer can be set to also choose the ball carrier by checking the box for "Computer Select Runner/Receiver."

Below are descriptions of each offensive play call available in the game. Descriptions and play diagrams are viewable in game. To access these, select an offensive play, and then click the "?" icon in the upper left of the pop-up box.

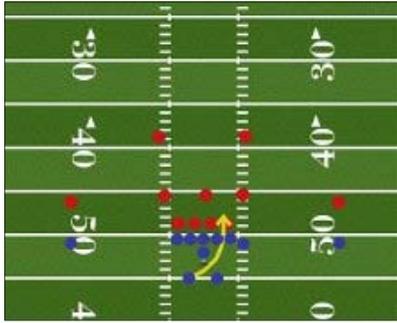
**Draw** - A draw play is an inside running play designed to initially look like a passing play. The hand off is delayed, while the offensive line attempts to force the defensive line outside after initially showing pass block. Receivers run deep routes to take defensive backs away from the play and to give the appearance of a pass play. Draw plays are most effective against pass defenses, while defenses expecting the run will not likely be fooled. Because it is a slow developing run play, draws are more likely than most runs to be stopped in the backfield for a loss



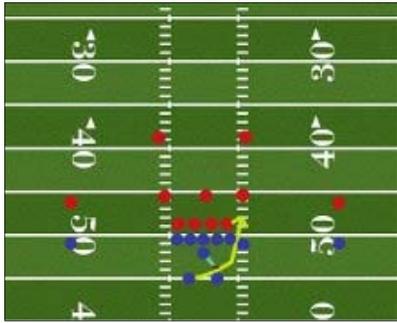
**Dive** – A dive play is a quick hand off straight up the middle. It is a conservative running play that can be effective at picking up a short gain. Dive plays rarely result in significant lost yardage, and rarely produce large gains.



**Trap** – A trap play is an inside run between the guard and tackle on either side. Offensive linemen use trap blocking technique to open up holes for the running back. Traps can be particularly effective against slanting defensive lines.



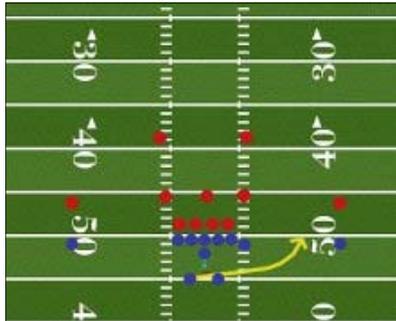
**Off Tackle** – An off tackle play can be run behind either the left or right offensive tackle. Off tackles offer the most standard yardage distribution for running plays; a moderate chance of a breakaway run, and a moderate chance of a loss.



**Sweep** – A sweep is an outside hand off. Linemen typically “pull” on the play, getting outside in front of the running back to block. Sweeps create good chances for breakaways, but also result in more losses since they take longer to develop



**Pitch** – A pitch play is an outside running play in which the ball is tossed to the running back rather than handed off. Pitch plays are similar to sweeps, but result in slightly more breakaways. They also carry more risk, including an increased chance of a fumble or a play stopped in the backfield.



**Short Cross** – A short cross is a six to nine yard route run over the middle of the field. Crossing routes have a high completion percentage because they are a shorter throw for the quarterback. However, throwing over the middle generally means more defenders will be in the vicinity, increasing the chance of an interception. Crossing routes produce a moderate chance for a breakaway, and are slightly better at beating man to man coverage.



**Short Slant** – A short slant is a quick angled route over the middle of the field. Because the receiver catches the ball while running up field, slants produce the best chance for yards after the catch. Slants have a slightly higher completion percentage than the average pass. However, because the route is run over the middle and up field, interceptions are more likely, and receivers are more susceptible to hits that could cause fumbles. Slants are slightly more effective against man coverage.



**Short Hitch** – A short hitch is a conservative, six to nine yard “curl” route. Hitch routes produce reliable gains, with very little chance of significant yards after the catch. Completion percentage on hitch routes is slightly lower than average, but interceptions and fumbles after the catch are significantly reduced. Hitch routes are slightly more effective against zone defense.



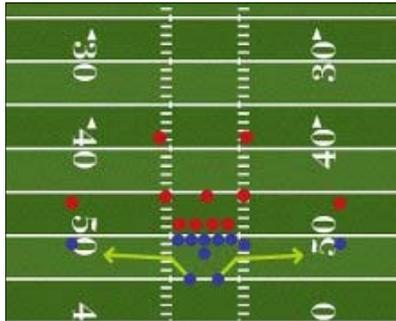
**Short Out** – A short out is a six to nine yard route run towards the sideline. Completion percentage is lower on out routes, since the pass generally has to be thrown further to reach the receiver. Throwing away from the middle of the field results in fewer interceptions and fumbles after the catch. Out routes are good patterns for getting out of bounds to stop the clock. Breakaways occur less often on out routes.



**Short Quick** – A short quick pass is an immediate throw to a receiver or tight end at the line of scrimmage. This play is particularly effective against loose coverage, and can be used with success as an audible. The short quick pass is less effective against normal coverage than other routes, and is especially ineffective against tight coverage. Receivers who can run after the catch will be able to produce the best gains.



**Short Flat** – A short flat pass is run out of the backfield to the flat on either side of the field. The pass is usually caught near the line of scrimmage, and relies on the running back's ability to gain yards after the catch. Flat passes are a good way to get the ball to good pass catching running backs.



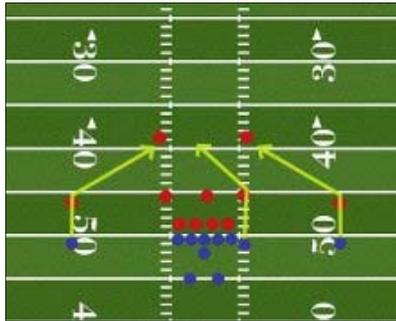
**Screen** – A screen pass is a short pass, usually to a running back, in which the pass rush is allowed to get behind the play before the pass is thrown. Linemen then release up field to block. Screens are especially effective against blitzing defenses. Screens are rarely intercepted, but when they are the result is often a big return.



**Medium Cross**– A medium cross is a 10 to 15 yard route run over the middle of the field. Crossing routes have a high completion percentage because they are effectively a shorter throw for the quarterback. However, throwing over the middle generally means more defenders will be in the vicinity, increasing the chance of an interception. Crossing routes produce a moderate chance for a breakaway, and are slightly better at beating man to man coverage.



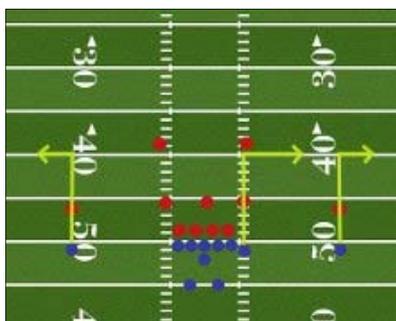
**Medium Slant** – A medium slant is a 10 to 15 yard angled route over the middle of the field. Because the receiver catches the ball while running up field, slants produce the best chance for yards after the catch. Slants also have a slightly higher completion percentage than the average pass. However, because the route is run over the middle and up the field, interceptions are more likely, and receivers are more susceptible to hits that could cause fumbles. Slants are slightly more effective against man coverage.



**Medium Hitch** – A medium hitch is a conservative, 10 to 15 yard “curl” route. Hitch routes produce reliable gains, with very little chance of significant yards after the catch. Completion percentage on hitch routes is slightly lower than average, but interceptions and fumbles after the catch are significantly reduced. Hitch routes are slightly more effective against zone defense.



**Medium Out** – A medium out is a 10 to 15 yard route run towards the sideline. Completion percentage is lower on out routes, since the pass generally has to be thrown further to reach the receiver. Throwing away from the middle of the field results in fewer interceptions and fumbles after the catch. Out routes are good patterns for getting out of bounds to stop the clock. Breakaways occur less often on out routes.



**Medium Fly** – The medium fly route is a 6 to 15 yard straight pass. This pass is slightly more effective against zone defense. Yardage will vary more than the typical pass, since the quarterback will attempt to throw the pass in a seam rather than to a specific distance.



**Long Cross** - A long cross is a 20 to 30 yard route run over the middle of the field. Crossing routes have a high completion percentage because they are a shorter throw for the quarterback than other long passes. However, throwing over the middle generally means more defenders will be in the vicinity, increasing the chance of an interception. Crossing routes produce a moderate chance for a breakaway, and are slightly better at beating man to man coverage.



**Long Slant** - A long slant is a 20 to 30 yard angled route over the middle of the field. Because the receiver catches the ball while running up field, slants produce the best chance for yards after the catch. Slants also have a slightly higher completion percentage than the average pass. However, because the route is run over the middle and up the field, interceptions are more likely, and receivers are more susceptible to hits that could cause fumbles. Slants are slightly more effective against man coverage.



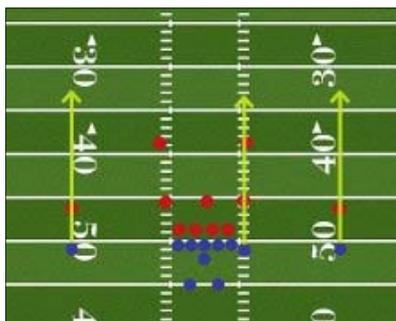
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**Long Out** - A long out is a 20 to 30 yard route run towards the sideline. Completion percentage is lower on out routes, since the pass generally has to be thrown further to reach the receiver. Throwing away from the middle of the field results in fewer interceptions and fumbles after the catch. Out routes are good patterns for getting out of bounds to stop the clock. Breakaways occur less often on out routes.



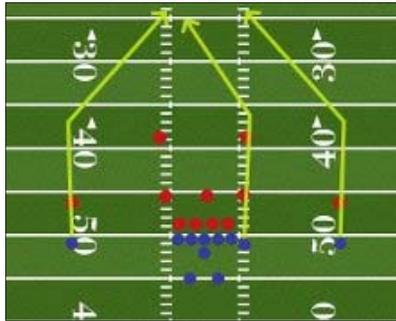
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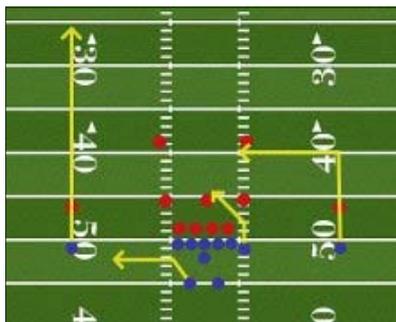
**Bomb Fly** – The bomb fly is a deep 40 to 50 yard route run straight up the field. Fly patterns are most effective against man to man coverage.



**Bomb Post** – The bomb post is a deep, 40 to 50 yard angled route across the middle of the field. Posts typically have a slightly higher completion percentage than fly routes, but also have a slightly higher interception chance and a lower big gain chance after the catch. The post route is most effective against zone defense



**Combo Pass** – The combo pass play allows up to four receivers to be selected to run short, medium, long, or bomb routes. The quarterback will throw to each receiver about evenly, except in certain defensive situations. For example, if the defense is playing tight coverage, passes are less likely to go to short routes. If one receiver is double covered, he is less likely to be thrown to. For this reason, combo passes can be effective against defensive coaches who aggressively adjust coverages from play to play. Because of the additional primary reads required, combo passes are slightly less effective than standard pass calls, so it is important that they are used in the right situations.



**Dive Over the Top** – The over the top play is a quick hand off to a running back who attempts to dive over the line of scrimmage in an effort to gain short yardage. This play will consistently yield between zero and one yard, making it an effective way to convert a first down or touchdown with inches to go against a goal line defense.



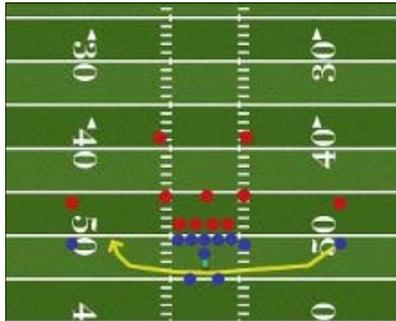
**Stretch** – A stretch play is an outside hand off to the strong side of the field, in which the quarterback sprints outside to make the hand off and the offensive line “stretches” in the direction of the run.



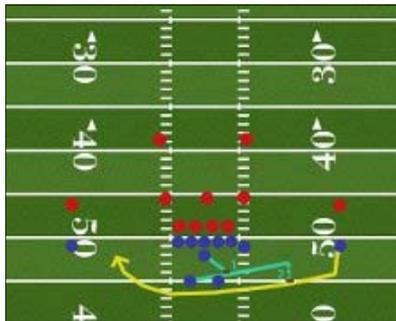
**Quick Pitch** – A quick pitch is a pitch play to the weak side of the field. It can be effective against aggressive defenses, or against defensive lines that are slanting towards the strong side of the field. Quick pitch plays have more risk of lost yardage than standard pitch plays.



**End Around** – An end around is an outside hand off to a wide receiver or tight end. It is a good way to get the ball into the hands of a good running receiver. End arounds risk lost yardage but may also produce a large gain. This play becomes somewhat less effective when trick plays have already been run in the game.



**Reverse** – A reverse is an outside hand off to a running back, who then hands the ball to a wide receiver running in the other direction. Reverses can produce big gains if the defense over pursues the initial hand off and is left out of position on the reverse. On the other hand, when the defense stays home the play will often go for a significant loss. Aggressive defenses, or defensive line slants in the direction of the original hand off, are especially likely to be fooled, while conservative defenses rarely will. Zone defenses are much less likely to be caught out of position on reverses than man to man. This play is less effective once trick plays have already been run in the game.



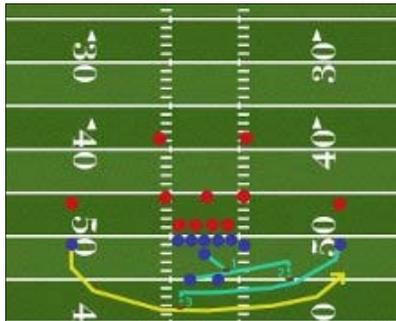
**QB Bootleg** – A bootleg is a fake inside hand off to a running back, followed by an outside run by the quarterback. Bootlegs are not effective in short yardage situations, since they are often stopped for a loss. They can produce good gains when used with a running quarterback. A defense that keys the primary running back may be more susceptible to bite on the fake hand off.



**Delay Draw** – A delay draw is a draw play with an exaggerated delay before the hand off. It can produce large gains against pass defenses, but also be frequently stopped in the backfield because of how slowly it develops. Delay draws will rarely have any success if the defense does not anticipate a pass.



**Double Reverse** – The double reverse play is a reverse with a third hand off. This play is extremely risky, and often loses significant yardage as each hand off moves further behind the line of scrimmage. Against aggressive defenses, there is a chance that the defense will be fooled and a big play could result. Zone defenses are much less likely to be caught out of position on reverses than man to man. This play is significantly less effective once trick plays have already been run in the game.

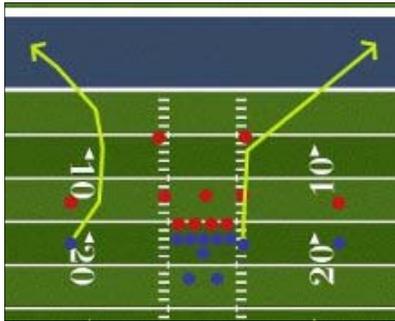


**Statue of Liberty** – A statue of liberty is similar to both a draw play and an end around. The quarterback fades back to pass, and then hands the ball to a wide receiver on an outside run. This play can be effective against defenses that are expecting a pass, but will also often be stopped for a loss, especially against basic and run defenses. The statue of liberty play is less effective once trick plays have already been run in the game.

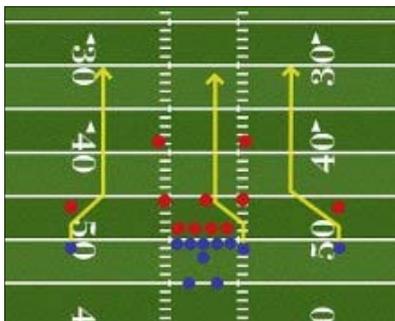


**Shovel Pass** – A shovel pass is a quick screen pass in the middle of the field to a running back. Shovel passes have a lower completion percentage than typical screen passes, but can also produce slightly larger gains. It is most effective against aggressive, blitzing defenses, especially when the blitz comes from inside linebackers.

**Corner Fade** – The corner fade is a lobbed pass into the corner of the end zone. It is only available inside the 20 yard line. Completion percentage is lower than a typical pass, but it is consistently thrown to the primary receiver, and will always result in a touchdown if completed. Because the fade attempts to isolate a one on one match up, it is particularly effective against a favorable man to man match up, while good defenders can shut down the play.



**Long Slant & Go** – The long slant and go route initially looks like a short slant, but the receiver then breaks straight up field on a long fly route. Defenses playing tight, aggressive coverage are likely to try to jump the short route and be beaten deep. Sacks and dump-offs are more likely since the primary route takes longer to develop. The slant and go is more effective against man defense than zone.



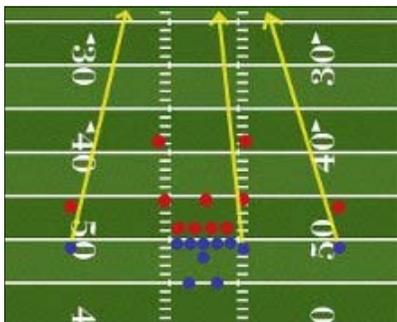
**Hook & Ladder** – The hook and ladder is a medium hitch pass, followed by an optional pitch to a receiver headed down field. The pass is slightly less effective than a standard medium hitch pass. If the pitch is made, it can result in an additional big gain. However, it also carries a significant risk of a fumble. This play is less effective once trick plays have already been run in the game.



**Flea Flicker** – On a flea flicker play, the ball is first handed off to a running back who starts up the middle. He then stops and pitches the ball back to the quarterback, who throws a long pass to a designated receiver. Flea flickers can be especially effective against defenses that are expecting the run. However, they often result in sacks since they take a long time to develop, and will often result in interceptions and incompletions against defenses who do not fall for the fake run. This play is less effective once trick plays have already been run in the game.



**Hail Mary** – A Hail Mary is a desperation, deep pass thrown as far as the quarterback can throw. No primary receiver is thrown as the pass usually ends up being a jump ball in the end zone. The chance for a completion is very low, and the chance of an interception is very high. It is, however, usually the best chance of scoring on one play against a prevent defense.



**Trick Pass** – A trick pass is thrown by a player other than the quarterback. It is usually a hand off to the passer, who then throws a medium or long pass. There is a very high chance of a sack or interception on a trick pass, but also potential for a big play if the defense is fooled. The trick pass is most likely to be successful when the defense suspects a run, or keys the passer. This play is less effective once trick plays have already been run in the game.



**Run-Pass Option** – On a run/pass option play, the quarterback rolls out and has the option of either throwing a short to medium pass or running. The quarterback will choose between running and passing about equally, except in certain situations. For example, if the defense is playing a pass defense or double covering the primary receiver, the quarterback will be more likely to run. Each option is slightly less effective than if it were called the standard way, but because the option that is taken depends partially on the defensive call, it can be an effective play for a team with the right players.



**Option** – On an option play, the quarterback carries the ball outside with the option to pitch to the running back who trails behind him. When calling the play, the preferred option is selected. Defensive play calls can also effect which option will be taken. For example, if the running back is keyed, the quarterback will be more likely to run the ball himself. Option plays are less effective against pro teams.



**Triple Option** – The triple option is an option with the additional option to hand off to the fullback up the middle. When calling the play, the preferred option is selected. Defensive play calls can also effect which option will be taken. For example, if the running back is keyed, the quarterback will be more likely to run the ball himself. Option plays are less effective against pro teams.



**QB Sneak** – The QB sneak is a quick run up the middle by the quarterback. This play will consistently yield between zero and one yard, making it an effective way to convert a first down or touchdown with inches to go against a goal line defense.

**Quick Kick** – The quick kick is a trick punt play. The quarterback lines up in the shotgun and punts the ball. Because the defense will not have a player deep, returns are generally very short when the kick is returned at all. Because of the short snap, and the fact that the quarterback is not usually a punter, there is a greater risk of the punt being blocked.

# Defense

### Dallas Defense

4-3 Basic

3-4 Basic

5-2 Basic

3-3 Nickel

4-2 Nickel

5-1 Nickel

3-2 Dime

4-1 Dime

3-1 Quarter

5-3 Stack

5-4 Stack

6-2 Stack

6-3 Stack

4-3 Basic 'B'

3-4 Basic 'B'

Play Call

Basic

Run

Pass

Prevent

Goal Line

Coverage

Man

Inside

Tight Man

Outside

Loose Man

Match

Zone

Swap

Short Zone

Deep Zone

Keyed Runner Ave Run

None	Gain	Ave	Key
RB Csonka	84%	4.6	-1.0
RB Morris	88%	6.7	-1.3
WR Briscoe	26%	-2.0	-5.0
WR Warfield	44%	6.6	-5.0
TE Mandich	32%	0.0	-5.0
QB Griese	52%	1.5	-4.0

Doubled Receiver(1/1) Ave Pass

None	Comp%	Ave	Dbl
RB Csonka	49.4	10.0	-30%
RB Morris	48.0	15.3	-28%
WR Briscoe	54.0	14.7	-18%
WR Warfield	57.0	16.1	-19%
TE Mandich	54.7	14.5	-21%

Aggressive

QB Spy

Conservative

None

Blitz

OLB Edwards 1

ILB Jordan 2

OLB Lewis 1

CB Renfro

CB Waters

S Harris

FS Green

Delay

Show

Run-Green

Defensive Line Play

Inside

Outside

Run-L

Run-R

**Opponent FG: 56%**

**Audible: 10%**

Timeout

Zone DB

0

1

2

Show Coverage

Tight

Normal

Loose

CPU

*Defense Play Calls*

## Calling Defensive Plays

There are three steps involved in calling defensive plays:

1. Set the formation to be used by clicking one from the list on the left side of the play calling box. If a no huddle is being used, this list will be grayed out as no personnel changes can be made.
2. Set any specific play options and assignments. These can include coverage depth and mode, keyed runners, doubled receivers, blitzers, match-ups, defensive line play, deception tactics, and more. As many options as desired can be used on a play, and each have their own strengths and weaknesses as they relate to players on the field and game situations.
3. Call a play. The play call determines the mindset and behavior of the defense as a whole. Plays include basic, run, pass, prevent, and goal line.

## Defensive Formations

Fifteen formations are available for the defense to use. These may be selected by clicking one from the list on the left side of the play calling area. Each formation is a different arrangement and number of defensive linemen, linebackers, and defensive backs. The personnel used in a formation may be set from the team roster screen. Any changes made during a game will not be saved for future games. Changes may also be made by clicking a player's name on the playing field and selecting a substitute from the quick sub form. Checking the "Global Substitutions" box will replace the player in every formation, while leaving it unchecked will only change the current formation.

To view the overall ratings of the chosen formation, select the "Line" tab. Ratings appear below the lineup. A range of ratings is used for the sack rating, since it varies according to which players are blitzing. The formation also influences what play calling options are available. For example, run defenses cannot be used when five or more defensive backs are in the game, while pass defenses require at least four. The match-ups created by different formations also affect the ability to double cover receivers, blitz, and move the free safety into run support, among other things. These will be discussed in more detail in later sections on defensive play calling.

**4-3 Basic** – A standard set including four linemen, three linebackers, and four defensive backs.

**3-4 Basic** – A standard set including three down linemen and four linebackers. The 3-4 is effective for teams with good linebackers, and usually relies on at least one blitzing linebacker to create a pass rush.

**5-2 Basic** – A basic package for teams with five good defensive linemen. The 5-2 may be vulnerable to short passing, and may give up more big runs.

**3-3 Nickel** – A pass oriented defensive formation with five defensive backs.

**4-2 Nickel** – A nickel formation that may be effective for teams with good pass rushing linemen or weak linebackers.

**5-1 Nickel** – A nickel formation using five down linemen to create a pass rush, and only one linebacker. Teams with good linemen may be able to produce sacks, but may be vulnerable to big plays.

**3-2 Dime** – A standard dime formation with six defensive backs. Matches up well against four wide receiver sets.

**4-1 Dime** – A dime set with four down linemen and one linebacker.

**3-1 Quarter** – A pass defense platoon using seven defensive backs. Can be an effective prevent defense.

**5-3 Stack** – A run defense formation useful in short yardage situations. Because only three defensive backs are used, it is vulnerable to passing.

**5-4 Stack** – Designed for short yardage situations, but very vulnerable to passing plays with only two defensive backs on the field.

**6-2 Stack** – Similar to the 5-3 stack, but it can be used effectively by teams with six good linemen.

**6-3 Stack** – Similar to the 5-3 stack, but it can be used effectively by teams with six good linemen.

**4-3 Basic B** – An alternate 4-3 basic formation. By default, this lineup is filled with backups, and is best used in blowout situations to protect important players from being injured.

**3-4 Basic B**– An alternate 3-4 basic formation.

## Defensive Play Calls

To send in a defensive play, double click the play call label. This should be done after selecting any desired coverages, keyed runners, blitzers, or other defensive options. The play call determines the mindset and behavior of the defense as a whole on a play. Plays may also be called with a single click when set that way in game preferences. Play calls include the following:

**Basic** – This is the standard, balanced defensive play. Basic defense will generally be used more than any other, as it has no specific strengths or weaknesses.

**Run** – Run defense lowers the opponent's rushing average, increases the chance of lost yardage, decreases the chance of a big gain, and increases the chance of a fumble on running plays. Run defenses are more vulnerable to passing plays. To call a run defense, there must be no more than four defensive backs on the field.

**Pass** - Pass defense lowers the effectiveness of the passing game, while making the defense more vulnerable to running plays. To call a pass defense, there must be at least four defensive backs on the field.

**Prevent** – Prevent defense is designed to prevent a big play. The offense will generally be able to move the ball with short passes or runs, but will be ineffective on long and deep passes and will rarely break a big gain. Deep zone coverage is selected automatically when playing prevent defense.

**Goal Line** – Goal line defenses bring everyone up to the line to stop the offense in short yardage situations. It is usually the most effective play at the goal line, but is very risky in non goal line situations. Breakaways and big gains are very likely on both passes and runs. The offense always gets a chance to audible when the defense plays goal line defense outside of the red zone.

## Coverage and Match-up Options

The image shows two overlapping windows from a game interface. The left window is titled "Man Coverage Match-Ups Preferences" and contains the following settings:

- vs LB: RB Csonka 2 vs ILB Jordan 3
- vs LB: RB Morris 1 vs OLB Lewis 3
- vs CB: WR Briscoe 7 vs CB Renfro 10
- vs CB: WR Warfield 5 vs CB Waters 6
- vs S: TE Mandich 5 vs S Harris 5
- Zone DB(s): Green
- Free Safety: S Cornell Green
- Rotate Coverage When Blitzing
- Buttons: Reset, Hide

The right window is titled "Coverage" and contains the following options:

- Man (selected), Tight Man, Loose Man, Zone, Short Zone, Deep Zone
- Buttons: Inside, Outside, Match, Swap
- Zone DB: 0, 1 (selected), 2
- Show Coverage
- Buttons: Tight, Normal, Loose

## Coverage Type

**Man Coverage** – Man to man coverage involves each player matching up against an offensive player in pass coverage. It is generally slightly more effective than zone defense, but weak defenders may be exploited by good receivers. Man coverage is also more vulnerable to breakaways and big gains, as well as certain routes such as slants and crosses. Scrambling quarterbacks will run more effectively against man defense, and it is more susceptible to being beaten by trick plays like reverses and end arounds. Any players who are not assigned a man to man match-up and are not designated to another assignment, like a blitz or quarterback spy, will play a zone. The number of defensive backs playing zone defense is displayed below the coverage options, and may be changed by clicking a number. Changing this number re-assigns match-ups to free up the desired number of defensive backs. For more details, see the “Zone DBs” section.

**Zone Coverage** – In zone coverage, each defender is given an area of the field to cover, rather than a specific player. Zone defenses can sometimes “hide” poor defenders but also minimize the positive impact of great defensive backs. Zones usually give up a slightly higher completion percentage and average gain, but are less susceptible to big gains and deep passes. Zones are more effective against certain routes, such as slants and crosses, but are worse against hitches, medium and long fly routes and posts. Because defenders are facing the line of scrimmage more often, they are better able to react to and stop running quarterbacks. Zones are much less likely to be caught out of position on trick plays like reverses and end arounds. Double coverages cannot be used while playing zone defense.

## Coverage Depth

**Tight/Short Coverage** – Tight man coverage and short zone coverage bring defensive players closer to the line of scrimmage. This makes them more effective at defending short passes, but leaves them vulnerable to long passes. Runs are slightly more likely to be stopped for a loss or a short gain, but are more likely to result in breakaways and big gains if they get behind the tight coverage.

**Loose/Deep Coverage** – Loose coverage moves defensive players away from the line of scrimmage to better defend against deep passes. Short passes are much more effective against loose/deep coverage but breakaways are less likely. Long and bomb passes are less effective. On running plays, the average gain is higher, but the chance of a long gain is reduced.

## Inside and Outside Coverage

When playing inside or outside coverage, defenders will adjust their zones or shade their man coverage to better defend an area of the field. Outside coverage helps pass defense near the sidelines, and can be effective at stopping out routes and fly patterns. This is often a good coverage style against a two minute offense that is throwing sideline passes in an effort to get out of bounds and stop the clock. However, it is more vulnerable in the middle of the field, where crosses and slants are run.

Inside coverage shifts defenders towards the middle of the field to defend against routes like crosses and slants, while leaving outside routes open more often.

### **Show Coverage**

Showing coverage allows the defense to play one coverage depth, but disguise it at the line of scrimmage as another. For example, the defense could show tight coverage, and then back off into normal coverage as the play begins. Pass defense is slightly less effective overall when showing coverage, since defensive backs are not in their ideal position to start the play. However, by using deception at the right times, the offense can be lured into making bad audible calls that can work to the defense's advantage.

Showing tight or loose coverage is available when playing normal coverage, and results in a significant chance that the offense is given an audible opportunity (usually about 70%). Showing normal coverage is available when playing either tight or loose coverage, and greatly reduces the chance of an offense reading the actual coverage and getting an audible chance. By showing tight coverage but playing normal coverage, for example, the defense could lure the offense into believing that a deep pass audible is a good call. By balancing the use of deception with actual coverage changes, a defensive coach can limit the use and effectiveness of offensive audibles, and turn the offense's ability to audible against itself.

### **Match-Ups**

The match-up preferences box, accessible by clicking "Match-ups" below the doubled receivers box, allows match-up preferences to be set by position. Preferred match-ups may be set to cornerback, safety, or linebacker. Specific player match-ups will then be assigned in order of pass defense ratings. For example, if three offensive players are designated to be guarded by cornerbacks, the best receiver of the three will be matched up against the best cornerback. If only two cornerbacks are on the field, the lowest rated receiver will be matched up with a safety instead.

An example of the usefulness of the match-up preferences could be when facing a running back who often catches passes. He could be matched up against a safety to limit his effectiveness. On the other hand, he could be matched up against a linebacker in situations where he is not a threat, such as long yardage, in order to free up a safety for support coverage. These changes can also be made temporarily with one click by using the "zone defensive backs" selection (see below).

The check box for "Rotate Coverage When Blitzing LBs and Safeties" determines how match-ups are assigned when coverage players are designated to blitz. When checked, the next best cover player is rotated up to guard the blitzing player's assignment, with his assignment being covered by the next best, and so on. When the box is unchecked, the best available player without an assignment is used. If no player is available, and the box is unchecked, he will be unguarded. Coverage is never rotated when blitzing corners, so it is important that a defender is free to pick up the blitzing corner's assignment. The match-up preferences box can be useful for situations like this, since it shows how match-ups change as blitzers, spies, and run support options are selected.

The match-ups box also allows a free safety to be designated for the current formation. The free safety will be the last defensive back to be assigned a coverage. This

means that he will be “free” more often to blitz, double cover, play run support, or simply to play zone defense.

### **Zone Defensive Backs**

When playing man to man coverage, any defensive backs who are not assigned a primary coverage responsibility will play zone defense. These defensive backs support the others in coverage, and play an important role in defending against deep passes and preventing breakaways. Defensive backs can be freed up to play zone coverage by assigning players to be guarded by linebackers using the match-ups box. The number of zone defensive backs can also be set for a specific play by setting the “Zone DBs” number, located below the coverage box. For example, consider the following match-ups.

Offense – Pro Basic, Defense – 4-3 Basic

WR1 vs CB1

WR2 vs CB2

TE vs SS

RB1 vs LB

RB2 vs LB

In this situation, one defensive back; the free safety; is in zone coverage. The “1” zone DB box will be highlighted on the defensive play call screen. Permanent changes can be made from the match-ups box, or changes may be made for one play only by selecting a different number of zone defensive backs. For example, selecting “2” would take the strong safety off of the tight end, who would then be guarded by a linebacker. The strong safety would play zone coverage along with the free safety. Reducing the number to “0” would assign the free safety to coverage against the best pass catching running back, leaving no defensive backs in zone coverage.

There are several situations in which the ability to quickly adjust match-ups is useful. For example, if the tight end in the above situation is a good receiver, but not a deep threat, the strong safety could be freed up to play zone in long yardage situations. Likewise, if one of the running backs often catches passes, or is split out wide, the free safety could cover him for a play by reducing the zone DBs by one. If one of the wide receivers is particularly dangerous, a safety could be freed up to support in zone coverage or to double cover.

### **Swap Corners**

“Swap Corners” switches the assignments of the top two cornerbacks on the field. This can be useful against teams with two receivers of near equal ability, especially when they have different skill sets. For example, the best corner could match up on the best deep threat in long yardage situations, and against the better overall pass catcher in others. Swapping corners occasionally can also force the offense to throw to different receivers, rather than throwing against the best match-up all game. The chance of an audible opportunity for the offense increases when the defense swaps corners.

# Keys and Doubles

## Keyed Runners

Keying a running back correctly reduces his average by the amount of his "keyed" rating, which can be viewed on the team roster and player form. Keying correctly also increases the chance of a stuff in the backfield, increases the chance of a fumble, and decreases the chance of breakaway run. Runners who carried the ball more often and more effectively in real life are less affected by run keys, because they are assumed to have been keyed more in real life. Keying incorrectly slightly increases the chance of a gain. Short and medium pass plays are more effective when a runner is keyed, since the linebackers give more attention to defending the run than guarding against a short pass. Screen passes are less likely to gain yardage when thrown to a keyed runner.

Run keys can not be used when five or more defensive backs are in the game, when playing a pass or prevent defense, or when double covering a receiver.

## Doubled Receivers

Double covering a receiver reduces the completion percentage on passes to that receiver by his "doubled" rating, which can be viewed on the team roster and player form. Receivers who caught more passes in real life are less affected by double coverages, since it is assumed that they were doubled more often in real life. The chance of a pass being attempted to a doubled receiver is reduced, often significantly, with the quarterback dumping the ball off to secondary receivers instead. Average gain and breakaway chance are also reduced when throwing to the doubled receiver, and interception chance is increased. Double covering a receiver increases the effectiveness of other receivers, and slightly increases the average on running plays.

As many receivers may be double covered as defensive players are available. The number of defensive backs and linebackers that are available is displayed above the double coverage box. For example, "Doubled Receiver(2/1)" means that two defensive backs are available for double coverage, as is one linebacker. Players are not available if they have another assignment, such as a man coverage assignment, blitz, QB Spy, or run support assignment. Defenders will be used in order of their pass coverage rating. Double coverage is not available when fewer than four defensive backs are on the field, or when playing run or goal line defense.

The effectiveness of double coverage is reduced when more than one is used. Double covering two receivers does not reduce each receiver's effectiveness as much as if they were the only one. Receivers who are not doubled become even more effective, since there are fewer defenders in support coverage.

# Blitzes

Blitzing can create pressure on the quarterback, causing more sacks, incompletions and interceptions. On the other hand, blitzes tend to give up bigger gains and more breakaways, and vacate areas of the field that can be targeted by the offense. Short passes and screens can be very effective at beating the blitz, especially when they are thrown towards the blitzing players. For example, if the left outside linebacker is blitzing, a screen right to

a running back, or a short cross or slant to a receiver on the right side of the field, can exploit the hole created in the defense. For this reason, it is important to vary the direction that blitzes come from. Offenses should be alert to where the best pass rushers are located, and throw short passes and screens in their direction when a blitz is expected, or when the defense shows blitz.

Blitzes by cornerbacks and safeties are the most aggressive, bringing potential risks and rewards. A good pass rusher coming from a corner position is especially difficult to pick up, but can leave a significant weakness on his side of the field. When blitzing a corner or safety while playing man to man coverage, make sure that another defensive back is available to guard his match-up assignment. Even when another player is available to cover, passes thrown in the direction of the blitz are much more effective.

Against the run, blitzes are more likely to shut down plays in the backfield, especially when the run is in the direction of the blitz. However, average per carry and breakaway chance are increased. When a run defense is called along with a blitz, it is considered a run blitz. In this case, average gain and gain percentage are decreased, while breakaway chance is increased.

Blitzing increases the chance that the offense will have an opportunity to audible. The defense can combat this, or use it to its advantage, by showing and delaying blitzes.

**Show Blitz** – Showing blitz is a fake blitz, designed to cause the offense to react with audibles that work in favor of the defense. To show blitz, select the “show” option below the blitzers list. Showing blitz presents an audible opportunity to the offense. Any defense that blitzes often should also include some fake blitzes to keep the offense from exploiting the blitz with audibles. For example, a defense could show blitz while playing tight coverage in attempt to lure the offense into a short pass audible. This could also be combined with a key on a running back who an audible screen pass might go to, or a double coverage on the side of the field that the blitz usually comes from.

Showing blitz also has some negative effects. Fake blitzers need to adjust from their blitz position to their assignment for the play. Both pass and run defense are negatively impacted. This can be offset in the short term by causing poor audibles, and in the long term by keeping the offense suspicious enough to decline good audible opportunities later in the game.

**Delay Blitz** – Calling a delayed blitz instructs blitzing players to remain in their normal positions before the snap, hiding their intention to blitz. This greatly reduces the chance of a blitz being detected and exploited with an audible. Because blitzers have further to go, the blitz is less effective at creating pressure but still has many of the negatives of a normal blitz.

## Additional Defensive Options

### Quarterback Spy

A quarterback spy's job is to follow the quarterback and limit his ability to run. This can significantly decrease the effectiveness of running quarterbacks. The spy's ability in pass and run coverage is decreased, resulting in increased average gains and completion percentages. To select a quarterback spy, select a linebacker from the “QB Spy” drop-down list.

## Aggressive vs. Conservative Defense

Setting the defense to aggressive or conservative affects the overall mindset of the defense. Aggressive defenses will go for strips and attempt to jump in front of routes for interceptions. This results in more fumbles and interceptions, but increases average gains and breakaways. Aggressive defenses also commit more penalties. Conservative defenses do not attempt to create turnovers. They yield higher average gains and completion percentages, but greatly reduce the chance of big gains and defensive penalties. In general, aggressive defense is best used when attempting to come from behind and a turnover is needed, and conservative defenses are often a good strategy when protecting a large lead. To select conservative or aggressive defense, click either label at the bottom of the play calling box. When neither option is highlighted, normal defense will be played.

## Free Safety Run Support

To bring the free safety "into the box" for run support, click the "Run-FS" label below the blitz list. This brings the free safety close to the line of scrimmage to defend against the run. The effectiveness of the running game is reduced according to the free safety's run defense rating. An extra player in the box can stop the run, but opens up the free safety's area of the field to passing plays and increases the chance of breakaways on both passes and runs. Pass defense is especially hurt on long passes and bombs.

Run support is not available when the free safety has another assignment. This could be a man to man coverage assignment, blitz, or double coverage.

## Defensive Line Play

The defensive line can be set to rush straight ahead or to slant left, right, inside, or outside. Slanting the line in one direction reduces the effectiveness of runs in that direction, but increases the effectiveness of runs in any other direction. Slants are best used against teams that are strong in one area of their offensive line. For example, a team with a good blocking tight end and strong side tackle will want to run to the strong side often. Slanting the defensive line in that direction will force runs to sometimes be called in the other direction, away from the strength. Teams with good blocking up the middle will call inside runs often, but inside line slants could force some outside runs. Being alert to the offensive coach's run direction tendencies over the course of a game and season will give clues as to how often and in which direction to slant the line.

## Preventing and Influencing Audibles

Quarterbacks have the ability to read a defense and create opportunities for audible calls. It is important that the defense understands what types of calls are more likely to result in these chances. The chance of an audible opportunity is shown at the bottom right of the defensive play call screen (ex. Audible: 5%) and changes as defensive options are selected. These include the following:

**Defensive Personnel** – Formations that do not closely match the offensive personnel are more likely to result in audible chances. For example, putting six defensive backs on the field against a pro basic formation, or a 4-3 defense against a

four wide receiver set, will increase the chance for an audible.

**Coverage Depth** – Playing tight or loose coverage increases the chance of an audible by about 10 percent. Deception can be used by showing a different coverage than is actually being played, in order to either prevent an audible from being called, or to try to lure a bad audible call.

**Swap Corners** – Switching the match-ups of the top two corners increases the chance of an audible opportunity.

**Blitz** – The more blitzers that are selected, the better the chance of an audible opportunity. This chance can be minimized by delaying the blitz, at the expense of reducing the effectiveness of the blitz. It can also be increased by showing (faking) a blitz, to try to lure the offense into a poor audible.

For more information on offensive audibles, see the offensive audibles section. For more information on defensive deception tactics, see the sections on pass coverage and blitz options.

# Special Teams

Miami Special Teams	
Kick Deep	Dallas Return Team
Kick Angle	Deep - Pearson 22.1 Lg 26
Kick Squib	Short - Harris 24.7 Lg 33
Kick Onside	Short - Montgomery 29.2 Lg 63

## Punts

**Punt Deep** – Attempt to punt as far as possible. Punting deep can open up the opportunity for big returns.

**Punt Sideline** – Punt towards the sideline. Sideline punts are shorter than deep punts, but limit the chance of a return and often go out of bounds.

**Pooch Punt** – Pooch punts are short punts designed to eliminate the return or stay out of the end zone.

**Fake Run** – Fake a punt, and have the punter attempt to run for the first down.

**Fake Pass** – Fake a punt, and have the punter attempt to pass for a first down.

### Punt Return

**Punt Return** – Attempt to return the punt as far as possible.

**Punt Block** – Attempt to block the kick. This increases the chance of a blocked punt, but greatly decreases the chance of a good return. The chance of blocking a punt is increased when punting from near a team's own goal line.

**Let Roll** – Let the punt roll to avoid the risk of a fumble, or if the punt is expected to roll into the end zone for a touchback.

**Fair Catch** – Call for a fair catch to decrease the risk of a fumble on a return, or to prevent the punt from rolling and being downed closer to the end zone.

**Watch Fakes** – Guards against a fake punt. This significantly decreases the chance of success on a fake, but also reduces the chance of a good return.

## Interactive Punt Return Options

When a punt is likely to land inside the 20 yard line, the option is usually given to either return, the punt roll, or call for a fair catch. There are several clues in the play by play to help make this decision. These can include the following:

"It should land inside the 15" means that the punt will probably land between the 10 and the 15. "Inside the 10" means between the five and ten yard line, and "inside the five" means between the goal line and the five yard line.

"Excellent coverage" means that the return is at about 30 percent effectiveness, and is more likely to result in a fumble.

"Good Coverage" means that the return is at about 60 percent effectiveness, and is slightly more likely to result in a fumble.

No coverage description means that the returner is at about 90 percent effectiveness.

## Kickoffs

**Kick Deep** – Kick as deep as possible. The returner will usually have a good opportunity to return the kick.

**Kick Angle** – Kick towards the sideline. Angled kicks are usually shorter, and are often fielded by a secondary returners. Field position allowed may be slightly better when kicking towards the sideline, but the chance of a big return can be decreased. Angled kicks occasionally go out of bounds.

**Squib Kick** – Squib kicks are low, bouncing kickoffs that are usually fielded by a non-returner. They generally give up very good field position, but rarely allow long returns.

**Onside Kick** – Kick onside in an attempt to recover the kick. Onside kicks are successful about 30 percent of the time the return team is not expecting it, and about 10 percent when they are.

### Kick Returns

**Return** – Return the kick.

**Watch Onside** – Watch for an onside kick. This greatly reduces the chance for a good return but decreases the chance of the kicking team recovering an onside kick.

**Interactive Kick Returns** – When a kickoff is fielded in the end zone, the option is given to either return or down the kick.

## Field Goals

**Kick** – Attempt to kick a field goal. The chance of a made field goal depends on the kicker's ability, length of the kick, weather, and wind.

**Holder Run** – Have the holder attempt to run for the first down.

**Kicker Run** – Have the kicker attempt to run for the first down.

**Holder Pass** – Have the holder attempt to pass for the first down.

### **Field Goal Defense**

**Block** – Attempt to block the kick. This increases the chance of a blocked kick and slightly lowers the field goal percentage, but leaves the defense more susceptible to fakes.

**Watch Fakes** – Defend against a fake field goal. This decreases the chance of a blocked kick and slightly increases the field goal percentage, but significantly decreases the chance of a successful fake.