

Defenses VS DW

Overview

The point of this chapter is to assume the defensive positioning of opposing teams. In a double tight, double wing, with tight line splits alignment, you will see alterations in the defense. This is amplified by the Double Wing's emphasis—off-tackle.

As Double Wing coaches, we must be able to quickly adapt our attack to the defense presented. Many coaches who face the Double Wing will install gimmick defenses or attempt to play a full game in a goalline against us. This is unsound **IF WE CAN** 1) recognize the defensive weaknesses and 2) exploit those weaknesses.

Cover 2 Fronts

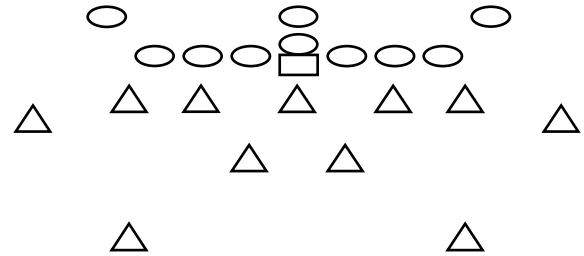
Most cover 2 shell defenses are relatively sound against the pass, run, and perimeter. This means all plays should have equal success against these different defenses (5-2/4-3). Given that even and odd fronts both cause different problems and present different opportunities.

5-2 Defense

The 5-2 Cover 2 (50) Defense is shown next. It is a very good run-stop defense. It features a 5 man solid front with 2 (usually solid) linebackers. This defense gives us 2-on-1 across the playside on the base Power play, so their line better be big and good. The linebackers will come straight downhill on guard reads. They are usually heavy hitter types in a 50 defense. The corners will step up to near the line to take outside linebacker responsibility as well as flats coverage. The split safeties play more like deep linebackers

against the Double Wing. This defense will not hurt the base Power play *initially*. This defense will not stay in a read 50 against the Double Wing in most cases. If they have 20 seniors and you have a bunch of freshmen playing (as I've had before) they won't change too much. If you are somewhat evenly matched, they **WILL CHANGE OR LOSE**.

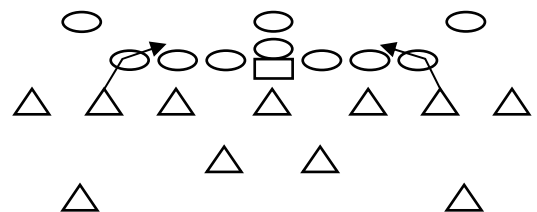
5-2 C2 VS Double Wing



5-2 Adjustments

After a hefty dose of Power, the 50 defense will likely morph into something different. The defensive ends will become “spill” only personnel—focusing on cutting your fullback and/or pullers near the line to force a bounced play. Another tactic is to time out blitzes by the linebackers on cadence. The other tactic is quick secondary rotation on motion to a 52 Monster defense with the strong end in “spill” technique. These tactics are either unsound and/or provide you with other weaknesses other than the Power play.

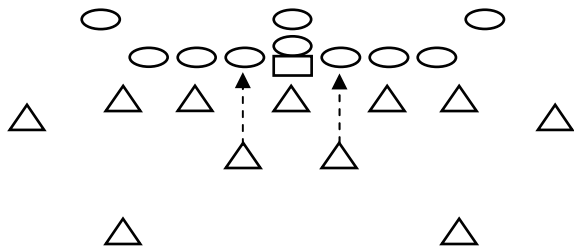
“Spill” 50 VS Double Wing



The “Spill” 50 is begging for the perimeter attack. The only defender who can stop you from achieving the corner is the cornerback. Even though the safety is cheated up and out, he is out of position to force a cut up. The Rocket, Jet, and base Sweep will

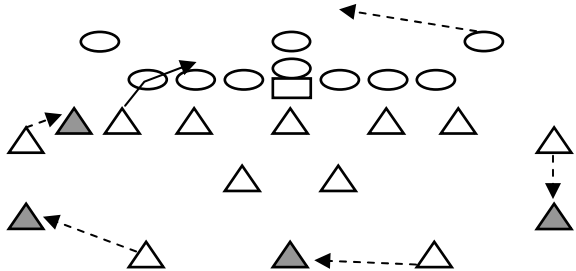
defeat this “spill” technique. The Sweep will not beat it as bad as the Rocket and Jet.

“Blitz” 50 VS Double Wing



The “Blitz” 50 is very unsound. This is the equivalent to a 9-2 defense. It will stop the Power play if the line is unable to pick up the blitz and/or the movement is defeated at the point of attack. The base Sweep and Jet will eat this defense up as long as the linebacker is not allowed into the playside backfield (gets cut down). The Rocket should be a no-brainer as well. The defense will have **NO PURSUIT** against perimeter attack. The Trap is also a possible big hitter **IF THE FULLBACK** makes it through the first wave of defenders

“Monster” 50 VS Double Wing

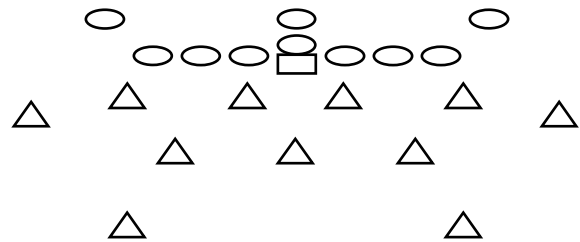


The “Rotate” 50 is probably the best in terms of “soundness” in adjustments to equalize the number advantage the Double Wing imposes. The problem for the defense is that it really doesn’t force the issue on the weakside. The Rocket and Sweep are still decent options even though numbers are not in our favor. The defensive end’s technique (spill) dictates those plays success. The Counter and Boot off Jet are both great options as they no longer have weakside support and/or dual coverage (flat/deep).

4-3 Defense

The 4-3 cover 2 (40) defense is shown next. It is a very good “middle of the road” defense to play the run and the pass. This defense presents the run with different problems than the 50 defense. This defense is less dependant on size and linebacker “heavy hitters” than the 50 defense. Usually 40 defenses have more “mover” types at defensive end and outside linebacker, with their lone “heavy hitter” at Mike linebacker. This defense (with Double Wing experience) will also attempt to utilize your center as a read. This is due to the MOMA rule (man-on-man-away) for the center. The end’s technique may be a 6 tech (head up) or a 9 technique with spill tendencies. Either way the ends will have more “spill” technique ability since he has a linebacker right off his tail and a corner to his outside. This is a normal tactic in the 40 defense (“D/C Switch” DE/LB gap) unlike the 50.

4-3 C2 VS Double Wing

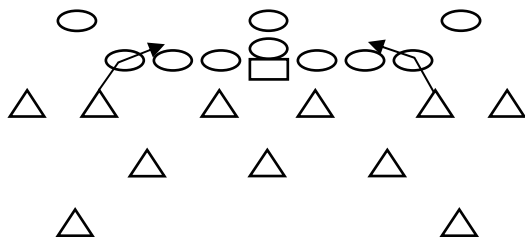


4-3 Adjustments

After a heft dose of Power, the 40 defense may change in a few different ways. The defensive ends D/C switch will become automatic (like the 50). The ends become “spill” only personnel—to force a bounced play. Another tactic is to blitz the linebackers on cadence or on puller read. The other tactic is quick secondary rotation on motion to a 4-3 Monster defense with the strong end in C gap fire technique. The other possibility is the reducing of the defensive ends as well as the

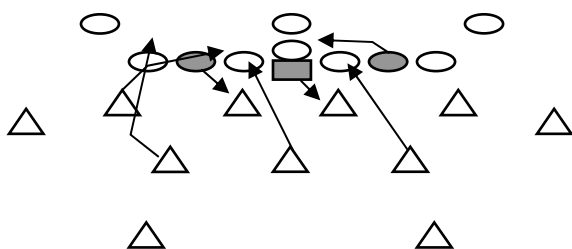
outside backers taking their 9 technique positions. The first defensive coordinator I worked for (4-3 guy), drew this up for me. This is very unsound. It turns a 40 into a Gap 8 for the most part with personnel who don't know their tactics well = not good for them. These tactics are either unsound and/or provide you with other weaknesses.

“Spill” 40 VS Double Wing



Again, the “spill” defenses are set up for Jet/Rocket play as well as the base Sweep play. The corner is the lone perimeter defender, just like in the 50. The linebackers’ ability to play the D/C switch is better in the 40 defense, so they will be closer to the play. Therefore, I would recommend the widest play—Rocket Sweep. With any even defense, the Trap is always a viable threat as well. Any 2 level passes (Power Pass, Boot) will most likely have 1 receiver open since the corner is forced to play run quicker.

“Blitz” 40 VS Double Wing

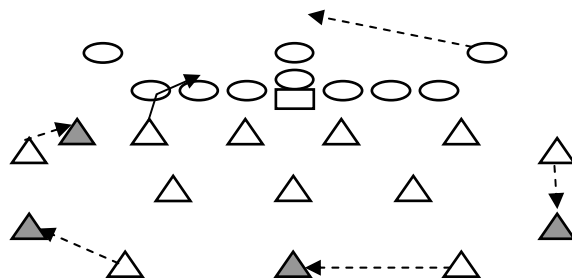


I was beaten by this type scheme with a hastily installed Double Wing. My linemen **REFUSED** to follow their blocking rules and get eyes inside on double teams. You can see how that would destroy the Power play with 2 linebackers in the backfield and one slipping the tight end's “squeezed” block (by DE).

That along with my wingbacks being very timid caused lots of no-gains and even losses. To defeat this “blitz” principle, the line has to pick up blitzers, and the wingbacks must ram the ball hard through traffic for “4 tough yards” no matter what. I would also use the “T-Power” scheme (covered later) to help remedy this problem.

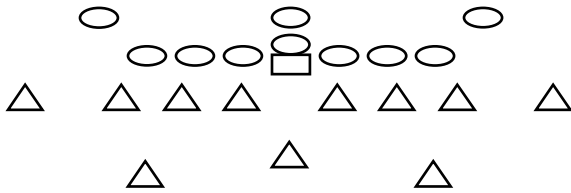
Aside from Power success, the Rocket and Jet plays should destroy this type “reading” of our line. If their linebackers are ready to fly inside on his key’s movement, he is in trouble for perimeter plays. The “spill” technique effectively gives away a defender in the Rocket Sweep as well (just like in “spill” 50 defense). Also like the “blitz” 50, the “blitz” 40 is susceptible to the Trap for **BIG GAINS** if the guard either traps the linebacker or the linebacker misses the fullback.

“Monster” 40 VS Double Wing



This adjustment of the 40 is similar to the 50’s strengths and weaknesses. Against the 40, the perimeter plays may have less chance of success though. This is due to the fact that the outside linebacker’s movement and the corner causing either a quick cut-up or a longer corner. Either way, it is still a very good possibility for success. The Counter and Trap should be a good alternative also if they have squarely focused their attention to motion-side C-E gaps.

“Reduced” 40 VS Double Wing



This is more like the normal Double Wing defense. This is also very similar to the more “Power Stop” goalline defenses we have seen week to week. This defense screams, “Run around, Pass over, or Trap me all night, please.” The interior only has one supporting linebacker—**RUN TRAP**. The perimeter only has 2 defenders and **NO SUPPORT**—**RUN JET, ROCKET, & SWEEP**. The secondary is completely vacant—**PASS THE BALL**. Because of these weaknesses, I’d say the Rocket Sweep, Rocket Trap, and Rocket Pass would be great choices of play selection.

The Power has little chance of success **IF** the ends continue to spill or squeeze hard and the safeties play more like linebackers. The condensed defensive front forces 1-on-1 blocking at many points along the front which takes away the movement factor. It also gives superior support angles to C gap with the corner, Mike, & safeties.

Cover 3 Fronts

Cover 3 defenses have weaknesses either inside (4-4) or outside (5-3) depending on their different line technique and blitzing tendency. They are also superior to defend the pass due to the 3rd defender in the deep secondary. These defenses are both more of the of what most coaches think of as “run defense” because of the Cover 2 conversion to Cover 4 and roll 3 in the previous fronts versus spread teams. That makes those defenses pass defenses against those teams. Against the Double Wing, day is night, and night is day though. These “run defenses” are really more of what I would consider pass defenses (VS DW) and easier to pick apart.

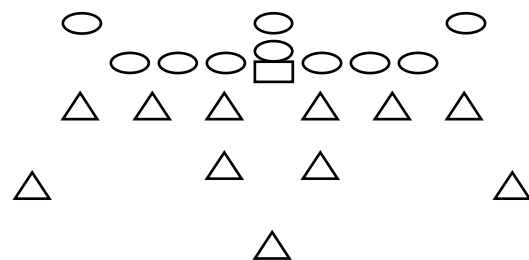
Why? They only have 8 men near the line (unlike the 9 in the Cover 2 defenses).

4-4 Defense

The 4-4 Cover 3 Defense is shown next. It is another very good “middle of the road” defense to play the run and the pass like the 40 Defense. This defense is reliant on some **MEN** at the inside linebackers (like the 50). Unlike the 50, these guys have help to either side of them (OLB). Usually 4-4 defense will blitz early and often. Many 4-4 defenses are based off of slanting linemen with blitzing linebackers—unlike other defenses. This defense (with Double Wing experience) will also attempt to utilize your center as a read. This is due to the MOMA rule (man-on-man-away) for the center.

The 4-4 is usually actually aligned in a 6-2 versus tight ends and wings to both sides. The end’s technique may be a 6 technique (head up/hands on technique) or a 7 technique (inside shade with “build a wall” technique). Either way the ends will give you trouble on the base play due to these tactics and the linebacker on the line on the wingback to the outside. In summary, the 4-4 is a mixture of 50 and 40 front defensive tactics/scheme with lots of slanting and blitzing most of the time.

6-2 C3 VS Double Wing

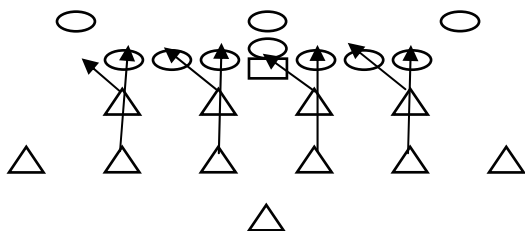


4-4 Adjustments

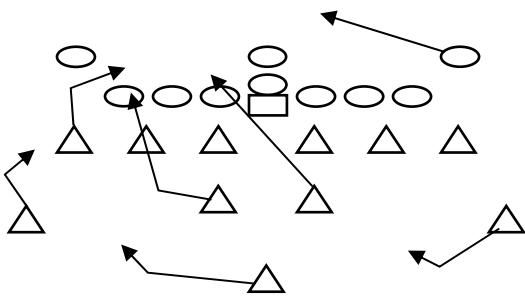
Like the other defenses the blitz on cadence or on puller read is popular. There are not many other options for the 4-4 to stop the power play if they cannot man up. The 4-

4 is already pre-snap adjusted to the formation by reducing the linebacker to the line and bringing the corner up to 4-5 yards (linebacker depth). This is a standard formation adjustment for the 4-4. There just isn't much more they can do besides blitz more and go straight man coverage. For this reason I will diagram their possible blitzers from Man coverage as well as the 4-4 blitz front. One possibility is to "restack the front" and blitz from that. This would cause blocking confusion.

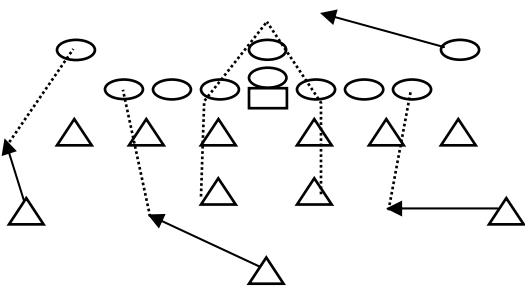
4-4 "Stack-Blitz" VS Double Wing



6-2 "Roll 2-Blitz" VS Double Wing



6-2 "Roll Lock" VS Double Wing



Odd Stack Defense

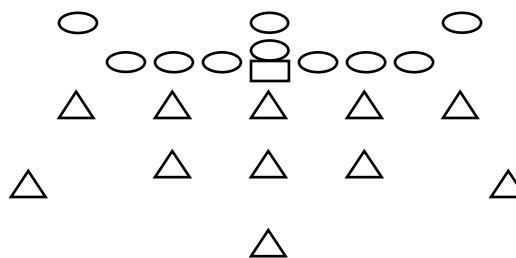
The 5-3 (or 3-5) Defense is the new popular defense among coaches. More topics on message board say 3-5 and 3-3 than just about any other subject line. That front is not

much different from the 50 front for Double Wing purposes if they stick to the 4 technique (head up tackle) and 0 technique (head up center) front.

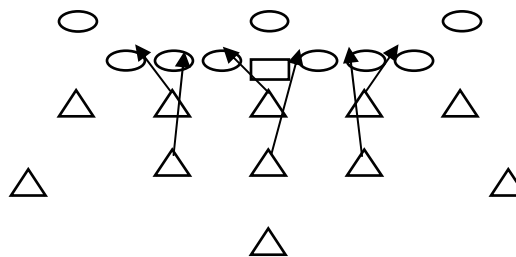
A "TNT" front with either 2 (head up guard) or 3 (outside shade of guard) techniques along with a 0 technique nose present some problems. That front is possible with the 5-3 without much variation. The normal ends play looser in the 5-3 since they do not have outside run support. In a TNT front, the ends have to tighten down to help with C gap, leaving the flank vulnerable.

Linebackers are stacked behind the front 3 in the base front. In the TNT front with the tackles in B gap, the outside linebackers move out to C gap. The stack front is great for blitzing and slanting, much like the 4-4 "Stack-Blitz" except even more versatile.

5-3 C3 VS Double Wing



5-3 "Stack-Blitz" VS Double Wing

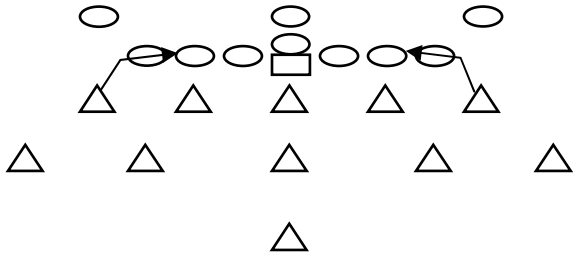


5-3 Adjustments

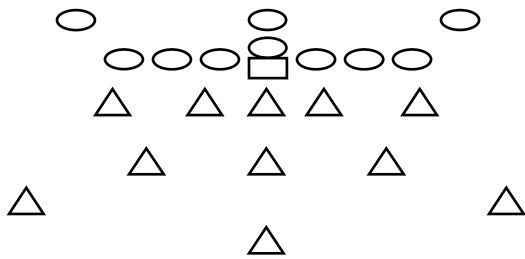
The usual suspects of "spill technique" will creep in with the loose end's normal technique as with most defenses presented. The TNT front is an adjustment to the inside running game by constricting the B to B

gap—stuffing the Trap. This adjustment leaves the outside wide open. The only defenders who can support the flank are the tight DE and the linebacker corner tandem. The DE, corner, and LB are all really in a bad position to make a play on the corner as well due to tightness, depth, and angle to the outside, respectively.

5-3 “Spill” C3 VS Double Wing



5-3 TNT C3/1 VS Double Wing



“Man” Fronts

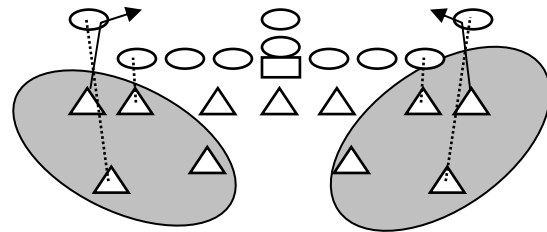
This heading will encompass “everything else” you will see on a football field. Most teams will not dedicate more than 8 guys near the line of scrimmage. Those who do are usually utterly beaten. Some very successful programs utilize defenses that have everyone on the line either in man coverage or in gap control. Those defenses only have 1-2 guys backed off the line and usually have man coverage as a base.

Special Defenses

The 46 “Bear” defense utilizes a “TNT” front, like the 5-3 variation. It can handle more perimeter support by utilizing Man Coverage or a Cover 2 variation instead

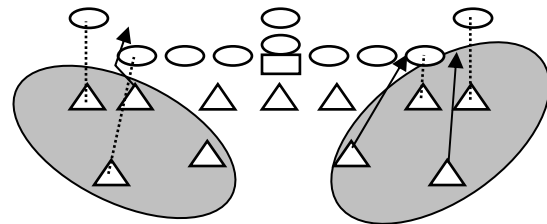
of Cover 3. This defense has many different variations, but it takes the 5-3 TNT front with on less linebacker (Mike). Along with no deep or 2-deep secondary, this allows the defense to spread 2 more men out to contain the flank. At this point, they are still able to man cover and control the interior gaps well.

46 Bear 1 VS Double Wing

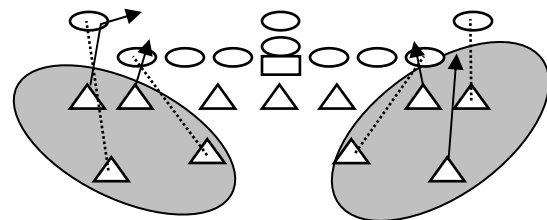


Obviously this is not the only man scheme they can use. Any of the 4 men in grey can man cover any of the two quick receivers to their side. This gives the defense the ability to really penetrate and stunt freely. I think the top graphic make the most sense, but either of the options in the following graphics are also available.

46 Bear 2 VS Double Wing



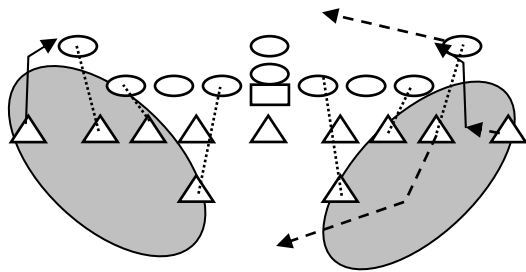
46 Bear 3 VS Double Wing



The 10-1 and variations are also a very effective means for stopping a power run game. This defense utilizes low charging “gap crawlers” as well as bump-man cover

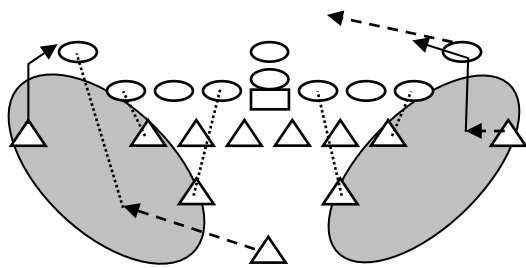
guys on the line. The only guys backed up are mirroring the backs in the backfield. This defense can choose to view wingbacks as quick receivers (10-1) or backs (8-3) in the backfield. The end man on the line has to contain in this type defense since their literally only a 2-3 man tandem pursuing inside-out.

GMP “Special” VS DW

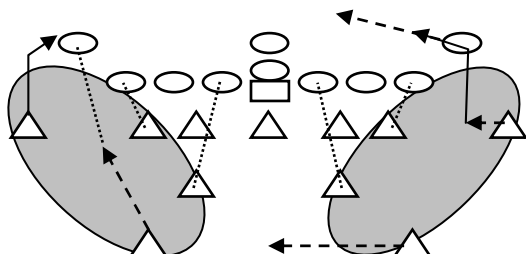


Like the other man scheme, the defense can play games with who is actually in man coverage. Sometimes a guy who was in man the previous down is merely penetrating with another responsibility the following down. In a motion dependant offense, like the Double Wing, the defense may “run with” coverage as the motion wingback begins his motion as shown above. The defense can also wait to declare man on the immobile wing until motion, shown in the following 2 examples.

GMP “Gap-Freeze” VS DW



GMP “Special-Freeze” VS DW



As you can see, this 10-1 variation (Gap-Man Pressure—GMP) puts a lot of pressure on the offense to execute the play. It also dissuades the offense from pulling too many guys—since it will results in instant penetration. The weakness of the defense is the perimeter (if the end gets reached) and defending the pass, especially the boot pass. Misdirection is a killer against pressure defenses as well, unless the linebackers are keying the line (like in this defense). For more information on this defense, see my book, *The Gap-Man Pressure Football Defense*.

Conclusion

These different cover 2 and cover 3 defenses are “sound” in that they should not leave an open door to completely exploit. This is much different from the goalline defenses and man scheme defenses that frequent Double Wing coaches. Those defenses present open doors in different areas—much like a “guess which shell it’s under” game. They are extremely vulnerable at spots, unlike the cover 2/3 defenses. Also unlike the cover 2/3 defenses, these goalline fronts present the problem of immediately stopping the Power play. Any of these defensive attacks of the Double Wing has merits and downfalls.

*For more information about the Double Wing, Strength Training, and other Football Strategy, visit Robert McAdams’ website www.robertwmcadams.com