

3-5 Fronts, Coverages, Pressures and Alternatives

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Tom Cousins, West Ashley H.S., SC: Overview of 3-3 Fronts, Coverages, Pressures and Alternatives

Believes that this defense changed his career - allowed kids who wouldn't normally play to be successful.

Why the 3-5 Defense?

- Not many coaches know how to block it, even today.
- Backwards from a normal defense in the way the offense sees it.
- Extremely flexible. Your dime and nickel packages are already on the field.
- 8 man front w/ pressure and pass coverage.
- Use of smaller, speed players.
- Offenses do not know where the pressure is going to come from.
- Confusing to the Offensive Line.

Perceived Disadvantages

- Teams will hammer the 3 Defensive Line structure
- The Tight End is uncovered
- Not being able to cover with anything but Cover 3 or Man
- Not giving multiple looks up front

Keys to Success

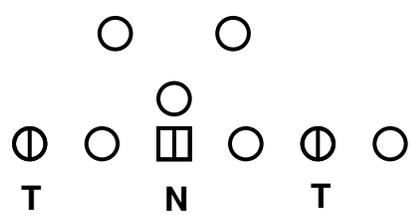
1. *Pressure* - many types of pressures, keep the offense off-balance. They cannot dictate to you. But you must know when to use pressure, and how to use it.
2. *Surge* - DL and LBs must get a surge up the field, sending the OL into panic mode and establishing a new Line of Scrimmage, one yard deep.
3. *Game Plan* - Take what the Offense does best away from them.
4. *Offensive Coaches* - Make them waste time covering all of your different stunts and blitzes.

Keys to Success

1. *Divide* - Keep the receivers out of the Middle of the Field.
2. *Creativity* - Think outside the box.
3. *Quarterback* - Force him to throw off balance, make him lose confidence in his Offensive Line.
4. *Punish the Running Back* - Multiple people at the Point of Attack
5. *Receivers* - Never let a receiver cross your face.
6. *Keep the Offensive Line confused*

Defensive Line Stunts

<p>Slant Strong</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W M S</p>	<p>Slant Weak</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W M S</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Weak Tackle is contain vs. Pass</i></p>	<p>In</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W M S</p>
<p>Out</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W M S</p>	<p>Pinch</p> <p style="text-align: center;">W M S</p>	

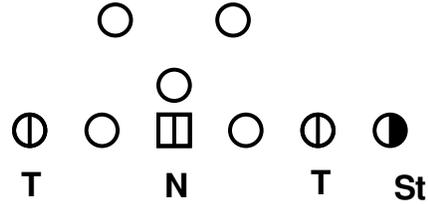


Wp W M S St

Stud is a true Outside Linebacker type. The **whip** is more of a true Strong Safety. They are 4x4 off the Tackles. The Inside Linebackers are 3.5 - 4 yards depth.

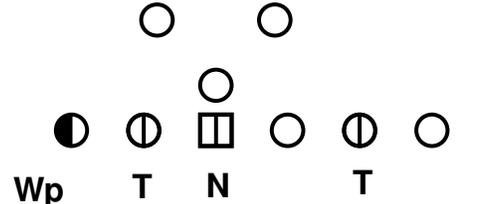
Vs. Double-Tight, there is no change. You can tighten the OLBs to a 2x4 look to help a little.

Tuff Strong



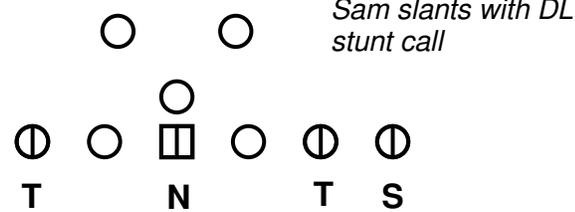
Wp W M S

Tuff Weak



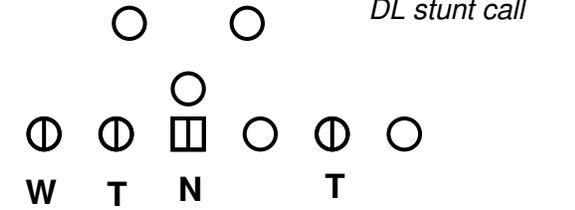
W M S St

Sam Up



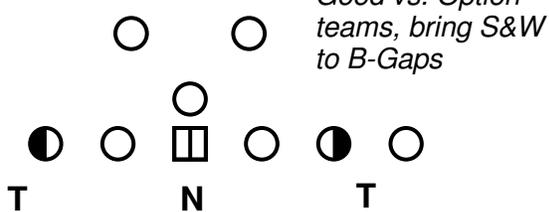
Wp W M St

Will Up



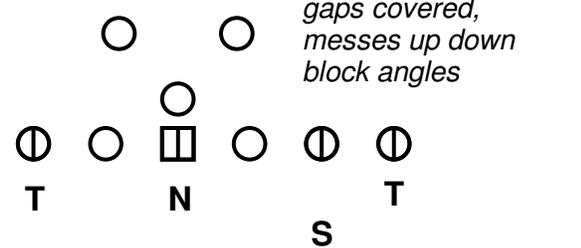
Wp M S St

Wide



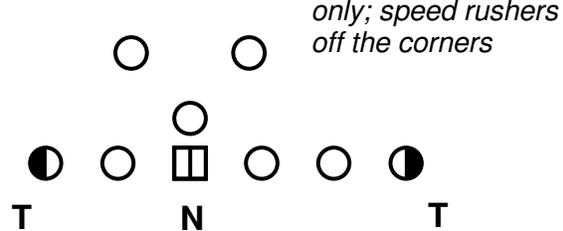
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Flex



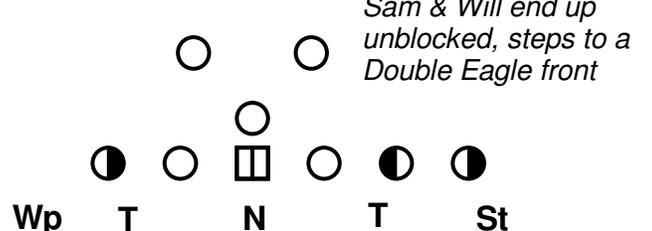
Wp W M St

Jett



Wp W M S St

Goal Line



W M S

Never likes to move the stack. It changes the linebackers reads and causes more trouble.

Cover Package

Base schemes are completely independent from the front. This is a very simple cover package. The defense lends itself to Man Coverage and to Cover 3. Cover 3 lets you still run the defense with lesser athletes.

Call Breakdown:

Cover 3: 80%; Man: 15%; Prevent 5%

Cover 3

Simple package, though sometimes an underneath zone will be vacated. You can "sling" an inside linebacker in the direction of springs and roll-outs as long as there is no throwback threat.

Mike: Finds the open hole and forces on sprints/scrambles if he's not on a stunt. You can use another linebacker (Sam or Will) if Mike isn't the most athletic or speedy linebacker. Mike knows to replace the drop of blitzing Sam or Will. He also knows that he will have to bust it all the way to the flats if Sam & Stud or Will & Whip are gone on a stunt. In a "Spy" call, the Mike covers the middle zone.

"There may be holes, but you better to there in a hurry."

Divide Field: If ILBs see pass, turn and look for someone going vertical and go hit them. Most receivers do not like to be hit.

Disguise Coverages: Move around. DBs can adjust vertically and horizontally to disguise. Changes in alignment will cause problems.

Vs. Twins: The Whip walks out to stop the unmolested vertical release of the Slot. The FS adjusts over and the coverage becomes Quarter-Quarter-Half, but there is no separate call for it. It just happens and is understood.

Vs. Trips: Whip aligns directly between 2 & 3 (on the nipple). He slides to #2 on the snap and jams the vertical release. Sam runs with the Tight End 10-12 yards deep (Trips Closed).

0 Coverage: Man

Corners: #1 Receivers

Free Safety: #2 Receiver strong, #3 Receiver weak (he's free vs. Twins)

Whip: #2 Receiver weak

Stud: #3 Receiver Strong

Cover 1: Man/Free

Corners: #1 Receivers

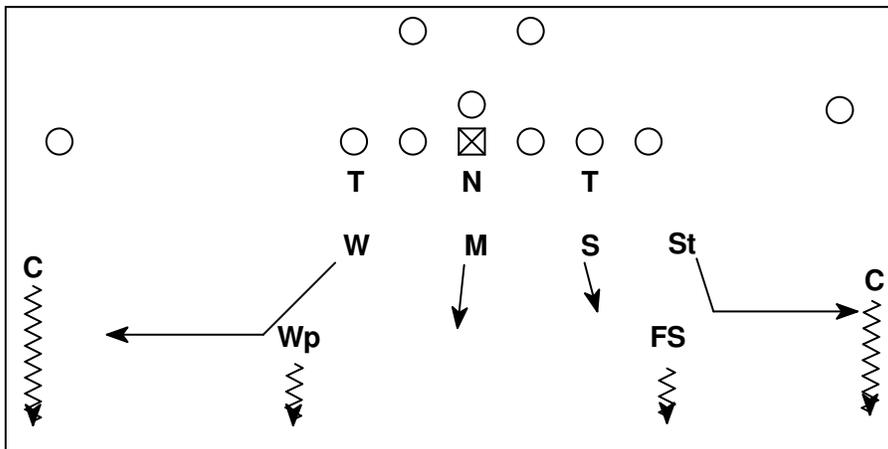
Whip/Stud: #2 Receivers

Free Safety: Has #3 receiver either way.

Could bump vs. motion with this, or when he comes across, the FS takes him as #3 receiver no matter what.

Vs. Trips Open, the Free Safety takes #3 and you can send the Stud and Sam backside for an overload.

Cover 4: True 1/4 zones. Whip rolls back to the hash.

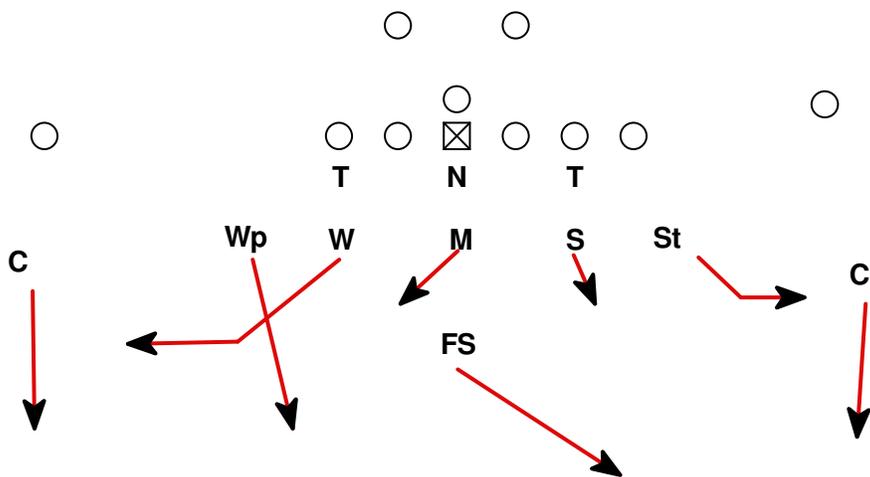


vs. Trips: Stud redirects #2, Sam rides #3

Cat Cover 4: Used when there is minimal run threat.
Will LB: Head up to #2, jam and deny vertical release.
Sam LB: Jams #2
 Don't like to bump LBs because it changes their run reads.

vs. *Quads:* Condense 4 zones, and Backside Corner has the Individual receiver in Man coverage.
 vs. *Empty:* Automatic CAT Cover 4. Will takes vertical, stud jams #2, Sam rides #3.

C3 Sky



Whip checks run, then sprints to deep 1/4; it shows C3 but gives C4 look.

Coverage Facts

- Take away quick slants by alignment. Shade the corner inside if necessary.
- Everyone will try to hit the Tight End on a pop pass. Be aware of him.
- Teams will try bootleg because of the aggressive nature of the defense.
- Teams will try Playaction because of the aggressive nature of the defense. DBs must know that they are pass first. Work the "Press-Release" drill with Linebackers daily. Teach them to bail after being sucked up. Start them at the L.O.S. in 7 on 7 Skelly drills, to get them used to taking deeper drops. Otherwise, you'll have drops but they'll only be 5 yards deep.
- Can rush 4 and still be successful - because they don't know where those 4 are going to come from.

Concerns

- Teams trying to mash the 3 DL - use movement and pressure. Nose must command a double team. There are two ways to do this - either use a big, strong guy or a small, quick wrestler.
- Not covering TE - Cover him by alignment, or movement. Use different fronts, or use stunts to cover him. "Sam Up Claw" if you have a Sam backer that can handle the TE. Mug him up and have him jam the TE. He can then ride the TE vertical from this position. Use the Flex call, too.
- Ability to run other coverages - you can run it, just be creative. To run Cover 2, just roll the Whip back (as in Quarters). Run Cover 2 Man by looking just like Cover 4, but the Corners play man to man. Whip & FS play man on any #3, and the Stud and Will take #2.
- Cover 3 Lock: For an athletic TE, run Cover 3 and have the Stud take the TE man to man.
- Cat Cover 3: Don't like sliding the LB, but you can do it. Bump Will LB over to #3 vs Trips. You can bump Mike and Sam if you want.
- Not giving multiple looks - Create looks by movement and pressure. Slant-Strong-Whip creates a 40 Under. In-Smash-Will Go creates a Double Eagle look. Use whatever gives the offense the most problems.

Pressure Package

- Simple terminology can tag 1 to 6 plays in a blitz.
- Tag a blitz on to any existing line call.
- Not vital for LBs to know where the DL are slanting. Walk up behind them, and then go opposite. Or delay and go opposite. Just make sure there aren't two bodies in one gap!
- Inside 3 have complete freedom to blitz how they want, just correct if it is causing them problems.

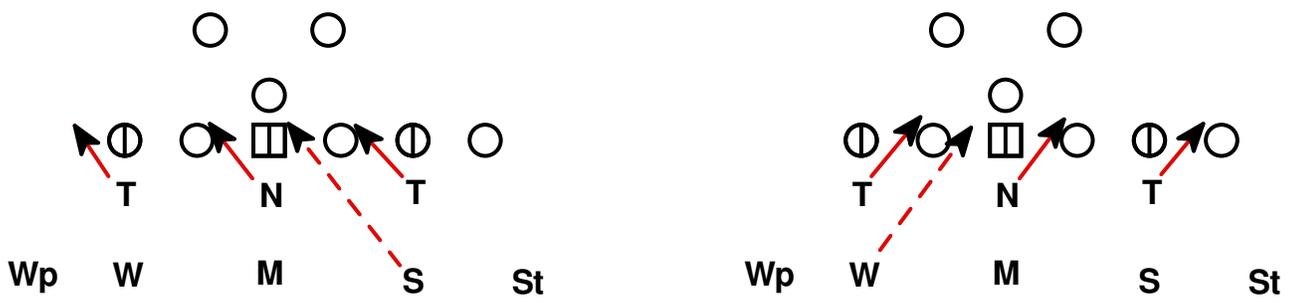
Inside Stunts: Go, Bat, Dog

Outside: Fire, X

Every stunt can be coupled with any of the 5 different line slants (only a couple of exceptions). So "Mike Go" is one call for the Mike, but can be coupled with the line slants to create 5 different looks for the Offense.

Fire calls: They know it is an outside stunt, you just have to tell them whether it is Will or Whip (or Sam or Stud). Bringing two off the backside edge is a good stunt to use vs. Spread teams.

Slant Weak Sam A: Only blitz where the front and stunt must be married. You have to make sure that the strong A gap is open. *Slant Strong Whip A* also must be married. This is a great stunt vs. Midline Option teams.



4 Man Pressure: Mike Go, Will Go, Sam Go, Whip Go, Stud Go, etc. coupled with line slant.

5 Man Pressures:

- Bat - both inside guys (Sam & Will)
- Dog - All 3 ILB; Dog Weak is Mike and Will; Dog Strong is Mike and Sam
- Double A - Only time the Nose doesn't slant. Will & Sam go to A gap. Nose crabs. Great vs. QB Sneak and the Midline.
- Fire - Both OLBs go
- Smash - Sam and Stud
- Wash - Will and Whip
- Mike go Stud Fire - You can call any combination to get a 5 man pressure.
- Slant Strong Will A Sam

6 Man Pressures

- Dog: Don't like to do this because of the screen threat.
- Smash - Will Go; Wash - Sam Go; Mike Go Fire
- Double A Stud Fire; Double A Whip Fire
- Don't use Double A much vs. a TE

7 Man Pressure:

- Bat Fire - Spurs, Sam & Will
- Dog Stud Fire

8 Man Pressure:

- Dog Fire - Send the house, Whip & Stud take the back out.

That's 30 calls, 8 per position. But coupled with line movement, you have 164 calls on paper.