

Dear Coaches,

I hope current conditions will subside soon and that we won't have much delay in our operations for 2020, including some spring practice like last year's. I sent some of you a version of this suggestion last fall, but I've revised it anyway, so here's my current thinking.

I've noticed opposing inside linebackers sit and key on Joey. They've been smart to do so, because:

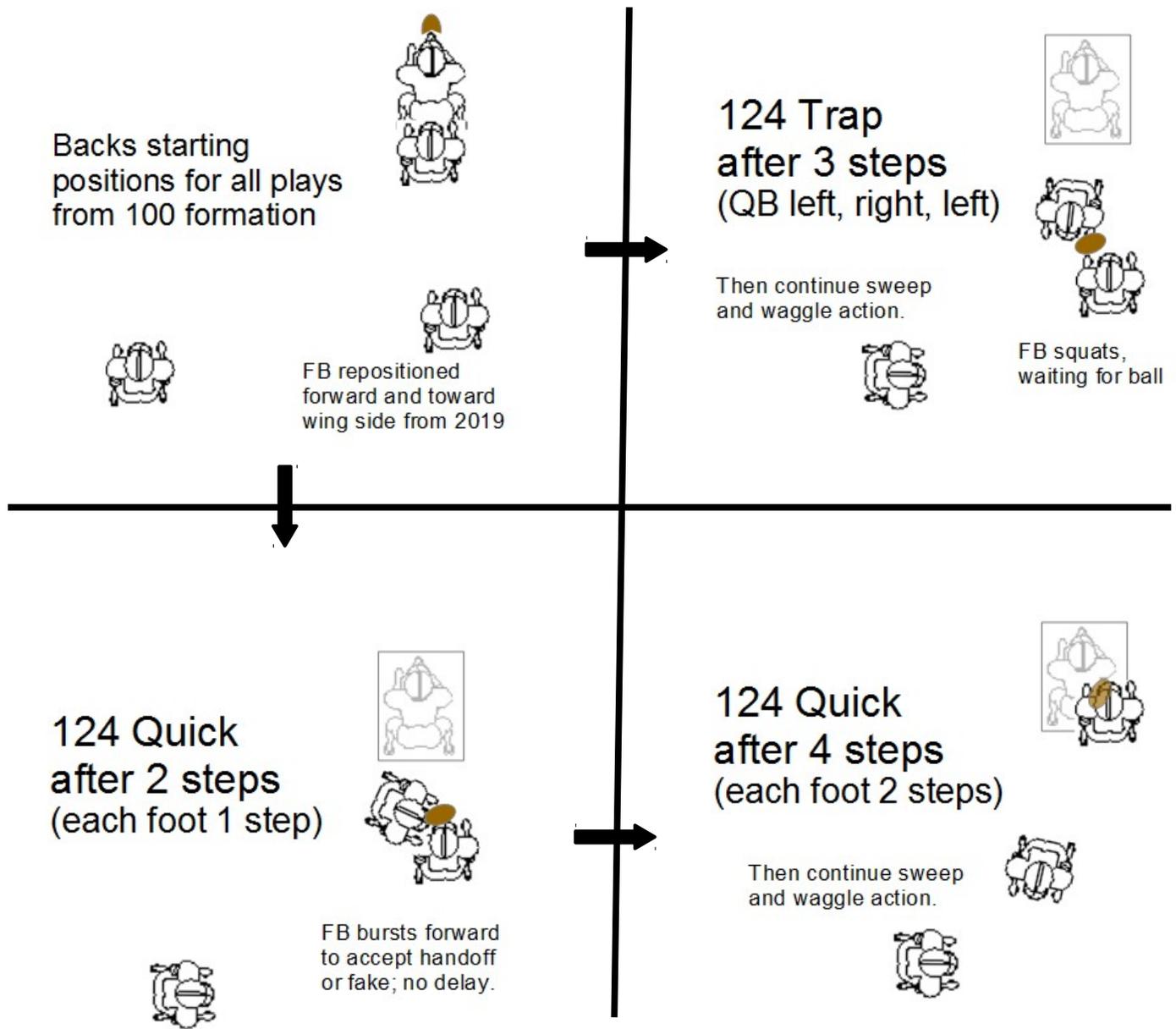
1. in the 30 (power) and 80 (belly) series, his action keys their responsibility;
2. in the 20 series, the trap develops slowly, and they can afford to wait until the fullback starts forward with the ball; and
3. in the trap plays, our line's not been so good at getting second level blocks.

Factor #1 I'm not too concerned with, because on most of the teams we've played, linebackers didn't flow much inside-out anyway. From my recollection, power sweeps and bellies were especially productive for us. Linebackers did flow on the superior teams, but those teams were beating us in several ways. And even against the best teams, what are you going to do, not bring the power because the defense brings even better power? You can't rely solely on misdirection.

So I'm focusing on the traps. I'm not suggesting we stop trapping or alter our trap plays, because they're an integral part of the buck-sweep-waggle-and counter series and occasionally break big. But there are a lot of opposing interior D linemen who are simply not quick enough to trap (and maybe some too quick to trap) but need to be powered out of the way. More importantly, we need to punish opposing inside linebackers for waiting for our fullback to come to them, and force them to fill quickly, which will often lead to misreads. And also, we need to have plays on which additional O line players, not just those assigned to on trap, can confidently release with the snap to second level, knowing they have no responsibility to protect against penetration on those plays.

With those objects in mind, I'd like us to add a fullback quick hitter — a simple dive or buck — to our 20 series. I also gather from the change in the quarterback's footwork from 2018 to 2019 on the 20 series that you'd be open to altering that again; I think we can get back some of the ball-hiding property of the reverse pivot without our quarterback's having to do such a quick turn, and without our fullback's having to bend his path around him as some teams do. So I'm proposing a change in the footwork, a change in the side the fullback goes to, and a change in the fullback's positioning. The fullback will line up 2 or 3 feet ahead of the halfback, and shaded to the strong side, splitting the strong side foot of the center. This will have advantages in terms of other plays I might suggest, but the main thing is how it'll improve the 20 series. It'll also make the QB's moves easier on the 80 (belly) series because he won't have to reach as far to meet the FB. I understand a lot of wing T teams now line up with the HB deeper than the FB — some even rename the halfback as tailback — though I don't know of any who offset their fullback slightly to a side as I'm proposing.

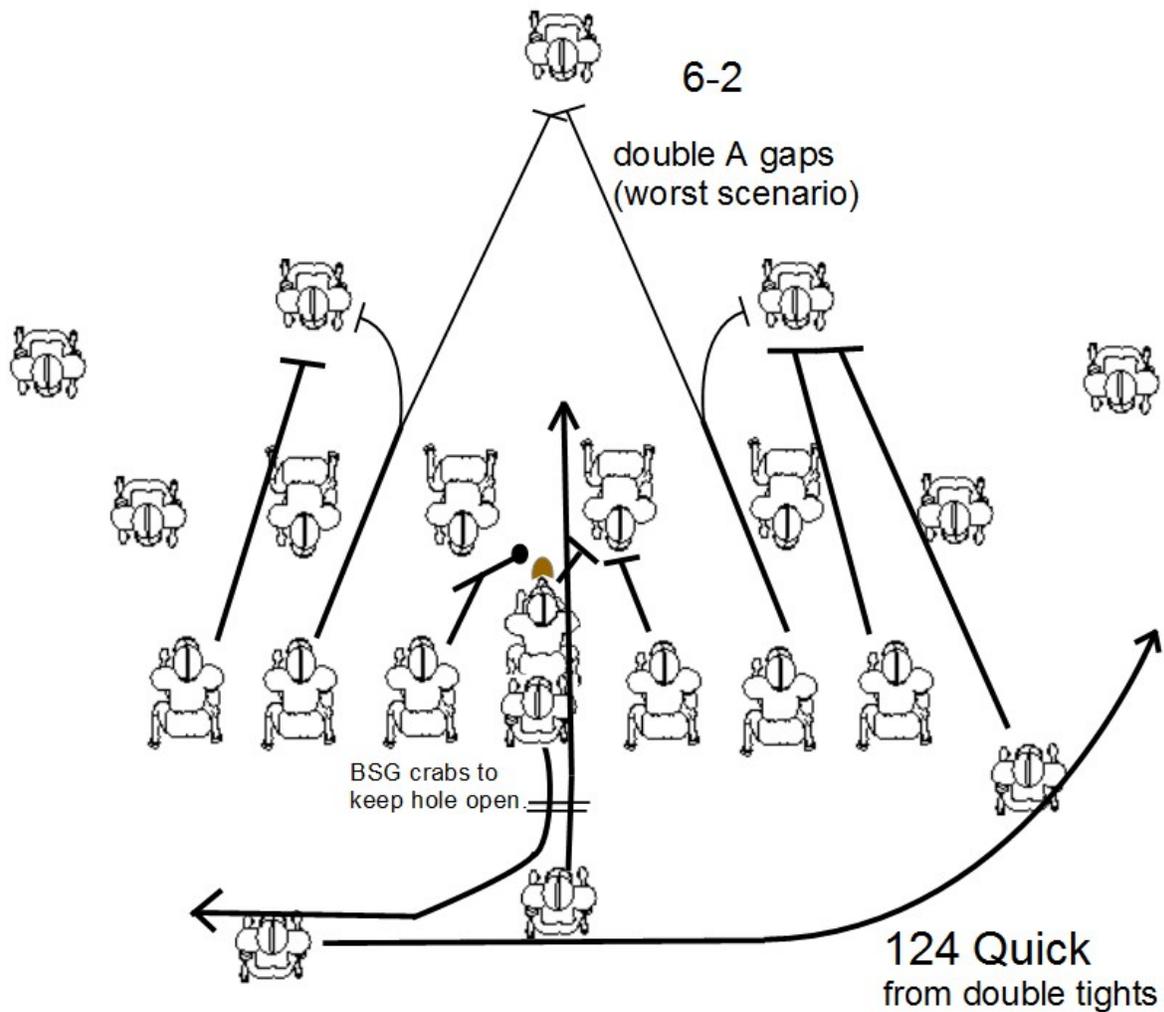
On the 20 series, the QB will open to the side the FB is offset on, and the FB will hit to that side on both dive and trap, plus fake that way on the sweep, waggle, and wing counter. So the 120 plays will include a 124 quick and 124 trap. (The other way, 926.) The QB will then continue turning so he winds up facing the HB on the sweep and waggle. So he's doing a reverse pivot, but more slowly than we were doing in 2018, meeting the FB part way thru that turn rather than after the turn. On the 124 trap, he can start with his left foot backstepping, then turn around on it with his right foot leading. On the 124 quick, he'll move his feet in the opposite order, crossing over slightly with the right foot behind the left initially. The reason for the difference is that he's going to meet the quick-hitting FB close to the line, so the QB's hips have to be open that way, while on the trap, the FB is going to squat and delay for a count, waiting for the QB to come to him with the ball, like a draw play. That's because with the FB positioned forward like that, we're going to need a delay for the trap block to develop. Unfortunately with this footwork, there won't be the possibility of the QB's putting one hand in the FB's belly at the same time the other hand goes into the HB's, but I don't know how often we achieved that, and it'll still be pretty hard for the defense to see the ball with this sequence. On the 124, quick or trap, the QB will use the left hand for both the FB and HB; on the 926, the right hand for both; or as I prefer it, the palm of one hand, the back of the other, with both hands on the ball, the backhand withdrawing earlier.



I can develop this further if you're interested. Would you like Arthur Murray style footprints, or is this enough detail for the footwork? On the next page is the 124 Quick play drawn up against what would be the most difficult likely defense alignment to run it against.

Whether to also use this FB positioning for Strong formation, I don't know. I guess it'd be good if we also ran the Quick and Belly plays from Strong, I'm not sure about its effect on the Pitch play. If the idea's to get the defense to not notice where the WB is or that the FB has switched with another back, then we should keep the same look for the FB position in Strong as in 100 and 900.

Come to think of it, in 2019 didn't we already move the FB forward in Strong (300/700) formation, because Joey or Braydan or somebody was having trouble receiving the pitch from normal depth?



Other ideas for offense I can develop off this would include rocket motion, a pop pass, and some direct snap plays thru the quarterback's legs. The only true reverse-pivot plays (where the QB turns around immediately) from the 100 and 900 formations would be the 80 series (Belly and Belly Second), and even then it would be slightly easier with the fullback offset like this. He'd still be making a reverse pivot for the pitches from Strong (300/700) formation, but for the pitch from rocket motion he'd open the same as for the 20 series and gently toss the ball to lead the halfback. On the direct snap plays, the QB's got to be willing to block a linebacker or secondary defender.

For defense I'd like to work more on stripping and recovering the ball, even sometimes in 1-on-1 situations.

Yours Truly,
 Coach Bob
 March 30, 2020