

Counters to Rocket Action

To give opposing linebackers something to think about when they see the halfback start Rocket motion and start moving to the 1 and 2 holes, here are some counters to holes 6, 7, and 8. In two of them the fullback intercepts the snap that looked like it was going to the halfback, and in the other the wingback intercepts the pitch that looks like it's for the halfback. Where feasible the wing side guard does an influence pull to add to the impression. The choice of one of these plays depends on what kind of player **the first defensive lineman away from the wing side** is.

If he's a penetrator, then trap him with the FB. In the 107, the FB counter-steps, then kicks him out. The QB tosses and then keeps turning to lead thru the hole. The wing side guard does an influence pull; the only exception would be if the defense were in double A gaps, whereupon the OG would stay home. When the DT on that side sees the pitch, he'll assume the play is going wide, so he should be easy for the OT to block.

If he's big, dumb, and proud, then use the 2-on-1 drive block as shown in the 126 Direct. I thought about other ways to handle him, such as a crab block to free the guard; having the tackle fold; and some combination block where one of the blockers comes off it. But if he's too smart to fall for the 2-on-1 drive, like if he knows how to make a pile, then you should just call one of these other plays. If he's not, he'll stay on his feet while you push him into the OLB's path.

If he's neither of those things, then cross-block as shown in the 128XG Direct. The QB's turning in front of him is insurance against his taking an inside path thru the vacating G's position to the FB, who's getting the snap thru the QB's legs.

Because the wing side G's pulling role is just misdirection, it's a luxury that should be foregone if there's a significant chance of penetration in those bottom two diagrammed plays. The G and T on that side need to communicate as to who has the DT to prevent him from getting a straight shot on the FB who's taking the snap right in front of him. If opposing LBs aren't influenced by guard pulling, then it doesn't pay, and **if they're keying only on Joey, none of these counters are strategically worthwhile.**

Of course other plays can still be run away from the Rocket motion: Belly (minus the HB lead), Jet, and regular Wing Counter, as if the HB motion hadn't happened. The HB can also continue the motion across to produce Strong formation.

