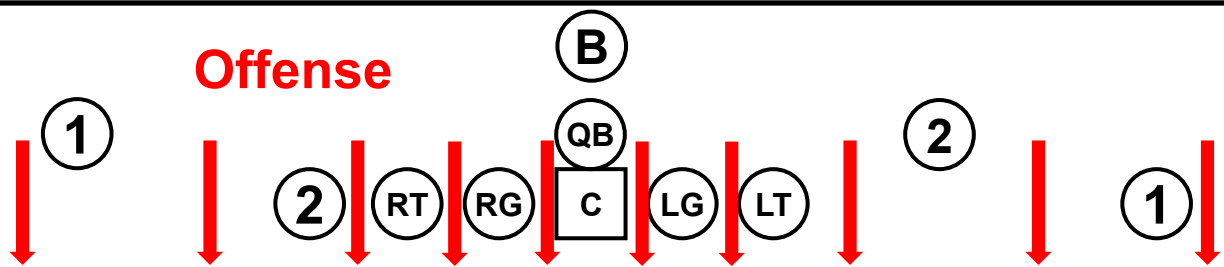
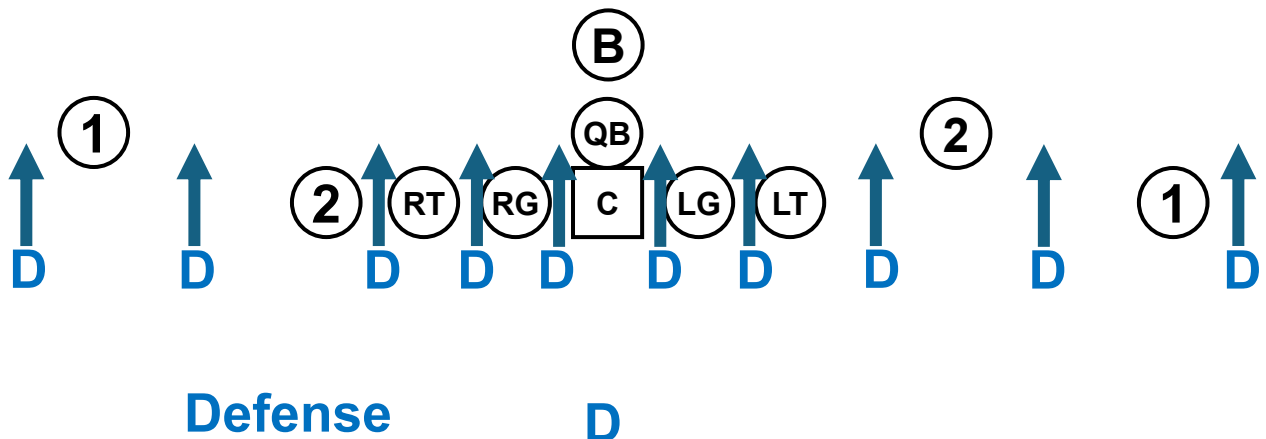


Defending the Field Overview

Defending the Field Pt 1

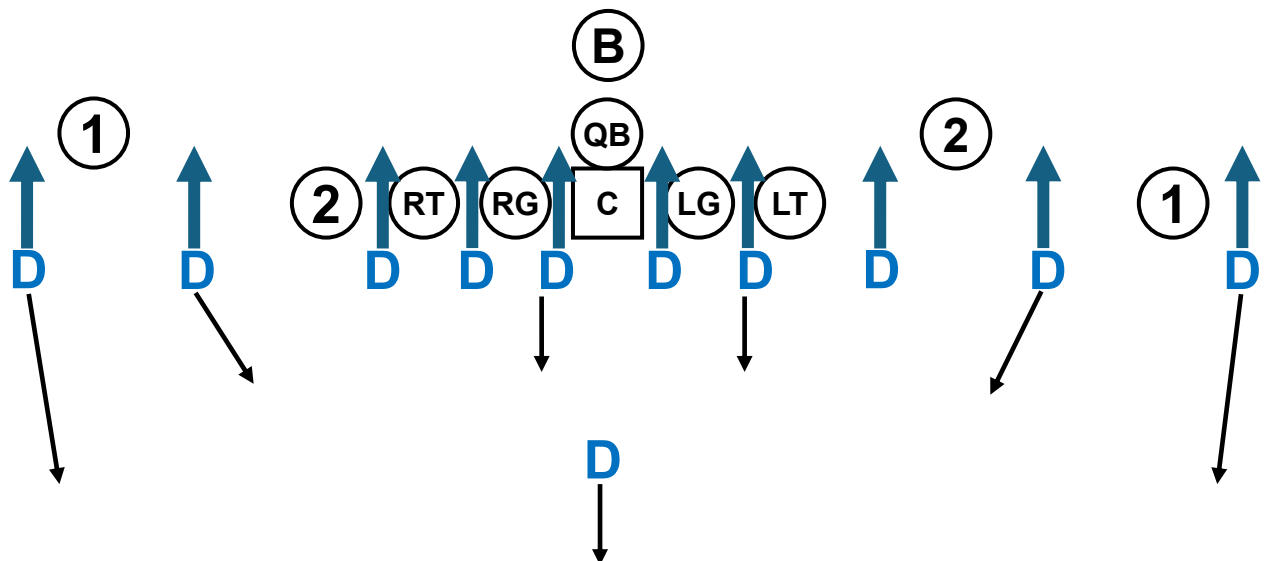


- The offense's objective is to move the ball down the field by any means necessary to score points. Defensively, we must always defend the entire field on any given play.
- The most immediate way to defend the field is by taking away gaps, or channels that the offense could move the ball between to get down the field. **ABOVE**, each red arrow indicates the location of a gap. **THE DEFINITION OF A GAP IS** a space between each offensive player lined up at or near the line of scrimmage, and the space between the widest offensive player and the sideline.
- To defend each gap, defensive players are assigned a gap and must work together to make sure all gaps are always covered.
- **BELOW** is a basic diagram of the easiest way to defend every gap on the field. Since the offensive formation presents 10 total gaps, 10 defenders at the line makes sense, with one hanging back to provide coverage should the ball get past the defensive line.
- When defending a running play by the offense, all defensive responses to the run will eventually look something like the diagram below.
- **HOWEVER, THE FORWARD PASS** makes this form of defensive arrangement very dangerous, since eligible receivers who are vertical/downfield threats (1's and 2's) could easily run past our defensive line before we could turn and cover them...

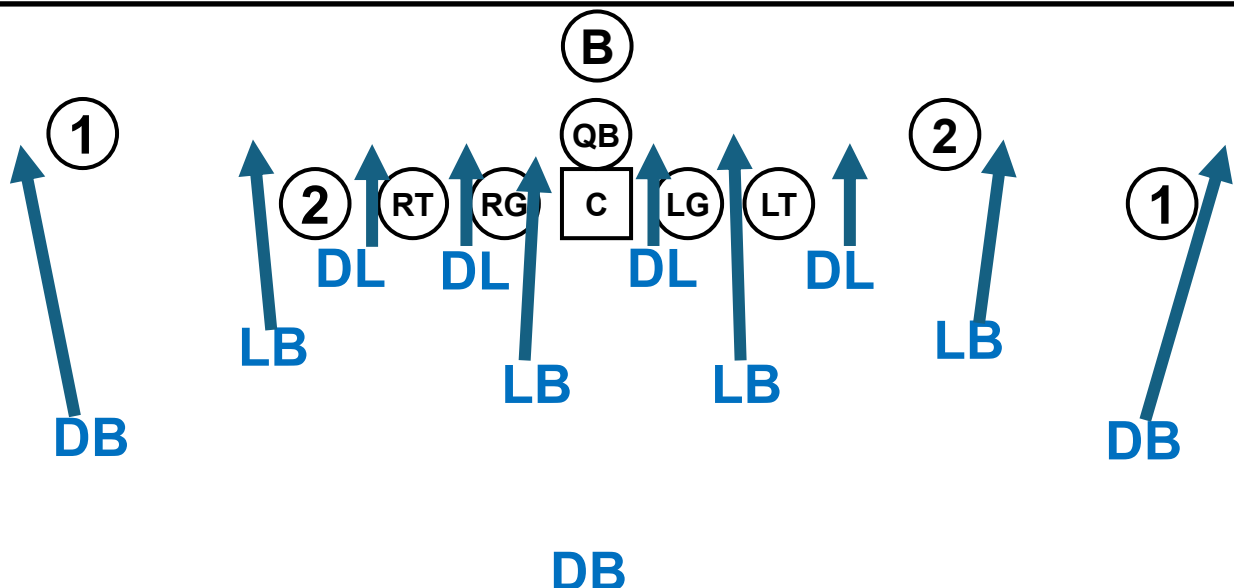


Defending the Field Pt 2

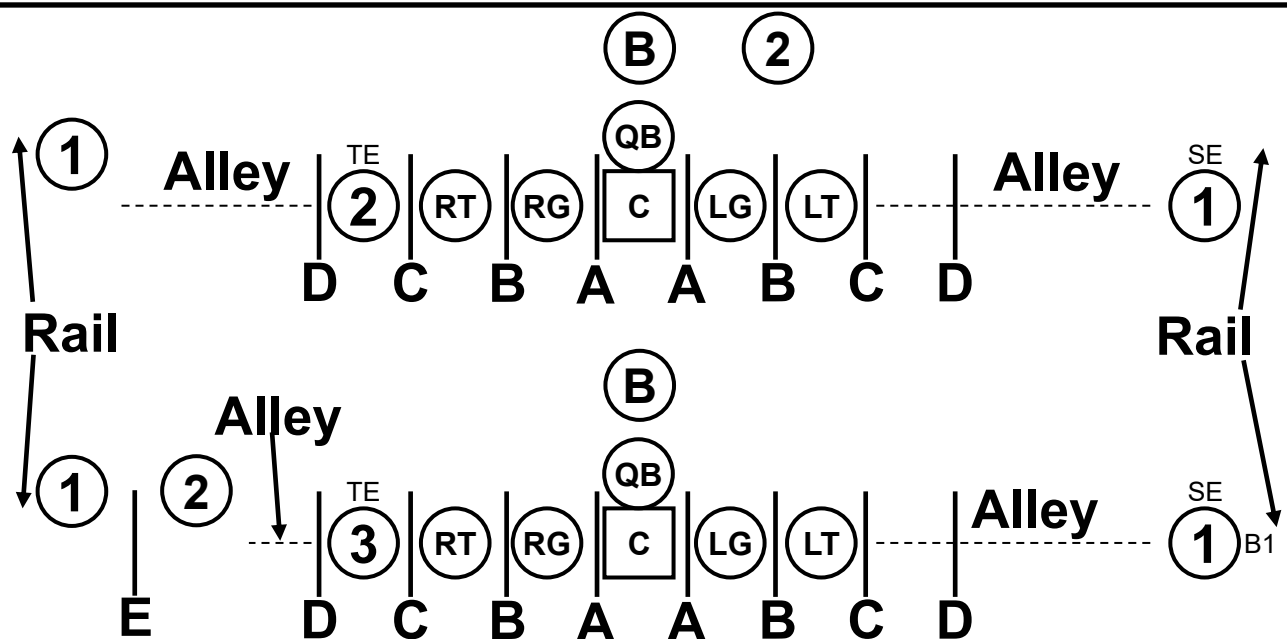
- Due to the threat of the forward pass, we must move some defenders back off the line of scrimmage to be ready to cover downfield receivers.
- Defenders that remain on the line of scrimmage are **DEFENSIVE LINEMEN (DLs)**
- Those who move just immediately behind the line (4-5 yards) and are still close to the interior gaps; behind the defensive linemen are called **LINEBACKERS (LBs)**
- Those who are moved further back behind or towards the sidelines are often done so to prioritize defending the forward pass. These smaller, more agile defenders are **DEFENSIVE BACKS (DBs)**
- *A defense can have as many defenders on or off the line of scrimmage as they wish.*



Even with defenders moved off the line of scrimmage, the gap assignments do not change. Everyone is still responsible for defending their gap or channel on the field. Below is how a basic defense may line up with players in the proper positions.

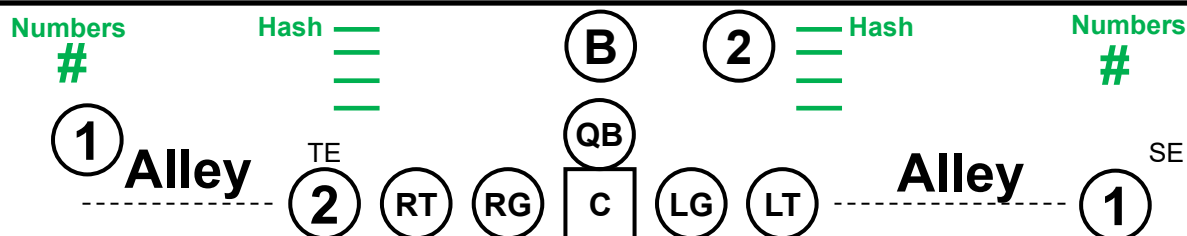


Run Defense & Rush Gaps



| Area | Description |
|---------------|---|
| A-Gaps | Gap between center and guards. |
| B-Gaps | Gap between guards and tackles. |
| C-Gaps | Gap between tackles and tight ends or wing-backs. |
| D-Gaps | Gap between tight ends and the next receiver out. |
| E-Gap | Gap created by a trips or unbalanced formation between the #1 and #2 receivers (#2 may be ineligible). There can only be one E-gap on the field. |
| F-Gap | Gap created by a quads or unbalanced formation between the #1 and #2 receivers (#2 may be ineligible). There can only be one F-gap on the field. |
| Alley | The space between the tackle or attached receiver and the first detached receiver. The “edge,” is the tightest part of the alley at and behind the line of scrimmage. |
| Rail | The space outside the widest WR. <i>It’s called “the rail” because of the hash marks near the sideline looking like the side of a railroad track.</i> |

Pass Coverage Zones



| NO COVER ZONE (Under 5 yards) | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| FLAT 5-10yds | CURL 5-10yds | HOOK 5-10yds | MIDDLE 5-10yds | HOOK 5-10yds | CURL 5-10yds | FLAT 5-10yds |
| 1/4 | 1/4 | | 1/4 | | 1/4 | |
| # 1/3 | 1/3 | | 1/3 | | 1/3 # | |
| # 1/2 | 1/2 | | 1/2 | | # 1/2 | |

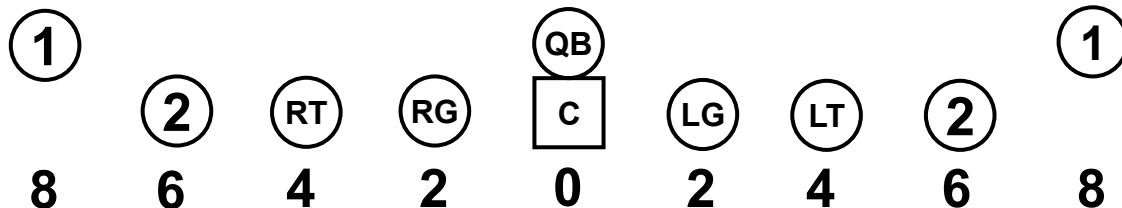
| Area | Description |
|----------------------|--|
| No Cover Zone | No defender in zone coverage should be in this area until the ball is thrown. |
| Under Zone | Any zone between 0-10 yards of the line of scrimmage. Defenders assigned to an under zone must drop to 9 to 10 yards (back of the zone). |
| Deep Zone | Any zone 11+ yards beyond the line of scrimmage. Defenders assigned to a deep zone always remain deeper than the deepest receiver in their zone. |
| Flat | Widest under zone that extends from sideline to 5yd inside the numbers |
| Curl | Under zone from 5yd inside numbers to hash mark |
| Hook | Under zone from hash mark to middle of field. Mid Hook is the hook zone played when only one hook defender is in coverage. |
| Deep | Any zone beyond 11+ yards beyond the line of scrimmage, which is divided into a fraction |
| Deep 1/4 | Deep Quarter: Roughly sideline to halfway between numbers and hash, and between that halfway point and middle of the field. |
| Deep 1/3 | Deep Third: Sideline to hash mark, and between the hash marks. |
| Deep 1/2 | Deep Half of the field. |

D-Line and Linebacker Alignments

Heads-up Techniques

(B)

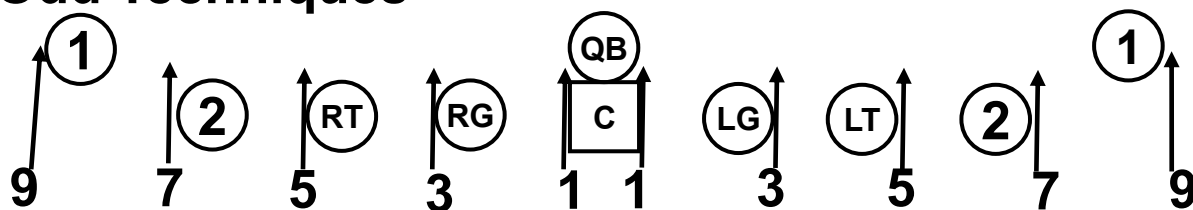
Listen for stunt call



Odd Techniques

(B)

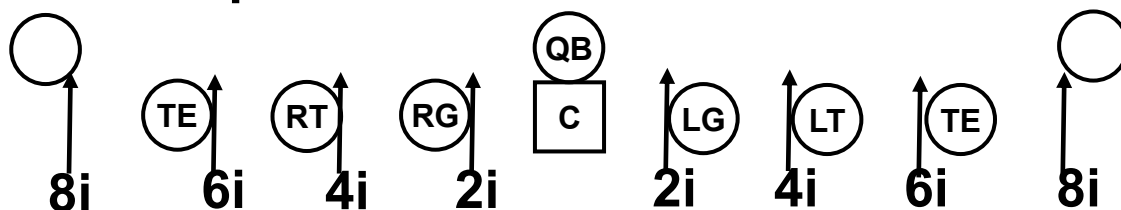
Attack through outside shoulder



“i” Techniques

(B)

Attack through inside shoulder



Adding a “0” to a technique makes a defender a linebacker, who lines up 4-5 yards back.

Example: “30 technique” means a defender lines up 4-5 yards deep over the B-gap.