

Virginia Tech's Attack Defense



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Jim Cavanaugh

**Outside
Linebackers**



Lou West

Secondary



Charlie Wiles

Defensive Line



It is with great pride that we can represent Coach Frank Beamer and the Virginia Tech football program, and it is indeed a tremendous honor for our defensive staff to speak at this year's AFCA Convention. I would also like to recognize a special group of people in our program and that is our players. It is through the hard work and commitment of these young men that allows us this opportunity to speak with you today.

Our defense is recognized for its aggressive — attacking style of play. Our main objective is to pressure the offense by creating chaos with multiple fronts, stunts and coverages. It is a scheme that looks complicated, but yet is very simple.

We play three different packages: G, Tuff and FD/ST-G. Our G package is our base defense.

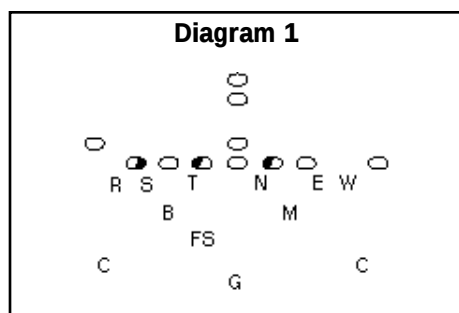


Diagram 1

A true eight man front. Our tuff package or 46 is the compliment to G=Defense.

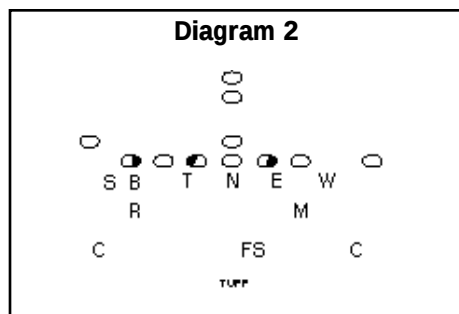


Diagram 2

What makes these two work together is that we can stem back and forth with these two fronts. Our third package is what we call FD/ST-G.

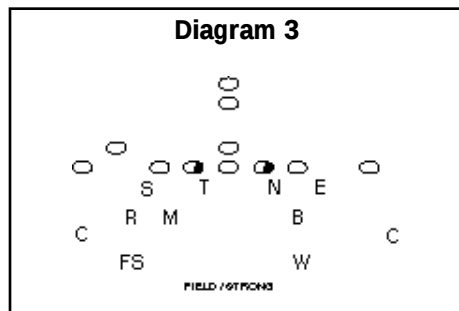


Diagram 3

It is G front with a two deep shell. With

these three looks, we are able to stem and move to different fronts, we will be able to blitz from all of these looks as well as play our coverages.

Before we get into techniques and fundamentals, I would like to share with you our base philosophy and objectives of our defense.

1. Stop the run.
 - Limit play selection.
 - Limit blocking scheme.
2. Outnumber defenders to blockers.
3. Outnumber receivers with four-man rush.
4. Attack the offense.
 - Make it defend itself.
 - Not going to see everything.
5. Attitude defense.
 - Pressure mentality.
 - Speed and desire.
6. Commitment to man coverage.
7. Study and predict protections.
 - Fewer receivers in patterns.
8. Study how offense reacts to pressure.
 - Take away quick answer.
 - Make quarterback beat you with his checks; take game out of press box.
9. Great disguise.
 - Multiple movements.
 - Up-calls.
 - Identical man-zone adjustments.
10. Solid fundamentals.
 - Block protection.
 - Tackling.
 - Get-off.
 - Pursuit — bending the body.
 - Four seconds of concentration.
 - Communication.

Charley Wiles, Defensive Line

Techniques and Fundamentals

1. Defensive Line: 10 Commandments
 - a. **Stance:** Three-point, heel-to-toe relationship, hips slightly higher than shoulders.
 - b. **Alignment:** Based on assignment and offensive line keys.
 - c. **Assignment:** Technique, stunt, etc.
 - d. **Get-Off:** Feet in neutral zone by the time the ball disappears into center's crouch.
 - e. **Target:** V of offensive lineman's neck.
 - f. **Cloth:** Jersey.
 - g. **Separate:** Lock out.
 - h. **Escape:** Rip or wipe, push with power, pull with trail, step 45 and rip your gap.
 - i. **Pursuit**
 - j. **Tackle:** Angle or Roll.
2. Gap I.D.

3. Alignments and Techniques

4. Stance keys of offensive linemen.

a. Run: Setting low in stance, weight forward, heels up-leaning forward on toes.

b. Pass: Setting high in stance, leaning back on heels, little weight on down hand, eyes zeroed in on you.

c. Pull: Leaning right of left, aligned at a different level (3), get combination of line-man leaning forward and some leaning back = a pull.

d. Draw: Overemphasis of hands at line of scrimmage.

e. Tight Splits: Combination of big vs tight splits.

f. Screen: Let you in with little resistance = screen.

Jim Cavanaugh, Outside Linebackers

I would like to thank the AFCA, Frank Beamer, our head football coach, and Bud Foster, our defensive coordinator for this opportunity to speak before you.

The outside linebackers in our eight-man front package are named the "Rover" and the "Whip." The Rover is our strong safety and the Whip is our weak outside linebacker. The Rover goes to passing strength and the Whip goes away. With the ball on the hash, the Rover goes to the field and the Whip goes to the boundary. The Rover's physical skills are those of a corner, and the Whip's skills are similar to those of a free safety.

Alignment

As Bud mentioned previously, we play three different packages without substituting personnel. In all 3 packages, our rules remain constant for lining up. In "G" defense, both the Rover and Whip will align on the line of scrimmage in our "up" position, showing blitz. We want to show pressure every time we align (See Diagram 1).

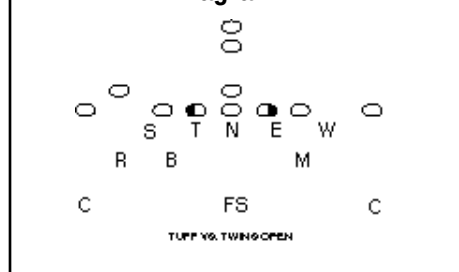
We call this our eight tech. From this position, we will blitz a crash or D-crash stunt; we will punch out and alley-run to a zone responsibility, or we will junk drop with man coverage responsibilities.

In "Tuff" defense, the Rover will align as a C-split linebacker, and Whip will I play a wide five (See Diagram 2).

The Rover and Backer will adjust as the offensive personnel reduce their offensive sets (Diagram 4).

In "Field/Strong" defense, our 4-3 package, the Rover will align in a force position to strength and our Whip will align to the boundary hash in a two deep shell (See Diagram 3).

Diagram 4



As you can see, we put our Rover and Whips in a lot of different positions.

Pressure from Rovers and Whips

In teaching our outside linebackers we pressure primarily in two ways — crash and D-crash.

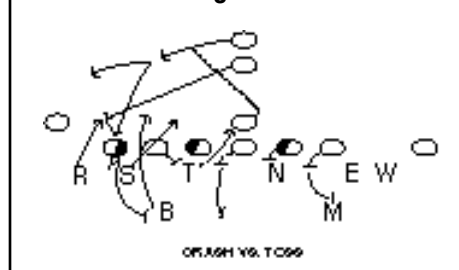
Crash Stunt

Landmark: Near knee of the deepest back.

Option responsibility: Pitch.

Power Runs: Contain; force the play inside.

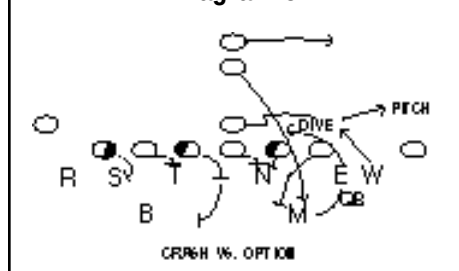
Diagram 5



Crash vs. Toss (Passing Strength)

Rover will run his inside shoulder through the outside shoulder of the fullback, forcing the tailback inside. If the tailback chooses to bounce outside, the Rover has his outside arm free to make the tackle, forcing the tailback to run laterally.

Diagram 6



Crash vs. Dive Option (Away from Passing Strength)

Whip will attack the near knee of the tailback. Upon reading the flare path of the tailback, he will redirect outside to put his nose on the outside shoulder pad of the tailback. This should take away the pitch or flare screen, whatever may be the case.

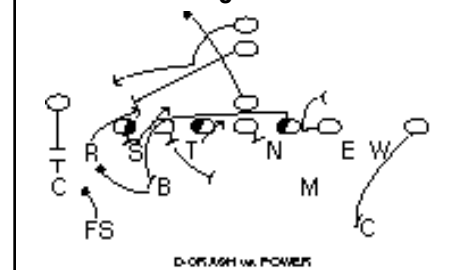
D-Crash Stunt

Landmark: Near knee of near back.

Option Responsibility: Quarterback.

Power Runs: Spill; make the play bounce outside.

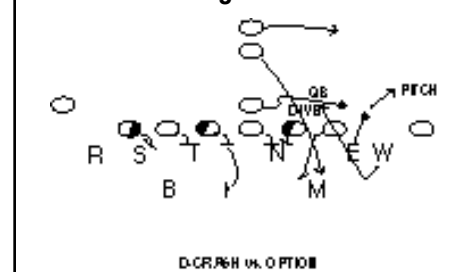
Diagram 7



D-Crash vs. Power (Passing Strength)

Rover will run his outside shoulder through the inside shoulder of the fullback, forcing the tailback to bounce outside into the pursuit of the scrape linebacker, free safety filling or the squat corner.

Diagram 8



D-Crash vs. Dive Option (Away from Passing Strength)

Whip will come off the near hip of the offensive tackle who is veer blocking the playside linebacker. The Whip is responsible for tackling the quarterback. The N/M have the dive, and the end has the pitch.

Lou West, Secondary

First, let me take a moment and say thank you to the AFCA for allowing me to speak to my friends, colleagues and peers. Indeed it is a great honor and pleasure for me to have this opportunity to share some of our defensive ideas with you all.

As stated earlier, part of our philosophy is to show one more man, in the box, than the offense can block. In the secondary, we try to get involved in this disguise as much as possible, depending on the coverage. What I would like to do is take you through our base coverage, and give you an idea on how we try to help give that pressure look in the secondary.

First, when teaching any coverage, I tell my student-athletes they must know the primary progression of every coverage. That progression is:

1. Alignment: Put yourself in the best position to execute your assignment when the ball is snapped.

2. Stance: Get your feet and body in a position to react as quick as possible, without any wasted movement.

3. Keys: Who will give you the quickest reads to help you perform your assignment when the ball is snapped.

4. Responsibilities: How to attack vs. run and what to defend vs. pass.

Along with this primary progression, they must also know who is responsible for primary run force (pitch) and who are the primary alley (quarterback) players, in every coverage.

Run Support Calls: Primary force player.

Sky = Rover.

Easy = Whip.

Read = OLB/DB off tight end's block.

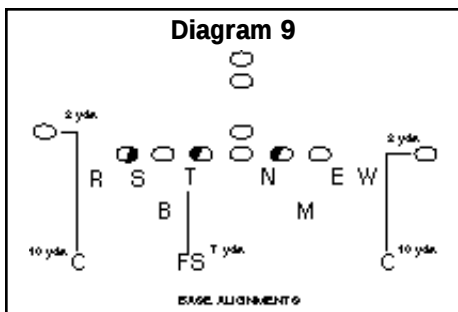
Our basic coverage is a rubber concept, with two deep half players. Our safety is the robber and our Corners are the deep half players, while our strong safety and outside linebacker are responsible for the flats. This coverage, at times and depending on the formation, will give us a nine man in the box look.

Our base coverage vs. a pro set would be taught like this:

Alignment

Corners: Ten yards deep, two yards inside Wide Receiver (start at seven yards, inside shade, move to 10 x 2 by the time the ball is snapped) (See Diagram 1).

Safety: Seven-eight yards over strong side guard (may start at 10 and over tight end) (Diagram 9).



Stance

Corners: Outside foot up slightly turned inward. Must be able to see Quarterback and wide receiver. Bent at the ankle, knees, and waist, (Good backpedal position).

Safety: Inside foot up slightly turned out. (In good back peddle stance). Inside foot up so he can get a quicker read on No. 2.

Keys

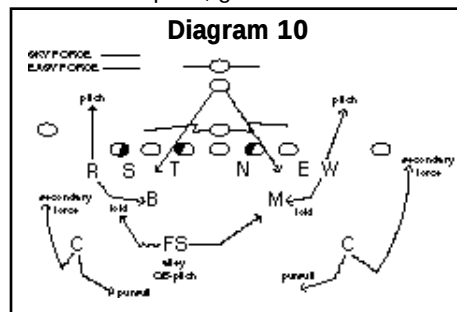
Corners: Key through end man on line of scrimmage to the ball. See wide receiver out of peripheral vision.

Safety: Key through uncovered line-man, to the ball, the No. 2 receiver strong.

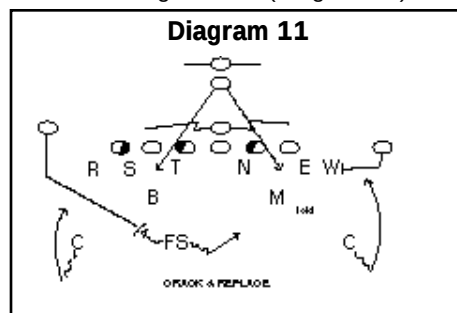
Responsibilities (Diagram 10)

Run: Sky support strong - easy support weak.

Corners: Run to you, secondary run force. Check pass, go to ball.



Any crack by wide receiver, replace defender being cracked (Diagram 11).



Example: Wide receiver cracks vs Rover, attack ball outside in. Wide receiver, cracks safety, attack ball inside out. Run away from you, get on a pursuit angle to stop the touchdown run.

Pass: Play inverted halves. Must keep good depth, protect the post, react to every thing else. Always have awareness of number one receiver to your side. Wide receiver runs underneath, route check back side post, be ready to help.

Safety - Run: Alley player to both sides. Attack ball inside out. Think quarterback to pitch on option. (Secondary fill player).

Pass: Must get read from number two receiver strong side. Reads are:

Diagram 12: No. 2 vertical, run with him man-to-man.

Diagram 13: No. 2 out, look up No. 1 and rob curl to post.

Diagram 14: No. 2 drags, look up No. 1 weak and rob dig.

Diagram 15: No. 2 blocks, free up, get depth and look for second-level crosser.

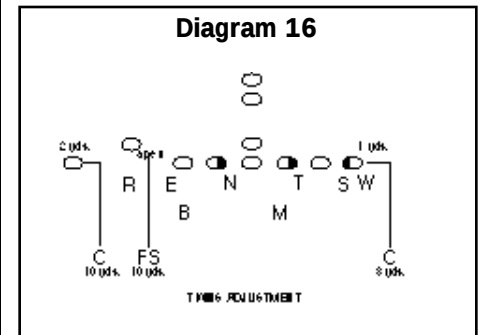
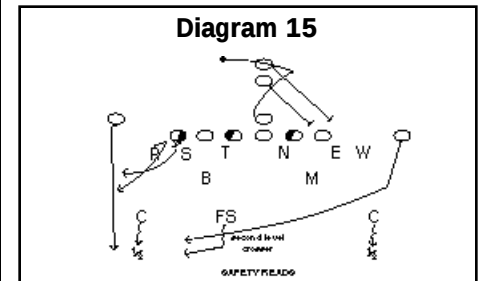
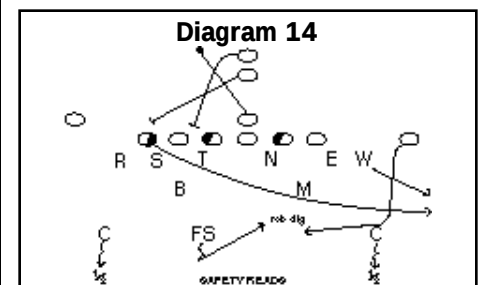
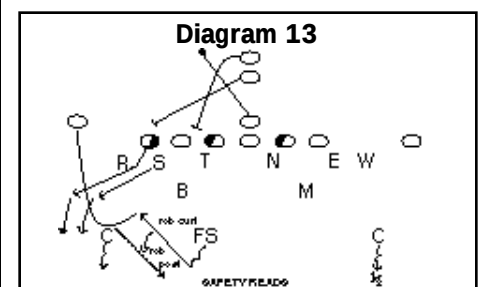
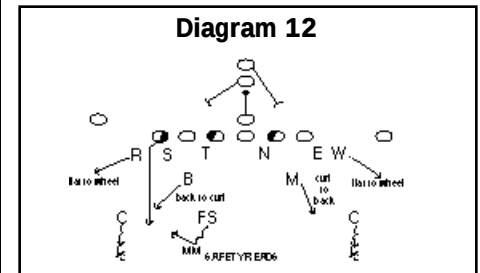
Adjustments

Vs. Twins: See Diagram 16

Corner to Split Side: Normal (2 x 10).

Corner to Tight Side: 1 x 8 on tight end with read support on run.

Safety will be 10 yards deep, align in apex of widest receiver and next man on the line of scrimmage (offensive tackle). Reads are the same.



Again, I would like to say thanks to the AFCA for allowing me to share some of our ideas and philosophies with you.