

Goal Line Defense

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Now I am not going to try to sell you on our Goal Line defense. We play the 6-5 defense and have been fairly successful with it. On the other hand, other people have been successful with the Gap 8 and 7-Box. I happen to be completely sold on the 6-5 Goal Line defense. I believe we can keep people from scoring when they get a first down inside our ten yard line. Even more important, our players are confident they can stop the opponent with our Goal Line defense. I know that my team can score against any defense and that my team can keep any other from scoring with any defense when I have this piece of chalk and eraser in my hands. However, the proof of a successful goal line defense is the number of teams it stops in game competition. Over the past several years we have stopped our opponents who have had a first and goal situation inside our ten-yard line about 50 per cent of the time. When we have started with a first and goal situation inside the ten-yard line, we have scored on our opponents 90 per cent of the time. That has been the difference in our having winning and losing seasons. I am sure many of you can find flaws in our defense, but we try to use a few stunts to keep a team off balance.

As I said before, I believe in the 6-5 Goal Line defense as it has proven highly successful to the teams I have been associated with, both as a player and a coach. To have a highly successful defense, you must first convince yourself that it is the best defense in the world. Believe in it with a passion. Then sell this defense to your coaching staff so that they believe in it heart and soul. If you can develop this type of feeling with your defense in yourself and your staff, then it will be easier to sell it to your football players. You must be able to convince your players that they are positively not going to let any opposing team score when they get a first down inside your ten-yard line. They have to believe this and they have to believe that the defense to do the job is the one they are playing. In one of our games in 1963 a team had first downs on our one-yard line, on our five-yard line, on our nine-yard line and on our ten-yard line and only scored a field goal out of the four scoring opportunities. The opponents made yardage out in the



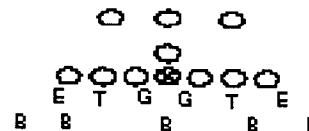
JERRY D. CLAIBORNE

field but our players became real tough when they got close to the goal line, and we finally won the game 28-3. The last time the opponent got inside our ten-yard line, our defensive signal caller said, "All right, we've got them right where we want them. They have to run at us. Let's take the ball." I like that type of attitude in this situation, but I still prefer stopping the opponent a little further up field—it's easier on the blood pressure.

We work hard on our Goal Line offense and defense. We finish up at least fifteen of our twenty spring practice sessions with full speed goal line scrimmage. We try to emphasize to our players that great importance of scoring or keeping the opponent from scoring when the ball gets inside the ten-yard line. During the season most all of our full speed work is done on the goal line. The only time our defense goes half speed on the goal line is when we are in sweat clothes. We will have the scout team run the offense half speed. We think it builds their confidence to never permit the scout team to penetrate into the end zone.

Now as I go through our defense, if you have any questions, just yell and I will be glad to try to answer them.

I am first going to diagram our basic alignment to show you where we place our personnel and then I will go over the technique of each one of the positions. See *Diagram #1*.



Our guards line up spacing themselves so that no one can run between them. We feel they do not have to get shoulder to shoulder to accomplish this. Their assignment is to penetrate a yard in the offensive backfield and to keep the offensive center and guards from blocking anyone. See *Diagram #2*.



The guard's stance has his elbows bent, his feet well up under him, his head close to the ground and his tail up. The guards are in a coiled position ready to explode when the ball snaps. When they explode, they drive their heads across the line of scrimmage in the gaps between the guards and center. With this charge they try to destroy the charge of the offensive guards and center. After their "explode" charge and penetration, their heads come up, tails down and they make every effort to bring their feet with them. The guards must keep a good wide base so that they do not get rolled out by the offensive guards. Their defensive charge is their step. After the charge they should make every effort to get up and pursue the ball. Even if the ball is on the one yard line, everyone should give maximum effort for pursuit as you never know when a fumble, a broken signal, a missed hand-off or any number of things will occur. When this happens, we must be pursuing in order to throw the offense for a loss or get possession of the ball.

Our tackles line up straddling the out-

side leg of a normal split offensive tackle. See Diagram #3.



The tackle's stance is very similar to the one taken by our guards. His feet are well up under him, knees bent, tail higher than his head, elbows bent, head down and ready to explode on the snap of the ball.

The tackles will face in at a slight angle, and they will charge in the direction they are facing. We do not want them to charge straight across the line as they are easily turned out by the offensive tackles. On the snap of the ball our tackles will make an explosive charge thrusting their inside shoulder pad at the outside shin of the offensive tackles. After their charge, they bring their feet with them, penetrate and pursue the football.

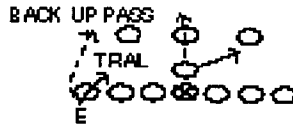
Each of our ends lines up straddling the offensive end's outside foot. See Diagram #4.



He will be in a two, three or four point stance depending on where the ball is located, and which stance he can use the best. On the snap of the ball, the end explodes into the offensive end trying to whip him right in his tracks. His responsibility is to never get blocked out. He must not let anyone run between him and the defensive tackle. If there is a flow pass toward him, our end is the contain man. See Diagram #5. On a



back-up pass he has the outside rush. When the flow is away from him, he is the trail man. See Diagram #6.

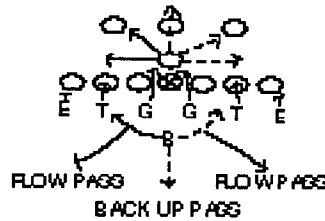


Our middle linebacker has to be the real "horse" in this defense. He should be your best football player and a great tackler. We pick this position first on his tackling ability and then on his ability to play pass defense.

He lines up between our defensive guards and head on the offensive center. See Diagram #7.



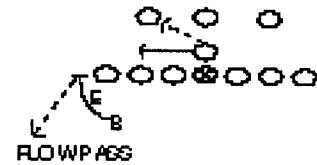
His depth depends on the position of the ball. He keys the ball and has the responsibility of filling the holes between the defensive guards and tackles. On a flow pass he has the strong hook. On a back-up pass he has the middle zone. See Diagram #8.



Each of our two inside linebackers lines up straddling the inside leg of the defensive end. See Diagram #9.

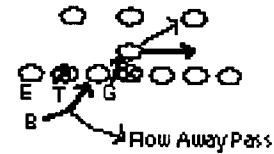


On flow toward him his first responsibility is to fill behind his defensive end. If it is a run he continues up to attack the ball carrier. If a pass develops he takes the short flat. See Diagram #10.

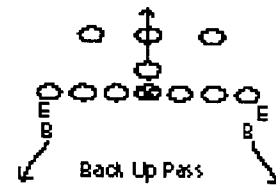


If the flow is toward him and he sees the ball handed off inside, then he may support to the inside.

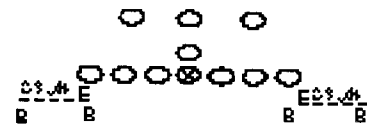
When the flow is away from him, he fills the gap between the defensive guards and tackles. If a pass develops when the flow is away from him, he covers the middle zone. See Diagram #11.



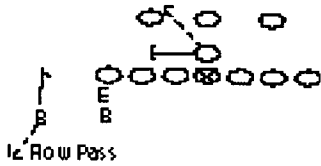
On a back-up pass he drops straight back and helps cover his one-fifth of the field. See Diagram #12.



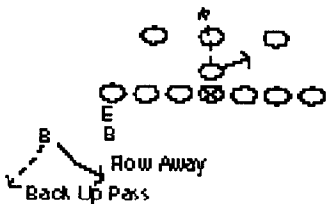
Each of our two outside linebackers lines up two to three yards outside of our defensive ends. He has his outside foot back and in a football position. His depth varies depending upon the situation. See Diagram #13.



Our outside linebacker plays slow and does not commit himself too fast. If it is a run toward him, he is the contain rusher. He must not let anyone get around him. If a pass develops on flow, he has the deep outside area. See Diagram #14.



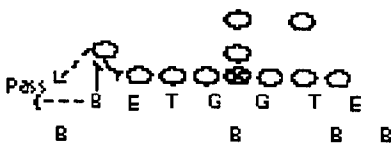
If the flow is away from him, he has a slow revolve. He must be alert for any bootleg, reserve or throwback. If it is a back-up pass, he covers his outside one-fifth. See Diagram #15.



On our pass defense, we play strictly zone. We do tell our defensive linebackers to get right on top of a man once he gets in his zone. We emphasize the fact that they do not have to get in the back of the end zone to cover a man in that area. We try to stay at least four yards from the end zone line.

I would like to discuss our adjustments on several different alignments. We try to keep our adjustments just as simple as possible. We never move our six linemen. We make our adjustments with our linebackers.

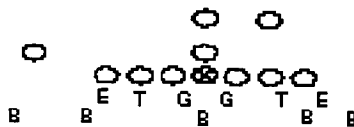
On a wing formation we only move one man—our inside linebacker on the side of the wingback. See Diagram #16.



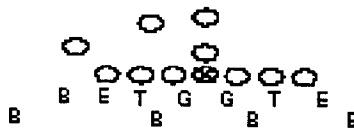
We move our inside linebacker head on the wingback. He reads the wingback. If

the wingback blocks in on our end, the linebacker comes up to contain. If the wingback comes out for a pass, the linebacker will move to his coverage area. The depth of our linebacker will depend upon the position of the ball and also what the team usually does from this formation.

On a wide wing formation, we will loosen up our inside linebacker and also our outside linebacker. Our outside linebacker will move to an outside position on the split man until he is able to cover him into the boundary by lining up on his inside. Our inside linebacker will loosen. His width and depth will depend upon the situation and tendency of the team we are playing. See Diagram #17.

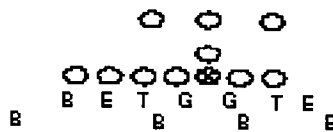


When the opponent gives us what we call a strong side, we will slide our linebackers to the strong side. See Diagram #18. We do not move our two outside line-



backers. If the strong flanker is split out wide, our outside linebacker will move out using his rule of staying on the flanker's outside until he is able to cover him into the boundary by lining up on his inside.

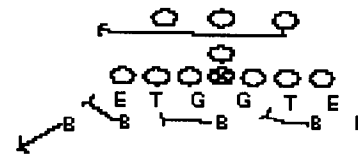
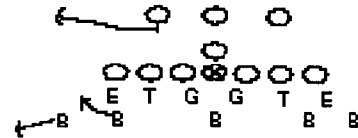
We treat an unbalanced line the same as a strong flanker. See Diagram #19.



We have moved our line over one man against some teams who have used the

unbalanced line—for example, Syracuse.

We treat motion the same as if the man lined up in this position. As the motion starts, we will slide our linebackers to their desired positions. See Diagram #20 and #21.



We will always try to do a little something different in our goal line defense in order to take advantage of our scouting report on our opponent. We try to do everything possible to stop the plays they have been using to score against other people. We feel that if we can stop their favorite plays, then they have been using to score against other people. We feel that if we can stop their favorite plays, then they will have to go to their second choice to try to score. If we can accomplish this, then we have the first part of the battle won.

We also use a tighter charge as the team gets closer to our goal line or an out charge when it is a long yardage situation. (Applause)

QUESTION: Do you allow the ends to release outside?

MR. CLAIBORNE: The question was do we allow the ends to release outside. We try to get them to release inside.

QUESTION: Where do the ends line up?

MR. CLAIBORNE: He asked: where do the ends line up. He lines up straddling the end's outside leg. He is not facing in like the tackle. He tries to keep his outside foot back and with his weight full on his outside foot where on the snap of the ball he can unload into the defensive end. There again he might be in a three-point stance and then our four-point stance, depending upon what he can do best.

QUESTION: Do you have a slot?

MR. CLAIBORNE: The question was if we have a slot. If he has a slot we still keep him here and move our linebacker out here on a slot and then depending upon what they do best in the slot we either charge this man or stay put, but he will keep this stance and charge here or charge there. I will go over that. We do not move our 6 man across there. I will get into that. Are there any other questions on the keying?

QUESTION: Does the immediate key flow?

MR. CLAIBORNE: The question was does the immediate key flow. We try to go where he is. I know there are different keys that will help you. For our linebacker we try to follow him. If he glues his eyes on the football he is going to go through the end to the back.

QUESTION: What do you do if the end is split out three feet?

MR. CLAIBORNE: The question is: what do you do if you split the end out about three feet. There again we try to go with what they do. We try to get out there nose on him and our linebacker is in here. One thing about this man in here. We tell him "If you see this ball handed off inside, come inside and make the play."