

On behalf of Jim Leavitt and the University of South Florida football staff, we would like to thank the AFCA for inviting us to be a part of the *Summer Manual*. We are excited to be able to share some ideas and hope that you will get something out of this article.

The topic is stopping the basic running plays in the 4-3 defense. Before you can start to develop a plan to stop the running game, you need to develop a philosophy for your defense; a philosophy that the head coach and the rest of the defensive staff will be committed to. In our case, Coach Leavitt brought a philosophy with him and hired coaches who felt the same way. Our basic defense philosophy is that we want to stop the running game first and not give up the big play. In stopping the running game, we want to be a gap-sound defense. Close all inside seams and spill everything to the outside where we can run it down. We will justify our philosophy by being an aggressive and attacking defense. Once your philosophy has been established, you need to recruit players to fit into it. Here's what we look for at every position.

**Ends:** We would like to have big outside linebacker-types. Good athletes that have speed, but more importantly are very quick. These athletes should have the ability to change direction well and to make adjustments on the seam.

**Tackles:** (Ideally we want ends that are too big). Athletes that are big and strong who have the ability to get push and dominate their ground when the ball moves.

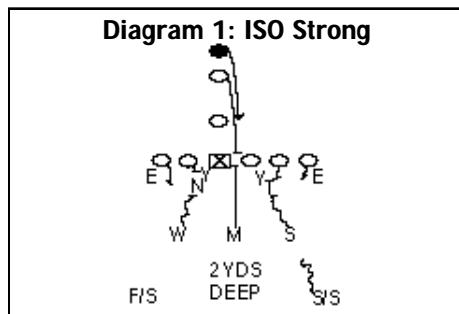
**Mike:** In our package, he is usually the biggest linebacker. Someone who is able to take on the ISO and still have the range to get from tackle to tackle.

**Sam:** Our Sam linebacker is a big strong safety-type. We would like this guy to be a player who is able to run with the tight end or fullback in coverage, and strong enough to line up on the tight end and play the run.

**Will:** Usually the best athlete of all the linebackers. He has to have the ability to play in space, take on the ISO, come off the edge and cover the tailback man-to-man.

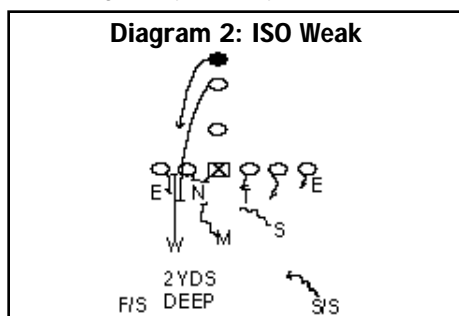
**Corners:** Ideally, our corners are athletes that have great speed, feet, hips, and attitude. Someone that is not afraid to challenge a receiver one-on-one.

**Safeties:** At this position we look for athletes with good speed who have great hips and range. They have to be physical hitter-types, that have the ability to corner man-to-man.



#### ISO Strong

1. Three tech needs to keep his shoulders down and draw the double team. Squeeze his gap.
2. Mike needs to hit the fullback two yards deep in the backfield. We like to attack the inside eye of the fullback and force it to bounce.
3. Sam will leverage his C Gap then squeeze to the ball.
4. Will squeeze his B Gap behind the nose until the back commits.
5. If the Sam gets too far over the top, the strong safety will play the cut back.



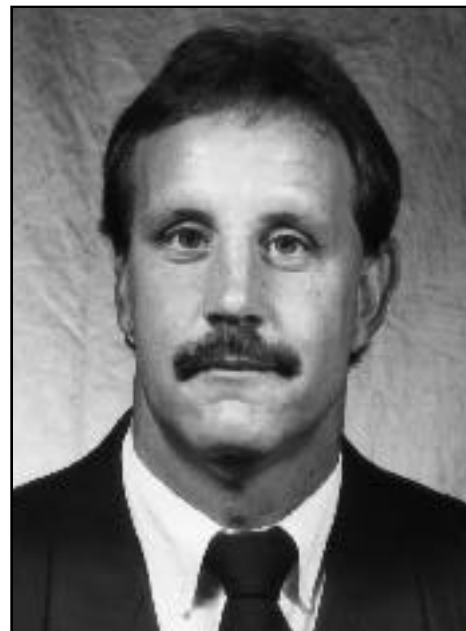
#### ISO Weak

1. Nose has to force double team to hold his ground.
2. Will must meet the fullback two yards deep in the backfield. Keeping his outside arm free, forcing the play back to the nose and Mike.
3. Mike squeezes his gap and comes over the top once the back commits to the hole.
4. End needs to hold point and squeeze the gap.
5. Sam leverages C Gap and plays cut back.
6. Free safety reads tailback in case of bounce.

#### Power Strong

1. **Key Coaching Point:** Three tech must stay low and can't get driven. He wants to hold point.
2. End (nine tech) attacks line of scrimmage working down to the three tech. We tell him we expect him to squeeze that far, but realize that will not happen very often.

## Stopping the Basic Running Plays in the 4-3 Defense



**Rick Kravitz**

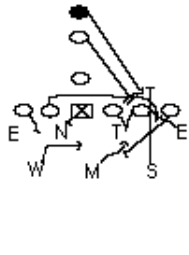
**Defensive Coordinator**

**University of South Florida**

**Tampa, Fla.**

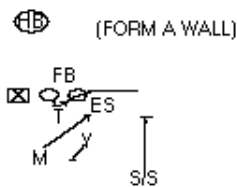


**Diagram 3: Power Strong**



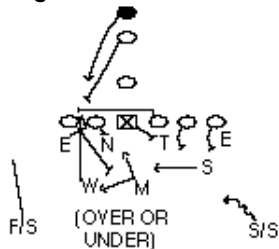
3. Mike will rip inside tight end and make sure the inside seam is closed.
4. Sam will come off the nine tech butt as tight as he can, to form a wall with the three tech and Mike, again no seams.

**Diagram 4**



1. The strong safety should be alone to read the back's shoulders and make the play.

**Diagram 5: Power Weak**



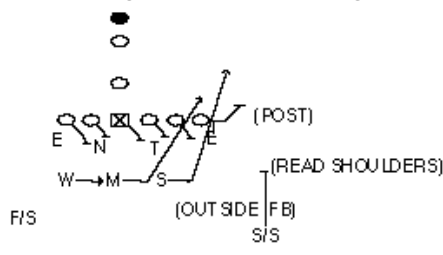
**Power Weak**

1. Nose must not get driven on double-team, and hold point.
2. End (five tech) needs to work down to the nose and attack the inside shoulder of the fullback.
3. The Will must squeeze to the butt of the end and close the seam.
4. Mike will read the block of the tackle, if he is high on his hip, he will come under, low, he will come under. Forming the next part of the wall.
5. Free safety comes off the butt of the Will and reads the shoulders of the back.
6. **Coaching Point:** The five tech should be able to close to the nose and cause a collision with trapper and fullback.

**Toss Strong**

1. Nine tech (end) must set the anchor. He can not get reached. For every yard he

**Diagram 6: Toss Strong**

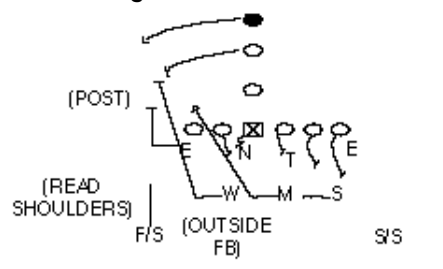


goes outside he needs to get that much depth. He needs to force everything inside.

2. Sam, mirror the step of the fullback, and rip up-field while keeping the outside shoulder free. If the end has been reached, he works outside and becomes that anchor.
3. Mike takes a flat step to clear the blockers and runs inside-out to the football.
4. Will takes a flat step and shuffles to the ball, making sure he does not cross the face of the tailback.
5. Strong safety reads the shoulders of the tailback and reacts.

**Note:** The key is bringing the ball back to the Mike and three tech.

**Diagram 7: Toss Weak**



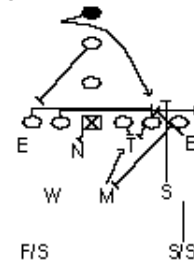
**Toss Weak**

1. Five tech (end) can not get reached. He is the anchor and must force everything inside. Will must get outside the fullback and keep his outside shoulder free. Also he is the force if the end is reached.
2. Mike must mirror the step-off fullback and run to the football.
3. Sam, mirror the step of the back and run to the football. Stay behind back for cutback.

**Counter Strong**

1. End (nine tech) attack the line of scrimmage and squeeze down the three tech. When he reaches the next level, run through the inside leg of the guard and cause a wreck, forcing play to bounce.
2. Three tech must stay low and force double team. Hold point.
3. Mike reads the fullback so he will take a false step, but should redirect when the guard crosses his face.

**Diagram 8: Counter Strong**

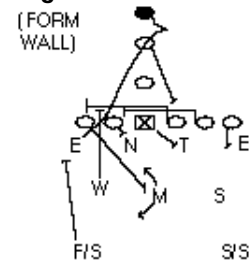


**Note:** Angle of fullback is wider on counter than ISO.

- Run through underneath the tight end and close inside seam.
4. Sam, squeeze to the ends but closing seam and force play to bounce.
5. Strong safety does the same as he does on the power.

**Note:** It's important that Will call out guard or pull to help the middle linebacker redirect quicker.

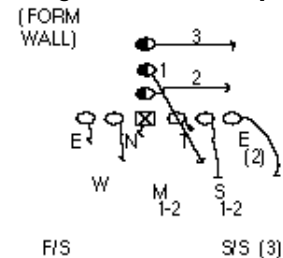
**Diagram 9: Counter Weak**



**Counter Weak**

1. Nose must stay low and not get washed. Hold point.
2. Five tech must squeeze the down block to the nose and attack, pulling guard's inside leg and cause a wreck. Force play to bounce.
3. Mike must redirect and try to come under or cross face of tackle, depending on the block.
4. Will must come tight to the five tech's butt to form a wall.
5. Free safety reads the shoulders of the tailback.

**Diagram 10: Base Option**

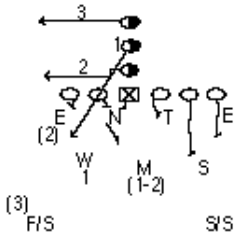


**Base Option**

1. Sam and tackle take the dive.
2. Mike plays dive to inside half of the quarterback.

3. End has the outside half of the quarterback.
4. Strong safety has the pitch.

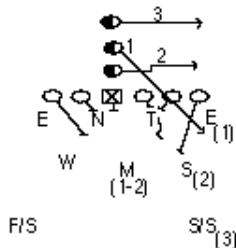
**Diagram 11: Base Option**



**Base Option**

1. Will has the dive.
2. Mike plays the dive to inside half of quarterback.
3. End has the outside half of the quarterback.
4. Corner and safety exchange pitch response.

**Diagram 12: Veer Option**



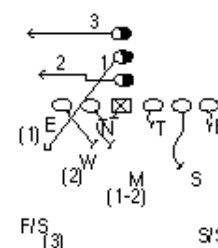
**Veer Option**

1. End squeezes down and takes first threat dive.
2. Sam has to gap exchange and take quarterback.
3. Mike must rip through block inside half of quarterback.
4. Strong safety has pitch.

**Veer Option**

1. End squeezes and takes first threat dive.

**Diagram 13: Veer Option**



2. Will gap cancel takes quarterback.
3. Free safety has pitch.

In closing, I realize much of this material I have gone over is very basic, and not new.

But we feel at South Florida that the small details make the difference. On that note I would like to thank and recognize Andre Waters, Earl Lane, Greg Frey and Kevin Patrick for all the time and effort they have put towards developing our defensive philosophy.

## NCAA Football and NAIA Football Promotional Programs Benefit College Football at All Levels

For the first time in the history of intercollegiate athletics, the AFCA, NCAA, the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) and Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA) have joined together to create NCAA Football.

The coalition is a partnership to improve, preserve, promote and market the game of college football. The program is expected to generate 'new' dollars that will go to athletics departments at all levels.

The organization is charged with heightening interest in and awareness of college football. It will market and promote the game on a national level by developing a marketing fund for promotions, licensing, merchandising, media, hospitality and grass-roots initiatives.

**What Is NCAA Football?:** NCAA Football represents a coalition of AFCA, NCAA, NACDA and the CCA formed to improve, preserve and promote the game of college football. It is the first time these groups have pooled their resources under one umbrella for the betterment of college football. We call this "The Power of One."

**Mission Statement:** To improve, preserve and promote the game of college football for those who play the game, those who coach the game and for those who support the game.

**Where Did NCAA Football Begin?:** The opportunity to promote college football on a national level got its start in several places. NCAA Football evolved from the 125th Anniversary cele-

bration of college football and College Football USA. College Football USA was an initiative begun by the AFCA and NACDA.

**Board of Directors:** NCAA Football has a 14-member board comprised of 10 Division I-A conference representatives, one Division I-AA conference representative, one NCAA staff representative, one AFCA representative and one NACDA representative.

**Who Benefits?:** NCAA Football will take the collective initiative of conference commissioners, football coaches, athletic directors and the NCAA to create, with corporate America, specific initiatives to promote college football. Revenue generated will be directed back to a national marketing fund established to build and promote college football. Participating institutions will receive revenues for usage of their marks.

**What Institutions Participate?:** All 566 NCAA football-playing institutions will have the opportunity to participate in the program. The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) is developing a similar program called NAIA Football .

For information on NCAA Football and on NCAA Football decals for your school's football helmets, contact Host Communications at 972-778-7700.

