

## ***A Multiple Eight-Man-Front Package***

**Don James**  
**University of Washington**

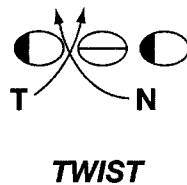
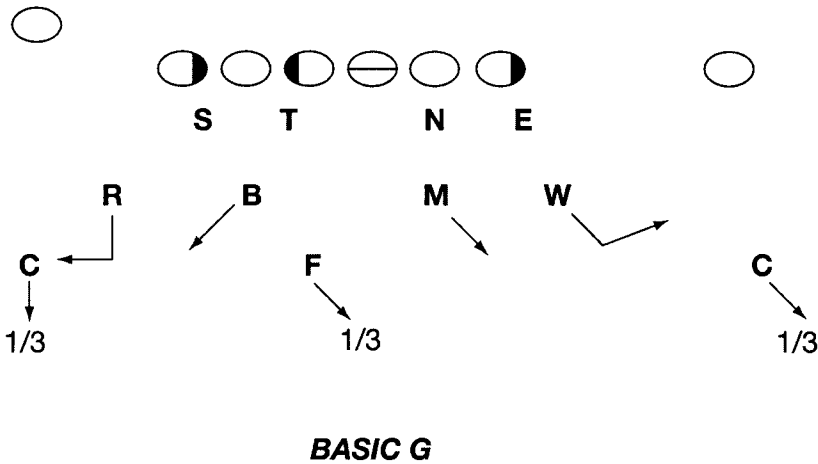
It's good to be back to this area. We're a long way from here. I spent about nine hours on an airplane, and I have an 8:30 flight leaving tonight. At 7:30 I have to be out that door. My original home is Massillon, Ohio, which is about 90 miles away.

What I thought I would do is not dwell so much on individual technique but give you a system. I want to show you what we are doing with our defensive scheme. We started out in a 50 look but have evolved into an even-front scheme. We wanted to get into a balanced defensive scheme. We were getting hammered by teams that got into alignments and then shifted or motioned to something else. We wanted something so that if we getting hurt with all those shifts, we could simplify our defense, get lined up in a defense, and keep from getting hurt. We evolved into this defense by backing the nose man off and keeping the eagle look to the tight end with an even look to the split-end side. We played our rover and Will outside linebacker in similar positions. It didn't look too good against two tight ends, but at the same time, if the offense brought the split end into the tight position, our corner walked, which balanced that advantage. We shift out of this defense, and if we put the word up into the defensive call, all 11 guys go up to the line of scrimmage. With the shifting defense and the up call, we got what we wanted. We got the quarterback checking off his huddle-called play. If we are showing a rover blitz or Will crash, that quarterback has to keep the tight end in to block or at least change the protection. The offense has to go to more maximum protection and to throwing check-down patterns or changing their plays. With our defensive alignment, we found that we were cutting down the number of running plays an offense could use.

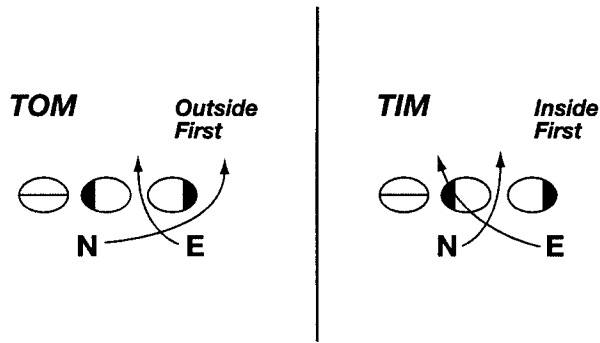
The defense was called G. We have a stud linebacker who plays over the tight end. If you play that position for us, you have to learn pass coverage. In the G call, the stud is taken out. He plays a 7 technique, which is an inside shade on the shoulder of the tight end. The direction call will tell our tackle and nose guard whether to play the 3 technique or an inside 2 shade. The end to the split-end side would be in a 5 shade. The defense is balanced and easy to adjust, and we are getting an eight-man front. That was our basic defense and the defense we are in a vast amount of time.

In our defense, we are not sitting back and reading. We are attacking the line of scrimmage and reading on the run. We don't worry about running around a block. We are trying to get upfield as fast as we can and make something happen. We used to get hurt by the offense trading their tight end from one side to the other after we declared our defense. What we do now is make a different direction call, which moves our tackle and nose guard to the opposite 3 and 2 techniques, the end to the 7 technique, and the stud to the 5 technique. We had no confusion with people trying to run from side to side. We do flip the Mike and backer linebackers because it is easy to do that. The rover and Will are interchangeable, so there is no need to flip them. We have calls to move all the down linemen anywhere we want them.

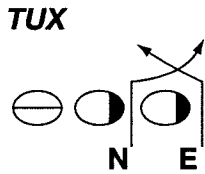
From the basic G look, let me show you some of our pass-rush stunts. We can use them on running situations also. We do that to slow down the linemen trying to pick up the stunts. The first stunt is called Twist. In the Twist, the tackle goes first. We cheat our linemen a bit to get to the proper place to make the stunt effective. The tackle comes from the 3 to the inside gap into the center. The nose guard comes from the 2-1 and goes second through the same hole.



The next stunt is called Tom. The Tom is an exchange charge stunt between the nose guard and the end. The O in Tom means outside first, or end goes first, and the nose guard loops to the outside. The end comes hard into the inside gap from the 5 technique. The nose guard takes a step up and looks for the ball. If the ball is going away, there is no need for him to run outside. The thing he has to know is that he plays contain if the quarterback drops back to throw the ball. The companion stunt is called Tim. It is like the Tom call, except the inside man goes first. The nose guard takes the outside gap and goes hard. The end draws the offensive tackle's block and fires inside.

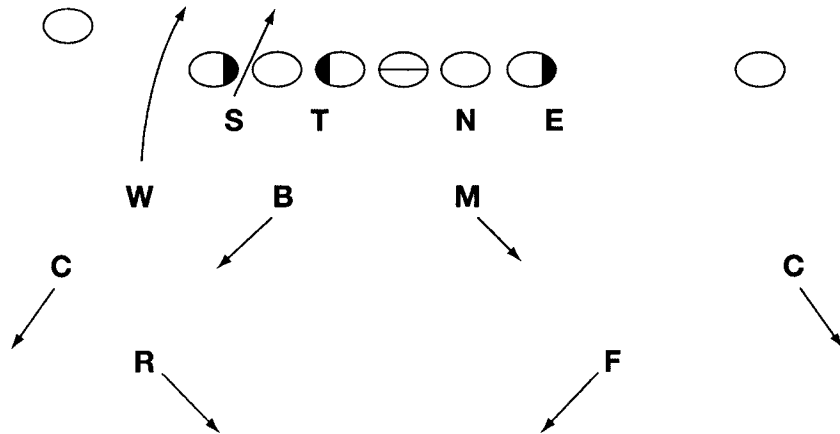


The next stunt is Tux. This is a Tom stunt delayed. We come off in our regular rush lanes, engage the offensive linemen, and then run the Tom stunt. That keeps the offensive linemen from being able to play the defense for the same responsibility every time. A lot of the big offensive linemen have trouble with this.

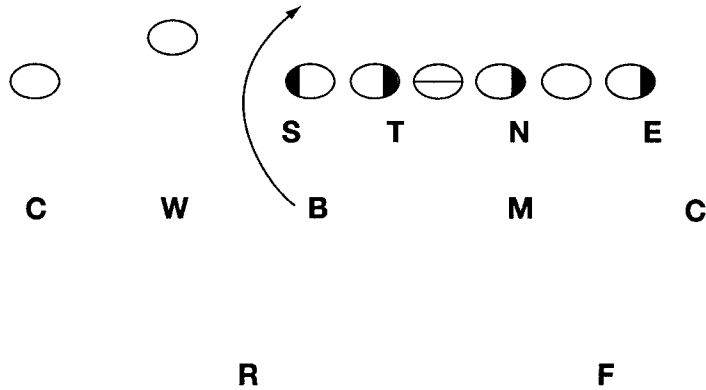


The last one is a double Tom. You have to be careful with this one. It leaves a lot of holes. We want to almost know that you are going to throw before we run this. The end and stud come hard, and the nose guard and tackle take a good look at what is happening then work their way outside. If the quarterback is flushed out of the pocket, they will probably be chasing him rather than being on the outside.

The next thing I want to show you is what we call a field G. We go to a two-deep with the rover and free safety. The Will comes to the field side. We are solid into the boundary. From this defense, we can run a field-G torpedo. This tells Will that he is free to go on a blitz. We change stud's charge to an inside charge because he doesn't have to worry about containing the quarterback on a sprint-out pass. We are playing two deep, four under, and a five-man rush. That has been a simple adjustment and a good call for us.

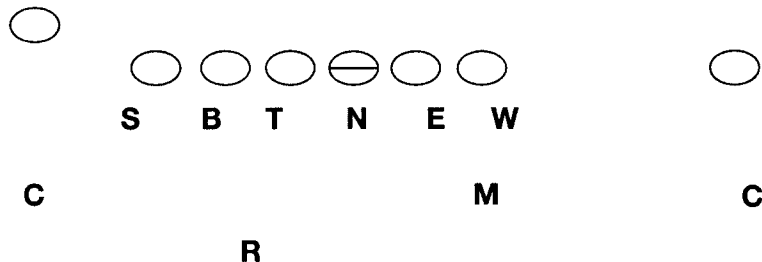


If the offense goes to a one-back formation with trips to the field, we call field G, bring out the backer linebacker, and move the Mike linebacker over the center. Now if we run the Torpedo stunt from this, the backer runs the blitz, and the Will linebacker stays in the coverage. When the backer runs the Torpedo stunt, there is a hole created. The Mike linebacker has to try to cover. If we are running the field G against the twin set, the Will linebacker has to stay in coverage. If the Torpedo stunt is called, the backer runs the stunt. All he has to do is look to see the two receivers. That tells him that he is going on the stunt.

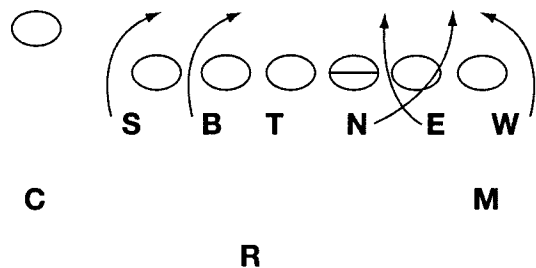


We like to shift our front a lot. We let the quarterback change the play, then we move. We like to move from the Eagle defense. If we call "move G," we line up in the Eagle defense. From there we move to the base G defense, which requires very little movement for the personnel. People try to quick-count us when we are moving. Sometimes they try to use the 25-second clock to outwait us to get in a good play. We have to play cat and mouse with the quarterback to get the move going.

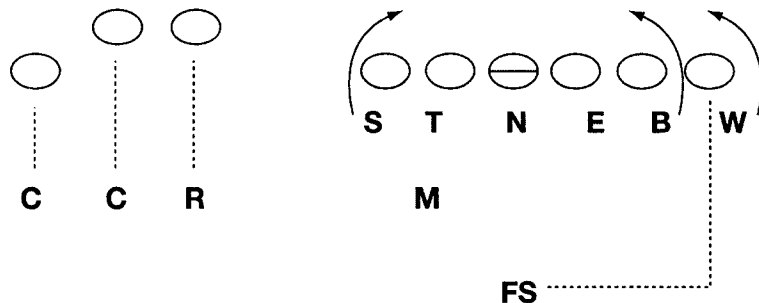
We call our Eagle defense the Tuff defense. The rover goes to the offensive strength, as well as the stud and backer. The Mike and Will go away from strength. The backer is a better cover guy, while Mike is a better run defender. We will play two coverages from this defense. We play both the zone and man coverages. If we tried to play all man coverage, we would get killed. There are too many good quarterbacks to do that. The Bears played this defense and did it with all man coverage. We can't. The first basic adjustment we have to make is when the offense breaks their backfield and goes to some type of one-back set. The rover has to pick him up. If the offense starts out in two backs and goes to motion, the rover will pick him up. If we call "move Tuff," we line up in G and move to Tuff.



We have pass-rush stunts from this defense also. The first one is called Tuff backer. In this stunt, we like to run a twist with our nose guard and the end. The Twist is away from the backer. The end goes first, and the nose guard comes around. The Will also comes upfield and gives us a six-man rush.

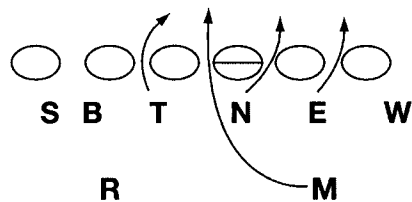


If the offense comes out in a trips set with the one back, we have to make some adjustments. We take our two corners and match up on the two wide receivers. The rover takes the H-back or third receiver. The backer moves to the tight end to be consistent with our rules. Now the Twist is run with the nose guard and tackle. The free safety moves over to take the tight end man to man. However, if the tight end releases, the offense is one man short in their blocking scheme. That is why they very seldom release him.

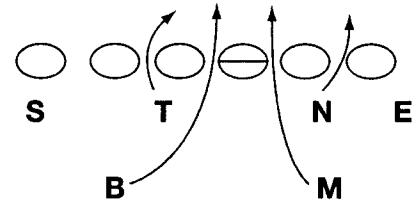


The next stunt is probably one of our best calls. It is called Mike Tuff. We call this in running situations as often as we do in passing situations. We have to put a man coverage behind it because of our alignment.

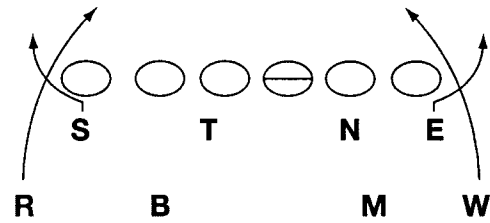
I don't know why, but this is a bear to block. If the offense doesn't put a back on the Mike linebacker, this stunt will kill them. Everyone lines up the same way. The tackle, nose guard, and end hit the gaps to their outside, and the Mike linebacker blitzes the strong-side A gap.



From the G scheme, we run a stunt that we have used for years. It is called Dog Inside and Dog Outside. We use this stunt in running situations as well as passing situations. On the Dog Inside, the Mike and backer linebackers hit the A gaps to their side, and the nose guard and tackle penetrate through the B gap to their side. The inside goes to the linebackers. If we call "Dog Outside," the linebackers hit the B gaps, and the nose guard and tackle come into the A gaps.

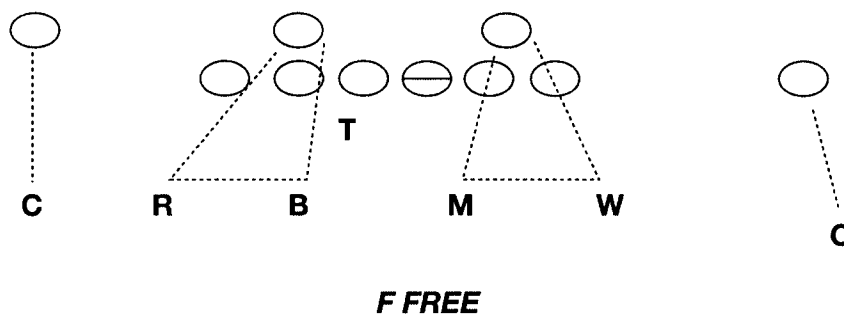


If we need a stop by the defense or a big play to pump us up, we have found that the double crash and double blitz have been good stunts for us. This gives us an extreme amount of pressure coming off the corners. The tackle and nose guard are playing straight defense. The rover and Will are crashing from the outside. The stud and end have to take contain, pitch on the option, and turn in the sweep. The double blitz is very close to the crash. The only difference is stud and end work up the field, and the rover and Will come on a delayed blitz to the inside. The stunts look alike, but the technique used in running them gives the offense a different look.



I want to talk about our secondary coverages. The base cover is called Cover 4. From the G scheme, it is a three-deep and four-under pass coverages. The corners have outside thirds of the field, and the free safety has the middle. The rover, Will, Mike and backer have the four-under zones. If we add the word Freeze, that means we are not going to make any changes in the coverage, regardless of set. That takes out the game-plan calls in the secondary if you want to go basic the half or at the end of the game. The rover goes with the passing strength, and the Will goes with the running strength.

The next coverage we use is Cover 6. We have three or four adjustments to our Cover 6. The Cover 6 is our man-to-man coverage. The first one is G-Cover 6 Free. In 1990 we had won the Pac-10 championship, but we still had to play UCLA. Homer Smith was the offensive coordinator at UCLA. We were a three-touchdown favorite. They came out and went into a shotgun set. They threw the three-step-drop passing game from that. Every pass they threw was a 5-yard pattern. If we were in Cover 4, everything was the 5-yard routes. If we were in man, everything was crossing rub-off patterns. They kept the ball afternooon. The game was tied, but we needed to win the game to be in contention for the national championship. They intercepted a pass and kicked a field goal to win the game. The point here was that we had to get into teaching more combination coverages. Now when we go one-on-one with our defensive backs and receivers, I send the running backs to work with the linebackers. That has helped our linebackers with our man coverage.



The Cover 6 Free looks like Cover 4 from our alignment. The corners take an outside shade on the receiver. The way it used to be was that if the defensive back was looking at the quarterback, it was zone. If he was looking at the receiver, it was to man. We line up looking at the quarterback and especially look for the three-step drop.

Once the quarterback goes beyond the three-step drop, the corner goes ahead and plays his normal man coverage. We want to take away the quick hitch, slant, and out. After that, he plays an outside-shade man technique, knowing that if the receiver breaks to the post, he has a free safety in center field to help. The rover and backer will combo the tight end fullback. The Mike and Will combo the tailback.

The next problem is the one-back set with an H-back in the slot. The corner and rover get in the outside shade on the split end and H-back. The free safety has too much ground to cove, so he gives a signal to the boundary corner that he has no help on the post move. The corner has to disguise his coverage and stop anything going to the post. We get a three-way combo with the Will, backer, and Mike on the tight end and fullback.

