

On behalf of the University of Wyoming, Head Coach Joe Glenn and our entire offensive staff; Bill Cockhill (offensive coordinator), Chad Germer (offensive line), Harvey Patton (runningbacks), Bryan Applewhite (tight ends), and Tony Spencer (asst. offensive line), it is an honor to contribute to the *2003 AFCA Summer Manual*. Our staff has always looked forward to reading the AFCA manuals, and we hope that you will find this article beneficial.

Most offenses have some form of the double smash, or hitch-flag combination in their playbook. At the University of Wyoming we are no different as this mirrored pattern is a major staple of our pass offense. In fact, we really have an entire package built around the double smash pattern.

What is it about Double Smash that we like so much? Well, the answer has a lot to do with our base philosophy. We feel that a pattern can be a fundamental part of our pass offense only if it provides the quarterback a good place to go with the ball regardless of the defensive look. Whether we get a two-safety look, a single-safety look, zone pressure or man/full pressure, we need to be able to give our triggerman an answer that is sound scheme-wise.

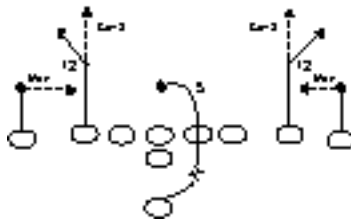
Not all patterns in football provide this kind of security. However, we feel that our version of the double smash pattern with built-in sight adjustments does provide us with a solid answer versus just about all looks. As a result, we rely on this pattern and its complementary variations a great deal. The objective of this author then is to explain the details of how we run both Double Smash and a few key variations.

Basic Pattern Structure and Read Progression

Our version of Double Smash has the outside receivers running five-step hitch routes and the inside receivers running 12-yard flag routes. The runningback check releases over the ball at a depth of five yards. Both the inside and outside routes sight adjust based on coverage. Versus any zone look, the outside hitch routes are locked while against any form of man coverage, they convert to down routes (Diagram 1). The inside or slot receivers adjust their flag routes to seams when they read three-deep zone.

What does this do for us? Versus a two-safety look, we've created a high-low stretch on each of the corners. Since this pattern is mirrored, our quarterback will pick the best-look side based on the lever-

Diagram 1: Double Smash



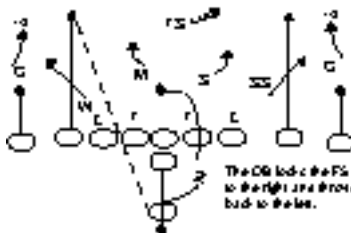
age of both the safeties and alley players (outside linebackers). Our preference is to find the side that has both the safety and alley player aligned more tightly as this gives our inside receiver a cleaner release and better leverage for working the flag route.

However, if the ball is on the hash and everything else is equal, he will choose the short side since the boundary-side flag route is an easier throw than the wide-side flag route. His drop is five steps and hitch, and he reads the corner. If the corner sits on the hitch, he throws the flag. If the corner gets depth, he takes the hitch. If it's not there, he goes to his check down.

Versus the three-deep zone, because of our established sight adjustments, we are able to work two vertical seams off the free safety. We feel strongly that this conversion is a better option than running locked flag routes since these verticals can be such a source of difficulty for Cover 3. So with this conversion principle in place, our quarterback will take his drop and use his eyes to steer the free safety to one side. He will then throw the seam route back to the other side (Diagram 2).

If at this point the alley player has gotten depth and is carrying the slot receiver through the seam, the quarterback will go to the hitch on that side. If it is the inside backers who are taking away the seams by getting a lot of depth, he can always check down to the runningback. (As a side note, if our opponent is intent on having their inside linebackers quickly gain a lot of depth, we may couple our pass plays with a draw fake to hold them closer to the line of scrimmage.)

Diagram 2: Three Deep Steering the Free Safety



Versus man coverage, we like the flag or

Wyoming's Double Smash Package

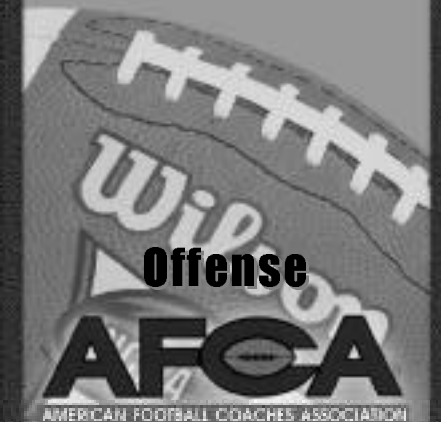


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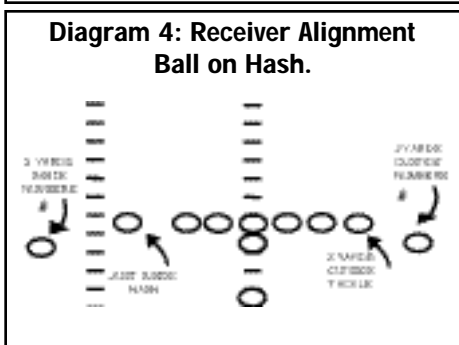
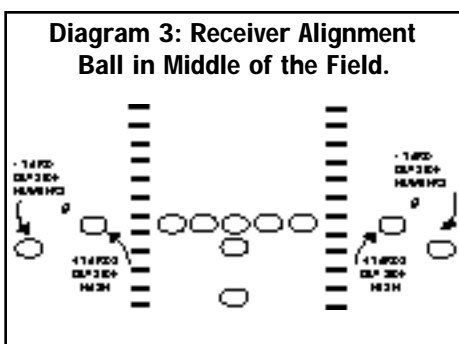


wide-side down route. Which one in particular the quarterback chooses will depend on a variety of factors such as personnel matchups, down and distance and/or leverage of the defensive backs. First and foremost, if we find our best receiver matched up against their second or third best corner, we expect our quarterback to get him the football. Down and distance-wise, we like to see our quarterback take a shot at a flag route on first and 10, especially if we are getting inside leverage over our slot receivers. If it's third and five or if we are getting seven-man pressure, we would then expect him to go to the wide-side down route.

Coaching Points for the Receivers

As with any pass play, receiver spacing is extremely important. We start by aligning our inside receivers on the ball, and we ask our outside receivers to over split. Having the outside guys aligning wider than normal accomplishes two things. First of all, it makes it harder for the alley players to get underneath the hitch routes and secondly, it widens the alignment of the cornerbacks.

This in turn makes it more difficult for the corners to fall in and play the seam routes in a three-deep concept. Furthermore, if the ball is on the hash, we have our short-side slot receiver under split to the point where he is aligned just a couple of yards outside the tackle. This leaves him enough room to work his flag route. Diagrams 3 and 4 illustrate our receivers' alignment landmarks for when the ball is in the middle of the field and when it is on the hash.

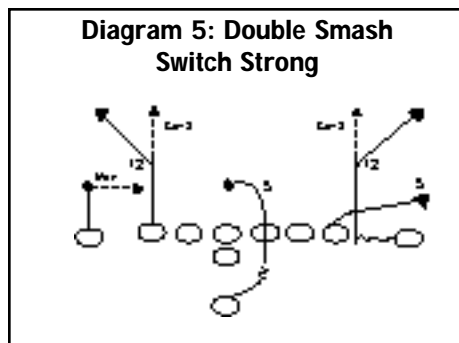


Now we turn to route mechanics. Versus a zone, we ask our slot receivers to work an outside release and avoid the jam of the alley player using a chop technique with his inside arm if necessary. He then pushes vertical and runs his flag route off the safety at a depth of 12 yards. If once he clears the alley player there is no safety over the top of him, he stays vertical in the seam as this indicates some form of Cover 3. He then must be aware of not bending his seam route in towards the single safety since we want to create as much lateral stretch on this safety as possible. Versus any form of man coverage, the slot receiver's responsibility is simple. He must beat his man on the flag route.

As was discussed earlier, the outside receivers adjust their hitch routes and come "down" only if they read man or man-under coverage. The down route is really nothing more than a flat slant and it is essential that the receiver create separation from the defender on this route. This can be a challenge versus a pressed corner aligned inside. In this case we tell the receiver to "take the corner up" like he is releasing on a fade route. The receiver then uses a "throw by" technique and comes under the corner.

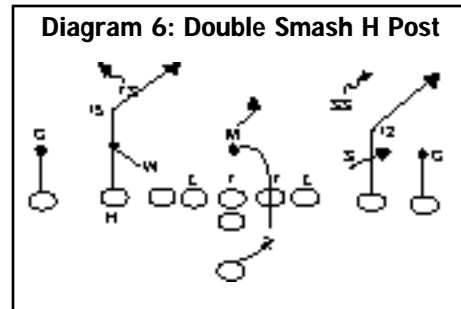
Double Smash Variations

Since the Double Smash pattern is a staple of our passing game, it is important that we have a number of variations off of it. As one change of pace, we can give a different look and get the same receiver distribution by running Double Smash Switch. In this case, the inside and outside receivers on one or both sides switch assignments (Diagram 5). The quarterback's progression is identical to that of the original play.

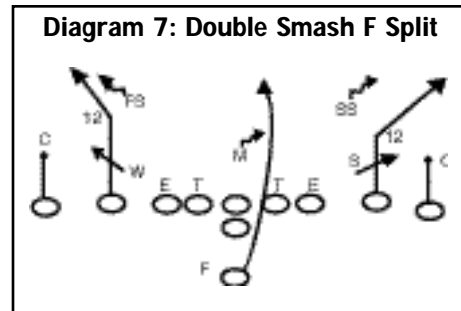


Our opponents know we run Double Smash and as a result, we often face safeties who overplay our flag routes. As a result, we go into each game with a couple variations designed to take advantage of

this. First, we can run Double Smash and designate one of the two inside receivers to run a skinny post (Diagram 6). The designated receiver must get a good vertical push and get on the toes of the safety. As he closes the cushion, he weaves to attack the defender's outside hip and then breaks back skinny inside of him. The break typically occurs at 15 yards and the ball should be caught at about 22 yards.



As a second way to take advantage of safeties overplaying our flag routes, we can try to get our runningback down the middle of the field (Diagram 7). This is not as crazy as it may sound since a two-deep look generally corresponds to no pressure, and hence; the chances of getting our runningback out are good. To be effective, it is imperative that our slot receivers draw the attention of the safeties and that our runningback avoids and then beats the Mike linebacker.



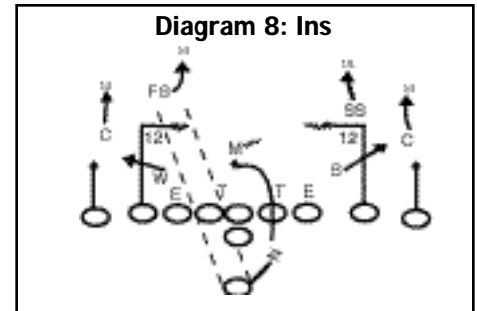
Teams that play a great deal of quarters coverage (Cover 4) will often try to defend Double Smash by having their alley players gain width quickly. They apply a token jam on the slot receivers and then race out to get under the hitch routes. At the same time, their corners are then able to sink to take away the flag routes. Versus these teams we make use of a complementary pattern to Double Smash that takes advantage of these drops of the alley players.

It is called "Ins" and it develops exactly like Double Smash, except that the slot receivers now turn in at 12 yards and settle in the first hole. With the alley players racing for width, there is typically a large pass-



Wyoming wide receiver Ryan McGuffey has had a solid career for the Cowboys. He was a First Team All-Mountain West Conference honoree in 2001. His performance in 2001 placed him on the Fred Belitnikoff Award Watch List in 2002.

ing lane open to the slot receiver on the side opposite the side the back releases (Diagram 8).



Again, on behalf of the University of Wyoming football program, I would like to thank the AFCA for the opportunity to share some of our ideas in the *2003 AFCA Summer Manual*. Hopefully, some of what was presented here will be useful to you. If there are any questions regarding this material, feel free to contact me at ronw@uwyo.edu. Good luck and go Pokes!

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