

The Double Wing Passing Game
8th Deadly Sin or Fun To Be Bad?

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Ok, let's get this straight right off the bat, gents. We will call Toss all night long if a team cannot stop it – period, end of story. We ain't pass happy – don't worry.

An important lesson in running the Double Wing Offense (DW) is that you must run the “core” plays (Toss, Counter, Wedge, Sweep, and Trap) to perfection. Do not add other plays, formations, or variations until these plays are mastered at a high level against a variety defensive fronts. Too many coaches, us included, have watered down and undermined the DW offense by doing *too much*. As our HC is fond of saying, “Don't be a *'jack of all trades'* and a master of none.”

Before I get into the passing game, it's important to note that our passing game is constructed (translation: begged, borrowed and stolen) from the plays and philosophies of many other DW coaches. I will be sure to give each proper credit as I discuss the play, as well as acknowledgments, and must visit discussion forums/websites.

I like to think of the DW passing attack as a nice juicy sirloin with a big ol' baked potato topped off with the works. The sirloin, in and of itself, is just heaven. Now toss (see, I said “*toss*” again) in that loaded baked potato and you're set for your last meal. You don't *need* that potato, but it sure as heck is nice.

A well-coached DW team does not *need* to pass. Not *needing* to pass is the number one reason the passing game is a killer. I'm happy calling the “core” plays and witnessing a defense progressively drag themselves off the ground slower and slower as they get physically hammered down by the doubles teams, kickouts, traps, shoeshines, and stampedes. I, however, take sadistic pleasure in watching a defense self-destruct and point fingers at each other as a well-timed pass goes sailing over their heads and we're off to the races.

Ideally, we call between 2-5 pass plays a game. That's it; 2-5 key times in the game where the running game is just infuriating that defense and, suddenly, here comes

that loaded baked potato sailing off into the horizon, and somewhere Don Markham is smiling.

Each of the following pass plays has its own merits. We pick and choose each week depending on the defensive scheme/tendencies and individual defensive player talents/weaknesses. For each play I would like to examine the following: the X's and O's of the play, what play series it connects to, and what defensive keys/coverages we note in selecting the play.

A Note About Defenses

It's fair to say that we are largely defended with 4-4, 6-2, 5-2, and 5-3 defenses in our league. Occasionally a team throws in an exotic defense designed specifically for the DW, but teams tend to jump back into their base defense once we show our rules allow us to block a "specialty defense." We run the core plays against all of these fronts consistently. Just because a defense has an ungodly number of guys in the box does not mean we go right to the pass. On the contrary, we like the loaded fronts because, as Jerry Vallotton writes in The Toss, they give us a "one-layer" defense that when effectively run blocked lets us get to the second level quickly.

Teams defend us with Cover 1 (one deep FS with Man Coverage underneath) and the occasional Cover 2.

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The Pass Plays

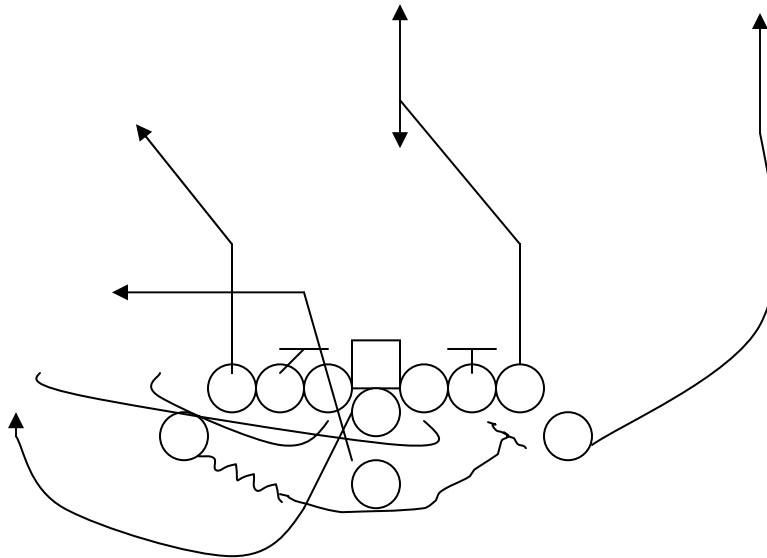
We break out pass plays down into the following two categories: high efficiency pass plays and shots. As with any DW team, turnovers are our nemesis. We want the result of our pass plays to be something big or simply moving onto the next down – no negative plays. They also serve to back people off or at least plant that seed of doubt in their mind about coming up too fast. Our philosophy with the high efficiency plays is that they will be wide open for safe throws or there is an easy out for the QB to get rid of the ball. Our "shots" result in huge plays or an incomplection because the QB has an easy read and/or we have clearly seen a fault in the defense coverage that we are attacking.

High Efficiency Pass Plays

The high efficiency pass plays are composed of Waggle, “OCP”, and the Fullback screen.

1a. Waggle – X’s and O’s

The first play in our DW passing attack is the Waggle. Who doesn’t like a little Waggle now and again? This is nothing more than good, old Wing-T Waggle jammed into our beloved DW. Here’s what our DW Waggle looks like:



<p>QB Open to motion. Proximity fake with FB, reach back to fake sweep handoff. Put the ball on your hip gain 6 yds depth, keep ball on your hip until shoulders are square then pull up ball in pass position as <u>you attack LOS</u>. We want the CB to make a choice to pick up the run or pass. Reads: 1. Corner Route 2. FB in flat, 3. Run. Looking to “Y” will be called by coach. If QB does not like what they see tuck it and run for a yard or hit the FB in the feet. Yell, “Go, Go” if you decide to run so guards and FB turn up to block.</p>	
<p>FB Proximity fake with QB, and break off at 5yds to flat. You must be disciplined not to drift further downfield. If QB runs, turn up and pick up 1st man you see.</p>	
<p>LW Fake 38 Sweep, Rock the cradle 2-3 times then pick up backside pressure.</p>	
<p>RW Fade – Outside Release (Get the Corner to go with you).</p>	
<p>X TE (left TE) Corner Rout. This can also be run as a Post-Corner if you prefer.</p>	
<p>Y TE (right TE) Post to FS – if he sits, go vertical past him. If he vacates, fill and replace.</p>	
<p>C Man On Down</p>	<p>BSG Fish Hook</p>
<p>PSG Pull Block 1st man on LOS</p>	<p>PST Man On Down</p>
<p>BSG Fish Hook</p>	<p>Notes: QB must attack LOS – make the CB make a choice. Must be disciplined in Reads:X, FB, Run. Guards/FB listen for “Go call.”</p>

1b. **Waggle - Play Series**: Our Waggle play is part of our Split Flow/Sweep Series, which is composed of Sweep, Trap, Waggle, Cross Pas, and FB Screen. It is nothing more than time-tested Wing-T series football in DW form. As a progression, we go to the Split Flow/Sweep Series for various reasons. Indicators such as LBs overly committed to reading the FB, DEs crashing hard, and some forms of 6/7 man fronts with LBs stacked inside the Tackle Box create easy opportunities to get outside via the Sweep, Waggle, or FB Screen. Over penetrating DTs cause us to Trap.

A hard lesson I learned, is that speed is not a requirement to get outside – leverage is far more important. Speed obviously helps, but I can recall saying, “We can’t get outside,” based purely on the speed of our players, not on the leverage that the defense is giving us.

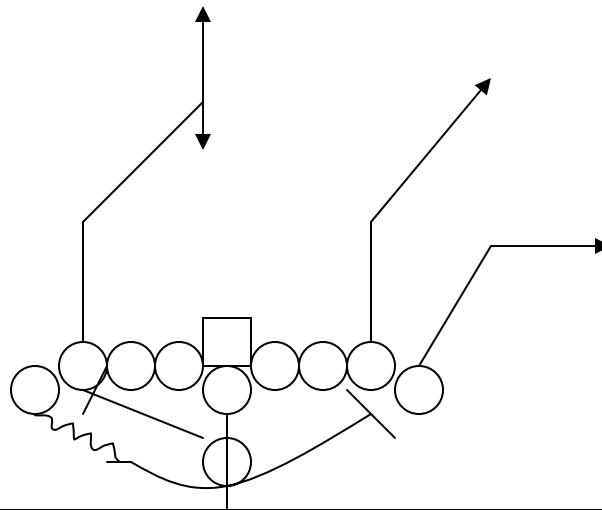
1c. **Waggle – Defensive Keys/Coverages** – From a playcalling perspective, we get to Waggle the same way we get to Counter, Screen, and Sweep – DEs who are crashing, pinching, etc. We prefer to have Sweep called several times prior to Waggle so we can clearly note the QB’s waggle fake getting outside of that DE.

Waggle is great versus Cover 1. The CB is wrong no matter what he does. Come up on the run – we loft an easy pass to the corner route. Run with the corner route, then we can hit the FB in the flat or the QB can run. Sometimes a FS may try to play the corner route over the top, but this then leaves the X-TE posting to the FS wide open. Typically, if the FS comes over the top a pass that leads the Y-TE to the outside is still safe, or at least the QB sees decent coverage and tucks it and runs. The press box should be very aware to watch the FS when we Waggle; the X-TE turning it vertical can be a huge play.

The high efficiency component simply being that the QB *always* has a green light to run the ball if he is even slightly unsure about the pass. If he feels he is caught in a bad spot, then he can “one hop” it to the FB or throw it out of bounds far over the FB’s head.

2a. **OCP – X’s and O’s** – This play comes directly from Coach Hugh Wyatt’s play “Thunder”/“Lightening.” If you have not reviewed his materials or website you need to do so. Coach Wyatt is one of the preeminent DW minds in the world. During our first season we utilized his playbook and teaching methods and found them highly effective.

The term OCP comes from our lettered passing tree. Our players found it easier to remember O=Out pattern, versus memorizing the numbered route tree. Thus, OCP is composed of Out, Corner, and Post patterns.

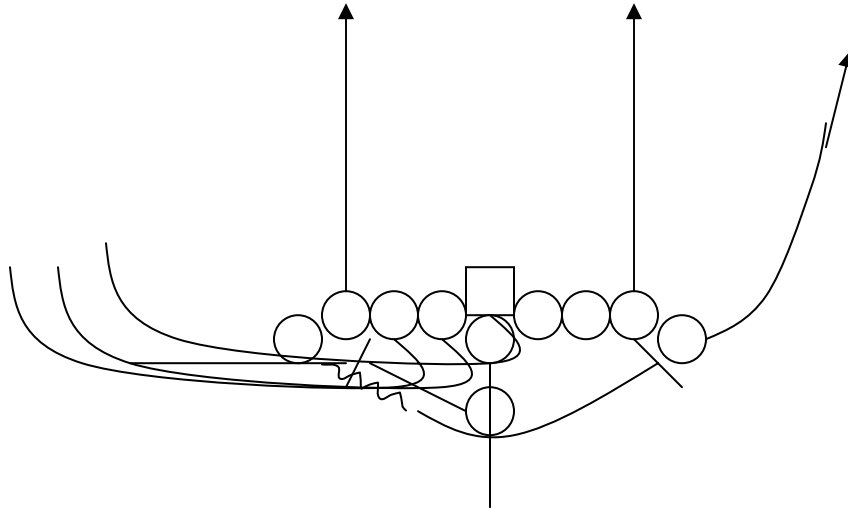


<p>QB – Fake 38 Sweep handoff. Then drop straight down the midline two more steps. QB CANNOT drift to the playside because typically we have pressure coming down trying to stop the Toss/Sweep action. Vs Cov 2 Flat is primary route; Vs Cov 1 the Corner is the primary route. Press box should be watching CB reaction to the combo of the Corner/Flat. Backside post is called ahead of time as the Pressbox notes FS play. If the QB is unsure of his read, hit the feet of the wing and move on to the net play.</p>	
<p>FB - Replace X-TE, this should cut off any backside pressure for a right-handed QB.</p>	
<p>LW – Fake 38 Sweep, Rock the cradle 2-3 times, replace Y-TE</p>	
<p>RW – Out – get to the Flat quickly, break route at 4/5 yards, snap head/hands around NOW.</p>	
<p>X TE (left TE) Post to FS – if he sits, go vertical past him. If he vacates, fill and replace.</p>	
<p>Y TE (right TE) Corner Route – Vs Cov 2 bend it flatter, Vs Cov 3 bend it more vertical – pull the CB with you to open the Flat route.</p>	
<p>C – Low Hat</p>	<p>BSG – Low Hat</p>
<p>PSG - Low Hat</p>	<p>PST – Low Hat</p>
<p>BSG – Low Hat</p>	<p>Notes: We have run this play successfully 7 times as a two-point conversion in 3 seasons (hitting the out route). Coach Wyatt also adds a “Switch” tag to have the PSTE and PSWing to flip their routes – we have run this when we have a wing that is a much better receiver than our TE.</p>

2b. **OCP- Play Series** – OCP is part of our “Toss” series. When a defense has been lulled into being “Tossed” repeatedly they see the same backfield motion and largely assume it is Toss or Sweep.

2c. **OCP – Defensive Keys/Coverages** - Defenses must come into games against DW teams dead set on taking away the Toss; any other attitude will get them trampled. CBs are called on for run support (probably more so than normal) when playing DW teams; therefore, they are exposed to the possibility of being caught out of position. OCP frequently results in the Out pattern popping wide open because a CB desperately bails on the corner route. We also get mismatches because many 6-2 style defenses are leaving the flats exposed as well as mismatches being created because ILBs often have difficulty getting back into coverage when they are drilled on being downhill players. LBs stacked inside also struggle to get to their outside coverage. Keep in mind, in an ideal game, we pass 2-5 times. We averaged 56 offensive plays per game this season over 13 total games (10 regular season and 3 playoff games) – so at the highest end we aim to throw 10% of the time – frequently much less.

3a. **FB Screen – X’s and O’s** – We have found our FB screen game to be highly effective out of our double tight, double wing set. Like a screen in any offense, it is set up by a defense that is attacking and crashing. The FB screen in the DW can be particularly effective because the DEs battle the FB all game. So, when the FB chips the DE allowing him to slip inside and chase the QB or motioning wing, the FB pops wide open.



QB – Rotate like 36 Toss, Drop back and backpedal counting 1001, 1002, 1003, Throw Screen to FB. Invite defenders upfield, backpedal away pulling them in and dump off screen	
FB - Chip PSDE, run through him letting him think he has beaten you to the inside, run by him a step then set up screen, show numbers to QB and backpedal out into position– stay on inside hip of guard. Do not leave blockers until they have made a block, then cut off.	
LW – 36 Toss/Striker – rock the cradle and pick up and backside pressure.	
RW Fade – release outside.	
X TE (left TE) XSeam – Clear Out	
Y TE (right TE) Y Seam – Clear Out	
C – 3 count Screen	BST – Low hat
PSG - 3 count Screen	PST – 3 Count Screen
BSG – Low Hat	Notes: Count must be emphasized to allow defense to come into QB. Also note, a defense that is tired and not moving upfield should not be screened. It’s amazing how the occasional widebody DT will look like a hero on a screen because he just didn’t move upfield at all and walks right into the play.

3b. **FB Screen- Play Series** –Screen is part of our “Toss” series. When a defense has been lulled into being “Tossed” repeatedly they see the same backfield motion and largely assume it is Toss or Sweep.

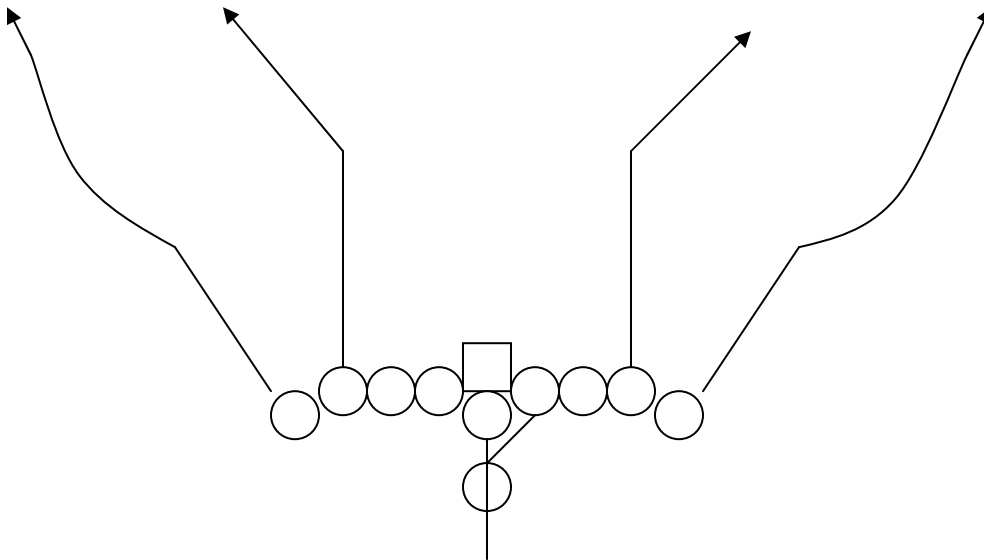
3c. **FB Screen– Defensive Keys/Coverages** - Like any screen pass we need to have a defense that is being very aggressive. In the DW this is established through DEs trying to chase down the Toss, DEs fighting off the FB, or LBs/DBs rolling to motion or being overaggressive in following motion. Be very aware of DT play when considering the screen. At times, a worn-out, beat-down or fat-body DT may look like a hero because he simply did not get a rush upfield and then walks right into the screen. It's amazing how a poor or lazy player can make a great play on a screen.

The “Shots”

“Shots” are among the most difficult plays to call in football. It's all about the proper set up and timing. Our shots are designed to gain huge chunks of yardage or simply move us on to the next down. When you run the ball with the DW you are relentlessly pounding defenses over and over. You are, in essence, lulling them into repeated patterns. When the shots are incorporated correctly they result in huge plays or, at worst, a moment of hesitation in the flow of a defense. Either way we win. We are not going to run these plays many times in the course of a game; however, you must consider them in defending us. Hesitate versus a well-coached DW team and you are getting washed down and stampeded. Get too aggressive with a DW team and off goes the shot. We preach to our QBs the worst thing a shot will do is get us to the next down – never a turnover.

Explode Diagrammed on Next Page

4a. **Explode – X’s and O’s** - We took the initial idea for Explode from Coach Vallotton’s **The Toss**. **The Toss** is an absolute must own item for any DW coach. You are doing yourself a disservice if you run the DW and have not read this book. We run it a bit different than Coach Vallotton – here’s our version of Explode:



QB – Call this play on first sound or a silent count. On snap proximity fake with FB, and take 5 big steps, hiding the ball. Read the FS Vs Cov 1 – if he goes left, throw right. When in doubt, check down to a wing route, if covered ground the ball to the wing or loft it far out of bounds.	
FB - Fake wedge	
LW – Take off at 45 degrees until you reach 7 yards, then fade gaining width.	
RW - Take off at 45 degrees until you reach 7 yards, then fade gaining width.	
X TE (left TE) Outside release, get to 10-yard depth and break angling towards the pylon.	
Y TE (right TE) Outside release, get to 10-yard depth and break angling towards the pylon	
C – Low Hat	BST – Low Hat
PSG - Low Hat	PST – Low Hat
BSG – Low Hat	Notes: Nice call versus cover 1 or goal line style defenses. We see many CBs rolled up who have difficulty getting back to a deep third or simply suck up on the wing’s route. Vs Cov 1 the QB simply needs to throw the ball the opposite of the FS reaction. We like this call after establishing our run game in a short yardage situation. Good when a defense expects you to Wedge. Also, it’s effective to have the QB call the play on “first sound” or a silent count – it creates a moment of hesitation. Most DC’s consider 4 verticals among the toughest things to cover.

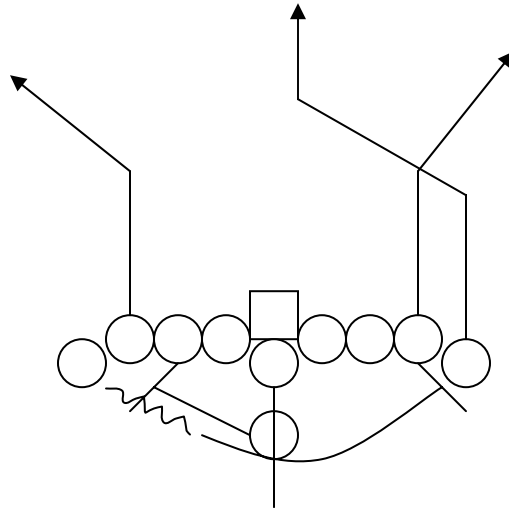
4b. **Explode- Play Series** – Explode is part of our base series.

4c. **Explode– Defensive Keys/Coverages** - Many defenses that are run versus the DW are prone to these vertical routes. DBs are typically rolled up so close to the LOS they have difficulty in getting back to their coverages. Many times the CBs are rolled up leaving a lone FS 7-8 yards off the line. The FS cannot cover 2 routes and LBs in goal line style defenses are asked to lock up TEs. We're betting one of two things: the LBs cannot run with our TEs or the LBs are so focused on the run game and the TEs break free.

*Coach Steve Calande noted that he has run this play with one wing staying, then later screened to that wing.

Cross Pass Diagrammed on Next Page

5a. **Cross Pass– X’s and O’s** – We got this play from Coach Davis and his Glenelg Gladiators of Howard County, Maryland. Coach Davis and his staff have produced any number of outstanding DW teams. We noticed this play in film study of them just killing teams – so we nipped it.



QB – Proximity fake with FB, Fake handoff to Wing, two more big steps hiding the ball, loft the ball as far as you can - aim to split the goal posts. Let the wing run underneath the ball.	
FB - Proximity fake with QB, block BSDE	
LW – Fake 38 Striker, replace Y-TE picking up any pressure.	
RW – Post to FS then turn the route vertical looking to split the goalpost. You are to break under the TE.	
X TE (left TE) Outside release to 10 yards, then break for pylon	
Y TE (right TE) Outside release to 10 yards, then break for pylon	
C – Low Hat	BST – Low Hat
PSG - Low Hat	PST – Low Hat
BSG – Low Hat	Notes: If you have more athletic TE you can call switch and have the wing and TE flip routes. Given most TEs won't have a speed mismatch with most FSs, but a height mismatch is likely. Here's that spot for the basketball player who plays TE who can just jump through the ceiling. By having the Wing break under the TE's route we may also have a FS who will jump one of the corner routes without realizing the wing is coming vertical past his vacated area.

5b. **Cross Pass- Play Series** – Cross Pass is part of our Split Flow/Sweep Series.

5c. **Cross Pass– Defensive Keys/Coverages** - The key component in the Cross Pass is an overaggressive FS or a FS we believe our wing can outrun. As with any of the other passes, loaded fronts can easily fall victim to a one on one match up. Teams must honor the run game and the action pass gives that moment of hesitation that can break the wing free.

Conclusion: DW teams must be built around a punishing run game. DW teams must run the “Core” plays at a high level against a variety of fronts to be successful. We must define ourselves and be feared for our run game. Opponents must spend the majority of their preparation time zeroed in on the Toss. Given that scenario, the DW passing game can be an absolute knockout punch. We don’t look to throw the ball very much, but when we do something exciting will happen.

Our 2005 team averaged 16.2 yards per completion and scored 11 passing TDs. When you consider the pass game accounted to 12% of our total offense, those numbers speak volumes for what is possible in the DW pass game.

Acknowledgements: I would like to thank my HC Kevin Lynott for bringing me back into the greatest game ever created and fostering my growth as a young coach. Coach Steve Calande has been a vast resource in my growth as a coach and one of the best coaches out there bar none. If you have not attended one of Steve’s clinics, purchased his materials, or visited his message board you are missing out. Coach John Weidner has also been a great support and should be thanked for his creation of the “Double Wing for Dummies” forums and “Doublewingonline” website. All the coaches on the aforementioned sites are outstanding as well. Last, but never least, my wonderful wife Kimberly and son, Gregory, for all their love and support. We all know how hard the life of a football family can be – they are angels walking the earth.

Must Visit Forums/Website Articles

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2. <http://coachweidner.proboards46.com/>
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