

As I finish my 20th season as a high school head football coach, with 17 seasons at the same school, I often wonder where I might be or what direction my career might have taken if I did not make some of the decisions I made years ago about my philosophy and approach to this great game. I was very fortunate to have played for great high school and college head coaches who taught me to believe in what we were doing. These two coaches had very different approaches in regard to offense but did a very good job in presenting their packages to their teams and getting them to believe in the total package.

As I earned my first opportunity to become a head football coach, I was suddenly faced with making decisions about what kind of football program I was going to place my name beside. In making these decisions, I knew if I made the wrong choices it would make it very difficult for me to survive as a head coach. I remember well being very hesitant about making these choices. As I pondered these, I remembered what I had learned from my former coaches about making decisions, and presenting them in such a way to your players that they believe it's the greatest thing in the world.

In my second year as a head coach I made a decision that I believe today, has been one of the key factors which attributed to the success I have enjoyed over the last 20 years as a head coach. This decision was to install the Delaware Wing-T offensive system. I was intrigued as a defensive coordinator, prior to becoming a head coach, with teams who ran the Wing-T offense. This offense presented more conflicts and mis-direction to defend than any other scheme. Initially, I was not sure as to the impact of this offense on a year to year basis because I knew that talent and types of athletes would vary.

I came to McEachern High School after being a head coach for only three years. McEachern was a school that had not experienced much football success in its history. The principal was new and seemed determined to turn the school around. He felt that a competitive athletic program was a key factor to a school's climate and success. The principal reminded me of my high school and college coaches. He was a former football player, educator and coach. He did a great job in making me believe that his plan was an important tactic in transforming this school to a level of state recognition. I presented the Wing-T offense

as the key element to build our program around. This plan was presented to the principal, the assistant coaches and to the players as a blueprint for football success and tradition. The offense coupled with strategies of sound discipline, athletic and academic training, became the core of our program.

In my effort to learn as much information as possible about the Wing-T offense, I was fortunate to have opportunities to visit the University of Delaware and their great offensive staff. From the very beginning it was obvious that they believed in what they were doing and they felt this was the best offense for their program. The Delaware staff presented a true order of football. The offense allows tremendous versatility, which allowed you the flexibility to build your offense around your player's abilities. The plan implements a power running attack to control the tempo of the game, a wide open passing attack that includes a play action package, as well as a deep drop back attack with the ability to stretch defenses both vertically and horizontally. This offense also includes a well-conceived option attack. All components of this program have been implemented at McEachern High School during various seasons.

During my tenure at McEachern I have had the good fortune of having some outstanding players in which to build teams around. Very few of these players have gone on to become household names in the world of college and professional sports. Many of these high school players may never play football again after high school. This offense has given these players a system in which they can succeed without being special athletes with tremendous skills. This offense has given our program the ability to reach our lower football programs and begins to teach its foundations and fundamentals as early as the "pound ball" years. The Wing-T offense has given our program an identity that is recognized throughout this state.

Below is a chart that list wins and losses, and points scored over the last sixteen seasons. Please keep in mind that this high school had not had a winning season in the previous 18 years.

McEachern High School			
Varsity Football			
1984-1999			
Year	Won	Lost	Avg. Score
1984	7	3	20.7

Building a Program to Survive the Long Haul With the Wing-T Offense

Jim Dorsey

Head Coach

McEachern High School

Powder Springs, Ga.



1985	9	2	19.3
1986	12	1	40.2
1987	13	1	22.6
1988	10	1	26.7
1989	12	1	28.5
1990	9	3	30.1
1991	11	3	26.7
1992	9	3	26.8
1993	9	3	26.0
1994	9	3	14.6
1995	10	2	26.5
1996	11	2	25.6
1997	10	2	26.5
1998	14	1	34.0
1999	12	1	33.9
Totals	167	32	26.7

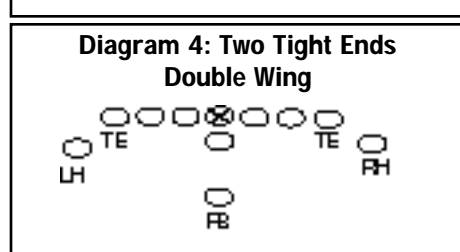
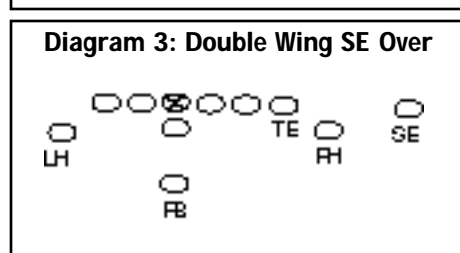
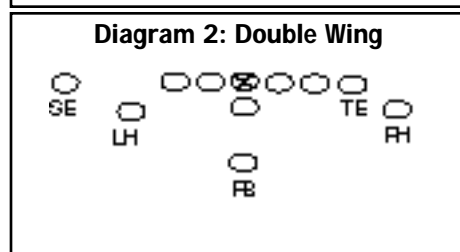
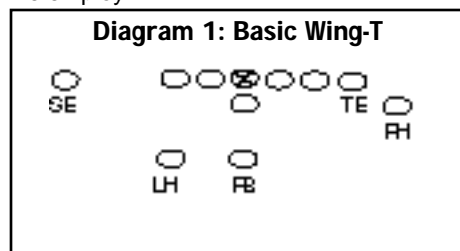
As you can see we have enjoyed consistent success over 16 seasons. Not all of these teams were great; certainly some were better than others were. On two occasions we graduated all 11 starters on offense and were able to return to the play-offs the following year. Without this system and teaching the foundations of discipline, teamwork and sound academic practices, the quality and proper mindset of our rising players would not be possible.

A good example, which demonstrates the benefits of this system and how it will work presented itself with the arrival of a major college quarterback prospect to our school. A tall, talented, young man with a great arm yet somewhat limited running ability was to be our next quarterback. My coaching staff and I were faced with the decision to either abandon the Wing-T and go to a west coast approach on offense to highlight this young mans talents, or to take our offense and adapt it to him and his abilities. In searching for the right answer we keep coming back to the investment we made in our offense throughout our program and how this would affect us after this quarterback graduated. We made the decision maintain our Wing-T Offense. During this quarterbacks'senior year we played for the state championship title and he threw for more than 2,500 yards. The best results of our decision came the next year when our talented quarterback was gone and we went ended our season with thirteen wins and one loss. We passed for less than eight hundred yards with a very inexperienced young quarterback, but he had become a well-prepared student of the Wing-T offense.

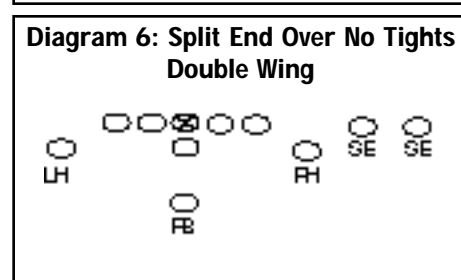
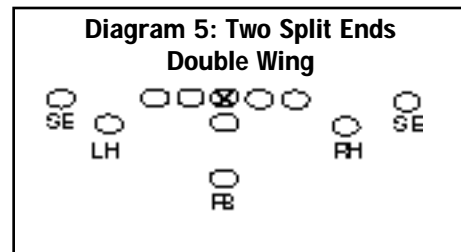
The elements of this offense are sound and interrelated throughout its various series. One of the most intriguing aspects

is how the blocking schemes are consistent regardless of the formation. This becomes most important not only to the offensive lineman but to the running backs as well because they perform many important blocking assignments in the execution of the system. The use of formations is the foundation of creating situations that will allow you to out flank your defensive opponents. As you incorporate the different series of the offense with the various formations you create alignment problems for the defense and give the illusion that you have a very involved offensive package.

We all know that the presence of a wing in any offensive formation is troublesome from the standpoint of creating defensive contain problems but also having the ability to release into vertical pass routes from that position quickly. The majority of the wing-t formations employ two wing positions, which compound the problem. Drawn below are the various Wing-T formations we employ:

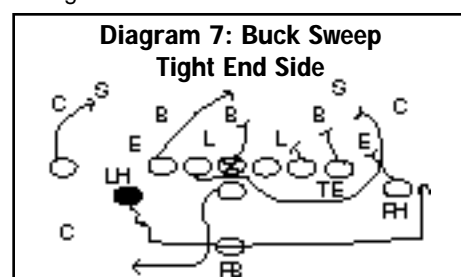


These formations are installed at the beginning of our spring practice. All of our plays both running and passing will be



introduced with these formations in mind. For example, we will run the buck sweep both to the tight and split receiver side. Looking at the various formations in the diagrams above all of them either has a split or tight receiver or both. Assignments for the five interior linemen remain the same regardless of whether there is a tight or split receiver to their side.

Blocking assignments for the halfbacks remain consistent for the sweep in all formations. Diagrams below show the sweep assignments both in a tight and split receiver alignment.



I hope the information presented will give some direction in making decisions that have to be made in the development of any sound football program.

Seek out coaches at all levels that have been successful over the long haul and evaluate what elements have provided them with the formula of excellence. I think you will find a lot of common concepts that make these individuals consistently successful.

Keep football a safe game with concentrated efforts toward proper techniques.