

Kick the K.I.S.S.
by
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I'm a strong believer in the rapid evolution of football in America. I truly believe that high school football is at the same preparation level collegiate football was at fifteen years ago, and collegiate football is where pro football was ten years ago. High school football today is a twelve month proposition that uses preparation tools like never before. Today, top programs use extensive video, scouting software, summer camps, youth programs, seven-on-seven, year-round strength programs, Saturday practices and clinics. More and more coaches are kicking the old 'K.I.S.S.' principle to the curb and creating devastating offensive schemes trickled down from the top collegiate minds. The old 'K.I.S.S.' principle does not fit well with the rapid evolution of high school football.

The common principle of 'K.I.S.S.' stands for **Keep It Simple, Stupid**. The idea is that the simpler we make things for athletes, the greater their success level will be. Simplicity eliminates confusion amongst the players on gameday. Because of this simplicity, the players don't necessarily have to think, but can react on autopilot - thus eliminating the mental aspect of the game and highlighting the physical. 'K.I.S.S.' also links itself with the necessary condition of a few simple core plays and formations.

It is my belief that by staying status-quo and committing to the 'K.I.S.S.' principle, a coaching staff would soon unravel in the modern era. Adhering to this philosophy allows coaches to put less time into evaluating their opponent, staying current on the latest trends, and creating winning schemes on gameday. If a loss occurs under the 'K.I.S.S.' principle, it becomes easy for a coach to say the kids just didn't execute - but did the coach put them into a position to be successful? I believe that a simple offensive scheme designed for little confusion and tremendous success actually only **produces** confusion. Today's defensive coordinators **love** the simplistic offense. It allows them to create more extensive blitz packages, the offense becomes more predictable, and a comfort level is established.

Staying in a few formations with a few plays only invites more blitzing - and greater defensive preparation will actually cause greater confusion. The 'K.I.S.S.' principle establishes a sense of false security for players and coaches. The modern high school offense must include several ingredients designed to keep the defense on its heels, take advantage of mismatches and put the team into a position of true success. The modern offense has these key aspects:

- It shifts the burden of success from the players to where it should belong - the coaches.
- It must be unpredictable.
- It has multiple formations.
- It includes an option threat.
- It uses motion.
- It has an audible system.
- It stretches the defense both vertically and horizontally.

This puts the offense into the position of dictator and provides the defense with less of a comfort

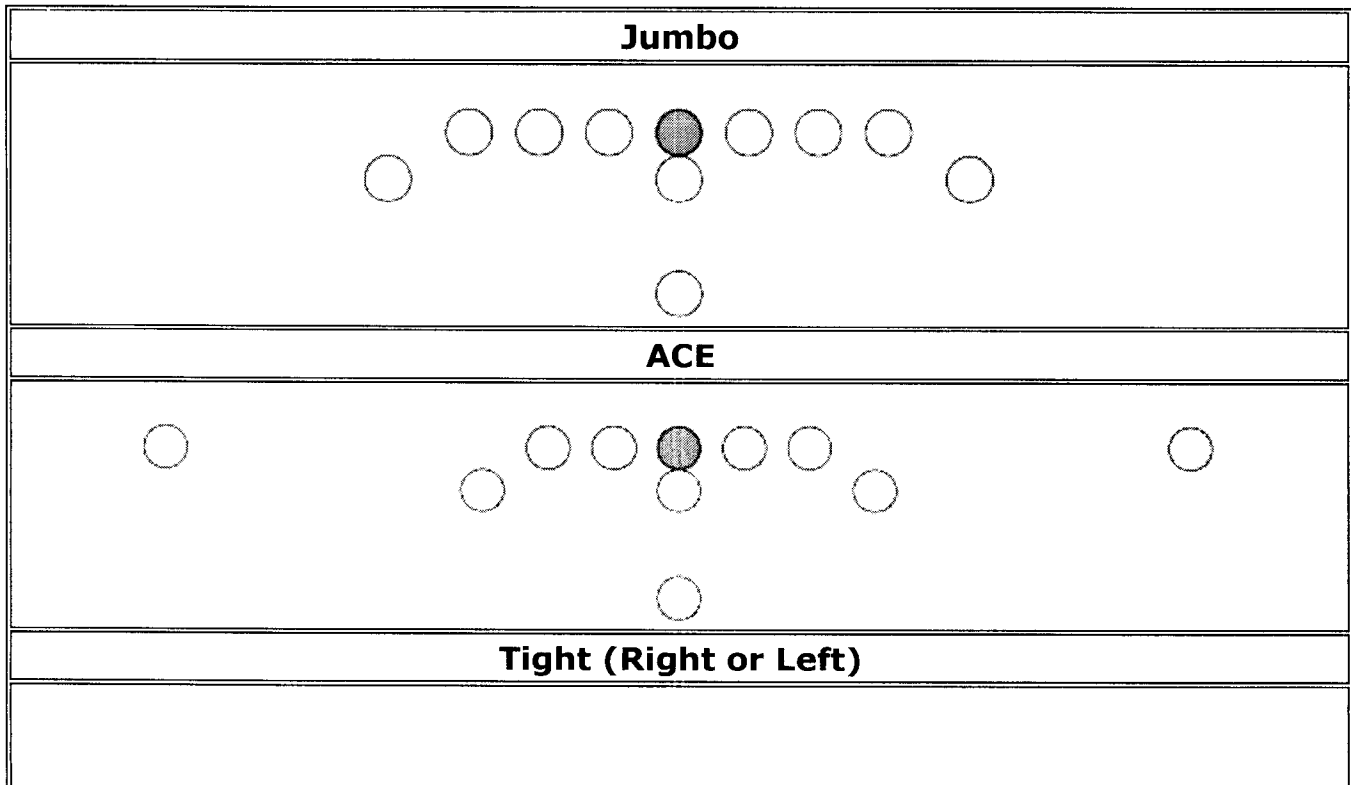
level as well as reducing blitz tendencies. Offensive coordinators love it when a defense is forced to stay in a base set.

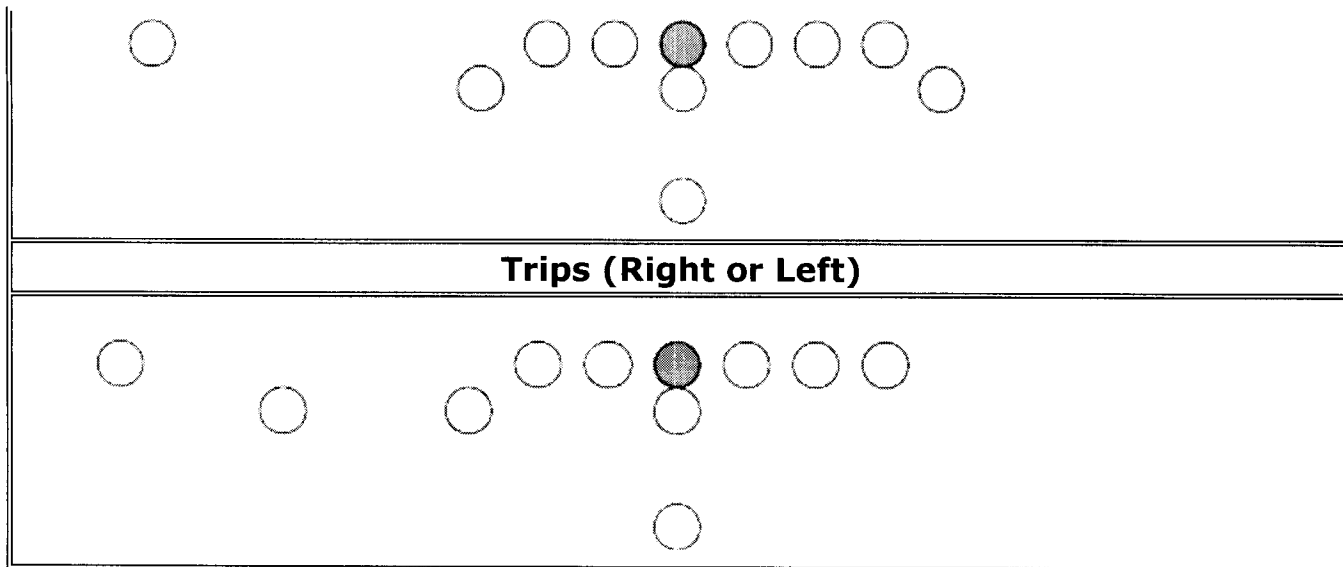
One modern offense that encompasses many of the key ingredients discussed above is the double-wing (flexbone, hambone, broken-bone or whatever else you wish to call it...). Numerous high school teams are switching to this offense due in part to the success of several college programs - Georgia Southern (D.I-AA Champs), Delta State (D.II Champs) and Air Force (Silicon Valley Classic Bowl winner) - and even some other high school programs that have gained the spotlight. These success stories have greatly helped to push the notoriety of this offense.

We at Paola have recently installed the Flexbone after listening to and watching both the Air Force Academy and Washburn University (KS). For eighteen years, Paola had been a split-back veer based on Lou Holtz's tenure at Arkansas. The base formation was a double-tight set with the outside veer being the best play. We began to find it difficult to find quality tight-ends and the good candidates we had were often forced to move to a depleted offensive line. So we began to move inferior talent into one of the most vital spots of the split-back veer and into the heart of our best play. Additionally, many of the other teams in our league began running the veer. So by district playoff time, these teams had seen the veer for almost ten weeks. They were totally prepared and we were totally predictable. We had few formations and a few plays. This enabled defenses to put ten in the box against our double-tight set. We were unable to stretch the field horizontally and vertically.

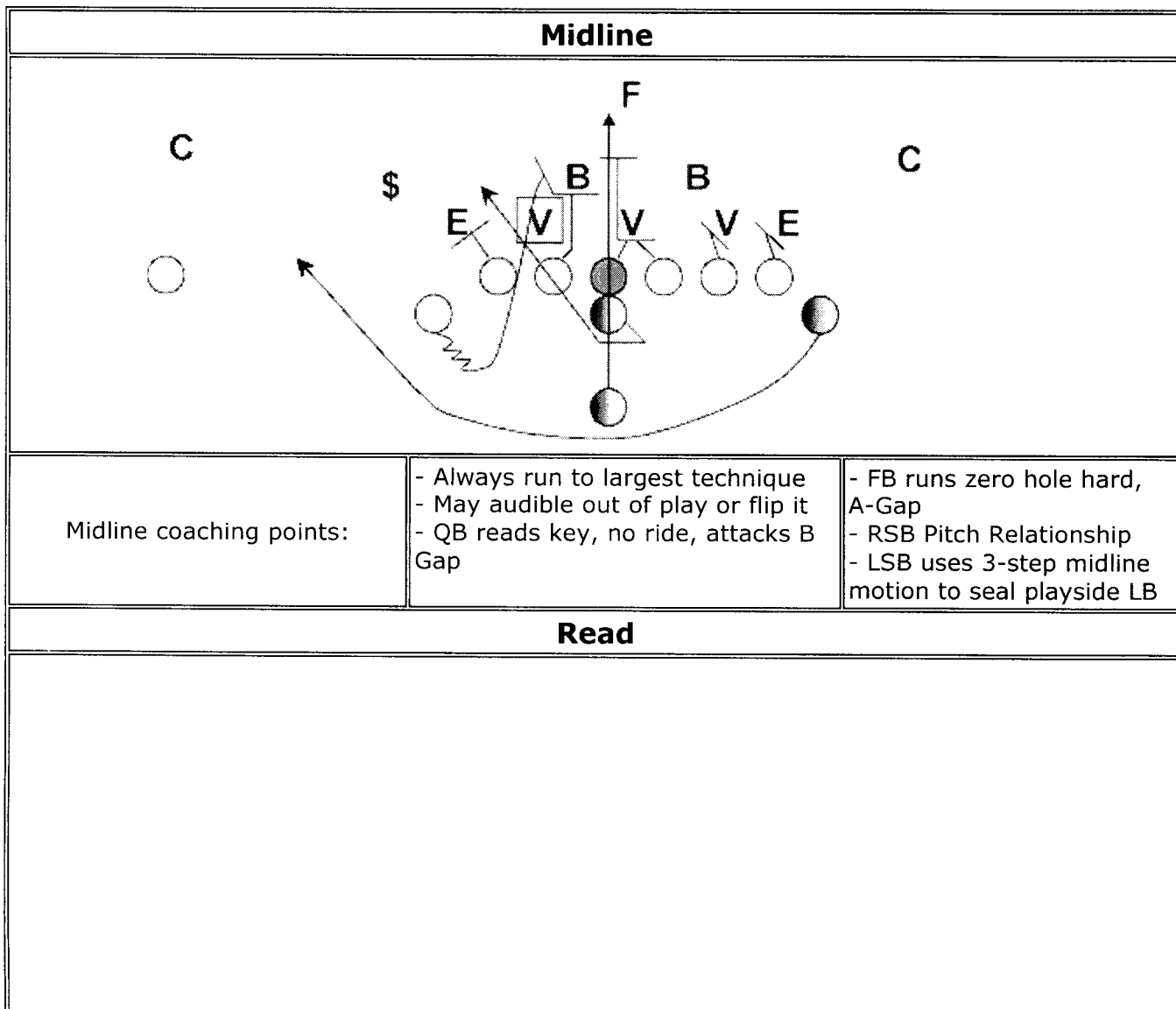
Since moving to the Flexbone, we have greater confidence. We feel like we're more unpredictable and the kids are having fun with the new system. The Flexbone also allows us to put another athlete on the field and ends our total dependency on tight-ends. The team is exciting to watch, and after eighteen years, we are forced to coach again. We finished as league runner-ups, increased our offensive production from 260 yds/gm to 320 yds/gm, and broke the school single-game rushing record. But most importantly, we were able to **'Kick the K.I.S.S.'**!

We use four base formations:





Our base plays are the Midline, Read and Toss:



<p>Read coaching points:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Read 1st man outside tackle - May audible out - QB extends, rides, reads key & attacks C-Gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - RSB arc release to primary force - LSB uses pitch motion to get wide quickly - FB run inside track of guard

Editor's Note: Questions or comments can be sent to mike at: msmith@footballcoach.net

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