



Esko Keeps Its Options Open

Esko football made a big change in its high school football offensive philosophy back in 1973. Before that time, Esko's offense was based on the "I" formation with a Power attack as its main weapon. Counter plays, play action passes, and inside traps all came off the "i" formation.

In attempt to be progressive with their offensive attack, the Esko coaches introduced the Triple Option attack. Now, this is the true Triple Option, where two defenders are not blocked on a play. They will be read by the QB. Since most of the defenses Esko saw at that time were of the 4-4 version, the defensive pressure caused problems for the offense, but eventually, things did work out. Esko went on a run of a 23-0 record in two seasons, ending with a State Championship in 1975.

Presently, Esko still runs a form of the True Triple Option attack, but from the Double Slot formation. Here again, two defensive players are not blocked. It is up to the QB to read the first defender and then option off the second. The Defensive End and another defender, either the OLB, CB, or safety are the typical players. Again, it is imperative that with this type of option, the QB has to be very good in his reads. Once the QB masters his reads, this option attack is a challenging but effective scheme to use. QB footwork is imperative and must be automatic. The QB will sneak a "look" at the FB, but must "focus and concentrate" on the defensive player that he is reading. We have found that the greatest problem that arises is the fact that the QB has to be able to "trust" his reads, and become confident with them. Another area of importance is the downfield blocking by receivers. The difference between a 10 yard gain and 60 yard gain is the down-field blocking. Here again, downfield blocking techniques do vary and change during a game. When running this option from the double slot, a motion man will be used. Timing of motion must be practiced to achieve the proper QB-RB relationship. Probably the last and most important aspect of the option is to be aware of and have the adjustments necessary to handle

the different defensive fronts that will and can be applied to your offensive attack. If the offensive adjustments are not made, the defense has the advantage. Unlike other offenses, a breakdown in the option can and will cause a turnover, which could be prevented. There obviously are many effective plays stemming from the option that will make this attack more effective. Counters, traps, and play-action passes are all part of the option package. With the trend in offense moving toward the wide open passing attacks, the option attack can give your team an advantage.

I hear fellow high school coaches indicate that this type of offense, the true triple option attack is too tough and not possible, especially at the high school level. I can assure you that it is possible, and can unbelievably increase your offensive yardage in a season. When mastered, this play is one that "can go all the way" on each play. One of the problems that we as coaches may be facing is that we are not challenging our athlete's abilities, talents and decision making skills. Student/athletes of today are taking college level courses while still in high school. Some of these students do have the ability to handle decision making type offenses and defenses. We are constantly adjusting the extent of our option attack to meet the athlete's skill and knowledge level in terms of what they/we can or can't have success with. The Triple Option Attack has been good to us and we will continue to use it, in the years to come.