



WEST COAST OFFENSE PLAYBOOK

10

**SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE
FOOTBALL PLAYS**

 PDF

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West Coast Offense 101

When you think of the greatest teams of all-time, it's hard not to think of the Joe Montana 49ers. But even the legendary Montana needed great coaching to take his game to the next level. Bill Walsh was the master behind the 49ers West Coast offense attack, but since then, you can find his influence in playbooks all over the country, and at every level.

Rather than a set of formations and playcalls, the West Coast offense represents more of an ideal, or an approach to playing the game of football. Since the dawn of the game, the traditional thinking had been to use the run to open up the pass, but Walsh believed that you could just as capably use the pass to open up the run.

The key is using a combination of short, horizontal passing concepts rather than deep vertical ones, ensuring a high completion percentage and a steady dose of short chunks of yards, much the way the running game does.

Why does this matter to you? Because the West Coast offense is an effective, simple offense that kids pick up easily. For youth coaches, this allows your offense to maintain confidence in the passing game even if it isn't a strong point, as the degree of difficulty on the plays is much lower, allowing you to avoid the turnovers that often plague young quarterbacks.

West Coast Offense

Quick Passes

I Form – Hook Outs

Setup

This play is run from a classic I formation, with a receiver on either side of the line, a tight end on the play side, and a full back and halfback in the backfield.

Play Objective

This is a great short pass play, designed to get the ball to the receiver on a high percentage pass and then let him try to beat a man and pick up some yards after the catch. This is a great play on any down, but is a favorite of mine one 2nd and long as you can usually catch the defense sitting back a bit and set yourself up for a much easier 3rd and short.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offensive line will drop back in pass protection once the ball is snapped.

Tight End – The tight end will run a curl route.

Wide Receivers – The flanker will also run curl route, while the split end runs a slant from the weak side.

Running Backs – The halfback will run a swing route on the right side, while the full back runs a flat out to the left.

Quarterback – The quarterback will take a three step dropback, and look to the flanker as his number one option. If he's not there, he'll continue from right to left, looking at the tight end next, and finally at the split end on the weak side. He also has the running backs, with the halfback as his 4th option and the fullback also there as the hot read.

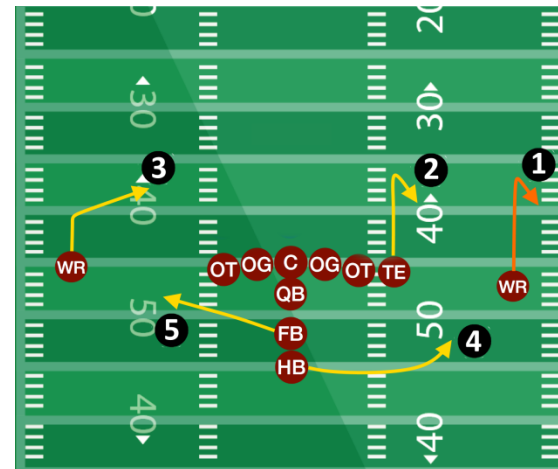


Figure 1: Hook Outs

Singleback Big - Slants

Setup

This play is run from a Singleback Big formation, with a tight end and receiver on each side of the line, with the halfback in the backfield.

Play Objective

A quick, short pass, the slants is a play with a high completion percentage that also gives your receivers to make a man miss and pick up some yards after the catch. This play is best used when you just need to pick up a couple yards – anywhere from 1st and 10 to 3rd and short.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offensive line will drop back into pass protection when the ball is snapped.

Tight Ends – Both tight ends will release off the line out into the flats, looking to make a catch.

Wide Receivers – The receivers will both run identical slant routes.

Running Backs – The halfback will run a swing route out to the left side.

Quarterback – The passer will take the ball from center and take a three step drop, then look to his right to hit his number one receiver running a slant to the inside. If the slant is covered, the quarterback will then look to the tight end out in the flat on the same side. His next read is to go through the same progression on the other side, with the halfback's swing route as his last resort

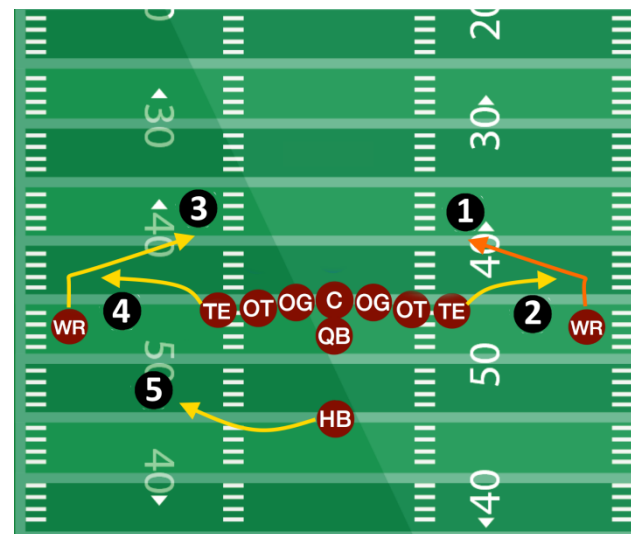


Figure 2: Slants

Singleback Big - Texas

Setup

The offense will come out in a Singleback Big formation, with two tight ends, two receivers, and a halfback on the field.

Play Objective

The Texas concept is a quick, high percentage play designed to get your number one option an easy completion after the tight end has cleared the area out. It forces the linebackers to make a decision, step up on the receiver or follow the tight end on the corner route. This is why this play is best used in the red zone, as there is little chance of interception while giving your playmakers a chance to do what they do best.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offensive line will drop back into pass protection on the snap of the ball.

Tight End – The strong side tight end will run an option route, reading the safeties and running either a dig or post route, depending on whether the defense is playing one or two safeties deep. The tight end on the back side will run a deep out.

Wide Receivers – The playside receiver will motion pre-snap, coming in tight to the numbers. On the snap he'll step up, feint a step to the outside, and cut hard across the middle looking to receive the pass from the quarterback in stride. The backside receiver will run a clear out route, opening up the backside for the tight end and halfback.

Running Backs – The halfback will run an angle route, selling the flat route before cutting back inside, following in behind the receiver running a drag across the middle of the field.

Quarterback – The quarterback will hike the ball and take a three step drop, reading the inside linebacker and looking to fire the ball in to the strong side receiver. If the defense steps up on that route, the next option is the halfback end on the angle route. The third option is play side tight end, with the backside tight end as the fourth option

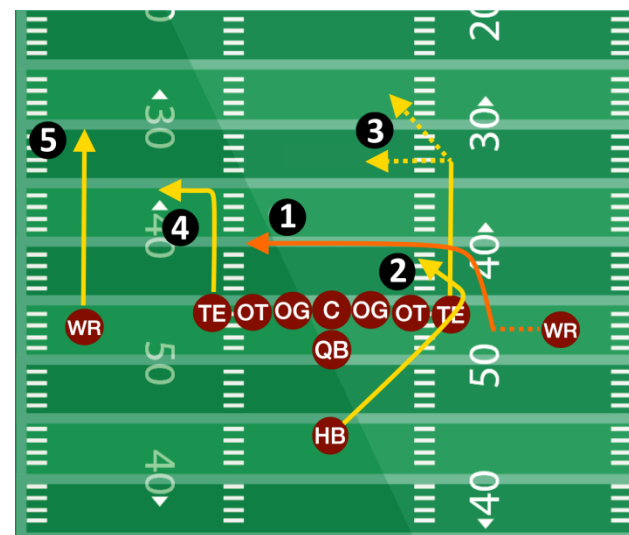


Figure 3: Texas

Shotgun Trips TE – Flood Left

Setup

The three receivers on the field will bunch up together on the weak side, with the tight end and half back on the strong side, leaving the offense in a shotgun trips formation.

Play Objective

This next play is designed to attack zone coverage on the weak side of the play. This is a great call on third and long, as it gives you a couple option past the sticks and a couple underneath receivers who would have a good chance to pick up the first down on the catch.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offensive line will be in pass protection, giving the passer as much time in the pocket as possible.

Tight End – The tight end will run a drive route across the middle of the field.

Wide Receivers – The split end will run a post route, while the flanker runs a fade deep along the sideline. The slot receiver will run a five yard route, taking care to adjust the yardage to the sticks if it's a third or fourth down.

Running Backs – The running back will run a wheel route to the strong side.

Quarterback – Once the ball is hiked, the quarterback will begin to go through his progression, starting with the slot receiver on the out route. If that isn't there, his next look is the split end's post route, with his third look on the right side being the flanker's fade. Next he'll look to the tight end on the drive route, with his fifth and final option being the halfback's wheel route.

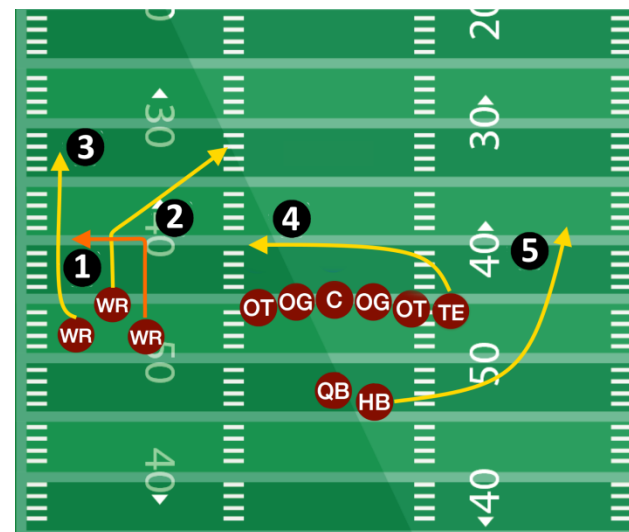


Figure 4: Flood Left

Shotgun Trips TE – Slot Trail

Setup

The offense will bunch up all three receivers on the weak side, while the halfback and tight end line up on the strong side - the tight end up beside the right tackle, and the halfback in the backfield next to the quarterback.

Play Objective

The Slot trail play is a fantastic zone buster, as the split end clears out the weak side hook zones, allowing the quarterback to fire the ball in with confidence if he times the throw correctly. This is a great play to pull out when you've burned the defense on slants a couple times already, and are in a high leverage situation – an important third down, or you're in the red zone and need a score.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offensive line will drop back into pass protection on the snap of the ball.

Tight End – The tight end will run a stop and go route here, trying to bait his man into stepping up and then looking to break downfield after.

Wide Receivers – The split end is the number two option, running a slant over the middle of the field. The slot receiver – the number one option on this play – will begin as if about to run a flat, before changing direction and coming back across the middle, trailing the split end. In the meantime, the flanker will run a fade.

Running Backs – The halfback will begin by helping out in pass protection, before releasing out into the flat.

Quarterback – The quarterback will receive the snap, and drop back going through his progression. His first look is the slot receiver coming on the trail, with his second option being the split end's slant. If he can't hit either of them, he should look to the tight end on the stop and go. In the event of a blitz, the halfback will be the quarterback's hot read.

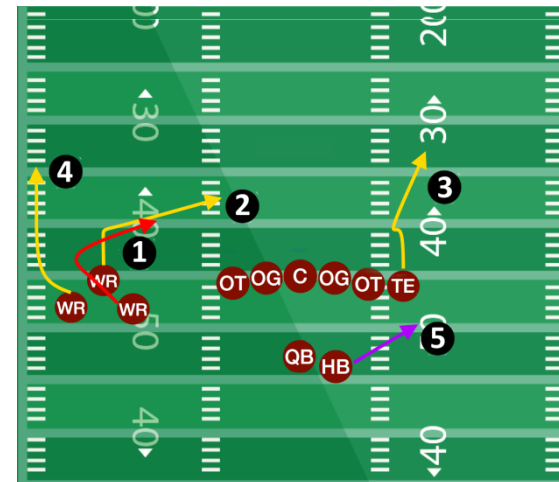


Figure 5: Slot Trail

Shotgun Trips TE – Spacing

Setup

The offense will bring three receivers on the field here, having them bunch up on the weak side, with the tight end lined up on the strong side along with the halfback. The quarterback will stand in the backfield next to the halfback, putting the offense in a Shotgun Trips TE formation.

Play Objective

Another quick, high percentage play that fits perfectly within the west coast philosophy, this play uses horizontal spacing to open up receivers for a quick catch. This play is best used on 1st and 10, when you want to pick up a couple yards and get your team in good position for 2nd down.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offensive line will drop back into pass protection on the snap of the ball.

Tight End – The tight end is the primary receiver, running a slant and looking to receive quick pass over the middle.

Wide Receivers – The split end is the number two option, beginning as if about to run a slant over the middle before sitting down on the hash marks and looking to receive a pass. The flanker will run a hitch route, and the slot receiver will slide out into the flat.

Running Backs – The halfback will help out in pass protection.

Quarterback – After snapping the ball, the quarterback will go through his progression from right to left – tight end, split end, flanker, slot receiver.

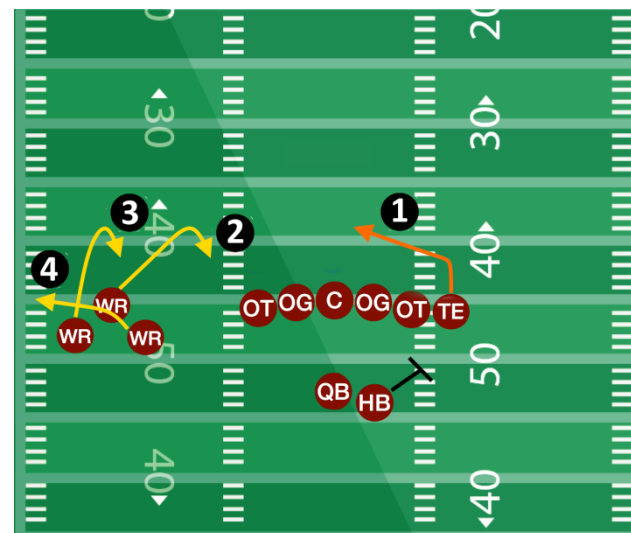


Figure 6: Spacing

I Form – HB Slip Screen

Setup

The offense will be in I Formation, with a tight end and a fullback on the field, as well as two receivers and the halfback.

Play Objective

The best way to neutralize an overeager pass rush is the a screen pass. It will force them to slow down and evaluate the play before just blindly charging at the quarterback, and as a result, give you more time on passing downs. But there's no reason for them so slow down unless you present the threat of the screen every once in a while. To be used at it's best effect, this play should be called in a situation in which the defense's aggressiveness could hurt it – like a man blitz that would leave a single linebacker to try and stop the halfback and his cavalcade of blockers.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offensive line will pass protect initially, then head downfield to make blocks at the next level. The right tackle however will pull out immediately, going out in front of the half back as a lead blocker.

Tight End – The tight end will pull out as well, kicking out and pushing any defensive backs coming to make a play to the outside.

Wide Receivers – The wide receivers will take off downfield, running clear out routes to get their defensive backs away from the play.

Running Backs – The fullback will pull out and head for the edge, combining with the right tackle to form a wall in front of the halfback. The halfback will step up as if pass protecting, then slip out to the side quickly and look to catch a screen pass in stride and head downfield.

Quarterback – The quarterback will take the snap and begin to take his five step drop, flipping the ball over to the halfback as soon as he has drawn the defensive line far enough towards himself.

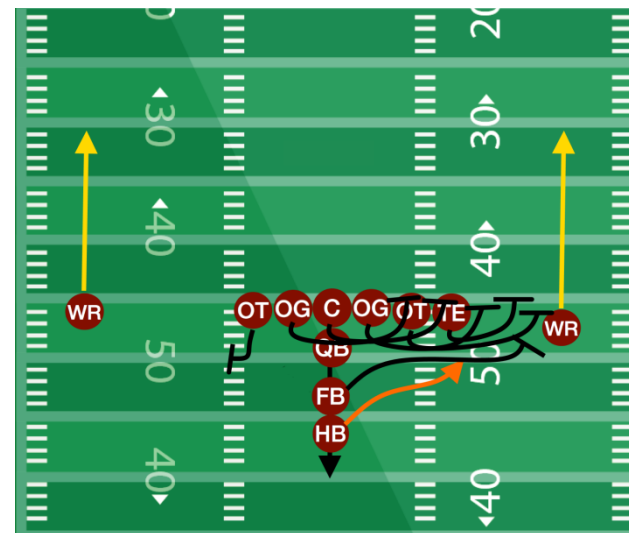


Figure 7: Halfback Slip Screen

West Coast Offense

Run Plays

I Form – HB Sweep

Setup

This play is run from a classic I formation, with a receiver on either side of the line, a tight end on the play side, and a full back and halfback in the backfield.

Play Objective

If you've got a running back who can get to that edge and make people miss in the open field, then you're definitely going to want to use the sweep early and often. This is a great play on 1st down, or in any situation where you want a run with a good chance of breaking out for big yardage, or a run that will allow the running back to get out to the sideline and stop the clock.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The backside guard and the center will double team the nose tackle, with the center just giving a chip block before heading up to block the Mike backer. The strong side guard will pull out, leading the halfback around the edge. The right tackle will block the defensive tackle over him to the back side.

Tight End – The tight end will block his man, pushing him to the weak side.

Wide Receivers – The strong side receiver needs to set a good block, as he can be the difference between a solid gain and a 40 yard run. He doesn't need to pancake him, but he does need to stay engaged and allow the running back a chance to get by. The back side receiver will block his man out to the sideline.

Running Backs – The fullback will run out in front of the halfback, picking up the first unblocked defender on the edge – most likely the Will backer. The running back will take the pitch and get to the outside before turning upfield and looking to work inside of the receiver before getting back out to the sideline.

Quarterback – The quarterback will reverse pivot and pitch the ball out to the halfback.

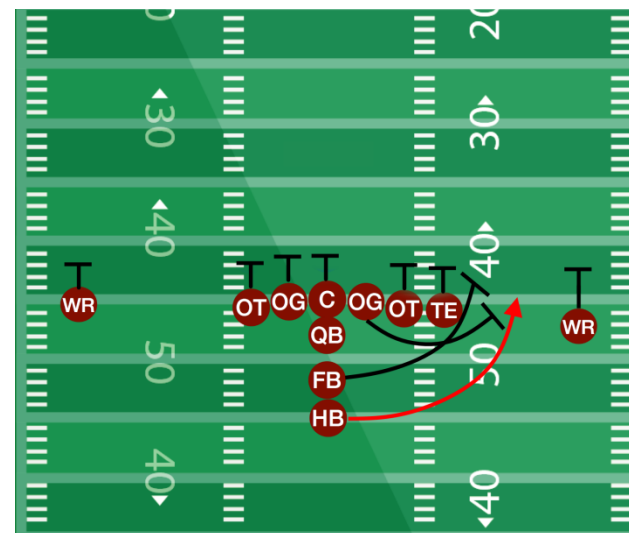


Figure 8: HB Sweep

Singleback Big – HB Draw

Setup

This play is run from a Singleback Big formation, with two receivers, two tight ends, two offensive guards, a center, a quarterback, and one halfback on the field.

Play Objective

The HB draw is an important play for any offense that likes to pass the ball a lot, as it does a great job of using a defensive line's own aggressiveness against itself, allowing them upfield to rush the quarterback and then handing the ball off to the halfback while their momentum is carrying them the wrong way. The linebackers and safeties may bite as well, dropping back into their zones or picking up their man assignments. This is a great call in a situation where the defense is expecting a pass, and will be at it's most effective if you call it in a situation where you would be most likely to pass but can still use a couple yards on the ground – a 3rd and five, when you're up in the 4th quarter and want to keep the clock running for example.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offensive line's first step will be back, as if they're pass blocking, before then trying to push the defensive line to the outside to create a lane for the running back.

Tight Ends – The tight ends will also show pass protection initially before blocking the defensive line to the outside with the offensive line.

Wide Receivers – The receivers must come off the line hard, selling Go routes to their corners so that the secondary will play the pass.

Running Backs – The halfback must take a step or two initially as if staying in to pass protect, then taking the handoff from the quarterback and heading downfield up through the middle of the line.

Quarterback – The quarterback will take the snap and begin his drop back, keeping everything the exact same as he would if he were actually about to throw a pass – before handing it off to the running back once the defensive line has begun to rush upfield.

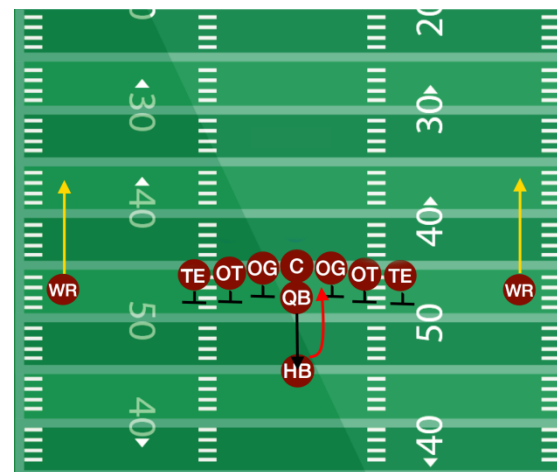


Figure 9: Halfback Draw

Shotgun Trips TE – HB Draw

Setup

The three receivers on the field will bunch up together on the weak side, with the tight end and half back on the strong side, leaving the offense in a shotgun trips formation.

Play Objective

The HB draw is designed to take advantage of an over aggressive defensive line, allowing them to get upfield and take themselves out of the play by presenting a pass play, before handing off to the running back. This play is best used in a situation where the defense will be expecting you to pass but you don't necessarily need to pick up 10+ yards – 2nd and long for example.

Positional Assignments

Offensive Line – The offense will step back as if going into pass protection, allowing the defense to get upfield before pushing them outside to create a lane for the halfback.

Tight End – The tight end will run a clear out route downfield.

Wide Receivers – The receivers will all run clear out routes, occupying their men and hopefully dragging a safety or linebacker over momentarily.

Running Backs – The halfback's first step will be as if he is back in pass protection, with him then stepping up to take the handoff and looking to pick up yardage running up the middle.

Quarterback – The quarterback will take the snap and drop back as if about to throw a pass, then hand the ball off to the halfback and let him head downhill.

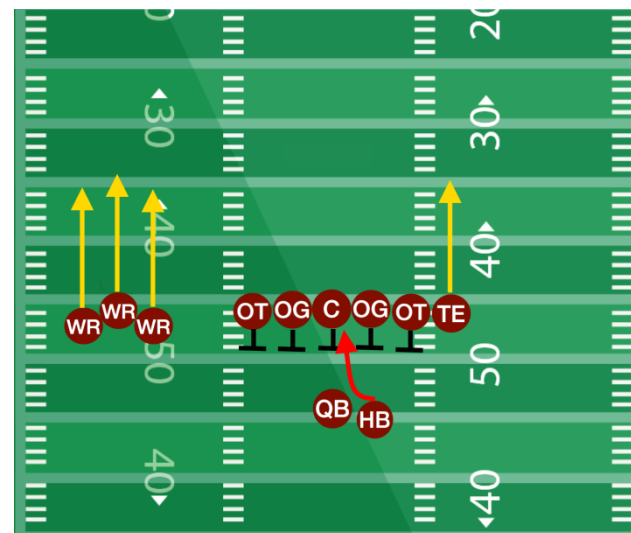


Figure 10: Halfback Draw

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