

THE GEORGIA TECH BELLY SERIES

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The Belly Series has been the most successful part of our offense for the past three seasons. Because the Belly Series is probably 70% of our offense, we have designed various blocking assignments for the line. This way we have available our most effective blocking to meet the varying defense used against us from week to week. We use the play from regular formation and with various flankers. We try to analyze the opponent's defensive strategy and then decide which formation to attempt the play from and with which type of blocking.

In the January proceedings there is an article on the Belly Series by my backfield coach, Frank Broyles, in which he diagrammed the various methods with which we run the play. In this article I am going to try to answer some of the questions most often asked by other coaches about the Series. These questions are:

1. IS THE PLAY A THREE WAY OPTION BETWEEN THE FULLBACK KEEP OFF TACKLE, THE QUARTERBACK KEEP, OR THE PITCH OUT TO THE HALFBACK? OR IS EACH PLAY CALLED SEPARATELY?

In our Series we make one of two calls in the huddle. One for the fullback to carry the ball with the desired blocking. The other is the outside play with the quarterback having the option of keeping or pitching off depending upon the defensive end. Having the three way option would be ideal if the quarterback could make the correct decision. But we feel that is asking too much of the quarterback. During spring training we tried the three way option and did not have success with it. In addition we want the desired blocking for each play. For example, on the off tackle play our guard will block the end out. On the pitch out he will fake a block on the end and turn downfield.

2. IS IT POSSIBLE FOR THE QUARTERBACK TO RIDE WITH THE FULLBACK TOO LONG AND THUS HURT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PLAY?

Yes. This is the most important phase of the play. If the quarterback rides more than one step with the fullback, the left halfback cannot run at full speed because he will be too wide for the quarterback to



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make a safe lateral. If you slow the play down pursuit by the defense will hurt the play. We do not slow our play at all, and many of our long runs have had pursuit by the defense only one step away from our halfback when he cut down the field.

3. DOES THE QUARTERBACK EXECUTE THE SAME FOOTWORK ON BOTH THE PITCHOFF AND GIVE TO THE FULLBACK?

No. On the outside play we do not want the defensive end to see our quarterback while the ball is in the fullback's stomach. The quarterback can best accomplish this by arriving at the faking area a little late. When the quarterback puts the ball in the fullback's stomach he should be an arm's length from the fullback so he can make a good distinct fake. The quarterback cannot go down the line of scrimmage because he will get to the faking area ahead of the fullback. His first step should be a 45° diagonal to the line of scrimmage.

When the fullback is to keep the ball, the quarterback should get to the faking area first. Then while he is riding the ball in the fullback's stomach, the defensive end will see the quarterback and usually stay to the outside thinking that the quarterback is trying to fool him. This naturally helps the fullback keep play.

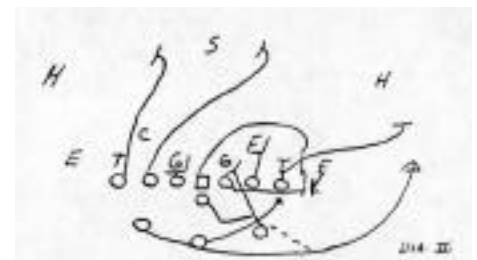
4. FROM A REGULAR "T" FORMATION IS IT BEST TO DIVE THE RIGHT HALFBACK OR SEND HIM AROUND

THE DEFENSIVE END?

Both of these plays have a place. We instruct our quarterback to dive the right halfback except on short yardage and on the goal line. In these two instances we feel that the defensive end will be coming to the inside regardless of what the right halfback does. Also the halfback is the only man that can block the defensive halfback who will be playing up very close on these situations.



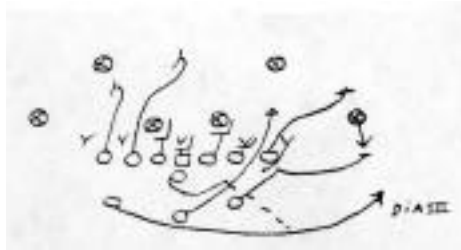
Other than in these two situations we have found that the defensive end will protect wide when the outside halfback starts at him. That is the reason for diving the halfback and pulling the guard as though he were to block the end out. These two factors, plus the fullback with the ball in his stomach headed for the off tackle hole, will usually pull the defensive end to the inside allowing a successful pitch off.



5. WHY DO WE SOMETIMES SEND THE OFFENSIVE END FOR THE HALFBACK AND OTHER TIMES BLOCK HIM ON THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE?

There are two reasons for this. First when we run the play on short yardage or on the goal line (Diagram 1) we expect the defense to penetrate and we are afraid someone might break through and interfere with the ball handling. Therefore, we use straight ahead blocking on the side of the play to prevent any chance of a fumble.

Secondly, we don't want the defensive halfback to be able to "key" on the offensive end to the effect that when he blocks it is the run and when he releases downfield it is the pass. We have found that when the end releases downfield (Diagram 2) the halfback does not come up as fast thus allowing a better chance of success for the play.

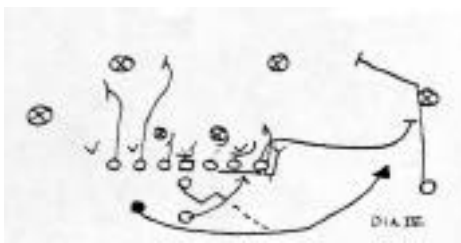


6. WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO RUN THE PLAY AGAINST A BOX DEFENSE WITH CORNER LINEBACKERS?

On a box defense neither the end nor the guard can get a decent block on the outside linebacker. It is possible to run the goal line belly against a box defense. The end will release for the twin safety if there is no one on the line for him to block.

We didn't want to lose the threat of the belly play and pass when we set flankers against the box defense. We tried to keep the blocking and faking the same. There is no change on the blocking against an odd set. The series is designed so it is possible to run with the flanker or against the flanker. If a team does not revolve with the flanker, we run towards him. If a team should mix up their defenses so as to revolve part of the time, we will set the flanker and decide on direction of play at the line of scrimmage by an automatic call. I will diagram the play using both the open flanker and the cross flanker.

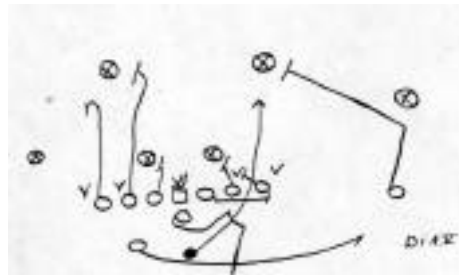
If the team loosens the corner linebacker to cover the open flanker the play



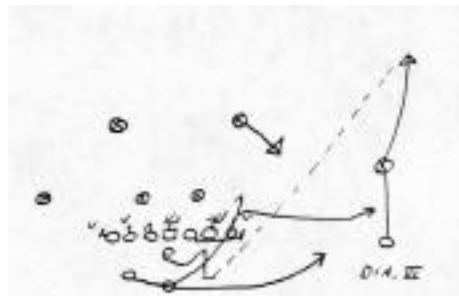
would be run toward the flanker. The flanker should not try to block the corner linebacker, but push him back as if for a pass then turn in and block the twin safety.

The off tackle play can be run with any

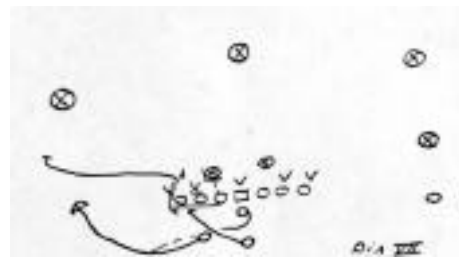
flanker set, and I will use this set to illustrate the blocking we use. Keep in mind that we use this same blocking no matter which flanker we have set.



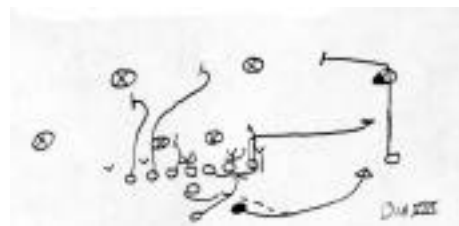
The pass from this set has been effective for us. Anytime we find the twin safety coming up fast this pass should work. The end should go down the line just as he does on the run.



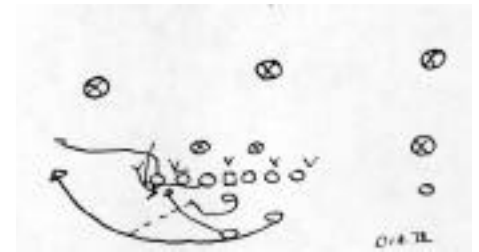
Should the defense revolve with the open flanker we would run away from the flanker with the same blocking. We do not slow down our halfback at all on this play. The quarterback does not try to ride very much with the fullback. The lateral should be a two-handed lateral.



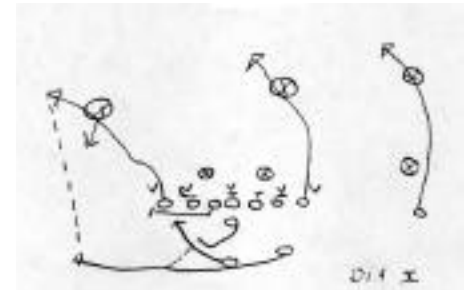
Also, we set the left halfback to see if the defense will revolve toward the flanker. If they do not the play should be run toward the flanker, with the flanker again pushing the corner man back.



Most of the time the defense will revolve with this flanker, consequently the play should be run back away from the flanker.



We believe this is the best way to throw the running pass. The safety man will be over toward the strong side of the formation and will have a hard time supporting the halfback. The defense must respect the pass possibility and thus keep the defensive halfback from charging up too fast.



7. DOES THE FULLBACK RUN UNDER CONTROL SPEED?

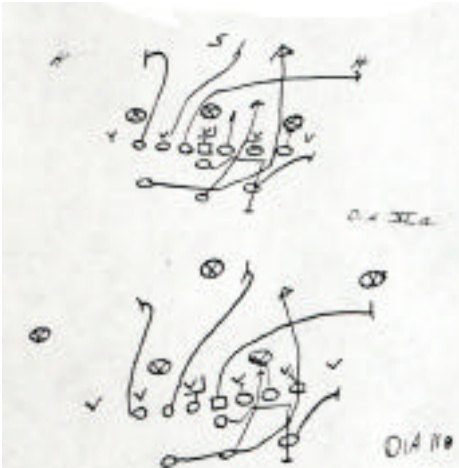
No. The fullback should run just as if the off tackle play had been called. Since the quarterback does not stay with the fullback long, it is important that the fullback continue his fake. It is best when the fullback runs into a defensive man at the hole to give the impression that he has been tackled.

WHAT IS THE INSIDE BELLY PLAY?

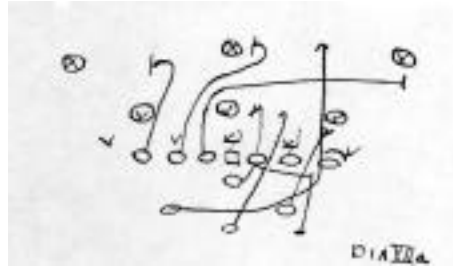
The inside belly play is run with the left halfback carrying the ball off tackle. The fullback fakes in the gap between the offensive guard and tackle. The play is very easy to operate and ties in very nicely with the other belly play. Sometimes we find the defensive end will flare to protect outside the minute the ball is faked to the fullback. We will run the inside belly until he starts playing his position again. This play had the highest gain average of any play we ran last year. The quarterback should ride the fullback all the way into the line and at the last minute reach out and hand off to the left halfback fairly close to the line of scrimmage.

We have two blockings for the play. We

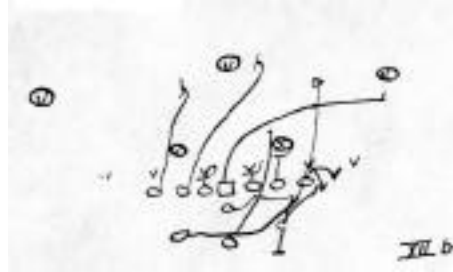
wedge block on the strong side with the fullback hitting in behind the wedge. The right halfback goes at the end and blocks him out. The left halfback comes straight across then cuts into the hole leveling off for the goal posts as he gets the ball.



The other blocking that we use is turnout blocking. The end and halfback swap assignments. The end will always turn the end out and the halfback will block the man at the hole.

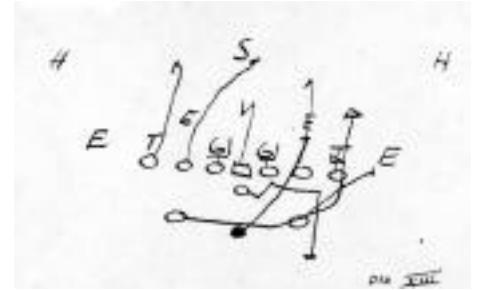


Occasionally we give the ball to the fullback using the same blocking we use for our dive play.



In concluding this discussion, I want to emphasize three MUSTS for running the Belly play:

Do not slow the play by allowing the quarterback to stay with the fullback too long.



Do not let the quarterback arrive at the faking area ahead of the fullback.

The fullback must continue his faking after the quarterback pulls the ball back.