

QUARTERBACK

101



WITH
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Quarterback 101

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01

Foundation

01 BASICS

Becoming a successful Quarterback is deeper than arm talent. The way to play the game at the highest level starts from the ground up. This was my realization when I entered the NFL in 2018. Sadly, my first introduction to the importance of footwork wasn't until the Senior Bowl in 2018. It was a crash course for me to learn the nuances of NFL footwork during the Combine & Draft process which led to a big game of catch up. Up until then I relied on arm talent to make all of the throws. There wasn't much anticipation in my game. It was typically seeing the guy come open and throw it. If I was late on the throw, I just threw it harder. That all changed for me in my rookie season. My goal with this book is to lay out the foundation of footwork tied to progression and show you how playing the game with your feet allows you to be more consistent over the long run - which allows your arm talent to really show.

GOOD FOOTWORK

- Gives you a chance to reach your potential
- Allows you to have a baseline for consistency
- Lets you focus on your weight distribution

GOOD LOWER BODY MECHANICS

- Meets in the middle between a boxer & a golfer
- Finds harmony between balance and explosive power
- Is a rotational motion, NOT a stepping motion
 - The steps are just getting your body in the right direction, at the right time (in sync with the timing of the play) in order to be a rotational thrower

01 BASICS

...continued

KEY NOTES

The Footwork laid out below translates to the shotgun very simply:

- **3 step under center** = quick game in shotgun (left-right)
- **5 step under center** = 3 step in shotgun
- **7 step under center** = 5 step in shotgun
- **5 step play action under center** = ride-set in shotgun
- **7 step play action under center** = ride + 3 step in shotgun

A THANK YOU

I wanted to thank Greg Knapp for being the amazing human that he was. For those of you that don't know - he was a long time coach in the NFL that passed away not long ago. Without him I truly don't know how long my NFL career would have lasted. He put so much time and effort into helping me become a pro. He was patient, held a high standard, and cared about me as a person. Again, thank you Knapper.



02



Pass Game



OVERVIEW

On offense, the pass game is broken down into concept categories.

Keep these in mind as we go throughout the book. The categories are:

- Quick Game
- Drop Back
- Play Action
- Keepers
- Sprint Out

Let's dive into the footwork associated to each of these install categories.



03



Run Alerts



03 RUN ALERTS

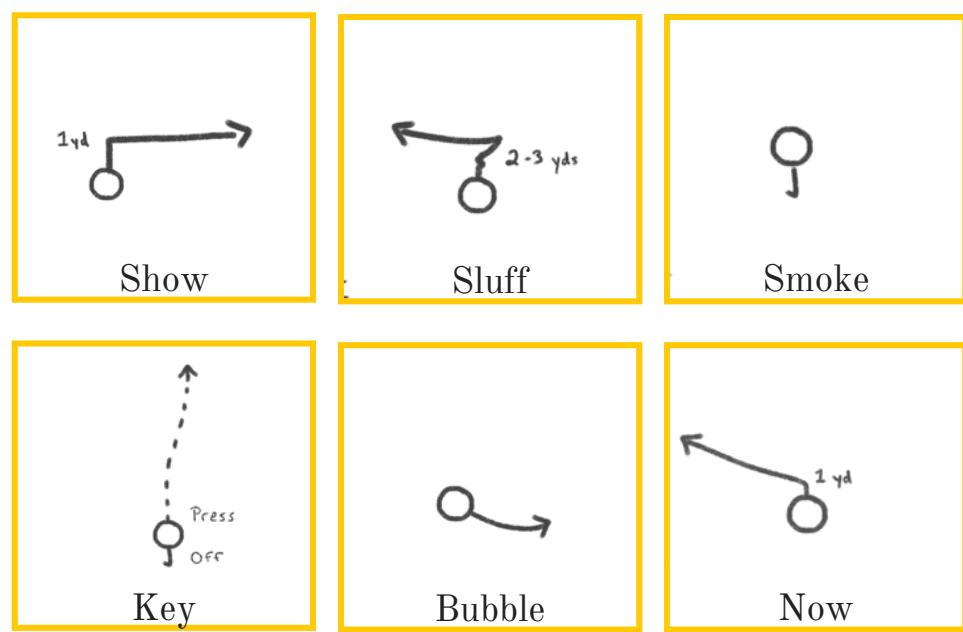
OVERVIEW

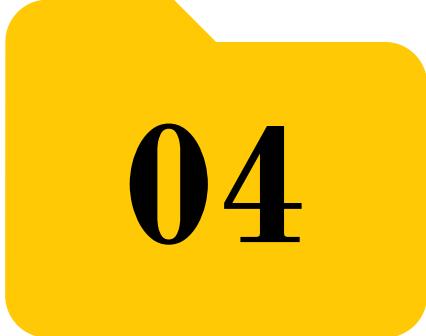
Run Alerts are pre-snap decisions to dish the ball out to a receiver on a route at the line of scrimmage

FOOTWORK: CATCH & THROW

- Based on #'s advantage or bad box looks for run game
- Most Run alerts are for off coverage (7+ yards)
- IF press man - auto hand off and live with it OR audible to 2 over 2 rub route to receivers

ROUTES





04



RPOS



OVERVIEW

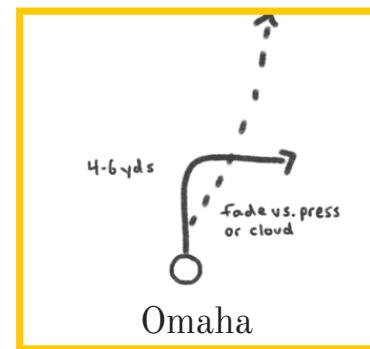
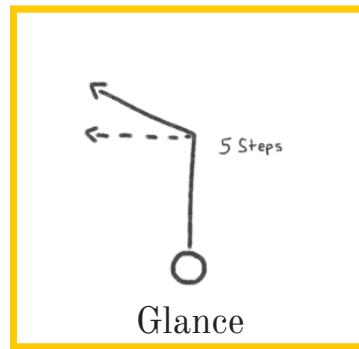
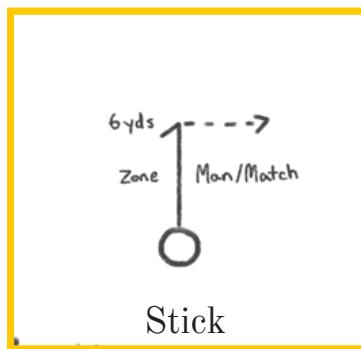
RPOs or Run Pass Options are plays that have the option to be handed off for a run or pulled and thrown for a pass.

This normally involves reading a key defender that changes from concept to concept. These throws have to be quick before a lineman gets too far down field and draws a flag.

FOOTWORK: 3 STEP TIMING

- Reach and throw
- Idea is to begin the handoff and watch your key defender's 1st two steps
 - You can't pre determine because you have to be able to let go of the ball on the handoff
 - If your key stays still or moves towards the route → handoff
 - If your key takes a step towards the run → throw the rout

ROUTES



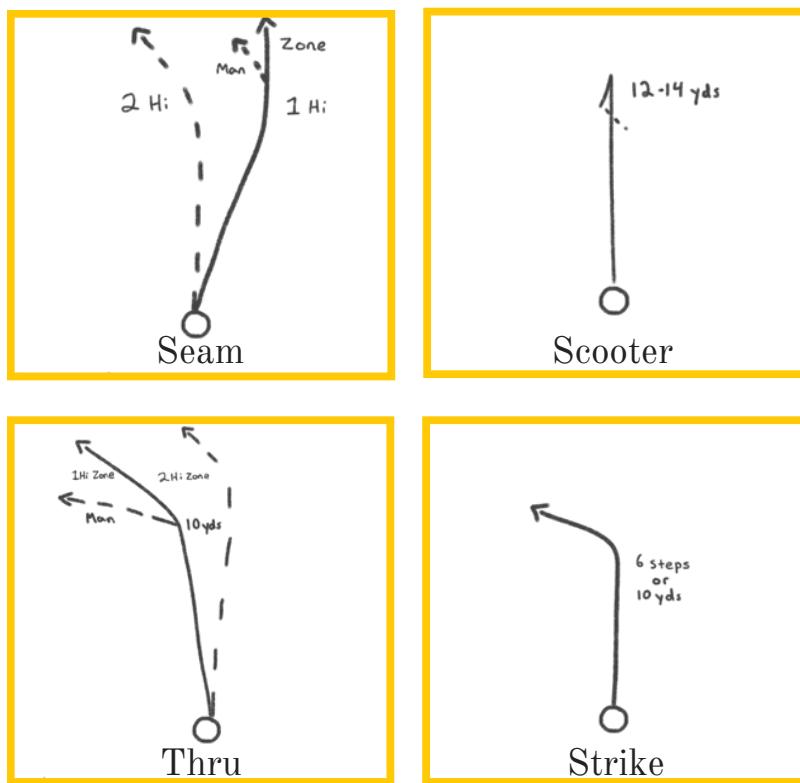
04 RPOs

...continued

FOOTWORK: 5 STEP TIMING

- Reach and ride
- This timing allows for a longer ride with the handoff & sometimes even a shuffle to let the concept develop
 - Generally matched with a route that gets to the second level
 - These RPOs are typically used to influence a hook defender

ROUTES





05



3 Step

05 3 STEP

OVERVIEW

3 step footwork is Quick Game footwork. Under center is a 3 step drop, it is a left-right from shotgun (or step slide). The throws are quick and typically have a pre snap coverage indicator that tells you which side you are going to read. The side you read will typically be based on a key defender unless it is man coverage.

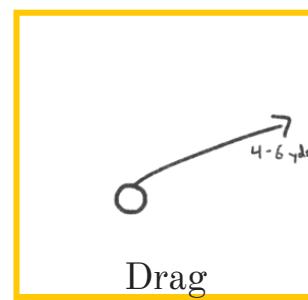
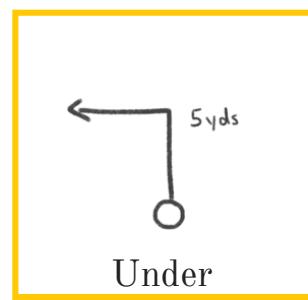
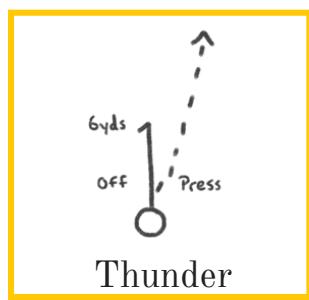
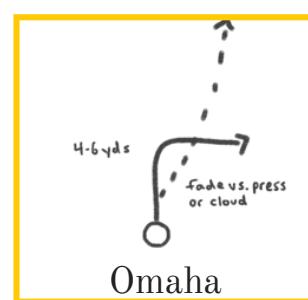
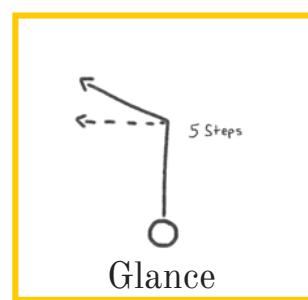
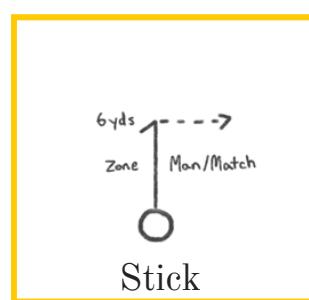
FOOTWORK: VS. FREE ACCESS

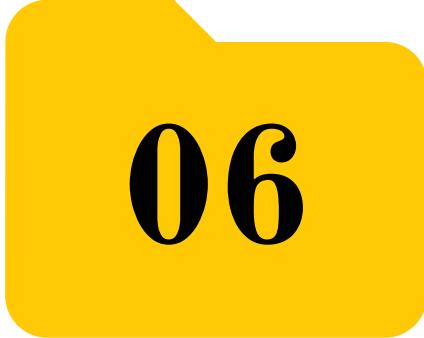
- From the Gun: Left - Right & let it go
- Throw to the spot
- Ball placement away from defender in zone to allow for a drop step

FOOTWORK: VS. PRESS

- Slow down the L-R or hold on the back foot
- Throw to upfield shoulder

ROUTES





06



5 Step

06 5 STEP

OVERVIEW

5 step footwork is Drop Back footwork. From under center, it is a 5 step drop, in shotgun it is 3 steps. These drops are typically paired with a 6-man protection.

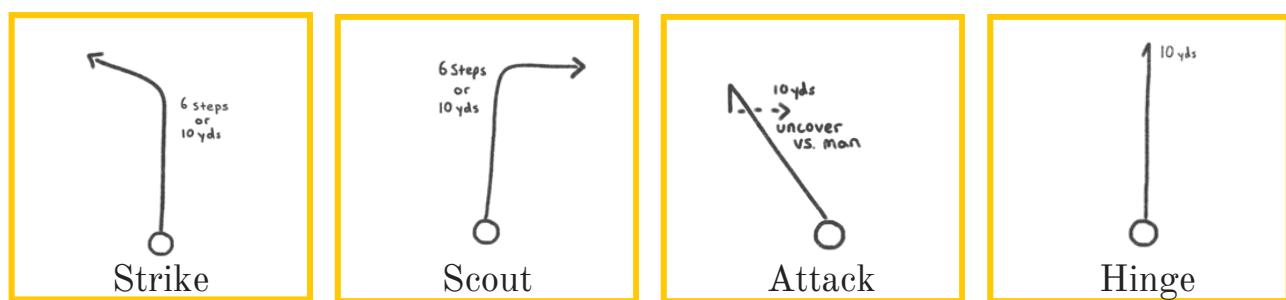
There are three types:

- 5 Plant
- 5 & a Hitch
- Combo

FOOTWORK: PLANT

- 5 step timing throws that are thrown when the 5th step hits the ground
- This footbwork is for 10-14 yard throws where you know exactly where the receiver will end up before the play even starts
- Often referred to as a “Plant Throw”

ROUTES



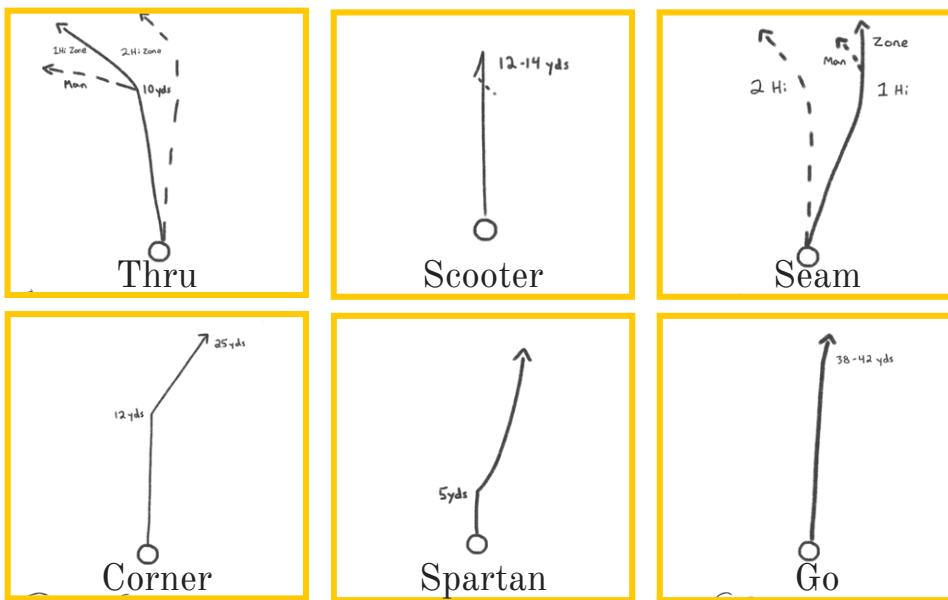
06 5 STEP

...continued

FOOTWORK: HITCH

- 5 step and a hitch throws are ones that require more time to see what type of throw is needed and where the ball should end up
- These throws can have different types of velocity
- These throws can also involve manipulating defenders with the QB's eyes and Shoulders

ROUTES



FOOTWORK: COMBO

- Combo footwork is typically used when a frontside concept requires quick game (3 step) footwork & is combined with a 5 step backside concept
- Often seen in the Green Bay system
 - Ex: Dice Lt 3 Jet F Stick Knife
 - Quick game footwork to the stick - then combo back to the knife



07



7 Step

OVERVIEW

7 step footwork is Drop Back footwork. From under center it is a 7 step drop, it is 5 steps from shotgun. 7 step timing is normally with a hitch.

Sometimes low crossing routes are thrown with a plant vs man.

You have to be careful about how deep you get on a 7 step drop, especially from shotgun. The max depth you want to get on this drop is 9.5 yards from the line of scrimmage.

FOOTWORK: PLANT

- 7 step plan throws typically come up when a longer developing route “flashes” in front of the QB and is open slightly earlier
- This often happens with the Mesh or Drive concepts when the low route gets a free release and gets to open grass cleanly
- Can also happen vs man if the DB misses the reroute
 - The quicker the WR gets the ball the more YAC he can get

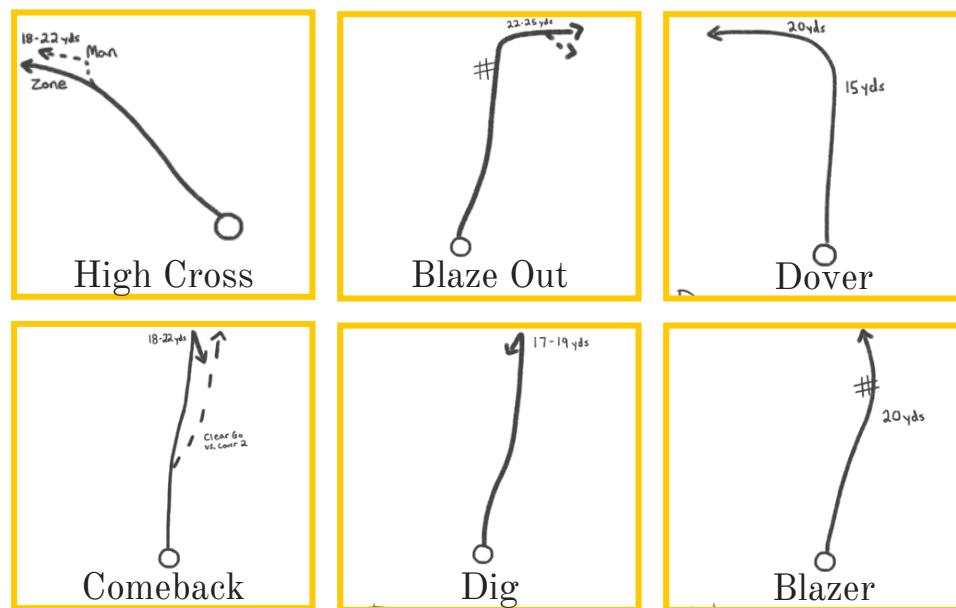
FOOTWORK: HITCH

- Hitch throws in the 7 step family change depending on the situation
- Most of these are chunk plays down the field
- Some of these are more horizontal concepts that stretch the field sideways
- The type of hitch required (explosive or smooth) changes depending on the route attached & the coverage on the field
 - A 20 yard deep curl probably requires an explosive hitch
 - A High Cross (18 yd climb) probably needs a layered throw with a more controlled hitch
 - The point: not every 7 step drop with a hitch is the same - nor is every other drop in the footwork “tree” the same

07 7 STEP

...continued

ROUTES & CONCEPTS



OTHER ROUTES & CONCEPTS

- Drive
- Mesh
- Post
- Sail
- Stool
- Bench
- Pylon
- Basic
- Deep Thru
- Scissors
- Criss Cross
- Field Post

FOOTWORK: COMBO

- Similar to the 5 step combo footwork
- In this sense, the front side concept is a 5 Step Plant concept with a 7 Step concept tagged backside
- Allows you to progress in rhythm with good timing



08



Play Action



OVERVIEW

Technique for play action is pretty standard around the NFL

- Show ball and leave off hand on belly for 5 step
- Show, Snap, Shrink for 7 step
- Tip: Reach to where the HB is going not where he is currently, it hides the ball from the LB's vision better that way (Thanks Matt Schaub)

There are different variations or “tracks” used with the same step count that time up with their paired run plays that should be practiced under this category.

Types:

- Gap Scheme
- Inside Zone
- Wide Zone

FOOTWORK: 5 STEP PLANT

- The 5 Step Plant throws from above translate to the Play Action version
- The Play Action version is used on 1st or 2nd down, OR on 3rd and short
- Strikes & Scouts are the two common throws with this footwork

08 PLAY ACTION

...continued

FOOTWORK: 5 STEP HITCH

- Some of the 5 Step Hitch throws from above translate to the Play Action version
- The Play Action version is used on 1st or 2nd down, OR on 3rd and short
- Thru routes, Scooters, and Seams are commonly thrown with this footwork

FOOTWORK: 7 STEP HITCH

- Some of the 7 Step Hitch throws from above translate to the Play Action version
- The Play Action version is used on 1st or 2nd down, OR on 3rd and short
- High Crosses, Comebacks, Digs, Blazeouts, and Field Posts are commonly thrown with this footwork





09



Keepers



09 KEEPERS

OVERVIEW

Keepers are a staple in the west coast system. These are typically tied to formations, shifts, and motions in the core run game to create misdirection for the defense.

Coaches love calling these for young players to get a completion under their belt early without having to sit in the pocket and read out the defense. Often times there will be shot plays associated to these where you pull up once you get outside the uprights to throw back across the field.

FOOTWORK: FK ZONE

- First step at 4 or 8 o'clock for Wide Zone, 4 steps total then turn the corner
- First step at 5 or 7 o'clock for Wide Zone, 4 steps total then turn the corner
- Depth at apex should be around 10 yards
 - See the edge pre snap (dirty edge be ready for a pull up)

FOOTWORK: FK POWER KEEP

- Pull, Show, Slide, 2 shuffles & out
 - Matched with similar routes to the Fk Zone Keepers

ROUTES

- Typically matched with slide, 12-14 yard low cross, down flat, & runback/ high corner (22-25 yd comeback if wide split, high corner to 25/30 if close split), Field Post, Take Off (Stop and Go)



10

 Sprint Out 

10 SPRINT OUT

OVERVIEW

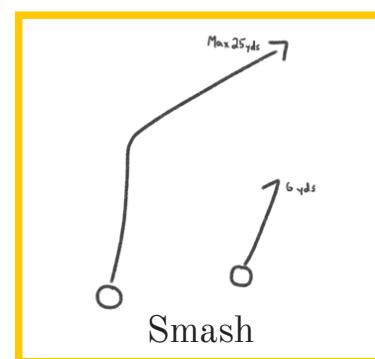
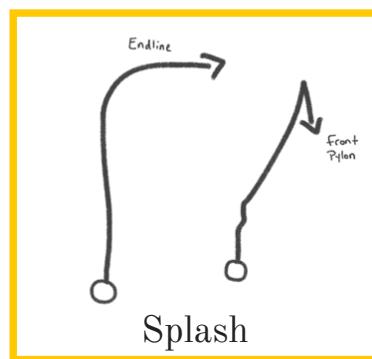
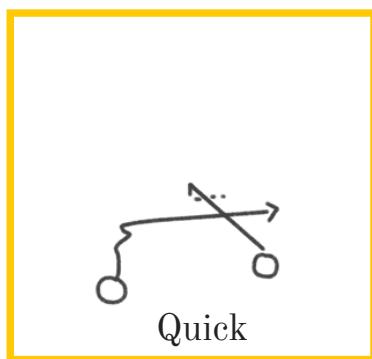
Sprint out plays are used to get the edge & gain leverage on throws in critical situations (typically). The negative to these plays is that you essentially shrink the playable field into 1/3 so the margin for error is small.

FOOTWORK: Q8/Q9

- Stance should be slightly more squared up than typical to alleviate a false step
- Situationally, Sprint Outs are used in the low Red Zone, Short Yardage, or as a 0 pressure check
- Coaches like it thrown on 3 to the right if free access (4 to the left)
- Often will take 5 to the right if there is a reroute by the DB

ROUTES

- Quick run to the front pylon, smash concept + anything that can get leverage on a defender



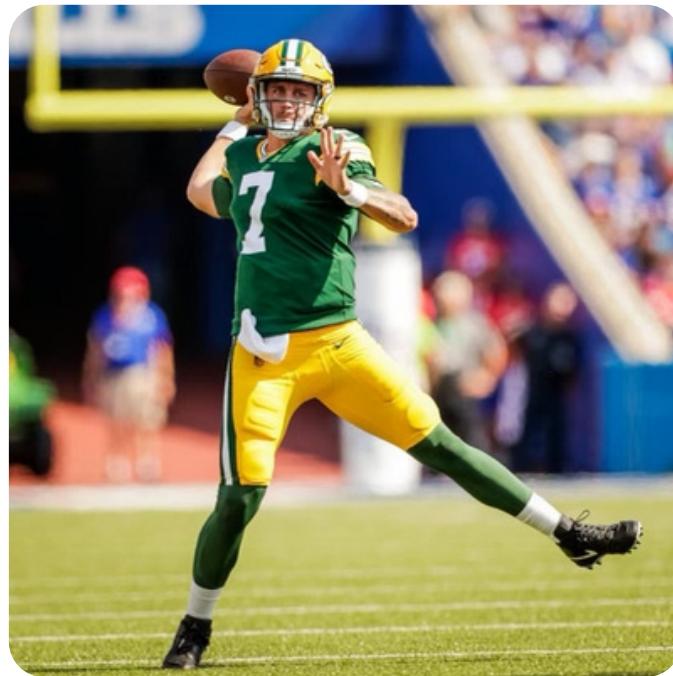


11



My Favorite QB Tips

11 MY FAVORITE QB TIPS



THROWING ON THE RUN

Throw easy:

- You shouldn't have to use 100% of your power when throwing on the run, you're already generating more force as a thrower while on the move

Throw AT your target:

- You're typically moving in the same direction as your target when you are throwing on the run
- Trying to lead them will typically result in the ball being too far in front of them

Lower arm angle:

- Releasing more across your body than over the top will keep the ball from dying and allow it to travel on the same plane longer

Leg kick:

- To even the plane of your body, use an off-hand leg kick to balance out while still generating the force you need

11 MY FAVORITE QB TIPS

...continued



RED ZONE QB PLAY

Back-end line throws

- The ball should be caught face mask or higher
- Release “across your face” to keep the ball up
 - Similar to throwing on the run

Goal line throws

- Aim below the belt
- Too high of throws lead to trouble on the goalline
- Catch & fall is safe and effective

11 MY FAVORITE QB TIPS

...continued

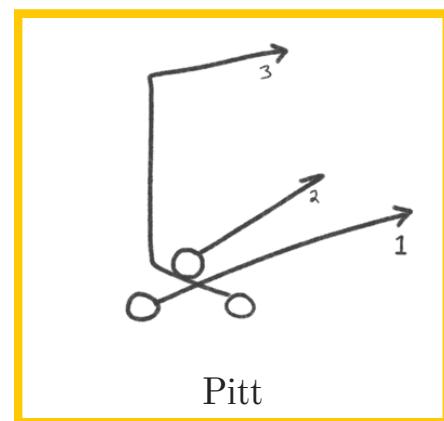
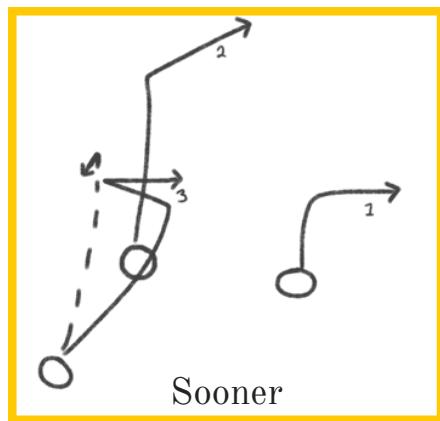
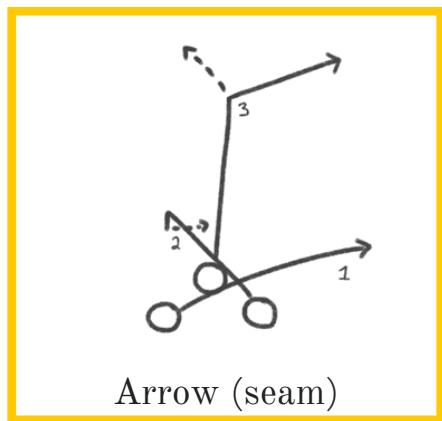
RED ZONE QB PLAY

...continued

Everything happens faster

- Concepts become tighter and your footwork should reflect that.
- Red Zone footwork should be cut down from the conceptual footwork in half
 - Hitches often become plants, 5's become 3's, and so on
- Let it RIP
 - More interceptions are thrown in the Red Zone as a result of hesitation than anything else
 - Making the right decision LATE is worse than making the wrong decision on time (typically)

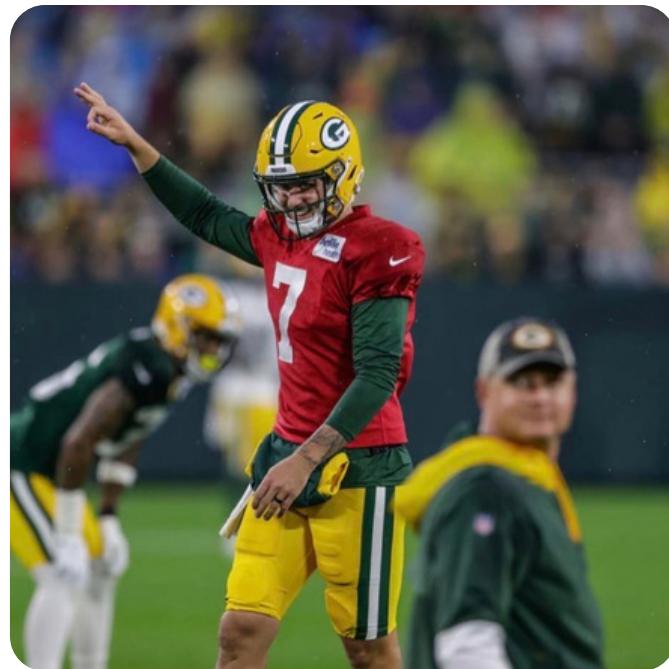
Top 3 Red Zone Concepts



11 MY FAVORITE QB TIPS

...continued

DRILLS



Net Drill

- With a net or a garbage can, practice throwing 20-yard fades into the net & gradually back up
- It's a great way to practice throwing deep balls & fades with the ball turning over at the end
- Make it challenging, try different ball trajectories while still hitting the target

11 MY FAVORITE QB TIPS

...continued



Base Bag Drill

- This is a great drill that I learned in Green Bay
- This drill can be used with bags in a straight line or with rolled-up towels in a straight line
- The idea is to shuffle back and forth with your feet at shoulder width
- Similar to a wave drill
- The goal is to learn how to throw with a base for times when you aren't able to step into your throw
- Simulates throwing from a tight pocket with minimal space

11 MY FAVORITE QB TIPS

...continued



Line Drops

- Start dropping back under control in a straight line until you hear a clap
- When you hear a clap react and put your foot in the ground to initiate weight transfer for your throw
- This drill teaches you the reaction of having to come to balance unexpectedly and still deliver an accurate ball
- Add in variations of swiveling hips and dropping back on non-dominant side

11 MY FAVORITE QB TIPS

...continued



Fence Throws

- This is my favorite drill for shortening release and improving arm strength
- You put your back against the wall and hold the ball at 90 degrees with the ball also touching the wall
- Have someone stand 10 yards in front of you and play catch with them by simulating the last piece of your throwing motion
- This should feel very similar to throwing a dart at point of release



12



Recap



12 RECAP



I hope you enjoyed this crash course on NFL QB footwork and are able to implement this into your training or coaching. If you stumbled here as a fan, I hope that this book helps you watch QB play from a different perspective and allows you to evaluate a QB's play from the ground up.

I truly believe that this can and should be a great resource for both players and coaches as they go throughout their offseason. After all, these movements are the same movements that future Hall of Fame Quarterbacks are still working on day in and day out. The work isn't lavish, but it's a necessity. This will help you to progress as a player and allow you to reach your full potential.

I'm looking forward to the impact this book will have on the next generation of players and coaches.

Enjoy, and dive in.

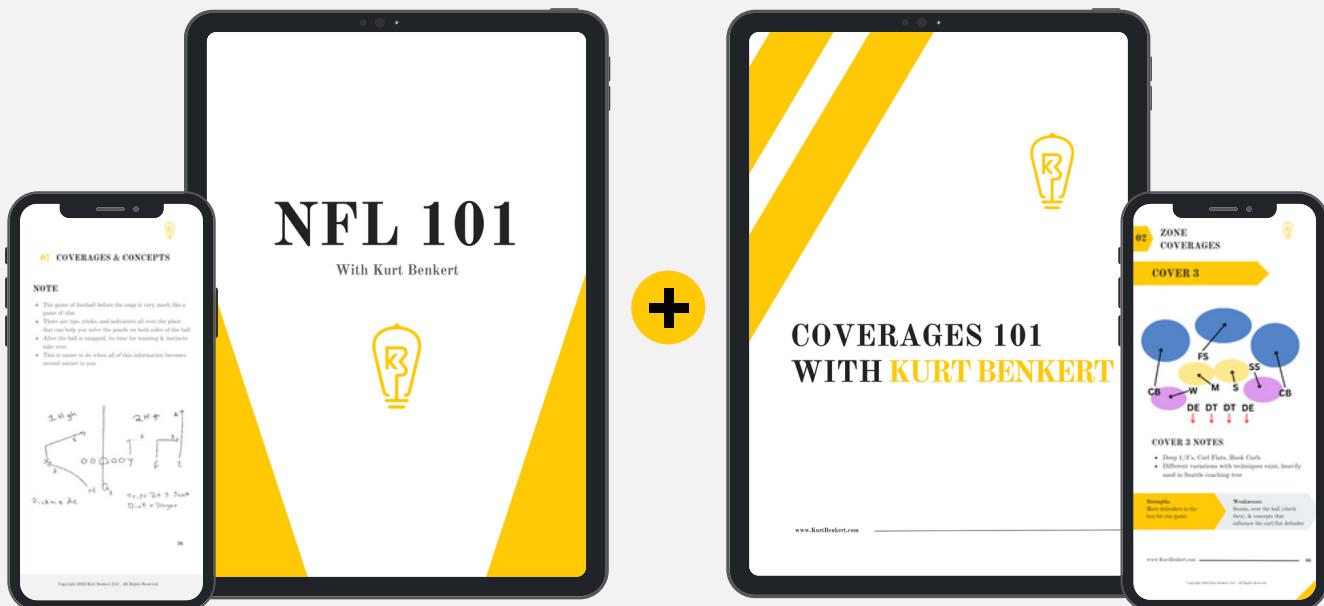
A handwritten signature of the author's name, Kurt Benkert, in black ink.



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