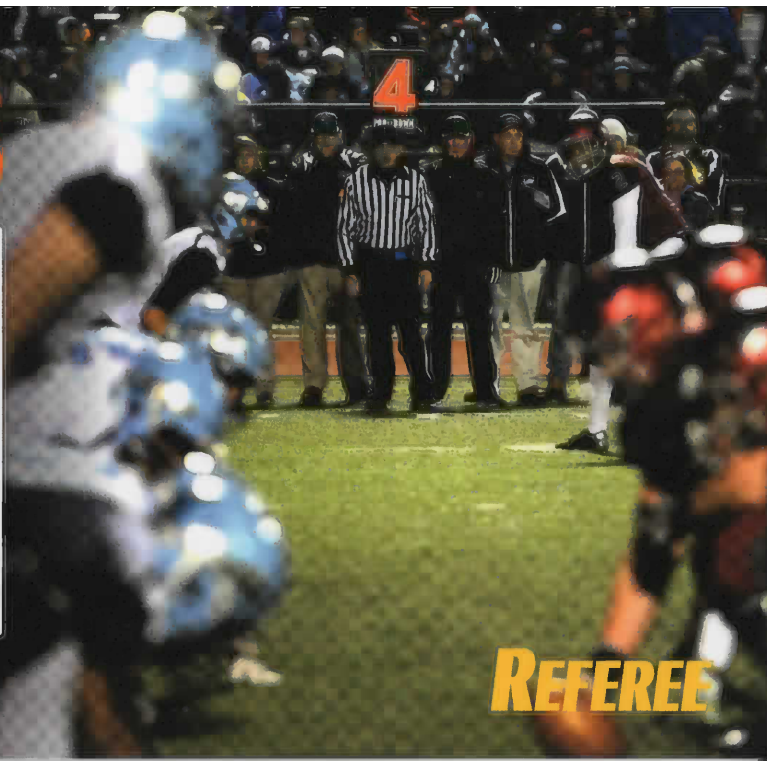


HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

# CREW OF 5

# KEYS

MAP



## KEYS KEY

**R** REFEREE

**L** LINE JUDGE

**H** HEAD LINESMAN

**U** UMPIRE

**B** BACK JUDGE

**O** INITIAL KEY

**C** KEY CHANGE AFTER MOTION

**←** DIRECTION OF MOTION

## BASIC KEY & COVERAGE CONCEPTS

- The strong side is the side on which there are more eligible receivers outside of the tackle.
- The widest receiver is the back judge's key. If players are stacked, the player nearest the line of scrimmage is considered widest.
- A balanced formation is one in which there are the same number of eligible receivers outside the tackles on both sides of the formation. Strength is always considered to be on the line judge's side.
- An unbalanced formation is when one side has more eligible receivers than the other. The back judge keys on the widest receiver on the strong side and the wing keys on the inside receiver. The weak side wing keys the nearest end.
- Legality of motion is always the responsibility of the official away from whom the player is moving. That responsibility doesn't change even if the motion man reverses and comes back toward his original position.
- Keys change if the motion man gets at least as far as the guard on the opposite side of the ball at the snap.
- This map shows only the initial pre-snap keys.

Once the ball is snapped, player movement dictates how the officials will cover the play.

- Observing the blocking will help officials determine the type of play and where they should move and look next. Generally speaking, linemen retreating indicates a pass; linemen firing out indicates a run; linemen pulling indicates a sweep or screen pass. Those are not hard and fast rules, but a guide to help in coverage.

By Jeffrey Stern, Senior Editor, Referee/NASO

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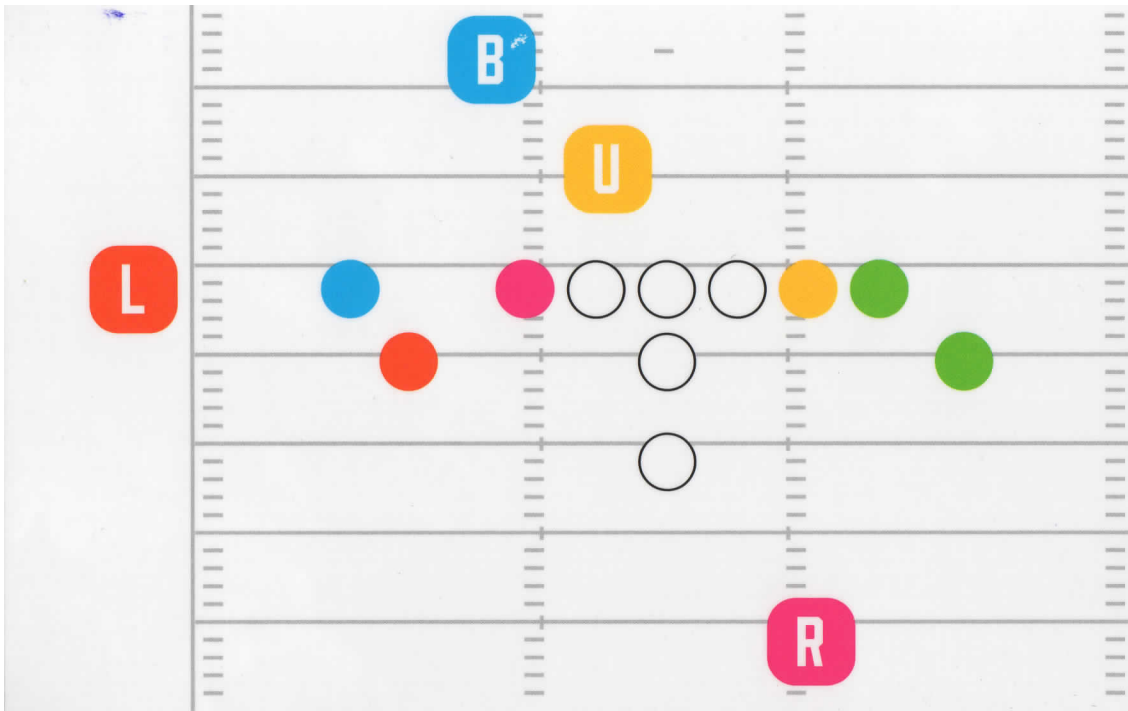
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Printed in the United States of America

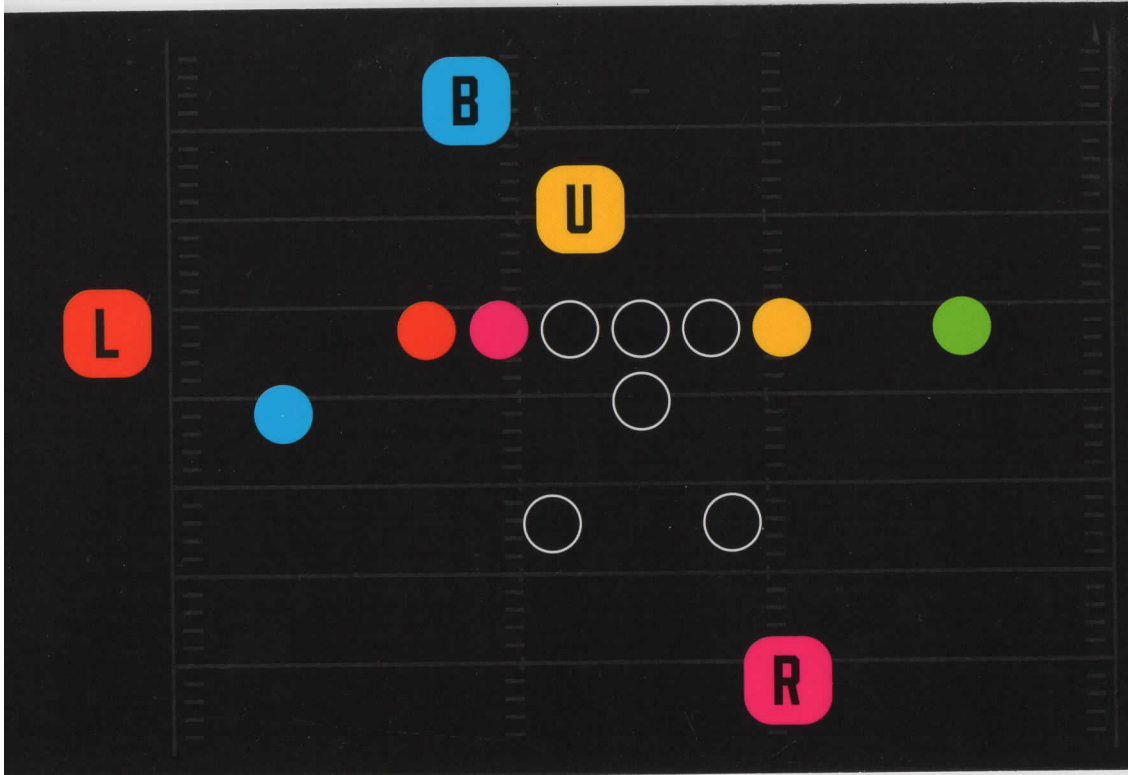
ISBN-13: 978-1-58208-474-9





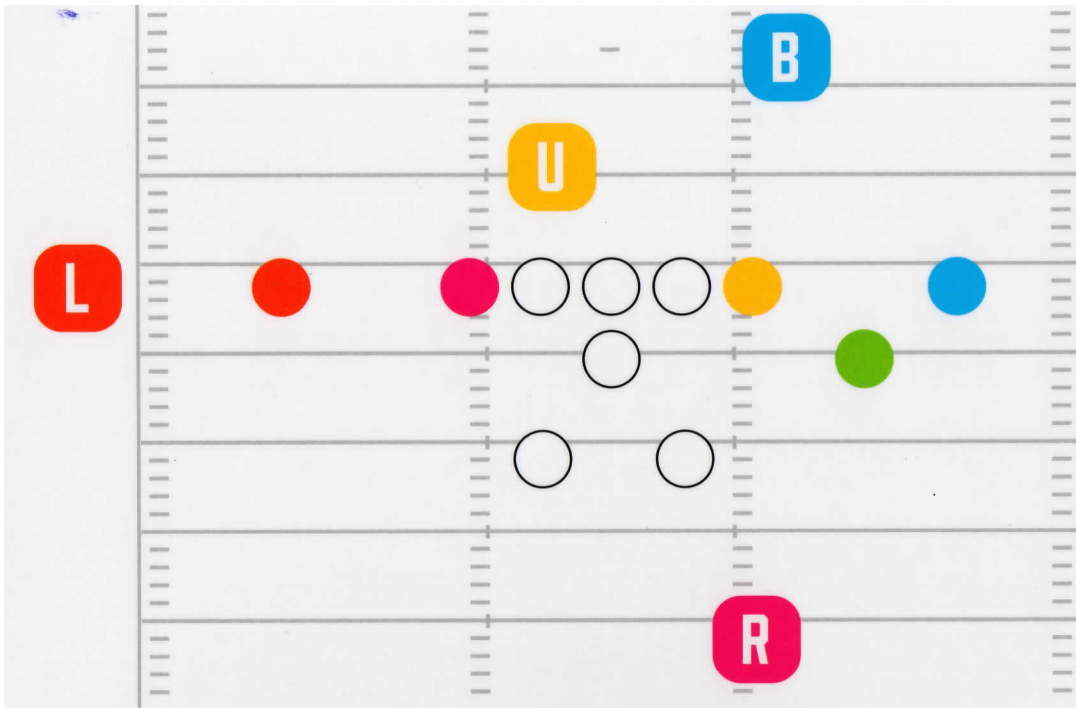
**BALANCED  
FORMATION,  
STRENGTH  
DECLARED TO LINE  
JUDGE'S SIDE**

Strength is considered to be on the line judge's side. The back judge keys on the widest receiver. The line judge keys on the flanker while the linesman has both the split end and flanker on his side. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.



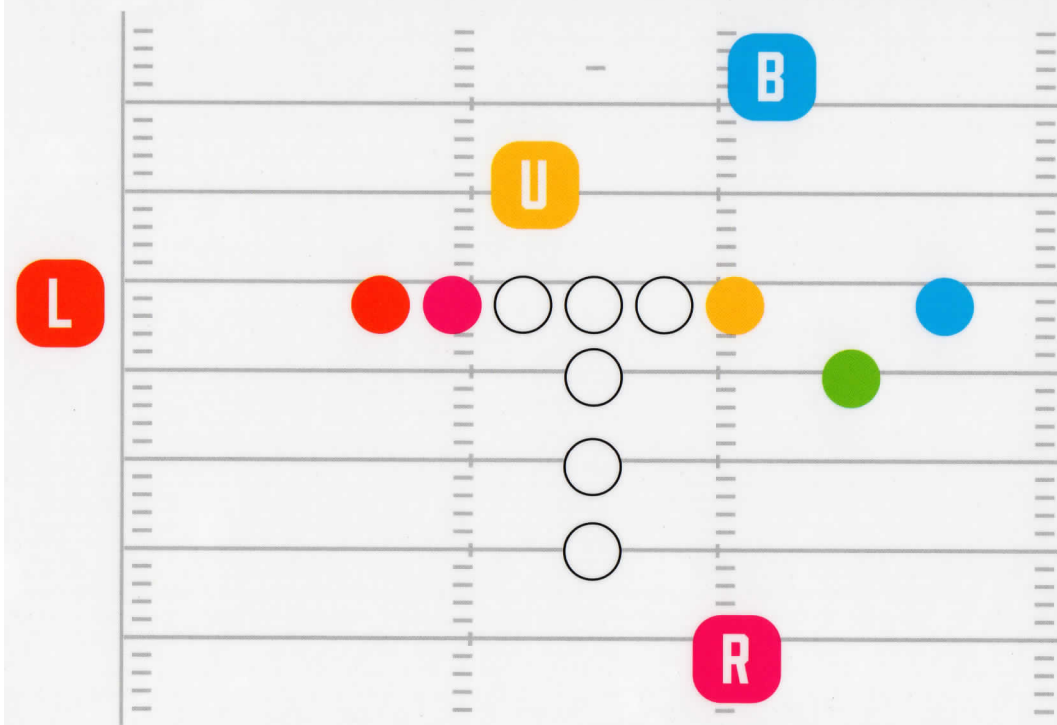
**UNBALANCED  
FORMATION,  
STRENGTH TO  
LINE JUDGE'S SIDE**

The back judge keys on the flanker and the line judge keys on the tight end. The linesman keys on the split end on his side. Either wing official may also have a back running a pass route.



## STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE SPLIT END

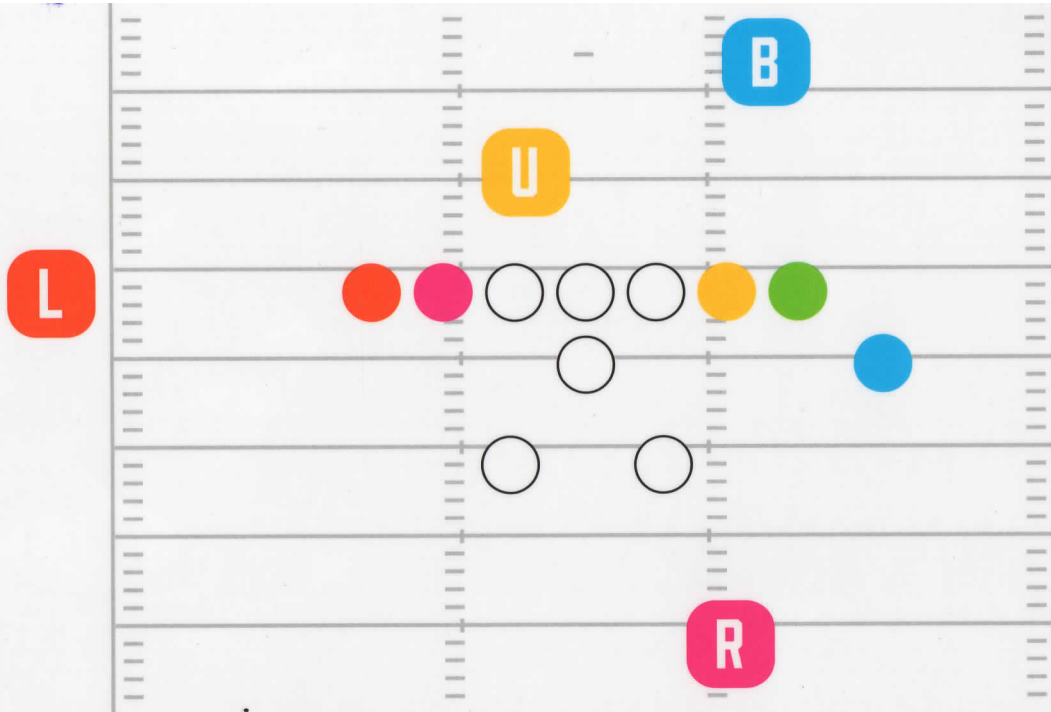
The back judge keys on the strong side split end and the linesman keys on the flanker. The line judge keys the split end on his side. The fullback will likely stay in the backfield for pass protection, but the halfback may run a pass route. If the route is to the line judge's side, the line judge takes him.



## STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE, WEAK SIDE TIGHT END

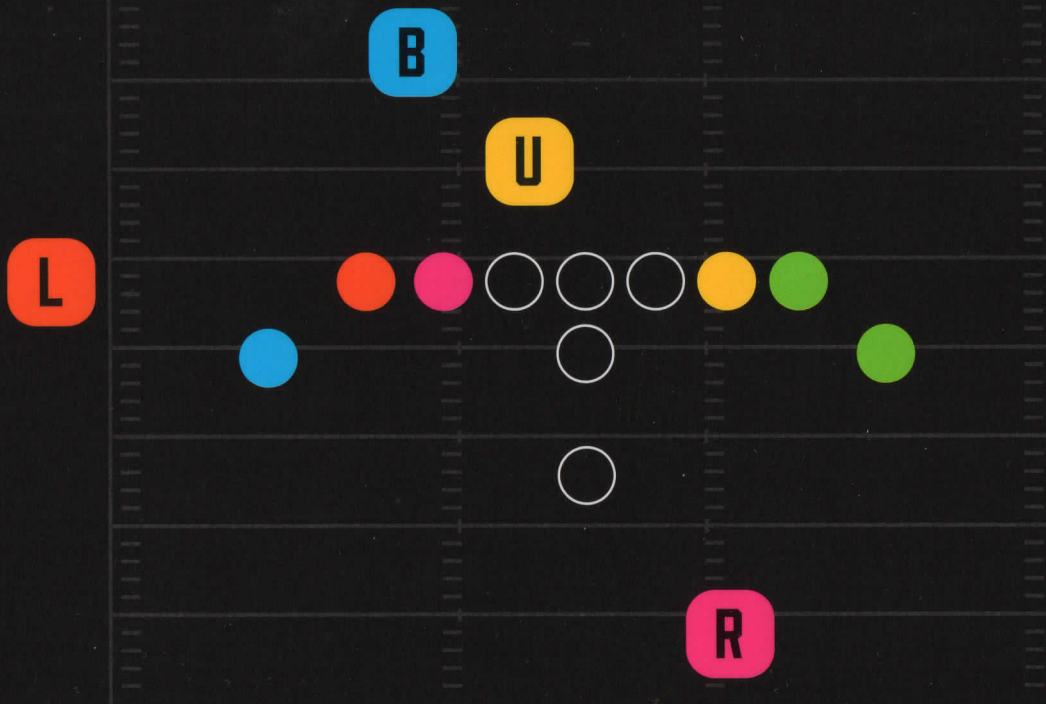
The back judge keys on the split end and the linesman keys on the flanker. The line judge keys the tight end. The fullback will likely stay in the backfield for pass protection, but the tailback may run a pass route. If the route is to the line judge's side, the line judge takes him.





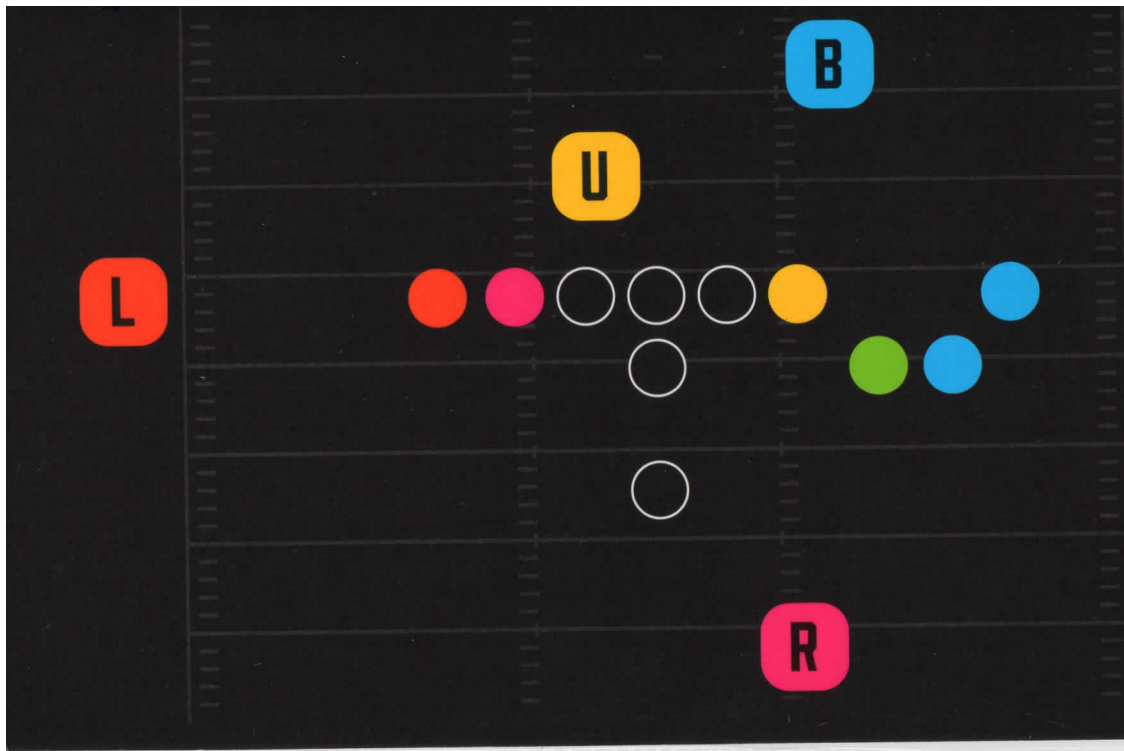
## DOUBLE TIGHT ENDS, STRENGTH TO LINESMAN'S SIDE

Primarily a running formation used on short yardage, but teams sometimes throw quick passes out of this formation. The back judge keys on the widest receiver on the strong side. The line judge keys on the tight end on the strong side. The line judge keys on the tight end on his side. Either wing may also have a back who runs a pass route.



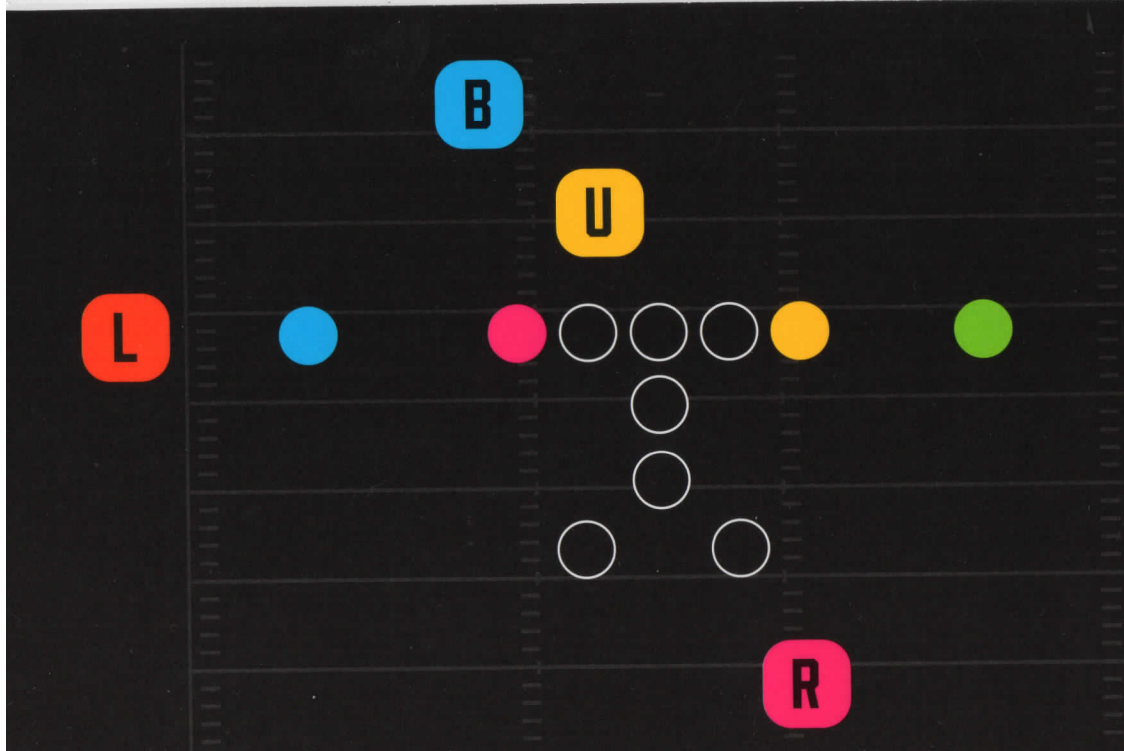
## DOUBLE WING, DOUBLE TIGHT ENDS

Strength is declared to the line judge's side. The back judge keys on the widest receiver on his side. The line judge keys on the tight end on his side. The linesman has the tight end and wingback on his side. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.



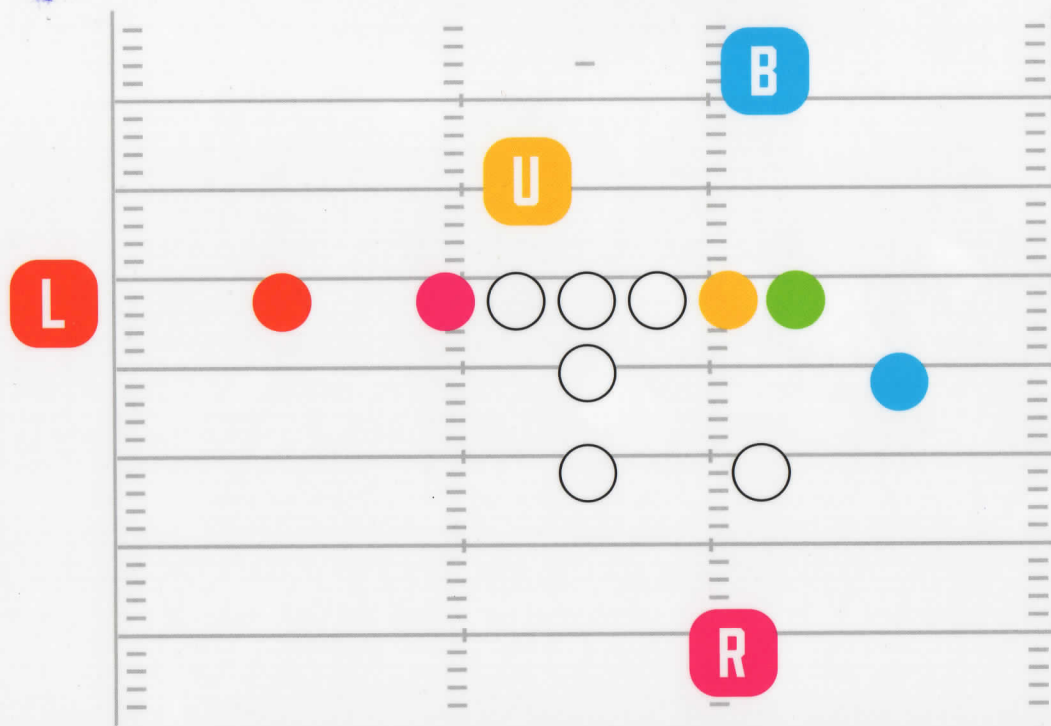
## TRIPS TO LINESMAN'S SIDE

The back judge keys on the two widest receivers and the linesman keys on the inside receiver. The line judge keys on the end nearest him. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route. If the same formation were strong to the line judge's side, the line judge would key on the inside receiver and the back judge on the two widest receivers.



## WISHBONE

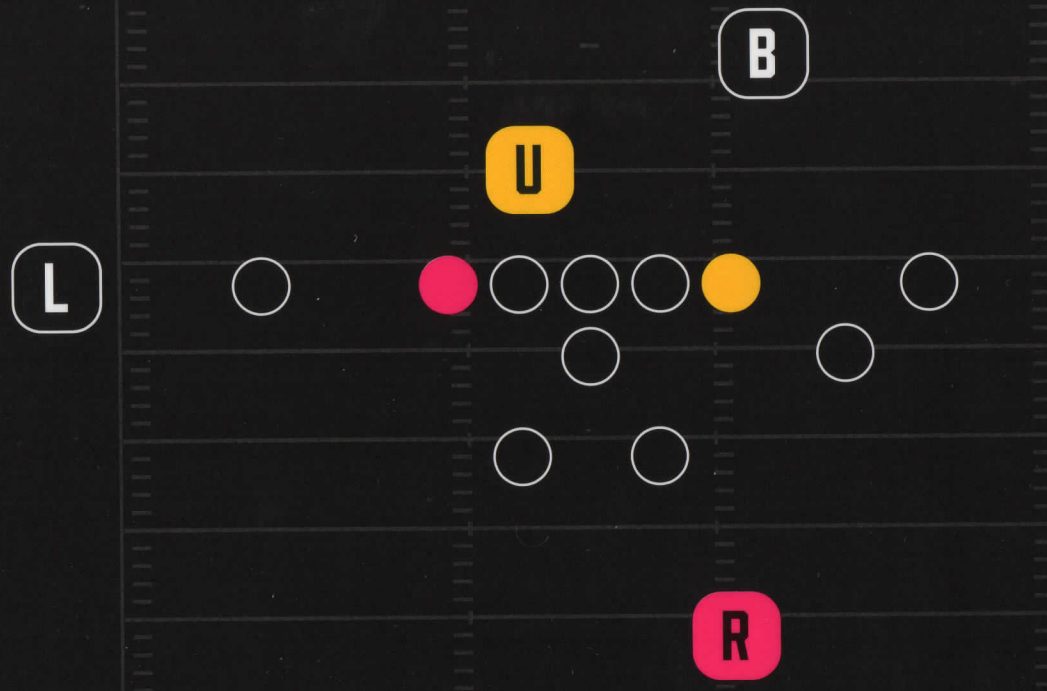
Although primarily a running formation, teams will throw to either split end if the run is well defended or the strategy calls for it. A balanced formation, so strength is declared to the line judge's side. The back judge keys the split end on the line judge's side. The line judge keys the backs. The linesman keys the split end on his side.



## VEER

Although primarily a running formation, teams will occasionally throw to the flanker or split end. In this example, strength is to the linesman's side. The back judge keys the flanker and the linesman keys the tight end. The line judge keys on the split end on his side. The fullback's primary function is as a blocker.

H

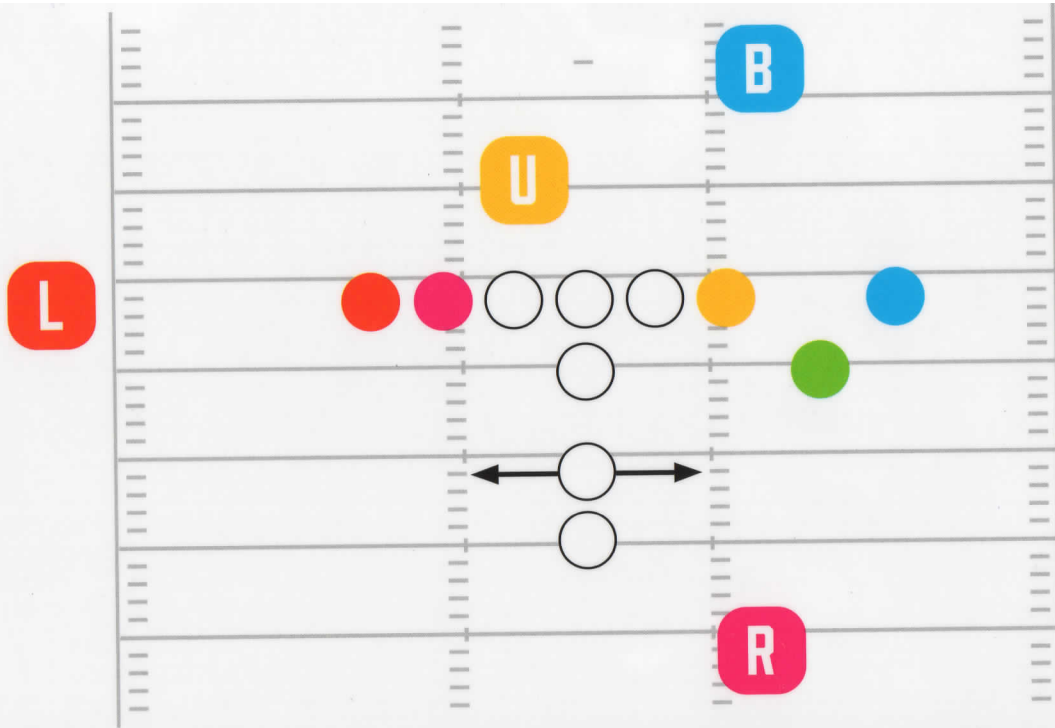


## REFEREE-UMPIRE

Referee's initial position is 10-15 yards off the line and at least as wide as the tackle. At the snap referee reads the block of opposite-side tackle. Umpire starts 4-7 yards off the line and between the tackles. Umpire will initially observe legality of the snap, then key on the opposite tackle. He can then transition to any two adjacent linemen. He should randomly vary which pair of linemen he views. Note: Actual position of officials not to scale.

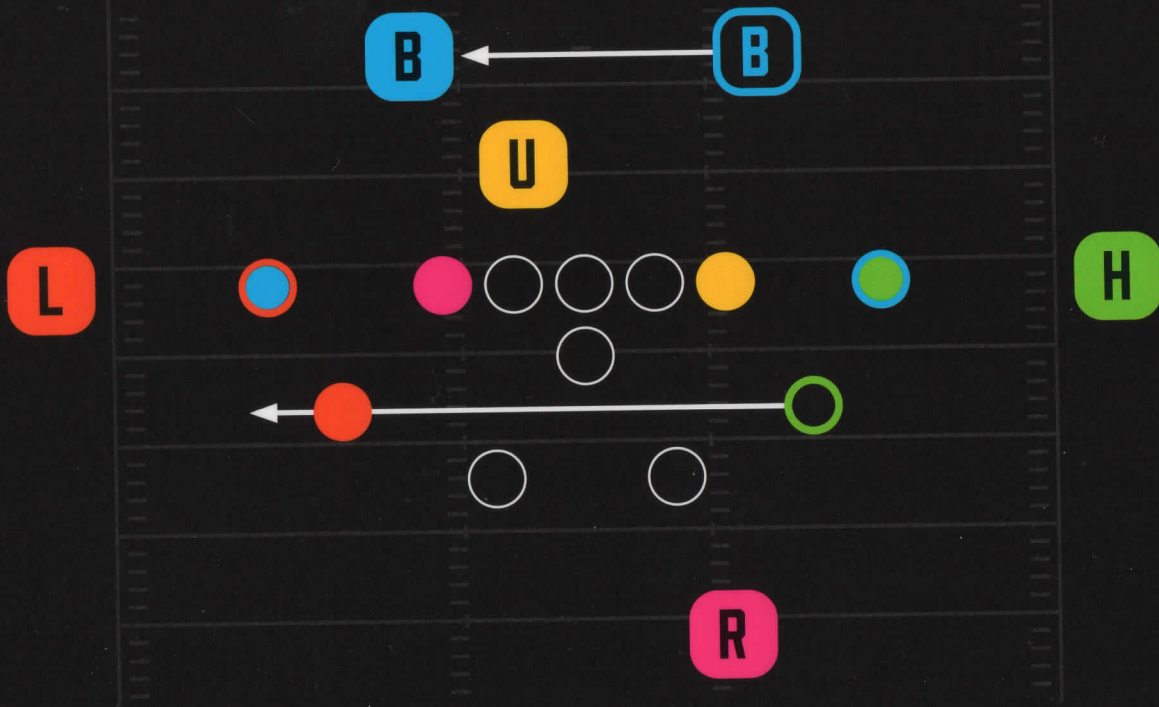
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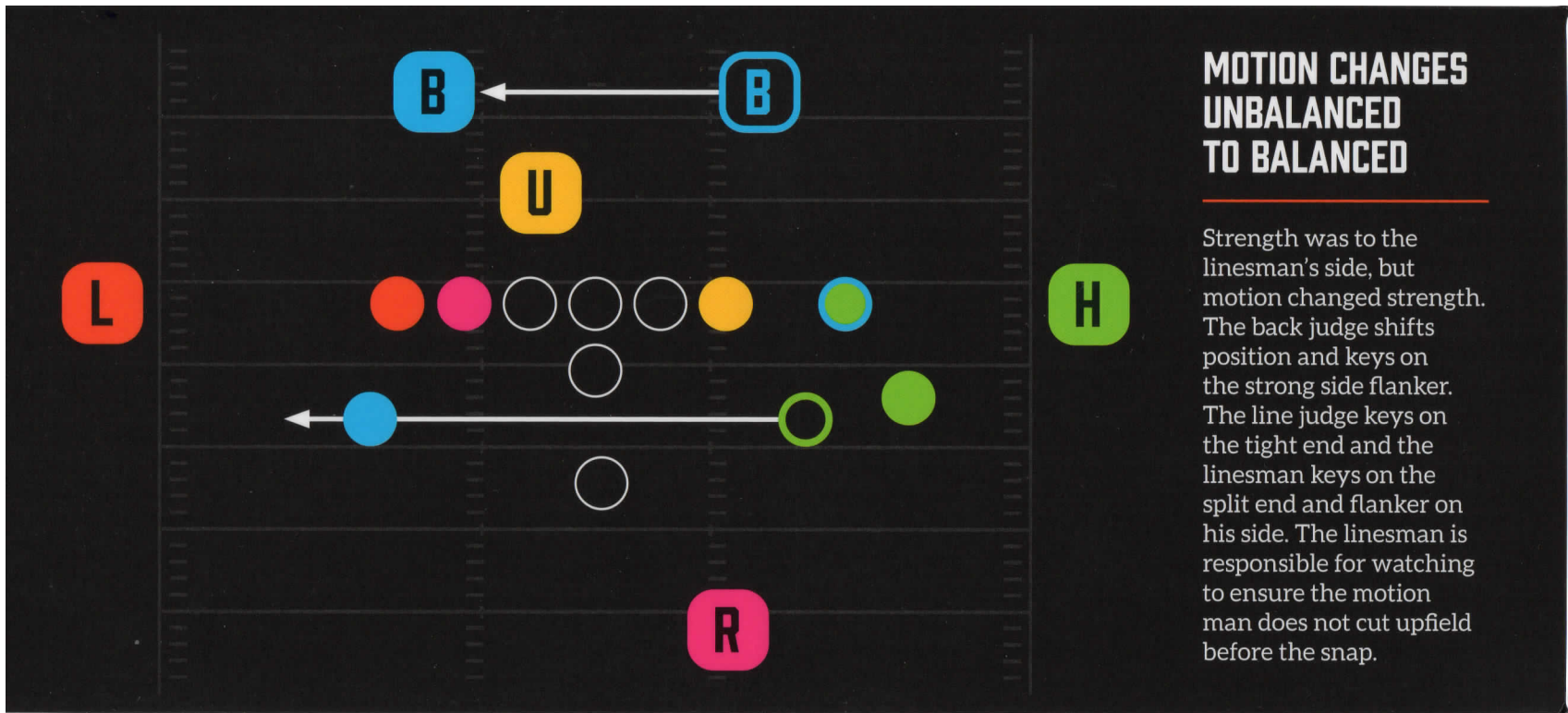
## MOTION DOESN'T CHANGE STRENGTH

Strength is to the linesman's side. Even if the back goes in motion to the line judge's side, strength is not considered to have changed. The back judge keys the split end and the linesman keys on the flanker. The line judge keys on the split end. Either wing official may also have the back if he runs a pass route.



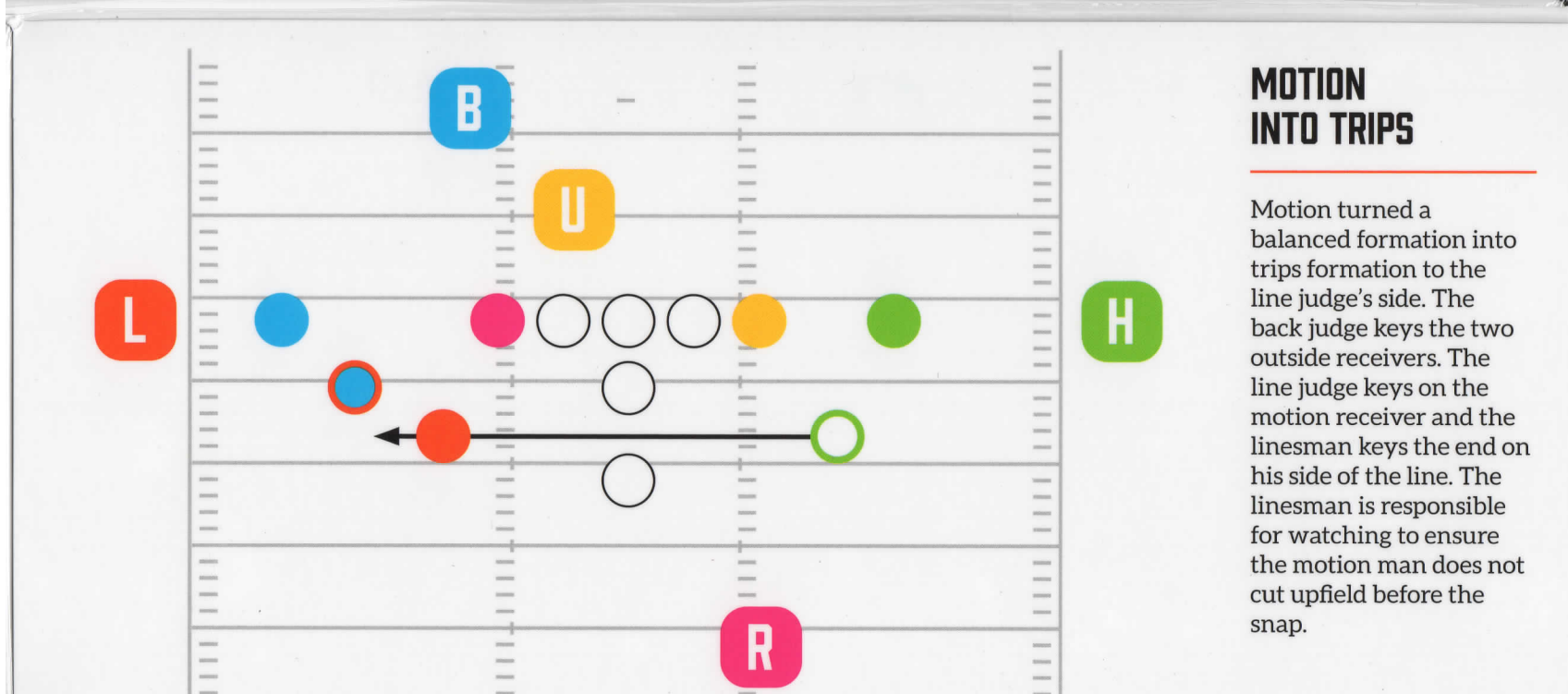
## MOTION CHANGES STRENGTH

Strength was to the linesman's side, but motion changed the strength. The back judge shifts position and keys the strong side split end. The line judge keys on the flanker and the linesman keys on the split end on his side. Although the line judge is keying on the motion man's action after the snap, the linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap.



## MOTION CHANGES UNBALANCED TO BALANCED

Strength was to the linesman's side, but motion changed strength. The back judge shifts position and keys on the strong side flanker. The line judge keys on the tight end and the linesman keys on the split end and flanker on his side. The linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap.



## MOTION INTO TRIPS

Motion turned a balanced formation into trips formation to the line judge's side. The back judge keys the two outside receivers. The line judge keys on the motion receiver and the linesman keys the end on his side of the line. The linesman is responsible for watching to ensure the motion man does not cut upfield before the snap.