Deep Choice (Outside)

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Our deep choice concept allows us to attack a single defender (corner) with a variety of option routes. We will give our outside receiver the option to run multiple adjusting routes depending on the reaction of the corner. The quarterback and choice receiver will be reading a specific coverage area of the field. This makes the teaching process for your quarterback extremely simple. Notice I did not say easy as I will preface as you read through this material that this concept is a very “expensive” one. Meaning that you must commit significant practice time to this play through drills and high repetitions to allow your quarterback and receivers to be able to read the coverage and attack in total synergy.

With this route we are able to effectively run a multiple adjusting route with total synergy between our receivers and quarterback we will pick up huge chunks of yardage. We will spend a lot of time repping the different looks that we could see from a cornerback alignment and technique standpoint in an effort to defend this play. When we are on the same page with this concept IT IS UNSTOPPABLE. Over the past two seasons we have passed for over 2,000 yards on this concept alone.

The advantages of this concept are that we can take one top receiver and move him around the formation and in essence “Force” the football to him. This is in contrast to if you are running a traditional four vertical scheme and the quarterbacks read progression takes him to the 3rd or 4th receiver in the sequence. This may not be a player that you want the ball going to vertically down the field. Maybe it is a young sophomore or similar type of player. With the deep choice series we can dictate exactly who we want the football to go to. I like to compare this to the old days of Michael Jordan with the Chicago Bulls when they would just clear the floor and let him go to work one on one. This is a very similar thought process with your best receiver.
The screen shot above illustrates how with alignment we are able to isolate a player one on one and place a defender on an island. Notice how all remaining 10 defenders are placed inside the top of the numbers to the boundary side.

For these reasons I believe that the simplicity of this concept can be a game changer for those at the small school level who may only have one or two “top” receivers. This concept will allow you to essentially force the football to these players in a situation where the defense is always wrong. At the same time your quarterback will enjoy the simplification of only reading one area of the field. This concept can also be implemented into a variety of offensive systems and personnel groupings. I have helped coaching around the country install this concept into spread, pro-style, wing-t, flexbone, and many more multiple offensive systems.

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Everything in our offense begins with alignment and assignment and probably none more important than the deep choice concept. I can not stress enough the importance of maintaining these alignments each and every play. If the proper split is not taken you are not effectively segmenting an area of the field by placing the defenders we are going to be reading and adjusting off of post snap “on and island”. We do not want to align ourselves in a position where defenses can cheat their coverage post snap and get help on the deep choice concepts.

The base alignments are as follows; if the ball is into the boundary we will align our receiver running the deep outside choice from 3 yards to a maximum of 5 yards from the sideline. We will try to stretch the coverage as far as possible. If the ball is in the middle of the field the alignment can be anywhere from 5 yards from the sideline to the numbers (preferably bottom of the numbers or wider). If the ball is on the wide side of the field depending on our quarterbacks arm strength we will align anywhere from the top of the numbers to the bottom of the numbers.

Many coaches have asked “well what if I don’t have a QB with a big time arm, can I still run this, I’m concerned with the wide splits?”. The short answer to this is yes you can still run this concept. There have been years where we have only run outside choice into the short side of the field, and the companion play the inside choice (slot choice covered in the following chapter of this book) to the wide side of the field. It is important to have an understanding of the limitations of your quarterbacks arm talent, however it is also non negotiable to have the receiver splits as discussed above to make this concept successful.
By maximizing our splits in this concept we are able to isolate the attack area and clean up the read for our quarterback. If we take an alignment that is too compressed to the formation we can allow players from outside of the attack zone to get involved in the play. An example would be a safety coming from inside the hash over the top to make a play on the vertical option.

Diagram illustrating the “Attack Zone” as defenders have been placed on an island due to the extreme splits in the deep choice series.
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The deep choice concept differs from a lot of our other routes as there is not a progression read for our quarterback. We are focusing on reading a particular segment of the coverage and the reaction of certain key defenders both pre-snap but more importantly post snap. We utilize a GPS thought process when attacking with multiple adjusting routes. What that means is we look at the overall picture of the coverage pre-snap. This gives us our GPS (Fastest Route to the End zone). Now once the ball is snapped we are “driving the car” and reacting accordingly to defenders who may change their position or get in our way. This is much the same way a GPS will reroute your vehicle to a quicker path, our multiple adjusting routes will provide our receivers with the best path to “open road to the end zone”.

When we get to the line of scrimmage we quickly identify area defenders in this manner. We will only be concerned with defenders pre-snap who are aligned in following area on the outside choice route.
In the previous diagram you can see our outside choice concept. The ONLY players we will be concerned with in the concept are designated by shapes in the diagram above. As our QB and receivers get to the line of scrimmage they will be identifying these players and setting their initial GPS for the best path to the end zone. The first thing that our WR and QB will check presnap are the alignments of the corner (designated with a star), and the area outside defender (designated with a circle). Finally they will scan for the safety nearest the hash (triangle). This will provide the road map pre-snap, while also indicating if there is a need to change the play at the line of scrimmage to a companion concept such as inside choice (we will cover this in a later chapter).

It is important to remember that this is ONLY a pre-snap road map, and the defense will most likely change at the snap as the play develops. This is where our multiple adjusting routes will come into play and no matter what the defense attempts to do to you they will be wrong. We will cover these adjustments against all defensive techniques throughout this section of the book. Defensive coverage categories do not matter when running this concept as much as getting your players to be able to identify individual defender leverage and techniques. We are only concerned with the alignment and reaction of defenders who are aligned in this attack zone.

With high repetitions at practice and the synergy of your quarterbacks and receivers, you will be able to navigate any potential defensive roadblocks or detours on your way to the end zone.
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Outside Choice Route

The key coaching point for the receiver running the Outside Choice is that he must GO FAST. He can not slow release off of the ball or stem his route. He must run a straight line as fast as he can to 10 yards. Think of it as a race. By doing that accomplished two things, one the faster the release off of the ball threatening the corner the quicker he must show his initial reaction and technique and the easier it is for the WR and QB to read and execute.

Illustration of the 10 yard landmark and straight “FAST” path to the point by the receiver.

In a situation where the corner is in a “hard alignment” or rolled up pre snap we will give our receiver the option to take the fastest release possible. In the event of a rolled up corner who is playing man to man technique we want to ensure that once we are able to beat the defender that we stack our route on top of the defenders alignment (will

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discuss later in the chapter). The other scenario against a hard corner could result in him playing “press-bail” coverage where he is showing press but bailing out at the snap. That is why it is imperative that our decision and final read be made at the 10 yard decision point and not pre-snap. Expect the coverage to change and defensive alignments to vary as the play unfolds.

The rules for the receiver running the Deep Choice are as follows. As the receiver races to the 10 yard landmark if the corner is loose and bailing out he will snap the route off violently and return straight down the stem to the quarterback. It is imperative that this is done at 100 miles an hour so that we really are forcing the corner to feel he is being threatened deep. It also must be fast so that we do not allow an area outside defender to buzz underneath this route. This is one reason that we may also flash fake the back to hold the linebacker in his run fit.

Option #1- The Stop
The stop is the MOST COMMON option on this route. We should always think this first. The home-run shots will be there after we beat this route up for consistent 10 yard gains. Do not get greedy and try to force this route into a situation that does not exist deep. We must take what they are giving us. After we force them to cover this route tighter it will open up our deeper options we will discuss later in this chapter. The rule is once the receiver reaches the 10 yard landmark if he can not touch the defender he will snap it off on the stop route.

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As the choice receiver climbs to the 10 yard decision point if he can not touch the corner he will snap the route off and start to come back down the stem. As he does this he gets his eyes immediately inside to identify any potential area outside defender who is buzzing into the attack area. Below is an example of the receiver scanning inside to find a potential area outside defender after he has executed the stop option on the route.
To avoid allowing the defender to take a drop underneath of the stop route, particularly into the boundary we allow our receiver to execute an adjustable stop, meaning he will work inside our outside against any defender buzzing towards him from the area outside. As he snaps the route off if the defender is closing to his inside but not close enough to “touch him” the receiver will redirect back outside towards the sideline.

As the area outside defender expands with extreme width our receiver works back down outside the stem to grass.
The same option exists if the area outside defender is in a position where our receiver can touch him. In this scenario which typically only occurs into the boundary the defender has worked so hard to get underneath the route they are in a true “county” spot drop technique. In this situation we will give our receiver the option to work against the momentum of the defender and stem the stop route to the inside.

The above diagram illustrates the adjustable stop route stem
Option #2- Vertical
As our outside receiver climbs quickly to the 10 yard landmark if he can touch the
cornerback he will run by him vertically. If the defender is in a press alignment as earlier
stated we are taking the fastest release regardless of inside or outside and then climbing
and stacking or getting on-top of the defender. There are several reasons for this, one
because of our extreme splits we want to allow our QB as much space as possible to
make a vertical throw down the field in-bounds. Secondly we must understand that our
receiver may be slower than the corner who is covering him. By stacking the route we
are negating some of the defenders “catch-up” speed by forcing the defender to work
through our receiver to make a play on the football.

Vertical Option with Outside Release

Vertical Option with Inside Release

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Example of a “hard corner” alignment pre-snap

In the screen shot above our receiver has defeated the defender vertically at the 10 yard decision point and is working vertically to stack the defender.
In the following example you can see how our receiver has “stacked” the vertical route and is forcing the defensive back to work through his body to make a play on the football.

We have a few tags that we can add to our outside choice concept to turn them into a “locked” route concept. One of which is a Post Tag that we will give the outside receiver if we start to see the middle of the field vacated and we are getting a corner who is playing with outside leverage and getting his butt turned towards the sideline. Some who run the outside choice concept will allow the post to be an option on the play. We only run the post as a tag, and since we have done that a few years ago our production on the play has greatly increased as the read has been cleaned up for both our quarterback and receivers.
Occupy Routes - Frontside

All receivers aligned on the frontside of the outside choice concept will have what we call occupy routes. These routes are live routes meaning the receivers could get the football, but in reality these routes exist to occupy defenders keeping them out of the attack area and cleaning up the read for the quarterback and outside receiver. Defensive reactions to the occupy routes will often result in us calling our inside choice concepts (slot choice) for big chunks of yardage.

The most important thing for our receivers running the occupy routes to understand is that their job is to do exactly what the route says; occupy defenders and protect the outside choice. This is done in two parts. The initial responsibility of the first receiver to the inside of the outside choice is to attack vertically the outside shoulder of the area outside defender. This is done to “pick” the defender from buzzing out and underneath the choice route.

We will work to rip outside of the area outside defender and continue vertically up the seam in an area around 3 yards inside or outside the hash depending on the placement of the ball. At this point the occupy route will break his route off based off the leverage of the near safety. If there is a safety on or near the hash he will execute a speed cut in (bender) in front of the safety with the goal of capturing him and getting him to leverage the route. This will keep the safety out of the deep area of the field and allow space to protect the outside choice route.
The screen shot above illustrates how the occupy route has captured the safety on the hash allowing the outside receiver to have a clear one on one with the corner who is now on an island.

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If as the inside receiver pushes vertical there is no safety on or near the hash, but in the middle of the field he will execute a post break at the upfield shoulder of the safety. He is essentially attempting to cross face the safety on the post. Again the idea here is not to necessarily get open but to protect the outside route. However in the event of a coverage bust or over rotation this route is live.

If there are three receivers to the front side of the concept the second receiver from the sideline will always be the occupy route, and the third receiver will always work a cross concept over the linebackers and across the safety face to the opposite hash as his landmark. Again both of these routes are helping to “clear-out” for the outside choice.
An example of two “occupy” routes on the front side of choice in a trips alignment

It is important to remember that the occupy route serves a very important purpose other than to clear out for the outside choice. This route sets the table for how the defense will most likely adjust and leverage our inside choice concept that is the companion to the outside choice and we will also cover in great detail in this book.

One other critical coaching point on the occupy route and one that we consistently drill daily is the fact that the receiver must attempt to take a forced outside release on the area outside defender aligned over him. In a perfect world we will get the area outside defender to attempt to wall off and get underneath of the route which will allow us to occupy both the area outside defender and the near safety with one player. What can give us some issues on this route particularly into the boundary is when our receiver takes an inside release against a zone defender. This allows the defender to get his eyes on the quarterback quicker and expand outside into the attack area.
In the screen shot above you can see our occupy receiver taking an inside release on the area outside defender. This allows the defender to have eyes on the QB and start to expand underneath the outside choice concept.

We will work this route, and particularly the release portion of the route during our half field choice drill that we utilize daily at practice with high repetitions. I will discuss this drill setup later in this chapter.
When deploying the backside of the routes on outside choice there are a number of thought processes that you can undertake. You can run “live” routes on the backside or you can run “dead” routes that we call hang-out routes on the backside. Let's talk about some of the benefits of both backside thought processes.

If running a live route concept on the backside we typically have some sort of a quick game tag or concept that we can add to the backside based off of a particular alignment of the defense. So for example if we are getting a loose corner backside we may tag our backside outside receiver on a hitch or a slant concept to take advantage of the defensive alignment. What is important to remember is if the quarterback decides to work the backside route, he must stay married to the backside. A full field progression concept taking his eyes from one side of the field and back to the choice or from the choice to a quick game concept on the backside simply does not work. We want our qbs locked into reading the attack area on the choice and not scanning his eyes across the field or throwing late because he took his eyes to the backside. If we are working backside we are working backside plain and simple.

If we are running our “dead routes” concept or what we call hangout routes on the backside, our receivers simply tempo off the ball into a light jog or even at times walk off of the ball. This does not appeal to everyone, but in our situation it works for our program. We are a small school that utilizes two way players so our receivers are typically also playing on defense. In addition to that we are an extreme up-tempo offense so these hang-out routes allow us to stretch the defense with our alignment, “clear the floor” for the choice route, and essentially have the opportunity to exert minimal effort saving our legs for our two way players. If you are not using two way players by all means run your players through the end zone on dead routes every play, but that is not something that is beneficial for our program. We also have “sucker” plays and “pump” concepts off of our hangout routes that will allow us to take advantage of defenses that are falling asleep on the backside.
The screen shot above illustrates our backside receiver running a “hang-out” route and occupying three defenders on the backside despite exerting minimal effort.
As with any play in the history of football our outside choice concepts are not without issues that will need to be addressed based on how the defense is choosing to take it away. Remember if you hang your hat on the concept and get good at it, the defense will start to devise schemes to limit what you do best. This is why it is important to have an understanding of some potential issues on the outside choice and how to handle them to ring the defense up for huge chunks of yardage.

Drop 8 Coverage Categories

Lets first examine the defensive strategy of dropping eight defenders into coverage. This is becoming more and more common with the proliferation of spread offenses and defenses going to three high safety looks to combat the offensive explosions. There are a few thought processes that come into play when examining drop 8 coverage. The first thought process is if they are playing with two high safeties or three high safeties and are giving us an advantage in the interior box, we should have great success running the football. Do not allow yourself to fall into the trap of continually throwing into bracket or combo coverage while the defense has five defenders or less in the box. If they are giving us a numerical advantage in the box we want to make them pay for it by effectively running the football. This will force them to add some of the cover players into the box for run support and the airways will soon be open again for takeoff.

One of our answers to drop 8 coverage on the outside choice route is to get into empty or no back five receiver formations. This will allow you to deploy 5 immediate threats down the field and will help to create space and clean up the attack area for the outside choice. By spreading the field in empty we can further stretch and displace the three high safety structures.
The screen shot above illustrates the displacement of the three high safety structure by the empty formation. Note the alignment of the receiver running the deep choice into the boundary.

**Single Receiver Backside**

If the defense is overplaying the strong side of the formation with their safety alignment a simple answer for us is to change the play to deep choice backside to the single receiver. This gives us a way to attack the corner out on an island who is typically placed in man to man coverage.

The diagram above illustrates the defense rotating to the strong side of the formation in an effort to take away our inside choice route. This gives us an excellent opportunity to work out deep outside choice backside.
Trap Coverages

As defensive coordinators begin to game plan to take away the choice routes they will attempt to play games in the secondary to “bait” your quarterback to think he is reading one thing and then make a mistake with the football leading to a turnover. These “trap” coverages will typically employ the corner playing with either deep outside leverage and using a “country” spot drop by the area outside defender to get under the stop route conversion, or by using a “cleo” coverage technique where the corner will roll down hard into the flat and the safety will come off of the hash to cover the deep outside area. Lets take a look at both beginning with trap- bail coverage.

In this scenario the corner will be playing with deep outside leverage to force a stop route conversion while the area outside defender will be “country” spot dropping deep to get underneath the outside route. While this may be used as a change up trap type coverage at times. We can attack it with our previously discussed multiple adjusting stop route that we work on each and every day in practice. In addition if the area outside defender is not truly respecting the area outside in a zone situation, we have a multitude of ways that we can attack that area of the field. Remember to truly take this concept away the defense is going to have to be unsound in some area in giving something up.

Another form of a trap coverage is what we call “Cleo” or corner roll coverage that we previously discussed in detail in the coverage identification and attack section of this book. In cleo coverage it will appear pre-snap as a four across quarters type of shell and at the snap of the ball the corner will roll into a hard alignment typically covering the flat and the safety will get over top in the deep third of the field as the other defenders also rotate into a deep 1/3 position.
Cleo coverage against a two by one receiver deployment

There are a few keys that give this coverage away including the safety working outside of the hash pre-snap. What the defense wants us to do in this situation is to believe that we will have a vertical shot down the sideline and have the safety cheat over the top to now become what is actually the corner to make a play on the ball. How we handle this as a read is once our outside receiver clears the hard corner if a defender has now leveraged over the top of him in his line of vision we now treat that defender as the corner, thus the receiver will throttle down into the dead area (See screen shot below).
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In the following screenshots of cleo coverage you can see the cleo coverage unfold as the play develops. Note how the corner has taken a hard alignment and our receiver has taken his inside release and stacked the corner. As our receiver continues vertical he notes that the safety is now off of the hash and over top of his track. This tells our receiver to sit his route down in the hole as we are now treating that safety who has rotated as the corner.

In this example we can see the defense rotate from a four across coverage category to a “cleo” look with the corner inverting into the area outside.

The screenshot above illustrates our receiver sitting in the hole against cleo coverage on the choice

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Handling the Area Outside Defender

As the quarterback reads the outside deep choice he will be keying the initial reaction of the area outside defender (circled in the screen shot below) on the snap. As long as this defender does not get into what we consider a “country” spot drop he will not be a factor on the outside choice. However, particularly into the boundary we must be aware of the reaction of this defender if immediately at the snap he is expanding vertically with extreme width in an effort to get underneath the potential stop route conversion. The quarterback and receiver must be on the same page with the multiple adjusting stem on the stop route conversion. I have discussed this in detail earlier in this chapter, but it is something that is certainly worth repeating again as teams will attempt to use this type of a strategy to “steal one” from us as our receiver executes the stop read and this area outside defender robs the route underneath for an interception. Now as with all concepts in our system, remember if they are willing to commit to this type of unsound coverage drop technique they are vulnerable to another area of our offensive attack.
Note the quarterback reading the area outside defender dropping with extreme depth and width in an attempt to get underneath a stop route conversion. We will use our multiple adjusting stem to combat this technique.

Safety Outside the Hash

As the quarterback and receivers begin their pre-snap “GPS” of the coverage, we want to be sure to identify situations where the safety to the call side has started to align or expand outside of the hash area. This could be a situation where the defense is planning a rotational trap coverage (cleo) or may just be attempting to cheat the safety over the top of our number one receiver (see diagram below). We must be ready to identify and attack this unsound coverage with our inside choice series that we will discuss in the following chapter of this book.
Stacking and Switching

There are multiple ways in which we can change who becomes the live outside choice receiver attacking with the adjustable route. One way is to formation in a way that will switch the responsibilities for our receivers. This can be accomplished by running our extremely wide stack formations. In the diagram below you can see an example of one of our stacked formations.

Here is an example of a base alignment on deep outside choice vs a stacked alignment
By stacking our receivers wide we are forcing the defense to expand their coverage, while also running the choice now with our slot receiver. In the screenshot below you can see the effect of the stacked alignment on the defenses man to man coverage as they attempt to employ and in and out banjo technique.

I have discussed the importance of our spacing and wide alignments at length during this chapter but as the screen shot below reveals it is of extreme importance as we have truly forced the defensive back onto an island, and have segmented the defense where there are no defenders other than the cornerback from the numbers to the sideline.

Note the wide alignment above by our outside receiver as he executes his stop read on the choice.
Long Yardage Considerations

As previously mentioned in this chapter as we have developed our inside and outside choice packages, we have completely gone away from installing the traditional four verticals concept. The reason for this is because of how time intensive it is to drill our choice packages daily at practice we simply do not have enough time to properly install and rep the four verticals package effectively.

Without four verticals in the offense we still need to have a way to attack down the field in a long yardage or what we term an XXL yardage situation. For example if we are facing a 3rd and 15 or 3rd and 20 we need to have the ability to push the ball down the field. If we call deep outside choice with our multiple adjusting routes, there is a high probability that the defense will be sitting in a please don’t beat me deep type of loose coverage category. As our receiver executes his read on the choice he will run a 10 yard stop route and will most likely be tackled short of the first down marker. To combat this we incorporate a lock call. The lock call will turn the deep choice route into a locked vertical. All other routes in the concept will remain the same, we are just shutting off the stop route option.

The route for the Locked choice receiver is simple; beat my man deep. However if as the receiver climbs to the 10 yard decision point he is not in a position to “touch” the defensive back, he will begin to think back shoulder. As he continues to push vertical the quarterback will execute a back shoulder throw to him past the sticks. We drill this conversion daily during our group periods at practice that I will explain later in this chapter. A common question that I get from coaches is how do you drill the back shoulder throw. The easy answer is repetitions and throwing and catching between your quarterback and receivers to get on the same page. If executed properly this is very difficult for the defensive back to defend and makes the “lock” call that much more efficient in XXL long yardage situations.
WR begins to think back shoulder at the decision point by looking back at the QB. Ball is delivered on the back shoulder on time for a big first down on 3rd and XXL.
Drilling the Outside Choice

The most important factor in your success in running the deep choice series will be in your commitment to getting high repetitions at practice daily. As I have earlier stated in this chapter this is a simple concept but that does not mean it is easy. Nothing good is easy, and this play concept has the ability to be a game changer for your program if you invest practice time in developing it. We spend on average of 15-20 minutes of practice time daily specifically on drilling this concept. By utilizing this format daily at practice you will ensure that your players are getting high repetitions and will be prepared to adjust and attack any defensive look that you will face during the season.

Choice Drill

The first drill that we utilize daily during one of our “group” practice periods is our choice drill. This drill is done daily for at least 10 minutes. Our quarterbacks and receivers will be paired together during this period while our running backs and offensive linemen will be working a live pass protection period on another area of the field during this time.
During the choice drill we will move the ball from the boundary to the middle of the field and even the wide side of the field if our quarterbacks arm allows us to. This allows our receivers to ensure they are taking a proper alignment pre-snap in relation to the placement of the football. Our players then pair up into groups and will execute their choice route decision based on varied looks that their partner playing corner will give them. It is important during this drill to vary the depth and techniques of the defender to give a multitude of varied looks during this period.

This period is not a live one on one period. Following the initial read at the decision point, the defender then becomes “dead”. There are no contested balls during this period, we are simply running our routes and making a decision based off of the defender. We do not want our players getting injured during this period due to contested balls in a one on one format with the defender. We will get around 40-60 reps during this period on each side of the field. You will notice in the screen shots above after the receiver has reached the decision point and run his route off of the leverage of the defender, the defensive back will stop and not continue to contest the catch.

This drill can also be done during the winter months in the same format in a gym or other facility without the use of a football. The goal of this drill is to work on alignment, vertical stem, and reading the defender at the decision point.
Our receiver focuses on his initial alignment and pre-snap “GPS” of the defenders aligned in the “Attack Zone”

At the snap our receiver works his extreme vertical stem right at the defender as he approaches the decision point.

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Once at the decision point our receiver works his multiple adjusting route directly back down the stem towards the quarterback.

Half-Field Choice Drill

The next drill we incorporate daily into our practice is a half field choice drill. This is used to get a high number of repetitions working both our outside and inside deep choice concepts. We will incorporate this drill for 10-15 minutes each day. This drill has replaced what we traditionally used as a routes on air period in our practice sessions. Due to the constant nature of our adjusting routes we do not operate with routes on air at practice because so much of our offense depends on reading and adjusting to defensive coverage leverage and techniques.

In this period we are able to get our quarterback and receivers a full picture of varied coverage categories. As I discussed earlier in this chapter we identify several key defenders that we are reading on our outside choice series. In this drill we will rep each of our playside routes with a cornerback, and area outside defender, and a safety to the call side.
As you can see indicated above in our half field choice drill we are able to give various coverage pictures to our quarterbacks and receivers as we execute our multiple adjusting concepts. This allows us to get high repetitions against varied coverage alignments and techniques. The cornerbacks (star) will give us varied alignments and techniques. The area outside defenders (circle) will provide varied leverage and post snap reactions such as collision, wall off, man to man, catch man, and country spot drop. We want these defenders to be physical when collision our receivers so we have them use a hand shield for this drill. The safety (triangle) will give us varied looks such as inside or outside the hash, middle of the field, and invert rotation. We use a coach to play the safety in this drill, as the coach can provide us with some varied looks very quickly and allow us to move quickly through the drill without the need for any sort of huddle or scout cards defensively.
As indicated in the above screen shots you can see how the defense aligns and gives us a post snap read during our half field choice drill. Note the area outside defender with the hand shield and one of our coaches playing safety.

Another important note that relates to practice and our drills is that everything is done defensively on the fly, meaning we have no scout cards for drills or team segments that coordinate with an offensive practice script. As a coach it has never made sense to me when coaches script their play calls and then coordinate the defense that they want to see against that particular play concept. We must be ready to identify, adjust and attack any defensive techniques and I know our opponent is not going to let us know in advance what they are going to be running before the ball is snapped so that we can script the perfect play.