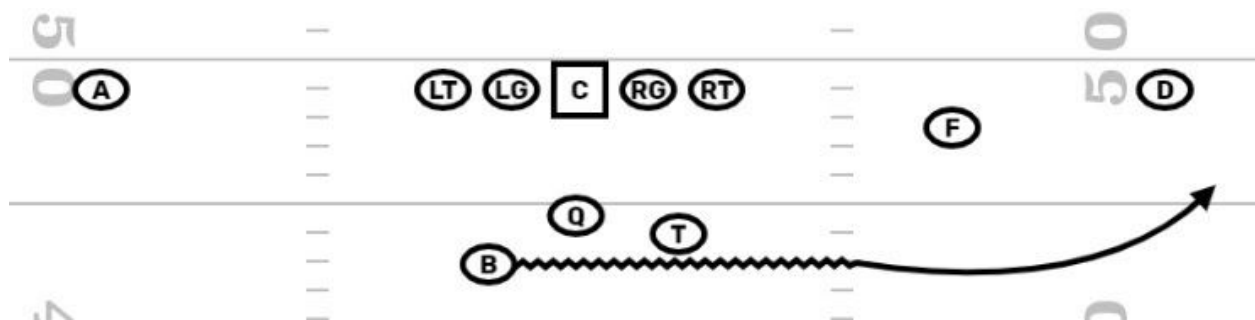




# FOOTBALL COACHES CORNER

## Runs and Passes Off Comet Motion

Getting into a 20 personnel set with two split backs in a shotgun formation gives the offense advantages. Not only does it give the offense 2, possibly 3 run threats, but it also maintains a passing threat with 3 receivers and 2 running backs in the backfield, eligible for a pass. Especially at the high school level, running backs in route combinations can create problems for defenses because linebackers may not match up well with a back out of the backfield. A creative way to put a defense in a bind out of a 20 personnel set is to utilize “Comet” motion by a running back in the backfield. This motion characterizes a pre snap motion by a running back going behind the quarterback and other running back. This concept is a cheap and easy way to create conflict in the defense without giving the quarterback intricate rules to execute. It also gives the offense the ability to either get the ball on the edge to a dynamic player or utilize another option within the play.



The backside running back does not always have to motion to the multi-receiver formation, however, this motion always utilizes a running back behind the quarterback

and other back. This gives us the ability to run away from the motion back, giving the offense the ability to counter this throw with a run simultaneously.

In this article, we will discuss some of the concepts that can be easily tagged with this motion, making reads simplified for quarterbacks.

## **COMET CONCEPT**

Regardless of what run or pass is tagged to this motion, the reads of this concept takes place based on the movement of the linebackers or safeties. Based on the play, the quarterback will read pre snap, post snap, or both. The Comet concept can be utilized to create run-pass, run-screen, or pass-pass scenario. If tagged with a run, concepts can either hit frontside or backside, based on the perceived movement of the defense based on the motion.

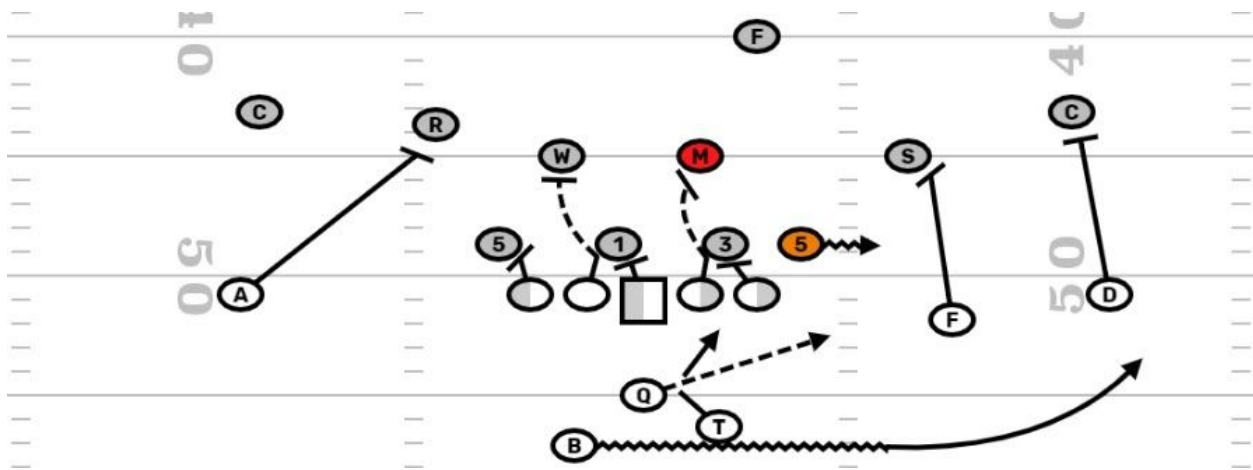
In our gameplanning, we use this concept to attack where the defense is compromising. For example, when they move linebackers, that's where we attack with the run. When they move outside linebackers, D gap players, that's where we attack with quick game, and when they begin to rotate in the secondary, that's where we attack. This article will touch on a few concepts in each scenario.

In terms of the actual motion, the quarterback will want to send the running back in motion and snap the ball, using whatever cadence, when the running back is approximately 3 yards outside of the tackle or tight end. This is a full speed motion and the running back should not look back for the ball until the ball is snapped. If this motion is not full speed, it will give defenders time to play the run and rally to the throw to the running back. We teach the running back receiving the swing to continue to work for width and let the ball take them up the field. To the field, a base rule is the back should take 5 steps full speed before the ball is snapped and they look back. To the boundary, they take 3 hard steps before the ball is snapped. If they bow backwards away from the line of scrimmage, then the running back will have further to work after the catch and a drop could result in a fumble.



Our rule for receivers is simple. They are always blocking the most dangerous defender for the swing unless they get a pass tag. Our receivers and tight ends work a stalk blocking drill daily that helps them accelerate off the line, break down, and work for leverage on the nearest defender. In the picture above, the most important block is the slot receiver (F). He must make sure that he is getting a piece of the D gap defender (S) and does not let him have a free run at the swing. After throwing this route several times in a game, these defenders can become very aggressive. When this happens, we will have answers to counter his aggression.

There are several adjustments that teams make to defend this concept. One, is they will begin to roll safeties to the motion, instead of removing linebackers from the box. Our counter to that will be discussed in some pass tags we incorporate. Another adjustment that teams make to this is using the playside defensive end to play the motion of the running back, instead of removing linebackers or rolling safeties. If teams look to do that, we will call the same motion and attach inside zone, QB counter to the motion, or speed option to the frontside and replace that vacating defensive end. Below is an example.



As mentioned before, this concept can feature many runs, not only counter and inside zone. We will also attach a tight end backside in a 21 personnel look and run truck (pin-pull), stay in 20 personnel and run single-back power (G wrap), or pull the



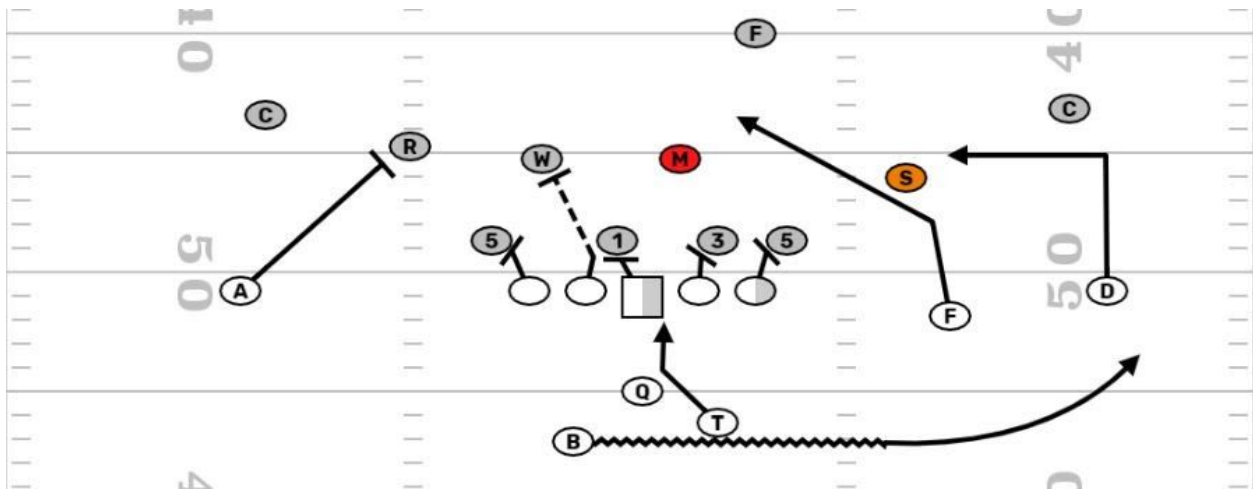


In our system, we would make the formation and motion call and tag “Lock” to the inside zone call, ensuring that the quarterback is protected if he throws the football. The call would be something like this: Twins Rt Comet Zags Lock Stick. You can tag any run to this concept, however, we like to protect the quarterback and feel that running inside zone or G-wrap are the best ways to do this when throwing stick.

Pre snap, the quarterback still reads the flow of the linebackers. If the Mike widens out of the box with the motion, the quarterback will give the football on the run. If he does not move, the quarterback will read the flat defender, shown above as the Sam linebacker. If he widens with the running back, the quarterback will throw the stick route. If the Sam holds on the stick, the quarterback will throw the swing. Pre snap, if the defense is showing a 2-high shell and there is a possibility of cover 2 or some sort of “cloud” coverage (corner in run support...squatting), then the quarterback may be able to peek the hole shot by the outside receiver (D).

One of the most important aspects of this play is the stick route by #2. He must attack the outside shoulder of the flat player and look to sit right behind him, replacing him. If he does not run this route on this defender, the Sam can play the stick route and rally to the swing. Another aspect, often overlooked, is the outside release by the outside receiver (D). He must get the corner's attention and release outside, protecting the two inside routes. If he releases inside, the corner can then squeeze him down to the other routes and get eyes on either the stick or swing, giving him the ability to make a break on those routes.

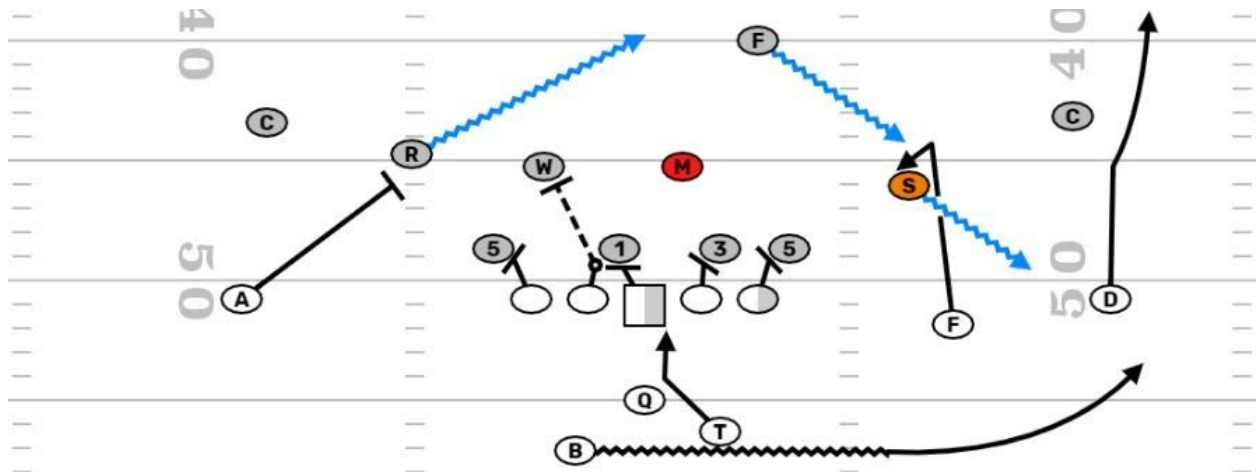
Another quick game concept that can be carried over to isolate aggressive D gap defenders is double slants. Again, no rules change for the quarterback. If he is getting a light box (5 or less) or movement from the linebackers, he is handing off the football, or reading run-run.



Above is a depiction of the double slants concept tagged to Comet Zags Lock. This play truly puts the D gap defender in a bind. He sees a running back widening and gets a vertical, then inside release by #2. If throwing, the quarterback truly has 3 options on this throw. If the Sam widens, he should throw the inside slant immediately. If the Sam holds or squeezes the slant, he then takes a look at the “In” by the outside receiver or swing by the running back. In terms of the receivers’ routes, #2 must get on the toes of the flat player before releasing inside. If the flat player widens, the slant window will be opened up and he should look for the ball immediately. On the outside, we run a 5 yard square in to help this play time up. In the past, I have ran a snag route, either will occupy the same window. #1 must stay flat on this route to protect the throw if the corner tries to come through him to make a play on the ball. #1’s eyes must be on the flat player as he comes out of his break, if he disappears in the box with the slant, #1 must stay on the run because he should be getting the ball. If the flat player holds, he must look to throttle down and find a window.

## **RUN/PASS vs. AGGRESSIVE SAFETIES**

After defenses have moved linebackers in the box and outside of the box, they will begin to play games with their safeties. A common theme we will see is teams give a 2-high look pre snap, and spin their free safety down to help take away any quick game so that the D gap defender can be aggressive vs. the swing by the motioning running back (shown below). They turn a “quarters” look to a version of cover 3.



Above is a common rotation by teams that look to take away our quick game concepts off of Comet motion. They have been aggressive with the flat defender to the comet side and we have taken advantage of that by either throwing the stick or throwing the swing. To give the flat player more freedom WHILE taking away the stick or double slat concept, teams will begin to roll their field safety to the motion. Again, this movement pre snap gives us a great indicator to attack the secondary.

There are two main concepts that we utilize to combat the safety rotation on this motion. The first is the “Glance” post from the backside receiver. This route is designed to get inside leverage on the corner and attack the vacated space left by the rotating weak safety (shown as Rover “R”). Like our quick game, this route is carry over from our RPO and quick game concepts. We can pair this route to either stick or double slants, giving the quarterback another option to go with the football, depending on pre snap rotation by the secondary.









single receiver will push-to-crack the first linebacker in the box. The screen-side tackle will invite the end man up the field, rip inside and look to kick out the corner. We call this block, “going down the sidewalk”. The screen-side guard will also invite outside and look to “go up the alley” and block the next defender inside of the center. This is usually a safety. The center will retreat and then look to seal the 2nd linebacker in the box (shown above as the Mike). The running back must do a great job selling pass protection. He will step up in the opposite B gap and count, “1001, 1002”, before widening and turning to the quarterback. He realistically wants to sit behind the tackle, however, he needs to widen enough and find a window to be able to see the quarterback.

In conclusion, the Comet concept has provided an easy way to get on the edge with a dynamic ball carrier, while still giving us the ability to run between the tackles. This article only provided a few ideas out of one formation to keep the concepts basic. Going forward, we will look to utilize this concept more in our offense to fit our personnel.

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