5-3 Defense
Contents
Definitions.......................................................................................................................... 4
Advantages of the 5-3 ........................................................................................................... 4
Positions............................................................................................................................... 4
D-Line .................................................................................................................................. 4
Linebackers .......................................................................................................................... 4
Secondary ............................................................................................................................. 5
Huddle ................................................................................................................................ 6
Base Alignment ................................................................................................................... 7
Adjustments to Offensive Formations ................................................................................ 8
Double Tight Ends ............................................................................................................. 8
Twins ................................................................................................................................... 9
Quads ................................................................................................................................. 10
Defensive Line Calls .......................................................................................................... 11
Base .................................................................................................................................... 11
Tight .................................................................................................................................... 11
Line Backer Calls ............................................................................................................... 13
Sting .................................................................................................................................... 13
Secondary Coverage ........................................................................................................... 18
Cover 3 ............................................................................................................................... 18
Cover 0 ................................................................................................................................. 19
Blitz Packages .................................................................................................................... 20
Rules .................................................................................................................................... 20
Linebackers .......................................................................................................................... 20
Rumble ............................................................................................................................... 20
Will ..................................................................................................................................... 20
Mike .................................................................................................................................... 21
Sam ..................................................................................................................................... 21
Twist ................................................................................................................................... 21
Double ................................................................................................................................ 22
Definitions

Advantages of the 5-3
- 8 defenders “in the box”, effective against the run.
- D-ends do not have pass coverage.
- Fits aggressive linemen.
- Contains running options to the middle of the field.

Positions

D-Line
T Tackle
- Center in a gap, one gap away from NG
- Draw and split double teams
- Penetrate one yard then contain/chase/rush

NG Nose guard
- Strong or wide side A gap
- Draw and split double teams
- Penetrate one yard then contain/chase/rush

DE Defensive end
- 1yd outside EMLOS
- Angled in, pointed directly at their key, which is the nearest or deepest person in the backfield.
- Contain everything, nothing can get outside
- Take on all blocks with inside shoulder keeping outside shoulder and arm free
- Attack the blocker squeezing the running lane down and force everything to the pursuit

Linebackers
S Sam backer
- Sam takes TE side or wide side of the field, 6 tech over TE, 4yds deep
- Call out and pass thru all motioned receivers
- Key on TE - First step must be forward then flow with your read

M Mike backer
- Mike aligns in 0 tech over center, 5yds deep
- Call out and pass thru all motioned receivers
- Key on OG, First step must be forward then flow with your read

**W** Will backer
- Will aligns opposite of Sam, 4 tech over OT, 4yds deep
- Call out and pass thru all motioned receivers
- Key on OT, First step must be forward, check for counter then flow with your read

**Secondary**
**CB** - cornerback
- Play pass first - deep outside 1/3 zone coverage
- Call out and pass thru all motioned receivers
- Backpedal on every snap, key on receiver
- Do not get beat deep
- Run support only when ball reaches the line of scrimmage
- Contain everything, nothing can get outside
- Take on all blocks with inside shoulder keeping outside shoulder and arm free
- Bend don’t break - make sure tackles

**F** – Free Safety
- Split the two widest receivers, 11 yds deep
- Make formation calls- strong, shift and motion
- Play pass first – deep middle 1/3 zone coverage
- Backpedal on every snap, key on TE
- Do not get beat deep
- Run support only when ball reaches line of scrimmage
- Bend but don’t break – make sure tackles
Huddle

5-3 Huddle

- 5yds deep
- Mike calls the plays
- Two rows – 1) D-line 2) Linebackers and Secondary
### Base Alignment

#### 5-3 Base Alignment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>S</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>DE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### D-Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Run Toward</th>
<th>Run Away</th>
<th>Pass - Zone</th>
<th>Pass - Man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nose</td>
<td>Strong/Wide A gap</td>
<td>Maintain gap</td>
<td>Chase</td>
<td>Rush</td>
<td>Rush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackle</td>
<td>One gap away from NG</td>
<td>Maintain gap</td>
<td>Chase</td>
<td>Rush</td>
<td>Rush</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-End</td>
<td>1yd outside EMLOS</td>
<td>Squeeze/Contain</td>
<td>Contain deep as</td>
<td>Rush</td>
<td>Rush</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Linebackers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Run Toward</th>
<th>Run Away</th>
<th>Pass - Zone</th>
<th>Pass - Man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sam</td>
<td>6 tech over TE at 4yds</td>
<td>B/C gaps</td>
<td>Chase</td>
<td>Flat/Curl zone</td>
<td>Nearback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike</td>
<td>0 tech over center at 5yds</td>
<td>A/B gaps</td>
<td>Chase</td>
<td>Mid/Screen</td>
<td>QB spy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will</td>
<td>4 tech over OT, at 4yds</td>
<td>B/C gaps</td>
<td>Chase</td>
<td>Flat/Curl zone</td>
<td>Nearback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Secondary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Run Toward</th>
<th>Run Away</th>
<th>Pass - Zone</th>
<th>Pass - Man</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corner</td>
<td>Inside shoulder of rec at 6yds</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Deep Chase</td>
<td>Outside 1/3</td>
<td>Receiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corner</td>
<td>Inside shoulder of rec at 6yds</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Deep Chase</td>
<td>Outside 1/3</td>
<td>Receiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Safety</td>
<td>Split widest rec. at 11yds</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Middle 1/3</td>
<td>TE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adjustments to Offensive Formations

Double Tight Ends

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5-3 Base v. Double TE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-3 Base v. Double TE Adjustments

- W goes into 6 tech over weak or short side TE at normal depth
- CB goes to 6X6 EMLOS if no receiver
- S adjusts alignment to split widest receivers
### Twins

#### 5-3 Base v. Twins

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Z</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5-3 Base v. Twins Adjustments

- W covers inside receiver at normal depth
- W plays under/inside zone
- Twins side CB plays over outside zone
- Non-twins CB goes to 6X6 EMLOS if no receiver
- F adjusts alignment to split widest receivers
5-3 Base v. Quads Adjustments

- W and S cover inside receiver at normal depth
- W and S backers plays under/inside zone
- Strong/Wide T plays 4i Tech
- CBs plays over/ outside zone
- F adjusts alignment to split widest receivers
Defensive Line Calls

Base

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5-3 Base</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5-3 Tight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-3 Tight Adjustments
- Both Ts play 3 Tech
- N plays 0 tech, choses side and indicates by taping that leg
5-3 Stack

5-3 Stack Strong

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WY</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-3 Stack Weak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WY</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-3 Stack Pinch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WY</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>SY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>T</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-3 Stack Adjustments

- Ts and N play heads up on Center and Tackles, must control called gaps
- DE become OLB Weak DE= Willy “WY”, Strong DE=Sammy “SY”. Still have D gap and contain responsibility.
- W, M and S stack at 3-4 yards directly behind D-linemen. First step to their gap responsibility.
- Secondary and pass zones remain same as 5-3 base
## Line Backer Calls

### Sting

#### 5-3 Sting

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 5-3 Sting Adjustments

- W and M shift to strong side of formation covering open gaps
- S shifts outside of DE at normal depth
5-3 Base "Moose" Mike drops into Strong A gap. Sam slides to cover defensive open gap. LB and secondary goes into Cover 0 man to man.
5-3 Base "Falcon" Free Safety drops into C gap, bumps T into B. LB and secondary goes into Cover 0 man to man.
5-3 Base "Stag" Sam drops into C gap, bumps T into B. Will and Mike slide to cover defensive T. LB and secondary goes into Cover 0 man to man.
5-3 Base “Wolf” Will drops into B gap, bumps T into A. Sam and Mike cover defensive T. LB and secondary goes into Cover 0 man to man.
Secondary Coverage

Cover 3

5-3 Cover 3 Zones

- Deep 1/3
- Deep 1/3
- Deep 1/3

- Curl/Flat Zone
- Curl/Flat Zone
- Curl/Flat Zone

5-3 Cover 3

- CBs and F back pedal into zones
- Linebackers sprint to zones
- Attack the ball in the air
5-3 Cover 0 Responsibilities “Raptor”

- F walks up and cover TE man to man
- W and S cover back in man to man
- M has QB in man to man
Blitz Packages

Rules
- No blitzing if offense is in Twins or Quads
- “Tap out” of blitz call based on formation

Linebackers

Rumble

5-3 Base Rumble

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Rumble
- DEs split 7yds, running start to crash on the snap

Will

5-3 Base Will

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>DE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Will
- W blitzes B gap
- T takes G into A gap
### Mike

#### 5-3 Base Mike

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>y</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mike**
- M blitzes open A gap, show on first sound

### Sam

#### 5-3 Base Sam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sam**
- S blitzes C gap based
- T takes G into B gap

### Twist

#### 5-3 Tight Twist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DE</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>DE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>o</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Twist**
- N plays 0 tech, chooses side and indicates by taping that leg
- M blitzes open A gap
Double

- S and SY blitz together

Cadence

1. Defense “5-3”
2. Line call “Base” or “Tight”
3. Any blitzes “Sam”, “Will” etc.
4. Coverage change if any “Raptor”