



The Flag Football Playbook.com

Table of Contents:

Free Plays

[Print Out for Using During Games – 3](#)

[83 Mirror – 4](#)

[Lineman Leak – 5](#)

[Quick Slant – 6](#)

Offensive Strategies

[Quarterback Play – 7](#)

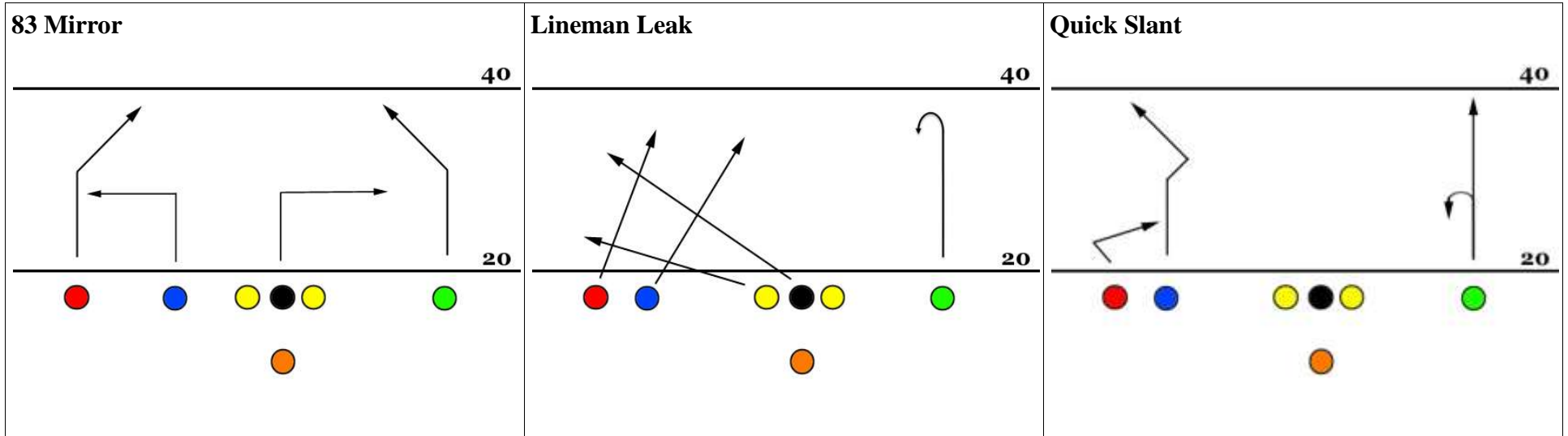
[Utilizing the Center in the Passing Game – 8](#)

Defensive Strategies

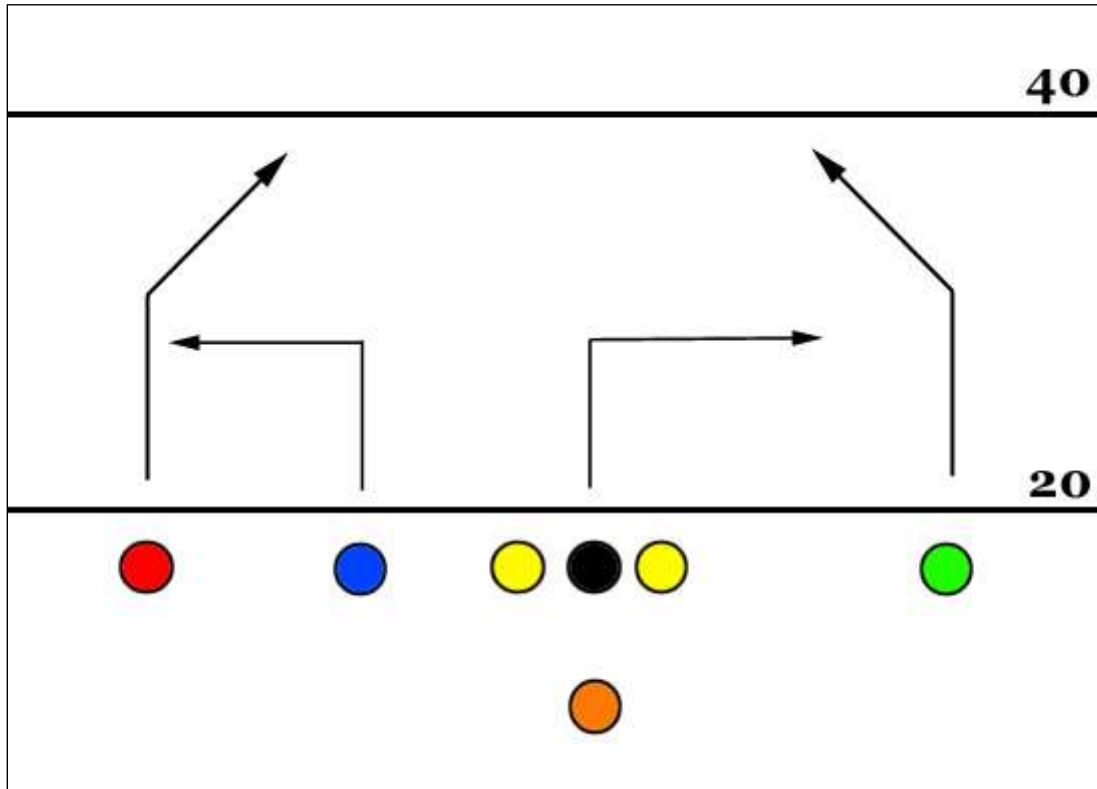
[Defense Sets: Man-to-Man vs Zone – 9](#)

[Goal Line Defense - 10](#)

Free Plays



83 Mirror

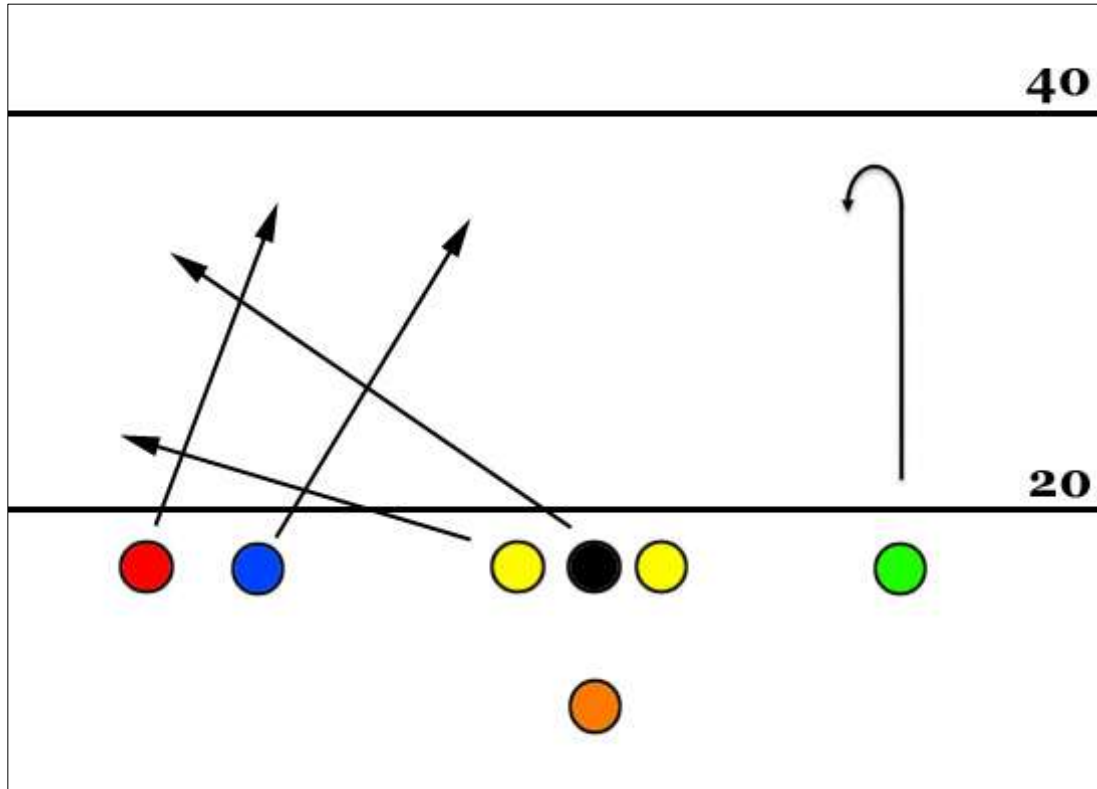


Play Theory: The two receivers on the left are running an 8 route (Red) and a 3 route (Blue). The same routes are mirrored on the right with the lone receiver and the center. This play works best against man coverage and a cover 3. Versus man coverage, the center should have lots of free space. However against a cover 3, this play is virtually unstoppable. On the snap, the two cornerbacks should run with the two wide receivers, leaving the underneath routes wide open. With the linebacker most likely covering the center, Blue should be wide open. Because the corners are bailing with the receivers, this play can also net a good chunk of yards after catch (YAC).

Play Variations: Against a cover 2, this play is

somewhat limited because all the routes end up in a defensive player's zone. However, some adjustments can still lead to big plays. Prior to the snap, the quarterback should be able to read whether the defense is cover 2 or cover 3 (two safeties vs one safety). If facing a cover 2, the Blue receiver can adjust his route from a 5 yard out to a 10-15 yard out. If the corner plays tight to the line, Blue can sneak in behind. If the quarterback rolls left, the corner will either back peddle to Blue which then the QB can just run. Or the corner will come up for the tackle which leaves Blue naked for a big gain. **Play Calling Tip:** The quarterback can help the offense by recognizing the defense pre-snap. He can relay this information to the rest of the team via a few simple calls. "Double" "Two" or "Twin" can signal cover 2. "Triple" or "3" means cover 3.

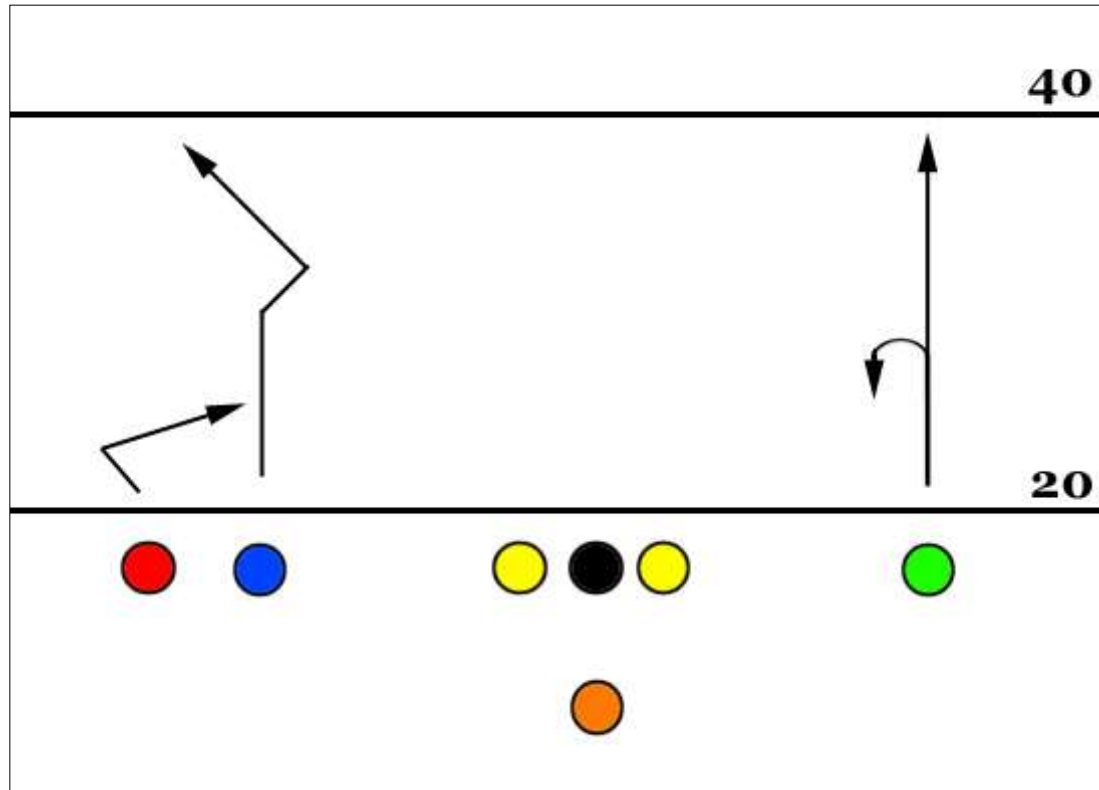
Lineman Leak



Play Theory: This play is mainly used to pick up short yardage (<10 yards). However, some slight adjustments can yield a big play later in the game. The idea behind this play is that the two receivers on the left (Red & Blue) will occupy the cornerback and safety on that side allowing the left lineman to leak out in the flat. If the quarterback has more time and the safety chases Red, then the center may be open on the deeper route.

Play Variations: Run this play a couple times in short yardage situations. Then, if in the situation again, run the play with this variation. Send the slot receiver (Blue) on a slant and go. The safeties should be occupied with Red & Green. This variation will be more effective if it's your team's first attempt at a deep pass.

Quick Slant



Play Theory: This is a fairly simple play that can net a lot of YAC (Yards After Catch). Blue's job on this play is to clear out and open some space for Red. The Quarterback should look to throw the ball early to Red. The idea is for Red to catch the ball and immediately run up field. If the ball is thrown late, Red will run into the Linebacker coverage. The second option would be Green. Green's route is dictated by the coverage. Against a cover 2, Green will be covered by either the Cornerback or Safety. If the Corner is covering, the best route will usually be the streak. If the safety is covering and continues to drop as Green runs up field, then Green should stop the route short and hook.

Receiver Tip: The Green receiver on this route has a choice: Streak or Hook. When running the route, the receiver needs to pay attention to the covering defense. If the defensive back stays in a back peddle, then the receiver should be able to run right past on the streak (providing the receiver has some speed). If while running the streak, the defender breaks down and turns to run up field to run with the receiver, this is when the receiver breaks off the route and hooks. The Quarterback should also make this read. Once the defender turns and runs up field, the QB can throw the ball to the spot where the receiver will come out of route. Developing a few timing routes such as this will provide a huge advantage as you play against better competition.

Quarterback Play

The most critical position in flag football is the quarterback. Teams in lower level leagues can succeed without a decent quarterback. However, in order to win at the elite levels, a team must have a person who can accurately throw the football. The ability to throw a deep pass is not a necessity. The key to winning in flag football is utilizing a ball control offense. If a team can average 6-8 yards per play, it will be successful.

In leading a team, the quarterback should be the one in control of the huddle. Too many times, I've seen teams where everyone in the huddle is trying to call a play. The first few seconds of a huddle can be for general comments by everyone: "The middle is wide open." "I think we can attack the left side." "Their rusher on the right side is killing us. Let's try rolling left or running the ball." Other than that, the quarterback needs to take control and call a play.

Another aspect of a quarterback that can greatly increase a team's chances of winning is having a mobile quarterback. Unless your opponent does not have any athletes rushing, in flag football, it's difficult to give a quarterback more than a few seconds to throw the ball. Having an agile quarterback can give the passing game a few more needed seconds to contact on longer developing plays. An agile quarterback does not necessary mean a fast running quarterback. The quarterback just needs to be able to side step a rush and be able to throw on the move.

One final characteristic that can lead to success is occasionally running the ball with the quarterback. This can be achieved either through a designed run or play where all the receivers are covered. Having a quarterback that will not force a throw and instead run for a small gain will keep turnovers down. Remember, success in flag football is usually achieved by picking up small chunks of yards working down the field.

Utilizing the Center in the Passing Game

In the passing game, one position that is often overlooked is the center. Most teams starting out bring a tackle football mindset to flag football. The center's purpose is to hike the ball and block. The problem with this is brought to light against team with even an average rush. By the time the center snaps the ball, he is out of position and can only be an effective blocking when the quarterback scrambles.

In 7-on-7, most teams will rush only 2 players most of the game. Leaving the center in to block means in the backfield, your offense is using 4 guys (3 lineman and quarterback) to combat the 2 rushers. This leaves your three receivers going against five defenders. Sending the center on a passing route shifts the balance to 4 against 5 which is more preferable. Most teams utilize some form of zone defense. Just sending the center on a 5 yard hook or out will occupy a linebacker. However, having the center run longer routes is where the big plays can happen. Many times the cornerbacks and safeties are focusing on the receivers. Run a play that will draw the safety to one side of the field and have the center fill in the now open area.

See the free plays in this playbook that utilize the center: All Hooks, Lineman Leak, and 83 Mirror.

Defense Sets: Man-to-Man vs Zone

When setting up your defense, most teams play either a man-to-man or zone. Below are their advantages and disadvantages.

Man-to-Man:

Advantages:

- Coverage Responsibility – Before a play starts each defender knows who they are covering.
- Increased Quarterback Sacks – Playing man-to-man should allow your rush some more time to get to the quarterback since the receivers will be covered on the line of scrimmage.

Disadvantages:

- Quarterback Coverage – When playing man-to-man, the defenders will lose sight of the quarterback more as they running with the receivers. This can allow for some quarterback scrambling.
- Susceptible to Big Play – If facing a fast receiver and the rush is not getting to the quarterback, your defense could give a big play.

Zone:

Advantages:

- Area of Responsibility – Defenders generally stay in a designated area.
- Facing the Quarterback – For the most part in a zone, all eyes will be on the quarterback. This can be good against a quarterback who likes to rush a lot.

Disadvantages:

- Coverage Confusion – Players may cover receivers into another zone leaving their area open. A cornerback may let a receiver go thinking he has safety help behind him. However, the safety may be covering another receiver if the offense sends two into his zone.
- Death by Nickels and Dimes – Play zone usually means receivers will be open early in their routes. This can allow a good offense to use a short passing attack and work their way up the field against your defense.

Goal Line Defense

Playing defense against a competent offense can be tough. However, it gets ever tougher on the goal line. Even with the much shorter field, the offense has many options. What makes playing defense more challenging on the goal line is that usually the plays develop much quicker.

Our recommendation is to play man or cover 4. We call the cover 4 – columns or quarters. The idea is simple. The two cornerbacks and two safeties split the field into equal quarter sections and stick within their zone. One reason not to play this defense though is that everyone has to be on the same page. The offense can exploit one weak link by flooding the zone with multiple players.

Playing man defense takes the guess work out of where someone should be. However, this leaves the defense susceptible to quarterback runs. With 7-on-7 flag football, you will most likely be facing a 3 wide receiver set. One of the best defense strategies is to have three defensive backs man up on the receivers. The linebacker will cover the center should the offense utilize him in the play. The extra defensive back (DB) will line up closer to the line of scrimmage and spy the quarterback to prevent a scramble. If your DB has some speed, he can do a delayed blitz. This is where the defensive player will wait a 1 or 2 seconds then blitz. The hope is that your rush will force the quarterback to commit to one side allowing the DB to shoot through and pressure the quarterback into a bad throw or sack.