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STRATEGY GUIDE

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NFL FEVER 2004



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PLAYERS INC





Prima's Official Strategy Guide

Dan Egger

Prima Games

A Division of Random House, Inc.

3000 Lava Ridge Court

Roseville, CA 95661

(800) 733-3000

www.primagames.com



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Associate Product Manager: Jill Hinckley

Project Editor: Michelle Trujillo

Design & Layout: Kim Tran

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Let's Get it On!



Welcome to the *NFL Fever 2004* strategy guide. If you've already played this game, then we don't need to tell you that you're looking at a much improved franchise. This already solid football series took a serious step forward this year, and if you want to keep up with the best players, you'll have to master all the new additions. Here's a quick look at some of the most important upgrades. We'll show you how to get the most out of all of them later on in this guide.

New Defensive Adjustments

For starters, you won't be able to go deep at will this year, the secondary has stepped up and you'll have to play the run too. On-the-fly defensive adjustments and adaptive defensive players geared up to take away the deep pass are just two of the new defensive improvements.



Revised Tackling and Blocking

The new tackling and blocking engine not only makes the game look better in action, but it adds significantly to the gameplay. If you want a great running game, you'll have to learn to read your blocks.



New Coaching Features

A new and more-intuitive playcalling interface makes calling plays easier, enabling you to dig deep into the playcalling menus and pick the perfect play. You can also listen to the coach as he describes each and every play in your playbook. His tips are incredibly helpful and useful in tight game situations.



Read and Lead Passing

Read and Lead Passing may be the coolest football control innovation we've seen in years. It actually lets you control the direction of both your pass and your receiver. Learn to use this well, and even the best passing defenses will have trouble shutting you down.



Xbox Live™ Upgrades

Downloadable content, roster updates, updated player ratings, tournaments and an all-new "cheater beater" that shuts down online tomfoolery are just some of the top new Xbox Live™ features in *NFL Fever 2004*.



Improved Graphics

The player models have been vastly improved and the player faces have to be seen to be believed. This game looks great.

Let's get started with the *Fever 2004* strategy guide. Good luck.



Controlling the Player

The first skill you need to learn in *NFL Fever 2004* is individual player control. It doesn't matter how solid your strategy is or how good you are at reading the other team—if you can't make the plays, you won't win.

In this section, we discuss each type of player and the skills that are important to him. First, let's look at the player ratings.

They're easy to skip over, but to be a top *Fever* pro you need to know the strengths and weaknesses of your entire team. Those strengths can be found in the player ratings.

RTG (Rating, Overall): This indicates the ranking of each player. The higher the ranking, the better all-around player you have.

ACC (Acceleration): This shows how quickly a player can increase speed. Players with good acceleration can react and move quickly.

SPD (Speed): Some players are faster than others. Players with both good speed and acceleration are dangerous to the opposition.

STR (Strength): One player pushing back another player demonstrates strength. Linemen and power running backs make use of strength.

AGI (Agility): Agility is a player's ability to execute a special move and to react quickly. Players with high agility scores can spin, juke, and hurdle their way to touchdowns.

VIS (Vision): Vision indicates on-field awareness—a player's ability to observe and know what's going on. You can leave players with good vision under computer control while you control players with less vision.

HND (Hands): This ranking determines a player's ability to catch. Your receivers will need good HND ratings; your linemen probably won't.

END (Endurance): Players with high endurance ratings tire more slowly than players with low ratings. Before you use your favorite player over and over, check his END rating.

AGG (Aggressiveness): Players with high aggressiveness ratings react quickly and intensely to the ball and any ball carriers. Highly aggressive players are very useful when controlled by the computer.

ASTR (Arm Strength): Arm strength determines how hard a QB can throw the ball. Those with good arm strength can zip the ball a long distance. Those with low ASTR should stick to the short passing game.

PACR (Passing Accuracy): Even with a perfectly timed, strong throw, a QB with low passing accuracy can miss his target.

LSTR (Leg Strength): This score indicates how far a kicker can boot the ball.

KACR (Kicking Accuracy): This score indicates how good the kicker's aim is.



PNTS (Punting Strength): This number reflects the strength of your punter's kicking leg.

PNTA (Punting Accuracy): This reflects your punter's aim.

INJ (Injury Resistance): A high INJ rating means your player isn't likely to get injured. A low rating means you need to be careful.

BCTL (Ball Control): Players with high Ball Control scores rarely fumble. Be wary of players with low scores—they cough up the ball when you least expect it.

BTKL (Break Tackle): This score reflects the ability of your player to break a tackle and get free. Players with high BTKL scores are very useful on offense.

SBLK (Shed Block): This score indicates a player's ability to get past a block. Players with high ratings are good at stopping the run and pressuring the QB. Players with low ratings are usually better suited for pass coverage.

BLK (Blocking): Good blockers are a boon to both the passing game and the running game. Know your team's good blockers and follow them in the running game.

FINS (Finesse Moves): This rating reflects a blocker's ability to use finesse moves to push aside a defender. Players with high scores are very useful.

TKL (Tackling): Players with high tackling ratings are reliable members of your defense. Players with low ratings can miss a big hit at the worst possible moment.

CVG (Coverage): This indicates a player's ability to cover during the pass. If you enjoy playing as a safety or cornerback, you can play with someone who has a low CVG rating and pick up the slack with your skills.

Pre-Game Practice

Training Camp

Even veteran football gamers should make a quick run through the training camp mode in *NFL Fever 2004*. Re-familiarize yourself with the controls, open up some secrets, and—most important—get an introduction to the new passing feature.



Moving Like an NFL Running Back

This one's cake; just run through the cones.



Sprinting to the End Zone

Another easy one. Use **A** to sprint. Hold it down until the lightning bolt shrinks, release for a second or two, then hold it down again.



Spinning Around a Defender

The key to a good spin move is hitting it early. In a game situation, use this move when you're away from all but one potential tackler. You have to spin by all the tacklers to complete this drill.



Power Running: The Shoulder Charge

Bull your way through the defenders. Make sure your runner has a high strength rating before trying this move in a game.



Putting Your New Moves to

Follow the onscreen directions and use what you've learned so far. You should make it through easily.



One-Button Passing

This is just a quick reminder of how the single-button passing works. Hit **A** and let it fly.



Pitch and Catch

This drill teaches you how to throw using **R**. See how the target leads the receivers? You need to mimic that in the drills coming up.



Selecting Your Receiver

Here's another ultra-simple drill. Pay attention—it gets tougher!



Trigger Passing

Hold down **R** for a bullet; tap it for a lob.



Leading Your Receiver

Here it gets a little more skill-intensive. Check your receiver's speed and direction before you throw the ball. Don't be frustrated if this skill takes a while to master. It's well worth the practice.



TIP

Remember that different quarterbacks have different arm strengths. Adjust your lead distances shorter for strong-armed passers and longer for noodle-armed QBs.

Start by targeting the end of the route (the tip of the arrow) and get a feel for your receiver's speed. Don't be afraid to lead your receiver beyond the end of his route. That tactic works especially well when throwing to your HB out of the flat.

Also, use touch passes if you have trouble with the short middle passes. You have to throw early, but it's worth it.



Throwing Bullet and Lob Passes

Follow the directions and get the ball past the yellow barriers. Learn the timing for the high and low passes, which serve you well in game situations.

Read and Lead Minigame

This is the toughest drill you face in training camp, but it's also the best for preparing you to pass in a real game. We deal more with throwing the ball in the QB section of this guide, but here are three tips to help you get through this minigame.



- Always hit **Y** to see your routes before snapping the ball.
- Hit the button of your desired receiver and the game automatically selects him.
- If you can't easily throw to the primary route in Read and Lead mode, choose another receiver.

Kicking Directionally

Get a feel for the kicking game in this drill. For the short zones, you need only a little bit of red to show on the gauge—more, and you go over the top.



Hitting the Right Way

Pay attention to the direction closely. Defense can win or lose games.



Offensive Player Controls: The Basics

Let's start with the offense. Before you jump into your first game, know all the controls available, so you go into battle fully armed. Here's a quick overview of the basic controls for every offensive ball carrier.



Sprint: **A**

Use the sprint button every time you have the ball. When you hit **A**, you get a burst of speed and see a lightning bolt over your head. This wears off over time, so don't keep **A** depressed all the time. When you have open space, release the button for a couple of seconds, then hit it again.



Spin Move: B

Use the spin move in open-field running. It slows you down in the middle of a defensive pack, letting pursuers catch you. Hit the move before your tackler arrives, and don't hold down A when you hit B, or you won't spin.



Juke Moves: L and R

A juke move sidesteps you right or left depending on which trigger you pull. Use juke moves to sneak into a hole in the line or to evade a defender coming at you head on. These aren't super moves, but if used properly, they can help you add a couple of extra yards to a play.



Shoulder Charge: X

If you have a ball carrier with enough strength and power, the shoulder charge move knocks a smaller defender flat on his back. If your ball carrier is weaker, use a finesse move like the spin.



Hurdle: R

This is a great move when you're being pursued from behind. Hit R just as the defender makes his grab. If you time it correctly, he grabs air and you run free.



Stiff Arm: Y

When a defender comes at you, use Y to push him back with your free hand. This move is effective when a defender is approaching you from an angle. With one clean shove, you get some distance and move right on by.



Celebrations: R, R, and R

Nothing feels better than a little celebrating on your way to the end zone. Remember that you risk fumbling if someone hits you while you're celebrating.



Dive: BLK

This is a last-ditch move to grab a couple yards before you're tackled. It's great for sneaking into the end zone and is also useful for picking up short first downs. Don't use it in other situations. Once you're on the ground, the defense easily finishes the tackle.



Lateral: WHT

Laterals are rarely used in the NFL because they often turn into fumbles. You can use it in the game, but beware the consequences. Pass laterally only if you're sure you have someone open to lateral the ball to.



Running Back Basics

The running back is a crucial part of any *Fever* team. No matter how good your passing offense is, you have to have a running game to back it up or the defense just sets up in a pass defense and shuts you down.

A good running back keeps the defense on its heels and takes pressure off the passing game, so it doesn't have to make the big play on every down.

Be smart in your use of the running back. Properly controlled, he's hard to stop. If someone does figure out how to stop him, you can bet your passing game will be wide open.

Here are tips for running with the ball.

Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your running back.

Speed: Fast backs can run to the outside and get around the corner. Slower backs are caught from behind or cut off before they can turn upfield.

Acceleration: Backs with good acceleration can hit holes quickly and get up the field before the defense reacts. Slow accelerators often get to holes too late.

Hands: It's okay to have a running back with a low hands rating (below 70), but a running back who also can catch gives your offense a lot more strategic alternatives.

Endurance: Watch this stat. If your player has a low rating, his skills quickly diminish as the game progresses.

Injury Resistance: You don't want your number one running back to get hurt during a game, so watch this number. If your back has a low injury resistance, don't rely on him too heavily.

Break Tackles: Backs with high tackle-breaking scores can make moves on defenders and add extra yards to almost every carry. Those with low scores need to turn upfield and take what they can get before the tackle.

Blocking: This score is more important for fullbacks than halfbacks because they do a lot of lead blocking. Backs also protect the QB from the pass rush, so low blocking ratings can be deadly.

Ball Control: Fumbles are the last thing you want in a close game. If your player has a ball control rating in the 70s or below, be careful especially when making moves.

Running Back Tip 1:

Follow Your Plays

Design your running plays to open a single hole for your back to hit and gain yards. If you freelance too much (say, try to stretch an inside running play to the outside or run the opposite direction of your blocks) you most likely lose yardage.



Running Back Tip 2: Know Your Running Back

Before you start playing with a team, check your running back's stats. Understanding his skills and abilities (see sidebar) helps you know how to call the right plays for him.



Running Back Types

You find several kinds of running backs in the NFL, and many that bridge the gap between two types. Here's a quick look at some of them.

The Power Back

Highs: STR, BTKL, END

Lows: SPD, ACC, HND

Best use: Running plays designed to run between the offensive tackles, right up the middle of the field.



The Finesse Back

Highs: SPD, ACC

Lows: STR, BTKL

Best use: Running on sweeps and counters around the corner of the defensive line. These backs have to have speed to get around the outside before the defense seals it off.



The Hands Back

Highs: HND, SPD

Lows: STR, BTKL

Best use: The short passing game. A halfback with a HND rating of 75 or higher is extremely useful in the passing game. With this back, a QB can look for the deep pass but know that there's a safe, short pass to make if no one's open.



The Average Back

Highs: Varied

Lows: Varied

Best use: Even if you don't have the NFL's best back on your team, use him to keep the defense on their toes. Just call plays that work to his relative strengths and prove you're not afraid to run.



Running Back Tip 3: Run North and South

Sweeping to the outside makes you feel good because you cover long distances before a defender hits you. But it's easy for your opponents to seal off the sideline. Don't always try for the big gain. As soon as you see a clean hole upfield, take it. In the end, you average much better yardage.



Running Back Tip 4: Wait for Your Blocks

If you call plays that involve pulling linemen, wait for them to get in front and make the block. A common mistake is to hit the hole before they get in front of you. Then you meet the defender that they were supposed to take out.



Running Back Tip 5: Don't Make Unnecessary Moves

Even if your running back has good BTKL skills and can put on a mean spin, be careful to use his moves only when they will help you. Make a move too early or in the wrong situation, and other defenders may catch up and bring you down.



Advanced Running Back Techniques

Advanced Running Back Tip 1: Know Your Blockers

No matter how well designed the play, you don't know what will happen until it actually takes place. As a running back, be aware that the hole that was supposed to open may not—but another lane may appear directly beside it.

Keep your eyes open and wait for your blockers to make their move. Immediately read what's opening up and hit the hole as fast as you can. In the NFL, the greatest running backs are the ones who can read the field, spot the hole, and react in seconds.



Advanced Running Back Tip 2: Read the Holes

No matter how well designed the play, you don't know what will happen until it actually takes place. As a running back, be aware that the hole that was supposed to open may not—but another lane may appear directly beside it.

Keep your eyes open and wait for your blockers to make their move. Immediately read what's opening up and hit the hole as fast as you can. In the NFL, the greatest running backs are the ones who can read the field, spot the hole, and react in seconds.



Advanced Running Back Tip 3: Know Who's About to Tackle You

While looking downfield, also watch who's closing to make the tackle. If it's a big lineman, you might get away by sprinting. If it's a linebacker, you need a finesse move to keep running. Once you hit the secondary, throw a shoulder charge into a defensive back. If they're small enough, they go right over.



Fullback Play

Fullbacks have a variety of uses in the NFL. Some are simply blocking backs who clear the way for the running back. Others are powerful runners who can be counted on to bang through the line on third and one. Still others have good hands and are used as much as a halfback in the running game.

Again, check skills before you play the game. Learn what your fullback can or cannot do, then play to his strengths and stay away from his weaknesses. If your team doesn't have a solid fullback, stick to a single back set or Shotgun Formation and rely on your tight end and offensive line to open holes for the halfback.



Wide Receiver Basics

The passing game gets emphasis in *NFL Fever 2004*, and you can't have a passing game without a couple of wide receivers to catch the ball. Even a great quarterback needs a couple of wide receivers who can both get open and catch his throws. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your receivers.

Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your wide receiver.

Speed: Your number one WR should be pushing a rating of 90 in speed. He has to have the jets to get open deep and outrun defenders.

Acceleration: Good acceleration is incredibly important for a wide receiver. He has to accelerate into his moves and also accelerate to the ball when it isn't thrown off target.

Hands: This is perhaps the most important of all the wide receiver skills. Nothing makes you angrier than delivering a perfect pass only to have a stone-handed receiver drop it.

Break tackles: This isn't as important with wide receivers as it is with running backs, but the yards gained after the catch are crucial, and it's good to have a receiver who can shake a few defenders after pulling down a pass.

Ball Control: Watch out for receivers who can't hold onto the ball. If you have one, don't try too hard for yards after the catch. Just get the yards you can without throwing too many moves.

Wide Receiver Tip 4: Learn How to Hurdle

Hit **△** to hurdle when a defender is behind you. Time it right and he grabs thin air. This is a very important move to learn as a WR. When you catch deep passes, your most pressing threat usually comes up from behind. Learn the timing and you can add 10 or more yards to a big catch.



Wide Receiver Tip 5: Run in Motion

Motion is important because it requires the defense to adapt and lets the quarterback read the opposing strategy. We'll talk about motion more in the next section.



Wide Receiver Tip 1: Choose Plays with Your Receivers in Mind

If you have a speedy WR, send him deep and air it out. If you have a WR with great acceleration, try some slants over the middle. By the time the defense catches up to him, he already has the ball.



Wide Receiver Tip 2: Learn about your 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Receivers

If the defense knows you have a favorite receiver, they double-cover him for the rest of the game and shut him down. Learn the skills and abilities of your other receivers, and you often end up throwing to them as much as to your primary guy.



Wide Receiver Tip 3: Turn Upfield Immediately After the Catch

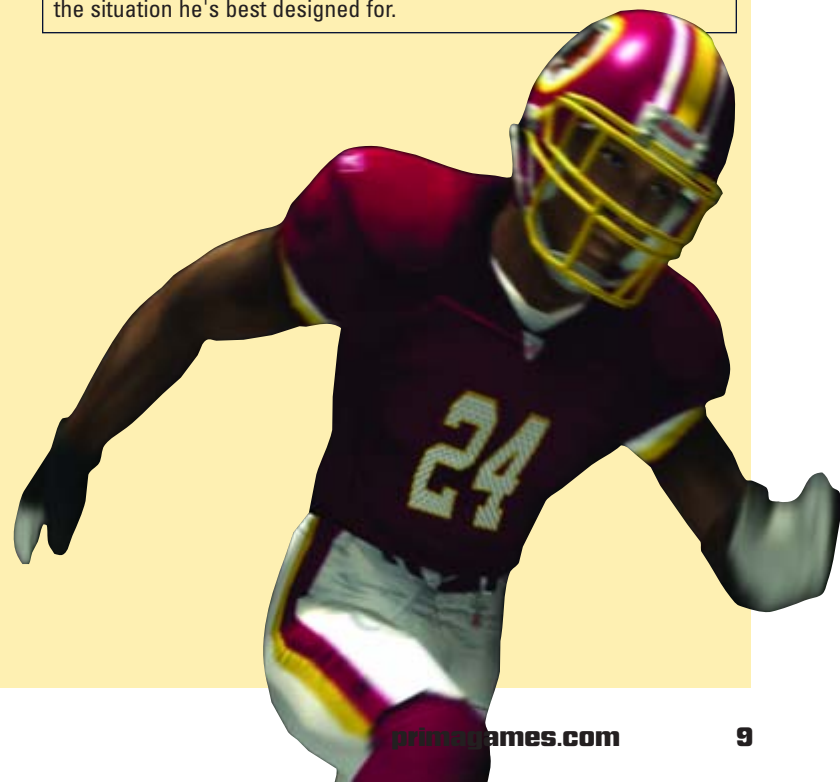
Yards after the catch are hard to come by. Grab as many as you can by immediately turning upfield. Kick in the sprint turbos (**A**) and run to daylight. Fancy moves don't usually buy you much.



The Tight End







The tight end is another huge part of your offense, but the position is different for each squad. Some TEs—among them Tony Gonzalez of the Chiefs—are almost like another receiver, and are an integral part of the passing game.



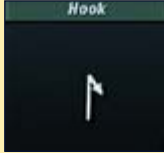




Others are primarily used as blockers who open holes for running backs and help protect the quarterback. Check out the stats for your TE before you start the game and use him in the situation he's best designed for.



The Routes

Often a passing play is described according to the route that the primary receiver runs. Here's a brief rundown of some of the main routes.

	Button Hook Out: Short comeback.		Angle Out: Short pass to the outside.
	Stunt Corner: Juke to the inside and then go outside.		Hook Out: Medium comeback.
	Out: Medium pass to the outside.		Seam Out: Break deep to the sideline.

	Seam: Deep over the middle.		Dino: Triple move deep across the middle.
	Hook: Fake deep and break back inside.		Sluggo: Fake the slant and break deep.
	In: Come across the middle deep.		Medium Cross: Come across the middle medium.
	Button Hook In: Very short comeback.		

Quarterback Basics

The quarterback is perhaps the most important player in this or any football game—and the position is the most complex to play. You can survive with a quarterback who throws the most basic of routes and makes the most basic of calls, but if you want to really succeed at *Fever*, get the most out of your quarterbacks.

First, the basics:

Note

Note that **X**, **Y**, and **RLK** swap usage when you start scrambling.



Pocket Passer Basics

The most traditional QB is a pocket passer. The player hikes the ball, takes a three-, five-, or seven-step drop, and then looks for an open receiver. If your team has a pocket passer, here are tips for getting the most out of his skills.

TIP

It's easy to see if your QB is better at scrambling or at staying in the pocket. If his SPD or ACC is below 75, stick to the pocket. If his INJ or BCTL is below 75, it's still a good idea to stick to the pocket.



Pocket Passer Tip 1: Look at All the Receivers

Don't just look for your primary receiver to break open. Keep your eyes on the field. You never know when your third or fourth option will break free.



Pocket Passer Tip 2: Watch your Footwork

If you throw while scrambling, you often make a bad, loopy throw. Plant your feet securely before making a throw, especially a deep throw.



Pocket Passer Tip 3: Stay in the Pocket

When the defense applies pressure, you may be tempted to drop back out of the pocket and drift away from the defense. If you do, you often throw off your back foot or miss the quick routes as you fade back. Stay in the pocket and keep an eye on the defensive rush.



Pocket Passer Tip 4: Know When to Throw It Away

If nothing has opened and the pocket is caving, just get rid of the ball. It's better than a sack and much better than an interception.



Pocket Passer Tip 5: Master the Quick Out

The quick, short pass is a major component of NFL passing games and a perfect outlet for a pocket passer. Read the defense (we get to that in a couple pages), pick your receiver, hike the ball, and make the quick pass. You may only pick up four or five yards, but that's a good high-percentage play.



Mobile Passer Tip 3: Call Plays That Make Scrambling Easier

Plays that feature a back running out to the flat or other short crossing route work well with a scrambling QB. Follow your receivers in their direction and hit them on the run.



Mobile Passer Tip 4: Don't Take Unnecessary Hits

If you have a top scrambling QB, don't get him injured or have him fumble. Be prepared to hit **SLK** in scrambling mode to make your QB take a slide. Your opponent will hate it, but you'll still have your QB in the fourth quarter.



Mobile Passer Basics

In the last decade, the mobile quarterback has become an integral part of the NFL. What was once considered a liability is now considered the QB prototype—a passer who's just as dangerous with his legs as he is with his arm. Here are a couple tips for winning with a mobile QB.

TIP

It's easy to see if your quarterback is a scrambling QB. If his SPD or ACC is above 75, work scrambling into the game. If his INJ and BCTL are above 75, make scrambling a key component of your passing game.



Mobile Passer Tip 1: Scramble Early

Let the defense know early on that they have to pay attention to your QB at all times, or he runs. If you do this right, they have to keep a man on you for the rest of the game, opening the secondary for easier passing.



Mobile Passer Tip 2: Scramble During Pass Plays

Simply running a few QB draw plays doesn't threaten your defense. Call pass plays that send receivers overloading onto one side. While they make their crossing routes, scramble in that direction. This makes passing easier, and if you have open space you can run it for seven or eight yards easy.



Mobile Passer Tip 5: Read the Defense's Reaction

When you start scrambling, the defense is forced to react. If a linebacker or a member of the secondary pulls up to seal off your run, look to the space he vacated—a receiver may be wide open. Pay special attention when the middle linebacker breaks off to stop you. That leaves the middle of the field wide open.



Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your quarterback.

Passing Accuracy: This is crucial for a good passing game. If the rating's high, you can thread the needle through the defense. If it's low, you have to look for more open receivers.

Arm Strength: This determines how far you can throw the ball and how much heat you can get on it. If you have low ASTR, don't try to force the deep pass. The secondary feasts on those lame ducks.

Speed: Good SPD ratings are not essential for your QB but those who do have good ratings (like Michael Vic) can scramble and frustrate defenses. If your SPD rating is low, stay in the pocket.

Acceleration: This is similar to speed—not essential, but certainly useful. Good ACC can help you sneak out of trouble without taking a sack.

Ball Control: Keep an eye on this stat if you're playing as a mobile QB. Some QBs drop the ball when a defender barely hits them.

Injury Resistance: Check this stat carefully. If you use your QB like a running back, he may get injured before the second half rolls around.

Read and Lead Passing

One of the coolest innovations in *NFL Fever 2004* is Read and Lead passing. This feature lets you control the direction of every pass you throw, rather than just pick a receiver and hit a button.

The skill is frustrating until you get the hang of it, but once you learn how to use it well, you can pick apart secondaries like Joe Montana in his prime. Here are some tips to help you master this control scheme.

Read and Lead Passing Tip 1: Play Through the *Fever* Training Camp

This mode is mostly basic, but a very good minigame teaches you how to use Read and Lead passing in game situations. Play through this minigame many times until you get a feel for the control scheme. There's no better way to get a grasp of it.



Read and Lead Passing Tip 2: Know Your Players

You've heard this before and you'll hear it again, but it's very important in Read and Lead passing. The system works as differently for a weak-armed QB and slow WR as it does for a rocket-armed QB and speedster receiver. Learn how much lead you need to give each receiver. Sometimes a fraction of a second makes all the difference.



Read and Lead Passing Tip 3: Pay Attention to Velocity

Plant your feet when you throw the ball, and remember to correctly use (R) with either a tap (touch pass) or a hold (bullet pass). Each requires timing to hit your receiver, and each is useful in its own circumstance. Don't rely on a single pass type. You need both to succeed.



Read and Lead Passing Tip 4: Remember Height

If you hold (R) as your QB goes into his throwing motion, the ball is thrown high. This often helps get it above the outstretched arms of defenders. If you hold (R) as you throw, the ball zips in low, which is great for comeback routes.



Read and Lead Passing Tip 5: Select Your Receiver with His Icon Button

Always select your receiver with his icon button. It's a three-step process.

- 1) Choose the receiver with his icon button.
- 2) Move the target with the right stick. (Lead the receiver.)
- 3) Pull the right trigger to pass the ball.



Other Passing Modes

One-button passing: This is the traditional way to throw in a football game. Hit (A) to snap the ball, then pick your favorite receiver and hit his button, and the QB automatically throws to him. One-button passing is the easiest and in some cases most efficient passing method. You can't exploit holes in the defense very well, but if you're controlling an accurate passer, you can hit your targets on their routes.

Trigger: This is similar to traditional one-button passing, but this time you throw using (R). While using trigger passing, you can pull (L), which sends your receiver breaking down the field for a deep pass. This broken play control is very helpful, but be careful—if your man isn't open, this is an easy way to get your pass picked off. Trigger passing bridges the gap between traditional one-button passing and Read and Lead. Its benefits include the broken-play control that gives you a chance to exploit some holes in the defense, and the use of (R) to pass, which is better than the usual buttons for controlling pass velocity.

Trigger passing is the "training wheels" version of Read and Lead. The receivers will be in a pre-lead state in Trigger passing. The AI does the leading for the user and it is a great way to get a feel for how far to lead a receiver.



Advanced Quarterback Techniques

Besides being one of the most important players on the field, the quarterback also can act as a play-caller during the game. A quarterback who can make last-minute changes at the line of scrimmage can give a defense no end of trouble. There are two main ways to do this: changing receiver routes and calling audibles.

Changing Receiver Routes

This is one of a QB's most useful skills. To do it right, you must be able to read defenses and be able to think quickly. (It's easy to get a delay-of-game penalty while making last-second changes.) Here are a few basic situations in which you change routes correctly.

Situation 1: Defensive Backs Are on Your Receiver

If you have a fast receiver, this is a good situation. Change the route to go deep and fade away from whatever safeties are in the backfield.



Situation 2: Defensive Backs Are Playing Several Yards off Your Receiver

This means they respect your WR's speed and have left themselves a cushion. Change the route to a quick slant or a curl route, and you have a quick pass for a couple easy yards.



Situation 3: The Opponent Puts Everyone In to Stop the Run

Send your WR straight down the field and let the ball go early. With all the focus on the run, he probably faces minimal coverage.



Situation 4: The Defense Sends in Extra Players on the Blitz

Tell your TE to stay in and block. If you think your opponent might blitz, hotroute your running back to stay and block instead of going on a pass route. This is often more effective than having the TE block.



Situation 5: You Sent a Man in Motion and a Defender Followed Him

Switch your running back to a deep route in hopes that he'll face a one-on-one with a slower linebacker.



Situation 6: You Sent a Man in Motion and a Defender Doesn't Follow

Change routes so that you flood one area of the field with receivers. If you overload the zone, the defense can't cover everybody.



Calling Audibles

In the coaching section of this book we talk about reading defenses and exploiting them by calling audibles. However, even before you're comfortable reading and reacting, you should put your favorite plays into the audible menu. When you face an obvious running defense, you can swap quickly to a passing play and burn them deep, or vice versa.

Knowing how to use audibles correctly also pays off in the two-minute drill. You can go to the line of scrimmage and call your plays from theirs. The right call could get you a touchdown. The wrong call could cost you the game. No one ever said it was easy being a quarterback.

This is a sampling of the ways you can exploit defenses by changing plays and receiver routes at the line of scrimmage. We get into more of this in the coaching section of this guide.



Kicking Basics

Your kicker often is the difference between snatching victory from the jaws of defeat and going home with a notch in the loss department. It's good to know your kicker's stats before starting a game.

Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your wide kicker.

Kicking Strength: If your kicker has a low KSTR rating, don't try for the long field goal. Either punt on the fourth down, or go for it.

Kicking Accuracy: This determines how accurate your kicker will be.

Quick Kicking Tips

Kick the ball high on kickoffs. The more air you get under the ball, the easier it is for your teammates to cover.



Adjust height on field goals. On longer field goals, you need to aim your target down just a little. You risk a block, but you get better distance.

Know when to kick and when to go for two. Many games are won or lost by a single one- or two-point conversion, so know when to kick for one and take the safe points and when to risk going for two.



One Point or Two?

Leading By	Go For	Trailing By	Go For
1	2	1	1
2	1	2	2
3	1	3	1
4	2	4	1
5	2	5	2
6	1	6	1
7	1	7	1
8	1	8	1
9	1	9	1
10	1	10	2
11	1	11	1
12	2	12	1
13+	1	13+	1

Be smart about inside kicks. You're often tempted to surprise your opponent with an inside kick. This is a low percentage play, and you yield a lot of free yardage to your opponent. If you insist on trying, make the inside kick from a regular kicking formation. You actually surprise your opponent, and you have a numbers advantage over his front-line guys.



Never kick off out of bounds. The penalty is just too steep. Just kick it down the middle and let your coverage team do its job.

Punting Basics

Do not neglect your punting game. A good punter can pin your opponents back in the shadow of their own goalposts.

Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your punter.

Punting Strength: You want a punter who can boom the ball.

Punting Accuracy: Know this stat before you try a precision coffin-corner punt.

Quick Punting Tips

Kick the ball high in the air: Line-drive punts give punt returners plenty of room to do their magic.

Kick out of bounds if necessary. One way to shut down a top punt returner is to never let him have the ball. Practice directional kicking so that the ball lands just a foot or two out of bounds in your desired location.

Go for the coffin corner. A perfect punt is when you kick the ball and have it land out of bounds inside your opponent's 10-yard line. This takes lots of practice and skill, but it's a very useful tactical maneuver.



Kick Returner Basics

Kick returners can make a huge difference in a football game. A good return can save an offense several first downs and can set them up for easy scores. A bad return can do just the opposite.

Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your kick and punt returner.

Speed: Having the speed to outrun the coverage team can help you get around the corner and up the field.

Acceleration: Good returners need to get up to full speed quickly, because danger is always coming.

Ball Control: You definitely don't want to get too crazy with a returner who can't hold onto a football. The hard special-teams tackles jar the ball loose easily.

Quick Returner Tips

Keep running north and south. You don't have to head right up the middle, but time is at a premium in the return game and you need to get as many yards as you can as quickly as you can.



Watch your blockers. Big kick returns usually start with a big block. Keep an eye upfield, and watch out for danger.

Make the big first move. The most important move you can make on a kick return is to make the first defender miss. Whether you try a spin, shoulder charge, or juke, if you can get past the first guy, you add quite a few more yards.



Defensive Player Controls: The Basics

Now we're on to the defense. The offense gets the glory, but defense wins and loses games. The first step to having a good defense is learning how to control the defensive players. Here's a quick guide to defensive controls.



Dive for Pass: **ALK**

This is mega-risky. If you miss the pass, you can't stop the receiver. But if the QB throws up a lame duck, it's worth a shot if the ball seems to be out of range of the intended receiver.



Sprint: **A**

You want to get to the ball on defense as quickly as possible. You may be switching between players, so it doesn't hurt to press the sprint button as much as you can and milk all the speed that you can out of your defender.



Knock Down Pass: **WHT**

This is a reliable and useful button for those who like top play in coverage. Just reach out your arm and swat down the ball. It isn't flashy, but used correctly it can help shut down a passing offense.



Dive Tackle: **B**

This is a good way to close the gap to a ball carrier and make a good, hard tackle. Be careful: If you dive wrong, you may miss the tackle completely and your guy skates by.



Player Nearest Target: **L**

Use this button to switch to the defender closest to the targeted receiver so you can try to knock down the pass or pick it off.



Player Nearest Ball: **X**

Be ready to tag this button quickly, and find yourself in the middle of the play. But be careful not to hit the button too late while trying to tackle the QB, which will make your defensive back run away from his receiver.



Shuffle Step: **R**

The shuffle step lets your defender move laterally to keep facing the ball carrier. Use this move when you're trying to keep an eye on a scrambling quarterback or a shifty running back.



Attempt to Catch Pass: **Y**

This can be a risky move, because you're less likely to stop the pass trying to catch it than by trying to knock down the ball. It's worth a try, because an interception is far more valuable than an incomplete pass.



Linebacker Basics

In *NFL Fever*, as in the real NFL, the linebacker position is one of the most difficult and complex positions. The linebacker has to watch the gaps in the line and stuff the run, but he's also called upon to cover the pass over the middle.

If you choose to control the linebacker, you have to read the offense and keep an eye out for the run while still paying attention to your zone or the receiver you're supposed to be covering.

Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your linebacker.

Speed: This helps you keep up with receivers and also gets you to the QB easier on a blitz.

Tackling: A good linebacker needs to be a good tackler. You're often all there is between the ball carrier and the secondary.

Shedding Blocks: This skill is especially useful when blitzing with your LB. The quicker he gets past a block, the more pressure he can put on the QB.

Aggressiveness: Linebackers with high ratings in this area are especially dangerous when you let the computer control them. They seem to be in the middle of every play.

Linebacker Tip 1: Read Before You React

Watch what the QB does before you make your big move. If he drops behind the back, look for your receiver or cover your zone. If he hands off the ball, sprint to the runner.



Linebacker Tip 2: Think Like a Running Back

When the offense is running the ball, think like a running back and look for his closest open hole. If you do your job, you hit the hole at the same time he does and nail him for no gain.



Linebacker Tip 3: If You Have the Skills, Blitz

A linebacker can put serious pressure on a QB if he has the right skill ratings. Look for LBs with high ratings in SPD, SBLK, and ACC. They usually make good blitzers.



Linebacker Tip 4: Keep an Eye Out for Scrambling QBs

LBs have to stop scrambling QBs. It's your job to determine when to leave your pass coverage and make a run at the QB. If the QB is a good scrambler, this can be a difficult choice. But if a linebacker doesn't do it, the QB runs over your team all day.



Defensive Back Basics

Defensive backs are the last line of defense against the passing game, and they often are put in dangerous one-on-one situations. Good cornerbacks and safeties are up to the challenge.

You're also called upon to blitz from the secondary from time to time and to load the offensive line with a speedy extra tackler. The rest of your secondary teammates must fill in the gap you've left, but if you can get to the QB, it's worth it.

Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your defensive back.

Speed: You need to be able to keep up with receivers who are generally very fast.

Acceleration: If you have a high acceleration rating, you can react to passes quickly and make fast moves to get to the ball.

Shedding Blocks: Defensive backs with high ratings in this area are perfect for blitzes. Those with low scores should stick to coverage.

Tackling: Some defensive backs have very low tackling scores. Don't go for the big dive tackle with them—play it safe.

Coverage: Players with high coverage scores can be very effective against the pass, especially when controlled by the computer.

Defensive Back Tip 1: Push the Receiver to Your Safeties

If you're playing cornerback, get to the outside of a receiver and force him to your safeties. If you're a safety, judge where you can help double a receiver.



Defensive Back Tip 2: Don't Try to Intercept Every Pass

It's okay just to knock the ball down, and it's less risky than trying an interception. If the pass looks like a floater or you have room, try for a grab. If it's close, swat it down.



Defensive Back Tip 3: Know Your Opponent

If you're playing against a rocket-fast WR, give him space off the line of scrimmage and try to keep up. If you're covering a slower receiver with good hands, cover him like a quilt and don't let him get the ball.



Defensive Back Tip 4: Blitz with Intensity

If you're called on for a safety blitz or corner blitz, don't be half-hearted about it. You leave a gap in the secondary that your opponent will exploit unless you put serious pressure on the QB.



Defensive Back Basics

Your defensive line has the dual job of getting pressure on the quarterback and stopping the running back. A defensive line that constantly gets in the QB's face takes pressure off the linebackers and the secondary. A defensive line that can shut down the run frees extra men to cover the pass.

Important Ratings

These skills determine the effectiveness of your defensive linemen.

Strength: Players with high strength ratings can push back offensive linemen who are trying to block and collapse the pocket on the QB.

Acceleration: Good acceleration means that your player can make quick moves to hit the QB or shut down a running play.

Shedding Blocks: You want your linemen to have good skills in this area. They're always facing a block. The easier it is for them to get past it, the better they can do overall.

Tackling: Running backs are hard to tackle, and your linemen are called upon to tackle running backs throughout the game. A lineman with bad tackling skills can create a dream day for an opposing running back.

Defensive Lineman Tip 1: Run Line Stunts

Choose plays in which your linemen swap positions and attack the QB from different directions. This often throws the opposing offensive line off their game and gets you a shot at the QB.



Defensive Lineman Tip 2: Run Your Own Stunts

It's okay to pull off the line and put yourself in another position for a stunt-like blitz. This leaves a gaping hole in the position you left, but if you get to the QB before he can react, it won't matter.



Defensive Lineman Tip 3: Keep an Eye on the Running Back

If all you think about is pass rush you over-pursue on running plays and the running back blasts past you. Attack the QB, but remember that your job is to shut down the run, too.



Defensive Lineman Tip 4: Finish the Job

If you get close to a QB, quickly hit **B** to make a dive tackle. That last-second burst is often just enough to take down the QB before he can get rid of the ball.



Secondary Adjustments

One of the best features in *Fever* is the ability to adjust your defense before the snap of the ball. If you're smart, you can shut down an offense and adapt to audibles quickly and efficiently.

Before the ball is snapped, hit **W** to bring up a menu bar at the top of your screen.



This bar gives you a set of options to adapt your defense quickly. Here's what they do:

- X—Bump:** Your cornerbacks come up to the line and bump your wide receivers. This is good for throwing receivers off their pattern and throwing offenses off their rhythm.
- Y—Loose:** If you know they're going to throw deep, switch to loose coverage. This keeps your corners from getting burned deep and helps them shut down the long routes.
- B—Original:** This switches you back to your original coverage settings.
- A—Tight:** If the offense is throwing quick slants on your defense, switch to this defense and your secondary covers the receivers tight from the line of scrimmage, eliminating the buffer zone that short passes exploit.
- Alt—Disguise:** If your opponents are smart enough to recognize your defensive changes, use this button to throw them off.

Note

You can also adjust the location of your defensive line and linebackers before a play. This is useful when you are able to predict what kind of play your opponent is going to run.

Before the ball is snapped, hit **B**. You see a menu bar at the top of your screen.



Choose to move the defensive line with **A**. Choose to move the linebackers with **B**.

Once you've picked which group to move, send them in the desired direction using the **+** digital pad. You can cancel out of this mode at any time by hitting **W**.

Coaching Like a Pro

Now that you've learned the basics of player control, it's time to learn the basics of coaching. Football is one of the most complex sports ever invented, and strategy can seem daunting at first.

The key is to keep it simple, know what your team does best, and anticipate what your opponent will do. If you can do all that, you'll be fine. To start, here's a primer on offensive and defensive formations.



Offensive Formations

Shotgun

The Shotgun formation is a passing formation that gives the QB four and sometimes five passing options. You get extra time to throw the ball, but you risk losing more yards if you get sacked.



Strengths

- The Shotgun provides extra time for QB to find an open man.
- You can put up to five receivers near the line.
- It makes draw plays very effective.

Weaknesses

- Running plays can be slow to set up.
- The defense can prepare for the pass.
- A sacked quarterback loses a lot of ground.

Shotgun Sets



When to Use the Shotgun

- You have a strong QB and receivers.
- The defense is putting too much pressure on your QB.
- You need to get a lot of yards on a single play.

Typical Game Situations

- Second and long
- Third and long

I-Formation

The I-Formation or I-Form is a balanced offensive set using two backs in the backfield and three other eligible receivers. This formation is good for both a running attack and passing attack.



Strengths

- It's balanced—you can run and pass.
- The I-Form provides a fullback who can be the lead blocker for your HB.
- It gives your QB several options to throw.

Weaknesses

- Backs can't get out to the deep pass quickly.
- It's hard to flood zone defenses with two WRs and a TE.
- It's not a strong, focused run or pass offense.

I-Formation Sets



When to Use the I-Formation

- You have a good blocking FB and good TE.
- You like running a balanced offense.
- You want to run sweeps and counters to the outside.

Typical Game Situations

- First and second down
- Third and less than seven

Single Back



The Single Back formation only has one running back. It is a passing formation but with the right mix of TEs and WRs can be used effectively to run the ball.

Strengths

- You have more receivers on the line of scrimmage.
- You can still run effectively.
- Your TE becomes very useful.

Weaknesses

- Your running back doesn't have a lead blocker.
- Your QB must often rely on the HB to block against the pass rush.
- The defense will be reading your pass.

Single Back Sets



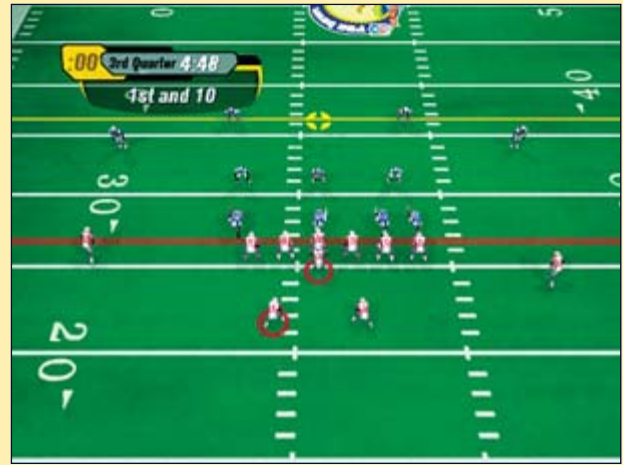
When to Use the Single Back

- You don't have a good blocking FB.
- You have a good catching and blocking TE.
- You want a third or fourth WR to throw to.

Typical Game Situations

- First and second down
- Third and less than ten

Pro Formation



The Pro formation or Pro form is a balanced offensive set using two backs in the backfield and three other eligible receivers. This formation is good for both running attacks and passing attacks.

Strengths

- It's balanced; you can run and pass.
- It provides a lead blocker for your HB.
- It's good for running both inside and outside.

Weaknesses

- It's not the best formation for long passes.
- It's hard to flood zone defenses with two WRs and a TE.
- It's not a strong, focused run or pass offense.

Pro Form Sets



When to Use the Pro Formation

- You have a good blocking FB.
- You like running a balanced offense.
- You have a quick running back who can take a pitch and sprint around the corner of the defense.

Typical Game Situations

- First and second down
- Third and less than seven

Goal Line



The Goal Line offensive formation should only be used in short-yardage situations, when you need that extra blocker to get that extra yard.

Strengths

- The Shotgun provides extra time for QB to find an open man.
- You can put up to five receivers near the line.
- It makes draw plays very effective.

Weaknesses

- Running plays can be slow to set up.
- The defense can prepare for the pass.
- A sacked quarterback loses a lot of ground.

Goal Line Sets



When to Use the Goal Line Formation

- You have a strong QB and receivers.
- The defense is putting too much pressure on your QB.
- You need to get a lot of yards on a single play.

Typical Game Situations

- Second and long
- Third and long

Special Teams

The I-Formation or I-Form is a balanced offensive set using two backs in the backfield and three other eligible receivers. This formation is good for both a running attack and passing attack.



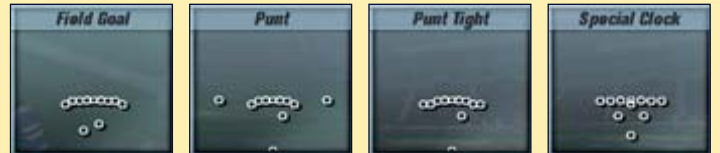
Strengths

- It's balanced—you can run and pass.
- The I-Form provides a fullback who can be the lead blocker for your HB.
- It gives your QB several options to throw.

Weaknesses

- Backs can't get out to the deep pass quickly.
- It's hard to flood zone defenses with two WRs and a TE.
- It's not a strong, focused run or pass offense.

Special Teams Sets



When to use Special Teams Formations

- You have a good blocking FB and good TE.
- You like running a balanced offense.
- You want to run sweeps and counters to the outside.

Typical Game Situations

- First and second down
- Third and less than seven

Basic Plays

This menu describes specific offensive plays that are grouped as running plays and passing plays.

Strengths

- It's easy to pick the right kind of play for your situation.
- You know exactly what the play is designed for.
- It's less confusing if you aren't familiar with football plays.

Weaknesses

- You don't have as many plays to choose from.
- It's hard to bluff in two-player games.
- You can't best use your personal team selections.

When to Use Basic Plays

- You're uncomfortable calling plays the regular way.
- You just need a quick play in a certain direction.
- You can't be bothered with strategy.

Developing a Passing Offense

If you want a high-powered passing offense, you have to do more than select a team that passes well. You have to rethink the way that you play. These 10 steps will help you develop your own passing juggernaut with any team that you pick.

Tip 1: Know Your Quarterback

All QBs are not created equal. Some have rocket arms and others would have difficulty throwing their way out of a paper bag. Go to the Coaching and Player Reports menu and check out your QB's stats before you play a down.

Can he run? Does he have good passing accuracy? Is he fumble prone? You need the answers to these questions and more to get the most out of his playing abilities.



Tip 2: Know Your Targets

Look at the stats for your WRs, TEs, HBs, and FBs. Pay special attention to the HND rating. If your guys can't catch, don't waste time throwing to them.

You might also discover that a backup runner has better receiving skills than one of the starters. If you intend to commit to the pass, sub the backup in as a starter.



Tip 3: Pick Your Top Targets

Your primary WR probably has good SPD and HND ratings, but check out the secondary WRs, TEs, and RBs. On some teams the TE or RB is a great target. On other teams, the third receiver not only has skill but also is open a lot because the best defensive backs are covering the top two receivers.



Tip 4: Know Your Offensive Line

The team section of this guide has stats from 2002. Look at the number of sacks the teams gave up. Detroit has the best record, yielding 20. Houston gave up an all-time record 76 sacks. If your team is more like Detroit than Houston, you probably have time to make good, long throws. If you're more like Houston (or you're the Texans), develop a quick, short passing game.



Tip 5: Learn Read and Lead Passing

Yes, this is more difficult to master than one-button passing, but it lets you to hit the holes in the defense. If, for instance, you have a receiver slanting across the middle to the right side and you see that the safety on the left side has pulled up to the line to cover the short pass, aim your target deep to the left and lead your receiver with a long touch pass.

Don't sweat the frustration of the occasional errant pass or bad throw on your part. As you master Read and Lead passing, your entire air attack opens up.



Tip 6: Spread the Ball Around

Don't rely too heavily on a single target. Any good defender will pick up on your tendencies early and double-cover that receiver for the rest of the game. Pick plays that highlight each of your receivers as well as your tight end and backs. Once the defense learns that they can't stop a single guy, they usually just rely on regular defense. Your top guys break open when you need them.



Tip 7: Scramble if You Can

Few factors open up the passing game like a QB scramble. When the defense knows that your QB is a threat to run at any time, they're forced to commit a defender to "spy" on your passer. This unclogs the passing lanes, usually in the middle of the field.

On passing plays, roll out in the direction that you're likely to throw, but tuck it in and run if the opportunity presents itself.

Take a QB slide whenever possible when scrambling. Your QB can easily fumble or get injured, which would leave your team stranded with a backup QB.



Tip 8: Get Your TE and RBs in on the Action

This has been briefly mentioned before, but it deserves emphasis. If you get the ball to your backs and TE, the defense has to take a lot of its pressure off your QB and WRs. Short Out patterns and tight crossing routes are hard to defend and can occasionally break open a big gain.



Tip 9: Mix in the Run

Even the best passing offenses need to use the run every so often. If not, the defense brings in extra defensive backs and sets up in a Dime defense, which is difficult to pass against. Worse, they forget about the run and try to tee off on your QB. A well-timed draw play from your HB can catch a defense off guard and make them think twice before playing a pass-only defense.



Tip 10: Read the Defense and Make Changes at the Line

We talk more about audibles, reading defenses, and changing passing routes later in this section. When you learn how to use these skills properly, your passing game is nearly unstoppable.



Developing a Rushing Offense

If you're the old-fashioned football fan who believes in the "three yards and a cloud of dust" strategy, you have a lot to enjoy while playing *NFL Fever*. A solid rushing offense plan frustrates opponents who expect players to air it out all the time. If you develop the strategy correctly, you win a lot of games.

Tip 1: Know Your Halfback

The halfback is the core of most running games. He may be a power runner, a finesse runner, or a good pass catcher. As long as you know his abilities, you can develop a strategy around him.

If your back is strong, send him into the middle and let him bull his way down the field. If he has good speed, send him around the corner and let him outrun the opposition.



Tip 2: Know Your Fullback

Most fullbacks aren't as quick as halfbacks, but check your fullback's stats to be sure. If he has good SPD and STR stats, use him a lot more as a running alternative.

Check out his blocking skills, too. A fullback with good blocking skills makes your halfback's life a lot easier. With well-designed, lead-blocking play, he usually takes out the first tackler and lets your halfback zip down the field.



Tip 3: Know Your Tight Ends

Find out which TE on your team has the best blocking skills, then run to his side whenever possible. You can even check out the blocking stats of your WRs. They won't be nearly as high as the stats for your tight ends, but even marginal receiver blocking skills can help when you're running a wide sweep.



Tip 4: Know Your Offensive Line

This may seem repetitive but it is very important. Your offensive line has strengths and weaknesses just like other parts of the team. Check out the blocking and strength stats of the starters and look for those you can trust to hold a block and open a hole for you.

Once you find your trustworthy offensive linemen, run to their side often or use them to pull off to the other side in front of you.



Tip 5: Pick Running Formations

If you have a good blocking FB, run out of formations like I-Form or Pro Form. You always have your FB in the play set with you and can call plays with him as a lead blocker.

If you don't have a good blocking FB, call plays in the Single Back or Shotgun formation and use your tight end to block. Don't waste a valuable player position on a FB that won't help you much on the run.



Tip 6: Give the Fullback the Ball

If you only run with your halfback, it won't take long for defenses to start keying off your halfback. Try a toss to the fullback every now and then to keep them honest. Even if he's not the best runner, he often picks up extra yards because the defense is focusing on the halfback.



Tip 7: Run to Both Sides of the Field

Vary your running direction between the right and left side of the line. This keeps your opponent guessing. Even if you have favorite offensive linemen to run behind, call plays for them to pull to the opposite side and stay behind them safely.



Tip 8: Run both Inside and Outside

Even if your running backs have skills that work best either inside or outside, mix both types of runs into your repertoire. If you run too much to the outside, the defense switches into a 3-4, and the extra linebackers start cheating out and sealing off the sidelines.

Punch the ball up the middle a couple of times and they have to play honest. The same rule applies to power runners. Mix it up a little.



Tip 9: Mix in the Pass

If the defense doesn't feel the threat of the pass, they load the line with defenders and stop any run you try. Pass often and occasionally deep to remind them that one of the greatest advantages of a running offense is that it opens the defense up to the big passing play.



Tip 10: Read the Defense and Make Changes at the Line

Have running audibles set up to for both sides of the line and have a couple deep passing routes ready. If the defense stacks players on one side, switch to the other. If they stack the line with defenders, burn them deep.



Defensive Formations

34 Defense



The 34 defense uses three down linemen and four linebackers. This gives you more speed on the field but sacrifices some size. It is a balanced defense, acceptable against both the pass and the run but not focused on stopping either one.

Strengths

- The 34 spreads out your linebackers to stop outside runs.
- It gives your defense more overall speed.
- It clogs the middle against the short passing game.

Weaknesses

- You're vulnerable to hard runs up the middle.
- You sacrifice strength for speed.
- It's not good for pressuring the QB without a blitz.

34 Sets



When to use the 34

- The offense is running sweeps outside.
- The offense is throwing short passes over the middle.
- You have good tackling and blitzing LBs.

Typical Game Situations

- First and ten
- Medium- to long-yardage situations

43 Defense



The 43 defense uses four down linemen and three linebackers. This gives you more size on the field but sacrifices some speed. It is a balanced defense, acceptable against both the pass and the run but not focused on stopping either one.

Strengths

- The 43 works well against the inside run.
- It gives your defense more overall size.
- It lets your linemen put pressure on the QB.

Weaknesses

- It's vulnerable to quick runs around the outside.
- You sacrifice speed for size.
- Compared to the 34 defense, the 43 leaves fewer men back to cover short passes.

43 Sets



When to Use the 43

- The offense is running up the middle.
- The offensive is picking up your blitzes.
- You have good pass rushing linemen.

Typical Game Situations

- First and ten
- Pretty much any other situation

Nickel Defense



The Nickel defense uses four down linemen, two linebackers, and five defensive backs. It's good at defending against the short and medium pass, but not very good against the run.

Strengths

- It works well against short and medium passes.
- The Nickel puts more skilled pass coverage players on the field.
- Its better against the run than the Dime.

Weaknesses

- It's vulnerable to a strong running game.
- You sacrifice size for coverage.
- Compared to the Dime defense, it's not as good against the deep pass.

Nickel Sets



When to Use the Nickel

- The offense is passing medium or short.
- The offensive is not running much.
- You have good defensive linemen against the pass and run.

Typical Game Situations

- First and ten
- Second or third with more than five yards to go

Dime Defense



The Dime defense uses four down linemen, one linebacker, and six defensive backs. It is good at defending against the medium and long pass, but not very good against the run.

Strengths

- The Dime works well against medium and long passes.
- It puts six skilled pass coverage players on the field.
- It can result in pass interceptions.

Weaknesses

- It's very vulnerable to the running game.
- You sacrifice size for coverage.
- Compared to the Nickel defense, it's not as good against the short pass.

Dime Sets



When to Use the Dime Defense Formation

- The offense is passing medium or long.
- The offense is not running much.
- You have good defensive linemen who can put pressure on the QB.

Typical Game Situations

- Second, third or fourth and long
- Late-game passing situations

Goal Line Defense



Use the Goal Line defense only in short-yardage situations. It is good against the run, but not very good against the pass.

Strengths

- Goal Line defense works well against the run.
- It works well near the goal line.
- It makes for a strong push against the offensive line.

Weaknesses

- It is very vulnerable to the pass.
- It's easy for opponents to identify and exploit.
- It doesn't feature your best coverage guys.

Goal Line Sets



When to Use the Goal Line

- The offense is inside your 10-yard line.
- The offensive is only running the ball.
- You have excellent cover cornerbacks.

Typical Game Situations

- Third and short
- Plays near the end zone

Special Teams



This section has plays to defend against field goals and punts.

Special Teams Sets



When to Use a Special Team Formation

- The other team is making a kick or a punt.

Typical Game Situations

- Kicking situations

Basic Defense Plays

The 43 defense uses four down linemen and three linebackers. This gives you more size on the field but sacrifices some speed. It is a balanced defense, acceptable against both the pass and the run but not focused on stopping either one.

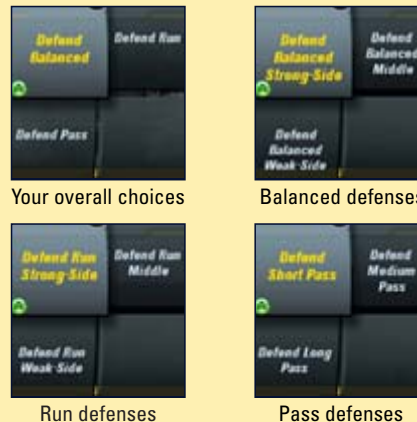
Strengths

- It's easy to pick the right defense for your situation.
- You know exactly what the defense is designed for.
- It's less confusing if you aren't familiar with football plays.

Weaknesses

- You don't have as many plays to choose from.
- It's hard to bluff in two-player games.
- You can't best use your personal team selections.

Basic Selection



When to Use Basic Defense Plays

- You're uncomfortable calling defenses the regular way.
- You just need a quick play in a certain direction.
- You can't be bothered with strategy.

Shutting Down the Passing Game

Football gamers tend to stick to the passing game. In fact, you often find opponents that try to run a couple of times in the first quarter and then abandon it altogether. For these opponents and, learn how to set up your defense to shut down the pass. It's not that difficult if you follow these steps.

Tip 1: Know Your Defensive Backs

Your defensive backs (cornerbacks and safeties) are the bread and butter of your passing defense. On any team, you have stronger and weaker defenders. You need to know which players you can rely on and which ones can't be trusted.



Check out the SPD, ACC, and CVG stats of each player to find out which ones you should control. If a player has high ratings for coverage and aggressiveness, let the computer control him while you control a weaker guy and use your skills to make up for his deficiencies. Also check the SBLK and TKL skills to see if you have a good blitz.

Tip 2: Know Your Opponent

Most teams have one or two top receivers who become the QB's primary focus in the offense. Before the game, look at the stats of the players you're facing or just check out the team listings in the next section of this guide. Check the QB, WRs, TE, HBs, and even the FB. The better you know your opponent's weapons, the better you are at stopping them cold.



Tip 3: Find your Pass Rushers

Look through the stats on your team and find players with good ACC and SBLK stats. These guys usually have the best shot at getting to the quarterback. You need them once you start applying pressure on the passing game.



Tip 4: Play Pass-Oriented Defenses

If your opponent is dead set on passing the football, switch into a Nickel or Dime defense. This adds extra defensive backs and makes it much tougher for defenders to get open. You're vulnerable to the run, but make your pass-happy opponents prove that they will stick to the run before you switch defenses to stop them.



Use the Nickel defense if they're throwing short to medium passes. Use the Dime defense if they're throwing medium to long passes with regularity.

Tip 5: Double Cover the Top Receiver

Players often focus on a single receiver. If you notice a pattern of a single receiver getting a lot of passes, take control of a deep safety and help the cornerback by double-covering this receiver yourself.



This forces the opposing QB out of his rhythm, frustrates his favorite plays, and makes him look for other, less talented receivers.

Tip 6: Get Line Pressure on the QB

One of the best ways to stop the pass is not to give the QB time to look for the open receiver. Use defensive line stunts (plays in which defensive linemen cross over or move out of normal position at the snap). This can provide quick pressure on the QB without pulling anyone from the secondary. Find your best pass-rushing lineman and have him run stunts whenever possible.



Tip 7: Spy on Scrambling QBs

Mobile quarterbacks can cause havoc in your defense. If you don't cover them, they run. If you do cover them, they exploit the area you left open while chasing them. The best way to stop a mobile QB is to "spy" on him with a LB.



When you're facing a running QB who has demonstrated that he'll run with the ball, control one of your linebackers and call plays that put them in zone pass defense. At the snap of the ball, keep an eye on the quarterback and drift in whatever direction he travels while still watching your zone. When he fully commits to the run, run after him and hit him with all you got. A few dice tackles from a linebacker sends a QB to the locker room with injuries.

Tip 8: Blitz Smartly

The blitz is a great way to keep a quarterback from getting time to throw. If you're smart about your blitzes, you make it difficult for your opponent to react and still throw complete passes.



If your opponent is constantly throwing medium or deep, mix in a lot of LB blitzes. They usually cover shorter passes and they won't be missed as badly when they rush the QB.

If your opponent is constantly throwing short or medium passes, try a safety or corner blitz. This is a little more risky, but if you get to the QB quickly, you won't have to worry about anyone breaking open deep.

Tip 9: Find What Works for You


In the early stages of the game, try both man and zone defenses and see which works best against your opponent's offensive strategy. Once you have a good idea of what works, stick with it. Offensive players often settle into a play-calling routine by the middle of the second quarter. If you have a good defensive philosophy going, you frustrate them for the rest of the game.



Tip 10: Make Changes at the Line of Scrimmage

The offense can make audibles and change receiver routes at the line of scrimmage, and so can you. You need to be on top of your defensive adjustments if you hope to keep up with an opponent who can read defenses. Keep a close eye on the other team. If it shifts formation, calls audibles, or pauses long enough to suggest that a change in pass routes, adapt quickly and change your defense to counter. If you do this correctly, you mess up their plans.



You can also call defensive audibles at the line of scrimmage. The easiest way to do this is to hit , which brings up a menu letting you shuffle your players. This is a useful tool.

Shutting Down a Rushing Offense

You're more likely to run across a pass-heavy offense than a run-heavy offense, but it's still important to know how to shut down the run. These tips that should help you accomplish this goal.

Tip 1: Know Your Opposing Halfback

The halfback is often the center of a team's running game. If your opponent is skilled, he uses the halfback's best attributes with well-called plays. If you face a speedy halfback, prepare ways to seal off the outside and force him back inside. If you face a big, lumbering power back, seal off the middle and force him outside where he can be easily tackled and dragged down.



Tip 2: Know the Opposing Fullback

The FB can either be a major part of the running game or a near-useless player. If the other team's FB has good blocking skills, watch for him to bully ahead on lead blocks. If the FB has good running skills, be prepared for him to take some of the carries.



More important to know are the FB's weaknesses. If he can't block well, you may be able to slip past his lead block almost every time. If he isn't a good runner, key your running defense almost entirely on the halfback.

Tip 3: Know the Opposing Offensive Line

If your opposing offensive line is strong on the right side, your opponent may run often in that direction. You can pursue the running back from the other side and still shut down a running back with a good line by controlling a linebacker from that side and shutting down the holes.



Tip 4: Play your Linebackers

Your linebackers play a crucial role in stopping the run. Their job is to stop the rush by plugging holes in the line and to keep the running back from getting into the secondary. Play your linebackers like running backs—look for the open hole in the line and plug it quickly. If you read the line correctly, you often hit the hole just as the running back does and take him down easily.



Tip 5: Pick Running Defenses

When you're trying to stop the run, stick with the 34 and 43 formations (we'll discuss the differences in just a moment). Stay clear of the Nickel and Dime defenses—the running game has a field day against them. You want defenses that feature a good number of linemen and linebackers who can stop a running back.



Don't make the mistake of playing Goal Line defense to stop the run unless you're near the goal line. A smart opponent reads your defense and burns you deep. Break out this defense only if your foe is completely committed to the run.

Tip 6: Use the 34 Defense to Stop the Outside Run

The 34 defense puts four linebackers on the field and spreads them out over the middle. The outside linebackers are usually very quick and can cut off the running back before he turns the corner. This defense leaves you vulnerable to quick sprints up the middle of the line, where your defensive linemen are outnumbered, but it shuts down the outside run.



Tip 7: Use the 43 Defense to Stop the Inside Run

If your opponent keeps running up the middle, try using the 43 defense. This puts extra linemen on the field and it allows you to plug any holes that open up with your middle linebacker. This defense makes you a little more vulnerable to sweeps and outside runs, but it is the best way (short of the Goal Line defense) to clog the middle.



Tip 8: Force Fast Runners to the Inside

When playing against a speedy runner, contain him so he can't get around the corner of your defense and force him to run up the middle. The key is not to be too aggressive and over-pursue. Speedy backs often elude the first tackler and then bust outside for a big gain.



Instead of trying to break through the middle and tackle a speedy back in the backfield, focus on containing him by staying in front and outside of him. Move laterally down the line if he stretches out the play and deny him a clear route up the field until he hits the sideline and runs out of room. You won't get many minus-yard tackles, but you stop the big runs and force the other team to run up the middle, which isn't their strength.

Tip 9: Force Power Runners to the Outside

When playing against a power runner, try using LB blitzes while controlling the middle linebacker to stuff the line with defenders. If you can close up this route, the running back is forced to bounce outside and try to break around the corner.



When he's trying to speed around the corner, that running back that could flatten your defenders can be pulled down easily from behind before he ever gains a yard.

Tip 10: Adjust Your Defense before the Snap

When playing against a running team, you'll notice patterns in the types of runs that they prefer and the directions they usually run. Before the play, hit **B** and a menu pops up that lets you shift either your linemen or your linebackers. If you know your opponent is going to one side, shift your team there, but be prepared to make up ground if he reverses field.



You can also call defensive audibles at the line of scrimmage. The easiest way is to hit **X**, which brings up a menu that lets you shuffle your players to best defend against each type of play. This is an incredibly useful tool. Use it often.

Other Playcalling Options

Playcalling menus are useful features in *NFL Fever 2004*. In addition to the regular plays listings, you can choose from several special menus that are helpful in game situations. Here's a quick overview.

Coach's Choice

This menu shows you plays chosen by the *Fever* AI for your game situation. These generally feature plays that are conservative but smart. Check this menu quickly before calling your own plays.



Look to this menu, too, if you have trouble stopping an opponent on defense. Coach's Choice gives you good ideas on how to shut down an offense, especially if your opponent keeps to a single strategy.

My Plays

This menu stores your custom plays (which you make in the play editor) and your favorite plays. The following are a few tips for these plays.



Custom Plays

When designing a custom play, start with a single target in mind. A play designed to get everyone on your team open is likely to be less useful than a play that works very well to get a single receiver open.



One smart idea is to look at a play that works well for you already and try to remake it so that it works even better. Remake the play in the play editor, and then tweak the route of your primary receiver to take best advantage of his skills. If you do it correctly, you improve the play for your specific team.



Another idea is to recreate team-specific plays. For instance, the Colts have a very useful play called IND Four Quicks. It's not in any of the other team's playbooks, but it works well on teams with fast number one receivers. Go to the play editor and create a version for your own team. You have to pay attention to the exact play design, but it's easily done.

Recent Plays

This menu is helpful for finding a play that worked a little while back, even if you don't remember its name. In the Recent Plays menu, you can scroll through as many as 15 of the plays you've called most recently. You'll be amazed at how often this reminds you that you're calling only a small set of plays. Expand your coaching repertoire and become less predictable to your opponents.



Coaching Info



As you scroll through your plays, check the Coaching Info text on the side for important information.

- Opponent Personnel:** Here you can see what kind of defense your opponent is setting up and adjust appropriately. For example, if you see five or more defensive backs, he's expecting a pass. Try a run.
- Success Rate:** This tells you how well your play has worked in game situations. If it's below 33 percent, steer clear of that play.
- Success Breakdown:** This shows you how the play works against different defenses. See if you can spot a weakness and exploit it.

Coach's Help



Hit **Y** while choosing plays. The Coach's Help feature tells you all about the play, and often gives the perfect tip for making the play work best for you.

The Plays

We've broken plays into passing and running, and listed them alphabetically so you can find them more easily. You'll find that perfect passing or running play here.

Passing Plays

Short Passing Plays (0 to 5 Yards)

Play	Special	Set	Formation	Play	Special	Set	Formation
3WR Crisscross	—	Single 3WR	Single Back	Out Over Up	—	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
All Crossed Up	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form	Over Swing	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
All Crossout	—	I-Normal	I-Form	PAP Big Boot	PAP	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Backside Flare	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back	PAP Big Hitch	PAP	Big Pro	Pro Form
Big Quick Hit	—	Big Single	Single Back	PAP Buttons	PAP	Single Trips	Single Back
Blue Fly Slants	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun	PAP Circle	PAP	I-Normal	I-Form
Chaos Flat	—	Bull Strong I	Goal Line	PAP Crossover	PAP	Single 3WR	Single Back
Clear Flare	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line	PAP Hookup	PAP	Weak I	I-Form
Cross M Out	Motion	Single 4WR	Single Back	PAP Isolation	PAP	—	Goal Line
Cross Slants	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	PAP Motion Flare	—	I-Normal	I-Form
Crossout Slant	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line	PAP Short Out	PAP	Strong I	I-Form
Curl Post Wing	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	PAP Strong Flat	PAP	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Curly Cross	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line	PAP Twins Hitch	PAP	I Twins	I-Form
Curves Weak	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line	Pivot Flood	Motion	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Deep RB Split	—	Spread I	I-Form	Post Hook	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun
Dive Waggle	Motion	Big Pro	Pro Form	Pro FB Flare	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Double Dump	—	Single Slot	Single Back	Quick Outs Hook	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Double Go	—	Strong I	I-Form	Quick Pivot	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
Down Under	Motion	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	Quick Slant	Motion	Bull I	Goal Line
E-Motion Slant	Motion	Bull Gun	Goal Line	Reach Iso	—	I Twins	I-Form
Empty All Curl	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun	Red Thunder	—	Single Trips	Single Back
Empty Over	Motion	—	Goal Line	Release Flare	Motion	Bull I	Goal Line
Flat Comeback	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line	Scissor Dig	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun
Flat Release	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	Settle and Go	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Flood Hitch	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	Shallow Wheel	Motion	Single Slot	Single Back
Goal Spread	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line	Slant Under	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun
HB Flare Strong	—	I Twins	I-Form	Slant Wave	—	Single 4WR	Single Back
HB Over Easy	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun	Slot Out	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun
HB Swing	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun	Sluggo Release	—	Spread I	I-Form
Heavy Release	—	Big Pro	Pro Form	Split Big Screen	Motion	Big Pro	Pro Form
I TE Stretch	—	Strong I	I-Form	Split Comeback	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun
I Wide	—	Bull I	Goal Line	Split Flats	—	—	Goal Line
In and Out	—	Spread Weak I	I-Form	Split Quick	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun
Inside Hitch	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun	Split Slot Screen	Motion	Pro Slot	Pro Form
Inside Hook	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back	Spread Flat	—	Spread I	I-Form
Iso Flat Deep	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form	Spread Slant	PAP	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Lightning Slants	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun	Stretch Middle	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
Lonely Slant	Motion	Bull Weak I	Goal Line	Strong Hook	Motion	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun
M Cross Hook	Motion	Strong I	I-Form	Swing Out	—	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
Mid Short Post	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun	TE Curl	—	Big Single	Single Back
Middle Dink	Motion	—	Goal Line	TE Flat	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
Motion Angle	Motion	Weak I	I-Form	TE Quick Slant	—	Strong I	I-Form
Motion Chaos	Motion	Single Slot	Single Back	Tight Pop	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun
Motion Cross	Motion	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	Trey TE Toss	—	Single 3WR	Single Back
Motion Drag	Motion	Pro Norm	Pro Form	Twin Z Out	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line
Motion Out	Motion	Pro Slot	Pro Form	Twins Screen	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Motion Quick	Motion	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	Underdog	—	I-Normal	I-Form
Motion Shorts	Motion	Single Trips	Single Back	Weak Release	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Motion TE Under	Motion	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun	Wheel Flat	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun
Motion Under	Motion	Single Slot	Single Back	Wide Clear	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
Motion Z Out	—	Single Slot	Single Back	Wild Slant	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Normal Hook Z	—	I-Normal	I-Form				

Passing Plays
Medium Passing Plays (5 to 15 Yards)

Play	Special	Set	Formation	Play	Special	Set	Formation
4WR Wheel	—	Single 4WR	Single Back	PAP Wheel	PAP	Single 3WR	Single Back
4WR Z Out	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back	PAP Z In	PAP	Bull I	Goal Line
Ace Quick Posts	—	Big Single	Single Back	Post Over Go	—	Pro Slot	Pro Form
Action Boots	PAP	Big Single	Single Back	Post V—Stretch	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
All Comebacks	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	Post Wheel	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
All Out Cross	—	Weak I	I-Form	Pro Chaos	—	Pro Slot	Pro Form
All Quick Hit	—	Strong I	I-Form	Pro Weak Slant	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
All Slant	—	Single 4WR	Single Back	Quick Protect	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line
Angle Hook In	—	Single 4WR	Single Back	Quick X Hit	—	Weak I	I-Form
Angle X Pro	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form	Red Angles	—	Single 4WR	Single Back
Blue Cross	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun	Short Go	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun
Buckle Out	Motion	Single 3WR	Single Back	Slant Dump	Motion	—]	Goal Line
Bull Slant	—	Bull I	Goal Line	Slot Cross Out	—	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
Chaos Motion	Motion	Single 4WR	Single Back	Soda Jerk	—	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
Clear Dig	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	Split Post	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun
Come Back Flat	—	Single 3WR	Single Back	Split TE Cross	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Confusion Hooks	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	Star Post	Motion	Single Slot	Single Back
Corner Shot	—	Pro Slot	Pro Form	Straight Outs	—	Big Single	Single Back
Cross Back Post	Motion	Single Split 4WR	Single Back	Streak Cross	Motion	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
Cross I	—	Spread Weak I	I-Form	Stretch Out	—	—	Goal Line
Cross In Out	—	Single 4WR	Single Back	Strong Double	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
Crossed Up	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun	TE Cross Over	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line
Curl Swing	—	Single 3WR	Single Back	TE Crossover	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Deep and Out	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back	TE Double In	—	Big Pro	Pro Form
Deep Hookup	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun	TE Fire Out	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Double Hook Out	Motion	Pro 3WR	Pro Form	Thunder Dump	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Double In-Out	Motion	Single Trips	Single Back	Trey Out Fly	—	Single 3WR	Single Back
Double Slants	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun	Triple Cross	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun
Empty Crosses	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form	Triple Deke	—	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
Flood Over Out	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form	Twins Cross	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Gun Clearout	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun	Twins In Go	—	Spread I	I-Form
HB Flag	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	Weak Comeback	—	Spread Weak I	I-Form
Hitch X Dino	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun	Weak Curl	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
Inside Slant	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun	Wide Drag	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun
Iso Chaos	Motion	Strong I	I-Form	Wide Empty Hook	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Iso Slant Cross	—	Single Trips	Single Back	Wide Hooks Out	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
Middle Flood	Motion	Single 4WR	Single Back	Wide Isolation	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line
Middle Over Out	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun	Wing Out Hook	Motion	Single Slot	Single Back
Middle Trouble	—	Single 4WR	Single Back	WR In and Out	—	Pro Slot	Pro Form
Mirror Z	Motion	Bull I	Goal Line	X Deep Out	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
Motion Flood	Motion	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	Z Double Hook	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Naked Slot Post	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun				
Out Protect	Motion	Single Trips	Single Back				
Over Flat	Motion	Single 3WR	Single Back				
Over Flex	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun				
PAP Corner	PAP	Bull I	Goal Line				
PAP Crosses	PAP	—	Goal Line				
PAP Double In	PAP	Single Trips	Single Back				
PAP Strike	PAP	Single Slot	Single Back				
PAP TE Cross	—	Big Single	Single Back				
PAP Trips Pass	PAP	Single Trips	Single Back				
PAP Twin Over	PAP	Pro 3WR	Pro Form				
PAP Twins Out	PAP	—	Goal Line				
PAP Under Wing	PAP	Single Slot	Single Back				
PAP Weak Wave	—	I-Normal	I-Form				

Passing Plays

Deep Passing Plays (15+ Yards)

Play	Special	Set	Formation	Play	Special	Set	Formation
3WR Crisscross	—	Single 3WR	Single Back	PAP Big Hitch	PAP	Big Pro	Pro Form
All Crossed Up	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form	PAP Buttons	PAP	Single Trips	Single Back
All Crossout	—	I-Normal	I-Form	PAP Circle	PAP	I-Normal	I-Form
Backside Flare	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back	PAP Crossover	PAP	Single 3WR	Single Back
Big Quick Hit	—	Big Single	Single Back	PAP Hookup	PAP	Weak I	I-Form
Blue Fly Slants	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun	PAP Isolation	PAP	—	Goal Line
Chaos Flat	—	Bull Strong I	Goal Line	PAP Motion Flare	—	I-Normal	I-Form
Clear Flare	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line	PAP Short Out	PAP	Strong I	I-Form
Cross M Out	Motion	Single 4WR	Single Back	PAP Strong Flat	PAP	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Cross Slants	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	PAP Twins Hitch	PAP	I Twins	I-Form
Crossout Slant	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line	Pivot Flood	Motion	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Curl Post Wing	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	Post Hook	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun
Curly Cross	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line	Pro FB Flare	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Curves Weak	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line	Quick Outs Hook	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Deep RB Split	—	Spread I	I-Form	Quick Pivot	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
Dive Waggle	Motion	Big Pro	Pro Form	Quick Slant	Motion	Bull I	Goal Line
Double Dump	—	Single Slot	Single Back	Reach Iso	—	I Twins	I-Form
Double Go	—	Strong I	I-Form	Red Thunder	—	Single Trips	Single Back
Down Under	Motion	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	Release Flare	Motion	Bull I	Goal Line
E-Motion Slant	Motion	Bull Gun	Goal Line	Scissor Dig	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun
Empty All Curl	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun	Settle and Go	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Empty Over	Motion	—	Goal Line	Shallow Wheel	Motion	Single Slot	Single Back
Flat Comeback	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line	Slant Under	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun
Flat Release	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	Slant Wave	—	Single 4WR	Single Back
Flood Hitch	—	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun	Slot Out	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun
Goal Spread	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line	Sluggo Release	—	Spread I	I-Form
HB Flare Strong	—	I Twins	I-Form	Split Big Screen	Motion	Big Pro	Pro Form
HB Over Easy	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun	Split Comeback	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun
HB Swing	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun	Split Flats	—	—	Goal Line
Heavy Release	—	Big Pro	Pro Form	Split Quick	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun
I TE Stretch	—	Strong I	I-Form	Split Slot Screen	Motion	Pro Slot	Pro Form
I Wide	—	Bull I	Goal Line	Spread Flat	—	Spread I	I-Form
In and Out	—	Spread Weak I	I-Form	Spread Slant	PAP	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Inside Hitch	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun	Stretch Middle	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
Inside Hook	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back	Strong Hook	Motion	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun
Iso Flat Deep	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form	Swing Out	—	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
Lightning Slants	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun	TE Curl	—	Big Single	Single Back
Lonely Slant	Motion	Bull Weak I	Goal Line	TE Flat	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
M Cross Hook	Motion	Strong I	I-Form	TE Quick Slant	—	Strong I	I-Form
Mid Short Post	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun	Tight Pop	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun
Middle Dink	Motion	—	Goal Line	Trey TE Toss	—	Single 3WR	Single Back
Motion Angle	Motion	Weak I	I-Form	Twin Z Out	—	Bull Gun	Goal Line
Motion Chaos	Motion	Single Slot	Single Back	Twins Screen	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Motion Cross	Motion	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	Underdog	—	I-Normal	I-Form
Motion Drag	Motion	Pro Norm	Pro Form	Weak Release	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Motion Out	Motion	Pro Slot	Pro Form	Wheel Flat	—	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun
Motion Quick	Motion	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun	Wide Clear	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
Motion Shorts	Motion	Single Trips	Single Back	Wild Slant	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Motion TE Under	Motion	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun				
Motion Under	Motion	Single Slot	Single Back				
Motion Z Out	—	Single Slot	Single Back				
Normal Hook Z	—	I-Normal	I-Form				
Out Over Up	—	Pro 3WR	Pro Form				
Over Swing	—	Bull Weak I	Goal Line				
PAP Big Boot	PAP	Pro Norm	Pro Form				

Passing Plays

Sideline Passing Plays (For Late-game Situations)

Play	Special	Set	Formation
2 Over Out	—	Spread I	I-Form
All Inside Out	—	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
All Out	—	Single 4WR	Single Back
Blue Down In	—	Single 3WR	Single Back
Chaos Strong	Motion	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun
Cross Flank	—	Single 4WR	Single Back
Deep Out Weak	—	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun
Double Delay	—	Big Single	Single Back
Empty Y Corner	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun
Gun 4 Sideline	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun
Gun Fadeout	—	Shotgun 5WR	Shotgun
I All Out	Motion	I Twins	I-Form
I Slot Out	—	Spread I	I-Form
Out Dig	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun
Over Double Out	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
PAP Post Arrow	PAP	Weak I	I-Form
Pro Strong Flood	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Quick Hits Out	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Single Quick	—	Big Single	Single Back
Strong Outpost	—	Strong I	I-Form
Super Back Outs	—	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Swing Cross	—	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun
Thunder Wide	—	Split Shotgun	Shotgun
Tidal Wave	—	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Tight Fade	—	Weak I	I-Form
Twin Slant Out	—	I-Normal	I-Form

Running Plays

Counter Plays (Fake Running One Way, Then Go the Other)

Play	Direction	Set	Formation
Big Counter	Right	Big Single	Single Back
Bull Counter	Right	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Clean Counter	Right	Spread Weak I	I-Form
I Counter	Left	I-Normal	I-Form
Weak Counter	Left	Bull Strong I	Goal Line
Wide Counter	Left	Single 3WR	Single Back
Wing Counter	Left	Single Slot	Single Back

Draw Plays (Show Pass and Then Run Up the Middle)

Play	Direction	Set	Formation
4WR Draw	Middle	Shotgun 4WR	Shotgun
Gun Draw	Left	Shotgun 4WR Trips	Shotgun
HB Draw Belly	Right	Big Single	Single Back
Motion Draw	Middle	Shotgun 3WR	Shotgun
Shotgun Draw	Middle	Split Shotgun	Shotgun
Single Draw	Middle	Single 3WR	Single Back
Trips Draw	Middle	Shotgun 3WR Trips	Shotgun

Running Plays

Fullback Plays (Your FB Runs the Ball)

Play	Direction	Set	Formation
Big Blast	Middle	Bull I	Goal Line
Bull I Dive	Middle	Bull I	Goal Line
Dive Off-center	Middle	I Twins	I-Form
FB Iso Big	Right	Big Pro	Pro Form
FB Iso Weak	Left	Spread Weak I	I-Form
FB Motion Dive	Middle	I Twins	I-Form
FB Off-Tackle	Left	Pro Norm	Pro Form
FB Power Weak	Left	I Twins	I-Form
FB Short Power	Left	Weak I	I-Form
FB Split Dive	Middle	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
FB Sweep	Left	Strong I	I-Form
FB Thrust	Right	Strong I	I-Form
FB Toss Sweep	Middle	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
FB Weak I Dive	Middle	Weak I	I-Form
Full Blast	Middle	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Full I Dive	Middle	Spread I	I-Form
Heavy Toss	Left	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Motion FB Belly	Left	Spread I	I-Form
Pro FB Draw	Middle	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Slot Splash	Right	Pro Slot	Pro Form
Split FB Dive	Middle	Pro Norm	Pro Form

Lead Plays (Your FB Lead-Blocks Ahead of You)

Play	Direction	Set	Formation
Big Lead Smash	Left	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Big Pro Belly	Right	Big Pro	Pro Form
Bull Power	Right	Bull I	Goal Line
Crash Strong	Right	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Full I Plunge	Middle	I-Normal	I-Form
Half Bounce	Right	I-Normal	I-Form
Half Smash	Right	Bull Strong I	Goal Line
HB Dive Lead	Middle	I-Normal	I-Form
HB Hammer	Middle	Bull I	Goal Line
HB I Plunge	Middle	Spread I	I-Form
HB Knife	Left	Pro Slot	Pro Form
HB Off-tackle	Right	Strong I	I-Form
I Motion Power	Right	Spread I	I-Form
Lead Plunge	Left	Spread Weak I	I-Form
Lead Punch Pro	Right	Pro Slot	Pro Form
Lead Smash	Left	Weak I	I-Form
Motion I Toss	Left	Spread I	I-Form
Motion Jolt	Left	I Twins	I-Form
Motion Power	Left	Spread Weak I	I-Form
Normal HB Belly	Right	I-Normal	I-Form
Offguard Smash	Middle	Strong I	I-Form
Split Pro Plunge	Middle	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
Spread Punch	Middle	Spread I	I-Form
Strong HB Iso	Right	Bull Strong I	Goal Line
Twins Plunge	Right	I Twins	I-Form
Weak I Blast	Left	Weak I	I-Form
Weak Smash	Middle	I-Normal	I-Form

Running Plays

QB Runs (Sneaks and Stop-Clock Plays)

Play	Direction	Set	Formation
Bull Stop Clock	Middle	Bull I	Goal Line
QB Plunge	Middle	I Twins	I-Form
QB Sneak	Middle	Bull I	Goal Line

Solo Runs (No Lead Block from the Fullback)

Play	Direction	Set	Formation
4 Wide Smash	Right	Single 4WR	Single Back
4WR HB Dive	Middle	Single 4WR	Single Back
4WR Inside Dive	Middle	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
Ace Punch	Middle	Single 3WR	Single Back
Balanced Power	Right	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
Big HB Dive	Middle	Big Pro	Pro Form
Big HB Iso	Right	Big Single	Single Back
Big Single Crack	Left	Big Single	Single Back
FB Quick Hit	Middle	Big Pro	Pro Form
Half Dive	Middle	Single Trips	Single Back
Half Hammer	Right	Single 3WR	Single Back
Half Plunge	Middle	Weak I	I-Form
Half Splash	Left	Bull Strong I	Goal Line
Half Weak Blast	Right	Single Trips	Single Back
Half Wing Belly	Middle	Single Slot	Single Back
HB Iso Power	Left	I Twins	I-Form
HB Slice	Right	Pro Wing	Pro Form
HB Slot Dive	Middle	Pro Slot	Pro Form
HB Slot Punch	Middle	Pro Slot	Pro Form
HB Spread Dive	Middle	Spread Weak I	I-Form
I Power	Right	Weak I	I-Form
Inside 4WR Belly	Middle	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
Motion Mislead	Middle	Spread Weak I	I-Form
Motion Punch	Middle	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Off-center Dive	Middle	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Power Knife	Right	Single Trips	Single Back
Pro HB Trap	Middle	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Single Big Dive	Middle	Big Single	Single Back
Slot Normal Belly	Left	Pro Slot	Pro Form
Split Direct	Middle	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Split HB Smash	Middle	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Weak HB Crash	Middle	Strong I	I-Form
Wing Power	Right	Single Slot	Single Back

Outside Runs (Great Plays for a Fast Halfback)

Play	Direction	Set	Formation
4WR Half Sweep	Left	Single Split 4WR	Single Back
4WR HB Sweep	Right	Single 4WR	Single Back
Ace Trips Bounce	Right	Single Trips	Single Back
Big I Toss	Right	Bull I	Goal Line
Big Iso Toss	Left	Big Pro	Pro Form
Half Wing Toss	Left	Pro Slot	Pro Form
HB Shovel Trips	Left	Single Trips	Single Back
HB Spread Toss	Right	Spread Weak I	I-Form
HB Toss Sweep	Left	Pro Slot	Pro Form
HB Weak Toss	Left	I-Normal	I-Form
I Sweep Strong	Right	Spread I	I-Form
Lead HB Bounce	Right	Bull Strong I	Goal Line
Motion Shovel	Right	I-Normal	I-Form
Motion Sweep	Left	Bull I	Goal Line
Motion Toss Big	Left	Big Single	Single Back
Quick Toss	Left	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
Red Toss Week	Left	Single 3WR	Single Back
Short HB Toss	Left	Pro Wing	Pro Form
Shovel Weak	Left	Bull Weak I	Goal Line
Single Big Toss	Right	Big Single	Single Back
Split HB Sweep	Right	Pro 3WR	Pro Form
Strong HB Toss	Right	Strong I	I-Form
Trips Hammer	Right	Single Trips	Single Back
Twins Bounce	Right	I Twins	I-Form
Twins HB Pitch	Left	I Twins	I-Form
Weak HB Pitch	Left	Pro Norm	Pro Form
Week I Sweep	Left	Weak I	I-Form
Wing Toss Weak	Right	Single Slot	Single Back

Reverses (Handoffs to the WR)

Play	Direction	Set	Formation
I Reverse	Right	Strong I	I-Form
Shovel Reverse	Left	Single 3WR	Single Back

Reading the Defense

It is difficult to predict what a human opponent is going to do, although you can make a good guess by reading the defense. Against the CPU, however, you can often read exact intentions and exploit the defense for big offensive gains. Here's a quick guide to reading defenses.

Three Defensive Linemen



The Defense: The defense is most likely playing a 34 defense with three linemen and four linebackers.

The Solution: Run the ball up the middle and let your offensive line outnumber and overpower their defensive line.

Interior Linemen Bunched Together

The Defense: The defense is most likely trying to double up against your center or guards.

The Solution: Sweep the ball to the outside and get your running back around the corner where the defensive linemen can't catch him.

Interior Linemen Spread Apart

The Defense: The defense is most likely trying to defend against the outside run.

The Solution: Run it up the middle inside the gap left between the spread linemen. Force them to close ranks.

Linemen Shifted to One Side



The Defense: The defense is trying to overload one side of your offensive line.

The Solution: Call a counter play and fake running in the overloaded direction. When you cut back, you should have open daylight to the other side.

Eight Men in the Box



The Defense: The defense is most likely on a heavy blitz or a run-stopping play.

The Solution: Forget about the run and try to get the pass off as quickly as possible. Audible a medium or deep slant pattern, take your short drop, and then let the ball fly before the pressure gets to you.

Linebackers Sneaking up to the Line



The Defense: The defense may be trying a LB Blitz.

The Solution: Look for passing routes that are short and in the zone left open by the sneaking linebacker. Watch out for running plays. Blitzing linebackers can plug a hole as soon as it opens, but if they over-pursue, you can blast right by them.

Cornerbacks Five Yards or More off Your Receivers



The Defense: Playing zone or trying not to get burned on the deep route.

The Solution: Try a quick hook or curl to pick up three or four easy yards. This isn't as exciting as a big gain, but it keeps your team moving forward.

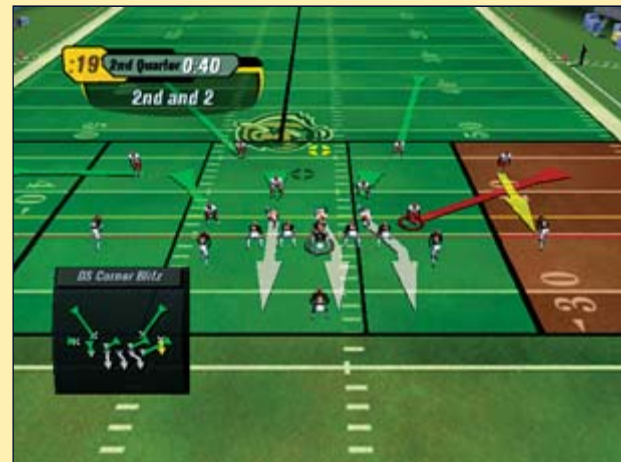
Cornerbacks Playing Directly Opposite and Within Five Yards of WRs



The Defense: Most likely it's playing bump-and-run coverage.

The Solution: Bump-and-run slow down your deep routes, but if you hot route into a slant pattern over the middle, you can usually run right under the CB and break open for an easy gain.

Both Safeties Deep



The Defense: The defense is watching out for the pass.

The Solution: Run a sweep to the outside and you won't have to worry about the safety breaking in to stop the run. If you get past the linebackers, you have a good gain.

Strong Safety Closer than Free Safety

The Defense: The strong safety is watching out for the run.

The Solution: Watch out for your outside run. The safety is trying to shut it down. A play-action pass play could draw him in, and you may end up with single coverage on your wide receiver deep.



Calling Audibles

Audibles should be an important part of your everyday game plan. With a good set of audibles already in place, you can react quickly to situations just begging to be exploited. Prepare your audibles in advance so you don't have to waste time setting some up before each game.

Offense Audibles



You can store a total of six audibles, and you should split them evenly between runs and passes. Set them up any way you like, but here is a suggested audible play selection.

- Run to the Left—to exploit weaknesses on the left side.
- Run to the Right—to exploit weaknesses on the right.
- Run up the Gut—to take advantage of 34 defense or line gaps.
- Deep Out Pattern—to take advantage of all out blitzes.
- Quick Slant Pattern—to take advantage of bump and run coverage.
- Short Sideline Pattern—to stop the clock in late game situations.

Defense Audibles



Defensive audibles are just as important as offensive audibles. If you can quickly adjust to an offense, you can shut them down with quick play calling at the line of scrimmage. Here's a sample set of defenses you should have in your audible list.

- Inside Blitz—to hit the QB and shut down the inside run.
- Outside Blitz—to stop the outside run and put pressure on the QB.
- Dime Deep Zone—when you know your opponent is going deep.
- Short Man-to-Man Coverage—to take away the short passing game.
- Medium Man Coverage—to shut off the medium pass.
- Heavy Run Defense—for goal line situations.

TIP

Remember, you don't change defensive personnel when you audible a play. You might have players in situations ill fitted to their abilities.

Team Listings



Check this section closely for information on the team you're playing and the team you're playing against. In this section, you find the players who make each team special and the plays that best use their abilities. The more you can focus your strategies on specific teams, the better you do in head-to-head matchups.

Pay close attention to individual player ratings. You need to play up each athlete's strengths and play down his weaknesses as much as possible. But don't read this section and skip checking the stats for yourself. There's always key information to be gained by browsing the rosters before a game.

Team Ratings at a Glance				
Team	Overall	Offense	Defense	Special Teams
Arizona Cardinals	77	79	76	80
Atlanta Falcons	82	85	79	82
Baltimore Ravens	79	80	79	82
Buffalo Bills	81	85	79	73
Carolina Panthers	79	82	77	75
Chicago Bears	79	81	79	77
Cincinnati Bengals	78	83	75	76
Cleveland Browns	78	78	79	79
Dallas Cowboys	77	78	78	74
Denver Broncos	81	83	81	77
Detroit Lions	78	79	77	78
Green Bay Packers	81	86	77	74
Houston Texans	79	79	81	75
Indianapolis Colts	81	87	76	83
Jacksonville Jaguars	80	84	78	75
Kansas City Chiefs	79	85	74	76
Miami Dolphins	80	75	86	74
Minnesota Vikings	78	82	76	67
New England Patriots	82	82	83	78
New Orleans Saints	80	84	77	81
New York Giants	79	82	78	78
New York Jets	81	83	81	79
Oakland Raiders	84	87	82	82
Philadelphia Eagles	81	83	80	81
Pittsburgh Steelers	80	82	79	74
San Diego Chargers	81	84	78	81
San Francisco 49ers	81	84	79	72
Seattle Seahawks	80	81	80	76
St. Louis Rams	83	87	80	80
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	81	81	83	78
Tennessee Titans	81	83	80	83
Washington Redskins	79	78	82	79

Player Ratings

Player stats in the following section are broken down into star ratings. Here is how the ratings break down:

50-59 ★	80-89 ★★★★★
60-69 ★★	90-94 ★★★★★★
70-79 ★★★	95-100 ★★★★★★

Star Players

Jeff Blake - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★

Key Weaknesses

BTKL ✕
STR ✕✕

Tips

Jeff Blake's best asset is his arm, so use that to find open receivers far down the field. If you run with Blake, remember that he's much better at making moves than breaking tackles.

Useful Plays



Deep Surprise

If the safety bites to your outside receiver, you have an open man running across the middle deep. Hit him on the run for big yards.



PAP

The defense should key on Emmitt and play run. Hit your tight end at the sideline or the outside right WR crossing over the



Tidal Wave

If a WR doesn't open up deep, drop it off to Emmitt short.

Emmitt Smith - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
AGI ★★★★★
VIS ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

HND ✕✕
STR ✕✕

Tips

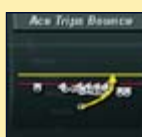
Focus on running sweeps on the outside rather than up the gut. Emmitt still has the moves, just not the straightforward muscle of previous years.

Useful Plays



Wing Counter

Don't cut inside too early. Let the play develop and follow your pulling guard.



Ace Trips Bounce

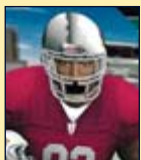
Your TE and pulling guard open the hole for you. All you have to do is get Emmitt past the defensive back.



Motion Power

If your FB and WR in motion make their blocks, it's just Emmitt versus a defensive back.

Other Offensive Stars



Bryant Johnson Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Johnson is the most physically talented member of the Cardinal's young receiving corps.



L.J. Shelton Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Shelton and LG Pete Kendall are a force on the left side of the offensive line. Stick behind them with Emmitt.



Bill Gramatica Kicker

Key Stats

LSTR ★★★★★
KACK ★★★★★

You need to rely heavily on Gramatica if you play it smart and keep the game low-scoring.

Defensive Stars

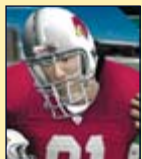


Duane Starks Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Starks is fast and can shut down an opponent's top WR. He's not much of a blitz, however.



Wendell Bryant Defensive Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

He's not quick, but he can bull his way through unwary offensive lines.



Calvin Pace Defensive Right End

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

When you run plays that require the defensive end to drop off into coverage, rookie Calvin Pace is mighty handy.

Star Players

Michael Vick - Quarterback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
ASTR ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★

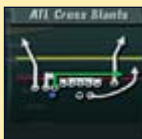
Key Weaknesses

BTKL ✖✖✖

Tips

Vick is perhaps the most exciting player in the NFL. He can run like an All-Pro running back and throw like a top QB. Use his legs on scrambles, draws, and open opportunities. The defense is so focused at stopping his runs, he's free to throw deep.

Useful Plays



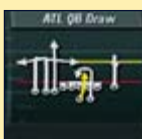
ATL Cross Slants

Roll to the right and if a defender drops off to cover you, look downfield. There's bound to be an open receiver. If not, run the ball.



ATL Gun Fadeout

Same thing, but this time roll out to the right. Don't use running as the last option—use it often to force the defense to cover you.



ATL QB Draw

Although having the option to pass is best, this play can catch a defense by surprise and give you big yards up the middle.

Warrick Dunn - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
AGI ★★★★★

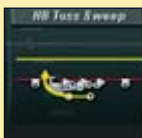
Key Weaknesses

BTKL ✖✖

Tips

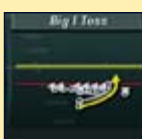
Dunn is at his best running to the outside or breaking up the side of the offensive line. Don't try to bull your way through players—go around or avoid them with moves. He has decent hands, so don't be afraid of the short HB pass.

Useful Plays



HB Toss Sweep

Get behind your pulling lineman, get around the corner and head up the field. Don't be afraid to stretch it out a little. Dunn's got speed.



Big I Toss

You don't have to wait for your pulling guard to make yards on this play. If a hole opens early, bust through it.



Motion Power

You need the motion man and the FB to hit their blocks. If they do, you've got big yards ahead.

Other Offensive Stars



Peerless Price Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He should be one of Vick's main targets. Look for him to get open as Vick scrambles and draws the defense in.



Brian Finneran Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He doesn't have the best hands for a wide receiver, but he's got speed and acceleration and knows how to get open.



Bob Whitfield Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Run to the left when possible, and you have the advantage of this guy leading the way.

Defensive Stars



Keith Brooking Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

His combination of speed and strength makes Brooking a blitzing menace.



Ray Buchanan Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

His combination of speed, getting past blocks and making the tackle makes Buchanan a near-perfect cornerback blitzer.



Keion Carpenter Free Safety

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Carpenter is dangerous in coverage or on a blitz. Use him to confuse the offense and blitz when necessary.

Star Players

Kyle Boller - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★
PACR ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕
BTKL ✕✕
INJ ✕✕

Tips

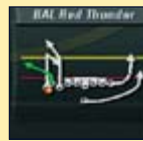
Even if Boller isn't starting for the Ravens, sub him in. He's got better arm strength and accuracy than Chris Redman and he's stronger overall. Look for short and middle-length passes rather than the deep bomb.

Useful Plays



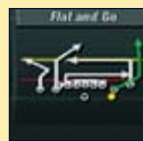
BAL Wing Post Out

Flood one side of the field and watch who opens up. Look for Heap over the middle.



BAL Red Thunder

On one side you have your TE and HB, on the other you have three WRs. Throw early to Taylor if the defense is playing off the line.



Flat and Go

Roll out to the right and look for your primary receiver deep. If he's not open, look for someone streaking across the middle.

Jamal Lewis - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
BCTL ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★

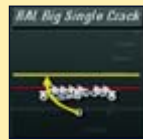
Key Weaknesses

HND ✕✕✕

Tips

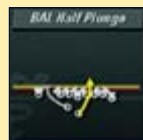
Lewis is best running to the outside, and you should use him often to open up the passing game for your young QB. His hands aren't the best, so don't rely on short passes to the flat for the majority of your passing game.

Useful Plays



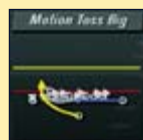
BAL Big Single Crack

Follow your pulling guard and hit the hole already opened by Jonathan Ogden. You usually find a few free yards here.



BAL Half Plunge

Nothing fancy here. Just hit the open hole and look for daylight.



Motion Toss Big

Ogden and a host of other blockers down the field swing around to the outside. Remember to send the man in motion before hiking the ball.

Other Offensive Stars



Frank Sanders Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Good hands, good speed, and excellent acceleration. This free agent should become a key go-to receiver.



Todd Heap Tight End

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★

Although he's not as well known as Tony Gonzalez or Jeremy Shockey, Heap is one of the league's best tight ends.



Jonathan Ogden Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Ogden is one of the best overall blockers in the NFL. Use him in the running game often.

Defensive Stars



Peter Boulware Left Linebacker

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

Boulware is a menace both covering the pass over the middle and rushing the QB. Use him in both situations and keep your opponent guessing.



Chris McAlister Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

McAlister is a rocket on defense, but remember that he's much better in coverage than he is against the run or on the blitz.



Ray Lewis Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

Lewis is the heart and soul of the Ravens's defense. He's a great player to control and use in just about any situation.

Star Players

Drew Bledsoe - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★
 VIS ★★★★★

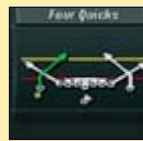
Key Weaknesses

SPD XXX

Tips

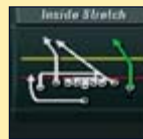
Bledsoe has a cannon for an arm and he's accurate, too. Look downfield for your primary two receivers (Moulds and Reed), but look for short routes opening up as well.

Useful Plays



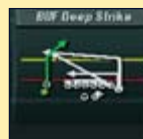
Four Quicks

If the cornerbacks are playing a few yards away from your primary WRs at scrimmage, one of them is probably open over the middle. If not, look outside.



Inside Stretch

Reed is fast. If the cornerback goes to the outside, you can hit him deep over the middle for a huge gain.



BUF Deep Strike

If the defense is set deep, the short outside pass is wide open.

Travis Henry - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
 FIN ★★★★★
 BTKL ★★★★★

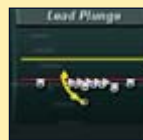
Key Weaknesses

BLK XXX

Tips

Henry is a quick back who has reasonably good hands. Use him mainly on outside runs, but mix it up with some inside running as well. Sam Gash is a good blocking FB; follow him whenever possible.

Useful Plays



Lead Plunge

Follow Sam Gash right off the side of the offensive line. Cut inside if the hole opens up that way.



BUF Doggo Swing

If the coverage is soft, look for Henry in the flat.



Lead Pro Punch

If the FB takes someone out, go inside. If not, swing it to the outside.

Other Offensive Stars



Eric Moulds Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

This speedy receiver also has great hands. Hit him deep or drag him across the middle for a quick gain.



Mike Williams Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 BLK ★★★★★

Look for Williams for open holes on the right side of the line.



Josh Reed Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Look for Reed when Moulds isn't open. He's often in single coverage.

Defensive Stars



Takeo Spikes Right Linebacker

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Use Spikes as a blitzing linebacker to pummel unsuspecting QBs.



Antoine Winfield Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Good, fast coverage back, but not very strong. Don't try to shed blocks with this guy.



Sam Adams Defensive Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 SBLK ★★★★★

Bull your way to the QB with Adams. Not many offensive lines can stop him for a full game.

Star Players

Rodney Peete - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
STR ★★★

Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕
BTKL ✕

Tips

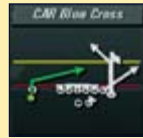
Rodney Peete isn't the most accurate or strong-armed QB in the league, but if you provide him with open targets, he can get the ball to them.

Useful Plays



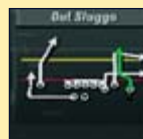
CAR Triple Cross

Look for the two receivers sprinting across the middle, but keep an eye on Muhammad. He may be facing single coverage down the sideline.



CAR Blue Cross

If they're playing your WRs tight, hit Muhammad when he makes the cut. Otherwise, check out the targets on your right or give him time to break away.



Out Sluggo

If the defense is worried about Muhammad and Dyson on the deep routes, you have open targets short.

Stephen Davis - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
FIN ★★★★★
AGI ★★★★★
VIS ★★★★★

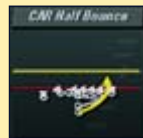
Key Weaknesses

HND ✕✕
STR ✕✕

Tips

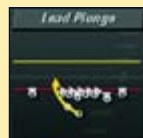
Focus on running sweeps on the outside rather than up the gut. Emmitt still has the moves, just not the straightforward muscle of previous years.

Useful Plays



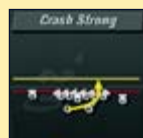
CAR Half Bounce

Only go to the outside if it's open. Use your moves to break tackles when you get the chance.



Lead Plunge

Follow your FB and punish any defensive backs who try to stop you.



Crash Strong

Don't use the CAR version of this play unless you want your QB to run the ball instead of Davis.

Other Offensive Stars



Muhsin Muhammad Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He's quick and he can flat out catch the ball. Look to him for the big gains and clutch catches.



Kevin Dyson Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★

He's hurt in the real NFL, but if he's on the roster when the season starts, sub him in and use him well...especially over the middle.



Todd Steussie Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Make sure that at least some of your inside runs are to the left side behind Steussie.

Defensive Stars



Julius Peppers Defensive Left End

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Last year's Rookie of the Year is even better this year. He's skilled across the board at defensive end. Wherever you use him, he excels.



Kris Jenkins Defensive Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

Jenkins is another well-balanced defensive lineman to use against the pass or run.



Terry Cousin Left Cornerback

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

He's not much of a tackler, so use Cousin mainly in pass coverage.

Star Players

Kordell Stewart - Quarterback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

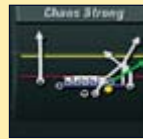
Key Weaknesses

BTKL ✖✖

Note

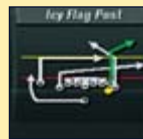
If Chris Chandler is still on the roster, he is a better fit for players more comfortable with pocket passing.

Useful Plays



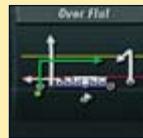
Chaos Strong

Send your man in motion. If no one on the defense follows him, you have an open receiver against this zone.



Icy Flag Post

Roll to your right and look to the guy breaking outside for the open pass deep. If no one comes up, tuck the ball and run for a gain. Try running to throw the defense off balance.



Over Flat

If the safety picks up the TE or the WR streaking deep, look for the other WR crossing the middle in the open.

Tips

Kordell is useful as both a running threat and a passing threat. And while he doesn't have the strongest or most accurate arm, he can cause havoc against a defense trying to decide whether to cover his pass or his run.

Anthony Thomas - Halfback



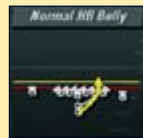
Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

HND ✖✖

Useful Plays



Normal HB Belly

Pure, simple power running. Let the hole open up and then hit it with speed.



CHI Crash Strong

Follow your fullback and flip this play to the other side from time to time.



CHI Motion Draw

When they're expecting a pass, fake them out with this draw up the middle.

Tips

Thomas is great for stuffing it up the middle and he has enough speed to run up the sides of the line. Steer clear of sweeps and outside runs—he's not at his best on the outside.

Other Offensive Stars



Marty Booker Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Booker should be your number one receiver. Give him routes that take advantage of his explosive acceleration.



Dez White Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He doesn't have the best hands, but White is a strong number two receiver who is open often.



Olin Kreutz Center

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

He opens many holes up the middle for Thomas and keeps the center of the line from crushing in on your QB.

Defensive Stars



Brian Urlacher Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He has a lot of top skills that can control a game. He's a great guy to use against any offense.



Michael Haynes Defensive Left End

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Haynes also has very good acceleration. Run line stunts and let him take a shot at the QB.



Mike Brown Free Safety

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

He's fast, but doesn't have strong tackling skills. Use him in coverage mostly.

Star Players

Carson Palmer - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

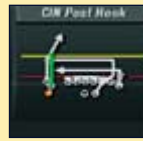
Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕✕
STR ✕✕✕

Tips

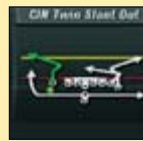
Marvin Lewis may choose to start Jon Kitna, but that doesn't mean that you have to. Palmer's got better stats and the arm strength and accuracy to go long. Keep short options open if the pressure starts coming at you.

Useful Plays



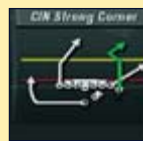
CIN Post Hook

Look first to Warrick breaking deep. If he's doubled, you should have Johnson over the middle.



CIN Twin Slant Out

Roll to the left with Johnson and Warrick and toss it to whoever's open, or tuck it in and grab a few yards yourself.



CIN Strong Corner

If they single-cover your primary receiver, you get have a huge gain if you can get him the ball.

Corey Dillon - Halfback



Key Strengths

BTKL ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

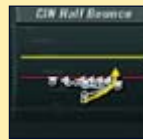
Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕✕

Tips

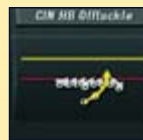
Corey Dillon has the rare combo of speed and power. If only he had a good offensive line. Run plays that provide lead blockers to take out defenders and pass occasionally so the defense can't key up on the run.

Useful Plays



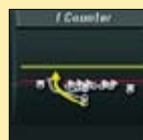
CIN Half Bounce

Follow your pulling guard and then make some of the defensive backs pay with Dillon's bruising running style.



CIN HB Offtackle

Stay on the outside shoulder of your blocking FB and then bust it up the middle.



I Counter

Don't beat your pulling guard to the line. Be patient and take the hole inside or outside, whichever opens up.

Other Offensive Stars



Peter Warrick Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

He's Palmer's top target. He's been a disappointment in the NFL so far, but his stats are good for this game.



Chad Johnson Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Although his stats aren't great, Johnson is the team's most reliable receiver.



Willie Anderson Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

He's slow, but he's strong. Follow him like a train.

Defensive Stars



Kevin Hardy Left Linebacker

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

Kevin Hardy is good in coverage, but isn't a strong tackler. Use him to shut down the short passing game.



Jeff Burris Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Keep Burris back in the secondary. He doesn't have the block-shedding moves or tackling ability to be effective on the blitz.



John Thornton Defensive Left Tackle

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

Thornton, a new addition to the Bengals, should help their pass rush significantly. Try some stunts to get him close to the QB.

Star Players

Tim Couch - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
INJ ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕
ACC ✕✕

Tips

Tim Couch may be fighting for his job in the NFL, but he's got better stats in *Fever* and deserves the starting slot. He is definitely not a running QB, so keep him in the pocket and look for open receivers.

Useful Plays



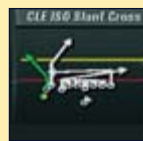
CLE Clear Dig

Look first for an open man coming across the middle, but keep an eye out deep. If you have single coverage and pass protection, you have a huge gain coming.



CLE Wild Slant

Take only a three-step drop and then hit the primary receiver as he makes the slant across the middle. If the middle's clogged, look left and then deep.



CLE Iso Slant Cross

If the middle is open, get the ball there quick. If not, look to the deep routes for the open man.

William Green - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
BCTL ★★★★★

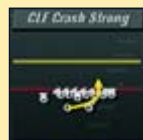
Key Weaknesses

BTKL ✕✕✕
HND ✕✕✕

Tips

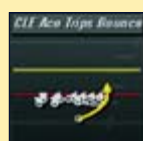
William Green is best used as an outside runner. Don't try to use him on long sweeps. He just doesn't have the speed to get around the corner. Run him up either side of the line.

Useful Plays



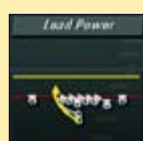
CLE Crash Strong

Follow your blockers right up the side of the line. Flip directions to throw the defense off occasionally.



CLE Ace Trips Bounce

Wait for your pulling guard to take out the safety if he's coming, and then rumble up the field. Don't get strung out to the sidelines.



Lead Power

Follow your FB and look for a hole to open. Don't try to go outside unless it's totally open.

Other Offensive Stars



Kevin Johnson Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

One of many quick Browns receivers. Look for Johnson on deep routes.



Quincy Morgan Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★

Here's another quick receiver who can get open across the middle. Look for him when Johnson is double-covered.



Chris Gardocki Punter

Key Stats

PSTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

A good punter can be the difference between a win and a loss during a tight, defensive struggle.

Defensive Stars



Courtney Brown Defensive Right End

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

This powerful defensive lineman is good at stopping the run as well as pressuring the quarterback.



Daylon McCutcheon Right Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He's quick and also has decent blitzing skills. Use him from time to time to hassle the QB.



Gerard Warren Defensive Left Tackle

Key Stats

TKL ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

He's a furious run-stopper who can push offensive linemen back to the QB.

Star Players

Joey Galloway - Wide Receiver



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★★

Key Weaknesses

STR ✕
BTKL ✕✕

Tips

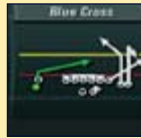
Joey Galloway is the top receiver for a team without a standout QB. Find plays that use his speed to get him open and make safe, low-risk passes when he's in the clear.

Useful Plays



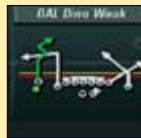
DAL Deep Strike

If they double up Galloway, look for the short out or the receiver crossing to his side. They should be wide open.



Blue Cross

In tight coverage, look for Galloway as soon as he crosses inside.



DAL Dino Weak

If you have the patience and pass protection to wait until Galloway hits his three moves, you're usually rewarded (an even better play when Carter is QB).

Chad Hutchinson - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
SPD ★★★

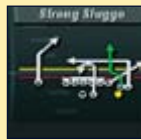
Key Weaknesses

INJ ✕✕
ACC ✕

Tips

Hutchinson has a weaker arm but much better passing accuracy than fellow Dallas QB Quincy Carter. Use Hutchinson to spread the field with throws short and medium as well as inside and out. A balanced attack should gain you some key passing yards.

Useful Plays



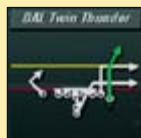
Strong Sluggo

With so much action on one side of the field, you may find a WR streaking downfield in single coverage. If not, look for the short middle pass to the back.



Four Quicks

If the corners give your receivers a big cushion, hit the pass quickly. If not, look down the field.



DAL Twin Thunder

Make the safety choose which route on the right side to cover. When he does, you throw to the other man.

Other Offensive Stars



Terry Glenn Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Look for crossing patterns and long routes for this receiver.



Jason Witten Tight End

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★

Don't forget to bring the TE into your passing game to mix things up for the defense.



Larry Allen Left Guard

Key Stats

AGG ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

He's better at pass blocking than run blocking, but you can still follow him with your HB for nice gains.

Defensive Stars



La'Roi Glover Defensive Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

Glover can make a QB's life miserable if you use him correctly. He also has very good coverage skills.



Darren Woodson Strong Safety

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

He's not as fast as some defensive backs, but Woodson is a great tackler who can fight his way through blocks to take down a ball carrier.



Roy Williams Free Safety

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

You can pick off errant passes when controlling the speedy Williams on defense.

Star Players

Clinton Portis - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕✕
STR ✕✕✕

Tips

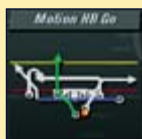
Portis is a speed back who can get to the outside in a hurry. Run sweeps and quick pitches, but also mix things up with an occasional burst up the middle.

Useful Plays



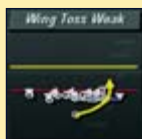
Motion Toss Big

Bust to the outside and turn it up the field. If you get the right blocking, you'll have a free run up the sidelines for a first down.



Motion HB Go

If a defender doesn't follow your WR in motion, there's a great chance that Portis is open for a long pass down the middle.



Wing Toss Weak

Wait until your receiver picks up his man and then zip your way around the outside corner.

Rod Smith - Wide Receiver



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★

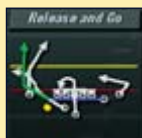
Key Weaknesses

STR ✕✕

Tips

This speedy veteran receiver should be at the center of your passing offense. Wait until the coverage is right and get him the ball.

Useful Plays



Release and Go

Send your offside receiver into motion to overload the right side, opening Rod Smith for single coverage.



All Slant

If your opponent uses man coverage, these crossing patterns provide a clean pick to get Smith open.



Double Post

When Smith gets open deep, get some air under the ball.

Other Offensive Stars



Tom Nalen
Center

Key Stats

BLK ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

Look for holes up the middle created by this guy.



Jake Plummer
Quarterback

Key Stats

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

Don't be afraid to let Jake the Snake air it out from time to time.



Jason Elam
Kicker

Key Stats

LSTR ★★★★★
KACR ★★★★★

He's a rock-solid kicker and gives you opportunities to boot long ones.

Defensive Stars



Trevor Pryce
Defensive Left End

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

Pryce is strong both on pass rush and dropping back into pass coverage.



Al Wilson
Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

CVG ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Use Wilson to plug up the middle in short passing defenses.



Deltha O'Neal
Left Cornerback

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Use his speed and acceleration to catch up to deep receivers and help out other DBs when the ball is thrown elsewhere.

Star Players

Joey Harrington - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕
STR ✕
ACC ✕

Tips

Under the tutelage of Mariucci, Harrington most likely blossoms into a solid quarterback. More important, Detroit has surrounded him with good receivers. Try them in the middle until the defense shuts that down. Then go deep.

Useful Plays



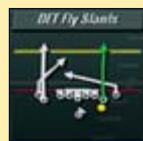
DET Wide Clear

Take a short drop, and look for the WR streaking near the line. If he's covered, someone should be open deep.



DET Cross Flank

With all the action headed to the right, your primary receiver has a good chance at one-on-one coverage deep.



DET Fly Slants

Look to the middle first and then check off deep. When someone's open, they're usually open big.

James Stewart - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★
BCTL ★★★★★

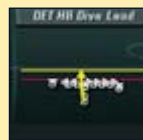
Key Weaknesses

ACC ✕✕✕
HND ✕✕✕

Tips

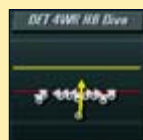
Stewart doesn't have the explosive acceleration to bust around the corners on sweeps, but he can hit holes up the middle and he's hard to bring down if he's got blockers. Keep him running inside when possible.

Useful Plays



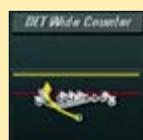
DET HB Dive Lead

Follow your FB through the open hole in the line and pound out a few yards.



DET 4WR HB Dive

If you pass often, this formation makes the defense think you're throwing the ball. Surprise them with a run up the middle.



DET Wide Counter

After a few runs up the middle, run this counter play. The defense is off guard, and you grab a few yards around the corner.

Other Offensive Stars



Az-Zahir Hakim Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Hakim is one of the quickest WRs in this game. Send him on deep routes that take advantage of his speed and acceleration.



Charles Rogers Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

The number one Lions draft pick sees a lot of action. He has good speed and hands to catch the tough catches.



Bill Schroeder Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Schroeder is another speedy target for Harrington. He's often open when the defense is doubling the big names.

Defensive Stars



Robert Porcher Defensive Left End

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Porcher is strong, fast, and good against the run and the pass. Use him in a variety of situations. He's useful any way you control him.



Luther Elliss Defensive Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

With the Lion's weak secondary, you need to get a lot of pressure on the QB with guys like Elliss.



Boss Bailey Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

Bailey could end up the heart of the Lions LB corps. Use him in pass coverage, against the run, or on the blitz.

Star Players

Brett Favre - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★
 BCTL ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

BTKL ✕

Tips

Favre has a cannon for an arm and accuracy to match. Although he doesn't have the most experienced receivers, he has the tools to get them the ball when they're open. Go deep and go deep often.

Useful Plays



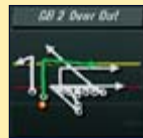
GB Gun Spread

Look deep first, if nothing opens up, hit the crossing pattern over the middle or dump the ball to Green up the sideline.



GB Twin Slant Out

You want to hit the receivers going down the field, but if you have to you've got short dropoff options on either side.



GB 2 Over Out

This is the perfect place for a Favre frozen-rope bullet pass over the middle, but keep an eye on the deep route—it occasionally breaks open.

Ahman Green - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★
 STR ★★★★★
 BTKL ★★★★★

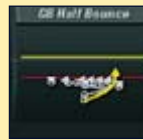
Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕✕

Tips

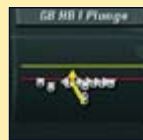
Green is a fast and powerful back who can run inside and outside as well as catch the ball. As if that weren't enough, he's playing behind a good blocking fullback and tight end. Run often to prime the defense for the deep passing game.

Useful Plays



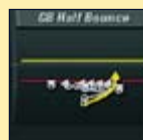
GB Half Bounce

Get behind your fullback and head up the field. Don't stretch this play too far to the sidelines. Find your hole and get your yards.



GB HB I Plunge

Wait for the block and then bust it up the middle. Keep pushing even if you're stopped. Be prepared to cut outside if the middle is stuffed.



Twins HB Pitch

Another quick run, but this time your whole team is blocking. Look for the blocks and hit the holes.

Other Offensive Stars



Bubba Franks Tight End

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Franks should be a key part of your offense. He's fast, he can catch, and he can block for the run. Make him do all three.



Donald Driver Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

Driver should be one of Favre's most frequent targets. He has good hands, so don't be afraid to zing the ball to him on a slant pattern.



William Henderson Fullback

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
 BLK ★★★★★

Henderson is a very useful all-around fullback. He's so useful that you should stick to formations that feature him in the backfield.

Defensive Stars



Darren Sharper Free Safety

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Sharper is good in coverage, but he's devastating on the blitz. Bring him in and give the QB nightmares.



Bryant Westbrook Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Here's another good coverage guy who can come in on the Blitz.



Joe Johnson Defensive Right End

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 TKL ★★★★★

Johnson can play against the run or the pass and he can shed blocks on the way to a QB sack.

Star Players

David Carr - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
ACC ★★★

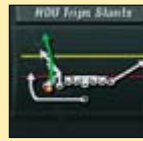
Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕
STR ✕

Tips

Because of the weak Texan offensive line, Carr spends a lot of his time facing defensive pressure. Develop quick, short routes and slant patterns that slow down the pass rush and let Carr get the throw off before he's planted on the turf.

Useful Plays



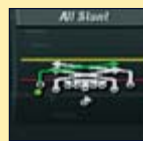
HOU Trips Slant

Roll slightly to the right and look for one of your WRs in single coverage. Dump off to your HB if necessary.



Inside Slant

If the defense is blitzing, throw the ball to the vacated area. If not, look for the quick slant across the middle.



All Slant

This is a great way to get your receivers open quickly. Against man-to-man defense, someone usually breaks away into the open.

Jonathan Wells - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

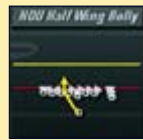
Key Weaknesses

HND ✕✕
BTKL ✕✕

Tips

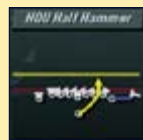
Wells needs to run the ball from time to time to take the pressure off Carr. He doesn't have great speed, but he has good strength. Run him up the middle and the side of the offensive line. Try to follow Boselli when possible.

Useful Plays



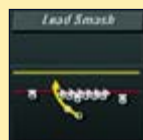
HOU Half Wing Belly

Bust through the hole opened up by Boselli and grab as many yards as you can up the middle.



Houston Half Hammer

This play works best when the other team is expecting a pass. Let the motion man pull a defender away from the play in man coverage.



Lead Smash

Blocks by your FB and Tony Boselli should open a hole. Don't get strung out to the corner. Turn it upfield when you see the open hole.

Other Offensive Stars



Jabar Gaffney Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Gaffney is the closest thing the Texans have to a big play receiver. Use him especially on quick slants to provide Carr a good target.



Corey Bradford Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Here's another good target for Carr. Remember, you won't always have time for the big, deep route, so be creative.



Tony Boselli Left Guard

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Boselli is one of the best offensive linemen in this game. Run to his side often.

Defensive Stars



Aaron Glenn Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Glenn is quick and can blitz with the best of them, so send him after the QB when you get the chance.



Gary Walker Defensive Left End

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Walker is fast and strong. Use him to get some heat on the QB and to shut down the running game.



Marcus Coleman Right Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Coleman is another fine blitzing cornerback. Alternate blitzes between him and Glenn to keep the other team guessing.

Star Players

Peyton Manning - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

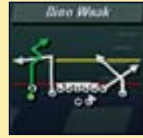
Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕✕
 STR ✕✕

Tips

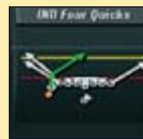
Manning has some of the best pure passing stats in the game. Plus, he has the acceleration to scramble occasionally. Throw it deep and don't be afraid to thread the needle if you have Harrison open across the middle.

Useful Plays



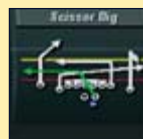
Dino Weak

If you've softened the defense with the run and your line gives you enough time, Harrison is wide open after his triple move.



IND Four Quicks

This play is all about hitting Harrison as he streaks across the middle. It's hard to stop.



Scissors Dig

Keep an eye downfield, but your primary receiver on this route is James. He's often open as he sprints to the left sideline.

Edgerrin James - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★
 BTK ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

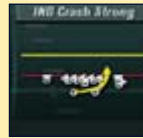
Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕✕✕

Tips

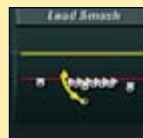
James is one of the league's premiere running backs. He can run inside and outside and he has good hands. Work him into the offense as much as possible and open up the passing game for Manning and Harrison.

Useful Plays



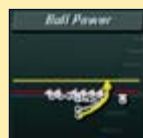
IND Crash Strong

Follow your blockers and punch through the open hole.



Lead Smash

Nothing fancy here. Just take the ball right up the side of your offensive line and push back anyone in your way.



Bull Power

Read the blocks and take it outside if you can, but don't pass up a clean hole toward the middle.

Other Offensive Stars



Marvin Harrison Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

Harrison is one of the quickest players in the entire game, and he has All-Pro hands and a QB who can get him the ball deep. Use him often.



Marcus Pollard Tight End

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

Pollard should be a featured part of the passing game, but remember that he's a good blocker too, so follow him on the run.



Reggie Wayne Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Wayne is a solid number two receiver who is open often if the other team doubles Harrison.

Defensive Stars



Chad Bratzke Defensive Right End

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
 STR ★★★★★

He's a good run-stopper and pass-rusher. Use him often.



Walt Harris Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 SBLK ★★★★★

Harris is a quick defensive back who's good on the blitz. Let him bring the heat from time to time.



David Macklin Right Cornerback

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Macklin has speed, but keep him back on coverage. He has lousy blitzing skills.

Star Players

Mark Brunell - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★

Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕
ACC ✕✕

Tips

Brunell is a good, strong-armed pocket QB who doesn't have a lot of top targets to throw to. Look for patterns that get Jimmy Smith, Fred Taylor and Jermaine Lewis into open slots in the defense.

Useful Plays



JAX Fly Slants

With so much attention paid to the right side, Jimmy Smith is often open after he crosses the middle. If you've got protection make the pass. If not, dump it to Lewis on the short slant.



JAX Release Flare

If the defense follows the man in motion, there's a good chance that Taylor is open for the short pass. If not, look for the TE crossing.



Split Strong All

If a safety cheats up, the middle of the field should be open for Jimmy Smith's deep slant.

Fred Taylor - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

STR ✕✕✕

Tips

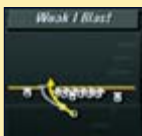
Fred Taylor is finally healthy coming into the 2003 season. He should be at the center of your offense with quick dashes and sweeps to the outside. He has good hands too, so work him into the passing game.

Useful Plays



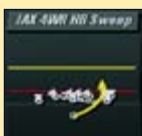
JAX Half Bounce

Depending upon where your FB hits his block, break inside or outside. Keep your eyes open and read the hole.



Weak I Blast

Only break outside if it's really open. Otherwise, skirt the line and head upfield for a few quick yards.



JAX 4WR HB Sweep

Your run depends on your pulling guard. Be patient and let him decide the path to run. Just watch out for pursuit from your backside.

Other Offensive Stars



Jimmy Smith Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Smith is rocket-fast and has good hands. He's often double-covered, but if you call the right pass patterns, you can get him open deep.



Jermaine Lewis Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Lewis doesn't have hands as good as Jimmy Smith's, but he has quickness to spare and can pull down most passes. Look to him when Smith is doubled.



Byron Leftwich Quarterback

Key Stats

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

Right now Brunell is the better passer, but first-round draft pick Leftwich is the future of the Jags.

Defensive Stars



Fernando Bryant Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Bryant is rocket-fast, but don't try to use him on blitzes. He has lousy tackling and block-shedding skills.



Hugh Douglas Defensive Right End

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

Douglas is a key pickup for the Jaguars. Use his speed to get to the QB or stuff the outside run.



Tony Brackens Defensive End

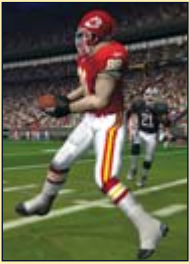
Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Brackens is another tough Jaguars lineman who can terrorize QBs and RBs alike.

Star Players

Tony Gonzalez - Tight End



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★
 BTKL ★★★★★
 BLK ★★★★★

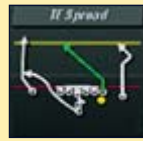
Key Weaknesses

ACC ✖✖✖

Tips

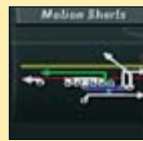
Few teams have as dangerous a weapon as the Chiefs' TE Tony Gonzalez. He has excellent hands and great speed. Target him often—he's typically covered by a defender who can't match up.

Useful Plays



TE Spread

Your FB stays in to block and gives you time to look for Tony Gonzalez deep across the middle.



Motion Shorts

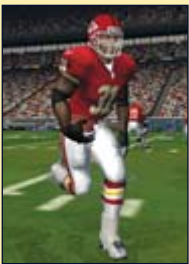
Send the WR in motion and then Gonzalez busts across the short middle. You should pick up some good yards after the catch here.



TE Clear Post

Wait as long as possible to let Gonzalez get open. When he's open, he's open big.

Priest Holmes - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★
 BTKL ★★★★★
 AGI ★★★★★

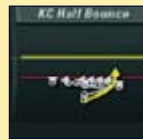
Key Weaknesses

BLK ✖✖✖

Tips

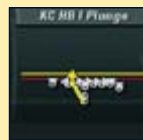
Running inside, running outside, catching the ball, going deep...there isn't much this running back can't do. Use him all over the field to confuse and wear down your opponent.

Useful Plays



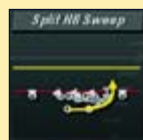
KC Half Bounce

Tony Gonzalez and pulling guard open the hole for you. Look for the open slot and power through.



KC HB I Plunge

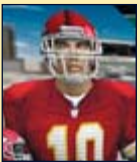
Strong inside running play that lets Priest Holmes show his power.



Split HB Sweep

Follow your fullback and your pulling guard to the promised land.

Other Offensive Stars



Trent Green Quarterback

Key Stats

ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★

Green is a solid but not spectacular QB who can get the ball to receivers accurately in both deep and short routes.



Will Shields Right Guard

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 BLK ★★★★★

Follow Shields, especially when he is the pulling guard to the left side.



Dante Hall Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

Look for this sure-handed speedster to get open when the defense is concentrating on stopping Gonzalez.

Defensive Stars



Dexter McCleon Right Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

He's mainly a coverage guy, but you can sneak him in on blitzes occasionally.



Kawika Mitchell Left Linebacker

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 CVG ★★★★★

Use him as a solid pass coverage linebacker with good speed.



Derrick Ransom Defensive Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 SBLK ★★★★★

He's decent in pass coverage but best used to put pressure on the quarterback.

Star Players

Jay Fiedler - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

ACC ✕✕
SPD ✕✕✕

Tips

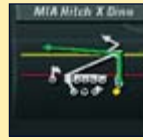
Jay Fiedler isn't among the league's marquee QBs, but with Ricky Williams behind him, he can still move the Dolphin offense. If he isn't working out, sub in Brian Griese, who has better stats in some key areas.

Useful Plays



MIA PAP Post Arrow

Once you've established the run, break out this play. If the defense bites on the play, your primary receiver is wide open, breaking to the sideline.



MIA Hitch X Dino

Look for the open receiver on a crossing route or hit Williams streaking down the sideline.



MIA 4WR Wheel

Great for third and long or for getting the clock stopped with a pass downfield and then out of bounds.

Ricky Williams - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★
BCTL ★★★★★

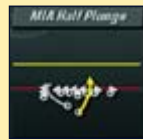
Key Weaknesses

AGG ✕✕✕✕

Tips

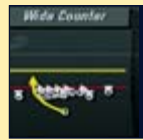
Ricky Williams is perhaps the best power back in the NFL at this time. He's also incredibly fast. Work your running game both inside and outside (with an emphasis on inside running). That should wear down the defense and open up the passing game.

Useful Plays



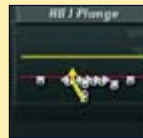
MIA Half Plunge

Wait for your blocker, then follow him through the hole with authority.



Wide Counter

Here's another play in which you *must* follow your pulling guard. Even if you have to slow down to do it, it'll net you several extra yards.



HB I Plunge

Keep pounding the defensive line with Williams. When they try to stop the run, go to the passing game.

Other Offensive Stars



Olindo Mare Kicker

Key Stats

KSTR ★★★★★
KACR ★★★★★

He has a strong leg and good accuracy. When playing with the Dolphins, you can try longer field goals than you would normally attempt.



Brian Griese Quarterback

Key Stats

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

Even though he's a backup, Griese is a talented QB. If Fiedler isn't making the grade, don't be afraid to call up Griese.



Mark Dixon Left Guard

Key Stats

BLK ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

Mark Dixon should open up quite a few holes for Williams on the inside, and also by pulling to the outside.

Defensive Stars



Sam Madison Right Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Sam Madison is a fast and fearsome defender who can take down even the toughest ball carriers when they hit the secondary.



Zach Thomas Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Thomas is as dangerous covering the middle against the pass as he is at stopping the run. He's a great all-purpose defender for hands-on players.



Jason Taylor Defensive Right End

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

Taylor is a force to be reckoned with. Make him the other QB's worst nightmare by pressuring on the rush or dropping back in short coverage.

Star Players

Duante Culpepper - Quarterback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
 ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★

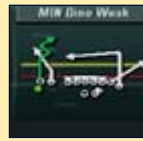
Key Weaknesses

BCTL ✕
 ACC ✕✕

Tips

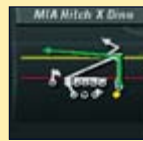
Culpepper is a powerful mobile quarterback who can punish defenders who take him on head-to-head. Scramble with Culpepper when possible and always look deep for Moss. Just watch out for fumbles.

Useful Plays



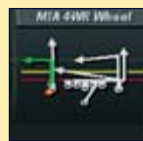
MIN Dino Weak

If Culpepper can avoid the rush long enough for Moss to make his triple move, you have a wide-open target deep all day long.



Shallow Wheel

If the safety on the left side comes in to help, look for Moss streaking across the middle and lead him with a touch pass. If the safety stays back, look for the short dump to Bennett.



Iso Slant Cross

If the safety rolls to help cover Moss, look to the other receivers or run it yourself. If not, hit him as he crosses deep.

Michael Bennett - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★
 BTKL ★★★★★

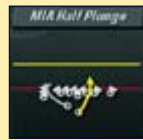
Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕✕

Tips

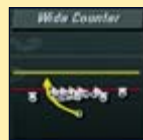
Bennett should run occasionally out to the outside, but more often around the side of his offensive line. He has decent hands and can catch passes as a dump-off valve in case Moss is covered deep.

Useful Plays



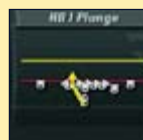
MIN Big Counter

Your pulling guard shows you where to go. Follow his lead and break it upfield.



Motion Jolt

In man-to-man defense, the motion takes a defender out of the play. Break it outside if this happens.



MIN Crash Strong

Follow your fullback to daylight. Don't try to break this one outside unless it's completely open.

Other Offensive Stars



Randy Moss Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Moss is the most explosive WR in the NFL. He faces lots of double coverage, but when he gets open, make sure to get him the ball.



Byron Chamberlain Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Chamberlain is also a very good blocking tight end. Use him in the passing game and go to his side in the running game.



Matt Birk Center

Key Stats

BLK ★★★★★
 STR ★★★★★

With Birk pushing bodies back on the offensive line, don't be afraid to break out a QB sneak from time to time.

Defensive Stars



Cory Chavous Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Chavous has good blitzing skills. Sneak him in on the QB from time to time.



Greg Biekert Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
 SBLK ★★★★★

He's good in pass coverage or blitzing the QB. Use him both ways to keep the offense honest.



Kevin Williams Defensive Left End

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 CVG ★★★★★

This rookie should see a lot of playing time on defense. He can also get past blockers very well.

Star Players

Tom Brady - Quarterback



Key Strengths
 ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★
 AGG ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses
 STR XX
 SPD XXX

Tips

You need to lean heavily on Tom Brady if you want to win with the Patriots. He's not a running QB and he doesn't have the strongest arm, but if you use him smartly with short and medium passes, you can take down opposing defenses.

Useful Plays



NE Soda Jerk

With everyone going over the middle, at least one of your receivers is mismatched against a linebacker. Hit the open target.



NE Post V-Stretch

Look first to see if your man is single-covered deep. If not, look for a receiver coming across the middle.



NE 2 Over Out

If the pressure comes, dump it off short to one of your backs.

Antowain Smith - Halfback



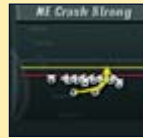
Key Strengths
 SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★
 BTKL ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses
 BCTL XX
 HND XXX

Tips

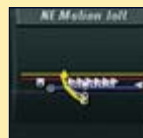
Antowain Smith had a disappointing season in 2002, but that doesn't mean that you can't use him well in this game. Take advantage of his speed and power by running to the sides of the line just off the tackle. Just don't run him too much—he's fumble-prone.

Useful Plays



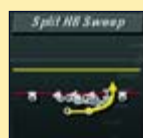
NE Crash Strong

Follow your FB up the side. Don't try to swing it to the outside. Just get the yards that you can get.



NE Motion Jolt

Against man coverage, the motion takes one defender away from the play. If your opponent likes zone, leave your receiver in to block.



HB Slot Punch

Pound it up the middle to open up the outside runs.

Other Offensive Stars



Troy Brown
Wide Receiver
Key Stats
 HND ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

With the other receivers crossing the middle, send Troy Brown long. He often outruns the defender.



Bethel Johnson
Wide Receiver
Key Stats
 ACC ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

This rookie receiver should be able to break open across the middle as well as down the sidelines.



Damien Woody
Center
Key Stats
 BLK ★★★★★
 STR ★★★★★

Don't be afraid to run it up the middle behind this big lineman.

Defensive Stars



Ty Law
Right Cornerback
Key Stats
 SPD ★★★★★
 SBLK ★★★★★

With his speed and ability to shed blocks, Ty Law is a wicked weapon on a corner blitz.



Lawyer Milloy
Strong Safety
Key Stats
 SBLK ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Milloy is good in coverage, but don't be afraid to blitz him from time to time as well.



Rodney Harrison
Free Safety
Key Stats
 SBLK ★★★★★
 CVG ★★★★★

Another great blitzer from the secondary. Keep the QB guessing by sending in these guys whenever possible.

Star Players

Aaron Brooks - Quarterback



Key Strengths
 ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses
 STR XXX

Tips

Brooks is a mobile QB with a strong and accurate arm. Mix in lots of plays in which you roll out while passing, and keep some deep passes in your playbook.

Useful Plays



NO Angle X Pro

Give time for McAllister to bust across the middle. If he's guarded by a slow linebacker, he's open almost every time.



NO HB Flag

Scramble to your right. Look first for Stallworth deep and then check for Horn coming across the middle. If the defense doesn't cover you, run toward the sidelines.



NO Buckle Out

Give your receivers on the left time to get open deep, and then let it fly if one of them is open. Otherwise, look to one of the side routes.

Deuce McAllister - Halfback



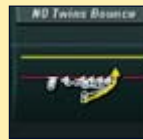
Key Strengths
 ACC ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★
 STR ★★★★★
 BTL; ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses
 INJ XXX

Tips

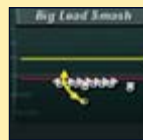
McAllister is quick and powerful. Use him to go to the outside and to make quick runs right up the sides of your line. He also has decent hands, so mix him into the passing game.

Useful Plays



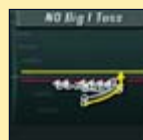
NO Twins Bounce

Follow your FB and turn it upfield the first chance you get.



Big Lead Smash

Hit the hole quickly before the defense can close it down. Let your FB dictate which direction you go.



NO Big I Toss

Another deadly outside run for McAllister. When the blocking's in place, he chews up the yards.

Other Offensive Stars



Joe Horn
Wide Receiver
Key Stats
 HND ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Joe Horn can get open deep or break free on slant passes, and he has good hands to pull down passes.



Donte Stallworth
Wide Receiver
Key Stats
 SPD ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

He's a good clutch receiver who leads the Saints in touchdowns. Look for him when Horn is covered.



John Carney
Kicker
Key Stats
 LSTR ★★★★★
 KACR ★★★★★

A dependable kicker is worth his weight in gold. It's nice to know he's there when you need him.

Defensive Stars



Dale Carter
Left Cornerback
Key Stats
 SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

He's fast but doesn't have good blitzing skills. Keep him in coverage whenever possible.



Tebucky Jones
Free Safety
Key Stats
 SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Another quick coverage defensive back who doesn't have the best tackling skills. Don't try taking down running backs with Jones.



Johnathan Sullivan
Defensive Left Tackle
Key Stats
 STR ★★★★★
 SBLK ★★★★★

The Saints' first round draft pick could see a lot of playing time, and opposing QBs could see a lot of Johnathan Sullivan.

Star Players

Jeremy Shockey - Tight End



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕✕✕

Tips

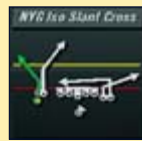
A tight end like Jeremy Shockey can be very useful in *Fever 2004*. Use him short out of the flat, across the middle, and streaking deep. You often find that he's facing mismatched coverage, giving you an easy target.

Useful Plays



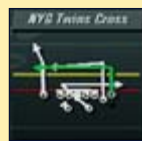
Icy Flag Post

The WR often pulls off the safety, leaving Shockey open streaking to the outside.



NYG Iso Slant Cross

Look for Shockey across the middle for a short but easy gain.



NYG Twins Cross

Against a zone, you can find open holes underneath and give Shockey a chance to run after the catch.

Tiki Barber - Halfback



Key Strengths

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
BCTL ★★★★★

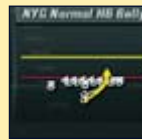
Key Weaknesses

STR ✕✕

Tips

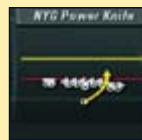
Tiki Barber is a good outside runner and has fantastic hands for a running back. Use him in both the passing game and the running game to confuse and spread out the offense.

Useful Plays



NYG Normal HB Belly

Wait for the hole to open up. If it doesn't, bounce outside and turn it upfield.



NYG Power Knife

Here's another well-designed running play. Flip directions from time to time to mix things up.



NYG Motion HB Go

Send the receiver in motion. If the defense doesn't follow, they're in a zone, and Barber should be wide open up the middle.

Other Offensive Stars



Amani Toomer Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He's got great hands and quick moves. Send him across the middle, or air it out deep.



Kerry Collins Quarterback

Key Stats

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

The key for this QB is to spread the ball around to the WRs, TE, and running back.



Ike Hilliard Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

Hilliard is another top target for Kerry Collins. He should be open when defenses double-team Toomer.

Defensive Stars



Michael Strahan Defensive Left End

Key Stats

TKL ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

Strahan is a fearsome defensive lineman who can get to the QB, stuff the run, and cover the short pass. Use him often.



William Peterson Right Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Peterson is a fast cornerback who can shut down opposing receivers. He's also a good tackler, which makes him useful on run blitzes.



Kenny Holmes Defensive Right End

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Holmes makes a perfect bookend with Strahan on the other side of the line for a tough defensive front.

Star Players

Chad Pennington - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

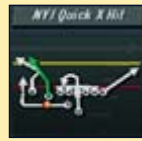
Key Weaknesses

STR ✕
AGG ✕✕

Tips

Pennington has the acceleration to get out of immediate danger, but he's not a full-fledged running QB. Use his arm strength and passing accuracy to spread the field and hit a variety of receivers.

Useful Plays



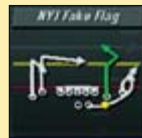
NYJ Quick X Hit

Look for Conway breaking open on the left side slant. If not, look at Chrebet and the short pass.



NYJ Post V-Stretch

If the defense covers the crossing routes, look to Curtis Martin in the flat.



NYJ Fake Flag

The defense can't both rush the QB and cover the FB. Look deep. If nothing opens up, drop it off to the short man.

Curtis Martin - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★

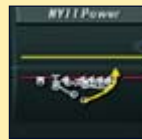
Key Weaknesses

INJ ✕✕✕✕

Tips

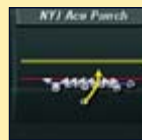
Curtis Martin is best running to the outside, but he can also take it to the middle of the field. He has good hands for a running back, so integrate him into your passing game.

Useful Plays



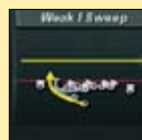
NYJ I Power

Get to the outside quick and hit the open lane.



NYJ Ace Punch

Send the man in motion and then punch it right up the middle for a nice gain.



Weak I Sweep

Your FB isn't much of a blocker, but if he even gets some part of the outside defender, you have a free run at a first down.

Other Offensive Stars



Wayne Chrebet Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He may have lost some steam in recent years, but he still has the stats to do well in this game. Look for crossing patterns and post routes.



Curtis Conway Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

His hands aren't as good as you'd want in a top receiver, but he has quickness to spare.



Kevin Mawae Center

Key Stats

BLK ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

Follow the center Mawae and the LG David Szott to daylight whenever you can.

Defensive Stars



Donnie Abraham Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

With his speed and ability to shed blocks, Donnie Abraham is a wicked weapon on a corner blitz.



John Abraham Defensive Right End

Key Stats

AGG ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

He's quick for a defensive end. Use him to get to the QB or ball carrier in a hurry.



Sam Cowart Right Linebacker

Key Stats

AGG ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

He's excellent in coverage over the middle, and aggressive to boot. It may be best to control another player and let him do wreak havoc.

Star Players

Rich Gannon - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★
 VIS ★★★★★

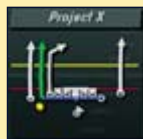
Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕✕
 STR ✕✕

Tips

Rich Gannon is one of the league's best pocket quarterbacks. He has tremendous arm strength and passing accuracy and a group of veteran receivers to throw to. Don't try scrambling with him, though—stick to the pocket.

Useful Plays



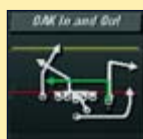
Project X

Look for one of your big three receivers to separate from the defense and hit him on the run.



OAK Post V-Stretch

Pass to your WRs as they cross over the middle. If the defense shuts it down, hit Charlie Garner coming out of the backfield for a huge gain.



OAK In and Out

Let Garner clear out the middle and then hit Rice as he crosses into the gap.

Charlie Garner - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★
 BTKL ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

STR ✕✕✕
 BLK ✕

Tips

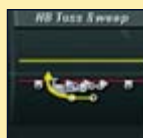
Use Garner as an outside runner who uses speed more than brute strength. Also remember that he has excellent hands for a halfback, so integrate him into the passing game.

Useful Plays



OAK Half Bounce

Follow the pulling guard to glory.



HB Toss Sweep

Get behind your pulling guard and try to avoid the defensive back.



Cross Slot Go

If Garner is matched up against a linebacker, he usually gets open across the middle.

Other Offensive Stars



Tim Brown Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Tim Brown has speed and some of the best hands in the NFL. Lay it out deep for him, and he gets to it.



Jerry Rice Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

The Legendary One is still a force to be reckoned with. And since he's a number two receiver, he often face mismatches.



Jerry Porter Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

Yet another incredible receiver, Porter often sees single coverage as defenses try to stop Brown and Rice.

Defensive Stars



Charles Woodson Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 SBLK ★★★★★

Woodson is deadly in pass coverage, but use him often in corner blitzes as well.



Rod Woodson Free Safety

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

This future Hall of Famer is the perfect guy to play if you like controlling the secondary as a safety.



Dana Stubblefield Defensive Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 CVG ★★★★★

He's slow as molasses, but Stubblefield is a good run-stopper and very proficient at covering short passes.

Star Players

Donovan McNabb - Quarterback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

None

Tips

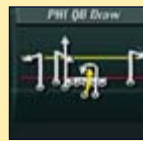
McNabb is a threat both running and throwing the ball. Use him well, and you have defenses scratching their heads trying to figure out what to do to stop him.

Useful Plays



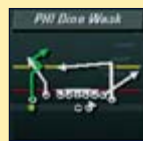
PHI HB Swing

Roll out in the same direction as the HB. If his defender comes to you, toss it to Staley and he has clear running room. If not, tuck it away and run it yourself.



PHI QB Draw

It's easy to get sacked by a blitz, so be prepared to audible another play. If the defense is right, though, this is a very useful play.



PHI Dino Weak

Use McNabb's scrambling abilities to let Thrash get through his triple move deep. When he's done, you have a wide-open target.

Duce Staley - Halfback



Key Strengths

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
BCTL ★★★★★

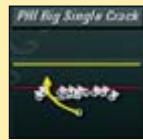
Key Weaknesses

STR XXX

Tips

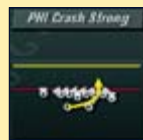
Duce Staley is a good overall runner who doesn't have All-Pro stats but works well in the Eagle offense. Use him in the passing game and rush with him often to set the defense back on its heels.

Useful Plays



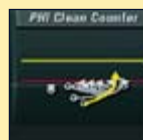
PHI Big Single Crack

Follow the pulling guard and head up the outside. If he doesn't make the block, however, you're toast.



PHI Crash Strong

This is all about judging where the hole opens. You're tempted to go outside, but the big yards are up the side of the line.



PHI Clean Counter

Your biggest threat on this play is from the defender coming around the back side. Wait for your blocks, but don't get caught from behind.

Other Offensive Stars



Chad Lewis Tight End

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
BLD ★★★★★

He has good hands, good speed, and he can block. Make him a key in both your passing and rushing offense.



James Thrash Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Thrash is fast enough to provide McNabb a good target. Look for him deep downfield.



Tra Thomas Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

He should open up holes in the line for the running game. Watch for plays that have him pulling for the HB.

Defensive Stars



Brian Dawkins Free Safety

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

He's good on coverage and can shed blocks on a blitz. Use him often.



Troy Vincent Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

He has speed and decent blitzing skills. Bring him in from time to time to hassle the QB.



Corey Simon Defensive Left Tackle

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★

With Hugh Douglas gone, it's up to Simon to anchor the defensive line. He's strong against the run and can rush the QB.

Star Players

Tommy Maddox - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★

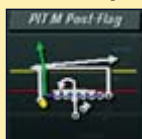
Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕
STR ✕
ACC ✕✕

Tips

Maddox has plenty of weapons to throw to, but he should look to Hines and Burress whenever possible. Keep him in the pocket and look for open routes.

Useful Plays



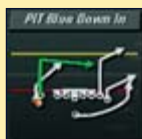
PIT M Post Flag

If the safeties double the deep route, look for your receivers crossing over the middle. If not, throw it long



PIT Outside Deep

Wait until the safety breaks off to cover your slot receiver, and you have single coverage on your man going deep.



PIT Blue Down In

If the defense is in a zone, flood the right side with four receivers and hit the one who can't be covered.

Jerome Bettis - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

HND ✕✕✕

Tips

Bettis may have lost a step or two over the years, but he still has great strength. Run him up the middle and put the line on its heels. Every time he bulls his way through, he wears down the defense.

Useful Plays



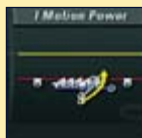
PIT HB I Plunge

Get through the line and power your way downfield.



PIT I Bounce

Don't get too far outside. Stick close to the line and punch it up the first open hole that you see.



I Motion Power

Wait for your FB to block and then pound your way to the inside.

Other Offensive Stars



Hines Ward Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Ward can get open just about anywhere on the field, and he has great hands. Send him deep on man coverage.



Plaxico Burress Wide Receiver

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

When the defense is keying on Hines Ward, Burress often faces mismatches. Make the defense pay for its mistakes.



Alan Faneca Left Guard

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Bettis should have Faneca's numbers in his view when running up the left side of the line.

Defensive Stars



Joey Porter Right Linebacker

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

His combination of speed and strength makes Porter absolutely crushing on a linebacker blitz.



Jason Gildon Left Linebacker

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

Gildon is another great LB. Because of his high aggressiveness rating, you can control another LB and let him cover his responsibilities on his own.



Kendrell Bell Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

Another fast linebacker, Bell is especially talented in pass defense.

Star Players

Drew Brees - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

ACC ✕✕
 STR ✕✕

Tips

Brees is a pocket passer, so don't try to run with him. He does have a very strong arm, however, and he can send the ball downfield with good accuracy. Work some deep plays into your passing offense.

Useful Plays



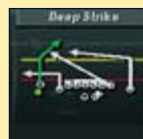
Outside Deep

You have speedy receivers on either side of the field. If they aren't open, drop it off to Tomlinson coming across the middle.



Motion Corner

Keep an eye on your two primary receivers. If they can't get open, drop it off to a back.



Deep Strike

Look for Dwight streaking across the middle or Boston running deep.

LaDainian Tomlinson - Running Back



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★
 HND ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕✕

Tips

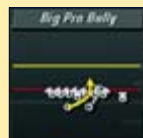
Tomlinson is an all-around useful back who can run to the outside or power through the inside. He also has great hands for a running back and has a strong blocking FB in front of him.

Useful Plays



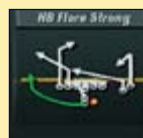
Crash Strong

Follow your FB up through the line. If you watch the block carefully, you almost always find a hole.



Bull Pro Belly

Watch for the block by your tackle before hitting the hole.



HB Flare Strong

If Tomlinson isn't covered, hit him for an easy gain. If he is, look for the FB running open up the seam.

Other Offensive Stars



Lorenzo Neal Fullback

Key Stats

BLK ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

He's fast and a great blocker. Use him to open holes for Tomlinson whenever possible.



Cory Raymer Center

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 BLK ★★★★★

Raymer can open up the center for some hard-nosed running. Use his skills whenever possible.



David Boston Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Boston is likely to be one of the Chargers' most useful weapons this year.

Defensive Stars



Donnie Edwards Middle Linebacker

Key Stats

CVG ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Edwards is excellent at stopping the pass in the middle of the field. He can also blitz well.



Quentin Jammer Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

He's incredibly fast. Use him to cover or plant the QB on a blitz.



Marcellus Wiley Defensive Left End

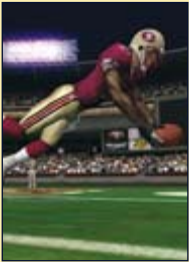
Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
 CVG ★★★★★

Wiley is also incredibly aggressive. Let the computer control him, and drop him into coverage in short passing situations.

Star Players

Terrell Owens - Wide Receiver



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★
END ★★★★★

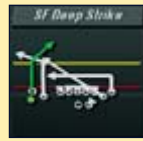
Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕✕

Tips

Owens has quickly become one of the best and most explosive WRs in the NFL. Get him open however you can. If the ball's even in his vicinity, he's likely to come down with it.

Useful Plays



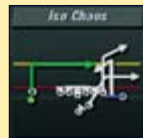
SF Deep Strike

Get air under the ball and leave Owens with enough room to accelerate to it.



SF Dino Week

It takes time for this play to develop, but if the defense isn't pressuring Garcia, Owens can often free himself for a big gain.



Iso Chaos

Owens splits across the middle. Hit him on the run for some extra yards after the catch.

Garrison Hearst - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★
AGI ★★★★★

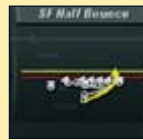
Key Weaknesses

BLK ✕

Tips

Hearst is a finesse runner, so use him to the outside. He also has good hands for a halfback, so don't be afraid to get him into the passing game. He's not much of a blocker, however, so don't rely on him for lead blocks or QB protection.

Useful Plays



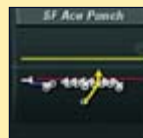
SF Half Bounce

If the blocking sticks, you find plenty of open space to run with this play.



SF Angle X Pro

Give Hearst time to get open deep before releasing the pass.



SF Ace Punch

Spread the defense with motion and catch a blitzing defense off guard.

Other Offensive Stars



Jeff Garcia Quarterback

Key Stats

ACTR ★★★★★
PAC R ★★★★★

Garcia, a very accurate QB, should look to Owens when he's open. When he's not, Garcia should look to a secondary receiver or back for a short pass.

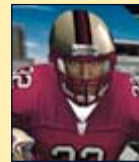


Jeremy Newberry Center

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Look for big holes up the middle, thanks to Newberry.



Kevan Barlow Halfback

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
BLK ★★★

Barlow is quicker and a better blocker than Hearst. Platoon him in when you need pass protection blocking more than an outlet receiver.

Defensive Stars



Bryant Young Defensive Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Young is one of the game's best tackling defenders. Use him to shut down the run and pressure the QB.



Derek Smith Right Linebacker

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Smith is a good coverage linebacker for players who like to control that position.



Ahmed Plummer Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Not as fast as some CBs, but still fast enough to keep up with most receivers.

Star Players

Matt Hasselbeck - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
VIS ★★★

Key Weaknesses

SPD ×××
BTKL ×

Tips

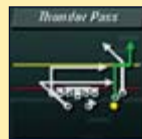
Don't run with Hasselbeck. You won't get far. He has a decent arm and decent passing accuracy, though, so don't be afraid to air it out a little. You can't thread a needle at 40 yards, but you should be able to tag the open man.

Useful Plays



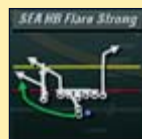
Wide Drag

Drift in the same direction as your open receiver and buy a few more seconds to get him open.



Thunder Pass

This play keeps a blocker back to buy some time. Look for one of your two primary receivers to break open deep.



SEA HB Flare Strong

If the defense adjusts to Alexander's HB flare route, look for the FB to be open down the middle of the field.

Shaun Alexander - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★

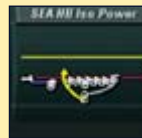
Key Weaknesses

HND ×××
BCTL ×××

Tips

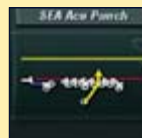
Alexander is a quick back who can get to the outside. Use him to take some pressure off Hasselbeck and give the receivers time to get open. He only has marginal hands, however, and he has a low ball control rating—which means that fumbles are a possibility if you use him too often.

Useful Plays



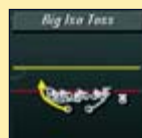
SEA HB Iso Power

No lead blocker, but Alexander has the speed to hit the open hole. Don't forget to send the receiver into motion before the play.



SEA Ace Punch

Spread the field, and then take it up the middle of the defensive line.



Big Iso Toss

This play is all about reading the blocks. Pick the right path and you chew up some yards.

Other Offensive Stars



Darrell Jackson Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Jackson is best in routes that have him cut and accelerate. Send him over the middle whenever possible.



Koren Robinson Wide Receiver

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Robinson is a deep threat, especially when Jackson is double-teamed.



Walter Jones Left Tackle

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

When you see number 71 laying down a block, follow him to daylight.

Defensive Stars



Shawn Springs Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Phenomenal speed and good tackling skills make Springs a threat in coverage or on a blitz.



John Randle Defensive Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

Use Randle to stalk opposing QBs and to shut down the run on his side of the field.



Norman Hand Defensive Left Tackle

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

Hand is excellent when dropping back into coverage, but you can also use him to bulldoze his way to the QB.

Star Players

Kurt Warner - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

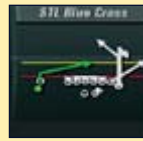
Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕✕
INJ ✕✕✕

Tips

Kurt Warner has the skills of a top QB. More important, he has a ton of great WRs and a MVP-caliber RB at his disposal. Spread the ball around. Always look for the open man, even if he's your third or fourth option.

Useful Plays



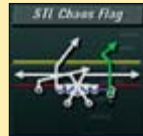
STL Blue Cross

If the corners are tight on Bruce, hit him quickly, just as he makes his move to the middle.



STL All Vertical

Drop back and look for the WR who's single-covered. Give that man time to get open and let it fly.



STL Chaos Flag

Look for the man in motion to get open deep down the middle. If not, look down the field. One of your receivers should be clear.

Marshall Faulk - Halfback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★
BCTL ★★★★★

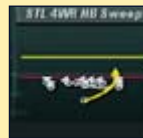
Key Weaknesses

INJ ✕✕✕
BLK ✕✕

Tips

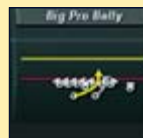
Faulk is one of the best multipurpose backs in the game. He's fast, he can break tackles, he has great endurance, he rarely fumbles, and he can catch the ball better than most WRs. Just take care not to overuse him and get him injured.

Useful Plays



STL 4WR HB Sweep

Watch your pulling guard's block and go outside or inside accordingly.



Big Pro Belly

Try flipping the direction of this play and using the other side of your talented offensive line.



HB Swing

Time your throw right and Faulk has the sidelines all to himself.

Other Offensive Stars



Isaac Bruce Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Isaac Bruce is just one of the Rams' many good receivers. He has good hands and good speed, so lean heavily on him.



Torry Holt Wide Receiver

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

He's not quite as quick as Bruce, but Torry Holt has very good hands. He won't drop many passes.



Orlando Pace Left Tackle

Key Stats

BLK ★★★★★
AGG ★★★★★

Pace is one of the best tackles in the league. Faulk should be right behind him on many of your running plays.

Defensive Stars



Aeneas Williams Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Williams is mainly a coverage back, but he can be useful on blitzes if he has an open shot at the QB.



Grant Wistrom Defensive Right End

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

Wistrom, fast for a defensive end, can get to the QB before he knows what hit him.



Adam Archuleta Strong Safety

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

Archuleta is a rock in coverage. But don't expect to take down a running back with him alone.

Star Players

Brad Johnson - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★★★
ACC ★★★

Key Weaknesses

BTKL ✖✖
INJ ✖✖

Tips

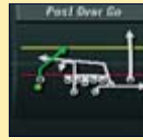
Brad Johnson is not the flashiest QB in the league, but he plays smart football and doesn't make a lot of stupid mistakes. When controlling him, do the same. Look for short, open passes, but keep an eye downfield at all times.

Useful Plays



TB Double In-Out

If the defender follows when you run motion, they're in man defense. Look for someone crossing the middle in the open.



Post Over Go

The two deep routes should open up the middle for Dilger to get open on the crossing pattern. If he's covered, look for Alstott in the flat



Motion TE Under

If a defender follows the motion, look for Dilger or McCardell crossing the middle. If he doesn't follow the motion, one of your left side receivers is in single coverage.

Mike Alstott - Fullback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★
STR ★★★★★
BTKL ★★★★★

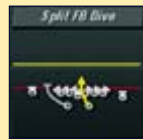
Key Weaknesses

None

Tips

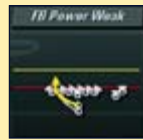
Alstott is an incredibly useful tool in this offense. He can run up the middle with power. He's fast enough to go a little bit outside, he can block, and he has good hands. Use him as much as possible.

Useful Plays



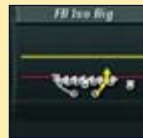
Split FB Drive

After passing several times, pound the ball up the middle and make the defense remember the run.



FB Power Weak

Let your HB make the block and then turn on the speed with Alstott.



FB Iso Big

Once you get past the defensive line, you should have some open space. Don't string this run to the outside

Other Offensive Stars



Keyshawn Johnson Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Keyshawn Johnson has good hands and quick feet. The Buccaneer offense is conservative, but don't be afraid to hit him with the long ball.



Ken Dilger Tight End

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★

Dilger is very important to this short, accurate passing offense. Look for him in the short routes and hit him with a crisp pass.



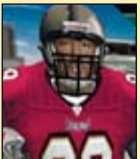
Keenan McCardell Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★

McCardell is a solid second receiver who often is open when Johnson is double-covered.

Defensive Stars



Warren Sapp Defensive Right Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

Sapp is a force of nature on the defensive line. If you like controlling linemen, you're hard pressed to find a better one.



Derrick Brooks Right Linebacker

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
SBLK ★★★★★

Brooks is a fearsome blitzer and a dangerous cover man. Use him in both situations.



John Lynch Strong Safety

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
TKL ★★★★★

Lynch is great in coverage, and he's downright nasty on a safety blitz. If you use one, he's your man.

Star Players

Steve McNair - Quarterback



Key Strengths

SPD ★★★★★
 ASTR ★★★★★
 PACR ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

AGI XXX

Tips

McNair can kill other teams, with his arm and with his legs. Throw deep if you have an open man (preferably Mason), but tuck it in and run whenever the opportunity presents itself.

Useful Plays



TEN Icy Flag Post

Wycheck runs deep, Mason crosses the middle, and George runs into the flat. Pick your target or run it with McNair.



Double Post

Let McNair air it out to Mason if he is open deep. Otherwise look for Eddie George in the flat.



TE Quick Shot

Short, but deadly passing play. Look for Wycheck breaking open.

Eddie George - Halfback



Key Strengths

S[D ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★
 BTKL ★★★★★
 BCTL ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

SPD XXX
 ACC XXX

Tips

Eddie George may have lost a step or two, but he can still run with the best in the league. Vary your game between inside and outside runs and throw to him out of the flat. He doesn't tire easily or fumble much.

Useful Plays



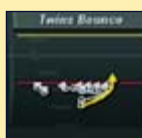
TEN Half Wing Belly

Run between your two left side blockers. There's usually a hole.



TEN Pro Strong Flood

George is tough to tackle after a catch.



Twins Bounce

Follow your FB and pulling guard, and let them pick up the first defenders.

Other Offensive Stars



Derrick Mason Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Mason is McNair's most reliable target, both deep and across the middle.



Frank Wycheck Tight End

Key Stats

HND ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

This TE is a reliable workhorse in the short passing game.



Brad Hopkins Left Tackle

Key Stats

AGG ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Eddie George should always look for holes opened by this tough left tackle.

Defensive Stars



Jevon Kearse Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
 SBLK ★★★★★

Use line stunts to get "The Freak" a clean shot at the QB.



Samari Rolle Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
 ACC ★★★★★

Rolle is great for CB blitzes or covering the opposing team's best WR.



Keith Bulluck Left Linebacker

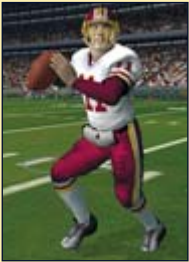
Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
 SPD ★★★★★

Use him on blitzes or covering the middle on passing plays.

Star Players

Patrick Ramsey - Quarterback



Key Strengths

ASTR ★★★★★
PACR ★★★

Key Weaknesses

SPD ✕✕
STR ✕
INJ ✕✕✕

Tips

Ramsey isn't the highest-rated QB in the league or even the highest-rated offensive player on the Redskins. He does have a variety of receivers to throw to, so you can still develop a solid offense. Just don't try to run.

Useful Plays



WAS Deep Hookup

Overload one side, and if the receiver streaking down the right side of the field is doubled, you have a clear shot at someone in the flat.



WAS Chaos Strong

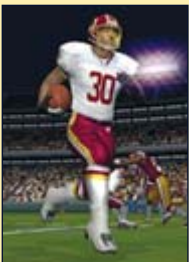
Flood the right side with receivers and watch for a receiver to break open on that side or over the middle.



WAS Chaos Flag

With potential receivers going everywhere, a target should open up. Send your receiver in motion and watch for him up the seam.

Trung Canidate - Halfback



Key Strengths

ACC ★★★★★
SPD ★★★★★

Key Weaknesses

BCTL ✕✕✕
BTKL ✕✕✕
HND ✕✕
INJ ✕

Tips

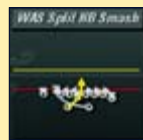
It's best to know Canidate's weaknesses before starting. He's fast, but is prone to injury and fumbling. He also doesn't have good hands. Despite these weaknesses, it's imperative to run with him to open up the passing game. Look for plays that protect him from the big hits.

Useful Plays



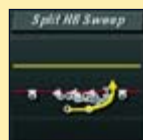
WAS Crash Strong

Follow your FB up the side of the line. Don't try to hit the outside—it closes up quickly. Flip to the other side often.



WAS Split HB Smash

Watch the safety. He shuts down this play in no time flat if he plays to the middle.



Split HB Sweep

You have plenty of blockers to follow. Play it conservatively. If you try to be a hero, you could fumble or end up with an injury.

Other Offensive Stars



Rod Gardner Wide Receiver

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
HND ★★★★★

Gardner has the speed and acceleration to get distance from the defensive backs.



Laveranues Coles Wide Receiver

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

This free agent pick-up could help kick the Redskin's passing game into overdrive. Get him open over the middle or deep down the field.



Chris Samuels Left Tackle

Key Stats

STR ★★★★★
BLK ★★★★★

Samuels is a rock on the offensive line for both the passing game and the running game. Go to his side whenever possible.

Defensive Stars



LB 57 Left Linebacker

Key Stats

ACC ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

LB 57 is one of the fastest and best linebackers you can control. Send him in on blitzes or to cover against the pass.



Champ Bailey Left Cornerback

Key Stats

SPD ★★★★★
ACC ★★★★★

One of the fastest players in the game, he's better in coverage than on the blitz. But try to use his speed to pressure the QB whenever possible.



Jessie Armstead Right Linebacker

Key Stats

SBLK ★★★★★
CVG ★★★★★

Here's another top linebacker for the Redskins. Control one LB and let the other cause havoc under computer control.

Wearing the Owner's Hat

Once you have the onfield action covered, you're probably looking for more. This is where you find it. In this section, we look at the game from a perspective that goes beyond the playing field.

We start with the Classic Challenge and then move on to Fever's in-depth Dynasty mode. Each adds countless hours to your gameplay experience, and you should try your hand at both of them before you move on to the Fever superstar strategies in the next section.



Classic Challenge

After you've proven that you can beat the best in the NFL, take a shot at the best football teams of all time. In the Classic Challenge mode, you take on all-time great teams like the '72 Dolphins and '85 Bears. If you're good enough, you can take them down.

Here's a quick look at each team you face.



1967 Packers

Stats
 Overall: 82
 Offense: 84
 Defense: 81
 Special: 86



1998 Broncos

Stats
 Overall: 84
 Offense: 87
 Defense: 82
 Special: 83



1993 Cowboys

Stats
 Overall: 86
 Offense: 91
 Defense: 83
 Special: 84

General Manager **SKILLS**



1985 Bears

Stats
 Overall: 85
 Offense: 86
 Defense: 84
 Special: 85



1972 Dolphins

Stats
 Overall: 83
 Offense: 86
 Defense: 81
 Special: 91



1989 49ers

Stats
 Overall: 85
 Offense: 86
 Defense: 84
 Special: 85



1978 Steelers

Stats
 Overall: 86
 Offense: 85
 Defense: 88
 Special: 81

Dynasty Mode

In Dynasty mode, you really test your skills as an all-around football guru. If you hope to create a dynasty worth remembering, you must be good on the field and also stay ahead of the competition during the off season. Tame the salary cap, the draft, and the free agent market, and create a team for the ages.



Setting Up Your Franchise

To start, either pick your own team or start with a Fantasy Draft. We'll walk through the Fantasy Draft, but if you want to take your favorite team through Dynasty, switch off the Fantasy Draft option.



Fantasy Draft

The Fantasy Draft randomly gives your team a slot in the draft order. Our team started at 11, so we still get some good picks. Build a team that suits your playing style. If you like running the ball, pick a good HB early. If you're more comfortable passing, start with a top QB.



We started with Michael Vick because we like mobile quarterbacks. We'll build around him. The next step is to get some offensive linemen around him and then a core for our defense.



Don't waste time on kickers and punters, even ones with high ratings. They're still around late in the draft, and their skills are largely based on how good you are with the kicking meter.

Also, use your top picks for your starting lineup. It won't do you much good to have high-ranked backups, at least not in your first season.

Pay attention to your salary cap. If you see two players with similar skills, pick the one with the lower salary. Next year, you'll have more money for big free agent signings. Veteran stars usually command high salaries, even though their skills are declining. Pick cheap and young—you'll do better over the long haul.

Starting the Season

Next up is the regular season. By this point, you're familiar with playing through a season, so start the action. We'll pick up again when the season ends.



TIP

During the season, keep your eyes open for trades. The computer won't often offer up exactly what you need, so be proactive and test the trading market before you start each game.



Retiring and Departing



Now that the season is over, check out your retiring players. You have to fill their empty slots.

We lost QB Doug Flutie and P Chris Gardocki. This actually helps us: Flutie has a high salary and punters are easy to replace.

Contract Negotiations

Here's where you make or break your dynasty. You must be brutal and cut players who have high salaries, even if they're fan favorites. There's little room for nostalgia under the salary cap.

We cut Gilbert Brown because his numbers are waning and a lower-priced journeyman easily tops his stats. As far as the other players are concerned, we kept only those with low salaries.



Sign Free Agents

Free agency is a good way to pick up a couple of impact players. Be wary of spending the big bucks on a single star, however. Unless he's a missing piece in your starting rotation or a key backup, you'll often do better through trades and the draft.

We didn't see anyone that we really needed right off the bat. We were tempted to pick up a punter, but decided to wait. They're easy to get in the draft.



Trade Proposals

Other teams offer their players in exchange for yours at this point in the Dynasty mode. Pay close attention to the player's position and salary. If everything lines up right, you may improve your team dramatically with a smart trade. Look for trades offered in positions in which your team is deep. If you can make the trade and still have a quality player in that position, you've done well.

We picked our team to get the best possible starting lineup, so we don't have depth this year. A trade would leave us stranded at almost any position. We'll pass.



The Draft

Now comes the draft—the most crucial period in Dynasty mode. Your performance here determines the success of your team more than any other aspect of the Dynasty mode. Here are a couple of quick pointers to help you with the draft.



Tip 1: Draft for Your Needs

Don't just pick the best player. Remember, you're trying to fill slots with the best players possible. But if the best available players have stats way in excess of your needs for the positions you need filled, go ahead and pick them. They'll make great trade bait in the future.

Tip 2: Bide Your Time on Special Teams Players

Kickers and punters often last well into the draft. Don't worry about grabbing them early, even if they're the best player on the board. They're usually around a few rounds.

Tip 3: Check Out the Suggested Picks

These usually are players you could use on your roster.

Tip 4: Don't Stress over Low-Round Picks

They're usually just role players. Pick them to play as backups.

We picked our punter on the third round because there wasn't much else we needed on the draft board. We probably could have waited until the fourth round and still picked up a great punter. We used the rest of our picks on role players and a highly rated backup guard that we will use for trade bait down the road.

Rookie Contracts

Sign your players. Lock the good ones down to a long contract; keep short contracts on the role players.

The Start of the Next Season

Now it's time to see how good your off season was. Start the next season and play it through. Keep trades in mind during the season. Good luck and have fun doing it all over again!

Our team made the playoffs the second year without any major signings. In the second year, we were able to pick up a top HB in free agency. We also traded for a high draft pick from the Bears, which helped us shore up our defense. By the fifth year, we made the Super Bowl.



5 Tips For Keeping Your Dynasty on Top

Tip 1: Don't Get Attached to Names

In the Dynasty mode of NFL Fever, forget that you're dealing with real players. Sentimental attachment to your top players results in bad moves.

Think of your players as statistics and numbers. Look at their age, their salary, and their player rankings. When the rankings start to slip, jettison your player, no matter how important he's been to the franchise in the past.



Tip 4: Don't Go Crazy in Free Agency

If you spend too much money before you reach the draft, you won't be able to sign your top draft picks. That pretty much invalidates all the work you did trying to get these picks. Pick players to fill slots, and don't get sucked in by big names.



Tip 2: Trade for High Draft Picks

Most of the useful players you get in the draft come in the first two or three rounds. Don't be afraid to trade players and lower-round draft picks for a high-round draft pick. Rounds five, six, and seven rarely, if ever, provide a starter for your squad. Use these picks to trade up to a first- or second-round draft pick.



Tip 5: Focus on Players Who Help Your Style of Play

You're the one playing through the seasons, so don't waste a lot of salary money, drafting focus, or trading power on positions that you really don't care about. If you play mostly a passing game and only run to shake things up a bit, keep a journeyman halfback on board and spend the extra cash on top receivers.



Tip 3: Trade During the Season

Don't wait until the last moment to try to pick up some draft picks with a smart trade. Watch the injury wire to see when a team loses a top player in a position where you have depth. If you time it right, you can make a trade in their hour of need and steal away a top draft pick for the off season.



Taking It to the Next Level

In our final section, learn what it takes to be a *Fever* superstar. Here are tricks for players who've mastered the skills taught in the rest of the guide and still want to learn more.

If you plan to play *Fever* on Xbox Live, pay close attention. The competition is fierce, and you need every advantage you can get.

Custom Assignments

Knowing how to tweak your Custom Assignments, through a menu buried deep in your personal profile menu, can give you a huge advantage over the competition. Here's a quick overview of the items you can tune.

Broken Route Action



This controls what your receiver does when he can't go through his route. In Trigger Passing mode, hit the left button and your receiver automatically follows this route.

- Options:**
- To end zone
 - To sideline
 - To open zone
 - To QB

Read Route Delay

This determines how long your running back waits to block in case of a blitz.

- Options:**
- Short
 - Medium
 - Long

Disguise Coverage

This controls what your defensive backs do before the snap of each ball. You can tell them always to disguise the coverage, but they may not be in position at every snap. It's often a tradeoff.

- Options:**
- Always
 - Never
 - Sometimes

Zone Defense

This toggles between a pure zone and a combination man-to-man/zone defense.

- Options:**
- Pure zone
 - Man zone

DB Match-Up

This determines how your defensive backs match up with your wide receivers.

- Options:**
- Nearest
 - Best on best

DB Cover Style

This determines how your DBs cover—tight, inside, or outside. Use this to push receivers in the direction you want them to go.

- Options:**
- Tight
 - Inside
 - Outside

Linebacker Matchup

This controls your linebacker matchups.

- Options:**
- Nearest
 - Best on best

LB Cover Style

This determines how your LBs cover.

- Options:**
- Tight
 - Inside
 - Outside

Safety Cover Depth

This sets up your safeties to play it safe deep or watch for the run.

- Options:**
- Balanced
 - Run Support
 - Over the top

10 Tips for Dominating the Computer

You'll probably start out playing against the computer in *NFL Fever 2004*. And if you don't have Xbox Live™, you'll probably play a lot of games against the computer. Here are some tips for winning against this sometimes-cagey opponent.

Tip 1: Find Your Strong Plays

You won't find many "money plays" in this game, but some plays work well against computer opponents. For instance, Indianapolis can use IND Four Quicks very successfully because the team has a quick number one WR in Marvin Harrison. You can rely heavily on this play against the CPU. Other teams have equally effective plays. Pick your team and then find your set of five or six well-designed plays.



Tip 2: Give Them the Old One-Two

If you run the pass over and over, eventually the computer adjusts and shuts down the air attack. Mix in the run to keep the computer honest. You can lean heavily on one or the other, but go the other way every third play or so.

You'll be surprised how well even a marginal runner can do against a CPU defense that expects the pass. Mix the run in often enough and the computer never gets a foothold on how to stop you.



Tip 3: Scramble with Your QB

To give the computer fits, use your QB to scramble. The defense struggles to stop the run and when they do, you likely find open passing lanes in the middle of the field. Even if your QB isn't a Michael Vick-like super athlete, you can still roll out and make short blasts up the field. Remember to use **SLIDE** for a QB Slide to avoid injuries or fumbles.



Tip 4: Play Pass Defense First

Force the CPU to run the ball. Start off in Dime and Nickel packages and see if you can shut down the passing game. If the offense starts making big runs against you, drop into 43 and 34 defenses, but otherwise think about stopping the pass before stopping the run.



Tip 5: Control the Clock

If you think you can hold the computer on defense, slow down the game and run down the clock as you play. This gives you an advantage because you are thinking tactically every second of the game. The computer is still waiting until the end of the second and fourth quarters to play clock management.

If you're up by two scores, you can run down more than a complete quarter (when playing five-minute quarters). This isn't in the spirit of real football, but it's a good way to get a win against a tough CPU opponent.



Tip 6: Spread the Passes Around

It's easy to get into a habit of throwing to one or two main receivers, but you must spread the ball around if you want to keep the CPU guessing. Otherwise it focuses its defense on your top receiver and shuts him down.



Tip 7: Audible, Audible, Audible

Learn to read the defense (check out the previous sections of this strategy guide) and call audibles on every play if you have to. With a good mix of audibles and a good eye for reading defenses, you can quickly assess your opposition and call a quick play that's extra hard to stop.



Tip 9: Master Read and Lead Passing

Read and Lead passing is especially useful against computer opponents. Send your receiver on his route, but keep an eye for open spots in zone defenses or single coverage in man-to-man defenses. Both of these are ripe for exploitation by a good Read and Lead pass. If you're able to hit your receivers on the fly, your after-catch yards skyrocket.



Tip 8: Use Hot Routes

Before each snap, look to see if you can make a hot route adjustment to give one of your players a better chance at making a play. In the passing game, check the cornerbacks to see how they're covering your WRs and then adjust accordingly. In the running game, take every opportunity to hot route your runner and your lead blocker to the weakest part of the defense.



Tip 10: Adjust on Defense

The defensive adjustments in *Fever* aren't just for looks. They're very effective against a top offense. Practice their use against weaker teams. When you're comfortable, start using them against the tougher teams. Before long, it's difficult for any CPU squad to score on you with regularity.



10 Tips for Dominating on Xbox Live™

Playing against human opponents on Xbox Live™ presents its own unique challenges. Human opponents tend to get in ruts, have favorite plays, and always seem to go for it on fourth and short. But you never know for sure what they're going to do next. These tips help you stay ahead of the competition.

Tip 1: Don't Show Your Cards Too Early

If you have a favorite play or two, don't use them in the first quarter and most of the second quarter unless you really need to. If you save them until late in the game, you can go back to them again and again while your opponent prepares for the plays you used in the early part of the game.



Tip 2: Swap Strategies

Don't start the first quarter with your favorite strategy. If, for instance, you like to pass deep, play through the first and second quarter using your running game and short passing game. Players tend to set their playing patterns for the rest of the game based on what you do in the first half. If you establish any kind of momentum, your opponent is still trying to keep the short game closed in the second half, while you burn him over the top deep.



Tip 3: Scramble with Your QB

This strategy works against the computer and against human opponents. When your QB is a threat to run, the other team always has to commit a man to cover him. That leaves receivers open somewhere on the field. This drives people crazy.



Tip 4: Play Pass Defense First

This tactic works against the computer, but it works even better against human opponents. *Fever* players tend to go to the air when possible. If you can force them to run the ball, you've likely taken away their favorite plays and favorite players. This should give you an advantage over even a more experienced foe.

If your opponent is able to establish the run, switch quickly into a regular defensive pattern to avoid giving up too many easy yards on the ground.



Tip 5: Fake a Primary Receiver

Another trick is to throw to a receiver who is not your favorite for the first and second quarters. Pick plays that get this receiver open and keep throwing the ball. By the time the second half rolls around, your opponent is focused on double-covering that receiver, and you start to see your primary receiver running free in single coverage.



Tip 6: Stay in Two-Minute Drill

Play every down as if it's the last two minutes of the game. Snap the ball and play as quickly as possible so as not to give your opponent time to adjust to your offense. Keep good audibles handy so you can choose your plays at the line. An opponent who doesn't have a good set of audibles is in big trouble.



Tip 7: Call Audibles Frequently

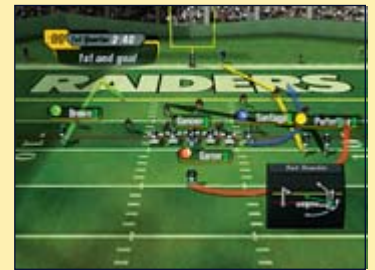
Human opponents are more likely to get in ruts and take huge risks on defense than computer opponents. When you see your opponent cue up a huge blitz, audible up a deep route and toss it long. When you see your opponent drop back to cover the pass, send a run his way and pound your way through the open field. Audibles help you counter every move and can frustrate even the best playcallers.

Have a good set of defensive audibles on hand in case your opponent tries to run the two-minute drill on you. If you have both offensive and defensive audibles set, you're hard to surprise.



Tip 8: Vary Your Plays

Don't get into a playcalling rut yourself. A human opponent with a sharp eye can pick up on those things. Do you always pass on first down? Do you always run on third and short? Do you always go for two? Look into your playing style and try to find the areas that you most tend to repeat yourself. Throw in a little variety.



Tip 9: Try a Little Razzle-Dazzle

Don't get carried away, but if you throw a trick play like a Flea Flicker or QB Draw into your playcalling, the defense always has to keep an eye out and can't fully commit to the play they suspect. One or two trick plays each game (in safe situations) really keeps the other team on its heels.



Tip 10: Get Pressure on the QB

The number one way to throw a team off its passing rhythm is to get pressure on its QB. You often have to risk a blitz to make this happen, but if you can get in the QB's face, he won't have time to let his favorite plays develop and his favorite receivers won't have the time to get open.



Making Yourself a Superstar

Once you've climbed the heights of *NFL Fever*, put yourself into the Hall of Fame. With this simple process, a healthy dose of skill, and a lot of playing time, you can earn yourself a spot in the Hall of Fame with the all-time greats.

Step 1: Enter your Personal Data

You can't get into the Hall of Fame if your name's not on a jersey.



Step 2: Pick Your Position

Choose a skill position, such as QB, HB, or WR. Or pick a defensive position that you like to control. For this situation we chose WR.

Step 3: Choose Your Stats

Boost your stats in the sections that matter most for your player. Don't worry about blocking and other unimportant details. Your player is the center of your offense and you control him for most of the game. Don't worry about the salary; you can cut another player from your team to make room under the salary cap.



Remember to boost endurance, ball control, and injury stats. If you rely on one player often, he risks tiring, fumbling, or getting injured. All three could cost you on your journey to the Hall of Fame.

Step 4: Personalize Your Player

Looks don't matter on the field, but it's nice to have a player you can quickly recognize. Pick your player's clothes and move forward.



Step 5: Join Free Agency

Now head to the Free Agent Sign/Release section of the menu. Here you can get your favorite team to pick you up in free agency. If you have to drop another player to make yourself fit, do it.



Step 6: Set Up Substitutions

Go to the Global Substitutions menu and put yourself in the appropriate spots on the roster. Don't forget to add yourself as a kick returner or punt returner if you have good speed and acceleration. Every all-purpose yard helps.



Step 7: Start Up Dynasty Mode

Turn the Fantasy Draft off and pick your favorite team as your Dynasty team. Before starting the first game, make sure you're on the roster and in the right spots.



Step 8: Play the Games



You don't have to give the ball to yourself every time, but get it often. You want huge stats, so that you can earn weekly awards for best player. Shoot for the Pro Bowl and an MVP season if possible.

Step 9: Pay the Price

You quickly find out that your virtual self is not cheap. The better you play, the more money your doppelganger wants during the off season. Sign him up for the longest contract possible.

Step 10: Repeat Season Over and Over

You can't enter the Hall of Fame after one good season. You have to play through a bunch of them. You also have to play the games yourself, because the CPU won't give your player the same attention.

Step 11: Wait for the Hall of Fame to Call

After seven or more great seasons, you can start to relax. Let the game simulate through a couple more seasons or play them yourself. Eventually your player retires, and you get the call from Canton, Ohio. You're in the Hall of Fame.

Developer Tips: The Ins and Outs of Defensive Macros

Defensive macros are a great way to shut down a predictable opponent, but each of them has one or more drawbacks that you should be aware of so that you can use them efficiently.

Defend Inside Run

This macro will move your linebackers closer to the line and tell them to play the run before the pass. The drawback is that they will almost always be fooled by play action pass plays, resulting in poor pass coverage. You can compensate for this by playing a safety and helping cover the area's that your linebackers were assigned to cover. This is also useful when you have linebackers who are blitzing and you want to move them a bit closer to the line.

Defend Run Left

This macro is similar to Defend Inside Run, but it is geared towards stopping sweeps to the left. It has the same drawback as Defend Inside Run does, plus it is also weak against runs to the right.

Defend Run Right

This macro is the opposite of Defend Run Left.

Defend Outside Pass

This macro tells your secondary to play outside of the receiver, and to play pass before run. This makes it extremely hard for your opponent to complete out routes, and TE quick releases into the flats, but it makes you extremely vulnerable to slant and in routes. You can compensate for this by playing a safety and covering the middle of the field yourself, comfortable in the knowledge that your fellow teammates will cover the outside of the field. This works best when you have at least 6 men in coverage, so that moving the safety to cover the middle of the field doesn't create a huge hole in the defense.

Defend Inside Pass

This macro is the opposite of Defend Outside Pass. It tells your secondary to play inside the receiver, and to play pass before run, making it difficult for your opponent to complete slant and in routes. The drawback is that you leave the outside of the field vulnerable. Unfortunately, you can only compensate a little with this macro. You can play a safety and manually cover the outside left of the field, or the outside right of the field, but not both at the same time, so use it wisely.

Defend Deep Pass

This tells your secondary to play a prevent defense. They will stay deeper than they usually do, and they will play pass before run. It is effective near the end of the game or half when you know your opponent needs to go deep for a quick score, but it leaves you extremely open to both runs and short passes, so use it sparingly.

How to Defeat Defensive Macros

If your opponent is using defensive macros against you, then all you need to do is use their weaknesses against him. If you see his secondary shift towards the outside, then hot route your receivers to inside routes such as a slant. If you see his secondary shift inside, hot route to an outside route like an out. If you are running, and you see his linebackers step up, hot route your running back to run outside. If you see his linebackers step left or right, just hot route your running back to run in the other direction. Be careful though, a good defensive player will use deception against you. He might first shift his players inside like he is going to take the slant routes away from you, but then at the last second shift them to the outside after you have made your hot routes.



Are you ready to become a legend?

Remember playing against a single friend—or maybe two or three? If you could get them all to your house at the same time, that is. And, if you couldn't, you'd sit and play all alone on your couch with no one to witness your glory except the AI.

Well, those days are over, my friend. This is *NFL Fever 2004*, and it's time to show the world—that's right, the world—exactly how good you are. Here's the deal...

First off, you're gonna need a high-speed internet connection and an Xbox Live™ account. If you've got those, then put down your Xbox controller (for the moment), and get in front of your home computer. Log on to the Internet, and surf your way to www.xsnsports.com.

When you're there, sign up as a member, and get ready to play in a whole new way. Use the website to join a league; or become a commissioner, and set up your own league. You can be the commissioner of up to three *NFL Fever* leagues and a member of as many as five.

What else can you do on the Web site? Plenty. Xsnsports.com also makes it possible for you to arrange tournaments, view schedules for upcoming games, check out results from games that have already been played, check out stats on yourself and your opponents, read and post to message boards, and... well, lots more than we can list here. Just go to the site, and see for yourself.

When you sign up for a league on the website, you're gonna get a password. You'll need to write down that password and carry it back over to your Xbox console. When it's time for you to play a game for that league or in a tournament, pick up your controller, and log on to the Xbox Live service. Enter your password and the name of the league or tournament you're going to play. You're in.

Oh, yeah. One more thing. Got an e-mail address? Of course you do. You're going to enter that address when you sign up on the website. And what will you get for your troubles? You'll get game invitations. You'll get schedule updates. You'll get personal messages from other league members. Again, you'll get lots more than we can mention here.

So, what have we learned? Go online to www.xsnsports.com to sign up. Log on to Xbox Live to play leagues or tournaments. Beat the cleats off your friends, your neighbors, your friends' neighbors, some guy in Toledo, all 2,364 citizens of Westchester County—basically everyone else who has a broadband connection and signs up for XSN Sports. And they're all gonna know your gamertag. That's right. Yours. Think you can handle that? Good.



Note

XSN Sports™ requires a computer, an internet connection, and a subscription to the Xbox Live™ service.