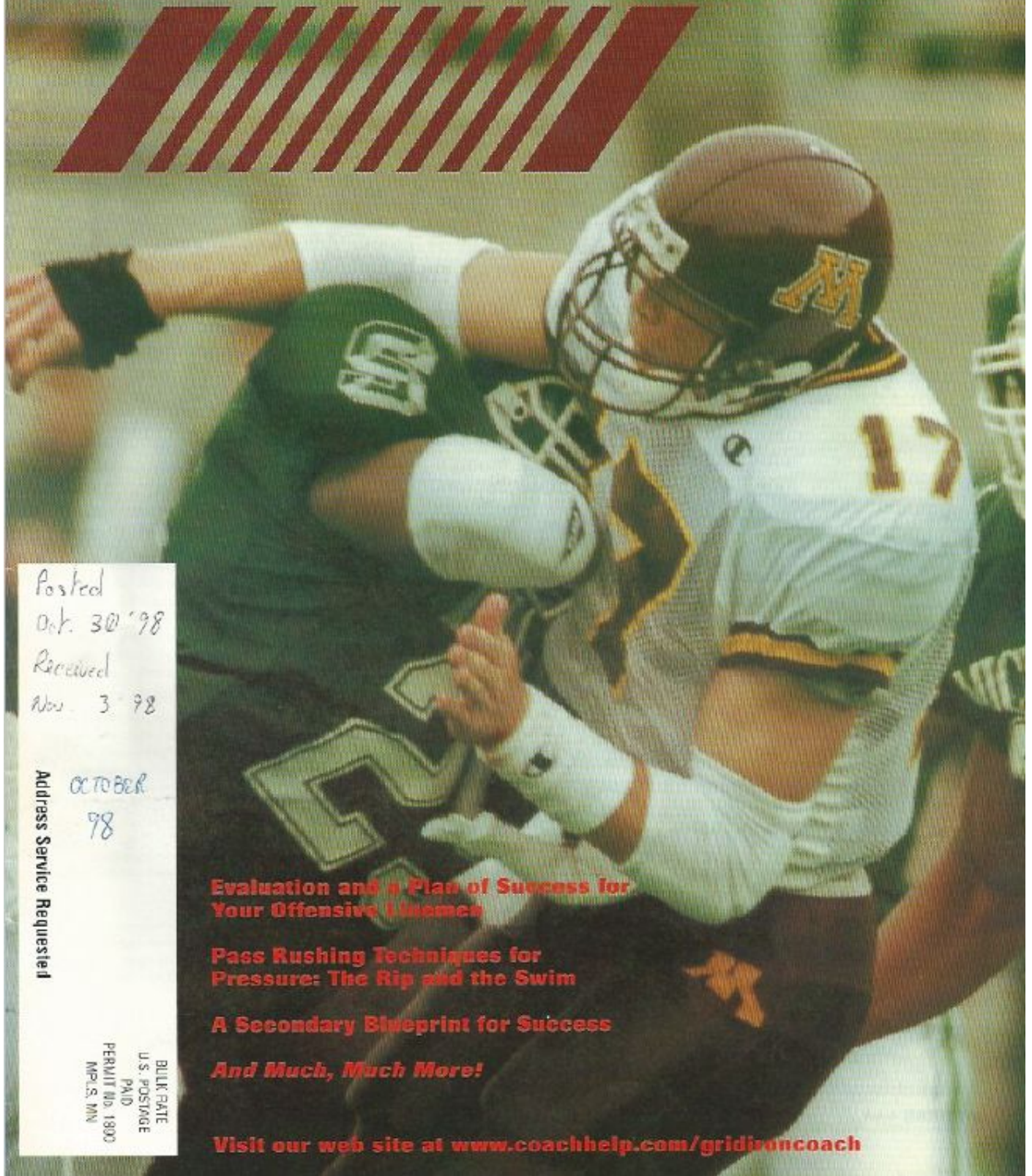


# GRIDIRON Coach

Volume 8 • Issue 7

The Number One Publication for High School Football Coaches



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# Creating Opportunity by Using Motions and Shifts on Kickoffs

By Michael Groisne  
Football Coach,  
Clermont-Fd Titans,  
France

The most important statistic for a team kicking the ball to their opponent are not the number of yards returned, but the average yard line that your opponent's series starts from. The kickoff is the best time to set the tone for the game...

As I've scouted our opponents, I have learned that predictability allows well-coached return teams to accomplish more against the kickoff team. A return team can be schooled in what the opponent's tendencies are and can use the defense's predictability to their advantage. I have attempted to find the unusual, to keep our opponents guessing, back on their heels and uncertain about how to block our team. Yet, at the same time I have attempted to keep our kicking game simple, so that the multiple formations did not confuse our players at the same time.

Our approach is very simple, but may appear to be quite complicated. It is even more difficult to if you haven't scouted us.

First, we emphasize attitude and attempt to build a tradition for our team. We tell our players to be aggressive, to give the maximum effort on every play. No other play in football can better reward a player for aggression, discipline and courage. It is the place where a player may make a reputation of being a hard hitter.



Our scheme is designed to address different kicking goals. As other teams we will sometimes:

1. Attempt a deep kickoff and emphasize hang time and distance;
2. Attempt a deep kickoff and emphasize ball action or spin, thus creating problems in catching or handling the ball (our squib kick); and
3. Attempt an onside kick hoping that ball action and kick direction may create ball handling difficulties and an opportunity to recover the ball.

## Ooohh boy ...

In Volume 8, Issue 6, of *GRIDIRON Coach*, our printer started to run an option play to the right, then realized Michael Groisne lives in France, and decided to hold the ball. That is, instead of running the text for page 19, he ran the text from page 18 a second time.

We are grievously sorry for the error. To make it up to our readers, we are re-running Michael Groisne's *Creating Opportunity by Using Motions and Shifts on Kickoffs* in its entirety... on pages 18 and 19.

So that you, our readers, don't miss out on any new material, we have shortened *GRIDIRON Bookstore* to one page, instead of its normal three pages.

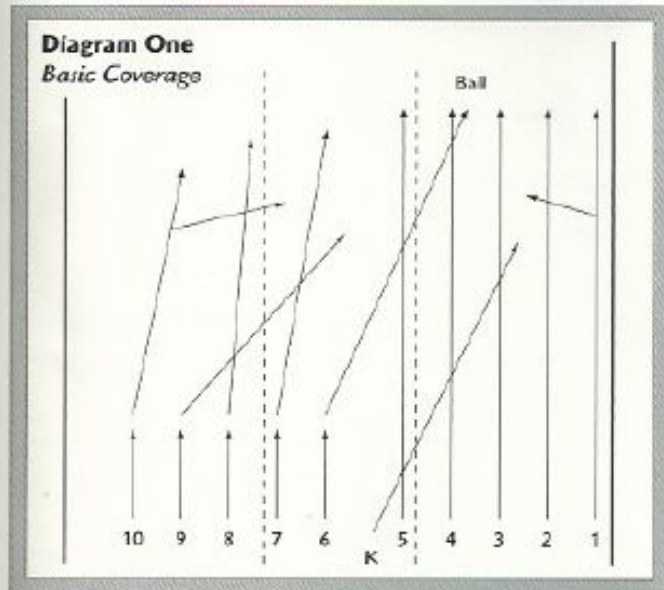
Please accept our apologies. *Printer, let's start that option play again, from the top...*

In an effort to keep an opponent in poor field position, we will generally kick from the hash mark to the nearest corner.

We have found that if we kick to the middle of the field our opponents can set up a left, right or middle return. Whereas, if we kick to the side of the field, they are limited to a sideline or middle return. Most teams do not have the speed to set up a return on the opposite side of the field. Limiting our opponents' options makes our job of coverage easier.

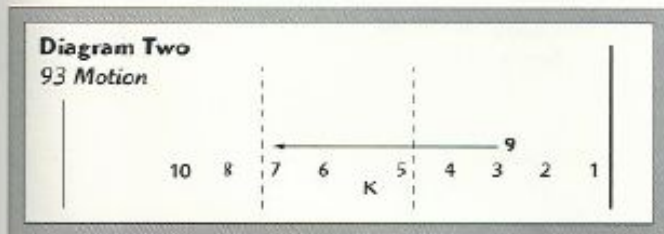
We also try to break the tempo of a game by kicking as soon as the ready-for-play whistle is blown and on other occasions we have told our kicker to wait for 15 to 20 seconds before kicking the ball. The change in tempo can make the opposing team start thinking that we are going to run a trick play, and it could affect their concentration.

Our basic coverage (right) is shown on Diagram #1. Players #1 and #10 are our contain, #9 and the Kicker are our safeties and #6 is our sprinter. If kicking to the left, we flip-flop the entire team, so that we do not change assignments.

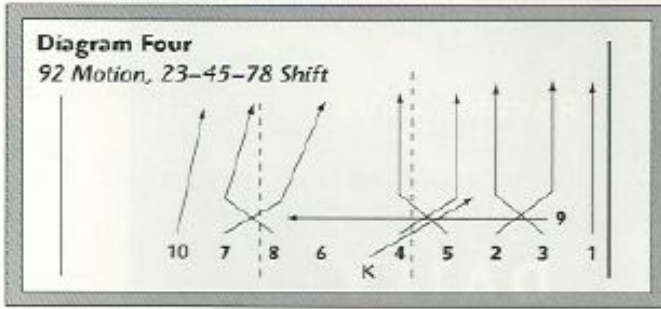
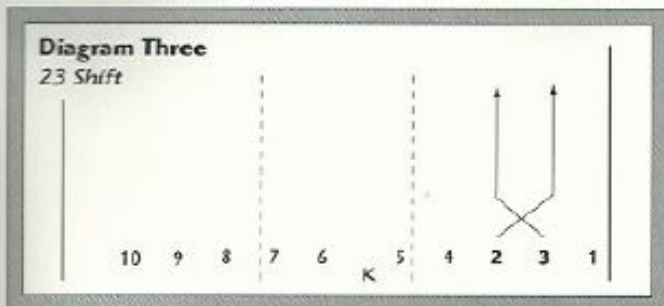


To further disguise our kickoff coverage, we rely on motion and shifts.

Our scheme uses motion for deception. An example can be seen in Diagram #2. When we use motion, #9 our safety will line up in a stack position in front of player #1 (or player #2,



#3 or #4, depending of the call). After that the kicker sets the team, he will motion to the farthest hash mark. Thus, it appears that he is asking player #9 to fill that spot. Player #9



runs across the field to fill, and the kicker will start his kicking motion as player #9 runs past the ball.

Motion causes the players on the left hash mark to wonder if the ball is being kicked in their direction. And, from time to time player #9 will kick the ball (an onside option). So what appears to be a mistake or what is a modest act of deception, can result in uncertainty and confusion on the part of the up blockers on that side of your opponent's formation.

A shift occurs when two adjacent players shift blocking responsibilities, as shown in Diagram #3.

Multiple shifts may be called. See Diagram #4. Or a motion call may result in a shift, because of a change in assignment. The permutations are endless, create confusion on assignments for our opponents, and yet are simple enough not to confuse our team.

Coaching Point : As we huddle on the sideline, each kickoff call is given in the following sequence :

- Kick direction : right or left.
- Type of kick : deep, squib or onside.
- Motion (if any)
- Shift (if any)

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