

DEFENSIVE PLAYER INSTRUCTIONS

The icons on the left side of the palette at the bottom of the chalkboard are used to assign defensive play instructions. These icons are very powerful and flexible tools that can be used to describe very detailed and complex instructions to your players.

A defensive instruction icon can be assigned to a player as his first instruction, or as his last instruction at the end of a running path. In either case, only one instruction icon can be assigned to each player during a particular play. The exceptions to this rule are the Shade, Pause and Linebacker/Zone combination instructions, which are described below.

HOW DEFENSE INSTRUCTIONS: This button is not an instruction, but is used to display or hide all the defensive patterns and instructions. It works like a light switch, so that each time you click it the patterns will either show up or disappear. Of course, the first time you bring a team to the Chalkboard Editor clicking this button will have no apparent effect since no patterns and instructions have been assigned yet.

HADE: This instruction can be added to other instructions, and determines how a defensive player lines up at scrimmage. It can be clicked three times for three different instructions: Shade Left, Head Up and Shade Right. A fourth click will remove the Shading instruction. The defensive Shading instruction can now be assigned to players with Key Back and Key Lineman instructions.

Shading is used when you want your defensive players to line up relative to certain offensive players. Normally, without Shading, the players will line up exactly where you position them on the Chalkboard Editor. If you want your players to adjust to a potentially odd offensive formation, Shading will cause them to alter their setup positions before the snap. Shading has special effects when used with the Defensive Rush and Man-to-Man instructions (see below).

EFENSIVE RUSH: This icon can be clicked two times to assign two different types of defensive rush.

un Rush: The first click assigns the Run Rush instruction. The player will take one step forward, oppose offensive blocking pressure, try to hold his position, then pursue the ball carrier.

If a run rusher is led to believe that the play is a pass (i.e., the quarterback holds the ball for a long time, drops back, or executes a pump fake) he will convert to an all out pass rush. However, defensive linemen are slow to read the flow of a play, so it may take them some time before they react to any changes.

This is the ideal instruction to use if you want a conservative but stable defensive line, and is especially well suited against a running offense.

ass Rush: The second click assigns the Pass Rush instruction. The player will blast across the line of scrimmage with only one thought in mind: get the quarterback.

Because he is coming upfield so hard a pass rusher's lateral tackling ability is impaired, and a ball carrier could easily run by him undisturbed. This is one of the reasons a draw play can be so effective. A pass rusher will be slow to react to a running play, but as soon as he realizes the play is not a pass, he will immediately pursue the ball carrier. If either of the rushing instructions are assigned at the end of a running path, the player will take on the characteristic of that instruction for the duration of the entire path.

If **Left or Right Shading** is used in conjunction with a Pass Rush instruction, causing the player to line up to the outside of an offensive lineman, he will attempt to "rush around" the lineman. This type of rush is effective at keeping the quarterback contained in the pocket, but is extremely vulnerable to inside runs.

If **Head Up Shading** is used in conjunction with a Pass Rush instruction, causing the player to line up directly opposite an offensive lineman, he will attempt a direct "bull rush", trying to force his way through the offensive lineman. This type of rush can sometimes be useful in stopping a running play in the offensive backfield, and it's often useful to have one or two of your linemen perform this rush in short yardage situations.

EAD OFFENSE: This icon can be clicked four times, each click assigning a slightly different version of the Read Offense instruction. It is typically assigned to linebackers,

who are especially good at watching movement on the offensive line and in the backfield in an attempt to anticipate the flow of a play. It is best carried out by players with high Intelligence.

The Zone Coverage instruction can be assigned in conjunction with this instruction. Simply assign a Read Offense instruction first, then select the Zone Coverage icon (see below).

The defensive Shading instruction can also be assigned to players with the Key Back and Key Lineman instructions. Under these conditions, a player who is also instructed to Shade will always line up opposite his appropriate offensive counterpart, and shade accordingly, no matter where the offensive player sets up. If no shading instruction is given, the player will stay in the general area of his diagrammed position. This shading ability is intended to allow linebackers to adjust more intelligently to unorthodox offensive formations.

ey Running Back - Read-and-Shoot: A player with this instruction will laterally follow the nearest running back for approximately 2 seconds, then try to tackle the ball carrier. If the quarterback holds the ball for more than 2 or 3 seconds, the player will assume it's a pass play and drop into an assigned zone. If no zone is assigned, he will cover the originally followed running back in Man-to-Man Coverage.

Read-and-Shoot instructions should be used if you want your linebackers to take aggressive action on a play, but is particularly vulnerable to Pump Fakes and Play-Action Fakes.

If there is a "hot" running back in the offensive backfield, linebackers with this instruction will automatically double team him before covering other backs.

ey Running Back - Lateral Pursuit: This is the same as the previous instruction, except that when pursuing the ball carrier the player will not cross the line of scrimmage.

Of all the Read Offense instructions, this one will cause the player to take the most time analyzing and determining the flow of a play. The player is less likely to be fooled by fakes and tricky offensive backfield motion.

If there is a "hot" running back in the offensive backfield, linebackers with this instruction will automatically double team him before covering other backs.

ey Lineman - Read-and-Shoot: The player will interpret the play based on the blocking

actions of the nearest offensive lineman. If run blocking is observed, he will directly pursue the ball carrier. If pass blocking is observed, he will drop into an assigned zone. If no zone is assigned he will pick up the nearest eligible receiver in Man-to-Man coverage. If the keyed blocker moves laterally, the player will move with him. If the blocker Push Blocks diagonally, the player will move in the opposite direction to fill the hole.

Read-and-Shoot instructions should be used if you want your linebackers to take aggressive action on a play, but is particularly vulnerable to Pump Fakes and Play Action Fakes.

Of all the Read Offense instructions, this one will cause the player to produce the quickest diagnosis of the play. If the player guesses right he can probably throw the play for a loss or incompleteness, but if he makes an incorrect assessment he may end up taking himself out of the play.

ey Lineman - Lateral Pursuit: This is the same as the previous instruction, except that when pursuing the ball carrier the player will not cross the line of scrimmage.

When keying on an offensive lineman, if the lineman blocks for the run, but the ball is not handed off within 2-3 seconds of the snap, the player will assume it's a pass play.

This instruction causes the player to make a fairly rapid diagnoses of the offensive play, and there is a danger that he could guess wrong.

ONE COVERAGE: This instruction assigns a form of pass coverage where the player is responsible for covering any receivers who enter an area of the field described as his "zone". After clicking this button, a line will stretch from the selected player's last position to the cursor. Stretch the line to the location you want the player to stand at for his zone coverage and click the mouse button.

ext, you must indicate the actual area of the zone by stretching a rectangle on the field. This rectangle becomes the player's Zone Coverage area.

The zone rectangle is divided horizontally into two sections. The lower section is the portion of the zone that is visible to the player while he is standing at his coverage point. The upper section is the area behind the player. The player can only pick up those receivers he "sees", therefore, if he is standing at his coverage point and a receiver enters the zone behind him, that receiver will go undetected.

The player will cover the first receiver who enters the lower section of the zone area and he will continue to cover that receiver as long as he remains within the player's entire zone rectangle. The player will continue to cover that receiver, even if new receivers enter the zone area.

If a receiver is already covered when he enters a zone, the player responsible for that zone will ignore the receiver.

This instruction can be combined with any of the four Read Offense instructions, provided the Read Offense instruction is assigned to the player first. A player in Zone Coverage will react to a running play, trying to help tackle the ball carrier, quicker than a player in Man-to-Man Coverage. In doing so however, he could give up his pass coverage responsibilities prematurely, especially if he is fooled by a Play-Action Fake.

Unless you are diagramming short zones for a specific purpose, it's a good idea to stretch your zone rectangles as deep as they will go, especially for cornerbacks and free safeties. If you don't do this, a receiver who is running a long pattern could potentially exit the "back end" of a zone and get open to receive a pass.

Micro Zones: there is a zone technique called "mini" or "micro" zones. These zones are very small zones no bigger than the box that surrounds the player's symbol or position abbreviation. The purpose of a zone this small is to keep the defender in a particular location to help defeat flooding patterns.

AN-TO-MAN COVERAGE: This instruction assigns a form of pass coverage where the player covers one specific receiver on the opposing team. The icon can be clicked twice to assign two different instructions: Standard Man-to-Man Coverage, or Double Coverage. When this instruction is assigned, the Shading icon will also appear above the player's symbol. Shading has a special effect on Man Coverage as described below.

Standard Man-to-Man: Before the snap the player will automatically line up opposite his receiver, and he will stay with that receiver throughout the entire play.

Vertical distance from the line of scrimmage is preserved during pre-snap line up. For example, if you set the player's initial position 10 yards off the line of scrimmage he will line up opposite his man, but will still be 10 yards deep. After the snap, he will gradually close the distance between himself and his man.

Shading affects the player's line-up position as described in the Shading section,

however for Man-to-Man Coverage it also determines the type of man coverage. If the player shades to the inside of the receiver he will "give up" the outside and try to stay to the receiver's inside. The converse is true for an outside shade. On a head up shade the player will try to stay together with the receiver step for step.

If a hot receiver is in the offensive lineup, any extra man-to-man players will automatically cover him, or double team him if he's already covered.

If no Shading is assigned to a player in Man-to-Man Coverage he will not move from his diagrammed location, provided his man is within 7 yards of his position. If not, then he will move and line up directly opposite his man.

In picking men to cover, cornerbacks will first look to the outermost receivers on the offensive line.

Partial Man Coverage: If you assign Man-to-Man Coverage to three or fewer of your players, the game assumes that your defense is in "partial man coverage". In this situation two rules apply in determining which receiver each defensive man will cover. The first is location: a player will try to cover the nearest open receiver on the line. If none are close, he will look off the line. Secondly, players will cover eligible receivers based on position. The following defensive players will cover the following offensive players, in the order listed:

Cornerback - Wide Receiver, Tight End, Running Back
Strong Safety - Tight End, Wide Receiver, Running Back
Free Safety - Wide Receiver, Tight End, Running Back
Linebacker - Running Back, Tight End, Wide Receiver

Full Man Coverage: If you assign Man-to-Man Coverage to four or more of your players, the game assumes your defense is in "total man coverage." The defense will try to spread its coverage among all of the receivers according to the above priority list regardless of location on the field. It is very possible that a cornerback initially positioned at the left side of the field, will need to move to the right side to cover a wide receiver.

Double Coverage: The second click instructs the player to go into Double Coverage. The player will line up next to his nearest Man-to-Man Coverage teammate, and together they will cover his man. If no other players are assigned to man coverage, his coverage will simply default to Standard Man-to-Man.

RECEIVE: This button allows you to assign the Receive command to defensive players

and can be clicked twice for two different instruction assignments. This instruction is typically assigned either to keep a defensive player in place (Get Open) or at the end of a pattern so that the defensive player ends up in a specific area (Hook).

Traditionally, the Receive command has been used solely on the offensive side of the ball. However, prevalent use of the command on the defensive side of the ball proved to be useful enough to include it here.

Note that while defensive players using the Receive command break to the ball faster than those player in Zone Coverage, they do not play the run well at all, not moving towards the ball carrier until after he has crossed the line of scrimmage.

et Open: The first click assigns the Get Open instruction. This is useful if you place the defensive player in the spot where you want him to cover and you do not want him to move.

ook: The second click assigns the Hook instruction. This instruction is useful if you want to assign the defensive player a pattern to cover deep or drop over the line of scrimmage to cover the screen.

eceiving Kicks: The Get Open instruction can also be used to instruct a player to receive a punt, kickoff, or free kick. In this instance, it is assigned to a defensive player on the receiving team. When the ball is kicked he will try to get in position to catch it. If it is assigned at the end of a pattern, the player will wait to catch the kick and will then follow the pattern on the return. In this way you can diagram specific return routes.

AUSE: The Pause instruction can also be given to defensive players, and works the same as for offensive players.

TRONG SIDE: This icon does not appear on the icon palette, but can be found in the defensive backfield, and affects the entire defensive play. It is used to indicate which side of the defensive setup is intended to play opposite the offense's "strong side." The strong side is defined as that side of the offense which has the most eligible receivers lined up within 12 yards of either side of the center. **Receivers and backs lined up out**

near the sidelines are not considered. In a standard offensive formation, the strong side is typically the side where the tight end lines up.

The concept of strong side and weak side is very important in modern football. If the defense ignores the offensive setup and doesn't properly adjust, there is a good chance that the extra blockers and/or receivers on the strong side will outnumber the defense and a big gain could result. Of course the offense could always try to mislead the defense and go the other way!

PlayMaker Football™ allows you to define which side of the defense is intended to play against an offensive strong side by positioning the Lightning Bolt in the defensive backfield. If the Bolt is in the middle, the defense will ignore the strong side/weak side configuration of the offense, and will line up as diagrammed. If the Bolt is set to the right or left, and the offense comes out of the huddle with the strong side on the opposite side of the Bolt, the defense will immediately "flip" its coverage so it is properly opposing the offense's strong side. To position the Lightning Bolt, simply click on it.