



THE NEW AGE MUDDLE HUDDLE TWO-POINT FORMATION

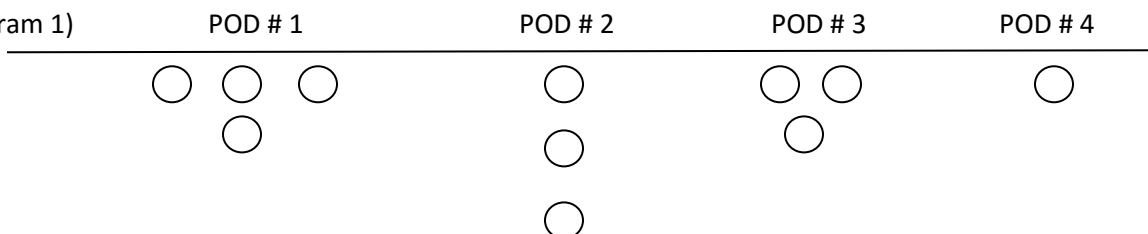
BY: JARED VAN ACKER- HEAD FOOTBALL COACH- GRAFTON H.S (YORKTOWN, VA)

Like all coaches, I look forward to the offseason to attend as many coaching clinics as I can that are held throughout the United States. Some coaches attend clinics looking to have a good time and use the weekend as an "outing" away from the wives and kids to unwind and enjoy themselves with their staff. When I go to clinics, I aim to attend as many sessions as possible to learn and gain knowledge from some of the most successful and innovative minds in football today. I set out to learn at least one new thing that could make me a better coach or help my team become more successful. I also enjoy meeting and networking with other coaches in the profession and bouncing ideas off of one another.

This past winter, I had the privilege to be a speaker at the Shenandoah Valley Special Teams Clinic held at Stuart's Draft High School in Virginia on my innovative Loco Punt Formation. While in attendance, I sat through a presentation given by clinic director, Abe Mikell, an assistant coach at the host school. He gave a presentation on his unique field goal/muddle huddle formation. I have always been intrigued by the Muddle Huddle/PAT formation also known as the "Ole Swinging Gate" and its ability to gain two-point conversions. I have encountered many teams in my short coaching career who have incorporated it into their special team's scheme and have seen multiple versions developed. Afterwards, my own creative juices began to flow and I determined that I was going to incorporate my own style of the Muddle Huddle which I have dubbed the "Muddle HD". This new and innovative attack has worked wonders for our football team and has given our special teams unit another weapon.

When I decided to include the "Muddle HD" into my arsenal, I wanted to use and incorporate many of the schemes and philosophy of the Spread Offense into this two-point conversion formation. I wanted to include philosophical things like spreading out your personnel and getting the ball into your athlete's hands in space. I also wanted to be able to force the defenders to cover space and look for mis-matches that we could exploit. This new attack also forces opponents to spend more time repping/studying how to defend this unique scheme. I even had one opposing coach tell me they spent close to 2 hours of practice time that week to try and stop our "unique and difficult" scheme. Last of all, this new attack has been a fun and exciting addition for our kids to practice and run in games. They have taken pride in being a part of this facet of Special Teams. Since we have implemented the "Muddle HD" we have scored on over 95% of our fake PAT/ 2 PT attempts. Our kicker has also had a 95% success rate on kicking attempts due to fear of other fakes. We have even scored more points using the "Muddle HD" then some of our opponents have scored on offense in games!

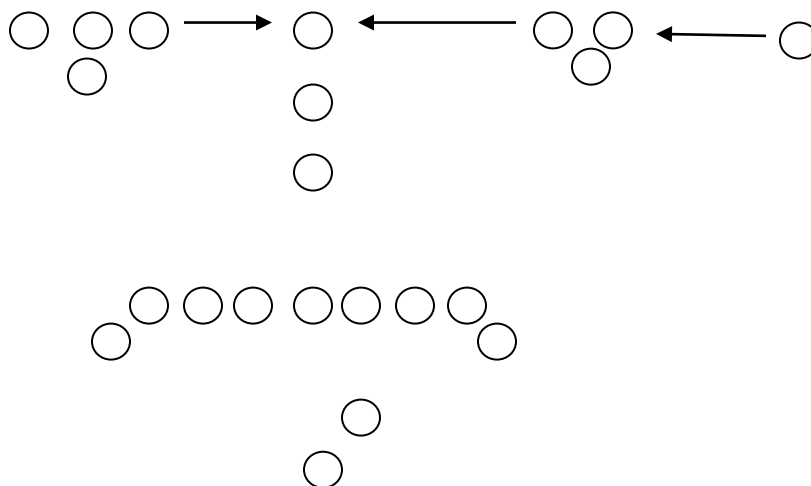
The basic formation of the "Muddle HD" separates the formation into four "POD" groupings. (See Diagram 1)



The first "POD" incorporates four players, two of which are eligible receivers. You will want one of your better skill players as the player behind the wall/bunch. He can be used as a WR, RB, and even as a QB. The second "POD" incorporates your long snapper, holder, and kicker. The kicker places the kicking tee at the desired depth, for us its 6-7 yards deep, and stands at that depth. The holder is like the quarterback of the formation and is at a depth of a shotgun snap at 4-5 yards deep. This is very convenient because most of the time he is a QB or a skill player who can probably throw. Your long snapper must be very good and be able to shotgun snap, PAT snap, and snap horizontally to each of the two up backs on both sides of him. These snaps take a lot of practice and we practice these everyday in our pre-practice segment to insure proper execution. The third "POD" consists of three players with one **up back** who is another one of our best skill players who can be used as a WR, RB, and even as a QB. The fourth and last "POD" consists of one player and is usually your best athlete. We put our All-State 6'5 230 TE/WR out there by himself, which causes serious one-on-one mis-matches for our opponents.

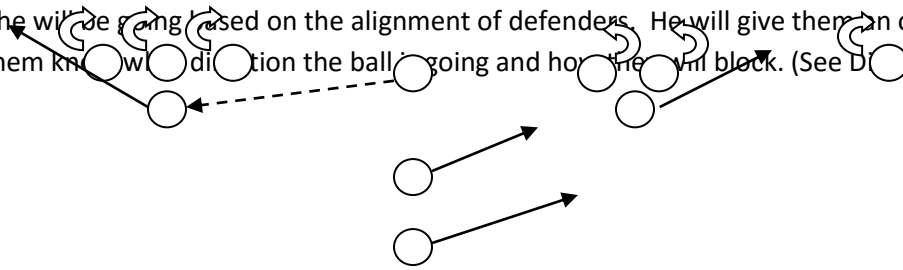
The "Muddle HD" incorporates a no-huddle call system that usually is called or determined by the number of defenders in our "POD" zones. Our holder reads or counts the number of defenders in each "POD" zone from left to right looking for numbers, skill, or size mismatch advantages that we can exploit. He then calls out the audible to either run one of our fakes or to shift into our PAT formation to kick the extra point. With all of our punt audible's named after NFL teams we decided to name our PAT audible's after NBA teams. Though we have a wide arsenal of ten different PAT fakes, I will be discussing our five main audible's of the "Muddle HD" in this article.

The first audible is our "kick" call in which we shift out of our "Muddle HD" formation into our regular PAT kick formation. (See Diagram 2)

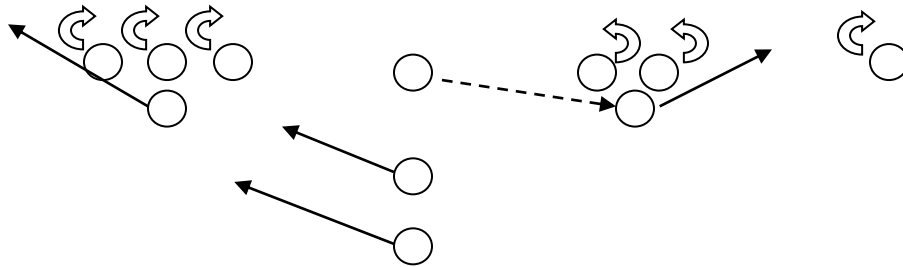


The second audible is our "left toss" call in which our snapper rugby-style passes the ball to the left up back. When the audible is called the left up back will make a call to the wall/bunch in front to tell them

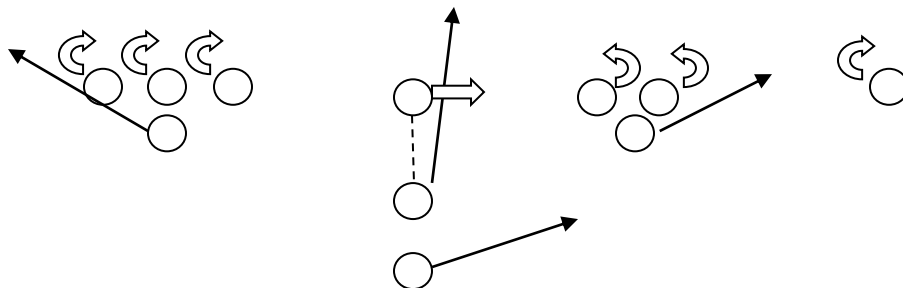
the direction he will be going based on the alignment of defenders. He will give them an out, middle, or in call to let them know in which direction the ball is going and how they will block. (See Diagram 3)



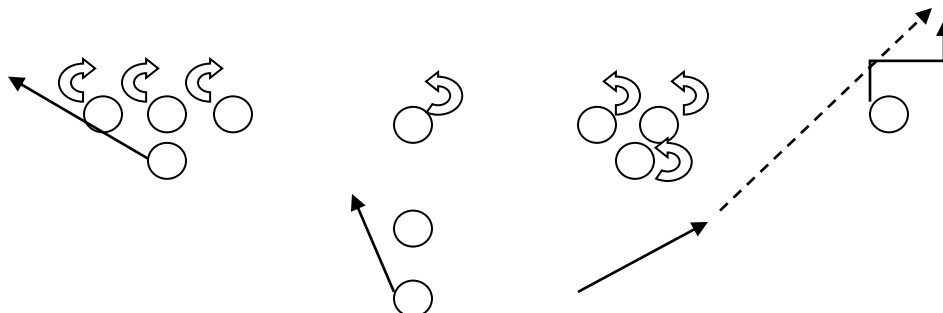
The third audible is our "right toss" call in which our long snapper will rugby-style pass the ball to the right up back and block the same way. (See Diagram 4)

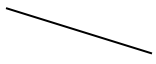


The fourth audible is our "dive" call in which the holder receives a direct shotgun snap from the long snapper. He will then dive it right behind a block by the snapper on the nearest defender. Our holder is instructed to only call this audible when there is a 3-1 advantage in this "POD" zone. This numbers advantage usually happens when opponents are worried about the other "POD" zones and misalign against the formation. (See Diagram 5)



The last audible that I will discuss is the "jump ball" audible in which the holder receives a direct shotgun snap and we roll toward "POD" zone #4 with the hopeful one-on-one mis-match. The WR and our holder will make one of our offensive individual route signals to communicate what route is to be run based on the defensive alignment of the defender. (See Diagram 6)





Though these are the only five audibles being discussed in this article, there are many more incorporated in our arsenal using all forms of trick plays for two-point conversions. Due to the “Muddle HD” we have been able to change the landscape of many football games and have used it to become a threat in our Special Teams phase of the football game.

About the Author:

Jared Van Acker

Coach Jared Van Acker recently finished his 2nd year as the head football coach at Grafton High School, located in Yorktown, Virginia. He has led the Clippers to back-to-back Division 4 playoff appearances, winning the Region 1 championship and finishing as a state-semifinalist in the 2011 season. At the end of the 2010 season, he was named Coach of the Year for the Bay Rivers District. Jared completed his fifth year as a head football coach, with three prior years at Galax High School in Virginia. Prior to Galax H.S., he served three years as an assistant coach at William Campbell High School in Virginia, where he helped coach the Generals to a state championship in 2005. He served one season as an assistant at Carthage High School in Illinois, where they finished as state runner-up. He played three years of college football at Quincy University, located in Quincy, IL. He received his Bachelor’s Degree from Western Illinois University and graduated from J.D Darnell High School in Geneseo, IL. Coach Van Acker is also a speaker for coaching clinics and author of numerous articles published in the national football coaches magazine, American Football Monthly.