

quick pass, even when shuffling in the pocket or on the move.

But, while action passes are a big part of his offense, Kelly's bread and butter remains the drop-back game.

DOWN THE FIELD

Kelly's drop-back passing game is built on a few basic principles. One, he is a general proponent of the "speed in space" philosophy so prevalent among spread coaches. In other words, get the ball to your playmakers. In this way his offense will likely differ from Weis's. While both are pass-first guys, Weis was very dependent on the big pass play to Jeff Samardzija or Golden Tate. And if they weren't hitting that big pass the offense tended to stagnate. Kelly, on the

other hand, wants to chew you up with steady completions in the voids between defenders created by his spread sets and schemes. Neither is inherently better than the other, though, when it works, Kelly's offense is more predictable. He won't try to surprise you with a big pass down the sideline. He will just continue to pick at the spaces between defenders until reaching the end zone. While Kelly will likely throw the ball more often than Weis did, the completions—and thus the first downs, and, hopefully, the scoring—will be more consistent than under Weis, which too often was feast or famine.

The second principle is a belief in "straight stems." Not a pottery term, this refers to the path the receiver uses when the play begins. Think of backyard football. If every time you wanted to run outside, you first ran inside, your opponent would quickly figure it out. If every time you ran inside you tried to "set him up" by going outside, the same principle would apply. With real football at the major college level, you have this "pattern recognition" on steroids. Coaches like Nick Saban spend hours with their team teaching them to "pattern read" entire passing plays so that if, say, the slot receiver runs a short crossing route while the running back heads to the flat, the defense quickly can deduce what the play is, or, at least narrow it down

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"Here again we see Kelly deemphasizing the play caller in favor of the players."

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