

to where they can double-team the downfield receivers.

For an example, look at Diagram 4. In it, the slot receivers and running back run routes that can (a) be easily identified and (b) easily defended by one player. This frees up both cornerbacks and both safeties to double-team the outside receivers, who have no chance to get open, no matter what route they run. The solution then is to prevent this kind of pattern reading by making every play look the same—by having each receiver begin the play by releasing straight down the field.

Of course, they eventually break their route off, even after five yards, and this is not an immutable law of all plays. But as a general framework for Kelly's offense it holds true. And look at how different the defense must react when the slot receivers, instead of immediately releasing inside or to the flat, run down the field, as shown in Diagram 5.

In this play, the right slot, TJ Jones for example, runs down the field, forcing the safety to go with him. This frees up the outside receiver, Floyd perhaps, on a square-in route to find the open void cleared out by the running back running to the flat. Alternatively, the two receivers on the left run a concept called "levels," where the inside receiver, again a slot receiver like Theo Riddick, runs an in-breaking route at ten-to-twelve yards while an outside receiver like Duval Kamara runs an in-route at a depth of five yards. This time the quarterback reads the linebacker in the flat: if he drops to handle the slot receiver, as shown in the diagram, the short route comes open. If he sits where he is, the square-in by the slot opens up behind him. This is arguably Peyton Manning's favorite pass play, and the one the Colts use the most.

From there, the rest is really just decoration, and just placing receivers in combinations that will get them open. But the principle remains the same: get vertical releases that the defense cannot read until the last possible moment. But a couple of decorations are worth mentioning. One is Kelly's use of the famous "switch" route.

The "switch" was a play the old run and shoot guys made famous. Two outside receivers criss-cross at the snap and then continue on their previous path. And like the run and shoot—which was predicated on the receivers reading the defense on the fly to find the open spots—Kelly lets his receivers sit down in the open voids, as shown in Diagram 6.

This means that the play can be either a deep one, if the defenders stay short

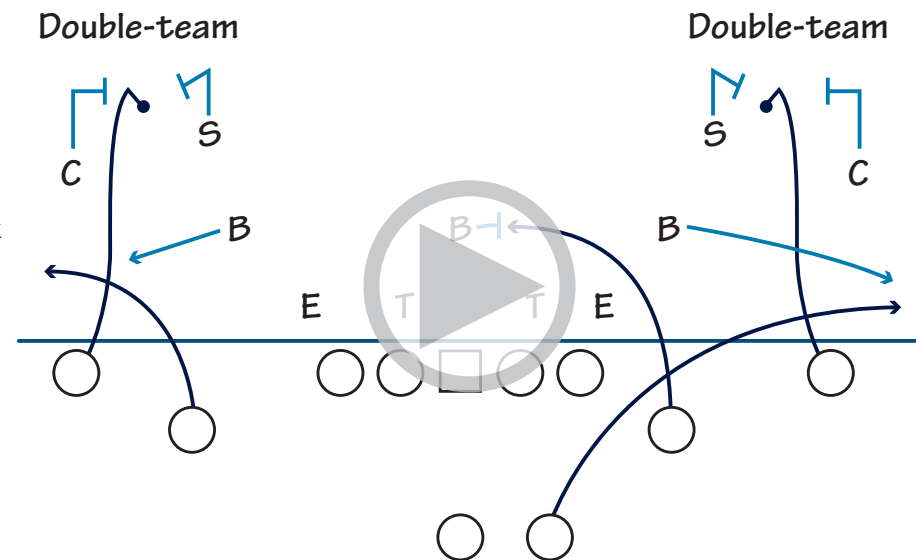


Diagram 4: The Double-Team. [Click to play.](#)

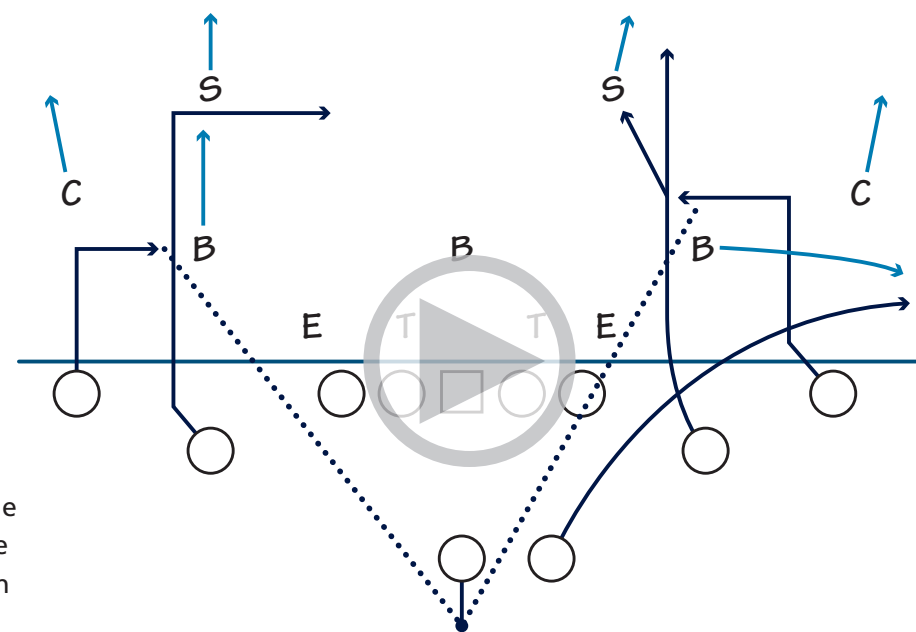


Diagram 5: Slot receiver run. [Click to play.](#)