

Madden NFL 2004 FAQ/Strategy Guide

by VinnyVideo

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This walkthrough was originally written for Madden NFL 2004 on the GBA, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the PS2 version of the game.

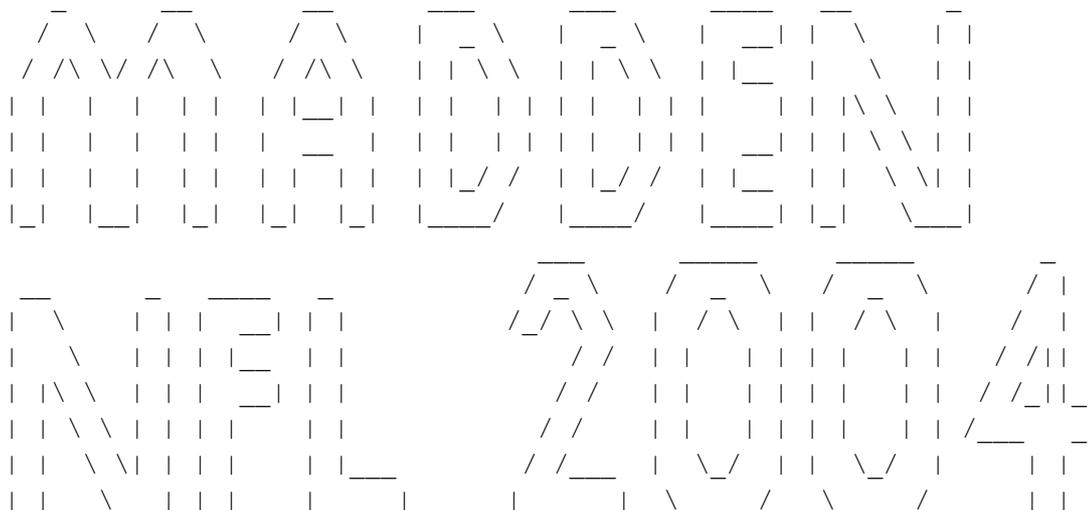


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Introduction

[INTRO]

Greetings! I've made another walkthrough! This is my 34th, which is kind of impressive. This is my first new guide in about three weeks - I've been too busy playing games that I'm not going to write walkthroughs for (namely, Pokemon Crystal and Banjo-Tooie) and doing stuff in real life. I never guaranteed you that I'd be producing 4-7 guides per month like I was back in May. Nonetheless, I'll probably release a bunch of new guides in the next few weeks.

This was one of the easier walkthroughs for me to write, as the GBA version of Madden NFL 2004 is very similar to the last two Madden games for the Super NES - games I've already written guides for. In fact, almost everything except the Team Stats, Suggested Substitutions, and season review is "ripped" from one of my previous guides, since this game's playbook is identical to the one used in Madden '98.

Anyway, Madden NFL 2004 is a good game. It's basically Madden '97 with 2003 rosters. The game designers were obviously limited by the GBA's limited capacities in comparison to the GameCube or Xbox. The sprite-based graphics weren't very innovative, but they got the job done. The music is terrible. It's not just because I can't stand punk rock; the ultra-compressed music sounds far worse than anything you could hear on your Datsun's radio while driving in the middle of nowhere. They should've stuck with better-sounding MIDI tunes. Thankfully, you can turn the music off. The play control is generally quite good; in fact, some may prefer the smaller number of buttons over the endless jukes and spins you need to learn to compete in console Madden games. Because of the GBA's limited number of buttons, you'll be able to pass to only four of your eligible receivers unless you use a more difficult control system. The lack of a fifth target makes passing marginally more difficult on some plays. The computer AI is pretty good, although occasionally it can be annoying; for example, it will call timeouts to stop the clock even if you're leading 52-10 with eight seconds left. This is enough rambling and reviewing, though. In the words of Mario himself, let's-a go!

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Modes of Play [MODES]
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Play Now

Select this option to play an exhibition game using the teams of your choice. Before you hit the gridiron, you'll be able to select the venue, weather, and quarter length. If you have another Game Boy Advance, a Game Link cable, a second copy of Madden 2004, and a friend (or enemy!) to play with, you can even play a Multiplayer game (select "Link" instead of 1-player "Solo").

---Season Play---

Here you can play through a 16-game season, and if you're good enough, the playoffs and Super Bowl.

---New Season---

This starts a new season. Imagine that! You can select as many or as few games as you wish to play. If you have a season or playoff in progress, starting a new season erases the previous season's data, so be careful.

---New Playoffs---

Here you can start a new playoff series. Again, this erases any data from previous seasons or playoffs.

---Season Rules---

This option lets you decide quarter length, injuries (off or on), endurance (whether you want fatigue or not), and whether you want the rosters to reflect modifications (trades and signings) you've made.

---League Stats---

If you have a season in progress, this lets you check out the statistics for individual teams and the entire league.

---League Standings---

This shows the current standings.

---Continue Season---

If you have a season in progress, this is where you can go to resume it.

---Continue Playoffs---

If you have playoffs in progress, you can resume the playoffs with this option.

=====
Front Office

The Front Office menu contains many options for modifying teams' rosters and other related tasks.

---Create a Player---

Here you can create a new player. After setting physical attributes (name, position, height, etc.), you run a series of drills to determine the player's attributes. The set of drills varies depending on your player's position. You might want to add some of the players not included in the game, or even yourself!

---Trade Players---

This option lets you trade players between teams. Just remember that transactions and player creations are limited by the game's SRAM space - and the space on each team's salary cap. Also, you can only trade players of the same position, and you can't trade two players for one.

---Reset Rosters---

This nullifies all changes to the rosters you've made. Be careful when using this option!

---Delete Players---

This option only lets you delete players you've created yourself. You might do this if you made a mistake, got a bad result in a training event, or are out of memory.

***Extras**

View all-time records for big plays and Scouting Combine events.

---Records---

View records recording the biggest plays in your career.

---Madden Cards---

This feature only works if you connect your game to the GameCube version of Madden NFL 2004. I believe it allows you to use Madden Cards in this game.

Controls

[CONTR]

This section is similar to the content found in the manual, although I've added some of my own information.

---General---

Move player - Control pad any direction

Pause game - START

---Special Teams---

Start the power bar - A

Stop the power bar - A (when it's near the top)

Aim kick left/right - Control pad left/right

Call an audible (onside kick) - B

Line up right/left (after calling an audible) - A/R

Return to standard kicking formation (after calling an audible) - B

Call for a fair catch (very important on punt returns) - SELECT

Control the kick receiver - Control pad any direction

---Before the snap---

(Offense)

Set a man in motion - Control pad left or right

Select player to control (only in multi-player mode or in a Manual Offense) - L or R

Fake snap signal (HUT!) - SELECT
Snap the ball - A

(Defense)

Select player to control - L or A

Show blitz (move players closer to the line of scrimmage; you can press it multiple times to change the player combinations) - R

---Audibles (either offense or defense)---

Call an audible - B

Select an audible play (after calling an audible) - B, A, or R

Cancel audible - L

---After the snap---

(Offense)

Rushing

Burst of speed - A

Spin - B

Dive/QB slide - L

Hurdle - R

(Defense)

Control player closest to the ball - A

Jump and raise hands - R

Dive - L

Power Tackle - B

---Passing---

Move the quarterback - Control Pad any direction

Bring up passing letters (only if Quick Passing Mode is off) - A

Pass to receiver L, B, A, or R - L, B, A, or R

Throw the ball away (receiver letters up) - SELECT

Note: The longer you hold down the pass button, the harder the throw will be.
Don't forget that your quarterback can run, too.

---Receiving---

Control receiver closest to the ball - A

Jump and raise hands - R

Dive - L

Spin - B

---Punting/Kicking---

Fake snap signal (HUT!) - Select

Aim the kick - Control pad left/right

Start power bar/snap the ball - A

Stop power bar/kick the ball - A

---Play Calling---

Move play selection highlight - Control pad up/down

Flip play (Only for offense, and not available for the Goal Line or Special Teams formations) - SELECT

Return to formation select screen from play screen - L

---Menus---

Move highlight up/down - Control Pad up/down

Cycle through choices - Control Pad left/right

Select highlighted option - A or START

Return to previous screen - B

Scroll through statistics on Team Lineup screen - L or R

These aren't exactly controls, but there are a few settings on the Pre-Game Show/pause screen that affect your controls. First select "Game Play Options." You can change audibles here, but I discuss that in the Q&A section.

First, you can switch the Pass Catch Mode from automatic to manual. Normally, the computer controls the receiver while the pass is in the air, but in manual mode you take control of the receiver as soon you throw the ball (better for advanced players).

Second, you can Set Offense Control. This isn't a bad thing for advanced players, but beginners should always use the default Automatic mode. In Manual Mode, you can control any of the so-called "skill positions" on offense - not just the quarterback. Use the L and R buttons to cycle through your players before the snap. On running plays it's best to select the running back, although it's also fun to block for a back using your fullback or tight end - or even the quarterback! On passing plays, you definitely want to control the quarterback, although you can press A while the ball is in the air to take control of the receiver. If you're controlling a receiver, press A to bring up the receiving windows and A again to call for a pass.

One more option here is totally useless: Passing Mode. Passing Mode determines whether five receiver letters are shown or one. Four (the default) is recommended, as the alternative is cumbersome.

There are a few other options, most of which are discussed elsewhere or are otherwise useless (like the Contrast and Quick Passing Mode options, which you shouldn't need to fiddle with) or don't change things much (like the Skill Level). Also, this is place where you can finally turn the music off.

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Team Stats

[TEAMS]
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These team ratings are taken from the GameCube version of Madden NFL 2004 - a game I played far more than the Game Boy Advance version. These ratings should be taken with a grain of salt, since they are based on a different version of the game and only take starters into account.

	OFF	DEF	OVERALL
Arizona Cardinals	77	77	78
Atlanta Falcons	86	83	84
Baltimore Ravens	80	84	82
Buffalo Bills	86	84	85
Carolina Panthers	80	84	82
Chicago Bears	82	84	82
Cincinnati Bengals	83	79	81
Cleveland Browns	81	79	80
Dallas Cowboys	78	85	81
Denver Broncos	86	82	84
Detroit Lions	80	80	80
Green Bay Packers	89	84	87
Houston Texans	81	80	80
Indianapolis Colts	87	78	83
Jacksonville Jaguars	83	82	82
Kansas City Chiefs	88	79	84
Miami Dolphins	85	91	88
Minnesota Vikings	85	79	82
New England Patriots	85	87	86
New Orleans Saints	88	78	83
New York Giants	85	84	85
New York Jets	86	82	84
Oakland Raiders	90	84	87
Philadelphia Eagles	87	86	87
Pittsburgh Steelers	86	85	86

St. Louis Rams	91	81	86
San Diego Chargers	83	84	83
San Francisco 49ers	88	85	86
Seattle Seahawks	85	84	84
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	84	91	88
Tennessee Titans	86	83	85
Washington Redskins	81	84	82

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Suggested Substitutions

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[SUBST]

I assume a 4-3 defense for every team other than Pittsburgh, Houston, Baltimore, and Atlanta. All substitutions should be "global" substitutions unless otherwise specified. I base these recommendations on player ratings in the game, not the lineups used during the actual 2003 NFL season. You may also want to manually make changes to the WR in the Goal Line formation (use the player with the best Hands rating) and the third cornerback and third safety in the Nickel and Dime formations. Also, I highly recommend that you adopt some form of player rotation (as discussed in the FAQ section).

Arizona Cardinals: Thomas Jones should get most of the time at HB, especially in Shotgun and Single Back. Tywan Mitchell should be your second-string tight end. Use Dennis Johnson as DLE. Rotate in Marcus Bell at DRT.

Atlanta Falcons: No changes are really needed. I recommend rotating FBs, whose attributes are equal. I'd also rotate Travis Hall at DRT.

Baltimore Ravens: Milton Wynn should be the #4 or #5 WR. Rotate Jason Thomas at RG. Alvin Porter should be the full-time starting LCB, and Will Demps should be the SS.

Buffalo Bills: The recommended WR depth chart is Eric Moulds, Bobby Shaw, Josh Reed/Charles Johnson/Sam Aiken, Andre' Rone. Reed, Johnson, and Aiken are equal at WR3. Marcus Price should be the LT when using the Shotgun formation (maybe Single Back, too). The DRT should be Ron Edwards. DaShon Polk should replace either one of the default starting OLBs. Izell Reese should play either safety position - rotate between FS and SS in different forms.

Carolina Panthers: I'd probably use Jake Delhomme, who led the Panthers to the Super Bowl, at QB. I suggest using a WR depth chart of Muhsin Muhammad, Kevin Dyson, Ricky Proehl, Steve Smith, Bashir Yamini, and Karl Hankton. Use Brian Allen at LLB.

Chicago Bears: Use Adrian Peterson as Goal Line HB. WR depth chart should be David Terrell, Marty Booker, Dez White, Jamin Elliott, Justin Gage, and Ahmad Merritt. Lance Briggs should be the LLB.

Cincinnati Bengals: It's a very close call at QB; take your pick. Use Jeff Burris at LCB and Marquand Manuel at FS.

Cleveland Browns: Start James Jackson at HB, at least in Shotgun formation. Use FB40 (Lee Suggs) at FB. I recommend placing Frisman Jackson at #3 on the WR depth chart. Steve Heiden and Aaron Shea are the best two TEs, in interchangeable order. Use Paul Zukauskas as LG in Shotgun. Andra Davis should start at RLB.

Dallas Cowboys: The Broncos' top two QBs are of equal ability. Use Tyson Walker at center in Goal Line. Insert Javiar Collins into the right tackle position in Shotgun. Use Louis Mackey as LLB. Both RCBs are equal, so rotate them.

Denver Broncos: Quentin Griffin and KaRon Coleman should split most time at HB.

Detroit Lions: Luke Staley should play HB some, although not in Shotgun. Charles Rogers should be your #1 receiver, and Az-Zahir Hakim should be #2. Use Stockar McDougale at RT in Goal Line and maybe other formations as well. Play Dominic Raiola at center in Goal Line. Use Cory Redding at DRE.

Green Bay Packers: Najeh Davenport is the recommended Goal Line HB. Rotate FBs. Tyrone Davis should be TE #2. Bill Ferrario should be LG most of the time, although I'd use him at RG in Goal Line. Use Jerry Wisne at RT in Goal Line. Use Hannibal Navies at MLB and Bryant Westbrook at RCB.

Houston Texans: Use HB rotation, but Stacey Mack should always play in Goal Line and Shotgun. Use TE rotation. Use rotation at RG and RT (Weigert-Herndon and Randall-Washington, respectively). Corey Sears should start at DLE. Seth Payne should be the 3-4 NT. Erik Flowers should be the ROLB. Rotate Pat Dennis in at both safety positions.

Indianapolis Colts: Marvin Harrison is your best wide receiver. Rob Murphy should be the Shotgun center. Use rotation at DRT and DRE. Start Mike Doss at SS.

Jacksonville Jaguars: The WR depth chart should be Jimmy Smith, Jermaine Lewis, Jimmy Redmond, Donald Hayes, Micah Ross, and Kevin Lockett. Use Jay Humphrey at RT in Goal Line. Use Larry Smith some at DRT. Ainsley Battles should be FS.

Kansas City Chiefs: Johnnie Morton should be WR #1, and Dante Hall should be #4. Donald Willis is the recommended LG. Eric Downing should be DLT. Eric Warfield should start at LCB. Use Shaunard Harts at FS and Jason Belser at SS.

Miami Dolphins: Derrius Thompson should be WR #2. Marco Battaglia is your top TE. Derrick Rodgers is best at LLB.

Minnesota Vikings: Greg Biekert should be MLB #1. Start Ken Irvin at RCB and Willie Offord at FS.

New England Patriots: Bethel Johnson should be WR #3, and Dedric Ward should be #4. Tom Ashworth should start at RT. Play Bobby Hamilton at DRE. Ted Johnson should be the LOLB. Use Mike Vrabel as ILB2 in the 3-4 (which New England used sometimes).

New Orleans Saints: Jerome Pathon should be WR #2. Boo Williams is probably the #2 TE. Spencer Folau should be the Shotgun RG. Rotate centers. Rotate DLEs - Charles Grant and Willie Whitehead.

New York Giants: Use Dorsey Levens as Goal Line (maybe another formation, too) HB. Give both fullbacks equal time. Tam Hopkins should be the LG in Goal Line. Rotate RCBs.

New York Jets: Vinny Testaverde may be the best QB. Rotate FBs. Jonathan Goodwin is the best LG for the Shotgun formation. Dewayne Robertson should be the DLT. Bryan Thomas is good as Goal Line DRE. Jamie Henderson should play FS.

Oakland Raiders: Rotate fullbacks. The suggested WR depth chart is Tim Brown, Doug Gabriel, Jerry Rice, Jerry Porter, Marcus Knight, and Alvis Whitted. TE order: Roland Williams, O.J. Santiago, Doug Jolley. Rotate Trace Armstrong and Tony Bryant at DRE. Napoleon Harris should be ILB #1. Take your pick at RLB. Rotate RCBs.

Philadelphia Eagles: Use a different HB in Goal Line. L.J. Smith should be the

#2 TE. Keith Adams is your best ILB. Use Rashard Cook at SS.

Pittsburgh Steelers: Each of the three quarterbacks has his own merit. Amos Zereoue should play at HB in one or two formations. Hines Ward should be the #1 WR. Kendall Simmons is the best LT. C. Hampton should be the NT in a 3-4. James Farrior is the better MLB, but it doesn't matter because the Steelers use a 3-4.

St. Louis Rams: Either fullback can be useful, so rotate. Drag Terrence Wilkins to the bottom of the WR depth chart. Rotate Jimmy Kennedy in at both DT spots. Scott Shanle should play some at LLB. Jerametrius Butler is the better RCB. Use rotation at FS.

San Diego Chargers: Use Kelvin Garmon at LG except in Shotgun, where he should be the RG. Jerry Wilson should be your starting LCB.

San Francisco 49ers: Paul Smith is probably the better FB. J.J. Stokes should be the #2 WR. Use Kwame Harris at RT in Goal Line. Travis Kirschke should rotate at both DT spots.

Seattle Seahawks: Trent Dilfer is the best QB. All linemen (except the LT and LG) are of equal ability, so use some rotation. Brandon Mitchell should play DLE. Doug Evans should be the RCB. And yes, the #5 WR really is named Taco Wallace.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers: Jim Miller is slightly better at QB. Ron Warner should play some at DLE.

Tennessee Titans: Tom Ackerman should be the Shotgun center. Rien Long should play some at DLT. Mike Echols is the better LCB. Thomas Wright (SS28) should be the SS.

Washington Redskins: Rod Gardner should be the #3 WR. Jermaine Haley should be the DRT, and Rashad Bauman should be the RCB.

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Offensive Playbook

[OFFPB]
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A few things to keep in mind before we start:

- * I'm going to be assuming you're playing against the computer when I write this guide.
- * I always assume that each play is NOT flipped, but the mirror feature (press SELECT on the play selection screen) is good to use from time to time, particularly on certain plays or against a human opponent.
- * I also assume you're using the "Normal" subset of each formation. Changing the set can be desirable but will also change the way the play works.
- * On passing plays, one eligible receiver won't have a button assigned to him, so the only way you can pass to him is if you manually control him when "Manual Offense" is turned on.
- * When I use terms like "R receiver" and "A receiver," I'm referring to the buttons that correspond to the receivers on the non-flipped version of the play.
- * Since you're playing an old football video game, I'm assuming you have some grasp of football theory, rules, and terminology; you know what a tight end or shotgun formation is. That said, I'm still going to explain certain terms for the less football-savvy.
- * Remember that results may vary based on offense, defense, down, hashmarks, set, and other factors.
- * I've tried to test each play against a variety of defenses, but there's still

a chance I may have misjudged a few plays. Also, no play will succeed 100% of the time.

* Lastly, while many of these plays (or plays that are very similar) appear in the playbooks of today's Madden games, I don't recommend trying to use this guide with any games other than the Game Boy Advance version of Madden NFL 2004.

For those of you who are counting, there are 109 plays on offense and 77 plays in the defensive playbook.

~~~~~  
Far (Normal, 3WR, 2TE, TE Motion) (12 plays)  
~~~~~

The Far formation has two running backs lined up close to each other, with the halfback lining up on the weak side ("far" from the tight end).

---FB Dive---

This play is good in short-yardage situations, but it's also good as a general-purpose running play. It usually gains about four yards.

---HB Flat---

Your main target on this useful passing play is the halfback (A) in the flat, who often goes uncovered. This can become a touchdown. If the halfback isn't open, look for the split end (B) on the in route or the hooking flanker (R).

---FB Opt. Dive---

Not very different from FB Dive, although this is a run off left guard.

---HB Dive---

You need a fast halfback to succeed with this slightly awkward play. The halfback takes a pitch and then runs up the middle. Call an audible if eight men are in the box.

---Weak Flood---

This play "floods" the weak side of the line with a trio of receiving options. Don't throw to the fullback (R), or you'll usually lose a lot of yards. Passes to the halfback (A) usually get deflected in the line, so your best bets are your wide receivers (B and L).

---HB Off Tackle---

This is the second-best play in the game! You may wish to use it as the audible assigned to the Y button. Just watch your blockers and turn when appropriate. This play can gain anywhere between five and 50 yards - and it's very often toward the higher end of that scale, although every once in a while you'll be tackled in the backfield.

---FB Screen---

Your main option here is (obviously) the fullback. A fast fullback can make a touchdown, but most fullbacks will have to settle for about five yards. But don't ignore your wideouts here. Passes to the B receiver are usually deflected in the line, but the R receiver is a very good option.

---Flood Zone---

Try a soft pass to the L receiver or a harder throw to the R receiver. Don't bother throwing to the fullback (B) unless the defense is in a deep zone. The halfback is primarily a blocker. The slanting tight end (A) can also work.

---WR Screen---

Here you throw to your flanker (R) while your linemen pull to block for the receiver. This can be a touchdown against the blitz or a deep zone, but your

receiver often gets tackled for a big loss in tight man coverage. I sometimes prefer to pass to the split end (B) or tight end (A) on the post patterns. Your backs are blockers.

---Quick Fade---

There are four options here: the receivers (B, L) on short fade routes, the tight end (R) on an in route, and the halfback (A) in the flat. The halfback is probably your best option, as you'll almost always get a completion for at least five yards, and good blocking can lead to a very big play. If you throw to a wide-out, it helps if they're fast. No matter who you throw to, you'll be happiest if you get the ball off fairly quickly.

---HB Trap---

This play looks a little like HB Dive. It usually ends up gaining about five yards, but you'll sometimes be stopped for no gain.

---Deep Curls---

Both backs stay in to block, so you should have plenty of time. Throw deep to one of your receivers (B, R) if one is open. Otherwise, look for the tight end (A) on the shorter pattern.

~~~~~  
Near (Normal, 3WR, 2TE, TE Motion) (12 plays)  
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As with the Far formation, the fullback lines up right behind the quarterback. However, the halfback is on the side closer to the tight end.

---FB Dive---

This play is very similar to the Far version of FB Dive. You may have difficulty if the opponents have eight men in the box.

---FB Flat---

The split end (Y) runs in and the tight end (R) runs an out, but the most dangerous option is the flanker (A) on the streak. The halfback blocks, but the fullback (B) is sometimes available in the flat.

---HB Delay---

Before getting the snap, your halfback freezes to confuse the defense. Run up the hole that develops in the middle of the line and you should get six or seven yards. If there are eight men in the box, call an audible.

---Post Stop---

Your main options here are the receivers (B and R) on short posts. The tight end (A) can also work, while the backs function solely as blockers.

---HB Counter---

Here the halfback takes one step in the opposite direction before taking the pitch to confuse the defense. This is a high-risk, high-reward rushing play. If you find the hole that develops up the middle of the line, you can often gain a dozen yards. Because you take the ball so deep in the backfield, it's also possible to lose yards.

---Deep Post---

Very similar to Post Stop, but the receivers (B and R) run deeper routes, and the tight end (A) runs out instead of in. Also, the backs are protecting against the inside blitz instead of the outside blitz.

---FB Circle---

The fullback (A) runs a circle route that's not very useful. However, your receivers (B and R) can get open if you're patient. Sadly, the tight end is not

an option in Madden 2004. I find that this play is of the all-or-nothing variety; it can gain big yardage against some defenses but fails miserably against others.

---HB Inside---

This play is pretty similar to HB Counter, but a little less effective. It doesn't lose yardage as often, though.

---PA Near---

This passing play isn't for the faint of heart. Your main targets are the receivers (B and R) downfield, but you can look for the tight end (A) if you need something safer. Your halfback (L) takes a while to get open but is a good receiver of last resort. The fullback blocks.

---TE Screen---

Your linemen pull out on this play to block for the tight end (A), the intended recipient of the pass. You can also throw deep to one of your wide outs (B or R). This play is a pretty easy and reliable way to earn 5-10 yards if you have an agile RG and RT and a speedy TE. If your TE isn't fast, expect to lose yardage.

---HB Toss---

What a great play this was in Madden '96! However, the players are a bit slower now, so this is best used as a sweep. This high-risk play usually gains 50 or loses six.

---Roll Out---

This play is pretty useful if you have a mobile quarterback. If no one's open, try scrambling for the first down. Look for the halfback (B) in the flat, the tight end (A), or your flanker (R). The split end (L) is a good target if he's not well-covered.

~~~~~  
Single Back (Normal, 3 WR, TE Motion, 4 WR) (18 plays)  
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The default set of Single Back formation has two wide receivers, two tight ends, and a running back.

---HB Dive---

This was one of the most useless plays in Madden '96, but it's now a good basic rushing play. Run behind your left tackle and left guard to pick up an easy five yards.

---Square In---

This would be a pretty play to watch from the upper deck. Your receivers (B and R) head in, while your tight ends (A) run out patterns. The tight end is probably the most dependable option. In Madden '97 and '98, you could throw to your second tight end - a far better option than the blocking halfback.

---HB Dive (2)---

Just like the other HB Dive play from the Single Back formation: follow your right guard and right tackle to pick up four or five yards. You could try running up the middle or even off tackle if the opponents are using an unconventional defensive alignment.

---Quick Slant---

Your main option is your split end (B) on the quick slant, who's great on 3rd and 2. The flanker (R) also runs a slant, while the second tight end's (A) slant usually encounters too much congestion to be useful. It's best to throw the ball very quickly, especially if you opt to throw to the B receiver.

---TE Quick Out---

Both tight ends (B and A) run outs, which are fairly reliable short patterns. You can also go for the home run with your receivers (B and R) on streaks. I like this play a lot and sometimes use it as my A-button audible.

---WR Screen---

This play is intended to be a screen pass to your flanker (R), but I get better results by throwing to the streaking split end (B) or second tight end (A). If you go with the screen pass, it's usually best to release the ball as soon as possible and to run to the outside of cornerback.

---Drag Right---

If you like the West Coast Offense, you'll like this play. I don't have much luck with any of the receivers except for the flanker (R) on the streak, who usually draws single (or no) coverage. You can also try the split end (Y), but this carries interception risk.

---Circle Pass---

Your L receiver should get open pretty quickly. Throw a touch pass to him for the score! The flanker (R) is another good choice. The halfback (A) can often get a lot of yards after completion, while the tight end (R) is slightly less useful. This play receives an official VinnyVideo Seal of Quality.

---HB Screen---

A screen pass intended for the halfback. Don't get rid of the ball too quickly. Let the blockers block and you might just wind up in the end zone. There are other receiving options here, but I wouldn't pay much attention to them. This play works well as an audible.

---Slot Reverse---

Here your quarterback hands off to the halfback, who then hands off to your slot receiver. It's best to use the 3-receiver set when you select this play, or else you'll be handing off to a lumbering tight end who won't be able to pick up as much yardage. Also, set the receiver in motion by pressing Right just before you snap the ball. You want him to be where the tight end is in the 2-TE set. This way you can get the ball off more quickly than you could if he were in the slot. Don't press any buttons or move the control pad until the receiver has the ball, unless you want to use this play as a conventional halfback draw/fake reverse. No matter what, this play can be very effective.

---Flea Flicker---

The riskiest play in the playbook! This play begins as Slot Reverse does, but at the end the receiver pitches out to the quarterback. If your wide receivers (B and R) aren't open deep, try throwing to the safer tight end (A). It's usually easiest to not press any buttons and allow the computer to control the entire play. Also, this play occasionally doesn't work right and becomes an ordinary running play or reverse. As with Slot Reverse, it makes sense to use the 3-WR set with this play.

---HB Toss---

This is a standard run up the middle, except there's a slot receiver faking a reverse. You can usually gain 5-8 yards with this nice play.

---Slot Screen---

This is a screen pass to the slot receiver. If you use a 3-WR or 4-WR set, you can try using this more as a conventional pass to the slot man. Also try throwing to the streaking wide receivers (B and L) or the tight end (R) down the middle.

---HB Counter---

This counter play is almost like a delay. There are two ways you can run this. You can run up the middle, following your blockers. Get past the line of scrimmage and you should get about 10 yards. Alternatively, you can run off right tackle and go for the home run. The latter is usually more effective, but it also depends on the defensive set your opposition is using.

---Break-Out---

This is what smart prisoners do. The wide receivers (B and R) run a deep out pattern that frequently results in a touchdown. You can also throw to one of your tight ends (A) for a shorter gain. This play works well against most defenses.

---Quick Fade---

Your main option is the tight end (B) on the short fade pattern, while the wide outs (L and R) run in routes. The halfback (A) isn't usually too useful. This play isn't much good on first down, but it can work if the opponents are sitting back in a deep zone.

---Post In---

Your best target on this play is the split end (B), who fakes an out and runs a deep post. Other options are the tight end (A) and flanker (R). The back blocks.

---In + Out---

I'd probably look first for the flanker (R) on the out pattern and the streaking slot receiver/TE #2 (B). You can also try the tight end (A), while the split end (L) runs a less useful route.

~~~~~  
Pro Form (Normal, 3WR, 2TE, TE Motion, H-Back) (15 plays)  
~~~~~

The Pro Form formation, alternatively known as Split Backs or other names, is similar to the Far and Near formations. It's good for both running and passing. It's the formation I use most frequently.

---FB Sweep---

Most outside running plays are geared toward speedy backs, and most fullbacks aren't fast. However, this play is very effective, especially against standard 4-3 sets. Follow your blockers and you can easily gain 25 or more yards.

---Comeback---

A good all-purpose passing play. The halfback (B) in the flat is almost like a sweep. Other options are the tight end (A) on the post, the flanker (R) on the hook, and the split end (L) on the deep in route.

---HB Off Tackle---

I think this is the best running play in the game. This is always my Y audible. This play simply shreds standard 4-3 sets. If there are eight men in the box, you may want to call an audible or run closer to the center of the line. I've gotten many a touchdown with this play.

---HB Toss---

This isn't a good play; it usually ends up losing about five yards. However, you can occasionally make a big play if you can reach the sideline and turn.

---HB Toss Pass---

This play is almost identical to HB Toss, but this is MUCH better. For one thing, you have a good chance of earning decent yardage on the ground and a far lower chance of being stopped in the backfield. Better yet, the receiver

windows will appear and you'll have the option of throwing a pass! If you throw to the B or R receiver, he'll probably be open and will usually score a touchdown. Another nice thing about halfback passes is that they keep human players guessing. You may want to turn Quick Pass Mode off when using this play in two-player mode. Against a human, you might not want to bring up the receiver letters until it looks like you're running. If you're playing the computer, though, you should bring up the passing windows as soon as your halfback gets the ball so the receivers can get downfield.

---HB Counter---

The quarterback spins before delivering the handoff here. This isn't a good play for beginners, but an experienced player can get a decent gain. You'll have to guide your halfback through a barrage of defenders, and it's often hard to tell exactly what gap you should run through. It's easiest and safest to run up the middle, but if you want to increase your chances of a big play, you can try running between right guard, who pulls to the left, and the left tackle (as shown on the play diagram)

---FB Inside Run---

This play isn't very well designed; you usually end up running into the quarterback and losing all your momentum! I don't recommend using this play, although you can get four yards with it if you're lucky.

---Curls---

Your main options are your wide receivers (B and R), who run curl patterns, which are similar to hooks. The halfback (A) in the flat is also effective, while the fullback (L) doesn't get open very much.

---FB Dive---

This play is pretty self-explanatory: a fullback run up the middle. However, you can often gain six or seven yards with it if you have good blocking. It's also effective in short-yardage situations.

---Quick Out---

This play is designed to facilitate very quick passes to the WRs (B and R), who run short out patterns. The tight end (A) is also a viable option. This is a pretty good play that shreds deep zones.

---HB Middle---

Look for the split end (B) on the corner route, the tight end (R) on the out, and the streaking flanker (L). The halfback (A) on the deep curl gets open less frequently.

---FB Screen---

A typical screen pass to the fullback. Make sure not to release the ball too early. Also consider throwing to the B receiver on the deep post or the streaking R receiver.

---Cross Pass---

Both backs protect the quarterback here. The most effective target is the tight end (A). Passes to the split end (B) on the slant are good against a Nickel and weak against standard 4-3 schemes. The R receiver runs a post pattern. This really isn't my favorite play in the Pro Form, but it's not terrible.

---Circle Pass---

Your main target is the streaking split end (B). If he's tightly covered, look for the R receiver on the out and the halfback (A) in the flat.

---All Streaks---

This is a Hail Mary pass, with the fullback staying in to block. You can use

this play to get a big gain in a desperate situation, but feel free to use it any time you like, because there's a good chance someone will get open against a standard 4-3 scheme. Not bad as an audible.

~~~~~  
I Form (Normal, 3WR, 2TE, Broken, H-Back) (15 plays)  
~~~~~

The fullback lines up between the quarterback and halfback here, producing an "I" shape. There's no TE Motion set, though.

---Belly Weak---

In this play, the fullback runs up the "belly" (middle) of the offensive line. Even with eight men in the box, you can get a decent gain - three or four yards. You can gain even more against a normal 4-3.

---FB Hook---

The fullback (B) runs into the line, blocks, and then runs a hook pattern. However, your other options are much more useful, from the split end (Y) and tight end (R) to the halfback (L) in the flat. The flanker (A) runs a medium in route that works pretty well against double coverage.

---Belly Strong---

This is the same as Belly Weak, except that the fullback runs between the right guard and right tackle (instead of the left). You'll get similar results.

---HB Wham---

This is another run up the middle, except this one goes to the halfback. Watch out for the defensive right tackle and right end and you're good for five or six yards.

---Square-In---

Your main target should be the split end (B) on the deep in route. If he's double-covered, try the flanker on the hook (R) or the tight end (A) on the short out. The tight end is very effective against deep zones. Both backs block, so you should have plenty of time.

---HB Draw---

Draw plays are a little unusual for the I-Form, but this play is moderately effective. It should gain 5-7 yards.

---Power Weak---

This play is a run off left tackle and should gain at least four yards. A few good blocks can produce a touchdown. More rebellious players can try running up the middle against certain defenses.

---Out-N-Ups---

Both receivers (B and R) fake quick outs and then streak downfield. If both are tightly covered, your halfback (A) should be wide open.

---HB Strong---

HB Strong looks a little like Power Weak, but this play is a sweep instead of an off-tackle. You'll occasionally suffer a big loss (five or six yards), but this risk is offset by the fairly high probability of making a very big play. You can try turning to either the right or left of the cornerback.

---HB Toss---

This play is pretty similar to HB Strong.

---Quick Slant---

Everyone except the fullback runs a slant pattern here. You can usually get a

satisfactory result by throwing quickly to any of your receivers, but be more patient before throwing to the halfback.

---HB Counter---

Like most counter plays in Madden '98, the back takes the pitch deep in the backfield, so there's a chance of sustaining a big loss. Another problem is that it's tricky to run between the left guard and pulling right guard without bumping into your quarterback. Still, this play generally works pretty well.

---Post Corner---

Your receivers (B and R) fake a post and run a corner pattern, while the backs (L and A) are available in the flat. If you're throwing to the WRs, be sure to release the ball a little after they begin to cut inside for the post.

---FB Streak---

Here's what a West Coast Offense looks like. Everyone runs a pretty short pattern. Your halfback blocks. Your receivers and tight end will usually be able to catch the ball, although passes are sometimes deflected in the line. This isn't a horrible play, but I prefer throwing deeper in Madden 2004. Still, it can be pretty effective against deep zones.

---TE Out-N-Up---

This is another West Coast-style play, but this is more practical. The split end (B) runs a streak, while the tight end (A) and flanker (R) cross. Both backs are blockers, so you may have enough time to throw deep to one of your receivers.

~~~~~  
Shotgun (Normal, 4WR, 2 Back, Gun, 5 WR) (15 plays)  
~~~~~

The shotgun formation is good for passing because of its "shotgun" snap - the quarterback gets the ball several yards behind the line of scrimmage instead of from right under center. It isn't great for running, though. A good pass-blocking line helps. The Madden '98 version of the shotgun formation normally has three receivers, one tight end, and one running back.

---HB Draw---

On a draw play, the linemen take a step backwards before blocking for the run to make the defense think you're passing. You can frequently get 10 yards with this play, even against a 4-3. It usually works better against a Nickel than a Dime, since you're running up the middle. A fast back also helps.

---HB Draw PA---

This play action is supposed to trick the opponents into thinking it's a draw play. Your exterior receivers (B and R) run deep posts. The tight end (A) runs an in route that gathers too much traffic against non-Dime defenses.

---HB Trap---

The key to success on this play is to run between your right tackle and the defensive left end. If you succeed, you can earn five or six yards. If you don't do it right, the end will tackle you for a loss of several yards. Against a few defensive sets, a massive hole will open in the middle and you'll be able to run for a big gain. However, HB Draw is generally more effective and less risky.

---HB Qck Toss---

The key to success on this outside rushing play is to patiently follow the pulling right guard. Don't get ahead of him! Once he's made his block, go for the score. This play usually works pretty well.

---HB Shovel---

This pass is intended as a shovel pass to your halfback - except the halfback isn't one of the four eligible receivers on the GBA! Your tight end (A) and flanker (R) run a crossing pattern. Both the split end (L) and slot receiver (B) run streaks, and there's a decent chance one will be open downfield if you're willing to take the chance on the long bomb.

---HB Off Tackle---

This play is usually run off left guard. Anyway, it's a pretty decent way to earn about five yards from the Shotgun.

---Quick Hitch---

This is what people do at shady Vegas wedding chapels. All three usable receivers (B, A, and R) go deep, while the back (L) stays back to block. Your wide men (B and R) have a good chance of making a very big play. This play is very dangerous against unsuspecting computer opponents who aren't in deep zones.

---Curl Drag---

Your best option is the split end (B) on the slant, who can make a surprisingly big play. The tight end (A) runs a deep curl, while the flanker (R) runs a corner pattern. Not a bad play.

---Quick Slant---

Your slot receiver (B) and tight end (R) are on quick slants, and your main receiver (L) heads downfield on a streak. The halfback (A) sneaks through the middle and can beat a passive defense.

---Post---

The main threats are the split end (B) and slot receiver (L) on posts. If he's open, go for the flanker (R) downfield for the touchdown. Throw to the halfback (A) if you want something safer.

---Post Corner---

The B receiver runs a post fake/corner route, the slot receiver (A) runs a conventional post, the flanker (L) runs a medium in route, and the tight end (R) runs a short out.

---Post Flag---

Both the split end (L) and slot receiver (B) run post routes, but they eventually cross if given enough time. The tight end (R) runs a post down the middle, and the flanker (A) is the home-run option.

---QB Waggle---

The quarterback rolls out to the right on this play. Your best bet is the flanker (R) on the out route. Your other receivers (L, B, and A) run post patterns, and the back blocks. Because the flanker route is consistent and is strong against deep zones (and can get out of bounds easily), this play is good in a two-minute drill.

---Flag---

If you want to gain yards in a short and safe way, throw to the split end (L), who runs a short hook pattern, as soon as you take the snap. The tight end (R) and slot receiver (B) run deep corners, and the halfback (A) streaks through the line. This is a good play to use as an audible. By the way, this is one of a couple of play diagrams that gives the wrong button assignments to receivers.

---Double X's---

All four receivers run fairly short crossing patterns. Someone should get open. The halfback (A) in the flat is your safest option. This play has some trouble

with short zones from the Nickel and Dime, but you can still get a completion if you're patient.

~~~~~  
Goal Line (Normal, Wide) (15 plays)  
~~~~~

This formation is full of plays that are useful only in short-yardage situations, especially near the goal line. The plays can't be flipped, for some reason. There are two backs, two tight ends, and a receiver, ideally the one with the best "hands" rating. On the play-calling screen, the B-button play is always a pass and the Y and A plays are always runs.

---HB Dive---

The halfback runs up the middle, with the fullback lead blocking. What more can you say? Nonetheless, it's a pretty effective play in Goal Line.

---Cross---

Your second tight end (B) runs a curl pattern, and your tight end (A) and receiver (R) cross on slant routes. Both backs guard against the inside blitz. The tight end should be your first option. It's very tough to pass with any of the plays in the Goal Line formation. I usually get the best results by keeping the ball on the ground.

---HB Dive (2)---

The same as the other HB Dive, except this is to the strong side.

---FB Smash---

A pitchout to the fullback, who runs off left tackle. This play is awkward and ineffective, especially if you don't have a quick fullback. The pulling left tackle doesn't help this poor play.

---Flat In---

Both tight ends (B and R) run in routes. However, your best options are the fullback (A) in the flat and the receiver (L) in the corner.

---FB Dive---

The fullback runs up the middle. A very good way to gain two yards.

---HB Power---

The halfback takes the pitch and runs off left tackle. Watch your blockers to avoid getting slammed by a lineman.

---Pwr Slant---

The RG and C pull to the left in a strange way here, often causing a sack. The tight end (A) and wide receiver (R) cross, while the second tight end (B) runs an out pattern. Look for the tight end in the corner.

---HB Power (2)---

The strong-side version of the HB Power play, discussed earlier. It usually fails if there are eight (instead of seven) men on the line of scrimmage (the 80 or 81 defensive set).

---HB Counter---

The counter move might fool the defense, but I prefer to just run straight up the middle with HB Dive.

---Play Action---

Everyone runs slant patterns on this play. The receiver (R) is your main option, but you can also try your tight ends (L and A) or halfback (B).

---HB Sweep---

This is the best running play in the Goal Line formation, with the possible exception of the HB Dives. However, I should warn you that because this is a sweep, there is a chance (about 15%) that you'll be tackled in the backfield for a loss. It's a sure touchdown the other 85% of the time.

---QB Rollout---

A bad play. This is supposed to be a quarterback sweep, but you'll usually get squashed in the backfield for a big loss. You'd need a former Falcons quarterback who will go unnamed here for this play to work.

---Out---

The last of the five passing plays in the Goal Line formation. This is designed to be a rollout to the left. Your best odds are with the B tight end on the out. You can also try the tight end (A) on the end or the slanting receiver (R).

---QB Sneak---

The ultimate in short yardage. It will consistently gain 0.5-2 yards. The chance of losing yardage is practically nil, and the odds of gaining more than two yards aren't much higher. Use this on the 1.

~~~~~  
Special Teams (7 plays)  
~~~~~

This formation contains special teams plays (like Punt) and miscellaneous plays (like Kneel Down). Worthless note: You can't "mirror" these plays.

---Fk. Punt Run---

This play looks like a punt... but it isn't! Your running back takes the snap directly and runs through the line. It's good at getting a couple of yards, but it can't get much more, so it's best on 4th and 1 and similar situations.

---Fk. Punt Pass---

This is the passing version of the fake punt. Your best bets are the receivers (B and R) on the outside, but the end (A) is also an option. Be careful, because the punter isn't the most accurate passer in the world. If you're an advanced player, you might want to press B while the pass is in the air to take control of the receiver.

---Punt---

When it's fourth down and too far to kick, you will usually want to punt. And this is the play to select when you wish to do so. I wonder if anyone noticed that the exact same description appears in my Madden '96 guide.

---Field Goal---

This play lets you kick a field goal. What a surprise! This is also the play to select when you want to kick an extra point after a touchdown. Don't try to kick a field goal unless you're inside the opposition 30 or so, though.

---Fake F.G.---

This play isn't really a field goal! The passing routes are the same as the Fake Punt Pass. There's no Fake F.G. Run play, although you can take off running if you want to. Just remember that the kicker can't throw as well as your regular quarterback.

---Stop Clock---

This play is designed to stop the clock quickly, but at the cost of a down. It can be useful in two-minute drill situations, but in Madden 2004 it's easiest just to get a play off instead, especially if you use a hurry-up offense.

---QB Kneel---

Use this play when you need to run out the clock without risking a fumble. I still don't fully understand why they always line up in the funny V-formation on kneel downs.

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Defensive Playbook [DEFPB]

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I'm not going to be as verbose on the defensive plays. Instead, I'm just going to give a few details about each play; you can tell a lot just from the names and diagrams.

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4-3 (21 plays)

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The 4-3 defense is the defensive set used by most teams in most situations.

---Read Right---

In John Madden Football '93, "read" plays were designed to contain the run, "attack" plays were blitzes, and "cover" referred to zone defenses. It's no different in Madden 2004; Read Right is a balanced defense that's slightly oriented toward stopping the run.

---Man Left---

This balanced man-to-man scheme includes a stunt on the left side of the defensive line.

---Corner Blitz---

The right cornerback blitzes here. The left linebacker also blitzes, while the defensive end covers the short zone. This play is vulnerable to the long ball to the flanker, so you may want to control a safety and play him deep.

---43 Crash---

The cornerbacks and a safety cover a fairly deep zone, while both the LLB and MLB blitz.

---SS Blitz---

Your strong safety blitzes here. This increases the chance of a sack while leaving a possible weakness in coverage that can be exploited for a big gain. A long ball could be trouble.

---Cheat Left---

All of your linemen rush toward the left side of the defensive line. The idea is to block the left tackle and allow the blitzing RLB to come around for a sack. It'll take some time for this to happen, though, especially if you don't have a fast linebacker. I recommend that you control the RLB if you want a sack. The receivers and tight end will be matched up in single coverage.

---Jam Middle---

Both outside linebackers blitz, while the linemen rush toward the middle of the line. This play is good at stopping the inside run but is weaker against sweeps.

---Cheat Right---

The same as Cheat Left, only to the right. Consider taking control of the LLB. Even if you don't get the quarterback, you might be able to tip his pass.

---Outlaw---

Not very different from Outlaw, but this is slightly more effective at stopping

the run.

---Cover 3---

Almost identical to 43 Crash.

---Man Zone 2---

The cornerbacks tightly cover the cornerbacks, and the safeties patrol a deeper zone. This play is slightly more pass-oriented than the previous plays in the 4-3 formation.

---Cover 2---

The RCB's main job here is to jam the split end, while the rest of the secondary is in zone coverage.

---Tuf Bronco---

I've always liked this play's name, despite its sub-par spelling. Your DRT and DRE are on a stunt, and the RLB blitzes. Again, you might want control the RLB.

---Jet Blitz---

Basically a strong-side version of Tuf Bronco.

---Short Zone---

This play is exactly what it says it is - a short zone. You could control a safety to help protect against deeper passes.

---Pinch---

The RLB blitzes, while the safeties will be ready to stop off-tackle runs.

---Outside Loop---

Both outside linebackers blitz inside, but they're too far away from the quarterback to make a sack unless you control one of them.

---SS Fire---

A safety blitz.

---Monster---

The last three plays in the 4-3 formation put eight men in the box to help stop the run. Six men rush, making life uncomfortable for quarterbacks.

---Stallion---

As with Monster, this play is almost like a 4-4. This is a very good way to contain the outside rushing game, although you'll have to look out for streaking receivers.

---Inside Out---

Your linebacker and safety both blitz. It won't be easy to run up the middle.

~~~~~  
3-4 (21 plays)  
~~~~~

The 3-4 has three linemen and four linebackers, whereas the 4-3 uses four linemen and three linebackers. The 3-4 is similar to the 4-3 in many aspects, but there are differences. The primary advantage of a 3-4 is it allows teams to put more pressure on the quarterback in unpredictable ways. The disadvantage is it requires specialized personnel, such as a massive nose tackle. A real team may have some difficulty regularly switching between a 3-4 and a 4-3, but you can do so as often as you want in a video game. The only teams that regularly used the 3-4 in 1996 were the Steelers, Texans, Ravens, and Falcons.

---523 Tough---

The 523 is a special form of 3-4 where a safety is "in the box" to help stop the run. Also, the outside linebackers line up right next to the linemen. The linebackers cover the short zones, while the cornerbacks and other safety patrol the deep zones.

---525 Angle---

The outside linebackers blitz, while the linemen rush at an angle.

---Wildcat Fire---

Another form of the 523 set. A linebacker and safety are blitzing.

---533 In---

Yikes! An eight-man rush. All four linebackers and the safety are blitzing. The only disadvantage is this forces the cornerbacks and other safeties to play rather passively.

---533 Out---

As with 533 In, there are eight men in the box, and all of them are rushing the quarterback. The only difference is that they're blitzing at different angles.

---533 Split---

Very similar to 533 In and 533 Out.

---Zone Blitz---

Both inside linebackers and the ROLB blitz, while the DRE covers the short zone. This is what a zone blitz looks like.

---Jam Middle---

Seven men, including all four linebackers, rush here, so the quarterback won't have much time. However, a quick pass could turn into a touchdown if the opponents deliver a crunching block or two. This play should crush the inside run.

---Man Zone 1---

No one blitzes here. With all the linebackers in coverage, it's going to be tough to find someone open, especially in the short zones.

---Jet Blitz---

The DLE and NT stunt, while the LLB blitzes. Essentially a 3-4 version of Tuf Bronco.

---Weak Storm---

Both right-side linebackers blitz, along with the RCB. Manually control the RCB if you want to reach the quarterback and not just jam the split end. The other defensive backs take the deep zone.

---Strong Bndt---

Both left-side linebackers and the safety blitz. I think the abbreviation is supposed to be Strong Bandit.

---Prevent---

This form of the Prevent isn't nearly as passive as the varieties found in the Dime formation. The defensive backs play a deep zone, while the linebackers stuff the short middle zone. A pass in the flat could be trouble, though.

---Safety Fire---

Both outside linebackers and a safety blitz. I suggest controlling the safety and moving him a little closer to the line.

---Short Double---

Short Double is very strong against the run, but it could have trouble with the long ball up the middle.

---Short Zone---

This play is designed to defend against short passes, especially to the flats.

---Man Left---

Your DLE and NT are on a stunt, but this is just basic man coverage.

---Man Zone 2---

Very similar to Man Zone 1, although the linemen rush at a different angle.

---Man Right---

This is standard man coverage.

---Wide Zone---

This play is designed to clog up the short zones. Good against two-tight end sets.

---Inside Heat---

I like this play. Both inside linebackers blitz, and the split end should be double-covered.

~~~~~  
Nickel (9 plays)  
~~~~~

The Nickel defense is best used in passing situations, as there are five defensive backs instead of four.

---Crash Man---

This is a good man coverage form of the Nickel, with each defensive back covering a receiver and the safety playing center field. One outside linebacker blitzes. This is a good way to defend formations with three or four receivers.

---Crash Man 2---

This is basically a mirror image of Crash Man. It might also remind you of Cheat Right from the 4-3.

---Double Gold---

Both linebackers blitz here. A draw play could earn a pretty big gain, though.

---3 Deep---

The cornerbacks and a safety play deep, with everyone else playing a shorter zone. This is probably the most normal form of the Nickel.

---2 Deep---

I think this play's diagram was accidentally mirrored by the game designers. The RLB and SS both blitz.

---Double Out---

A man-to-man version of the Nickel that works best against multi-receiver formations.

---Exchange---

Weird. In the 50 set, a defensive tackle plays linebacker, and one of your linebackers switches places with your nickel back. This isn't a bad play, especially if you have agile linemen, but it's very strange. Here the defenders seem to rotate counter-clockwise.

---50 Sky---

A zone version of the 50 that's pretty good against the pass.

---50 Man---

Five men are rushing the quarterback on this more aggressive form of the 50. The unconventional alignment can certainly confuse the offense.

~~~~~  
Dime (12 plays)  
~~~~~

The Dime formation is even more pass-oriented, with six defensive backs and just one linebacker. Since it's weak against most running plays, especially the inside run, the Dime should generally be reserved for prevent situations.

---Short Zone---

A pyramid-shaped short zone defense. The DRE and DRT stunt.

---Double Blitz---

The strong safety and linebacker blitz.

---Double SE---

The opposing team's split end will face double coverage. A good way to shut down a particularly dangerous receiver.

---Dbl Flanker---

This double-teams the opponent's flanker. The defensive tackles stunt.

---3 Deep---

Three defensive backs play deep, while the rest control shorter zones.

---Prevent 1---

All six defensive backs head deep here to protect against the bomb. Prevent defenses are best against the Hail Mary pass. Because of its passive nature, don't get carried away with using this play.

---Prevent 2---

Very similar to Prevent 1.

---Black + Tan---

One of your defensive backs blitzes here, and the slot receiver is double-teamed. This is usually a weird thing to do, because the slot receiver is most often not at the top of the depth chart.

---2 Man Free---

As with Black + Tan, your sixth defensive back blitzes, but here the safeties play deeper instead of double-covering the slot receiver.

---General---

The cornerbacks play deep, and the tackles stunt. This is a general-purpose Dime play.

---Double Tight---

This play is supposed to double-cover the tight end. However, that's a fairly strange way to use a Dime defense.

---4 Deep---

A whopping four defensive backs are in deep zones. This should only be used when expecting a long pass. It's pretty much a prevent defense.

~~~~~  
Goal Line (9 plays)  
~~~~~

~~~~~  
The Goal Line formation counters the offensive version of the Goal Line. This should only be used near the goal line or possibly in certain obvious short-yardage situations.

---Read Left---

This is very good at stopping passes to the left flat.

---Zone Man---

This is good against the goal line pass.

---Read Right---

Similar to Read Left, this stops passes thrown to the right side of the backfield and sweep right plays.

---Attack Mid---

An aggressive bull rush.

---Attack Left---

Similar to Attack Mid, but everyone rushes toward the left. It may remind you of the 4-3 Cheat Left.

---Attack Right---

The same as Attack Left, only to the right.

---81 Blaze---

The last three plays in the Goal Line formation have eight men on the line instead of seven. The linebackers rush aggressively.

---80 Zone---

You won't have any success running against this play, although a fade route could score.

---80 Str Crash---

80 Straight Crash is an aggressive blitz, including a safety. A pass up the middle to the tight end will score if it's not deflected, though.

~~~~~  
Special Teams (5 plays)
~~~~~

These plays are designed to defend against punts and field goals.

---Punt Rush---

Use this play to increase your chances of blocking a punt. You'll probably have to call for a fair catch, though.

---Fake Punt---

Use this play if you think the opponents might be planning on attempting a fake punt.

---Punt Return---

This play is designed to maximize your chances of making a big play on the punt return. You probably won't be able to block the punt, though. Because punt blocks are extremely rare, this is probably better than Punt Rush.

---FG Block---

This is the play you'll normally use when the opponents are kicking a field goal.

---FG Cover---

This is a less aggressive version of FG Block. Use this if you're not sure whether the opponents will kick a field goal or go for the first down. It's most useful near the goal line.

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FAQs and General Tips

[NOTES]  
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Q: What plays are the best audibles?

A: Here are the audible selections I most frequently use.

[B] A run (Far HB Off Tackle)

[A] A short pass or screen pass (Single Back HB Screen)

[R] A long pass (Single Back TE Quick Outs)

Defense

[B] A balanced defense (4-3 Read Right or 3-4 Man Left)

[A] A play that covers the pass (Nickel 3 Deep)

[R] A blitz (4-3 43 Crash or 3-4 Wildcat Fire)

Make sure to change your offensive audibles if you're using a hurry-up offense, or your defensive audibles if your opponents are in a hurry-up. Against a human, you should change your audibles periodically to keep opponents on their toes. In case you didn't know, you can change audibles from the "Set Audibles" option on the Game Play Options subscreen of the Pre-Game or pause screen. Most importantly, select plays that work well for you as audibles.

Q: How do I use a hurry-up offense?

A: Hold the A button right before the play selection screen would ordinarily appear. You'll bypass the play selection screen and run the play you last run, unless you call an audible. A no-huddle offense is useful if you need to get points fast, but it can also be useful for confusing your opponents, especially a human player.

Q: How do I kick an onside kick?

A: As in real life, onside kicks are very difficult to execute properly. First press B to call a kickoff audible, and then press A or R to change your team's alignment. Press A to start the power bar, and hold left or right on the control pad to angle the kickoff (preferably toward the side where all your players are). You want to stop the power bar when it's on the way down. It takes a lot of practice to do this right. By the way, make sure to call a kickoff audible yourself if your opponents are attempting an onside kick.

Q: How do I call a timeout?

A: Select "Call Timeout" from the pause screen if you have one or more timeouts remaining. As you probably know, timeouts stop the game clock, so they're useful in a two-minute drill or when you're about to get a delay of game penalty. Calling a timeout also restores all of your players' energy levels to 100.

Q: How should I manage fatigue?

A: If endurance is turned on, players will tire the more they play. The lower the player's fatigue rating, the slower and less effective he will be. The best way to keep players fresh is by spreading the ball around to many different players. Don't throw to the same receiver over and over again, and (more importantly) don't hand off to the same back 40 times in a game. There isn't a "Spell HB" set like in the console games, but you can set up a back rotation system using the Substitutions menu. For example, start fictitious back Andy A. at HB in the Near, I-Form, and Goal Line formations, use Bobby B. in Far and Pro Form, and install Chris C. (a fictional back with a high Hands rating) in Single Back and Shotgun. You might want to rotate players at some of your other

positions, as well - even quarterback. If players are exhausted after a long drive, you can call a timeout to set all energy ratings to 100.

Q: What's the best way to put pressure on the opposing quarterback?

A: Select the middle linebacker. Charge past the center and squash the quarterback! Even better, start running toward the line of scrimmage before the snap to get a running start.

Q: How do I get more interceptions on defense?

A: First take a look at the ratings of your team's safeties and cornerbacks. See which player has the best stats, especially for the Interceptions category - maybe someone like John Lynch for Tampa Bay or Rod Woodson for Oakland. Computer-controlled defensive backs on your team won't get too many interceptions, so take control of the star of your secondary before every play you think the opponent might call a pass. During the play, run towards the ball while it's in the air and press R to jump just before the opponent catches the pass. If timed just right, you might get an interception. Don't cover the receiver too tightly, though, or you could get called for pass interference.

Q: Why is the computer controlling my quarterback?

A: If you don't press any buttons after the snap, the computer takes control. The same goes on defense. You can usually generate better results than the computer, though.

Q: What penalties appear in this game?

A: Basically, you can get a delay of game penalty if you take too long to call your play on offense, and on defense you can get called for encroachment by moving past the line of scrimmage before the snap. These can't be turned off. Other penalties, such as pass interference and facemasking, appear randomly and can be turned off or turned down on the Game Play Options menu. A few other penalties are very rare, like illegal procedure (kicking the ball out of bounds on a kickoff).

Q: Why does the computer usually call an audible when I select a pass from the Shotgun formation but rarely when I run from the Shotgun?

A: The computer seems to have ESP (or an unauthorized video camera) and knows what play you're calling. To deal with this, call an audible yourself, or just look for the receiver who's poorly covered.

Q: What should I choose when I win the toss?

A: It doesn't matter, although it's more fun to receive first. If you're deciding the goal to defend, you might want to have a tailwind on the kickoff. But it doesn't matter at all.

Q: What happened to Bluff Mode?

A: This feature appeared in the Super NES Madden games upon which this game's engine was based. Bluff Mode was designed to keep your opponent from knowing which play you were calling; there's no use in doing so in a two-player Game Boy game!

Q: Are there any hidden teams?

A: None that I know of. Only the 32 2003 NFL franchises are included in this game.

Q: Why can't you trade certain players?

A: Some players are "yellowed out" so you can't select them for trades. I'm not sure why; most of them wouldn't cause a major salary cap hit.

Q: Is the Raiders' quarterback the villain of the Zelda games?

A: No. Their names are pronounced, though not spelled, the same way. I can't

write a guide without mentioning a Zelda character, location, or item.

Q: Did the Red Sox designated hitter help make this game?

A: No. He's not the only David Ortiz in the world, if you watched the credits.

Q: What are the actual names of the players who don't have names in Madden '97?

A: I was able to figure out most of them with about 85% certainty:

|         |     |                             |
|---------|-----|-----------------------------|
| CLE #40 | FB  | Lee Suggs                   |
| CLE #50 | OLB | Chaun Thompson              |
| GB #47  | SS  | Bobby Jackson               |
| HOU #87 | KR  | JaJuan Dawson               |
| IND #51 | ILB | Cato June                   |
| JAX #42 | SS  | David Young                 |
| KC #52  | OLB | Quinton Caver               |
| OAK #29 | KR  | Nnamdi Asomugha             |
| PHI #43 | FB  | Josh Parry                  |
| PIT #81 | WR  | Khori Ivy? (I have no idea) |
| PIT #93 | DT  | James Harrison              |
| SD #50  | OLB | David Binn                  |
| SD #35  | SS  | Terrence Kiel               |
| SD #36  | SS  | Vernon Fox                  |
| STL #47 | FB  | Arlen Harris                |
| STL #16 | KR  | Mike Furrey                 |
| TEN #28 | SS  | Thomas Wright               |
| WAS #52 | OLB | LaVar Arrington             |

Q: What other tips do you have?

\* This is common sense, but if you have a good running back and a weak passing game (such as the New York Jets), run the ball a lot. Likewise, if you pass well but can't run well (like New England), you'll want to keep the ball in the air.

\* Hard throws take just a little longer to get off than touch passes.

\* Don't give up! When you get hit, keep holding Up on the control pad to try to break the tackle and get an extra yard or two.

\* Run straight if you want to keep going fast; zig-zags slow you down.

\* Blitzes don't just increase the chances of a sack; they also make it easier to deflect passes.

\* Remember you can move your defenders a little past the line of scrimmage before the snap, making it easier to sack the opposing quarterback.

\* Don't get into a play-calling rut, especially against a human opponent.

Madden 2004 has a massive playbook loaded with well-designed plays.

\* If you're just starting out, stick with simple plays like FB Dive. Wait until you're more advanced before trying advanced plays like Flea Flicker.

\* Your split end (on the left) is usually the B receiver, while the flanker (on the right) is generally assigned the R button. The A button is usually a tight end or halfback, while fullbacks or slot receivers are most often L. However, you should refer to the play diagrams for the information specific to each play; this isn't the case on all plays, especially if you press SELECT to reverse the diagram.

\* Remember that on the Team Matchup screen, you can press the L or R buttons to compare each team's players, and Left or Right on the Control Pad to browse through the various attributes.

\* Don't forget to check out the Instant Replay feature (found on the pause menu); it's pretty cool for the GBA.

\* If you're playing on an emulator, assign the B, A, and R buttons to the X, C, and V keys, respectively, to ease play-calling.

\* For GameCube/emulator players: A controller with a turbo button makes certain training events much easier.

Q: What other notes do you have for the game?

A: Just a few miscellaneous tidbits:

\* This was the last GBA Madden game based on the Madden '97 engine. Madden NFL 2005 was more like the console games, just with weaker graphics.

\* You might enjoy slamming into opposing players after the whistle blows. You won't even get called for unnecessary roughness.

\* You can't set the weather for teams that play indoors.

\* After a touchdown, see what happens when you press different buttons during the celebration. You'll be able to produce horn and whistle sounds.

\* The name of Bengals defensive tackle John Thornton is incorrectly spelled Thronton in the game.

\* Because of injury, Tony Boselli never actually played a game for the Texans.

\* Many teams' lineups were different in real life; for example, for the Jaguars, Joe Zelenka was a long-snapper instead of a backup tight end, and Vince Manuwai played left guard instead of Daryl Terrell. Also, Mike Peterson and T.J. Slaughter should've switched positions.

\* You might not agree with all the player ratings in this game; for example, Kurt Warner was overrated, and Byron Leftwich was actually a very poor scrambler.

\* Michael Vick continues the "cover jinx" in this game; he missed 2003 with injury (and got his puppy-dueling ring busted four years later).

\* The opening photo of Al Michaels is not flattering.

\* The theme song for this game (which I praised so much in the introduction) comes from the now-defunct band Blink-182.

Q: How many guides have you written?

A: This is my 34th FAQ, in addition to my Link's Awakening maps. The complete list: F1 ROC: Race of Champions, F1 ROC II: Race of Champions, SimCity 3000, Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing, Kyle Petty's No Fear Racing, Madden NFL '96 (SNES), Madden NFL '98 (SNES), Madden NFL '97 (SNES), ESPN SpeedWorld (SNES), The Oregon Trail: Fifth Edition, The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time Master Quest, Off Road Challenge (N64), F-1 World Championship Edition (SNES), Donkey Kong 64 FAQ/Walkthrough, Where in America's Past is Carmen Sandiego, Michael Andretti's Indy Car Challenge, Mario Open Golf (Japan), Donkey Kong Country 2: Diddy's Kong Quest (SNES), MicroLeague Football 2: The Coach's Challenge, Scooby-Doo: Unmasked! (GBA), All-Star Baseball 2004, BS Super Mario USA 2, BS Super Mario USA 1, BS Super Mario USA 3, BS Super Mario USA 4, All-Star Baseball 2003 (GBA), Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego (PC), Formula One 2000 (GBC), All Night Nippon Super Mario Bros. (FDS), Mary-Kate & Ashley: Winner's Circle (GBC), Bill Elliott's NASCAR Fast Tracks, SimCity 2000 (GBA), and Madden NFL 2004 (GBA). If you ask me, that's a rather diverse and quirky (maybe neurotic) group.

Q: How do you write so many guides?

A: Many of the games I've written guides for are fundamentally similar, allowing me to reuse certain pieces of information in multiple guides; this guide is a good example of such. I've probably spent an average of 90 minutes per day since November working on my guides, sacrificing a little bit of sleep (maybe even eating) along the way. I don't drink coffee products or energy drinks like Red Bull, despite my proliferation of Formula One guides. I stick mostly with good ol' H2O, and only a little in the way of soft drinks. If you want to become one of the most prolific FAQ writers in less than a year's time, you'll have to start small, work hard, and write guides for related games.

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Comparing with Reality

[REALL]

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You'll recognize this section if you've read my Formula One walkthroughs. This is a brief summary of the 2003 NFL season. More in-depth information can be found at NFL.com, Wikipedia.org, and assorted other Internet and print sources.

The New England Patriots defeated the surprising Carolina Panthers 32-29 in Super Bowl XXXVIII, played in Houston. This was one of the most exciting Super Bowls ever, but most people remember the game for the halftime show, which included Janet Jackson's infamous "wardrobe malfunction." I never thought I'd mention her in one of my guides.

Chiefs running back Priest Holmes set the individual record for rushing touchdowns in a season (27), while Ravens halfback Jamal Lewis rushed for more yards in a game (295) than anyone in NFL history. Colts quarterback Peyton Manning and Titans signal-caller Steve McNair split the MVP award - rare

Only four teams from the 2002 playoffs reached the postseason in 2003. Both of the previous year's Super Bowl teams, Tampa Bay and Oakland, missed the playoffs with losing records. And just to give Mr. Goodell his kicks for the day, the NFL Network was launched in 2003.

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Version History [VERSN]  
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Because Madden 2004's playbook and engine are identical to those used in Madden '97 and '98, I was able to use the same information from my Madden '97 guide and construct this guide with relatively little difficulty.

- 0.25 Began guide on 7/7/08. (74 KB)
- 0.3 Did some stuff on 7/8/08. (73 KB)
- 0.35 Did a little on 7/10/08. (74 KB)
- 0.4 Made some progress on 7/11/08. (75 KB)
- 0.45 Worked on Suggested Substitutions on 7/12/08. (75 KB)
- 0.55 Did some stuff on 7/13/08. (78 KB)
- 0.6 Completed Suggested Substitutions on 7/16/08. (79 KB)
- 0.7 Added Team Ratings on 7/22/08. (81 KB)
- 0.75 Double-checked some facts on 7/24/08. (82 KB)
- 0.8 Changed receiver letters for Offensive Playbook on 7/25/08. (82 KB)
- 0.9 Reviewed pass plays and proofread most of the guide on 7/27/08. (84 KB)
- 1.0 Reviewed controls and finished things up on 7/28/08. (84 KB)
- 1.1 Made a small adjustment on 3/2/09. (84 KB)
- 1.2 Added a note about interceptions on 1/28/11. (85 KB)

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Contact Information

[CONTC]  
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If you have any questions or comments about this guide, send an e-mail to VHamilton002@gmail.com. Remember that not all e-mails will be read. Please follow these rules:

- Do include "Madden 2004" in the subject line.
- Do send polite suggestions about ways to make this walkthrough better.
- Do tell me about any errors or omissions you find in this guide.
- Do send information about any glitches, tricks, or codes you find.
- Do ask any questions you have about Madden NFL 2004 gameplay. I will respond eventually if you follow all of these guidelines.
- Do make a reasonable effort to use decent spelling, grammar, usage, punctuation, and capitalization so I can understand what you're saying.
- Do use patience. I check my messages rather sporadically.
- Do not send spam, pornography, chain letters, "flaming," or anything that contains profanity or vulgarity. Again, violation of this rule will result in permanent constipation.

And lastly, a public service message: Fight for and affirm the rights of all humans, regardless of race, age, or creed! And... Say no to illicit drugs, whether recreational or performance-enhancing, and their devastating effects. I don't know if anyone reads this, though.

For John C. Calhoun - at least for his good sides

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