

Madden NFL '96 FAQ/Strategy Guide

by VinnyVideo

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This walkthrough was originally written for Madden NFL '96 on the SNES, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the GENESIS version of the game.

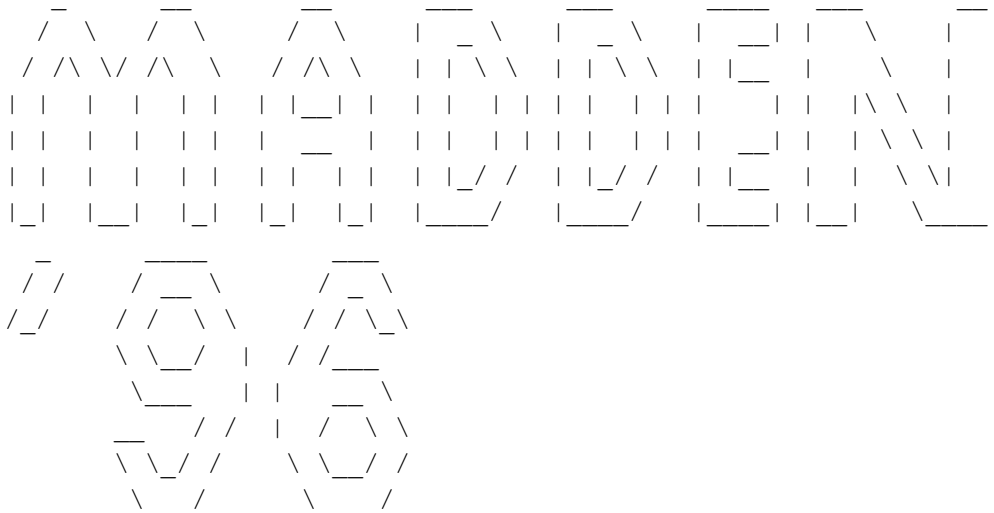


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Introduction

[INTRO]

Vinny's back with his sixth walkthrough. This time, I'm leaving the race cars behind and hitting the gridiron! While Madden '96 doesn't have today's graphics or updated rosters, it has a deep playbook and simply awesome music. Madden '96 has lightning-fast players and more of an arcade feel than other titles in the Madden series. The engine and playbook will remind you of Madden '95, but the playbook is considerably larger. Also, despite the demise of drive summaries and sudden death mode, there are many new features, like Create-A-Player and trades. While a certain play (Far/Near HB Toss) makes it a little too easy to beat the computer, playing a friend is still a challenge. And with the TV writers on strike, it sure beats watching re-runs of some stupid reality show. Please note that this guide is intended mostly to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each team and provide an in-depth analysis of the playbook. I'm not here to discuss the codes and tricks available for the game; those can be found elsewhere on the Madden '96 page. And before we get started, a word of caution: 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 Super NES version of Madden '96.

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Modes of Play

[MODES]  
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Play Now

Here you can play an exhibition game using the teams of your choice. You can select the venue, weather, and quarter length, too. Some secret codes will even allow you to play with all-time great teams in this mode.

NFL 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.

---League Rules---

Here you can decide quarter length, penalties (whether or not you want pass interference called), injuries (off or on), 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.

---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 them with this option.

Front Office

---Sign Up New 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 (mostly Jaguars and Panthers) not included in the game, like WR Jimmy Smith and K Mike Hollis.

---Practice Event---

Here you can practice the training drills used when creating a player. Some of them are pretty fun, too!

---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.

---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.

Records

View all-time records for big plays and training events.

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Controls

[CONTR]

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This is similar to the content found in the manual.

---General---

Move player - Control pad any direction

Pause game - START

---Kickoff---

Start the power bar - B

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

Aim kick left/right - Control pad left/right

Call an audible (onside kick) - A

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

Return to standard kicking formation - Y

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 games) - B or X

Fake snap signal (HUT!) - X

Snap the ball - B

(Defense)

Select player to control - B or X

Show blitz (move players close to the line of scrimmage) - L or R

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

Call an audible - A

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

Cancel audible - X

---After the snap---

(Offense)

Rushing

Burst of speed - B

Spin - A

Dive/QB slide - Y

Hurdle - X

Lateral to closest teammate - L or R

(Defense)

Control player closest to the ball - B

Jump and raise hands - X

Dive - Y

Power Tackle - A

---Passing---

Move the quarterback - Control Pad any direction
Bring up passing letters - B
Pass to receiver Y, B, A, L, or R - Y, B, A, L, or R
Throw the ball away (receiver letters up) - SELECT
Lateral to closest teammate (receiver letters not up) - L

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 - B
Jump and raise hands - X
Dive - Y
Spin - A

---Punting/Kicking---

Fake snap signal (HUT!) - X
Start power bar/snap the ball - B
Aim the kick - Control pad left/right
Kick the ball - B

---Play Calling---

Move play selection highlight - Control pad up/down
Flip play (Only for offense, and not available for the Goal Line, Madden, or
Special Teams formations) - X
Return to formation select screen from play screen - L or R

---Menus---

Move highlight up/down - Control Pad up/down
Cycle through choices - Control Pad left/right
Select highlighted option - START
Select highlighted option if at Pre-Game or Game Pause screen - B
Return to previous screen - X

These aren't exactly controls, but there are a few settings on the Pre-Game Show/pause screen that affect your controls. First select "Gameplay Options." You can change audibles here, but I discuss that in the Q&A section. First, you can adjust the skill level (novice, intermediate, or advanced). Second, 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). Third, you can change the play-calling mode from "direct" to "bluff." This is only useful against a human opponent, though. In bluff mode, you still select plays using the B button, but you can also make fake selections (before or after the real selection) using the Y button. When you're finished, press A.

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Team Stats [TEAMS]  
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I don't agree with all of these ratings. The Chiefs' overall rating should be better than a 50, and while the Browns were overrated, the 85 is a little high. The Panthers were good for an expansion team, but they shouldn't have been a 72. Also, it's hard to tell why the Saints' all-time team was so much worse than all the others. Some of the game's team descriptions on the Team Select screen contradict the ratings; the Panthers' special teams (45) aren't "outstanding." By the way, SPC is the Special Teams rating, if you couldn't figure that out.

	Overall	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	DB	SPC
Arizona Cardinals	69	48	66	55	41	69	99	68	74

Atlanta Falcons	84	64	60	67	63	78	98	64	81
Buffalo Bills	65	76	78	52	20	75	56	76	81
Carolina Panthers	72	80	46	77	30	69	94	88	45
Chicago Bears	72	64	80	75	34	41	63	99	59
Cincinnati Bengals	48	40	91	82	45	47	54	58	23
Cleveland Browns	85	32	53	64	81	41	90	97	92
Dallas Cowboys	90	96	96	72	70	75	61	99	20
Denver Broncos	55	64	27	64	59	78	37	84	52
Detroit Lions	55	20	51	46	78	44	75	72	78
Green Bay Packers	51	80	44	47	27	99	27	91	41
Houston Oilers	45	32	20	23	74	50	86	84	67
Indianapolis Colts	70	68	92	27	45	96	77	69	63
Jacksonville Jaguars	37	40	59	50	34	53	48	65	63
Kansas City Chiefs	50	40	32	48	30	72	80	65	89
Miami Dolphins	72	88	66	99	49	47	71	51	78
Minnesota Vikings	35	88	23	67	99	50	20	20	85
New England Patriots	37	92	50	76	30	35	37	50	74
New Orleans Saints	20	72	30	52	45	20	63	48	56
New York Giants	48	48	75	46	38	53	52	58	89
New York Jets	32	48	73	48	41	47	39	45	70
Oakland Raiders	29	36	51	38	38	59	23	48	99
Philadelphia Eagles	83	72	80	48	74	84	86	79	49
Pittsburgh Steelers	59	56	91	20	34	47	79	90	78
St. Louis Rams	54	48	99	59	38	50	33	65	78
San Diego Chargers	65	80	82	42	41	56	75	73	78
San Francisco 49ers	99	99	60	81	85	72	73	87	70
Seattle Seahawks	52	40	89	64	30	72	69	46	56
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	77	28	67	92	63	63	98	50	74
Washington Redskins	46	40	57	47	56	50	50	80	56
All Madden	99	99	99	98	96	99	99	99	99

	Overall	QB	RB	WR	OL	DL	LB	DB	SPC
1975 Phoenix Cardinals	90	76	99	56	99	66	40	81	56
1980 Atlanta Falcons	92	76	99	71	99	99	77	93	30
1973 Buffalo Bills	92	28	99	68	67	56	42	99	63
1985 Chicago Bears	99	68	99	76	89	66	99	99	74
1981 Cincinnati Bengals	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	81
1965 Cleveland Browns	99	44	99	64	78	47	80	99	81
1978 Dallas Cowboys	99	99	99	81	99	99	77	99	67
1977 Denver Broncos	99	68	99	92	99	99	99	93	52
1962 Detroit Lions	99	48	99	82	99	99	99	99	30
1967 Green Bay Packers	99	99	99	99	99	96	99	99	70
1980 Houston Oilers	98	48	91	82	99	50	29	99	59
1968 Indianapolis Colts	99	44	99	79	52	99	99	99	49
1969 Kansas City Chiefs	99	76	99	75	99	99	99	99	81
1972 Miami Dolphins	99	88	99	92	99	99	99	93	78
1976 Minnesota Vikings	99	80	99	94	99	99	52	99	81
1985 New England Patriots	99	52	99	96	99	87	99	99	99
1979 New Orleans Saints	27	80	99	80	92	99	66	60	30
1986 New York Giants	99	72	87	90	99	99	99	89	89
1968 New York Jets	99	99	99	99	99	84	99	99	81
1976 Oakland Raiders	99	88	99	99	99	93	99	99	70
1960 Philadelphia Eagles	95	80	99	65	67	53	77	86	23
1978 Pittsburgh Steelers	99	84	99	84	99	99	99	99	89
1968 Los Angeles Rams	99	48	87	72	70	99	90	97	56
1981 San Diego Chargers	91	99	99	96	99	66	40	55	52
1984 San Francisco 49ers	99	99	99	96	99	41	92	89	67
1978 Seattle Seahawks	98	88	99	88	67	63	63	97	38
1979 Tampa Bay Buccaneers	88	52	99	55	59	96	80	71	45
1982 Washington Redskins	99	68	99	71	99	72	73	86	85

EA Sports	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
Tiburón Gotcha	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99	99
NFLPA Free Agents	99	99	99	21	99	99	99	99	75

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Suggested Substitutions [SUBST]  
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Note that I assume a 4-3 defense for every team other than Pittsburgh and Carolina. 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 1995 NFL season. I don't know the first names of a small number of these players.

Arizona Cardinals: The best WR depth chart is Rob Moore, Frank Sanders, Bryan Reeves, Chuck Levy, Anthony Edwards, and Kevin Knox.

Atlanta Falcons: I don't recommend make any changes to this lineup.

Buffalo Bills: The WR depth chart is Andre Reed, Bill Brooks, Justin Armour, Steve Tasker, Damon Thomas, and Russell Copeland. Replace Phil Hansen with Jim Jeffcoat at DLE.

Carolina Panthers: The WR depth chart is Mark Carrier, Don Beebe, Dwight Stone, Willie Green, David Mims, and Eric Guliford. Use Shawn King (#96) as your LE in Nickel and Dime. Tim McKyer should start at RCB. The real Panthers were quite a bit different from the Madden '96 version.

Chicago Bears: Rashaan Salaam should start at HB. Todd Burger should start at LG.

Cincinnati Bengals: Use Harold Green at HB in Shotgun and Run & Shoot. Carl Pickens is your #1 receiver.

Cleveland Browns: Replace Tommy Vardell with Earnest Byner at FB. Move Keenan McCardell up to #4 on the WR depth chart. Use T. Pupua (Pio Sagapolutele?) instead of Dan Footman at DRT in Nickel and Dime.

Dallas Cowboys: Michael Irvin should be the #1 receiver. Larry Allen should start at RT. Billy Davis should be TE #2.

Denver Broncos: Glyn Milburn is your best running back, but use Rod Bernstine in Goal Line and Aaron Craver in Shotgun. David Wyman should start at MLB.

Detroit Lions: The best WR depth chart is Johnnie Morton, Herman Moore, Brett Perriman, Anthony Carter, Aubrey Matthews, and Kez McCorvey. Start Sean Vanhorse at LCB.

Green Bay Packers: The receiver depth chart is Antonio Freeman, Robert Brooks, Mark Ingram, Anthony Morgan, Charles Jordan, and Terry MICKENS.

Houston Oilers: Use Todd McNair as your Shotgun HB. Your #1 receiver is Haywood Jeffires, followed by Chris Sanders, Travis Hannah, and Derek Russell.

Indianapolis Colts: Your WR depth chart should be Brian Stablein, Flipper Anderson, Sean Dawkins, Aaron Bailey, Floyd Turner, and T. Smith. Leonard Humphries should start at free safety.

Jacksonville Jaguars: Replace Steve Beuerlein with Mark Brunell at QB. Johnnie Morton should be the #1 receiver, followed by Desmond Howard, Ernest Givins, Shannon Baker, Charles Davenport, and Willie Jackson. The real-life version of

the team was radically different from the one found in Madden '96, so you may want to create players for this team.

Kansas City Chiefs: The WR depth chart should be Lake Dawson, Chris Penn, Victor Bailey, Danan Hughes, Willie Davis, and Wesley Carroll. Swap Joe Phillips for Mike Pelton at DT for the Nickel and Dime. Replace George Jamison with Jaime Fields at LB in the Nickel.

Miami Dolphins: Start Terry Kirby as HB. Use Andrew Greene at RG, although you may want to still use Chris Gray on Shotgun and Run & Shoot. Use Steve Emtman (!) as your DLT. You heard that right.

Minnesota Vikings: The WR depth chart should be Cris Carter, Jake Reed, Chris Walsh, Cunningham, Qadry Ismail, and David Palmer. Orlando Thomas should start at free safety.

New England Patriots: The WR depth chart is Vincent Brisby, Kevin Lee, Ed Ellis, Ray Crittenden, M. Henry, and Troy Brown. Use Aaron Jones instead of Mike Pitts at DLE in Nickel and Dime.

New Orleans Saints: Use a WR depth chart of Torrance Small, Quinn Early, Michael Haynes, T. Johnson, Steve Rhem, and Derrell Mitchell. Wesley Walls is your top tight end.

New York Giants: The recommended WR depth chart is Chris Calloway, Mike Sherrard, Thomas Lewis, Arthur Marshall, Keith Crawford, and Omar Douglas. M. Davis should be the ROLB. Roderick Mullen may be better at RCB.

New York Jets: Consider playing Bubby Brister at QB instead of Boomer Esiason, especially if you like a more mobile quarterback. You may prefer Adrian Murrell over Ronald Moore as your HB on non-passing downs. The WR depth chart is Tyrone Davis, Stevie Anderson, Ryan Yarborough, Orlando Parker, Curtis Ceaser, and A. Allen. Kyle Brady should be your #2 TE. James Brown should be the LT.

Oakland Raiders: You might want to start Derrick Fenner at FB. Tim Brown is the #1 receiver, and then Raghil Ismail, Montgomery, James Jett, Daryl Hobbs, and P. Bobo. Kevin Smith should be the #2 TE. Play Jeff Kysar at RT. Nolan Harrison can replace Anthony Smith at DLE in the Goal Line formation. Start James Folston at LOLB.

Philadelphia Eagles: The recommended WR depth chart is Kelvin Martin, Fred Barnett, C.T. Jones, Calvin Williams, B. Ford, and J. Kearney. Start Joe Rudolph at LG.

Pittsburgh Steelers: Charles Johnson is your #1 receiver, followed by Andre Hastings, Ernie Mills, and Yancey Thigpen. Mark Bruener should be the tight end for the Shotgun formation and the #2 tight end overall.

St. Louis Rams: The best WR depth chart is Jermaine Ross, Jessie Hester, Chris Brantley, Todd Kinchen, Isaac Bruce, and Alexander Wright.

San Diego Chargers: You might want to use Ronnie Harmon at RB in the Shotgun formation.

San Francisco 49ers: D. Moore should be your Shotgun/Run & Shoot back. The WR depth chart is Jerry Rice, John Taylor, J.J. Stokes, Chris Thomas, Nate Singleton, and Patrick Rowe. Bart Oates is the best center, and Rod Milstead should be the RG except in Shotgun and Run & Shoot. Kevin Mitchell should be the MLB. C. Hicks is arguably the better LCB.

Seattle Seahawks: The WR depth chart is Brian Blades, Ricky Proehl, Joey Galloway (#84), James McKnight, Terrence Warren, and Michael Bates.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers: Vince Workman is a good Goal Line HB. The WR depth chart consists of Lawrence Dawsey, Alvin Harper, Charles Wilson, Horace Copeland, Courtney Hawkins, and Lamar Thomas. Dave Moore may be preferable as TE #2, especially in Single Back. Sean Love is a better RG in Shotgun and Run & Shoot.

Washington Redskins: The receiver depth chart should be Michael Westbrook (#82), Henry Ellard, Tydus Winans, Leslie Shepherd, Olanda Truitt, and Pat Newman. Frank Wycheck is the recommended starter at tight end. Cory Raymer starts at center. Darrick Brownlow starts at middle linebacker. Alan Grant may be preferable at LCB.

All Madden: Use Emmitt Smith as your HB in Goal Line. Sterling Sharpe should probably be your #1 receiver. Steve Wallace is your best RT. Use #63 as your LG on Shotgun and Run & Shoot. Andy Harmon should be the DLT. Aeneas Williams is the best RCB. Merton Hanks is preferred at FS.

There are two substitutions you should also make. On some teams, you might want to change the Nickel formation's fifth defensive back. Also, make sure that your wide receiver in the Goal Line formation is the receiver who has the best "Hands" rating; speed isn't much of a factor on the goal line.

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Offensive Playbook

[OFFFPB]

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I'm going to be assuming you're playing against the computer when I write this guide, since a human probably wouldn't fall for Far/Near HB Toss on every down. I always assume that the play is NOT flipped, but the mirror feature (press X on the play selection screen) is good to use from time to time, particularly on certain plays or against a human opponent. When I use terms like "Y receiver" and "A receiver," I'm referring to the buttons that correspond to the receivers on the non-flipped version of the play. "Y receiver" can have a different meaning in real-life playbooks. Also, 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. Caution: Results may vary based on offense, defense, down, hashmarks, and other factors. I've tried to test each play against a variety of defenses and with the plays both regular and flipped (press X), but there's still a chance I may have misjudged a few plays. Also, no play will work 100% of the time. The five-receiver formation was new to the NFL in 1995, so don't go looking for any five-receiver sets or 7-DB "quarter" defenses here. Also, the "zone blitz" was just coming into fashion in 1995, so there isn't much of that in this game. In case you didn't know, a zone blitz is where a linebacker blitzes, while a defensive lineman covers the short zone the linebacker normally would have covered. For those of you who are counting, there are 92 plays on offense (not counting the Madden formation) and 81 plays in the defensive playbook.

Far/Near (9 plays)

=====
This formation is best for running, although it contains several passing plays. Note that the letter in the upper-right corner of each play indicates whether the play is in the "Far" or "Near" formation (there's little difference, though; it just means whether or not your HB is on the same side of the formation as the TE).

---HB Counter---

This is a counter play; the running back steps in one direction to fake out the

defense, and then he runs the opposite direction. Like most "north and south" run plays in this game, it's tough to get this to gain more than two or three yards. It works best against a Nickel and is more effective if you press X to mirror the play.

---HB Toss---

This is the best play in the game! I recommend that you use it A LOT against a computer opponent - sometimes even on third and long. It's lethal against standard 4-3 schemes. However, it won't work against a Nickel defense or some five-man lines, so call an audible if your opponent is using it to prevent a big loss. If you flip the play, it's weak against a standard 4-3 scheme. You could even use this play instead of kicking an extra point after a touchdown.

---Strg. Flood---

Strong Flood is the only pass play in the Far/Near formation that isn't a screen, play action, or rollout. Most of the receivers are on the strong side, but your best bet is to quickly pass the ball to the Y receiver on the slant for 10-20 yards. If you flip the play, a quick pass to your running back (B) or flanker (Y) could become a touchdown. No matter what, you're most likely to complete your pass if you get rid of the ball very quickly.

---HB Inside---

This play demonstrates the difficulty of running inside, even if you have a good offensive line. You can't often gain more than a yard or two on this play. Fortunately, you're also very unlikely to lose yardage here. However, if you mirror the play using the X button, you have a good chance of gaining decent yardage.

---FB Dive---

Running fullbacks were a little more popular in 1995 than they are nowadays. Anyway, this play is considered a dive (running between the guard and center), but you're most likely to succeed if you run off left tackle. Flipping the play makes an inside run more effective. No matter what, this play can frequently gain three yards.

---PA Near---

This passing play isn't as effective as Strong Flood. Make sure to take control of your quarterback quickly, or your pass will usually be deflected in the line. The tight end (B) should be your main option. There's not too much difference between the regular and flipped version of this play.

---Off Tackle---

This running play takes a while to develop, but a speedy back can get a big gain. Aim for the hole between the right tackle and tight end. The flipped version of this works poorly against a normal 4-3.

---FB Screen---

Ironically, it's tough to get a good gain here if you pass to the fullback. The intention is for the lineman to let the defenders run by, and then they can block for the fullback. Instead, the pass usually gets deflected by a defender because you can't throw a high pass. If you choose this play, look for your receivers (Y or A) or tight end (R) instead, or flip the play to make it easier for your fullback to actually catch the ball.

---Rollout---

It's best to stay inside the pocket on this poorly-named play. Against most defenses, try a fairly quick pass to either of your receivers. Against some non-4-3 defenses (or if you flip the play), a pass to the tight end on the wheel route can be very effective.

Single Back (9)

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I don't like this form of the Single Back formation and rarely use it. The problem is that your only running back lines up very close to the quarterback, so the back can't get much momentum on running plays, and there's no fullback to tie up defenders. And while this formation is OK for passing, I usually prefer a shotgun snap on obvious passing situations.

---Dive---

See what I mean about the lack of momentum? This is a low-risk, low-reward play that can sometimes gain three yards. There's not much to say about this meat-and-potatoes play.

---Counter---

Pretty similar to Dive, but this is a counter. Flip this play for best results against a normal 4-3. This can easily gain four yards (at least when flipped), but there's also a chance of a loss.

---WR Screen---

An interesting play. Flipping the play doesn't usually yield very good results. Your receiver stands still and receives the pass. Meanwhile, the left tackle and left guard pull to block for the receiver. This play can lose a couple of yards, but if you let the blockers block for you, you can make a big gain. While the Y receiver is the intended target, throwing to the tight end or halfback can also work.

---Toss Left---

Pretty risky for a run play, but it can be very effective. If you hit the hole between the tight end and left tackle, you can gain some yards. If you're really daring, flip the play and run backwards and right, and then between the opposition OLB and CB. This can gain (or lose) a lot of yards. Anyway, this is one of the better running plays in the Single Back formation.

---Off Tackle---

This play is pretty similar to Toss Left. The normal version of the play isn't very good. Mirror the play and you should get excellent results against a standard 4-3 alignment.

---HB Screen---

I love this play! Throw the ball to your halfback (the B receiver) at the right moment and you've got an easy touchdown. The Y and A options are dangerous, too. This is one of the best passing plays in the game.

---HB Trap---

Another inside run, but this is better than Dive. You might like this play if you have a very strong, powerful running back like Jerome Bettis.

---Opt. Reverse---

The reversing wide receiver here is just a ploy to distract the defense. Whether you flip this play or not, your halfback can get a pretty good gain. But watch out for the outside linebackers that can stop you for a loss.

---PA---

A pretty ordinary play-action pass play. Your Y receiver on the post is your best target, but the tight end also works well. The flanker's pattern is usually too short to be very effective.

Pro Form (12)

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The Pro Form formation, also known as Split Backs or other names, is very

similar to Far/Near. It's good for both running and passing. It's the formation I use most frequently.

---Toss Left---

The key on this play is to avoid the outside linebacker. After that, you'll hit paydirt and gain at least 15 yards! This is a very nice play. The mirrored form of the play is a little less useful because it's harder to avoid the OLB and CB.

---FB Counter---

If your fullback runs well, this is a pretty good play. Wait for the blocking to set up, and then try to find the right hole. A skilled player can often gain 10 yards. Players tend to run into each other in the mirrored version of this play, and a stacked line or inside blitz can cause problems.

---Deep Posts---

A pretty ordinary passing play. I sometimes have trouble with it. Your tight end probably has the best chance of being open. Some players use this as an audible.

---HB Trap Left---

HB Trap Left can be effective, but it's also inconsistent. Be patient with the blockers and you can get some pretty good yardage. The flipped version is pretty weak against a normal 4-3 scheme.

---Quick Outs---

Most of the receivers head toward the sideline on this play. Try a quick pass to the Y receiver, but don't forget the other receivers, including the backs in the flats. You won't notice much difference if you flip the play.

---Cross Pass---

Quick slant patterns are lethal against the computer, so try a quick pass to the Y receiver. The tight end and flanker are also good options.

---Sweep Right---

The success of this play depends a lot on the blocking abilities of your right tackle, tight end, and flanker. Dash near the sideline, and if your men make their blocks, you'll be gone! If they don't block well, you can easily lose five yards. You can also use this play as an off-tackle, especially if you flip it, if you want to reduce risk (and also minimize reward).

---Dbl. Flares---

Double Flares is a well-designed pass play. Your main receivers (Y and B) are your halfback and fullback in the flats. Dump the ball off to one of them and you should get some yards after the completion. Don't overlook the other receivers, though; your WRs and TE are also viable options.

---Flag Left---

Your main target here is the split end (Y), who runs a flag pattern that very often throws off the secondary, leading to a very big play. Throwing to your tight end and flanker reduces the risk of both interceptions and touchdowns. This is a very nice play. However, it's usually less effective when flipped, especially the tight end route.

---FB Dive---

This is a rare play that really gives your fullback a chance to shine. Your halfback is the lead blocker, so this play works best if you have a halfback who blocks well. Look for the hole that develops, sometimes off left tackle. Don't bet the farm on gaining more than a couple of yards on the flipped version of FB Dive against the average 4-3 scheme.

---Hooks---

A good short passing play that should earn approximately 10 yards. Your main target is the Y receiver on the hook pattern. Try to get some oomph on the ball. The A receiver runs a very short pattern on the flipped version, which is tougher to use.

---TE Corner---

Nothing smites the defense like a quick slant to the Y receiver. The tight end also runs a great route, although the A receiver's route is too short to be too useful. The flipped form of TE Corner is even better.

I Form (18)

=====
The I-Form, as the most popular formation of the time, has the largest play selection of any offensive formation in Madden '96. Oddly, there are very few running plays.

---36 Slam At.---

The annoying thing about this play is that the halfback will run into your quarterback if you're not careful. Run left or right around him and try to find the best hole. The flipped version works pretty similarly.

---Flats---

Your main options here are your backs in the flat. Your Y receiver (the halfback) runs too close to the line of scrimmage to be effective; you'll usually get tackled for a loss, although you can sometimes make a big play with good blocking. The fullback runs a much more practical pattern, although passes sometimes get deflected in the line. You can also try throwing to your WRs and TE. You might prefer the flipped version against a normal 4-3 defense.

---Weak Flood---

Most of your targets are on the weak side of the line on this play. The fullback stays back to block, so don't try to throw to him. The flanker's route isn't too useful, but the Y receiver can be very dangerous on a quick slant. Don't overlook the tight end, too, who will be running in some real traffic.

---HB Draw---

The linemen take a step backward here, which may fool the defense into thinking this is actually a pass. You might prefer the flipped version so you won't be running right at the outside linebacker. This isn't the best running play out there, but it's not awful.

---HB Screen---

This is a normal screen pass that's great against blitzes. I wouldn't recommend trying to throw to anyone other than the halfback.

---TE Slant---

Both backs are blocking, so you have plenty of protection from the outside blitz. The main option, hence its name, is a short pass to the tight end, but you might want to consider going deep with the split end.

---Toss Right---

In Madden '96, the best plays are usually outside runs, and this is almost as good as Far/Near HB Toss. Keep a good distance behind your blockers, run to the right sideline, and then you've got only the safety to beat! The flipped version of this play is more like an off tackle than a sweep, thus diminishing both risk and reward. I like this play.

---HB Option---

Here's a play that isn't for the faint of heart. You pitch out to the halfback in a play that's very similar to Toss Right. If you want to, you can run for what should be a pretty big gain. However, you can also press B to bring up the passer windows and throw! Aim for the tight end. I usually prefer just to run, though. Against a human, make sure to bring up the passer windows just to cause confusion. It's harder to run on the flipped version of HB Option.

---WR Outs---

Both backs stay in to block, so you have a lot of time. Use your "pocket presence" and be patient. When a receiver gets open, let the long bomb go and you might just have a touchdown. This play is exciting, fun, and quite effective.

---Draw Left---

Another draw play, although this one goes to the left. Although it's a draw play, it functions more like a short-yardage dive. You can't usually get more than a gain of two.

---TE Curls---

I usually throw to the tight end on the curl pattern in this play, although you can also throw to the deep Y receiver. This really isn't my favorite passing play, though.

---PA Screen---

Here the quarterback fakes a handoff to the fullback and then throws to the halfback. Your receivers and tight end aren't very useful as pass catchers here, as most passes to players other than the halfback get broken up in the line. I prefer the flipped version or HB Screen.

---Pitch Left---

A good off-tackle run that usually gains about five yards. The flipped version is less effective.

---Pitch Right---

Very similar to Pitch Left, but this is more like a sweep. Follow your fullback and find the right hole. A stacked line causes problems for this play. The flipped version is less effective against a normal 4-3.

---Slant N Go---

Quick slants to the split end are usually excellent, but this one is too deep to work as consistently as most, although it can be a very big play. The other routes aren't remarkable, either. I don't use this play much.

---Toss Left---

This looks a lot like Toss Right to the weak side. Let the fullback take care of the OLB and you should get a decent gain on this off-tackle. The flipped version is very similar.

---FB Dive---

This play is exactly what it says it is - a fullback dive. 1-5 yards is a frequent outcome, but at least you won't lose any yardage.

---PA Streaks---

Here's a good passing play. After the play fake you'll have a choice of three streaking receivers to choose from - and one should be open. If nobody's open and you're about to get sacked, press SELECT to throw the ball away.

Shotgun (9)

=====
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. The Madden '96 version of the shotgun formation has three receivers, one tight end, and one running back. This is one receiver more than Single Back and one less than Run & Shoot. A good pass-blocking line helps.

---HB Shov. Pass---

This play is designed to be a shovel pass to your running back (B). Expect to gain 5-10 yards against a Nickel defense with little risk. Against a 4-3, the shovel pass can occasionally be deflected by a lineman. If you feel lucky or your opponent is still in a 4-3 (or you see an open receiver), you can also throw deep to someone else, probably your Y or A man. Overall, this is a good play.

---All In---

The pass patterns are pretty self-explanatory here. The A receiver tends to get open very frequently, especially if your opponent isn't prepared for the shotgun.

---Deep Outs---

Your main targets here are your exterior receivers (Y and A), who can make some pretty big plays. This play is best if you need a lot of yards.

---Draw---

This can earn a surprising amount of yardage if the defense is expecting a pass. If your opponents use a Nickel or Dime, you might want to just run through the hole left by the right guard. Against a 4-3, follow the right guard as he pulls to the left, and you'll probably pick up a lot of yards.

---HB Toss Right---

Outside running isn't easy in the Shotgun formation, but good blocking will reward you with a big gain. This is a high-risk play that can easily gain 25 yards or lose five. Call an audible in the unlikely event your opponent has eight men in the box.

---QB Waggle---

You've got to love plays with cute names. Normally you roll out to the right and throw to the B or A receiver - one of whom should be open deep - but you might want to take off running if you have an agile quarterback. It's a bit harder to get a completion with the other receivers.

---HB Lead---

This formation is a little different - one of your receivers lines up in the backfield. This is probably the weakest running play in the Shotgun formation, although it's a good choice if you like seeing people fall down.

---Dbl. Flares---

Double Flares is a good choice if you're in a situation where you want to pass and want a lot of short options. Again your third receiver is in the backfield. Look for the split end on the hook and the running back in the flat, but don't forget about your other receivers.

---Deep Posts---

This also has a receiver lined up next to your halfback, this time to block. This is a good play for getting 10-20 yards, although a blown coverage can lead to a big play. Passes to the split end get broken up a lot.

Run-Shoot (15)

=====
The Run-Shoot formation is named after the Run 'n' Shoot offensive system, as

this was the formation that scheme usually employed. It's similar to Single Back, except that it has four wide receivers and one running back instead of two receivers, two tight ends, and a back. As with the Shotgun formation, opponents will often audible into a Nickel or Dime when you line up in this formation, frequently double-covering your split end. For that reason, don't forget to use the slot receivers, who often remain uncovered or covered by a linebacker or safety (especially against a standard 4-3). You want good wide receivers and an offensive line that pass blocks well when you use the Run & Shoot formation. Flipping these plays won't change much.

---HB Dive---

HB Dive. Hmm. I wonder what that could mean? While the Run & Shoot formation should spread out the defense, the computer rarely audibles into a Nickel or Dime on run plays, so this play is usually stopped after a yard or two. I don't recommend this play. It does work well against a Nickel or Dime, though.

---Curls---

I use this play way too much, but it's quite nice. It's a good way to get 10-20 yards. Your four receivers run curl patterns, while the back stays to block. I usually prefer to throw to the third receiver in the slot with B. Like most plays in the Run & Shoot and Shotgun formations, there's not much use in flipping the play.

---Toss Right---

A good running play. It's riskier than some, though. Normally you'll run off-tackle, although it can be used as a sweep with good blocking, especially against a normal Dime defense.

---Double X's---

Both pairs of receivers run crossing patterns. The receivers run too close together for this play to be really effective; one defensive back can essentially cover two receivers. However, if you're patient, one of your receivers will get open deep for the long ball, leading to an easy touchdown.

---Flood Right---

This isn't much of a flood - just three men right. The tight end and flanker are usually open, but if you're feeling bold try a bomb to your split end (L). Your best bet is the halfback in the flat, who can get some yards after the completion.

---PA Pass---

A play action pass seems a little weird in this formation, but this play is reasonably good nonetheless. The Y receiver is a good way to earn 15 yards or so, while the flanker and tight end offer slightly better completion percentages.

---Roll Out---

This is a medium-range passing play. If he's open, throw to the A receiver on the right. Otherwise, try for the Y receiver or the safer tight end. I wouldn't try to actually roll out though, as the quarterback normally just stays in the pocket on this play.

---Counter Left---

This running play can usually gain at least three yards. It's much more effective than HB Dive, and it's much less likely to lose yardage than Toss Right. Counter Left is a good general running play for Run & Shoot fans.

---Quick Outs---

This play gives you a choice of distances. The Y receiver can get you about 20 yards, the tight end 15, and the A receiver about 10.

---Hook N Go---

Three of your receivers run a "hook and go" route - they fake a hook and then run downfield. This is best as a long pass, and it can be pretty effective. Your only medium target is the third receiver (B) on a post, which gets a good reward and not much risk.

---HB Flats---

The halfback in the flat is a safe option, although you need a very elusive runner to gain much more than five yards or so. The Y and A receivers on the post patterns tend to yield more satisfying gains.

---Quick Posts---

This is another Run & Shoot play where many of your receivers run similar routes - in this case, a quick post. You want to get rid of the ball fairly quickly - right before the receiver "turns." The fourth receiver runs an in pattern that isn't too useful.

---Hail Mary---

All your receivers head deep. Use this only in desperate situations where a touchdown is needed.

---Circle---

Your main target is here is the halfback, who runs around the line. This play is pretty good and is almost like a screen pass without pulling guards. You might also want to look for your A and Y receivers, as well as the R receiver in the slot.

---Deep Flood---

Don't try throwing to the halfback, since he's rarely open and passes to him may get intercepted or deflected in the line. Instead look for your A receiver on the corner pattern or the riskier L receiver on the deep out.

Goal Line (9)

=====
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.

---FB Dive---

A good play to use if you only need a yard or two. It's not particularly glamorous, though.

---PA Pass---

One of the four passing plays in the Goal Line formation. First look for the fullback (R) in the flat. If he's not open, look for your receiver (B) or one of your ends: the fade route (L) or the post (A). The halfback (Y) doesn't get open much.

---Corners---

If your receiver (B) isn't open, throw to the halfback (A) in the flat for the score.

---FB Opt. Right---

This play is pretty similar to FB Dive, although it's not as good and can also lose yardage.

---QB Sneak---

The Quarterback Sneak is a pretty low-risk play, but don't expect to gain much

more than a yard or two. But it's very good at getting that one yard! This play works great against the Miser and Tough Man variants of the Goal Line defense but consistently fails against 53. You might even call an audible if three men are blocking your center.

---Rollout Left---

Your best options here are your receiver (A) and halfback (L). All other options are pretty iffy. Make sure to throw a bullet pass. Normally your quarterback drops back quite deep on this play.

---HB Opt. Left---

The goal of this play is to run around the congestion in the middle by running off left tackle. This play works very well, although nothing is guaranteed inside the five.

---Wishbone---

This formation has one of your tight ends in the backfield as an additional blocker. However, what you're doing is faking a handoff to the fullback and then using the quarterback to plunge through the line or run off right tackle. I don't get good results with this.

---Quick Outs---

This may be the best passing play in the Goal Line formation, especially if you're on the five or six yard line. Look for the receiver (B) on the post. If he's not open, try the tight ends (Y and A) on the out routes on either side. Both backs block.

Madden (6)

=====
This formation consists mostly of some of the better plays from the I-Form, sometimes with a name change or a VERY slightly different pattern. You can't flip these plays for some inexplicable reason.

---Toss Left---

This is the same as the Toss Left of the I-Form. Duh.

---Dive Middle---

This is almost identical to the FB Dive of the I-Form.

---Toss Right---

Another play ripped from the pages of the I-Form.

---Sideline Pass---

This is WR Outs from the I-Form masquerading as Sideline Pass.

---Slant---

This play stole TE Slant's identity.

---Bomb---

This is almost the same as PA Streaks from the I-Form.

Special Teams (5)

---Fk. Punt Run---

=====
As you know, fake punts are risky. In this version, one of your blockers takes the snap and plows through the line. It's hard to gain more than three or four yards with this, but it's certainly worth a try on fourth and two if the situation is right. Also, it almost always gains at least two yards. Because the computer will audible into a normal formation when you call a fake punt, they're most effective against a human player.

---Fk. Punt Pass---

Another fake punt, but this is a pass. Look for your Y, B, and A receivers and throw to whoever's open. Your B man is safest, while Y and A are best for longer gains. This play can be quite effective against human players, if just for the shock value alone.

---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.

---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.---

Fake field goals are very risky, so use them carefully. This is a standard passing fake field goal. Your best bet is the B option. Ignore the kicking meter. As with punts, computer opponents will usually call an audible when you call a fake field goal.

~~~~~  
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.

4-3 (24)

=====

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

---2 Deep---

A very balanced defense. I use this a lot.

---Key HB---

A good balanced defense that defends both the run and pass. It's best not used against teams that run their fullback a lot.

---Wrangler---

Puts a little pressure on the quarterback by blitzing an outside linebacker. Running the ball will probably be easier, though.

---3 Deep---

This is a little stronger against the pass - might be good on something like a 2nd and 11.

---Contain---

Contain is designed to contain the outside run.

---Breaker---

Another basic 4-3 set, but this has the left end and left tackle on a stunt.

---Galaxy---

This is the first of six unusual forms of the 4-3 named after the now-defunct NFL Europe teams of the time. All of them put eight men in the box, which helps stop the run. This particular permutation is a great way to stop HB Toss.

---Claymore---

Not too different from Galaxy.

---Fire---

The middle linebackers blitz here.

---Admiral---

A weird zone defense that may fail against a long ball to the split end. The outside linebacker blitzes. Does this play make you feel like you're in Amsterdam?

---Monarch---

This zone is one of the better of the NFL Europe plays against the pass.

---Dragon---

The Admiral of Claymore swore vengeance against the Dragon that slew his Monarch with Fire. Okay, that's stupid. This is the last of the NFL Europe plays, and it's Designed to put pressure on the quarterback from unusual angles.

---Grizzly Zone---

The Grizzly set places all four defensive linemen very close to one another. This version is designed to defend the pass.

---Grizzly Read---

This is the most balanced form of the Grizzly scheme.

---Grizzly Attack---

Grizzly Attack is designed to put pressure on the quarterback, with the outside linebackers blitzing and two linemen on a stunt.

---Flex 2 Deep---

This is the normal version of the Flex form of the 4-3, which has two lineman slightly further from the line of scrimmage than normal.

---Flex 3 Deep---

A deep zone.

---Flex Bomber---

A Flex blitz.

---Dbl. Talon Zone---

No, it's not named after Malon's dad from Zelda games. The Double Talon has the tackles very close to each other, and one of the outside linebackers is situated far to the left. This form of Double Talon is a zone defense.

---Dbl. Talon MZ2---

Another variation of the Double Talon system.

---Dbl. Talon Stk.---

The outside linebacker blitzes in Double Talon Strike.

---Cowboy Zone---

The Cowboy system is similar to Double Talon, but the linemen and linebackers are symmetrical.

---Cowboy HB---

This is like Key HB, only with the Cowboy set.

---Cowboy SE---

Cowboy SE double-covers the split end (usually the flanker, actually) - a good

way to stop a dangerous receiver.

3-4 (21)

=====

In real life, only the Steelers and Panthers regularly used the 3-4 defense in 1995. 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 it as much as you want in a video game. Don't overlook the more unconventional forms of the 3-4, like Ace and Tiger.

---2 Deep---

A balanced defense.

---Weak Blitz---

An outside linebacker blitzes here; nothing too wild. This is another useful general-purpose 3-4 play.

---Safety Blitz---

Your safety blitzes along with an outside linebacker.

---3 Deep---

Three of your defensive backs are in a deep zone, while the RCB covers the split end (flanker on flipped plays) in man coverage.

---Man/Zone 2---

Another good versatile 3-4 scheme.

---LB Blitz---

Both outside linebackers blitz.

---Viper Zone---

Viper is a weird 3-4 system where the linebackers are arranged in a diamond shape. This is the zone version.

---Viper Key HB---

This form of the Viper is better at stopping the run, especially the halfback run.

---Viper Strike---

An outside linebacker blitzes, along with a safety.

---Ace Zone---

Ace puts eight in the box, with a down linebacker. It's almost like a 4-3 or 4-4. Both OLBs blitz, spelling trouble for quarterbacks.

---Ace Man---

An inside linebacker blitzes with man-to-man coverage.

---Ace Flush---

A favorite of wavers of the Terrible Towel: two blitzing linebackers and a safety. With six men rushing, the opponents will have to get the ball off quickly.

---Crimson Yard---

Crimson is a bizarre set that stacks the right side of the offensive line. However, this play is suitable for the average 1st and 10.

---Crimson Read---

Crimson Read is designed to contain the run.

---Crimson Tide---

I don't know if they used this at the University of Alabama, but you have five rushing here.

---Tiger Zone---

Tiger is another weird subset of the 3-4 that facilitates the mass blitz, with the defensive linemen near the edges of the offensive line. This is the most normal Tiger play.

---Tiger Tiger---

Tiger, tiger, burning bright... I bet you weren't expecting poetry in this guide. An outside linebacker blitzes.

---Tiger Hunt---

An outside linebacker and a safety blitz.

---Wilkie Zone---

In Wilkie, all three linemen line up near the center, while the linebackers cover the outside. If that doesn't overwhelm the middle of the line, exotic blitzes may get past the tackles. This is a zone, as you can probably guess.

---Wilkie Man---

This is the man-to-man form of Wilkie.

---Wilkie Storm---

Wilkie Storm is a heavy-duty blitz, including a rushing safety.

Nickel (12)

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

---Prevent---

Everyone goes deep, so use this only when your opponents are in a two-minute drill and are trying to gain yards quickly. It's best against a "Hail Mary" or similar play.

---Safety Blitz---

Here one of your safeties, as well as a linebacker, will come rushing toward the quarterback. The pressure on the QB is offset by the possible hole in your coverage. The safety is too far away to get to the quarterback unless you manually change his position so it's closer to the linebackers.

---Short Zone---

This defense is designed to contain a short pass. Good on, say, a 3rd and 6.

---3 Deep---

Both safeties and a cornerback cover the deep zone here, so this defends the deep pass well. However, there will be a hole in the short zone.

---Outs---

This play helps stop the receivers, while increasing the risk of a completion to a tight end or back.

---Double FL---

This double-teams the flanker. A good way to shut down a particularly dangerous receiver, although this play usually double-covers the split end.

---Double SE---

Identical to Double FL, except this puts the split end (or more commonly the flanker) in double coverage.

---Double HB---

This play is designed to contain a dangerous receiving halfback.

---Pirate Zone---

The Pirate set is a special form of the Nickel where the linebackers line up near the center and tight end. This is a fairly deep zone defense.

---Pirate Dbl.---

The Pirate Double play double-covers the receiver on the right - usually the flanker.

---Pirate Blitz---

Both linebackers blitz here, creating a six-man rush.

Dime (12)

=====
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.

---Prevent In---

This deep zone is designed to stop long passes down the middle.

---Short Zone---

The cornerbacks and linebacker protect against the short pass, while your safeties drop back to provide a last line of defense.

---Double SE---

This play double-teams the receiver lined up on the right side of the offense, which in reality is usually the flanker.

---Prevent Out---

This deep zone stops the outside pass but may be vulnerable against passes down the middle or in the flat. Good in a two-minute drill.

---Double FL---

This play double-teams the receiver lined up on the left side of the offense, which in reality is usually the split end.

---CB Blitz---

One of the cornerbacks blitzes the quarterback here, while the rest of the secondary is able to fill the hole.

---Prevent---

The classic prevent defense. All of your defensive backs head deep to prevent the big play. Because of its passive nature, you definitely don't want to use it except when necessary.

---Tight Man---

As you might expect, this is a tight man-to-man coverage. I think it's pretty effective.

---Safety Blitz---

A safety blitzes, with the other five defensive backs providing the other assignments.

---Medium Zone---

This medium zone is actually pretty deep, so it's best in third-and-long and two-minute drill situations.

---Rotation---

Your defensive backs rotate in a circular manner in this play, which could definitely confuse quarterbacks' views of coverage assignments. This increases the chances of an interception and also a big play for the offense.

---Key HB---

This is a man-to-man defense, with the linebacker staying near the line to stop the inside run. Could be useful against a Run 'n' Shoot.

Goal Line (9)

=====
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.

---Miser Left---

This is a general-purpose goal line defense.

---Miser Key FB---

This play is designed to stop the fullback.

---Miser Right---

Very similar to Miser Left.

---53 Ram---

The 53 variation of the Goal Line formation is excellent against the inside rushing game, especially quarterback sneaks, but it is weak against outside runs.

---53 Griffin---

Similar to 53 Ram, but with more emphasis on stopping the outside play.

---53 Bearcat---

This is a blitz.

---Tough Man Outs---

The Tough Man set is somewhat stronger against the pass - especially this version. Interestingly, this set was called Tough Guy in Madden '95.

---Tough Man HB---

Similar to Tough Man Outs, with the defense keying the halfback.

---Tough Man Blitz---

Seven men rush, while the cornerbacks guard against the fade.

Special Teams (3)

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

---Punt Return---

Here your personnel will be blocking for your returner in an attempt to get a good return.

---Punt Rush---

Here your team goes all out trying to block the punt, but you won't be able to get a return.

---FG Block---

Use this if you know your opponent will be kicking a field goal.

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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.

Offense

[Y] A run (Far/Near HB Toss)

[B] A short pass or screen pass (Pro Form Cross Pass)

[A] A long pass (Shotgun Deep Outs)

Defense

[Y] A balanced defense (4-3 Key HB)

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

[A] A blitz (4-3 Grizzly Attack)

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. You also want to use different defensive play selections when using a 3-4. 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 Gameplay Options subscreen of the Pre-Game or pause screen. The most important thing is to 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 A to call a kickoff audible, and then press A or B to change your team's alignment. Press B 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: Where's the Kneel Down play?

A: There isn't one. If you need to run out the clock without risking a fumble, try something like FB Dive from the Goal Line formation. Another option is to select a passing play and dive backwards right after you get the snap.

Q: Is there fatigue?

A: No. No matter how fast a player runs, no player ever gets fatigued. Players could first tire in Madden '97.

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, or try lining up in the neutral zone (the referee

thinks the line of scrimmage is at the feet of the offensive linemen).

Q: My passes keep getting deflected by the stupid defensive linemen! How can I stop that from happening?

A: You can either drop back farther or leave the pocket. In some plays you can try releasing the ball faster (or sometimes later).

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: 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.

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 offsides by moving past the line of scrimmage before the snap. Pass interference appears randomly and can be turned off. Other penalties can't be turned off, though. Penalties other than the three mentioned here are extremely rare, like illegal procedure (kicking the ball out of bounds on a kickoff).

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: 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 is also more likely to use a Nickel defense when you use the Shotgun formation, even on first down. 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: How do you perform touchdown dances?

A: After scoring a touchdown, hold Y, B, or A and press any direction on the Control Pad. Different combinations will produce different moves! Groove on, baby. Also try pushing different buttons (not in combination) to produce horn and whistle sounds.

Q: What other tips do you have?

* This is common sense, but if you have a good running back and a weak passing game (like St. Louis), run the ball a lot. Likewise, if you pass well but can't run (like Minnesota), you'll want to keep the ball in the air.

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

* 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.

* Your split end (on the left) is usually the Y receiver, while the flanker (on the right) is generally assigned the A button. The B button is usually a tight end or halfback, while backs or slot receivers are usually L and R. 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 X to reverse the diagram.

* Don't forget to check out the Instant Replay feature (found on the pause

menu); it's pretty cool for 1995.

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

* A controller with a turbo button may make certain training events easier.

Q: What are the actual names of the players who don't have names in Madden '96?

A: I was able to figure out most of them:

ARI #26 HB Ryan Terry
ARI #36 FS Tito Paul
ATL #42 FS Devin Bush
BUF #34 HB Thurman Thomas
CAR #96 DE Shawn King?
CHI #90 DE Alonzo Spellman
CIN #80 KR-PR David Dunn
DAL #63 G Shane Hannah?
GB #88 TE Keith Jackson
HOU #20 HB Rodney Thomas
NE #52 ILB Ted Johnson
NYG #30 HB Tyrone Wheatley
OAK #91 RE Chester McGlockton
PHI #42 SS Greg Tremble?
SD #21 CB-PR Darrien Gordon
SEA #84 WR-PR Joey Galloway
WAS #82 WR Michael Westbrook

I think the anonymous players for the All-Madden team are just "filler" players with very high ratings who don't appear with any actual teams.

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

A: Just a few miscellaneous tidbits:

* If you play using a classic team, you'll be able to play at the old team's stadium (like Memorial Stadium). Unfortunately, the venues in this game are pretty generic; the only distinguishing features are indoors/outdoors and grass/Astroturf. Still, it's kind of neat.

* The official name for the Gator Bowl was by then Jacksonville Municipal Stadium. Incidentally, this game was made about a year before it became really fashionable to sell stadiums' naming rights.

* Madden '96 is based on the Madden '95 game engine, but the playbook is better, several features have been added, and the rosters are updated for the 1995 season.

* Hold START, SELECT, L, R, and A on Controller 2 while starting up your game to see a debug screen with all sorts of interesting hexadecimal stuff. Try it. It's neat.

* 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.

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Comparing with Reality [REALL]  
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This is a pretty familiar section if you've read my Formula One walkthroughs. This is just a brief summary of the 1995 NFL season. More in-depth information can be found at NFL.com, Wikipedia.org, and assorted other Internet and print sources.

The NFL expanded from 28 to 30 teams in 1995 with the addition of the Jacksonville Jaguars and Carolina Panthers. It was also the first season in decades without a franchise in Los Angeles, as the Rams departed for St. Louis and the Raiders moved back to Oakland. Several notable individual career

achievements occurred on the field, as Jerry Rice broke records for most career receptions and receiving yards, and Dan Marino passed Fran Tarkenton in four major passing categories. Also, Emmitt Smith scored 25 touchdowns, beating John Riggins' 12-year-old season record. The Dallas Cowboys defeated the Pittsburgh Steelers 27-17 in Super Bowl XXX on 1/27/96 in Tempe, Arizona to win their fifth Super Bowl and their third in four years. The game remains the seventh most-watched program in American TV history and one of the better games in Super Bowl history.

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Version History

[VERSN]  
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Here's the most beloved section of my guides... the version history.

- 0.2 Began guide on 1/10/08. (17 KB)
- 0.25 Did very little on 1/12/08. (17 KB)
- 0.4 Added most of the team stats and playbooks for Far/Near, Single Back, and Pro Form on 1/13/08. (28 KB)
- 0.6 Expanded the playbook with I-Form and Shotgun on 1/14/08. Finished the team stats. (45 KB)
- 0.75 Completed the defensive playbooks on 1/15/08. (54 KB)
- 0.85 Added controls and other details on 1/16/08. (65 KB)
- 0.99 Fixed some player names and finished things up on 1/17/08. (74 KB)
- 1.0 Made final adjustments to line breaks and such on 1/18/08.
Submitted guide to GameFAQs.com and Neoseeker.com on 1/19/08.
- 1.1 Fixed a few errors on 7/28/08. (75 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 '96" in the subject line.
Do send polite suggestions about ways to make this walkthrough better.
Do ask any questions you have about Madden '96 gameplay. I will answer them eventually if you follow all of these guidelines.
Do tell me if you want me to produce more Madden guides of this type in the future.
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.

Current list of VinnyVideo guides available on GameFAQs.com and Neoseeker.com:

F1 ROC: Race of Champions FAQs/Walkthrough
F1 ROC II: Race of Champions FAQs/Walkthrough
SimCity 3000 Walkthrough/Strategy Guide
Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing FAQs/Walkthrough
Kyle Petty's No Fear Racing Strategy Guide/FAQs
Madden '96 (SNES) Strategy Guide/FAQs

Possible future guides:

Madden '97 (SNES) Strategy Guide/FAQs
Madden '98 (SNES) Strategy Guide/FAQs
The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening Spoiler-Free FAQs/Walkthrough
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time Spoiler-Free FAQs/Walkthrough
The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time Master Quest FAQs/Walkthrough
The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess FAQs/Walkthrough
Donkey Kong 64 FAQs/Walkthrough

For Matt