

**A STUDY TO COMPARE THE EFFECTIVENESS  
OF THE  
SPREAD AND CLOSED PUNT FORMATIONS**

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**A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School  
College of William and Mary**

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**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts**

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**by  
George Samuel Hughes**

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**I would like to dedicate this thesis to my wife, Kate, for her constant encouragement and also thank Dr. Kenneth Morland, Mr. Bernard E. Wilson and Howard M. Smith for their guidance in this study.**

**George Samuel Hughes**

## PREFACE

The punt formation to many coaches, as well as the average fans, is just a conventional means of changing possession of the ball. However, in reality, the punt formation has a far greater value in football than just as a means of exchanging possession of the ball. As a positive offensive weapon in many important games, the punt formation has proved its merit.

Of all the great offensive weapons employed, the defense has devised methods of combating or slowing down the offensive advances; so, with these defensive maneuvers, many coaches have changed their punting strategy by introducing the spread punt formation.

The capable and outstanding coaches of the Annual Collegiate All-Star Staff were skeptical when the suggestion was made to use the spread punt formation. Their doubts were authoritative for the spread punt formation had not been proved in day-in and day-out competition. The board of strategy, under Head Coach, Doctor Edward Anderson, decided in favor of experimenting with this formation. The experiment was conducted under game conditions, employing only the spread punt formation. During this practice session every punt was protected perfectly and the punt coverage was superior. The results of this experiment were so conclusive, that the coaching staff decided to use the spread

punt formation in the All-Star game of 1950. In the upset over the Philadelphia Eagles, Champions of the National Professional Football League, the spread punt formation proved to be one of the most effective offensive tools in the victory.

The 1950 Collegiate Football Season provided many changes. to the spread punt formation, so I feel through this research, the relative values and the fallacies could be studied and could be analyzed.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study is to compare the spread punt formations and the closed punt formations; thus endeavoring to find which punt formation offers more advantages for its punters.

Need for the study. In the past few years the tempo of football has increased tremendously, so that one of the outgrowths has been the spread punt formation. The advocators of the spread punt formation believe that it gives the punters more protection and more time, thus allowing the kicking team to cover their punts more effectively.

With this visible evidence, the need for a study on the spread punt formation and the closed punt formation is imperative, so that research can keep abreast with modern football tactics.

#### II. DEFINITIONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF

##### TERMS USED

#### A. SPREAD PUNT FORMATIONS

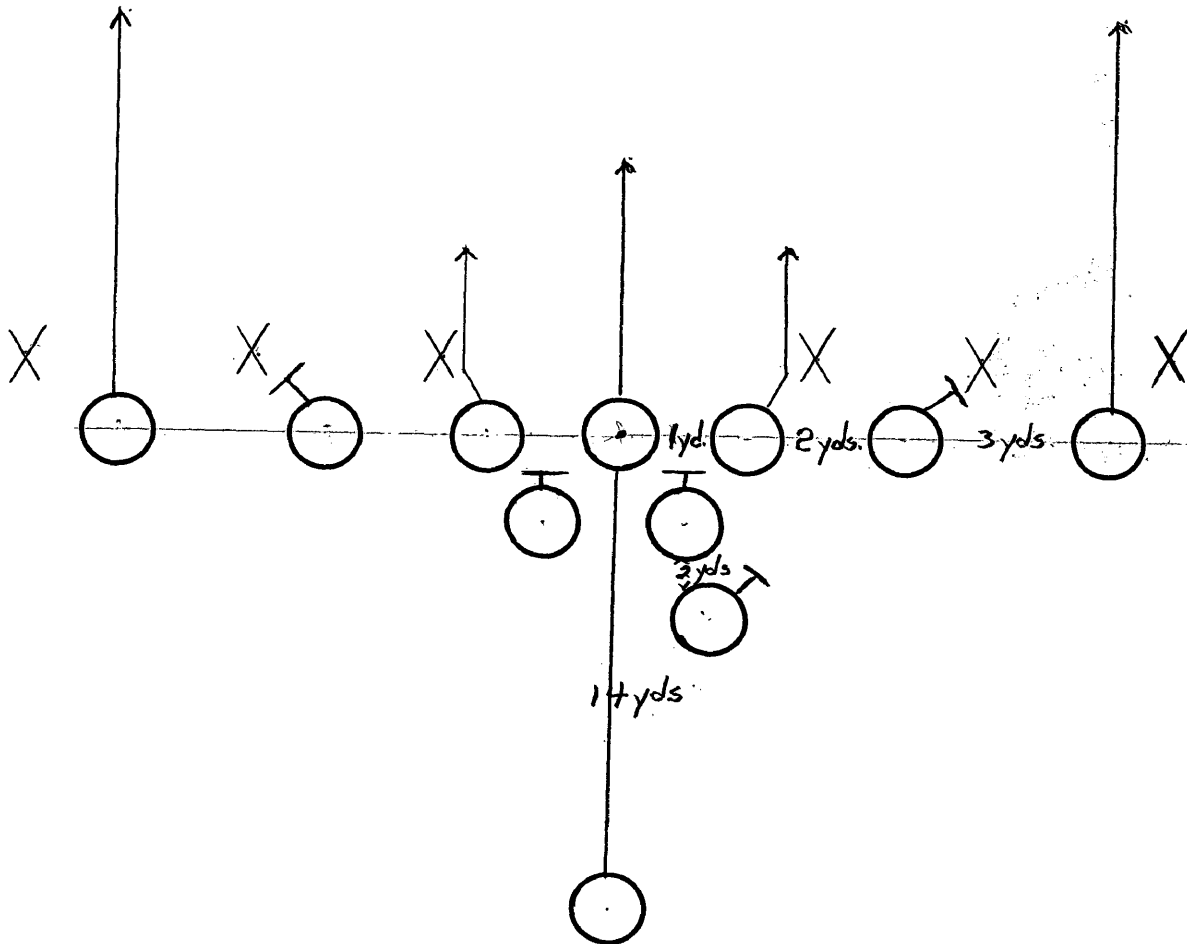
##### 1. Balanced line

When the spread punt formation employs a balanced line, it utilizes two backs blocking one yard back of the center, thus releasing

the line to cover the punt. The punter, in this formation, stands approximately fourteen yards behind the line of scrimmage.

### DIAGRAM I

### SPREAD PUNT FORMATION<sup>1</sup>



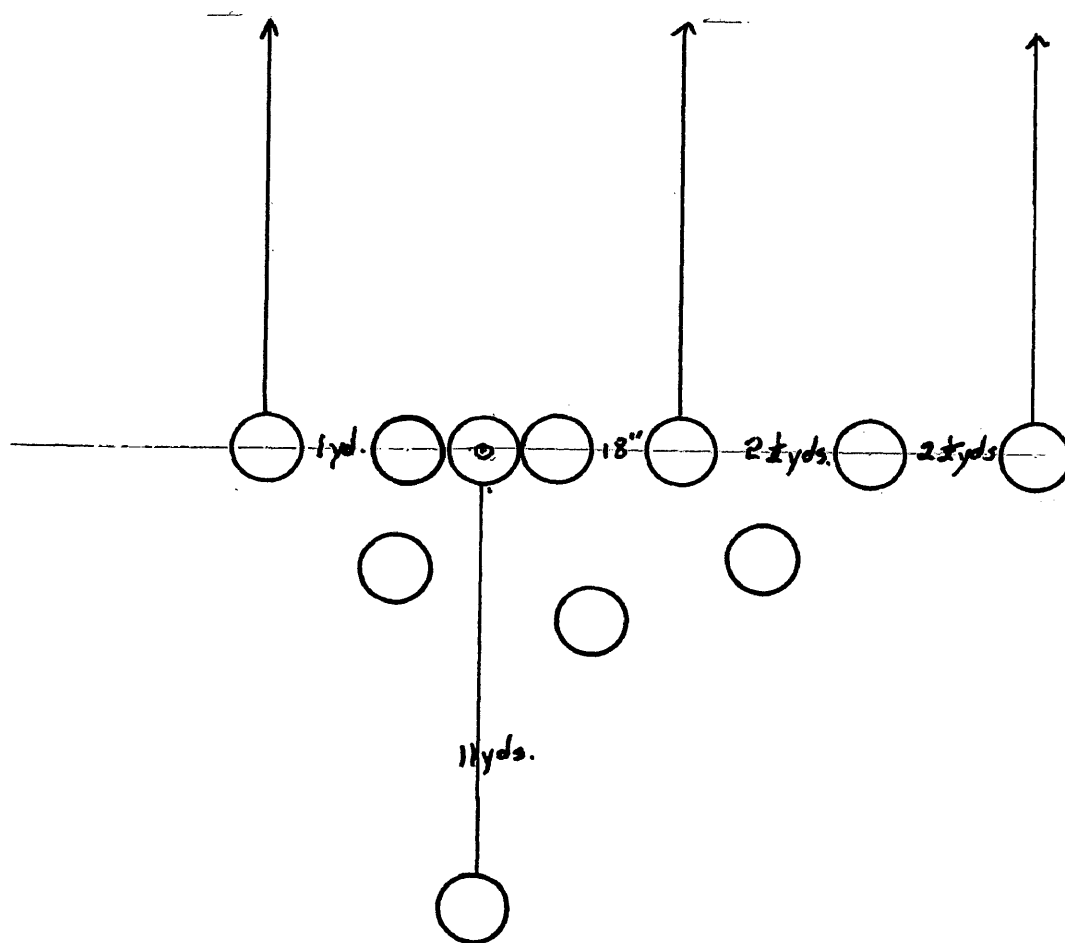

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1. Diagram of the spread punt formation used in the Annual Collegiate All-Star Game in Chicago, August 11, 1950. Coach Doctor Edward Anderson.

2. Unbalanced line. The unbalanced line, when used in the spread punt formation, has the backs lined up on each side of the guards. In addition, another back is behind the strong side tackle, which releases the linemen to cover the punt. In this formation, the punter lines up approximately eleven yards behind the center.

DIAGRAM II

SPREAD PUNT FORMATION<sup>2</sup>



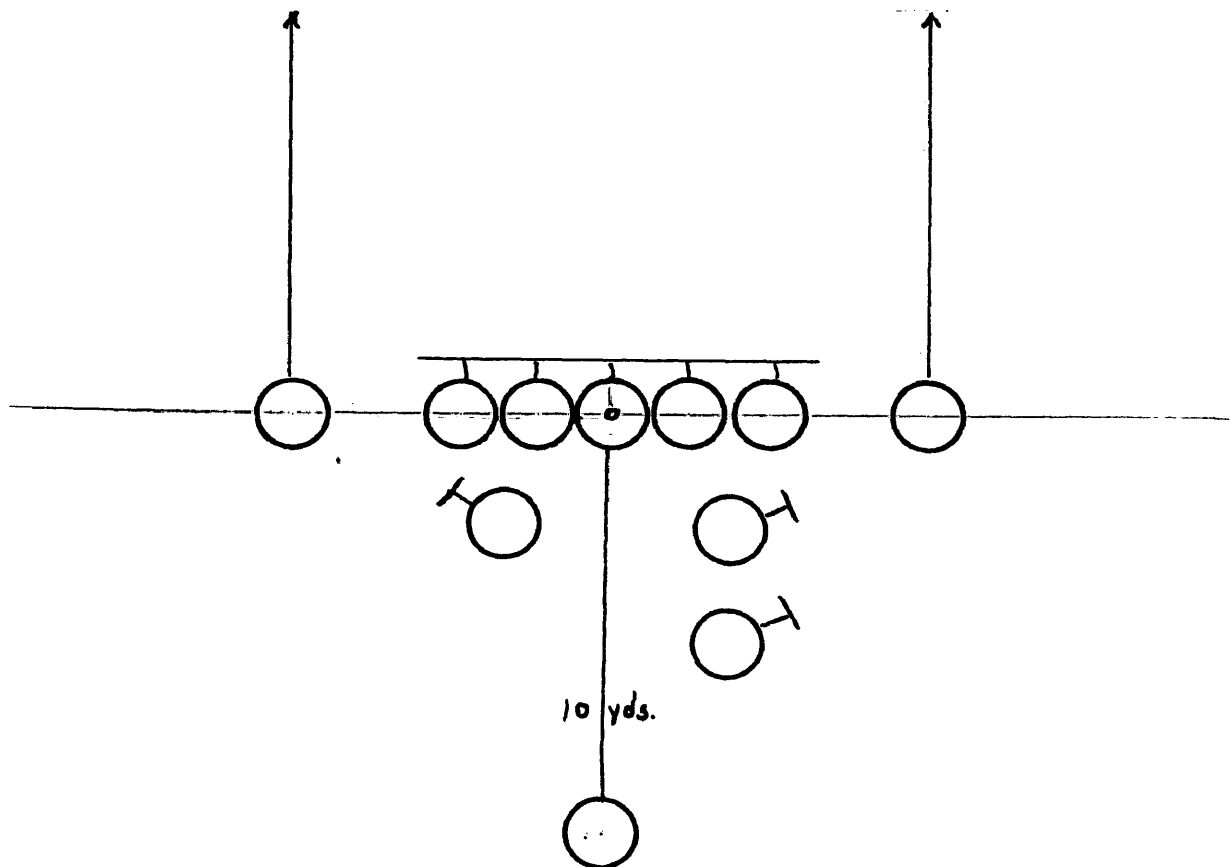
2. Diagram of the spread punt formation used by the Pittsburgh Steelers during the 1950 Professional Football Season. Coach John Michelosen.

### B. Closed or Conventional Punt Formation

The closed or conventional punt formation requires the five linemen to block very tight, while the three backs form a pocket for protection. Ten yards behind the line of scrimmage, the punter in this formation lines up.

#### DIAGRAM III

#### CLOSED PUNT FORMATION<sup>3</sup>




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3. Robert C. Zuppke, Coaching Football (Champaign, Illinois: Bailey & Himes, 1930) p. 227.

### III SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study involves the outstanding punters in the 1950 football season, with relation to their individual punting averages based on the National Collegiate Athletic Bureau.

It also includes data collected while playing and while observing professional football games during the 1950 season, as well as questionnaires sent to the coaches of the nation's outstanding punters.

### IV SOURCE OF DATA

The National Collegiate Athletic Bureau rated the first fifty punters of the nation, which served as the basis for the questionnaire in this study.

In developing this topic, unpublished scouting reports from the Pittsburgh Steelers during the 1950 Professional Football Season were used, as well as information from players of other schools.

Also, important information used in this study came from outstanding books on football.

## V PROCEDURE

The primary source of information for this study came from the questionnaire. The questions were centered around the punt formation each coach had used during the 1950 season. As a follow-up, the next two questions were to find out how many punts were returned for touchdowns in the respective formations. In the last question, the coaches were asked which factor or factors influenced them most in changing to the spread punt formation. The subjects covered are as follows:

- a. Personnel
- b. Protection
- c. Coverage
- d. Fair Catch

All findings shall be placed in tables, and from these facts, I shall try to evaluate the results and to formulate pertinent conclusions.

Of the forty-nine questionnaires sent out, thirty-eight were returned, which was a return of seventy-eight percent.

## VI ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINING CHAPTERS OF THIS STUDY

In Chapter II is a brief explanation of the beginning of the formations explained plus a detailed description of the closed and of the spread punt formations.

Chapter III shows the results of the data collected from the

questionnaires, the interviews and the other sources mentioned.

The fourth chapter is a summary of the data collected and of the conclusions drawn.

## CHAPTER II

## THE PUNTING GAME

Development of the punt formation. "The use of punting as a means of advancing the ball or for the other purposes dates back to the early days of intercollegiate football. Much was made of punting in the first set of rules adopted by the first football association, the Intercollegiate Football association, which, with representatives from Harvard, Princeton, Yale and Columbia, met in Springfield, Massachusetts on November 23, 1876." <sup>4</sup>

In the kicking game, the idea that a kick should be used only as a last resort or only as a defensive measure should be discarded. When conditions are favorable, the kick, is the surest, is the quickest, is the safest, and the most effective means of advancing the ball under such circumstances; it should be employed almost exclusively. However, under the most favorable conditions possible, there is a definite limit to the extent to which the punt can be used as an offensive weapon. The quarterback must know exactly what this limit is. A team cannot hope to advance by kicking beyond the point to which the opponents themselves can advance by kicking from the region of their goal line.

"In dangerous territory it must be remembered that the probability of getting a kick blocked increases with each down in a series, because the opponents can commit themselves to punt blocking plays with greater abandonment on each successive down. However, against a team which, because of their kicking talent, their covering, or the wind, can outkick us we must kick less often and must gain enough by other means to offset their advantage. Likewise, against a team with a superior offense, we must hold the ball as much of the game as possible." <sup>5</sup>

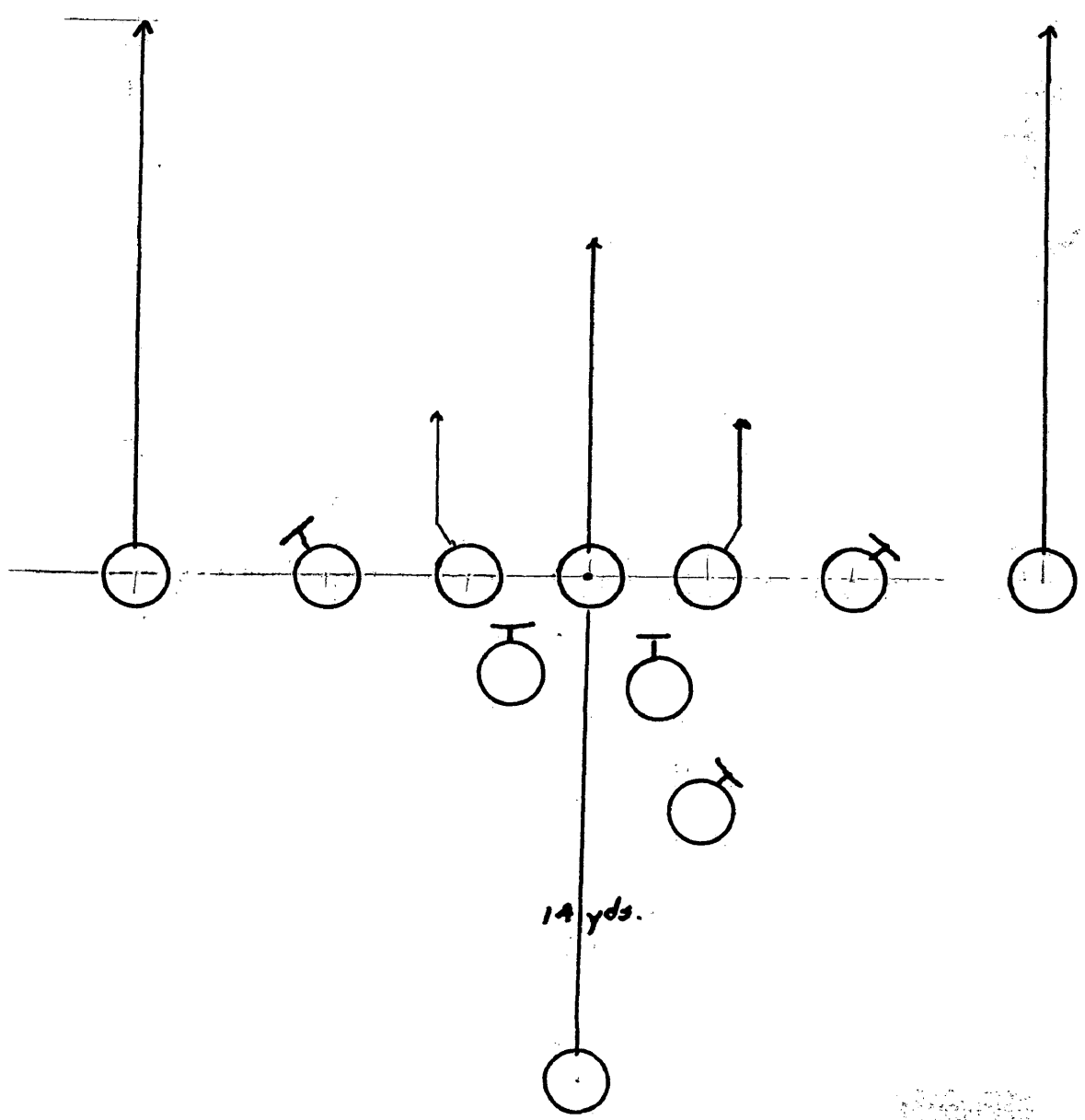
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4. Dr. L. H. Baker, Football: Facts and Figures (New York: Farran and Rinehart, Incorporated, 1946), p. 1.

5. Carl Snavely, Unpublished Coaching Strategy, Univ. of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, p. 15.

Spread punt formation. The spread punt formation did not reach a fairly wide acceptance until the 1950 season, because it had not been universally used by large colleges and universities. I would like to present the views of the outstanding coaches of the Annual Collegiate All-Star team, as an example of their skepticism of the formation. The members of this coaching staff were as follows: Coach Dodd, Georgia Tech; Coach Schwartz, Stanford; Coach Voigts, Northwestern; and Head Coach, Doctor Edward Anderson of Holy Cross. These coaches could not agree upon using the spread punt formation; so one afternoon the board of strategy set an hour to work out a solution to the problem. During this kicking scrimmage not one punt was blocked. The coverage in this scrimmage was superb, so with this conclusive proof, the formation was used in the All-Star game with the same success.

DIAGRAM IV  
SPREAD PUNT FORMATION<sup>6</sup>



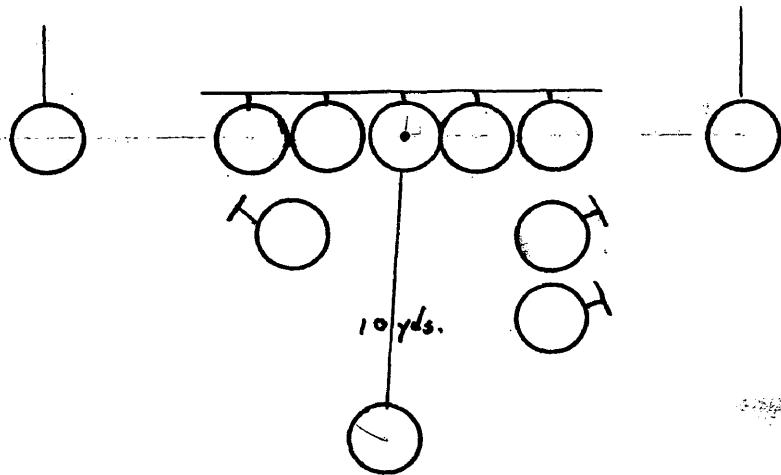
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6. Anderson, op. cit., Spread punt formation.

In the spread punt formation the space between each offensive lineman varies from inches to several yards. The center's first job is to make a good pass of the ball and break immediately down the field. The guard, at this time, takes a step toward the defensive lineman, on his immediate outside, to make a brush block, then break down field to form the fast middle wave of coverage.

The wall of protection is formed by the tackles and the three offensive backs. The offensive tackles block the defensive tackles, and the backs step forward with the pass of the ball to meet the middle of the defensive line. This group of five men go down field with the thud of the ball, thus leaving the kicker as the safety valve.

DIAGRAM V  
CLOSED PUNT FORMATION<sup>7</sup>




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7. Zuppke, op. cit., p. 227

Maneuvers of the lineman. The linemen, from tackle to tackle, form a protective wall by blocking toward the center. When the ball is snapped each lineman hops back a half step so that the wall can be formed, therefore, making a broader and firmer stance for the blocker. A common mistake in protecting for the punter is to get over-anxious and to leave a position by charging the defense. The object of setting up a protective wall is to force the defense to run around in order to get the punter.

In some instances, a lineman can go downfield almost immediately with the pass of the ball, but he must be absolutely sure that no defensive man is in a dangerous position or trying to break through his territory. If this man can release and go downfield, it helps the ends in forming the first wave. Frank Leahy, Coach of Notre Dame believes, "The length of time these blocks should be held depends upon the kicker; however, two full seconds should be long enough. As soon as they release their blocks the linemen should 'fly' downfield to get into the fracas."<sup>8</sup>

End play. The left end should line up just inside the opponent's defensive right end, so that he can quickly leave his marks just lightly brushing the opponent's body so as to prevent him from

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8. Frank Leahy, Notre Dame Football - The T Formation (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949), p. 169.

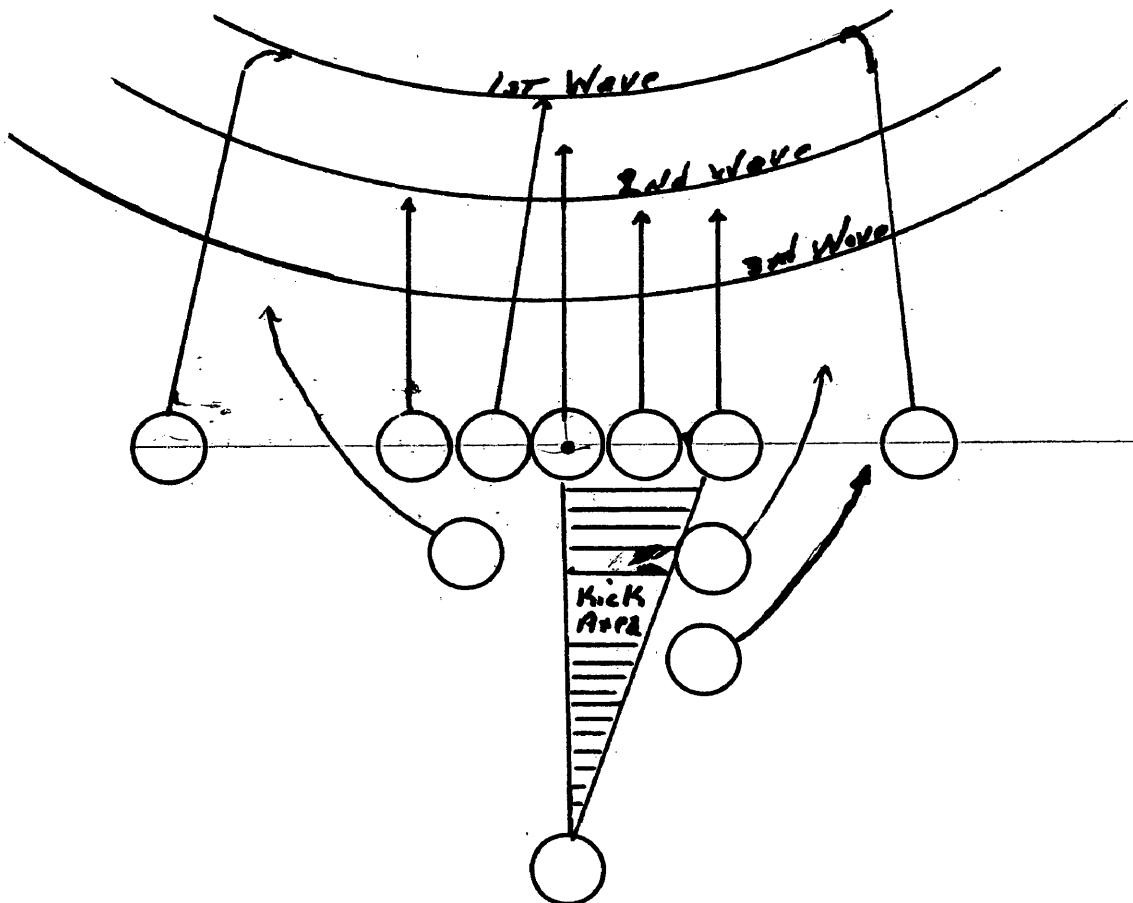
These maneuvers should be done in one motion, so that contact which will slow him up can be prevented. The right end should take a position so that he is perfectly free from the opponent's tackle. This will allow him to go downfield unhampered by the defensive linemen.

When an end is covering a punt, he has two thoughts in mind. The first is to flank the intended receiver, and the second is to make the tackle himself. A good end should be a menace to the receivers by disrupting their attention, thus trying to make them fumble.

Backfield punt protection. The three protecting backs block outward to force the opponent's tackles and the ends around them. These backs take their positions, well inside of their own tackles, in such a way that neither of the opponent's tackle can slice in to get in front of the kicker.

A kicker should always take a position so that he will be directly behind the frontal protection of the linemen as well as the flank protection of the backs. When the ball is kicked, the backs should release and go downfield forming the third wave. The punter should stay fifteen yards behind the third wave, as a safety valve.

DIAGRAM VI  
COVERING THE KICK<sup>9</sup>



The three wave system of covering the punt is the most widely accepted. In this type of coverage, the ends break downfield with the pass of the ball flanking the defensive safety man in for the lineman that released with the first count.

A second wave is formed with the thud of the ball when the four linemen and when they form up the middle.

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<sup>9</sup> John DaGrosa, Functional Football (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, 1942) p. 206.

The third wave is made up of the backs that release and fan out when the ball is kicked making an outside echelon of protection.

CHAPTER III  
PRESENTATION OF DATA

The first fifty punters in the nation. The table on the following page lists the colleges and universities that used the spread punt formation and the closed punt formation.

In this table, the punter's names are listed according to their individual punting averages, with a tabulated reference to their number of games participated in and their total number of attempts. These statistics were prepared and computed by the National Collegiate Athletic Bureau Official Football Statistics.

TABLE I  
PUNTING<sup>6</sup>

<u>National Ranking</u>	<u>Name and School</u>	<u>Games</u>	<u>Punts</u>	<u>Averages</u>
1	Jordan, Colorado - - - - -	10	38	48.2
2	Brady, Nevada - - - - -	9	35	46.9
3	Smith, Utah - - - - -	9	47	43.2
4	Wallace - - - - -	10	27	42.6
5	Berry, Brigham Young - - -	10	28	42.4
6	Hammond, Wisconsin - - -	9	26	41.5
7	Simons, Kansas - - - - -	10	32	41.2
8	Isbell, Baylor - - - - -	10	56	41.2
9	Moore, U. C. L. A. - - - - -	9	63	41.0
10	Drahn, Iowa - - - - -	9	56	41.0
11	Fucci, Kentucky - - - - -	11	42	40.8
12	McGowen, Auburn - - - - -	10	43	40.5
13	Hoak, Virginia - - - - -	10	45	40.2
14	Avinger, Alabama - - - - -	11	44	39.7
15	Connors, William and Mary -	11	25	39.6
16	Williams, Notre Dame - - -	9	42	39.2
17	McConnell, Brown - - - - -	9	46	39.2
18	Stone, Syracuse - - - - -	10	44	39.2
19	Massucco, Holy Cross - - - -	10	47	39.1
20	Whelan, Boston U. - - - - -	8	29	39.0
21	Montsdeoca, Florida - - - - -	10	62	38.8
22	Connell, Texas Western - - -	10	44	38.8
23	Lary, Texas A&M - - - - -	10	57	38.8
24	Mussaco, Loyola (Calif.) - -	9	41	38.7
25	Adams, Utah State - - - - -	11	66	38.7
26	Field, Georgia - - - - -	11	63	38.7
27	Estes, Kansas State - - - - -	11	66	38.5
28	Misno, Columbia - - - - -	9	57	38.5
29	Beck, San Jose State - - - - -	10	53	38.5
30	Cox, Duke - - - - -	10	50	38.3
31	Schaufele, Arkansas - - - - -	10	60	38.3
32	Bunting, No. Carolina - - - -	10	38	38.2
33	Davidson, Vanderbilt - - - -	11	41	38.1
34	Mays, Idaho - - - - -	9	28	38.1
35	Stainbrook, Miss. State - - -	9	37	38.0
36	Cipparone, Detroit - - - - -	10	58	37.9
37	Bonar, Tulane - - - - -	9	49	37.8
38	Foxley, Wash. State - - - - -	9	50	37.7
39	Baker, Oregon State - - - - -	9	41	37.7
40	Horn, Stanford - - - - -	10	64	37.6
41	Blaik, Army - - - - -	9	56	37.6
42	Koons, Chattanooga - - - - -	9	68	37.5
43	Heatly, Oklahoma - - - - -	10	50	37.4
44	Stelle, Oregon - - - - -	10	36	37.4
45	King, Colgate - - - - -	8	42	37.4
46	Zibnack, Denver - - - - -	9	33	37.4
47	Roedel, Minnesota - - - - -	9	75	37.3
48	Reynolds, Nebraska - - - - -	9	36	37.3
49	Kingsford, Montana - - - - -	9	51	37.3
50	Hoelzer, Colorado A & M - - -	9	40	37.3

10 Cooke, Homer F., Director, The National Collegiate Athletic Bureau, Official Football Statistics; New York; Official Service Bureau of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, 1950

Spread punt formation teams. The coaches that were sent questionnaires were asked: (1) Which punt formation they used? (2) What percentage they used the punt formation?

On the next page Table II contains the data from the schools that stated they employed the spread punt formation in their offense.

The teams tabulated in this table are listed according to their punting averages, which was compiled by The National Collegiate Athletic Bureau.

**TABLE II**  
**TEAMS OF LEADING PUNTERS**  
**THAT USED THE SPREAD PUNT FORMATION, 1950**

Schools	Averages
University of Colorado	48.2
University of Nevada	46.9
University of California at Los Angeles	41.0
University of Kentucky	40.8
Alabama Polytechnic Institute	40.5
University of Virginia	40.2
Brown University	39.2
Syracuse University	39.2
Holy Cross College	39.1
Boston University	39.0
University of Georgia	38.7
Kansas State College	38.5
Columbia University	38.5
Vanderbilt University	38.1
University of Idaho	38.1
Mississippi State College	38.0
University of Oklahoma	37.4
University of Oregon	37.4
Colgate University	37.4
University of Denver	37.4
University of Nebraska	37.3

Total spread punt formation averages - - - - - 40.5

Closed punt formation. Out of the thirty-eight questionnaires received, seventeen or forty-five percent of the sample were schools using the closed punt formation exclusively. The schools using the closed punt formation are tabulated in Table III and presented on the following page. In this table the schools are listed according to their punt averages, which were computed by the National Collegiate Athletic Bureau.

TABLE III

## TEAMS THAT USED THE CLOSED PUNT FORMATION

Schools	Averages
University of Utah	43.2
Brigham Young University	42.4
University of Wisconsin	41.5
University of Kansas	41.2
Baylor University	41.2
The State University of Iowa	41.0
University of North Carolina	40.4
University of Alabama	39.7
College of William and Mary	39.6
The University of Florida	38.8
Agriculture and Mechanical College of Texas	38.8
University of Arkansas	38.3
Washington State College	37.7
Oregon State College	37.7
United States Military Academy	37.6
University of Minnesota	37.3
Montana State University	37.3
Total closed punt formation averages	39.6

**TABLE IV**  
**PUNTS BLOCKED ON TEAMS**  
**USING THE SPREAD PUNT FORMATION**

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Punts Attempted</b>	<b>Punts Blocked</b>
<b>University of Idaho</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Boston University</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Colgate University</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Holy Cross College</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Total number of punts blocked - - - - -</b>		<b>4</b>

**TABLE V**  
**PUNTS BLOCKED ON TEAMS**  
**USING THE CLOSED PUNT FORMATION**

Schools	Punts Attempted	Punts Blocked
University of Minnesota	75	1
University of Florida	62	1
University of Utah	47	1
Brigham Young University	28	3
Oregon State College	36	1
College of William and Mary	25	2
University of Arkansas	60	2

Total number of punts blocked - - - - - 11

**TABLE IV**  
**PUNTS RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWNS ON TEAMS**  
**USING THE SPREAD PUNT FORMATION**

Schools	Punts Attempted	Touchdown Returns
Brown University	46	1
University of Syracuse	44	1
<b>Total number of punts returned for touchdowns - 2</b>		

**TABLE VII**  
**PUNTS RETURNED FOR TOUCHDOWNS ON TEAMS**  
**USING THE CLOSED PUNT FORMATION**

Schools	Punts Attempted	Touchdown Returns
University of Kansas	32	1
University of Iowa	56	2
Baylor University	56	1
Texas A & M	57	1
Washington State College	50	1

Total number of punts returned for touchdowns = 9

Factors that influenced the coaches to use the spread  
punt formation

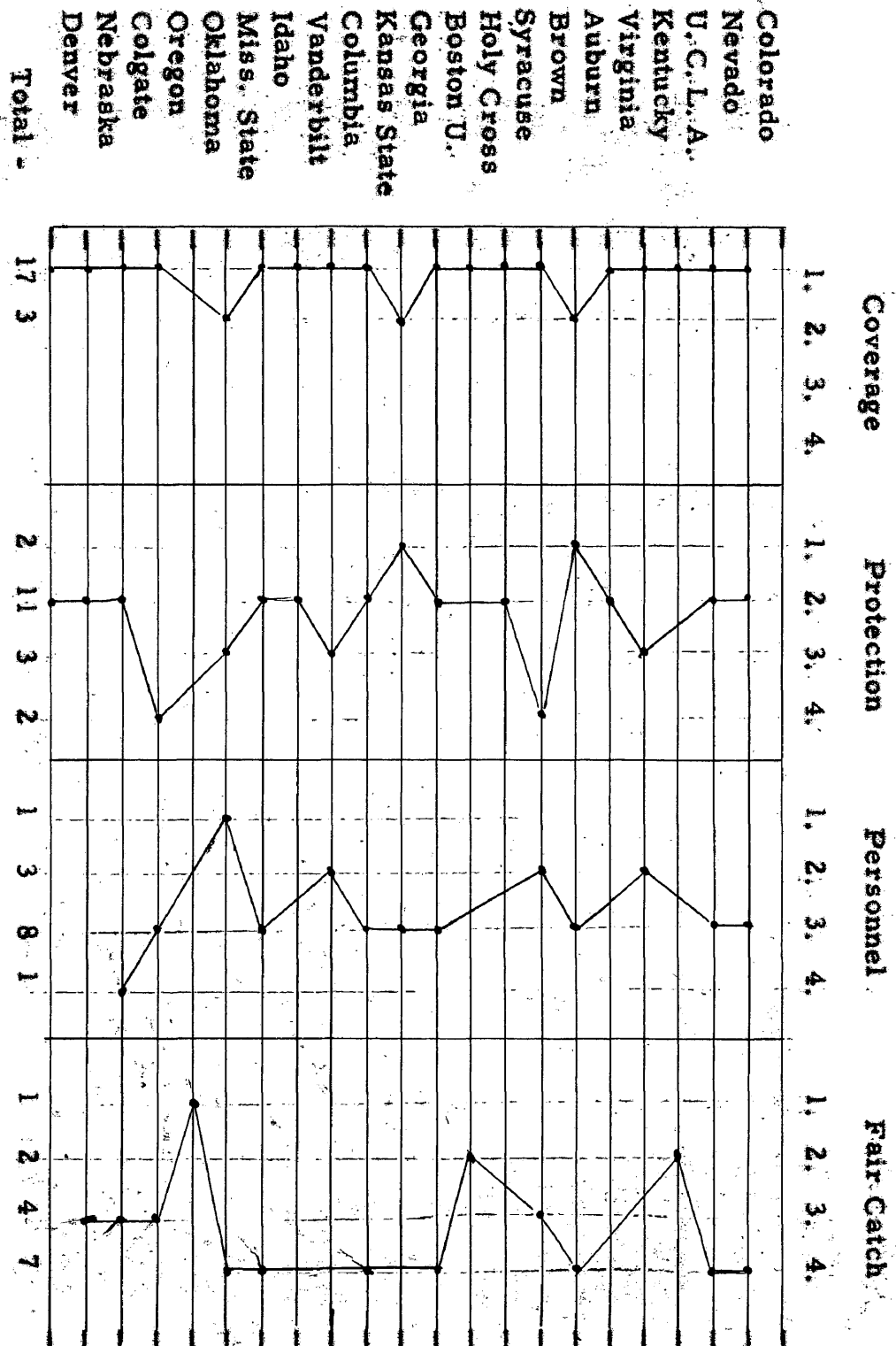
On the questionnaire coaches were asked to list, by preference, the factors that influenced them to introduce the spread punt formation into their offense. Every coach answered this request by ranking one, two, three, or four for each factor to indicate his preference.

In addition, questionnaires were received from the coaches using the Closed Punt formation. Two replies were returned with additional notes as to why the spread punt was not used in their institutions. One said, "Our personnel prevented us from using the spread punt formation." Another said, "We did not use the spread punt formation last year because the center could not pass the ball to the kicker at that distance."

The following graph shows the coaches preferences among the factors influencing them to adopt the spread punt formation.

TABLE VIII

A GRAPH TO SHOW COACHES PREFERENCES FOR CHANGING TO THE SPREAD PUNT FORMATION



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has been designed to analyze the facts and to determine which punt formation offers more advantages for its punters.

The National Collegiate Athletic Bureau tabulated the first fifty punters in the nation, but, of these punters listed, two were from the University of North Carolina, which reduced the total number of questionnaires to be sent, by one. Out of the forty-nine questionnaires sent, thirty-eight were returned to give a percentage of the return of seventy-eight percent. The promptness of the return was very gratifying, but the obstacle that prevented this return from being closer to one-hundred percent was the fact that collegiate coaching had many changes after the 1950 season.

Spread punt formation. The questionnaire returns showed that fifty-five percent of the coaches contacted used the spread punt formation. These twenty-one schools used this formation entirely. The spread punt formation was used exclusively by teams in 222 games throughout the United States during the 1950 football season. In these football games the total attempted punts were 922, which gives an average of 43.9 punts attempted by each school during the season. The average number of punts per game were from four to five, or, to be more specific, the exact was 4.56 per game.

The punt average is very important in this study, but it should be emphasized again that the punter in the spread punt formation lines up four yards farther back than the punter does in the closed punt formation, which gives a total of fourteen yards. Yet, with this difference, the twenty-one teams using the spread punt formation averaged 40.5 yards per kick for the season.

Any computation of averages is very significant but in this study the most important information is how many punts were safely executed. In the schools questioned the total punts blocked were four in 922 attempts which gives the phenomenal odds of 230 1/2 to 1 that a punt will be blocked using the spread punt formation.

The next factor, the most important element in a football game, is the touchdown (which is the determining basis on who shall be the victor). The organized punt return is a very important defensive play in every successful coaches category. The punt return, before the spread punt formation was introduced, played a major role in a team's offense. Many games have been won, or turned into a complete upset, by one second of poor punt execution. The questionnaires revealed that only two punts were returned all the way for a touchdown under the spread punt formation. This evidence gives reasonable proof that if the players carry out their assignments the possibility of having a punt returned for a touchdown is 461 to 1.

while using the spread punt formation.

Closed punt formation. The schools using the closed punt formation were forty-five percent of the total and numbered seventeen. These seventeen schools participated in 164 games during the 1950 season and handled the ball for attempted punts 831 times or a game average of 5.05.

In the closed punt formation, the punter lines up ten yards behind the line of scrimmage. From this point the schools using the closed punt formation averaged 39.61 yards per try for the 1950 Collegiate Football Season.

In this formation, the total punts blocked were eleven out of 831 possible attempts for a chance of having a punt blocked are 75 1/2 to 1.

The possibility of having a punt returned for a touchdown is 92 to 1, since the seventeen schools using the closed punt formation had nine punts returned all the way for a touchdown.

TABLE IX

A COMPARATIVE TABLE OF FORMULATED CONCLUSIONS

Spread punt formation		Closed punt formation	
1. Number of teams - - - - -	21	1. Number of teams - - - - -	17
2. Percentage used by each team - - -	100%	2. Percentage used by each team - - - - -	100%
3. Number of games played - - - - -	222	3. Number of games played - - - - -	164
4. Average number of games played -	9.61	4. Average number of games played - - - -	9.64
5. Total punts attempted - - - - -	922	5. Total punts attempted - - - - -	831
6. Average number of attempted punts	43.9	6. Average number of attempted punts	48.88
per season - - - - -		per season - - - - -	
7. Average attempts per game - - - -	4.56	7. Average attempts per game - - - - -	5.05
8. TOTAL PUNT AVERAGE - - - - -	40.5	8. TOTAL PUNT AVERAGES - - - - -	39.6
9. TOTAL NUMBER OF PUNTS		9. TOTAL NUMBER OF PUNTS	
BLOCKED - - - - -	4	BLOCKED - - - - -	11
10. TOTAL NUMBER OF PUNTS RE-		10. TOTAL NUMBER OF PUNTS RE-	
TURNED FOR TOUCHDOWNS - - -	2	TURNED FOR TOUCHDOWNS - - - - -	9
11. Coaches order of preferences			
a. Coverage			
b. Protection			
c. Personnel			
d. Fair catch			
12. The punter lines up 14 yards behind		11. The punter lines up 10 yards behind	
the line of scrimmage.		the line of scrimmage.	

## Conclusions

In this study more teams went into their ball games using the spread punt formation as a basic kick formation than did the teams using the closed punt formation. However, the teams using the spread punt formation kicked a fewer number of times than the teams using the closed punt formation. This evidence gives ample proof of the offensive advantage to be gained by using the spread punt formation. Whereas more teams went into their ball games using the spread punt formation, they actually kicked a fewer number of times. This is probably due to the four additional yards behind the line of scrimmage or due to the far superior coverage which put the opposing team in "the hole".

In computing averages, the possibility of having a punt blocked tends to vary directly with number of punts attempted, which is a liability to any football team. Yet with this visible liability, the school using the formation had a punting average of 40.5 per try, an advantage over the teams using the closed punt formation that had only a punting average of 39.6 per try.

This advantage might be attributed to the fact that the spread punt formation offers more protection for its kickers.

Due to the superior protection of the spread punt formation, only four out of twenty-one teams in this study had punts blocked. Whereas out of seventeen teams using the closed punt formation, eleven punts were blocked. From this comparison, it is reasonably safe to assume that teams using the spread punt formation will usually have a far lower percentage of punts blocked than will the teams using the closed punt formation.

The return from the questionnaire revealed that the most important single factor that influenced coaches to use the spread punt formation was coverage.

The statistics substantiated the coaches' opinions by showing further that the twenty-one teams using the spread punt formation only had two punts returned for touchdowns. In comparison, the seventeen teams using the closed punt formation had nine punts returned all the way for a touchdown.

In view of all the data presented, the writer concludes that the spread punt formation is the most effective punt formation in modern football.

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**APPENDIX A**

1870 East Ocean View Avenue  
Norfolk, Virginia  
February 24, 1951

Coach R. N. McCray  
College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, Virginia

Dear Coach:

I am in the process of completing my thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts in Physical Education at the College of William and Mary, and your assistance in this questionnaire would be of great value to me.

This past football season, while playing with the Pittsburgh Steelers, I became interested in my thesis topic. I feel that a study of the spread and closed punt formation would be invaluable, so that research can keep abreast with modern football tactics.

Since this is a research on the 1950 season, to be valid, it should be completed before the 1951 season begins. Therefore, your co-operation in completing this questionnaire and returning it in the self-addressed envelope would be greatly appreciated. I am,

Respectfully yours,

George S. Hughes

**APPENDIX B**

1870 East Ocean View Avenue  
Norfolk, Virginia  
March 6, 1951

Coach R. N. McCray  
College of William and Mary  
Williamsburg, Virginia

Dear Coach:

On March the first of this year, I sent you a letter accompanied by a questionnaire.

In order to complete my thesis for a Master's Degree at the College of William and Mary, by this June; it is imperative that I receive your reply. Your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated. I am,

Cordially yours,

George S. Hughes

**APPENDIX C**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The data collected for this questionnaire shall be confidential and used only for this educational purpose.

1. Please fill in, to the closest percentage points, how much you used the following punt formations:

\_\_\_\_\_ Spread Punt Formation

\_\_\_\_\_ Closed or Tight Punt Formation

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of punts blocked while using the Spread Punt Formation

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Punts blocked while using the Closed or Tight Punt Formation

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of punts returned for touchdowns while using the Spread Punt Formation

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Number of punts returned for touchdowns while using the Tight or Closed Punt Formation

6. List by preference the factors that influenced you to introduce the spread punt to your offense:

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Personnel

b. \_\_\_\_\_ Protection

c. \_\_\_\_\_ Coverage

d. \_\_\_\_\_ Fair Catch

7. Please check this space if you would like a copy of the results. \_\_\_\_\_

\* If there is any additional information or suggestions, please use the reverse side.