

MADDEN 10

PRIMA Official Game Guide

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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Madden NFL 10 goes to incredible lengths to provide gamers with a fun pro football experience. The game is packed with thousands of real NFL plays and many brand-new formations. Our guide will take you from learning the fundamentals of playing the game all the way through creating advanced schemes to dominate the competition. Here's how we have organized all of the information in this guide for easy reference:

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE



The **New Features** chapter explains all of the exciting new features that have been added to *Madden NFL 10* this season. From Pro-Tak™ to Online Franchise, this year's game has something new for everyone.



The **Offensive Fundamentals** chapter serves as your pre-season training camp. You'll learn the keys to having a successful running game and master the skills required for a devastating aerial attack.



The **Defensive Fundamentals** chapter shows you the foundation for building a lock-down defense. We'll teach you all the defensive options at your disposal, plus how to shut down the run and unleash killer blitzes.



The **Advanced Strategy** chapter is all about taking your game to the next level. Learn how to attack every type of coverage and how to put together custom-built blitz schemes to get after the quarterback.



The **Team Strategy** chapter is an in-depth breakdown of all 32 NFL teams. We supply complete offensive and defensive scouting reports, key packages, and easy-to-read depth charts. Get a jump on your playbook selection with a list of every formation in each team's book.



The **Offensive Schemes** chapter takes you through five of the most common offensive styles in *Madden NFL 10*. We give you a powerful 16-play (four each from a selected playbook) series from each style that you can plug right into your game plan.



The **Defensive Schemes** chapter will help you stuff opposing offenses before they can even get started. We take you through all of the defensive formations and teach you how to stop both the run and the pass.



The **Career Modes** chapter examines Franchise mode and NFL Superstar mode. We help you with drafting, free agent signing, and making trades so that you can build the next NFL dynasty. We also teach you the ins and outs of building the ultimate athlete in Superstar mode.



The **Depth Charts** chapter gives you a quick look at each team's key roster players. If you are playing Franchise mode and are not sure which team to begin with, this section should help you out.



The **Roster Attributes** chapter gives you the top players at every position along with their key ratings. This is an invaluable resource for players who like to use the Fantasy Draft feature of Franchise mode.

07: DEFENSIVE SCHEMES

No team is constructed the same way. Some defenses work best from the 3–4 personnel sets. Others will excel when they run the 4–3. A fortunate few can run either scheme with great success. In addition, down, distance, and your opponent’s personnel choices will often influence the defensive sets that you use. At times you will need to go to Nickel, Dime, and even Quarter formations to prevent the offense from exploiting mismatches. In this section of the guide we show you a number of our favorite plays from each personnel group so you’ll have a powerful base defensive scheme that you can build from.



INTRODUCTION

This year in *Madden NFL 10*, each team rolls with its own specific defensive playbook. Most teams in the NFL primarily run a four down linemen scheme; however, more and more teams are making the switch to the 3-4 schemes. As a matter of fact, there are now 13 teams in *Madden* that run the 3-4 as their base set. Here we take a look at each of the defensive sets and formations in the game. Next, we'll break down some of our favorite plays from each set.

3-4 SET



The 3-4 is a defense that has three defensive linemen, four linebackers, and four defensive backs. The 3-4 is good to use if you have a better set of linebackers than linemen. The idea of having four linebackers is so there is more speed on defense. The three defensive linemen's purpose is to keep the offensive linemen off the linebackers so they can make the plays. The strength of the 3-4 is in stop-

ping the outside run. You also get good coverage for short passes with the extra linebacker. The weakness of the 3-4 is that it struggles against the inside run, and you will not get a lot of pressure from your line. You can get pressure on the quarterback from the inside as well as the outside if you decide to use the 3-4. One new 3-4 defense has been added to the game this year—the Predator. It places the right outside linebacker on the line of scrimmage in a three-point stance.

4-3 SET



The basic 4-3 defense is good against the inside running game and gives you a strong pass rush from your four down linemen. There are three linebackers. The right outside linebacker (Will) is generally the team's fastest linebacker. He should be able to blitz from his side and bring heat on the QB. The middle linebacker (Mike) is normally the defensive team's quarterback. He should be able to make all the adjustments and let his teammates know what is going on. The left outside linebacker (Sam) often covers the tight end, blitzes, or covers the short zones to that side. There are four defensive backs on field when running the 4-3 scheme. The primary responsibilities for the corners are to play man or zone coverage. The safeties play man or zone coverage as well. They are also asked at times to play up near the line of scrimmage to help defend the run.

4-4 SET



The 4-4 defense is brand-new to *Madden*. By replacing a safety with an extra linebacker, this defense is going to be strong against the run but flexible enough to defend the pass. You will find the 4-4 in only one defensive playbook—that of the Tennessee Titans.

46 SET



The 46 Normal defense can wreak havoc on the opposing team's passing game with multiple defenders blitzing from all directions. The 46 Normal defense can cause turnovers in a hurry. It's also a great run defense to call because it places eight men in the box.

NICKEL SET



The Nickel defense traditionally has four linemen, but you will also find formations that have one, two, or three down linemen. The primary use of this set is as a pass defense. It is still decent against the run as it does still bring two linebackers to the field. You want your four best pass rushers on the defensive line. Your two best cover linebackers should be in the nickel as well. The fifth DB (nickelback) you bring in should be your third best cover corner. The object of the Nickel defense is to get enough defenders to cover the offense's multiple receivers. When you see the offense using 3WR, 4WR, and 5WR sets, call the Nickel defense. A new Nickel defense has been added to the game—the Nickel Odd Split. You will find it in the Jets' and Ravens' playbooks.

DIME SET



The Dime defense brings in a sixth DB, plus has four linemen and one linebacker. This gives the defense six defensive backs to defend the pass. It is mostly used against 4WR and 5WR sets when you know the offense is going to throw the ball. When using the Dime defense you are sacrificing the run defense to be able to stop the pass.

DOLLAR SET



The Dollar set only has one formation—the Dollar Normal. It's very similar to the Dime in the sense that it has six DBs. However, an extra linebacker is added to the mix, replacing the weak-side DT. This gives the Dollar defense a little more speed to defend against the pass.

QUARTER SET



The Quarter defense is used to counter multiple receiver sets like the Gun 5WR. The defense consists of three down linemen, one linebacker, and seven defensive backs. This allows the Quarter defense to clog up the passing lanes. If you plan on using this defense as a run defense, forget it. It is not designed to stop the run. There are two Quarter defenses—Quarter Normal and Quarter Combo (3 Deep).

3-4 DEFENSIVE SCHEMES

3-4 OVER STRONG—PINCH ZONE



The 3-4 Over Strong—Pinch Zone is a two-deep zone blitz concept that sends six pass rushers after the quarterback. Both outside linebackers bring pressure from the outside. We like to re-blitz the right outside linebacker so that his blitz angle shoots straight down.



Once the ball is snapped, the left guard and left tackle look to block the nose tackle and the right end. The center slides over to block the right inside linebacker. With these offensive linemen preoccupied, the right outside linebacker should have a clear path to the quarterback.



Having a fast right outside linebacker is a must so that he can use his speed to quickly go after the quarterback. Another key attribute to look for is block shedding. If a back were to try to pick up the blitzing linebacker, the defender has less of a chance of being blocked if he has a high block shed rating.

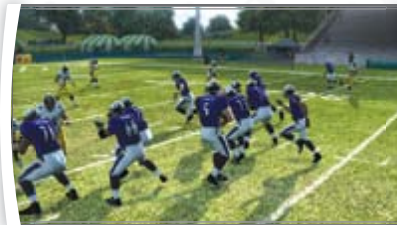


The pass coverage is solid with three defenders dropping back in hook zones. The two safeties play two-deep coverage. The weakness of this defense is the flats and the deep middle, which are both left uncovered. As long as pressure gets to the quarterback quickly, this zone blitz defense is pretty solid.

3-4 NORMAL—CB DOGS BLITZ



A rock-solid zone blitz to call to prevent the quarterback from rolling out is the 3-4 Normal—CB Dogs Blitz. This blitz sends the two cornerbacks on a blitz from the outside. The two outside linebackers drop back in buzz zones, while the two inside linebackers play hook zones. The safeties play a Cover 2 shell.



Because the cornerbacks blitz, the quarterback more than likely won't see them during his initial drop. All he will see is a

three-man pass rush coming. For this reason, he may feel comfortable at first and not expect any type of outside pressure.



If he tries to roll out to the left or right side, he will find that he is in trouble because the Steelers' cornerbacks are closing in on him. The guards won't be looking to block them, because they are focused on the three defensive linemen.



The left cornerback wraps up the quarterback in the backfield for a 7-yard loss. The weakness of this blitz is that the flats and deep middle of the field are left uncovered. Keep in mind that if the pass is thrown to the flats, the outside linebackers will close in quickly since they are playing the curl flat zones.

3-4 STACK—OLB FIRE MAN





The 3-4 Stack—OLB Fire Man is a Cover 0 defense. There is no deep safety help. For this defense to be successful the pressure must get to the quarterback quickly or there is a good chance of giving up a big play. To set this defense up, we first re-blitz the two outside linebackers.



We then want to spread the linebackers out. Notice they now blitz outside of the offensive tackles as opposed to blitzing inside of them. We also like to call delayed bump-n-run man coverage. This prevents the receivers from getting out in the routes quickly.



The key to success for this defense is that the heat must come quickly from one of the outside linebackers. James Harrison is left unblocked and is able to go straight after the quarterback because all the offensive linemen are preoccupied blocking the other pass rushers.



The quarterback is unable to find an open receiver since the Steelers' pass coverage is tight. Harrison goes straight after the quarterback, and the result is a sack. We suggest controlling the defender covering the running back. If he stays in to pass block, drop the defender back in deep coverage.

3-4 UNDER—PINCH



A good man blitz defense that brings B gap pressure on the quarterback is the 3-4 Under—Pinch. This is another Cover 0 defense that has no safety playing deep. There is a six-man pass rush. The right outside linebacker, right inside linebacker, and left outside linebacker blitz the quarterback.



The pressure generally comes from the right inside linebacker. That's because

the left tackle slides out to block the right outside linebacker. The left guard blocks the nose tackle. This creates a gap for the right inside linebacker to shoot through to get pressure on the quarterback.



Something to consider when calling this blitz is to call bump-n-run man coverage to disrupt the receivers' pass routes. If there is a receiver lined up in the slot, he won't be jammed since a safety covers him.



Consider moving the safety up closer to the slot receiver, so that the quarterback can't throw a quick pass. As long as the right inside linebacker is able to shoot through the B gap, unblocked, the quarterback won't have much time in the pocket to find an open receiver.

3-4 NORMAL—WIDE BLITZ



A good outside run defense to use against counter tosses, sweeps, and other outside run plays is the 3-4 Normal—Wide Blitz. If the offense comes out in a tight formation such as the I-Form Tight, notice that the cornerback will come in closer if no receiver lines up across from him.



If this happens, manually move him back outside. If you don't, there is good chance he will be blocked by one of the pulling offensive linemen or the fullback. By moving him outside his chances of being blocked are greatly reduced.



With the cornerback now lined up outside, he will get a better angle for blowing up the outside run play. In this example, the offense is running a toss play to the left side. Notice how the offensive linemen are unable to block him.



The cornerback closes in and makes the tackle on the running back as he tries to get outside. He may also get help from the right outside linebacker or free safety, depending on how the run blocking shapes up.

3-4 OVER—ENGAGE EIGHT



One of the more popular run defenses in the game is the Engage Eight. The play can be found in just about every defensive formation in the game. With eight defenders run blitzing, the offensive linemen are outnumbered. One of the ways we like to run it is to bring the strong safety down in the box.



At least one defender will get through and go straight after the ball carrier. Sometimes it may be an inside linebacker or the strong safety getting through untouched. Other times it may be one of the outside linebackers.



In this example, notice that the right outside linebacker is left unblocked. The quarterback is handing the ball off to the halfback just as the right outside linebacker gets in the backfield. There isn't much the halfback can do as he is tackled for a loss.

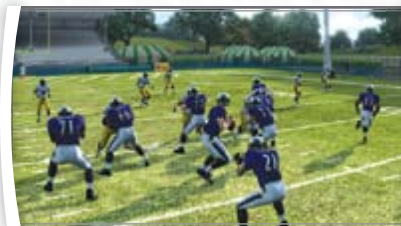


If you decide to call this play, understand that you risk giving up a big play because you are selling out your defense to stop the run. There are only three defenders playing zone coverage. It's best to run this against basic under center formations such as the I-Form Normal.

3-4 UNDER—DROP ZONE



The 3-4 Under—Drop Zone is a solid zone coverage defense that defends most areas of the field. This defense has the secondary playing four-deep coverage. The right and left outside linebackers play buzz zones, while the two inside linebackers play hook zones.



There is only a three-man pass rush, so the quarterback may have time to sit in the pocket and look for an open receiver. As far as the pass coverage goes, even with all that time the quarterback may not be able to find an open receiver before one of the three down linemen is able to get to him.



With the secondary playing four-deep coverage, it will be hard for the offense to attack vertically. If the quarterback tries to throw to a receiver running a corner route, the outside linebackers will be able to help the cornerbacks out.



The cornerbacks play over the top, while the outside linebackers play underneath. If the pass is thrown off target, one of them will be in position to pick the pass off or at least knock the ball down. The one area of the field that is open for a pass is the flats.

3-4 EVEN—2 MAN PRESS



One of the more popular pass coverages in the game is 2 Man Under. The 3-4 Even—2 Man Press has two cornerbacks in man lock press coverage by the default design of the play. The two safeties split out wide and play two-deep coverage.



The right inside linebacker drops back in a hook zone. The right and left outside linebackers, plus the left inside linebacker, are in man coverage. They do not jam the receivers across from them.



There is only a three-man pass rush from the down linemen, so the quarterback has time to look for an open receiver. If he tries to throw over the short middle, the right inside linebacker may be in posi-

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How to stop every offensive tactic you can imagine including: defending the mobile QB, defending the deep ball, defending crossing routes, defending backs out of the back field and more!

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