

# Waconia's Two Platoon System and Short Yardage Offense

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After graduating from Bemidji State in 1974, my varsity head coaching career began in Grand Meadow, MN, in 1977. I continued head coaching duties at Archbishop Brady high school in 1984 and St. Bernard's in 1985-87. I have spent the last twenty years at Waconia where we have had conference championship in 1992 and 2006, and section championships in 1992 and 2007. Both 1992 and 2007 teams advanced to the semifinals, where they were beat by eventual state champions Detroit Lakes and Totino Grace, respectively.

My article will have two major areas. First, I will discuss our ideas as to why we choose to platoon on offense and defense. Secondly, I will discuss how we have implemented our short yardage plays into our offense.



Five years ago we decided to go two platoon football. We had twenty one seniors returning to our program and we felt that most of them were good enough to start on one side or the other. We had seen Glencoe-Sibler Lake have great success with platoon football, so we decided to give it a shot. In the previous five years, we had won fifteen games and missed the playoffs the last three years. Since we started to platoon, we have won thirty five games, with a conference and sectional championship and have won nineteen games over the last two years.

## Reasons to Platoon

1. Use more players. Twenty-two starters will get more players involved and your parents will be pleased.
2. You can concentrate on coaching one side of the ball. Better preparation time on weekends and during the week.
3. Utilizes practice time better, offense, defense, and special teams. It doubles your repetitions in practice.
4. Improves special teams. More time to practice and you can use your offense and defensive starters on special teams because they have time to rest.
5. Improves overall numbers. More players starting means more kids want to play because they have an opportunity to start.
6. Wear down your opponents in the second half. Our players are fresher in the second half because they are only going

one way. We have won games trailing in the fourth quarter and also maintained close leads because we have more energy.

7. More success for your junior varsity. They are practicing against varsity starters on both offense and defense and they will improve as the year goes on.

8. Gives you more depth. If a player gets injured, you only lose him on offense or defense, not both.

9. Varsity will improve as the season goes on. You should be playing your best at playoff time because of your improvement through the year, with all of the extra repetitions you are getting.

The second area I want to discuss is using our short yardage, or goal line, offense as a part of our basic package. Over the years we have been and I-slot, or Double Slot team. When we are inside the ten yard line, we will usually go to a Power I set with two tight ends. This year we had great success using our Power I package in all situations. We only had one linemen over 200 pounds, but we did have a 6'3", 215 pound back that gained over 1,500 yards.

Reasons for short yardage plays in your basic package

1. Difficult to defend. Teams would have to change personnel when we went to short yardage. Example; extra defensive lineman or linebacker.
2. Change the tempo of the game. We are seeing more and more spread offenses and we can slow the game down with

the ball control and short yardage type offense.

3. Rest our defense. By staying on the field for a longer period of time and converting first downs will rest the defense.

4. Helps in bad weather and poor field conditions. We were able to win a few games this year, where the field was in terrible shape, and we were able to run the ball in our Power I set.

5. Utilize our personnel. We would bring in an extra tight end(defensive end) and fullback(middle linebacker) and take out our slot and split end.

6. Become more physical. There wre game where we would start out slow and not block very well in our double slot set, so we would go to the Power I set and have success running ball.

7. More balanced run and pass. We had the best statistics for our quarterback: touchdowns, completions, and interceptions we have ever had and also our running back gained over 1,500 yards.

8. Use the clock. We were able to run the ball successfully in the fourth quarter of many games this year because of the faith we had in our short yardage offense.

In summary, I would like to thank the Minnesota Football Coaches Association for the opportunity to write this article. Coaching is an honorable profession. Many of my closest friends are guys that I have coached with or against.