

How Many Formations, For Youth Football Teams?

Many youth football coaches are looking for help in determining the right number of offensive formations for their youth football teams. The optimum number all depends on the age and experience level of your specific team.

Many coaches feel the more formations they have, the more complex and difficult it will be for the defense to stop the offense. I'm not sure I buy into that train of thought and at some point there is a diminishing returns point as you spend inordinate amounts of time working on formationing, you confuse the kids and lose practice time elsewhere. Many times in the leagues my teams have played in, the teams with the most formations are the teams with the lowest offensive scoring output. If a formation that is different from your base formation gives your team an advantage, it may make sense to have an additional formation of two. But if you add formations in just so you can say you are running additional formations, that makes little sense to me. Formation advantages could include getting better blocking angles for specific plays, isolating a back or receiver on a weaker defender, adding more punch to the point of attack, decoying the defense or taking a dominant defender out of the play.

In 2002 the first year I ran the Single Wing, we ran everything out of the base unbalanced that we still run today. We had nearly all rookie players age 8-10 and I had the youngest team in the league that year. It was also my first year running the Single Wing Offense. We did fine with it (11-1) and in retrospect I probably could have added the "double" and "nasty" formations in toward midseason. In 2006 I had a team of 8-10's where over half of the kids were in their 2nd or 3rd year, we ran the base, nasty, double, mesh, split and war formations because of the experience level and intelligence level of this team. With the exception of the Mesh formation, all the other formations are tiny adjustments to the base that are simple to put in.

There is a matrix in the book that shows you which formations you should be running with the age and experience levels your particular teams has. We do the same for the football plays as well, which football plays make sense for each team based on age and experience. For rookie teams, just one formation probably makes a lot of sense for the first game or two and for some teams maybe the entire season. Add additional formations in only as your team masters the offense and other aspects of the game.

We will run our base football plays out of several different formations, but each formation does something to add to the play. We don't change formations just to say we can or to give the defense a different "look", we do it to gain specific advantages.

Here are the poll results of over 75 Successful Single Wing Coaches on the Number of Formations they ran in 2006:

One Base Formation: 11% Just The Base Plus a Nasty Split: 15% Three Formations: 45% Four Formations: 15% Five Formations: 4% Six or More Formations: 11%

So as you can see, 71% of successful Single Wing coaches run three formations or less. I'm not preaching out in the wilderness on this one.

Don't be one of those jack of all trades master of none guys we see so often coaching youth football. Master your base formation first, then add in what only gives you very specific quantifiable advantages.

Article written by Dave Cisar.

About the Author

[Cristiano Ronaldo](#)

Source: <http://www.tntarticles.com>