



Introduction

They say the college years are the best of your life. Short of starting an adult fraternity, there isn't really any way to relive the glory days. Thankfully, modern gaming technology has deemed it fit to provide us with NCAA Football 07. It's time to break out the funnel; you're going back to class.

It doesn't matter how you spent your formative years. This time through you'll be the big man on campus. Not everyone is blessed with the athletic prowess of Vince Young or the football knowledge of Charlie Weis. That's why IGN Guides is here. We'll get you on the right path towards a national championship.

Look inside the guide for:

- **Basics**: Starter info.
- **Offense**: How to score touchdowns and maintain possession of the ball. We'll give you a crash-course in formations and play calling.
- **Defense**: Read here to learn how to stuff the run and avoid getting burned on the deep pass. Formations, tips, and play calling are covered inside.
- **Dynasty**: Maintaining a national powerhouse can be quite a task. Taking your no-name school to a national championship can be even tougher. Read here for help.
- **Top 25 Teams**: An overview of the best schools and tips to take advantage of their impact players.
- **Secrets**: Achievement points and pennant codes. Cheaters always win.

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Basics

Audibles

Setting audibles is very easy. Just select the team's playbook you want to work on, then choose whether you want to edit the offense or defense. Select what button you want the play to be triggered from, then cycle through the available formations and pick your play. You can choose to flip any play at this level, and that is how it will be called during the audible.

Make sure you get into the habit of setting and calling audibles. These are plays that you can suddenly switch to after you've already selected a play. The strengths to this are obvious. You can scout out the opponent's defense and then select a new play. If they come out in a Dime, switching to a running play might be a great idea. Likewise if you notice their formation is designed to stop the running play you just called. Switch it to a deep pass and you'll have an easy touchdown.



Rosters

As you know, the names of the players are not included in the game for licensing reasons and college regulations. However, EA has allowed you to enter the names yourself, if you feel behooved to. If you want, you can tell the game to auto-generate names for the players, but that's no fun. We've compiled this section for those of you who love the game enough to enter the challenging (and sometimes frustrating) world of roster editing.

For the most up-to-date rosters, you'll have to head to the individual team pages found on the Internet. It's best to start with a search for the school's official site. Type something like "tcu athletics" to find the home of the Horned Frogs. Then navigate to the Football section of the athletic page. If you go to the front of any team's page, you're looking for the "2007 Roster" or "Meet the Team" or "Players" option. The team's official site is usually the most up-to-date and accurate source for information, but even then, sometimes you'll need to wait until closer to the season's start in order to get the best info. Once you've got a rough roster put together, work between the various sources (like ESPN or CNNSI) to compile the complete save.

Working off of a team's numerical roster is easiest, as you can quickly scan the list to get the number you want. Once you match the number and position, make sure the player's class in the game matches that indicated on the web site. Then match stats like weight and height. If everything is a go (or at least three of four categories matches), enter the name.



One thing to note: in college guys move around a lot. Tight ends become linebackers. Safeties become wide receivers, etc. It is not that big of a deal if you see that a QB changed to a WR, as long as the rest of the stats match. Another thing to watch is the different names that certain colleges have for positions. For instance, some schools call certain receivers flankers. Below is a chart for some of the conversions:

ROV=SS, FS, or LB
 FL=WR
 SE=WR
 NG=DL or DT
 RB=HB or FB
 ILB= MLB or LB

In addition, centers (C) might just show up as offensive linemen (OL), halfbacks (HB) or fullbacks (FB) might appear as running backs (RB) and more specified linebackers (ROLB, MLB, ILB) might simply appear as just LB.

You can not only edit the names of 1A schools, but 1AA and Historic squads as well. Finding info on some of the smaller schools and historic teams can be a challenge, but most things will eventually present themselves if you scour the web long enough. With these things in mind, go forth and build your mighty save. Good luck!

What sorts of plays consistently work on offense?

Check out the [Offense](#) section of this guide for some specific information. Or, if playing with a Top 25 team, visit the [Top 25 Team](#) section of the guide for specific pointers for those squads.

In general, inside runs are still quite successful, especially if you have a strong back. Ace-HB Dives and Blasts should be used liberally. If you have a speedy quarterback, use the option. If one or more of your receivers are fast, Streaks plays work well. In fact, any fly pattern or deep passing play will work more often than not -- the deep pass coverage in this year's version is especially weak.



What's a good base defense?

Although it partially depends on your personnel, the 4-3 Spy Gold play is both convenient and quite effective. Manipulate the MLB and use him to stuff the run, cut around the corner to put pressure on the QB, or stay in the middle of the field

and cover ends and backs crossing. Other than that, Cover 2 seems to work well. If you have a good secondary, a variety of blitzes will do good things for you. Try the 4-3 Thunder Green if you want to stay relatively safe.

My favorite team is terrible and I want to make them better. What should I do?

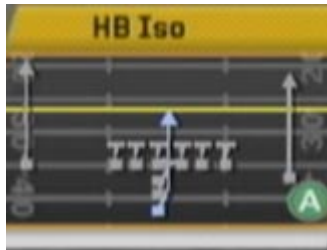
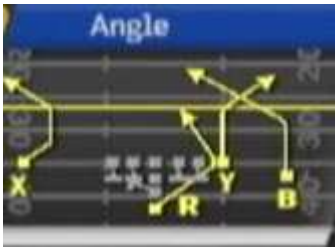
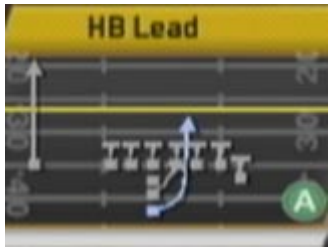
It can be very hard to take a team from the dumps to a NCAA Championship. Start by giving yourself a very easy schedule. Even if your schedule strength is terrible, you'll get more prospects interested in you if you can pull off a winning season. After that, focus all your efforts on recruiting a few good players. It is easiest to start by getting a running game going. Look to run the ball as often as you can and recruit a 3 or 4 star HB. Running the ball is easier at the beginning because you only need one player (the HB) to start getting first downs. Without a good QB and WR, you'll end up throwing a lot of interceptions on tipped passes.

Offense

Formations

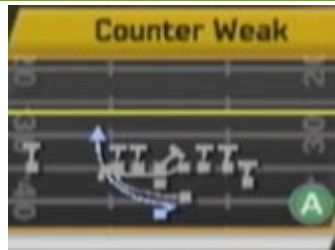
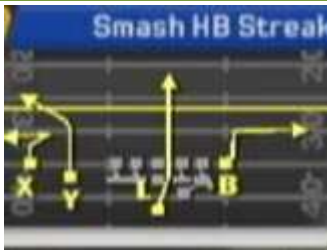
I-Form

In this formation, the halfback and fullback line up directly behind the quarterback, forming an "I." Normally, there is one wide out on either side and one tight end, although in the Twins and Y-Trips versions of this set, receivers can be stacked disproportionately to one side of the line. The I-Form is great for running inside, as the fullback usually provides a lead block for the halfback. It also provides for a lot of passing to backs coming out of the backfield. The I-Form is also useful for running some types of option plays. Here are a couple of our favorite plays out of the I.

		
I-Form-Normal: HB Iso This is a standard, bread-and-butter running play. Take and bang up inside, following the block of the fullback. If you have a decent O-line, this play can be flogged to death, especially against CPU opponents. If nothing exists inside, don't be afraid to cut outside with a speedy back.	I-Form-Normal: Angle One of the most consistently successful passing plays from this set, look to the halfback sneaking to the center of the field. The tight end on the right side of the formation is another good target.	I-Form-Twins: HB Lead The classic HB Lead is another good staple running play. If it's plugged up inside, you can easily cut this to the corner and get to the sideline for beaucoup yards.

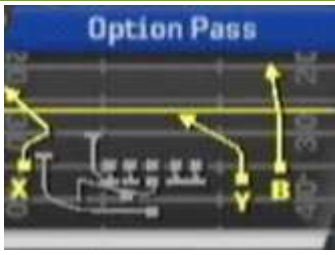
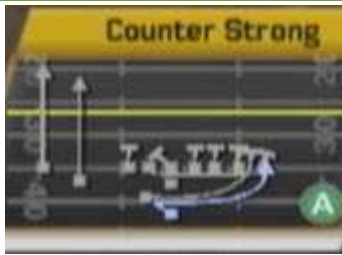
Strong

In the Strong formation, the fullback is offset a bit right, on the same side as the tight end. The idea here is that you're loading up the right side of the formation with blockers. Run over this side or pass underneath after the coverage commits to the right. Strong plays normally happen quickly, and are designed primarily for short yardage.

	
Strong- Twins: Counter Weak This is a good change of pace running play with lots of bodies in motion, and it's most effective when run with an exceptionally speedy back. Just wait momentarily for blocks to develop, or you could be tackled prematurely.	Strong-Twins: Smash HB Streak The halfback streaking up the middle is the primary target you should be looking to on this pass play, but the left slot receiver is also a good choice.


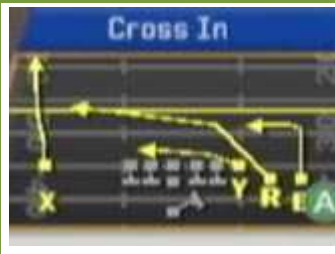
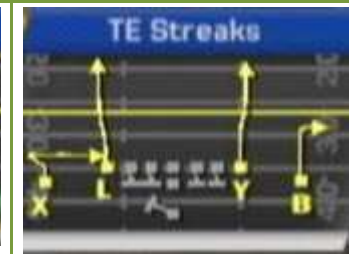
Weak

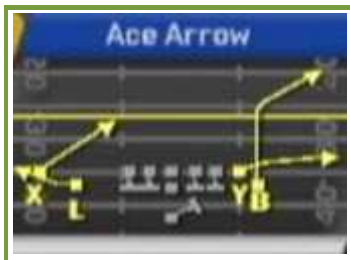
In the Weak formation, the fullback is offset a bit left, opposite of the tight end. Still primarily a running formation, this also allows for easy passing to the two backs out of the backfield.

	
Weak-Slot: Option Pass This is a nifty little play, because it lets you choose after the snap whether to run or pass. Once you take, look to the left. If the run is available around the corner, take off, but be sure to avoid bringing up the passing icons. If you get hassled, you can pitch out to the trailing back. If the run isn't there right off the bat, chances are the pass is. The most consistently open target is right across the middle.	Weak-Twins: Counter Strong This is a nice little misdirection running play. It's often successful due to the fact that so much meat is out front blocking as the back rounds the corner. If your runner is fast, he'll hit the edge and really be able to fly.

Ace

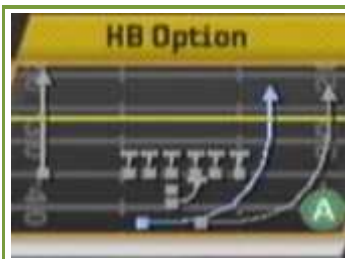
The Ace formation is balanced for the run and pass. One back (usually the halfback) lines up five yards behind the QB. This leaves one tight end and several receivers to catch passes. The Ace formation is versatile, but what you do with it depends on your personnel and the version of it you select. If you have a speedy back, you may want to run sweep and toss running plays out of this formation, because one of its main characteristics is that it spreads the field. If your back doesn't have the wheels, keep him in the backfield to protect the QB as he passes.

		
Ace-Big Twins: HB Dive/HB Blast Two tight ends are added to this package, making it a nice running formation. Either the Blast or Dive play can serve as a staple of your inside rushing game.	Ace- Y-Trips: Cross In Three receivers are lined up to the right... two WRs and a TE. If you have a decent tight end, look for him coming open across the middle, then bust some tackles. Otherwise, capitalize on the confusion that three similar crossing routes creates.	Ace-Normal: TE Streaks This lovely little ditty features two tight ends streaking up the field, which can create some serious matchup problems for the defense. If you have an accomplished tight end on your squad, be sure this play is in your arsenal. You'll be able to rain pass after pass over the top and drop it into outstretched arms.

	
<p>Ace-Big Twins: Ace Arrow One of the best offensive plays you can run is the Ace-Big Twins: Ace Arrow play. If the receiver crossing from left to right is not open, you should be able to nail the other left receiver looping up the sideline. Pump fake to freeze the D, then loft it and let him come down with it.</p>	<p>Ace-Big Twins: HB Option This is a rare option play out of the Ace set, but it's actually pretty effective, due to the extra beefy blocking on the outsides. Scoot your QB around the corner and try to turn upfield. If nothing is there, eat the ball or huck it out to the waiting halfback.</p>

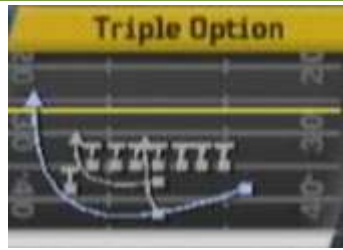
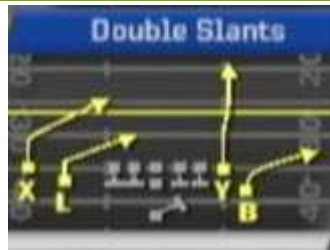
Wishbone

The Wishbone formation is a pure running formation, and, more specifically, an option running formation. There are two wide receivers and three backs (in addition to the QB).


<p>Wishbone-Normal: HB Option This is an excellent, excellent option play. The QB will give to the first halfback, who will sprint out and around the edge. If he runs into opposition on the perimeter, he can option out to a wider back. It's a brilliant play, and can be very effective when used with a pair of decent backs.</p>

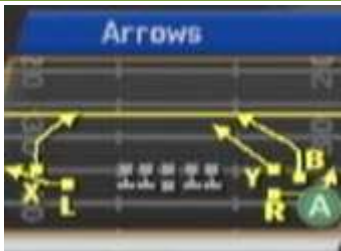
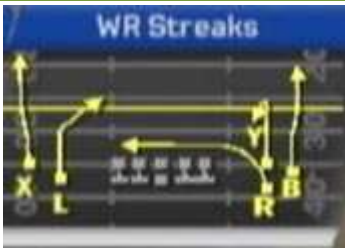
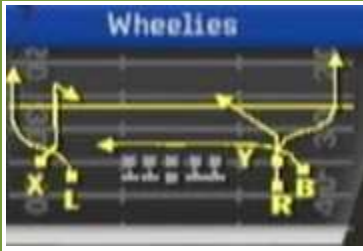
Flexbone

Another formation used to run the option, the Flexbone has one back deep, and then either two shallow wingbacks or one wingback and an extra slot receiver.

	
Flexbone-Tight: Triple Option This is a triple option. You can take and give to the fullback immediately by holding the snap button after the ball is hiked. Or, you can take things outside, breaking around the corner. If your QB gets bogged down, toss the ball out on the option to the halfback.	Flexbone-Split: Double Slants Slant plays tend to work well in general, and this play has double the fun. The tight end streaking deep is another good option. Pump fake to freeze the D, and then put it up.

No Back

The No Back formation is just what it sounds like. No tailback, no halfback, nothing. All available players that aren't on the line are used as receivers. This formation is good when you need a lot of yards in a hurry. However, you are susceptible to the blitz in this formation, as there is no one to pick up attackers.

		
No Back- Normal: Arrows Any passing pattern that has multiple targets posting over the middle is going to be successful. This one has the added benefit of a slot guy sneaking out into the flat late. A great all-around play.	No Back-Normal: WR Streaks This is a great deep play, especially if you have speedy outside receivers. A perfect jump ball play when you need a chunk of yardage in a hurry. If nothing is open deep, take a gander at the right slot receiver dragging across the middle.	No Back-Normal: Wheelies The routes on either side of the field sometimes result in some not-so-inadvertent "picking," allowing for some wide open possibilities downfield. If nothing presents itself on either side of the field, take a look at the receiver dragging from right to left late in the play.

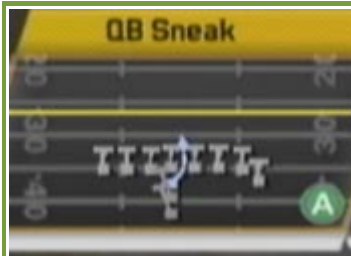
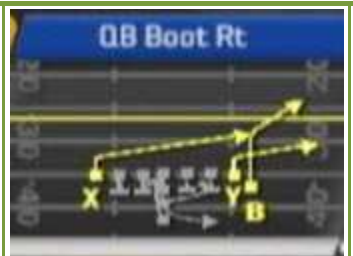
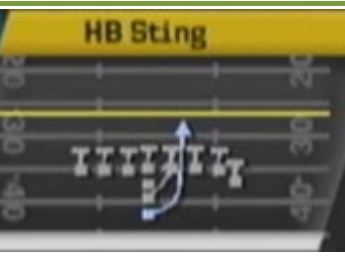
Shotgun

The shotgun formation is primarily used for passing. The QB takes a couple of steps back off the line and the ball is snapped back to him. The extra distance gives him a chance to survey the field and read the defense before dishing the ball.

		
Shotgun-2 Back Slot: RB Deep In this play, both backs take off up the field, resulting in some serious matchup problems for the D. This is an especially effective play if you have a sturdy and speedy back. Loft the ball up to him and watch the magic happen.	Shotgun- Spread: Deep Attack The streaking outside receivers should provide you with decent home run ball opportunities, especially if one or both of them are speedsters. Late in the play, you can bail yourself out with a halfback dump off if need be.	Shotgun-5 Wide: Middle Attack As you'd expect from this formation, it's all about going downfield. Look to the speedy receivers to stretch the field, and if that's not there, look underneath. Just beware of lurking linebackers.

Goal Line

Goal line formations are designed for short yardage. More often than not, you'll be running this formation when you need to pick up a couple of inches or maybe a yard. There is massive run support and protection, with two tight ends, a fullback and only one receiver.

		
Goal Line: QB Sneak This is an important play to keep in mind when you need a yard or less going into the endzone. Provided your line gets a decent push, it's just a matter of finding a crease and squeezing into it.	Goal Line: QB Boot Rt This can be flipped if you have more room to the left. This play works because the QB rolls to the same side that the action is going to. Throw it to one of three tight ends... one of them is almost always open.	Goal Line: HB Sting Just follow the block of the fullback and punch it into the endzone. No frills, just straight running. Try this one on first or second, before resorting to more crafty playcalling.

Other Formations

There are a couple of other formations in the game that are specific to individual schools. The Maryland-I, Pro, and Power-T fit into this category. Mostly, these unique formations offer more running options, but you'll want to look to the same plays that work in the more traditional formations listed above: crossing routes that create mismatches, well-blocked misdirection runs and the like.

Offensive Tips

General

If playing at home, and the crowd is going crazy, make sure you calm them down before attempting a play, especially if you need to audible.

Always take a look at the opponent's set-up using the match-up stick. This will give you a thumbnail view of weaknesses in the defense. In addition to seeing which players don't stack up to your guys, you'll get a quick idea of how composed the other team is. If you see a lot of rattled players, that means the opposition is considerably weaker than their original ratings. Pick on the players who can't hack the big game, and you'll come out victorious.

For the most part, you want to run plays toward the open side of the field. For instance, if you're on the left hash mark, run a play to the right side. This will allow your receivers enough room to run their routes, or backs space to bust out around the corner.

Make sure you know your audibles well before heading into battle. You'll want to have a long and short yardage pass, an inside run, and one kill clock play. To set audibles, go to Features and Create-a-Playbook.

Make use of your Impact Players. If your QB is in the zone, choose a passing play. Likewise, if your FB or HB gets in the zone, set up a play that will allow them to break out for a big run.

Passing

Passing is about finding a rhythm. You have to deliver the ball at the right moment in order to properly hook up with a receiver. Learn the routes and time your releases accordingly. A good place to do this is in Practice Mode.

If you're scrambling, make sure you set before you throw the ball. Unless you're a scrambling virtuoso, the ball will float and fly all wonky if you don't pause and collect yourself before heaving the ball downfield.

Try not to throw into double coverage. Sometimes you'll squeak the ball in, but it's more likely it will be batted or picked. Besides, double coverage usually means that another player is in single. If you have a good receiver (especially on a fly pattern) just chuck it up and let him come down with it. Remember: the advantage is usually with the receiver on a well-thrown ball.

Passing is analog, so practice with the touch on passes in order to throw the perfect ball. You don't want to rifle the ball on a screen pass, and you don't want to zip a fade pass, because you'll just end up drilling your receiver in the back. Conversely, it's pretty easy to float the ball if you just tap the button. The longer the ball stays airborne, the likelier it is to be snatched.

Be careful with the tapping, though. If your routes are close to the sidelines, you'll want to put a little more mustard on the pass, or it will end up fluttering out of bounds, and no one wants that (well, maybe your opponents do).

If you have the time, use the pump fake. This will often freeze the secondary for just enough time to make a receiver come free. Fake in the opposite direction that you're planning to throw to further confuse the defense.

There are several trick passing plays in the game, and most involve a player other than the QB making a pass. In these situations, make sure your player is completely set before throwing, and make sure you have adequate time to complete the play. If the opposing team has consistently been getting in your backfield, avoid trick plays.

Running

Don't be afraid of exploiting a play over and over. If the defense cannot stop repeated dives up the middle, there's no need to get fancy. Just cram the ball down their throats until they force you back.

Wait for your blockers... but not too long. If you're running a lead play or sweep, wait a moment for the play to set up. You'll see immediately if it's there. If it isn't, just turn upfield and try to find any kind of hole. It's better to make a short gain (or even a short loss) than to run around all willy-nilly in the backfield and get dragged down for a huge deficit.

Since momentum is a factor in NCAA, don't try to cut back too severely, unless it's scripted in the play. Otherwise, you can get stuffed deep and take a loss.

Make sure you use special moves liberally. The stiff arm works well to shed a potential tackler, as does the juke. If there are collapsed players in front of you, or you can sense a player is going to dive for your feet (this is more common in multiplayer games) use the hurdle button to avoid danger.

Running the Option

The option can be dangerous if you don't use it properly. Remember that you can either take it yourself or pitch it out. Often, the QB keeper is the best option, as certain defenses spread the field and concentrate on the halfback. If you see an opposing player hovering on the outskirts, don't pitch the ball out. Wait for all players to commit to the QB before pitching it.

Never, ever pitch the ball if there is a player between you and the back you're trying to get the ball to. Any deflection will result in a fumble. Or, if your back cannot make the grab, and the ball hits the turf, it's live.

Don't pitch when your back is too far away. The ball could go wild and result in a turnover.

If your QB is being tackled, pitching is a risky proposition. However, sometimes you'll be rewarded for taking a chance. If you have a strong QB, you just may be able to heave it out to the back while you're in the clutches.

If you're running an option pass, survey the field first. If it's better to run (like when the defense drops into pass coverage), just take the ball and scramble upfield. Otherwise, remember that it takes a while to call up the passing icons and unload. If someone is bearing down on you, you won't have enough time to set up and pass before the opposing player tackles you.

Defense

Defensive Tips

What to Call

The art of defensive playcalling takes a while to master. You have to learn how to balance your front against the enemy's attack. To do that, you'll have to read what the offense is going to do. Check out the number of receivers as the team is heading to the line of scrimmage. If it's more receivers than DBs, you might have a problem. Audible to change your array, or, if desperate, call timeout if you're too discombobulated.

Different downs call for different formations. A good all-purpose set (handy on first down) is the 4-3, as it gives you maximum flexibility. When in doubt, use something safe like 4-3 Base and control a linebacker.

On second or third and long, the opposing team will likely put the ball up. Against the pass, go with a Nickel or Dime formation. If you're consistently being burned by deep receivers, call a Double Outs formation from this set to put maximum coverage on those players. Be sure to cover anything out of the backfield and across the center with a linebacker, because this pulls everything deep.

If it's third or fourth and short, you'll want to gang up on the run. Stack up with a safe 5-2 to get the job done. Make sure you don't commit every player to the line of scrimmage, though, or you'll get burned. Stay in a 5-2 zone or something, as a safety valve.

Much of what you consider when playcalling is the talent level of your players, and who you want to control. If your squad has an exceptional middle linebacker, you would be wise to call a Spy package that allows the MLB to roam free. Then you can manually manipulate him to stuff the run, speed around the edge and put pressure on the QB, etc.

If you have a good secondary, call Man coverage and attack with safeties and linebackers. Having a good shutdown corner or two is a great luxury, and should be leveraged to provide opportunities elsewhere on the field.

What Player to Select

More often than not, the best player to select is a linebacker (as discussed above). This will allow you to adjust to the game situation on the fly. With a linebacker, you can cover receivers coming out of the backfield, or charge the QB, or drop into double coverage, whether the play calls for it or not. Also, linebackers are usually better tacklers than DBs, so you'll have a more effective weapon to combat the enemy with.

It's almost never a good idea to start out taking a DB. Since the camera often follows what's closest to the line, the DBs can get lost offscreen, resulting in a wide-open receiver. Also, the CPU is usually better at keeping with receivers. If you want to switch to a DB, make sure you do it right before the ball arrives, or to quickly react when a player is wide open. Hopefully your play calling will allow for the best match-ups, but sometimes, you'll still get burned. Switching to a DB to put out a late fire is tough to master, but will reap big dividends.

Selecting a lineman can be effective, but usually in running situations when you're trying to collapse the line. Make sure to use swim moves and other special maneuvers to get early penetration and force the play in a different direction (hopefully in the direction of the ground). Really good linemen are obviously easier to use, simply because they have the ability to swim and rip through the line.

Impact Players in the line or as linebackers are *always* a good choice. They'll make big plays and, most of the time, make you look better than you actually are. If your impact player is in the secondary, let him do his thing as a CPU controlled player.

General Tips

At home, be sure to use the home fans to your advantage. Pump up the crowd with anyone who isn't at the line (those guys have to remain in their set stances). It is especially important and effective on first, third and fourth down. The louder you can make your house, the less composure the opposition will have, and the further their ratings will slip. Tons of ruckus will also result in botched audibles and assignments.

Before each play (mostly when playing against the CPU), take a gander at how your squad is lined up, and where your best matchups are occurring, using the Matchup Stick. This is a good idea, because it will show you where there are holes in your D, if you have guys out of position, or have mismatched coverage. If you don't like something you see, you can move a player, call an audible, or call a timeout and regroup.

While tackling, don't always lunge at the guy you're going after. This is good to use when you're trying to catch a player downfield, but not good when trying to drag someone down in the backfield. Just sprint into a player and tackle more conservatively.

Instead of dive tackling, use the Big Hit stick press to really pummel a guy if you have a good bead on him. It will lower his composure, or maybe even knock him out of the game.

If they try to run up the middle into a crowd, start hitting the Strip button to force a fumble.

If you select a player that is pass-rushing but can't make it to the quarterback, jump as the quarterback releases the ball to block it. This can disrupt a play just as effectively a sack, and often leads to turnovers as well. Read on...

Remember the old tip drill? That training will be in full effect this year. If a ball is batted in the air (and a lot of them are), pluck it and tuck it. Use the catch button to haul in a ball that is caroming around. Once you get used to doing this, the majority of your interceptions will be snagged on up-for-grabs batted balls.

If you *know* it's going to be a run, go ahead and march a linebacker up between the defensive linemen and use him to stop up the rush. You can also blitz this way.

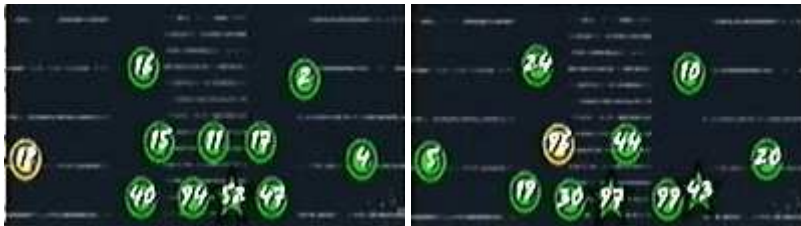
Another way to gang up on the run is to do a line audible. This contracts your guys into a tighter unit, making it tougher to penetrate your defenses. Also, if you are planning on blitzing linebackers around the edges, use a LB Shift and press up to spread them out and allow them to get to the edges quicker.

Formations

4-3

The 4-3 is the standard defense employed by most teams. In it, four defensive tackles line up against the offensive front. These guys try to stuff the run and get in on the quarterback on passing plays. They are flanked by three linebackers, who bottle up the running lanes or drop into pass coverage, depending on the play that is called. In the secondary, you have two safeties: a free safety and a strong safety. These players assist with the run, help double cover receivers or pick up tight ends or backs out of the backfield. On the outside are two cornerbacks (on opposite sides of the field). They cover the primary and secondary receivers, and help to shut down the outside run.

The 4-3 offense is very flexible. It is a good running D simply because there are so many players near the line. Four tackles help to collapse the holes in the line, while the linebackers fill any space opened by the offensive line's push. You can apply pressure on the quarterback with linebacker or safety blitzes (these players will explode through the line and attempt to hurry or sack the QB or stop the runner).



3-4

The 3-4 is the opposite of the 4-3. Three linemen stack up against the offense, and four linebackers back them up. This is a good defense to use against a team with little running threat, as it provides maximum coverage in the middle of the field. It also allows for different blitzing lanes, simply because the blocking schemes up front are different. A linebacker can blitz in the hole made by a penetrating tackle, or shoot around the outside of the line as it's sealed on the interior.

One significant thing you gain by using a 3-4 is more team speed. Trading up linemen for linebackers improves the quickness of your team. Of course, you give up size, which might not be good on running downs. A 3-4 is perfect on medium passing downs (second or third and 5-8).

5-2

The 5-2 is a college-specific formation designed to stack up against the run. Since there are five linemen and only two backers, you're getting in close and packing the line with big bodies. That means if the opposing team decides to line up more than two receivers, you'll be screwed. You shouldn't, however, be lined up in this formation on passing downs. This one is great close to the goalline, or in two-yards-or-less situations.

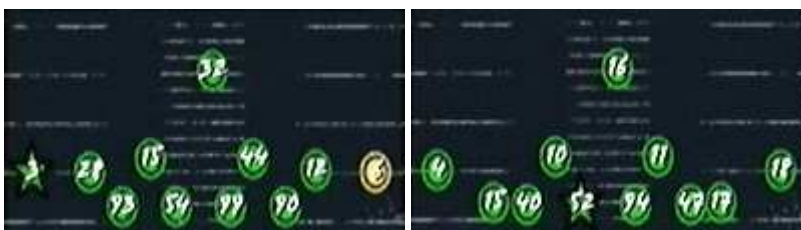


3-3-5 Stack

Three linemen, three linebackers and five DBs scrunch down near the line. This set provides a lot of speed close to the line and can be effective as a change of pace when blitzing. With the five DBs, it provides a lot of coverage as well. Good plays from this set are Cover 2 MLB Spy and Double Outs.

4-2-5

A similar idea to the stack, but this one involves one more lineman. This is a good package if you want to send a bunch on the blitz, especially against an inferior offensive line. SS Dogs and the Pinch Blitz are good plays out of this formation.



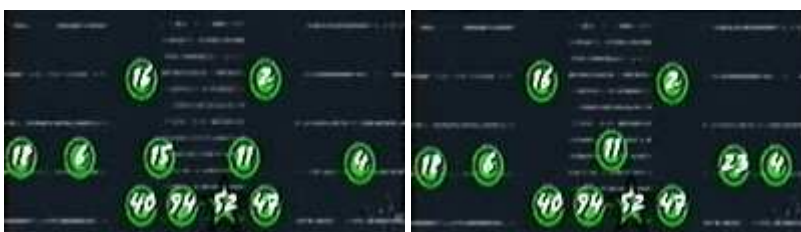
4-4

The 4-4 is midway between the 4-3 and 5-2. It still allows for a lot of meat on the line. This is a great formation for protecting against both the run and short passes.

Nickel

Nickel defenses are designed to protect against the pass. Also good on medium range pass plays, Nickel sets allow for great versatility on defense. The reason for the Nickel name is that five DBs patrol in the secondary. Again, this bumps up the team speed, but leaves your defense susceptible to the run. To guard against this, use a safety (or the remaining linebacker) to keep an eye on the rush.

One good thing about the Nickel is that four linemen are still squared off against the O-line. If you have a superior defensive line but weak linebackers, you may want to consider running the Nickel D more often than not.



Dime

The Dime maximizes coverage and should be used on long passing downs or against superior passing teams with little rushing threat. Even more speed in this set assures that you won't be smoked for a big gain. Dime packages work well to double up speedy receivers or guard against the deep ball. Like the 3-4, the Dime is quite versatile.

Quarter

The Quarter is an even more extreme passing defense than the Dime, though you'll leave huge holes for running. If you've got a 3rd and very long (15-20 yards) or need to prevent a deep pass at all costs, then you might consider dropping into a Quarter.



Goal Line

Goal Line defense primarily stacks up against the run. The linebackers camp out right behind the D-line and the DBs suck up next to the line. By creating a wall of bodies, the defense is hoping to turn back penetration by the opposing team's offensive line and running backs.

If a team has an exceptional back, you might want to consider blitzing to the strong side of the line (or the side they've been running to most). Don't commit to a goal line blitz too often, however, as the team could run a pass play. Instead, stay in a Base coverage. This leaves the safeties and an odd linebacker to drop out and cover should they pass.

Dynasty

In Dynasty mode, you can take complete control over your favorite college football team. Everything from recruiting to playcalling becomes your responsibility. Of course, the school isn't going to let you do just anything you want. If you don't meet their goals for the team, they'll look for a new coach. This section is designed to help you make it through the difficult decisions you'll be faced with while running a college team.

Scheduling

As the coach, it is your job to decide which teams you face during the regular season. If you're looking for an undefeated season, try loading up the schedule with a bunch of pushovers. But remember, your strength of schedule helps to determine your ranking and bowl game bids. If you play nothing but cupcake teams, you'll drop out of the rankings and end up with an early end to your season.

There is a general rule of thumb to follow. The better your team is, the tougher your schedule should be. If you're trying to take a terrible team up to the top, start by giving them a schedule that they can win. This will enable you to get more prospects interested in your team -- nobody likes a team that hasn't won any games. If your team is already good, big wins against similarly ranked teams will help improve the way you look in the eyes of recruits and will get you a shot at the national championship.

Redshirt Players

Sometimes you'll end up getting a 5 star quarterback committing to your team before your senior star goes on to the pros. Don't worry. You can redshirt the incoming freshman. This will allow him to improve through a year of practice and still be a freshman the next year. That means you'll get an extra year of development into a player without losing his eligibility to play in college.

It's more likely that you'll redshirt a player at a position where you have a lot of depth. If you have a junior and a senior QB who are both awesome players and you just recruited another freshman stud, there's no sense in keeping the freshman on the bench. He's probably not going to play because of the guys ahead of him, so why waste a year of his eligibility? Redshirt him for a year, and next season he can be the backup QB as a redshirt freshman. This way he still has all four years of eligibility remaining. Now if disaster befalls your first two QBs you can pull the frosh off the redshirt list and put him on your active roster, which forfeits that redshirt year for him. He's got to play out all four consecutive years now.

Also, you can redshirt a player in any year. If you like the way your junior linebacker has developed and you know you've got a sophomore linebacker who's going to be a gamer as well, you can make sure they play their last two seasons side by side by redshirting the junior. You take the lump this season by holding back a talented player, but you'll have two awesome guys going for you the next season and the season after that.

You can only redshirt a player during the offseason, but you can bring a guy off the redshirt list during the season. It's better to put a guy on there knowing you can take him off later than to miss the opportunity to sit a player when you had the chance. Also, players will develop and improve their skills during their redshirt year, so it's almost like you're getting an extra year of ratings boost by redshirting a player at some point during his college career.

In-Season Recruiting

The recruiting process begins briefly during the Preseason. Here, you can recruit players during the season and, if you're successful, they will commit to your team before the off-season even begins. Start in the Pre-Season by targeting players that will fill the holes that your graduating seniors will make at the end of the season. Keep in mind how many scholarships you have available and where you'll need players. It's a good idea to recruit the best players out of your pipeline states, as they are more likely to come to your school. In the 360 version of NCAA Football 07, you can even check their interest. Don't try to recruit anybody that isn't interested in your school.



As the season progresses, the list of schools the players are interested in will be cut, so don't bother to focus your time and energies recruiting a player who is only mildly interested in your team. If a player cuts your team from his interest list, reallocate his recruitment points to players who are more interested in your team. Towards the end of the season, be sure to extend an offer to visit the school, especially during the week of a big game, so that the recruit can see why your team is the best. Before one player visits, look at his Pitch Feedback and find out why the player is interested in your school. This will help you adjust what pitch you give during the campus visit and allow you to maximize your chances of landing a big recruit.

Early Off-Season

After the regular season and before the bowls, conference championship trophies will be presented. After the Heisman has been presented, you will learn whether or not you've received a bid to play in a Bowl game. If so, you'll have one more game to play. If not, get gear up for the recruiting process a little earlier. You'll also learn the results of your In-Season Recruiting. If you managed to convince them, players will begin committing to your school as the season ends.

If you did exceptionally well, and surpassed expected goals, the university may offer you (as Coach) an extension. You can choose to accept or decline. If you're planning to build your squad into an unbeatable Dynasty, better sign. If you performed under expectations, they may show you the door. All of this will happen before you ever get to the postseason menu.

Off-Season

Note: Not all of these features exist in the stripped down Dynasty mode on the Xbox 360 version of NCAA Football 07.

There is one last thing to do in the offseason, and it's both the most important and the most time-consuming. It's also at the top of the Dynasty list. It's the Offseason Schedule, and it will walk you through the recruiting process. Click on it to go to an nine-step menu. At any time, you can skip down this list and have your assistant coach handle the recruiting duties. But what fun would that be?

Step 1: School Budgets

There are three sliders you can manipulate here in order to allocate moneys to different portions of your school's budget. You start with 0 available percentage points, so in order to add points to any area, you'll have to take them away from another one. Here's how they break down:

- **Recruiting:** Smaller schools might have some difficulty pulling in talent, and you may want to consider cranking up the Recruiting budget a bit to help in this effort. You probably still won't be able to pull in the AAA players, but the quality of interest *will* generally be better. If you're a prestigious school, don't get too carried away with this slider.
- **Training:** This is where you can improve the stats of your existing players and the ones you recruit. If you are only planning on playing a season or two of Dynasty, go ahead and crank this slider up. It will help make your existing guys good, sacrificing the future for some short-term gains.
- **Discipline:** Don't change this slider too much, because the further it drops down, the harder it will be to keep your players in line as the year progresses.



Step 2: Players Leaving

Here's where you bid your hard-working warriors adieu. Will they leave and head for greener pastures in the NFL? If they do, make sure you export your save for use in *Madden 2007*. There are three ways players can leave. First, they can graduate. This happens when a player uses up all of his eligibility... err... completes his studies and receives a degree. When a player has played his senior year, he has to leave, even if all that's waiting for him is a job as a ditch digger. Second, he can choose to go to another school, claiming he is not making a difference on the current team. Some of your better players may also want to depart for the NFL early. If a player is good and wants to go, there's really nothing you can do about it.

There is a way to keep guys around if they're headed out the door, but it involves using some of your recruitment points for Week One. Our opinion? There aren't too many indispensable athletes. Unless you have an emotional attachment to a guy, let him leave. After all, you don't want to have to play like crap just to keep your talented people around. Let them go... you'll make more. When you're done, you'll have two choices... either export your draft class or simply continue to recruiting. Exporting your draft class only need be done if you plan on playing Franchise Mode in *Madden 2007*.

Step 3: Recruiting

Recruiting Central displays a map of the US, and highlights your home state. From this location, you can get Recruiting Reports or check your squad's Team Overview. On the Recruiting Report, you'll see these options:

- **State Prospects:** A list of all of the prospects from the state where your school is located.
- **Current Targets:** The players to whom you've offered scholarships. After week one, it will still list them even if they've committed to other schools.
- **National Top 100:** A list of the top 100 players in the nation regardless of position. All of them are blue chip prospects as designated by the five stars next to their names. Don't even try to land one of these guys unless your team has at least four stars of prestige.
- **All Prospects:** Just like it says, this is the massive list of every school kid and junior college player that wants a scholarship to play ball.
- **Interested Prospects:** The most helpful list. It includes all of the players, both good and bad, who want to come to your school.
- **Returning Players:** Also very helpful. See exactly where your strengths are at a micro level, and look at individual stats. For instance, if you know you have one slow receiver, you may want to look slightly beyond rating when recruiting and pick up a faster WR.

On the Team Overview screen, you'll see a global view of how your team is composed, and ratings of each and every position. Obviously, you want to attack the lowest rated areas first and make sure those are hammered down before working on improving some of the other areas.

Other things to note here include number of scholarships you have left (this is the total number of players you'll be able to recruit). You'll also want to take a look at any orange categories. This means that you're light on players at that position, and you'll need to fill them up. If a line is orange, look over to the far right where it says "Needs" to see how many to recruit.

You'll have five total weeks to recruit players, and you should keep an eye on your Team Overview after every move you make. After all, you want to have the fullest, best squad possible at the end of the recruiting period, or you could lose ground in your conference.

Start with Interested Prospects. If there are five star athletes looking at your school, lucky you. Throw some resources at them to move yourself up in their estimation. Especially go after highly-rated players who have you listed as the first school in their Top 3.

If you're interested in getting a guy, you can do two things with the Prospect: Scout or Recruit. Scouting will give you a quick idea of the player's strengths and weaknesses, and how he measures up in areas of strength and speed, based on 40 speed and bench press, etc. Scouting guys costs recruiting points, so don't scout every last person you're interested in. If a guy has a high star rating, consider that he will probably be a quality player even if he's not exactly what you thought he'd be. Save your recruiting points for the Recruiting process, and to scout players who are really questionable. However, if you really want to land a guy, don't be bashful about throwing some heavy artillery his way.

Now it's time to Recruit! When talking to players, you can stress different things. Scroll back and forth where it says "Pitch" in order to talk up Coach Prestige, Program Prestige, Location, Playing Time, or Coaching Style. If it's a local boy, you can talk about location. QBs might dig the Coaching Style angle. If your school is extremely respected, pitch the Prestige angle, but only if you have the stars to back it up.

With highly-rated players who are also interested in you, make sure you give them at least a visit from your head coach. Even if the interest level is high, you want to keep it up there. If interest is flagging a bit, and you can spare some points, go ahead and double-team a guy with coach and assistant coach visits. It may pay huge dividends.

When you are done with Interested Prospects, head to your State Prospects. Use the Location angle on these guys, and visit the highly-rated ones with at least one coach to bring up their interest level. Even if a player does not currently have an interest in you, you may want to try the Location thing and throw some points at him to see if you can get him interested. Remember, it's a five-week process and you don't need to do it all the first week... but you do have to plant the seeds.

If you still have a lot of points remaining after pursuing Interested and State prospects, take a quick gander at the National Top 100. If there is anyone on this list interested in you, make sure to throw the full load of points at you. If he is a player at a skill position, preach Playing Time. Otherwise, preach Coaching Style or Location (if nearby). Don't waste points on someone whose interest level is less than half, though. They'll probably go elsewhere.

Once you have done all you can, go back to the main map and press Start. Advance to the next week if you want to keep recruiting, or Simulate All Weeks if you don't care. If you choose to do the next week, set things in motion, and you'll begin to see prospects committing to your university. If you didn't land many recruits the first week, lower your sights a little. Focus on the players who are interested in you in the next rounds, and throw a lot of points at the guys you really want. Remember, you are competing against more than a hundred other schools. Sweeten the deal in the second round and bring those recruits home!

Also, be mindful of the fact that you have a finite number of scholarships. You really must focus on the things you need on the Team Overview screen. You'll also want to bring up your lowest rankings by aggressively pursuing good athletes in those categories. Anything at C- level or below should be considered an immediate priority.

In the rounds after one, keep working on Prospects that you have already wooed but who haven't signed. You'll note that a lot of their Interest Levels will have risen if you've paid close attention to them. Make sure you keep the pressure on if you want them to sign. If a player's Interest remains flat, try a different approach during the Pitch. If Location doesn't work, use Playing Time or Coaching Style. Mix it up and see what happens.

If you ever run out of scholarships, that's when you should head back to the map and go to the next week. You can only offer the number of scholarships that are left after each week, so if you recruit a player, that scholarship will be gone. As you move along, the weeks will go faster and faster. After the final week, it's on to the next bit of business. Once you finalize the recruits, the CPU will add walk-ons for every team.



Step 4: Position Changes

It happens a lot in college football, where corners may become receivers, and tight ends might be better served as linebackers. Why would you switch a player? Usually because you're already loaded up in one position and lacking in another. By moving players around, you don't have to re-recruit for positions you may be lacking in.

Select a player, and a pop-up window will appear showing current position and the new position. Scan through the new positions and check out the Ovr rating that appears. You'll want it to be about the same (or better, which is rare) than the player's original position.

Step 5: Spring Game

The Spring Game exists for you to scrimmage your players and see how they perform on the field. This is a new feature for this year but it isn't the most necessary. It does effect the way the next step comes out, so it may be worth it to start and play as those students you need the most improvement from.



Step 6: Training Results

All that Training does is show how your players' attributes changed. A player might have a Breakthrough year and improve a lot, or show Minimal gain. This section is basically designed to show you who your future stars may be.



At the end, you'll be allowed to pick your offensive and defensive MVPs for the spring. This allows you to pick two of your Impact Players for the coming season. It is wise to pick an Impact Player at a position that you feel comfortable using on most downs. Don't bother putting your kicker as an Impact Player - they get minimal time on the field. In general, having a HB or QB as your offensive MVP is the best decision. On the defense, you'll want a linebacker or defensive end. These are the players that will be critical on every down, so you'll want the added bonus of having them in the zone occasionally.

Step 7: Cut Players

Time to get rid of some dead weight. Or not. If you don't want you, you don't really need to cut anybody. You can just let the CPU do it. But if you have a ton of players at one position, you may want to set some guys free. The roster needs to be at 55 or less, so if you want to manage the cuts, go for it. Otherwise, the computer will simply cut all the lowest rated players at the most full positions.

Remember when cutting that you can redshirt guys before the season begins. So if you think a guy near the bottom is going to blossom down the road, slap a redshirt on him and see if you're right.



Step 8: Set Depth Chart

The CPU will automatically put the top-rated player in the first place of each position. However, if you value speed over rating (for instance at the HB position), you'll want to take matters into your own hands. It's not imperative that you do any reordering here, though, as setting the depth chart is available from your Season menu as well.

Step 9: Start New Season

Just like it sounds.

Top 25 Teams: #1-5

Teams 1-5	Teams 6-10	Teams 11-15	Teams 16-20	Teams 21-25
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1. Ohio State Buckeyes

Conference: Big 10

Impact Players: QB #10, DT #90, WR #7

Great Plays: Ace Twin TE Power Option, Ace Big Corners, I-Form Normal PA Streaks, Ace Twin TE WR Screen

Overview: The Buckeyes are blessed with an offense that will simply outrun nearly any defense it is put up against. The QB is amongst the fastest of all starters in the game making him great for running the option and keeping it himself. We've easily been able to break out for runs of 20 yards or more. The real key to this offense lies in the wide receiver. #7 has a 99 rating for speed, acceleration, agility, and elusiveness. It's no wonder this kid plays every down and returns kicks for special teams. You really only need to vary between three types of plays to dominate on offense. Run your option to establish the ground game. Mix in some short passes to #7 with slants and screens. He's fast enough that he'll bolt all the way to the end zone with a little room. The final type of play you'll need is the deep pass. Take advantage of #7's speed and send him deep past the defense.

Ohio State has a great defense, especially against the run. The pair of highly rated defensive tackles will make sure no runs ever make it through the middle of the field. Play in a 4-3 zone most of the time and use the DT's to open holes to blitz through. The cornerbacks aren't this team's strong point so you don't want to allow the opposing QB to have enough time to spot them for a long pass. Keep the pressure on by blitzing a linebacker through the middle, but be ready for runs and tosses to the sides.

2. Texas Longhorns

Conference: Big 12

Impact Players: LE #80, HB #25, SS #27

Great Plays: Strong I - Normal HB Blast, Ace - Big HB Dive, Weak I - Twin WR HB Trap

Overview: Although you may have dominated NCAA Football 06 with Vince Young and the option, you'll have to rethink your strategy with this team now that he's gone to the NFL. The Longhorns don't have anything in the means of a speedy quarterback. What they do have is a decent halfback and a dominant offensive line that can create huge holes. Pound the ball up the middle and around the right side on the ground and you'll gain 2-5 yards on every play with the occasional big play.

Although Texas has an effective offense, you'll put yourself in a position to win with the defense. There isn't a place on this squad that isn't solid. Stick in a 4-3 most of the time to ensure that LOLB #40 is on the field. He is fast, strong and quick off the line. Play a Cover 2 defense and blitz him around the side to put extreme pressure on the quarterback. You'll also be able to gobble up any outside runs to the strong side this way. With the great defensive line in the center, this will pretty much shut down any hopes of a run game that your opponent has. Play your safeties in a zone and the corners on man coverage to guard against the deep pass and you're set.

3. Notre Dame Fighting Irish

Conference: Independent

Impact Players: QB #10, WR #83, SS #9

Great Plays: I-Form Normal Slants, Ace-Normal SLOt TE Cross, Weak I-Twin WR HB Trap

Overview: Notre Dame has an offense more along the lines of the classic NFL teams. A pocket QB with a great arm and accuracy anchors the squad. Backing him up is an above average HB that can surprise the opposition. You'll probably want to call the majority of your plays as passing, especially with a strong wideout in #83. Don't forget to mix in the running plays. This will keep the defense guessing and allow you to bring in a few play action calls that can win for huge yards. Run your ground plays around the corners to get the maximum yards possible. The offensive line can have a tendency to let a blitzing player through. A strong pass rush could result in you getting sacked. Start off with short slant and cross passes rather than trying for the long bomb and getting nailed.

The main weakness to Notre Dame's defense is the linebackers. They just don't have the awareness, strength, or speed that you'd prefer. What they do have to make up for it is a great secondary and a powerful line. When playing in a 4-3 defense, we like to compress the linebackers and then blitz around the corners with the defensive ends. Make sure you get SS #9 into the plays as much as possible. Occasionally have him sneak in for a safety blitz. He's fast and can be on top of the quarterback before the other team knows you're blitzing. If he's not blitzing, put him in a zone coverage or double team a particularly good wide receiver.

4. USC Trojans

Conference: Pac 10

Impact Players: WR #2, WR #8, LE #96

Great Plays: Split Backs - Normal WR Shake, Ace - Big Twin WR HB Draw, Ace - Normal Slot Post

Overview: USC's quarterback won't be playing the option very much if you want to win, but that's ok when you look at the targets he has down field. Line up both of the wide receivers on most plays and watch your opponents scramble to cover them. You'll almost always find one in single coverage. If you don't, that means your tight end is unguarded. Either way, you'll have a high percentage pass on nearly every down. We've had a lot of success calling slightly more passing plays than running and playing a semi-West Coast Offense. Manage the clock through running the ball and short passes. There are a few holes in the offensive line making the deep pass something you should only do after you've got your opponent looking for short passes and runs up the middle (through the hole that your center will create for you).

Defensively, you'll want to take advantage of the powerful linebacker trio. The MLB works great as a spy. If you blitz the left linebacker, LE #96 will usually make a hole for him allowing you to rush the passer regularly. Do it. USC is generally good at stopping the run, but you'll have to make sure the QB doesn't have time to plant his feet or you could find your secondary getting burned.

5. LSU Tigers

Conference: SEC

Impact Players: FS #30, WR #80, LE #94

Great Plays: I-Form Normal Cross In, I-Form Normal HB Counter, Shotgun - Slot Strong PA Comebacks

Overview: The Tigers sport a great HB, QB, and WR, although their offensive line leaves something to be desired. To make up for this, you'll need to launch a balanced attack. This means a lot of inside and outside handoffs and short passes. Throw in a PA set every now and then to get your big yard plays once you get the defense into a rhythm.

LSU's defense is anchored completely around the star free safety, the best in the game. He's fast, can make open field tackles, and possess great field vision. It's best to put him into a zone coverage and let him pick up any receivers that filter through. Occasionally though, you'll want to play a 4-3 Man and blitz him through to look for a sack. The linebackers leave something to be desired, though the combination of LE #94 and LOLB #7 can effectively shut down and strong side running plays that your opponent might try. Take control of the linebacker and start rushing the quarterback if the play turns out to be a passing one.

Top 25 Teams: #6-10

Teams 1-5	Teams 6-10	Teams 11-15	Teams 16-20	Teams 21-25
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6. Florida Gators

Conference: Pac 10

Impact Players: QB #12, MLB #40, DT #44

Great Plays: Ace - Big TE Under, Shotgun - 2RB 3WR WR Post Corner, Ace - Big HB Draw

Overview: With the ball, Florida's main strength is their quarterback. This guy has a rocket for an arm with laser precision. That may be why their playbook is predominantly set up out of the shotgun. Look to pass deep to anybody in single coverage and watch the big plays unfold. Mix in a few draw plays that allow the solid halfback to get his carries and keep the defense from sitting back and waiting for the pass.

Defensively, Florida is as solid as they come. No teams have a chance at running the ball up the middle with the DT/MLB combo of Impact Players waiting there. Play a 4-3 with the MLB as a spy. This means he sits in the center. During a run play he'll step up to make the stop. Otherwise, he'll float in the area just over the line to pick off any passes over the middle. If you can, send another linebacker on the pass rush. This combination of blitzing and zone coverage will produce at least 3 interceptions per game.

7. Auburn Tigers

Conference: SEC

Impact Players: QB #12, HB #23, ROLB #35

Great Plays: I-Form Normal HB Slam, I Form - Twin WR Off Tackle, Strong I - Normal Double Flares

Overview: The senior halfback should be the go-to guy for your offensive needs. He's fast enough to get around the corners, but strong enough to take the run inside. Look to run the majority of your plays to the right to take advantage of

the stronger linemen on that side. The QB is accurate, but doesn't have any targets worth throwing to consistently outside of WR #86. Play a controlled game with Auburn where you run the majority of the time and complete short, precision passes on the other downs.

The defensive line is good, especially on the edges. Play in a 4-3 defense primarily and blitz ROLB #35 around the edge to put some pressure on the opposing quarterback. The secondary has a tendency to get beat deep, especially if you commit too many players to the rush. Make sure your safeties play conservatively to prevent any big plays getting over your head.

8. Oklahoma Sooners

Conference: Big 12

Impact Players: HB #28, ROLB #42, RE #58

Great Plays: Shotgun - Trips Bunch Slants Slot Flat, I-Form - Normal HB Slam, Strong I - Twin WR HB Sweep

Overview: Like Auburn, the Sooners have a halfback that can steamroll any opponent. He's fast and has great trucking. Take him up the middle and power your way through to the first down. You can manage the clock and just run down your opponents if you really want to. You might also want to look to play out of the shotgun. A short pass to the HB outside will give you room to run or you can look for the open receiver. This will make your opponent unsure whether they should play tight or fall back deep when you play out of this set.

Just as the Sooners can run you into oblivion, they can stop any running game thrown at them. Their defensive line is arguably the best in the game and is backed up by a trio of solid linebackers. Their secondary isn't nearly as strong, so play them in a zone coverage and try to pick off errant passes that your linebackers create during their blitzing.

9. West Virginia Mountaineers

Conference: Big East

Impact Players: QB #5, HB #10, RoLB #43

Great Plays: Weak I - Big HB Wham, Ace - Big Power Option, I-Form Normal Speed Option

Overview: The Mountaineers were built to run the option. With a speedy QB and a great HB, you can create chaos by keeping the ball on the ground and flipping off the timely option. With all of the speed on the ground and few targets to pass to effectively, you'll want to call the majority of your plays as running.

West Virginia plays out of a 3-3-5. This means they only have three players on the line which can be rough for those accustomed to the traditional 4-3 defense. This playset has a lot more speed which is great for blitzing, but you'll want to leave at least two of your linebackers behind the line to help stuff any runs up the middle where your line is weak. Blitz with one or more of your defensive backs to quickly get on top of the QB.

10. Louisville Cardinals

Conference: Big East

Impact Players: MLB #10, QB #12, HB #19

Great Plays: Weak I - Twin WR PA Deep Threats, Strong I - Normal HB Blast, Goal Line - Normal HB Sting

Overview: The Cardinal's halfback is fairly fast but has a great stiff arm and truck move. He also has good enough hands that you shouldn't be afraid to pass him the ball. When playing as Louisiana, we prefer to play most of our downs on the ground. The QB has a great and accurate arm, but the majority of passing targets won't get open or will drop the ball. That's why we'll usually go with a play action passing play to give the receivers the extra step they need, but only after establishing the running game.

The free safety for Louisville can cover a lot of ground quickly. Combine that with two solid linebackers and you have the makings of a lot of errant passes and picks. Blitz with either #43 or #10, depending upon the offenses set. The defensive line is good enough that you can usually come right through the hole they open for you.

Top 25 Teams: #11-15

Teams 1-5	Teams 6-10	Teams 11-15	Teams 16-20	Teams 21-25
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11. Miami Hurricanes

Conference: ACC

Impact Players: FS #19, TE #82, LE #98

Great Plays: Ace - Bunch TE TE1 Option, I-Form Normal Slants, Strong I - Normal PA TE Corner

Overview: Miami has one of the best all-around tight ends in #82. There are few linebackers who will be able to guard him when he goes out for a pass, so make full use of him. You can always call on him to make a 5-10 yard reception on a third down. Outside of those passing plays, you'll want to keep the ball on the ground. Use the tight end as a blocker and follow him with the halfback for a good gain every time.

Miami has the highest rated passing defense in the game thanks to FS #19. You'll rarely get burned deep with this team. The defensive line and linebackers are extremely good, though you'll want to watch out for short passes over the middle. The MLB has a tendency to miss players running through.

12. Florida State Seminoles

Conference: ACC

Impact Players: HB #28, ROLB #7, LOLB #83

Great Plays: Strong I - Twin WR Strong Stretch, Ace - Twin TE PA Middle, Weak I - Normal Counter Weak

Overview: Florida State lacks a true standout offensive player, though they do have a very speedy HB. You'll want to get him the ball and try to skirt around the sides of the line for gains of 5-10 yards. Running to the right side will be much more successful with this team. Mix in some play action downs and passes to keep the defense honest.

Although the Seminoles lack offensive threats, their linebackers are beasts. Make sure at least one of the outside linebackers are crashing through to the QB on every play. Even if they don't get through, LE #90 probably will and you'll have very effective pressure on the QB. Play a 4-3 Cover 2 with this blitz philosophy for a solid D.

13. Penn State Nittany Lions

Conference: ACC

Impact Players: WR #2, HB #26, LOLB #31

Great Plays: Ace-Slot Deep Outs, Shotgun-4 WR Trey HB Draw, Shotgun Spread Flex Wheelie Smash

Overview: Penn State may be ranked 13th, but they perform better than many of the teams above them. Their primary wide receiver is ridiculously fast making him a deep threat on every down. Take advantage of that and send him in deep streak routes. When you're not making 20-40 yard passes, look to hand the ball off to the halfback, another great playmaker. He's fast and strong making him difficult to take down in both the open field and close to the pocket. Look to call mostly run plays, but not by much.

If the Nittany Lions' offense is good, their defense is phenomenal. With the best trio of linebackers in the game, you'll be ringing up sacks in no time. Don't even think about laying off of the quarterback for a second. Just make sure you switch up which linebacker is blitzing and from where to keep the offense completely confused.

14. Michigan Wolverines

Conference: ACC

Impact Players: WR #15, HB #20, LOLB #56

Great Plays: Ace Normal - Slot Safety Bait, Strong I - Normal HB Blast, Ace Twin TE WR PA FL Stretch

Overview: Michigan is one of the most fun teams to play as. Their halfback is good enough that you should hand the ball off to him slightly more than half of the time. Play out of the I-Form to give him some solid blockers, and make sure to get TE #89 involved with leading the way. This run heavy offense will set you up for the stellar play action sets this team has. Look to see if TE #89 or WR #15 are open after you completely fuddle the defense into thinking you're running yet again.

The Wolverines have a defense that works perfectly to blitz. The two defensive ends make it easy to blitz around the corners with the two phenomenal outside linebackers. Once you get it to third and long, switch to a dime defense and blitz CB #29. He's so fast off of the line that you'll be on top of the quarterback before he realizes that you're blitzing. We averaged about 5 sacks a game with countless interceptions playing this way.

15. Cal Golden Bears

Conference: Pac 10

Impact Players: HB #10, CB #13, DT #52

Great Plays: Strong I - Normal HB Blast, Ace Trips - TE TE Corner, Weak I - Normal HB Wham

Overview: Berkeley's offense is designed around the running play. The quarterback isn't accurate or strong enough to mount an effective passing attack. Only use the pass if the defense is beginning to crowd the pocket and you feel you might be able to get a receiver wide open. Otherwise, keep giving the ball to #10 and let him run where he can find space.

Cal doesn't have the strongest secondary or linebackers, but their defensive line is amongst the best in the game. This takes a lot of pressure off of the linebackers since the linemen can usually pressure the ball without having to blitz extra players. Make sure at least the MLB is playing in a zone coverage over the middle to stop any passes or rushes that manage to slip through and put a man coverage on every man going out for a pass.

Top 25 Teams: #16-20

Teams 1-5	Teams 6-10	Teams 11-15	Teams 16-20	Teams 21-25
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16. Georgia Bulldogs

Conference: SEC

Impact Players: HB #20, SS #25, RE #94

Great Plays: Strong I - Normal HB Blast, Split Backs - Normal WR Shake, Weak I - Normal WR Streak

Overview: With such a powerful pair of kickers, you won't have to worry about punting the ball short or missing a kick. That may help you win games in real life, but is sadly not the case in NCAA Football 07. Georgia's QB isn't up to the other top team's standards which makes this team fairly one dimensional on offense. Try your best with the running game and short PA sets.

If you're going to win with Georgia, then you're going to have to do it by completely shutting down the opposition's offense. Georgia has a strong secondary and some decent linebackers. Try to play the MLB as a spy. Pick up any runs that come through or else look to snatch any passes through the center of the field. You'll find that the rest of the team can take care of themselves when you stay in a zone 4-3.

17. Iowa Hawkeyes

Conference: Big Ten

Impact Players: QB #5, HB #51, RE #92

Great Plays: Strong I - Normal Power Option, I Form - Twin TE Wing TE Post

Overview: Iowa has a great QB/HB combo. Unfortunately, the only person worth throwing to consistently is the TE #87. The wideouts are slow and poor at catching compared to other top teams. The HB is almost strong enough to play fullback, making him a huge inside threat. Pound the ball up the middle, run some options around the corners, and mix in a few passing plays or PA's to spread out the defense.

Iowa's defense isn't particularly weak in any area. Their safeties are the anchor and should be put in a Cover 2 zone to be most effective. Although the linebackers may not have the highest rating, they're fairly fast and can cover tight ends looking to streak down the field relatively well. Don't be afraid to stay in a 4-3 defense on all but the most obvious of passing downs.

18. Tennessee Volunteers

Conference: SEC

Impact Players: HB #27, FS #33, DT #92

Great Plays: Weak I - Normal HB Wham, Ace Big HB Dive, I-Form - Twin WR PA Cross In

Overview: The Volunteers are another team with a big halfback. Make use of him by pounding the ball up the center. The option works well with this team, but don't overuse it because it is only a matter of time before the slowish QB gets nailed and a fumble pops out. Keep the ball on the ground and wear the defense out.

Tennessee has a strong secondary and strong defensive line. Their linebackers aren't the best, but they are fairly quick making them decent for blitzing or covering streaking tight ends. You also might want to switch to a Nickel defense on 2nd and long.

19. Arizona State Sun Devils

Conference: Pac-10

Impact Players: SS #5, QB #9, TE #86

Great Plays: I-Form Normal Slant and Go's, I-Form Twin TE Wing WR Corner

Overview: #9 has a rocket for an arm that seems to be laser guided. With the ease of the deep pass in this year's game, you should look to pass on basically every down. Try to involve the TE #86 as much as possible, but if he is in double coverage, look for another target. You really should only run with this team if you need a couple yards for a first down or find that the defense is spreading out in a wide zone to stop your passing.

Arizona State has better safeties than cornerbacks. You'll probably want to stick the safeties onto double coverage for any player streaking deep so that you don't get completely burned. Play each down as MLB #90 hovering over the center. He has great awareness and can easily pick up a halfback trying to move forward or a ball over the middle. You're more likely to find players breaking through the middle than around the edges considering the strength of the defensive ends and the weakness of the rest of the line.

20. Nebraska Cornhuskers

Conference: Big 12

Impact Players: WR #83, RE #90, LOLB #34

Great Plays: Strong I - Normal FB Dive, Ace Twin TE PA Middle, Ace 4 WR Comebacks

Overview: Nebraska has a great fullback that can keep smashing through the center for solid gains. The quarterback is accurate and strong enough to be effective, but you'll have to watch for blitzing linebackers coming from the weak side. The left side of this offensive line has serious holes in it that make pocket passing difficult. Since you probably won't have a lot of time to look for open receivers, you should run your passing plays conservatively with plenty of short passes. Look to send your tight end on streaks or crosses over the middle and you'll usually be able to connect for a nice gain.

The Cornhuskers have two great defensive ends that can shut down the option. Try playing with your defensive line with audibles. Shift them around to get better access to the ball carrier. The secondary is fast so you aren't likely to get burned deep, but you also won't get many interceptions if you don't constantly put pressure on the quarterback.

Top 25 Teams: #21-25

Teams 1-5	Teams 6-10	Teams 11-15	Teams 16-20	Teams 21-25
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21. Virginia Tech Hokies

Conference: ACC

Impact Players: WR #4, MLB #9, LOLB #11

Great Plays: I-Form Normal FL Post, Weak I - Normal HB Wham, Strong I - Normal HB Stretch

Overview: Virginia Tech has arguably the best defense in the game. Their linebackers are beasts. The defensive line can open up blitzing lanes at their leisure and the secondary is just fast enough to zip in and pick up the rushed passes that don't go quite where your opponent wanted them to.

Unfortunately, the offense doesn't quite live up to the defense. The quarterback isn't accurate enough to risk throwing

the ball regularly -- at least not with the weak offensive line. You'll want to keep the ball on the ground and run to the right with most of your plays.

22. Texas Tech Red Raiders

Conference: Big 12

Impact Players: WR #8, WR #88, LOLB #96

Great Plays: Ace 4 WR Posts, Shotgun Split Twins Texas, Shotgun Split Twins Flats

Overview: Despite the starting quarterback's low rating, he has the goods where it's most important. He's accurate and can throw a bullet, which is all you really need in this year's NCAA Football. Add to that a duo of wide receivers with glue on their hands you've got everything you need. Go deep early and often.

The Red Raiders' defensive line has some issues, so you'll want to make sure you back them up with one of the good linebackers to make sure the other team doesn't run all over you. You'll want to blitz less with this team and focus on shutting down any passing with the fast linebackers and secondary.

23. Clemson Tigers

Conference: ACC

Impact Players: WR #2, RE #93, MLB #2

Great Plays: Ace Big Speed Option, Ace 4 WR PA Drop In, Ace 4 WR HB Sprint

Overview: Clemson has the ability to pick apart the defense in just about every way possible. The offensive line is strong enough to ensure a solid running game. The QB isn't the best passer, but he's fast enough to run the option. Add in a good wide receiver and you've got it all. Play an offensive game that keeps your opponent guessing on every down.

The defense is made strong by the most dominant defensive end in the game, RE #93. He's backed up by two very good linebackers making this team great at stopping the run. The secondary is a bit on the slow side. Play a conservative zone defense to make up for this.

24. Alabama Crimson Tide

Conference: SEC

Impact Players: CB #1, HB #34, ROLB #42

Great Plays: I-Form Big HB Lead, Strong I Normal HB Blast

Overview: Alabama can beat many of the higher ranked teams thanks to their amazing defense. Although not all of their linebackers are stars, ROLB #42 is strong enough to single handedly stop runs around the corner and put pressure on the quarterback if he decides to drop back into the slot. Add in a great defensive line and a star cornerback and you don't have any glaring weaknesses. Play an aggressive pass protection defense and look for interceptions.

On the other side of the ball, Alabama has a strong running game. Keep the ball on the ground most of the time to grind out some time and get a few scores. You'll probably be winning in low scoring affairs with Alabama so try to control the ball.

25. Georgia Tech Yellowjackets

Conference: ACC

Impact Players: QB #1, WR #21, LOLB #35

Great Plays: Strong I - 3 WR Slot Streak, Strong I - 3 WR Double Flares, Shotgun - 2RB 3WR WR Post Corner

Overview: This QB/WR combination is all you need to completely dominate your opponents offensively. Send the WR in a streak route downfield and bomb it to him. More often than not, you'll connect for a 40+ yard pass.

Georgia Tech has good defensive tackles but can allow runs to get around the corners. Have your two outside linebackers play outside of the line to pick up anybody running the option. If it turns into a passing play, you can always blitz them around the corners. Leave your MLB to clean up any short passes over the middle so as not to leave any gaps in your coverage.

Secrets

Achievements

Achievement points are only available in the Xbox 360 version of NCAA Football 07. They work just like Campus Challenges. To obtain them, you'll have to meet certain goals laid out by EA. You must be playing at least at the Varsity difficulty with standard quarter lengths to get these points. Read the table below to learn the requirements and point values.

Achievement	Points	Requirement
Undefeated	10	Go undefeated during a season in dynasty mode.
Win by 21	10	Win a game by 21 points or more.
100 Yard Receiver	10	Gain 100 or more receiving yards with a single player.
100 Yard Rusher	10	Rush for 100 or more yards with a single player.
Complete a 30 Yard Pass	10	Complete a pass for 30 or more yards.
Pass to 5 Different Receivers	10	Complete a pass to 5 or more receivers in a game.
Break a 30 Yard Run	10	Break a run for 30 or more yards.
Held Under 200 Yards	10	Hold the opposition to under 200 total yards.
2 Sack Player	10	Make 2 sacks in a game with the same player.
Conference Champs!	10	Win a conference championship game.
Bowl Win	10	Win a bowl game in dynasty mode.
Throw 4 TD Passes in a Game	15	Throw 4 touchdown passes in a single game.
350 Total Passing Yards	15	Pass for 350 or more total yards in a game.
200 Total Rushing Yards	15	Rush for 200 or more total yards in a game.
No Fumbles in a Game	15	Do not fumble the ball in a game.
No Interceptions in a Game	15	Do not throw an interception in a game.
Allow No Sacks	15	Do not give up any sacks in a game.
Intercept 2 Passes	15	Intercept 2 passes in a game on defense.
Recover 2 Fumbles	15	Recover 2 fumbles on a defense in a game.
Punt Return for TD	15	Return a punt for a touchdown.
50 Yard Punt	15	Punt the ball 50 or more net yards.
Score 35 Points	15	Score 35 or more points in a game.
Complete a 60 Yard Pass	20	Complete a pass for 60 or more yards.
Break a 60 Yard Run	20	Break a run for 60 or more yards.
Return Interception for a TD	20	Return an interception for a touchdown.
Return Fumble for a TD	20	Score a touchdown after recovering a fumble on defense.
Make 4 Sacks	20	Sack the opposing quarterback 4 or more times in a game.
Kickoff Return for TD	20	Return a kickoff for a touchdown.
Held Under 100 Yards	25	Hold the opposition to under 100 total yards.
50 Yard Field Goal	25	Kick a 50 or more yard field goal.
Block a Punt	25	Block a punt.
Block a Field Goal	25	Block a field goal.
500 Total Yards	25	Gain 500 total yards or more in a game.
#1 Offense	25	Have the #1 ranked offense in a dynasty season.
#1 Defense	25	Have the #1 ranked defense in a dynasty season.
Heisman Memorial Trophy	25	Win the Heisman Memorial Trophy with a player on your dynasty team.
5 Star Recruiting	25	Sign 8 or more 5 star prospects in your recruit class.
National Champions!	25	Lead your team to a BCS championship in dynasty mode.
Mr. February	25	Have the #1 ranked recruiting class in a dynasty season.

Achievement	Points	Requirement
Score a Safety	30	Score a safety on defense.
Shutout	30	Prevent your opponent from scoring any points in a game.
Perfect Game	40	Bowl a 300 game.
High Score - Option Dash	40	Score 15,000 or more points in Option Dash.
Win Tug-of-War	40	Win the Tug-of-War mini-game.
Dynasty Trifecta!	50	Win the National Championship in three back-to-back seasons in dynasty mode.
60 Year Dynasty	100	Complete 60 years of Dynasty.
Junior Varsity Level (Secret)	0	Gain 250 Gamerpoints in NCAA Football 07.
Varsity Level (Secret)	0	Gain 500 Gamerpoints in NCAA Football 07.
All-American Level (Secret)	0	Gain 750 Gamerpoints in NCAA Football 07.
Heisman Level (Secret)	0	Gain 1000 Gamerpoints in NCAA Football 07.

Pennants

Pennants unlock Mascot teams, stadiums, historic teams, and cheats that you can use in subsequent games. You can obtain them by spending points that you scored through completing Campus Challenges. Read below for codes to unlock some of these pennants. These are not available in the Xbox 360 version.

Pennant Name	Code	Description
1st and 15	Thanks	Requires your opponent to gain 15 yards for a 1st down.
Blink	For	Makes the referee spot the ball short for your opponent.
Boing	Registering	Forces your opponent to drop more passes.
Butter Fingers	With EA	Increases the likelihood of a fumble for your opponent.
Crossed the Line	Tiburón	Allows your QB to pass the ball past the line of scrimmage.
Cuffed	EA Sports	Your team can't throw interceptions or fumble.
Extra Credit	Touchdown	You get 4 points for an interception and 3 points for a sack.
Helium	In the Zone	Improves the likelihood that your players will catch the ball.
Hurricane	Turnover	Improves your team's pass rush for one game.
Instant Freplay	Impact	Gives your team 5 downs instead of 4.
Jumbalaya	Heisman	Gives your team points when one of your players is injured.
Molasses	Game Time	Increases your opponent's fatigue for one game.
Nike Free	Break Free	Improves your ability to break tackles for one game.
Nike Magnigrip	Hand Picked	Increases the likelihood your players will intercept a pass.
Nike Pro	No Sweat	Improves your QB's accuracy for one game.
Nike Speed TD	Light Speed	Improves your receivers' chances of catching a deep pass.
2004 All-Americans	Fumble	Unlocks this team.
All-Arkansas	Woopigsooie	Unlocks this team.
All-Alabama	Roll Tide	Unlocks this team.
All-Auburn	War Eagle	Unlocks this team.
All-Clemson	Death Valley	Unlocks this team.
All-Colorado	Glory	Unlocks this team.
All-Florida	Great To Be	Unlocks this team.
All-FSU	Uprising	Unlocks this team.
All-Georgia	Hunker Down	Unlocks this team.
All-Iowa	On Iowa	Unlocks this team.
All-Kansas State	Victory	Unlocks this team.
All-LSU	Geaux Tigers	Unlocks this team.
All-Miami	Raising Cane	Unlocks this team.

Pennant Name	Code	Description
All-Michigan	Go Blue	Unlocks this team.
All-Mississippi State	Hail State	Unlocks this team.
All-Nebraska	Go Big Red	Unlocks this team.
All-North Carolina	Rah Rah	Unlocks this team.
All-Notre Dame	Golden Domer	Unlocks this team.
All-Ohio State	Killer Nuts	Unlocks this team.
All-Oklahoma	Boomer	Unlocks this team.
All-Oklahoma State	Go Pokes	Unlocks this team.
All-Oregon	Quack Attack	Unlocks this team.
All-Penn State	We Are	Unlocks this team.
All-Pittsburgh	Lets Go Pitt	Unlocks this team.
All-Purdue	Boiler Up	Unlocks this team.
All-Syracuse	Orange Crush	Unlocks this team.
All-Tennessee	Big Orange	Unlocks this team.
All-Texas	Hook Em	Unlocks this team.
All-Texas A&M	Gig Em	Unlocks this team.
All-UCLA	Mighty	Unlocks this team.
All-USC	Fight On	Unlocks this team.
All-Virginia	Wahoos	Unlocks this team.
All-Virginia Tech	Tech Triumph	Unlocks this team.
All-Washington	Bow Down	Unlocks this team.
All-Wisconsin	U Rah Rah	Unlocks this team.
Arkansas Mascot	Bear Down	Unlocks this mascot team.
Georgia Tech Mascot	Ramblinwreck	Unlocks this mascot team.
Iowa State Mascot	Red And Gold	Unlocks this mascot team.
Kansas Mascot	Rock Chalk	Unlocks this mascot team.
Kentucky Mascot	On On Uk	Unlocks this mascot team.
Mid Tennessee	Go Green	Unlocks this mascot team.
Minnesota Mascot	Rah Rah Rah	Unlocks this mascot team.
Missouri Mascot	Mizzou Rah	Unlocks this mascot team.
North Carolina State Mascot	Go Pack	Unlocks this mascot team.
Northwestern Mascot	Go Cats	Unlocks this mascot team.
South Carolina Mascot	Go Carolina	Unlocks this mascot team.
Wake Forest Mascot	Go Deacs Go	Unlocks this mascot team.
Washington State Mascot	All Hail	Unlocks this mascot team.
West Virginia Mascot	Hail Wv	Unlocks this mascot team.
Baylor	Sic Em	Gives this team a positional ratings boost.
Illinois	Oskee Wow	Gives this team a positional ratings boost.
Texas Tech	Fight	Gives this team a positional ratings boost.