

# Wildcat offense spreads in copycat league

Wildcat formation is the latest trend on offense in the NFL

By KARL YU  
Epoch Times Staff

While the "West Coast Offense" used to be the "it" scheme in the NFL, over the past couple of years, a new formation has been tickling offensive coordinators' fancy, the "Wildcat" formation.

Not that the pass-oriented offense made famous by the late Bill Walsh is on the endangered species list, but that more teams are picking up the Wildcat.

Essentially, the Wildcat is an offensive formation that utilizes a direct snap to the running back (typically), who acts as the quarterback out of the shotgun; the actual quarterback lines up as a receiver.

The "Wildcat QB" then has the option of running the ball, passing, or handing off to another player, often a wide receiver on an end-around or sweep play.



WILDCAT: Running back Ronnie Brown, 23, of the Miami Dolphins takes a direct snap in the "Wildcat" offense against the Indianapolis Colts earlier this season. DOUG BENC/GETTY IMAGES

**ORIGINS**

There are many different stories about the actual originator of the offense.

The Boston Herald calls it an "homage" to Pop Warner's single-wing offense.

The Philadelphia Daily News says it evolved from former University of Delaware Fighting Hens head coach Harold "Tubby" Raymond's "Wing-T" formation.

The Kansas City Star says it was first used by head coach Bill Snyder

in the late '90s with the Kansas State University Wildcats.

Regardless, many credit the 2006-07 Arkansas Razorback team—with current NFL running backs Darren McFadden and Felix Jones—for refining the current scheme that is used in the NFL today.

**MIAMI INNOVATES**

While some, including New York

Jets head coach Rex Ryan, view the Wildcat strictly as a gadget or trick play, teams in the league are successfully implementing it.

The current Wildcat craze in the professional ranks can be traced back to last season in a game between the then 0-2 Miami Dolphins and the 2-0 New England Patriots in Week three.

Dolphins QB coach David Lee, who was offensive coordinator

with the 2007 Arkansas team, helped tailor it to suit the team's personnel.

Caught by surprise, the Patriots couldn't stop the Dolphins from putting up 461 yards of total offense. Dolphins running back Ronnie Brown, the recipient of many of the direct snaps, rushed for 113 yards, four TDs, and threw for an additional TD.

According to ESPN's John

Clayton, the Dolphins finished the 2008 season 11-3 when using the formation.

While many credit Walsh with creating the West Coast Offense, numerous were the coaches who would install their own brand. Many are now doing the same with the Wildcat.

Clayton reported that 17 teams in total used the offense in 2008 and more were at least thinking about

using it this season. The NFL is considered a copycat league after all.

Tennessee Titans head coach Jeff Fisher considered the Wildcat in the preseason featuring QB Vince Young.

The Philadelphia Eagles ran a version called the "Wild Eagle" last year with WR DeSean Jackson. So when the team signed QB Mike Vick, it was thought that he would be a Wildcat QB.

The Eagles have used it a number of times this season with modest success.

The Cleveland Browns have tried unsuccessfully to implement the Wildcat this season, using WR Joshua Cribbs as the man behind center.

Cribbs remains hopeful as he recently told www.cantonrep.com.

"With me making the right decisions, I feel like we can do great things and have a lot of success, just like Miami is having success," he said.

Integrating the offense doesn't happen overnight as teams are finding out: it takes the right players to run the offense effectively.

Miami has the benefit of having Lee on their coaching staff plus Ronnie Brown has had a season to practice it and run it.

But will it become commonplace like the West Coast or will it fade like the "Run and Shoot" offense?

"[The Wildcat] will be around because it changes your rules in preparing a defense," Carolina Panthers head coach John Fox told ESPN.

"It's like a punter who can run on special teams. You have to prepare for fake punts."

# Man U, Chelsea through after late drama

By RAHUL VAIDYANATH  
Epoch Times Staff

Manchester United fought back in dramatic fashion at Old Trafford on Tuesday to reach the knockout stage of the Champions League. The Premier League champions drew 3-3 with CSKA Moscow after falling behind 3-1.

With the draw, United has 10 points and leads Group B. Two more games are left to play in round-robin stage.

CSKA took the lead after 25 minutes of play when Alan Dzagoev's tight-angled shot somehow found the top shelf past Edwin van der Sar.

Michael Owen, starting in place of Wayne Rooney, got United's first goal four minutes later, converting a clever back flick pass from Nani. But then things went south for United.

Milos Krasic and Vasili Berezutsky scored on either side of halftime after some sloppy defending by the Red Devils.

On came substitute Wayne Rooney, who had just become a father.

Paul Scholes's glancing header in the 84th minute brought the home side within one. And in stoppage time, Antonio Valencia's long drive, which was going wide, hit CSKA defender Georgy Shennikov and found the back of the net.

"The play in the last 25 minutes was terrific," said Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson in an interview with Sky Sports.

United can now look forward to a trip to Stamford Bridge on Sunday to face Chelsea in the

## Kaka returns to Milan



GOOD FRIENDS: Ronaldinho (left) and Kaka chat after their Champions League encounter at the San Siro on Tuesday. CHRISTOPHE SIMON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

**Premier League.**

**CHELSEA THROUGH**

Didier Drogba made his triumphant return to Champions League after being suspended at the end of last year's campaign. The Ivorian was in imperious form as he scored both Chelsea

goals in a 2-2 draw away to Atletico Madrid.

Diego Maradona's son-in-law Sergio Aguero scored both goals for Atletico.

Aguero gave the home side the lead just after the hour mark with a terrific volley. Drogba pulled that

one back with a trademark header in the 82nd minute.

Then, Drogba, who is perhaps the hottest striker in Europe now, did it all himself with a dazzling run down the inside-left channel. His first shot was stopped but he popped in the rebound and Chelsea had a 2-1 lead with less than two minutes to play.

But Aguero's free kick in stoppage time gave Atletico a share of the points.

Chelsea tops Group D with 10 points, one more than Porto.

Didier Drogba spoke with Sky Sports about being glad to be back and his return to top form. "It's easier when you play injury free," he said.

**RETURN TO MILAN**

Real Madrid and AC Milan played to an exciting 1-1 draw at the San Siro on Tuesday. The match marked Kaka's return to Milan after being signed by Madrid in the summer.

The Brazilian playmaker received a warm welcome from the Milan crowd but it was another Brazilian playmaker who stole the show—Ronaldinho. The former Barcelona star, who is surely finding his form, scored from a penalty kick shortly after Karim Benzema had put the visitors ahead.

In a very tightly contested Group C, AC Milan and Real Madrid each have seven points. (Milan are technically in first place since they beat Real). Marseille sit one point back after a 6-1 thrashing of FC Zurich.

**WEDNESDAY ACTION**

Liverpool's hopes of reaching the knockout stage were dealt a near-fatal blow after they conceded a goal to Lyon with less than a minute of time left.

Ryan Babel's 83rd minute blast gave the Reds (dressed in all-white for this game) the lead. But Lyon's Lisandro broke Liverpool hearts when he guided a shot past Pepe Reina.

"We were working so hard, it's a pity at the end," said Liverpool manager Rafa Benitez. Liverpool has four points from four games and need to win their remaining two games while hoping that Fiorentina loses to Lyon.

In London, Arsenal ripped Alkmaar 4-1 courtesy of two goals from Cesc Fabregas. The Gunners need one point from their final two games to reach the knockout stages.



TALLADEGA WIN: Jamie McMurray, driver of the 26 IRWIN Marathon Ford, takes the checkered flag ahead of Kasey Kahne, driver of the 9 Budweiser Dodge to win the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series AMP Energy 500 at Talladega Superspeedway last Sunday. JERRY MARKLAND/GETTY IMAGES FOR NASCAR

## McMurray wins rule-restricted Talladega NASCAR race

Johnson keeps Chase lead under no bump-drafting rule

By JAMES FISH  
Epoch Times Staff

Jamie McMurray surged to the front in the final 40 laps and avoided the two big wrecks in the last five laps to win the NASCAR AMP Energy 500 at Talladega Superspeedway in Talladega Ala., last Sunday.

McMurray moved into the top 10 on lap 149, took the lead on lap 154, and held it for all but a handful of the remaining laps.

When the dreaded-but-expected big crashes finally occurred on laps 183 and 189, McMurray was safely ahead of the danger. This was McMurray's first win since 2007.

"It's been a long time since I've won and I want to assure every fan out there that I appreciate this as much as anybody," McMurray said after the race. "Thanks to all my fans that stuck with me. I just can't believe it's here again."

Qualifying was rained out, so the grid lined up according to championship points, but Jimmie Johnson didn't contest the lead. Johnson and several other Chase contenders dropped back to the last third of the field, intent on avoiding "the Big One" if it occurred.

The plan nearly backfired, as Johnson waited too long to make his move, and couldn't find a drafting partner. When the first wreck, a five-car crash that saw Ryan Newman flipping and flying through the air took place, Johnson was in 21st place. But drivers ahead of him began running out of fuel as the field paraded around under yellow.

"I was really, really concerned under the red flag for Newman's crash, and it was like, 'What do I do? How do I get to

the front?' and Chad [crew chief Chad Knaus] said, 'Man these guys might run out of gas,'" Johnson said.

"I didn't want to believe too much in that ... but they started to run out of gas, and there's another car and then the 24, then the five hit pit road and I'm like, 'Man, this isn't Halloween. This is an early Christmas present.'"

The field was halfway through the Green/White/Checked restart, when Brian Vickers nudged Brad Keselowski into Kurt Busch, setting off a 13-car pileup that claimed both Jeff Gordon and Mark Martin, while moving Johnson up to sixth.

With his competition eliminated, Johnson increased his points lead to 184 over Martin and 192 over Gordon.

**NO BUMP-DRAFTING**

Before the race, NASCAR president Mike Helton told drivers there would be no bump-drafting through the corners. "We want to see sunshine between the cars," he said, warning that offenders would receive a pass-through penalty.

Bump-drafting is the process of running up against another car's bumper and physically pushing it forward. Because of the aerodynamic efficiency, the rear car can run faster and shove the front car, while both cars run faster than a car running solo.

Bump-drafting on the straights is accepted because skilled drivers can usually control it, but through corners it can be exceedingly dangerous and NASCAR wanted to avoid "the Big One," the huge multi-car pileup that so often occurs on Superspeedways.

Because of the warning, and because of the fear of getting caught up in someone else's accident, the entire field refrained from actually racing for much of the race. For most of the first 180 laps, cars ran single file around the track, with most of the Chase contenders in their own separate pack well behind the first 30 cars.

Juan Pablo Montoya said before the race, he didn't like the ruling. Ryan Newman criticized the rule after the race.

**TENNIS RANKINGS**

**MEN'S GOLF RANKINGS**

Women		Men's Golf Rankings	
Name	Points	Name	Avg. Points
1. (2) Serena Williams (U.S.)	9,075	1. (1) Tiger Woods (U.S.)	15.60
2. (1) Dinara Safina (Russia)	7,800	2. (2) Phil Mickelson (U.S.)	7.87
3. (3) Svetlana Kuznetsova (Russia)	6,141	3. (3) Steve Stricker (U.S.)	7.47
4. (4) Caroline Wozniacki (Denmark)	5,875	4. (4) Paul Casey (Britain)	6.12
5. (5) Elena Dementieva (Russia)	5,585	5. (5) Lee Westwood (Britain)	6.00
6. (7) Venus Williams (U.S.)	5,126	6. (6) Padraig Harrington (Ireland)	5.73
6. (6) Victoria Azarenka (Belarus)	4,820	7. (7) Henrik Stenson (Sweden)	5.69
8. (8) Jelena Jankovic (Serbia)	3,965	8. (8) Kenny Perry (U.S.)	5.45
9. (9) Vera Zvonareva (Russia)	3,560	9. (10) Sergio Garcia (Spain)	5.33
10. (10) Agnieszka Radwanska (Poland)	3,450	10. (9) Jim Furyk (U.S.)	5.31
11. (11) Flavia Pennetta (Italy)	3,150	11. (11) Martin Kaymer (Germany)	5.04
12. (12) Marion Bartoli (France)	3,105	12. (13) Stewart Cink (U.S.)	4.78
13. (13) Samantha Stosur (Australia)	2,945	13. (14) Sean O'Hair (U.S.)	4.76
14. (14) Maria Sharapova (Russia)	2,820	14. (12) Geoff Ogilvy (Australia)	4.76
15. (15) Li Na (China)	2,541	15. (21) Ian Poulter (Britain)	4.74
16. (17) Francesca Schiavone (Italy)	2,375	16. (15) Lucas Glover (U.S.)	4.25
17. (18) Kim Clijsters (Belgium)	2,340	17. (26) Ross Fisher (Britain)	4.18
18. (19) Yanina Wickmayer (Belgium)	2,310	18. (16) Rory McIlroy (Britain)	4.14
19. (20) Virginie Razzano (France)	2,300	19. (18) Camilo Villegas (Colombia)	4.08
20. (16) Nadia Petrova (Russia)	2,220	20. (17) Vijay Singh (Fiji)	4.08

Rankings as of November 3, previous rankings in parentheses