

4.2.5 Formations and Getting Lined Up

Defensive formations

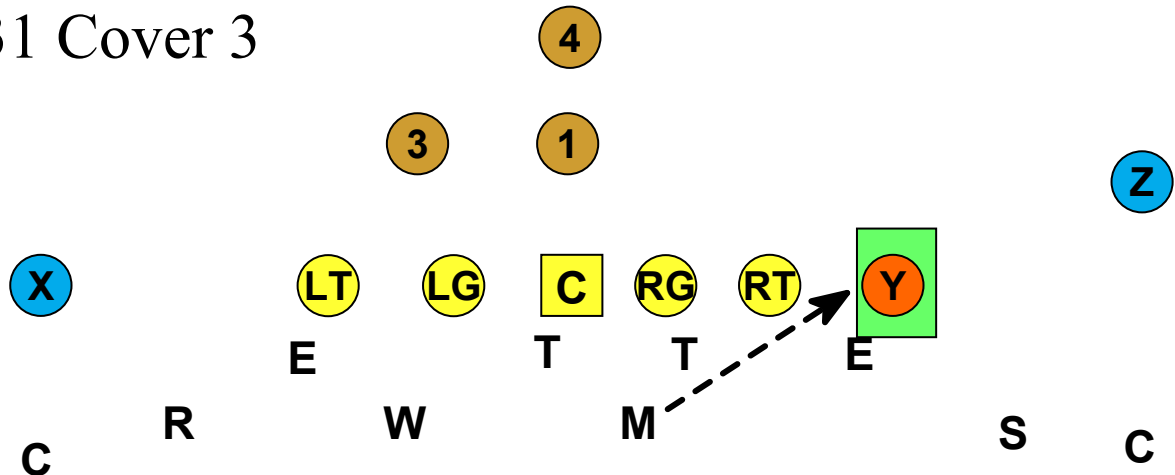
The most common way to describe a basic defensive formation is by stating the number of linemen involved followed by the number of linebackers. The number of defensive backs is usually not mentioned, though if it is, (such as in the "4-2-5"), the number typically appears after the number of linebackers, thus the formula would go (# of linemen)-(# of linebackers)-(# of defensive backs [if stated]) in these situations. This naming rule does not always apply when the personnel for a certain formation are lined up in a way that changes the function of the players in the defense. A good example to help explain this would be the "3-5-3," which actually uses the 3-3-5 personnel, but has the five defensive backs arranged with "3 deep", thus grouping the other two defensive backs with the linebacker group.

By far the most common alignments are four down linemen and three linebackers (a "4-3" defense), or three down linemen and four linebackers ("3-4"), but other formations such as five linemen and two linebackers ("5-2"), or three linemen, three linebackers, and five defensive backs ("3-3-5") are also used by a number of teams.

On plays where the defense expects the offense to pass, naming emphasis is often placed on the number of defensive backs. In a basic 4-3 or 3-4 defense, there are four defensive backs on the field (2 cornerbacks], 1 strong safety, and 1 free safety). When one of the linemen or linebackers is removed and an additional defensive back is added, common alignments of these five defensive back packages are the "nickel" package, which includes 3 Corners, 1 Strong Safety, and 1 Free Safety, and the "3-3-5," which is a nickel package variant that includes either 2 Corners, 2 Strong Safties, and 1 Free Safety, or 3 Corners, 1 Strong Safety, and 1 Free safety like the standard nickel package. When a sixth defensive back is inserted, it is known as a "dime" package (4 Corners, 1 Strong Safety, 1 Free Safety). In rare instances when a seventh defensive back is inserted, it is known as a "quarter" package (5 Corners, 1 Strong Safety, 1 Free Safety or 4 Corners, 2 Strong Safties, 1 Free safety).

Base: = Even / 31 Cover 3

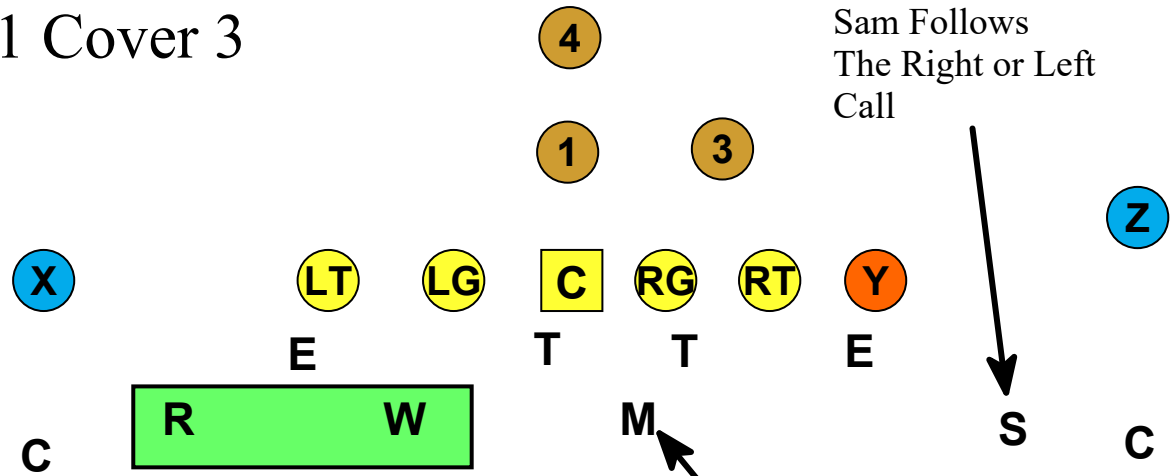
31 Cover 3



FS Mike Linebacker
 Makes Call
 Towards The Tight End
 Or Strength

Automatic 5 technique backside

31 Cover 3



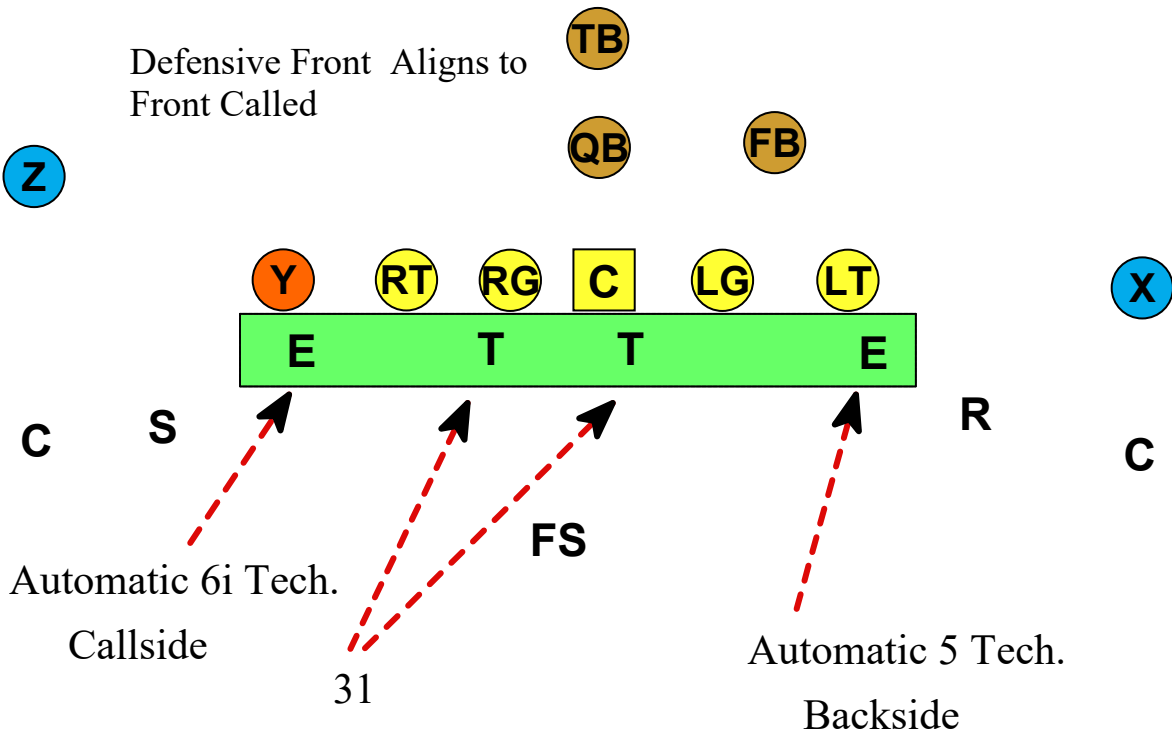
Sam Follows
 The Right or Left
 Call

Rover and Will
 Always Aligns
 Opposite The
 Right or Left Call

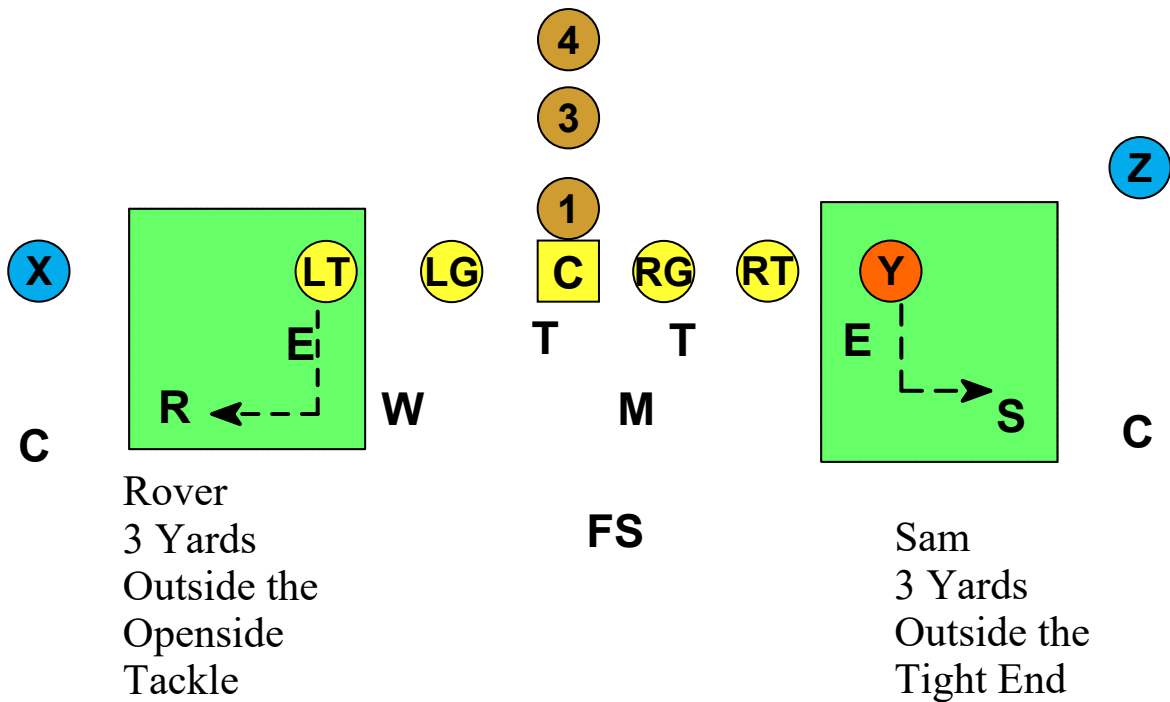
Mike Linebacker
 Follows The Right
 or Left Call

Base Defense: Even

31 Cover 3



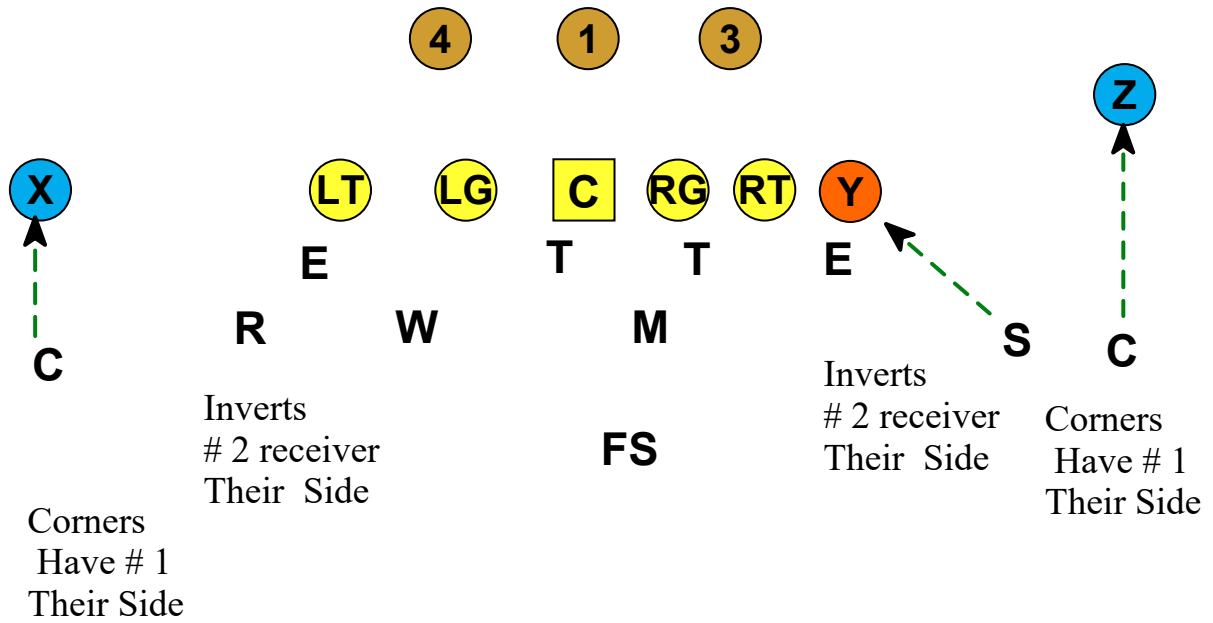
31 Cover 3



Base Defense: Even

31 Cover 1

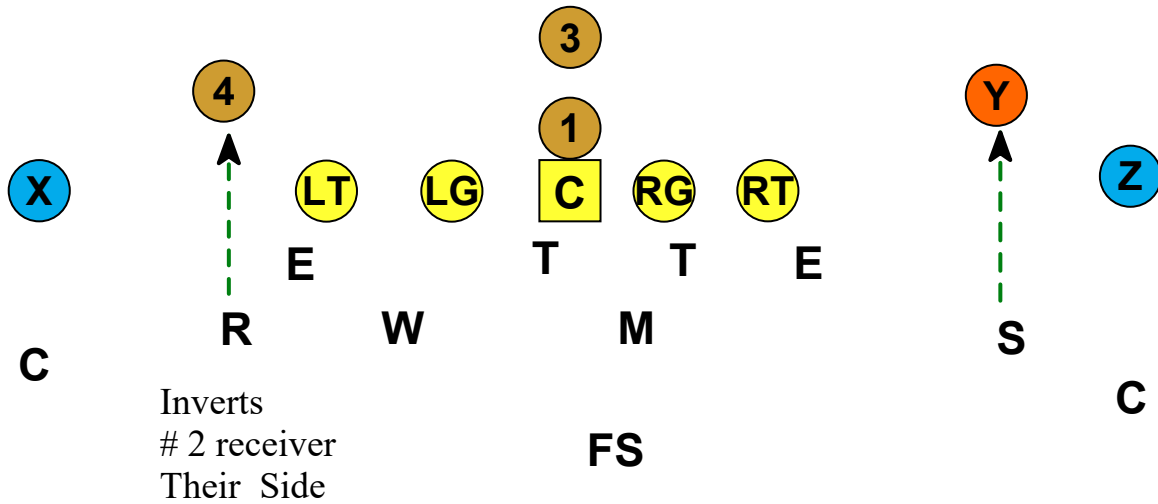
vs Pro



31 Cover 1

vs Doubles

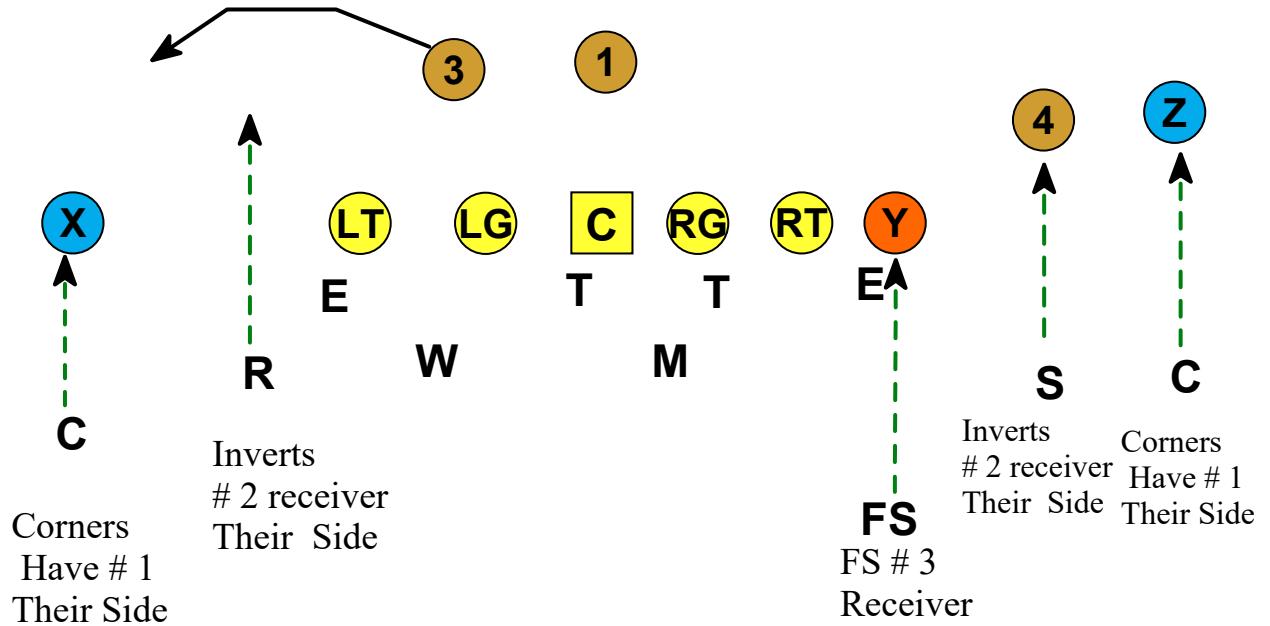
Sam and Rover will always be responsible for getting aligned according to the number two receiver to their side.



Base Defense: Even

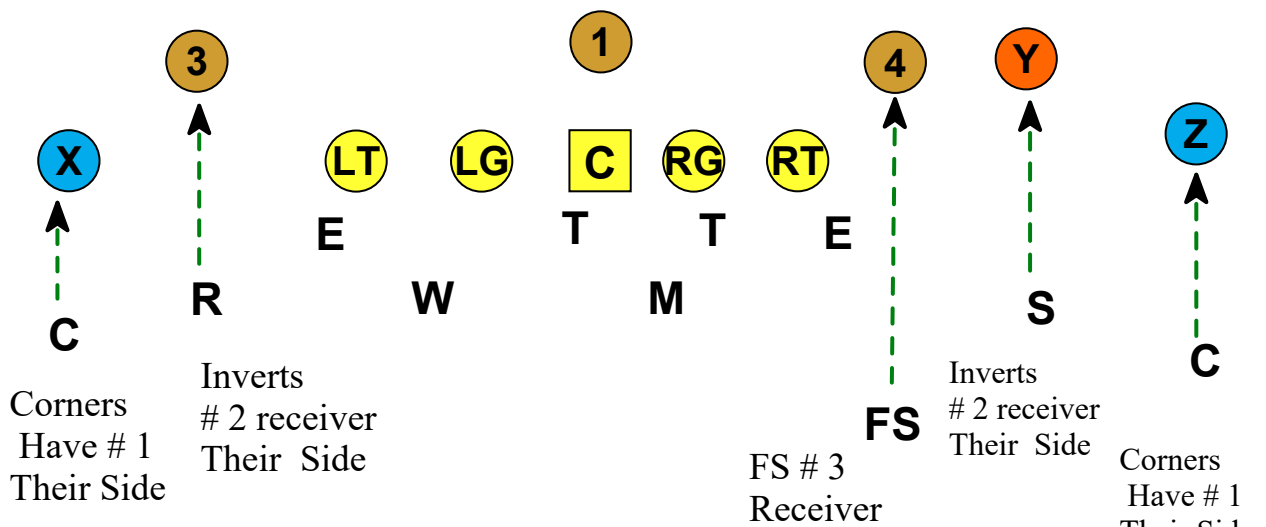
vs Trey

31 Cover 1



Note...Possible switch between Sam and FS vs. personnel.

vs Empty



Note...If we want to stay in Cover 1, will must walk out Will and then Rover must rock to the Free Hitter position.