

CONSIDER FLATS AS RUNS - OPTIONAL RULE

In recent years, the flat pass (also designated as a screen pass) has often been utilized in real-life similar to a running play. The completion is frequently made behind the line of scrimmage in order to have as high a completion percentage as possible, and the idea is to gain the same type of yardage that a typical running play might net you (or hopefully more with good yards after catch). In essence, teams use these quick passes in lieu of runs. In Strat-O-Matic, this real-life change in strategy (along with a general shift in emphasis towards the passing game) has resulted in gamers guessing "Pass" most of the time, often trying to stop the run by positioning linebackers appropriately.

In order to restore a balance to the defensive Run/Pass decision, we are introducing an optional rule that will consider flat passes to be runs when determining which column on the offensive player's card to use (the Right or Wrong column). When using this rule, the defense will often have a much more difficult decision to make when guessing Pass or Run, which is the intent of the rule. Other than containment (described below), this rule has no other effect - it only changes the column to be referred to on the quarterback and receiver cards.

To illustrate how this rule works, say that the offense calls for a flat pass and the defense guesses "Pass". That is considered a "Wrong" call. However, if the offense calls for a flat pass and the defense guesses "Run" then that is considered a "Right" call.

In addition to the above changes, this rule includes **Strong Safety Flat Pass Containment**. In third or fourth down situations where 5 or more yards are needed for a first down, the Strong Safety is responsible to contain the Flat Pass when "Pass" is called.

In these situations, if the white die roll is 1, 2, or 3, then the Flat Pass Containment is in effect. You must refer to the "Run Containment Chart" to see if the Strong Safety stops the receiver short of the first down. If the receiver is stopped short of the 1st down, then the white die indicates how many yards short of a 1st down he was. Note that containment is in effect on both the Quarterback and the Receiver's cards.

For example, if the Strong Safety is rated 5 and a 2 is rolled on the white die, then the receiver is stopped 2 yards short of a first down. However, if the reading from the card results in more than 2 yards short from a first down, accept this result instead. Continuing with the same example (where a 2 is rolled on the white die) let's say this occurred in a 3rd and 10 situation and that the QB flat pass card yields a 7-yard completion, accept this figure rather than crediting the receiver with an 8-yard reception.

Strong Safety Flat Pass Containment only applies to results read off Quarterback and Receiver Flat Pass Wrong columns. Results derived from defensive cards remain the same.

With the use of this rule, All Pro Strong Safeties (like Troy Polamalu in his prime) will truly become important weapons in your Strat-O-Matic games!

Important notes:

- This rule only applies to flat passes, and not to look-in passes (which are never thrown behind the line of scrimmage). So when using this rule, if the defense guesses "Run" and a flat pass is thrown it is "Guessed Right" but if a look-in pass is thrown it is "Guessed Wrong".
- This rule is never in effect for receivers who are double-teamed. If a receiver is double-teamed follow all rules (including double-teaming rules) as if this rule were not being used.
- This rule is not in effect for Dump Off Flat Passes – by rule they are always guessed Right.
- This rule can be used with or without the "Empty flat pass = guessed wrong" rule. However, when used together the "Empty flat Pass = guessed wrong" rule only applies to look-in passes (as true flat passes are considered to be runs).
- In the computer game, the computer manager automatically senses when this rule is being used, and it sometimes overrides the guess of "Pass" with a guess of "Run" when it is expecting a flat pass to be thrown.
- We do not recommend that you use this rule for seasons prior to 1994.