

Madden NFL 97 FAQ/Strategy Guide

by VinnyVideo

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This walkthrough was originally written for Madden NFL '97 on the SNES, but the walkthrough is still applicable to the GENESIS version of the game.

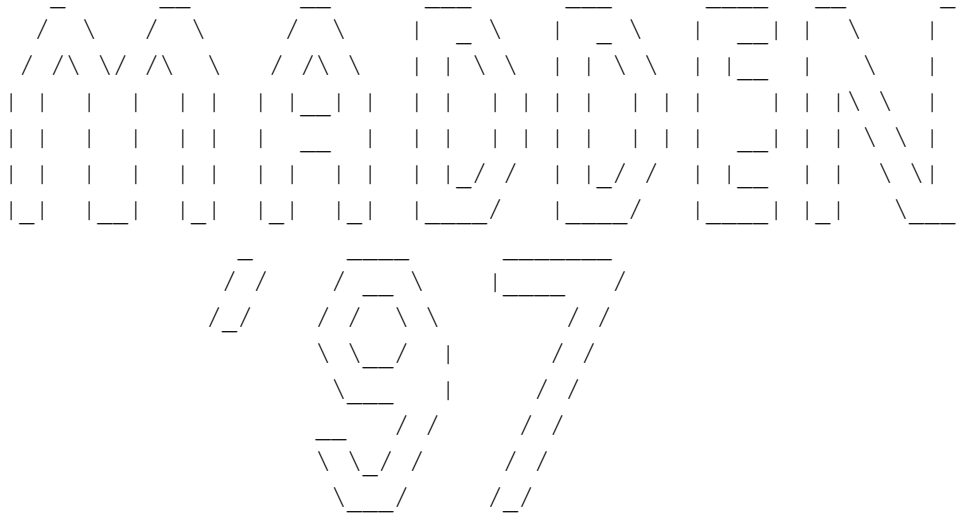


Table of Contents

[INTRO]	Introduction
[MODES]	Modes of Play
[CONTR]	Controls
[TEAMS]	Team Stats
[SUBST]	Suggested Substitutions
[OFFFPB]	Offensive Playbook
[DEFPB]	Defensive Playbook
[NOTES]	FAQs and General Tips
[REALL]	Comparing with Reality
[VERSN]	Version History
[COPYR]	Copyright
[CONTC]	Contact Information

Introduction

[INTRO]

Greetings! I've made another walkthrough! This is my eighth, which is kind of impressive. Before we start the applause, I have to say that this guide was the easiest for me to make. I've already written guides for Madden '96 and Madden '98, so I was able to use much of the content from those guides in this one. In fact, almost everything other than the Team Stats, Suggested Substitutions, and season review is from one of my previous guides, since this game's playbook is identical to the one used in Madden '98. By the way, I'm not going to be discussing secret codes in this guide, since the Cheats section of GameFAQs (and other sources, too) describe them comprehensively (By the way, I found all the classic teams by playing through the Super Bowls with each team - I didn't use the Internet or any tip books to find them!).

Anyway, Madden NFL '97 is a really great game. In contrast to the arcade-like Madden '96, Madden '97's style is quite realistic. The sprite-based graphics weren't very innovative, but they got the job done. The music is very good, too,

especially by the standards of sports video games, which is usually awful (and in Super NES games, poorly compressed). It's almost as good as the Madden '96 music. This is enough rambling, though. In the words of that famous plumber, let's-a go!

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Modes of Play

[MODES]
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Play Now

Here you can play an exhibition game using the teams of your choice. You can select the venue, weather, and quarter length, too. Some secret codes will even allow you to play with all-time great teams in this mode.

NFL Season Play

Here you can play through a 16-game season, and if you're good enough, the playoffs and Super Bowl.

---New Season---

This starts a new season. Imagine that! You can select as many or as few games as you wish to play. If you have a season or playoff in progress, starting a new season erases the previous season's data, so be careful.

---New Playoffs---

Here you can start a new playoff series. Again, this erases any data from previous seasons or playoffs.

---Custom League---

Set up a mini-league with the teams of your choice. Only available in the Genesis version of the game, for some reason.

---Custom Tournament---

Begin a custom playoff series using the teams you select. You can control as many or as few of them as you like, and you can make the tournament as big or as small as you want. As with Custom Leagues, this is a Genesis exclusive.

---Season Rules---

Here you can decide quarter length, injuries (off or on), endurance (whether you want fatigue or not), and whether you want the rosters to reflect modifications (trades and signings) you've made.

---League Stats---

If you have a season in progress, this lets you check out the statistics for individual teams and the entire league.

---League Standings---

This shows the current standings.

---Continue Season---

If you have a season in progress, this is where you can go to resume it.

---Continue Playoffs---

If you have playoffs in progress, you can resume them with this option.

Front Office

The Front Office menu contains many options for changing teams' rosters and other related tasks.

---Sign Up New Player---

Here you can create a new player. After setting physical attributes (name, position, height, etc.), you run a series of drills to determine the player's

attributes. The set of drills varies depending on your player's position. You might want to add some of the players not included in the game, or even yourself!

---Practice Event---

Here you can practice the training drills used when creating a player. Some of them are pretty fun, too! Keep in mind that turbo controllers help on some of the events.

---Trade Players---

This option lets you trade players between teams. Just remember that transactions and player creations are limited by the game's SRAM space - and the space on each team's salary cap. Also, you can only trade players of the same position, and you can't trade two players for one.

---Reset Rosters---

This nullifies all changes to the rosters you've made. Be careful when using this option!

---Delete Players---

This option only lets you delete players you've created yourself. You might do this if you made a mistake, got a bad result in a training event, or are out of memory.

Records

View all-time records for big plays and Scouting Combine events.

Controls

[CONTR]

This section is similar to the content found in the manual, although I've added some of my own information.

---General---

Move player - Control pad any direction

Pause game - START

---Special Teams---

Start the power bar - B

Stop the power bar - B (when it's near the top)

Aim kick left/right - Control pad left/right

Call an audible (onside kick) - A

Line up right/left (after calling an audible) - A/B

Return to standard kicking formation - Y

Call for a fair catch (very important on punt returns) - SELECT

Control the kick receiver - Control pad any direction

---Before the snap---

(Offense)

Set a man in motion - Control pad left or right

Select player to control (only in multi-player mode or in a Manual Offense) - L or R (or X)

Fake snap signal (HUT!) - X

Snap the ball - B

(Defense)

Select player to control - B or X

Show blitz (move players closer to the line of scrimmage; you can press it multiple times to change the player combinations) - L or R

---Audibles (either offense or defense)---

Call an audible - A

Select an audible play (after calling an audible) - Y, B, or A

Cancel audible - X

---After the snap---

(Offense)

Rushing

Burst of speed - B

Spin - A

Dive/QB slide - Y

Hurdle - X

Lateral to closest teammate - L or R

(Defense)

Control player closest to the ball - B

Jump and raise hands - X

Dive - Y

Power Tackle - A

---Passing---

Move the quarterback - Control Pad any direction

Bring up passing letters - B

Pass to receiver Y, B, A, L, or R - Y, B, A, L, or R

Throw the ball away (receiver letters up) - SELECT

Throw to a default receiver - X

Lateral to closest teammate (receiver letters not up) - L

Note: The longer you hold down the pass button, the harder the throw will be.
Don't forget that your quarterback can run, too.

---Receiving---

Control receiver closest to the ball - B

Jump and raise hands - X

Dive - Y

Spin - A

---Punting/Kicking---

Fake snap signal (HUT!) - X

Aim the kick - Control pad left/right

Start power bar/snap the ball - B

Stop power bar/kick the ball - B

---Play Calling---

Move play selection highlight - Control pad up/down

Flip play (Only for offense, and not available for the Goal Line or Special
Teams formations) - X

Return to formation select screen from play screen - L or R

---Menus---

Move highlight up/down - Control Pad up/down

Cycle through choices - Control Pad left/right

Select highlighted option - START

Select highlighted option if at Pre-Game or Game Pause screen - B

Switch between home and visiting teams on Team Select screen - B

Return to previous screen - X

These aren't exactly controls, but there are a few settings on the Pre-Game
Show/pause screen that affect your controls. First select "Game Play Options."
You can change audibles here, but I discuss that in the Q&A section.

First, you can switch the Pass Catch Mode from automatic to manual. Normally, the computer controls the receiver while the pass is in the air, but in manual mode you take control of the receiver as soon you throw the ball (better for advanced players).

Secondly, you can change the Play-Calling Mode from "direct" to "bluff." This is only useful against a human opponent, though. In bluff mode, you still select plays using the B button, but you can also make fake selections (before or after the real selection) using the Y button. When you're finished, press A.

Third, you can Set Offense Control. This isn't a bad thing for advanced players, but beginners should always use the default Automatic mode. In Manual Mode, you can control any of the so-called "skill positions" - not just the quarterback. Use the L and R buttons to cycle through your players before the snap. On running plays it's best to select the running back, although it's also fun to block for a back using your fullback or tight end - or even the quarterback! On passing plays, you definitely want to control the quarterback, although you can press B while the ball is in the air to take control of the receiver. If you're controlling a receiver, press B to bring up the receiving windows and B again to call for a pass. Manual Offense Control is a lot of fun and is a superb addition to an otherwise less-than-innovative game.

One more option here is totally useless: Passing Mode. Passing Mode determines whether five receiver letters are shown or one. Five (the default) is highly recommended, as the alternative is cumbersome.

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 Team Stats [TEAMS]
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Some of the game's team ratings make only a little sense, but here goes anyway. The game doesn't provide numerical ratings for OL, DL, and DB.

	Overall	QB	RB	WR	LB	SPC
Arizona Cardinals	63	35	82	43	49	72
Atlanta Falcons	65	87	41	57	90	22
Baltimore Ravens	39	63	41	20	70	72
Buffalo Bills	75	50	53	57	87	99
Carolina Panthers	54	59	22	55	61	37
Chicago Bears	71	87	42	37	92	67
Cincinnati Bengals	75	69	27	83	63	85
Dallas Cowboys	99	99	91	85	90	77
Denver Broncos	75	93	53	76	98	35
Detroit Lions	87	81	90	99	87	92
Green Bay Packers	75	96	49	76	61	70
Houston Oilers	48	59	40	41	67	27
Indianapolis Colts	83	90	68	62	54	65
Jacksonville Jaguars	53	63	47	44	81	45
Kansas City Chiefs	86	66	99	26	99	80
Miami Dolphins	50	90	42	56	65	25
Minnesota Vikings	70	81	46	75	79	22
New England Patriots	63	75	59	83	65	60
New Orleans Saints	50	72	50	51	52	87
New York Giants	20	50	39	26	20	82
New York Jets	51	53	47	63	27	90
Oakland Raiders	76	50	40	75	56	82
Philadelphia Eagles	51	35	61	60	58	97
Pittsburgh Steelers	50	32	41	59	60	35
St. Louis Rams	66	38	32	71	63	85
San Diego Chargers	52	50	20	63	65	67
San Francisco 49ers	78	90	47	91	54	60
Seattle Seahawks	76	56	56	68	70	65
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	49	38	40	60	52	20
Washington Redskins	70	20	55	45	76	45

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	Overall	QB	RB	WR	LB	SPC
1975 Arizona Cardinals	45	50	93	55	99	70
1980 Atlanta Falcons	56	75	99	67	99	70
1986 Cleveland Browns	45	69	59	66	99	99
1990 Buffalo Bills	67	93	78	59	99	99
1996 EA Sports	99	99	99	99	99	99
1985 Chicago Bears	85	59	94	44	99	99
1981 Cincinnati Bengals	45	84	70	56	99	82
1977 Dallas Cowboys	82	99	99	60	99	99
1986 Denver Broncos	54	93	70	38	99	99
1952 Detroit Lions	31	72	35	44	99	60
1966 Green Bay Packers	64	99	64	49	99	85
1993 Houston Oilers	75	99	77	66	96	99
1970 Indianapolis Colts	44	81	32	52	99	99
1996 Tiburon Gotcha	99	99	99	99	99	99
1969 Kansas City Chiefs	89	99	82	57	99	99
1972 Miami Dolphins	80	84	99	55	99	99
1976 Minnesota Vikings	66	75	80	51	99	99
1985 New England Patriots	56	41	97	24	99	95
1987 New Orleans Saints	40	59	55	37	99	60
1990 New York Giants	65	84	55	67	99	95
1968 New York Jets	65	99	55	76	99	65
1976 Oakland Raiders	89	99	89	95	99	99
1980 Philadelphia Eagles	65	84	66	52	99	99
1978 Pittsburgh Steelers	96	90	89	68	99	99
1979 Los Angeles Rams	56	35	84	29	99	99
1994 San Diego Chargers	52	84	60	37	99	99
1988 San Francisco 49ers	87	99	98	78	99	99
1978 Seattle Seahawks	41	81	82	66	99	75
1979 Tampa Bay Buccaneers	54	90	86	45	99	92
1982 Washington Redskins	66	90	99	29	99	99
1996 NFLPA Free Agents	99	32	26	99	99	20

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Suggested Substitutions

[SUBST]

Note that I assume a 4-3 defense for every team other than Pittsburgh, Carolina, Buffalo, and Baltimore. All substitutions should be "global" substitutions unless otherwise specified. I don't include suggested substitutions for any of the hidden teams. I base these recommendations on player ratings in the game, not the lineups used during the actual 1996 NFL season. I don't know the first names of a small number of these players. You may also want to manually make changes to the WR in the Goal Line formation (use the player with the best Hands rating) and the third cornerback and third safety in the Nickel and Dime formations. Also, I highly recommend that you adopt some form of player rotation (as discussed in the FAQs section).

Arizona Cardinals: Johnny McWilliams (Rookie TE, #86) is probably your best TE. Use Aaron Graham as your LG in Shotgun and Single Back. Use Michael Bankston as your DLE except in Nickel and Dime.

Atlanta Falcons: Eric Metcalf is probably your best HB except in the Goal Line formation. Tyrone Brown should be WR #4. Ricky Sanders is your best TE, and Harper Le Bel should probably be #2. Matt Willig should be your C in Goal Line.

Baltimore Ravens: Brian Kinchen should be TE #1. The recommended WR depth chart is Andre Rison, Michael Jackson, Floyd Turner, Derrick Alexander, Calvin Williams, and Jermaine Lewis. Wally Williams should be the RT. Tim Goad should

be the DRT in a 4-3. P. Johnson should be ILB2 and 4-3 MLB. Antonio Langham should be the LCB.

Buffalo Bills: Quinn Early should be your #1 WR, Russell Copeland should be #2, and Eric Moulds should be #3. Corey Louchiey should be the LT. Ted Washington should be your 3-4 NT.

Carolina Panthers: Bob Christian is probably the better FB. Michael Bates should be the #4 WR, followed by Ray Crittenden and Dwight Stone. Andrew Peterson should be the RT. Greg Kragen should be the 3-4 NT.

Chicago Bears: Use Robert Green as your HB in Shotgun and Single Back. Bobby Engram should be WR #2, and Jack Jackson should be WR #5. Ryan Wetnight should be TE #1.

Cincinnati Bengals: Eric Bieniemy should be your Shotgun/Single Back HB. Tyree Davis should be your #4 WR. Marco Battaglia should be TE #2. Use Alfred Oglesby as the DLT in Nickel and Dime. Corey Sawyer should be the LCB.

Dallas Cowboys: Herschel Walker is probably the best FB. Stepfret Williams should be WR #4. Eric Bjornson should be the #2 TE. George Hegamin is the best RT. Randall Godfrey is recommended at RLB, and Godfrey Myles at MLB.

Denver Broncos: Patrick Jeffers should be the #5 WR. Use Al Wallace as your DLE.

Detroit Lions: Use Scott Conover as the center except in Shotgun/Single Back. Mike Johnson should be the LLB.

Green Bay Packers: Rob Carpenter should be WR #4. Mike Flanagan (Rookie OL, #58) should be the center in the Goal Line formation.

Houston Oilers: Ronnie Harmon is the recommended Shotgun/Single Back HB. The recommended WR depth chart is Chris Sanders, Willie Davis, Mel Gray, Travis Hannah, M. Seaborn, and Derek Russell. Barron Wortham is the recommended MLB. Rayna Stewart is recommended at FS.

Indianapolis Colts: Roosevelt Potts is the better FB. Marvin Harrison is the #1 WR. Flipper Anderson should be the #4 WR. Tony Mandarich is definitely the best LT. Bernard Whittington may be the best DLT.

Jacksonville Jaguars: Keenan McCardell is the best receiver. Cedric Tillman should be the #3 WR, and Ernest Givins should be #5. Pete Mitchell should be the #1 TE. Ben Coleman should be the RG. Don Davey is the recommended DRT. Keith Goganious is the best RLB. Chris Hudson should be the FS, and Dave Thomas should be the SS.

Kansas City Chiefs: Greg Hill is the best HB except in Shotgun/Single Back. Use Keith Traylor as the DRT in Nickel and Dime. John Browning (Rookie DL, #92) is the best DRE. Use Anthony Davis at LLB.

Miami Dolphins: Use Terry Kirby as your Single Back/Shotgun HB. Irving Spikes is the best FB. Kirby Dar Dar should be the #3 WR, and Randal Hill should be #4. James Brown is the best RT. Daryl Gardener is the best DLT. Terrell Buckley should be the LCB.

Minnesota Vikings: Amp Lee is a good Shotgun/Single Back HB. S. Evans is the better FB. Moe Williams should be the #4 WR. David Dixon should be the RG. James Manley (Rookie DL, #94) should be the DRE.

New England Patriots: Kevin Lee should be WR #4, and Troy Brown should be #5.

Todd Rucci should be the LG. Jeff Dellenbach is the recommended center.

New Orleans Saints: Ray Zellers is the better FB in this game. Haywood Jeffires should be the #1 WR. Paul Green is preferable at TE #2. Craig Novitsky should be the RG in Goal Line and run-oriented formations. Richard Harvey is best at RLB. Brian Jones is a tad better at MLB. Sean Lumpkin should be the SS.

New York Giants: Lawrence Dawsey should be WR #2. Amani Toomer (Rookie WR, #83) should be WR #3. Omar Douglas should be WR #4. Aaron Pierce should be the #1 TE. Roman Oben (Rookie OL, #72) should be the RT. Lance Smith should definitely be the RG. Cedric Jones is the best DLE. Coleman Rudolph should be the MLB. Ben Talley is the best LLB.

New York Jets: Alex Van Dyke should be WR #4. Tyrone Davis should be the #1 TE. Harry Boatswain should be the RG. John Bock should be the center except in Goal Line.

Oakland Raiders: Joe Aska is a bit better at FB. Calvin Jones should be the #5 WR. Andrew Glover should be the #2 TE. Robert Jenkins is the recommended RT. Dan Turk should be the center.

Philadelphia Eagles: It's a very close call at quarterback. Ty Detmer has a better arm and running ability, but Rodney Peete is more accurate. Charlie Garner is the best HB. Mark Ingram should be the #3 WR, followed by Phillip Riley, D. Burks, and C.T. Jones. Jimmie Johnson should be the second TE. Guy McIntyre should be the LG. Raleigh McKenzie should be the center except in the Goal Line formation.

Pittsburgh Steelers: Kordell Stewart is the best QB. Justin Strzelczyk should be the Goal Line center. Use Kevin Henry as the DLE in Nickel and Dime. Joel Steed should be the 3-4 NT. Steve Conley should be the LOLB.

St. Louis Rams: Brent Moss should be your HB in the Shotgun and Single Back formations. Jerald Moore (Rookie FB, #30) should be the starter at FB. The WR depth chart should be Isaac Bruce, Eddie Kennison, Jessie Hester, Alexander Wright, Todd Kinchen, and J.T. Thomas. Lovell Pinkney should be the #2 TE.

San Diego Chargers: Use Walter Reeves at fullback if you prefer pass-catching over running ability. Bryan Still should be the #3 WR. Use Stan Brock at RT in Goal Line and as your Shotgun/Single Back LT. Dennis Gibson should be the RLB. You might want to use a 3-4 defense with the Chargers, even though they didn't use it in real life.

San Francisco 49ers: Terrell Owens should be the #3 WR. Israel Ifeanyi should be the DLE in Nickel and Dime.

Seattle Seahawks: Mike Pritchard should be the #1 WR. Ronnie Harris should be the #4 WR, and Robb Thomas should be #5. Carlester Crumpler is the recommended #1 TE. Matt Joyce should be the LG.

Tampa Bay Buccaneers: Courtney Hawkins should be the #1 WR, and Charles Wilson should be #3. Definitely start Pete Pierson at RT.

Washington Redskins: Brian Mitchell is the best FB. Bill Brooks should be the #1 WR.

All Madden: Steve Young is the best overall QB. Barry Sanders is the best overall HB. Rodney Hampton is the best FB. Isaac Bruce should be the #3 WR. Herman Moore should be the #4 WR. Brent Jones should be the #1 TE. Harris Barton is the recommended RT. Neil Smith is the best DRE. Dan Saleaumua should

start at DLT. Junior Seau is the best MLB. Jessie Tuggle is the best RLB. Phillippi Sparks is best at LCB, and Tyrone Poole should be the RCB.

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Offensive Playbook

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[OFFPB]

I'm going to be assuming you're playing against the computer when I write this guide. I always assume that each play is NOT flipped, but the mirror feature (press X on the play selection screen) is good to use from time to time, particularly on certain plays or against a human opponent. I also assume you're using the "Normal" subset of each formation. Changing the set can be desirable but will also change the way the play works. When I use terms like "Y receiver" and "A receiver," I'm referring to the buttons that correspond to the receivers on the non-flipped version of the play. "Y receiver" can have a different meaning in real-life playbooks. Also, since you're playing an old football video game, I'm assuming you have some grasp of football theory, rules, and terminology; you know what a tight end or shotgun formation is. That said, I'm still going to explain certain terms for the less football-savvy. Remember that results may vary based on offense, defense, down, hashmarks, set, and other factors. I've tried to test each play against a variety of defenses, but there's still a chance I may have misjudged a few plays. Also, no play will work 100% of the time. Lastly, while many of these plays (or plays that are very similar) appear in the playbooks of today's Madden games, I don't recommend trying to use this guide with any games other than the Super NES version of Madden '97.

For those of you who are counting, there are 109 plays on offense and 77 plays in the defensive playbook. Madden '96 had 92 offensive plays and 81 defensive plays. The offensive playbook has a few redundancies but is basically better, but I miss some of the unconventional defenses from Madden '96. The Madden formation, which appeared in Madden '96, is gone, and while the Run & Shoot formation is also gone, the Single Back formation now has a 4-receiver set.

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Far (Normal, 3WR, 2TE, TE Motion) (12 plays)

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The Far formation has two running backs lined up close to each other, with the halfback on the weak side ("far" from the tight end).

---FB Dive---

This play is good in short-yardage situations, but it's also good as a general-purpose running play. It usually gains about four yards.

---HB Flat---

Your main target on this useful passing play is the halfback (B) in the flat, who often goes uncovered. This can become a touchdown. If the halfback isn't open, look for the split end (Y) on the in route or the hooking flanker (A).

---FB Opt. Dive---

Not very different from FB Dive, although this is a run off left guard.

---HB Dive---

You need a fast halfback to succeed with this slightly awkward play. The halfback takes a pitch and then runs up the middle. Call an audible if eight men are in the box.

---Weak Flood---

This play "floods" the weak side of the line with a trio of receiving options. Don't throw to the fullback (A), or you'll usually lose a lot of yards. Passes to the halfback (B) usually get deflected in the line. The tight end (R) is a

pretty safe option, but your best bets are probably your wide receivers (Y and L).

---HB Off Tackle---

This is the second-best play in the game! You may wish to use it as the audible assigned to the Y button. Just watch your blockers and turn when appropriate. This play can gain anywhere between five and 50 yards - and it's very often toward the higher end of that scale, although every once in a while you'll be tackled in the backfield.

---FB Screen---

Your main option here is (obviously) the fullback. A fast fullback can make a touchdown, but most fullbacks will have to settle for about five yards. But don't ignore your wideouts here. Passes to the Y receiver are usually deflected in the line, but the A receiver is a very good option.

---Flood Zone---

Try a soft pass to the L receiver or a harder throw to the A receiver. Don't bother throwing to the halfback (B), because he often catches passes intended for the flanker by accident. Try throwing to the fullback (Y) if the opponents are in a deep zone. The halfback is primarily a blocker.

---WR Screen---

Here you throw to your flanker (A) while your linemen pull to block for the receiver. This can be effective against the blitz, but your receiver often gets tackled for a big loss in tight man coverage. I often prefer to pass to the split end (Y) or tight end (B) on the post patterns. Your backs are blockers.

---Quick Fade---

There are four options here: the receivers (Y, L) on short fade routes, the tight end (A) on an in route, and the halfback (B) in the flat. The halfback is probably your best option, as you'll almost always get a completion for at least five yards, and good blocking can lead to a very big play. No matter who you throw to, you'll be happiest if you get the ball off fairly quickly.

---HB Trap---

This play looks a little like HB Dive. It usually ends up gaining about five yards, but you'll sometimes be stopped for no gain.

---Deep Curls---

Both backs stay in to block, so you should have plenty of time. Throw deep to one of your receivers (Y, A) if one is open. Otherwise, look for the tight end on the shorter pattern.

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Near (Normal, 3WR, 2TE, TE Motion) (12 plays)  
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As with the Far formation, the fullback lines up right behind the quarterback. However, the halfback is on the side closer to the tight end.

---FB Dive---

This play is very similar to the Far version of FB Dive. You may have difficulty if the opponents have eight men in the box.

---FB Flat---

The split end (Y) runs in and the tight end (R) runs an out, but the most dangerous option is the flanker (A) on the streak. The halfback blocks, but the fullback (B) is sometimes available in the flat.

---HB Delay---

Before getting the snap, your halfback freezes to confuse the defense. Run up the hole that develops in the middle of the line and you should get six or seven yards. If there are eight men in the box, call an audible.

---Post Stop---

Your main options here are the receivers (Y and A) on short posts. The tight end (B) can also work, while the backs function solely as blockers.

---HB Counter---

Here the halfback takes one step in the opposite direction before taking the pitch to confuse the defense. This is a high-risk, high-reward rushing play. If you find the hole that develops up the middle of the line, you can often gain a dozen yards. Because you take the ball so deep in the backfield, it's also possible to lose yards.

---Deep Post---

Very similar to Post Stop, but the receivers run deeper routes, and the tight end runs out instead of in. Also, the backs are protecting against the inside blitz instead of the outside blitz.

---FB Circle---

The fullback (B) runs a circle route that's not very useful. However, your receivers (Y and A) and tight end (R) can get open if you're patient. I find that this play is of the all-or-nothing variety; it can gain big yardage against some defenses but fails miserably against others.

---HB Inside---

This play is pretty similar to HB Counter, but a little less effective. It doesn't lose yardage as often, though.

---PA Near---

This passing play isn't for the faint of heart. Your main targets are the receivers downfield, but you can look for the tight end (B) if you need something safer. Your halfback (L) takes a while to get open but is a good receiver of last resort. The fullback blocks.

---TE Screen---

Your linemen pull out on this play to block for the tight end (B), the intended recipient of the pass. You can also throw deep to one of your wide outs (Y or A). This play is very effective if you have an agile RG and RT and a speedy TE. It's a pretty easy and reliable way to earn 5-10 yards.

---HB Toss---

What a great play this was in Madden '96! However, the players are a bit slower now, so this is best used as a sweep. This high-risk play usually gains 50 or loses six.

---Roll Out---

This play is pretty useful if you have a mobile quarterback. If no one's open, try scrambling for the first down. Look for the halfback (Y) in the flat, the tight end (B), or your flanker (A). The split end (L) runs an out.

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Single Back (Normal, 3 WR, TE Motion, 4 WR) (18 plays)  
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The default set of Single Back formation has two wide receivers, two tight ends, and a running back.

---HB Dive---

This was one of the most useless plays in Madden '96, but it's now a good basic

rushing play. Run behind your left tackle and left guard to pick up an easy five yards.

---Square In---

This would be a pretty play to watch from the upper deck. Your receivers (Y and A) head in, while your tight ends (B and R) run out patterns. The tight end is probably the most dependable option.

---HB Dive (2)---

Just like the other HB Dive play from the Single Back formation: follow your right guard and right tackle to pick up four or five yards. You could try running up the middle or even off tackle if the opponents are using an unconventional defensive alignment.

---Quick Slant---

Your main option is your split end (Y) on the quick slant. The flanker (A) also runs a slant, while the second tight end's (B) slant usually encounters too much congestion to be useful. Also consider trying a quick pass to your #1 tight end (R) on the streak pattern.

---TE Quick Out---

Both tight ends (Y and B) run outs, which are fairly reliable short patterns. You can also go for the home run with your receivers (A and L) on streaks. I like this play a lot and sometimes use it as my A-button audible.

---WR Screen---

This play is intended to be a screen pass to your flanker (A), but I get better results by throwing to the streaking split end (Y) or tight end (B). If you go with the screen pass, release the ball as soon as possible and try running to the outside of cornerback.

---Drag Right---

If you like the West Coast Offense, you'll like this play. I don't have much luck with any of the receivers except for the flanker (A) on the streak, who usually draws single (or no) coverage. You can also try the split end (Y).

---Circle Pass---

Your L receiver should get open pretty quickly. Throw a touch pass to him for the score! The flanker (A) is another good choice. The halfback (B) can often get a lot of yards after completion, while the tight ends (Y and R) are slightly less useful. This play receives an official VinnyVideo Seal of Quality.

---HB Screen---

A screen pass intended for the halfback. Don't get rid of the ball too quickly. Let the blockers block and you might just wind up in the end zone. There are other receiving options here, but I wouldn't pay much attention to them. This play works well as an audible.

---Slot Reverse---

Here your quarterback hands off to the halfback, who then hands off to your slot receiver. It's best to use the 3-receiver set when you select this play, or else you'll be handing off to a lumbering tight end who won't be able to pick up as much yardage. Also, set the receiver in motion by pressing Right just before you snap the ball. You want him to be where the tight end is in the 2-TE set. This way you can get the ball off more quickly than you could if he were in the slot. Don't press any buttons or move the control pad until the receiver has the ball, unless you want to use this play as a conventional halfback draw/fake reverse. No matter what, this play is very effective.

---Flea Flicker---

The riskiest play in the playbook! This play begins as Slot Reverse does, but at the end the receiver pitches out to the quarterback. If your wide receivers (Y and A) aren't open deep, try throwing to the safer tight end (B). It's usually easiest to not press any buttons and allow the computer to control the entire play. Also, this play occasionally doesn't work right and becomes an ordinary running play or reverse. As with Slot Reverse, it makes sense to use the 3-WR set with this play.

---HB Toss---

This is a standard run up the middle, except there's a slot receiver faking a reverse. You can usually gain 5-8 yards with this nice play.

---Slot Screen---

This is a screen pass to the slot receiver. If you use a 3-WR or 4-WR set, you can try using this more as a conventional pass to the slot man. Also try throwing to the streaking wide receivers (Y and L) or the tight end down the middle.

---HB Counter---

This counter play is almost like a delay. There are two ways you can run this. You can run up the middle, following your blockers. Get past the line of scrimmage and you should get about 10 yards. Alternatively, you can run off right tackle and go for the home run. The latter is usually more effective, but it also depends on the defensive set your opposition is using.

---Break-Out---

This is what smart prisoners do. The wide receivers (Y and A) run a deep out pattern that frequently results in a touchdown. You can also throw to one of your tight ends (B and R) for a shorter gain. This play works well against most defenses.

---Quick Fade---

Your main options are the tight ends (Y and A) on short fade patterns, while the wide outs (L and R) run in patterns. The halfback (B) isn't too useful. This play isn't much good on first down, but it can work if the opponents are sitting back in a deep zone.

---Post In---

Your best target on this play is the split end (Y), who fakes an out and runs a deep post. Other options are the tight end (B), flanker (A), and slot receiver/second tight end (L). The back blocks.

---In + Out---

I'd probably look first for the flanker (A) on the out pattern and the streaking slot receiver/TE #2 (Y). You can also try the tight end (B), while the split end (L) runs a less useful route.

~~~~~  
Pro Form (Normal, 3WR, 2TE, TE Motion, H-Back) (15 plays)  
~~~~~

The Pro Form formation, alternatively known as Split Backs or other names, is similar to the Far and Near formations. It's good for both running and passing. It's the formation I use most frequently.

---FB Sweep---

Most outside running plays are geared toward speedy backs, and most fullbacks aren't fast. However, this play is very effective, especially against standard 4-3 sets. Follow your blockers and you can easily gain 25 or more yards.

---Comeback---

A good all-purpose passing play. The halfback (Y) in the flat is almost like a sweep. Other options are the tight end (B) on the post, the flanker (A) on the hook, and the split end (L) on the deep in route.

---HB Off Tackle---

I think this is the best running play in the game. This is always my Y audible. This play simply shreds standard 4-3 sets. If there are eight men in the box, you may want to call an audible or run closer to the center of the line. I've gotten many a touchdown with this play.

---HB Toss---

This isn't a very good play. It usually ends up losing about five yards. However, you can occasionally make a big play if you can reach the sideline and turn.

---HB Toss Pass---

This play is almost identical to HB Toss, but this is MUCH better. For one thing, you have a good chance of earning decent yardage on the ground and a far lower chance of being stopped in the backfield. Better yet, you have the option of pressing B to bring up the receiver windows and throw a pass! If you throw to the Y receiver, he'll probably be open and will usually score a touchdown. Another nice thing about halfback passes is that they keep human players guessing. If you're playing the computer, bring up the passing windows as soon as your halfback gets the ball so the receiver can get downfield. Against a human, you may want to wait until it looks like you're running.

---HB Counter---

The quarterback spins before delivering the handoff here. This isn't a good play for beginners, but an experienced player can get a decent gain. You'll have to guide your halfback through a barrage of defenders, and it's often hard to tell exactly what gap you should run through. It's easiest and safest to run up the middle, but if you want to increase your chances of a big play, you can try running between right guard, who pulls to the left, and the left tackle (as shown on the play diagram)

---FB Inside Run---

This play isn't very well designed; you usually end up running into the quarterback and losing all your momentum! I don't recommend using this play, although you can get four yards with it if you're lucky.

---Curls---

Your main options are your wide receivers (Y and A), who run curl patterns, which are similar to hooks. The halfback (B) in the flat is also effective, while the tight end (R) doesn't get open very much.

---FB Dive---

This play is pretty self-explanatory: a fullback run up the middle. However, you can often gain six or seven yards with it if you have good blocking. It's also effective in short-yardage situations.

---Quick Out---

This play is designed to facilitate very quick passes to the WRs, who run short out patterns. The tight end is also a viable option. This is a pretty good play.

---HB Middle---

Look for the split end (Y) on the corner route, the tight end (A) on the out, and the streaking flanker (L). The halfback (B) on the deep curl gets open less frequently.

---FB Screen---

A typical screen pass to the fullback. Make sure not to release the ball too soon. Also consider throwing to the Y receiver on the deep post, the streaking A receiver, or the tight end (R) on the post pattern.

---Cross Pass---

Both backs protect the quarterback here. The most effective target is the tight end (B). Passes to the split end (Y) on the slant are good against a Nickel and weak against standard 4-3 schemes. The A receiver runs a post pattern. This really isn't my favorite play in the Pro Form, but it's not terrible.

---Circle Pass---

Your main target is the streaking split end (Y). If he's tightly covered, look for the A receiver on the out, the tight end (R) on the post, and the halfback (B) in the flat.

---All Streaks---

This is a Hail Mary pass, with the fullback staying in to block. You can use this play to get a big gain in a desperate situation, but feel free to use it any time you like, because there's a good chance someone will get open against a standard 4-3 scheme.

~~~~~  
I Form (Normal, 3WR, 2TE, Broken, H-Back) (15 plays)  
~~~~~

The fullback lines up between the quarterback and halfback here, producing an "I" shape. There's no TE Motion set, though.

---Belly Weak---

In this play, the fullback runs up the "belly" (middle) of the offensive line. Even with eight men in the box, you can get a decent gain - three or four yards. You can gain even more against a normal 4-3.

---FB Hook---

The fullback (B) runs into the line, blocks, and then runs a hook pattern. However, your other options are much more useful, from the split end (Y) and tight end (R) to the halfback (L) in the flat. The flanker (A) runs a medium in route that works pretty well against double coverage.

---Belly Strong---

This is the same as Belly Weak, except that the fullback runs between the right guard and right tackle (instead of the left). You'll get similar results.

---HB Wham---

This is another run up the middle, except this one goes to the halfback. Watch out for the defensive right tackle and right end and you're good for five or six yards.

---Square-In---

Your main target should be the split end (Y) on the deep in route. If he's double-covered, try the flanker on the hook (A) or the tight end (B) on the short out. The tight end is very effective against deep zones. Both backs block, so you should have plenty of time.

---HB Draw---

Draw plays are a little unusual for the I-Form, but this play is moderately effective. It should gain 5-7 yards.

---Power Weak---

This play is a run off left tackle and should gain at least four yards. A few

good blocks can produce a touchdown. More rebellious players can try running up the middle against certain defenses.

---Out-N-Ups---

Both receivers (Y and A) fake quick outs and then streak downfield. If both are tightly covered, your tight end (R) or halfback (B) should be wide open.

---HB Strong---

HB Strong looks a little like Power Weak, but this play is a sweep instead of an off-tackle. You'll occasionally suffer a big loss (five or six yards), but this risk is offset by the fairly high probability of making a very big play. You can try turning to either the right or left of the cornerback.

---HB Toss---

This play is pretty similar to HB Strong.

---Quick Slant---

Everyone except the fullback runs a slant pattern here. You can usually get a satisfactory result by throwing quickly to any of your receivers, but be more patient before throwing to the halfback.

---HB Counter---

Like most counter plays in Madden '97, the back takes the pitch deep in the backfield, so there's a chance of sustaining a big loss. Another problem is that it's tricky to run between the left guard and pulling right guard without bumping into your quarterback. Still, this play generally works pretty well.

---Post Corner---

Your receivers (Y and A) fake a post and run a corner pattern, while the backs (L and B) are available in the flat. Try the tight end (R) against deep zones. If you're throwing to the WRs, release the ball a little after they begin to cut inside for the post.

---FB Streak---

Here's what a West Coast Offense looks like. Everyone runs a pretty short pattern. Your halfback blocks. Your receivers and tight end will usually be able to catch the ball, although passes are sometimes deflected in the line. This isn't a horrible play, but I prefer throwing deeper in Madden '97. It is pretty effective against deep zones, though.

---TE Out-N-Up---

This is another West Coast-style play, but this is more practical. The split end runs a streak, while the tight end and flanker cross. Both backs are blockers, so you may have enough time to throw deep to one of your receivers.

~~~~~  
Shotgun (Normal, 4WR, 2 Back, Gun, 5 WR) (15 plays)  
~~~~~

The shotgun formation is good for passing because of its "shotgun" snap - the quarterback gets the ball several yards behind the line of scrimmage instead of from right under center. It isn't great for running, though. A good pass-blocking line helps. The Madden '97 version of the shotgun formation normally has three receivers, one tight end, and one running back.

---HB Draw---

On a draw play, the linemen take a step backwards before blocking for the run to make the defense think you're passing. You can frequently get 10 yards with this play, even against a 4-3. It usually works better against a Nickel than a Dime, since you're running up the middle. A fast back also helps.

---HB Draw PA---

This play action is supposed to trick the opponents into thinking this is a draw play. Your exterior receivers (Y and A) run deep posts. The tight end runs an in route that gathers too much traffic against non-Dime defenses. Don't overlook the slot receiver (R) on the curl. The back serves as a blocker.

---HB Trap---

The key to success on this play is to run between your right tackle and the defensive left end. If you succeed, you can earn five or six yards. If you don't do it right, the end will tackle you for a loss of several yards. Against a few defensive sets, a massive hole will open in the middle and you'll be able to run for a big gain. However, HB Draw is generally more effective and less risky.

---HB Qck Toss---

The key to success on this outside rushing play is to patiently follow the pulling right guard. Don't get ahead of him! Once he's made his block, go for the score. This play usually works pretty well.

---HB Shovel---

This pass is intended as a shovel pass to your halfback (Y) - a relatively safe and easy way to gain seven yards or so. Your tight end (B) and flanker (A) run a crossing pattern. Both the split end (L) and slot receiver (R) run streaks, and there's a decent chance one will be open downfield if you're willing to take the chance on the long bomb.

---HB Off Tackle---

This play is usually run off left guard. Anyway, it's a pretty decent way to earn about five yards from the Shotgun.

---Quick Hitch---

This is what people do at shady Vegas wedding chapels. All four receivers (Y, B, A, and R) go deep, while the back stays back to block. Your wide men (Y and A) have a good chance of making a very big play. This play is very dangerous against unsuspecting computer opponents who aren't in deep zones.

---Curl Drag---

Your best option is the split end (Y) on the slant, who can make a surprisingly big play. The tight end (B) runs a deep curl, while the flanker (A) and slot receiver (R) run corner patterns. Not a bad play.

---Quick Slant---

Your slot receiver (Y) and tight end (A) are on quick slants, and your wide receivers (L and R) head downfield on streaks. The halfback (B) sneaks through the middle and can beat a passive defense.

---Post---

The main threats are the split end (Y) and slot receiver (B) on posts. If he's open, go for the flanker (A) downfield for the touchdown. Throw to the tight end (R) if you want something safer.

---Post Corner---

The Y receiver runs a post fake/corner route, the slot receiver (R) runs a conventional post, the flanker (L) runs a medium in route, the tight end (A) runs a short out, and the halfback (B) is dangerous down the middle on a streak.

---Post Flag---

Both the split end (Y) and slot receiver (B) run post routes, but they eventually cross if given enough time. The tight end (R) runs a post down the

middle, and the flanker (A) is the home-run option. The halfback (L) sneaks into the flat and is often overlooked by the defense.

---QB Waggle---

The quarterback rolls out to the right on this play. Your best bet is the flanker (A) on the out route. Your other receivers (Y, B, and L) run post patterns, and the back blocks. Because the flanker route is consistent and is strong against deep zones (and can get out of bounds easily), this play is good in a two-minute drill.

---Flag---

If you want to gain yards in a short and safe way, throw to either wide out (L or R), who run short hook patterns, as soon as you take the snap. The tight end (A) and slot receiver (Y) run deep corners, and the halfback streaks through the line. This is a good play to use as an audible.

---Double X's---

All four receivers run fairly short crossing patterns. Someone should get open. The halfback (B) in the flat is your safest option. This play has some trouble with short zones from the Nickel and Dime, but you can still get a completion if you're patient.

~~~~~  
Goal Line (Normal, Wide) (15 plays)  
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This formation is full of plays that are useful only in short-yardage situations, especially near the goal line. The plays can't be flipped, for some reason. There are two backs, two tight ends, and a receiver, ideally the one with the best "hands" rating. On the play-calling screen, the B-button play is always a pass and the Y and A plays are always runs.

---HB Dive---

The halfback runs up the middle, with the fullback lead blocking. What more can you say? Nonetheless, it's a pretty effective play in Goal Line.

---Cross---

Your second tight end (Y) runs a curl pattern, and your tight end (B) and receiver (A) cross on slant routes. Both backs guard against the inside blitz. The tight end should be your first option. It's very tough to pass with any of the plays in the Goal Line formation. I usually get the best results by keeping the ball on the ground.

---HB Dive (2)---

The same as the other HB Dive, except this is to the strong side.

---FB Smash---

A pitchout to the fullback, who runs off left tackle. This play is awkward and ineffective, especially if you don't have a quick fullback. The pulling left tackle doesn't help this poor play.

---Flat In---

Both tight ends (Y and A) run in routes. However, your best options are the fullback (B) in the flat and the receiver (L) in the corner.

---FB Dive---

The fullback runs up the middle. A very good way to gain two yards.

---HB Power---

The halfback takes the pitch and runs off left tackle. Watch your blockers to avoid getting slammed by a lineman.

---Pwr Slant---

The RG and C pull to the left in a strange way here, usually causing a sack. The tight end (B) and wide receiver (A) cross, while the second tight end runs an out pattern. Look for the tight end in the corner.

---HB Power (2)---

The strong-side version of the HB Power play, discussed earlier. It usually fails if there are eight (instead of seven) men on the line of scrimmage (the 80 or 81 defensive set).

---HB Counter---

The counter move might fool the defense, but I prefer to just run straight up the middle with HB Dive.

---Play Action---

Everyone runs slant patterns on this play. The receiver (A) is your main option, but you can also try your tight ends (L and B) or halfback (Y).

---HB Sweep---

This is the best running play in the Goal Line formation, with the possible exception of the HB Dives. However, I should warn you that because this is a sweep, there is a chance (about 15%) that you'll be tackled in the backfield for a loss. It's a sure touchdown the other 85% of the time.

---QB Rollout---

A bad play. This is supposed to be a quarterback sweep, but you'll usually get squashed in the backfield for a big loss. You'd need a former Falcons quarterback who will go unnamed here for this play to work.

---Out---

The last of the five passing plays in the Goal Line formation. This is designed to be a rollout to the left. Your best odds are with the Y tight end on the out. You can also try the tight end (B) on the end or the slanting receiver (A).

---QB Sneak---

The ultimate in short yardage. It will consistently gain 0.5-2 yards. The chance of losing yardage is practically nil, and the odds of gaining more than two yards aren't much higher. Use this on the 1.

~~~~~  
Special Teams (7 plays)  
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This formation contains special teams plays (like Punt) and miscellaneous plays (like Kneel Down). Worthless note: You can't "mirror" these plays.

---Fk. Punt Run---

This play looks like a punt... but it isn't! Your running back takes the snap directly and runs through the line. It's good at getting a couple of yards, but it can't get much more, so it's best on 4th and 1 and similar situations.

---Fk. Punt Pass---

This is the passing version of the fake punt. Your best bets are the receivers (Y and A) on the outside, but the end (B) is also an option. Be careful, because the punter isn't the most accurate passer in the world. If you're an advanced player, you might want to press B while the pass is in the air to take control of the receiver.

---Punt---

When it's fourth down and too far to kick, you will usually want to punt. And this is the play to select when you wish to do so. I wonder if anyone noticed that the exact same description appears in my Madden '96 guide.

---Field Goal---

This play lets you kick a field goal. What a surprise! This is also the play to select when you want to kick an extra point after a touchdown. Don't try to kick a field goal unless you're inside the opposition 30 or so, though.

---Fake F.G.---

This play isn't really a field goal! The passing routes are the same as the Fake Punt Pass. There's no Fake F.G. Run play, although you can take off running if you want to. Just remember that the kicker can't throw as well as your regular quarterback.

---Stop Clock---

This play is designed to stop the clock quickly, but at the cost of a down. It can be useful in two-minute drill situations, but in Madden '97 it's easiest just to get a play off instead, especially if you use a hurry-up offense.

---QB Kneel---

Use this play when you need to run out the clock without risking a fumble. I still don't fully understand why they always line up in the funny V-formation on kneel downs.

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Defensive Playbook

[DEFPB]

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I'm not going to be as verbose on the defensive plays. Instead, I'm just going to give a few details about each play; you can tell a lot just from the names and diagrams.

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4-3 (21 plays)

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The 4-3 defense is the defensive set used by most teams in most situations.

---Read Right---

In John Madden Football '93, "read" plays were designed to contain the run, "attack" plays were blitzes, and "cover" referred to zone defenses. It's no different in Madden '97; Read Right is a balanced defense that's slightly oriented toward stopping the run.

---Man Left---

This balanced man-to-man scheme includes a stunt on the left side of the defensive line.

---Corner Blitz---

The right cornerback blitzes here. The left linebacker also blitzes, while the defensive end covers the short zone. This play is vulnerable to the long ball to the flanker, so you may want to control a safety and play him deep.

---43 Crash---

The cornerbacks and a safety cover a fairly deep zone, while both the LLB and MLB blitz.

---SS Blitz---

Your strong safety blitzes here. This increases the chance of a sack while leaving a possible weakness in coverage that can be exploited for a big gain. A long ball could be trouble.

---Cheat Left---

All of your linemen rush toward the left side of the defensive line. The idea is to block the left tackle and allow the blitzing RLB to come around for a sack. It'll take some time for this to happen, though, especially if you don't have a fast linebacker. I recommend that you control the RLB if you want a sack. The receivers and tight end will be matched up in single coverage.

---Jam Middle---

Both outside linebackers blitz, while the linemen rush toward the middle of the line. This play is good at stopping the inside run but is weaker against sweeps.

---Cheat Right---

The same as Cheat Left, only to the right. Consider taking control of the LLB. Even if you don't get the quarterback, you might be able to tip his pass.

---Outlaw---

Not very different from Outlaw, but this is slightly more effective at stopping the run.

---Cover 3---

Almost identical to 43 Crash.

---Man Zone 2---

The cornerbacks tightly cover the cornerbacks, while the safeties patrol a deeper zone. This play is slightly more pass-oriented than the previous plays in the 4-3 formation.

---Cover 2---

The RCB's main job here is to jam the split end, while the rest of the secondary is in zone coverage.

---Tuf Bronco---

I've always liked this play's name, despite its sub-par spelling. Your DRT and DRE are on a stunt, and the RLB blitzes. Again, you might want control the RLB.

---Jet Blitz---

Basically a strong-side version of Tuf Bronco.

---Short Zone---

This play is exactly what it says it is - a short zone. You could control a safety to help protect against deeper passes.

---Pinch---

The RLB blitzes, while the safeties will be ready to stop off-tackle runs.

---Outside Loop---

Both outside linebackers blitz inside, but they're too far away from the quarterback to make a sack unless you control one of them.

---SS Fire---

A safety blitz.

---Monster---

The last three plays in the 4-3 formation put eight men in the box to help stop the run. Six men rush, making life uncomfortable for quarterbacks.

---Stallion---

As with Monster, this play is almost like a 4-4. This is a very good way to

contain the outside rushing game, although you'll have to look out for streaking receivers.

---Inside Out---

Your linebacker and safety both blitz. It won't be easy to run up the middle.

~~~~~  
3-4 (21 plays)  
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The 3-4 has three linemen and four linebackers, whereas the 4-3 uses four linemen and three linebackers. The 3-4 is similar to the 4-3 in many aspects, but there are differences. The primary advantage of a 3-4 is it allows teams to put more pressure on the quarterback in unpredictable ways. The disadvantage is it requires specialized personnel, such as a massive nose tackle. A real team may have some difficulty regularly switching between a 3-4 and a 4-3, but you can do it as much as you want in a video game. The only teams that regularly used the 3-4 in 1996 were the Steelers, Panthers, Bills, and Ravens.

---523 Tough---

The 523 is a special form of 3-4 where a safety is "in the box" to help stop the run. Also, the outside linebackers line up right next to the linemen. The linebackers cover the short zones, while the cornerbacks and other safety patrol the deep zones.

---525 Angle---

The outside linebackers blitz, while the linemen rush at an angle.

---Wildcat Fire---

Another form of the 523 set. A linebacker and safety are blitzing.

---533 In---

Yikes! An eight-man rush. All four linebackers and the safety are blitzing. The only disadvantage is this forces the cornerbacks and other safeties to play rather passively.

---533 Out---

As with 533 In, there are eight men in the box, and all of them are rushing the quarterback. The only difference is that they're blitzing at different angles.

---533 Split---

Very similar to 533 In and 533 Out.

---Zone Blitz---

Both inside linebackers and the ROLB blitz, while the DRE covers the short zone. This is what a zone blitz looks like.

---Jam Middle---

Seven men, including all four linebackers, rush here, so the quarterback won't have much time. However, a quick pass could turn into a touchdown if the opponents deliver a crunching block or two. This play should crush the inside run.

---Man Zone 1---

No one blitzes here. With all the linebackers in coverage, it's going to be tough to find someone open, especially in the short zones.

---Jet Blitz---

The DLE and NT stunt, while the LLB blitzes. Essentially a 3-4 version of Tuf Bronco.

---Weak Storm---

Both right-side linebackers blitz, along with the RCB. Manually control the RCB if you want to reach the quarterback and not just jam the split end. The other defensive backs take the deep zone.

---Strong Bndt---

Both left-side linebackers and the safety blitz. I think the abbreviation is supposed to be Strong Bandit.

---Prevent---

This form of the Prevent isn't nearly as passive as the varieties found in the Dime formation. The defensive backs play a deep zone, while the linebackers stuff the short middle zone. A pass in the flat could be trouble, though.

---Safety Fire---

Both outside linebackers and a safety blitz. I suggest controlling the safety and moving him a little closer to the line.

---Short Double---

Short Double is very strong against the run, but it could have trouble with the long ball up the middle.

---Short Zone---

This play is designed to defend against short passes, especially to the flats.

---Man Left---

Your DLE and NT are on a stunt, but this is just basic man coverage.

---Man Zone 2---

Very similar to Man Zone 1, although the linemen rush at a different angle.

---Man Right---

This is standard man coverage.

---Wide Zone---

This play is designed to clog up the short zones. Good against two-tight end sets.

---Inside Heat---

I like this play. Both inside linebackers blitz, and the split end should be double-covered.

~~~~~  
Nickel (9 plays)  
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The Nickel defense is best used in passing situations, as there are five defensive backs instead of four.

---Crash Man---

This is a good man coverage form of the Nickel, with each defensive back covering a receiver and the safety playing center field. One outside linebacker blitzes. This is a good way to defend formations with three or four receivers.

---Crash Man 2---

This is basically a mirror image of Crash Man. It might also remind you of Cheat Right from the 4-3.

---Double Gold---

Both linebackers blitz here. A draw play could earn a pretty big gain, though.

---3 Deep---

The cornerbacks and a safety play deep, with everyone else playing a shorter zone. This is probably the most normal form of the Nickel.

---2 Deep---

I think this play's diagram was accidentally mirrored by the game designers. The RLB and SS both blitz.

---Double Out---

A man-to-man version of the Nickel that works best against multi-receiver formations.

---Exchange---

Weird. In the 50 set, a defensive tackle plays linebacker, and one of your linebackers switches places with your nickel back. This isn't a bad play, especially if you have agile linemen, but it's very strange. Here the defenders seem to rotate counter-clockwise.

---50 Sky---

A zone version of the 50 that's pretty good against the pass.

---50 Man---

Five men are rushing the quarterback on this more aggressive form of the 50. The unconventional alignment can certainly confuse the offense.

~~~~~  
Dime (12 plays)  
~~~~~

The Dime formation is even more pass-oriented, with six defensive backs and just one linebacker. Since it's weak against most running plays, especially the inside run, the Dime should generally be reserved for prevent situations.

---Short Zone---

A pyramid-shaped short zone defense. The DRE and DRT stunt.

---Double Blitz---

The free safety and linebacker blitz.

---Double SE---

The opposing team's split end will face double coverage. A good way to shut down a particularly dangerous receiver.

---Dbl Flanker---

This double-teams the opponent's flanker. The defensive tackles stunt.

---3 Deep---

Three defensive backs play deep, while the rest control shorter zones.

---Prevent 1---

All six defensive backs head deep here to protect against the bomb. Prevent defenses are best against the Hail Mary pass. Because of its passive nature, don't get carried away with using this play.

---Prevent 2---

Very similar to Prevent 1.

---Black + Tan---

One of your defensive backs blitzes here, and the slot receiver is double-teamed. This is usually a weird thing to do, because the slot receiver is most often not at the top of the depth chart.

---2 Man Free---

As with Black + Tan, your sixth defensive back blitzes, but here the safeties play deeper instead of double-covering the slot receiver.

---General---

The cornerbacks play deep, and the tackles stunt. This is a general-purpose Dime play.

---Double Tight---

This play is supposed to double-cover the tight end. However, that's a fairly strange way to use a Dime defense.

---4 Deep---

A whopping four defensive backs are in deep zones. This should only be used when expecting a long pass. It's pretty much a prevent defense.

~~~~~  
Goal Line (9 plays)  
~~~~~

The Goal Line formation counters the offensive version of the Goal Line. This should only be used near the goal line or possibly in certain obvious short-yardage situations.

---Read Left---

This is very good at stopping passes to the left flat.

---Zone Man---

This is good against the goal line pass.

---Read Right---

Similar to Read Left, this stops passes thrown to the right side of the backfield and sweep right plays.

---Attack Mid---

An aggressive bull rush.

---Attack Left---

Similar to Attack Mid, but everyone rushes toward the left. It may remind you of the 4-3 Cheat Left.

---Attack Right---

The same as Attack Left, only to the right.

---81 Blaze---

The last three plays in the Goal Line formation have eight men on the line instead of seven. The linebackers rush aggressively.

---80 Zone---

You won't have any success running against this play, although a fade route could score.

---80 Str Crash---

80 Straight Crash is an aggressive blitz, including a safety. A pass up the middle to the tight end will score if it's not deflected, though.

~~~~~  
Special Teams (5 plays)  
~~~~~

These plays are designed to defend against punts and field goals.

---Punt Rush---

Use this play to increase your chances of blocking a punt. You'll probably have to call for a fair catch, though.

---Fake Punt---

Use this play if you think the opponents might be planning on attempting a fake punt.

---Punt Return---

This play is designed to maximize your chances of making a big play on the punt return. You probably won't be able to block the punt, though. Because punt blocks are extremely rare, this is probably better than Punt Rush.

---FG Block---

This is the play you'll normally use when the opponents are kicking a field goal.

---FG Cover---

This is a less aggressive version of FG Block. Use this if you're not sure whether the opponents will kick a field goal or go for the first down. It's most useful near the goal line.

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FAQs and General Tips [NOTES]
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Q: What plays are the best audibles?
A: Here are the audible selections I most frequently use.

- [Y] A run (Far HB Off Tackle)
- [B] A short pass or screen pass (Single Back HB Screen)
- [A] A long pass (Single Back TE Quick Outs)

Defense

- [Y] A balanced defense (4-3 Read Right or 3-4 Man Left)
- [B] A play that covers the pass (Nickel 3 Deep)
- [A] A blitz (4-3 43 Crash or 3-4 Wildcat Fire)

Make sure to change your offensive audibles if you're using a hurry-up offense, or your defensive audibles if your opponents are in a hurry-up. Against a human, you should change your audibles periodically to keep opponents on their toes. In case you didn't know, you can change audibles from the "Set Audibles" option on the Game Play Options subscreen of the Pre-Game or pause screen. Most importantly, select plays as audibles that work well for you.

Q: How do I use a hurry-up offense?
A: Hold the A button right before the play selection screen would ordinarily appear. You'll bypass the play selection screen and run the play you last run, unless you call an audible. A no-huddle offense is useful if you need to get points fast, but it can also be useful for confusing your opponents, especially a human player.

Q: How do I kick an onside kick?
A: As in real life, onside kicks are very difficult to execute properly. First press A to call a kickoff audible, and then press A or B to change your team's alignment. Press B to start the power bar, and hold left or right on the control pad to angle the kickoff (preferably toward the side where all your players are). You want to stop the power bar when it's on the way down. It takes a lot of practice to do this right. By the way, make sure to call a kickoff audible yourself if your opponents are attempting an onside kick.

Q: How do I call a timeout?

A: Select "Call Timeout" from the pause screen if you have one or more timeouts remaining. As you probably know, timeouts stop the game clock, so they're useful in a two-minute drill or when you're about to get a delay of game penalty. Calling a timeout also restores all of your players' energy levels to 100.

Q: How should I manage fatigue?

A: If endurance is turned on, players will tire the more they play. The lower the player's fatigue rating, the slower and less effective he will be. The best way to keep players fresh is by spreading the ball around to many different players. Don't throw to the same receiver over and over again, and (more importantly) don't hand off to the same back 40 times in a game. There isn't a "Spell HB" set like in newer games, but you can set up a back rotation system using the Substitutions menu. For example, start fictitious back Andy A. at HB in the Near, I-Form, and Goal Line formations, use Bobby B. in Far and Pro Form, and install Chris C. (a fictional back with a high Hands rating) in Single Back and Shotgun. You might want to rotate players at some of your other positions, as well - maybe even quarterback. If players are exhausted after a long drive, you can call a timeout to set all energy ratings to 100.

Q: What's the best way to put pressure on the opposing quarterback?

A: Select the middle linebacker. Charge past the center and squash the quarterback! Even better, start running toward the line of scrimmage before the snap to get a running start.

Q: Why is the computer controlling my quarterback?

A: If you don't press any buttons after the snap, the computer takes control. The same goes on defense. You can usually generate better results than the computer, though.

Q: What penalties appear in this game?

A: Basically, you can get a delay of game penalty if you take too long to call your play on offense, and on defense you can get called for encroachment by moving past the line of scrimmage before the snap. These can't be turned off, though. Other penalties, such as pass interference and facemasking, appear randomly and can be turned off or turned down on the Game Play Options menu. A few other penalties are very rare, like illegal procedure (kicking the ball out of bounds on a kickoff).

Q: What should I choose when I win the toss?

A: It doesn't matter, although it's more fun to receive first. If you're deciding the goal to defend, you might want to have a tailwind on the kickoff. But it doesn't matter at all.

Q: How do you perform touchdown dances?

A: After scoring a touchdown, hold Y, B, or A and press any direction on the Control Pad. Different combinations will produce different moves! Groove on, baby. Also try pushing different buttons (not in combination) to produce horn and whistle sounds.

Q: What other tips do you have?

* This is common sense, but if you have a good running back and a weak passing game (like Arizona), run the ball a lot. Likewise, if you pass well but can't run (like Miami), you'll want to keep the ball in the air.

* Hard throws take just a little longer to get off than touch passes.

* When you get hit, keep pressing Up on the control pad to try to break the tackle and get an extra yard or two.

* Run straight if you want to keep going fast; zig-zags slow you down.

- * Blitzes don't just increase the chances of a sack; they also make it easier to deflect passes.
- * Remember you can move your defenders a little past the line of scrimmage before the snap, making it easier to sack the opposing quarterback.
- * Don't get into a play-calling rut, especially against a human opponent. Madden '97 has a massive playbook loaded with well-designed plays.
- * If you're just starting out, stick with simple plays like FB Dive. Wait until you're more advanced before trying advanced plays like Flea Flicker.
- * Your split end (on the left) is usually the Y receiver, while the flanker (on the right) is generally assigned the A button. The B button is usually a tight end or halfback, while backs or slot receivers are usually L and R. However, you should refer to the play diagrams for the information specific to each play; this isn't the case on all plays, especially if you press X to reverse the diagram.
- * Don't forget to check out the Instant Replay feature (found on the pause menu); it's pretty cool for 1996.
- * If you're playing on an emulator, assign the Y, B, and A buttons to the X, C, and V keys, respectively, to ease play-calling.
- * A controller with a turbo button may make certain training events easier.

Q: What are the actual names of the players who don't have names in Madden '97?

A: I was able to figure out most of them:

ARI #86 TE	Johnny McWilliams
ATL #75 DE	Shannon Brown
BAL #26 CB	DeRon Jenkins
BUF #98 LB	Sean Moran
CAR #81 WR	Muhsin Muhammad
DAL #56 C	Clay Shiver
DAL #50 DT	Mike Ulufale
DEN #37 CB	Tory James
DET #81 WR	???
DET #24 S	Ryan Stewart
GB # 2 QB	Kyle Wachholtz
GB #88 TE	Keith Jackson
GB #77 T	John Michels
GB #58 C	Mike Flanagan
GB #27 FS	Chris Darkins
HOU #30 HB	Eddie George
KC #10 QB	???
KC #92 DE	John Browning
KC #24 FS	Reggie Tongue
MIN #94 DE	James Manley
NE #89 TE	Chris Griffin
NYG #83 WR	Amani Toomer
NYG #70 T	Roman Oben
NYJ #83 WR	Keyshawn Johnson
PHI #87 TE	Jason Dunn
PHI #58 MLB	Ray Farmer
STL #30 FB	Jerald Moore
SD #82 WR	Charlie Jones
SEA #21 SS	T.J. Cunningham
TB #84 WR	Nilo Silvan
WAS #69 T	Andre Johnson

Q: What other notes do you have for the game?

A: Just a few miscellaneous tidbits:

- * You might enjoy slamming into opposing players after the whistle blows. You won't even get called for unnecessary roughness.
- * You can't set the weather for teams that play indoors.

* In Madden '97, all players with surnames of less than eight letters have an initial for the first names. In screenshots in the manual, no players have an initial for their first names; only their last names are mentioned. Obviously, the manual was produced before the final version of the game. There are some other differences, too. For example, John Taylor (who hadn't yet announced his retirement) was shown as still playing for the 49ers.

* The pre-game commentary usually contains an error or two in spelling, grammar, or usage (such as a "fiesty" defense).

Comparing with Reality

[REALL]

This is a pretty familiar section if you've read my Formula One walkthroughs. This is just a brief summary of the 1996 NFL season. More in-depth information can be found at NFL.com, Wikipedia.org, and assorted other Internet and print sources.

The Cleveland Browns moved to Baltimore to become the Ravens, although the NFL promised Cleveland a revived Browns franchise to begin play in 1999. Pete Rozelle, NFL commissioner from 1960-1989, passed away December 6. The second-year Jaguars and Panthers both reached the conference championships. The Jaguars' 30-27 win over the Broncos in the divisional round of the playoffs is still one of the biggest upsets in NFL history. QB Brett Favre led the Green Bay Packers to a 35-21 victory over the New England Patriots in Super Bowl XXXI in New Orleans for their first Super Bowl title in 29 years.

Version History

[VERSN]

Because Madden '97's playbook is identical to the one used in Madden '98, I was able to use the same information from my Madden '98 guide and construct this guide very quickly.

- 0.7 Began guide on 1/24/08. (76 KB)
- 1.0 Completed Suggested Substitutions on 1/25/08. (82 KB)
Submitted guide to GameFAQs.com and Neoseeker.com on 1/26/08. (81 KB)
- 1.1 Finished making a few adjustments on 9/29/09. (82 KB)
- 1.2 Added a note about two modes only available in the Genesis version.
Thanks to Corey Strantz for telling me about that. (12/29/10) (82 KB)

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Contact Information

[CONTC]
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If you have any questions or comments about this guide, send an e-mail to VHamilton002@gmail.com. Remember that not all e-mails will be read. Please follow these rules:

- Do include "Madden '97" in the subject line.
- Do send polite suggestions about ways to make this walkthrough better.
- Do tell me about any errors or omissions you find.
- Do ask any questions you have about Madden '97 gameplay. I will answer them eventually if you follow all of these guidelines.
- Do make a reasonable effort to use decent spelling, grammar, usage, punctuation, and capitalization so I can understand what you're saying.
- Do use patience. I check my messages rather sporadically.
- Do not send spam, pornography, chain letters, "flaming," or anything that contains profanity or vulgarity. Again, violation of this rule will result in permanent constipation.

Current list of VinnyVideo guides available on GameFAQs.com and Neoseeker.com:

- F1 ROC: Race of Champions FAQs/Walkthrough
- F1 ROC II: Race of Champions FAQs/Walkthrough
- SimCity 3000 Walkthrough/Strategy Guide
- Nigel Mansell's World Championship Racing FAQs/Walkthrough
- Kyle Petty's No Fear Racing Strategy Guide/FAQs
- Madden NFL '96 (SNES) Strategy Guide/FAQs
- Madden NFL '97 (SNES) Strategy Guide/FAQs
- Madden NFL '98 (SNES) Strategy Guide/FAQs

Proposed future guides:

- Donkey Kong 64 FAQs/Walkthrough
- The Legend of Zelda: Link's Awakening Spoiler-Free FAQs/Walkthrough
- The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time FAQs/Walkthrough
- The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time Master Quest FAQs/Walkthrough
- The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess FAQs/Walkthrough

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