Twitter Thread by Aaron Semm



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1/ To all who answered my question ab the college spread run game, I'd argue that RichRod & Urban were the first devotees & developers to have major success with it. RichRod started at wvu in 2001 & Urb at BG also in 2001. It was Urb's unbeaten 2004 Utah team that hit bigtime.

2/ In an interview I heard that season, Urban noted that so much of what they were doing was based on Tom Osborne's offense using inside & outside zone principles, but just from the shotgun. That's how the game almost always evolves-someone borrows something and tweaks it...

3/ the evolution of the "zone read" goes something like this: 1) teams needed a way to control the cutback defender on IZ run plays, 2) the naked bootleg was the first constraint play off IZ, 3) then came "orbit motion". Both of these actions created conflict for backside DE...

4/ SG teams used IZ as a base run play so they also used the naked and orbit actions. The legend goes that one day in pract a RichRod QB accidentally "read" the BSDE rather than just handing the ball off on an IZ play. They started tinkering with that and found that it worked...

5/ this solved the major shortcoming of the naked and orbit actions--both those things were "guesses". If you called naked, and the bsde didnt squeeze the cutback, your qb could get a face full of hard plastic and metal. By reading him from the SG, this problem was solved...

6/...I bring this all up as a way of saying that NU is already running an offense rooted in option principles complete with many unblocked read keys. Many of these principles come from developers named Osborne, Rodriguez & Meyer...

7/ The NU offense also borrows from latter day practioners like Chip Kelly & Gus Malzahn, who started adding elements of "old offenses" with pullers & unbalanced sets. It borrows from the great Bill Snyder who pioneered the use of the SG qb as a runner on traditional TB runs...

8/ Nevada's Chris Ault ran a quirky offense called The Pistol. In approx 2007, they had a frosh qb, who was really fast. They wanted to zone read with him, but that forced them out of the pistol. They tinkered & found that they could keep the TB in pistol but still read the DE...

9/ Nevada discovered they would just aim the pistol tb at the backside of the IZ and mesh with the qb there. This is now essentially the old veer play, and NU uses this a LOT...

10/ you put all this together and you get the current NU run game. It's rooted in option principles and incorporates all the evolutions of the modern spread run games. It is a very QB centric offense. B/c it employs many receivers & creates space, it is well suited to throwing...

11/ The ability to run AND throw appeals greatly to athletic dual threat HS QBs. They dont want to play in old school offenses that ask them to get under center, run all the types of options and throw the ball 15 times a game...

12/ 30 years & 70 pounds ago, I was a wishbone qb. I LOVE option football-it's in my blood. I understand what makes it great & what it's limitations are. I'd love to see it rise again, but it won't other than at a handful of places where the letters N F L don't matter to players.

13/ I do, however, think that it would be possible to take Bill Snyder's offense which was similar to TO's, update it some and run THAT. That is the style that I feel would give NU it's best chance at longterm success. THE END