Stick a Strat middle pickup in a Tele and you have a Nashville Tele. This wiring was made popular by Nashville session players in the 1990s. Nashville ace Joe Glaser told us that the typical configuration then would be to install a Duncan Hot Stack in the middle, and to wire its top coil to a dedicated volume control that was tucked in between the Tele’s normal volume and tone controls. Brent Mason’s Tele has a similar configuration, but with a Gibson mini-humbucker in the neck. The idea behind all of this, of course, was to add tonal flexibility by adding some Strat coolness to a Tele’s coolness.

Fender came out with the idea of tying the three pickups to a 5-way switch - rather than using the standard Tele 3-way switch - and getting rid of the third knob altogether. While this reduced the tonal flexibility somewhat, it cleaned up the guitar by getting rid of the third knob, which is a tight fit on a Tele’s control plate. This setup produced most of the commonly-asked-for switching combinations, and is the most popular 3-pickup Tele wiring.