



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COACHES LACROSSE CONVENTION

MEN'S TRACK

HANDOUTS

ADVANCED:

6 v 6 Motion Offense – Playing in Rhythm - Lorne Smith

BEGINNER:

Team Defense: Coaching Youth – Carlos Trujillo & Doug Appleton



Half Field Team Offense – Playing Together in Rhythm

Main Concept

Offense can be broken down into two phases – Phase I is more scripted and involves everybody moving at once on the first dodge. Phase II comes after several passes after the initial dodge, and involves a dodge into the weak side of a defense that has already rotated once. Phase II is more freelance with no script on how to move. Off-ball picking and popping is critical to Phase II success, and if done well, is un-scoutable. One word – ANTICIPATION – defines how great teams are able to move together to attack a defense. A basic offensive framework gives your players the opportunity to anticipate what happens next and move accordingly.

6v6 Half Field Offense

A team half field offense should provide a framework for players to be creative within. We are not talking set plays here which look for the same shot every time. It is nice to have set plays to fall back on, but half field team offense should be a system which allows players to work together to get good shots in a number of ways. Teams typically run half field offense out of a formation (2-2-2, 1-3-2, 1-4-1 are common sets) in order to keep spacing. This is the beginning way to get players on the same page – give them a formation to attack out of. Once in that formation, we attack the defense. While attacking, a strong team concept can help keep everyone on the same page. Our basic team concept in its simplest form is Dodge-Pass-Pass-Dodge.

1. (Phase I) **Identify the dodger** – should be in good spot on field to get strong hand. Everyone else anticipates this dodge and prepares to move.
2. (Phase I) **Dodge**, everyone moves together, able to anticipate the direction of the dodge. Dodger must be able to beat a short stick 1v1 to get shot, or if slid to, quickly move the ball to the next guy.
3. (Phase I) The person receiving a pass from a dodger is a **transfer** person, quickly moving the ball again to the next guy toward the weak side – keep the ball moving in the same direction. So far we have now dodged, passed, and passed again.
4. (Phase II) Now we **attack the weak side** of the defense with another dodge, while moving hard off ball, picking and popping, expecting the dodger to have his head up in case someone off ball springs open for an easy one. This is the freelance part of the offense. Movements on and off ball are not scripted, but rather are based on spacing, communication, and knowing your teammates' strengths and tendencies.
5. You can keep attacking the defense in this rhythm of dodge-pass-pass-dodge while moving hard off ball, or if things get jumbled up, pull it out, re-set, and go back to the initial Phase I dodge, the more scripted dodge, where everyone moves together at once on a dodge.

Final Notes on Half Field Team Offense

What you are able to do on offense depends in part on how individually talented your players are. If they cannot catch and throw consistently, you need to devise a system that does not rely on lots of quick passing. It can still utilize the Phase I idea of everyone moving together, and dodging for your strength, and recognizing who should be the dodger and knowing how to move when he dodges. A coach should be able to recognize what his team's offensive strengths are and set up a system to utilize them.

Coaching Youth Defensemen
Doug Appleton
Carlos Trujillo January 23, 2010

Overview

- >Playing good defense is not about taking the ball away with stick checks.
- >Today's equipment is simply too good to do take away checks. A missed check results in a goal.
- >Stick checks should be used to disrupt an offensive play, not for take away checks.
- >Coaching youth defensemen begins with the basics of good body position and footwork. Need to move the feet and stay with your man and not rely on the stick.
- >It's extremely important to teach basic stick handling at the youth level: throwing, catching and scooping.
- >Teach youth defensemen to be proactive, not reactive. Defenders control an offensive play more than they think.

Which Players Should Play Defense?

- >Look for players who are all round good athletes. Lateral quickness and good footwork is more important than running speed.
- >Identify players who play defense in other sports or take pride in their defensive skills.
- >Don't just pick the biggest players, especially younger players.
- >NOTE: If you have an experienced team, a great athlete new to the game can experience success/earn playing time right away on defense.
- >For the very young players, have everyone play all positions.
- >Have defensemen use mid-length "tweener" sticks -don't let them use full length sticks until they can handle it and are big enough (usually 8thgrade).
- >The players who exhibit a natural tendency toward anticipating a play will usually make better defenders.

Stick Length

- >Pee Wees: 37"-42"
- >Pups: 40"-42" for offense, 50" -62" for defense
- >Juniors 40"-42", 52" -72"

>When first using a long defense shaft, start with a shorter, mid-length stick (50"-56") -encourages better stick work and emphasizes better body position.

>A defenseman should be able to cradle the stick with one hand and not have it hit the ground.

>For younger players, can buy a goalie shaft (50") instead of buying a full length D stick and cutting it down.

>A good guideline for young defenders is that the stick (including the head) should be no more than an inch or two taller than the player.

Defensive Position

>The #1 most important thing is to teach proper defense body position and footwork.

>Feet apart with low center of gravity so can move quickly in any direction.

>Keep the feet shoulder width apart.

>Bend the knees and lower the center of gravity.

>Bend forward slightly at the waist. The weight of the head and shoulders stays over the feet.

>On balls of the feet, so can change direction quickly in response to the movement of the ball carrier.

>Hold the stick parallel to the ground directly in front with the head of the stick either on the attackman's number, or touching the attackman's bottom hand.

>One stick length away to keep a cushion.

>Shuffle step: When attackman is moving slowly, shuffle feet. Don't cross feet. Throw "busy checks".

>Drop Step:

>When attackman changes direction, need to "drop step".

>Drop the leg in the direction the ball carrier moves to and "open your hips" in that direction.

>Stick goes straight up, gloves on his back or hips.

>Stick moves to the other side, on the numbers.

>Hip to Hip Running: When the ball carrier begins to run faster, turn and run hip-to-hip with a cross over step (running side by side).

>Stick up in the passing lanes.

>When playing off the ball, need to have your head on a "swivel" -need to watch both your man and the ball.

>When playing off ball, never have your feet square to your man or square to the ball -always make a "skinny triangle between you, your man, and the ball.

>Keep the play in front of you. Play slightly to the ball side of the offensive player to gain a step as he cuts toward the ball.

>Listen to your goalie.

>Communicate with your teammates!!

Defensive Position Drills

>Side to side shuffling. Coaches point in a direction -left, right, back, forwards. Then roll a ball out for a ground ball.

>Shuffle between cones, staying low and poke checking.

>Partner Up Downs. 40-50 yds, O carries the ball, changes direction back and forth. First use a 20" PVC pipe, then with full stick.

>One on one drills. No stick at first. First use a 20" PVC pipe, then with full stick.

Stick Checks

>The main purpose of stick checking is to disrupt the play, not taking the ball away.

>Busy stick checks are used to throw off the offensive player's timing, keep him from seeing the field, and force him to throw the ball to another player instead of feeding or shooting. The mental advantage of busy checks is that they demoralize the attackman and discourage him from attacking the goal.

>Making your opponent throw the ball instead of feeding or shooting is a GOOD PLAY. -forcing a bad pass is just as good as a takeaway check or a hit.

>Keep constant pressure on the stick and hands to worry the attackman with the ball. Make him be worried about you and unable to look over the field for an open player.

>The key to all checks is quick, short (5-10"), strong checks without losing body position. Effective checks don't have to be hard, just accurate.

>Make your checks short and hard, across the forearm and keep moving your body with the offensive player. Keep moving your feet when checking -and don't try an all or nothing check.

>Keep playing sound defensive position after making a stick check. Don't assume the ball has come out or look for the ball on the ground. Listen for your goalie or other players telling you "ball down!"

- >If making checks behind the goal, divide the area behind the goal into thirds:
- >the 1/3 area directly behind the goal would be a "free check" zone.
- >the other 1/3 areas behind the goal are "safe check" zones meaning fewer risky checks and better position.
- >Once the defender reaches goal line extended (GLE), NO CHECKS should be thrown.
- >At GLE, primary objective is to push attacker out to the sidelines, not to throw stick checks.
- >Good body position is the #1 most important aspect of playing defense -including when throwing checks. Need to keep moving your feet while checking.
- >Never chase the offensive player's stick.
- >Don't force or rush the attackman. Make the attackman make the first move. There is a big difference between worrying an attackman and forcing or rushing him.
- >When not poking, keep your stick a little above the height of your attackman's shoulder. Don't ever carry it at your side. KEEP THE STICK UP!!
- >Equipment is too good these days for youth defensemen to do take away checks.
- >A missed takeaway check = goal.

Poke Check

- >The poke check is a hard straight check across the offensive player's numbers onto the stick or hands.
- >Most basic and commonly used check.
- >If effectively used, it disrupts the ball carrier without the defenseman having to over-commit or be put into a vulnerable off balance position.
- >Doesn't have to dislodge the ball. It keeps the offensive player busy and unable to see the field or execute a play.
- >Use busy poke checks as opposed to slap checks.
- >Keep moving your feet while poking.
- >Groundball situation -if you are after a loose ball, but the opposing player is ahead of you, check his back hand -either by poking or lifting the butt end.

Slap and Lift Checks

- >The slap check is a quick strong slap on the bottom hand.

>The lift check is a lifting of the bottom hand or stick as the offensive player makes a shot or pass. Probably the best check a defenseman can make.

>Most youth kids cradle with both hands on the stick, so either of these checks can be used more frequently than with older kids who may carry the stick with one hand (use poke instead).

>If carrying with one hand, use the slap check as soon as the bottom hand is put on. It signals that the offensive player is going to pass or shoot.

>Use the lift check more as the pass or shot is being made -used to disrupt the throw or shot.

>The key is to keep applying constant pressure, especially as an offensive player drives towards the goal.

Body Checks

>The purpose of body checks is the same as any other check --to disrupt the flow of the offense or disrupt a player who is dodging -not to knock a player down or to take away the ball.

- in loose ball situation (man-ball)
- sliding to a dodger who is driving towards the goal

>Body checking rules:

>No body checking of any kind (including man/ball "clear the body" type checks) is permitted in the U9 or U11 Division. "Boxing out" type body checking is permitted on loose balls in those divisions.

>Body checking is permitted in U13 and U15 Divisions; however, no "take-out checks" are permitted by any player.

Holds and Pushes -The Standoff

>When an attackman reaches the GLE, need to push him out of the play. Follow with a hard slap or poke check.

>No stick checks at GLE (unless passing or feeding, then use slap or lift check).

>The standoff, either a push or hold, prevents the attackman or middle from turning towards the cage, or being able to feed.

>Use a hold/push technique to direct a player towards a certain area, and to keep a player from going to a specific area.

- Equal pressure
- "V" (forearm hold)

- Fist hold

>PUSH/HOLD WITH YOUR LEGS NOT WITH YOUR ARMS

Slides and Switches

>Initially, teach to fight through picks -with lots of communication. It's more important to force them to think about staying with their man.

>With older kids, can teach more advanced defensive plays, such as switches and slides.

>If you ever switch, STAY WITH THAT MAN until your team gets the ball or you have to switch again.

>Need to teach defensive to always think about the first and second slide. The second slide is the most important slide.

Zone vs. Man to Man D

>Zones defenses at the younger age groups can be effective but are discouraged as they don't teach proper defense skills. Need to always teach proper man-to-man D to develop body positioning skills.

>Use zone for younger players only to develop proper position on the field -not to try to "win" a game. It's better to work on man-to-man skills to develop proper body positioning and active stick checks vs. putting in a zone defense at a young age.

>A good mixture of man-to-man and zone is a "saggy man" defense -where adjacent players sag in for back up help.

Man Down D

>Recognize the offense. Players should immediately recognize and call out the offensive formation -"3-3", "1-3-1", "1-4-1"

>3-3: Box and 1 with the crease defenseman on a string.

>1-3-1: Box and 1, lock on crease attackman, rotate opposite of ball movement.

>1-4-1: flat zone, DM slides from crease to top middle. Crease D slides to attackman behind.

>Cutters: Cover cutters halfway, then release at crease and return to position. Recognize if the offense changes.

>Sticks up!!! Head on "swivel"

>Against younger teams, can be more aggressive on the perimeter and pressure the outside shooters.

Closing Tips

>Body position and footwork are the keys to playing good individual defense.

>Proper defensive positioning on the field is the key to good team defense.

>Use busy stick checks, not takeaway checks.

>Check at appropriate time. Know when to check vs. push/hold.

>Keep moving feet while checking.

>Use mid-length shafts for younger defensemen.

>Talk on D -need to communicate.

>"LOOK AWAY" -a Coach's best friend.

1. Always communicate with your teammates. No good defense is ever silent.
2. Always be in position. Good body position on the ball and good position to slide, help or block a passing lane.
3. Know your responsibilities in the team defense.
4. Trust your teammates. Offenses can be one man shows. Defenses must play together. Force your man the right way, and know the slide will be there.
5. Own the crease. Never let a player pick up a cheap goal in front of the cage. Be physical.
6. Never take a step into a man while playing him on defense.
7. Once the attackman has the ball, worry him plenty by poke checking, etc., don't give much chance to look over his field, make him worry about you.
8. Don't ever carry your stick at your side, KEEP IT UP!
9. Make your checks short and hard.
10. Once the other team has cleared the ball, all defense men must drop in fast, RUN HARD --THIS IS ONE TIME YOU CANNOT LOAF.
11. On clears, make all passes sharp, away from the (attackman) and, as a general rule, to the nearest open man.
12. Never allow your attackman to beat you to a ball at the midfield line. Rules for Defensemen

THANK YOU!

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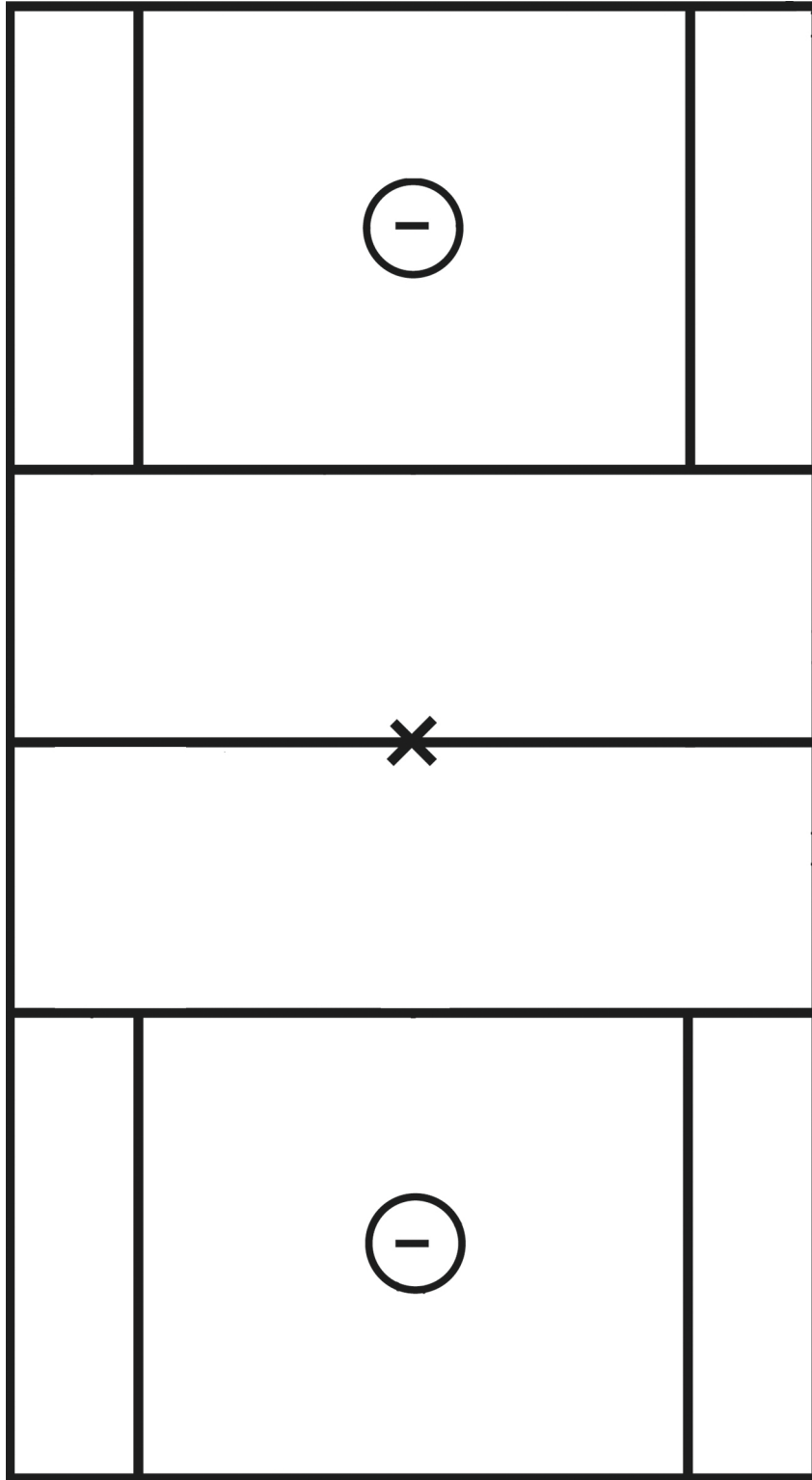
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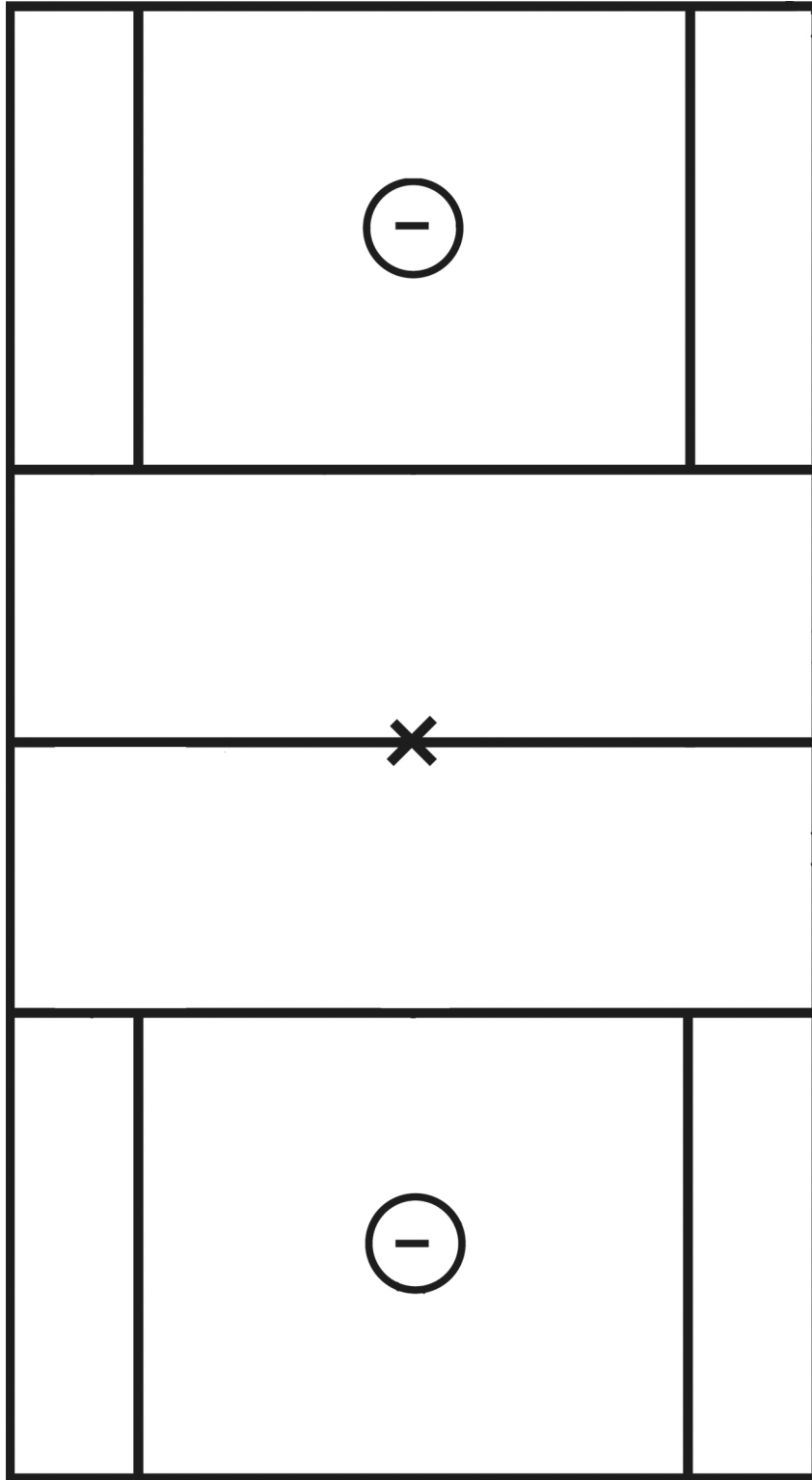


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