

Rotation Offense and Practice Drills



HOLLISTON LACROSSE

January 2010

Rotation Offense

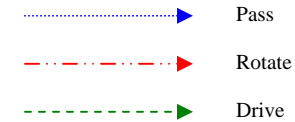
Guidelines

- Keep field balanced. Players in triangle are “on a string” and rotate together.
- All in triangle rotate when pass is made to the other triangle.
- If middle drives with ball, other middies rotate with.
- If attackman drives with ball, other attackmen rotate with.
- When rotating, find space between triangle points for quick pass and shot.
- Middies stay high to keep crease clear and protect against fast break. Middies also back up each other and wing attackmen.
- Players should be using V Cuts to get open for passes. They are not “running bases” and should keep field balanced. Sometimes it will make sense to settle into area between points of triangle.

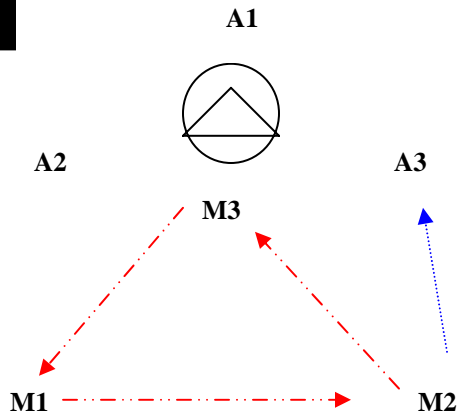
Note: Goal is to be patient, maintaining possession until high percentage shot is available. If player driving faces too much resistance (backup) and cannot get clear pass or shot off, ball should be pulled out and cycle re-started. Typically opportunity is there after 3 passes.

Key Skills:

- Movement without the ball. Balancing field. Finding space.
- V Cuts before receiving ball.
- Dodging from Attack and Middle, Both Hands.
- Passing and catching both hands to keep ball on outside.
- Shooting on the run.
- Patience!

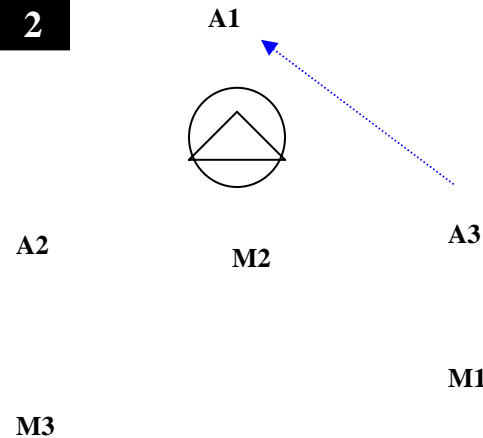


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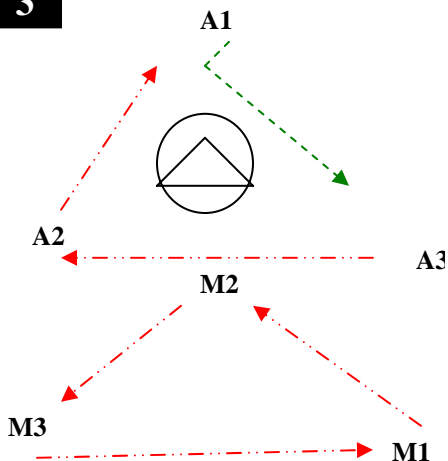
- M2 passes to A3. Middies rotate.
- A3 can
 - pass back to M2 (give and go shot)
 - pass to M1 (possible shot) or
 - pass to A1 in X

2



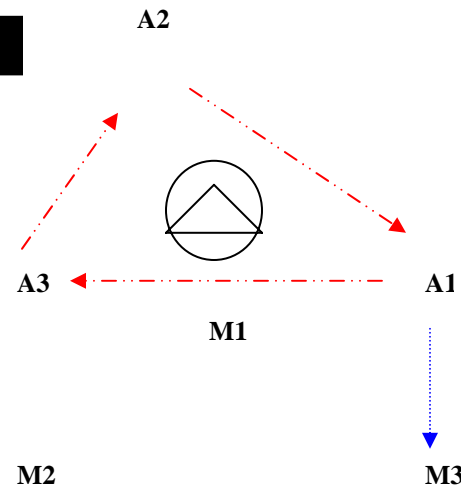
- A3 passes to A1.

3



- A1 Drives towards Goal. Attackmen rotate. Middies rotate
- A1 can
 - Continue drive to goal
 - pass to M2 if open in space (shot)
 - pass to M1 (possible shot) or
 - pass to M3 (shot or hold)
 - pass back to A2 in X

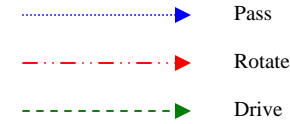
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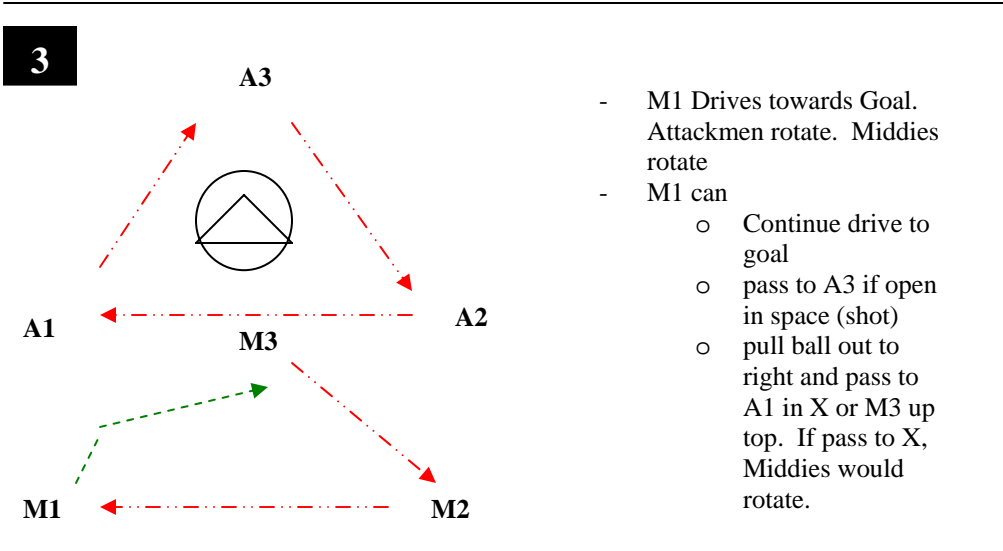
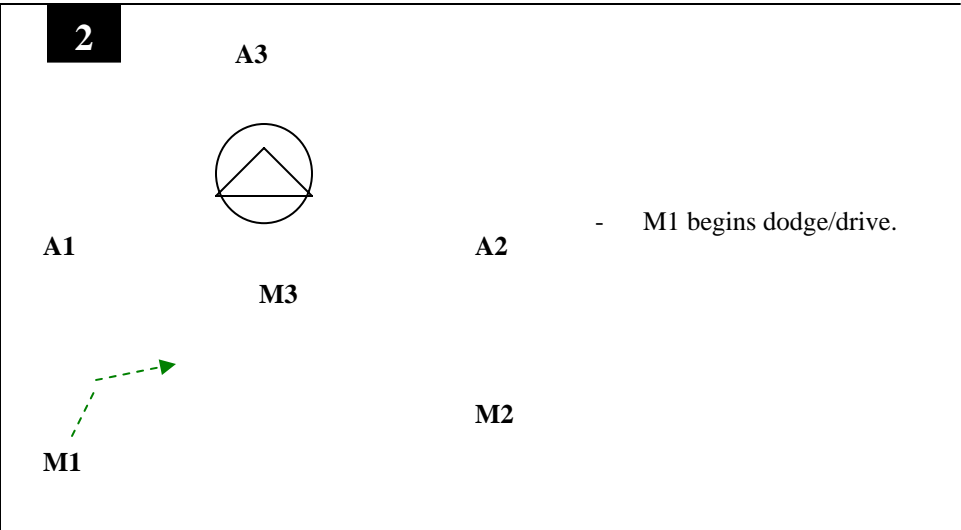
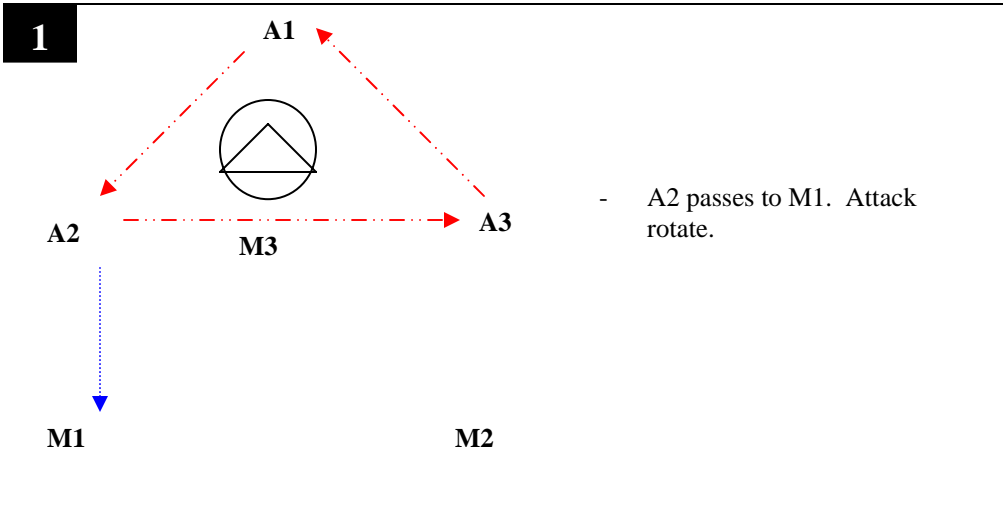
- A1 passes to M3. Attackmen rotate.
- M3 can pass to A2 (possible shot), pass to A1 in space (possible shot) or hold

Key Skills:

- Movement without the ball. Balancing field. Finding space.
- V Cuts before receiving ball.
- Dodging from Attack and Middie, Both Hands.
- Passing and catching both hands to keep ball on outside.
- Shooting on the run.
- Patience!



ROTATION OFFENSE EXAMPLE, MIDFIELD DODGE



Offensive Basics:

1. Players at every level must play every day with both hands.

Both hands. No one can advance in lacrosse without playing with both hands. There are too many youth players who have played for three years and can't use their off hand. The longer we wait to teach them, the harder it is for them to catch up. It will cause teams to play less well to have players using their off hands. In the long term it will make better players. Each team at each practice must have off hand aspects of their throwing and catching skill exercises. This is especially true for bantams who will initially have the best chance to develop two hand skills.

Drills:

- All left hand triangle and passing drills.
- Single out players at each practice to play off hand all practice, include taping bottom hand to stick. Reward team every time off hand player gets goal or assist.
- Run all cut drills to both sides.
- Don't tell kids to play with their 'bad' hand. Just say "All Lefty!" It's easier to monitor when they are all using the same hand.

2. The ball can outrun anyone. Lacrosse is about passing the ball not running with it.

Too many skilled youth players are trained to carry the ball up the field themselves - through other teams if needed. This is a useless skill, and a hard habit to break. Especially when young players are encouraged to carry first, and only throw as a last resort. Our players must have as their first instinct moving the ball through the air. Like other basic skills, this may cause teams to do less well until they learn the skill. We must not let the skilled bantam and junior players develop the ball-hog habit. Many players will want to just run with the ball, because it is easier, and because they are not good at throwing on the run.

Drills:

- Running entire length of field passing back and forth with partner.
- Three man pass with center player running toward ball, catching, turning, running toward other player and throwing.
- Triangle passing drill in both directions
- Ultimate scrimmage. In this scrimmage the coach counts to 3,4, or five depending on skill of players, and players must pass in that time or the coach gives a new ball to the other team. The player who failed to pass must carry the ball all the way to the coach and hand him the ball. The coach has thrown another ball to continue the scrimmage. Coach counts loud. Trains players to pass and get open, or lose the ball.

3. Strategy over individual skills. Skills will come, strategy must be taught. For example, play 4 vs 3. It teaches defense how to slide, and offense how to throw and catch. Do this rather than spend practice time throwing only.

4. Do all drills at full speed. Players who jog through drills are lost when they have to play a game full speed.

5. Don't chase balls. Waiting for a player to retrieve a lost ball wastes 25 other players' time. Send players on a run after lost balls as break. Keep plenty at hand.

Specifics: Offense

1. Our offense shoots and passes on the run.

This is a real skill. Too many players stop to plant their feet and then throw. Try to point this out when they do it. Stop play and let player know he stopped.

Drill:

- The best drill is to tell the kids to run and concentrate on running, then throw without changing pace. This can be fun as a shooting drill. Encourage players to shoot no matter what. Most will miss goal by a mile. That's okay. Eventually they will start to get the shot to work. Better to let them miss than 'hit' the goal by stopping. It won't work in a game to stop, so learning to do it is not very useful.
- Players run from restraining line, catch pass and have one step to shoot.
- Triangle passing drills where players run and throw in a triangle or box instead of the straight line.

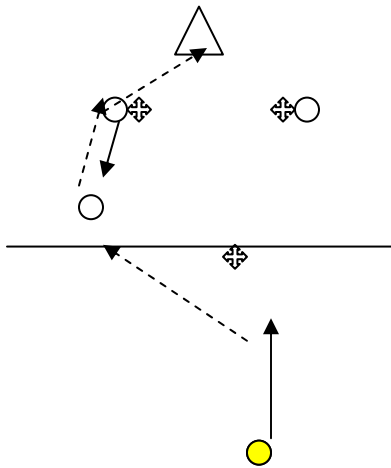
2. Our offense knows how to fast break or go to X.

Fast Break or X. Too many youth middies run the ball to the goal every time. Our players must know that with a fast break we go to the goal (by passing). A fast break is when we have four players to their three. In all other situations we want ball to go to X (behind the goal) to set up. We want this for two reasons, if we lose the ball we want the other team to have to clear from as far down the field as possible. Second, moving the ball to X forces the defensive team to turn around and face their goal. That makes it harder for them to watch players in position to score. Players must learn to feel the difference, and know when to push a fast break and when to settle.

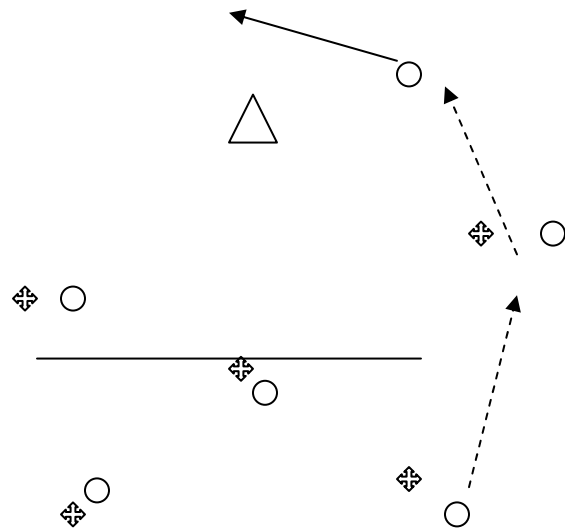
Drill:

- Set up a fast break. Form six rows of middies at opposite restraining line. Half middies are defense, half are offense (pinnies). All odd numbers are offense, all even numbers are defense. Coach rolls ground ball and calls random numbers 1-6, sending break down field in an unpredictable fashion. Coach can send a normal fast break down the field by giving an offensive player a big head start, or another formation.

(Fast Break pass to undefended player)



(No fast break get ball to X)



3. **Our offense knows the four steps of a dodge. Speed, change direction, step away, close.** Too many kids start their dodge not with speed, but with stand still, and things go bad from there. Speed is their first tool, if that doesn't work, a change of direction, like a split dodge is tried, if that doesn't get rid of the defender, they can simply step away to free their hands, and if the defender pounces on them then, they can use their last trick, a close dodge like a roll dodge.

Drills:

- Get kids to memorize four steps and repeat back
- Get kids to move through and call out "Speed" and when the defender keeps up "Change Direction" then call "Step Away" then "Close Dodge".

4. Our offensive players carry their sticks up and down, and protect them.

Carry Stick Perpendicular: Too many youth players carry their sticks parallel to the ground. Players who have played for two years still carry their stick in front of them like a serving tray. They cannot throw, dodge or avoid checks. Our players must know how to carry their stick protected and perpendicular to the ground.

Drills:

- One-on-one with proper carrying position. Stick protected by body.
- Run with ball and stick upright in jog drills.
- Gauntlet. Offensive player runs through three defenders spaced about 20-feet apart. Players will learn to 'protect' their stick.

5. Our Attack uses a Zone Ride and our Middies ride Man to Man.

Middies will stay man for man on the clearing middies, keeping their man in front of you and close enough to check him if he were to receive a pass. If they break our ride and create a fast break go the hole and pick up the nearest threat to the goal. Off-side middie must stay on-side to allow our attack player to pursue their clearing defensive player. We must have three players on our offensive side of the field at all times.

Once the opposing goalie has gone behind the cage our attack should drop back three across on the restraining line. We are going to run an "off" or soft ride. We would like to bring the defensive players up the field and force them to handle the stick beyond their restraining line.

As the defensive player with the ball approaches the restraining box, our X attack player will call "Break". The attack players will aggressively cover the player with the ball and the two closest players. We will leave their furthest player from the ball open. We want to force the long pass. Once the pass is made the attack will rotate aggressively towards the ball.

Attack players must keep all defensive players in front of them. If a defensive player cuts beyond the restraining line the closest attack player must pick him up. We will then play two on three and again force the longest pass. Our defensive players must be close enough to their attack players so that we do not give them an easy clear.

If we call a "Freeze" all attack and middies will keep man for man and we will leave the goalie uncovered. We will use this to get the goalie out near mid-field and then jump him to create an unsettled situation.

“Finding Space” Drills

1. 3 vs 2 (4 Cones)

Set up 4 cones in a square 8-10 feet apart. Set up 3 players on 3 of the 4 cones. Give one player a ball to begin play. The rule is that the 2 players without ball must always be on a cone adjacent to the ball. As ball is passed, players should be constantly moving to always have players at cones adjacent to cone with ball. Players should use left and right hands, keeping ball to outside. After a while, cones can be removed.

Add 2 defenders to the middle (initially without sticks). Defenders should move with the ball with player covering ball yelling “ball” and other defender splitting 2 outlets and yelling “back”.

2. 3 vs 2 Ground Balls

Set up players in 5 lines facing field. Using colors or odd/even numbers, identify 3 lines as one team and the remaining as another team. Roll ball away onto field. Both teams attempt to retrieve ball and must make 3 passes before returning to coach. Players with ball must move to find space similar to 3 on 2 cone drill. Defenders must take “man” or “back” as ball is passed.

3. 3 vs 3 Ground Ball set up to Goal

Set up players in 6 lines facing field. Identify 3 lines as one team and the 3 remaining lines as another team. Roll ball away onto field. Both teams attempt to retrieve ball. Team that gets ball initially must set up around net in triangular formation make 3 passes before taking shot. Team with ball must move continuously to find space. Defenders should “match up” with offensive players and adjust their position to cover “ball” or “back”.

Variations: Set up teams on 2 sides. Roll to one team as offense. This variation takes the ground ball out of the drill and allows more time spent on the offensive setup and defense of the drill.

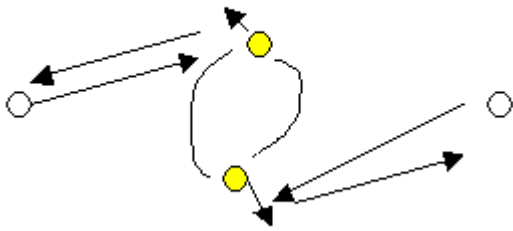
4. 3 on 3 Ground Balls with 2 Goals

Similar to # 3. but played with 2 nets on small field. After initial ground ball, allow play for several minutes as ball may move from team to team before shot is taken.

Connecticut Lacrosse Club Drills

1. 'Four Man - Two Ball'

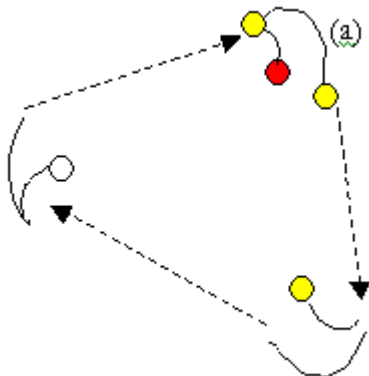
In this drill the two yellow players get in the middle. They step to their right, receive a pass, throw it back, then run to other yellow position, and repeat the catch and pass back. They then switch hands and step out to the opposite side and take a pass from the opposite partner. This drill is done with head high passes, ground balls and over-the-shoulder passes. It maximizes normal movement and reps, and is used in place of 'line drills' that are often more about line than drill.



2. Triangle Passing

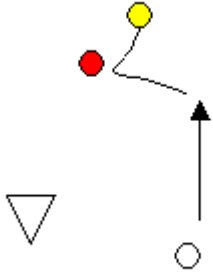
This drill also replaces an old line drill. Three players who play together get in a triangle. They replicate the stick protection of a pass from one angle and throw to the next player as the ball works in a normal game situation. In this illustration, the red player steps out right handed, catches the pass, turns to the outside of the triangle, (a) switches hands, and passes left handed to the next player.

Can add over the back passes, various dodges, ground balls to the drill.



3. Keep Away

A key drill, and fun. This is the best way we have ever found to teach players to spread out and get open. There is no objective to score, just maintain possession. In Dave's version it's full field, with a count to when the ball has to be passed. We can go half field, and include the passing count. If a team fails to pass by the count, seven seconds is a good place to start, the other team is awarded the ball. Count out loud how long each team keeps the ball. See what the record is. Warning: A dominant team can really frustrate the other group, especially when players are tired. Pitting the best attack and best middies the long sticks and second or third middies can make this a bad drill. Mix the players up, especially poles and attack.



Note: This is a good time to remind players about the V cut. V cuts are an essential tool. Ball is with White player. Defender is Red. The V cut forces the defender to honor the attacker headed to the goal. When the attacker cuts back away, it creates the space needed to catch the ball. It places the defender behind the catcher, and the catcher's body is between the defender and his stick when he catches the ball. Any other cut and the defender can get a stick on the ball. Key to keep away.

4. Two on One

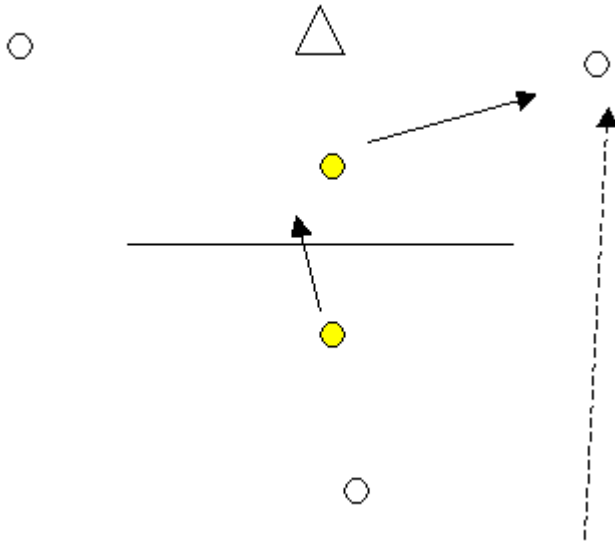
This drill works offense and defense through a typical situation. The defense has to know when to commit to the ball, and leave his man, and the offense needs to spread the defender, and keep a passing lane open. This can be set up from behind the net, and in front, as shown in the second diagram.

The Red player had the ball. The Yellow player is a defender. It seems like an easy chance to score, but with practice the defense learns how to force a bad angle shot. Use a goalie to keep the shots honest. Encourage the offense to move, and the defense to remember that the hole is the place to defend, not just the ball.



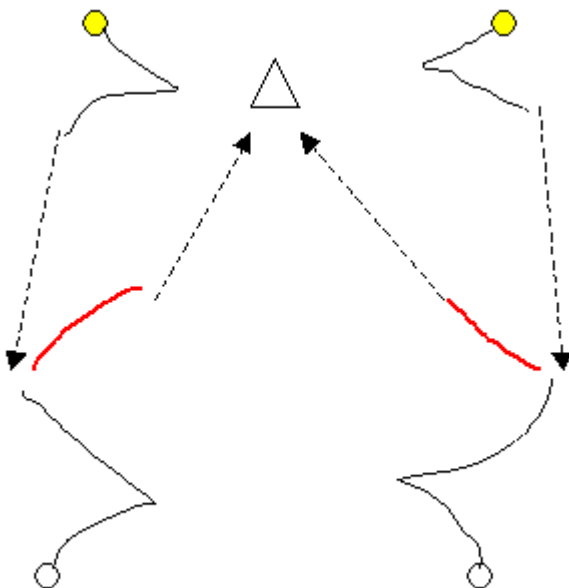
5. Three on Two

Another great all-purpose drill. Most goals are scored in three versus two breakdowns on the field. The two Yellow defenders against the three White offensive players. The coach lobs the ball to any of the three offensive players. One defender must address the ball, while the other must split the remaining threats. The defense must communicate. "I've got ball!" The offense must learn to move off ball.



6. Pass and Shoot

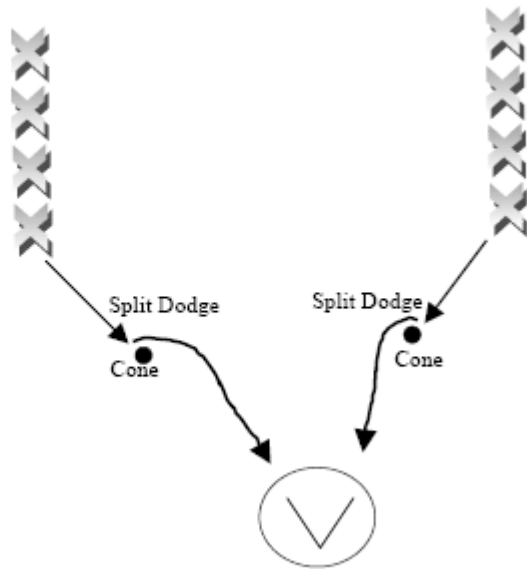
Often forgotten, the art of catching and driving to shoot and score. This drill combines V-cut, passing to a moving target, and catching and shooting on the run. Stress that after the catch the shooter must drive back to net, and not fade away (red). Defense can shoot too.



Walpole Drills

1

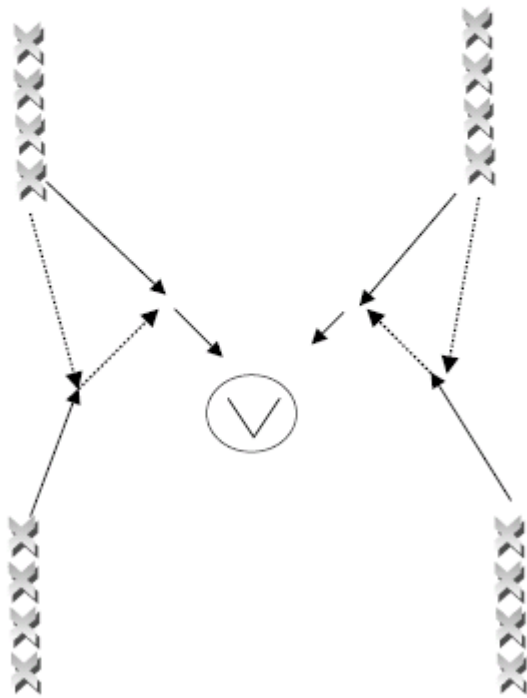
Dodge and Shoot



Set up two lines (one on the left and the other on the right). The lines should be about 20 yards out from the goal. Set a cone (or person) about 5 yards in. Each player at the head of the line will alternately run toward the cone and do a split dodge. They should shoot at the goal as they come off the dodge.

Alternate each line so the players work on both their strong hand and their week hand.

Give and Go

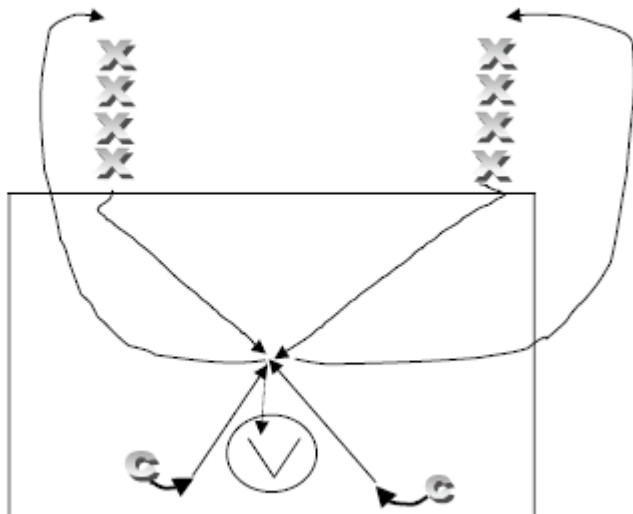


Set up four lines. 2 lines at the top of the box (20 yards out). 1 on the right side and 1 on the left side. Set up two lines behind the goal (1 on the left side and 1 on the right side). Start with the ball at the head of each line in front of the goal.

The Attackman on the same side as the Midfielder cuts toward the man with the ball. The midfielder passes the ball to the Attackman. The Midfielder then does a “v-cut” and cuts toward the goal. The Attackman passes the ball to the cutting Midfielder. The Midfielder catches the ball and immediately shoots it at the goal.

Players should alternate lines so that they work their strong and weak hand, as well as Midfielder and Attack positions.

Opposite Midi Cut



2 lines are set up at the top of the box. 2 coaches (or players) are standing at “X” with a bunch of balls. One coach calls “Cut”. The first man in the opposite line does a “V-Cut” and runs a route perpendicular to the crease with his stick up looking for a pass. If the pass is made the cutter catches the ball and shoots (bounces) the ball at the goal. After the shot or if he doesn’t get a pass (you should opt not to pass everyone the ball to simulate game conditions) the cutter pulls through and clears out to the top of the box and goes to the back of the line.

This process is repeated alternatively, one side then the other.

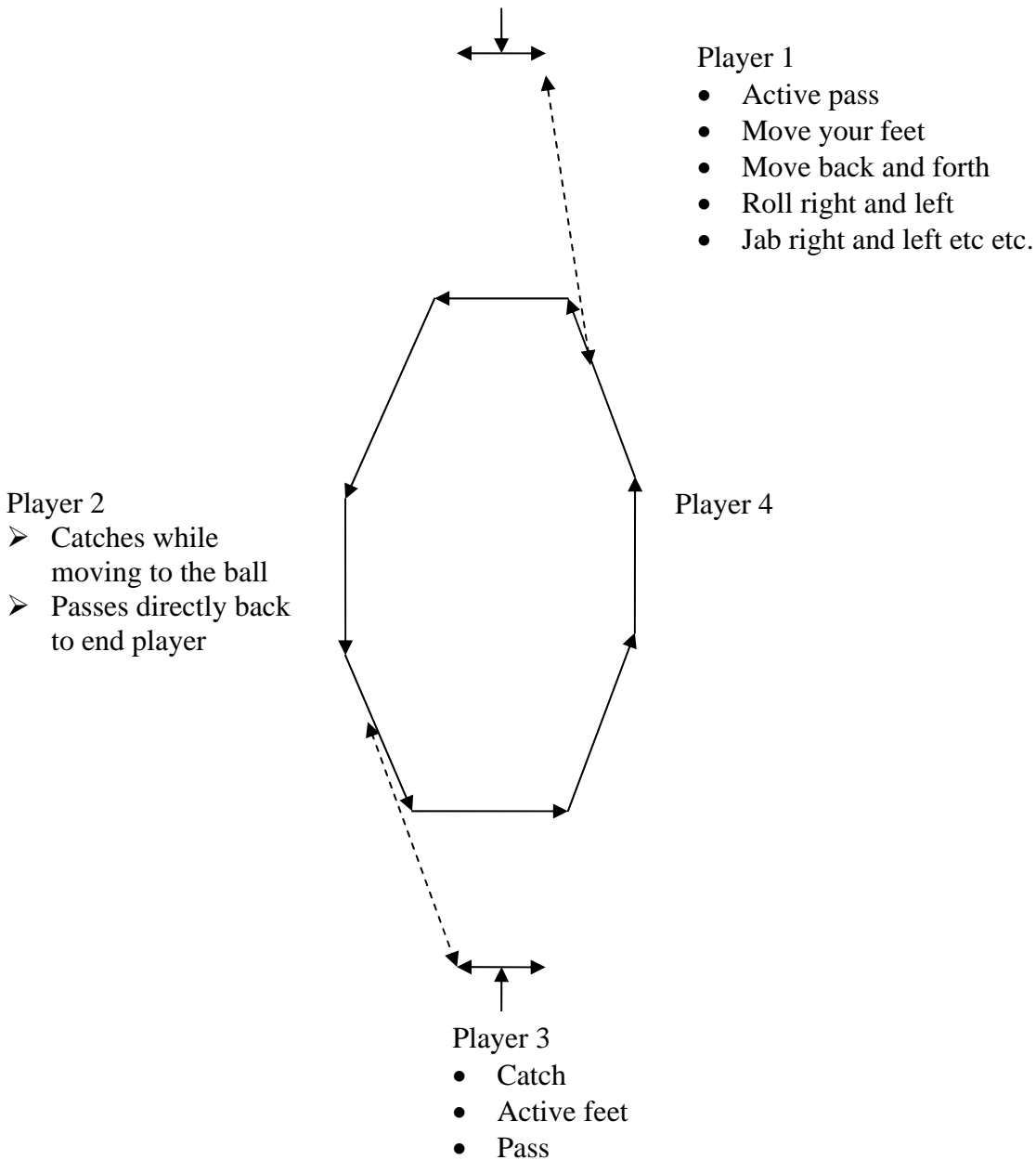
As an options you could:

- line up 3 lines up top with 1 feeder at “X” and practice the Pull Through Play.
- add a Defenseman or two.

Sudbury Drills

1. 4 man 2 Ball Active Passing

- Right Hand
- Left Hand
- Over shoulder
- Off-Hand catch, How to catch balls thrown to your “Off-side”
- Catch Left / switch / Throw Right
- Catch Right / switch / Throw Left



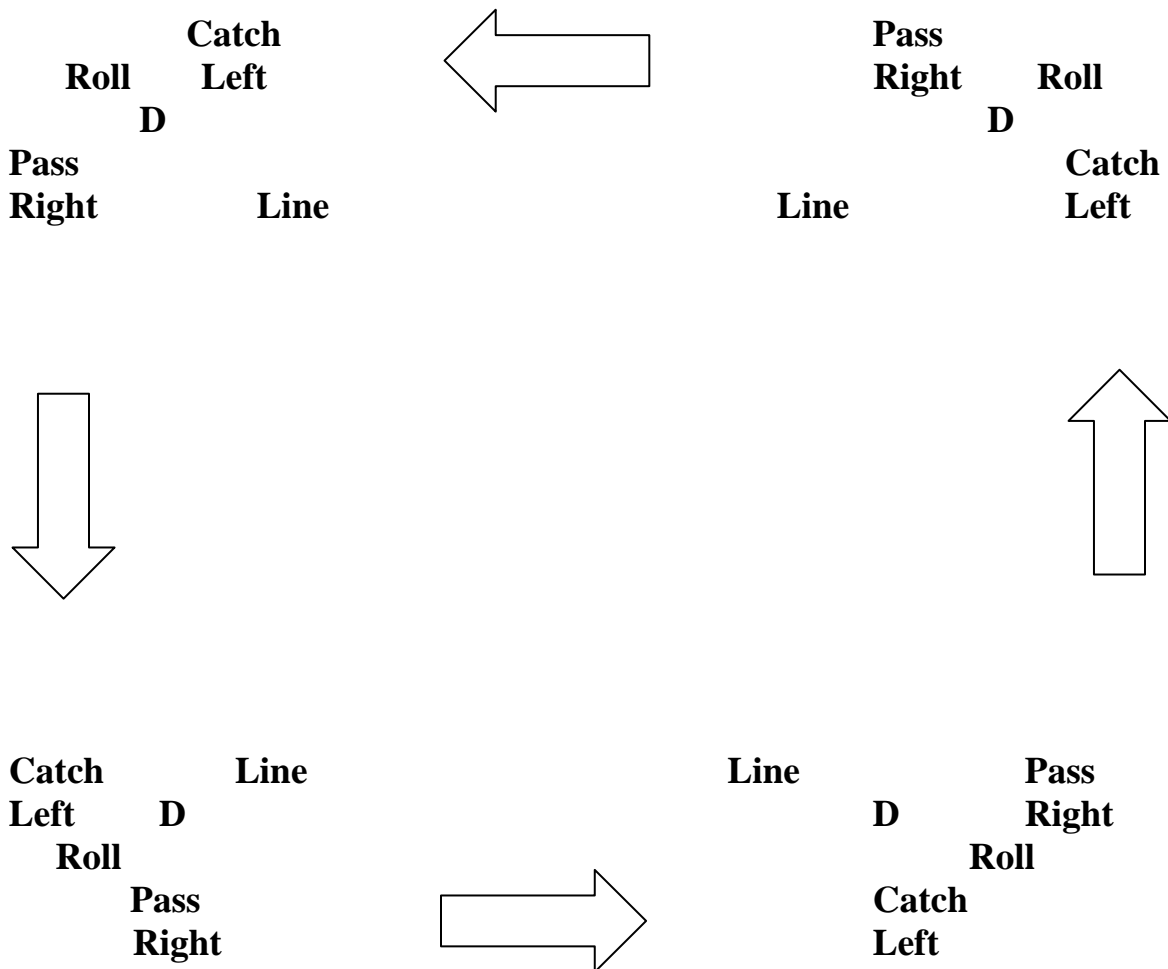
2. 4 Corner Perimeter Drill – Long Passes

Benefits

- Create Passing Lane
- Step towards target
- Keep stick to outside away from defense
- Catch left rotate and pass right
- Catch right rotate and pass left
- Pass and then cut opposite

Variation

- Add next player up as loose defense
- Multiple balls

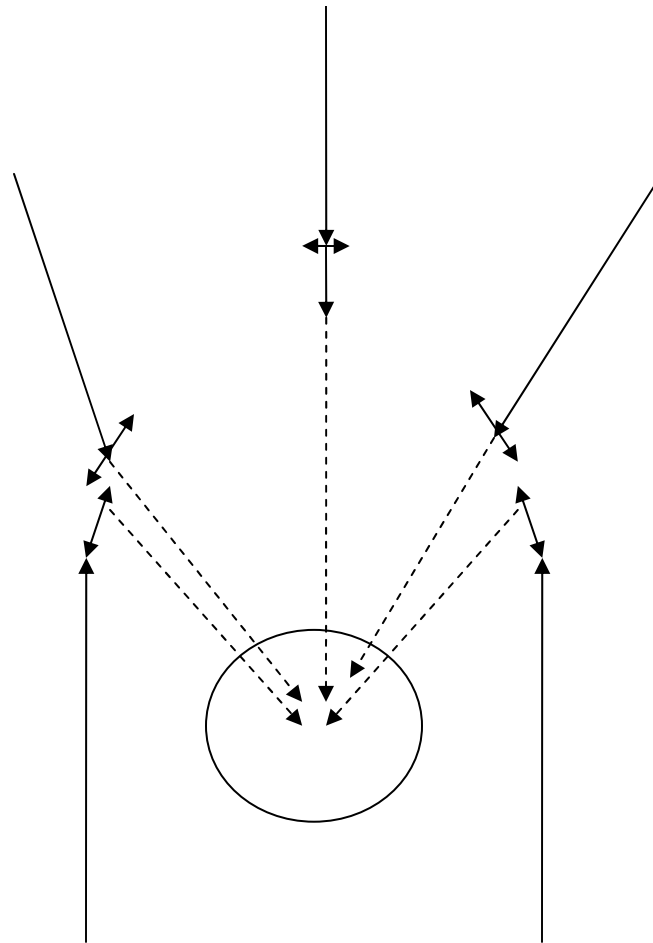


Shooting and Dodging

3. Skeleton Dodge and Shoot

Outside “Mid” Lines rocker step and shoot inside – Middle line split and shoot

- Shoulders point to target
- Hands back
- Follow through with shoulders finishing facing end line
- Right hand and left hand



2 “Attack” Lines Dodge – Rocker Step - Shoot

4. Cone Drill

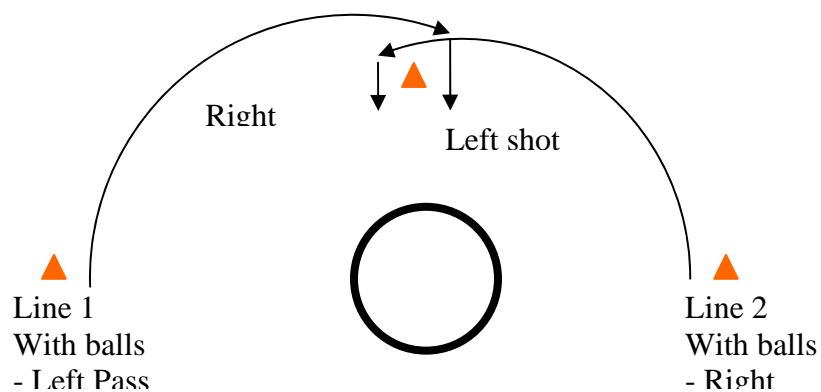
Benefits

- Hitting moving target
- Shoot on the run
- Catch and shoot quickly

Concentrations

- Keep stick in shooting position
- Quick and short shots
- Quick wrist fakes and then shoot
- Quick sticks
- Shoot low
- Turn bad pass into a goal
- Right and Left

- Pass first then dodge out to receive pass from other line
- Front shoulder points towards goal
- Finish towards goal with shoulders parallel to end line
- Catch with stick in shooting position



5. Box Drill

Progression from cone drill – add defense

Benefits

- Hitting moving target
- Space and Time
- Take a check
- Catch, split, and shoot

Concentrations

- Keep stick in shooting position
- Quick and short shots
- Quick dodge and then shoot
 - Shooter has shoulder pointed towards goal
 - Jab step / Freezer
 - Split
 - Change hands
- Quick sticks
- Shoot low
- Right and Left

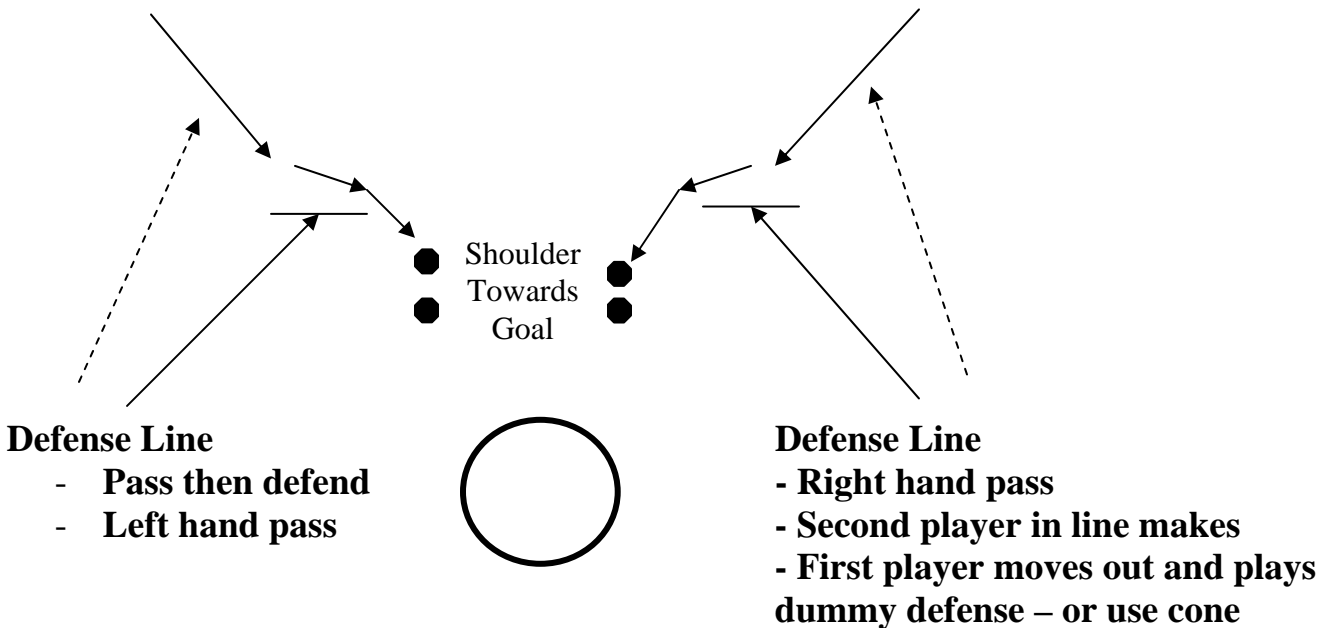
Defense passes then goes out to play defense

Offense Line

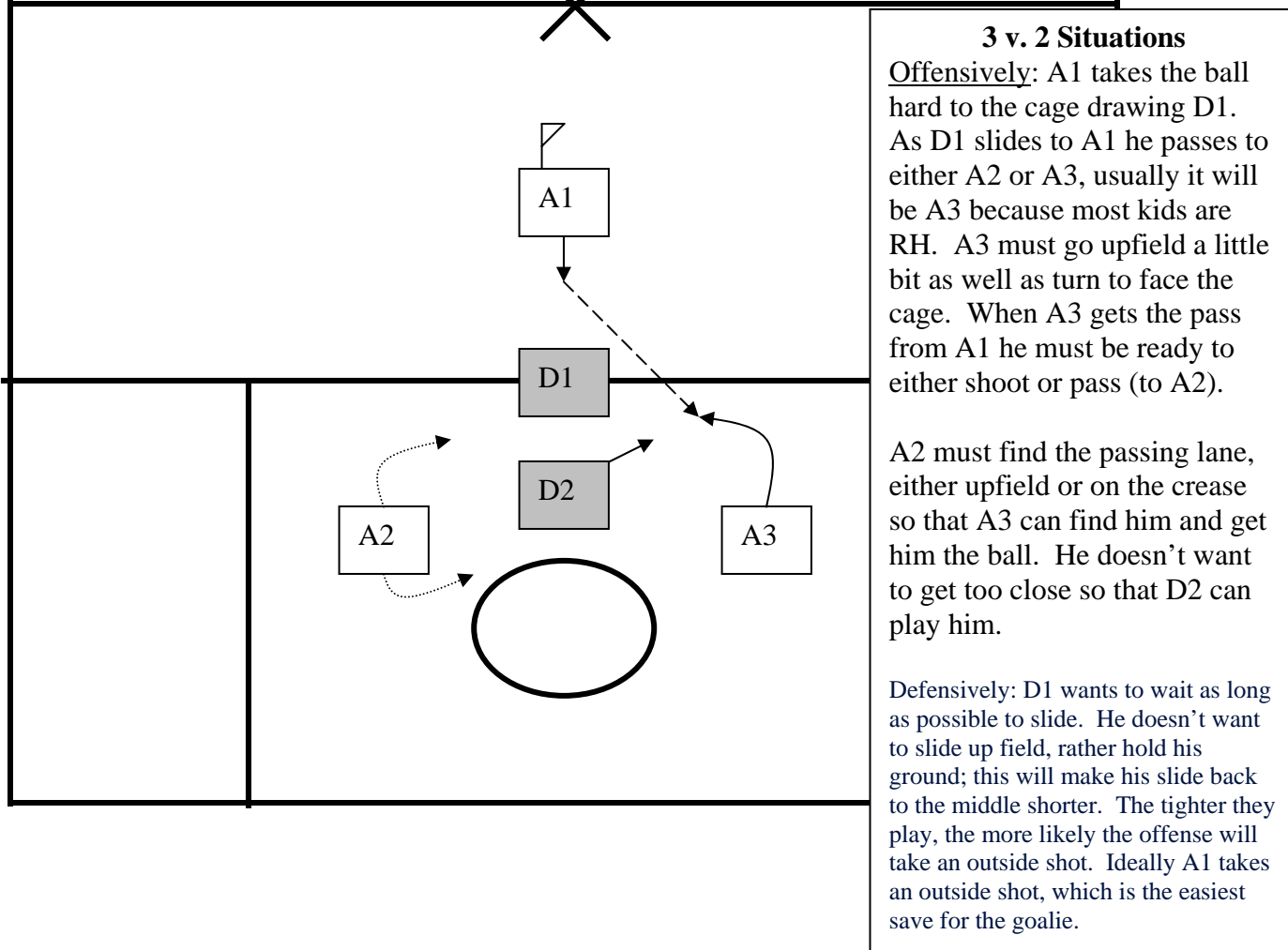
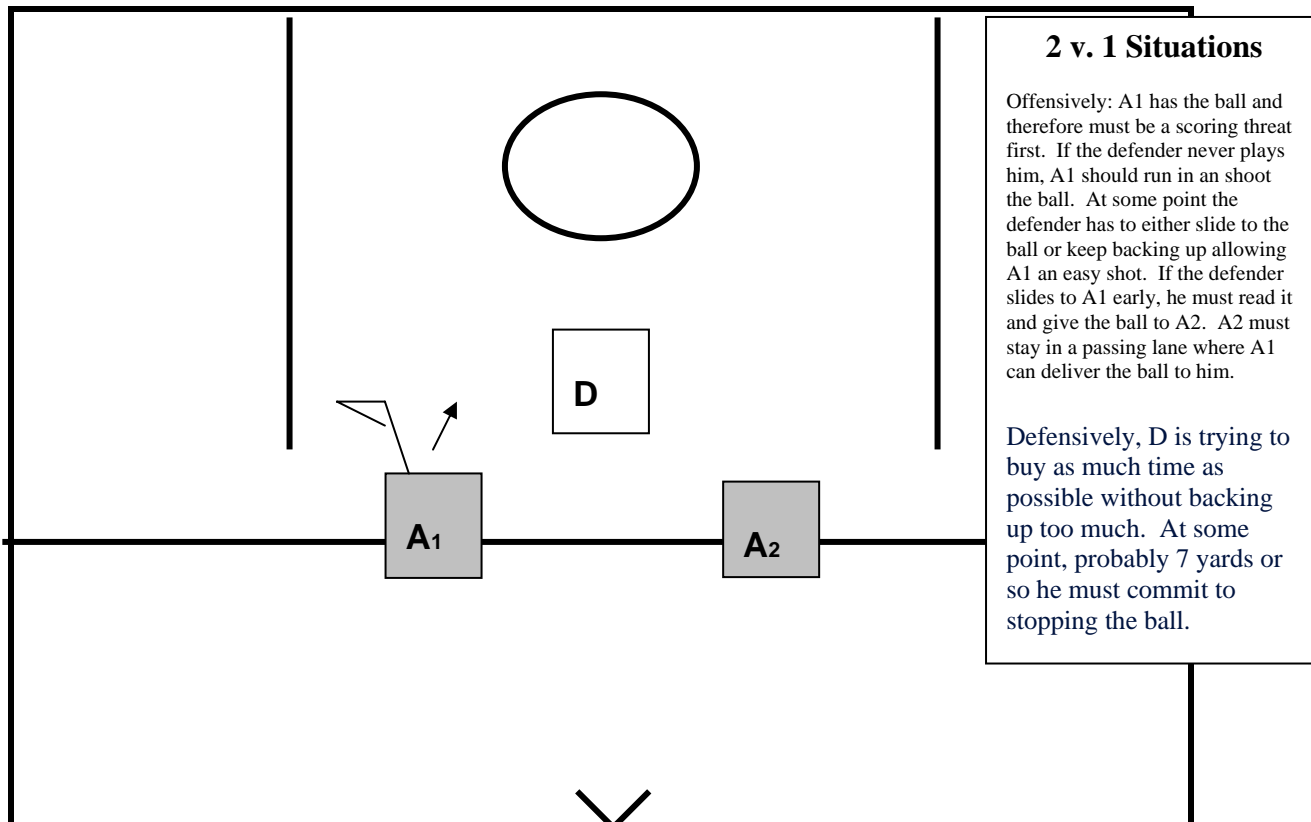
- Catch Right hand
- Split Left Hand shoot

Offense Line

- Catch Left hand
- Split Right Hand Shoot



6. 2 v 1 and 3 v 2 Situations



Additional Scrimmage Drills

7's or 9's: 4 v 3 or 5 v 4 from any point on the field....Start across the midfield line in 7 or 9 lines, 4 or 5 offense and 3 or 4 defense. Coach rolls out ground ball for offense. Gain possession make the first pass up field or to the opposite side of the field. (STRETCH THE FIELD) Don't do this drill from just one point on field, throw loose ball out to many different points. Emphasize draw a man and dump (Be like a magnet, attract a player) and then move ball quickly. Don't bunch up, Look for "ONE MORE" pass all the time. We should usually score a "LAY UP" goal. Do not dodge your man...you are a man up! Always try and get ball down the side through "X" if you can, which makes the defense turn their heads...MOVE THE BALL, and make the easy passes.

Circle the net: 3 v 2 or 4 v 3...have kids run around crease...coach rolls ball out in any direction... kids play uneven until a goal. After we pick up a ground ball move the ball to the opposite side of the field!!

Keep Away: 3 v 3 in the alleys, 3 v 3 in the soccer circle, 5 v 5 in the restraining box. Do this in two of these places during the 15 minutes. Have kids "show and go""Show" or cut for the ball and then.... "Go" clear through for the next player. Draw and dump, Defense should try to take ball away, don't let them just cove their man, they must go to the ball and take it away...double team.

Keep away with fast breaks: 3 v 3 in the soccer circle....You can use two ends of the field. After three total (not consecutive until U-11's) passes (2 passes if a young group), the player who receives the final pass goes in on a fast break towards 3 defense, and 3 attack who are ready for the play. The remaining players are passed a ball by the coach and go down to opposite goal on a 3 v 2.

Virginia Breaks: Two teams. 3 v 2 ground ball on one side at midfield line. Team who picks up GB goes down to the offensive end on a fast or slow break. Emphasize getting the ball down the side through X on a slow break. Make sure we have cutters on the back side toward ball at X (time the cut). Perform the same drill with a 2 V 1 on the opposite side...same rules apply. This helps recognition of fast / slow breaks, GB's and pushing the ball.

Back side drill: 4 offense, 4 defense. Lined up in a square...each def player is playing an offense player. Coach rolls ball towards an offensive player (he should have a CLEAR advantage...TWO adjacent def players must go to ball and cannot get back into hole until off player passes ball....other players now play a 3 v 2...get the ball to the opposite side ASAP!!!!

5 Line 1 v 1's: Set up in 5 spots (1-3-2 set up). Emphasize the player keeps his Eyes up, Coach hold up fingers just as dodge starts (make them say the number of fingers you have help up as they dodge..they need to keep their head up!!!). From the top. One move and GO. "Split and Go". From the side and behind start one direction, change direction QUICKLY and sprint to net (HEAD UP)... From "X" you need to get to the 6 V 6 or the Island. *Progression Talk....*

2 v 2's: Set up with offensive / defensive players at top of the box. Start with one offensive player and one defensemen on crease. Top offensive player dodges toward goal. As he splits down one side or the other and "beats" his man...the defenseman on the crease must slide EARLY. Offensive Player on crease curls to the opposite side and finds a passing lane / Alley. Progression....dodger either question marks (?) or feeds crease for a shot.