



Field Hockey BC
General Tactical Instruction

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ATTACK - GENERAL

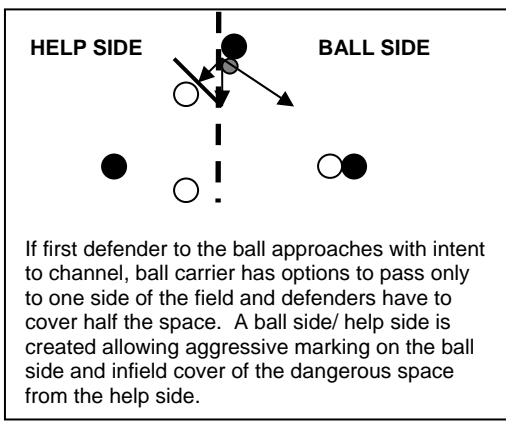
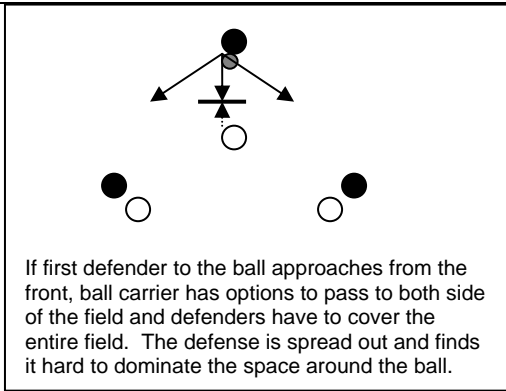
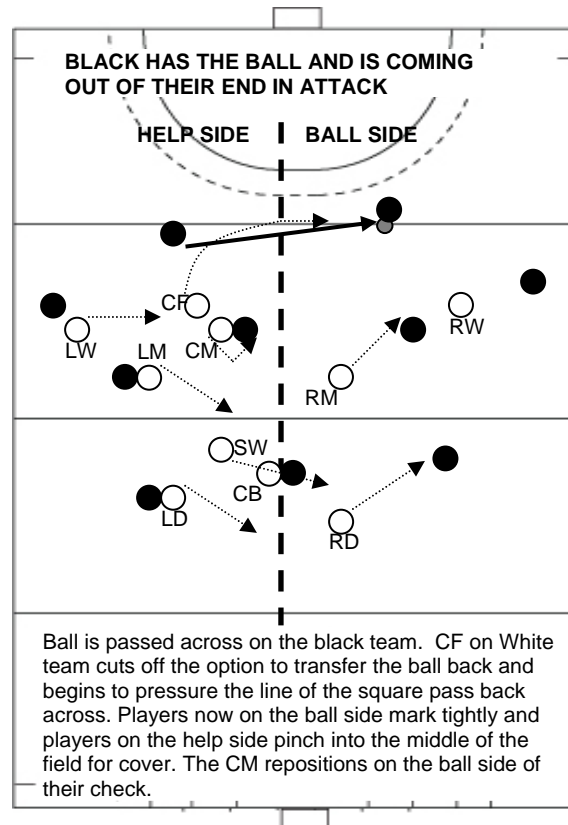
Theory:

- It's harder to defend big spaces
 - "stretch" the field out by maintaining width and depth
- Always prioritize support for the ball carrier
 - Work hard to create distinct passing options around the ball
- Create numerical advantage
 - Quick free hits / restarts
 - passing and supporting / following the pass / or give and go's can create simple two on one situations anywhere in the field
 - aggressive well timed leads will also allow isolation of defenders and create simple two on ones
 - off ball forwards overloading the ball side
- Look to create danger in front of the ball
 - Allows attack to advance forward with pace
 - Can be accomplished with players initially square to the ball leading through (deep), or off ball players who do not have a cover responsibility, leading deep
- Unbalancing the defense
 - Forcing the defense to react to or make decisions on forward movement can create space or passing options to exploit
 - This can be accomplished by leading deep, through interchange (both laterally and vertically), or passing and supporting (overlapping)
- Counter cover / counter defense / weak side cover
 - Preparing for the counterattack while attacking
 - Ball side players on attacking team support the attack
 - Off ball (weak/help side players pinch into the middle to allow for transfer of the ball and to help defend a counter attack in the event of a turnover

DEFENSE - GENERAL

Theory:

- It's easier to defend small spaces
 - Cut off ability to transfer and channel ball carrier to create a definite ball side and help side
 - Ball side players can be more aggressive with pressure and help side players pinch into the middle for cover
- Control/ dominate the space around the ball
 - Eliminate passing options
 - Tight marking on the ball side especially around the ball
 - Ball side players position for possible interception
- Prevent penetration into "advantage" or "dangerous" space
 - Communicate to help block passing lanes
 - Help side players pinch into the middle of the field



ROLES IN ATTACK AND DEFENSE

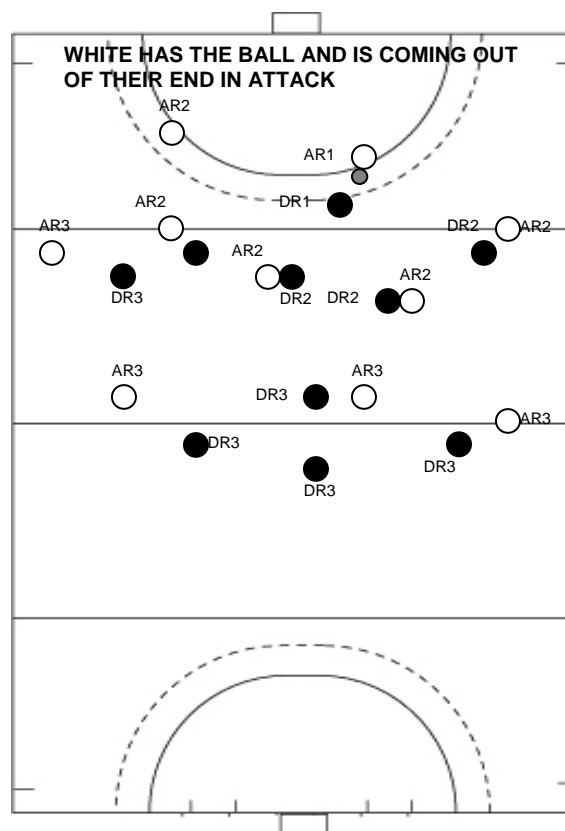
There are three roles in attack and three roles in defense and it is essential that every field player be able to fulfill them all. With all the roles it is important to keep in mind the location of and pressure on the ball, location of teammates, and the location of opponents.

Attacking Roles

- **Attacking Role 1 (AR1):**
 - **Ball carrier**
 - **Responsible for keeping possession by passing or dribbling in order to facilitate a pass**
 - Critical requirements:
 - Awareness of options
 - sound decision making

- **Attacking Role 2 (AR2):**
 - **Support player potentially one pass away from the ball**
 - **Responsible for repositioning to provide a distinct passing option for the ball carrier (AR1)**
 - Positioning is based on the needs of the ball carrier and other AR2 players in the area
 - Critical requirements:
 - Awareness of AR1 and other AR2's
 - Communication (both verbal and non-verbal) with AR1 and other AR2's.

- **Attacking Role 3 (AR3):**
 - **Support player potentially two or more passes away from the ball**
 - **Responsible for creating space (depth and width) over and above the immediate support provided by AR2's.**
 - Critical requirements:
 - Awareness of other AR3's as well as support for and pressure on the ball carrier.
 - Communication (both verbal and non-verbal) with other AR3's to create space.
 - Anticipation of how the play is likely to unfold.



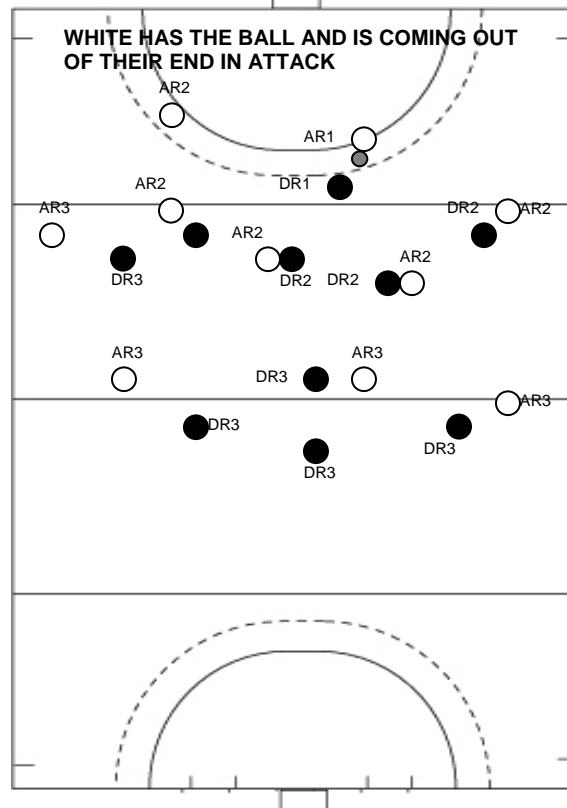
Defensive Roles

- **Defensive Role 1 (DR1):**
 - **Closest player to AR1**
 - **Pressures the ball carrier to prevent forward passes**
 - The lines for pressure will depend on team tactics and the relative organization of the players around the ball but it is usually in the line of a pass to a dangerous player or in the line of a pass to dangerous space (often the same thing)
 - Critical requirements:
 - Awareness of organization of other defensive players around the ball
 - Must maintain engaging distance to the ball carrier to avoid getting eliminated

- **Defensive Role 2 (DR2):**
 - **Players closest to DR1**
 - **Eliminate the options immediately around the ball (passes to AR2's)**
 - Critical requirements:
 - Awareness of the ball carrier's options
 - Awareness of organization of other defensive players around the ball

- **Defensive Role 3 (DR3):**
 - **Defensive players furthest from the ball**
 - **Position to provide depth and cover in defense as well as possible help for DR2's**
 - Critical requirements:
 - Awareness of potential danger (dangerous space and AR3 movement)
 - Communication to position players in front of you

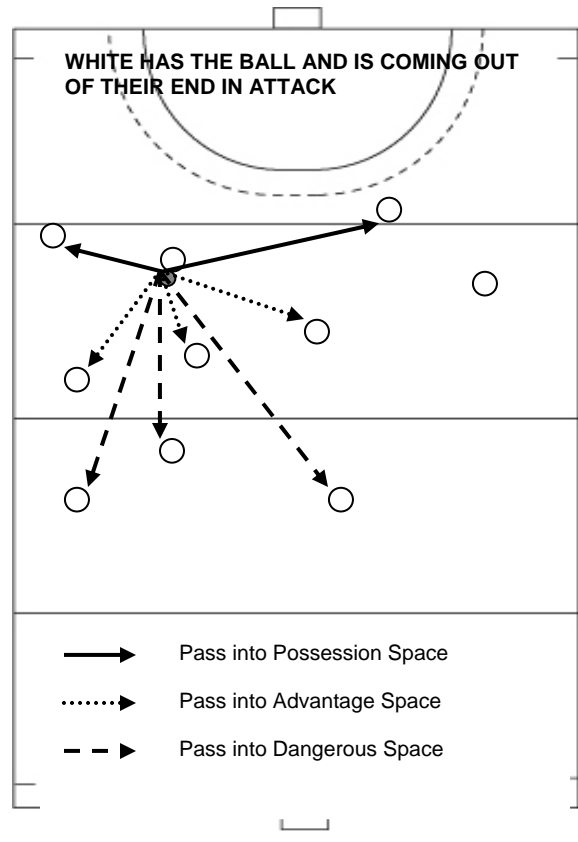
Roles need to be filled in number order i.e. DR1 before DR2 and DR2 before DR3. This is a key point as it allows players to know what their priorities are based on the location of the ball and their teammates. In attack for example there is no point in looking to create space (AR3) if the ball carrier has no options (i.e. AR2 role is not filled).



TYPES OF SPACE

There are three types of space, Possession Space, Advantage Space, and Dangerous Space

- Possession Space:
 - Square with or behind the ball carrier
 - Easy to make passes
 - Poorly defended
 - Easy to keep possession
- Advantage Space:
 - Forward space between the ball carrier and the first line of defenders
 - Well defended by players immediately around the ball
 - Harder to keep possession
- Dangerous Space:
 - Space behind the first line of defenders closer to the goal
 - Very well defended by multiple lines of defense
 - Hardest to keep possession
 - Passes into this space have the highest risk of being intercepted but also pose the greatest threat to the defense



BALL SIDE AND HELP SIDE

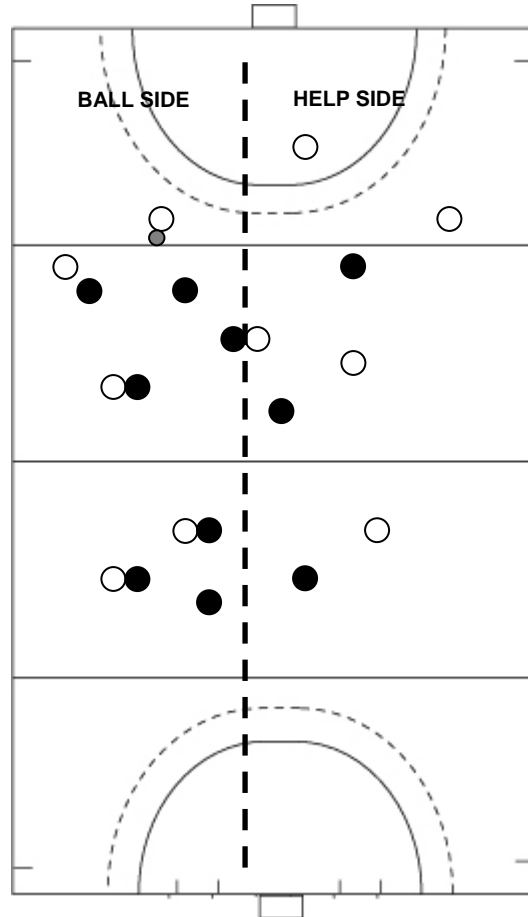
Theory in Defense:

- Concept is used to determine how tightly offensive players are marked
 - Players on the “ball side” are marked tightly as it is likely the attack will advance up that side
 - Players on the non-ball side or “help side” pinch into the center of the field and protect the dangerous space
 - Even though they are not tightly marked, players on the help side need to stay even or just slightly deeper than their checks to allow for recovery in case the ball gets switched around

- Black dots are defending
- White dots are attacking
- Notice how the defensive RM and RD pinch into the middle of the field to help protect the dangerous space but still stay even or slightly deeper than their checks to allow for a possible recovery if the ball gets through.

Theory in Offense:

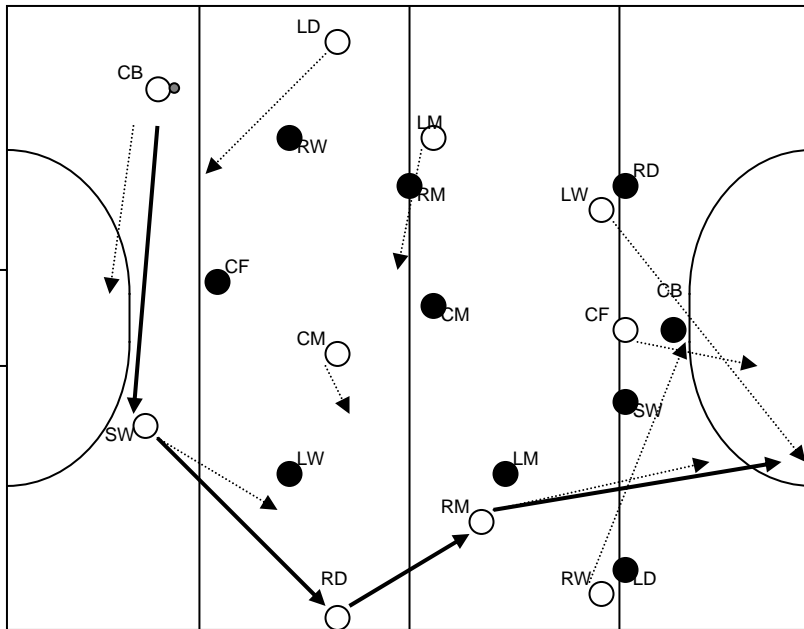
- Concept is used to determine commitment to attack and level of direct support for the ball carrier
 - Ball side players (including wing defenders) are free to join the attack as necessary
 - Help side players (excluding the forwards) pinch into the middle of the field in anticipation of a possible turnover and counter attack



COUNTER COVER (COUNTER DEFENSE)

Theory:

- Ball side players (including wing defenders) are free to join the attack as necessary
- Help side players (excluding the forwards) pinch into the middle of the field in anticipation of a possible turnover and counter attack



Counter Defense (weak side cover)

The diagram shows a build up in attack on the right side.

Note the movement of the LD and LM. They are both moving into the middle of the field to provide cover for a possible turnover.

It is important to note however that they are still accountable for their marks and should be in a position to recover if the ball does get switched to their checks.

While accounting for their check, defenders should also try to position themselves in a passing lane to an opponent further up the field (as is the case with any zonal marking). For example our LM should always play in the lane to the opposition RW.

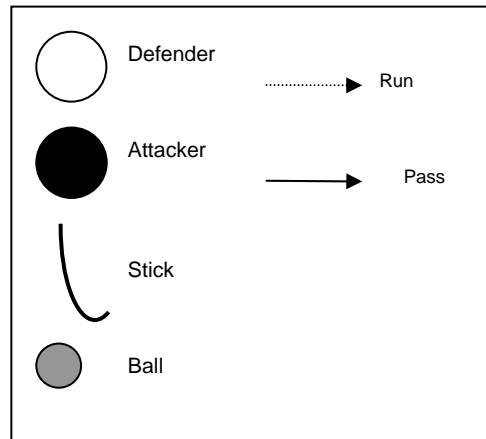
DOUBLE DEFENSE (DOUBLE TEAMING)

Use:

- Dispossession of ball carrier by using teammates to help make the tackle
- The tactic requires two defenders, the channeling defender (CD) and the tackling defender (TD)

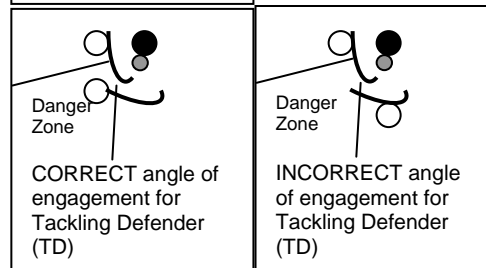
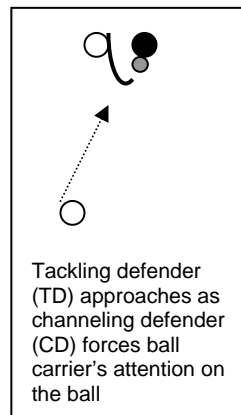
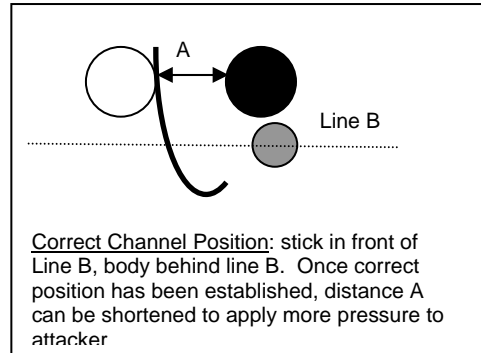
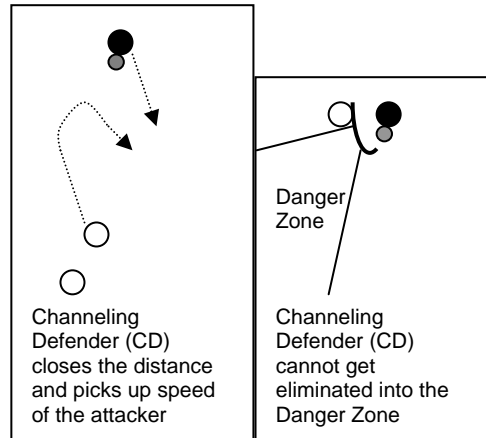
Theory:

- Team defensive technique that prioritizes keeping the ball carrier moving to their left (defenders forehand).
- The ball carrier at all costs cannot eliminate the defenders into the middle of the field
- Helps establish a “ball side” and a “help side” to allow defenders on the “ball side” to be more aggressive with pressure and defenders on the “help side” to pinch into the middle of the field to provide support and cover



Execution:

- The defender closest to the ball as the channeling defender (CD), closes the distance to the attacker
- As you approach the forward, “pick up the speed” of the attacker by arcing your run to come in more from your left (forwards right) and encourage / channel the attacker to your strong/forehand side
- CD should end up a position where they are essentially running with the attacker... hips pointed in the same direction
- to ensure correct channel position imagine a horizontal line running through the ball parallel to the baseline...the channeling defenders stick should be in front of that line but their body should be behind it (overstepping the line with the body will potentially allow a pullback thus losing containment of the forward). Alternatively to maintain correct channel position the defender can look to run “hip to hip” with the forward
- Once channel position has been established the CD should close the distance to the attacker without compromising the above rule
- Stick position should be as low as possible so that a draw to the attackers right will result in a tackle being made... the attacker has no choice but to keep going wide or pull the ball directly back and around (which slows the play and allows the defensive team to get back).
- Pressure by the CD should be high enough that the attackers attention is on the ball and they do not see the flat stick tackle being set up ahead
- When convinced that the attacker's attention is on the ball the TD can move into position to make the flat stick tackle.
- The TD's angle of engagement should be such that the space diagonally forward of the attacker (danger zone) is blocked by the TD's body
- As the tackle is being made (and communicated by the TD), the CD should start to recover to the space behind the TD is case the tackle is not successful
- If the CD has lost containment (an effective channel) of the attacker, the TD should avoid trying to flat stick tackle and instead assume the role of the CD and try and establish an effective channel... the original CD can then recover to the space behind and if possible assume the role of the TD.





DEFENSIVE OUTLETTING TIPS

1. Set up and get the ball into play quickly (before the defense has a chance to set up)
2. Provide distinct passing options for the ball carrier
3. Get the ball moving to change the line to passing options and force the defense to reposition
4. Look to isolate simple 2v1 opportunities
5. Reposition after every pass to create more passing options and fill transfer and cover responsibilities
6. Communicate and time leads to get open
7. Vary the short and the long game (passing vs. big hits out of the back)
8. Getting the ball out of trouble doesn't have to be petty
 1. Getting the foul and working the ball up 5 yards at a time is sometimes good enough
 2. Look for and train the quick restart after the foul to catch the defense before they have a chance to set up

When the ball in on the sidelines, players in the back field should prioritize:

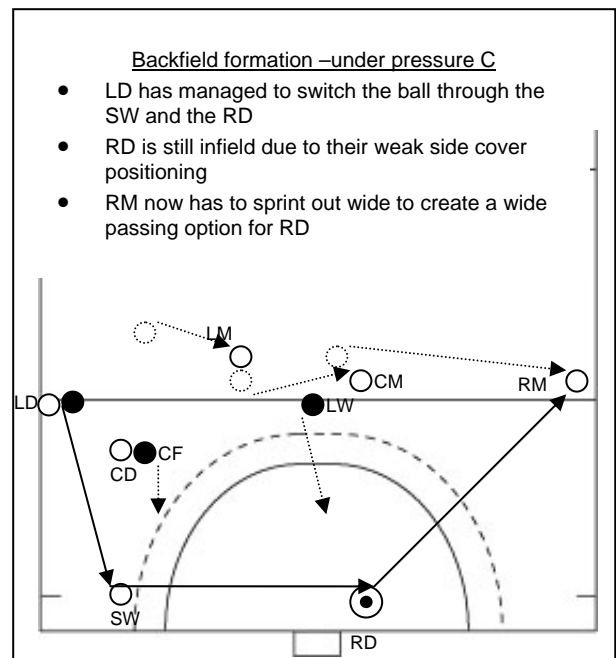
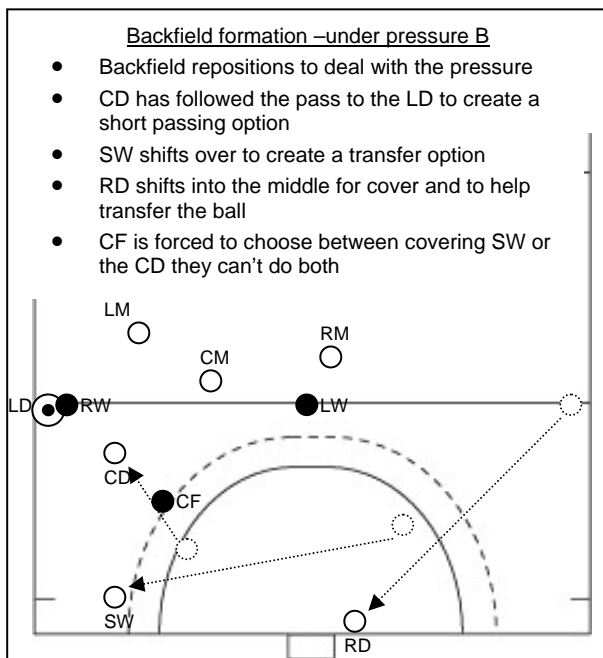
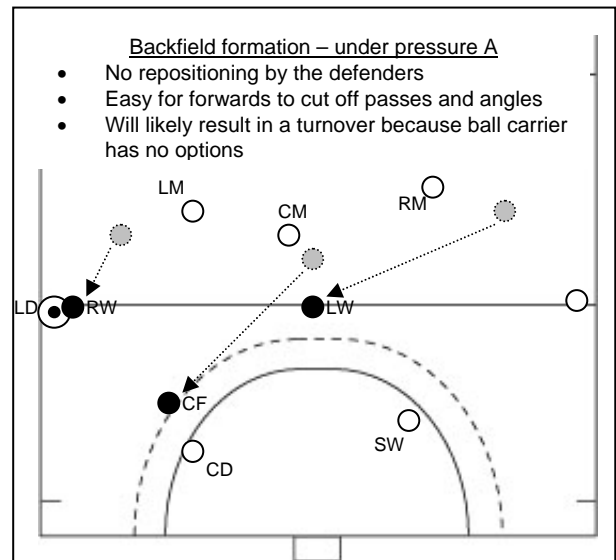
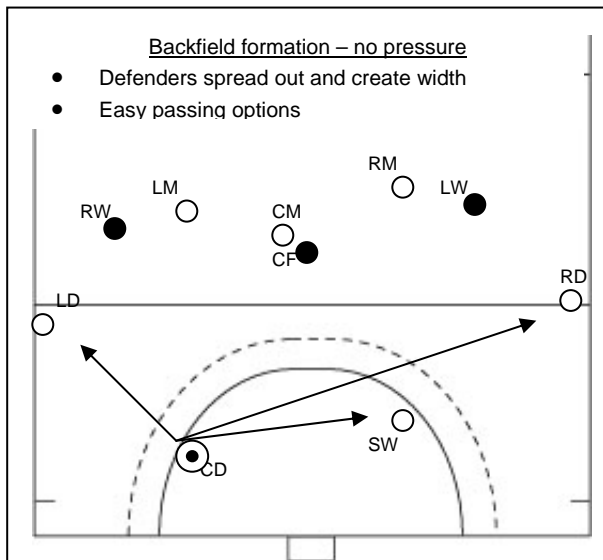
- Short support for the ball carrier
- Options to transfer the ball
- Cover (from the weak/non ball side)

DEFENSIVE MOVEMENT OPTIONS

Defensive movement is invariably based on satisfying three principles, usually in the following order:

1. Support to create a distinct passing option for the ball carrier (this usually involves repositioning after every pass!).
2. Positioning to accommodate the transfer of the ball to another part of the field.
3. Positioning to provide weak side/ off ball cover in case of a turnover.

We will usually set up in a “trough” or “bowl” formation. This provides maximum defensive cover and makes it easy to transfer the ball across the field. If under no pressure from the opposition we will try and spread out and create as much width as possible. Pressure by the opposition, either in free play or when pressed on defensive free hits, will force us to reposition in order to create more options for the ball carrier.

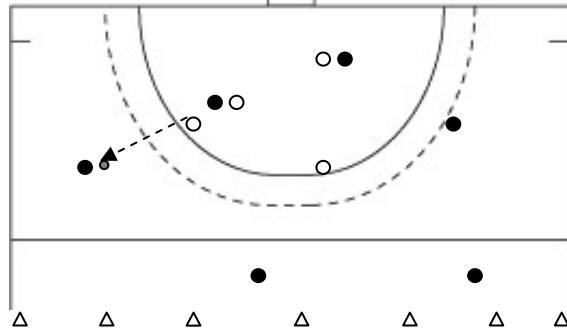


DEFENDING THE BOTTOM 1/3 OF THE FIELD

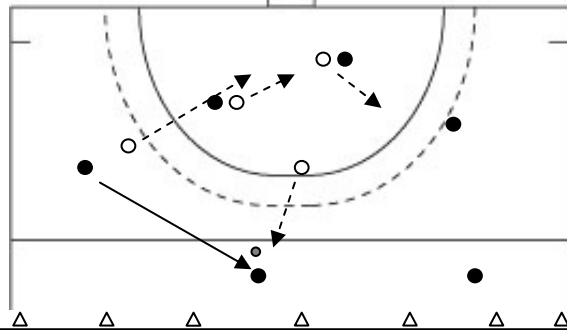
Theory:

- Channel wide and away from the dangerous space to the net
- Initial pressure is usually applied in the direct line between the ball and the net as the hard hit ball into the circle is still a legitimate threat and this lane needs to be blocked
- defenders do not chase the ball if passed wide to another attacker, instead they drop back to help cover the dangerous space and the next closest defender to the ball carrier sprints up to put direct pressure on the attacker
- The rest of the defenders will provide cover and are constantly deciding between protecting the dangerous space/and or the man as attackers move into and out of the circle
- As with any marking situation, attackers closer to the ball and those in the dangerous space are marked tighter
- The degree to which you can commit to marking outside the dangerous space will depend on the numbers and level of organization in defense
- If unorganized or outnumbered, defenders can be aware of attackers leading out of the circle but need not get sucked out to mark them as this leave the dangerous space to the net undefended
- With the above roles in mind the defenders have to dispense with the burden of playing their position and simply fill the role that needs the most immediate attention

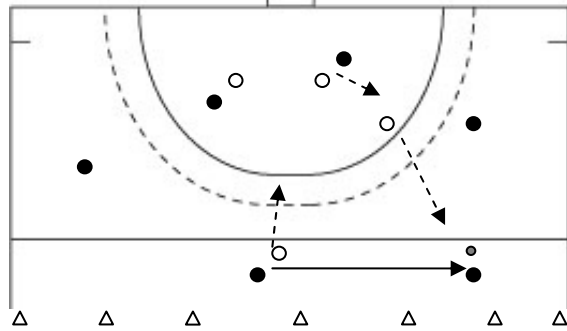
Pressure and Cover A



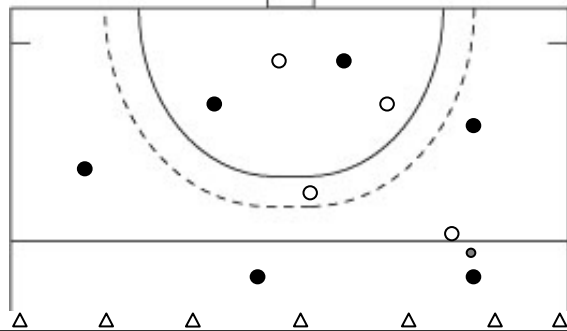
Pressure and Cover B



Pressure and Cover C



Pressure and Cover D



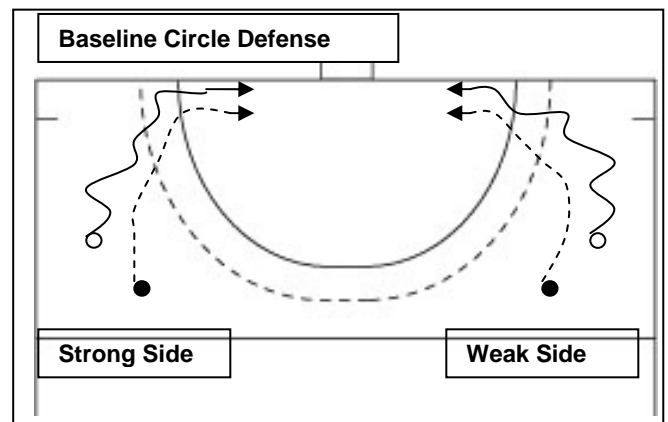
DEFENSE OF THE CIRCLE

Effective defense of our circle will be a critical part of our defense. Limiting the number of goal scoring opportunities and penalty corners conceded will give us a chance to compete against any team. Our defense will rely on patience and discipline. Diving in and over committing to the tackle are basically the only ways the opposition wins PC's. I will therefore be essential to:

- stay calm, balanced and in control as you approach the ball carrier
- be conscious of your angles of approach so that you are taking away the right options
- be conscious of your distance away from the ball carrier
 - Too far and we cannot make a tackle and will allow the ball carrier to look up and make a pass or take a shot
 - Too close and we cannot react in time to a pull back (draw) or a change in direction and it will be impossible to protect your feet

Strong Side

- first priority is to keep the forward wide
- Forwards will be looking to pull the ball back inside so maintain discipline to not dive into the tackle
- Ideally tackle should be made outside the circle but NOT at the expense of giving up your angles and getting beaten with an easy pull inside
- If forward gains the baseline it becomes even more important to not dive into a tackle... be patient and protect the most dangerous passing lane
 - If you have help from teammates with picking up the other forwards in the circle then protect the guard lane (directly up toward the top of the circle, from the ball carrier)
 - If you do not have help the most dangerous lane is probably the lane to the stroke spot



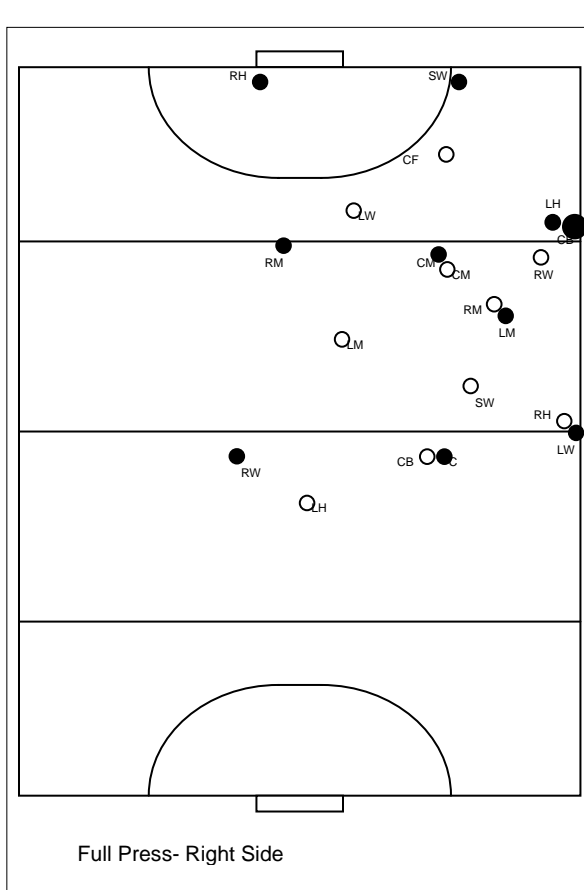
Weak Side

- Keep forward wide
- Ideally try to get to the baseline first (before the forward) and try to channel forward out and away from the circle
- If forward gains the baseline, block/ defend the lane to the most dangerous option
 - If you have help from teammates with picking up the other forwards in the circle then protect the guard lane (directly up toward the top of the circle, from the ball carrier)
 - If you do not have help, the most dangerous lane is probably the lane to the stroke spot

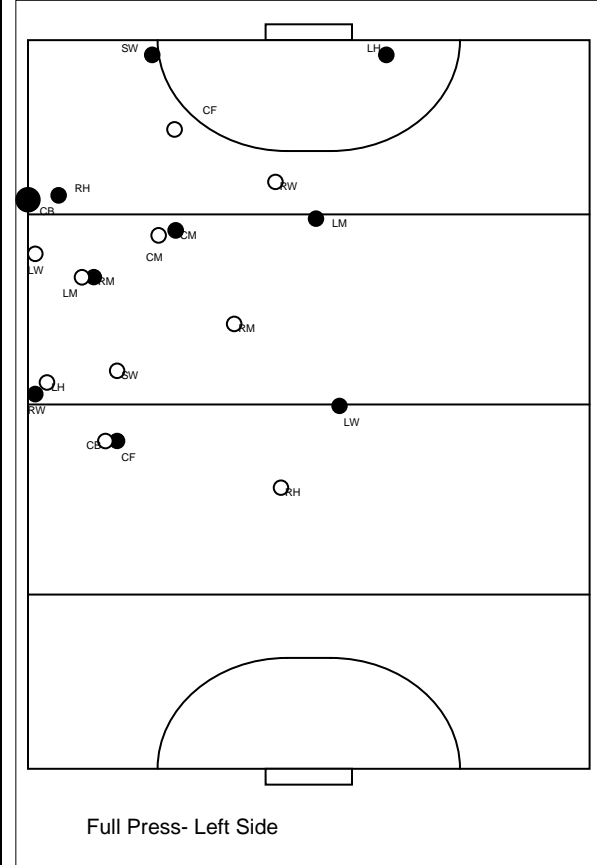
FULL PRESS

Theory:

- Used to try and force a turnover when the opponents are trying to get the ball out of their deep defensive corners
- Ability to transfer the ball is cut off by the CF and the off ball winger
- High pressure on the ball carrier as soon as the ball is in play
- Tight marking (intercept positioning) on opponents who are passing options immediately around the ball carrier
- If unable to intercept then angle of pressure needs to be such that opponent is forced to turn to their weak side
- Upon intercepting, ball should be passed immediately to the CF who will be free at the top of the D



- CF cutting off the deep transfer
- LW cutting off the shallow (square) transfer
- RW pressuring the scoop or short ball
- RM, CM, RH, CB are all in possible intercept positions
- LM providing weak side cover, protecting the lane to the RW (is positioned by the LH)
- SW plays as always in the line between the ball and the goal (is positioned by the CB)
- LH is providing deep cover (helps with any positioning flaws)



- Positioning is mirror image of press on Right Side

1 vs. 1 - DEFENSIVE

Use:

- Dispossession of ball carrier without the possibility of any teammates helping to make the tackle

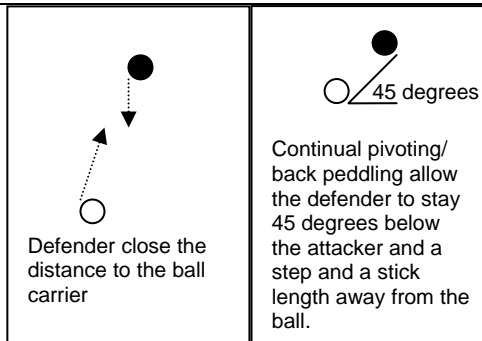
Theory:

- The 1 vs. 1 is a defensive battle that relies most heavily on the ability to continually engage that ball carrier without getting eliminated
- Continual engagement slows down the attack and allows the defender to have multiple opportunities to dispossess
- A priority is to try and channel to the forehand as it is easier to tackle on that side but this should not be done at the expense of getting eliminated (a clear lane might be opened to the goal as a result of getting into good channel position).
- Upright and balanced body position is crucial. Weight should be on the balls of the feet. Stance should be narrow enough to allow for quick changes in direction
- Defender should always have one foot in front of the other to avoid getting caught flat footed be able to continually pivot while moving backwards to maintain both this stance and the engaging distance to the attacker.

NOTE: Channeling will become a much higher priority as soon as the possibility of help from teammates is confirmed.

Hands:

- Left hand at the top, with the "V" made between your thumb and forefinger going down the front face/ flat side of the stick
 - Right hand half way down with the "V" same as above and right thumb extended straight down the front face of the stick
- NOTE: the above grip is a default and will allow for poke tackling and upright tackles closer to the defenders feet. It will have to be altered accordingly to make a forehand and reverse stick tackle



Execution:

- Close the distance to the attacker
- As you approach the forward, "pick up the speed" of the attacker by continually pivoting or shuffling backwards on the balls of your feet
- Engaging distance should be a step and a stick length away from the ball
- Try to maintain a 45 degree angle to the opponent but always keep one foot in front of the other to avoid getting caught "flat footed"
- Eyes on the ball
- Use the poke tackle to keep the attacker "honest". This may not win the ball but will:
 - slow the attack down
 - help maintain the engaging distance
 - Often forces the forward to make a decision to eliminate prematurely resulting in upright tackles made closer in to the defenders feet as the forward loses control of the ball or makes a move before they are ready to do so.
- Watching the attackers stick on the ball will give you all the cues necessary to determine the direction change of the ball and allow you to make the tackle, protect your feet, or continue pivoting as necessary
- Maintain a balanced position when going in to tackle (do not throw your weight completely forward and dive in).
- Do not leave the left arm and stick extended if the tackle is not made on the first attempt as this gives away the reach of the defender and exposes the defenders feet.
- When the ball is suitable exposed or when the forward loses control make an upright, forehand, or reverse stick tackle as necessary.

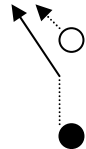
1 vs. 1 - OFFENSE

Use:

- Elimination of a defender to advance the attack

Theory:

- The defender is most comfortable when he/she is able to maintain balance and control over their direction and speed. To eliminate we therefore need to create a threat that will force the defender out of their comfort zone and unbalance the defender.
- There are a few generalities to keep in mind that will help accomplish this goal
 - Change of speed
 - Change of direction
 - Deception
 - Hold the ball in the middle of your stance so that you have the option of eliminating or passing left or right
- As an example, a hard acceleration into a channel left or right of the defender will force the defender to keep pace and close the gap to prevent the attacker from just running by them into the space ahead. It is at this moment, where the defender is accelerating to close the distance to the attacker that they are most vulnerable to a pull inside to completely eliminate them.
- Running at the defender is also effective as it forces them to engage and possibly get caught flat footed and off balance. This is especially effective if the defender is trying to channel the attacker as it will result in the defender continuing to reposition and open up a lane to the dangerous space ahead.
- It is important to accelerate after an elimination move to prevent the defender from recovering and having a second chance at the tackle. The same can be said for cutting or "sealing" off a recovering defender to place them completely behind the attacker and not beside them in a position to make a second attempt at a tackle.



Scenario 1(S1):
Attacker runs at the defender and accelerates hard into the space



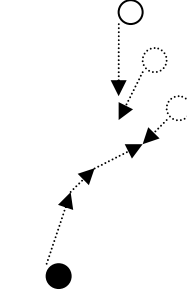
S1: Defender is forced to accelerate to prevent the attacker from running by them ...defender is now unbalanced.



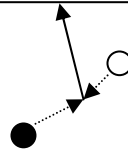
S1: Attacker now pulls the ball back and accelerates around the defender



Scenario 2 (S2):
Defender tries to establish a channel position on the attacker



S2:Attacker drives at the defender forcing the defender to continually reposition to channel forehead



S2: Repositioning of the defender will open up the lane for the attacker to accelerate into.

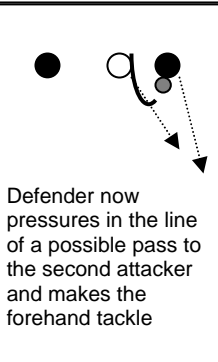
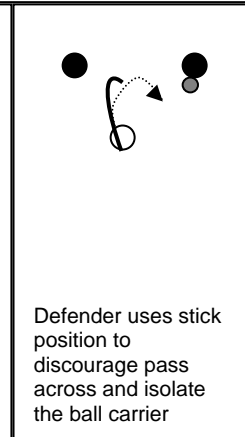
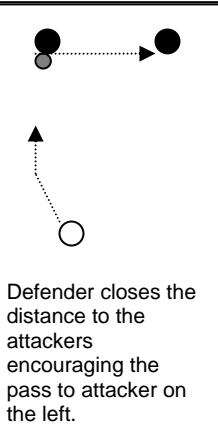
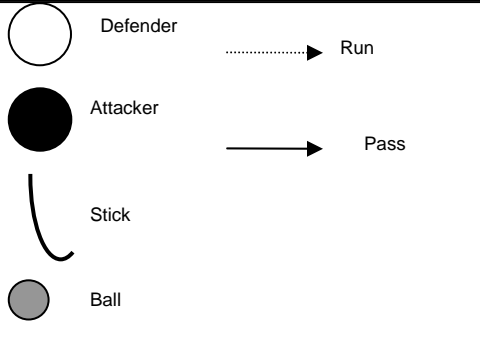
2 vs. 1 - DEFENSE

Use:

- Delay and possibly gain possession on a 2 vs. 1 attack.

Theory:

- The defender is trying to isolate one of the attackers and reduce the 2v1 to a 1v1.
- Try initially, with your line of approach, to encourage a pass to the attacker on your forehand side
- We ideally want the 1v 1 to be on our forehand side to make an easier tackle (however the same theory applies if you have to channel to your left and have to make a reverse stick tackle).
- Once the ball is on your forehand side encourage it staying there by blocking the passing lane with your body and/or stick position
- Pressure should then be applied in the line of the pass to the second attacker.
- There are a few generalities to keep in mind as defenders:
 - Stay balanced and on your toes the entire time
 - Take small steps to allow for quick changes in direction
 - Be aggressive with closing down the ball carrier ... forcing their attention on the ball will prevent them from scanning ahead and making a good pass



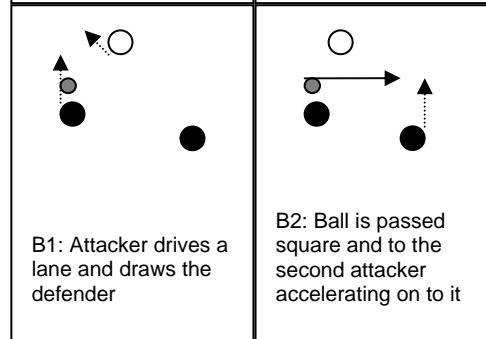
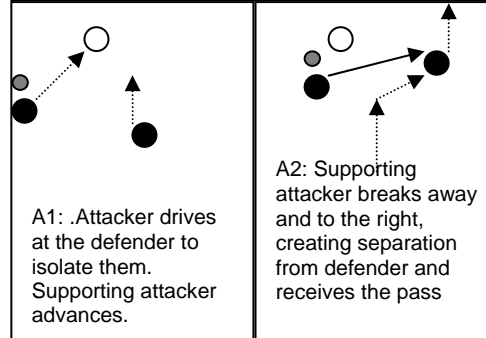
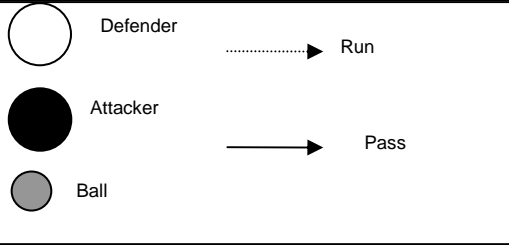
2 vs. 1 - OFFENSE

Use:

- Elimination of a defender to advance the attack

Theory:

- The defender is most comfortable when he/she is able to maintain balance and control over their direction and speed. To eliminate we therefore need to create a threat that will force the defender out of their comfort zone and unbalance the defender.
- The defender will also try to get between the two attackers in order to eliminate a passing option and isolate an attacker creating a 1 vs. 1.
- There are a few generalities to keep in mind as attackers:
 - Avoid trying to eliminate with a pass that needs to go through the defenders body or stick to be successful
 - Isolate the defender by running at them so that a pass at the right time will beat them completely
 - Change of speed
 - Change of direction
 - Deception (faking or disguising the pass)



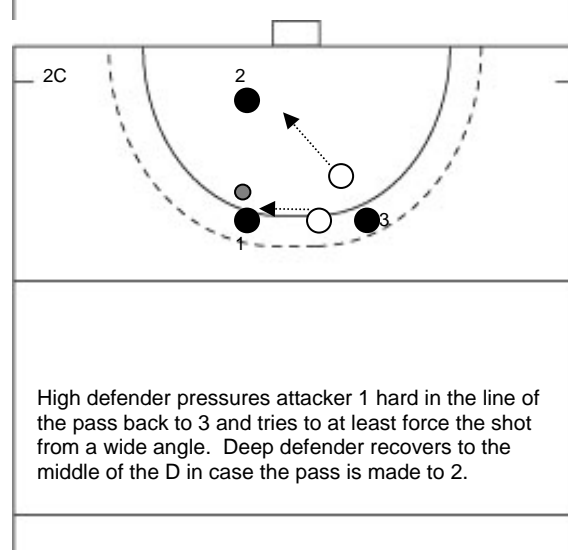
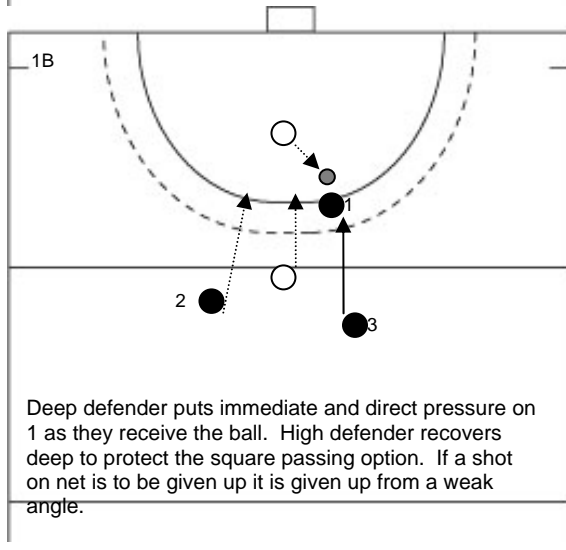
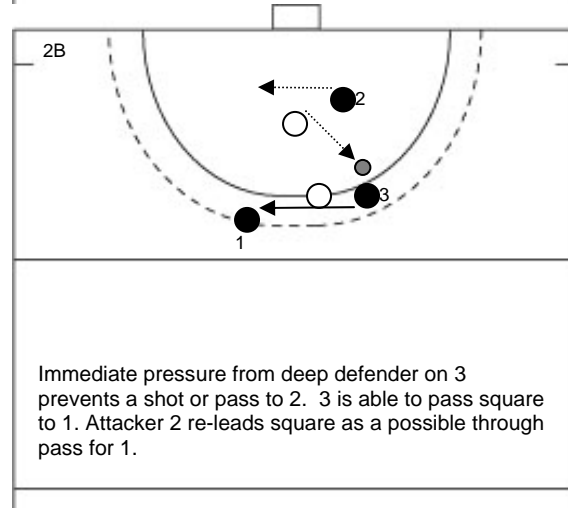
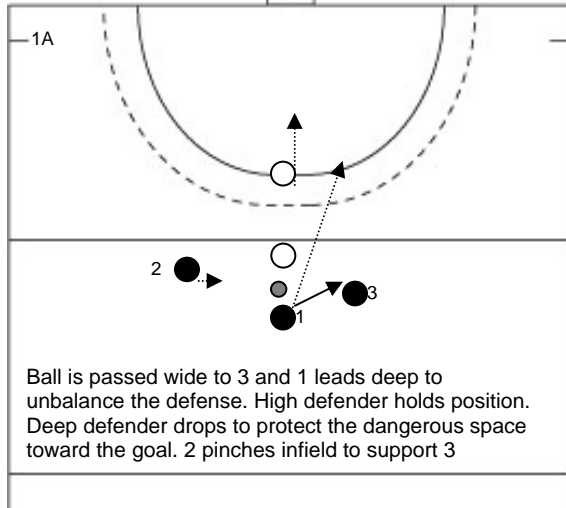
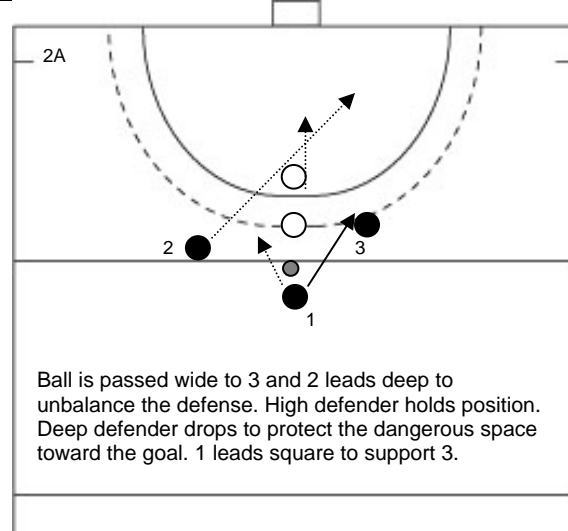
3 vs. 2 - DEFENSE

Use:

- Delay and gain possession on a 3 vs. 2 attack.

Theory:

- The defenders need to stay compact allow the play to come to them
- Play one defender higher than the other and force the ball wide (to your forehand side if possible)
- Deeper defender should be in a position to put immediate pressure on the ball carrier as the ball is received wide (forcing the attackers attention on the ball and preventing a good pass)
- Higher defender should recover to the middle and protect the square pass
- If a shot is given up, make sure that it is from the top of the D and from a bad angle



3 vs. 2 - OFFENSE

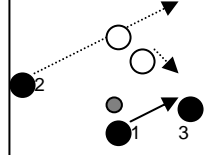
Use:

- Elimination of defenders to advance the attack usually in a fast break situation

Theory:

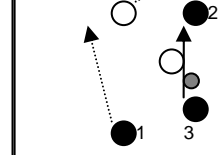
- The 3 vs. 2 usually exists for a limited time in a counter attack situation and so the speed at which the attack is executed is critical for success
- The 3 vs. 2 hinges on two important concepts:
 - Forcing defensive decisions by unbalancing the defense
 - Always having as many options for the ball carrier as possible
- The defense is unbalanced by a combination of one or more of the following:
 - Creating danger in front of the ball (attackers leading deep)
 - interchange
- the ball should be held in the middle as much as possible to create the maximum number of passing possibilities (if the ball is passed wide and a pass deep is not available then the ball carrier should either pass square into the middle or traverse into the middle with the ball to create more options)
- Avoid trying to eliminate with a pass that needs to go through the defenders body or stick to be successful
- Try whenever possible to isolate a defender and create a 2 vs. 1 possibility.
- Use deception with passing and leading to increase success rate
- Do not keep ball in the same channel for too long

1A



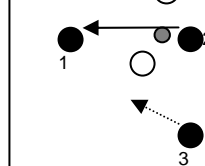
Ball is passed wide to 3 and 2 leads deep to unbalance the defense.

1B



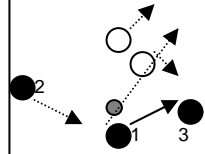
Ball is passed by first defender and second defender moves to compensate. 1 moves up to support.

1C



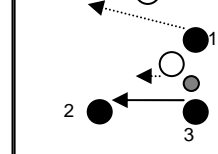
Ball is passed square to 1 who is able to take a shot at net.

2A



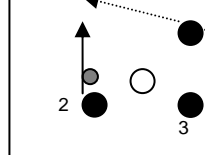
Ball is passed wide to 3 and 1 leads deep to unbalance the defense. 2 leads infield for support

2B



Deep pass to 1 is not on and so 3 passes square to 2. 1 re-leads square to provide a through option for 2.

2C



Attacker 2 makes a through pass to 1.

