

On ultimate; O2: secondary middle, left centre or popper

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This document is about playing secondary 'middle' (vertical), left-central cutter (horizontal), or popper (zone) on offence¹. Let the handlers deal with catching the pull, but as you run downfield try to see what defence structure is being used.

Beating person-match defence with a vertical stack

Figure 1 (left) shows a situation with: a brick called; a forehand force; person-match defence; and your team using a vertical stack formation. As secondary middle, (O2) your role will likely involve cutting AFTER the primary middle (O1)². However, in Figure 1 (left) O6 is shown potentially throwing a break throw to D, which you (O2), or any of the other cutters (O1, O3, O4) might be able to run onto after it is thrown. All the defenders (D8-D11) are on the wrong side, so you are all open to that space. However, you will likely need to stay still before it is thrown as if you cut towards D PRIOR TO THE DISC BEING THROWN then there is likely to be a pick³.

There are many different ways that the play might develop. Figure 1 (right) shows the disc having been thrown to O1 on the back-under cut to the open side. O4 is indicated clearing or cutting deep on the break side. The stack is shown having moved further downfield, in response to the pass to O1 with you, having waited for O1 to cut first, still in the stack together with O3. This leaves you available to make cuts to A-D, NOW THAT O1 HAS THE DISC.

It is this timing that is important when playing in a secondary cutter position. O2 is called secondary middle, because you cut second, not because the position is of secondary importance. Ideally, only (maybe) two of the four cutters (O1-4) will be out of the stack (cutting) at any moment. Otherwise, you will likely get in each others way, and/or run out of cutters in position to cut next. Staying between the dashed horizontal lines may also help when cutting⁴.

Vertical works against other person-match defences. But it might need some adjustment. For example against: (1) RH-backhand-force: mirror the above; (2) last-person-covers-the-deepest-threat you may need to coordinate with O1 to overload D8 (deep) or D9 (under); or against (3) a straight-up force, maybe stay in the stack while the handlers move the disc around until there's an opportunity for a huck without a marker, or if you do cut under go out to the sideline.

¹ Referred to here as position O2.

This is part of a series, available at <https://github.com/James-Reynolds/Ultimate-strategy-and-tactics>

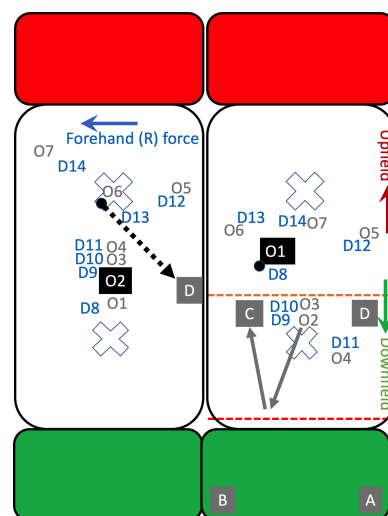


Figure 1: Vertical stack: starting position (left), and development (right)

² Especially as being in the middle of the vertical stack, as shown in Figure 1 (left) it is difficult for you to make a cut without causing a pick. In contrast, Figure 1 (right) shows O1 having cut upfield and received a pass on the open side, which immediately frees you (O2) to cut from the back of the stack, with less chance of a pick occurring.

³ Picks occur when a defender is obstructed from following someone they are marking. So maybe stand still until it's thrown so any pick might not affect the pass itself (meaning that it stands), and D9 only gets to catch up to put the force on earlier.

⁴ The position of the lines vary with the position of the disc and with how far the thrower can or will throw. However, if you go downfield of the dashed red line before the disc is in the air, D9 may be able to get to A or B before the disc, intercepting or preventing deep throws to you or others. Similarly, if you go upfield of the dashed yellow line then D8 may be able to help prevent dump throws from O6 to O5 or O7.

Beating person-match defence with feldrunner

Figure 2 (left) shows a feldrunner formation, with 4 handlers, 2 cutters in the endzone, and you (O1) left isolated in the centre as the focus. O6 can throw to A, B, C or D. If D8 looks at you, stand still and O6 can throw it to your advantage. If D8 looks at O6, cut to A-D. Instead, O6 might reset to O4, O5 or O7, for them to throw to you. With the disc you can throw to cuts from O2-3, or dump and repeat.

Beating person-match defence with a horizontal stack

Basic horizontal stack involves cutting upfield and downfield (black arrows) within your quarter of the field⁵. Figure 2 (right) shows O1 on the left wing. O6 can potentially throw to you at A or D⁶. However, O6 throwing to O2, O3 or O4 may be easier. Hence, you may wish to wait and cut later. If you do get the disc at D a huck to A for O2 or to B for O4 may be effective. Otherwise, get it to the middle of the field with a dump to O5 or O6.

A typical pattern is that D8 (marking you) will try to help D9, D10 and D11 by poaching deep. To beat this you can: trade spots with O5; move to the open side, between D10 and O6; or stay still on the left wing, so O6 can get it to you quickly with a hammer or blade.

Beating zone defence

Vertical stack probably won't work. Instead, your team needs to spread out. Three ways to beat a zone are: (1) over; (2) round; or (3) through. Figure 3 (top left) shows this against a 3-3-1 zone. Figure 3 (top left) shows a throw direct from O6 over to you⁷. Otherwise, O6 might throw over or through (to O2 or O3), or round (to O5 or O7)⁸.

If the defence continues to play zone once the disc gets close to the endzone, you (O1) and the other wing (O4) can GO AND STAND ON THE BACK CORNERS (Figure 3 (bottom left))⁹. Figure 3 (bottom right) shows how the further you are from the back corner the more D8/9 can cover both you AND others,, and the harder it is to throw direct to you. D9 might even be able to get a block on a throw to O5 (dashed blue line). This applies also when not close to the endzone (top right), If you crowd O2 and O3, D8 only has to cover O4, and D9-11 get to cover you (O1), O2, O3 and O5.

Beating clam defence

Clam mixes person-match and zone defence styles¹⁰. Wherever you cut, one or more defenders will likely have you (at least somewhat) covered. As O1, you might coordinate with O2 to overload D8 or D9.

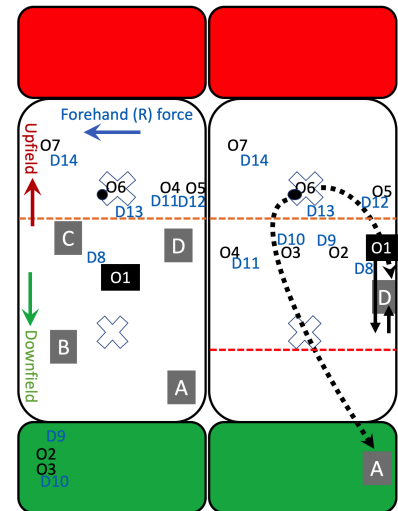


Figure 2: Feldrunner (left) and horizontal (right)

⁵ Other cuts can work, but might need communication, e.g. diamond cuts involve you trading places with O2.

⁶ Black arrows show how a back-under cut opens space for this throw.

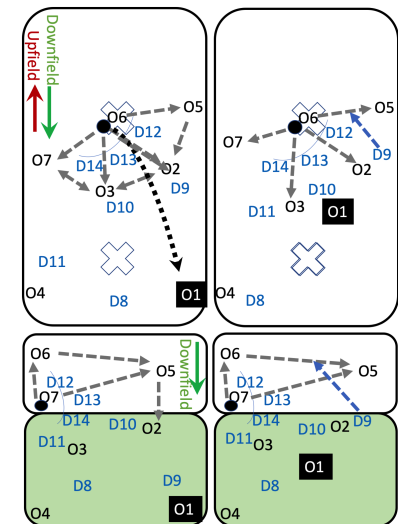


Figure 3: effective formations against 331 zone: general (top left) and close to the endzone (bottom left); and less effective formations (top, bottom right)

⁷ This may be a blade or hammer, to get it to you as quickly as possible. So it may help to stand still and look at O6.

⁸ You, O2, O3 and O5 might then split D9-10 to make ground before the cup (D12-14) catch up. Once they do, dump to O6 so all 7 of your players are involved again.

⁹ The defence will either leave you open, or cover you at the corner (D8 or D9), making more space for O2, O3 and O5-7 at the front of the endzone.

¹⁰ Involves defenders switching so as to cover an area. For example, in Figure ??(left) D8 (the deep-deep) might cover O1 deep, but then switch with D11 (open-side wing) to cover O4's cut deep, while D11 covers the O1 cut to C.