

# 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 offence<sup>1</sup>. 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)<sup>2</sup>. 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 pick<sup>3</sup>.

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 cutting<sup>4</sup>.

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 wide to the

<sup>1</sup> Referred to here as position O2.

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

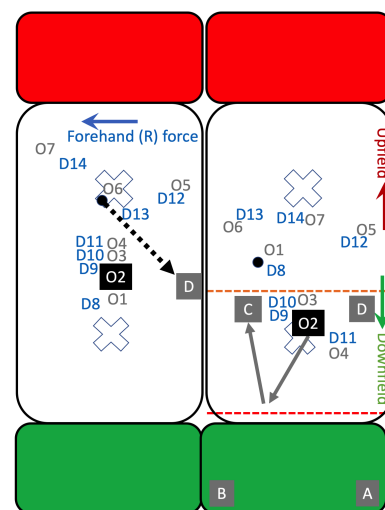


Figure 1: Vertical stack: starting position (left), and development (right)

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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 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.

sideline.

### *Beating person-match defence with feldrunner*

Figure 2 (left) shows a feldrunner formation, with 4 handlers (O1-4), and O1 as the focus. You (O2) and O3 are positioned together in the endzone. The idea of feldrunner is to pass to the isolated focus. They will then either pass to O3 or you, or dump to the handlers and reset.

This formation relies on you and O3 waiting until O1 gets the disc before making a cut. It may be that one of D9 and D10 go to help D8 cover D1. If so, you and O3 might spread out, one on each side line and move a bit closer, so that one of the handlers can hit one of you directly and quickly.

### *Beating person-match defence with a horizontal stack*

Basic horizontal stack involves cutting upfield and downfield (black arrows) within your quarter of the field<sup>5</sup>. Figure 2 (right) shows how O6 can potentially throw to you at A or D<sup>6</sup>.

### *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, with you behind the cup O6 might then be able to throw through the gap between D12 and D13, or over the cup<sup>7</sup>, to get the disc to you. Alternatively, it might go round to O5 and then to you.

An issue to keep in mind is how you and O3 coordinate to split D10. In Figure 3 (top left), D10 is shown as having to try to cover both you and O3, with perhaps some help from D9 and D11. In contrast, Figure 3 (top right) show a position that might occur if you 'crash' the cup<sup>8</sup>. However, this might allow D10 to ignore you and play tighter on O3<sup>9</sup>. An exception, however, is shown in Figure 3 (bottom right), where close to the endzone moving in towards the cup might suck D10 in as well, opening more space for O5 in the front corner. Alternatively, Figure 3 (bottom left), indicates how spreading might split D10, so that if it gets to O5 they can then score to either O2 or O3.

### *Beating clam defence*

Clam mixes person-match and zone defence styles<sup>10</sup>. Whereever you cut, one or more defenders will likely have you (at least somewhat) covered. As O2, you might coordinate with O1 to overload D8 or D9.

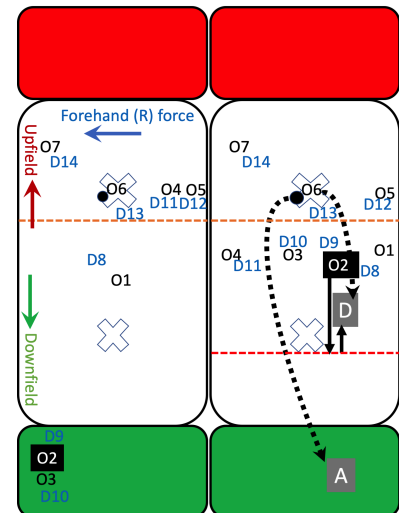


Figure 2: Feldrunner (left) and horizontal (right)

<sup>5</sup> Other cuts can work, but might need communication, e.g. diamond cuts involve you trading places with O1 or O3.

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

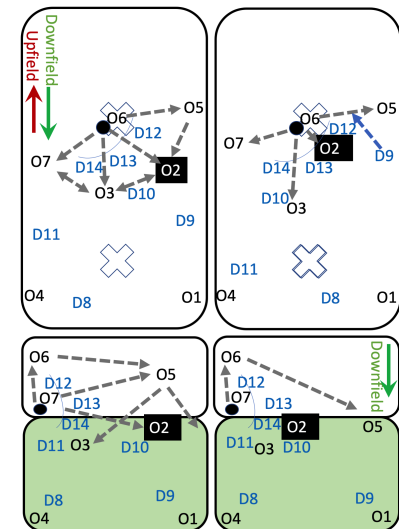


Figure 3: formations against 3-3-1 zone  
<sup>7</sup> short hammer, scoober.

<sup>8</sup> This style of play might be used to disrupt the cup's formation, and reset the stall count with a short pass. I'm not a huge fan, unless its one of the handlers crashing from behind.

<sup>9</sup> It might also allow D9 to threaten to intercept a pass to O5 (blue arrow), and have further, cascading, impacts. In general, by crashing the cup from downfield it becomes 3 (O1, O3 and O4) versus 4 (D8-11) downfield of the cup, which is not ideal.

<sup>10</sup> Involves defenders switching so as to cover an area. For example, in Figure 1(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.