

On ultimate; O1: primary middle, focus or left wing

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This is a two-pager on being primary middle, the focus, or left wing on offence. It is referred to here as position O1¹.

Beating person-match defence with a vertical stack

Figure 1 (left) shows a situation with your team: using a vertical stack formation; having called a brick; and facing a forehand force with person-match defence². O6 is shown potentially throwing you (O1):

1. A break-side huck to A. This throw is probably difficult. However, you as O1 can just stand still till O6 throws it, then run and catch it. D8 will be on the wrong side of you and so probably not be able to get to the disc first.
2. An open-side huck to B. This is viable if: D8 is closer to the disc than you; you are faster than D8; or D8 does not cover an initial cut downfield (black arrow).
3. A throw to C. The solid black arrows indicate a cut you might do; initially going deep, but then coming back-under on the open side.
4. A break to D. You can stand still and run onto this one once it is thrown as D8 is already on the wrong side to intercept this throw.

When cutting, staying between the dashed horizontal lines may help³. If you go downfield of the dashed red line before the disc is in the air, D8 (your marker) may be able to get to A or B before the disc, intercepting or preventing any deep throws⁴. Similarly, if you go upfield of the dashed yellow line then D8 might help prevent dumps.

Figure 1 (right) shows the disc having been thrown to you on the back-under cut towards C. In order of desirability, your options may include: (1) off-load to O6, putting them in power position⁵; (2) throwing to A' to hit O2 or O4; (3) throwing to B' or C' for O2; (4) break force throw to centre the disc to O3 or O5; (5) dump to O7, then head back to the stack, or make another cut.

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.

¹ This is part of a series, available at <https://github.com/James-Reynolds/Ultimate-strategy-and-tactics>.

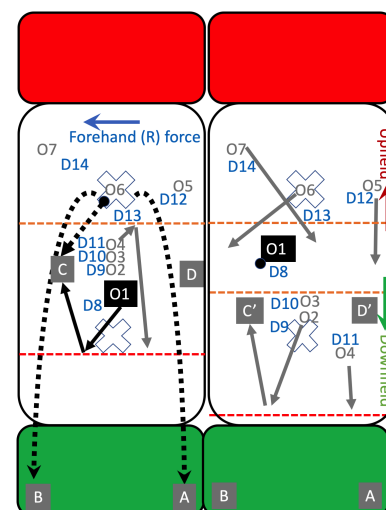


Figure 1: Vertical stack: starting position (left), and development (right)

² Vertical works against other person-match defences, but might need adjustment e.g. (1) RH-backhand-force: mirror everything; (2) straight up force, wait while handlers move it about until they can huck to you (going to A or B); (3) last-person-covers-deep, coordinate with O2 to overload D8 (deep) or D9 (under); etc.

³ The position of the lines vary with the position of the disc and with how far the thrower can or will throw.

⁴ To you, or anyone else. By going too far from the disc you effectively allow your marker to poach deep.

⁵ Because D13 will likely be trailing them and O6 will be looking downfield as they catch the disc, they can then pretty much throw to anywhere.

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

Figure 2 (right) shows you (O1) on the left wing. This formation typically involves cutting upfield and downfield (black arrows) within your quarter of the field⁶. O6 can potentially throw to you at A or D⁷. 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, with a throw direct from O6 OVER to you⁸. Otherwise, O6 might throw over or through (to O2 or O3), or round (to O5 or O7)⁹.

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))¹⁰. 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 forward, D8 only has to cover O4, and D9-11 can push upfield.

Beating clam defence

Clam mixes person-match and zone defence styles, with defenders switching frequently. You might coordinate with others to overload a defender, or spread out to give the handlers space and targets deep.

...AND FINALLY this is just a two pager; there are many more offensive strategies and tactics¹¹ Remember, defence wins games, offence loses them¹² and after a turnover it's better to get it back with another turnover, than receiving another pull!

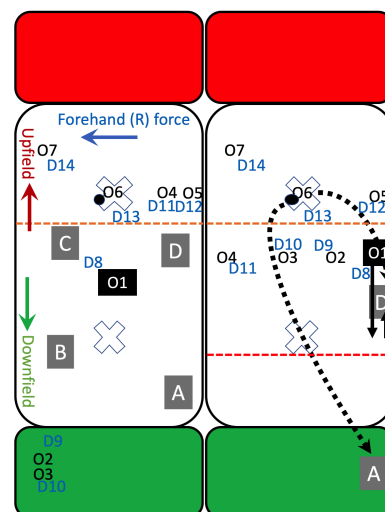


Figure 2: Feld (left) and ho-ro (right)

⁶ Other cuts can work, but might need communication, e.g. diamond cuts involve you trading places with O2.

⁷ Black arrows show how a back-under cut opens space for this throw.

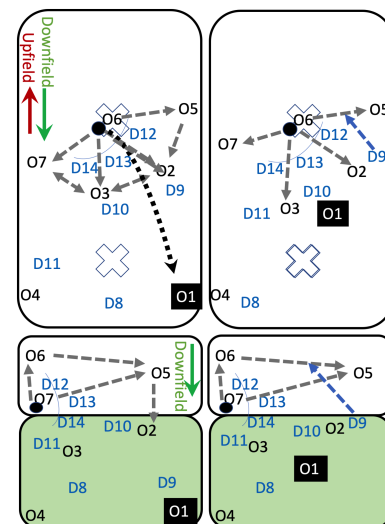


Figure 3: effective formations against 331 zone: general (top left) and close to the endzone (bottom left); and less effective formations (top, bottom right)

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ Try a side stack. Similar to vertical, but with your stack hard up against one of the sidelines. This reduces the risk of picks, changes cutting angles, and provides space to make a cut going across the field, only to turn back and receive a disc thrown behind you.

¹² Least turnovers usually wins.