

On ultimate; O₃: secondary long, right-middle or popper

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This is a two-pager discussing being the secondary long, right-middle or popper on offence, referred to here as position O₃¹.

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. You (O₃) are in the middle of the stack. O₆ is shown potentially throwing a break to D (dashed black arrow). You (O₃) or any of the other cutters (O₁, O₂, O₄) might run onto this pass after it is thrown³.

Otherwise, as secondary long, (O₃) your role will likely involve cutting AFTER the secondary middle, O₂⁴. The play might develop in lots of different ways, but Figure 1 (right) shows one outcome, with the disc having gone to O₁⁵. This leaves you available at the front of the stack. You might: (1) stand still until O₁ (or someone else) throws it to D'⁶; (2) cut to A; or wait till O₂ cuts to C, then cut to (3) A, (4) B, or back-under (dashed grey arrow) to (5) C'.

O₃ is called secondary long, because you provide the second long cut (after O₄ makes the first one), not because the position is of secondary importance, or the easiest. Rather, Figure 1 (right) perhaps indicates how the role of secondary long is complex. It requires you to initially wait for, and then pick, a useful time to cut⁷. At the same time you will probably set the position of the stack itself, which moves downfield as the disc does, as most others will be cutting⁸.

When cutting, staying between the dashed horizontal lines may help. 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 (your marker) may be able get to A or B before the disc, intercepting or preventing any deep throws. Similarly, if you go upfield of the dashed yellow line then D₉ may be able to help prevent dumps.

If you do get the disc, look to immediately MAKE GROUND OR THROW A GOAL to O₁, O₃ or O₄. However, you are a cutter, so the most important things to do are: to make sure your team retains possession of the disc; and that you cut some more. Hence, if no pass downfield is immediately available, it is probably time to engage one of O₅-7, throw a dump, and get downfield again (and into the stack).

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

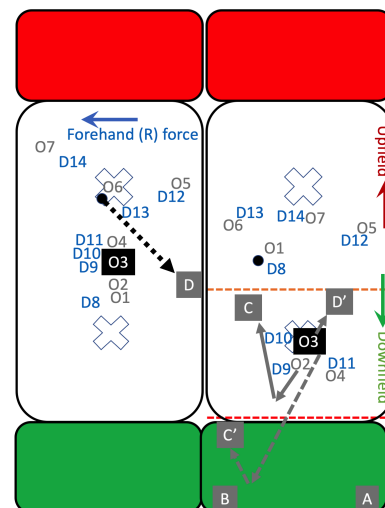


Figure 1: Vertical stack: starting position (left), and development (right)

² Vertical works against other person-match defences, but might need adjustment e.g. (1) backhand force, mirror everything; (2) straight up force, maybe give the handlers time to move the disc around, and go out to the sidelines when you do cut; etc.

³ Note, cutting to D before the throw risks causing a pick, as D₁₀ might be obstructed by O₄ or O₂. However, if you do not move until the disc is in the air the pass may stand, with any pick just allowing D₁₀ to catch up to put the force on a bit earlier.

⁴ Starting in the middle of the vertical stack, as shown in Figure 1 (left), it is difficult for you to make an initial cut without causing a pick.

⁵ O₁ has cut under on the open side. O₄ is indicated clearing back to the stack or cutting deep on the break side. The stack is shown having moved further downfield.

⁶ This throw breaks the force, so it is likely that D₁₀ will be on the wrong side of you to make an interception.

⁷ Because you start in the middle of the stack (Figure 1 (left)) if you cut first it is likely you will cause a pick.

⁸ Too many cuts at once means getting in each others' way, and/or running out of people to cut next.

Beating person-match defence with feldrunner

Figure 2 (left) shows a feldrunner formation, with 4 handlers (O4-7), and O1 as the focus. You (O3) and O2 are in the endzone. The idea of feldrunner is to pass to the isolated focus (O1). They will then either pass to O2 or you, or dump to the handlers and reset. This formation relies on you and O2 waiting until O1 gets the disc before cutting.

It may be that one of D9 and D10 go to help D8 cover D1. If so, you and O2 might spread out, one on each side line, and move a bit closer, so as to receive a pass from the handlers directly.

Beating person-match defence with a horizontal stack

Horizontal stack typically involves cutting upfield and downfield (black arrows) within your quarter of the field⁹ as shown in Figure 2(right). O6 can potentially throw to you in the endzone or at C¹⁰.

Beating zone defence

Vertical stack probably won't work against zone. Instead, your team might do better spreading out, as shown in Figure 3. Three ways to beat a zone are: (1) over; (2) round; or (3) through. Figure 3 (top left) shows this with you behind the cup, potentially receiving a pass THROUGH between D13 and D14, or OVER the cup¹¹. Alternatively, it might go ROUND to O7 then FURTHER ROUND to you.

Also to consider is how you coordinate with O2 to split D10. Figure 3 (top left), shows D10 having to cover both you and O2, maybe with help from D9 and D11. In contrast, Figure 3 (top right) shows a position that might occur if you 'crash' the cup¹², which allows D10 to ignore you and play tighter on O2¹³. Figure 3hat (bottom left and right) show two possible positions close to the endzone. Again, as O3 your role might be to try and work with O2, O5 and O7 such that D10 and D11 are unable to cover you all.

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 and give the handlers space and targets deep.

...AND FINALLY this is just a two pager; there are many more offensive strategies and tactics¹⁴ Remember, defence wins games, offence loses them¹⁵; and it's better to get it back with another turnover¹⁶ than receiving another pull!

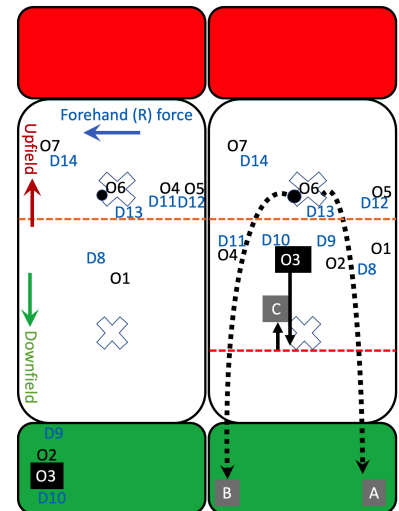


Figure 2: Feld (left) & ho-ro (right)

⁹ Other cuts can work, but might need communication, e.g. diamond cuts involve trading places with O1 or O3.

¹⁰ Black arrows show how a back-under cut opens space for the throw to C.

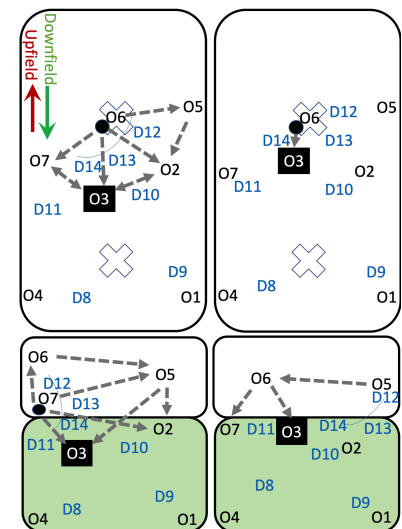


Figure 3: formations against 331 zone

¹¹ Short hammer, scoober.

¹² Crashing might disrupt the cup's formation and allow a stall reset. But, I'm not a huge fan, unless it's a handlers crashing from behind, because you lose a player downfield

¹³ It might also allow D11 to threaten to intercept a pass to O7, and the rest of the cup (D12-13) to do more to block throws to O2 or O5. In general, crashing the cup changes the downfield situation to 3 (O1, O2 and O4) versus 4 (D8-11), which is not ideal.

¹⁴ Try no formation, just a string: O1-throws-to-O2-who-throws-to-O3-etc. Bonus points for getting all the way to O7 before scoring!

¹⁵ Because the team with the least turnovers usually wins.

¹⁶ i.e. if you offence fails, then its time to play defence, even though you're the O team :)