

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

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This document is about playing primary 'middle', the focus, or left wing on offence, referred to here as position O1¹. You are starting the point on offence. 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 how everyone might setup if there is: a brick called; a forehand force; person-match defence; and your team has decided to use a vertical stack formation. Restricting your cutting to between the dashed horizontal lines can help².

In Figure 1 (left) O6 is shown potentially throwing you (O1) either:

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. Figure 1 indicates how D8 will be on the wrong side of you and so probably 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 throw to D. Any of the cutters (O1-4) can go and catch this, as all the defenders (D8-D11) are on the wrong side. However, if anyone except O4 cuts towards D PRIOR TO THE DISC BEING THROWN then there is likely to be a pick³.

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 position; (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.

Vertical works against other person-match defences. But it might need some adjustment. For example: against (1) RH-backhand-force: mirror the above; against (2) person-match-straight-up-force: your defender (D8) may just cover you under, so maybe stand at the back of the stack until one of the handlers have a chance to throw (deep) without a marker.

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

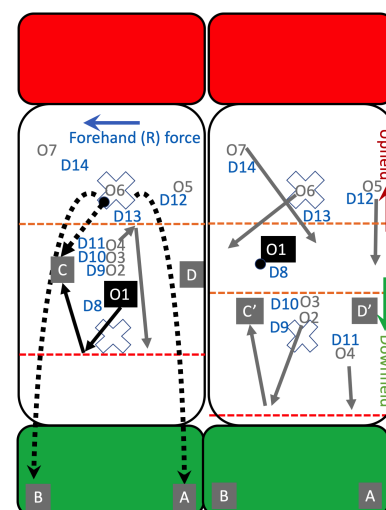


Figure 1: Vertical stack: starting position (left), and development (right)

² Position of the dashed red line might vary with how far O6 can or will throw. If you go downfield of the dashed red line before the disc is in the air, D8 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. Hence, if you cut to C but the disc is not thrown to you perhaps cut deep to clear the area, then return to the stack and make space for O2-O4

³ Picks are when a defender cannot follow someone they are marking. However, once the disc is thrown, everyone can move anywhere to try and catch it. So, maybe stand still until it's thrown to avoid a pick

Beating person-match defence with feldrunner

Figure 2 (left) shows a feldrunner formation, with 4 handlers and 2 cutters in a stack in the endzone. It involves leaving you (O1) isolated in the centre as the focus. O6 can throw to A, B, C or D. If D8 looks at you, let O6 throw it first. If D8 is looking at O6, make a cut. It might get dumped but then it just resets with one of O4, O5 or O7, trying to throw to you. Once you get the disc either throw a goal to a cut from O2-3, or dump to one of O4-7 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 field⁴. Figure 2 (right) shows O1 on the left wing. O6 can potentially throw to you at A or D⁵. 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. As O1 (left wing), you are mostly relevant to (1) OVER, in the gap between D8 and D9. Figure 3 (top left) shows a throw direct from O6 to you⁶. Otherwise, O6 might throw over or through (to O2 or O3), or round (to O5 or O7)⁷. 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))⁸.

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, because you are all so close together.

Beating clam defense

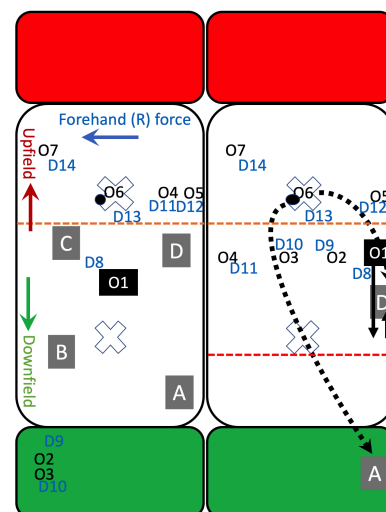


Figure 2: Feldrunner (left) and horizontal (right)

⁴ Other cuts can work, but might need communication, e.g. diamond cuts involve you trading places with O2.

⁵ Black arrows show how a back-under cut opens space for this throw.

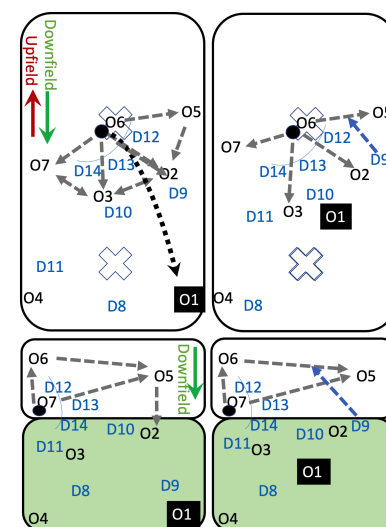


Figure 3: effective formations against 331 zone: general (top left) and close to the endzone (bottom left); and less effective formations (top, bottom right)

⁶ Blade or hammer to get it to you as quickly as possible, so may help to stand still and look at O6.

⁷ You, O5, O2, and O3 might then seek to split D10 and D9, making ground before the cup (D12-14) catch up. However, once the cup arrives, it is best to dump to O6, so you have your 7th player downfield.

⁸ The defence will then have to either leave you open (a direct throw (1) over to you then scores) or cover you at the corner (D8 or D9), making more space for O2, O3, O5, O6 and O7 to score at the front of the endzone.