

On ultimate; O2: secondary middle or popper

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This is a two-pager on being secondary middle/popper on offence¹.

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 a break throw to D (dashed black arrow). You (O2) or any of the other cutters (O1, O3, O4) might run onto this pass after it is thrown³.

Otherwise, as secondary middle, (O2) your role will likely involve cutting AFTER the primary middle (O1)⁴. The play might develop in lots of different ways, but Figure 1 (right) shows one outcome, with the disc going to O1⁵. This leaves you available at the back of the stack. You might: (1) stand still until O1 (or someone else) throws it to A or D⁶; (2) cut to B, or (3) cut back under to C (grey arrows).

O2 is called secondary middle, because you cut second, not because the position is of secondary importance. Hence, playing O2 is about waiting for a good time to cut, and otherwise staying in the stack so that the defence always has to worry you receiving a throw to A. Too many cuts at once means you may get in each others way, and/or run out of people in a good position to cut next.

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 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).

Beating person-match defence with feldrunner

Figure 2 (left) shows a feldrunner formation, with 4 handlers (O4-7), and O1 as the focus. You (O2) and O3 are in the endzone.

¹ Referred to here as position O2.

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

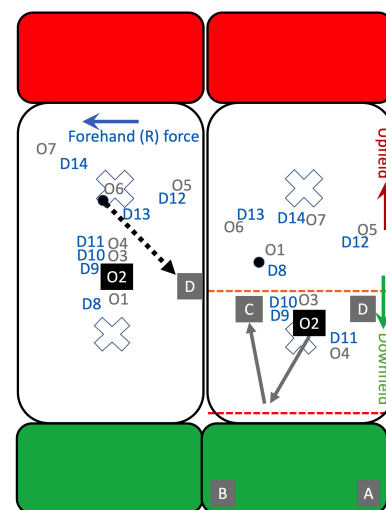


Figure 1: Vertical stack: starting position (left), and development (right)

² Vertical works against other person-match defences, but might need adjustment e.g. (1) backhand force, mirror everything; (2) straight up force, wait while handlers move it about until they can huck to you or O1; (3) last-person-covers-deep, coordinate with O1 to overload D8 (deep) or D9 (under); etc.

³ Note, cutting to D before the throw risks causing a pick, as D9 might be obstructed by O1 or O3. However, if you do not move until the disc is in the air the pass may stand, with any pick just allowing D9 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. 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.

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

⁶ These throws break the force, so it is likely that D9 will be on the wrong side of you to make an interception.

The idea of feldrunner is to pass to the isolated focus (O₁). 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 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 field⁷ as shown in Figure 2(right). O6 can potentially throw to you at A or D⁸.

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** the gap between D12 and D13, or **OVER** the cup⁹. Alternatively, it might go **ROUND** with a pass to O5, who then throws to you.

An issue to keep in mind is how you coordinate with O3 to split D10. Figure 3 (top left), shows D10 having to cover both you and O3, with perhaps some help from D9 and D11. In contrast, Figure 3 (top right) shows a position that might occur if you ‘crash’ the cup¹⁰, which allows D10 to ignore you and play tighter on O3¹¹. 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 far front corner. Alternatively, Figure 3 (bottom left), indicates how spreading across the front of the endzone might split D10, so from O5 it can go to either you or O3.

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 tactics¹². Remember, defence wins games, offence loses them¹³ and after a turnover it's better to get it back with another turnover, than receiving another pull!

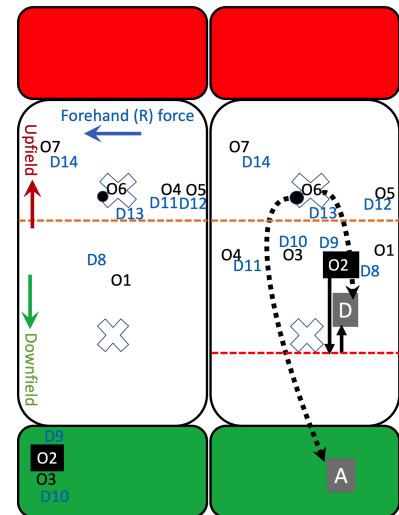


Figure 2: Feld (left) & ho-ro (right)

⁷ Other cuts can work, but might need communication, e.g. diamond cuts involve trading places with O1 or O3.

⁸ Black arrows show how a back-under cut opens space for the throw to D.

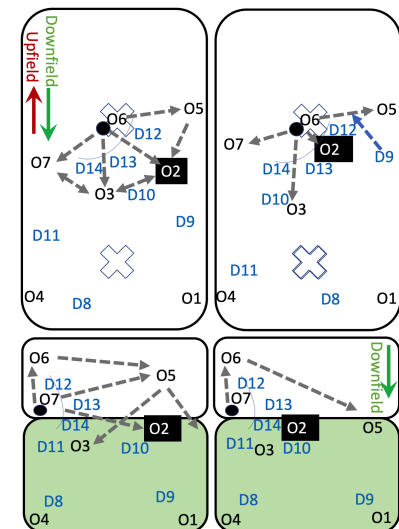


Figure 3: formations against 331 zone

⁹ Short hammer, scoober.

¹⁰ Crashing might disrupt the cup's formation and allow a stall reset I'm not a huge fan, unless its a handlers crashing from behind, because you lose a player downfield

¹¹ 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 the situation becomes 3 (O1, O3 and O4) versus 4 (D8-11) downfield of the cup, which is not ideal.

¹² Try Star Wars offense: No formation, but Vader (O₄), Palpatine (O₃) and (Darth) Jar Jar (O₁) can throw/receive amongst themselves; same for Obi-Wan (O₅), Luke (O₁) and Leia (O₂); Jar Jar and Obi-Wan can throw to each other. Yoda (O₆) throws/receives to/from anyone; No other throws allowed

¹³ Least turnovers usually wins.