

On ultimate; O4: primary long or right-wing

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This is a two-pager about primary long and right wing on offence¹.

Beating person-match defence with a vertical stack

Figure 1 (left) shows your team: using a vertical stack formation; having called a brick; and facing a forehand force with person-match defence². You (O4) are shown at the front of the stack. D11 is likely to set up, as shown, to defend the open side. O6 might therefore be able to throw a break-force you going to D3. If you do not receive the disc at D, you might then cut downfield on the break side of the field, heading towards A⁴.

The third, solid black arrow shown in Figure 1 (left) indicates you returning to the rear of the stack, or you might continue and cut to C. However, the dashed, red, horizontal line indicates the limit of how far you would go downfield⁵. Figure 1 (top-right) shows what might happen if you go downfield of the dashed red line prior to the disc being thrown. Because the disc travels slowly through the air, D11 will no longer have to stay as close to you to prevent or intercept a throw (to you and/or A) D11 is therefore able to play further upfield so as to cover you if you cut back towards the disc. They might also poach, so as to potentially intercept or prevent downfield throws to O1-3⁶.

Figure 1 (bottom-right) provides an example of a similar situation, but where the disc has moved in the meantime to O1, who cut to C. The dashed, red, horizontal line is shown further downfield in Figure 1 (bottom-right), reflecting that if O1 throws the disc to A it will arrive more quickly than before, when O6 had it further upfield. Hence, D11 will likely have to play tighter defence on you (O4), meaning that O2 and O3 will be able to cut deep to B.

As primary long, your role is typically to provide a target for a scoring throw into the endzone, or otherwise gain a lot of territory. If you do get the disc, you might be able to immediately pass to one of the other cutters (O1-3). However, you are also cutter, so the most important things to do are: to make sure your team retains possession of the disc. Hence, if no (safe) pass downfield is immediately available, it is probably time to engage one of the handlers (O5-7), throw a dump, and get downfield again to do some more cutting. The handlers can take care of the throwing, but your team likely needs you to be a target, which the handlers are likely too far upfield to provide.

¹ Referred to here as position O4.
This is part of a series, available at
<https://github.com/James-Reynolds/Ultimate-strategy-and-tactics>

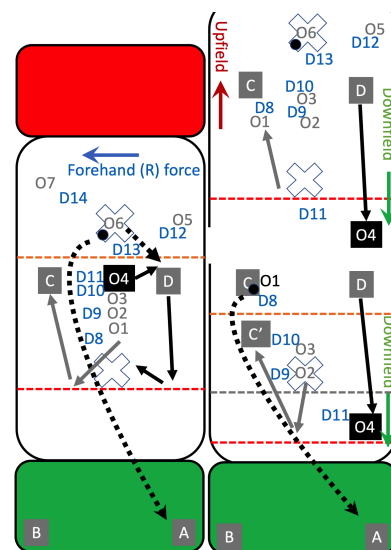


Figure 1: Vertical stack: starting position (left), D11 poaching deep (top-right) and disc moved to C means D11 covers O4 (bottom-right)

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 You may be able to stand still, simply wait for O6 to throw, and then run onto it at D.

⁴ Watch out that you do not cause a pick between D11, D10 and O3.

⁵ The position of this line varies with movement of the disc and the distance that the person with the disc can (or is likely to) throw. The dashed, yellow line, similarly indicates approximately the limit of how far you would go upfield. Any further and you are crowding the handlers, and your defender might be able to interfere with the dump

⁶ Note how Figure 1 (top-right) shows D8-10 having changed their positioning to cover O1-3 almost exclusively upfield, preventing the under cut. This is possible because you (O4) are so deep, that D8-10 may be able to rely on D11 intercepting or preventing any deep throws to their direct opponents.

Beating person-match defence with feldrunner

Figure 2 (left) shows a feldrunner formation, with 4 handlers (O4-7), and O1 as the focus. You (O4) 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 field⁷ as shown in Figure 2(right). O6 can potentially throw to you in the endzone or at C⁸.

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 cup⁹. 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 cup¹⁰, which allows D10 to ignore you and play tighter on O2¹¹. Figure 3hat (bottom left and right) show two possible positions close to the endzone. Again, as O4 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 tactics¹² Remember, defence wins games, offence loses them¹³; and it's better to get it back with another turnover¹⁴ than receiving another pull!

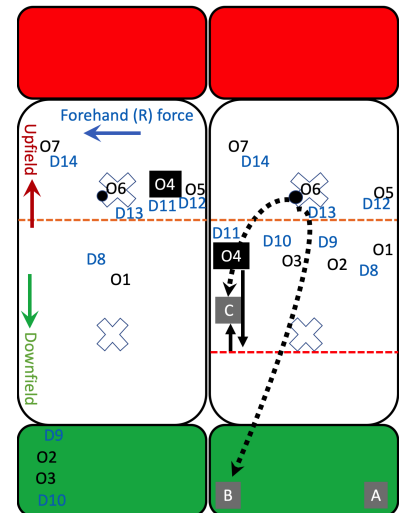


Figure 2: Feld (left) & ho-ro (right)

⁷ Other cuts can work, but might need communication, e.g. diamond cuts involve trading places with O1 or O4.

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

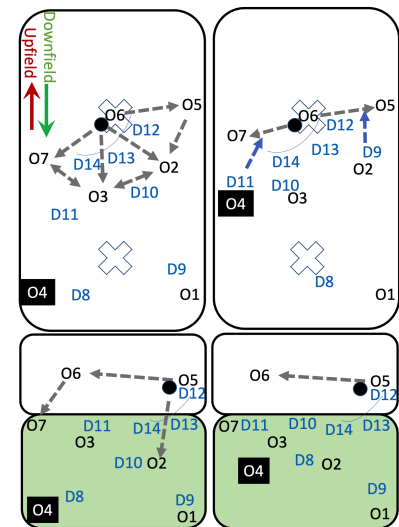


Figure 3: formations against 331 zone

⁹ Short hammer, scoober.

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

¹¹ 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.

¹² Try no formation, just a string: O1-throws-to-O2-who-throws-to-O4-etc. Bonus points for getting all the way to O7 before scoring!

¹³ Because the team with the least turnovers usually wins.

¹⁴ i.e. if you offence fails, then its time to play defence, even though you're the O team :)