

Developing Youth Team Defense

John Stevenson
NH Lacrosse Foundation



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Sound Familiar?

- Lunging
- Overplaying
- Ball watching
- Stick 'first'
- The 'machete'
- 'Covered like glue' - My guy didn't score
- Poor (No) Communication



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Developing Team Defense

- "I've **GOT BALL**"
- **PROTECT THIS 'HOUSE', 'HOLE', 'PAINT'**
- Who's **'HOT'**
- **COMMUNICATION**



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Where do we start?

Playing the Ball



Off Ball Position



Playing the Crease



Help/Sliding



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Philosophy

Good lacrosse vs. good results



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5 Keys to Good Defense

- Play defense with your **feet and head** vs. stick and shoulders
- Play from the **'inside-out'** (protect the paint/extend and recover)
- Attack **bottom hand** of the ball carrier when checking
- Defensive positioning and responsibilities are based on player's **relationship to the ball.**
- Players must **communicate**



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Playing the Ball Carrier

*Good Individual Defense =
FOOTWORK, BODY POSITION & LEVERAGE*

Then we need to teach correct technique
for:

Stance/Footwork, Approach, Holds



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Defensive Stance/Footwork

- Breakdown drill (Wave Drill)
- Alley Drills
- Alley Shadow Drills
 - Also used in progression to practice holds
- Use Restraining box for footwork & conditioning



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Approach

- 1-Man Approach
- Approach & Recover
- 2-Man Approach & Drive



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Approach

- Joystick
- Lob & Dodge from wing & top



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Holds (& checks)

Holds are used to direct a ball carrier where you want him to go

- into help
- into 'safe zones'

Checks are used to disrupt ball carriers rhythm and timing and cause bad passes

- Poke
- Lift



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Holds (& checks)

DRILLS

- Step Into It Drill
 - Top hand punch, bottom hand punch
 - Top Hand hold, Cross Forearm Hold
- "Spot" Drill, or "Footrace" drills – progress to 'Jam' Drill (from behind and up top)
- Poke & Drop (dev progression from poke/drop to approach-poke-drop-run-hold aka run arc)
- 1v1 (controlled)
 - Alley Shadow Drills (add hold call)
 - Shadow 1v1 drill from all over protecting 'top side' & concentrate on approach footwork, posture, holds while shadowing offensive player
 - Run the Arc (footrace), Funnel drill
- King of the Crease – hold attacker out of 'box' (also for slide practice)
- Poke & Lift
- Chop & Drive (from behind only vs change of direction dodge)



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Holds & Checks

- Step Into It
- Spot Drill (Feet First)
- Jam Drill



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Holds & Checks

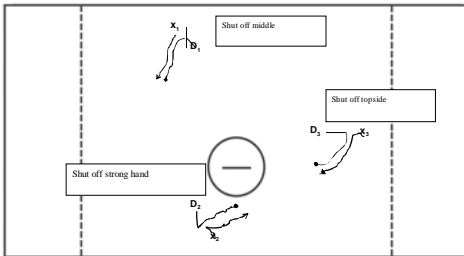
- Run the Arc (Footrace)
- Funnel Drill
- Poke & Drop



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Holds & Checks controlled 1v1 drills

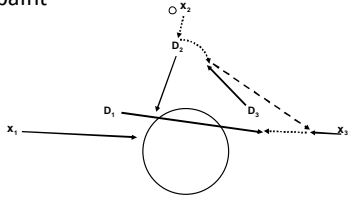
Shadow Drill – combines Run the Arc/Funnel, Approach & Hold Techniques



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Holds (& Sliding)

- King of the Crease – keep ball carrier out of the 'paint'



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Off Ball Play

Defensive Role is based on your relationship to the ball

- Playing the ball
- 1-Pass away
- 2-Pass away
- Backside



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Off Ball Play

- 1-Pass Away
- Ball-Back Box drill
- Extend & Recover
 - 2v2

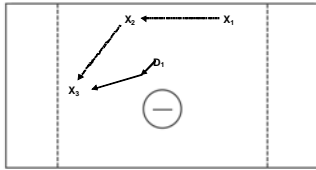


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Off-Ball Play 2-Pass Away

Drill Diagram:

2-Pass Defender



*Also use Extend/Recover 4v4 for 2-Pass away technique

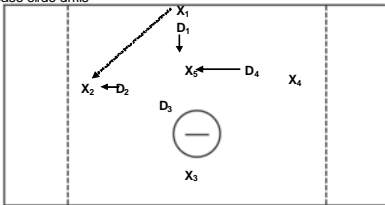


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Off-Ball Play

Backside Coverage

•Defend the Crease – also use as a progression to crease slide drills



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Off Ball Play

2v2, 3v3

- Off-ball D drop to 'level of ball' & use 70/30 rule – 70% man/30% ball
- Defending on-ball picks
- Double Teams



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Sliding

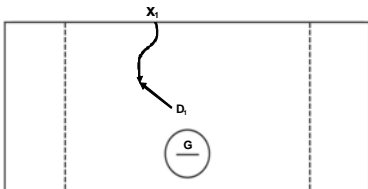
- Hitman - slide technique slider meet dodger at 10-12yds
- Slide & Recover (start 2v2 progress to 4v4)
- King of the Crease
- Thud Slide
- Forced Slide
- Out of Dodge (5v5)
- Cover the crease – 5v4 rotation, passing lanes, backside cover, communicate



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Sliding

Hitman Drill



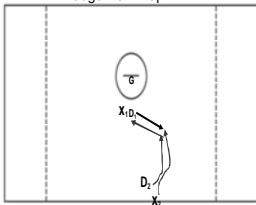
Variation: Add a defender on ball who persists for a double team after he is 'beaten' on dodge



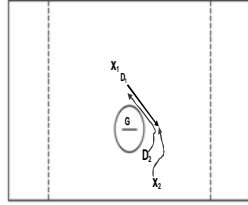
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Sliding

Dodge from Top



Dodge from Behind



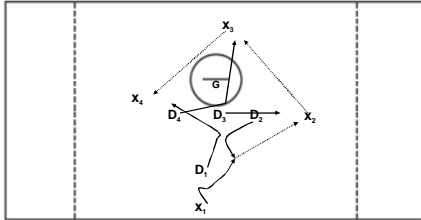
Slide & Recover 2v2



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Sliding

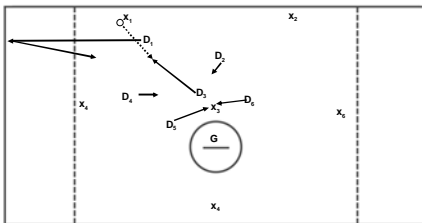
Slide & Recover Progression – 4v4 Adjacent Slide pkg



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Sliding

Out of Dodge Drill –crease slide pkg



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Transition/Unsettled

- Defense sets up based on the # of DEFENDERS available: 2='1', 3='Triangle', 4='box', etc
- PTP principle – Get to the PAINT, slow Offense to take TIME, and force the (outside) PASS
- Drills
 - 3v2 box drills
 - 2v1, 3v2
 - Numbers drill
 - Scramble Drill



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Transition

- 2v1 (get to the paint & stop the ball)
 - 3v2, 4v3, etc (off ball defender always drop to 'level of ball' or to the crease)
 - Numbers Drill
 - Scramble Drill
- * In both numbers and scramble D should sprint to paint, set up based on # defenders, use PTP principles.



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Playing the Crease

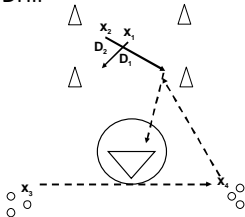
- 1 on
 - 1 in: (posture, communication, body position based on ball position)
 - Cover the crease (5v4 - backside coverage, communication, extend/recover)
- 2 on
 - 2 in (posture, communication, body position, ready for '2' slide)
 - Survival Drill (posture, communication) progression is to slide to dodger (hot) and make '2' slide to near crease



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Playing the Crease

- Survival Drill



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Developing Youth Team Defense Practice Drills

**John Stevenson
NH Lacrosse Foundation
1/16/10**

Breakdown Drill

Objective:

To improve fundamental defensive stance and footwork.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Half-field

Players needed:

All team players can participate in this drill simultaneously.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Spread players out in even lines about five yards apart (no more than six lines) facing the coach – they should not be within arm's reach of any other player. On a coach's whistle, players "breakdown" (yell 'ball', assume a solid defensive stance, and begin quickly running in place with short choppy steps). Players then follow the coach's stick – when he points to his right, they shuffle to their left (without crossing their feet); when he points forward, they backpedal; when he points to his left, they shuffle to their right; when he points his stick backwards, they sprint forwards; when he touches the ground, they breakdown and yell 'ball'.

Drill diagram:

None

Skills practiced:

- Defensive stance
- Defensive footwork

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To make the drill more realistic, challenge players to throw poke checks as they shuffle side-to-side, and to raise their sticks up (as if to knock down a pass) as they move back and forth. To increase the conditioning component, make changes of direction less frequent. To increase the focus on agility and reaction time, make changes of direction more frequent. One variation of the drill would be to have players shuffle backwards on a 45 degree angle, rather than going side-to-side (this works on footwork and drop steps).

Goalie involvement:

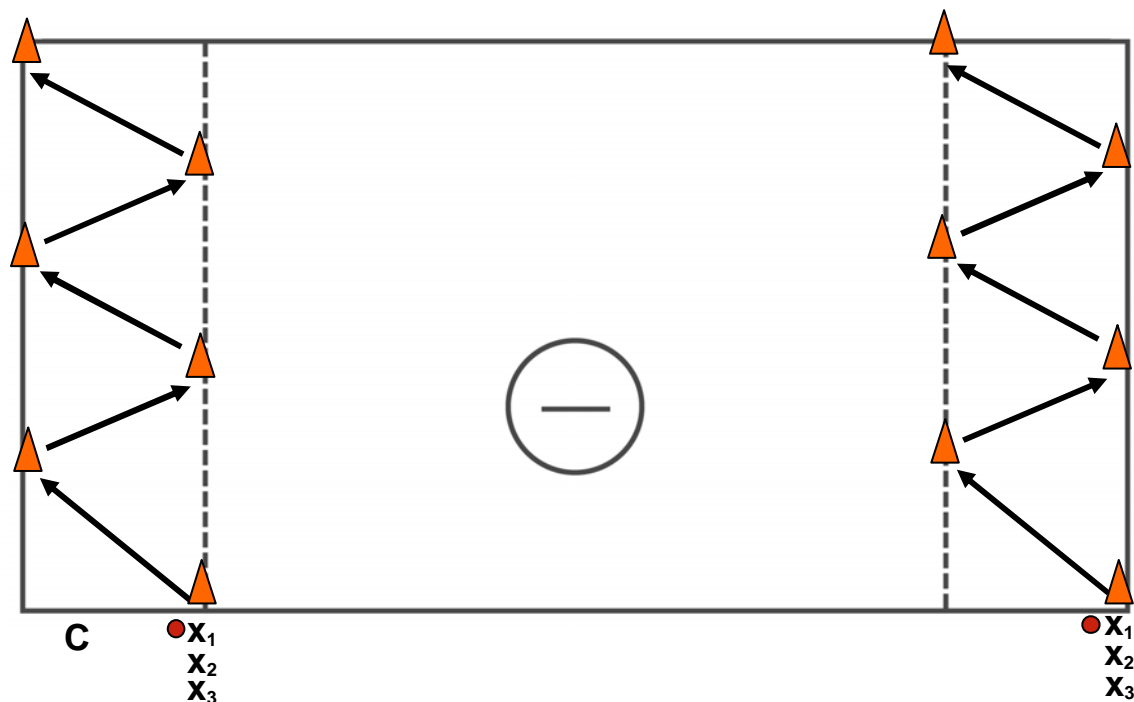
None

Related drills:

Joystick Drill; Lob N' Dodge, all Approach drills

Alley Drills

A variety of defensive footwork drills can be practiced using 'alley drills'. Cones are positioned in alley (area between restraining box and sideline) on 45° angle. Players approach 1st cone facing Coach proceed to shuffle-drop step, shuffle-open step, open step-run hip to hip, etc from cone to cone. These drills are also a great way to incorporate conditioning into your drills.



Skills practiced: Defensive footwork

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...): 1). Add an offensive player and have the defenseman 'shadow' him simulating covering a ball carrier 1v1. 2). Increase speed of offensive player to simulate live play – have defender 'stop' the ball at a specific spot when the coach makes a 'hold' call (use a hold to stop the offensive players movement into the paint).

Goalie involvement:

None. Coach can make 'hold' call for progression.

Related drills:

Ladder & Box footwork drills

Shadow Drill

Objective:

To improve defensive positioning, and cultivate a mentality of forcing the issue defensively.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Quarter-field

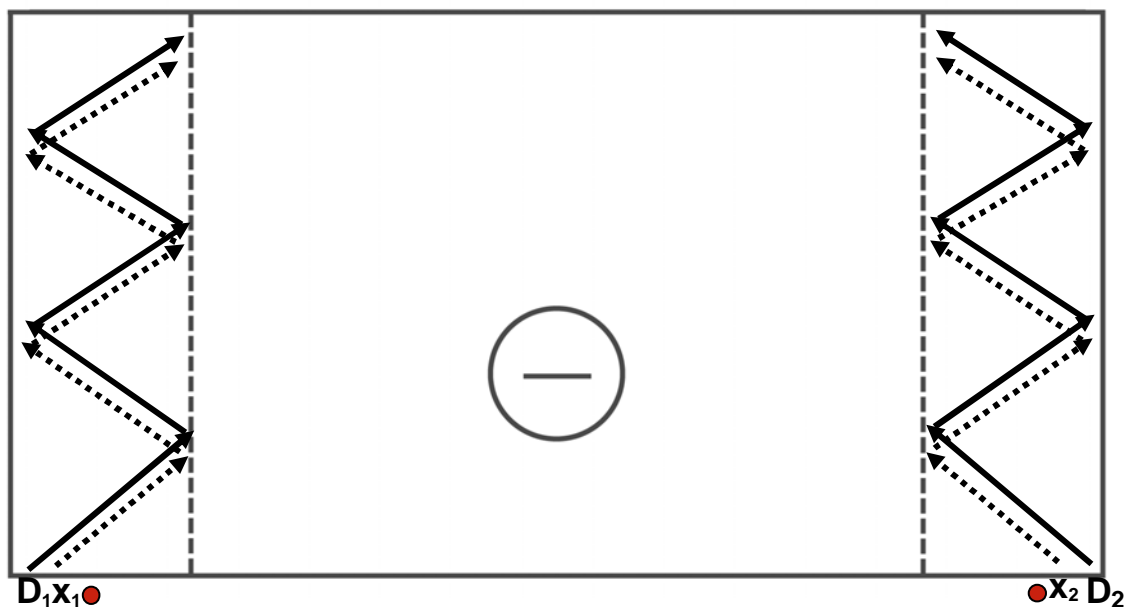
Players needed:

All players can participate in this drill simultaneously, but it is best to have an even number (no more than 8-10) in each group.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Partner players up and start the pairs in the back-right and left corners of the field. One player in each group will be the defender, and one will be the "dummy" offensive player. The dummies must stay between the sideline and the restraining box, and their object is to progress up the field in a zigzag motion to the restraining line. The defenders shadow the dummies, and as the dummies approach the sidelines, the defenders beat them to a spot, wheel their hips around, and force the dummies to turn in the opposite direction. Once every group has gone through, players reverse roles and return to the original starting point.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Defensive positioning and footwork
- Hand and footwork on defensive holds

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To increase the difficulty, challenge defenders turn to go through the drill using no sticks or using just short sticks. To increase the difficulty further, increase the pace of the offensive players (up from 50% effort to 75%, etc.).

Goalie involvement: None

Related drills:

Step into It; Run the Arc

Progression/Variation: Shadow offensive player from top RT/LT (protect middle), side RT/LT (protect topside) and back RT/LT (protect topside).

1-Man Approach Drill

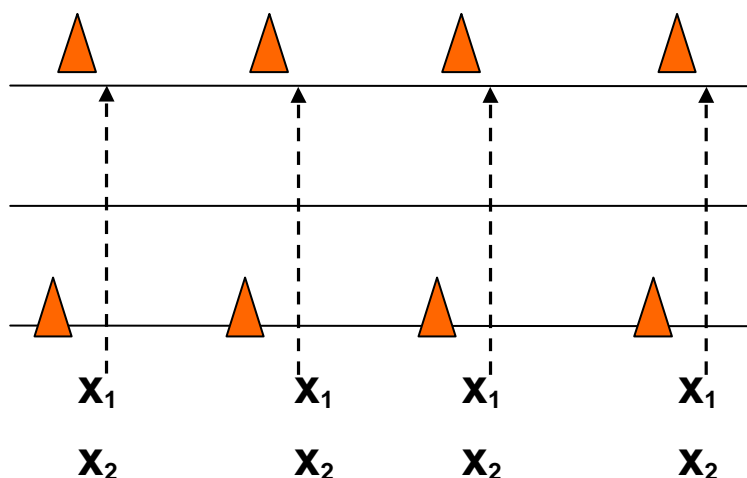
Objective: Establishing 'ready' defensive position when approaching the ball carrier.

Suggested Space needed/Equipment: Cones, or yard line markings (football field lines, etc)

Players needed: All players can perform drill simultaneously. If multiple coaches are available break into smaller groups for higher reps.

Drill Description: Players line up behind 3-4 cones positioned 10 yards apart (or on yard lines 10 yds apart). On coaches command players move toward cone 10 yards away, breakdown into solid 'ready' position (good posture, stick chest high, correct foot leading) and make 'ball' call as they approach partner.

Drill Diagram:



Skills Practiced:

- Footwork for approaching ball carrier
- Correct approach technique – stick and angle of approach

Variations/Progressions: See Approach & Recover, 2-Man Approach & Drive, Joystick, Lob & Check, Lob & Dodge drills.

Approach and Recover Drill

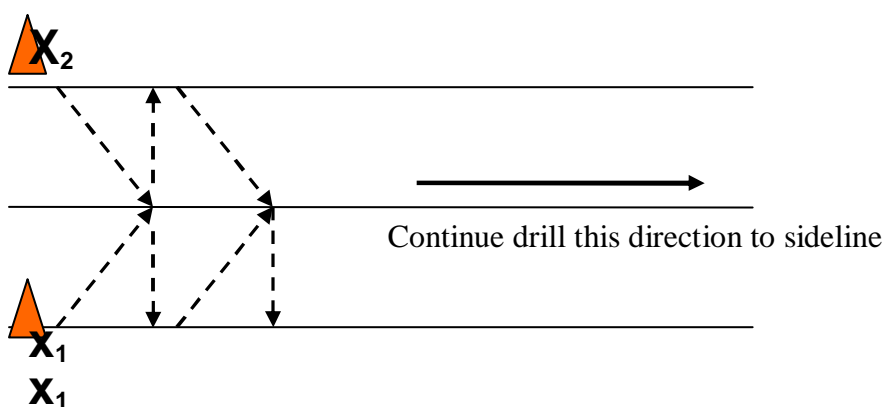
Objective: Progression to 1-man approach drill. Establishing 'ready' defensive position when approaching the ball carrier on an angle, and recovering with drop step & back pedal.

Suggested Space needed/Equipment: Cones, or yard line markings (football field lines, etc)

Players needed: All players can perform drill simultaneously. If multiple coaches are available break into smaller groups for higher reps.

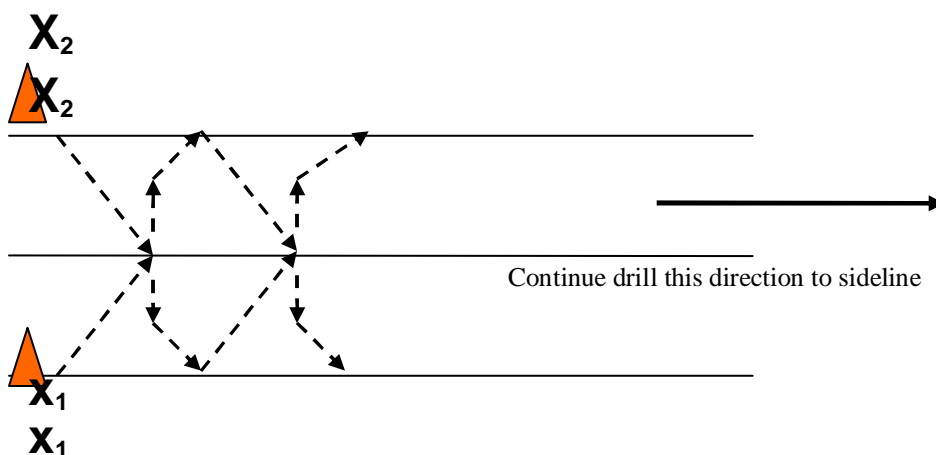
Drill Description: Players line up in pairs facing each other behind 3-4 cones positioned 10 yards apart (or on yard lines 10 yds apart). On coaches command players move on a 45 deg angle to meet each other at 5 yards away, breakdown into solid 'ready' position (good posture, stick up, correct foot leading), drop step & backpedal back to start line and continue down field.

Drill Diagram:



Variation:

Instead of just backpedaling to start line. Back pedal 2-3 yards, push off, open step and run hip to hip on 45deg angle. Continue across width of field.



Skills Practiced:

- Recovery technique – drop step, back pedal
- Correct approach technique – stick and angle of approach

Variations/Progressions: See 1-Man Approach, 2-Man Approach & Drive, Joystick, Lob & Check, Lob & Dodge drills.

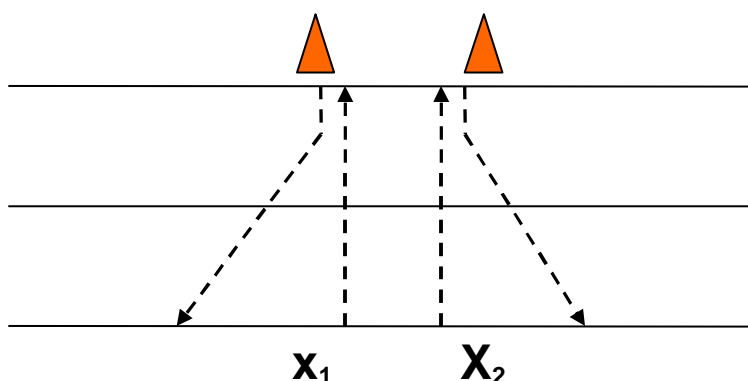
2-Man Approach and Drive Drill

Objective: Progression to 1-man approach drill. Approach ball carrier to cut off middle of field dodge when defending up top and forcing the ball carrier to a specific side when defending behind or on the wing.

Suggested Space needed/Equipment: Cones, or yard line markings (football field lines, etc)

Players needed: All players can perform drill simultaneously. If multiple coaches are available break into smaller groups for higher reps.

Drill Description: Players line up in pairs facing cones positioned 10 yards away. On coaches command players move toward cones, breakdown into solid 'ready' position with **inside foot 'up'** (demonstrating good posture, stick up, correct foot leading), stand ground, drop step & backpedal 2-3 yards, then drive and run hip to hip to start line.



Skills Practiced:

- Footwork for directing/forcing a ball carrier to a specific area of the field. (Shut off middle, force to weak hand, force into slide/help.
- Correct technique for approach, open step and drive/run. Emphasize foot position, stick/hand position and drive/run with ball carrier.

Variations/Progressions: See 1-Man Approach, Approach & Recover, Joystick, Lob & Check, Lob & Dodge, Funnel, Run the Arc drills.

Joystick Drill

Objective:

To practice defensive communication, alertness, and positioning when approaching and retreating from the ball.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Half-field

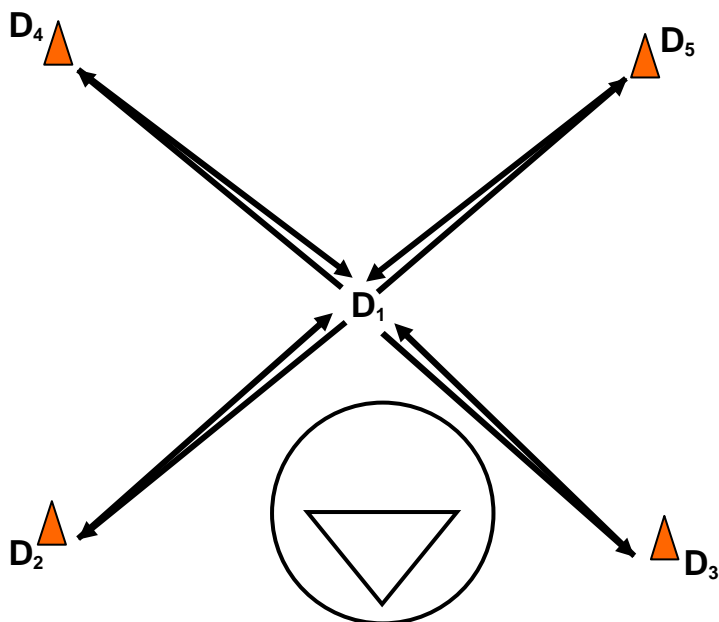
Players needed:

All players can participate in this drill at one time, but it is best to have groups of five.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Set four players in a box shape approximately 12 yards from one another, and set one defender in the middle of the square. The defender starts in a solid defensive position and stance. A coach then calls out *top-right*, *top-left*, *back-left*, or *back-right*. As he does, the defender sprints to the player representing that position, poke checks his stick, and recovers to the starting point. This pattern continues until a player has touched all four corners of the box, and then players rotate positions.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Defensive stance and positioning
- Alertness to defensive communication
- Approaching and retreating from ballcarriers

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To increase the difficulty of the drill, give defenders short sticks to ensure that they focus on proper positioning and footwork rather than relying on their stick. To increase the difficulty of the drill further, the coach could not call positions but instead just pass a ball to one of the four perimeter players, forcing the defender to be aware of and react to the ball instead of vocal commands.

Related drills: Breakdown Drill; Lob N' Dodge

Lob N' Dodge

Objective:

To improve defenders' ability to approach dodging offensive players under control and in proper defensive position.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

Half-field, Balls, Goal

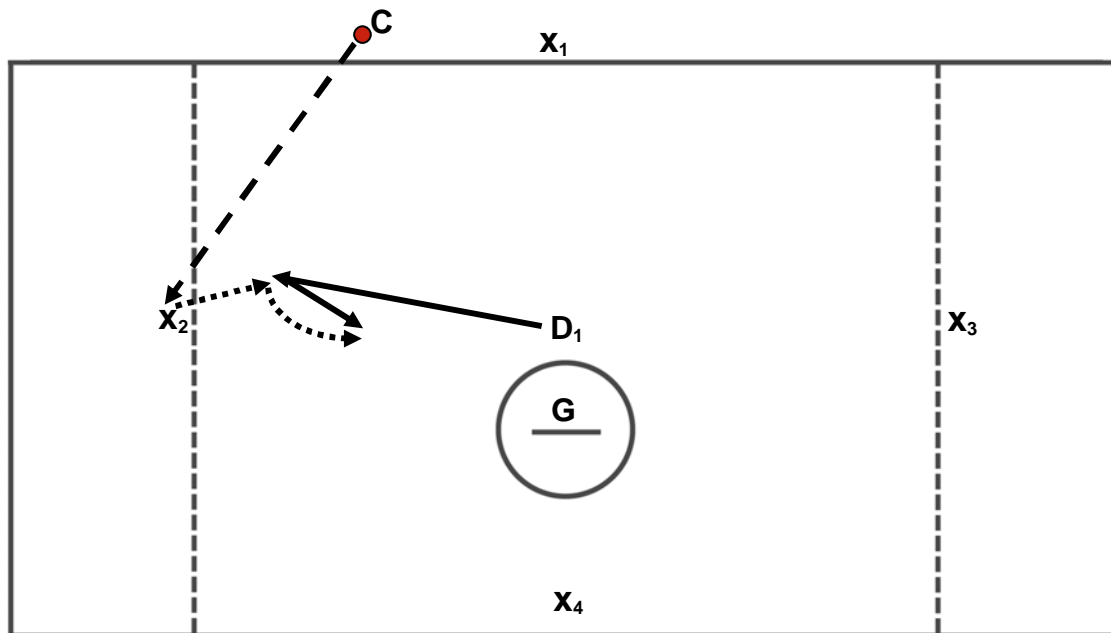
Players needed:

No more than 12-15 players, as well as a goalie, should participate in this drill at a time.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Set four offensive players around the perimeter of the goal (the positions should mimic the perimeter positions of various offensive sets (1-3-2, 1-4-1, 2-2-2, or circle offense) and one defender on the crease. A coach lobs a ball to one of the offensive players, and the single defensive player sprints out to guard him. Once the offensive player catches the ball, he immediately dodges the defender and goes to the goal. Once he takes a shot or turns the ball over, a new defender steps in, the coach throws a new ball to another offensive player, and the drill repeats itself.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Reacting to ball movement
- Approaching offensive players under control and "breaking down"
- Approach with correct footwork to protect 'topside' and/or middle of field.
- Playing live 1-on-1 defense from a variety of positions

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To make defenders focus on their footwork, give them short sticks instead of long sticks. To increase the game-like feel of the drill, add a second offensive and defensive player on the crease (making it a 2-on-2 situation). Now, after the first offensive player catches the ball and dodges his defender, the second defender slides to meet him and the second offensive player curls to the ball to create a passing lane; the first offensive player must pass to his teammate for a shot.

Goalie involvement: Full

Related drills: Breakdown Drill; Joystick Drill

Spot (Feet First) Drill

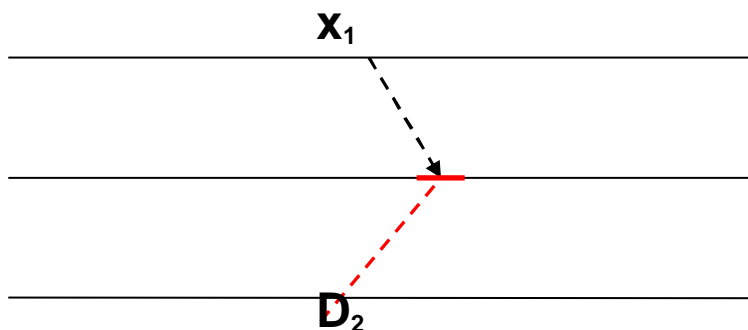
Objective: Teach defenders to use feet and angles to beat the offensive player to a 'spot'.

Suggested Space needed/Equipment: Cones, or yard line markings (football field lines, etc)

Players needed: All players can perform drill simultaneously. If multiple coaches are available break into smaller groups for higher reps.

Drill Description: Two lines of Players (one line is Def, one is Off) stand 10 yds apart and move toward one another and the cone at 45 degrees with hands behind back. Object is for D2 to get to cone first, get his chest on the offensive players outside chest/shoulder.

Drill Diagram:



Variation:

- Jam Drill – same drill set up as 'Spot' drill but allow defensive player to use hands to 'jam' offensive player – defense can use a shorty or dowel vs. just hands.

Other drills:

Footrace, Jam

Step into It

Objective:

To improve fundamental hand and foot positioning for defensive holds.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Half-field

Players needed:

All players can participate in this drill simultaneously, but it is best to use an even number of players.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Partner players up with one another and spread the pairs out across the Goal Line Extended. The group facing the endline will be the defenders and the group facing the midfield line will be the "dummy" offensive players (applying token pressure). Defenders start in a good defensive stance two yards from the dummies and on successive coach's whistles, make the following movements:

- 1) Establish contact (dummies lean in)
- 2) Wheel hips around
- 3) Turn/drive him back

After several repetitions, players reverse rolls.

Drill diagram:

None

Skills practiced:

- Defensive positioning
- Hand and footwork for defensive holds

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

This skill can – and should – be practiced on both sides of the goal, using the different holds (V-hold, Top/Bottom-hand hold, etc.) that your team employs. Also, the positioning and direction that the defenders force the dummies can be catered to match your overall defensive scheme and slide package. You can also use goalies to call out directions rather than relying on coach's whistles.

Goalie involvement:

None

Related drills:

Shadow Drill; Run the Arc

Run the Arc

Objective:

To practice defensive positioning and holds at the Goal Line Extended.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Half-field

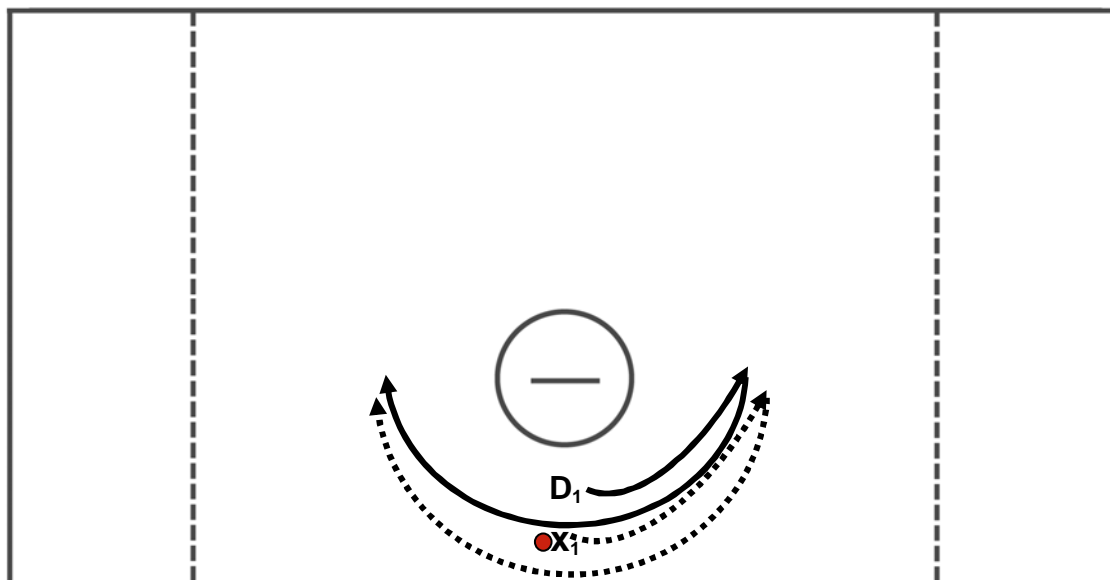
Players needed:

All defensive players can participate in this drill simultaneously, but it is best to have an even number and to have no more than 6-8 in a group.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Start a line of defenders and a line of "dummy" attackmen on the endline behind the goal. On a coach's whistle, the first attacker drives in his right hand towards the right side of the goal. The first defender beats him to a spot at the GLE, wheels his hips around, and turns him back towards X. The attacker rolls back, goes through X, and then drives in his left hand towards the left side of the goal. Again, the defender beats him to a spot at the GLE, wheels his hips around, and turns him back towards X. This pattern repeats itself until the defender has successfully turned his man back twice on each side. Then, players rotate positions.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Defensive positioning
- Hand and footwork for defensive holds

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To increase the difficulty for defenders, challenge them to perform the same drill without sticks or with short sticks. To increase the difficulty further, increase the pace at which the dummy attackmen run. To increase the challenge even further, increase the time or number of repetitions that defenders play each time.

Goalie involvement:

None

Related drills:

Step into It; Shadow Drill, Funnel Drill, Footrace, Spot Drill/Jam Drill

Funnel Drill

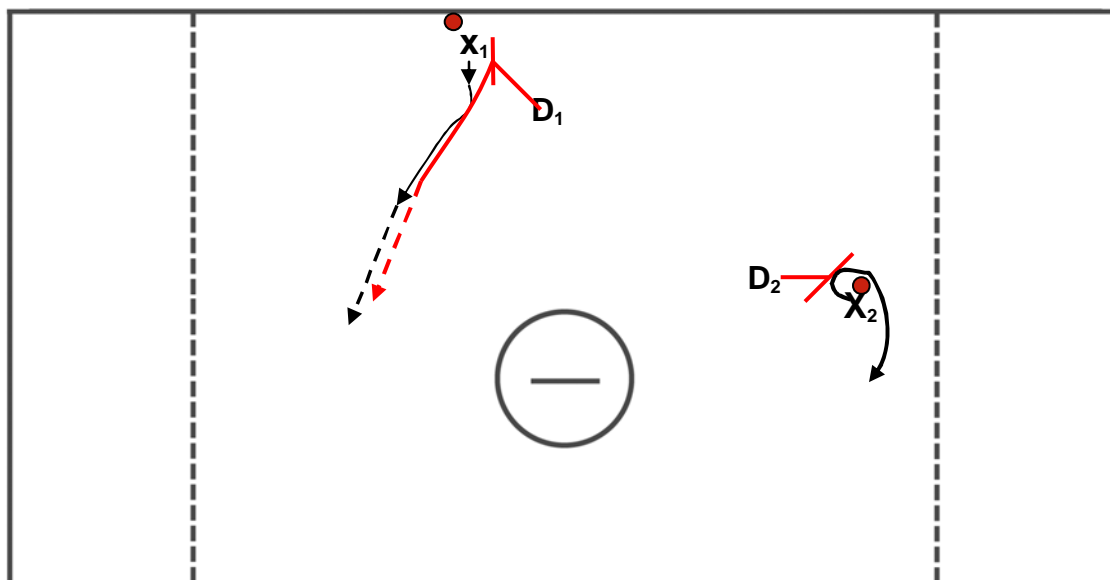
Objective:

To practice defensive positioning and holds when playing a ball carrier from up top to direct ball carrier down the alley, or to the backline (GLE).

Description of Drill-Execution:

Start a line of defensive Middies and a line of "dummy" offensive Middies outside the restraining line. On a coach's whistle, the first ball carrier drives in his right hand towards the right side of the goal. As the dodger makes his move to the goal, the first defender turns his hips and positions his feet so they point to the sideline to 'take away' the middle of the field. The defender establishes contact with a "Top Hand Hold" by placing his top hand (here, his right) on the ball carrier's lead shoulder and his bottom hand on the ball carrier's lead hip, being sure to allow only his gloves (and not his stick) to make contact with the ball carrier. If the dodger attempts to roll back, the defender maintains contact, stays topside and drives defender down the alley into the slide. ***Also run this drill with dodger from the wing – defender must stay 'topside' and funnel dodger behind GLE using top hand hold to funnel dodger toward GLE (see X₂/D₂ in diagram) work both sides of goal/both hands.***

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Defensive positioning vs a dodger from up top
- Hand and footwork for defensive holds
- Taking away the middle of the field, or taking away ball carriers strong hand while funneling him to the alley/help

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To increase the difficulty for defenders, challenge them to perform the same drill without sticks or with short sticks. Can add a Crease A/Crease D to practice driving the dodging into the slide from the crease (or from adjacent defender).

Related Drills:

Spot Drill/Jam Drill, Footrace.

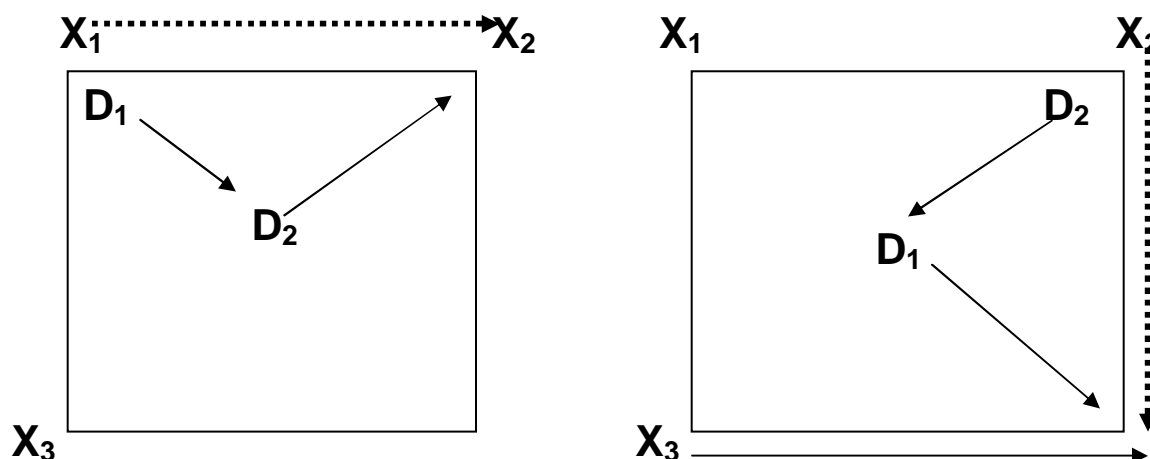
Box Drill (3v2 Ball/Back Drill)

Objective:

To improve on & off ball position and communication between defensive players who are: 1) playing the ball and 2) backing up the ball.

Drill Description:

3 offensive players are situated on 3 corners of a box formation (size of box is dependent on age and skill level of players). 2 defensive players are aligned inside the box in an 'I' formation, with 1 defender (BALL) playing on the ball and the second defender aligned several yards behind his teammate, splitting the remaining 2 offensive players (BACK). As the offensive players pass the ball around the perimeter the two defensive players either move out to cover the BALL, or move to the middle of the box as the BACK up. D playing ball should call "BALL", be in good defensive body position, stick on hands of offensive player. D playing back should call "BACK" & be in good defensive body position with stick up in passing lane, feet pointing toward ball carrier. Alternate calls are: BALL & I've got TWO.



Skills Practiced:

Approaching ball carrier with correct body position and breaking down when covering **ball**
 Correct footwork (drop step, turn to ball) when recovering to **back** position
 Understanding of correct 'help' position
 Conditioning

Variations/Progressions:

Make drill 4 offensive players on the corners vs. 3 defenders inside the box. Defense will set up in triangle formation and will have a 'BACK' right & left call.

Extend and Recover

Objective:

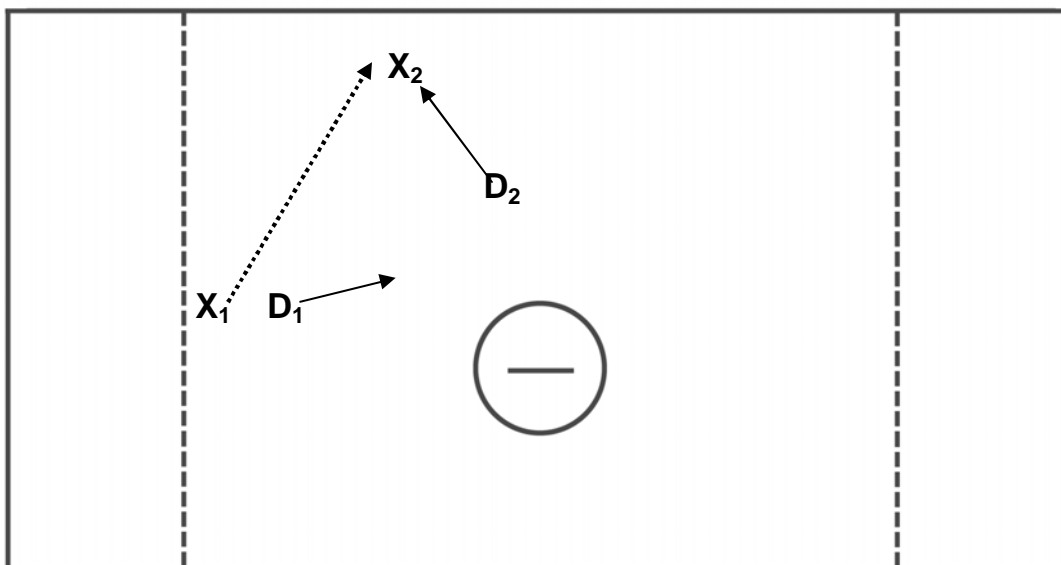
To improve on ball & off ball defensive positioning, including approaching ball carrier & recovering to 'hole' in good 'help' position after a pass is made.

Drill Description:

Start as modified 2v2, with 2 offensive players moving the ball back & forth forcing the defensive players to move into correct position – when your man is receiving the ball you should '**extend**' to ball, break down, and check his bottom hand. When your man passes the ball you should drop step, turn in the direction of the pass/ball, with your stick up & in passing land while quickly '**recovering**' to a good 'help' position in the hole. When playing off-ball you should maintain the "man-you-ball" triangle.

D is playing ball carrier X1. When X1 passes to X2, D1 drop steps, turns toward ball and recovers to help position in the hole. D2 simultaneously extends to play X2 receiving the pass.

Drill Diagram:



Skills Practiced:

- Approaching ball carrier with correct body position and breaking down when covering ball
- Correct footwork (drop step, turn to ball) when recovering to hole
- Understanding of correct off-ball, or 'help' position
- Conditioning

Variations/Progressions:

This drill can be expanded to 4v4 where 4 defensive players are in constant motion moving to 'on-ball' or 'off-ball' positions as the ball is passed around perimeter. A higher progression is the 'Interception Drill'. To add increased difficulty and communication see "Defend the Hole drill".

Interception Drill

Objective:

To attack the ball, then follow the stick back to the paint to cover passing lane and intercept or knock down skip pass.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Quarter field (box area)
- Cones, balls

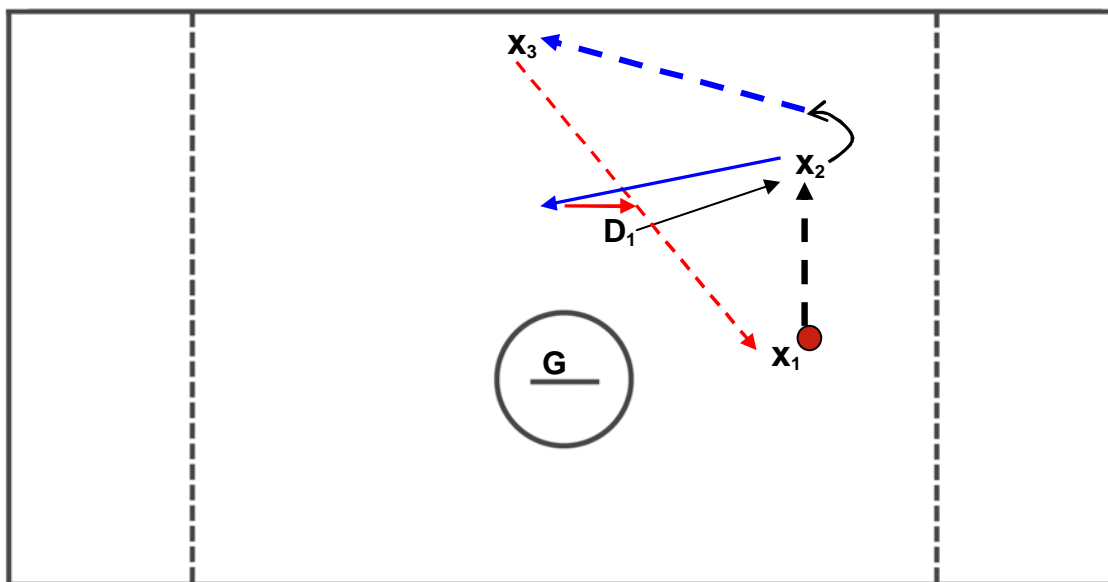
Players needed:

4 players at a time perform the drill. Best run in groups of 10 with rotations.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Offensive players are positioned at the 3 cones and need to stay within 1 yard of cone to maintain spacing. D1 takes an off-ball position with his 'feet in the paint' (hole). X1 starts with the ball and passes to X2, D2 runs out to X2 breaks down and checks hands while calling ball. X2 turns away from pressure and passes to X3. As X2 makes the pass to X3, D1 recovers back to the paint with stick in passing lane. As X3 attempts to make a skip pass to X1, D1 attempts to knock down or intercept the pass.

Drill diagram:



Skills Practiced:

Communication, Recovering to Paint & covering skip pass lanes, sticks up in passing lanes.

Variations: Make D play with shorties to encourage anticipation and footwork. Use same drill

Related Drills:

- 3v4
- Numbers Drill
- No Skips

2-Pass Defender

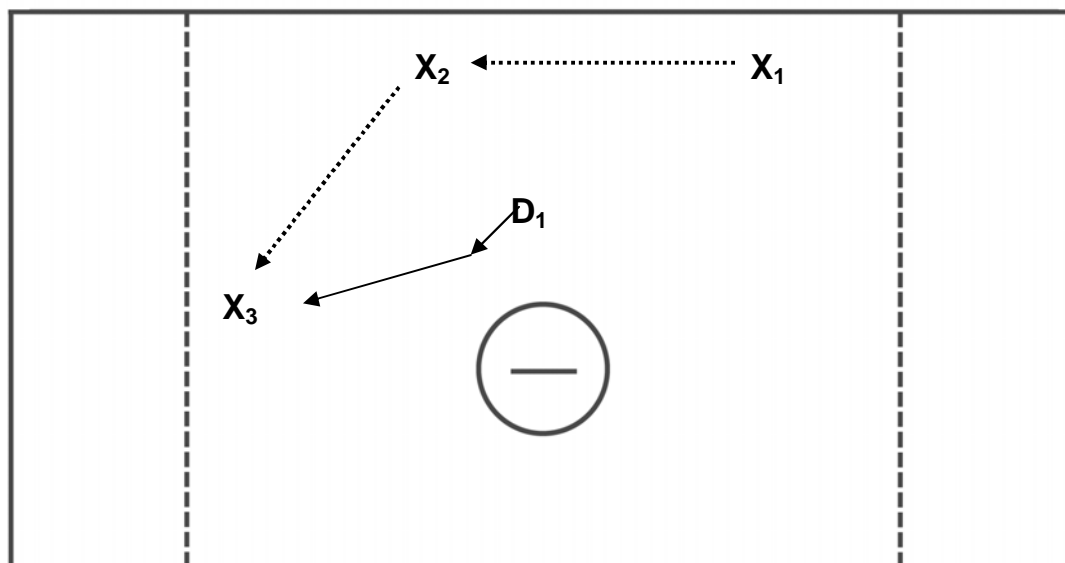
Objective: Practice defensive positioning when 2 passes away from ball and approach as it moves toward your man.

Suggested Space/Equipment required: Drill can be run in restraining box/goal area of field

Players needed: 4 players perform drill. Break players into groups to have no more than 8-12 players (ideally) per drill. Goalie can be used to call out ball position as it moves.

Drill Description: 3 'offensive' players set up on perimeter. Defender is assigned the offensive player that is 2-passes from the ball. Offense moves the ball with 2 passes to designated offensive player. The defender adjusts his off ball position from a 2-pass away position (feet in paint), to a 1-pass away position (start to extend to his man), to an on-ball position when the pass goes to his man.

Drill Diagram:



Skills Practiced:

- Concept of shifting responsibility based on relationship to the ball
- Repositioning body from covering the backside (2-passes away) of the crease to adjacent (1-pass away) to playing the ball.

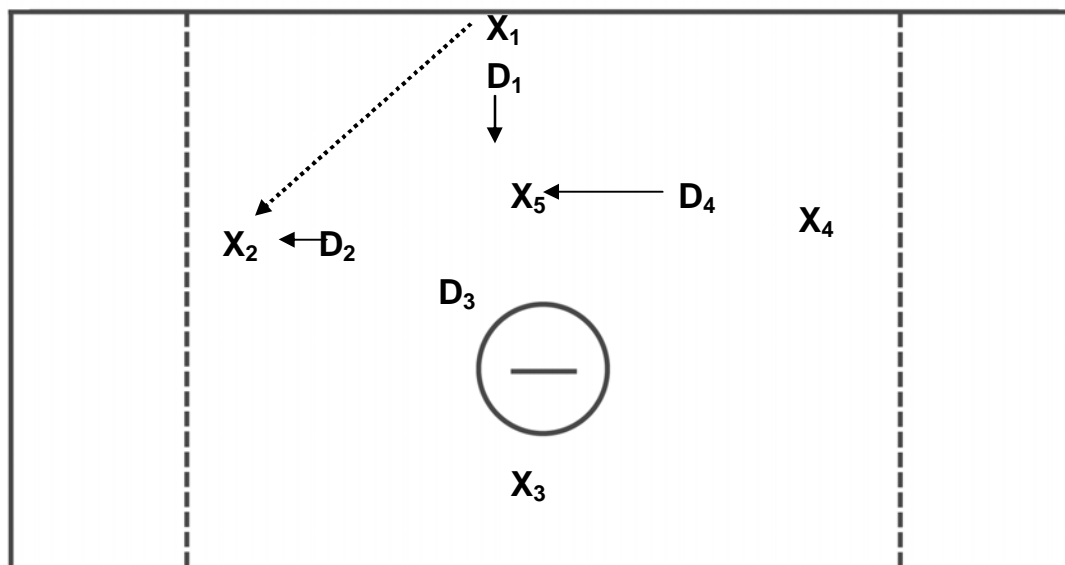
Defend the Crease Drill

Objective:

Practice backside defender sliding to & covering the crease.

Drill Description:

Set up 5 offensive players in a 1-3-1 vs 4 defenders playing the perimeter offensive players (leaving the crease offensive player undefended). Offense works ball around perimeter looking to feed the crease. As ball moves from point to point defensive players must constantly adjust position from off ball to on ball and backside defender must slough to crease to cover crease offensive player. TIP: defender who can see the ball when looking 'through the crease' is the player who must cover the crease.



Skills Practiced:

- 1v1 defense on ball
- Recovering to hole and sliding to help on crease.

Variations:

- Add Defender on Crease who will slide to dodging ball carrier.
- Work drill as 6v5 with 2 offensive players on crease

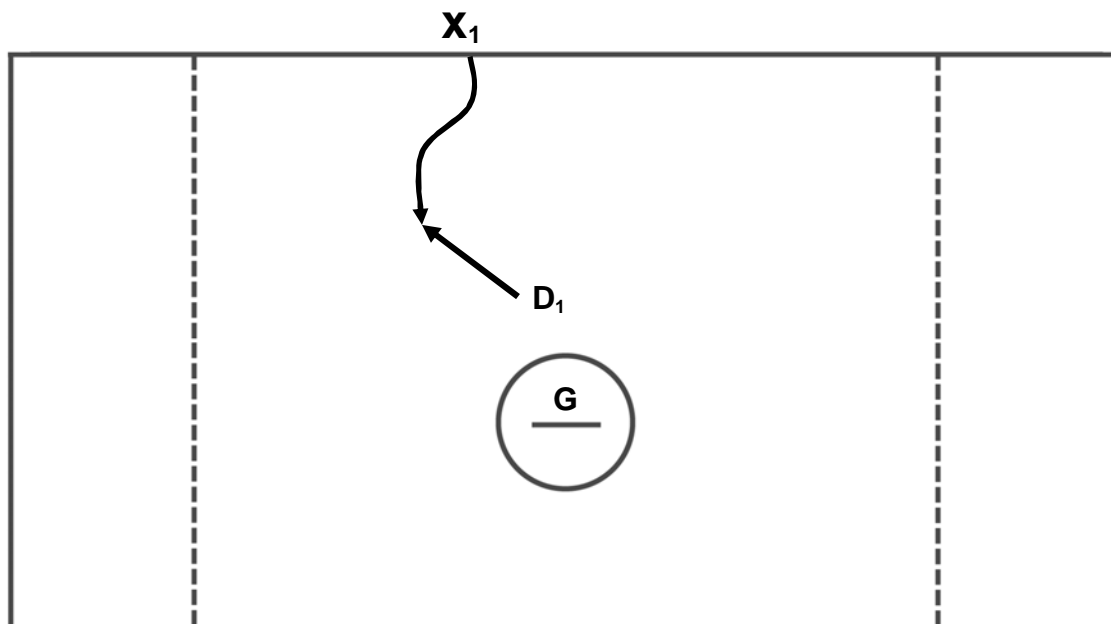
Related Drills:

- 2-Pass Defender
- Extend & Recover

Hitman Drill

Drill Objective: To work on slide technique.

Drill Description: Defensive player (D_1) positioned on the crease slides to meet dodger (X_1) at 10-12 yards to stop the ball from advancing into the 'paint'. At point of contact defender should get chest-to-chest and contact lead (inside) shoulder of dodger with a slight 'cross check' (top hand on inside shoulder/bottom hand on inside hip). Not looking for a knock down of dodger, just a chest on chest position redirecting dodger away from paint.



Variation: Add a defender on ball who persists for a double team after he is 'beaten' on dodge.

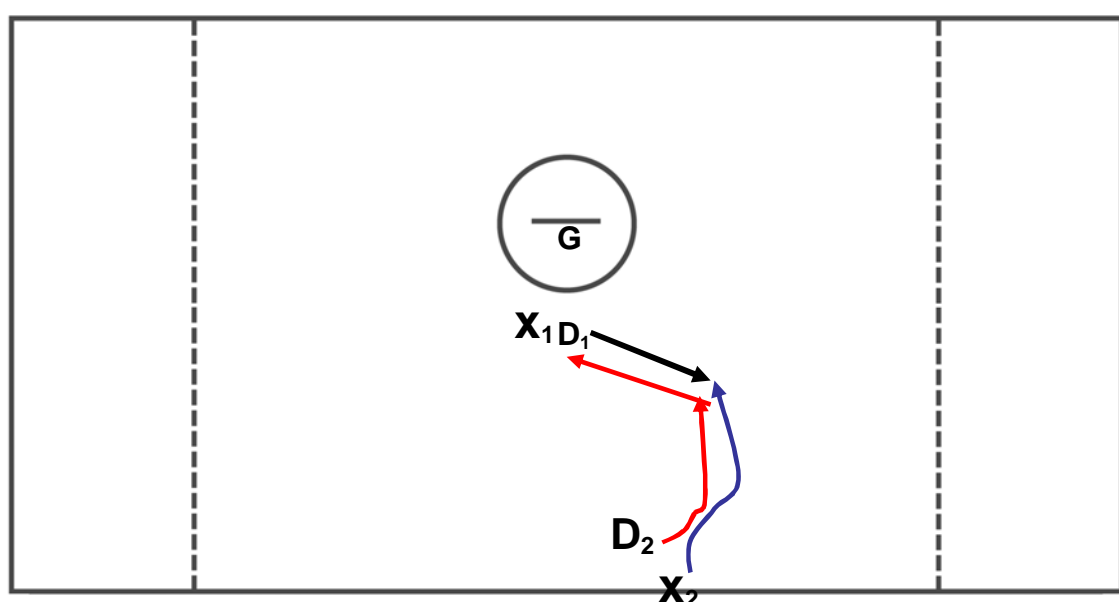
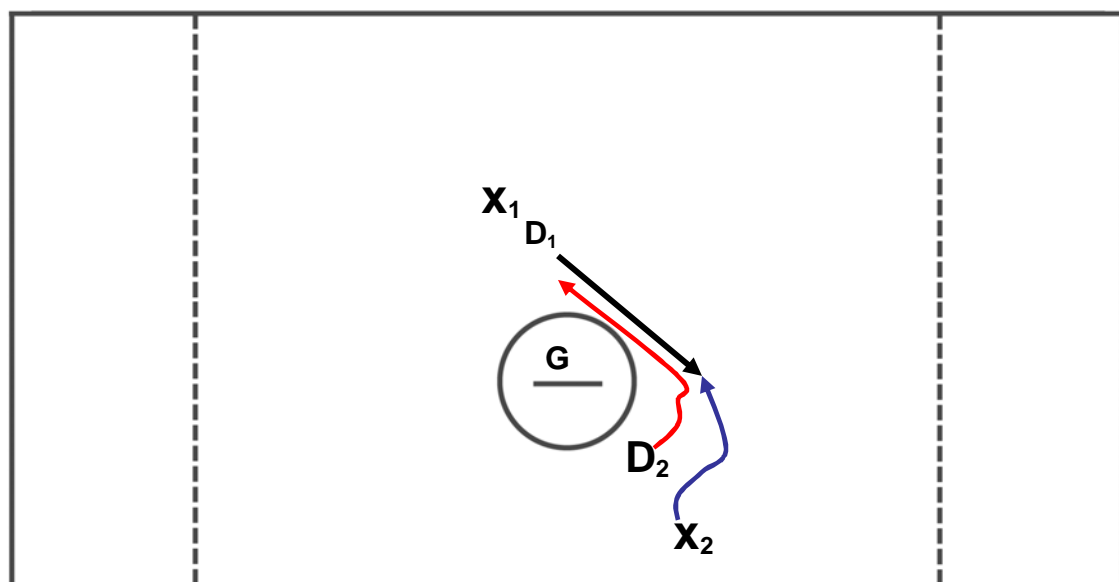
Slide & Recover Drill (2v2)

Drill Objective: To work on sliding (crease) and recovering after slide.

Suggested Space/Equipment: Goal & Crease Lines

Players Needed: 12-16 players to run drill, alternating positions after each run.

Drill Description: 2v2 drill. Defensive player positioned on crease slides to meet dodger (X_1) at 10-12 yards if dodging from top, or at GLE if dodging from X to stop the ball from advancing into the 'paint'. Defender that is beaten by dodge recovers to the crease then picks up open man.



Variation: The beaten defender can persist on ball carrier for a double team after he is 'beaten' on dodge.

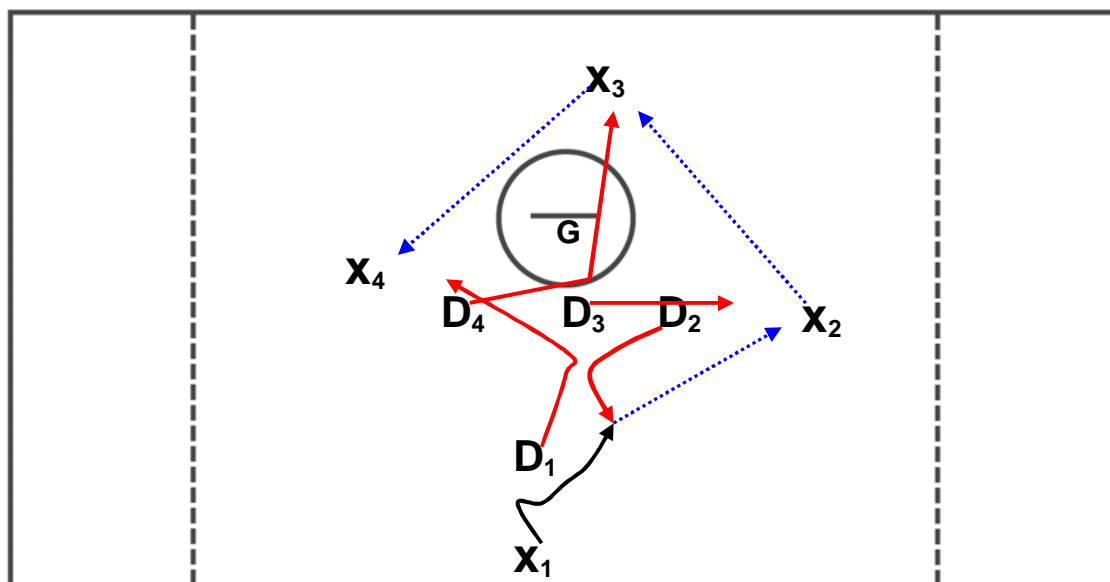
Slide & Recover (4v4)

Drill Objective: To work on sliding (adjacent) and recovering after slide.

Suggested Space/Equipment: Goal & Crease lines.

Players Needed: All players can run drill. Rotate in at X4 & D4 spots after each complete ball rotation. (D1 drops off new D in at D4 spot & X3 comes off new O in at X4 spot)

Drill Description: Expanded 4v4 version of the drill. Offensive players are positioned in a 'diamond' formation. Defensive players are positioned man-man matched up on offense. X1 at top splits dodges to his right driving down alley. D1 lets X1 beat him and X2 slides to stop ball. X1 moves the ball to X2 and slide rotation continues as D3 slides to X2. Ball continues to move around perimeter to X4 where offense looks for backside shot and D1 attempts to be in 'recover' position to slide and stop him. Defender that is beaten by dodge recovers to the crease then picks up open man.



Related Drills: Slide & Recover 2v2, Thud Slide, Hitman

King of the Crease

Objective:

To improve the timing and movement of defensive adjacent slides.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Balls
- Crease

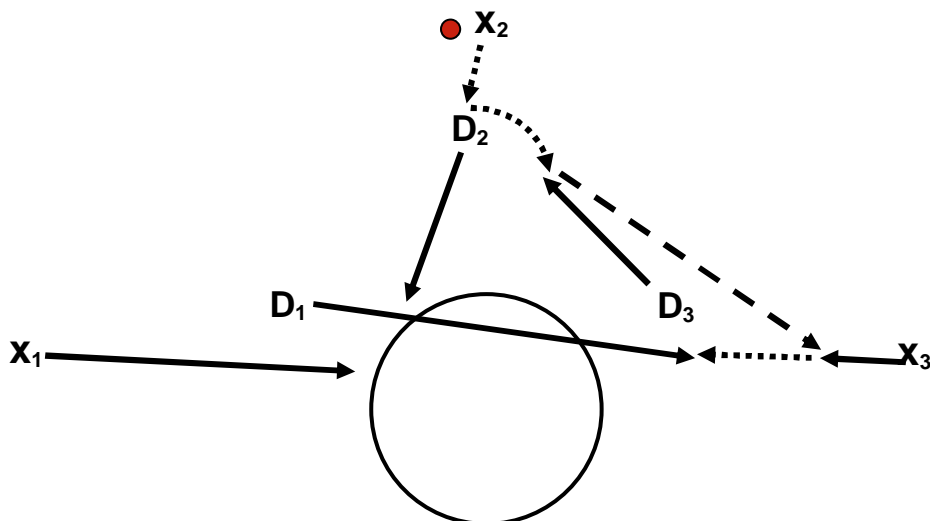
Players needed:

Only 12-15 players should participate in this drill at a time.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Remove the goal from a crease and set three offensive players around it with three defenders covering them. A coach rolls or throws a ball to one of the offensive players, and they begin to play a live three-on-three. The goal for the offense is to carry the ball into the crease (much like a rushing touchdown in football), and the goal for the defense is to stop them. Offensive players should use clear-throughs, picks, etc. to get open and create space. Defensive players must adjust to this and slide, switch, etc. to prevent them from "scoring."

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- On and off-ball defensive positioning
- Communication
- Adjacent sliding

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To increase the challenge for the defense, make all defenders use short sticks (or "stubbies," handles with no heads), or no sticks at all (hands behind their backs). To make it more game-like, give the offense a time limit or a confined space in which to dodge. To make it more competitive, keep score (two points per touchdown, one point per defensive stop).

Goalie involvement:

None

Related drills:

Lead the Blind; Reverse Numbers Drill; "Thud" Slide Drill; Out of Dodge

"Thud" Slide Drill

Objective:

To improve the timing and positioning of crease slides against a 2-2-2 offense.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Balls
- Goal
- Half-field

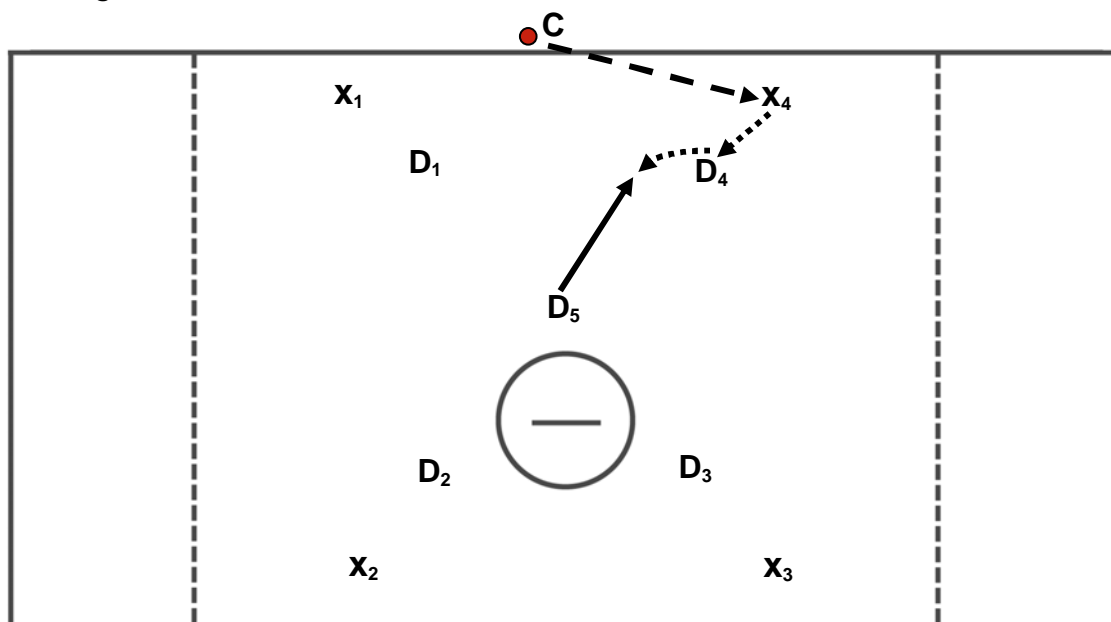
Players needed:

Approximately 12-15 players can participate in this drill simultaneously.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Start offensive players in the four perimeter dodging spots of a 2-2-2 offense (top-left, top-right, back-left, back-right) with a defender on each of them and a fifth defender on the crease. A coach passes the ball to an offensive player, who immediately tries to dodge his defender and go to the goal. As the ballcarrier reaches a shooting area, the crease defender should slide to meet him and stop his progress with a "thud" (solid contact, but not knocking him down) hit. The players reset, and the drill begins again when the coach moves the ball to a different offensive player.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Defensive sliding and timing
- Communication

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To make the drill more realistic, start fifth offensive player on the crease. When the crease defender slides to meet the ballcarrier, he curls to the ball to create a passing lane. As he does this, the far/opposite (i.e., top-left when the ball is back-right) must drop down to the crease to make a second slide.

Related drills: Lead the Blind; King of the Crease; Reverse Numbers Drill; Out of Dodge

Forced Slide Drill

Objective:

To practice defensive positioning, communication, and backside slide technique vs. a Circle offense.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Balls
- Goal
- Half-field

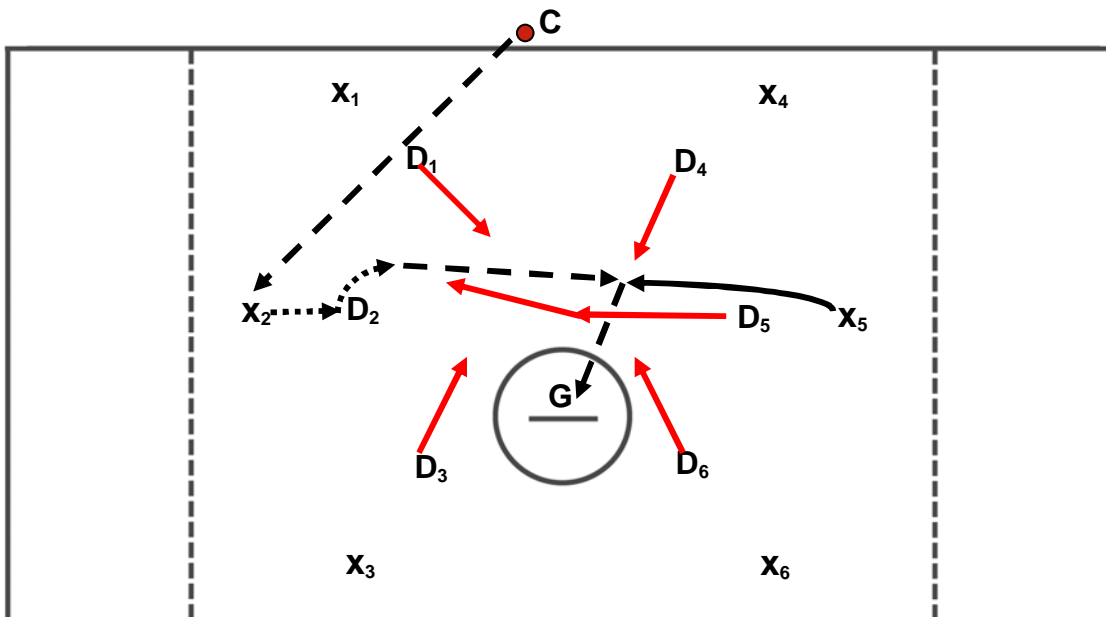
Players needed:

For this drill to work best, 12 players (six on offense and six on defense), as well as a goalie, should participate at a time.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Set the six offensive players up around the goal in the shape of a Circle offense. Position 6 'off-ball' defenders inside them with 1 foot in the 'paint'. A coach throws a ball to an offensive player, who immediately dodges by his defender and goes to the goal (the defender applies only token defense). The defensive player opposite him (backside defender) slides to meet the ball carrier, and the offensive player opposite him cuts to the goal to create a passing lane. The ball carrier attempts to move the ball to his open teammate for a shot while the defender sliding into the passing lane attempts to intercept/knockdown pass or check cutters stick. The coach then starts the next ball with a different offensive player.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Defensive positioning, communication, and backside slide technique vs. a Circle offense.
- Dodging to shoot and feed

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To make the drill more game-like, allow the defenders to increase the intensity of their defense. To make it more challenging to the offense, give them a time limit in which to generate a shot or a confined area in which to dodge. This drill can also be modified to fit other offensive sets (i.e., 2-2-2, 1-3-2, 1-4-1, etc.) by changing the dodging positions and starting the "opposite" offensive player on the crease.

Goalie involvement: Full

Related drills: Live 2-on-2s

Out of Dodge

Objective:

To improve defensive communication and sliding.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Balls
- Half-field

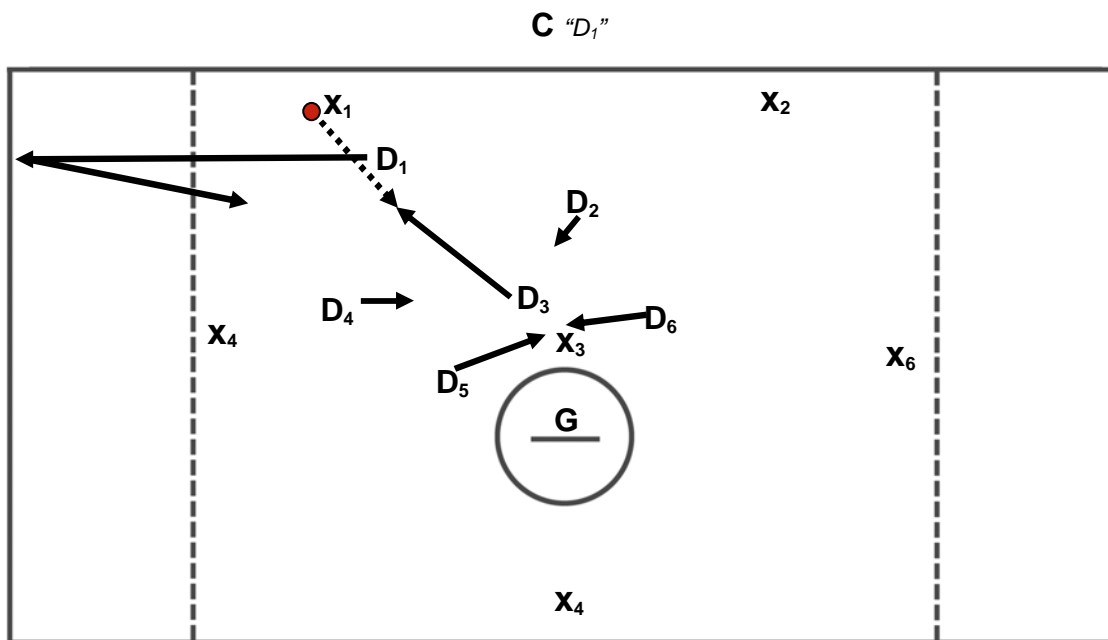
Players needed:

Only 20-24 players, plus a goalie, should participate in this drill at a time.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Start six offensive players in a 1-3-2 formation, and start six defenders on them with a goalie in the crease. On a coach's whistle, the offensive begins to pass the ball around the perimeter and go into their particular movements. A coach then calls out the jersey number of the defender who is covering the ball. This defender must sprint to the sideline and back before rejoining the play. When he vacates his spot, the ballcarrier should go to the goal, making the defense slide to halt his progress and limit good scoring opportunities. After a goal or turnover, the drill repeats itself and the coach calls out the number of another player. After several repetitions, players rotate positions.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Defensive communication
- Sliding

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

This drill can be used to simulate any slide package (crease, adjacent, etc.) against any offensive set (1-3-2, 1-4-1, 2-2-2, etc.). To make it more competitive, keep score--- each offensive goal is worth one point, and each defensive stop (either a saved shot or a non-shot) is also worth one point.

Goalie involvement: Full

Related drills: "Thud" Slide Drill; King of the Crease; 4-on-3 Fastbreaks with Trailer

Settled Defense Drill – Ball & Back

Objective:

Improve defensive communication among teammates. Reinforce correct back up position and slide responsibilities in your team defense.

Drill Description:

Players set up in the defensive formation you will use (in our case we will use a M/M formation matching up with offensive players). The player guarding the ball carrier yells "BALL". All other defensive players are in a 'BACK up' position identified by the word BACK.

Coach must stress that good defense requires that 'everyone' must see the ball. If they can't see the ball they cannot be 'back'. If a player yells 'back' he must: 1) not be outside the box covering his man, 2) must see the ball, 3) will have his feet pointing to the teammate they are backing – if they are not doing all 3 of these things they CAN'T be BACK!. Coach will move with a ball to various areas of the field around the defense. The player on the ball should yell BALL and all others should yell BACK when they are truly back (see rules 1-3). Coach should be checking that all players who yell back are in correct position – challenge those who are not correctly identifying BACK position.

Once players have a good grasp of BALL/BACK position and communication coach will now call out an offensive player number who will drive to a shooting position. The designated defensive player who is BACK (differs depending on Crease slide/Adjacent slide, etc) must slide. If an adjacent teammate slides to cover the ball, the 'back' for the sliding defenseman must also slide to the open man next to him. If in a crease slide package, crease D slides to ball & backside defender slides to cover the crease.

Variation:

Instead of coach walking ball around the defense have offensive players pass the ball around perimeter forcing the defense to react. Further increase speed and pressure by moving offensive players into various formations forcing the defense to move with them, changing who has back position. This requires constant re-adjustment by the defense and ensures they are 'seeing' the ball at all times.

Skills Practiced:

Communication

Correct back up position & sliding

Seeing the ball, the opponent (Man-You-Ball) and who slides.

Lead the Blind

Objective:

To improve basic defensive positioning and communications skills.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Half-field
- Goal

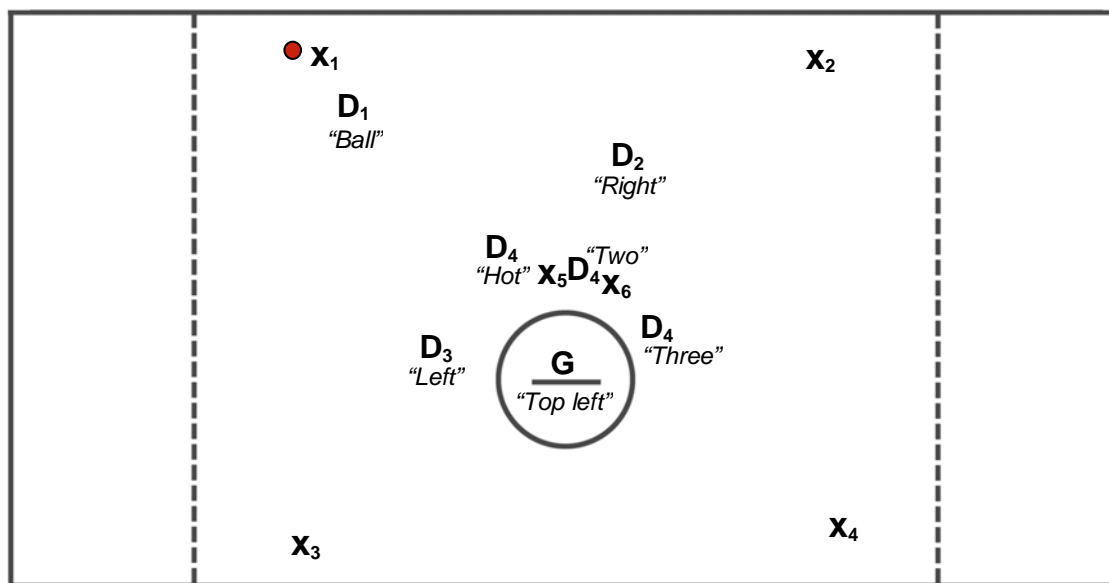
Players needed:

Only 10-15 defensive players should participate in this drill at one time.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Set six "dummy" players in the positions of a particular offensive formation (2-2-2, 1-3-2, etc.). Start six defenders in position to defend this formation, and blindfold them (or have them close their eyes). Ask the offense to pass the ball around the perimeter (they should hold it for several seconds allowing the defense to adjust before they pass it again). As the ball moves around, the goalie (who has his eyes open and on the ball) announces its position to the defenders (i.e., top-right, top-center, top-left, etc.). Each time he announces a new position, the defenders must 1) adjust their position accordingly, and 2) call out their new position relative to the ball (i.e., ball, left, right, hot, etc.). After the ball is cycled through all of offensive spots, players rotate.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Defensive positioning and communication

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To increase the difficulty of the drill, shorten the amount of time that each offensive player holds the ball or allow for skip passes (i.e., passes not to the adjacent offensive players).

Goalie involvement:

Full

Related drills:

Reverse Numbers Drill; 4-on-3 Fastbreaks With Trailer

No Skips

Objective:

To improve Man Down Defense positioning, communication, and orientation.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Half-field
- Balls
- Goals

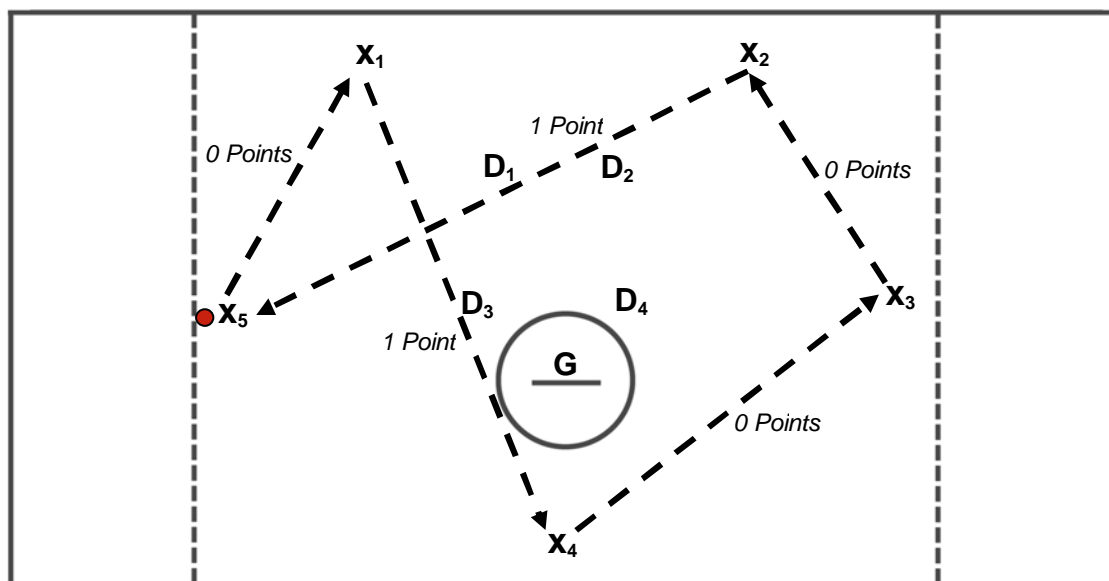
Players needed:

No more than 12-15 players can participate in this drill at one time.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Start five offensive players in the perimeter positions of a 1-3-2 offense (i.e., X, right wing, top-right, top-left, and left wing) and start four defenders with a goalie in a box shape inside of them. On a coach's whistle, the offensive players work the ball around the perimeter – they "score" a point each time they successfully make a skip pass (i.e., to a player not adjacent to the ballcarrier) and the defense scores each time they knock down or intercept one of these passes. See how many points teams can rack up in a 30-second or 1-minute penalty.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Interior MDD positioning
- Blocking of passing lanes

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

To make it more difficult for the defense, challenge them to use short sticks. To make it more realistic, allow the offense to shoot on goal once they successfully complete a skip pass.

Goalie involvement: Full

Related drills: Touch the Cone; Full-field 54s; Retirement Drill

Survival Drill

Objective:

To practice working together on the crease, both offensively and defensively.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Cones
- Balls

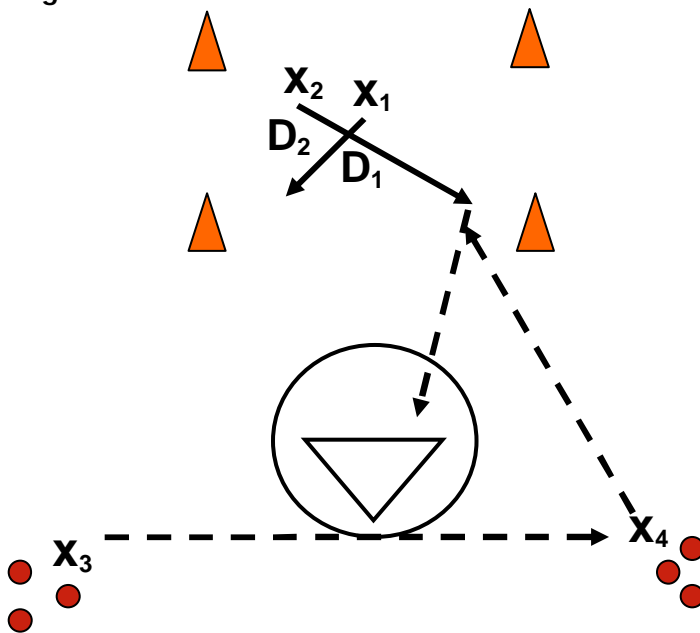
Players needed:

All players can participate in this drill, but there should be no more than 10-12 in each group.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Set four cones in a box in front of the goal (about three yards wide of each pipe and about eight yards above the Goal Line Extended). Start one feeder on each side of the goal about five yards wide and about three yards behind the GLE (each player should have a pile of balls), and two offensive and two defensive players inside of the box. On the coach's whistle, the two feeders pass the ball back and forth, looking to feed the ball inside to the offensive players. The two off-ball offensive players must react to the ball's position, set their position accordingly, and work together to create open shooting opportunities. The drill continues for 60 seconds at a time, and then players rotate positions.

Drill diagram:



Skills practiced:

- Establishing good posture and position playing 2 offensive players on crease
- Communication

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...): To increase the competitiveness of the drill keep 'score'. Defense gets 1 point for every pass to the crease intercepted or knocked down. Offense gets a point for each successful feed to crease and shot on goal. To increase the difficulty, add 2 offensive players up top forcing crease defenders to defend feeds from behind and up top. To increase the conditioning component, increase the time that players perform the drill. If defensive players are struggling, make the crease area smaller (move cones in to reduce size of box) until the defense gets more proficient.

Goalie involvement: Add Goalie to make calls for location of ball.

Get In/Get Out (3v2) Drill

Objective:

To attack the ball, then follow the stick back to the paint to cover 2v3.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Quarter field (box area)
- Cones, balls

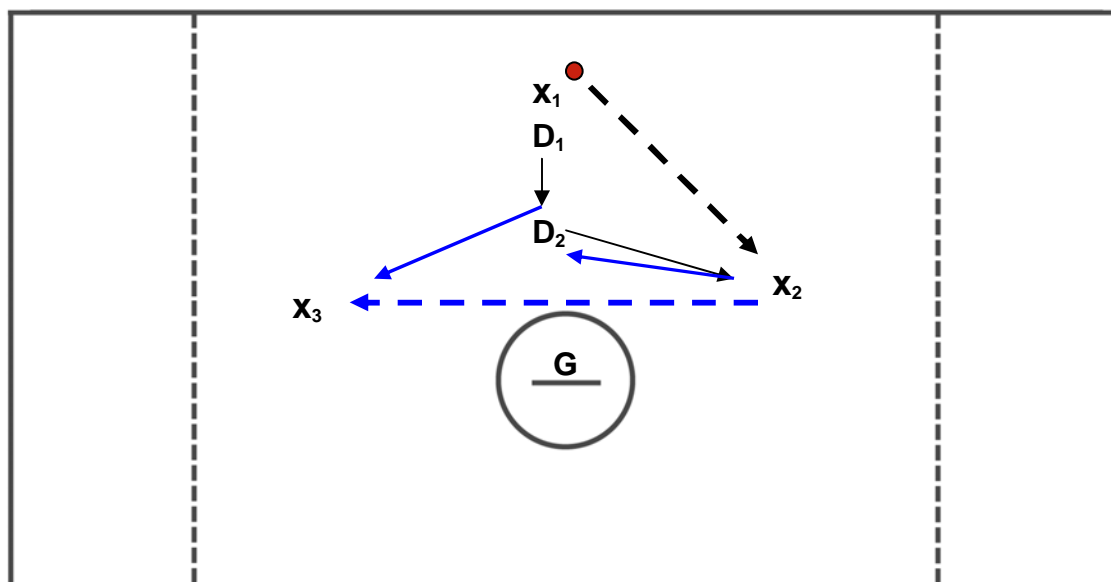
Players needed:

5 players at a time perform the drill. Best run in groups of 10 with rotations.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Offensive players are positioned at the 3 cones and need to stay within 1 yard of cone to maintain spacing. Defenders begin stacked in an "I" formation. D1 plays the ball (X1) and D2 has to cover 2. As X1 passes to X2, D2 runs out to X2 breaks down and checks hands while calling ball. D1 turns in direction of pass and sprints to the paint with stick in passing lane shouting 'I have two'. As attack attempts to draw and dump, the D must use the **Get in & Get out** movements required to cover 3 offensive players.

Drill diagram:



Skills Practiced:

Communication, Recovering to Paint & Covering 2, Backside coverage after slide, sticks in passing lanes.

Variations: Let Offense move freely. Make D play with shorties to encourage anticipation and footwork. Use same drill format for 3v4 with D in Triangle, offense starts in box shape.

Related Drills:

- 3v4
- Numbers Drill
- No Skips

Numbers Drill

Objective:

To improve offensive and defensive awareness and movements in unsettled and uneven situations.

Suggested space needed/equipment:

- Half-field
- Balls

Players needed:

This drill requires at least 10-12 offensive players and 6-8 defensive players, as well as a goalie.

Description of Drill-Execution:

Start a line of offensive players at the midfield line, and a line of defensive players at the end line. A coach rolls a ball out in front of the offensive players, and call out a number between one and six. This number represents the number of offensive players that will go in; the defense takes this number and subtracts one to determine the number of defensive players who will go in. As the number is called, the offensive players pick up the ball and attack the goal as the defensive players set up and prepare to defend the goal. So, if the coach calls "Three," three offensive players run in against two defensive players, and they play a live 3-on-2 on the goal.

Drill diagram:

None

Skills practiced:

- Offensive and defensive recognition of unsettled situations
- Offensive and defensive positioning in uneven situations
- 2-on-1s, 3-on-2s,... 6-on-5s

Variations/Progression/Increased difficulty (As your players improve their skills incorporate the following...):

The starting positioning of the offensive and defensive players can be altered to imitate different situations. To add competitiveness, keep score (if the offense scores, they get a point, but if the defense stops them, they earn the point).

Goalie involvement:

Full

Related drills:

Reverse Numbers Drill.