



# INSTALLING THE **PIT BULL DEFENSE**



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The Pitbull Defense motto is “Every score saved is the same as a score made.”

The Pitbull Boys Lacrosse Defense Manual outlines and illustrates the fundamental skills and techniques required to build an effective youth Lacrosse team defense. It is built upon the fundamental premise that every single player on the field must play defense, regardless whether they are Attackmen, Middies or Longpoles. Building a great Defensive Team requires every player on the field to embrace their part of the defensive play.

The goal of the Pitbull Defense is to hold the Opposition to 4 scores or less per game. If you hold the Opposition to 4 or less points, the odds are your team will win the game. A great Defense relieves the pressure off the Offense to make a high volume of scores against tough teams.

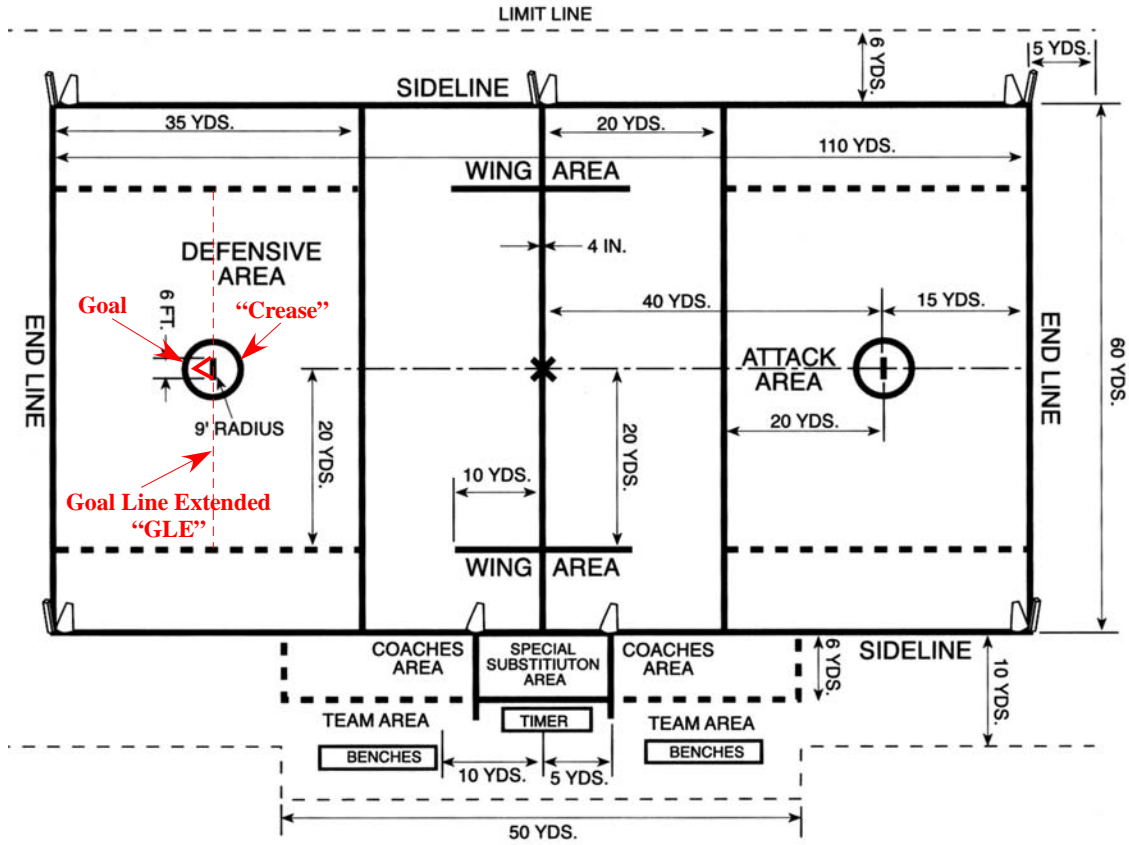
The pictures shown in this manual are of the 2005 Westside Competitive Boys Lacrosse Club Team (Colorado State Champions for Club Teams 2003, 2004, 2005), and the 2009 Golden High School Freshmen team (11 wins - 3 losses, holding to Opposition to an average 2.7 points/game for the season. Once the Defense was set up, the GHS Freshman team won 11 out of 12 games which included beating 4 four JV teams).

**WESTSIDE LACROSSE, Golden Colorado**

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## FIELD TERMINOLOGY



### ABBREVIATIONS:

- “LSD”: Longstick Defenseman
- “Crease LSD”: Crease Longstick Defenseman
- “GLE”: Goal Line Extended
- “Box”: Defensive Area encompassing the Goal
- “OBH”: Offensive Ball Handler

## THE 3 RULES OF INDIVIDUAL DEFENSE

There are 3 Rules of individual Defense that must be drilled into each player:

1. Stay between your man and the goal;
2. Force the opponent to the bad side of the field or to his off hand;
3. Check the ball out of the opponent's stick.

90% of all Defense is Rule #1. If a player is great at Rules 1 & 2, but is poor at checking the ball out of the stick, he will be one of the best D players on the team. The players need to be taught they never go after the ball until they have position between their opponent and the goal. The entire Pitbull Defense is built around these three rules.

## DEFENSE STARTS WITH THE OFFENSE PLAYERS

The opposing team can not score if the ball is kept your offensive side of the field. The number one goal for defense is to keep the ball on your offensive side of the field.

# GROUNDBALL SWARM

## STAGE #1: OWN THE GROUND BALLS

The moment the ball hits the ground, the Defense Coach owns each and every player on the field, bar none. When the ball hits the ground on the attack side of the field, every single attackman and middie must immediately revert to defense mode.

The moment the ball hits the ground, the *only job the attack and middies have is to regain possession of the ball*. This is best accomplished by swarming each and every groundball with at least 3 players, if not more. This requires hustle and fight. Any attackman or middie standing around watching others do the work needs to be pulled off the field and replaced by those who understand this concept. OWN THE GROUND BALLS.

# RIDING



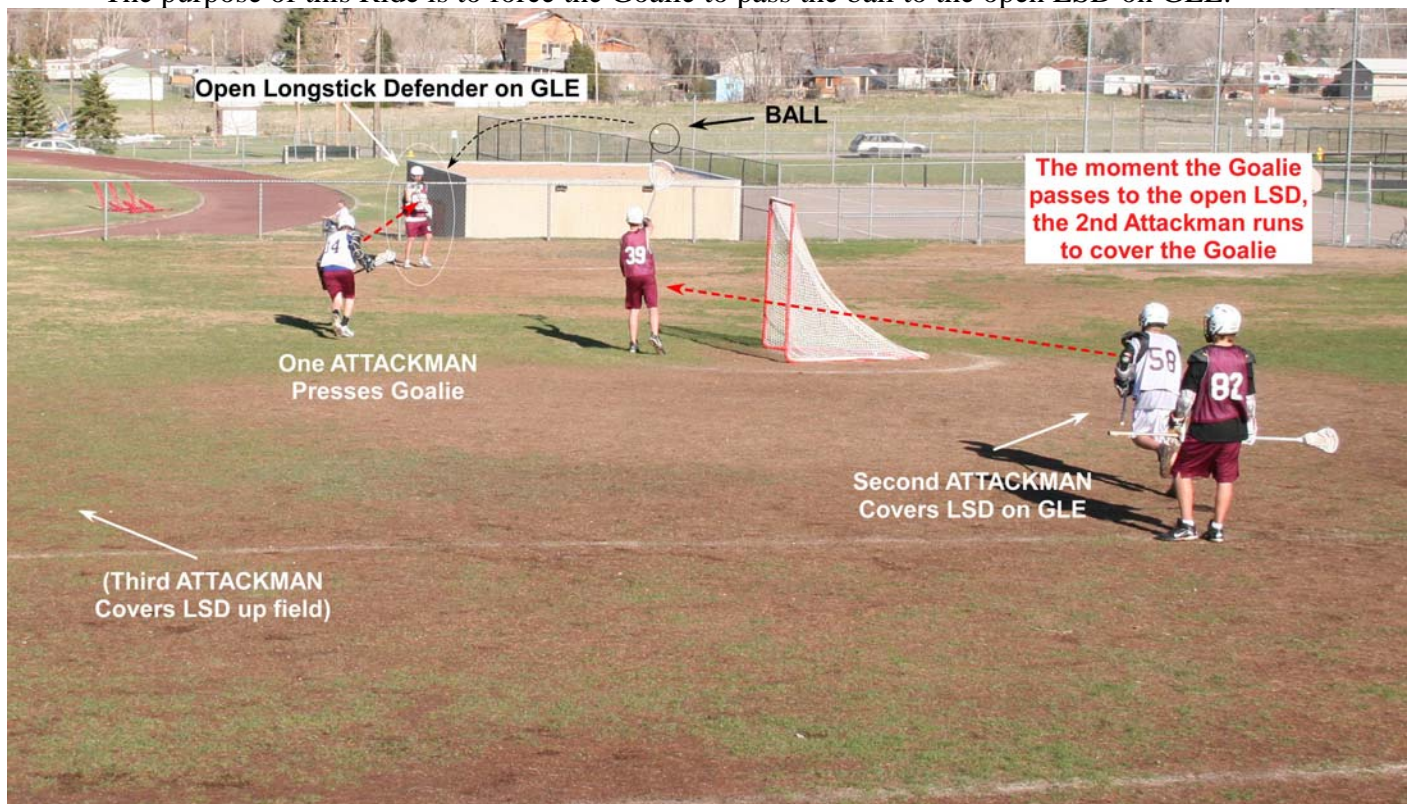


## STAGE #2: PRESSURE RIDES CREATES TURNOVERS

In the event you are unable to maintain ownership of the ball after the Groundball Swarm, the second Stage of Team Defense is the Ride. We use a tight man-on-man ride. In the case where the opposing Goalie has the ball:

### RIDE #1:

- A. The three Middies must immediately tightly cover their respective counterparts, hip to hip. This will force the Opposing Team to go into a settled Clear.
- B. The crease Attack player presses the Goalie, the second Attackman tightly covers one LSD on GLE, and the third Attackman covers the LSD down the field. This leaves one LSD on GLE undefended. The purpose of this Ride is to force the Goalie to pass the ball to the open LSD on GLE.

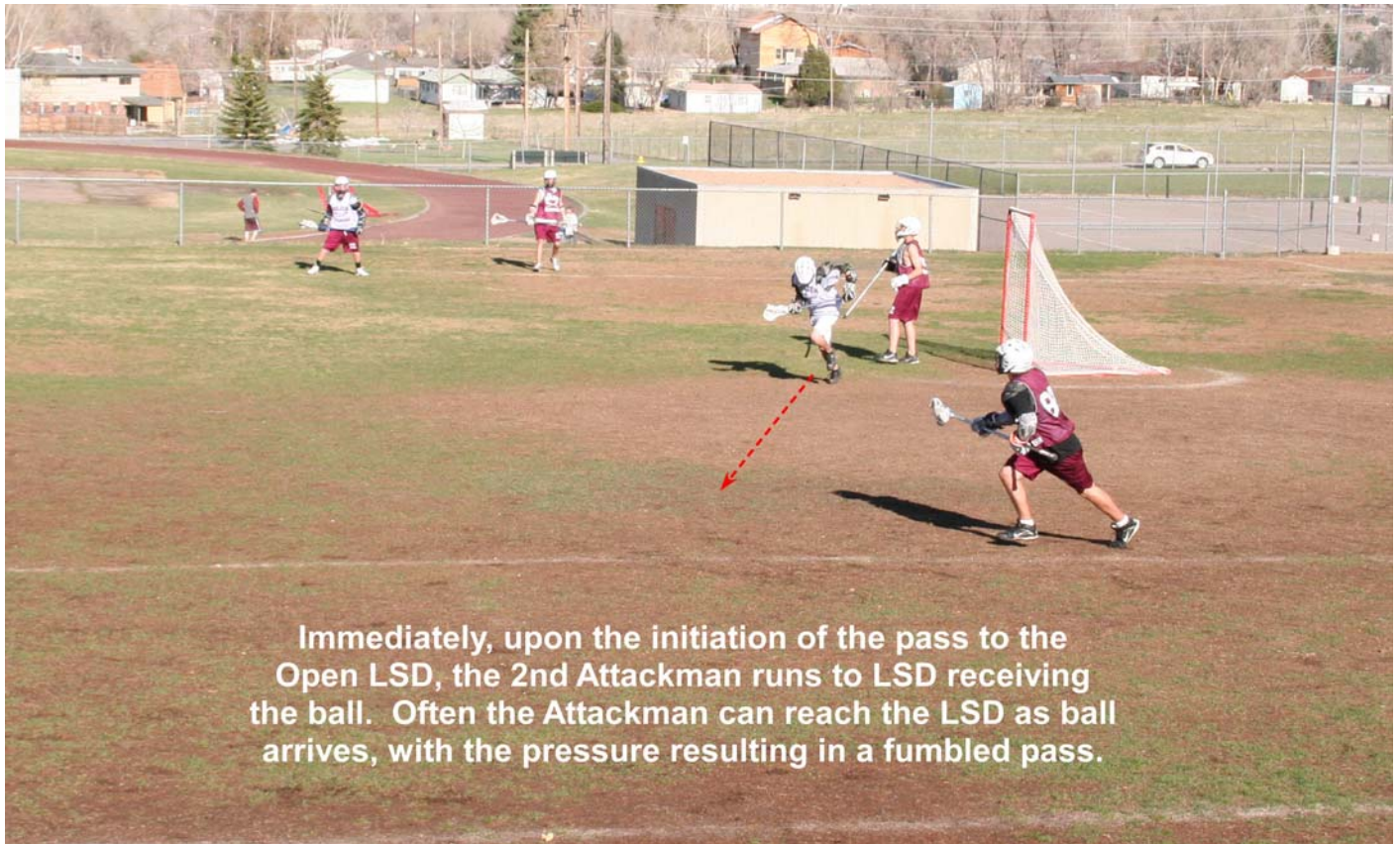


- C. The moment the Goalie passes the ball to the open LSD on GLE, the Attackman covering the Goalie immediately leaves the Goalie and runs to the ball. The second Attackman guarding the LSD on GLE immediately runs to guard the Goalie upon this pass.
- D. Upon the First Attackman arriving at the ball, he presses the LSD into making a pass across the field to the open LSD on GLE.



- E. Immediately upon the initiation of the pass, the second Attackman leaves the Goalie and runs to the open LSD. Since the pass will be in the air for a long period of time, if the second Attackman hustles, he can arrive at receiving LSD about the same time the ball arrives.
- F. This Pressure Ride forces the LSD to make great passes, catches, and dodges without mistake.
- G. The Opposing Team only has 20 seconds to clear the ball across mid-field, or receives a “Failure to Advance” call resulting in an automatic turnover.





(If the Goalie remains in the crease, he has only 4 seconds either to pass the ball or to leave the crease. Failure to do so results in a turnover. Pressuring the Goalie with the stick up a waving has resulted in numerous bad passes as well as turnovers from the Attackman intercepting the pass.)





- H. The Attackman CANNOT physically interfere with the Goalie's stick while the Goalie is within the crease making the pass. This will result in an interference call, allowing the Opposing Team to have a free Clear.
- I. ***The Attack players must ride hard until the ball is past midfield.***
- J. *The Middies must play tight man-on-man with their respective counterparts while the ball remains on the Defensive side of the field.*

## **RIDE #2:**

In the event the Opposing team's LSDs are proficient in clearing the ball, adjust the ride as follows:

1. The three Attackmen tightly cover ALL three Opposing LSDs;
2. The Goalie (with the ball) is left unguarded;
3. As the Goalie walks the ball upfield, each of your middies and LSDs must stay on their respective men they are guarding. The Opposing Team's GLE LSDs will walk with upfield their Goalie;
4. As the Goalie gets near the top of the box or to midfield, one of your attackmen guarding one of the opposing GLE LSD's leaves his man and charges the Goalie.
  - a. In the event one of the LSD's is trailing behind the Goalie, it is that Attackman who charges the Goalie when the Goalie is not looking;
  - b. In the event both of the Opposing LSDs are walking in unison with their Goalie, then the Attackman guarding the worse of the two LSD charges the Goalie.

# NO EASY CLEARING PASSES: LSD POSITIONING

As your Offense initiates the Ride on the Opposing team's clearing play, your LSDs must stick man-on-man with the opposing teams Attackmen. In most cases, at least 2 of the 3 Attackmen will move up to the midfield line.

1. The LSD stickhead needs to be placed on the Attack player.
2. If the opposing team's Goalie attempts to clear a pass to the Attack, the LSD needs to fight for the ball.
3. **DO NOT PERMIT YOUR LSDs TO STAND BEHIND THEIR ATTACKMEN**
4. Place your fastest running LSD in the center of the field if your LSDs are fearful of getting beat.

With the Pit Bull Defense, there are no easy clearing passes to any of their Attack players.



As shown in the picture below, in the event the opposing Team's Attackman is successful in capturing the pass, the LSD can push the Attack player over the midfield line, creating an "off-sides" and hence a turnover. The LSD may only push the Attackman from the side or front, and not from behind.



**THE SECOND LINE OF DEFENSE:**

## **MIDDIE DEFENSE**





## PHILOSOPHY:

The Middies are the key to creating a great Defense and hinge on the Middies doing just three things:

1. Staying between their man and the Goal;
2. Pushing their Opponent down the Alley away from the middle of the field, and/or to the Opponent's weak hand;
3. Establishing and maintaining a "Defensive Triangle" where they can both watch their man and the ball at the same time.

Sound easy? Teaching these concepts is like trying to herd cats.

## MIDDIE RIDE:

In the event an Opposing Team's Middie has the ball and running it for a clear:

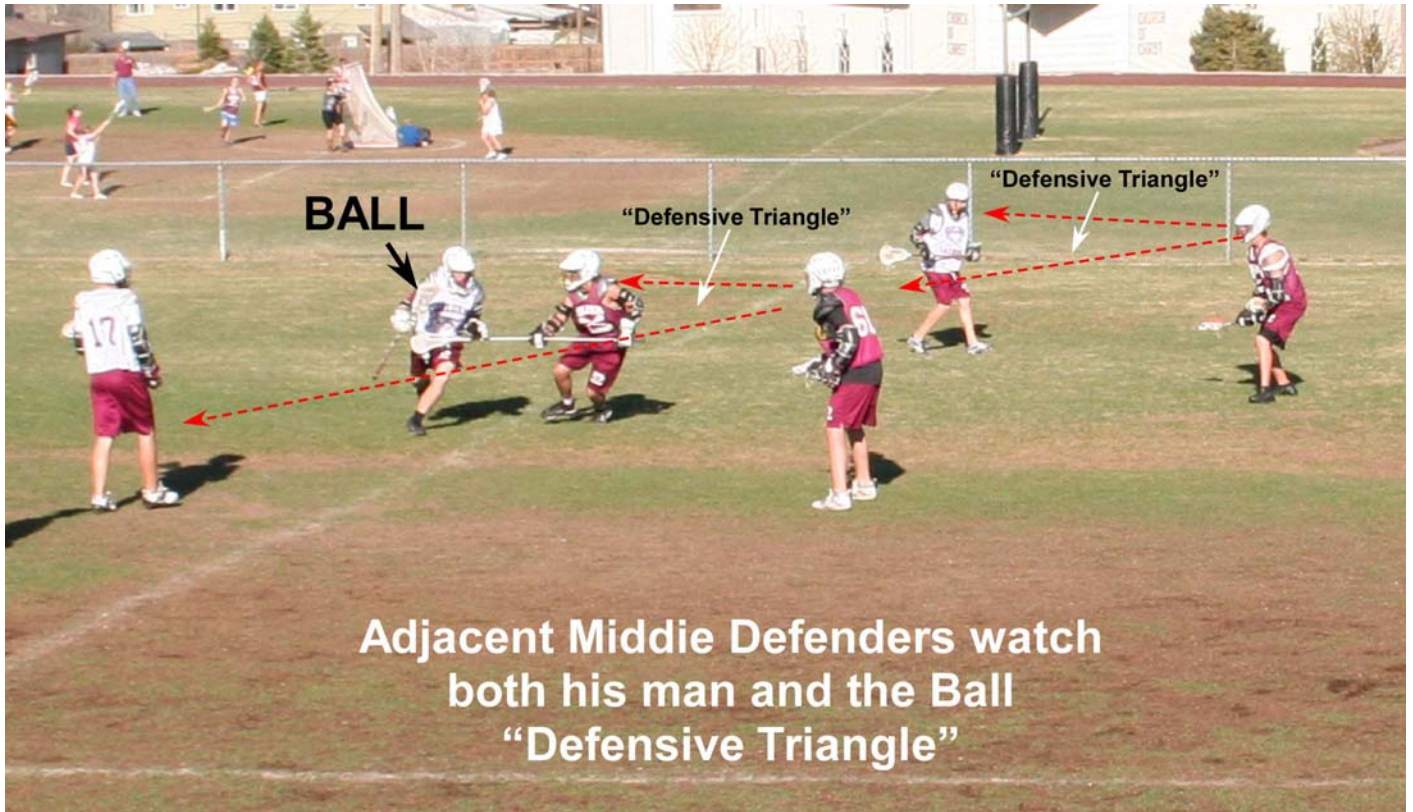
1. One of your Middies stays on the ball, hip to hip, staying between his man and the goal. His job is to:
  - a) Slow down the play down, allowing for the D to set up;
  - b) Push his Opponent away from the middle of the field and down the Alley.
2. Your Middie closest to the substitution box, runs off, switching out with a Defensive Longstick Middie (LSM) who is standing in the sub box ready to go.
3. The LSM and remaining Defensive Middie run back into the Defensive Box as fast as humanly possible, and set up to guard their respective men.

(The Middies must be taught to never go after the ball until they have position between their Opponent and the Goal. Players who go after a check at the expense of Defensive Rules #1 & 2, more often than not miss the check, get beat, requiring the five remaining Defensive players to defend 6 Opponents in a fast break situation. The "one swap" Middie defense (and more often than not, then fall down) cannot be tolerated.)

## A) The Concept of the "Defensive Triangle":

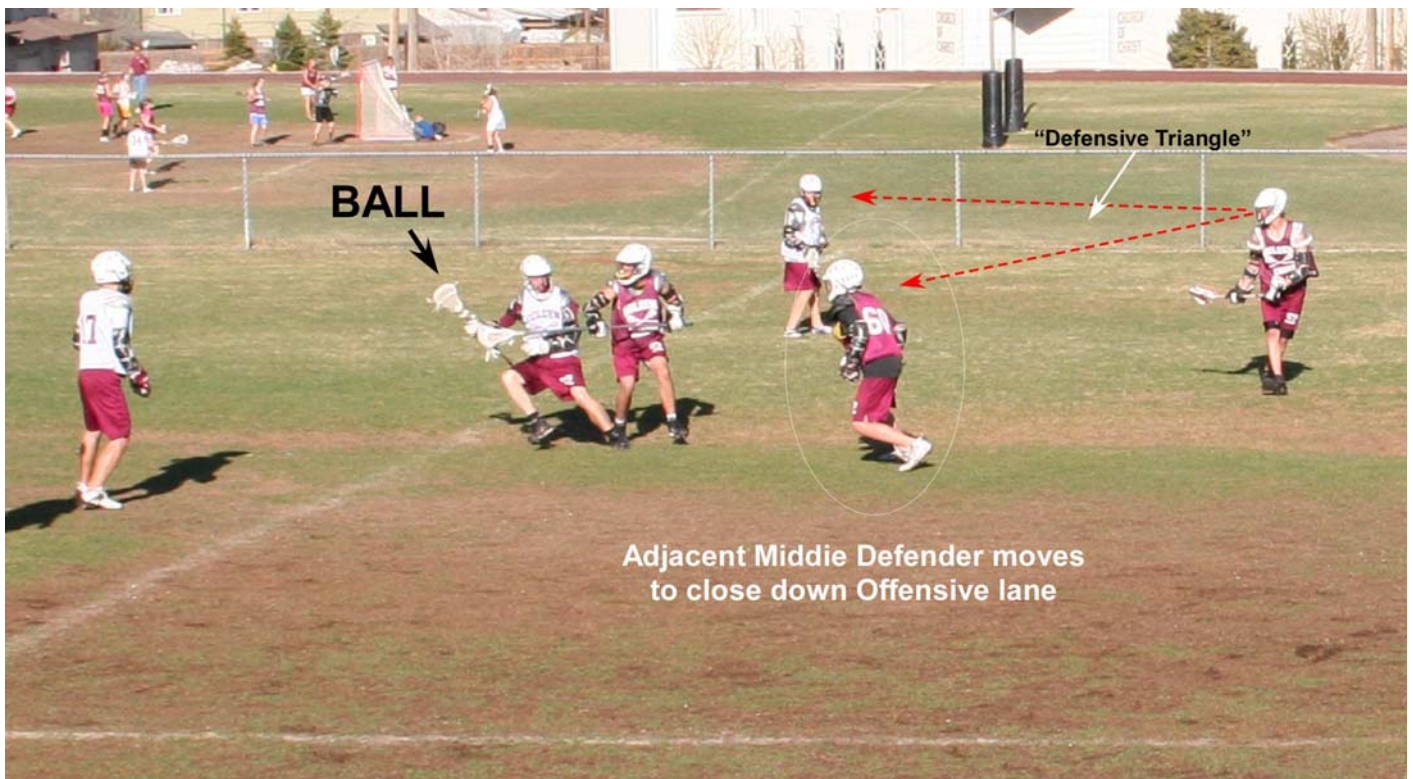
1. The Middies must be taught to set up and defend only in the BOX.
2. The Middies are not to chase the Opponent outside the Box unless the Opponent is a weak ball handler or the ball hits the ground.

Inside the box, one Middie addresses the Opponent with the ball, while the two remaining Middies each establish their Defensive Triangle.



**Rule of Thumb:** When the Ball is above GLE, each Defender who are not addressing the ball pushes his butt back towards the Goal to place himself in position to help. The Defender is trying to establish a line of sight where he can both see his man as well as the Ball at the same time.

In the event the Defender addressing the Ball needs help, the Adjacent Defender can quickly come to assistance shutting down the Offensive lane:





This Adjacent Man help also applies to Defensive Middies assisting an Adjacent LSD:



Once the Opponent's advance has been halted, effort must be made to extract the ball from the Opponent.



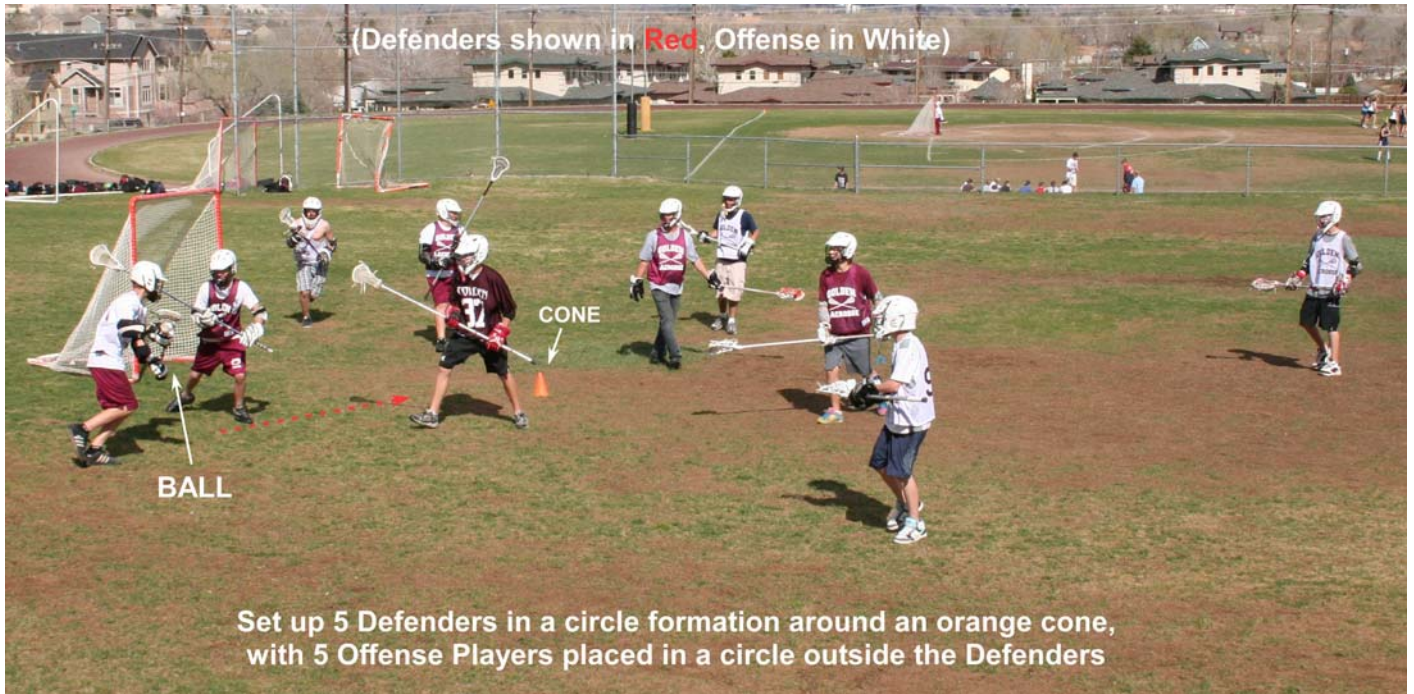
How do you teach the "Defensive Triangle" concept?

## DRILL: "KICK THE BUCKET":

In the early years, Defensive Middies like to stand and stare at their Opponent they are guarding, even though the ball may be sitting on the ground next to their feet. "Kick the Bucket" drill is one of the most effective drills to teach Adjacent Man help.

1. First, you place a red cone on the field;
2. Take 5 players, place them in a circle around the cone, and they are the "Defenders of the Cone";
3. Take 5 Offense players and place them in a circle on the outside of the Defenders;
4. Give the Ball to the Offense;
5. All the Offensive Player with the Ball needs to do is kick over the cone while he has possession of the ball;
6. All the Defenders have to do is keep that from happening:





7. The Offense needs move the ball and test every point of the Defense.





If unsuccessful, the Offense works the ball around the circle and the Defenders reset, with sticks up in the passing lanes.



The Offense continues to test the Defense at every point in the circle.

Once the Offense kicks over the Cone, the two groups switch sides and the Offense plays D and visa Versa.

Run this drill early in the season and often. The Players will soon see that the key to protecting the cone is Adjacent Man help. Once that concept is realized, teaching the players to establish “Defensive Triangles” becomes obvious to them.

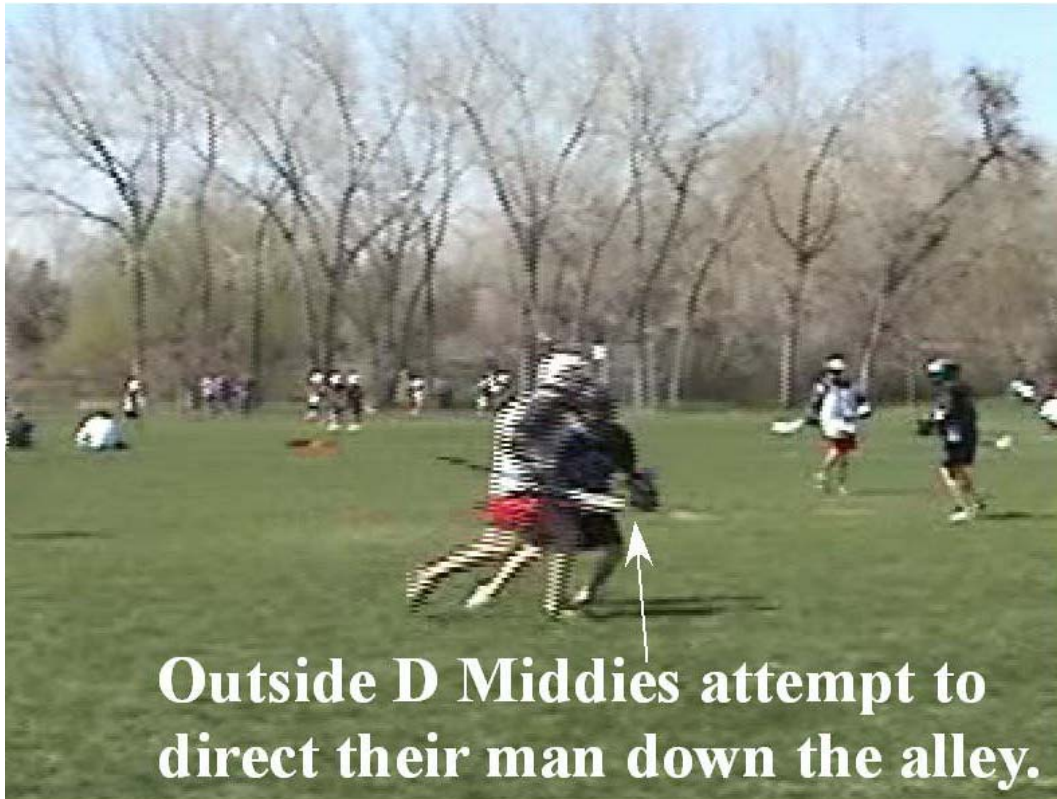
Offensively, the players realize that when they are double teamed, someone else is open. As the season progresses, this exercise becomes increasingly competitive.



Inside the Defensive Area box, all D Middies must stick to his respective man, staying between his man and the goal. Any time the Offensive Middies move, the Defensive MIDDIE must stick with his man. Movement is due to an Offensive Play being set up.

## **B) The Concept of Pushing their Opponent down the Alley:**

Given the choice, the outside D Middies position their stance and direct the OBH down the outside alleys.





## C) Miscellaneous Skills and Concepts:

### 1) PUSH THE OPPOSING PLAYER OUT-OF-BOUNDS

When the OBH is close to the side lines, the Defensive Middie needs to attempt to force the OBH out of bounds. Accomplishing this task creates a turnover.

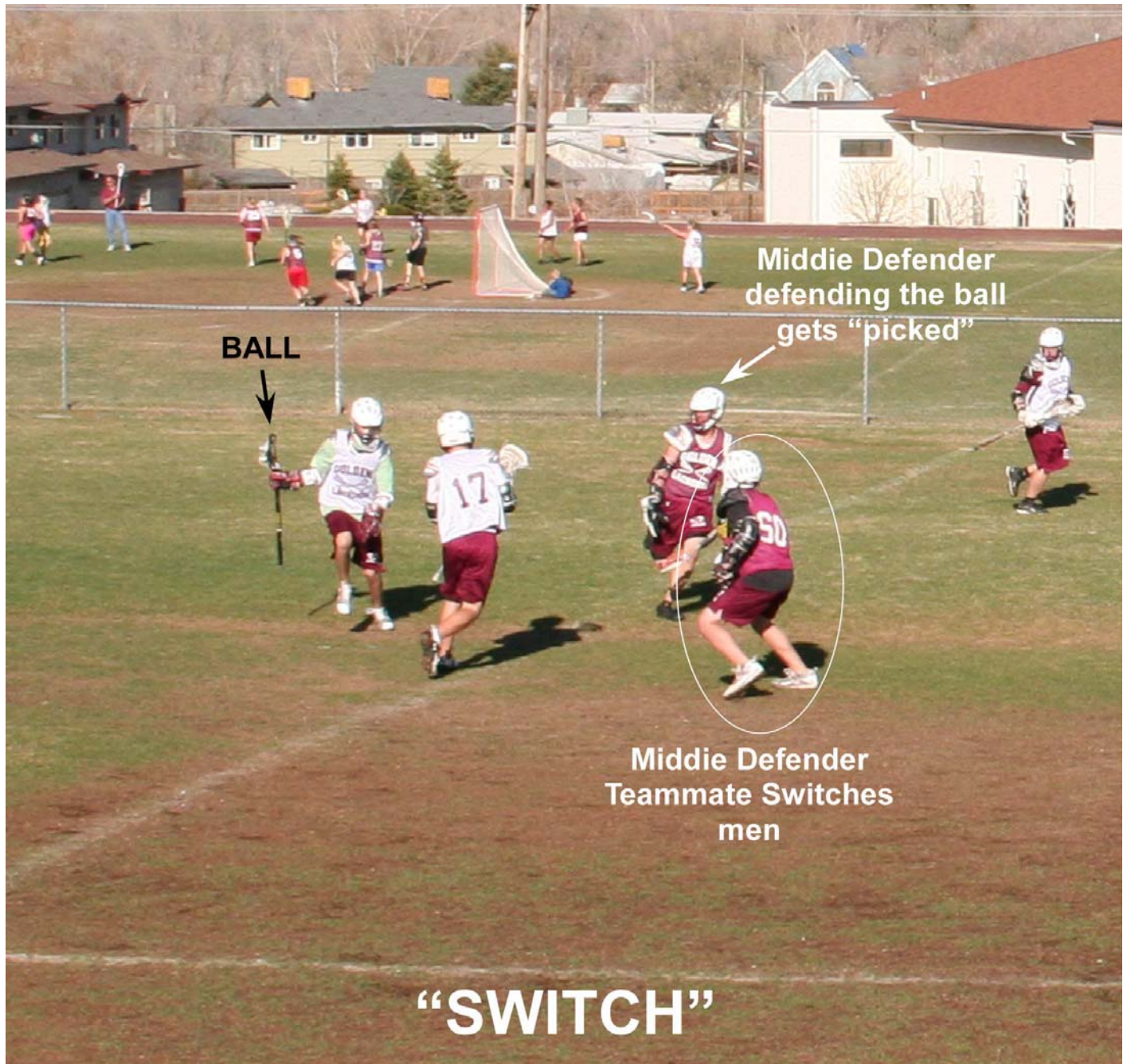


Often the contact will make the OBH lose his balance.



## 2) DEFENSIVE MIDDIE SWITCHES

D Middie switches occur when the Offense places an effective pick on a D Middie guarding the OBH. When the D Middie sees that his man he is guarding setting a pick, he yells out “Pick” to inform the D Middie guarding the OBH. (Often the D Middie guarding the OBH does not see the pick coming because he is facing the OBH.) As the pick occurs, the D Middie yells “Switch” to the D Middie guarding the OBH, each D Middie switches to guard the other man’s Offensive player and yells “I got yours” in order not to end up with two men guarding the same man.







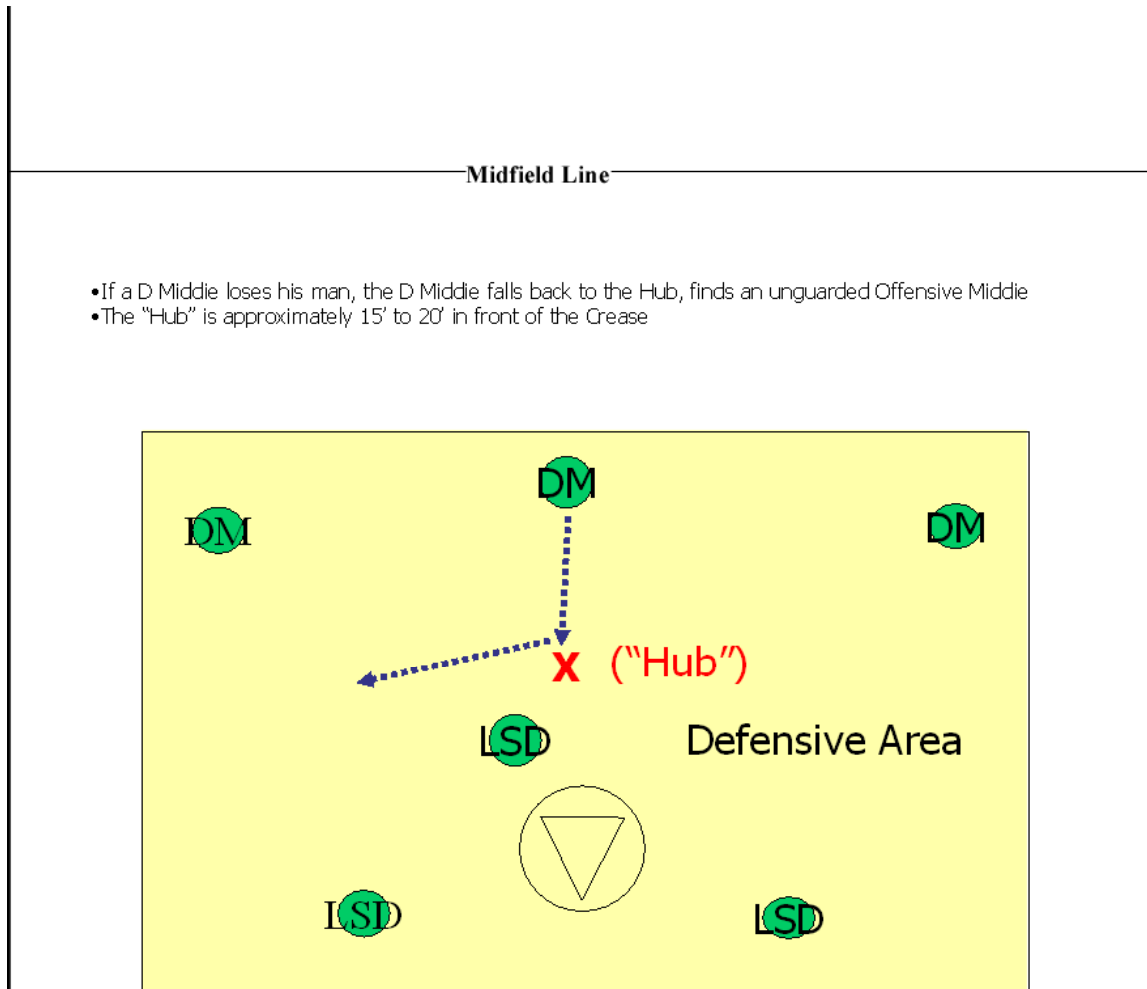
Each Middle Defender now defends their new Opponent.  
The Offensive ball handler always remains covered.



### 3) WHEN LOST, GO TO THE "HUB"

Often the Defensive Middie will lose his man due to substitutions, an effective Offensive pick and movement, field chaos etc. In the event any of the D Middies lose the Offensive Middie they are guarding, the D Middie needs to run to area 15' to 20' directly in front of the crease (called the "Hub") and locate an unguarded Offensive Middie.

When the D Middie runs to the Hub, it helps to choke off the area in front of the crease and will allow the D Middie to quickly locate and get back onto his man.



# LONGSTICK DEFENSE IN THE BOX



## PHILOSOPHY:

The Longstick Defenders have a complicated tough job, and are the last line of defense before the shot.

- Don't switch hands: keep the stick in the strong hand (except in certain cases as outlined herein);
- Keep the stick head up, and in the passing lanes;
- Keep your head on a swivel, watching the Ball, your Opponent, and play development at the same time.

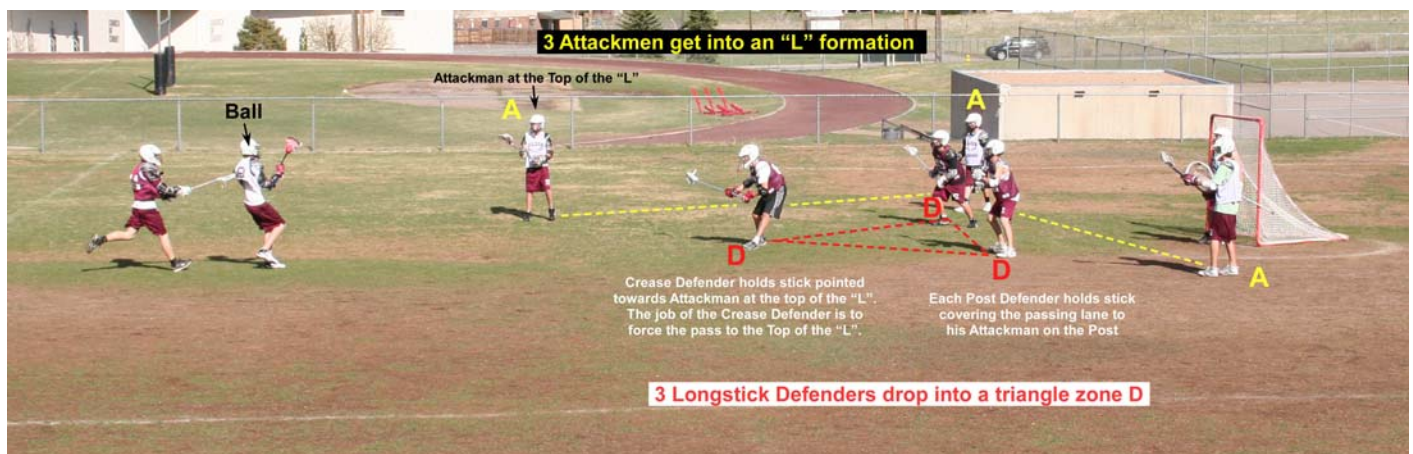
This is a pressure Defense. Any time the Ball is in the Defensive end of the field within the Box, we pressure the ball with the confidence because we know your teammates are positioned to back you up.

## A) FAST BREAK DEFENSE

A Fast Break occurs when one or more of the D middies is not defending his respective man after a turn over or face off. This means the 3 LSD must guard 4 to 5 offensive players. This will be accomplished by Fast Break Defense. This is like trying to place a Band-Aid on a deep wound, however you are just trying to buy a few seconds to get your Defensive Middies set back up into a defensive position.

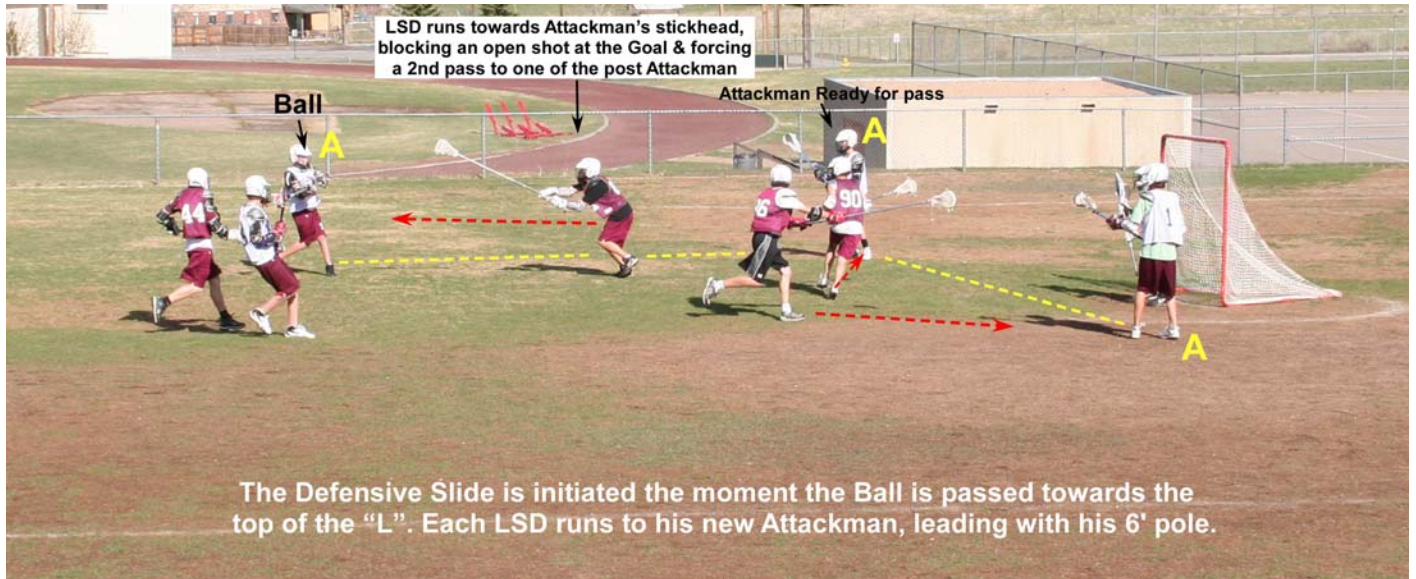
Upon the onset of a Fast Break:

1. The Crease LSD or Goalie yells "Fast Break";
2. Immediately the three LSDs fall back into a Triangle Zone D;

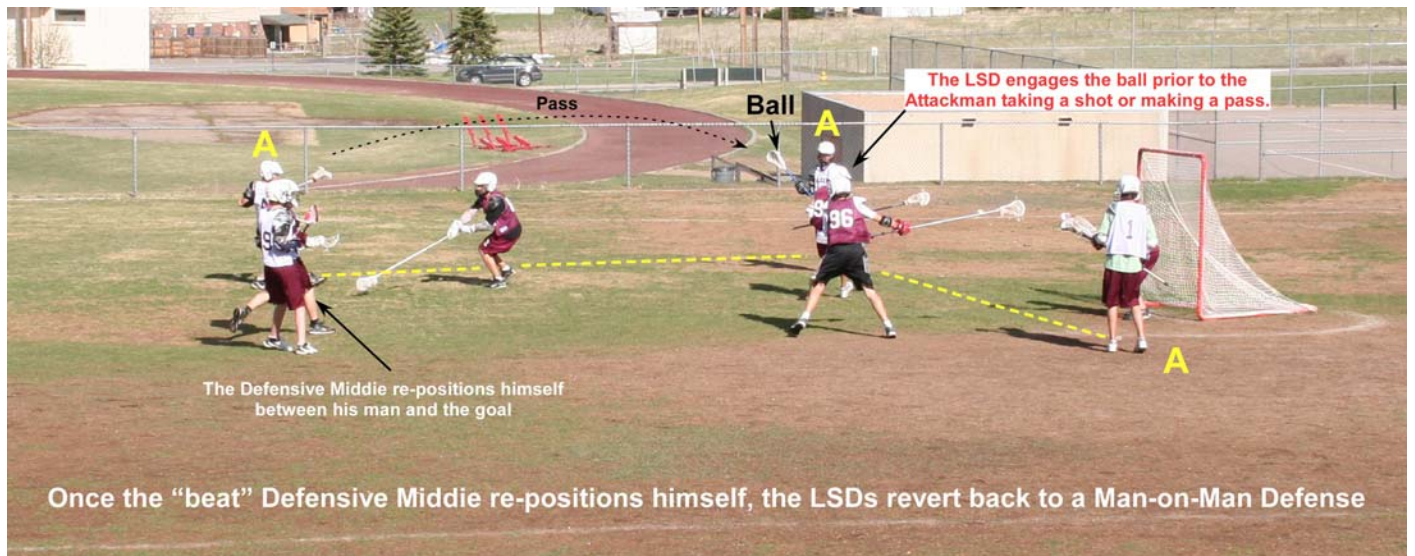


3. In most cases, the Opposing Team's Attack will fall into an "L" position;
4. The Crease LSD takes Point;
5. The remaining 2 LSD run to their Post positions and hold their sticks up in the passing lanes to cover their respective Attackmen positioned on the Posts (this is one case where the LSD can switch hands);
6. The job of the Crease LSD is to force the Fast Break Player to throw the ball to his Attackman at the top of the "L";





7. Immediately upon the pass to the Top of the "L", the same side Post LSD immediately leaves his man, runs to the ball holding his stick out. The stick will arrive 6' quicker than the LSD's body.



2. **Immediately** upon the pass, the Ball-side LSD leaves his Attackman on the post and charges the Offensive player receiving the pass.



## ONE EXAMPLE OF A BAD FAST BREAK DEFENSE:

1. The LSDs fall into a Defensive Zone Triangle, however the one Post LSD is playing his Post Attackman soft, leaving the Attackman open to receive a pass;
2. The Crease LSD correctly forces the pass, however the pass is NOT thrown to the Top of the "L", but to the open Post Attackman;



3. There are **NO** Slides if the pass is not made to the Top of the "L";
4. As shown in this example, the one Post LSD incorrectly initiates the slide across the goal;







# POSITIONING IN THE DEFENSIVE BOX

The positioning of the Defense is dependent upon the set up of the Opponent's offense. For this discussion, we will assume the Opponent is set up in a 3-2-1 Offense with one Attackman behind the Goal at "X".

1. Only defend the area within the Defensive box;
2. Place your Longstick Middie (LSM) at top center;
3. Place both of your Defensive Middies off of their respective Middies, cheated in towards both the Imaginary Center Line and the goal (to act as Adjacent man help if needed);
4. Your Crease LSD defends the Attackman at "X", however is positioned in front of the crease when the ball is above GLE;
5. Each of your Post LSDs are cheated in towards the Imaginary Center Line;
6. Every Defender not On-Ball is set up in a Defensive Triangle;



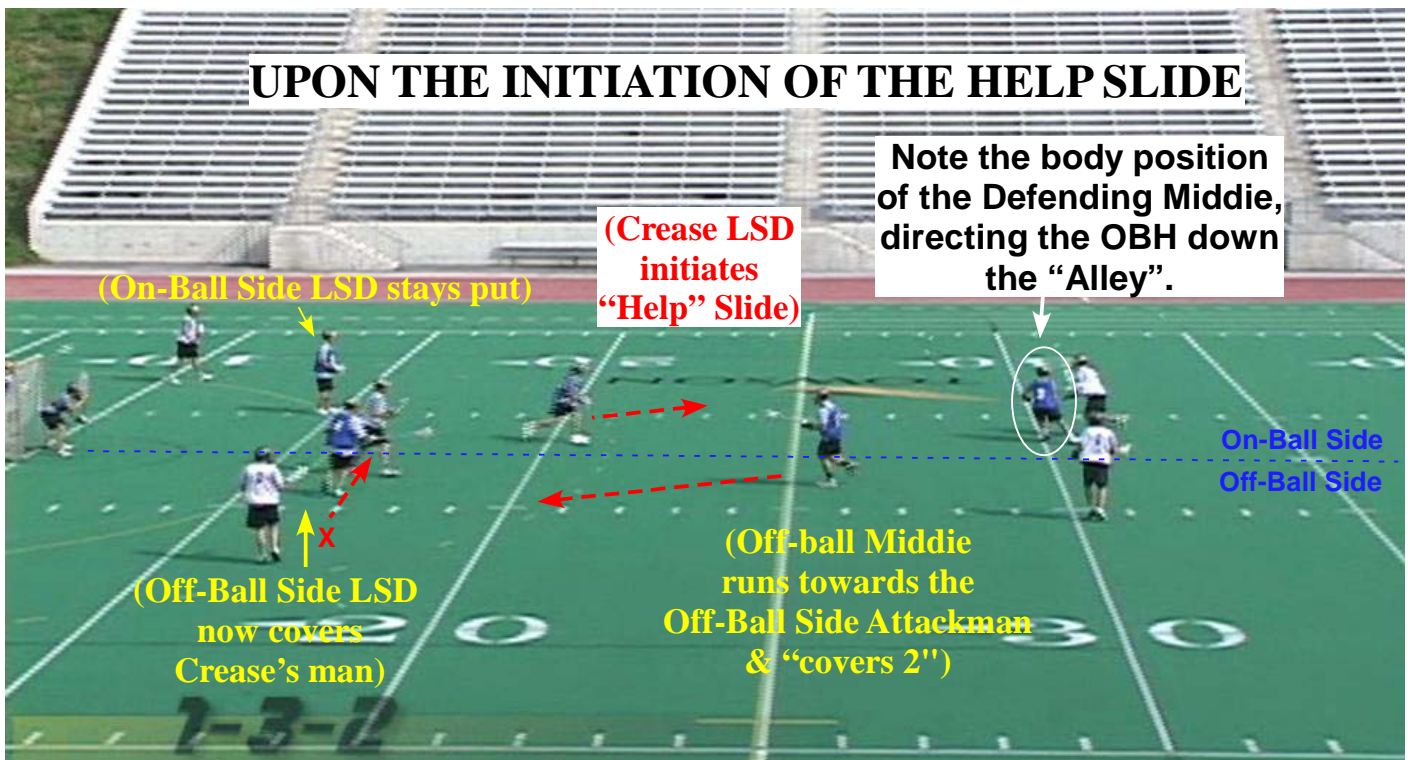
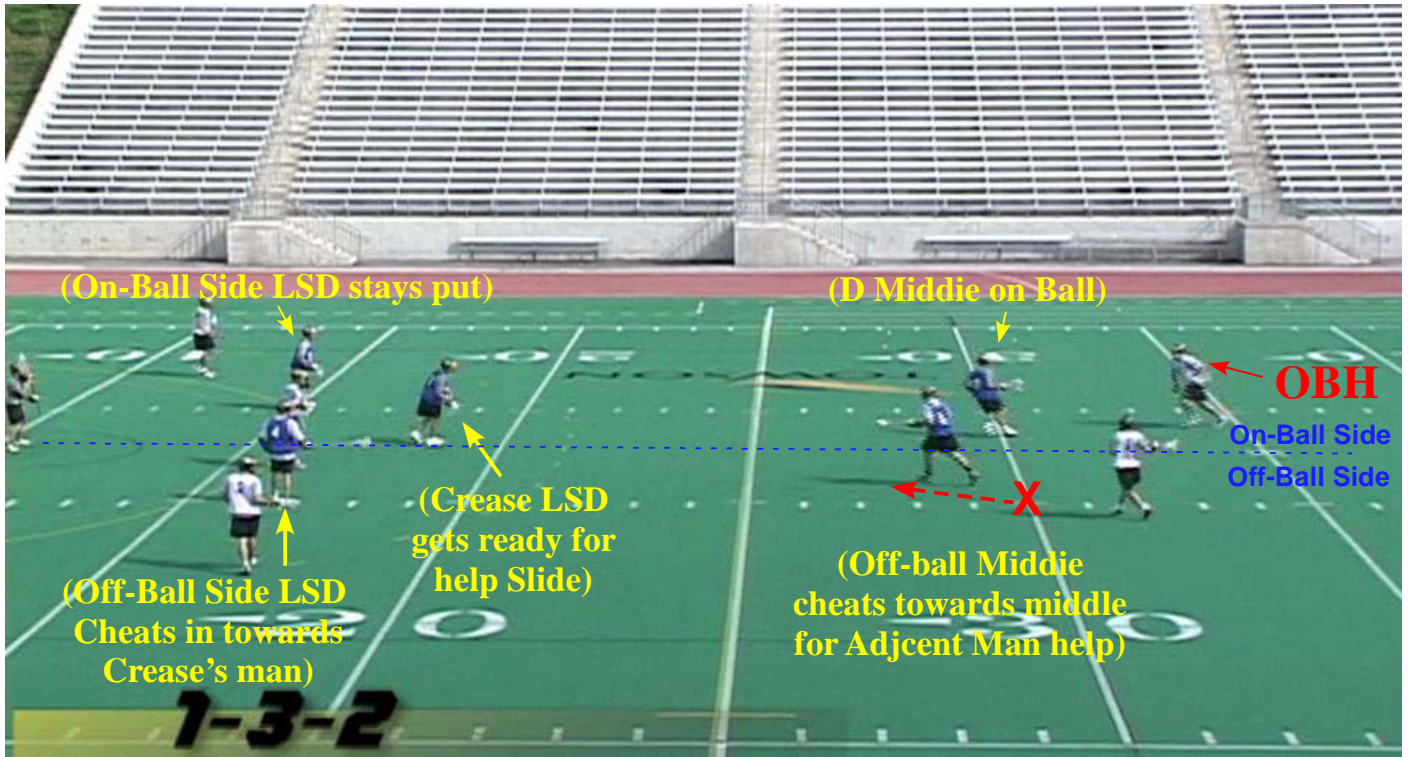
7. When the ball is passed to one of the top corner Offensive Middies, the LSM moves off of his man, cheating both back towards the Goal and the Ball;
8. The corner Defensive Middie moves out on the Ball;
9. All Off-Ball Side Defenders need to cheat in towards the Imaginary Center Line
10. All Defenders Off-Ball constantly reset their respective Defensive Triangles.





# CREASE SLIDE

1. The initial Help slide initiates from the Crease LSD;
2. In this example, a 2-3-1 Offense is set up;
3. The LSM is positioned top-right;
4. Once the Crease LSD initiates the help slide, the Off-Ball Side LSD picks up the Crease Attackman;
5. The Off-Ball LSM has to cover two: Off-Ball Side Attackman as well his top-side middle;

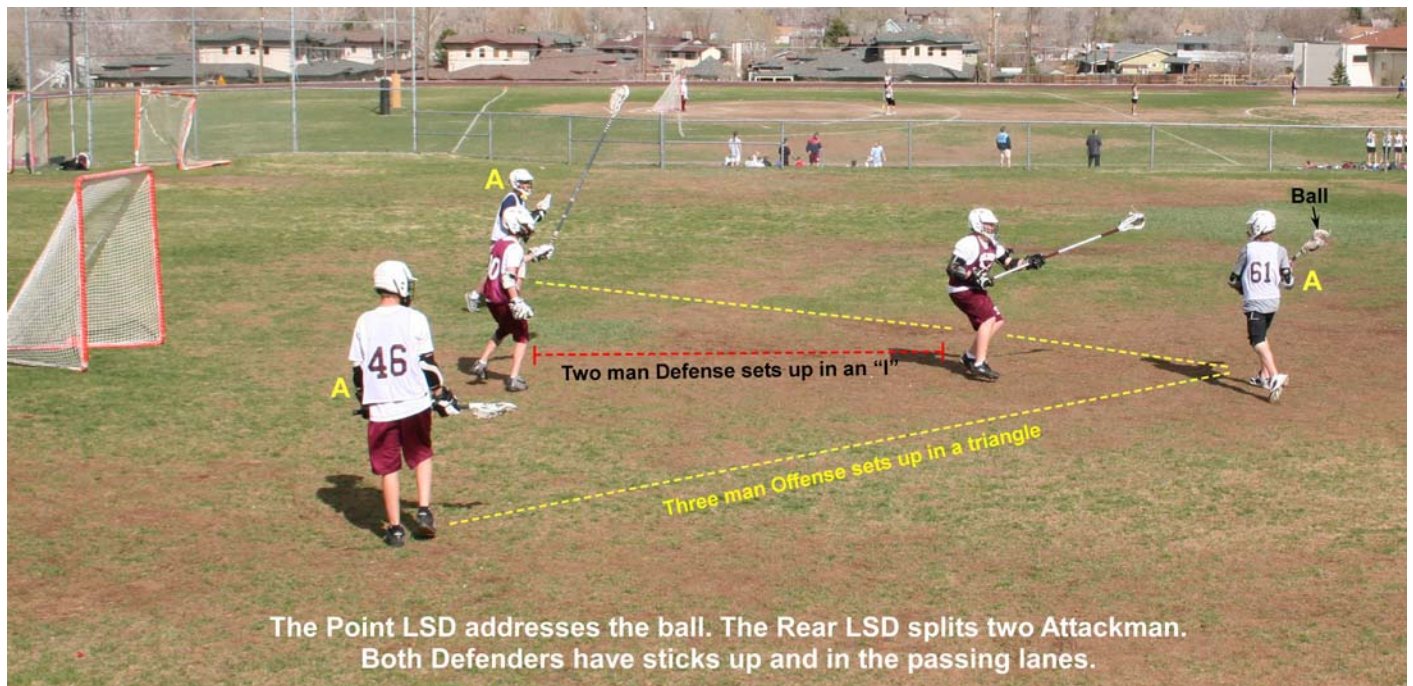




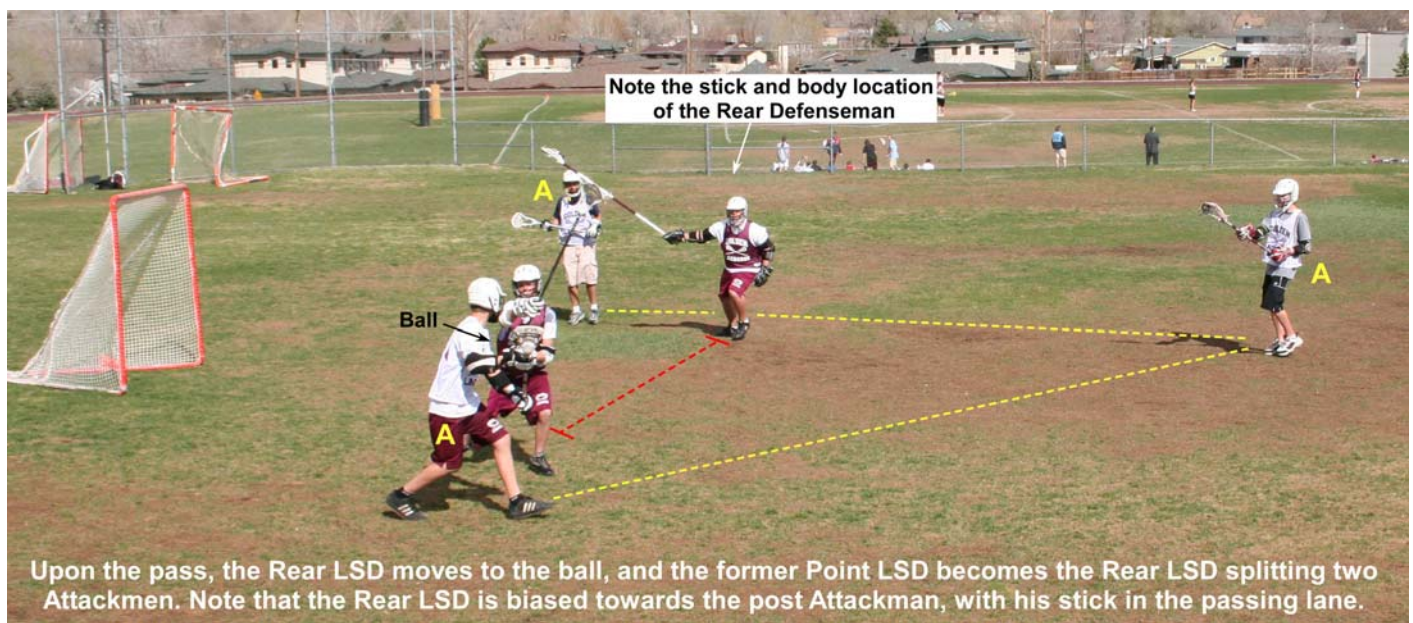
So how do you teach both LSD as well as Middies how to defend 2 Opponents?

## DRILL: "3 on 2":

1. Place three Offense in a Triangle in front of the goal;
2. Place 2 Defenders inside the Triangle;
3. The Ball starts at the top;
4. The Point Defender takes the Ball, and the Rear Defender takes 2;
5. Both Defenders have their sticks up in the passing lanes;



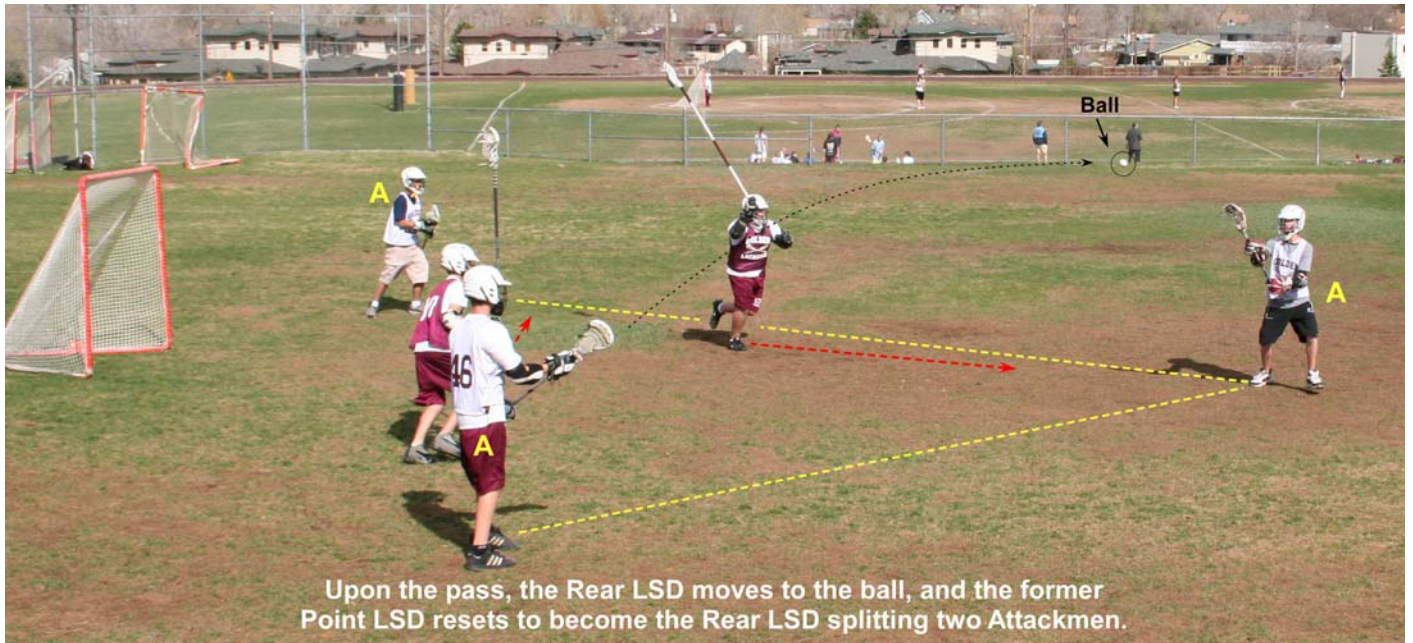
6. Upon the pass, the Rear Defender takes Ball, the former Point Defender takes 2, HOWEVER as shown below, with a position biased towards the Attackman nearest the post holding his stick in the passing lane;





7. Upon the pass to the top of the triangle, the Defenders reset.

*Run this drill with all LSD AND Middies to teach the concept of covering two.*



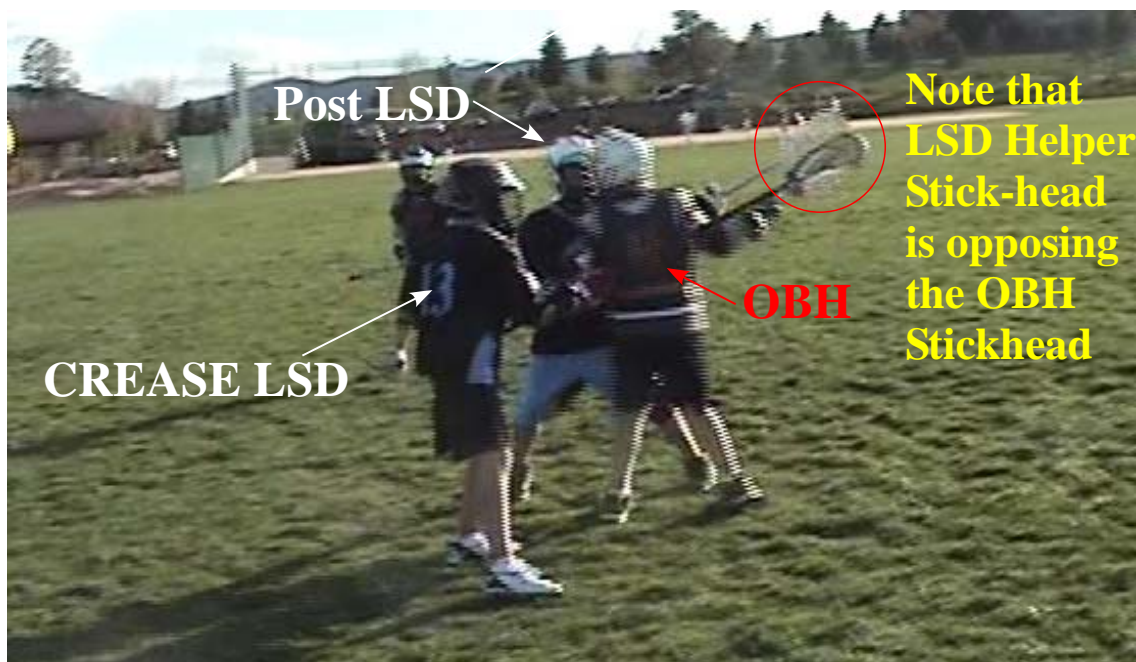


## BUST-THRU ADJACENT MAN SLIDE

The Bust-Thru by the OBH often occurs on a Fast Break Offense when the Opponent is charging towards the goal and the Crease LSD needs help. In this case, the Post LSD on the Ball-Side must leave his post position and charge the OBH.

Adjacent Man slides will result in an unguarded Attackman standing next the goal on the same side as the Ball. This allows for quick easy feeds to this Open Attackman and easy scoring opportunities. Therefore in order to successfully use effective Adjacent man slides, you must have 2<sup>nd</sup> and third slide support.

1. The moment the Post LSD leaves his man to assist, the Non-Ball side LSD must slide across in front of the Goal to cover the Ball-side Attackman;
2. The Off-Ball Side Middies need to cover two, with the bias being the Off-Ball Side Post Attackman;
3. The Post LSD must keep his stickhead in the passing lane and hit with his body.

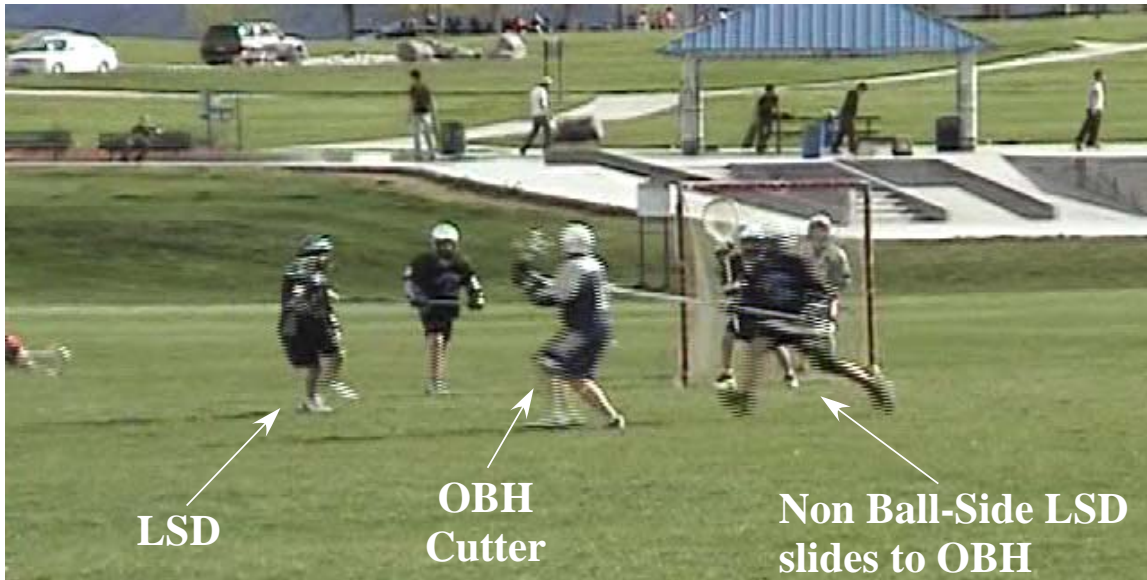


## COMA SLIDE

The “Come Across” Slide is used when there are no other Defenders available to help. This occurs when the LSM and the Crease LSD are both out of position to help. The Off-Ball Side LSD must leave his post position and charge the Ball.

This usually occurs when the Crease LSD is behind GLE, and a feed is made to a:

1. Offensive Middie cutter or to
2. A Post Attackman who is getting by the Post LSD.



The Off-Ball Side Middies need to then “Take 2”.

The easiest way to coach slides are to set the team up in various situations, then slowly walk through the required slides.

Running repeated drills and establishing communication between the Defense are the keys to establishing a great defensive team.



## MISCELLANEOUS

### NEVER 3 LONG STICKS TOGETHER

Never should there be 3 LSD in a ball brawl. There should always be at least one LSD in the Crease area.

- If 2 LSD are in a fight for ball possession, as the D Middies take over, the LSD should roll back to their positions;
- If 2 LSD are in a ball brawl, one of the 2 LSD needs to always be positioned between the ball and the goal.



### BALL BEHIND GLE

- Immediately after the ball thrown or carried behind the goal the 3 LSD need to have “sticks up”. The purpose is to limit passing lanes, intercept any pass and be ready for a check-down onto an offensive player’s stick. On any “check Down” call from the Goalie, the defense checks down on the nearest offensive man’s stick.



“V” Hold



Stick Technique #2

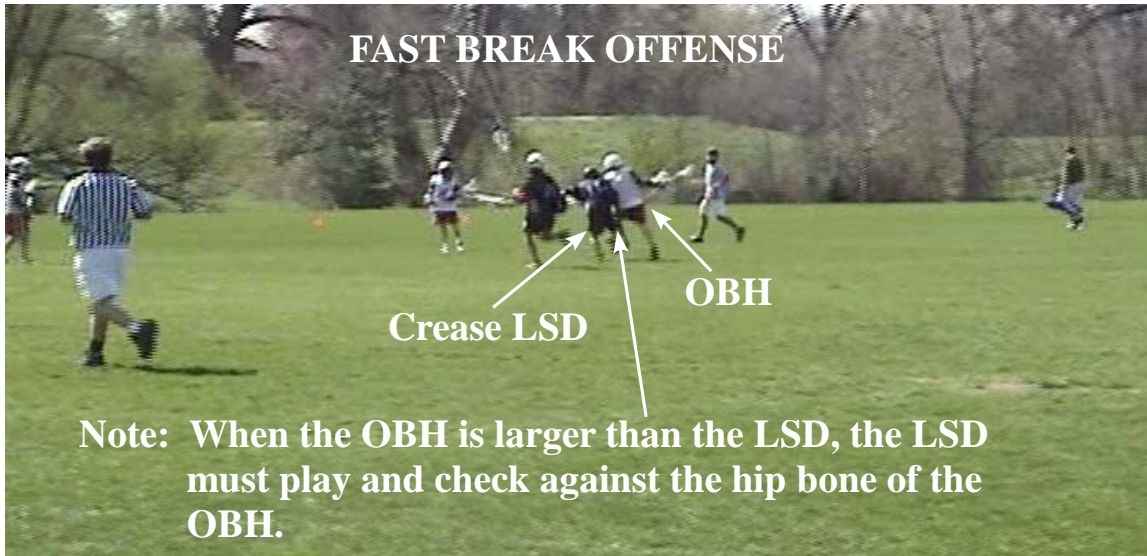


B. In the event the respective ball-side post LSD has not contained the OBH by GLE, the Crease LSD must charge and make contact with the OBH by the time the OBH reaches GLE. At the same time as the crease LSD slides to help, the non-ball side LSD must slide to the Offensive player being guarded by the crease LSD. The non-ball side LSD must have his stick up, stickhead on the O player side, ready to intercept a pass or check-down.



## D. WHEN THE OBH IS LARGER THAN THE CREASE LSD

In those cases where the Opponent is physically larger than the Crease LSD, or it is too tight or late to check the Opponent's stick, the Defender needs to check against the hip bone of the OBH. This technique slightly bends the back of the OBH, effectively taking away some of his torso strength out of a shot or pass and usually causes an early release.



## FAILED CLEARING PASS PLAY

In the event the Clearing Pass is dropped or intercepted, the LSD must **immediately** fall back to the goal and establish a 3-on-2 Defensive I formation (covered earlier).





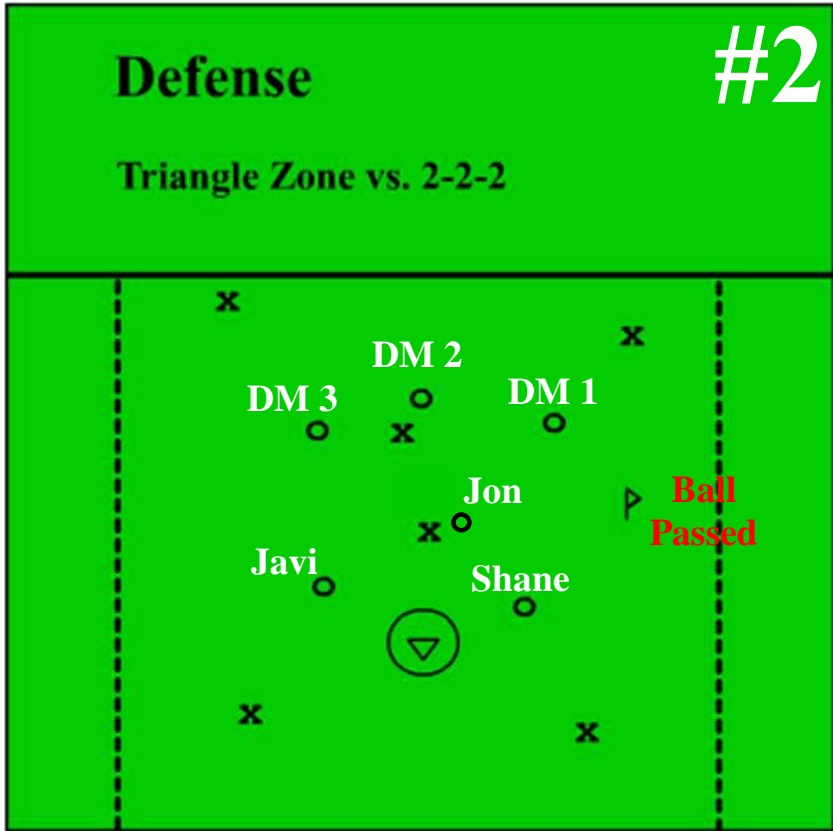
## CHASE THE BALL OUT OF BOUNDS

When a shot is made at the goal, but misses, and goes out-of-bounds, the player whose body is closest to that point at the time the ball crosses the line takes possession of the ball. Always try to be the first.

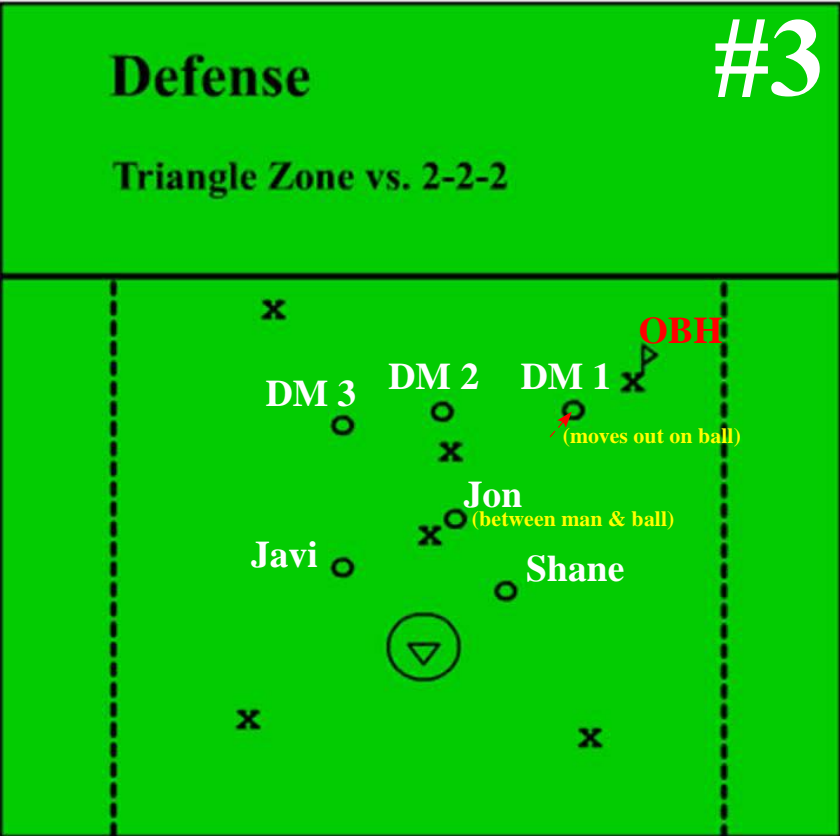








Usually, the middle D MIDDLE (DM2) cheats a bit towards the middle of the field until the ball enters into his zone. He is defending inside passes, sweeps and outside cutters.



# Defense

# #4

## Triangle Zone vs. 2-2-2



# Defense

# #5

## Triangle Zone vs. 2-2-2

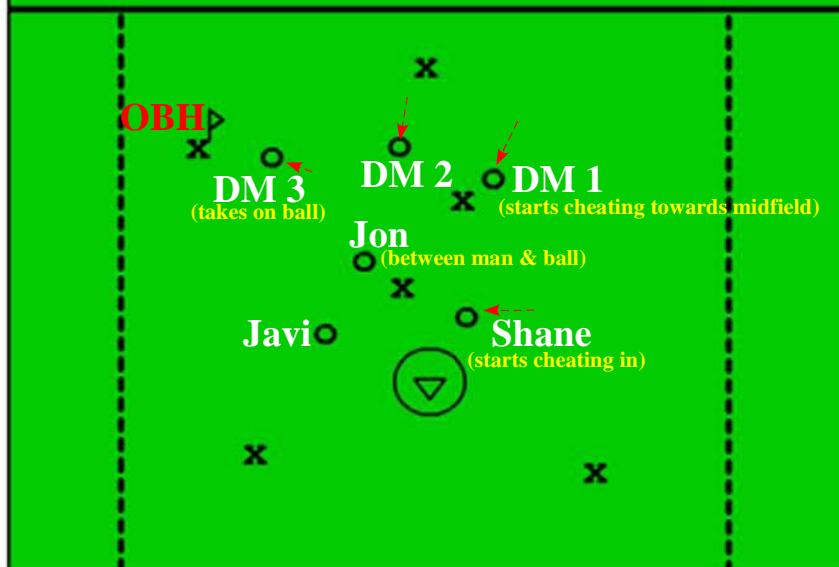




# Defense

# #6

## Triangle Zone vs. 2-2-2



NEED:

1. Man Down with pics
2. Goalie Talk
3. Behind GLE defensive zones
4. Good V-Hold pics
5. GB Swarm pics
6. Communication "Hot", Got your Back etc
7. Clears
8. Stickwork
9. ..

**GOOD LUCK PIT BULLS!**





## One of the Best On-Line Collections of Lacrosse Tips

### 27 Tips For Defensemen

1. Don't rush an attack man after he has caught the ball. If he is receiving a rather long pass and you are sure you can reach him before the ball, go after him, checking his stick and hitting him with your body.
2. As a pass is made to the man you are playing, move out to cover him as the ball is moving to him, so that you are in position as he catches it. Don't wait until he has caught the ball, and then move out on him.
3. Never take a step into a man while playing him on defense.
4. Once the attack man has the ball, worry him plenty by poke checking, etc., don't give much chance to look over his field, make him worry about you. Don't force or rush him however. There is a big difference between worrying a man and forcing or rushing him. Make the attack make the first move.
5. When not poking at the man with ball, keep your stick a little above the height of your attack man's shoulder. Don't ever carry it at your side, KEEP IT UP!
6. When your man hasn't got the ball, always play slightly to the ball side of him, so that you gain a step as he cuts toward the ball. If he cuts away from the ball, the pass must go over your head which leaves you in good position to intercept or check.
7. When your man hasn't got the ball, stand sideways to the man and ball. You must use split vision watching both man and ball.
8. There must be plenty of talk on defense, this is important. The following are the most important examples: a) The man on each side of the ball must let the man on the ball know if he is-backed up. b) If a man leaves to back up he must let the defense know he is leaving, so that they may shift. c) The man playing the ball must holler, "I've got-the ball". d) If a man cuts, the defense man playing him should holler "man cutting" so that he alerts the rest of the defense for a possible switch. e) If a switch is necessary, both men call "SWITCH".
9. If a man leaves to back up on a dodge, the whole defense slides a man, leaving the man farthest from the ball open.
10. Only in extreme cases, should the defense man on the crease leave to back up. Example: To stop a play that would end up in a score.
11. Never cross your feet while playing an attack man unless you are forced to run to keep up with him.
12. Never throw a ball just to get rid of it.
13. Always scoop a loose ball. Never draw it. If there is a crowd, go through and either kick it or scoop it up.
14. When you check, make your check short and hard, making your check across the man's forearm and following through with your body. Never raise your stick high to check.
15. If a man dodges you, keep after him. You should catch him as your backer comes in from the front.
16. Never pass a ball across in front of your goal.
17. If you are after a loose ball, but your attack man is ahead of you, press him hard if you cannot come up with the ball, but don't give him the opportunity to go around you.
18. After the man you are playing throws a ball, step back two steps quickly and be ready for a cut. Also always look in the direction of the ball as you drop off. Don't turn your back on the ball.
19. As the man you are playing starts a pass, check across his arms, but don't step in.

20. A. If the ball is out front, and your man is behind the goal, play on the pipe of the cage on the side of the goal your man is on. B. If the ball is behind the goal and your man is behind also although without the ball, go behind with him.
21. If you ever switch, STAY WITH THAT MAN until your team gets the ball or you have to switch again.
22. When clearing the ball, as you catch the ball, circle away from your stick side if you are moving in to receive the pass.
23. Never let an attack man clamp your stick. If you are on the crease on a screen shot, stop it or catch it, if you can't do either then move so that your goalie can see it.
24. Once the other team has cleared the ball, all defense men must drop in fast, RUN HARD --THIS IS ONE TIME YOU CANNOT LOAF.
25. On clears, make all passes sharp, away from the (attack man) and, as a general rule, to the nearest open man.
26. On a clear, when making a pass to a man who is coming in to meet the ball throw at his face, so that he catches the ball in front of him, making it hard for a (attack man) to check him.
27. If the ball is rolling toward the midfield line, NEVER ALLOW your attack man to beat you to the ball. Be alert, use your stick to goose the ball to teammate. Don't let the attack man clamp your stick or lift up so ball goes under and through. Remember, if the ball is 5 yards away or less you can use your body for position. Don't hit from the rear and don't go offside.

## **Defensive Tips from the Best: Tommy Smith**

**University of Virginia; All-American 1995, 1996, 1997**

(from a recent interview by [Great Atlantic Lacrosse](#))

### **Communication is the key**

The number one key to being an All American defenseman, is the communication you have on the field between yourself and the rest of your teammates. Communication can make good players great and great players All-Americans. It's amazing how easy team defense can be with everybody (goalies and short stick midfielders) barking out calls to their fellow teammates. It is even more amazing how you can intimidate an offense just by how loud you can yell out a call (even if a defender is beat). Everyone in the defensive end should be yelling a call. Whether it's the man on the ball (yell "ME"), the players off the ball (yell "I'VE GOTCHA LEFT/RIGHT"), or the slide man (yell "I'M HOT), every player is communicating and working together as a team.

### **One-on-One**

This can be a defenseman's dream or nightmare. With that aside it is definitely the one time a defenseman has an opportunity to show his athletic ability. There are a couple of things for a defenseman to keep in mind when going one-on-one with an offensive player. The first thing that defensemen should focus on is their "ready position" when preparing for a good one-on-one battle. Defensemen should always have a slight bend to their knees, almost as if they are sitting in a chair. Secondly, defensemen should also always have their sticks out in front of them, not at their waist, this way they are ready to engage their attackman. Finally, defensemen must play on the balls of their feet, not on the back of their heels.

### **Attacking Defense**

My final tip for any defensemen would be to play an attacking style of defense. A lot of defensemen, especially at the collegiate level, will get beat for goals because they are too worried about taking the ball away from their man. Remember, your job as a defenseman is to stop your opponent FIRST. Be physical and initiate the contact and never play on your heels. You have a six foot stick in your hand, make sure you take advantage of this luxury. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of the poke check. Keep poking the bottom hand of the attackman. This will drive him crazy! Attackmen cannot

stand physical play; so BE THE AGGRESSOR! Your physical play will bother the attackman so much that it will take him out of his game. You can develop take-away checks such as the over-the-head or the "kayak" later on, but the poke check still remains the most effective check in one's arsenal.

**Closing Tip**

Remember, coaches love aggressive defenseman, however know your opponents and weaknesses and more importantly your own. Keep practicing and best of luck with your game.



# FRESHMEN DEFENSE

## 1. ATTACK / MIDDIES

- Groundball Swarm
- Man Ride

## 2. MIDDIE D

- One man on ball, 2 into the box
- Body position, push to weak hand, defensive triangle
- Pushing down alley
- Adjacent man help
- Longstick middie substitution
- Off-ball field position
- Switch on picks
- Stick up, in passing lanes
- Reading the offensive
- 

## 3. LONGSTICK D

- Fundamentals' of the House Defense
- Fast Break slides
- Middie Bust Slides
- Coma Slides and other help slides
- Man-down D
- Zone D
- Behind GLE three-area Defense
- 1 on 1 D techniques
- 3 on 2 D
- Effective Clears
- Walk the dog
- 4 Dodges
- 4 checks (Poke, slap, wrap and trailing)
- Head on swivel
- Sticks up, sticks to the inside
- Communication
- After score, 3 poles and goalie talk how to correct situation
- Clockwise vs. Counterclockwise ball movement techniques
- V-Holds

## 4. Team Concepts

- 3 Keys of D: (1) Stay between Man and goal, (2) off hand or push to bad part of the field, (3) lastly, go for the ball only after 1 and 2 are accomplished. No hatchet swipes & fall down
- Trailing checks
- Lifting arm of offensive player
- Rabbit hole
- Effective Rides