

Dialing in your "D"

(1.5 hr indoor practice, can be used outside)

by Lynne Nolan, 2-10-2015

Coaches Note: The cafeteria is NOT ideal space, but we do what we can.

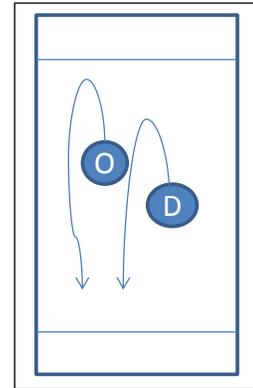
Target: Players will improve their defensive body position and understanding of tracking their opponent.

Here's how we got there: (You can do your regular team warm-up, run, stretch, plyos, etc. Or focus on shuffling feet, moving backwards and forwards) Then,

- 1) Warm-up all throws with a partner or in groups of three. Backhands, forehands, overheads.
During this time some individual technique coaching can occur. (We continued working on our forehands.)
- 2) STATION #1 : Sockeye Drill - from USAU Coaching Clinic #1

In this drill a 10 x 20 area is coned. We placed a second set of cones, 3 ft in from the end lines to make a mini-endzone.
Offense "O" jukes several times, then sprints towards either endzone.
Defense "D" tries to stay close and beat "O" across the end line.

Repeat several times with players switching roles. No discs are used.
(My drawing doesn't do this justice.)



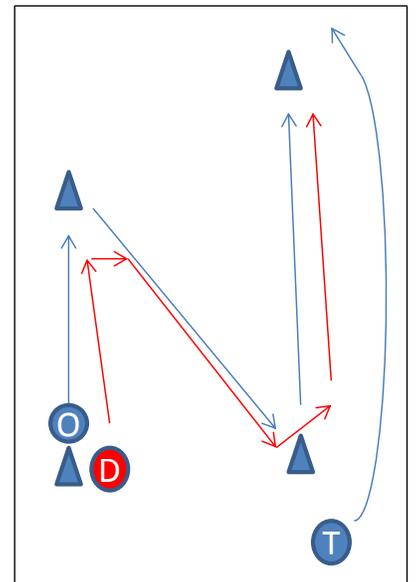
(We split the café in two and set up these two stations, after 10 min. we swapped sides.)

- 3) STATION #2 The "Dialing in the D" Drill – Defensive positioning focused on staying between the "O" and the Thrower – adapted from USAU Level 2 coaching clinic
To begin set cones in the shape of the letter "N" – the top right corner is farther away.
"O" and "D" lines are at the bottom left corner of the "N"
"T" line is at the bottom right corner of the "N"

Defender body position points:

- a. To start, D has right hand extended toward O, and left arm towards the thrower. D should be able to see both. D should NOT have back to thrower. (Arms don't have to remain extended, but I want to describe the position.)
- b. O runs to top left of "N", D follows but doesn't turn away from the thrower. At the cone, D opens left leg towards the thrower to change direction of body while keep O behind him. (He is fronting the receiver, never turning his back to the disc.) It takes a while for players to get the hang of this, but well worth learning it!
- c. When O turns again to sprint long, D follows as quickly as he can.
The thrower releases the disc.

Coaching points: keeping the thrower in sight, not turning your back,
Softening up as O slows to change direction, fronting, accelerating.



Phase 2: Remove the cone at the top left corner, and allow O to decide when they want to cut in. (Keeps the D honest – they are playing the player and not the cone.) I talked my O about making a decision and finishing a cut when they start it! Don't wiggle around out there, go somewhere! T can throw the disc on the cut IN or the cut OUT.

Phase 3: Add a marker, teach the importance of the Marker keeping the mark . (We did not have time for this.)

4) The 1 v 1 "Score in the Box" Drill (We set up two stations of this one drill).

Object: O needs to catch the disc in the box. The box is 5 ft by 5 ft.

D cannot play zone at the front of the box.

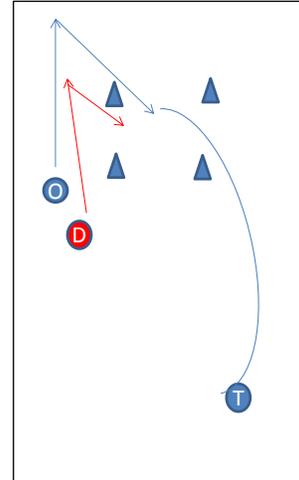
Set up an O and D line, so the next group is ready to go.

O went to T line. D went to the back of the O line, T went to D line.

Coaching points: O has the advantage, so make a cutting decision and go with it.

D if goes deep, be ready to soften up as he comes under.

T – timing is everything. (Again, we practiced forehands).



5) Score in the Box Scrimmage

Set two sets of 4 cones (5 ft by 5 ft) at opposite ends of the cafeteria/playing area. The cones must be 10 ft from any wall, so all sides are active or "inbounds".

Teams of 3 -5 depending on your space. It gets crowded quickly.

Coaching points: Look at your teammates, if they are cutting – then get out of the way! Anticipate the next cut. Do not "hangout in the endzone". One person running through great ! Two people hanging out+ 2 defenders = itty bitty space (spoken in the voice of the genie from Aladdin.) Move the disc around. Take your defender for a stroll, then cut under or back.

This practice can be developed to bring in many different aspects of the game.

I am of the humble opinion that if new players learn defensive fundamentals, they can really frustrate BETTER teams. So while I hesitate to share some essential elements that I know will be used against my own team. I believe in the greater good – let's show these kids how to play great Ultimate!