

## Play Without the Ball

The skills referenced to this point have all involved a ball carrier.

Ninety-percent of your offense consists of off-ball movement.

Therefore, it is crucial that your players know what to do when they don't have the ball.

Off-ball movement can consist of something as simple as a cut, or as complicated as a designed pick play.

For Level 1, we will focus on

- cutting
- creating space for players with the ball
- and on-ball picks

They are the basis of more advanced play without the ball, such as off-ball picks and posting, which are taught in Level 2 of the Coaching Education Program.

### **Teaching the Skill: Cutting**

Cutting is the movement of a player to a different area of the field while trying to lose his defender.

Cuts can allow a player to receive the ball in the open field or to get open for a potential shot.

There are five basic types of cuts: an inside cut, a backside cut, a "V" cut, a flip and a clear through.

An inside cut is precisely what it sounds like.

The cutter cuts inside of his defender, between him and the player with the ball.

A backside cut occurs when the player cuts behind the back of his defender.

(If coming from behind the cage, this is often called a backdoor cut.)

A "V" cut allows the player to get his hands free and create an offensive advantage.

He should take one or two steps forward in one direction to force his defender that way, then quickly break back out in the opposite

direction to receive the ball with the defender behind him.

A flip creates a partial-screen on the on-ball defender.

The cutter should cut towards the ball carrier and his defender.

The ball carrier can then flip the ball to him as he moves to the outside.

In a clear through, the cutter mirrors the ball carrier by cutting through the adjacent area towards which the ball carrier is headed and replacing the area from where the ball came.

### **Teaching the Skill: Creating Space for Players with the Ball**

When a teammate is dodging or feeding a cutter, the adjacent offensive player must maintain the same distance between him and the ball carrier.

Instruct an off-ball player to do so by backpedaling or shuffling laterally.

Otherwise, he might draw his defender to the ball carrier for a double team.

With sufficient space, the ball carrier is free to continue his progression one-on-one, or he could draw a slide from the adjacent defender, leaving the off-ball player open for a draw-and-dump goal.

### **Teaching the Skill: On-Ball Picks**

Picks in lacrosse are used the same way they are used in basketball – an offensive player uses his body to screen a defender on one of his teammates, who can then run into free space unabated.

Picks are intended for players who are more confident in the basic cradling-throwing-catching school of lacrosse and can maintain possession of the ball.

They should also possess good enough field awareness to fill in the positions on the field once a pick is set.

Make sure your players are of the appropriate age and skill to execute this function.

For an on-ball pick, the picker must face his teammate carrying the ball, and assume a square position to use as much of his body's

surface area to block the oncoming defender.

He must remain stationary, with both feet planted.

Otherwise, it is an illegal moving pick.

The ball carrier should drive his defender directly into the picker's body, then brush shoulders with the picker to seal the pick and prevent the defender from getting around it.

For more advanced players, as we will later describe in Level 2, this is the basis for the pick-and-roll, another basketball concept that can be very valuable in lacrosse.