

Winning Face-Off's

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Content from Coaches Clinic – Marymount University

In Lacrosse you always want to try to win the face-off. By winning the face-off you are on offense and have an opportunity to score first. Coaches will keep statistics on number of face-offs won and lost so at the next practice we can work on our techniques.

It is all about **EXPLOSION**, a quick player can beat anyone. Here are some points to remember:

Your Stance

1. Feet

- a. Point toes towards your opponent, your hips should be facing your opponent. Most players want to face the goalie – this is a mistake. Be square to your opponent.
- b. Stay on the balls of your feet. This means your heels should be off the ground.

Coaches note:

During practice Coaches will place wood or a crosse under your heels to get players in the habit of staying off their heels.

- c. Right foot as close to the head of the stick as possible. Feet as wide as your shoulders, knees facing your opponent. If your feet are too wide you lose **EXPLOSION**.

2. Head

- a. Many times players can not find the ball once the face-off is in progress so we need to think about how we will position our head.

Head should be tilted, left ear on left shoulder. Keep your head low this will help you keep your eye on the ball

Hand Positioning

1. Right Hand

- a. Palm facing the sky. Right hand close to the throat of the stick.
- b. Thumb pointing towards the head of the stick.

2. Left Hand

- a. Palm facing the dirt, thumb pointing towards the head of the stick.
- b. Left hand should be in the middle of the stick. If you narrow the distance of your two hands you will be quick but you lose strength so keep your left hand in the middle of the stick.
- c. A motorcycle grip (both hands on top) is a bad grip, you can't do anything.

3. Other considerations

- a. Don't rest on your hands, don't put weight on your hands. Why? Players will lose a tenth of a second taking the weight off of their sticks.

Coaches note:

1. Practice reaction to the referee's whistle. Little guys want to "jump-up" Teach them that they should scrape-up their gloves, its cool to have scraped-up gloves.
2. Players get ready for a face-off. Coaches either whistle or say "pick-up your hands". If the players body does not shake or move then they are in a good stance.

What Should I do After the Whistle Blows ?

There definitely is a series of steps that needs to be executed in a specific order plus there are different "plays" a player can execute. Below you will find basic moves plus specific plays. We will work on face-offs during practice.

1. Basic concepts

- a. Lead with the left hand. The motion you should be executing is that of a punch. Punch with the left hand in a forward motion, this will confuse and block your opponent.
- b. Keep both hands on the ground. Get those gloves dirty and scraped-up. Do not stand-up and lift your hand up.
- c. Stay low. Keep your hips lower than your opponent. The lowest player always wins a face-off.
- d. Assume you will win. Visualize yourself winning a face-off. Don't be intimidated if your opponent is bigger. Remember be **EXPLOSIVE**.

2. Specific Plays

a. The Clamp

Upon hearing the whistle, throw your left hand forward. Rotate both wrists to cover the ball.

Your secondary move is to step four inches to the right with your right foot. Slide both hands four inches to the right. By moving to the right you are getting in a position to scoop and run, like heck, past your opponent.

Your finishing move is to reverse wrist rotation for a fast break or pull the ball between your legs.

b. The Rake

Upon hearing the whistle, throw left hand forward; lead with the bottom edge of the stick, use a reverse wrist rotation. The secondary move is to slide both hands to the right. Step right foot four inches to the right, this blocks a fast break. The final move is to step out with the left foot.

c. The Top

Upon hearing the whistle, throw left hand forward; lift both hands off the ground and jump over the ball. Lift hands just enough to clear the ball, 45 degrees into the opponents hands, lead with the lead. Put the throat part of the stick over the ball. The secondary move is to snap both hands back quickly, step with the right foot. The finishing move is to reverse pivot and box out.

What is the Wing Man's Role?

Prior to the face-off the three middies need to communicate. The center middle needs to define what face-off play he will execute. Once the whistle sounds the wing man can dash in. Upon running in wing man should execute the following:

- a. Wing man need to be looking for a ground ball
- b. As soon as one wing man gains possession the other wing man should block-out his man.
- c. Upon running in the wing man should talk to the face-off middle, the wing man should also be using the face-off middies name.

Drills

- a. Stance Drills

No weight on hands. Players in stance, Coach whistles or yells "pick-up your hands". If the players body does not shake or move then they are in a good stance.

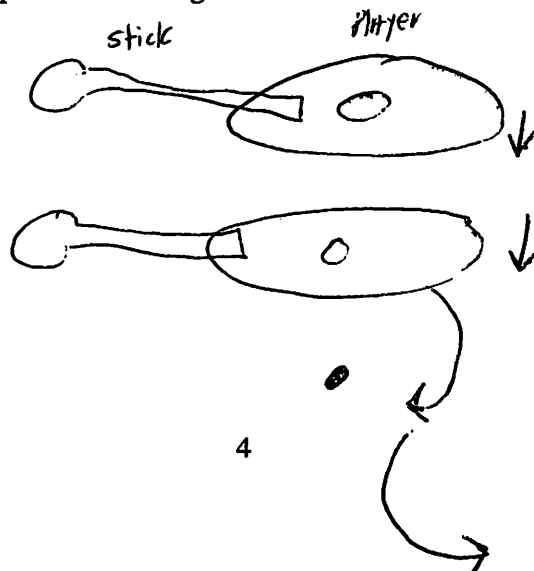
- b. Whistle explosion drills

Ball Drop Drill – Both hands on the ground (no stick), Coach drops a ball, players compete to catch. Teaches whistle reaction. Players catch with left hand. Drill could be completed with one player.

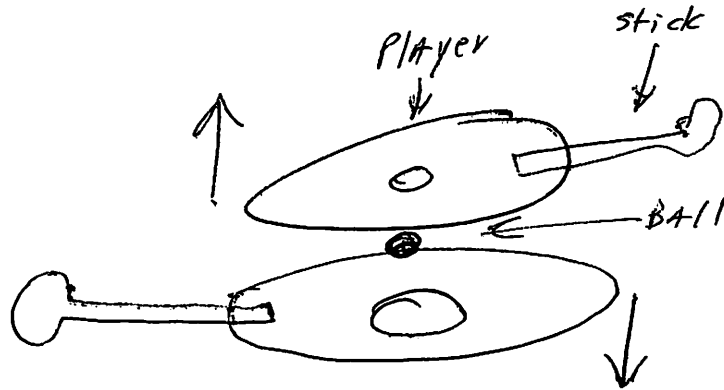
Butt-end face-off – Face-off is completed using the butt-end of the stick, teaches stance and whistle reaction.

- c. Ground ball drills

Box-out drill– Two players line-up in stance, both facing the same direction, one behind the other. Ball two feet in front of the first player. Upon the whistle, front man boxes out. Front man should complete large swinging drop steps to gain possession. Diagram below.



Back-to-Back Drill – Players line-up back to back, ball placed between their backs, upon whistle, ball drops. Players compete for ground ball. Teaches looking for the ball. Players should complete large swinging, drop steps. Diagram below.



d. Team drills

Three-on-three – three middies line-up like a real game, center middies face-off, two wing man run in, compete for ball. Teaches real game situation.

