

Free your offensive man.

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[Lacrosse games](#) witness sudden changes of momentum. A team with a dominating face-off man or goalie who has found his "zone" can alter the outcome of a game. Similarly, a change in defensive strategy can also transform momentum. One common way to change momentum is to "shut off" a player. That is, to [play](#) defensively and deny the opponents' best player access to the ball.

Offensive teams must know how to adjust to this defensive strategy to avoid being frustrated by their offensive sets and [plays](#).

Several ways to free your offensive man.

1. [Free](#) your man when the ball goes out of bounds and you retain possession. Since the ball may remain in the possession of the offensive team as the ball goes out of bounds on a shot, the "shut off" player feed or shoot.
2. Free your man by having set plays (3 man or 2 man) where other offensive players set picks for the player being "shut off."
3. Free your man by sending him to the crease. In many cases a defensive strategy is to slide from the crease; thus, as the crease defender slides from the crease, the player "shut off" will be free momentarily for a quick shot or to receive a pass.

[ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

4. Free your man by sending him and another player to the crease; if one crease defender is playing with a short stick, try to pick and re-pick until the "shut off" player is being guarded by the short-stick defender. This action will force a possible mismatch and provide a better opportunity by which the "shut off" player can receive a pass or feed.
5. [Free](#) your man by sending the player "shut off" to the midfield line. This action will force the defense into a dilemma. Inside the restraining box, the [play](#) will be 5 on 5 and the defensive team will be wasting a player; the 5 on 5 game often allows for more movement offensively. If the defensive player shutting off the offensive best player sloughs off, it will allow the "shut off" player to cut [back](#) door and potentially get a feed or a pass.
6. Free your man by sending the player "shut off" to the offensive end line. This will allow the offensive team to play a 5 on 5 game above the goal-line extended, while maintaining a man near the end line to chase the shot. Reminder: The player closest to the ball on a shot out of bounds retains possession of the ball; thus, the player "shut off" would be in [position](#) to pick up the ball.
7. Free your man by utilizing the substitution [rules](#). Sub your man through the box or over the midline. Both of these actions provide instant space for the "shut off" player to receive the ball.

The other offensive players must look to pass the ball quickly as the "shutoff" player (re)enters the field of play.

As with any change that occurs within a game, these situations must be anticipated and practiced. Preparation can turn a potential negative situation into a goal-scoring opportunity.

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