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Dodges in Boys Lacrosse

A dodge is meant to move a player's stick and body in such away that allows him to 1) get past a defender for a shot or 2) make the defense "slide," or rotate, out of position.

There are several dodges to use, depending on the defender's stance and the proximity of other opponents.

They rely on good footwork, stick protection and body position.

The first two dodges you should teach beginners are the face dodge and the roll dodge, both of which are "north-south" dodges used to evade a defender who is square to the dodger.

Teaching the Skill: Face Dodge

The face dodge is initiated 2 to 3 yards from the defender.

Your player's stick, as always, is in "box position."

His body is square to the defender as he initiates his dodge.

The dodger should bait the defender by exposing the stick head on his stick side.

As he gets close to the defender, your player then forces him to commit in one direction by jab-stepping with his stick-side foot.

When the defender commits to a check, the dodger should bring his stick across his face by curling his top-hand wrist inward, bringing the stick to the opposite box position.

His palm faces his ear.

For footwork, the dodger side-steps with the non-stick side foot, opening into a wider stance, before immediately crossing the stick-side foot also.

This creates stick protection by using the body.

Your player should envision a straight line through his defender.





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His dodge begins and ends on that imaginary line.

When he gets by the defender, he brings his stick back to its original position.

This dodge should be completed without transferring hands.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Your player's stick gets checked or is exposed and vulnerable to checks.

Correction:

Either he is hanging his stick on the dodge, or he is exposing it too far wide of box position.

- In the first case, instruct him to keep his elbow up for stick protection.
- The stick must be perpendicular to the ground.
- In the second case, he should roll his wrist inward to curl the stick head quickly from one shoulder region to the other.
- He can also rotate his shoulder to offer better stick protection with his body.

Teaching the Skill: Roll Dodge

For ease, we will explain the roll dodge as it would be performed with a right-handed approach.

In the case of a left-handed player, reverse the directions.

The dodger runs straight toward the defender.

As he gets close, he releases his left hand, bringing it up and out for stick protection.

He attacks the defender's shoulder to force him to run hip-to-hip, creating more space for the dodger.

The dodger then plants his left foot in between the defender's legs, bringing his body as close to the defender as possible.





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With his right foot, the dodger pivots, rotates and rolls his body around the defender in the direction of his choice.

In one long stride, he can seal off his defender, finishing in a direct line from where he started the dodge.

Mid-dodge, your player's back must always face the defender.

His body serves as stick protection.

Whether or not the dodger switches hands after he gains separation from his defender is situational.

If the defender tries to reach around him to check his stick, the dodger should keep the stick in his right hand, because his body is already protecting it.

If the defender drop steps to keep an open stance, the dodger should switch to his left hand once he is 1 or 2 steps free of the defender.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

Despite proper roll-dodge mechanics, the dodger is not getting by the defender.

Correction:

He is not sealing off the defender properly, which means he is rolling too early.

He must plant his lead foot between the defender's legs and bring in his body tight enough before rolling to create the appropriate seal.

Error:

The dodger frequently drops the ball unforced.

Correction:

He is not sealing off the defender properly, which means he is rolling too early.

He must plant his lead foot between the defender's legs and bring in his body tight enough before rolling to create the appropriate seal.





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Error:

The dodger loses the ball to a check thrown by the defender.

Correction:

He does not have sufficient stick protection.

He needs to

- raise both elbows for stick protection
- keep his stick perpendicular to the ground, and
- hold it near his midsection and between his legs as he rolls.

His stick head should be below his chest to avoid the defender's reach.

Hip-to-Hip Dodges

The next three dodges to teach your Level 1 player are the

- Split
- Change of direction
- Bull dodges

In broader terms, these are hip-to-hip dodges, executed when an attacker is running hip-to-hip with his defender. When this is the case, the defender's backside is vulnerable and it is difficult for him to reverse directions along with the dodger.

Teaching the Skill: Split Dodge

The player starts with the stick in his weak hand.

As he drives in one direction, he plants his stick-side foot as if to continue in that direction.

The dodger then opens his hips away from the original direction and begins to step toward the defender's exposed backside.

As his feet change direction, the dodger transfers the stick from one hand to another by sliding his lower hand up the shaft.





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This also offers protection from a check.

When the dodger cuts off his defender's backside, the dodger drives in the opposite direction.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

The dodger gets checked and loses the ball.

Correction:

Beginners tend to throw the stick between hands, giving defenders easy access to a stick check.

Make sure your player slides his bottom hand up for a quicker, smoother transfer and gets his free arm up to protect his stick as he switches hands.

Teaching the Skill: Change-of-Direction Dodge

A change-of-direction dodge is an “east-west” version of the roll dodge, used when the dodger is moving laterally.

Running hip-to-hip with the defender, the dodger plants his stick-side foot, pivots off of it and steps with his non-stick side foot in the opposite direction from which he was running.

The non-stick side foot now becomes the pivot foot, which the dodger rolls off of, keeping his back to the defender.

Then the dodger accelerates and protects his stick as the situation deems, keeping his body between his stick and defender.





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Error Detection and Correction

Error:

The dodger gets checked and loses the ball.

Correction:

Make sure the dodger

- keeps a low base as he changes directions
- does not switch hands until the dodge is complete
- keeps his stick head tight to the shoulder area as he rolls
- keeps both elbows up.

Teaching the Skill: Bull Dodge

There's not much tact to a bull dodge.

It's a powerful hip-to-hip dodge that can be likened to a fullback pushing the pile in football.

The dodger cradles two-handed and uses his lead shoulder to lean in and drive hard against the defender's hold or check.

Error Detection and Correction

Error:

The player cannot get through the defender.

Correction:

He's not getting enough leverage.

Instruct him to keep low and accelerate as he reaches the defender.

