



# US LACROSSE COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Extra-Man Offense (EMO) in Boys Lacrosse

Extra-man offense or EMO situations occur when the defense receives a penalty and one defender must leave the field to serve that penalty. EMOs are similar to power plays in hockey. Because there is usually one more offensive player than defensive player, one defender must work to cover two offensive players at one time. That defender is known as the “splitter.”

The offense’s goal is to exploit that defensive player by forcing him to choose one of the offensive players to cover. The offensive EMO formation can allow offensive players to cut in such a way that it forces the splitter to pick up the cutter, thus freeing an offensive player to receive the ball. Many EMO plays are just that – designed plays where one particular player (the best shooter) is isolated to receive the ball in a particular area for a shot.

Other EMO plays are designed to allow the offense to freelance and move the ball quickly to exploit the defense by moving the ball faster than the defense can shift, therefore giving a player a shot with limited or no defensive pressure. Freelance plays are best executed with 6 experienced players who have mastered basic individual and team skills.

Many experienced defensive teams key in on the EMO formation that the offense shows at first. Because of this, experienced players executing extra-man plays often also shift from one formation to another, making it difficult for the defense to react and read. Extra-man offenses must be used against defenses that rotate. Such offenses must also hold their specific area (while drawing the defense to rotate) or aim to shut off or deny an area. The following are some basic EMO formations.

### Key concepts:

Offensive players must:

- Move the ball quickly and accurately – they must keep the ball “hot.”
- Recognize which defender is covering 2 players and force that defender to commit to one of the attackmen he is covering.
- Then recognize and give the ball to the open attackman for a shot from a good angle.





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## **1-3-2 Extra-man offense:**

This extra-man offense with a single player behind the goal, 3 players across the front of the goal, and 2 players up top can force a team to slide 4 defenders around the perimeter while 1 defender covers the crease player.

Having 1 offensive player behind the goal forces the defense to watch or guard him and still be aware of players above the goal line extended. If the player behind positions himself to turn the corner to shoot, this forces the perimeter defender to slide to the next player.

Also, with the spacing that comes from the attackmen placed in these positions, the defense is forced to slide and pick up the player with the ball. This then starts a series of slide rotations for the defense, either on the perimeter or from the crease, which forces the defense to fill the crease spot with another defender.

### Advantages:

- This opens up the offensive players on the perimeter and allows them to pass the ball around the perimeter and work to get in between the slides for a good shot.
- This EMO also may force only 1 player to use his “off” hand (less-skilled hand) when playing on one of the wings, as opposed to having many players using their weak hand. The other 4 perimeter players could effectively use the dominant hand the whole time.
- This EMO allows for good angle shots.
- Finally, more skilled offensive players can easily cut into a 1-4-1 offensive formation (see specifics for a 1-4-1) either by having 1 of the top players cut to the crease or having a wing player cut to the crease and a top player slide down replacing the wing player who cut to the crease.

## **2-3-1 Extra-man offense:**

- This formation is basically the 1-3-2 offensive formation reversed, with 2 players behind goal, 3 across the front of the goal, and 1 player up top high near the restraining line in the center of the field.
- When 1 of the 2 players behind the goal receives the ball, he must step up and be a threat to the defense – thereby forcing the defender on the wing to guard him.
- This starts the series of passes to make the defense slide.
- Similar to the 1-3-2, eventually someone will get between the defender and their next slide for a quality shot.

