

Alternate attacking patterns

Depending on the defensive style the opposition is playing, the attacking teams' requirements are to counteract that method. The coaches' job is to look at the system the opposition is playing and then direct their attack to the required areas that will create space and produce team goals. This article outlines various patterns the attacking teams' coach can put in place through-out the game.

If the opposition is playing the following:

- 1. Fall-away press:** One player from the attacking teams' back 4 to bring the ball up and engage the first opposition player to create a 2 on 1. This player is required to keep moving forward through the lines receiving the ball back, therefore, creating 2 on 1's and an overlap up the field. Now the back 4 will turn into a back 3; use swing defence when transitioning. *Also*, when the strikers lead back towards the ball and the opposition players follow, space is created for mid-fielders to lead into. The mid-fielders may receive the ball by the use of an overhead from their backs or a deflection pass from the striker leading back to the ball which bisects the opposition players.
- 2. Man-to-Man defence:** The use of rotations. Rotate your teams' backs with mid-fielders - midfielders with strikers. This movement will place the opposition players out of position and may also put those players out of their comfort zone. By using width and length in attack, this movement will create space and plenty of opportunities to produce goals.
- 3. Zone defence:** Employ a screen. Screens can be used like a wall; one player will move inline with the passer and stand in front of their opponent. The passer should be aiming down the attackers/defenders left-foot or have the attacker jump in the air to allow the ball go under their feet and past the opposition player. The screen will let the ball go through for their team-mate to run onto the path of the ball. This play will help to eliminate one line of defence.
- 4. Slanted press:** To bring the ball back into play while being confronted with a slanted press requires the attacking team to incorporate a variety of set plays. The first play can be: to employ the use of angled over-heads; left-half to right-half/right-half to left-half; this play creates space, 2 on 1's and 3 on 2's on the opposite side. *Alternately*, the second play can be: the need of quick transfers using correct foot-work, one-time-passes and knowledge of your own players positioning. Again, this play creates space, 2 on 1's and 3 on 2's. This action does require repetitive training. *Also*, the 3rd alternative is more of an advanced skill: to dummy-pass. The attacker to fake-pass one direction then passes down the non-weighted side of the opposition player. This movement will have the opposition's weight transferred onto the wrong foot therefore, unable to move in the right direction in time to intercept the ball.

The ball movements written above will help your team possess the ball and place pressure on the defensive teams' coach to change their overall methodology to enable them to gain control of the ball.

Creativity in attack:

Look to support the ball carrier at all times, in attack or defence. When the attacking team is travelling forward, what is created behind? Space is created therefore, the ball could be dropped back for a team-mate to run onto and change the line of attack. Also, when you are defending, your team-mates behind the ball need to position themselves to be the out-let player to receive the ball straight-away when the opposition is tackled and turn defence into offence quickly. The strikers should lead-off the position of the out-let player to create the second and third phase play. This quick transitional play requires repetitious practice. One other way to position in attack could be: in the attacking half of the field, the right wing is travelling with the ball, left wing to start moving forward and in-field behind the defenders near or on the backline. This player can lead off the opposition backs looking for an opening between defenders to receive a straight pass, move back towards the ball to receive a lateral or angle pass, *furthermore*, this movement will create space for the attacking teams' left half or inside to move onto the ball by receiving a transferred pass from the right-side. If the transfer is thrown, the left wing would then head towards the far right post ready to tap the ball in from the left half or inside left's pass.

©Neil Shearer

RCD

Rockhampton/Gladstone Hockey