

MOTION OFFENSE: LACROSSE OFFENSE OF THE '80s

THE motion offense has played a major role in the success of the Adelphi University lacrosse team. Since we installed it in 1979, we have won two Division II championships in three years, and qualified for the national Division I playoffs twice in four years.

We believe that the motion offense teaches basic principles that most lacrosse players do not inherently bring to the game. It teaches them to move and think like basketball players.

Even scholarship lacrosse players, especially those with football and wrestling backgrounds, are often derelict in general field sense. Consider your basic pattern. Though you may constantly exhort

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your players to move without the ball, your offense may not be teaching them to get out of the way of your one-on-one threats.

Diagrammed lacrosse plays are no more successful than diagrammed basketball plays. What you have to do is replace your plays with *patterns*. The players have to learn these patterns and read their options.

We believe that the motion pattern can teach your players field balance, moving without the ball, backdoor cuts, reading the defense, and seeing the whole field.

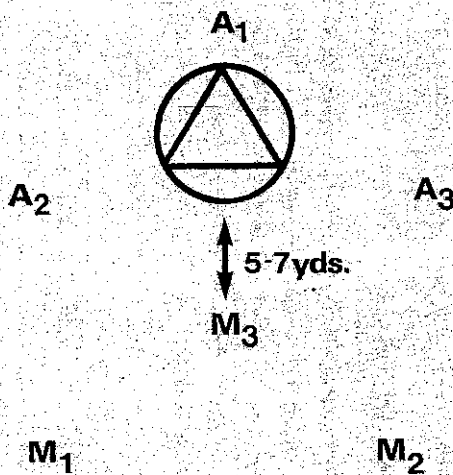
Our motion pattern, built on bas-

ketball principles, was created in response to our particular offensive problems: failing to clear out for the dodger, failing to make or see the backdoor cut, and failing to know where everyone on offense was going.

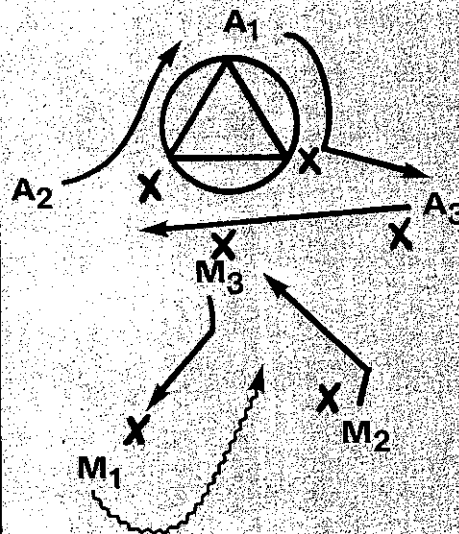
Our goal was to create an offense that would keep all six players in motion at the same time, correct offensive inadequacies, and capitalize on our strengths.

Our motion offense is so simply structured that it can be installed in a single practice session, yet is malleable enough to be modified every year. Its most valuable asset is that its concepts can carry over into any offense you employ, even your unsettled play.

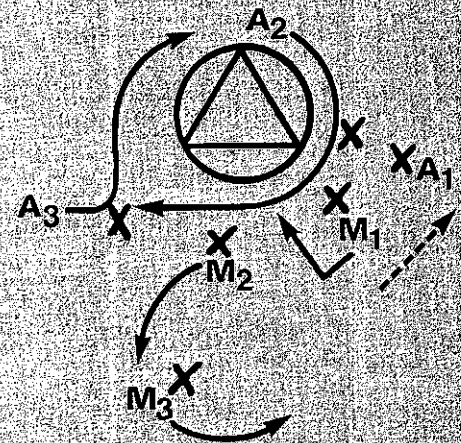
Its basic setup—a 1-3-2 with a



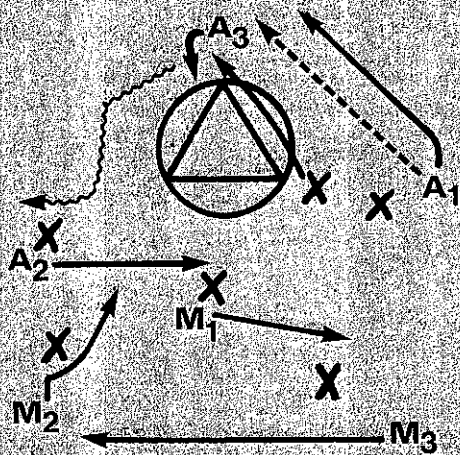
DIAG. 1



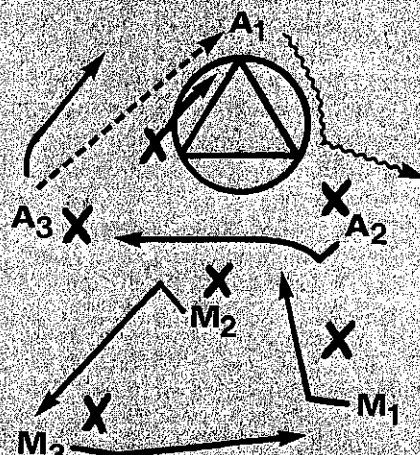
DIAG. 2



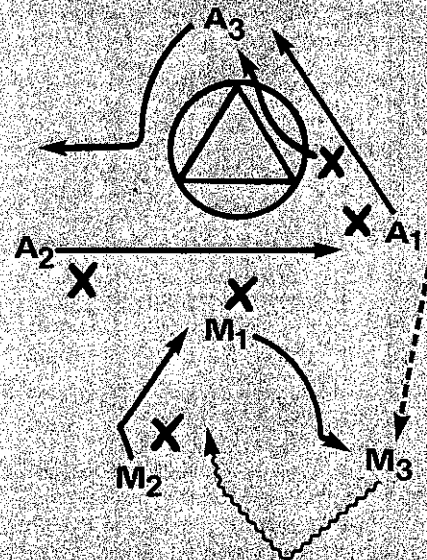
DIAG. 3



DIAG. 4



DIAG. 5



DIAG. 6

midfielder in the crease (Diag. 1)— offers several advantages.

1. It allows all our attackers to handle the ball and forbids an opponent to hide a slower defenseman on the crease. Whenever we play a team with a slower third defenseman, we attack this weakness with a motion offense.

Last season, for example, we discovered that the No. 1 team in the nation was trying to play an injured defenseman against us. Our players automatically called for a motion offense, realizing that the injured defenseman wouldn't be able to run through our patterns.

2. The offense also isolates midfielders in the vulnerable crease areas. We make sure that our midfielder is posted five to seven yards from the crease so as to leave a lane for cutting attackmen.

3. By far the greatest advantage of the offense is that it allows all our players to be involved as active threats and parts of the offense with or without the ball. No one is hidden on the crease or sacrificed as a diversion.

The offense is triggered by a sweep rather than a pass. Diag. 2 shows M1 starting the offense by sweeping righthanded. As M1

moves, M2 cuts backdoor and M3 vacates the crease. M1 must be trained to look for M2 and M3, as they may be open.

As M1 presses the right pipe, A3 times a secondary cut backdoor while A2 fills behind the cage and A1 comes up to provide an outlet. Though all this motion may simply be giving M1 an isolation, M1 must be drilled to see all his options, for the offense to be successful.

If M1 arrives at the pipe with no open options, he must pass to A1 and initiate motion without the ball in the form of a backdoor cut to the crease, as shown in Diag. 3.

At this point, the midfielders must effect the concept of balance by filling the vacant positions. A2 and A3 must move without the ball to accomplish the dual task of a backdoor cut and an isolation for A1.

A1 keeps the motion flowing by either throwing out to M3 for a mid-field sweep or throwing behind to A3, as shown in Diag. 4. Upon receiving the ball from A1, A3 goes at his defenseman hard, forcing a side early in the dodge.

For the sake of practicality, let's assume A3 is righthanded and forces the right pipe. A2 times his

cut behind his defenseman's back, providing the first look. M2 times a secondary backdoor cut, while M1 backs off the crease and faces the ball, offering an outside shot.

If A1 can beat his man, and no one backs up, the best play may simply be to come around and shoot. If someone has looked too long at the dodger, the backdoor cut may be open. If the defense has sagged in, playing the backdoor cut, it may be giving M1 the outside bounce shot.

What is most valuable to you as a coach is that the offense is offering your player options. With time and drilling, it will even teach him to read the defense.

The most valuable read your player may make is that none of the options is open and the best recourse is patience.

At this point, A3 can veer outside and throw to M3, who will start a mid-field rotation, or to A1 who will start an attack rotation. The rotations shown here can also be run to the left side, as shown in Diags. 5-6.

The motion can be constant or set up to meet your needs. If you have just two or three players who can move only to specific sides, you can allow your players to pass



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the ball around the outside and trigger your motion by the action of the sweep.

We have learned to adapt our motion offense to our game-to-game or personnel needs.

Remember, not only will this offense get all six players into motion, it will force them to think. We believe that the motion offense is the offense of the '80s in that it moves the more highly skilled players closer to the philosophy of basketball offense.

(Ed. note: The author would like to acknowledge the contributions of Frank Januszewski, the basketball coach at Oceanside (N.Y.) H.S. from 1955 to 1972. Coach Januszewski implanted the philosophy and mechanics of offense that eventually flowered into Kevin Sheehan's lacrosse version of motion offense.)

HERE BELOW

(Continued from page 15)

thing about managing baseball and nothing about managing people, or themselves.

What a fantastic difference there seems to be between college-bred managers like Dick Howser and Davey Johnson and managers like Herzog and Martin and Weaver—who appear to have been bred on pine tar and rhubarbs. No class.

TO THE EDITOR:

I was very happy to recently receive the first issue of my very first subscription to *Scholastic Coach*—a magazine that I started reading as a freshman at Herndon (Va.) H.S. 30 years ago.

I think I owe my intellectual interest in football to the penchant I developed for drawing X's and O's way back then.

There was very little scouting and no film exchanging in those days. The preparations were pretty crude. In my junior year, I once heard one of my coaches say that our homecoming opponent used the belly series. I went to the library and drew up flash cards from an article in *Scholastic Coach*, and then gave them to the head coach.

He used my cards in practice and we went on to win the game, 22-0!

— Henry Dudrow
Mater Dei H.S. (Santa Ana, Cal.)

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