

Face-Off Wing Play with Drills

- PERSONNEL
- COMMUNICATION
- CREATING SPACE
- STRATEGY
- DRILLS
- CONCLUSION

I. PERSONNEL

- A. Standard (Long Stick and Short Stick on the wing) – when discussing the other topics throughout this presentation it is done through a Standard situation unless noted otherwise.
 - 1. The long stick would be on the opposing face-off man's rake side
 - a. Reason 1 – make it difficult for the opposing team's wing man to pick up the ball.
 - b. Reason 2 – the long stick would pick up the face-off man if he tries to rake it out to himself.
 - c. Reason 3 – rather have long stick cutting off angle to the goal and have him getting in the hole.
 - 2. The short stick is on the face-off man's rake side
 - a. You want your fastest short stick on the wing, preferably a defensive midfielder.
 - i. Reason 1 – to create space which will be discussed later.
 - ii. Reason 2 – if you lose the face-off you would want your best defensive players on the field.
 - iii. If you are not running a defensive line, then you would want the fastest midfielder from whatever line is up to be on the wing.
- B. Defensive (Two Long Sticks on the Wing)
 - 1. See Strategy
- C. Offensive (Two Short Sticks on the Wing)
 - 1. See Strategy
- D. Unorthodox (Two Long Sticks on the Wing and a Long Stick Facing-Off)
 - 1. See Strategy

I. COMMUNICATION

- A. Verbal
 - 1. Before the face-off man goes out for the next face-off, he should let his wingman know what move he will be doing and where his face-off man should be on the wing.
 - 2. For example, the face-off man lets his wingman know he will be trying to bring the ball forward. Therefore, the wingman would try and get as deep as possible on the offensive end of the wing.
 - 3. There must be constant communication once the whistle is blown in order to let the face-off man know where to rake the ball.
- B. Signs
 - 1. Right before the face-off man goes down for the ball, he lets his wing man know where he will trying to bring the ball. The wingman does not need to know the specific move, but it's a definite advantage to anticipate where the ball will go.
 - 2. This would be necessary when the face-off man sees who he is up against. For example, if he is up against a guy who likes to rake then he may want to clamp and bring the ball behind.

3. Make the signs as discreet as possible. For instance, the face-off guy should make eye contact and then touch a part of his body that signifies where he will be looking to bring the ball. If he touches his chest he will look to bring it forward, or if he touches his knee then the ball will come behind him.

II. CREATING SPACE

A. Short Stick

1. You want speed on the wings in order to create space, gain position, and cut off any angles that the opposing wingman may have of picking up the ball.
2. This is especially important when the wingman knows where the ball will be going. For instance, if you know the ball will come behind then the wingman would try and beat his man to a spot about 10 yards from the X at the midfield and at the same time keep his man to his left. Essentially, the short stick is trying to put himself in a position where he can open up space for the face-off man to get the ball himself, or he can push off (legally) the opposing team's wing man to create separation.
3. If the face-off man is getting the ball out extremely fast, whether it's behind him or in front of him, then the wing-man may want to try and beat the opposing wing-man to a spot 10 yards diagonally behind the face-off man for an easy ground ball.
4. Otherwise, in a Standard situation the short stick wing-man would want to be either directly on the midfield, or 2 – 3 yards above or below the midfield line.

B. Long Stick

1. Once again, speed is the most important factor. If you do not have someone who can keep up with the opposing team's short stick then it will make it extremely difficult to gain position and fight for a groundball.
2. The object of the long stick in a Standard situation is to prevent the opposing short stick to gain position, and to make it as difficult as possible to have him pick up a ground ball cleanly.
3. The long stick would typically start out 3-5 yards away from the midfield line and do a b-line for the X. If the opposing teams face-off man is bring the ball behind him, then the long stick would move up towards the midfield and could even cheat to the other side. If the opposing team's face-off man is quickly bringing the ball forward, then the long stick may want to get as deep as possible on the wing and get to a spot that is approximately 10 yards behind his face-off man. This will help cut off the break. There is another way to play this as well and it will be discussed under Strategy.

III. STRATEGY

A. Standard

1. Use this when the face-off men are even percentage wise, consistently getting into a stalemate, and/or it's hard to get a good read on where the ball will be pushed out. When going with a Standard line-up, Creating Space and fighting for position become critical.
2. Standard (Offensive)
 - a. Push your long stick and short stick approximately five yards above the midfield line.
3. Standard (Defensive)
 - a. Set-Up #1: Have your short stick start directly on the midfield, but have your long stick drop about 10 yards off the midfield to cut off fast break.
 - b. Set-Up #2: Switch the long stick and short stick (long stick would be face-off man's rake side), and have your long stick go directly to the hole and bump over the point defensemen to stop the break. The short stick would also be about 7-10 yards deep on the wing.
 - c. Set-Up #3: Switch the long stick and short stick (long stick would be face-off man's rake side), and have your face-off guy let the other team's face-off man rake the ball forward. The face-off man's job would be to box out

and let the short stick come in and pick it up. This would work well on turf, b/c the ball would travel further, thus buying the short stick more time to get in.

B. Defensive

1. Two long sticks on the wing. This would be done if you are losing over 65-70% of your face-offs, and especially if the opposing team's face-off man is bringing the ball forward for a break.
 - a. Set-up #1: Start out with long sticks at the midfield and have face-off man tie up opposing team's face-off man.
 - b. Set-up #2: This would be similar to Set-Up #2 in the Standard (Defensive) approach. Only this time, you may want to have one of your short sticks shut off the weaker of the two bottom attackmen.
 - c. Set-up #3: Face-off with a long-stick and do not let him pick the ball up. This will buy the wingmen time to get in and make it a 50-50 situation. The long stick would be on the opposing team's rake side, and would start about 5 yards off the midfield line.

C. Offensive

1. Three short sticks on the face-off. This would be done if the face-off man is winning over 80% of his face-offs, and is controlling it himself. This will keep their face-off man on the field, and it will also keep the momentum going at the offensive end of the field.
2. Depending on where the face-off man is bringing the ball will determine where the wingmen would start. For instance, if the face-off man is bringing it back then the wingman must create space. If the face-off man brings it forward, then the wingman would want to run with the opposing wingman and ride him away from the middle of the field.

D. Unorthodox

1. Three long sticks at the midfield line with two midfielders in the Box, ready to switch or shut off.
2. The objective here would be to tie up the opposing team's face-off man, knock the ball into space, and run on to it. When hitting it into space, it would probably be best to hit it into the opposing team's restraining box to make the attackmen a factor.

IV. DRILLS

A. Whistle Reaction

1. Without looking at who is blowing the whistle – 5 yard sprint straight ahead, back to the line X 10.
2. Without looking at who is blowing the whistle – 5 yard sprint with your first step to the left, back to the line X 10.
 - a. Work on stepping to the left and/or right in order to box out opposing wing man and gain position.
3. Without looking at who is blowing the whistle – 5 yard sprint with your first step to the right, back to the line X 10.

B. Whistle Reaction going against someone

1. This time it would be with the Down, Set, Whistle cadence and do half the reps (X 5).

C. Live with a Face-off man and opposing wingmen

1. This will give you the opportunity to recognize the referees whistle pattern and what he does before blowing the whistle. For example, does the ref take a step back before blowing the whistle, or does he take two steps back? Does he do anything with his arms, i.e. point to the X before blowing the whistle?

2. About 10 repetitions and each time critique the communication, positioning, and groundball work. This will allow the face-off man and wingman to get more and more familiar with each others tendencies.

V. CONCLUSION

- A. This is an aspect of the game that should be worked on 10-15 minutes prior to practice. Then you can incorporate what you worked on in scrimmage situations.
- B. Questions

