



**FIH FINAL
COACHING SEMINAR**

“DEFENSIVE DELAY TACTIC”

Presented by

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DEFENSIVE DELAY TACTIC

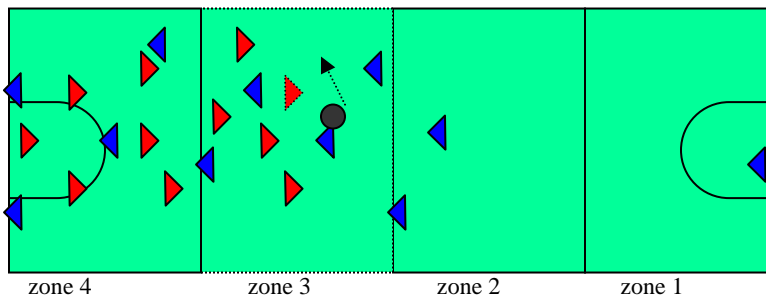
"the intentions are for players/teams to: from an *attacking position*, learn how to slow down the opponents attack when possession is lost"

Introduction:

The 1st reason for going further into the tactic was when I noticed some international teams playing attacking/direct hockey at high speed with their outside defenders or their CD, from a diamond defensive set-up, joining the attack. This style is most exciting and attractive for the spectator, sponsors and media however it opens up to much space behind and the good counter attack teams (with particularly good speedy strikers) have been able to benefit (the Chinese Ladies Team at the Champions Trophy were particularly impressive with this style of attack)

Another idea for when to use this tactic is when a player in your team is sent off and it is required that your team needs to play on the attack/force a result, with time playing an important factor to your tactic. I have tried this out in match play with the defence playing man-man at the back and in the counter attack situation the 'delay' was of number one priority (team system: 3-3-3-1; 3 defenders instead of the traditional 4).

Diagram 1: Blues are playing an attacking game (this is and 11 v 11, if the CD is the MM for blue a similar situation may arise but the principles would be the same for the last two defenders). Reds are playing a ½ press with the CS's interception she is hoping to use the space in zone 2 and 1 to counter attack.



The CD of blue passes to RD but CS of red intercepts, the SW and the LD of blue are left to begin the delay defense

Case study:

Why would this tactic be of importance as a tactic?:

The tactic aims to reduce the *risks* when playing the *winning game*.

Giles Bonet, when interviewed he emphasized that "every team needs to win a game at a time" therefore he could see a need to take this tactic as a team tactic and to train it further.

As it is common knowledge that no team will have possession for the whole game, and most likely will have to play at least 40 % of the match without the ball, it would seem that this tactic, and in particular against teams who play the high speed counter attack game, would be most useful.

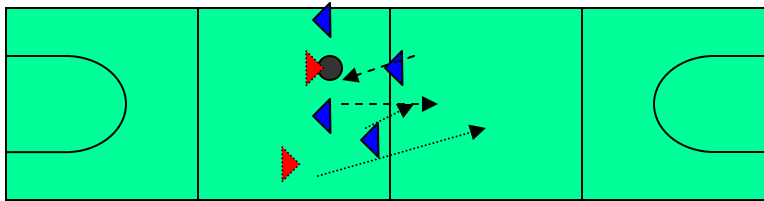
There would be many reasons as to why the defensive delay tactic would be necessary but mostly this would be that from playing the winning game and with loss of possession a defensive organization must be set up to:

- avoid opponents counter attacking at speed into the goal scoring zones
- avoid direct passes
- get more numbers behind the ball

When it is used at the HP level we can go further with the tactic to that of:

- interchanging of positions

Diagram 2



Red CS begins the counter: SW approaches Red by 1st moving inwards and to the side, intentions to delay to get CD and LD to interchange (CD and LD to cover the direct passing lines to LS while interchanging positions with SW)

A vital aim is to "slow down not break down" with the awareness as to where (what zone on the field) and when (what time in the match) the possession was lost.

Key points:

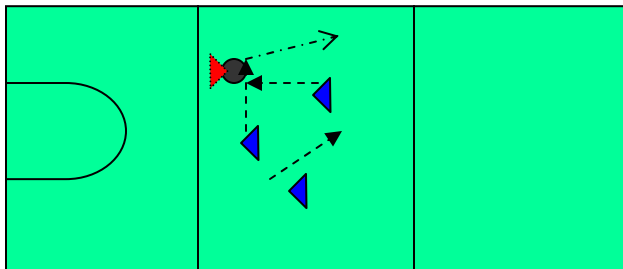
All players need to learn this tactic but much of the delay of an attack comes from:

- where on the field the ball is lost
- how or from what the situation is, e.g. interception, counter attack (long pass) etc
- which player has possession.

What skills are we going to use to do this: Very importantly here is the focus on the direct pass/es and not on the ball (this is different to other types of defence where the focus is on the ball)

1. The side approach
2. The face on block (used in football, basketball and many other sports)
3. The positional interchange

diagram 3



CD: approaches from the side, and must be visible to red, this will force red to run to the side of the field
 SW: approaches from the inside frontal view with the aim of delaying the forward approach of red, allowing LD to interchange with CD or with SW (depending on the position of the rest of Red and the rest of Blue)

From *Basic Tactics* (i.e. 2 v 1, 3 v 1, 4 v 2 and 3 v 2 etc) players become aware of the tactical/technical possibilities (both for attack and defence). Through training and knowing the fundamentals of basic tactics (individually, positionally and as a team) it becomes easier for players to react to more complicated situations like those when out-numbered.

"Defending aims of the past and present are: to prevent scoring opportunities and goals by positioning defenders between the goal and the opponent and then to tackle the player with the ball. With the flat triangle team defence we have created the opportunity to get into ball possession through interception. The counter attack often comes from gaining possession through interception and leads to a numerical advantage and a fast attack – *Boudewijn Castelijm*

Many of the coaches interviewed have basic tactics for the counter but have as yet not used them within a team tactic, such as the Defensive Delay Tactic. They commented on the usefulness of this tactic when playing an attacking game:

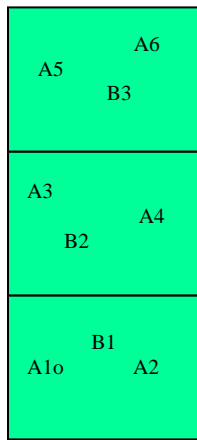
- The Dutch Ladies train many of their counter attack defensive fundamentals in game situations where the defense are out-numbered by the attackers- *Rob Bianci*
- Called 'Counter defence' - *Ian Rutledge*
- "For every attacking move there is a defensive action" – *Giles Bonet*
- " a half press has been used as a delay or the break down technique" – *Remco Hartgers*

Basic tactical fundamentals used in the defensive delay situations are:

- move sideways and sometimes backwards in order to begin the delay
- players are to think "delay and prevent the direct passing lines not to break down or go for the ball. "Where the ball is, is not dangerous but where it goes to is" *Giles Bonet*
- once numbers are back then the aim is to intercept the pass (basic rules for intercepting passes requires the use of 'fake space') and/or to force the players to go wide. It is the short ball you are looking for your opponent to play.
- in 3 v 2 situations the defense learn to work together, switching roles

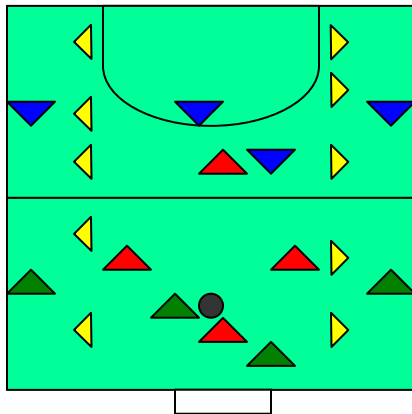
In a 2 v 1 situation there is always a choice between a combination or individual play with 'defence delay tactic' the opponent can do both as long as there is delay in the action away from the direct passing lines and until the defenders have numbers back. In other words the player may dribble to the side, may pass side ways or back but no direct goalwards action.

diagram 4: 2 attackers v 1 defenders (basic defensive fundamentals practiced before moving on to defensive delay fundamentals: choice of front or side approach to delay and therefore decrease both speed and passing options. Variations to the drill can be to get area 2 to move into position from a Help Side starting position)



- Exercise example by *Graham Worth* (1999) 2 v 1
 The ball starts with A1 (A's being the attacking team, B's the defenders). A1 and A2 may pass between themselves but ultimately need to pass the ball to either A3 or A4.
 B1 attempts to steal the ball or channel the play to his and or B2's advantage
 If A3 or A4 get the ball, they need to try and get the ball to A5 or A6. In all cases the B's try to prevent this and reverse the direction of play.
 The size of the area in which you play is critical. The better the players, the smaller the area.
 The ball may not travel from area one direct to area three.
 Variation for Defensive Delay:
 Add a goal, with keeper, in area 3;
 B1, B2 and B3 can interchange positions or move through the zones with an end result of playing a 3 v 6 or 3 v 5

diagram 5: 4 v 2 (switching in defence to avoid the triangle passing lines)



exercise by *Boudewijn Castelijin*
 3 teams of 4. In possession attack with 4 vs 2 defenders. Red team begins with the ball and 2 blue players defend. After the interception blue team attacks with 4 vs 2 from green.
 After interception the aim on attack is to look for support from the sidelines, and defenders have to avoid dangerous passing lines and prevent speed through the centre.

From these basic defensive fundamentals I believe as a coach you move towards defending tactics with more 1 v 1, 2 v 2 and from the two attacking zones (3 and 4) with the main focus on delaying a possible counter attack situation and this would require a more precise/general team tactic. The team feels confident on the attack when knowing there is an organized defensive tactic when possession is lost.

Diagram 6: 2 v 2 No tackle game (working on the delay; side to reduce speed and to channel away from the goals and front when to block the forward route and allow for cover time from your help defender)

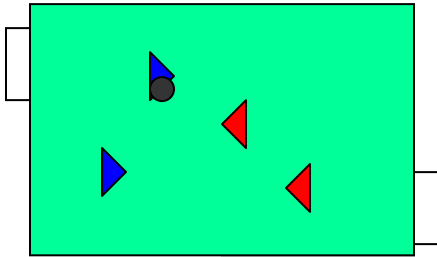


Diagram 7: 5 v 5 (In defense two attackers have to remain in their attacking ½, one defender may stay in their defensive ½, work on defending the counter attack and defending in 4 v 3 situation)

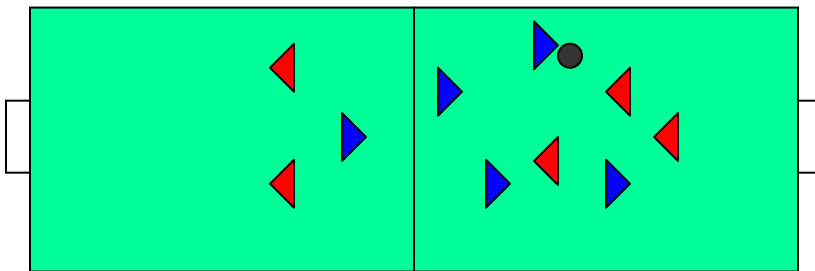
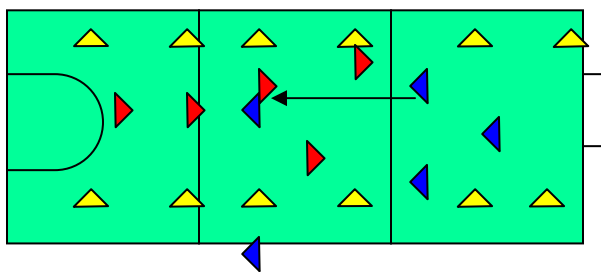


Diagram 8



5 vs 5 plus keepers, blue team try's to attack with numbers, red play ½ press and look for counter attacking options when possession is won. Players are to work on decision-making, communication, positional awareness, delay and passing lines when not in possession.

- ▲ = cones
- ▲ = team 1
- ▲ = team 2

My aim with the 'defence delay tactic' would be to get an awareness that this is a *team tactic* to be used when your team is playing the 'winning game'.

The difficulty of this tactic (as with any) is that if not clearly coached and trained it is sometimes difficult to know:

- who is responsible to start the delay tactic
- how (what individual skills are required) to do this
- when to do what (interchanging of positions or side approach)
- who of the opponent's team has possession

The other defensive tactic known is the 'press' (the principles may at times be similar, but the approach or scenarios different: team organization for one). Here are 'some' comparisons:

Defensive Delay	Press
Main Principle: the focus is to delay and prevent the Direct Pass/es	Main Principle: to recover possession with a focus on the ball
Requires a high work rate	Requires a high work rate
Similarity: From an Attacking System organization in Defence	Similarity: Defend to Attack

Supporting information:

I have interviewed a few coaches regarding their approach to:

- attacking tactics
- defensive tactics to the counter
- delay tactics

and have through video and match analysis seen the skills and basic tactics used but as a team tactic to an attacking tactic much is left up to player's trained basic tactics.

In summary:

My aim has been to get an awareness that this is a **team tactic** that can be used and coached.

Thanks to:

- Giles Bonet (Belgium Men's National coach)
- Boudewijn Castelijjn (FIH Master Coach)
- Remco Hartgers (Switzerland Men's National Coach)
- Frank Wybenga (video's)
- Ian Rutledge (New Zealand Ladies National Coach)
- Rob Bianci (Netherlands Ladies Assistant Coach/Trainer)
- Chantal van Nistelrooy (Nijmegen Ladies Hockey Team)

