



6 a-side – Basic Tactical Principles

This resource is designed for all 6 a-side coaches to help support their basic understanding of some key attacking and defensive principles.

Please note: there are a number of ways to coach 6 a-side but we hope this will provide some guidance to all involved.

Basic Terminology



Please note, the terminology used below is just one of many ways to describe these concepts. Even if you don't use the below, try and keep things as simple and consistent as possible. Remember, your athletes may have a different understanding of what each of these terms mean. Make sure you take time to explain things clearly and ensure you're all on the same page.

Attacking Terms

Height – refers to creating space by attacking players moving forward up the field and leaving space in behind for others

Width – refers to creating space in attack by attacking players spreading out wide across the field

Leading – attacking players moving with the intent to get the ball or create space for others

Help side – opposite side of the field to where the ball is (often vacant space)

Counter-attack – refers to quickly attacking the oppositions goal after gaining possession

Connected – attacking players staying in close proximity to the ball carrier, so that they are in a position to receive a pass from them

Point of Attack – Side or area of the field in which the attacking team are trying to attack the circle through

Defensive Terms

Point Defender – the player engaging the opposition ball carrier, who attempts to point their play in a certain direction

Marking – occupying the same space as your opponent in an attempt to stop or limit their ability to receive the ball

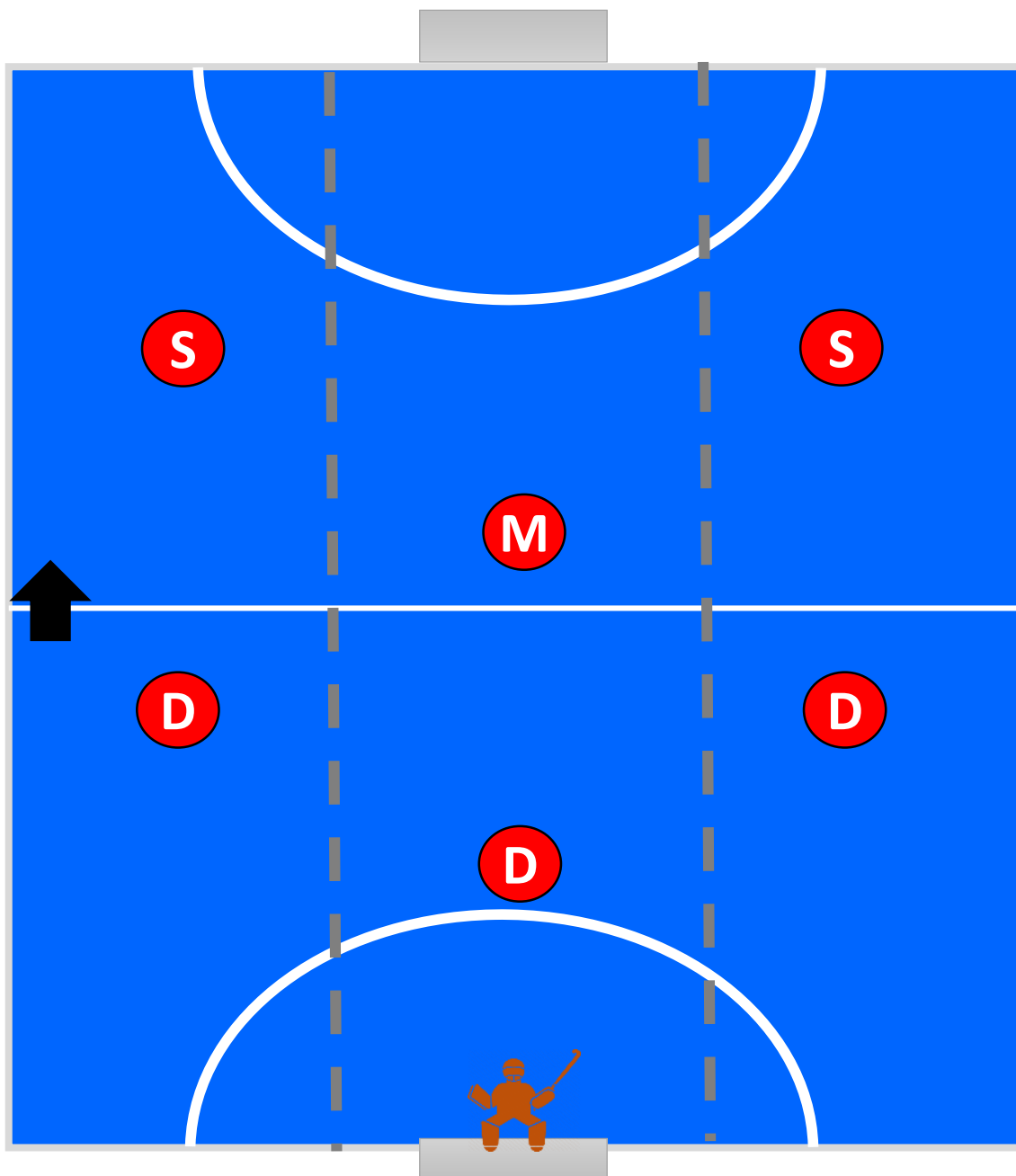
Goal-side – the space between an opposing attacker and the defenders goal

Man-to-Man – refers to each defender marking/engaging with an opposing player

Hot-line - the imaginary line between the ball and the centre of the goal

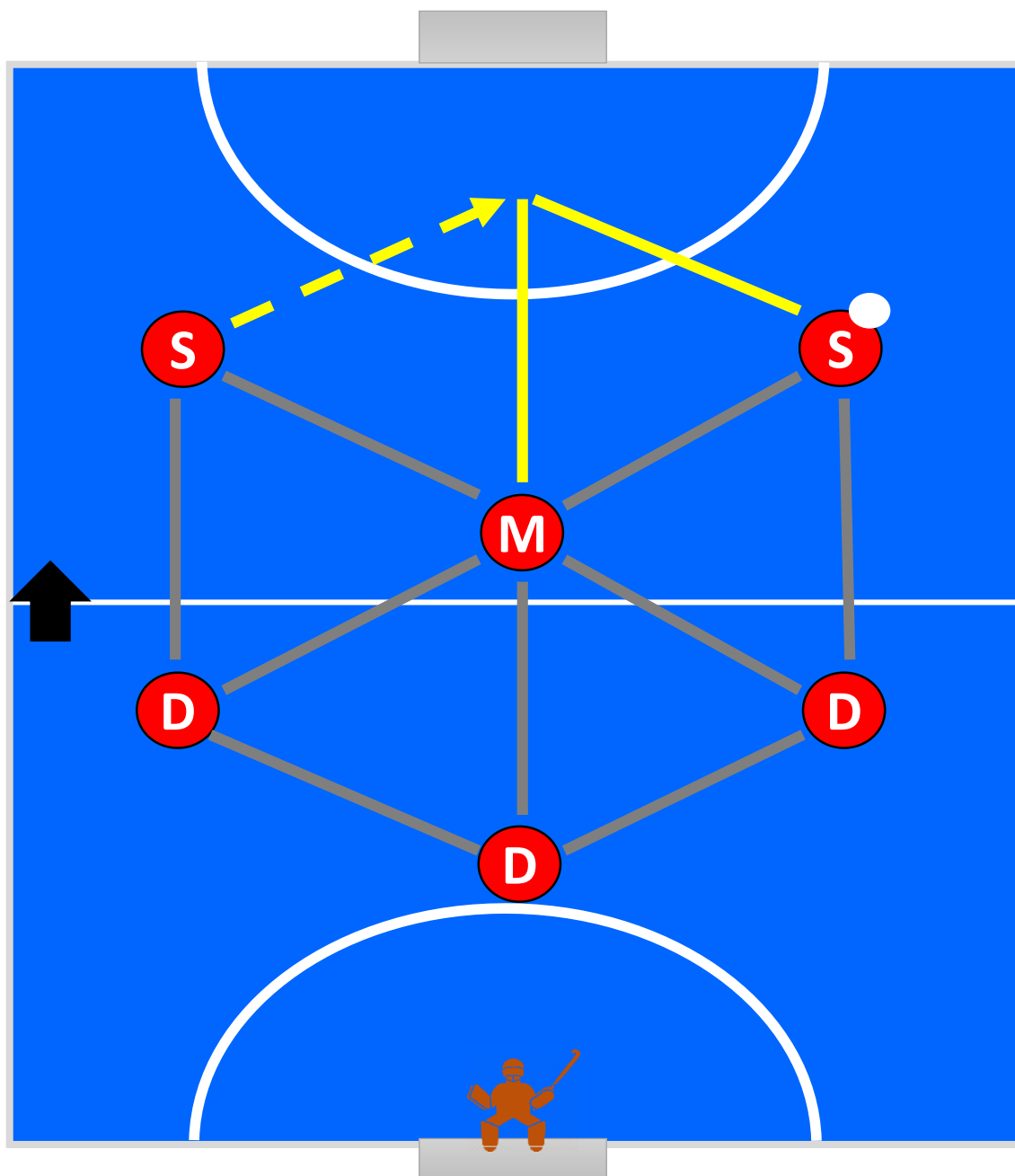
Channelling – a defender pushing a player wide or into a certain area on the field

Free-man/Sweeper – a player who does not mark an opposition player and instead occupies the 'hot line' or space in front of or behind other defenders



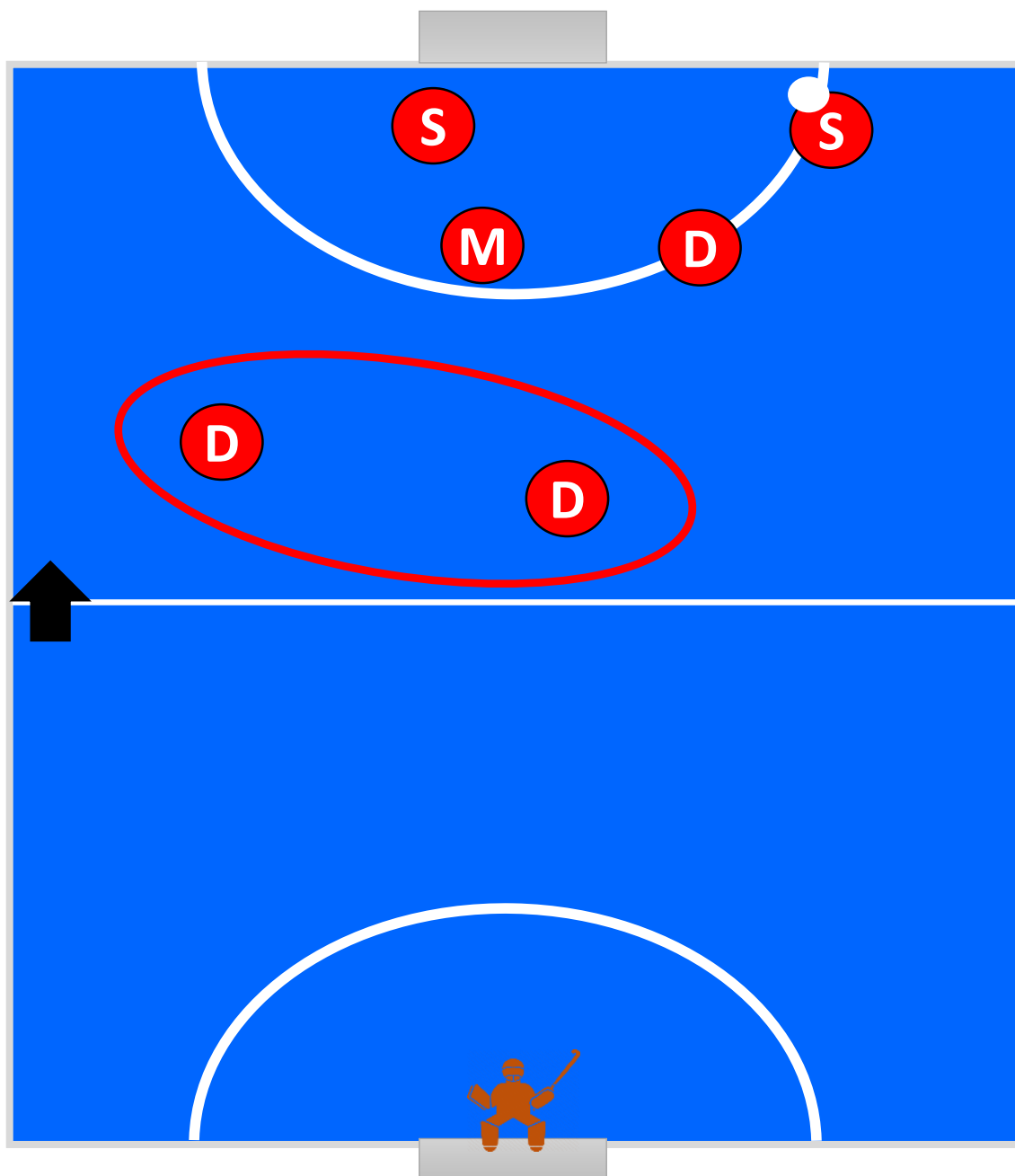
Attacking Principle #1 – Create Height and Width

- Creating space on attack should be a key focus
- Imagine the field is split into 3 x lanes
- When in possession of the ball, the attacking team should try and keep 1-2 players in each lane to ensure width and therefore space is maintained
- Players should also occupy different heights to create further space
- The player in possession of the ball should have at least two passing options available – normally at least one forward and one backwards or square
- Defenders should move forward with attacking play and ensure they're connected to the attack
- We recommend coaches and players don't worry about set 'positions' too much as during the match players will inevitably switch roles



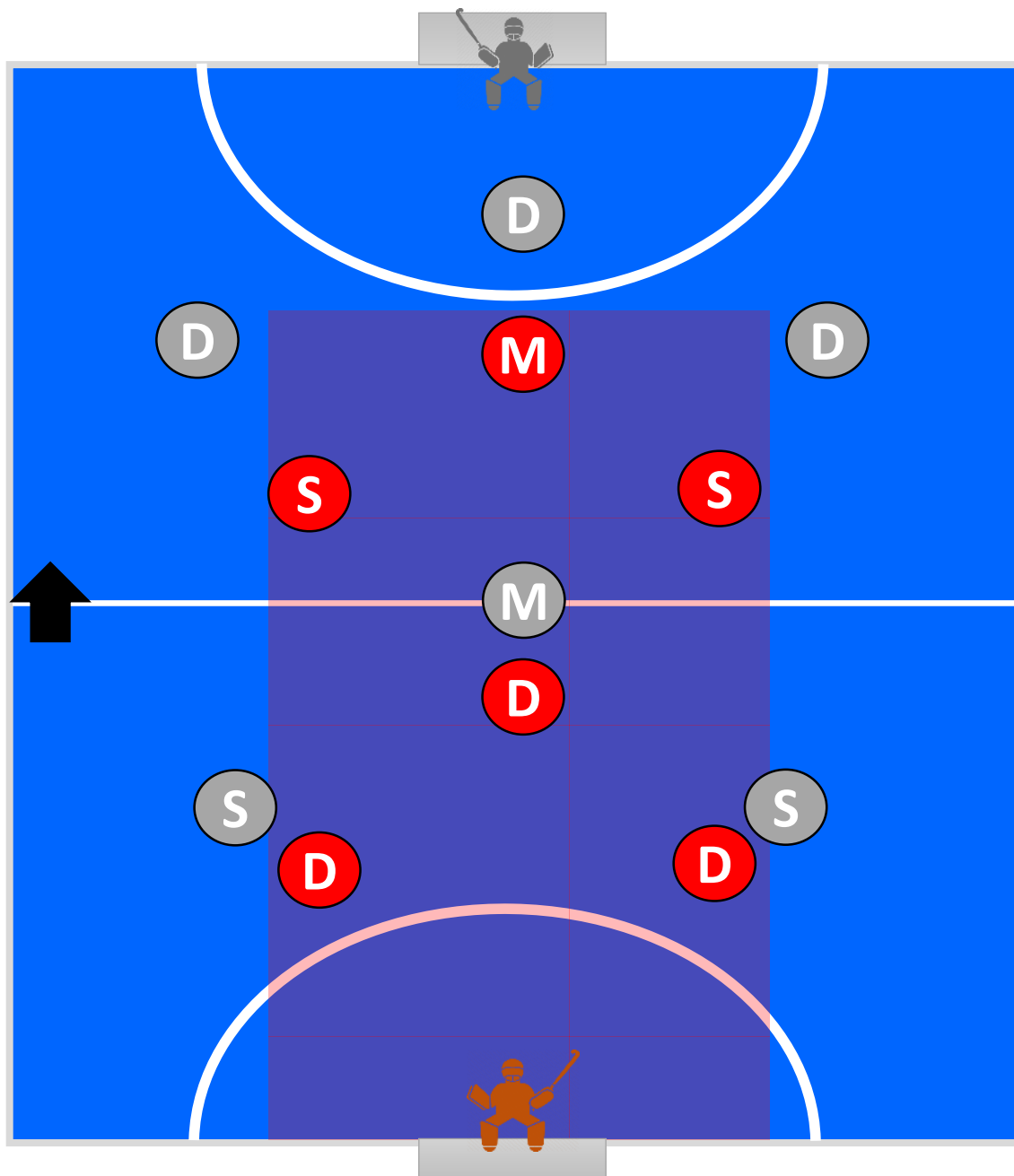
Attacking Principle #2 – Stay Connected

- Setting up in an attacking shape like this ensures each player has at least two (often three) short passing options on when they receive the ball – as displayed by the grey lines
- As play and the ball moves, players should adjust to ensure they stay connected whilst also creating height and width
- Example – left striker leads into the circle as the ball is passed to the right striker and creates a new short passing connection (shown in yellow)
- Players don't need to maintain perfect triangles as displayed here, however being aware of their position and whether or not the ball carrier has two short passing options available is important



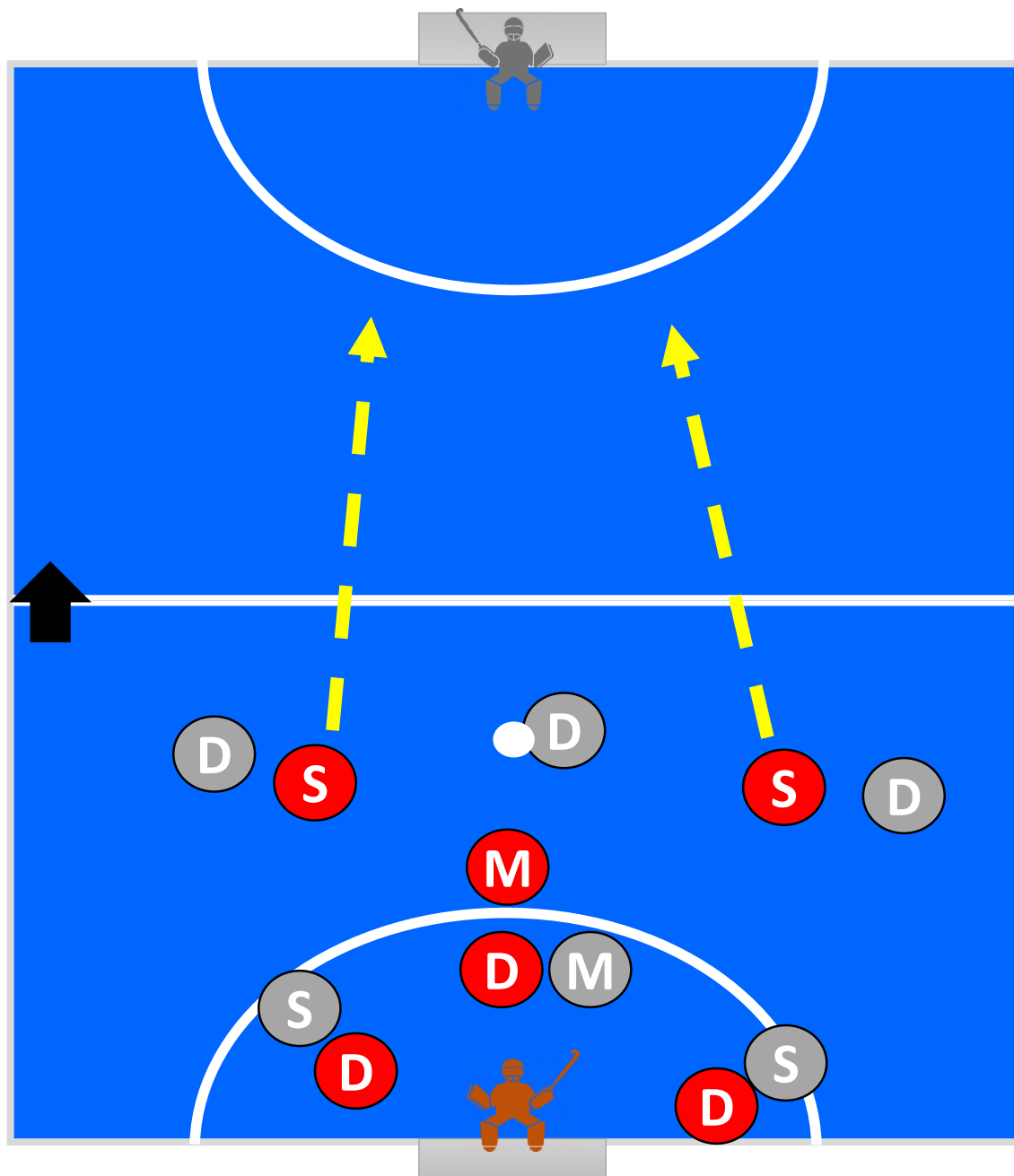
Attacking Principle #3 – Counter Control

- When the attacking team has possession in the attacking third all players should support the attacking play
- However, it's recommended that two players occupy 'cover positions' to slow/stop opposition counter-attacks if the ball is turned over
- These two players should also be available for passes from their teammates in or around the circle, to switch the point of attack
- By occupying these 'cover positions' they will also reduce crowding in the circle and likely leave teammates with more space to create more goal scoring opportunities
- If these two 'covering players' stand too far back i.e. behind half way, the opposing players will have a large amount of space to counter attack into



Defensive Principle #1 – Minimise Space

- Minimising space on defence should be a key focus
- Players should congest the middle of the field and force attacking players to play the ball wide
- Defenders should emphasise protecting the top of their circle and forcing any circle entries to be near the base line
- Teams should try and ensure they defend the 'Hot-line' to limit their opponents ability to attack the most direct line to the goal
- In 6/7 a-side we do not recommend teams play with a free-man or sweeper and instead simply mark the opposition 'man to man' (one person on each player)



Defensive Principle #3 – Counter-attack Ready

- Some of the best goal scoring opportunities come directly from good defence and effective counter-attacks
- To set up for this ensure one or two players (normally strikers) are ready to counter-attack quickly if your team gains possession
- These two players should ensure they protect the middle of the field and their defensive circle by marking their opponents
- Once in marking position they should be prepared to jump in front of their opposition and break forward to provide a counter-attack if a turnover occurs