definition

- defence is when we don’t have the ball
- remember... “offence sells tickets - defence wins games”...!!!

basic rules

- defence is everybody’s responsibility
- compact team play
- players in dangerous positions are closely marked, otherwise we just keep an eye on them
- communication from behind (keeper ⇨ defence ⇨ offence), we talk to each other
- we need our forwards for defence (sometimes deep into our own half)
- in close vicinity of the ball we always try to be in numerical superiority (double)
- our opponents are never in numerical superiority in front of our goal
- our position is between our direct opponent and our own goal
- we need our forwards for defence (sometimes deep into our own half)
- no space / no time for (ballkeeping) opponents
- stick against stick, body against body
- we show the reaching area of our sticks as late as possible

team tactics

- we play a flexible man orientated 2:1:2 zone defence (every player is responsible for a certain zone and the player within this zone): no close marking over the entire field, you can hand-over players, you can leave your zone
- never let yourself outrun by the opponent with the ball (gain speed before your attack and “push” him to a safe zone (zones close to the rink, away from our slot)
- we ultimately defend the slot and allow no shots on goal from this area (blocking)
- we try to force our opponents into a certain direction (from the middle to the outside) by attacking with the stick from the middle (not body - danger of outrun)
- uncontrolled balls in front of our goal are played out immediately (stick, foot, ...)

individual tactics

- I always know where the ball is and where my direct opponent is
- in a 1-1 situation I use my body to defend the ball (turn around and cover the ball)
- I defend according to the rules (I don’t use my hands, I use my upper body)
- my stick blade is always on the floor
fore-checking

what:  
- defensive play that starts in our opponents' field area
- remember: fore-checking is teamwork (mostly the second or third player wins the ball)

why:  
- to stop our opponents' starting their offensive play

how:  
- prevent the first pass
- try to interfere as much as possible to force them to a bad pass - win the ball (turnover)
- persistent work with stick and body (within the rules)

(1) direct the opponents' offence (2:1:2, 2:2:1)

when:  
- against stronger or equal opponents

where:  
- starts 2-4 m into the other half

- strong-side forward - close long line pass
- weak-side forward - watch the other defender
- centre - middle zone coverage
- defenders - close gaps to own offence

- against stronger opponents fore checking starts at the middle line
- our goal is to steer our opponents (e.g. to outer (safe) position if opponent team has good center players, or to center if we have strong center players)
- after directing we start to double the opponent (centre/forward, forward/defender, centre/defender)

(2) aggressive fore checking (2:1:2)

when:  
- against equal or weaker opponents or, if we are down 1 or 2 goals in the last minutes

where:  
- starts deep into the other half

how:  
- pressure against ball possessor, 1 on 1 close marking

- strong side forward - pressing
- weak side forward - cover the middle / intercept passes
- centre - close marking
- strong side defender - close marking
- weak side defender - cover the middle

- mark more closely as the opponents approach our goal
(3) **pressing (2:1:2)**

**when:**
- against much weaker opponents or,
- if we are down 1 or 2 goals in the last minutes

**where:**
- to be played on the entire field

**how:**
- massive fore checking, interfere all passes
- tackle every player and win the ball (within the rules)

- forwards - double the player with the ball
- centre - close marking of opponents centre
  - supports fore checking
- defenders - close marking of the opponents forwards
- counter attack possible - prepare for back checking

**back-checking**

- every fore checking can be interfered by our opponent
- back-checking is the unplanned transition from offence to defence
  (intercepted passes, …)
- prevention of direct danger for our goal (pass into our slot, power play situation against us, …)
- an overrun forward runs back until deep into our own half and puts pressure on his opponent
- always run the whole distance with your opponent push them into safe areas (out of the slot)
- all other players move quickly to their defensive positions (still trying to intercept passes)
- the centre supports the strong side forward, the weak side forward then always runs through the middle (see right picture)
Short-handed defence

- there are two systems depending on the offensive play of the other team (see right pictures)
- the whole figure shifts towards the ball side / the side where the opponent has numerical superiority
- always have your stick on the floor
- we always cover the slot and allow no shots from this area
- compact play is essential to survive

Some explanations

- slot: see right picture
- 2:1:2 system: see right picture
- strong side: the side where the ball is
- weak side: the other side

Free hits defence

- directly after the whistle (3m distance incl. stick)
- usually 2 players, if less than 6m up to 3-4 players (generally: same numbers of players in the wall as the opponent team has players at the ball to play free hit)
- a wall usually consists of the centre and the strong side forward (but depending on situation: directly after the whistle: the player standing in the direct defence line between ball and goal starts to form the wall)
- closer to our goal the centre, strong side forward and strong side defender (+ weak side defender)
- use your entire body area, upper body upright, one knee on the floor, stick parallel on the floor

- defender 1 attacks forward 1 (should even follow him behind the goal)
- centre 3 covers centre 5 and closes the first goal post if forward 1 goes behind the goal to prevent the pass from there into the slot; he also tries to intercept a possible pass from forward 1 to forward 2
- defender 2 covers the zone in front of the goal and goes to the second post if forward 1 goes behind the goal or passes to forward 2
- forward 4 returns deep into our own half to intercept the pass from forward 1 to defender 4; he also helps if forward 1 starts to run in a bow onto our own goal
- forward 5 covers the rear area in front of the goal and prevents the diagonal pass to defender 6; if forward 1 passes to forward 2 (and defender 2 subsequently went to the second goal post) forward 6 moves into the central area in front of the goal and covers centre 3; forward 4 then prevents the diagonal pass to defender 6