



# Advanced Skills & Drills

# Skills

 = Defender  
 = Attacker

## Over Heads

Aerial, or “overhead,” passes are used to lift the ball long distances across the field and over the heads of the opposing team. While men generally make overhead passes by using only upper body strength, women will generally use more of their body to lift the ball. If preformed correctly, overhead passes can be very useful in moving the ball up the field and over crowded areas.

Knowing when you are allowed to complete an aerial pass is important. You can only lift the ball if you are 5 yards from all players and the ball needs to land into space (not a crowded area). You can now perform an overhead from a still ball at a free hit (you used to have to auto first before over heading).

This pass is similar to a push, but instead of simply pushing the ball, the player needs to get her stick under the ball to lift it into the air.

- 1.Position your hands in the basic grip on the stick. Place the stick directly behind (and in contact with) the ball.
- 2.Start with your feet close together. Bend your knees and get low to the ground.
- 3.Position the ball to the right of you, slightly in front of your back foot.
- 4.Take a large step forward with your left foot (step past the ball). This will make getting underneath the ball easier.
- 5.As you step forward, shift your weight from your back foot to your front foot as you push the ball forward and across your body. Start turning your hips so that both your hips and your stick face the target.
- 6.Now, lift the ball: Lift the base of the stick by pulling your right hand (located at the base of the grip) upwards, and simultaneously pushing your left hand (located at the top of the stick) down as you push the ball forward. This will force the base of the stick to move upward at an angle and it will give you added power to your lift.
- 7.Make sure to follow through by continuing your swing and bringing the stick up to your waist (or a bit higher) after the ball has left the stick. And step through, you shouldn't end the pass leaning back you should end taking steps forward in the direction the ball went.

Remember everyone is different and some people may have different techniques, but if it works for them don't change it. get players to practice with a dead ball and a moving ball, see which one works best for them, although it's handy to be able to do it both ways.



-Back knee drops to get under the ball

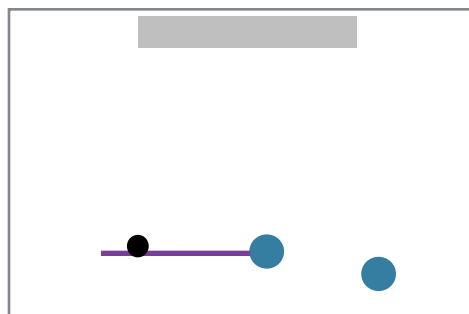
## Receiving an overhead

There is a new rule that allows you to lift your stick above your shoulders to trap a ball as long as you are 5 meters from all players (check your competition hand book as some grades still do not allow this). Also no one can come within 5 meters of you when you are trapping an overhead until you gain control of the ball. The initial receiver of the ball has the right to the ball. If the receiver is not clear the defending team get the right to the ball.

## Tomahawk

Known as a back stick shot, reverse hit and tomahawk is a useful hit for the players on the left side of the field and also a useful shot at goal. To execute the tomahawk the balls contact on the stick needs to be in the correct spot. the part of the stick that the ball makes contact with is the edge just up from the hook.

1. Grip- hold the stick in a normal hitting grip but with your stick turned by about a quarter so that when you hit the rounded edge of the stick would be facing the ground and flat side facing the sky. (like when your holding a frypan with two hands to flip a pancake).
2. Body Position- player is 90 degrees from target (see diagram below) and very low to the ground. With the Right foot lunging forward and the side of the right thigh facing the goal. R foots toes are facing the ball rather than the target.



3. Ball Position- the ball is a stick length in front of the right foot and in line with the feet. The balls impact with the stick is about 5-10cm up from the stick head.
4. Swing- Start from the right shoulder, in contact with the ball the stick should be parallel with the ground and follow through around the body.



## 3D skills

3D skills are where the ball is played in the air tight to your stick for control, like a jink. The next step up from a jink is a double jink where you would jink two players in a row. You could develop on from that and jink then drag in the air, and juggle in the air (low to the ground and tight to your stick). 3D skills are a great skill to have, as defenders are getting better at flat stick tackles around their defending circle its good for attackers to be creative and get the ball over the defenders sticks!

## Deflections

Deflections are one of the most common ways to score. When you deflect the ball, you essentially redirect its course after it is hit by another player. These shots are extremely hard for goalies to defend against since they are prepared for the initial shot on goal. With deflections, they don't have time to reposition themselves to defend against the shot.

There are four main types of stick positions you'll use for deflections: The upright strong stick, the flat strong stick, the upright reverse stick, and the flat reverse stick.

Guts to Goal: is a good way to think when positioning for flat stick deflections no matter where the ball is coming from. You're more likely to send the ball in a good angle towards the goal if your body is positioned correctly.

## Stick Angles

Deflections are not shots at goal — they are redirections of shots at goal. So, the angle of your stick plays a major role in your success. Generally, midfielders will take a shot from the top of the circle and forwards cover the posts and goalie for possible deflections. This means that all players come from different angles, so their sticks have to be angled differently.

On penalty corners, four players generally run in towards the goal — two blocking the posts and two blocking the goalie. Depending on the angle you're using to run in towards the goal, you'll hold your stick differently:

- **Coming in from the right:** Hold your stick in an upright, strong stick position in front of the goalie. In front of a post, hold the strong stick flat, horizontal to the ground.
- **Coming from the left:** The player running from the left post holds her reverse stick flat. The player shielding the goalie will hold her reverse stick upright.

By using these strategies, your team will be able to cover the entire goal and increase scoring opportunities.

The most important thing to remember for deflections is to get your stick on the ball. Most goals are scored off deflections, but you can only score if you can control the ball. This means that you must sprint to where the ball is headed and be ready to put your stick down to deflect it into the goal.

The more goal-hungry you are, the more goals you will score. Be aggressive in front of the goal and do whatever you can to get the ball into the back of the net. If you want a goal, go get it!

## **Deceptive sweep**

A deceptive sweep is where it looks like you're going to pass it one way but you pass it another, there is a little acting in it to make it convincing, like looking where they think you're going to pass it not where the ball is actually going to go.

Passing to your left is the easiest way with a deceptive sweep as you are just carrying the ball around your body more before letting it go from your stick. The best way to do this is to carry the ball on an angle to your right like you are looking to go that

way (which should shift the defence and open a gap) then you can throw it back to the left.

Passing to your right is a lot harder you can do it as a straight sweep and just angle your stick so the ball comes off it earlier. But it isn't as deceptive as the way most men do it.

The way the men do it (it is easier for them as they are a lot stronger) is all in their wrists. the ball will start half way up their stick and as they sweep it will roll down to the end of the stick and flick off the end.



## Chop/Squeeze

The chop or squeeze is another quick way to lift the ball over an opponent's stick. To complete the chop you need to be dribbling not stationary:

1. Start with your hands in the basic grip on the stick.
2. Slide your bottom hand to your top hand at the top of the stick to create the double "v" grip.
3. Chop the ball right before you get to your opponent's stick. Off the dribble, the ball should be behind your back foot.
4. Angle the stick forward at a 45-degree angle on impact. The stick's flat side will face the ground.
5. Cock your wrists for the hit.
6. Hit the top/back of the ball with the flat bottom side of the stick. Hit the ball *down*, not back.

7. The force of hitting the ball into the ground will cause it to pop up, over your opponent's stick.



## G-Turn

A G-Turn is a good way to eliminate a defender where you would dribble up the field and when a defender confronts you, you do a G-Turn and open out the field. It works well when attacking up the left side of the field and coming up to a defender, by doing a G-Turn you open the entire field up for a passing option.

1. When going into do a G-Turn you need to bend your right knee and pivot on your left foot
2. Moving in a circle 3/4 of the way around so that you are facing the middle of the field to finish
3. The quickest way to move the ball in this motion is to get the ball in the hook of your stick.
4. Look up for a pass





## Shave tackle

Tackling from behind used to be a big no no in hockey, but as the game has developed the rules have changed. The shave tackle is useful when you are chasing the ball carrier especially when you don't know your behind them. To achieve a good successful shave tackle you need to get very low so your stick is almost lying flat on the turf. The key is to get the ball without making contact with the ball carriers stick (timing is crucial, as soon as they lift their stick off the ball thats you cue). If you make contact with their stick the umpire will most probably pull you up for a hack!



## Formations

It's not the positions you assign to the players that matters the most, it's how they work together within those positions. Every role and responsibility has to be understood. The basic lineup of a team includes forwards, midfielders, and defenders, players should not be referring they positions to specifics by now e.g. Right Half, Left Wing etc.

## Create Your Lineup

The most basic line up for 11 aside is 3x strikers, 2x insides, 1x centre half, 2x wing halves, 2x backs and a goalie. As players grow and start to understand the game more they should be flexible with where they play on the field. They should be able to be put in a position and know what the role is. Of course some players have skills that are specific in each role so are more suited to different areas.

Players should be able to adapt to play and switch with players when needed, eg if the right half goes for a run up the field the inside should notice this and roll back into the halves role until they are able to swap back. This takes a lot of practice and



players need to be aware of what is going on around them rather than just ball watching!

Some popular line ups:

3x strikers, 2x insides, 2x centre halves, 2x wing halves, 1 fullback- the two centre halves could play one up one back or side by side, and it just means that the halves will have to hold back a little more.

You often hear about teams playing with a back 3 and that's what they mean 2 halves and one back. And they play like a seesaw, so if the ball is on the right side the right half will push up and then the fullback will push across to the right and the left half will pull back and more central.

There are heaps of different ways of playing you just need to know your players and what they are capable of. The best way to explain a new lineup is to have a board session to explain everyone's roles in different situations.

As players become more experienced they should be able to naturally play different lineups within the one game.

### Hotline

When someone refers to a hotline player it means that it is one designated player (usually when playing a double centre half, it would be the back centre half) whose role is to cover the line between the ball and the spot. All they do is move around to hold that line between wherever the ball may be and the spot, so there is no direct pass into the circle.

This role could also be played by a high fullback.

### Free man

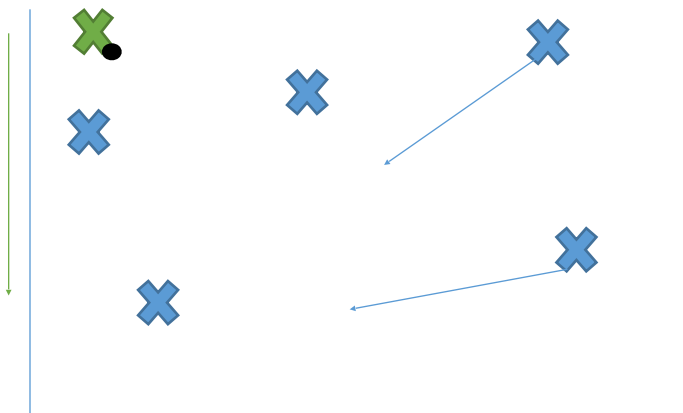
A free man is a designated player (usually a fullback) that on defence within the defensive 25 of the field will take the ball carrier. This way there is no confusion who is leaving their player to make the tackle on the ball carrier.

## **Defensive patterns**

### Help side

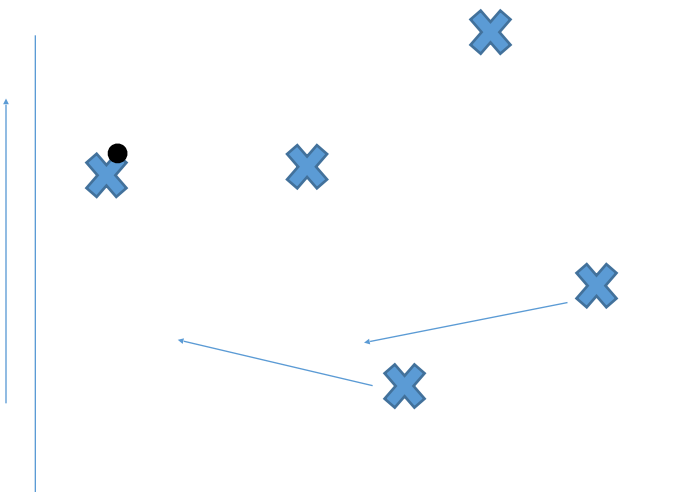
Help side is when the ball is on the opposite side to you and you drop around to cover in case there is a turnover. This is very important and often players think that if the ball is not on their side of the field that they don't have a job to do and shut off.

Defence: Help side is very important on defence to cover each other in case of a break away from the opposition.



Opposition (in green) has the ball on the left, the players on the right (blue) need to be aware and drop back and infield to help block off any passes and to back up their team mates if they get beaten.

Attack: Most players forget about this on attack as they are so focused on moving the ball up the field.



This is mostly used at the back, especially when playing a back 3. Say that in this diagram the player with the ball is the LH and they are attacking up the turf, the FB and RH need to adjust and cover the LH in case they turn the ball over.

This can also be used up the field as you don't want all players in the attacking circle! Someone needs to come out and cover so if the ball comes out they are there to bring it back in.

## Zonal Defence

Zone defence is a type of defensive strategy. In zone defence, you do not mark a specific person, but rather cover an area in the defensive zone. In this situation, you are responsible for marking any player that comes into your zone. With this type of defence, you are positioned to guard your area against potential danger (an open, opposing player). You will also be able to defend any other areas should the point of attack shift in front of the goal.

Maintaining discipline and organisation is crucial to the success of zone defence. If part of the zone breaks down, your defence may be compromised. Done correctly, zone defence can lead to counterattacks. This type of marking is less physically demanding than man-to-man marking. The downside to this type of defence is that if the area becomes overcrowded in front of the goal, it may result in a two-on-one situation against the defenders.

## Press

There are different types of press's but most often used is the full or half and sometimes the three quarter press. A press is where the team or group defending apply pressure to the opposition in order to force them to go in a direction you want and hopefully cause a turn over. The type of press used depends on where on the field the ball is, how far along the game is and the position of the defending team in the match (winning, losing, drawing).

The success of the presses lies in the strength of the walls. A defensive wall setup against a free hit involves the entire team. There are two ways to set up a wall. The first is to block the middle of the field, forcing the other team to the sidelines (this looks like the setup of ten bowling pins). The second setup is used to cut off the passing options for the player taking the hit. This is done by forming an arched wall around the player taking the free hit, supported by staggered lines behind it.

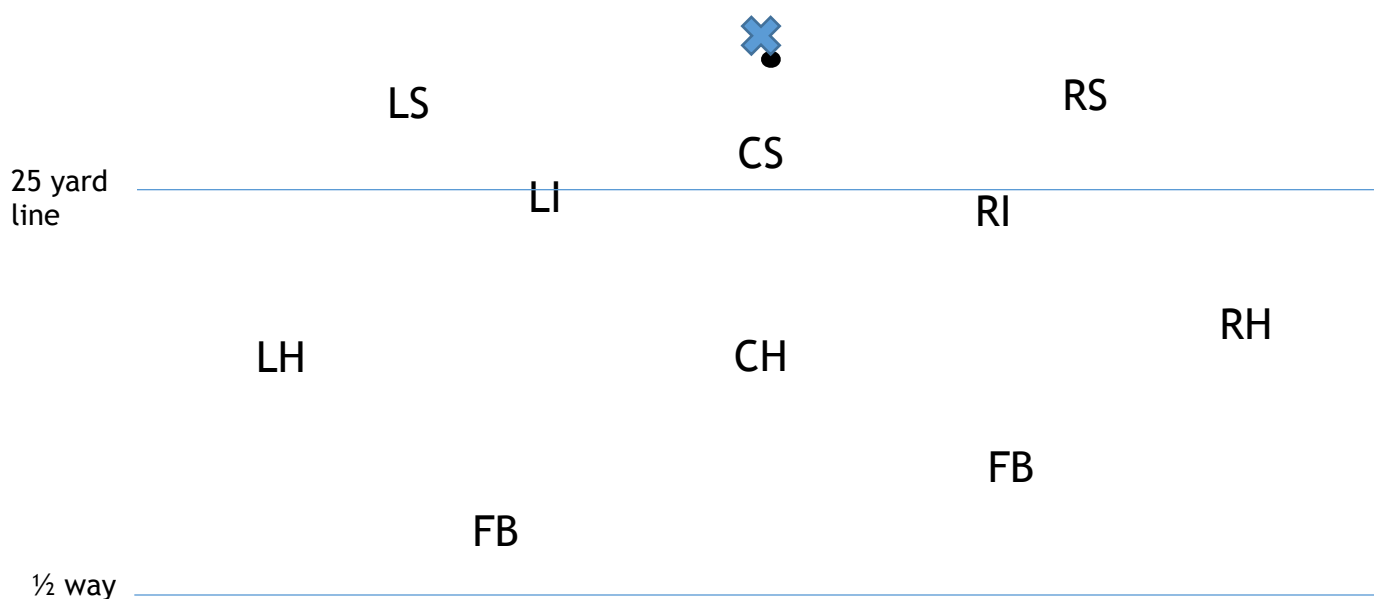
In the first formation (the one that mimics the setup of bowling pins), the centre forward positions herself as the point player, blocking the middle and marking the player taking the free hit. The remaining players set up behind her in staggered lines.

In the second formation — the arched wall — the forwards position themselves in an arch around the ball. This blocks all passing options. The remaining players line up behind the arch to block the middle of the field in staggered lines. They set up in "window" positions, standing between the players that make up the wall in front of them. This strategy is mainly used in the **full press** to cut off the opposing team's passing options.

## Full Press:

The full press strategy closes down all passing options for the opposing team. This press is used when the ball is deep in the **offensive zone** (for a sideline or 16-yard hit, for example). To employ the full press:

1. Set the team up as a standard **defensive screen**.
2. Position the entire team in the offensive half of the zone (including the defence).
3. Block all passing options for the player taking the free hit.
4. Position the left and right forwards where they can cut off the hitter's sideline passes to prevent them switching sides.



There are advantages and disadvantages to using this strategy. The advantages of the full press include:

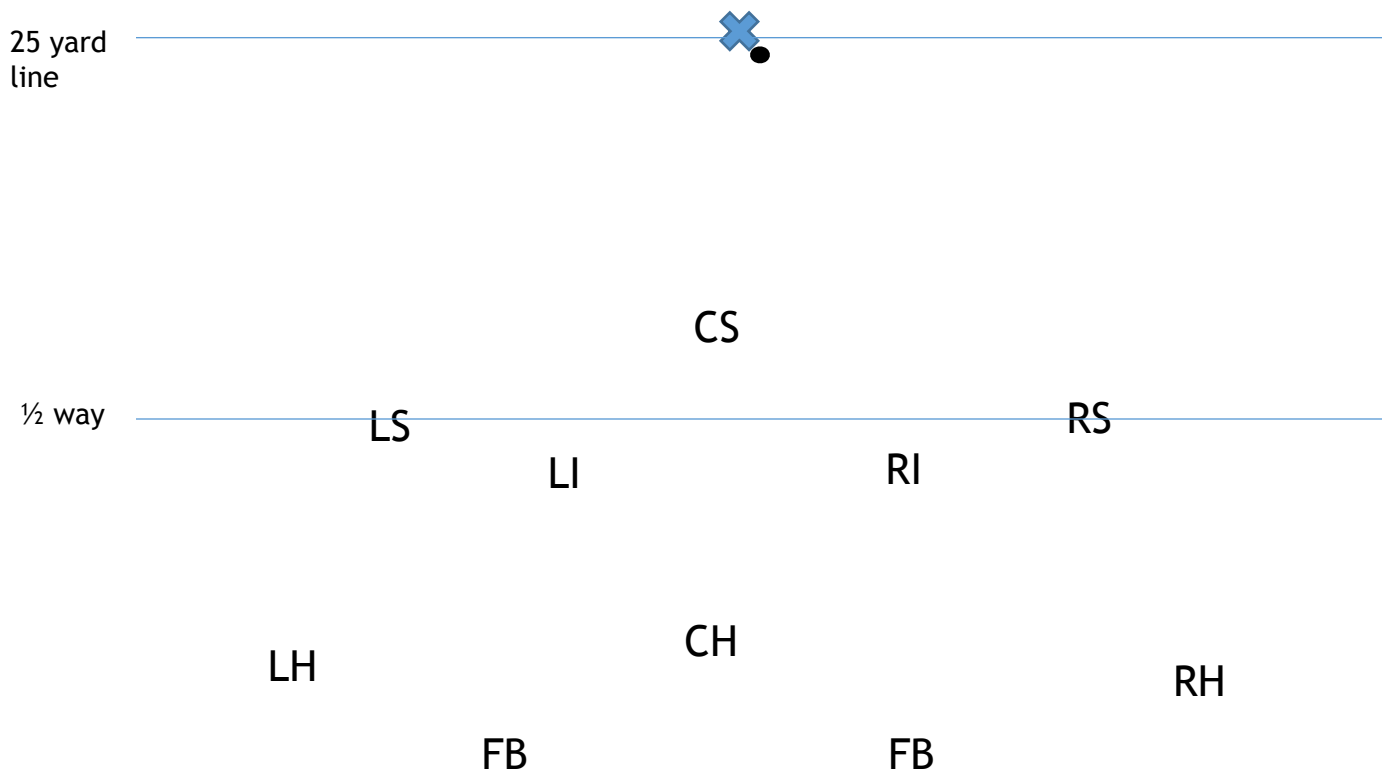
- Blocking the opposition from taking long hits down the field
- Keeping the ball in the offensive zone
- Allowing large numbers on defence to encourage easy turnovers

The disadvantages of the full press include:

- Allowing the opposition to catch the defence off guard if the ball gets through the wall.
- The opportunity of the opposing team to get long passes down the field to open forwards. If the hitter decides to self-pass the ball, the wall can be easily broken down.

## Half Press:

The half press is very useful in a game. This press is used to defend against free hits by pulling back to around the half way (that is if the free hit is on your offence end of the field). The half-press setup blocks the opponents attacking half of the field giving them a lot of space to play the ball. This can make the other team think that they can get through to their attacking half with ease, they are likely to want to hit the ball to their team mates on the other side of the press which results in an easy turnover.



## Inside the Defensive Zone:

If the opposing team receives a free hit inside of the defensive 25-yard zone, no press is used. Instead, man-to-man or match-up zone marking should be used near the goal. The benefit of man-to-man marking is that no opposing player is left open in the zone. The benefit to match-up zone marking is that you control both the players *and* the space in the defensive zone.

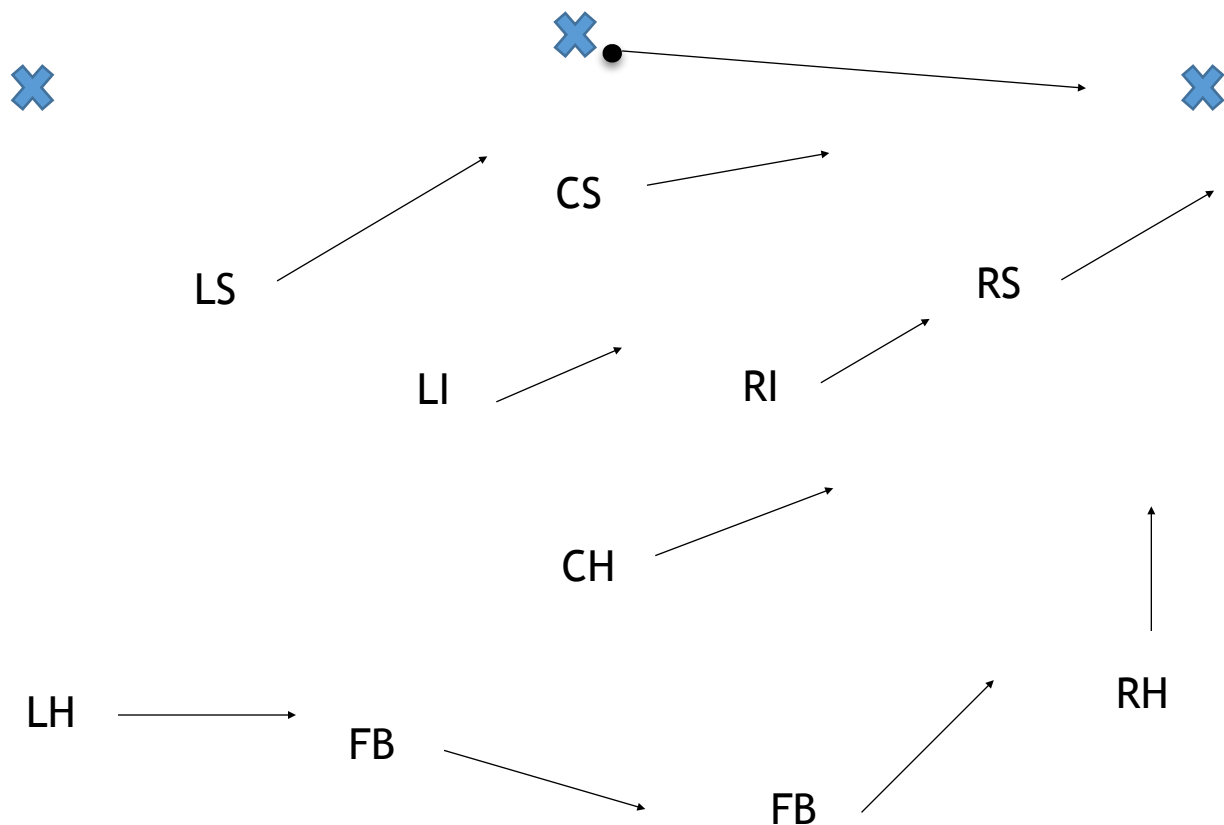
## Mastering the Press:

The more in tune the team is to working as a unit, the more successful their presses will be. Once your team masters the full and half presses, they will have an easier time keeping the ball in their offensive zone and creating scoring opportunities. The more time spent in the offensive zone, the more likely your team is to win.

## Shifting Screens:

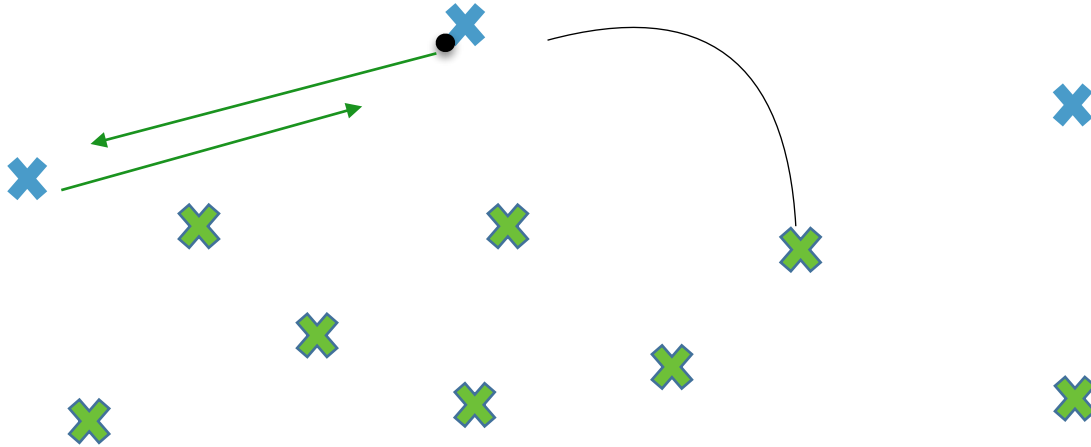
It is one thing to set up a screen/wall but when the ball has been played and moved the screen will have to shift to continue to have its effect. This is where the team work really come to play!

For example in the diagram below: The ball has been passed from a fullback to a half the screen will have to shift across to then block the halves passing options. This is done by the entire team adjusting to the play and filling in the gaps.



## Blind Side Press:

This works well when screening a 16 yard hit, if the player taking the free hit passes to a side the opposite side striker will come in on the side that they didn't pass the ball. If they receive it back they won't be able to go the other way and it will put them under a lot of pressure which in turn could cause them to make a mistake and give you an easy turnover. It would look like this:



## Receiving

By receiving the ball correctly you can eliminate a defender in one motion without having to confront them. This works well on free hits when the opposition have a screen set up or when you have a defender on you. It does involve team work, the player passing the ball needs to give the ball in an appropriate place as well as tell them whether they are open or not (they need to tell them before they receive the ball so they know). What you do is let the ball roll past your body and receive on the go.





Open- by the passer calling this it lets the receiver know that they can open receive (on the side the ball has been passed to) this allows them to eliminate the defender in one movement without having to go into contact with them.

Closed- this is called by the passer when you are blocked off from behind and need to trap the ball and protect it. Usually the only thing to do from there is to pass it back to the passer then re-lead to receive it again.

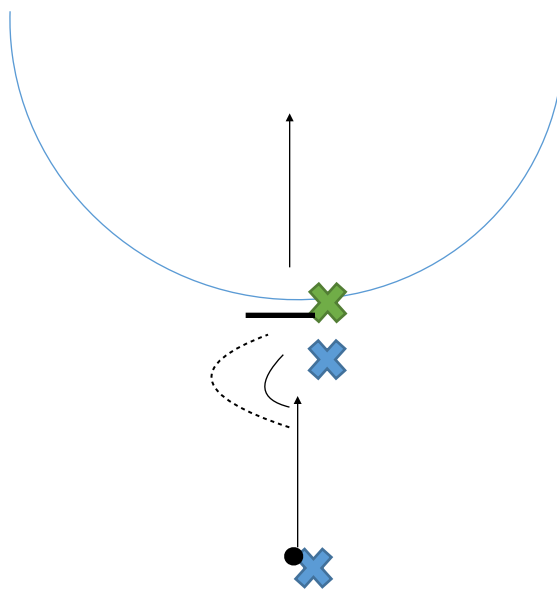
This involves great communication between team mates and trust in each other.

# Drills

## Jink Receive:

Players should be able to jink the ball fairly well at this stage and should be able to do multiple jinks in a row.

You can also use a jink when receiving the ball this is an easy drill to practise the skill.

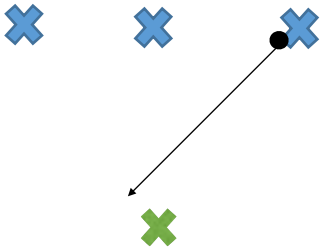


↑ = Ball  
↑ = Player

Blue player with the ball passes to blue player who's at the top of the circle being marked by a green player. When the ball reaches the blue player at the top in one motion they jink the ball over the green players stick then run around (following dotted lines on diagram) and have a shot at goal. Follow your ball. Can have green player as an actual player or a row of cones.

## Receiving on the left foot:

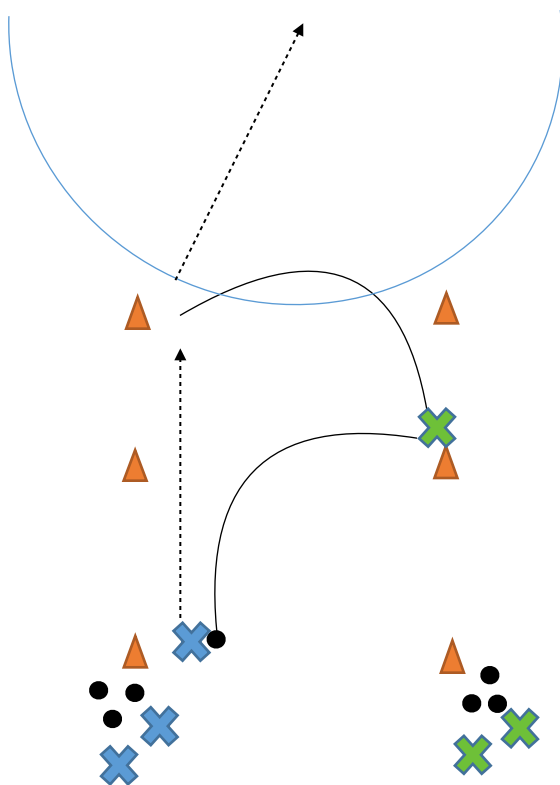
This may seem like a simple drill but it is really worth doing as players often struggle to do the very basics like trap a ball.



Green player is the player practising the skill, the players in blue pass the ball to the greens LEFT foot and then they trap and pass quickly back to the next blue player and so on. Go through a few times then swap the player practising the skill.

## Trapping a bobbly ball:

This drills great for not only trapping a bobbly ball but getting control then passing it on.



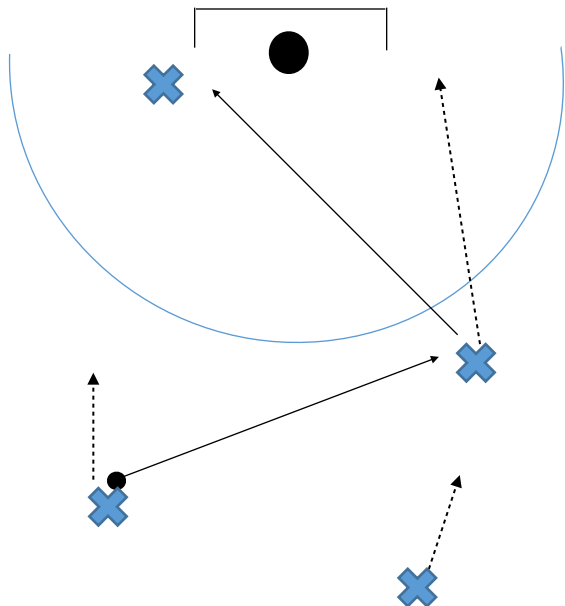
| = Ball  
↑ = Player

Blue player with the ball throws a mid -raised/bobbly ball to the green player on the second set of cones tho throws a bobbly ball back to the blue player who has ran to the top on the circle. The blue player gets control then shoots at the goal. then the green player heads back to their set of balls and does the same with the next blue player.

To take it up a level the player shooting has to try and shoot without trapping first (so one time it).

## Deflections:

This is the hardest thing for a goalie to save as they cannot predict where the ball is going to go. Deflections is one of the things that is hard to practise in game scenarios but this drill below is good for players to practise the deflection as well as the hard flat pass into the circle.



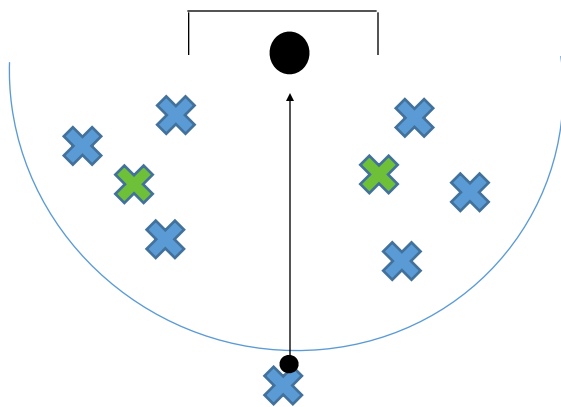
- ↑ - where the ball travels
- - where the player runs

Player waiting for the deflection needs to be running in not just standing waiting for it and they need to be ready to move as the ball most likely won't come right to their stick. The ball going in needs to be hard and flat.

Depending on the age group and level you could do one side at a time or alternate sides like in the drill shown.

## All in drill:

Attackers need to be hungry in the circle and really want that goal, they should be willing to put their body on the line. The way to explain to attackers is that they should put as much effort into getting a goal as the defences do to save a goal.



Player at top hits ball in straight to the goalie who saves it and then everyone is in on the rebound. Attackers (blue) wanting to get a goal and defenders (green) wanting to clear it out of the circle.

Make it a competition with punishment for the losers!

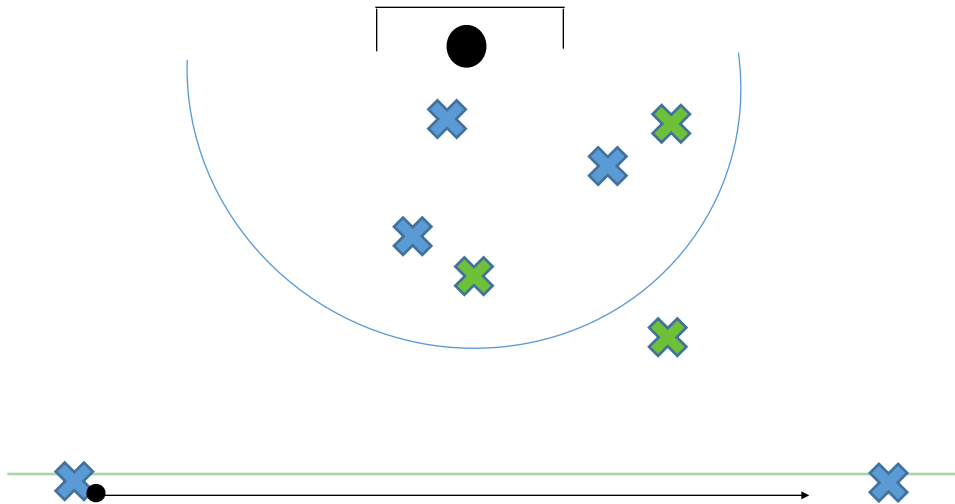
Attack- point for goal or PC

Defence- point for clearing the ball out of the circle or a free hit

# Small Games

## 4 v 3- Circle Marking:

This is great for defence to work on their communication (especially the goalie) and working together as a unit. As there is one more attacker than there is defence the defence will have to work in a zonal type defence rather than man on man.



Attacking player (blue) passes a long ball across the field to their team mate to start the game. The player who has received the ball then moves forward into the attacking 25 working with the 3x strikers who are already in the circle.

Defences aim is to work in a triangle type unit to defend the circle wight he point defender of the triangle taking the ball carrier. As the ball is passes the closest defender then becomes the point and the other two defenders shuffle around to maintain the triangle shape.

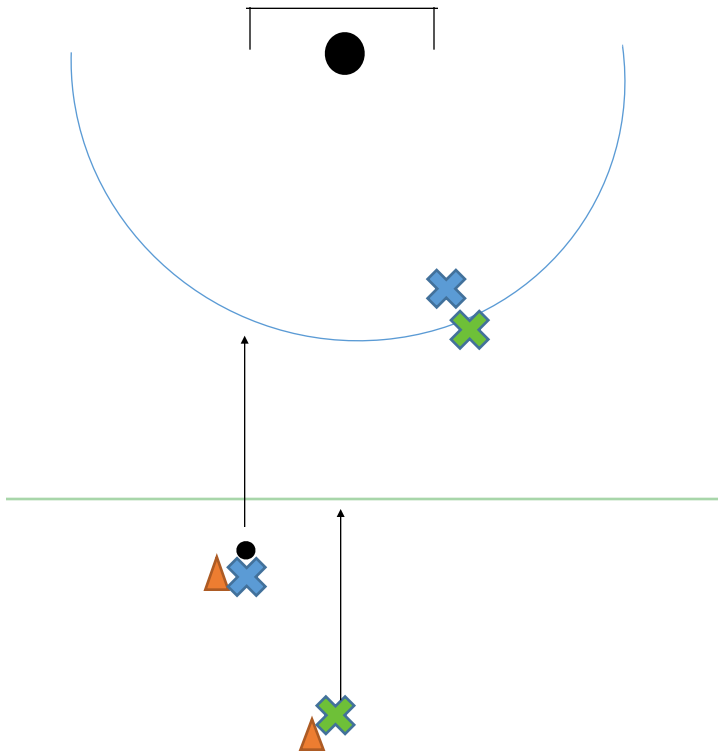
Defence aim is to clear the ball out.

Attacks aim is to score a goal.

Once that ball is done swap sides.

## Back Tackling:

This is good for everyone to practise, getting back on defences after a quick turnover. Often attackers will lose the ball and then think “oh well, my jobs done, defence will get it”, but at some stage in the game everyone needs to defend!

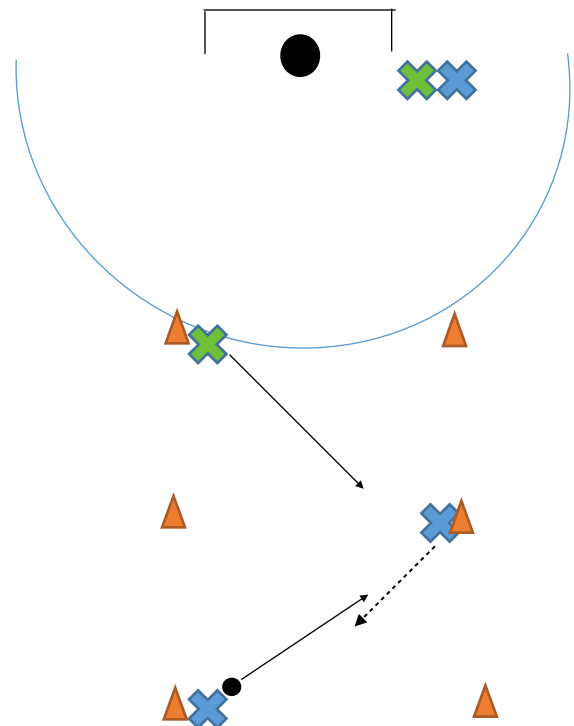


On the coaches call the attacker with the ball and defender behind go. Defender needs to get back to help the other defender and it becomes a 2 v 2.

## 3 v 2- Focus on shave tackle:

Player with the ball passes to team mate- when that pass is given the defender on the cone tries to attack the ball carrier and try and shave tackle them. Player can try and beat defender or work with their team mate.

Once the first defender attempts the shave or puts pressure on the attacker the defender and attacker who are on the base line can go. It then becomes a 3 v 2.



## 1/2 Court Game:

This is the best way to practise certain game skills and because there is normally only 16 players maximum at training and usually only have half a field to train on this works out perfectly.

Split your team into two teams defines and attack:

Attacking team usually has- 3x strikers, 2x insides, 1x ch, 2x halves

Defence team- GK, 2x fullbacks, 2x halves, 2x insides

Depending what you want to practise and how many are at the training is dependant on the positions you put them at.

Scenario 1: Want to practise defending against 2x CH's then put 2 CH's in the attacking team and see if defence can adjust.

Scenario 2: Want to practise using width, put cones in the middle of the field and make that a no go zone players can move through it but the ball can not.

Scenario 3: Want defence to work hard and communicate well, add an extra striker in so it adds extra stress on defence and makes them think who's taking who.

