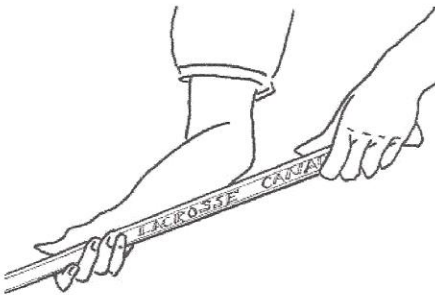


THE OFFENSIVE FUNDAMENTALS

HOLDING THE STICK



Thumbs and Fingers

The handle rests in the pads of the fingers and the thumbs are along the shaft. Holding the stick this way helps keep the hands soft and the wrists flexible.



The Ready Position

The bottom hand is at the butt of the stick and the top or strong hand is placed anywhere from the butt to the throat, depending on how the stick is being used. i.e. Hand position will be different for catching, cradling, throwing, reaching and checking.

In the ready position the head of the stick is held about shoulder height with the top hand near the throat and the bottom hand at the butt of the stick.



Common Faults

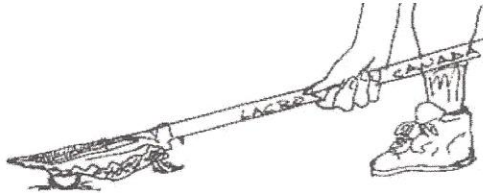
The natural way to hold the stick is to let the arms hang. If this position becomes a habit, players find it very difficult maintaining the ready position while on the floor and end up missing many opportunities to maintain or gain possession of the ball.

Gripping the Stick

New players tend to grip the stick with too much pressure, with their thumbs wrapped tightly around the handle in a “punching” grip and with their top hand stuck to one spot on the handle.

PICKING UP THE BALL

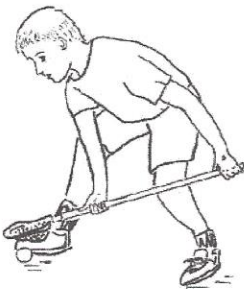
Trapping



Trapping is a method of stopping a rolling or bouncing ball by trapping the ball between the head of the stick and the floor or field.

*Keep the handle low.
Bend the knees.*

Scooping



Preliminary Movements

Trap to control the ball then:
right handers place the right foot beside the ball and left handers the left foot.

Control and ball position



Preparation

Bend the knees to lower the handle
Keep the head up.
Put the weight on the back foot.

The butt of the handle is kept as low as possible.



Force Producing Movements

The movement starts with the thrust of the back foot followed by the acceleration of the arms and stick.

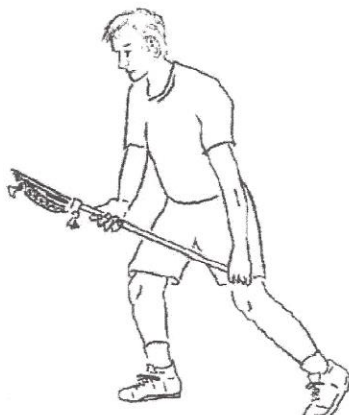
Acceleration of the stick through the ball.



Follow-through

The head of the stick is brought up

Keep the wrists and arms soft.



Critical Instant

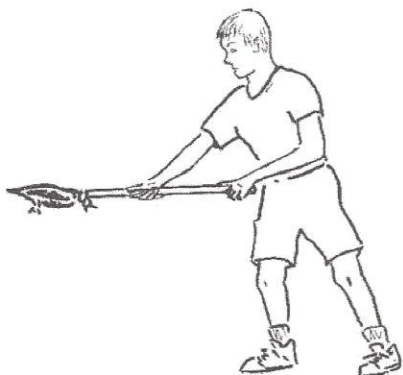
The stick slides under the ball as to the chest. a downward force is exerted by the bottom hand.

COMMON FAULTS OF SCOOPING



Not bending the knees or lowering the handle makes the ball difficult to scoop.

Also it forces the head down leaving the player in a vulnerable and weak position.



Using the arms instead of the body to generate the motion to scoop often sends the follow through away from the body.

Back-spin and Scoop



Place the end of the stick or pocket on the ball and roll the ball back.



When the ball gets to the player's foot, scoop as before. i.e. Push with the back foot and accelerate the scooping action by moving the shoulders and arms.

CARRYING THE BALL

Cradling

- Cradling is the rocking action that keeps the ball in the stick when the player is running.
- The wrist must be "soft" and flexible.
- The top hand creates the cradling motion
- The bottom hand protects the stick and supports the cradling motion by allowing the handle to rotate or by flexing the bottom wrist.
- When running, the movement of the wrist must coincide with the motion of the arm.

Learning to Cradle

Beginners have difficulty learning to cradle because of the tension in the shoulders arms and wrists. Relax and "soften" the wrists by using the relaxation techniques from Module 5, Mental Preparation, and by using the body to create the movement.

Coaches can speed up the development of the "feel" of the stick by planning practices to include stick handling activities (switching hands etc.) and by encouraging daily practice routines.

The Teaching Progressions for Cradling



Hold the stick near the throat with the handle vertical. Develop the wrist action by flexing and extending the wrist.



Teaching point: Cradling is the action of the wrist that uses the pocket of the stick to absorb the centrifugal force created as the arm moves back and forth when a player is running. In effect, the pocket of the stick is turned to catch the ball at the end of each arm swing.



Swing the arm from side to side in front of the body. Flex the wrist as the arm moves in front of the chest and extend it as the arm moves back.



Add the bottom hand, remembering that the bottom hand does not grip the stick or supply any of the cradling. Practise until the two hands feel coordinate.



The final step is to cradle the ball while slowly moving the stick to the normal carrying position often called the double threat position. The stick can be carried with one or two hands, however beginners and younger players should develop the habit of carrying the ball with two hands first.

The Double and Triple Threat Position

Players should always carry the stick so that the body shields the stick from the defensive player. The “**double threat**” term is used so that players will hold the stick in a protected position while they try to go around the defence and yet still have the stick ready to make a pass by simply moving the arms back. (The top hand slides to a throwing position on the handle. The double threat position becomes a **triple threat** when the player is close enough to the goal to take a shot.

Switching Hands



It is important that players can play with the stick in either the right or left hand. This skill can prevent undue defensive pressure and increase scoring and passing opportunities. For best results teach players to use both hands when they first learn to use the stick.



To initiate the switch, bring the bottom hand up underneath the top hand. Players should always be conscious of using the body to shield the stick during the switch.



To complete the switch, the top hand now moves down to the butt of the handle.

Coaching Tip:

When coaching beginners, all activities and drills should be organized so that all players practise their skills **left and right handed**.

THROWING

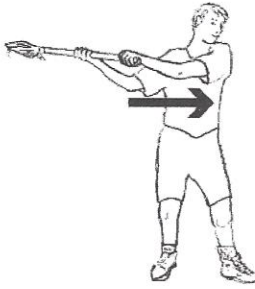
Passing



Preliminary Movements

The shoulder is facing the target.
 The feet are shoulder width apart.
 The arms are extended back slightly.
 The passer mid-points the defender and the receiver.

The shoulder faces the target.

**Preparation**

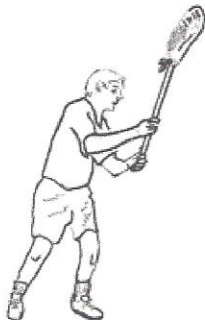
Lift the arms to shoulder height.
The weight is on the back foot.
Extend the arms straight back.
Point the elbow at the target

*Don't rest the stick on the shoulder and point the elbow.
Place the thumbs along the handle*

**Force Producing Movements**

Shift the weight forward.
Rotate the hips shoulders.
Drive the arms forward.
Snap the elbow down.

Using the weight shift and body rotation to generate the force.

**Critical Instant**

The two hands move together with the top hand acting as a moving fulcrum.
The wrists add the snap as the ball is released.

**Follow-through**

Let the stick follow through in the direction of the target.
Bring the back foot forward as in taking a step.

The stick follows through in the direction of the target

SHOOTING

Preliminary Movements

The same as passing except the shooter is watching the goalie while focusing mentally on the target.

Preparation

The same as passing except special emphasis must be placed on pointing the lead foot in the direction of the target.

Force Producing Movements

The same as passing except a slide step can be taken to start the shot.

The force must come from the legs, the hips and the shoulders. Any force generated by the arms often causes the stick to hook and creates tension that will effect the accuracy and speed of the shot.

Critical Instant

Keep the hands soft so the ball can be directed and not pulled.

Follow-through

If the follow through was not in the direction of the target then check head and foot position or whether too much force was produced by the arms.

Common Faults When Passing or Shooting



When the stick rests on the shoulder, the use of the body to supply force is blocked and encourages the use of the arms only.

There is no wind-up as the chest is facing the target and will result in a loss of power

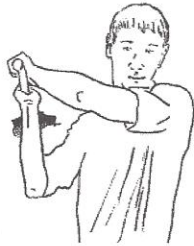


The top hand is too close to the throat – there is no leverage and encourages a pushing rather than a throwing action.

The elbow and handle are pointing to the ground – the ball will hook toward the ground.



The stick has gone behind the head – the ball will leave the stick early and be difficult to control.



The head of the stick is pointing to the ground – the ball may roll out the back and the hand position promotes pushing with the top hand.

The chest is facing the target. The player should turn so that the left shoulder is facing the target.

Bounce Shot

The bounce shot is a variation of the “overhand”. You can use the same mechanics, but bounce the ball in front of the goal. When the shot comes off the floor, the goalie has to readjust to the angle of the bounce, creating a more difficult save. There are many different places that can be used to bounce the ball: 1) about a foot in front of the goalie – this will put the ball up around the goalie’s hips; 2) at the edge of the crease – this will put the ball towards the top corners of the net.

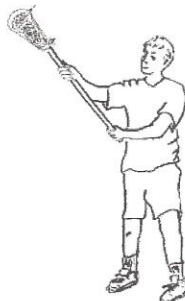
CATCHING



Preliminary Movements

The top hand grips the stick near the throat. Thumbs are along the shaft and the wrists are soft.

Present the stick as a target.



Preparation

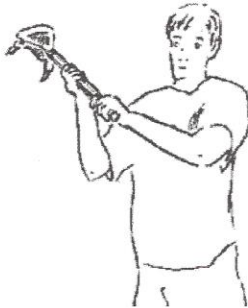
Reach up to the ball.

Watch the ball into the stick.



Critical Instant

The ball enters the pocket



Force Absorbing Movements

Cushion the pass by letting the head of the stick fall back as the ball enters the pocket.

Keep the wrists and arms soft.



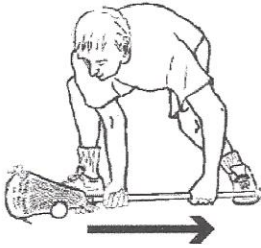
Follow-through

In catching the follow-through is the recovery movement to absorb the force of the pass and becomes the preliminary movement for a pass or shot.

Common catching faults

- Swinging or batting at the ball.
- Not watching the ball into the stick.
- Having too much tension in the arms and wrists.
- Holding the stick half way down the handle or more.
- Not having the stick held up as a target for the passer.

FACE-OFFS

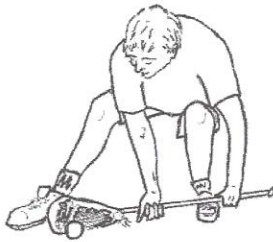


Preliminary Movement

Line up on the defensive side of the circle
Hold the stick with the top hand at the throat of the stick. (See “soft hands” in Mental Preparation.)

Preparation (Forward Press)

Weight on the front foot. Relax the shoulders and arms. (Use the breathing relaxation techniques from Mental Preparation.)



Force Producing Movement

In one motion, push off the front foot, rotate the hips and shoulders and pull with the arms.

Critical Instant:

The moment when the ball is pulled.

Follow-through

The follow-through is a product of the momentum from drawing the ball. Players should use it to complete the turn to face and follow the ball. Then, depending on which team gains possession, quickly move to an offensive or defensive position.

Line-up for the Face-off

Coaches should have two defensive players lined up in the most strategic position to defend and to pick up a loose ball. The other players try to establish the best position to retrieve a loose ball.

The Loose Ball

Once the ball is drawn, the responsibility of securing the loose ball is that of the players around the face-off circle.

Drills: Once the players can trap and scoop they can work in pairs: one player draws the ball to the partner who traps it for control, scoops it and then passes it back to the partner. This drill teaches the face-off person the idea of quickly getting into the play.

2-on-2 and 3-on-3 games would be the next steps in the progression.

GOALTENDING

THE FUNDAMENTALS

HOLDING THE STICK



Gripping the Stick.

Grip the stick so the fingers and thumb wrap around the handle.

Hold the stick handle so that it extends freely between the body and the arm.

Do Not hold the stick like a hockey goal stick as this places the hand in the wrong position for catching shots and making the subsequent passes.



Do Not place the thumb in the crook of the stick as there is danger of the thumb being jammed.



Hand Placement.

Have the goalie assume a balanced stance, and then grip the stick so the head of the stick just touches the ground.

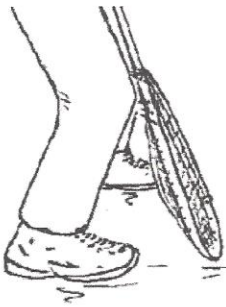


Holding the stick too high on the handle will cause the goalie to stand too tall or the stick to rest on the floor. Both situations will impede the goalies ability to move quickly.



Holding the stick too low will cause the stick to lift off the floor thus opening up the “five hole”. Also, taller players who hold the stick this way have to crouch too much to get the stick to the floor, thus putting the players weight too far forward.

THE STANCE



The Feet: *The feet are shoulder width apart and pointing slightly outward.*

For a right-handed goaltender, the left foot will generally be an inch or so ahead of the right for balance and vice versa for lefthanders.

The Stick Hand: *The stick hand is positioned inside the right knee for a right-hander.*

This will vary with the degree of crouch and size of the goaltender.

The Stick: *The stick just touches the floor.*

The stick should be centred between the feet and touching the floor about 6 inches in front of the feet. The pocket of the stick is kept square to the shooter with the handle fitting under the arm.

The Knees: *The knees are flexed so they cover the toes.* Goalies will have to experiment to find a comfortable position. Quadriceps strength is a key factor

The Weight: *The weight is evenly distributed and the player is balanced on the balls of the feet.*

If the weight is too far forward the weight will be shifted to the toes which will cause a loss of balance and encourage resting the stick on the floor; too far back puts the weight on the heels. Both positions make it difficult for the goalie to react. **Stay balanced and don't rest on the stick. Resting promotes mental laziness.**

The Upper Body: The back is straight with a slight forward bend which is good for deflecting shots down and promotes quick reactions.

The Free Hand: The free hand is held lightly on the hip. Program the movement of the free hand so that it is always turned to keep the pads square to the incoming ball.

POSITION

The Basic Position: The basic position is one step out from the goal line and lined up in front of the ball. Goalies can maintain their position relative to the goal frame by touching their hand or stick to the posts or by jamming a foot against one of the post when covering shots from the side.



Movement:

From the basic position, the goalie must be constantly moving to stay with the ball as it is passed from player to player and to stop shots to the open areas of the goal.

The best way to initiate movement is for the goalie to simultaneously extend the lead foot in the direction of movement while pushing off the opposite foot. By moving in this manner the goalie can keep the body behind the goalie stick and in front of the shot.



Shots from the side:

Once the ball is in the area of the goal line extended the foot and the leg guard is pressed tight to the goal post.

Angles: *The term used to reflect the amount of open goal the stick sees.*

The further the shooters are away from the goal, the more the goalie can move out to reduce the available space to shoot at. The closer the ball moves to the goal, the more the goalies must move back to their **basic positions**.

Vision and concentration:

Seeing is as much a function of concentration and experience as it is of physiology. Goalies must not only watch the ball carrier at all times but must develop the ability to focus all their attention on the ball itself.