

Skills of Hockey



South Australian Sports Institute



Grip

The basic grip outlined below is used for pushing, dribbling and receiving.

- ◆ Place the stick on the ground with the flat side facing the ground and the hook on the right side facing away from you
- ◆ With the left hand pick up the stick at the top
- ◆ Right hand moves forward to shake hands with the stick around 15 - 20cm below the top

To rotate the stick only the left hand will rotate, with the right hand acting as a guide. The stick will rotate through the right hand.

Watch For

- ◆ When facing stick forward the left hand must curl around the stick
- ◆ Right hand palm must be on back of stick with thumb pointing down
- ◆ When player rotate the stick make sure the right hand is not rotating at all
- ◆ Players should be bending at the knees more than their back when stick on ground

Distribution Skills

Push- Fore stick

- ◆ Right hand may be placed lower to exert maximum forward power.
- ◆ For basic push, line between feet points where you want to go, left foot should be in front.
- ◆ Place ball in front of right foot.
- ◆ Put stick on ball & slide stick along ground for around a metre.
- ◆ Keep the stick face on the ball and accelerate it as it moves along the ground.
- ◆ Keep face of stick at 90 degrees to the direction of the push throughout.
- ◆ Transfer weight from right to left foot as stick moves along ground.
- ◆ Follow through in an arc
- ◆ Older players should look to 'flick' their wrists to increase power

Watch for

- ◆ Player's eyes focussed on ball until ball delivery completed.
- ◆ Stick stays on the ball throughout the push.
- ◆ Stick moves along the ground as ball is pushed.
- ◆ Weight transfer from right to left foot.

- ◆ Face of stick is at right angles to direction of push.

Push – reverse stick

- ◆ Right hand may be placed lower on stick to exert more power.
- ◆ Left hand only to turn top of stick, right hand to let stick turn.
- ◆ Right foot should be forward and line between feet should point to where ball is to go.
- ◆ Ball to start just in front of left foot and body weight should be on back foot.
- ◆ Put stick face on ball and slide stick along ground for around a metre.
- ◆ Stick should accelerate as it pushes ball along, making sure stick remains in contact with the ground.
- ◆ Transfer weight from back foot to front foot and keep head steady over the path of ball
- ◆ Follow through in arc and stick should end in direction of the push

Watch for

- ◆ Left hand only to turn stick, right hand to act as a guide
- ◆ Stick face not at 90 degrees to keep pass flat on the ground
- ◆ Head not over ball as it is released
- ◆ Stick moves along the ground as ball is pushed

Slap hit – Hands together

- ◆ Right hand to be placed immediately under left hand at top of stick
- ◆ Left foot should be forward and line between feet should face in direction where ball is to go.
- ◆ Bend knees and back so that knuckles are almost touching the ground
- ◆ Ball to be placed level with front foot and well away from body to allow for 'sweeping' motion.
- ◆ Wrists to be cocked and provide all the speed and motion of the stick
- ◆ Stick should slide along ground all the way through back swing and until contact of the ball.
- ◆ Follow through should be in an arc with stick still contacting ground.

Watch for

- ◆ Hands not together on stick
- ◆ Players not getting hands low enough to ground
- ◆ Stick leaving ground on backswing, should be a smooth
- ◆ Eyes need to be focussed on ball until contact is made
- ◆ Ball too close to body, this will force player to be upright

Reverse slide

- ◆ Square shoulders to rolling ball away, with front shoulder pointing at target
- ◆ Crouch low with knees bent and a solid base.
- ◆ Slide hands together on stick, and horizontal stick behind ball on ground.
- ◆ Flat side of stick to be facing upwards.
- ◆ Short and quick backswing with stick on ground at all times.
- ◆ Follow through and keeps knees bent throughout.

Watch for

- ◆ Make sure face of stick is facing up.
- ◆ Ball is far enough away from body so that stick can be horizontal on ground.
- ◆ Either foot can be forward but will be easiest with right foot forward.

Hit - Fore stick

- ◆ Right hand to be placed immediately under left hand on stick (either up top or about 5 cm down grip)
- ◆ Left foot should be forward and line between feet facing where ball is to go.
- ◆ Bend both knees and the back so swing just contacts ground.
- ◆ Ball should be placed near the front foot.
- ◆ Keep face of stick at 90 degrees to the direction of the hit on contact.
- ◆ Wrist movement should be used to increase stick speed on contact (cock the wrists).
- ◆ Wrists should be cocked first before starting the swing.
- ◆ Transfer weight from right to left foot as swing through the ball.
- ◆ At end players should feel like they are falling forward not backwards.
- ◆ Follow through should be around the body.

Watch for

- ◆ Hands together on stick.
- ◆ Eyes focussed on ball until ball delivery completed.
- ◆ Knees bent.
- ◆ Ball starts near front foot.
- ◆ Ball is not too close to front foot (makes player tend to be upright).
- ◆ Swing is fluent (elbows not tucked in).
- ◆ Wrists are cocked to start the swing.

Pushing to left or right

- ◆ Feet continue to move forward so as not to telegraph the pass.
- ◆ Right hand may be lower down stick to help generate power.

- ◆ Push left of right elbow (depending on direction of push) forward so that the stick is facing direction that the ball will travel.
- ◆ Ensure face of stick is at right angles to direction of pass.
- ◆ Push both hands in direction of push to keep the stick upright (prevents the ball being lifted).

Watch for

- ◆ Feet and body do not turn.
- ◆ Stick face is turned far enough to be at right angles to direction of push.
- ◆ Stick is kept upright to prevent lifting the ball.
- ◆ Follow through is in direction of pass.

Hitting on the run

- ◆ Left hand at top of stick turned anticlockwise from basic grip.
- ◆ Right hand at top of stick immediately under left hand.
- ◆ Hit can be made off either foot.
- ◆ Ball should be placed near the front foot.
- ◆ Keep face of stick at 90 degrees to the direction of the hit on contact.
- ◆ Transfer weight from back to front foot as swing through the ball.
- ◆ It is important player does not slow down, shuffle the feet or skip.
- ◆ Player should continue to move forward even after delivering ball.
- ◆ If necessary have players start at walking pace and build up to a full sprint.

Watch for

- ◆ Hands together on stick.
- ◆ Eyes focussed on ball until ball contact completed.
- ◆ Ball starts near front foot.
- ◆ Swing is fluent (elbows not tucked in).
- ◆ Weight transfer from back to front foot.
- ◆ Player does not break stride.

Flicking

- ◆ Basic grip to be used and right hand to be slightly lower down the stick.
- ◆ Left foot to be forward and line between feet should be pointing to where ball will go.
- ◆ Ball should be positioned just in front of left foot to allow stick to get under ball.
- ◆ Stick faced to be angled to allow lift of ball.
- ◆ Drop right shoulder and transfer body weight forward, pulling stick forward with left hand.

- ◆ Lift through the bottom half of the ball, with the right hand exerting all the pressure and direction.
- ◆ Follow through to generate momentum through the ball, finishing with stick toe up and arms extended to target.

Watch for

- ◆ Ball not in right position to start with as body will not be able to lift ball.
- ◆ Head staying over ball and transfer of body weight is from back foot to front foot.
- ◆ Stick is angled at the right amount to lift ball high enough.
- ◆ Power and control is coming from bottom and shoulder is dropped to generate this.



Ball Control

Basic dribble

- ◆ To improve vision, bend knees more so than the back to get down low.
- ◆ Basic grip is to be used is important for reverse stick dribble later on.
- ◆ Right hand can/should move closer to top of stick to increase vision.
- ◆ Dribble the ball slightly outside the right foot and in front of body.
- ◆ Lean the stick back toward you to get the ball further out in front.
- ◆ With knees bent look about a metre in front of ball to increase vision ahead.
- ◆ Also practise looking up as often as possible without losing control.
- ◆ In early stages keep ball on or very close to the stick at all times.

Watch for

- ◆ Correct grip.
- ◆ Knees are bent and ball is out in front and to the right.
- ◆ Eyes are looking forward.

Indian dribble

- ◆ Use the basic grip for reverse stick (Indian) dribble.
- ◆ Left hand remains firm on stick and bottom hand loose.
- ◆ Only the left hand turns with the stick.
- ◆ Turn stick over the ball (acts as a form of ball protection).
- ◆ Right hand used to control and power the dribble to left and pull back to right.
- ◆ Try to keep the ball on the stick at all times for control.
- ◆ Discourage players from tapping ball in front in early stages.
- ◆ Weight should transfer from side to side with the movement of ball.
- ◆ Extend left hand & make stick more upright if stick rolls over ball.
- ◆ Face of stick should be 90 degree to desired direction for ball.

Watch for

- ◆ Top hand position allows stick to turn 360 degrees comfortably.
- ◆ Stick stays on ball – no sound of tapping can be heard. Weight transfers with ball.
- ◆ Bottom hand does not turn with stick.
- ◆ Weight transfer from right to left foot as the ball moves.

Big drags

- ◆ Similar to Indian dribble except ball is drag as far outside the foot as possible.
- ◆ Ball should be kept on the stick.

- ◆ The stick should roll over the ball to stop it running away.

Watch for

- ◆ Stick is reversed easily.
- ◆ Ball is dragged quickly.
- ◆ Ball does not run off the stick.
- ◆ Weight transfer is crucial in big drags to make sure balance is maintained at completion of drag.

Spin Dribble

- ◆ Basic grip to used, important for player to bend knees and crouch to allow for maximum power in pivot or spin.
- ◆ Incorporate body fakes and deception before spin.
- ◆ Stick to remain on ball the whole time during the spin.
- ◆ To maintain power and control in the spin, player to remain with solid support base throughout.
- ◆ After completion of spin readjust body in relation to opponent.
- ◆ Accelerate away from opponent, and be in position as able to pass or shoot after spin.

Watch for

- ◆ Player not aware of opponent before starting spin.
- ◆ Loss of balance and power in spin due to base not supporting enough.
- ◆ Ball not in control or in contact with stick as player spins.

Jinking

- ◆ Grip is as per basic dribble. The left hand should be comfortable.
- ◆ Before jinking drag ball sideways to cause defender to lay the stick flat but also to make it easier to jink.
- ◆ As the ball moves sideways roll the stick under the ball and give it a small scoop or flick just high enough to get over stick
- ◆ Player should continue to move forward with the ball so that the ball does not run away too far forward.
- ◆ If necessary have players start at walking pace with passive defender then build up to a full sprint with active defender.

Watch for

- ◆ Stick stays on ball throughout the drag and jink.
- ◆ The ball does not run too far forward off the stick.
- ◆ Shoulder should drop to aid player getting under the ball

Stick feints

- ◆ Do not do a lot of stick work while approaching opponent otherwise attention will be focussed too much on the ball.
- ◆ Move/dummy so that defender is tricked into moving in the wrong direction.
- ◆ Dummy movement can be either with the body or the stick.
- ◆ Player should focus on the opponent's feet, stick and weight transference.
- ◆ The ball should be moved immediately the opponent reacts to the dummy.
- ◆ The player should cut in behind the defender and protect the ball as quickly as possible.
- ◆ Deceptive moves include: Swerve and Drag, Show and Go, Dummy over the ball, Body Swerve.

Swerve & Drag: Move ball to the right and as defender shifts to that side swerve towards the left. As defender shifts back watch for when the defender's weight is shifting and/or the defender's legs cross. Immediately drag the ball to the right and then cut in behind the defender.

Show and Go: Move to the left and move body around as if to pass the ball to the right. When the defender shifts to the right and/or lays the stick down flat to cut off the pass immediately drag the ball left then cut in behind the defender.

Dummy over ball: Move the stick across in front of the ball as if to pass from right to left. In the same motion drag the ball back to the right and cut in behind the defender.

Watch for

- ◆ Dummy move is realistic enough to trick defender.
- ◆ Player watches defender's movement.
- ◆ Player moves the ball immediately the defender reacts to the dummy.
- ◆ Player does not get too close to defender before moving the ball.

Receiving

Basic trap

- ◆ Eyes to focus on ball throughout its travel until trap has been completed.
- ◆ Feet must move quickly to get eye behind line of ball as early as possible.
- ◆ Bend knees to get down low, this also keeps head up for release after trap.
- ◆ For basic trap keep stick upright to allow for bouncy ball.
- ◆ Stick tilted forward so as to control the ball and prevent it rebounding.
- ◆ Keep face of stick at 90 degrees to the direction of the ball.
- ◆ Let the stick “give” to the degree required to make ball stay on stick.
- ◆ Ball should be trapped in a protected position near front foot.
- ◆ Trap in a position to allow immediate movement in any direction.
- ◆ For advanced skill trap so as to immediately perform the next movement.

Watch for

- ◆ Players keep their eyes behind the line of the ball.
- ◆ Players watch the ball all the way on to their stick.
- ◆ The stick is not held too softly or too firmly.
- ◆ Players are well balanced.

Flat stick trap

- ◆ Eyes to focus on ball throughout its travel until trap has been completed.
- ◆ Feet must move quickly to get eye behind line of ball as early as possible.
- ◆ Bend knees to get down low.
- ◆ Stick is placed flat on ground tilted forward.
- ◆ Let the stick “give” to the degree required to make ball stay on stick.
- ◆ Keep face of stick at 90 degrees to the direction of the ball.
- ◆ Ball should be trapped in a protected position near front foot.
- ◆ Ball should be trapped in a position to allow immediate movement in any direction.
- ◆ Players should let the stick “give” to the degree required to make ball stay on stick.

Watch for

- ◆ Players keep their eyes behind the line of the ball.
- ◆ Players watch the ball all the way on to their stick.
- ◆ The stick is not held too softly or too firmly.
- ◆ Players are well balanced.

Trapping on the run

- ◆ Eyes to focus on ball throughout its travel until trap has been completed.
- ◆ Feet must move quickly to get eye behind line of ball as early as possible.
- ◆ Bend knees to get down low.
- ◆ Keep stick upright to allow for bouncy ball and prevent slowing down.
- ◆ Stick tilted forward so as to control the ball and prevent it rebounding.
- ◆ Keep face of stick at 90 degrees to the direction of the ball.
- ◆ Push/bunt ball forward as it meets stick so that it stays on stick as you move forward.

Watch for

- ◆ Players keep their eyes behind the line of the ball.
- ◆ Players watch the ball all the way on to their stick.
- ◆ The stick is not held too softly or too firmly.
- ◆ Players are well balanced.
- ◆ Player propels the ball forward so that it stays on the stick.

Reverse stick trap

- ◆ Eyes to focus on ball throughout its travel until trap completed.
- ◆ Feet must move quickly to get eye behind line of ball.
- ◆ Bend knees to get down low.
- ◆ Left hand reverses stick, right hand lets the stick turn.
- ◆ Stick tilted forward to prevent rebound.
- ◆ If stick is upright trap ball behind front foot.
- ◆ If sticks upright keep face of stick at 90 degrees to the direction of ball.
- ◆ If stick is flat on ground, have left knuckles on ground.
- ◆ If stick is flat, angle it forward so ball will move to strong side.
- ◆ Let the stick "give" to degree required to make ball stay on stick.

Watch for

- ◆ Players watch the ball all the way on to their stick.
- ◆ The stick is not held too softly or too firmly.
- ◆ Players are well balanced.

- ◆ Only resort to flat stick trapping as an defensive option, prefer players trapping on reverse upright to keep flow of play going.

Trapping deception

- ◆ Get in position for normal trap.
- ◆ Just before ball arrives either accelerate forward or drop back to receive ball in a different position.

Watch for

- ◆ Player does not move too early.
- ◆ Player has looked around to see where to move to be in the best space when receiving the ball.

Aerial Balls

- ◆ Make sure body is positioned behind the descending ball.
- ◆ Stick should be raised no higher than shoulder to receive.
- ◆ Bend knees to gain a good support base and balance.
- ◆ Determine line of ball and decide on vertical or horizontal placement of stick.
- ◆ Direct rebound of ball towards the ground with angle of stick.
- ◆ Once ball has hit ground place stick on ball to secure

Watch for

- ◆ Player's eyes not following the ball all the way onto the stick.
- ◆ Body out of the line of ball.
- ◆ Player playing ball back up in the air, rather than towards ground.
- ◆ Player taking ball above shoulder height.
- ◆ Player unable to decide between vertical or horizontal stick position in time.

Tackling

Basic tackling technique

- ◆ Practise mirroring opponent (staying with opponent until they slow down).
- ◆ Show how to channel opponent to one side or the other.
- ◆ Show how to move backwards by pivoting on back foot rather than crossing feet over.
- ◆ Practise moving/running backwards without crossing feet.
- ◆ Practise channelling.
- ◆ Players should concentrate on the ball and not the opponents stick and body feints.
- ◆ The tackler can also employ deceptive stick and body movements to influence what the opponent does with the ball.
- ◆ Players should hold stick in front of feet and body so they are able to execute all style of tackling from one position.

Watch for

- ◆ Tackler is able to slow down or stop opponent.
- ◆ Defender moves backwards quickly if opponent is in a position to get past.
- ◆ Players do no lay all or nothing tackles.
- ◆ When moving back while mirroring or channelling the feet do not cross over.
- ◆ Position for channelling forces opponent to go one way but not enough to escape tackle.

Basic flat stick tackle – fore stick

- ◆ Before tackling mirror and/or channel opponent to get them where you want them to be.
- ◆ Look for ball control errors or time opponent's moves are limited.
- ◆ Knees should be bent and weight balanced to allow quick recovery.
- ◆ Knuckles of both hands should be close to on ground so stick is almost flat.

Watch for

- ◆ Player slows down opponent before tackling.
- ◆ Player waits for best time to tackle.
- ◆ Player is balanced to allow quick recovery.
- ◆ Player does not rush at opponent.

Basic flat stick tackle - reverse

- ◆ Before tackling mirror and/or channel opponent to get them where you want them to be.
- ◆ Look for ball control errors or time opponent's moves are limited.
- ◆ Grip should allow stick to be reversed easily.
- ◆ Knees should be bent and weight balanced to allow quick recovery.
- ◆ Knuckles of both hands should be close to on ground so stick is almost flat.
- ◆ If opponent drags from fore to back stick SWEEP stick along ground (not over the top).

Watch for

- ◆ Player slows down opponent before tackling.
- ◆ Player waits for best time to tackle.
- ◆ Player is balanced to allow quick recovery.
- ◆ Player does not rush at opponent.
- ◆ Stick is low enough so ball can't go under it at any point.
- ◆ Stick swept along ground (not over the top) to change from fore to reverse stick tackle.

Poke, jab or lunge tackle

- ◆ Before tackling mirror and/or channel opponent to get them to where you want them to be
- ◆ Look for ball control errors or time opponent's moves are limited.
- ◆ Knees should be bent and weight balanced to allow quick recovery.
- ◆ Stick is held in both hands in front of feet except for the lunge forward.
- ◆ Step forward and quickly extend stick (held in left hand only).
- ◆ Use dummy lunges to make opponent move ball and create errors.
- ◆ Stick returns to both hands quickly after the lunge to regain balance.
- ◆ If unsuccessful step back quickly to continue to mirror opponent and repeat lunges.
- ◆ If successful move forward immediately and steal ball
- ◆ Poke the ball in behind the opponent rather than try to sweep it to the side.

Watch for

- ◆ Player slows down opponent before tackling.
- ◆ Player waits for best time to tackle.
- ◆ Player is balanced to allow quick recovery.
- ◆ Player does not rush at opponent.
- ◆ Lunge is made with stick only held in left hand.
- ◆ Stick returns to both hands quickly.

- ◆ Player moves backwards if lunge is not successful.
- ◆ Player moves forward quickly if lunge IS successful.
- ◆ Player lunges with stick only, not committing with whole body



Goal shooting

Basic Principles

- ◆ Get into a good goal scoring position (near goals, not forward of the near post, be down low).
- ◆ When running into the circle with the ball straighten it up towards the goals before shooting.
- ◆ Look at the goals and goalkeeper to decide where to shoot (Is goalkeeper off the line?).
- ◆ Advanced players should hit/push to the side of the foot on which the goalkeeper has all the weight.
- ◆ Shoot quickly (e.g. push rather than hit, drop left hand down for shorter back swing, slap hit the ball, hit off either foot).
- ◆ Shoot to the far side of the goals so that if the goalkeeper saves the shot it will rebound into play.
- ◆ Shoot low into the corners from the top of the circle and high from in close.
- ◆ Follow up shot (don't stand back and admire the shot).
- ◆ Protect the ball for the shot (e.g. drag it back for a squeeze shot, run to the right using the left foot for protection)

Watch for

- ◆ Shot is quick - both early shot and avoid big wind up.
- ◆ Player always follows up the shot.
- ◆ Player looks at the goals and goalkeeper before shooting.

Quick Hit

- ◆ Lead should and lead foot should be pointing towards goal.
- ◆ Ball should be in line of front foot, and player balanced with flexed knees.
- ◆ Head should be over ball and eyes focussed on the ball.
- ◆ To execute hit quickly left hand to slide down to be directly above right hand.
- ◆ Body weight to be on back foot and transferred through to front foot as hit is performed.
- ◆ Backswing to be short and explosive, yet still controlled with balance from body.
- ◆ Keep head down and see ball leave stick.
- ◆ Arms and stick to finish in line of goal.

Watch for

- ◆ Hand too high on the stick and resulting in swing not executed quickly.
- ◆ Head coming too early and not watching ball.

- ◆ Body weight remaining on back foot as player hits, and head going back.
- ◆ Follow through too large
- ◆ Power should be generated by speed of stick swing not distance of swing

Chip Shot

- ◆ Grip and body to be same as for quick hit technique.
- ◆ Stick to be slightly angled as contact is made to ball.
- ◆ Contact on ball to be made on lower half of ball.
- ◆ Follow through to short and held, to make ball drop quickly after it is raised.

Watch for

- ◆ Extended follow through will result in ball be uncontrolled
- ◆ Make sure body is facing target as ball is hit
- ◆ Minimal wrist movement to be involved in chip shot

Deflection

- ◆ Lead foot and shoulder should point to target of goal.
- ◆ Grip will need to be firm on the stick.
- ◆ Knees bent and body low to ground to set solid base.
- ◆ Angle stick face to target and approaching ball.
- ◆ Body weight to central as ball is delivered and transferred to front foot as ball hits stick.
- ◆ Contact should be made with the lower half of the ball and guided towards target.
- ◆ Head must be kept in line of ball path

Watch for

- ◆ Knees bent and solid base is created
- ◆ Ability to move and adjust to pass
- ◆ Stick angled in direction towards goal.
- ◆ Body is angled and open towards the target

Squeeze/Punch shot

- ◆ Lead foot and shoulder should point to target of goal.
- ◆ Knees well bent and body well balanced.
- ◆ Left hand to slide down stick to be directly on top of left hand.
- ◆ Ball to be in line or just behind back foot and body weight to over back foot and head over ball.
- ◆ Short back swing, with contact to be made on top half of ball to squeeze it off the ground.
- ◆ No follow through will occur due to angle of backswing.

- ◆ Eyes need to be focused on ball at all times.

Watch for

- ◆ Ball behind body to allow for squeezing of ball.
- ◆ Hands to be together in middle of stick to generate quickness of backswing
- ◆ Eyes to be focussed on ball until swing is complete.
- ◆ Ball should travel towards goal at about chest height.

Dive shot

- ◆ Square shoulder to oncoming ball, in a slightly crouched position with weight balanced and centered on power points.
- ◆ Angle stick face to target approaching ball, keeping eyes on the ball at all times.
- ◆ Push off near foot of dive direction.
- ◆ Slide body parallel to ground (not on stomach)
- ◆ Hold stick firmly in both hands and deflect ball off angled stick towards goal.
- ◆ Return to feet as quickly as possible after slide.

Watch for

- ◆ Balance in the dive, and control over stick and body
- ◆ Eyes on the ball the whole time
- ◆ Angle of stick and body lines up with goal.



HOCKEY SA