



Worcester County United Field Hockey Academy

Coaches Corner #6 – PASSING

Why pass the ball?

Often we observe players passing the ball when there is absolutely no reason for passing. There must be no misunderstanding of that comment. It is agreed that every time the ball is moved (passed) the opponents are required to take action or to move, however unless there is a motive behind the pass, the pass could have achieved very little.

The following points could be listed as reasons why we should pass the ball.

- a) To *gain* advantage
- b) To *eliminate* a player
- c) To *relieve* defensive pressure
- d) To *retain* possession
- e) To *initiate* attacking moves
- f) To *position* opponent players
- g) To *change* the width of attack
- h) To *encourage* opponent to act predictably
- i) To *enhance* your team position with respect to defensive and offensive play
- j) To *start* the game
 - i. Hit from center
 - ii. Hit from sideline
 - iii. Hit in from penalty corner (specialist pass)
 - iv. Hit in from corner
 - v. Hit from free hit

'Look at your pass from an opponent's point of view' – self analysis.

This list is far from complete but serves to stress the point that all movements of the ball in hockey are *passes* made to either a *player*, a *space*, or some *target*.

The ball must never be hit at a player but always *passed* to the player.

Elements involved in effective passing

1. Preparation
2. Deception
3. Delivery
 - Direction
 - Speed
 - Timing and space
 - Target
 - Position of feet
 - Position of body
4. Game understanding – vision
5. Position on the field – special passes for certain areas
6. Conclusion (what to do once a pass is made)



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If a pass fails, what does the coach look for?

Faults by the striker? The receiver? The players understanding of the pass? Communications? Problems can be in many areas, lets look at a few.

- a) Pass no *understood* by both players (i.e. each player not certain of his role in the movement)
- b) Poor *delivery* variations in such factors as *direction, speed, timing*. Spin imported on the ball causing poor line, ball will curve and be difficult to stop. Ball hit with a chopping action causing the ball to bounce (especially when ball is hit from left of ground to right)
- c) Not enough *time* to make pass (player under pressure)
- d) Poor *trapping* technique by receiver
- e) Slow bringing the ball under control (good gathering by receiver can turn a poor pass into a good pass)
- f) Ball hit towards a player *not passed*
- g) Receiver not *aware* of the next move (gets caught in possession or mistraps because of pressure)
- h) The player passing approached too closely to opponent before passing (poor preparation for pass)
- i) Poor deception – passing action is predictable allowing opponent to read and intercept the pass
- j) Receiver in poor position for effective pass (he has restricted space)
- k) Player passing runs out of *time* and *space*. When this happens the player often chooses to ignore assist play and battle his way to get free from the situation before attempting to pass. By the *time* he does this most of his passing options will have been lost. *Passing under pressure is a skill*
- l) The player *passing* allows himself to be driven into a position that limits his passing options. Play is often reversed from such a situation.
- m) Player passing the ball does not move to position to assist next movement (as in a 'wall pass' or a 2 v 1 situation)
- n) The receiver has not provided a target for the player passing
- o) Poor assessment of peripheral influences

If the pass is inaccurate then the ball becomes the master and the player is forced to follow the ball



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