

## Holding the Stick

### *Thumbs and Fingers*

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

### *Ready Position*

1. The bottom hand is placed at the butt of the stick and the top or strong hand is placed anywhere from the butt to the throat of the stick. Depending upon how the stick is being used, the hand position will be different for catching, cradling throwing, reaching and checking.
2. In the ready position, the head of the stick is held about shoulder height with the top hand positioned near the throat and the bottom hand placed at the butt of the stick.

### *Common Faults*

1. The natural way to hold the stick is to let the arms hang. If this position becomes a habit, players find it very difficult to maintain the ready position while on the floor and end up missing many opportunities to maintain or gain possession of the ball.
2. Gripping the stick: new players tend to grip the stick with too much pressure from 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

### *Preliminary Movements*

1. Trap to control the ball then:
  - a) right-handers place the right foot beside the ball
  - b) left-handers place the left foot beside the ball
2. Key elements: control and ball position.

### *Preparation*

1. Bend the knees to lower the handle of the stick.
2. Keep the head up.
3. Put the weight on the back foot.
4. Key element: the butt of the handle is kept as low to the ground as possible.

### *Force Producing Movements*

1. The movement starts with the thrust of the back foot followed by the acceleration of the arms and stick.
2. Key element: acceleration of the stick under the ball.

### *Follow-through*

1. The head of the stick is brought up to the chest and leads into the cradle.
2. Key element: keep the wrists and arms soft.

## **Cradling**

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. In effect, the pocket of the stick is turned to catch the ball at the end of each arm swing.

### ***Teaching Progression***

1. Hold the stick near the throat with the handle vertical.
2. Develop the wrist action by flexing and extending the wrist.
3. Swing the arm from side-to-side in front of the body.
4. Flex the wrist as the arm moves in front of the chest and extend it as the arm moves back.
5. Add the bottom hand, remembering that the bottom hand does not grip the stick or supply any of the cradling until the two hands feel coordinated.

The final step is to cradle the ball while slowly moving the stick to the normal carrying position often called the double throat 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.

### ***Switching Hands***

1. 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.
2. To complete the switch, the top hand now moves down to the butt of the handle.

## **Throwing**

### ***Preliminary Movements***

1. The shoulder (if right-handed, the left shoulder) faces the target.
2. The feet are shoulder width apart.
3. The arms are extended back slightly.
4. The passer mid-points the defender and the receiver.
5. The shoulder faces the target.

### ***Preparation***

1. Lift the arms to shoulder height.
2. The weight is on the back foot.
3. Extend the arms straight back.
4. Point the elbow at the target
5. Don't rest the stick on the shoulder and point the elbow.
6. Place the thumbs along the handle.

### ***Force Producing Movements***

1. Shift the weight forward.
2. Rotate the hips and shoulders.
3. Drive the arms forward.
4. Snap the elbow down. The two hands move together with the top hand acting as a moving lever.
5. Using the weight shift and body rotation to generate the force.
6. The wrists add the snap as the ball is released.

### ***Follow-through***

1. Let the stick follow through in the direction of the target.
2. Bring the back foot forward as in taking a step.
3. The stick follows through in the direction of the target.

## **Catching**

### ***Preliminary Movements***

1. The top hand grips the stick near the throat.
2. Thumbs are placed along the shaft and the wrists are soft.
3. Present the stick as a target.

### **Preparation**

1. Reach up to the ball.
2. Watch the ball into the stick.

### ***Force Producing Movements***

1. Cushion the pass by letting the head of the stick fall back as the ball enters the pocket.
2. Keep the wrists and arms soft.

### ***Follow-through***

1. 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 Faults***

1. 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.
2. The top hand is too close to the throat - there is no leverage and it encourages a pushing rather than throwing action.
3. The elbow and hand are pointing to the ground - the ball will hook toward the ground.