

WELSH HOCKEY UNION

HOCKEY FACT SHEET FOR COACHES



The Drag Flick

Penalty corners have over the last few years become a major method of scoring goals. Teams have perfected the art of both drag flicking as well as many successful variations. This has put a huge emphasis on winning penalty corners during matches allowing teams free opportunities for the penalty corner specialists to score from the top of the circle.

Mental aspects of goal scoring are applicable from penalty corners and field goals- they being:

- Body language
- Reading the defence
- Deception
- Video analysis
- Rebounds

Technical aspects of the penalty corner which must be practiced to be consistent are:

- **INJECTION**
- **STICK STOP**
- **HIT**
- **DRAG FLICK**

In order to drag flick successfully the following aspects need to be focused on;

• **Footwork:**

When approaching the ball the flicker needs to make sure their feet are working well. The approach must be comfortable and not too long or too quick. It is all about rhythm and the key is technique rather than the speed at which the flicker approaches the ball. The movement in the approach must be consistent in the build up to the final skip and placement of the feet to execute the flick. By having a consistent approach you ensure that your feet are in the correct position each time to execute the perfect flick.

• **The approach:**

Every player will have their own preference as to how many steps to take in the approach to the drag flick. The key to getting this aspect right is too make sure you take as many steps needed to get rhythm. However the fewer steps one takes the less chance of error and inconsistency. The top flickers in the world generally try and start a few yards away and take 3 steps. Left foot, right foot, left foot and the final skip. This is enough to get a good rhythm. The rhythm will also be controlled by the pace of the approach. The key is to start slowly and build up the momentum in the final step and skip.

• **The skip:**

The final movement before landing the right foot into the circle is the skip. There are 2 ways to execute this and it is all personal preference.

1. Skip forward with the right leg overlapping the left in front
2. Skip forward with the right leg behind the left leg

- **The right foot:**

It is crucial the flicker tries to get their right foot as far past the ball as possible. Normally the right foot should land at least 30centimetres inside the circle. This will ensure that the flickers body is ahead of the ball at pickup and allow for a long drag along the stick before releasing the ball. By landing this far in front of the ball it is crucial that the flicker is in a very low position allowing both their hands and stick to be low enough to the ground to pick the ball up. Once the stick is in contact with the ball it is crucial that the flicker's body position stays extremely low with their hands well below the level of the knees. The angle of the stick must be as parallel to the ground as physically possible. This will allow the ball to slide from the head of the stick up the shaft. The idea is to try and get the ball to slide about an inch or 2 up the shaft. Once the ball is up the stick the real acceleration can take place from the body and the hands flicking the ball. The key to generating power is to get the hips and legs through the ball and get a big follow through with the right leg. Another key point is to get the hands and stick driving up and past the left side of the body.

- **Left foot:**

When in the final phase of execution it is important to try and get the left foot to point towards the goal. A lot of flickers land their left foot towards the corner flag. This will not allow the body to come through with as much power and it could also put a huge strain on the knee joint (injury).

- **Deception:**

With goalkeepers becoming more accustomed to facing drag flickers it is crucial that flicker's learn how to use some deception on the execution of the flick. To deceive the keepers the flicker needs to try and make the goal keeper think that they are flicking the ball to the one side of the goal and then using their wrists and body at the last second adjust and flick the ball into the other side of the goal. Keepers will confirm that once their weight is on one foot it is very difficult to change direction and make a save the other way. It is also crucial that the flicker does not develop 2 separate techniques for the flick to the left and the right. The build up and picking up of the ball must all be the same with the slight change all happening in the last stage of execution. By carrying the ball on a straight line at the goal for as long as possible, the goalkeeper will not know which side the flicker is flicking and therefore will not be able to commit early to make the save. This will give the whole side of the goal to flick into making the save a reflex save as opposed to one that they have read from the flickers technique

Mental

Most drag flickers particularly the younger players want to flick the ball under the roof of the goal. Yes, this looks fantastic but may not always be the most effective area to flick into. If one speaks to keepers you will realise that often the most difficult height to make a save is about 18 inches off the ground. This height is difficult as the keeper is caught between making a save with his feet or his glove. It is a difficult area for the keeper to get to with either feet or gloves. If you watch the top flickers in the world some of them will flick the ball into the top corners but their percentage flicks will be low where they are asking a lot more of the keeper's ability.

Rebounds

If the attacker has their drag flick or hit saved by the keeper, often the rebound comes into the area that the attacker should have followed through into somewhere just behind the p spot. It is therefore crucial that the attacker prepares themselves for a first time slap or snap hit. The footwork again is crucial with the body position being nice and low. Often flickers are bigger players in the team and it is crucial that they train the rebound as it requires quick feet and a quick shot, often first time All the attacking players need to be well trained in rebounds. Often the goalkeepers will make the initial save and then the ball will be available for a rebound shot. Ensure players are covering the crucial areas of the circle and are in a low ready position to ensure either a first time rebound or a stop and quick snap shot or flick. There will be numerous practical examples that you can take away to use please feel free to make copies of those practices.