

# The Floorball Book

## Formations and Tactics

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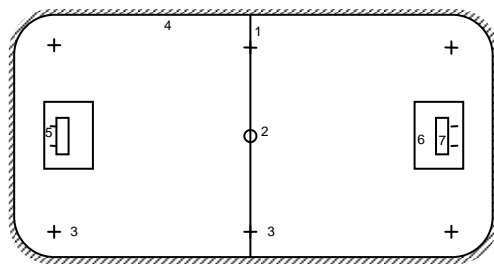
### Game Basics

Floorball is an indoor team sport played on a rink which is a bit bigger than the basketball court (15 m by 28 m). This is mentioned because of the markings already present in most halls. The rink is in fact the same as the handball court: 20 m by 40 m. The court is enclosed by boards of 50 cm height, with rounded corners. Floorball is also played on a smaller rink with only sight differences. In this section, the basic rules are introduced, as are the basic formations when playing floorball.

In countries where there is a tradition of ice hockey or field hockey, similarities between said sports and floorball are often highlighted. Normally, floorball is played with five field players on each side, plus a goalkeeper. The number of players on the rink can be affected by bench penalties. Each team is allowed 20 players. Substitution may take place at any time, and indeed substitutions do take place very frequently because of the intensity of the game. In top-level games, substitutions take place as often as every minute.

The basic movement in floorball is by running. In schools floorball is liked because of the relative lack of body contact, as well as the good workout it offers. In adult leagues the game can become quite physical, but the rules emphasize fairplay and safety. Tactical considerations become more important the higher the level of game.

## The Rink



*Figure 1: The rink: (1) centre line, (2) centre spot, (3) face-off dots, (4) board, (5) goal, (6) goal crease, (7) goalkeeper area.*

Figure 1 illustrates a floorball rink as seen from above, with the key parts identified by numbers. The rink is divided into two halves by the centre line (1). The centre spot (2) is used to start the game, and to confirm goals. There are six face-off dots (3): one in each corner and two on the centre line. A face-off can only take place on one of these designated spots. The playing field is encompassed by the boards (4), with rounded corners. The goals are placed near the far ends of the rink (5), but it is possible to play around the goals. The goalkeeper is largely restricted to the goal crease (6). Within the goal crease, goalkeepers are relatively free in their actions to defend the goal. The smaller area is called the goalkeeper area (7). Only the goalkeeper is allowed in this area.

All dimensions of the rink are clearly defined. Where floorball is played on a smaller rink, the dimensions differ, but the basic outline of the rink is identical.

The goals are 160 cm wide and 115 cm high. They have a depth of 65 cm. There are designated substitution zones, placed on each side of the centre line, 5 metres away from the centre line. The substitution zones are 10 metres long and 3 metres deep. There are benches for the substitute players, and the team staff. During training sessions, most clubs do not use benches, but have substitute players stand or sit outside the rink.

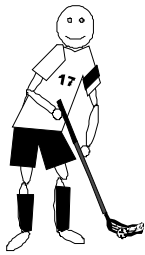
Clubs without boards often use makeshift substitutes: long benches as found in most sport halls placed in the corner will do in many cases. Benches placed in the corners have the advantage that the ball does not get stuck in the corners where it is very difficult for players to move out from when under pressure. Substitutes and material, such as stick bags, can also be kept outside the playing area when benches are used.

As floorball is still a new sport in many places, many sports halls do not have floorball markings on the floor. Players need to agree on where the playing area stops. This is particularly important if the hall is very large, or if its shape differs significantly from a floorball rink. Existing lines can be used as guides, but it is necessary to agree on the limits before playing. Knowing the size of other courts may also be useful.

When playing a proper game, such as a friendly or a competitive game, you should always have the full markings on the floor. You can use tape to do so, but always check with the facilities manager. Some kinds of tape stick so well that it is difficult to remove them afterwards. Worse still, some floors may be damaged by the adhesive used for some tapes.

## Players

### Field Players



*Figure 2: The captain wears an armband on the left arm*

Field players are equipped with a stick. They wear shirts and short trousers, as well as knee socks. For training sessions, many players choose not to wear knee socks. If you choose to wear shin guards, you should always also wear knee socks. Shin guards are a matter of choice. On the one hand, they can reduce the pain when getting hit by a stick, but on the other hand, many players find them uncomfortable. Some players wear multiple pairs of socks rather than shin guards. Appropriate footwear should always be worn. The team captain differs from the other field players in that she or he wears an armband on the left arm, which should be clearly visible. It is possible to have the word 'captain' or the letter 'C' written on the armband, but this is not at all necessary. The captain's role largely is to communicate between the team and the referees. Whilst the captains have the right to talk to referees—something ordinary field players do not have, strictly speaking—the captain is required to assist the referees. In training sessions, a captain needs not to be designated. For friendly games, having a captain is probably optional, but for competitive games, a captain is required. Tape is not allowed instead of an armband.

### Goalkeepers

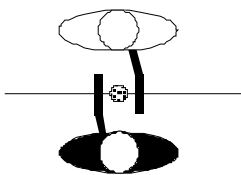
The goalkeepers are equipped differently from the field players. The rules stipulate that they wear long trousers and a shirt, as well as a face mask. In practice, a goalkeeper wants to wear padded clothing. There is in most cases a trade-off between maximum padding, comfort, and the ability to move freely. Modern goalkeeper equipment means that such a trade-off can be minimized. Whilst goalkeepers want to wear padded clothing, because shots can hurt quite a bit, they are not allowed anything designed to make the area they cover bigger. This means that goalkeeper equipment from hockey is not suitable. Similarly, whilst goalkeepers are allowed to wear gloves, they are not allowed to wear catching gloves. In floorball, goalkeepers do not use sticks.

### Referees

There are two referees in floorball games. Both referees are equal, meaning that there is no head referee. The referees control the game and ultimately can send players off depending upon the severity of the rule infringement.

## Basic Game and Rules

There are six to twenty players in each team. Of these, there are usually 5 field players and one goalkeeper on the rink. Substitution can take place at any time and is normally carried out as a whole line of players at a time. It is possible to substitute the goalkeeper with an additional field player in certain circumstances. A game starts with a face-off at the centre spot, all players must start on their own side. A full game is 3 times 20 minutes with intermissions of 10 minutes. The teams change sides after each intermission.

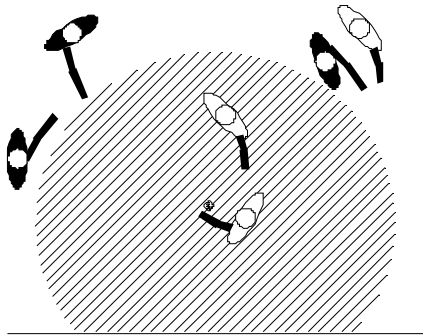


*Figure 3: Correct face-off*

A face-off is carried out by two players. The players face each other; their blades do not touch the ball, although they are close to the ball. The blades are on floor and parallel. The defending team may place the stick first (choosing which side of the ball to place their stick). At the centre spot, it is the guest (away) team to place the stick first; all other players must be at least 3 metres away (including sticks). A face-off may lead to a goal. Other

than to start the game, a face-off is awarded when the ball is damaged, the ball is not playable, the referees cannot decide the direction of a free-hit or hit-in, after a failed penalty shot, or when a player suffers from serious injury.

A hit-in is carried out not further than 1.5 metres away from the board, at the place where the ball left the rink. Like with the face-off, all opponents need to be at least 3 metres away (including sticks). A hit-in may lead to a goal. If the ball leaves the rink behind the extended goal lines, the hit-in is carried out on the closest face-off dot in the corner. A hit-in is not only awarded when the ball leaves the rink, but also when the ball touches objects above the rink or the ceiling.



*Figure 4: All players from the opposing team need to take at least 3 metres distance from the place of a free-hit*

A free-hit takes place where the offence was committed. If an offence took place behind the extended goal lines, the free-hit is carried out on the closest face-off dot in the corner. A free-hit is never carried out closer than 3.5 metres to the goalkeeper area. This allows the defenders to build a defensive wall, because all opponents (including sticks) need to be at least 3 metres away. In floorball, the advantage rule always applies: If the non-offending team still control the ball, giving greater advantage than free-hit, play is not interrupted. The referees shout advantage, and it is them who decide when the rule applies.

A free-hit is awarded when a player hits, blocks, lifts, kicks, or holds the stick of an opponent, or the even holds the opponent. Repeated offences and slightly more severe offences (considerable advantage) lead to a bench penalty. A free-hit is also awarded if the stick or foot are raised above waist level. If no other player is nearby, a front-swing above waist level is generally tolerated. A back-swing above waist level is not tolerated. If the ball is played with the stick above knee-level, or places their stick or foot between the opponent's legs, a free-hit is awarded.

A free-hit is also awarded when a player pushes an opponent other than shoulder to shoulder. This means sudden and active pushing. If the ball is kicked twice (active), or kicked to a team mate, a free-hit is awarded to the other team. The offence is receiving the ball. A free-hit is also awarded if a player moves backwards into an opponent, or jumps to stop the ball (running is OK). A goalkeeper controlling the ball for longer than 3 seconds, or throwing out the ball so that it crosses the centre line without hitting the floor first, are other offences leading to a free-hit.

Two minute bench penalties are used for slightly more severe offences. The player receiving the bench penalty spends time on a designated penalty bench. The size of the team on the rink is affected, but there are always at least 3 field players per team on the rink. This means that two bench penalties can run against a team at the same time. If a team receives a goal when short-handed, the penalty expires.

When a player plays the ball above waist level, or plays without a stick, he or she is sent off for two minutes. Other offences leading to a two minute bench penalty include holding an opponent or equipment, blocking an opponent's way, body-checks, pushing over the board or against the goal cage, deliberately obstructing an opponent who is not in control of the ball, playing with hand or head, or playing when on the floor. Field players are allowed to place one knee, and their stick hand on the floor as a maximum. A player throwing him or herself into a shot is always sent off for two minutes.

A player closer than 3 meters at a face-off, hit-in, or free-hit, is sent off for two minutes. No offence occurs if the player is trying to move away. A team with too many players on the rink—such as a substitute entering the rink before the other player left—incur one two-minute penalty.

Five minute bench penalties are used for serious offences. A player incurring a five minute bench penalty cannot be replaced on the rink. In contrast with the two minute penalty, if the team receives a goal, the penalty does not expire. Five minute penalties are awarded for dangerous and violent strikes, when the stick is used to hook an opponent, or when the stick is thrown to hit the ball. For even more serious offences there are match penalties (red card). Unsportsmanlike behaviour is penalized with a ten minute personal penalty. The personal penalty does not affect the team size.

A penalty shot is carried out from the centre spot. All other players, except for the defending goalkeeper, need to leave the rink. The ball needs to move in a constant forward motion during the penalty. Once the goalkeeper touches the ball the player cannot touch the ball any more. This means that a player is only allowed one shot. However, if the ball bounces off the goal and then goes into the goal (even when deflecting off the goalkeeper), the goal counts. The player is allowed an unlimited number of touches. A penalty is awarded if an offence prevents a clear goal situation.

When played on a small rink, the key difference is that there are three field players and a goalkeeper on the rink for each team. The distance to free-hits, hit-ins, and the face-off is reduced to 2 metres.

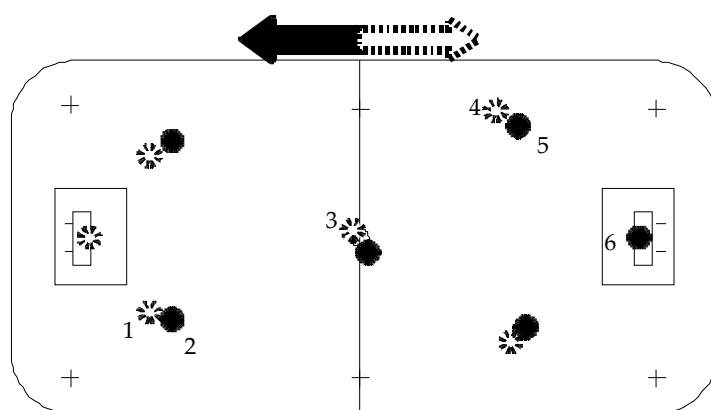
### Full Rules

The full rules can be obtained from the IFF (<http://www.floorball.org>).

### Basic Formations

The floorball rules do not prescribe any formation. There are however, some basic formations that are commonly played.

### Full-sized Rink



*Figure 5: Basic formations.*

On the full-sized rink, the basic formation consists of two defenders, two attackers, and a centre. Figure 5 outlines these positions, for a black and white team. The white defender (1) is essentially matched by the black attacker (2). The white centre (3) is matched by his or her black counterpart. The white attacker (4) is matched by the black defender (5). It is customary for the centre to take the face-off at the centre, but if one of the attackers is much stronger, the roles can be swapped for the face-off. The goalkeepers (6) are not usually considered when it comes to tactical formations, since there is very little scope for changing the position.

### Small Rink

On the small rink, there is no such thing as a basic formation. With only three field players and a much smaller rink, every field player may take every position during a game. The most forward-oriented players obviously play in the attack, but without support from the defender(s), attacking is difficult. It is common to designate one player as a central defender who will generally stay back, but is ready for shots from the centre line. A more defensively oriented team might keep two players back, and try to attack with only a single attacker.

## Possibilities with the Ball

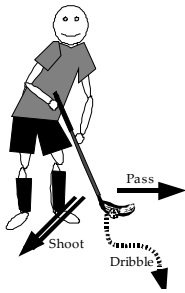


Figure 6: Possibilities

The player with the ball has a number of possibilities to play. He or she may choose to pass the ball to another player. A pass can be low (on the floor) or high (through the air), played forehand, or backhand. In most cases, there is more than one pass that can be played. The player can try to finish by shooting on the goal. There are different ways to shoot. Finally, the player may choose to run with the ball: dribbling. There are many different tricks he or she can choose from.

The player can also stop the ball and wait for a moment before deciding which of these possibilities he or she wants to use.

Figure 6 illustrates these possibilities. Advanced players will spend less time consciously considering these options, as many moves will have become near automatic in nature. Many training exercises are designed to ensure such moves become instinctive and second nature, so that when a player receives a ball, he or she can simply play on.

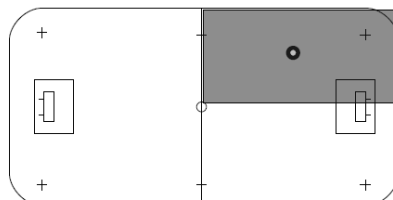
## Tactics

### Basic Roles

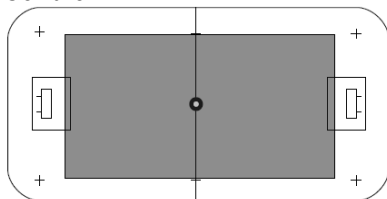
Floorball tactics are defined by the basic formations, and variations thereof. Changes to the basic formations at moments the opponents do not suspect are what you should aim for. The ultimate aim is obviously to score goals, and goals can be scored more easily when the defence is (temporarily) disorganized. On the other hand, the aim of the defenders is to prevent goals from happening. This is done most effectively by preventing the opponents having direct shots on goal.

### General Positions

Defender:



Centre:



Attacker:

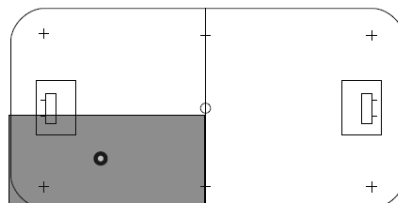


Figure 7: Primary areas of responsibility

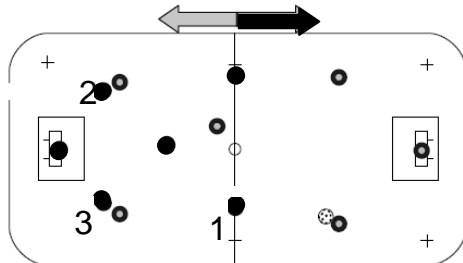
There are normally five field players and one goalkeeper on the rink for each team. The basic positions are: goalkeeper (1 person), defender (2), centre (1), and attacker (2). There is a left defender and a right defender. Similarly, there is a left attacker and a right attacker. These are often called left wing and right wing respectively. These roles are outlined in figure 5 on page 5. A defender is primarily responsible for his or her side. Figure 7 illustrates primary areas of responsibility. The centre is responsible to support the attack and to support the defence. This means that centres are required to run a lot and have an excellent sense of position. An attacker is primarily responsible for his or her own side when in attack and to cover his opposite side's defender when the opposite team are in attack.

These areas are the primary zones of responsibility, and depending on the situation of the game, any of the players might be found elsewhere on the rink. There is also a certain area of overlap, and players may choose to swap roles during the game. This means that the left defender and the right defender may choose to swap. A different yet common scenario is that a defender comes into the

attack, and then either the centre or the attacker from the same side drops back to temporarily take on the role of defender.

## Defending

If black have the ball, everyone in the white team is responsible for defending. There are different systems to defend, but the fundamental aims of defence are the same: preventing the attackers from scoring.



*Figure 8: Defending*

and the choice is largely down to what the team members are comfortable with: what works for them. On the small rink, marking people is probably more common, on the full rink zones are probably used more often.

The two different approaches to defending are marking people, and defending zones. When a team choose to defend by marking people, each player on the rink is assigned to one of the opponents. When a team choose to defend by zones, each player on the rink is assigned to a certain area in the rink. There are mixtures of these two approaches (marking opponents, but with swapping sides; or the defenders mark opponents, the other field players do zones),

Strict marking of people is very tiring, but actually very effective. Strict zone defending needs great discipline, but is also very effective. Mixes are successful, too, but the team members need to communicate. What does not work well, is if the different field players try to defend in different ways, where the left defender does not do the same as the right defender. Without communication, it is possible that two players end up marking the same opponent—meaning that one of the opponents is not marked. Some teams adjust their tactics according to the opponents, particularly if they know them. Figure 8 outlines a common defending position. The attackers come back to the centre line to close down space (1). The centre also moves back to close down space. The defenders are close to the attackers to leave them only a little room to manoeuvre (2). They are particularly vigilant in the slot. They place themselves in between the goal and the attacker (3), so if the attacker receives the ball, he or she cannot shoot directly. With all the field players back in their own half, the opponents will find it far more difficult to find a position from where to shoot from. Note that the attackers cannot act very successfully in this setup.

Defending in zones means that if the attackers cross over, the defenders stay on their own side. This has the advantage that the defenders do not need to run excessively, but also that free space is reduced as much as possible. In contrast, where teams choose to mark opponents, the defenders run with their assigned attacker.

### Role as a Defender

The role of a defender is characterized by the following points. You are often more successful waiting for the attackers to make a mistake than chasing to gain the ball off them. If you try to chase a ball, and make a mistake, the attacker can often shoot. Concentrate on closing down space and intercepting passes. As a defender you:

- try to close down space (leave fewer options for the attackers)
- try to intercept passes
- do not hit the attacker's stick to get the ball
- do not normally try to get the ball off the attacker
- maybe try to nick a ball if unprotected
- do not normally defend behind your own goal

If you successfully close down space, it is difficult for the attackers to build up an attack. They may be able to pass the ball around freely in their own half, but that is not very dangerous.

When marking people, in terms of skills, the difficulty is to keep up with an attacker. You should be reading the game and assessing the possibilities of the attacker you mark. Standing close to the opponent is often successful, as it normally means that when they receive the ball, the attackers cannot shoot direct. You stand close to the opponent, on the side of the goal. The stick is on the floor, close to the opponent's stick. In almost all cases, you want to focus on the forehand of the attacker, as this is the side players are stronger. What is more, when it comes to shooting, the forehand is more useful. A player using the backhand for a shot is usually a bit slower to set up the shot, and this gives the defender a little bit more time. When marking people, your attention should be on the game, not just the attacker. This means that you will be aware of where the ball is, and where other players stand. Holding your opponent or their equipment is not allowed.

### Defending Behind the Goal

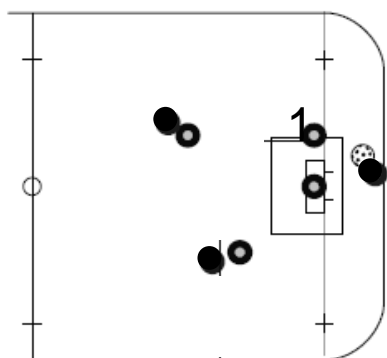


Figure 9: Behind the Goal

It is generally a bad idea to defend behind your own goal. The reason is simply that the attacker can run the other way and then the other team may have one more person in front of your own goal. Instead, wait on the extended goal line, making passing difficult. Take care not to stand in the goalkeeper area. Figure 9 illustrates where you can stand to defend a player behind the goal. One of the defenders stands near the goal, watching the attacker with the ball closely (1). The defender does not go behind the goal, but waits. The attacker is unable to score a goal from that

position. The other defender, as well as the centre is close to the other opponents. They focus on closing down space, and making sure that passes cannot be received easily. Note that the positions of the defenders are of course dynamic and adjust according to what the opponents do. The defender at (1) may choose to stand closer to the goal post, but should never stand inside the goalkeeper area.

If the attacker attempts a hook (or wrap around), the defender can take one step closer to the goal, removing the space needed for the trick. The same is true for an airhook. The defender might want to take just one step behind the goal line, placing the entire body in the way. This way scoring with an airhook becomes much more difficult. In order to determine what the attacker has in mind, defenders will need some experience, but may also wish to observe how exactly the attacker keeps the ball. For an airhook, for example, the ball needs to be in the pocket at the front of the blade.

### General Defending

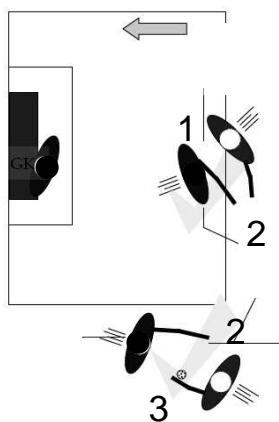


Figure 10: General Defending

Figure 10 indicates some good practises as a defender. The primary goals are to close down space, not allowing the attackers to finish onto the goal (shoot), and intercept passes. The defender close to the attacker stands so that the attacker is unable to shoot from this position (1). The focus is on the forehand, because almost all players are stronger and quicker on their forehand. The defender also places his or her stick so that passing is difficult (2). The stick is on the floor, because passes on the floor are generally more dangerous. The defender does not try to get the ball off the attacker, because in that case one little trick of the attacker may mean that

he or she can shoot. The other defender also prepares to intercept a pass (2). Again, the stick is on the floor. The defender stands close to the other attacker (3), leaving little



room to manoeuvre. A successful defence is able to close down space without feeling nervous simply because the ball is close to their own goal. The ball is only dangerous when it is in a position from where a goal can be scored. Note that the positions of the defenders are of course dynamic and adjust according to what the opponents do. If the attackers leave the ball unprotected, the defender will of course get the ball of them, but generally, a comfortable defence is happy to wait until the attackers lose the ball.

### Chasing the Ball

As a defender, you do not normally try to actively chase the ball off the attacker. In no circumstances should you hit the attackers or their sticks to get the ball of them. This leads to a free-hit, which is normally of greater advantage to them. Moreover, if you actively chase the ball, the attacker may simply turn around and proceed towards the goal on the other side. Focus on the forehand, but do not neglect the backhand. The reason is that almost all players are stronger and quicker on the forehand, but if there is space enough, many will turn easily onto their other side.

### Defensive Walls

See the section on building a defensive wall on page 22 below.

### Goalkeepers

Goalkeepers are the last line of defence. In tactical terms, their role should not normally be counted on: defence is the role of the field players—in particular the defenders. The goalkeeper is more of a safety net, the player helping out when the defence fails. This makes goalkeepers very important players.

Probably the only time when goalkeepers are involved in tactical play and positioning is when there are two attackers and only one defender. In this case, the defender will need to try to position him or herself in such a way that the attackers cannot shoot. However, there is often a trade-off between preventing the shot and preventing the pass. When the game is close to the goal, the defender preventing the pass is overall more successful, since the goalkeeper is more effective in stopping a shot than a defender.

## Attacking

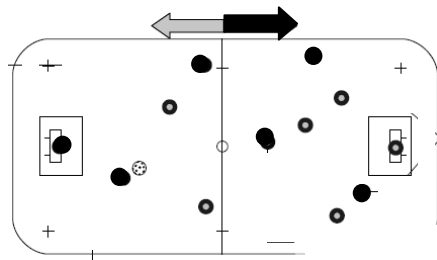


Figure 11: Attacking

If black have the ball, everyone in the black team is responsible for attacking. The black attackers try to open up space by running into different positions. The black centre supports the attackers. The black defenders move forward to support the attackers and venture the odd long shot. Figure 11 shows the basic positions to attack. Note that the defenders (in white) do not act very successfully.

The attackers (shown to the right above) try to open up space and with that create possibilities to play the ball. This means that they need to run continuously to create space and draw defenders out of position. The centre moves forward to support the attackers. The defenders also move forward to about the centre line to support the attack. One of the defenders always stays back a bit more than the other. This is necessary to prevent quick counter-attacks, or is useful if the ball is lost near the centre line. Depending on the situation, even the defender further back moves up to the centre line or even in front of it. The defenders may designate one player as the last defender, or communicate on a case by case basis, keeping the attack more dynamic.

### Role as an Attacker

As an attacker, you are concerned with keeping the ball and opening up possibilities to finish onto the goal (shoot). Normally, shots onto the goal are your only chance of scoring. As an attacker you:

- try to open up space (more options to play)
- try to play safe passes (be sure that they arrive)
- shoot on the goal if you can
- have one attacker in the slot if possible
- confuse the defence by running continuously and switching sides
- try to keep the ball moving
- run into a position where you can receive the ball

### Opening a Game

When you have the ball in the defence, you start the attack by opening the game. All the moves here assume that the ball is with one of the defenders in the corner. For balls right in front of your own goal, simply add a pass to the defender in the corner.

### Through the centre

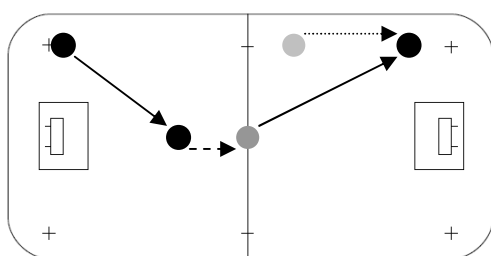


Figure 12: Through Centre

This is a common way to open the game. The ball is played from the defender to the centre who then distributes the ball towards one of the attackers in the corner.

The attackers run forward from the centre line as soon as the attack is launched. By running this way, they are also ready to receive a ball directly (see below). The centre will try to play the pass as soon as possible, best somewhere

around the centre line (runs with ball if necessary). Direct throw-outs to the centre are a possibility, but many teams like to take the time to organize themselves, and thus start in the corner.

### Direct

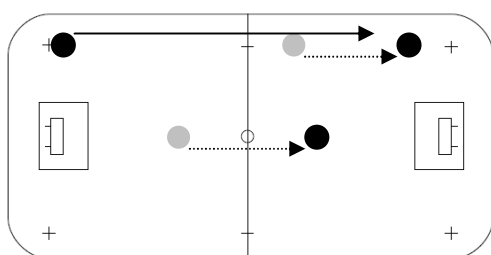


Figure 13: Direct

This is an alternative to the above opening. The ball is played from the defender directly to one of the attackers. The centre also runs forward in order to assist the attackers. By playing this opening from time to time, the opponents will no longer have a sure way to defend; not knowing which way the ball is played.

To launch an attack, if possible, the ball is played low: on the floor. You can play direct or play off the board. Low balls are easier to receive. Some defenders use wide high passes, playing above the opponents in the centre. This is particularly useful if the centre of the rink is crowded.

### From the Corner

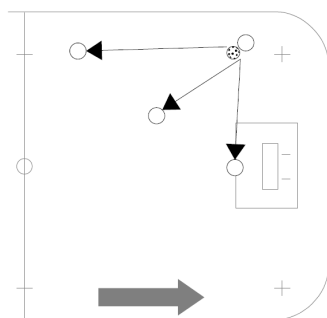


Figure 14: Corner

This move applies both to when the ball is received by the attackers directly from the defenders, or when the centre is involved.

If the ball is in the left-hand corner, the centre, the other attacker, and the left-hand defender will all try to be available to receive the ball and shoot onto the goal. One player will be right in front of the goal (usually the right wing). One player will be at a comfortable shooting range (usually the centre), and the defender will come forward to the centre line

to be available for long shots.

It is important that the players do not remain static, since a static game is relatively easy to defend against. The players keep moving so that they can receive the ball.

### Through the Centre

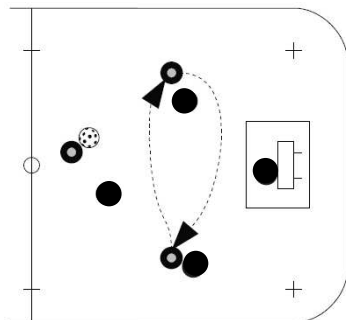


Figure 15: Through the Centre

corner”) applies.

Once the centre receives the ball, he or she distributes it to the attackers in the corners. If the ball cannot be played, the attackers need to move around into a position where they can receive the ball. This can be done by changing speed (accelerate suddenly), or by crossing. Crossing means that the two attackers will swap, the left attacker will move to the right and vice versa. This move should leave the defenders behind for a short moment: long enough for the pass to be played. Once the ball is in the corner, the same as above (“from the

### Slot

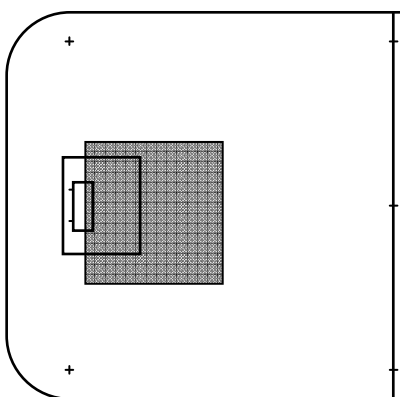


Figure 16: Slot

the goal. Having one attacker in the slot is often a good idea, especially if he or she can receive a pass in the area. Some players, when playing in the corner, choose to pass the ball into the slot in any case. Whilst this can result in dangerous attacks, blind passes have the tendency to miss their target, or the other attacker need so much time to control the ball that the defenders have time to re-organize themselves. Nonetheless, a pass in the slot is often dangerous.

The slot is an important area when playing floorball. A shot from this area often leaves no time for the goalkeeper to react. Therefore, having an attacker in the slot is often a good idea. The attacker in the slot should not remain static, but run around to be in a position to receive a pass. Another thing an attacker in the slot can do is deflecting a shot, making it very difficult for the goalkeeper to catch the ball.

Figure 16 illustrates the area commonly referred to as the slot. Some players call it the *mouth*. It is the area immediately in front of

### Through the Corner

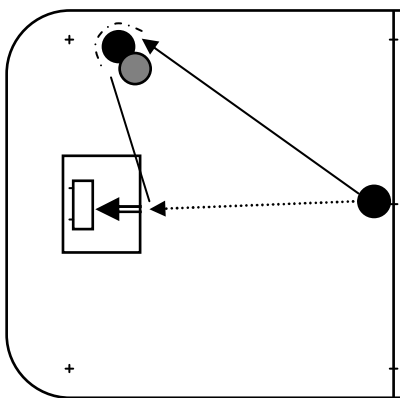


Figure 17: Through the Corner

the attacker, rather than in the centre. The pass in all cases needs to be precise and fast enough, so that the defender cannot reach the ball before the attacker. Once the attacker controls the ball, he or she shields it well against the defender, and turns in a continuous

In order to play to the slot, here is a move that should allow you to get the ball into the slot for attacking. The centre plays to the attacker in the corner. The attacker then turns with the ball, shielding it against the defender. At the end of the turn, the attacker plays the ball into the slot, from where the centre can venture a shot.

As alternatives, the centre may want to play the ball off the board, making it more difficult for the defender to intercept the pass before it reaches the attacker. Similarly, the centre may already be on the same side as the

way—back always against the defender—to eventually pass the ball into the slot. This is a single move.

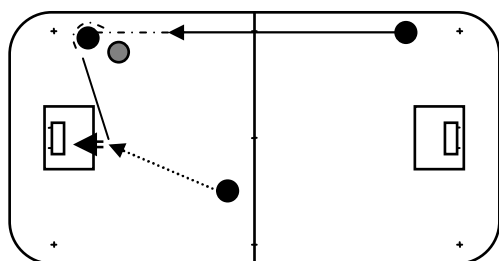


Figure 18: High pass

running, the attacker will need to shield the ball.

There are many combinations that can be successfully combined with this move. For example, a high pass may be used to launch the attack (figure 18). The high pass should be received about half way between the centre line and the corner, as it will take a moment for the attacker to properly control the ball. The attacker runs towards the corner and then plays the ball into the slot. When

Crossing over (see just below) can be added to make sure the attacker can receive the ball. Once they receive the ball in the corner, the turning move is done as in the previous examples. Both the centre and the other attacker may get ready to get a shot in the slot area.

### Crossing Over

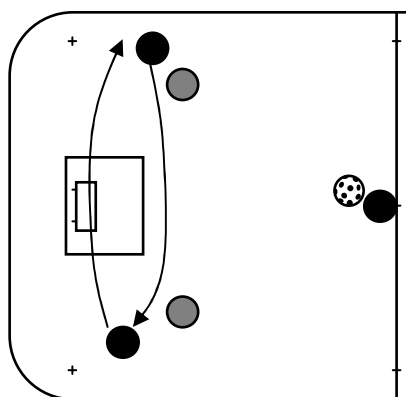


Figure 19: Crossing Over

over behind the goal, or with one player crossing behind the goal and the other in front of. This is a choice up to the attackers, and also up to the precise situation of the game. It is possible to cross over twice in a short time, something that may unsettle a defence even more. See the section on variations on page 14 for further ideas of how to bring about movement in the game, and thus opening up space.

One of the best ways for opening up space is to run around. The two attackers can swap their sides. It is a good idea to change at the same time. This may confuse the defenders for a little while (until they get organized again), and this may be just the moment you need to score. Figure 19 illustrates how you can cross over in a floorball game.

It is a good idea to try crossing over in training a couple of times, so that both attackers know where they want to run. Uncoordinated sudden runs can in rare occasions lead to collisions. Some players cross

### Defenders Support Attack

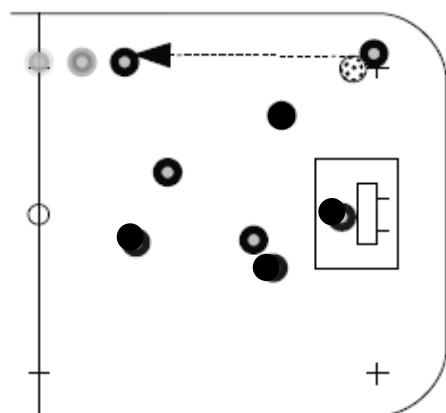


Figure 20: Support

The defenders do not sit back and watch the attackers running circles. Instead, they move forward towards the middle line and support the attackers. From this position, the defenders can keep the ball moving, but also venture the odd shot. If a defender comes further forward such as in front of the goal, then usually one of the attackers or the centre falls back a little bit. A defender coming forward can be a crucial link to cross the ball from one side to the other. Figure 20 illustrates a defender coming forward to support the attackers. This is particularly useful if the attacker is stuck in a corner with little possibility to pass the ball.

## Help with Passing

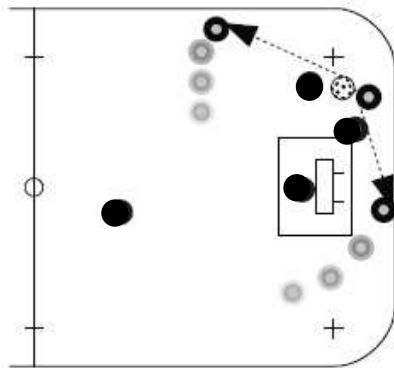


Figure 21: Help

Figure 21 illustrates such positions. Note that in the case illustrated, both the centre and the other attacker move to offer themselves. One of the two will receive the ball, and the other will have to move again to be able to receive the ball.

A situation you want to prevent as an attacker is to hold the ball without any possibility to pass. For a short while, most attackers are able to keep the ball by shielding it. However, most players find it hard to keep the ball for a long period of time when under pressure. Many players also find it difficult to keep the ball and at the same time look out for other players. If a player gets stuck, the others should run into a position where a pass is possible. The game is of course dynamic, and this means that an attacker may have to keep running to be in a position to receive the ball.

## Getting Away from the Defender

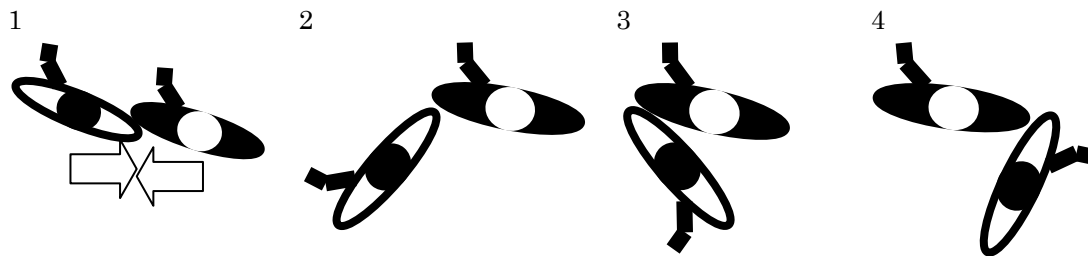


Figure 22: Turning around the back: In (1) the defender and attacker try to get into a better position by pushing (shoulder to shoulder). In (2) the attacker turns backwards, letting the defender (in black) run into empty space. The attacker turns with the back towards the defender (3), and end up on the other side of the attacker (4), ready to receive the pass. This sequence assumes a pass from the right-hand side.

The easiest way to get away from a defender is to change speed suddenly. Very fast players will be able to outrun their opponent in any case, but changes in speed may give you enough of an advantage even where the defender is faster.

When playing in the slot, as an attacker you might not want to run far, simply because doing so would be giving up your position in the slot. Many players jostle trying to get the upper hand, but it is often easier to turn round backwards. This means that when the attacker and the defender stand shoulder to shoulder, rather than pushing against the defender, the attacker quickly rotates to the other side, turning around the defender, and is then free on the other side to receive the pass. Figure 22 illustrates this move. It is very successful particularly if the defender tries to push the attacker away from the slot. In this case, once the attacker starts the move away (2), the attacker might well push in a direction where there is no longer any resistance, and thus end up losing the favourable position.

## Key Ideas

The key ideas of floorball tactics are that both the attack and the defence are the job of everyone. Whilst there are often players designated as attackers or defenders, the other field players need to support them. The key aspect of a defender is to close down space. The attackers try to do the opposite, by opening up space, and thus increasing the possibilities to play the ball.

## Variations

The basic formation introduced in the previous section is just that: basic positions for the players. In this section, a number of variations are introduced. The idea is to make you aware of the different ways space can be opened up. The key to a successful attack is communication, where all the field players know what is going on, and therefore can position themselves accordingly.

To begin with, many teams choose to try out variations in the safe environment of a training session. The next level is a friendly game, and then the power play situation in a game. A power play situation is suited, because the players are under less pressure. Of course, when the score is close, the team probably want to use tried and tested tactics during a power play. A variation is truly mastered, if it can be used in normal a game: that is with five on five field players.

### Circle Around the Goal

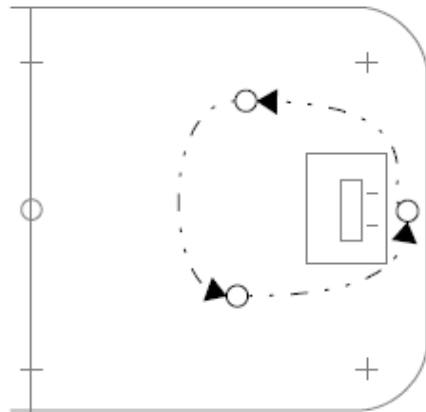


Figure 23: Circle

This variation involves the two attackers and the centre. On the small rink, this variation can be used with all the players involved. The three players run in a large circle around the goal. The ball is passed in the opposite direction: that is the players play the ball to their back. The players can run with the ball for a few moments before passing the ball on, but the idea is that the ball is in constant movement. A shot is either attempted when there is a gap allowing a direct shot on the goal, or by passing the ball in the opposite direction. Passing the ball in the opposite direction means that one of the players passes the ball back to the person the ball was

received from, rather to the one behind. By playing such a surprise pass, there should be a gap allowing a direct shot on the goal.

The same variation can be played with all five field players involved. In this case, the two defenders move forward, too, and join the circle. The circle may be a bit larger than with three players. Alternatively, four players can circle around the goal, with the fifth player at the centre spot. This player is both a centre back and an additional position for passing, should the players get stuck. As a variation to the variation, so to speak, in any case—be it three, four, or five players—the ball can be passed forward to begin with, and then the actual attack takes place with a pass backwards. The most effective moment to attack is when the surprise pass can be played across the slot, right in front of the goal

### Quick Pass

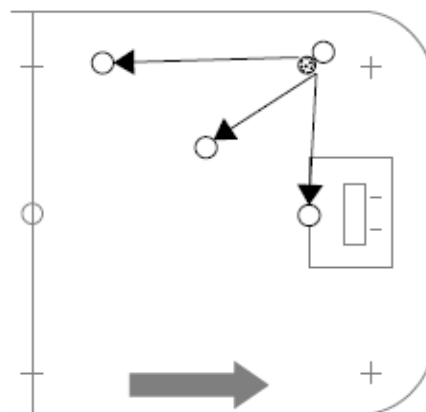


Figure 24: Quick pass

This variation is based on the ability to play fast and precise passes, as well as direct shots. One of the attackers plays in a corner, keeping the ball. The other attacker positions him or herself in the slot—constantly moving so as to be able to receive the ball at any time. One of the defenders comes forwards, to take a position where he or she can play a long shot. The centre takes a position in between, also ready to shoot. Watching all the three other players, the attacker with the ball plays a fast and precise pass to one of the three. The player receiving the ball shoots at once. The key to success in this variation is the ability to

change the pace of the game, slowing it down when the ball is in the corner, and then suddenly attacking.

### Centre Drop Back

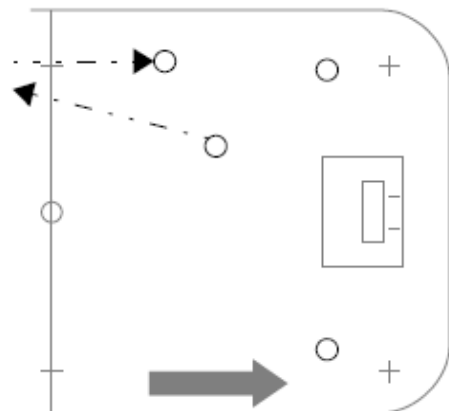


Figure 25: Drop

The centre drop back is a simple variation. One of the defenders moves forwards along the side line, supporting the attackers. The centre drops back, taking the position of the defender. If carried out swiftly, this variation can open up enough space to shoot on the goal.

As with most variations, communication is the key to success. A centre dropping back without the defender knowing what is going on will not bring about a variation of play, but weaken the attack. Similarly, a defender moving forward without the centre being prepared may weaken the defence should a counter-attack take place.

### Wide Cross-Over

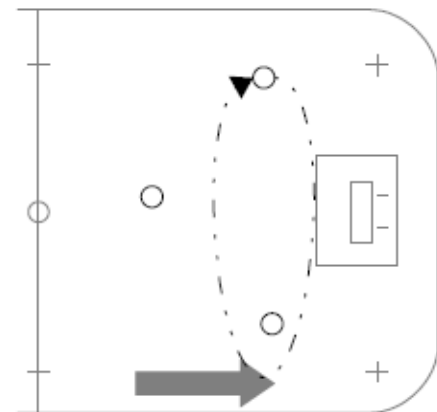


Figure 26: Wide

Wide cross-overs are an addition to the common cross-overs. Rather than the attackers swapping sides, this variation largely involves one attacker. The attacker changes to the other side, but then turns and runs back to his or her side. It is possible to spend a moment on the opposite side before running back, possibly adding to the confusion. Wide cross-overs are particularly successful if the attacker involved is fast, and can open up additional space by running faster than the defenders.

It is important that both attackers know what is going on, so that the attacker not changing sides, does not attempt to do so, thinking he or she has missed to do an ordinary cross-over. The aim is to confuse the defence, not your team mates.

It is important that both attackers know what is going on, so that the attacker not changing

### Rotation

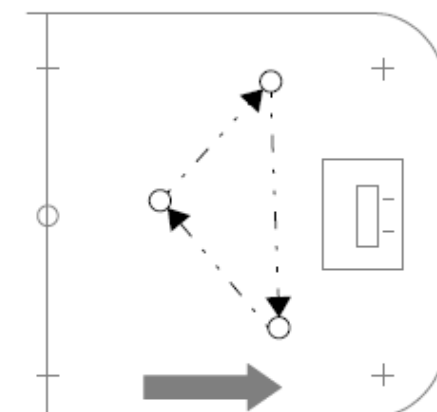


Figure 27: Rotation

Rotation is a variation of the standard crossing over. It not only involves the attackers, but also the centre. The left wing runs to take the position of the right wing. The right wing at the same time drops back a bit, taking the position of the centre. The centre moves forward to take the position of the left attacker. It is important that all the players involved know what is happening. It is also important that the attackers and the centre know what position they play should the attack fail. Does the centre keep playing left-forward, or does he or she take on the role of centre again? This variation can be used more than once in a single attack, and the direction

of the rotation can be varied. It is possible to rotate left once, and then rotate right. If all the players involved are good runners, it is also possible to do two rotation one after the other. If the players are confident, the play passes whilst rotating, otherwise one of the

players rotates with the ball. All these should confuse the defence long enough to open up a little window.

#### Side Play

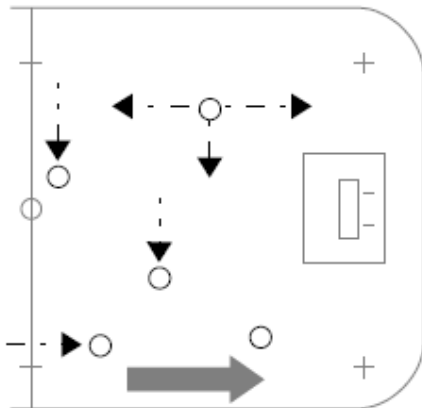


Figure 28: Side

moves to the centre spot, moving the game further to the right. He or she also keeps an eye for possible counter-attacks, and is positioned as a centre back, so to speak. The left attacker moves forth and back to offer him or herself for a surprise cross. The same can obviously be played mirrored on the other side.

This variation involves the players moving onto one side, making pressure on one side only. On the other side, there is one attacker left, running to be in a position to get the surprise cross. The idea is to move the whole game onto one side, with a quick cross to the other side, or even the middle of the field. Like with other variations, it is important that after the surprise pass is played, the shot on the goal is played at once.

The centre moves to the right, whilst the right defender comes forward for support. The right attacker, the centre, and the right defender control the ball in a triangle. The left defender

#### Long Side

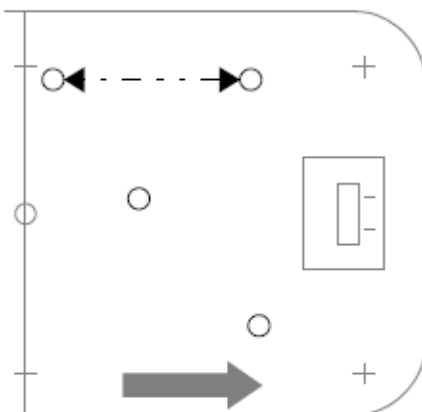


Figure 29: Long

This variation involves a swap between the attacker and defender on one side. The centre and the players of the other side are not directly involved. As the left attacker drops back, the left defender moves forward, effectively taking on the role of the attacker. Simply by bringing a fresh face to the attack, the defence can be confused for a short moment. This variation is best played when the ball is controlled by the centre or the attacker on the right. Obviously, the variation can also be played on the right. It is important that the swap of defender and attacker is swift. After a while, the two can swap back into their original positions.

#### Side Rotation

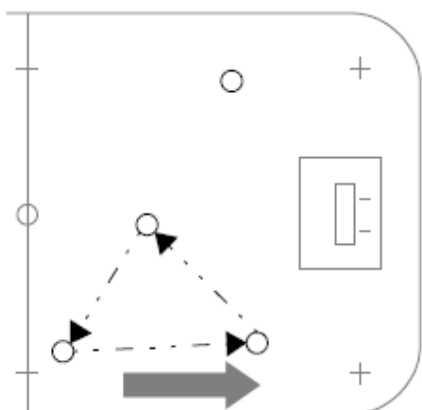


Figure 30: Side Rotation

The side rotation is a variation that involves a defender. The defender moves forward, taking the position of the attacker. The attacker drops back and moves towards the middle, taking the position of the centre. The centre, in turn, drops further back, becoming the defender, but actively involved in the attack as a supporter. All the players move at once. After a while, a second rotation in the same direction can be used, or alternatively the players can rotate back into their original positions. It is important that the players communicate to avoid confusion. The same variation can be played on the other side, mirrored.



## Wide Rotation

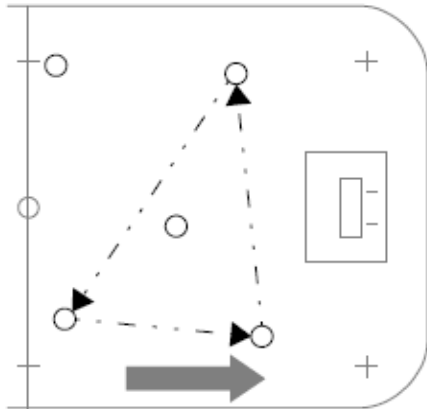


Figure 31: Wide Rotation

may be larger than with smaller rotations. The same variation can be played mirrored on the other side.

The wide rotation is yet another rotation. It does not involve the centre, but again one of the defenders is actively involved. The defender on the right moves forward, becoming the new right forward. At the same time, the original right attacker runs across the field, becoming the new left forward. The left wing, in turn, drops back and moves to the right, taking on the role of the right defender at the centre line. The defender position is active and supporting the attack. This variation involves a fair bit of running. On the downside, this tires players more quickly. On the upside, because of the large movement involved, the confusion caused in the defence

## Two Back

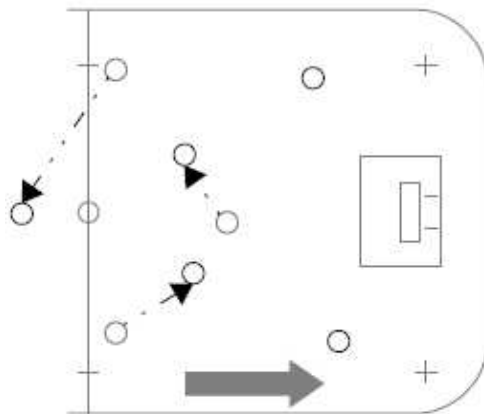


Figure 32: Two Back

time to time, when there is a gap opening up.

This variation involves one of the defenders very actively. The two attackers stay in position. The centre drops back a bit, taking position just left of the centre spot—probably a bit more forward. The right defender takes position next to the centre, a bit more to the right. The left defender moves towards the middle of the field, effectively becoming a centre back. This is necessary should a counter-attack occur. The attackers, the centre, and the forward-oriented defender can now play in a similar fashion as is commonly used for power plays (see page 19). It is important that the players involved are confident passers, and venture a shot from

## Diamond

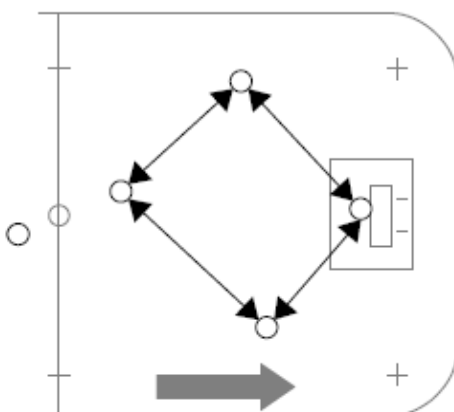


Figure 33: Diamond

goal, and the centre will try to deflect the shot.

In this variation the centre plays most forward, right in front of the goal. One of the defenders moves forward, taking position near the centre spot, possibly more forward. Just like in the previous variation, the other defender needs to become a centre back, moving towards the centre of the rink. In the diamond position, the attackers can play to the centre or to the central defender. The centre and the defender can pass the ball back or onwards to the other side. If the opponents allow, the attackers can pass straight to each other. After such a pass, a shot on the goal is probably the best finish, as a gap should have opened. The attackers can also shoot on the

## Corner to Back

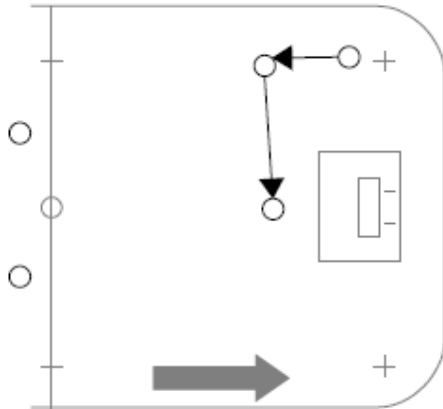


Figure 34: Corner to Back

This variation builds on the ability of one of the attackers to keep the ball under control even when under pressure. The centre will need to be able to pass the ball quickly and precisely, whilst the other attacker will need to shoot direct. The attacker with the ball plays near the corner, keeping the ball under control. He or she needs to watch the other players. Once the positions are right, the attacker plays the ball back to the centre who plays it direct to the second attacker who then shoots. In order to get into position, the centre and the second attacker need to run, and stay away from the defenders. The defenders are not directly involved in this variation, but

move a bit closer to the middle of the field, to prevent counter-attacks.

The advantage of all variations is that you potentially confuse the opposing defence. This means that you will have space to shoot, and thus increase the chance of scoring goals. The potential disadvantage is that you can confuse yourselves, and lose the ball unnecessarily. It is vital that everyone involved in a variation knows what is going on. For this reason, it is important for the players to communicate. Use interruptions in the game to talk to each other, and talk on the substitution bench. Shouting on the rink is in most cases futile. By the time your team mate knows what to do, the opponents may know what is going on, too. In this case you lose these vital seconds which open up space.

The variations outlined here are not prescriptive. Their role is best thought of as inspiration for teams to come up with their own variations. The most effective variations are those a team can perform well, and those the opponents do not expect. For this reason knowing and being able to perform a greater number of variations in a game is an advantage. Often attackers forget that they can play backwards to the defenders who come forward as a support. However, they need to make sure that the defender is ready to receive a ball, otherwise a counter-attack is looming.

## Goalkeeper

The tactical aspects of a goalkeeper are mostly about keeping the right position, and moving so as to reduce the angle. The aim is to cover as much of the goal as possible. The section on goalkeeper skills on page 47 will explore this aspect in more detail.

## Substitution

In floorball, the goalkeeper can be substituted at any time. A goalkeeper can not only be substituted with another goalkeeper, but also with an additional field player. In fact, only at the very beginning of a floorball game is a team required to have a goalkeeper on the rink. This opens tactical possibilities.

There is a danger in the substitution process. Like any other player, the goalkeeper needs to leave the rink without hesitation. Because in practice goalkeepers do not often substitute, it is worth mentioning this. The field player can only enter the rink once the goalkeeper has left the rink.

The main benefit of substituting a goalkeeper with an additional field player is supporting the attack. A floorball goalkeeper does not have a stick, and is unable to score goals. With an additional field player, a team is normally able to increase the pressure on the opponent. In practice, goalkeepers are substituted only towards the very end of a game when the score is a draw or close to a draw. Coaches are more likely to substitute a goalkeeper when the team is playing a power play, and already putting the opponent

under pressure. A goalkeeper can be put back on the field at any time, as long as one of the field players comes off.

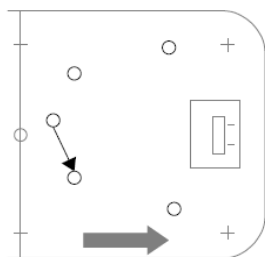
The dangers are obviously that a goalkeeper is the only player in a team who can defend a shot on the goal effectively. For this reason alone, many teams do not substitute their goalkeepers. Just having one pass intercepted may mean losing a goal, because a field player is very limited in the ways he or she can stop a shot on the goal. The key to successful goalkeeper substitutions is good communication, where the goalkeeper knows when he or she is required to come off the rink. For example, the goalkeeper does not normally leave the rink until their own team is in possession of the ball. It is also important to be aware of the fact that a goalkeeper on the substitution bench can be brought back onto the rink. For this reason, goalkeepers normally are ready to get back onto the rink at any time if they are substituted with a field player. Substituting a goalkeeper without having an attack able to put pressure in the power play is probably futile.

## Power Play

A power play occurs if one of the teams can play with superior numbers. This is normally the case if one or two of the players of the other team were sent off with a bench penalty. A power play provides an increased opportunity to score. The team playing with fewer players is said to play a box play.

### Attacking

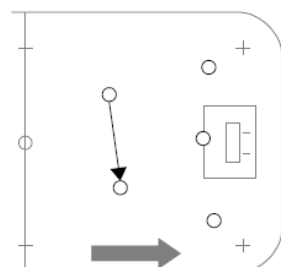
The aim of the power play is the same as attacking in general: create an opportunity to shoot on the goal. Because the attacking team plays with one more player, they are more likely to generate such opportunities. The attackers try to play a game of fast and precise passes, waiting for the defence to become disarranged whilst they adapt their position. Such a moment is taken to shoot on the goal. Successful power plays are characterized by patience on behalf of the attacking team: waiting for the opportunities to come. However, it must be stressed that only by actually shooting goals can be scored. No points are awarded for nice passes.



*Figure 35: Beginning a power play*

The basic formation of a power play involves all the players, not just the attackers. The players line up in a U shape, passing the ball from one position to the other. They take care that the passes are safe and cannot be intercepted. As time progresses, the attacking team try to come closer and closer to the goal. The passes have to be fast. The centre is often involved in the initial build-up (see figure 35), but then moves into the slot, trying to open up

space, or to deflect shots on the goal (see figure 36).



*Figure 36: Power play formation with centre in front of the goal*

The attackers can rotate in their positions, making defending a bit harder still. The attacking team should not remain static, but instead keep moving so that the power play remains dynamic. A static power play is much easier to defend against. See page 14 for some general attacking variations. Most of these can be adapted for power plays. The players attempt to keep the ball moving at any time by passing it from one player to the other. A single player keeping the ball under control is

far less effective and easier to defend against. The players playing furthest back should never attempt to dribble. This is in case they lose the ball. The defending team can then launch a counter-attack with no defence other than the goalkeeper.

## Defending

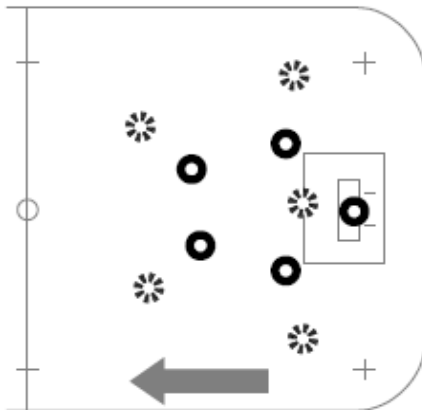


*Figure 37: Chasing the ball off an opponent when playing in numerical superiority*

In case the defending team gains control of the ball, the attacking team will normally chase the ball off them. It is important that this happens in a coordinated manner, and that it happens in a fair way. Since the defending team have one player fewer, the attacking team can have two players getting the ball off the player in control of the ball. All the other players need to be marked closely, so that they cannot receive a pass. As indicated in figure 37, two players will approach the player in control of the ball at the same time. It is important that the timing is coordinated; otherwise the player may turn around and launch a counter-attack. The two players move close to the player in control of the ball, making sure that there is little room to manoeuvre. Placing the sticks close to the stick of the defender means that there is no need to commit a foul, since if the space is too small, the defender will lose control over the ball. Watch out for players trying to quickly turn around.

## Box Play

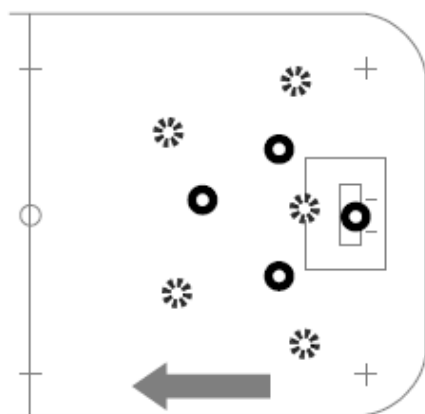
### Defending



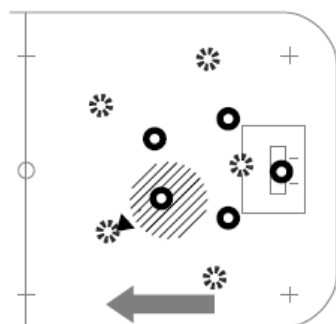
*Figure 38: Basic box play formation*

The box play is the defence during the power play of the opposing team. Defending with one player down is easier than with two players down, but both cases can be survived without conceding a goal. The key to success in a box play is the same as in defending in general: discipline. Very disciplined zone defending is essential. You only try to chase the ball if you are super confident that you can get the ball. Even in counter attacks, two defenders will stay back. With two players down, the situation is no different from the one with one player down. If anything, even more discipline is needed, and unnecessary advances are very likely to be punished. You should never rely on the goalkeeper to defend a shot: the goalkeeper is the extra safety you have should the defence fail.

With weak opponents, some teams are able to play as normal, with one attacker, a centre, and two defenders. You should never start with such a formation, but with the standard box play formation. Should it turn out that the opponents are weak, you will eventually gain possession and be able to play your game.



*Figure 39: Box play with three field players*

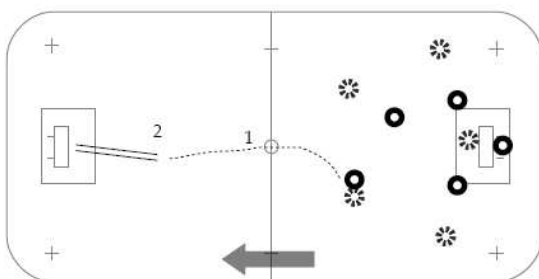


*Figure 40: Putting attack under pressure*

The overall aim of a box play is to leave no space for the attackers to shoot on the goal. No shots means no chances to score. With one or two players down, defending needs discipline, and this needs concentration. The general formation is two defenders back, and two further field players further in front (see figure 38). With two players down, the standard formation is two defenders back, and the additional field player in front (see figure 39); although depending on the power play, two players front and one back may be more appropriate. The players position themselves so that no direct shots are possible. They attempt to intercept passes, if anything at all.

A defender can approach one of the attackers to put them under pressure (you are looking for a badly hit pass that can be intercepted), but should always bear in mind the gap left behind (see figure 40). In many cases, a successful box play involves keeping the nerves and waiting for the attacker to lose the ball.

#### Counter-Attacks



*Figure 41: Counter attack*

If a defender manages to get hold of the ball, he or she has two options. Either a counter-attack is launched, or the player attempts to keep the ball under control. Some players also choose to simply hit the ball towards the other goal. The choice will depend on the position on the rink, the player's abilities, and the score of the game. The decision to keep the ball is often a mere delaying tactic, waiting for

the bench penalty to expire. Because the team are one or two players down, it may be difficult to keep the ball, so one of the other players may want to assist the player in control of the ball: offering a possibility to pass the ball. In any case the defending team should take great care not to leave the goal completely undefended.

A counter-attacker needs to be swift and determined. At least one person needs to stay behind in order to defend. The player or players involved in the counter-attack usually seek the centre of the rink, from where it is easier to shoot (see figure 41: 1). Rather than getting involved with any other players, the choice is often to shoot (2). Obviously it is easier to score when closer to the goal, but most players choose to shoot just before the first opponent catches up with them—in time to shoot freely. Once the counter-attack is over, the players should move back into formation at once. It does not matter if the opponents start to build up the power play in their own half, because the aim of the box play is to close down space.

Sometimes it happens that the attacking team losing the ball in a power play focus on the player with the ball only, during a counter attack. The player with the ball, launching the counter-attack should take a quick look to see whether one of their team mates is running

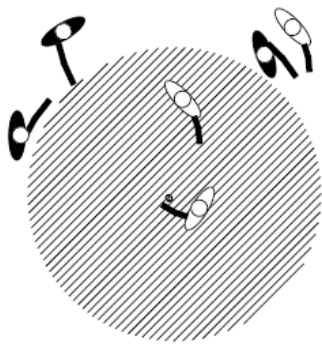
in parallel. If there is a team mate running in support, a pass across can be very dangerous (i.e. a good chance for scoring).

## Free-Hit

A free-hit is a fixed situation, where a team is given the opportunity to play without any opponents closer than 3 metres. With this gained space, a number of possibilities open up for the team. The fact that the ball is still when the free-hit is carried out means that the team get a chance to organize themselves. This means, however, that the players need to communicate with one another, so that everyone in the team knows what is happening. In some cases, the defenders are not involved in a free-hit, but even then it is a good idea for them to know what is going on. This allows them to position themselves in a strategic place, maybe going for a second shot.

A free-hit may be carried out immediately, and this option needs to be borne in mind. A quick free-hit can unsettle a defence, but unless the attackers involved know what they want to do with the ball, it may also be a lost opportunity. For this reason, some teams use short names or even numbers to communicate common free-hit variations. This way they can communicate quickly. An additional benefit is that the opponent may not know what is coming up, especially if these codes are communicated non-verbally. This only works, however, if all the players involved know the code.

### Correct Free-Hit



*Figure 42: Three-metre rule at free-hits and hit-ins: All players of the opposing team (in black) need to be at least three metres away before the ball is played.*

One of the players hits the ball cleanly but very softly. The ball moves very little, and the ball can now be played as in open play. However, as soon as the ball is touched for the first time, the defenders can move closer: the 3 metres distance is no longer required (2 metres on a small rink). Figure 42 illustrates the three metre distance required at a free-hit. Only players of the same team are allowed within this imaginary circle. The distance includes sticks.

To start with, the ball is not moving, although slight movement may be tolerated if the game is not influenced. A correct free-hit is hit cleanly. This means that the ball cannot be dragged, flicked, or lifted on the stick. This means, for example, that a wrist shot is not allowed, or an airhook cannot be carried out from a free-hit. It is a free *hit* after all. The player carrying out the free-hit cannot play the ball a second time before another player has touched the ball. If a free-hit is carried out incorrectly, the free-hit is awarded to the other team. One way to avoid the limitations is by having two people where the ball is played.

As a general rule, a free-hit is carried out at the place of the offence. There are two exceptions to this rule. Firstly, no free-hits are carried out behind the extended goal lines. If an offence is committed behind the goals, the free-hit is instead carried out at the nearest face-off spot in one of the corners. This exception is necessary to keep the game moving. Secondly, no free-hits are carried out closer than 3.5 metres to the goalkeeper area. This exception is necessary so that the defending team have the possibility to build a defensive wall in every case. There are only 50 cm for the defenders to build a wall.

### Building a Defensive Wall

The advantage gained with a free-hit is usually countered by building a defensive wall. Most teams build a wall whenever there is a free-hit, but vary the position and number of players according to the place of the free-hit. Other teams only build defensive walls in their own half. The aim of a defensive wall is to prevent a direct shot on the goal.

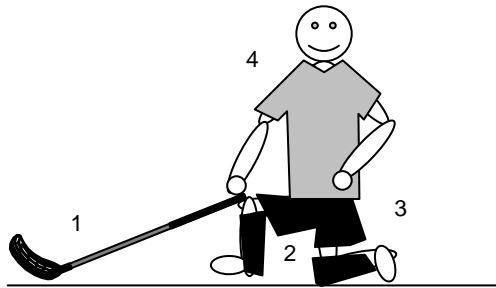


Figure 43: *Kneeling as a defensive wall*

There are no special provisions for building a wall, and the usual rules regarding hand balls, or playing on the floor apply. A player is allowed to put one knee on the floor, but not both. A player is not allowed to actively stop the ball with his or her hands or head. The players are allowed to put their stick onto the floor, but only the stick hand is allowed to touch the floor: that is the hand placed at the end of the shaft.

Figure 43 illustrates how defenders commonly kneel down when forming a defensive wall. The stick is kept on the floor (1), possibly even closer to the ground than shown here. The aim is to intercept low passes past the wall. There will be a little gap between the legs (2), and players are not allowed to put their hand to cover the area. The reason is simply if they get hit on their hand, they are sent off (hands). The players often kneel (3) in order to maximize the area covered by their body. The upper body is kept straight for the same reason (4). When kneeling in a defensive wall, a defender generally faces the middle of the rink; that is the head is orientated towards the imaginary line that divides the rink into halves along its length. The reason for this is really to maximize the area of view covered. Where there are two, or even three, defenders kneeling in a wall, they all face in the same direction. The players further behind place themselves so as to reduce the possibility for a shot to go through the wall.

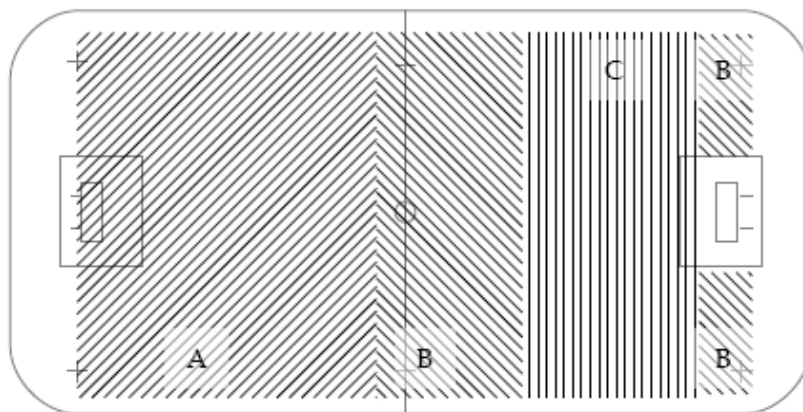


Figure 44: *Different kinds of defensive walls in different areas of the rink.*

A defensive wall is built with the aim of covering as much space as possible. When the free-hit is near their own goal, then the largest area can be covered when kneeling. When the free-hit is far from their own goal, a wall kneeling is not effective, as the attackers can simply shoot over it. A wall

may include one, two, or even three players. The number of players in the wall is dependent on the place of the free-hit, how the attackers position themselves, and usually what the goalkeepers feel comfortable with. However, the speed of floorball means that there is usually not enough time for the goalkeepers to ask for an additional player in the wall, and desires need to be made clear before games. A general guide is included in Figure 44. In zone A, near the opponent's goal, only one player forms the defensive wall. He or she will be standing. Very close to the opponent's goal, players often just stand roughly in front of the free-hit, since any direct shot is unlikely to be dangerous. In zones B, one player forms the wall, kneeling and facing the middle of the rink. In zone C, two players kneeling form the wall, both facing the middle of the rink. There is a combination which you also might want to consider, where one player stands and the other kneels. The advantage of this combination is that the player not kneeling is quicker to run into a different position.

For free-hits in the corner (B), generally one player is placed kneeling. The aim here is not primarily to prevent direct shots, but to prevent passes into the slot. The player will face the other goal, with their back towards the short side of the rink where the free-hit is being played from.

Walls with more than two players are rare. A player kneeling can face either left or right. Normally, the players position themselves in a way that they face the middle of the field, facing away from the board. Where there are two players, it is essential that they face the same direction. Otherwise, they may leave a bit of a gap in the middle of the wall, rendering the defensive wall rather useless. When there are two defenders on a defensive wall, sometimes one of the two will run towards the ball as soon as it is played, putting the attackers under pressure. This can be effective when the attackers are generally slow in carrying out their free-hits.

The attacking team are allowed to put players in front of the defensive wall. They are not, however, allowed to prevent the defending team from building a wall. The usual rules of obstruction, holding, and pushing apply during a free-hit.

#### Beating a Defensive Wall: Basic Free-Hit

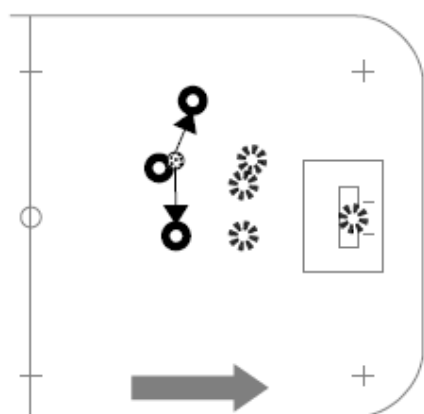


Figure 45: Basic pass to beat a defensive wall

As an attacker, a defensive wall is inconvenient. A good wall means that the attackers no longer can shoot direct. For that reason, the attackers will try to play around the wall somehow. The good news is that the 3 metres distance gives enough time and space to do just that; provided the free-hit is carried out quickly. The basic movement is a quick and precise pass to either side of the place where the free-hit is carried out, and the shot is taken from there. If the free-hit is taken from near the board, the shot is usually more successful from the side towards the middle of the rink. However, the surprise element in choosing the other side may be successful to catch out the defenders from time to time.

#### Variations

The defenders will be aware of the basic way to pass around the wall and possibly have another player nearby, to prevent the shot if possible. The way to solve this is to bring more variation into the free-hits. For example, even though shooting from further out—rather than the middle of the rink—is more difficult, doing so from time to time will mean that the defenders no longer know which way the attackers play. There are a number of free-hit variations, and it is essential that everyone involved knows which one is being played. There is usually no time to play it slowly, or change one's mind.

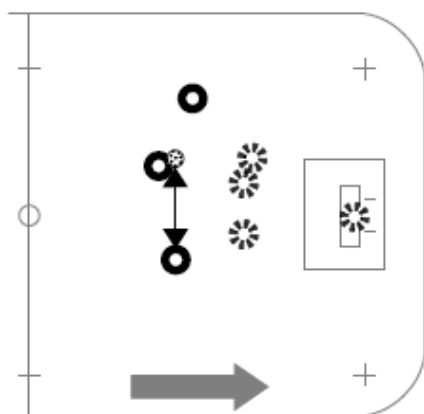


Figure 46: Playing back to beat the wall.

One variation consists of a pass to the second player, who plays it straight back. The player who actually carried out the free-hit can then shoot. The passes need to be fast and precise. In most cases the defensive wall will have moved a bit by the time of the second pass, and there is a little gap to shoot. A wall patient enough to wait will be effective against this variation. This variation is therefore most effective against a wall that is not very good, such as one where there is already a little gap (which is likely to grow with the passes), or where one of the defenders is known to run towards the attackers. Attackers often choose this variation when they observe that the defenders are impatient and tend to run

forwards as soon as the ball is played.



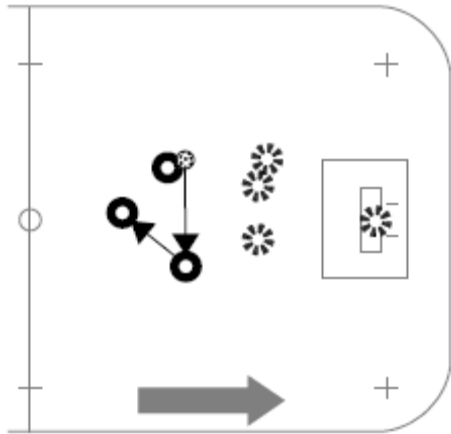


Figure 47: Triangle

Another variation consists of passes in a triangle. The first pass is to the side, the second pass to the back. It is the third player to shoot. It is vital in this case that the player who is to shoot is prepared, because the extra pass involved means that there is more time for the defenders to close in. The fact that the ball is actually played back a little bit in this variation means that a bit of extra time is gained. The player executing the free-hit may also do a fake, pretending to pass the ball to the player at the back first.

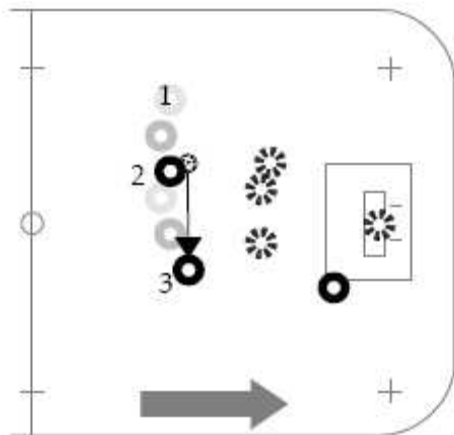


Figure 48: Sideward Move

A variation that often catches out defenders eager to run towards the ball is a shift. For this variation, two players start in a position as if playing the standard free-hit. However, rather than taking the free-hit as probably expected, both players shift sideward. The player previously in the position to shoot (1) now actually plays the free-hit (2); the player previously in the position to pass the ball (2) is the one who shoots (3). This variation is effective particularly where time was stopped because of an event, and the whistle is blown to bring the ball back into play. Defenders are frequently caught out, running towards the ball when the players shift, and therefore

before the ball was actually played. However, this variation is most successful if the attackers can count on the referees to see the violation of the three-metre rule. The variation also works in other cases, particularly where the defenders aware of their mistake to run forward too early quickly retreat, often leaving the attackers a poorly organized defensive wall.

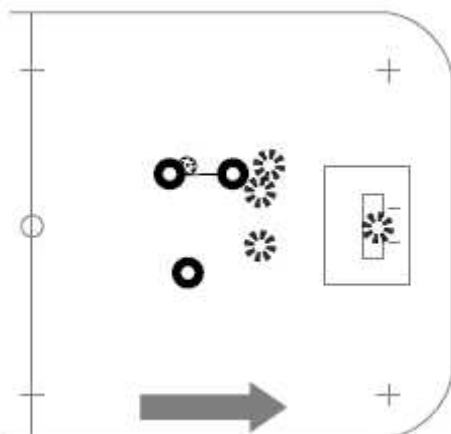


Figure 49: Player in front of defensive wall for free-hit

For players able to play fast and precise passes, there is a variation where the attacking team place one of their own players in front of the defensive wall. This as such is not very unusual, but this time the player is actively involved in taking the free-hit. The player in front of the wall needs to stand at least half a metre away from the wall. The free-hit is played straight to the player in front of the defensive wall. This is usually an incentive for the players in the wall to move. The ball, however, is played back to the player taking the free-hit, and the actual shot takes place from there. As with any other free-hit, it helps to have one or two other players from the attacking team in position where they

could shoot, too. This means that the defending team are unsure how the free-hit will actually be taken.

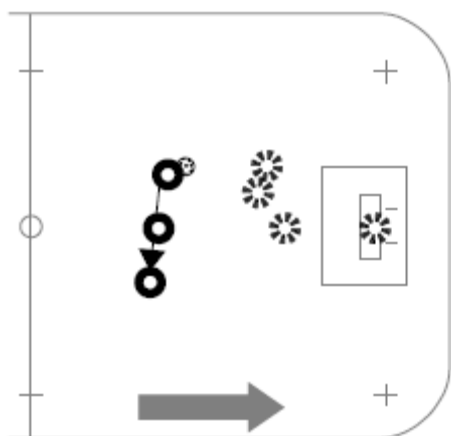


Figure 50: Letting pass

there is not much time for the players themselves to actually observe what is going on.

Teams eager to confuse the defence may make use of the following variation. Three players line up. One of them stands where the ball is played, the others both relatively close, so that they can shoot direct. The free-hit is taken, by hitting a clean pass towards the closer of the two players. This player then either shoots (making this the standard free-hit), or lets the ball pass between the legs to the third player, who then shoots. To add confusion, the first player may fake a shot when letting the ball pass. Similarly, the third player may fake a shot when the second player does not let the ball pass. In either case, all players involved need to know which version is played, because

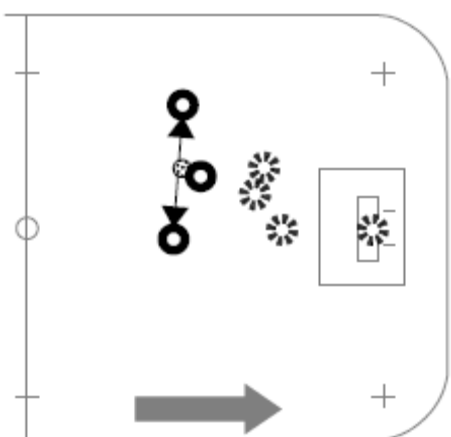


Figure 51: Concealment

Having moved to the art of concealing links well to the next variation: hiding the free-hit. The easiest way to hide a free-hit is by kneeling in front of the ball, in a similar position as the defenders in the wall. Players may also choose to stand with the legs closed. There are two attackers ready to shoot, one on either side. The player executing the free-hit conceals the ball, and plays the ball in one direction. A fake movement (or two) may add further confusion. Both players move as to shoot, although only one will have the ball to actually shoot on the goal.

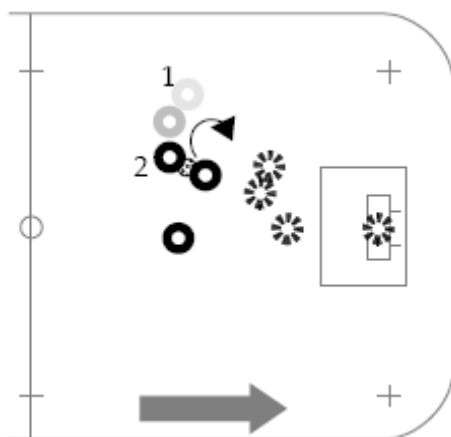


Figure 52: Concealment with spin shot

Alternatively, with the same formation, a quite different free-hit can be played. The three players begin in the same positions as outlined in the previous variation. Now, rather than playing the free-hit, the player near the ball is merely pretending. The player on the left (or the right) moves to the ball, as if to do a shift. It is the player who has run to the ball who touches the ball, and the player hiding the ball quickly shoots using a spin shot. This variation is effective if the wall is not positioned very well. Good spin shots are essential. Make sure the player doing the spin shot can shoot forehand.

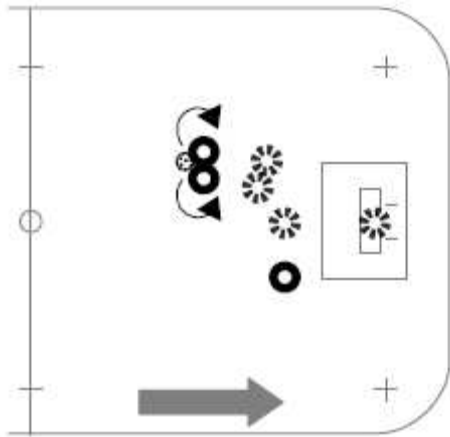


Figure 53: Double spin

A spin shot is also involved in the next variation. There are two players near the ball, together concealing the view on the ball. Both of them face away from the goal they shoot on. One of the players touches the ball, the other one actually shoots. Both players move as if they were doing a spin shot: one as a fake, the other as the real thing. This variation is effective where the wall is not placed very well, and may confuse the goalkeepers a great deal. This variation is more effective and also more credible where one of the players shoots right, and the other one shoots left. As an alternative, a third player may be placed immediately behind the two players near the ball. Both players may choose to do a fake, in which case the third player shoots direct. An additional player may also be placed on the left or right of the free-hit, as if to pass the ball there to shoot (standard free-hit). The idea is really that the opponents do not know what is going to happen.

Having covered a few free-hit variations, it remains to emphasize that simple is often best. Surely the attackers want to confuse the defence, but they should never attempt a free-hit so complicated that their own team mates are confused. That is what training sessions are for, though. Taking a free-hit quickly is often a good idea, and there is nothing wrong with shooting direct if no good wall is ready. There are also more advanced variations, involving the airhook trick, lifting the ball over the wall, or involving the board where the free-hit is near the side of the rink.

#### Free-Hit in the Corner

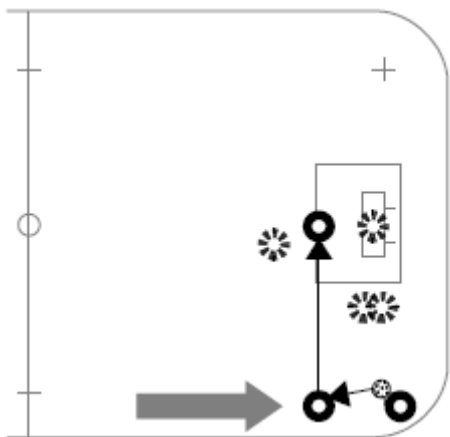


Figure 54: Basic free-hit from the corner

A free-hit in the corner (on one of the face-off dots) is a different challenge from free-hits in other places. The aim needs to be to get out of the corner, preferably into the slot. A simple and effective way is to have a few players in the slot, moving around. A fast pass is then played into the slot, where the players try to deflect the ball into the goal. This only works where there is no good defensive wall present. If there is a defensive wall present, the basic trick is to play a short but fast pass along the side of the rink, and pass it into the slot from there.

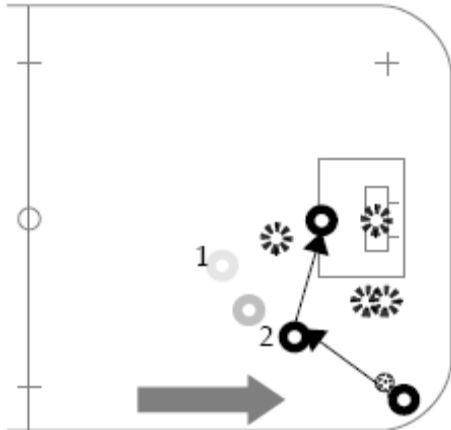


Figure 55: Alternative with running

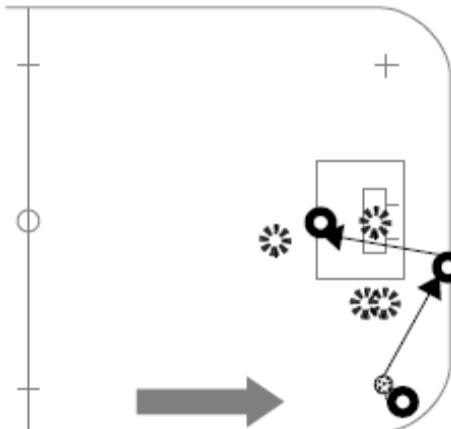


Figure 56: Alternative behind the goal

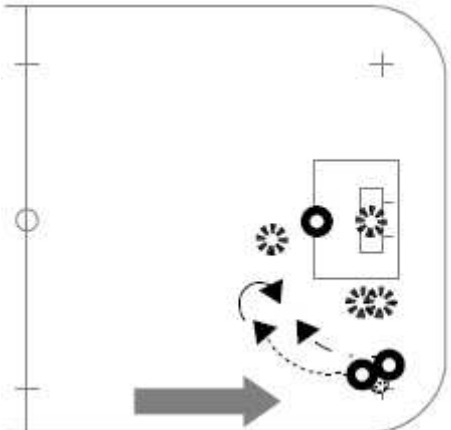


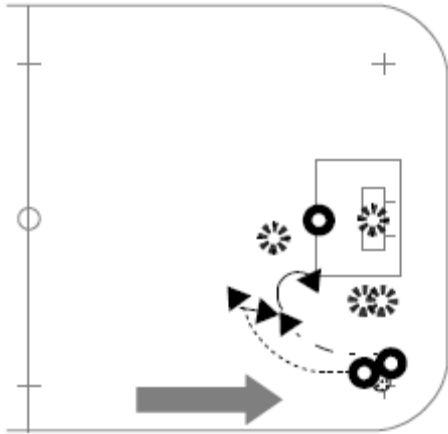
Figure 57: Double run alternative

slows down a little, and the player with the ball shoots. A spin shot is usually the choice. This free-hit needs training, because the timing is essential.

Many defenders are aware of this, and alternatives need to be considered. One is not to have a supporting player near the player taking the free-hit to start with, but let one of the players run from inside the slot towards the face-off dot. The pass is played to the running player, who passes straight on into the slot. The player runs from a position where the ball cannot be passed easily (1) to one similar to that of the supporting player in the previous version (2). The difference is that the running player is further inside the rink. The pass must be fast and direct.

Alternatively, one of the attackers may offer him or herself behind the goal. The pass can be played direct, or via the board. The player behind the goal does not keep the ball, but passes it straight into the slot, passing the ball near the goal. This variation is effective, but it is possible that the ball gets intercepted before it reaches the goal; or that there are too many feet just in front of the goal, so that the ball actually never reaches the goal. What is essential are fast and precise passes. The pass off the board is usually safer, but it is also slower.

A less common but highly effective alternative involves two attackers taking the free-hit in the corner. It is often the centre and one of the attackers, but one of the defenders can be involved, too. This is the case, because the players will end up relatively close to the centre line as part of the free-hit, so there will be no major gap, should the free-hit fail. The two players start where the ball is, and one of the two hits the ball softly. The other one starts running with the ball, shielding it well from the other players. The second player runs next to the player with the ball. There are now two possibilities to complete the free-hit. In the first, the player running without the ball



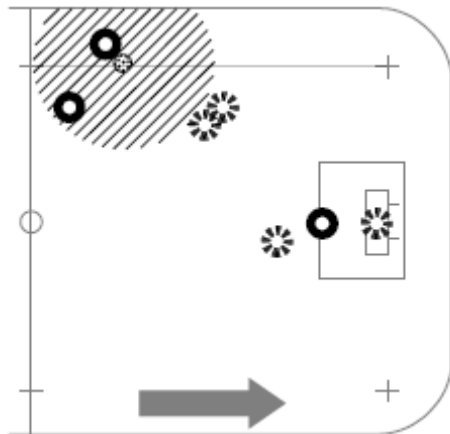
*Figure 58: Double run with spin shot alternative*

In the second possibility, the player without the ball might slow down a bit, but it is equally possible for the player with the ball to speed up for two or three steps. At this moment, the ball is passed to the other player who shoots direct, using a spin shot. Again, timing is essential, and the free-hit needs to be practised. It is important that the two players involved know which of the two possibilities they are playing.

The most common way to get out of the corner is probably a pass along the side of the rink, similar to what is illustrated in figure 14 above, with the key difference that a finish on the goal is not attempted. Trying to build up an attack this way is not necessarily a waste;

as the actual choice of free-hit will depend to a large degree on the skills of the players as well as how well the opponents defend.

## Hit-In



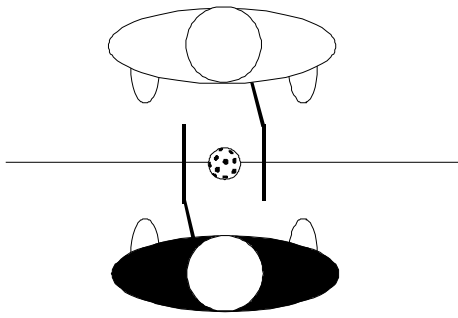
*Figure 59: A hit-in is essentially a free-hit along the side of the rink*

A hit-in is tactically essentially the same as a free-hit. The rules are practically the same, with a 3 metre distance imposed on the opponents. A hit-in is taken at the place where the ball left the rink, but never further away than 1.5 metres from the board. A ball leaving the rink behind the goals leads to a hit-in on the nearest face-off dot. The only difference is that the board is always close by, offering another possibility to play the ball. A hit-in may lead to a goal. Figure 59 illustrates the 3 metres distance that needs to be kept, as well as the 1.5 metres distance to the board. A free-hit may be played closer than 1.5 metres to the board. On the small rink, the distances are 2 metres and 1 metre respectively.

## Face-Off

A face-off is played at the beginning of a game, when play is resumed after an intermission or a goal, or in certain circumstances when no free-hit can be awarded. To begin or resume play as described above, a face-off is played at the centre spot. For all other cases, a face-off is played at the nearest face-off dot—but never at the centre spot. There are six face-off dots, one in each corner, and two on the centre line. When the face-off is played at the centre spot—to begin or resume a game—all the players of a team need to be in their own half. For a face-off during play, there is no such rule.

## Correct Face-Off



*Figure 60: Correct face-off*

centre line, the player of the visiting team places the stick first. If the face-off is in any of the corners, the player of the defending team places the stick first. These rules are necessary, because not every player shoots on the same side, and taking a face-off forehand is normally an advantage. Both players hold their stick with a normal grip. The feet are placed parallel to the centre line. With both players in position, one of the referees blows the whistle, and play begins.

Should one or both of the players not follow the instructions of the referees with regards to positioning themselves or their blades correctly, the referees may ask for a replacement. This means that any other player already on the rink is asked to take the face-off—and it is the team who decide who this other person is. The correct positioning, as outlined in figure 60 is important to give both players a fair chance.

## Positions at Face-Off

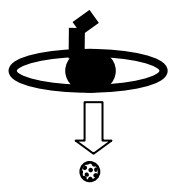
The players not taking the face-off may position themselves anywhere on the rink, provided they are more than 3 metres away from the face-off dot. For the face-off beginning a game, or after a goal, the players may stand anywhere as long as they are in their own half and at least 3 metres away. Tactically speaking, the players should try to choose a position that gives them an advantage.

When the face-off is taken at the centre, the attackers may choose to stand right on the centre line, ready to press forward. The defenders probably want to stay behind to receive the ball if the face-off is successful, but also because a face-off may lead to a goal. Sometimes one of the attacker stands fairly close to the face-off (keeping the 3 metres distance) so that he or she can assist, should the face-off not lead to a clear winner. Sometimes the ball rolls back slowly when a face-off is won, and the attackers may intercept the ball before it reaches the defender on the other side. The defenders probably do not want to stand near the board, or at least not both of them: the ball is likely to roll back towards the goal.

When the face-off is taken elsewhere, the players may choose any position advantageous to them. This means, for example, that they are free to stand 3 metres behind the opponent taking the face-off. The attackers will think about how to play the ball into the slot, the defenders how to keep the ball out of this dangerous zone. It is important to consider the possibility that the other player may win the face-off, too. When a face-off is taken near the board on the centre line, but not on the centre spot (relatively rare), the players not taking the face-off need not be in their own halves. In some cases, the player taking such a face-off deliberately 'loses' the face-off so that the ball is played forward towards their own attack.

In either case, a face-off is taken by one player from each team. All the other players need to be at least 3 metres distance (2 metres on the small rink). Players too close may be penalized with a 2 minute bench penalty: just as it is the case with free-hits and hit-ins. The players stand on their own side of the rink, with both feet firmly on the ground. The ball is placed on the face-off dot and does not move. Both players place their blades on the floor, close to the ball, but not touching it. The blades are at a right angle to the centre-line and thus parallel to each other. If the face-off is on the

## Winning a Face-Off

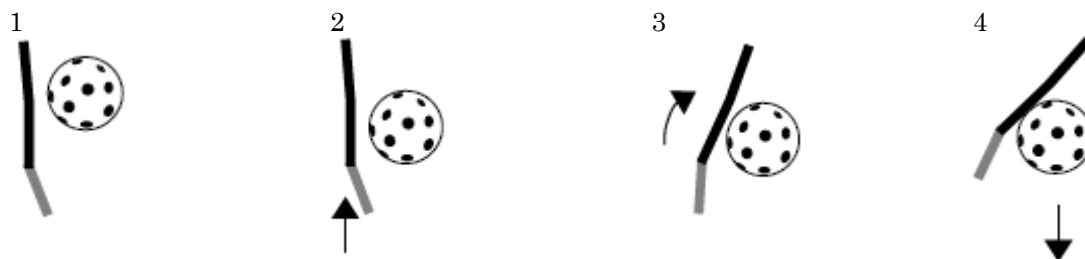


*Figure 61: You have to want to win the face-off to win it*

To win a face-off, it is important to be focused. Once the whistle goes, there is little time to think, and it is best to know how you want to take the face-off before you place the stick—or at least before the referees whistle. Trying to adjust the face-off according to what the opponent does is difficult, because normally there is just not enough time. The standard face-off is an attempt by both players to play the ball backwards into their own half of the rink, passing the ball between the legs. This is achieved with a quick turn of the stick: turning the stick and moving it backwards. If your reaction is faster than that of the opponent, the ball should roll back into your own half. It is often the case that the ball gets deflected, so the other players need to be ready for the ball going in any direction.

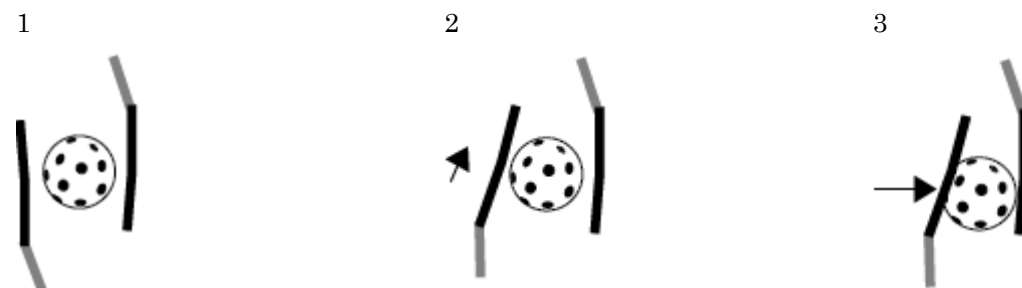
Without determination to win a face-off, a player is usually too slow. If playing the face-off with the forehand, it suffices to turn the stick and try to pull it backwards a bit. It can happen that both players turn their stick in the same way and at the same time. Sometimes the ball then gets stuck between the blades. In this case, you should try to move your body so that you can press harder with the stick. A very short forward movement may help, but it may also mean that you lose the face-off.

Taking the face-off with the backhand is more difficult, but by no means impossible. As with the forehand, speed is king. You may again simply turn the blade and pull the stick back a bit. Often it helps to move the stick forward slightly, just as the whistle goes, and then turn the stick. The movement of the blade in this case is illustrated in figure 62. The weight of the body is concentrated on the toes, but both feet are flat on the floor.



*Figure 62: Backhand face-off by pushing the blade forward first before pulling it backwards*

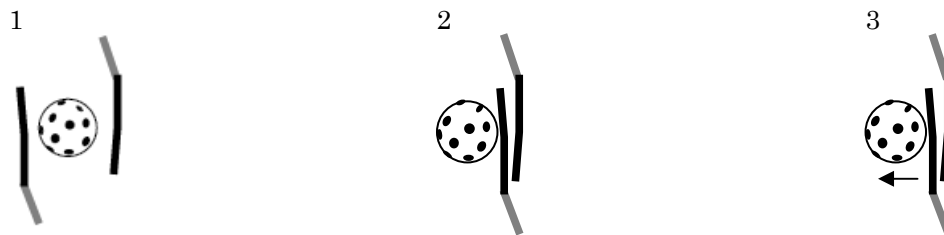
There are alternative ways to take a face-off. You may try to play sideways to one of the attackers rather than backwards. To achieve this, you need to press the ball strongly. The blade is turned a little bit, to counter the movement of the opponent who is likely to try to pass the ball backwards. It is important to push the ball, and not hit it, as you may end up hitting your opponent's stick—a foul play. Figure 63 illustrates this variation.



*Figure 63: Face-off by playing sideward. The movement needs to be fast and strong*

Players who are very fast may try to skip. That is rather than playing the ball directly, they lift the blade and move it over the ball, place it on the side where the opponent has his or her stick, and then move it in the opposite direction. Figure 64 illustrates this move. If a skip succeeds, there is little for the opponent to do, and the player taking the face-off often ends up with control over the ball. Care must be taken not to hit the stick or

blade of the opponent when attempting a skip. Under no circumstance are you allowed to hit the stick of your opponent or to push it away, to achieve a skip: all you are allowed is sheer speed.



*Figure 64: Skipping at the face-off*

The rules do not stipulate in what direction the ball needs to be played at a face-off. This means that the player taking the face-off may actually try to play the ball forward. In many cases, such a move means that both players want to play the ball in the same direction. For this reason, a player wanting to play the face-off forward may actually choose not to do anything. The problem with not doing anything is that the opponent may play the ball quickly and precisely—maybe straight to one of his or her team mates. Playing forward can be successful in a number of cases. If the face-off takes place at the centre spot, and the opponent's defenders stand fairly far behind, an attacker may try to play the face-off forward and shoot a goal straight away. If the face-off takes place on the centre line but near the board, a team may want to attack, and thus want the ball in the opponent's half. This of course requires having an attacker in front of the player taking the face-off. Finally, the same may be the case in one of the corners. An attacking team may want to play behind the goal; or a defending team may want to launch a counter attack.

#### Rules during Face-Off

Normal floorball rules apply during a face-off. This in particular means that hitting the stick of an opponent is not an option, nor is pushing. The correct positions should be respected, as they give both players a fair chance. Taking the face-off with the stick placed far away from the ball is not allowed, although it might be a 'successful' method. The reason is that a player doing so is likely to end up hitting the stick of the opponent in an uncontrolled manner. A face-off may lead to a goal.

## Penalty Shot

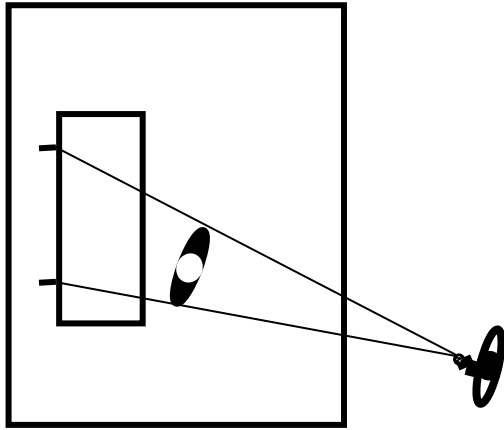
### Penalty Shot as a Player

A penalty shot is carried out by a single player, starting from the centre spot. The ball needs to be in constant forward movement, and may be hit as many times as the player wants. Only one shot is allowed. If the ball bounces off the bar or goalposts and then ends up in the goal, the goal counts. This is the case even where the ball bounces off the goal and hits the back of the goalkeeper and then ends up in the goal. A second shot is never allowed. Apart from the restriction that the ball needs to be in a forward movement, a penalty shot is a one on one attack, with only the goalkeeper defending. There is no time limit.

A player may choose to shoot, or to trick the goalkeeper and score from a short distance. There are two approaches: knowing what you want to do, and looking for the goalkeeper to make a mistake and then exploit it. The second approach may be more difficult, given that many goalkeepers wait for the players to make the first move. The key to success is a quick and decisive move to finish, surprise being the key element.



## Penalty Shot as a Goalkeeper



*Figure 65: Reducing angle*

In this case, goalkeepers move forward a little bit when the penalty starts, so as to reduce the angle (see figure 65).

A goalkeeper defending a penalty shot starts on the goal line, but is free to defend normally. Like during normal play, a goalkeeper is allowed to leave the goal crease, but he or she then counts as a field player without a stick. Tactically, there are two approaches, trying to chase the ball off the attacker, or waiting for the attacker to move first. Many goalkeepers choose the latter; but unpredictability is probably the key to success. If a goalkeeper moves, he or she is most successful if this is determined and decisive. Many players get nervous if a goalkeeper stays put, especially those who have not made up their mind yet. In any

## Skills

The previous section on tactics was about how players act together, how their game involves each other. This section is on skill: on the ability of individual players. As players skills improve, more tactical formations become viable. For example, a player who is able to shield the ball well will be able to play variations that involve keeping the ball whilst under pressure.

Many skills involve ball handling, the feeling of where the ball is (even if the player cannot actually see it), and being able to control the ball. A good way to improve general ball skills is to play on as many different surfaces as possible. The reason for this is that different surfaces come with different friction, and with that you will learn to control the ball in slightly different environments. What is more, if you play in a competitive league, other halls will probably have slightly or very different surfacing than the one you know best. Being able to play your tricks on all surfaces is obviously a great advantage.

Whilst playing on different surfaces is generally a good idea, there are limits to this advice. Playing on grass may be convenient as you can play in your garden. Playing on a car park may seem equally convenient, but the surface is not suited. Road surfaces are all very rough (compared to sport halls), and the blades wear very quickly. You will not only have to replace the blade very often, but you also end up with a blade that is rough at the bottom, making playing in the hall a different experience.

When choosing tactical moves, players are generally well advised to keep to simple moves. It is the simple moves that often work best because there is less that can go wrong. If a move involves 10 passes, there are 10 possibilities of something going wrong...

## Running with the Ball

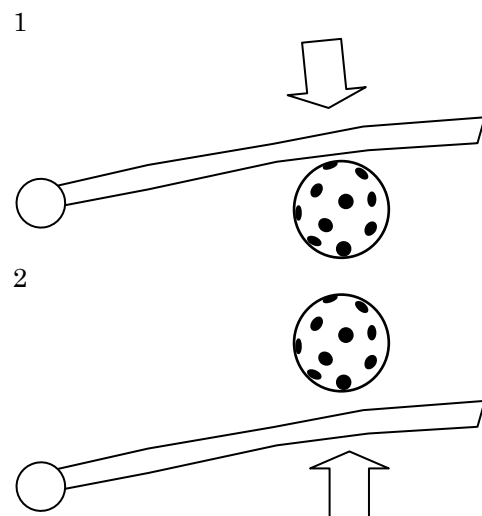


Figure 66: Keeping the ball between forehand and backhand

of the blade, and players try to constantly touch the ball or be very close to it. In fact, many players probably use a mixture of the two approaches, running with the ball right on the blade, and at times using the backhand to control the movement of the ball. The use of the forehand and backhand requires a bit more skill, but it means that the player is freer to move either left or right. In fact, this way sudden changes of direction are relatively easy, especially if the ball is played further towards the back of the blade (where the shaft is attached).

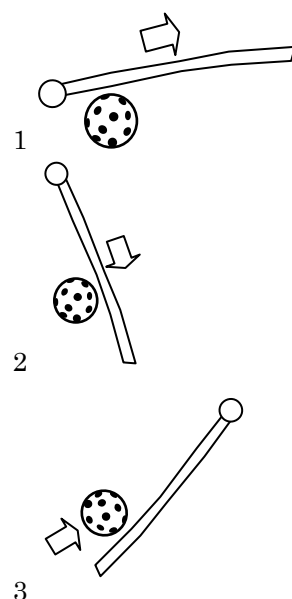


Figure 67: Keeping the ball on the forehand

large hook, skill is needed to synchronize the movement of the blade with that of the ball. Many players find this means of ball control difficult to maintain for a prolonged period of time. The key advantage is that there is little scope for the defender to intercept the ball, as the blade protects the ball from the side the defender is likely to approach. Swift changes of direction are possible with this approach, too.

Running with the ball is a basic skill. The ball is kept in front of the player, possibly slightly to the side. The blade should touch the blade all the time, or at least be very close. It is a soft touch, not a strong hit. A soft touch is necessary so that the ball does not bounce in an uncontrolled manner. This way, the ball is played forward, ahead of the player. The player then catches up with the ball and hits it again. The ball hits the blade in the middle of the blade. This kind of running is fairly easy, but it is relatively easy for the defender to intercept the ball. Advanced players probably use this move most often when simply outrunning an opponent.

Some players find it easier to keep the ball between the forehand and the backhand (see figure 66). The ball is kept in the centre part

An alternative is the use of the forehand in a semi-circular way. The ball is played on the forehand only, kept under control with the tip and back of the blade. Figure 67 illustrates this. The ball is moving forth and back, and the player can feel the ball on the blade. This alternative is more difficult than the use of the forehand and backhand. The ball is played forward with the back to middle of the blade (1). The movement is more sideward than forward (2). Once the ball has reached 30 to 40 cm on one side, the tip of the blade is used to draw the ball backwards again (3). As the ball is drawn backwards, the blade is turned, so that when the ball is furthest back, it is ready to push the ball forwards again.

The ball constantly touches the blade. The move depends on the movement of the blade, but depending on the hook of the blade, this way of keeping the ball under control can be made much easier. Nonetheless, even with a

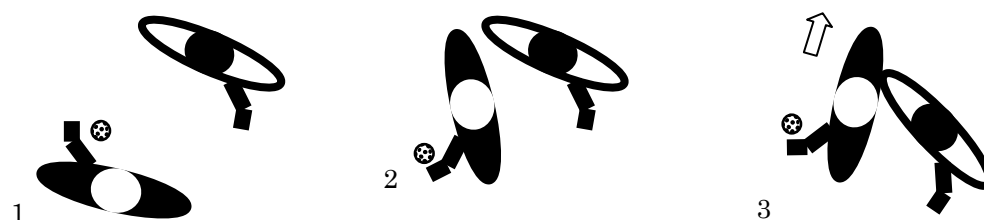


Figure 68: Shielding the ball

Running with the ball as outlined just above is basic, but leaves the player with the ball vulnerable. It is not too difficult for a defender to nick the ball, or cause the attacker to lose the ball. The solution is shielding the ball with the body. Figure 68 illustrates this. The feet are positioned relatively wide, whilst their back is turned towards the opponent the attacker then moves past the defender whilst constantly shielding the ball with their body. The position will need to be adjusted dynamically according to the movements of the opponents. The head should be kept up, so the player can see what is going on elsewhere on the rink. Keeping the ball between the forehand and the backhand can be useful in this case, as the player can feel where the ball is. In any case, the ball needs to be controlled well, leaving no possibility for the defender to intercept an unprotected ball.

There are a number of things to consider when shielding the ball. The player is allowed to stand with their feet very wide apart. This is useful since the opponents are not allowed to place their sticks between the legs of the attacker. However, some players use their legs to kick the sticks of opponents when shielding the ball. Such kicking is not allowed. Similarly, the attackers are not allowed to run backwards into an opponent when they are controlling the ball: they need to run sideward. It is OK to run backwards up to the moment when the opponent is touched. Any further movement backwards is an offence.

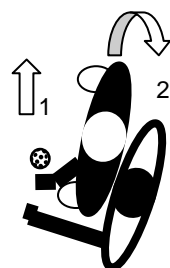


Figure 69: Shielding the ball: the body is placed between the ball and the opponent

Shielding the ball is an important skill in floorball. The aim is to put your own body in between the ball and the opponent. As visible in figure 69, the feet are kept relatively far from each other, making it more difficult for the opponents to reach around your legs. The ball should be kept on the other side from where the opponent's blade is. The ball is kept close to the blade at all times. The head is kept up as much as possible to look around and seek passing opportunities. Obviously, the sticks of the opponents also need to be

watched, as the position is adjusted. In figure 69, the attacker in black will want to move the ball towards the right-hand side (1) in order to keep the ball away from the defender's stick. At the same time, the attacker will want to turn towards the right in order to have the body placed between the defender and the ball (2). By so doing, the defender loses the possibility of reaching the ball.

Whilst shielding is allowed and encouraged, you are not allowed to run backwards into an opponent when controlling the ball. This is easier said than done, especially when shielding a great deal. As soon as you touch the opponent, no further backward movement is allowed. Similarly, it is not permitted to shield the ball and run along the board with the ball pressed against the board where the opponents have no possibility to reach the ball fairly. Some players use their legs to kick the sticks of the opponents when shielding. The rules are clear that such kicking is not allowed. You can position yourself in a way that reaching the ball is difficult—by having the feet wide apart—but kicking is not allowed. Having the feet apart is useful, as the opponents are not allowed to play between your feet.

## Control

Ball control is essential when keeping the ball: that is when you have received a pass and decide against playing it on straight away. It might be that you want to wait for the other players in your team to run into a better position, or that you want to try a trick to get past an opponent. Controlling the ball is an essential skill in floorball, and achieved by keeping the ball close to the blade. Ideally, the ball should touch the blade most of the time. If the ball touches the blade, not only can the ball be played immediately, but also you can literally feel the ball.

The ball can be controlled with the forehand of the blade only, or by using both the forehand and the backhand of the blade. Using both sides of the blade is usually easier, especially if you run or walk at the same time. This way, the ball is kept on the forehand of the blade, played slightly forward. Within about 20 to 30 cm, you change back to the backhand. Essentially, the blade is lifted over the ball, and the ball is played backwards a little bit, until the same procedure is repeated the other way. This movement can be slow where the player is not under pressure. Where the player is under pressure, the movement is much faster, because a faster moving ball is more difficult to intercept. The ball needs to be kept in constant motion to deny the opponent any chance of a steal. The ball can be kept to the side of the body, or in front of it. Using slightly larger movements to one side, it is possible to quickly change position.

## Without Ball

There are many options to try and get past a defender. One is running without having the ball right on the blade. It is faster than running with the ball, but not usually recommended, because the ball can be lost easily. There are moments, however, when a player wants to run very fast whilst more or less controlling the ball—such as during a counter attack. In this case, the ball is hit harder, and controlled only every few metres. The ball should in this case always be played so that the opponents cannot intercept it. Another application is the case where a player wishes to outrun an opposing player. The ball is then played on one side, making sure the opponent cannot intercept the ball, and a short sprint follows to regain proper control of the ball. A fake may also be useful in this case.

## Dribbling with the Ball

The basics of dribbling with the ball are the same as running with the ball, as previously outlined. The difference is that when dribbling with the ball, you want to do something else other than just run with the ball. Players need to be active and quick. To achieve this, their body weight is moved towards the front of the feet, and their mind is actively considering all options available. The ball is kept on the blade or very close to it. It is normally kept towards the middle of the blade, where it is often easiest to control the ball forehand. When playing the ball alternatively forehand and backhand, the ball is kept more towards the middle or back of the blade.

The aim of dribbling with the ball is to get past an opponent. There are a number of possibilities, and the most successful one will depend on your individual skills, but also on the position and movements of the opponent. Because the ball is to be played quickly, it is often kept in front of the body; but dribbling is also possible when starting with a shielded ball. The ball in front is easier and quicker to play, but it is also easier to lose the ball in such a position.

One possibility is to play the ball between the legs of the opponent. After the ball is played, you will have to run past the opponent. This should be possible because running forward is easier than running backwards or turning round. However, you will need to make sure that the opponent does not close the tunnel when you play it. Some defenders deliberately stand in a position to invite you to try to play the ball between their legs, just to close it and intercept the ball. Furthermore, the ball needs to be played at the right speed: too fast and another defender will intercept the ball; too slow and the opponent can catch the ball.

Another possibility is to play around the opponent. For this, proper shielding is essential. You should keep up your speed as much as possible, but never use a body-check or similar push to get around the opponent. By placing your body in between the ball and the opponent, it is difficult for the opponent to intercept a ball. The opponents may place themselves in a way so that you cannot turn back to the forehand easily. In such a case, you need to be able to turn around the other way, using the backhand. A defender will quickly learn if you always try to get past on the forehand side, and subsequently focus on that side.

Even simpler is the alternative of running faster than the opponent. This trick only works if you have enough space to gain speed, and also enough space to run past the opponent. This is most often the case somewhere in the middle of the rink. Shielding the ball makes this alternative more successful, but the key to success is speed—combined with the ability to see the free spaces where to run. The ball is therefore shielded much less than in the previous alternative.

A successful alternative is often where the ball is played past the opponent on one side, and the player runs past the opponent on their other side. To make this trick work, it needs to be played relatively quickly. What is more, the first move is with the body, towards the direction you are going to run. After the first step in this direction, the opponent is likely to react, so that you cannot simply run past. At this very moment, the ball is passed on the other side of the opponent. Great care needs to be taken not to play into the stick or feet of the opponent. With the ball and player doing different things, most defenders are unsettled for a short while. The pass must be fast enough to get past the opponent, but not too fast so that it is lost to another player.

Because many defenders keep their stick low to intercept passes, the above alternative is sometimes played with a pass that is played above the stick, maybe half knee height. It helps to let the ball roll onto the blade before playing the pass. This is the case, because when the ball is on the blade, it is difficult to predict which way it will be played. The pass is then played from a point maybe 10 or 20 cm high. The completion of this variation is the same as in the previous alternative.

When dribbling near the side of the rink, or when doing so behind the goal, players should not forget the possibility to play off the board. In a way, this alternative is similar to the previous two, in that the ball and player pass the opponent on different sides. However, by using the board, the attacker can play a safer angle—more difficult for the defender to intercept. The player starts running on the side where there is no board. As the first step is done in this direction, the ball is played off the board and received behind the opponent. Knowing the boards helps in playing the pass with the right speed and at the right angle, because not all boards react the same way.

If the two dimensions on the floor seem restricting, an alternative is to play the ball over the opponent. Often this is done by first lifting the ball on the blade, in the same fashion as the pass just over the stick. This not only makes the pass over the opponent easier, but also the defender does not know what is going to happen. The ball needs to be passed fairly straight and just high enough to pass over the defender. Rather than playing over the head, it is obviously easier to pass the ball over the shoulders, or even less high quite close to the opponent. The difficulty with passing the ball over the opponent is taking control of the ball afterwards.

Some players shield the ball before the ball is played over the opponent. To carry this out, they push out their back and lower their upper body. The ball is lifted onto the blade, with the stick fairly flat. Next up, the ball is played up and backwards over both the attacker and the opponent. A quick turn follows to regain possession of the ball—unless this trick is used to play a pass to a team mate. Great care needs to be taken not to lift the stick higher than knee level when playing the ball. If the ball is shielded well, the opponent is unlikely to see exactly what is going on before you actually execute this trick.

Dribbling can be done very effectively by varying the speed at which an attacker runs. For example, running, and then suddenly slowing down, and then speeding up again may

be just enough to lose a defender. This variation may be extended with more or less arbitrary turns, rotating to the backhand, then back to the forehand. Tempting the defender to make a play for the ball by actively not shielding the ball as well as you can, may provide the opportunity required to dribble the ball past them. The ball should be kept on or near the blade all the time to prevent the defender stealing the ball.

Some players use the board as a way to get past opponents. Whilst often effective, the rules restrict what is possible. It is permitted to run with the ball near the board, however, such a run can be interrupted by a defender simply standing there. Not allowed is the pressing of the ball against the board, and then running along the board. The main reason for this is that there is no fair way to get the ball off an attacker running with the ball in this way. If you run with the ball against the board for a prolonged time, the referees will ask you to come away from the board. If the ball is pressed against the board itself, you might be penalized straight away. The defenders need to have a reasonable chance to get the ball off the attacker. Shielding the ball properly, as outlined above is not a problem, because at least in theory, a defender could run around you, or indeed a different defender may come and get the ball of you coming from the other side.

In most cases, dribbling is not the most effective way to play. Instead, a pass is normally more effective. Passes are easier to play, faster, and also more likely to lead to a situation where the ball can be shot on goal. Staying with dribbling, however, successful players combine tricks, such as those outlined in this section. The tricks will always depend on the level of skills of the player, but also, on what the defender does. In any case, ball control is essential for dribbling. Finally, the position on the rink should always be borne in mind. For example, the last defender on the rink should never even think about dribbling. There are risks involved in all tricks, and the result is a single attacker in front of the goal: something you should always try to prevent.

## Fakes

Fakes are useful in floorball, as they are in many other sports. The aim is to make the defender think that you will move one way, but you actually move the other. Fakes are all about the subtle body signs, but also about agility and speed. Good ball skills are needed, because you not only want to fool the opponent, but most likely want to do something with the ball, too—such as running past with it, or passing it to somebody else. Fakes are most successful when fast and decisive. An opponent you play often, such as your friends and team mates, may learn your fakes. This is a challenge to increase the variety of fakes you can do. When doing a fake, it is important to do it before you are too close to the defender. If you wait too long, there is no space to get past the defender. On the other hand, if you do it too early, there is time for the defender to recover from the surprise move.

Fakes can be used to open up space for passing or shooting, too. The most basic and probably most common form of a fake is where you first move to the left, but short of actually running left, continue on the right. The right moment to change direction is when the opponent has moved the weight of his or her body onto the other foot, making it difficult to move back very quickly. Doing the fake yourself, you are ready and can make use of this short moment.

In floorball, fakes are not only about the body, but also about the stick. As you can play the ball both forehand and backhand, the trick is to make the opponent believe that you are going to play the ball using the forehand and then actually play it backhand (or the other way round). You are more credible if there is a real chance to play the forehand, and also if you do use your forehand from time to time. Some players try to use the same trick all the time, never actually playing the forehand, for instance. The opponents will quickly learn, and be able to intercept the ball more easily.

## Two Opponents

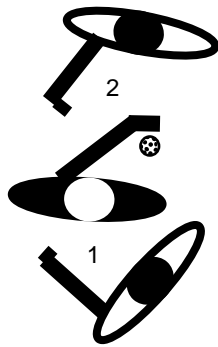


Figure 70: Two opponents

Dealing with two defenders at the same time. This can be done by moving the ball out of the reach of one of the two opponents, and then use shielding for the time being. Look out for those little gaps between the opponents' blades, and lead the ball through: good ball skills are obviously necessary. Figure 70 illustrates how blades may be placed, and where the ball could be played in this case. The attacker shields against one of the defenders (1), and holds the ball on the side away from the other one (2). This way the first defender cannot reach the ball because the attacker's body (and feet) is in the way, and the second defender cannot reach the ball because the attacker's stick is protecting it. An incorrect hit might be tempting for the second defender, but would probably be an acceptable outcome for the attacker.

Dealing with two opponents at the same time is more difficult. The trick is to use shielding as much as possible. An opponent in the back is by far less dangerous than one right in front of you. The next thing you will have to do is to watch the sticks of the opponent. Keep the ball moving, always close to the blade, and move it away from the opponents' blades. A coordinated attack is more difficult to deal with, but your moving the ball may turn it into dealing with two opponents in turn, rather than at once. In fact, this is what you

In some cases the two opponents come from the side. There are two approaches. One is to place the feet as far apart as possible, and try to play the ball close to the body right in front. The alternative approach is playing the ball close to the body, and use rotations around your own body to keep the whole game more dynamic: an opponent previously next to you can be behind you the next second, and so on. The faster you can play the ball, whilst still keeping it under control, the more successful this latter alternative is.

Dealing with two opponents means that you will have to concentrate on their sticks, but keep an eye open to their body movements. A player with all his or her weight on one foot is less agile, and you may profit from this situation. Similarly, you should also try to keep an eye on what is going on elsewhere on the rink—maybe a team mate you can play the ball to. As long as you keep the ball moving, dealing with two opponents is easier than when the ball stops. The faster you can keep the ball moving while still controlling it, the more difficult it is for the defenders. Once the ball has stopped, it is much more difficult to get it moving again.

If you have played with the same team mates for a while, you often find that you know where they are on the rink without having to look carefully. When dealing with two opponents, this is obviously an advantage, as you may venture a speculative pass, or may only have to check one position whether your team mate is really there. When considering a speculative pass, you should always assess the possibility of a counter-attack should the pass be intercepted.

## Passing

Whether shielding the ball or not, a player running with the ball should be ready to pass the ball at any time. Passes can be played forehand and backhand.

## Passing the Ball

The ball can be passed faster than any player can run. It is important to bear this in mind when playing floorball. Whether running with the ball or not, a field player should always be prepared to pass the ball. A ball can be passed both forehand and backhand, and the more readily a player can hit a pass, the more advantageous for the game.

## Basic Low Pass

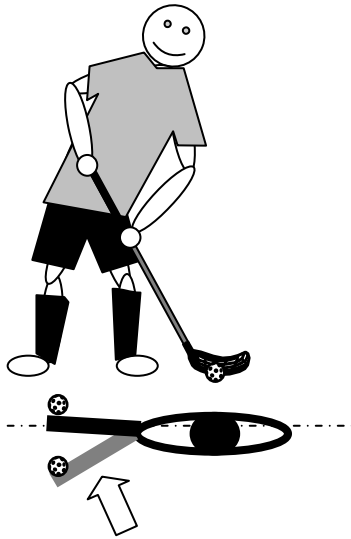


Figure 71: Basic pass

the ball is dragged along from behind the body and released just next to the feet. The ball will roll much more if released as described here, making it easier to control at the receiving end. If the ball is released in front of the body, the blade is more open, and the ball will bounce more.

When the pass is completed, the stick points into the direction where the ball has gone. The player needs to keep a good balance during the pass. Beginners will look at the blade and the ball, but this is not generally a good idea. The aim should be to play the ball without having to look where it is. This way the players can keep the head up and see what is happening on the rink.

## Wide Low Pass

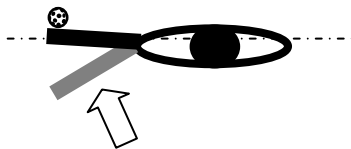


Figure 72: Wide low pass

possible without hitting the ball—as described in the previous section—, and precision will be better. However, when hitting a pass, the ball may be hit from slightly behind the leading foot, so that the ball will not bounce. The ball is kept next to the body to begin with, and only the stick is moved behind (grey). The further forward the ball is actually hit, the more likely is it that you hit the ball with an open face, and it will start bouncing.

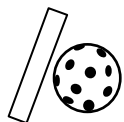


Figure 73: Keeping the top down

The most common pass is low on the floor. A pass that is hit low is easy to receive and therefore can be passed on much quicker than any other pass. The ball should be kept close to the blade until the ball is actually released. Rather than a clean hit, a low pass is achieved by a sweeping movement: much more like pushing the ball. The ball is played from the side of the body. As illustrated in figure 71, the ball is kept on the blade from the beginning of the pass. First, both the ball and the blade are placed behind the body (grey). Then follows the sweeping motion, and the ball is released when next to the body (black). The stick will often continue to move further forward, although the ball is already on its way.

A pass will stay flat on the floor much more if

A straight hook normally makes passing easier, whilst a stiff blades gives more power. This is important if the player wants to hit a long pass. If the pass is very long, it may be hit, but the sweeping movement should be kept if at all possible. Powerful passes are

Alternatively, keep the blade a bit turned forward, so that the ball is hit with no open face. The blade covers the ball slightly: as the top of the blade is slightly ahead of the rest of the blade.



## Backhand Low Pass

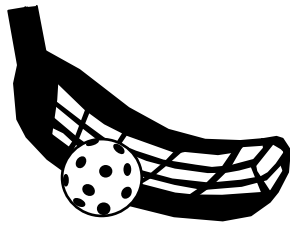


Figure 74: Backhand low pass

way should prevent the ball from bouncing. Keeping the stick itself close to the body might help playing backhand passes. The ball is played relatively far back on the blade, but the blade itself will touch the floor a bit further forwards (see figure 74). This way it is possible to keep the top of the blade down. Conversely, keeping the stick itself further away from the body might help, too. In this case, the focus is on the sweeping motion, not so much on the position of the blade. In both cases the aim is to avoid playing the pass with too much open face, and thus prevent the ball from bouncing.

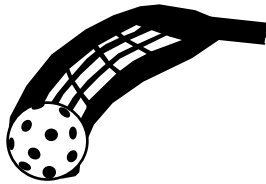


Figure 75: Backhand pass using the forehand

variation of passing it is easier to pass to a player slightly behind.

Backhand passes are a bit more difficult, although many players hit them all the time. However, as with forehand passes, a sweeping motion—dragged passes—will increase precision. In order to play good backhand passes, it helps to play the ball relatively far back on the blade. The blade itself is turned a bit so that the ball is touched more from above (see figure 73). Turning the blade a bit this

A backhand pass can be played with the forehand, too. Figure 75 illustrates how this can be done. The ball is kept on the forehand, played a bit in front of the body. Touching the blade right at the front, the ball is pulled back. The blade is kept at an angle so as to increase the touch with the ball. It is the pulling movement that accelerates the ball. Using this

## Basic High Pass

High passes can be played like a wrist shot (page 43 below), or hit. Precision is higher where the blade and ball are in contact longer, but some players find that they have more power when hitting a ball. For short high passes, hitting the ball is more difficult, and the desired precision is difficult to achieve. A basic high pass is not very different from a basic low pass. The key difference is that the blade is held more open, allowing the blade to go under the ball and provide the desired lifting motion. This can be achieved by holding the blade in a more open way, or by playing the ball in front of the body. Playing in front of the body automatically means that the blade is more open.

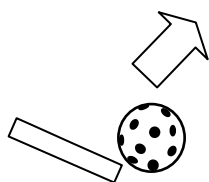


Figure 76: Lowering the whole stick for a backhand high pass

be placed under the ball (see figure 76). The difference when hitting a high pass is really that the ball is hit, and the sweeping motion is replaced with a short back-swing.

A high pass can be used to play over the stick of an opponent, over a defensive wall, or a single opponent. As with the low pass, the backhand pass is very similar. However, this time, rather than turning the blade so that the ball is touched more from above, the opposite is desired. Many modern blades are relatively thick towards the end, and the blade needs to be turned quite a bit to place it under the ball. It is easier to play high backhand passes with the ball further away from the body, but in play this is often not an option. Instead, the whole stick can be lowered so that the ball can

## Wide High Pass



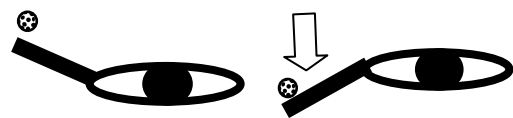
*Figure 77: Hitting the ball from underneath*

playing the pass to a team mate right in front of the goal.

There is also a kind of wide high pass that is rather unique, yet useful. The ball is hit right at the bottom (see figure 77). To achieve this, the stick itself is held rather low, lower still as outlined in figure 76. Some players find it useful of imagining their stick as a frying pan. This technique will result in balls travelling relatively high and fast, but they will return quite sharply. This is a great advantage if you want to play a pass above a group of opponents. Other hit passes tend to fly more evenly and are thus more difficult to receive. The stick is held quite low, and the blade is almost perfectly open. The stick is dragged like in the dragged shot, perhaps in a less circular movement. The ball is hit right at the bottom and should travel up fairly steeply. Whilst useful in the game, especially for defenders, this passing technique will need training to perfect. Backhand passes are possible in the same manner, but are a bit rarer. The main reason is that this pass is usually played when the player is not under immediate pressure, and can thus choose to play it forehand. Playing it backhand, it is important to lower the stick even a bit more.

For wide high passes, the choice is the same: using the wrist or hitting the ball. In many respects, the pass is the same as a shot. The players probably aim higher than they would when shooting on the goal. Some players even use slap-shot motions to hit a very wide high pass. This—like any wide high pass—can be useful to play over one or more opponents,

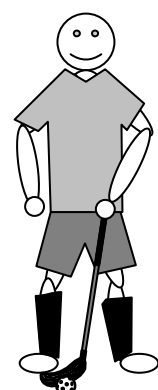
## Receiving a Pass



*Figure 78: The blade is moved backwards with the ball to receive a pass*

Ideally a player does not need to look down (this can be practiced). The ball is touched very softly to avoid an immediate bounce. The blade moves backwards with the ball, so as to slow it down. The blade is turned a bit, so that the ball is touched more on the top—reducing bouncing even more. The ball is received in the middle of the blade. Figure 78 illustrates this movement. Soft blades, and to a limited extent a soft flex can help a little bit with receiving passes, but the key to success is the right technique.

Receiving a pass is as important as playing one in the first place. For low passes, the blade is on floor. The stick is placed a bit in front of the body. The player stands well balanced: The head is kept up, so that the player can see what is happening on the rink.



*Figure 79: Receiving a backhand pass by keeping the grip quite loose*

A ball can be received backhand, too. The backward movement becomes more important to slow the ball down. Moreover, it can help to turn the blade down even a bit more than when playing forehand. If the pass is not too fast, the ball can be received with the front of the blade rather than the middle bit (see figure 79). The ball is received right at the front of the blade. The stick is held relatively loosely, not firmly on the floor. The stick is kept quite close to the body, almost straight up. The ball is consequently received very close to the body. The ball might bounce a little bit, but not far enough so that the ball is lost.

Receiving a high ball is more difficult, and in almost all cases takes more time to control. This is one of the reasons why low passes are preferred if possible. The key is to slow down the ball as much as possible, and get it on the floor where the ball can be played

more easily. There are two approaches to receiving a high pass: catching the ball from below, or keeping it down from above. The first approach is a bit like catching the ball with a frying pan. The blade is kept very open, the stick rather flat. The ball is received on the blade, and the blade is moved down as soon as the ball touches the blade. In fact, the stick is already in a downward movement when contact is made. It is important that contact is not made before the ball has come down to knee-level. Ideally, the ball is slowed down completely when the blade reaches the floor. It either now sits on the blade or gently drops off the blade.

The second approach is an attempt to catch the ball at the very point it reaches the floor. The blade is kept very closed (see figure 73) and is placed on top of the ball at the right moment. If played right, the ball will stay in place right under the blade. In both cases, the player receiving the ball will sometimes miss it, and repeat the same procedure for the second bounce.

An alternative and usually preferred way to receive a high ball is the use of the body. The ball can be stopped with the chest, but jumping to do so is not allowed. This is useful for very high passes. If the ball is not quite that high, the legs can be used, too. Normally, the legs are used to kick the high ball once, before the ball is played closer to the floor with the stick. Only one kick is allowed. Care must be taken not to use the legs to play the ball above knee level. The thighs may be used when running only. Otherwise, the ball may be kicked only up to knee level.

### Direct Pass

Direct passes are an important aspect of a fast game and the first part of the movement is the same as when receiving a pass. As the ball is received and the blade moves backwards this also prepares the player to then hit the pass all in one continuous movement. From the point furthest back when receiving the ball, the ball is then moved forward straight away. Direct passes are easier to play when the previous pass was not hit, since hit passes are more difficult to control (they may bounce in unpredicted directions). The ball is received in the middle of the blade, and the blade is kept fairly closed. The receiving of the ball may be closer to the body than the actual pass played afterwards. This way, the stick is held a bit more loosely when receiving the pass, slowing the ball more quickly. At the point the ball reaches the point furthest behind, full pressure is applied, and a fast pass can be played.

High balls are extremely difficult to pass direct. Essentially, they are played as a volley shot, but with a pass you would normally want more control. Some very advanced players are able to receive a high pass and move to the airhook trick all at once, but not usually when under pressure in a game.

## Shooting

The aim of a shot normally is to score a goal. The ball needs to be released quickly and at high speed. In floorball, there are different ways to shoot. Because a shot should not only be fast but also placed with precision, the different kinds of shooting happily coexist. What is more, a player able to play a greater variety of shots is able to shoot more often—from different positions. Added to this is an element of surprise, where the opponents cannot predict when an attacker is about to attempt to finish on the goal. Most players use one to three different ways to shoot; but the more variations you can play, the more effective the play.

### Wrist Shot

The wrist shot is similar to playing a basic pass. The ball touches the blade all the time until it is released. It is swept along from behind the body and released next to the body or just slightly in front of it. As the stick is moved forward, the player pushes the stick down so that it bends a bit (giving the shot power). The wrist is used to control the ball, and give it the desired direction. The players keep their head up to focus on the target. A blade with more open face makes it easier to shoot high, as does releasing the ball

slightly in front of the body. Players need to take care with high sticks, particularly where there are other players in front of them.

Because the ball is not cleanly hit, the wrist shot may not be used at a free-hit or hit-in. One way around this is to have another player merely touching the ball (this is considered a clean hit), and then use a wrist shot.

### Dragged Shot

The dragged shot differs from the wrist shot in that the ball is actually hit: it is the stick that is dragged. The stick is moved backwards, in a slightly circular way. Whilst the stick is dragged forward, the player pushes it down more and more. This pressure is slightly released as the ball is actually hit, next to the body (see figure 72). The stick ends up pointing in the direction of the shot. The head is kept up all the time, to focus on the target. A blade with more open face makes it easier to shoot high. Hitting the ball in front of the body will invariably make it travel higher.

The dragged shot has many advantages in real play. It is more powerful than a wrist shot, making it ideal to shoot on the goal. Since the stick is dragged from behind, it is easier to hit the ball; or put it the other way round: it is more difficult to miss the ball altogether. This is an important point as players are always encouraged to keep their head up and not look at the ball as they shoot. Where the ball is resting, such as in the situation of a free-hit, missing the ball is not normally a problem. Where the ball is played as a pass, possibly even deflected a bit, this is more of an issue. As with other shots, care must be taken with high sticks in front.

### Hit Shot (Forward Drive)

The hit shot is simple and preferred by some beginners. It is a crude shot that does not take advantage of the floorball sticks, and players using the hit shot exclusively will find it difficult to progress. The ball is hit next to the body or slightly in front. The players use a back-swing to gain power, and the stick travels through the air to hit the ball. The shot is fairly straight. Great care must be taken not to raise the stick above waist level, especially on the back-swing. A high stick on the back-swing is never tolerated.

Many players find hit shots easier than other alternatives when shooting back-hand. However, as with forehand shooting, such a shot does not make use of the characteristics of floorball sticks, and players will not be able to progress from there.

### Volleys

In floorball, volleys are generally difficult. They are essentially a hit shot, with the difference being that the ball is hit in the air. The timing is crucial for a successful volley. Even more than with the hit shot, great care must be taken with high sticks. Trying to hit a ball mid-air may make it easy to forget the limits of where a ball can be played, and the level to which a ball can be raised. Volleys are only allowed up to knee-level, making them rather rare in floorball. However, their key advantage is the speed: they are always played direct, leaving little time for the defender and often goalkeepers.

### Slap-Shot

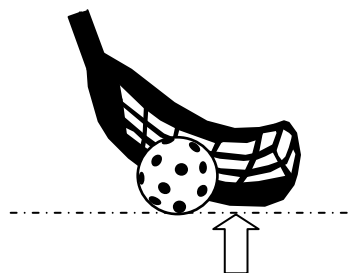


Figure 80: Slap-shot

the shot. It is indeed the flex of the stick that gives the power to the shot. As with the

The slap-shot is a useful shot, allowing fast and precise shooting. Importantly, maybe, it is a shot that allows the players to perfect the technique as they keep using it. The stick is swung back and travels through the air to hit the ball next or slightly in front of the body. As with the dragged shot, a blade with open face makes shooting high easier. The blade touches the floor shortly before hitting the ball. The player presses the stick down, and the bending of the shaft and blade is used to get power in

dragged shot, having a stick that is too hard means that the player is unable to bend his or her stick enough to get power into the shot. Similarly, a stick that is too soft is also ineffective.

The blade touches the floor just before the ball is hit. The front of the blade touches the floor slightly ahead of the rest of the blade, as illustrated in figure 80. This adds to the power of the shot. The blade is actually straight once the ball is released.

The head should be kept up during the entire shot, allowing the player to focus on the target. The swing, in particular the front-swing, needs to be watched. The slap-shot, like other shots in floorball is not actually very loud. If the shot is very loud, the player probably hit the floor too much, and actually lost power. In this case, the players should focus on making the whole shot more fluid. It often helps to think about the ball being released, not the ball being hit. Some players are afraid to hit the floor, and thus not bend the shaft. It is important to understand that floorball sticks are designed to flex, and indeed that this is the only way to produce very powerful shots. Technologies such as the kickpoint or bubbles only work when the shaft is bent.

### Spin

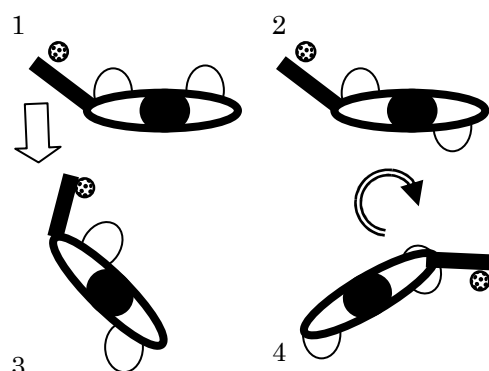


Figure 81: Spin

The success of the spin shot lies in the surprise element, and its seamless integration with shielding the ball. A spin shot is essentially a wrist shot, with the difference that the ball is dragged from much further behind. In addition, the player's body undergoes a spin, hence the name. Whilst shielding the ball, the player stands or runs with the back towards the goal (1). The ball is kept touching the blade in the middle or kept very close to it. During the shot, the blade travels in a circle. Once the player decides to shoot, the stick is moving, but at the same time the body is spun. It is the body's movement that adds power to the shot. The forehand foot is placed a step behind (2), meaning that the body starts rotating, but also that the rotation is easier. The weight of the body is on the backhand foot at this time. As the shot progresses, the body is rotated, the blade is moved forward—like a wrist shot—and the weight of the body moves away from the backhand foot (3). The ball is released next to the body, with the body weight relatively evenly distributed between both feet (4).

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### Turn

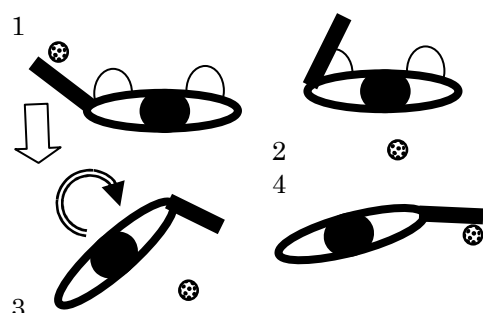


Figure 82: Turn

The dragged shot is often easiest, but more advanced players may choose a slap-shot. Most players find a turn easier than a spin, but this shot requires more space, or defenders who are less vigilant.

A turn is different from a spin shot, in that the shot itself does not involve the rotation. The player starts with the back towards the goal, shielding the ball (1). Then, the ball is played either between the legs, or in front of but very close to the own forehand foot (2). The player then rotates the body (3), and shoots on the side of the body (4). The choice of shot may include a wrist shot, a dragged shot, or a slap-shot. In a sense, a turn is the combination of a trick with an ordinary shot.

### Backhand Shot

To shoot backhand is more difficult for most players. The choice is largely between a backhand wrist shot and a backhand dragged shot. For a wrist shot, the difficulty normally lies in getting enough power. Because it is relatively difficult to move the blade

with the ball on the backhand (no cavity, no open face), the player's skills are more important. Whereas using the forehand power can be gained during the sweeping motion, for the backhand this is more difficult. Modern blades make it easier to control the ball forehand, but backhand, the blades are usually straight. This makes ball control more difficult. You will probably release the ball further in front of the body, making it easier to lift the ball (see figure 77). Furthermore, the stick itself is held a bit flatter, making it easier to place the blade under the ball. Much of the power of the shot will come from the arms. You must be careful not to lift the stick too high on the front-swing, especially where there are other players nearby.

### Backhand Dragged

A backhand dragged shot, in contrast, can be as powerful as its forehand counterpart. Many players find it more difficult to give power to the shot, but this is largely a matter of practice. The shot is essentially the same forehand and backhand. If anything, the stick is held a bit flatter to compensate for the lack of open face.

### Special Shots

Because real backhand shots are more challenging, some players shoot on the backhand side using their forehand. There are a number of possibilities to do so. They all involve turning the blade in a way that makes such a shot possible: essentially upside down. The ball can be played relatively easily when kept on the front of the blade. As the blade is kept upside down, the power of the shot cannot come from the shaft. Instead, you can give the shot more power using your arms, or by sweeping the blade from further behind the body. The basic move is the same as illustrated in figure 75.

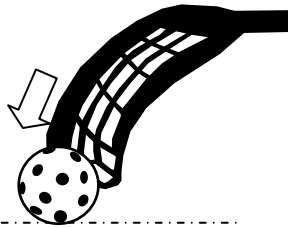


Figure 83: Front special

It is also possible to hit the ball using the forehand side of the blade. For this purpose, the stick is rotated so that the blade is very open. The front of the blade points downwards a bit. The ball is hit just a little bit behind the front of the blade. The blade should not be completely flat; otherwise the ball will just jump up a bit. Similarly, the blade should not be pointing downwards too much, as this will result in a shot that is essentially a flat pass. Finding the right angle makes this shot difficult, and mostly useful for short distances. Figure 83 illustrates how the blade is held for this shot.

There are many other ways to shoot, and the more of them you know, the more dangerous you become as an attacker. More of a variety to shoot means more possibilities to shoot. Patrik Lönnell ([http://www.skottskolan.se/filmklipp\\_English.html](http://www.skottskolan.se/filmklipp_English.html)) lists 38 ways to shoot on his website, all with video instructions. You should concentrate on a few basic shots first, but always seek more skills once you feel comfortable with your current shots. The video instructions hosted by the British federation are very useful as a starting point (<http://www.gbff.co.uk/coaching/videos.htm>).

## High Stick

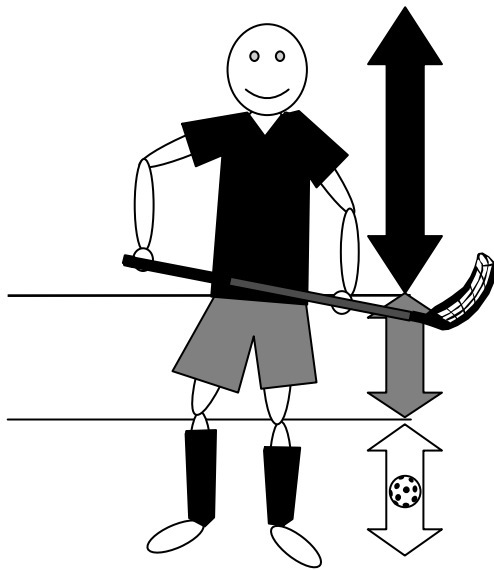


Figure 84: High stick

When shooting you should always pay attention to high sticks. The rules are very clear about high sticks, and you should always respect them. The main reason for the strict rules regarding high sticks is the safety of other players. It is a good habit not to raise the stick high. Figure 84 illustrates what you can and cannot do when shooting. For the front-swing, the interpretations are more generous. For the back-swing, there is no excuse—simply because you cannot see what is happening behind your back: whether anyone is standing in the vicinity. If you learn a new shot, and find your back-swing to be too high, spend time to remedy this. Similarly, you should be able to execute your shots without raising the stick too high on the forehand. This is crucial when other players are nearby

The ball can be played up to knee level. This is normally only a consideration for volley shots. Front- and back-swing up to waist-level are fine. Back-swings above waist-level are dangerous, and your opponents will be awarded a free-hit. A front-swing higher than waist-level is only tolerated if no other player is nearby.

## Best Shots

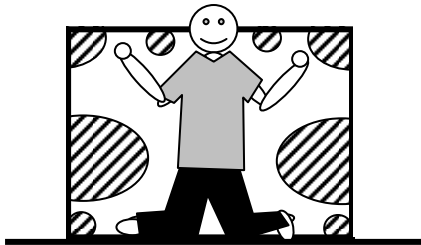


Figure 85: Generally best shots

Your first aim when learning to shoot is probably to release a relatively fast ball. As you progress, you will want to control the direction of the shot, and in fact all shots played in floorball can be controlled. Other schools argue that a shot on target should be the prime focus, and that power will come through practice.

In either case, ideally, you want to shoot where the goalkeeper is weakest. Figure 85 illustrates the zones most difficult to defend for a goalkeeper. These zones include the top corners, above the keeper's shoulders under the cross-bar next to the head, the bottom corners, and above the keeper's legs closer to the goal posts. In most circumstances the most successful shots are either under the cross-bar, or just above the goalkeeper's legs. Saying this, goalkeepers will of course be aware of these zones, and will try to move in a way that you cannot shoot easily. The best shots are not necessarily those aimed at the zones in figure 85, but those aimed at where there is a gap—especially a gap difficult for the goalkeeper to move to defend. The top corners are almost always difficult to defend, but the chances for most players of missing are also relatively high.

## Goalkeeper

The goalkeeper is the last line of defence. He or she is relatively free how to defend the ball when within the goal crease. Jumping, kicking, hitting, and blocking: all are allowed if the action is directed at the ball.

### Positions

Fast reflexes may be what distinguishes the best goalkeepers from the rest, but most success probably comes from reducing the angle. By so doing, the goalkeeper reduces the area where an attacker can shoot, making the whole undertaking more difficult. As with

outfield players, experience will teach the goalkeeper to read the game, and move into the right position.

A goalkeeper positions himself or herself in a way to maximize the area of the goal covered. No equipment is allowed to artificially increase the area covered, but the right moves can ensure that the attackers do not have an easy life. Goalkeepers generally choose to kneel, having their upper bodies cover the centre of the goal. The arms are kept up, ready to catch high balls. Depending on where the ball is, the keeper moves to the left or right of the goal. He or she may also move forwards and backwards.

The legs are generally kept closed, so that the ball cannot be played in between the legs. When kneeling with the knees wide apart, the goalkeeper can keep the feet together at the back. This way a ball getting past the legs through the middle will not end up in the goal.

When play is behind the goal, many goalkeepers place one of their feet directly against the nearest goalpost. This way most attempts to hook the ball in from behind are foiled.

### Angles

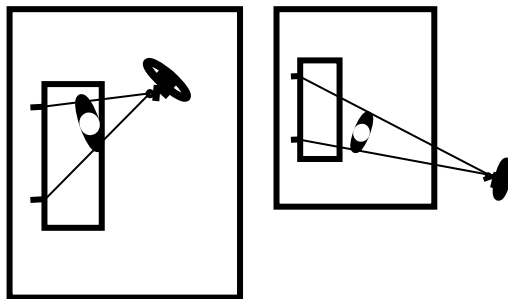


Figure 86: Reducing angles

The key aspect of successful goalkeeping is reducing the angles. The aim again is to cover as much of the area of the goal as possible. Figure 86 illustrates two successful applications. In each case, the goalkeeper situates himself or herself in a position so that a straight line could be drawn between the ball, the centre of the goal, and the goalkeeper. If the attacker is further away, the goalkeeper can move forward to increase the covered area.

Reducing angles is so important that new goalkeepers probably want to focus on this (together with keeping the hands up). In training, it is possible to attach two pieces of string to the goals for the goalkeepers to get a feel of the correct positioning. In this case, a piece of string is attached to each goal post. The attacker then positions himself or herself somewhere, and the goalkeeper tries to get into the best position. The coach then connects the pieces of string and the ball, giving the keeper a good idea whether he or she is in the right place.

### Goalkeeper Pass

Outfield players are not allowed to play a pass to their own keeper. This rule was implemented to keep the game fast. If a ball is played to the keeper, the goalkeeper may either let it pass, or kick it away with his or her feet. If the ball is touched with the arms, a free-hit is given to the opposing team.

It is important to bear in mind that only active passes are counted as passes. This means that if a ball bounces off a defender, the goalkeeper is still allowed to pick up the ball.

### Throw-Out

There are many ways to throw out a ball. As with passes between outfield players, a throw out along the floor is easiest to play for the field players. This is the chosen throw-out when a goalkeeper throws the ball to a defender next to the goal, and where there is no pressure from the opponents. Rather than throwing the ball, the goalkeeper rather rolls the ball.

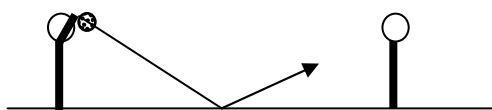


Figure 87: Wide throw-out

A throw-out may also be used to launch an attack directly. This is common on small rinks, or where one of the attackers is in a promising position close to the other goal (or anywhere near or past the centre line). In this case a throw-out rolling flat on the floor would

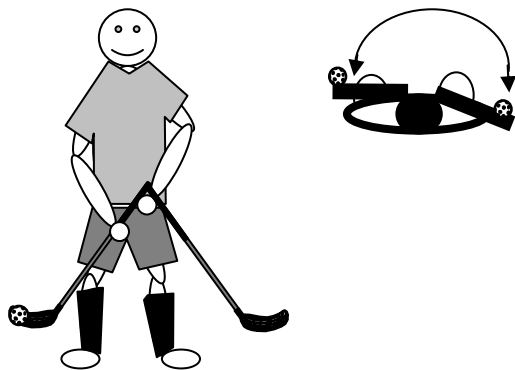


be too slow. Instead, the goalkeeper throws the ball wide. The ball is picked up and thrown from above the head. The ball is thrown at the floor, so it bounces towards the attacker, as illustrated in figure 87. The only thing to consider with such wide throw-outs is that the ball needs to touch the floor before it crosses the centre line. (It may also touch the rink or any field player, but this is difficult to control.)

## Airhooking

The airhook is a very advanced skill; and in most game situations it is of relative little use. Nonetheless, there is great interest in the trick, especially in young players. Airhooking is also known as zorro moves, although some players make a difference. In this case, the airhook is the trick that can be used in the game, where the ball is lifted in the air and played around the goal or a defensive wall. Zorro moves, in contrast, refer to freestyle moves. The difference really lies in that the ball is also played above knee-level (even above the head), and the moves are not game related.

### Idea



*Figure 88: Air-hooking*

The following basic instructions are for players shooting left. If you shoot right, obviously replace references to left and right. To start with, put the ball next to your left foot. Place the ball right at the front of the blade, where the airhook basket is. Hold the stick as if playing forehand (normal). The hand itself is twisted a bit (overturned wrist). You now drag the ball in a circular movement to the right-hand side of your body. The ball should stick on the blade as it travels through the air. As you move the stick to the right, move the wrist, so that when you reach the end of the move on the right, the wrist is straight again. Once the ball and stick are on their furthest right, the basket of your blade should carry the ball. If the ball falls down, you have not moved the wrist in the correct way. It is this movement of the wrist that requires great skill and training.

Once the ball and stick are on their furthest right, the movement carries on backwards towards the left. The movement is essentially the same in reverse. As you move the ball, make sure the ball and the stick remain together, and the ball does not drop from the basket. The difficulty is to coordinate the movement of your stick whilst fighting the centrifugal forces and gravity.

The airhook really does take a lot of skills, and it is probably not something you should aim to do when you just start playing floorball. If you want to master the airhook, you need to keep training persistently. It takes many experienced players a couple of months to learn the basic trick. The good news is that once you master the basics properly—that is once you are able to control the ball in the air—other zorro moves are not that much more difficult to achieve.


It is also important to hook your blade for the trick. There are now blades that facilitate creating a basket for the ball. A few even come pre-hooked in the right shape. The better the basket, the easier it is to keep the ball. However, even the best equipment does not replace the skills needed to airhook.

## Getting There

If you want to learn to do the airhook, the first thing to do is to sort out the hook. It's usually best to seek advice from an experienced airhooker. Without a good basket, the trick is extremely difficult; not that it was easy anyway. Bear in mind that some blades are difficult to hook for the airhook. Some players find it useful to start with a hook that is too large. You can use this option if you have a spare stick you do not want to use in a proper game. If you over-hook the blade, you need to gradually reduce the hook once you master the basics.

If you only have one stick, or do not want to over-hook your blade, some players successfully start with a footbag (hackey sack). These bags come with greater inertia and may help you getting the movements right. Tennis balls are less suitable because of their greater weight. In any case, the key to success is that you keep trying.

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Authors and contributors: Tidus (principal author); Ian Carrie (contributor)

Created 2006–8.

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