

Roller Hockey

Book of Tactics

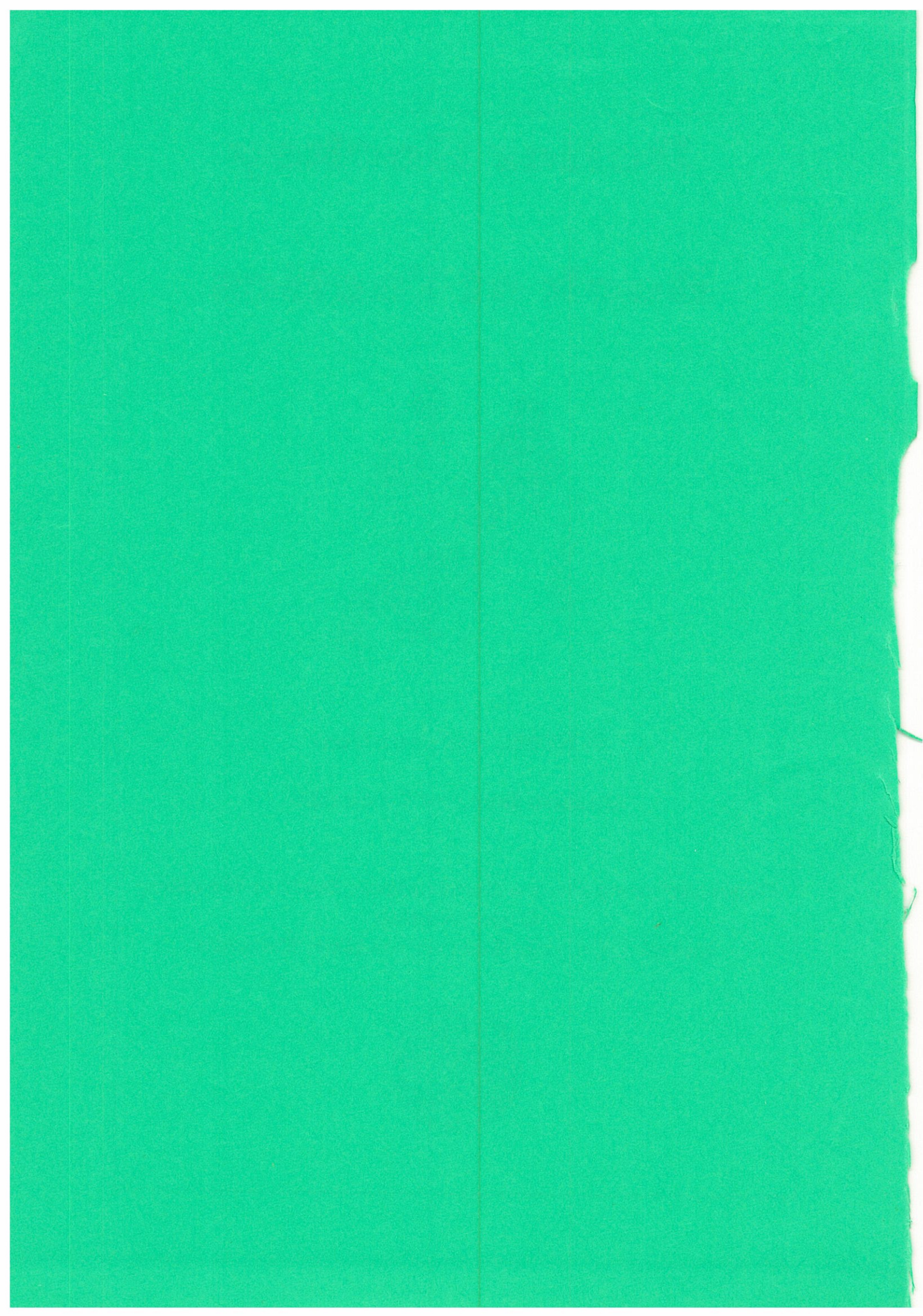


A NRHA Publication

Carlos Ismael Lacerda

**Compulsory Text – Australian Roller Hockey
Committee
Level 1 Coach Accreditation Course**





Roller Hockey Book of Tactics

by Carlos Ismael Lacerda

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PREFACE

When I started on my first work "Basic Roller Hockey", I wanted to make the best of my knowledge available to you all. On reflection, it may be that, here and there, I went a little too deep too soon.

My intention was to stress the importance of sound technical development of players from the very beginning of their training. If we want to progress in modern Roller Hockey, we must recognise this as it provides the whole foundation for the tactical coaching that is to follow.

This book does not pick up where Basic Roller Hockey leaves off. It does introduce some new ideas but its chief aim is to put the subject matter of Basic Roller Hockey in a tactical context and offers more than one point of view.

Tactics are the opposite of improvisation. Tactics are the controlling influence which bring order to deploying the skills we have learned. "Club love" must be backed up by intelligence, athleticism, discipline, a cool head and knowledge. The knowledge contained in this book becomes the instinct of top teams and top players and the platform from which their inspiration is launched.

Carlos Ismael Lacerda

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Introduction

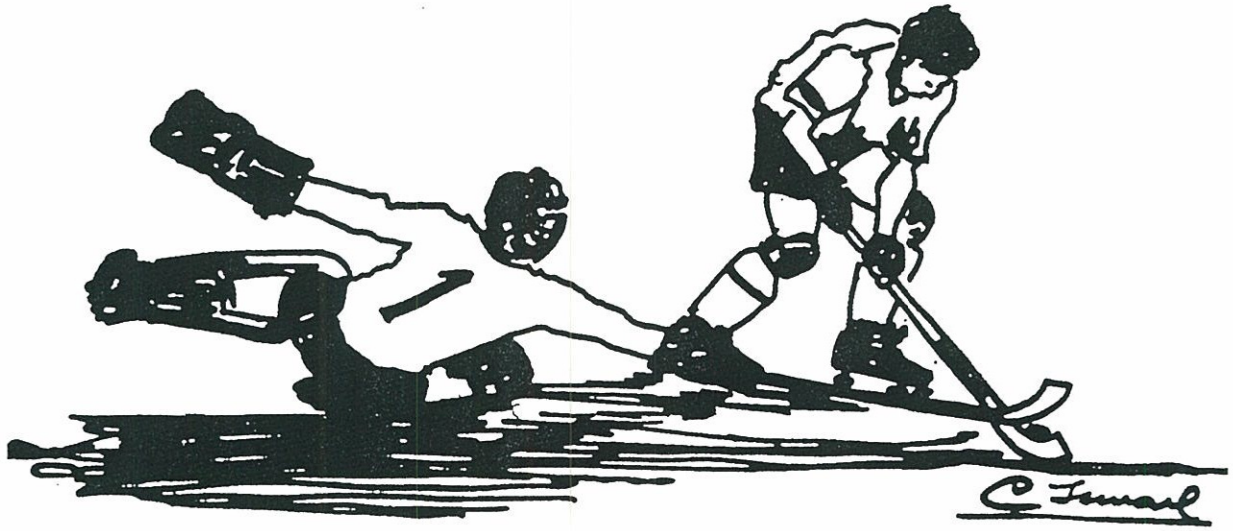
“Confrontation in sport is the contest. Not merely team versus team, but one human being facing another - in the rink, on the track, even in the sky overhead - in a competition which is, at its best, a form of co-operation. It is also a test of oneself, striving to some new limit of performance or endurance. Thus the contest occurs whenever men or women try to extend their grasp that bit further than they have ever stretched before. At its best, the appeal to those who take part in it, watch it, or hear of it second-hand, is as old as time itself.”

“For many people who watch sport at the highest level the drama, the heroes, the sheer spectacle are enough. But to others the sight of a true champion in full cry poses a whole new set of questions. How can a professional golfer place his iron shots with such consistency? How is a Roller Hockey goalkeeper able to find time to consider his response to a 120 mph shoot? And for anyone who has participated in sport, at whatever level, the cool analysis of technique, skill and the tricks of the trade provides an endless fascination.”

From the Sunday Times Sports book.

Chapter 1.

Individual Technique and Tactics



Chapter 1. Individual Technique and Tactics

Chapter 1. Individual Technique and Tactics

The development of a roller hockey player starts with personal skills, followed by training in individual tactical actions, and finally group activity which creates the system of the team (see Chapter 3. Systems). A player's skills will develop according to his talent; every player is an individual. Psychology plays a part in the development of skills, and becomes increasingly significant as individual tactics are taught and group interaction becomes fundamental to further development. The coach must combine insistence on essential knowledge with respect for the individual personalities and skills of his players.

It follows, therefore, that the coach will have a particular playing system as his objective, and will develop the skills and individual tactics of his players to serve that objective. However, the system will come out a little different for each group of players. It's not an easy job.

Individual tactical knowledge includes:-

- ◆ Marking
- ◆ Dismarking (losing your marker)
- ◆ Positioning sense
- ◆ Anticipation
- ◆ Interception
- ◆ Tackling
- ◆ Sense of Support
- ◆ Determination

The grounding in this knowledge begins at an early age (9-10 years) as players gain familiarity with the rink areas, lines of play and rules of the game. As a game of 4 players and a goalkeeper on the rink at the same time, all must know equally well how to attack and how to defend.

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Marking Marking is concentrating on an individual player of the opposing team with the objective of preventing him, by action or mere presence, from taking part in any constructive action. Basic rules of marking are to stay between the opposing player and our goal ("goal side" of the player), and not to be tempted to "follow the ball" and forget who we are marking.

The uses of various schemes of marking are examined in Chapter 5.

Defensive Action:-

Zone

Individual Marking

Mixed Marking

Dismarking (losing your marker) To take part in constructive action we must lose our marker, or at least get him out of position sufficiently to, for example, receive a pass.

To lose our marker we can use superior skating skills such as out-turning him or out-stopping him. In other situations, dismarking can be achieved by working with our team mates to cause confusion through movements such as "scissors", in which we cross with our team mate and attempt to "screen" one marker (*see Chapter 6. Attacking Individual Marking.*)

Positioning A roller hockey player must develop a good sense of positioning.

Much of this will come from instruction regarding the zones of the rink and the systems of defence and attack discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

There are, however, some basic positioning guidelines which players should remember:-

- (a) In attack, the system will search for certain effects. In following the system we need the positioning sense to find that little bit of extra space that will give us time to shoot or start weaknesses to develop in our opponent's defence.
- (b) After an attack which has failed, do not just chase back aimlessly but rather skate back to position at the correct pace trying to cut the line of possible passes.

Chapter 1. Individual Technique and Tactics

- (c) In defence, stay “goal side” of your direct opponent (that is, stay between the opponent and your goal). Look for opportunities to tackle or intercept but keep strong defence as your first priority.
- (d) Do not “follow the ball” and forget the man you are supposed to be marking.

Anticipation Anticipation is being able to judge what is going to happen next.

Anticipation will come naturally to some players, but experience of the game and familiarity with opponents will improve any player’s ability to anticipate. (The more experienced the player, the more he will be able to read the play). A player who anticipates can initiate a response before something happens and will have more time for his own moves.

Anticipation in attack will enable us to take advantage of our team’s moves immediately they have the desired effect on our opponent’s defence - and roller hockey is a game where speed is of the essence. In defence, anticipation can put us into a position to win possession of the ball and go straight into counter-attack.

Interception Interception is the action which cuts a pass (or a shot) to win back possession. Interception is often the chance to counter attack. Interception demands anticipation, but it can drag us out of position if we get it wrong either because of poor skills or because our opponent has fooled us. We must, therefore, be sure of the skills we have practised and feel that the opportunity for success is worth the risk. Otherwise, our first priority must be to make sure we don’t expose our defence recklessly.

Tackling Tackling is the action when we go to an opponent who is in possession of the ball to pit our skill and determination against him in order to win the ball.

As with interception, we must be sure of our skills and make a sensible assessment of the opportunity for success.

Knowing the way our opponent plays will help anticipate how we should tackle him.

Tackling which fails can take us out of position which will give our opponents a numerical advantage against our defence. Our first rule must, therefore, be to stay “goal side” unless there is a really good chance.

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The basic “safety first” rules are:-

- (a) Avoid tackling in the constructive zone of the rink, especially when the opponent is very skilful. Instead, mark the player into a less dangerous position.
- (b) The safest areas in which to tackle are:-
 - (i) Close to the barrier.
 - (ii) Close to the anti-game line at the barrier.
 - (iii) In the rink corners.
- (c) If you find yourself being attacked head-on, do not dive in to tackle, but come backward with the attacker (back off) so as to mark him into a less dangerous position and give yourself more tackling opportunities (*See Diagram 5 on Page 25*).

Sense of Support

The whole team has to work together in attack or defence to create opportunities to score goals or to win back possession. All players need to develop the “sense of support” of their team mates.

In attack, supporting action will be taken by players to make it easier for the team mate who has the ball.

Typical examples of this action are:-

- (a) Skating into position to receive a pass.
- (b) Scissors and rotational moves.
- (c) Screening (eclipse).

(These actions are considered in Chapter 6. Offensive Action).

A sense of support is especially important when we have just won back possession, or we have attacked and our move has failed. In these situations, we are likely to be very badly out of position.

Often, when we have won back possession, our player will need to “freeze” the ball while we get organised.

In getting back into defence after a failed attack, we may have to take up a position normally taken by a team mate, or we may have to organise a minority defence while a team mate gets back.

Chapter 1. Individual Technique and Tactics

Diagram 1 illustrates this.

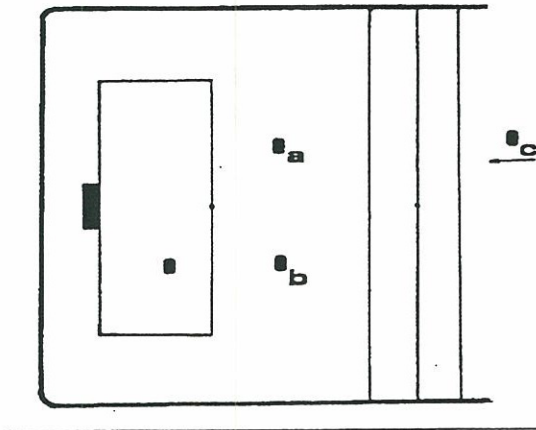


Diagram 1

Player A will move to replace the missing player.

Player B takes the centre while waiting for C.

Determination

As with any sport there must be a “will to win”. We have to work hard to develop our skills, and we must keep them practised. We must understand the individual tactics which we are good at and also know what we are bad at. We must understand the system of the team and respect the coach’s instructions for particular games and match situations. Then, we must be fit and enter into the game with determination.

Roller Hockey is, in theory, a “non-contact” sport. In reality, the game is extremely physical and our opponents must be made to feel the power of our skills, discipline, fitness and determination.

Tackling will be hard, but must not be permitted to be violent. Well trained players will know where the line is drawn and the consequences of crossing it, whether from their coach or the referee.

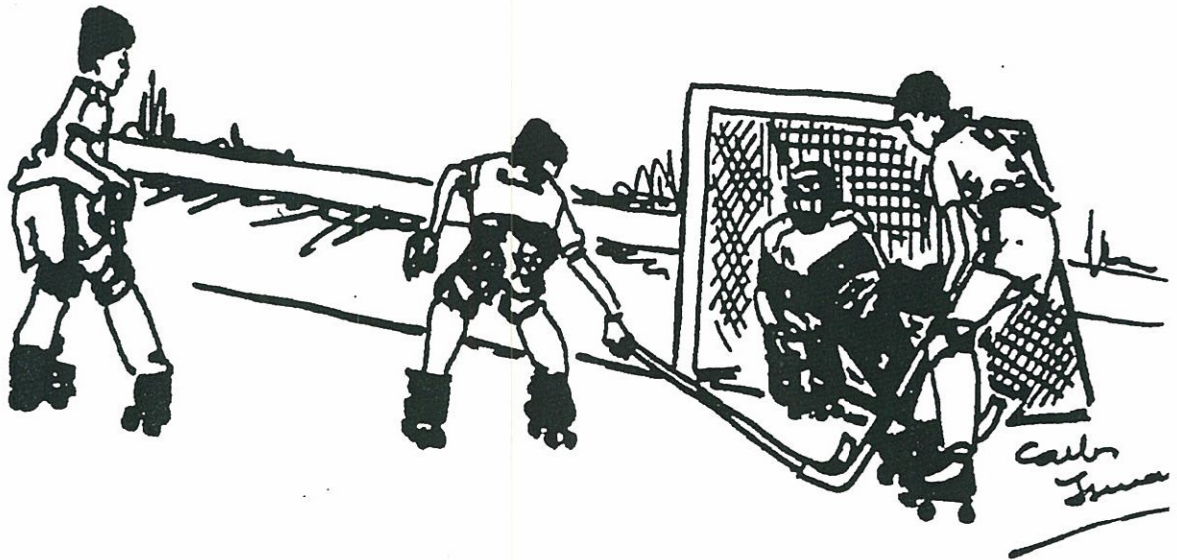
Different matches will be played to the standard of different teams and different referees. Pay attention to the referee’s decisions and adjust your play accordingly.

NEVER come into dispute with the referee or take the risk of getting sent off - it will not help your team at all.

Roller Hockey is a game and luck will play its part. Even if luck is going against you, it can't last forever; be positive and determined throughout a match. This is the hallmark of top players who sustain high performance and secure success for their teams.

Chapter 2.

The Concept of Attitude



Chapter 2. The Concept of Attitude

Chapter 2. The Concept of Attitude

The two principle Attitudes are, of course, Defence and Attack (Offence).

A roller hockey player must put his technical skills and his tactical knowledge at the service of his team. If his team is in defence, he will adopt a "Defensive Attitude" and vice versa.

Defensive Attitude The three essential components that influence the development of the Defensive Attitude are:-

- ◆ Knowledge of the playing area
- ◆ The players
- ◆ The ball

These three elements of Defensive Attitude allow the following situations to be considered:-

- ◆ The best location from which to have a perfect vision of the game
- ◆ Positioning
- ◆ Facing an opponent with the ball
- ◆ Facing an opponent without the ball
- ◆ In minority
- ◆ In equality
- ◆ In superiority

Let us now look at some aspects of the different situations and the Defensive Attitude we will adopt:-

Positioning Have the tactical scheme of the team constantly in mind.

Always be in "Zone" when in minority.

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Be positioned in the zone of the Defensive space where the best defence can be performed.

Always be positioned on the imaginary line between the opponent and the Goal ("Goal Side" of the opponent).

The principal elements of individual defensive tactics are Positioning and Marking.

Facing an Opponent

With The Ball Always be positioned "Goal Side" of the opponent.

Position the stick either to the front or side of the body and have bent knees.

Look at the ball and not at the player.

Back off, always in front of the player.

Do NOT dive in and tackle. Only try to get the ball when certain of getting it or knocking it away from the opponent.

Steer the opponent to an area of low danger (barrier or corner).

Do not go behind the goal to mark or tackle.

In extreme situations, allow the ball to pass but not the opponent.

If necessary to foul, know where to make the foul.

It is essential that a roller hockey player knows all the elements of the Individual Tactics of Defensive Play.

Without The Ball This is dependent upon the Tactical Defence System in use.

In Zone

Know the playing zones for the best defensive efficiency.

Adopt the best static position.

Concentrate the main attention on your opponent but also know where the ball is.

Chapter 2. The Concept of Attitude

Individual Marking.

Get between the opponent and the Goal - "Goal Side".

Be close enough to the opponent to be able to intercept and/or prevent a pass to that opponent.

Observe if the opponent is a right or left player.

Observe the direct opponent at all times but do not forget the ball position.

Know how to use the elements ANTICIPATION, TACKLING or INTERCEPTING the ball, without fouling if possible.

NEVER follow the opponent to areas of the rink considered as "LOW OFFENSIVE ZONES" (*the shaded area of Diagram 2*). If the opponent goes to one of these zones, keep a "Watching Brief" (vigilant marking or zone marking), which will enable marking to be recommenced if the opponent returns to the "HIGH OFFENSIVE ZONE" (*the Defensive Zone of Diagram 2*).

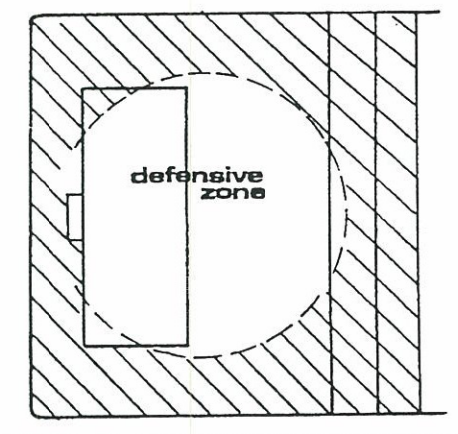


Diagram 2

In Diagram 3, attacker "A's" marker will not follow him to the limit of the defensive zone. With an attacker with the ball progressing on the opposite side of the rink, "A's" marker will keep a watching brief ready to close mark again if "A" returns, while also being ready to support his team mate(s) involved with the attacker with the ball. The same applies to "E's" marker. The solid dots are the defenders.

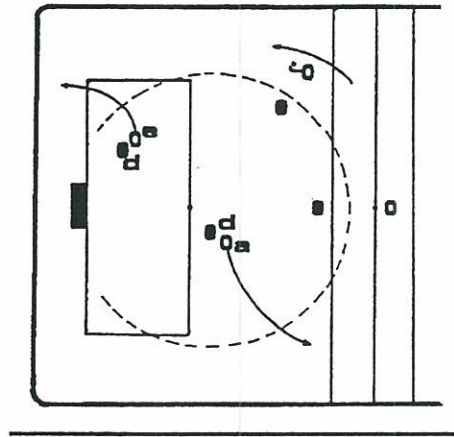


Diagram 3

Don't forget, when facing the opponent without the ball, the defender must know the elements of Individual Tactics with special reference to POSITIONING, MARKING and ANTICIPATION.

In Minority

Positioning always in Zone.

Use the zones which have the highest defensive value (shaded area).

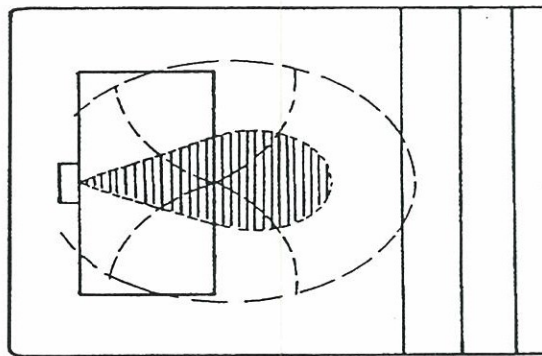


Diagram 4a

The opponent with the ball is the Goalkeeper's responsibility. Know how to give the opponent with the ball to the keeper.

Chapter 2. The Concept of Attitude

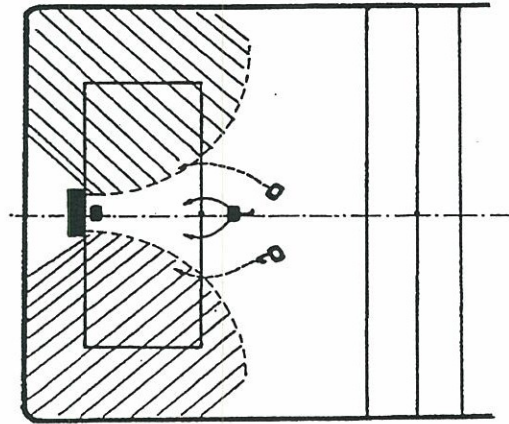


Diagram 4b

In Diagram 4b, the defender tries to steer the opponent with the ball to the shaded areas. In doing this, the defender must also anticipate the passing possibilities and his positioning to intercept (*see Basic Roller Hockey - Chapter 5*).

In situations of great disadvantage, know how to get the best deal. (*See Basic Roller Hockey pages 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, Chapter 5*).

In Equality

All aspects of "Facing an opponent with the ball" must be considered.

In Superiority

Two methods may be adopted:-

1. If possession of the ball is not critical, wait carefully and see what develops.
2. If possession is required, take the initiative of marking for ANTICIPATION, TACKLING or INTERCEPTING the ball.

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Offensive Attitude Later in this book (*in Chapter 6*), some elements of individual technique and individual and collective tactics are examined. Here, some general principles are introduced.

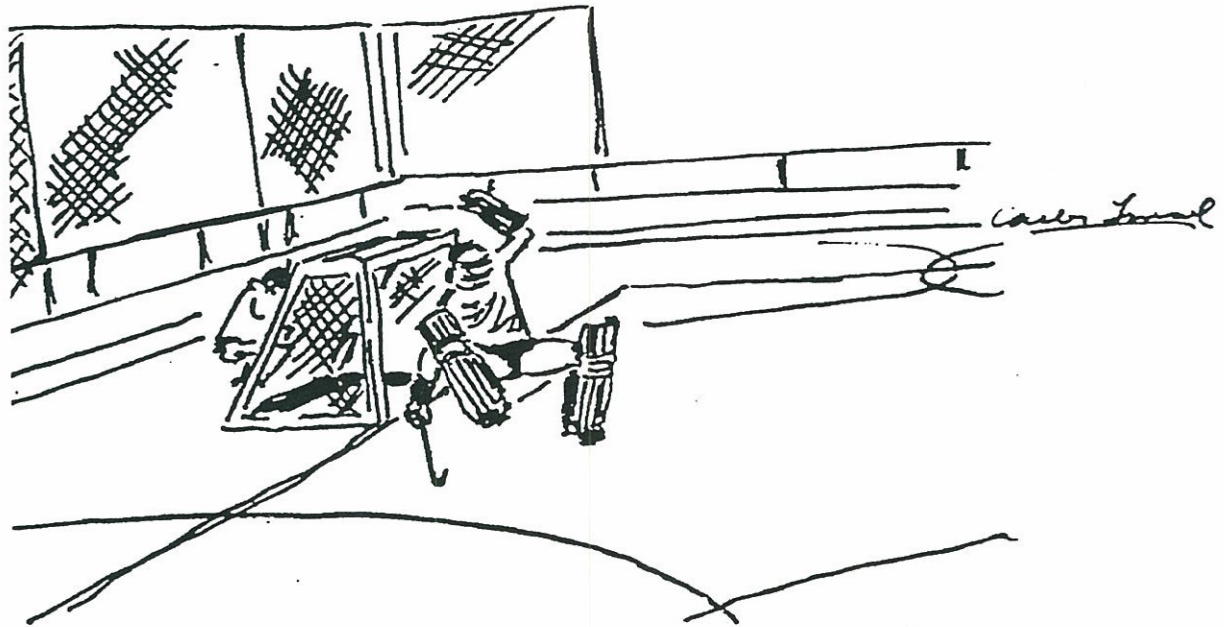
The ball is ALWAYS faster than the player.

Know how to help and support the team mate who is in possession; this is the equivalent of putting the opponent in a situation of doubt or confusion concerning which Attitude to take - Scissor and/or Rotational movements, Screens, Diagonal Moves, etc (moving off the ball).

Diagonal movements of the ball and player offers more possibilities than square movements and passing.

Chapter 3.

Systems



Section 3. Systems

Attack and Defence

Every roller hockey team needs to develop two systems:-

1. Attack
2. Defence

These systems will be built on schemes of practised tactical operations which are developed in keeping with the desired style of the team and the technical and tactical power of the players comprising the team at any given time.

Teams will also vary their systems to approach a particular match. Specialised tactics will be developed to search for certain effects against certain opponents and even identified groups of the opponents' players.

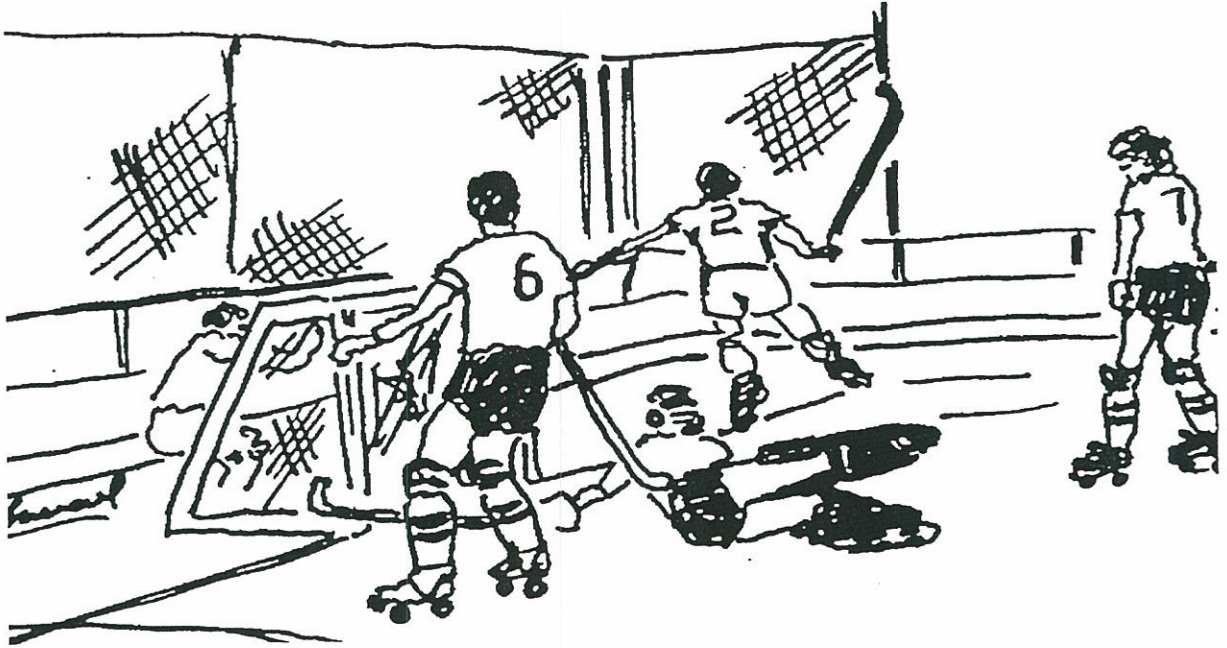
Tactical play requires rehearsed, synchronised action by the whole team with the knowledge to see when the desired effect is achieved and with the discipline to seize the opportunity immediately.

In attack, the chief objective of tactical play is to divert the attention of our opponents and to conceal our true intentions. We may, therefore, set up a play on one side of the rink when the final action will take place unexpectedly on the other side. Another objective could be to play our players into positions to use their strengths, ideally against our opponents' weaknesses.

In defence, tactics are essentially an intelligent screening action. This can start from positional play, such as the box (2 x 2) formation, to serve as a base for defensive tactics depending on the actions of the opposing team.

Chapter 4.

Tactical Plans



Chapter 4. Tactical Plans

The game, the players and the playing area

To form a tactical plan, we must consider, amongst many other things, these essential aspects:-

1. The game.
2. The players.
3. The space in which the game is played (playing area).

The Game A basic principle is that any action of ours will give rise to a reaction by our opponents. We must consider this in defence and attack.

The Players We need a sound knowledge of all the players, ours and theirs. We need to assess their strengths and weaknesses, technical and emotional, individually and collectively.

The Space A careful analysis is required of the space in which the game develops. In roller hockey it is useful to consider three areas (zones) of play:-

1. Defensive Zone.
2. Constructive Zone.
3. Attacking Zone.

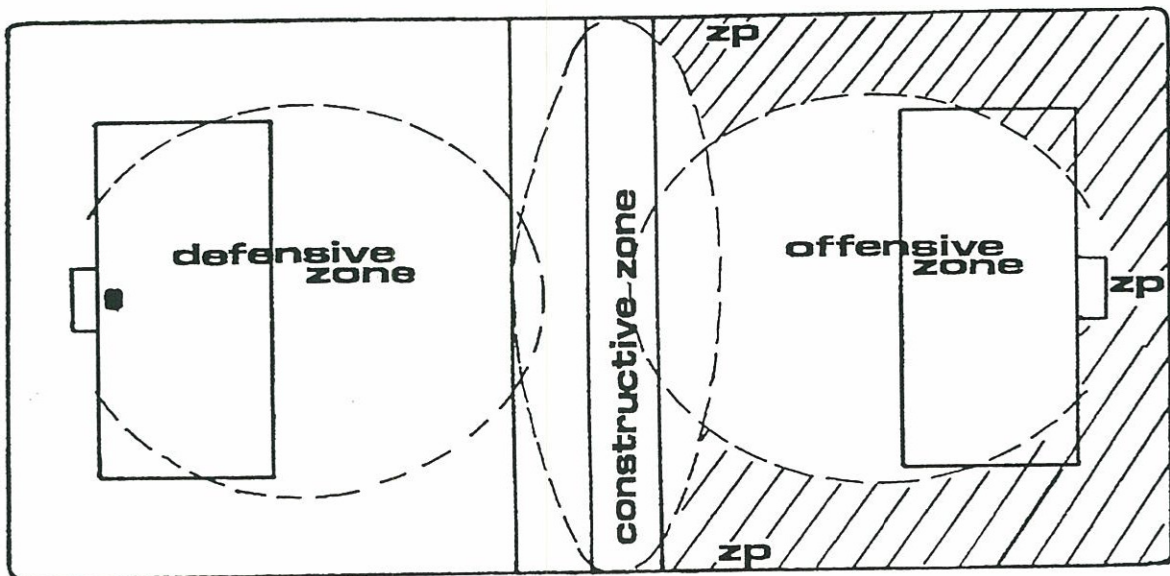


Diagram 5

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Our defensive zone will be our opponents' attacking zone and vice-versa.

Understanding how to use the zone is very important because of the 22 metre line. On winning the ball, the opposing team will return to a defensive system which will mostly mean moving back over the 22 metre line. We will thus have a large constructive area but have only 10 seconds to move the ball over our anti-game line after which it cannot be brought back.

Once over the line, the zones are as shown in Diagram 5 with a "zone of pass" left around the sides of the rink (an area in which we are relatively free to skate and pass the ball).

The three zones naturally lead us to think in terms of three forms of activity.

1. Defensive Action.
2. Attacking Action.
3. Constructive Action.

Defensive Action is taken up in Chapter 5. Defensive Action.

Attacking Action is taken up in Chapter 6. Offensive Action.

Constructive Action, as the name implies, is the team's action from getting possession up to the commencement of Offensive Action.

The defending team can sometimes take immediate action to win back possession before their opponents have had a chance to move out of Constructive Action.

Chapter 4. Tactical Plans

Some Tactical Schemes

The Y Perhaps the first system. Offensive but very vulnerable defensively.
No longer used.

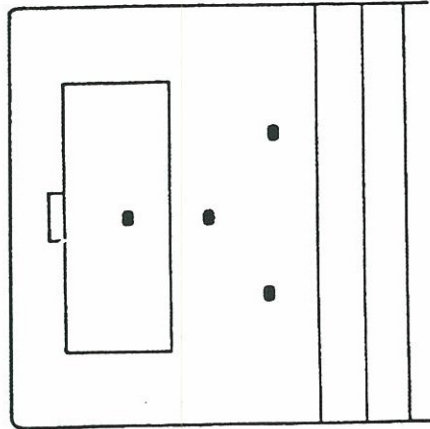


Diagram 6

The Inverted Y Little used; can be offensive or defensive (See Chapter 7.
The Inverted Y).

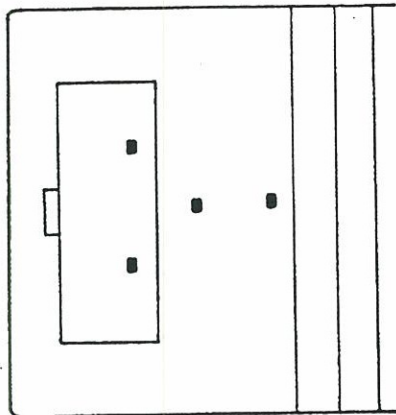


Diagram 7

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The Box. Specifically defensive.

Attacking action relies on two forwards and two backs.

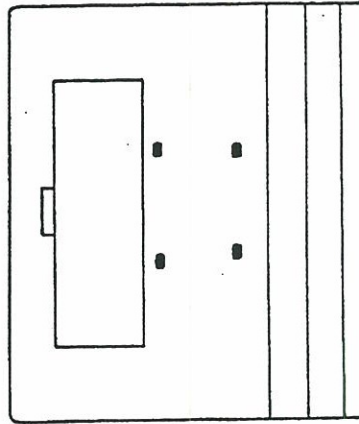


Diagram 8

The Trapezium More defensive variation of the box.

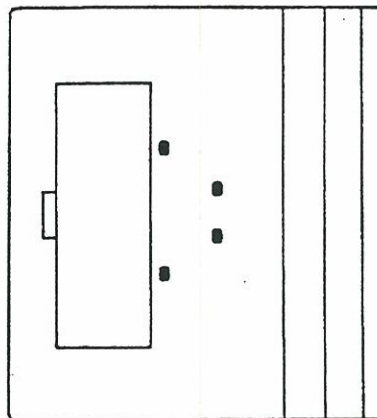


Diagram 9

Chapter 4. Tactical Plans

The Diamond A mixed system to occupy the largest space in the defensive zone and to allow an easy counter-attack with the first man.

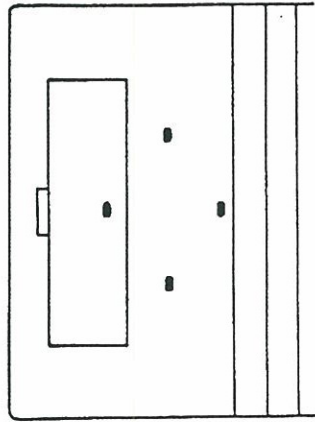


Diagram 10

The Triangle A defensive variation of the diamond (See Chapter 7. *The Triangle*).

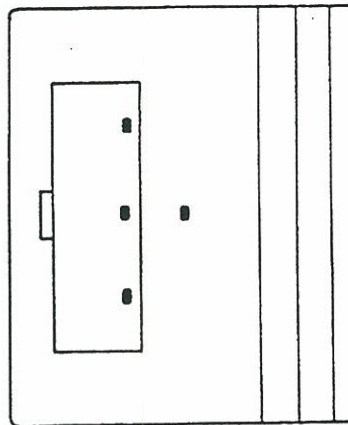
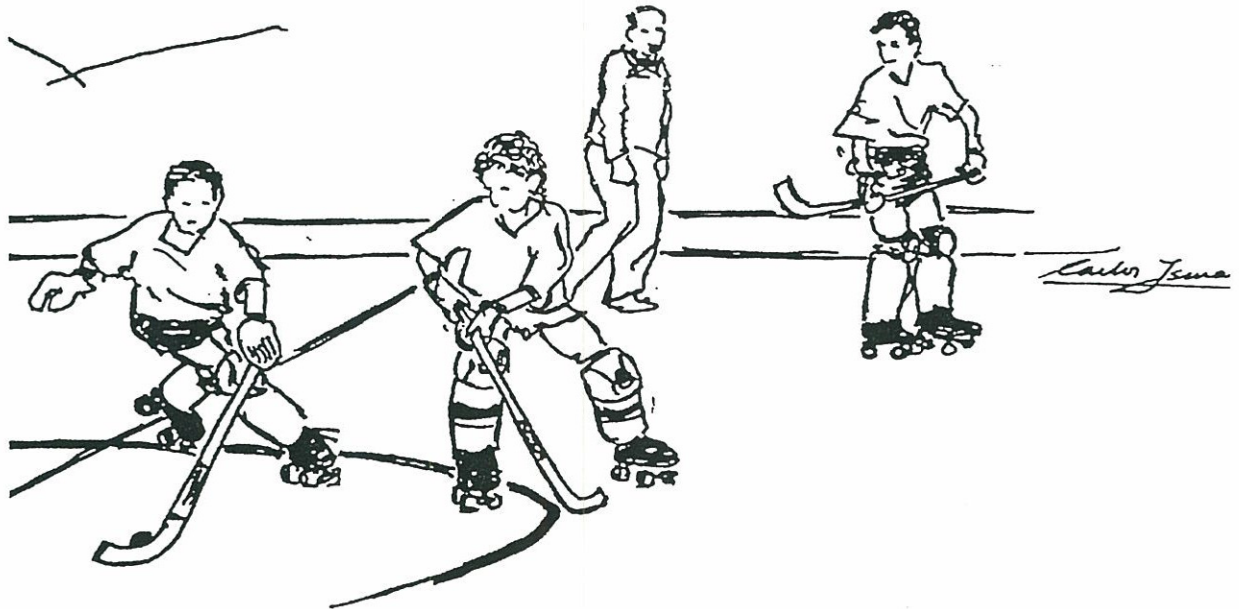


Diagram 11

These defensive systems take the name of the geometric figure they exhibit. In a match they are in constant variation depending on the movements of the opponents.

Chapter 5.

Defensive Action



Chapter 5. Defensive Action

Principles Defensive action takes three forms:-

1. Action to prevent our opponents developing their attack.
2. Action to win back the ball.
3. Action to keep possession in attack.

A key principle in defence (ie, not in possession of the ball) is to mark all the players and not simply to follow or watch the ball. Various forms of defence and their purpose are examined in the following sections.

Zone Defence An efficient defensive action can be based on dividing the defensive zone into quadrants. With a team of four players, this can be box (2 x 2) or diamond (1 x 2 x 1):-

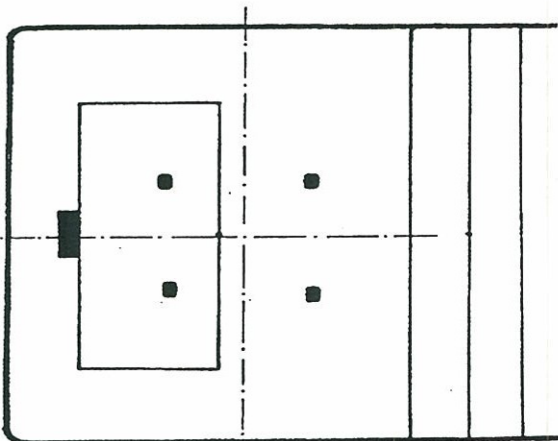


Diagram 12a

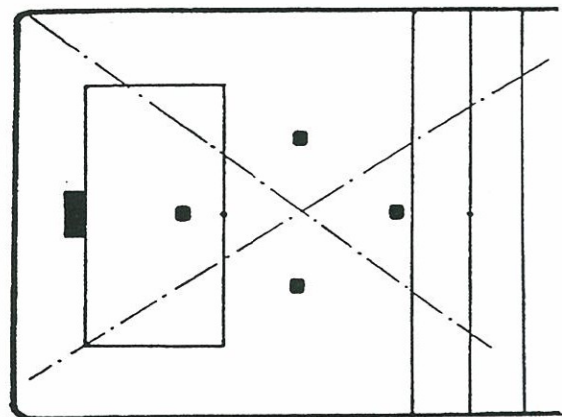


Diagram 12b

An individual player is assigned a quadrant and is responsible for marking any opponent who comes into his quadrant (or the first opponent to come into the quadrant).

All quadrants come together at a point in the centre and any defensive plan must take care of this point and assign clear responsibilities.

(The system of zone defence is explained in "Basic Roller Hockey". Refer to pages 104, 105, 106, 108, and 109).

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Individual Marking

Individual marking is where one player has the responsibility to mark one player of the opposing team. This is not necessarily man-to-man which implies tight marking with the intention to win the ball back quickly (pressing).

Individual marking can be assigned by name, shirt number or offensive space taken up (for example, first into zone).

The individual marking can be:-

Tight

or

Vigilant

Both forms of marking can be co-ordinated usually by defining a zone of tight marking. This is called "man-to-man in a restricted zone". The "restricted zone" can vary and needs to be defined before each match depending on the objectives.

Inside the restricted zone, we must use tight (close) marking, always mirroring the movement and direction of our opponent so as not to be caught flat-footed; we must also remain between the opponent and our goal. When the opponent moves outside the restricted zone, the defender shadows him and mirrors his actions while staying within the restricted zone; do not follow to zone of low offensive value (*see Chapter 2 - The Concept of Attitude - sub-heading - Facing An Opponent*).

On rinks where a basketball "D" is marked, this is often a useful guide to the length of an effective "restricted zone". This form of defence, with everyone in movement, is looking to create mistakes in the opponents' play with counter attack in mind. It is also a risk that opponents can create confusion in our marking and set free the man with the ball.

Chapter 5. Defensive Action

Here are some simple rules:-

1. If the opponents use a scissors movement, the defender marking the player with the ball stays close to his man and his team mate crosses behind him.

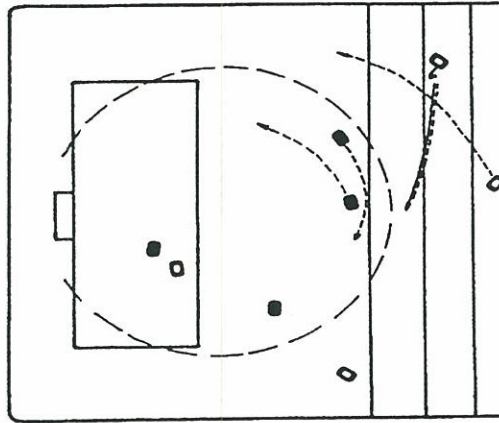


Diagram 13

2. If an attacker with the ball outside the restricted zone tries to come into the zone with a dribbling or feinting movement, his marker does not go to him or stand still, but comes backwards (back off) giving a little space but always within stick or body distance to tackle.

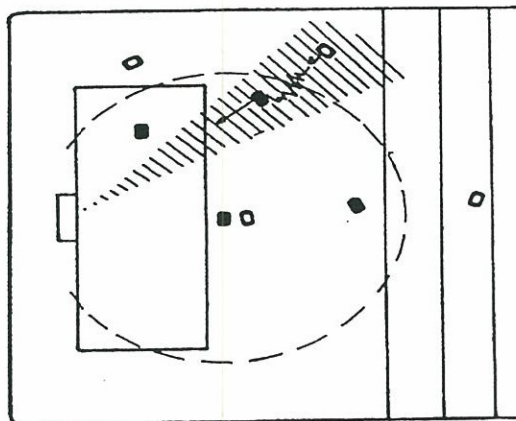


Diagram 14

3. Look at your opponent's eyes to know his true intentions.
4. In emergency situations, a defender may be left with two attackers (in minority). With youngsters it is possible to mark the man

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without the ball leaving the man with the ball to the goalkeeper. With competent players, it is more effective for the defender to assume a midposition to try to interfere with both the one-on-one on the goalkeeper and to block the ideal final pass (*refer to Chapter 2. The Concept of Attitude - subheading - Facing An Opponent*).

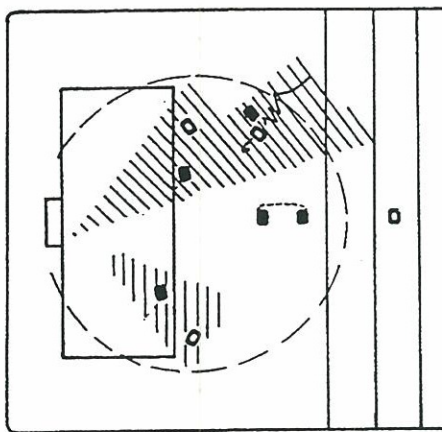


Diagram 15

5. When trying to win possession, only attempt to tackle at the sides of the rink to the rear of the defensive zone and in the zone of pass.

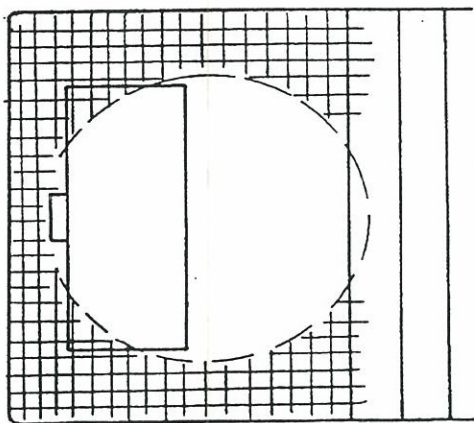


Diagram 16

Chapter 5. Defensive Action

6. Behind the goal.

- ◆ Never go behind the goal to start marking an opponent with or without the ball. However, you can follow an opponent to that area if he has the ball in order to tackle him, provided your chance of success is very high.

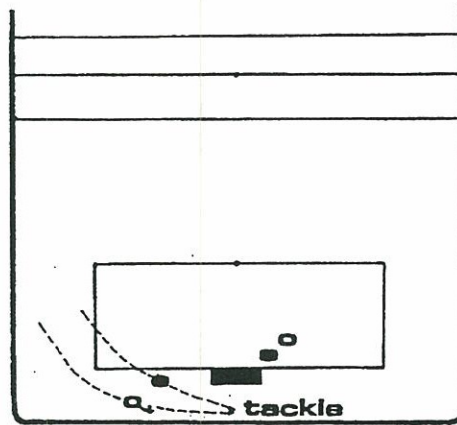


Diagram 17

If the opponent is behind the goal, the defender shall mark him in front of his goal.

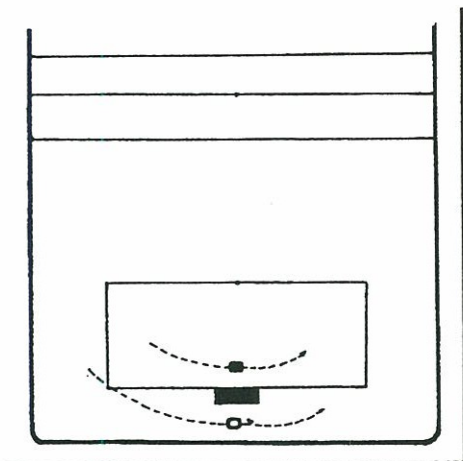


Diagram 18a

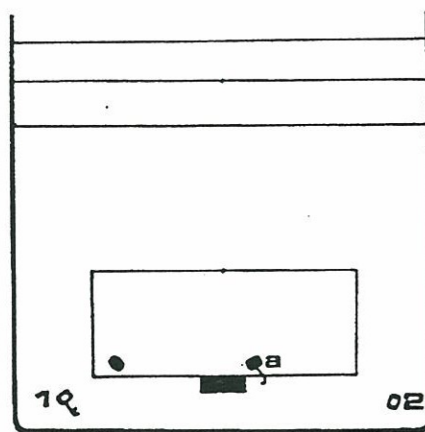


Diagram 18b

or

Defender A can try to intercept a pass from 1 to 2.

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Mixed Marking While Individual Marking is an “active” defence, Zone marking (box or diamond) is a more “passive” attitude of defensive waiting.

“Mixed Marking” is a combination of the two. Some (two) players are defending in zone and some (two) are marking individually depending on the position of the ball. This system is sometimes referred to as “Mixed Man/Zone”.

The zone defence is adopted as the starting point and the defender will mark the player that comes into his zone. After this, the system will develop as the play develops.

Diagrams 19, 20, 21 and 22 show examples.

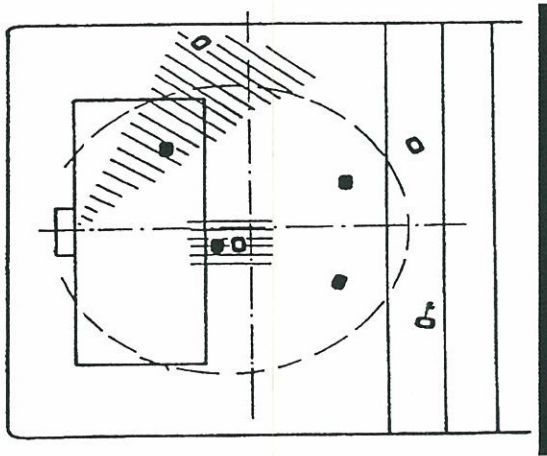


Diagram 19

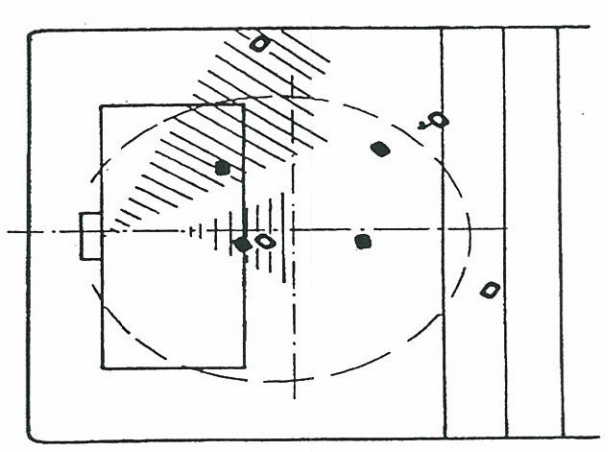


Diagram 20

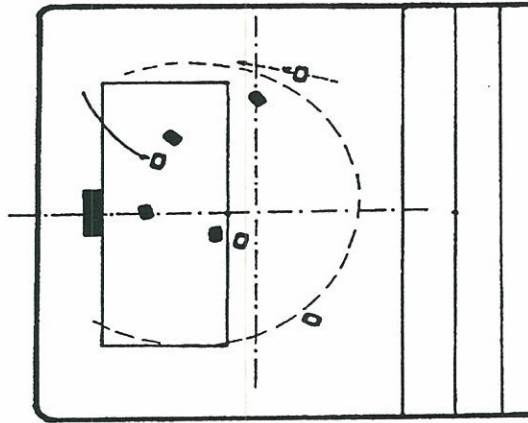


Diagram 21

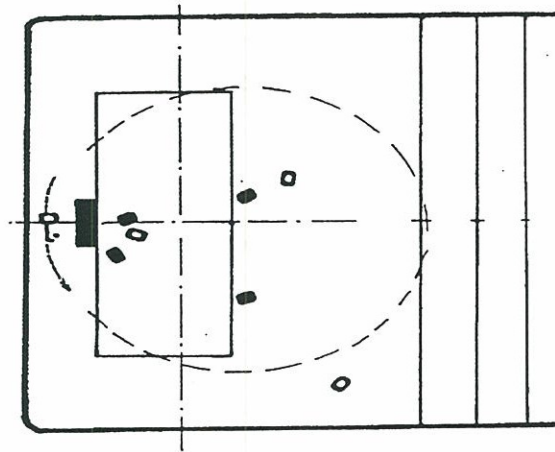


Diagram 22

Choice of Defence

Choice of defence will depend on the individual tactical and technical abilities of our players.

Zone marking is easier to understand and, being based on waiting, is less demanding on weak or unfit players. It also allows players to be concentrated around the goal to give the opposing team more space, so as to encourage medium and long distance shots, which are easier for the goalkeeper to deal with and give opportunities for us to win possession.

On the other hand, a team which adopts the active attitude of individual marking needs all its players to be tactically and technically proficient, fit and able to perform correctly all the elements of the system; otherwise, the system will be very vulnerable. The best system

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will be that which makes the most of the strengths of our players and does not expose our weaknesses.

Situations in Defence

It is not usually possible to use one system of defence for the whole of a match. The defence must respond to changes in system of attack, counter-attack, different groups of players and the scoreline as the time runs out. The ideas considered here concern defence in the face of counter-attack and how to position to get the best out of the situation.

Counter-attack is an action to surprise the other team and produce a shooting opportunity before they can get into a defensive position. The defending team will be at a numerical disadvantage.

In a position of numerical disadvantage, defenders will have to opt to defend in zone, parcelling the space as sensibly as they can. Here are some ideas:-

2 x 1 or 3 x 1 The most efficient zone is as shown in diagram 23.

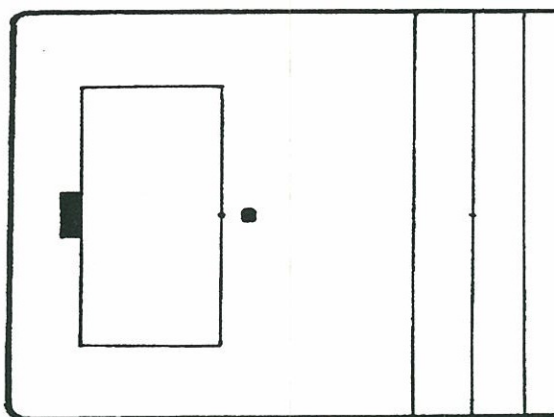


Diagram 23

Chapter 5. Defensive Action

1 x 1 (Equality) The defender must position himself on the attacker's line of approach to goal.

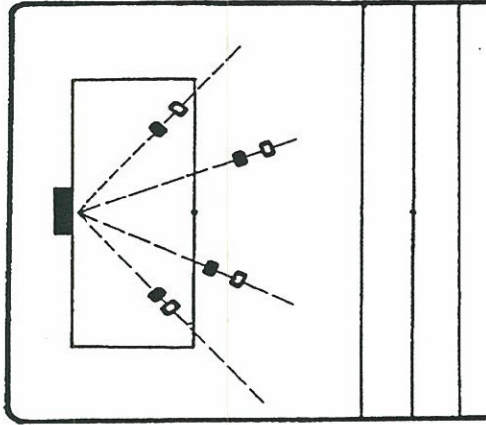


Diagram 24

3 x 2 or 4 x 2 The most efficient zones are shown in diagrams 25 and 26.

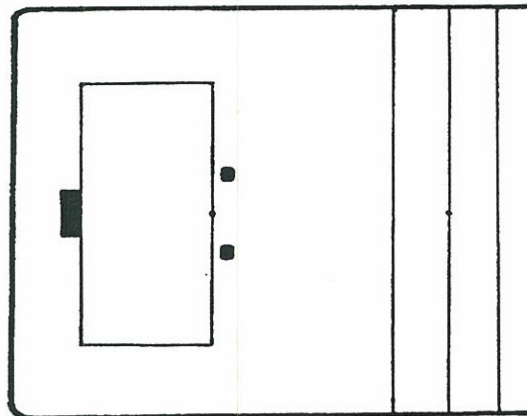


Diagram 25

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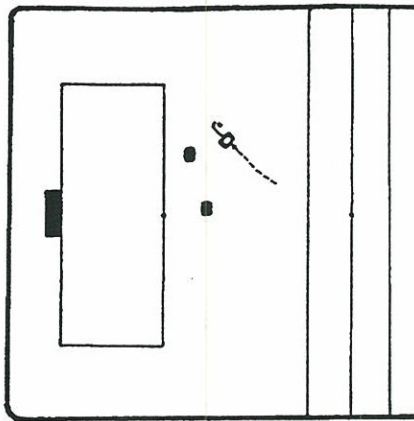


Diagram 26

4 x 3 or 3 x 3 A defensive triangular zone should be formed.

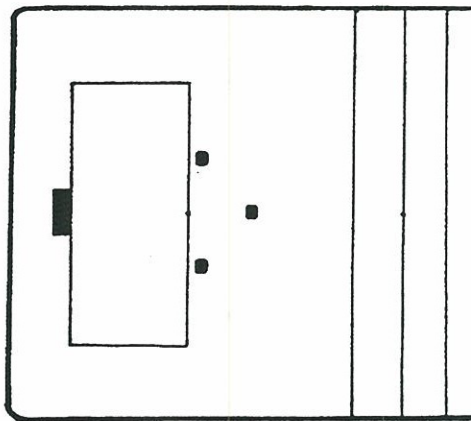


Diagram 27

In equality, defenders may choose to mark individually which will be most efficient if the defenders have the best skills and know how to defend (“defensive attitude”).

In the final analysis “stay goal side” and be directly between the attacker and goal.

Chapter 6.

Offensive Action



Chapter 6. Offensive Action

Principles The objective of attacking action is to put our opponents in a position of disadvantage so that a goal may be scored.

There are several ways of doing this:-

- ◆ Drawing our opponents into tactical or technical mistakes
- ◆ Creating a situation in which we have more players than our opponents
- ◆ Creating a situation in which our players will have better effective skills than theirs
- ◆ Taking advantage of the situation which we have created, giving our opponents no chance to recover

Our attacking system must be devised to take into consideration:-

- ◆ The technical and tactical potential of our players in attack
- ◆ How to be in possession and build the required situation from continuous play
- ◆ How to lose marker(s)
- ◆ How to create a situation from which a counter attack can be launched
- ◆ Practised movements for use in counter-attack
- ◆ How to gain the knowledge and perception to see the mistake and take advantage of it.

In attack, as at all other times, we must be aware that any of our actions will cause reactions by our opponents. This is true of the player with the ball and of the other players. All the players need to play to support the strengths of their team mates and not to expose any weakness. This can only be achieved through careful and dedicated team practice so that it becomes second nature in a match situation.

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Before examining specific attack situations, here are some general observations:-

Continuous attack is the sign of superiority and reflects the different strengths of the teams on the rink.

Counter attack is, in general, the weapon of the team in the weaker position. Counter-attack can be used by the stronger team, which allows its opponents to get a false impression of control so as to execute practised counter attacks on them.

Experience shows that there are zones of greater and lesser effectiveness with regard to scoring goals.

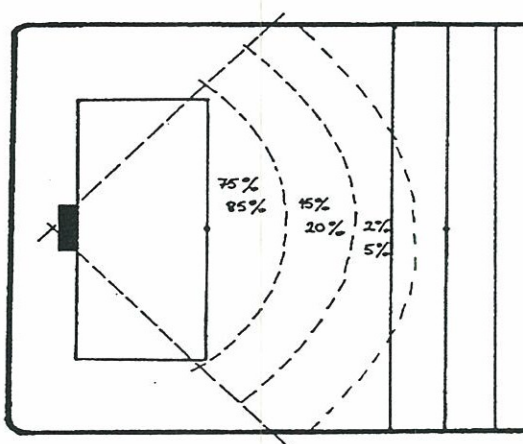


Diagram 28

These zones accord with our zones of attack, construction and defence. Goals can be scored from anywhere, but the most successful teams will play to the statistics.

Attacking a Box The initial position to take up is commonly known as a “V”.

A player is placed in the centre of the box. The ball is passed fast, preferably using the zones of pass. We attempt to achieve:-

- ◆ Numerical superiority at a given moment
- ◆ A pass to the player in goal position
- ◆ An opportunity for a middle distance shot

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

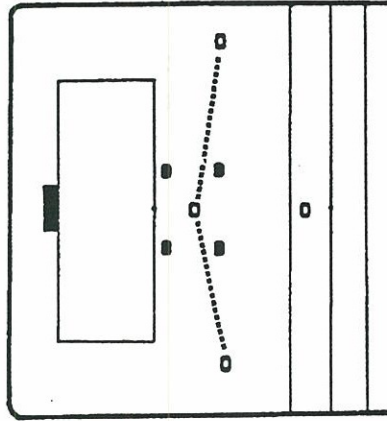


Diagram 29

Players should not maintain fixed positions. As indicated by the arrows in the figure below, they will make and support each other in rotations and scissors movements so as to seek reactions in the defending team which will present opportunities.

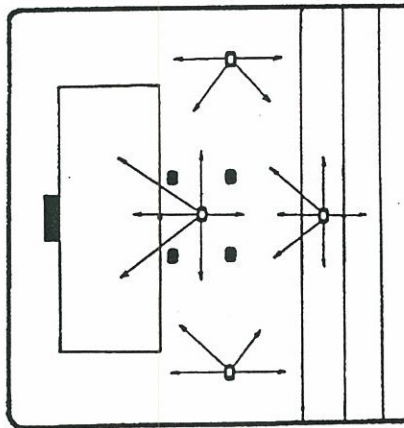


Diagram 30

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“Rotation” is where one player skates into the position of a team mate who has moved on. There is no crossing.

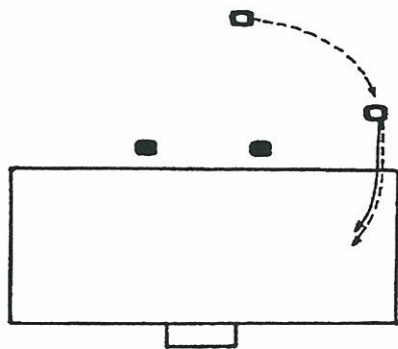


Diagram 31a

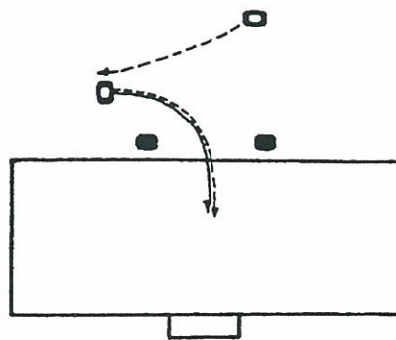


Diagram 31b

“Scissors” is a change of position in which a player changes position crossing with the player with the ball, whether behind or in front.

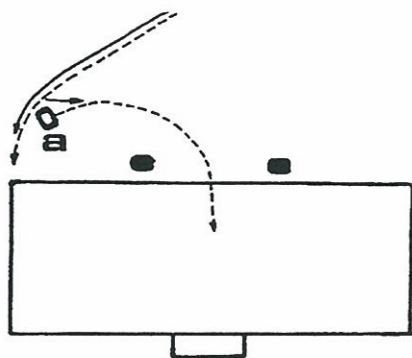


Diagram 32a

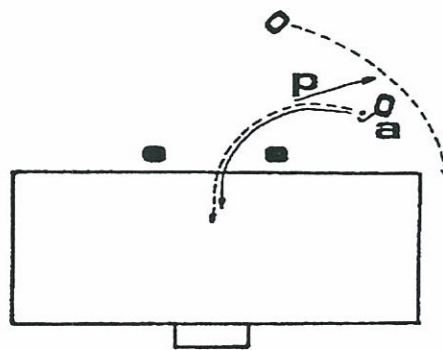


Diagram 32b

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

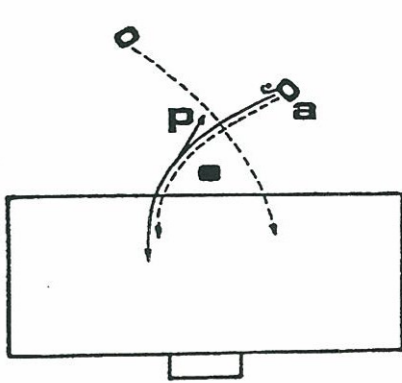


Diagram 32c

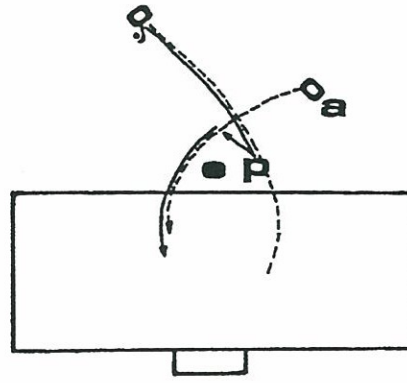


Diagram 32d

A box can be “Open” or “Closed”.

A “Closed Box” is where the players in the defending team take up positions 3 to 5 metres apart. An “Open Box” is where there is more space between the defending players.

We must vary our attacking system depending upon whether the defensive box is open or closed.

In front of a closed box the zones of pass (ZP) and the constructive zones are larger. We have more chances for fast passes and middle distance shots (Z Shoot), but it is very difficult to get a player into “goal position”.

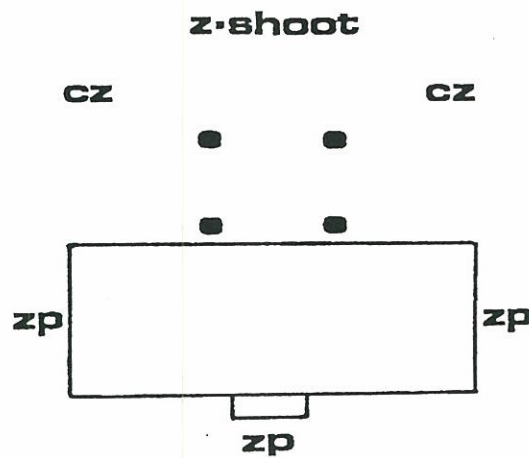


Diagram 33

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Facing an open box, the zones of pass and the constructive zones are reduced, which makes the middle distance shot more difficult to achieve. It is easier to create space and give a pass to a player in goal position.

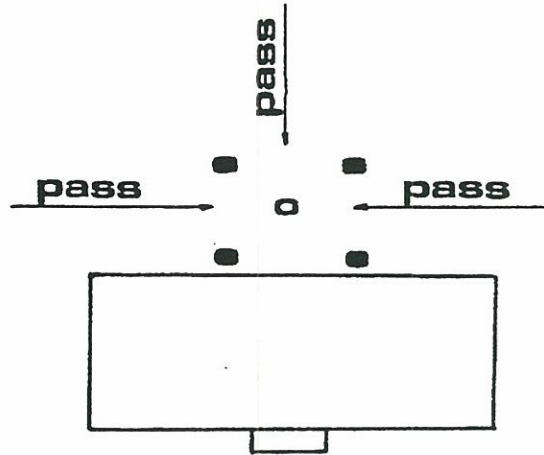


Diagram 34

Attacking a Diamond

As with attacking a box, the object is to create our play in the constructive zones, searching for an opportunity to shoot or pass to a player in front of goal. However, the zones of pass and the constructive zones vary, and the initial positions of attack have to be varied. An initial position can be as shown in this drawing.

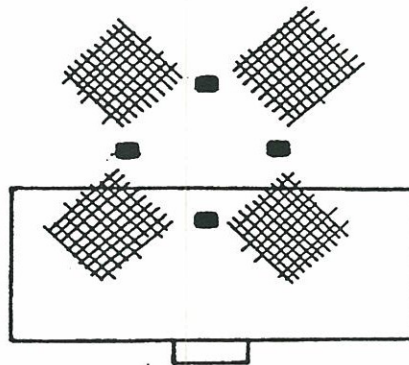


Diagram 35

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

Rotations and scissors movements are used to develop the play with passes often using the barriers. Here we are searching for the pass to the player who can enter to the centre of the diamond diagonally.

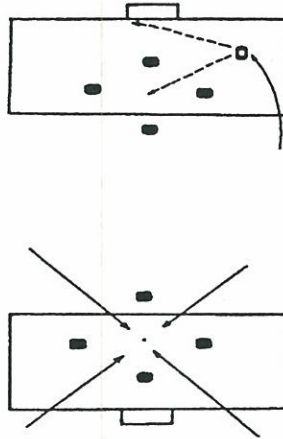


Diagram 36

Diamond defence makes it difficult to achieve a middle distance shot from the centre; there is more opportunity from the diagonals.

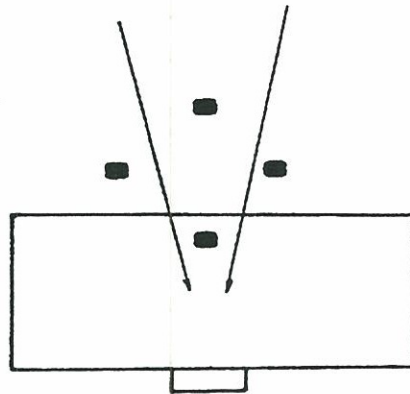


Diagram 37

Attacking Individual Marking

Individual Marking is a defensive system which is often used nowadays as it reduces the space available for attack. Players have to be well qualified, technically and tactically, to use this system of defence effectively. Attacking teams must, therefore, seek perfection

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in their technical and tactical operations, so as to get the better of the many 1 x 1 plays which happen.

To attack Individual Marking, we have to be very efficient and well co-ordinated in rotational and scissors movements. Out of these movements come the opportunities for screening (eclipse) which can set one of our players free; if we get it wrong we can cause ourselves confusion and collisions, which will give the possession and the advantage to our opponents.

Screening consists of "obstructing" a marker by coming between him and our player. Referees have trouble deciding whether or not a foul has been committed and so, if well done, the referee may not blow.

To break the individual defensive marking system, we must first of all create free space in which to penetrate. This can be done by attracting markers into the zones of pass for our player, in possession of the ball, to attack the goal along a diagonal; our other players also skate along the diagonals in support.

In this system there is no initial position of attack (except when you have a studied move).

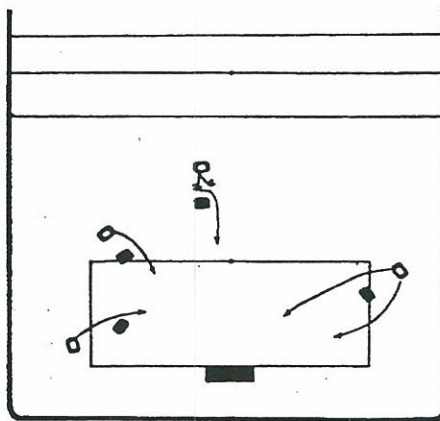


Diagram 38a

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

NEVER play the ball in the Constructive Zone because it is risky to attract defenders into this zone. Our aim is to push our forwards forward by the Zone of Pass, close to the penalty area, trying to create free spaces in which we can play. If we succeed in creating a diversion on one of the four possible sides, then we may create free space in one of the remaining three.

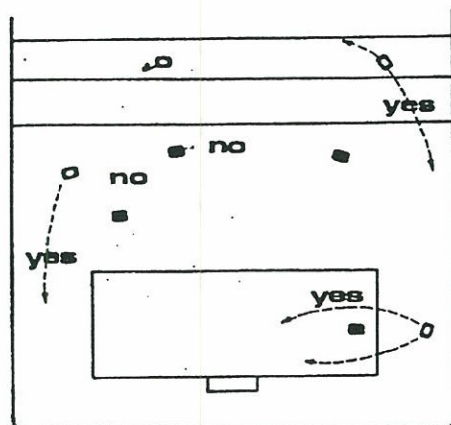


Diagram 38b

In Diagram 39, attacker "A's" marker will not follow him to the limit of the defensive zone. With an attacker with the ball progressing on the opposite side of the rink, "A's" marker will keep a watching brief ready to close mark again if "A" returns while also being ready to support his team mate(s) involved with the attacker with the ball. The same applies to "E's" marker.

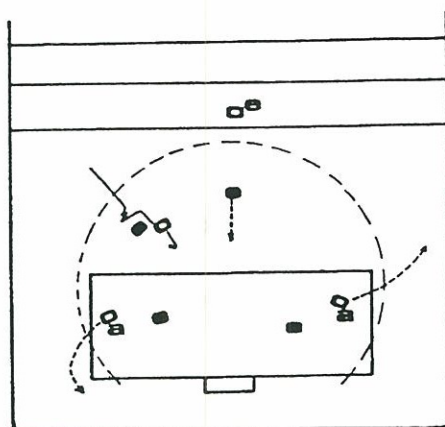


Diagram 39

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Situations in Attack

In the situations which are examined next, we are looking from positions of numerical advantage, that are most of the time, results of counter-attack. Before going further, it is necessary to mention that counter-attack is a system of surprise. It consists of arriving at the opposite Defensive Zone before the opposing Team can adopt their Defensive position. The counter attack is not to just skate fast, pass and shoot without precision. It is a system of attack, and therefore, it is necessary to be well trained and do it under control.

One against the Goalkeeper (1 x 0)

This situation happens with some frequency during a Roller Hockey match. It is necessary to take account of the zone from where the action starts and what attitude can be adopted by the keeper

(see Chapter 5 Basic Roller Hockey).

Regarding the Keeper's attitude, this can be:-

Active or Wait.

Facing these two attitudes we may establish 2 principles:-

1. Active.

The attacker shall dribble.

2. Wait.

The attacker shall shoot.

Regarding the zone (place) from where the attack starts:-

1. Lateral to the goal.

2. Frontal.

If it is lateral:-

If possible search for the most frontal position.

If not, search for the largest angle to shoot at the goal.

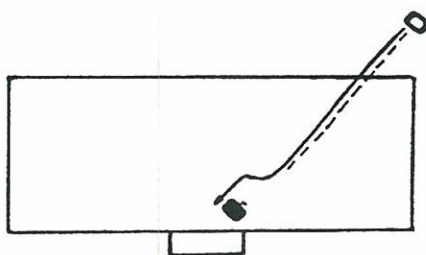


Diagram 40

If it is frontal:-

It transforms into a situation of 1 x 1 where the surprise action, shoot (high or low), dribble, individual talent are the solution. Remember to pay attention to the attitude that the goalkeeper takes.

Two against one (2 x 1)

This is a situation constantly searched for by all ball sports as a situation of advantage.

To take advantage of the 2 x 1 situations requires that the attacking players know how to play on the ball and skate off the ball in support of each other.

The players will need to know and be practised in a variety of moves which develop their:

Positional sense (attack and defence)

- ◆ Understanding of how to support each other and play to their respective strengths
- ◆ Ability to respond to the attitude adopted by the defender
- ◆ Effective use of the basic technical skills - dribble, feint, ball protection, pass, receive and shoot

- 1 Remember to take full advantage of a situation of numerical advantage before the defenders get into a position of more defensive value.

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- 2 When a defender gets into a position of higher defensive value it is necessary to have an alternative ready.
- 3 The attacking variations must accord with the characteristics and qualities of the attackers.
- 4 It will be helpful to have some well practised combinations of 2 players, who are both good at set pieces and know each other's games well enough to improvise. The position of the attacker with the ball is very important to determining the action to follow.
- 5 To opt for the shot may be adequate.
- 6 When a defender opts for action to anticipate or intercept, dribbling is possible and efficient.

Here are some examples:

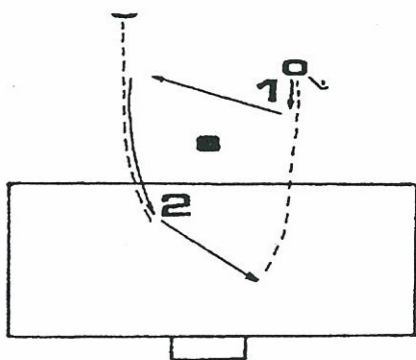


Diagram 41

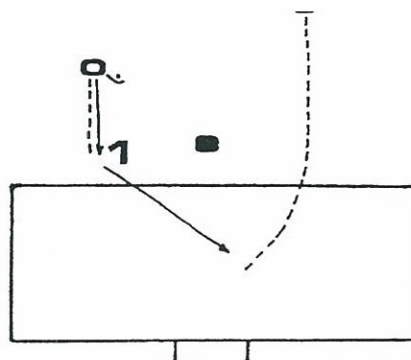


Diagram 42

Diagrams 41 and 42 illustrate situations in parallel to the goal; although they may happen, they are not very advisable as they present an easier task to the defender.

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

The combinations where scissors, rotations and screening happen are more effective:-

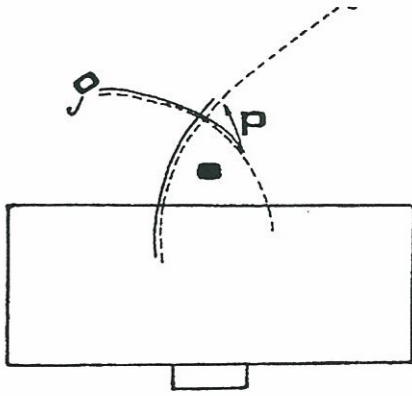


Diagram 43a

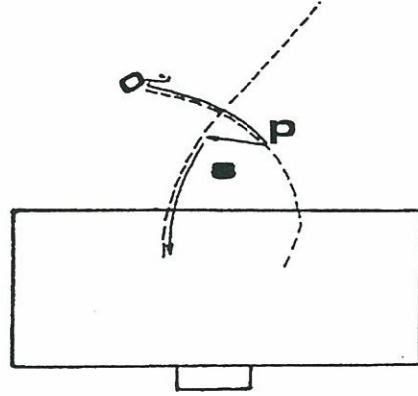


Diagram 43b

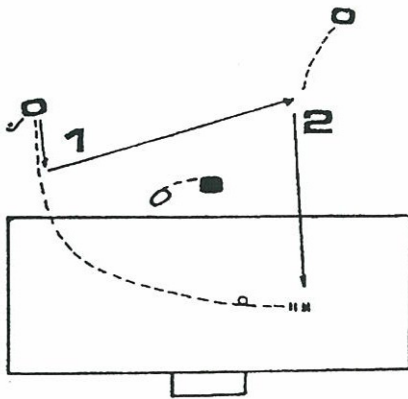


Diagram 43c

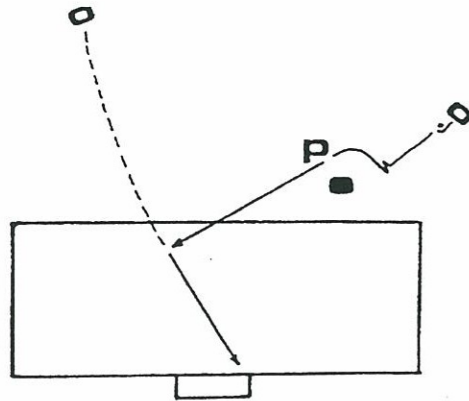


Diagram 43d

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Scissors, rotations and screening (continued)

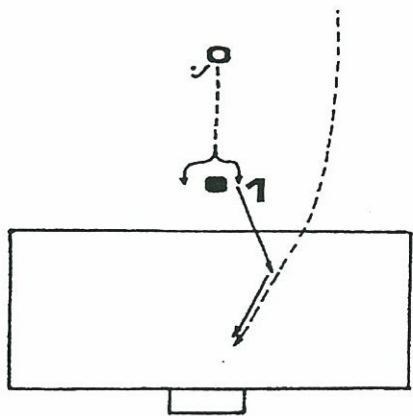


Diagram 43e

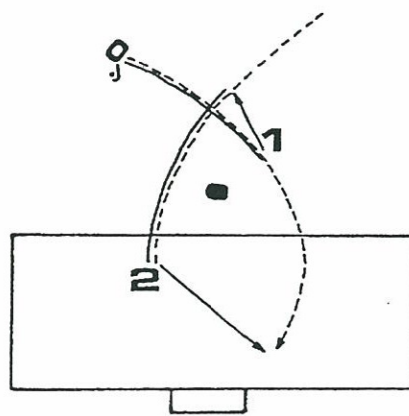


Diagram 43f

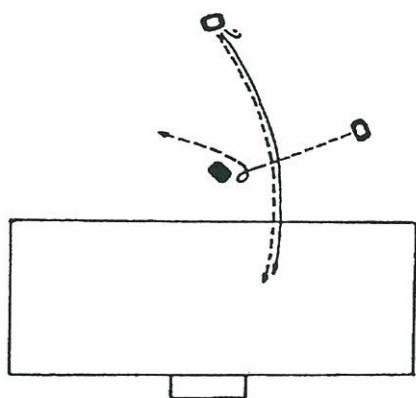


Diagram 43g

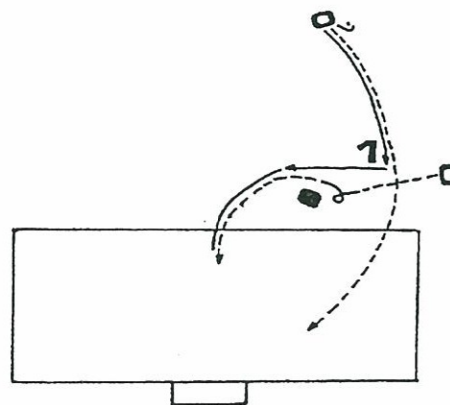


Diagram 43h

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

Scissors, rotations and screening (continued)

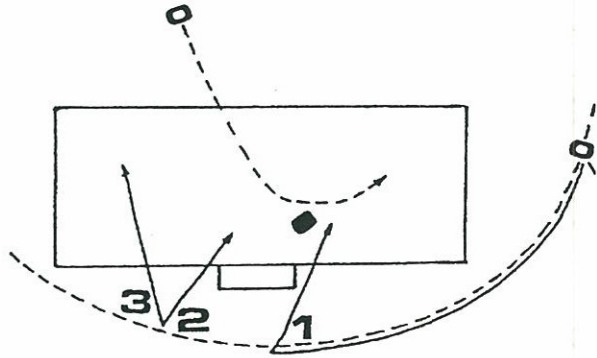


Diagram 43i

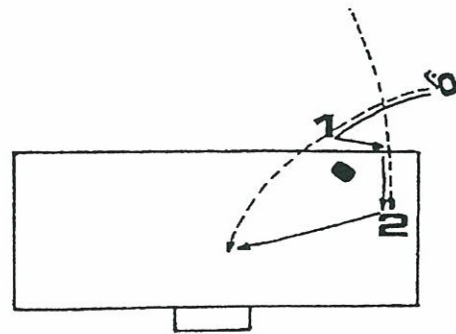


Diagram 43j

In all these types of combinations, it is worth remembering the general principles:-

- ◆ With the scissors, when the leading attacker possesses the ball, the other player will pass behind and vice-versa
- ◆ Avoid parallel play

Variations to consider and practise:-

- ◆ Vary the position of the defender
- ◆ Vary the location of the play
- ◆ Keep practising the elements of individual technique until adequate

All these points must also be considered in all types of combinations:-
3 x 1, 3 x 2, 4 x 2, 4 x 3.

Three against one (3 x 1)

This is a position of great numerical superiority, and it allows many possibilities of maximum efficiency. The difference between 2 x 1 and 3 x 1 is that it is not necessary to take the play to the zone of maximum defensive efficiency of the defender to get the most of the play.

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We shall consider some principles:-

In a situation of 3 x 1 the defender must be surrounded by a triangle, if possible equilateral, with the base behind the defender.

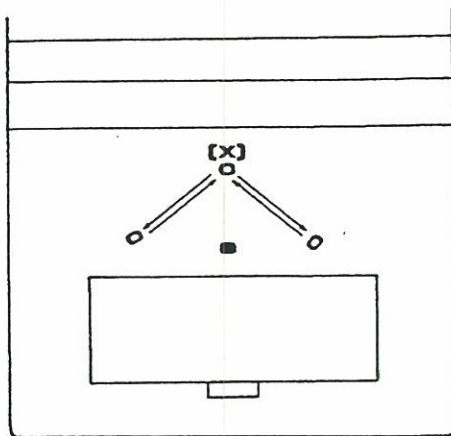


Diagram 44

The ball must be passed via the player who makes the apex (x) of the triangle.

Once the defender is out of position, the final action will be performed by the attacker in the best position for the goal.

The player in position x should never pass the penalty spot unless he has a free way forward.

When the ball is in the centre (x), it will be passed to the side, and from here back to the centre.

The player in the centre will try to keep that position, keeping the two players in front of his line, unless a scissors move is going to be performed.

It is very important to the player in x position to have a good view and control of the players on the sides.

Unless the ball is in the zone of shooting, the shot shall not take place.

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The following diagrams illustrate three against one (3 x 1)

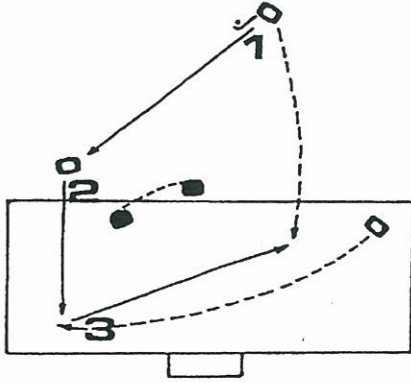


Diagram 45a

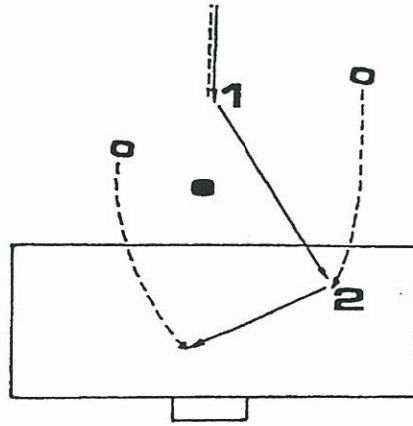


Diagram 45b

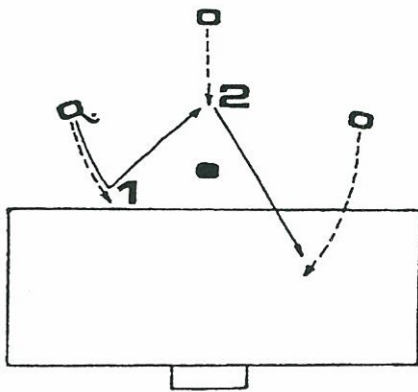


Diagram 45c

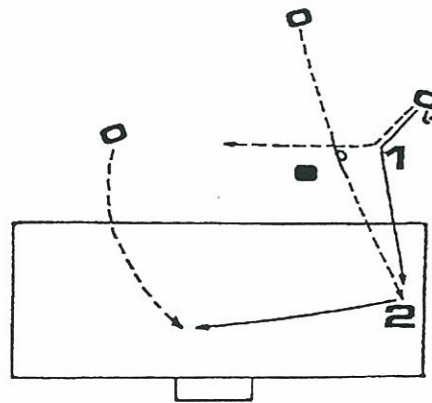


Diagram 45d

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Three against one (3 x 1) (continued)

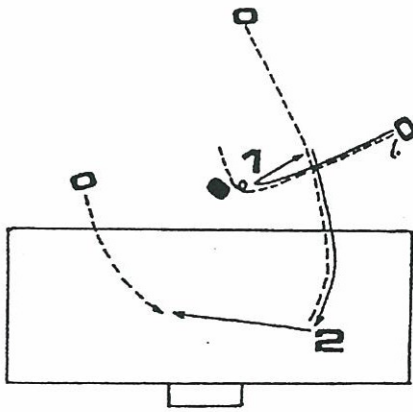


Diagram 45e

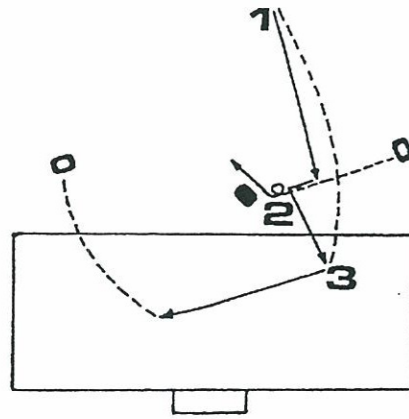


Diagram 45f

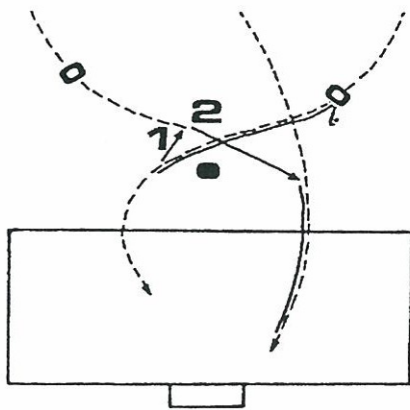


Diagram 45g

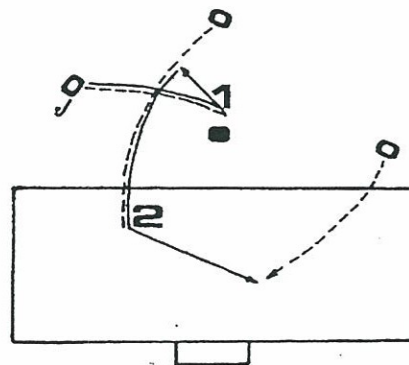


Diagram 45h

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

Three against one (3 x 1) (continued)

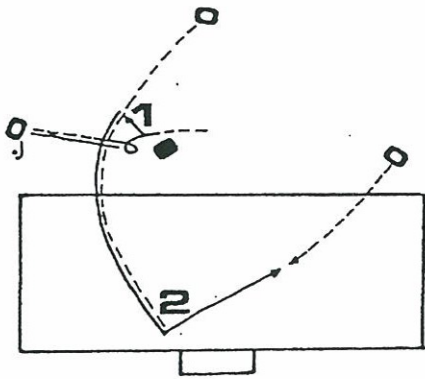


Diagram 45i

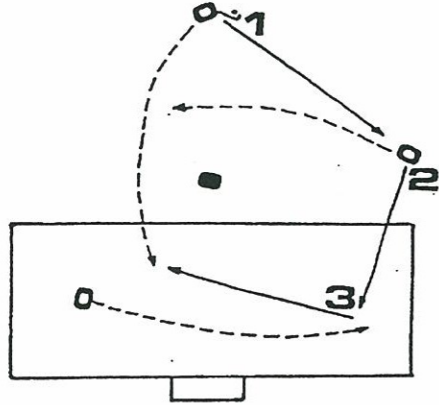


Diagram 45j

Three against two (3 x 2)

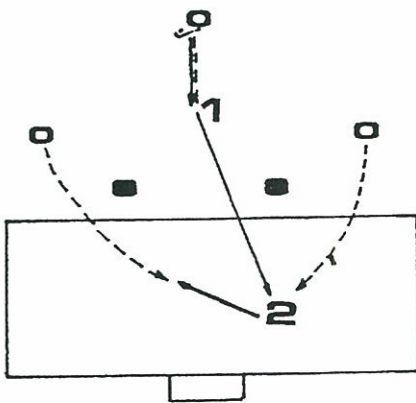


Diagram 46a

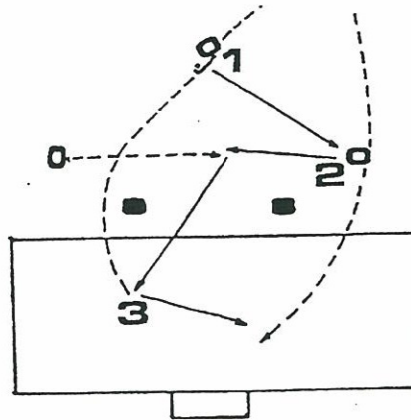


Diagram 46b

Roller Hockey Book of Tactics

Three against two (3 x 2) (continued)

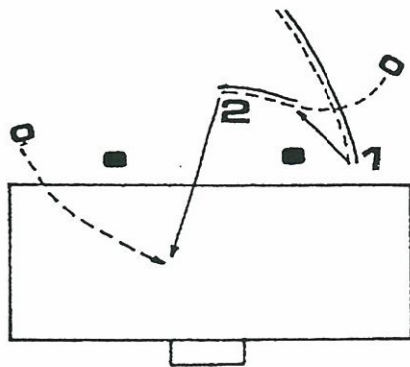


Diagram 46c

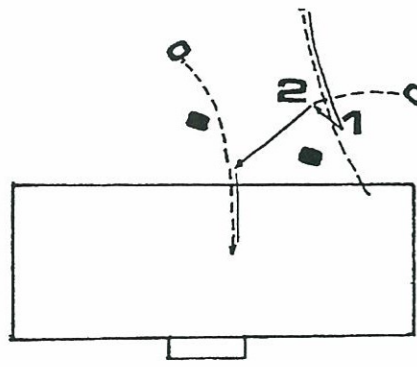


Diagram 46d

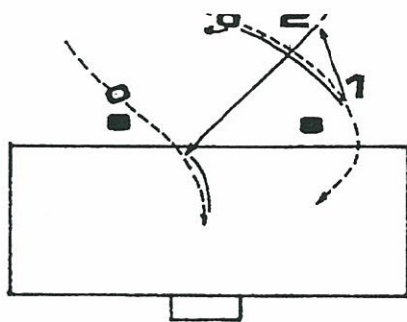


Diagram 46e

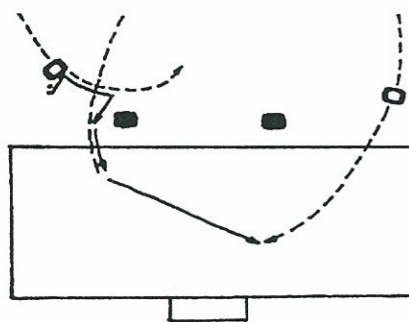


Diagram 46f

Three against two (3 x 2) (continued)

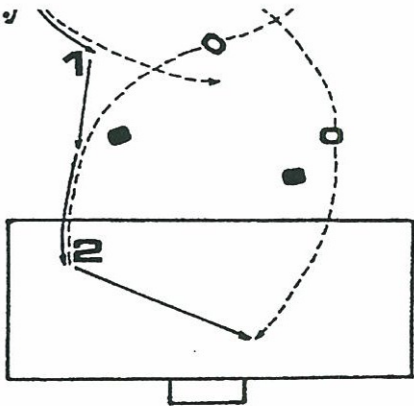


Diagram 46g

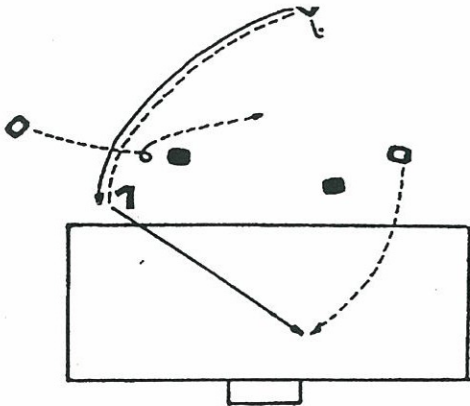


Diagram 46h

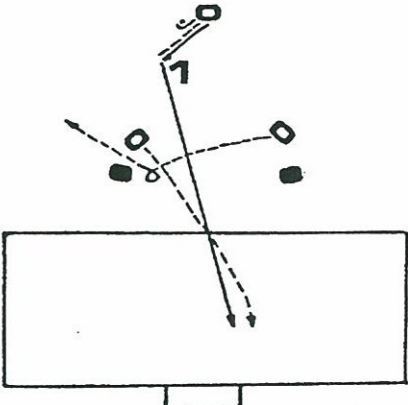


Diagram 46i

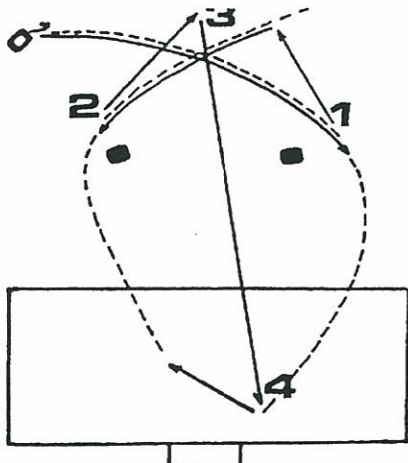


Diagram 46j

Roller Hockey Book of Tactics

Four against two (4 x 2) The plan to be followed will to search for situations 2 x 1 or 3 x 1. The fourth player will always be free of marking.

Here it is necessary to consider that, although a Roller Hockey match is with four defenders, all situations of attack must search for triangulations (combinations between 3 players).

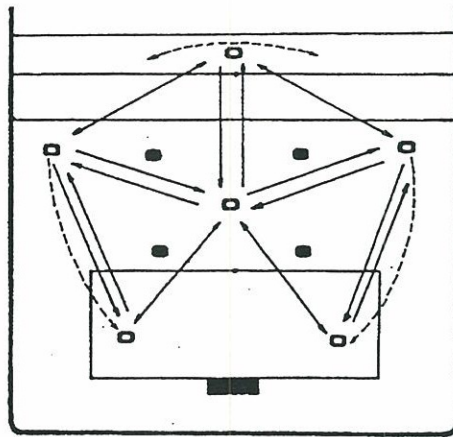


Diagram 47

Four against three (4 x 3) The first objective will be to eliminate the defensive actions of the central defender, and that can be done by screening, scissors or rotations, or even very fast passes between the attackers.

Combination types:-

These situations are more usual when there is a sent-off player.

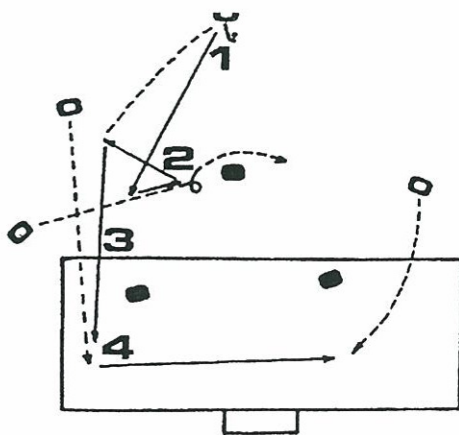


Diagram 48a

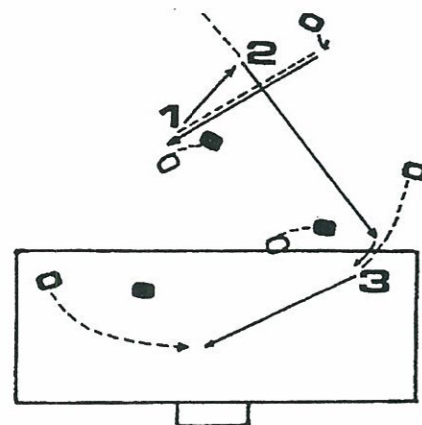


Diagram 48b

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

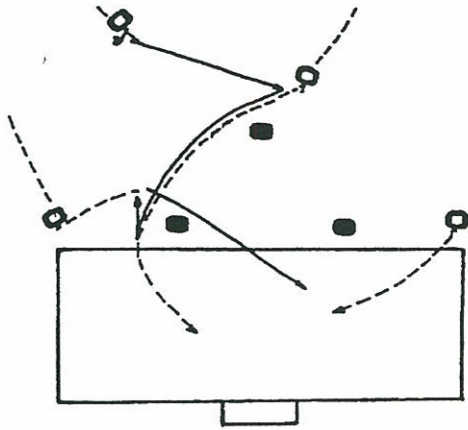


Diagram 48c

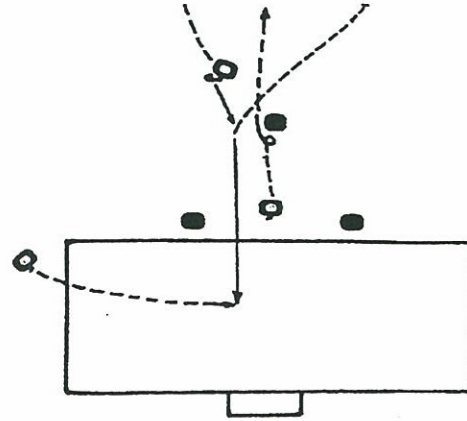


Diagram 48d

Situations of Equality - the 2 x 2 Against zone defence (marking)

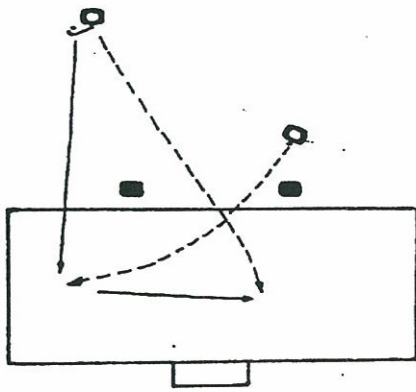


Diagram 49a

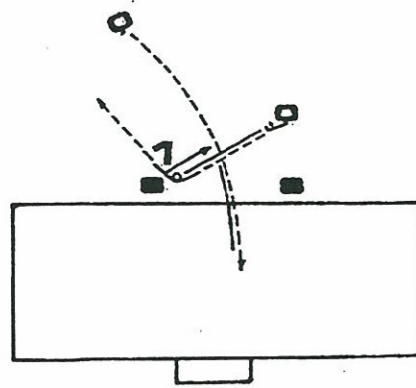


Diagram 49b

Roller Hockey Book of Tactics

Against individual markings:-

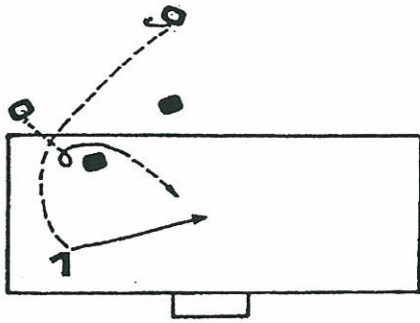


Diagram 50a

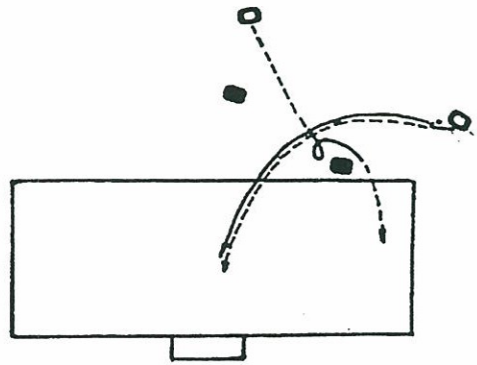


Diagram 50b

Free hits

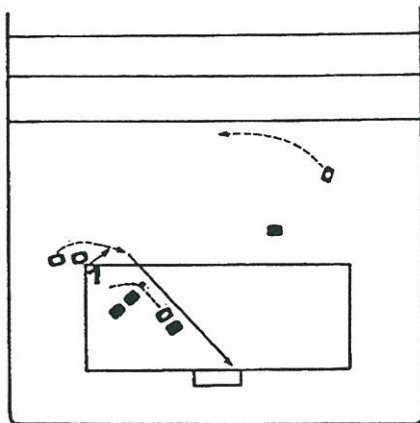


Diagram 51a

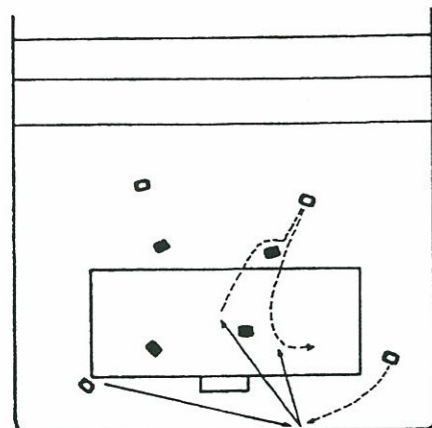


Diagram 51b

Chapter 6. Offensive Action

(Free hits continued)

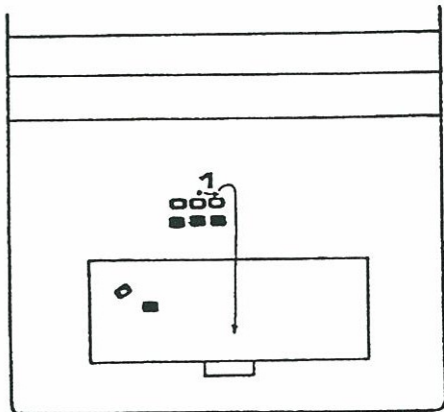


Diagram 51c

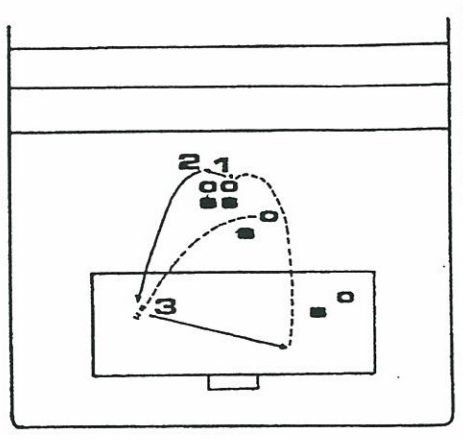
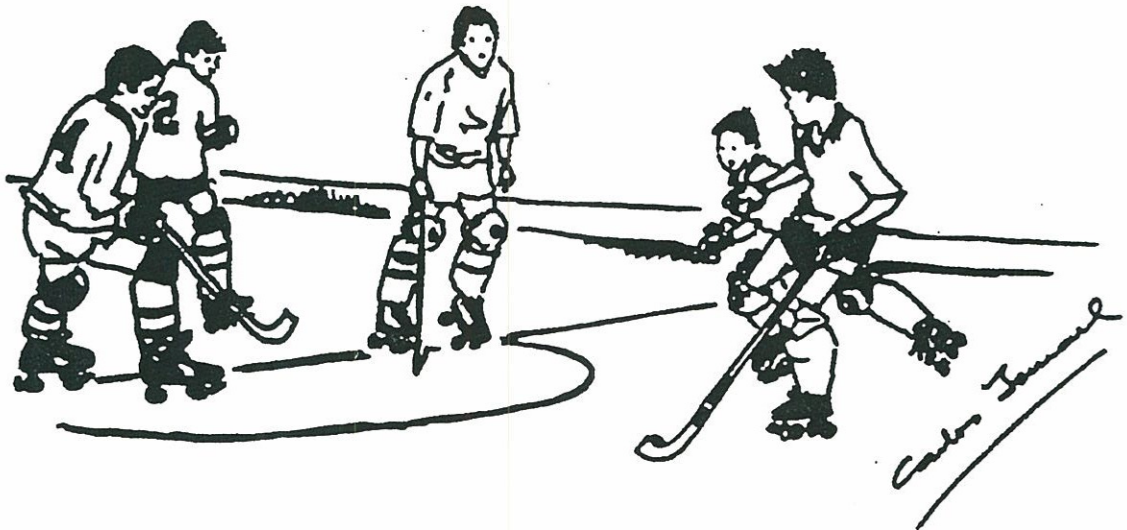


Diagram 51d

Chapter 7.

The Inverted Y (2x1x1) and The Triangle (1x2x1)



Chapter 7. The Inverted Y and The Triangle

Chapter 7. The Inverted Y and The Triangle

The Inverted Y The defensive formation often referred to as the “Inverted Y” is as shown in Diagram 52.

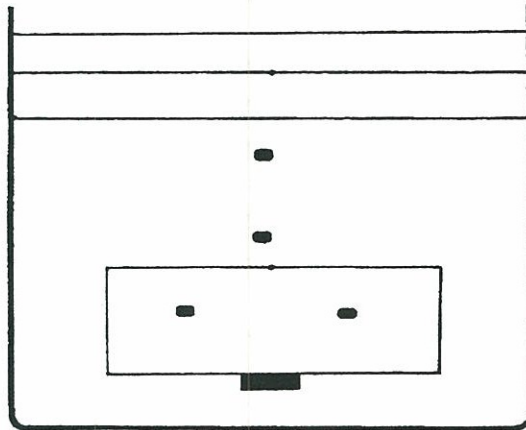


Diagram 52

Three players operate in a triangular zone defence leaving one player “floating”. This “floater” may be positioned as shown in the diagram but can be to one side or further up the rink in the “constructive” zone or even the opponents’ defensive zone.

As a general principle, the inverted Y is not a defensive system which a team uses all the time, but rather a tactic for use in certain situations, such as:-

- ◆ To gain a quick goal at the beginning of a match
- ◆ To close a gap of one or two goals at the end of the first half or beginning of the second
- ◆ The opponents are down to 3 men

Once the effect of the inverted Y is achieved, it is wise to return to the regular system as the formation has risks as well as opportunities.

The objective of the tactic is to cause indecision in the other team as to how to mark:-

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- ◆ Man to man on the floater with a further defender behind
- ◆ Two defenders keeping an eye on the floater (vigilant marking)
- ◆ Or is the floater, in fact, man to man marking the attacking team's "defender" as already indicated

The chief reason for using the tactic is to capitalise on the indecision and create an opportunity for breakaway scoring. A team using the inverted Y, especially the floater, must be well practised in counter-attack situations of 1 x 1, 1 x 0, 2 x 1 and the best results will be achieved by rehearsed moves. For example, the floater can be used as a pivot in the counter-attack as shown in Diagram 53:-

- ◆ Our defender wins possession and passes a deep ball to the floater
- ◆ Floater draws a marker and lays the ball off to a team mate coming fast out of defence

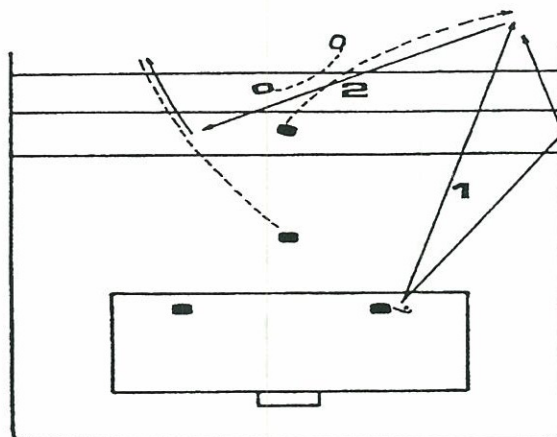


Diagram 53

Looking at the position from the point of view of the team attacking an inverted Y:-

- ◆ If they leave two defenders to cover the floater, they are left with just two forwards to attack three defenders
- ◆ Because the triangle is formed back on the goal, there will be opportunities for middle distance shots but the risk of

Chapter 7. The Inverted Y and The Triangle

counter-attack is great and possession play will be more sensible to guard a slim lead

- ◆ They might feel they are good enough to keep possession with no-one marking the floater; even so, they should make sure they only attack the goal when they have someone coming back to cover the floater if necessary. To attack the triangle see situations of 4 x 3 and 3 x 3

The Triangle The "Triangle" defence is for use when we have a game we do not want to lose but know it will be difficult to win. The triangle is formed tight to the goal. It is a trap. We intend to let our opponents play until they make a mistake and give us the chance to counter-attack.

Total concentration and a well developed sense of support are required from all our players.

The following section examines the geometry of the formation (sometimes the triangle is a diamond, sometimes a box) and the roles of the individual players relative to the position of the ball.

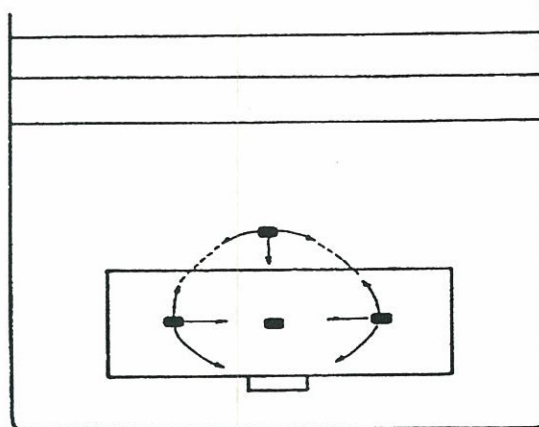


Diagram 54

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Firstly, the defending players must know that only 3 of them are involved in zone with the ball.

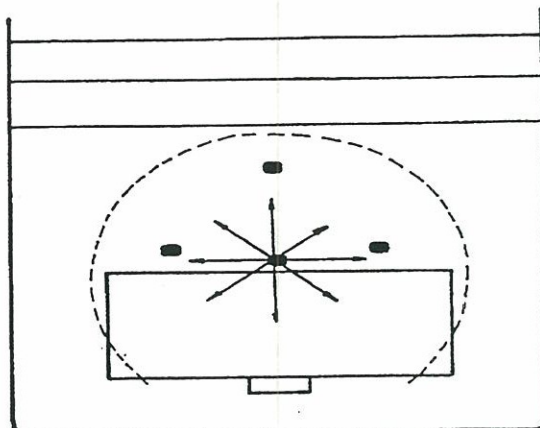


Diagram 55/56

The fourth player is the Sweeper.

The Sweeper is the key to the system. From his positioning, he can watch out for all his team mates. He:-

- ◆ Controls the action of the three defenders (calling their attention to threats of the opponents' play)
- ◆ Backs up (comes to reinforce) any of them when attacked
- ◆ Is the pivot point where the triangle can become a box (see below)
- ◆ Can also be the pivot point for a counter-attack to free a player for a far post finish

Diagram 57 shows the reaction of the triangle as an opponent with the ball skates anti-clockwise. The triangle pivots on the sweeper to become a box.

Diagrams 58 a, b and c show the directions in which these players must be facing as they change position and the areas of the rink they must be watching.

Chapter 7. The Inverted Y and The Triangle

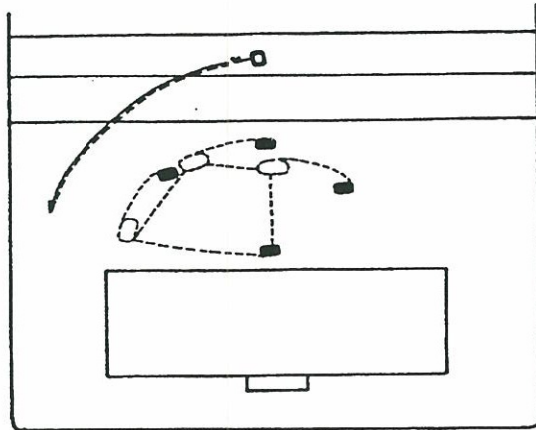


Diagram 57

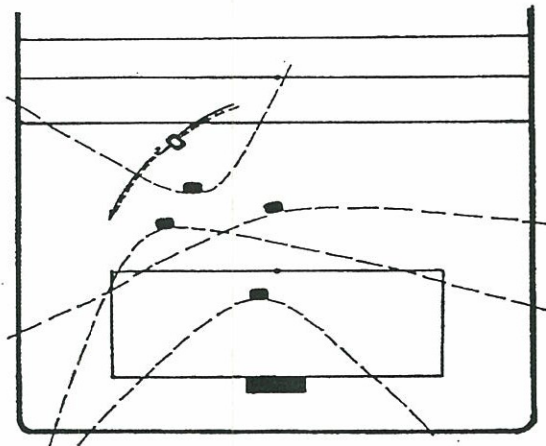


Diagram 58a

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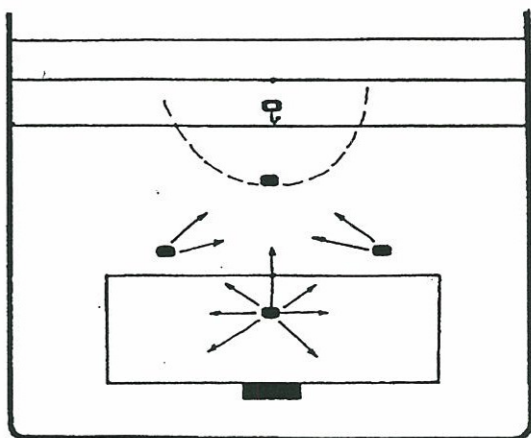


Diagram 58b

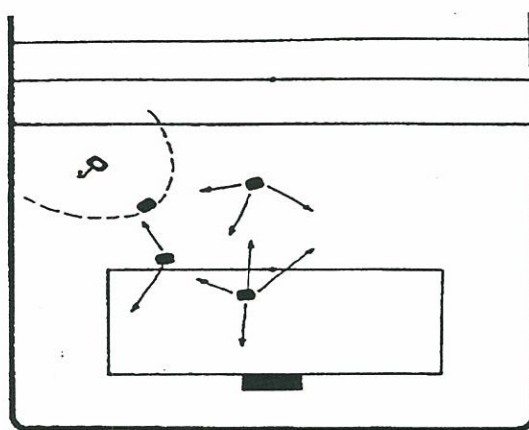


Diagram 58c

If the opponents pass the ball around, then the defenders continue to mark in zone (in accordance with the principles set out in "Basic Roller Hockey"). We **only** make **this movement** if the opponent skates with the ball.

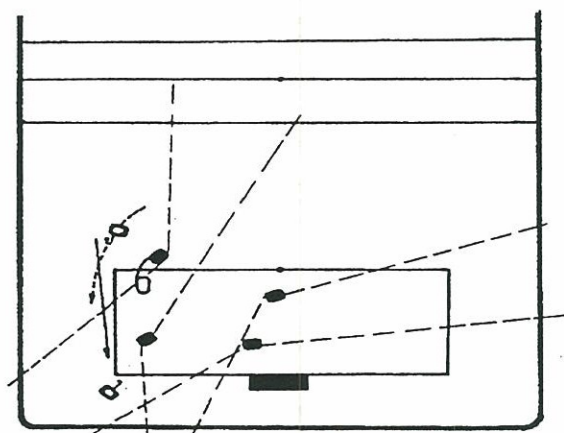


Diagram 59

As you can probably see, the initial triangle shrinks laterally to a box, pivoting on the sweeper.

Defender "A" moves to the left, zone marking the opponent in possession. Defender "B" moves back. Defender "C" moves behind or

Chapter 7. The Inverted Y and The Triangle

in line with "A", and Defender "D" (Sweeper) stays more or less in the same position.

As you can see, with the rotation the initial triangle shrinks laterally.

If the ball is passed from side to back of the defence the sweeper comes off and the triangle is transformed into a box, players A or B must pay attention to their backs so positioning for vision is important.

Other General Ideas When Rotating From a Triangle To a Box:-

- A. Always forward, sometimes left sometimes right.
- B. Always backward, sometimes left sometimes right.
- C. Sometimes backwards left, sometimes forward left.
- D. Sometimes backwards right, sometimes forward right.

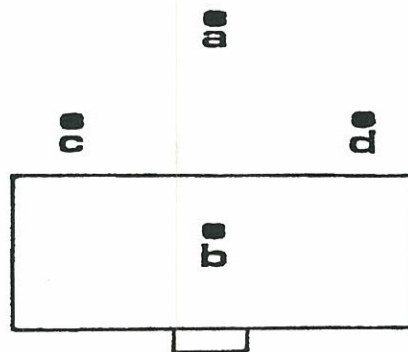


Diagram 60

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As stated at the outset, this system is a trap to allow counter-attacks. We can now consider some forms of counter-attack out of this defence.

Situation 1

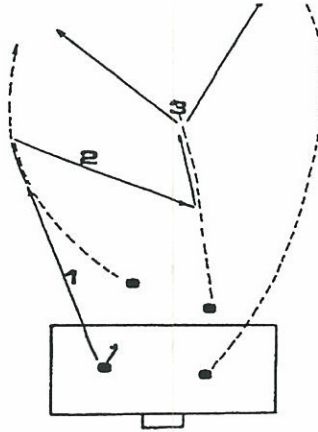


Diagram 61

Causing 2 x 1, 2 x 0, 1 x 0, 1 x 1, 2 x 2

Situation 2

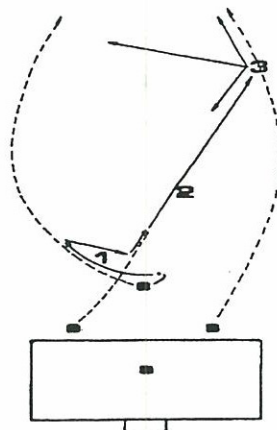


Diagram 62a

Chapter 7. The Inverted Y and The Triangle

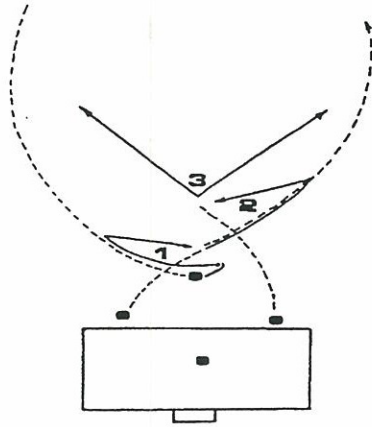


Diagram 62b

Situation 3

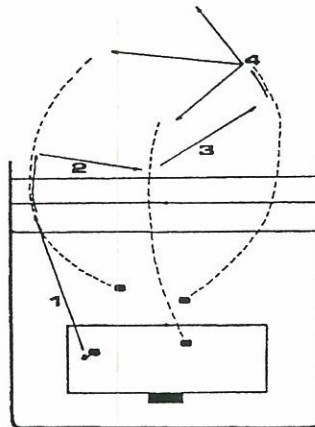


Diagram 63

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Remember that these passes must be well practised so that results are obtained regularly.

Speed of execution and precision of passing are of the utmost importance.

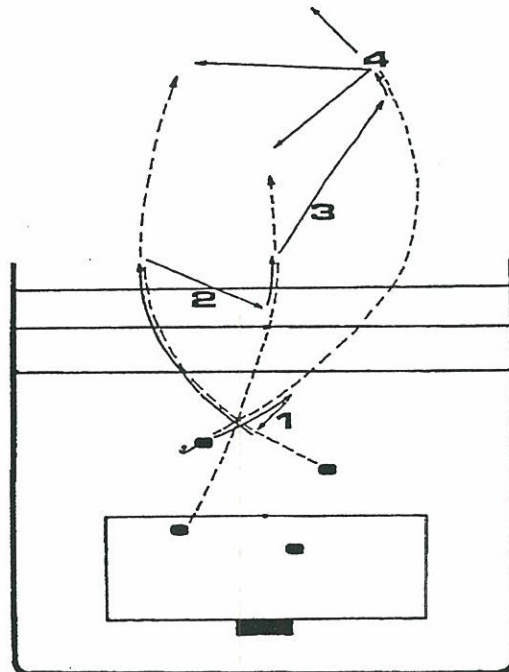


Diagram 64

Chapter 7. The Inverted Y and The Triangle

More usual 1 x 1
situation

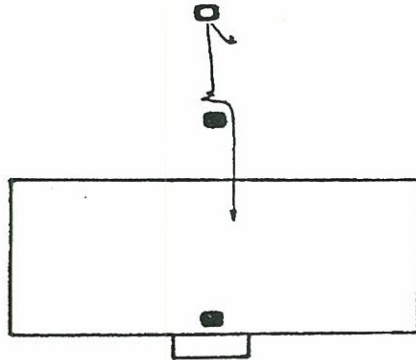
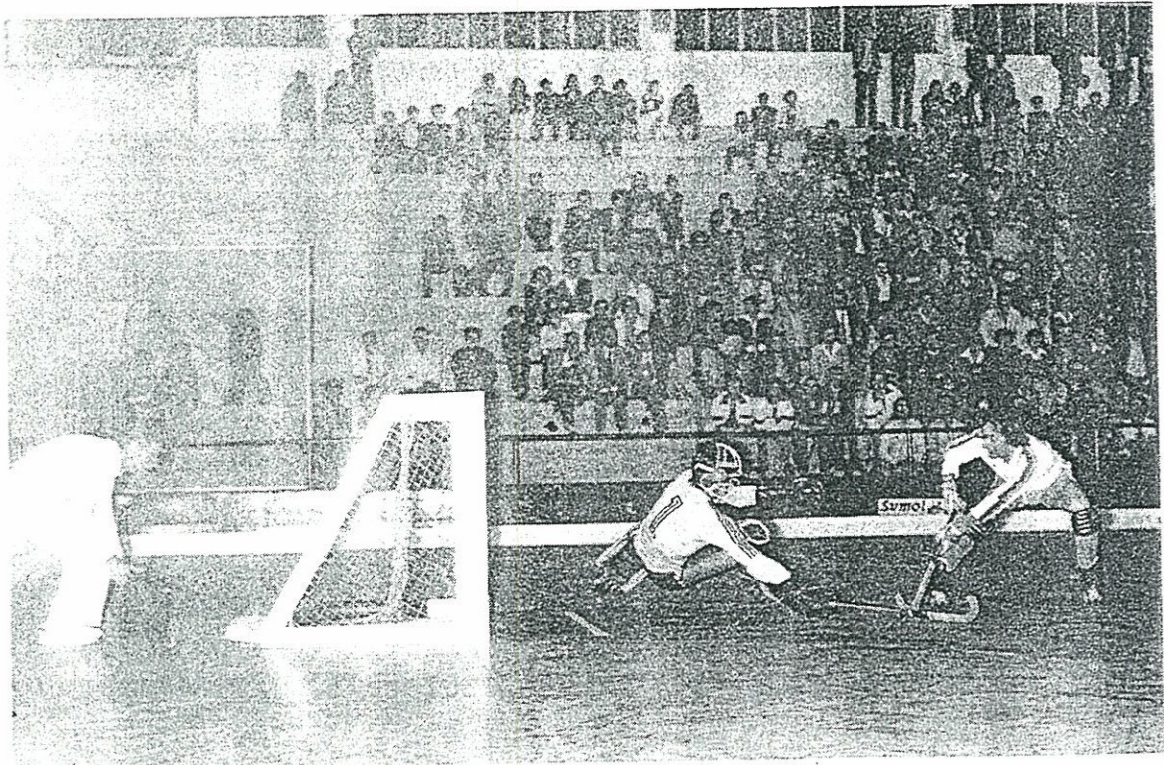


Diagram 65

In this position, all the hard work on our individual techniques comes together - spoons, ball between the legs, Italian turn and so on. This is the charismatic Roller Hockey Player - fast, fit, dynamic and skilful and the “great goal” is what we all want to score!



Carlos Ismael (Portugal) faces Frank Barham (England)

