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Paper

“Receiving skills”
By Guillermo Fonseca – Argentina

Introduction

Nowadays hockey became a faster, sparkling and very exiting game. Players are all the time in shape, due to the continuous substitution rule; and as a consequence of improved physiological training, spaces are reduced and time to solve situations is extremely short. So this is a new approach to the problem, I will specially focus on midfielders and forwards receptions (Usually the most pressed players), as a way to create spaces, solve 1:1 situations, and giving flow and continuity to the game.

When space becomes smaller, different solutions are possible. The first one is the use of individual skills. We all have seen acrobatics skills during the last international tournaments, tri – dimensional skills, deflections, and one touch passes and a hundred of other abilities, but we have just seen a few number of special receiving skills. Nevertheless those receiving skills many times helped to create clear goal scoring situations or penalty corners. So I think that training those skills properly and improving understanding between passers and receivers will create new playing developments and amazing solutions to difficult attacking situations.

Elements of a good passer – receiver connection

Most important elements:

- 1- Passers (Good visual skills, position of the ball) They need space to solve the game situations and they also have to see what their teammates want to do, the way their mates want to receive and when they need the passes to be done.
- 2- Passes (Importance of good techniques, execution speed, faking and lifting) The passes should have enough speed to avoid interceptions and anticipations, but they shouldn't be excessively fast. To avoid anticipation it is also important to do evasive actions as faking, lifting and passing on the run (At the highest speed) or watching off the ball (or both). Passers shouldn't point on the body of t receivers, but on the extreme of their sticks if space is extremely short and it has to point to the open space if there is some space available.

- 3- Receivers (Previous movements, lead). As I said before, receivers can't do many movements, because if they do so, ball carriers will receive a big pressure and consequently will lose the ball possession. Leading has two moments; the first consists of creating space before receiving the ball and the second consists of doing explosive movements exactly in the moment when passers place their eyes on receivers. The only movement allowed is to take one step on the opposite direction to give the message to their teammate that they don't want to receive the ball there.
- 4- Defenders: If the receivers pay attention to the defender's position, it will be easier to control the ball.
- 5- Receiving (Techniques, feet and body positions, grips) Receivers can use different receiving skills, which will be the main focus of this work.
- 6- Communication skills between them. The codes of understanding of the receivers are: Eye connection, pointing with stick or index finger on the direction where receivers want to stop the ball, taking a step on the opposite direction or just putting down the stick on the floor.
- 7- Available space: The points of reference of passers are:
 - a- If it is a long distance pass, the reference is the zone in which the receivers are.
 - b- If it is an intermediate distance pass, the reference is the body of the receivers.
 - c- If it is a short distance pass, the reference is the stick of the defenders.

Leading

Leading is an important part of receiving the ball. Being capable to use or to create a space and exploiting it is a rare ability nowadays. It is remarkable the use of explosive sprints for every kind of movements running off the defenders pressure. We shall avoid double and triple movements due to lack of space and time.

It is necessary a proper scan of the game situation, and good understanding. The key points are when and where do they pass the ball.

It is also important focus on technical details, but progressively. As coaches we have to detect the main mistake and work it on until being able to go ahead

Important elements for leading

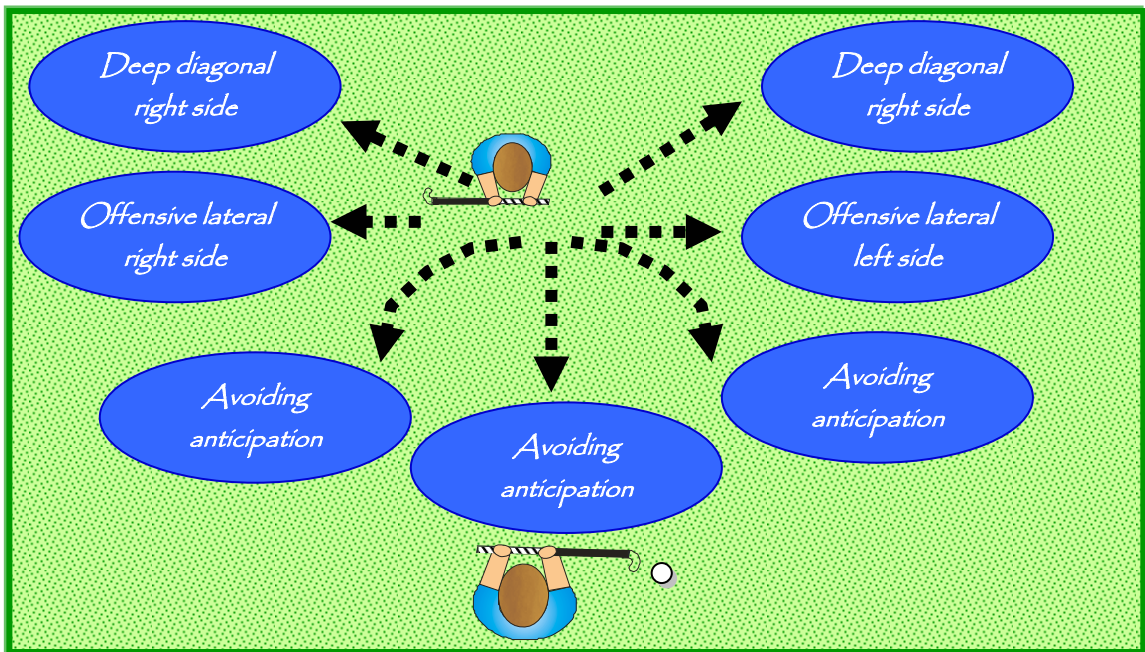
1. Good understanding codes. a strong step on the opposite direction and using the body to run away the pressure of defenders.
2. Timing, run in time (Neither too early nor too late)
3. Speed and surprise
4. Previous movements
5. Reception skills (one touch, turning, sliding and lifting the ball)
6. Watch the ball all the time if possible
7. Low body position
8. Footwork
9. Pass quality

Important elements for the next action

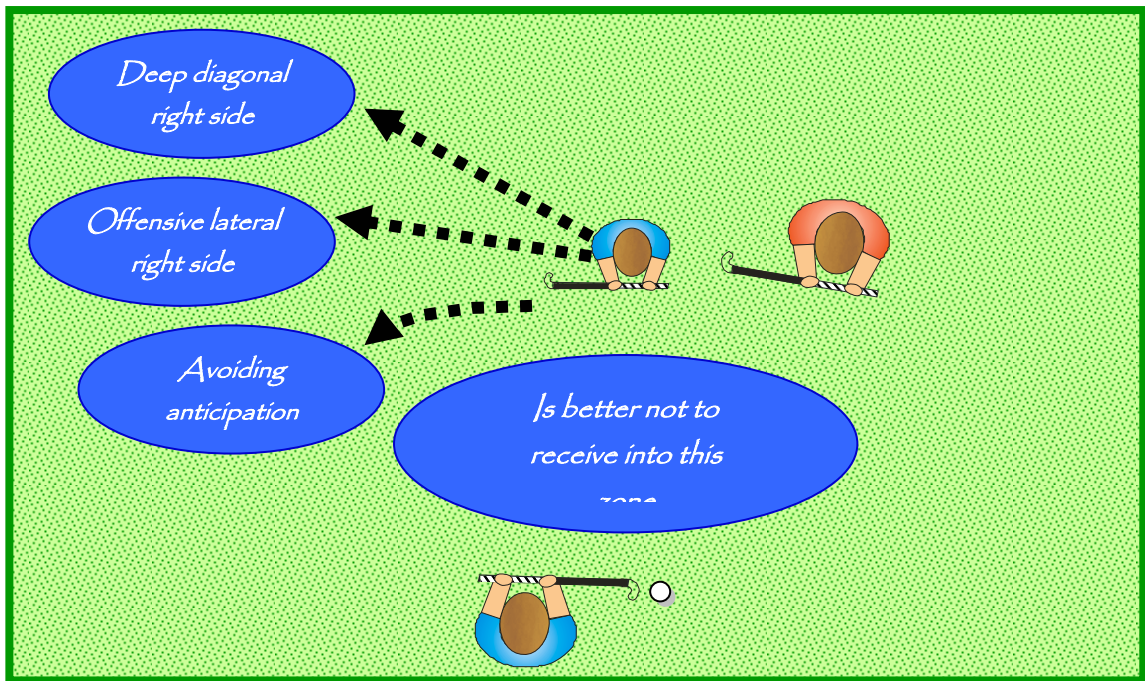
In the moment in which we want to receive the ball we should pay attention to some particular elements as:

1. Next action (What would receivers do with the ball)
2. Defender's body position (Where defenders are placed. It is always easier to receive on the opposite side)
3. Defender's stick position (In order to decide to use lift receptions or flat ones)
4. Number of defending players
5. Number of attacking players
6. Available space
7. Available pass options
8. Distance from our goal
9. Distance to opponent's goal
10. To see if they will be able to play, or to face the game options
11. Looking for positions in which defenders couldn't see at the same time both the attacker and the ball.
12. Looking inside the field if it is possible when receiving. It makes easier the vision of the game options.

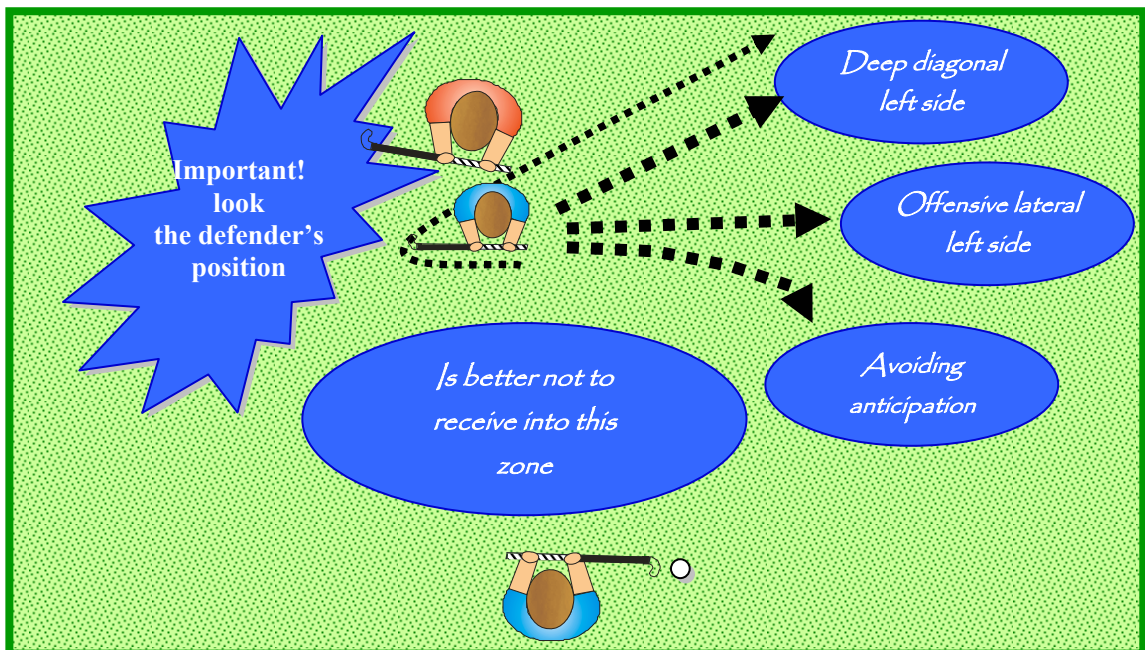
Typical reception zones



New right side reception zones – Open and deep receptions



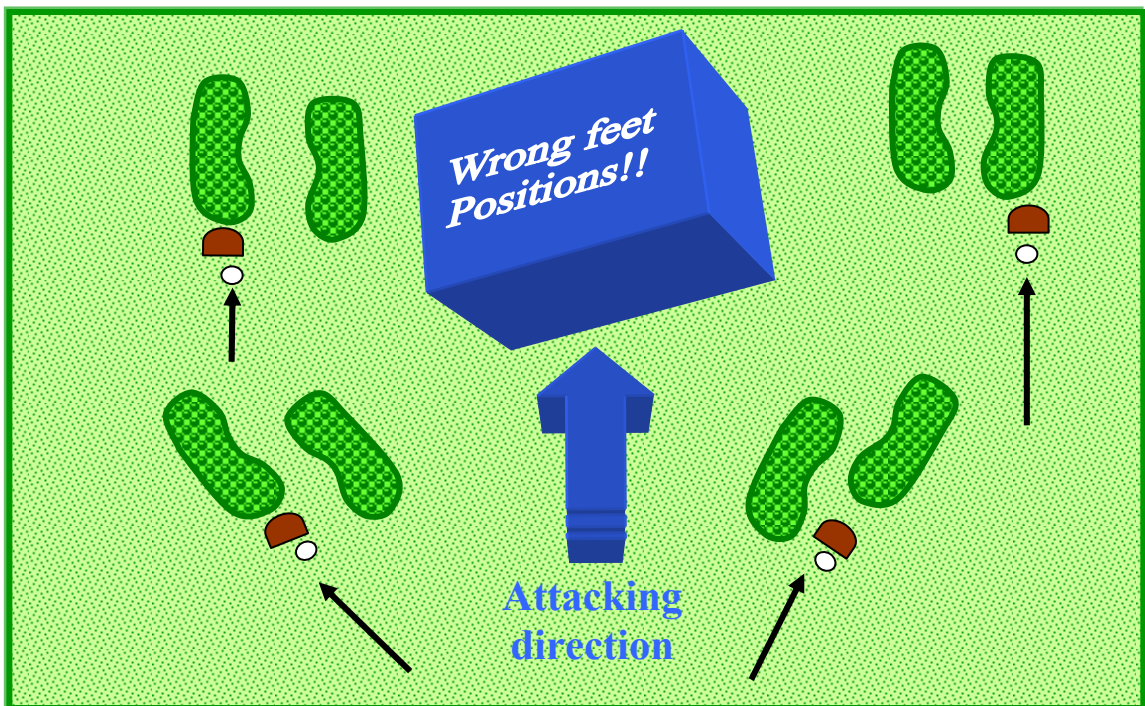
New left side reception zones

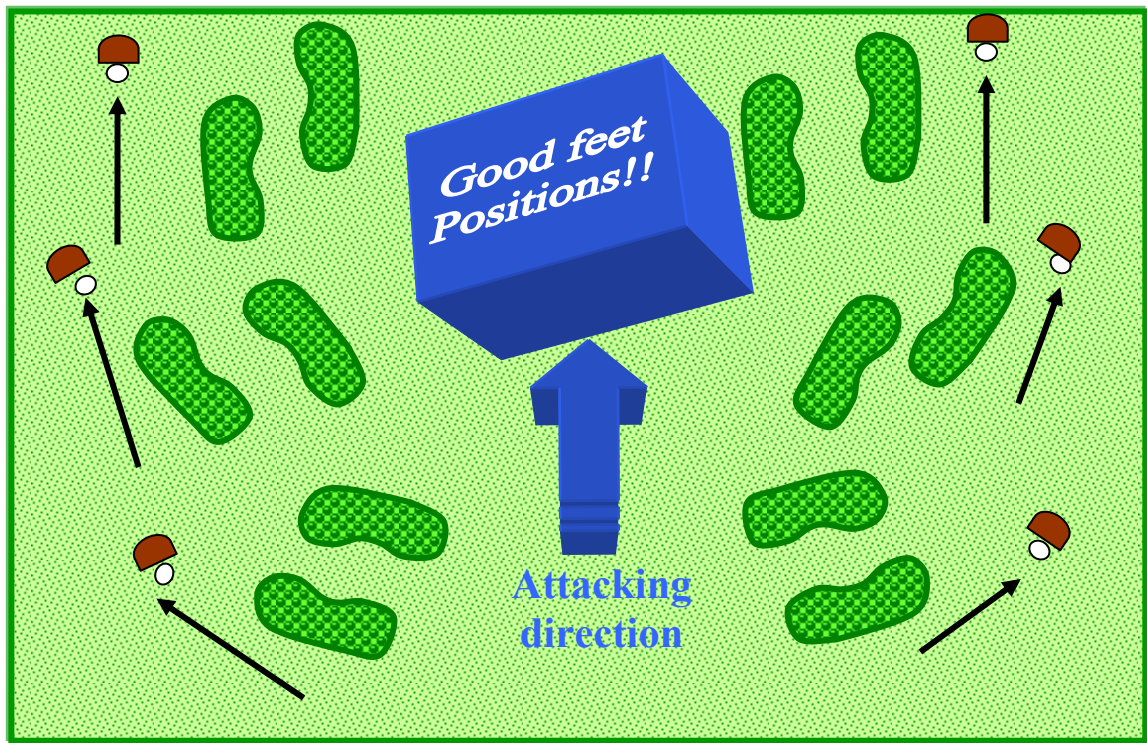


Why not receive avoiding anticipation?

1. They reduce space
2. They still need to eliminate their defenders
3. They are playing facing their own goal
4. They don't have any surprise
5. Defensive pass available only
6. They are going backwards
7. They have only defensive passes as options.

Key points – Footwork





Different ways to receive the ball

In addition to the traditional receptions (frontal and lateral receptions, with the stick in diagonal or vertical position and aerial receptions), in this chapter I will explain carefully the new techniques used by midfielders and forwards.

The list will consider two important aspects: Reception side and technique. Depending on the side, we can classify receptions as:

1. Forehand side receptions
2. Reverse side receptions

Depending on the chosen technique, reception skills can be classified as:

- a. Open reception, escaping from the defender's pressure.
- b. Lift reception, over the defender's stick.
- c. Changing the direction suddenly.
- d. Changing the direction suddenly twice.
- e. One hand reception.
- f. Sliding reception.
- g. One hand aerial reception.
- h. Receiving and turning.

Therefore, mentioning both classifications together we will have sixteen reception skills. For each one we will focus specially on technical details. In each description I will concentrate specifically on a brief description of the skill, grip, stick position, feet direction, body position, and ball placement.

1. Reception skills

1.1 Open reception, escaping from the defender's pressure.

Use: Delaying the end of the action. The body has a significant role covering the ball.

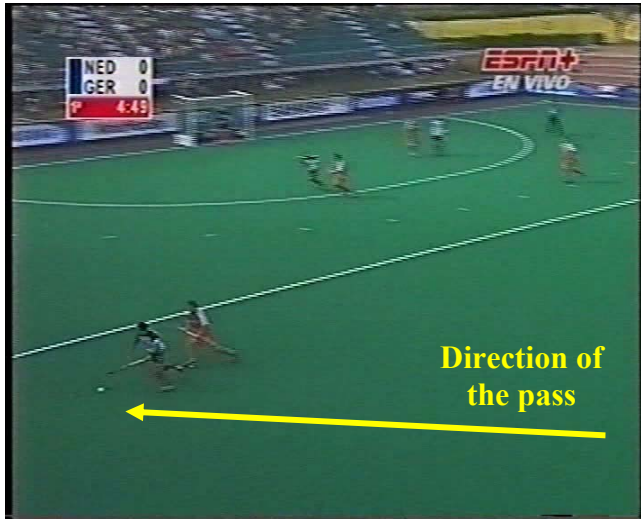
Grip: Low and soft right hand. Index finger extended.

Stick: Should accompany the path of the ball (forehand side). Left hand rotates quickly to stop the ball (reverse side)

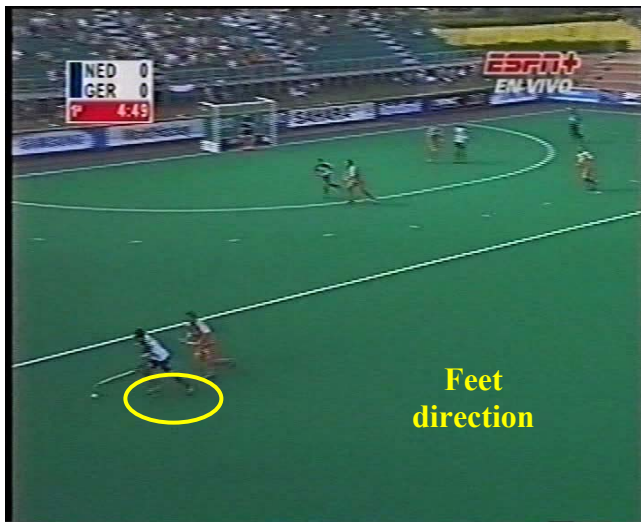
Body: Low body position.

Feet: Should be in perpendicular position to the path of the ball. When receiving, feet position changes slightly and feet now point on the opposite backline.

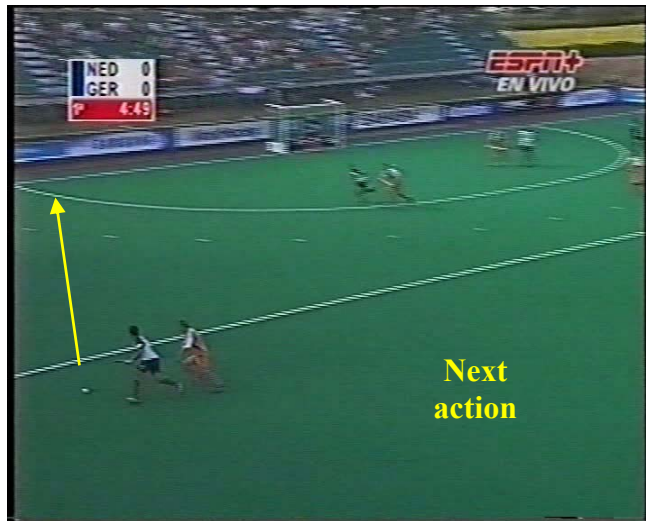
Ball: Should get to the open space. Strong passes are preferable due to the lack of space. Receivers can also deflect the ball to the open space in order to escape from defenders.



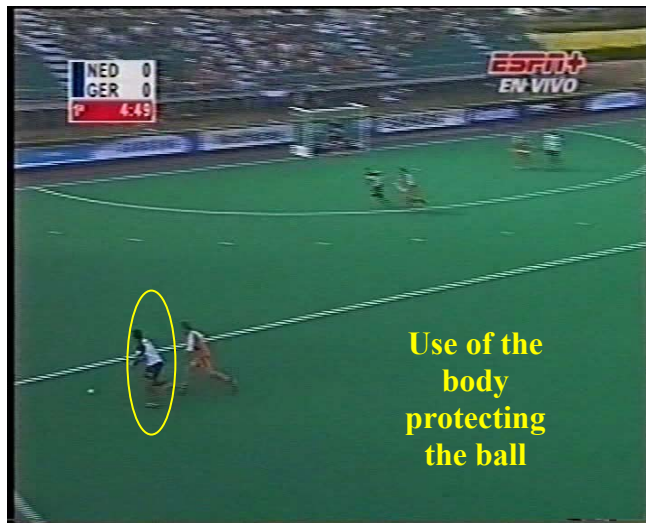
Attack player is running to the open space, trying to control a long distance pass. In this case the receiver is using the one hand reception skill on the open space.



Another important point is the feet direction. A correct position may help to do a better next action.



In this case, the German player pass the ball to the deep zone, but he has already won the 1:1 situation, receiving correctly.



After receiving, the receiver should put his body between the defender and the ball, to protect it.

1.2. Lift reception, over the defender's stick.

Use: When the defenders are in a low position.

Grip: Low right hand. Both hands grip firmly.

Stick: Stick should be slightly open and placed on the ground. The ball does not need to be lifted. The ball is lifted because of the open stick position and the ball's speed. A little turn of the wrists could help for slow passes.

Body: Low body position.

Feet: Feet placed diagonally or pointing to opposite backline.

Ball: It should not come very fast.

1.3. Changing the direction suddenly.

Use: When the defenders leave inside space.

Grip: Intermediate right hand position, index finger extended.

Stick: On the ground, in the path of the ball, to do only one movement. Slapping the ball slightly, changing the ball's direction.

Body: Keeping the eyes on the ball, shoulders should point to the own backline.
Feet: Placed diagonally or pointing to opposite backline. Long step before receiving and changing the body's weight from one foot to the other
Ball: Slow passes can be received in this way.

1.4. Changing the direction suddenly twice

Use: Surprising the defenders.

Grip: Intermediate right hand position, index finger extended (to improve sensitivity). After the first change of direction we should rotate the left wrist again in the opposite direction.

Stick: On the ground, in the path of the ball, doing just one movement.

Body: Keeping the eyes on the ball, shoulders should point to the own backline.

Feet: Placed diagonally or pointing to opposite backline. Double body's weight translation from one foot to the other.

Ball: Slow passes can be received in this way.

1.5. One hand reception

Use: To control hard passes.

Grip: Firmly with the left hand.

Stick: Diagonal position and perpendicularly to the path of the ball.

Body: Left arm completely outstretched.

Feet: Placed diagonally or pointing to opposite backline.

Ball: It depends on the situation

1.6. Sliding reception

Use: To rescue hard passes.

Grip: Firmly with the left hand.

Stick: On the ground.

Body: Sliding across the floor. Two options: A. Body completely extended. B. Sliding over the leg. The free hand can also help supporting the body weight.

Feet: -----

Ball: Far from receivers

1.7. One hand aerial reception

Use: To rescue hard aerial passes.

Grip: Firmly with the left hand.

Stick: Parallel to the floor.

Body: Left arm completely outstretched.

Feet: Placed diagonally or pointing to opposite backline.

Ball: Aerial ball.

1.8. Receiving and turning (hooking up the ball)

Use: To change suddenly the direction when receiving.

Grip: Both arms completely outstretched. Left hand and right elbow together (reverse side)

Stick: In a small angle with the floor, to be able to hook up the ball. Stick firmly pressed on the floor to have more control.

Body: Low body position.

Feet: Footwork. Transfer the body's weight from right to left and vice versa.

Ball: Should be completely stopped before being hooked up. So it has to be accelerated slowly.

Conclusions

Being hardworking coaches and studying constantly the changes of the game will help us to improve the performance of our teams. This is just an approach to the development of reception skills, which is one of the most important topics about attacking game. I have great expectations about further developments of these techniques. We all want to see more exiting matches and I think that by improving reception skills, our midfielders and forwards will feel more confident and will add new options to solve the constant defenders pressure.