

# The 7 laws of field hockey to play it effectively

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Everything in the universe is governed by one law or the other, and so is field hockey. Here are core 7 laws of the game, to play it smartly and effectively. When ever any individual athlete or the team, as a whole, steps away from it, it effects - diminishes - its effectiveness. Of course, there are times, when there is a exception to every law, during the run of play. These laws also govern the game of soccer and basketball. In my opinion, these sports employ some, if not all the laws, to a higher degree and effectiveness, than compared to field hockey. Here are the 7 laws.

## 1. Ball travels faster than the player:

This is a pure and simple law and does not need much explanation. At the same time, during the heat - run -of the game, one sees it so much under employed and misused and even abused. This even hurts the most skillful teams, when they do not abide by it.

## 2. Play first time - one touch field hockey:

In other words play a passing game. As it keeps the individuals and the team on their toes and keep them moving. It also makes the things harder for the opponents, to keep it up. Yes, there comes a opportunity, to run with a ball, a few yards, and end up with a shot on a goal. Go for it when the timings is optimum.

For Example: The Brazilian soccer team are the masters of this law and so is their winning record to support this law.

## 3. The player who passes you the ball is free 9 out of 10 times:

Please observe this law during the next game or practice. You will be pleasantly surprised that how true this is. It is surprising that how the teams don't take maximum advantage of it. And get into trouble time and time again.

## 4. Play the right side to build the attack and the left side to score the field goals.

This is a powerful concept and employed diligently by the top teams.

The key field goals, in the very critical matches, have been scored from a pass of a Right inner floating in the Play making space to the leading Center Forward. Please refer to author's article, "Space awareness"

There is always some room for flexibility in this law, as some teams prefer to attack from the left, as they have a strong Left Inner. for Example Pakistan with Shabaz Ahmed in the 1994 Sydney world cup and Holland with Teun de Nooijer, in recent times, when he plays in this position.

Shining example: While observing and co relating the video tapes from the men's 1962 and 1990, soccer World cup finals, the winning goals came ditto from this one same situation, using the above law and so did in the women's 2007 China soccer world cup final, where Germany scored the winning field goal against Brazil and won the world cup..

## 5. Play in triangles maintaining the width and depth of it.

The Law - concept - is to divide the whole team in to mini departments, namely Right side triangle, Left side triangle, midfield triangle etc, to employ offensive or defensive strategies, during the run of play. Just a tip while building a attack employ the right and left side, attack, with the ratio of 60% to 40%, respectively

Please also refer to the flexibility example mentioned in Law # 4. Looking at the big picture this triangle play, also compliments the Law of using the width and depth of the whole field, to create and exploit space.

## 6. Change the focus of play from the left to the right and vice versa

When the ball comes from the left side (Left inner) pass it to the right side (right inner or right winger), this way catching the opponents, shifting from one side of the field to the other, and in case they are not fast enough to recover or react, they can be caught in the middle, which will leave wide open gaps to be exploited.

This concept is employed to a high degree by the top teams in the world, by moving the ball in the back, employing the services of the back four defensive players. They sure are very effective.

## 7 Center half and sweeper back are the base - axle - of the team, on which the whole team rotates and functions.

Before the No off side rule came in to play in 1996, Center half was the key player and with the combination of the midfield triangle of Center half, Right inner and Left inner, formed the base on which the whole team rotated and functioned. Now, this is mostly governed by Sweeper back / Right full back with the combination of the back four defensive players namely, Right half, Right full back, Left full back and Left half back, to form the base on which the team functions effectively.

## Conclusion:

As coaches, we all think a lot. Zillion thoughts dance in our mind, they come and go. We like to let go most of them and capture some key ones. It is always beneficial to jot down the thoughts on a piece of paper or your notebook. Especially the ones, which come to your mind, while in the shower &ndash; where one is, in the state of mind, which is most serene - to give them a format for future reference, particularly if they are as important as the above laws of the game.

By the way, Jack Nicklaus the legendary golfer's most creative thoughts came to his mind, when he was in the shower. The question is how will one jot them down, while one is taking a shower? This is a dilemma which one needs to solve creatively and gracefully. Cheers

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