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HOCKEY

MODERN SPORTS

EDITED BY

HOWARD MARSHALL

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Sport and General

THE AUTHOR

Modern Sports Edited by Howard Marshall

HOCKEY

BY

D. S. MILFORD

Illustrated with 28 *pages of photographs and* 10 *diagrams*

LONDON
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EDITOR'S NOTE

I TAKE some pride in introducing Mr Milford's book on hockey since it represents the first attempt to deal comprehensively and at length with this most admirable of amateur games.

Mr Milford, I think, hardly appreciated the magnitude of the task when he first undertook to write, though it gradually became apparent to him that any game can spread itself far more extensively on paper than it does on the field of play. It is a tribute to his perseverance and his powers of selection and exposition that he has produced so lucid and coherent a treatise on the game.

Of his qualifications for writing there was never any doubt, as those who know of his prowess for England and Oxford will agree. At Oxford Mr Milford was a triple Blue—hockey, rackets, and lawn tennis—and although he is best known to-day as the world's rackets champion, he has also been an international hockey player since 1930, and has twenty-five caps.

Hockey is not a spectacular pastime in the sense that it attracts great crowds; and it has therefore escaped many of the evils which threatened to undermine the character of such fine games as Rugby football and cricket.

As Mr Milford points out, of all hockey's virtues the most highly prized and the most jealously guarded is its purely amateur status. It is fitting, therefore, in these days of commercialized sport, that due tribute should be paid to hockey, and I think that every one who has the game's best interests at heart will welcome Mr Milford's book.

HOWARD MARSHALL.

LONDON, 1938.

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FOREWORD

THE task is at length accomplished; and readers may rest assured that I shall not lightly put pen to paper again.

Tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem.

I can only hope reviewers, if any, will bear in mind by way of extenuation that no book of this inordinate length has ever previously been attempted on the subject of hockey.

Albeit, the shrewd critic will not take long to discover that one chapter of this book is infinitely superior to the rest—I refer to that on 'full-back' play. Nor is the reason for this far to seek—it is the one chapter not written by the author! I have to thank for it my friend, Mr A. E. C. Cornwall, himself a full-back who, as I think all who have played with or against him will testify, is a shining example of the triumph of mind over matter as applied to hockey—the ability, that is, to compensate by sound stickwork, footwork, above all brainwork for a lack of even average speed owing to rheumatism and other unfortunate and ill-deserved physical ailments.

I owe a further debt of gratitude to another colleague,

the Rev. R. H. Lane, who has taken immense trouble over the instructional photographs; these seem to me, knowing little about the art of photography, amazingly good when one considers that, except for the obvious 'stills,' like the grip and the bully, they are all taken in action, and not posed.

A further debt is owed—and not of gratitude only—to Mr B. W. Hone (whose recently published book on cricket I heartily recommend to all those interested in the finer points of that fascinating game) who has done everything in his power, though often without avail, to guide me along the straight and narrow path, and has furthermore relieved me of such worldly details as 'getting the stuff typed'—a veritable labour of Hercules, as it turned out, in this primitive town, whither the name of Caxton seems scarcely to have penetrated.

Lastly I have to thank those hockey players of skill and repute who have been kind enough to give me their help and advice without imperilling their amateur status.

I will conclude with an ardent prayer that, when I achieve the not far-distant age when I can no longer take an active part in the game, I may not become one of that lamentable company of grumblers who do their best—often quite unconsciously—to discourage youth (and sometimes—alas!—wield undue influence by

becoming Press reporters), by constantly comparing the present generation unfavourably with its predecessors. I pray, therefore, that if any reader of the next generation ever hears me muttering through my beard about

> The good old days of Wyatt and Penn
> When hockey *was* hockey and men *were* men,

he will accord me the derision I shall deserve. But if he is magnanimous he will remember also that the fault is not necessarily all on one side; indeed, there is nothing old age likes better than to admire youth, and it is often only because youth is so unkindly scornful of age that the old in self-defence discourage the young. It is one of the many things in this life which can only be adjusted by tact and understanding.

D. S. M.

MARLBOROUGH, 1938.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

THE seven years since this book was first published have seen, I suppose, the greatest changes the world has ever suffered in so short a time. Hockey, however, in this country at least, though much curtailed, is far from dead and the very fact that a second edition of this book is called for seems to show that its resuscitation to full pre-war popularity (the game, not the book!) is contemplated.

There have been a few changes necessary or thought fit in this edition. Of the players mentioned in the text or shown in the illustrations, some, alas! have been killed and probably none will again be seen in first-class hockey, which has meant a number of changes of tense. (Of my collaborators, two, I am happy to say, are still colleagues of mine, but the third has—much to our loss—returned to the Antipodes whence he sprang.) But the chief trouble has been caused by two or three alterations in the rules themselves, which took place very shortly after the book was first published, and, indeed, were foreshadowed in it (and, in one case, it was even possible to state the *fait accompli* in a footnote). These changes have necessitated various

additions and subtractions—among the latter (regrettably, I think) the incident of the over-excited Afghan who cut my eye open!

The other major alteration has been the addition of a few paragraphs to the chapter on Practice and Training. This was at the request of a reader—more famous as a cricketer than as a hockey-player, though only, I fancy, because he has never played hockey seriously.

Otherwise only minor corrections have been necessary. In a few places I have toned down my youthful exuberance; in others I have merely corrected slips. Two errors in particular (mine, not the printer's), which have weighed heavily upon me all these years, I have been thankful to be able to expunge. For in one place I had written 'right 'when I meant 'left,' while in another—and this I find far more blushworthy—having decided to show off my classical upbringing, I had worked in a Greek figure of speech and then called it by the wrong name—a blunder which a kindly colleague (or was he?) was not slow to point out.

D. S. M.

MARLBOROUGH, 1945.

CHAPTER I

THE GAME

THE game of hockey made rapid strides in popularity between the wars, and the enthusiasm and pioneering spirit of holiday touring sides did much and will, we hope, do even more to render it one of the most widespread games in the world.

The cause of its appeal will be readily understood by all those who have played the game a few times; it is perhaps of all the great team-games the *pleasantest*. There is no time for the nervousness and anxiety inevitably bound up with so leisurely a game as cricket; on the other hand, even in the most important hockey match, there is less roughness and ferocity than in a big rugger match. Moreover, hockey is more truly a team-game than either. It is with Association football that it is most natural to compare hockey, since there is a great similarity in the tactics of both games and both depend more than any other on team-work.

Association football is too firmly established (and incidentally too good a game) ever to be likely to be ousted from popular favour by hockey. Heaven forbid that it should be, but Association football tends

to be dominated by professionalism; and of all the institutions of hockey the most highly prized and most jealously guarded is its purely amateur status—indeed, I think it is true to say that it remains after all these years the only purely amateur game of its class.

Now, far be it from me to depreciate professional sport, still less professional sportsmen, who have often seemed to me a much sounder and pleasanter set of people than amateurs. Many of the latter (now colloquially called 'shamateurs') are really amateurs only in name; and since they are for ever passing themselves off for what they are not, they tend to become hybrid in soul as well as in status. But it has to be admitted that owing to the many side issues of professional sport, such as betting, crowd psychology, and the rest, winning becomes of paramount importance, and the game itself inevitably suffers. In this respect, therefore, hockey has a definite advantage over its rival sport.

Hockey holds a further advantage and a much greater one over both rugger and soccer. Despite the fact that it is undoubtedly a faster game than either and needs every bit as much fitness, especially of wind, it is not such a severe strain on the body; and as a result it can be played with enjoyment and even success over a very much longer period of one's life. A rugger player is normally finished before he is thirty, a soccer

player by the time he is about thirty-three, but S. H. Saville was still playing hockey for England after he was forty. Admittedly he was exceptional, but if any man (working in London, too) can be still good enough to represent his country at forty it is clear that others at like age can still be playing hockey well enough to get enjoyment and recreation, which, after all, is the prime object of any game. The reason for this comparative longevity of hockey players is that the rugger 'tackle' and soccer 'barge' have no counterpart in hockey, and it is frequent buffets on the body more than a tax on wind and legs that cannot be supported after the first flush of youth.

It would be unfair not to discuss also the disadvantages of hockey as compared with soccer. The first disadvantage I will mention arises directly out of the chief advantage. Owing to its comparative safety hockey has become extremely popular among women. This, of course, injures the stupid pride of the male—a pride due, as we all know, to the pathetic desire to conceal his inferiority beneath a cloak of superiority! Scornfully terming it a 'sissy's' game, he damns it without giving it a trial. But I do not think that many will be found who, having once tried hockey, will still consider it a soft game; they are more likely to come home licking their sores and wondering if the game is worth the candle!

The mention of women's hockey naturally calls for further discussion, but since as such it is hardly relevant to the point at issue we will leave it to a later section (see Chapter XI) when mixed hockey will be lightly (but firmly) touched upon also.

The gravest disadvantage under which hockey labours is undoubtedly the expense, coupled with the difficulty of grounds. With a ball among a number of players a game of soccer can be indulged in on any rough piece of grass of reasonable size without any need of further equipment; although some sort of goal with a cross-bar of the right height is certainly an improvement on a couple of coats or caps, which hardly compensate by their breadth for what they lack in height. Moreover, a game of this kind, if the players are at all skilful, may well be quite a reasonable replica of the true game. But in hockey, though one ball still suffices (this being, however, less than usual for hockey, when owing to quick discoloration any number from four to eight may be used—to be used again after repainting, of course), every player must have a stick, and unless the grass is short and the ground passably smooth the game cannot be played. In fact, the only respect in which the 'pick-up' game of hockey has the advantage over a similar soccer game is in the makeshift goal-posts, since height is, or should be, of no importance in hockey.

As a result of these factors the game of hockey has not spread among all classes of the community, and until the problem is met of providing suitable grounds for all and sundry, I doubt if it can spread further. It is no good minimizing this difficulty, but I feel that if overtures could be made from the right quarter to that great organization, the National Playing Fields Association, something might be done about it.

CHAPTER II

THE GAME (*continued*)

I HAD hoped to be able to emulate D. R. Jardine (see his book on cricket in this series) in consigning so dry a topic as 'The Rules of the Game' to an appendix. But many important features of the game of hockey are so inseparably interwoven with the rules that I shall have to reproduce them here, with the permission of the Hockey Association, commenting and enlarging upon them where it seems necessary or of interest.

RULES OF THE GAME OF HOCKEY

I. TEAMS AND DURATION OF GAME

(*a*) A game shall be played by two teams of not more than eleven players each. The usual constitution of a team is five forwards, three half-backs, two backs, and a goal-keeper.

(*b*) The duration of the game shall be two periods of thirty-five minutes each, unless otherwise agreed upon mutually by the respective captains. At half-time the teams shall change ends, and the interval shall not exceed five minutes.

2. CAPTAINS

The captains shall:

(*a*) Toss for the choice of ends.

(*b*) Act as umpires, if there be no umpires, or delegate the duties of umpire to a member of their respective teams; and,

(*c*) Indicate the goal-keepers of their respective teams before starting the game and after any change of goal-keeper.

In the average well-regulated game of hockey to indicate the goal-keepers would be a work of supererogation, since by their leg-encasements and other insignia they indicate themselves. It will sometimes happen, however, mainly in scratch games, that no goal-keeper or perhaps no goal-keeper's equipment is present. In such a case one of the backs is deputed to kick if he wishes when in the circle, and the captain will, of course, 'indicate' which of them it is to be.

3. GROUND

(*a*) The ground shall be rectangular, one hundred yards long and not more than sixty yards, nor less than fifty-five yards, wide. It shall be marked out with white lines in accordance with the plan on page 31. The longer boundary lines shall be called the side-lines, and the shorter boundary lines shall be called the goal-lines.

(*b*) Flag-posts (not less than four feet high) shall be placed at each corner of the ground, and also at the

centre and the twenty-five yards lines; those at the centre and twenty-five yards lines to be one yard outside the side-lines.

4. GOALS, POSTS, ETC.

(*a*) There shall be a goal at the centre of and on each goal-line and it shall consist of two perpendicular posts four yards apart, joined together by a horizontal cross-bar seven feet from the ground (inside measurements). The goal-posts shall not extend upwards above the cross-bar, nor the cross-bar sideways beyond the goal-posts. The goal-posts and cross-bar shall be two inches wide and not more than three inches deep, and they shall have rectangular edges to the sides facing the field of play. Nets shall be attached firmly to the goal-posts, cross-bar, and the ground behind the goal, at intervals of not more than six inches.

(*b*) Goal-boards, not exceeding eighteen inches high, shall be placed at the foot of the goal-nets, the shorter boards being at right angles to the goal-line.

5. STRIKING CIRCLE

In front of each goal shall be drawn a white line, four yards long and three inches wide, parallel to, and fifteen yards from, the goal-line. This line shall be continued each way three inches wide, to meet the goal-line by quarter circles, having the goal-posts as centres. The space enclosed by these lines and the goal-line, including the lines themselves, shall be called the striking circle (hereinafter referred to as the circle).

6. BALL

(*a*) The cover of the regulation ball shall be of white leather, or of any other leather painted white. It shall be sewn in a manner similar to the cover of an ordinary cricket ball, or it may be seamless.

(*b*) The inner portion of the ball shall be composed of cork and twine, similar to that of an ordinary cricket ball.

(*c*) The weight of the ball shall be not more than five and three-quarter ounces and not less than five and a half ounces.

(*d*) The circumference of the ball shall be not more than nine and a quarter inches and not less than eight and thirteen-sixteenth inches.

(*e*) A ball of any other description may be used, as agreed upon mutually by the respective captains.

7. STICKS

(*a*) The stick shall have a flat face on its left-hand side only.

(*b*) The head (i.e. the part below the top of the splice) shall not be edged with, nor have any insets or fittings of metal, nor shall there be any sharp edges or dangerous splinters. The extremity shall not be cut square or pointed, but shall have rounded edges.

(*c*) The total weight of the stick shall not exceed twenty-eight ounces, and shall be of such a size (inclusive of any surgical binding) that it can be passed through a ring with an interior diameter of two inches.

PENALTY. *Umpires shall forbid the use of any stick which does not comply with this Rule.*

8. BOOTS, ETC.

No player shall wear any dangerous material, such as spikes or nails, etc.

PENALTY. *Umpires shall forbid the wearing of boots, etc., which do not comply with this Rule.*

9. BULLY

(*a*) To bully the ball, a player of each team shall stand squarely facing the side-lines, each with his own goal-line on his right. Each player shall tap first the ground between the ball and his own goal-line and then his opponent's stick over the ball three times alternately, after which one of these two players must play the ball with his stick before it is put into general play.

(*b*) All other players shall be nearer to their own goal-line than the ball until it is in play, and none shall stand within five yards of the ball.

(*c*) To start the game, restart it after a goal is scored, and after half-time, a bully shall be played at the centre of the ground.

(*d*) Inside the circle, no bully shall be played within five yards of the goal-line.

PENALTY. *For any breach of this Rule, the bully shall be played again.*

One or two points here require special emphasis. By, probably quite unwittingly, not 'standing square' (see the illustration facing page 153) bulliers gain an unfair advantage, and the number of players who stand within five yards of a bully even in first-class hockey is fantastic.

10. GENERAL DETAILS

(*a*) The flat face of the stick only may be used for playing the ball and *for making contact with an opponent's stick at a bully*. No player shall take part in, nor interfere with, the game unless he has his own stick in his hand.

The italicized passage ('for making contact with an opponent's stick at a bully') is often overlooked or not known.

(*b*) When striking at the ball, no part of the stick shall be raised above the shoulder, either at the beginning, or at the end, of a stroke, nor may a ball above the height of a player's shoulder be stopped in the air by any part of the stick; nor may a player, in the act of approaching the ball, raise any part of his stick above his shoulder.

(*c*) The ball shall not be undercut. The scoop stroke, which raises the ball, is permissible (except as specially provided for in Rule 13 (*b*)), but the umpire shall penalize this stroke if, in any particular instance, it be either dangerous in itself, or likely to lead to dangerous play. The ball may be hit whilst it is in the air, provided that the player does not contravene paragraph (*b*) of this Rule.

The undercutting rule is one of the hardest to interpret. So many factors contribute towards making a ball rise that it is wellnigh impossible for an umpire to be sure that the ball has been 'undercut,' by which is meant a deliberate 'mashie' shot with the stick laid

back. It is probably best to be guided by the circumstances and penalize usually under the heading of 'dangerous play,' that is, when other players are near the striker and in the line of flight. Under normal conditions it should be possible to keep the ball below waist height if due care is taken. For a further discussion of 'aerial' play and the 'scoop' stroke see Chapter III.

(*d*) The ball shall not be stopped on the ground or in the air intentionally by any part of the body except the hand. If the ball be caught, it shall be released into play immediately. The foot or leg may not be used to support the stick in order to resist an opponent.

(*e*) The ball shall not be picked up, nor kicked, thrown, carried, or propelled, in any manner or direction, except with the stick.

(*f*) There shall be no hitting, hooking, holding, striking at, or interference with the stick of an opponent.

Rules (*d*) and (*f*) have been altered since the first edition of this book came out, when the foot might be used for stopping the ball, and 'hooking' sticks was permissible. The amendment to (*f*) has my unqualified approval, but I am not quite happy about (*d*). That no part of the body except the hand should be deliberately used to stop the ball I entirely agree; in fact, my complaint is that the rule still doesn't go far enough in eliminating 'foot' play. For if the word 'intentionally' is strictly interpreted (and the Notes on the Rules in the official 1944 issue of them make it clear that it

is meant to be), then it seems to me that, apart from the umpire's difficulty in distinguishing between what is genuinely unintentional and what one might perhaps call *laissez faire*, the clumsy player comes into his own at the expense of the neat.

The argument in favour of letting all unintentional 'footwork' go is the admittedly strong one that it is of paramount importance that the game should not be marred by continual stoppages. The best answer, I think, is for umpires to concentrate especially on the 'advantage' rule (*see* 19 (*d*)) and also to adapt their interpretation to the quality of the players!

(*g*) A player shall not obstruct by running in between an opponent and the ball, nor shall he interpose himself, or his stick, in any way as an obstruction to an opponent, nor attack from an opponent's left unless he touch the ball before he touch the stick or person of his opponent. There shall be no charging, kicking, shoving, tripping, or striking at an opponent or his stick, nor holding an opponent or his stick by any means whatsoever.

This rule is the most important, as it is certainly the hardest to interpret, of all the rules of hockey.

The injunction not to 'obstruct' is, I imagine, what leads many who do not play hockey to suppose the game is 'soft': yet in fact it is the making of the game. Nor do I say this merely because, if rough play were allowed in hockey, smashed heads might be the result,

since the contestants have in their hands potentially lethal weapons. Hockey is above all things a game of skill. If body-play and obstruction were allowed, skill, achieved no doubt by assiduous practice, would go by the board and the game as a game would be ruined.

I have also said that the 'obstruction' rule is the hardest to interpret. At first sight this may be surprising; for it would seem easy enough to detect barging, tripping, and other such forms of obstruction of which I have been writing above. And so it is, but there is far more to obstruction in hockey than deliberate rough play. Much more commonly it is what one might call 'defensive' obstruction: by placing yourself between the ball and your opponent, you put him in such a position that he cannot reach the ball with his stick unless he bangs you out of the way; in which case to the inexperienced eye *he* will appear to be the offender.

The commonest form of this type of obstruction is what is usually known as 'turning on the ball.' The player, usually in an endeavour to hit the ball to the right, instead of turning *clockwise* keeping the ball on his right-hand side, turns about it *anti-clockwise*, thus placing his body between the ball and a would-be tackler. This is rarely done wilfully, being almost invariably due to inexperience. Umpires usually

detect it easily enough, but are apt to forget that if no opponent is within striking distance of the ball a player may turn on the ball to his heart's content.

An almost equally common form of defensive obstruction is 'playing the ball on the wrong side.' In order to get past an opponent the player, naturally and rightly, draws the ball to the left. But having done so, instead of *himself going to the left with it* and getting it back on his right side as soon as possible, he *keeps* it on his left-hand side, playing it of course with reversed stick, and thus very successfully but quite unfairly gets past the opponent; for the latter is unable to reach the ball at all without first knocking him over, or at least hitting him severely over the shins (which, incidentally, is probably the most effective and perhaps the only way to cure him).

This type of obstruction is not only common even in supposedly good hockey (though not in a really first-class game), but it far too commonly goes unpenalized. In fact, it is more often than not the unfortunate opponent who is penalized when in desperation he pushes with his body in order to get near the ball.

Players on the left, especially forwards, are the commonest offenders in this respect, and I shall make no excuse for repeating myself on this point when I come to discuss individual places in the field. In school

hockey, from what I have seen of it, all forms of obstruction are well looked after, and young players soon learn what they can and what they cannot do. But hockey is often taken up after schooldays by people brought up probably on soccer, and those noble souls who are willing to umpire have usually been similarly grounded. The latter, who no doubt read the book of rules with great care, are generally 'dead nuts' on 'kicking,' and that most unimportant of rules, 'hand-ball,' sometimes also on 'sticks,' but on obstruction they are practically mute. Nor is this always due to ignorance on the umpire's part: for since the players obstruct continually throughout the game, he is on the horns of a dilemma, and of the obvious alternatives it is better that the game should be played in the crudest manner than not at all.

The correction of obstructive tactics, deliberate or unintentional, rests ultimately not with the umpires, but with the players themselves. It is not an easy rule to learn simply by reading it. Demonstration by one of the more experienced players in a new side is much more effective, and if, as may sometimes happen, a side is wholly new to the game it is to be hoped that somebody who really knows something about hockey will be found to help in expounding more clearly the rule upon which all the finer points of the game depend.

(*h*) A goalkeeper shall be allowed to kick the ball or stop it with any part of his body, but only whilst it is inside his own circle. He shall not be penalized if, in stopping a shot at the goal, the ball, in the opinion of the umpire, merely rebounds off his body. In the event of his taking part in a penalty bully, these two privileges shall be denied him; but he may be permitted to remove his pads, and extra time shall be allowed, if necessary, for their resumption.

(*i*) If the ball become lodged in the pads of a goalkeeper, or in the wearing apparel of any player, the umpire shall suspend the game and shall restart it by a bully on the spot where the incident occurred (subject to Rule 9 (*d*)).

(*j*) If the ball strike an umpire, it shall remain in play.

(*k*) Rough, or dangerous, play shall not be permitted, nor any behaviour which, in the opinion of the umpire, amounts to misconduct.

PENALTY. (1) *For any breach of this Rule:*

(i) *Outside the circle.*

A free hit shall be awarded to the opposing team.

(ii) *Inside the circle.*

(*a*) *By the attackers. A free hit shall be awarded to the opposing team.*

(*b*) *By the defenders. A penalty corner, or a penalty bully, shall be awarded to the opposing team.*

(2) *For a simultaneous breach of this Rule by two opponents, inside or outside the circle. The umpire shall order a bully to be played on the spot where the breach occurred (subject to Rule* 9 (*d*)).

(3) *For rough, or dangerous, play, or misconduct. In addition to awarding the appropriate penalty, the umpire may also warn the offending player or suspend him from further participation in the game.*

11. GOAL

(*a*) Except as specially provided for in Rule 18 (*d*), a goal is scored if the ball pass wholly over the goal-line between the goal-posts and under the cross-bar, the ball, whilst inside the circle, having been hit by, or having glanced off, the stick of a player of the attacking team. It is immaterial if the ball subsequently touch, or be played by, one or more players of the defending team. If, during the game, the goal-posts and/or the cross-bar become displaced and the ball pass wholly over the goal-line at a point which, in the opinion of the umpire, is between where the goal-posts and/or under where the cross-bar, respectively, should have been, a goal is scored.

(*b*) The team scoring the greater number of goals shall be the winners.

12. OFF-SIDE

(*a*) No player can, in any circumstances, be off-side when in his own half of the ground.

(*b*) Subject to paragraph (*a*), at the moment when the ball is hit, or rolled in, any other player of the same team as the striker, or roller-in, is in an off-side position unless:

(i) There be at least three opponents nearer to their own goal-line; or,

(ii) The striker, or roller-in, be nearer to the opponents' goal-line.

(*c*) A player who is in an off-side position shall not be penalized for off-side unless, in the opinion of the umpire, he is, by his position, gaining some advantage, or influencing the play of an opponent.

(*d*) A player who is in an off-side position shall not be put on-side by reason of the ball having touched, or glanced off, the stick or person of an opponent.

(*e*) Subject to paragraphs (*c*) and (*d*) a player in an off-side position shall be put on-side as soon as the ball has been definitely played by an opponent.

Note. If the ball rebound off a goal-post or the cross-bar, it shall be deemed to be a direct pass.

PENALTY. *For any breach of this Rule a free hit shall be awarded to the opposing team.*

This rule is the same as the old soccer rule, and the most important words are undoubtedly 'at the moment when the ball is hit.' Many a time when a player receives the ball he will be in an apparently off-side position; when the ball was hit, however, he was on-side, and therefore is so still. There is nothing more discouraging than to be constantly pulled up for off-side when, by intelligent anticipation and quickness off the mark, you have started behind three men when the ball was hit or pushed forward into a gap, and reached it before one or other of them could turn, with no one now left but the goal-keeper to beat. Yet this is a common fate, especially for outside lefts (see

Chapter IV). We must sympathize, however, with the umpires who make this mistake, for they do not do so through ignorance of the rule, but simply because even the most hawk-eyed of men cannot look in two directions at once. Yet that in effect is what an umpire must do if he is to interpret an off-side rule correctly. He must watch the ball when it is being hit lest some infringement occur in the hitting, while at the same time he must watch the position of the forwards as the ball is hit. Clearly this is an impossible task, but the good umpire, like the good statesman, will have learnt the art of compromise. He will have discovered that there is usually a fraction of a second before the ball is dispatched, in which time he can take in the position of the forwards. Until he has mastered the art, an umpire should, I consider, give the possible hitting infringement less attention than the off-side rule since the latter is infinitely more important, involving as it so often does the whole difference between a goal scored or disallowed.

13. FREE HIT

(*a*) Except as specially provided for in Rules 16 (*a*) and 17, a free hit shall be taken on the spot where the breach occurred, provided that no hit shall be taken within five yards of a goal-post.

(*b*) The ball shall be hit, or it may be pushed along the ground. The scoop stroke shall not be permissible in this instance.

(*c*) At the moment when a free hit is taken, the ball shall be motionless on the ground, and no other player of either team shall be within five yards of the ball. If the ball be not motionless, or if there be any other player within five yards of the ball, the free hit shall be taken again. If, however, in the opinion of the umpire, any player remain within five yards of the ball in order to gain time, he should not cause the hit to be delayed.

(*d*) When taking a free hit, if the striker miss the ball, he shall take the hit again, provided that he has not contravened Rule 10 (*b*).

(*e*) After taking a free hit, the striker shall not approach within playing distance of the ball, nor in any way participate in the game, until the ball has touched, or been played by, another player of either team.

PENALTY. *For any breach of this Rule:*

(i) *Outside the circle.*

A free hit shall be awarded to the opposing team.

(ii) *Inside the circle.*

A penalty corner shall be awarded to the opposing team.

14. ROLL-IN

(*a*) If the ball pass wholly over the side-line, it shall be rolled (and not bounced, or thrown) into play by hand along the ground in any direction from the point where it crossed the side-line, by a player of the team opposed to the player who last touched the ball.

(*b*) The ball shall be rolled in at once, but the roller-in shall stand outside the field of play and have his hands, feet, and stick behind the side-line, and he

shall not approach within playing distance of the ball, nor in any way participate in the game, until the ball has touched, or been played by, another player of either team.

(*c*) All the other players of both teams shall be in the field of play and have their feet and sticks behind the seven-yards line. If, however, in the opinion of the umpire, any player of either team remain within the seven-yards line, or outside the side-line, in order to gain time, he should not cause the roll-in to be delayed. Players may cross the seven-yards line as soon as the ball leaves the hand of the roller-in.

PENALTY. *For any breach of this Rule:*

(i) *By the roller-in.*
The roll-in shall be awarded to the opposing team.

(ii) *By any other player.*
The roll-in shall be taken again (except as specially provided for in paragraph (c) of this Rule); but for persistent breaches, a free hit may be awarded to the opposing team.

This rule, though it seems clear enough, is either misinterpreted or deliberately disregarded on the Continent, especially by the Germans. The ball is rolled in regardless of the position of the opponents. Early on in the match between England and Germany at Berlin in 1931, the English left half, having politely fetched a ball that had gone into touch off his stick and thrown it to the German right half, was astonished to see the latter roll it in, while he (the Englishman)

was still off the field of play! It is needless to add that he did not fetch the ball for his opponents' touch again, or if he did, he carried it on to the field with him and did not throw it to his opposite number until he was in position near the seven-yards line. Misconceptions like this should be cleared up, for they inevitably lead to a bad spirit.

15. BEHIND

(*a*) If the ball be sent over the goal-line by a player of the attacking team, or, in the opinion of the umpire, be sent *unintentionally* over the goal-line by a player of the defending team from a distance of twenty-five yards or more from the goal-line, the game shall be restarted by a bully at the nearer twenty-five-yards line, on a spot exactly opposite to where it crossed the goal-line.

(*b*) If, in the opinion of the umpire, the ball be sent *unintentionally* over the goal-line by a player of the defending team from a distance of less than twenty-five yards from the goal-line, a corner shall be awarded to the opposing team, unless a goal be scored.

(*c*) If, however, in the opinion of the umpire, the ball be sent *intentionally* over the goal-line by a player of the defending team from any part of the ground, a penalty corner shall be awarded to the opposing team, unless a goal be scored.

16. CORNER

(*a*) A player of the attacking team shall have a free hit from a spot on the defenders' goal-line, or on the

side-line, within three yards of the corner flag-post nearer to the point where the ball crossed the goal-line.

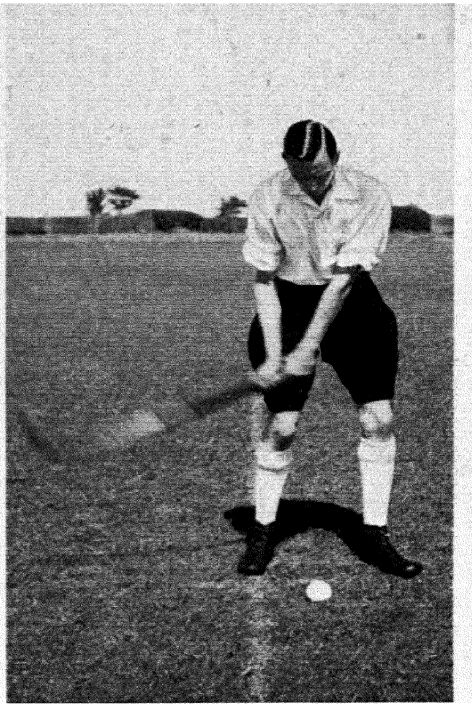
(*b*) At the moment when the hit is taken, the defending team shall be outside the field of play and shall have both feet and sticks behind their own goal-line. The attacking team, except the player taking the hit, shall be in the field of play and have both feet and sticks outside the circle. If, before the ball be hit, a player of the defending team cross the goal-line, or a player of the attacking team enter the circle, the umpire may order the hit to be taken again.

(*c*) No shot at goal shall be made from a corner hit unless the ball first be stopped (not necessarily motionless) on the ground by a player of the attacking team, or touch the stick or person of a player of the defending team.

PENALTY. *For any breach of paragraph* (*c*) *of this Rule a free hit shall be awarded to the opposing team.*

This is a very difficult rule to interpret. The object of it is clearly to eliminate dangerous 'first-time' shots —corners are quite dangerous enough as it is! But the parenthesis 'not necessarily motionless' is open to much variety of interpretation. For example, when a player 'stops' a corner hit with his stick the ball often rises into the air (for only once in a while do we have an opportunity of playing on a 'billiard-table' surface). The subsequent 'half-volley' which the player probably takes is every bit as dangerous as a first-timer would have been. Fortunately this can always be penalized under the dangerous play rule—

I



II

III

IV

V

THE HIT

From beginning to end

A genuine 'action' series, as can readily be seen from the tautness of the forearm muscles; the striker ran up to the ball to ensure the natural position of the feet. The head has been kept down until well after the finish of the stroke, and there has been a minimum of sideways rotation of the shoulders. Beginners should bend the left elbow more than in I and IV. The body should be inclined further forward than in IV and V.

The five photographs were taken during a series of hits. This accounts for the slightly varying positions of the feet. The shutter speed of the camera was the same for all, showing that the stick accelerates very rapidly until the ball is struck, and then slows down very fast. Compare II with IV. The positions of the wrists are also interesting.

10 (*c*)—but it is less simple if, when a player half stops the ball, it goes on to another, who shoots it as it comes. My own opinion is that this does not constitute a stop. When the ball is stopped with the stick, it should be stopped and hit by the *same player*. It may be stopped with the *hand* by one player and hit by another, but in that case the parenthesis of 16 (*c*) no longer applies, since all stopping with the hand must be 'dead.

17. PENALTY CORNER

Rule 16 shall also apply to a penalty corner, except that the free hit may be taken from any spot on the defenders' goal-line on either side of the goal, but not within ten yards of a goal-post.[1]

PENALTY. *As for Rule* 16.

18. PENALTY BULLY

(*a*) A penalty bully shall be awarded to the opposing team if, in the opinion of the umpire:

(i) There has been an *intentional* breach of Rule 10 inside the circle, by a player of the defending team, to prevent a goal being scored; or

(ii) A goal would probably have been scored had an *unintentional* breach of Rule 10 inside the circle not occurred.

(*b*) The bully shall be played on a spot five yards in front of the centre of the goal-line by the offending

[1] For suggested revision of this rule, see p. 172.

player, or any other player of the defending team, if he has been incapacitated or suspended, and any player of the attacking team.

(*c*) Until the bully has been completed, all the other players of both teams shall remain outside the nearer twenty-five-yards line.

(*d*) If, during a penalty bully, the ball pass wholly:

(i) Over the goal-line between the goal-posts and under the cross-bar, off the stick of the attacker, or stick or person of the defender, a goal is scored; or

(ii) Over any part of the goal-line which is within the circle, other than that between the goal-posts, off the stick or person of the defender, the bully shall be played again; or

(iii) Outside the circle in all other cases, the game shall be restarted by a bully at the centre of the nearer twenty-five-yards line.

(*e*) If necessary, time of play shall be extended to admit of a penalty bully being played or completed.

PENALTY. (1) *For any breach of any rule (except Rule* 9*); and for an intentional breach of Rule* 9*, after a warning by the umpire:*

(i) *By the attacker. The game shall be restarted by a bully at the centre of the nearer twenty-five-yards line.*

(ii) *By the defender. A goal shall be awarded to the opposing team.*

(2) *For a simultaneous breach of Rules* 9 *or* 10 *by both players. The bully shall be played again.*

Note that after a penalty bully the game does not

under any circumstances continue without a restart. For the time being it is, as it were, a single combat with all the other players as passive spectators.

19. UMPIRES

(*a*) There shall be two umpires. Each umpire shall take one-half of the ground for the whole game. In addition, each shall take the whole of one side-line, but shall give corner decisions for his own half of the ground only.

There is usually no hard and fast rule about this. It will often happen that an umpire is in a better position to see what is happening, even when the ball is not in his own half or on his touch-line. On such occasions he generally blows his whistle, if an obvious infringement appears to have escaped the notice of his fellow umpire. But in general the rule as stated should be abided by, lest one umpire be sensitive perhaps and his feelings be aroused.

(*b*) An umpire shall give his decisions without waiting for an appeal.

(*c*) An umpire shall only blow his whistle to:

(i) Start and end each half of the game.
(ii) Enforce a penalty, or to suspend the game for any other reason.
(iii) Indicate, when necessary, that the ball has passed wholly over the goal-line, or side-line.
(iv) Signal a goal.

(*d*) An umpire shall refrain from enforcing a penalty in cases where he is satisfied that, by enforcing it, he would be giving an advantage to the offending team.

The underlining is not, as might be thought, my own, but is actually in the text of the book of rules. The importance to be attached to this point can therefore be well imagined. The advantage rule is every bit as important in hockey as it is in rugger, although owing to the greater speed of the former (this is not meant to be a dig at the latter) much less time will need to elapse between the infringement and the whistle.

I consider this rule is rather strangely worded, for it is hard to see how a penalty is ever likely to be giving an advantage to the offending team. What is meant, of course, is that a penalty should not be given if the non-offending team would clearly be better off were the game allowed to continue, that is to say, 'an umpire shall refrain from enforcing a penalty in cases where he is satisfied that, by enforcing it, he would be depriving the innocent team of an advantage.' However, on the analogy of 'one man's meat is another man's poison,' I suppose the rule is sufficiently intelligible as it stands.

(*e*) By mutual agreement the time may be kept by one umpire throughout, or by each umpire for one-half of the game. The full or agreed time shall be

allowed, after deducting all wastage for enforced stoppages, accidents, etc.

(*f*) If there be only one umpire, there should be two linesmen to give side-line decisions.

(*g*) The umpires and linesmen are debarred from coaching during a game.

(*h*) The umpires shall keep a written record of the goals as scored.

20. ACCIDENTS

(*a*) If a player, or an umpire, be temporarily incapacitated, the umpire, or second umpire, shall suspend the game. In either case, if a goal be scored before the game has been suspended, it shall be allowed if, in the opinion of the umpire, it would have been scored had the accident not occurred.

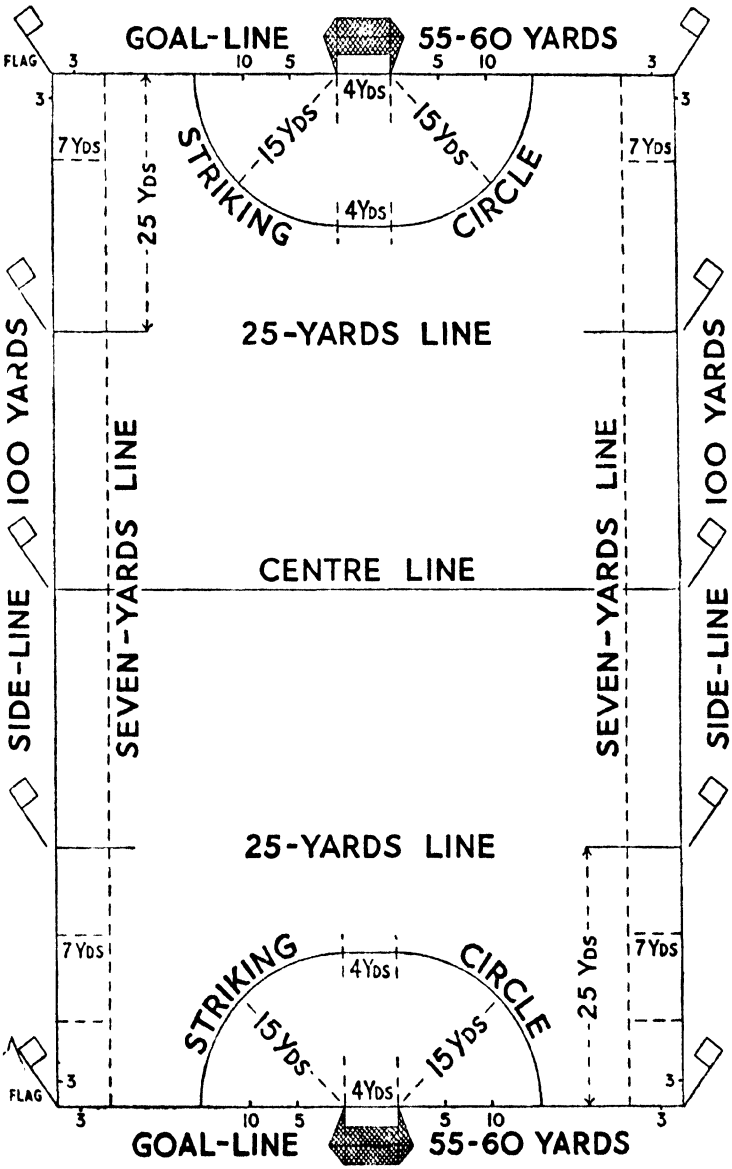
(*b*) When the game is resumed it shall be restarted by a bully on a spot to be selected by the umpire (subject to Rule 9 (*d*)).

PLAN OF GROUND

Opposite is reproduced the official plan of ground. Flag-posts in the four corners are sufficient for most purposes. In further reference to flags the rules say:

The flag-posts at each end of the centre line and of the twenty-five-yards lines must be one yard outside the side-lines.

N.B.—The twenty-five-yards line must not be fully drawn, but only its extremities (nine yards only to be marked at each end). The seven-yards line to be a dotted line, as shown in the above plan. Short lines must be drawn at right angles to the goal-lines and side-lines for the taking of corner hits at the point shown in the above plan.


GOAL-LINE
55-60 YARDS
FLAG
3
10
5
5
10
3
4 YDS
15 YDS
15 YDS
STRIKING
CIRCLE
4 YDS
7 YDS
25 YDS
7 YDS
25-YARDS LINE
SIDE-LINE
100 YARDS
SEVEN-YARDS LINE
CENTRE LINE
SEVEN-YARDS LINE
SIDE-LINE
100 YARDS
25-YARDS LINE
7 YDS
STRIKING
CIRCLE
4 YDS
15 YDS
15 YDS
4 YDS
25 YDS
7 YDS
FLAG
3
10
5
5
10
3
GOAL-LINE
55-60 YARDS

CHAPTER III

STICKWORK AND FOOTWORK

It will be obvious to all that the foundation of hockey playing must be stickwork, but the importance of footwork may not at first sight be apparent to the beginner. He may even imagine on reading this chapter-heading that stickwork and footwork refer to two different departments of the game, the former to hitting the ball and the latter to kicking it (presumably with such sleight of foot that the umpire cannot detect it). This is, of course, not the meaning of footwork in hockey except when applied to goal-keeping; but as in batting at cricket the movement of the feet in relation to the ball is of the greatest importance, so at hockey no amount of clever stickwork is of any value without neat and effective footwork; or perhaps it would be truer to say that stickwork cannot be neat and effective without footwork. The parallel with cricket only holds good in so far as the importance of footwork in each game is concerned—the actual use of the feet is quite different. In cricket one is always moving one's feet *towards* the ball while in hockey the chief aim is to get the clumsy things out of the way.

The beginner at hockey usually finds it difficult to hit the ball to his right, and the secret of this hit lies in correct footwork. The player must learn to position his feet so that he can use his arms and body to crack the ball to the right (see the illustration facing page 73). And here another parallel with cricket may be drawn. There are three stages in a young cricketer's use of his feet. First, he does not use them at all, and so can practically only 'mow' round to leg; then, he learns to move them in the right direction, but moves them too early (so that he is out of position if the ball either swings late or turns sharply off the ground); and finally (but only if he becomes first-class), he learns to move them at great speed at the latest possible moment. The corresponding stages at hockey are these: first, he does not use them at all, except to run with, and therefore he can only hit the ball across his body to the left or at best straight ahead (see below, p. 69); then, he learns to position them so that he can hit or flick to the right, but he makes this movement so early that everybody knows he is going to hit that way; finally, the good player will learn to move his feet so late that he can disguise his pass to the right almost as easily as he can that to the left.

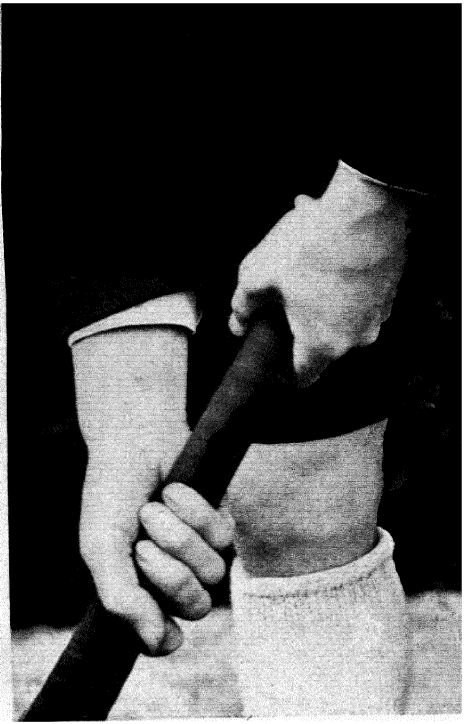
With these few preparatory words on footwork we can begin our detailed study of stickwork, remembering always that quick and correct footwork is the

foundation on which good stickwork is built. For convenience we will divide stickwork into four sections, delivering the ball, receiving the ball, dribbling, and tackling. But before discussing these we will deal with the grip.

The Grip

The grip for hitting with a hockey stick is similar to that used by many people in the forward drive at cricket and to the old grip of a golf club, before the overlapping grip came into fashion. To most people this will come naturally, but to a few, perhaps, it will not, so it is necessary to go into details.

The left hand is, of course, at the top with the right hand *close* below it. Remember that it is almost impossible to generate much force if you try to hit a ball, whether at golf, cricket, or hockey, with the hands separated, yet this is a common fault to see in young hockey players (and even common in young cricketers). The position of the hands, as shown in the illustration facing this page, is practically that of a handshake. Be careful to avoid having the left wrist in front of the shaft since this will render the left hand almost useless, whereas it should be doing at least as much as the right. Gripping thus with the left wrist in front of the shaft is perhaps the commonest mistake in holding the stick



GRIP FOR HITTING

Left. Correct action.

Practically the same as that for hitting a cricket ball.

Right. Wrong action.

Hands apart, and knuckles too far under. Both these points tend to weaken power and control.

R. H. Lane

(though even this is rare), and it is due undoubtedly to the influence of cricket. Young cricketers are (or were) often taught to hold the bat thus in the belief that it helped to keep the left elbow and shoulders round and over the line of the ball. It is necessary in hockey that the left shoulder should point in the direction of the hit, but it is equally necessary that the left hand should have a strong grip on the stick. Note that this grip is primarily for hitting and flicking; for dribbling, it will be much modified, as we shall see later (illustration facing p. 50).

Delivering the Ball

The most natural way of propelling a hockey ball is to hit it.[1] The hit in hockey is in some ways similar to that of golf and cricket, though more to the latter than the former. In one respect it differs greatly from both—at hockey one has to hit the ball without raising one's stick above the level of the shoulders either at the beginning or end of the swing.

The method of hitting a hockey ball generally advocated in text-books is to swing the stick with a scythe-like motion: that is, the stick is held at arm's length, and is drawn back and round the body; the arms, stick, and

[1] Or is it? Recent experiments with the very young lead me to wonder, since the first instinct seems to be to push rather than to hit.

body then swing violently until the stick has travelled to the full extent of the arms in front of and across the body from right to left (see the illustration facing this page). You have only to watch a game of women's hockey to see this method in continuous use, for women (as Henry Cotton, who should know, has said) are better than men at doing what they are told!

I am convinced, however, that this is the wrong way to hit the ball at hockey. It takes too much time in the first place, and it is extremely difficult for a player using this method to achieve either power or accuracy in his hitting.[1] In first-class hockey you will rarely, if ever, see any one hitting the ball in this way.

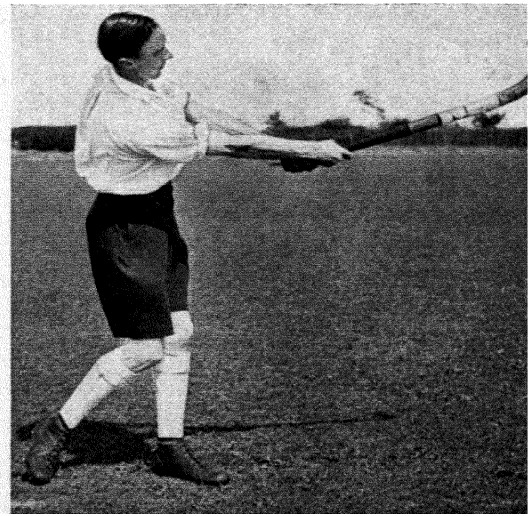
How then should one try to hit it so as to achieve the maximum quickness, accuracy, and power, and at the same time avoid giving sticks? (The latter, by the way, is something which even first-class players do not always achieve, though only too often they go unpenalized.)

When players give sticks it is in approximately ninety per cent of cases on the backswing; in nine per cent it is on the follow-through in addition to the backswing; and in only one per cent is it on the follow-through alone. Now any one who has seen Padgham

[1] I think this is because the lateral rotation of the hips and shoulders makes it very difficult to keep the head steady, with the eye down on the ball all the time.

THE SCYTHE

The stick is kept well below the shoulders, but their sideways rotation causes rotation of the head, and together these make for loss of both power and control. Try it for yourself.



R. H. Lane

FINISH OF HIT (*Wrong*)

The head is up too soon, and the stick is nearly, if not quite, above shoulder level. The left shoulder has swung off the line of the ball too soon and too much. This was intended to be a *correct* finish, which explains why it is not nearly so bad as it might be! In fact as the finish of a full iron shot it could hardly be better!

hit a golf-ball will have noticed that, though he has a full follow-through, his backswing, even for a wooden shot, is little more than a half-swing. It may seem strange to compare a golf-swing with a hockey-swing, yet I believe that the two have one great thing in common, and that the comparison may well be a useful one.

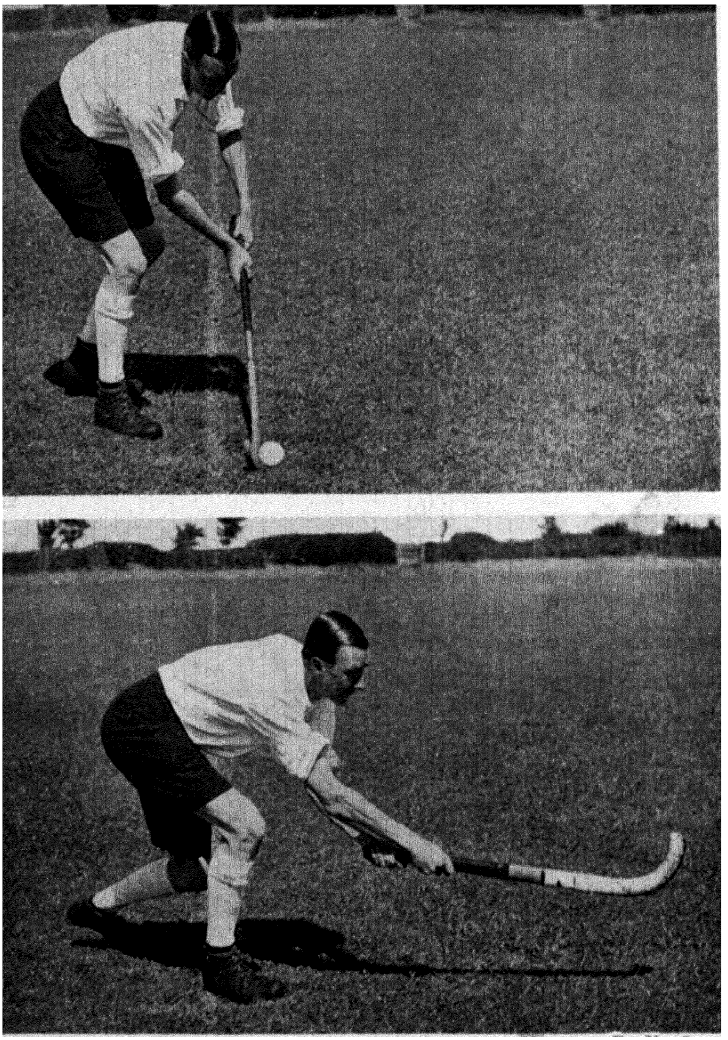
As any golf 'pro' will tell you, the essence of 'timing' a shot is to hit at the *bottom* of the swing—and the bad golfer or the beginner is always distinguished by the fact that he tries to get power by hitting from the top. Is there not something to be learnt from this with regard to hockey? Do we not imagine that in order to hit the ball hard we must lift the stick high? We forget that what counts is the power we put into the last foot of swing before we hit the ball. Remember too that, except for free hits (which we will deal with later), a hockey ball is probably already moving slightly in the direction we intend to hit it, and this is one great advantage we have over the golfer; we have only to help it on its way, as it were.

Therefore, to hit a hockey ball take the shortest possible backswing and use the *wrists* and *forearms*. If you find you need to follow through to compensate for lack of backswing, go on turning the stick over and to the left with a roll of the wrists which will prevent its going above shoulder level. But you will probably

find little necessity to stop the swing this way; as we said before, sticks are almost invariably given before hitting the ball, not after.

In hitting from right to left there is really no excuse for giving sticks. It is in hitting from left to right that it will be found not only more difficult to keep the stick down, but also more difficult to avoid undercutting (see Chapter II). The reason for this is that the easiest and perhaps only method of hitting the ball to the off when you are facing straight ahead is to slice it, and this not only tends to lift the ball, but owing to the difficulty of keeping one's balance one is apt to lose control of the swing and give sticks (see the illustration facing p. 73). The remedy is obvious—footwork again. If the player quickly moves his feet (which of course means his body too) into such a position that he is well poised to hit to the right both sticks and undercutting will be avoided. R. T. Read, Ogilvy's successor in the English side, was a model for turning and hitting when running at full speed.

The positions where sticks are most commonly given and hardest to avoid are left back, left half, and outside left. These players should always be practising hitting quickly from left to right without offending against the rule. It is often extremely hard to know yourself whether you have given sticks behind; so this



R. H. Lane

THE FLICK (BEGINNING AND END)

Note the weight right forward and pressing downward

type of practice should naturally be undertaken in pairs or threes.

Before we leave the 'hit' and pass to the 'flick' one point must be stressed again—the eye must be kept on the ball. More than half of the foozles in hockey as in golf are due to 'head up.' It is necessary to look where you are going to hit the ball, and if possible to look in such a way that your opponents cannot tell for certain which of various alternatives you are going to adopt; but when actually hitting the ball, avoid at all costs the fascinating desire to see where you have hit it. If you do, you may be sure the fulfilment of your desire will not come up to expectations—if you have hit the ball at all, you certainly will not have hit it where you intended.

The Flick

The flick or push shot (I see no reason to differentiate between the two terms which seem to me to be synonymous) differs from the hit principally in that it has no backswing at all—the stick is simply placed behind the ball and with a flick of the wrist pushed in the required direction. I say 'simply,' but it is in reality not so simple. Despite protestations to the contrary I still maintain that it is a 'knack' which beginners will pick up for themselves with practice, some

sooner, some later, and that it is extremely difficult to teach anybody to flick or to show him exactly how it is done. This much, however, can be said—it is done almost entirely with the wrists and forearms, and the man with strong wrists has a decided advantage over the man with weak wrists. It follows from this also that one cannot expect to be able to flick with much power until one has reached maturity.

When trying to flick the beginner will find it a help if he drops his right hand two or three inches. He should also remember to have the ball well in front of him and lean on it with all his weight (see the illustration facing p. 39). J. K. Waydelin (perhaps the finest right half England ever had) had such a powerful flick that he could not only reach his own inside left with it, but almost knock him over. With great difficulty I at length persuaded him to overcome his extreme diffidence and give me his views on how it is done.

'The secret of the flick or push shot is real co-ordination of the wrists, shoulders, and body. Each of these plays its part, though in the case of the short flick the wrists are the governing factor. The common mistake is that of scooping up the ball[1]; this is caused by getting the handle of the stick too

[1] The *deliberate* 'scoop' is dealt with on p. 42.

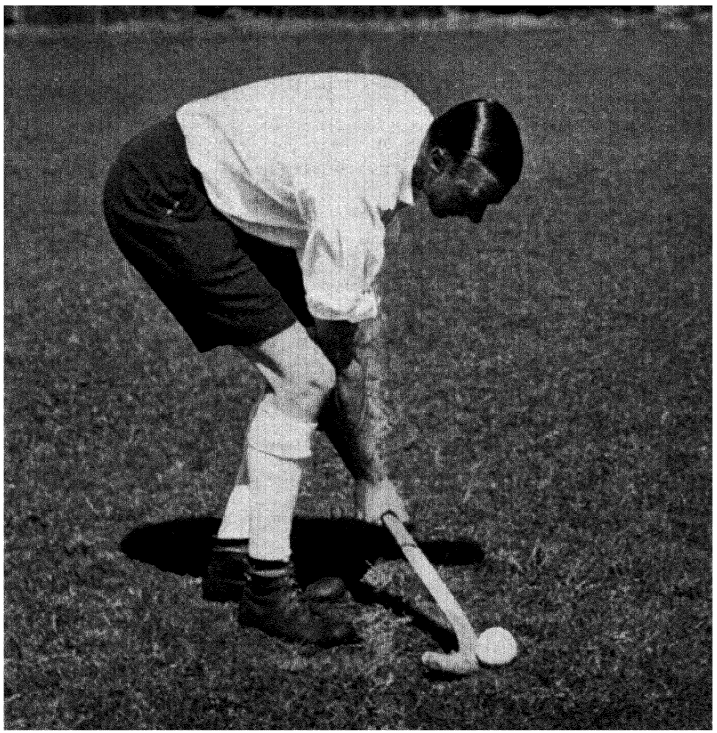
low, and not following through with the wrists. Any player with reasonably strong wrists should be able to flick a ball hard at least twenty-five yards, either to his left, or to his right, or straight in front of him. As a general rule, the ball should be kept as low as possible to the ground; the exception is if the ground is very wet or cut up. The first motion of the flick shot is a forward movement of the wrists, with the head of the stick kept stationary; this has the effect of imparting great spring to the stick when the head is pushed through a fraction of a second later.'

The flick is very difficult to keep on the ground, but this should be done if possible. It should never be deliberately lifted higher than the shoulder. If it is, it will introduce a quite unnecessary element of danger to the game, and a good umpire will penalize it just as he will undercutting.

The advantages of the flick are these. It can be made quicker than a hit, and since there is no back-swing at all the stick cannot be hooked at the crucial moment. For this reason it is particularly useful in the circle, either to the attack or the defence, where the importance of making some sort of shot or clearance is vital. Furthermore, to flick to the right requires less footwork, and so less time, than to hit there.

Finally, the pace with which the ball is dispatched can be more delicately controlled than with a hit, so that it is the ideal method of giving the 'through' pass, which needs to go so far and no farther (see below, p. 60). But let no one despair who finds himself unable to flick. E. S. Hoare (see Chapter V), although able to flick, only did so about once a year—he hit so quickly and accurately that he had no need to do anything else. And C. E. N. Wyatt (England's right back in the later thirties and the finest the author has yet seen), though he occasionally flicked when really hard pressed in the circle, never did so unless he was forced to. The inside left and centre forward, with whom a fraction of a second in shooting may make all the difference between a goal and nothing, are perhaps the only two players for whom a mastery of the flick is an absolute necessity. In fact, the flick can be much overdone, especially on heavy grounds—players having mastered it, use it almost exclusively and become increasingly lazy over their footwork. The clean crisp hit is still the best method of propelling the ball on most occasions.

There is one other method of delivering the ball which must, I suppose, be touched on, although it is only a bastard offspring of the flick—namely the 'scoop.' It seems necessary to mention this atrocious shot only because it has (or had) its advocates. By



R. H. Lane

THE SCOOP

The right hand is well under the 'shaft' of the stick, and the 'head' is laid back, like that of a golfer's niblick.

lowering the right hand almost to the bottom of the stick the ball can be scooped up high over the heads of the defence (see the illustration facing p. 42).

The objection to the scoop has usually been simply that it is dangerous, partly because it may fly into someone's face on the way up, but mostly because when it is coming down there will be a rush to have the first flying hit at it. This is undoubtedly a sound argument against it, and when the ball is 'scooped' into the circle, the umpire should blow his whistle *immediately*, before the fun has started. But the chief advocate of the scoop, while admitting this, maintains that when used by a wing-half in passing to his wing over the opposing half, there is no danger, and in fact for several years he has used it to good effect and never seen an injury result from it. But I assert confidently that the scoop is contrary to the spirit of the game, not so much on the grounds of dangerous play, but because *there is no defence against it*, except by a foul, that is, by leaping wildly in the air, with stick brandished like a battleaxe. Surely any move to which there is no lawful reply must, *ipso facto*, be unfair.

Receiving the Ball

The object of every player when the ball comes to him, whether from friend or foe, is to get it under immediate control, which normally means stopping it

almost dead. This applies particularly to backs, as we shall see when we come to the chapter on back play. Forwards, on the other hand, particularly when passing among themselves, have to learn to trap the ball and take it on with them all in one movement, since they wish to avoid any kind of check if they can possibly help it. When receiving a pass from behind, however, it is nearly always best for the forward to stop it dead, even at the expense of loss of speed, for if the ball is only half stopped, the opposing half or back will be on it like a flash. Halves will usually have to take a ball coming at them while they themselves are running fast towards it, since the forwards will be harassing them from behind. This is undoubtedly the most difficult way of taking a ball on any ground except a really smooth one, and if there is no forward pursuing him, a half, especially a wing-half, should try to steady himself before taking it.

Sometimes it is possible, even advisable, to hit the ball without stopping it at all—taking a 'first-timer,' as it is called. This is always risky, but the advantage gained from the saving of time is sometimes worth the risk. This particularly applies to a forward in the circle, for often even if he misses it he is no worse off than he would have been if he had stopped it only to be robbed before he could shoot. The one first-timer that should never be taken is by a defender at a ball

coming straight towards him. The hockey stick is not made for this shot either in shape or in strength.

It must be fairly clear from what I have said so far that the methods of receiving the ball vary so much according to the circumstances, and are so different for different positions on the field, that it is hard and incidentally not very profitable to generalize. It will be best to go into greater detail, and this I shall endeavour to do when considering each position separately. There are, however, one or two purely general points about stopping the ball which fall naturally into this chapter.

First, stopping on the left-hand side of the body. The beginner will inevitably be tempted when the ball comes suddenly on his wrong side, to stop it with the back of his stick. Only by *constant practice* will he learn to use the point or 'pick.'

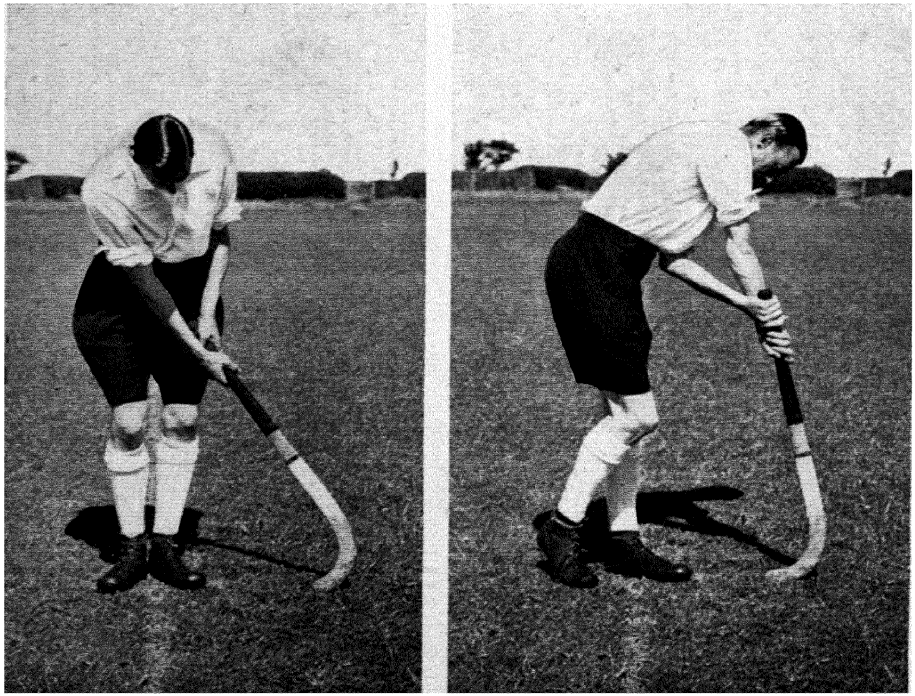
There is a right and a wrong method of doing this. Some beginners tie themselves in knots by taking the stick across the body as if they were going to use the back of it, and then turning it over in another half-circle in order to use the front, thus finding themselves in the remarkable entanglement shown in the illustration facing p. 46. This is quite the wrong method, as must be obvious if you look at the extraordinary position of the hands, the wrists, and the right shoulder. The correct method, which incidentally takes far less time, is

to take the stick across with the *left* hand only without turning it over at all;[1] then the right hand is placed upon it again in the natural position shown in the left hand illustration. Actually many first-class players use the left hand only when taking the ball on their wrong side, especially when it is some distance away from the body, since the addition of the right hand merely curtails the reach. But of course this requires considerable strength in the left wrist, and the beginner may lack this strength especially if he is young. In practice, however, he may well try to avoid using his right hand since this will help to develop his left wrist.

It might appear to be an advantage to be naturally left-handed, and it is certainly true that the left-handed player finds it easy to use the point of his stick. But unfortunately he finds it too easy. He tends to play on his left side for preference, and it is one of the first principles of hockey that, though you may have to stop the ball on the wrong side, and may place it there momentarily when dribbling round a man, it should never be kept there as it tends to cause obstruction.

According to the rules of the game the ball may be stopped with either the foot or the hand if it is stopped quite dead. Continental teams, especially German, interpret this rule far more strictly than we do, and, since it is almost impossible in this way to stop the ball

[1] For more about this, see Chapter X, on 'Practice and Training.'



R. H. Lane

REVERSING STICK

Left. Correct action. The left hand slips under the shaft, and the stick moves across the body, without turning over. Most players soon learn to remove the right hand altogether.

Right. Wrong action. The half-turn of the stick results either in the extraordinary wrist-distortion here shown, or in the complete turning of the back to the oncoming ball.

absolutely, they never use this method deliberately. Personally, I think this is a great improvement and makes for greater speed and neatness in the game. It is noticeable also that from having come to rely on their stick alone (excluding the hand for the moment) foreign teams stop the ball even on a bumpy ground with far greater precision than the English. This difference of interpretation is clearly a matter of great importance involving, as it does, a question of policy concerning the whole future of the game. I have therefore thought fit to mention it two or three times in various parts of this book. It particularly concerns the full-backs (see Chapter VI).[1]

The ball may be stopped with the hand. If the ball is in the air above shoulder level, this is the only method of stopping it, and for this reason I consider umpires are nearly always too strict on the hand-ball rule, for the opponent is probably to blame in the first place for lifting the ball, and to penalize the unfortunate defender for doing his best to bring the game back on to the ground is as often as not a miscarriage of justice. If, however, a player uses his hand when he could use his stick the umpire is right to be strict.

The only players justified in using their hands to stop the ball when it is on or near the ground (except at corners—see Chapter VIII) are the backs. When a

[1] This whole paragraph is now, of course, irrelevant.

hard clearance comes up the field to them and the opposing forwards are not yet near them, the backs must at all costs stop the ball cleanly, and the use of the hand is not to be discouraged, if the player finds it very much safer, and is sure of stopping it dead (see Chapter VI on back play).

When stopping the ball with the hand it should be fielded as at cricket and the hand immediately removed. Do not push your hand at the ball with an open palm; this is almost certain to cause 'hand-ball.

Dribbling

Dribbling, as in soccer, means running with the ball, hitting it (at hockey) with short, sharp taps, now to the right, now to the left, so that the defence is hard put to it to know where or when to tackle. To be able to run round or past any opponent in this way without parting with the ball is, I contend, a necessary accomplishment of every good forward. The fact that three times out of four he should defeat his opponent by passing does not affect the truth of this contention (see p. 59).

The natural way to circumvent an opponent is to go past him on his right, that is, by swerving to your own left. Good inside rights often pass the left back on the other side, but this is very difficult for the beginner, as he will almost inevitably obstruct by placing his

body between the back and the ball. It is, in fact, a moot point whether even first-class inside rights are justified in passing on this side, but they do it so skilfully that if anybody is pulled up for obstruction it is usually the back himself, for tackling on the wrong side.

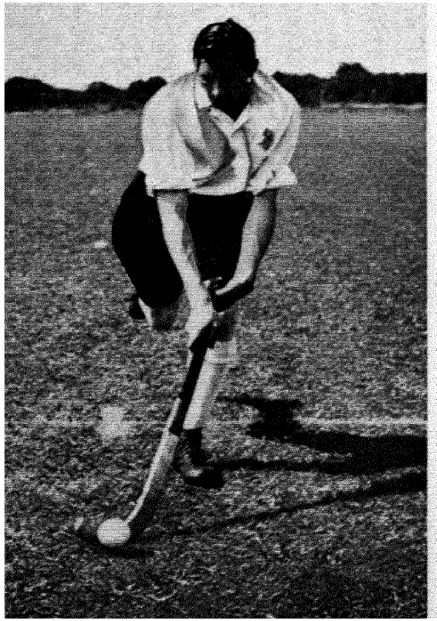
The beginner's method of trying to round the back is normally this: dribbling the ball, he approaches the back head-on, and on reaching him hits the ball to the left, reverses his stick, and goes past (if he is not tripped up, as he deserves to be) with the ball on his wrong side, and his body between the ball and his opponent, who is therefore unable to tackle. In inferior hockey with inferior refereeing you will see this frequently done, and a player may even gain a spurious reputation for clever dribbling. *But he is not playing hockey.*

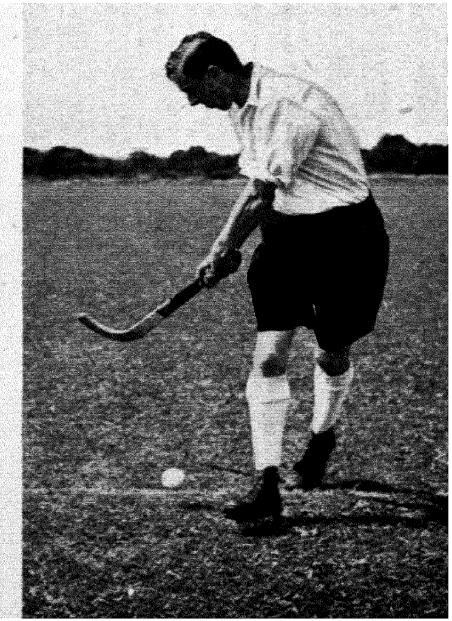
There is not, actually, a very great difference between this method of dribbling round an opponent and the correct method; in fact, up to a certain point, the procedures are identical—the ball is dribbled up to the back and then hit to the left, *but* the player must move to the left like lightning so that he is immediately in a position to play the ball on his correct side again, and in this way avoid obstruction.

In other words, dribbling without footwork is like a car without petrol—it won't go.

It is true to say that fifty per cent of dribbling *is*

footwork. To dribble is not merely to run, but to run and swerve with the ball under close control. Remember that, although you will often be using the pick (or point) of the stick when dribbling, the ball should never be hit more than a foot or two to your left and should never be *played* there at all. Some of the best dribblers have dribbled with the ball close to their feet. O. Rocyn Jones, who did such yeoman service for Wales, dribbled in this way, and there was no more dangerous dribbler except for his tendency to defeat one man too many. Personally, I prefer to have the ball some distance away from my feet so that I can pull it quickly towards me and still have it on my right side. Then again, most players dribble with the ball slightly in front of them; but S. H. Saville, who has certainly had no superior as a dribbler, often seemed to be trailing it along behind him like a well-trained lap-dog. I think, however, that the young forward, especially at inside right and centre forward, should learn to dribble with the ball just in front of him, if only because it will enable him to see better on his 'blind' side, and so to pass to the left at the right moment (see illustration facing this page). Again, some players like to dribble with the ball touching their stick the whole time. R. Perfect—who played inside right for England in the 'bumper' year of 1932, when in four international matches twenty-five goals were scored





R. H. Lane

DRIBBLING

Left. Correct action. The ball is well in front of the player, so that he can look or pass either way. Note that the left hand has slipped further underneath to facilitate playing the ball on either side.

Right. Wrong action. Here the player can have no idea of the position of any one on his blind, or left, side, nor can he pass that way: further, he is potentially causing obstruction.

These pictures apply principally to those dribbling on the right-hand side of the field.

against four—was a past master in this method of dribbling, but this naturally can only be done if the ground is as smooth as a billiard table.

But whatever variation there may be in style the foundation on which successful dribbling is built is correct and neat footwork. No amount of stickwork will make a good dribbler if he does not use his feet as he should.

Tackling

Halves and backs do not dribble, unless we can count as such the quick draw to one side which eludes the onrushing forward and gives the defender time to get rid of the ball unmolested; on the other hand, forwards as a rule do not have to tackle in the same way as halves and backs. Such tackling as the forward does is of two kinds; 'tackling back,' and also tackling a back who has possession of the ball.

'Tackling back' means that the forward chases the defender who has robbed him, in the hopes of either regaining the ball or at least harassing his opponent and causing him to foozle the pass. No skill is required, sheer pace being the most useful quality.

Tackling a back who has possession of the ball is an almost impossible task. The best hope of succeeding

in this is to put out your stick beyond (i.e. to the right of) the ball, since the back will probably draw it towards him in order to elude you; you may surprise him. If you do succeed in this it probably means a goal and the back will be more careful in future—but if you can bring it off once in a game you will have done well.

An inside left or outside left will sometimes find that the opposing right back instead of drawing the ball towards him, pushes it softly to the right towards the touch-line, the ball going across the onrushing forward, and then being recovered after he has run past. This is even harder for the forward to prevent, but I have occasionally seen a really quick-thinking inside left anticipate the move, and, with a quick reverse stick thrust, gather the ball and leave the back standing. But in this second type of tackling, no blame is ever attached to the forward for failure. All he can do is to go hard, and hope to put the back off his stroke and perhaps once in a hundred times get the ball.

The tackling to be done by halves and backs is a very different matter, and if they fail in tackling, they fail in their job. The whole art of tackling an oncoming forward is *never to commit yourself irrevocably*. As we shall see in a later chapter, this applies especially to the backs. There is nothing a good forward is more pleased to see when he has the ball nicely under control, than his opposing back rushing in to tackle him—a

deft swerve to one side, and he is past with a two yards' start while the back turns. If the defender can be certain of getting to the ball before it reaches the forward, or even at the same time, that is undoubtedly the best time to tackle, but he must be very sure of himself, for if his judgment proves at fault he is done for. In this respect it is worth remembering that the faster a back is, the more risks he can run, since he may be able to recover from a misjudgment.

But it is when, as must often happen, the forward has the ball well under control by the time the back is reached that the back is really tested. If the forward is a good player the back will not know till the last moment whether he is going to pass or try to dribble round him, and therefore needs to be prepared for either contingency. He must wait then in the expectant attitude of a panther about to spring, watching for any indication the forward may give of his plans, and for any momentary loss of ball control. If there is neither he may be able to make the forward commit himself by pretending to tackle and then drawing back again.

The back need not be afraid in tackling to use one hand only. The additional reach thus gained will often make the whole difference—this applies particularly to tackling on the wrong side, about which more anon. Finally, remember these two rules when

actually tackling: (1) watch the ball and keep the head down; (2) try to stop the ball with the heel of the stick to make sure of reaching it.

For halves tackling is much easier than for backs. In fact, it is more like the 'tackling back' which is required of forwards. The principal job of the half is to prevent the ball reaching the forward he is marking. If he has failed or been baffled in this, then he will have to tackle from behind or from the side, which is much easier than tackling head-on. For this reason backs, and especially right backs, sometimes let the opposing forward come level with them, and then run alongside delaying their tackle till the last possible moment. This creates a most embarrassing position for the forward since his opponent, the back, is so placed that he cannot pass to the right, while his way is clear to the circle, but he knows that he will be tackled just at the moment he reaches it and starts shooting! Phillips, the Irish International back, was an adept at these tactics, but the back who employs them has to be fast, or the forward will gain on him, and he will never have a chance of tackling him at all.

Wrong-side Tackling

All that has been said so far refers to tackling on the right or natural side, but it must often happen, especially in the case of a left half or right back, that

an opponent has to be tackled on the wrong side. This is quite one of the hardest things to do in hockey—that is, to do fairly. It is easy enough to tackle on the wrong side by riding the other man off the ball or by holding your stick in such a way that he must trip over it; but this is not hockey, and if you cannot avoid such clumsy methods it is better not to try to tackle on the wrong side at all. To tackle fairly the stick should be held in the *left* hand only and the stick should touch the ball and nothing else. [I have seen some quite good players, such as the captain of a public-school eleven, try to tackle on the wrong side with the *right* hand—obviously an almost impossible feat.] Ideally, the stick should be removed immediately after stopping the ball lest the opponent trip over it. In practice, however, the latter is usually moving too fast for this to be possible; his feet will probably come in contact with the tackler's stick and remove it for him. But even if this happens the tackler should still be able to gain possession after the dribbler has overrun the ball, and having done so he should transfer himself with all speed to the correct side of it. There is no more pleasing sensation in hockey than a clean wrong-side tackle, and no prettier sight. Any one wishing to see it well done had only to watch the English left halves, T. L. Rowan and A. J. Stuart, tackling their wings. But remember—if you touch your opponent at all or

in any way obstruct him you will be penalized by any good referee. In all tackling the inviolable rule, both written and unwritten, is 'go for the ball and not the man.' See illustrations facing p. 102 for further comments.

One final word which applies to every branch of stickwork. At tennis or rackets the beginner is continually having to be told 'racquet up'—that is, hold the racquet ready for the next shot. The same advice applies to hockey. The tiro will often be seen rushing about with his stick held anyhow in the right hand only; sometimes I have seen a young player so unconscious of his stick that he is quite unwittingly brandishing it aloft or carrying it slung over his shoulder like a rifle! The stick should be held whenever possible in both hands in readiness for receiving the ball. You may have to take it wide on the left with the left hand only, or wide on the right with the right hand only; with both hands holding it in front of you, you are best prepared for any contingency. Actually, it is noticeable from the photographs taken in the course of a game how many players hold their stick in the *left* hand only.

CHAPTER IV

FORWARD PLAY

Hockey is won by goals. Upon the forwards rests the responsibility of scoring these goals, and since attack is harder than defence, it follows that the forwards must be the most skilful players on the field. The principal qualities they require are:

1. *Ball control*, by which is meant the ability to stop the ball on either side, to hit or flick it accurately and quickly, and to dribble or run with it at full speed. In this last respect, the forward must go one better than the half or back, as it is not essential for the latter to be able to dribble.

2. *Speed*, that is pace over a short distance without the ball (much the least important quality); pace with the ball under control (much more important—if the German teams only possessed this quality, they would easily defeat us since in all other respects they are superior); and finally, speed off the mark—a quality quite distinct from mere pace and attainable by one who may not be able to do the hundred yards in anything like even time, since it is as much a mental quality

as a physical one. Quickness of mind and anticipation are worth at least a couple of yards at any game.

3. *Imagination*, or head-work, or whatever other name is given to the use of the brain. This is perhaps the most important, and certainly the quality which is most rarely applied in hockey or any other game.

These seem to be the three chief qualities required by forwards, though of course there are others such as physical fitness, even temper, keenness, on which there is no need to dwell in this chapter since they are equally necessary for other positions and other games.

Some players seem to possess naturally these qualities of ball-control, speed, and imagination, and they have an initial advantage over other players, but the qualities can all be cultivated to a greater or lesser degree, except perhaps actual speed of foot, which I maintain is the least important. Stickwork and ball control are above everything a matter of *practice*. The keen beginner at tennis is always to be found knocking up against some suitable wall (preferably where there are no windows), and the keen young hockey player has always a stick and ball with which he knocks about, if possible with others, on any suitable piece of grass (not the tennis lawn or bowling green). The value of this type of practice cannot, I think, be overestimated. When hockey was first started at Rugby, one House possessed a piece of ground just outside,

with a gate at one end and a rugger goal at the other, on which in every spare half-hour pick-up games took place. Certain of the finer points of the game were undoubtedly disregarded, such as 'turning on the ball' and 'sticks,' but it speaks for itself that for the first five years that House was cock-house at hockey.

Dribbling and Passing

There is a tendency nowadays to minimize the importance of dribbling. Worthy coaches, intent (and rightly so) on inculcating in the young the idea that there is no room in team-games for the selfish player, emphasize the value of passing to such an extent that boys learn to pass before they have learnt to control the ball, which is equivalent to learning to run before you can walk. Good passing is of course the foundation of a good attack at hockey. But it is impossible to pass well unless one can control the ball enough to draw the defence and threaten to go through on one's own if they will not tackle, and indeed to go through now and then. There is no one who gives the defence less trouble than the mechanical first-time passer—except the fellow who, after beating two men, will always try to beat one more!

We will assume, therefore, that the forward must be able to dribble well enough to threaten danger on his

own. Let us now consider the general tactics of forward play. They consist, in brief, of a nice mixture of individual thrusts and attacks threatening danger 'in single spies,' with combined play and passing movements between the forwards as a body.

In combined play, skill and finesse are required in the passing. There are passes, of course, of many sorts: they may be pushed or hit, soft or hard, but in general they can be divided into two very distinct classes—the 'square' pass and the 'through' pass. Of these the first, as its name suggests, is the pass hit directly to or a little in front of another player who is either to the left or to the right. The 'through' pass is hit with modified pace through an opening in the opponent's defence to a point where the wing-forward, or whoever it may be, will pick it up. The important difference is that the one is hit nearly direct to a player of the same side, while the other is hit or flicked where a player will be in a few moments' time. This player may actually start from behind the hitter.

The 'square' pass from right to left is probably the first one used by the beginner. Just as at cricket the novice naturally hits, or tries to hit, the ball to square-leg, so the natural direction in which to hit a hockey-ball is across the body. But it is one of the paradoxes of hockey that the pass found easiest at first ends by being the most difficult and rarest. I think there are

two reasons for this. First, the left is one's blind side so that it is hard to see the person to whom one wishes to pass. This is particularly so when the forward dribbles the ball at his side and rather behind him, instead of keeping it in front of him.[1] Secondly, this pass is much the easiest to intercept, and if it is to be successful it must be given at the exact moment when the defence is drawn out of position.

Nevertheless, this pass remains, especially when near goal, the best form of attack, though it is often maddeningly overlooked, particularly by centre forwards. Outside rights naturally cultivate this square pass since they have no one on their right; inside rights learn (and, having learnt, overdo) the 'through' pass to their wing, but cannot well forget altogether the square pass to the centre forward or inside left; but centre forwards with an inside right to whom they can push the ball forward or sideways if they cannot go through themselves, often lose, or forget altogether, the square pass to the inside left. This is so even in the highest class of hockey: one can think of at least two centre forwards who have played (and with success, principally as goal scorers) for their country, without giving their inside left more than one pass (and that a bad one) in the whole season! Yet well given, this square pass from centre forward to inside left is unquestionably the most effective

[1] See p. 50 and illustration.

goal-getter in hockey.[1] Perhaps I speak with a certain amount of bias on this question, for I play at inside left myself, but for the sake of all other inside lefts I pray that budding centre forwards may remember well what I have said here.

The square pass should always be given *firmly*, since a soft hit will be intercepted before reaching its objective. Outsides in particular, whose square passes are more commonly called centres, must hit the ball hard (see below). Allowance should be made for the speed at which the receiver of the pass is moving. The ball should always be hit in front of him so that he can take it in his stride; for nothing halts an attacking movement so much as a pass which causes a forward to stop in order to take it. In an ideal square-passing movement passes are given and taken among the forwards while they are running at full speed.

If the same kind of pass were always given how easy would become the work of the defence. Often the intelligent forward will see that his square pass is blocked, but that in order to block it the opposing backs are themselves square (of which more anon). Then he hits the ball (or rather pushes it, since exact pace of shot is of paramount importance in this case—it must *not* be too firm) 'through' the space between

[1] I have heard this pass termed colloquially the 'poached egg pass,' but I have been unable to discover why.

Associated Press

FROM THE WRONG SIDE

R. Whitlock (England centre forward) bringing the ball back from his wrong side. Notice how beautifully under control he seems.

the backs, and his equally intelligent fellow forward, anticipating the move, is through the gap like a flash while the backs are turning. By the time the second forward reaches the ball he is in an off-side position (one of the umpire's hardest decisions, this), but of course as long as he was on-side when the ball was hit, he is on-side when he reaches it. But he must remember not to anticipate the pass too soon. It is clear that this pass differs from the other principally in that (as I have said before) it does not go straight *to* anybody, but through into a gap. The commonest use of it is from inside right to outside right. Diagram 1 will perhaps illustrate this.

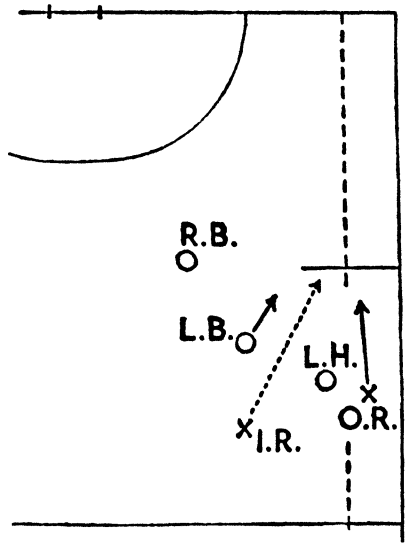


DIAGRAM 1

----→Path of Ball ——→Path of Players

It will easily be seen how effective this pass can be, since the outside right, if he has any pace at all, will be well away with nobody to worry him, except perhaps the right back who has come across to cover. But, of course, the really good left back and left half will work

in conjunction to prevent the pass ever getting through —the left half in particular being ready to drop back if the left back comes up on the inside right (see Chapter VI). The through pass, in fact, depends for its effectiveness entirely on a clear and quick summing up of the position of the defence.

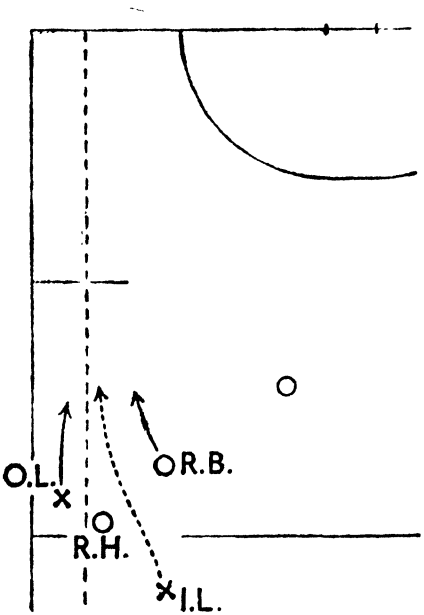


DIAGRAM 2

It can also be used to good effect from inside left to outside left, but the defence is then more likely to be successful since the opposing back has the ball on his right-hand side, and can more easily get back to it, as Diagram 2 will show.

It will be noted that in this diagram the outside has been placed considerably further up the field than his inside. This is because, to have a chance of reaching a 'through' pass before the opposing defence, he must be as nearly off-side as possible when the pass is given (and *look* extremely off-side when he reaches it!).

Among the inside forwards the 'through' pass is also useful if the backs are standing square or if the ground is heavy, since it can then be hit hard through without danger of simply going over the backline or

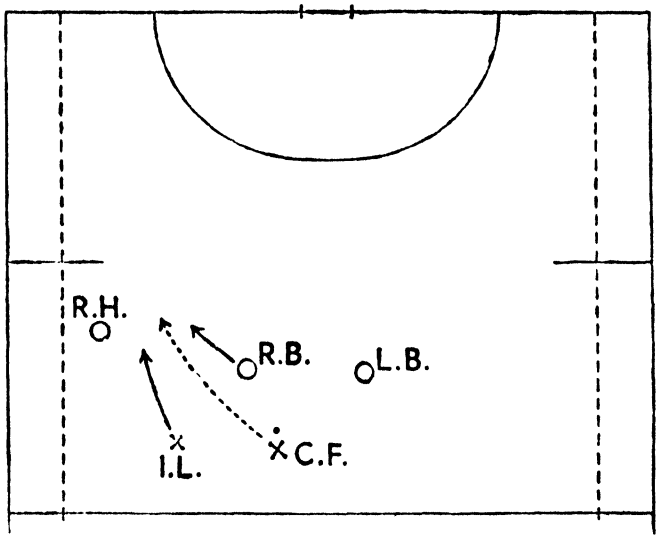


DIAGRAM 3

to the goal-keeper. The one 'through' pass which is useless (yet often given) is that from inside right or centre forward to inside left, going *across* him as well as in front of him as in Diagram 3.

It will be seen that the inside left 'hasn't a hope.' If he can get to the ball at all before it reaches the retiring right half he has it on his wrong side, while the back can either tackle him easily or get a free hit

if he obstructs. Incidentally it may also be noted that in this diagram the backs are standing 'square,' thus apparently breaking one of the first principles of back-play (see Chapter VI). But since the centre forward has the ball this is inevitable, though only momentary, and will immediately be remedied when it becomes clear which way he is going to pass (personally, I would lay ten to one on his passing to the right!).

There is often heated discussion as to the relative value of the 'through' and the 'square' pass. The answer surely is that neither is intrinsically better than the other. The ideal is to use whichever one the circumstances (i.e. the position of the defence) demand.

Shooting for Goal

Before we consider each of the five positions in the forward line separately (for each demands somewhat different qualifications and tactics), there are one or two things which apply generally to all the forwards. Of these, the most important is *shooting at goal.* How often one sees a forward line wellnigh perfect in co-operation and in leading up to the goal-scoring position and then . . . a veil is best drawn over the efforts to get the ball into the net! Perhaps the commonest cause of a failure of this kind is that the forwards try to make a little too sure of it. There is rarely more

than two seconds in which to get in a shot at goal, and if one takes longer an opposing back or half will just get his stick to the ball in time to spoil one's shot. The golden rule for beginners, and probably for the more advanced also, is to get in a shot of *some* sort at all costs: even a topped one may deceive the goal-keeper by its very slowness, or may rebound off his pads to you or to one of your own side to give you another chance—but 'no shot at all' never scored a goal! Not when he is *in* the circle, but when still two yards *outside* it, the forward should prepare himself to shoot by getting himself in the right position. Then the *moment* the ball is inside he is ready to shoot, and that vital split second is saved. The shortest possible backswing with the maximum amount of wrist and elbow movement should be used. Often there is no time for any backswing, and then the shooter must employ his flick. This takes less time than any other shot, and is, as we have said, an important part of any forward's technique. If, as occasionally happens, the defence has been so drawn that you are left with ample time to 'tee up,' as it were, then the golden rule is, as at golf, keep your head down!

Getting Unmarked

It is extraordinary how few forwards seem really to think about *getting unmarked*—yet it makes all the

difference to the defence behind them. Nothing puts a half or back so much at a loss as to have the ball, look for a forward to whom to pass, and see them all covered by opposing backs. But we will say more of this in the chapter on free hits.

Tackling Back

Nothing perhaps so turns the scale between two evenly matched sides as the fact that one set of forwards *tackles back* while the other doesn't. Many forwards when they lose the ball stand and watch (and perhaps curse) while the opponent takes it up the field and at the right moment passes it on to his own forwards. Yet what a difference it makes if the forward turns and chases the man who has robbed him. If exceptionally fast he may catch him before he gets rid of the ball, and he will then be as well off as before he lost it. Even if he doesn't catch him he will probably get near enough to harass him and cause him to fluff his pass, thus giving valuable assistance to his own defence. Such tackling back requires great energy, but matches are won and lost by it and I would urge all forwards to start it young—for it is not a thing one can do more easily as the years go by! It is not, of course, a matter of skill—simply one of energy and spirit.

Forward Positions

Turning to the individual positions in the forward line let us start with outside right, since this is undoubtedly the easiest position to fill at least adequately although it is no easier to be really first-class in this position than in any other. It is the one place on the hockey field where speed, in the sense of actual pace over the ground, is an asset in itself and can counterbalance deficiencies in other respects, such as stickwork. An outside right well fed by his inside with 'through' passes can, if he is fleet of foot, outstrip the opposing defence, and then he has only to hit the ball square across to the left—the easiest type of shot as we pointed out above, requiring principally the application of the maxim 'head down.' However, let no one imagine from this that by merely being able to run and hit he can be a really good outside right, nor that if he is unable to sprint he is thereby debarred from playing well in this position—for speed off the mark and intelligent anticipation combined with neat stickwork will compensate for lack of pace. The fact remains, however, that the sprinter starts with a definite advantage for outside right, and he is the natural man to choose if you wish to train somebody for this position.

Outside right.

The outside right should be able to take the ball on the run, dribble past an opponent if necessary, and centre the ball hard. When dribbling he must keep the ball well in front of him, and not behind him or at his side. It may be permissible for the outside left to dribble with the ball at his side, but for the outside right this is wrong.

When he has acquired this technique the outside right has yet to learn the more important part of his game—that is, how to apply this technique—to know when to pass and when to dribble. A useful rule for beginners is 'never hold on too long,' but the experienced player who uses his brain will learn when it is better to pass immediately and when to beat or draw a man first, when to pass forward and when back, when to hit as hard as he can—as when the defence is well back and the only hope is to trust to their missing it so that it will go right through to the centre forward or inside left—and when to hit quickly but accurately —as when the defence is outstripped and another forward is up with him quite unmarked. From this, one important point should be clear. Before passing, the outside right (or any one else for that matter) *must* spare a glance to see the position of the defence and of his own forwards. Mere mechanical passing in the right direction may come off once in twenty times (and

RIGHT WING ATTACK

A fine action photograph of Slade (English right wing) leading an attack on the German goal with Whitlock up in close attendance. Note the position of the ball in relation to Slade—well out *in front*, not at his side.

is better than looking up at the *moment* of passing), but against an intelligent defence it is doomed to inevitable failure. Yet to judge by school sides one sometimes sees, it may be doubted whether coaches emphasize this point sufficiently.

Another rule for outsides (right or left) is 'keep out on the touch-line.' Because they are often given a pass *straight* through which necessitates cutting *inwards*, wing-players form a habit of standing some five yards in from the touch-line, imagining they will then get to the through pass more quickly. But they fail to realize that if they stand thus, they bring the opposing half in, thus crowding the inside right who can no longer find a gap through which to pass. Only near the circle should the wing cut in, as his opposing half will have gone across to cover the left back, and he may well have an opportunity of having a shot at goal.

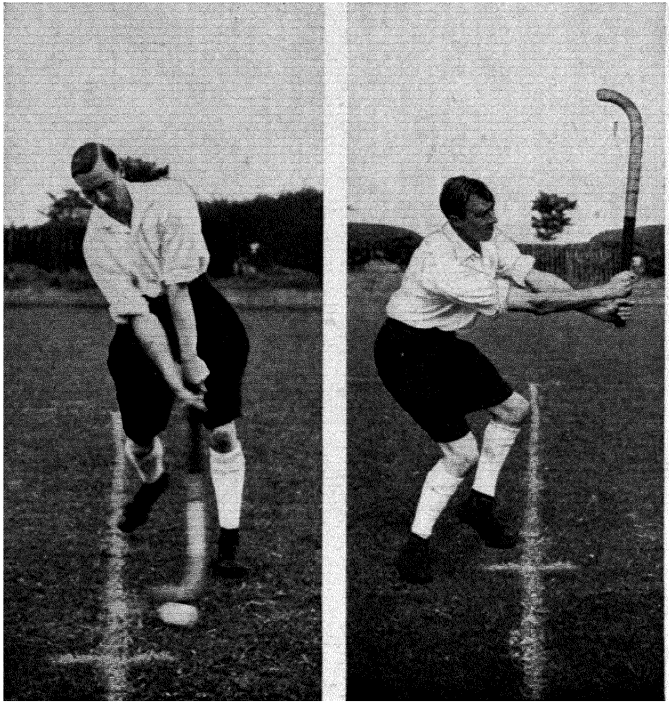
Three times out of four an outside right on reaching the circle should *not* shoot, since his angle is almost certain to be very narrow, thus making it extremely easy for the goal-keeper even if the shooter achieves the right direction. On the other hand, he is justified in shooting himself if the inside forwards are all marked, or if he has already passed in vain to them several times! But on the whole advice to outside rights is *pass* and *pass in good time*. One year, an outside right who represented his country was in deadly

form shooting at goal, and he started every international match by scoring in the first few minutes *pour encourager les autres*. The next year, his early shots just went awry, but instead of passing to his insides he went on trying to go through himself, and great was the fall of that forward line.

Outside left.

Since our recent remarks have often applied to outside forwards in general, it will be only natural to pass from a review of outside-right play to that of outside-left. Just as the former position is undoubtedly the easiest for the beginner, so this is assuredly the hardest. For, as will be shown, even greater speed is needed than at outside right, and with it considerable stickwork.

The outside right when well *behind* the ball can centre it the moment he is within reach of it, but since it is almost impossible to hit the ball hard enough or accurately enough from left to right with reversed stick (though as a last resort it is worth trying), the outside left has to be level with, or even in front of the ball before he can centre it. Thus he has to run even faster than the outside right, for his opposing half or back, having the ball on the right side, can tackle him at any moment from behind or from the side, and he must be a yard or two clear of them to be able to centre the ball successfully.



HITTING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Left. Correct Action

A remarkably fine action photograph Moreover, the striker did not cheat, for up to the moment of striking he was running at right angles to the white line (the half-way line) so that he must have moved his feet pretty quickly. The right shoulder is, perhaps, a little too low; otherwise the position is, I think, fairly good. The weight is focused on the left foot, which is pointing in the direction in which the ball is to go; the weight will follow the line of the ball, which travelled at an angle of about thirty degrees to the white line.

Right. Wrong action.

Owing to the position of the feet and stick (one can almost hear the whistle blowing) it is hardly recognizable as a left-to-right hit. But the fact remains that the ball travelled in the same direction as in left-hand figure, only in the *air*, since it obviously had to be undercut to get it to go in that direction at all. The weight of the body cannot have gone into the hit, for it is all on the right foot.

R. H. Lane

There is, however, one manœuvre that every outside left, especially one without quite sufficient pace, must learn. This is to stop practically dead when running fast with the ball, pull the ball back with the reverse stick and then, turning half right, hit it across the centre. This manœuvre, if well done, probably defeats the opposing half. Though he will be expecting it, he cannot tell exactly at what moment it will be performed, and thus he almost inevitably overruns the ball. Many outside lefts, having once learnt this trick, seem to imagine they have now mastered the art of hockey, and use this method of centering on every possible occasion. They should be quickly disillusioned. It should only be used by the outside as a last resort, when the half or back is level with him, and he has not the pace to round him—a position the really skilful player will usually avoid. The reason why this stopping and turning is weak is fairly obvious. Every move which checks the onward flow of the attack must inevitably be bad; it may help the outside left himself to get in his centre, but it also helps the defence who may have been outstripped to get back into position.

So let every outside left remember that the really important thing to learn is to be able to centre on the run—a very difficult business requiring much practice. It will be found that a flick is a useful stand-by, since

a player can flick to the right without having to turn the feet and body so much as for a hit, but unless gifted with an exceptionally powerful flick he cannot usually generate enough speed to beat the defence with it.

Position. The outside left, like the outside right, should keep well out until nearing the circle. The temptation to leave the touch-line, however, will be even greater for him than for the outside right, since in order to reach a 'through' pass before the back he will have to cut inwards very fast; but in mid-field especially he should keep well out in order to distribute the defence as widely as possible. A. D. Ogilvy, who played no less than thirty-five times for England at outside left, used to keep right on the touch-line (in fact, his feet were generally outside it with his stick just inside); and if *he* did not know the best position for an outside left it is hard to imagine who would! To sum up, the golden rule for this position is 'keep out and pass early'—earlier even than the outside right, for unless the outside left passes as soon as he can, he is likely to miss his chance.

Inside Left.

It will often be found that the most skilful player is put at inside left, and this would incline one to imagine that it is the most difficult position; but such is not the case. In fact, it is the easiest eventually, although for

Sport and General

ON THE TOUCH-LINE

'A. D. Ogilvy used to keep right on the touch-line (in fact, his feet were generally *outside* it).' Unfortunately no photograph of Ogilvy in action is available, but the outside left in this one is obviously of the same persuasion.

a beginner inside right and centre forward may be easier. It is, however, very necessary to have a good man at inside left because not only is constructive ability required, but since the inside left usually gets the most chances in the circle, he must also be a quick and dangerous shot. But his job is easier than that of the other two in the matter both of giving and of receiving passes.

The inside left, with the inside right, should come back more than the other forwards when their side is on the defence and form a link between halves and forwards. On receiving the ball when behind the rest of the line there are clearly two courses open to the inside left, to run with the ball until he is up in line with the other forwards, or to pass it straight away. Of these two courses the first should be taken sometimes for variety, but the second is undoubtedly the safer and the better for general use, for the same reason that usually makes it better for a half- or a full-back to send the ball up-field with the least possible delay—namely, the saving of precious seconds which the opposing defence might use to regain a lost position (see Chapters V and VI).

It often happens, however, that the inside left receives the ball when only a few yards behind the centre forward. Provided that the opposing centre half is momentarily out of the way (as he is bound to

be, if the offensive has suddenly changed hands), he can then essay one of the most effective passing movements in the game. From his position slightly behind, he passes across to the centre forward, the latter without waiting at all just taps it back and in front of the inside left, who after delivering his pass has run up at full speed and takes this return pass in his stride. If well timed, this movement is almost certain of success, since the speed at which the inside left is moving when he receives the ball again carries him past the back, who has had to move towards the centre forward. Perhaps Diagram 4 will make this clear.

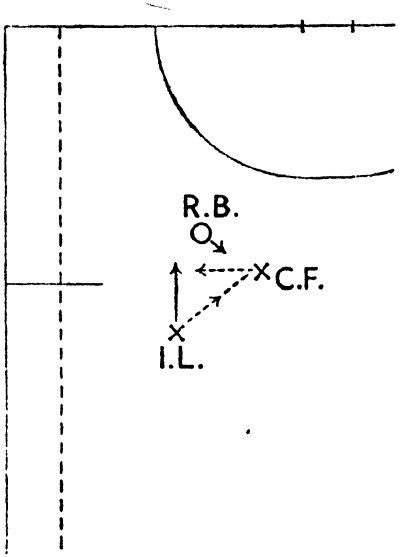


DIAGRAM 4

Note. This is sometimes, for a reason that should be easily apparent, known as the 'triangular' passing movement, and is not necessarily confined in its use to inside left and centre forward.

Two things, however, are essential to the success of this movement.

1. The inside left on giving the pass must then run *as fast as he can.* (This is an important thing for all forwards to remember—often, having given his pass, the beginner seems to imagine he can now take a rest —whereas this is the moment at which he should be putting his best leg forward!)

2. The centre forward must give the return pass *immediately.* If he waits one second it will be too late, since either the inside left will have overrun the ball, or if the centre forward sends the ball farther forward the inside left will almost inevitably have got off-side.

The inside left will find on the whole that by far his easiest pass (and no less good for that reason) is to the inside right, since the centre half, if he knows his business, will be marking the centre forward, while the outside left will be equally well marked by the right half. But, of course, the inside left often wants to pass to both players and in order to do so will have to show constructive ability. He will have to draw the opposing defence by threatening to go through on his own (see above for importance of ball control and ability to dribble; for if the defence knows that it need not fear the player individually, it will refuse to be drawn), or otherwise he will have to find a gap for a 'through' pass. The inside left will do much flicking since only thus can he disguise a pass to the right—a difficult thing to do even when flicking, and wellnigh

impossible with a hit. Occasionally a reverse-stick pass will be successful, but it is too unreliable to be used often. The most effective manœuvre an inside left can learn, by assiduous practice, is to be able to draw the ball towards him as if about to dribble round his opponent, and then in the same movement, without using the reverse stick, flick it across to the right. The draw to the left will just bring the opposing defender far enough across to be able to clear him with a pass.

Inside Right.

To be a second-class inside right is probably easier than to be a second-class inside left, but to be a first-class one is much harder. In the first place the receiving of passes from behind is more difficult. . One of the first things to be learnt by every forward is to be able to get the ball under immediate control when it has been passed to him from behind. It is almost invariably best to *stop it dead* and then proceed, rather than try to go on with it after having merely altered its pace somewhat. This is particularly the case when one receives a hard pass from either full-back. For the inside left it is easy enough, after he has stopped the ball, to get into his stride again, since he has only to turn through a quarter of a circle. But the inside right, especially when he receives the ball from his left back (a favourite pass), has to stop the ball first and

then turn three-quarters of a circle. This clearly tends to take longer and if the opposing back comes up (as he should), it is liable to involve him in a breach of the obstruction rule. Consequently an inside right would be well advised to come back for his passes even farther than the inside left, so that he can have more time to get the ball under control before he is tackled.

The inside right's other great difficulty (as I have hinted before) is to pass to the left—the difficulty lying partly in the fact that it is his blind side, but mainly in the ease with which this pass can be intercepted. To obviate this the inside right must be the most constructive player on the side. He must be able to dribble so skilfully that he can draw the opposition away from the centre on to himself, and then when he does pass, his pass is not so likely to be intercepted. Moreover he can, if he manages it properly, do this without giving any hint of it to the defenders—an advantage he holds over the inside left.

Probably no inside right has ever been more skilful at making openings than S. H. Saville, who holds the record number of English Caps with thirty-six. His opponents were beaten by the pure neatness and artistry of his stickwork. But it is also possible to be nearly as effective with less stickwork but with a good swerve. G. D. Penn, who was playing for England just before the second war, had a swerve with the ball

which would have done credit to a Rugby three-quarter. The inside right has an advantage over the inside left in that he can pass his back on either side: and the ability to swing *inwards* and then with a quick reverse-stick tap to swerve *outside* the opposing back is the sign of a first-class player.

Passing to the outside right is easier—for either a 'square' or a 'through' pass will do, and the opposing half-back can hardly block both.

But until he has sufficient ball control to be able to make openings before passing, the best advice for the inside right is to pass very early and very firmly, and then to dash up into position for a possible return pass.

Centre Forward.

Lastly we come to the centre forward, for which position the principal qualities required are probably *dash* and *marksmanship*. By dash I mean, principally, courage to go for a doubtful ball (that is, one which an opponent may reach first) without that fatal second's hesitation which makes all the difference between being in time and being too late. Marksmanship, of course, means the ability to shoot hard, accurately, and quickly.

But the first-class centre forward needs rather more than just these two qualities. In particular, he must have the ability to see where there is a gap in the

defence, and enough speed over a few yards to carry him through that gap, combined, of course, with sufficient stickwork to control the ball while going through. With these qualities alone players have reached the highest class of hockey and, when they receive frequent passes from the insides, they score many goals and are pronounced match-winners. But they are not ideal centre forwards, for if by any chance they have an off-day (as may happen to anybody, especially in shooting for goal), or if the defence is intelligent and able to size them up and prevent them from playing their natural game, they become match-losers instead of match-winners, for they have no constructive ideas, and if they cannot go through themselves they are at a loss.

Most centre forwards can pass to the inside right (and sometimes do) but, as has been said before in this chapter, too often they fail altogether to pass to the inside left, especially when near the circle. Yet it is just here that this pass can be so effective, and it will be worth while to discuss in some detail the application and effectiveness of this movement.

If the centre forward never passes to his inside left in or near the circle, the right back will soon notice it and, leaving the inside left, will join the centre half in looking after the centre forward. But if the latter can only draw the back on to himself and will then tap the

ball to the now unmarked inside left, a goal will almost certainly result.

This sounds easy enough, but time and again the inside left will find himself quite unmarked on the edge of the circle with the defence drawn across to the right, and the hoped-for square pass never comes, even though he cry aloud for it (as indeed he should, for he is on the blind side, and it is hard for the centre forward to know just where he is).

The centre forward then, as much as any player, must use his head as well as his stick and must adapt his game to the circumstances. It was such adaptability and headwork, in addition to his other great qualities, which made S. H. Shoveller a much better 'pivot' than any of his successors. And Dyan Chand, the centre forward of the 1936 Indian Olympic team which defeated Germany, on her home ground, by the astounding score of 8–1, of which he scored six himself, was, it seems, a great constructive player, as well as a great individualist; but unfortunately I had no opportunity of seeing him.

Forwards and Off-side

It is perhaps the commonest fault of inexperienced forwards to *stand off-side*. This is nearly always the result of over-keenness, and is therefore a fault on the

THE LAST RESORT—CENTRING WITH REVERSE STICK (Page 72) *Topical Press*

right side, but there is naturally nothing more detrimental to a successful attacking movement. The remedy is always to have an eye on the position of the opposing defence, unless of course to keep on-side necessitates keeping behind *your own* men, as happens when inside forwards are running parallel to an outside right who has outstripped the defence and is about to centre *square* across when nearing the circle. How often have I seen a young (or even not so young!) centre forward or inside left running in his excitement just two or three feet *ahead* of the wing-player, and thus spoiling what might have been an almost certain goal. Indeed I was for years guilty of this fault myself, and may sometimes still be so, though, if I am, it is through carelessness now and not over-keenness!

The outside left undoubtedly has the hardest job to keep on-side. There are two reasons for this; first, since he has to get *beyond* the ball before he can do anything with it, he has to run farther than his opponents and so has to start sooner; secondly—and this is hard luck on him—when he reaches the ball he is almost invariably in an (apparently) off-side position, and only the most perfect of umpires, standing as they do on the opposite side of the field whence the outside left is most clearly visible, can have noticed where he was *when the ball was hit.*

I think, after outside lefts, centre forwards are off-side more often than players in other positions, though outside rights run them close. If the latter are given off-side, they almost certainly *are*, and they have only themselves to blame—not that that helps when a fine movement is ruined. They should, like any other forward, have kept their eyes open and taken care *not* to be off-side, in any case.

There are a few other matters connected with forward play, such as 'bullying' and 'corner-taking,' which will be dealt with elsewhere, and I shall end this chapter with some general advice to aspiring forwards.

A forward, off the field of play, must constantly practise stickwork and footwork, whether on a practice pitch with others, or by himself in his own back garden.

On the field of play, above all things, let him use his *brain*. He must try, from the beginning of the game, to detect the weak spot in the opposing defence and play on it. He must avoid being stereotyped and being selfish (but that does not debar him from dribbling). He must adapt his tactics to the conditions. On a dry smooth ground no form of attack is more effective than short passing between the inside forwards; but dry smooth grounds are rather the exception than the rule in England, and on a wet ground which has become bumpy through being cut up the open game is best. Long through passes to the

wings or to the centre forward are then most effective, for it is impossible under such conditions to keep the ball close—moreover, the backs are at a disadvantage with the through pass since they cannot turn quickly on the wet turf. Finally remember to *tackle back*. Many a match has been won by the less skilful side because the forwards have made up for lack of skill by solid hard work and worrying tactics. On the other hand, many a match has been lost by clever forwards being too lazy to come back for the ball, and afterwards blaming their unfortunate defence for not feeding them.

CHAPTER V

HALF-BACK PLAY

THE duty of half-backs is to support their forwards in attack and their backs in defence; it follows, therefore, that the principal quality required by a good half-back is *tireless energy*. This applies particularly to the centre half as we shall see. Furthermore, since half-backs alone have constantly to take a ball running (or more probably bumping) towards them while they themselves are running at it, they will require even more than other players that elusive quality, known as a 'good eye.'

I wonder how many people are aware of what having a good eye really means? I am sure most believe that it is simply a gift of nature, and one man will say enviously that so-and-so was born with a much better eye than he and is therefore a much better hockey-player, while he himself has 'no eye' and so will never be any good. Now there is a modicum of truth in this, but it is by no means the whole truth. Let it first be clearly understood that a 'good eye' and good eyesight are quite different things. It is perhaps harder for a man with poor eyesight to have a 'good

Keystone

ATTACK AND DEFENCE

General scene of an attack on the English goal in the match between England and Ireland at Bristol in March 1935. Note the position of the defence. Block (left back) is up on the edge of the circle (his left leg appears to be off the ground), Wyatt has come across behind him to 'cover' him, while Waydelin (right half) has left his wing man and come across to the edge of the circle to make the *inside* left, should the ball come that way.

eye' (though there is nothing to prevent his wearing glasses provided they are triplex), but there are many people with average, or even exceptionally good, eyesight who have no eye at games. Having a good eye then has little or no relation to having good eyesight, paradoxical as that may appear.

What, then, do we mean by this elusive term which expresses so inadequately a quality so essential to the ball game player? First, judgment, and then action based on that judgment. The mind through the eye judges that a ball is moving at a certain speed and will arrive at a given point at a definite moment. The mind conveys this judgment to the limbs and if the person's reflexes or reactions work fast enough he so moves his legs and body and arms that he meets the ball at this given point, and at this definite moment with his stick.

Many are undoubtedly fortunate enough to be born with the possession of this faculty or quality (it is usually hereditary) and thus far the envious grumbler has truth in his fatalistic complaint but no farther. There is no reason why a 'good eye' should not be developed. By the exercise of a little faith and by constant practice the fellow who complains of having 'no eye' will have his reflexes working as quickly as the 'natural' player; the only difference will be that the former will need to keep in practice throughout

the season. In the first week or two of the hockey season the 'born' games-player will have things his own way, but after that there is no reason why the 'made' player should not come into his own.

The Tactics of the Half-back Position

1. *Defensive.*

The foundation of all defensive play is *position.* I remember hearing it said of soccer that a wing-half could play a perfect game without ever touching the ball, and though it is clearly hyperbole the same might equally well be said of hockey. The normal position of a half-back is in front of the man he is marking, in such a position that the ball cannot reach him. This exact position naturally depends on the direction from which the ball is coming.

However, if the half sticks rigidly to this principle he will be wrongly positioned. Position in defence is not simply a matter of marking one's opposite number; if it were, hockey would be just eleven individuals opposed to eleven others instead of one of the greatest of team games. Suppose, for instance, the opposing inside-left has beaten his back and is racing for the circle. It would be absurd to leave him to do so unmolested, so the left back comes across to tackle him. This leaves the inside right unmarked.

Clearly the left half must come across now to fill up the gap left by the back and this necessitates leaving his wing. This is only one example of the elasticity of the 'mark your man' principle. Other instances will be given when we consider each of the three halves separately. Defence just as much as attack needs co-operation.

One of the hardest questions for a half to decide is what to do when the opposing half dribbles the ball up the field. I think it is best, especially for wing-halves, to retreat, refusing to be 'drawn.' The backs can then advance, and when the dribbling half eventually passes, his forwards are almost certainly off-side and will not bless him for his delay. Moreover, if the opposing forwards know (and do) their job, the attacking half will not be allowed to dribble far as he will be chased and tackled from behind. If, on the other hand, the defending half advances and tries to tackle him, he is doing just what the attacker wants, for there will now be an unmarked forward for him to pass to. But if the defending half retreats before him, watching for any momentary loss of ball control, the attacker is doing no harm and if he does lose control of the ball that will give the opportunity for a change of tactics—the defending half will be able to rob him before he passes.

It is hard to make any more general observations

applying to all halves in defence; there will be more to say when we consider wing-halves and centre half separately.

2. *Offensive.*

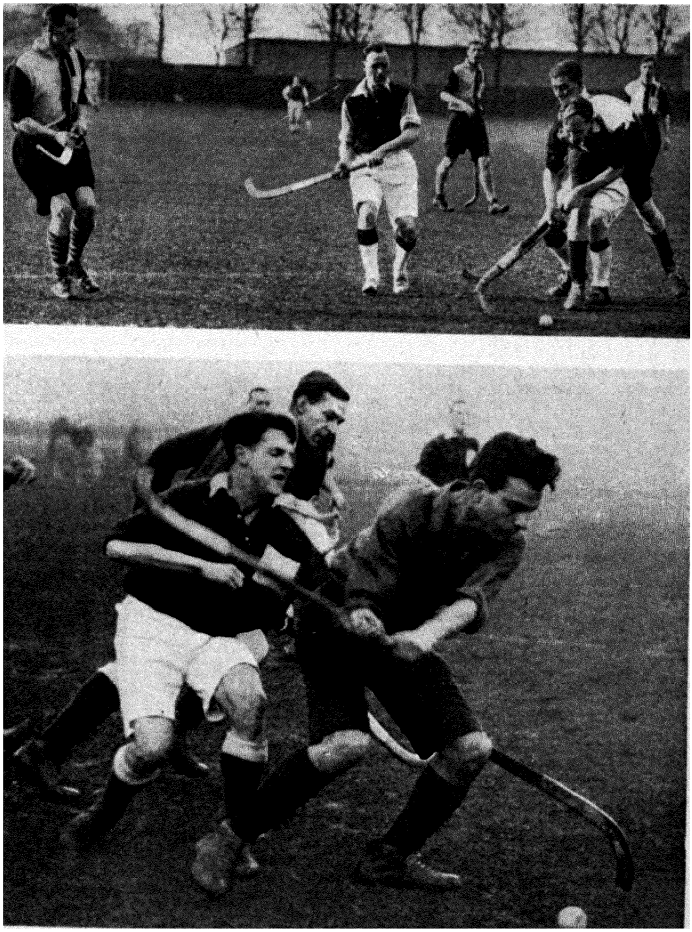
In attack it is the function of the halves to ply their forwards with frequent passes given with the *minimum* of delay, and when they have set them going to follow up behind to pick up the ball if their forwards lose it and if the opposing defence clear it ineffectively.

When close behind the forwards a half will often see that a pushed 'through' pass into a gap will be more effective than a direct hit to an unmarked man; this especially applies when attacking on the right, where taking the ball from behind is awkward for the forward (see Chapter IV) and it is much easier for him to run after a ball sent in front of him.

Where, and to whom, to pass differs very much for the wing-halves and the centre half, and we will now consider these positions separately and in detail.

Right Half

I have started with right half as it is the easiest of the three half-back positions to fill, at least competently. In fact it is probably the easiest place on the field if



Fox and *Topical Press*

TACKLING

Above: How *not* to tackle wrong side

Below: Probably a good wrong-side tackle, but it looks as if the stick may hit the opponent's leg before the ball, in which case it will be a foul. Quite a good hitting swing, too, though the knees look a bit odd!

only for the reason that outside left is the most difficult. The right half has everything in his favour—the ball is nearly always on his correct side, the opposing outside left has to run at least two yards faster than he, in order to round him and centre the ball; while he himself is usually well placed for hitting the ball either straight ahead, or right across the field (though this should only be done in attack). However, to be really expert at right half requires almost, if not quite, as much playing ability as any other position.

For instance the right half will have to be able to stop the ball neatly and regularly on the wrong side. Most inside lefts when passing to their wing use the through pass (the square pass being impossible if the half is in position) which goes past (or aims to go past!) the half on his left (as in Diagram 2). Again though in mid-field he will have no wrong-side tackling to do, he will often be able to save a goal by coming in and tackling the inside left as he shoots—but it must be a fair tackle. Many right halves prevent inside lefts scoring goals by the simple process of knocking them off the ball and surprisingly often get away with it! This of course is a flagrant breach of the rules and umpires should be especially strict on wrong-side tackling among beginners, so that they may learn to do it fairly or not at all.

In Attack.

To whom should the right half pass in attack? I have heard it said frequently that he should feed his wing man, but if the opposing half knows anything about the game this will be impossible. The two unmarked men to pass to are the inside forwards, and the right half's normal pass will go to the inside right and thence to the outside right. But of course occasions arise when the opposing half is obviously out of position and then the half can pass direct to his wing with great advantage. Even more valuable perhaps is the pass across the field to the inside left, since the defence will have been drawn across to the other side and a quick inside left will be through before they can get back. (This is what is meant by 'opening up the game.') But there is a snag about this pass—it is very easy for the centre half to intercept it. The ball must therefore be hit extremely hard (and never pushed, except by Waydelin, who can flick harder than you or I can hit!), but this pass must at *all* costs be avoided when anywhere near your own circle because if it is intercepted there, the result will probably be disastrous.

In Defence.

In defence the right half should *never be drawn* by the opposing inside left. It is the back's job to

tackle him. Only in or just outside the circle is he justified in leaving his wing-man and tackling the inside.

Apart from that, the most important thing for a wing-half to remember—and a thing the beginner will probably be surprised to learn—is this. When the ball is on his side of the field his position is naturally in front of his back and between the ball and his opposing wing. But when the ball is on the other side of the field, *regardless* of the position of his opposing wing, who may for some reason best known to himself be right behind the rest of his forward line, the right half should be on a level with or even just *behind* the right back, and some way inside the touch-line. This is what is known as *covering*, about which there will be more to be said when we consider full-back play, for it is the very essence of defensive tactics. I have known beginners who have been well grounded on the 'mark your wing' rule, surprised and even incredulous about this point, but they have only to watch what happens when the ball is suddenly swung by their opponents across from right to left to see the necessity of this covering; without it the inside and outside left between them will score goal after goal with the half vainly panting up *behind* them.

Finally the right half should constantly be co-operating with his back; the one always covering the

other. For instance, if the opposing inside left refuses to pass and the back advances to tackle him, or to make him pass, the half should fall back somewhat to fill the gap. Again, the back will often be able to reach a through pass to the wing, which has beaten the half who was in front of the wing. (Being certain of getting there first is the only justification the back has in going for the wing-man instead of for the inside.) When the back does this, then the half should come inside to deal with the inside left in case of accidents. Thus it is the right half's business to be continually watching not only his opponents but also his own back, and to make his plans accordingly.

Left Half

In Defence.

There will be little to say about left half tactics, since *mutatis mutandis* they are the same as for the right half. By the nature of things it is a less easy position to fill, since the ball will frequently be coming on the reverse side, and—worse still—if the wing once has the ball, the left half can probably only tackle him from the wrong side; it is therefore doubly important to prevent him from ever getting it! Greater speed, better stickwork, and above all neater footwork, will be required of the left half than of the right, but in one

Keystone

A FORWARD CUTS IN

Another scene from the match shown opposite page 87. McVeagh, the Irish inside left (and incidentally Davis Cup lawn tennis player) cuts in between Wyatt and Waydelin, but it looks as if Milward, the English goal-keeper, is equal to the occasion.

respect at least the former has an advantage over the latter. When the ball has come up the opposite side of the field, and the left half has consequently become the last line of defence—covering his left back, who himself has gone across to cover the right back—he is in a much easier position, if the ball does come across, for intercepting and clearing than was the right half, since the ball comes to him on his right side.

In Attack.

In attack, the left half will feed primarily his inside left (he will find it even more impossible to feed the outside left direct than will the right half to feed *his* wing), but the pass across to the inside right is also an extremely valuable one, more to be used than the corresponding pass from right half to inside left since it is much harder for the opposing centre half to intercept. To give this most useful 'opener up' of the game will require quick footwork in order to make the necessary half-turn to the right without 'telling the world,' and special care is called for to avoid giving sticks in over-hitting. It must be remembered also that there can be too much of a good thing. Many of the best players having learnt to give this cross-pass to the inside right, use it *ad nauseam*, thus spoiling its efficacy since everybody knows it is coming.

Finally, owing to the difficulty of defending against

good right wing play, the co-operation between left half and left back must be even more nicely adjusted than that between the corresponding players on the other side of the field. They should be like a good doubles-pair at lawn tennis, the one always knowing where the other is going to be. Obviously there will be nothing like experience for learning this and it is easy to tell whether a half and back are used to playing together or not. But if, as must often happen, you find yourself playing with a stranger, then you must watch him carefully the whole game and hope he will do the same for you, so that you are both trying to play as a pair and not as two individuals.

Centre Half

We come lastly to the most important player on the field, the hub round which the wheel revolves. Though it might be an exaggeration to say that the centre half makes or mars the team, it is not far from the truth.

His job in defence is primarily to keep a close watch on the centre forward. But since there is no one except himself in a position to intercept a pass up-field to any of the inside forwards (though the backs can sometimes run up and do so), the first-class centre half will often be able to mark to a considerable extent

not merely one man but three. In this respect, the chief quality required is a mental one—the power of anticipation. If you watch the opposing defence really carefully you are almost sure to glean some information as to where they are going to hit the ball. Probably the two foremost centre halves of the inter-war years were R. Y. Fison and E. S. Hoare. The former had perhaps the most boundless energy ever seen on a hockey field, and in addition that inborn quality of greatness which always rises to the occasion. He could galvanize the most sluggish and nervous forward line into activity. Yet Hoare, though to the inexperienced eye far less brilliant, was really an even greater player, since by his powers of anticipation he managed always to be in the right place without ever appearing to have to run! Thus without sacrificing anything in attack (he was always up behind his forwards and was a positive menace if the ball came loose on the edge of the circle) he was able to keep a closer eye than Fison on the opposing centre forward.

In attack the centre half may pass to any of the five forwards but in the nature of things the two insides will receive most. It is very tempting for the centre half to continue dribbling in order to draw the opposing centre half away from the centre forward, but it rarely pays. Almost invariably he should pass *quickly*. When passing to the inside left he should usually give the

pass straight and hard at him or slightly inside him and never outside him. To the inside right a through pass will often be effective; sometimes it will also be possible to get a through pass to the centre forward, especially if the latter is an intelligent player who is always on the look-out to get himself unmarked and to make for gaps. As for passing to the wings the opportunity does not happen very frequently, but Hoare did it sometimes when at first sight it would seem a very odd thing to do, namely when near the enemy's circle. But if looked into, the theory will be found to be a very sound one. The defence will have all congregated in the circle, and the pass to the wing is bound to draw them out again—another instance of opening up the game. Fison had a beautiful 'through' pass near the circle to the outside right, who cut inwards for it; the essence of the pass was that the outside right should be expecting it—another example of the importance of quick thinking and collaboration.

CHAPTER VI

BACK PLAY

In this chapter we shall consider the full-back positions and though in a few instances, which will be noted, the play of the right back differs from that of the left and vice versa, it is better to treat both together. It cannot be too greatly stressed that the two backs should play absolutely together; that any movement one back makes should be made with equal regard to the position of the ball, to the movement of the play, and to the position of his partner; that one back should have constantly and clearly in mind his partner's position, and should adjust his own position and play accordingly. Besides this close co-operation between the two backs, both need to work in combination with the half-backs. Naturally, the left back will most often combine with the left half and the right back with the right half, and when these respective halves and backs have played together frequently and have developed a close understanding, the strength of their defence is very greatly increased. More will be said of this when we come to positioning and tactics.

First, we must speak of the stickwork and ball control particularly necessary for the full-backs.

In the chapter on stickwork and footwork the various ways and methods of hitting and stopping the ball have been discussed in some detail, and here it is only necessary to mention their application to full-back play. The full-back must possess a powerful and controlled hit so that he can clear the ball well away from the circle, and a young player who aspires to play in this position should make every endeavour to acquire this power and control. He must be able to hit quickly and hard in any direction. It is not enough that he should only be able to hit to the left. He must pay particular attention to the swing of his stick so that, however hard he tries to hit, he does not give sticks. Though it is often bad enough for other players to be penalized for 'sticks,' it is obviously much worse for the full-back, for he puts his goal in danger especially if he offends in the circle. He must indeed be careful about any infringement of the rules. A good back must be neat, not clumsy, with his feet, or he will unintentionally kick the ball. He must also be very careful not to obstruct an opponent in any way and scrupulously fair.

Though the powerful hit is a necessity, the full-back also needs to be able to flick or push the ball. Very often there is no time to raise the stick to hit and a

strong flick up the field or a push to his half serves as well.

Finally, when getting rid of the ball at any time there are two things the back should always do:

1. He must look where he is hitting (though not, of course, at the moment of impact) and if possible hit to one of his own side. Sometimes he must 'find touch,' but he should avoid doing this unnecessarily. He must try to avoid blind hitting at all costs.

2. He must avoid hitting across the goal-mouth because of the danger of interception, from which a goal would almost certainly follow.

Stickwork

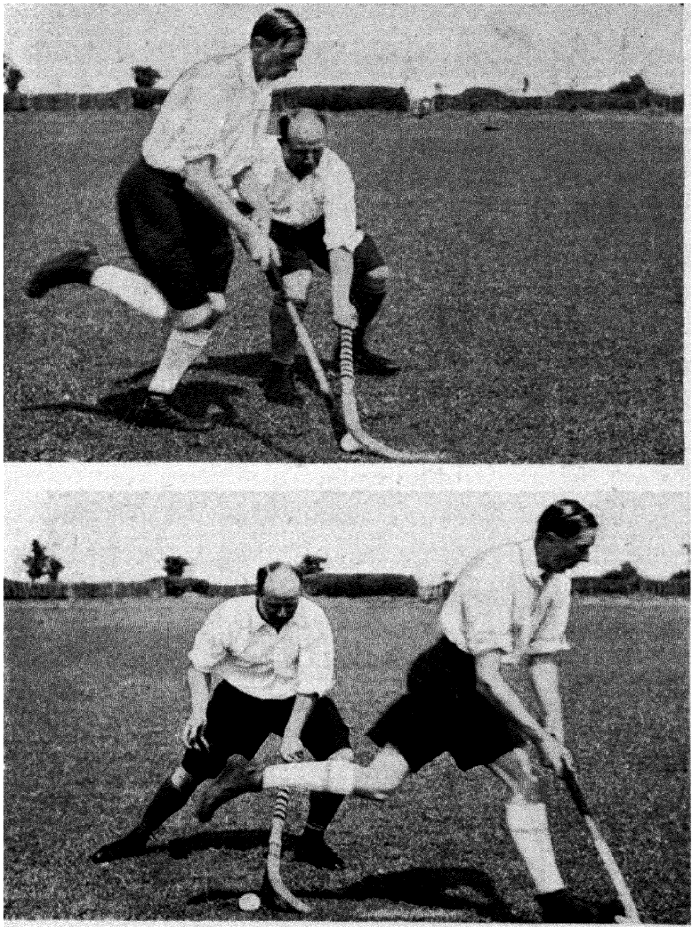
For intercepting passes, especially from short range, it is essential to acquire the ability to transfer the stick with lightning rapidity from one hand to the other and to be able with certainty to stop and bring under control a ball at the extremity of the player's reach.

Seeing that a full-back's first aim should be to give a quick hard pass to an unmarked forward, it is important to practise getting the ball as quickly as possible into a position from which to make a hit. To do this when the ball has been stopped on the left, the player must be able with the pick of his stick to draw the

ball across towards his right side while at the same time moving his feet round to the left with a view to reducing to a minimum the time which must elapse between stopping the ball and making a well-directed hit.

Both backs need to be able to tackle fairly from the wrong side. To do this the stick must be under strong control when held in the left hand. The right moment for the tackle must be selected and the point of the stick laid firmly against the ball with the rest of the flat of the stick sloping over the ball. The effect is obtained by laying the stick very firmly *on* the ball. The opposing dribbler is carried on by his impetus and before he can tackle back the full-back should have made his clearance.

Both backs will often find that they have sufficient time to stop the ball safely from a hit up-field by the other side, but that there is not enough time to make their hit before being rushed by the opposing forward. It is necessary not only to trick the forward but to retain control of the ball and then make the hit when he is disposed of. An obvious trick is to tap or draw the ball to the left as the opponent aims to hit where the ball was. This tap must be made late and must draw the ball far enough to the left to avoid the sweep of the opponent's stick, and it is worth remembering that an experienced opponent will be expecting and allowing for the move. An attempt to tap or hook the



R. H. Lane

'WRONG-SIDE' TACKLE

Above. A good 'reverse-stick' tackle by A. E. C. Cornwall. Notice that nothing is touched, except the ball, even when, as in—

Below. —the dribbler has gone on, leaving the tackler in possession. The tackler's right hand is being kept very carefully out of the way; his left hand is held very low, so that the dribbler's foot passes above it, as he lifts it in the natural course of running.

ball the other way—to the right—can be made earlier, and the opponent is then allowed to pass between the back and the ball. If it is done at the last moment—as is necessary the other way—your opponent may be unable to avoid knocking you down.

The right back will find it even more important than his partner to be able to use his stick in his left hand and to tackle fairly and strongly from the wrong side. Both his own man—the opposing inside left—and the centre forward can work towards their right, and so throw him on to their wrong side; and they will still be able to make good progress towards their objective. If the centre forward or inside right attempts the same tactics to defeat the left back he will soon reach the touch-line on his right or narrow the angle for his shot at goal.

The right back must also be particularly adept at gaining the position in which he can hit up the field towards his right, whereas the left back should, under pressure, hit in the easier direction towards his left.

When the backs are chasing the ball towards their own goal-line, pursued by an opposing forward, each has a slightly different problem to solve. The left back usually finds himself in the greater difficulty. The ball is on his wrong side—between him and his touch-line—while it is on his opponent's right side. He has to elude his opponent and get round through

nearly 360° before he can get his hit in. If his opponent is close upon him, he may have to employ a form of wrong-side tackle to extricate himself. He can draw his opponent on—perhaps by slowing down himself—until his opponent is confident that he can sweep the ball past him with an extra spurt and lunge: at the crucial moment the back puts his stick on the ball—as mentioned above for a wrong-side tackle—or hooks the ball back a few inches towards himself. As he does this—and he alone knows just what he is going to do and when—he stops himself sharply. The rushing forward carries on, leaving the ball in the back's possession.

If, from a similar position to that postulated for the last trick, there is more time at the left back's disposal —or if he has intercepted a pass aimed towards the outside right, he will probably have to dribble towards his left touch-line pursued by the opposing inside or outside right. Co-operation with his own left half (as mentioned in the section 'To Get Rid of the Ball') will often extricate him from an awkward position. A push to a half waiting nearby, or a flick to him if he is farther off, may well result in a good pass to his own forwards. But we are here concerned with the stickwork required by the back to save himself unaided. As he dribbles across the field towards his own touch-line drawing an opponent with him, he

tempts the opponent to lunge at the ball. A well-timed touch draws him on again—he makes another lunge, and if the back is fast enough on his feet he may outpace the uncontrolled lunger and get time for a hit at any rate to his own outside left. If he lacks this pace he should draw his opponent on, as has just been described, but as the lunger lunges desperately at the ball he stops it firmly with the pick of his stick and draws it back towards him, at the same time stopping himself short. The opponent does not know when this sudden check is to come and overruns the ball.[1] The back has time to get in his hit, as described earlier in this section. It is possible further to deceive your opponent by feinting with the stick to perform this manœuvre. If he stops—thinking you are going to stop—and you go on, your chance of outstripping him and getting time for your hit by simply running round the ball is improved. If he ignores your feint, the effect of the actual stop will be enhanced.

The right back under similar circumstances has not the same difficulty to meet. The ball is on his right side between him and his touch-line. He can at any moment hit the ball hard towards that touch-line. If he needs time or room for a well-directed hit, he can tap the ball towards the touch-line choosing

[1] Compare the outside left's trick in attack. See p. 73.

his moment so as to throw his opponent onto the wrong side of him. He should then have time to get his hit in comfortably.

Either back may find himself so placed—particularly in mid-field play—that the manœuvre described above as his partner's is applicable to himself.

Stopping the Ball

A full-back more frequently than almost any other player has to make sure of stopping the ball as it comes straight at him. If he has anticipated well and positioned himself rightly, he will often be stationary when the ball arrives. He cannot afford to miss the ball—or even fail to gain immediate control, for a mistake by a back immediately opens the circle to his opponents. How is he to be sure of stopping and gaining control of the ball? Unquestionably the best method is with his stick, and in modern first-class hockey a player is expected to use his stick only. The use of the hand is allowed by the rules, but it is slow and clumsy and liable to penalty for improper use. Constant practice, a good eye and a deliberate effort to watch the ball on to the stick will work wonders, and the young player should always aim at being reliable with his stick.[1]

[1] Try to receive the ball on the *curve*, not at the end. For if it bumps, you will still have the shaft behind it.

Topical Press

AN AWKWARD POSITION

The player with the ball may have been caught by the camera just as he was stopping an awkward one, but if he is hoping to 'flick' from this position he will hardly achieve much power.

But first-class hockey is usually[1] played on a good ground where the ball rolls and bounces truly. The ordinary player often has to contend with grounds which are far from level, and on which there is no reliable possibility of the ball rolling and bouncing truly. A back must not miss the ball. How under circumstances far from ideal is he to be sure of doing his job? If he has plenty of time and can be stationary when the ball arrives, he can on a bumpy ground stop the ball, without contravening the rules, with his hand. To do this successfully necessitates getting well down—with eyes over the line of the ball and watching it hit the hand. This is a slow method, because before making your hit you must stand up and get both hands on to the stick again. According to the interpretation of Rule 10 (*d*) given by the official publication of 1944[2] it would seem that, if the back *endeavours* to stop the ball with his stick but fails and it hits him on the foot or leg, he is not to be penalized 'if his body is behind the stick in a natural position, and one not clearly assumed for the purpose of stopping the ball.' But how can an umpire

[1] But by no means always—many will remember the season of 1936–7.

[2] *The Rules of the Game of Hockey, with Notes on the Rules and Suggestions to Umpires*, 1944. Issued under the authority of the International Hockey Board. Hon. Sec., M. G. Cowlishaw, Longcross, Surrey. Price *6d.* Highly recommended.

tell? I have already intimated my dislike of this interpretation on p. 13 and I should like to see backs *always* stop the ball (except, of course, in mid air) with their *stick*, and penalized if it hits them on foot or leg if they had any chance of getting their stick to it.

To Get Rid of the Ball

It is the full-back's business to get the ball up to his forwards as quickly as possible. An attack is being made by the other side, and the forwards are advancing, backed up by their halves; you obtain the ball and immediately give a hard pass to one of your own forwards. There are for a few moments five of your own forwards and only two backs and a goal-keeper to check them. Dilly-dallying with the ball, giving it one extra tap to save moving the feet quickly, a miss-hit, or a flick when a hit was possible, may just give the defence that extra second in which to re-dispose themselves to check the attack. So let your slogan be: 'Hit at once and hit hard.'

No forward will complain that his backs pass too hard. The quicker the ball reaches him the better

pleased he will be. Of course, there are times when he is too close to you or when you cannot get in a hit, and then a push, a flick, or a softer hit, is preferable to a hard hit—but normally 'hit hard.'

The harder you hit the better—within reason—but the more important becomes the direction of your hit. Hence a useful addition to the slogan 'Hit at once and hit hard' is 'and straight at your man' (not your opponent!). It is his business to stop the ball and develop his attack—it is your business to give him the maximum time in which to do this.

It is not your business as a back to try to direct your own side's attack by passing to where you think the forward ought to want to go. Give him the ball quickly, and let him get on with it. A soft hit or a push wastes time and will probably be intercepted; a hard hit saves time, but, unless it is well directed, it will go either over the line or straight to the opposing backs.

Positional Play

General Principles.

1. Except in or very near their own circle the two backs should never be in line—that is to say, parallel with the goal lines. One should be 'up' and the other 'back.' The term 'covering' is used to describe

the position of the one who is 'back.' To cover his partner it is necessary for him to be such a distance behind, and so far across towards his partner's side of the ground, that he is able to get farther across to stop any ball his partner misses, discourage a through pass by his opponents, or tackle an opposing forward who has broken through. But——

2. The back is responsible for his opposing inside forward—the left for the inside right—the right for the inside left. The necessity for combining this responsibility with covering determines to some extent the distance between the backs when one is covering the other, and means that the change over from being 'up' or 'back' must be made very quickly. Moreover, the importance of the back marking his man means that he must resist the temptation to be drawn to tackle another forward unless the latter has got away and is about to enter the circle or shoot at goal.

3. The edge of the circle should be the backs' goal-line. Their object in defence should be to keep their opponents out of the circle.

Position at Bullies—Centre.

Both should stand about five yards nearer the centre line than the twenty-five line—parallel for the moment, but ready to move instantly and fast when the direction of the attack by either side is indicated. If the

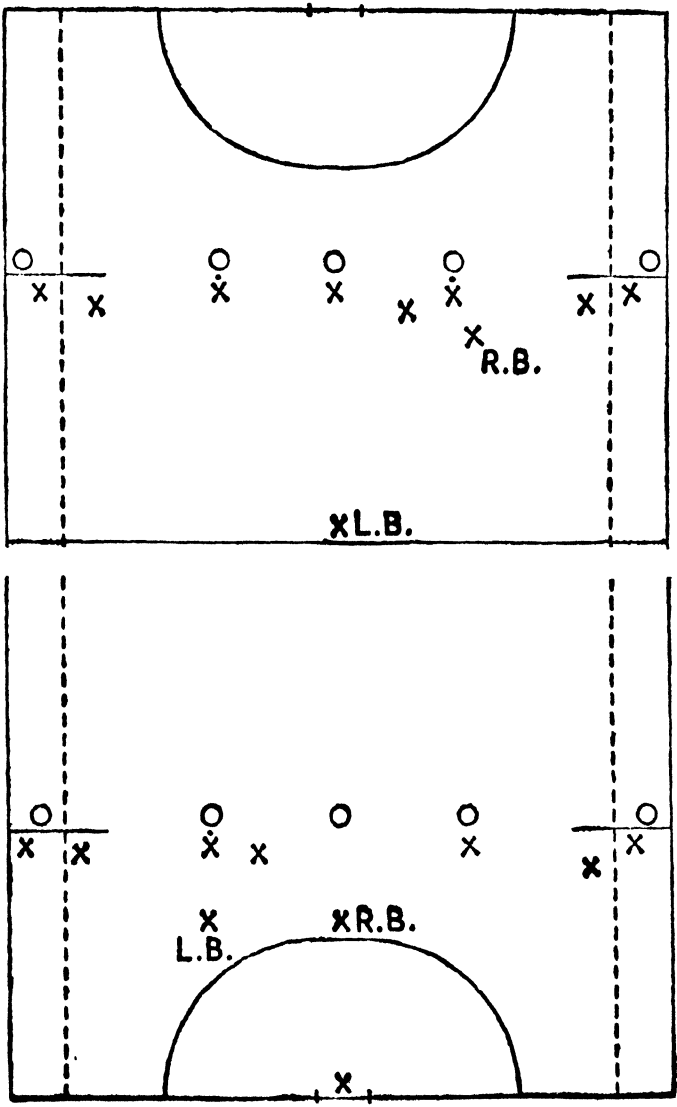


DIAGRAM 5

opponents secure the ball from the bully, and an attack via their inside right is suggested, the left back moves up to tackle him while the right drops back and moves across towards the centre of the field to cover him, and vice versa. If your own side secures the ball and looks like developing an attack on the right, the right back moves up in support while the left back adopts a covering position.

Position at Bullies—Twenty-five : Attack and Defence.

See Diagram 5. This shows the positions for bullies by inside forwards. Reverse the positions for a bully on the other side.

Note that in (1) the right back is well up to the bully —probably not more than ten yards behind it—and the left back is correctly placed for covering. In (2) the back on the side where the bully is being taken should be about seven yards behind the bully, only a little to the right or left of the X in the diagram according to the point where the bully is being taken. He should not go far towards the touch-line for an outside bully.

The Roll-in from Touch.

When your own side has the ball you should place yourself close to the seven-yard line opposite your half-

back. Your chief object is to engage the attention of the opposing wing-forward and prevent him from interfering with your own forwards farther up the field. If he refuses to mark you, your half may roll the ball in to you—but this should be done with caution, especially on the left. It ought never to be possible if the opposing wing is watching you as he should be.

When it is your roll-in inside your opponents' twenty-five, you cannot be opposite your half-back but should be close to the seven-yards line, as far behind the half-back as is appropriate to the point of the roll-in.

Your partner should be covering you—but as your side has the initiative he need not be so far back as at some other times. When it is your opponent's roll-in, the situation is more dangerous and your exact position more important.

The diagrams show that the positions of the backs differ slightly according to the flank concerned, and fundamentally according to the position on the field of the roll-in.

The slight difference 'according to the flank concerned' referred to above is not important, but it is worth mentioning if only to emphasize that there is a difference in the problems presented to the two backs. Because hockey is a right-sided game, the right back when facing the roll-in has the easier task in preventing

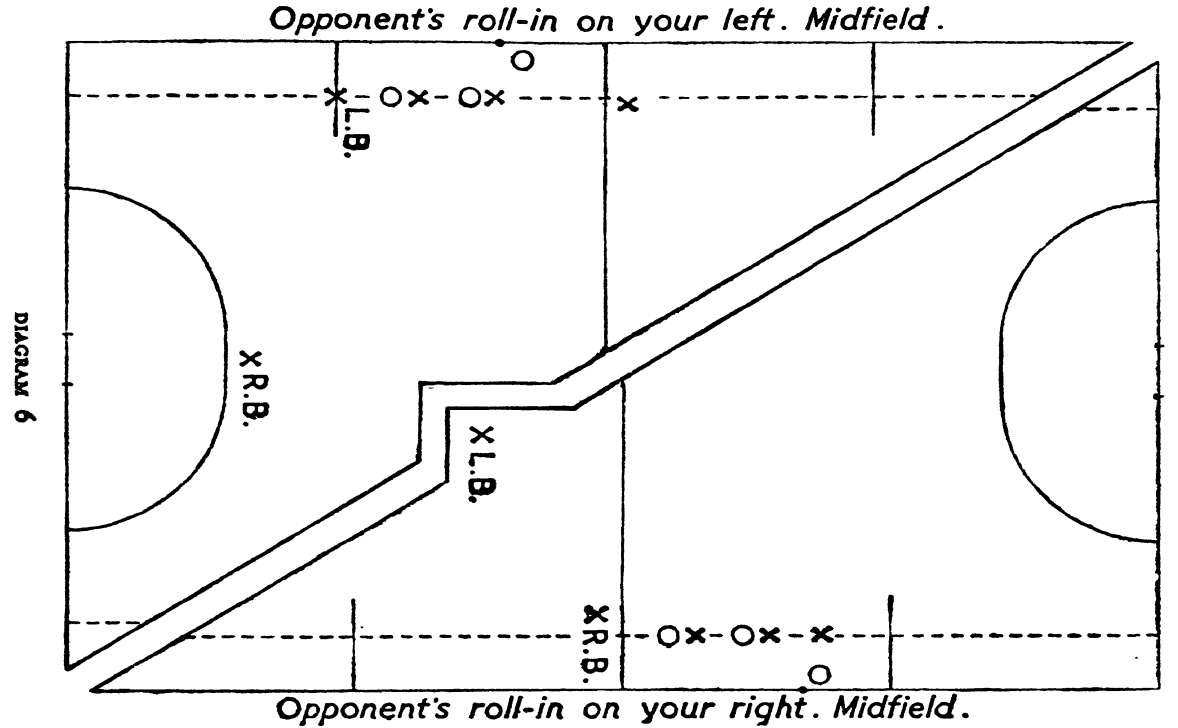

Opponent's roll-in on your left. Midfield.
L.B.
R.B.
L.B.
R.B.
Opponent's roll-in on your right. Midfield.

DIAGRAM 6

a hard roll-in from passing him before he can reach the touch-line to stop it. Moreover, his opponent for the moment, the outside left, has a more difficult task than an outside right. Because the ball is on his right side the right back can afford to stand nearer the roll-in and less glued to the seven-yards line than his partner. He is, however, responsible for preventing a roll-in from passing him and an attack from developing on the wing. His exact position depends much on his speed and his opponents' tactics, but he should seldom be more than a few yards from his seven-yards line.

The left back should be right on the seven-yards line when the roll-in is on his flank and in mid-field. Both he and his half-back have also to prevent the ball from being rolled past them and an attack from developing on the wing. The ball is on the wrong side of them, and their opponents have the easier task. The back must be ready to leap towards the touch-line, and with stick extended in the left hand to stop the rolling ball. He then needs time to circumvent the opposing forward, and for this reason he should generally stand farther away from the roll-in point than his partner on the other side. If the roll-in favoured by the other side is a fast one close to the touch-line, the back should place himself on the seven-yards line from five to eight yards nearer his own goal-line than the nearest opposing forward.

The circumstances dealt with above are those in which the roll-in is in mid-field, and for this purpose mid-field must be defined as accurately as possible. These mid-field positions should be adopted when your opponents are rolling in from any point between lines drawn parallel to the goal-lines across the top of the circles.

Between this imaginary line and your own goal-line a roll-in by your opponents must be treated by different positioning. It is not now of any use if your opponent rolls the ball hard close to the touch-line; it will go over the goal-line. Your position is dictated to you by two considerations—the exact point from which the roll-in is taken, and the tactics of your opponents.

If the ball is being rolled-in from a point on the touch-line about ten or fifteen yards from the goal-line, your opponent is likely either to roll the ball slowly towards your line, relying on the outside getting in a centre, or to roll it hard through a gap in the players on the seven-yards line opposite, or to roll it slowly towards one of his side opposite him for him to tap it back, when he will be able to hit in a hard centre (see Chapter VIII, pp. 157–60).

Diagram 7 shows a position for the back—roughly the same on either flank.

It will be noticed in the diagram that the opposition outside right is off-side so that a throw-in to him

Sport and General

'COVERING' BY THE BACK

This scene from the University match of 1933 affords another good example of 'covering' by the back. Hardie (Cambridge and Welsh right back and captain) is well up the field and his partner, Bisseker, has come across and is almost directly *behind* him—perhaps too far even. But where is the left half? Surely he should be somewhere in the picture, coming across to fill the left back's vacated position. (See the illustration facing page 87, the other side of the field, of course.)

down the touch-line will be ineffective and will result in a free hit to your side. This is a perfectly fair manœuvre, but as a matter of fact an experienced player will not allow it to occur. He will start from

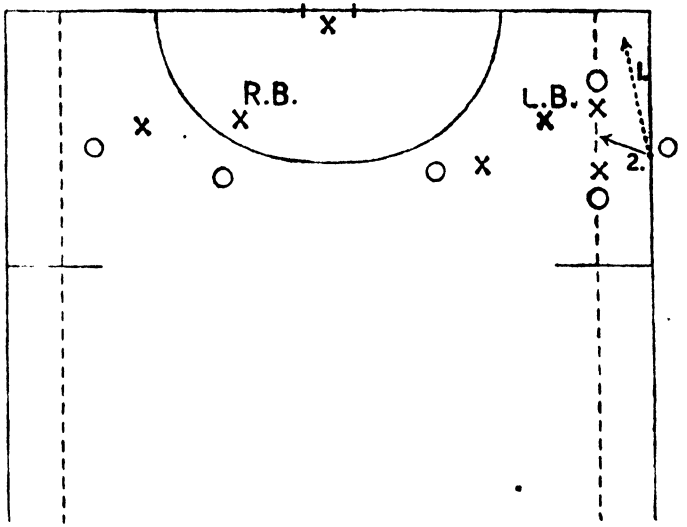


DIAGRAM 7

an on-side position as the ball is rolled-in, and may well reach the ball near the touch-line and the goal-line. He will be harassed by the appropriate half-back, and may be prevented from getting a centre either across the goal-mouth or to the back of the circle. From the position indicated in the diagram, the left back is able to move towards his own goal-line to be ready to intercept any centre from the outside right.

He is also well placed to deal with either of the other

methods likely to be adopted by the opposition in setting the ball rolling. Arrow No. 2 shows the probable direction of a hard throw or of the slow roll returned to the thrower to be hit hard across by him towards the edge of the circle.

The left back is clearly well placed to deal with this too, and it may be added that if his own particular opponent gets hold of the ball he is close by to tackle him on his way to the circle.

As the place of the roll-in moves down towards the goal-line, the back will move in the same direction, keeping roughly the same position relative to the other players as shown in the diagram: but he must bear in mind that he still has much ground to cover if he is to intercept a centre. He should also remember that the nearer his goal-line a roll-in or a centre originates, the less likely are any of his opponents to be in an off-side position.

In both the diagrams illustrating positions at a roll-in by your opponents the position of the back not immediately concerned should be noted. In the second particularly it should be noticed that the right back (and the right half-back) are not near the goal-mouth—thereby putting any opponent on-side—but are close up to their opponents on or near the edge of the circle: that is to say, when close to the circle the rule about backs covering each other goes by the board.

Corners—long and short.

When the opponents are awarded a corner, short or long, close co-operation is needed with the goal-keeper. This has been dealt with in some detail in Chapter VII, p. 151, and here we are only concerned with emphasizing the duties of the full-backs.

Their position and action depend on the goal-keeper's demands. If he requires one corner of his goal guarded it will be the corner opposite to that flank from which the corner is being hit. The back guarding this corner should regard himself as an addition to the goal-post. His job is to give the goal-keeper a narrower goal to defend. If the goal-keeper prefers to be responsible for the whole goal-line, this back should move forward about one yard directly in front of his goal-post, ready to move across after (but not before) the first shot in order to clear the ball if it has bounced off the goal-keeper's pads and presents a dangerous opportunity of scoring to one of the other forwards who will be following up the shot. This is also the task of the 'goal-post' back. As soon as the danger of an immediate shot from the corner hit has passed, this back should move up to and mark closely his opponents' inside forward, who is his particular responsibility. On no account should he loiter near the goal-mouth.

The other back—on the flank whence the corner is being hit—should normally regard himself as the second wave of the rush at the opposing forward who appears likely to be going to shoot. If this forward, unable to get in an immediate shot, tricks the first rush, this back should arrive just in time to prevent him from getting in any shot. At all costs this back must not do what is only too often done by inexperienced players, that is, take a few leisurely paces out from the goal-line and then stop. They are then in no position to prevent a shot at goal; they are in a bad position to stop one; and they are almost certain either to unsight the goal-keeper or to deflect a shot into their own goal. Some goal-keepers prefer to narrow their area of responsibility by using both backs as additional goal-posts. Under these circumstances they should both remain as goal-posts until the ball is out of the circle.

When your own side is awarded a corner—long or short—it is usual for the back on the flank from which the corner is being hit to go up while his partner covers him. He himself should stand a few yards on his own side of the twenty-five line, and with his half-back cover his half of the ground ready to intercept a clearance. His partner should be close to the centre of the ground.

We have now finished our survey of the full-back

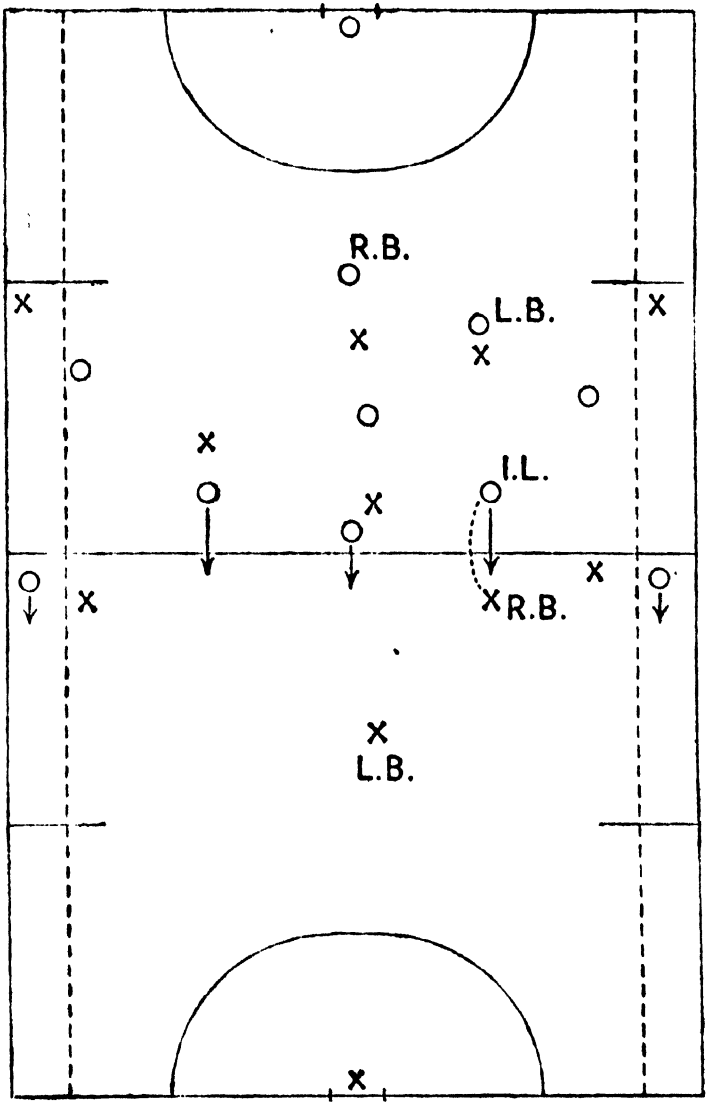


DIAGRAM 8

positions for what may be called 'set pieces.' It may be useful to consider two typical situations in general play which will serve to illustrate further the application of the general principles which have been stated earlier in this chapter.

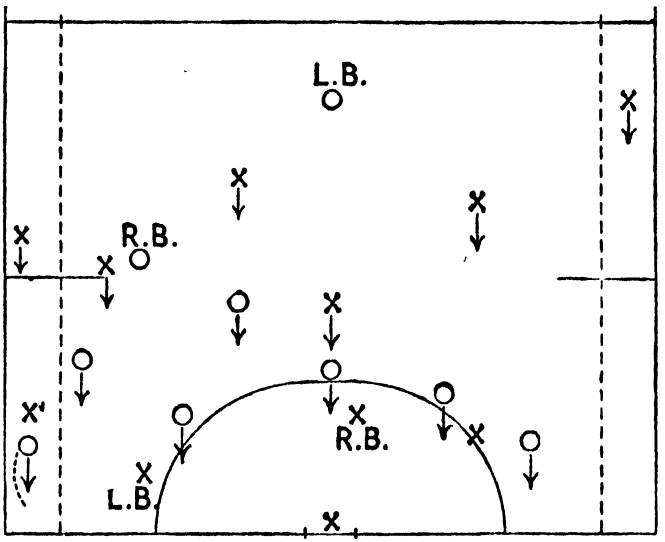


DIAGRAM 9

In Diagram 8 the opposing inside left has the ball and is dribbling up the field. The right back has to decide whether to tackle him at once and rob him of the ball, whether to force him to pass, or whether to delay his tackle until his own half-backs are in position to intercept any pass given and his partner is covering him in case he fails to secure the ball. The positions

of the players in the diagram suggest an early tackle. Notice that the left back is covering the only gap open to his opponents' right front.

Notice that in Diagram 9, which shows an attack from the opponents' right wing, the left back is placed to intercept any centre made by the outside right; he makes no attempt to tackle—leaving that to the half-back who is pursuing his man. The right back, far from covering his partner or unsighting the goal-keeper, is up marking his own inside, but he is ready to deal with the centre forward if the centre half does not get back in time.

Tackling

The subject of tackling has been discussed in Chapter III, pp. 52–6, but it is important to apply those more general remarks on the subject to back-play in particular.

In the first place a back should not, except in desperate straits when a shot is imminent, attempt to tackle an opponent who is on the run while he himself is running in the opposite direction. More will be said later in this section to emphasize this. But before elaborating in detail the tactics and strategy of tackling it is important to refer again to the technique. There are really three tackles available for a back on every

occasion when he has to face a dribbling opponent. They can be made in turn from a stationary, but not immobile, position. The first is the long-distance forward lunge, left foot forward with the stick held out in front at full stretch in the left hand. The second is made on a level with the body, the stick being held in both hands when the ball is on your right side—in the left hand when it is about to pass you on your left side. The third is made when your opponent has eluded both first and second, and it is made at as full a stretch as necessary (or possible) with the stick in the right hand as your opponent moves away after having passed you on your right side. It is seldom possible to use this third position if your opponent has passed you on your left; his body will be in the way.

The first of these tackles—the long-distance lunge forward—will not often secure the ball for you unless your opponent is inexperienced; but it may do so, especially if the movement is very sudden. You should not hover in the lunge position as your opponent approaches. Wait in your most alert posture and, as it were, lure him within striking distance. Then you may surprise him by the length of your reach and secure the ball. This tackle is more effective as a means of forcing your opponent to make a mistake than as a means of obtaining the ball. The fear or threat of such a tackle may induce him either to pass

before he has 'drawn' you (see p. 59), or to give away his intentions early, or to get flustered, thus ensuring the success of your second tackle. To make the second tackle effectively you must concentrate on the ball and your opponent's stick, follow his every movement, and that of the ball closely with the eye, and have the stick ready to take the ball from him at the right moment. Moreover, you should register in your mind the tricks he employs and take steps to counter them next time. By the time the third tackle becomes necessary you will already be starting to chase him, but the long right arm may secure the ball after the two earlier tackles have failed to do this.

The strategy and tactics of tackling can be summed up in the phrase: 'Do not commit yourself.' The back has three valuable allies in his battle with a dribbling forward. The first is time. The longer he can delay his opponent, or the farther he can make him run on his way to the goal, the better. The second is the difficulty a forward has in keeping the ball under perfect control while running at full speed. The third is nerves. He ignores these allies if he dashes wildly at an advancing opponent. The longer he can wait, the more chance there is of his opponent making a mistake, and while he remains balanced, menacing, uncommitted, the more likely he is to achieve his object.

Practical Applications

It is not possible to describe in detail the action to be taken in the innumerable situations which may confront a back on the field, and it is especially difficult to do so where his action must depend on that quality called judgment, which only the gifted or experienced seem to possess. A few hints may help a young player to develop the gift or gain the necessary experience more quickly.

You, a left back, have been covering your partner when the ball is rapidly transferred to your half of the field and passed by an opponent far up your touch-line for his outside right to pursue. You have immediately to judge (*a*) whether your half-back will be able to get back quickly enough to hamper his opponent, or (*b*) whether you can reach the ball before your opponent and so prevent his attack. In (*a*), if you can safely leave the job to your half-back, do so and position yourself as indicated in Diagram 9. If your half-back stands no chance of doing his job, which on the other hand there is a good chance of your being able to do, you should give chase and become the left half for the moment, while the real left half-back races back to the normal full-back position to intercept a centre which your opponent will have been able to make owing to your bad judgment. If the chance

just mentioned is not a good one, you should not be drawn out on a speculative venture. You must run back watching your opponent very carefully for the earliest indication of his intentions, and you must be so placed that you can both intercept a centre and prevent him from coming into the circle and shooting from a favourable angle. Only when the shot is imminent—perhaps as he steadies himself to shoot—must you make your tackle. In (*b*) you should clearly go for the ball if you can get there first. If you cannot your tactics must be as described in the previous sentence. Judgment alone can ensure your acting correctly, but you will make a mistake less often if you remember that the principle is not to commit yourself.

You, the right back this time, have been covering your partner while a *mêlée* has been taking place on your opponents' twenty-five line opposite your partner. The opposing centre half secures the ball and shapes to pass to his inside left—your particular opponent. You have instantly to decide what to do. Can you intercept the pass? Can you reach your man at the same moment as the ball, and so tackle him at that crucial moment? Or will your rush be too late and leave the field clear for an attack while you stop and turn and pound back too late to hold the fort? Judgment alone can answer these questions. Let us hope

that you will not after reading this chapter decide on a desperate, fruitless rush.

You are either back this time, and you are faced with the situation illustrated in Diagram 8. An ill-judged tackle leaves your opponent a clear field and five forwards to attack your possible four defenders. If your fellow defenders are all well placed, you should so threaten the man with the ball—if he is your man—that either he attempts to dribble past you while you, still perfectly balanced, wait to pounce at the right moment to rob him of the ball, or else he is forced to pass at your dictation only to see his pass snapped up by your well-placed defence. If your defence is disorganized, your only chance is to delay until it has time to recover. Your opponent cannot dribble as fast as he can make the ball travel if he passes. Do not therefore threaten him directly enough to encourage him to part with the ball. He will not dribble either fast or confidently if you are hovering ahead of him waiting to take advantage of any mistake he makes. Every moment of delay you can secure enables your defence to reorganize.

Another situation you may find yourself faced with is when an opponent is bearing down on you in midfield, and you alone are left to stop him. An ill-judged tackle lets him through with only the goalkeeper to beat. The longer you can delay your tackle

the better. Your threatening presence ahead may lead even a good dribbler to lose control of the ball, and then your chance has come. Even if he keeps control you may be able to force him to take an indirect route to the goal and so waste valuable time: and, when he reaches the circle, you are still there to hinder and hustle him. Therefore, do not commit yourself.

There is one situation, however, when you cannot afford to delay, when even a hopeless tackle is justified, and that is in your circle when your opponent is about to shoot. You must do everything possible to prevent that shot from being made. The better you have judged your approach, the less uncontrolled your rush, the more balanced and deft your footwork and stick-work, the more likely are you to be successful, but this is no time for delay. Things have gone wrong, and desperate remedies are needed. Your rush, your lunge, the very sound of your approach, may fluster your opponent and save the situation.

If your particular opponent—the inside forward—is dribbling near the circle manœuvring for room to shoot, you should often run beside him—and this particularly applies to the right back versus the inside left—watching and waiting for a moment when he loses control or, failing that, for the moment when he raises his stick from close contact with the ball to make his shot or give his pass. Then is the moment for

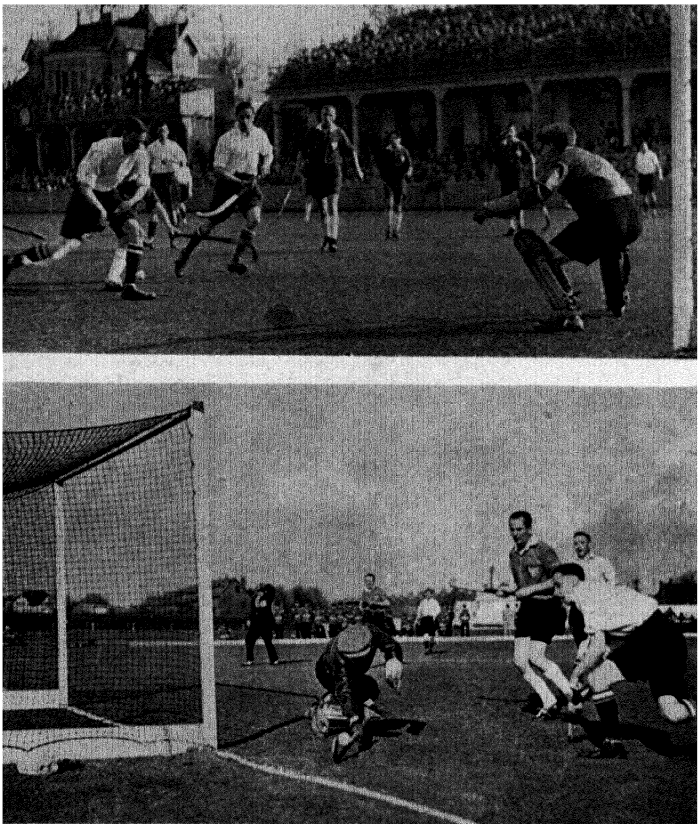
you to strike. Such a moment is bound to come, it will be very short—the better the player the shorter the moment—and you must be so placed and balanced that you can seize upon the chance. The one hope of the dribbling forward is that you will mistime your tackle and give him that moment of freedom for his shot that he needs while you are recovering your balance.

Co-operation

At the beginning of this chapter we spoke of the necessity for close co-operation between backs and half-backs and others. In this section we will discuss in some detail certain examples of such co-operation.

The Full-backs and the Goal-keeper.

In the section on goal-keeping the essential interdependence of backs and goal-keeper has been emphasized; nor can it be emphasized too strongly. It is vitally important that the goal-keeper should have as long and as clear a view of the ball as possible. It is a fatal fault, but one very common in the young, to hang about, when the circle is threatened, a few yards in front of the goal. Backs who do this are forgetting that their duty is to defend the edge of the circle, not the goal-mouth. They must be close up on their men,



Fox and *Associated Press*

TENSE MOMENTS

Two more fine action studies from the Anglo-German match at Edgbaston. In the first Penn (inside-right), harassed by two German sticks (that on the right is in a fine position for a wong-side tackle), threatens danger to the German goal. Note the splendidly alert and *mobile* position of the goal-keeper.

The second is another instance of 'the last resort.' Unable to cover his goal with his leg or hand, the goalie has had to save, or try to save, in desperation with his stick. It looks very much, however, as if he has failed.

preventing or hampering their shot. They need not fear to leave a gap behind them between them and the goal-keeper — the off-side rule will protect it and the goal-keeper is not immobile. The mobility of a good goal-keeper is an enormous comfort to the backs. Time and again when inside their own twenty-five, where deep covering is impossible, it is the goal-keeper who comes out and kicks far up the field a 'through' pass which looks dangerous. The judgment of the goal-keeper can be assisted by the backs if they make it quite clear when they are or are not going to deal with a ball within the goal-keeper's province. They should call definitely and in good time whenever there might be a doubt. They should also be ready to shout 'Leave it' to the goal-keeper when a shot has been made from outside the circle.

Co-operation in General.

Backs, just as much as other players (see p. 174), should be prepared to help in co-operation by talking during the game. This may sound dangerous advice, but the right thing said at the right moment to your own side may avoid misunderstanding and assist co-operation. Hockey is a game in which the eye must often be kept exclusively on the ball so that the use of the voice to indicate position, intention, or warning is very useful. Such remarks as 'Right, I 'll take him'

when there is doubt which back is to tackle a centre forward who has eluded his half-back: 'With you, if you like' to a half-back or to the other back when he appears likely to be in difficulties, and a pass to you would extricate him: 'I 'm here,' 'I 'm back in my place,' facilitate the smooth correction of a state of disorganization.

Something has been said in Chapter IV on forward play about the importance of forwards getting unmarked (pp. 67–8). All their efforts will be nullified unless the backs use their intelligence to support these efforts. Free hits are usually taken by full-backs at least as far up the field as half-way, but it is the free hit taken on the edge of your own circle that is often as much a source of danger as of relief unless there is a good understanding between back and forward and half-back.

How often do we not see a free hit directed straight at an alert opponent? It looks as though such a hit is simply stupid. Certainly it often is, but more often it is sheer lack of guile and experience.

The back who takes the hit is faced by many of his opponents who seem to cover the area available for his hit and leave no gaps. Gaps must be made or found. A back so placed—on his own circle when a free hit has been awarded—cannot usually get in his hit so soon that he catches his opponents unready. He

usually has to wait for them to get five yards away. By that time all are in position. He should not be in too great a hurry. While collecting the ball, placing it on the right spot, preparing to hit, he should have been casually glancing at the available area—to hit across his own goal-front will be criminal folly—and noting the position of the players. His own side—especially his own inside forward and half-back—should manœuvre a gap for him by leading the opponents who are marking them astray. As the back prepares to hit he observes, without directly looking, the gap available for his hit. Then he hits suddenly, hard and accurately into that gap. As he lifts his stick his inside forward, his outside, or his centre forward—or even his half-back—is on the move behind the opponent who a fraction of a second before was confidently covering him. He takes the ball in the gap and an attack begins.

The area available for the hit is further narrowed if the penalty has been awarded near the seven-yards line or, even worse, the touch-line. The back dare not hit across towards the centre of the ground—he can only hit towards his touch-line or parallel to it. Opposite him, apparently guarding every avenue, are two opposing forwards and a half-back. A judicious use of his own half-back will often enable the back to get a pass through to his forwards. This half-back

places himself fifteen or twenty yards ahead of the penalty spot between it and the opposing players, and stands facing the hit. The back then hits the ball straight at his half-back. This half-back does nothing but dodge the ball which continues and finds a friendly forward waiting beyond. The success of this is greater than might be expected because, first, the opposition is not likely to take up a place immediately behind the half-back, and secondly, if he does do so he will probably miss the ball through being unsighted.

Another way of using a half-back to help a penalty hit from an awkward position is especially useful to the left back. His half-back stands nonchalantly on the touch-line facing this hit some yards nearer his own goal-line than the opposing outside right. The back, about to take the hit, notices this without looking in that direction, and shapes to hit elsewhere. In fact, he pulls his shot straight at this apparently indifferent player who receiving the ball at a convenient angle can, either with a first-time hit or with more deliberation, redirect the ball to his wing-man who is waiting farther up the field on the touch-line. The right back cannot use this trick so effectively because, in the first place, it is more difficult for him to slice his hit and, secondly, it is more difficult for his half-back to redirect the ball when he gets it.

It is, again, impossible to detail the enormous variety

of opportunities for co-operation occurring in a game which depends so enormously on combination as does hockey. There are, however, a few more opportunities which frequently occur and which no full-back can afford to miss.

First, in attack he should frequently find himself, after a successful tackle or interception, out in the open in mid-field between his opponents' forwards behind him and their defence in front. He wants to get the ball at once by a hard hit to an unmarked forward. The left back should always be alert to crack the ball hard across to his inside or even outside right. This is especially likely to be effective in view of the fact that the opposite left back will probably be covering his partner, who will be up on the side where the ball is. By doing this too or feinting to do so he will find that his opposing centre half is drawn in that direction leaving the inside left uncovered for a pass at the last moment to him.

This pass is more frequently open to the left back than the corresponding one from right to left is to the right back. For the centre half, who is most likely to intercept it, has to take the ball with reversed stick when it comes from left back to inside right across his front, whereas from the other flank it is on his right side. But if the inside left positions himself correctly, far enough back, the right back can often give this very

effective cross-pass. Both backs must hit very hard without indicating by slow footwork what their intentions are. Slowness in giving the pass will nullify its effect.

The possibility of combination between back and wing-man in any part of the field should not be overlooked. It is not easy to get a pass through to your own wing-man if his opposing wing-half knows his job. When he has been drawn out of position, during an attack followed by a quick interception and break-away by the defending back, it may well be easy to pass to your wing. But when he is marked by his half-back, it is usually to the inside forward that the back must pass. Often, however, especially after an opposing attack, a pass can be given with safety only to the wing-forward—because the back must clear towards the touch-line. The wing-forward, if he knows his job, will expect this pass, and in order to elude his half-back he will have dashed back down his touch-line at the last moment, ready to receive the pass which will come rather squarer than the half-back marking him expects.

There are obvious occasions, some of which have been already mentioned, when a thorough understanding between back and half is of great value. An observant and thoughtful player will frequently foresee that his half-back or fellow back is going shortly to be

in difficulties over getting rid of the ball. He should quickly place himself where he knows he will be most useful and, if necessary, make such a remark as 'With you, if you like,' or 'I 'm here.' Conversely he should warn his partner, if such warning is necessary, of his forthcoming need of help and so ensure its ready presence at the critical moment. It is, perhaps, worth while to mention here that 'passing back' as practised on the 'soccer' field is not a manœuvre to be used at hockey, except on very rare occasions and by the very expert.[1] In the first place, a penalty for obstruction is likely to result—in the second, it is easier to miss a hockey ball than a soccer ball.

Adaptation

Conditions of weather and ground have a considerable bearing on the style of play to be adopted by the full-backs. A back relies enormously on his ability to anticipate. He has, therefore, to be constantly starting and stopping and turning. This is, of course, true of the other players, but the result of failure on their part is not usually so immediately dangerous to the side as failure by a back.

[1] It is done a fair amount by the Indians, I believe, and they are the best hockey players in the world. But they play on very fast, smooth grounds, and this makes all the difference to a manœuvre of this sort.

A greasy ground on which stopping and turning is difficult, but where the ball skids fast and true over the surface, is favourable to the attack. To counter this the backs must, generally, be ready to play less far up the field and to cover more deeply. They will have to be more cautious about attempting to intercept and they must be especially careful to eschew the speculative tackle. In feeding their forwards it is even more necessary that their passes be straight to their man. He cannot make ground to a flank as surely as on a firm ground.

As the surface cuts up conditions will be approximate to those met on rough and bumpy grounds. On such grounds both attack and defence are on level terms—with perhaps the balance in favour of the defence. The forwards will miss their passes and find it difficult to dribble successfully. Much can be done to overcome this difficulty by greater concentration of eye on the ball than is demanded on a smooth surface, but the tactics too must be varied. The backs should, again, not venture quite so far up the field and should cover each other even more thoroughly. They should rely less upon the intercept and remember that the opposing forwards are less likely to take their passes cleanly or dribble under control. They can, therefore, lie up behind the forward who is receiving the pass ready to take it if he

misses it, or to pounce on it if he stops it but fails to bring it under immediate control. When considering the question of tackling they should bear in mind that the forward is likely to make a mistake if given time.

A heavy muddy ground—the worst possible for good hockey—affects defence and attack alike. It is an axiom that in these conditions the side which hits the harder will win. The defence should remember that in such conditions even more than in better they should never give up. The backs must pound back at full speed when they have been passed by opposite forwards, for if they do they will very often arrive in time to check an attack slowed down by the mud. The push pass along the ground must be eliminated, but a powerful flick in the air may travel even faster than a hit if the ground is in a very bad state.

Opponents' Characteristics

The full-backs should observe carefully in the early part of the game any particular characteristics of the general and individual play of their opponents.

The opposing half-backs may be dribblers, and though this may cheer you with prospects of an easy time, you must not play into their hands. They will be justified in dribbling if, unmolested by your forwards, they can draw you and put their forwards

through. Leave them alone and let them dribble. They should be tackled from behind by the forwards, and they will not dribble so well that the chance will not soon arrive to rob them of the ball without danger.

Their forwards may be unable to dribble, and may rely on immediate passes. You will not then be called upon to tackle and can study your positions for intercepting.

One wing may be exceptionally fast, which will mean deeper covering by the backs and exceptional efforts in speed of recovery and anticipation.

A forward may dribble with the ball behind him instead of in front of him. If he does he will be unable to pass quickly to his left.

The outsides may favour an early or late centre; or they may be unable to centre and prefer an individual attack on goal. The outside left, especially, may favour either the stop-and-turn or the run-round-the-ball method of centering.

Each of these tendencies should be noted, and tactics adapted to deal effectively with them.

Umpires

Finally it is important to notice early the interpretation put upon the rules by the umpires. There is room, and necessarily so, for differences of emphasis

amongst umpires, and these differences must be taken into account by the backs if they are to serve their side well. The importance of being scrupulously fair has been emphasized already, and it cannot be given too much emphasis. But there are certain directions where latitude in an interpretation of the rules necessitates modification of tactics. An umpire whose soundness on the off-side rule you suspect will force you to adapt your positioning accordingly. You cannot ignore a man you might otherwise ignore. Again, you must not be put off by an unusually strict application of the 'sticks' rule, and you must expect to be penalized frequently unless you modify your usual swing. Few umpires notice if the half-back at the roll-in causes the ball to enter the field of play where it went out. Your position at the roll-in may have to be adapted to meet a ball which travels many yards up-field outside the field of play. Whatever the circumstances may be it is no use ignoring them. They must be met by whatever fair tactics you can devise.

CHAPTER VII

GOAL-KEEPING

THERE is, I am sure, a general belief that goal-keeping is a 'mug 's' game, taken up only by the fellow who, having no natural aptitude for games, sees it as his one way of achieving athletic distinction. I intend to start this chapter with a vigorous attempt to discredit that belief.

Goal-keeping at hockey certainly has some disadvantages compared with other places on the field—they are so obvious that they need not be stressed, but it would be unfair not to mention them. In the first place there is inevitably less exercise involved (though not so little as might be imagined, as I hope to show); secondly, practically no stickwork is required; thirdly, keeping goal behind a greatly superior side is undoubtedly no fun at all, for even if you regard yourself as one of the audience you would get a better view from the touch-line!

But let me try to bring to light the advantages. First, the 'goalie' is, potentially at least, the *most important player on the side*, and, according as he is good or bad, may inspire the rest of his own side with confi-

Associated Press

'THE GOAL-KEEPER REQUIRES COURAGE'

No comment is necessary! Whitlock will not stop for any man when he sees the goal near at hand; but equally the German goalie will save his charge at any cost.

dence or despair, and his opponents correspondingly with despair or confidence. It is, therefore, a splendid place for one who does not fear responsibility. Again, keeping goal, except under the circumstances mentioned above in which there is nothing to do, is an extraordinarily fascinating business. I think it may give force to this statement if I mention that (admittedly on a warm day!) I sometimes go out of my way to play in goal myself. I may add that I am a remarkably poor performer in this position, for though I flatter myself that I possess one of the two chief qualities required, namely *judgment*, I know only too well that I lack the other, which is *courage*! There can be few more satisfying sensations than a really good kick up-field from the edge of the circle off the sticks of the oncoming forwards, or an apparently certain goal saved by clever anticipation.

I hope, then, that we have persuaded the hesitant 'goalie' that it is well worth his while to take up this position; let me now pass on to a few hints which may help him to fill this responsible post.

I have said that the chief qualities required are *courage* and *judgment* and I find it hard to say which is the more important. When we think about it the former may seem easily to transcend the latter, but we must first be sure of what we mean by courage, for it is of all the virtues perhaps the hardest to define. So

often what we call courage is due to lack of imagination, and when no danger is imagined surely the virtue has departed from so-called courage. Is not a man truly brave only in proportion as he faces a danger which he sees? The truth seems to be for our purposes that while you can have judgment without courage, you cannot have *true* courage without judgment, so that properly our first quality embraces both. But since I am rapidly getting out of my depth, let us leave such generalities and try to give some rather more concrete advice to the would-be goal-keeper.

In the first place let him rid himself of any idea he may entertain that his is a purely sedentary job. A few years ago, in one of Cochran's revues I think it was, there was a masterly mime of a soccer goal-keeper guarding his goal, and nobody who saw this scene would have said that it was lacking in action. Of course being caricature it exaggerated, but the essence of caricature must be truth; and I hardly think that any experienced soccer goalie would call his job sedentary. Nor is it at hockey, though perhaps it is a little less energetic, as the goalie's legs are somewhat hampered in their movements by his pads. There are bound to be times when he is inactive, but unless the game is hopelessly one-sided, they will not be many or long.

For the rest, though he may never touch the ball

he should be constantly on the move, perhaps only within the radius of his goal, perhaps within that of the whole circle. For instance, if the ball is coming straight down the middle, he will be in the centre of his goal, ready to stretch either foot out; if the ball comes through on the left (I mean from the attacking point of view) he should move to the right, if on the right to the left, always guarding the *nearer* goal-post. This is one of the first rules to be learnt; and if an oncoming forward gets too near the back-line before shooting, it should be impossible for him to score a goal himself if the goalie's position is correct—right up against the nearer post, making as it were an outward continuation of it. (For exceptions to this rule, see below p. 150.)

Then again it sometimes happens, especially when one side has been attacking hotly and the other makes a sudden counter-attack, that a forward, usually the centre forward, or perhaps one of the wings (though because of the acute angle they are less dangerous), breaks clean away and is left with only the goal-keeper to beat. On these occasions the latter should leave his goal and meet the enemy *right on the edge of the circle* if he has time to get there. If the goalie can meet him there the forward will be unable to shoot before he has dribbled round him, and if the goalie knows how to spread himself out the forward will have

to make a pretty wide detour. Anything may then happen—he may lose control of the ball altogether, or the time taken in circumnavigating the goalie may just give another defender time to get back into the goal and save. But if the goalie 'stays at home,' his chances of saving are negligible; the forward will bring the ball on till he is at point-blank range and only some exceptional unevenness in the ground putting him off his stroke will prevent a goal.

Sometimes the breakaway will be too sudden for the goalie to be able to reach the edge of the circle in time. He should, however, *come out as far as he can.* The only time a goal-keeper has any excuse for staying at home when a forward has broken clean away is when there seems a very good chance of his being overhauled by an exceptionally fast defender.

The goal-keeper should always be on the alert, too, for a ball that comes through momentarily out of the control of the oncoming forwards. If he can get to it first and kick it away, the danger will be averted, and even if he can only get there at the same time he will probably save, since his wide and well-padded legs will smother the shot before it gets under way. In this case, however, he should not attempt to kick—merely to smother with legs well together. It is particularly in his dealing with the loose ball that the goalie shows his judgment—gained, of course, only by

experience. The beginner will almost certainly find that he thinks he has more time than he actually has—mainly through slow-wittedness, but partly perhaps because he does not make allowance for the impediment of pads.

At this point it would be as well to make it clear that the stick is by far the *least* important part of a goal-keeper's outfit. I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that a good goalie does not on an average use his stick more than once, or at most twice, in a game. The two circumstances under which he may use it with advantage are:

(*a*) When he has stopped a hard shot, and the ball, instead of being kicked or rebounding some distance off his pads, stays within his reach, he will probably find it best to push it away with his stick as it is hard to kick a stationary ball.

(*b*) When the ball has been hit wildly right ahead of the opposing side and the goal-keeper has ample time in which to trap it and get rid of it, he is justified in using his stick, so long as he hits well to one wing or the other—and never down the centre. But even in this case some first-class goalies who can kick half the length of the field prefer the foot to the stick, since time is saved and by lifting the ball they can be certain of clearing the onrushing forwards. (In my opinion there are two justifiable 'lifts' in hockey

and two only—the goal-keeper's kick and the shot at goal.)

This second example leads naturally to another point—when to kick the ball and when to leave it. A wild hit down-field for instance will as often as not go harmlessly over the backline (perhaps the goal-line—it does not matter) and it is clearly safer to let it go. On the other hand it may be better policy sometimes to return it up-field, as, for instance, when the goal-keeper's own side has just been on the attack, and the forwards are still up in the opponents' half of the field; if he lets the ball go over the backline, they will all have to come trapsing back within their own twenty-five line, and this is not only tiring but may mean the loss of a good attacking position. But then if the goalie foozles his hit or kick, and a goal results, he feels a fool. The solution to the problem seems to me clear; the responsibility should *not* be with the goal-keeper at all on such occasions, unless he is himself the captain of the side. It is the captain's business to decide quickly the best policy, and shout to the goalie to leave it or save it, as the case may be. This applies of course only when there is ample time for either course. At close quarters the goalie must use his own judgment. It is often a very effective move to come out and *pretend* to kick, and then lift the foot and let the ball go. The feint will almost certainly

Keystone

'THE GOAL-KEEPER REQUIRES JUDGMENT'

The French goalie comes out in the nick of time to kick away from the German centre forward or at least to block his shot. Notice how his eye is *glued* to the *ball*.

check the oncoming forward and have the effect of preventing his reaching the ball before it goes over the backline. All these are matters of judgment on the part of the goalie and will be found troublesome at first but increasingly easy as he gains experience and confidence.

The goal-keeper must always be ready to use his *hands*. He will have many 'aerial' shots to deal with, especially 'flicks,' and his temptation is sure to be to wave his stick at them—a temptation which must be overcome. Apart from the uncertainty of achieving contact at all the penalty for 'sticking' when a certain goal is saved thereby is a penalty bully and a goal-keeper's chances of 'getting away with' that against the other side's picked bullier are negligible; especially as he loses for the moment his special privilege of being allowed to use his legs. As an encouragement to goal-keepers to use their hands the 'hand-ball' rule is less strict in their case—see Rule No. 10 (*h*)—though the essence of the rule remains the same. He must not deliberately push the ball away with his hand, still less catch it and throw it!

When waiting to receive a shot the goal-keeper then should stand with legs together and *both* hands on his stick so that he can quickly stretch out either if the occasion demands. His only excuse for using his stick to save will be if he has been drawn out of position

and a shot then comes which can only be reached with the stick at full length. If he succeeds in saving it will be a brilliant feat, and many ignorant spectators will think him a wonderful goalie. But the players and those better acquainted with the game will not judge him by this 'fluke'; they may even blame him for having ever got into such a position that this feat was necessary to extricate him. It is by consistent soundness and reliability that a goalie (even more than anybody else) builds up a reputation.

We mentioned on p. 145 that there might be an exception to the rule of guarding the nearer post. This may occur when the opposing outside right has the ball near the backline, and there is an inside forward quite unmarked near the goal-mouth. If the wing centres accurately to the inside, the goal-keeper will have practically no chance of saving at point-blank range. On the other hand, if he leaves his goal he may be able to intercept the wing's pass and kick it away. This move requires the exercise of very good judgment. He must be certain of being able to get to the ball before it reaches the inside forward. He must be certain also (or as nearly certain as is possible in a world of uncertainties) that the wing will centre and not shoot himself—for the goalie will look a precious fool if the ball passes quietly into the goal behind him while he is elsewhere! Only with much experi-

ence can he know when the risk is justifiable, and the beginner will be well advised to stick to the rule that the nearer the ball to the backline, the closer he should be to the near post, and the more impossible should it be for the ball to pass between him and that post. No goal can be scored with a direct shot against a first-class goal-keeper, if the angle be very acute. To know that they can rely on their goalie will be a great asset to the rest of the defence, for if one of the enemy forwards has got near to the backline before shooting they can safely leave him and mark the others in case he passes; he himself is no longer a serious danger.

In defending 'corners' some goal-keepers like to have a back in each corner of the goal, others prefer only one, and a few like to have the goal to themselves. It is simply a matter of taste, but I think the commonest formation is the goalie and one back, the latter guarding the corner farthest removed from the corner-taker. Nothing will harass the goalie more than to be unsighted by his own men, and if they get in his way he should let them know it in no uncertain manner! I well remember J. F. Wolfenden's (see below) vivid plea: 'Let the dog see the rabbit!' And I can't recollect ever seeing him beaten at a corner except by being unsighted or by a ricochet.

I have seen good goal-keepers when defending corners come about two yards out of goal with great

effect; partly because by doing this they narrow the angle for the shooter, and partly, perhaps, because they thus lessen the chance of being unsighted. Many good goalies don't do this, but it is worth mentioning if only because it serves to emphasize one of the most important points in goal-keeping, viz. that the goalie's position (if anything so mobile can be called a position) is not *on* his goal-line but a foot or more *in front of* it. I emphasize this because I have seen beginners let goals not because they have missed the ball, but because they have actually been standing *behind* their goal-line when they 'saved'!

The goal-keeper's equipment which is of rather special importance is discussed in a later chapter.

To sum up, the chief points to remember seem to be:

1. Be on your toes ready to move.
2. Use feet and hands rather than stick.
3. When stopping a direct shot or when running out to 'block,' *keep the legs together* (no good goalie ever allows a goal to be scored through his legs).
4. Guard the 'nearer' post.
5. Watch and *think*. Goal-keeping is anything but a mug's game. The finest goalie I ever knew (see above) was a teacher of philosophy at Oxford at the age of twenty-three, and before he was twenty-eight was headmaster of a leading public school!

R. H. Lane

THE BULLY

The left-hand figure is correct. The right-hand figure is breaking two of the most important rules by (i) not standing 'square'; (ii) not using the 'flat' of the stick. He may be contemplating further crimes, such as 'hoicking' the ball through his legs.

CHAPTER VIII

SETTING THE BALL ROLLING

THE heading of this chapter may be a little obscure, but it is intended to cover those parts of the game which concern putting the ball in play, either at the start, or when in the course of the game it has gone out of play through crossing the touch-line or goal-line, or on account of some infringement. We shall be considering such points as bullying, corner-hitting, rolling-in, and free hits. Let us start with the bully, since it is by this that the game is started.

THE BULLY

Bullying is a part of the game which practically concerns forwards only, though surprisingly the goal-keeper is of the others the most likely to have to undertake it, as he may quite possibly save a certain goal by a foul (not, of course, necessarily deliberate), and so become involved in a penalty bully.

I think Englishmen, rather typically, tend to pay little heed to bullying, as being one of the less interesting sides of the game. I know that I myself am a

grave offender in this respect, and with little excuse, for I remember R. Summerhayes, surely one of the keenest and most inspiring captains Oxford University has had, spending the whole of a railway journey from Oxford to London telling me about different methods of bullying! But the willing pupil was never able to do his mentor credit, as he dislocated his shoulder (not very excusably, either) five days before the 'varsity' match, and his place was taken by a full-back who had probably never bullied in his life, but achieved undying fame by scoring the winning goal! And I seem to have forgotten all except one of the, I think, seven ways which I was taught, and now any good bullier can defeat me, and also any bullier, good, bad, or indifferent, whose method is to hit me or even threaten to hit me on the fingers! But, seriously, this matter of bullying is important, since goals may well be scored directly from a movement started at a bully, especially on the attacker's twenty-five line: and English bullying is almost invariably 'shown up' when opposed to that of continental sides, particularly the scientific Germans who do not allow any part of the game to 'take care of itself.'

Undoubtedly, the first thing the beginner should learn is to bully *fairly*. It is often possible to defeat your opponent by standing at an angle to the ball with the right foot nearer to it than the left; it may also be

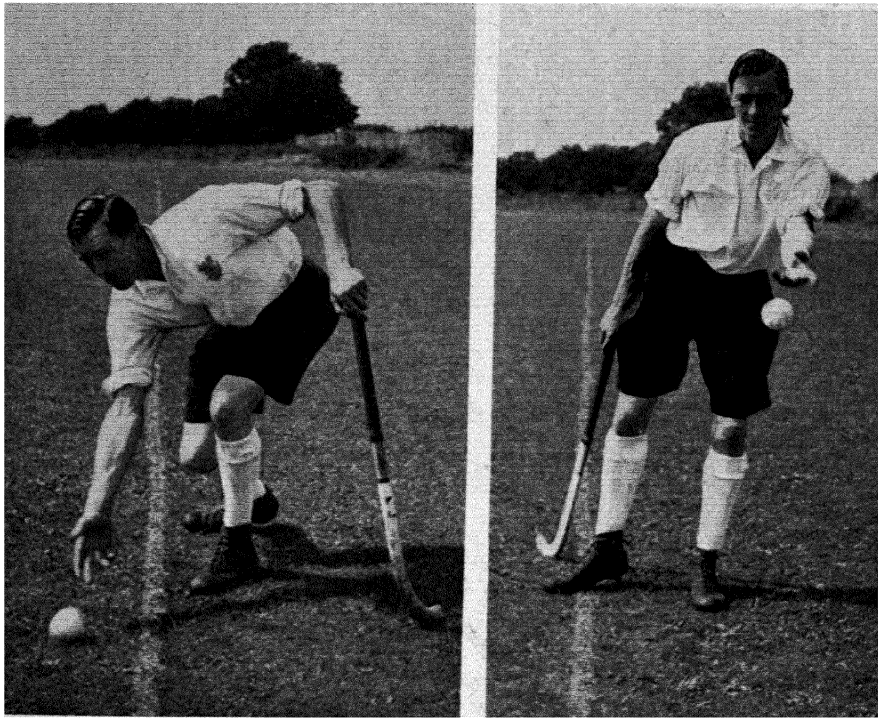
found effective to turn the stick over (see the illustration facing p. 153); while you will almost certainly win the bully if you hook the ball towards you through your legs. But all these methods contravene the rules and any sound umpire will penalize you. On the other hand, hitting at, or near, your opponent's fingers breaks no rule that I can think of, but is clearly contrary to the spirit of the game.

Having learnt then to 'stand square,' to bully with the face of the stick, and to avoid obstructing by putting the ball through his legs so that his opponent cannot get at it, the beginner now wishes to learn to win the bully by fair means. Perhaps the commonest trick (I dislike the word as it has a sly sound about it, but use it for want of a better) is to make the third tap a very quick one and to take the ball before his opponent gets his stick down to it. Against a quite inexpert bullier this will almost certainly succeed, but obviously against another who is using the same trick the result will depend on which can do it the quicker; and if you hope to 'put this one over' on an Indian or an Afghan, you 've 'got another hope coming!'

Another trick often used to good effect is to *reverse* the stick quickly after the third tap and hit the ball *back* to the half five yards behind; the latter must of course be 'in the know.' The chief disadvantage of this manœuvre is that it takes valuable time to reverse

the stick, and in order to do so quickly enough not to lose the ball the users of this method almost always turn the stick half over before the end of the bully, this being against the rules. Incidentally, if this method is used the stick is *not* reversed in the way suggested in Chapter III (see the illustration facing p. 46), but in the other and normally incorrect way; it is, in fact, the exception which proves the rule.

There are doubtless other tricks for winning the bully, but the essence of every method is speed and strength of wrist-movement. I have met at least one player who, even when at school, was so strong in the wrist that he could just flick the ball where he wanted (probably half-right as he played inside left) at the end of a bully as though the opponent's stick wasn't in the way at all! But this is very exceptional. My general advice at bullies is this: in the first three or four try out your repertoire of tricks to see which is the most effective. If by then you have discovered that your opponent is too quick and strong for you, *alter your tactics completely from attack to defence*, saying to yourself that if you cannot win the bully you can at least do your utmost to prevent his winning it! This will mean watching carefully what he does with the ball when he (invariably) gets it, and moving with him so that he can neither get rid of it nor dribble through on his own. Whether it is due to pride, or obstinacy, or simple



THE ROLL-IN

Left. Correct action. Stick and feet behind the line: hand near the ground just inside the line, so that the ball has been truly *rolled*, and enters the field of play immediately.

Right. Wrong action. The reverse in every respect. The photograph has been cleverly timed so that the ball has, in each case, just left the hand.

R. H. Lane

stupidity, I do not know, but I am sure many players (myself included) go on vainly hoping to win bullies long after they ought to have realized that they cannot hope to win them and would do better to concentrate on not losing them. In conclusion, remember they are *important*.

The Roll-in

A few years ago experiments were made involving the abolition of the roll-in from touch and the substitution of a free hit. Though not present at the experiment, and so unable to vouch for the success or failure of the innovation on that occasion, I believe that such a change would benefit the game. The players on the left-hand side of the field, whether defending or attacking, are at a very great disadvantage at a roll-in, since, in order to avoid obstructing, they have to turn at least a semicircle before they can play the ball, while their opponents do not need to turn at all. It is probably because of this incongruity that the Germans (in their interpretation of all other rules, except perhaps obstruction, so much stricter than ourselves) display laxity over the roll-in rules, neither being careful to keep behind the seven-yards line until the ball is delivered, nor waiting till everybody (attack and defence) is behind the line before rolling in.[1] But

[1] See Chapter II, pp. 22–3.

since of all nations we are perhaps the most obstinately conservative, it is more than doubtful whether the present rule will ever be altered, and we must make the best of a bad job.

The best, perhaps the only, chance which players on the left have of getting the ball from the roll-in is somehow to catch the opposition napping. For instance, it will sometimes be found that an inexperienced outside right fails to mark the left back when the latter's half-back has the roll-in. The half can then roll quietly to his back who, unmolested and without having to turn more than the slightest amount, can hit the ball up the field perfectly to the inside right in order to open up the game. Again, by pre-concerted arrangement an inside left may suddenly run to an unmarked position just before the half delivers the ball and thus perhaps escape for that vital second or two the vigilance of his opponent. If he does so, his simplest move is to tap the ball back to the half who can then hit it across or up the field as he thinks fit. If the half-back cannot bring off either of these 'coups,' he should usually roll the ball down the touch-line. This especially applies near his own goal, when a roll into the centre going to the wrong side may prove fatal.

These two examples apply when one's own left half has the roll-in. When the opposing right half has it,

such subtleties are clearly useless. All you can do is mark your man very closely (the left half marking the outside right, the inside left the inside right, and the outside left guarding against the roll to the right back which the half will certainly use if he can), then try to stop the ball, on the reverse side, of course, and transfer yourself to the correct side of it immediately in order to avoid obstruction.

There is little more to be said about the roll-in. For those on the right the same advice applies, *mutatis mutandis*, though their task is far easier. The centre half naturally marks the centre forward in case there is a gap through which the ball comes to him, and furthermore (a point often overlooked) at the roll-in the centre forward of the defending side should keep an eye on the attacking centre half who can often get into an unmarked position. This is probably the only occasion on which a centre forward ought to mark the centre half, the reverse being naturally the normal procedure.

Finally, the roller himself should endeavour to roll fairly—feet *and stick* behind the line, ball *rolled* and not bounced, and—most important because most frequently disregarded by both players and umpires—the ball must be rolled straight on to the field of play. One often sees most effective rolls that skim along *outside* the touch-line for a few yards before going

in, thus making the opposing half's interception considerably more difficult (see illustration opposite p. 157).

The position of backs at the roll-in has been fully dealt with in the chapter on back-play, and there is no need to say anything more here.

Free Hits

In England a free hit is usually regarded as a nuisance, no less by the side to whom it is given than by the side penalized. There is obviously something wrong about this. Yet it is easy to sympathize with the point of view of the players against whom the foul has been perpetrated, especially if they are on the attack; not only has the whole rhythm of the movement been broken, but the opposing defence has time to recover position, and the inside forwards, who would not normally be marking their opposite numbers, now do so. If free hits are of frequent occurrence, we begin to feel we should prefer our opponents' fouls to go unnoticed, for we may still recover the ball, whereas from a free hit no advantage ever seems to accrue.

In one respect I think these arguments are unanswerable. There is no doubt that too many free hits quite ruin hockey. Perpetual stoppings and restartings are inevitably harmful to a game, the very essence

of which is movement. At hockey, perhaps more than any other game, it is in the power of the umpires to make or mar the game. But if we assume that the umpiring is not unnecessarily pernickety, there is no reason why we should not make better use of the free hits in our favour than we do. How frequently one reads in accounts of soccer matches that goals were scored following upon a free kick—and in soccer goals are much rarer phenomena than in hockey!

The belief that the better use of penalties made by soccer players has nothing to do with any essential difference in the two games, will, I am sure, be supported by any who either watched or took part in the hockey match between England and Germany at Edgbaston in 1936. Ineffective use was made of penalty awards by the English team as usual, but the advantage gained by the Germans from their free hits must have been a revelation to many of us. For despite our efforts (really quite considerable!) to mark our men, their free hits seemed to find their objective with monotonous regularity, and indeed their most dangerous attacking movements usually started from this source—not least their well-deserved equalizing goal in the last few minutes of the game. Why then should the Germans put us to shame in this department of the game? I think they would readily agree that we are not (yet!) inferior to them in stickwork or

footwork, nor do our minds work noticeably more slowly. There is, in fact, no reason why we should be so inferior in the matter of free hits—no real reason, that is. Why we are so, is only because we are too lazy. It is one of the scientific parts of the game which require constant practice—and not mere practice in our back garden by ourselves, or with another enthusiast, but practice by a *whole team together*, not only on the field of play, but with chalk and blackboard. For the only explanation of the effectiveness of the German free hit is that each man knows exactly where to go and at what moment, so that, though one thinks one has them all marked off, when the ball is hit (into a gap, of course) one turns round to find that the man one is marking is now in quite a different place—the place, needless to add, whither the ball has been dispatched!

It may be said that the Englishman plays games for fun and recreation and does not want to make such a business of it—an admirable sentiment, which I for one heartily endorse. Moreover, I do think that, owing to our more light-hearted attitude towards games, we perhaps enjoy them more than other nations. But we are hardly consistent in this attitude, for we love to win and hate to lose! Well, there is a proverb about eating your cake and having it, which seems to apply here with some aptness. If we intend

to keep on winning we must take more trouble; there will come a day (very soon too) when a natural genius for ball games will have to bow before science.

There are a few minor points about free hits which may be touched upon.

When taking a free hit near your own circle, hit towards the touch-line—the nearer one, unless you are centrally placed. The risk of the hit being fatally intercepted is too great to justify hitting down the centre even if you are a very strong hitter; incidentally, it is not at all easy to strike a stationary ball really hard with a stick of average weight. S. A. Block, the England left back, is the most powerful 'dead-ball' hitter I know—he can hit any sort of ball, dead or alive, like a kicking horse, as any one who has had the misfortune to field mid-off to him will readily agree!—but he is of exceptional physique; moreover, he is not by any means without blemish in the matter of giving sticks!

When the hit has to be taken actually in the circle, it is good advice to think of nothing but hitting towards the touch-line, and not giving sticks, for nothing will make you more unpopular with your side than at one fell swoop changing the advantage of a free clearance out of the circle to the direct disadvantage of defending a penalty corner.

When a free hit is given just outside the opposing circle which is dense with humanity (as it certainly

will be, each forward being well marked and no gaps left owing to the restricted space), it will sometimes be found effective to give the ball a sharp *downward* blow towards the goal. This will have the effect of making the ball bump, and it will be harder for the defence to intercept. The forwards should run for the goal as the ball is hit (not before). If it comes through the crowd of sticks and feet they will have only the goal-keeper to beat at close range and, although when they take the ball they will appear to be off-side, a good umpire will see that when the ball was hit they were on-side, and are therefore so still. A goal was scored thus by Oxford in the Varsity match of 1927—but as it was her one ewe lamb, and Cambridge scored four (or was it five?) it profited her little!

By a recently adopted rule a ball may now be pushed instead of hit, as long as it does not leave the ground —a daring innovation for the Hockey Association to have made, and one, I venture to suggest, of little value to anybody. Owing to the greater accuracy and 'touch' of a flick or push and the greater ease with which its direction may be disguised, it may perhaps be found useful in attack when the half is close up behind his forwards; but the difficulty of keeping it rigidly along the ground counterbalances this advantage. Perhaps its best use is in the taking of a short corner (see below).

Corners

Of all these parts of the game, which start from scratch, as it were, perhaps the most important are corners. From them alone goals are always liable to be scored directly, though they all too rarely are. In my opinion a great deal of nonsense is talked about the inefficiency of corner-hitting, or rather of shooting from corners. People constantly complain of the low percentage of goals resulting therefrom, and even go so far as to assert that from a penalty corner a goal should be scored nine times out of ten. Yet surely the dice are heavily loaded in favour of the defence. For, if the defending players are sufficiently determined (as they will be in an important match) that a goal shall not be scored, they have only to stand in the line of fire and stop the ball, if possible with their sticks, but if not, with some portion of their anatomy! Furthermore, keen defenders—especially if the issue of the match is in doubt, and all may depend on preventing a goal from the corner—run out almost invariably before the ball is hit, and though the umpire may order them back and have the corner re-taken once or twice he cannot continue to do so indefinitely, if the game is to proceed at all; and running out, even a split second early, makes all the difference between being just in time to intercept the shot or not. (In passing,

I would suggest that one way of obviating this difficulty would be to borrow a rule from Rugby football, where 'no charge' is given if defending players run out before the ball is grounded for a place kick. Some further rider would have to be added, of course, to prevent the attacking side bringing the ball into point-blank range—but something on these lines might curb this 'misplaced enthusiasm'—to use a euphemism for what is really nothing more than unfair tactics—on the part of the defence.)

Here, then, are two undeniable advantages held by the defence—the first of which operates however perfectly the attacking side may 'take' the corner. The second (which is after all an unfair advantage and should therefore not figure in the ideal game) can be reduced to a minimum if the corner-taker hits the ball *with the shortest possible backswing*. For none but the most hardened defender (if I may use the expression on the obvious analogy) has the nerve to run out before the hitter begins his swing.

There are further difficulties experienced by the corner-takers, which have no relation to the defenders. On the average English ground, which is neither firm nor smooth, to stop the ball 'dead' with the hand, or at all with the stick, is far from easy. Remember, however, that with the latter it need not be stopped dead—the rule reads:

[1] For an official suggestion, see p. 172.

Keystone

ENGLAND'S PLAYERS IN ACTION

A general scene from the match between England and Germany at Edgbaston, March 1936. Included principally because it shows three of England's greatest players 'in action.' From right to left, Block (left back), Wyatt (right back), and Hoare (centre half). The other Englishman is obviously the author—'tackling-back,' we presume!

'No shot at goal shall be made from a corner hit unless the ball first be stopped (not necessarily motionless) on the ground by a player of the attacking team or touch the stick or person of a player of the defending team.'

Perhaps these arguments will do something to answer the critics, but to alter my standpoint let me freely admit that, though I consider that they exaggerate, I agree that corner-practice in England is on the whole sadly neglected (like the other parts of the game dealt with in this chapter, though rather less so), and as a result goals are less forthcoming than in other countries.

Let us turn then to the technique of taking corners, starting with ordinary or 'long' corners. They are of commonest occurrence and are, of course, the hardest from which to score.

In the normal way, the corner is hit by the wing-player, and wing-players should practise hitting a stationary ball hard and accurately, since this is by no means an easy thing to do. It may well be, however, that a wing, in order to facilitate stickwork, uses a very light stick. To hit a stationary hockey-ball really hard with a light stick is wellnigh impossible, and the captain should depute someone else to take the corner—preferably the inside forward or half on that side of the field (the latter is sure to have a heavier

stick), the outside temporarily occupying the vacant position.

The taker should use if possible a short backswing —or at any rate a quick one—for the reason mentioned above, and the ball should be hit as hard as possible at a tangent to the circle; *remember* that it is a worse mistake to hit it too far back and outside the circumference than too far forward and thus nearer to the outrushing interceptors.

If the corner is from the right, the receiver, since he is already facing the right direction for shooting at goal, will probably do best to stop the ball with his stick without any assistance. There must be the minimum of time between his stopping it and shooting, or the defenders will be upon him. This vital second is clearly saved if *somebody else* stops the ball for him with his hand, but on the right the difficulty of stopping it without obstructing the shooter will probably be found too considerable to make it worth while. However, a good *left-handed* fielder may find himself able to stop the ball and keep himself clear of the shooter's swing, and if he can, this method should certainly be encouraged. When making the shot at goal it is normally best to aim at the farther corner (as with any other form of shooting), but the most important thing to remember, to my mind, is that *any shot is better than none.*

If the corner is from the left it is nearly always best to have the ball stopped by hand—the stopper standing on the striker's right and using his right hand extended well in front of him, so as to ensure his being out of the striker's way. The latter will be able to stand already facing in the right direction and hit at goal *immediately* the stopper's hand is removed, instead of not only having to stop the ball himself before hitting but to turn his whole body at least half a semicircle. Stopping the ball for another player in the circle is by no means easy, and I have known absolutely first-class hockey-players quite unable to do it without obstructing the striker; while I have likewise known the most indifferent players almost worth their place in the side for their mastery of this alone! It should be done preferably by one of the inside forwards or the centre half, in order to avoid disorganization if the corner is unsuccessful.

'Penalty' corners (which may, of course, be taken from either side, regardless of where the infringement took place) should undoubtedly result in a good *shot* being made nine times out of ten, though I do not consider one can hope to score from them as often as people contend (see above). S. H. Saville had a wonderful method of shooting at corners from the right, which I have never known anybody succeed in learning from him! But in case somebody of

equal genius (in the bud) reads this book, I may as well place it on record. Holding the stick rather low down with the right hand, he stopped the ball with his left, which he then clapped back on to the stick before shooting. Only one of the finest cover-points in England—and a man of short stature to boot—could carry out this manœuvre quickly enough; it would probably take you or me nearly as long to do it as it does to write it.

It is more normal, however, to take 'short' corners from the left, for two reasons, I imagine. First, by having the ball stopped by another, one saves valuable time. The time element is not so vital in short corners, and personally I would prefer to stop a short corner for myself with my stick, since umpires are so strict on hand-ball at corners that if the stopper moves the ball a millimetre in any direction the whole thing is null and void. Secondly—and this is much more important, I think—if the corner is taken from the left, the defenders have to cross the line of the ball in flight before intercepting, and if they have any regard for the safety of their shins they will be extremely loath to do this!

These are the principal methods of taking corners, but there are a few more points to add. If corners are frequent but always unavailing, either because the ball does not travel fast enough, or because the defenders

persist in moving out too soon, or for any other cause, it is useful to vary the tactics as follows: the forward who stops the corner-hit just pushes the ball to another forward, who will have moved into the middle of the circle a few yards out from the goal, and who will probably be unmarked, since the defence will be concentrated on the supposed shooter. This forward can then usually make his shot in reasonable comfort. I have often seen goals scored this way, but usually by mistake rather than by design, the shooter having 'fluffed' his shot!

Finally, *at least* one forward should *always* rush the goal as soon as the corner has been taken. If a good shot is made the goal-keeper is unlikely to be able to do more than stop it, and the rebound may well give the player who 'follows up' a chance of just tapping the ball in from close range.

Now a word or two for the defenders. There should be as much method in defence against a corner as in the taking of it. It is probably best to detail one man only (both fast and brave) to 'rush' the striker. Others should back him up in case the ball runs loose, but should endeavour to do so in such a way that they do not obstruct the goal-keeper's view. There is no one so useless in defending a corner as the man who comes out a yard or two and stands plumb in front of his own goalie!

As to the position of the backs at corners, this is fully dealt with in Chapter VI on back-play.

All defensive tactics should be based on what is most helpful to the goal-keeper, and his wishes should always be consulted.

In the 1944 Rules, the Board recommends that a new form of penalty corner be tried out. 'The free hit shall be taken from a spot on the defenders' goal-line five yards outside either goal-post, and at the moment when the hit is taken no member of the defending team except the goal-keeper shall be within ten yards of the nearer goal-post or five yards of the further goal-post.'

It will be interesting to see if this experiment is adopted and, if so, whether many more goals are scored. There are likely, by the way, to be fewer penalty corners awarded now that they are not to be given (and here, I think, rightly) if the ball goes behind off a defender's 'unintentional' foot.

[1] It wasn't! The only alteration in the 1947 Rules was the deletion of this recommendation. Presumably it was either found that not enough extra goals were scored to justify the change, or considered (rightly, in my opinion) that it was merely pandering to the ineptitude of our shooting.

CHAPTER IX

CAPTAINCY

THE importance of good leadership in any co-operative concern is too well known to need stressing. In hockey as in other games the inspiration of an exceptional captain may well turn a mediocre side into one which, because of its spirit and determination not to fail its leader, is very hard to beat.

The good captain in any sphere of life, whether it be business, sport, or warfare, is 'Dux' rather than 'Imperator'—he leads rather than commands. And, if a quibble may be forgiven, to lead he must command —respect. In war no one respects the captain who, like the Duke of Plazatoro, 'leads his regiment from behind.' In hockey, of course, this only applies metaphorically, since the captain may well be a full-back or even a goal-keeper, but the principle is the same—the leader must set his team an example of industry, zeal, and courage.

Having once earned respect—which he has probably done already, long before he became captain—his principal aim will be to get the best out of his side. To

do this he must bear well in mind that, though what makes a good side is undoubtedly team-work and unity, a team is still made up of eleven *individuals*, and it is the captain's job to study the nature of each. Some players, for instance (and they are usually those with the greatest capabilities), are sensitive and highly strung: they will almost certainly start a match, especially one of importance, very nervously. An insensitive captain who curses his side indiscriminately may well destroy the little self-confidence these players possess, and so prevent them from ever fulfilling the promise they have shown. When the match is actually in progress, it is hardly possible to treat individuals differently, and consequently, since the insensitive player is unlikely to be affected much one way or the other, a great part of the captain's leadership on the field should always be *encouragement*.

How much the captain's voice should be heard while play is actually in progress is not easy to decide. Too much shouting is not only irritating to all concerned but wastes valuable breath in the shouter. Too little, on the other hand, may give a quite false impression of lack of enthusiasm. One thing is certain: players other than the captain should, except when calling for a pass (or in such cases as are mentioned in Chapter VI on back-play), be seen and not heard. (Any reader familiar with the writer will smile at this: I can only

hope the fact that I am well aware of my failings in this respect goes a little way towards mitigating the offence. I fear, however, logic argues that it makes it even worse!)

Before the game, and especially in the half-time interval, the captain should gather his team together and speak to them as he thinks necessary. Criticism should by all means be made, provided that it is *constructive*. Before the start, unless he happens to know the opposing side's strength and weaknesses, either by repute or experience, there is little he can say except words of encouragement. But by half-time by shrewd observation he will have detected the enemy's weak spots and those of his own side, as well as any other matters such as ground conditions, and he can make suggestions for a possible change of tactics. For example, he may notice that the opposing backs are standing 'square' (see Chapter VI). His own forwards not having noticed this are having all their close passes intercepted: more 'through' passes are indicated. The same will apply if the ground is heavy and cutting up badly: the ball will not travel smoothly or quickly enough for the 'short passing' game. Again, the halves may be holding on too long and thus giving the opposing defence time to regain a momentarily lost position, or perhaps his side is having all the best of the game, but cannot score because the opponents,

being continually on the defensive, are packing their circle. The solution of this problem has, perhaps, never been found, but a shrewd captain may think of some scheme. For instance, instead of the half-backs or even the full-backs coming farther and farther up, desperately trying to help their forwards to force the ball into the net (and probably imagining the latter are being incompetent and that they could do better themselves), would it not be more profitable for the defence to drop back in order to lure the opponents out of their own circle to counter-attack? This is a risk, of course, but one well worth contemplating when normal tactics have met with no success.

These are only two or three instances of the sort of thing the good captain should be quick to notice and give his team advice about in the interval. It may, of course, be urged that by half-time the match is perhaps already lost or won, and advice, however sound, will come too late. Certainly, if an opportunity occurs, the captain should advise any alteration of tactics as soon as he sees the need, but one cannot in hockey, as one does, I believe, in American Rugby football, hold up the game for a conference. The most he can do, without making altogether too much of a business of the game, is to 'tip the wink' to individuals as occasion arises.

In this connection it may be worth mentioning that

centre half is perhaps the best position for a captain, for the obvious reason that from there he can 'telegraph' his wishes most easily to all members of the team. The next best is probably the full-back position where one has not only a clear view of the 'run' of the game, but also rather more time for contemplation! Needless to say, I am not suggesting that when a player is made captain he should alter his position to suit.

So much for the duties of a captain as leader. I have played under many fine captains but none finer, I think, than the captain of Oxford University in my first year.[1] His enthusiasm both on and off the field was boundless, and he would take any amount of trouble with individuals. I have already had occasion to recount how he spent the whole of a sixty-mile railway journey simply giving me tips for bullying! I should reckon him ideal were it not that his exceptional zeal on the field occasionally led him to use rather harsh words, and I, for one, was somewhat alarmed by him! His successor, on the other hand, was anything but alarming, and perhaps too easy-going and lacking in inspiration.

But a captain has other duties besides leading his side on the field. He may have to build up that side, and this means both coaching and selecting. This applies particularly to university and school hockey,

[1] See p. 154.

though in the case of the latter there is usually a master to help with the coaching. In some schools I suspect the master does all the coaching and perhaps even the selecting, but, if this is so, I am convinced it is a very great mistake. It would be out of place to say why, involving as it would a long dissertation on ethics.

As with leading the side, so with coaching: it is by paying attention to individuals that a good team is produced. One thing especially for which to be on the look-out (and it is difficult to detect) is a wrong method of holding the stick, or the extremely common wrong way of reversing it. Group practice is also to be encouraged, especially among forwards and backs —the former learning to dribble and inter-pass at speed; the latter to hit cleanly and quickly without giving sticks. Most of this is too obvious to be worth mentioning, but the possibilities of coaching by means of a blackboard may be worth stressing, since I have never yet seen it done.

As to selecting the team there is little to be said. The captain (we are assuming he is coach as well) knows his material—he has only to put it to the best possible use. He is sure, however, to be faced with difficult decisions—whether, for instance, in a 'needle' match to play A or B; A being brilliant but unreliable, B moderate but safe. He will be guided by such considerations as the quality of the opponents (if reputedly

rough they will probably affect A more adversely than B); the probable state of the ground; the known preference of the rest of the team; and he will not be too proud to be guided by the advice of the older and wiser heads.

But what is far more important than his decision before any particular match is his attitude towards A and B in regard to matches to come. A's unreliability may be due either to conceit and lack of real spirit, or (more probably and hopefully) to a lack of self-confidence. If the former, the captain will take a firm line, dropping him from the side for perhaps a match or two in order to make him realize he is by no means indispensable. But he must be a very sound psychologist to be certain that what looks like conceit is not really diffidence, which often masquerades in strange guises. If it is, then bullying is the worst possible treatment. The player who fails to rise to the occasion through lack of self-confidence should be encouraged in every way; for only by experience will he learn to know and trust his own powers.

B, too, who is safe but undistinguished, should not be 'filed' as a sort of Toby Tortoise to be brought on when Max Hare has outgrown his boots and needs to be shown 'where he gets off.' Rather should his captain be ever coaching and encouraging him, helping him by constant practice to soften his rough edges while making the most of his finer points.

Finally, we come to the captain's minor duties; as host, as 'time-keeper,' as toss-winner. The first two are closely connected; and in order quickly to dispel the possible puzzlement of readers over the word 'time-keeper,' let me state that it is intended to mean 'one who is in or on time.'

Unpunctuality in the captain, whether he be host or guest, is not only extremely irritating to the other side (especially if as guests they have come a long way and perhaps missed their lunch in order to be on time), but it is also a poor example to his own side, who will naturally not bother to be punctual when they know their captain will be late, and furthermore it may very well result in a loss of that respect which, as I have said, is the very foundation-stone of leadership. It is as a time-keeper alone that the captain under whom I have played for the last few years falls short of greatness: but I have to confess that he seems to have lost little, if any, of the respect of his team—presumably because his other qualities so far outweigh this one signal weakness.

When he is host to a visiting team, the captain should take the trouble to see that the various members of the team are as comfortable as it is in his power to make them, and that, as far as possible, they have everything they want. It is his job to make them feel welcome and at home—hockey, after all, is a sociable game, and

the enemy on the field is often a friend off it. There is a great difference between visiting a team which makes this effort to be pleasant and one which does not. It is only a question of small things—a few words, an offer of help over bootlaces, boots, or such trifles, and it is the home captain's business to see that it is done.

Lastly, we come to the captain as toss-winner. It is obviously the duty of every perfect captain to win the toss. (In the 1936–7 cricket Test Matches in Australia Allen seems to have forgotten this duty at the critical moment—unless perhaps Bradman remembered it. On the other hand, a Lancashire captain a few years ago won the toss so many consecutive times that within a year he had exchanged cricket for a parliamentary career!) But it is another of the merits of hockey that, of all the great outdoor team games, it is the one in which the winning of the toss is of least account. In soccer and rugger, owing to the lightness of the ball, wind is a powerful factor, and though it is probably the same for both sides, it is not necessarily so by any means, since the wind often moderates or increases as the game continues. In cricket alas! the winning of the toss is frequently as much as half the battle. But I doubt if more than one game of hockey in a thousand depends on the spin of the coin.

However, it is worth the captain's while to give the matter a little thought. The chief thing to be on the

look-out for is the state of the ground. One end may be wetter than the other: he will want to play towards that end first, so that his forwards have it before it cuts up. Another factor is the sun, often rather puzzling, since it is difficult to be sure whether it is going to be worse or better (or perhaps non-existent) after half-time. Wind is less important, but might be a determining factor if the other two are absent.

I end this chapter with these few suggestions for the captain on 'tossing' and choice of ends. Incidentally they afford another reason for punctuality. The coin is normally spun only just before the game is begun—the captain's decision must have been made some time before this, after he has inspected the ground and consulted the weather and its prophets.

CHAPTER X

PRACTICE AND TRAINING

I HAVE been at some pains throughout this book to emphasize the importance of practice; but at the risk of being charged with redundancy I think it might be worth while to devote a brief chapter to the subject.

Let us suppose you are a schoolboy approaching your last hockey term, and you know you have a good chance of getting a place in the school eleven as an inside forward. For most schoolboys the question of 'training' in the sense of reaching and maintaining maximum physical fitness has not yet arisen; for a fortunate few it never arises (the author has never seriously 'gone into training' for any game yet). But for those otherwise constituted it should suffice to say that it is as necessary to be in good trim, especially as regards wind, for hockey as for any other energetic outdoor sport.

We will assume, anyhow, that you have spent your holidays pursuing the healthy activities of a normal boy, and that you are 'fighting fit.' You wish then to polish up your stickwork and footwork, so that when

the first organized game takes place it is at once apparent that you 'have your eye in,' this being simply another way of saying you are 'in practice.'

As a forward you enjoy an initial advantage—you can practise *alone*. A full-back whose stickwork consists mainly of stopping and hitting the ball can do little in the way of practice without a companion; a half-back too, who needs most of all to be able to 'take' the ball on the run, requires another player to hit it at him. But the forward can practise his dribbling and shooting by himself to his heart's content. Remember that inside right and inside left require rather different manœuvres; try both and see which you are best at. It will make a better impression on your captain if when he asks you which inside position you prefer you can give a definite answer, instead of an optimistic 'either'—which probably means 'neither.'

The same with shooting: if you fancy yourself as an inside left, practise running with the ball for a few yards outside the circle to the left of the centre, and then see how quickly you can turn feet and body and crack it into the far corner of the goal. Shooting from the right will seem far easier perhaps, but in a game you will find the inside right gets less than half the scoring chances of the inside left.

If I had to write a book on golf or rackets the first point I should make would be that both have one

enormous advantage over all other ball games—the player can practise by himself. The golfer, of course, has a further advantage in that he can *play* by himself, and personally few things give me more pleasure than going round a new golf course alone and trying to 'break 80.' But in several other ball games much can be done in the way of practice by oneself; at lawn tennis the wall is a great stand-by for the young aspirant who cannot always rely on the good nature of his elders; at rugger, of course, all the kicking can be practised alone, though it is more convenient, as well as more amusing, to have a companion.

You will also wish, however, to practise giving and taking passes, and for this you must discover some other ardent soul, or better a couple; and it will be best of all if you can persuade a pair of backs or half-backs to come along and give you some opposition. It will be practice for them also.

And so to the practice game—in good hands the best practice of all. The captain will perhaps be playing and observing as he plays—the coach will be observing also, unless he has to blow a whistle. Between them they should be able to get a good idea of the weaknesses to be eradicated or strong points to be brought out. Suggestions and changes should be made at half-time, and if any particular point crops up the game should be held up from time to time, so

that errors in tactics or positions can be commented on and corrected. But not too often—that the players should be 'warmed up' and have a feeling of *continuity* in a practice game is of the utmost importance.

I have said nothing on the question of how much time should be given to play or practice each week. In this a player must learn to use his own discretion. He must avoid any danger of 'staleness,' and no one can help him much here, for one player will go 'stale' far quicker than another. Each must judge for himself.

To me (chiefly because I go stale quickly) one of the chief causes of the poor display so often given by the English team has always seemed that the International matches come right at the end of a long season, and follow immediately upon a sequence of trials, each one of which is an even greater anxiety than its predecessor. When at length a player has come through them all safely and been picked, the zest for the game has sadly diminished. However, it is hard to see how this can be avoided with so many players to be sifted and with no league system such as must help the soccer selectors. And no doubt, although it is partly to guard against injury, it is even more to guard against staleness that the hockey selectors, when once the International matches have begun, discourage the English team from playing any other games of hockey in the week.

Associated Press

TOO MUCH 'BODY'

It is difficult to see which is to blame (if either). This is a scene from the match between England and France in Paris, March 1937. Cranston (English right half) on the right, Wyatt (right back) on the left.

Here again, however, one may use one's own judgment. In a normal season I would undoubtedly keep off other games when these matches are on, but last season when our wayward climate surpassed itself in beastliness I found myself actually suffering from lack of 'match practice,' and so deliberately turned a Nelsonian eye to instructions, played a mid-week county match, and was undoubtedly in better form the following Saturday. Admittedly, however, I could not have been worse than I had been the Saturday before!

One final word about 'staleness.' The young player must learn to distinguish between his physical tiredness on the one hand, and mental or nervous fatigue on the other; for the effect of both on his game is the same, namely, a lack of zest, a tendency to go at a jog-trot all through the game, and loss of quick acceleration and speed of reaction. The first is common among schoolboys at the end of a term, and it can be cured quickly and easily by resting from all physical activity for a few days. The other can only be cured by giving up hockey for a time—perhaps for a week or so, sometimes for longer. It is this kind of staleness, I think, which, as I have said, is liable to attack players after the nervous strain of three or four 'trials' on end. Their physical condition may be perfect, but they are tired mentally.

To return to the question of practice. I came

across recently one of the best short articles on sport I have ever read, an article by Miss Helen Jacobs on lawn tennis, in which she showed clearly that the reason for the indifferent quality of English tennis was simply that we have no idea how to practise (she put it more tactfully, however). This sweeping statement may come as a shock to some people, who may even be under the impression that they at any rate cannot be convicted on this charge. But how often when they go out with their friends to practise, or even when at considerable expense they have lessons from a professional, are they content to spend half an hour or more simply practising one shot? I contend that ninety per cent, after five or at most ten minutes 'knock up,' start playing a 'match,' in which they are no longer concentrating solely on their stroke production, but are far more concerned with defeating their opponent.

And how much good does the continual round of tournaments do players? It might do them a considerable amount of good if they would be content to regard some of these tournaments simply as a convenient means of gaining practice and would care nothing for the result of each match. But how few of us can do this! I speak feelingly on this subject; for I find myself the typical Englishman in this respect. Lately under the influence of an Australian (who, of

course, has the right idea) I have done some real practising for the first time in my life, and have then entered for a tournament with a firm determination to 'play the shots' and 'hang' the result. But can I do it? A thousand times no! The moment I find myself losing I return to my old pat-ball methods. I defeat a number of third-class players and then fall (not without a struggle) to a second-rate player whom I know I could 'murder' in a practice game. I can only plead one extenuating circumstance; since I only play one or at most two tournaments a year I like to get my money's worth. But even this breaks down, as I fail to enjoy any of my matches and am always knocked out the round before prize money is 'touched.'

I may seem to have wandered far from the subject of hockey; but I have chosen lawn tennis as an illustration partly because of Miss Jacobs's article, and partly because it affords perhaps the most striking example of the Englishman's attitude to practice and his consequent inefficiency. So, too, in hockey it is only by constant and intelligent practice combined with the right amount of match play, that you may hope to become really proficient. You may say you only play the game for fun, and that I am trying to make a business out of it; the old 'too much like hard work' argument, in fact. My answer to that is threefold. In the first place, hard work never did any one

any harm; in the second, it is always more fun to do a thing well than to do it badly (schoolboys are extraordinarily slow to perceive this whether in work or play); and lastly, you are welcome to your attitude, but I would ask you to be consistent in it. If you only play hockey for (what you call) the fun of it, you must not mind if your side loses,[1] or if you are degraded to a lower team in favour of a keener, though perhaps less naturally gifted, player than yourself. In short, as I think I have had occasion to mention before, you cannot both eat your cake and have it.

Some Things to Practise

Forwards.

In *dribbling* keep the ball well out in front, with the left hand further *under* the shaft than in the 'hitting' grip illustrated opposite p. 35, so that you can easily reverse the stick without going 'over the top' (as we call it at Marlborough). I have seen beginners taught to dribble in and out of cricket stumps posted at intervals of a few yards. I feel this is a little artificial, but I may be prejudiced as I didn't learn this way myself. It may well be worth trying and will, perhaps, help to show that *swerving* is nearly as important in dribbling as ball control.

[1] Not that I am suggesting you should from practising hard and intelligently become a 'bad loser'—Heaven forbid!

In *receiving* the ball, from the right at least, I believe it is a good idea to take it *at some distance* from you—for two reasons:

1. The ball usually spins on another yard or so after being 'stopped,' and taking it well away from you may prevent its getting mixed up with your feet.

2. In some mysterious way it seems to me that you have a better chance of not missing the ball if you take it at a distance. Perhaps there is no mystery; it is simply that if you miss it there you may be quick enough to have another try before it goes past or, detecting a bounce just before it reaches your outstretched stick, be able to alter your 'timing.' Practise it for yourself and see if you agree.

Halves and Backs.

It is good practice for a half or back to get his companion to hit or flick the ball at close range wide to his 'wrong' side. He will thus get into the way of quickly transferring the stick to his left hand.

Remember that this means *loosening the grip* momentarily with the left hand in order to let it slip round anti-clockwise further under the shaft, or rather *behind* it as it will be when you are holding the stick on the left of your body. This takes nothing like the time to do that it takes to read (let alone to write!) and, indeed, soon becomes a quite *unconscious* act—as I

can vouch for, since I was not even aware one had to relax the grip at all until I came to analyse it! It needs much practice, however, to learn to transfer to the left hand quickly, and the fact that it is harder to do this than the reverse is perhaps shown by the number of players in these photographs who are standing with their stick already *in* the left hand.

WOMEN'S HOCKEY

A scene from the match between England and Scotland at Glasgow in 1936. The Scottish goal-keeper appears to have been defeated, but another defender (probably the left-half) has got back to save in the nick of time. It is noticeable how all the women, when not actually playing the ball, hold their stick in both hands as I have suggested it should be held. Whereas the men hold them frequently in one only—usually the left.

CHAPTER XI

WOMEN'S AND MIXED HOCKEY

I MAKE no apology for the brevity of this chapter, for though to avoid excessive clumsiness I have written throughout as if to a male reader, I see no reason why my remarks should not be equally applicable to a woman player. There are, however, one or two points of difference which may be worth discussing.

In the first place, there is a fairly unimportant difference in the rules. In women's hockey a free hit to the defenders in their own circle is not necessarily taken from the spot at which the offence took place, but may be taken from *anywhere* in the circle. I presume the object of this rule is to enable the defenders the more easily to find their own stronger wing or to avoid that of their opponents, but it seems to me of very little account. Perhaps, the true reason for the addendum is that to the more logical female mind it conforms more exactly with the rule that a free hit against the defenders in their own circle, i.e. a penalty corner, may be taken from either side of the goal.

When this book was first published there was a second and far more important difference—the women having abolished the pernicious habit of 'hooking' sticks some time before the more conservative males would do so. The latter had attempted to compromise by allowing only a special form of hooking, but it was almost impossible for the poor umpires to detect if it was being done fairly or not and caused more acrimony than the original 'nothing barred' rule! All, I think, will agree that the eventual, if belated, coming into line with the women has been much to the benefit of the game.

One or two other points of difference arise from the nature of the sexes. I have mentioned before when writing about hitting the ball (Chapter III) that it is mainly women who use the 'scythe-like' swing; and since writing of that so derogatorily I have wondered perhaps whether for women, whose wrists and forearms are less strong than men's, there is not more to be said for the method than I had thought. There is no doubt, however, that it is a slower method, and for a muscular girl the other is still recommended. For the same reason—lack of sufficient strength—there will probably be less flicking in women's hockey; but as a result to be able to do so will be of even greater advantage, and any woman will find it worth while to try to cultivate the flick.

Again, few girls are strong enough to wield the stick comfortably in the left hand only, and consequently in women's hockey the legitimate wrong-side tackle is seldom seen. In good and well umpired hockey this, like the absence of hooking, makes for a cleaner game, since even in the supposedly highest class of men's hockey legitimate and unfair wrong-side tackles are about equally divided. On the Continent, indeed, the umpires bid fair to ruin the game by their laxity over 'coming in on the wrong side,' so that beginners, perhaps, never learn how to make the clean reverse-stick tackle which is one of the prettiest and most satisfying accomplishments of the game.

On the other hand, in second-class women's hockey the obstructing is usually worse than in a men's game of the same standard. In fact, to sum up, it is probably true to say that the highest class of women's hockey is a better and certainly a prettier game than anything men can produce; but the lower class is even cruder than its male counterpart.

There is one thing, however, cruder than anything produced either in men's or women's hockey, and that is mixed hockey! Far be it from me to decry this form of sport; indeed when I indulge in it, as I not infrequently do—usually on top of my Christmas dinner—I find it the most exhausting, the most amusing, and undoubtedly the most hair-raising game imaginable.

But I do not consider it within the province of a serious treatise on hockey to write about this merry by-blow. I will give one word of warning to the novice entering upon his first (and perhaps his last) experience of this perilous pastime. It is the same advice as is proverbially given by the father when sending his son out into the world: 'Beware of the women!'

CHAPTER XII

EQUIPMENT

In his admirable book on cricket in this series D. R. Jardine has stated 'categorically' that the most important part of a cricketer's equipment is his footgear. I cannot honestly say that I consider suitable boots of greater importance to the hockey-player than a suitable stick, but they are at least equally important; and we may as well discuss them first.

Boots. One hesitates to urge any course that involves additional expense in a game which is already by its nature more costly than either rugger or soccer, but I contend that in any European country and particularly in Great Britain (I am not qualified to speak of hockey in India, but I suppose all hockey there is played on brick-hard mud) it is necessary to have two pairs of boots of quite a different nature. Nor in the long run will this be found more expensive, for the wearing of 'wet-weather' boots (the normal wear in this country, of course) on a hard dry ground ruins not only the boots themselves, but the feet of any but the most pachydermatous player.

The best boot for the normal 'yielding' ground (to use a euphemism) is probably the ordinary rugger-boot, preferably as light as possible, like the 'Cotton Oxford.' Special hockey boots are made giving more protection to the foot, but the extra weight hardly justifies them in my opinion. Studs will be found to be much more effective than bars. Personally, owing, I fancy, to a somewhat crab-like gait, I find considerable difficulty in keeping studs in, especially those on the inside of the ball of the foot, but it is possible to have them built up in such a way that they are less liable to come out.

As long as this type of boot can be worn without causing sore feet it is undoubtedly the best footwear, but when the ground is hard enough to cause the studs to be felt through the sole, and when as the game progresses the feet become increasingly sore, the time has come to don one's auxiliary pair—probably made of canvas and rubber-studded, a type of boot which is becoming more and more popular. It is especially useful on the 'betwixt and between' ground—hard underneath, but with some give on top. On a brick-hard ground, occasionally met with in this country right at the beginning and end of the season, or, of course, when it is frost bound—though on such a surface the game is too dangerous to be worth the

candle—there is probably nothing to beat the ordinary 'gym' shoe.

The 'gym' shoe and the rubber boot have one grave disadvantage, however. They make the average player hesitate (even more than usual) to rush in where angels fear to tread. A blow on the foot is unpleasant enough when one is wearing leather boots—in canvas shoes or boots one is liable to be incapacitated.

There is one surface for which I have not yet discovered any suitable footgear—not an altogether uncommon surface either—a brick-hard ground with a greasy top. It may be caused by recent rain on dry turf, or by a surface thaw on a hard frozen ground. 'Gym' shoes and rubber-studded boots (the latter a temptation) are thoroughly bad, giving no purchase whatever. Studded rugger boots give the best grip, but cause agony. Perhaps *barred* rugger boots are the best, but if studs are worn, the wearing of extra socks or a rubber-composition inside sole will save the feet a certain amount.

One final word. If you wish your boots or shoes to last for two or three seasons, it is very necessary to put them away with care at the end of the season. All the mud should be washed off; and then the leather should be oiled or greased. They should be put on trees or else filled with rolled-up paper, so that they will keep their shape. Before the beginning of the next

season they should be inspected—regreased, studded where necessary, and generally reconditioned.

The Stick. The ideal stick is very hard to come by, since for different 'strokes' in the game different and indeed diametrically opposite qualities are required. For instance, it is easier to hit the ball hard with a somewhat 'whippy' stick, but for the flick shot you need as stiff a shaft as possible. Again, it is easier to get power behind a stroke, especially when the ball is stationary—as when the player is taking a free hit or shooting at a corner—with a heavy stick, but for quickness and neatness of stickwork lightness is essential. As a firm believer in the gentle art of compromise I advocate that one should bear all these points in mind and aim at the 'happy medium,' remembering, that for the forward, neatness of stickwork is of first importance; for the back, ability to hit clean and hard.

The tendency among beginners, especially schoolboys, is to use *too heavy* a stick. I am of opinion that even for a full-grown man twenty ounces is the heaviest that should be used by any one playing forward or half-back, and in case it is of interest I may add that personally I always use an eighteen-ounce. Of course. in choosing a hockey stick as in choosing a tennis racket or cricket bat, it is the *balance*, not the weight, that is everything. A well-balanced twenty-ounce stick may well feel lighter than a clumsy eighteen; in

fact, to parody the proverb, a stick is as light as it feels. Quite a good test to apply to any stick is to see if you can wield it comfortably in the *left hand only.*

Most sticks nowadays are sold with rubber handles already on them. The old rubber ring has, I think (and hope), at last become almost extinct in women's hockey, as well as in men's. The function of this ring was similar to that of the guard on a carving fork, and it clearly dates from the days when all forms of hooking sticks were permissible and fingers were in constant peril. The chief disadvantage of the ring was, I suppose, besides the added weight, the difficulty of stopping or hitting a ball which was off the ground with a stick with such an excrescence upon it. At any rate, with the revised hockey rules, the need for the rubber ring has disappeared, though I have to confess I still on occasions think lovingly of the 'pretty ring time' when bullying-off with certain opponents.

As to the care of the stick, the chief question is 'to oil or not to oil'; and general opinion seems to favour the latter. The place of oil is sometimes taken by a special kind of chalk, but in the ordinary way any good stick will be found to drive without any attention after a little use.

Sticking-plaster should always be handy to bind a stick when, as often happens, it begins to split. Some

people bind sticks in this way even when they are unblemished, the binding having the same effect as the rubber handle—namely, the prevention of 'stinging.' The disadvantage is that even a small quantity of this binding increases the weight and spoils the balance of the stick.

Shin-Pads. There are still to be found a few Spartans who scorn to protect their shins, but when once these foolhardy ones receive the really good 'crack' with the stick that is assuredly coming to them sooner or later they will, I fancy, be converted to a saner policy.

Women wear shin-pads that strap on to the leg outside the stocking, but men are able to wear simpler pads which slip down inside the stocking. These have the added advantage of being invisible to the naked eye, so that their cowardly self-protection at least does not advertise itself!

There is one other point connected with general equipment which might be worth touching upon before we deal with the special armour of the goalkeeper. It happens not infrequently in this country that a game of hockey takes place in the rain, and in these conditions a rubber-handled stick becomes extremely difficult to grasp with the naked hand. The best remedy is perhaps to wear a thin pair of *cotton* gloves (not kid, of course); another good, and cheaper,

idea is to wind a strip of sticking-plaster spirally round the rubber handle. This really affords a remarkably good grip in the rain, and indeed some players like it so much that they use it in dry weather also. The stick used by A. E. C. Cornwall in the illustration facing p. 153 is thus treated.

The Goal-keeper's Equipment. The goal-keeper's equipment is, of course, rather more complicated than that of the other players. I know of one goalie of divisional standard who advocates the use of light skeleton pads, mainly, I presume, in the interests of greater mobility, but partly I fancy through a praiseworthy—or perhaps foolhardy—belief that to encase oneself in all-enveloping armour is hardly sporting. But the general tendency is undoubtedly towards pads of very considerable breadth, height, and thickness, pads in fact which will encourage the wearer to put all his faith in *them*, and none in his stick.

Toe-pads covering toes and instep are also an extremely important item, as anybody will agree who has tried to kick a hockey ball with a bare boot or perhaps has kicked one unintentionally. In short, up to the waist a goalie should be thoroughly protected; above the waist he looks after himself, though a cap is favoured by some goal-keepers as an aid to coping with the low sun that so often joins the enemy's ranks

against them. All these things are of greater importance to the goal-keeper than his stick—in fact, if he ever has to buy a stick he must be singularly friendless, since the world must be full of cast-off sticks that would be adequate for his purpose.

The only other question about his equipment is whether he should wear trousers or shorts, and it is really only a matter of taste. I believe that, just as until recent years it was 'not done' to wear shorts for lawn tennis, so contrariwise it was (and in big matches still is) 'not done' to wear trousers for keeping goal at hockey. But I am convinced that nothing is more important in all forms of sport than to be *warm*, and in cold weather I would urge all goalies to defy convention and wear as many clothes as they like. How hard dies the extraordinary tradition that it is manly to be cold! One still finds schoolmasters of the old brigade who expect their boys in a typical English May to go in to bat without a sweater on. As most people (unless they differ greatly from the writer) are already shivering with nerves long before they reach the crease, the chances of stopping that fast straight 'yorker' are hardly improved when they cannot even stop their teeth chattering.

CHAPTER XIII

A SHORT HISTORY OF HOCKEY[1]

WHERE hockey originated or when it was first played is uncertain. Some people think that a kind of hockey was played long ago in Asia, and it is likely that the ancient Greeks had some game with a stick and ball. A sculptured bas-relief of about 460 B.C. was discovered in 1922, and it shows six boys playing a game with crooked sticks and a ball. Two of the boys seem to be bullying-off, but they have the picks of their sticks pointing down instead of up, as we have them. The American Indians also played with stick and ball in a game in which teams consisting of whole villages sometimes took part—though it seems that to hit the *ball* with one's stick was of secondary importance.

When we come to the British Isles we find that in Ireland the game of 'baire' or 'hurley,' which bears some resemblance to hockey, has flourished since very early times. It is on record that in one game, many hundreds of years ago, a team of nine players not only defeated another team, but slew them also. A similar

[1] Those who wish to read further in the history of hockey are recommended to Mr E. A. C. Thompson's book on the subject.

game, known as 'shinty,' was played in Scotland from earliest times, and in England and Wales it was called 'bandy.'

There seems no need to agree with those who would have us think that the Romans or any one else introduced these parent games of hockey into these islands. In the first place, these early games had no fixed rules as far as we can judge—they consisted mainly of hitting a ball with a stick, and any group of people would be likely to begin this of their own accord. That evidence of such primitive stick-and-ball games has been found in ancient Persia, Greece, and among the American Indians, would support this latter view.

In England, we know that during medieval times measures were taken by means of statutes to discourage games with stick and ball as they distracted the young men and boys from the practice of archery. Nevertheless, they continued to be played in a rough and ready way, and the youth of the country persisted in hitting or kicking a ball about.

From this fondness for hitting a ball with a stick there grew up several games, and among them cricket and hockey. Whether hockey is the parent of cricket or vice versa is not really important, nor could either statement be true. The game of hockey, as we know it, did not exist until late in the nineteenth century, and though cricket had been evolving its particular

mode since the eighteenth century, there was no similarity between the two games at any time in their history; and pre-history does not concern us. Rather, as we have indicated, the early rough and tumbles of man, stick, and ball in England developed in time into cricket and hockey as we know them. Both games were played originally with a crooked stick—the words themselves tell us that: 'cricket' is from *cricce*, which is the Old English for 'crooked stick,' and 'hockey' is borrowed from the word *hoquet*, which in Old French also meant 'crooked stick.'

The modern game of hockey dates from the second half of the nineteenth century, and it was in 1883 that the laws of the game were standardized for the first time, and the Hockey Association was formed. As late as the sixties and seventies hockey sticks were as often as not crude lumps of wood, or curved branches of trees, sometimes weighted with lead at the bottom to give them extra driving power, and teams consisted of sometimes twenty players, or more or less as seemed fit to the occasion. Even when the rules of the game were published by the Hockey Association as authoritative, uniformity did not follow at once, and it was not until the beginning of this century that the old kind of stick was done away with, nor was it until then that goal-keepers were found in every team.

The progress of the game during the last fifty years

has been extraordinary. From being the game of a few it has become the game of the many. It has spread all over the world, and continues to go from strength to strength. There is not space here to trace this progress nor to speak of the great names associated with the game in its earlier days. A section might also have been devoted to the famous hockey schools, and to the great part Marlborough, Rossall, and other schools played in the fostering of the game. At the universities the story of the game's progress has been of small beginnings, gradual recognition, half-blue status, and finally some years ago the granting of a full-blue to it. Now it is one of the most popular games of all to play, though it draws fewer spectators than some other games.

The growth of the game in other countries is mentioned in other parts of this book, and references have been made to continental hockey, and to the wonderful Indian teams, who seem without peers. It is to be hoped that such growth will continue, and long may the game flourish in all corners of the earth.

The development in the game itself has been no less remarkable during these years. From a rough and ready scramble and hit, it has become one of the most skilful of all games, and one of the most difficult to play supremely well. Sir Frank Fletcher records in his autobiography the half-blue he obtained for hockey

in the nineties, and he comments on the difference in the game of that time. 'Hockey was an easy game in those days: there was less combination and more individual work, and the main requisites were a good eye and pace.'

It is necessary to consider only one or two points to gain some idea of the increased skill and finesse of the game. Among the forwards I should think that the increasing use of the through pass, which demands perfect understanding between two or three players, and greater speed and certainty of stickwork have made most difference. And their play, and the whole game in fact, was revolutionized by the development of mobile and intelligent full-back play in the years before and after the war. What full-back play means in these days is indicated in Chapter VI—I doubt if it meant as much thirty or forty years ago. For the future, it will be interesting to see what further is added or taken from the game—will hockey, for instance, keep its own off-side rule and not adopt the new soccer off-side rule, or a version of it? It would appear that by keeping the present rule the importance of dribbling and individual play among the forwards at hockey has been maintained, while in first-class soccer one hears continually the complaint that the day of the great individualists and dribblers is past and gone. This fact many would attribute to the new off-side rule.

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