

# **FIH FINAL COACHING SEMINAR**

**TOPIC –**

***CHANNELING AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP  
SKILL***

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## CHANNELING AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP SKILL

### Introduction

The Oxford Dictionary defines channeling as “directing towards a particular end or causing to pass along or through a specified route or pathway.”

How much of this definition relates to channeling as individual and group skill in field hockey?

In field hockey, channeling is viewed as a tactical defensive skill employed by a defender to direct a ball possessor, towards a particular area of the pitch or to cause him to pass along or through a specified route or pathway with the intention of either dispossessing the ball possessor or recover the ball.

### **Which is better?**

To recover the ball to –

- Control the speed of game
- Control the speed of your attack
- Counter attack
- Create goal scoring chances

### As opposed to dispossessing

It is not necessary to always gain possession, but sometimes to delay, stall or break down a dangerous attacking situation

The ball could be recovered from channeling by way of:

- A forced turnover
- Tackling
- Interception (when two or more defenders are involved).

### **A forced turnover**

This is as a result of the ball possessor being pressured by a defender and -

- Fumbles and the ball is knocked onto his foot
- The ball crosses the line from an attempted pass or runs off the stick

### **Tackling and tackling techniques**

Channeling an opponent does not guarantee ball recovery while tackling techniques are employed in conjunction with channeling to delay or stall, cover space or gain possession

- The fake jab tackle
- The high backhand tackle
- The forehand block tackle

### **When to employ a tackle to recover the ball during channeling**

- When ball speed or control is low
- When the ball is away from the stick
- When the space between ball possessor and defender is tight

### **Interception**

Interception, in my view, is probably the best way to recover ball the and may occur as a result of the ball possessor trying to hurry a pass to evade the pressure from the tackler or being tricked into thinking there is space ahead to make a good pass.

Interception involves -

- No confrontation between the ball possessor and defender
- No tackles, no fouls, no eliminations
- The player intercepting the ball is momentarily uncontested and can scan for or make good passes
- More time available to transfer the ball
- The player channeling is usually unmarked and free for an early pass when the ball is intercepted

## **Channeling as a group skill**

Earlier I defined channeling as a tactical defensive skill employed by a defender to recover the ball. But, it is very difficult for a defender to run alongside a ball possessor (channeling), awaiting the perfect moment to tackle (to gain possession), without causing an infringement or being eliminated.

As an individual defending as part of a group it would be easier to channel the ball possessor –

- Into a particular area of the pitch where he has supporting players
- To delay or stall to allow supporting defenders to get into good defensive positions
- Towards the sideline, baseline or into the corners of the pitch
- Into a tackle (double defense)
- To make a high risk pass (interception)
- Away from his supporting players

I can therefore say **channeling as a group skill** is a combination of defensive strategies and offensive strategies, employed by a number of players to recover the ball in a particular area of the pitch to counter attack. These strategies eliminate any 1vs1 situations and increase the team's chances of gaining possession.

These strategies can be interpreted as “**Defense with Offense in mind**”

- Defending
- Winning the ball
- Outnumbering in attack

For the group to successfully recover the ball from channeling there are some principles each player must learn through training and discussion with coaches

### **Group principles in defense**

- To recover the ball
  - With very little or no confrontation
  - Via interception
  - Double defense if a tackle is needed
  - In opponents' half, 25 or D
- To over load the ball side on the pitch (change the weight of the game)
- To cover dangerous pass lanes (horizontally and vertically)
- To reduce the space the ball possessor has to run
- To have a good knowledge of channeling to recognize and initiate the situation
- Good ability to perform channeling
- Each player must be able to perform more than one action ( e.g. covering space and repositioning to tackle)
- To implement a plan B if the ball possessor escapes the trap (all behind the ball)

### **Group principle in offense**

- To quickly transform from defenders to attackers
- To counter attack
- To score goals
- To maintain possession
- To reposition for an early pass
- To outnumber your opponents on the ball side (2vs1 or 3vs1)
- To control the speed of the game
- To control the speed of attack

## The step by step execution of channeling

### Step 1

#### The approach

- Approach the ball possessor at speed
  - to deny time and space to scan for or make a good pass
- Make a half curve to the right ( as seen in the diagram below)



- Use the high backhand tackle to cover the right flank
- Use some fake jabs
  - to delay and force him to dribble ball on his backhand



## Step 2

### Channeling

- Run alongside the ball possessor
- Keep just behind the ball to avoid him cutting in front of you
- If your objective is to tackle
  - Close in on the space between yourself and the ball possessor
  - Wait for an opportunity to make the tackle



When channeling to recover the ball in a 1vs 1 situation you may have to give up some ground in waiting for the right moment to tackle.

Step 3

### **The tackle**

The forehand block tackle is the best tackling skill to gain possession

When the moment is right execute the tackle



Channeling can be performed in any area of the pitch, in any direction, but it is most effective on the left side of the pitch where the defenders are on their forehand. While channeling also occurs on the right side of the pitch, the ball possessor has a better chance of maintaining possession.

From this position the objective should be to delay for support. Any attempt to tackle would see the defender tackling with his back stick and runs a higher risk of infringing on the ball possessor.

**In conclusion**

Sport is about winning or losing, defending and attacking, scoring or missing. Hockey is no different in this regard. Strategies must be developed to gain every possible advantage over your opponents. But, no matter what strategies you develop and employ in your team, the objective is always to win. Some teams take a more defensive approach focusing on a solid and organised defense to reduce scoring chances by their opponents. Other teams rely on individual attacking abilities or a combination of defense and offense.

The best thing for my team is to be able to strike a balance between defense and offense, to defend and control my opponents' attacks, win the ball and outnumber them in a counter attacking situation to win matches.

**CHANNELING AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP SKILL**

**IS**

**DEFENSE WITH OFFENSE IN MIND**