

# Penalty Corners

It can get be frustrating, to say the least, to watch your team receive penalty corner after penalty corner, but not score. If this is happening, something just isn't clicking and it's time to switch things up.

The tried and true play of hitting the ball to the top of the circle for a direct shot on goal can only take your teams far. Once the other team realizes who your hard hitters are, they'll have a rusher on them at all times. This is when specialty (set) plays come in.

At the more advanced levels, the basics just won't cut it. Your team needs to have at least three set plays at their disposal to use during the game. Listed below are a few ideas to get your team started.

## The Setup

Before every short corner, have your entire offensive team meet at the top of the circle to agree on a play. The team will have only six seconds to meet before the referee will call a "delay of game" penalty.

You'll want to make sure that every member of the team is aware of the intricacies of the play (including the defense), so dedicate time to run through each play during practice. This will help the players set themselves up accordingly come game time.

### Hot Tip: Name Your Plays

Name your set plays or assign them numbers. This will make them easier to remember. You can also let your players name them as part of your team bonding!

The play should be completed quickly and efficiently. The goal is to beat the rusher and force a new shooting angle on the

goalie, and your team wants to do this *before* the defensive team gets back from the center line. If a set play is too complicated or takes too long, it will give the remainder of the opposing defensive team time to run back and mark your players. Keep the plays short and simple.

There should be seven or eight players positioned on the offensive circle during a short corner. Listed below are sample positions, but they may vary depending on preference:

- An injector
- A player positioned to the right of the injector
- A hitter
- A stopper
- A backup (to the stopper)
- A player positioned at the top (generally towards the right) of the circle
- A player positioned to the right of the player at the top of the circle
- A post player (the last player on the circle, positioned closest to end line)

Please see iSport's guide, *Offensive Penalty Corners in Field Hockey*, for complete instructions on basic setup and positioning.

## Slip Left

The setup of this play is simple. Two hitters position themselves to the left of the stopper, standing a few feet apart. Both will be ready to take the shot with their sticks already up in the backswing position. Listed below are the steps to perform the slip left:

1. The injector will send the ball to the stopper.
2. The stopper will trap the ball and push it to her left, towards the inside the circle.
3. The hitter standing closest to the stopper will *fakethe*

shot by stepping to the ball and bringing her stick down for the swing. Instead of hitting the ball, she'll step over it and purposely miss it, letting the ball go through her legs.

4. The second hitter will wait until the ball passes through the first hitter's legs, and then take a shot on goal.

The advantage of this play is that the rusher must cover the first hitter (in case she takes the shot) and the goalie must cover the initial shooting angle. If done right, the goalie will react to the first hitter's swing before even realizing the hit is coming from the second player. This strategy will help the hitters beat the rusher and goalie by creating that second shooting angle.

## Slip Right

This play can be called if the rusher is too fast for the hitter to get her shot off. To teach the slip right, your players will follow these steps:

1. The stopper will trap the ball and the hitter will *pretend* to take the hit.
2. At the last second, the hitter will *push* the ball to the player positioned at the top of the circle.
3. That player will then take a direct shot on goal.

This play can also be modified by having the hitter slip (push) the ball right, and then having the second hitter push the ball *back* to the first hitter to take the shot. This is basically a give-and-go around the rusher. It also gives the hitter a closer shot on goal. Pushes are used to both pass and shoot because they are accurate and are quickly released. Pushing also forces the goalie to work harder to clear the ball because hard shots bounce easier off the pads.

# Pass to the Injector

You can also use your injector! She is positioned closest to the goal and can get to the post the fastest. To complete this play, your players will assume the following roles:

1. The injector will pass the ball to the stopper, and then run towards the near post.
2. The stopper will trap the ball.
3. The hitter will hit wide at the goal, towards the post closest to the injector.
4. Meanwhile, the injector will stand ready to deflect the hitter's shot into the goal.

This play works well because the goalie is generally set up in the middle of the goal to block the straight shot. The remaining defenders are also outnumbered and cannot cover every player. When the injector eventually receives the ball, she only has to touch it once to redirect it into the goal. In addition, deflection shots are extremely hard for the goalie to stop. So unless a defender is marking the post, this should be an easy tap-in goal.

## Switch Things Up

It is very easy to defend against a static team that uses the same hitter, same plays, and adds no variety to its corners. By keeping the defense guessing, you can teach your team to can create more confusion in the defensive zone. As a result, you'll see more successful corners.

You can create your own set plays, as well! Don't feel limited to the ones you find online or have used in the past. The best way to create your own plays is to evaluate individual skills on your team. Figure out who plays well together; who the strongest hitters are; and who has strong reverse hits. By creating strategies with your team's individual strengths in mind, you can bring out the best in your players. When you've

figured out your perfect play, you'll know because everything will just click.

## PCA

A penalty corner, or short corner (short), is the best opportunity to score in field hockey because the offensive team attacks with twice as many players as the defensive team.

From an offensive standpoint, mastering the short corner is one of the best attacking strategies, and every team has their own special play. Players often try to draw a defender into committing a foul within the shooting circle so that the offensive team may receive a penalty short. This guide will teach you the basic positions and setup of a short corner, as well as the specific roles of every player involved.

### The Penalty Corner

A penalty corner is awarded to an offensive team when the defensive team commits a foul inside the shooting circle. It's also awarded when a defender commits an intentional foul outside the circle within the 25-yard (23 meters) defensive area.

When a penalty corner is called, play is stopped to allow both teams to set up their respective attack and defense positions. Defense is allowed five defenders, including the goalie on the end line, but no attacker or defender can be within 5.5 yards (5 meters) of the ball before the hit is taken. The rest of the defenders must return and wait behind the field's center line until the ball is pushed out by the offensive player.

One offensive player – the “injector” – also stands on the end line, 11 yards (10 meters) away from the goal. She pushes the ball out her teammates – the stopper and shooter – who are waiting at the top of the shooting circle to take a shot on goal. The ball must travel outside the shooting circle before an offensive player can take a shot.

Once the injector pushes the ball out to her teammates on the shooting circle, the stopper will stop it to control the ball. She will then tap the ball back into the circle for the shot to be taken. The shot has to be taken inside the marked circle for the goal to count.

If the ball is lifted in the air above the backboard, the goal will not count. The only exception to this rule is if the first shot is a “scoop” or a “flick” – shots that are lifted in the air with a long scooping or pushing action. On the international level, the “drag flick” – the fastest lifted shot you can take on goal – is the most popular type of lifted shot on short corners.

### The Setup

Most coaches have set plays for short corners. The positions on the top of the circle generally vary, but there are three concrete positions for the offensive player: The injector, stopper, and hitter.

### Injector

The injector stands 11 yards from the goal post at a designated spot on the end line. She is the only player allowed to have one foot inside the shooting circle. She sends the ball from the end line to the top of the circle, where the stopper is waiting to control the ball before the hitter takes her shot.

The injector can hit the ball to her teammates however she chooses. At the beginning stages or on a grass field, the injector should either deliver the ball with a push, upright slap, or short handle hit. The key to this position is controlling the ball. It cannot be lifted, nor can it deviate from the path of the stopper. This type of delivery will put the stopper in the best position to stop and control the ball before the hitter takes a shot on goal. On turf, the injector would simply position the ball in the hook of the stick and drag it in a straight line towards the stopper.

## Stopper

The stopper's job is to trap the ball at the top of the circle to control it for the hitter. There are two main types of stops.

On turf: Place the stick horizontally with the toe touching the ground. Use the shaft of the stick to stop the ball. Make sure to stop the ball outside of the circle, and then move it into the circle for the hitter to take a shot at goal.

On grass: The stick should be vertical to the ground. The ball is trapped on the bottom of the stick, outside of the circle before being knocked back into the circle so the hitter can take her shot on goal. As the stopper, make sure to position your left hand at the bottom of the grip and your right hand behind the stick to for support. Do not wrap your fingers around the flat side of the stick – unless you want a few bruised or broken fingers.

If you are a beginner, use the grass-specific stop rather than the turf stop because it works for both types of surfaces.

## Hitter

The hitter stands at the top of the circle and to the left of the stopper. Timing with this shot is crucial, the ball needs to be hit as soon as it is either trapped or pushed into the circle. The ball is usually stopped a few inches outside the circle and tapped back in.

For the hit, hold the stick in the “double v” grip. Approach the ball to give yourself a moving start. Start with the stick in the backswing position. By doing this, you save time on the hit by not having to windup your backswing. Use a drive or hit to take a shot on goal. Aim for the back post.

## Hot Tip: Just Tap It In

Most goals are scored off rebounds and deflections in short

corners. Big swings won't get you goals, but quick pushes and redirections will. So, work on getting goal-hungry and making smart plays in front of the goal. When in doubt, remember: Just tap it in.

### Circle Positions

The injector, stopper, and hitter are the three main positions for offense in the short corners – they set up the entire play and their formation is set up by the coach. But, the other positions are equally as important in scoring. Generally, six to eight attackers surround the circle. The players must stand outside the circle until the ball is hit in by the injector.

The most important thing to remember is that your position on the top of the circle is your starting position. Your finishing position is where you are attacking after the ball has been hit. Once the injector hits the ball, everyone moves:

The injector runs to the goal post closest to her, ready for possible deflection or scoring opportunities.

The player to the right of the injector (on the circle) runs towards the goal and shields (covers) the goalie, ready to deflect shots into the goal.

The next players, going counterclockwise around the shooting circle, are the hitter and stopper. These two players stay at the top of the circle for possible rebounds.

A backup player stands behind the stopper and hitter in case they miss the initial delivery from the injector.

To the right of the hitter and stopper stands another player. Her job is to cover the right side of the goalie's pads for possible deflections.

The final player stands to the far right of the circle. Her job is to cover the right post.

### The Key to Successful Shots

Watch for rebounds. A rebound is when the ball hits the goalie's pads and comes back into the circle. The ideal situation in a short corner is a goal on the first shot by the



hitter. However, in the beginning stages of the sport, this is not often the case. Therefore, do not only rely on the hitter to take a powerful shot. Work on covering the circle to gain possession of the ball off a rebound. If you keep your stick down inside the circle, you will be able to deflect the ball into the goal off the first shot. You'll be able to take quick shots off other rebounds, as well.

Inside the circle, the game is bound to get messy. So, keep your cool and watch for opportunities to shoot. This will give you the best mindset to score goals.

Read more  
at: <http://fieldhockey.isport.com/fieldhockey-guides/offensive-penalty-corners-in-field-hockey/>