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Back to School Edition

I am very proud of our issue being released today in time to support teams coming back to school! I would like to thank our authors who submitted papers for publication. I would also like to thank the newest Editor of the Journal of Broom-Mounted Sports, Dr. Lyz Renshaw, who has been an enormous help in preparing and supporting these papers as they go through the editing process. Additionally I would like to thank all our reviewers who volunteered their time to look at the submissions we received and ensure that they have reached a suitably high standard of accuracy and value. Finally, I want to thank every reader of the JBMS for taking the time to support our publication.

We invite anyone with the time, energy and knowledge of quidditch to put forth effort into publishing at the JBMS. The discussions that followed the publication of Dr. Cooper's review paper in issue #2 of the JBMS were intense and provocative, and I choose to see the resulting publication by Fast Break News of a guide to preventing concussions as further validation of our mission here at the JBMS. We are not using science to be right but become right, and I hope that we will be able to continue serving the community with that mission.

Alejandro Enriquez

Editor-in-Chief, Journal of Broom-Mounted Sports

TWO-HANDED SEEKING

A guide to coaching seekers to make snitch pulls by using both arms

By Alejandro Enriquez

INTRODUCTION: The seeker position in quidditch is often considered one of the most challenging positions for a new player to attempt. The closest mainstream analogues are wrestling or judo, yet seeking has a unique challenge in that the seeker must pull the snitch while remaining mounted on their broom, while their opponent the snitch runner has no such handicap. One viable technique that experienced seekers develop is a two-handed approach, but this is very challenging to execute successfully, as it is difficult to close the distance to the snitch quickly without holding the broom, and once both hands are engaged the snitch may easily de-broom the seeker with a single swift grabbing motion. Yet with some simple practices, seekers can develop the fundamental hand and body movements necessary to achieve a snitch pull.

It is not necessarily recommended that this be the first lesson to a new seeker, but as these form a valuable addition to a seeker's toolkit, with some individual coaching a seeker could still learn these early in their seeking career. These techniques are often most effective against a snitch runner who is more stationary, and are not intended to be a comprehensive skill set.

MECHANICS:

The *ready position* for two-handed seeking involves both arms being ready to move. The back is straight, hips are square, knees are bent, thighs are pressed together to hold the broom, the elbows are tucked in and the shoulders are relaxed and down. The player should have their weight forward enough to be on the balls of their feet, so that they can control their body using their legs.

Practicing switching from a more neutral hand-holding-broom position and this position fluidly is important to defend against snitch runners who frequently grab at the broom, and practicing moving while in this position by making small steps from the knees is valuable for adjusting the space between the seeker and snitch runner.



Fig. 1: Ready position

When a snitch runner has an opening on one side, such as if their arms are out of position or their attention is diverted to one side, the seeker must be able perform a *stationary lunge* by twisting their hips and shoulders, thrusting one arm around to catch the snitch. The shoulders and hips twist to give the arm maximum reach. This typically requires the feet to be firmly planted to get enough drive to twist the body quickly.

Often snitches will react to the lunge by turning their body away from the arm, which means there is an opportunity to make a *piston lunge* by then rapidly pulling the arm and shoulder back and lunging with the other arm. Being able to pull with both hands is also a basic essential skill all seekers hoping to become elite must develop.



Fig. 2a: left side stationary lunge.
Fig. 2b: right side stationary lunge,
if performed immediately after 2a,
referred to as a piston lunge.

One way to break a snitch runner's two-armed grip on a seeker is to use one arm to break the opposite arm's grip while simultaneously lunging (here, the lunge is made with the left arm, while the right arm breaks the grip of the snitch runner's right hand on the seeker's left arm or shoulder). Moving or twisting the body to help shed the grip of the snitch runner may be necessary if the snitch runner is significantly stronger than the seeker.

Another common technique is to break both grips simultaneously with the inside-out movement of both arms in what is often referred to as a *breaking lunge* or *swim move* (no relation to the football technique, as this more closely resembles the breast stroke), followed immediately by lunging and grabbing with both arms.



Fig. 3a: Right hand breaks snitch's grip on right shoulder while left hand simultaneously performs stationary lunge. Fig. 3b: Arms move circularly to break snitch's grip, followed by one- or two-handed lunge.

This technique of moving both arms simultaneously, one defending while the other counterattacking, is borrowed from Wing Chun kung fu, a close range combat martial art. Wing Chun also develops hand sensitivity through Sticky Hands training (*chi sau*), which can also be applied to seeking and snitching. Sticky Hands is a training methodology where two partners/opponents face each other and keep their wrists of both arms in constant contact while pushing, pulling, and rotating each other's arms, with the goal to touch your opponent's centerline. The idea of the training is to develop a feeling for your opponent's energy and gain the ability to redirect it by reacting to touch rather than sight, which can be processed more quickly in close quarters situations. Advanced versions often involve blindfolded Sticky Hands, to better learn to rely on touch. More info can be found at <https://www.wingchun.edu.au/wing-chun/chi-sau>

DEVELOPMENT: The development of these techniques should be applied in a multi-step process. The movements should be practiced and corrected individually under coach supervision, first in air and then against a cooperative opponent such as a coach. The coach should regularly use a static one- or two-handed grip on the player to help them understand how their movements will result in successful snitch catches. The intensity of the holding, pushing, and broom-grabbing should steadily increase as the player becomes more effective. The last step is for the player to start well outside the snitch's reach and enter their reach using good handwork, footwork, speed and power cohesively. Once the player is able to accomplish this they have now come much closer to achieving their full potential as a seeker.

LIVE PLAY APPLICATIONS: As each seeker/snitch matchup is different, developing a wide array of tools to successfully catch the snitch is critical to the development of a successful seeker, and the seeker's plan should depend in large part on their own advantages. Seekers who rely on speed should practice rapidly closing the distance to the snitch runner and then going to a two-arm grab before the snitch runner can react. Seekers who rely on length, especially in the case that their arms are disproportionately long to their body, should practice the stationary lunge and piston lunge to maximize their advantage and potentially make a pull from outside the range the snitch runner is expecting. Seekers who rely on strength and power may incorporate a slower approach so that the snitch runner engages them with both hands, giving the seeker an opportunity to break this grip and enter into reach of

the snitch. Finally, seekers who excel at hand-fighting may find success by entering the snitch runner's range already in ready stance so that they can readily deflect the snitch runner's attempts to grab the broom or body of the seeker and create an opening to pull the snitch.

The two most salient disadvantages of two-arm seeking, as mentioned above, are that it is harder to run quickly without holding the broom, and the snitch runner may more easily de-broom the snitch with a quick broom grab. These are especially problematic when the seeker is using a two-arm position outside the range of the snitch runner and does not have a good plan to enter into the reach of the snitch. For this reason, the seeker should have a plan of attack and practice it regularly. For example they may choose to enter into range of the snitch runner while holding the broom and then use a piston lunge using the broom-holding hand once in range, or alternatively to attempt to swat away the snitch runner's hands on first approach while already in a two-hand seeking position. The exact strategy of the seeker should be developed based on their own body, in conjunction with their coach and ideally with their organization's other experienced seekers and snitches.

Thanks to Dillen Cooper for modeling.

BEATER ACCURACY DRILL

A series of drills to improve beater accuracy

By Scott Lebow

INTRODUCTION: When teaching a position, it is important to give players as many opportunities as possible to learn the position's skills. In a typical game situation, there is little room for inaccuracy in bludger throws and few opportunities for practice.

In my experience, the primary job of the Beater position is to throw the bludger at opposing players. As such, throwing skills should be prioritized over all other skills, until a Beater is a competitive bludger thrower.

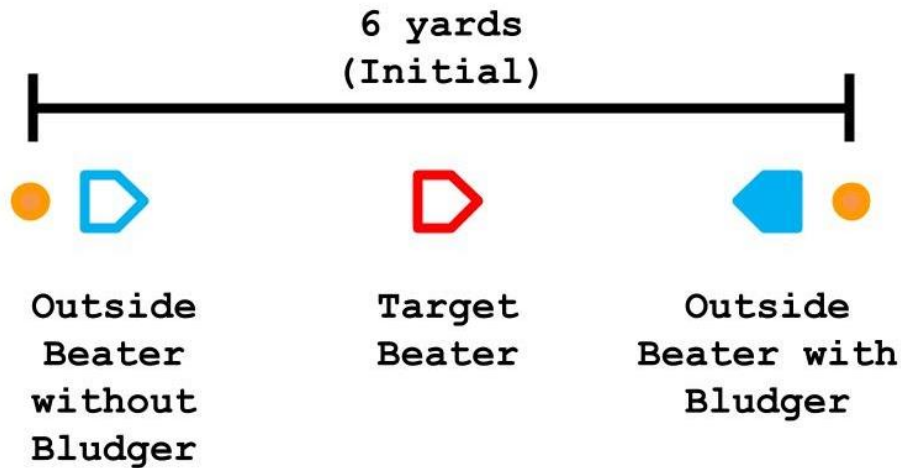
This simple drill teaches accurate throwing skills by giving players as many focused opportunities as possible. For accurate bludger throwers, the drill allows them the opportunity to practice dodging and catching skills in addition to throwing skills.

In the drill, two Outside beaters will alternate throwing at a Target beater with the intention of knocking out the Target beater. The Target beater will dodge or catch the bludger until they are knocked out. Upon knock out, the Target beater will switch locations and roles with the Outside beater that had thrown the bludger. The drill will then continue indefinitely.

SETUP: This drill requires three beaters and one bludger.

The practice leader should divide the larger group of beaters into groups of three. Each group should consist of three players of similar skill levels. If the group is not evenly divisible by three, assign each group of three a remainder player to a Waiting beater role.

Two beaters will start as Outside beaters, standing apart from each other, with initial locations marked with field cones. The between these two beaters should be twice the distance of the average maximum accurate throw distance of the group. For example, if the average beater in a group is accurate to a bludger throw distance of 9 feet, the two Outside beaters should be 18 feet or 6 yards apart. If this distance is unknown, start with a distance of 6 yards and increase the distance to increase the drills difficulty or decrease to make the drill easier. One Outside beater will start with the bludger. The Target beater will start halfway between the two Outside beaters.



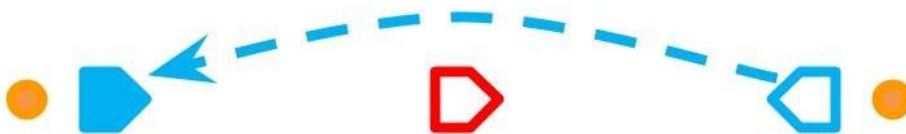
ACTION: To start a drill repetition, the Outside beater will throw at the Target beater.



1. Outside Beater throws at Target Beater

From here three scenarios are possible.

Scenario A: If the Target beater avoids the bludger, the opposite Outside beater should recover the bludger.



1a. If Target Beater is not knocked out, opposite Outside Beater recovers Bludger

Scenario B: If the Target beater catches the bludger, the Target beater should turn about and gently roll the bludger to the opposite Outside beater.



1b1. If Target Beater catches Bludger...



1b2. Target Beater rolls Bludger to opposite Outside Beater

Scenario C: If the Target beater is knocked out by the throw, the Target beater recovers the bludger, then switches locations and roles with the previous Outside beater. If the group has a Waiting beater, see Setup, the Waiting beater will instead fill the vacant Outside beater role and the knocked out beater will rotate out of the drill to the Waiting beater position.



1c1. If Target Beater is knocked out by throw...



1c2. Target Beater recovers Bludger, then switches locations and roles with previous Outside Beater

The drill then continues, back and forth, indefinitely.

ANALYSIS

DRILL POSITIONS: In the drill, the Outside beater position focuses on throwing skill development. The Outside beaters will be encouraged to vary the power and target of their throws to increase their chances of knocking out the Target beater. With practice the Outside beaters will become more decisive and confident in their throwing skills which will translate to better play in games.

The Target beater will practice their dodging and catching skills. It is important that the Target beater tries to avoid knock outs as much as game opponents would, to give the Outside beaters good practice. While typically the focus of the drill is to improve the skills of the Outside beaters, beaters with better throwing skills may find the Target beater role more beneficial as they may work on dodging and catching in skills.

DRILL STRUCTURE: The drill structure allows the least accurate beater in each group of three the most throws in the group. The most accurate beater will end up spending the most time in the center of the drill, which allows them to focus on catching and dodging skills.

With time, the three beaters in each group will develop to a similar skill level, balancing the time each spends in the Target beater position. Because the goal of the drill is to develop throwing skills, a group of evenly matched players will each spend two-thirds of their time in the Outside beater position. Because of this, the drill should develop “bottom up”, bringing the lesser skilled two players up to the level of the most skilled player.

DRILL WEAKNESSES AND LIMITATIONS: If the groups of three beaters are not sufficiently balanced in skill, a single beater could end up stuck in the Outside beater position while the other two beaters knock each other out repeatedly. This can lead to frustration and harm skill development. The practice leader should keep watch for this and correct the issue. Example corrections are shuffling the player groups, instituting a forced position rotation after a set amount of throws, or proceeding practice to the next stage or drill.

Some players may find the drill uninteresting compared to more dynamic drills. This could be corrected by shortening the throw distance to increase knock outs, or by adding more movement to the Outside beater position, see Drill Variations below.

A group of beaters with competitive throwing skills may only find value in the Target beater position and a different drill focusing more on dodging and catching skills would be more appropriate.

DRILL VARIATIONS: The throw distance can be adjusted by widening the cones and Outside beaters. The distance between Outside beaters is directly proportional to the challenge level of the Outside beaters and inversely proportional to the challenge level of the Target beater.

The drill can be made more dynamic by requiring the Outside beaters to throw while running; or by requiring the Outside beaters to face away from the Target beater, before turning and throwing. Outside beaters can be required to throw with their non-dominant hand to increase challenge and develop mental flexibility.

Target beaters can be equipped with a bludger to practice bludger blocking, and increase the challenge of dodging and catching.

LIVE PLAY APPLICABILITY: In game situations, a beater is often throwing their bludger from a planted position at another beater who is prepared for the throw. This most commonly happens when a beater is on offense attempting to disrupt the opponents defending beaters. In these situations, the risk of losing bludger possession and allowing the opponent an easy counterattack can be high and beaters often become flustered and overwhelmed.

With enough practice of this drill, Beaters will be confident enough to regularly knock out their opponents in these situations.

CHASER BASICS FROM A BASIC CHASER

By Ashton Jeanlewis
 Edited by Alejandro Enriquez

INTRODUCTION: I've played quidditch for the Houston Cosmos for five years, Major League Quidditch's League City Legends for two years and my experience comes not only from playing and coaching quidditch but also from challenged with my own body. At 6ft tall and 360lbs at the time of writing this my best teacher has been defeat and let me tell you her lessons are thorough. These are some tips and drills that helped make me a better chaser, and hopefully can help you reach your own potential.

MENTALITY

1: Self Talk

You can never get to many reps of positive self talk.

This is a technique for getting into and staying in the mindset that will push you towards victory, being a great teammate, and improving your play. Self talk is pretty simple, it's emphasizing and reiterating the belief in your skills and ability to get better. For example Lightning McQueen in Cars before every race starts off by saying to himself "Faster than fast, quicker than quick. I am Lightning. Speed. I am Speed" His goal is to be the fastest car on the track at all times, saying it out loud allows you to mentally lock in on a goal and subsequently believe you can do it or build towards that belief.

It's easy especially in training to get down on yourself about mistakes (that's the point of training and practice), positive self talk will keep you on your game during not only training but in game if you dedicate the energy to maintaining that train of thought.

Staying positive during tough moments can be contagious for your teammates, and there's nothing better than a teammate that inspires others to play hard. It can be as simple as muttering or thinking, "I got this" and using other kinds of motivators to address your own weaknesses and emphasize your strengths.. For instance, when I first started playing I didn't move as much as I should to be effective on offense. To counter that I would say out loud over and over again in line, "Move your feet."

Find your positive self talk it can change throughout practice and games remember the point of self talk is not to lie to yourself about your skills but remind yourself you're working or have worked hard to get better. Believe in yourself, you're worth it!

WARMUPS

2: Dynamic Stretches

Warm ups are crucial for every practice, exercise and lift. Warm up helps get the blood flowing, prevent injuries and allows you to perform at your peak potential. If a car can't go from 0 to full speed at the press of a button without ramping up what makes you think a human can? A great way to warm up is with some kind of active stretching. This includes exercises like high knees but kicks short sprints shuffling etc.

Its a common misconception that static stretching (think reaching for your toes, partner stretching etc) are the best exercises will help warm up the body. As a matter of fact these exercises SHOULD not be

performed before exercising. According to academic literature and testing this actually increases risk of injury as well as limits peak potential. Static stretching can help improve flexibility but only after you've already worked out. Think about shoes. You can't just get more flexibility out of your shoes by bending them to the furthest extreme, they get broken in and then they become more malleable and flexible. Therefore when you are looking to improve flexibility and do static stretching, do it after you've already worked out.

STRENGTH TRAINING

If you have regular access to a gym these will be great for improving your ability to move and perform on the pitch.

3: Deadlifts

If you're familiar with lifting at all you know deadlifts are a compound lift, an exercise that works multiple muscle groups at once.

Not only does it kill multiple birds with one stone unlike isolation exercises that work one specific muscle (example bicep curls), but it is a functional movement meaning you do it in real life.

A deadlift works your core and pretty much every muscle below your waist, which in quidditch you use A LOT.

4: Squats

Bodyweight: Air Squats

Dumbbell: Goblet Squats

The almighty squat! It is popular for its strength, power, and development of the booty (though I squat over 300lbs and have no booty to show for it, so your mileage may vary).

Squats are another compound lift that activates most of your body's muscle groups every rep. Combine that with the fact it helps with flexibility when you perfect the form. You'll feel it translate on offense and defense as your cuts become stronger. The angle your leg takes during a cut and your athletic defensive stance are both positions involved in the squat range of motion.

5: Front Squats

Bodyweight: Air Squats

Dumbbell: Dumbbell Front Squat

Front Squats are the underdogs of compound lifts. Many assume they attack the same muscle groups of a squat while that is true in a small way the front loading position mostly activates the exact opposite muscle groups specifically your fight for balance activates your quads and core. There is also research showing that because Front Squats help prevent anatomy imbalance it helps with injury prevention. Front Squats are the leg day of leg day for people who skip leg day.

AGILITY/SPEED

To play quidditch at a high level you'll need to develop mental pathways that becomes physical execution for movements on offense and defense. Training these movements will reduce the amount you have to put into executing them allowing you to analyze the game happening around you and even

predict your opponents and teammates movement. You don't think about walking, you just do it after years and years of doing it. The same can be done with other movements.

6: Sprints

I personally start my workouts with 10 forty yard dashes AFTER stretching.

I mark cones 40 yds downfield at a park, field or my backyard using paces. I walk to the cones turn and sprint back to the starting point ten times. To help you measure 40 yards:

<http://www.kylesconverter.com/length/paces-to-yards>

This creates High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) which is the closest simulation of quidditch matches that you can create on your own. HIIT also has been shown to be the best for your overall health and strength.

Sprinting will improve the muscles needed to run at top speeds which has its benefits for tagging back in after being beat or attacking on offense in the half court or transition. Your focus should be on exploding with each step and cycling your legs quickly to get faster overall. Avoid long looping steps or kicking your butt as you run. You want powerful steps very quickly, not steps that waste energy or time.

7: 8 Cone Defensive Slides (Lateral)

This is a drill I took from a former pro football player named LeShawn Henderson. Using 8 cones each 5 yards(use paces if you don't have exact measurements) apart in the shape of a rectangle

This drill will help you work on lateral movement while in your defensive stance setting you up for success in locking up your opponent and to deliver high quality hits with impeccable form on tackles.

A. You'll start at either end of the rectangle facing the other cones and begin sliding in your defensive stance towards the cone to the right or left

B. Once you reach it you'll use your outside foot to explode forward towards the cone directly in front of you.

C. When you reach the next cone you'll return to your defensive stance knees bent on the balls of your feet and slide towards the next cones to either side

D. You'll repeat this until you get to the final cone

Make sure you do this drill starting on both sides. You should feel your quads burning since they'll be doing a lot of work.

This drill can finished by either

1. Stopping at the final cone(I started off doing this because honestly it gassed my legs)
2. Sprinting off the final cone forward to another spot
3. Turning and sprinting to horizontally

8: 8 Cone Defensive Slide(Angled)

We're using the same 8 cones that are 5 yards apart in the shape of a rectangle (use paces if you don't have exact measurements)

- A. Starting on either cone facing away from the cones you'll defensively slide horizontally to the opposite cone.
- B. When you plant your foot open your hips until your body points towards the cone diagonal from the one you're currently at
- C. Then slide to it while staying in your defensive stance.
- D. Once you reach that cone repeat the same process until you reach final cone

Don't forget to do the same number of reps on both sides. We all have one side that feels natural. It's paramount to get both sides to feel that way once again while working these movements so we think about them less while executing on the field.

Options for finishing the drill:

- A. Upon reaching the final cone turning and sprinting towards another marked spot this helps develop your running out of your stance. You'll need this when offensive players try to sprint around or away from you.
- B. Upon reaching the final cone plant your foot and run through back towards the first row of cones. This is good training for successful defensive stands that ends in your team generating turnovers and you getting out in transition on offense.

9: W Drill

This is a football drill used by most positions but most importantly defensive backs, who have the greatest need for speed. This drill helps you develop the ability to break towards the ball on defense, gain momentum for potential tackles, rotate to your defensive mark quicker and develop explosion for change of direction overall.

You can set this up two ways: the first way requires five cones, the second only requires three.

Take three cones and place them in a line 5 yards apart; this is all you'll need for the second method I mentioned above. Remember you can pace it out to measure it the distance doesn't have to be exact.

For the first method you'll take the last two cones you have, and create a second line of cones 5 yards away from the first line you made place the two cones in the middle of the 3 cones five yards away.

This should create a W shape on the ground (You know...the name of the drill)

To actually perform the movement you will start on the furthest outside cone on the row of three facing away from the two cones if you're using the five cone method the way you face doesn't matter for the three cone method.

- A. Get in an athletic stance, bend your knees, butt down, feet shoulder width apart, chest and head up.
- B. Begin a back pedal at an angle in the five cone method you're aiming at the cone in the three cone method you want to back pedal at a 45 degree angle away for the cone
- C. Upon backpedaling reaching the cone or the distance you want in the three cone version of the drill. You'll plant ONE foot, drop your bodyweight, and explode back towards the first line of cones
- D. You'll repeat this until you reach the final cone where you'll run past it full speed to finish the drill
- E. Make sure you're doing the same amount of reps starting on both sides

Suggestion: Stretch thoroughly before this drill your achilles in particular is going to be heavily taxed, due to the planting, explosion and running.

Start slowly and build up your speed as you get more comfortable and you'll see much better results.

10: Cone Cuts

This drill is simple but will go a long way in avoiding tackles and cleaner shooting angles.

You can do three or four cuts per rep(I personally do three) I say three or four so you can focus on footwork explosion, and the feeling of pulling this off.

My explanation is the 3 cuts version of this drill. To set this up you'll need four cones. Place one on the ground where you'll have plenty of space in front of you. After placing the first cone, turn to a 45 degree angle to your left or right and walk 5 yds that direction placing your second cone. From the second cone turn 45 degrees the opposite direction of the one you just placed(If chose to walk 5 yds to the left of the first cone you place you'll now walk five yards to the right). Do that one more time and you'll have cones in a zig zag formation.

- A. Go to the first cone you placed, assume a running stance, lower your bodyweight and hips, bend your knees, lean forward slightly in the direction of your second cone.
- B. When you're ready sprint towards the cone as you approach the cone breakdown with short choppy steps
- C. Plant your outside foot, drop your hips, lean towards the next cone and explode towards attempting to get back to top speed as quickly as possible
- D. Repeat this until you reach the final cone.

Suggestions: This drill heavily taxes your legs, so make sure you're properly stretched. Start slowly until you can develop the balance to lean at higher speeds, and are more comfortable with the movement.

This drill is very useful without a broom, without a broom, and with a broom and ball for a game like situation.

11: Catch

Yes...literally play catch with a quaffle, with a teammate, by yourself it doesn't matter. The ball scores goals and not catching it prevents that from happening.

This is a fundamental skill that goes a long way in being successful in this game you see it from great players like Kaci Erwin, Lindsey Marella, and Erin McBride they catch nearly everything thrown their way.

I see a lot of players whose origins in sports are not ball sports (basketball, football, handball, etc). Even if you're one of those players it doesn't change the fact that repetition is how those players gained those skills.

Here are some tips on catching.

1. Keep your eye on the ball

A. I cannot emphasize this enough, if you practice extreme focus on the ball as it approaches you, in games you'll reap the rewards and help your team. Side note as you get more adept at catching just like the movement drills I mentioned above you will be able to focus on more things while catching. The number one priority is to catch without the ball your cool moves don't matter

B. If you have access to a large field, practice throwing the ball high in the air and catching it. You can especially improve by not throwing straight up but at a slight angle to force yourself to move to the ball, rather than waiting for it to come to you.

2. Catch with your fingertips not palms

A. This is the backbone of catching cleanly and moving the ball quickly

B. Catching with your fingertips prevents the ball from bouncing off your palms and cuts down on drops. You'll find this approach works for players with all hand sizes

C. Work on catching hard passes, it will pay off during games.

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL PREPARATION

My last section is not actually centered around movements or exercises, but it will set you up for success

12: Consistency/Planning

The key to progress in any form is the consistent effort to get better. Get familiar with patience, it will be your guide on this path you're walking. Every great or decent athlete you see in this sport and others built by staying on the grind. You're not going to become great in a week or even a few months and knowing that is key to avoiding burnout. Consistency is a huge hurdle that you'll face every week due to the chaotic nature of life.

My tip is to plan ahead and pick days that give you a day of rest if you can. If you can't, it's perfectly normal for people to train three days in a row and take multiple days off for rest and recovery.

Planning ahead for when and where workouts will be, gives you a plan to adjust if needed that includes not working out that day by either moving the workout to another day. The alternative is trying to make it up as you go which can result in training too much and courting injury or not enough to see results.

If you have any questions on these drills or information you thought was incorrect please feel free to message me on Facebook at Ashton Jeanlewis, Instagram @theashtonforever or twitter @theashtonj

Good luck on your path.