

## Shooting Technical Breakdown

Objective: To provide players with a breakdown of proper shooting technique that they can understand and apply.

Discussion:

Teaching proper strike technique is often a topic that coaches stay away from. It can be difficult to see what is wrong, know why it's not correct, and then communicate to the player how to fix it in terms they can understand and implement. However, proper shooting technique can be conveyed to the player in a four step process. Each step in the process is summarized in one sentence instruction to the player...in a way that they can understand and adopt.

1. Place your plant foot next to the ball

Challenge the player to place their plant foot up even with the ball. You will notice that players are predisposed to placing the foot before the ball. Many coaches ask the players to put the plant foot beyond the ball, knowing that at least that will result in the foot being even with the ball. The biggest cause of improper strikes is having the plant foot too far behind the ball. With the ball in front of the foot, the strike foot is already rising up before the foot strikes it, and the result is either a toe kick, or a high rising strike that goes above the target.

2. Make a fist with the toes of your shooting foot

A successful strike requires the strike foot to be locked in an extended position. Challenging the player to make a fist with the toes of their strike foot will achieve this. It is nearly impossible to make a fist with your toes without extending your foot. The player should continue this through the strike and into the follow through.

3. Strike the ball with the laces

With the foot extended and the plant foot next to the ball, the player can now focus on striking the ball with the laces. If you notice the toe striking the ball, then it's likely that the plant foot is too far back, or the foot is not locked. Sometimes I have put tape on the top of the foot where I want them to strike it.

4. On the follow through, don't let the keeper see the bottom of your shoe

Challenge the player to keep their toe pointed for the full follow through. If the player allows the toe to creep up, it somehow sucks the power right out of the strike. I tell them not to let the keeper see the bottom of their shoe. If the toe comes up, then their toes can't be still making a fist....

As the players grow, you can certainly add that they land on their kicking foot. Doing so requires that the player fully commit to the strike, throws all of the weight forward through the ball, and helps keep their head down.

Take aways:

We can distill the complex activity of striking a ball down to 4 simple steps.

We can communicate those steps to the player in a way that they can understand.

We can watch and see how those 4 steps interact together and help the player learn to strike the ball correctly.

This can be coached inside any other activity involving shooting, or in a specific activity for shooting.