



1. Positioning and the Attacking Stance

There can be no disputing that the position adopted by the goalkeeper in relation to the ball is crucial to her ability to make a successful save. My earlier text *The Rebound Revolution* (1988, 1991) discussed and examined this important core concept and in terms of goalkeeping skills and techniques, not a great deal has changed in this area. Positioning is one of the first skills that a goalkeeper needs to learn. Some goalkeepers pick it up naturally but the truth is that most have to be taught how to 'get into the right line.' Even at the most elite level, goalkeepers let goals in that should be saved because they are not in the correct position.

Aim

To be in the correct position to save the shot at goal.

Technique

Place the goalkeeper in front of the goal with her back to the goal mouth. I always begin by telling the goalkeeper to imagine that she has her very own 'semicircle', which extends from the right goal to the left goal post. The top (mid point) of this invisible semicircle is approximately one and a half metres from the goal line.

This invisible semicircle helps the goalkeeper position herself in order to cut down the angle of the ball to the goal. This semicircle forms the blueprint for her movement for most shots at goal. The closer the goalkeeper is to the ball, the less room the ball carrier has to shoot at goal and generally the less of the goal the ball carrier can see as being an easy target.

Get the goalkeeper to stand at the top of this semicircle (approximately one and a half meters from the goal line). Tell the goalkeeper to move around her invisible semicircle in a sideways motion.

Some of these goals go in because the goalkeeper is not on the correct angle, on the right line to the ball to be able to save the shot. During training the goalkeeper must work hard on her positioning, not only for those shots taken from the top of the circle, but also for those taken from in close to the goal mouth. The goalkeeper should be made aware of her incorrect (and correct) positioning so that she can re examine where she should have been standing if indeed a shot goes into the goal. It is important therefore, that as a goalkeeping coach, you know how to teach the goalkeeper to take up the correct position.

The goalkeeper should always move around this semicircle with her head and body front on. She should not turn sideways when she is moving around this arc. Stand in front of the goalkeeper and get her to move around the semicircle ensuring that as she moves she goes to each post of the goal. Get her to move around the arc a number of times so that she begins to develop a feel for this most important positioning technique.

Attach a piece of coloured string to the middle of the backboard of the goal (down close to the ground). If you do not have any string, get the goalkeeper to imagine that there is a piece of string that is attached at this spot. Place a number of balls around the hockey circle that is marked on the field.

Once the goalkeeper has become familiar with the semicircle, place her at the top of this invisible arc and stand directly in front of her at the top of the hockey circle that is marked on the field. Run the string from the backboard through the goalkeeper's legs out in a straight line to you.

When the goalkeeper is on the top of her invisible semicircle and you are at the top of the circle (in the middle) this piece of string should run in a straight line from the back board, through the goalkeeper's legs, to you. (If you do not have any string attached, then you need to get the goalkeeper to imagine that a piece of string is attached and runs out to you at the top of the circle).



Goalkeeping Skills and Drills

by Kathleen Partridge

Move from the top of the circle to another hockey ball that has been placed around the circle. Take the piece of string and place it over this ball. Tell the goalkeeper to move around her invisible semicircle that arcs from post to post and get into the correct position to save the shot. The piece of string should once again be in a straight line running from the ball, through the goalkeeper's legs and attaching to the middle of the backboard. If the string is not in a straight line, the goalkeeper is not in the correct position. Move to another ball and repeat the same sequence.

The string must always be in a straight line from the ball, through the goalkeeper's legs and joining to the middle of the backboard.

You may find that the goalkeeper will forget about the invisible semicircle and will be back on the goal line moving across to each ball with the string running through her legs joining the backboard. As goalkeeping coach you must explain to the goalkeeper that the invisible semicircle must be the blueprint she uses to move around her goal because it helps cut down the angle of the ball to the goal.

Now slowly move from one ball to another to give the goalkeeper time to position herself correctly and also to give you time to check her positioning in relation to the ball.

Start to hit some balls to her (softly) and take time to check her position each time and reposition the goalkeeper if she is not in the right line. The imaginary string concept should still be used. As you start to hit the ball more firmly, again stop and check the goalkeeper's position especially if a goal is scored.

The second technique involved in teaching positioning to the goalkeeper involves the goalkeeping coach explaining, via a diagram, the correct position for the goalkeeper in relation to the hockey ball. Draw a line to each post from the ball. The goalkeeper must be standing on her invisible semi circle in the middle of the triangle. This is my preferred discussion with more advanced goalkeepers.

Once you have drawn and explained to the goalkeeper about her positioning, get her to imagine a triangle that starts at the ball and joins either post.

For the goalkeeper to be in the correct position she has to be in the middle of this triangle standing on her invisible semicircle.

Place a number of balls around the circle and softly hit them in towards the goal. The goalkeeper has to picture in her head this triangle that extends from the ball to either post. Again, if a goal is scored the coach and the goalkeeper must re-examine where the goalkeeper was positioned. Were they in the middle of their triangle standing on their invisible semicircle?

As the goalkeeper progresses and her positioning is becoming more natural, increase the tempo of the ball towards the goal.

Issues to Consider

The goalkeeping coach must appreciate that teaching positioning is an essential or core goalkeeping skill. Practicing this skill can be tedious for the goalkeeper, however, the goalkeeping coach must be looking at the goalkeeper's position during all training activities and they must reinforce to the goalkeeper the importance of this core skill. Going 'back to basics' with positioning is appropriate with goalkeepers of all levels.

A lot of young goalkeepers have trouble imagining the piece of string that runs from the middle of the backboard, through their legs joining up on the ball. Use the triangle diagram that has been presented to help explain positioning and angles. Positioning requires repetitive drill practice.

The Attacking Stance

Sometimes referred to as the 'ready position' the attacking stance is the body position assumed by the goalkeeper when she is set and ready for the shot on goal. Once you have taught the goalkeeper how and why she positions herself in order to make a save, the next important core skills is teaching her how to position her body to be ready to save the shot on goal.

POSITIONING AND THE ATTACKING STANCE



As the name suggests, the 'attacking stance' prepares the goalkeeper to attack the ball, make the save and repel the ball away from the goal.

Aim

To position the goalkeeper's body in the best possible stance in order to be able to attack, save and repel the ball away from the goal.

Technique

The first important thing to do is simply to get the goalkeeper to relax. You will usually find that when the goalkeeper relaxes her knees will be slightly bent and her body weight will be slightly forward. This is good. Ultimately what you want the goalkeeper to be able to do is to have her knees slightly bent so that she is ready to block or move to the ball, but not so much so that she is carrying all of her weight on her quadriceps. It is very important that the goalkeeper is not simply bending wholly from the waist with straight legs; she must bend at her knees and also be slightly forward from her waist. If she does this, her head will be forward (somewhat over her kickers).

The goalkeeper's left hand should be up around chest height, open, palm facing out with fingers pointing to the sky. The goalkeeper's head should be slightly forward, not back. On contact with the ball, the goalkeeper's head should be over the point of contact. The goalkeeper's weight should be oriented to the front.

Make sure the goalkeeper is neither flat-footed, nor right up on her toes. The goalkeeper should be up on the balls of her feet, heels off the ground. Being up in this attacking position, the goalkeeper not only looks as though she is hungry for action, she is also ready to pounce.

Some coaches insist that when the ball is not in the goalkeeper's direct area of play she should relax but remain in the attacking stance. I believe that the goalkeeper can observe the play that is occurring up the field in a relaxed manner, taking on the attacking stance when the ball is entering

her area of play (usually the twenty five yard mark is a good trigger for this position to be assumed).

When I was goalkeeping I would use this change of body position as a direct trigger for me to take on a more attacking mode of thinking. I used this change of body position to help me focus and concentrate.

The attacking stance must become second nature to the goalkeeper. This essential, core skill is like the positioning skill; it must be practiced.

Issues to Consider

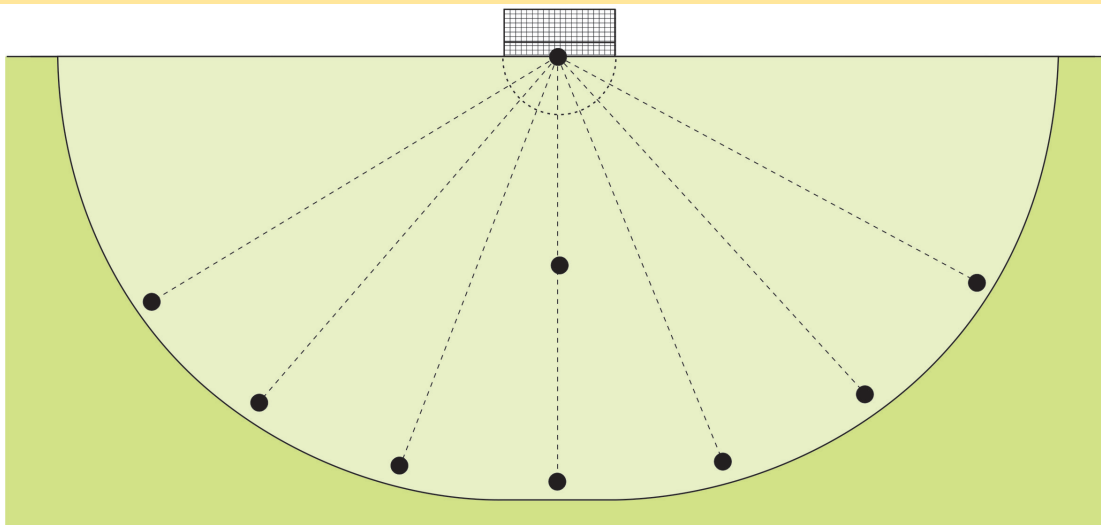
There is a natural tendency for the goalkeeper to place too much weight on her quadriceps when she is first assuming the attacking stance. If she bends too much from the knees her body weight will be too far forward and she will be in no position to move quickly to the ball. When you first get the goalkeeper to assume the attacking stance, simply get her to relax, bend her knees (only slightly – just enough to bring her weight forward).

You may find that the goalkeeper will be bent so much from her waist that she is in no position to save the ball. Be careful of the goalkeeper who only bends from the waist and keeps her knees straight. This is also a problem. The goalkeeper has to have her body weight forward, however, if she is too far forward from the waist, her balance will be poor and she may end up toppling forward.

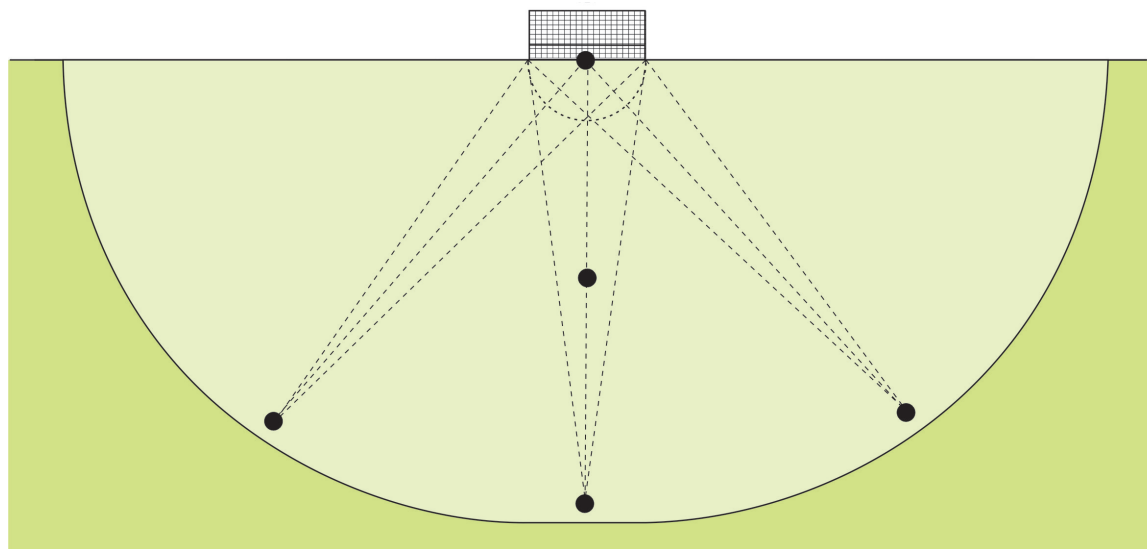
If you observe the goalkeeper is too upright (head back from the ball) and is therefore not making saves that she possibly could make if she was in a more balance position, you may find that the problem stems from her being scared or frightened of the ball. Some goalkeepers will also 'shy' away from the ball. You will need to consider if her equipment is up to standard (especially her kickers). You will also need to check that attackers are not getting too close to her during training, especially if she is a beginner and is developing her skills and confidence.



Goalkeeping Skills and Drills by Kathleen Partridge



Teaching Positioning using string concept.



Teaching Positioning using post concept.

POSITIONING AND THE ATTACKING STANCE

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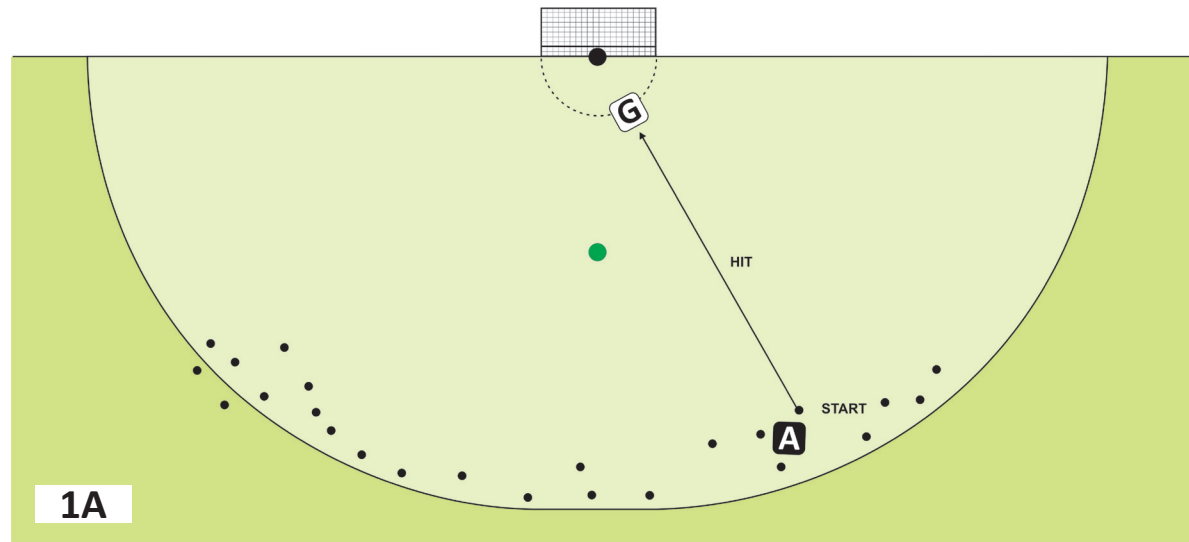
SKILLS



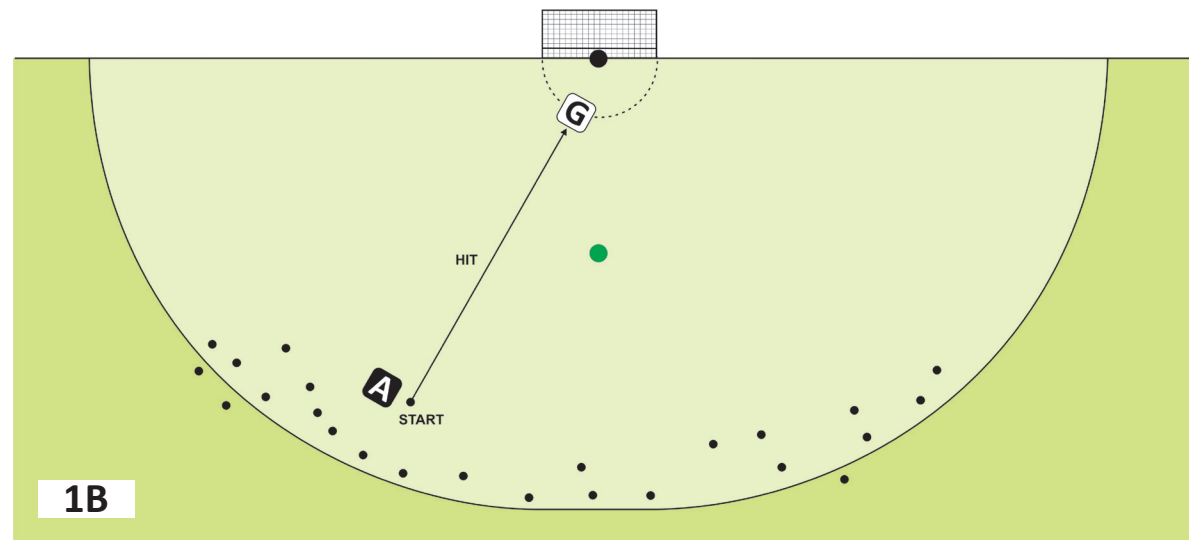


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- Place a number of balls around the circle
- The attacker selects a ball
- The goalkeeper positions herself on the correct angle to the ball that the attacker has selected
- The goalkeeper assumes the attacking stance and is ready for the shot
- The attacker softly strikes the ball towards the goal
- The goalkeeper makes the save
- The attacker quickly moves to another ball
- The goalkeeper repeats drill, checking her position each time



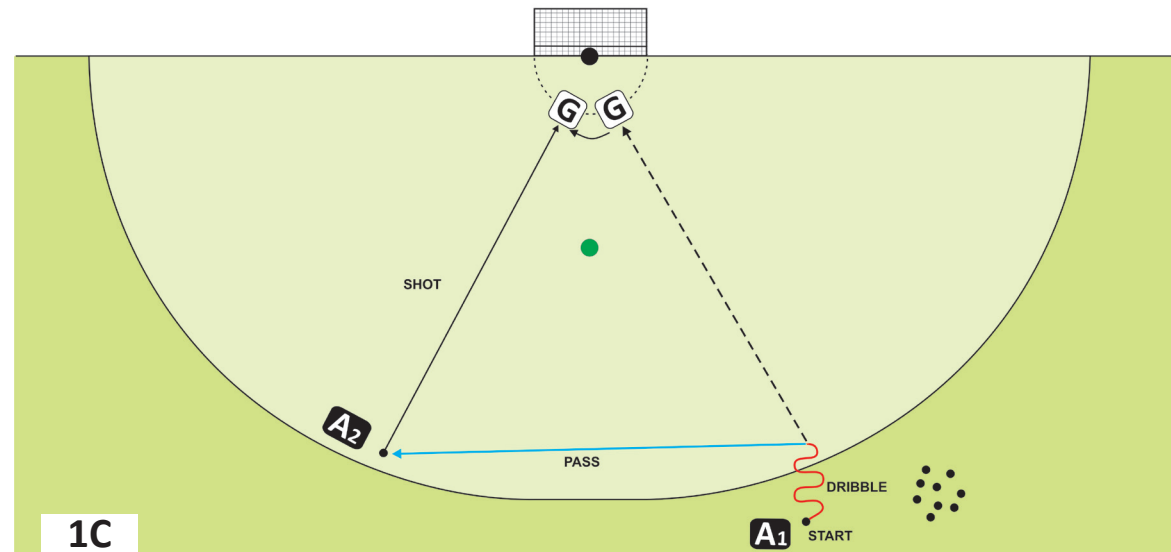
- Place a number of balls around the circle
- The attacker selects a ball
- The goalkeeper positions herself on the correct angle to the ball that the attacker has selected
- The goalkeeper assumes the attacking stance and is ready for the shot
- The attacker hits the ball with increased speed
- The goalkeeper makes the save
- The attacker quickly moves to another ball
- The goalkeeper quickly repositions herself into the correct line and assumes the attacking stance ready to make the next save
- The goalkeeper repeats the drill, checking her position each time



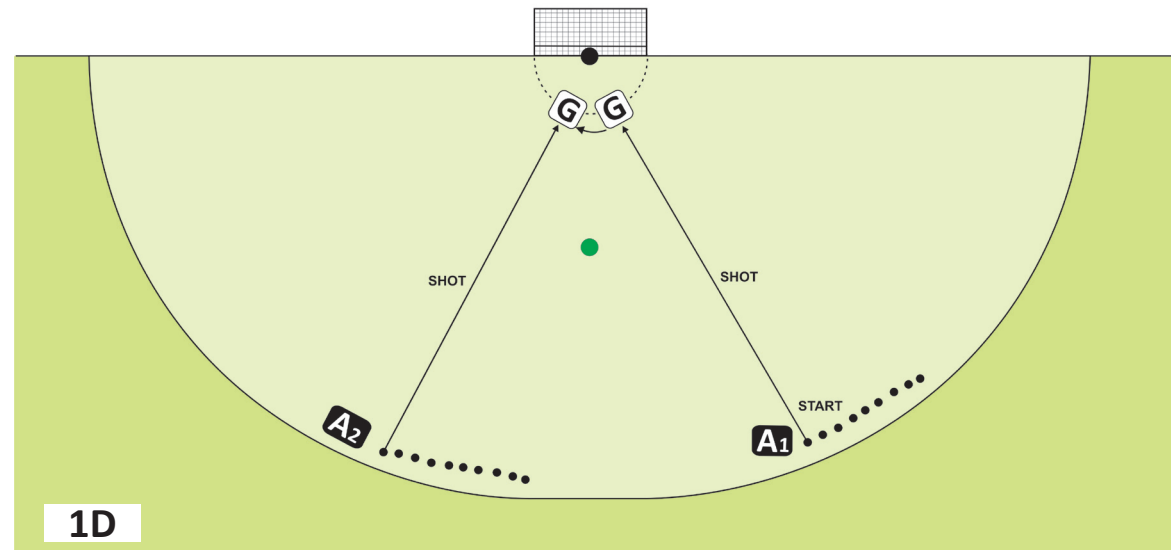
POSITIONING AND THE ATTACKING STANCE



- Place a number of balls outside the circle (either right of left)
- Attacker 1 starts with the balls
- Attacker 2 is waiting on the opposite side at the top of the circle
- The goalkeeper positions herself on the correct angle to Attacker 1 (she assumes Attacker 1 will have a shot at goal)
- The goalkeeper is ready in the attacking stance
- Attacker 1 dribbles the ball into the circle and then passes it to Attacker 2
- The goalkeeper quickly repositions herself to be on the correct angle to save the shot from Attacker 2
- The goalkeeper repeats the drill, checking her position in relation to the ball
- If a goal is scored the goalkeeper must stop and examine her position in relation to the ball



- Place eight to ten balls inside the circle (close to the top on either side)
- Attacker 1 has a shot at goal
- The goalkeeper has assumed the correct position and is in the attacking stance ready to make the save
- The goalkeeper makes the save and immediately moves around to Attacker 2 who also has a shot at goal
- The goalkeeper then moves back around to Attacker 1 and repeats the drill
- The goalkeeper may need a rest after four or five shots. The aim is to build up the goalkeeper's strength and skill so as to get through all of the balls
- If a goal is scored the goal keeper must examine her position in relation to the ball

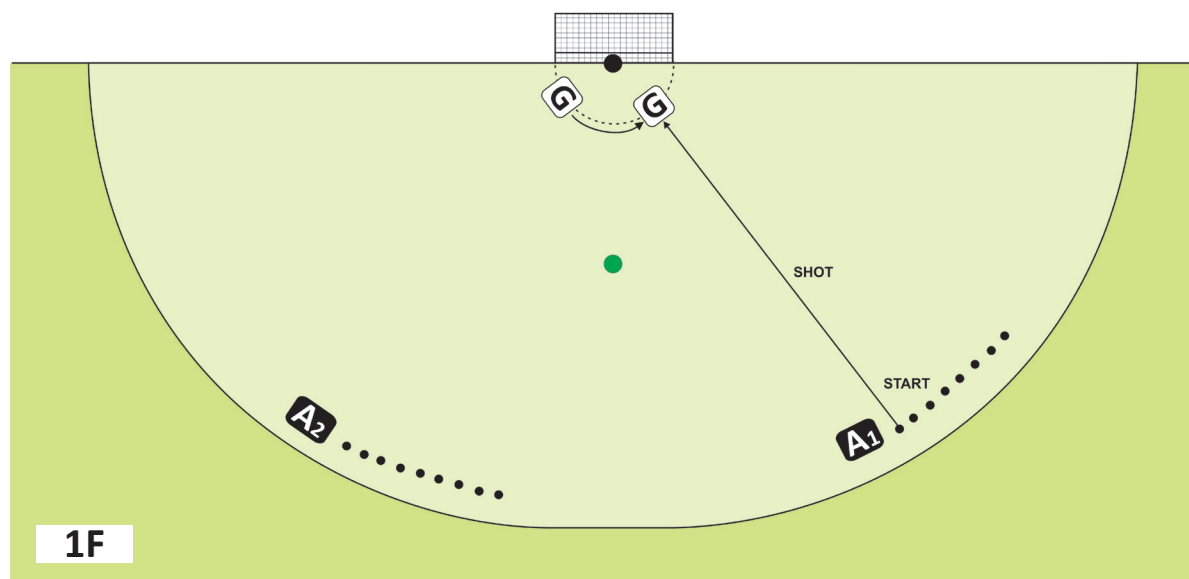
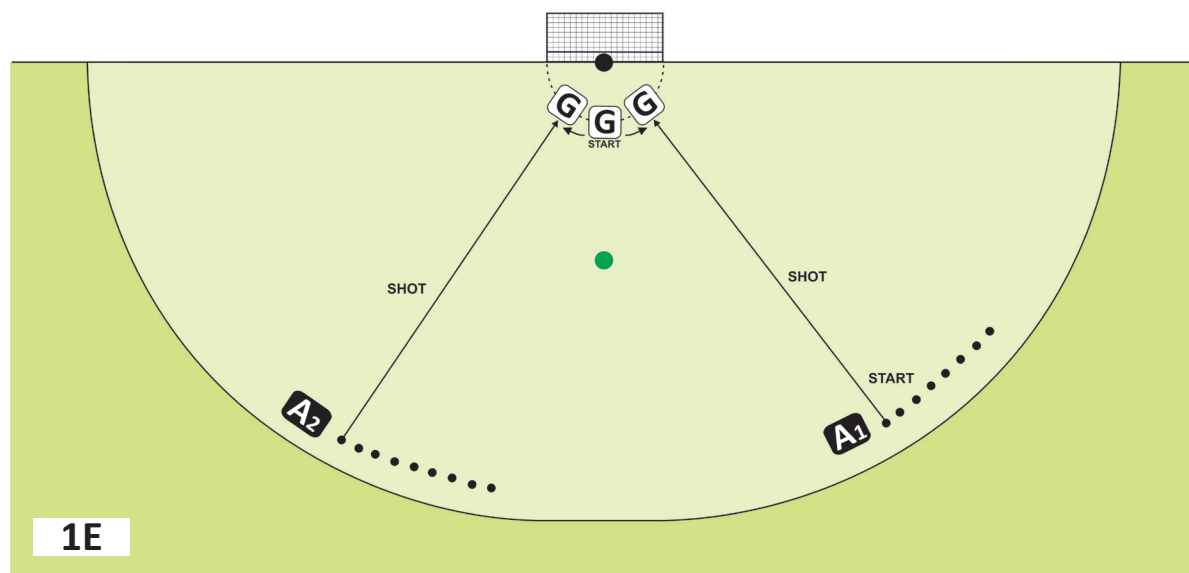




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- The progression from the previous drill is to get the goalkeeper to start at the top of her invisible semicircle
- The goalkeeper must move around to Attacker 1 and position herself in line with the ball
- Once the goalkeeper makes the save from Attacker 1 she returns to the centre of her invisible semicircle and repeats the movement around to Attacker 2
- The goalkeeper makes the save and returns to the centre position once again
- While positioned on the top of her invisible semicircle the goalkeeper is in the attacking stance, ready to move around to either attacker
- The goalkeeping coach may vary this drill, calling out which Attacker is going to have the shot at goal e.g. "Attacker 2", "Attacker 2", "Attacker 1"

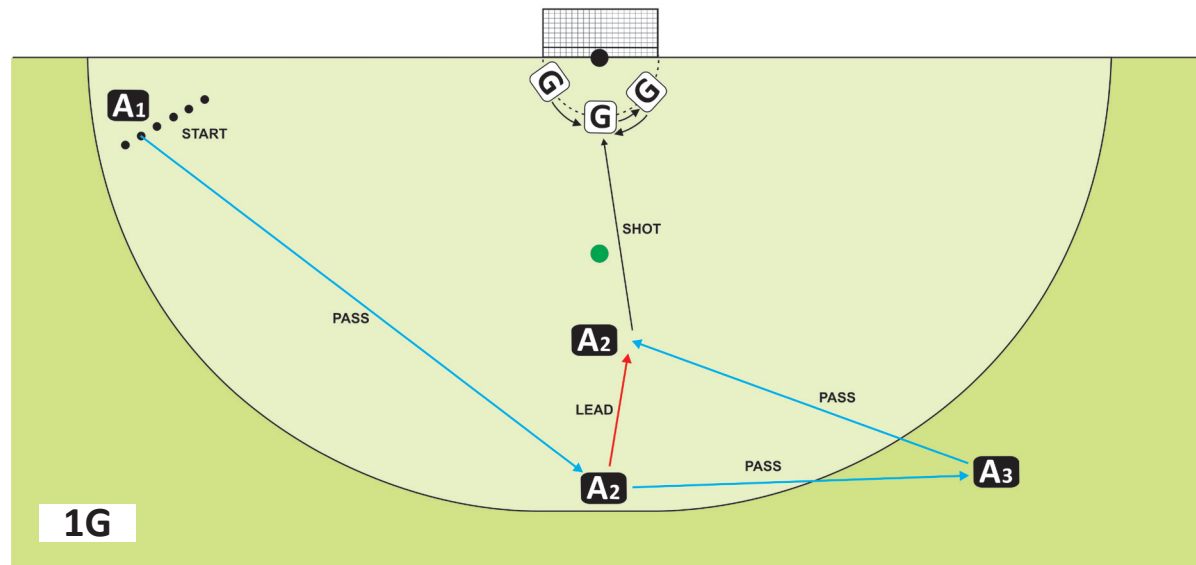
- A further progression from the previous drill is to get the goalkeeper starting on the opposite post to the side of the circle that the balls are placed
- The goalkeeper has to move quickly around her invisible semicircle (in the attacking stance) and position herself to save the shot from Attacker 1
- The goalkeeping coach can instruct the goalkeeper to complete a set of six or eight balls on the same side (Attacker 1) before changing posts to save shots from Attacker 2
- The goalkeeping coach may also get the goalkeeper to alternate between Attacker 1 and Attacker 2



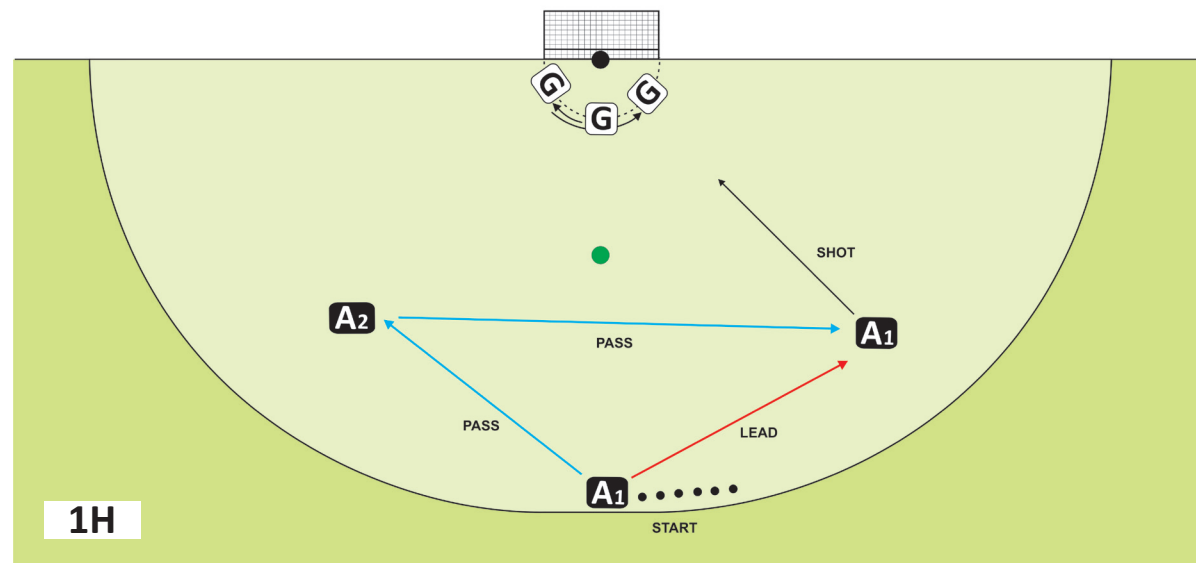
POSITIONING AND THE ATTACKING STANCE



- Attacker 1 starts with the balls near the back line
- The goalkeeper positions ready to save this shot. As Attacker 1 passes the ball to Attacker 2 at the top of the circle, the goalkeeper repositions on her semicircle
- Attacker 2 passes the ball to Attacker 3
- Attacker 2 leads into the circle and receives the ball back from Attacker 3
- When the ball is passed to Attacker 3, the goalkeeper repositions again
- As Attacker 3 passes the ball back to Attacker 2, the goalkeeper repositions once again ready to make the save
- There is a lot of goalkeeper movement in this drill, so the goalkeeper will need a break between each one
- This drill can also be mirrored on the other side (i.e. Attacker 1 and Attacker 3 are on opposite sides)



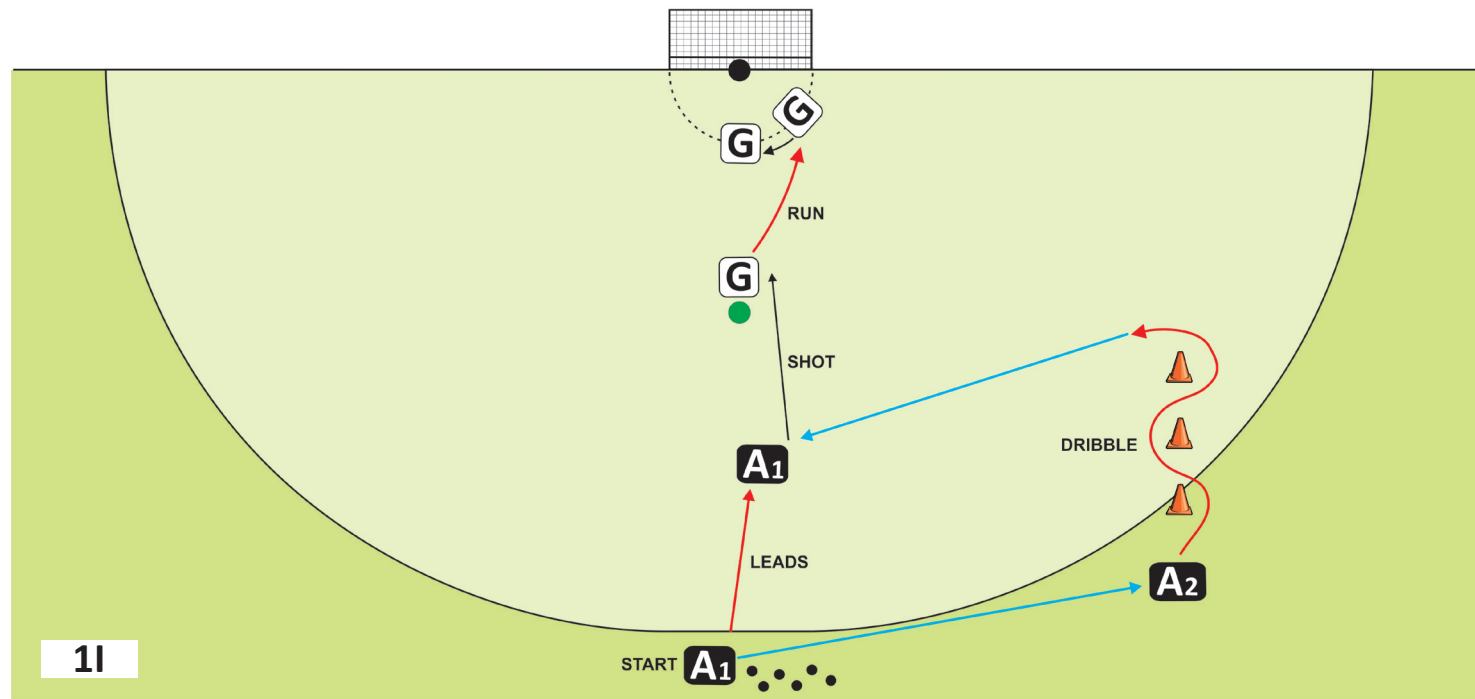
- Attacker 1 starts with the ball
- The goalkeeper starts in the attacking stance ready for the shot from Attacker 1
- Attacker 1 passes the ball to Attacker 2
- The goalkeeper repositions to be in line with Attacker 2
- After Attacker 1 passes the ball to Attacker 2 they lead away ready to receive the ball back from Attacker 2
- Attacker 2 passes the ball to Attacker 1, who has a shot at goal. The goalkeeper repositions to be in the correct line to save the shot from Attacker 1
- This is a strenuous activity and the goalkeeper will need a short break between each shot
- Attacker 2 and Attacker 1 can also change sides to vary the shot at goal





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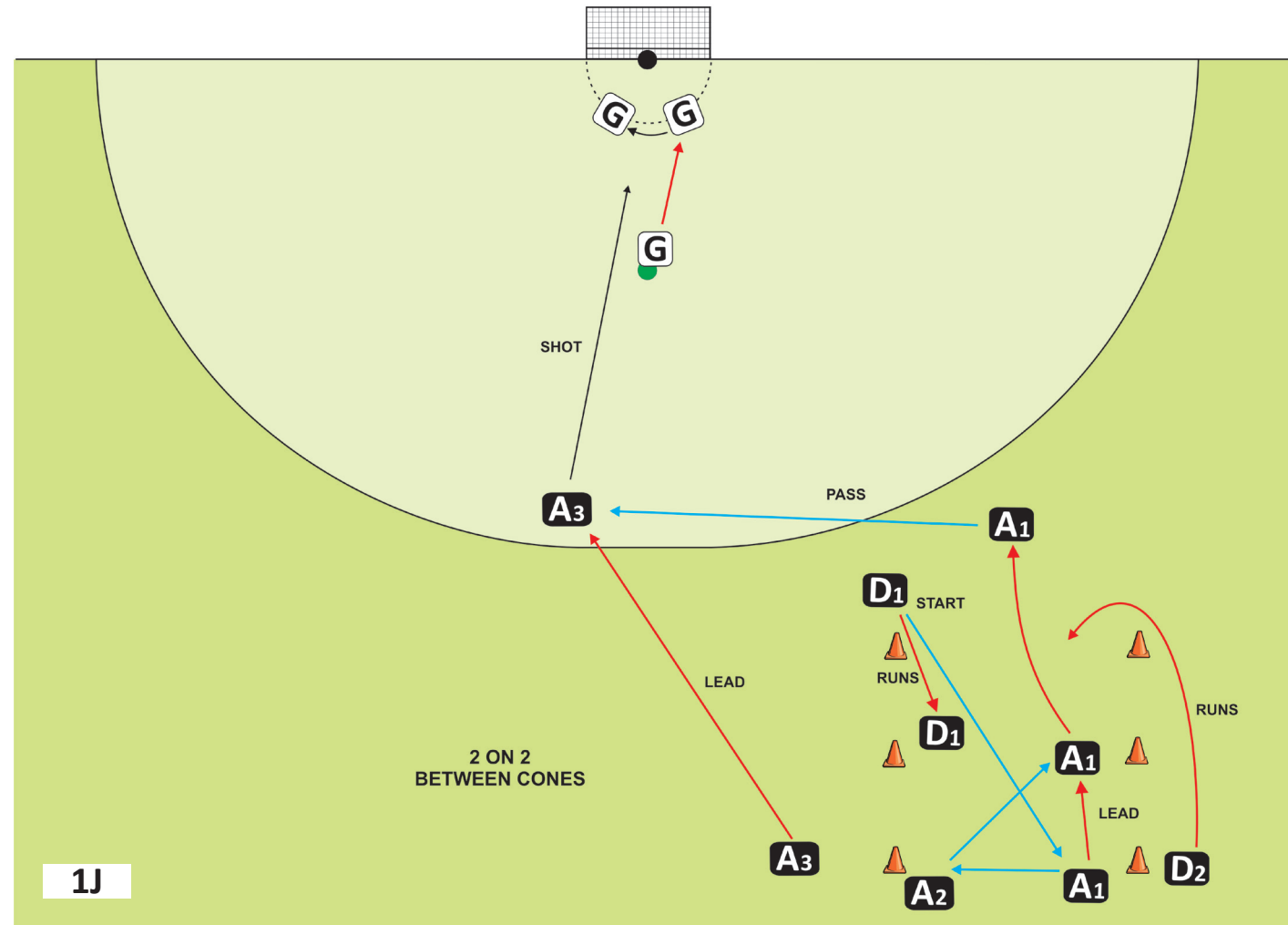
- The goalkeeper begins this drill at the seven yard spot (normal game position)
- Attacker 1 passes the ball to Attacker 2 who dribbles the ball through a few cones
- After passing the ball, Attacker 1 leads forward ready to receive the ball back from Attacker 2
- The goalkeeper moves quickly from the seven yard spot back to her semicircle and positions for the shot that may come from Attacker 2
- Once Attacker 2 passes the ball back to Attacker 1 the goalkeeper has to reposition to save the shot from Attacker 1
- A tiring drill that can once again be mirrored on the opposite side
- The goalkeeper will need a break between each shot (building up to three sets of eight balls)



POSITIONING AND THE ATTACKING STANCE



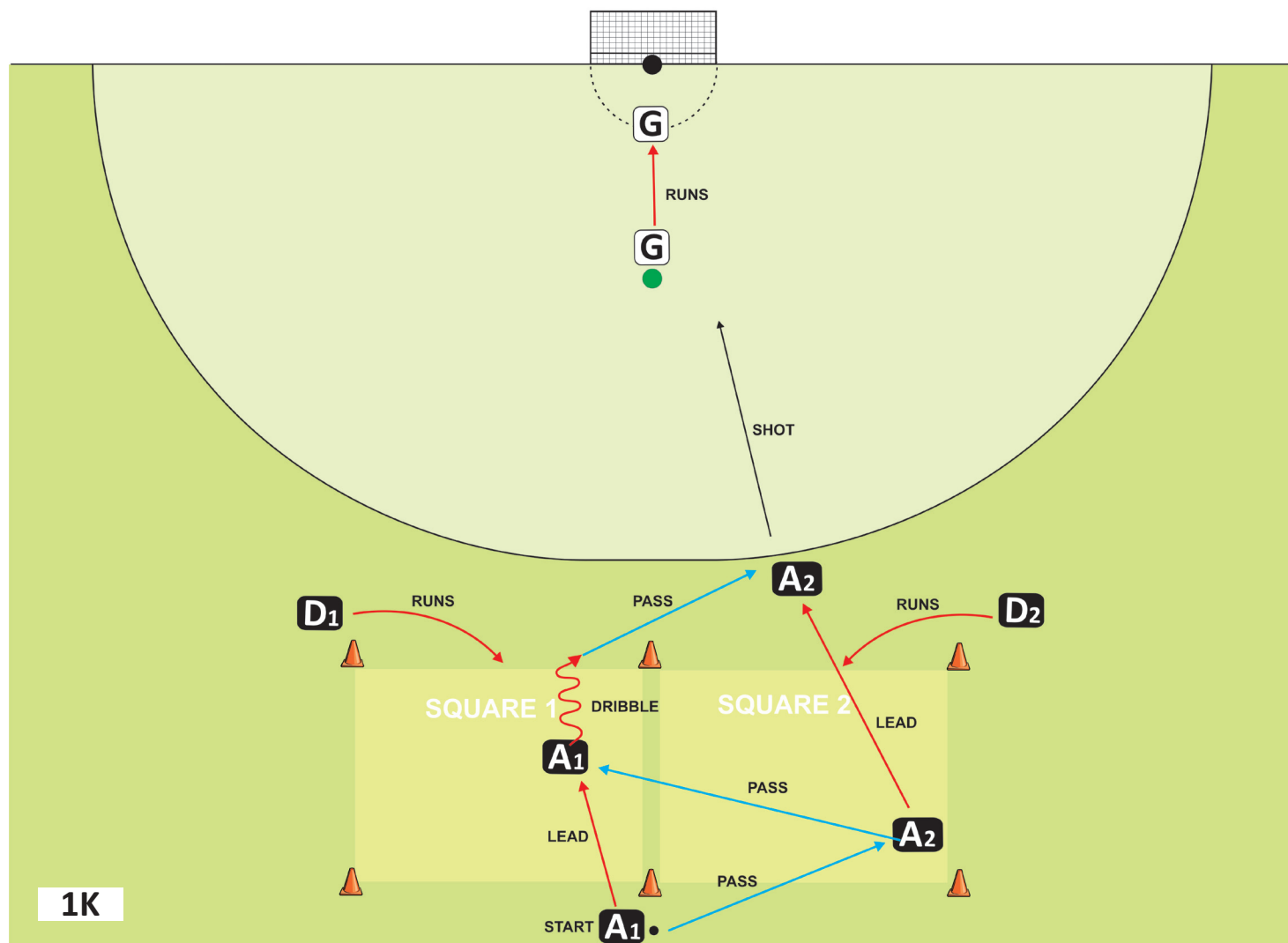
- A two on two is set up between cones. Defender 1 starts with the ball
- Defender 1 passes the ball to Attacker 1 and at the same time Defender 2 runs around the outside of the cones to get down to help Defender 1
- Attacker 3 also leads into the circle as Defender 1 passes the ball to Attacker 1
- Attacker 1 and Attacker 2 play out the two on two between the cones
- The goalkeeper starts at the seven yard spot, moving back onto her invisible semicircle ready to reposition to save the shot at goal
- Attacker 1 or Attacker 2 is trying to get the ball to Attacker 3. If the defenders get the ball off the attackers they also can get the ball to Attacker 3 so that the drill can continue without interruption
- The goalkeeper has to reposition to be in the correct angle to save the shot from Attacker 3
- Attackers and defenders must be mindful that they must be desperate to get a shot on goal (creative thinking) so that the goalkeeper gets to make a save





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- 3 defenders/2 attackers
- Set up six cones into two squares
- The ball begins with Attacker 1 who passes to Attacker 2
- As soon as the ball is passed both Defenders 1 and 2 can run into the squares
- Attacker 2 must get the ball back into square 1 to Attacker 1
- The attackers and defenders play out a two on two between the cones
- The goalkeeper needs to read the play and be ready either to move out to the attacker and make a one on one save, or move back to her semicircle to save the shot on goal
- If the two on two breaks down and the defenders win the ball, they need to continue to play as attackers to get the shot on goal (attackers become defenders in this instance)

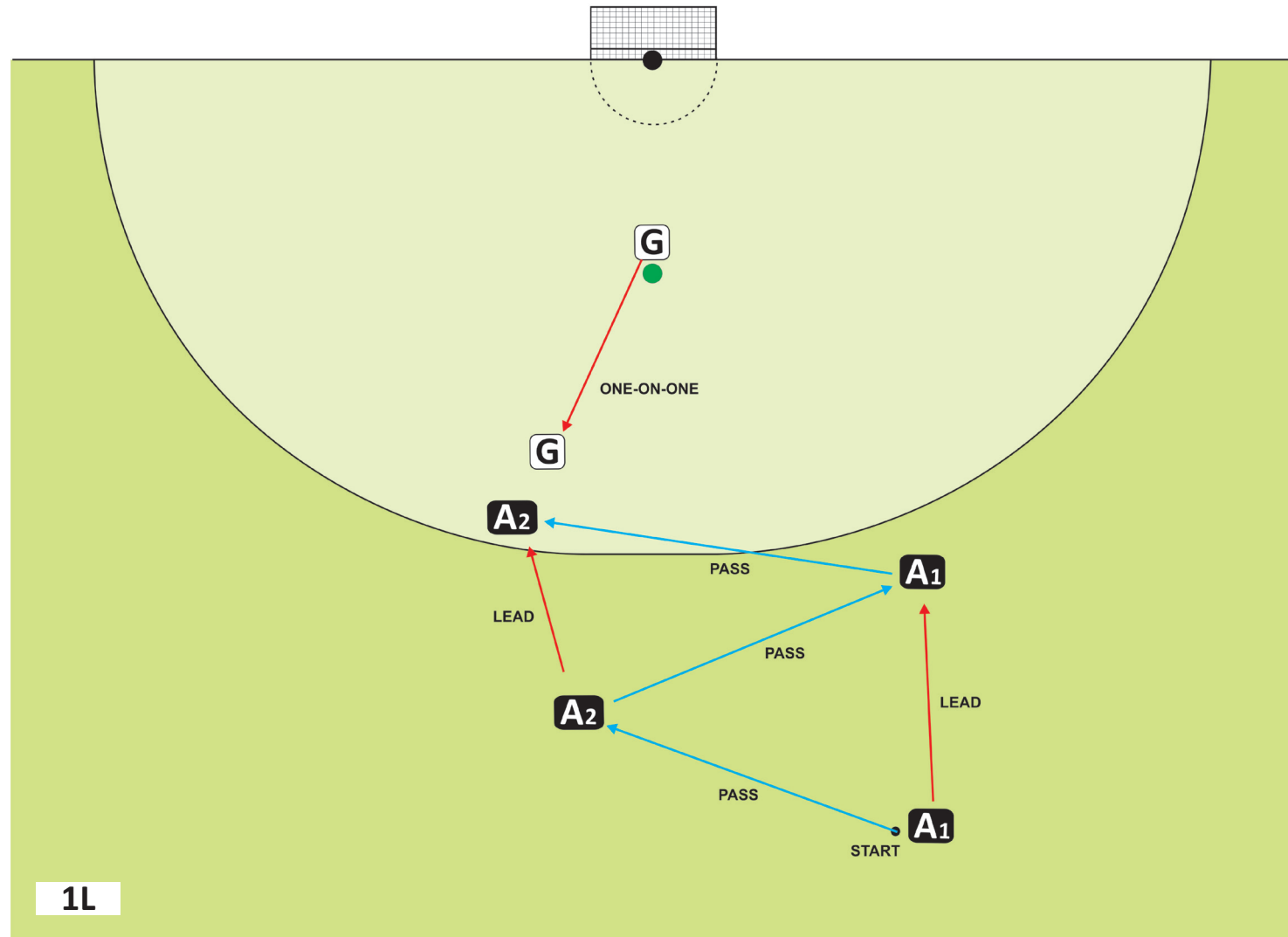


POSITIONING AND THE ATTACKING STANCE



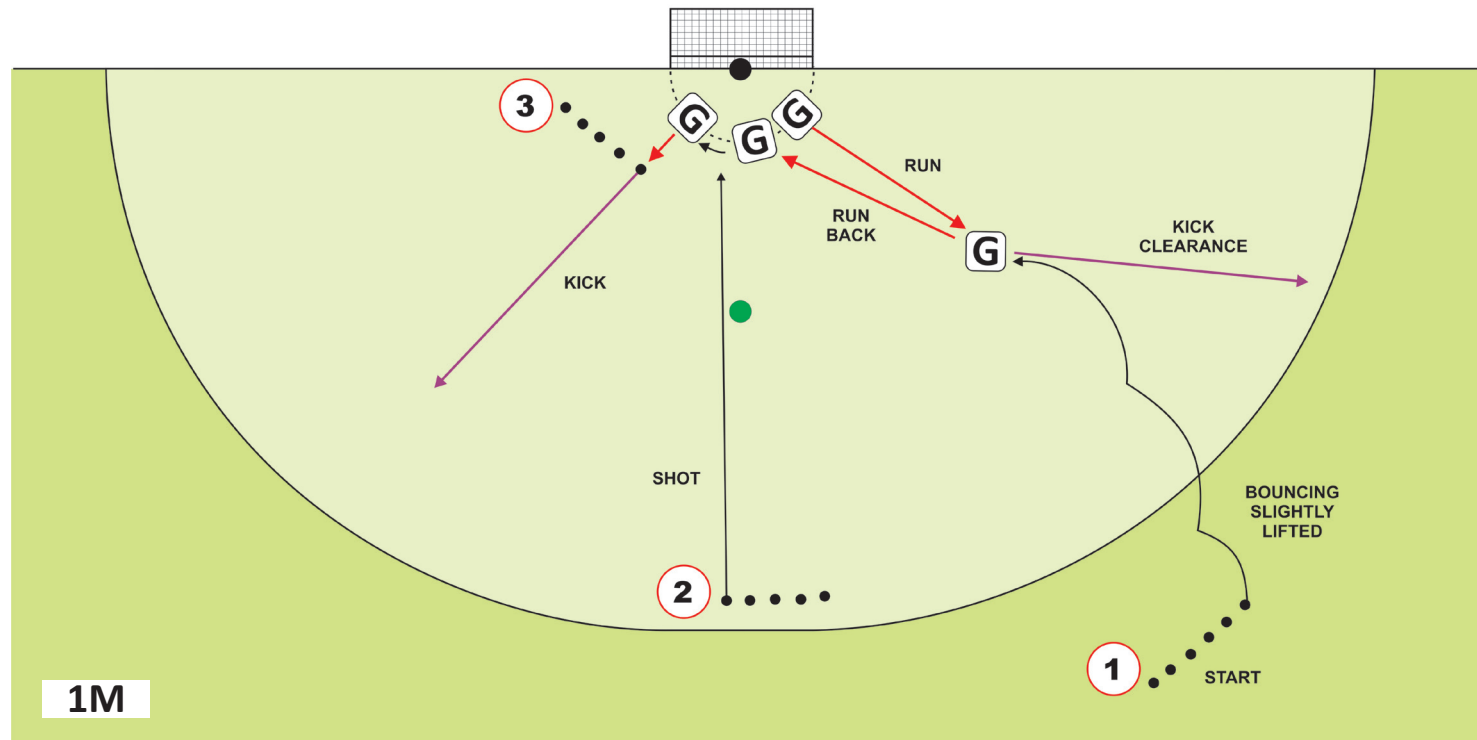
One on One with Goalkeeper

- Attacker 1 starts with ball
- Attacker 1 passes the ball to Attacker 2 and then leads forward to receive the ball back
- The goalkeeper remains at the seven yard spot until Attacker 1 passes the ball back to Attacker 2 who has led to the top of the circle
- As Attacker 1 is passing the ball back to Attacker 2 the goalkeeper comes out and presents to Attacker 2 ready either to slide or perform a double leg block save in this one on one situation
- The goalkeeper has to pick up the correct angle and move out to Attacker 2 ready to make the save
- This is a strenuous drill and the goalkeeper will need a break between each shot



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- Bounce or push a ball in towards the goal
- The goalkeeper attacks the ball, kicking it (either toe or instep) towards the sideline
- The goalkeeper then quickly moves backward to her semicircle, ready to make the save from the shot at the top of the circle
- After this save, the goalkeeper then moves around to a third position where she needs to toe kick a stationary ball either to the sideline or through two cones that have been placed outside the circle
- This is an exhausting drill. The goalkeeper will need a short rest between each one (no more than six balls in a set)
- Ensure the goalkeeper is warm and well stretched



POSITIONING AND THE ATTACKING STANCE

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PICS

