

# Empowerment Guide

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This guide has two main purposes. The first is to help quidditch players who feel disadvantaged in the sport in any way, be that due to their size, athleticism or gender. Individuals can use this resource to help them find ways to improve their skills and confidence when on pitch. The second is for coaches to have a resource to help them coach such players, and become aware that not all coaching styles and drills work for everyone. We are always looking to improve this guide, so if you have any suggestions please get in touch with us.

Other helpful resources: “All in” youtube series by QuidditchUK; Quidditch Coaching Library (which can be found in the QA Resource Hub);

Video tutorials coming soon...

## General tips / Core Skills

### Chasing/Keeping

#### Holding the ball

If you have small hands, holding a more inflated quaffle might be difficult. Something that can make it easier is to look for the pump-hole, which has a hardened circle around it. Place your thumb just outside that hardened bit when holding the quaffle, it can help provide more grip.

If this doesn't work, some people hold the quaffle between their hand and wrist by bending their hand down. This position is not ideal for throwing, but can still allow arm movement for running, faking, etc.

It is not recommended to tuck the quaffle into your body at the elbow, as this position greatly restricts movement, disallows a quick pass, and makes it very easy for someone to grab the ball or pin your arm down in a tackle. However, it is sometimes the only way of holding the quaffle, on a rainy day for example. If this is the case, make sure to check your surroundings and stay away from the opposition, knowing where your passing options are and giving yourself time to rearrange your grip before passing off the quaffle.

#### Throwing

**Over-arm:** When throwing, don't use only your arm. Arm muscles alone aren't very strong, so we must use our whole body to help provide power to the throw. Twist your whole body sideways together with your arm stretched out behind you. This initial stance should have the opposite foot (from the throwing arm) forward. To throw, start by *twisting* your **hips** and

**back forwards** while *lifting* your **arm behind** you, then *bring* the rest of your **dominant hip forwards** while your **arm continues** its trajectory, and lastly finish by *twisting* your **shoulder and arm over and forwards**. Your arm/hand should mostly be providing direction rather than force. The movement of your twisting hip/back muscles, followed by your shoulder, should provide the most power.

## THROWING PROCESS

Body movement steps for an overarm throw



**Push-pass:** a push-pass is used for shorter distance throws. There is less power behind it than an over-arm, but it generally has better accuracy (especially when taking a shot at hoops). For this pass, your elbow is bent and close/parallel to your body (as opposed to out at a 45° or greater angle from your body) and your hand should be at the height of your chest with your palm facing forwards. Your leg (same side as throwing-arm) should be set back, and your body should be slightly twisted. To throw, twist your body and step forwards with your back leg. Push your arm forwards by straightening your elbow (as if you're assertively telling someone to stop), and as the ball leaves your hand try to give it a backwards spin by rolling it off your finger tips.

### Volleyball tap

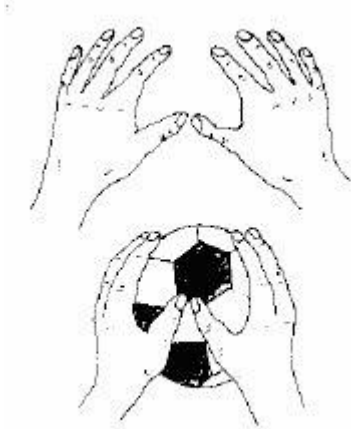
It is quite common for a quaffle to be thrown at you when you aren't ready, or when a beater is too close to you, or when a bigger player is almost upon you. In these cases, catching that pass might not be the best outcome (you'll get beat or tackled), but simply doing nothing is also not a good choice. Sometimes, the best option is to quickly get the quaffle back to whoever passed it to you, or to someone else on the team who is in a better spot. This requires quick thinking and movement, too quick for a catch-think-aim-pass.

Tapping the quaffle can be very effective if done well. For people with a volleyball background this is fairly simple. While the ball is in the air, you will already be thinking about whom you'll tap it to and both your hands will be ready. Bend your knees so that you are lower down than you would usually be for a normal catch. Once the quaffle reaches you, tap it to your teammate, using your bent knees and elbows to spring your hands upwards a tiny

bit. This is important: you should not only aim in the right direction, but you also need to propel the quaffle upwards a bit. In a normal pass-catch movement where you receive a chest pass, your pass leaves from a higher point (i.e. head height) than the ball was when you received it (at your chest). This means you must do the same during a volleyball tap, or else the quaffle will simply fall too low for your teammate to catch.

## Catching form

To catch a pass, it is best to use two hands and a 'W' (for winner!) frame, whereby each hand is spread wide - thumbs touching and fingers fanning out each side (kinda like jazz hands). This creates a 'W' shape that provides both a wide area for the ball to make contact while also making it easier to receive fast passes, slow ball momentum, and secure your grip on the ball. Your elbows should act like springs, easily stretching and bending, to help slow the ball's momentum when catching.



## Catching a high pass

Catching a high pass can feel tricky at first, but managing to pull off an alley feels incredible. Lift your arms above your head and keep your hands side-by-side, in the "W" catching frame. Don't try to catch by "clapping" your hands together. Tilt your hands slightly downwards. This will help bring the ball down towards you, rather than skimming off your fingers and falling behind you. Even if you don't catch the quaffle, it is better to have it falling in front of you than behind.

If a pass comes too high for you to catch, you'll have to jump for it. Doing this at a run is easier, as the movement and momentum will help you. When you are about to jump, bend your knees for the push-off, let go of your broom and press your thighs together to hold it, just like you would do for a normal catch. Time your jump so that you are pushing off the ground as the ball is almost upon you, not too early. Use the same catching technique as explained above.

## Picking up a quaffle from the ground

There are many times during a game when a pass isn't very good, or we simply miss the catch and the quaffle falls on the ground. Being quick on the pick-up is an essential skill. Most people with bigger hands or good grip strength are able to pick the ball up with one hand, but even they sometimes drop it again, especially on a rainy day. The safest way is to use two hands.

To pick up a quaffle from the ground, bend down (squat) with both hands ready for the pick-up. Take the broom with you, holding it in your non-dominant hand. Do not try to hold the broom between your legs awkwardly while bending down with both hands free. It might seem better to have two free hands, but holding the broom between your legs like that is inconvenient and slows you down. By taking the broom down in your hand, you are able to keep moving/running, as your legs won't be stuck.

Additionally, it helps to angle your body side-on to the ball, as this angle provides less strain on the legs and back, and also allows you to maintain and manipulate your momentum. If the ball is still moving, being side-on also enables you to get a foot behind the ball, so even if you miss the pick up your foot will stop the ball from rolling away from you.

## Stepping and faking

Facing up against someone bigger or faster than you can seem daunting. When running through someone like that is not an option, trickery can be your next best friend. Just like when playing tips as a kid, quickly switching directions by pushing off your outside leg is a great way of dodging someone who's running at you. If you put this together with faking a pass, you'll be almost invincible.

**Stepping:** the most important things to remember about stepping are: timing, bent knees, tilting, and one powerful push. The simplest way to step someone is to quickly change the direction you are running in. Don't get within arm's reach of the opponent, especially if they have strong arms. But also don't go too early, or else your opponent will have time to switch directions as well. It is tricky to get the timing right and practice will help. The important thing is for that direction change to be as quick and surprising as possible.

Once you reach a good spot in front of your opponent, keep your knees bent and your ankles ready, with a wide stance. Your body and hips should be tilted in the direction you were running. This body tilt will help confuse your opponent, who will likely be watching your upper body. Your outside leg (the leg on the same side as the direction you are running in) will be your source of power in the step. Make sure your knee is bent, jam your foot into the ground, and push off hard in the opposite direction. Don't lose speed after this! Sprint away before your opponent can get in front of you again.

It is important to remember that you aren't simply running up to an opponent then curving towards a new direction. This is an explosion of direction change and it should be done with speed and power.

Additions/variations: sometimes it is cool to add some flair to your step. Spinning mid-step can help keep the quaffle away from your opponent and confuse them further. Doing a windmill (swinging your arm in an arc while you spin and step) looks beautiful. Hopping right before you switch directions is also pretty cool. And you can even fake twice by stepping, waiting a little so your opponent thinks they've got you, then stepping again back in the original direction. All of these are difficult to explain, so wait for the video tutorials to see how they're done!

**Faking a pass**: during a step, if you pretend you're about to pass off the quaffle in the opposite direction you want to step towards, you'll definitely leave the opposition confused. However, you don't need to step and fake at the same time. They can both be done on their own and are quite effective. Faking a pass is basically the exact same thing as actually passing the quaffle to your teammate, except you don't release the ball. Your whole body language and movement need to be convincing. Tilt your body towards the direction you are faking, look that way, call your teammate's name. Swing your arm like you would a normal pass, and just before you finish (while your opponent is focused on your arm and the ball), run the other way. Your opponent's instinct will be to follow the "fake quaffle", and it is even better when they completely fall for it like a dog playing fetch. One of the dirtiest tricks in the book is to fake a pass to a teammate who is perceived to be more threatening to the opposition, so that their subconscious bias is used against them. Faking can also be used when you are about to score, which will be explained in another section.

## Picks

Picks (or screens, the terms are used interchangeably) provide a variety of options for non-ball-carriers to do some playmaking. They can be used to fix mismatches between marked players, to create favourable mismatches for your team, to create confusion, to allow a teammate to become a free passing option, to help your ball-carrier, etc.

**How to set a pick**: Setting a pick is basically using your body to block the motion of an opponent. Your body becomes a wall/obstacle that slows or confuses your opponent. Picks can be very effective if done right, but they can also be tricky. It is important to remember that you are not allowed to run into another player (if that player is not carrying a ball), so when setting a pick you need to make sure you are safe and provide some level of room for the player you're picking to evade you before contact is made. But you also don't want to stop too far away, or else they will easily see and dodge you. Sometimes you will be setting a pick on someone who is relatively stationary, making it a bit easier to gauge the required distance. Other times, you might be setting a pick on a player who is moving towards you, so you'll need to stop yourself a bit earlier so you don't run into each other. The first contact must be made by your opponent on you, not by you on your opponent. Once contact is made, then you are free to push and shove and maintain that contact.

To set the pick, place yourself on the path you think your opponent will want to run on and plant your feet with a wide stance. Have one foot slightly behind the other to provide better balance, so you won't fall backwards upon impact, and bend your knees to absorb the impact. Angle your body so your chest is facing your opponent, and you can slightly angle yourself 45 degrees behind the plane of the opponent's torso. This 45 degree position is

such that your body is now just in the way so that your opponent cannot move laterally or forwards/backwards to where they wanted. Some people like to put an arm out sideways to make themselves “wider” (although be careful not to let your arm bend once your opponent hits you, because that would be an illegal wrap), while others like to bend their arm in front of them to protect their chest from the impact of the opponent.

Once the opponent has made contact with you, you can maintain that contact and still get in their way or push them around. Alternatively, you can quickly “roll” off and become a free passing option.

**Pick and roll:** after setting a pick, you sometimes want to quickly become a passing option rather than stand around. To do this, when setting the pick, position your hand/arm so that it will touch your opponent (usually on the shoulder or chest) upon impact. Then use that hand to push off hard and roll away from the opponent. That push might even push them off-balance as a bonus. Now you have successfully set a pick to help a teammate, while also quickly freeing yourself to become a passing option.

**Off ball picks:** Mismatches: picks can be used to rearrange who is marking whom in a game. If you are being marked by someone much bigger or faster than you, you can request a switch from a teammate who is being marked by someone of more similar size/skills to you. In doing this, you set a pick on your teammate’s mark and, after a bit of confusion, your “big and fast” opponent will be marking your teammate, while you will be marked by the new opponent better suited to your size/skill set. Mismatches happen all the time in quidditch and are usually noticed and fixed without needing picks, simply communication. However, the “confusion” mentioned above which a pick provides can be the split-second opening needed to free a passing option.

Creating a passing option: if you and a teammate are on the wing and can’t seem to get away from your marks to become a passing option, you can set picks. This disrupts the defence, as it is quite common for the defence to lose their mark in the confusion. In setting a pick for your teammate, you’ll be getting in the way of their opponent, giving them time to run away and become a passing option, leaving you with two confused opponents (the person who was marking you and your teammate’s mark who you just set a pick on) squished against you.

**Pick on point:** in the scenario where your ball-carrier is being marked by a very good and physical defender, and the player marking you is less so (or you don’t have anyone marking you), a pick and roll would force the defence to switch, and the physical defender is now marking you due to losing their mark on your ball-carrier. Not only this, but when you set a pick on that point defender, your ball-carrier has some time to make their move and quickly get away. They should use your pick and run in a route such that their shoulder brushes close to yours to help ensure the defending player tracks them and subsequently moves into your pick.

## Track the belly button

On defence, it is hard to guess which direction the offence will step to. One good way to track their motion is to keep track of the opponent’s torso and their belly button. The direction the opponent will step to is almost always the direction their belly button points towards,

even when they are trying to fake you out. It is useful for players guarding the offensive ball-carrier to watch which side the ball carrier holds the quaffle in -- if in their right hand, keep your left arm up to attempt to block shots or passes, whilst your right arm holds your broom and you split your attention by vaguely paying attention to the ball, and watching the bellybutton to stop drives.

## Slowing your opponent/Effective point defence

Tackling can be a tricky thing for smaller-bodied players or for those who have never played a contact sport before. There are so many ways we can try slowing down an opponent that don't involve tackling them to the ground. The first, and simplest, is by getting in their way - be as annoying as possible, jump around, grab at the ball, shove them. This works well if you are on point and your opponent is trying to decide what move to make, where to go next, where to pass. With you distracting them there is a higher chance they'll make a mistake. Make sure to watch their ball-arm so that you can smack the ball away or intercept a pass. If they are running towards you, you can use a jockeying technique, whereby you follow their movements and track their belly button. This can help you manipulate where you want them to run to. For example, you can bait or direct them to a specific side through personal body placement and angle, either to get them to run on your strong arm side to tackle them, or to get them to run toward the side that has better defensive cover (by a bludger, or keeper's stronger blocking side, or simply more defenders in that area), etc.

Another effective strategy when on point is to go for the leg. A lot of the time, if you don't have long/strong arms, it can be hard to get a good hold of your large opponent's torso. Going for the thigh is a lot easier, and will also surprise your opponent because it isn't a very common move. Remember to not let your arm go below your opponent's knee. Using the common tackling form, bend low with a wide stance (to keep your balance), wrap your arm around the opponent's thigh, get your shoulder into their hip and tuck your head in to provide better grip. Then try to lift their leg or simply shove them backwards as hard as you can. Keep pushing, shoving and lifting and you'll get a very surprised reaction.

Generally, taller ball carriers (especially those who are confident in their skills) don't hold the quaffle high up when facing up against someone smaller than them. Use this to your advantage and instead of going for a wrap or tackle, go for the ball-arm. Simply trying to grab the quaffle out of the air might not be the best strategy if your opponent is paying attention, because it is very easy for them to move their hand away. However, it is harder for them to move their whole upper-arm. While you are up and close, stretch your arm up towards your opponent's shoulder or upper-arm. Remember not to touch their neck. Once you have a good grip (having your elbow in contact with the opponent's arm is the most effective way), slide your arm down the length of theirs and pin their arm down to their body (as if you were wrapping them but their arm is stuck in there, too). Do this quickly, and if it works you can keep sliding your arm down until you reach their hand, pinning the quaffle at your elbow and grabbing a hold of it or simply dislodging the ball from their grip and onto the ground. It is important to remember not to yank the opponent's arm forcefully. You are allowed to slowly drop to the ground using your own weight to help you, though. Even if you don't get a hold of the quaffle, simply having the opponent's arm pinned means they cannot

make an effective pass and if you hold them long enough your beaters can come help. Simply disrupting and holding up the opposition is good defence.

## Boxing Out

When racing an opponent for a loose ball on the ground, the boxing out technique better enables you to protect the ball. Boxing out refers to using your body, both as you run and pick up the ball, to obstruct the path between the ball and your opponent, making it harder for your opponent to reach the ball as they're forced to run around you. To box out effectively, the initial aim, while running, is to get in the way of your opponent's direct path to the ball, hence forcing your opponent to take a longer route. They may try to get around you so it's important to track your opponent the whole run and adjust your position to ensure you remain on the path between them and the ball. As you approach the ball, you essentially want to do a sumo-like squat in front of the ball (as opposed to bending down beside the ball), ensuring your body creates a wall protecting the ball and reducing the ability for your opponent to swoop in at the last moment and bat the ball away from you. If you find yourself side-to-side with your opponent, a sweeping hip-bump approach as you step/squat your leg across and in front can be helpful for getting your body in front of your opponent. Make sure you pick up the ball with **two** hands by bringing your broom-hand down as well.

## Options for off-ball plays

On offense, there is a lot you can do to help playmake and change the course of the game. Set picks (on-ball and off-ball), create confusion and distract the opposition. Find space and time your movements so that you are one step ahead of your opponent. Be constantly moving, on your toes ready for a sudden explosion. Cut in and out of the hoops constantly, don't wait at the hoops for more than three or four seconds at a time. Draw out your defensive mark and then at just the right moment step around them and sprint into hoops, calling to your ball-carrier. Ensure there is a clear line for the pass (no obstacles in the way) between you and your ball-carrier. Constantly communicate (your movements, your teammates' movements, and the opposition's movements) and help be your ball-carrier's eyes. On defense, make sure you are effectively marking and communicating, being on your toes and ready for intercepts or blocks. You might feel useless if the play never comes your way, but that is actually a good thing, because it means you are doing a good job on defense and the opposition can't play on your side.

## Marking

On defense, make sure you are effectively marking your opponent - with attentiveness, tenacity, and efficiency. How you mark often depends on both your skills and the skills of your opponent. If you're faster than your opponent then close-up marking is often best - a hand on their chest to help nudge and annoy your opponent as a form of distraction and interference, and also to help track your opponent when you flick your eyes away to check on the ball and other players' movements. If you're slower than your opponent then sometimes it can be helpful to mark them from a small distance with yourself positioned on the inside lane to where your opponent wants to go (ie. your body is between the hoops and your opponent). This distance and positioning helps to give you the space and time to



respond to their quick movements and to shut down their cut in attempts (as being up-close can sometimes make you susceptible to being stepped). In this distanced marking approach, tracking can be improved by pointing your hand out towards your opponent to help maintain your awareness. It is also advantageous to determine a distance that's still close enough to be able to intercept a pass. When marking someone, make sure you aren't looking straight at them at all times, but rather split your attention between them and the quaffle. If you have your back to the quaffle and the player you're marking is about to receive a pass, you won't see it coming and won't be able to intercept it. Keep your body sideways, watching both at the same time to give yourself better game awareness.

## Scoring that goal

There are many times when a player has the quaffle close enough to hoops, but something stops them from scoring, usually lack of confidence. They'll finish that play and think it over in their minds saying "I could have scored that, why didn't I?". Lacking confidence is one of the biggest issues smaller, less-athletic, AFAB players face in quidditch, and it leads to them not trying out new things for the fear of letting the team down. It is important to practice the skills you feel less confident in and begin training not only your body, but your mind, so that you condition yourself to take those risks you know you can overcome.

One of those skills is pushing the quaffle through the hoop, even if there are defenders in front of you. If you are on the wing and are being marked by someone of relatively the same size/skill as you, be confident in yourself to run through them if you have the ball. Quidditch favours the offence when beaters aren't around (unless there is someone double your size ready to tackle you, then maybe don't try to run through them and use other techniques explained above, such as faking, stepping, passing off). If you have just received a pass and there is only the person marking you on the wing in your way, go for it. Push through them and put the quaffle through the hoop (put your hand through the hoop as well to make sure the quaffle can't get blocked or intercepted). Even if there are two smaller players in your way, if you know they won't try to tackle you, grab a good hold of the quaffle and push through. Holding it with two hands will help you keep a good grip. You can also spin and move around to confuse the defenders. Tell yourself you can score that goal and do it!

Another effective strategy when you are about to score is to fake at one hoop then score on another. This is especially good against keepers who like to shot-block and who overcommit. They will commit to your fake and by the time you score it will be too late for them to recover. When doing this, you can either fake and then take a shot if you are confident in those skills, or you can fake and then drive in quickly and put your hand through the hoop. If the keeper reaches you in time, keep going, you are so close! Hold the ball with two hands and push it through the hoop with all your might! What you can also do if the keeper's hand is in the way, either from your side of the hoop or from the other side, use one hand to push their hand out of the way while you score with the quaffle in your other hand.

## Effective communication

Communication is one of the most important aspects of quidditch. The best teams out there are the ones that treat communication as an essential skill just as much as passing and

catching. On offense, call out when you are open for a pass instead of standing and waiting. If you are available but your ball-carrier doesn't need a passing option, keep telling them where you are in case they do suddenly need you, saying e.g. "I'm on your left if you need". If you notice a threat that your ball-carrier hasn't (like a beater coming close), call for the pass forcefully saying "beater on!" and "pass to me now!". If you see another fellow chaser is a free/better option, tell that to your ball-carrier, e.g. "Courtney is your option". When you want to switch your mark with a teammate, call for it. When you are about to set a pick, let your teammate know. Remember, communication is not only verbal; you can and should use hand gestures as well (and you can create new ones with your team). If you are the ball-carrier, communicate with your beaters and chasers; make a plan, know what to watch for, tell them what you want.

On defense, tell your keeper and fellow chasers who you will be marking and give updates on where the opposing players are. If there is a mismatch, call for a switch or let your beaters know to pay closer attention to your side. If you are going up on point or switching your mark, call it so that your team doesn't accidentally have two people marking one opposing player.

Make sure you aren't silent, but also try and figure out what information your team needs from you. As a rule of thumb, more talk is better than little talk, and often when we think we're talking enough there's still more we could be doing. Even if you don't have the ball or feel like you're not doing anything important, using your loud voice and being the eyes of your teammates is great support, helping your team become more aware of everything that is happening.

Communication off-pitch is also important. Debriefing with your teammates after a play/game to talk about what went well, what needs work, and also to air any frustrations or perceptions of being under-utilised (eg. being an open passing option that wasn't used, having requests for the ball ignored, etc) - biases exist, often simply because of culture as opposed to malicious intent, yet it's important to discuss experiences where you felt under-utilised so everyone is aware and able to change their behaviour and attitudes to be more inclusive and respectful.

## How to talk to your captain/overbearing teammate

It can sometimes be difficult to talk to your captain or teammates, but a team's communication is not restricted to the pitch, meaning off-pitch communication is just as essential. It is important to foster an open and welcoming team spirit so that everyone feels comfortable speaking up or bringing new ideas forward. At training, let your captains/coaches know what you would like to work on, what you think the team might need to work on, suggest new drills, etc. Ask for advice from your teammates who might be better at some particular skill and help each other out. By doing this, you are creating stronger bonds and a feeling of mutual respect between teammates, so when the time comes to talk about more serious issues it will be easier.

If a tournament is coming up and there is something you'd like to bring up with your captain, doing so face-to-face is much more effective than via social media. If you'd like to ball-carry

more, practice being a point defender, become a lateral rather than a wing chaser, tell this to your captain in a calm, respectful way. Form a strategy together of how the lines/subs could be set up to best support you and your teammates. Keep in mind, during a game your captain has a lot to think about and they might forget about your chat. Make sure you keep up the communication in the sub box, with the people in your line, and on pitch by taking the lead.

More often than not, issues can be solved through mature communication and do not require any formal systems. It might be the case that, even after repeated chats, your requests are still not being met. This is a bit more serious and might require different strategies. Every case is different, so ask a teammate you trust for some guidance and support. Your club should also have a grievance system in place where you can go to someone of authority for help as well (if your club does not have this, it should be done asap). If these club-based approaches fail to resolve your grievance, your state-body and QA are also available to provide support to help facilitate the conversation to achieve an inclusive, safe, and respectful outcome.

## Beating

### Grip strength

If you have small hands, holding bludgers can be almost impossible, especially in rainy weather. Similar to holding a quaffle, the structural integrity of the bludger is slightly weaker around the pump hole so it can be easier to get a bit more grip by holding the bludger in that area. Other than that, the other main way to improve your hold of a bludger is to strengthen your grip. You can practice by repeatedly picking up a bludger with one hand (grabbing it from the top with wide-spread fingers), faking a throw, then dropping it. You can start out with less-inflated bludgers and move your way up as your grip strengthens. You can also find things at home you can use, like those squishy balls or hand grippers.

One way some players like to hold a bludger is to “crush” it into their palm, curling in their fingers. This is a good way to keep a firm grip on the ball when someone is trying to steal it from you or when you are deflecting a bludger thrown at you. It isn't the best way to hold it before throwing it, although your aim can be improved with practice.

### Throwing

If you can't effectively hold a bludger, throwing one might seem even more difficult. One way you can throw a bludger is by balancing it on your palm, like a waiter holding a tray. Mold your hand around the ball (don't keep your hand flat) and keep your fingers spread wide to give it at least some support.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=In76AoJFgbQ&list=PLXW3IvIcHfY\\_YurxfJLXVeQAe3pGZj2bq&index=2](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=In76AoJFgbQ&list=PLXW3IvIcHfY_YurxfJLXVeQAe3pGZj2bq&index=2)

When throwing, don't use only your arm. Arm muscles alone aren't very strong, so we must use our whole body to help provide power to the throw. *Twist* your whole **body** *sideways* together with your **arm** *out behind* you, keeping your **elbow** *slightly bent* and *pointing*

*downwards*, while you balance the bludger. This initial stance should have the **opposite foot** (from the throwing arm) *forward*, with that same **shoulder facing** the direction of your target. Put your *weight* onto your **back leg**. *Twist* your **hips** and **back forwards** while *bringing* your **shoulder forwards**. Continue by *bringing* your **arm forwards** while *lifting* your **palm** and *pushing* the bludger through the air (rather than waiter-balancing it) at about head-height. Your **chest** should now be *facing* your target, and you should *shift* all your **weight** onto your **front leg** as you *release* the bludger to provide that last bit of power. *Throw* at a slight *downwards* angle so that your **fingers** can still help keep the bludger in place. Make sure to *follow through* with the throw, ending with your **throwing arm pointing** in the direction of the feet of your target.

If you can hold a bludger, the throwing technique is similar to what is explained above, except you have more freedom of movement. You can bring your arm up higher in an arc, providing more power to the throw. Getting the ball high means gravity will help it on the way down to your target. You are also able to fake, which is an important part of beating.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5az13sxxWM&list=PLXW3lvIcHfY\\_YurxfJLXVeQAe3pGZj2bq&index=4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5az13sxxWM&list=PLXW3lvIcHfY_YurxfJLXVeQAe3pGZj2bq&index=4)

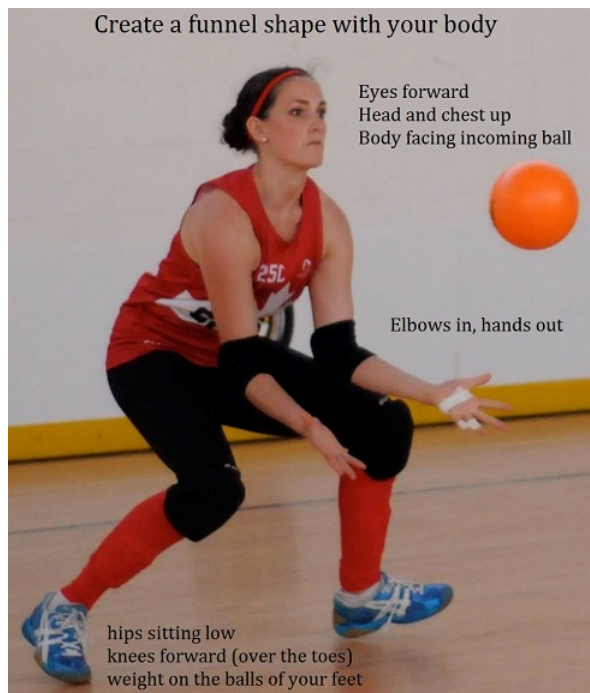
If an opposing beater is very close to you ready to catch your bludger when you throw it, don't throw at their chest, but rather at their fingertips. In a downwards motion with lots of power, they won't be able to catch your bludger when their fingers get beat. If a beater is relatively close to you, they can still catch your bludger if you throw at their chest. Basically, never throw at a beater's chest. It is better to aim for their legs/ankles.

When beating quaffle-less chasers who are close to you, you don't need a powerful throw. You might lose your bludger that way. Instead, calculate how much power you'll need so that the bludger will come back to you on the bounce-back, or at least so that it will stay close by. A quick tap is enough for a chaser who is right next to you. If a chaser is holding a quaffle and ready to deflect, aim at their legs/ankles.

## Catching

Catching a bludger is not the same as catching a quaffle. If you try using the "W" catching technique chasers use, the bludger will likely just bounce away, or you'll break a finger. Instead, you need to scoop the bludger into your chest, creating a sort of funnel then cradling the ball. Think of your upper body as a box, from your chest down to the top of your thighs: this is the area where you can most easily catch a bludger thrown at you; anywhere outside this box will require a lot more effort or you should simply dodge it. When a bludger is thrown at you at around chest height, let go of your broom (hold the broom with your thighs instead) and hold your arms bent in front of you, as if you're carrying a big pile of firewood. When the ball arrives, let it come into your chest and elbows, and close your upper arms over it in a scooping motion. If it was a strong throw, it helps to bend your body over the ball and jump back slightly to help reduce the momentum. Once you master this technique, you can try different variations of this hugging/scooping motion, such as not letting go of your broom. Keeping your knees bent and springy helps a lot in increasing your "box" area -- it is much easier to start lower and spring upwards if the bludger was thrown slightly high, than the other way around (bludger thrown close to your knees and you having to quickly bend down to catch it). Remember, as a beater you are not beat until the bludger

hits the ground, hits another person, or another beater grabs it out of the air. So even if it bounces upwards off you, you can still try to catch it.



## Up close

It is quite common for bludgerless beaters to get up close trying to steal a bludger from their opponent. If this is you, but you feel outmatched by your opponent, there are a few things you can do. Generally, if your opponent isn't urgently needed by their team, they might just want to quickly get rid of you, so be ready for a beat. You can try catching their bludger using the catching technique explained above, you can try dodging the beat, or you can slap that bludger away.

Dodging a beat is fairly self explanatory, but there are some under-used strategies that might come as a surprise to your opponent. If they are aiming high, you can duck at the last second by dropping low to the ground. If they are aiming low, which is more likely, then you can jump-dodge. For this, you need to be ready and bouncy on your toes, so the instant your opponent throws at your feet you can easily jump. Some people like to open their legs so the bludger goes between them, some people like to bend their knees upwards.

If catching or dodging don't seem like viable options and you will definitely get beat, that's fine, take the beat, but don't make it easy for your opponent. Have a hand out ready to slap that bludger away. Your hand will get beat, but you will use the ball's momentum to slap it away in another direction, which will highly upset your opponent. If you are feeling confident with this, you can try being strategic. Aim to hit the bludger in a direction which will most negatively affect the opposition, or even back to your own hoops.

Ghosting is also an option. That is when you sneak up behind your opponent and poke/grab the bludger out from their hand before they realise you're there. This isn't very easy, but

being small and less threatening comes as an advantage here, as you'll be underestimated. You'll need to pick the right moment and make sure they are distracted. There are many other tactics for getting control back that beater partners can do together, most of which are explained in the Quidditch Coaching Library.

## Texas/1.5/Napalm

Texas/1.5/Napalm refers to a beater play performed during offence when your team has two bludgers. To keep those bludgers safe, one offensive beater remains back (often at the midline or hoops) and their offensive beater partner runs towards the opposition with or without a bludger (if they have a bludger they will throw it back to their partner before engaging in the napalm). That offensive beater then tries to physically engage with the defensive beater who is holding a bludger to create a no-bludger situation for their team.

Generally, a napalm is done by the bigger, more experienced beaters, while the less confident ones (or the more defensive ones) are left to guard the hoops. If you feel like this is you and you are tired of being the one told to stay behind, ask your beater partner if you can be the one to go up for the napalm. It is likely that they don't consciously realise that they are always the one doing it, and will be more than happy to switch it up. However, if they say no, then there is a bigger problem you might have to talk to your captain about. During trainings, build up your napalm skills so that your team can see this is something you are committed to getting good at.

The whole point of a napalm is to distract and annoy the opposing beater so that your chasers have an easier time scoring without the beater threat. It doesn't really matter how you do it. The best thing to do is to get up close and be as annoying as possible. They'll likely have the bludgerless beater protecting them, so you'll have to get around them first. Be quick, step around them, shove them away. Once you get to the beater with the bludger, you can use all the strategies explained above such as catching, dodging or slapping it away. It doesn't matter if you get beat (as long as the bludger doesn't go straight back into the opponent's hands), that's the point, because now they have no bludgers and your team can score. If it doesn't look like the beater will throw at you because they are too intent on your chasers, keep being annoying. Pin their arm down, push them around, tackle them if you can, and if they throw at your chasers you should block it and "sacrifice yourself".

One thing that is important to remember is to communicate what you are doing with your chasers. A lot of the time, napalms don't work because chasers and beaters aren't communicating. Even if you do a great job, if your chasers don't realise it, you've lost your chance. Tell them what you are about to do and what they should watch for. Tell them to be ready and to take advantage of any distraction you create. You can also yell "go now!" or something when you are about to engage with your opponent.

## Snitch on pitch (also referred to as SOP)

Snitch on pitch beating in an in-range game is probably one of the hardest things beaters do. It involves a lot of running, strategizing and quick thinking. The important thing to remember is that the priority is to beat the seeker, rather than getting too distracted by beater play.

Even when facing up against an opposing beater, if their seeker is threatening, you need to beat that seeker quickly and later focus on the beater (unless you know you outmatch them and have enough time). Also try to avoid long beats. If a seeker is paying attention they can easily dodge, and long beats have a much higher chance of missing their target. Get up close and don't overdo it. If an opposing beater is nearby, you want to have as much control over your bludger as possible so that they can't steal it.

Keeping bludger control is very important, especially if you need to keep switching your focus between quaffle play and the snitch in an in-range game. In this case you'd usually have one beater on hoops helping the chasers, while the other is on the snitch. If both beaters (you and your partner) are on the snitch, try making a wall between the opposing seeker and the snitch, so that your seeker is fully protected and the other seeker can't get through.

If you don't have bludger control, you and your partner need to work together to steal a bludger. Again, remember that the most important thing is to stop the opposing seeker, and when they are running back to their hoops that is your opportunity to do something before they can get back. Sometimes your seeker will have to 'sacrifice' themselves so that you have a chance at stealing that thrown bludger, or you can use other techniques explained above to steal it.

## Defensive vs. Aggressive beating

It is quite common for the smaller beaters to be forced into a "defensive" playstyle, meaning they take less initiative/risks, stay back while their partner goes up to do the "cool stuff", are the ones always right next to the hoops in a protected space, etc. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. Many players prefer to play this way and in fact are much better playing this way because it matches their particular skill set. For example, if you are better at beating out the threatening wing players you might prefer to be the one closer to hoops, or if you are better at cleaning up and staying back because you have better game awareness, communication, are reliable, etc. Having beater partners who provide different playstyles is a great way to make sure the team is kept in check. Having two beaters who constantly take risks might not be a great strategy, but having two who never take initiative is also bound to fail.

It is important for captains to know what playstyle each beater prefers so that they can be efficiently partnered. Assuming playstyles based on someone's size, gender or athleticism is never ok. This knowledge must come from communication, not assumptions.

You might feel like you'd prefer playing the "other beater" every once in a while, or that you have simply been forced into a position you never really chose before you could even perfect your skill set. If this is the case, it is important to bring it up with your captains/coaches so that you can start practicing these new skills. Try out new things, take risks, don't worry about looking dumb. That is what training is for. Let your coaches/captains know what you are doing so that they can better support you and give you feedback. Ask more experienced teammates for advice. On game-day, make sure there is a plan in place so that you have been partnered with the correct beater and that the two of you know what the other is doing on pitch.

## Effective communication

Communication is one of the most important aspects of quidditch. The best teams out there are the ones that treat communication as an essential skill just as much as throwing hard beats. On offense, make sure to plan with your chasers what you are going to do. Plans need to be very simple and must have something in place in case they go wrong (which almost always happens). Tell your chasers what to watch for, what side to swing towards, etc. During the play, keep up the talk with your partner and with your chasers, saying things like “go now!”, “wait!”, “no bludgers!”, “I’m out, throw back!”

On defense, communicating with your beater partner is the priority. Make sure you know who is watching the quaffle, who is watching the opposing beaters, who is closer to hoops, if you get beat, if you need them to pass their bludger to you, etc. It is also important to listen to your chasers, because they will likely be making calls signaling when they have lost their mark or if a wing chaser is a threat. Tell your keeper if you are keeping an eye on a particular chaser so that they don’t have to split their attention even more.

Make sure you aren’t silent, but also try and figure out what information your team needs from you. That way, even if you don’t have the bludger or feel like you’re not doing anything important, you’re still helping your team become more aware of everything that is happening.

## Seeking



Figure 1: Schematic of snitch runner in yellow, and zones they control



## Useful definitions

It is worthwhile thinking about what zones of control a snitch runner has and how relatively comfortable they are with seekers in those zones. In seeking, the main goal is to catch the snitch tag attached to the back of the snitch shorts. The best way to go about it is to basically get your hips as close as you can to the snitch runner's hip. As such, as a seeker, you want to get to the yellow zone. Figure 1 shows the schematic that is set up as a cone of 120 degrees. The idea being that snitch runners can only really pay attention to that zone in front of them, more on that later in the snitching section.

The red is the zone that snitch runners can put their arm on seekers and control their movement i.e. push them to the ground. This is dangerous for the snitch runner, because it is the last zone before seekers reach the yellow zone, however it is actually relatively less worrying for most experienced snitch runners. The zone that is arguably more dangerous for the snitch runner is the black. This is denoted as starting from just out of reach of the snitch runner's arms, but still close enough that a sudden burst of speed would get the seekers in range of the snitch runner to catch. This zone is where the snitch runner cannot comfortably manipulate a seeker's movement without risking overcommitting or leaning forward too much, which then opens them up for a catch. It's not particularly useful to define a concrete end point for this zone that can be described to apply to all snitch runners, suffice to say it basically blurs into the last zone.

The last zone is in green, which is basically the zone where the snitch runner is most comfortable for seekers to be in, far away enough that they can react in time if a seeker suddenly starts running towards them. Notably, these zones differ in size from snitch runner to snitch runner, but function well enough as a guide.

## Defensive seeking

An often overlooked aspect of seeking which is no less important, but a lot less glamorous is defensive seeking. This refers to actively not catching the snitch and stopping the opposing seeker from catching to allow your team to score more quaffle points and get back in range of either overtime or winning. All snitch runners fall into 3 broad categories: the ones who are super mobile and will run circles around you, the ones who don't run but instead fight you with physicality, and lastly snitch runners that are a varying mix of both. For defensive seeking, however, the only thing to be considered is whether or not the snitch runner is mobile. The basic premise of defensive seeking is to be between the snitch runner and the opposing seeker. Since both you and the snitch runner are defending against the opposing seeker, the snitch runner should almost always have their torso facing the opposing seeker. The goal here is to have your body be in the way of the offensive seeker and the snitch runner such that there is no way for the offensive seeker to be able to reach the snitch tag. Note that you want to strike the balance between being as close you can manage to the

snitch runner without being dismounted by the snitch runner or sidestepped by the opposing seeker.

If the snitch runner is the type to move around a lot, it is more advisable to face them while hand fighting (explained later) and constantly moving into the red zone to box out the opposing seeker and keeping them in the black zone. This is because it's a lot easier to follow the snitch runner this way instead of keeping your back to them. The hand fighting and moving into the red zone essentially claims the space right in front of the snitch runner and leaves the opposing seeker with no room to maneuver to get close to the snitch tag barring the snitch runner losing track of them and they get a sneaky catch.

For snitch runners who don't move around but instead stay planted, the common approach is to keep your back to the snitch runner and your torso facing the opposing seeker. Your torso should face the opposing seeker regardless of wherever they move to in this case. Keep one arm on your broom and bodyblock opposing seeker with the other arm outstretched. In the absence of opposing seekers, the position you set up between yourself and the snitch runner will depend on your grip strength and how well you think you can match up against the snitch runner dismounting you. In general, to be effective, you will want to be deep in the red zone or in the middle of the black zone. If your matchup against the snitch runner is such that you won't be dismounted by the snitch runner easily, you can opt to be very close to the snitch runner, usually resulting in the snitch runner grabbing hold of your broom. The advantage is given how close you are, if your team comes in range of quaffle points for an overtime catch or catch to win, you can in principle fake and spin to catch easily. Alternatively, you can also be in the black zone, where the snitch runner can't comfortably reach you. The advantage is that you are less easily dismounted, keeping the time where the snitch runner is unguarded to a minimum barring getting beat out.

The above was discussed in the context of opposing seekers being removed from play, e.g. they were sent back to hoops. This is obviously not the case most of the time, since opposing seekers will want to catch to win. If you have set up very close to the snitch runner, there's not much to add except to be in the way. Keep in mind, if long enough an arm, the opposing seeker can catch anyway. (e.g. this shenaniganry from LQC seeker Jonathon Purvis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FIZd5VpDATA&t=23m>).

If you're in the latter set up of being in the black zone, you can now dictate when and where you make contact with the opposing seeker. A very good example is team UK seeker Alex Walker at the semifinals at IQA World Cup 2018 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl9JJiQYGj0>). At multiple points, she either engages deep in the red zone, or walks up to team USA seeker Harry Greenhouse and Tyler Trudeau in the black zone or even outside of it. One thing to note here is that this approach requires a lot of athletic footwork, because if you are sidestepped by the opposing seeker, you are now behind the opposing seeker and unable to defend effectively. This approach is quite worthwhile if up against a seeker who's agility is less than yours, as seen when Carpenter effectively shuts out Trudeau by giving him no room to start running (at 37m5s and 38m40s). Greenhouse, on the other hand, makes Carpenter work for her defense, as he is much more well matched with her in terms of agility. However, she still manages to keep an arm outstretched, so he still can't engage the snitch runner directly (at 30m18s)

Practise with drill from TUK, link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7ZboHPta2c>

Alternatively, there is the approach used by team UK seeker Franky Kempster, who instead stands in a way as shown in figure 2.

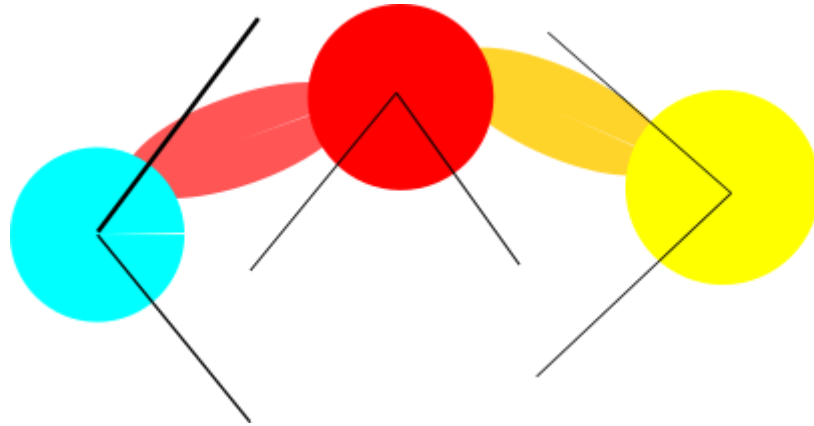


Figure 2: Schematic of Kempster's defensive seeking approach. The cones drawn out by the lines represent the direction each person above is facing. Yellow signifies the snitch runner, who has an arm on the defensive seeker in red. The defensive seeker has a hand on the offensive seeker in blue.

Kempster instead keeps an arm on opposing seekers when they get close, and typically stays on the edge of the black zone and red zone. She positions her torso sideways as shown in figure 2 above, while keeping both the snitch runner and the seeker in her view. This gives her a lot of freedom to move and adapt. For instance, if the snitch runner moves out of her way to give the opposing seeker a go, she can immediately adapt to it. If you were using the approach detailed above, you wouldn't necessarily know where the snitch runner moves to unless they have a hand on your back. It also gives Franky the ability to immediately move into the path of the opposing seeker. Examples of this are shown in the same semifinals game at IQA World Cup 2018 as before (link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl9JJiQYGj0>), this time at 33m30s and 34m11s against Harry Greenhouse and at 39m19s, 39m35s and 34m11s against Jayke Archibald. In particular, at 39m19s because she has an arm on Archibald, when he dove for the snitch tag, she held a stiff arm on his shoulder and effectively guided him to the ground before he came anywhere near the snitch tag.

## Catching the snitch

The more exciting bit of the position: catching the snitch and ending the game and all the glory and rush that comes with. **Typically**, you want to bring as much intensity as possible. The only exception to this being if the snitch runner has their arms on you and you want to lure them into a false sense of security. **Never** wait for your turn to run at the snitch runner. To start with, the snitch tag is the goal and is hanging off the back of the shorts of a snitch

runner. We'll start with the general intermediate steps to get to the snitch tag, and with those established we'll move on to how to actually accomplish them.

Working backwards from the end goal of catching the snitch, the first thing would be to get your hips as close to the snitch runner's hip as possible. If your hips aren't close enough, even if you manage to get the snitch runner's hands out the way, you might be unable to reach the snitch tag if there is still an arm's length between your torso and the snitch runner's torso.

So how do you manage to get your hips close? Ideally, get the snitch runner's hands out of the way. The most common way is hand-fighting, which involves swatting the snitch runner's hands out of the way with your own without grabbing them. Another way is to use the timeless technique of sneaky catches. The common theme here is to create split second opportunities. Put the snitch runner off balance by hand-fighting, or get them to overcommit on pushing you back to get them to lose balance, or just get them tired and lose focus to open up a catch opportunity. Whatever works to get the snitch runner to make a mistake.

### The how

First, a general disclaimer: this is just a general guide written based on the experiences of a smaller bodied seeker and snitch runner. There are multiple ways to win in Quidditch, the ideas listed are not 'follow-these-steps-to-guarantee-snitch-catch', they are just starting points for newer seekers, ideally also smaller bodied or less muscular seekers to think about how they can improve their technique.

The special case first, and one that I admittedly don't use often: the sneaky catch. Usually, snitch runners will try to keep you and the other seeker in sight, but they get tired, or distracted, or both after a while. You basically want the snitch runner to take their eyes off you, a typical way is to wait for the seeker to engage with the snitch runner. As shown in figure 3 below, placing yourself to the side of the snitch runner is usually easier to move out of the snitch runner's view as soon as the opposing seeker engages the snitch runner. Once there, sprint in from behind the snitch runner to catch.

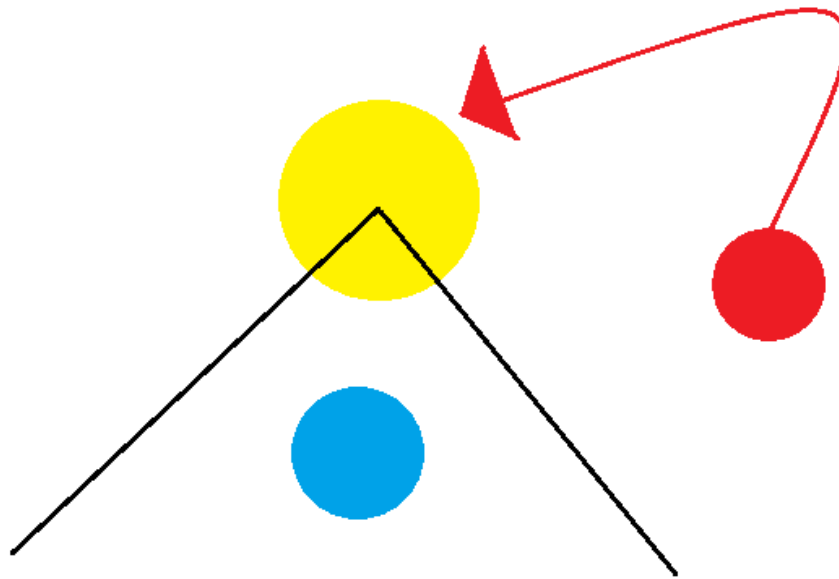


Figure 3: Schematic of sneaky catches. Yellow is seeker, Black cone lines is where the snitch runner's torso is facing, red is sneaky catcher, blue is opposing seeker.

Now, aside from the special case of the sneaky catch, generally you always want to approach the snitch runner in a way that forces them into your team's half of the pitch. The reason being if you approach them along the midline as most snitch runners tend to enjoy staying on, you risk the snitch runner losing track of the other seeker (which opens up for the opposing seeker to do a sneaky catch!), or if you dive for the snitch runner but don't catch, you now give the opposing seeker time and chances to catch the snitch runner. Additionally, the mentality of most snitch runners to be fair to both sides means by staying in the middle of the pitch, they have one thing less to worry about. By forcing the snitch runners off the middle, you essentially bring the fairness aspect to the snitch runner's mind and that can potentially cause a mistake to be made and an opportunity to catch. Typically, you can force the snitch runner into your half by going into your opponent's half of the field, and then approach the snitch runner while facing the hoops you're defending.

For the more mobile snitch runners who choose to turn around to run away every time you get close, a good approach would be to attempt to dive and catch in the split second they turn around to start running (long limbs can help immensely. RIP Zoe Cheong as snitch runner vs seeker Cameron Walker and his long arms at QUAFL 2019). Similarly, if you have quicker instantaneous acceleration than the snitch runner, you can catch up to them for a grab before they turn around. This variant of snitch runner can also be caught by a simple matter of numbers: your team can substitute out seekers, but the snitch runner doesn't, unless they get injured. So another viable option is to sprint at them repeatedly until they get tired and slow down enough to be caught.

A subsection of this group would be snitch runners that constantly maintain a distance between themselves and you, typically they force you to stay on the edge of the black zone

or in the green zone illustrated in figure 1. They retreat faster as you approach them quicker, and retreat slowly as you slowly approach them. These snitch runners typically retreat along the midline of the field, slowing down as they get close to the pitch boundary and sprinting off to the other end when they get close. For these snitch runners, an idea would be to approach them at a jog to force them to retreat at a reasonable pace (assuming no bludgers around) and quickly close the distance the moment they slow down due to hitting the boundary or for whatever other reason.

A similar variation is the snitch runner that retreats using your momentum. The idea is that as a snitch runner, you hold your arms out to block incoming seekers with slightly bent elbows. The seekers will run at you to catch the snitch tag, and the moment they come into contact with your hands you push off of their momentum and hop backwards which conserves energy. Since this technique relies on the seeker's momentum to be effective, a suggested workaround is to walk or jog slowly up to the edge of the black zone and the red zone. From there, you basically want the snitch runner to make a mistake and be off balance. One idea would be to start from the edge of the black zone and tilt your body slightly into the red zone or fake that you're about to sprint at the snitch runner. The snitch runner reacting to this might push you back while not moving or try to steal your momentum and hop back. Regardless, the moment the snitch runner makes contact with your torso, lean backwards. The snitch runner now has to reach forwards to complete their movement and are now off balance. Alternatively, if you as the seeker are of average build and the snitch runner is smaller than you are, you can also jog up to them right into the black zone, and just hold your ground as the snitch runner tries to push you. If the snitch runner doesn't manage to move you, they are now off balance and the split second opportunity for a catch opens up.

Now if the snitch runner isn't super mobile, they'll likely be the type who grabs a hold of you and limits your movement, or they'll try to throw you to the ground. Let's talk about the former first. If you get your wrists grabbed, just retreat, there isn't any good way of getting out of it barring being much stronger than the snitch runner. Even more so with brooms getting held onto by a snitch runner, and especially if the snitch runner holds your broom from behind you while you're trying to catch. If the snitch runner doesn't let you retreat/pull out your broom completely, just dismount yourself and tag back in.

Now in general, snitches will try to hold you from anywhere on your shoulders to on your biceps near your elbow. To get around this, you want to hand fight and break their grip, in general there are many ways to achieve that. If the snitch runner is grabbing your shoulders or chest, you can bring your arms up and around to break the grip like a butterfly stroke while swimming. Note that this case is specifically for when the snitch runner has their hands in the region between your shoulder joint and your neck. In addition, you should make contact on the inside of the snitch runner's elbows (medically referred to as antecubital fossa for easy googling). The goal behind targeting that area is to be able to force the snitch runner's arm away, regardless of the difference in strength.

Snitch runners can also grab you by your biceps, and where they put their arms actually matters somewhat. If they grab you in the region starting from above halfway your bicep to your shoulder joint, first, lean forwards and force the snitch runner to take more of your

weight if they want to keep holding on to you. Then, suddenly take the weight back on your feet. The snitch runner will now be off balance if you've leant on them with enough of your own weight to get them to be moving slightly towards you as you take the weight back. In that split second, bring one of your arms up as if you were answering your phone with the other holding your broom. Keep your palm open, and meet the snitch runner's arm with the space between your thumb and index finger. This forces the snitch runner's arm off you, and now lunge or dive and bring your arm down in the same motion to go for the catch. A bad example of this can be found here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nU\\_o8D9QOqE&t=1m10s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nU_o8D9QOqE&t=1m10s) , but keep in mind that the seeker in the video grabs on the snitch's arm, which isn't allowed.

Lastly, snitch runners can also grab you in the region between your elbow and halfway up your bicep, flex your elbow to bring your forearm inside the grip. Then, move your arm up and forwards, making contact at the snitch runner's wrists this time. It's akin to making a V shape with your arms. If done with enough sudden force, the snitch runner should be off balance and arms wide out, unable to guard effectively against a catch attempt. Notably, if there isn't a big enough difference in arm strength between yourself and the snitch runner, you can also use the leaning technique mentioned in the previous paragraph.

If the snitch runner is the type to throw you to the ground, or even if as discussed above they enjoy grabbing a hold of your arms as a seeker, a good way to approach it is stay on the edge between the black zone and the red zone, as mentioned in the paragraph above discussing snitch runners that retreat using your momentum. Similar to that, by tilting your torso forward to tempt the snitch runner to grab you, and leaning back the moment they try to grab on to you, you have now potentially created a split second where the snitch runner is off balance and you can go for the catch.

If there is a defensive seeker in front of you, then how you get past them will depend on where they are facing. If the defensive seeker has their torso toward the snitch runner, the best way to get them out the way would be to box them out from the side. Keep in mind that accidental charging can sometimes occur from this, and depends on the severity/intent you might be sent back to hoops or blue-carded for repeated infringements. When the seeker has their torso towards you and their back to the snitch runner, there are two ways to approach this and the effectiveness will differ from case to case. The first way would be to be super athletic and fake to the defensive seeker out and step them at the last minute, preferably with speed. This is especially effective for cases when the snitch runner has some space between themselves and the defensive seeker.

The other approach is to spin around the defensive seeker out. A good start to practice this is to keep your torso perpendicular to the way defensive seeker. Move the foot closer to the defensive seeker planted slightly further towards them and the snitch runner, away from the way your torso face and not between the legs of the defensive seeker. Spin 270 degrees by pivoting on this foot and your body as well as your broom will have effectively put the defensive seeker behind you, leaving the snitch runner available to be engaged. More advanced forms of this would be to fake a catch with your hand that is closer to the defensive seeker to reach for the snitch runner. Since the defensive seeker can't see where the snitch runner is, they might try to move to guard that and make the maneuver easier. If

you're able to reach past the snitch runner in the same movement, a great move is to face the snitch runner with your torso facing them, and fake a lunge on the opposite side from the leg you want to pivot on, then pivot on closer foot and spin and dive for catch.

Now, those were very specific and idealistic scenarios, and in seeking (and in quidditch!) there's no absolute right way to do things. If one trick fails, try another. Keep the same intensity up while attempting to catch the snitch and sub out if you're tired. Now, below are a list of generally useful things to keep in the back of your head as options.

First, a commonly used tactic when sprinting at retreating snitch runners is moving your arm around. It's unlikely that it will actually be able to distract snitch runners, but sometimes it can give you just a split second where the snitch runner is able to be caught when you smack the snitch runner's hand out of the way.. This only really works if the snitch runner doesn't have a solid grab on your arms. With one arm on your broom, draw circles with your wrist by pivoting with your elbow and shoulder in quick motion. This can also be used to fight off snitch runner's hands, which if done successfully can create a catching opportunity.

Next, Use quick hand changes. For example, get the snitch runner into the rhythm of expecting your right hand attempting to grab. Then, create a sudden change by faking with your right arm but then using your left arm for the catch to throw the snitch runner off balance.

Diving for the snitch tag is a good tactic especially for smaller bodied seekers to get more reach. This can be combined with the lunging for a catch in the scenarios above and even combined with quick hand changes. However, keep in mind that if the snitch runner is too preoccupied by you diving, they may lose track of the other seeker and be caught by the sneaky catch. In addition, diving can sometimes leave the snitch runner wide open to be engaged by the other seeker if you don't catch, and in close games that could be the difference between a win or a loss.

Another one would be the wriggly worm. Keep constant movement of your shoulders by shaking it back and forth and adjust the height of your shoulders to make it hard for the snitch runner to get a stable grip. This method requires quite a bit of athleticism, but is quite hard to defend against due to the relentless at the snitch runner and often opens up catching opportunities if done fast enough repeatedly.

This next technique mentioned requires much smaller strength difference between the snitch runner and the offensive seeker, but works very well if done right. The idea is to come in with the snitch runner have their hands on your shoulders, and to break the hold you make a V with your arms. By bring your hands inside of the snitch runner's arms, bring your arms straight up, contacting at the antecubital fossa, then slice down and out. The idea is to get the snitch runner off balance and pin their arm in whilst going for the snitch tag.

Lastly, approach with a torso tilted to the side and lead with your shoulder instead of having your torso facing the snitch directly. The snitch runner will realistically only have one hand up to grab the shoulder that's closest to them and is much easier to manage. Typically, its very easy to pivot your arm on your shoulder joint to draw a circle with your hand and swat the



snitch runner's arm away (contact at the antecubital fossa!) and go for a catch. There's also the possibility that the snitch runner will move to close the gap and grab onto the shoulder you've kept back. If the snitch overreaches, this also opens up a split second opportunity to go for the catch.

Another thing to take into consideration, and this is also quite applicable to other positions as well: Consider how you match up against the opposing seeker and the snitch. Are you stronger than them? Are you faster than them? This will greatly influence the best approach to the situation. For example, as a seeker trying to catch, if the snitch runner is the type to hold onto you instead of pushing away, then a better strategy would be to let them grab a hold of you, lean and make them take your weight before moving for the catch. If they push you away, leaning forward with your torso to tempt the snitch runner to push before leaning back at the same time they make contact with your torso would keep the snitch runner off balance. Notably, be aware of how small you are relative to the snitch runner. The smaller you are, the easier it is for the snitch runner to dismount (even by reaching over you!) or manipulate your movement. However, this makes you more agile than the snitch runner, so stutter steps in conundrum with quick hand changes would be a good approach for this case.

## Snitching

The following is written with smaller-bodied or less experienced snitch runners in mind, which are typically comprised of women and non-binary folk. However, the suggestions here can apply to snitch runners of all abilities.

As a snitch runner, you basically want to prevent seekers from catching as well as be as fair and impartial as possible to both teams. This, in my opinion, does not necessarily translate well to the metric most players use for quality of snitch runners: length of time a snitch runner remains uncaught. For example, in an in-range game against very accomplished seekers on both teams, it is quite possible for the snitch runner to get caught in the first 5 minutes of seeker floor. A counter-example to this would be a snitch who holds onto a defensive seeker for half an hour worth of seeker floor just to remain uncaught. I'd argue that at least some effort should be made on the snitch runner's part to dismount or move around the defensive seeker to let the offensive seeker have a fair chance.

Now, in general, snitch runners basically want to do the opposite of what offensive seekers mentioned above do. When engaging seekers, keep your hips as far back as comfortable without losing mobility to increase the distance the seeker has to traverse to grab the snitch tag. Typically, this is done by keeping your core engaged, and your hips and knees slightly bent. In addition, if you decide to run away from the seekers, you must ensure that you are sprinting at maximum speed to put as much distance between yourself and the seekers. Note that if you turn around at the wrong time, the seekers can catch the tag if they are close enough. Lastly, when engaging the seekers, you should not overextend yourself. If you reach too far forward, there is a split second when you are off balance and that's enough time most top tier seekers require for a catch.

Snitch runners should also be aware of where both seekers are at any time, if both seekers are in the green zone (see Fig. 1), pointing at both of them is a good way to keep track of them. When facing two seekers coming from two opposite directions, it is imperative that you stack them. The idea is to move in such a way that you form a straight line with yourself and the two seekers, such that you only have to deal with one seeker at any given point in time. This massively reduces the chances of being caught as you no longer need to guard against the seekers coming in at two directions.

To conserve energy while snitching, a good tactic is to steal the seeker's momentum. As discussed previously from a seeker perspective, the basics of it is that you hold your arms out to block incoming seekers with slightly bent elbows and keep your weight on the front of your foot to be ready to move at a moment's notice. The seekers will run at you to catch the snitch tag, and the moment they come into contact with your hands you straighten your arms and push off of their momentum and hop backwards to maintain distance while conserving energy. Note that it is preferable to keep your thumb close to your palm when you push off, as this lowers the risk of injuring your thumb by having it point in a weird way when making contact with the seeker. This technique is something snitches of all abilities can make use of, but it is much more effective if a smaller snitch runner does it to a bigger seeker, as they will be able to hop backwards a larger distance with the momentum.

The workaround to this from a seeker perspective would be that they walk up slowly to you and you can't steal their momentum as effectively. In this case, it is preferable to wait until they start getting close enough that you as a snitch runner can reach comfortably without overextending, then give the seeker a palm to their shoulder with moderate force. That is enough to momentarily stun the seekers from continuing their movement and gives you time to move backwards as well.

Lastly, guiding seekers to the ground, or at least getting them to turn with you. If the seeker is running at you and dives for a catch, you can just move out the way and guide them to the ground by keeping your hands on their shoulders. Basically, whichever hand the seeker reaches for the catch, you want to spin away from it to keep your snitch tag safe. If you've been retreating and have hit the boundary, then you'd want to turn and a good way is to grab the seeker with you (assuming there's only one of them there.) Grab a hold of the outstretched hand they have to catch, and with your other hand grab their broom. Then spin away from the outstretched hand, and in the same motion you're effectively pulling the seeker into the space you were just occupying while moving to occupy the space the seeker was just in, and you can even drag their arm and broom downwards to try to get them to fall over.

Now for smaller bodied snitch runners in particular, seekers will try to reach over you. The only advice I have for that would be to palm the seekers at their shoulder/armpit region to stop the motion, as this maximises your chances of stopping them. If you go for their arm instead, it's very easy for them to break the hold and move to catch before you have time to react.

In general, as a snitch runner you should also know your opponents. Is the seeker faster than you? More agile? Stronger than you? Smaller than you? If they are faster and more

agile, you might want to keep a hold on them at all times to limit that advantage; if they are stronger, be sure to keep your distance; if they are smaller be sure to not lose track of them and allow for sneaky catches from them.

Last but most importantly, practice. Put your hand up to be a snitch runner when your team reps ask. For NSW players in particular, join the QNSW snitches facebook group which was heavily used by the QNSW board to schedule snitch runners. For the broader Australian community, join the facebook group Australian Snitch Corps where Dropbear, snitch master, all around teddy bear of a human Dameon Osborn has put up many tactics to think about while snitching. If you're not as confident, ask for friendly games at the start of the year or during scratch matches at training sessions. Snitching at tournament games is how you gain experience and improve yourself as a snitch runner. If everything fails, just step on pitch with the yellow shorts and have a sprint around the pitch to get a feel for the rush of being a snitch.

## Practice drills

### Chasing/Keeping

#### Throwing and catching

Any drills that involve passing a quaffle around will also help with these basic skills. However, if you feel like you need more practice, do some repetitive passing and catching until you feel more confident. Start easy by being stationary, then increase the distance, then try running, catching at different heights, and add more and more variations.

#### Catching basics

Set up: set up a line of 5 cones spaced roughly 8m apart. Make a line of chasers behind the first cone. Place a player with a quaffle at cones 3, 4 and 5.

Focus: to practice the different ways of catching a quaffle.

Activity: chasers must run from cone to cone catching quaffles thrown at different angles. The first one is an alley pass (passed from the player at cone #3), the second a chest pass, and the third a roll pass. The chaser must run from cone 1 to cone 2, and at cone 2 they must jump to receive an alley pass. When doing this, players should practice running with their hand up to serve as a target, and when jumping they should pin their thighs together to hold the broom, and try to jump while maintaining forward momentum (rather than stopping, jumping in place, landing, then running again). Then they pass the quaffle back to the person who threw at them and continue to the next cone, where they receive a chest pass, then they pass back. Then they run to the last cone where they will receive a roll pass, and they must bend by the knees bringing their broom hand down and pick up the ball with TWO HANDS, while keeping one leg behind them (this position, as opposed to a stationary open-legged stance, not only creates a foot-barrier should the ball roll past their hands, but also allows the player to maintain their running momentum and push off that back leg).

## Alleys

Set up: Two cones set around 10-15m apart, with a line of people behind.

Focus: Long passes and alley catches

Activity: person 1 with a quaffle throws a long pass to person 2 on the other side, then begins running up towards them. Person 2 passes back, aiming to make the push-pass go diagonally upwards as an alley, so person 1 must jump to catch it. After catching the alley, person 1 should try to pass back to person 2 in midair.

## Volleyball tap

Set up: Two cones set around 4m apart, with players behind each.

Focus: quickly tapping back a quaffle before a bludger hits you

Activity: players must pass the ball to each other and volleyball-tap it back. You can make this more challenging by incorporating beaters close to the centre that will fake and “scare” the person who is making the tap-pass.

Progression: this can be done while moving rather than stationary using a set up similar to the alley passing drill.

## Stepping

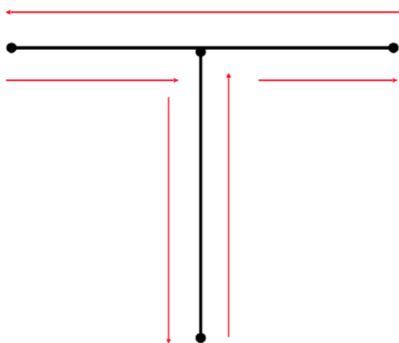
### T-sprints

Set up: create a ‘T’ of cones. Each line should be ~10m in length.

Focus: Stepping hard off the outside foot and changing direction explosively.

Activity: Stand at the base of the T in a ready position. On “go” sprint forwards as fast as possible to the top of the T. Side step right until you reach the right-hand cone. Immediately sidestep left until you reach the furthest left-hand cone. Sidestep right until you reach the middle. Turn and sprint back to the base of the T, making sure to spring through the line.

Progression: Start with no broom, move to with broom. Can time runs for individual challenge or competition.



## Stepping

Set up: make a large Y shape with cones. Have a quaffle.

Focus: learning how to effectively step/fake someone.

Activity: the ball carrier begins at the bottom of the Y, sprints up to the middle cone, and steps a person who is standing there. The ball carrier should focus on lunging one way, then

exploding off the outer foot to change directions quickly. They should keep sprinting until they reach the final cone, rather than stepping and immediately stopping. They should also learn to gauge the correct distance to begin a step, not too close and not too far from the defensive player.

Progression: the ball carrier should try different stepping techniques other than the simple “lunge one way and explode the other way”. The basketball “jump”, the spin, the windmill, reverse windmill, double step, are all techniques which can be practiced until players find their preferred method of stepping. Faking should also be included in this drill, as stepping while faking is A LOT more effective. Players should aim to practice getting the coordination right, between stepping and faking at the same time. When faking, the aim is to use one’s whole body language to trick the defensive player into thinking the ball carrier will pass/run one way; this means eyes, hips, feet, throwing arm, and even calling someone’s name (as if about to pass to them) are all techniques which should be included in this drill.

### Side to side 1v1

Set up: set up two cones, 50-80cm apart. Set up another pair 3m away from the first pair.

You should have two pairs of cones, like this:

O O            O O

Focus: learning how to psych out the player who is marking you by faking, twisting your legs and hips, and getting away from them. The defender has to learn to read body language and be quick at reacting to the opposition’s movement.

Activity: in pairs, players begin in the centre of the line facing each other. One player is on offence, the other on defense. The player on offense needs to get away from their mark and touch one of the **outer** cones before the defensive player can react and touch the corresponding **inner** cone. The winner is the person who touches a cone first. Repeat 3-5 times, then swap roles/cycle people out.

### Tag/Tips

Play a game of tag/tips in a designated area and everyone should focus on quick movement, split-second direction changes and stepping.

### Picks/Screens

#### Simple on-ball picks

In groups of three, practice setting picks on each other while a ball-carrier uses the pick to run by. Start slow to get the technique, then increase the speed and difficulty.

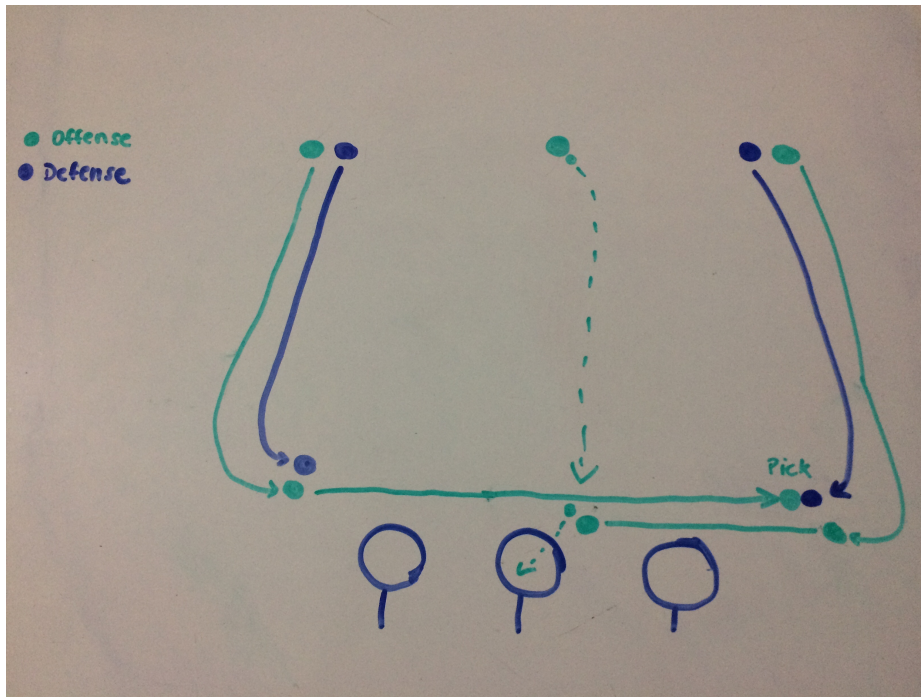
#### Off ball picks

Set up: hoops, one quaffle, and cones. One cone at the centre at about 15m from hoops, where a distributor will be stationary. Two cones next to each other at either side (roughly 5 metres away from centre). The outermost cone is for the offensive player, the inside cone if for the defensive player. So, in the end you will have 2 defensive players marking an

offensive player each, and an offensive stationary ball carrier whose only job is to pass a quaffle.

Focus: setting off-ball picks, getting away from your mark, cutting into hoops, calling for a pass.

Activity: the two outer offensive players need to jog up to the hoop line and try to drag out their defensive players before making a cut into hoops. They set picks for each other in order to free one of them up, to be ready for a pass. They must call for the pass.



## Contact

Practice all the different forms of contact explained in the Tips section (going for the ball arm, going for the leg) one on one until you feel confident. Incorporate these skills into any other more complex contact drills.

### Wrapping progression

Set up: split into groups of two or three, with one quaffle per group.

Focus: starting at the simplest form of contact then progressing to higher difficulty.

Activity: the first step is to get people used to pushing/shoving the ball carrier. The ball carrier can jog up to the defensive player, whose aim is to push them sideways away from the hoops. The defensive player should switch arms as the ball carrier switches directions (i.e. if the ball carrier is moving to the defensive player's left, the defensive player should use their right hand to keep pushing them in that direction, as well as away from the hoops. Then if the ball carrier begins moving the other way, the defensive player should switch arms). The next step is to effectively wrap. The ball carrier begins by walking up to the defensive player, who wraps them, aiming to pin down the ball arm. Once the wrap is firm, the defensive player can push them away from hoops. This should be progressed by increasing the speed at which the ball carrier approaches the defensive player. Lastly, this can be done at a run, and the ball carrier can try to step and get away from the defensive player.

## Tackling box

Set up: Create a small square; ~2x2m with cones. Multiple squares are needed for larger groups. Assign ~4-5ppl per square.

Focus: To try to push/slow down/take down the ball carrier in the square. Useful for 1.5s, marking, tackling.

Activity: Two people in the square, one with a ball. The aim of the drill is to push a person with a quaffle or bludger out of the square, take them to the ground, or strip the ball off them. The tackling player gets ~10secs to do this successfully. Ball carrier rotates out, tackler stays in, repeat.

Teaching points: use people's momentum to push them out. Grab and fall. Stripping the ball is effective against all size players.

## Boxing out

Set up: Groups of 3, 1 quaffle per group. Brooms.

Focus: To practice boxing out another player while running for a ball.

Activity: 2 players on brooms stand next to each other facing the third who has the quaffle. The 2 players close their eyes and the quaffle carrier throws the ball in a random direction (ideally behind the other 2 players. On "GO", the 2 players open their eyes and accelerate to try to get to the ball before the other. They should aim to box out the other player while running for the ball to ensure they get it first.

## Scoring through one person on hoops

Set up: hoops, one cone for ball carriers set diagonally roughly 5m from the outer hoop. A line of distributors waits behind the cone. One wing player stands behind and close to the outer hoop (same side as the ball carrier) waiting for a pass that would generally be a quick catch and dunk. A keeper stands in front of the hoops, between the middle and outer hoop.

Focus: scoring through a keeper/chaser on hoops. This is specifically helpful for smaller players, gaining confidence in scoring on bigger players.

Activity: The distributor must pass the quaffle to their teammate who is right by the hoop. Once the pass reaches them, the keeper must do all they can to stop the goal. As they are on opposite sides, this generally means blocking with their hand through the hoop. If this is the case, the ball carrier should use their free hand to shove the keeper's hand away and score. The ball carrier can also fake at that hoop, then score on the middle one. The keeper can also try to move quickly behind the hoops, defending more effectively. The ball carrier must fake, drive through, and do anything they can to score.

## Beating

### Grip strength

Using a bludger: pick up, fake, drop, repeat.

## Catching and throwing

With a partner, throw the bludger back and forth, starting light then progressing the power of the throws. Make sure to bring the bludger into your body so that it hits your chest and your arms are bent under/around it. Increase the distance, try at a run, make it more and more difficult to hone both catching and throwing skills.

### Beater Basics

Set up: 4 cones, roughly 2-3m apart in a line.

Focus: practice different beating skills repetitively.

Activity: People stand in line behind the first cone. One person will move through the other three cones. First, they will attempt to catch a bludger thrown at them (or dodge if it doesn't go straight at them). After a few tries they move on to the next cone, where they must deflect a bludger thrown at them (by someone on the first cone) using a bludger, holding it either with one or two hands and trying not to drop it. On the last cone, they must have their back to the group and move side-to-side, while the person on the first cone gets a target practice, trying to beat them as they move sideways.

Progression: "catching" cone: start without a bludger → hold a bludger and drop it before catching the one thrown at you. "Jumping" cone: add an extra cone right next to the throwing one, in which the beater must jump over a bludger thrown at their feet at close quarters.

### Throwbacks

Set up: Ideally a hoop and cone, can be two cones

Focus: Throw-back accuracy

Activity: Beater stands with back to hoops and throws a series of bludgers backwards and aims to have the bludger reach the middle hoop and stop nearby.

Progression: Throw the bludger backwards and then have to run after it (teaches accuracy when you have to get tired from running).

Alternatively: Same set-up except the beater runs away from hoops and throws the bludger backwards, second beater runs forward and picks it up, keeps running and throws it backwards.

### Firing Range

Set up: 3 beaters w/ bludgers, one without standing about 1.5m away

Focus: Catching bludgers

Activity: The beater without a bludger (Beater A) stands facing away. Silently, the other beaters determine who will throw their bludger, while the other two fake. One beater yells 3, 2, 1, fire! And Beater A turns and must try to catch the bludger thrown at them.

### Texas

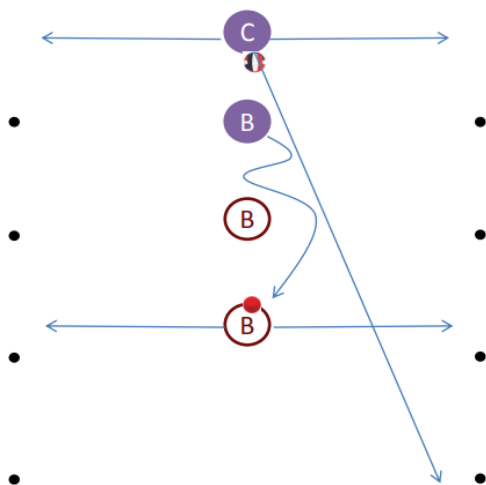
Set up: 4 participants: 3 beaters, two on defence in island w/ one bludger, one offence, and a "chaser".

Focus: Teaching texas, getting comfortable with contact

Activity:



- The defense has one bludger, they will be referred to as A and B, where A has the bludger and B is at the top of the island defence. Beater C's (on offense) aim is to tackle A and therefore take the bludger out of play (in a real game opening up an opportunity for their team's chasers).
- A will be focusing on the quaffle and chaser, moving to either side of the hoops and also keeping in mind they want to make B's job easier by keeping them in between themselves and C. Note: watch for coming out too far from hoops and clumping too close to B.
- Beater B's aim is to keep C away from A. The aim is to keep C in the area between your head and arm. The arm must be kept straight (note: not straight out) and can be switched to your left or right arm. When B believes they are about to lose C, they call "break" and A will pass the bludger to B. B will then take up defensive beating and A will defend them.
- Chaser holds the quaffle and pretends to be a threat, they stroll towards hoops and as the drill progresses can potentially run into hoops to do dunks (however, this is not the aim or focus of the drill).
- Progression: Begin with Beater's A and C, and the chaser. Teach ideal tackle technique and have a few step-throughs. Ideal tackle technique should involve pinning the beater's throwing arm/otherwise taking them out of play, and potentially taking them to the floor, this last varies. Then introduce B and have them practice defending and making calls. As this progresses, allow the chaser to make more obvious fakes rather than just strolling in a line parallel to hoops.



## Snitch on Pitch

### King of the Hill

Set up: hoops on either side of the pitch, a 2x2m square on the midline. 3 bludgers.

Focus: beaters must protect their seeker while also beating out the opposing seeker.

Activity: there are two beaters and a seeker on each side. They all begin from their hoop line. The seekers must run to and remain inside the square without being beat out for 20 seconds. Beaters must work together to eliminate the opposing seeker while also protecting their own.