

HOCKEY.

A SPLENDID GAME FOR GIRLS.

BY E. M. ROBSON, HON. SEC. ALL ENGLAND WOMEN'S HOCKEY ASSOCIATION.

PERHAPS no game has ever been taken up with such keenness by girls as hockey. The reason for this growing popularity of the game is not far to seek. It provides plenty of amusement and excitement, and is in addition a splendid form of exercise.

A girl, accustomed in the summer months to outdoor exercise, and by nature, if one may be pardoned for using a slang term, a "sportsman," is naturally anxious that she should be able to indulge in some form of really active exercise in the winter. Her thoughts turn to hockey, and when once initiated into the mysteries of the game, she cannot for the life of her understand how she has existed so long without it.

The girl who has made up her mind to start naturally first considers the most important implement required—a stick. Where shall I get it? What shape shall it be? Sticks vary very considerably in their shape. One manufacturer may make a shape with a long hook, and another one with a short and squarer bend. It is difficult to recommend any special shape as being most suitable, and it had far better be left to the player's own fancy. This much may be said, however: to one playing "forward" a short curve will be found most suitable, whilst to "a half" or "back" one provided with a longer curve, and for this reason, that players in the back division are required to cover more ground. With regard to its weight, do not let it be too heavy. For a forward nineteen to twenty-one ounces is quite sufficient, whilst for a half or back one weighing one to two ounces more will be deemed quite heavy

enough. On no account let it be too long. The longer the stick the clumsier will be your play. Let it be one that can be handled easily and freely, and can be used, when

occasion demands, with one hand. Too long a stick is a disadvantage, as there are occasions (as, for instance, when one is hemmed in by an opponent) when a stick of too great a length



FIG. 1.—PLAY! THE BULLY OFF.



FIG. 2.—PASSING TO THE LEFT.



FIG. 3.—PASSING TO THE RIGHT.



FIG. 4.—A TRICKY PASS BY CENTRE TO THE RIGHT WING.



FIG. 5.—SO HIGH, BUT YET NO HIGHER.



FIG. 6.—AN ILLEGAL STROKE! STICKS!



FIG. 7.—A FANCY SHOT—PASSING BETWEEN THE FEET.

is absolutely useless. As in the case of a forward, whose stick should be lighter than that of one in the back division, so should it be shorter. A back or half-back has to hit the ball harder and farther, and, as has been previously said, has to cover more ground, and therefore requires a longer reach. For a longer reach a longer stick is naturally needed.

Only a few years back sticks were made in one piece. At the present time they are very different articles. Cane-spliced handles, and handles bound like a cricket-bat, are now alone used. As in wet weather the string becomes slippery and greasy, consequently causing the stick to slip in one's hand, enclose the handle either in a rubber or leather cover, the former for preference. You will then find you have a much firmer hold of your stick, and need have no fear of its slipping from your grasp.

A thick rubber ring placed at about the commencement of the splice is also a great protection, preventing as it does, time and again, an opponent's stick sliding up your own and giving you a nasty blow on the hand.

Now as to one's personal attire. Boots or shoes? Which are most suited for the game? Without a doubt one has no hesitation in saying—boots. And boots with low heels, too. Boots are but a trifle heavier than shoes, and whilst the latter may perhaps be slightly easier to move in, they do not afford the protection to one's ankles. Boots, however thin the sides may be, offer a certain amount of resistance to the force of a blow on the ankles, and at any rate lessen the force of it. Boots, in addition to protecting the ankles, also support them, and the strongest of ankles may be liable to get twisted on turning suddenly. Let the soles be either "studded" or "barred." Without "studs" or "bars" it is impossible to obtain a firm foothold on a wet ground. One stud of about half an inch long on the heel, and three of the same length on the sole, will be quite sufficient. Shin-guards should always be worn. At first they may feel a trifle clumsy and uncomfortable, but one soon gets accustomed to them, and finds they in no way hamper one's movements.

Gloves should also be worn. Many prefer cricket batting gloves with rubber backs, others wear thin kid ones. The latter perhaps are more generally used, in that the hand and fingers are freer, and in addition are not so heavy. Of course, the rubber glove saves many a nasty blow which a kid glove can only do in a lesser degree. As a general rule one advises forwards to wear thin kid, halves and backs rubber-back gloves. Each, however, to her own taste, but at any rate protect your hands.

The skirt is an impediment to a free movement, and should not be worn too long. At the very least it should be six inches off the ground. Of course, it is impossible to drive a ball through a skirt trailing on the ground, but in the long run one would find a shorter skirt far more advantageous, and at any rate you would be compelled to play a more scientific game, in that you would have to stop the ball either with your stick, hand, or foot, and not rely upon the length of your skirt to do the work for you.

If you do not like to play without a hat, and by the rules of the All England Women's Hockey Association straw hats, or hats with hard brims, are strictly forbidden, wear a cloth cap or Tam-o'-Shanter. You would feel far freer if you eschewed a hat of any kind. Projecting hat-pins are also strictly forbidden, and very rightly too. They are most dangerous, and might be the cause of many accidents.

With this brief outline of the necessary outfit required, we will now turn to the game itself (Fig. 1) and give a few hints as to the way it

should be played. A team is made up of eleven players, each one having a special place appointed for her. The eleven places are: "centre" forward; "outside" and "inside right" forward; "outside" and "inside left" forward; right half-back, centre half-back, and left half-back; right back and left back, and goal-keeper. The latter is often dispensed with, and plays as centre-back instead. Goal-keeping at the best of times is not an enviable post. To stand shivering, as a goal-keeper often has to do, with your side attacking and playing a winning game, is but a poor form of enjoyment. With but little to do except freeze, can one wonder that the post is not popular?

The backs, two or three in number as the case may be, must be strong hitters and good tacklers. With their side attacking they must also to a certain extent attack themselves in that they should move nearer towards their opponent's goal. A back's position should be from twenty-five to thirty yards behind the half-back line. As the half-back line moves forward, so should the backs; on the half-back line retiring, so should the back line.

Whilst actually on the defensive the best plan to adopt is to get the ball away in to "touch," and avoid as much as possible hitting in front of goal. Many a goal has been scored by the reckless play of a back in hitting the ball across his own goal when it should have been driven into "touch."

Upon the halves may be truly said to fall the hardest work. With their forwards attacking, they must follow them closely up to within a distance of five or six yards, so that should their forwards lose the ball they can at once return it. Then again they must be back in a moment to help the backs in defence. It is a hard place to fill, and one which requires stamina of no slight degree. The object of a half-back is to let her line of forwards have the ball as soon as possible, and also break up the attack of the opposing forwards. Reckless hitting is useless. Pass the ball to whichever forward you consider is in the most advantageous position, and do not pass wildly. Perhaps this would now be a fitting place to discuss the question of "combination and passing."

"Passing" (see Figs. 2 and 3) is not the mere hitting of the ball and getting rid of it as soon as possible without an object in view. Passing means "the transferring of the ball from one player to another on the same side when the person receiving the ball is in a more advantageous position than the striker." Before passing make certain to whom you intend sending it. Do not hesitate but make up your mind at once. The game is played so quickly that there is no time to wait and consider. "She who hesitates is lost."

A team that passes well to each other is said to play with good "combination" or "combine well together." The secret of success is combination.

An Eleven may be composed of players individually good but lacking the power of playing into each other's hands. Let them be pitted against an Eleven not so individually good but thoroughly versed in the ways of passing, and see which side would win the most games. Without a doubt the Eleven that combines well.

A good individual player is of course useful, but if such a player plays for herself alone, and does not rely on the assistance of the other members of the team, she more often than not seriously jeopardises the success of the side, and the team would be more successful with a less selfish player. Selfish is perhaps a hard term to use, but one has no hesitation in saying that lack of combination is due to selfishness, and selfishness alone. After this somewhat lengthy, but at the same time

important, digression, we will now pass on to the forwards.

By far the most difficult and important post is held by the "centre." Upon her rests the whole combination of the front rank. She is in fact the pivot upon which the other forwards act. She must be quick on foot, quick with stick (see Figs. 4 and 7), and above everything else unselfish. Centre forward (this also applies to the other four forwards) should never be out of her place; that is about mid-way between the two touch lines, and moving up and down the ground parallel to such touch lines. She must be a good and quick shot at goal and able to give and take passes from either wing with equal certainty and precision. In passing to the wings, much judgment must be used. If passing to the outside player, the pass should be hard and a yard or so in front of the player passed to. If passing to the inside wings, the pass would naturally not be so hard owing to the closer proximity of the would-be receiver. When approaching goal "centre" should not pass too much to the outside wings, but rather to the inside players, and for this reason, that the insides are nearer to the shooting circle. Of course, there are occasions when a judicious pass to the outside is a good move. Take the following case. The centre and two inside forwards are close on to the circle, and are seriously hampered by the opposing halves. So hampered are they that they are unable to get a clear shot at goal. By sending the ball straight out to the wing, the defence is to a certain extent drawn away from the centre, and if the outside player returns the ball hard and without delay, the chances are very much in favour of either the centre or the insides being in a more favourable position and not so closely marked as they were previous to the pass to the outside wing.

Outside right has perhaps the easiest position of the whole five. In addition to the fact that all her strokes are made from right to left, she is often, more often than not, left quite unguarded, the opposing half being in nine cases out of ten engaged in watching the inside wing, and trying to intercept an intended pass. Let us assume that outside right has obtained possession of the ball and has got clear away. Whilst running, let her note the positions of the other forwards, and, having reached the "25 flag," she must at once drive the ball hard into the centre and thus give the centre or inside wings an opportunity of getting nearer to the mystic circle. Outside right must keep to her proper position, *i.e.*, on the touch line or within a foot or so of it. Either with hand, stick, or foot she must at all costs prevent the ball from going into touch, and above everything else must be ever on the alert and ready to run and take any passes that may come her way.

The latter remarks as to position, alertness, and saving, also refer to the outside on the left wing. Her position is not an easy one to fill. In order to pass the ball back into the centre, it is necessary either to stop the ball dead before striking it (this, however, wastes time), or else she must learn to hit whilst running at full speed. To do this your left shoulder must be brought well forward and plenty of right wrist power brought into play.

To the two outside wings does not often fall the pleasure of scoring goals, but they must remember that it is often by their work on the wing and final pass to one of the inside forwards that the goal has been obtained.

As often as not, the actual goal-getter has done not a tithe of the work that has led up to a goal being scored. She certainly gets praise for her final shot, but spectators, who understand the game, know full well to whom praise should also be given.

Inside right and inside left have practically the same duties to perform. Each acts as a centre between the real centre of the forward



FIG. 8.—REACHING OUT WITH ONE HAND.

and if playing on a good level ground with a true surface, it is almost, if not quite, as easy to field the ball with your stick as with your hand. In hitting, be careful to avoid raising the stick above your shoulder (Fig. 5). You can hit quite as hard if you use your wrists. A quick turn of the wrist will send the ball as far as is needed, and there is no danger of your being penalised for raising the stick too high. A big and long hit is not made with one's body and by swinging your arms frantically over your head (Fig. 6). As in tennis one uses one's wrist for hitting hard, so one must do the same when a hockey stick is the weapon, and not a racquet. As much as possible use both hands for holding your stick. You have thereby a much firmer hold, and are not as likely to have it knocked from your grasp as if you were using one hand only. There are occasions, however, when one-handed play is not only a necessity but also an advantage. This, however, should be done sparingly and with judgment. By reaching out with one hand you naturally have a longer reach, and may be able to get the ball away from an opponent who is too far off to reach with both hands (Fig. 8). Again, should you stop the ball with your left hand while grasping your stick with your right, you can at once bring your stick into play without having to transfer your left hand again to the handle (Fig. 9). As a general rule, however, use two hands, and do not rely on one.

In conclusion, remember, to be successful at the game you must be quick both in thought and action. Do not hesitate, make up your mind at once, and act upon it.

rank and the outside wing. Like all the other forwards she must be quick both in giving and taking passes, and a clear and hard shot at goal.

Now as to a few general remarks that apply to all players, whether backs or forwards. Do not use your hand in fielding the ball more often than you can help. Time is only wasted,

VARIETIES.

A POETIC ALPHABET.

The following "Alphabet" by C. S. Calverley is less known than it deserves to be. According to a competent critic it is the most perfect production of its kind in the English language. Many writers have attempted similar feats, but this A B C is by far the most successful of them. Difficult in its composition as an acrostic, not a line is forced or meaningless, but each drops into its place as naturally as if it were a volunteer and not a conscript, and had to express an apt thought rather than to serve an exigency.

- A is an Angel of blushing eighteen :
- B is the Ball where the angel was seen :
- C is the Chaperon who cheated at cards :
- D is the Deuxtemps with Frank of the Guards :
- E is the Eye which those soft lashes cover :
- F is the Fan it peeped wickedly over :
- G is the Glove of superlative kid :
- H is the Hand which it spitefully hid :
- I is the Ice which the fair one demanded :
- J is the Juvenile who hastened to hand it :
- K is the Kerchief, a rare work of art :
- L is the Lace which composed the chief part :
- M is the old Maid who watched the girls dance :
- N is the Nose she turned up at each glance :
- O is the Olga, just then in its prime :
- P is the Partner who wouldn't keep time :
- Q's a Quadrille put instead of the Lancers :
- R the Remonstrances made by the dancers :
- S is the Supper where all went in pairs :
- T is the Twaddle they talked on the stairs :
- U is the Uncle who "thought we'd be going" : [in:]
- V is the Voice which the niece replied "No" :
- W is the Waiter who sat up till eight :
- X is his exit not perfectly straight :
- Y is the Yawning fit caused by the ball :
- Z stands for Zero, or nothing at all.

HOW TO HAVE A FIT.

A few years ago there was a ready-made tailor in Birmingham who had this advertisement outside his shop :—

"Wear our 21s. suit and you will have a fit."

PROVERBS OF CYCLING.

Cycling has given rise to some new proverbs of which the following are examples :—

"Politeness is like a pneumatic tyre. There isn't much in it, but it eases many a jolt in the journey of life."

"A pleasant disposition, like oil in a bicycle bearing, reduces friction, and prevents a world of wear and tear."

"Like a link in a bicycle chain we may not amount to much individually, but collectively we make the wheels go round."

"Life is like a bicycle run. Some worry, fret, and scorch along and soon reach the end ; while others take it easy and enjoy life as they go."

A SIGN OF VULGARITY.—There cannot be a surer proof of low origin or of an innate meanness of disposition than to be always talking and thinking about being genteel.



FIG. 9.—NO TIME WASTED.

GROWING OLD.—Whenever you begin to feel that you want people to think you are younger than you really are, you are growing old.

MUSICAL ADVICE.—"My child," said a musician to his daughter, "don't be too sharp nor yet too flat ; just be natural."