



Skill Tests in Field Hockey - Past, Present & Future

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Abstract

Field Hockey is a team based outdoor game played between two opposing teams of 11 players whose aim is to score on opponents goal and to defend goal being scored. Players are permitted to play the ball with the flat side and with the edges of the head and handle of the stick. The ball may not be struck hard with a forehand edge stroke, because of the difficulty of controlling the height and direction of the ball from that stroke. There are no fixed positions even a goalkeeper is not required under the 2007-2008 rules, but most teams arrange themselves into fullbacks, halfbacks and forwards. For the purpose of the rules, all players on the team in possession of the ball are attackers, and those on the team without the ball are defenders. In the present scenario, the methods adopted in field Hockey are highly appreciable. With the advent of synthetic surface from 1976 onwards the game got a new trend and drastic changes have take place in skills and performance. Tests are very important in the area of physical education. Instructions may not be effective, if the students are classified according to their status such as beginners, intermediary and advanced rather they have to classify the students in a particular activity or skill according to the ability. To compare our teams with the international standards and to compete with the foreign teams, proper selection must be done in order to measure the skill and performance level. This paper deals with the need of construction of skill test to meet the demands in future.

Keywords: Field Hockey, Skill Test, Construction.

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Introduction

Field Hockey is one of the many sports derived from pre historic man's delight in stick and ball games. Field Hockey became popular in India when the British regiments played the game in India and introduced it in the British Indian regiments who quickly picked up the game. Field Hockey is a team based outdoor game played between two opposing teams of 11 players whose aim is to score on opponents goal and to defend goal being scored. Players are permitted to play the ball with the flat side and with the edges of the head and handle of the stick. The ball may not be struck hard with a forehand edge stroke, because of the difficulty of controlling the height and direction of the ball from that stroke. There are no fixed positions even a goalkeeper is not required under the 2007-2008 rules, but most teams arrange themselves into fullbacks, halfbacks and forwards. For the purpose of the rules, all players on the team in possession of the ball are attackers, and those on the team without the ball are defenders. In the present scenario, the methods adopted in field Hockey are highly appreciable. With the advent of synthetic surface from

1976 onwards the game got a new trend and drastic changes have take place in skills and performance.

Test and its Importance

According to Barrow (1989) a test is a specific tool, procedure or technique used to elicit a response from the student in order to gain information to be used on a basis for appraisal of the quantity or quality of elements such as fitness, skill, knowledge or values.

The purpose and significance of test are paramount importance in the field of Physical Education and sports. Some of them are as follows,

1. To acquire knowledge from the tests.
2. To find out the capacity, ability and inherent qualities of the individual are alike.
3. To overcome difficulties or to adjust himself to his environment.
4. Rendering guidance and services.
5. To find out the learning experiences and learning process.

Need of Skill Test

A skill is an ability, usually learned and acquired through training, to perform actions which achieve a desired outcome. Barrow & Mc.Gee during 1930 given the concept regarding testing the fundamental skills in different games and sports. Yobu

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(1988) suggested that skill tests require an environment similar to the game environment and standardisation procedures for administration. The validity associated with skill tests is judged to some extent on the consistency between testing and performing environments.

In the present scenario, the methods adopted in field Hockey are highly appreciable. With the advent of synthetic surface from 1976 onwards the game got a new trend and drastic changes have taken place in skills and performance. To compare our teams with the international standards and to compete with the foreign teams, proper selection must be done in order to measure the skill and performance level.

Test Construction in Physical Education

Tests are very important in the area of physical education. Instructions may not be effective, if the students are classified according to their status such as beginners, intermediary and advanced rather they have to classify the students in a particular activity or skill according to the ability. Apart from classification, tests

are widely used to diagnose the needs and weakness of the students, to evaluate the effectiveness of a programme, to grade and classify the students with reference to their performance levels, to motivate the students towards a particular activity or skill by means of a test at the end of the programme as an instructional device, as a prediction and as tool of research. Test may be utilised to determine which at the two methods of instruction is better. Tests may be also used to determine which kind of student is likely to be a better performance in a given activity. Test results, if retained over a period of years, may provide professional physical educationists and other investigators with opportunities to compare such results in terms of trends, evaluation of progress, or identification of need for the change and philosophy.

Skill Test in Hockey

Physical Educationists and coaches were consistently working to find the measurable qualities of a player since the inception of game. The list of skill tests are presented below,

Table I. Skill Tests in Hockey

Sl.No	Name of the Test	Testing Items
1	Akil Mehrotra's Objective Skill Test Battery in Field Hockey	1. One minute angular passing and receiving test 2. Rolling and passing test 3. Dodging and goal shooting test
2	SAI Hockey Skill Testing for Talent Spotting at Young	1. Shooting the Target 2. Balancing the Ball on the Stick 3. Moving with the Ball
3	Munjal's Hockey Skill Test Battery	1. Shoot 2. Rolling and Dribble 3. Push 4. Shuttle 5. Hit 6. Sprint 7. Scoop 8. Pass 9. Flick
4	D.K.Dureha's An Objective Skill Test Hockey (1984-85)	1. Angular Hitting and Stopping for One Minute Test 2. Pass Receiving, Dribbling and Hitting Test 3. Dribbling and Goal Shooting Test
5	Chapman Ball Control Test (1982)	1. Ball Control
6	Friedal-Henry Field Hockey Test (1940)	1. Speed Dribbling 2. Shooting Accuracy

Most of the skill tests are measures only certain parameters or in combination of skills. When compare the modern performance each player is specialised in single skill and each skill plays an important role in game performance.

Past and Present Scenario

Hockey is a highly popular outdoor sport of India. Hockey has gained the status of the national sport of India owing to its immense popularity in India.

Though there are different types of Hockey, field Hockey is extremely popular in India. India stands unrivalled when it comes to field Hockey. India has churned many outstanding Hockey players. It has bagged many trophies and awards in the international arena. In Olympic Games India played Hockey for the first time in 1928 held in Amsterdam and won the title. India lifted the Olympic Hockey Crown for five times in a row and last in Moscow Olympics during 1980. In world cup scenario, after 1975 India hardly finds the place in first eight.

Recent developments in field Hockey, such as the playing surface, new stick material, and interchange of rule, have increased the number of technical demands made on field Hockey players at all levels. Day by day the nature of the game changes its structure. Dureha & Mehrotra (2003) found that very limited number of experiments have been made in testing individual skills. Some of the reports concerned with subjective and objective evaluation with less number of subjects. Some of the objective tests show high reliability, but poor validity.

Recent Changes in the Rule

The rules are constantly changing due to the modern demands of the game. Recently the International Hockey Federation introduced experimental changes in February 2009, as a mandatory experiment for international competition, an updated version of free hit rule. The changes allow a player taking a free hit to pass the ball to themselves. The player must play the ball any distance in two separate motions, before continuing as if it were a play-on situation. They may raise an aerial or overhead immediately as the second action, or any other stroke permitted by the rules of hockey.

Also, all players (from both teams) must be at least 5 m from any free hit awarded to the attack within the 23 m area. Additionally, no free hits to the attack are permitted within 5m of the circle, so if a free hit is awarded inside this area it must be dragged back outside this zone. The ball may not travel directly into the circle from a free hit to the attack within the 23m area without first being touched by another player or being dribbled at least 5m by a player making a self-pass. These experimental rules apply to all free hit situations, including sideline and corner hits. National Associations may also choose to introduce these rules for their domestic competitions.

Skill Test in Future

From the observation of development and changes in the rule, the future performance can be unpredictable. But it is within the range of researchers. Due to the modern demands of the game, there is a need of highly reliable and valid test for selection of players in field Hockey. For better performance of the team the players must fit for it. Ball travels faster than man in modern surfaces. The tests that are already constructed were from grass and mud surfaces. Lemmink (2004) found that the coaches, trainers and players are continually searching for effective methods of identifying and developing those characteristics in a player that may enhance performance. Since the Hockey performance changes its structure, the various skill tests constructed by experts also to be restructured. The previously constructed tests measure the combination of skills and given less importance to measure the individual skills. After the synthetic revolution the skill tests are not constructed.

The following areas could be strengthened in order to excel present and future performance of teams.

- The skill test already constructed should be reconstructed in Astro turf.
- The newly constructed skill test must cover the modern demands of the game.
- The skills like Slap hit and Drag flick must given priority.
- The skill tests must reflect the players quality.

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