

Pocket Pounding

A perfect pocket is bliss...

The attribute for a superb setup one so the ball will stay in practically through hell and back, and one that doesn't have too much whip, or inaccuracy. To do this you must be able to create, or pound a pocket, and to tune in the shooting strings just right. In the following steps, hopefully you'll be able to have a sweet pocket made and adjusted to you.

Making the Pocket

The first step to making a perfect pocket is the pocket itself. You'll probably need to locate where you want the ball to rest. This will be the deepest part of the pocket. Some people like it right below the shooting strings so it will have extra support by the laces and a quick snap off. Others like it a little bit lower, like right in the center of the head. This gives it an over all larger pocket. To define the pocket, you must break it in. There are conventional methods and techniques made up and passed down for decades. The easiest way is to buy either a Warrior Pocket Pounder, or a deBeer Pocket Screw. The Pocket Pounder is basically just a metal rod with a ball at the end and you're supposed to methodically hit the pocket. A cheaper and sometimes easier way is to just hold a regular lacrosse ball and constantly pound it. The true way to get a pocket, but one without complete definition, is to just hit the wall. This will then let the pocket adjust to the ball. The pocket screw is basically just half a wooden ball on the end of a screw with two metal wing out to the side. What you're supposed to do is put the two wings in between your lower part of the wall and the beginning of the stringing. Then you screw down the half-ball so it's pushing down the pocket. You then just leave in there for a night or day so the pocket adjusts to the force. Another cheaper way to do this is what is called the butter knife trick. Here, you take a knife or something thin and strong. You first put the ball in the pocket and let it rest there. You then take the butter knife and slide in between the lower part of the wall and the top of the ball. This now has the same effect as the screw except for free and will never give you an illegal pocket.

Adjusting the Shooting Strings

Shooting strings can be tricky and deceiving, but basically they are just an easy weave. To be able to master the strings, you must know how they are strung and how they work. If you look at your stick, you'll probably see a shooting string. Take the time to look at it and see how they created it. They first took one part of the string and kept it straight running along the back side of the head. Then, it comes around on the side and they start to spiral around while always keeping it tight. The tightness doesn't come from the wrapping, but from the back. To tighten or loosen a string, you must undo the knot and pull or loosen the back and then re-tie the knot. The purpose of the strings is so the ball will have a nice, gradual staircase to leave the pocket. If the strings are too loose you'll have whip and the ball will come out to late. If they're to tight, you won't have a sweet pocket and the ball will come of early making it go high. You have to tune it in for yourself, but a quick easy way to check it is the "Point System." In this case, you push a ball as hard as you can into your pocket. Then, you take your fingers and push all of the shooting strings as hard as you can. What you want to see is the line of the shooting strings pointing to the lowest part of the pocket. This will give it a basic setup and should be fairly accurate.