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AUGUST 2008

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pg.26

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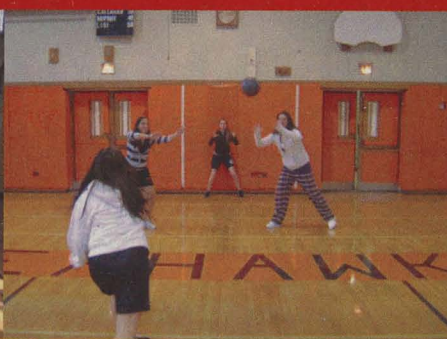
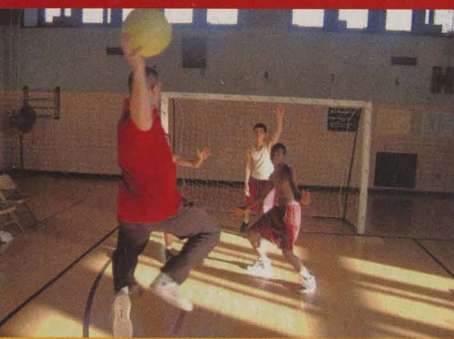
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# Speedball

## A Conditioning Alternative for Various Sports

By Bob Walpole, Retired Baseball and Football Coach, Carey High School, Franklin Square, NY

**T**here probably has never been a fall or spring sports season coach who, faced with inclement weather, an unplayable field, a cancellation, or simply “playing out the string,” hasn’t wondered: “What can we do for practice today?”

Midway through a season when strategies and techniques have been duly addressed and physically repeated, some variety is often a welcomed alternative for team morale. The majority of sports contain similar elements—lateral and backward movement, hand-eye coordination, cardiovascular conditioning, offensive and defensive sets, etc.

What “new wrinkle” could simulate those actions on a “day off”? What could provide something unique while repeating actions that could carry over in your specific sport? The answer to that might be **Speedball**.

**Speedball** combines the skills, rules, conditioning, speed and excitement of basketball, hockey, team handball, lacrosse and soccer. Unlike basketball, that constantly stops for minor fouls, it is a super-fast, energetic activity that rarely allows its participants to catch their breath.

The general idea of the game is to advance the ball as you would in basketball and score from outside a designated area (as in hockey, team handball, and lacrosse) by shooting (throwing a ball) at a net or area protected by a goalie.

Shots can be thrown by the offense either overhand, underhand, backhand, hooked, bounced or “spiked” (as you’d do a volleyball). Screening, changing defensive alignments, power plays, changes “on the fly” and delayed penalties all highlight the excitement and unique quality of the game.

**Speedball** can be played on gym floors and schoolyards of various dimensions, with shooting lines and goal sizes modified for all ages, abilities and situations. The new outdoor roller hockey rinks are also a perfect venue.

It is an exciting, non-stop activity that can be played with a minimum amount of equipment by youngsters with varying degrees of skill. Add to this the fact that just throwing a ball past a goalie is a relatively new kind of challenge for most kids and you have something that generates a lot of enthusiasm.

A volleyball, preferably rubber to insure a consistent bounce, is suffi-

cient to play the game. Since the court size, the amount and ability of the players and age will obviously vary in all situations, the size of the goals, length of periods and shooting distances should be adjusted to fit your particular group.

Although team handball or field hockey nets are efficient, small gyms may mandate the use of permanently painted or taped wall goals. Shooting lines and even goals can be laid down quickly with floor tape (see diagram on p.67).

The game is usually played as a 6-on-6 format—five players and a goalie. The opposing teams line up on opposite sides of mid-court. The game starts with a jump ball and the ball is advanced by dribbling or passing, like basketball. There are no backcourt violations. Except for the goalie crease, all players are unrestricted in their movement, setting up the opportunity for screening and rebounding.

Offensive players work to get open for clear shots at the goalie in an attempt to throw it past him or her for a score. Goals can only be scored when the shot is initiated from OUTSIDE or ON the shooting triangle lines.

If the shot is initiated there, the shooter must release it before landing inside of the area with either foot ("flying over the line"). Referee will call "Over!" if this rule is not adhered to and it will result in loss of possession.

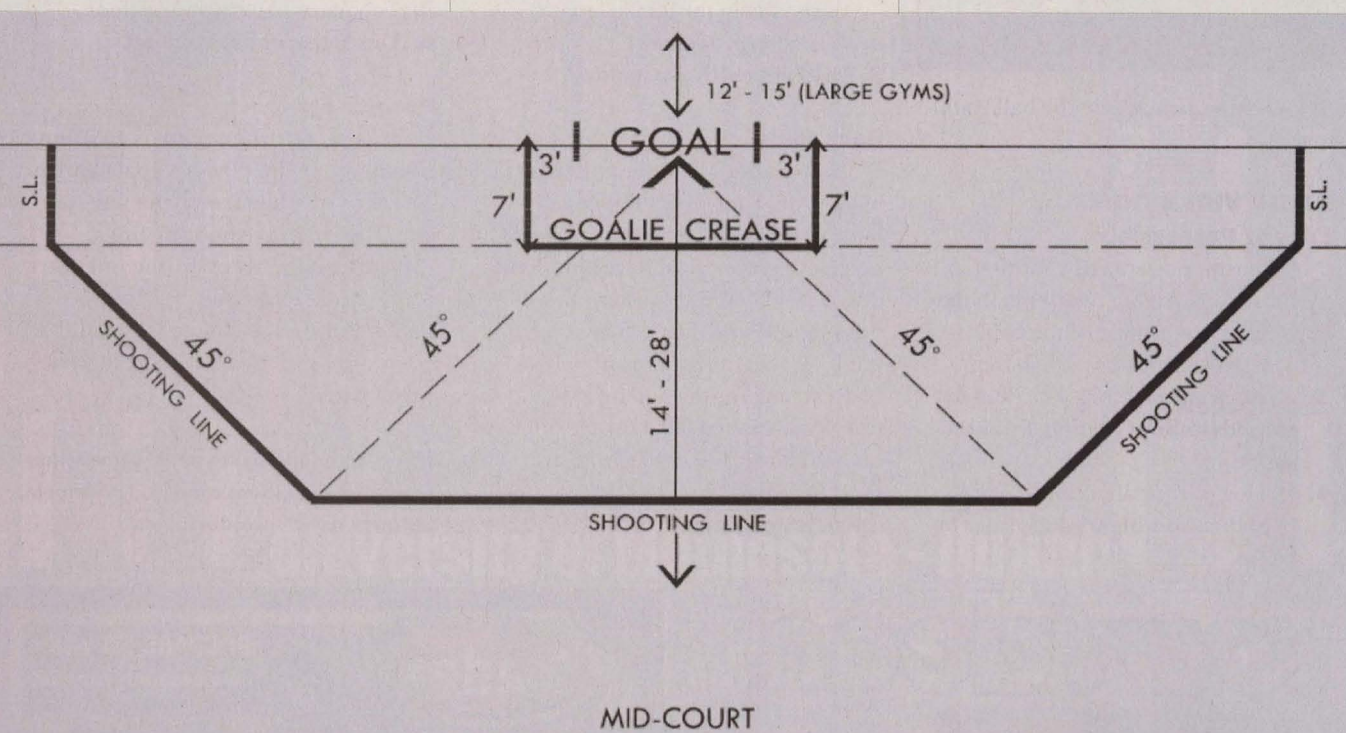
Players are allowed a maximum of three steps before or after a dribble

and the goalie must put the ball back in play after a score. The defensive player can never play the offensive player from behind without risking a foul. All attempts at blocking or stealing the ball must be from in front or on the side of the offensive player.

Violations are immediately sig-

naled by the referee ("Back foul!"), but are always delayed until the offense actually loses possession ("Play on!"). The offensive goalie may come out from the goal and participate offensively until that time, similar to hockey.

Substitutions can be made "on the



----- NOT actual lines. Just guides to alignment.

———— Lines on floor.

Laying lines and removing them should be simple. Consequently, all taped (indoors) or chalk/painted lines (outdoors) are straight with no need for curvature and can be put down by one person.

1. All nets should be 7' high when possible. The width is determined by the distance of the shooting lines (SL). The closer the lines, the smaller the net. A minimum net width of 7' and a maximum of 10' for large areas is suggested.
2. The Goalie Crease is limited to the goalie and ANY number of defensive players. Screening by the offense is allowed, but any offensive foot or body part touching inside the area will result in loss of possession. The front should ALWAYS be 7' from the goal line, regardless of net size, and 3' from the net edges.

There is **NO** standard shooting distance due to the variety of gym sizes, player abilities, ages, etc., but a minimum of 14' and a maximum of 28' (usually at the college level) are suggested. The starting point is measured from the middle of the goal line **OUT**, straight to the middle of the horizontal shooting line. That line ends, on the right and left, at a point where the 45 degree angle, which radiates from the middle of the goal line, bisects it. The side lines (SL) run at the same angle from the **ends** of that horizontal line **IN** to a point that's 7' from the goal line. Anytime an area behind the goal is available, it should be utilized (12' - 15'). This allows offensive setups and plays similar to those in hockey and lacrosse.

3. Goal scoring is obviously the most exciting part of the game. When young children who may have little shot-velocity are involved, widening the net or allowing one foot over the line is suggested. Another option is to add a second, closer, permanent horizontal shooting line for young students or athletes.

# STRENGTH & CONDITIONING Speedball



fly” by either team while the ball is still in play.

## BASIC VIOLATIONS

### Loss of Possession:

1. Offensive player taking more than three steps before or after dribbling.
2. Intentional kicking of the ball, except for a kick save by goalie.
3. Holding the ball for more than five seconds without passing, dribbling, shooting.
4. Having part or all of either foot over the shooting triangle lines on

the shot.

5. Entering the goalie crease to screen on offense.
6. Offensive interference, i.e, moving pick.
7. Goalie passing to a teammate past mid-court.
8. Intentional offensive contact with the goalie in the goalie crease (Usually on a screen).
9. Dribbling with two hands.

### Back fouls:

These occur on attempts to play the ball by the defense when his or her body is **behind** the offensive player. The defensive player must have one shoulder in front of the offensive player’s near shoulder in order to be considered “on the side or in front of him.”

Reaching for the ball from that position is considered legal. In the opinion of the referee, the defensive player must have had time “to react,” otherwise it is a non-call.

### 3-minute Non-releasable

#### Penalties:

1. Each back foul after three (3) per team. Player committing it serves it.
2. Intentional pushing, holding, tripping or attempted tripping by any player including the goalie, he or she must serve it themselves.
3. Too many players on the floor.
4. Unsportsmanlike conduct.

### Penalty Shot

This occurs when there is an intentional foul on an obvious goal chance. The shot may be taken from any spot on or beyond the shooting lines. Players usually “fly over” the lines on these shots. Three-step rule applies. Ball is awarded to violated team at half-court after the shot, whether successful or not. ■

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If you would like to see actual game action or have any questions concerning rules, etc., log on to [www.speedball.com](http://www.speedball.com).