

# Trapping v. Receiving

*There's more to it than semantics*

*By Lawrence Fine*

While some may consider the difference between trapping a ball and receiving a ball to be an exercise in semantics, I see them as two different terms.

When I hear people say they want to learn how to trap the ball, I believe what they really are asking for is how to stop the ball from moving, right at the feet. There are a number of ways to teach this, depending upon how the ball arrives at the player. If the ball is played directly to a player's foot, he or she can use the bottom of the foot to stop the ball (simply by keeping the heel of the foot almost on the ground and pointing the toes up at a 45-degree angle to make contact with the ball). By using this technique, the ball is "trapped" between the foot and the ground. Another technique is to receive the ball with the inside of the foot and to pull the foot back on contact to cushion the ball and make it stop moving. It's actually almost the exact opposite technique used when passing the ball with the inside of the foot. The outside and the top of the foot also can be used for trapping.

The difference between trapping the ball with the foot and receiving the ball with the foot is that the act of trapping a ball brings it to a complete stop. When receiving the ball properly, it will almost always keep moving in a different direction to avoid oncoming players or to change the point of attack.

In most cases during a game, when the ball is coming to a player, an opposing player is pressuring the ball. If the attacking player traps the ball dead, the oncoming player has the opportunity to challenge for the ball. This puts the attacking player at risk of either losing possession of the ball or possibly having unnecessary contact that may result in injury. If, in this same situation, the attacking player receives the ball by playing it softly to him/herself away from the oncoming player, it greatly increases the probability of the attacking player maintaining ball possession while greatly decreasing the potential of contact and injury.

The way to receive the ball away from pressure is to first know where the pressure is coming from. This requires the player having his or her head up to observe the players in the vicinity. Once the direction of the oncoming pressure, he or she must decide which direction to take the ball. If pressure is coming from the player's left side, the most likely decision is to receive the ball toward the right side, going away from pressure and providing more time and space in which to work. To do this, the player must turn his or her hips during initial contact with the ball so they end up facing the

desired direction (this is true whether he or she is using the inside or outside of the foot). Once the ball is cushioned in the same manner as performing a trap, it is then pushed in the desired direction, so the ball actually never comes to a complete stop.

Receiving with the thigh, chest and head is done the same way. Rather than simply stopping the ball dead, the player turn the hips upon contact with the ball and takes the ball in a different direction. This is NOT an easy thing to do in the beginning; it takes much practice to perfect.

By receiving the ball in this manner, the player will be able to have more time, more space and improved sight lines to decide the next step in the action. In other words, once players start working on receiving the balls as opposed to just trapping the balls, they will become better players.

Once the players have the technique of receiving down, the easiest way to practice it is to scrimmage where the one rule is that any time the ball is killed (meaning anytime the ball stops moving completely because of a trap), it's an immediate loss of possession. When this drill is first introduced, a lot of losses of possession will result, but the players quickly will get the hang of it. Once they do, it becomes a wonderful habit to develop.