



## **Buying A Hockey Stick**

The key questions to ask yourself when buying a stick are:

- Does the stick feel comfortable?
- Is my body interfering with my control of the stick, and so the stick is too long?
- Do I have to bend too low to hold the stick, and so the stick is too short?
- Can my hands control the stick head throughout the swing when attempting a hit?

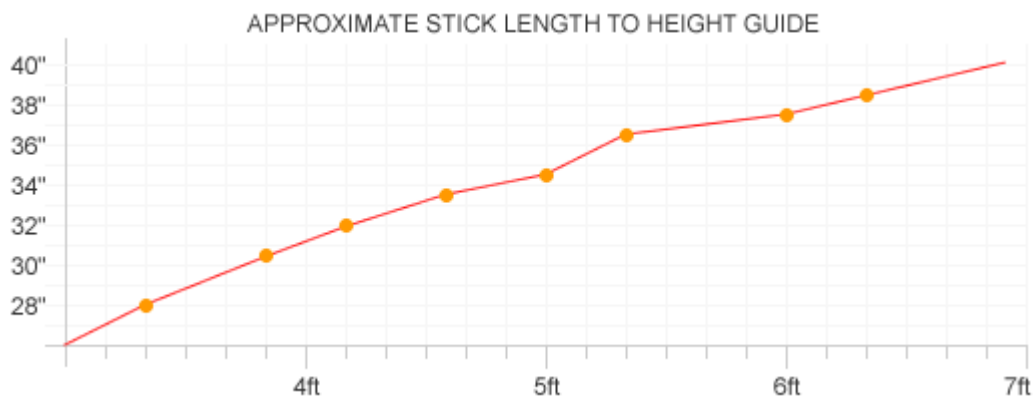
The below information will hopefully help you choose the right stick, however please remember this is only a guide. ***The most important factors in deciding whether a stick is right for you is its comfort and feel.***

More detail on buying a stick can be found at the below website if required.

<http://www.hockeysticks.co.uk>

### **What length stick should I choose?**

The main factor that should influence the length of stick you choose is your height. In junior this is of particular importance as using the wrong length stick will hinder the development of skills and control. The graph below can be used as a rough guide to the appropriate length stick for a player's height.



### **Choosing the Correct Weight**

There are three key factors you might consider when trying to find weight stick – your strength, playing position and playing style.

- **Strength:** The stronger you are the easier you will find it to control a heavier stick. However, if your stick is too heavy it is likely to have a detrimental effect on your game as you may find it difficult to control the stick.
- **Playing position:** Individual positions on the pitch require slightly different skills and this may well influence your choice of stick weight. Defenders often need to make longer more powerful passes or clearances as well as stronger tackles, so therefore may consider a heavier stick. Forwards often favour a lighter stick to allow closer ball control and manoeuvring in the D. Midfielders may vary their choice depending on their specific role or playing style.
- **Playing Style:** Each individual develops a playing style to suit their own skills. For example a



defender who relies heavily on close control and jab tackling may consider a lighter stick and a forward who relies heavily on a powerful shot may well choose a heavier stick.

However, one of the main points to consider when picking up a hockey stick and swinging it for the first time is:

*Can I control the head throughout the swing?*

If in doubt we would recommend that you always choose a lighter option!

### **What type of material stick should I buy?**

Traditionally sticks have been made from wood, however recent improvements in technology and the introduction of playing on AstroTurf has resulted in most modern sticks being manufactured from composite materials.

For juniors, especially those starting out in hockey, we would generally recommend composite sticks for the following reasons:

- Composite sticks have a greater power to weight ratio, which means that a light composite stick will be stronger than a wooden equivalent. Young players will therefore find it easier to generate power on the ball using a composite stick.
- Composite sticks tend to have a larger sweet spot which makes it easier for younger players to hit the ball correctly with power.
- Wood is more susceptible to wear and tear on sand based surfaces whereas composite sticks are more resistant and so have an increased playing life.
- Due to the very nature of the material, wooden sticks tend to be more inconsistent in their quality as they are only as good as the wood they are made from. The manufacturing processes involved mean that composite sticks are much more consistent in terms of their weight, stiffness and power.
- Over time wood has a tendency to draw in moisture which will lead to the stick degrading, and potentially breaking.

The one main downside of composite sticks is that they tend to be more expensive than wooden equivalents due to the cost of manufacture.

### **How much should I spend on a stick?**

As with most goods, the price of a stick is generally governed by the stick's cost of production which in turn is usually a reflection of the materials used to provide stiffness and strength and therefore hitting power. As a simple rule of thumb, the more expensive a hockey stick is, the stiffer it is and so the more power it is capable of transferring onto the ball. On the whole prices reflect the material content and structure of the stick.