

Anatomy of a Stick

by Dan Torretta – 2/13/20

There seems to be a lot of slang when it comes to floorball sticks. Whether it's referring to the stick as a club, or calling the blade a head, it gets confusing trying to decipher what all these terms mean. I'd like to try to clear some of that up by going over the specifics of the stick so we're all on the same page.

Starting from the top, the first thing on our list is the cap. The cap is there to literally "cap" the shaft. Floorball sticks are very lightweight in part because they're hollow. Without this cap you'd have a hole on the butt end of your stick. Oxdog attempted to add some technology to their sticks with their Stick Balance System which was a 20 gram weight that could be inserted into the cap to change the balance point of the stick, but they've backed away from using it with their latest models opting to put in a lightweight cap to keep up with the growing trend "lighter is better." If you get a chance to experiment with one of these Stick Balance System sticks, I'd recommend trying it to see if you notice a difference.



Next, we have the grip. Grips are probably the most underappreciated part of a stick. I regularly see players go years(!) without replacing their grip which makes me cringe. A good grip can actually make you shoot harder, and an old grip that's falling apart can absolutely negatively impact your play. I have an article on NTFA.us explaining the importance of regularly changing your grip, [Changing Your Grip](#), which is worth the read if you haven't already done so. Unlike a blade, you can replace your grip with any brand. There is no requirement to match the stick and grip from the same manufacturer.



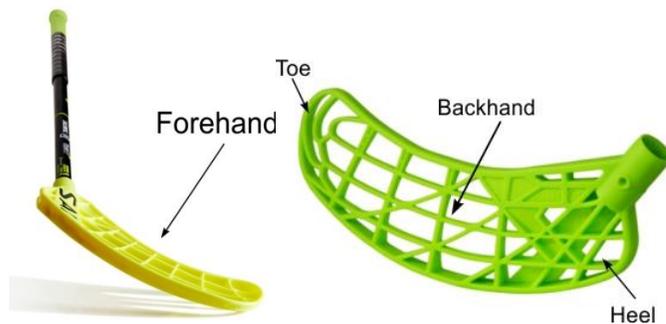
Underneath the grip is the shaft. It's self-explanatory what the shaft is, but sometimes it's incorrectly referred to as the "stick part." The difference between the shaft and the stick is that the shaft refers to just the tube, and stick refers to all the parts together as a whole. This is easily the most customized part of a stick. Every manufacturer has their own shaft technology to try to get the edge on the competition. Basic sticks use spun fiberglass shafts because it's cheap and durable, whereas higher end sticks use carbon fiber because of how light it is. Shafts also come in varying flex. Remember, the higher the number the higher the flex (typical range of flex in floorball sticks is 32-25). If I tried to explain all the variations this would be more of a book than an article, so I encourage anyone interested to check out the websites of the major brands (Salming, Fatpipe, Oxdog, Exel, Unihoc) for specifics. I'll also be writing a more detailed explanation of different shaft technologies and their purpose in a future article. If you've ever wondered why shafts are labelled with two different lengths be sure to check out my story on that on that: [Stick Length Explanation](#).

Two things you'll find on the shaft are the faceoff line and the IFF Certification. The faceoff line is a highly visible ring about 9 1/2 inches from the bottom of the shaft. This marking is how far down you can put your hands on a faceoff (remember thumbs must be pointed down!). **As a**

side note, if you ever shorten your stick you must cut the shaft from the TOP. I understand it seems easier to just take the blade off and cut the bottom. However, cutting from the bottom moves the faceoff line lower to the ground resulting it more leverage for the player, and making the stick illegal. The penalty for using an illegal stick is automatic ejection from the game. Further down, just above the blade, you'll find the IFF Certification. This stamp shows that your stick is approved by the IFF and is game legal. If you can't find this marking on your stick it means the IFF has NOT approved that model and is illegal to use in an IFF sanctioned match. Again, the penalty for using an illegal stick is automatic ejection from the match (shown with a red card, similar to soccer).



Lastly, the blade. Blades can be broken up into four parts, forehand, backhand, heel, and toe. The forehand is the front face of the blade where the ball will make contact when you hold your stick normally. The backhand is simply the opposite side of the forehand. The heel is the part of the blade that is closest to the shaft, and the toe is the part furthest from the shaft. No part of the stick gets more attention to detail than the blade. Players and manufacturers alike are hyper focused on what gives the best performance. Curve and concavity are the two main characteristics of any blade. Curve is the curvature from the heel to the toe, and concavity is the curvature from the top to the bottom. Blades are most commonly made from one of two types of plastic, polyethylene (PE) and polypropylene (PP). Your blade is marked with what material it's made out of in fine print on the backhand side. There are advantages and disadvantages to both, and there are further variations of blade material which I'll go into great detail in a future article. I'm not sure anyone has ever definitively found the "best" blade, and I doubt anyone ever will. But that's an article for another time.



Hopefully this has cleared up any confusion (and language barriers) about different parts of a floorball stick. If you have questions or comments, email me at dan@floorballplanet.com