

Hornussen

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Strike

Playing area

The team cohesiveness when catching is contrasted, in the catching, by individual performance. With a high degree of concentration required and the obvious courage to swing the driver (try to imagine a cross between a fishing rod and a flexible golf club), the batsman tries to hit the hornet as far as possible onto the pitch. Power, size, mobility, as well as intensive training, are important factors for achieving long distances. The striking distance is converted into points. From a minimum distance of 100 meters (= 1 point) there will be 1 point added for each extra 10 meters (160 meters = 16 points). These points are counted as a personal score, as well as part of the team score. In order to guarantee fair conditions the teams alternate turns between striking and catching. In each turn, each player hits 2 scoring strokes with a maximum of 3 attempts. The aim, when striking, is to have a higher team total than the opposition. However, the major deciding factor for a team is primarily to have the least (or none) dropped hornet within the playing area and secondarily that they have more points in hitting as the opposition.

The bock



The «bock» is the launcher for the hornet and acts as a set of tracks/guiderrail for the driver. It consists of two symmetrical parts made of chromium steel known as the «runners»; these can be used equally well by either right- or left handed strikers. A standard shape and technical guideline for its erection guarantees equal striking conditions for all teams.

The firing screen, erected in front of the «bock», collects badly struck hornets and thus protects the closest opposing team catchers from low flying and poorly visible hornets. The «back-stop», the large green cloth behind the «bock», acts on the one hand as a demarcation line between batsman and spectator and, on the other hand, makes the batsman more easily visible, even to the catcher who is furthest back on the catching field; these players can be some 250 – 350 metres away!

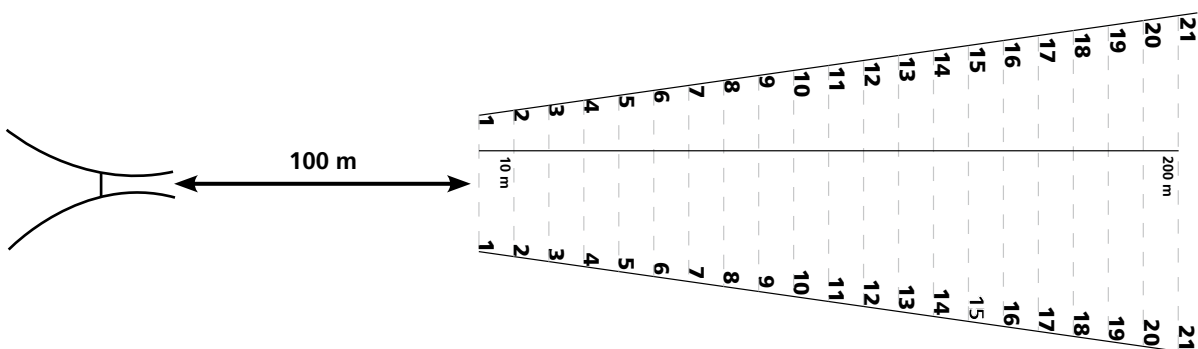
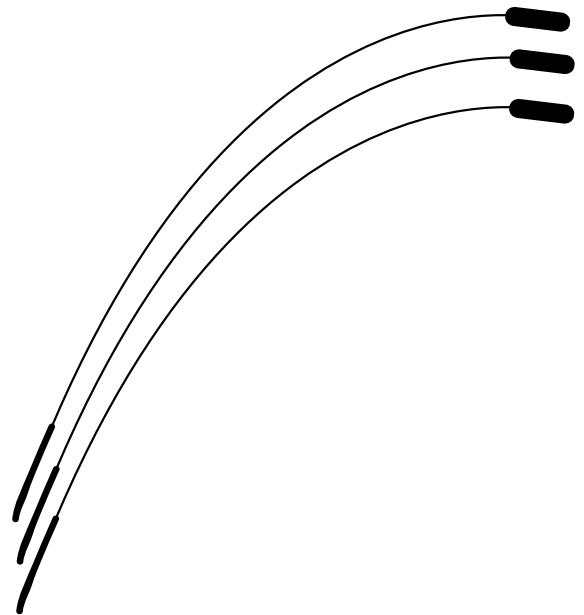
The hornet



Around this black projectile revolves the entire world of the hornet player. Using a small pellet of clay, the hornet is positioned on the front end of the «Bock». The mounting height depends upon the chosen driver's diameter, the striking techniques and the wind conditions. The correct mounting of the hornet also calls for precise knowledge of the whip of the driver, the striking technique and the material. The captain not only possesses this knowledge, but also the ability to support the striker's concentration and bolster his confidence.

The whip

The 2 to 3 metre long, flexible whip is made from aluminium fibre-glass, plastic and more recently also from carbon-fibre. The length, tension and material of the whip, as well as the weight of the driver, are selected according to the personal striking technique, power and size of the batsman. The driver, which is compressed from beech or maple wood and formed into its final shape, is used to impart the power transmission to the hornet. High acceleration, right-angled impact on the hornet as well as high tension in the whip is the preconditions for achieving large distances.



Catching

Playing area

Each batsman is confronted, whilst catching, by the cohesively formed team. Togetherness, mutual support and courage are the preconditions to reliably catch the approaching hornet, i.e. catching it with the catch board within or outside the playing field. If a hornet falls within the pitch to the ground uncaught, then a number is allocated to the catching team. The flight path and speed of the approaching hornet is variable depending upon the stroke length and demands, from the catchers in the front part of the playing field, for fast reactions to low-flying object, whilst, in the rear of the playing field, keen eyesight, skilled assessment of the flight path and obvious athletic ability to react to varying flight paths. The team, which following completion of game, has recorded the lowest numbers, is able, despite a lower point score when striking, to leave the arena as victors. Hence the shared action of catching, of defending, is ranked above personal, individual striking performances.

The pitch (playing field)

Development of the hornet today calls for playing field lengths of up to 350 meters and more. On the field layout, the field divisions showing the point scores for the batsman are visible. Within the playing field are written the striking distances and the numbers for landed hornets. Outside and within the pitch extension, only the striking distance is written. Some signs are necessary for the game to progress. Thus, the batsman has to indicate, with an empty hitting movement, his readiness to take up the game. Where a number is registered, this is indicated by a white flag, the raising of a catch board or of the score sheet by the referee.

The catch board

The most important auxiliary tool for the catcher is the catch board, This bonded ash or elm wood catch board is approx. 60 x 60 cm in size, with a covering veneer of poplar or willow and weights about 4 kg. Recently catch boards with a target surface made from synthetic materials have also appeared on the market. The helmet, which is nowadays frequently worn, protects the tightly grouped players from ricochets or falling catch boards. The risk of accident, which is already in fact small, is thus reduced to a minimum. For the young hornet player an obligatory helmet-wearing regulation is nowadays in force on the pitch.



Catch

The catchers have, after the executed strike, between 4 and 8 seconds to recognize and catch the approaching hornet. In doing so, up to 30 or more meters will be covered in the sprint in order to reach the anticipated fall position. Fitness, reaction, good eyesight and a reliable feel for the flight path, coupled with an element of courage, form the foundation stone for encountering the hornet, which approaches at approx. 180 kmh. The hornet impacts upon the catch board at approx 180 kmh. At the striking stage, poorly struck hornets often have an unstable flight path (rotation) and can suddenly deviate there from. Wind, rain or the environment (woods, trees) can have an influence upon the flight path. Such secondary influences call for an additional reaction capacity from the catcher.