

## Analyzing the body position of a fetcher at the breakdown

To truly understand low body position when stealing the ball one needs to compare two players during play or a drill - one showing good form and one showing poor form. When their body angles are compared a coach can see how important a small change in position is to successfully setting up for the steal. Often players will think they are set in the correct low body position but until they are corrected and tested in the new position they will continue to attempt steals using the incorrect setup causing unnecessary loss of energy which will cause accelerated onset of fatigue.

Below I have analyzed two young players both are talented and have great ability to steal the ball at the breakdown, but one is definitely more effective due to the precise positioning of his body, especially feet and legs during the steal process. When I compare the angles at which they are setting up for the steal you can easily see what difference correct foot placement and proper low body position makes.

### PLAYER A - CORRECT FOOT PLACEMENT + LEG BEND



The angle is measured from the player's core (mid point) to the left foot. Because of good low position, legs bent and hips in line with / below shoulder height the angle is acute, below 40 degrees. Now take a look at player B below.

### PLAYER B - INCORRECT FOOT PLACEMENT + INCORRECT LEG BEND



The angle is also measured from the player's core (mid point) but the angle increased by 15%. The reason for this is the placement of his feet (too wide) and this caused the outside leg to straighten for stability which caused the hips to lift up above shoulders = unstable base. A simple increase in angle shows you how much more vulnerable player B would be if hit by an opponent at the breakdown.

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## PLAYER A - SECOND ANGLE SHOWING LOW FLAT BACK



Player A again shows how the correct foot placement and leg bend influences the hip placement and straight spine = low fetching ability with solid base and acute angle when measuring.

## PLAYER B - SECOND ANGLE SHOWING CURVED SPINE AND LOCK OUTER LEG



Player B again proves that incorrect foot placement creates the need for extra stability hence the locked outer leg which causes hips to lift up taking the player further away from the ball making him curve his spine to reach for the ball exposing him to being cleaned out easily.

### CONCLUSION

So often you here coaches say to players “it is the little things that make the difference” and in this case coaches would often say “ it is the little things that make the difference so you must aim to get low when stealing the ball” but often

they leave out a simple demonstration or short **SPECIFIC** list of points which can show a player what low good body position at the breakdown really is. So be **SPECIFIC**:

1. Foot placement - feet must be equidistant from the mid line, don't let one foot go further out than the other.
2. Leg bend - low and ensure butt cheeks are in line with heels or slightly in front, this will set the base and also ensure the player does not get pulled over the ball causing a penalty for going over.
3. Low flat back - creates a straight spine putting the player in a position to forcefully drive forward against an opposing player if contested.
4. Hips below or inline with shoulder - this will keep the players spine in line and ensure the player has a solid base. If the legs straighten the players spine will curve and their base is gone.