

## HOW TO PROPERLY BREAK-IN YOUR POCKET

This is in response to a recent request from some parents as well as the coaches in general recognizing that we still have some kids with sticks that have pockets which are very flat and not broken in properly and that is causing them problems at times. I understand the game of Lacrosse is very new to many of you as well as many of the kids.....so I hope this helps. At this point in the season we expect all the kids to have their sticks properly broken in and feeling 100% confidence in using them.

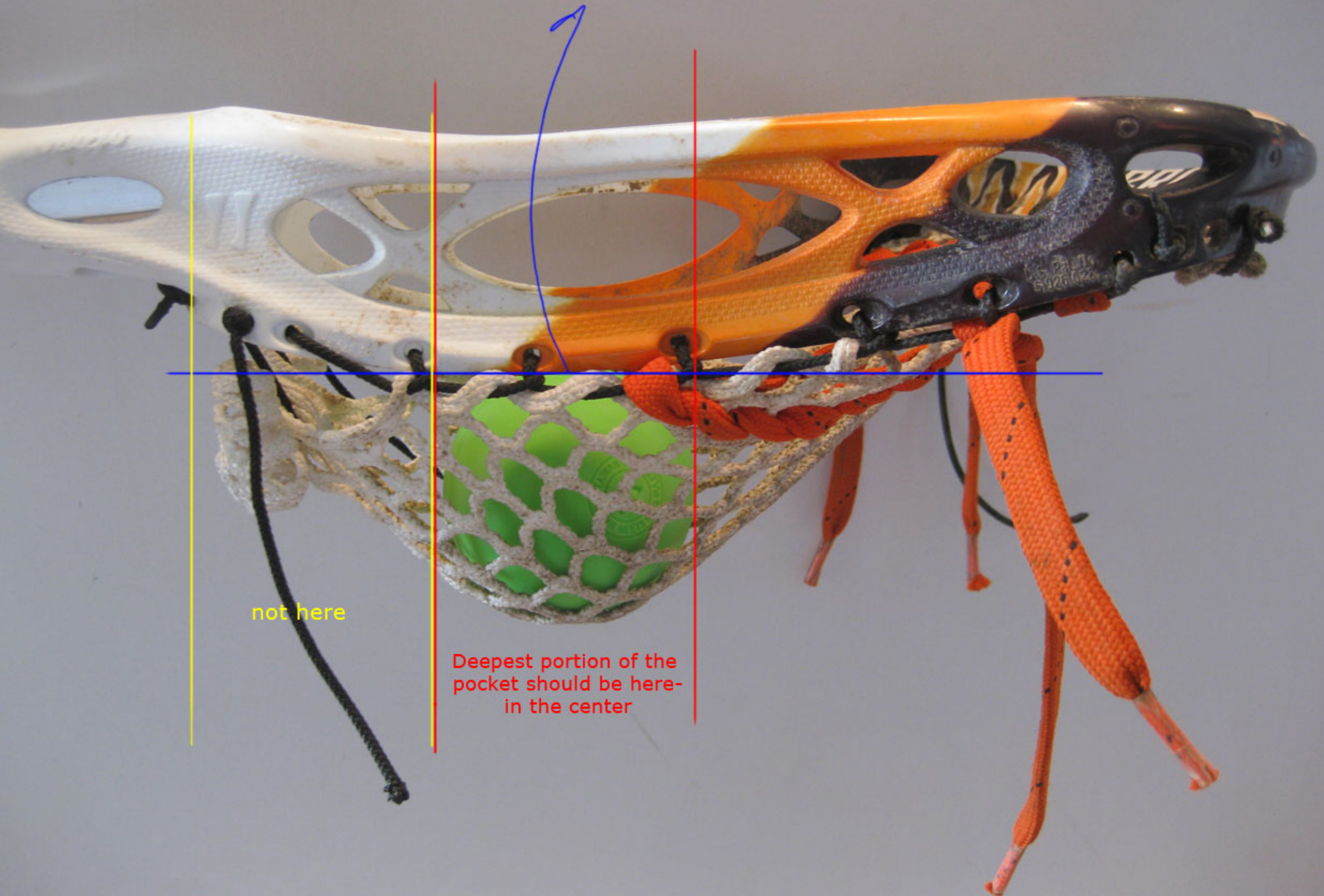
All sticks/pockets are NOT created equal. There are several reasons it is very important to have a properly broken in stick. In order to properly catch, throw, scoop and run with the ball, the depth of the pocket must be such that the ball can 'naturally rest' deep enough in the pocket in order for the ball not to come out or be dislodged easily. The depth of the pocket must also not be so deep that the stick becomes illegal. In order to maintain possession of the ball in your stick while running up and down the field, the pocket must be deep enough to allow the ball to sit properly so the player can run as fast as he/she can while cradling and feel confident that the ball will not come out, at least without some prodding. Lastly, the stick is the most important piece of equipment that your child will need in order to play this game at a higher level and with great confidence. The feeling a player must develop using his/her stick is complete control and predictability when they have possession of the ball [and without]. This will usually take some time to develop but once a player obtains that kind of confidence, the game opens up tremendously for them and their confidence soars and 100% of their effort can be solely focused on executing. As a player becomes more in tune with the performance of the pocket, he/she can tweak certain things as necessary to really get the stick dialed in based on their style and the feel of the ball in the pocket from catch to release.

Consider this, the difference between the feeling of having the confidence in a properly broken in stick is like a car with bad alignment- your constantly fighting to keep the car between the lines, you say 'right', your car says 'left'...somewhat predictable and yet very frustrating. Or trying to play a sport with shoes that are 2 sizes too small, it makes it almost impossible to participate and play the game properly with any confidence. The same is true when a player is using a new lacrosse stick that is not completely broken in. As coaches, we continue to impart the importance of the basic skills of the game to all the kids. They absolutely MUST be able to pass, catch, scoop and run with the ball in their stick otherwise the game will be very frustrating for each kid to learn as well as to coach.

So I have included 7 different angles/images that show what the ball should look like inside the pocket and where it should 'rest comfortably'. It may also be necessary to loosen some of the nylon strings in order to allow you to slide a butter knife over the ball as shown..... in order to 'break in' a mesh pocket, you will first need to soak the mesh in hot water until it's good and soaked thru...and then you can use the butter knife method shown.

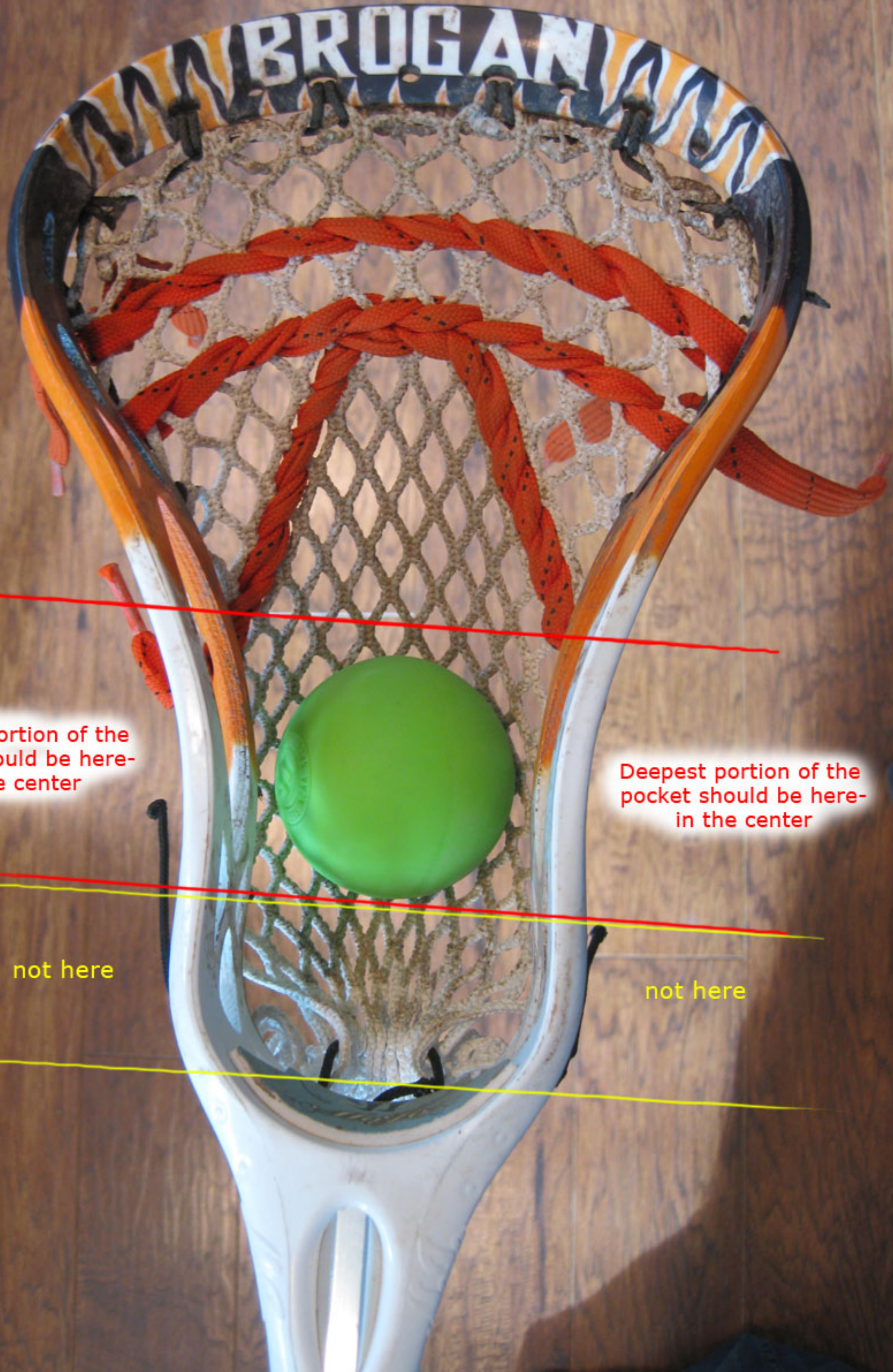
If your child is using a traditional leather pocket the same general rules apply, however, a leather pocket is typically more difficult to 'tame' and may take some more time to break in... I suggest mesh as the better way to go next time. There are also leather/mesh combination pockets, which are also a better alternative.

Ball should hang almost BUT NOT COMPLETELY below the plastic sidewall as shown-  
NOTE- a small portion of the ball must remain partially 'invisible' or covered by the  
plastic sidewall otherwise the pocket would be illegal



not here

Deepest portion of the  
pocket should be here-  
in the center



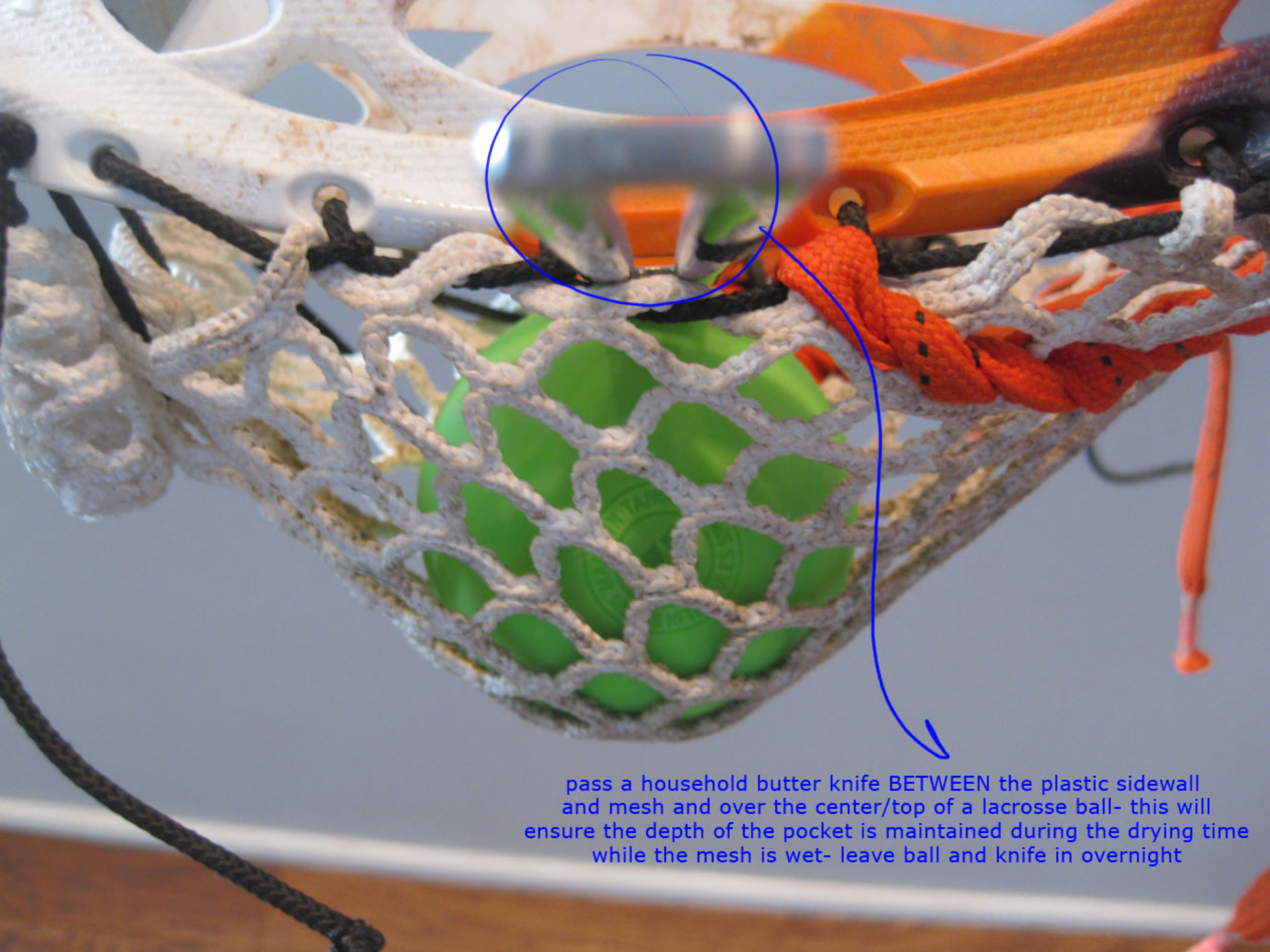
BROGAN

Deepest portion of the pocket should be here-  
in the center

Deepest portion of the pocket should be here-  
in the center

not here

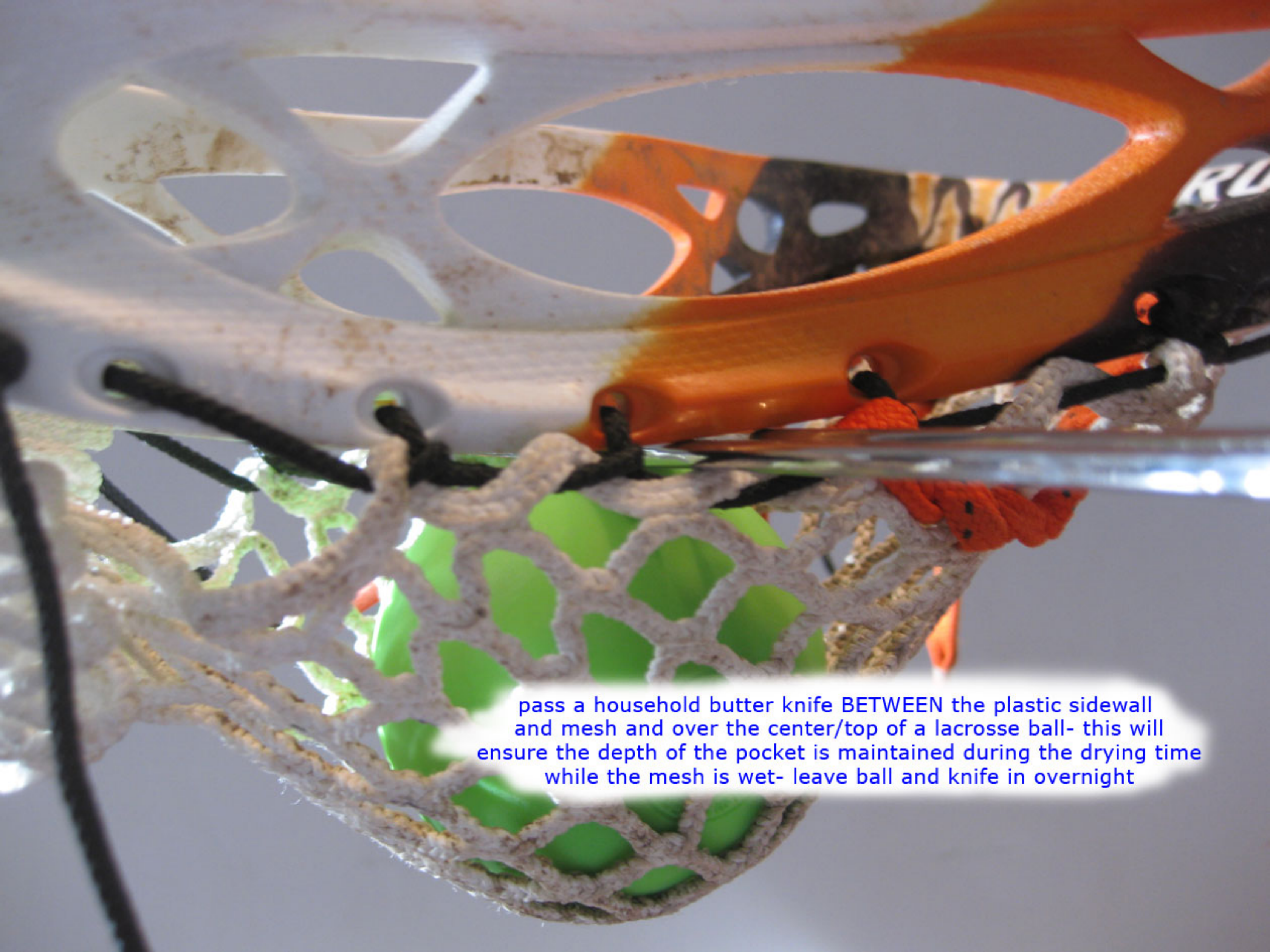
not here



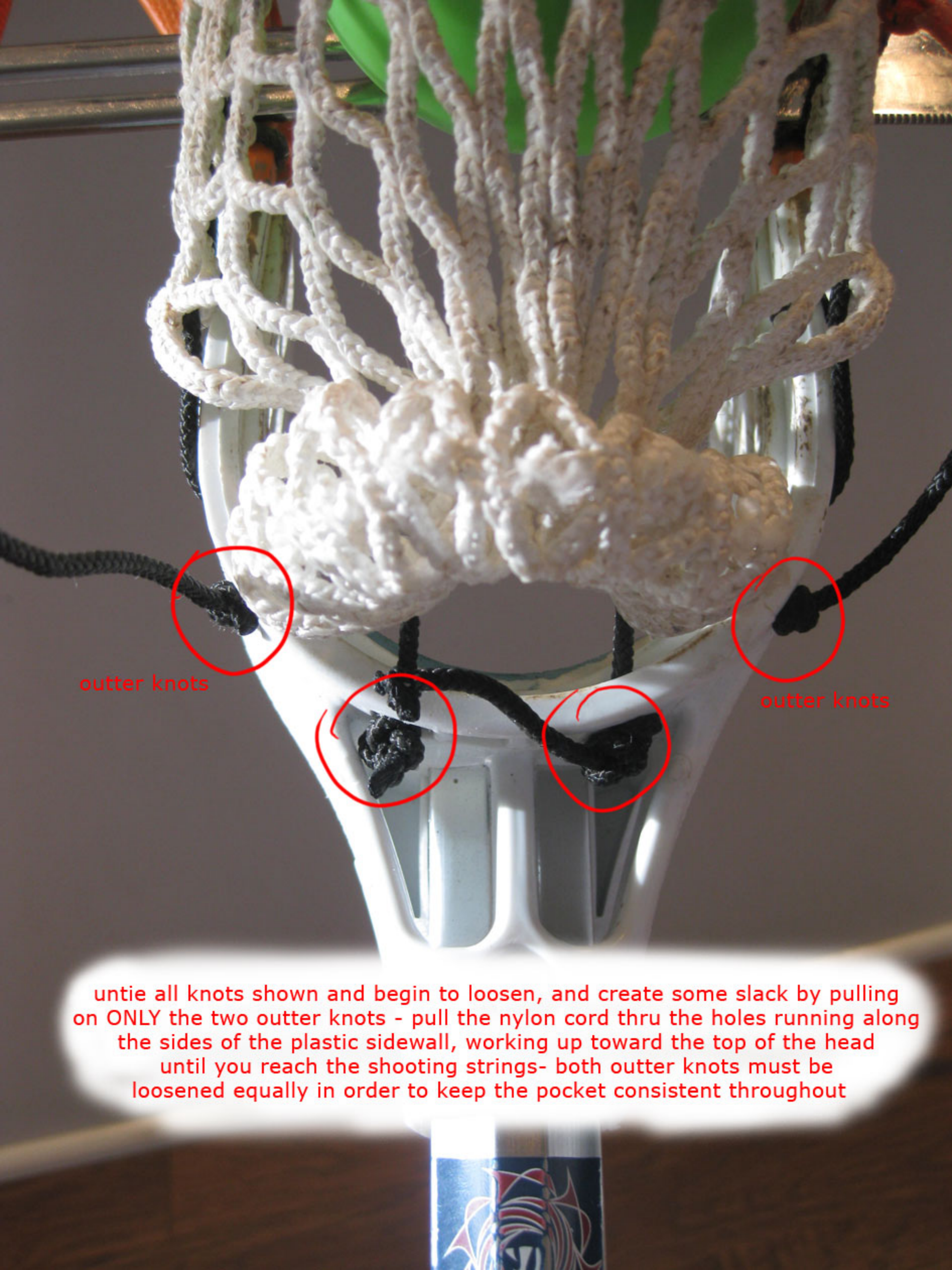
pass a household butter knife BETWEEN the plastic sidewall and mesh and over the center/top of a lacrosse ball- this will ensure the depth of the pocket is maintained during the drying time while the mesh is wet- leave ball and knife in overnight

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outer knots

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untie all knots shown and begin to loosen, and create some slack by pulling on ONLY the two outer knots - pull the nylon cord thru the holes running along the sides of the plastic sidewall, working up toward the top of the head until you reach the shooting strings- both outer knots must be loosened equally in order to keep the pocket consistent throughout

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loosen knot

pull and loosen all along here

pull and loosen all along here

STOP HERE

more slack in between this area  
so the pocket is deeper here