

# DEFENSEMEN SKILLS WORKSHOP



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- 31yrs. *Minnesota Youth & High School Hockey Coach*
- 21 yrs. *USA Hockey - Coaching Education Program Instructor*
- 18 yrs. *Minnesota Hockey Participant in Coach & Player Development*
- 1990 *USA Hockey Select 17 Team Assistant Coach*
- 1996 *USA Hockey - Developmental Coach of the Year*
- 1997 *Minnesota Select 16 Team Coach - National Festival Champions*
- 1998 *Minnesota Select 16 Team Coach - National Festival Champions*
- 1998 *Minnesota H.S. Hockey - Class "AA" Assistant Coach of the Year*
- 1999 *Czech Republic - International Ice Hockey Federation Select 15 Development Camp Coach*
- 2002 *USA Hockey - Walter Yaciuk Award*

## DEFENSEMEN GUIDELINES

1. Teach "Gapping" - space between defender & puckcarrier. Never be further away from puckcarrier than half of a zone.

"Gapping" distances in odd/even situations

### Up-Force

1on1, with BC  
2on2, with BC  
3on2, with BC

### Even-Meet

3on2, with BC  
2on2, no BC  
2on1, with BC

### Down-Fade

1on1, no BC  
2on1, no BC  
3on1, 0/1 BC  
3on2, no BC

2. Always position inside the "seams" (face-off dots) when puckcarrier is coming thru neutral zone.
3. When outnumbered, don't commit first, allow play to go outside toward boards.
4. "Block Out" puckcarrier who tries to go to net. Stay in front of puckcarrier by using back crossovers, pumps, side steps or step-outs.
5. Body Checks (full contact) can only occur when you have the puckcarrier outnumbered. This means that the next closest player to the loose puck, after making the check, is a teammate or when puckcarrier is next to boards.

\* Remember, when you do a body check, you also take yourself out of the play.

NOTE: Check only for a purpose. Checking just for the sake of a hit is seldom of value and creates risk of self-injury, missing checks, gives openings to opposition, as well as penalties.

6. "THE RULE" - Always Contain The Puckcarrier Outside Towards The Boards. Keep The Puckcarrier On Your Outside Shoulder (Towards The Boards).
7. "Hold" the offensive blue line for as long as possible when the puck starts to move up ice. Center Point, must always keep all opponents in front of him.






8. Odd Player Rushes - play between attackers, fill the passing lane, force the shot to be taken from the bad angle (deny the pass).  
- When shot is taken outside the "seam", goalie takes the shooter and defenseman covers the opponent in front of net.
9. Always back your partner on the offensive blue line, in the neutral zone, and especially in the defensive zone.
10. Always one defenseman in front of the net when the opposition has the puck in your zone or there is danger that they may gain possession.
11. Always play defense first. If attacking with puck, only go deep into offensive zone until PRIME scoring opportunity is over.
12. Stagger one defenseman up a little further than the other on 2on2 and 3on2 situations. The defenseman up is the player nearer the puck.
13. Do not "tie up" with opposition in front of net -- rather gain position and control (between PC and net, stick on stick, control passing lane).
14. Shoot intelligently from the point. The best shot is always low, generally not too hard (so it stays in the scoring area for rebounds), and accurate. Always look up so shots are not into opposing players and so passes to wide wings or partner can be made without error.
15. Never stop with puck (unless behind net and no pressure) to make a pass. LOOK-MOVE-LOOK-PASS. This reduces the chances of being surprised from the back and side, makes the pass more accurate, and forces the opposition to begin retreating.
16. When pivoting with a puckcarrier breaking around the outside, keep the feet moving -- do not lunge or reach without moving the feet.
17. When in the corner with puckcarrier, always play the body first, separate the opposition from the puck and "pin" the body to the boards.

18. Always keep puck between the face-off dots when trying to breakout. Don't carry puck beyond dots to corner, there are not many options when puck is in this position.
19. When being checked tight and in control of the puck, protect puck from checker with body (especially in defensive zone).
20. WORK-WORK-WORK on backward starts, quickness, aggressive tight turning and pivots. A defenseman must be comfortable in all areas of skating.
21. COMMUNICATE -- with your partner, goalkeeper and forwards. When retrieving a puck, your defensive partner and goalkeeper should tell you of many checkers and your options with puck.
22. The strongside defenseman (started the breakout) follows the attacking forwards closely (20-30 feet) and moves into the zone as the 4th (Delay) attacker.
23. The blue lines are critical. Always clear the puck over the defensive blue line as a first priority -- then move up over the blueline quickly. Defend both blue lines with as much vigor as reasonable as the opposition attacks down the ice -- they are natural points to stop the attack.
24. Do not ever "tie up" with an opposing player anywhere when your team is a man short. Be able to cut off any pass to opposing player and be able to be in stick contact with him if in front of net.




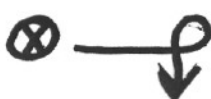
## Developing Defensemen Skills

### I. SKATING




#### A. Backward Skills

1. Backward Swizzels 
2. Backward Crossovers for Speed 
3. Backward Crossunder Start 
4. Lateral Movement
  - a. Backward Pumps 
  - b. Backward Crossovers 



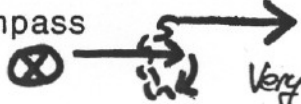
#### B. Forward Skills

1. Quick Acceleration (15 to 30 ft.) 
2. Forward Crossovers 
3. Hockey Turns w/ Acceleration 
4. Escapes w/ Acceleration 



#### C. Stops & Starts

1. Forward One Skate Stop & Change Direction (Counters) 
2. Backward Crossunder Start-Swizzel-One Skate Back Stop-Forward 
3. Forward Stop to Backward Crossunder Start 

## D. Transitional Movements



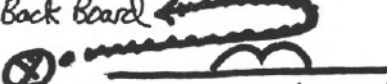
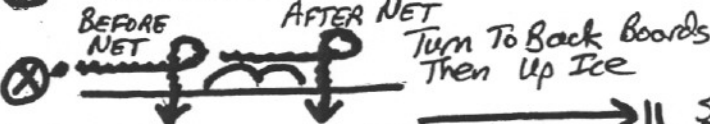

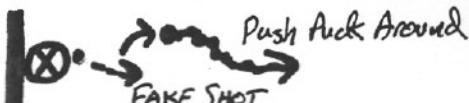

1. Forward-Lateral Slide Step- Backward 
2. Backward-Lateral Stepout Sideways-Forward 
3. Forward-Backward Compass  Very Tight Circle

## E. Pivots


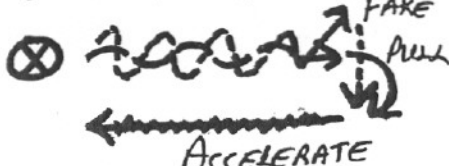
1. Backward-Heel To Heel Stepout-Forward (0-110 degrees) 
2. Backward-Crossunder Stepout (110-180 degrees)  CROSSUNDER STEP-OUT

## II. Puckhandling


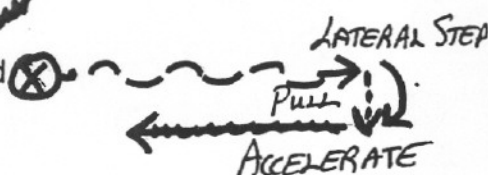
### A. Forward Puckhandling

1. Forward Fake & Pull  ACCELERATE
2. Forward Double Fake & Pull  ACCELERATE
3. Hockey Turn 
4. Escape  BEFORE NET AFTER NET Turn To Back Boards Then Up Ice
5. Forward Stop & Counter  Stop on far post facing Up Ice
6. Fake Shot Stationary - Push Puck Around  Push Puck Around FAKE SHOT
7. Fake Pass - Move Opposite Direction 

### B. Backward Puckhandling

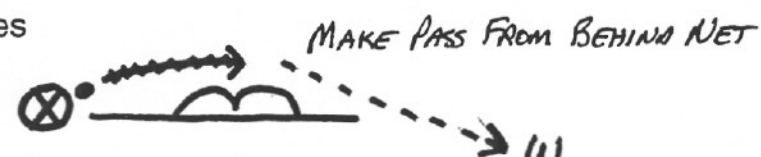
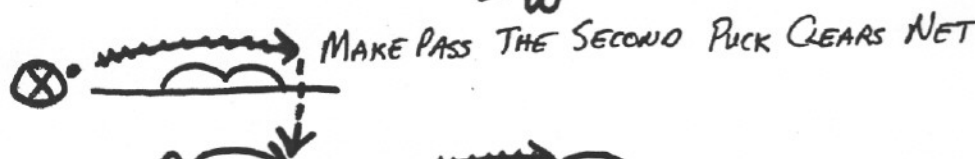



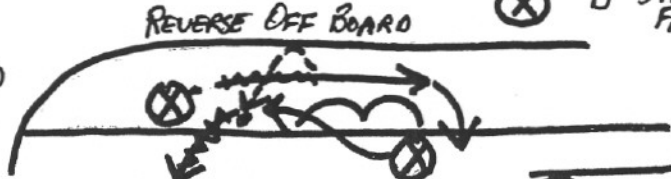
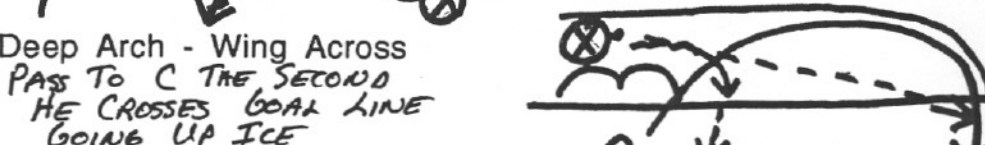
1. Backward Pulls 
2. Backward Fake & Pull  ACCELERATE





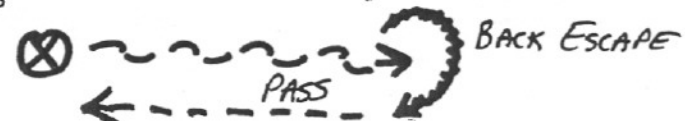
3. Backward Escape 
4. Backward- Lateral Step To Side-Forward 

### III. Passing and Receiving

#### A. Breakout Passes

1. D to Wing 
2. D to Center 
3. D to Wing - Give & Go 
4. D Counter to Wing 
5. D to D Behind the Net 
6. D Reverse to D 
7. D to Center Deep Arch - Wing Across 

#### B. Blueline/Neutral Zone

1. D to D Backward Skating Passes 
2. Backward-Lateral Step Sideways & Pass 
3. Backwards Escape & Pass 

## IV. Shooting

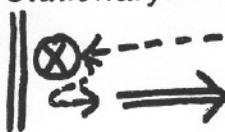
### A. Basic Shots

#### 1. Receive & Shoot Stationary - Shoot for Tip/Deflection

a. Wrist Shot

b. Snap Shot

c. Slap Shot

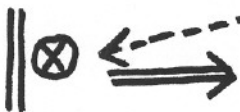


WRIST SHOT - Receive, Rock Back, Sweep Puck

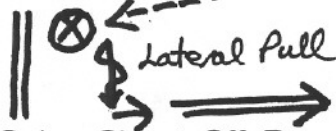
SLAP SHOT - Receive off front foot "CAULK" STICK - FIRE 6

### B. Advance Skills

#### 1. One Time Shot



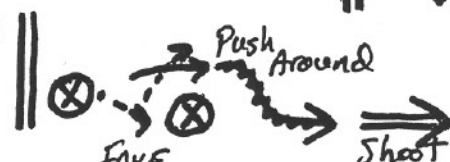
#### 2. Lateral Pull & Shoot



#### 3. Pass Down to Forward (Give & Go) - Shoot Off Pass



#### 4. Fake Shoot-Pull Around & Shoot



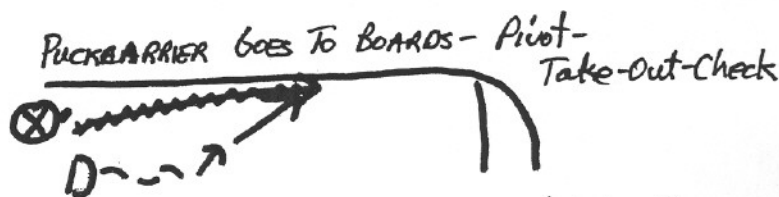
#### 5. Dump Into Corner



## V. Body Play & Coverage

### A. Body Play

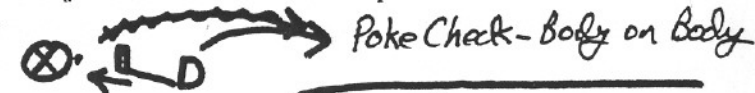
#### 1. Take Out Check On Boards



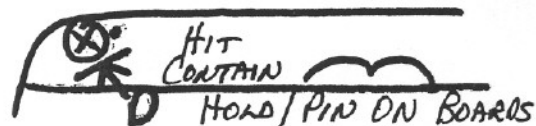
#### 2. Blocking Out



#### 3. Poke Check-Play the Body



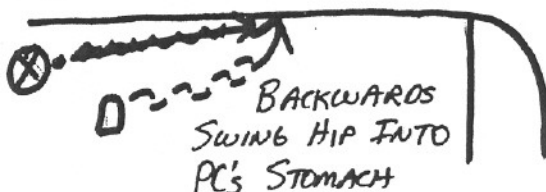
#### 4. Pinning Against Boards



#### 5. Shoulder Check



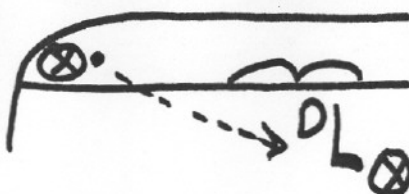
#### 6. Hip Check





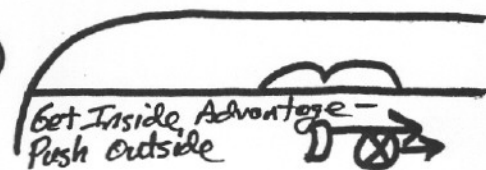
B. Coverage

1. Front of Net



COVER WEAKSIDE - Stay Between Goal & Opponent, Skates Pointing Up Ice.

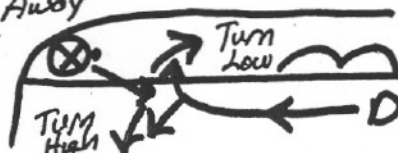
a. Puck in Corner



b. Puck at Point

2. Puckcarrier Coming Out of Corner

Turn PC Away From Net



Turn Low

Turn High

3. "Switching" When Puckcarrier Goes Behind Net



Chase - Move Out Front of Net

Hit PC Before He Clears The Net

VI. "GAPPING" - Playing Situations

A. Even

1. 1 on 1 no BC
2. 1 on 1 with BC
3. 2 on 2 no BC
4. 2 on 2 with BC

B. Odd

1. 2 on 1 no BC
2. 2 on 1 with BC
3. 3 on 1 no BC
4. 3 on 1 with 1/2 BC
5. 3 on 2 no BC
6. 3 on 2 with 1/2 BC

# Defensemen Drills

## SKATING SKILLS

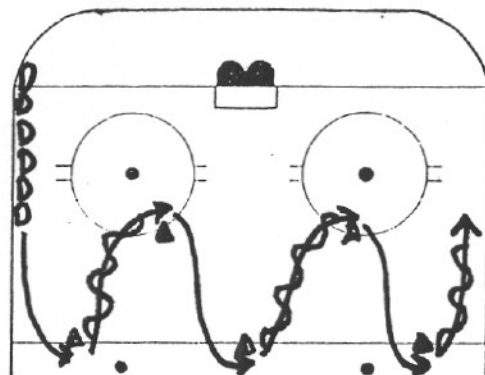
### # 1 Forward/Backward Zig-Zag

-Stagger 5 cones between blue line & top on circle

-Players skate forward/backward zig-zagging each cone.

-Players must keep chest & eyes on red line all the time

Stress: 1) Quickness, 2) Tight Transition on each cone (don't "belly" out)

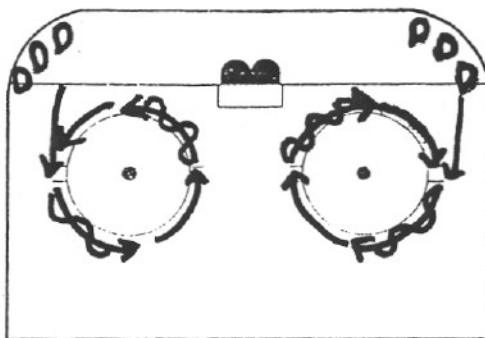


### # 2 Forward/Backward Pivots On Circle

-Players does pivot from forward/backward every 1/4 circle.

-Always turn inwards so chest & eyes are on dot in middle of circle

Stress: 1) Quickness, 2) Don't "bobb up" when making pivot



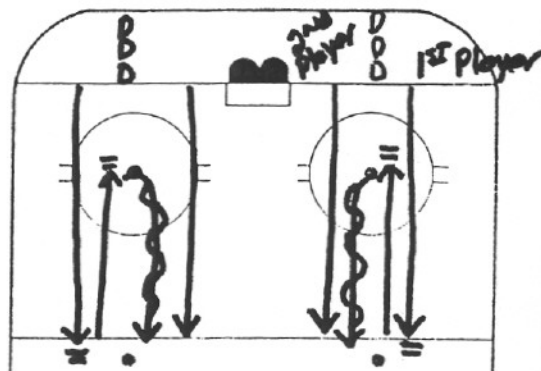
### # 3 Forward/Backward Race

-1st player forward to blue line-stops- and skates forward back to face-off dot.

-1st player then skates backward and 2nd player in line skates forward racing 1st player to blue line.

-When 2nd player gets to blue line they repeat what first player did.

Stress: 1) Quickness, 2) Tight transition from forward to backward, 3) Do back crossovers to blueline

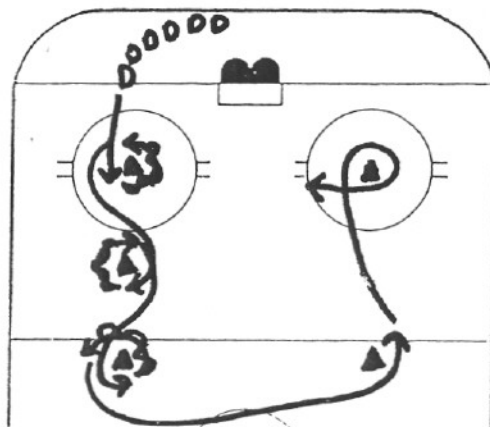


### # 4 "Compass"-Control Turn-Escape on Dots/Cones

-Do compass (forward/backward) on first three cones/dots.

-Continue skating forward & do control turn on 4th cone and an escape on 5th cone.

Stress: 1) Quickness, 2) Accelerate coming out of movement, 3) Wide base when doing control turns & escapes

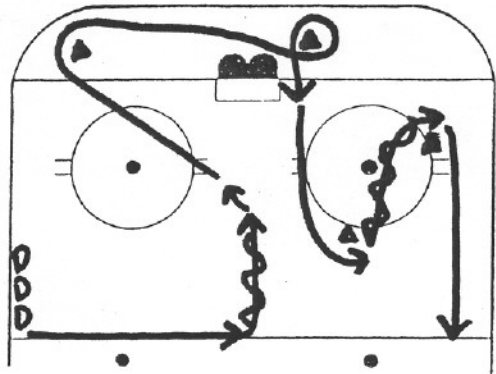


## # 5 Over and Back Aggressive

### Edge Course

- Skate forward to middle then skate backwards to top of circle
- Pivot forward to corner and skate hard behind net
- Escape on cone at side of net
- Skate forward & do forward/backward transition zig-zagging cones

Stress: 1) Quickness, 2) No "bobbing" when doing pivots, 3) Tight transition forward/backward, 4) Wide base when doing escape move

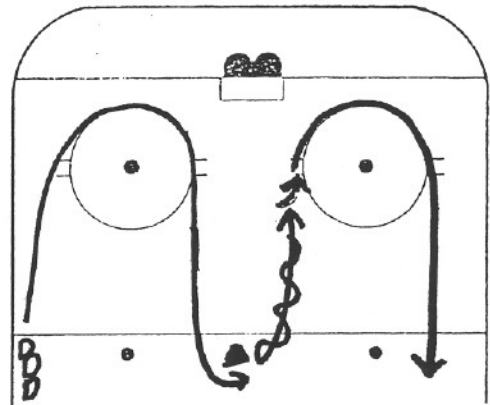


## # 6 In & Out of Zone Skating

### Movements

- Player does forward crossovers on bottom of circle and then skates forward up over blueline
- At blue line, transition to backward
- Pivot forward at top of circle
- Do forward crossovers on bottom of circle and accelerate forward out of zone

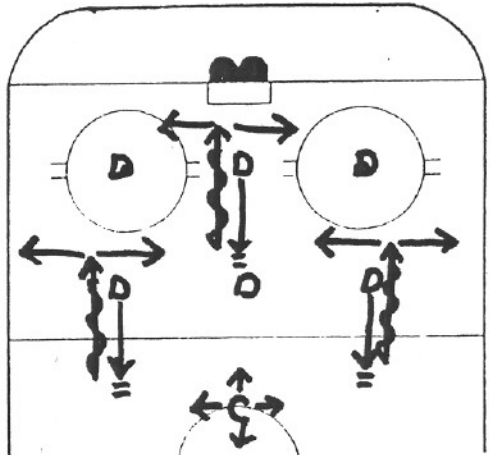
Stress: 1) Quickness, 2) No gliding on forward crossovers, 3) No "bobbing" when doing pivots, 4) Tight turn when doing transition forward/backward



## # 7 Wave Drill

- Players spread out facing coach
- Players move forward/backward/sideways crossovers as coach points stick the direction to go.

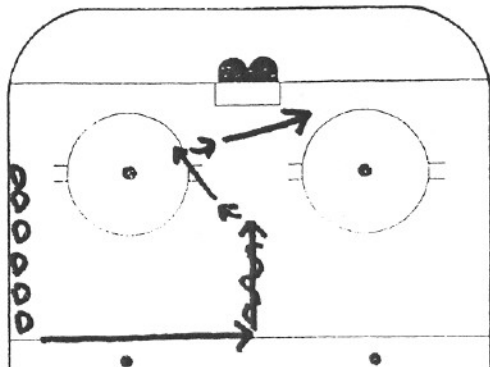
Stress: 1) Quick reaction to change direction, 2) Tight transition forward/backward



## # 8 Over & Back - Cut Back Pivot

- Forward to middle then skate backwards
- On coach's whistle pivot forward to side player started on
- On 2nd whistle, do a crossunder pivot forward going to other side

Stress: 1) Pivot quickly, 2) When doing "cut back" pivot turn chest up ice



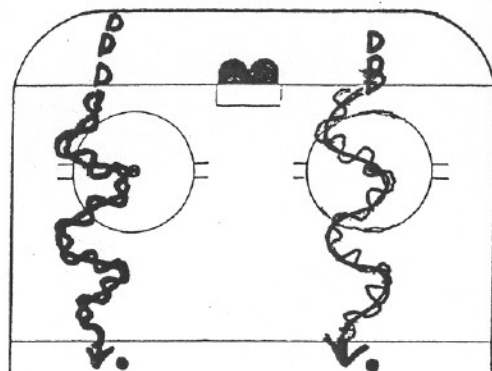
## Defensemen Drills

### PUCKHANDLING SKILLS

#### # 1 Backward Movement Dribbling The Puck

-Player skates backward zigging back and forth stickhandling the puck

Stress: 1) Eyes up when handling puck,  
2) Dribble the puck back & forth, pulling puck on back angle when going side-to-side

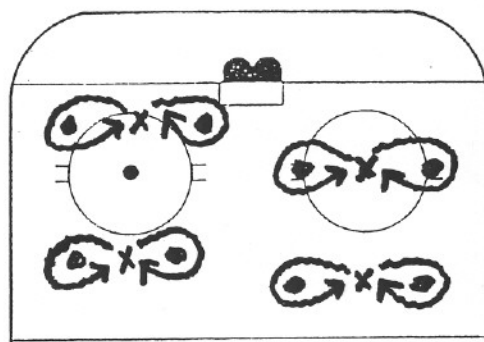


#### # 2 Control Turns Fig. 8 On Gloves

-Lay gloves down 8 ft. apart

-Player does tight control turns w/puck, doing fig. 8 motion on gloves

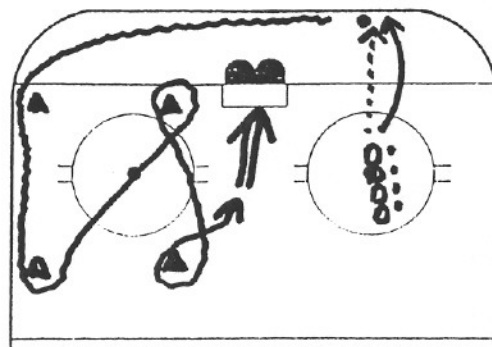
Stress: 1) Skates close to glove & puck  
farthest away from glove when turning



#### # 3 Forward Puck Control - "BOX" Control Turns & Escapes

-Player does control turns and first 2 cones and escapes on last 2 cones

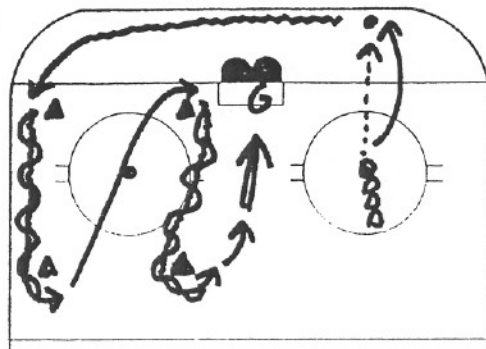
Stress: 1) Acceleration coming out of turns,  
2) Wide base when starting turn,  
3) puck farthest away from cone on turn



#### # 4 Forward/Backward Puck Control "BOX" Movements

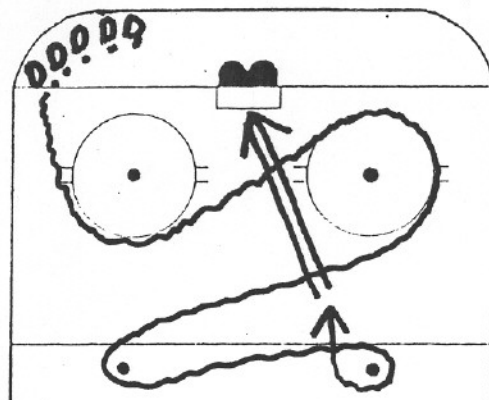
-Backward/forward transition stickhandling puck.

Stress: 1) Pull puck in towards you when doing transitions



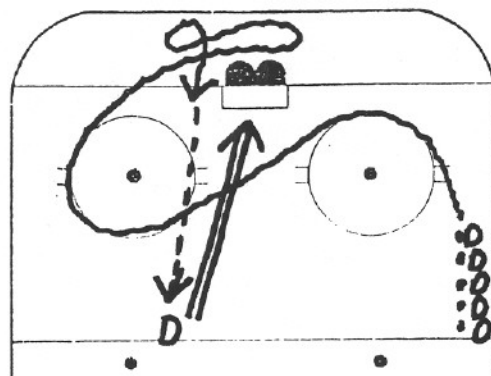
### # 5 Over/Under On Circles - Control Turn/Escapes On Dots

- Player does forward crossovers on circle carrying puck
  - Player then does control turn on 1st dot and escape move on 2nd dot
  - Player then shoots on net
- Stress: 1) Full speed forward crossovers,  
2) Tight turns with quick acceleration coming out of turns



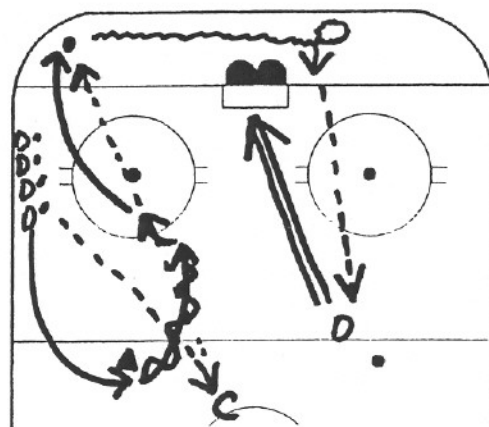
### # 6 Under/Over Counter Control Turn & Escape Move

- Player does forward crossovers on circles
  - Player then goes behind net to far post and does control turn towards boards
  - Player then does escape move immediately after clearing net
  - Then passes to player at blue line for shot
- Stress: 1) Full speed forward crossovers,  
2) Full speed control turn to quick escape, 3) Quick shot, low & accurate



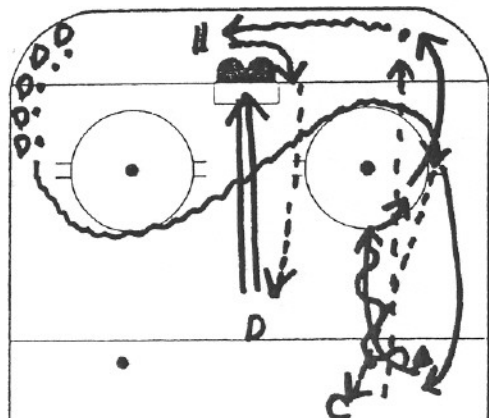
### # 7 Up & Back - Retrieve Puck - Escape

- Pass to coach, skate up to blue line and do forward/backward transition
  - Pivot forward at top of circle, retrieve puck dumped in corner by coach
  - Skate behind net, clear net & do escape
  - Pass to player on blue line for quick shot
- Stress: 1) Quickness when retrieving puck and going behind net, 2) Quick, low, accurate shot



### # 8 Over/Under Circle - Up & Back- Retrieve Puck - Counter

- Player does forward crossovers on circle
  - Pass to coach, up over blue line, forward/backward transition. retrieve puck corner
  - Skate behind net full speed & do counter
  - Pass to player at blue line & shoot
- Stress: 1) Quickness when retrieving puck and doing counter, 2) Quick-low-accurate shot

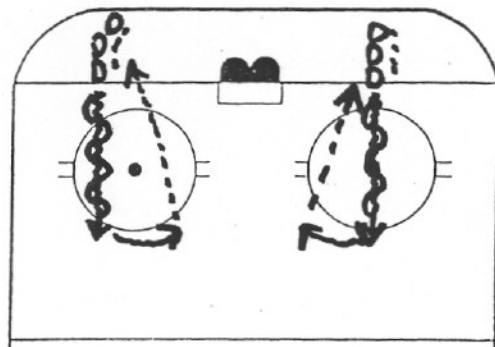


### # 9 Backward Stickhandling -

#### Lateral Step Sideways

- Player skates backward to top of circle
- Then stepout sideways to middle and pass to next player in line

Stress: 1) Stickhandling the puck,  
2) Accurate pass

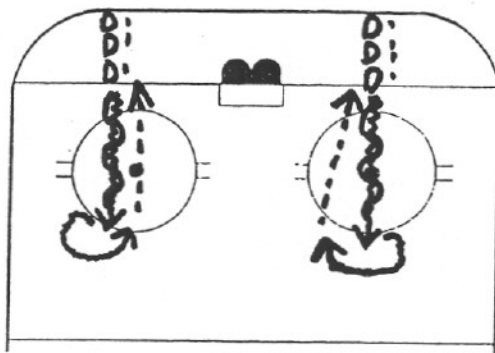


### #10 Backward Stickhandling -

#### Backward Escape

- Player skates backward to top of circle
- Then do an backward escape and pass to next player in line

Stress: 1) Stickhandling the puck,  
2) Accurate pass

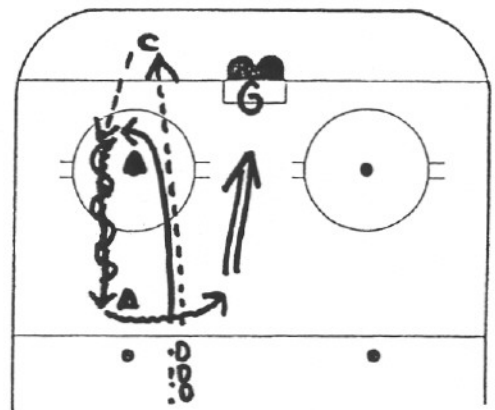


### #11 Forward/Backward Transition-

#### Lateral Pull to Middle - Shoot

- Player passes to coach, skates and does forward/backward transition on cone
- Receives puck & stickhandles backwards over top of 2nd cone
- Does lateral pull or move to middle and shoots

Stress: 1) Tight transition, 2) Stickhandle puck, 3) Lateral movement to middle, 4) Shoot quickly



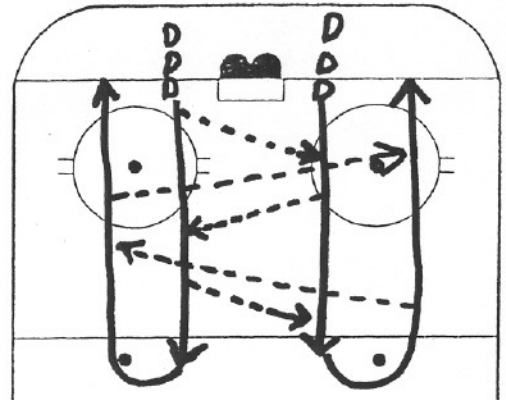


## Defensemen Drills

### PASSING SKILLS

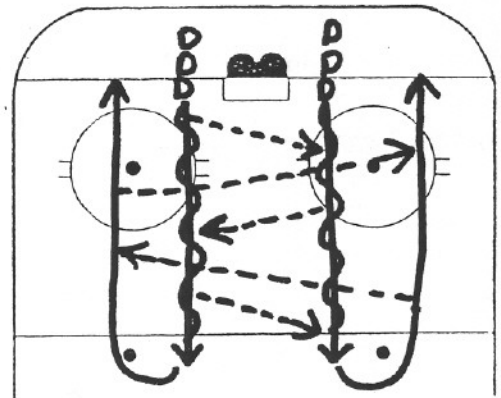
#### # 1 Up & Back - 2on0 Passing

- Form 2 lines inside dots.
- Go forward the entire drill, up to blueline and turn and come back wider.
- Make as many passes as possible up and back.



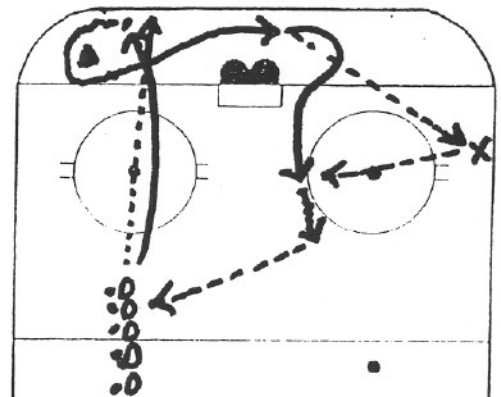
#### # 2 Backward Up & Forward Coming Back - 2on0 Passing

- Form 2 lines inside dots.
- Skate backwards to blue line passing the puck.
- Step out forward at blue line wider and make as many passes as you can.



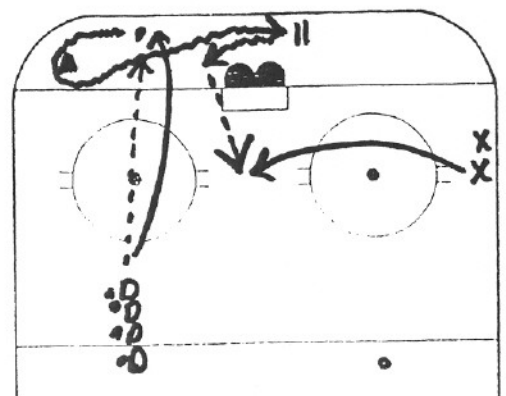
#### # 3 "Dump" - Retrieve - Control Turn Give & Go Pass With Wing

- Start at blue line, "dump" puck into corner
- Do a control turn around cone & skate behind net.
- Make pass to wing on boards
- After pass skate up MIDDLE of ice and get a return pass.
- After receiving pass, immediately pass to line at blue line.



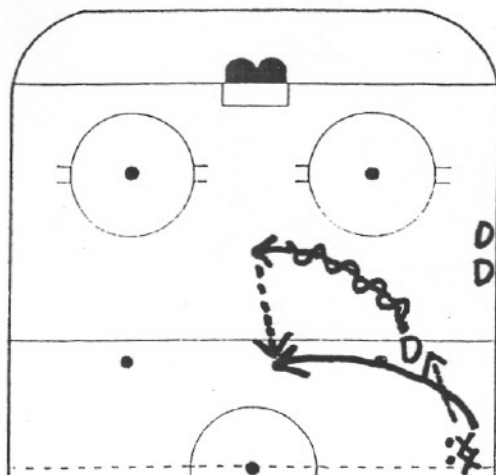
#### # 4 "Dump" - Retrieve - Control Turn - Counter - Pass Up Middle

- Same as #3, but when going behind the net do a "counter"
- Defenseman playing wing on boards comes across and plays center position, do not be in front of "D" going behind net.
- The pass is made immediately after clearing the net and straight up ice.



### # 5 "D" Regroup Pass - Forward Archs Into Middle

- Form 2 line, one for "D" and one for "F".
- "D" starts on blue line and receives pass from "F".
- "D" skates backwards swinging into middle while stickhandling the puck.
- "F" swings into middle and gets pass from "D".



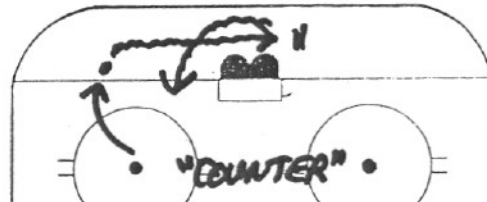
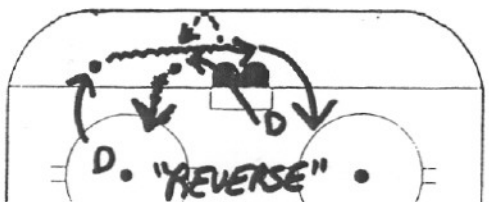
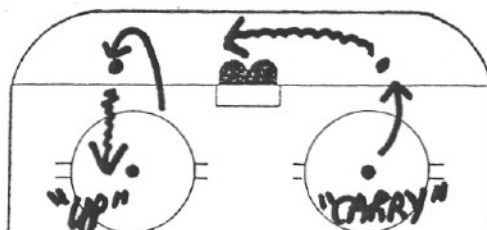
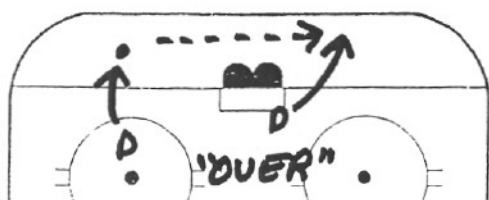
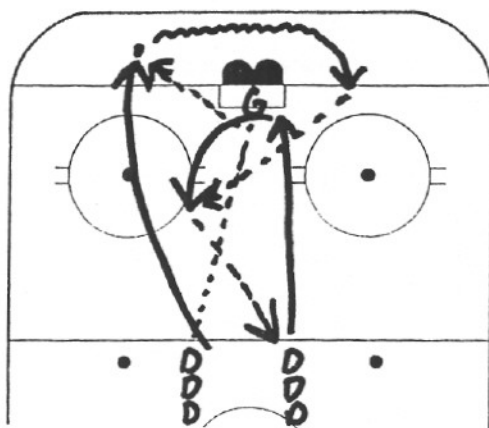
### # 6 "D" Regroup Pass - Forward Swings Up Boards

- Same as #5, except "F" starts in middle and "D" starts at face-off dot.
- "F" passes to "D" who skates backwards swinging into middle.
- "F" swings to boards and receives pass from "D".
- "D" should make pass the minute the "F" starts up the boards.



### # 7 2on0 - Breakout Patterns - Pass To "D" Moving Up Slot - Pass and Shoot

- Form 2 lines 10 feet apart, one "D" shoots puck in on net.
- Strongside "D" retrieves puck and weakside "D" goes to far side of net.
- "D" with puck does one of 5 breakout play: "UP" - "CARRY" - "COUNTER" - "OVER" - "REVERSE"
- After breakout play is made the "D" without the puck moves up slot and gets pass from puckcarrying "D".
- "D" receives pass in slot and passes to "D" in one of the lines.

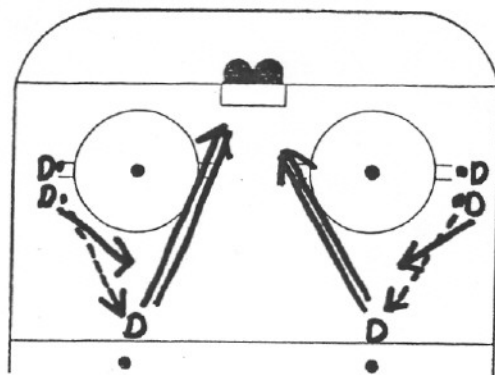


# Defensemen Drills

## SHOOTING DRILLS

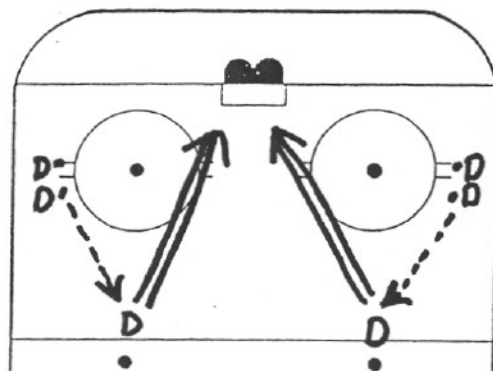
### # 1 Pass - Receive - Shoot

- Form 2 lines. one line on the blue line in line with dot, the other on the boards at "hash" mark of circle.
- Pass to "D" at blue line, receive puck off front skate, don't let the puck bounce forward off stick.
- Quick release on all shots, low and on net (use wrist, snap, & slap shots)



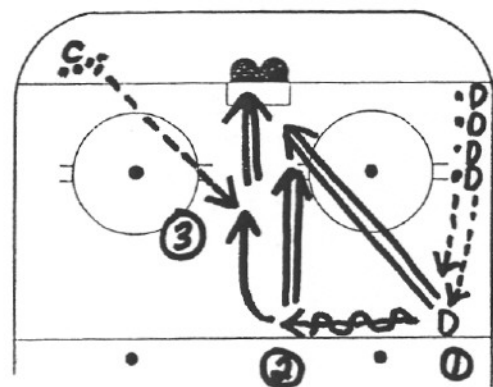
### # 2 Pass - Receive - Pressure And Shoot

- Same as #1, except that after the passer makes pass, he goes and tries to block shot with his stick.
- NOTE: if "D" shooting knows the shot will be blocked they should "dump" the puck into the corner.



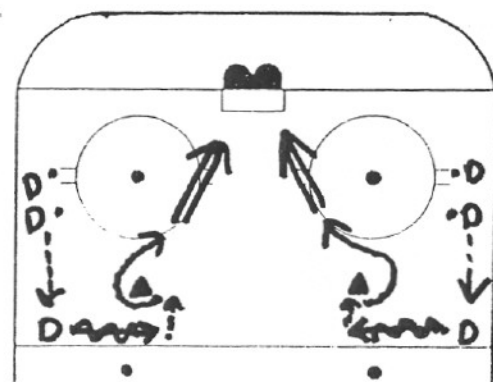
### # 3 "1-2-3" Shoot & Move

- Form 2 lines, one on the blue line next to boards, the other at the "hash" mark of the circle against the boards.
- The "D" on the blue line will make 3 shots, each from a different location.
- 1st Shot: Pass to "D" who stands still and takes quick, low accurate shot
- 2nd Shot: Pass to "D", receive puck and pull laterally towards middle and shoot.
- 3rd Shot: Pass to "D" skating down the slot, shoot immediately!!



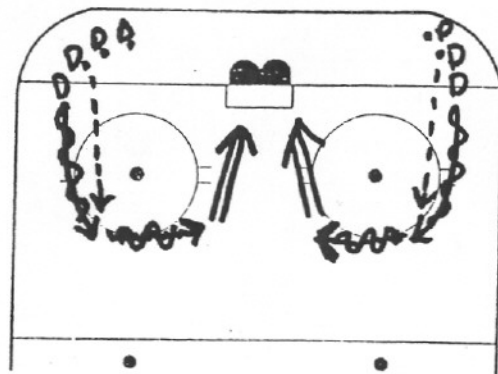
### # 4 Receive - Lateral Slide - Fake Shot - Go Around Forehand Side

- Form two lines as in drill #3
- Passer passes to "D" on blue line, "D" then pulls laterally into middle to cone and does a "fake" shot
- Push puck around on forehand side and shoot quickly.



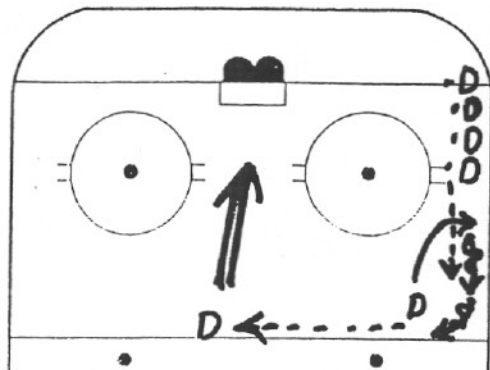
# # 5 Backward Around Circle - Receive Lateral Slide - Shoot

- Start at goal line and skate backwards around circle and receive pass at top of circle.
- Do a lateral slide towards middle and take a quick snap shot.



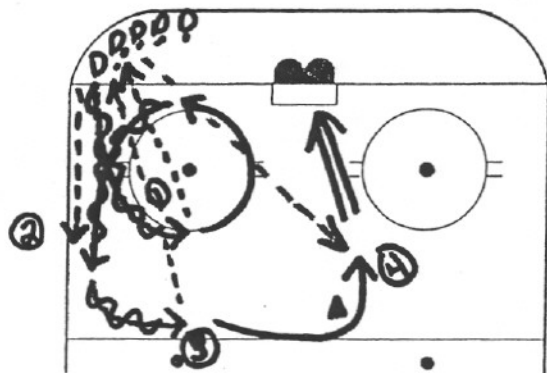
# # 6 "In & Out" - Receive - "D to D" Pass - Shoot

- From 3 lines, one at "hash" mark on on boards, 2nd at blue line on boards, 3rd blue line in middle
- "Board "D" steps forward in and backward out receives pass, and quickly goes "D to D" in middle
- Middle "D" quickly takes a low accurate shot.



# # 7 Forward/Backward Circle Skate - Lateral Slide - "Dump" - Skate To Slot - Receive - Shoot

- "D" skates backward to top of circle, step out forward, to bottom of circle, step out backward and go to blue line.
- When "D" gets 1/2 way to blue line, pass puck to him
- "D" does lateral slide towards middle "dumps" puck into corner,
- "D" then skates forward around cone, skates into slot, receives pass and shoots quickly.

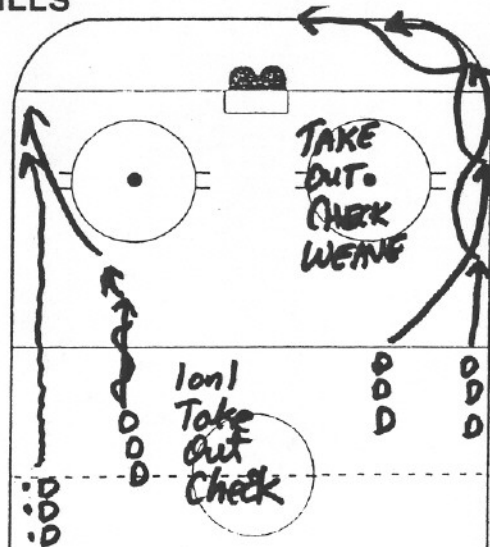


# Defensemen Drills

## BODY PLAY & COVERAGE SKILLS

### # 1 Take Out Check Weave

- Form 2 lines close together on red line, line on boards is puckcarrier, line closer to middle is "D" checker.
- Both line skate slowly, "PC" forward "D" checker backwards.
- At blue line "D" checker pivots and goes forward, angles "PC" to boards and attacks "PC" hands and stick with his hips.
- Note: 2 nd option is to "pin" the "PC" to the boards - hands & stick in front leg behind "PC" and hold against boards.



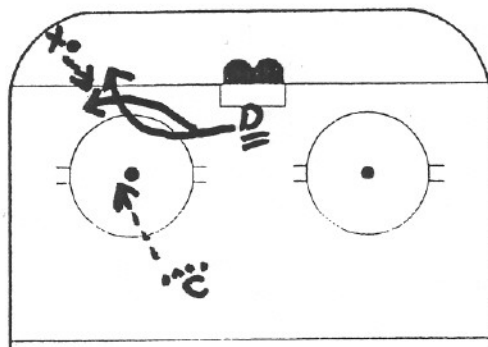
### # 2 "Mirror" Forward - Get "F" Away From Puck at Dot

- "F" starts at red line and "D" at dot.
- "F" tries and gets to puck, "D" blocks out "F" by staying in front of him, not letting "F" touch puck on dot.
- If "F" gets around "D", "D" can pivot forward and go to puck and play "F" body at that point
- Allow for battles to continue for a while at dot.



### # 3 1on1 Coverage In Corner - Front Of Net

- Coach has pucks in slot, one player in corner who will be "PC" and other player on knees in front of net who will be a "D".
- Coach passes to player in corner, who tries to get to front of net and score.
- "D" in front of net quickly goes to "PC" and forces him up boards or to back boards
- "D" must get into "PC" body and "lock up" with him.



### # 4 1on1 Coverage Going Into Corner

- Form two lines at top of circle.
- One line is "D" other line "F"
- Coach "dumps" puck into corner, both go to puck, "D" - "Hits-Pins-Holds" "F" tries and gets to front of net.

