

ADVANCED BODY CONTACT



Individual and Team Defense

A Publication Of The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program












The USA Hockey Coaching
Education Program is Presented By



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Checking Videos and Manuals on Body Play and Body Checking	2
Review: Introduction To Body Contact	3
Skills Tips	6
What Are The Problems?	10
Teaching Concepts	11
Forechecking	24
Backchecking	29
Reading Defensive Situations	34
Team Defense	41
Additional Drills	49

LEGEND

	FORWARD SKATING
	SKATING with PUCK
	BACKWARDS SKATING
	PASS or DUMP IN
	PYLONS
	PIVOT
	BODY CONTACT
	STOP
	PUCK

CREDITS

Writer:	Matt Walsh
Editors:	Mark Tabrum
Layout & Design:	Dana Ausec
Illustrations:	Mike Curti, G.A.S. Productions (Spring Park, Minn.)

INTRODUCTION

USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program and its Body Play Committee believe that providing coaches with the proper methods of teaching body contact are the first lines of defense against injury. The foundation skills were taught in *Introduction to Body Contact*. *Advanced Body Contact* uses that foundation to build upon the total team defense concept.

There is a great deal of body contact in all levels of hockey. Players need to know safe ways to play along the boards, even if they are the one near the boards. Body contact (body blocking) is the concept of using leverage to play the puck or puck carrier. Developed through drills and practice, contact confidence allows a player to feel that he/she can successfully compete in body contact situations. Having the skills and confidence to play in contact situation is a primary and essential step to becoming an effective hockey player.

The Body Play Committee hopes this book will help in teaching body contact skills and make the game of ice hockey a better and safer sport.

CHECKING VIDEOS AND MANUALS ON BODY PLAY AND BODY CHECKING

Skills and Drills for the Complete Player and Coach – USA Hockey – Features more than 400 skills and drills, including checking. The DVD-Rom format allows you to print instructions for each drill and view actual game footage of the drill. The DVD-Rom is available at usahockey.com.

Heads Up Hockey Challenge – Dr. Alan Ashare and USA Hockey – This 13-minute informational video shows players how to protect themselves when playing along the boards. All Heads Up Hockey Program materials are available at usahockey.com under Education & Training.

USA Hockey Officials Checking Video – Distinguishes between coincidental body contact situations and body checking situations. The video shows examples of body play situations and then pauses to allow time for discussion. The video is available from USA Hockey's officiating program.

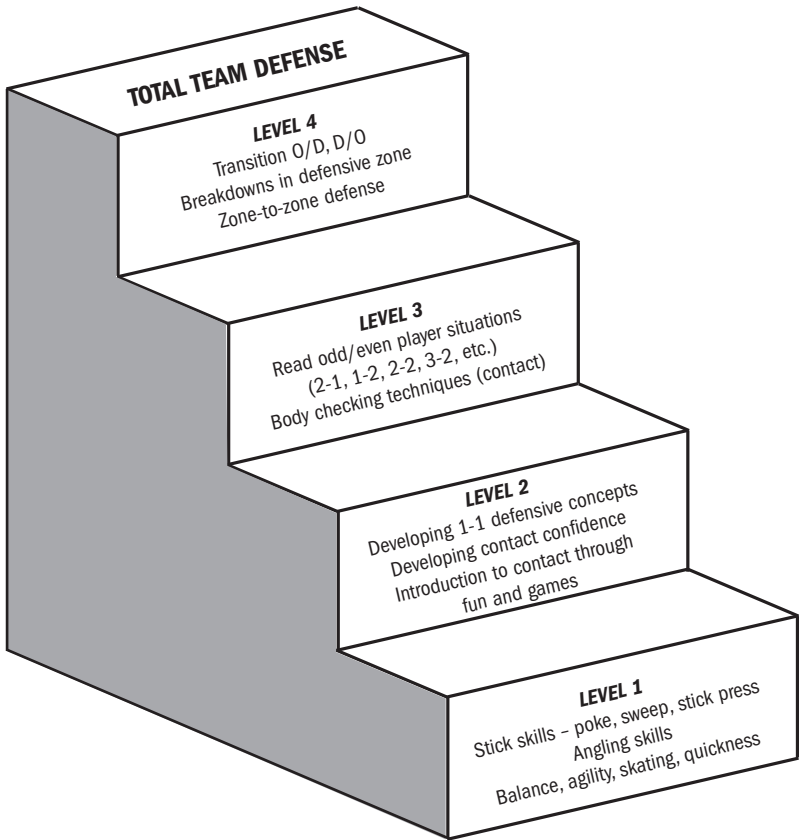
Checking the Right Way for Youth Hockey Manual and Workshop – USA Hockey – This comprehensive manual and workshop teaches body contact and body checking with both on- and off-ice demonstrations. The manual is available by attending a USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Checking Workshop.

Introduction to Body Contact – USA Hockey – The handbook is an illustrated text for coaches covering basic body contact skills to create a foundation for teaching body play and contact confidence skills.

REVIEW: INTRODUCTION TO BODY CONTACT

- A. *Introduction To Body Contact* provided an excellent foundation for teaching body play and contact confidence skills.
- B. *Introduction To Body Contact* discussed the skills needed for successfully performing all phases of body play. For example, we need to work on balance, agility, leg strength, speed and quickness. The other body play skills (angling, stick checks, contact confidence, body blocks, takeout/rubout checks, body checks, heads-up hockey and taking a body check) are also explained in detail.
- C. For each individual body play technique (i.e., angling, poke check, checking along the boards, stick lasso technique, shoulder check, etc.), the objective, teaching points of emphasis and common errors are explained in detail.
- D. Body play technique (list) terminology:
 - 1. Angling
 - 2. Stick Check
 - a. Poke check
 - b. Stick press
 - c. Stick lift
 - d. Hook (sweep) check
 - 3. Contact Confidence
 - a. Checked into the boards – body protection
 - b. Checked along the boards – body protection
 - c. Checked away from the boards – body protection
 - 4. Body Block
 - 5. Body Checks
 - a. Take out (rub out)
 - b. Pinning against the boards
 - 1. Knee pin and body press
 - 2. Stick lasso technique
 - 3. Body squeeze technique
 - c. Shoulder check
 - d. Hip check
 - 6. Puck Protection

Steps to Total Team Defense



Advanced Body Contact

- Look at the diagram, Steps to Total Team Defense, which can also be found in *Introduction To Body Contact*. The introductory book covered the individual skills listed at Level 1; contact confidence, contact with fun and games on Level 2; and specific body contact techniques on Level 3.
- *Advanced Body Contact* will continue to build the first three levels of Total Team Defense. We will discuss additional tips to help in teaching skills in Level 1. We will also introduce new concepts (Level 2) that need to be taught in order to perform body play and team defense, and round out Level 3 by teaching how to read situations, determine our objectives when playing various situations and explain how to reach our objectives. We will then touch on overall team defense and breakdown coverage techniques in our defensive zone.
- Before we get started, let's remember a key point. The body play (check) is the goal or the end result. A player must possess certain skills, understand various concepts and know how to perform specific body play techniques to reach that end result. Having said that, it is imperative we teach the skills, concepts and techniques before we put our players in situation play. That teaching progression is the key to success.

SKILL TIPS

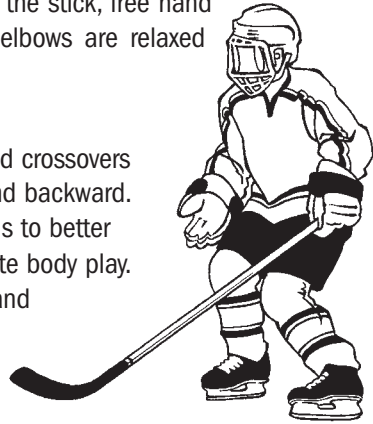
Skating – After the player has learned proper body position and worked on edges, balance, agility, speed, quickness and strength, we can start to teach specific skating skills required for body play.

Skating backward

- Proper position is deep knee bend, wide stick base pointed up ice, one hand on the stick, free hand palm facing out, arms and elbows are relaxed and in at the side.

Lateral Movement/Crossovers

- Practice lateral movement and crossovers both while skating forward and backward. A player can utilize these skills to better angle an opponent and initiate body play. Stress proper body position and developing power from full extension of both legs while crossing over.



Turns/Pivots

- When teaching turns, have the player initiate the turn with their head, turning their head in the direction they want to skate. With knees bent, using the head, the shoulders, hips and feet will follow. Also, bring the arms in tight and feet together. The closer all body parts are to the center axis, the quicker the player will turn.
- For pivots from forward to backward, keep the chest facing up ice and pivot the hips to initiate the backward momentum. For backward to forward, the player performs a mohawk, steps out and skates forward. Emphasize keeping the head over the skates and proper knee bend while performing the pivot.

Escape Moves

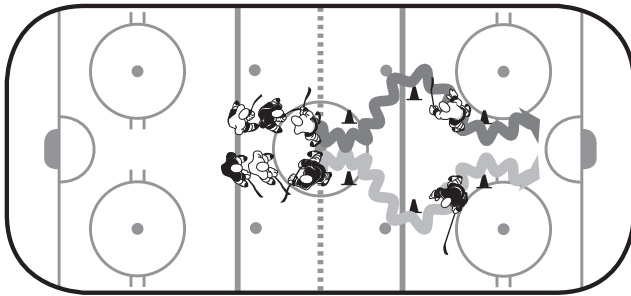
- Escape moves are taught to improve the skills of forwards and defensemen. These drills are designed to have one player angle and perform a body play while the other is trying to avoid the check by using pivots, tight turns and puck protection.

Starts and Stops

- Players should perform stops to change direction from forward to backward and backward to forward. Stops should be done with one foot and two feet. Players should stay in proper position and explode off of their inside edges.

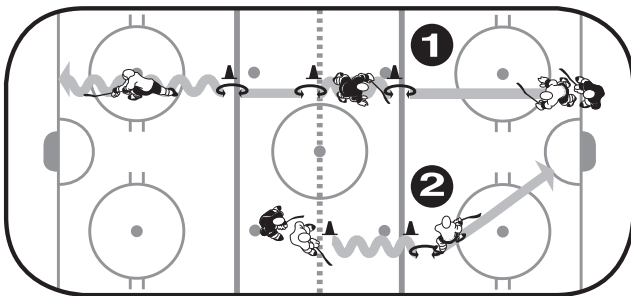
LATERAL MOVEMENT DRILL

The defenseman starts skating backward, proceeds inside the first cone, outside the second cone, inside the last cone, and stops in the goal crease. The defenseman should have proper body position and use crossovers and lateral movement to perform the drill.



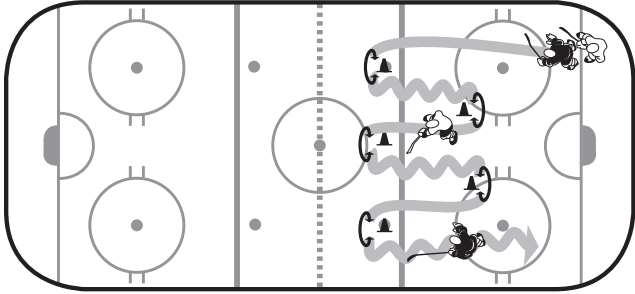
TURNS

1. The defenseman skates forward to the cone. At the cone, turns and skates backward to the next cone and then turns forward. The defenseman skates to the final cone, turns and skates backward to the end. Have the players initiate the turn with their head and always turn to the outside.
2. The defenseman starts at the cone and skates backward. At the cone inside the blue line, the defenseman turns his/her head to the net and skates forward to the net, stopping in the crease. Make sure the players bring their arms and heels in tight, initiate the turn with the head, and turn the head directly to the net.



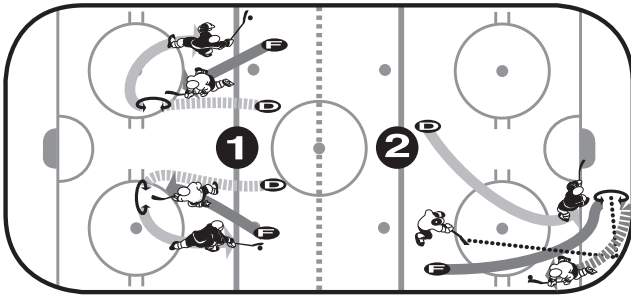
PIVOTS - "W" DRILL

In the "W" drill, the player always keeps his/her chest facing up the ice. The defenseman starts skating forward, he/she pivots around the first cone and skates backward to the next cone. The defenseman then steps out and pivots, skating forward to the next cone.



ESCAPE MOVES

1. The defenseman begins backward with the puck. The forward angles and applies pressure on the defenseman. The defenseman performs an escape pivot toward the boards and heads up the ice.
2. The coach dumps the puck in the corner. The defenseman skates to the puck, the forward angles and pressures the defenseman. The defenseman performs an escape pivot toward the boards and heads up the ice.



Body Contact Tips

- Proper body position is needed for body contact. When skating forward, remember to have deep knee bend, two hands on the stick and a wide base. When skating backward, keep deep knee bend, wide base, one hand on the stick directed up ice and elbows and arms at side with free hand palm facing forward. Do not let the free hand or stick cross in front of the body. When this happens, the elbow automatically leaves the side of the body and goes into the air. This leads to elbowing penalties.
- Power for body contact comes from the legs and hips, not the upper body and arms. Players should have a wide base and deep knee bend. This allows players to pin an opponent with the legs and hips while at the same time gain control of the puck with their stick.
- Never start any body contact unless there is a zero gap (distance) between the player and opponent. If a player starts the contact too far away, the player will lunge at the opponent and will never be able to perform the contact properly. Have the players continue skating (not glide) to the opponent to close the gap before initiating body contact. Create drills in which the players have no sticks. This forces them to skate all the way to the contact and not rely on their stick leverage when they are several steps from the opponent.
- Stopping an opponent's momentum when performing body contact is also important. To accomplish this, the player needs to drive the legs and hips back in the direction from which the opponent is skating. It also helps if the stick is also pointing in the same direction. An example of this is when an opponent is skating down the boards with the puck, the defenseman should have his/her stick pointing up ice (not to the side or across the body). He/She should then angle, close the distance to zero and perform the body contact. The defenseman drives the hips and legs back up ice, not toward the side boards.

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

At all levels of hockey, coaches have the same problems with players when it comes to defensive hockey and body contact. Does this sound familiar?

- My forwards skate directly at an opponent on the forecheck and get beaten.
- My defense backs into our zone, gives up the blue line, and is on top of our goaltender.
- My players keep falling down when attempting any kind of body contact.
- My player gets beaten in one-on-one situations.
- My defense gets caught flat-footed and/or standing still.
- My players never support each other.
- My defense always gets beaten to the outside.
- My forwards don't know how to pick up players on the backcheck.
- My players can't read the situation.
- My players don't communicate with one another.
- There are always breakdowns in our defensive zone.

TEACHING CONCEPTS

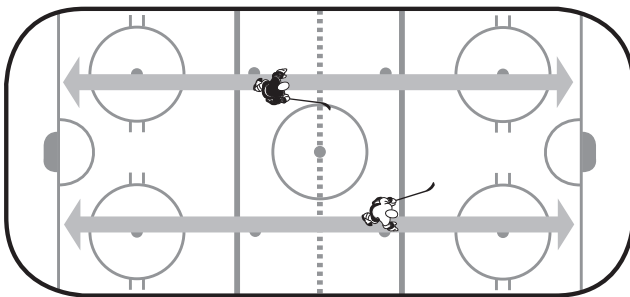
We will now start introducing the concepts that players need to understand before they can learn situational play. Remember our progression: Teach skills (skating, body contact techniques), concepts (angling, gap, pressure, etc.), and then situations (one-on-one, two-on-one, etc.). These concepts are used for all players whether they are forechecking, backchecking or playing defense.

Concepts	Situations
Inside the Dots	Outnumbered
	Two-on-One
Straight Line Rule	Three-on-One
Angling	Three-on-Two
Gap Control	One-on-Two
Support	Two-on-Three
Defensive Position	Even strength
	One-on-One
Pressure	Two-on-Two
Transition	Three-on-Three

The Golden Rules

There are two fundamental rules to follow when we start talking about body contact concepts.

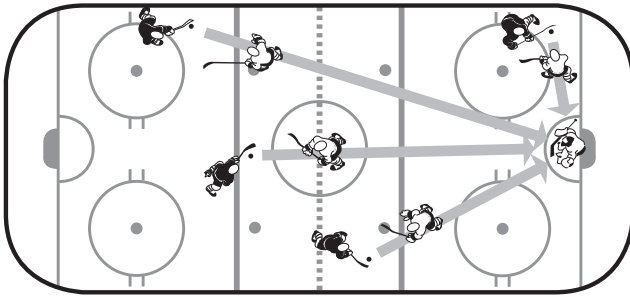
First – for any defensive situation (forecheck, backcheck, one-on-one, three-on-two, etc.), the defensive players should position themselves **inside the dots**.



Why Inside The Dots?

- **Point of Reference is the Same on All Rinks** – though rinks are different sizes, the face-off dots are the same distance apart. The distance from the dots to the boards is what changes.
- **Keeps Defensive Partners in Support Position** – by staying inside the dots, the defensive partners can stay in a better support position. The defensemen can then move outward together using lateral movement and angling.
- **Opponents Attack This Area** – opponents are attacking the middle of the ice and the goal, so it makes sense to be here. It forces the opponent to go through defensemen to get to the goaltender.
- **Easier to Recover if a Mistake is Made** – if a mistake is made or the puck is turned over, it is easier to recover when the first move is to head inside the dots. Players are in better position to angle back to the goal and make a play.
- **Can Dictate the Play of the Opponent** – in situational play, it is easier to dictate the play of the opponent if players remain in the middle of the ice. Offensive players will end up being forced wide for poor shots. It helps to force the puck carrier to the outside when forechecking.
- **Opens Up Offensive Passing Options** – when players move off the boards and inside, more passing angles to teammates are created.
- **Better Shooting Angles in the Offensive Zone** – when players move to the middle of the ice in the offensive zone, shooting angles improve and more passing options are created.

Second – always take position in a straight line between (or to the inside of) the puck carrier and the goaltender.



- Opponents must go through defenseman to get to the goaltender.
- The defensive team can dictate the play of the opponent by using lateral movement, angling, gap control and pressure.
- Opponents are forced outside the scoring area (outside the dots).

To teach the Golden Rules, create drills that make players think about where they are in relation to the dots on the rink, and where they are in relation to other players. Start the drills with the defensive player outside the dots and stress making their first move to inside the dots, not chasing or skating directly at the opponent. Also make sure they do not chase the puck. Make sure the defensive player is always to the inside, between the puck carrier and the goaltender.

Now that we have covered the Golden Rules, we can move on to other concepts. We will cover how to teach each concept and then use them in combination with the Golden Rules to gain proper defensive position. We will then move on to forechecking, backchecking, reading situations/situational play and team defense.

The Concepts

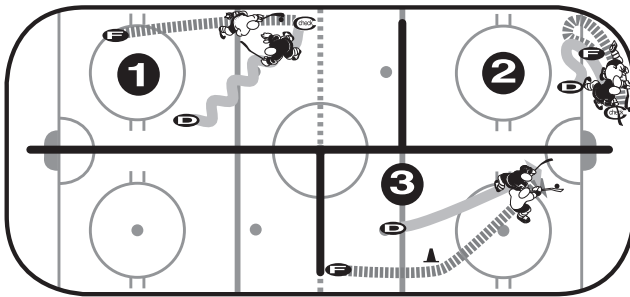
Angling – Approaching an opponent in a certain direction which forces that opponent to move the way you want them to go.

Do not skate directly at an opponent, but skate diagonally to a space where the opponent is heading. A good teaching tip is telling the players to always keep their skates parallel to the boards when angling. This eliminates going directly at an opponent and perpendicular into the boards. This is a great Heads Up Hockey rule.

Angling allows players to close the distance between themselves and the opponent. The distance to needs to be closed to zero before body contact is performed.

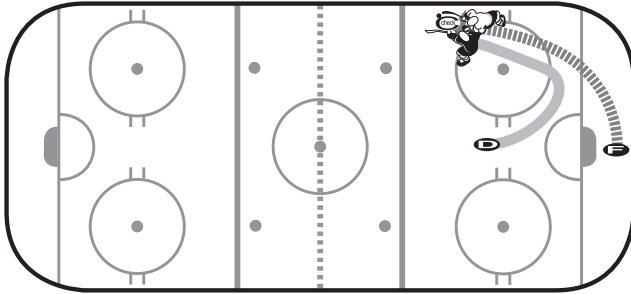
ANGLING DRILL #1

1. The defenseman starts near the middle of the ice. The forward skates with the puck along the boards. The defenseman may skate forward or backward. The defenseman angles the forward, keeps skating, closes the gap to zero and performs a body contact technique.
2. In a confined area, one player starts with the puck along the boards, the other player must angle and perform a body contact technique. The player with the puck also uses puck protection and escape moves to make the task more difficult.
3. The defenseman starts on a dot at neutral ice, facing up the ice. The forward skates with the puck to the cone, five feet inside the blue line. When the forward reaches the cone, he/she can proceed to the net. When the forward hits the blue line, the defenseman must turn to the outside (directly to the net) and angle to catch the forward. They should meet near the bottom of the circle. If the defenseman turns first to the player and not the net, he/she will never catch up to the forward.



ANGLING DRILL #2

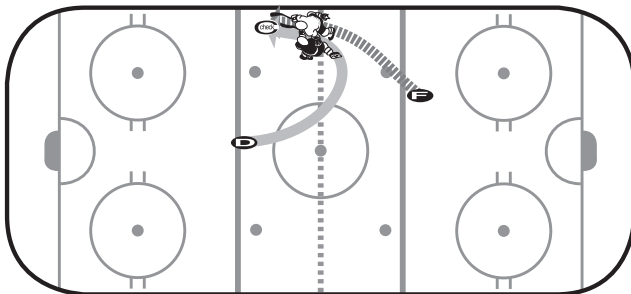
1. The defenseman starts with the puck beside or behind the net. When the defenseman starts to move, the forward must angle keeping the feet moving, close the gap to zero, and perform a body contact technique. The forward must take an angle so the defenseman does not cut back to the middle of the ice.



ANGLING DRILL #3

1. The defenseman starts with the puck at the blue line. The forward starts in the middle of the ice at the opposite blue line. When the defenseman starts to move, the forward must angle keeping the feet moving, close the gap to zero, and perform a body contact technique. The forward must take an angle so the defenseman does not have to cut back to the middle of the ice.

Option – Perform the same drill and have the defenseman and the forward switch positions. The defenseman must work on his/her gap, pivot from forward to backward. At the point where pivot takes place, angle to close the gap to zero and perform a body contact technique.



Gap Control – Adjusting the distance between yourself and an opponent, defensive partner, offensive teammate or goaltender.

Between teammates, it is called **support**. We should always support a teammate on the defensive side of the puck. That way if there is a turnover, we are in good position to play defense.

For simplicity, the proper gap should be one to two stick lengths. By using the proper gap a player can angle properly, close the gap to zero and perform the appropriate body contact technique. They are also then in proper position to support a teammate.

Loose vs. Tight Gap: When playing defense, we will use this general rule: As we move closer to our goaltender and to the middle of the ice (inside the dots), our gap gets tighter.

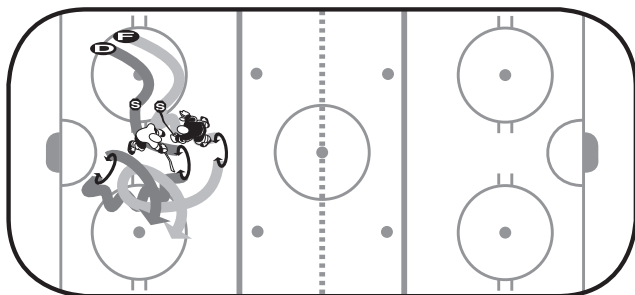
For example, our gap is zero if an opponent has the puck in our zone and is inside the scoring area.

How To Teach Gap Control

- Shadow Drills/Mirror Drills
- Follow-the-Leader Drills
- One-on-One Drills – out of corner, blue line in, off the boards, center ice
- Pursuit Sprints
- Neutral Ice Regroup Drills
- Protect the Dot
- Front of Net Coverage

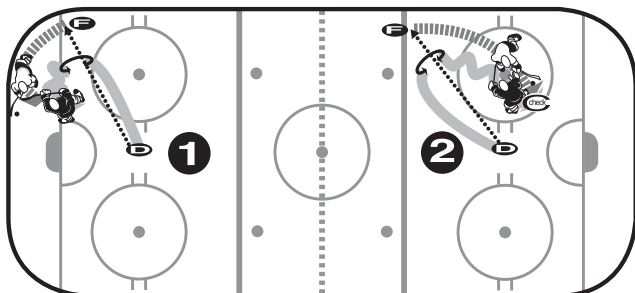
MIRROR DRILLS

1. In mirror or shadow drills the forward and the defenseman face each other. The forward can skate anywhere in the zone always facing the defenseman. The defenseman must imitate the forward while performing stops, starts, lateral movement, backward skating, forward skating, pivots, shuffle steps and crossovers. The defenseman must always keep a one to two stick length gap, face the forward and stay to the inside.



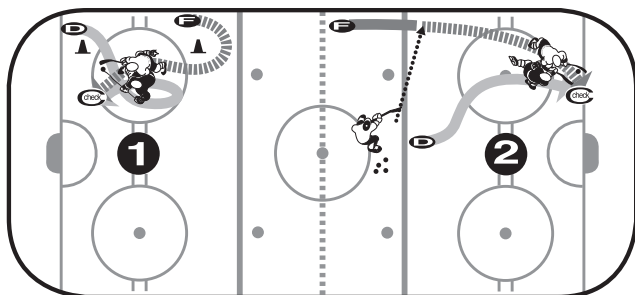
ONE-ON-ONE – OUT OF CORNER, BLUE LINE IN

1. The defenseman starts at the hash mark with the puck. The forward starts in the corner. The defenseman passes the puck to the forward and skates forward to close the gap. When the forward receives the puck, he/she can proceed to score a goal. The defenseman must close the gap, pivot backward keeping himself/herself between the puck carrier and the goaltender, angle, and perform a body contact technique. Do not let the defenseman skate directly at the forward, but rather adjust the gap, skate backward, angle to close the gap and perform a body contact technique.
2. The same techniques are used at the blueline in this drill. The defenseman must adjust the gap, always staying to the inside, pivot backward, angle to close the gap and perform a body contact technique.



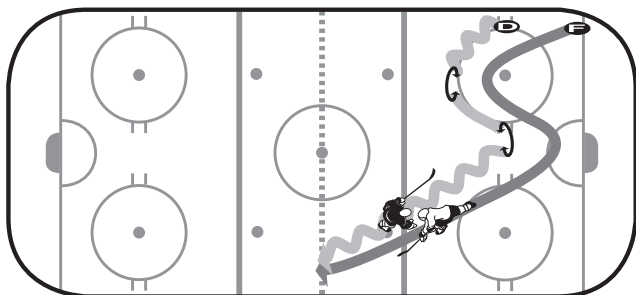
ONE-ON-ONE – OFF BOARDS, DEFENSEMAN REACTION

1. The defenseman and the forward start on the boards. The forward has the puck. On the whistle, the forward goes to the net. The defenseman must move inside the dots, adjusting the gap while staying to the inside. The defenseman then angles and performs a body contact technique. Have the forward and the defenseman switch positions.
2. The forward starts moving and the coach passes the puck to the forward. The defenseman reacts to the pass, adjusts the gap using lateral movement, angles to close the gap and performs a body contact technique. The defenseman is skating backward.



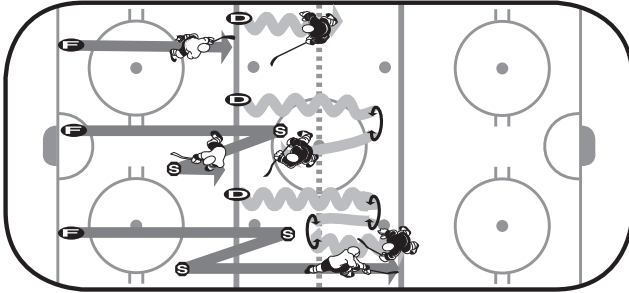
PURSUIT SPRINT #1

1. The forward skates the set pattern as shown. The defenseman skates backward, pivots forward and then backward. The defenseman must keep a tight gap with the forward, taking away any open space. The drill is finished when they reach the red line. Have the defenseman and the forward switch lines.



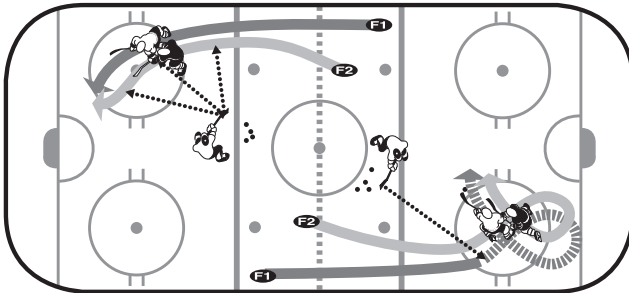
PURSUIT SPRINT #2

1. The forwards start in three lines. The forwards perform stops and starts while skating forward. The defenseman must skate backward, pivot forward, and pivot and skate backward. The defenseman always keeps the appropriate gap to the forward. Have the defenseman and the forward switch lines.



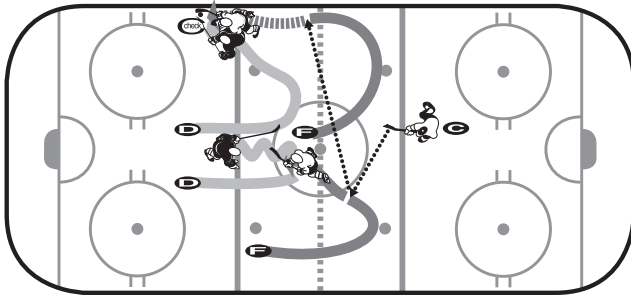
BACKCHECKING DRILL

1. F1 initially takes a route to the goal. F2 keeps a tight gap and body position to the inside. F1 can try to cut back or continue to the goal. F2 keeps a tight gap and defensive body position between F1 and the goal. The coach can pass at any time to F1 once they enter the zone. They play until the whistle. F2 is the backchecker.



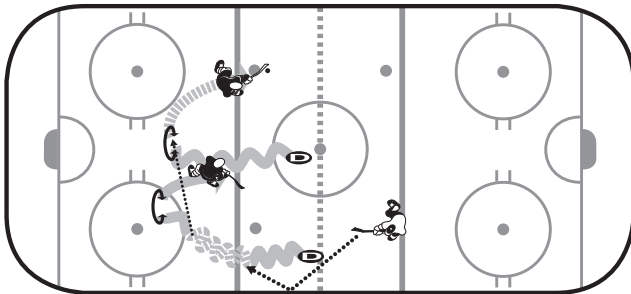
NEUTRAL ZONE – ADJUSTING GAP TO FORWARDS

1. Both defensemen start in the zone at the top of the circles. The two forwards start anywhere in the neutral ice. The coach has the puck and blows the whistle to start the drill. The forwards start skating and regroup with the coach. The defensemen must move up to establish the correct gap with the forwards while maintaining a two stick-length gap between themselves. The coach passes the puck to any forward. The defensemen must react to the pass, keeping a proper gap between each other. They then use lateral movement and angling to close the gap, and perform a body contact technique.



REGROUP AT NEUTRAL ICE

1. The coach starts with the pucks and has the defensemen face him/her. For the entire drill, the defensemen must keep a two stick-length gap between each other. The center bumps the puck off the wall past the defensemen. The defensemen must pick up the puck while skating backward, move laterally to the center of the ice, and perform a defenseman to defenseman pass. The defenseman receiving the pass immediately heads up the ice. The defenseman who made the pass must keep the correct gap and support his/her partner.



Pressure

Whether we decide as coaches to have our players provide great pressure on an opponent, or not be as aggressive and provide passive pressure, is strictly a personal choice.

One thing is for sure, pressure forces opponents to make decisions and plays before they are ready. Also, pressure in conjunction with angling takes away an opponent's time and space. The result: pressure causes possession turnovers and creates scoring opportunities.

When to pressure? As stated above, when and how much to pressure differs with each coaching philosophy. In general terms, apply more pressure, and the gap to the opponents decreases, as our opponents move the puck toward our defensive zone, and inside the dots to the scoring area.

Transition

Are we on offense or defense? Teaching players to anticipate puck possession changes is very difficult, but very important.

Puck possession changes occur hundreds of times during a game. If our players fail to recognize or anticipate a possession change, it could lead to the other team scoring a goal. For example, if a defenseman fails to anticipate a change in possession, they can be in poor defensive position by having incorrect gap, remaining outside the dots, getting caught flat footed, or not being between the opponent and the goaltender.

Create drills in which the players must react to puck possession changes, and be aware of their defensive position on the ice. Have the players be aware of their location on the ice, gap to opponent, and pressure before the change in possession happens. They must anticipate the puck changing hands and position themselves accordingly.

Defensive Position

Using the Golden Rules and concepts we have learned we can easily determine where we need to be on the ice relative to any situation.

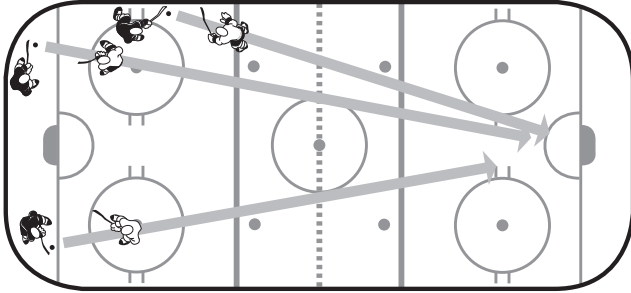
Defensive position is determined by these constants:

- Position inside the dots.
- Remain in a straight line between (or to the inside of) the puck carrier and the goaltender.
- Gap to the opponent is one to two stick lengths.

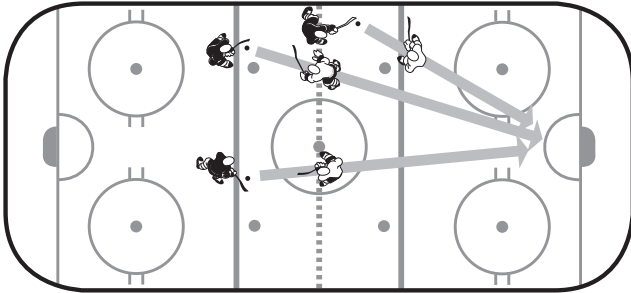
If these constants are followed, our players will be on a specific spot on the ice. Our players then have proper defensive position, can dictate the play, use lateral movement and angling, close the gap to zero, and perform a body contact technique.

Also remember, as opponents move the puck closer to the goaltender and inside the scoring area, the gap gets tighter, and greater pressure is applied.

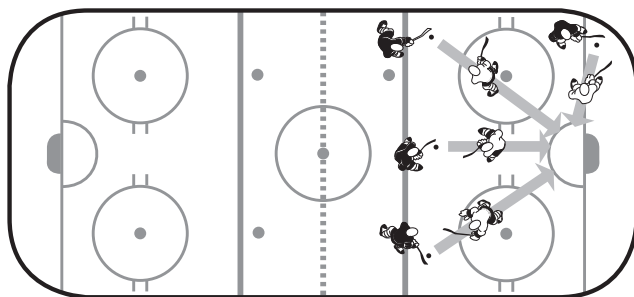
OFFENSIVE ZONE POSITION



NEUTRAL ZONE POSITION



DEFENSIVE ZONE POSITION

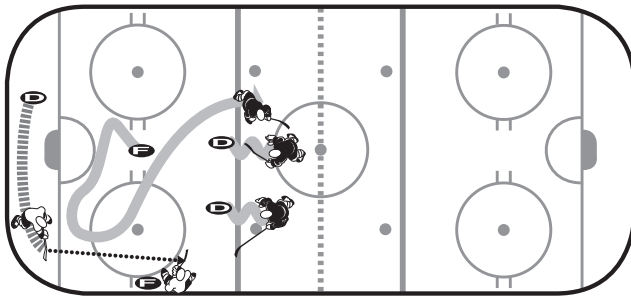


FORECHECKING

How much pressure on a forecheck and what system to play (1-2-2, 2-1-2, 2-2-1, 1-1-3, etc.) is determined by the personnel on the team, the opposition's personnel and/or the coaching philosophy. Whatever system played, the forechecking forward must start inside the dots, using angling to pressure the player, and use the proper body play technique to gain possession of the puck.

Forecheckers must also communicate with supporting teammates. When their job is finished, they must recover back to the middle and wait for direction from a teammate or react again to the developing situation. They should not chase the puck all over the ice.

FORECHECKING



Skills To Be Taught

1. Quickness/Agility – short 20-30 foot sprints to the puck.
2. Angling – force the puck carrier wide using “inside dots – out” approach.
3. Gap – keeping a proper gap to the opponent.
4. Pressure – play through the puck carrier’s body. Stay between the opponent and the goal to prevent the “give-and-go.”
5. Stick Positioning – stick on the ice, blade on blade.
6. Filling Passing Lanes – time the forecheck to be in position to intercept passes. Enter passing lanes with the stick on the ice.
7. Body Contact Techniques – when reaching the opponent, the player must accomplish a stick lift, stick press, boards pin, poke check, shoulder check, or some other type of body contact technique.

Forechecking Terminology

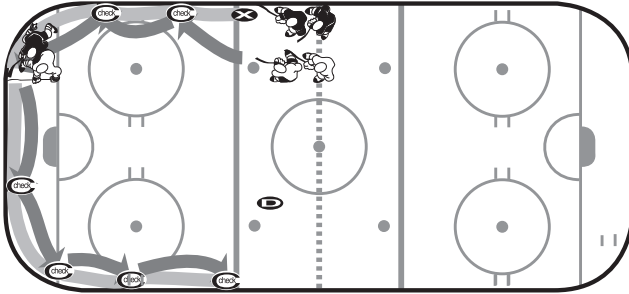
1. **Pressure** – forces mistakes early before opponents have gained proper control of the puck.
 - a. Aggressive pressure means physical contact, “play through the puck carrier.”
 - b. Must have the support player with proper gap to pick up loose pucks.
 - c. Speed and ability to react quickly are key skills.
2. **Containment** – control and restrain forecheck when the opponent has good puck control and you have no support.
 - a. Always influence the puck carrier toward the boards.
 - b. Use angling to force passes into an area – reducing passing options.
 - c. Use angling and gap closure to reduce the puck carrier’s skating space.
 - d. Setting up traps.
3. **Delaying the Play** – allowing the opponent to take some ice and make the first pass. Then force the play aggressively in the neutral ice. Shorten the ice surface.
4. **Time and Space** – taking “time and space” away from an opponent. To accomplish this use angling, proper gap, anticipation and pressure.
 - a. Hurry the opponent before they are ready to make a play.
 - b. Play through the puck carrier after the play is made. Finish the play.
5. **Anticipation** – Second and third forecheckers must learn to “read and react” to the play.
 - a. Second player “reads” the play and “reacts” to the puck. Also, look for a pass around the boards or reverse play.
 - b. Third player becomes the “high man” and is responsible for not getting caught.
6. **Pinching** – this allows the strong side defenseman to move in on the boards when the following conditions exist.
 - a. The puck carrier is under strong pressure.
 - b. The “high man” support forward is in position to back up the pinching defenseman.

Forechecking Guidelines For Players

1. Hustle and quickness to the puck carrier. Be a competitor.
2. Forechecking is hard work, but it pays off in turnovers and goals.
3. First forechecker – must apply pressure and play through the puck carrier's body.
4. Second forechecker – provides “support” with proper gap to first forechecker. Reads and anticipates the play of the puck.
5. Third forechecker – is the “high man” and doesn't get caught in the offensive zone. He/She is the first backchecker and takes the weak-side lane.
6. When the first and second forecheckers are beaten, hustle back inside the dots, through the middle of the ice.
7. Always approach the puck carrier on an angle – never straight on.
8. Win all the races to loose pucks in the corner. The puck is always yours in the corner if you are the closest, not your teammate's or your opponent's.
9. The board-side defenseman may pinch when heavy pressure is applied to the puck carrier and the third forechecker is in a support position to cover for him/her.
10. Weak side defenseman – keeps the entire play in front of him/her as a safety valve.
11. Short line shifts are a must for effective forechecking.
12. Never chase the puck carrier behind the net, unless in contact with him/her.
13. Keep pressure on the opponent so he/she cannot get organized. This forces mistakes and leads to turnovers and scoring chances.

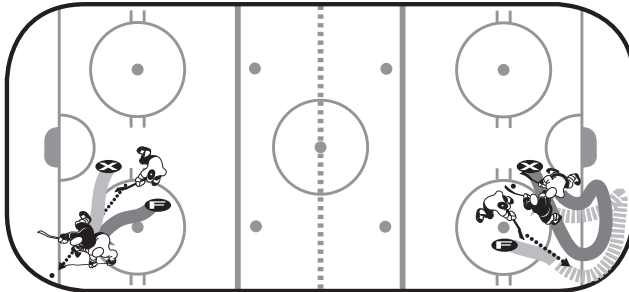
TAKE OUT CHECK WEAVE

1. The forward approaches X from behind on an angle with two hands on the stick. When a good angle is established, the forward accelerates and performs a body contact technique. The goal is to pin the opponent, or attack the opponents hands with the hips to gain control of the puck.



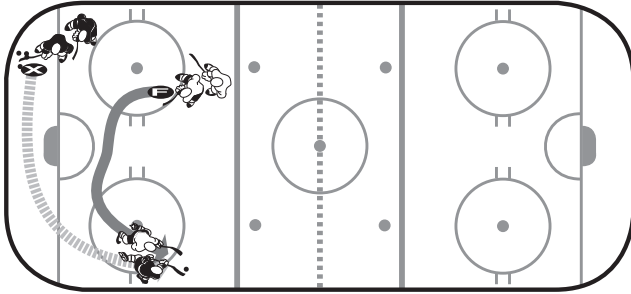
ONE-ON-ONE INTO THE CORNER

1. X is the defensive player. The forward is the offensive player. The coach dumps the puck into the corner. Both players compete for the puck. The offensive player tries to attack the net. The defensive player must anticipate and use quickness, good angles, tight gap, pressure and body contact techniques. Make sure the defensive player does not turn his/her back to the offensive player.



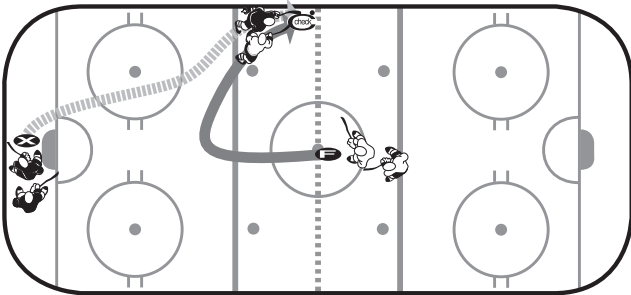
ANGLING – BEHIND THE NET

1. X skates with the puck behind the net and tries to beat the forechecker to the blue line. The forward takes a good angle, so X cannot cut back. He/She then accelerates to close the gap and force X to the corner or the boards. If the forward gets control of the puck, he/she tries to score. X must then play defense and stay between the forward and the goal.



STEERING IN OPEN ICE

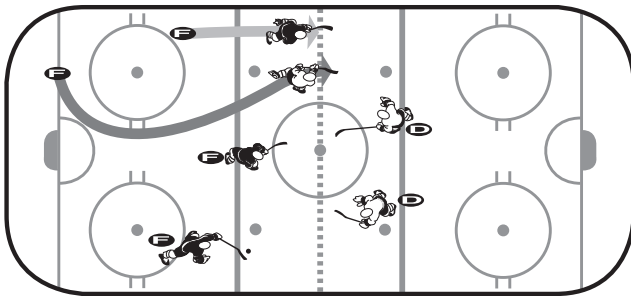
1. X steps out and skates up the ice with the puck. The forechecker must steer the puck carrier to the outside by giving room to the outside and swinging. The forechecker must take a good angle and then accelerate to pressure and close the gap, forcing the puck carrier to the boards. The forward then performs a body contact technique.



BACKCHECKING

Because the defensemen are always facing the play, they dictate which player the backchecking forward picks up. Verbal and/or non verbal communication is essential between teammates.

For a general rule, backchecking forwards should move inside the dots and start backchecking up the middle of the ice. They are then able to angle (staying to the inside) of an open forward. Also, by moving to the middle of the ice initially, they are in the best position to be directed by the defensemen to either side of the ice.



Skills To Be Taught

1. Develop Quick Comeback Turn – players should work on quick power turns and return up the middle of the ice. Tight control turns, or “J” turns are essential for good backchecking.
2. Tight Checking – establish defensive position by having a tight gap and staying between the opponent and the goaltender. The backchecker should always stay to the inside of the attacker. Use legal body contact techniques to break the attacker’s stride.
3. Blocking Out – use the body to screen and legally impede the opponent from getting the puck.
4. Stay With The Check To The Goal – backcheckers should get in the habit of taking the check all the way to the goal. Work on using the body and stick to eliminate passes, tip-ins, rebound shots, or a screened goaltender.
5. Continue Skating – stride hard and continue skating when chasing an attacker. Never reach with the stick when close. Always close the gap to zero by using your feet.

6. Closing The Gap – backchecking forwards must accelerate, and use angles to close the gap to attacking forwards. Defensemen must read where their support backchecker is and determine when to close gap between themselves and the puck carrier.

Backchecking Terminology

1. **Swivel Head** – this allows the backchecker to constantly watch the puck and the opponent while keeping his/her skates pointed in the right direction.
2. **Narrow The Gap** – same as “closing the gap.” Defensemen must narrow the space between themselves and the puck carrier by using angles and lateral movement. As the opponent gets closer to the defensive blue line and the scoring area, the gap gets tighter.
3. **Tight Checking** – backchecker must be “glued” to an attacker early and then take the check all the way to the goal, breaking the opponents stride.
4. **Blocking Out** – when the puck is dumped into the corner of the defensive zone, the defenseman “blocks” the path of the opponent. The backchecking forwards are responsible for the loose puck behind the defenseman.
5. **Defensive Body Position** – the checker has a tight gap and stays between the attacker and the goaltender, staying to the inside, defensive side of the puck.
6. **Take Away The Center Area** – force the puck to the outside toward the boards. Always backcheck inside the dots using a “inside-out” approach. Triangulation of the two defensemen and backchecking forward forces the puck to the outside.
7. **Pick Up The Trailer** – the second and third backcheckers backcheck inside the dots up the middle of ice and look for the trailing attackers joining the play.

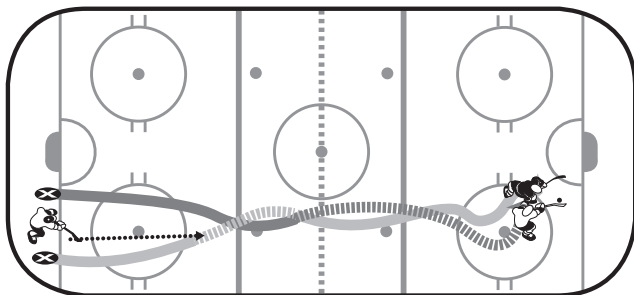
Backchecking Guidelines

1. Backchecking means work. A player can make a very important contribution to the team’s success by backchecking well.
2. Attitude of a backchecker is important. Players must take pride in working hard and backchecking as hard as they can.
3. An inside defensive position must be established when backchecking.
4. First Backchecker – looks to the defensemen for direction on where to backcheck. When in doubt, take the weak side lane and find an attacking offensive player.

5. Second Backchecker – should backcheck inside the dots and up the middle of the ice. Look for an offensive attacker who is entering the zone late (trailer).
6. Third Backchecker – should backcheck inside the dots and up the middle of the ice. When entering the defensive zone he/she should move to the strong side and intercept passes to the defensemen. He/She must also look for a fourth offensive attacker entering the play in the defensive zone.
7. Backcheck all the way to the goal. Release when the puck is forced to the corner and pressure is applied by a teammate on the puck carrier.
8. If tired, don't try to hide fatigue. Head to the bench for a change.
9. When in the neutral ice and the puck has been forced wide, let the defensemen “stand up” the opponents, and keep the opponents from gaining the defensive zone blue line. Let the defensemen concentrate on the puck carrier. Be in a support position for the defensemen, and go hard after loose pucks.

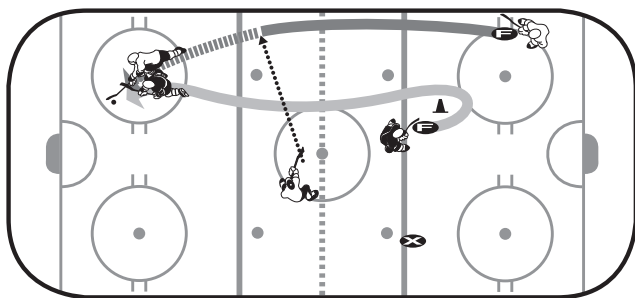
PUCK CHASE COMPETITION

1. Coach slides the puck up ice. The two players compete for control of the puck the length of the ice. Players constantly work on transition from offense to defense and defense to offense. Last player to have the puck, attacks the net and tries to score.



“J” TURN WITH BACKCHECK

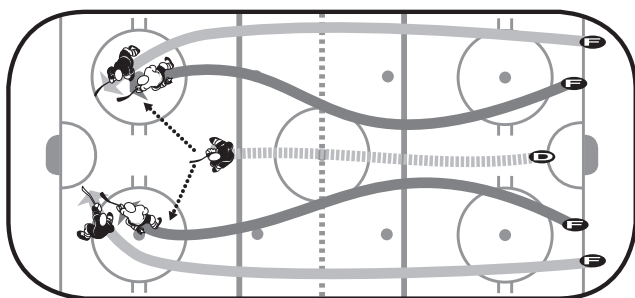
1. The coach starts at center ice with pucks. On the whistle, the backchecker and forward start. The forward tries to get open and the coach tries to pass to the forward. The backchecker makes a “J” turn and heads inside the dots up the middle of the ice. The backchecker then angles and closes the gap on the forward. The backchecker tries to break the forward’s stride, cut off the passing lanes, not reach with the stick and gain defensive position.



TWO-ON-TWO BACKCHECK - DEFENSEMAN START

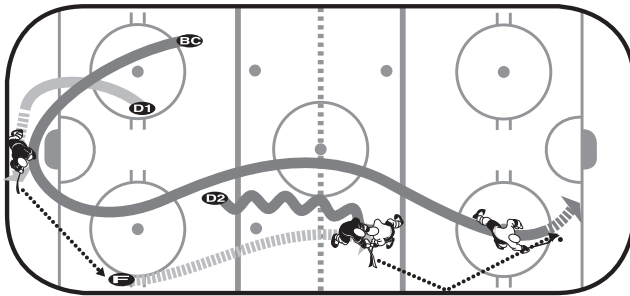
1. The defenseman starts the play and skates up the ice with the puck. The forwards attack the net, trying to get open. When the defenseman reaches the offensive blue line, he/she can either pass the puck to either forward or shoot. Backcheckers must move inside the dots and up the middle of the ice.

The backchecker angles to close the gap on the forwards, establishes defensive side position, and takes the forward to the net. The backchecker must try to break the forward’s stride, eliminate passing lanes and box out the forward when a shot is taken to eliminate a rebound goal.



ONE-ON-ONE – BACKCHECK WITH BLOCKOUT

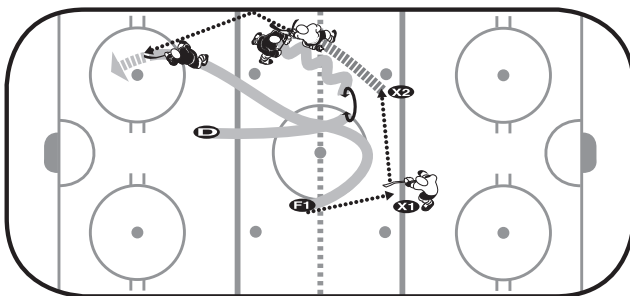
1. On the whistle, D1 skates to pick up the puck. The forechecker angles and pressures D1. The forechecker now becomes the backchecker. D1 then makes a pass to the forward. The BC continues inside the dots and up the middle of the ice, supporting D2. After receiving the pass, the forward skates with the puck up the ice. D2 plays the one-on-one, angles the forward and closes the gap. D2 then stands up and blocks out the forward. The forward dumps the puck in the zone. The BC leaves the support position and skates hard, taking an angle to pick up the loose puck.



NEUTRAL ZONE – STAND UP

1. On the whistle, the forward passes the puck to defenseman X1. Defenseman X1 passes to defenseman X2. X2 then skates up the ice with the puck. After X1 to X2 pass is made, the forward backchecks up middle of ice and supports the defenseman. When the whistle blows, the defenseman starts up the ice and reads the play. After the X1 to X2 pass is made, the defenseman picks up X2 and plays the one-on-one. The defenseman pivots backward, angles and closes the gap using lateral movement, and then stands up X2 between the red and the blue line. X2 dumps the puck in the zone, and F1 leaves his/her support position to gain control of the puck.

Option – X1 joins the play after making a defenseman to defenseman pass. X2 can pass to X1 or dump the puck. The forward must cover X1, staying in a defensive position. The forward must also continue to support the defenseman until the puck is dumped or passed.



READING DEFENSIVE SITUATIONS

Now that we have taught our players skills (skating, body play techniques, etc.) and concepts (angling, gap, etc.), we can now move into reading situations and teaching situational play.

How well a player reads a situation is sometimes called “hockey sense.” Can a player read and react to a situation? Is he/she positioned correctly at the time? As coaches, when we ask ourselves these questions about a player, we also must ask ourselves; “How can I help my players anticipate plays and make the correct decision?”

Some coaches argue that we cannot teach “hockey sense.” Either the player understands the game or not, regardless of the skill level. Though that may be true to a certain extent, we can teach “hockey sense” by exposing players to controlled situations in practice, breaking down the situations into smaller components, explaining how to react to a given situation and repeating the situation as often as we can. In a game, the player is then better prepared to recognize a given situation and react in a positive manner.

To teach players to read situations, we need to keep some things in mind:

- **Play Away From The Puck** – according to the USA Hockey study during the 2002 Olympics, players studied had an average total playing time of 18 minutes 37 seconds and an average puck possession time of 1 minute 8 seconds. Because most of the game is played without the puck, it’s important that coaches spend time to teach this part of the game.
- **Split Second Decisions** – hockey is the fastest game in the world. Reading a situation and reacting to it is measured in fractions of a second. The better we prepare our players, the more successful they will be when it’s time to read and react in a game. Coaches must devise controlled situations where players have little time to read a situation and then react to it.
- **Communication** – verbal and non-verbal communication between teammates is critical for situational play. Communication is critical for support between teammates and eliminates any hesitation when reacting to situations. Have players use key words or simple actions to communicate with each other.

- Learning Components – when teaching players to read situations, break each one down into smaller learning components. Players will learn to recognize a situation at various stages of development. Players also will learn faster when given smaller pieces instead of everything at one time.

Players Analyzing Situations

Whether players are in the offensive zone, neutral zone, defensive zone or are forechecking, backchecking, or playing defense, players are constantly evaluating each situation and reacting accordingly. Players must be aware of the smallest details to make good decisions on the ice. This attention to detail may be the difference between creating a turnover or the opponents getting a scoring chance. When breaking down reading situations, details to look for are:

- Position of the puck on the ice – inside or outside the dots?
- Is the opponent right- or left-handed?
- What is the skill level of the opponent?
- Is the puck on the opponent’s forehand or backhand?
- What is the speed of the puck carrier?
- Does the puck carrier have support – is it behind or ahead of the play?
- Do you have support of your teammates and where are they in relation to the play?
- What zone are we in?
- What is the situation of the game (one goal differential, tie score, three-goal lead, etc.)?

All of the above details dictate how a player reacts to a situation. Where he/she skates, the angle of attack, how much pressure to apply, or what type of body play technique used are all parameters influenced by the above details.

Situational Play

No matter what situation listed below, we can follow our rules and concepts to reach our intended result. When we break each situation into smaller components we find the process to achieve the objective is the same. The process is:

1. Follow Our Rules – move to inside the dots, be in a straight line (or to the inside) between the puck carrier and the goaltender, gap is one to two stick lengths. This will put us in proper position.
2. Proper defensive position allows us to dictate the play.
3. Once we have proper position, we angle and apply pressure.
4. We then use a specific body play technique to gain possession of the puck.

Now let's break down some situations.

Outnumbered	Even
Two-on-One	One-on-One
Three-on-One	Two-on-Two
Three-on-Two	Three-on-Three
One-on-Two	
Two-on-Three	

Even Situations – One-on-One

Why? Losing one-on-one battles creates breakdowns and scoring chances for the opponents.

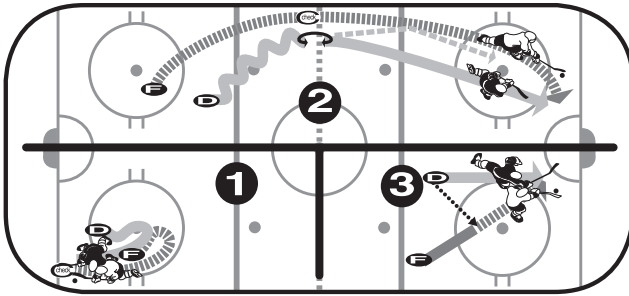
How To Teach: Create the majority of the one-on-one drills in confined areas on the ice. Then move to half ice and some full-ice drills. Example – you may have a one-on-one drill in the right defensive zone corner and a three-on-three drill in the offensive zone or at neutral ice.

Challenge defensive players by taking away their sticks, starting them on their knees or using impossible angles. Players must then think to make sure they have proper position, proper gap and are angling correctly.

The Objective: For all even-strength situations, the objective is to play the puck carrier and gain proper defensive positioning. We can then dictate the play, angle to close the gap and use a body play technique to gain possession of the puck.

ONE-ON-ONE

1. Perform one-on-one drills in confined areas all over the ice. This will help your offensive players with puck protection and your defensive players with angling, gap, pressure, containment and transitions.
2. Notice in this example, the defenseman has good position, angles to close the gap, applies pressure and performs a body play technique. If the player does get beat, he/she must turn to the goal (solid line) and not directly at the puck carrier (dashed line). This allows the defenseman to use proper angles to again gain proper inside position to make a play.
3. Challenging your players emphasizes the need for using proper angles and establishing good defensive position. Notice here that the defenseman must turn directly to the goal in order to have a chance to play the forward.

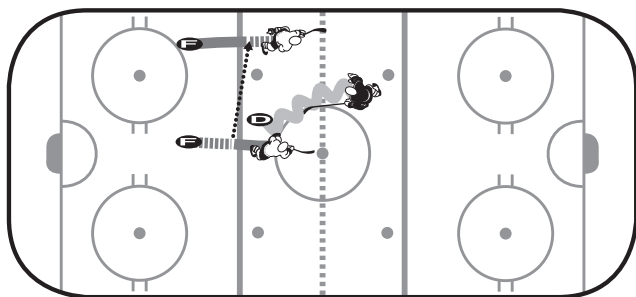


Uneven Situations – Two-on-One

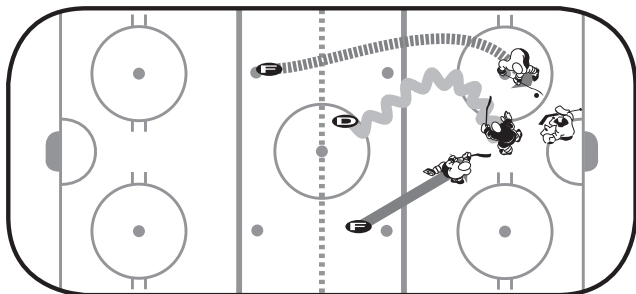
Objective: Force a shot from outside the dots, or delay the play long enough to receive support from a backchecker.

TWO-ON-ONE

1. Defense dictates the play by proper position (inside dots, straight line, proper gap) and takes away the center of the ice from the opponent.



2. Using lateral movement, the defenseman forces the puck as wide as possible, ideally outside the dots.
3. After forcing the puck wide, the defenseman moves back inside the scoring area to take away the slot shot.



4. The defenseman should not proceed below the hash marks of the circles. Backing in on the goaltender just opens up the scoring area. Also, remember our proper gap. When the defenseman is in the hash marks, and the goaltender is on the top of the crease, they are two stick lengths apart.
5. Rely on the goaltender to make a save of the wide shot. The defenseman stays in the scoring area to break up a pass or clear a rebound.
6. When the puck enters the scoring area (pass or skated) the defenseman must release to the opponent with the puck. The gap is zero when any opponent has the puck in the scoring area.

Uneven Situations – Three-on-Two

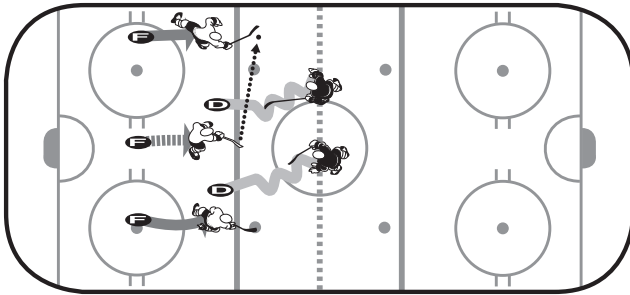
Objective:

Aggressive – Make a play before the defensive zone blue line

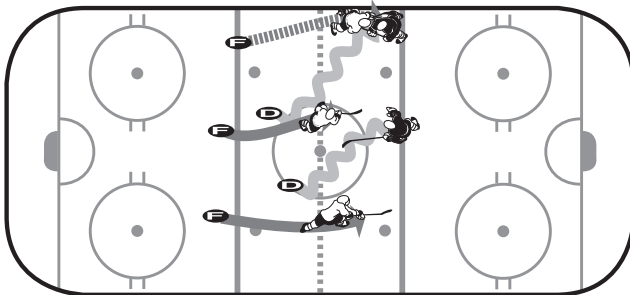
Passive – Delay the play long enough to receive support from a backchecker. May give up the defensive zone blue line.

THREE-ON-TWO

1. Defense dictates the play by proper position (inside dots, straight line, proper gap) and takes away the center of the ice from the opponent. This forces the puck wide – outside the dots.

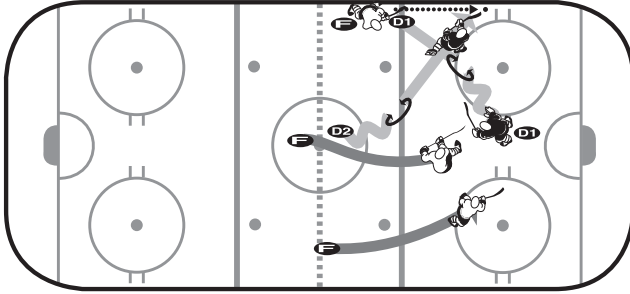


2. Using lateral movement, the defenseman angles, applies pressure and makes a play using a body play technique before the blue line. The defensemen must support each other and keep a proper gap between themselves.



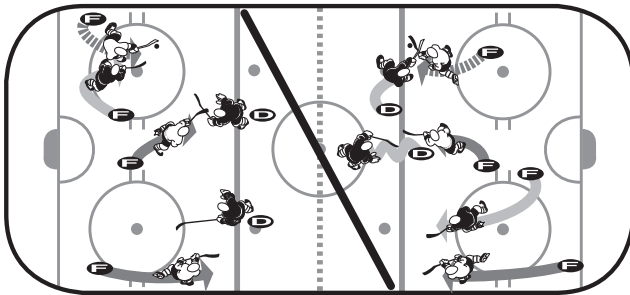
3. Once committed, the defensemen must continue to support each other and keep maximum pressure on the puck.
4. By supporting each other and leaving the weak side wing unchecked, we are using pressure to force the puck carrier to make a play before he/she is ready. We play as a two-on-two situation and continually pressure the puck.

- If the puck does get through the two defensemen to the open forward, the inside defenseman is still in good position to angle back to the goal and play the puck carrier. Also, by this time the defenseman has possibly received weak side support from a backchecking forward.



THREE-ON-TWO

- Puck Behind The Play** - when the puck is behind the play, the defenseman takes away the passing options of the forward with the puck. The defenseman then directs the backchecking forward to take the puck carrier. This is one of the rare situations where the backchecking forward may backcheck the puck instead of the weak side or trailing forward.
- Puck Ahead Of The Play** - in this case, the puck is ahead of two supporting forwards. The defenseman should treat this as a one-on-two and play the puck carrier as soon as possible. The supporting defenseman looks for the nearest forward to the puck and the backchecker picks up the last forward, farthest from the puck. The defenseman must recognize the situation and not wait until the trailing forwards catch up to the play and support the puck carrier.



TEAM DEFENSE

Let's break down the term "team defense," define each of the components and then conclude with a definition for the term.

Defense – is the phase of the game during which our team is not in possession of the puck. It begins each time we lose possession of the puck and ends when the puck has been recovered. The act of resisting attack or preparing to meet the attack.

Team – this refers to all of the different positions (centers, wings, defensemen, goalie) working together on a common task or to achieve a certain objective.

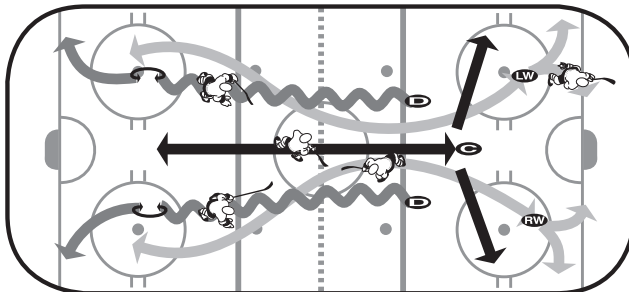
Team Defense – is all the positions (centers, wings, defense, goalie) working together to resist attack or preparing to meet the attack of the opponent.

What does this tell us? In order to accomplish our goal of good defense, all of the positions must work together. In order to do this, each position must have certain roles and responsibilities. We can't have everyone forechecking the defenseman with the puck. Also, our team must communicate by using verbal and non-verbal methods. This is critical to effective team defense.

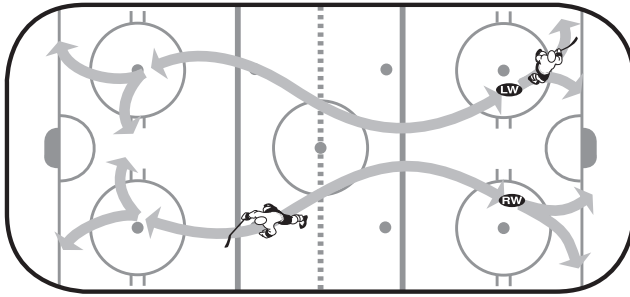
In this section, we will outline the roles and responsibilities of each position, as well as give some guidelines to play in the defensive zone.

TEAM PLAY – DEFENSE

1. Defense is a matter of pride. 100 percent effort and energy will make a difference in playing team defense.
2. Everyone has responsibilities in each zone. Whether angling the puck carrier, intercepting passes, covering open opponents, blocking shots or standing up the puck carrier, all must make the effort to accomplish the objective.



WING RESPONSIBILITIES



COVERAGE ZONE BACKCHECK ZONE FORECHECK ZONE

Offensive Zone:

- Strong side wing forces the puck carrier angling toward the boards.
- Weak side wing plays on top of the circle instead of the face-off dot. If the puck moves to the weak side, the wing angles the puck carrier with pressure.

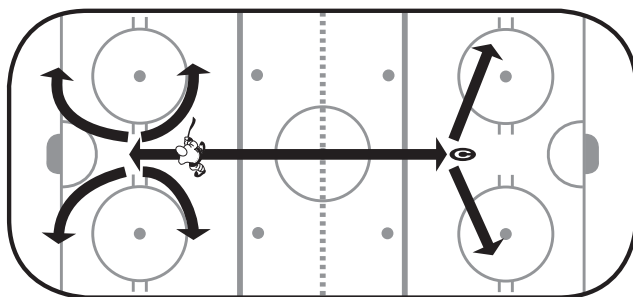
Neutral Zone:

- Both wings backcheck inside the dots up the middle of the ice. Always keep an inside defensive position between the opponent and the goaltender.

Defensive Zone:

- Backcheck the opponent to the goal, until play is forced to the corner.
- When the puck is low, the strong side wing supports the defenseman or covers the strong side defenseman. The weak side wing covers the high slot.
- When the puck is high, the strong side wing picks up the man in front or covers the strong side defenseman. The weak side wing covers the middle point of the ice and weakside defenseman.

CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES



COVERAGE ZONE BACKCHECK ZONE FORECHECK ZONE

Offensive Zone:

- Backup first forechecker (wing), who is on the puck carrier. React to movement of the puck.

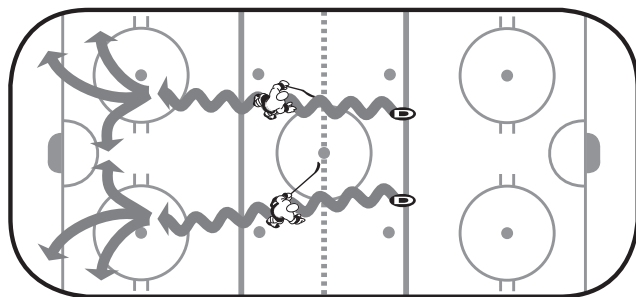
Neutral Zone:

- Move up the middle of the ice inside the dots, force the puck carrier to the outside.

Defensive Zone:

- When the puck is low, support the strong side defenseman or cover the strong side defenseman.
- When the puck is high, pick up the loose player in front of the net, or tightly cover the strong side defenseman.

DEFENSEMAN RESPONSIBILITIES



COVERAGE ZONE BACKCHECK ZONE FORECHECK ZONE

Offensive Zone:

- The defenseman holds the blue line so there is a proper gap between himself/herself and the puck carrier. The weak side defenseman supports the strong side defenseman and keeps the entire play in front of him/her.

Neutral Zone:

- The defenseman angles the puck carrier, closes the gap and tries to stand the opponent up before the blue line. Stay between the dots initially and then use quick lateral movement to angle the puck carrier.

Defensive Zone:

- The defenseman forces the play to the outside. The strong side defenseman takes the puck carrier in the corner with heavy pressure. The weak side defenseman covers in front of the net looking for the third attacker.

Defensive Coverage

Skills To Be Taught

1. Situational Play – the defensemen must know how to read and play various situations. They must know where to direct backcheckers during a one-on-one, two-on-one, two-on-two, three-on-one, three-on-two, three-on-three, one-on-two or two-on-three.
2. Closing The Gap – all players should know how to angle properly, keep proper gap control and accelerate to close the gap quickly. Backwards lateral movement is imperative for the defensemen to close the gap effectively.
3. Blocking Shots – players must participate in blocking shots and learn proper technique.

4. Defending Opponents In Various Areas
 - a. In the Corner – establish an angle to force the opponent either low below the goal line or high along the side boards.
 - b. Behind the Net – if close enough, a stick length or less, continue behind the net with the opponent. If not close, cut in front of the net and contain the opponent on the other side.
 - c. Front of the Net – stay between the opponent and the goaltender. Keep your head on a swivel to look at the puck in the corner and still see the opponent. Keep toes of skates always up ice, turn head, not the body to the corner. In the slot area, prevent a shot by jamming opponents stick at the right time.
 - d. Along the Boards – rub opponent to the boards by using a pin or another body contact play.
 - e. Point Area – approach from inside-out toward the shooter. Block shots.

Defensive Coverage Terminology

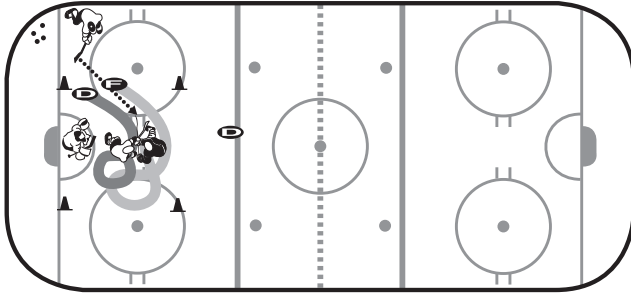
1. Containment Outside – do not allow movement of the puck into the prime scoring area. All defensive players must be on the defensive side of their checks, hold their ice and force the offensive players outside the dots.
2. Seams – this is the imaginary line running through the face-off dots on each side of the rink. The defensemen should play inside the seams (inside the dots) and read the play in front of them. They can then decide whether to pressure the puck carrier using angling, gap, and lateral movement or guard the middle of the ice, containing the puck carrier to the outside and wait for backchecker support.
3. Defensive Body Position – stay in position where you can see the puck and also your opponent. Keep your body and feet facing up ice. Use a swivel head to see the puck and opponent at the same time. Always stay between the opponent and your goaltender.

Defensive Coverage Guidelines

1. Pressure the puck carrier at all times. Limit his/her “time and space.”
2. Keep outside containment – do not allow the attackers to move into the scoring area in the middle of the ice. Stay on the defensive side of your opponent, hold your ice and be competitive.
3. Stay with your checks all the way to the goal when entering the defensive zone. Do not leave the check until the defenseman can take over your responsibility.
4. Forwards are responsible for trailers into the defensive zone.
5. Everyone should know all responsibilities in the defensive zone. When the puck is entering high or low.
6. Keep sticks on the ice at all times to deflect or intercept passes or shots.
7. Approach all scrambles from the defensive side of the puck.
8. Defense is hard work. “Stop and start” hockey. No circles or turning back to the play.
9. After making contact and the puck is gone, always beat your opponent back to the front of the net. Head immediately to the inside of the dots.
10. When the shot is taken, contain the opponents stick to eliminate any rebound shots.
11. When the puck is loose in front of the net, clear your opponent out or contain his/her stick. Move the puck to the corner or the side boards. No stickhandling.

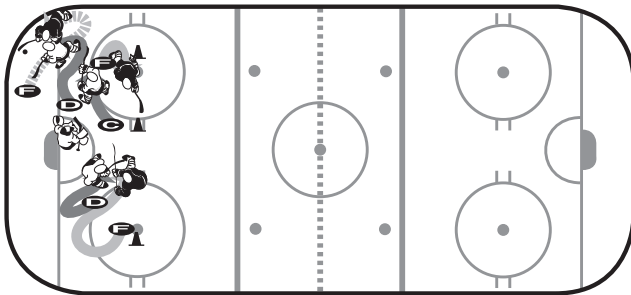
FRONT OF NET COVERAGE

1. The coach starts with the puck in the corner. On the whistle, the forward tries to get open for a pass, staying in a confined area. The defenseman must face up ice, keeping defensive position between the forward and the goaltender at all times. The defenseman uses a swivel head to keep one eye on the puck and one eye on the opponent. Maintain a stick length gap to the opponent. When the pass comes, close the gap to zero, and control the stick of the opponent.



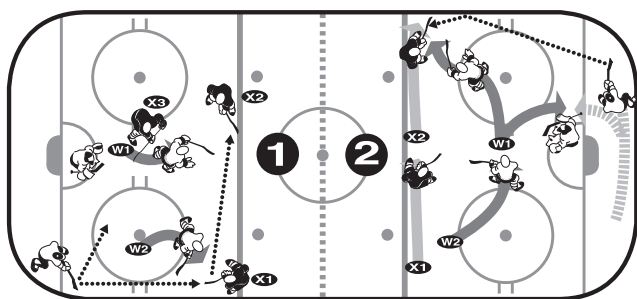
THREE-ON-THREE DOWN LOW

1. Start with two defensemen and a center, or wing depending on the defensive-zone coverage. Strong side defenseman pressures the puck carrier. The center supports the strong side defenseman, looking for the second attacker. The weak side defenseman looks for the third attacker while keeping one eye on the puck and skates facing up ice. All defenders need to keep defensive position between the opponent and the goaltender and contain the puck outside the dots, near the boards.



POINT COVERAGE

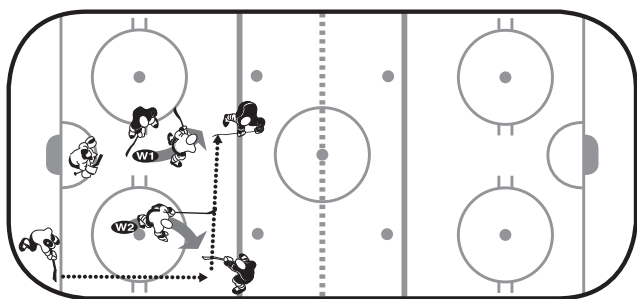
1. The coach starts with a puck in the corner and passes to the strong side defenseman (X1), or high forward in the slot (X3). If the coach passes to the high forward in the slot (X3), the weak side wing (W1) must keep good defensive side position, and make the play. If the coach passes to the strong side defenseman (X1), the strong side wing (W2) pressures inside-out. The offside wing (W1) moves to high slot. If the pass goes defenseman to defenseman (X1 to X2), the weak side wing (W1) pressures inside out, and the strong side wing (W2) moves back to slot.
2. The coach starts with the puck and skates behind the net. The coach has the option of walking out or passing to the defenseman. W2 must follow the play and move back to the high slot. If the coach walks out, W1 must play immediately. If the coach passes to the defenseman, W1 must pressure the shooter skating inside-out. This teaches the wings to communicate, anticipate the play and hustle to coverage positions.



BLOCKING SHOTS

1. Use soft pucks, so players gain confidence and work on the proper technique for blocking shots. The coach starts with the puck in the corner and passes to the strong side defenseman (X1). If the defenseman shoots, W2 must pressure inside out using various shot blocking skills. For example, W2 could stack both legs to the shooter's stick, while using his/her own stick to prevent a walk around.

If X1 performs a defenseman to defenseman pass to X2, the weak side wing (W1) must release, pressure inside-out and block the shot. W1 could go down on one knee, hands at his/her side, chest up, and stick out to the side.

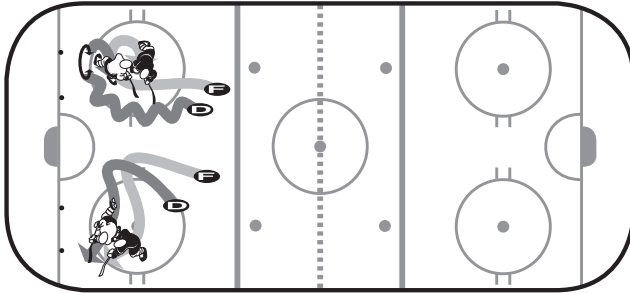


ADDITIONAL DRILLS

FOUR PUCKS ON GOAL LINE

1. Forwards try to get to the puck and poke the puck off the goal line. After poking each puck, the forwards must go back to the top of the circles and “touch up” before going to the next puck.

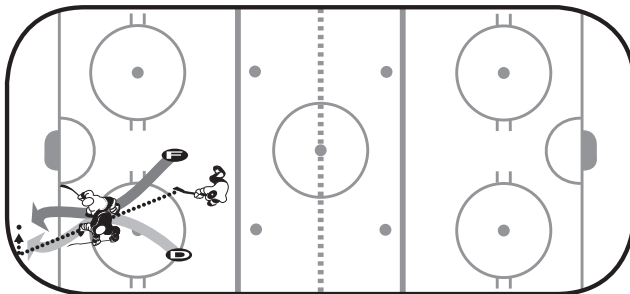
Defense must use body contact skills skating forward and backward to prevent the forwards from touching the puck. Have the players switch lines so each player plays offense and defense.



LOOK, BUMP, PUCK

1. The coach dumps the puck in the corner. When the coach blows the whistle, the forward and the defenseman race for the puck. Before touching the puck, the players must use their hips or their shoulder to bump the opponent and gain position. A good saying is: “Look at the opponent, bump with the hip and go get the puck.” This teaches players to gain puck protection position before getting to the puck.

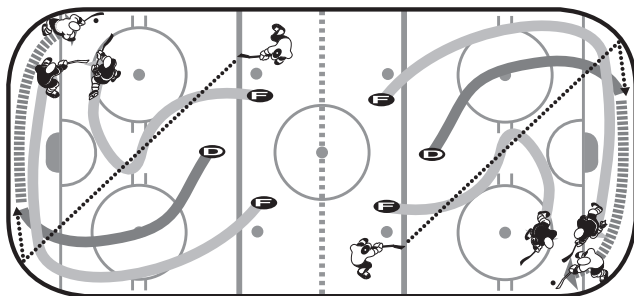
Option - designate which player, or line, will be performing the bump before they go.



TWO-ON-ONE - DEFENSIVE ZONE

1. The coach dumps the puck in the corner. The forwards forecheck against the defenseman, trying to gain control of the puck and score a goal. The defenseman tries to beat the forecheckers and skate the puck over the blue line.

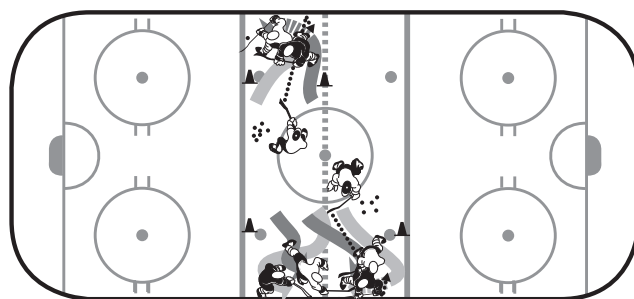
Drill is done at both ends.



ONE-ON-ONE, TWO-ON-TWO - NEUTRAL ICE

1. The coach or the next player in line dumps the puck in a confined area designated by the boards, cones, blue line and red line. Players must battle for control of the puck, and protect the puck when they have control. Players must use stick lifts, stick presses, body bumps, body blocks, or other body contact techniques to accomplish the goal. No checking from behind!

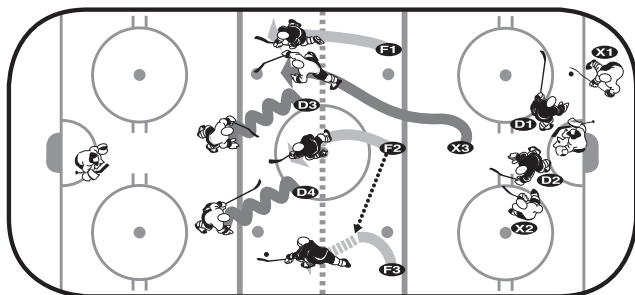
Perform the drill one-on-one or two-on-two at both sides of rink.



THREE-ON-TWO LOW – BACKCHECK

1. X1, X2 and X3 play three-on-two low against D1 and D2. One X must always stay high. When the coach blows whistle, F1, F2 and F3 skate down the ice three-on-two, on D3 and D4. The X forward who is high, when the whistle blows, must backcheck. The play is then a three-on-two with a backchecker X.

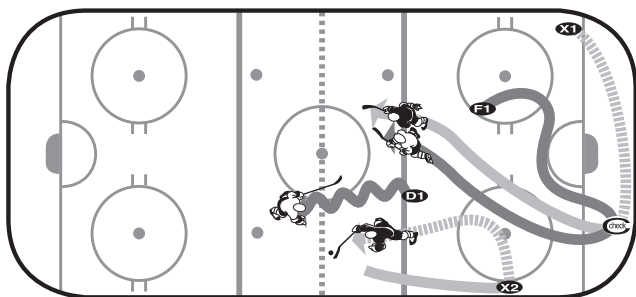
D3 or D4 must designate which forward the backchecking X must take. Play continues until the second whistle.



TWO-ON-ONE WITH BACKCHECKER

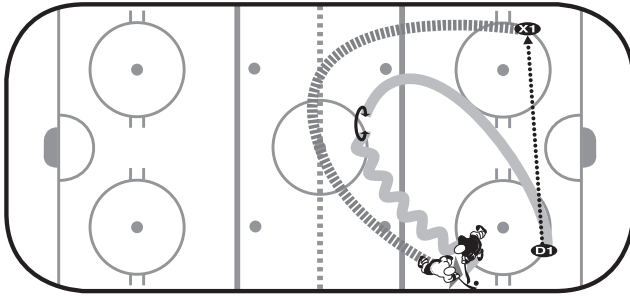
1. X1 starts by carrying the puck around the net. F1 angles before or after the net and performs a body contact technique on X1. X1 passes to X2 who has come back to a breakout position. X2 goes one-on-one with D1.

After making the pass, X1 tries to get into the play, making a two-on-one against D1. F1 must backcheck and make the situation a two-on-one with a backchecker. D1 must communicate with F1 on which player to cover on the backcheck.



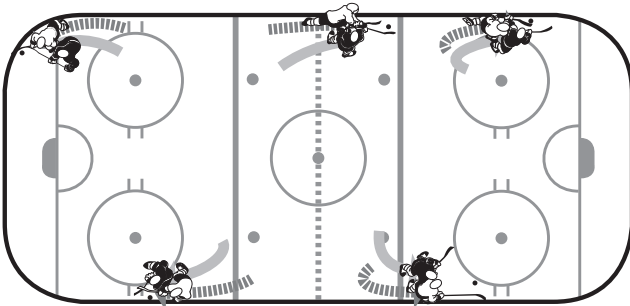
CROSS-ICE ANGLING

1. D1 starts the drill by passing to X1. X1 carries the puck into the neutral zone. D1 must head inside the dots, close the gap, angle, pivot and force the puck carrier to the boards using lateral movement and angling.



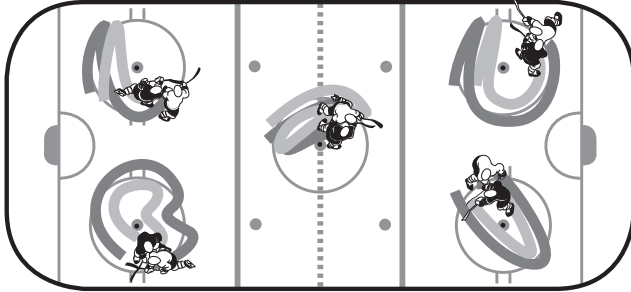
THREE-QUARTER CHECKING DRILL

1. The drill is performed at half- to three-quarter speed. Players pair up and spread out around the rink. The player along the boards has the puck. The player off of the boards must slowly angle, close the gap and perform a body contact technique. The player on the boards protects himself/herself from contact.



PROTECT THE DOT

1. The puck is placed on one of the face-off dots. The designated defensive player must keep the offensive player from getting the puck. The defensive player protects the puck without touching the puck. The defensive player uses body contact techniques. All groups go on the whistle. Change positions each time.



NOTES



**1775 Bob Johnson Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80906
www.usahockey.com**