

LEVEL 3 – INTERMEDIATE MANUAL



Handbook 2: Individual Techniques, Tactics & Team Play

A Publication Of The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program



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USA Hockey Coaching Education Program

Level 3 – Intermediate Manual

Handbook 2 Individual Techniques, Tactics & Team Play

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Chapter 1

Goaltending

OBJECTIVES

- Understand how to play angles
- Outline basic save techniques
- Outline basic game situations

INTRODUCTION

It is the hope of USA Hockey that the goaltending section of this manual will become a practical, helpful tool that all coaches will use. Several topics will be covered: playing angles, save techniques and game situations.

PLAYING ANGLES

The single most important skill in stopping the puck is learning to correctly play the angles. It accounts for at least 70 percent of goaltending success. Quickness is a great asset, but playing the angle and being in the right position are what enables goalies to consistently make the save.

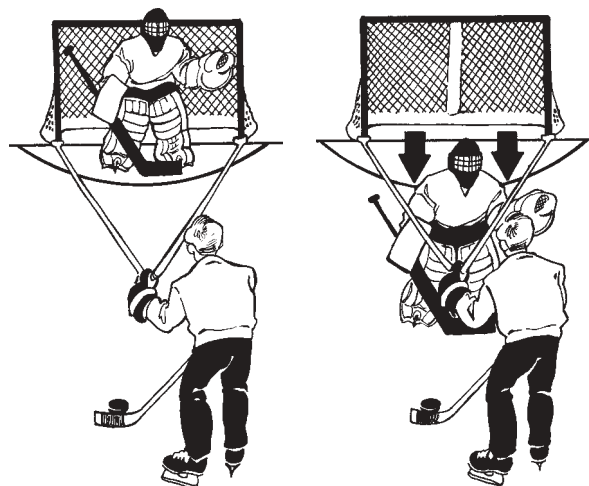


Figure 1. Utilizing ropes to teach angles.

There are three rules to remember about playing the angles.

- Cut down the shooter's vision of the net
- Never give the shooter the short side
- Play the puck, not the shooter's body

Key Elements

- Teach your goalie to visualize a shooting angle or triangle. Take time for this at practice with ropes
- Goalie is out of the net when puck is in front, not when the puck is to the side
- The goalie must be in the middle of the angle or centered on the puck
- Maintain the basic stance and correct positioning

Common Errors

- The goalie is too far back in the net
- Getting caught out of the net and does not time movements
- Giving too much room to one side, often the same side
- Lining up on the shooter instead of the puck
- The goalie is not squared to the puck (particularly when player comes out from the corner)
- Goalie is usually still moving forward when the shot is taken rather than being stationary

Suggestions for Coaching

To explain to your goalie the technique of playing angles, draw two imaginary lines from the puck to the goal posts. The area inside these lines represents the angle. As the goalie moves closer to the puck or as the shooter moves closer to the goalie, the angle is cut down, giving the shooter less of a target at which to aim. Tie a rope to each goal post, this way, your goalkeeper can visually comprehend angles better.

One way to force goalies to work on their angle play (or positioning) is to use a drill that does not allow them to move their arms or legs at the puck. The only thing they can do to stop the puck is to have it hit them (i.e., the only thing they can control is their ability to move out and be in the right place). Make it a contest: two points for a goal, one point when they move an arm or leg at the puck.

CONTROL OF REBOUNDS

The difference between a good goalie and a great goalie is the ability to control rebounds. Most goals are scored on rebounds, tip-ins or screen shots. To control rebounds, the goalie should:

- Cushion the puck (as explained in the section on pad saves)
- Trap the puck on the ice, against his/her body, or in his/her equipment (Figure 2)

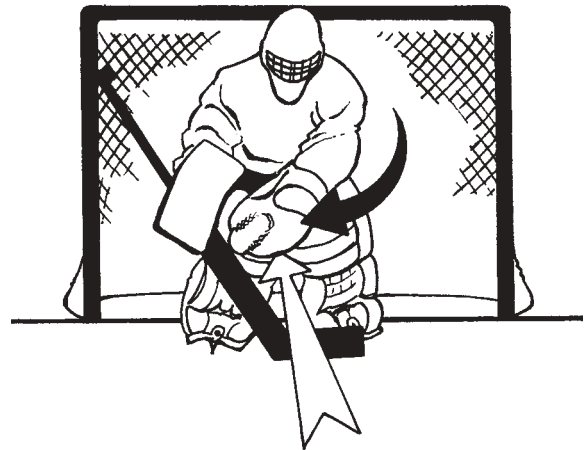


Figure 2.

- “Cushion” the stick to give a soft rebound (Figure 3).

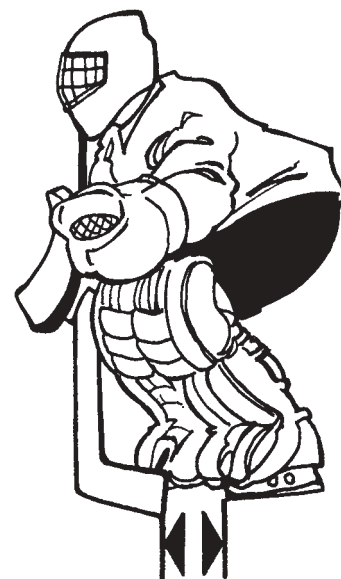


Figure 3.

- Smother each loose puck he/she cannot clear (Figure 4).



Figure 4.

Key Elements

- First locate the puck
- Maintain stick position to help stop shots
- Use the knees as half-way point to regain the basic position
- Recover behind stick into basic stance as fast as possible

Common Errors

- Attempting a recovery before locating the puck
- Turning back to puck
- Failing to position the stick where it can be of use before recovery is complete
- Not recovering to proper stance

Suggestions for Coaching

Insist that in game-like situations during practice your goalies follow through on all aspects of play. Just because it is a practice rather than a game, it is not an acceptable reason to become sloppy in controlling rebounds. There is a lot of truth in the old adage “what you do in practice you will do in a game”. Remember practice does not make perfect. Rather, perfect practice makes perfect.

SAVE TECHNIQUES

There are several commonly used and effective ways of stopping shots which coaches should teach young goaltenders. They include:

STICK SAVES

The stick should be held firmly (usually just above the wide portion of the shaft) and under control. The grip will tighten as your goalies make their plays. Figure 5 illustrates the positioning of the hand on the stick. The stick is used for stopping the puck (particularly low shots), clearing, poke checking, intercepting passes and passing. Figure 6 illustrates a good example of the poke check.

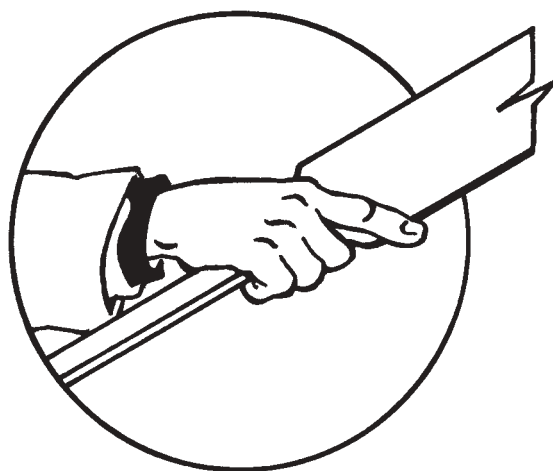


Figure 5. Positioning of the hand on the stick.

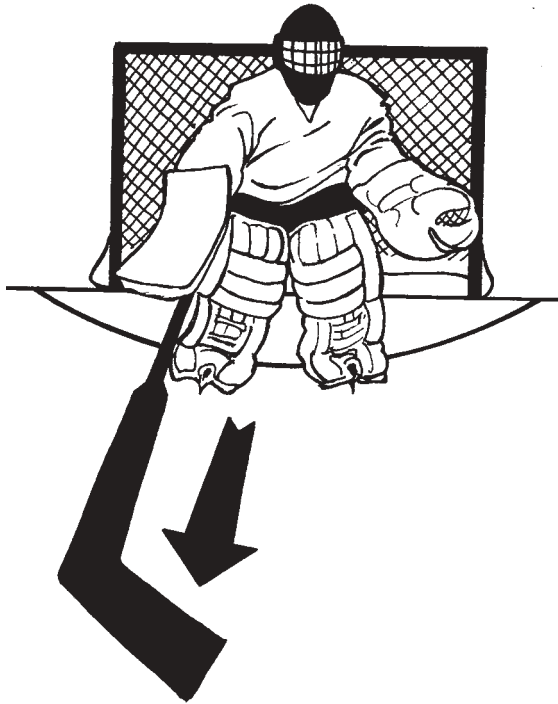


Figure 6. Poke Check.

The goalie should use as long a stick as he/she can control, full size if possible. When the stick is lagging behind on moves and/or saves it usually signals that the size is too large and should be downsized.

Key Elements

- Grip position is just above the wide portion of the stick
- Firm but not clenched grip
- Maintain the cushion between the stick and the skates
- Maintain the basic stance and correct positioning
- Back up the stick with the skate(s)

Common Errors

- Failing to maintain the basic stance position while stationary or moving
- Failing to maintain the cushion between the skates and the stick
- Kicking the stick to deflect a puck
- Dropping to knees behind a stick save resulting in poor positioning for the next shot

Suggestions for Coaching

Be sure your goalies learn to execute the correct technique when executing stick saves on slow moving pucks before expecting them to stop hard shots. Gear your practices to give them success with easier saves and then gradually increase the speed and therefore, the difficulty of the saves.

BODY SAVES

The ultimate objective for goaltenders is to get their body in front of the puck on every shot. Realizing this is not always possible, glove, pad and stick saves are also used. However, if young goalies start with the objective of moving their body in front of every shot, they will find that their other save options will also improve.

Key Elements

- Maintain the basic stance and correct positioning
- Stay between the goal and the puck
- Keep eyes on the puck as long as possible
- Anticipate the shot

Common Errors

- Failure to maintain the basic stance and correct positioning
- Relying on the stick rather than the body
- Shying away from the puck

Suggestions for Coaching

Work on technique first. Start slowly and increase the difficulty of the saves as goalies improve. Be sure to cover priorities within saves. First, cover and/or control the puck. Second, deflect the puck to the side. Third, make the stop and hope for the best.

GLOVE SAVES

Gloves are the best weapons goalies have because they can be moved rapidly and cover a great distance in a short time. Teach your goalies to keep their wrists firm but flexible when catching the puck (soft hands). Also,

they must keep their eyes on the puck. **The majority of shots above the knees on the stick side should be stopped with the blocker. The catching glove should be brought over the blocker to trap the puck and prevent a rebound.** Figure 7 illustrates this move.



Figure 7. Trapping the puck with the glove and blocker.

Key Elements

- Proper initial position of glove (open, around knee high, ahead of the body and filling open net)
- Shift of body weight toward puck
- Eyes follow puck into glove
- Close the glove
- Off-speed shots should be backed up with the body
- Blocker deflects shots to side

Common Errors

- Poor glove position
- Initiating the save with a closed glove
- Eyes stay with shooter rather than the puck
- No shift of body weight (moving only the glove to the puck)
- Deflecting shots in front of the net

Suggestions for Coaching

Focus on technique first. Movement and

save actions are critical and should be learned first with easy shots, then with difficult shots. Most young goalies can learn proper techniques and develop good habits by stopping thrown, rather than shot pucks in practice. Start here and advance to shot pucks as ability improves.

LEG SAVES

The legs (pads) are used mainly for blocking the angle to the net, low shots directly at the goalie, and low corner shots that are above the stick but too low to catch.

Teach goalies to not kick at a shot directly at them as it may result in a rebound to the front of the net. Instead the pads are also used to cushion shots to fall to the feet and prevent rebounds. To cushion a shot, goalies should raise the buttocks slightly, thus straightening the knees slightly. It is critical that this straightening occur at the same time the puck is hitting the pad. The straightening allows for redirecting the flight of the puck downward resulting in the cushioning effect (puck falling at feet for easy cover-up). This is illustrated in Figure 8.

When shots are to one side or the other, the goalie's pads are the only weapons they have. In this case, teach your goalies to kick the puck with the leg pad, following through to direct it to the corner or sideboard.

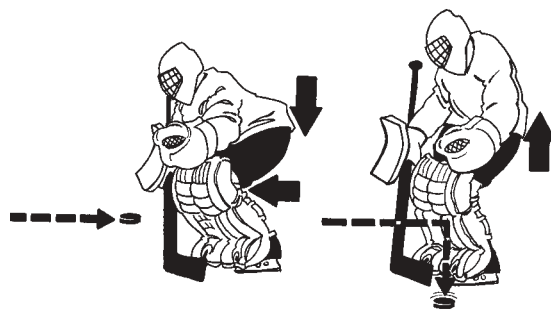


Figure 8. Cushioning a shot to fall to the feet.

Key Elements

- Maintain the basic stance and correct positioning
- Watch the puck all the way to impact
- Deflect the puck to the side when it can not be trapped
- Cushion the puck impact so the puck falls at the feet on direct shots for easy cover-up
- Trap the puck with the glove when possible to prevent rebounds

Common Errors

- Taking eyes off the puck
- Not maintaining the basic stance and correct positioning
- Failing to cushion the shot, which could result in a dangerous rebound
- Deflecting rather than trapping direct shots

Suggestions for Coaching

The goalie must feel that the pads are a part of him/her. There are several ways this can be accomplished. Playing table tennis with the leg pads strapped on gives goalies an opportunity to get used to the weight of the pads while moving from side to side. Also wearing the pads at home while studying, eating, reading, etc., teaches goalies the special feel (weight, size, mobility, adjustments necessary) that is invaluable in making leg saves.

As with the other saves, be sure to provide your goalies with practice on all leg saves. Easy to more difficult shots remain the rule for developing goalie skills.

TWO PAD SAVE OR “STACKING THE PADS”

Stacking the pads is similar to a slide in baseball. To teach your goalies to stack to the right, they must slide to the right, tucking their left foot and leg behind the right leg. They should then slide down on the left hip, and as it makes contact with the ice, kick the left foot and leg forward. It is this kicking action that

“stacks” the pads, one on top of the other. (See Figure 9). Generally, stacking is a desperation move.

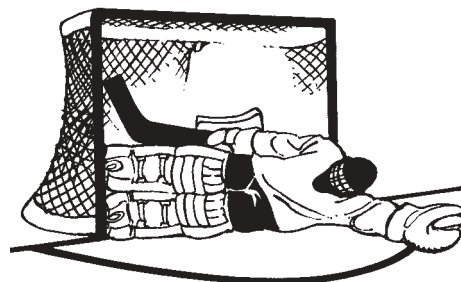
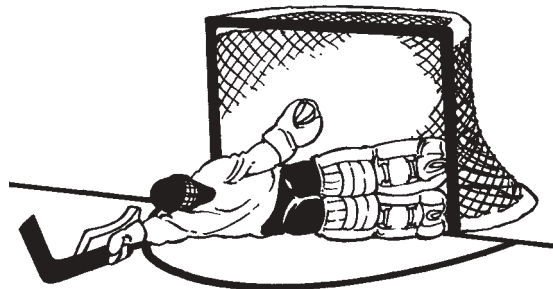


Figure 9. Two pad or stacking the pads.

Key Elements

- Obtain as much height as possible with the pads
- Use the top arm to increase the height of the “wall”
- Bottom arm flush to ice at armpit, prepared to swing from shoulder to shut off the backdoor pass

Common Errors

- Legs are not evenly stacked. Bottom leg gets caught in a “baseball slide” position
- Top arm falls on one side of pads
- Goalie rests on bottom elbow, creating “bridge” for puck to slip under
- Goalie does not swing bottom arm from shoulder, which allows the backdoor pass or a lane for puck carrier to skate in across front of goal

Suggestions for Coaching

This is one of the techniques that your goalies can work on that is not dependent on other players. Have them pair off and help

each other develop this skill. They should know the key elements and common errors already and therefore be in a good position to work independently.

“BUTTERFLY” OR “V-DROP”

This save is used against a “deking” forward. Goaltenders should move out in front of the crease and drop to the inside of their knees and lower legs, thus fanning out the feet so that the toes point toward the posts of the goal. This places the pads in a “V” position, completely covering the surface of the ice. The “V-Drop” is illustrated in Figure 10.

The secret of this move is to keep the chest and upper body upright and lined up with the puck. Covering the top part of the net enables the goalie to use his/her gloves and chest to make saves should the shooter flip the puck over the pads.



Figure 10. The “butterfly” or “V-drop” position.

Key Elements

- The pads must be flush to the ice
- The stick must move to the puck side, covering the opening between the pads
- The upper body should remain upright with the glove above the pad
- The leg away from the puck must “launch” body to puck side

- Use this save technique only when puck is in close to the net

Common Errors

- Dropping straight down to knees and then extending leg rather than launching oneself laterally
- Allowing the stick to lag behind, leaving the opening between pads uncovered
- Not getting pads flush to ice, which leaves space for the puck to get through
- Executing the move when the puck is too far out which leaves the top of the net uncovered
- Goalie does not keep catching glove and upper body in a ready position

Suggestions for Coaching

As with stacking the pads, have your goalies work with each other on perfecting the butterfly technique. Be sure they correctly recognize and provide feedback to each other on the key elements of the skill and on describing errors made.

SITUATIONS

The position a goalie takes depends on the movement of the puck carrier. The goalie plays the puck carrier, the puck carrier does not play the goalie.

Positioning with the Puck in a Shooting Situation

Goalies should maintain a position on the crease line in relation to the position of the puck (See Figure 11). The moment the puck is positioned for a shot (or when the shooter takes his eyes off the goalie) goalies should play the existing angle or reposition themselves for a newly developed shooting angle, if a pass occurs.

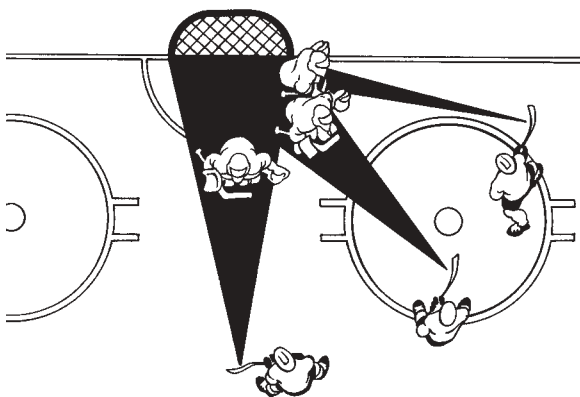


Figure 11. Positioning on the crease line.

Positioning Against a Stickhandling Forward

Again, teach your goalies to take a position on the crease line. **As a puck carrier approaches the goal while stickhandling, the goalie should move back toward the net.** (See Figure 12). Goalies should never move first but must grudgingly retreat as the puck approaches. They can either stay on their feet, make a half butterfly, full butterfly, stack the pads, or poke check the puck off the puck carrier's stick if they come close enough.

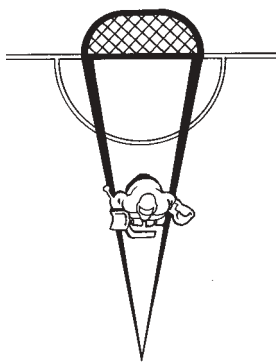


Figure 12. Positioning against a stickhandling forward.

PLAYING A TWO-MAN RUSH

When two opponents are coming in on the goaltender, he/she should stay on his/her feet and **cut down the shooting angle in**

relation to the position of the puck (See Figure 13). **Do not try to play both players at once.** The dangerous one is the puck carrier. This is the player that must be covered. In this situation, definitely try to freeze the puck.

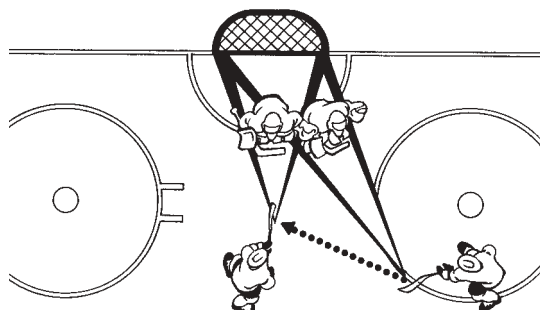


Figure 13. Playing a two man rush.

Positioning When the Puck is On the Side of Net

When the puck is on the side of the net behind the goal line or in the corner of the rink, goalies should play as close as possible to the goal post (See Figure 14). The skate should be pushed against the inside post to prevent a goal from the side. The stick should be placed in front of the feet to permit the goalie to intercept passes.

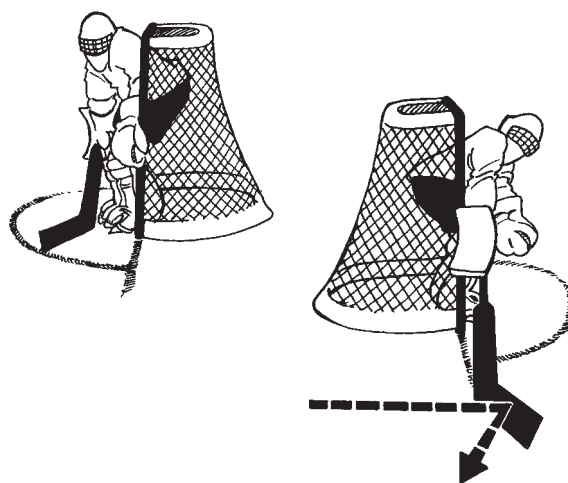


Figure 14.

ACTIVITIES AND DRILLS

Daily drills for goaltenders should include: (1) moving forward, backward and laterally; (2) blocker and catching glove saves; (3) V-

drops; (4) stacking the pads; (5) stick saves and poke checking, and (6) skating.

Some of the drills and activities that are useful for practicing these skills are described below.

Agility Exercises

Agility drills should be done at full speed, with signals coming from a whistle or movement of the puck: (1) dropping to the left knee and springing back up; (2) dropping to the right knee and springing back up; (3) dropping to both knees and springing back up; (4) dropping to stomach with stick extended and getting up.

Basic movements and save positions cued on movement of the puck are excellent ways to instill correct goalie skills.

Side-to-Side Drill

Six pucks are placed in a line halfway between the face-off spot and the inner edge of the circle on both sides of the net. One shooter is placed in each circle. The shooter to the goalie's right shoots first, then the shooter on the left shoots, etc. The goalie should be given time to make the first save before the second shot is made. The drill provides a good opportunity to practice recoveries and lateral movement.

Multiple Puck Drill

Ten pucks are lined up directly in front of the net, about 15 feet out. The goalie stands back in the net. (He has to move faster in that position). The shooter then shoots the pucks, one after another in rapid succession.

Semi-Circle Drill

Three or four players position themselves in a semi-circle in front of the net. They pass a puck between them rapidly, occasionally taking a shot at the net. This drill helps goalies follow the puck while on their feet, and the occasional shot keeps them alert and helps them develop quickness from a moving position.

Off-Season Drills

Tennis, racquetball, table tennis, squash, etc., are excellent off-season activities for goaltenders. Another drill is to place the net 20 feet in front of and facing a wall. The goalie stands in goal facing the wall, using stick and gloves only. The coach stands behind the net and throws rubber balls against the wall from various angles. The goaltender reacts to the balls as they rebound off the wall and toward the net.

SUMMARY

Goaltending is a game within a game, but good goaltending skills can be developed by using the information in this chapter and designing and conducting effective practices. Also insist that your goaltenders learn and apply the following six principles of play:

- Watch the puck
- Don't commit yourself too soon; try to make the shooter commit first
- Cut down the shooting angle
- Stay on your feet in a good basic position with correct positioning
- Get some equipment blockage behind all shots
- Be vocal in the goal

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Chapter 2

Puck Control

OBJECTIVES

- To understand intermediate level puck control techniques
- To understand the various game situations for stickhandling techniques

INTRODUCTION

Puck control is one of the most important fundamental skills of ice hockey. Until players learn to control the puck, their ability to shoot and pass will be greatly diminished. This chapter will cover various puck control techniques which will be very useful in game situations.

FOREHAND SHIFT

The forehand shift is one of the most important ways you can teach your players to stickhandle around an opponent. The characteristics of this move are described below and illustrated in Figure 1.

Key Elements

- The puck is shifted to the forehand side
- The arms are fully extended and the puck is brought out and slightly back and away from the defender
- Use the body as much as possible to protect the puck
- Keep head up
- Speed is important in this move

Common Errors

- Slowing down when approaching the defender
- Not using the body to shield the puck from the defender



Figure 1. Forehand Shift.

Suggestions for Coaching

- Teach your players to set up the move with a slight move to the backhand (and/or head and shoulders fake to the backhand side). This move should be strong enough to get the defender to react. As the defender reacts, initiate the shift in the other direction.
- As the players advance in skill, allow them to use the lower hand only to hold the stick. This frees the upper hand so that it can be used to ward off the defender.

BACKHAND SHIFT

The backhand shift must be developed to compliment the skill developed in the forehand shift. As your players master both of these skills and can reliably use them at full speed, they can create enormous difficulties for the defensemen. This move is illustrated in Figure 2.

Key Elements

- The puck is shifted to the backhand side
- The arms are extended
- The body screens the puck from the defender
- The head is up

Common Errors

- Keeping the puck too close to the body
- Watching the puck rather than the defender

Suggestions for Coaching

As with the forehand shift, the backhand shift can be set up with a fake to the forehand side. As with many of the other skills of hockey, teach the moves of the backhand shift at slow to moderate speeds before working on them at full speed.

CHANGE OF PACE

In this move, players skate under control at moderate speed. Just as they reach the defender, they accelerate to full speed. Figure 3 shows the sequence of events involved in the change-of-pace move. Puck carriers should approach the defender at moderate speed, then they should accelerate and cut around the defender carrying the puck on his/her forehand side. Note that the puck is kept far away from defenders, and that the puck carriers should use the arm closest to the defender to aid in brushing past them. The combination of timing and fast skating will allow the puck carrier to beat the defender. This maneuver may also be done to the backhand side.

Key Elements

- Distinct acceleration
- Shift the puck to the backhand and/or forehand side
- Shield the puck with the arm closest to the defender



Figure 2. Backhand Shift.

Common Errors

- Accelerating prior to reaching the defender
- Failing to execute the forehand and/or backhand shift
- Leaving the puck too close to the defender

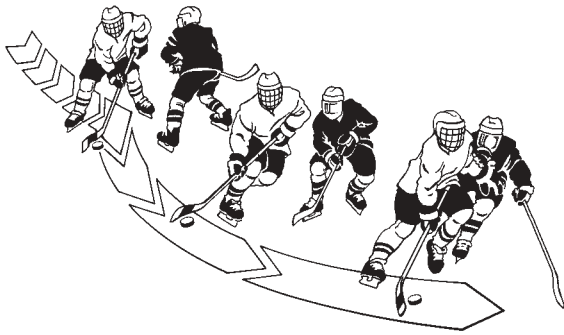


Figure 3. Sequence involved in the change-of-pace move.

This move is especially useful when a defenseman is skating backward slowly and there is room to move on either side.

SLIP THROUGH

In this move, the puck is pushed through the defender's stick and skates or between the skates. This move is illustrated in Figure 4.

Key Elements

- Push the puck forward with the appropriate velocity
- Pull the stick back away from the defender

Common Errors

- Inappropriate timing for pushing the puck through

Suggestions for Coaching

The defender should have slowed down, the head should be down, and a large space should be between legs or between the stick and the skates.



Figure 4. Executing the slip through

SLIP ACROSS

The slip across is another important move to teach your players to help them beat a defender one-on-one. To execute this skill, shift the puck to one side and then slip the puck between the skates and the heel of the stick of the defender. The slip across is illustrated in Figure 5.

Key Elements

- Set this move up by a shift to one side to get the defender to shift weight to that side
- The puck is slipped across between the defender's skates and the heel of the stick
- The player shifts direction and picks up the puck on the other side of the defender

Common Errors

- Failing to get the defender to react to the first shift (fake)
- Slipping the puck too hard and thus losing control of the puck

Suggestions for Coaching

- The slip across differs from the slip through in that the puck travels across the body instead of straight ahead.



Figure 5. Execution of the Slip Across

SLIP AROUND

The slip around should be executed in the following manner. First, fake right, and slip puck around the defender's right side. Pull the stick back and skate around the left side of the defender. Pick up the puck and be ready to jump over the defender's stick. This series of moves is illustrated in Figure 6.



Figure 6. Slip Around

Key Elements

- Make a good fake to commit the defensive player

Common Errors

- Not getting the defensive player to commit before executing the move

Suggestions for Coaching

Players must be encouraged to accelerate quickly as they change direction. The timing on this move is important and therefore, many practice repetitions are often necessary to master this ability. Again, work on developing the move going in both directions.

FAKE SHOT

The fake shot is used to slow down or freeze the defender, allowing the offensive player to advance around him/her easily. It is initiated by shifting the puck to the forehand side and initiating a wrist or slap shot motion. A shoulder drop or lower hand slide is beneficial to create the deception. The puck is then shifted to the forehand or backhand side. This is illustrated in Figure 7.

Key Elements

- An effective fake shot

Common Errors

- Telegraphing that the shot is a fake

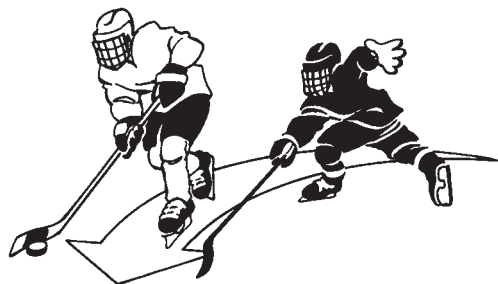
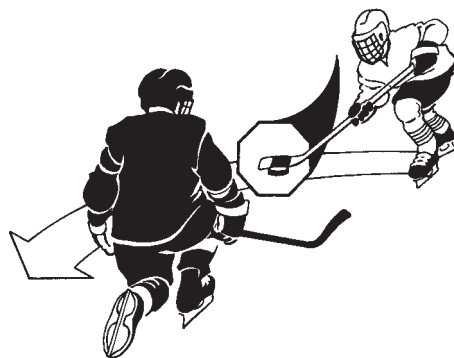


Figure 7. Executing the Fake Shot.

Suggestions for Coaching

This move is especially useful when the defender has slowed down or stopped in his defensive zone.

THE MAGIC WAND

The magic wand is a very deceptive move, and probably has its origins in European hockey. It is called the “magic wand” because the attacking player “waves” his stick **above** the puck, as if to dribble from side to side, never touching it. (Figure 8). This tends to freeze the opponent.

This fake movement of the puck, combined with a head or shoulder fake, often catches the defender leaning or committing to one direction or the other. At this moment, the attacker may play the puck to his forehand or backhand and accelerate around the opposition (Figure 8).

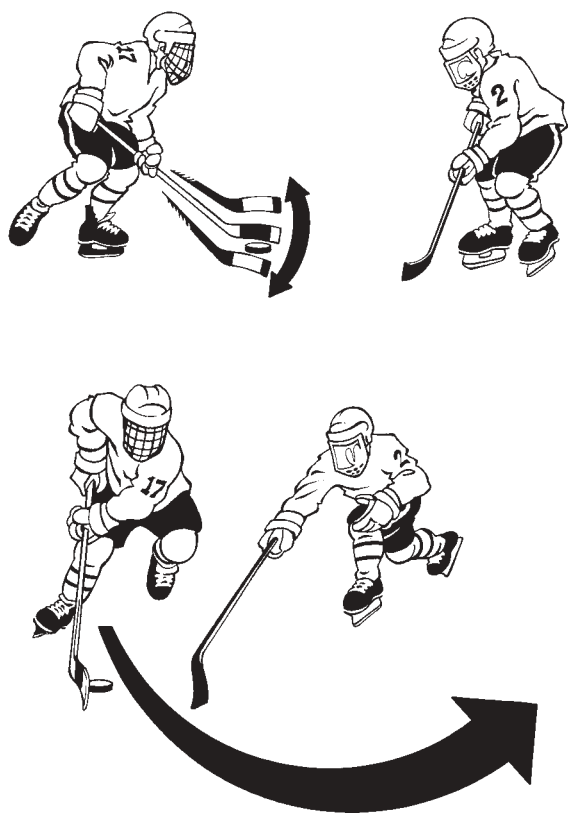


Figure 8. Illustrates the Magic Wand.

Key Elements

- Waving the stick **above the puck** as if to dribble it
- Utilizing a head or shoulder fake to get the defender to commit to one direction
- Accelerating around the defender

Common Errors

- Playing the puck accidentally instead of waving the stick over it
- Not using an adequate fake to force the defender to commit

Suggestions for Coaching

This maneuver may be practiced utilizing some of the same drills previously outlined in this section. Once again, you may want to start against a stationary defender, move to passive resistance and then practice at full speed.

PUCK OFF THE BOARDS

This maneuver involves passing the puck off the boards and going around the defensive player on the opposite side to pick up the puck. It is successful because the defender is often deceived into trying to play the puck. This is illustrated in Figures 9 a and b.



Figure 9a. Puck Off the Boards.

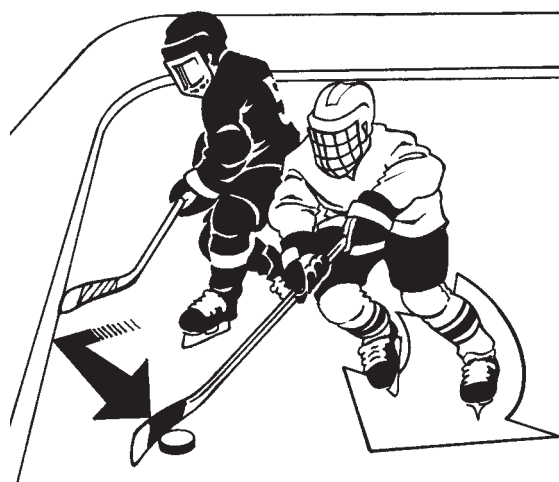


Figure 9b. Puck Off the Boards.

Key Elements

- The puck should be shot off the boards at approximately 45 degrees at only moderate speed. (The puck will come off the boards at the same angle it hits

the boards: angle of incidence = angle of reflection).

Common Errors

- Failing to shoot the puck off the boards at the proper angle and speed, thus allowing the defender to intercept the puck

Suggestions for Coaching

This move is used when moving out of your own end and a defender is standing still.

STOP AND GO

As your players approach the defender they should stop and then quickly accelerate again. There must be a distinct hesitation.

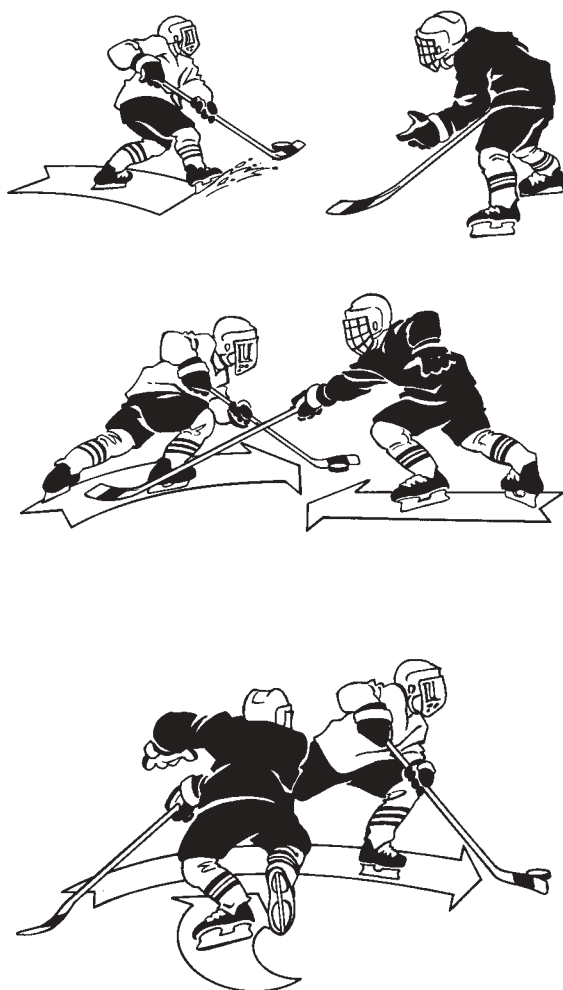


Figure 10. Executing the Stop and Go.

Key Elements

- The ability to accelerate quickly from a virtual standstill

Common Errors

- Stopping too close to the defender
- Not accelerating quickly after hesitating

Suggestions for Coaching

This maneuver will be most effective when utilized against aggressive defenders.

DOUBLE SHIFT

This is an advanced maneuver. Shift the puck to the forehand side, then shift to the backhand side. Pull the puck and then go to the forehand side.



Figure 11. Double Shift.

Key Elements

- Properly controlling the puck by cupping the blade of the stick during the shift from forehand to backhand to forehand

Common Errors

- Trying to complete this maneuver too close to the defender

Suggestions for Coaching

Teach this advanced move by breaking down its components; start from a stationary position and progress to moving.

GRANDSTAND

This is an advanced maneuver. It is executed as follows: Crossover to the right (puck and stick extended to the left). Crossover to the left (puck and stick extended to left). Pull the puck back to the skates deflecting it from the blade of the skate to the blade of the stick. Shift left, and go.

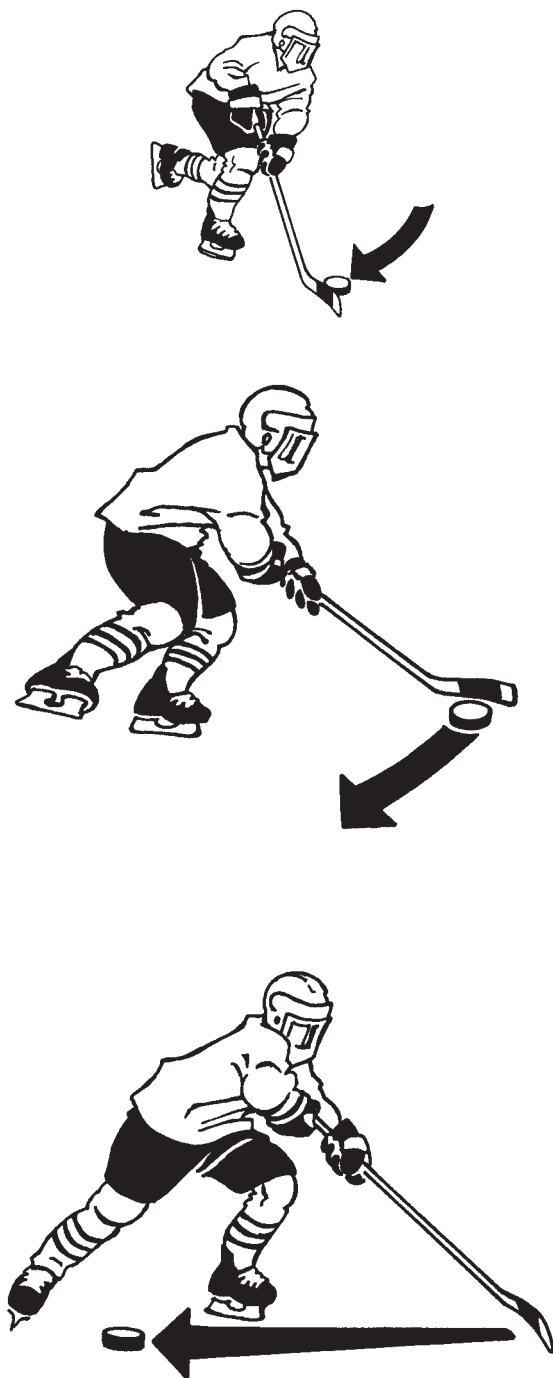


Figure 12. Executing the Grandstand.

Key Elements

- Shifting the puck from left to right using full extension
- Pulling the puck up to the skates and deflecting it to the stick

Common Errors

- Slowing down in order to complete the maneuver

Suggestions for Coaching

This move, like all of the others included, should be practiced first against a stationary pylon, then against a stationary defender, then moving at moderate speed. Once these steps are mastered, the maneuvers should be done at full speed.

SKATE CONTROL

Skate control is also an important aspect of stickhandling. It should be developed and practiced with all of the above skills. Some drills that are useful for working on this ability are:

1. Skate forward stickhandling and drop puck into skate and kick out onto the stick



2. Foot drag drill - control the puck by kicking it out from behind the other blade



3. Control the puck along the boards with the skates



Figure 13. Skate Control.

To become proficient at most of these moves, a player must be efficient at executing fakes. Many hours of practicing are necessary to perfect this ability. Opponents quickly learn which players have only one move. Availability of a wide variety of moves that can be employed during a game results in each move being more effective in winning the one-on-one contest.

SPIN AROUND

This maneuver is utilized when driving hard and fast into the offensive zone against an aggressive defenseman who likes to challenge the puck carrier. The puck carrier drives hard toward the defenseman and just as the defender slows to make contact, the attacker spins away from the check and accelerates.

The spin around may be done to both the backhand and forehand sides as illustrated in Figure 15.

Key Elements

- The player stops quickly, close to the defender
- The puck is kept away from the defender on the forehand or backhand side
- Spin 180 degrees with the puck on the forehand or backhand side of the stick and accelerate quickly forward

Common Errors

- Failing to control the puck while spinning away from the defender
- Not accelerating quickly forward after completing the spin

Suggestions for Coaching

The players must master the art of shielding the puck from the defender with the body

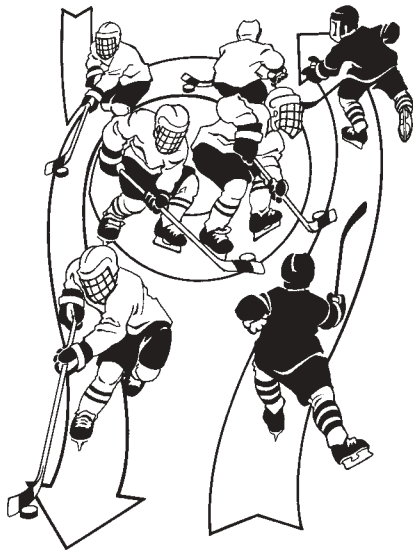


Figure 14. Executing the backhand spin around

SLIP THROUGH AND SPIN

The attacker pulls the puck back between his skates, spins, picks up the puck and goes, utilizing a controlled turn with a crossunder to accelerate away from the defender.

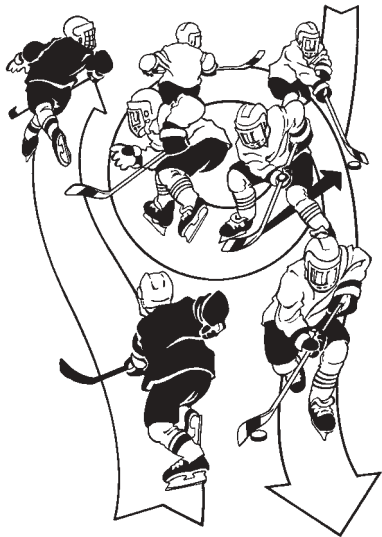


Figure 15. Executing the Slip Through and Spin.

Key Elements

- The attacker must pull the puck back between the skates with the right velocity
- The attacker must spin away from the defender

Common Errors

- Failing to accelerate out of the spin and away from the defender

ESCAPE TO AVOID A CHECK

The attacker executes a 360 degree controlled turn and accelerates away from the defender. He/She places his/her body between the defender and the puck.

This maneuver may be done to (1) continue skating, (2) to pass, or, (3) to shoot, and should be practiced utilizing all three options.



Figure 16. Executing the Escape to Avoid a Check.

Key Elements

- 360-degree controlled turn
- Placing your body between the puck and the defender as a shield

Common Errors

- Turning into the defender instead of away

Suggestions for Coaching

All of these escape maneuvers should be practiced in a stationary position to begin

with. As the players begin to gain confidence in each maneuver they should increase speed and then go against passive resistance.

REFERENCES

Blase, K; O'Connor, R (1985) the USA Hockey Puck Control Handbook
Colorado Springs, Colorado - USA Hockey

Chapter 3

Body Checking

OBJECTIVES

- Describe the principles of body checking
- Outline the types of body checks
- Teach the players how to protect themselves when checked

BODY CHECKING

Hockey is a contact sport. It is therefore important for coaches to teach their players to body check properly and within the rules (insist on sticks and elbows down).

Body checking requires concentration, agility and anticipation. The checker must concentrate on the puck carrier, not the puck. The checker must keep both hands on the stick, with the blade on or near the ice, using timing and angling to limit the puck carrier's space. The checker must avoid lunging at the puck carrier, placing his glove in the face of the puck carrier, or making excessive contact with the stick. All of these infractions must be discouraged or they will result in penalties during games.

When being checked, a player should try to cushion the collision with the board or glass with the arms.

It is a good idea to teach your players that when they know they are about to be body checked, they should reach out and place a hand on the player checking them. This often will cushion the blow and sometimes will allow the player to slip off the check. The

player being checked should establish a wide, solid base. They should then lean into the check.

The three types of body checking that you should teach are:

- shoulder check
- hip check
- checking along the boards

While the techniques vary somewhat, there are factors common to all.

1. The appropriate time for checking is before or as the offensive player is releasing a pass or shot.
2. Straight-on checking is difficult. It is better to get an angle or take advantage of a limited area: (i.e., an offensive player trying to go between a defensive player and the boards).
3. The checker's speed must be under control and the knees should be bent.
4. The checker must keep his/her eyes on the target – usually somewhere between the chest and waist.

When teaching body checking, you should emphasize to your players that the purpose of

the body check is to block the progress of the puck carrier by legally getting in their way. Too many players and coaches feel that a body check must knock the opponent down or hard into the boards every time. This type of attitude leads to unnecessary rough play and injuries to either of the players involved in the collision. The individual who learns how to block or angle the puck carrier out of the play will be much more effective.

PRINCIPLES OF BODY CHECKING

1. When intending to check in a one-on-one situation, the velocity of the offensive and defensive players should be the same. This will prevent the attacking player from skating around the defensive player. To play defense, speed in skating backwards is a key requirement.
2. **RHYTHM.** The defensive player should be taught to watch the offensive player and to catch the rhythm and movement of the puck carrier in order to anticipate his/her movement. Defensemen should be taught to watch the chest of the opposing player because it is the most difficult part of the human body to shift quickly. For instance, a player's legs can maneuver quickly around another player, as can the stick. A good head fake can stymie and outmaneuver a player quite easily. It is imperative that the defensive player play the body of the puck carrier – not the puck.
3. **ANTICIPATION OF FAKES.** A player must learn to anticipate the primary and secondary movements in every fake.
4. **ABILITY TO ROTATE.** The defensive player must learn to turn quickly both left and right effectively in order to keep pace. For example, a younger player cannot skate backward as rapidly as a player skating forward. Therefore, in order to defend against a fast forward skater, the defender may have to start in forward motion, pick up speed, and then rotate into the backward position.
5. **SELECTION OF POSITION.** The primary task of the defender is to cut off the main direction of the opposing player to the net by watching the center movement of the player. When against the boards, the defender should angle his/her body a half-turn toward the boards and use the boards to his/her advantage. A defender may (1) push the player off the puck, (2) separate the puck from the player by employing a hip check, or (3) pin the player along the boards with a solid body check. The most important aspect in selecting a checking position to always make the player move towards the boards by skating at the player from an angle. This cuts off the central ice area.
6. **COMPULSORY LEG WORK.** When the body check is taking place, most players stop using their legs. This is a drawback because it cuts down the speed along with the momentum of the check. A defender should keep his legs moving at all times.
7. **QUICKNESS.** The defender must learn to cut down the puck carrier's reasoning time by attacking suddenly. This comes through timing and instinct. For maximum results, a player must use his/her stick, shoulder and full body when checking.

SHOULDER CHECK

The shoulder check is most typically used by a defenseman when taking out an on-rushing attacker. The defenseman must anticipate where he/she intends to make contact with the attacking player, then time his/her backward skating so that contact is made at the appropriate time. An example of proper shoulder checking technique is illustrated in Figure 1.

The defensive player should attempt to aim his/her shoulder at the offensive player's chest and make contact with the shoulder and side of the body. Skates must be shoulder width apart with the knees bent to provide a strong foundation. Leg power is used to drive the

shoulder into the opponent's chest. Players may find it helpful to keep only the top hand on the stick with the free hand up, both for protection and also to push the offensive player. Remember, players are allowed only two steps before hitting the opponent. There is often a tendency to use the elbows in shoulder checking. Do not let your players develop this bad habit.



Figure 1. The Shoulder Check.

Key Elements

- Skates shoulder width apart
- Knees bent with the weight on the inside edges of the blade
- Head up at all times
- Shoulder contact with the opponent's chest
- Stick and elbows down
- Two or less steps before hitting the opponent

Common Errors

- Defender is skating too slow, thus attacker skates around him/her
- Legs are straight, resulting in poor balance and insufficient power to make a good check
- Raising of the arms resulting in elbowing penalties
- Defender is watching the puck, not the player

HIP CHECK

The hip check is somewhat more difficult to execute because the timing required is precise. It is important to have the offensive

player committed to a course which he/she will have difficulty changing (See Figure 2a); this provides a good checking angle. The defensive player "lines up" the offensive player in a way similar to executing a shoulder check, but at the last moment the head and shoulders are dropped (bending at the waist) and the hip is turned into the stomach area of the offensive player. The leg closest to the check should remain bent. The hips must rotate into the puck carrier (See Figure 3). This action will result in the defender being positioned under the attacker, forcing him up and over the defender's hip (See Figure 4). Hip checks may be performed in open ice or along the boards (as indicated in Figures 5 and 6).



Figure 2a. Forcing the Offensive Player to a specific course.



Figure 2b. Maintaining a good checking angle.



Figure 3. Rotating the Hip.



Figure 4. Completing the Hip Check.

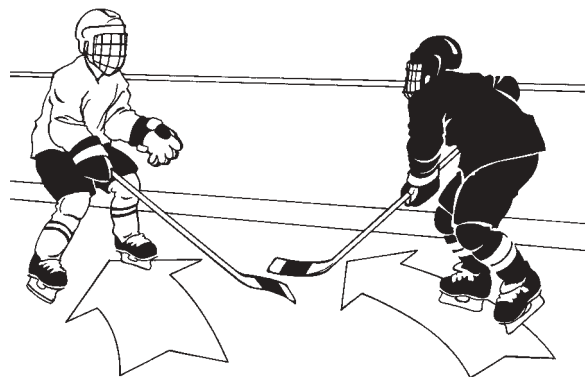


Figure 5. Angling the puck carrier towards the boards.

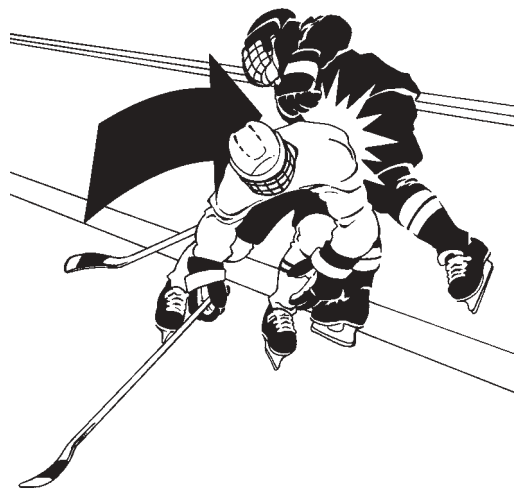


Figure 6. Executing the "Hip Check along the boards".

Key Elements

- Watch the puck carrier's chest, not the puck
- Knees bent
- Head and shoulders lowered
- Thrust the hip into the stomach area of the offensive player

Common Errors

- Looking at the puck instead of watching the puck carrier's body
- Knees are not flexed when initiating the check
- Poor timing (this often allows the attacker to skate by as if there was no defense)

CHECKING ALONG THE BOARDS

The ability to check properly along the boards will enable a team to regain possession of the puck without receiving a penalty. The defender must concentrate on the puck carrier, not the puck, using timing to angle the attacker towards the boards. As he/she approaches the puck carrier from an angle, the checker reduces the amount of space between himself/herself, the puck carrier and the boards. The checker must have two hands on the stick with the blade on or near the ice (See Figure 7). (Coaches must emphasize that the stick must be kept down). The checker should aim to hit a point on the boards in front of the puck carrier. Typically, the defender should not attempt to retrieve the puck himself/herself, as this is usually done by a teammate.

To successfully check an opponent along the boards, the checker must angle the puck carrier into the boards under controlled speed. He/She gives the puck carrier only one option, not two (See Figure 8). He/She forces the puck carrier in the direction he/she wants him/her to go, squeezing the opponent on the boards using his/her arms and body. Push, with your inside arm, down and across your opponents chest and move your body in front of the attacker, blocking his path (See Figure 9). After contact be sure to keep your body low and well-balanced (See Figure 10).

If the puck should become tangled in skates along the boards, you may want to freeze it to gain possession. This often allows your team to reorganize.

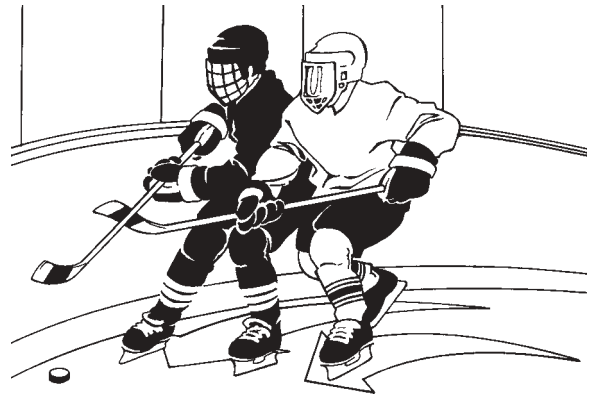


Figure 7. The checker must approach the puck carrier with two hands on the stick.

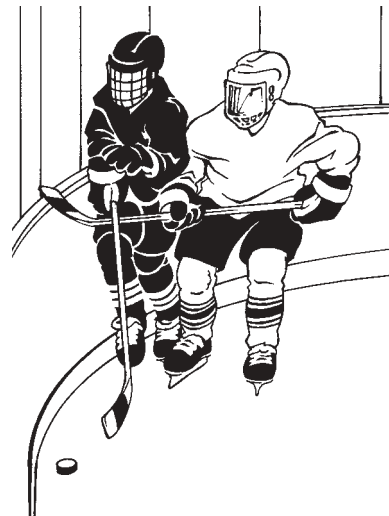


Figure 8. Angling the puck carrier to the boards.



Figure 9. The checker must move his/her body in front of the puck carrier.



Figure 10. Maintain good body balance in completing the check.

Key Elements

- Angling your opponent
- Controlled speed at the point of contact
- Use inside arm to pinch your opponent into the boards
- Keep your body low, legs spread for balance

Common Errors

- Approaching the puck carrier straight on, not angling
- Banging your opponent rather than pinching him into the boards
- Failing to maintain good body balance

PROTECTING YOURSELF ALONG THE BOARDS

Players must learn how to protect themselves around the boards. When being checked, try to distribute the force of the check over as wide a surface as possible. Get your stick and gloves up to spread out the area of impact (See Figure 11). Your arms act like shock absorbers. Place the forearm and upper thigh (hip area) against the boards and keep the feet well apart and knees bent with a low center of gravity (See Figure 12). After impact, recoil by pushing upward and outward with the forearms and inside leg. Never fully extend your arms towards the boards when cushioning a check; serious injury could occur. Avoid hitting the boards with the point of your shoulder (See Figure 13), because you could separate the shoulder. Lift the shoulder and take the blow on the flat of the biceps and shoulder area.

Accept checks when playing the puck along the boards. Keep the head up, get a good stable position, feet apart, knees bent, body in a low position, and forearm and hands on the boards for protection (See Figure 14).

When going into the corner for the puck, try to use some deception (fakes) with your body, stick and skates and when you are in a position to pick up the puck, move the skates quickly so that they are parallel to the boards rather than pointing towards the boards where the opponent may ram you head first into the barrier. Protect the puck with your body, skates and stick and try to move out of the area quickly and with control of the puck.

Players should practice these techniques and use them in game situations.

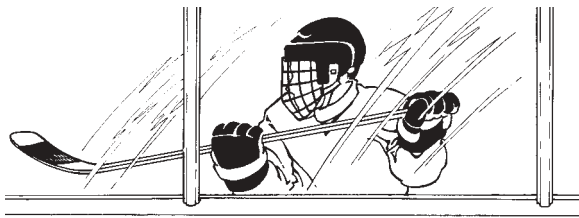


Figure 11. Getting the stick and gloves up to absorb the force of the check



Figure 13. Avoid hitting the boards with the shoulder.



Figure 12. Maintain a low center of gravity



Figure 14. Positioning to avoid injury for check along the boards.

SUMMARY

Practicing checking is a problem because many young players do not like being checked. Proper technique can be taught by having the puck carrier skate a controlled course (along the blue line or between markers) at reduced speed and having the defensive player make contact without making a final, forceful thrust. This will allow players to gain confidence in their ability to check and be checked. Players will tend to speed up the action as they become more comfortable. Eventually, you must have your players check at full speed if they are to successfully master the skills.

Before leaving the subject, let us stress the importance of teaching your players to hit legally and to take a check safely and never, ever hit from behind. Insist that officials in your association call charging, high sticking, and elbowing closely. They should, however, allow good, legal body contact.

REFERENCES

Blase, K; O'Connor, R; Wood, D (1985) the USA Hockey Checking Handbook Colorado Springs, Colorado – USA Hockey.

Chapter 4

Shooting

OBJECTIVES

- **Describe various shots**
- **Describe proper shooting areas of the net**
- **Describe various ways of attacking the net**

SHOOTING

This section should perhaps be entitled “Goal Scoring”, since that is the reason for shooting. For most players (except goalies), scoring a goal has to be the emotional peak of any hockey game. Even the fluke goals make the scorer feel good.

Coaches usually find that they have little trouble getting their players to practice shooting (especially the slap shot), but to get them to practice specific shots or goal-scoring maneuvers often poses some problems. However, solution of these problems will pay big dividends in terms of goals scored.

Consider the following statement by Valeri Kharlamov, the great Russian player, “When one shoots, there are three things needed for a successful shot: precision, power and suddenness.”

The goal scorer needs to bring with him/her certain skills to assure his/her success. Puck control and stickhandling skills are important and work well against goalies and defensemen.

The potential goal scorer’s repertoire should consist of the following types of shots:

Wrist Shot — forehand and backhand

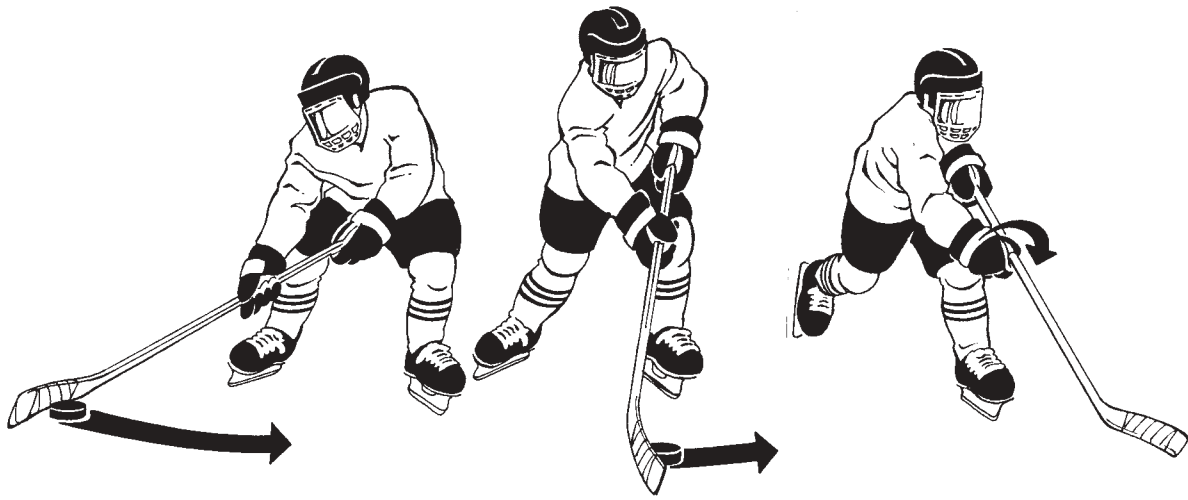
Snap Shot

Flip Shot

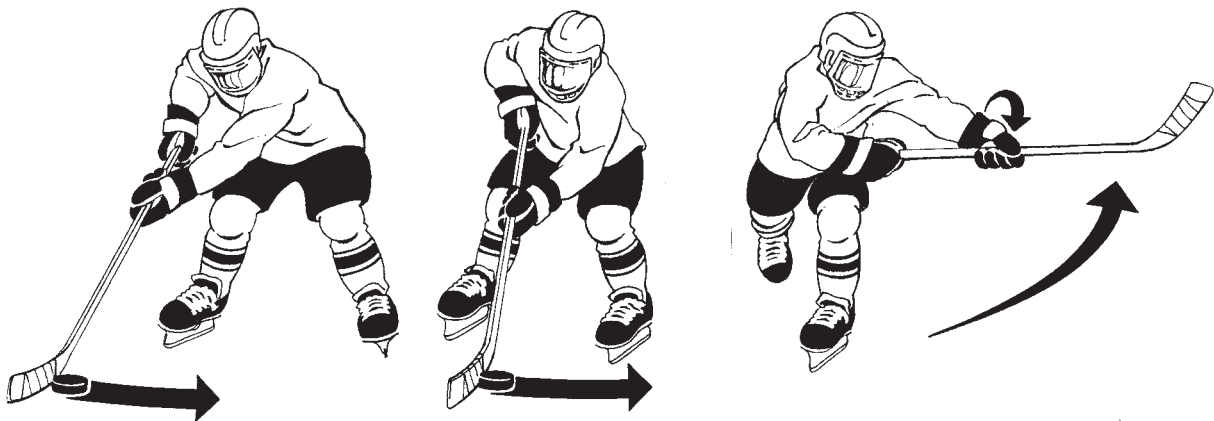
Slap Shot

Tip-in or Deflection

1a. FOREHAND WRIST (OR SWEEP) SHOT



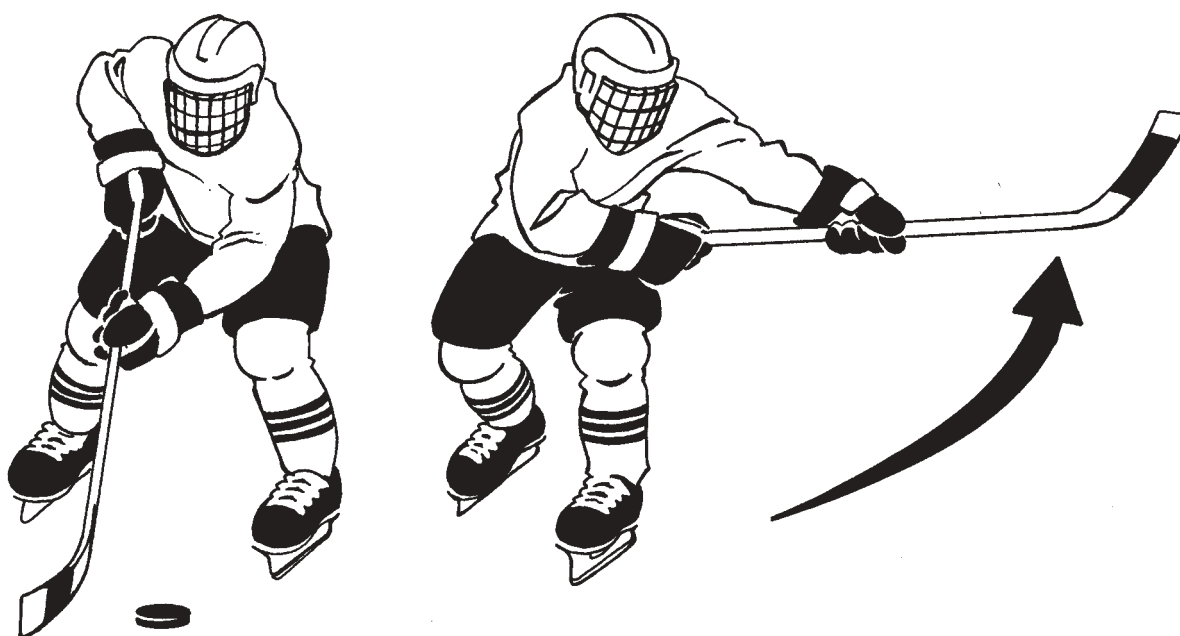
1b. BACKHAND WRIST (OR SWEEP) SHOT



2a. FOREHAND SNAP SHOT



2b. BACKHAND SNAP SHOT



3a. FOREHAND FLIP SHOT



3b. BACKHAND FLIP SHOT



4. SLAP SHOT



5. TIP-IN OR DEFLECTION



KEY ELEMENTS FOR SHOOTING

Wrist Shot

- Shot begins with the puck at the side of the body and behind the back foot
- Blade of the stick cupped over the puck
- Weight transfer to the front skate
- The height of the follow through with the stick will dictate the height of the shot
- Puck movement from heel to the top of the blade

Backhand Wrist Shot

- Shot begins with the puck at the side of the body and behind the back foot
- Blade of the stick cupped over the puck
- Weight transfer to the front skate
- The height of the follow through with the stick will dictate the height of the shot
- Puck movement from the heel to the toe of the blade

Snap Shot (Forehand and Backhand)

- Blade of the stick is brought back slightly behind the puck
- The blade of the stick snapped through the puck towards the target striking the ice just behind the puck
- Push - pull hard wrist action
- Weight transfer in the direction of the shot

Flip Shot (Forehand and Backhand)

- Initial puck position in front of the body
- Quick wrist snap that results in blade rotation from straight to open position
- Exaggerate upward movement of the blade

Slap Shot

- Stick is drawn back and upward
- Weight transfers to the front
- Blade of the stick strikes the ice just behind the puck
- Puck contact in the middle of the blade

SHOOTING ON THE NET

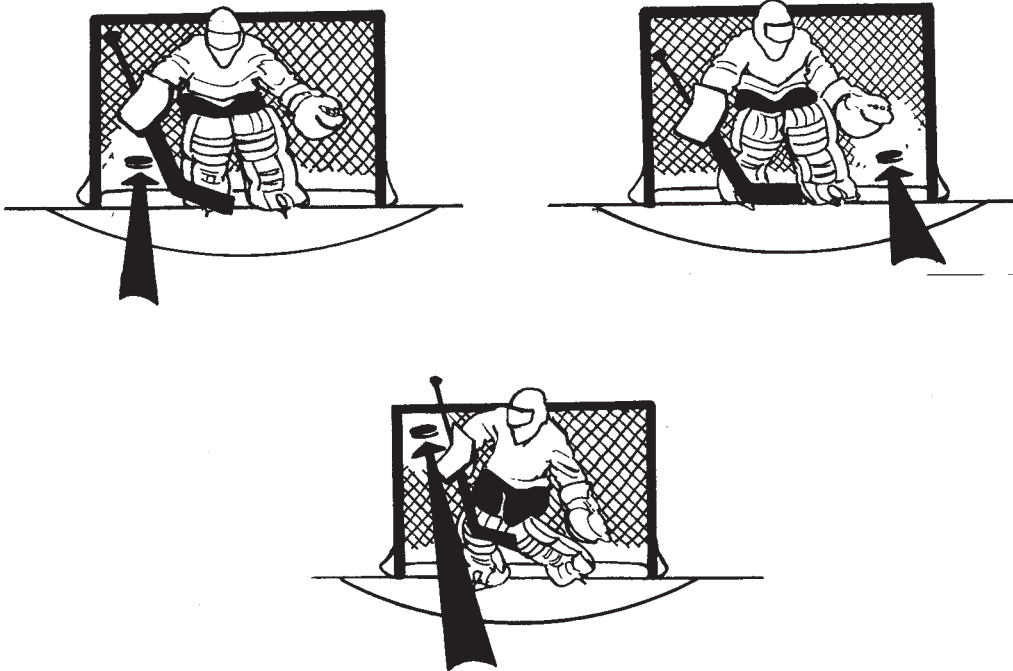
For a moment, let us consider the opponent — the goalie — perhaps the most dedicated to his/her position of all players on the ice. Most goalies consider a goal scored against him/her as a personal violation; they do not give up easily. Goalies have one thing in mind — get as much equipment as possible in front of the shot.

While it is important for a goalie to be quick and able to react to the offensive play (shot or maneuver), most good goalies take away scoring area from the attacker by playing in an appropriate position or playing the angle. It seems logical for the attacker to study where the weakest point of the goalie is and attempt to score through that point.

Understandably the **four corners of the net** are the most difficult points for the goalie to cover. Usually, the low stick side of the goalie is the weakest point.



The next best place to shoot is often debated. Some say low glove side, while others may encourage high stick side. Often the goalie's position does not allow the attacker to choose the low corner, thus the choice becomes low or high on the side to which the goalie allows shooting space.



It is safe to assume that goalies are weaker on the stick side than the glove side, and weaker on the ice than up high. It should also be expected that the catching glove is the most effective weapon for goalies. Finally, most goalies prefer that the attacker make the first move. Let us consider what the attacker needs to do to score a goal.

While accuracy and power are important in goal scoring, they are perhaps secondary to the surprise of a quick or sudden shot. Statistics do not record a puck going **through** a pad (although some goalies will swear it had to) but hundreds of pucks go by goalies because “I didn’t think he was going to shoot” or “I never saw it.”

If the attacker can do something to make the goalie move just before the shot, the attacker can have a better opportunity to score. It is important for attackers to understand that the goalie focuses most of his/her attention on the puck, therefore, movement of the puck will cause at least some movement of the goalie’s eyes, and possibly the goalie’s body.

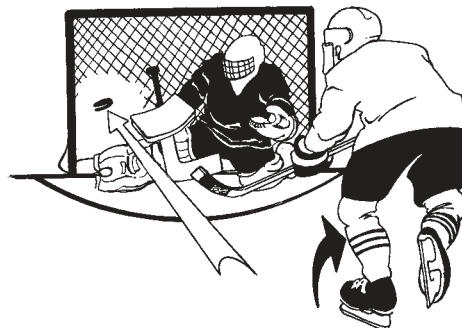
It is also worthwhile to study the goalie, both in warm-up and throughout the game, to see if he/she has obvious weaknesses or plays in such a way as to encourage the attacker to try an unusual shot. An example of this might be a goalie who holds his/her hand extremely low. This might encourage the attacker to shoot a quick high shot to the glove side, a shot that would not normally be the best selection.

Shooting when the goalie does not expect the shot is perhaps the most potent weapon for the attacker. Thus, players must learn to:

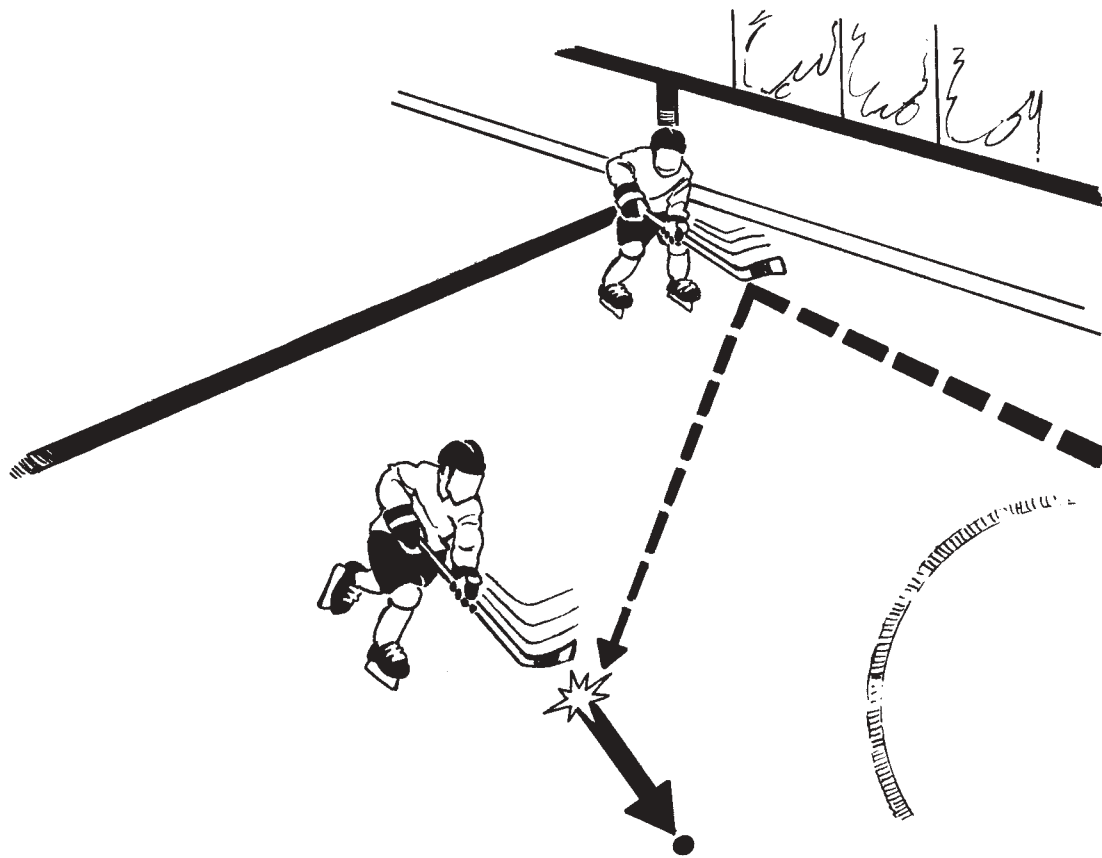
1. Shoot while continuing to elude defenders (in stride)



2. Shoot off either leg



3. Shoot off the pass (receive pass and shoot in one action)



4. Shoot from the middle of a skating or stickhandling maneuver



5. Shoot while being checked or closely defended



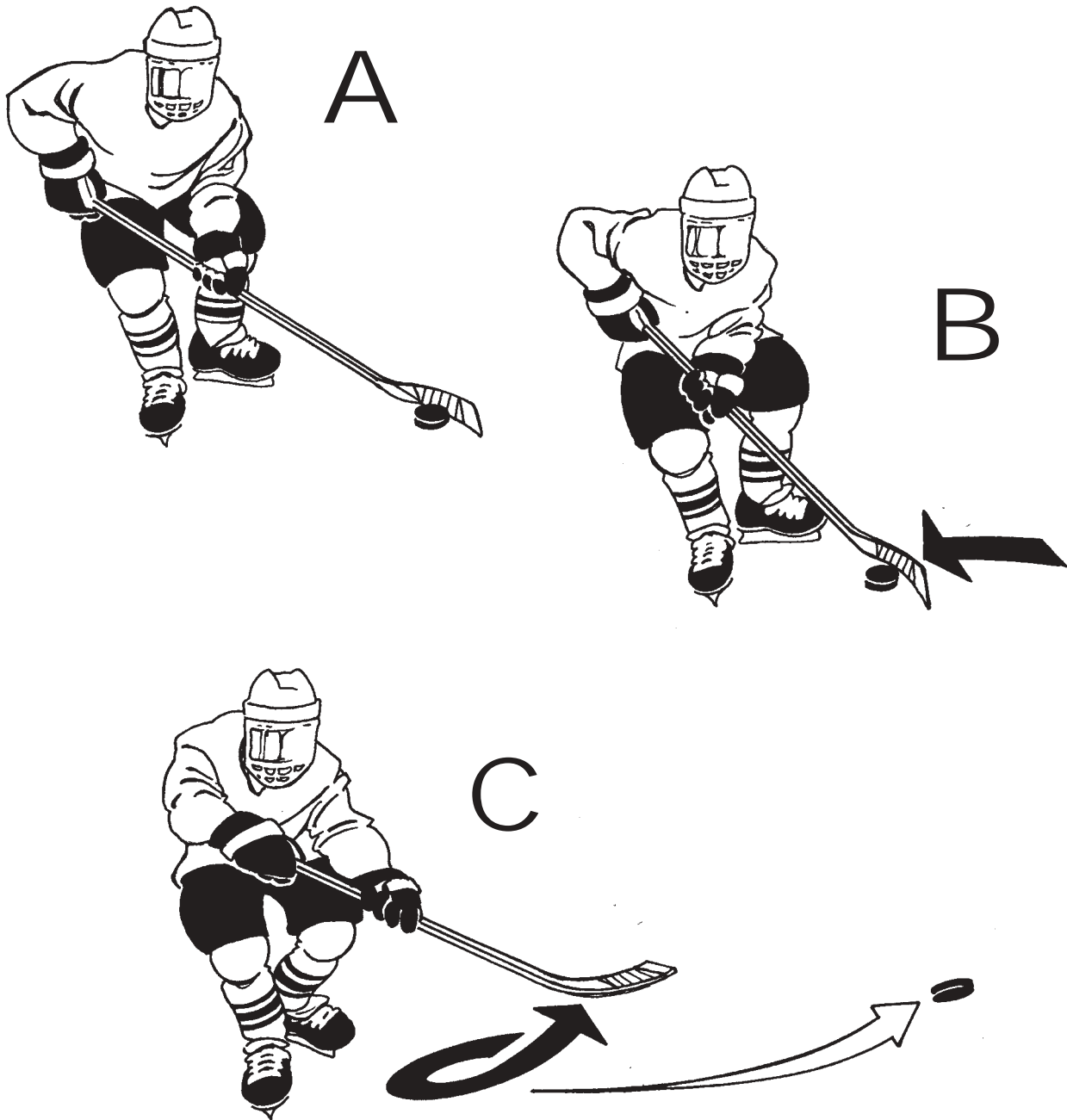
It is equally important that players learn to camouflage their intended actions (i.e. faking a pass, then shooting or faking a shot, then passing).

While the attacker must be prepared to shoot immediately when a good opportunity presents itself, the best shot is from in front of the goal, 12 to 15 feet from the goal line. Thus, faking and other preparatory moves must occur 20 to 25 feet up ice.

In order to get the most power into a shot, a player must use his/her body. This is best accomplished by striding off the foot nearest the puck and onto the foot away from the puck as the shot is made. This is called shooting “in stride.” However, as mentioned above, don’t lose a shooting opportunity simply because you are not in “stride.”

Shooting drills should include obstacles (cones, sticks, other players) to be avoided as the attacker maneuvers for the shot. Shooting drills that require quick reaction to multiple pucks are beneficial for both shooters and goaltenders.

Many players have developed the skill of moving the puck just before shooting thus causing the goalie to move at least his/her eyes. When carrying the puck (A) at the side of the body, draw both hands and the puck sideways toward the body six to eight inches (B) then release the shot (C) with a quick wrist or snap shot.



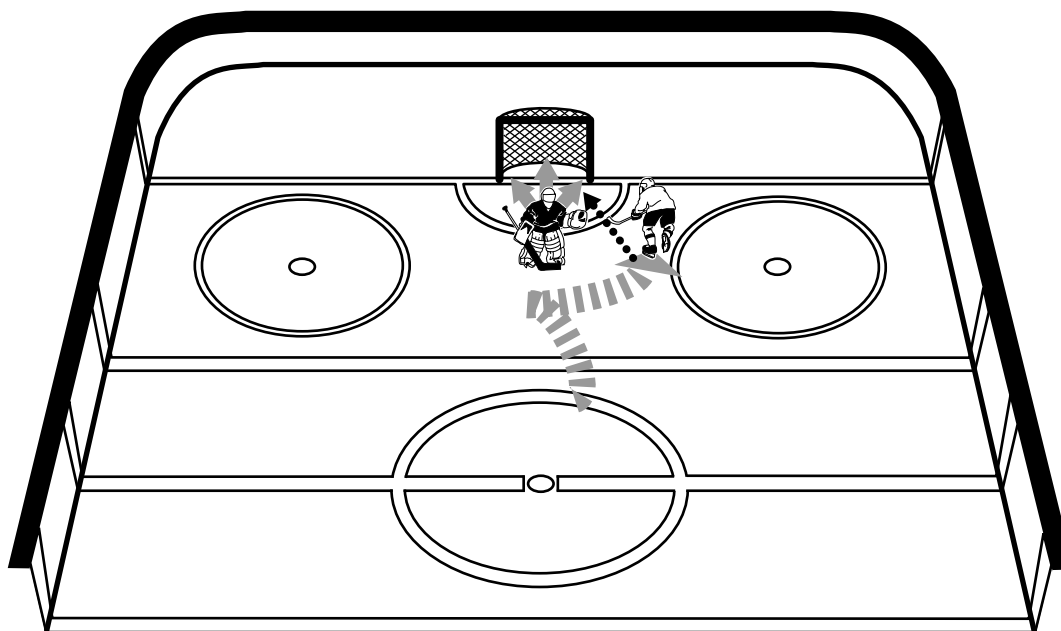
As on a defenseman, a one-on-one attack on the goalie is more successful if the attacker can make the goalie move laterally. **A shot to the side from which the goalie is moving** is a difficult shot to stop.

Should a player shoot or deke? If the opportunity to shoot is good, players should take advantage through a quick shot. Deking provides more opportunities for error by the offensive player as well as decreasing the angles needed to be covered by the goalie. Nonetheless, a properly-executed deception by the attacker can fake out the goalie and produce a beautiful, exciting play.

When a player chooses to deke, the goalie should be some distance out of the goal and should have the shooting angles cut down severely, thus making the chance of a successful shot minimal.

Two things are of great importance to the attacker:

1. Keep cool — don't get excited and rush the play
2. Maintain as much speed as possible while maintaining good control of the puck



Let us consider the attack from three points:

1. Head-on in front of the goal
2. The forehand side
3. The backhand side

Differing opinions exist about where the attacker should carry the puck when planning to deke the goalie — in front of the body or to the forehand side? Carrying in front, the player can quickly move to either side, but must move the puck to shoot. Carrying on the side, the player is ready to shoot at all times during the attack on the goal, but his/her move is limited to one direction — across his body. Coaches should encourage their players to try both methods, but eventually settle on one style and practice that method.

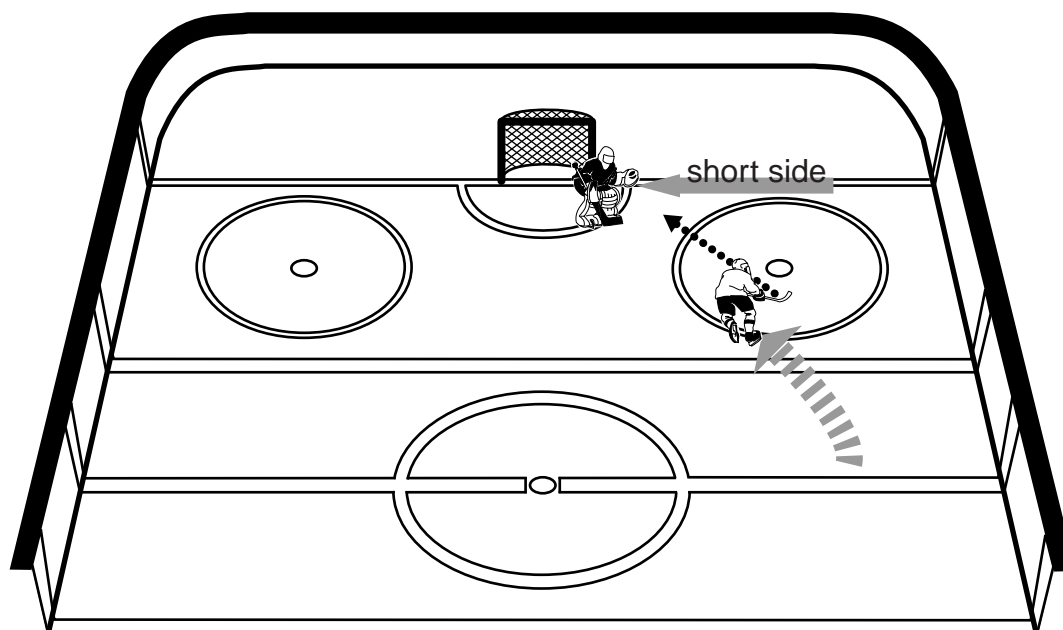
From Attack On Goal

By moving the puck, the attacker should make the goalie adjust his/her position laterally in the goal. Be sure to maintain the speed of the attack. Faking one direction, shifting quickly to the other side and shooting can be effective, but may also give the goaltender the best opportunity to react and stop the shot. Faking and going to the same side, or a double fake, is likely to be a more effective attack. Faking a shot, pulling back then quickly shooting, will often unbalance a goalie and provide an opening for the puck. From the front, the attacker usually makes his move on a diagonal line toward the side of the net. One way a goalie will try to stop this attack is to throw his/her legs back to post (staking his/her pads). In these cases, the sharp rising flip shot is perhaps the most effective. Once again, the importance of slow, deliberate faking and quick movements must not be minimized.

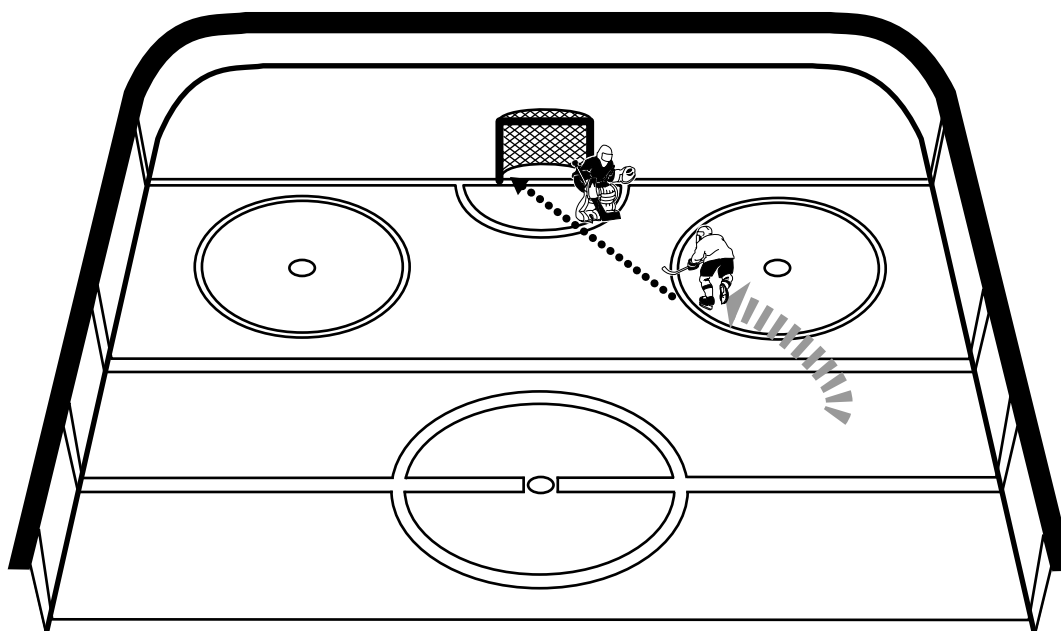
Side Or Angle Approach To Goal

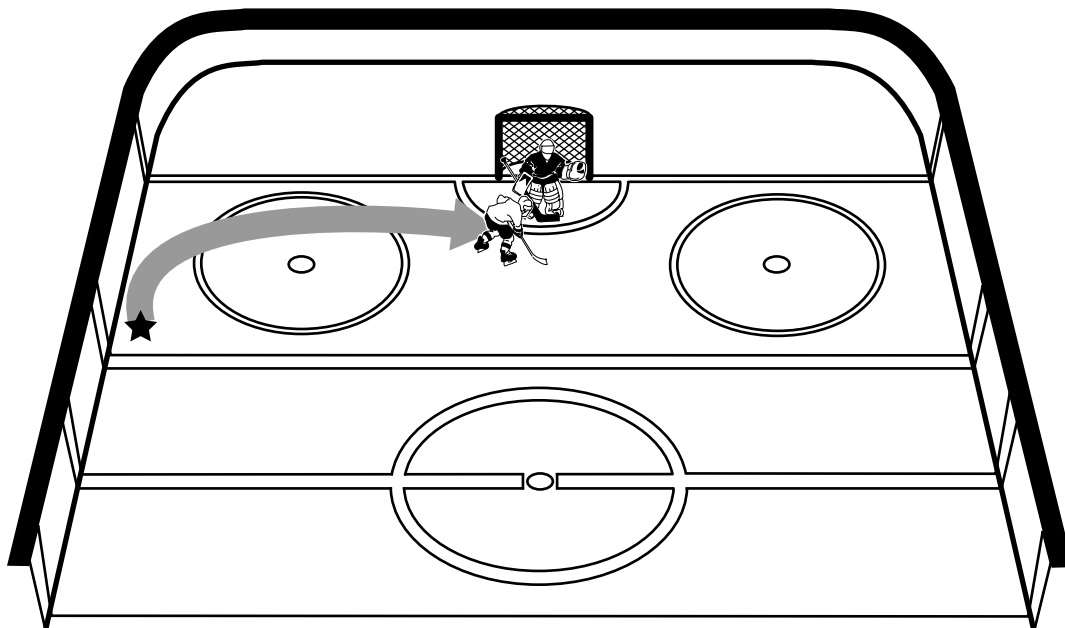
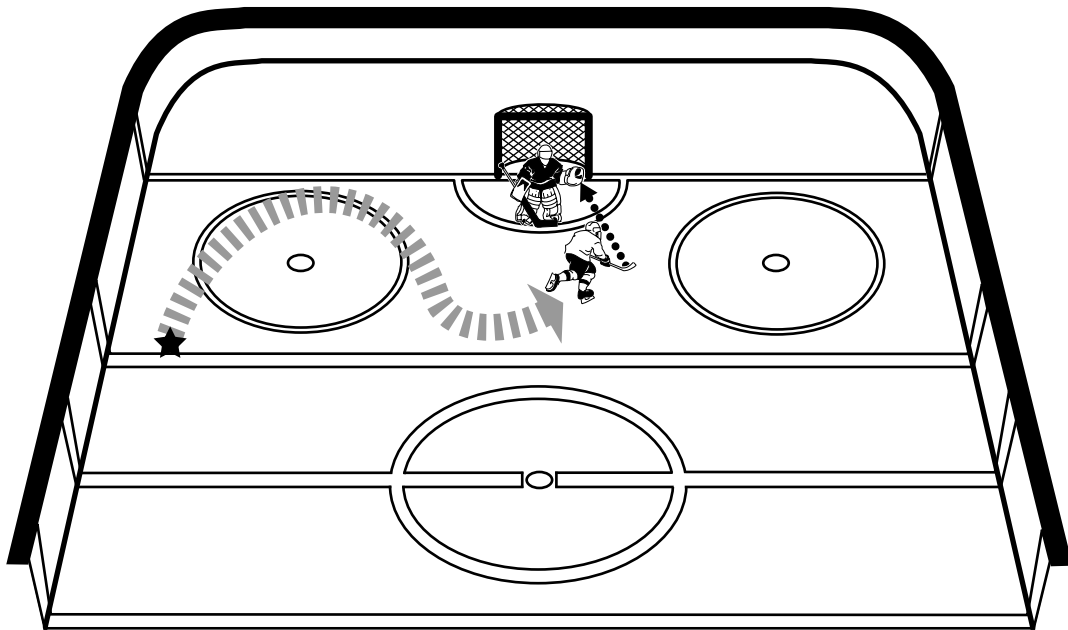
As the attacker comes on the angle, most goalies try to take away the “short side.” In this way only a good shot to the far side of the goal will score. The attacker must try to fake or pull the goalie

away from the post to increase the opening to score on the short side. The off-wing is provided a unique opportunity because of the angle from which the shot can be taken. This is demonstrated in the diagram below.



If the goalie holds the near post, the attacker must move in front of the goal to get a good scoring opportunity. It is important to maintain speed and to protect the puck from a poke check by the goalie when cutting across the front of the net. Rather than skating a straight line across the front of the net, the attacker should make a "C" cut, holding the shot as long as possible in an attempt to get the goalie out of position or off-balance.





Many good goal scorers are players who tend to be around the net a lot. If the player is not the puck carrier, moving in front of the net with his/her **stick on the ice** will be a distraction for the goalie and defenders. By keeping the stick on the ice he/she may deflect or tip-in a shot. The time required to put his/her stick on the ice when trying to bat in a rebound may be the time that allows the goalie to get set for the shot or the defender to check the player.

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Chapter 5

Positional Play

OBJECTIVES

- **Describe the potential responsibilities of players**
- **Describe both offensive and defensive sides of positional play**
- **Outline the importance of individual positional skill development**

INTRODUCTION

The idea of teaching hockey players positional responsibilities and play is an important, yet difficult part of coaching. It is important to expose players to various offensive and defensive situations and practice them so they become routine. Always leave room for the players to utilize their individual skills and imagination within the framework of the team's philosophy and style of play.

Developing the Forward

Today's swift, wide-open style of hockey makes playing the forward position exciting, and a position where a player receives a lot of attention. However, playing forward has a lot of responsibilities attached to it, and it is a position you need to master. In selecting forwards many coaches select the athlete that can score, skate fast and handle the puck well. However, there is more to the position than skating fast and scoring goals. They not only need to know how to play with the puck, but just as important, play without the puck.

Characteristics of a Forward

- Solid in the fundamental skills
- Ability to read and react to situations
- Understands the game at both ends of the rink
- Patient and confident
- A good two-way player
- Very creative
- Intelligent with the puck
- Strong on his/her skates
- Aggressive instinct around the net

Many coaches neglect drilling their forwards on the skills and principles required to play the position. Drills must be constantly used to develop the abilities needed for today's forward. Before coaches or players begin special drills for forwards, they must understand the responsibilities a forward has on the ice during a game. This understanding avoids a great deal of confusion and indecision on the ice and in the players' minds during a game. It is another part of the systematic approach to the game of hockey.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR FORWARDS

Offensive Points of Emphasis

- Keep your feet moving when passing or shooting the puck
- Communicate with your teammates
- Win all the races to loose pucks
- Never skate by the net after a shot
- Don't get caught with three players deep in the zone below the puck
- Keep a forward high for offensive as well as defensive purposes
- Understand the concepts of support, transition, pressure and containment
- Ability to cycle and create space

Defensive Points of Emphasis

- Back check by picking up the off-side forward
- Take your players to the net if they stay outside your defenseman
- If the player cuts to the middle in front of the defense, stay in your lane, and back up your defenseman
- If you are the trailing backchecker, pick up the player in the high slot area
- Keep your body between your opponent and your net (defensive posture)

One-on-One Points of Emphasis

- Attack your opponent at angles
- Make your moves in full stride
- Learn to protect the puck
- Use change of pace speeds to elude your defender
- Work hard to gain a path into the prime scoring area
- Do not be predictable, vary your attack

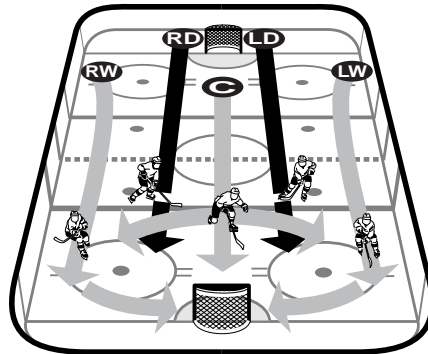
Two-on-One Points of Emphasis

- Cut the ice in half
- Try to pull the defender out of the middle
- Bring the play to the defenseman as quickly as possible
- Use a variety of moves: go wide, freeze the defenseman, criss cross, etc.
- Stagger so the open forward is in support position

Three-on-Two Points of Emphasis

- Attack the offensive blue line with speed
- Get the puck deep into the attacking zone quickly
- Penetration to the net with puck is of utmost importance
- Use a variety of attacks
- Be creative
- Move the puck quickly around the zone
- Isolate your attack on one defenseman, creating a two-on-one situation on one side

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

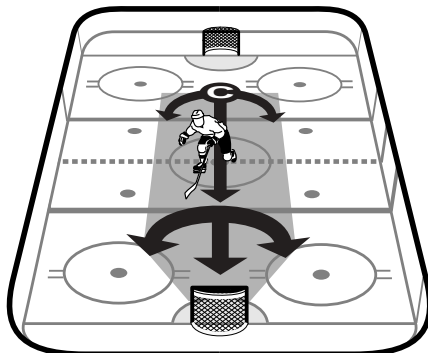


Offense – The phase of the game when a team is in possession of the puck. The aim is to get the puck down the ice in a systematic way and into the opponent's net.

Key Elements

1. Individual Skills
 - Carrying the puck (stickhandling)
 - Passing and receiving
 - Shooting
2. Team Skills
 - Teach an orderly method of moving the puck down the ice into the attacking zone
 - Players must take a great deal of pride in their passing and receiving skills
 - Two quick passes when breaking out
 - Stay wide and move quickly through the neutral zone
 - Set up offensive triangle in attack zone; set up a two-on-one on the defensive player

Center – Offensive Responsibilities



Breakout Zone

1. Center stays between the circle, close to the top of the circle
2. Always angle toward side boards when receiving pass

Neutral Zone

1. Move up ice in the middle zone, between the seams

Attack Zone

1. Playmaker - usually passes to a wing
2. Without Puck
 - Trail the puck carrier at top of circle (or skate hard to front of net)
3. With Puck, Over Blue Line
 - Stop in middle, just before top of circle, and pass to wing or shoot

WING – OFFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Breakout Zone

1. Strong-side Wing
 - Position yourself against the boards at the hash marks to receive a breakout pass
2. Weak-side Wing
 - Move to top of face-off circle when puck goes to the other side
 - Move out of zone along seam

Neutral Zone

1. Both wings should stay in outside lanes

Attack Zone

1. Puck Carrier
 - Quickly penetrate zone on top of circle
 - Options: go to net and shoot; pass back to trailer (center); pass to weak-side wing in front
2. Weak-Side Wing
 - Stay wide when coming into zone
 - Skate into face-off dot and angle to net

DEVELOPING DEFENSEMEN

Today's swift, wide-open style of hockey makes playing defense one of the most difficult positions to master on a hockey team. It is a position where a player receives few accolades, but make a mistake and he/she is sure to hear the jeers and sneers. However, defense is the backbone to sound team play because defenseman are responsible for initiating offensive attacks and also thwarting the opposition's assaults on their goal. The days of placing the big, slow, clumsy player back on defense are gone. Today's game requires a unique, intelligent, highly skilled and well-trained player back on the blue line. Many coaches select their best athletes to play defense, because they are the "quarterbacks" of a hockey team.

Defenseman Characteristics

- superb skater - strong and stable on skates
- excellent lateral mobility
- good upper body strength
- patient and confident
- keen hockey mind
- handles the puck well
- passes with pin-point accuracy, short, long and one-touch
- has a quick, hard, low shot

Many coaches neglect drilling their defensemen on the skills required to play their position. Drills must be constantly used to develop the abilities needed for today's defensemen.

Before coaches or players begin special drills for defensemen, they must understand the responsibilities a defenseman has on the ice during a game. This understanding avoids a great deal of confusion and indecision on the ice and in the players' minds during a game. Everybody knows their assignments in any given game situation. It is another part of the systematized approach to the game of hockey.

Methods for Playing Various Situations

- **One-on-One** – Skate backward, one hand on the stick, with elbow cocked next to your hip, blade open to forehand, stick out in front without leaning too far forward (keep balance), face on-rushing forward and watch his/her upper body (chest), not the puck. Let the attacker make the first move. If you over-play him/her to the inside, his/her only option is to go outside off the shooting angle. Keep your body between the attacker and the net. Play the attacker and not the puck, and keep a good gap, (distance between you and the puck carrier), maintain same speed as forward, force player to backhand, do not cross your feet.
- **One-on-Two** – The first defenseman who can play the forward to his/her backhand side moves on the attacker and forces him/her to the outside, therefore limiting his/her mobility to one side of the ice. The second defenseman moves to back up his/her partner and picks up the loose puck.
- **Two-on-One** – Position yourself between the two forwards and try to force them off the shooting angle. Stay in the middle of the ice to prevent attempted passes. Never let the puck carrier get behind you or cut in on the goal. Keep the puck out of the prime scoring area in front of the net. The defenseman's prime responsibility here is to prevent the pass, force a bad angle shot, let the goalie play the puck.
- **Two-on-Two** – (No backcheckers) - play just like the one-on-one, the defense does not cross if the forwards criss-cross, only player coverage may change. Talk with your partner and know your assignment. Protect the middle of the ice, don't allow the attacking forwards to split you or create a two-on-one situation. Don't back in too far on the goalie. Keep a tight gap, and try to prevent your opponents from gaining the blue line.
- **Three-on-One** – (no backchecker) - stay in the middle of the ice, try to stall or slow down their attack, force a shot from a poor angle. Don't become physically tangled with any of the attackers, avoid picks, interference and checks. Try to position yourself so that the puck carrier will have to pass the puck through you to reach a teammate. Don't back in too far on your goaltender.
- **Three-on-Two** – There can be two ways to play this. (1) Try to force the play at the blue line with a one-on-one situation involving the puck carrier and one defenseman. The other defenseman plays the open attackers (without puck) like a two-on-one, with the player closest to the net receiving the most attention. (2) One defenseman plays the puck carrier forward side establishing a two-on-one situation, forcing the puck carrier to the outside and a bad shooting angle. The other defenseman plays a one-on-one situation with the off-side attacker. Play a delaying game but threaten any puck carrier coming into the prime scoring area in front of the goal. Do not allow yourself to be drawn out of position.

General Tips

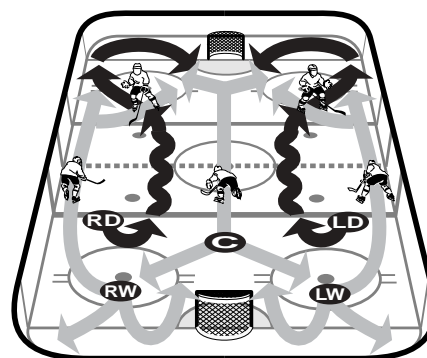
- Remember that the defensemen should be staggered, and they must work together as a pair.
- Always gauge the speed of the attackers coming at you. Your backward speed must be the same as the attacker's speed.
- When stick- or poke-checking never reach out so far that you are off balance — a forward can easily turn you if you have shifted the wrong way.
- Don't body check when you are in a situation where the opposition has a numerical advantage. Check when you have an even or numerical advantage or the player has his/her head down.
- Communicate with and back up your teammates in your zone.

- Blocking shots – (not recommended for younger players) - if you have to block a shot, make sure the attacker is about to shoot—look for the clues, head drops, hand slips down the stick or he/she drops his/her arm and shoulder on his/her shooting side. Do not drop too soon or the attacker will carry the puck around you. Don't commit yourself too early. Another method sometimes used is the sliding block. The player must leave his/her feet and slide the body in front of the puck as close to the shooter as possible. This method is very dangerous and must be perfectly timed. It should only be used by advanced players.

Defensive Zone Tips

- Always try to stay between the puck carrier and the goal.
- Coverage in the corner - move in under control and force your opponents to go in the direction you want them to move - cautiously play their body. Always create a good angle to eliminate the puck carrier's options.
- Coverage in front of the net - block all opposing players out of the prime scoring area, cover their sticks without losing sight of the puck and be prepared to intercept passes, clear rebounds and check opponents attempting to shoot on goal. No one should be left uncovered in this area. Defensemen should stand off the goal posts facing up ice with a full view of the ice surface. They should turn their heads and not their bodies when looking into the corners and maintain physical contact (use stick or arm, etc.) with the opponent in the slot area. Don't get into a pushing and shoving match in front of the net with an opponent who doesn't have the puck. Keep body position.

Areas of Responsibility

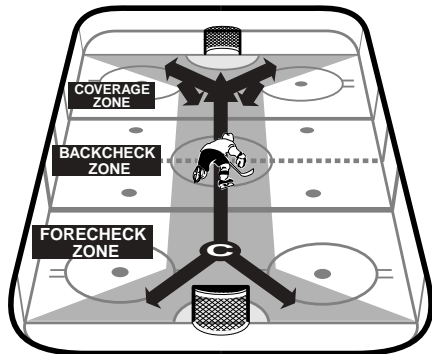


Defense – The phase of the game during which your team is not in possession of the puck. It begins when your team loses possession of the puck and ends when your team regains control of the puck.

Key Elements

1. Individual Skills
 - Checking the puck carrier, angling
 - Intercepting passes or cutting off passing lanes
 - Covering opponent
 - Blocking shots
2. Team Skills
 - Carrying out lane responsibilities in all three zones
 - Pressuring and outnumbering opponent at puck
3. Defense is a Matter of Pride
 - Be proud of maintaining your defensive responsibilities
4. Give 100 percent
 - Effort and energy are a matter of will

DEFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITY



Offensive Zone – Forecheck

1. Defensemen hold the blue line until the puck is between face-off dot and top of circle
2. Middle defenseman plays as free safety, keeping all five of the opponents in front of him/her

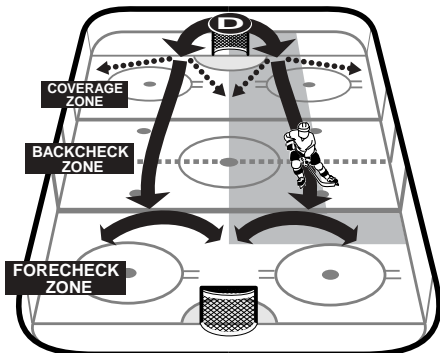
Neutral Zone – Backcheck

1. Each defenseman plays the seam (imaginary line drawn through face-off dots), to the middle of the ice

Defensive Zone – Coverage

1. Force play to outside
2. Strong-side defenseman on puck, block out puck carrier from going to the net
3. Weak-side defenseman cover the front of the net, start on the weak-side post

Offensive Responsibility



Breakout Zone

1. Move puck quickly up ice
2. Puck carrier is between the face-off dots when making breakout pass

Neutral Zone

1. Strong-side defenseman, after making pass, follows up play inside the seams
2. Weak-side defenseman is last player to leave the zone and moves up the middle

Attack Zone

1. Strong-side defenseman moves to top of circle
2. Weak-side defenseman moves to just inside blue line

DEVELOPING THE GOALTENDER

Overview

The coach and player should be aware of two things involving the goaltender. First, know that the goalie's world in game situations is one of confusion and uncertainty. They never know for sure what will happen next. Will the opposing player shoot, pass or keep the puck a little longer? Will the teammate see the play that's before him/her and make the normal move or will he/she do something unexpected? The goalie's real world is a screen, a deflection and an attempt to figure out the opponent's next move. Thus, your practices should provide some time for the goalie to work on this reality. Build some of the uncertainty into your drills.

Next, the coach and player should look at the areas we present here and see if there is one or perhaps a couple that you identify as problem areas for your own goalie. Identify weak areas and spend more time finding a way to solve that problem together.

Offensive Attacks

"Offensive attacks" refer to the many situations where the goalie sees the puck change possession down the ice and an

organized rush begin in his/her direction. It's often a three-on-two, or three-on-two with a backchecker or two-on-two, etc. There may be no other situation faced so regularly as this.

You should encourage your goalie to consider the following.

1. Don't daydream. Observe the far end of the ice, relaxed but with a degree of concentration.
2. As the play approaches, **see the whole ice, not just the puck carrier**. This is an area where you can make a big difference. Constantly remind your goalie to see the whole ice. This is the first step towards anticipating. Your goalie must see the players away from the puck to get an idea of what the player with the puck might do next.
3. Be heard. The goalie should yell out what's coming: "Two-on-one!", or "One-on-one." Let the defensemen know what they are facing.
4. Finally, the goalie should be out at least to the top of the crease, limited in his/her wandering by the presence of the other attackers. The first responsibility is the puck/puck carrier. But he/she should be ready to move in response to any pass to the other attackers.

Key Elements

- Goalie should see the entire ice
- Goalie centers on puck but looks to find open men
- Goalie should be positioned near the top of the crease
- Goalie should communicate with defensemen

Long Shots

At the young ages, simply stopping the long shot may be a minor triumph. To assist that task, it is important to have the goalie at least at the top of the crease. It is not enough just to stop the shot. It is equally important to control it.

Don't let your goalies be content to make a save and let all long shots go into the corner.

Impress upon them the importance of either keeping control of the puck, within a stick's length, or clearing it to safety. The obvious concern here is a rebound that goes back into a dangerous spot, making a follow-up shot possible. Again, it helps if the goalie knows who else is in the zone so he/she does not deflect a shot to another attacker.

Key Element

- Goalie should attempt to control shots and not simply deflect into a corner

Passes To or Through the Prime Scoring Area

The attack has now moved into the zone. No shot has been fired toward the goal, no pass has yet been made. The puck carrier has taken the puck deep and is looking to make a pass to a teammate in a better position.

Here are the goalie's concerns.

1. As the puck carrier becomes "less dangerous" (off-angle), someone else is most likely becoming "more dangerous" (in a spot to take a pass). If the situation allows, the goalie should be encouraged to "cheat" by taking a quick look away from the puck, to spot the potential target of a pass. Locating him/her may tip off what's coming. The danger here is to look away at the wrong time, particularly if the puck carrier is still on angle, even if a poor angle.
2. Next, the goalie should **anticipate the pass**, and should be prepared to use his/her stick to deflect or intercept the pass. This should be done without reaching or leaning with the stick in any extreme way. If the goalie commits with his/her stick and the pass gets through, he/she may be in poor position to deal with what follows.
3. Finally, if the pass is made successfully to someone in the slot or even a bit deeper, the goalie must push off the back skate, lead with that front skate and move out at the puck. He/she must stay low, keeping his/her stick on the ice and move out toward the puck,

not the shooter's body. The common errors here are: the goalie moves out too far, playing just the shot and the shooter goes around him/her or passes; or the goalie moves from the post **sideways** instead of out, leaving the shooter too much net to shoot at. The goalie must move out at the puck but put the brakes on at some point, prepared to react if the player moves with the puck or even makes another pass.

Key Elements

- Goalie should locate open player(s) in front
- Goalie should expect pass and attempt to deflect or intercept with stick
- If pass is made successfully, goalie should move in stance, low, leading with stick, to smother puck. Movement should be compact, to the puck
- Butterfly is possible for advanced goalies **only if** puck is in close

Breakaways

Clean breakaways do happen in games but not with the frequency a goalie sees them at practice. Still, a breakaway drill can tell a coach a good deal about a goalie: does he/she have a sense of angles, does he/she skate well, is he/she aggressive and, most telling, does he/she find a way to stop the puck? Let's look at three types of breakaways.

1. Clean break down the middle, this is like a penalty shot. Look for extremes and break them. Does your goalie stay far back? Does he/she like to charge out all the time? Does he/she do the exact same thing all the time? The goalie should come out early and have stopped moving by the time the attacker crosses the blue line. He/She should be backing in accordance with the speed of the attacker. The goalie should modify his/her own speed if the attacker slows down or speeds up.

More things can go wrong for the attacker if he/she has to keep coming and deke. So at the least, make sure

your goalie comes out of the net and challenges the shooter. The worst situation is for a goalie to be caught back and invite the easy way for the attacker (i.e., a simple shot).

2. Breakaways from the side; the goalie has the same concerns here except one. With the breakaway straight down the center of ice, there's no way of knowing to which side an attacker will go (though statistically, more players will deke to their backhand). When an attacker is coming down the wing at an angle (having turned a defenseman perhaps), the goalie can dictate much of what happens next. If the goalie comes out and takes the shot away, it is safe to say that in eight or nine out of every 10 situations, the attacker will go across the front of the crease (the far side) rather than deke to the short side. There will be the one or two times that the attacker will try to move the goalie to the center and slide the shot inside the near post. The goalie should take that shot away, anticipate the move to the center with a poke-check if the player comes in too tight, or move with the attacker. The goalie should try to stay on his/her feet as long as possible as he/she moves with the attacker.
3. Breakaways with help; sometimes one defenseman is beaten which allows a partial break. As the attacker approaches, the other defenseman is coming back to help. The presence of the other defenseman allows the goalie to come out a bit and favor one side. The thinking here is that the attacker is less likely to take himself/herself toward the side from which help is arriving. Like so many situations, the goalie's decision on where to be and what to do will be based on knowing who else is in the vicinity (on both teams).

Key Elements

- Goalie must stay in stance, centered on puck, moving back at speed of attacker
- Goalie must be able to close off all open ice to post at time of deke

Screens and Deflections

Screens and deflections are certainly tough but not impossible situations. Each of these situations has a simple rule to follow. But first, you have an overriding job as coach; **don't let your goalies write these situations off as "nothing-I-could-do-situations"**. Yes, they're tough. And yes, quite often these goals are not the fault of the goalie. But once you concede that you are helpless here, you remove a whole section of your game that can be dealt with effectively.

For screens, the rule is to **look low**. Shots have a better chance of making it through a screen low, through legs, than they do high, through wide upper bodies. Goalies should look low and cover the lower part of the goal with sticks, pads or both.

As for deflections, there's another simple rule. Recognize potential deflectors and get as close to their stick blades as possible to cut down the angle of deflection. The original shot is the goalie's first responsibility. But those players lurking around the net have a way of getting their stick on the puck to change its direction. Do one drill of tip-ins where your goalie at first has to stay back on the goal line, and then he/she is allowed to move out at the deflector. That should drive home the point.

Face-Offs

You have two concerns here. You want your goalie to know when it's important to get a whistle and cause a face-off. And you want him/her to know how to deal with a face-off in your end. The first matter is one of encouraging the goalie to be aware of the game in which they play. Are the players tired, are they being run around the zone, is someone hurt, etc.?

Then there's dealing with the face-off itself. Two immediate concerns should affect the goalie. First, look at your teammates. Are they lined up correctly? Can you see the puck clearly? Move someone if he/she is out of place. (Of course, this assumes you, the coach, have shared this information with him/her). Next, look at the other team's formation and particularly the opposing center's hands. That will tell you what **they** are trying to do, draw the puck back or go for a play on goal.

Handling the Puck

This can mean many things. It can be simply putting a glove down on a loose puck or making a short, one-hand clearing pass, or eventually skating out of the net and passing the puck like a defenseman. For this fundamental section, let's consider three situations.

1. Tying up a loose puck — if you are going to cover a puck with your glove hand, **don't leave it exposed!** The attacker will chop at your hand until he/she hears a whistle which can either knock the puck free or result in serious injury to the hand. Use your body, or more likely your stick/stick hand, to protect and shield your glove hand and the puck.
2. Clearing the puck with one hand — often a slow moving puck approaches your goalie with a defenseman close behind. The goalie has two chores to perform here. He/She has got to physically get control of the puck and he/she must somehow, verbally or with a signal (pointing the glove, etc.) let the retrieving defenseman know what he/she's going to do with the puck. Even the youngest goalies should have the strength to sweep a puck to the side with one hand. Later, the advanced goalies should be able to sweep a long pass up-ice with one hand. Watch to see if the goalie is not only developing strength in that stick arm but also thinking to signal the defenseman as to where he/she is going to put the puck.

Many goalies always sweep the puck to the same side by habit even if the defenseman is returning on the other side.

3. Skating out and stickhandling — goalies are handling the puck more aggressively at the high school, college and professional ranks. It is not too much to expect to have goalies of Pee Wee age skating behind the net to at least stop and control the puck, and occasionally make a safe pass. Certainly with Bantam age, puck control is no longer a luxury but a necessary skill.

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Chapter 6

Team Play

OBJECTIVES

- Describe skills needed for successful team play in hockey
- Outline the sequence to be used in introducing team play
- Present some of the unique formations that are effective in youth hockey

INTRODUCTION

Many good books on hockey have been published recently, and nearly all have excellent suggestions for team offense and defense. Coaches with teams of experienced players who are strong in the fundamentals of hockey should benefit from reviewing one or more of these publications.

This chapter is devoted to some relatively basic offensive patterns and defensive assignments that may be used by teams at all levels. First, a few introductory comments.

Beginning hockey players soon figure out that offensive means getting in scoring position and scoring goals. Defense means stopping the offense and recovering the puck. This simple assessment is sufficient to permit the game to be played. A coach has the opportunity, however, to explain why certain things will happen on the ice and then to **teach the players to create situations rather than just letting them happen.**

The first question a coach must resolve is, “When are we on offense?” The offense-or-defense question centers on control of the

puck. Team puck control falls into three categories.

1. We have it – we are on **offense**
2. They have it – we are on **defense**
3. Nobody has it (loose puck). This is the condition that the game is all about. If we win the race to the loose puck, we go on offense. If not, we are on defense. An important principle of play, therefore, is to win most of the races to the puck (the team which wins the races for loose pucks usually wins the game).

From an offensive or defensive standpoint, you should **teach your players that when we are on offense we control the puck; at all other times, we are on defense.** This will put your team into a defensive pattern when you go after loose pucks.

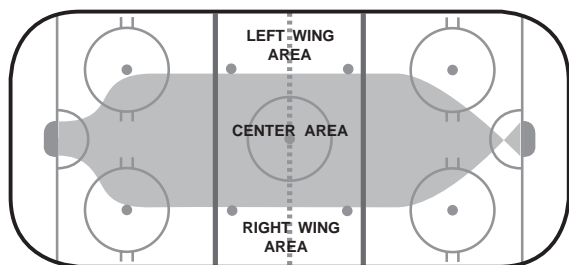
The object of team offense is to control the puck long enough and well enough to get a good shot on goal. Here are some simple offensive patterns for the three zones.

POSITION OFFENSE

When left alone, most young hockey players will fall into the “swarm” system or (non-system) of offense and defense. In this “system” everybody goes where the puck is. If you can get your players organized just a little, you can achieve greater results.

A basic (or least complex) offensive pattern is “everybody play his position”. This is the first offensive concept that should be taught. In simple terms - spread out! The left wing skates up and down his/her side of the rink, the right wing up and down his/her side, etc. This creates territorial division of the ice surface. If your players maintain these lanes or areas and do one more thing - pass the puck to the open man - you will have a reasonably acceptable offensive system. Figure 1 illustrates the areas of play appropriate for forwards and defensemen.

Forwards



Defensemen

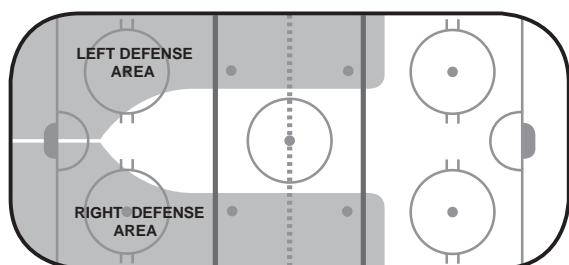


Figure 1. Areas of play in position offense

OFFENSE IN YOUR DEFENSIVE ZONE

Offensive play in the defensive zone is commonly referred to as the breakout play and is considered to be one of the most important aspects of the game. The success or failure of the breakout will determine whether the team plays offense or is forced to return to defense. The objective of the breakout play is to clear the offensive zone while maintaining possession of the puck.

The success of your team's breakout play is dependent upon teamwork. It is very difficult for one player to clear the zone by himself/herself. Consistently effective breakouts must be executed quickly with all the players working together as a unit.

There are several different systems that may be utilized to clear the defensive zone. For starters, have your players master a basic, yet balanced system which allows for the breakout play to be made to either wing or up the middle.

We will start by assuming recovery of the puck by a defenseman. As illustrated in Figure 1a, the wings go quickly to their breakout positions along the boards, inside the hash marks on the face-off circle (never turning their backs to the puck). The center starts in the middle by moving away from the puck side (or strong side) and then skates across (or curls) toward the puck side. The defenseman then has the options illustrated in Figure 1 a-d open to him:

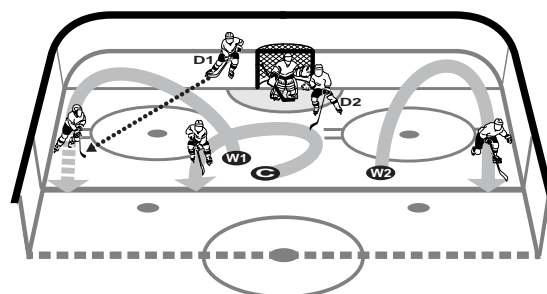


Figure 1a. Breakout pass to the wing

In option 1 (Figure 1a), W1, after receiving the initial pass, can; (a) pass to C, (b) carry the puck, (3) return a back pass to D1.

Passing from W1 to W2 or W1 to D2 is usually risky and therefore should be avoided.

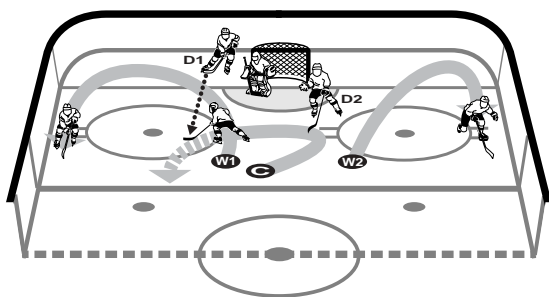


Figure 1b. Breakout pass to the center

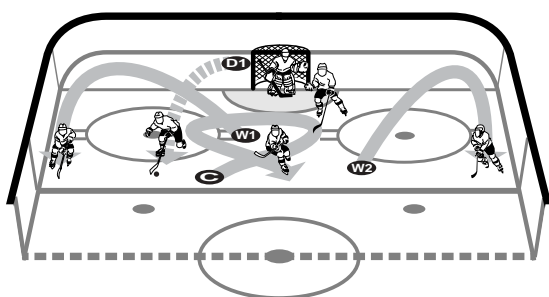


Figure 1c. Defensemen carry the puck up the ice

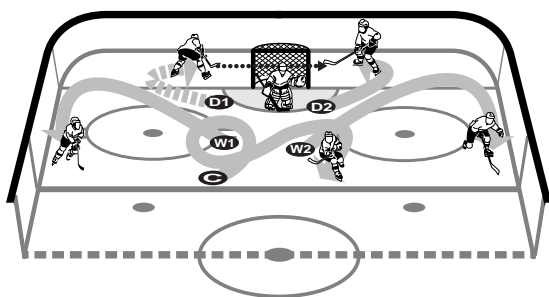


Figure 1d. Breakout pass to the other defensemen

D1 needs to “call” D2 to arrange this option. D2 then has the same options as indicated in a, b, and c above. D1 can also move behind the net and set up the same options on the opposite side.

NOTES: Offensive in the Defensive Zone

- This breakout system has one forward that is always in position to move quickly to defense, should control of the puck be lost
- The system emphasizes high percentage passes (short, direct, and quick)
- The defenseman “quarterbacks” the play
- All three forwards are utilized, although specific roles may change

OFFENSE IN THE NEUTRAL ZONE

The middle (or neutral) zone is not often used for offensive play. It is jammed between “Thank goodness we got it out of our zone” and “How can I get free in front of the net?”

The primary objective of neutral zone offense is to set up the attack and enter the offensive zone with possession of the puck. You should teach simple guidelines which give a sense of direction to the offensive unit while at the same time allowing your players to be creative and innovative. **The most important offensive guideline you can teach your players is to create a two-on-one situation.** The middle zone is the place to initiate strategy. In this zone, players need to learn how to “read” which side lacks backchecking. As this is determined, they should then move to attack the defenseman on that side and move him away from his defensive alley. To initiate this situation, teach your puck carrier to enter the offensive zone near the boards (See Figure 2).

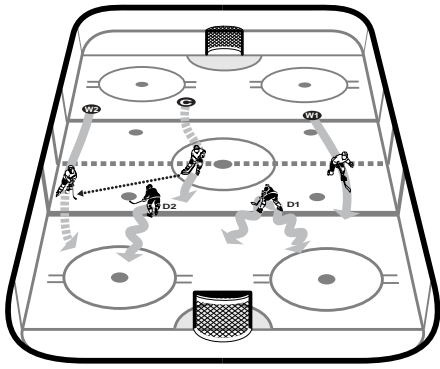


Figure 2 Offense in the neutral zone.

The situation illustrated in Figure 2 is usually referred to as three-on-two. Moving the puck to W2 provides the opportunity to create a two-on-one and forces D1 to make a decision: Does he want to stay one-on-one with W1 or should he move over to help D2 and thus leave that area open? Even if W1 is covered by a backchecking forward, D1 will wonder about leaving the area open. In this case, D1 will have to ask the question, “Can I really trust the backchecker to defend the area alone?”

By isolating defensive players in a two-on-one situation, you put tremendous pressure on them mentally and physically. This creates an opportunity for them, and their teammates to make mental errors and therefore, provide offensive opportunities for your team.

While following the basic premise of entering the offensive zone near the boards, **provide some flexibility by allowing your players to change lanes.** This creates many options. Some of the more common ones are lane changes illustrated in Figure 3.

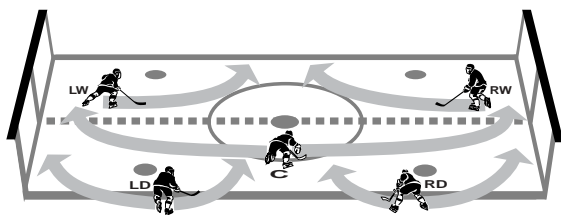


Figure 3. Player lane change options.

Normally the wings stay in their lanes. **However, if a wing moves to another lane, several options exist.** (See Figure 4)

1. The center moves to fill the wing’s lane
2. The defenseman on that side moves to fill the wing’s lane
3. The puck carrier moves the puck to a player filling an outside lane

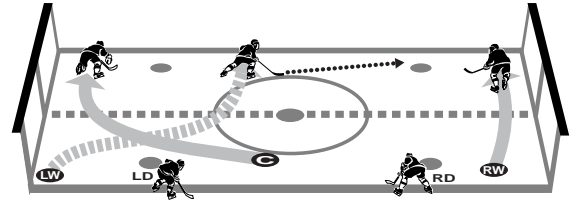


Figure 4 Lane change options when a wing moves to another lane.

When the center is the puck carrier and has one or both wings ahead of the play, the puck should be passed to either wing who stays in his/her lane or moves to the middle lane. Teach the center to react to the wing’s movement. The puck-side defenseman has the option to fill a lane or remain at his position. These options are illustrated in Figure 5.

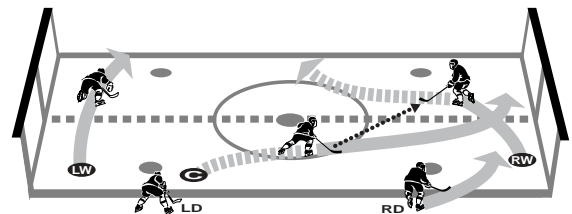


Figure 5. Lane change options when the wings are ahead of the center.

If the center is the puck carrier and the wings are behind the play, the center then has the following options (See Figure 6 a-d).

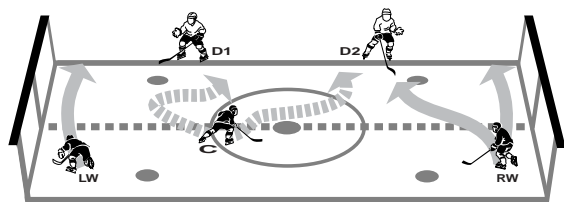


Figure 6a. Hold the puck.

- a. Hold the puck and set up a two-on-one situation against a defenseman (D2). In this situation the wings must break.

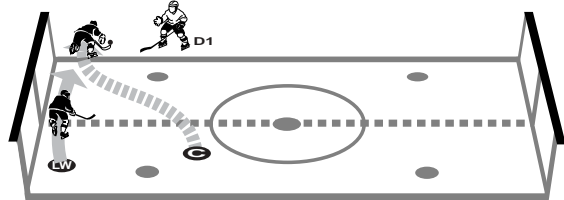


Figure 6b. Swing wide and carry the puck.

- b. Swing wide and carry the puck deep along the boards with the wing (LW) following. This creates a two-on-one situation on a defenseman (D1) in a vertical alignment.

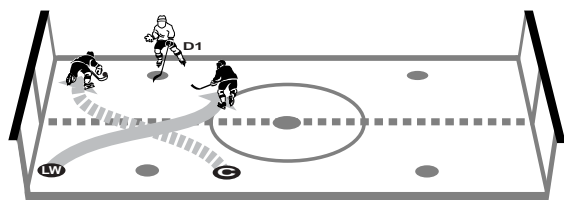


Figure 6c. Cut to the boards.

- c. Cut to the boards. The wing (LW) cuts to the middle creating a two-on-one situation on a defenseman (D1).

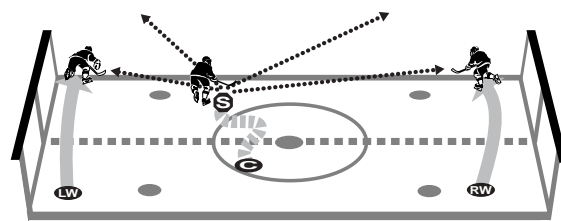


Figure 6d. Wings breaking toward the blue line.

- d. Slows down or stops close to the blue line permitting the wings to break toward the blue line and receive a pass or be in position to gain possession of the puck if it is passed in to the corner.

Defenseman should never keep the puck and force their forwards to stop skating. Their responsibility is to move the puck and keep the play moving toward the offensive zone. The forwards can move up the ice or move to another lane. These options are illustrated in Figure 7.

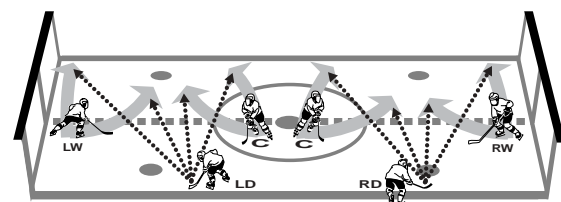


Figure 7. Defensemen options to keep the forwards skating.

Defensemen can also work a give-and-go as illustrated in Figure 8. The defenseman (LD) passes to a wing (LW) and moves up to receive a return pass. They will create a two-on-one situation on the defensemen (D1) for the LD and the Center.

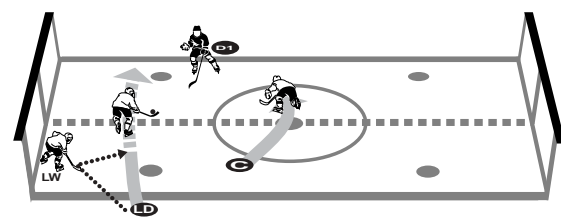


Figure 8. A defenseman initiated give-and-go.

If the forwards are covered but skating, the defenseman (LD) can pass the puck into the corner ("dump the puck") so two forwards (LW and C) can converge on it. This is illustrated in Figure 9.

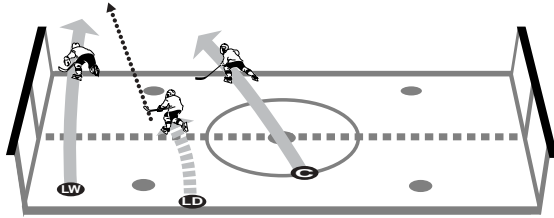


Figure 9. "Dumping" the puck into the corner.

NOTES: Offense in the Neutral Zone

- Control the boards in the neutral zone
- Defensemen are conservative. Their primary responsibility is to move the puck to the forwards. When they move up, it is done to fill a lane
- "Dumping the puck" should be used only as a last resort or as a pre-determined play. Before a puck is "dumped", one forward must be in an advantaged position to get to the puck before the opposing defensemen

OFFENSE IN THE OFFENSIVE ZONE

One way of playing offensive zone hockey is to "dump the puck", chase it, and hope somebody will make a mistake! This approach results in some success; however, to play your heart out on defense to gain control of the puck and then shoot it away (admittedly into the offensive zone) and then try to get it back again doesn't make much sense.

As a last resort, when no one on your team is open, "dumping it in" may be an appropriate alternative. You should try, however, to **teach your players an orderly method of entering the offensive zone.** Select one designed to control the defense.

A coach may build a relatively simple offensive zone system out of very basic moves. Offensive systems are limited only by the imagination of the coach (and players) and by the skill level of the players. (If your players cannot skate from position A to B without falling down, your obvious choice is to spend time developing skating skills rather than working on offensive systems of play). If, however, your players have acquired significant levels of skill, it is critical that you teach them how to use these skills to the advantage of the team. You can develop an offensive system of play by applying some of the following guidelines.

1. Attempt to create two-on-one situations
2. Enter the offensive zone with the puck near the boards
3. The first player into the zone is the puck carrier
4. The second player into the zone breaks to the net
5. The third player into the zone curls to the high slot
6. Have the wings skate one of the three basic patterns (illustrated in Figure 10)
 - a. belly curve
 - b. break
 - c. inside cut

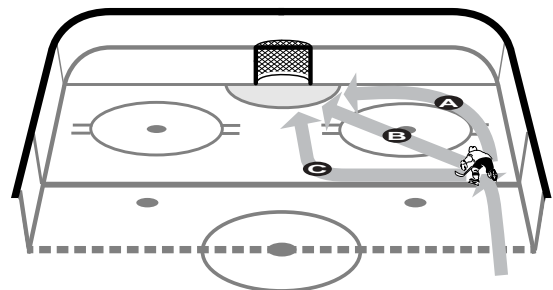


Figure 10. Three basic patterns for the wings.

Try to set up one of the options illustrated in Figure 11 through 14.

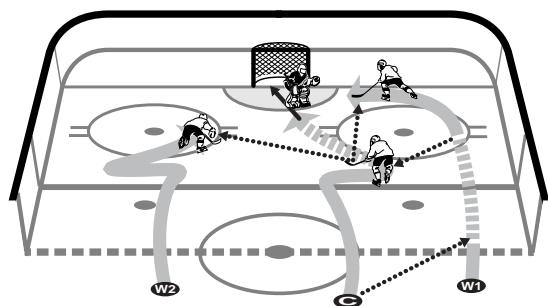


Figure 11. Teaching the back pass option.

BACK PASS

- C passes to W1 near the red line
- W1 carries the puck wide and beats the defenseman on a belly curve if possible or makes a back pass to C
- W1 continues to move through entire pattern
- W2 enters zone, hesitates to let W1 and C develop the pattern. When the pass back to C is made, W2 breaks for the net
- C, after the pass to W1, skates forward across the blue line, and then cuts behind W1 (about 15 feet back and five feet inside W1)
- When C receives the back pass, he/she may pass to W1 or W2 or skate in and shoot

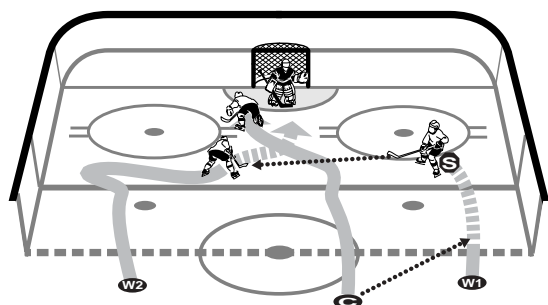


Figure 12. Teaching the wing set option.

WING SET

- This option is the same as the back pass option until W1 gets to the top of the face-off circle. At this point W1 stops.
- C breaks for the net.
- W2 makes an inside cut across the blue line and up the center lane.
- W1 passes to W2.
- W1 moves behind W2 as a safety measure.

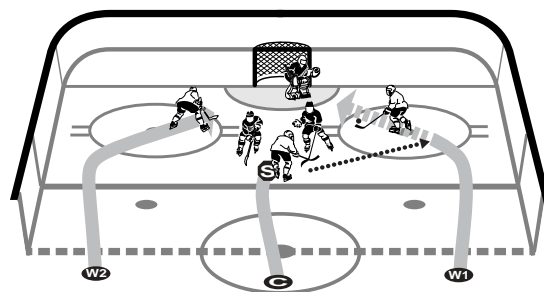


Figure 13. Teaching the center set option.

CENTER SET

- When the defensemen cross the blue line, the center carries puck toward **one** defenseman, crosses the blue line and **stops**.
- If the defenseman moves toward C, C passes to W1 or W2 (both on break patterns).
- If the defenseman moves back, C carries the puck in and shoots.

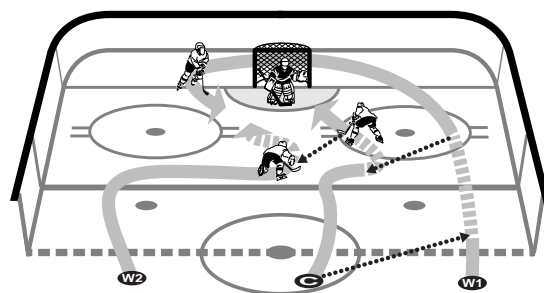


Figure 14. Teaching the double back pass option.

DOUBLE BACK PASS

- A. **This option requires agreement by the forward line that on a specific rush (first time, or every time this shift, etc.) they will play for a double back pass.**
- B. Same as Option 1 (back pass) except W2 moves across the ice and accepts the second back pass from C, and W1 curls behind the net to look for a pass from W2 or a rebound.

Developing a team offense can provide great satisfaction for you and your players. Be sure that you and your players **remember that as long as you give each pattern a best effort, you should not be disturbed by lack of success. If one in 10 works very well, that's good.** As players become more skillful, two or three in 10 may be a good level of success.

NOTES: Offense in the Offensive Zone

- Always place one forward in the high slot. This results in maintaining a good offensive position and a good defensive position for backchecking
- Two forwards attack the net
- The roles of the defensemen are conservative, allowing them the freedom to move into the high slot

POWER PLAY SITUATIONS

There are many different types of power plays which may be utilized. In order for the coach to make a decision regarding the type of power play you wish to use, answer the following questions.

1. What is the size of the rink, the size of the corners, and the distance behind the goal line (10 feet or 15 feet)?
2. What is the general condition of the ice?
3. What players will you use?
 - The next unit?
 - The next line up?
 - A mixed line utilizing particular players?

- Forward(s) playing defense or regular defensemen?
 - Players on the off-wing?
 - Specific power play unit?
4. Do you want a particular player leading the rush up the ice?
 5. Do you want to utilize quick rushes and play for the quick shot?
 6. Do you want to set up designed plays?
 7. What are the responsibilities of each player?
 8. Who is the quarterback?
 9. What type of defense is the opposing team utilizing?

You must also consider what you want your players to do in each of the three zones while on the power play. Some of the options include:

1. Defensive Zone
 - Fast breakout
 - Semi-controlled breakout
 - Controlled breakout
2. Neutral Zone
 - Carrying the puck into offensive zone
 - Passing the puck into offensive zone
 - Shooting the puck into offensive zone
 - Various "pick" plays
3. Offensive Zone
 - Designed play
 - Quick shot/rebound

Some of the skills that make a player effective in power play situations include:

1. Passing skills
2. One-touch passing skills
3. Shooting off the pass
4. Ability to read defenses
5. One-on-one puck control skills

GUIDELINES FOR EXECUTING EFFECTIVE POWER PLAYS

1. Maintain possession of the puck
2. Keep the puck moving
3. Penetrate the offensive zone
4. Passes to where teammates will be — not to where they are or have been

2-1-2 POWER PLAY

The 2-1-2 Power Play is a basic play that provides a balanced attack and multiple options. Either a forward or defenseman may quarterback or direct this play. It may originate deep in the offensive zone, outside at the blue line, or from the boards. **The primary objective is to maneuver the puck to the man in the slot.** Figures 15 through 19 illustrate options of the 2-1-2 Power Play.

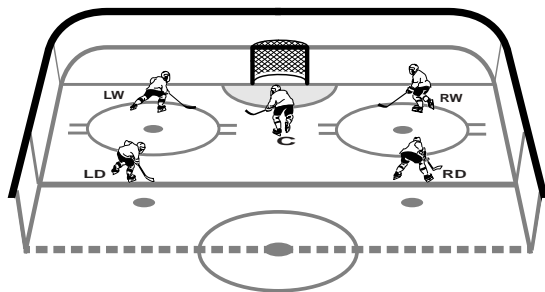


Figure 15. Basic alignment for the 2-1-2 power play.

Two forwards (LW and RW) are deep in the zone, one forward is in the slot. The defensemen play normal positions on the blue line.

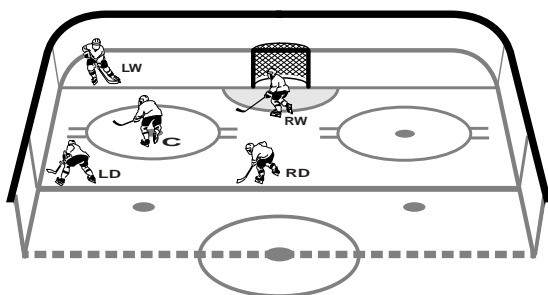


Figure 16. The 2-1-2 with play shifted to the boards.

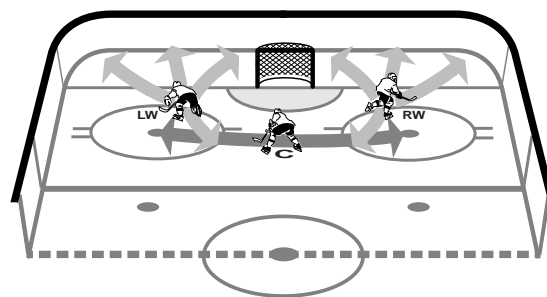


Figure 17. Forward movement in the 2-1-2 power play.

The three forwards have room to move without altering the 2-1-2 alignment. The deep forwards have more freedom to move and redirect the play than does the forward in the slot.

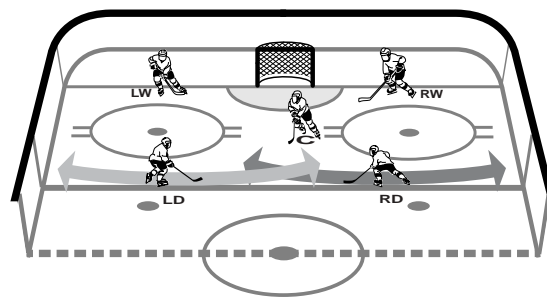


Figure 18. Defensemen movement in the 2-1-2 power play.

The defensemen (LD and RD) can move along the blue line. The forwards should adjust to their movement with a corresponding move in the same direction. The LD and RD can pass between themselves. The two deep forwards (LW and RW) should be taught to skate around to create openings.

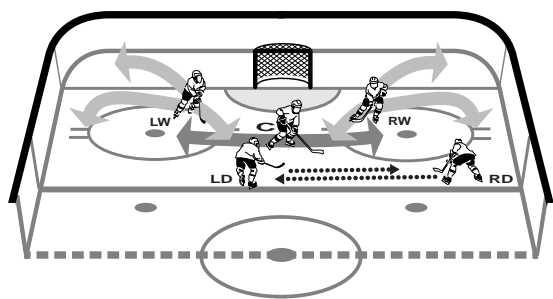


Figure 19. Movement of the forwards in the 2-1-2 power play.

The primary purpose in this power play is to get the puck to the man in the slot. The basic passing patterns involve one defenseman (LD), one deep forward (LW), and the forward in the slot (Center).

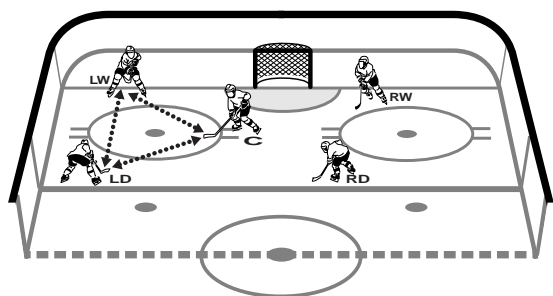


Figure 20. The offensive triangle in the 2-1-2 power play

NOTES: The 2-1-2 Power Play

- Maintain balance in the power play (teach your players to work the puck using the forwards and the defensemen)
- Maintain each of the multiple options illustrated
- Get the puck to the player in the slot who can then take a shot

If it is all that easy, one wonders why scores are not 98-97. The offensive players also have a few problems with which to contend.

- a. Stickhandling skills (lose control of the puck and/or possession)

- b. Passing and receiving skills (complete and/or miss a pass)
- c. Skating skills (lose mobility and/or speed, power or fall down)

If the defense just stood still, the offense would likely win (get a good shot on goal) about 70-80 percent of the time. And, of course, the goalie could stop many of those shots.

TEAM DEFENSE

The two words that best describe team defense is **hard work**. Players generally like to play defense but often have a difficult time putting forth the effort necessary to make team defense effective.

If each defensive player does his job, defense should be no worse than one-on-one times five. The three major problems that cause this to break down are (1) somebody does not stay one-on-one (e.g., a forechecker does not backcheck), (2) a highly-skilled offensive player beats a less-skilled defensive player, or (3) the offense has the advantage of knowing where it is going, how it will get there, and when. In each of these cases, the defense adjusts and someone tries to help out (which is a must). But usually doing so makes it possible for the offense to create a desired two-on-one situation.

There are three conditions that the defense must be prepared to control.

1. Even (**one-on-one**) – play the opponent
2. More offensive players than defensive players (two-on-one) – play the puck **Play close to the defensive alley, thus encouraging the offense to go outside to try to get to the goal.** In this situation, the defensive player should (a) try to gain time so that a teammate can get back to help or (b) give up a poor shot on goal by forcing the shooter to a bad shooting angle. Above all, **don't let the two offensive players get the puck into the slot.**
3. More defensive players than offensive players (**one-on-two**) – this is a good time to body check the offensive player

One defender plays the opponent while the other takes the puck.

In a competitive game, it would be foolish for the defensive team to think it could stop the offense from getting a shot (or shots) on goal. Normally, the offensive team will get 25-30 shots on goal. By playing well, the defense may limit the offense to fewer than 20 shots, but it is suggested that **a better measure of success is for the defense to work toward forcing the offense to take poorer shots on goal.** Conversely, the offense should try to increase its shots on goal, but more importantly, should try to get better shots.

TERRITORIAL DEFENSE

The simplest of team defenses – (and one that is complimentary to “position” offense) is defensive assignments by territory. Figure 21 illustrates a common assignment to defensive territories.

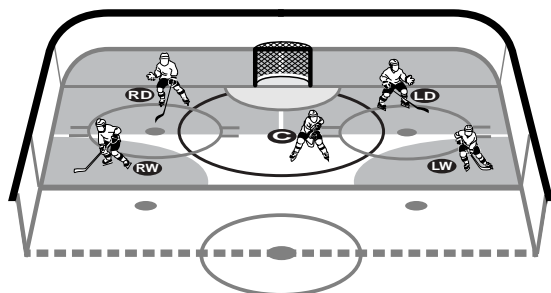


Figure 21. Defensive assignment to territories.

The wings are responsible to backcheck the offensive wings, but once in the defensive zone the wings will usually cover the offensive “point men” (usually the offensive team’s defensemen).

ONE-ON-ONE DEFENSE

In one-on-one situations, teach your players to play the opponent, not the puck. Playing the opponent does not mean draping over him/her like a flag. Rather, it means

keeping your body between the offensive player and your goal. Make body contact as necessary. If the defensive player follows this rule (assuming comparable skill levels of players), the defense will win as much as 70-80 percent of the time.

FORECHECKING

The objective of forechecking is to prevent the opposition from clearing their zone and to gain possession of the puck in their defensive zone.

There are many forechecking systems and no one system is the best. All systems can be adjusted to meet specific situations. **Every team should have at least one system mastered.**

The quality level of your team’s personnel is an important factor in determining which system you utilize. You may wish to consider a method of designating the player or players who have forechecking assignments. For example, you can forecheck with your center only (i.e., if the center is not able to forecheck, you do not forecheck) You also may decide that the closest player forechecks. This method gives you the potential of later debates about who really was the closest, but it does ensure forechecking.

Regardless of the system or the number of players forechecking, position should be stressed at all times. The forechecker should always “get an angle” on the puck carrier so, at the very least, he/she can confine the offensive player’s movement to one side of the ice. **In other words, never forecheck straight at the puck carrier.**

ONE-MAN FORECHECKING (1-2-2)

Although **this is a conservative system and is easy to teach**, when successfully executed it will:

- Prevent three-on-two breakouts
- Control the boards (eliminating the wings as a breakout option)

- Encourage the opposition's defenseman to carry the puck out of the zone
- Position one forward (usually the offside wing) to assist defensively

The forechecker must pressure the puck carrier, forcing him/her to the side. Wings of the offensive team must be covered. The defenseman (point on the puck side) stays in the zone as long as possible.

The purpose of this forechecking pattern is to make the offensive wings unavailable to bring the puck out of the defensive zone. The forechecker tries to take the puck away, to force the offensive player to carry the puck up the side and into the defenseman at the point, to make a bad pass, or to use his/her defenseman to break out.

A highly skilled forechecker will get the puck occasionally, but the offensive team should be able to beat one forechecker by using the three open players to move the puck out.

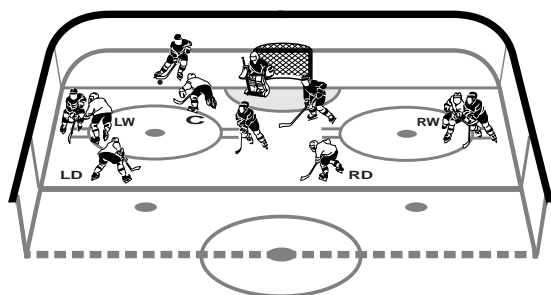


Figure 22. One-man forechecking.

The basic alignment illustrated in Figure 22 uses the center (C) to forecheck the puck carrier. The wings (LW and RW) stay wide so they can check the opposition's wings, and the defensemen (LD and RD) play inside the wings.

NOTES: One-Man Forechecking

- Stress pressuring the puck carrier and covering the areas that the puck is likely to go
- Prevent the opposition from breaking out three-on-two. This is accomplished

by keeping both wings back and controlling the boards

TWO-MAN FORECHECKING (1-1-3)

Two-man forechecking is most successful when the puck carrier is in the back of an imaginary line across the top of the face-off circles. This is shown as the shaded area in Figure 23.

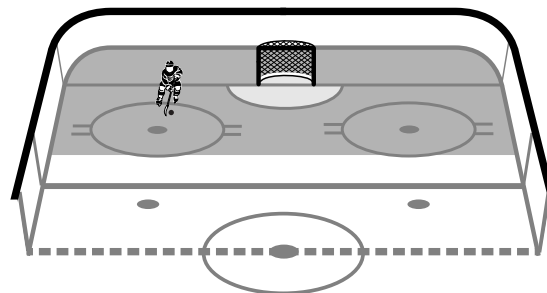


Figure 23. Two-man forechecking.

This forechecking system combines aggressiveness with the conservatism of the 1-2-2 system just discussed. One forward, usually a wing, plays back to prevent a three-on-two breakout. The remaining two forwards have an aggressive forechecking responsibility and must exert pressure on the puck carrier.

When successful, this system may result in quick counterattacks on goal since the one defensive forward is in a position to move quickly to the slot.

For illustrative purposes (See Figure 24), two forwards, the center and puck-side wing (RW) are assigned forechecking responsibilities. The off-side wing (LW) stays high in the offensive zone. The LW is in a position to move back to become a defenseman or to move to the slot area. The defensemen take normal positions.

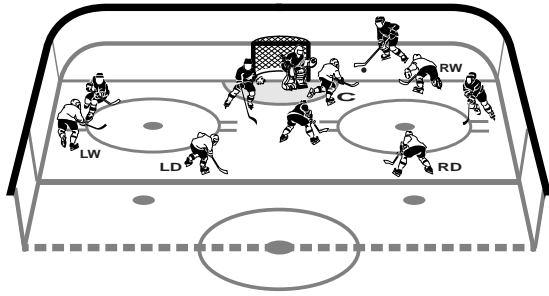


Figure 24. Two-man forechecking positions.

The objective of this configuration is to have the off-side wing (LW) control the far board which pressures the opposition to bring the puck up through the forechecking forwards (C and RW). The first forward (RW) forechecks the puck carrier and the center is in a position to assist the RW or move to the puck if the RW is beaten. The RD is permitted to pinch in toward the **boards** and the LD is responsible for the middle (see Figure 25).

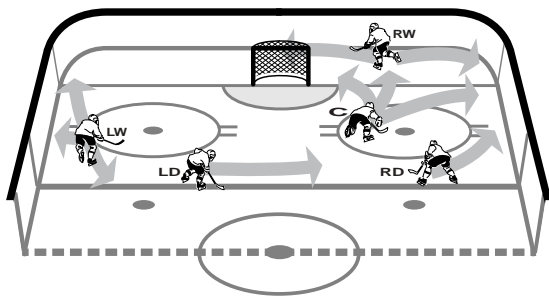


Figure 25. Movements of the forwards.

The **forwards will often have to rotate**. As indicated in Figure 26, when the play moves from one side to the other, the off-side wing (LW) will become the forechecker and the puck side wing (RW) assumes the defensive forward's role. The center's role remains constant.

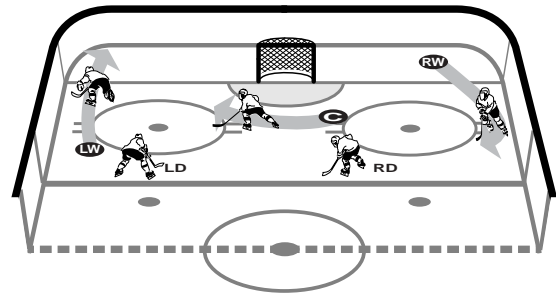


Figure 26. Rotation of the forwards.

A forechecker can get the puck for your team by taking it away from the puck carrier or by forcing a bad pass. Obviously, forechecking will not be successful 100 percent of the time. You should, however, **insist that your forecheckers force the puck carrier to move down the side of the rink**. Do not let them come down the center and pick the side of your defensive zone they wish to attack.

BACKCHECKING – MIDDLE ZONE COVERAGE

It is important that both offensive wings be covered. This forces the puck carrier to face a one-on-one defensive situation. This also does not happen very often, as we discussed in the team offense section.

DEFENSIVE ZONE COVERAGES

Play in the defensive zone is the most critical of the three zones. A mistake here often results in a goal. The primary objective is to prevent a play on net and to regain possession of the puck. **The following principles of defensive play should be understood by your players.**

- Understand the system. Every player must know each other's responsibilities so that when a breakdown occurs, they may adapt and help out
- When checking a player, stay between the player and the goal
- Play the body - legally!
- Accept defensive responsibility as an essential part of the game

There are three basic patterns of coverage which seem to be the most popular for youngsters: basic, center on point and wing on point.

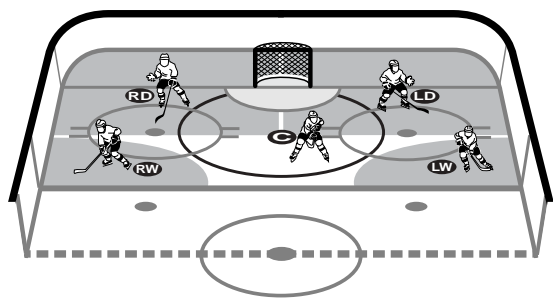


Figure 27. Basic coverage zones within the defensive zone

BASIC DEFENSIVE COVERAGE

As illustrated in Figure 27, **the defensive zone is divided into five zones**. There is some overlapping of the zones. Typically, the wings cover the two points, the Center covers the slot area, and the defensemen cover from the front of the net to the corner.

CENTER ON POINT COVERAGE

In this coverage pattern, the wings are responsible for their offensive wings from the time the forechecking pattern is broken until their team recovers the puck and goes on offense. As illustrated in Figure 28, **the center covers the point on the puck side**. The defensemen on the off-puck side stays near the front of the net, usually covering the offensive center. **The defenseman on the puck side moves to help cover the puck carrier** (usually a wing or the center), but does not “run out” to the point. **The strength of coverage is in having four players to cover three forwards**. The weakness is that the center has a difficult time moving from point to point. It is usually a good defense for younger teams, because the offense cannot pass well enough to take advantage of the open point man or shoot the puck well enough from the point to consistently score.

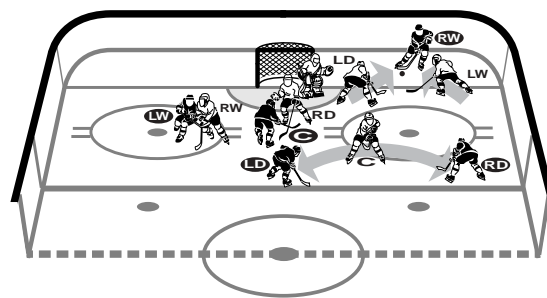


Figure 28. Center on point coverage.

WING ON POINT COVERAGE

In this pattern, **the wings backcheck their offensive wings**. When the offensive wing does not have the puck and/or the defenseman on the weak side can assume responsibility for the offensive wing, the defensive wing leaves the offensive wing and moves to cover the point. As shown in Figure 29, **the defensemen cover the zone in front of and to the side of the net**. The **center moves back in front of the net** to work with the defensemen.

It is important to defend the opposition by covering the entire defensive zone. In a normal situation, **one defensive player should be able to play the man or the puck in his zone**. For example, the opposition has the puck in the corner, the puckside defenseman (RD) would cover that player. The other defenseman (LD) would cover the front of the net. The center covers from the slot to the boards. The wings cover their respective points maintaining a position between the puck and the point.

The strength of this defense is that all five offensive players are covered one-on-one. This system’s weakness is that there are mixups that often occur when the defenseman becomes responsible for the wings. A second weakness is that the center, who most often is involved in deep forechecking, is often late in getting back to help in front of the net.

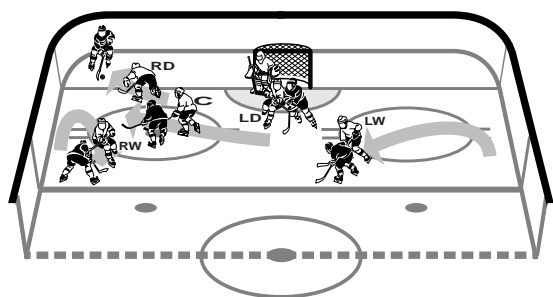


Figure 29. Wing on point coverage.

PENALTY KILL SITUATIONS

The penalties assessed in hockey are more reasonable than in any other sport. The offender is penalized, but the team has an opportunity to prevent damage by working extra hard for a limited amount of time to prevent a goal.

Playing a man short does, however, cause you to change your forechecking strategy. It appears reasonable to apply enough pressure by forechecking to force the direction of play or an inaccurate pass.

It is particularly important to backcheck the wings. This forces the power play unit to use at least one point player to gain a two-on-one advantage against the defense as the offensive zone is entered.

Most teams use a type of zone coverage when playing four against five. This usually is referred to as the “box”. In this coverage, one defensive player is positioned on each corner of the box (See Figure 30a). The wing on the off puck side should “collapse” the box somewhat to help out in the slot area (See Figure 30b).

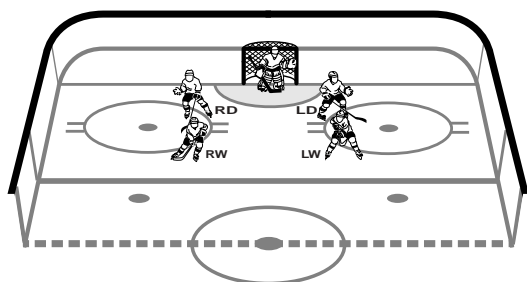


Figure 30a.

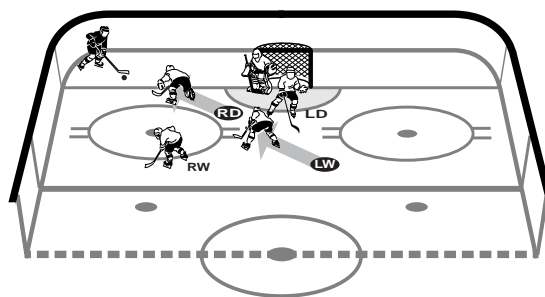


Figure 30b. Collapsing “box” coverage.

It is important for the defense to avoid chasing the puck and to recognize that the objective is not to prevent any shots on goal, but to prevent the shot from the slot, and/or a good scoring opportunity.

When your opponent has a two-player advantage, the usual approach is to put your fastest player out as a forward and have him/her chase the puck. In the defensive zone, the three defenders try to maintain a triangle. One point of the triangle is on the puck and the other points cover the front of the net. (See Figure 31). Be sure the three players you have on the ice are the quickest and most agile available at the time.

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Chapter 7

Gap Control

OBJECTIVES

- Provide a basic understanding of gap control
- Review the governing principles of hockey
- Describe the effects of gap control offensively and defensively

INTRODUCTION

Gap control involves a high level of skill, intelligent decision making, discipline and the proper mental attitude. Perhaps the most important thing is to have coaches create practice environments which will continually improve the overall skill level, encourage problem solving/decision making and develop the proper mental approach.

This chapter will give a practical overview of suggestions and techniques in teaching “gap control” for forwards and defensemen, as well as address its common components.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

It is absolutely essential that a coach gets back to the basics and reviews a few common components influencing gap control.

Definition

Gap control is defined as the spacial relationship between an offensive opponent and a defensive opponent.

Types of Gaps

- Tight Gap: players within a stick length of each other.

- Loose Gap: players more than a stick length apart.

Governing Principles

- Pressure (defensive): defensive speed creating pressure on the offensive player reducing the time, space and force of the attack.
- Pressure (offensive): offensive speed creating pressure on the defensive player creating time, space and force for the attack.
- Stall/Contain (defensive): an attempt to force an opponent to stop or slow down the speed of an attack to provide time to set up better defensive coverage.
- Stall/Contain (offensive): an attempt to to change the speed of the attack to provide time and space to set up better offensive options.
- Support (offensive/defensive): players away from the puck involving themselves as an offensive option to an attack or a defensive deterrent to an attack.
- Transition: the ability of players to move quickly from defense to offense; or offense to defense.

Defensive and Offensive Gap Control

Gap control applies to all players on the ice (offensive and defensive) from one-on-one situations to five-on-five situations. In the past the talk of gap control - closing the gap, etc. has focused too much on the defensive segments of the game, when in reality its influence is equally as important in the offensive segment of hockey.

Objectives

- Control of situation offensively and defensively
- Influence play offensively and defensively
- Reduce time-space-force of an attack
- Create time-space-force of an attack
- Regain puck possession
- Retain puck possession
- Prevent scoring opportunities
- Gain scoring opportunities

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Far too often as coaches we become enamored with the overall look of a tactic, overlooking the key skills necessary to execute it. These skills (physical and mental) must not be neglected and must be nurtured at every practice. No player is too old, experienced or skilled to be excluded from the continual development of individual skills which are a vital component of an effective athlete. Additionally, these skills mastered by the athlete will create confidence reflecting in the athlete's overall performance.

Key Components

1. Skating
 - speed
 - quickness
 - agility
 - balance
 - transition
 - acceleration
2. Proper checking techniques
3. Play away from the puck
4. One-on-one confrontation technique
5. Decision making: when? where? how?
6. Proper mental attitude

Coach's Question:

- A. **Are you one of those coaches who question the contribution of certain players because they can't execute within the system?**
- B. **Are you a coach who knows the value of continually providing time to develop the skills of your players throughout the season so they may meet the skill necessary to achieve total peak performance within a system?**

Small Game Activities/Drills

One of the coach's major responsibilities is to create an environment so the athlete has the opportunity to reach his/her optimum level of peak performance.

In developing the athlete's decision-making skills, the coach needs to put the athlete in as many game situations as possible allowing the athlete an opportunity to come up with solutions.

The coach must make the athlete realize that there is more than one solution to any given situation and that the decision made will be based on many factors such as **ability, confidence, knowledge, game situation, etc.**

An excellent way to develop decision-making skills in a hockey player are small area/game activities which will create an environment challenging players. Players gain a better understanding of pressure, stall/contain, support, transition, and time/space.

Mental Attitude

Energy will be used in this presentation to describe a hockey player's degree of **mental attitude**. Athletes who are somewhat energized will generally perform better and reflect confidence in their overall performance. Peak performance comes when the player has reached his/her optimum level of energy.

Listed below are a few energizing techniques for controlling and increasing a player's mental energy level.

- Positive self-talk
- Positive mental imagery
- Psych-up technique
- Goal setting
- Relaxation technique
- Deep breathing technique
- Task focus technique

VALUE OF GAP CONTROL

Defensively

- Reducing time/space/force of an attack
- Limit the speed and velocity of play
- Prevent penetration to the prime scoring areas
- Isolate game situations and avoid getting outnumbered
- Control
- Be pro-active

Offensively

- Creating time/space/force for your attack
- Control the speed and velocity of the play
- Penetrate the prime scoring areas
- Create outnumbering situations and maximize opportunities
- Control
- Be pro-active

Basic Concepts for Sound Gap Control

- Communication both verbally and visually
- Protect or attack critical areas of the ice
- Create or eliminate offensive and defensive options
- Defensive or offensive side positioning.
- Angling - steering - deflecting
- Control the speed of the attack or creating/controlling multiple speeds for the attack
- Stick on stick - body on body principle
- Effective use of body-stick-boards-and areas of the ice

DECISION MAKING

Tight Gap ↔ Loose Gap

Pressure ↔ Contain

Angle ↔ Direct Penetration

Factors in Decision Making

There are many factors influencing the read on a particular situation and in making a decision for gap control. Creating opportunities and an environment for your players to experiment and master these skills is your challenge as a coach. Below are a few helpful hints and cues which will assist them in their process:

- Defensively look through/beyond the attack
- Offensively look beyond/through your attack
- Know what support you have offensively or defensively
- Who is controlling the puck and what type of control do they have?
- Where is the situation in relationship to the ice surface (ice position): close to the boards; in open ice; what zone; defensive blue line; offensive blue line; prime scoring area?
- Speed and direction of the play
- Total game awareness; score; period; type of game; specialty teams; etc.

Should you take an aggressive attitude offensively or defensively regarding your approach to gap control? Based on what system you play, there must be a philosophy or "attitude" established for this component of the game.

Tight Gap Control Defensive Reads

1. Approaching the backside of a puck carrier
2. When a puck carrier moves across the ice or along your defensive blue line
3. The skating speed of both players and the situation is the same

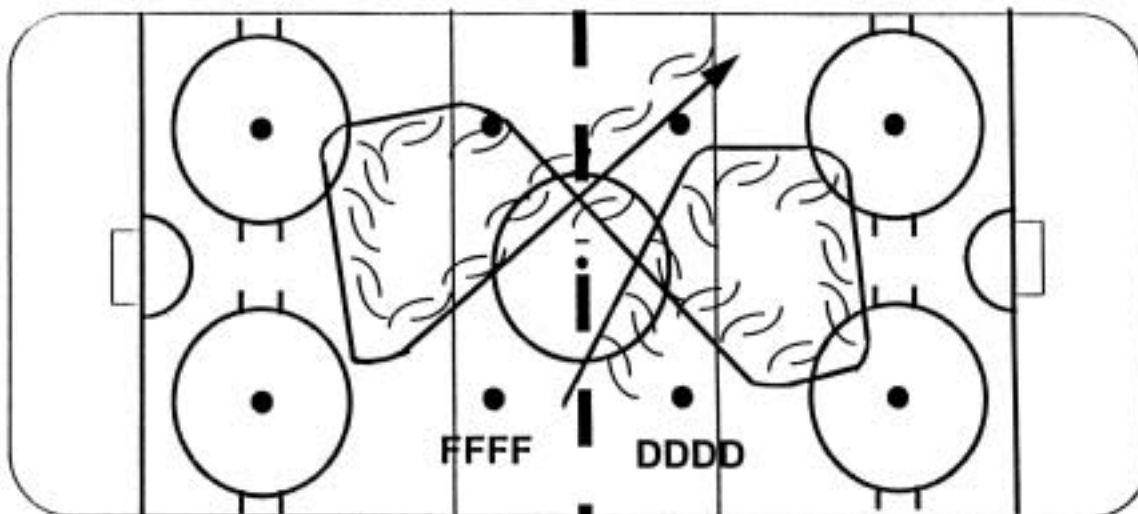
4. The offensive player has not established solid control of the puck
5. When you numerically outnumber the offensive opponent
6. When you have isolated the situation down to one-on-one
7. When the puck carrier is attempting to penetrate the prime scoring/grade A area
8. The puck carrier is in a “threat” to score position

SKILL TECHNIQUES

The following is a review of skill techniques for the players to master regarding the tactical component of game control:

- skating
- open-ice checking
- play away from the puck
- one-on-one confrontation
- angling/steering/deflecting
- body positioning
- body contact
- decision making
- pinching

DRILLS FOR IMPROVING THE SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES OF "GAP CONTROL"

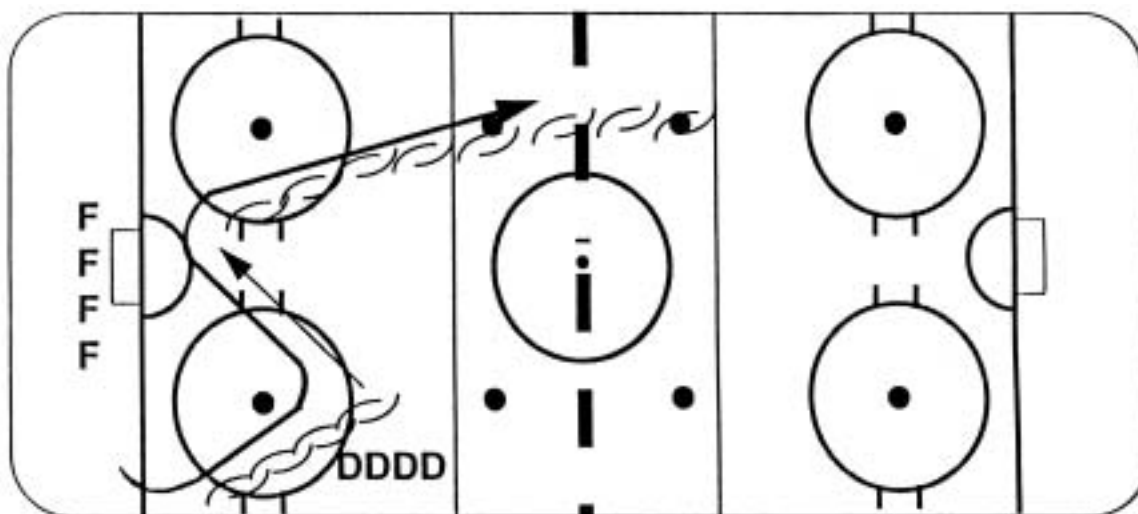


Skating: Pursuit Sprints — D mirrors F

Defenseman skates backward

Forward skates forward

Note: Give the defenseman a head start of about 15 feet

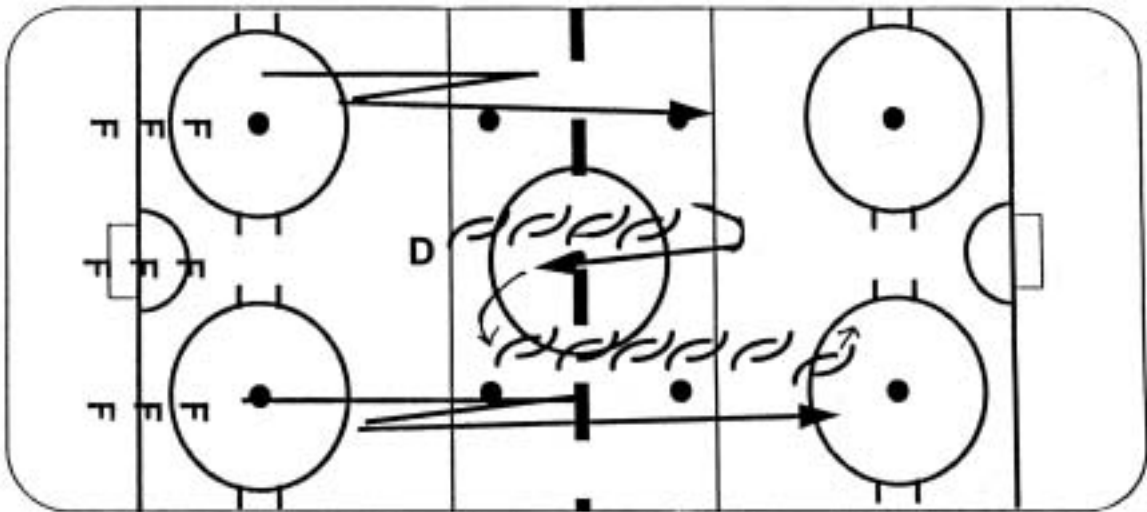


Skating: Pursuit Sprints — D mirrors F

Defenseman skates backward, forward, backward

Mirror forward; keep in front of you

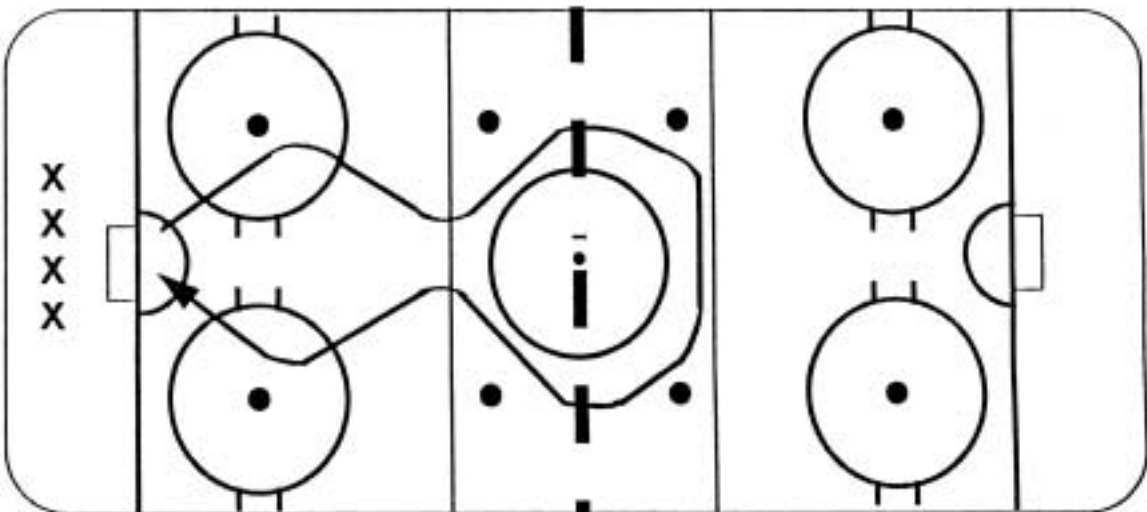
Take away space



Skating: Pursuit Sprints — D mirrors F

Three forwards do stops and starts, all forward

Two defensemen skate backward, forward, then backward

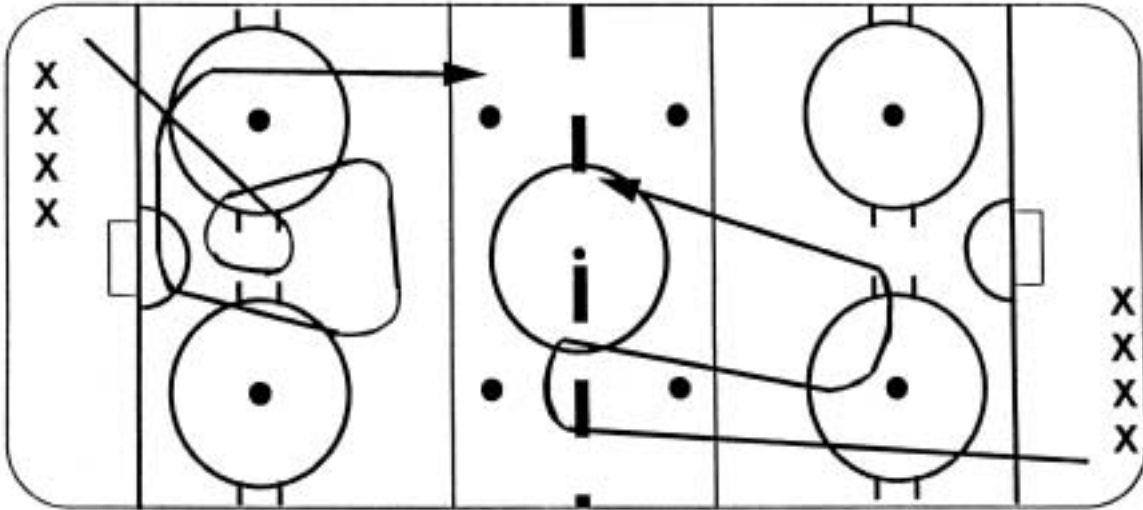


Skating: Cornering

Twice around course

Five at a time

Start every 75 seconds

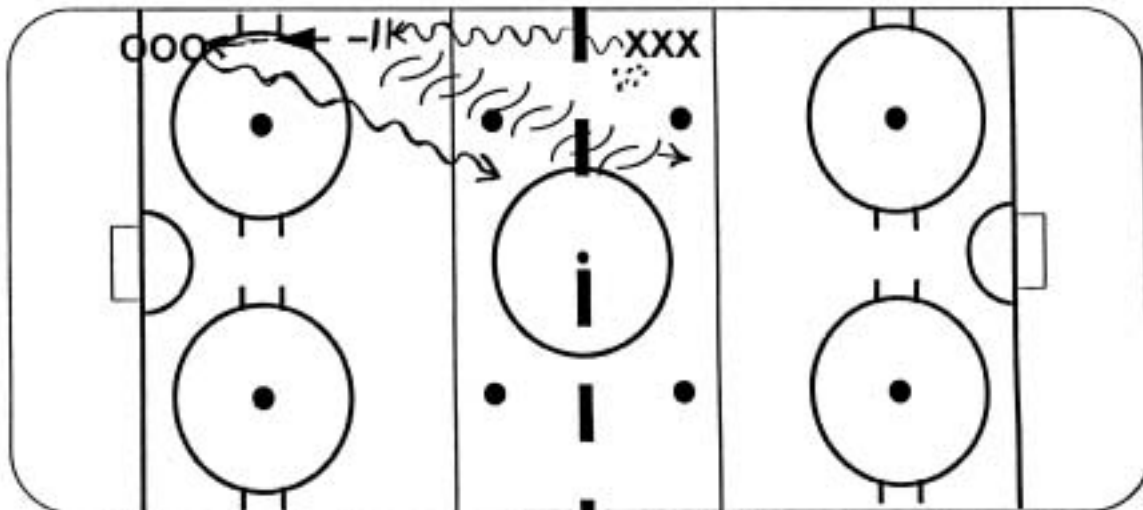


Skating: Cornering

Start every 60-75 seconds

Five at a time

Once through

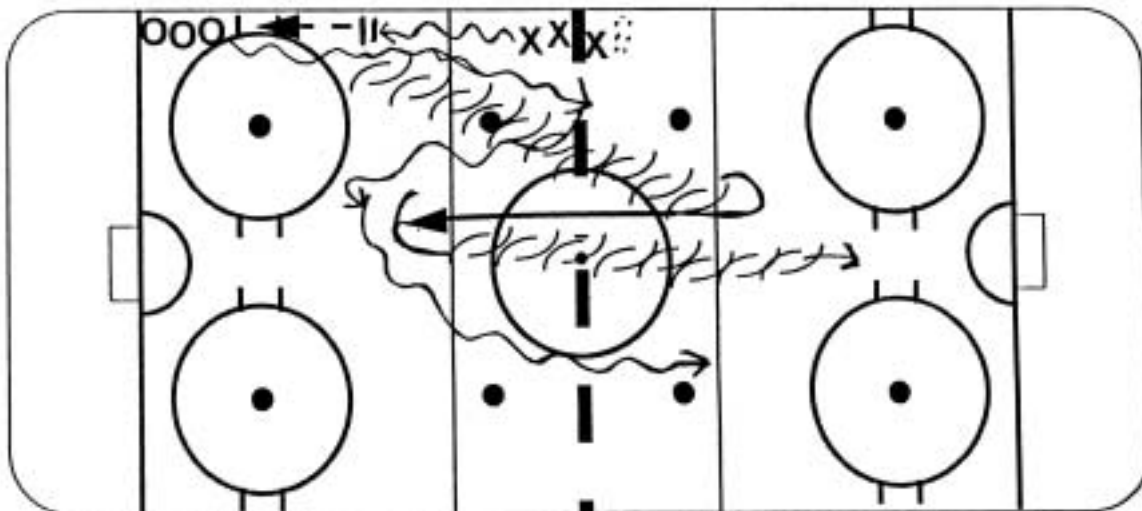


Basic One-on-One Drill For Tight Gap Control

Purpose: Defending One-on-One

X skates to top of face-off circle, passes to **O** and pivots to backward skating to play one-on-one with tight gap control tactics

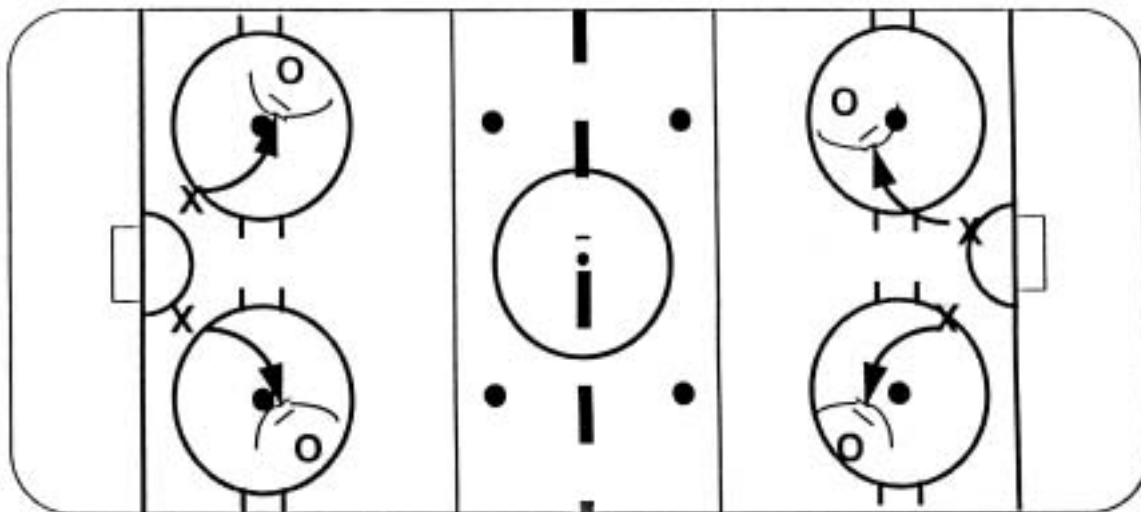
O receives pass and attacks one-on-one using a variety of individual tactics — drive, delay, cross, carry behind



Regroup One-on-One Drill For Tight Gap Control

Purpose: Tight Gap Control

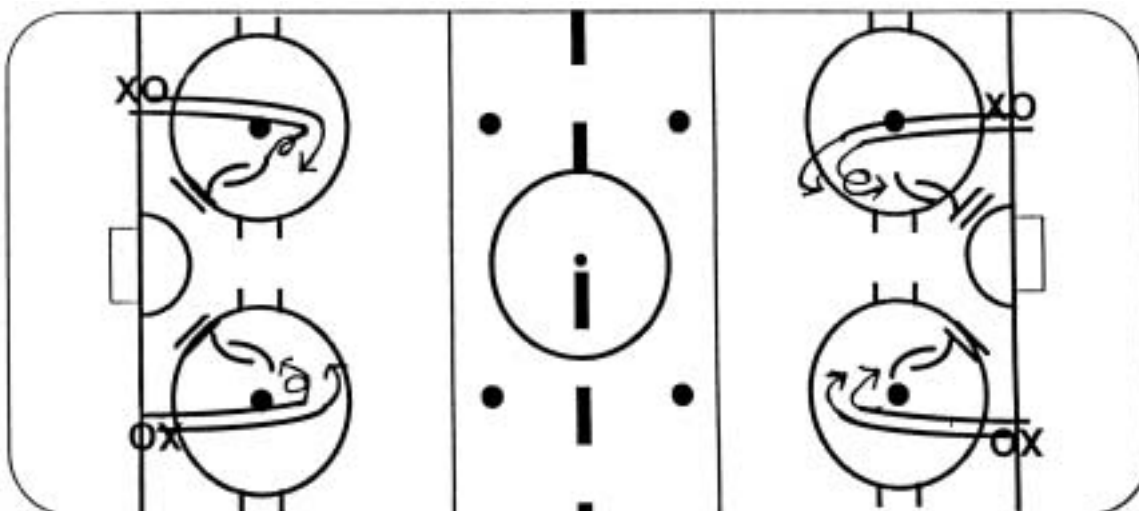
Same idea as basic one-on-one with the addition of one or more regroups to force defensemen to pressure up and play tight gap control versus regroup. **O** uses a variety of attacking tactics. Coach can blow whistle whenever to control time of regroups and gap control drill can go both directions on the ice.



Circle Drill

Purpose: Angling/Defense Side Positioning

X uses short burst to establish checking angle (inside out) and defensive side positioning. **O** attempts to get to goal. **X** and **O** start simultaneously.



Defensive Side Positioning Drill

Purpose: Defensive Side Positioning

O and **X** skate forward toward blue line with **X** in tight gap. **O** turns and attacks **X** who maintains defensive side positioning and boxes out **O**.

SUMMARY

Remember what was stated earlier: gap control is a component of the game which in many cases will affect the game outcome. It is the effectiveness of gap control that is often the determining factor.

Gap control can reflect or be used by a team to make an overall statement to its opponent. Your team's success could be measured in direct proportion to how much time you have spent on developing players' skills, mental attitude and tactics such as gap control.

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Chapter 8

Offensive Concepts with Cycling

by: Bob O'Connor

OBJECTIVES

- To create options of attacking the blueline
- To provide options of attacking the net
- To provide basic principles of cycling

OFFENSIVE CONCEPTS IN DEVELOPING GAME UNDERSTANDING

I recently bought a tee shirt: on it is a picture of a plane with a smile on its nose, flying over a field. There are seven windows in the plane; the pilot and six kids are waving at the people, horses, cows, dogs and cats below. The words on the shirt say: "Art is a place kids travel to where they feel good about themselves." Art is creation of things of beauty."

I've always been a romantic about the game of hockey: "To Win the Game is Great; To Play the Game is Greater; To Love the Game is Greatest of All."

When I watch a hockey game, I observe the seeds of creation: the artists with powerful postures and agile, fluid, explosive strides, handling the puck with eyes up, adroit passing, receiving, shooting; with five other craftsmen reading and reacting and creating a pattern of beauty for a final result, with the puck controller being the quarterback, all others improvising options without paralysis by analysis. Some people believe that great artists in any field are just born. I and many others believe that, yes, everyone is born with

certain capabilities, some greater or lesser than others, but those capabilities have to be born into the right environment, discovered, encouraged, supported, disciplined, directed, refined, expanded to reach full capacity. Then, at full capacity these talents become free flowing, spontaneous, innovative and more creative, with infinite possibilities.

You are unique - in all the history of the world there was never anyone else exactly like you; and in all infinity to come there will never be another you.

So, we have "wannabe" hockey players that we have to teach the right posture and balance of edges and how to move on skates. They were not born with skates on so we have to introduce them to the primary skill of the game. In skating there are certain efficient ways of moving and there are inefficient ways of moving. This holds true with all the foundations skills: eyes up puckhandling, eyes up deking, eyes up passing, eyes up receiving, eyes up shooting and blocking.

Once a skill is learned it becomes more difficult to modify or to make changes in the skill. That is why youngsters require excellent instruction initially so that they can learn efficient execution of the basic skills early.

The right way is always the right way forever. Youngsters will try to make adjustments through their maturation, during slow growth or growth spurts, but once quality execution is comprehended and demonstrated, it is the only way. Once a player gets into competition, it is the end of improving skills and they play with what they have.

Many people feel that if a player has the physical skills of skating, puckhandling, passing, receiving, shooting, blocking, the mental part of the game will follow. Not true! The most neglected part of the game is game understanding. It must be learned like all the other skills. What did Wayne Gretzky do better than anyone else? He thought about the game better. "Mental is to physical as four is to one." (Bobby Knight). Good skills will help you make the team, but the ability to think, handle the puck and skate at the same time gets you the ice time.

Thoughts from Dave Peterson, two time USA Olympic Team Coach:

1. "How can a coach facilitate players in learning to understand the game better?
 - a. Clear, verbal feedback.
 - b. Chalktalks, instructional videos.
 - c. Key locations on the rink: deep corner, behind the net, goal line extended, bottom of circle, mid-board, top circle, hash marks, face-off spots, blue-red-blue, middle circle, off wing, strong wing, near post, far post, etc.
 - d. Open team analysis of a game on video.
 - e. Each member of team submit a scouting report of next two opponents.
 - f. Watch video on your own team, watch for scoring chances and name the options.
 - g. Know the vocabulary of the game: clear the slot, win the race, tape to tape passes, put the shot on the net, total focus, total awareness, headman the puck, get it over the red, read the gap, read the open ice, read the traffic, use support, go to

the net, set up triangle, camouflage, box them out (one, two, three, four, five player rotation), C-angle the puck carrier, take the steps, check through your man, velcro, get close stay close, stick on your man, stick on stick, head on swivel, they have to come through you, options, forecheck, backcheck, all the way, give and go, pressure, gap, loose gap, tight gap, stretch breakout, zone coverage, man to man coverage, five man offense, four man offense, create space, forcing pass, move it forward, move it.

2. "Teach understanding of basic concepts: time and space, with or without puck; transition; read and react; support first, second, third, fourth, fifth man; triangularization; box out."
3. "Take common reoccurring situations and constantly rehearse them on the ice, and you will improve read and reactability."
 - a. 1/0, 1/1, 2/0, 2/1, 2/2, 3/0, 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, 4/3, 4/4, 5/3, 5/4, 5/5
 - b. 3/0 red line attack technique options 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, 5/3 offensive movement
 - c. cycling options

Game sense is read and react — read is taking in information, react is processing it quickly and accurately.

Teach players to use ice markings on the ice. When a player is under pressure and eyes are down, ice markings help in decision making. The player should be able to see the blue line, red line, corners, goal line, faceoff spots, top of circle, bottom of circle to know where he/she is on the ice.

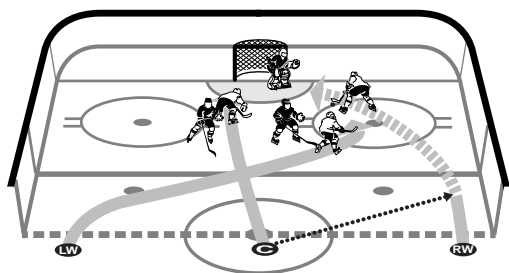
Hockey has certain windows of opportunities when it is most favorable to learn skills and game understanding. These foundation years are from 7-15 years old. If a player is not exposed to or doesn't spend time at these windows, development will be slower.

SEEDS OF CREATION

Drills to plan ideas for hockey designs

OFFENSIVE CONCEPTS

1. Shooting angles: accuracy, quickness, one touch, moving
2. Open ice: 1/G, 1/1D, 2/1D, 2/2D, 2/2D splits, speed, shoot, rebound, tip, picks, criss-cross, drop, give-and-go...
3. Red line technique, with resistance...look for support...



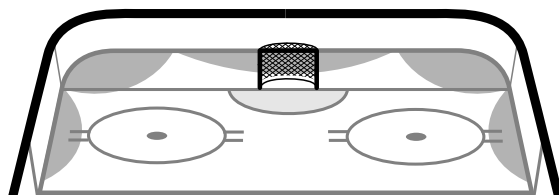
(see diagrams later in chapter)

1. Drive skate
2. Center trailer - off wing to post
3. Off wing trailer - center through to off post
4. Center drop 10 feet wings move inside to center
5. Backpass from outside to top of circle
6. Backboard pass to trailer
7. Stop and go, pass or shoot, fake shot and pass
8. Splits
9. Gretzky across
10. Escapes high and low
11. Corner play - straight give and go
12. Corner play - straight switch give-and-go
13. Ring around, walkout or King of Prussia
14. Puck carriers should be taught to skate away from defenders, not right at them

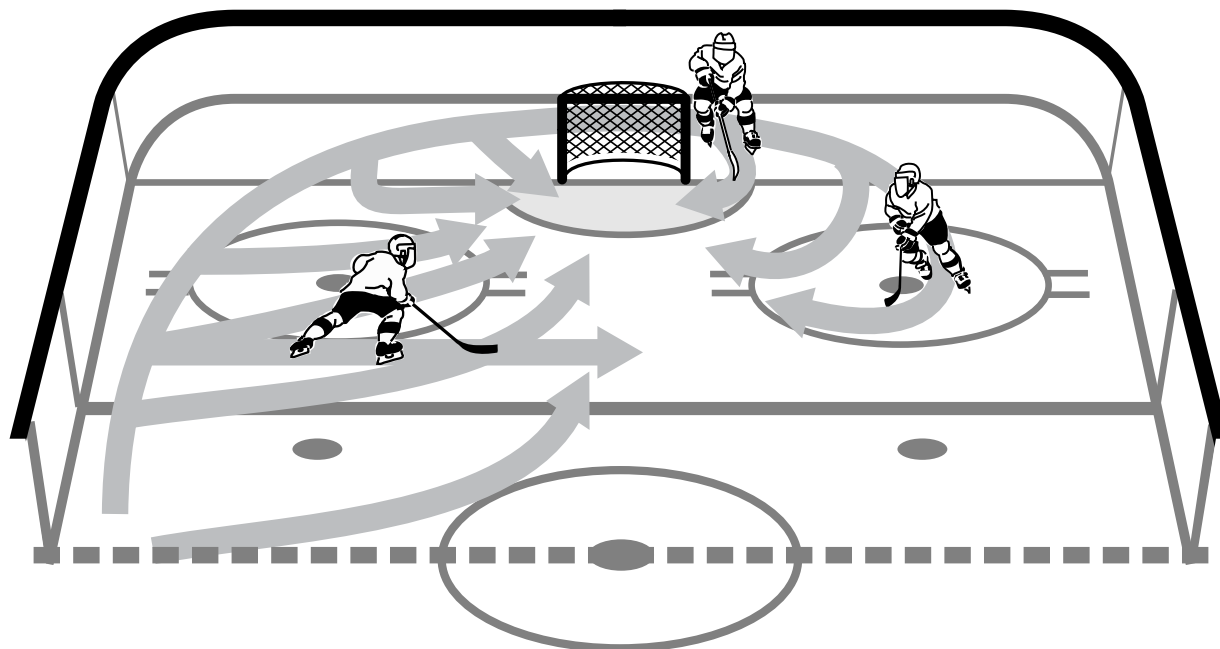
4. Offensive Movement with Defensive Interplay (see diagrams later in chapter)

1. Blocking
2. Center ice shooting
3. Pass out, D shoots
4. Pass out, pass across, shoot, tip
5. Pass out, pass across, pass back across, shoot, tip
6. Pass out, pass back three-step laterally, then down to top of circle, shoot off pass
7. Come around top of circle with hesitation
8. Wisconsin Z
9. Montreal Picks, pass to off defense

5. Cycling with Rotation to the Open Areas



Some call them the quiet zones. Others call them the dead zones. But, in these zones is where you cycle.

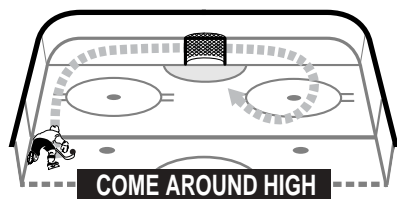
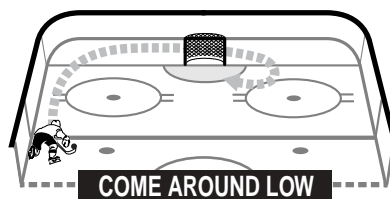
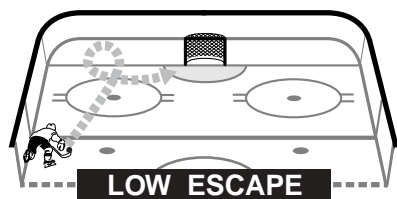
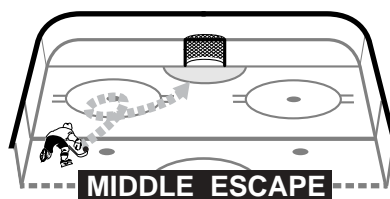
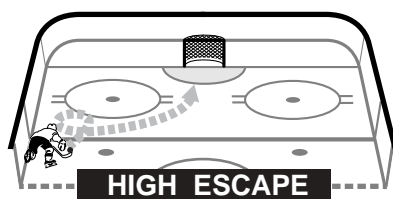
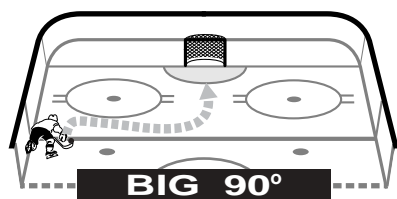
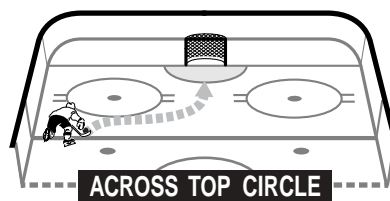
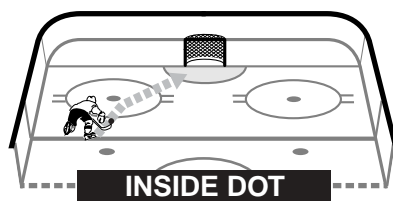
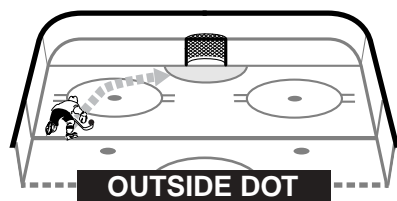


ANGLES TO THE GOAL

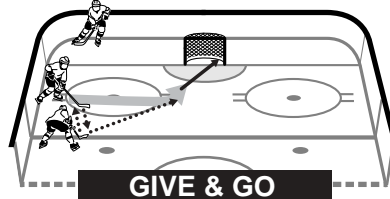
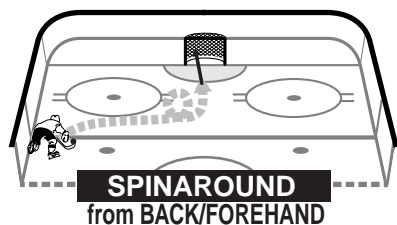
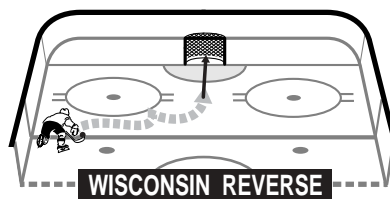
Shooting Angles – Drive Skate

Shooting angles - the number of shots....indicates what team has the intensity... Most teams usually have one or two pure scorers. A pure scorer usually has tunnel vision about going to the net. I feel that if I can get the supporting players thinking more about going to the net, by designing shooting drills with different routes to the net, and more time at shooting, the player who usually gets, and is happy with five goals in 20 games, will get seven or eight goals.

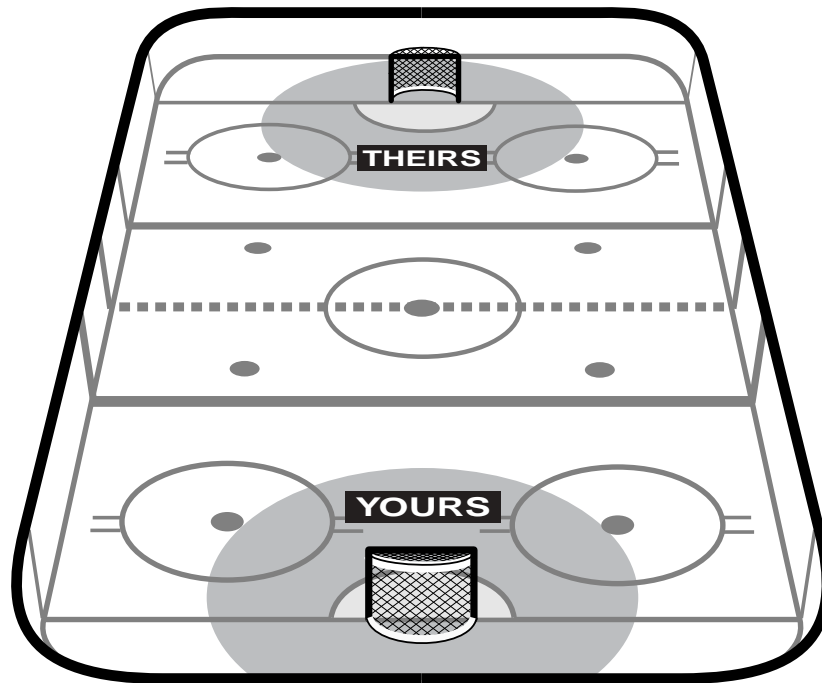
SCORING is making the calls on the goalie ... It is amazing what can happen when you put the puck on the net!



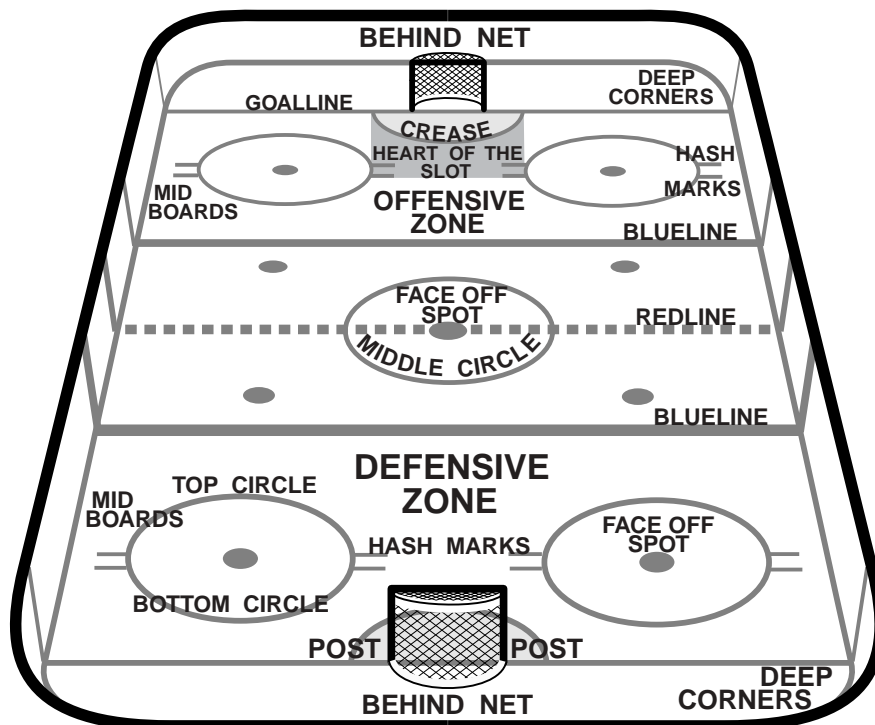
- (A) Far Post
- (B) Near Post
- (C) Five Hole
- (D) Race Across
- (E) Back Door



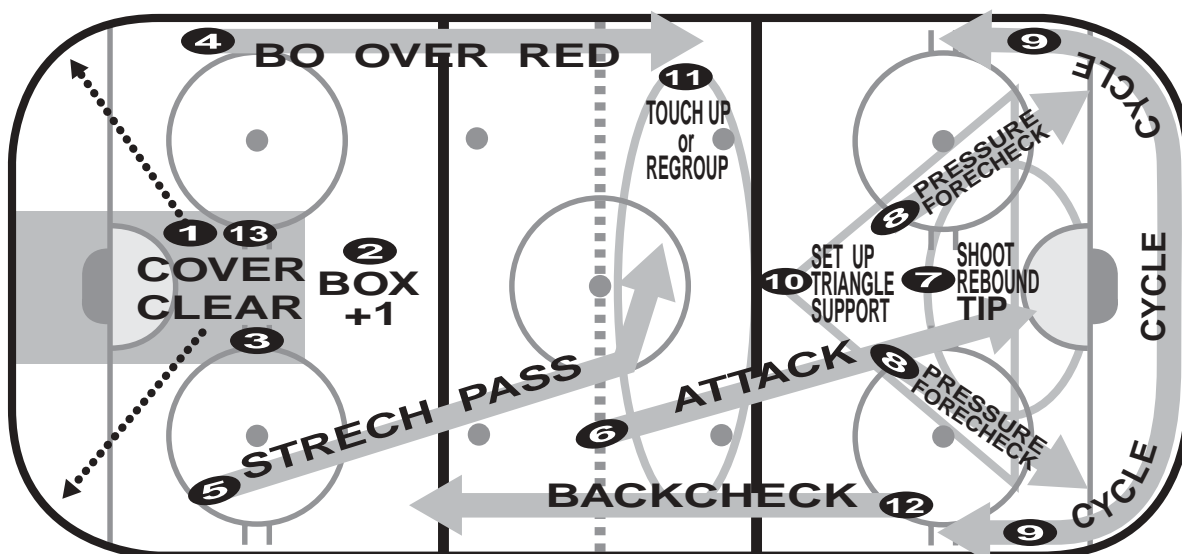
UNDERSTAND THE RINK!



Two most important Areas:
In front of your net.
In front of their net.

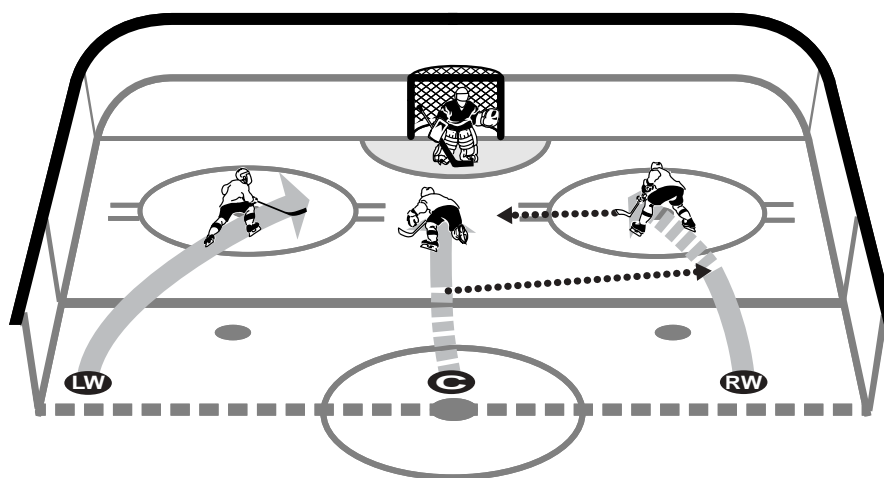


Players must know rink identity to help read and react.



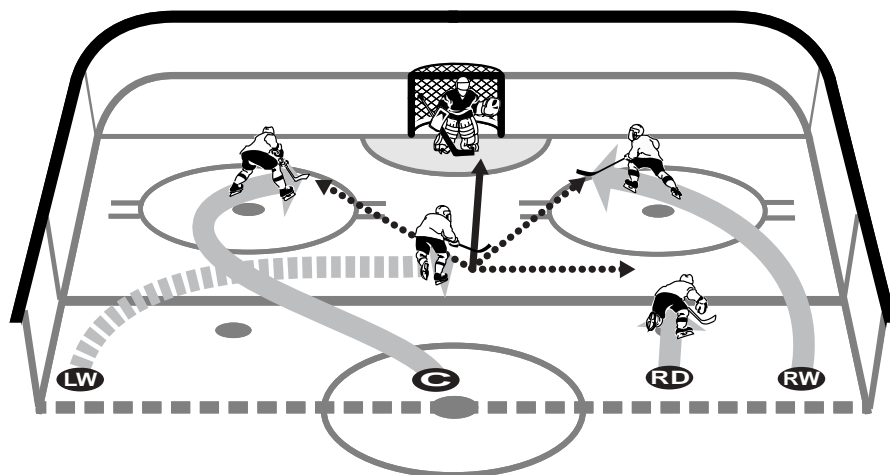
- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. Cover | 8. Pressure forecheck |
| 2. Box + One | 9. Cycle |
| 3. Clear | 10. Set up - triangle - support |
| 4. Breakout Over Red | 11. Touch up or regroup |
| 5. Stretch Pass | 12. Backcheck |
| 6. Attack over Red | 13. Cover |
| 7. Shoot - Rebound - Tip | |

QUICK PASS - RETURN LATERAL PASS

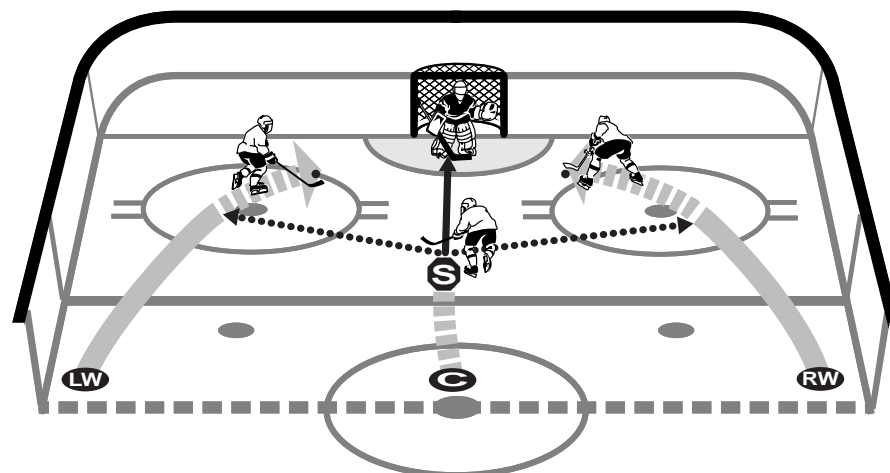


This is very simple, but very effective. It can work either way, with give-and-go with first pass starting at wing or center.

GRETZKY ACROSS



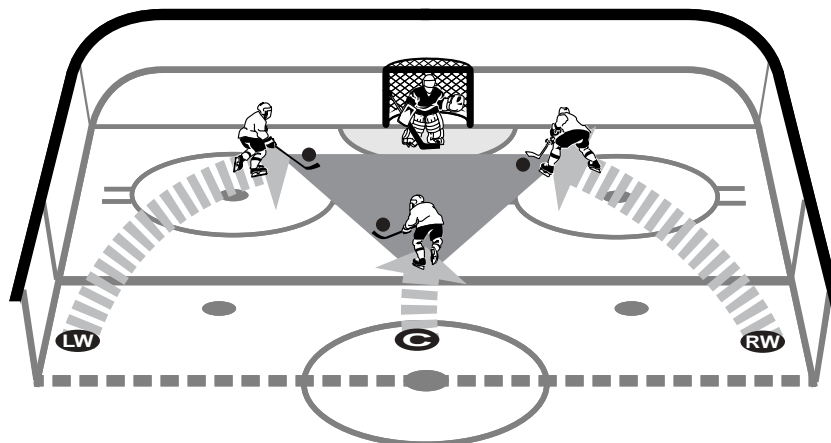
STOP & GO



Puck carrier in either situation, passes or shoots; other forwards go for rebound

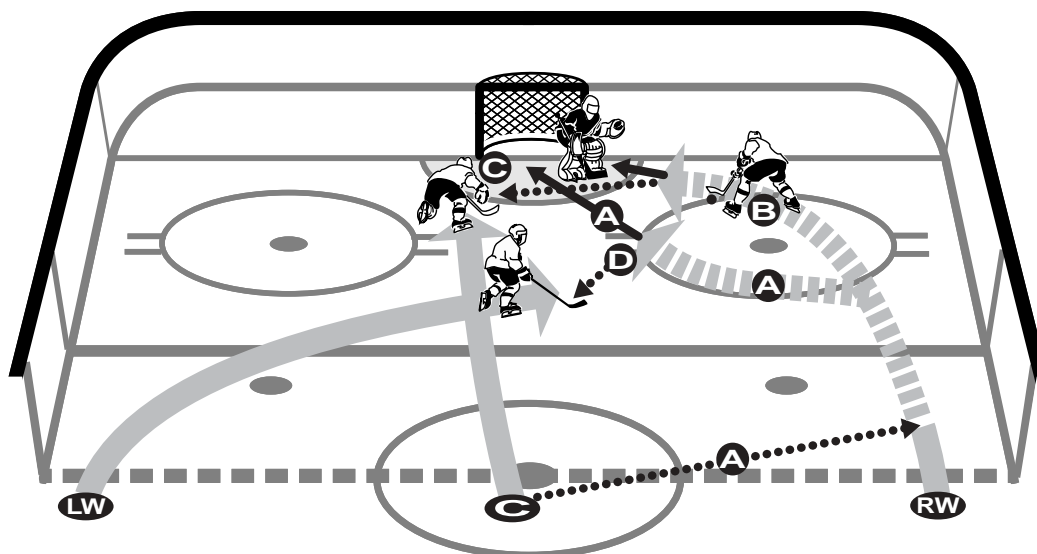


GO TO THE NET – KEEP THE TRIANGLE



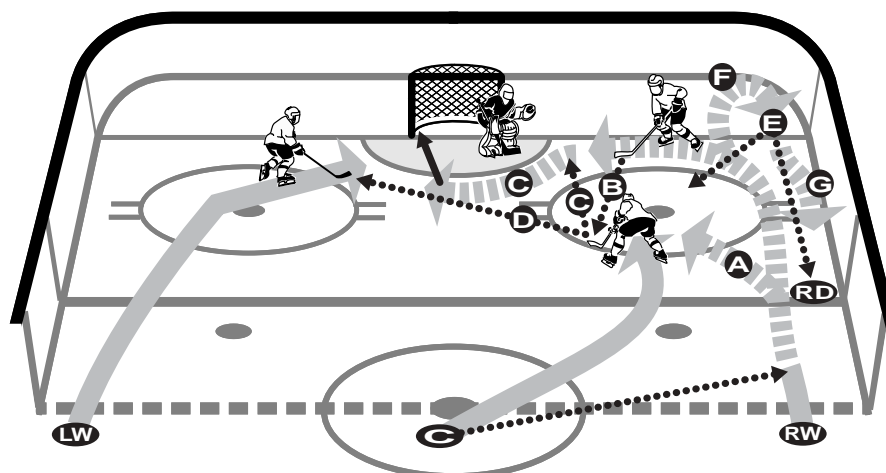
In Doubt, shoot or go to the net – Drive Skate

OFF-WING TRAILER – CENTER TO THE NET – KEEP THE TRIANGLE



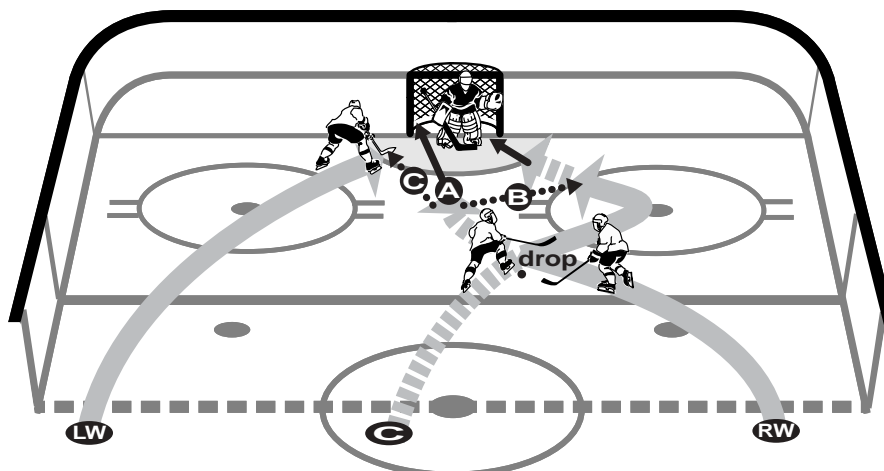
- A. Center passes to right wing - center drives middle of ice to far post of goal, right wing drives inside face off spot for scoring chance
- B. Right wing drives outside face off spot, cuts in for scoring chance
- C. Right wing drives circle, passes to center on far post
- D. Right wing drives circle, passes back to off-wing, cutting to slot

CENTER TRAILER – OFF-WING TO THE NET (with most common options)



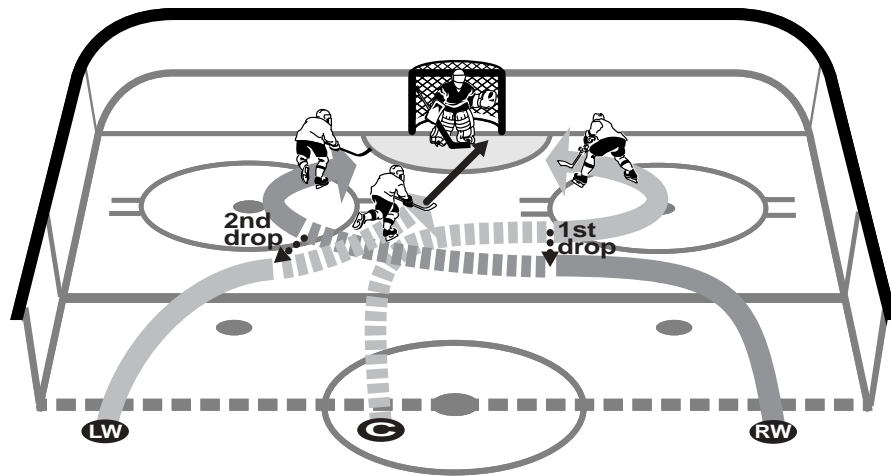
- A. Center passes to right wing, who attacks to top of circle, center and left wing go to net for rebound
- B. Center passes to right wing, who drive skates to bottom of circle, passes back to center trailer
- C. Center passes to wing, who drive skates to bottom of circle and cuts in to goal for scoring chance
- D. Center trailer passes to off-wing, who shoots or passes to other wing
- E. Wing makes escape, passes back to center or up boards to defense
- F. Wing does escape, walks out to goal for scoring chance
- G. Wing escapes, cycles up boards, center comes down boards, center passes down, wing passes up, give and go, center shoots, wing rebounds

OUTSIDE-IN DROP – Keep the Triangle



- A. Center drop passes to wing, wing takes center and shoots with other forwards going to net
- B. Wing with puck gives pass back to center who cuts across face off spot on good angle for scoring chance
- C. Wing with puck passes to off-wing

DOUBLE DROP – Keep the Triangle

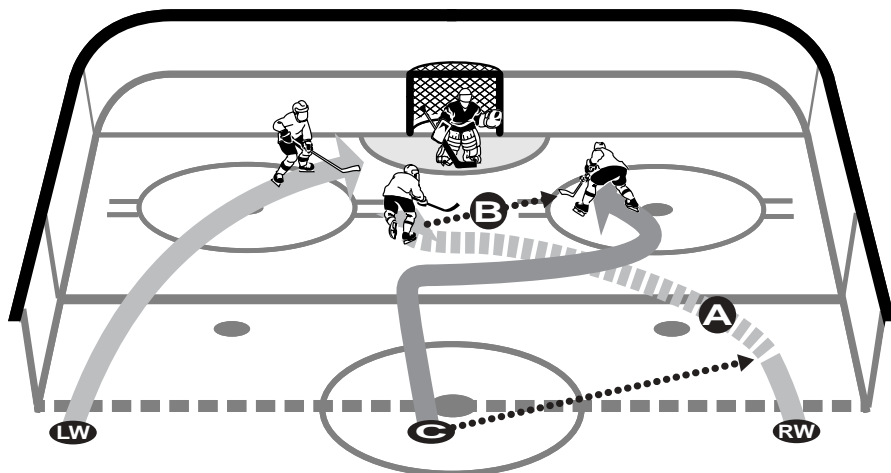


- A. Center drop passes to right wing, right wing takes center, then swings in front of left wing and makes second drop pass

On all drop passes, all other forwards slow up when he/she sees puck carrier skating into his/her lane in front of him/her.

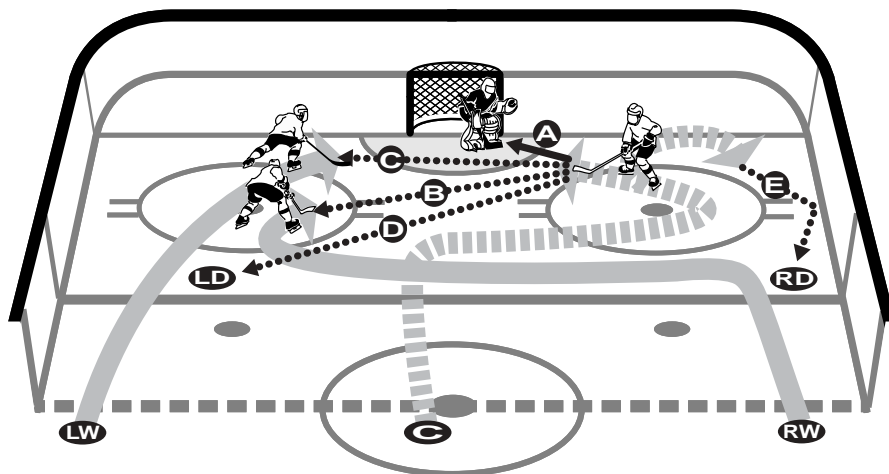
The puck carrier goes first.

INSIDE-OUTSIDE CRISS CROSS WITH LATERAL PASS



- A. Center passes to right wing, right wing cuts into middle and center crosses behind the puck carrier to right side
B. Right wing, who has become center, passes to center, who has become right wing

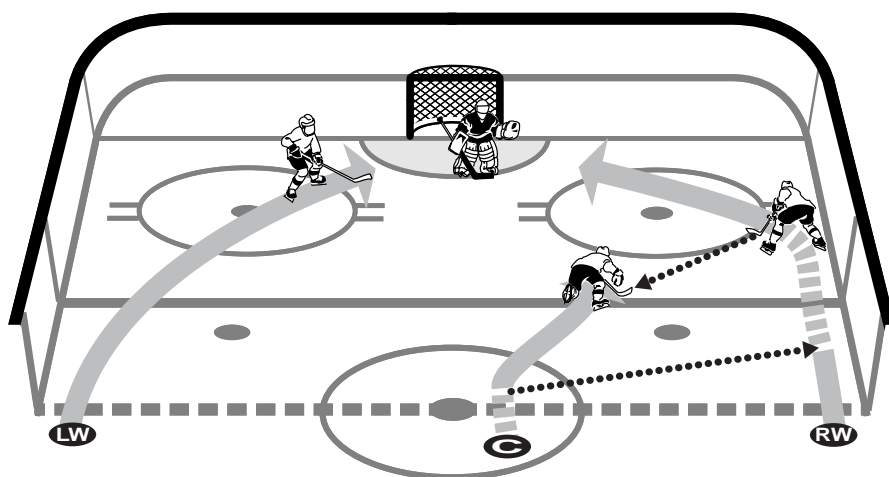
OUTSIDE-INSIDE CRISS CROSS WITH LATERAL PASS



Center carries puck into right side, right wing crosses behind center into the middle, left wing skates from the left side to far goal post. Center who is the puck carrier has these options.

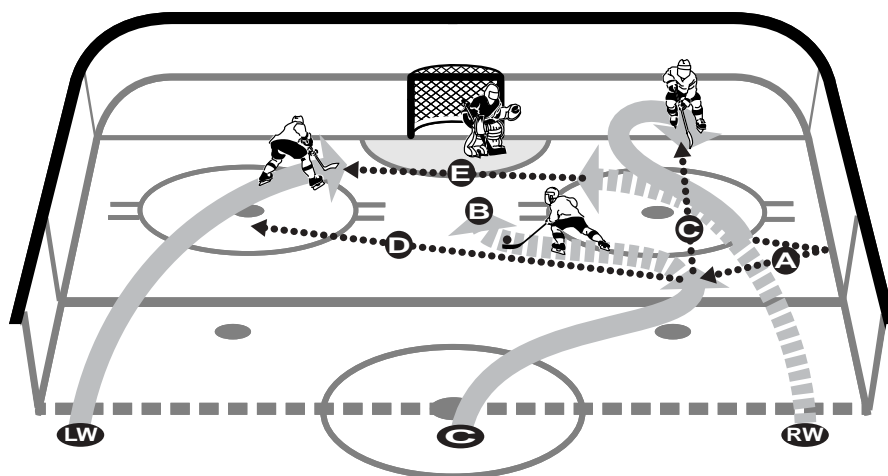
- A. Center shoots
- B. Pass to right wing, who has crossed to top of left circle
- C. Pass across goal crease to left wing
- D. Pass out to left defense
- E. Execute an escape pass up the boards to right defense

DIAGONAL BACK PASS – TOP CIRCLE



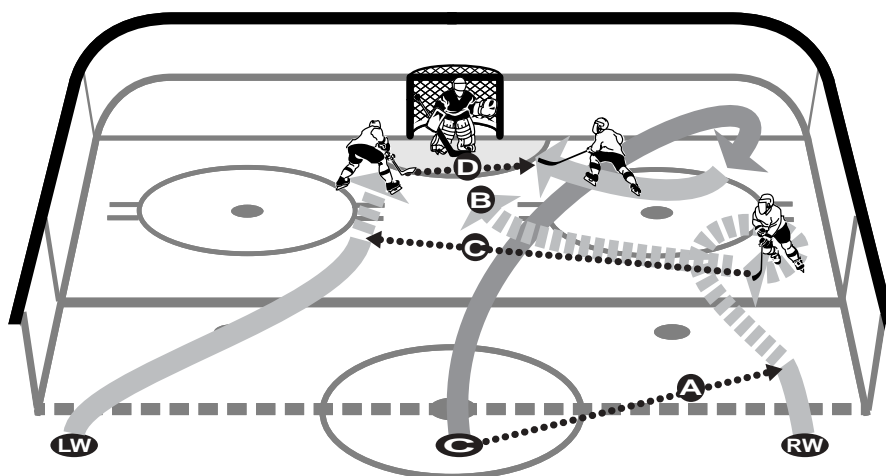
This is another quick series of passes, but it is done at top outside the circle with a back diagonal - not lateral pass - if a defenseman meets the puck carrier at the top of the circle.

BOARD PASS



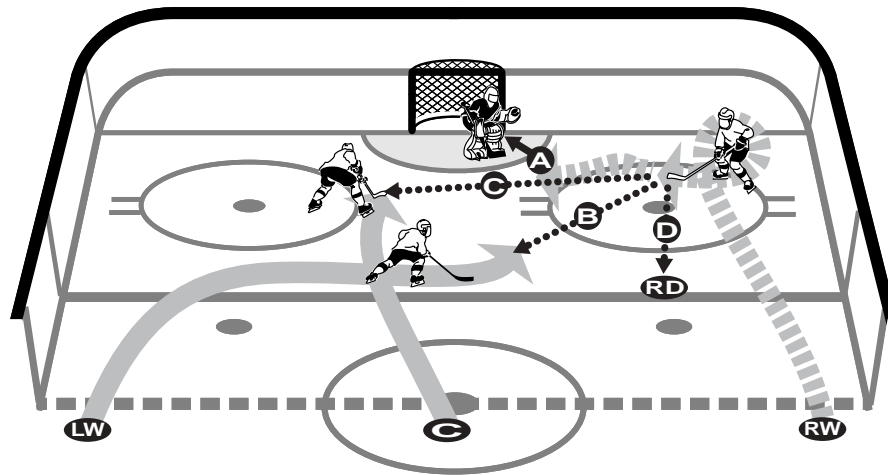
- A. Right wing drive skates at board at top of circle, back board passes to trailing center
- B. Center receives board pass then cuts in for shot at top of circle
- C. Center receives board pass then passes back to right wing, who after making board pass skated to bottom of circle executed an escape to be a receiver
- D. Center receives board pass and passes across to off-wing
- E. Right wing drive skates and goal mouth passes to left wing

HIGH ESCAPE



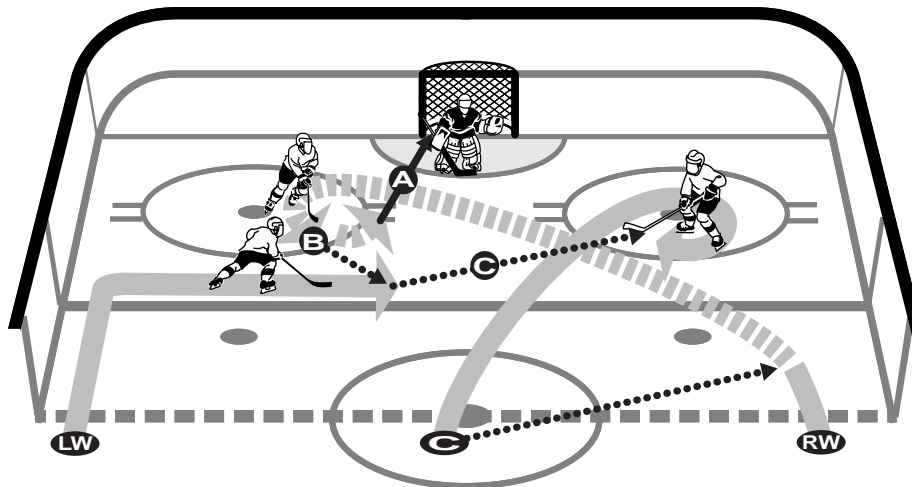
- A. Center passes to right wing, right wing drive skates to top of circle, executes escape
- B. Cuts in and shoots
- C. Passes across to left wing
- D. Left wing shoots or passes to center who executes an escape in low right corner

LOW ESCAPE



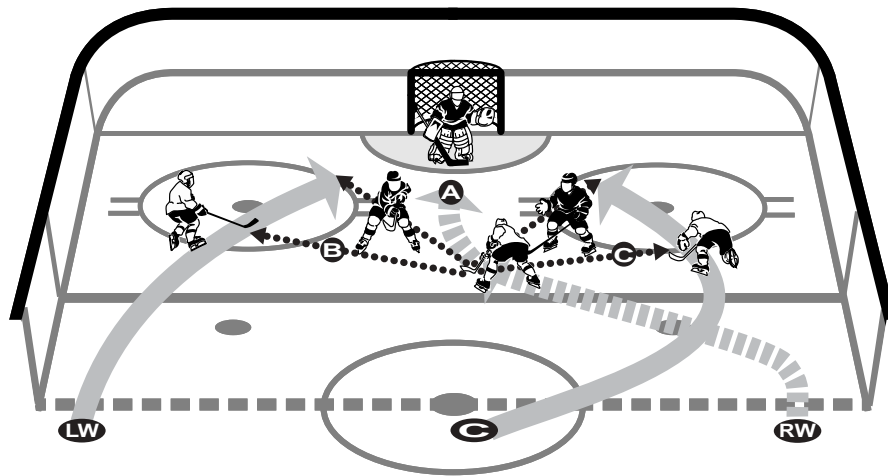
- A. Right wing drive skates to bottom of circle, executes escape, cuts in for shot
- B. Pass to off-wing (left wing) crossing into high slot
- C. Passes to center driving to off post of net
- D. Passes to defense

DOUBLE ESCAPE



- A. Center passes to right wing, right wing skates across to far circle, does escape and shoots, others go to net
- B. Wing does escape, passes to left wing trailer or defense who shoots, others to net
- C. Wing trailer passes to center, who did a double escape, who can do a pass-return-pass with wing trailer, pass across to other escaper or go to the net

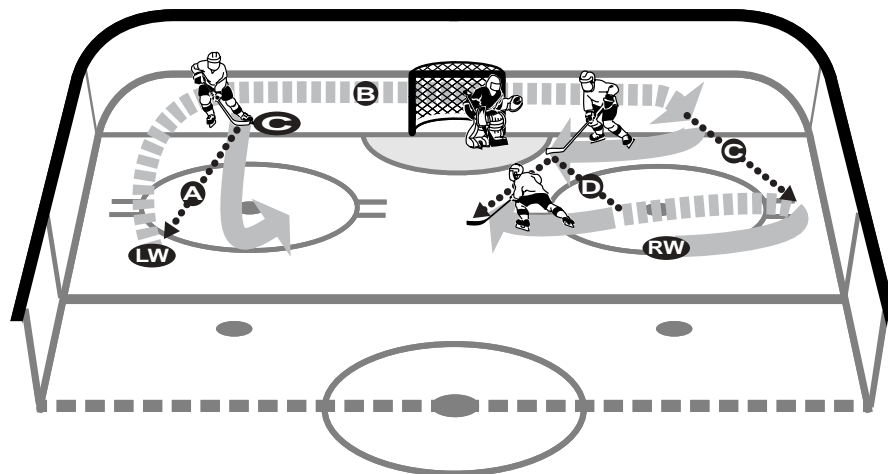
SPLIT THE DEFENSE



An offensive finesse that can be used if the defensemen are side by side at the blueline or 10 feet inside the blueline. Puck carrier skates right at off defenseman:

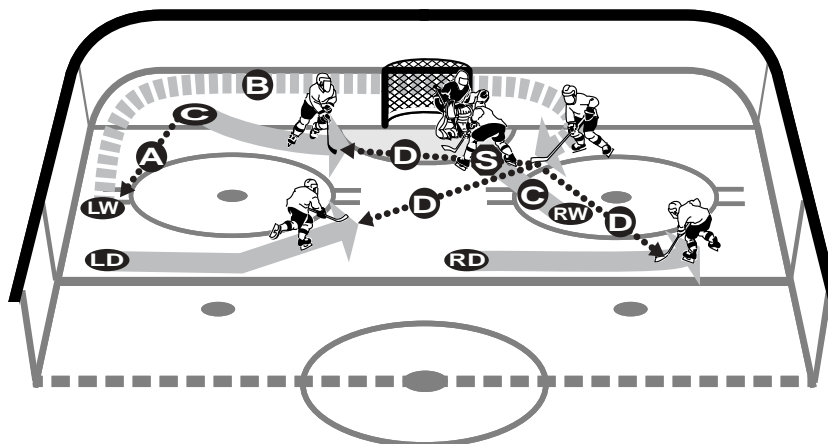
- A. Right wing cuts through the defenseman by splitting them
- B. Pass outside or inside to left wing
- C. Passes inside or outside to center, who crossed behind and drove the right alley

KING OF PRUSSIA



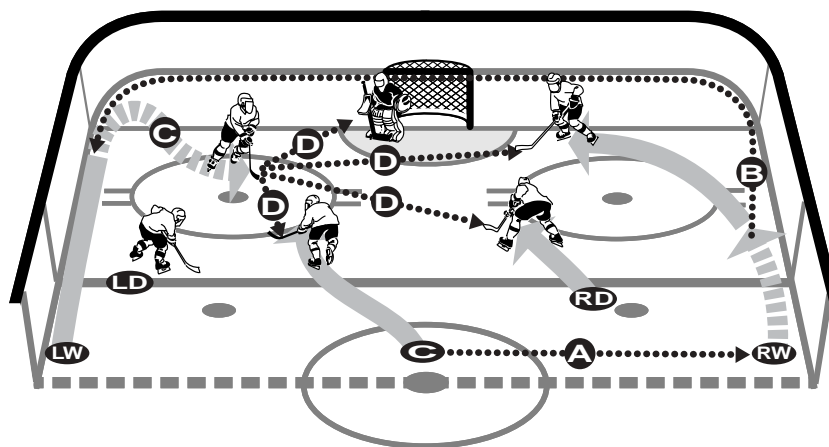
- A. Center passes up to left wing, then curls up around face off dot
- B. Left wing receives pass, skates down and behind goal to right corner
- C. Left wing passes up, to right wing at midboard, then moves to net along goal line. Right wing takes pass at boards and walks out
- D. Right wing and left work a give and go, with rights wing's option to shoot or pass

MONTREAL PICKS



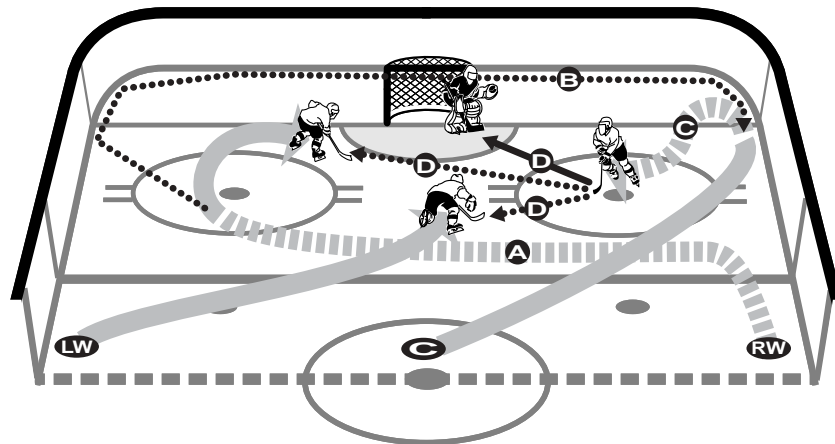
- A. Center has the puck, passes up to left wing
- B. Left wing carries puck down around net, then walks out from behind the net
- C. Right wing screens defenseman and goalie
- D. Left wing has options of: passing to nearside defenseman, off-side defenseman, center or take to the net himself

RING AROUND



- A. Center passes to right wing
- B. Right wing drive skates to top of the circle, rings the puck around boards
- C. Left wing drive skates, picks up puck deep in corner and walks out
- D. Options are to shoot, pass to center, across to defense or to right wing

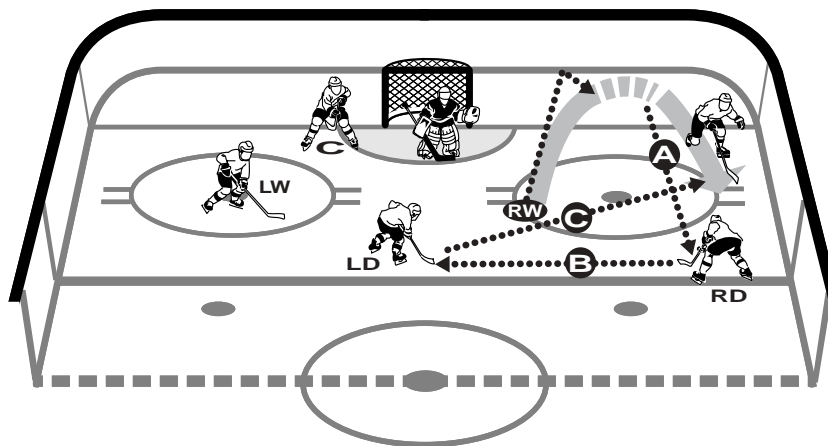
RING AROUND



- A. Right wing skates across zone at top of circles
- B. Center, having gone to right alley, picks up puck
- C. From deep in corner, center walks out
- D. Options include taking a shot, pass to left wing moving into slot area or to right wing who has moved to backdoor goal post

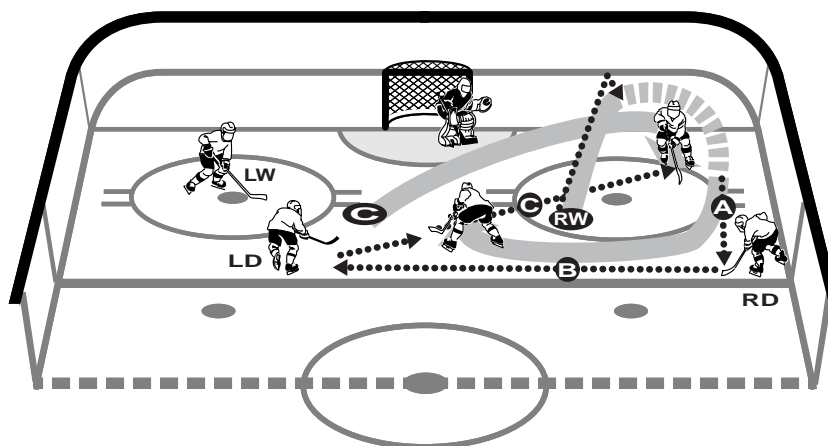
Move the puck after ring around — 3 passes — shoot.

LOW - WISCONSIN - "Z"



- A. Right wing shoots the puck, retrieves puck and passes out from deep corner to right defenseman, the skates up boards
- B. Right defense passes across to left defense
- C. Left defense passes to the right wing coming up the boards
- D. Right wing can shoot or pass to the center or left wing

Mid-Board Wisconsin – “Z”



- A. Right wing shoots the puck, retrieves the puck and passes out just below the circle, to right defense
- B. Right defense passes across to left defense, who sends a short pass to the right wing, who has skated up the boards and around the top of the circle
- C. The right wing can then shoot, pass to the left wing or pass to the center

CYCLING

1. Creative - fun - entertaining - rink rat hockey
2. Can be taught to semi-skilled or skilled Squirts and up
3. Must have good control of edges both inside and outside
4. Quality execution for their level of:
 - crossovers
 - push-unders
 - control turns
 - escapes
 - mohawks
 - handle puck with eyes up
5. Have conceptual thinking:
 - triangle
 - box or square
 - house
 - umbrella (upside down house)

RULES OF CYCLING

- Use cycling to create openings, shots, rebounds and tips
- Create time and space
- Do not get hypnotized by the flow - take the opening when it presents itself
- Camouflage your tactics
- Players must be disciplined - go to the net - on every chance which you create
- Keep the triangle
- Keep skates moving in a tuck posture - protect yourself against boards
- Only two players below the faceoff dot
- Bump pass must be angled off the boards to reach the deep corner or ring to go behind net
- Forwards must read the flow
- Develop time and space, create openings - and go hard to the net
- Third player always high

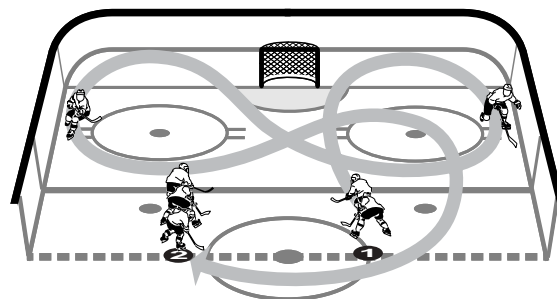
OPTIONS (see following diagrams)

- Curl Shoot
- Double Curl
- Walkout
- Reverse
- Reverse Ring
- Hi - Low

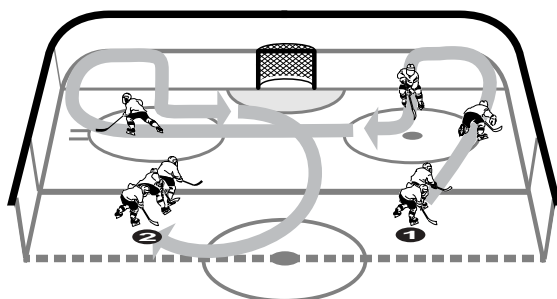
- Wrap Around
- Drop-Rap
- Wisconsin Z
- Trailer
- Ring Around
- Picks
- King of Prussia
- Behind Net
- Pass Out Up Pipe
- Passouts
- Board Passes
- Swedish Yo Yo (A) (B)
- 5/0
- 5/2
- 5/3
- 5/4
- 6/5

BASIC SKATING USED BEFORE YOU GET INTO CYCLING

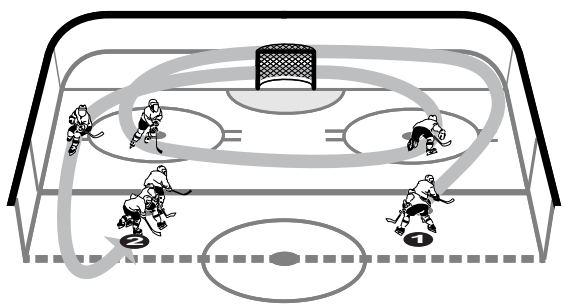
Skate the Cycle - without the puck
Attack Angles Behind the Net



Curl the Circles -Right then left



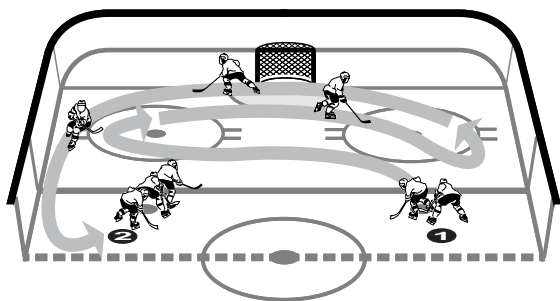
Walkouts



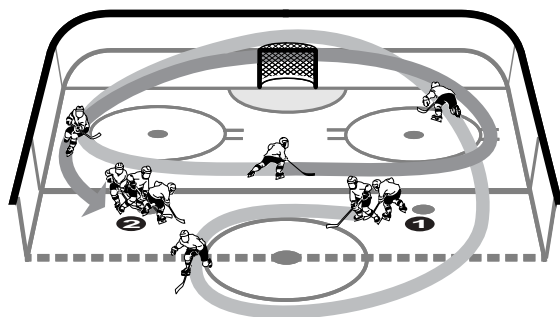
Behind Net - Loop de Loop



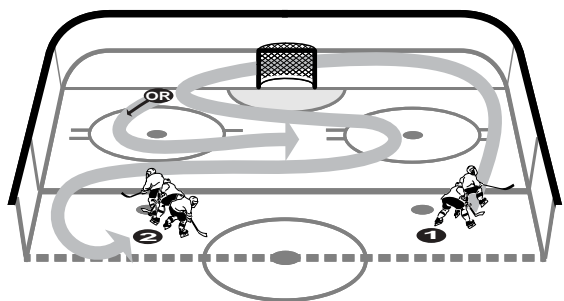
Mohawk Right Angle Skate



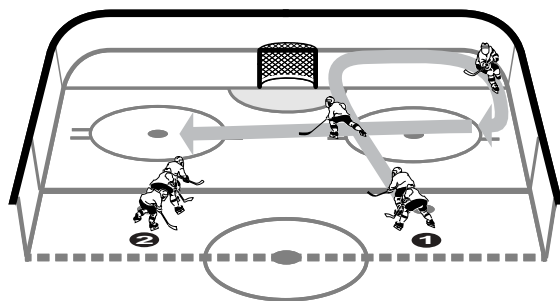
Forecheck Angle Skate



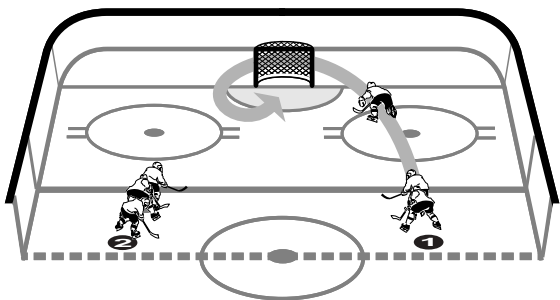
High Come Around



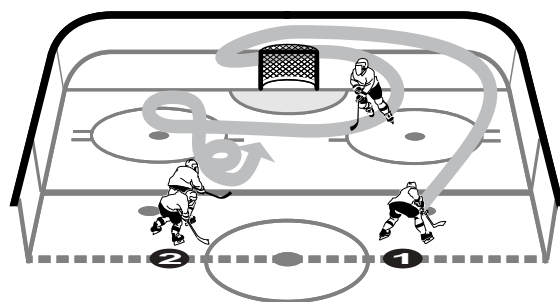
Come Around at Bottom of Circle or at spot



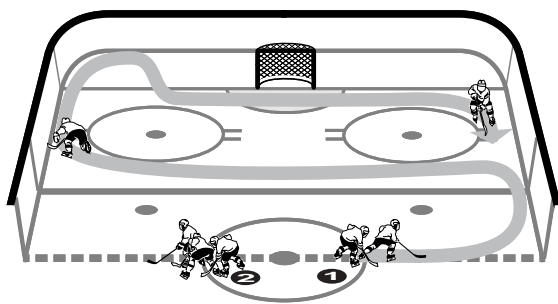
Curl Mid-Board - Lateral Come Across



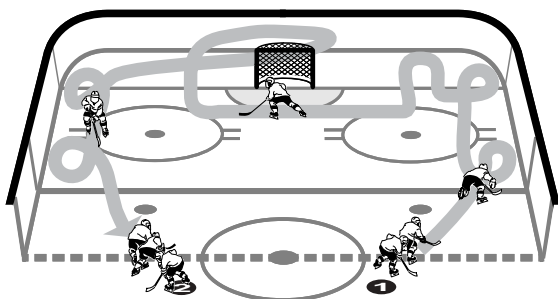
Wrap Around



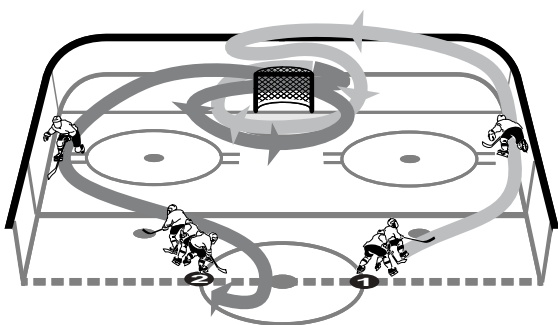
Counters Behind Net with Escapes -
Spin-a-rama



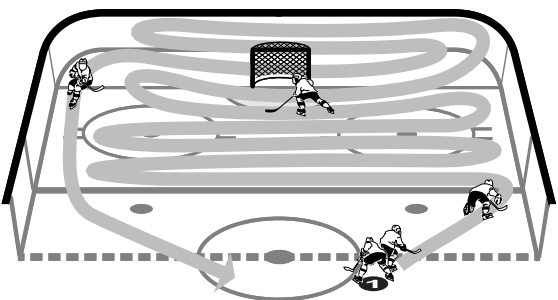
Mid-Board Lateral Come Across - Walkout



Hi Escape - Low Escape - Walkout - Counter -
Low Escape - High Escape



Behind Net Counters - Loop De Loop



Maze

WHY TEACH CYCLING OPTIONS

1. Fun
2. Creativity
3. Develop supportive interaction
4. Flow
5. Expand hockey initiatives
6. Double your offensive options by having as many behind the net options as in front of the net
7. Power play concepts in six-on-six situations
8. Refine power play situations by trying options in six-on-six hockey
9. Teach players to use the seventh player (boards)

SEEDS FOR CREATIVENESS - IDEAS THAT BLOSSOM TO GREAT HOCKEY

TEACHING CYCLING

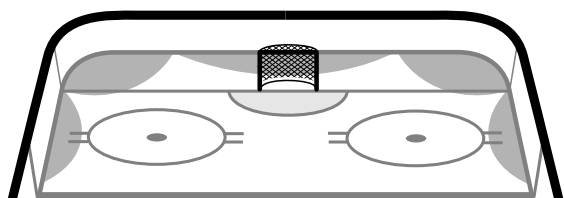
1. Most options start with bump
2. Pass off the boards at hash marks and top of circle at a good angle
3. One player skate the circles
4. Two players skate the circles
5. Two players skate the cycling options

CYCLING WITH ROTATION TO THE OPEN AREAS

1. Open Areas
2. Development of flow cycling top of circle bump
3. Development of flow cycling corner bump
4. Cycle, one bump and pass or shoot
5. Cycle, one bump, three passes using defense
6. Cycle, using the Wisconsin Z pattern
7. Cycle, one bump, drop pass mid-board, and switch
8. Cycle, one bump with walkout to rim of circle
9. Cycle, one bump with pass behind net and double walkout
10. Cycle, one bump with reverse pass behind net and walkout
11. High bump, low bump

12. Cycle, one bump, pass to D, D walks, passes back, everyone goes to the umbrella
13. Cycle, one bump, carry and drop behind the net
14. Low come around, high come around
15. King of Prussia
16. Implementation: do drill 2-4 times for five days then add three-on-two, three-on-three, five-on-five in half rink with defense having sticks turned over and offense going until they score

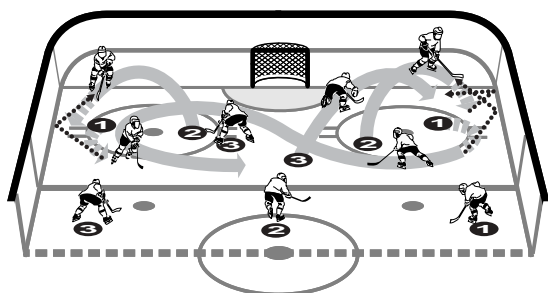
CYCLING #1



Notes/Comments

Open areas sometimes called “Dead Zones” are spaces that coverage is light. The defenders must move to these areas to cover. When this happens, the offense has separated the defense and can confuse defenders with movement.

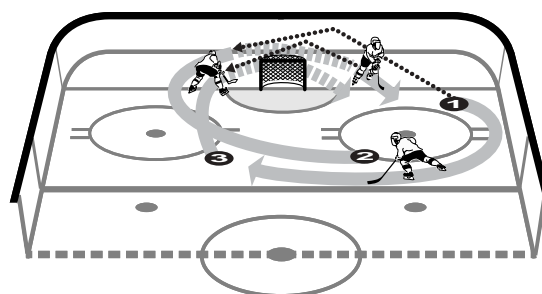
CYCLING #2



Notes/Comments

Fundamental movement of cycling with a line of three skaters, skate the circle, so that each player bumps and receives the bump pass on the left circle and the right circle, do the two circle rotation once, then do it twice so it will be a four circle skate.

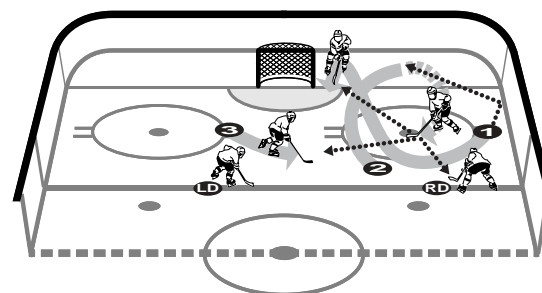
CYCLING #3



Notes/Comments

Practice the same, but bump the puck low in the corner, so the puck stops behind the net. All three separately skate the cycle, then bump puck back behind net, skate both circles to complete the drill.

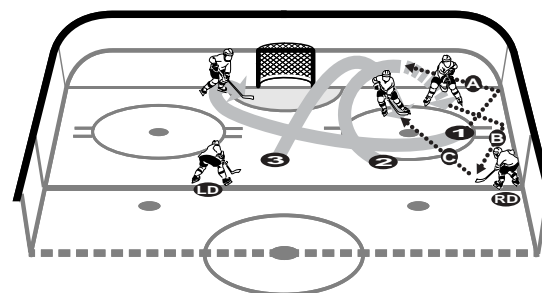
CYCLING #4



Notes/Comments

Cycle one bump. Second player picks up puck, carries out to top of circle and passes back to first player, third player or outlet to defense. Cycle one bump and pass to linemates or shoot.

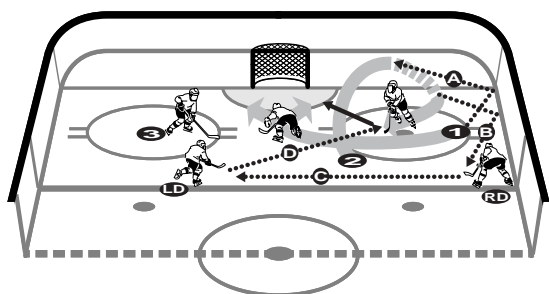
CYCLING #5



Notes/Comments

Cycle one bump - three passes - use defense. First player bumps, second player picks up bump and passes to defense. Defenseman passes to third player through who passes to first player, second player, defense or shoots.

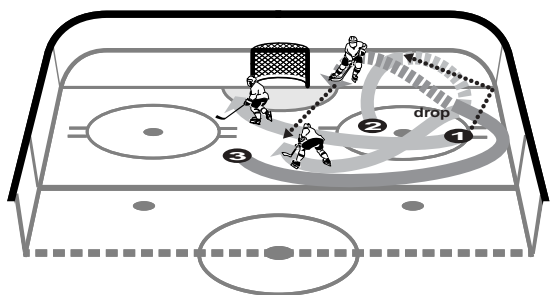
CYCLING #6



Notes/Comments

Cycling using the Wisconsin Z pattern - one bump, second player through picks up puck and passes to D. D passes across to lateral D, who passes back to second player through who shoots or passes. Second player passes low in corner.

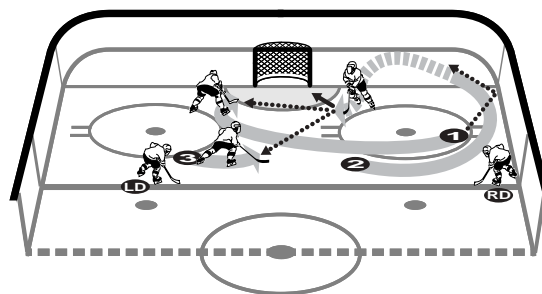
CYCLING #7



Notes/Comments

Cycle one bump by first player who goes to off-post. Second player picks up puck and drops pass to third player coming down. Third player goes deep and passes out.

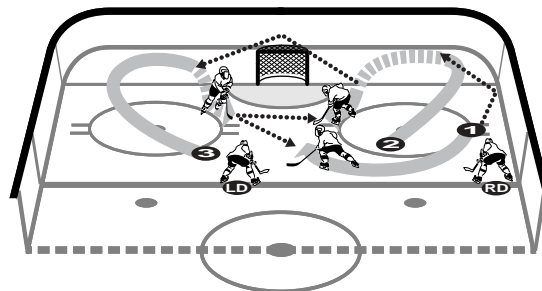
CYCLING #8



Notes/Comments

Cycle one bump with walkout to rim - first player bumps and goes to weak side post. Second player picks up bump and goes deep behind goalie then walks out to rim of circle and shoots or passes.

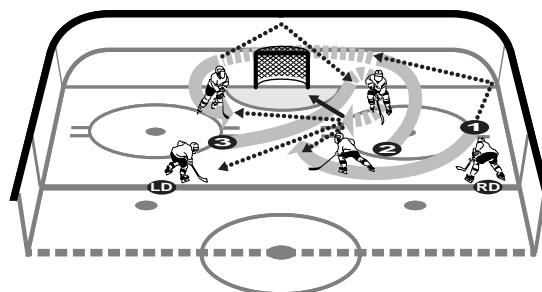
CYCLING #9



Notes/Comments

One bump with pass and double walkout - first player bumps then loops high. Second player picks up bump, walks out and passes behind the net. Third player picks up pass behind net and walks out.

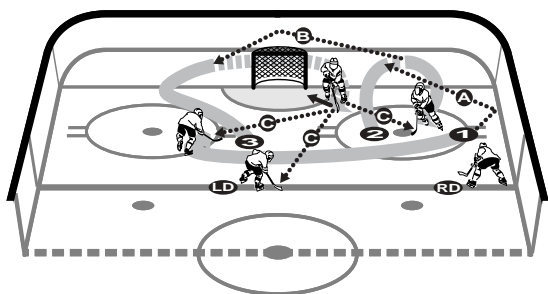
CYCLING #10



Notes/Comments

One bump with reverse pass behind net, and walkout - cycling first player bumps then stays high. Second player picks up puck, goes behind net, then makes reverse pass off boards. Third player picks up reverse pass, walks out, passes or shoots.

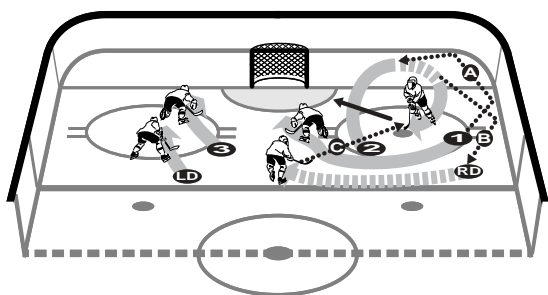
CYCLING #11



Notes/Comments

High Bump ... Low Bump - first player bumps and stays high goes across. Second player picks up bump and then bumps low and comes around circle. Third player circles net and passes or shoots.

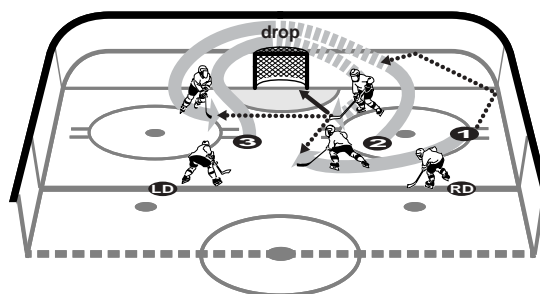
CYCLING #12



Notes/Comments

One bump pass to D. D walks and passes back to passer. Everyone goes to umbrella. First player bumps then goes to net. Second player picks up bump and passes to D. D walks the blue line and passes back to second player who shoots or passes. Third player goes to the net.

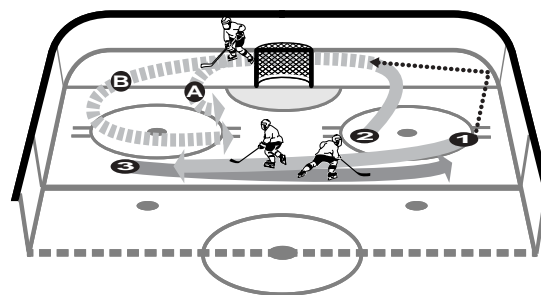
CYCLING #13 - DROP PASS BEHIND NET



Notes/Comments

Cycle one bump ... carry and drop behind net. First player bumps and stays high. Second player picks up puck and carries behind net and drop passes third player circles net, picks up drop pass, walks out and shoots or passes.

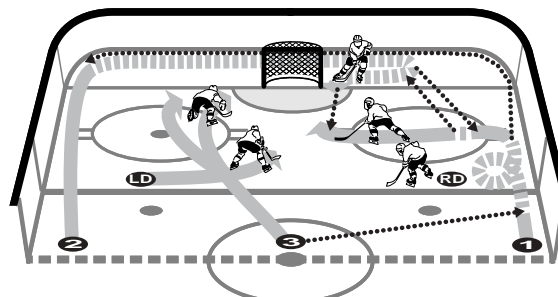
CYCLING #14 - HIGH/LOW COME AROUNDS



Notes/Comments

Low Come Around, High Come Around - first player bumps, stays high and switches sides with third player. Second player moves in, picks up puck, carries behind net and walks out low or high around circle.

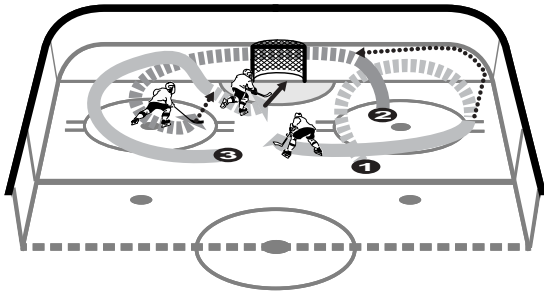
CYCLING #15 - KING OF PRUSSIA



Notes/Comments

King of Prussia - commonly the situation arises from a dump or ring around pass - we will use an outside escape and ring the puck. Third player passes to wing. Wing drives to top of circle, does outside escape and passes around boards. Weakside wing receives puck, goes behind net, passes to first player, gets return pass, skates to post and passes up pipe alley.

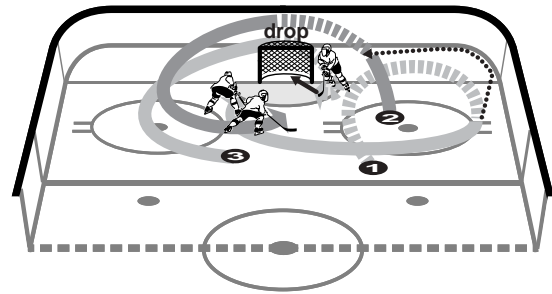
COME AROUND WITH TRAILER



Notes/Comments

First player curls circle, bump passes and stays high. Second player moves in, picks up puck, comes around net and faceoff spot. Trailer passes to third player who has curled down around goal line next to goal post.

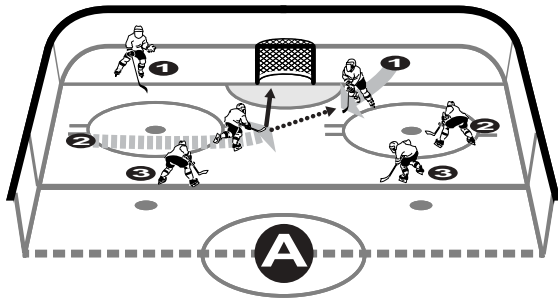
DROP PASS BEHIND NET



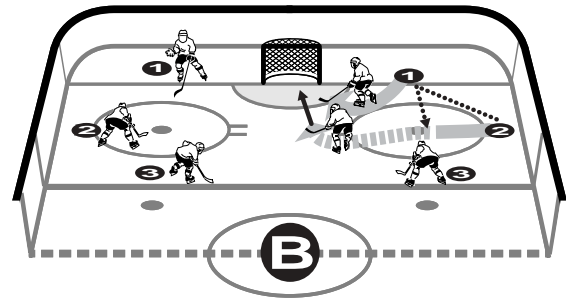
Notes/Comments

First player curls circle, bump passes and goes to far post. Second player moves in, picks up puck, skates behind net, drop passes and curls into slot. Third player skates behind net, picks up drop pass and tries a wrap around.

DRILLS FOR CYCLING

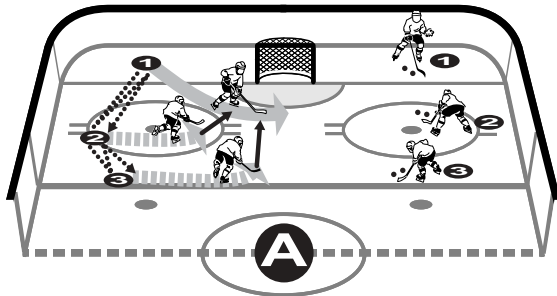


A. #1 supports #2 - walk across - shoot or pass

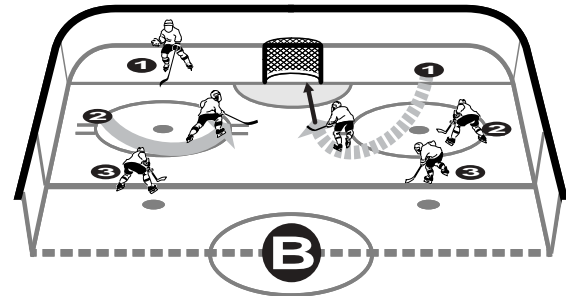


B. Down, up, shoot - rebound

DRILLS FOR CYCLING

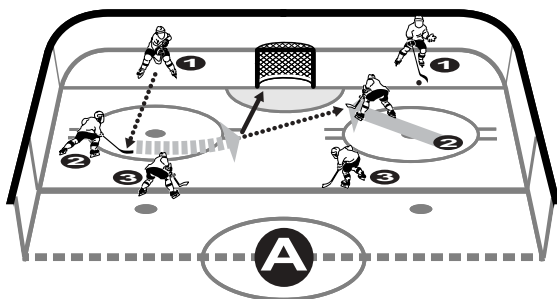


A. (1) & (2) up-down-up-walkout-shoot-screen tip & (3) up-down-up-walkout-screen-tip

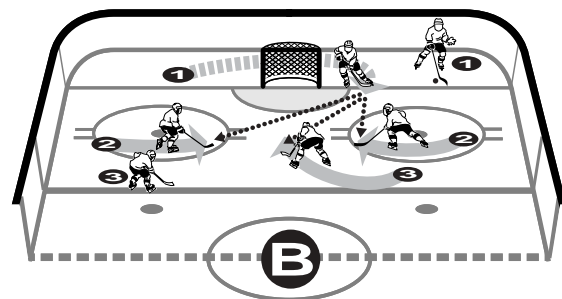


B. #2 supports #1
(1) Walkout with support (2)

DRILLS FOR CYCLING

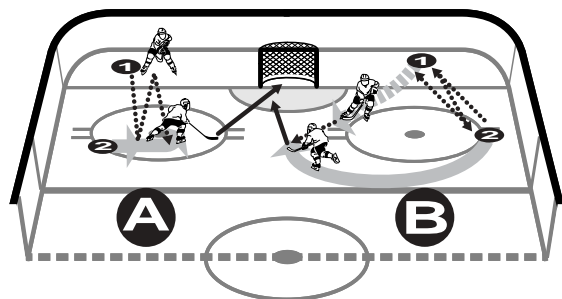


A. Up-walk across-pass-shoot



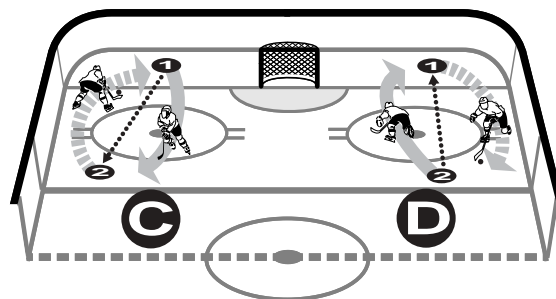
B. Come around-pass out to 2-3-2.

DRILLS FOR CYCLING



A. Up-down-up-walk across-shoot

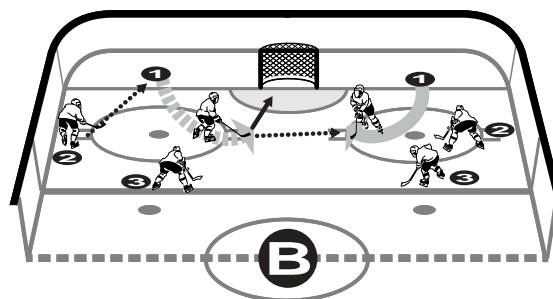
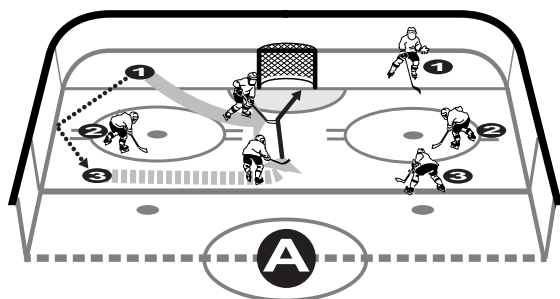
B. Down-up-down-walkout-pass



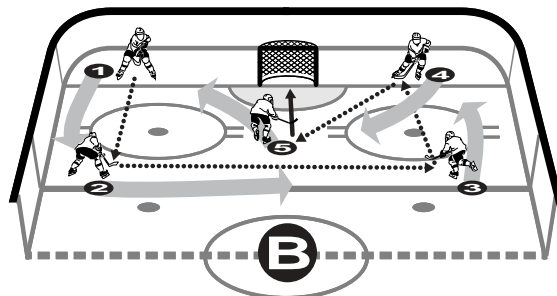
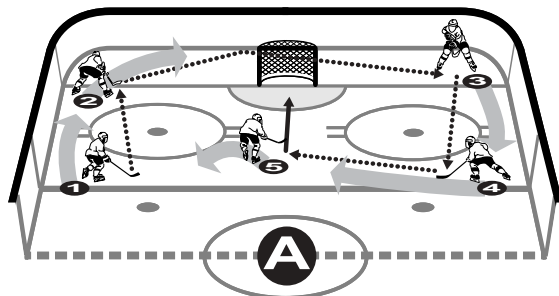
C. Pass up-carry down-switch

D. Pass down-carry up-switch

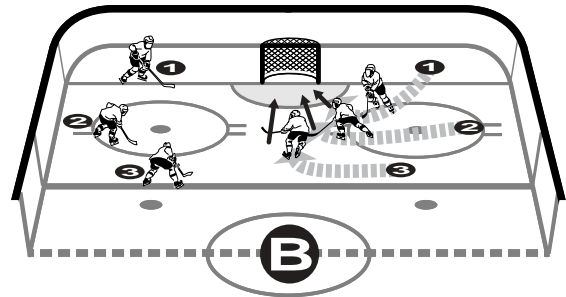
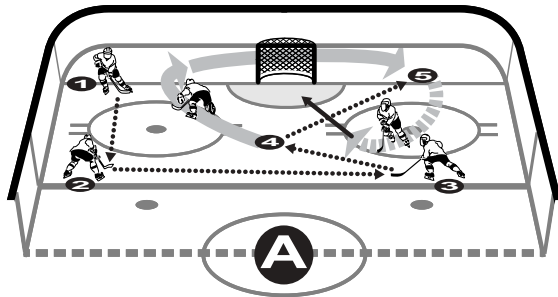
DRILLS FOR CYCLING



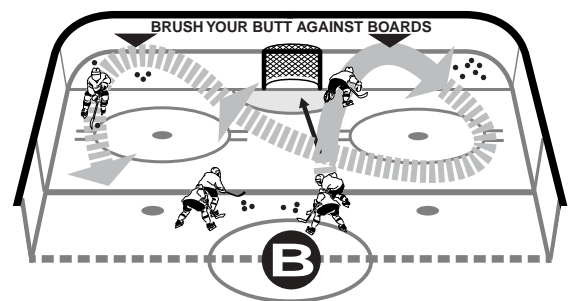
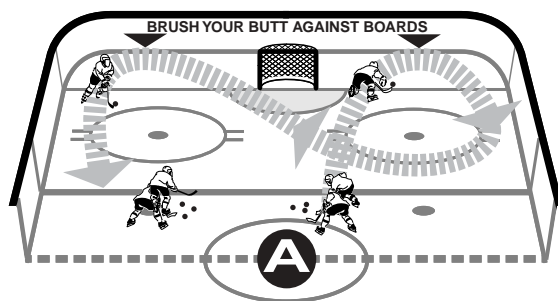
DRILLS FOR CYCLING



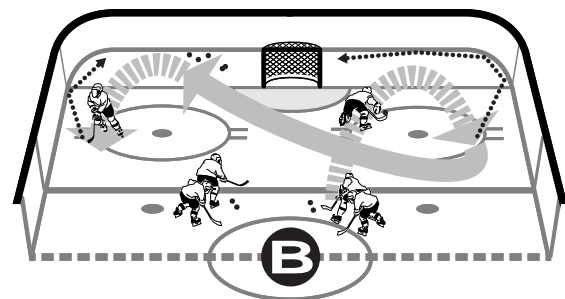
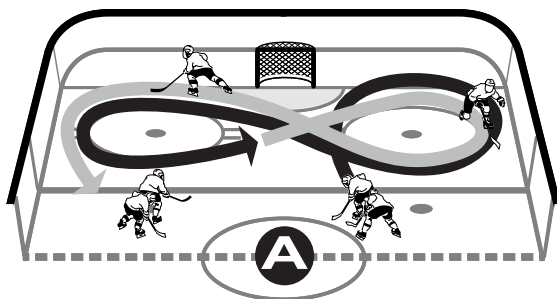
DRILLS FOR CYCLING



DRILLS FOR CYCLING - CARRY PUCK, SHOOTING AND PICK UP PUCK

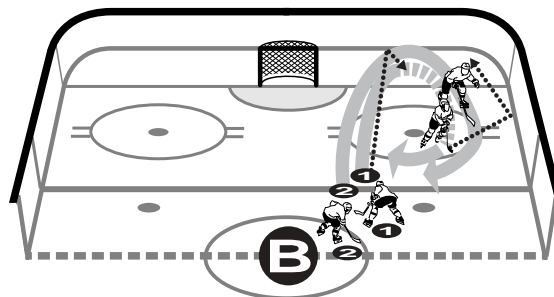
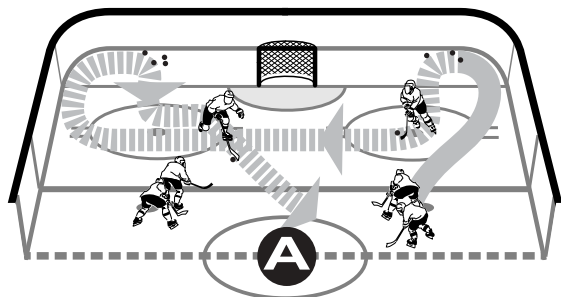


DRILLS FOR CYCLING - BUMP PASS

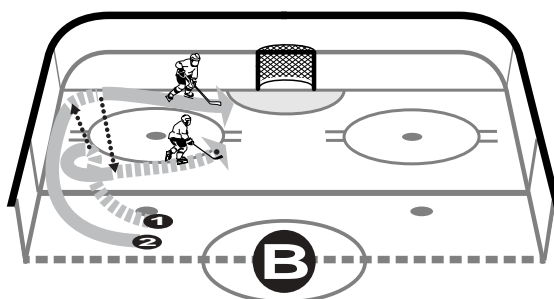
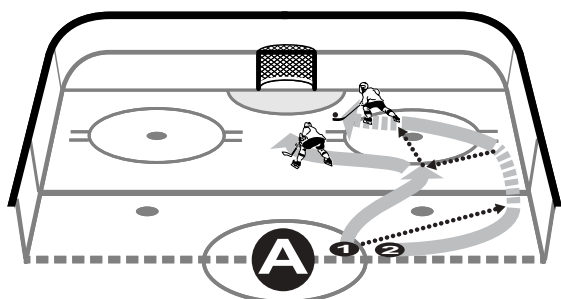


Must have good angle on boards so that puck reaches deep corner or behind goal.

DRILLS FOR CYCLING - WALK OUT - TWO PLAYER BUMP PASS



All play options whether frontal attack, lateral attack or cycle behind net should be taught with two players, then add third player.



A. Pass, diagonal back pass with return pass

B. Escape with give and go passes

C. Cycle with reverse behind net pass

D. Cycle with walkout

TEACHING CYCLING

Usually all options start with bump pass

1. One player skate the circles
2. Two players skate the circles
3. Two players skate the cycling options
 - a. bump-pass: skate the circle, shoot or pass or pass-return-pass.
 - b. bum-pass: skate the circle, pass to D, D passes to D then passes diagonally back to forward coming around circle.
 - c. Bump pass with a walkout.
 - d. Bump pass with reverse behind net and walkout.
 - e. Bump pass with bump pass behind net.
 - f. Billy Baker
 - g. Bump pass with come around low.
 - h. Bump pass with come around low - converted to King of Prussia.
 - i. Bump pass with come around high.
 - j. Drop at hash marks.
 - k. Drop behind net.
 - l. Montreal.

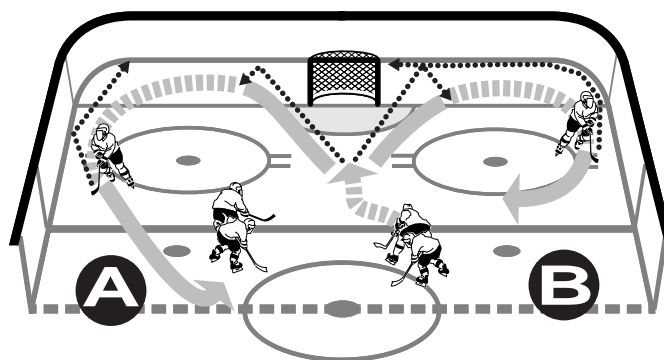
PRACTICE PLAN FOR CYCLING #1

1. Players without pucks skate the circles:
 - a. Cross-overs, control turns, escapes
 - b. Curls, walkouts, behind net counters, behind net come around for rap-around, come around low on circle. Come around mid-circle spot, come around top circle.
2. Same with puck:
 - a. Practice cross-arm bump pass to corner or behind net
 - b. Devils drill with cross-overs, control turns, and escapes at opposite side of horseshoe, stickhandle the course.
 - c. Devils 1/1, 2/2 in the horseshoe.
3. Cycling options with a partner
4. Cycling options with a line
5. Five-on-zero with offensive movement
6. Five-on-five sticks turned over
7. Three-on-three down below the spots - three forwards vs. center and two defensemen

PRACTICE PLAN FOR CYCLING #2

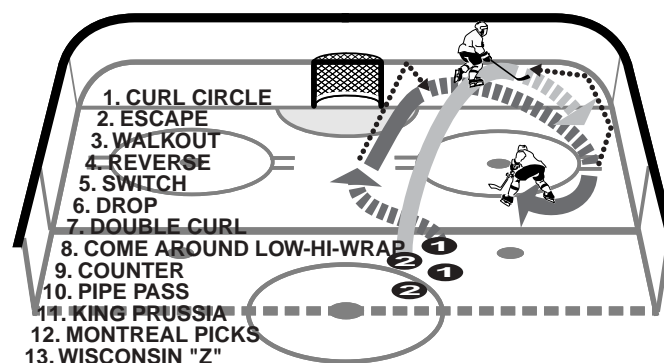
1. Teach offensive movement
 - a. straight give-and-go
2. Teach offensive movement from the goal line extended
3. Teach free flow all three forwards
 - a. cycling from the triangle
 - b. with read and react options
 - c. with third player becoming defensive forward - either top of circle or on defensive side of spot
4. Two player cycle with a defensive forward - depending on forecheck 2-1-2, 2-3
5. Two player cycle with a grinder and a mucker
 - a. fire hose drill
 - b. two-on-one in corner
 - c. two-on-two in corner
 - d. three-on-three in corner
6. Teach "keep it on the wood"

CYCLE DRILLS - SHEET #1



BUMP PASS

- A. To deep corner
- B. Behind net

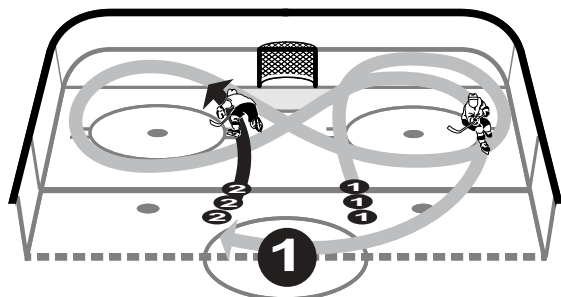


GOOD BUMP

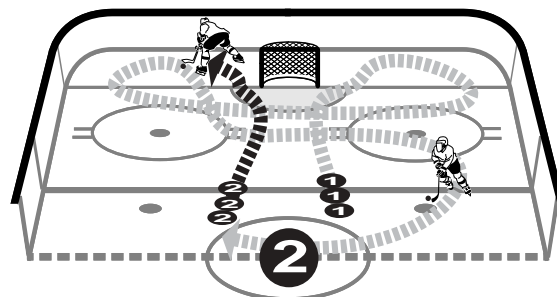
Two players - read and react - use both circles

CYCLE DRILLS SHEETS #2

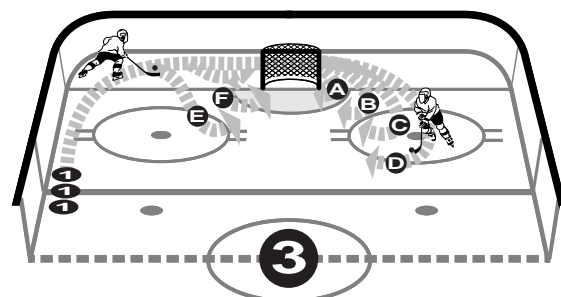
Simple to Complicated with and without pucks



1. Curl the circle

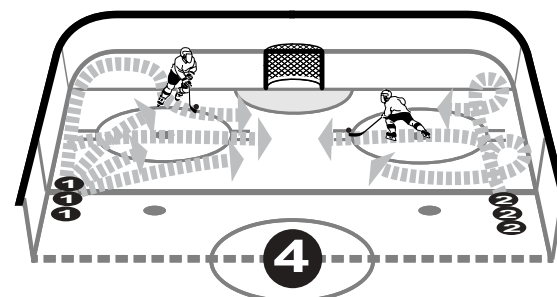


2. Walk out to circle



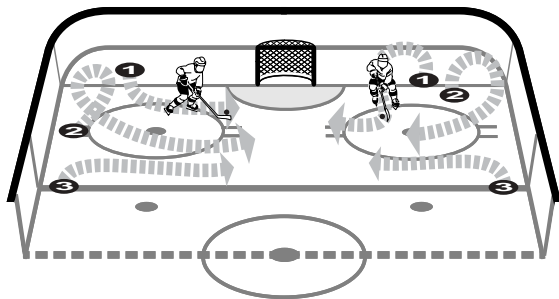
Attacks from Behind Net

3. A. Wrap around
- B. Come around at bottom of circle
- C. Come around at spot
- D. Come around at top of circle
- E. Walk out
- F. Counter

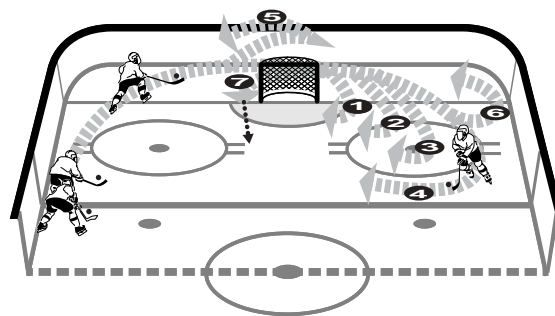


4. Angle Shooting
- A. Escapes
- B. Mohawks

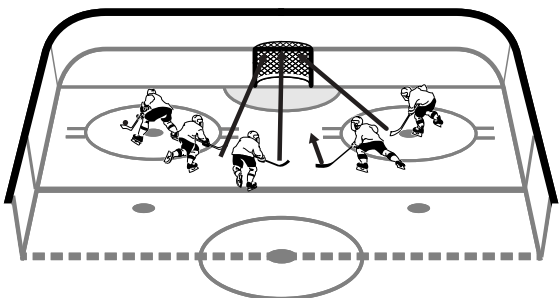
CYCLE DRILL SHEETS #3



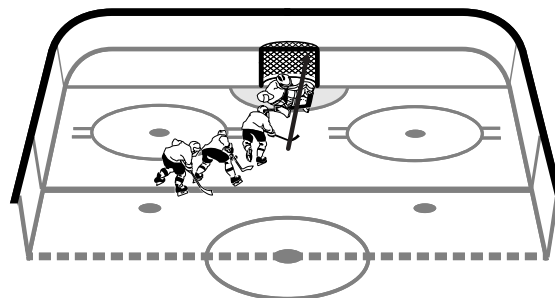
1. Walk out
2. Escape
3. Mohawk



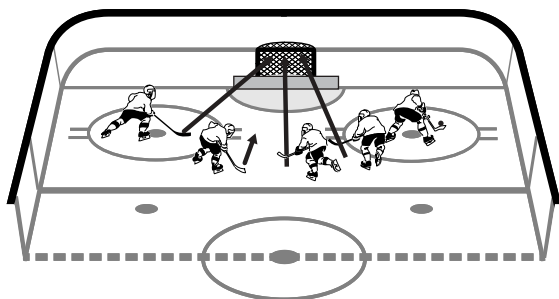
- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Wrap | 5. Counter |
| 2. Walk out | 6. Escape |
| 3. Low - come around | 7. Pass up pipe |
| 4. High - come around | |



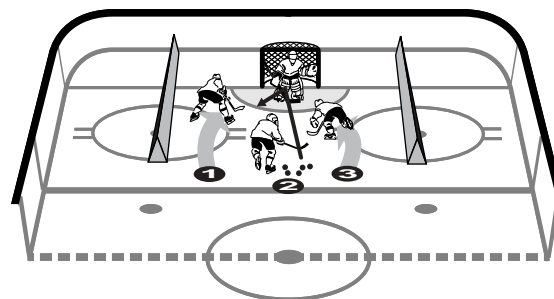
UPPERS - Empty net



Goalie flat across net



Bench-Pull-Back



Three Amigos

**"HARD WORK WILL BEAT TALENT THAT IS NOT WILLING
TO WORK HARD EVERY TIME."**

FOCUS ONLY ON THOSE THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL

Chapter 9

Face-Offs

OBJECTIVES

- **Provide the objective of face-offs**
- **Outline the responsibilities of players during a face-off**
- **Provide face-offs in various situations**

INTRODUCTION

Face-offs involve gaining possession of the puck in order to create scoring chances or eliminate a scoring chance from your opponent.

There are many ways to accomplish these goals by your center winning the face-off, by having your wings and defensemen move in to gain possession during a face-off, and all the players reacting positively after losing a face-off so that they have the opportunity to quickly regain possession of the puck.

CRITICAL OBJECTIVES

1. Have your best face-off person take the face-off where ever it may be on the ice.
2. Have your two best face-off people on the ice at all critical times in case one of your best gets thrown out of the face-off circle.
3. Every player on the ice needs to know each of their responsibilities whether you win or lose the face-off.
4. Be aware of scoring chances created from face-offs during a game.
5. Be aware of your opponents scoring chances from face-offs.

IMPROVING FACE-OFFS

If you want to improve your team's face-offs there are three critical components to address:

- focus
- set objectives
- having players value the importance of this part of the game

Ways to improve your teams focus and overall performance are to set face-off objectives. An objective can be to win 60% of all face-offs.

Talk about the importance of face-off play during the course of a game. Reward good execution. Spend time practicing the techniques and tactics of face-offs.

Finally, make face-off success a matter of pride with your team. It can represent partial victory in any game which was won or lost.

ZONE OBJECTIVES

- **Defensive Zone:** limit the possibility of allowing a scoring chance against your team. You have a chance to start a successful attack.

- Neutral Zone: enhance your opportunity to attack and limit your opponents chance of entering your zone.
- Offensive Zone: create a scoring opportunity and create continuous sustained pressure.

SITUATIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Power Play: The question you need to answer, especially in the offensive zone, do you face-off for possession or do you attempt to score off the face-off?
- Penalty Killing: Most coaches agree that defensive posture must be the first priority in a penalty killing situation. However, when a scoring or offensive opportunity presents itself in a penalty killing situation, remember that power-play units do not tend to think defensively, so seize the moment.

Another area to consider is how to cover a face-off in the defensive zone:

- Identify what opposing player takes the majority of the face-offs
- Does your opponents put a player along the boards, should they be covered?
- Pulled Goalie: This situation is the same which exists in a power play. Should you try to score off the draw or play for possession? If there are only a few seconds remaining, there is no question. You must attempt to score off a set face-off play.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PLAYER TAKING THE FACE-OFF

1. Take charge and be the “quarterback”
2. Know the linesman, how they drop the puck, what they allow around the face-off circle

3. Know the playing rules
4. Know the face-off abilities of your opposing players. Know their strengths, weaknesses, and face-off strategies in all situations
5. Know your team’s strategies in all situations

Face-Off Reads

1. Read how the opposing team sets up
2. Read the techniques of the opposing face-off player
3. Read how the opposing face-off players hold their sticks
4. Read how the linesman conducts a face-off

Key Elements

1. Arrive at the face-off dot:
 - Go to the dot when your teammates are ready
 - Establish position over the face-off dot
 - Physically control the area where the puck will be dropped
 - Be confident
2. Stance:
 - Feet wider than shoulder width, knees bent, good balance over your skates
 - Be in a position to take control, and move quickly
 - Keep your eyes on the linesman’s hand
3. The Face-Off:
 - Use your whole body
 - Keep your arms close to your body
 - Use the power of your legs, shoulder and back
4. Stick Blade:
 - Keep blade slightly off the ice
 - Use an up-and-down motion
 - Do not be too anxious nor tense

NEUTRALIZING YOUR OPPONENT

- Block the motion of the opposing centerman's stick. This will create a loose puck for you to sweep back with a second swipe
- Move quickly into your opponent, checking his/her stick, then body. The puck can be retrieved by a teammate
- Stick check your opponent's stick, spin into his/her body, kick the puck back to a teammate

FACE-OFF ALIGNMENTS - OFFENSIVE

1. This alignment allows the center to attempt to win (draw) the puck back to the shooter (defenseman). The wings interfere (holdup) the opponent's players so the shooter can get the shot away. It is preferable to have a left-handed center taking the face-off in the right circle (and vice-versa) because it is easier for him/her to draw the puck to his/her backhand (see Figure 1).

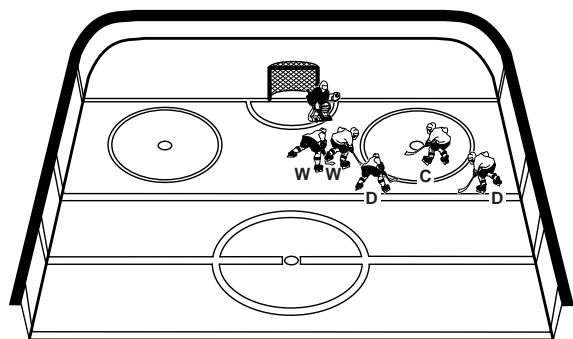


Figure 1

The alignment in Figure 2 is again dependent on the strength of the player taking the face-off. The situation here is to attempt to win the draw to the player on the boards who then passes back to the defenseman for the shot on goal. This alignment may also open up the slot area and force the defending team to place a man on your player along the boards.

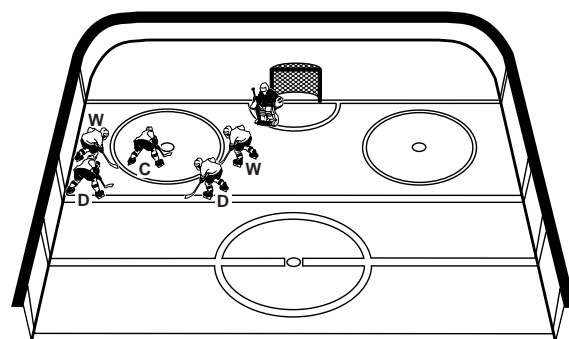


Figure 2

This is the most common alignment for a face-off in the offensive zone (see Figure 3). Here the player attempts to win the face-off back to the shooter in the slot. Again, the player on the circle in front of the net attempts to interfere with the defending player, so the shooter has time to release the shot. There is also a safety value in the presence of the defenseman (a player for a backup shot or puck control in the zone).

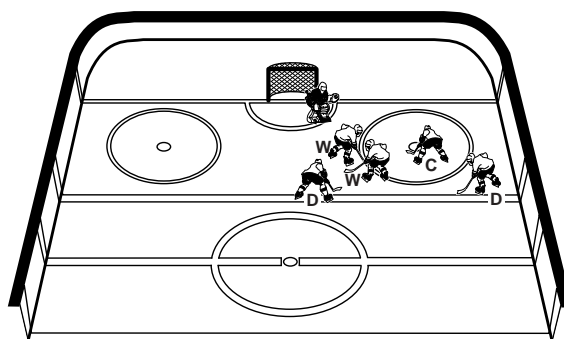


Figure 3

Offensive zone face-off alignment when you have pulled your goaltender becomes very important because you must win the face-off (see Figure 4). In these situations, use your best face-off player and your most experienced players. Attempt to gain possession of the puck on the face-off and work the puck for a good shot on goal.

Figure 4 places a great deal of emphasis in interference of the opposing players once the puck is dropped. The offensive team must tie up the opposing player in order to gain control

and take the best possible shot on goal. It is important in all player advantage situations that the shooter attempt to put his/her shot on goal.

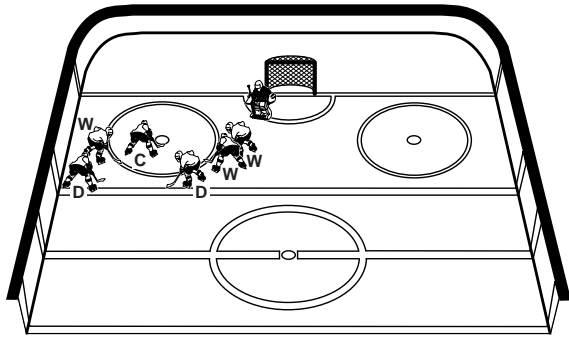


Figure 4

Figure 5 use your strongest possible player positioning to ensure, if the face-off is won, that your team gains a good shot on goal. As in all face-off situations, gaining control of the puck is your primary concern.

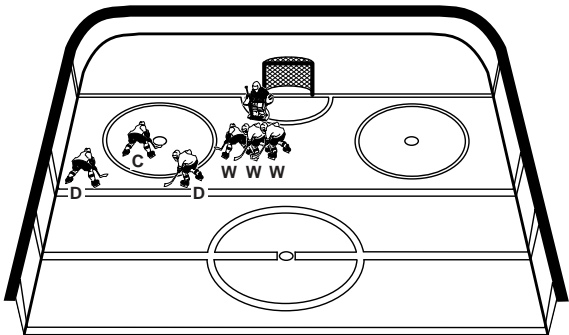


Figure 5

FACE-OFF ALIGNMENTS - DEFENSIVE

Figures 6 and 7 are dictated by the alignment of the offensive team. You are attempting to align your players so that they can get to the shooter as quickly as possible. Since the offensive players are trying to tie up your player, the best you can possibly do is neutralize the offensive team and make sure you have a player moving to cover the shooter on the play.

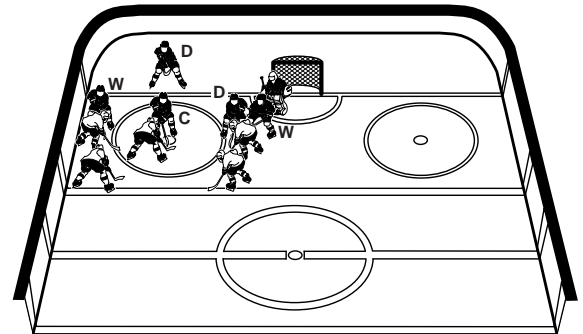


Figure 6

Figure 7 insures one of your players is able to break to the shooter when the puck is dropped.

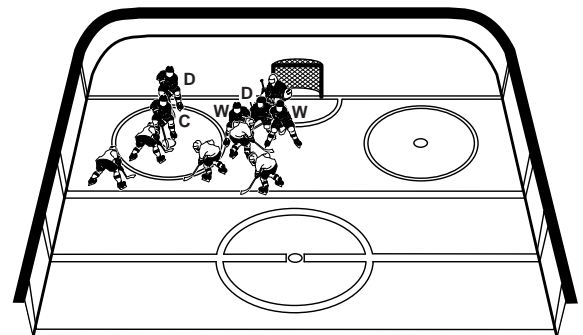


Figure 7

Figure 8 is presented to illustrate defensive positioning when your team has a short-handed defensive zone situation. Again, the player taking the face-off must be your best. You align your players in order to neutralize the opposing team's strength. First and foremost, position your players where it is easiest to get the shooter if your center loses the face-off.

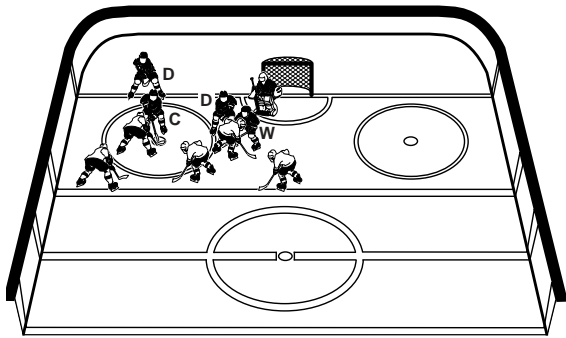


Figure 8

FACE-OFF ALIGNMENTS - NEUTRAL ZONE

Face-off alignment #9 (see Figure 9) in the neutral zone, illustrates the options available to the player taking the center face-off. He/She may go forward by himself/herself or to either wing. He/She also has the option to draw the puck back to either defenseman to gain control.

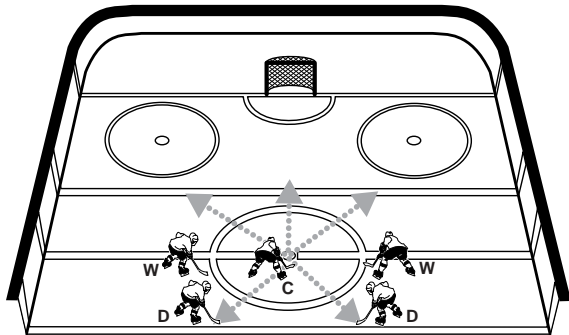


Figure 9

In Figure 10, the face-off player has the option of drawing the puck back for control or going forward to a breaking wing on the far side of the rink.

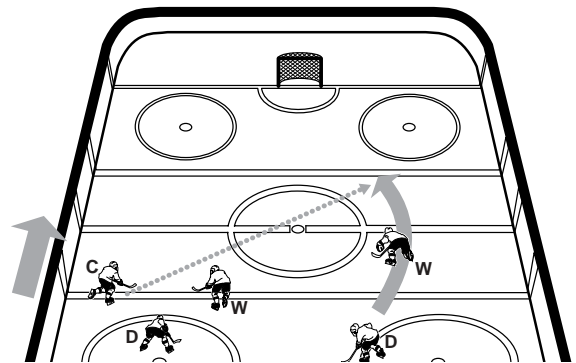


Figure 10

Figure 11 is the basic alignment for a neutral zone face-off. Again, the primary purpose of the face-off is to gain control of the puck to organize an offensive attack on goal.

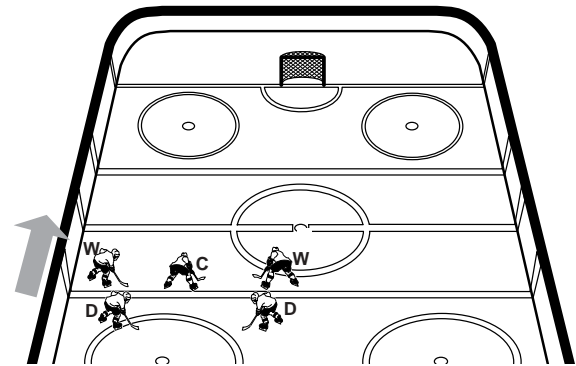


Figure 11

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