SARATOGA YOUTH HOCKEY
COACHING HANDBOOK

RED, WHITE AND BLUE
CROSS-ICE MITE PROGRAM

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK AND A SPECIAL THANKS

Welcome to SYH Red, White and Blue Cross-Ice Hockey. This approach to training forms the foundation of the American Development Model promoted by USA Hockey experts. This handbook was put together for you, the coach, as an aid to optimizing your implementation of the ADM and teaching the game of hockey. This handbook includes a variety of supplemental materials gathered by Wally Bzdell (see below), USA Hockey's Adult Education Coordinator and includes information from USA Hockey, Hockey Canada, Dave Randall Hockey Skating Instruction and other highly experienced leaders in hockey. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with all of the materials in the handbook as they will greatly enhance your teaching knowledge of the details of the game.

We will be following the ADM practice plans in order with minor modifications as necessary. Each week, the Red, White and Blue Director will be contacting you to assign station work for that week. Please take the time to review the details of that station and any other supplemental materials that may aid in the running of that station prior to coming to the rink. After review but before going to the rink, please contact the director if you have any questions or concerns. It is very important that you attend the sessions for which you have been assigned. Please allow as much notice as possible if you cannot attend any given session so that substitutes can be rotated in.

This effort to implement the ADM requires a substantial commitment from the volunteer staff. For that there is no substitute. The kids need good coaches. With that said, we offer A SPECIAL THANKS to Wally Bzdell for helping us coordinate our Red, White and Blue Program by sharing with us a wealth of material specifically designed for implementation of the ADM at the 8U Level. Coach Bzdell combined his expertise in sports psychology with numerous expert approaches to training hockey players to compile his Cross-Ice Handbook which he has so generously provided us here at SYH. He currently runs the Schenectady Youth Hockey Cross-Ice Program and is the USA Hockey Adult Education Coordinator for the Northern Zone. He has also been the sport psychologist for the Union College men's ice hockey team since 2007 as well as providing sport psychology services to a range of Siena College teams and athletes. Coach Bzdell has a Doctoral degree in counseling psychology with a specialization in sport and performance psychology, a Master's degree is in counseling with a specialization in athletic counseling and a Bachelor's degree from Union College (psychology) as well as an Associate's degree in physical education. We hope to have Coach Bzdell visit us during the season to provide us with more information on how to be better coaches and better parents of young hockey athletes. In the meantime we shall do our best to implement the ADM using Wally's guidelines. Thanks Wally for all you do for youth hockey.

THE SCHEDULE

STARTING IN OCT. AND RUNNING THROUGH MAR.

Weekly: Mon. and Fri. 6-7 PM Window for start (check web schedule for exact time: http://www.saratogahockey.org/Current_ice.php)

Bi-Weekly: Sunday 8am for combined Dave Randall/ADM stations (check web schedule for exact dates)

For Parents of Hockey Players

The Game is for the Kids!

- We must focus on why they play...not what we want.
- Be yourself
- Enjoy watching your child play but do not become overly ego-involved
- Look relaxed, calm, positive, and energized. Your attitude will influence your child.
- Have a life of your own outside of your child's sport experience.
- Do things with other parents
- Make friends with other parents. Socializing can make this more fun!
- Volunteer as much as you can.
- Police and self-monitor other parents to ensure all parents behave properly.

With Coaches:

- Leave coaching to the coaches. Don't interfere.
- Give us support to help your children.
- Communicate with us about your child
- Inform us of relevant issues that might affect your child at hockey
- Inquire about the progress of your child. You have a right to know!
- Make us your allies (let's not contradict one another)

Ways to be a Great Hockey Parent!

- Get involved with our team in a positive way.
- Let your son or daughter know you enjoy having them involved with the game
- Don't lose perspective; emphasize the values associated with the game.
- Be supportive and don't let expectations become a burden to your son or daughter. Why they want to play is most important
- Model respectful behavior for your son or daughter.
- Give them unconditional love and support whether they play well or not.
- Make safety, respect, fair play and fun a priority.
  - Emphasize values of respect, responsibility, and relationships
- Encourage your child to participate but avoid pressuring them to play the game.
- Communicate with coaches in a professional effective manner.
- Keep a sense of humor. If you are having fun and laughing, so will your child.
- Understand that he/she might need a break from hockey (or other sports) occasionally.
- Don't compare your child's progress to that of other children (it is not critical at this age)
- Don't use sarcasm, threats, or fear to motivate your child
- Help your child set performance goals (learning skills)
- Cheer for all children on the ice (even when they score against your son/daughter)

USA HOCKEY'S
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL MITES

- Help ensure our participants gain physical literacy
- Develop a passion for hockey in all our children (keep kids and families in the game)
- Encourage participation in a variety of complimentary sports to help our children maximize their ability to reach their genetic potential in hockey
- Develop on-ice balance, coordination, agility and speed (ABC'S)
- Introduce basic puck control skills
- No formal competition: cross-ice/half-ice games
- Hockey 2 times per week
- Training year: 4 weeks/mo, 5 months/year

EXPECTATIONS FOR CROSS-ICE MITES

- Players and parents should arrive at the rink 30 minutes before ice time
- Players should be ready 5 minutes before ice time
- Players listen with eyes, ears, bodies on one knee. Coaches will re-direct; parents should not
- A parent or responsible adult for each child should be present at practice; coaches might need your help, particularly if your son or daughter is having a tough day.
- More than 3 disruptions (not redirections) that lead to time-outs on the bench in a practice will lead to that player being removed from that practice (sit on the bench for the remainder of the practice)
- Speak positively about all practices and games with children...if you have concerns come to the coaches. The players need to learn many skills through repetition and we need to reinforce "how great" that is.

FOR EACH PRACTICE/GAME NIGHT

- Please make sure to put a piece of white tape across the front of your player's helmet and print their first name followed by their age. Ideally you want coaches to be able to read both name and age from several feet away. For ex: JOEY 7
- Make sure skates and equipment fit well (skates are sharp)
- Sticks are proper length (no higher than nose and no lower than collar bone with skates on) and proper size: be sure to use a junior stick, and wood sticks probably provide a better "feel" for the puck than composite sticks
- Each player should have a water bottle filled and clearly labeled with his/her name on it
- Please let us know if your son or daughter will not be at practice or game night

improving, and a recognition that this is because of their hard work. When kids attribute success to natural talent they tend not to be willing to fail (hurts their ego). When kids attribute success to hard work they tend to persevere through frustration (as long as they know what the end result can be).

We foster optimism and enjoyment through positive words and actions. We give tons of encouragement and praise and expect them to do it with one another. Each coach should say something positive to each child, each practice. We are kind to them and one another. We encourage friendships and laughter...this is fun.

We strive for them to be self-regulated learners. If we teach well they will start to have a model in their head of what good technique looks like and can notice/feel when they are not quite there. They will start to make their own adjustments to be able to perform like the model in their head.

We help them learn to be good teammates and citizens. We set and follow behavioral expectations on the ice and off the ice. We are supportive and expect them to support others. When we need to correct behaviors and disruptions we are doing so in a respectful way and we address the behavior (do not criticize the person).

We create standards and high expectations. We let them know that they can learn what we are teaching. We keep it simple and emphasize the main points repeatedly. We expect them to get better each and every practice and we want them to recognize it. We develop individual hockey skills and "hockey sense" (tactics) – we don't work on systems.

Experts tell us the hockey systems in youth hockey might create winning teams at young ages but they do so at the expense of developing talent and creativity. Systems are counterproductive for younger players.

Experts also tell us that good hockey **tactics** are the basis for all systems and those strategies foster creativity and good "hockey sense." Players who can read and react, anticipate the play, and are skilled can learn and adapt to any system when they are mature players. We will develop "hockey sense" in our cross-ice games.

Applying Principles, Hockey Truths, and the Core Philosophy

We want our players to develop athleticism, hockey skills, and hockey sense. Agility, Balance, Coordination, and Speed are key areas for this age group. Our stations and drills (as well as exercises between drills) help develop these core areas along with specific hockey ability. We also encourage families to have their children active in other sports or athletic games during the hockey season and without question in the other 7 months of the year. USA Hockey recommends that we have one 30 minute session per week with our players off the ice working on **Agility, Balance, Coordination, and Speed.** We will not be able to coordinate that this year, but ask that parents make sure their kids are

involved in another activity.

On The Ice

The practice format is purposely set up to develop the skills the experts want kids to have at this age:

- 1 station is of ABC's
- 1 station of hockey competition, 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4
- 1 station is on puck control skills
- 1 station is of passing/shooting skills
- 2 stations are devoted to specifically skating skills

Out of these six stations, two to three will typically be in a games format.

Skill Development on the Ice

Skating

- Deep knee bends
- Use of edges
- Good powerful forward strides with full extension (snapping toe at end of stride)
- Forward and Backward crossovers
- Two feet down on tight turns using edges properly
- Pivots – from forwards to backwards and backwards to forwards
- 1 foot stop
- 2 foot stop
- Stick control and placement while skating (if cannot control your stick you cannot handle the puck)

Puckhandling

- Open ice carry (1 and 2 hands on stick/knowing when to use each)
- Good stick handling – rolling wrists, head up, using peripheral vision
- Using body to shield the puck, be able to reach/extend arms and body for puck
- Use feet as part of puckhandling skills
- Carrying the puck in traffic
- Skating backwards while carrying puck

Passing

- Forehand and back-hand
- Sweeping puck across body (not slapping puck)
- Follow-through to where want puck to go
- Passing to moving player (anticipating where he/she will be)
- Stationary passing
- Passing while moving
- Bounce passes off the boards
- Receiving a pass – cupping blade over puck and moving hand down stick when hard pass

- Getting to open space, supporting the puck, and calling for a pass

Shooting

- Wrist shot in a sweep motion across the body.
- Force is downward and forward to produce power/speed of shot
- Backhand shot in a sweeping motion.
- Transfer of body weight and holding stick tightly.
- Shooting while standing still.
- Shooting while skating (keep feet moving).
- Looking for open space in net to shoot.

Goalies

1. Stance and Movement
    a. Feet shoulder width apart and on inside edges
    b. Knees bent and elbows close to body
    c. Gloves ahead of body – same height
    d. Stick ahead of body
    e. Avoid extremes
2. Angles and Positioning
    a. Forward and back
    b. Shuffle
    c. Recovery to feet
    d. Square chest to puck

To borrow from Laura Stamm (renowned power skating coach) teach players to:

Do the skill correctly.
Do the skill correctly and powerfully.
Do the skill correctly, powerfully, and explosively.
Do the skill correctly, powerfully, explosively, and quickly under lots of pressure in game situations (cross-ice games).

Teaching Hockey Sense

Jerry York, head coach at Boston College, recommends that for youth hockey we need to keep it simple – puck support, pressure for puck, back pressure, puck possession. He emphasizes that these are the concepts players need and not systems – they are tactics or what we otherwise call "hockey sense." He tells us to focus on skill development, hockey sense, and fun.

Some facts about hockey that will help us frame developing hockey sense:

- 75% of passes in NHL are 1/3 width of the ice or less…hockey is a SHORT PASSING game. You must go towards the puck if you what to have the puck.
- 80% of the game is played away from the puck so we need to teach it – away from the puck is a significant amount of hockey sense!
- Close puck support is much more important for breakouts than staying in lanes (yet youth coaches tend to teach lanes). Teach puck support now to develop good breakouts later in hockey.
- The number one thing a player away from the puck does is help the puck carrier and the number one way to help the puck carrier is to get close to him.
- The BEST offensive theme is
  - Pass the puck
  - If no one is open, keep it and skate it
  - Sometimes make 1-1 moves but 1-1 doesn't work very well

  ***These put us in the position to shoot**
- There are only two reasons to stickhandle: a) The puck needs to be settled flat on the ice; b) The puck must be protected from an opponent. Otherwise you should carry the puck in the pass-ready position (on forehand)

It is good to "quiz" our players as the season progresses about tactics…in fact we need to quiz them. If they can't tell us they won't be able to think it on the ice. The great Scotty Bowman quizzes his players!

Kevin Constantine (former NHL coach) tells us that to teach "hockey sense" (tactics) we should look at four areas:

1. **Offense with the puck (10% of game per player)**
2. **Offense without the puck (40% of game per player)**
3. Defense at the puck (10% of game per player)
4. Defense away from the puck (40% of game per player)

Below are some hockey basics followed by more specific tactics that we will teach x-ice mites.

The Schedule and Framework

The season starts in early October and runs through March. You can expect your player to get about 58-60 on-ice sessions during the season (the number recommended by USA Hockey for this age group). For the most part we should expect to be on the ice two to three times per week. We expect to host a jamboree and attend 2-3 at other Capital District rinks.

A snapshot of the season is as follows...

Our first session of the week (Mondays for 2011-2012) will use the ADM mite practice plans provided by USA Hockey. We will use teaching stations, strive to incorporate constant involvement and movement (minimize standing in line), and fun games/competitive games (that teach skills without players knowing that is the purpose) or cross-ice scrimmages.

Our second session, on Friday evenings, is dedicated to cross-ice games utilizing the recommendations and format of USA Hockey. We will frame these sessions as "Game Nights." For those of you familiar with "Hockey Night in Canada" which happens each Saturday night – our version is "Hockey Night in Saratoga." We encourage players, parents, and families to socialize and enjoy their experience.

The third session is every other Sunday morning. Coach Dave Randall will run skating stations (with help from our coaches) and there will be additional stations from the ADM practice plan for that week. Coach Randall's stations will focus on skating instruction...this is critical for the long-term development of our children. Without solid skating skills our children will struggle with other aspects of the game. Dave is amongst the best at what he does and we are fortunate to have him on board! We incorporate some competitive games (repetition of skills without players knowing that is what they are doing) on Sundays in at least one station.

We know from the research and the recommendations of the top hockey experts that children in the mite age group develop better, and quite frankly have more fun, during cross-ice experiences than they do in full-ice experiences because they are more involved in the game (As an aside, Ken Martell from USA Hockey points out that Zetterberg, Datsuk, Ovechkin, and Lindstrom all played cross-ice through 10 U squirts!). Please keep in mind that BOTH USA Hockey and Hockey Canada are advocating for games for this age group to be cross-ice. The message is clear...the optimal game environment for mites is cross-ice! Similarly, both USA Hockey and Hockey Canada tell us that we should not keep score during games.

Hockey Night in Saratoga Format

1. Two or three cross-ice games are running at a time (based upon the number of players; players are matched for age/skill level). Games are primarily 4 v 4. If only two games are being played the players can use the neutral zone ice for free-time (unstructured practice) between shifts.

2. No score shall be kept for games.

3. The scoreboard shall be used as a timing device only – the horn will sound every 60-90 seconds for a player change. The clock will keep running so we will try to make player (line) changes as quick as possible.

4. One coach will serve as a referee for each game.

5. Face offs should be conducted in the middle of the ice section to begin games, after every goal, and after a penalty substitution.

6. Penalties – flagrant penalties that have the potential to hurt someone will be called. A penalized player's team will not play short-handed. Penalized players will be immediately substituted and miss the rest of that shift (returning at his or her next scheduled shift)

7. Each game will be 3 periods. Each period will last around 18 minutes. There will be a brief pause (1-2 minutes) between periods and players will change directions for each period. Please note that there is a 5 minute warm-up and slight time adjustments will be made as needed

Players will be in three groups for games (and we will try to keep them in these rough groupings for practices as well).

Youngest (6U) and/or most novice levels of skills
Mainly 7 year olds – intermediate skill level
Mainly 8 year olds – most advanced skill level

My Guiding Principles for Working with Young Hockey Players

This is not about one season. This is about a hockey foundation. This is about creating a love for the game. This is about making skill development fun. This is about planning backwards and executing forwards – in other words... recognizing that player development in hockey is not about being the best mite player it is about being your best at 15-18, and for a small fraction of players, nation-wide, being your best in your mid twenties. This is about recognizing that short term gains can often impede and be a detriment to long-term development. Again, create a love for the game by making skill development fun in a developmentally appropriate way! We will use the research and recommendations of hockey experts to guide us in making this happen.

Hockey is a late specialization sport – children should not specialize in hockey before ages 13-15 years. We want our players to develop physical literacy; experts consistently recommend that our children play multiple sports. We encourage our parents to have their children in other sports and activities not only after hockey season... but during hockey season! This means we will try to keep our schedule consistent so families can plan for other activities. We also believe that there are times to put hockey aside – we will take Thanksgiving and the winter break off so families can be families and enjoy the holidays together.

* AGES 5-15ARE WHEN YOU BUILD PHYSICAL LITERACY. Specialization (only one or two sports) before 13-15 years of age hinders physical literacy development and ones athletic potential.

* Around age 14-15 is when specific sport skills will start to truly show if you've developed physical literacy.

* Do we give kids an adult bike to learn to ride? No, we give them a small bike; we even start with training wheels. Do we say "you need to ride a big bike, that little bike isn't "real" bike riding"? No, that sounds crazy to us but that's what we've been doing in hockey with full ice and regular pucks. Yet some people are still insisting on the big bike model of hockey. We will let our players *ride the bike that fits!*

The Simplest Truths about Hockey

It is critical that we train kids with "speed of foot, speed of hand, speed of mind. You must practice them all!" *Tarasov – Russian National Coach*

"Speed wins – physical speed and decision making speed." *Dr. Steven Norris – Director of Performance and Strategy for the Canadian Sport Centre; primary role is to work with national team officials and coaches to devise and enact programs that increase the likelihood of success at international level competition (Olympics, World Championships, etc.)*

"To rapidly increase the skill levels of your players drills must be:

a. High Tempo
b. Short Duration
c. In a confined Area"

Kevin Constantine – Coached in the NHL (Sharks, Devils, Penguins) for seven seasons; coached learn to skate through junior hockey; currently with Swiss championship team

Endurance training is a sure-fire way to ruin a hockey player. It is a sprint sport and we need fast twitch muscle development and power. The best sprinters are the fastest skaters. *Mike Boyle*

Small ice games and drills create the best environment to develop *speed of foot, speed of hand, and speed of mind!* We want our players to be intense on the ice and our drills will be high tempo with short duration in a confined area!

In all of our practices we can push the players to go beyond their limits and go hard with the puck and after the puck. The competitive games stations are ideal to reinforce offensive and defensive strategies.

We will make as many drills as possible races and competitions (even simple drills like circles for cross-overs).

Our Foundation/Core Philosophy

The Cross-ice Mite program is based upon the best available research that is applicable to youth sport in general and in particular to youth hockey. We acknowledge that leading hockey minds and sport scientists know more about athletic and hockey development than we do. We are thrilled that this expertise is being shared with us and gives us a blue print for developing active children, good athletes, and good hockey players. We believe that all of our players deserve the best opportunity to develop to the full extent of their potential; which comes with applying the recommendations of the experts.

Within our core coaching philosophy (adopted from the Coach Effectiveness Program by Smith and Smoll) we emphasize that success is found in hard work, practice, and improvement (as one strives for victory). We help teach this while creating an environment that fosters what children want out of sport (hockey): to learn skills, enhance their sense of competence, be with friends, and have fun.

We teach (through our actions) **deliberate practice/deep practice**. Essentially we want children to learn through their mistakes and corrections of their mistakes. This means we need to give good feedback and emphasize the correct technique. It also means we need to provide examples of how the skill should look (they need a picture in their mind to guide them). This boils down to **quality practice** instead of the quantity of practice.

We help develop **self-efficacy** – the belief that they can perform on-ice skills, are

The Basics of Hockey Sense (team tactics)

Offense WITH the puck:

The best choices are in this order:

1. **Move the puck.** Get your feet moving and pass it if another teammate is open. Advance it towards the other team's goal.
2. **Keep the puck.** If nobody is open, skate it and if on boards protect it.
3. If nobody is open and you are being pressured, go 1 v 1

THESE PUT YOUR TEAM IN A POSITION TO SHOOT!

* Stop on the puck (never skate over it or make a long curl to go back and get a puck we missed)

Offense WITHOUT the Puck:

1. Support the Puck. Get close enough to the puck carrier that he/she can pass to you. You must be facing the puck carrier and your stick must be on the ice.
2. Create Time and Space – stick picks, skate near the puck carrier so defensive player has to worry about you also.
3. Become a scoring threat – backdoor (other side of net just off the crease), screen goalie, position for tip, drive the net.
4. Provide insurance – player hanging back in case puck is turned over; still ready for pass and to attack the net but you can defend if the other team gets the puck.

Defense AT the Puck:

1. Tons of pressure; stick on the ice; stick on puck; battle for puck
2. Force the puck carrier to his/her backhand (more likely to make a mistake)
3. Stay on the defensive side and angle the player away from our net.
4. Stop the body and the puck (we don't want the puck getting through)

Defense AWAY from the Puck:

1. Pressure their player on the back-check (back pressure)
2. Stay between their players and our net (defensive side). Heels towards our net (which means facing the puck)
3. Around our net – 2 players low, 2 high, sticks on ice, pick up open man.
4. Deny passing/shooting lanes (stick on the ice) – don't give the other team a place to pass or an open shot at our net
5. Keep the player with the puck in the corners or off to the side – can't score from there. We don't want a player with the puck in front of our net.
6. Move puck away from our net – get puck and attack up the ice.

Four Sets of Three that Every Player Must Learn to be a Smart Player

I. The Basics

1. Get the puck and move your feet! Always advancing and moving with the puck – never standing still.
2. Pressure – go after the puck fast and hard. Pressure hard (on the fore check) and backpressure hard (on the back check). Stick on stick; angle the body away from our net.
3. When we have the puck every player is on offense; when they have the puck every player is on defense. Stick is always on the ice.

II. Puck Support

1. The number one thing a player away from the puck does (when our team has the puck) is help the puck carrier and the number one way to help the puck carrier is to get close to him.
2. **Players should FACE THE PUCK** 99% of the time that you play the game on offense or defense. You should always know where the puck is.
3. To be a better pass receiver **OPEN UP AND FACE** the puck carrier....this is the key to pass reception.

III. Puck Possession

1. Stay on your forehand - open ice push – always carry puck in pass ready position (**don't over-handle the puck!**). There are only 2 times when you need to stickhandle:
    a. The puck needs to be settled flat on the ice
    b. The puck must be protected from an opponent/making a fake on an opponent
2. **LOOK TWICE BEFORE** getting to the puck. Look once and take a mental picture; look second time and take mental picture – now you know what you want to do with the puck.
3. As soon as you get the puck open up to make a good pass (if that is your best option)... keeping the puck on your forehand

IV. Puck Pressure

1. When we are on defense keep the other team "outside" – keep them away from our net. Know which player is in a scoring position and keep the puck away from him/her.
2. Stick on the ice in shooting lane or passing lane (as get older need to choose one that is most important in a particular play)
3. Force the other team to its backhand whenever possible. Always take away their time and their space (force them to make mistakes).

Appendix

Decision Making for Mites

Defensive Decisions – if the other team gets the puck:

1. I am between the puck carrier and our net AND nobody from my team is checking him....I go after the puck and angle the puck carrier.
2. I am between the puck carrier and our net AND somebody else from my team is checking him...I pick up an open player from their team
3. The puck is between me and my net (they are going to our net)....I funnel back to my net as hard as I can and back-pressure the player with the puck or pick up a "dangerous player" and protect my net (2 low, 2 high)
4. Puck is in front of my net....I move it to either side (away from our net) and then attack their net with the puck

Offensive Decisions – **I have the puck** and I am going hard to the other team's net

1. If I have a good shot I take it and go hard for the rebound
2. If I don't have a good shot and my teammate is open I pass it to my teammate and then go to the net for the rebound

Offensive Decisions – **my teammate has the puck** and is skating to the other team's net

1. I go hard down the middle of the ice straight to the other team's net with my stick on the ice and in a position to shoot (drive the net)...open my body to receive a pass.
2. If one of my teammates is already driving for the net I stay back a little and get open for a pass and in a position to shoot...open my body to receive a pass.
3. If three of my teammates are ahead of me I hang back (insurance), support the puck (stay open for a pass), and I am ready for defense if the other team gets the puck
4. If the other team is pressuring him I get close enough to help him/her.

Skill Development and Strategy Extras

- Cushioning a hard pass DOES NOT WORK. Blade must be perpendicular to pass; for hard pass you cup the blade over and move lower hand down the shaft of the stick

- The way you know when to go to the puck versus going for a stretch pass is thru two reads
    - How much pressure is my teammate (puck carrier) under? Is there another teammate close to him/her?
    - If little pressure and someone is close than I can go for stretch pass. If not then I should move to the puck carrier.

Cross-Ice Mite Coaching Guidelines/Philosophy

Children want to learn skills, enhance their sense of competence, be with friends, and have fun. The Cross-Ice Mite program strives to provide an experience that fosters what children are looking for through the application of research used to develop the Long Term Athlete Development model.

Research shows:

- Players respond better to coaches who use supportive and instructional behaviors
- Players on teams where coaches created a supportive environment liked their teammates more
- Win/loss record has no significant effect on how players liked coaches and if they wanted to play for them again

Coaching Tasks:

- Help players define and achieve success
- Keep practice activities and drills exciting
- Provide time for children to be with friends
- Keep practices and games fun
- Structure the environment to foster skill development for all team members

Negative approach to coaching:

- eliminate unwanted behaviors through punishment and criticism

Reminders of what we should avoid:

- Skating around aimlessly
- Shooting pucks
- Passing pucks with another instructor
- Talking to other coaches or players when a coach is giving instruction
- Yelling at players/Threatening players (keep in mind some of our players have ADD and other learning disabilities and our job is to help them develop)

We use a positive approach

Positive approach to coaching:

- strengthen desired behaviors by motivating athletes to perform them and by rewarding the players when they do

WE ARE TEACHERS! IF IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN THE CLASSROOM IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE ON THE ICE.

Use positive reinforcement such as verbal praise, smiles, applause, pats on the back.

- Give plenty of praise and encouragement
- Develop realistic expectations and consistently reinforce achievement
- Give reinforcement for desirable behavior as soon as it occurs
- Reinforce effort as much as results
- Smile and have fun with the kids…enjoy the game of hockey.

When giving corrective instruction point out the good things that will happen if the player follows your instruction (don't punish).

- Give encouragement immediately after a mistake
- Start with a compliment - something the player did right
- Give future oriented instruction
- Finish with encouragement
- Be specific with instruction (general statements such as "make a better pass" are not effective).

Use simple strategies

- Teaching stations
- Break skills down and start with basics
- Keep it moving – the less standing and waiting the better

Keep it fun

- 5-10 minutes per drill or station (10 minutes maximum)
- Repeat drills or variations over several practices in order to get needed repetitions
- Instructions to under 1 minute (watch this – now do it) and ideally 30 seconds or less…A DEMONSTRATION IS MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN DESCRIBING AN ACTIVITY OR DRILL. "WATCH THIS. NOW TRY IT."

Discipline

- Warning with instruction
- Time out if needed
- Three time-outs leads to sitting on bench the remainder of practice with follow-up from coach; it is important to reinforce that the behavior has to change (and how) but not to be critical of the person…they are children playing a game.

This Promises to be a great season!!!!

Player Expectations and Ground Rules (told to them on first day)

1. When the whistle is blown and a coach has his/her stick up we all skate to the coach and STOP (no sliding).
2. Down on one knee to listen.
3. Listen with ears, eyes, body. No talking and hands/sticks to yourselves.

General Rules:

1. No running into other players from behind.

2. Sticks are for puckhandling and shooting – they stay on the ice and we don't hit other players with them.

3. IF YOU BREAK THE RULES OR AREN'T LISTENING AND COACHES HAVE TO TELL YOU TO STOP YOU MIGHT HAVE TO SIT ON THE BENCH FOR A TIME OUT. IF THAT HAPPENS MORE THAN 3 TIMES YOU WILL SIT ON THE BENCH FOR THE REMAINDER OF PRACTICE.

4. TRY, TRY, TRY, AND HAVE FUN. MISTAKES ARE OKAY AND NORMAL – YOU WILL MAKE THEM. KEEP TRYING AND HAVE FUN.

Basic Structure for 8U Mite Practices

The 8U Mite group consists of players ranging in age from 6 to 8 years old. This assumes that the players have first followed USA Hockey recommendations and taken a basic learn to skate and learn to play program. These two foundational programs will provide the rudimentary skills needed to for the 8U program. In the case of some smaller youth association it may be necessary to group the 6U or even the 10U players into practice sessions. This can still be done efficiently with proper planning and be very beneficial to all involved.

Skating is a primary skill for ice hockey and although players must continue to master skating technique throughout their career, there must be a special emphasis place on the ABC elements of skating in the early years of development. Players at the Mite age have a harder time processing technical skills instruction and their bodies lack some of the fine motor control required. At this age large muscle groups and multiple joint movements should be incorporated into the practice sessions. Agility, balance and coordination (A, B, C's) on the ice surface are at the foundation of LTAD for Mites.

Practices have a preparatory phase followed by the main body of the practice. The main body of the practice session includes station work so that kids are developing their skills in an efficient manner. The recommended breakdown is with six stations so that there is enough variety to hold the interest of players at this age. Training should be structured so that a large part of the skill repetition is done in a games format. Players at all levels must be mentally engaged in order best acquire new skills. When skills repetition lacks an emotional element, children at this age quickly become bored. If the skills repetition is hidden in the form of a game, children are capable of extended periods of focused effort. Play is the key to emotional engagement in the skills repetition.

The six station format should include the following breakdown:

- 1 station is of ABC's
- 1 station of hockey competition, 1v1, 2v2, 3v3, or 4v4
- 1 station is on puck control skills
- 1 station is of passing/shooting skills
- 2 stations are devoted to specifically skating skills

Out of these six stations, two to three at least should be in a games format.

Coaches also need to be mindful of the costs associated with quality ice time for the players and must always strive to maximize the learning environment. Keep explanation, demonstration and setup time to a minimum. The goal is to have the players actively participating in a drill within one minute of station rotation. This is not easy to do so preparation is a key. If you can divide setup and explanation time between multiple coaches, two jobs will get done in half the time.

The basic 8U Mite practice structure is for a 50 minute hour block of ice as this is common across the country (50 minutes of ice with the cost of a 10 minute ice cut included). If your local associating gets the full 60 minutes out of their hour block of ice the practice sessions are easily modified by adding one additional minute to each station and four minutes to the game activity at the conclusion of practice.

It is a good practice to repeat one of the prescribed ice sessions twice in a row. Kids at this age like familiarity with the drills, the repetition is good and it helps the overall efficiency of the session. It is easier for the coaches the second time through.

At the 8U Mite age group, USA Hockey doesn't recommend full time goalies. Every player at this age needs to build a foundation of agility, balance and coordination on the ice surface. We recommend that teams rotate every player through the goaltender position to help kids discover if that position is truly for them. Goaltending requires a high degree of athleticism to be successful. If an 8U player has demonstrated a good on-ice foundation in the ABC's and skating skills and has a passion for the position, it is acceptable to allow that player to play more regular in net.

During the practice sessions the goalies should only play goal when they rotate to a station that has a net. Goalies should continue to rotate with their team as the group advances through the stations. The goalies should continue to skate and be active in every drill.

When no goalie is present for a station, the coaches can tip the net over to provide a low to mid range target for the player to shot at or small nets can be used if available.

Practice: 1 & 2

Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Six Nets, Cones, 6-7 Softballs Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Passing with Coaches - 5 min

Players skate around the rink with puck and make passes to any coach. Coaches are stationed at various positions along the board.

Designate two additional coaches to set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle to change stations, players do 5 jumping jacks before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Skating (ABC's)

Have players put their sticks down in a row. They line up facing the sticks and perform a number of different agility movements running over the sticks. Run 1 foot over each stick, 2 feet together hop, step over sideways facing left and right, using edges to slalom between them.

Station 2: Stationary Passing

Players partner up, stand 8-10' apart and pass the softball back and forth. Work on proper technique, emphasize keeping the hands away from the body and sweeping the puck. Players should stand sideways so that they pass cross body. Softballs will help force proper technique.

Station 3: Sharks and Minnows Tag

Two players are designated as the sharks to start. The minnows must skate from blue line to blue line without being tagged. If they are tagged, they become sharks too.

Station 4: Slalom Puck Control

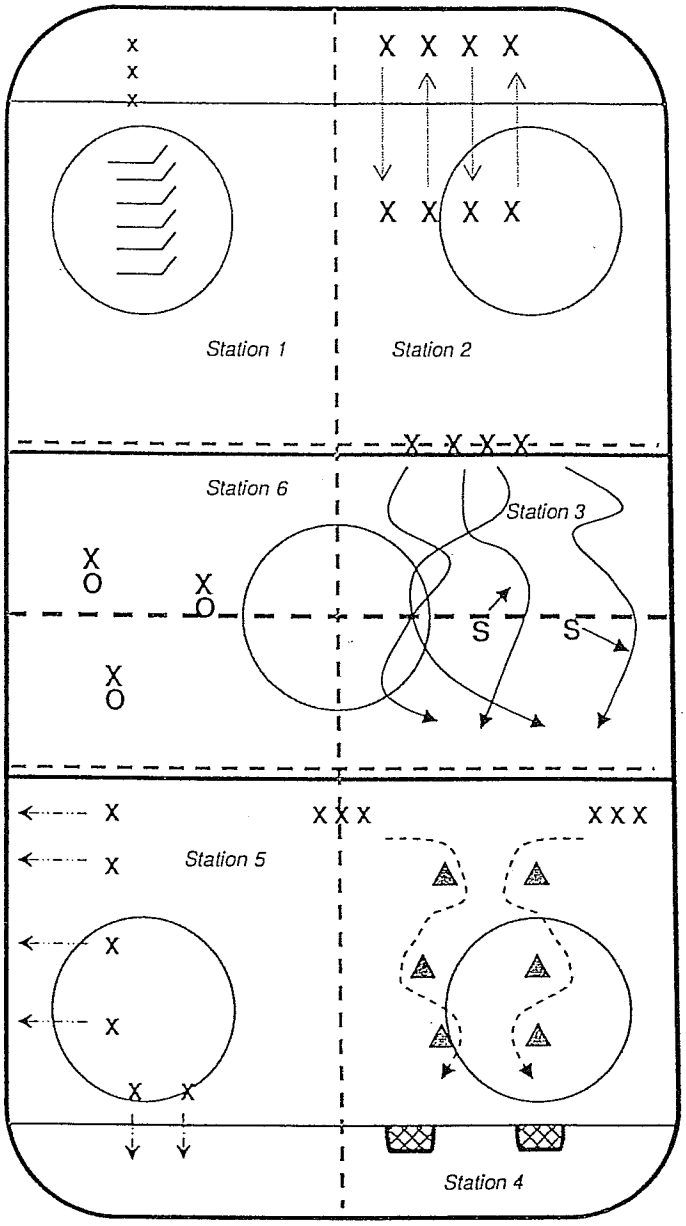
Players carry a puck through a slalom course ending with a shot on net. Emphasize proper shooting technique at the end. This can be turned into a race to force speed.

Station 5: Shooting

Have players shoot against the boards. Work on proper wrist shot technique, shooting off the proper foot, and weight distribution. Players should stand sideways to the boards so that proper weight transfer is used. Start with the puck behind the back foot and sweep puck towards target.

Station 6: 1v1 Keep Away

Have players play 1v1 keep away in a tight area. Have multiple 1v1's going at once to encourage playing in traffic areas.



Games: 4v4 Cross-Ice (9 minutes)

Play 4v4 cross-ice for the remaining time. Change every 30 seconds.

Coaching Tip:

Don't be afraid to repeat a practice before moving on to the next one in the sequence. Mite age players love repetition and knowing the activities make the practice run more efficiently.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 3 & 4 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires, Softballs **Ice Time:** 50 minutes

Warm Up: 5 min – Puckhandling
Players skate around the rink handling a puck. On whistle, they jump into the nearest circle and stickhandle, exit on next whistle and continue around the rink in the opposite direction.

Coaches use this time to set up stations

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes
On the whistle to change stations, players do 5 jumping jacks before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Skating (ABC's)
Run on skates, drop to knees, drop to single knee, drop to knees and spin 360, arm circles forward, arm circles backward, arm circles 1 forward & 1 backward, 2 foot power jumps, log role to right, log role to left.

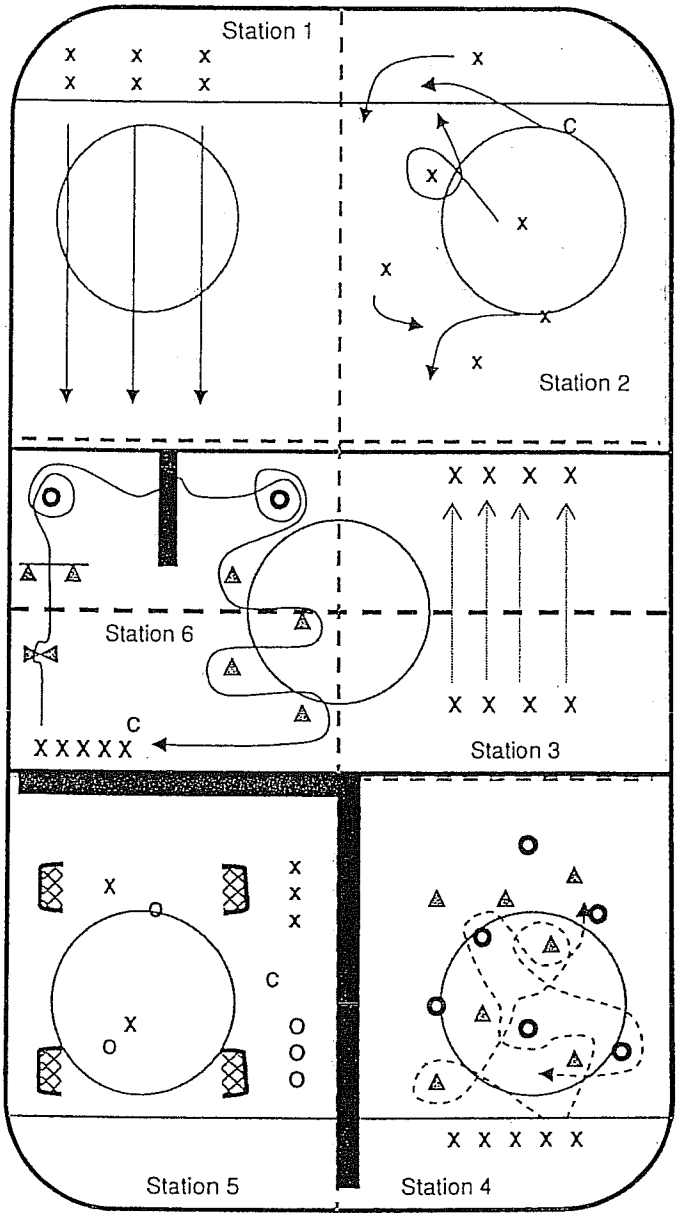
Station 2: Freeze Tag
Coach tags or selected players do the tagging. The tagged player is frozen and stands in the hockey ready position until he is set free. The tagged player is set free when someone skates a circle around him.

Station 3: Passing
Players practice passing technique on both the forehand and backhand. Players should be positioned so that they make the passes across their body. Sweep the ball when passing and keep the hands out away from the body. Use softballs to force proper technique.

Station 4: Chaos Stickhandling
Players stickhandle skating around obstacles. All players are involved. The coach can switch to players going in pairs in a follow the leader setup. Check to see that each player is holding their stick properly. Hands about shoulder width apart and top hand at the end of the stick partially held in the palm with the V between thumb and forefinger on to of the stick like you would hold a hammer.

Station 5: 1v1 Hockey
Keep two 1v1 hockey game going with a change of players every 30 seconds.

Station 6: Obstacle Course (ABC's)
Have players begin obstacle course by starting on their knees, stomach, back, etc. Jump over obstacle, immediately followed by sliding under an obstacle. Include 360 degree turns and a slalom course. On all turns, lead with stick.



Game: Pom Pom Pull Away (9 Minutes)
Players must skate to opposite end of ice without being tagged by selected taggers. Once tagged players stand along boards. Last survivor wins.

Coaching Tip:
Have the coaches distribute the water at each station by spraying it directly to the players. Coaches handling the bottles improves the efficiency and reduces time wasted.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 5 & 6 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Six Nets, Cones, Tires **Ice Time:** 50 minutes

Warm Up: Passing with Coaches - 5 min
Players skate around the rink with puck and make passes to any coach. Coaches are stationed at various positions along the board.

Designate two additional coaches to set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes
On the whistle, players do 5 two foot jumps before changing stations. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Skating Edge Control (ABC's)
Swizzles, inside edges, outside edges, 2 foot slalom, inside edges pump, single leg alternate edges, power jumps, swizzles out jump feet together.

Station 2: Puck Control
Slalom through cones and finish with wrist shot. Next, skate full circles around each cone and finish with a wrist shot. Coach can add chaser to slalom. Check to see that each player is holding their stick properly.

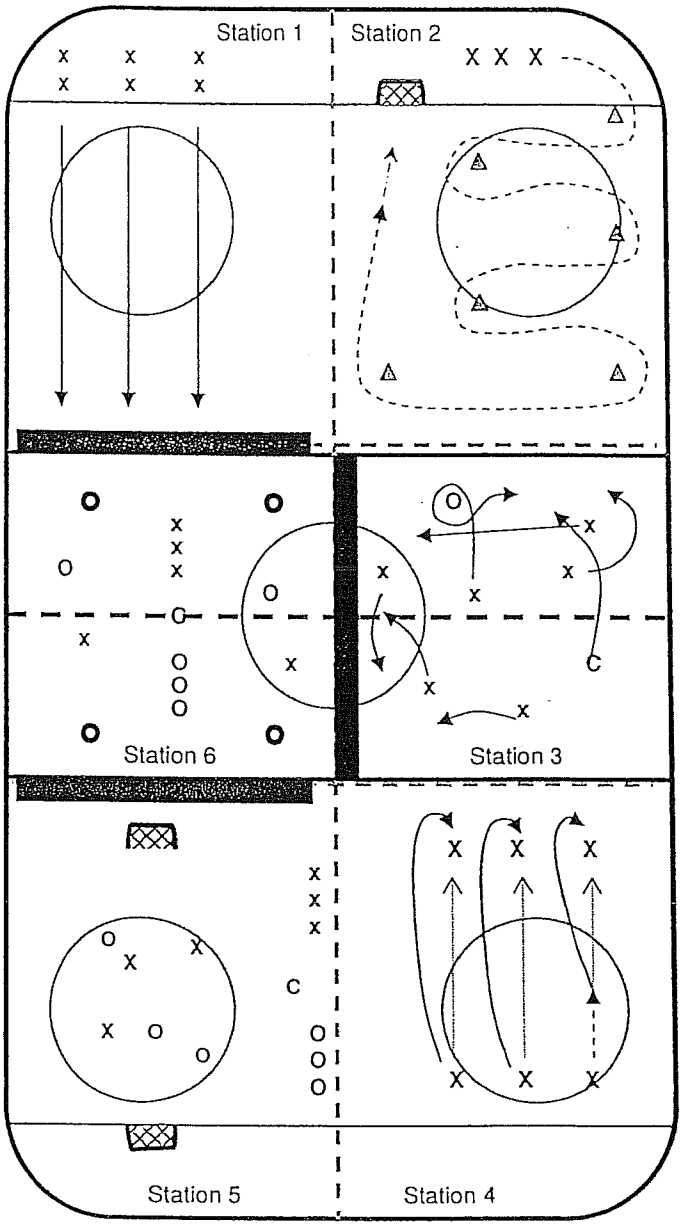
Station 3: Tag with Both Feet on Ice
Players must push with inside edges and keep both feet on ice as the maneuver to escape the coach. If tagged the tagged player drops to knees until a teammate skates a circle around him and is then set free.

Station 4: Passing Shuttle
Player with puck skates 3 strides, passes to opposite line and then skates to the back of that line. Next the player with the puck skates 3 strides and passes to opposite line. Work both forehand passing and backhand passing. Remember to sweep puck.

Station 5: 3 v 3 Tight Space
Play 3v3, change on whistle every 30 seconds.

Station 6: 1v1 or 2v2 Hit the Tire
Pass the puck off the tire to score. The coach can have two 1v1's or 2v2's going on at the same time.

Game: 4v4 Cross-Ice – 9 minutes
Play 4v4 cross ice hockey in all three zones for the remaining time.



Coaching Tip:

Good rule of thumb for running Mite practice is that coaches should talk less and players do more.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 7 & 8

Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Six Nets

Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Warm Up: 5 min – Puckhandling

Players skate around the rink handling a puck. On whistle, they jump into the nearest circle and stickhandle, exit on next whistle and continue around the rink.

Coaches use this time to set up stations

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle, players do 5 two foot jumps before changing stations. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Forward Cross Overs Left

Players skate the circle working on cross-over skating technique. Each player skates two laps around the circle with the next player in line starting as player one passes in front on his first lap. Coaches should work individually with players that need technical instruction. Keep stick to inside.

Station 2: Net Tag

Player X attempts to evade player O using the nets as a screen. This activity can be done with multiple players at the same time.

Station 3: Pass & Follow

Players pass the puck to the next player and then take that players spot. Sweep puck and show a good target for reception. Finish with a wrist shot on goal.

Station 4: 3v3 Tight Space

Play 3v3 and change on the whistle every 30 seconds

Station 5: Forward Cross Overs Right

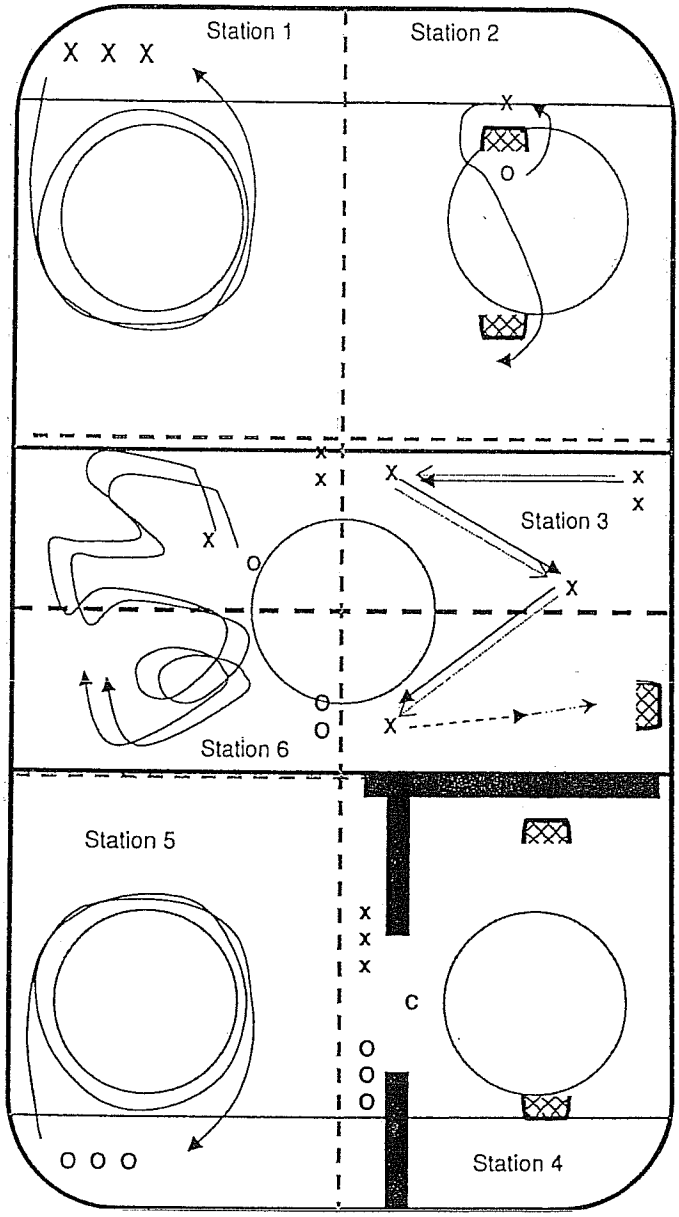
Players skate the circle working on cross-over skating technique. Keep stick to inside.

Station 6: Russian Shadows (follow the leader)

Two players go together and play follow the leader. Encourage them to be creative with their movements. Can carry pucks as well and can have multiple groups going at once. Works on skating, edges, agility, coordination, and balance.

Soccer in all 3 zones (9 minutes)

Cross ice Soccer in all three zones for remaining time.



Coaching Tip:

What I hear - I forget
What I see - I remember
What I do - I understand
- Confucius

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 9 & 10 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Six Nets, Cones, Tires **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: ABC's Warm-up - 5 min

Coaches should immediately set up the dividers across each blue line. Players will skate a figure 8 around the ice surface down the middle and back along the side boards. Players must jump over the dividers and perform a superman dive at the red line down the middle and drop to their knees at the red line coming back along the boards. Mix up the agility moves.

Designate two additional coaches to set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle to change stations the players do one 360 jump to the right and one to the left before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as players arrive.

Station 1: Puck Control

Players skate with puck through slalom and finish off with a shot on goal. Check to see that the players are holding their sticks properly.

Station 2: Shooting Technique

Player work on wrist shot technique shooting against the boards. Players should stand sideways to boards so that proper weight transfer is used. Start with puck behind back foot and sweep puck towards target.

Station 3: Soccer (ABC's)

Play soccer 5v5 or 4v4 cross ice in 40 second shifts in whatever number that allows players to participate every other shift.

Station 4: Obstacle Course

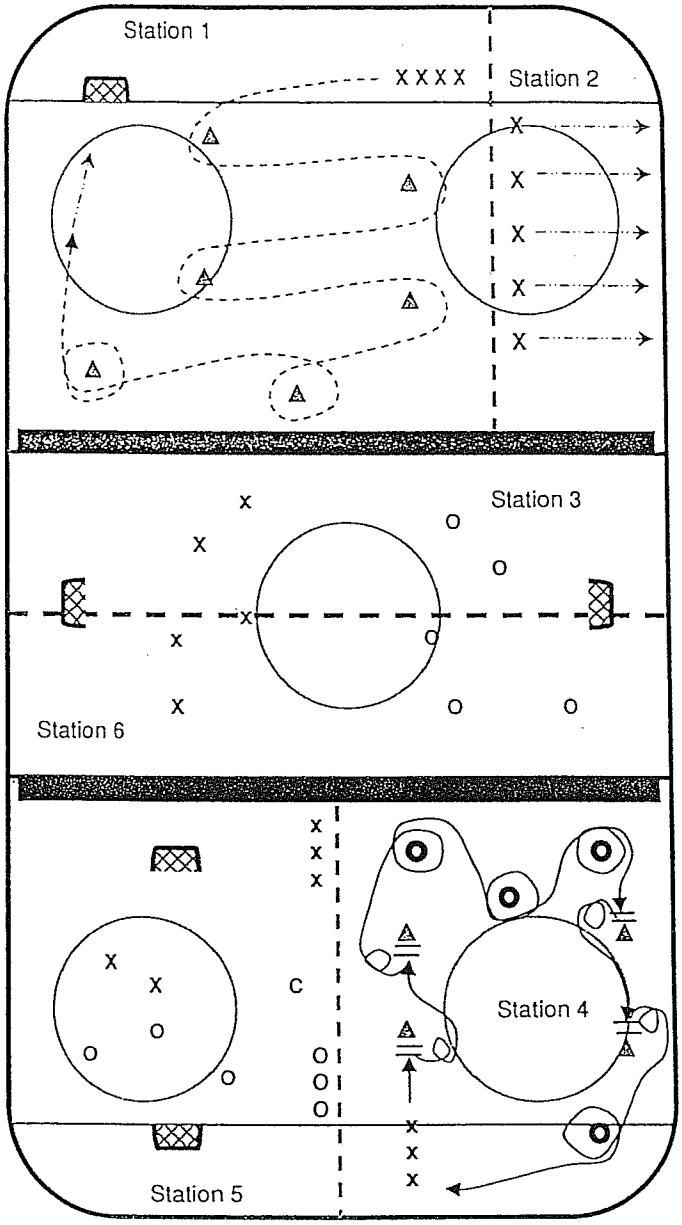
Run obstacle course to focus on stops, starts, and tight turn skating skills. Once players begin, be active and assist individual players with skating technique. Keep stick under control and blade near ice. Follow stick through course.

Station 5: 2v2 Score on Any Net

Play 2v2 in 30 to 40 second shifts. Players can score on any net. The coach continues to spot puck into play after goals are scored until the shift time is complete.

Station 6: Soccer (ABC's)

Play soccer 5v5 or 4v4 cross ice in 40 second shifts in whatever number that allows players to participate every other shift.



Game: 4v4 Cross-Ice (9 min)

Play 4v4 cross-ice hockey in all three zones for the remaining practice time.

Coaching Tip:

No Lines, no laps, no lectures...words to live by for coaching 8U Mites.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 11 & 12 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Ice Marker **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Free Play – 5 minutes
Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes
On the whistle to change stations the players do one 360 jump to the right and one to the left before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as players arrive.

Station 1: 1v1 Pit Game X2
Players compete 1v1 in a tight space scoring on opposite goal. Coach continually spots puck into play when a goal is scored. Variation: score on either net.

Station 2: Edges Around Sticks
Players drop stick length wise in front of them. Inside edge around stick, outside edge around stick, 2 laps inside edge around stick, 2 laps outside edge, inside edge figure 8, outside edge figure 8, 2 foot side jumps over stick, 1 foot side hop over stick. Perform all exercises on both right and left feet.

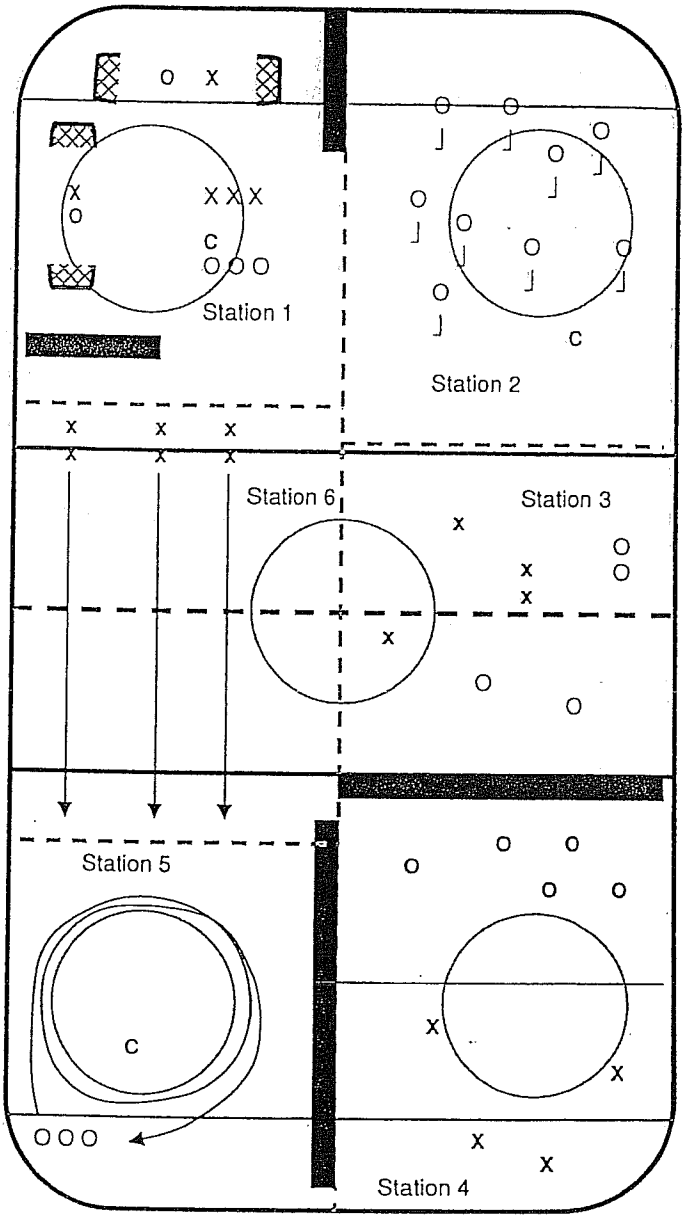
Station 3: 1v1 Keep Away & Passing
Players play 1v1 keep away in zone. On whistle to rest, players stationary pass to each other. Pass cross body and sweep puck. Forehand, backhand, bullet pass (hard as possible).

Station 4: Give Away Game
Players split into 2 teams with one team on each side of the line. Players must stay on their own side. The players attempt to shoot as many pucks as possible into the other team's zone. On the whistle to end the game the team with the fewest pucks in their zone wins. Dividers can also be used as the line in the middle so the players must lift the puck.

Station 5: Cross Overs Right & Left
Cross over skating technique to both right and left. Keep stick under control and to the inside.

Station 6: Skating & ABC's
Skating Technique and ABC's – Step over stick, stick through legs, drop to knees, drop to knees 360, log role to left/right, run on skates forward, butt to heels glide, inside edge swizzles, swizzle out jump feet together, single leg stride left/right.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com



Game: Full Ice Glove Tag (9 Min)
Players must skate the length of the ice without getting hit by a glove thrown by the coaches. If the player can catch a glove before it hits the ground, they have a free pass to opposite end. Tagged players wait along the boards.

Coaching Tip:

Yell at me I will resent you
Pamper me I will not respect you
Encourage me I will never forget you

Practice: 13 & 14 *Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun*

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Six Nets, Cones, Tires, Tennis Balls, Ringette Rings *Ice Time: 50 Minutes*

Warm Up: ABC's Warm-up - 5 min
Coaches should immediately set up the dividers across each blue line. Players will skate a figure 8 around the ice surface down the middle and back along the side boards. Players must jump over the dividers and perform a superman dive at the red line down the middle and drop to their knees at the red line coming back along the boards. Mix up the agility moves.
Designate two additional coaches to set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes
On the whistle to change station, players do 3 hops on the left foot and 3 hops on the right foot before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: 3v3 Ringette
Play 3v3 tight space ringette. 30 second shifts and change.

Station 2: Freeze Tag
Once tagged the player drops to knees with stick out on ice. The player is unfrozen when a teammate skates a circle around him and jumps over his stick.

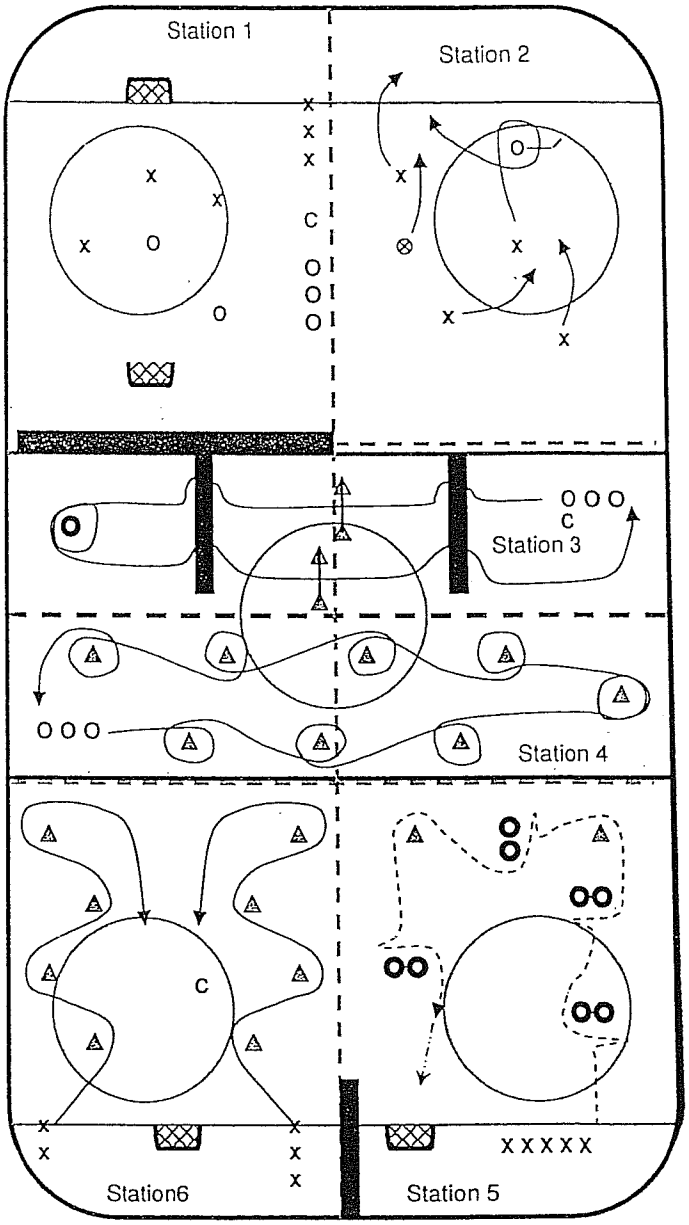
Station 3: Obstacle Course (ABC's)
Have players start on knees, stomach, back, etc. Jump dividers, dive under sticks and 360 around far tire. Keep stick under control and follow stick.

Station 4: Skating Tight Turns
Skate the tight turn slalom course. Half way through add pucks. Once started, work individually with players that need technical skills help. Keep stick down, under control and lead with stick.

Station 5: Puck Control Fakes
Have players attempt a wide fake at each set of double tires. Emphasize exaggerated moves and putting the puck as wide as possible. Finish off with a shot on goal.

Station 6: Loose Puck Races (ABC's)
Players race for a loose puck and finish with a shot on goal. Vary course and add extra agility. Examples, start from knees or stomach, complete 360 around cone, jumps etc. Keep stick down and under control, lead with stick.

Games: 3v3 Cross-ice w/ Tennis Balls (9 minutes)
Play cross-ice hockey in all three zones using tennis balls. Change shifts every 30 to 40 seconds.



Coaching Tip:

Play attaches the emotional engagement for kids at this age to make skills repetition fun.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 15 & 16 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Five Nets, Cones, Tires **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Free Play – 5 minutes
Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.)

Coaches set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes
On the whistle to change station, players do 3 hops on the left foot and 3 hops on the right foot before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Forward Cross Overs L/R
Work on skating technique. Each player skates two laps around the circle with the next player in line starting as player one passes in front on first lap. Coaches should work individually with players on technique as needed. Keep stick to the middle.

Station 2: Net Tag
Players evade the tagger by using the nets and tires to screen out opponent.

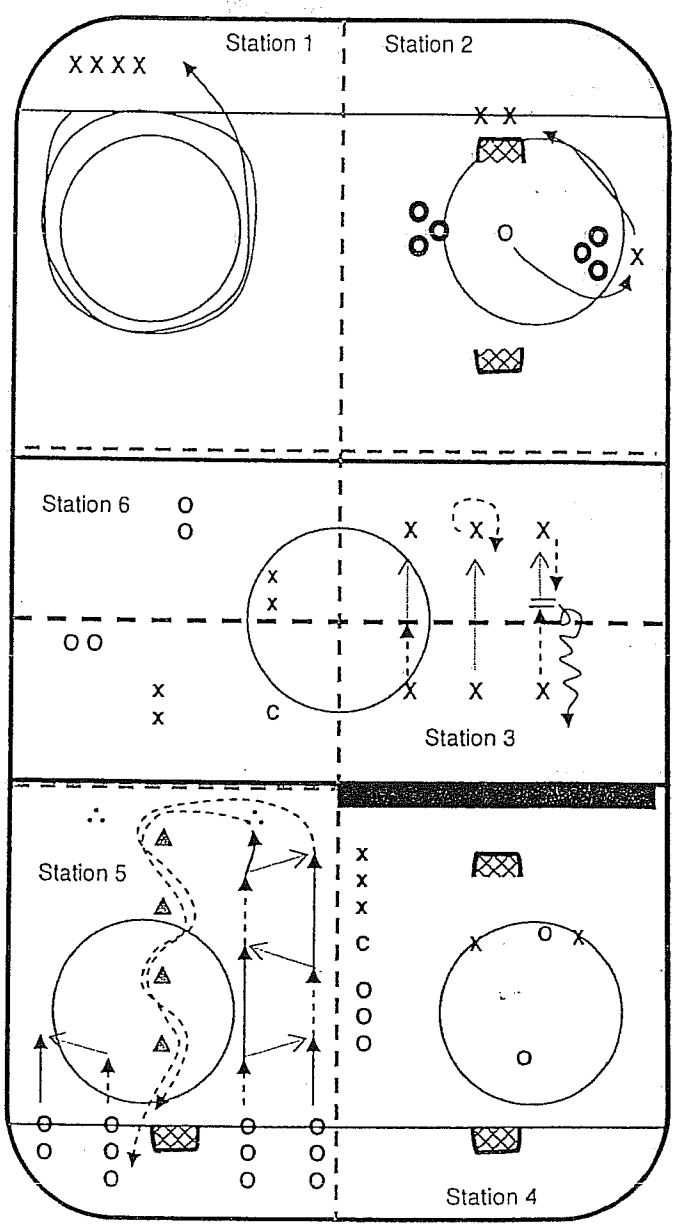
Station 3: Passing with Movement
Pass forehand then backhand. Catch pass and spin 360. Skate forward and pass, stop and skate backwards to starting spot.

Station 4: 2v2 Any Net
Play 2v2, with the players able to score on either net. Coach continues to spot pucks into the game when players score until the end of a 30 second shift.

Station 5: 2 on 0 Passing
2 on 0 passing with weave back through cones. Players should change lines so the they are passing on both forehand and backhand. Use proper technique and sweep the puck. Have stick on the ice to show a target on pass reception.

Station 6: Steal Pucks
Each player has a puck. On the whistle players attempt to steal other players pucks while still possessing their own.

Submarine Tag (9 minutes)
On the whistle, players must skate the length of the ice without being tagged. If tagged the player stands still with legs spread apart wide. To become free again a teammate must slide between their legs.



Coaching tip:

Turn the word "practice" into a positive thing!

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 17 & 18

Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Six Nets, Cones, Tires

Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Skating – 7 Minutes

Whole ice skating with everyone moving – includes, forward stride, cross-overs, 2 ft stops & head up w/ traffic. Begin out of two corners from same end and finishes in the far corner. Keep stick under control and lead with the stick...repeat coming back, can add pucks as progression. Assign coaches to prepare stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle to change stations, players do pop corn (drop to their knees and up) 5 times before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Passing

Players skate around the cone making passes to the coaches, finishing off with a shot on goal. The players must keep try to make passes without planting their feet (pass in stride). If on backhand, pass and receive on the backhand. Show a good target for reception.

Station 2: Bull in the Ring X2

One player attempts to skate with a puck inside the circle avoiding the checker. The checker attempts to push the puck carrier outside the circle while carrying a soccer ball with two hands.

Station 3: 2v2 Score On Either Net

Play 2v2 in a tight space. Players can score on either net. Coaches continue to spot pucks into play for 30 second shifts.

Station 4: Obstacle Course (ABC's)

Skate through course working on tight turns, stops, spins and ABC's. Lead with stick.

Station 5: Passing

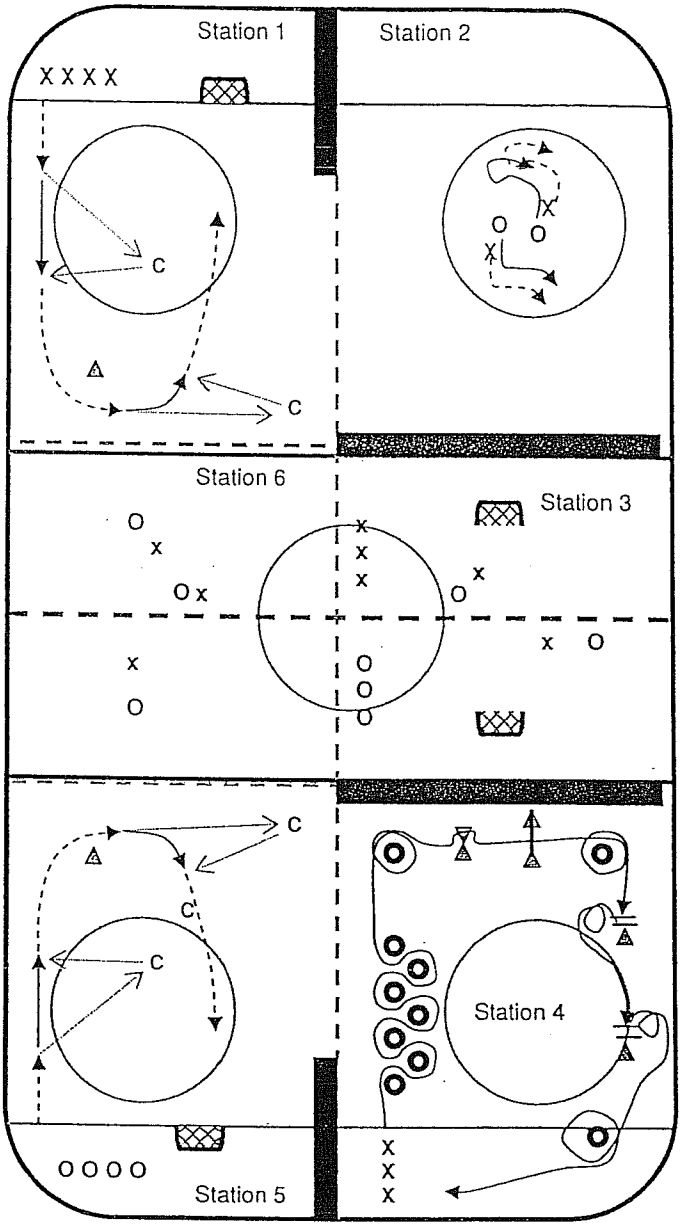
Players skate around the cone making passes to the coaches, finishing off with a shot on goal. The players must keep try to make passes without planting their feet (pass in stride). If on backhand, pass and receive on the backhand. Show a good target for reception.

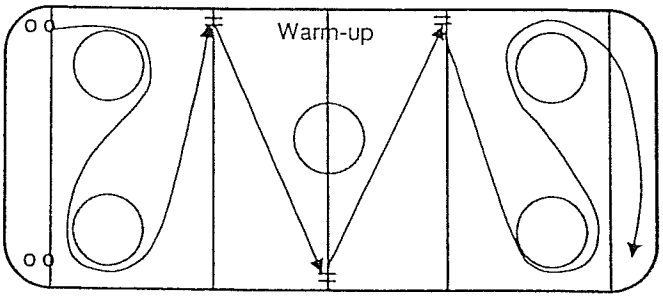
Station 6: 1v1 Keep Away

Players pair up and play 1v1 keep away. Have all players active. Play for 30 to 40 seconds and then have players pass with each other while resting.

Games: Cross-Ice Scoro (7 Minutes)

Line each team up on opposite side boards. Put 20 pucks into the middle of the zone. On the whistle, each team tries to put as many pucks into the other teams net as possible. When all the pucks are in a net, the team with the most goals wins.





Coaching Tip:

The fun part of practice should always last a full 60 minutes.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 19 & 20 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Six Nets, Ringette Rings **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Partner Skills (10 Minutes)

Divide up into six groups with two groups in each zone. Players work in pairs through the following sequence:

Begin with Russian Shadows (creative skating that partner imitates). Russian Shadows with pucks, 1v1 keep away. 2v2 keep away. Repeat each activity twice for 45 seconds. During rests between activities, have players work on passing skills, forehand, backhand, bullet pass (hard as possible)

Designate additional coaches to set up dividers.

Stations: 3 Stations x 13 minutes Games Day

On the whistle to change stations, players do pop corn (drop to their knees and up) 5 times before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Cross-Ice Hockey

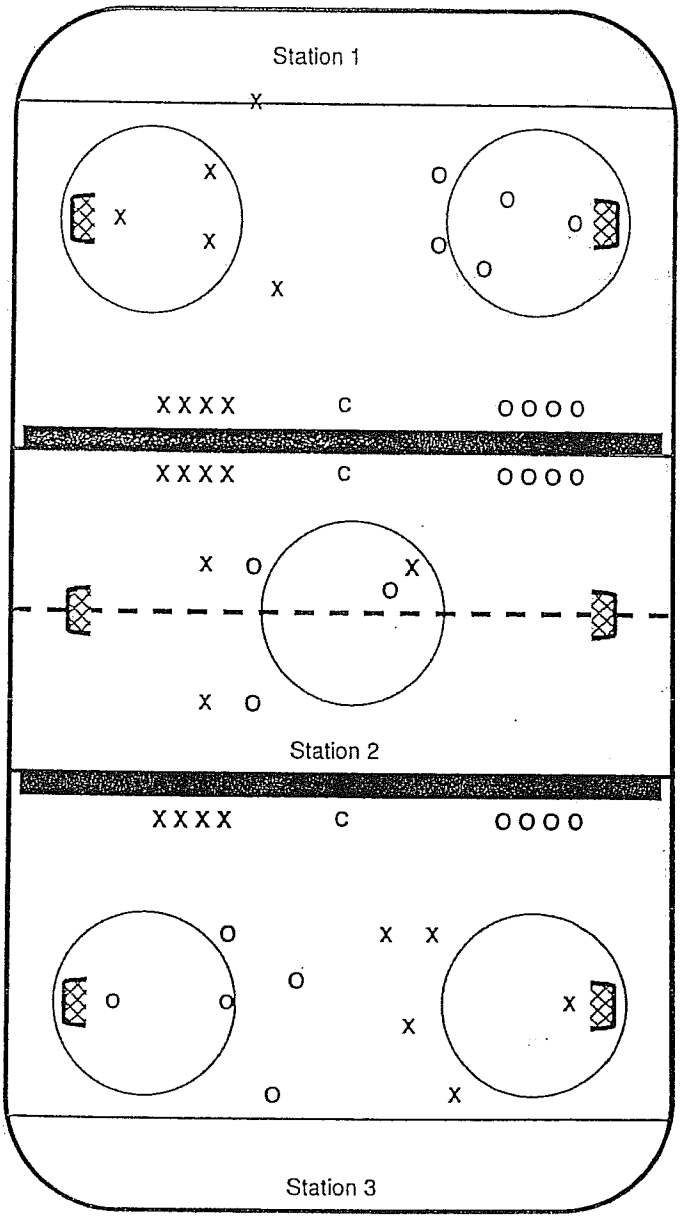
Play cross-ice hockey 5v5, 4v4 or a combination of both, whichever allows the players to play every other shift. Shift length is 45 seconds.

Station 2: Cross-Ice 1v1's

Play 1v1 cross-ice until someone scores. Keep 3 to 4 1v1 competitions going at all times. When a 1v1 competition ends the players go to the back of their team lines. Can also be done 2v2.

Station 3: Cross-Ice Ringette

Play cross-ice ringette 5v5, 4v4 or a combination of both, whichever allows the players to play every other shift. Shift length is 45 seconds.



Coaching Tip:

The smaller the ice, the bigger the competition.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 21 & 22

Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires

Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Skating – 7 Minutes

Whole ice skating with everyone moving – includes, forward stride, cross-overs, 2 ft stops & head up w/ traffic. Begin out of two corners from same end and finishes in the far corner. Keep stick under control and lead with the stick...repeat coming back, can add pucks. Assign coaches to prepare stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle to change station, players drop to the ice and do two log roles to the left and two to the right before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: 1v1v1 Keep Away

Dived players into groups of three. Players Play keep away from each other in a confined space. Encourage players to try and use their hand skills to beat their opponents instead of just skating away from them.

Station 2: Backwards Bumper Butts

Players skate backwards and attempt to run into each other knocking the others off balance. Everyone should begin with their hands on their knees. If a player is knocked down or their hands leave their knees, they are out. Last player standing – wins!

Station 3: Backwards C-Cut Starts

Coach work with players on their backwards C-cut starts and backwards skating. One coach works on left foot start and other coach on a right foot start.

Station 4: Tight Turns

Players skate 360 degree tight turns around each tire. Keep stick under control and lead with the stick blade near ice and out in front. After a few minutes add in pucks.

Station 5: Passing Lanes Game

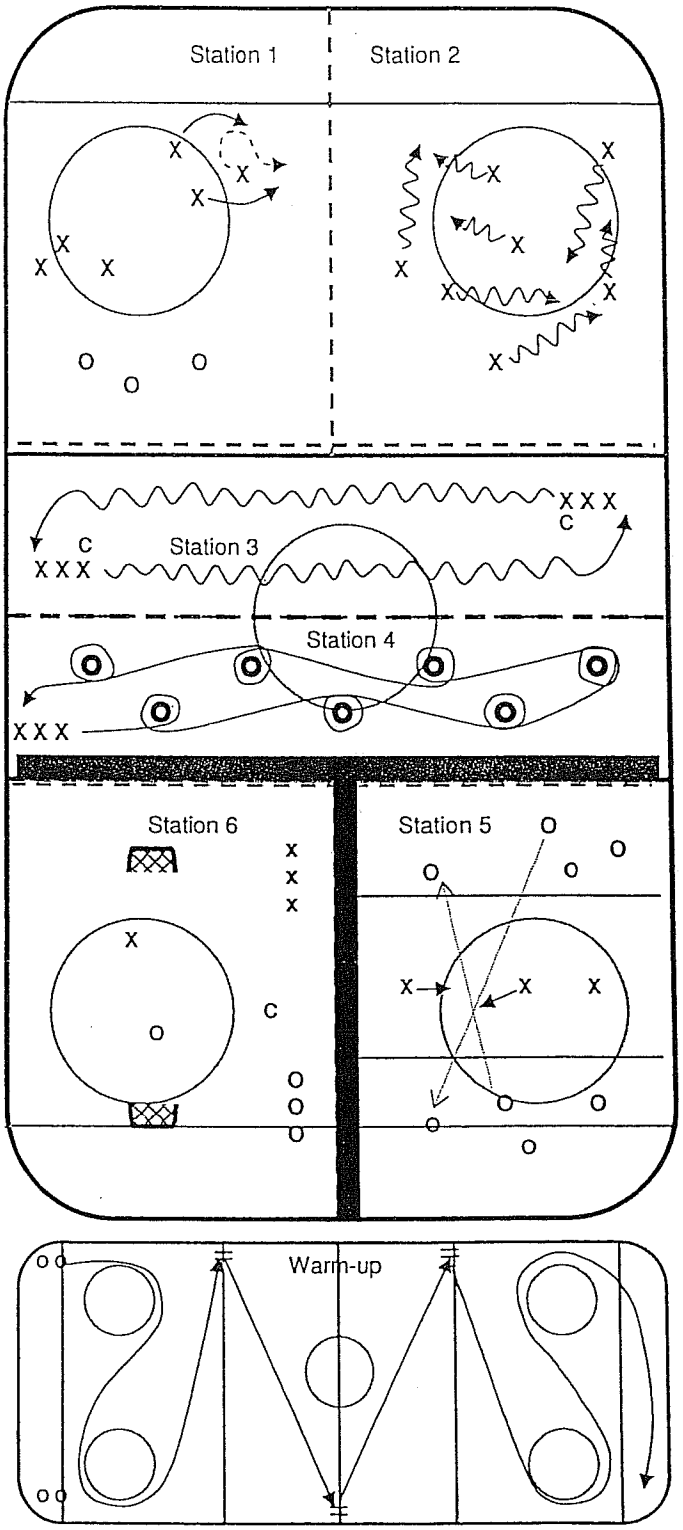
Using a marker, divide the ice into three zones. The players in the end zones attempt to pass pucks to each other through the middle zone without being intercepted. Players in the middle zone attempt to steal passes. All passes must be on the ice and direct (not off the boards). If a player in the middle zone intercepts a pass, he now becomes a new passer. The old passer moves to the middle. Keep 3 to 4 pucks in play.

Station 6: 2v2 Score Any Net

Play 2v2 in a tight space for 30 second shifts. Players can score on either net.

Game: 4v4 Cross-Ice – 9 minutes

Play 4v4 cross ice hockey in all three zones for the remaining time.



Coaching Tip: Encourage competition at the puck...win your 1v1 battle.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 23 & 24 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Partner Skills (10 Minutes)

Divide up into six groups with two groups in each zone. Players work in pairs through the following sequence: Begin with Russian Shadows (creative skating that partner imitates). Russian Shadows with pucks, 1v1 keep away. 2v2 keep away. Repeat each activity twice for 45 seconds. During rests between activities, have players work on passing skills, forehand, backhand, bullet pass (hard as possible) Designate additional coaches to set up dividers.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 Minutes

On the whistle to change station, players drop to the ice and do two log roles to the left and two to the right before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Forward & Backwards (ABC's)

Step over stick R/L hands & F/B, stick through legs F/B, drop to knees F/B, Drop to one knee L/R & F/B, Log role L/R. Arm circles F/B, Arm circles 1F/1B.

Station 2: 3v3 Tight Space

Play 3v3 in the defined area with 30 second shifts.

Station 3: Forward & Backwards Tag

Use the center red line as the pivot point. Players can only skate forward on one side of the line and backwards on the other. Coach or designated tagger must try to tag all players. If tagged the player is frozen until a teammate skates a circle around them and sets them free.

Station 4: 2v1 Keep Away

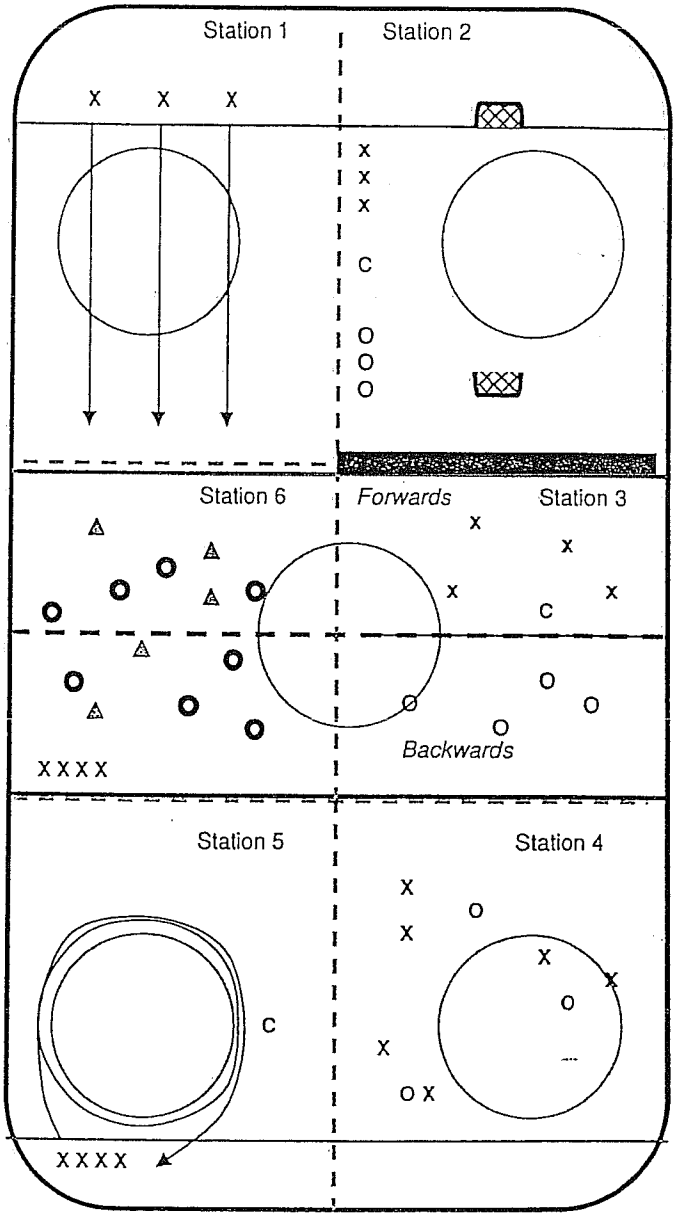
Divide players into groups of three. Two players attempt to play keep away from the other player in their group. If the puck is stolen a new player becomes the odd man out.

Station 5: Backwards Cross Overs

Work on skating technique. Each player skates two laps around the circle with the next player in line starting as player one passes in front on first lap. Coaches should work individually with players on technique as needed. Keep stick to the middle.

Station 6: Puck Control, Follow the Leader

Players go in pairs with multiple pairs involved at a time. Each player has a puck with the first player designating the course through the obstacles. The second player follows the path of the first player. Take turns as to who is leading.



Game: Pom Pom Pull Away (9 Minutes)

Players must skate to opposite end of ice without being tagged by selected taggers. Once tagged players stand along boards. Last survivor wins.

Coaching Tip:

Reducing the space forces players at all levels to think and act quicker.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 25 & 26

Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires

Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Free Play – 5 minutes

Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Players pair up and pass various object to each other around the rink. Coaches set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle to change stations, players do 5 jumping jacks before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Edges (ABC's)

Run on skates F/B, inside edges, outside edges, inside edges backwards, outside edges backwards, swizzles F/B, two foot jump forward to backwards & backwards to forwards (face same side), single leg step forward to backwards & backwards to forwards (face same side)

Station 2: Pass, Follow Pass

Players make a pass to the next player in the chain and then follow their pass by pivoting and skating backwards to take the receivers spot. Last player in the chain finishes off with a shot on goal.

Station 3: 1v1 X2

Play 1v1 in tight space for 30 second shifts. Have two sets of 1v1's in play.

Station 4: Puck Control, Fake & Shoot

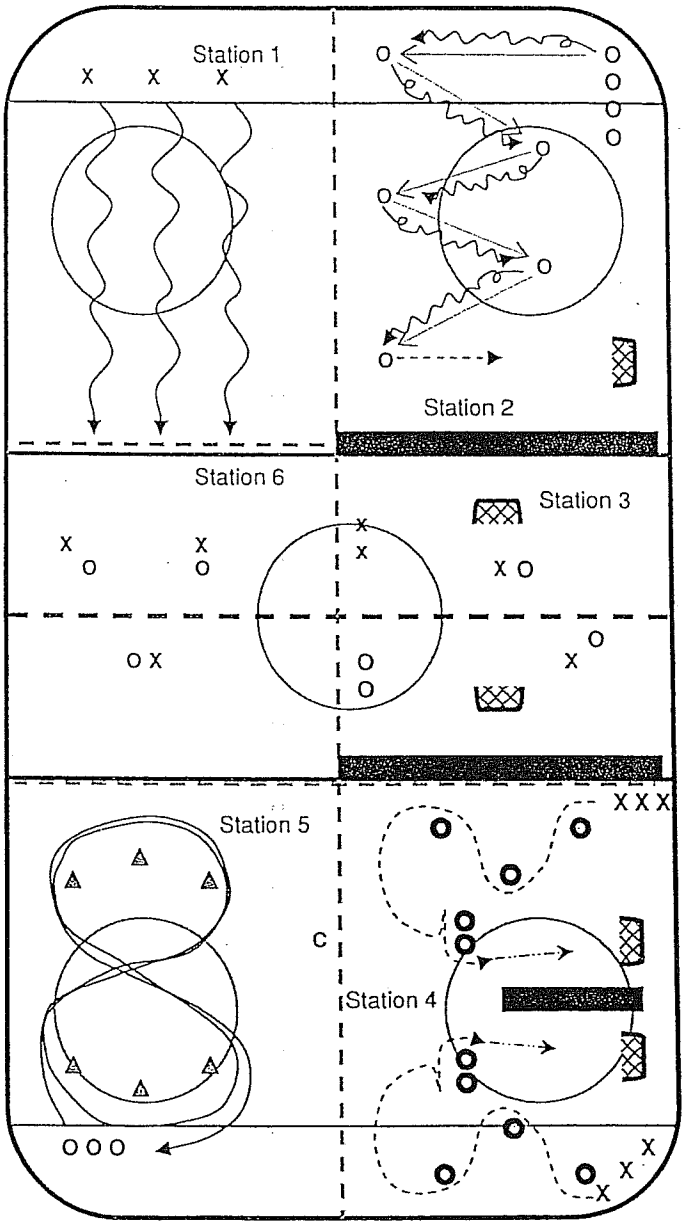
Players handle puck through obstacles. At the double tire the players must use an exaggerated fake before shooting on goal.

Station 5: Forward & Backwards Cross Overs

Work on skating technique. Each player skates two laps around the figure 8 with the next player in line starting as player one passes in front on first lap. Coaches should work individually with players on technique as needed. Keep stick to the middle.

Station 6: 1v1 Keep Away & Passing

Players play 1v1 keep away in zone. On whistle to rest, players stationary pass to each other. Pass cross body and sweep puck. Forehand, backhand, bullet pass (hard as possible).30 seconds keep away then 30 second of passing. Coaches help with technique.



Games: Ringette (9 Minutes)

Play 4v4 cross ice ringette with 30 to 40 second shifts for the remaining time.

Coaching Tip:

Keep as many players moving as possible, don't let them wait in lines.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 27 & 28 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Edges Around Sticks – 5 min

Divide into three groups for more direct instruction to the players. Players drop stick length wise in front of them. Inside edge around stick, outside edge around stick, 2 laps inside edge around stick, 2 laps outside edge, inside edge figure 8, outside edge figure 8, 2 foot side jumps over stick, 1 foot side hop over stick. Perform all exercises on both right and left feet.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle to change stations, players do 5 jumping jacks before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Passing in 3's

Divide players into groups of three. Two players are stationary and one player skates around the out side of the two. All three players pass between themselves. After 40 seconds, change the moving player.

Station 2: Forward & Backwards Pivots

Work on skating technique, forwards to backwards and backwards to forwards pivots. Lead with stick.

Station 3: Backwards Skating

Work on backwards skating technique. Begin with a C-cut start and backwards stride, return skating backwards through slalom course. Use tires so the coaches are not continually setting the course up and not instructing.

Station 4: Tire Push Game

Players are split into two teams. Each team must push the tires across the ice and touch the tire to the boards on the opponent's side of the rink to score a point. Have multiple tires in play. When a goal is scored, coach drops the tire back at center ice.

Station 5: Catch & Shoot

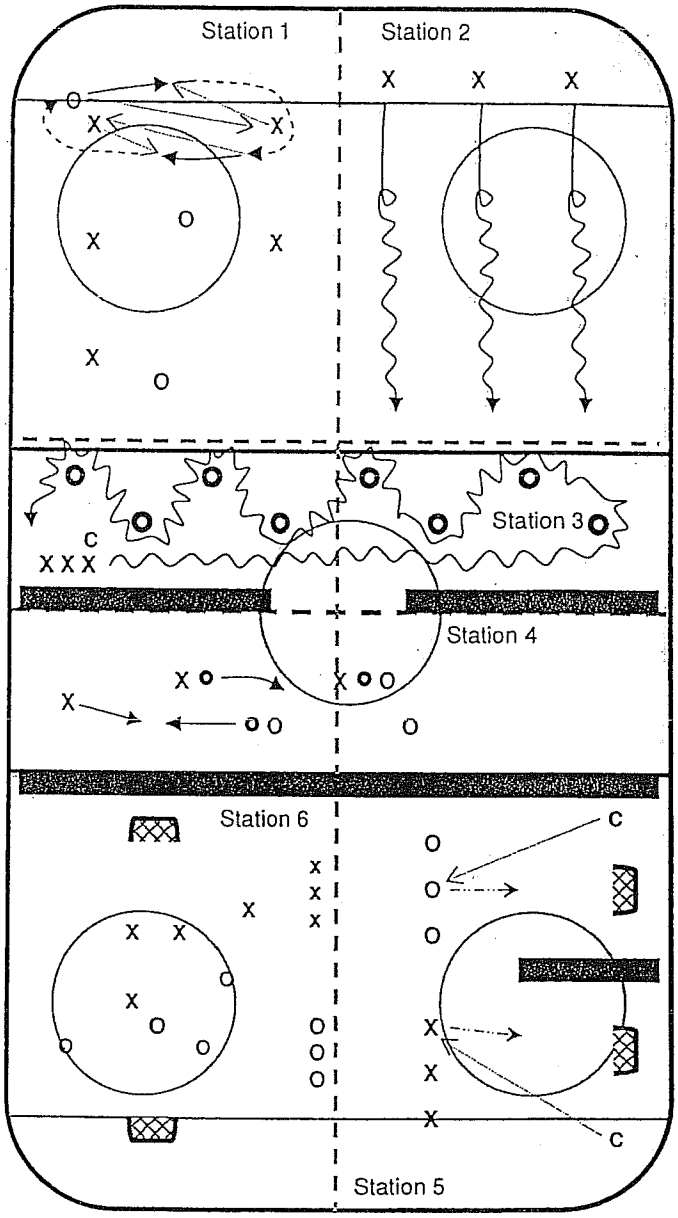
Coaches rapidly pass pucks to the stationary players. Players catch the pass and immediately shoot on goal. Teach players to receive the puck and move their feet into shooting position without stickhandling.

Station 6: 3v3 Tight Space

Play 3v3 in the confined space for 30 to 40 second shifts.

Games: 3v3 Cross-ice w/ Tennis Balls (9 minutes)

Play cross-ice hockey in all three zones using tennis balls. Change shifts every 30 to 40 seconds.



Coaching Tip:

Be positive and upbeat in your communication with the players. How you say something is just as important as what you say.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 29 & 30 *Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun*

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires *Ice Time: 50 Minutes*

Warm Up: Free Play – 5 minutes
Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Players pair up and pass various object to each other around the rink. Coaches set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes
On the whistle, players do 5 two foot jumps before changing stations. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Puck Control, Indirect Pass
Players make an indirect pass to themselves at each tire. They then proceed to make an exaggerated fake to the left and to the right at the obstacles before shooting on goal.

Station 2: 2 on 0 Passing
Two players make as many passes as possible while moving down the center lane. Return through the cones.

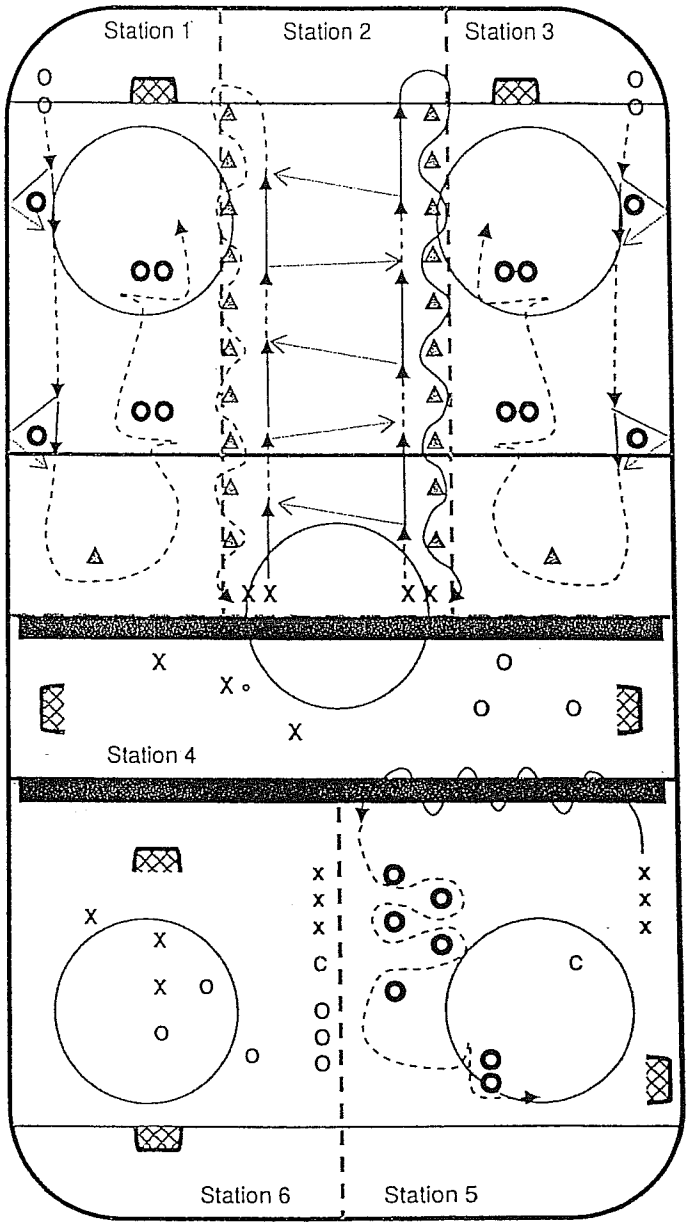
Station 3: Puck Control, Indirect Pass
Players make an indirect pass to themselves at each tire. They then proceed to make an exaggerated fake to the left and to the right at the obstacles before shooting on goal.

Station 4: Ringette
Play cross ice ringette in the narrow lane.

Station 5: Puck Control (ABC's)
Players side jump back and forth over the divider, then pick up a puck and control it through the tires, finishing off with an exaggerated fake and shot on goal.

Station 6: 1v1 X2
Play 1v1 in tight space for 30 second shifts. Keep multiple 1v1's going.

Game: Full Ice Glove Tag (9 Min)
Players must skate the length of the ice without getting hit by a glove thrown by the coaches. If the player can catch a glove before it hits the ground, they have a free pass to opposite end. Tagged players wait along the boards.



Coaching Tip:

Full potential is easier to reach when you don't have to skate as far to find it.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 31 & 32 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Edges Around Sticks – 5 min

Divide into three groups for more direct instruction to the players. Players drop stick length wise in front of them. Inside edge around stick, outside edge around stick, 2 laps inside edge around stick, 2 laps outside edge, inside edge figure 8, outside edge figure 8, 2 foot side jumps over stick, 1 foot side hop over stick. Perform all exercises on both right and left feet.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle, players do 5 two foot jumps before changing stations. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: 1v1 Attack the Net

Coach spots a puck into the corner. Two player compete for puck possession. The player that gains the puck attacks the net to score and the other player defends.

Station 2: Ringette Keep Away

Play keep away with the ringette rings. Have 3 less rings that the number of players. The coach can add in a time limit and on the whistle whoever doesn't have a ring, does 5 power jumps.

Station 3: Tarasov Agility (ABC's)

Players follow the coaches lead, with high knee runs in place, then side to side and forward and backwards. Coach can be creative to have the players move in multiple directions. Have players pass during rest periods.

Station 4: Puck Control, Give & Go

Players give and go with the coach finishing off with a fake and shot on goal. Have the players begin skating before making the pass to the coach. Pass and receive on the backhand, when on the backhand side.

Station 5: Cross Overs & Turns

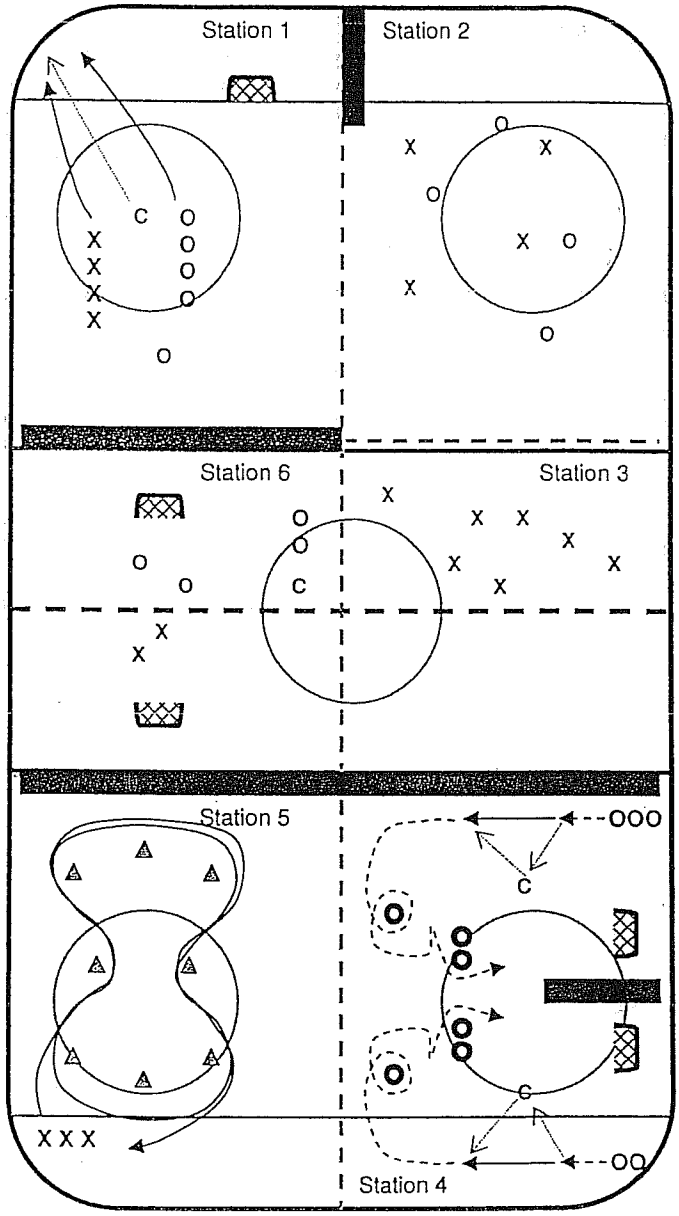
Have players make three laps through the peanut skating pattern using both cross-overs and tight turns. Have players skate both to the right and to the left, then switch to skating backwards.

Station 6: 2v2 Tight Space

Play 2v2 in small area for 30 to 40 second shifts.

Submarine Tag (9 minutes)

On the whistle, players must skate the length of the ice without being tagged. If tagged the player stands still with legs spread apart wide. To become free again a teammate must slide between their legs.



Coaching Tip:

Give short instruction and demonstrate the drill...get the kids involved quickly.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 33 & 34

Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires

Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Warm Up: ABC's Warm-up - 7 min

Coaches should immediately set up the dividers across each blue line. Players will skate a figure 8 around the ice surface down the middle and back along the side boards. Players must jump over the dividers and perform a superman dive at the red line down the middle and drop to their knees at the red line coming back along the boards. Mix up the agility moves.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle to change stations the players do one 360 jump to the right and one to the left before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as players arrive.

Station 1: Skating Agility Race (ABC's)

Divide into teams and race through the slalom course. Return down the middle backwards. After a couple of races add in pucks.

Station 2: Forward Cross Overs with Tight Turn

Players skate two laps around the circle using cross overs. On a cue from the coach the player cuts back using a tight turn to the outside completing a 360 degree turn and then continues on with the crossovers.

Station 3: Soccer

Play cross ice soccer for the first three station rotations. Play for 30 or 40 second shifts.

Station 4: Transition Skating

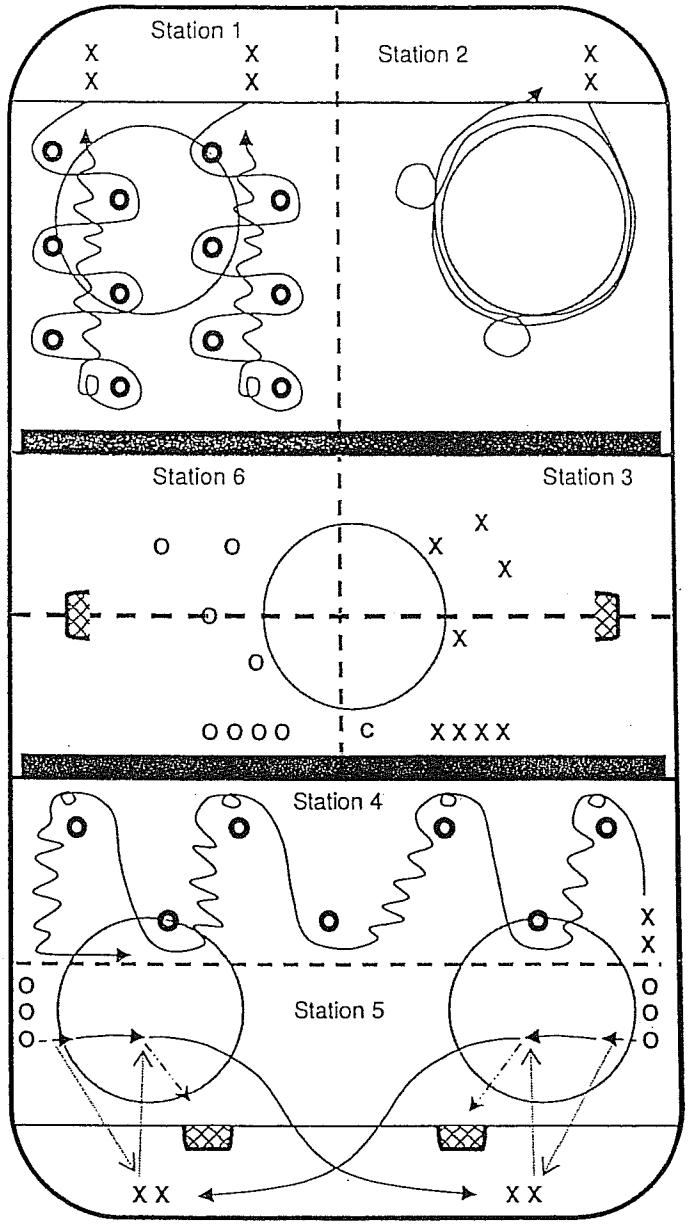
Skate forwards to the first tire and pivot to backwards, continue to the next tire and pivot to skating forwards. Continue through the course. Make sure to switch to the other side so players practice pivoting to both left and right. Coaches should work individually with players who need technical help.

Station 5: Give and Go

Players begin on the hash marks making a pass to the player below the goal line and then heading to the net for a return pass and shot on goal. After the shot the player moves to the passer line on the opposite side. Players should begin skating before making their initial pass and follow their shot to the net before moving on to the other side. Start the players off with good habits!

Station 6: Tennis Ball Scrimmage

Play cross ice hockey using tennis ball for the last three station rotations. Play for 30 to 40 second shifts.



Games: Cross-Ice Scoro (7 Minutes)

Line each team up on opposite side boards. Put 20 pucks into the middle of the zone. On the whistle, each team tries to put as many pucks into the other teams net as possible. When all the pucks are in a net, the team with the most goals wins.

Coaching Tip:

The coach can never make the practice too much fun for Mites!

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 35 & 36 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Boards Pass, 2 on 0 – 7 min
Players make indirect passes to themselves by the obstacles down the outside and return passing 2 on 0 down the middle. Assign coaches to set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes
On the whistle to change stations the players do one 360 jump to the right and one to the left before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as players arrive.

Station 1: Loose Puck Race
Players race through the slalom course and compete for a loose puck. Whoever gains possession attempts to score and the other player defends.

Station 2: Backwards Bumper Butts
Players skate backwards and attempt to run into each other knocking the others off balance. Everyone should begin with their hands on their knees. If a player is knocked down or their hands leave their knees, they are out. Last player standing – wins!

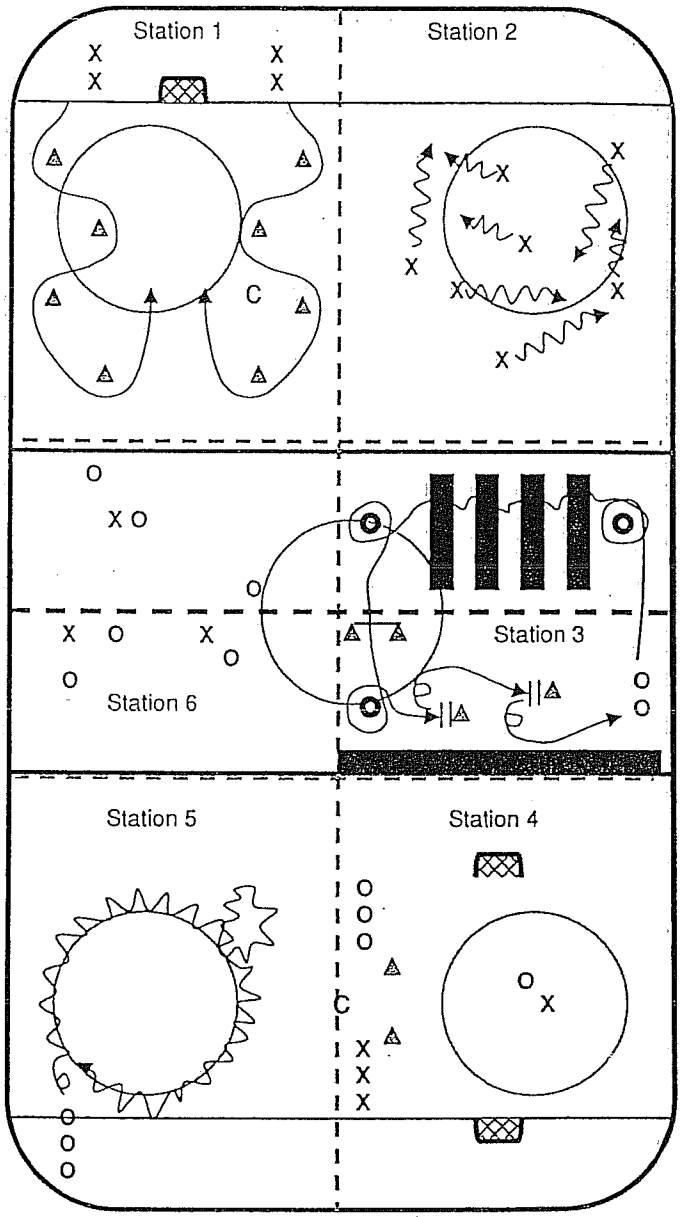
Station 3: Obstacle Course (ABC's)
Run obstacle course to focus agility, balance and coordination skills. Once players begin, be active and assist individual players with skating technique. Keep stick under control and blade near ice. Follow stick through course.

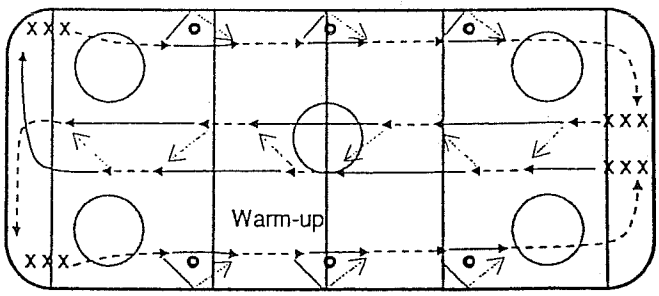
Station 4: Loose Puck Race 1v1 Game
Coach spots a puck for the players to race to. Players compete for 30 second shifts. Keep two 1v1 battles going at a time.

Station 5: Backwards Cross Overs with Tight Turn
Players skate two laps around the circle using backwards cross overs. On a cue from the coach the player cuts back using a tight turn to the outside completing a 360 degree turn and then continues on with the crossovers.

Station 6: 2v1 Keep Away
Divide players into groups of three. Two players attempt to play keep away from the other player in their group. If the puck is stolen a new player becomes the odd man out.

Game: 4v4 Cross-Ice – 7 minutes
Play 4v4 cross ice hockey in all three zones for the remaining time.





Coaching Tip:
Catch every player doing something right in practice...especially effort.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 37 & 38

Theme / Goals: Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires

Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Free Play – 5 minutes

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle to change station, players do 3 hops on the left foot and 3 hops on the right foot before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Tire Push Race

In a relay race, players push a small golf cart tire around the far obstacle. Emphasize knee bend and driving with the legs.

Station 2: Statues / Figure Skating (ABC's)

Players move around the zone and on a signal from the coach freeze and hold a creative position and gliding for a few 3 to 4 seconds (statue). Next have the players demonstrate their most creative figure skating maneuvers.

Station 3: Partner Passing on the Move

Players pair up and move around the zone passing with their partner. Coach can direct players to use their feet to collect the puck as well.

Station 4: 1v1 Angling Left

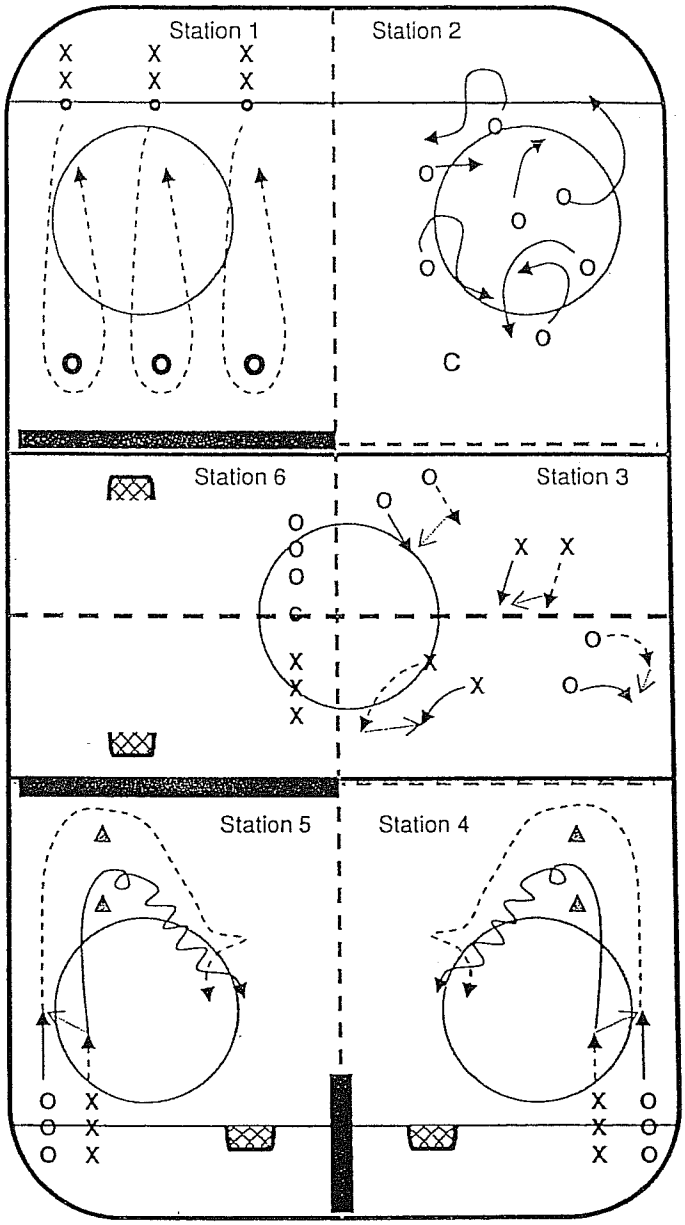
The inside player passes to the outside players who skates around the far cone and attacks the net. The inside player follows up by skating around the near cone and angles the attacking player to the left.

Station 5: 1v1 Angling Right

The inside player passes to the outside players who skates around the far cone and attacks the net. The inside player follows up by skating around the near cone and angles the attacking player to the right.

Station 6: 3v3 Tight Space

Play 3v3 in a tight space with 30 to 40 second shifts.



Soccer in all 3 zones (9 minutes)

Play 4v4 cross ice Soccer in all three zones for remaining time.

Coaching Tip:

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com

Practice: 39 & 40 **Theme / Goals:** Skill Development/Fun

Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, Four Nets, Cones, Tires **Ice Time:** 50 Minutes

Warm Up: Boards Pass, 2 on 0 – 7 min
Players make indirect passes to themselves by the obstacles down the outside and return passing 2 on 0 down the middle. Assign coaches to set up stations.

Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes
On the whistle to change station, players do 3 hops on the left foot and 3 hops on the right foot before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Lap Race
The chaser begins at the behind the goal line and the rest of the group at the hash marks. On the whistle the group skates 2 laps around the nets. The chaser sees how many players he can lap before the race is over.

Station 2: Spin Tag
The coach or a selected player is the tagger. Tagged players wait along the boards until finished. Last player to be tagged is the winner. All player must do a 360 degree spin each time the coach blows the whistle. First game all spins to left, second game all spins to the right.

Station 3: 2v2 Tight Space
Play 2v2 in a tight space with 30 to 40 second shifts.

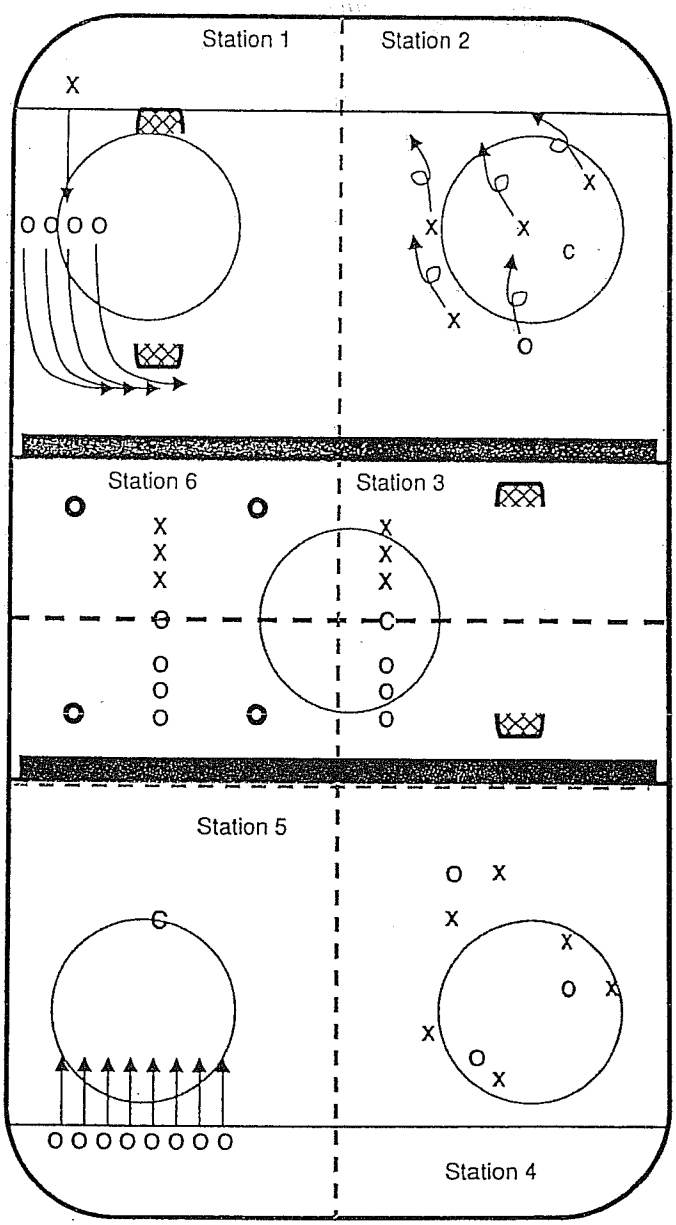
Station 4: 2v1 Keep Away
Divide players into groups of three. Two players attempt to play keep away from the other player in their group. If the puck is stolen a new player becomes the odd man out.

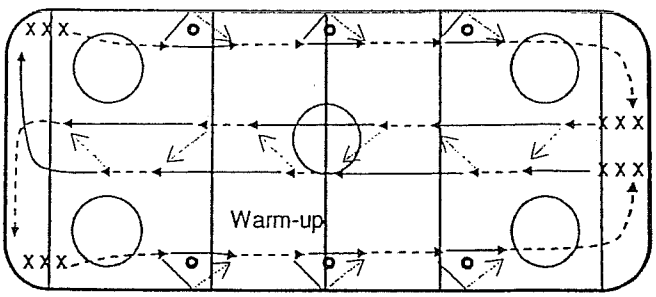
Station 5: Mr. Wizard (ABC's)
The coach points his stick (wand) and the players perform the appropriate agility. Straight up, forward skate. Point left, side step crossovers left. Point right, side step crossovers right. Point at ice, drop to knees and up. Point down ice, skate backwards.

Station 6: 1v1 Hit the Tire X2
Pass the puck off the tire to score. The coach can have two 1v1's or 2v2's going on at the same time.

Games: Ringette (9 Minutes)
Play 4v4 cross ice ringette with 30 to 40 second shifts for the remaining time.

For more practice plans in the 8U Mite progression see www.admkids.com





Coaching Tip:
Let them Play...Have Fun...Fail...Learn... Succeed...
Let Them Be Kids.