



DEFENSE

DRILLS

AND

SKILLS

# Golden Rules for Defensemen

These Golden rules are the key items players should be striving to master as they progress up through the ranks to high school and college. The best players at the highest levels of hockey follow the Golden Rules most often.

A player of average skills and speed will do very well if these rules are mastered. While the rules are basic and seem obvious, it may take many years of concentrated effort for most players to automatically perform them properly. This automatic reaction is what coaches should be teaching and players working towards.

1. Always back your partner — on the offensive blue line, in the neutral zone and especially in the defensive zone.
2. Always one defenseman in front of the net when the opposition has the puck in your zone or there is danger that they may gain possession. For young defenseman, (mites through early PeeWees) the rule should always be one defenseman in front of the net when the puck is in your zone.
3. Do not leave the offensive zone too soon. Leaving too soon is a much more common mistake than leaving too late for a large percentage of defensemen from mites through high school. It backs the defense up too fast and too far and makes "pacing" the attacking forward much harder.
4. Always play defense first. If attacking with the puck, only go deep into the offensive zone until the prime scoring opportunity is over — and you are part of it.
5. Never play a 1-on-1 head on. Give the attacker a little room on one side to force him to go where you want him to go.
6. Stagger one defenseman up a little farther than the other in 2-on-2 and 3-on-2 situations. The up man will generally be nearest to the puck carrier.
7. Shoot intelligently from the point. The best shot is always low, generally not too hard (so it stays in the scoring area for rebounds) and accurate. Defensemen seldom are shooting to score, but rather to put the puck into the scoring area so that forwards can score. Always look up so shots are not into opposing players and so that passes to wide wings or partner can be made when appropriate.
8. Do not "tie-up" with people in front of the net, rather gain position and control.
9. Do not ever "tie-up" with an opposing player anywhere when your team is a man short. As the players on the team with a penalty tie up and are out of the play, the odds get better on the power play, i.e. 4-on-3 is better than 5-on-4, 3-on-2 is better than 4-on-3, etc.

10. Do not stand looking for someone to pass to, especially in the defensive zone. Look-move-look-pass. This reduces the chances of being surprised from the back or side, makes the pass more accurate and forces the opponent to begin retreating.

11. When turning with a player breaking around the outside, keep the feet moving — do not lunge or reach without moving your feet. Young players have an especially hard time with this, mainly because of their lack of skating and turning skills.

12. Work, work, work on backwards skating and turning. A defenseman must be as comfortable going backwards and sideways as forward. Young players all the way through college must continue to practice these skills as their bodies grow and change.

13. Do not pass to covered forwards – carry it, cross-pass to partner or “eat it” if necessary. Defensemen must gain confidence in cross-passing and in carrying the puck to open up the attack, allowing their forward to get open. Feeding the opposition’s point has been a weakness at all levels since day one.

14. Check only for purpose. Checking just for the sake of a hit is seldom of value and creates risk of self-injury, missed checks and open opposition players, as well as penalties.

15. Communicate — with your partner, to goalkeeper and your forwards. It is an important part of teamwork. Do not communicate with opposing players

— it seldom is of value and exposes your emotions.

16. Follow your attacking forwards closely (20 to 30 feet) and move quickly into the offensive zone after the puck goes into the zone. Many defensemen are lazy moving up the ice and allow the puck to turn around before they get over the blue line.

17. The blue lines are critical. Always clear the puck over the defensive blue line as a first priority – then move up to the blue line quickly. Defend both blue lines with as much vigor as is reasonable as the opposition attacks down the ice – they are natural points to stop the attack.

18. Learn the critical skills of flipping the puck (out of the zone) and deflecting the puck off the glass (out of the zone) at the earliest possible age. They are key puck movement skills.

19. Learn the skills and situations to cross pass and cooperate with your partner to move the puck out of the defensive zone.

20. Know your job in the defensive zone and do it consistently and well.

Title : Cornerstone

Category #1 :

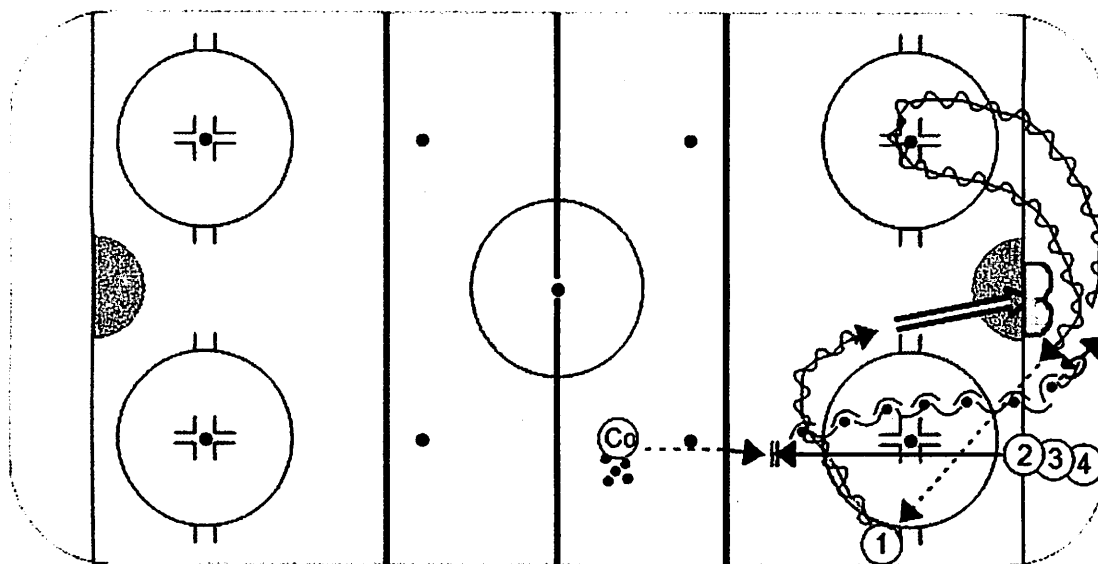
Defensemen

Category #2 :

Skate/Shoot

Content elements:

Components :



Key Points :

### Description

Start with one (D) on the half wall and the remainder behind the goal line.

On the whistle (2) skates hard to the blue line and receives a pass from the coach. (2) skates backward to the goal line and transitions to forward. He skates hard to the dot and does an escape move around the dot. Skate hard back behind the net and execute a breakout pass to (1) on the half wall.

(1) skates to the middle and shoots on goal.

(2) goes to the half wall

(1) goes to back of line

(3) starts the drill again.

Title : 1 x 1 Mirror

Category #1 :

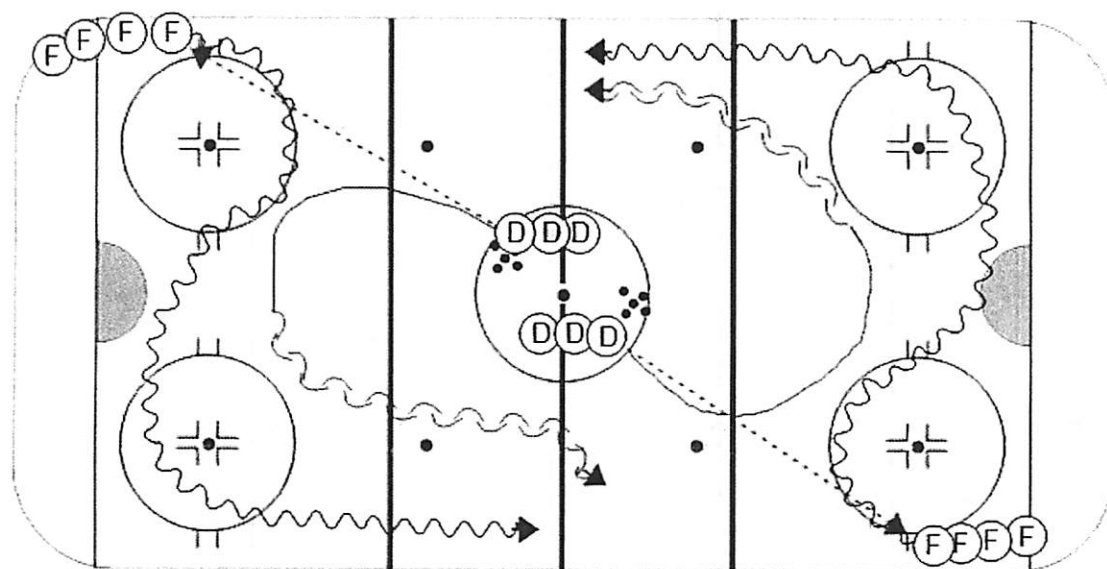
Defensemen

Category #2 :

Try-Outs

Content elements:

Components :



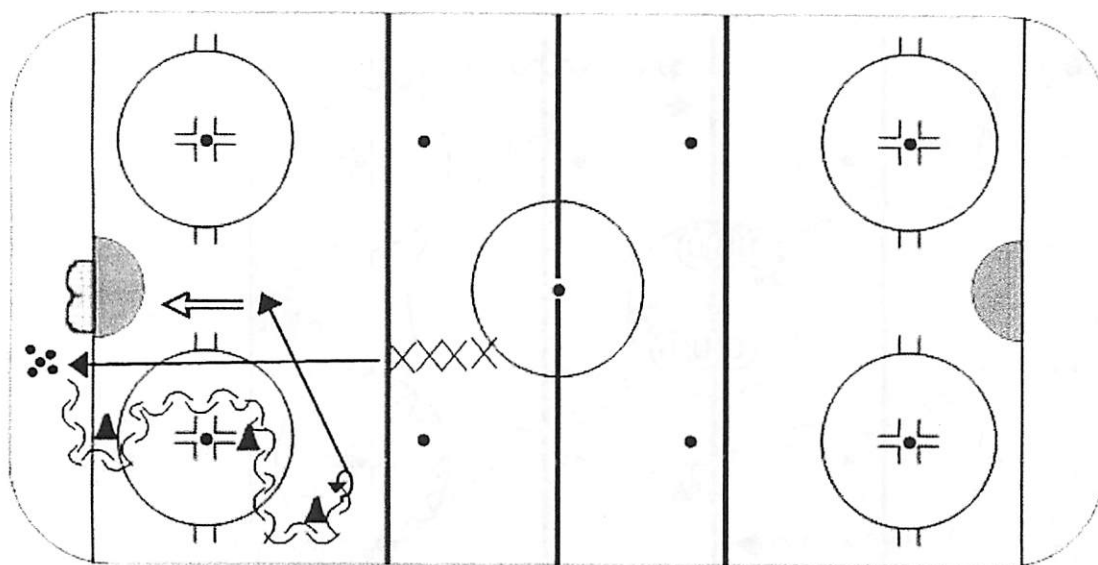
Key Points :

### Description

- D makes pass to F coming out of the circle.
- F carries the puck over the top and across the bottom of the circles
- D mirrors the F keeping a good gap
- D works to ride the puck carrier into the wall before he can get a shot off

Skate/Shoot

**Components :**



### Key Points :

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### Description

Player goes hard to get a puck. Skates backward through the cones. Pivots at the top cone and skates in for a wrist shot.

Title : Zig/Zag Shooting

Category #1 :

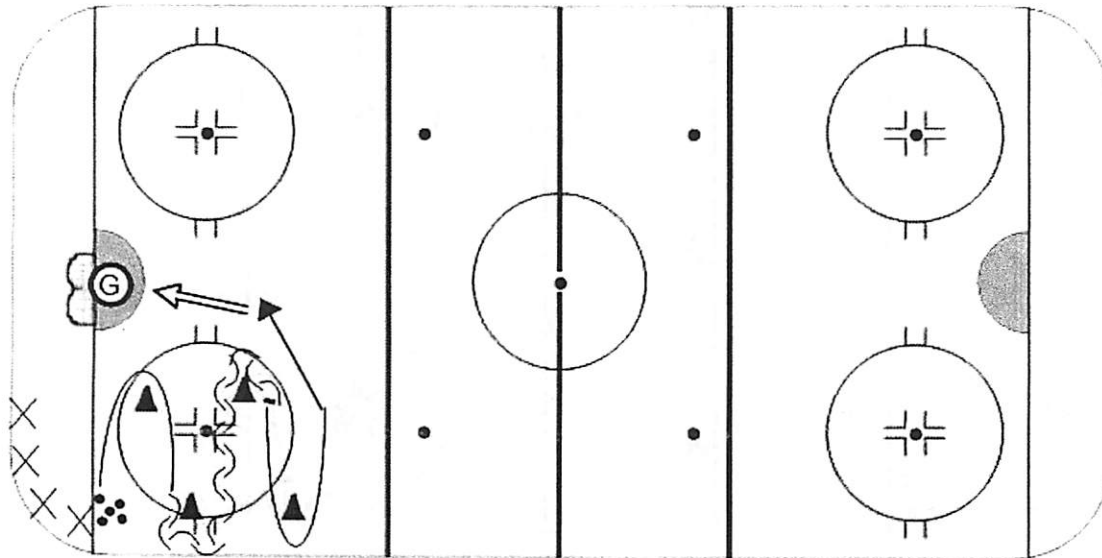
Defensemen

Category #2 :

Skate/Shoot

Content elements:

Components :



Key Points :





### Description

Players skate around cones with a puck alternating between forward and backward, finish with a shot on goal.

Title : 5 Agility Skating Drills

Category #1 :

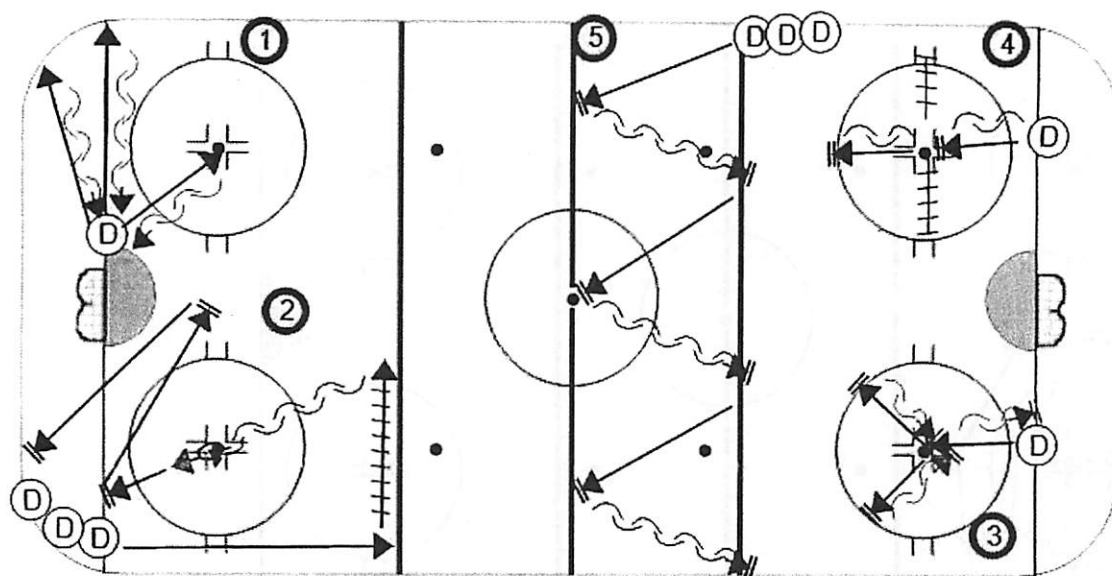
Skating

Category #2 :

Defensemen

Content elements:

Components :



Key Points :

Quality hockey stops

Quick feet

### Description

There are 5 different skating drills on this one diagram

#### 1 - 3 Spots

Skate to dot and back, to wall and back, to corner and back. Make sure to do a good hockey stop at each point of the drill.

#### 2 - Agility Skate

Line up in the corner

Skate to the blue line, side step across, backward to the dot, spin and skate to the goal line, skate to the slot, skate back to the corner

#### 3 - "Y" Drill

Forward to the dot with a hard stop. Forward to the top of the circle, hard stop. Backward to the dot. Forward to the opposite top circle. Back to the dot. Back to the start.

#### 4 - "Iron Cross"

Forward to dot. Side step left, side step back. Forward to top of circle. Backward to dot. Side step right, side step back. Backward to the start.

#### 5 - Up and Back

Alternating forward and backward skating through the neutral zone.



Title : D Specific Skating Drills

Category #1 :

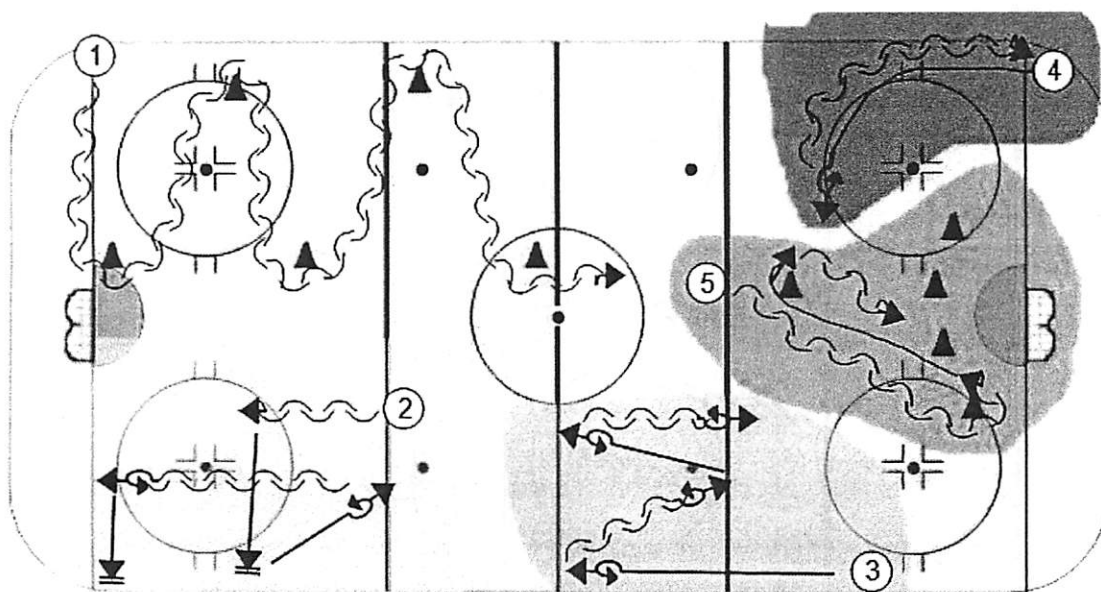
Defensemen

Category #2 :

Footwork

Content elements:

Components :



Key Points :

### Description

5 Skating drills to help defensemen develop the necessary skating drills to be effective players.

1. Backward Snake - Players skate backward around each cone. Player should keep their knees bent and head and chest up.
2. D Turn Step Outs - Quick start backward and pivot out to the wall, Hard skate back to start position, D turn and accelerate down to goal line. Step out to the wall again.
3. Defense Lightning - Out hard to the red line with a good D pivot and backward to the blue line.
4. D Half Circle - Hard out to the top of the circle with a good D turn and back to the starting position backward.
5. 4-Pivot - Player starts above the first cone and skates hard backward to the first bottom cone. Pivot to forward and skate hard back to the top cone. Pivot backward and go to the second bottom cone. Drill continues through all four cones.

Title : D2D with Shot Switch Sides

Category #1 :

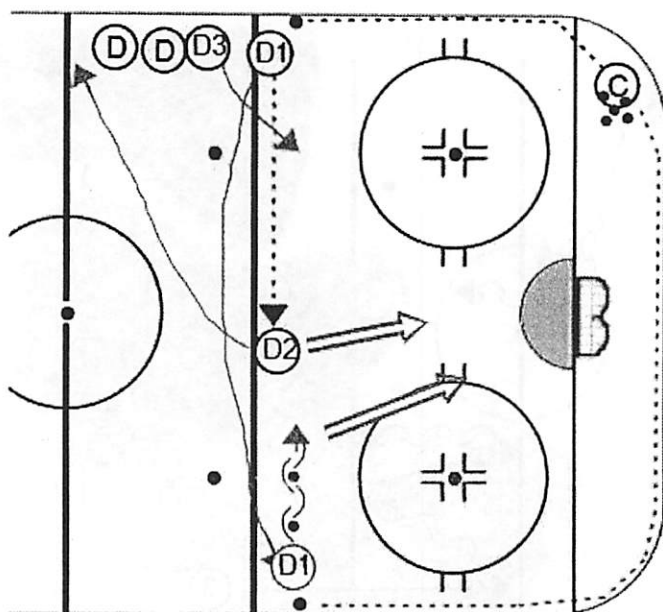
Defensemen

Category #2 :

Skill Work

Content elements:

Components :



Key Points :

### Description

Coach is in the corner with pucks

D1 and D2 start the drill as shown in black

Coach rims the puck to D1 on the wall. D1 picks the puck off the wall and passes D2D to D2.

D2 catches pass and takes a slap shot from up high

D2 goes to the back of the line

D1 skates to the far wall and catches a rim pass from the coach

D1 drags the puck out off the wall and takes a long slap shot

D3 steps into the original D1 position and the drill continues

Title : D Rim in Corner

Category #1 :

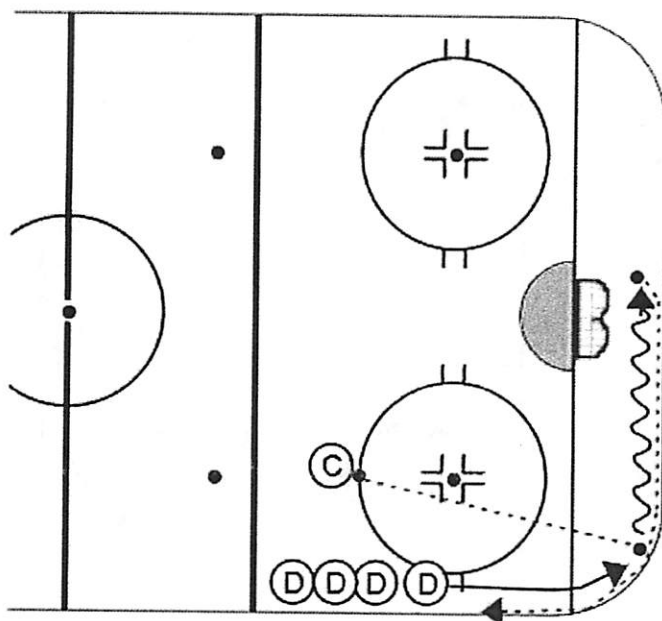
Defensemen

Category #2 :

Skill Work

Content elements:

Components :



Key Points :

Puck Control

Reversal Pass

### Description

Coach dumps the puck into the corner

D goes in hard after the puck, picks it up and carries behind the net.

Once behind the net the D executes a reversal pass back up the wall to the next defenseman

Switch sides so all defensemen work on their ability to make a reversal pass on both the forehand and backhand sides.

Title : Defensive Icing

Category #1 :

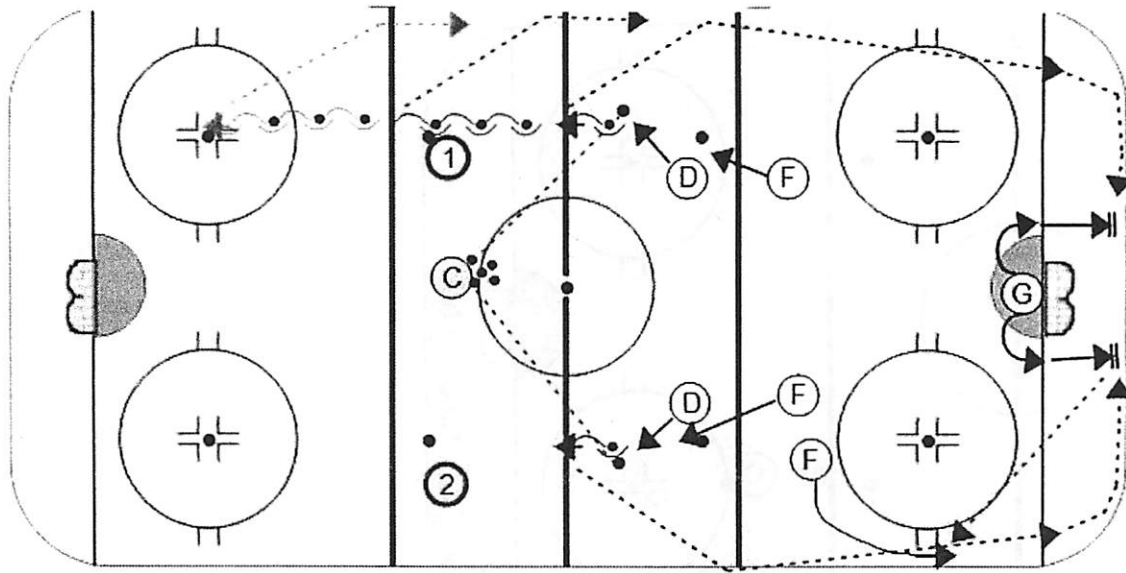
DEFENSE

Category #2 :

Puck Control Drills

Content elements:

Components :



Key Points

Control

Patience

Balance

### Description

Two drills on this one diagram

This drill is used to practice icing the puck when killing a penalty from the offensive zone.

How many times have we all had a defenseman give up the puck as he is backing out of the offensive zone instead of just chipping it up off the glass into the zone. This drill allows the defensemen to practice that part of the game.

#### Progression #1

Red Line  
Blue Line  
Top of Circles

Coach chips a puck out behind the defenseman

Defenseman skates to loose puck pivots backward and banks the puck up off the glass to ice it.

Forward provides pressure to force the defenseman to think.

Goaltender plays puck to practice his puck control.

Have the defenseman carry the puck further back into the zone before he dumps it.

#### Progression #2

Run the drill with one defenseman and two forwards.

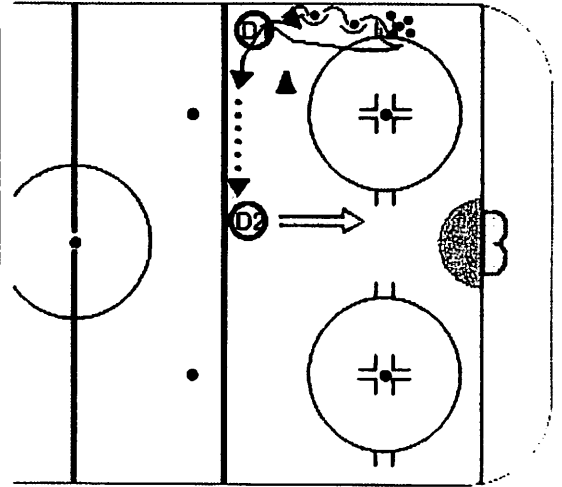
Title : OFFENSIVE BL SUPPORTCategory #1 : DefenseCategory #2 : Support**Description**

This drill works on supporting your partner along the offensive blue line.

1. D1 pinches in and gets a puck
2. D1 drags the puck back to the blue line transitions and feeds D2 for a shot
3. D2 takes a good hard low shot that can be deflected in front

Work on the proper spacing between the D as they support each other. D2 should not be too close to D1

Run from both sides



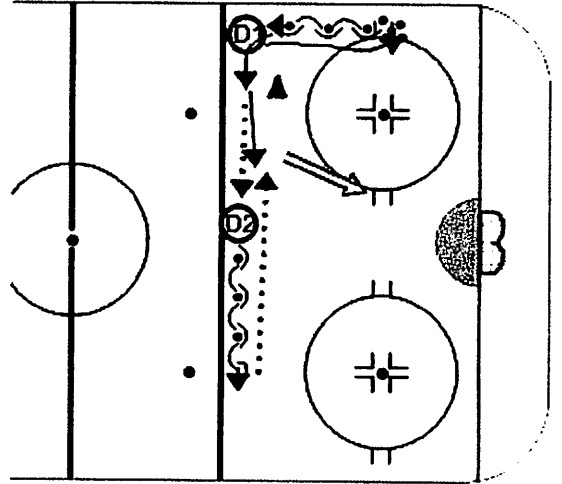
Key points:

Title : OFFENSIVE BL SUPPORT (s) Category #1 : DefenseCategory #2 : Support**Description**

This drill works on supporting your partner along the offensive blue line.

1. D1 pinches in and gets a puck
2. D1 drags the puck back to the blue line transitions and passes to D2
3. D2 drags the puck along the blue line
4. D1 moves into the proper support position as D2 skates back across the blue line
5. D2 passes to D1 for a shot
6. D1 takes a good hard low shot that can be deflected in front

Run from both sides



Key points:

Title : Hinge

Category #1 :

Defensemen

Category #2 :

Support

**Description**

Simple drill to work on hinge technique.

D1 starts with a puck. D2 starts in a back support position.

D1 back skates and so does D2 to maintain proper support position.

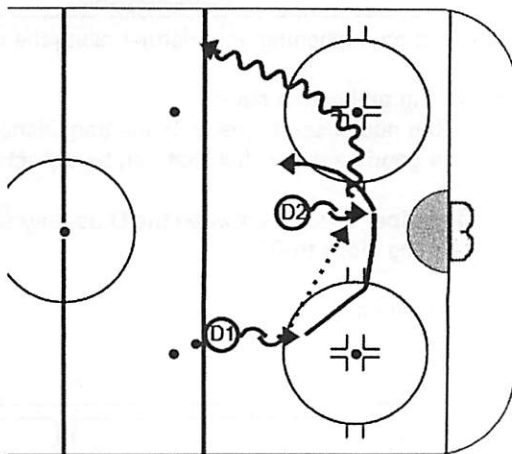
D1 passes to D2.

D2 skates forward while D1 skates to proper support position.

D2 moves up ice toward blue line and D1 follows in proper support position.

Proper support position should be behind about five feet and over 10-15 feet (varies by coach)

When D2 gets to the blue line he back skates and passes to D1 and the drill goes back the opposite way. Run each D pair for 30 to 45 seconds.



Key points:


Title : Hinge with Regroup Passin Content elements: \_\_\_\_\_ Components : \_\_\_\_\_

### Description

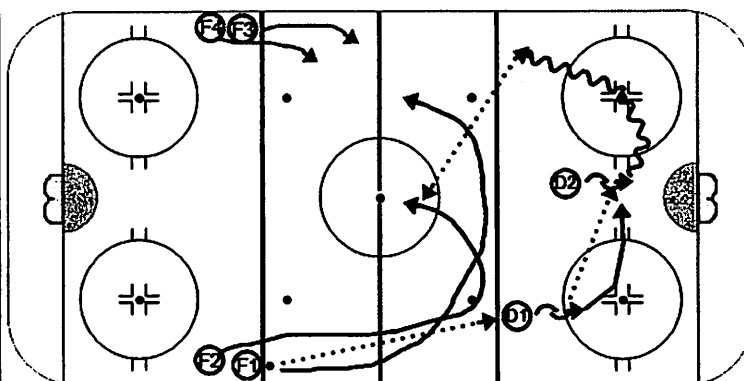
Drill starts with F1 passing to D1  
D1 and D2 hinge and D1 passes to D2  
F1 and F2 skate through the neutral zone  
D2 receives pass and moves up looking to pass to F1 or F2  
F1 and F2 go in 2x0 for a shot

F3 starts the next series by passing to D2 who is now on the blue line and D1 is in support position.  
D2 and D1 hinge and D1 passes to F3 or F4 in the neutral zone.

Drill is continuous. Each D pair should run the drill a few times each and then change pairs.

#### Options:

Add a third F on each side to make it 3 forwards in the neutral zone. Add 1 or 2 D to defend the rush.



Key Points :

Title : D Shot and Hinge Content elements: \_\_\_\_\_ Components : \_\_\_\_\_

**Description**

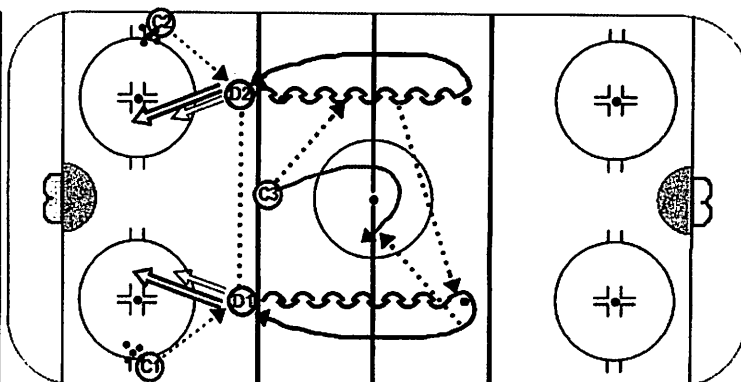
You can use 3 coaches or other players to work this drill.

C1 passes to D1 who goes D2D for shot  
C2 passes to D2 who goes D2D for shot

Both D skate backward and C3 passes to D2.  
D2 performs a hinge pass to D1 who looks for C3 on an outlet  
pass up the middle.

D1 and D2 race back to the blue line to receive passes from the  
coaches for a shot on goal.

If D2 races to the blue line after his pass to D1 the timing will work  
for both to attempt a one-timer off the coaches pass inside the  
blue line.



**Key Points :**

**Shooting**

**Hinge**

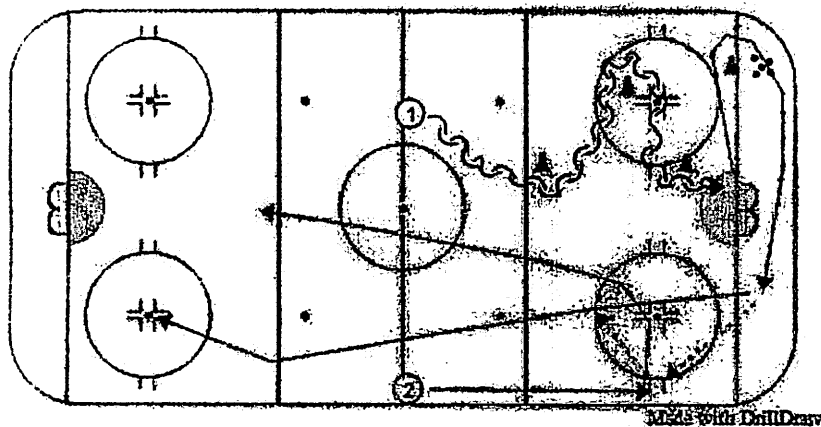
**Get up In Play**

**Support**



# Defense Lateral Movement

Category: Skating | Drill Level: Intermediate



## Key Points

- Backwards Lateral Skating
- Mobility
- Backward Quick Starts

## Description

Starts by executing a backward quick start at the red line and weaving (skating backwards the entire time) through the cones, stopping at the near-side post.

## Notes

Optional 2 on 0 continuation shown in green.