

# INTRODUCTION TO BODY CONTACT



## Beginner Levels

*A Publication Of The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program*



The USA Hockey Coaching  
Education Program is Presented By



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## LEGEND

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

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## INTRODUCTION

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USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program and its Body Play Committee believe that providing coaches with the proper methods of teaching body contact are the first lines of defense against injury.

We further believe that how to play with body contact should be taught beginning in the 8-and-Under (Mite) age group and continuously in a progressive manner through 10-and-Under (Squirt), before body-checking is introduced at 12-and-Under (Pee Wee). There is a great deal of body contact in all levels of hockey. Players need to know safe ways to play along the boards, even if they are the only one near the boards. Body contact (body blocking) is the concept of using leverage to play the puck or puck carrier. Developed through drills and practice, contact confidence allows a player to feel that he/she can successfully compete in body contact situations. Having the skills and confidence to play in contact situations is a primary and essential step to becoming an effective hockey player.

Body checking, the physical separation of a player from the puck, should be the last step taught in the progression of body contact skills. (See the "Body Play Pyramid to Success" to view the four levels of body contact development).

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



## ACTION PLAN

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*“Body contact is separating the player from the puck, not the player from the game.”*

— Bob O'Connor, National Coach-In-Chief

In order to implement the first phase of a checking program, the Body Play Committee strongly recommends that every local youth hockey association conduct a workshop on body contact and checking. Coaches, players and parents should be encouraged to attend this meeting. At this meeting, the video tapes, “Heads up Challenge” and “Body Play/Contact Versus Body Checking,” should be shown.

To follow up, every team should view the video, “Beginning Checking.” Associations should provide ice time at the beginning of the season specifically for the development of body contact skills and require that coaches cover body contact skills at every practice.

The Body Play Committee recommends the following guidelines for teaching body contact skills:

- Respect for the rules
- Having pride in exhibiting good sportsmanship
- Agility skating
- Angling concepts
- Stick checks
- Contact confidence through repeated skill development drills and game experience
- Leverage of body blocking

The second phase of body contact skills is the teaching of body checking which is discussed in materials developed for the Level 3 (Intermediate) Clinic.



## **VIDEOS/MANUALS ON BODY PLAY & BODY CHECKING**

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**USA Hockey Heads Up Challenge** – Dr. Alan Ashare – Short informational video aimed at showing players how to protect themselves when playing along the boards.

**Total time:** 13 minutes

**Available:** Visit the “Heads Up Hockey” section on USA Hockey’s web site at [www.usahockey.com](http://www.usahockey.com)

You can get a complete multi-media kit for \$29.95 plus shipping and handling from USA Hockey by calling (888) 222-2313

**USA Hockey Officials Checking Video** – distinguishes between coincidental body contact situations and body checking situations. The video shows examples of body play situations and then pauses to allow time for discussion.

**Smart Hockey Video** – Mike Bossy – Identifies both proper and improper ways of playing along the boards. Discusses the possibilities of serious injuries when playing along the boards.

**Beginning Checking Video** – Canadian Hockey Centre of Excellence – Introduces players and coaches to the fundamentals of body play that include skating, contact confidence and stick-checking skills.

**Body Checking Video** – Canadian Hockey Centre of Excellence – Continuation of “Beginning Checking” video which teaches all body-checking skills.

**Coaches Checking Handbook** – USA Hockey – The handbook is an illustrated text for coaches covering basic to advanced body contact and body-checking skills.

**Developing Defensemen Video** – Matt Walsh – Series of two videos. The first covers skill development including skating, puck control, passing, shooting and different body checking techniques. The second video incorporates defensive concepts with team play, including angling, gap control, defensive positioning and one-on-one play.

To order this video contact Matt Walsh at (608) 758-7285 or [walee0514@aol.com](mailto:walee0514@aol.com).

## BEGINNING BODY PLAY

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***“The objective of a body check is to separate the opponent from the puck, not to separate him from consciousness.”***

— Dr. Alan Ashare

Chair, USA Hockey Safety & Protective Equipment Committee &  
President, Hockey Equipment Certification Council (H.E.C.C.)

***Official Playing Rules Definition of Body Checking*** – A legal body check is one in which a player checks an opponent who is in possession of the puck, by using their hip or body from the front, diagonally from the front, or straight from the side, and does not take more than two fast steps in executing the check.

Legitimate body checking must be done only with the trunk of the body (hips and shoulders) and must be above the opponent's knees and below the neck. If body checking is unnecessarily rough, it must be penalized. (*USA Hockey 2003-05 Official Rules of Ice Hockey*).

***A Misunderstanding of Body Checking*** – the phrase body checking refers to only one phase of body contact. From now on the correct term to be used is Body Contact.

There are four levels of body play:

- 1st line of defense . . . . . ANGLING
- 2nd line of defense . . . . . STICK CHECKS
- 3rd line of defense . . . . . BODY BLOCKS
- 4th line of defense . . . . . BODY CHECKS

Before one can teach team defense, one must teach all the skills needed to perform all phases of body play.

Body play skills must begin to be taught at 8-and-Under (Mite). At this early age, several important skills must be taught before actual body contact can be introduced.

1. ***Skating***
2. ***Angling***
3. ***Stick checks***
4. ***Contact confidence.*** Contact confidence is being comfortable with incidental body contact – contact that occurs when competing for a puck.

5. **Body blocking**
6. **Take out/rub out checks**
7. **Solid body checks**

It is important that coaches teach this progression of body play skills. This will allow players to enjoy the game more and will also make it a safer sport.

## POINTS OF INTEREST ON BODY PLAY

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### Five Common Components of Body Play

#### 1. **Skating Ability**

- Speed & Quickness – in all four directions, and can change directions quickly.
- Strength – strong legs and aggressive edges (“dig in”).
- Balance & Agility – remain in “ready position” to execute various types of body play. Practice the skills of turning, stopping, starting and pivoting.

#### 2. **Anticipation**

- “Read” what the opposition is going to do and deliver the correct body play technique.
- Preparation – know ahead of time what an opponent’s tendencies are.
- Observing – when resting on the bench, watch your opponents’ tendencies.

#### 3. **Positional Play**

- Angling – force the opponent to go a certain way or direction.

#### 4. **Head Up and On A Swivel**

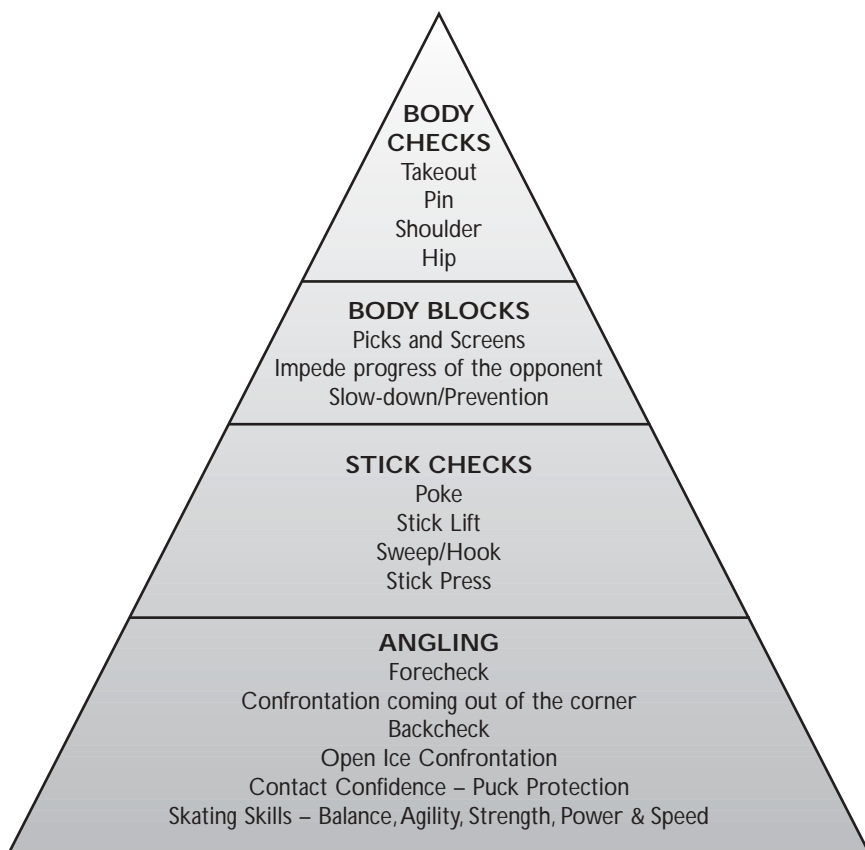
- Be aware of all of your options, see the entire ice surface and do not have “tunnel vision.”

#### 5. **Body Position**

- Being in the ready position.
- Resisting your opponents’ counter to body play.
- Understanding the position of your body when delivering a body check.

## BODY PLAY – PYRAMID TO SUCCESS

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**BODY CHECKS** – 4th line of Body Play

**BODY BLOCKS** – 3rd line of Body Play

**STICK CHECKS** – 2nd line of Body Play

**ANGLING** – 1st line of Body Play

## TYPES OF BODY PLAY

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### Angling – 1st Line of Defense

- Do not allow your opponent open ice
- The basic fundamental to performing any body play technique including forechecking, backchecking, open ice rushes and play out of the corner
- The most important skill to be taught is skating

### Contact Confidence

- Puck protection
- Taking a hit safely away from the boards
- When getting checked from behind near the boards
- When getting hit from the side when playing near the boards

### Stick Checks – 2nd Line of Defense

- **Poke Check** – taught first, usually done skating backward
- **Stick Lift** – used in coverage, when backchecking and approaching from the side or behind
- **Stick Hook (Sweep)** – approaching from behind and unable to overtake the opponent
- **Stick Press** – typically executed in close, one on one confrontations, usually in front of the net or along the boards

### Body Blocks – 3rd Line of Defense

- Using the body to impede the progress of an offensive player trying to get to a certain area of the ice (with or without possession of the puck)

### Body Checks – 4th Line of Defense

- **Take Out (rub out) Check** – first body contact skill to teach
  - Technique of angling the opponent into the boards. This is not a solid body hit
  - Attacking with hips onto opponent's gloves
- **Pinning Techniques** – containment skills
  - Lasso Pin Technique – approach from behind, use your stick and arms to surround the puck carrier's body and press against the boards
  - Knee Bend Technique – approach from behind, press the puck carrier's body into the boards, put your knee in between the opponent's legs and press hard

- Body Surround Technique – approach the puck carrier from the side and behind, get your stick and elbows in front of the puck carrier's body, put your legs behind the puck carrier's legs, squeeze back with your elbows while pushing forward with bent knee
- **Shoulder Check** – open ice contact
  - The defensive team must outnumber the offensive team when the defensive player steps up and makes an open ice check
  - High risk check, possibility of only partial or no body contact with the puck carrier
  - Opponent must be close enough so that only one stride forward is required to make contact (gap control)
  - Drive shoulder into opponent's chest, do not lunge forward
- **Hip Check** – used mainly along the boards
  - Difficult check to deliver, timing must be perfect
  - When delivering a hip check, bend at the waist and turn hips into the puck carrier's stomach

## DEVELOPING CHECKING SKILLS – AGE GROUP PROGRESSION

### 8-AND-UNDER (MITE)

**Area of Concentraion:** balance, agility, skating, concept of angling, assertive attitude, stick press, stick lift, poke check

**Method:** aggressive skating, obstacle courses, chase games, challenge drills, relay races, cross-ice games, angling drills

**Tactical Situation:** allow enthusiasm to prevail

### 10-AND-UNDER (SQUIRT)

**Area of Concentration:** review all areas covered in 8-and-Under (Mite), backward skating, concept of body blocking, play along the boards, taking the hands away, forechecking, concept of “taking the lane,” odd-man situations

**Method:** crossovers, backward starts, pivots, backward lateral movement, partner drills, competitive drills, compete for pucks in small areas, controlled takeouts, one-on-one drills along the boards, one-on-one drills in offensive zone, breakdown defensive responsibilities and cross-ice games

**Tactical Situation:** introduce one-on-one situations – forcing the puck carrier wide to the near boards, open ice (backchecking), play in front of the net, play in the defensive corners, covering points, covering the slot

### 12-AND-UNDER (PEE WEE)

**Area of Concentration:** review all previously taught skills, introduce body checking, defensive team play

**Method:** checking technique, drills for taking a check, drills for giving a check, drills that address odd or even man situations (one-on-one, one-on-two, two-on-two, two-on-one, three-on-three, and three-on-two) and cross-ice games

**Tactical Situation:** body checking vs. containing a puck carrier, support of the player who is attacking the puck carrier, understanding of defensive zone coverages and breakdowns, introduction of “team systems”

## 14-AND-UNDER (BANTAM)

**Area of Concentration:** review all previously taught skills, continued emphasis on defensive team play, development of “team systems” with zone-to-zone continuity, transition from offense to defense and defense to offense

**Method:** drills that teach player responsibilities in each zone, drills that teach reaction and decision making when there is a change of possession either way, cross-ice games

**Tactical Situation:** 5-on-5 play in each zone from zone-to-zone, 5-on-5 play situations where players transition from offense to defense and defense to offense

## 18-AND-UNDER (MIDGET/HIGH SCHOOL)

**Area of Concentration:** review and training is based on the individual skills, the team skills and the levels of play

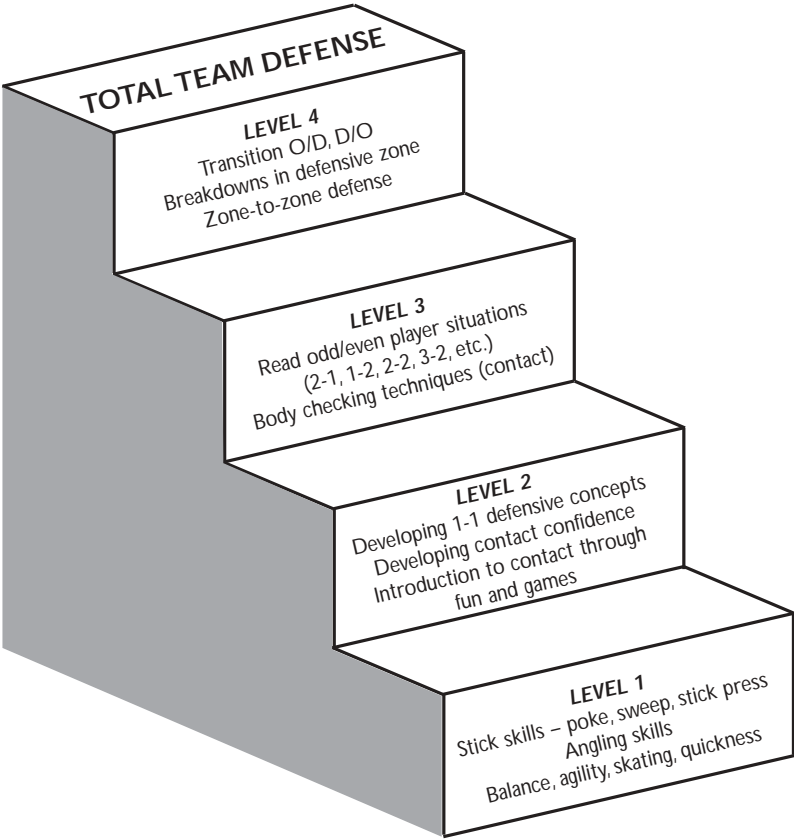
**Method:** emphasis is on drills for game-specific responsibilities of forwards, defensemen and the goalkeeper. Emphasis on improvement of individual skills

**Tactical Situation:** breakdowns, transition, implementation of several “team systems” to be used (i.e., forechecks, defensive zone coverages, specialty teams)



# STEPS TO TOTAL TEAM DEFENSE

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## TEACHING OF SKILLS

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We can have all the knowledge and know all the drills, but unless we consider the individual when we teach skills, we are missing a big part of what we are trying to accomplish.

***What should coaches do in order to develop the skills of their players?***

1. Demonstrate clearly
2. Use part-to-whole instruction
3. Introduce read and react concepts
4. Utilize good drills

A workshop can provide aspects of skill development, but only you can provide the special interest and concern that each player will need.

1. **Build confidence.** At first, many players will struggle or have difficulty. Encourage players to keep trying until improvement takes place. Then, the motivation itself will keep them trying.
2. **Support.** It is frustrating when a player struggles or is having difficulty. It is the true coach who can continue to encourage that player to keep trying.
3. **Faith.** Remember, players will believe in themselves more if they know you believe in them. A consistent, calm, reassuring atmosphere that encourages the attempt and celebrates success will lead players to greater skill development.

## THE TEACHING PROCESS

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Our objective in working with youth hockey players is to expose them to effective methods of skill development. The outcome of that objective is measured by how much the skill level of our players improves. In order to attain significant outcomes for our efforts, coaches must use effective teaching principles like those listed below:

1. Learning begins where the learner is and not where the coach might hope him/her to be.
2. Too much detail only confuses – use the K.I.S.S. (keep it simple stupid) method.
3. People learn at different rates and in different ways. Personalize as much of your instruction as you can.
4. Repetition consolidates learning, provided the skill is repeated correctly. Correction needs to be individual, short and positive.
5. Drills are great for skill development, but by themselves do not ensure learning. Any exercise must be understandable and meaningful to the learner.
6. Players tend to practice skill strengths. Coaches must be sure to drill on weaknesses. Be positive with correction and reinforce the attempt to improve often.
7. The battery of drills a coach uses must include “game situation” type drills. In that way, the skill becomes meaningful within the context of the game itself.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR TEACHING BODY CONTACT/CHECKING SKILLS

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1. Body contact and checking drills should be a part of each and every practice. During drills, emphasize the body contact/checking side of the drill. Example: during one-on-one's or two-on-one's, work more with the defensemen than the forwards on their responsibilities.
2. Make checking skills a priority for all players on your team – a responsibility of every player. All players must backcheck, forecheck and play the body, etc.
3. When introducing body contact and checking drills, especially for the first time, perform the drill at half speed. Confine the offensive players to ensure the success of the defender. As the defenders gain success, make their job more difficult by making the drill more competitive.
4. Use competitive drills that place skaters in the situation of “winning the short races” to the puck. Develop drills that provide one-on-one battles in confined areas and provide a shot on net for both players.
5. Develop drills that simulate game situations and reflect the tactical systems that your players will be using.
6. Use video tape to evaluate and correct technical and tactical mistakes. Be sure to use the video tape in a teaching manner and not as a tool to criticize players. Identify errors with the purpose of correcting them.
7. Most of all, remember that you are dealing with children. Body contact, checking, playing along the boards and trying to dominate someone physically may be something new to players. There is a lot of fear in thinking about being checked into the boards (if you don't think so, then it has never happened to you). If you want to make someone more assertive on the ice, do it by having them realize success in a physical situation. Shaming a person or questioning their courage will do little more than damage their self-worth and self-esteem.

### ANGLING

#### *Objective*

- Basic fundamental to performing any type of body play skill
- Force opponent in a certain direction
- To prevent the opponent from getting to open ice; to contain the opponent to the outside of the rink

#### *Teaching Points*

- Forechecking – when the puck carrier comes from behind the net, be slightly behind your opponent until he/she clears the net
  - Quick acceleration is important once the puck carrier is contained
  - Continue skating when making body contact with your opponent
- Backchecking – when skating alongside your opponent, be slightly in front of him/her.
  - Always have your stick in the passing lane of the opponent you are covering
  - Contain your opponent to the outside. Don't allow your opponent to cut into the middle of the open ice
- Skating Backward – force the puck carrier to go to the outside by lining your outside shoulder up with your opponent's inside shoulder.
  - Maintain proper “sitting in chair” stance, with one hand on your stick
  - Keep your body between your opponent and the net
  - Maintain a tight gap between you and your opponent
  - Once the opponent is committed to the outside, pivot outside to “angle” the opponent toward boards.

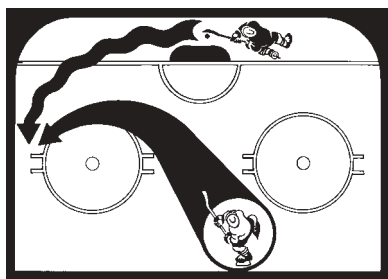


Fig. 1 Angling

### **Common Errors**

- Gliding when you're at the side of your opponent
- Approaching your opponent "head on"
- Not accelerating once your opponent is in a contained area

## **STICK CHECKS**

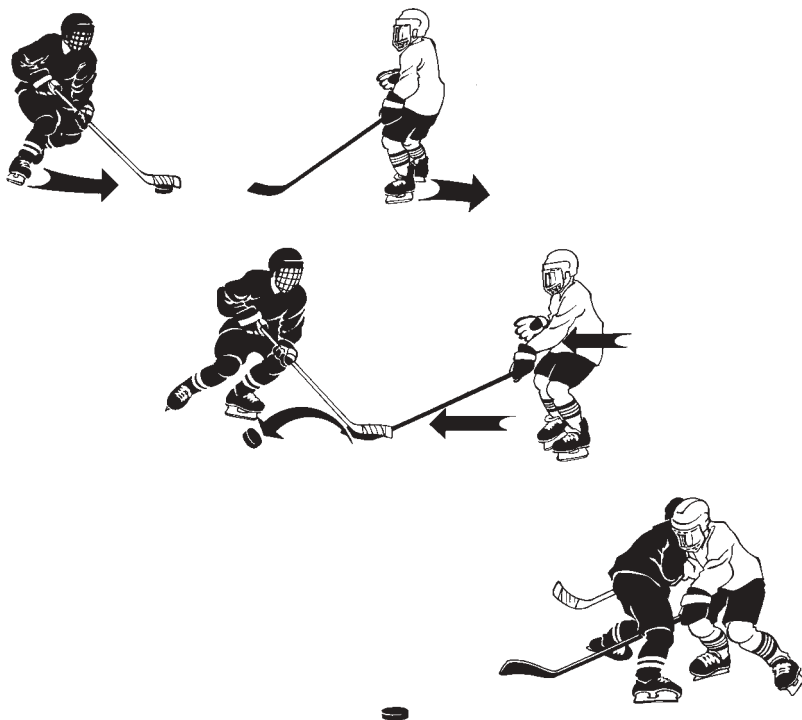
### **A. Poke Check**

#### **Objective**

- To knock the puck off the puck carrier's stick

#### **Teaching Points**

- Stick hand is held close to body, elbow bent
- Palm of hand down
- As the puck carrier gets within range, quickly extend the stick, making contact with the puck
- Finish the check by sliding your stick between the opponent's legs and performing a body block check



**Fig. 2** Poke Check

### ***Common Errors***

- Stopping when making the poke check
- Lunging when making the poke check
- Not watching the body of the puck carrier
- Committing too soon

## **B. Stick Press**

### ***Objective***

- To prevent the opponent from gaining control of the puck
- To prevent the opponent from receiving a pass or shooting on net

### ***Teaching Points***

- Executed on one-on-one coverage situations
- Press your stick down over the opponent's stick
- Use the back and shoulder muscles to create leverage

### ***Common Errors***

- Reaching with the arms
- Failure to move into the opponent with your body



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**Fig. 3**    **Stick Press**

## **C. Stick Lift**

### ***Objective***

- To take possession of the puck from the puck carrier

### ***Teaching Points***

- Lift the puck carrier's stick in the shaft by using the blade or shaft of your stick
- Lift with both your legs and arms



Fig. 4 Stick Lift

### ***Common Errors***

- Timing
- Reaching in too early with your stick
- Not moving into the opponent after the initial stick lift

## **D. Hook (Sweep) Check**

### ***Objective***

- To sweep the puck away from the puck carrier when approaching from behind

### ***Teaching Points***

- Stick shaft is extended along the ice
- Stick side knee is bent
- Stick blade flat on ice
- Use a “hooking” motion to sweep the puck away from your opponent



Fig. 5 Hook Check



### ***Common Errors***

- Timing
- Reaching in too early
- Not accelerating before reaching in to hook the puck away
- Not bending the inside leg when hooking the puck

## **CONTACT CONFIDENCE**

### **A. Checked Into The Boards – Body Protection**

#### ***Objective***

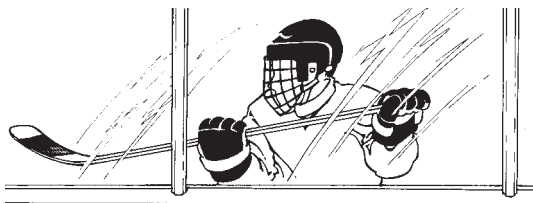
- To protect the body when being checked while facing the boards

#### ***Teaching Points***

- If at all possible, try to turn skates parallel to the boards before contact is made
- If checked while facing the boards, distribute the force of the impact over as wide a surface as possible, including putting your stick and gloves on the glass to cushion the blow

### ***Common Errors***

- Not getting your stick and gloves up and spread out on the glass



**Fig. 6**    Protecting Yourself Along The Boards

### **B. Checked Along The Boards – Body Protection**

#### ***Objective***

- To protect the body when being checked while skating parallel to the boards

#### ***Teaching Points***

- Press your forearm and upper thigh (hip area) against the boards
- Avoid hitting the boards with the shoulder
- Keep a low center of gravity with your feet apart and knees bent



**Fig. 7** Checking Along The Boards

### ***Common Errors***

- Standing too upright with your feet together (not having a low center of gravity)
- Not having your body against the boards when contact is made

## **C. Checked Away From The Boards – Body Protection**

### ***Objective***

- To protect the body when being checked in open ice

### ***Teaching Points***

- Keep a low center of gravity with your feet apart and knees bent
- Gain momentum by moving toward the checker

### ***Common Errors***

- Standing too upright with your feet together (not having a low center of gravity)
- Trying to avoid the check by leaving your skates (jumping out of the way)



**Fig. 8** Body Protection Away From The Boards

## BODY BLOCK

### *Objective*

- To impede the progress of the puck carrier in open ice situations where a body check would be too dangerous

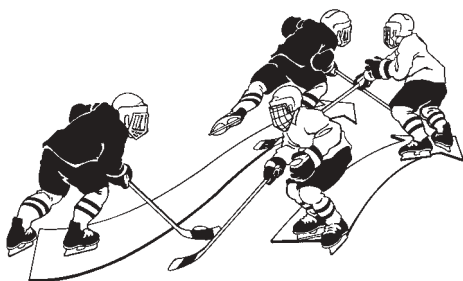
### *Teaching Points*

- The purpose of this check is to slow down the puck carrier and angle him/her toward the boards
- The checker must focus on the body, although a poke check is often used to help slow down and steer the attack
- Keep a low center of gravity with your feet apart and knees bent
- Your outside shoulder is lined up with the center line of puck carrier
- Keep your body between the opponent and the net
- You may have to use lateral movement skills
- Gradually skate backward to tighten “gap”



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Fig. 9 Body Block



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Fig. 10 Body Block Using Lateral Movement

### ***Common Errors***

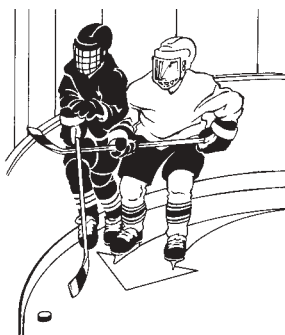
- Being overly aggressive, trying to use a body check rather than a body block
- Lifting the hands and elbows and striking the puck carrier above the shoulders
- Not having a low center of gravity

## **BODY CHECKS**

### **A. Take Out (Rub Out) Body Check**

#### ***Objective***

- The technique of pinching the opponent into the boards
- The skill of angling is very important in this check



**Fig. 11 Take Out Check**

#### ***Teaching Points***

- Accelerate on an angle to slightly in front of the puck carrier (checker's hips are slightly ahead of puck carrier's hips)
- Pinch the opponent's hands and stick with hips
- Stick goes under the puck carrier's stick
- Keep your feet moving

#### ***Common Errors***

- Attacking the puck carrier's body too aggressively with checker's hips
- Checker starts to hit the opponent when even with the opponent's body (too soon)
- Not pinching the opponent's stick off hard enough into the boards with checker's hips
- Checker doesn't keep his/her feet moving allowing the player to skate away

## B. Pinning Against The Boards

### **Objective**

- To separate and contain the opponent off the puck during play along the boards

#### 1. *Knee Pin and Body Press*

##### **Teaching Points**

- Approach from the back side of the opponent
- Press the puck carrier's body against the boards
- Hold the opponent's body against the boards with a wide stance
- Put bent knee between the opponent's legs and press hard
- Bend knees and keep your feet apart (low center of gravity)

##### **Common Errors**

- Over aggressively playing the body into the boards
- Not maintaining a low center of gravity



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Fig. 12 Pinning Against The Boards

#### 2. *Stick Lasso Technique*

##### **Teaching Points**

- Approach the opponent from behind with a wide stance and one hand on the stick
- The checker's stick surrounds the puck carrier's front side

- Press the opponent against the boards with a low center of gravity
- Put hand not holding the stick on opposite side of opponent's body
- Hold the opponent's body up

#### ***Common Errors***

- Trying to "lasso" with your stick too far way from the boards
- Not maintaining a low center of gravity when pressing the opponent to the boards
- Holding the opponent too long after pinning against the boards

### ***3. Body Squeeze Technique***

#### ***Teaching Points***

- Approach the opponent from slightly behind and from the side
- The checker's hands and elbows are in front of the opponent's body
- The checker's legs are behind the opponent's body
- Squeeze back with elbows and hands while pushing forward with inside leg that is bent
- Outside leg is away from the boards as a brace

#### ***Common Errors***

- Not having a brace leg out far enough from the boards
- Lack of upper body strength to squeeze the opponent

## **C. Shoulder Check**

#### ***Objective***

- Open ice check intended to physically knock the puck carrier off the puck by use of the shoulder

#### ***Teaching Points***

- The opponent must be close enough so that only one stride forward is required to make contact
- The checker must focus on the chest of the opponent
- The checker needs to get his/her shoulder lower than the puck carrier's shoulders to gain leverage
- The checker should step forward and deliver the shoulder into the chest of the opponent



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**Fig. 13** Shoulder Check

- The checker's back foot turns sideways to drive his/her body into the opponent
- The checker must continue to keep his/her feet moving after the initial contact is made
- The checker should try to put his/her stick between the opponent's legs when delivering the check

#### ***Common Errors***

- Lunging at the puck carrier
- Looking at the puck rather than the body/chest of the opponent
- Extending the arms out in front of the body when delivering the check
- Not keeping your feet moving through the opponent

### **D. Hip Check**

#### ***Objective***

- To physically knock the opponent off the puck by the use of a hip check

#### ***Teaching Points***

- The puck carrier must be committed to a course which he/she will have difficulty changing
- Line up the opponent like a shoulder check
- At the last minute, the checker drops his/her head and shoulders (bending at the waist) and thrusts hips into the stomach of the opponent
- Keep the leg closest to the check bent
- The hip check is best used against the boards where you have the puck carrier contained



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Fig. 14 Hip Check

***Common Errors***

- Poor timing will result in a complete miss



## PUCK PROTECTION

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What angling is to the defensive side of body contact puck protection is to the offensive side.

Puck protection is the ability of the puck carrier to protect the puck from a defender who is trying to take it away. It is as simple as keeping your body between the puck and the defender. It is different from stickhandling and deking in that the puck carrier is trying to maintain control of the puck, while stickhandling and deking are used to attack a defender or the goal.

A player should protect the puck anytime he/she needs to create time in order to find a teammate. It is most often used along the boards where time and space are limited.



## SKATING DRILLS

### *"J" Cross-Over Start to Sprint*

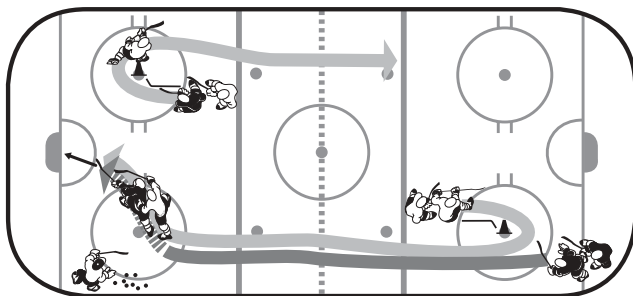
**Objective:** To develop the quick cross-over start when beginning a backcheck

**Age Group:** 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- Put a cone on the face-off dot in one end of the rink
- Player X starts one stick length behind the cone
- On the whistle, X does three quick forward cross-overs around the cone and sprints up the ice to at least the far blue line

**Competitive Option:** Add a second player O at the bottom of the circle, and have a coach with pucks at the far face-off dot. Place the puck on the dot, players X and O race for the puck to get a shot on goal.



### *Circle Stop & Start & Turn*

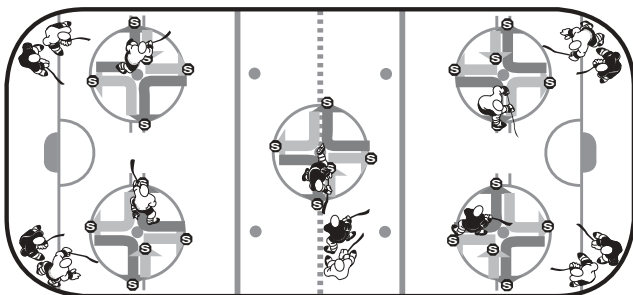
**Objective:** To develop quickness needed for forechecking by doing quick stops & starts for a short distance

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

- Start a player in every circle on the face-off dot
- On the whistle, sprint forward to the edge of the circle and stop
- Sprint forward back to dot and do a 90 degree turn and sprint to the edge of the circle

**Competitive Option:** Coach may use the scoreboard. Horn sounds to begin the drill, players try and finish the pattern before the time runs out.



## ***Partner Tag***

**Objective:** To develop skating agility and the concepts of defensive coverage and backchecking

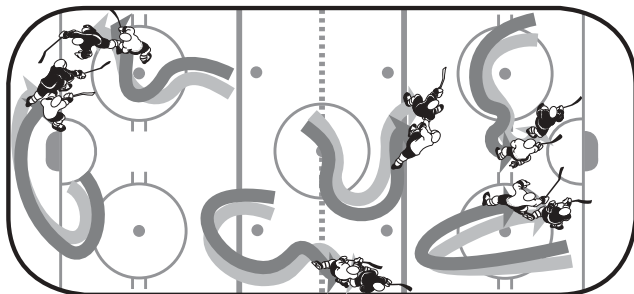
**Age Group:** 8-and-Under (Mite), 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee)

**Organization of Drill:**

Players partner up and on the whistle, the X's chase the O's.

- a) Every time the whistle blows, the chaser changes, or
- b) When the X tags the O, the chaser changes

**Teaching Points:** Players should skate hard to stay close to their partner



## ***Pom Pom Pull Away***

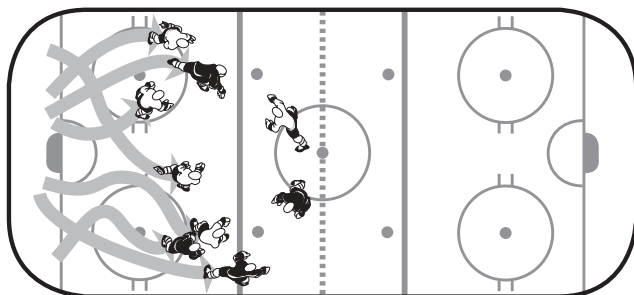
**Objective:** To develop skating and angling skills

**Age Group:** 8-and-Under (Mite) and 10-and-Under (Squirt)

**Organization of Drill:**

The object of the game is for X to tag all the O's before they can get to the other end of the rink. As the O's are tagged, they become X's and help in tagging the other O's. Last O caught gets to be the X to start the next game.

**Teaching Points:** For younger, less experienced skaters, set cones up for boundaries around the boards and end.



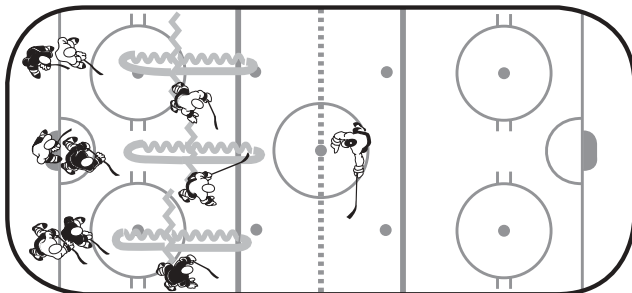
## *Four Directional Wave*

**Objective:** To develop quick agility skating skills, moving laterally, forward and backward

**Age Group:** 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- a) Start three players across the ice near the blue line with a coach at center ice
- b) On the whistle, players have to move forward, backward and laterally in the direction the coach's stick points



## *Forward, Backward, Pivot, Race to Puck*

**Objective:** To develop your defensemen's skating skills of forward to backward, pivoting and quick acceleration to the puck

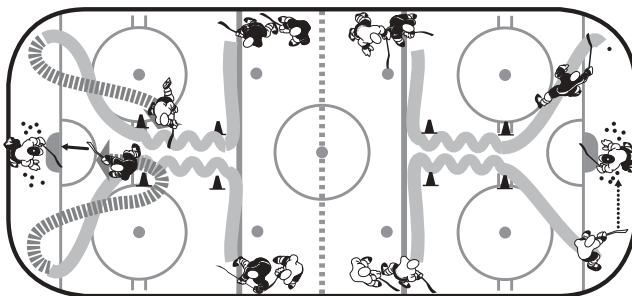
**Age Group:** 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- a) Have players in four lines, one at each blue line against the boards. A coach is behind each net with pucks. Put a puck in each corner. Place two cones 15 feet apart at the blue line and just below the hash marks of the circle.
- b) On the whistle, players skate forward around the cone then backward to the cone on the hash mark, pivot and race to the puck in the corner.

**Option #1:** Retrieve the puck and pass it quickly to the coach to win.

**Option #2:** Retrieve the puck and accelerate around the cone at the hash mark and shoot – 1st to score wins.



## Circle Directional Agility

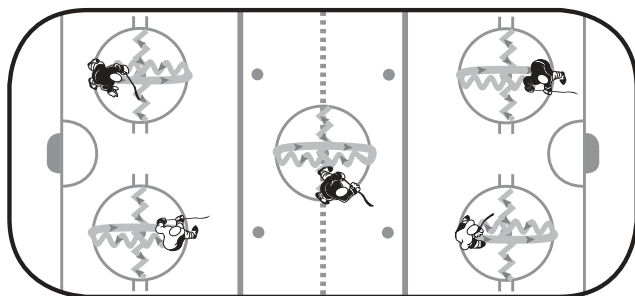
**Objective:** To develop quick skating skills moving laterally, forward and backward

**Age Group:** 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- Start a player in every circle on the face-off dot
- Player does the following skating skills to the outside edge of the circle: Lateral cross-overs, forward to backward, backward to forward

**Competitive Option:** Use the scoreboard clock. Press the horn and start the clock. Players try and complete all the moves before the time runs out.



## ANGLE – STICK CHECKS – BODY BLOCKING OUT DRILLS

### *Angle Behind Net, Stick Check*

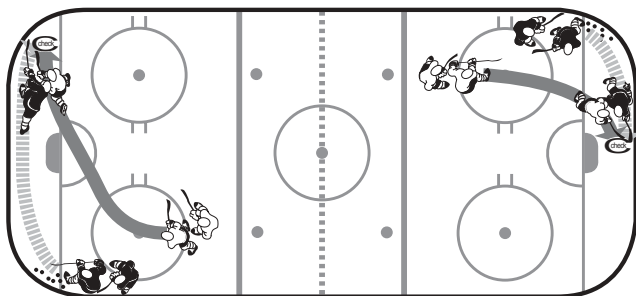
**Objective:** To develop proper angling skills

**Age Group:** 8-and-Under (Mite), 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- O's start in the corner with pucks, X's start near the top of the circle on the same side of the ice
- On the whistle, both players go. O's carry the puck behind the net. X's force O's behind the net and skate in front of the net. Angle the puck carrier into the corner.
- X's can do a stick lift, stick press or take-out check

**Option:** Allow X's to either confront the puck carrier before or after going behind the net.



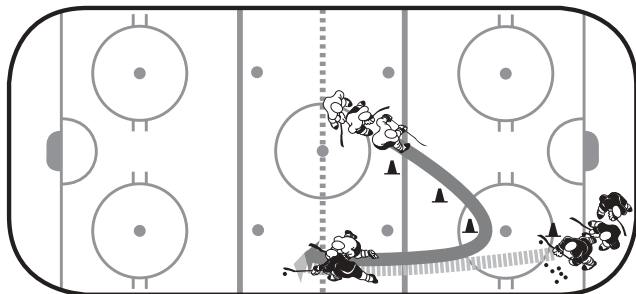
### *Open Ice One-on-One Angling and Stick Lift*

**Objective:** To develop the proper open ice angle and then deliver a stick lift check

**Age Group:** 8-and-Under (Mite), 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee)

**Organization of Drill:**

- Put a cone at the bottom of the circle with pucks. Put three cones in an arc to teach open ice angling.
- O's start with the puck and try to beat the checker to the red line.
- X's start in the neutral zone behind the last cone.
- On the whistle, the race is on to see if X can open ice angle and execute a stick lift. O accelerates quickly and tries to beat X with speed or break to open ice.



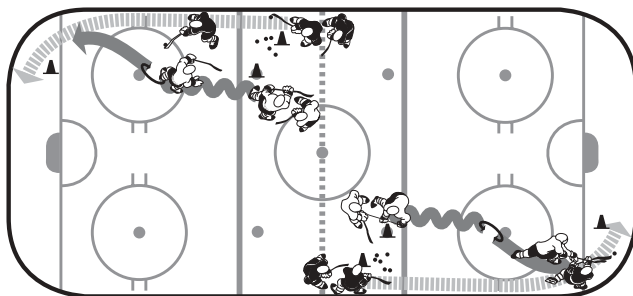
## ***One-on-One Race to Cone***

**Objective:** To develop the skills of angling and stick checks

**Age Group:** 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- a) Use three cones. Put one cone on the face-off dot near the blue line, the second halfway between the blue line & red line and the third below the goal line.
- b) X is the checker and starts out skating backward. O is the puck carrier and skates forward with the puck.
- c) On the whistle, X contains O to the outside, pivots forward, angles the puck carrier toward the boards and does a stick lift or stick hook check.
- d) O is trying to get to the cone at the goal line with control of the puck.



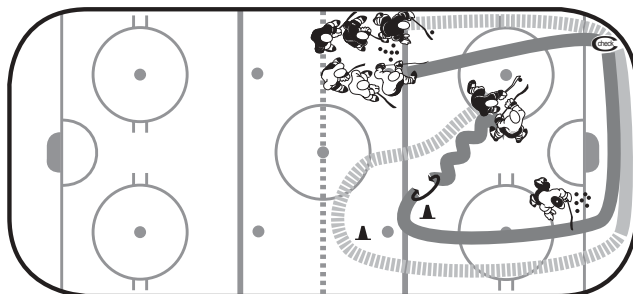
## ***Take Out Check Competition, One-on-One Block Out***

**Objective:** To develop the skills of angling, take out check and blocking out

**Age Group:** 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- a) Two players partner up. A coach stands near the net with pucks, two cones are placed near the blue line. One cone is 15 feet above the blue line and the other is five feet inside the blue line.
- b) On the whistle, O's try and carry the puck behind the net, X's angle the puck carrier and perform a take out check.
- c) Once in the corner, O's skate behind the net, retrieve another puck and accelerate up around the high cone, X's skate behind net and accelerate up to nearest cone.
- d) Play turns into a one-on-one with X trying to do a block out check.



## BODY TAKE OUT – STICK CHECK DRILLS

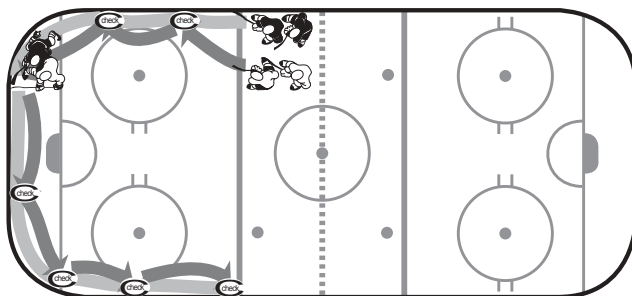
### *Take Out Check Weave*

**Objective:** To develop the skills of angling and taking the hands out with the hip (start of take out check)

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

- Players pair up according to size.
- The O's and X's will weave around the boards in one end.



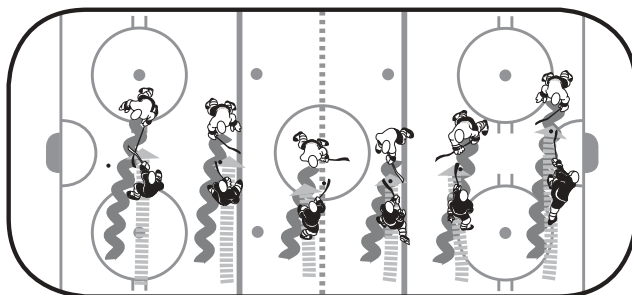
### *One-on-One Cross Ice, Poke Check*

**Objective:** To develop the skill of poke checking while skating backward

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

- O's carry the puck cross ice going half speed. X's start backward, one stick length in front of the O's.
- Defensive players (X) slow down gradually while skating backward, when the puck gets a stick length away, deliver a poke check, poking the puck off the offensive player's stick (O) and body blocking the puck carrier's body.
- Switch positions on the other side.





## BODY BLOCK OUT DRILLS

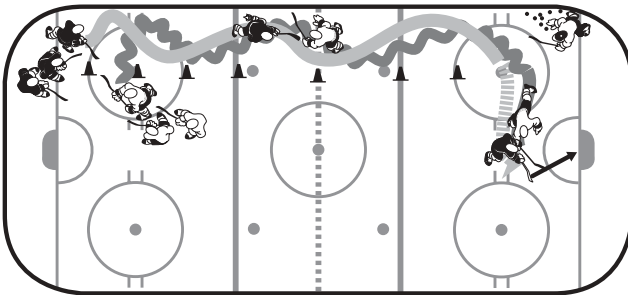
### *Mirror Weave, Battle for Puck & Shot*

**Objective:** To develop the skill of moving laterally and block out check

**Age Group:** 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- O's start at the cone at the bottom of the circle. X's start at the second cone on the face-off dot.
- Coach with pucks is at the other end of the rink. Place the puck near the face-off dot.
- On the whistle, O skates forward, weaving between the cones and the boards trying to beat X. X skates backward and "mirrors." X moves and blocks O from getting the puck.
- If O gets the puck, he/she skates in and shoots on goal.



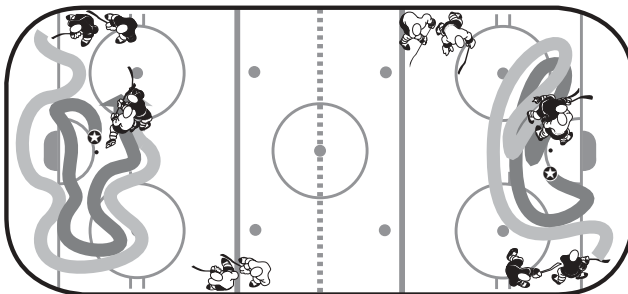
### *Shadow Crease Competition*

**Objective:** To develop the skill of blocking your opponent from getting the puck

**Age Group:** 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- Put a puck in the goal crease, start O (offensive player) in the corner and X in front of the net off the strongside post.
- On the whistle, O tries to get the puck and score. X must maneuver O away from the puck by angling, moving laterally and using body block techniques.
- Let the drill run about 15-20 seconds.



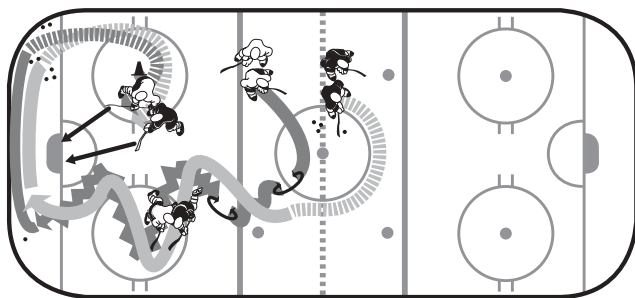
## One-on-One Dump In, Block Out Competition

**Objective:** To develop the skills of blocking out and moving laterally

**Age Group:** 10-and-Under (Squirt), 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- O starts with the puck on the center circle, X starts on the blue line.
- On the whistle, O skates around the circle and dumps the puck into the corner, X skates forward close to the red line then pivots backward and challenges O to dump the puck in the zone.
- After dumping the puck in the zone, O tries to retrieve the puck, X uses lateral movement and block out skills to prevent O from touching the puck.
- Allow 15 seconds time limit. Blow whistle and both X and O race to the pucks. Each player picks up a puck in the corner, goes up and around the cone and takes a shot on goal.



## Three One-on-One's Across

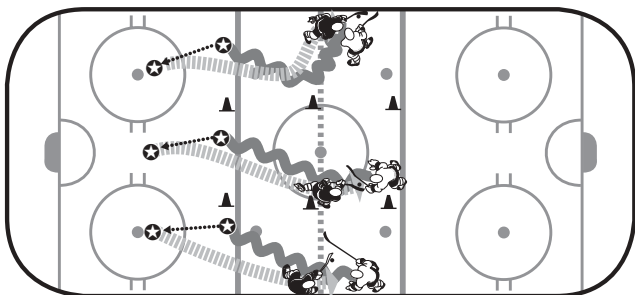
**Objective:** To develop open ice one-on-one's or "body blocking" skills.

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

Use cones to divide the rink into three zones. The X's pass the puck to the O's and then skate backward. The O's try to get past the far blue line; the X's try to play the body or prevent the O's from getting across the far blue line.

**Teaching Points:** The defenders cannot lunge; they must keep their feet underneath them if they expect to block the forward with the puck.



## CONTACT CONFIDENCE DRILLS

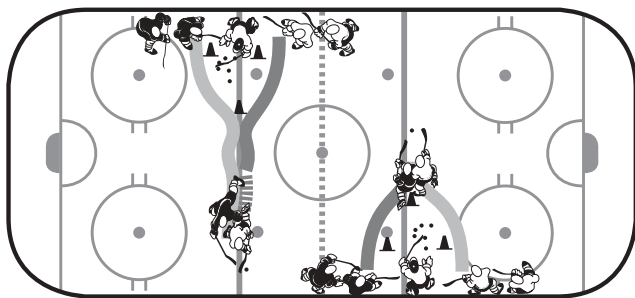
### *Take The Lane*

**Objective:** To improve shoulder-to-shoulder contact positioning in a battle for a loose puck

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

The players and cones are lined up as shown. The coach puts a puck about 10' past the third cone. On the whistle, X and O skate toward the puck. They must make contact with each other before they battle for the puck. The objective is to carry the puck to the other side of the rink. The battle for the puck should continue until the coach stops play.



### *Twigs Body Contact Drill*

**Objective:** To improve safe, effective play along the boards

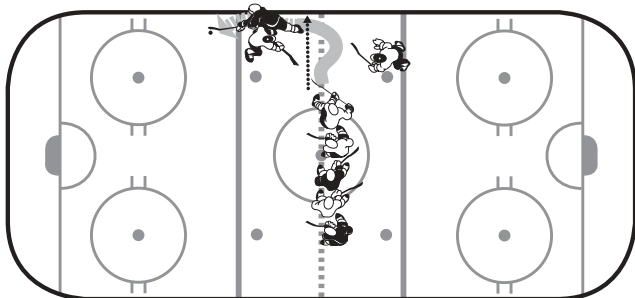
**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

Players line up facing the boards even with the face-off dots. The player dumps a puck softly by the boards and then circles/angles so that when they get near the boards, their skates are parallel to the boards. The player picks up the puck and then skates past the coach, who bumps them against the boards.

**Teaching Points:** Players should keep their feet moving as they are bumped by the coaches.

Players should turn to their right and left to get bumped going both ways.



## War

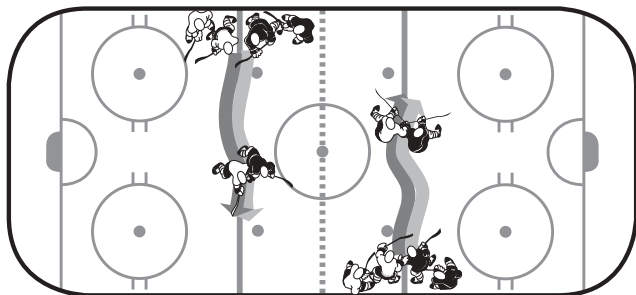
**Objective:** To develop contact confidence in young players and to teach them how to shift their weight when they are in checking situations.

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

Players line up on either side of the blue line as shown (the drill may be duplicated on the other blue line at the same time). Players lock arms and then, while skating forward must try to push their way into the other player's territory. Stop them at the dots on the other side of the rink.

**Teaching Points:** Players need to keep in good hockey position. If they lean forward, they will fall down face first. Do not allow players to face each other and push.



## Bump Back Drill

**Objective:** To develop contact confidence and proper body position when being checked; to be able to play safely and effectively along the boards.

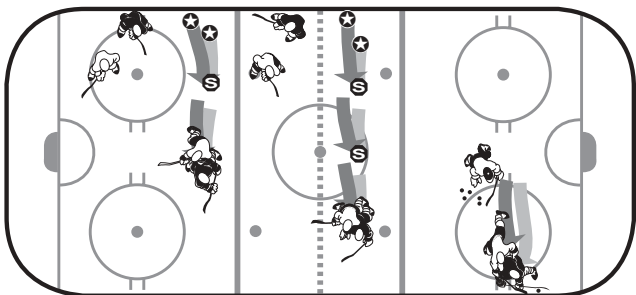
**Age Group:** 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

X's and O's are lined up as shown. On the whistle, O skates forward with X skating behind. The coach blows the whistle again and O braces for a check by X. Whistles continue to start and stop the drill. When X and O reach the other side of the ice, O then begins checking X.

**Teaching Points:** The player being checked should brace and try to "bump back." Look to see that both players maintain good hockey position with head, chest, knees and skates in good alignment.

**Variation:** Line up X and O as shown. O moves to the puck and protects himself/herself and the puck from the check from X. Players start and stop on the whistle.



## Corner Bump Drill

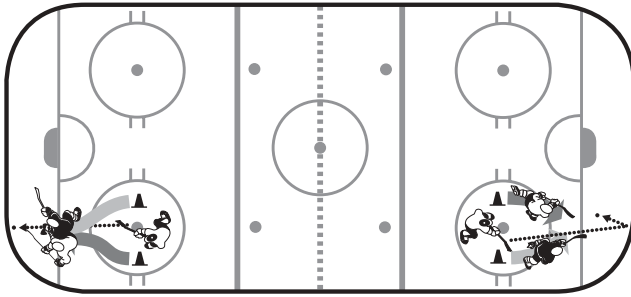
**Objective:** To develop safe play in contact situations along the end boards. To teach the lasso checking maneuver when attacking a player from behind.

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

When the puck hits the boards, X and O race for the puck. Before touching the puck, each player tries to make shoulder to shoulder contact with the other to bump their opponent.

**Teaching Points:** Continually remind players that they should make shoulder to shoulder contact to bump their opponent. ***The defenders should never, ever make contact through the number on the backs of their opponents.*** Instead, they should steer to the side of their opponents and then use their arm or stick to “loop” or lasso their opponents from the side (preferably inside out). When first performing this drill, bounce the puck away from the boards. Later, when players show you that they have a level of control and understanding about what you want them to do, allow the puck to nestle in closer to the boards.



## Partner's Bump Along the Boards

**Objective:** To teach players how to give and take a check along the boards (pre-checking teaching to check the hands)

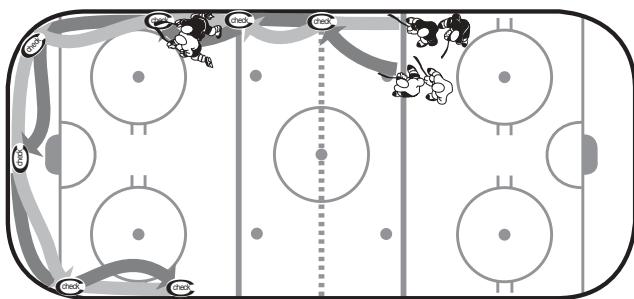
**Age Group:** 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam), 18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

O's line up against the boards at the blue line. X's line up alongside them at the face-off dot. On the whistle, X angles O and checks him/her using proper technique. (O uses proper technique to take the check). The partners alternate checking each other around the boards. Alternate direction to allow for checking with each shoulder.

**Teaching Points:** Checkers need to use their hips and shoulders, not their arms, to check.

The checker's stick should lift their opponent's stick and the outside skate should be used to push the player into the boards, with control. Keep the head up. The player being checked needs to keep the head up and turn the far shoulder toward the boards to prevent shoulder injury.



## *New Jersey One-on-One, Two-on-Two*

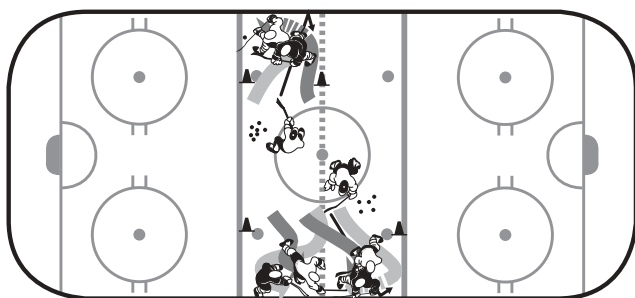
**Objective:** This drill can be done to develop pre-checking skills or as a more complete checking drill that includes body checking skills.

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

Designate an area of the ice. A puck is dumped in and the player tries to maintain control while the player without the puck uses stick checks, angling and possible body checks (12-and-Under and above) to gain possession of the puck. In the two-on-two drill, partners try to maintain control of the puck, while their opponents use the skills mentioned and have to decide when to support their partner in gaining control of the puck.

**Teaching Points:** Players need to be reminded to use proper checking skills. Stop the drill at any time when illegal or dangerous use of the body or stick occurs. This is a fun drill that players should enjoy. For younger players, create a playing area away from the boards.



## PUCK PROTECTION DRILLS

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### *Shadow Drill with a Puck*

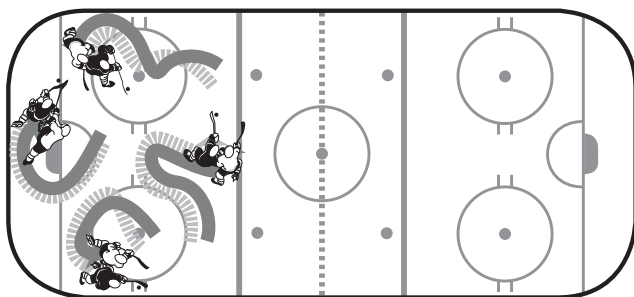
**Objective:** To develop puck protection skills and angling skills

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

Players pair off. The offensive player tries to maintain control of the puck, while the defensive player tries to stay a stick length away or closer to the puck carrier. Alternate roles every 30-45 seconds.

**Variation:** Perform the drill as shown, then when the coach blows the whistle, the chasing player tries to take the puck away from the puck carrier.



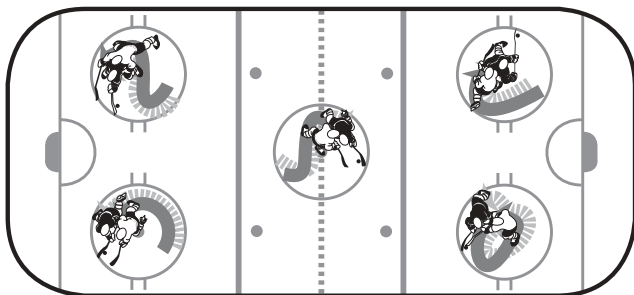
### *Dot Tag with a Puck*

**Objective:** To teach puck protection and contact confidence skills

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

Players pair off and alternate being on offense and defense. The object of the drill is to maintain control of the puck while staying in the circle.





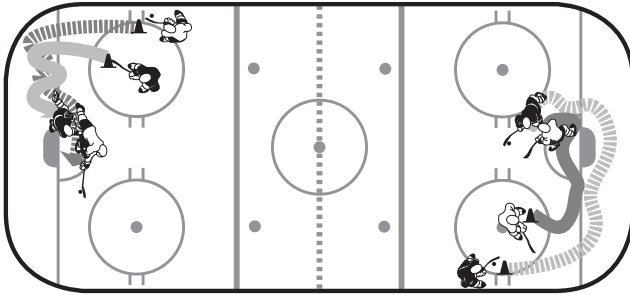
## Crease Tag

**Objective:** To develop skating agility and puck protection skills to move into the scoring areas

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

The offensive player (O) and defensive player (X) line up by the pylons as shown. O's objective is to skate the puck through the crease while maintaining control. The defender (X) tries to use body blocking and checking techniques (12-and-Under and above) to keep O out of the crease.



## One-on-One Into the Corner

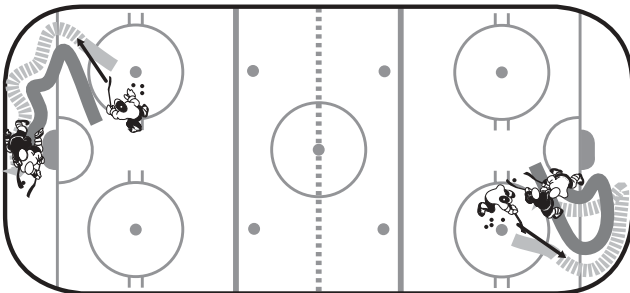
**Objective:** To develop puck protection, contact confidence ("soft shoulder") and angling skills

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

The offensive and defensive players are lined up as shown. The coach dumps a puck into the corner (favoring the offensive player). The offensive player then tries to attack the net. As he/she is near the boards, they may need to use tight turning maneuvers as they try to avoid the defensive player.

**Teaching Points:** Remind the offensive player to not use the soft shoulder until he/she is close enough to the boards so they don't get injured should contact occur. Player "X" should be reminded to try to stay square to the offensive player and to move in and play the body (do not turn your back).



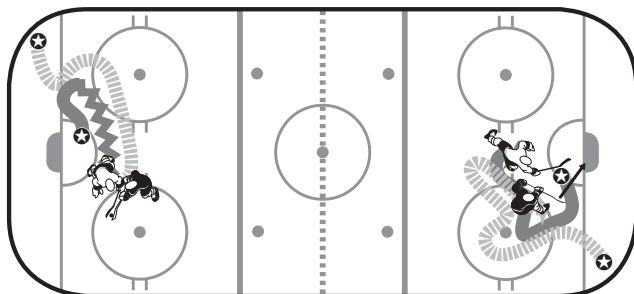
## *One-on-One Out of the Corner*

**Objective:** To develop puck protection, contact confidence and body blocking skills

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

O has control of the puck in the corner and X is positioned off the near post. On the whistle, O attacks the net with X defending. O should use aggressive skating, puckhandling and puck protection skills to get a good shot on net.



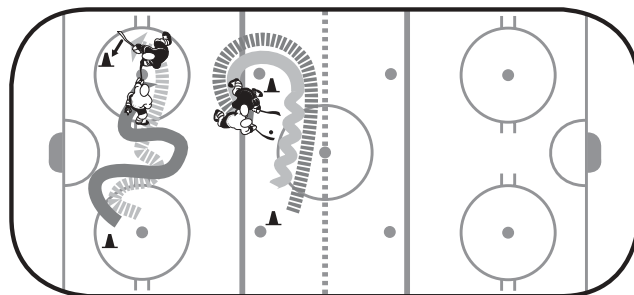
## *Two Cone Drill*

**Objective:** To develop puck control and contact confidence skills. To develop body blocking skills.

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

Two cones are placed across the ice. The object of the drill is to gain control of the puck and then tap the cone with the puck (no long shots). As the cone is hit, the player picks up the puck and attacks the other cone far away.



## HEADS UP HOCKEY

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A program to decrease the risk of serious injuries due to contact with the boards or other players

### Basic Principles of Heads Up Hockey

- Rule One: Heads Up – Don't Duck!
  - Hit the boards or goal posts with an arm, a leg, or anything but your head first.
  - Skate into the boards on an angle to dig out the puck.
  - Taking a check: Keep your head out of it. Keep skates parallel to the boards, knees bent and a low center of gravity. Skate through the check and get away quickly.
  - NO CHECKING FROM BEHIND. It's illegal, dangerous and bad hockey.
  - Wear a snug fitting, HECC-certified helmet in good shape, plus full facial protection.
  - Use a mouth guard every time you are on the ice.
1. If you think a player may have sustained a spinal injury, get help and **keep the player calm and immobile**. After a spinal impact, look for these symptoms:
    - Pain in the area of the injury.
    - Buzzing or tingling in the arms or legs.
    - Loss of movement in the arms or legs.
    - Radiating pain in the arms and legs.
  2. After calling for immediate medical help, give care as follows:
    - Ensure adequate airway and breathing.
    - Observe the ABC's: Airway, Breathing and Circulation.
    - Reassure the player.
    - Do not allow the player to move. Instruct the player not to move and immobilize him or her to prevent motion, especially motion of the head and neck.
    - Keep the player warm.

### Sideline evaluations for concussions

Use the following guidelines to help decide whether a player may have sustained a concussion:

### ***Orientation***

Ask the player to tell you the time, the place, the players, and the situation of the injury.

### ***Concentration***

Ask the player to tell you the months of the year backward.

### ***Memory***

1. Ask the player the names of the last two teams you have played against.
2. Ask about the details of the game or practice in progress, strategies, moves, plays, etc.
3. Ask the player to recall three words and three objects immediately; and then the same three words and objects five minutes later.

## **Areas/Drills to Cover When Teaching: “Heads Up” Hockey**

### **1. “Angling In”**

Skating into the boards at an angle means better puck control and less risk of injury.

- Skating in on an angle affords players a better approach angle to the puck, and by giving the body a better position to accept impact with the boards, it allows players to keep skating and gain control of the puck.
- When players skate into the corners at an angle, the risk of hitting the boards with their helmets first is greatly reduced. A leg or side or an arm will absorb most of the impact.

When demonstrating “angling in,” be sure to cover these points:

- Go in on an angle
- Keep a low center of gravity
- Keep knees bent, back straight, head up
- Absorb the shock over the widest possible part of your body
- Keep your feet parallel to the boards
- Prepare forearms – hands – legs
- Lean into the impact
- Never hit the boards or glass with the tip of your shoulder – it can cause injury
- Check over your shoulder to see where your opponent is

## Angling In and Retrieve Puck In Corner

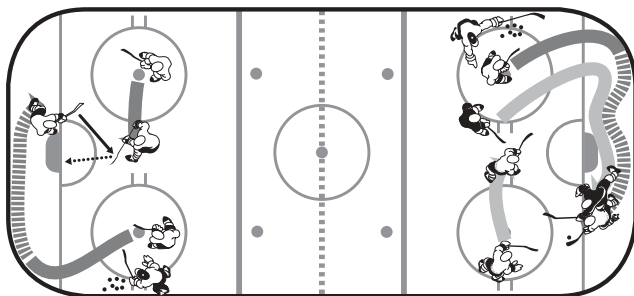
**Objective:** To develop the skill of angling in to retrieve a puck in the corner, which allows the player to keep skating and gain control of the puck

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

- Set up two lines of players (O1, O2) at the face-off dots and a pile of pucks in O1's corner.
- On the whistle, the first player in O1 line angles into the corner, picks up puck, skates behind the net and makes a pass to O2 who has moved into the slot and shoots.

**Option:** For age levels with checking, add a line X1 who try and catch O1 and angle them into the boards.



## 2. "Hitting the Boards"

Good ways and bad ways to have a close encounter with a goal post, the boards, or another player.

- Don't duck
- Hit the boards with anything but your head first

When demonstrating, the best way to cushion an impact with the boards is:

- With both hands on the stick if possible
- With arms out to create a three-part "shock absorber"
- To have players try to absorb the impact over as much of their bodies as possible

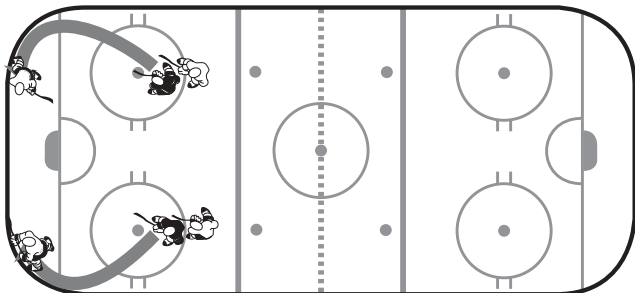
## Hitting The Boards

**Objective:** To develop an awareness when being checked or bumped into the boards

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

- Set up two lines of players (X1, X2) at the face-off dots.
- On the whistle, a player from each of the lines skates at an angle toward the corner boards. The players should make contact with the boards and glass with their extended arms, forearms, side of body and legs, but with no head contact at all.
- The speed at which the players hit the boards must be managed, depending on the skill level of the players.



## Body Slide With Head Up

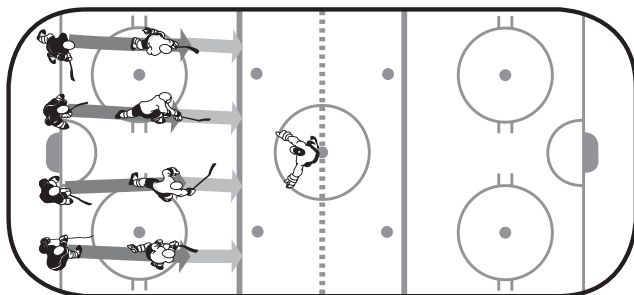
**Objective:** To teach players to keep their heads up when sliding into the boards

**Age Group:** All levels

**Organization of Drill:**

- Start with four lines down behind the goal line at one end of the rink. Coach stands near the center red line.
- When the whistle is blown, the first player in each line skates to the top of circle and slides either on their stomach or back with their head up. Have them imagine the blue line as an impact with the boards.
- Coach reminds players to keep their head up.

**Option:** When players are sliding, the coach holds up a certain number of fingers, players must yell out the number.



### 3. *“Taking a Check”*

What players should do when they see a check coming:

- Heads Up – Don’t Duck
- Keep your head out of it, take the impact with anything else first
- Know where your opponents are, work on peripheral vision and overall awareness
- Skate through the check, this provides a better chance of maintaining balance and staying in the play

When demonstrating taking a hit, be sure to cover these points:

- Keep skates parallel to the boards
- Move out of the area quickly
- Keep your feet moving
- Use arms/legs as shock absorbers
- Keep feet apart, knees bent, low center of gravity
- No shoulder contact on the boards, if possible

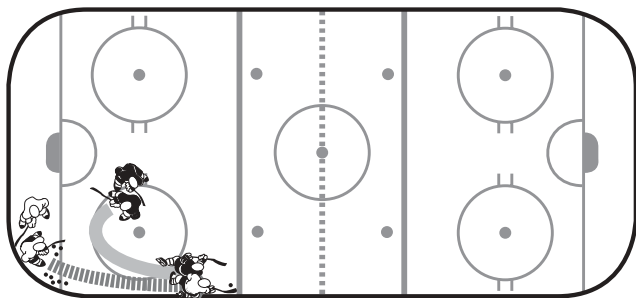
### *Taking A Hit On The Boards*

**Objective:** To learn to prepare for a check while skating close to the boards

**Age Group:** 12-and-Under (Pee Wee), 14-and-Under (Bantam) and H.S./18-and-Under (Midget)

**Organization of Drill:**

- Set up a line of puck carriers (O’s) in the corner and one line of checkers (X’s) at the face-off dot.
- The puck carrier (O1) moves up boards and skates through the check of (X1).
- Emphasize heads up position to the puck carriers, keeping the legs moving with the feet apart, knees bent and the stick down.
- Stress contact with the shoulders, not the head, elbows, knees, stick or feet with the checkers.



#### 4. ***“Giving a Hit”***

Separating the puck from your opponent, not separating your opponent from consciousness.

- Checking is just one part of the game, along with skating, shooting, passing and puck handling
- Checking and body contact are not about intimidation and not about inflicting pain and injury
- As a coach, the caliber and sportsmanship of your team's play is in your hands
- Put the emphasis on the right type of body play skill that allows your team to get possession of the puck

#### 5. ***Checking From Behind***

Checking from behind is illegal, extremely dangerous and less than courageous.

- It's illegal
- Even a light hit from behind could inflict a severe head or neck injury
- It exposes your team to the possibility of a major penalty

#### 6. ***A Word About Reckless Play***

- DUMB!!!
- This type of play does nobody any good
- It rarely results in a goal or a good play, and often ends up as a penalty, an injury or both







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