



# USA HOCKEY SMALL AREA COMPETITIVE GAMES *Handbook*





is the National Governing Body for the sport of hockey in the United States. Its mission is to promote the growth of hockey in America and provide the best possible experience for all participants by encouraging, developing, advancing and administering the sport.

To assist coaches, USA Hockey conducts clinics and produces training manuals and videos such as this through the Coaching Education Program.



**USA HOCKEY**  
**SMALL AREA**  
**COMPETITIVE GAMES**  
*Handbook*

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# Introduction

The USA Hockey Small Area Competitive Games Handbook is designed to help coaches create drills that emulate game situations. Using small areas and short shifts, players are challenged to read and react quickly under pressure and by doing so they learn to think and see the ice better. USA Hockey has many people to thank for the content in this book, starting with the true pioneer of small area games, Bill Beaney, head hockey coach at Middlebury College. Many coaches have taken his blue prints of small area competitive games and helped provide the drill content for this handbook.

Small area competitive games not only force players into tight competitive quarters, they also encourage players to battle hard for the puck while at the same time having a great deal of fun. Similar to how kids used to play growing up and skating on frozen ponds, these games help simulate the past and place the same skills into today's future stars.

Utilizing small area competitive games provides many other advantages. First and foremost, the games are designed to provide an environment to help players in their ability to make quick decisions. Small area games also simulate game shifts and provide an excellent form of conditioning in practice.

There is a growing concern among ice hockey educators that, during hockey games versus hockey practice, players do not have enough time to control the puck in order to develop crucial skills while skating such as passing, receiving, puck and body protection, shooting and stickhandling. Many programs are not following the USA Hockey practice guidelines of a 3-to-1 or even a 2-to-1 practice to game ratio. There is also a concern with the quality of individual skills possessed by North American players when compared to their European counterparts. Former Canadian National Team and NHL coach George Kingston stated in a 1971 study that the average North American youth hockey player handled the puck less than one minute per game. According to Kingston, in Europe there are typically two to five practices for each game played. Kingston goes on to say that in order to get one hour of quality work in the practicing of basic skills of puck control, approximately 180 games would have to be played, compared to a quality one hour practice.

USA Hockey conducted a comprehensive puck possession study at the 2002 Olympic Winter Games and the 2002 Youth Tier I National Championships. Interestingly, the maximum average time any player possessed the puck in a single game – from the top professional players right down to the 12-and-Under level – was a minute and twelve seconds.

Through practice, puck possession time and overall skill development can take place at a far more rapid rate than simply playing games. And by utilizing small area games in practice, you'll find both skill development and fun taking place simultaneously.

The drills enclosed in this book are age specific. USA Hockey challenges all coaches to take these drills and put their own spin on them. Coaches are encouraged to progress from these

# USA HOCKEY

## PUCK POSSESSION STUDY

### 2002 OLYMPIC WINTER GAMES

#### Men's Gold-Medal Game

##### 60-Minute Game

- 19:37 minutes of ice time
- 25.6 shifts
- 1:01.4 of puck possession time
- 16.3 passes received
- 19 passes attempted
- 5.3 shots taken
- 40.3 puck touches

#### Men's Per Game Averages

##### 60-Minute Game

- 18:40.5 minutes of ice time
- 23.65 shifts
- 1:07.05 of puck possession time
- 21 passes received
- 23.05 passes attempted
- 4.22 shots taken

#### Women's Per Game Averages

##### 60-Minute Game

- 18:36.8 minutes of ice time
- 26.27 shifts
- 1:12 of puck possession time
- 17.10 passes received
- 20.37 passes attempted
- 5.44 shots taken
- 48.86 puck touches

### 2002 YOUTH TIER I NATIONAL CHAMP.

#### 12-and-Under

##### 45-Minute Game

- 16:02 minutes of ice time
- 21 shifts
- 38.4 seconds of puck possession time
- 9.6 passes received
- 12.4 passes attempted
- 5.2 shots taken
- 31.8 puck touches

#### 14-and-Under

##### 48-Minute Game

- 18:06 minutes of ice time
- 19.4 shifts
- 1:06.02 of puck possession time
- 12.8 passes received
- 18.3 passes attempted
- 5.3 shots taken
- 43.1 puck touches

#### 16-, 18-and-Under

##### 51-Minute Game

- 17:13 minutes of ice time
- 18.9 shifts
- 48.3 of puck possession time
- 11.8 passes received
- 15.9 passes attempted
- 5.4 shots taken
- 39.3 puck touches



drills or create new ideas. Perhaps your 12-and-Under team is good enough to use a 14-and-Under drill. As a coach, it is also your responsibility to look at your team realistically and not give the players a drill that is too advanced for them.

USA Hockey acknowledges that small area competitive games are an excellent option to help create competition while improving a player's skills in game-like situations. USA Hockey is pleased to provide this handbook to all great coaches who are out in the rinks everyday making a positive impact on youth hockey players.



# Acknowledgments

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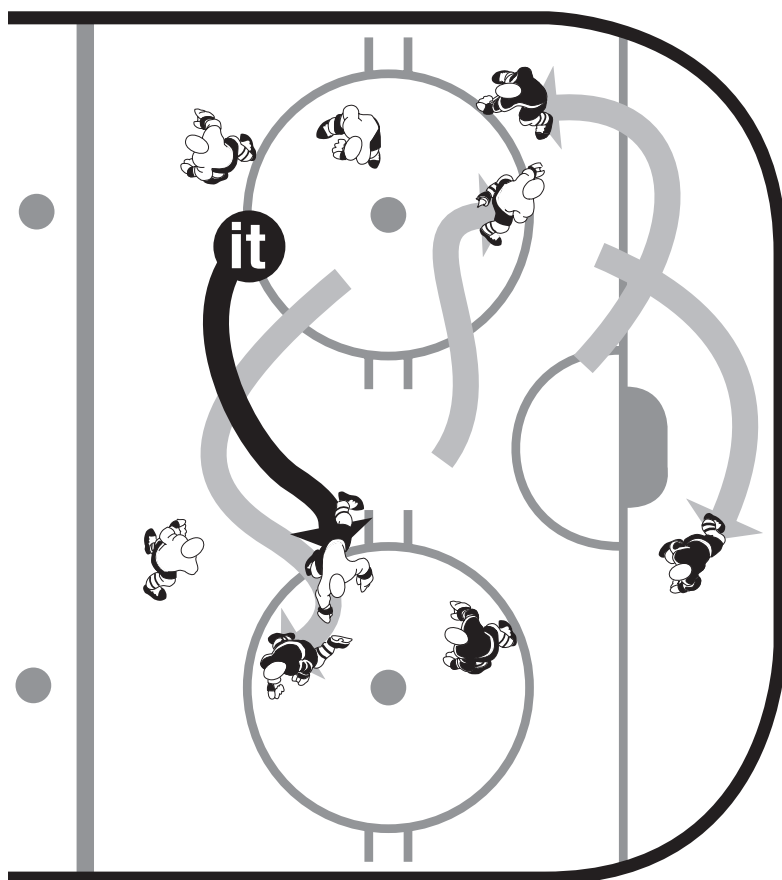




**Small Area**  
**Competitive Games For**  
**8-and-Under**





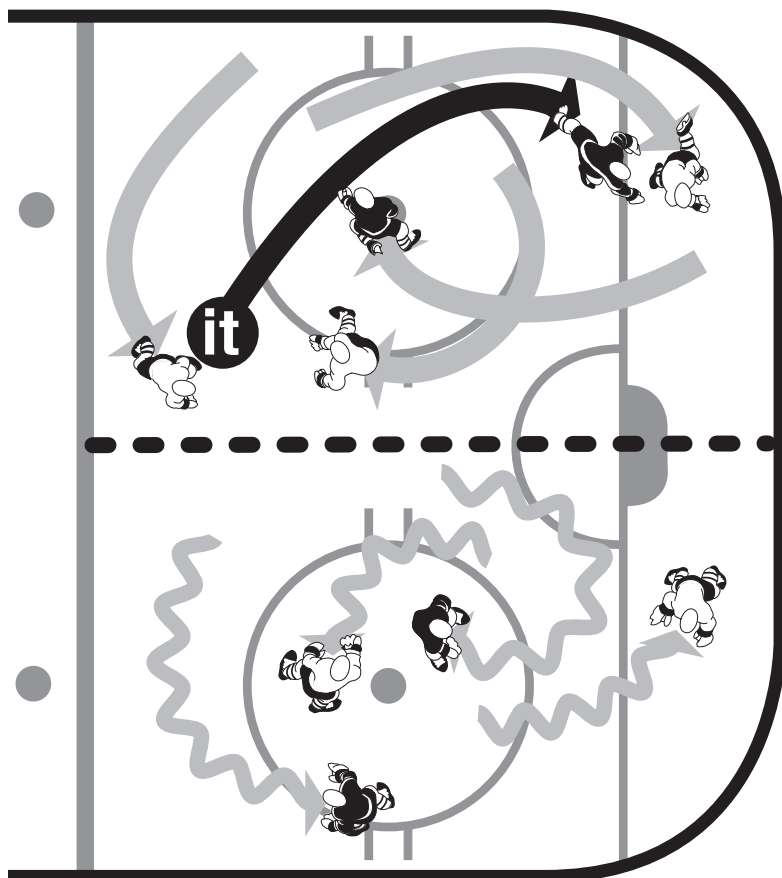


### Freeze Tag

Players spread out across one third of the ice surface. Denote either a coach or a player as "it." All other players skate within the designated area avoiding the tag. If they get tagged, they are frozen until another player unfreezes them by tagging them. The game is over when all players are frozen.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Designed for skating and teamwork.

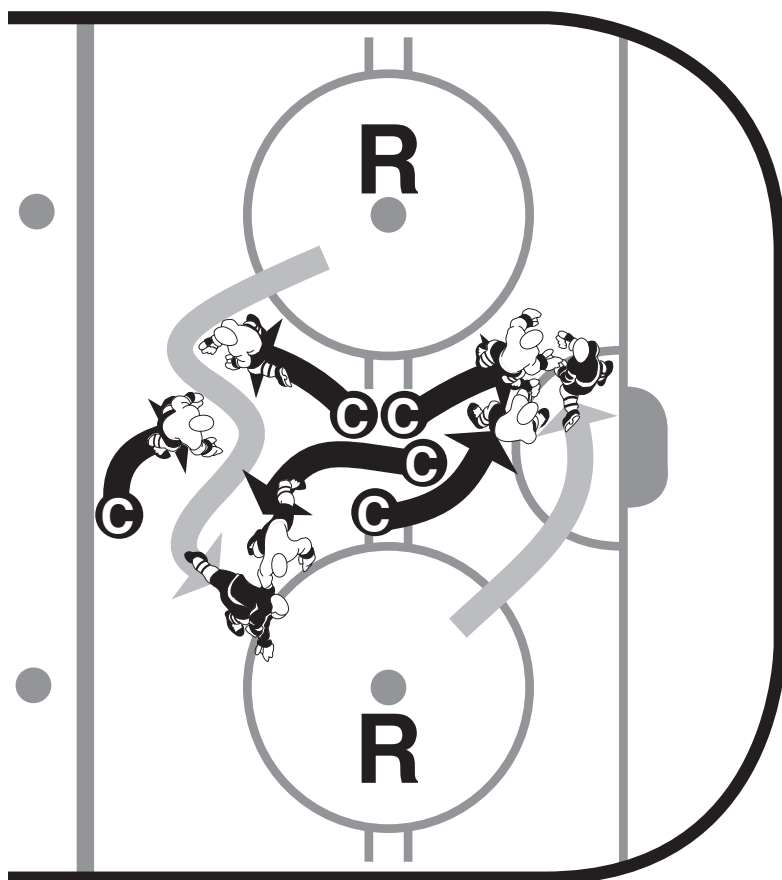


### Forward/Backward Team Tag

Using one third of the ice, divide the area in two with an ice pen. On one side, players can only skate forward while on the other side they must skate backward. One player is "it" and begins the game by tagging the other players. If any player, including "it", crosses the line to the other side, they must skate forward or backward depending on which side they are on. Once a player has been tagged, he/she must help tag everyone else.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Players learn to pivot and keep their heads up.

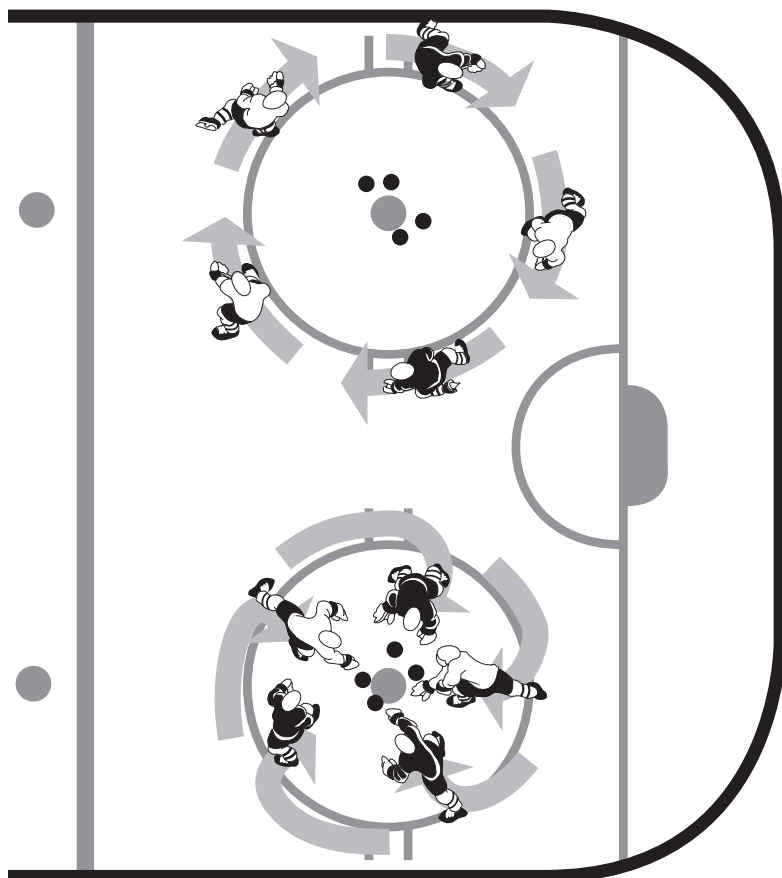


### Cops and Robbers

Using one third of the ice, place one player in each circle. The rest of the players begin in the middle. The two “Robbers” try to get from one circle to the next without being tagged by the “Cops”. If the “Robber” gets tagged, he/she trades places with the “Cop” that tagged him/her.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Encourages players to change direction, skate both ways and keep their heads up.



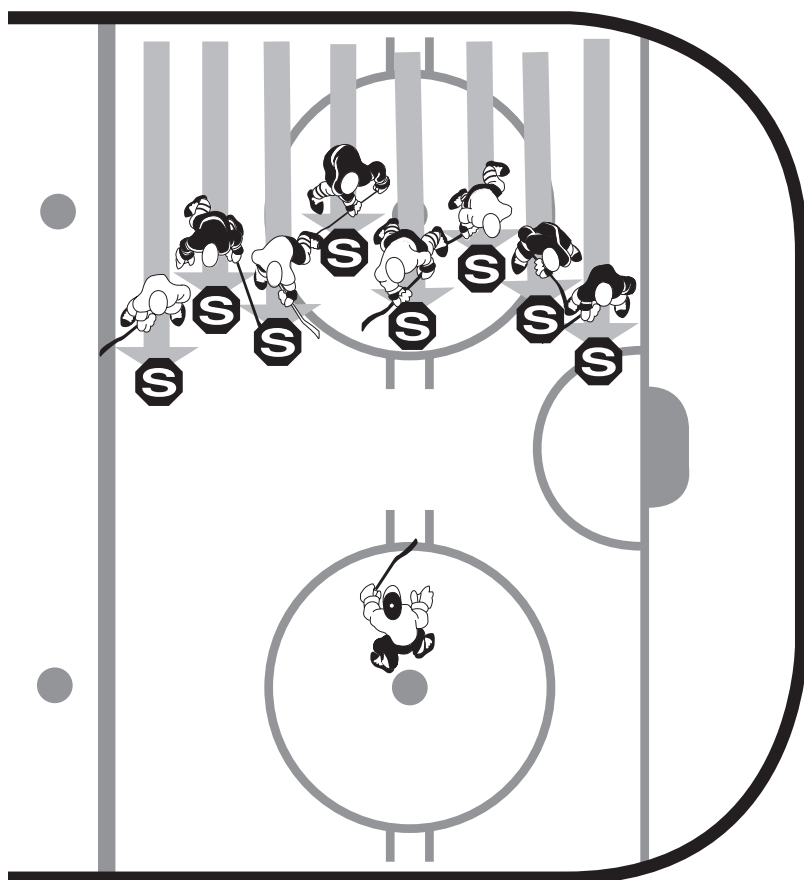
### Musical Pucks

Using one or two circles (depending on the number of players) players line up without sticks around the circle. Players skate clockwise around the circle staying on the line as they crossover. If there are five players place four pucks in the middle. On the coach’s signal, players dive in the middle to get a puck. If they don’t get one they are eliminated. Reduce the number of pucks each round. The game is over when only one player is left.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches players to crossover with their heads up.





## Red Light, Green Light, Yellow Light, Blue Light

Using one third of the rink, all players start against the boards. The coach starts out between the face-off circles. The coach commands are:

**Green Light** – skate forward

**Red Light** – stop

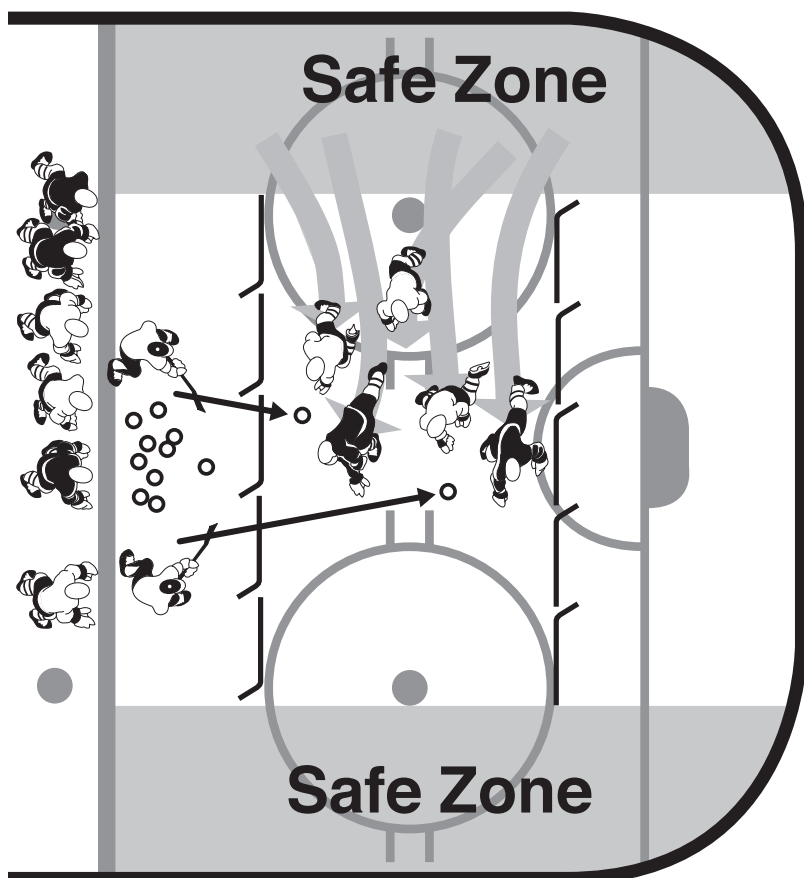
**Yellow Light** – fall down on their stomachs and get up quickly

**Blue Light** – yell “hockey” or their team name.

A new game starts when all the players have made it to the other side.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches stopping and agility while having fun.

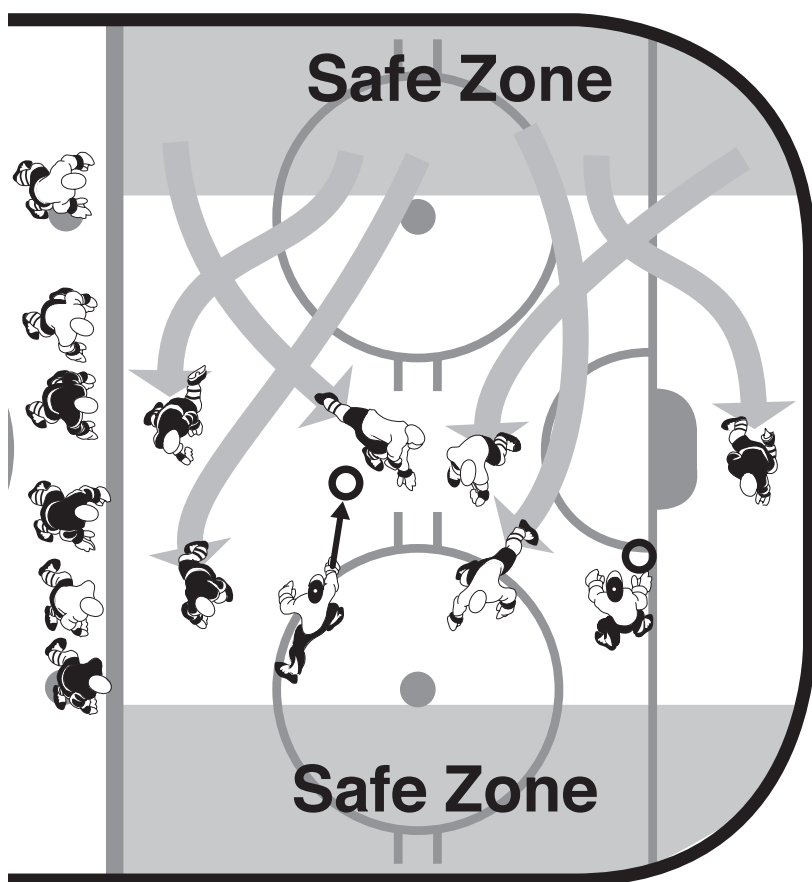


## Torpedo Alley

Using one end, players line up along the boards. The coach lines the players’ sticks in two rows across the center of the zone. On command, players skate from board to board. Using tennis or whiffle balls the coaches try to hit the kids as they skate across the ice. Players are safe once they pass the face-off dot. This gives them plenty of time to stop before the boards so they are not sliding. Once a player is hit, they are out and must come out to the blue line. The game is over when every player has been hit.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches players agility, stopping, jumping and skating with their heads up.

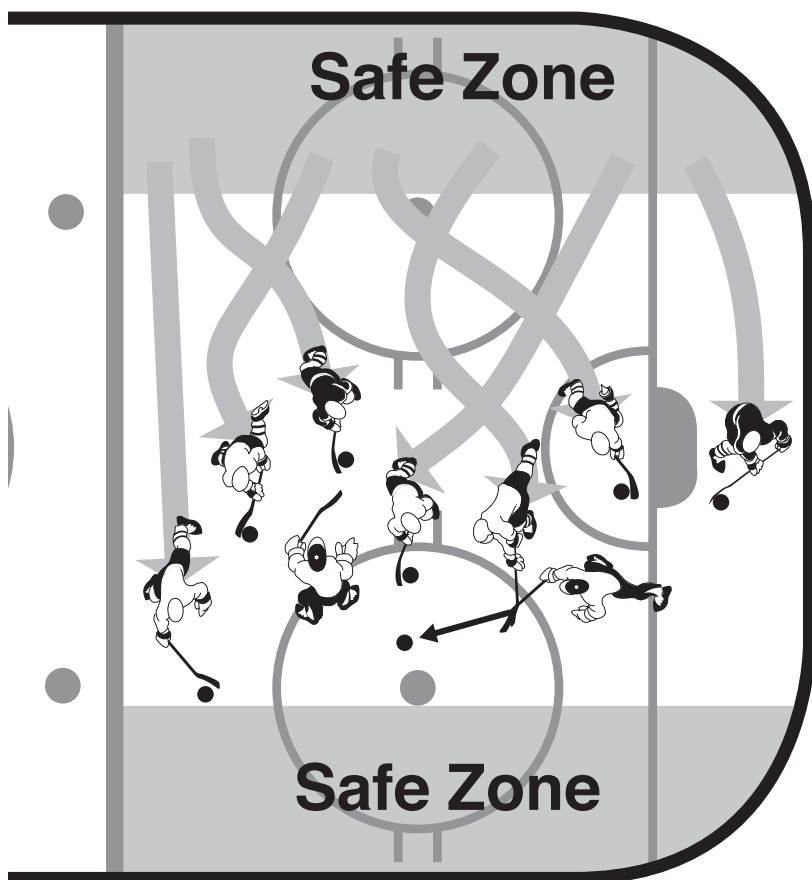


## Dodge Ball

Players begin lined up against the boards. Players skate back and forth (dot to dot) while the coach or other designated players try to hit them with soft sponge soccer balls. Players are safe once they reach the face-off dot. This gives them plenty of time to stop before the boards so they are not sliding. Once a player is hit, they are out and must come out to the blue line. The game is over when every player has been hit.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches players agility, stopping, jumping and skating with their heads up.

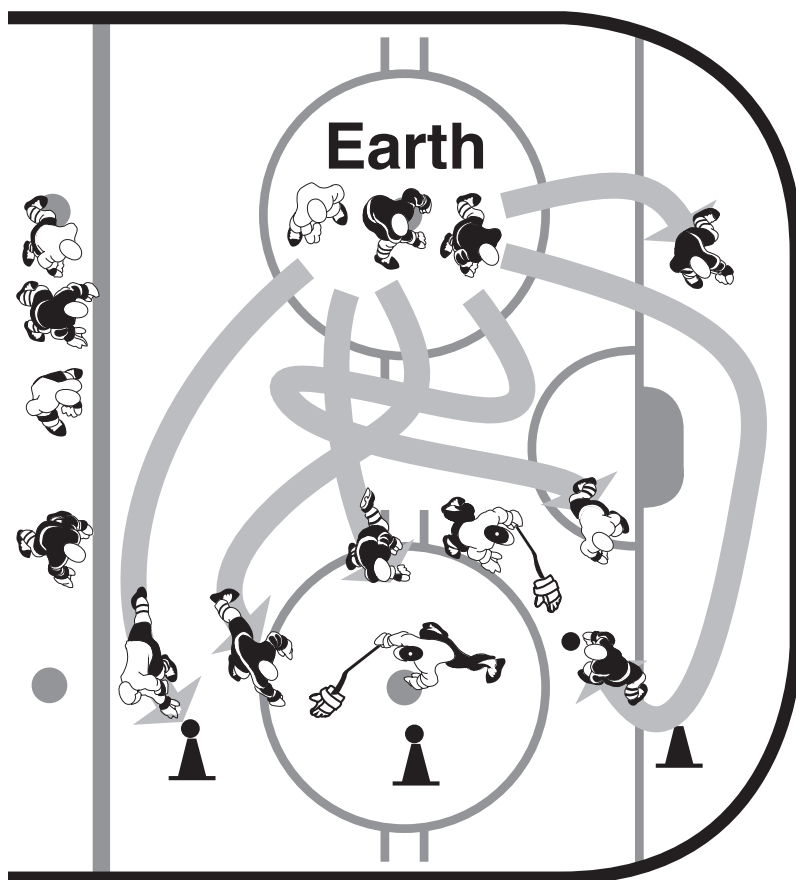


## Sharks and Minnows

The Minnows line up across the boards with pucks, while the Shark begins in the middle. Minnows skate from dot to dot with their puck. If the Shark takes or knocks the puck from their stick, they too become Sharks and help check the remaining Minnows. The Minnows are safe from the dots to the boards as shown. The game is over when every player has their puck knocked off of their stick.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches puck handling under pressure.

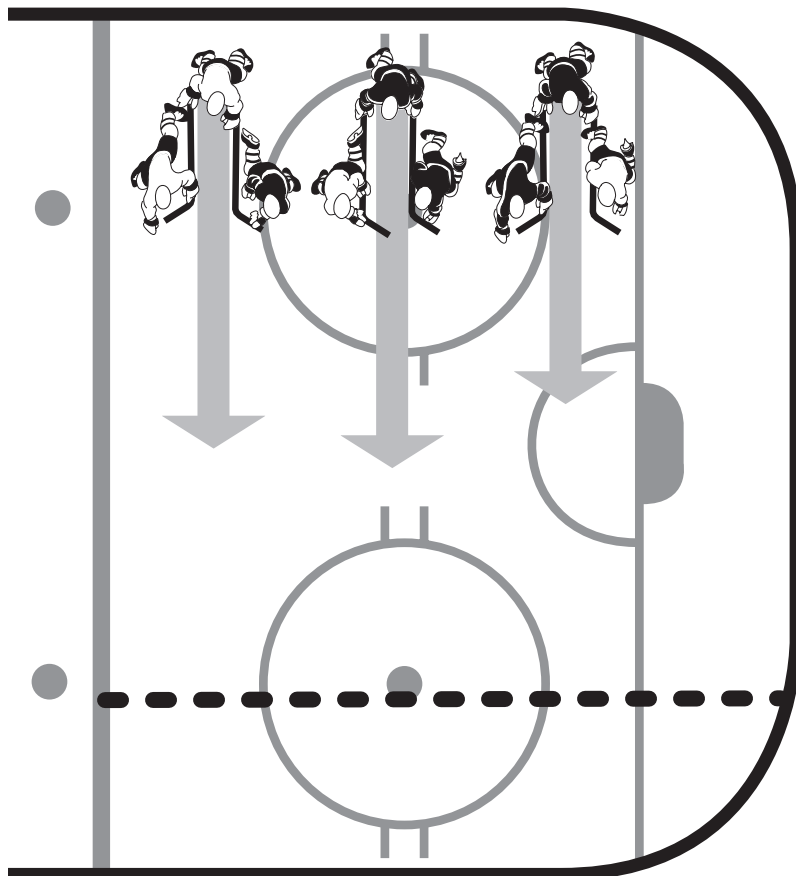


## Star Wars

All players begin in the same face-off circle (Earth). Three cones are placed on the opposite side with a blue puck atop each cone. Coaches place a glove on their stick which serves as their "light-saber." To save planet Earth, players must retrieve the blue pucks and return to Earth, which is their safe-zone, before they are tagged with the coaches "light-saber." The game should last no more than one minute so the kids must leave the circle to skate. Once a player is tagged, he/she is out and must come out to the blue line after returning the puck to the cone. The game is over when all pucks are retrieved, the coaches tag all of the players or time runs out.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Be creative. Call yourself Darth Vader or Darth Maul and let the players be Jedi Knights.

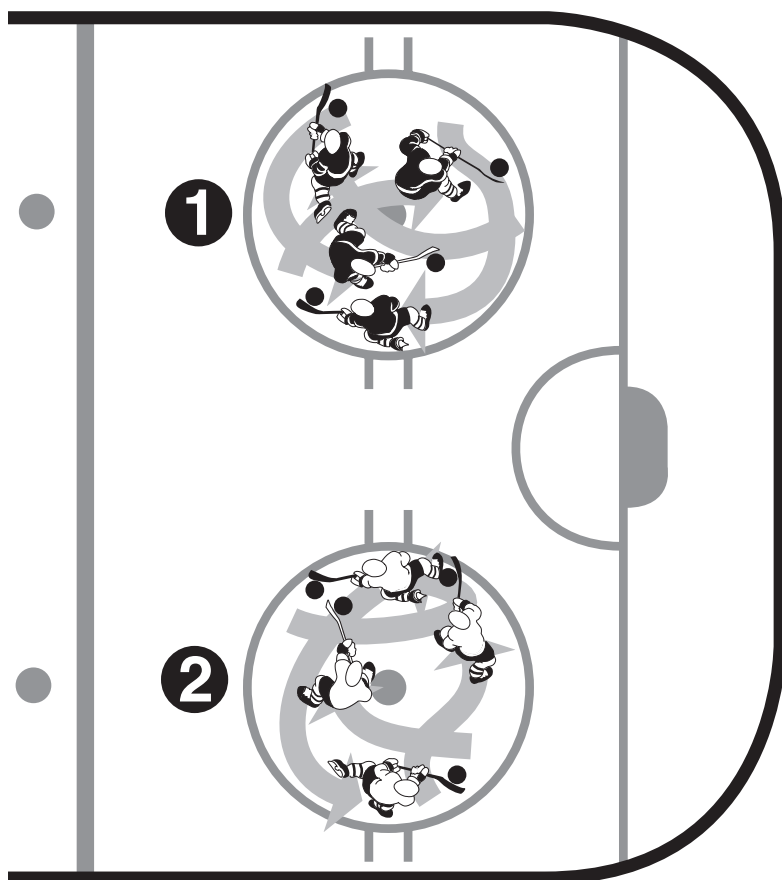


## Three-Player Chariot Race

Players line up on the side boards in groups of three. Using two sticks, the two front players create a chariot for the remaining player in back. The player at the back holds both sticks and glides behind the front players who are each carrying one of the sticks and skating full out. When they get to the far side face-off dot the race is over. The players rotate and race again until each player has been in all three positions.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Fun relay race that encourages teamwork and improves players' balance.

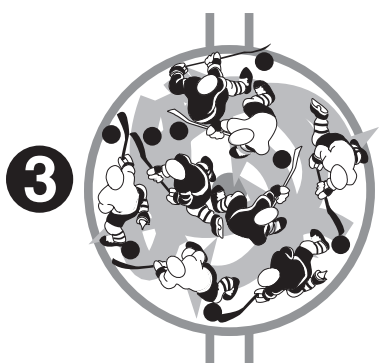


## Chaos Drill

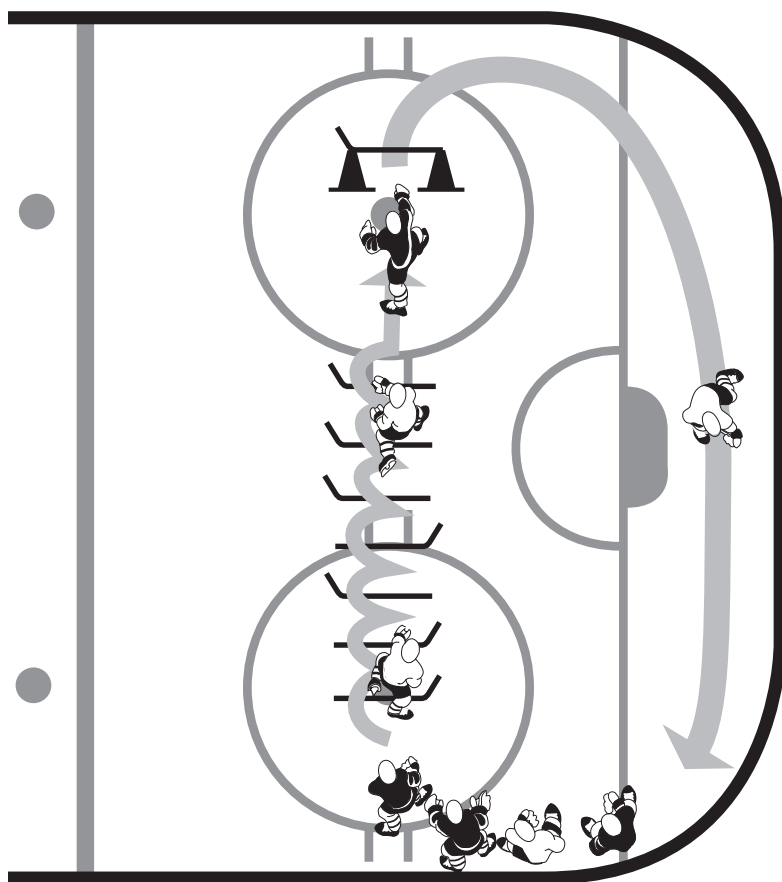
Divide the players into two groups. Players begin the drill in a face-off circle, each with a puck. The players can skate in any direction, keeping their heads up and staying inside the circle. After a few minutes, place all the players in one circle and repeat the drill.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Coaches emphasize to the players the importance of quick skating and puckhandling in a confined area.





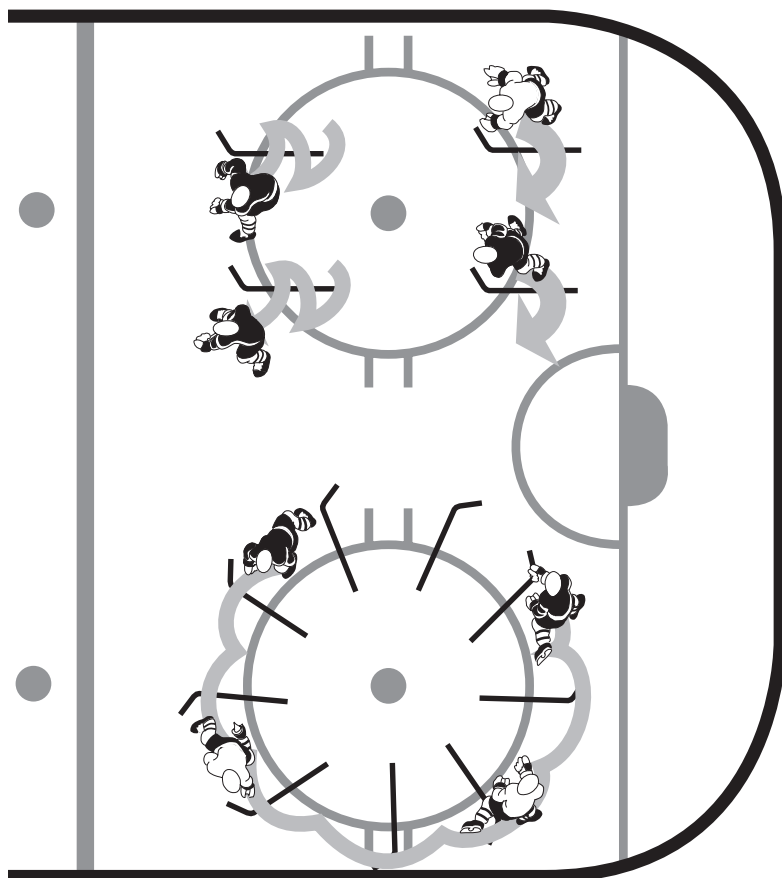


### Stick Jump Agility Drill

Players line up behind one of the face-off dots. Place all of the players' sticks out in front of them. At the end of the sticks, two cones are set up with a stick across them. The players jump over the sticks, alternating feet, then dive under the stick placed on the cones. After each player has gone through the drill twice, tip the cones on their side and have players try to go under again or jump over the lowered stick.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Improves agility and promotes fun.



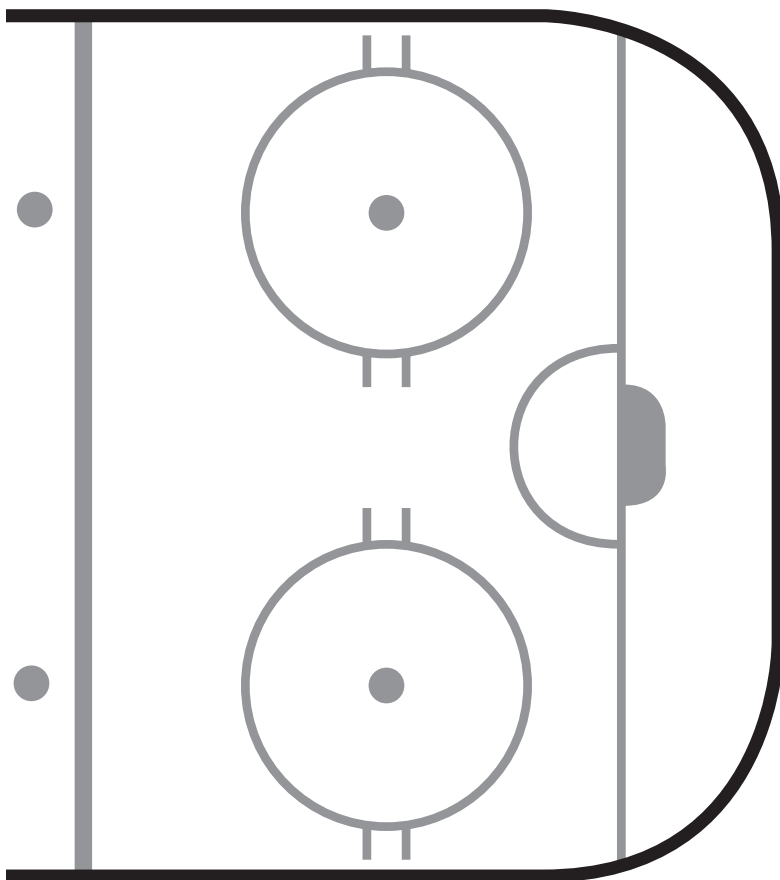
### Stick Jump/Crossover Drill

Players spread out and place their sticks on the ice in front of them. On the coach's command, players two-foot jump over the stick back and forth. After awhile, have players jump forward from the bottom of the stick side to side, to the top and then backward jump side to side down to the bottom of the stick.

Next, line the sticks up around the circle and have the players skate around the circle doing crossovers and jumping over the sticks at the same time. Change direction after 30 seconds.

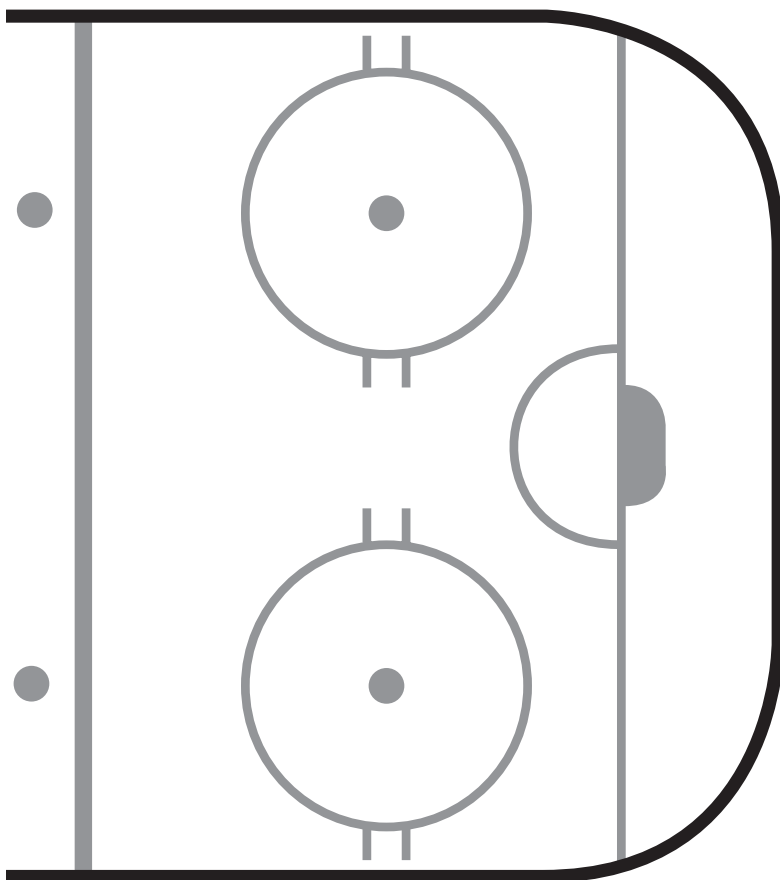
#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Improves crossovers and teaches players to skate with their heads up.



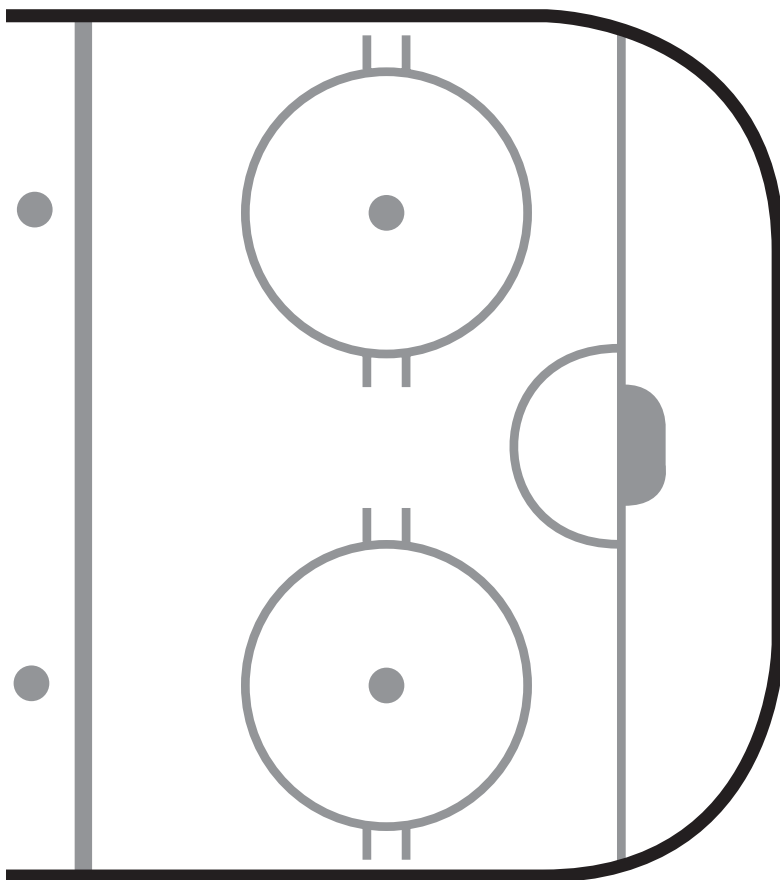
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**NOTES/COMMENTS**



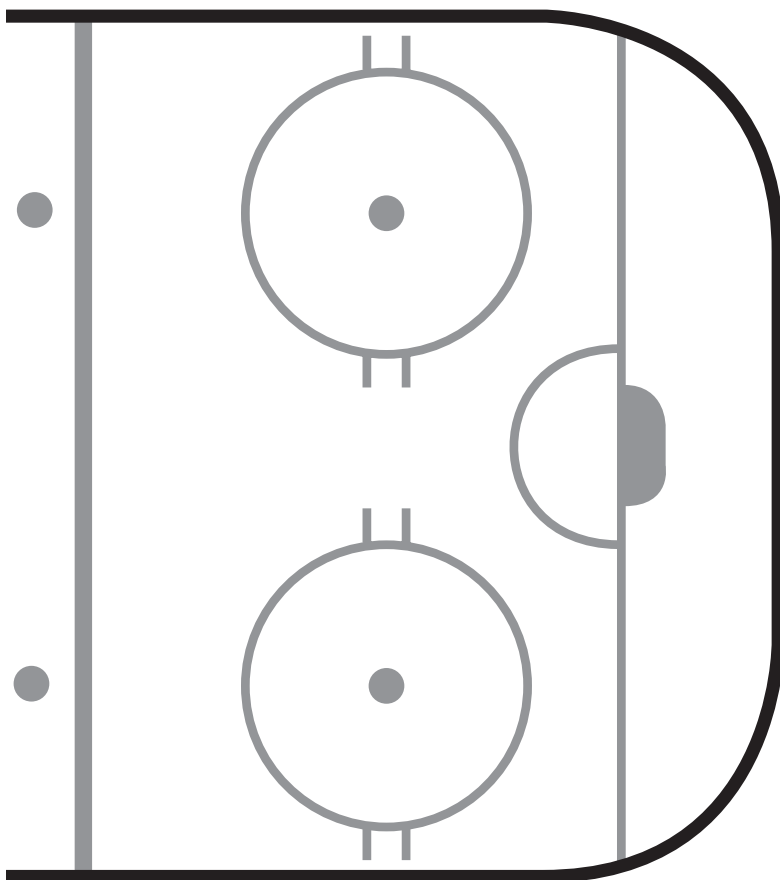
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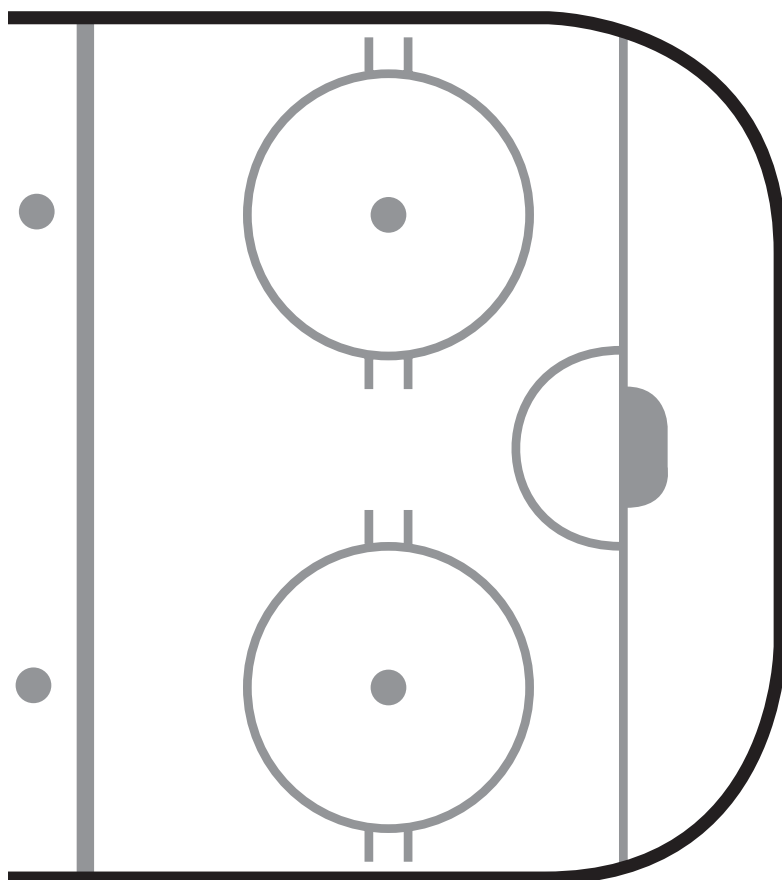
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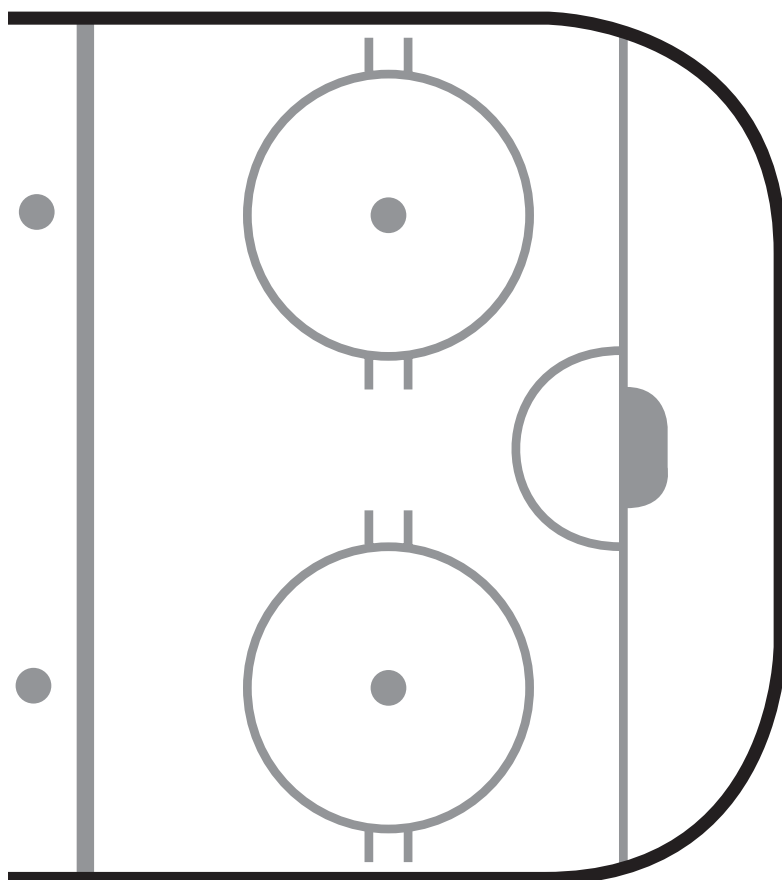
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**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



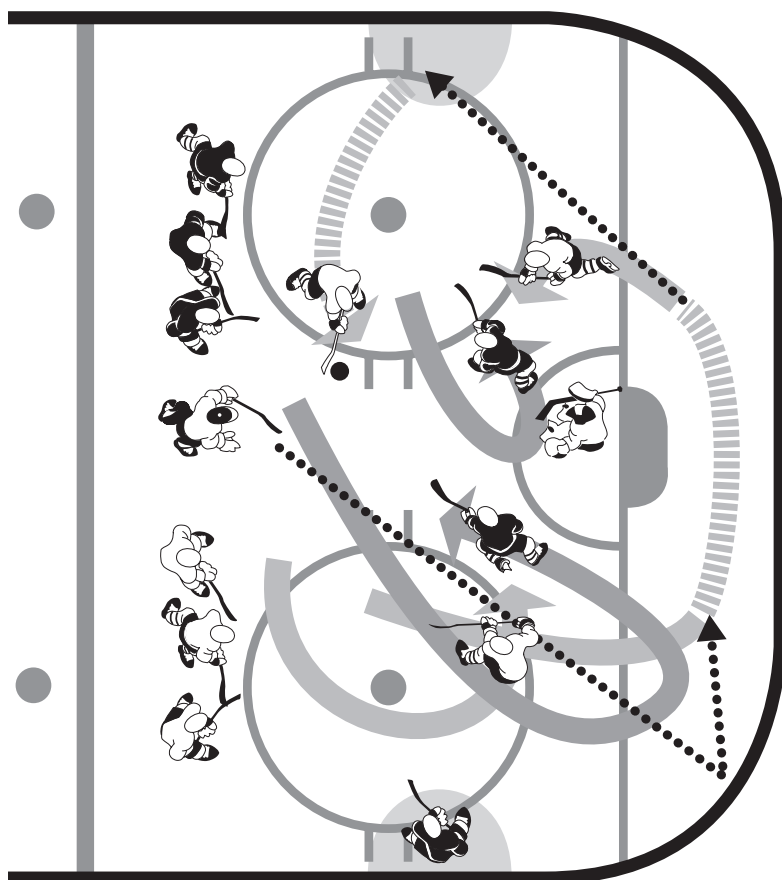
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**

**Small Area**  
**Competitive Games For**  
**10-and-Under**





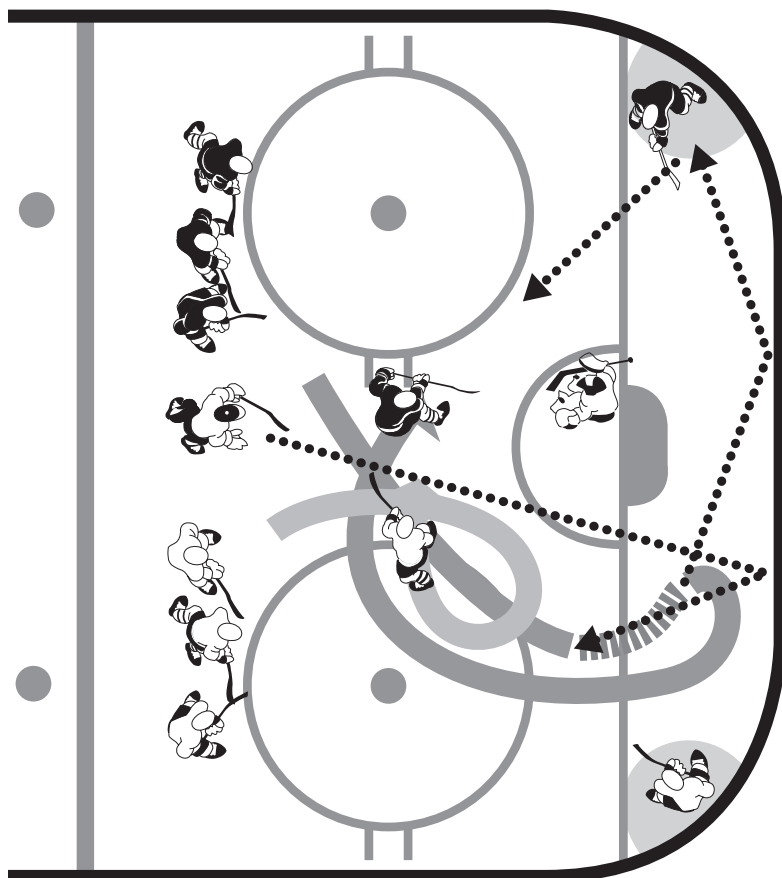


### 3-on-2 Transition Game

Select two players from each team and place them in the zone. Select another player from each team and put them on the side boards near the hash marks on the face-off circle. The players pass to their teammate on the boards and he/she now enters the play 3-on-2. If the opposing players gain possession of the puck, they pass to the side boards and the player on the other team must go back to the boards. The opposite team now plays 3-on-2.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Works on transition offense and defense.

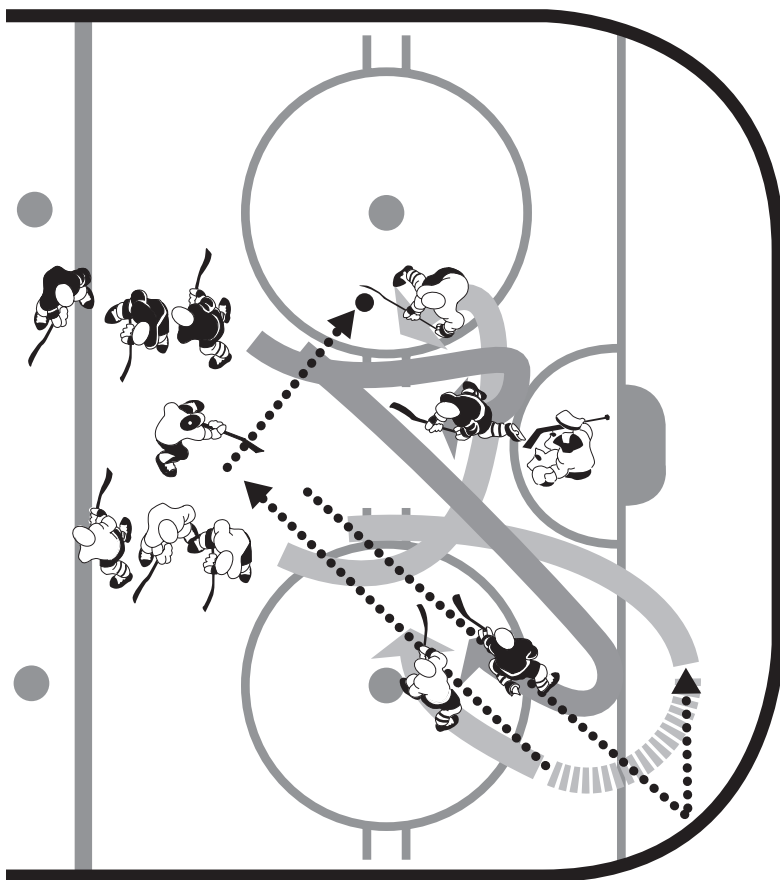


### Safehouse Drill

Divide the players into two teams with the coach in the middle. One player from each team is placed in opposing corners. These players are safe and can handle the puck without being checked. The coach calls out 1-on-1 or 2-on-2, etc. The players must pass to their corner teammate first, then receive a pass back to be able to play offense and score.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Works on transition offense.

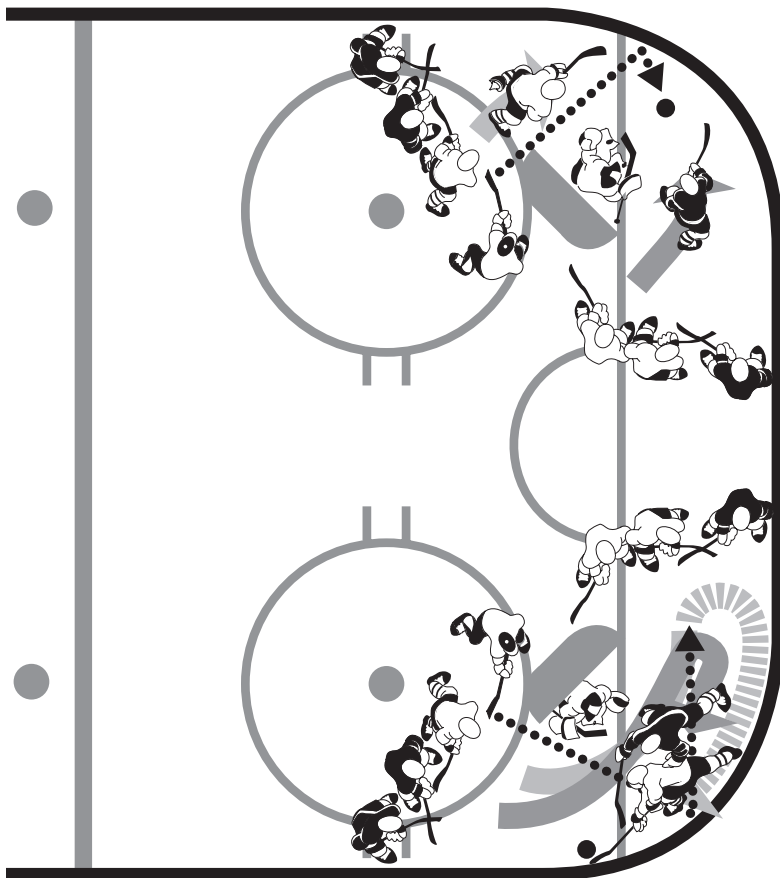


## Coach's Quarterback Drill

Divide the players into two teams. The coach shoots the puck in the corner and calls out 2-on-2 or 3-on-3. The coach can also call out two blues, one red to force a 2-on-1. Whatever the coach calls out, the players in line react to it. To change possession and score, the defensive team must create a turnover, pick-up the puck, pass it to the coach who then passes it back. Now the defensive team is on offense. Both teams are trying to score on the same net. Change players after 30 seconds.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops transition, 1-on-1 play and creating 2-on-1 situations.



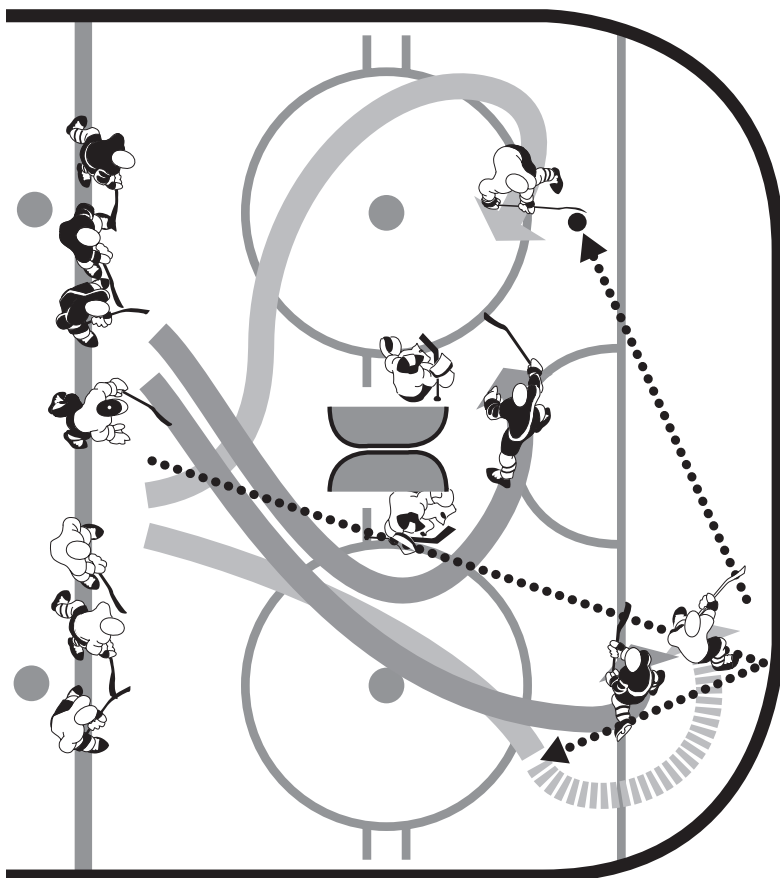
## 2 Corner Drill

Set a net up in both corners. Sealing off the corner, the net is placed facing the glass. Two teams are selected and they play a 1-on-1 or 2-on-2 in the corner. The other players who are not in the drill surround the area and continue to throw the puck back in the confined area. Change players after 30 seconds.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops puck protection and puck skills in a confined area.



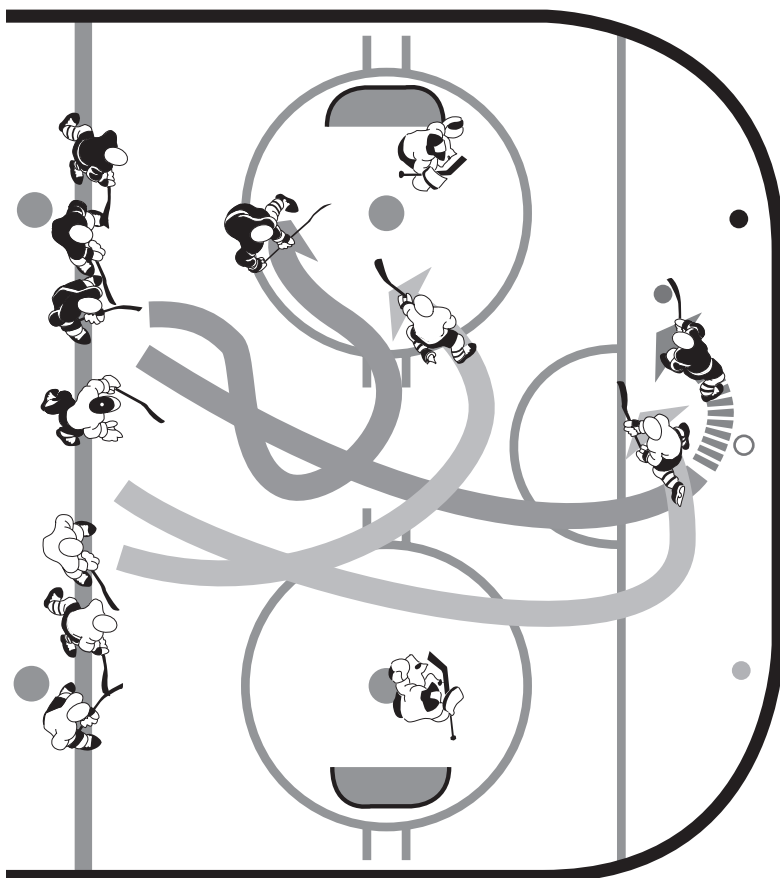


### Back-to-Back Net Scrimmage

Place the nets together back-to-back. Divide the players into two teams. Teams play 1-on-1, 2-on-2, 3-on-3, etc., trying to score on the opposite net. Use 20-second shifts and play to 10. Make it competitive.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Increases anticipation at all positions.



### Multi-Puck Game

The coach stands in the middle of two teams. The coach chooses 3-on-3, 2-on-2, etc. Players start play on the coach's puck declaration and react to the play. The coach can declare:

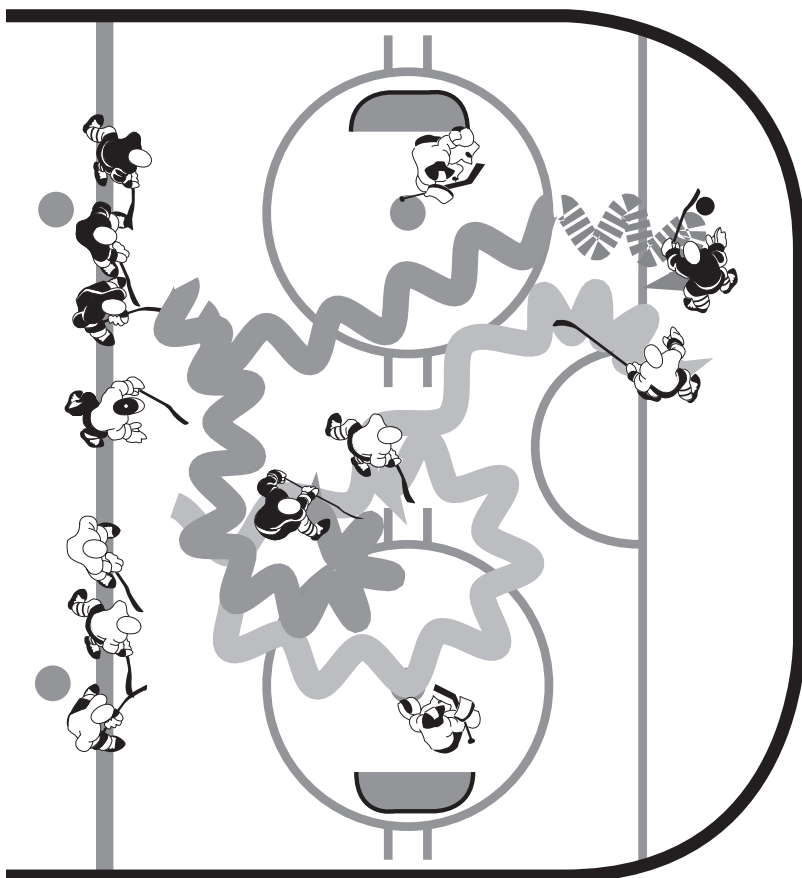
**Black Puck** and the players can score on the opponent's net.

**Red Puck** they can score on either net.

**Blue Puck** they can only score on one net that is designated before the game starts.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Improves anticipation.

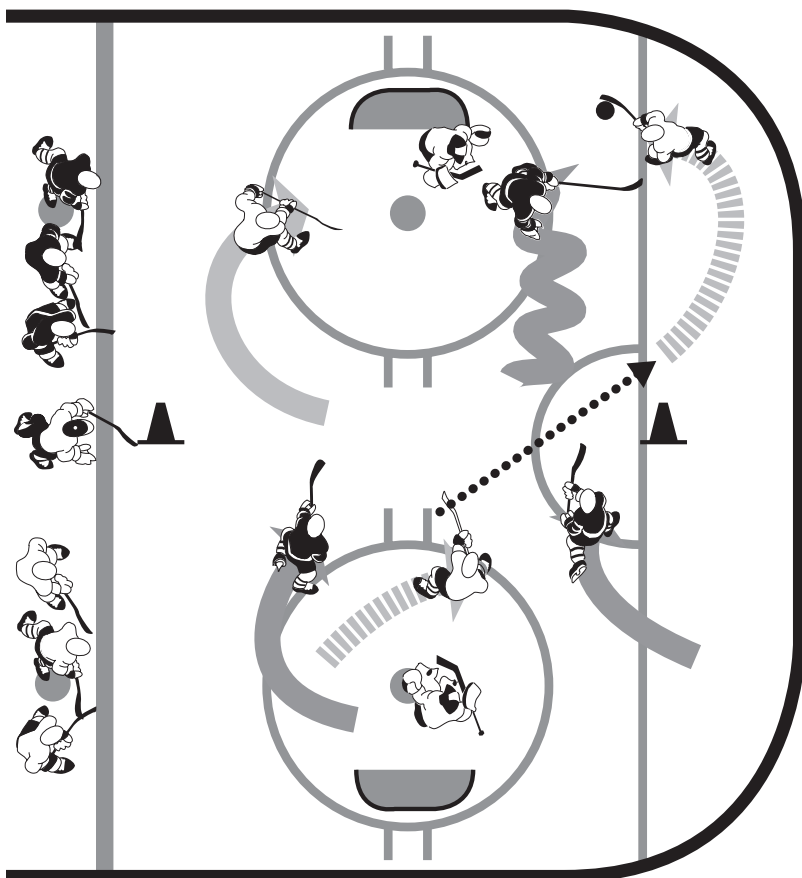


## Coach's Call

Using one third of the ice, the coach places two nets near the boards as shown. The players can play 3-on-3, 4-on-4 or even 5-on-5. The coach calls out the signals and the rules of the game as they change. **For example:** the coach will declare that only backhand passes and backhand shots are allowed. After awhile, the coach can declare only flip passes and wrist shots. The next time he might declare only backward skating. Be creative and challenge your players.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Promotes fun and skills in practice.

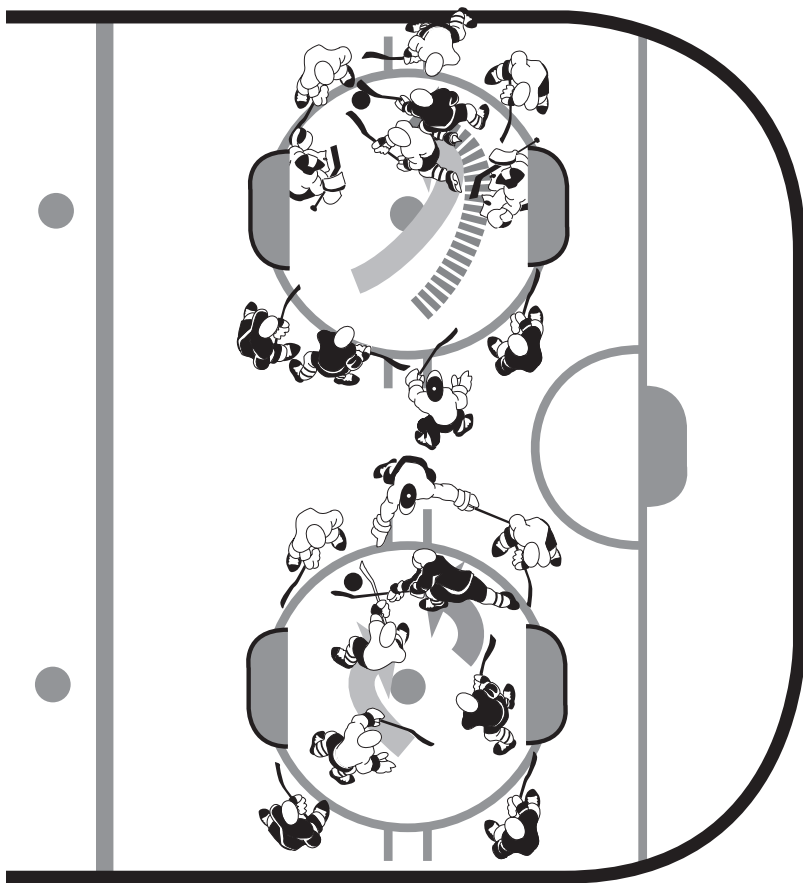


## Center Line Boundary Scrimmage

Using one third of the ice, the coach divides the players into two teams. Players are designated as forwards and defensemen and cannot cross the center line. This line can be marked on the side with cones. Start the game with two defensemen and four forwards. Alternate players and allow them to play both positions. Start the game with a 2-on-1 at each end. The defense, after a turn over, passes the puck to the forwards at the other end creating a continuous 2 on 1. Progress using more players and build the game into a 2-on-2, and eventually a 3-on-2.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops transition play and passing.

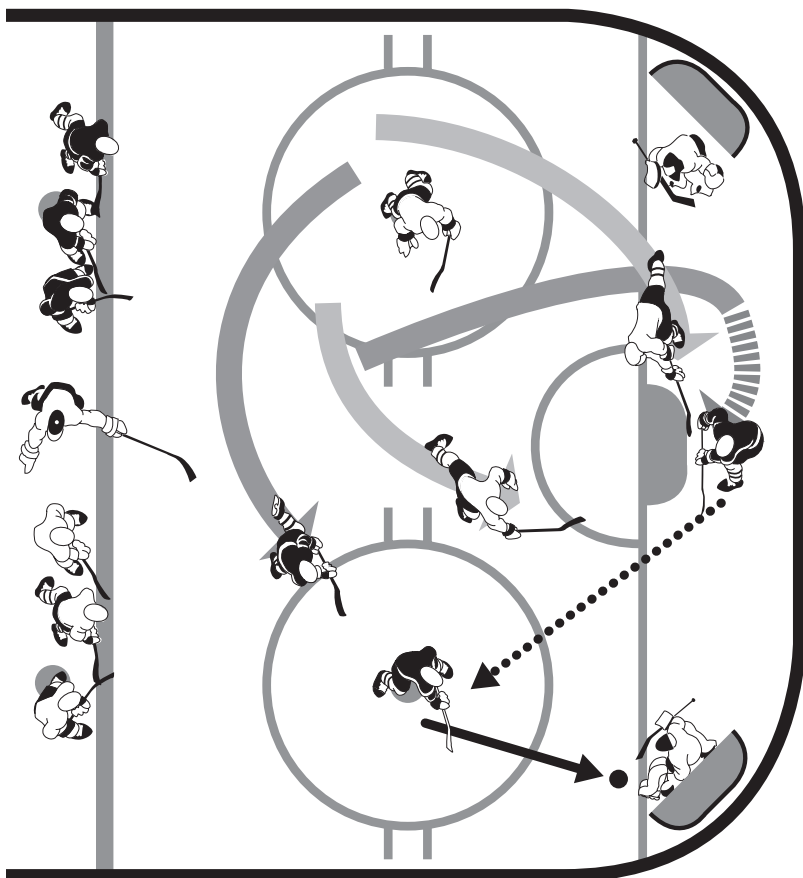


### Tight Circle Game

Using two nets in one face-off circle, have the players surround the nets staying on the circle lines. The coach then calls out the players and they play 1-on-1 or 2-on-1, etc. The players on the outside keep the loose pucks in play. After awhile let players score on either net. Be creative.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops quick passing and anticipation.

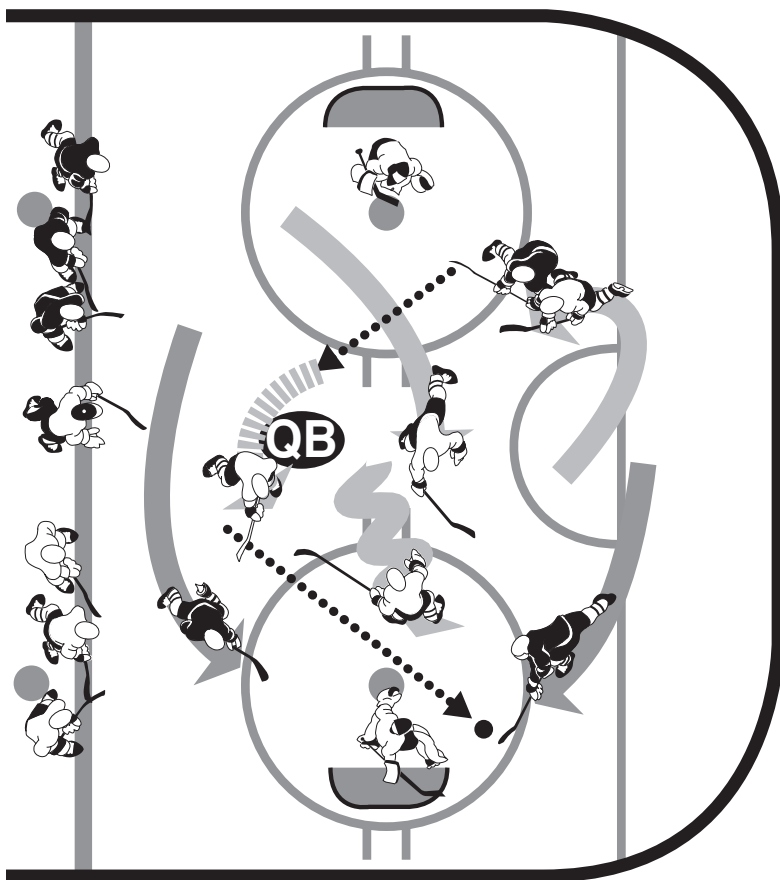


### On the Dot 3-on-2 and 4-on-3

Place a net in each corner. A player from each team is placed on the face off dots. The player on the dot cannot move but can pass to a teammate or shoot. Each team has two other players in the game to create a 3-on-2, progress to a continuous 4-on-3 by adding another player to each team.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops quick transition with odd-man chances.

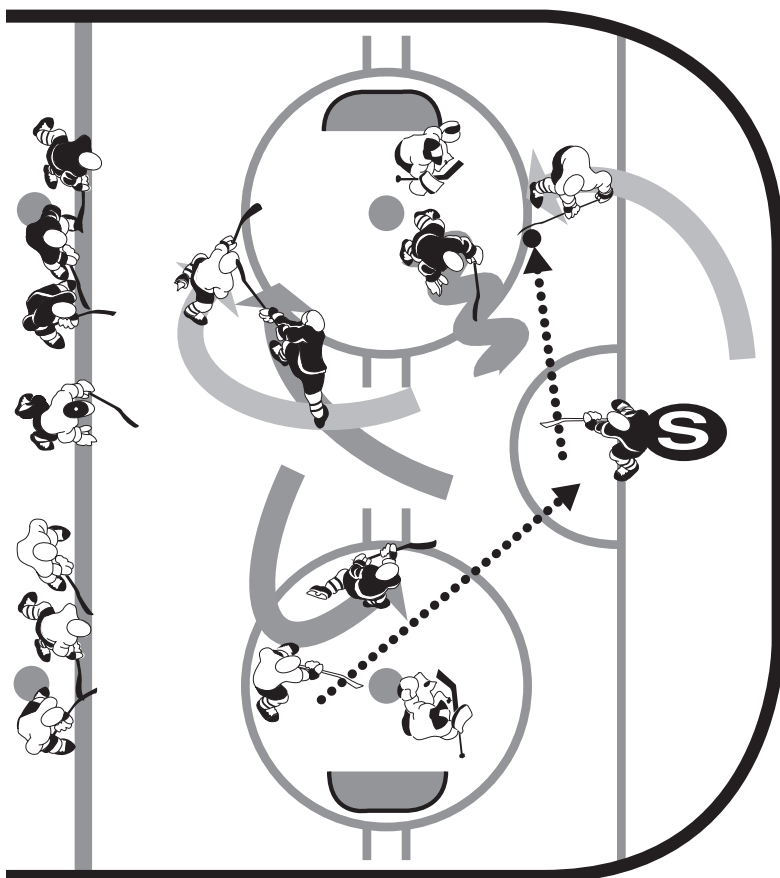


### All-Time Quarterback Drill

Designate one player to be the quarterback for the entire game. The quarterback plays for whichever team has the puck. To score a goal after a turnover, the team must first pass to the quarterback, who returns the pass, signifying the change of offense to defense and vice versa. The quarterback can also shoot and score.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Creates quick transition and develops anticipation skills.

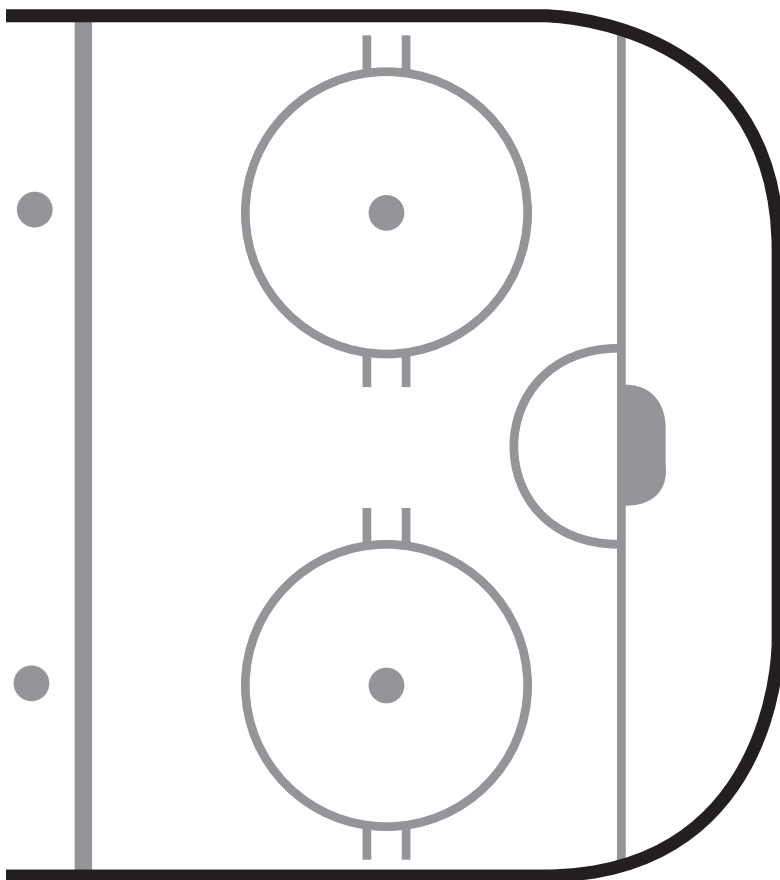


### 2-on-2 Support Single Support

One player is placed in the middle of the rink. This player is known as the support player. Playing 2-on-2, the team with the puck must pass to the support player to go on offense. As a variation, tell the players they can shoot on any goal after receiving the pass from the support player.

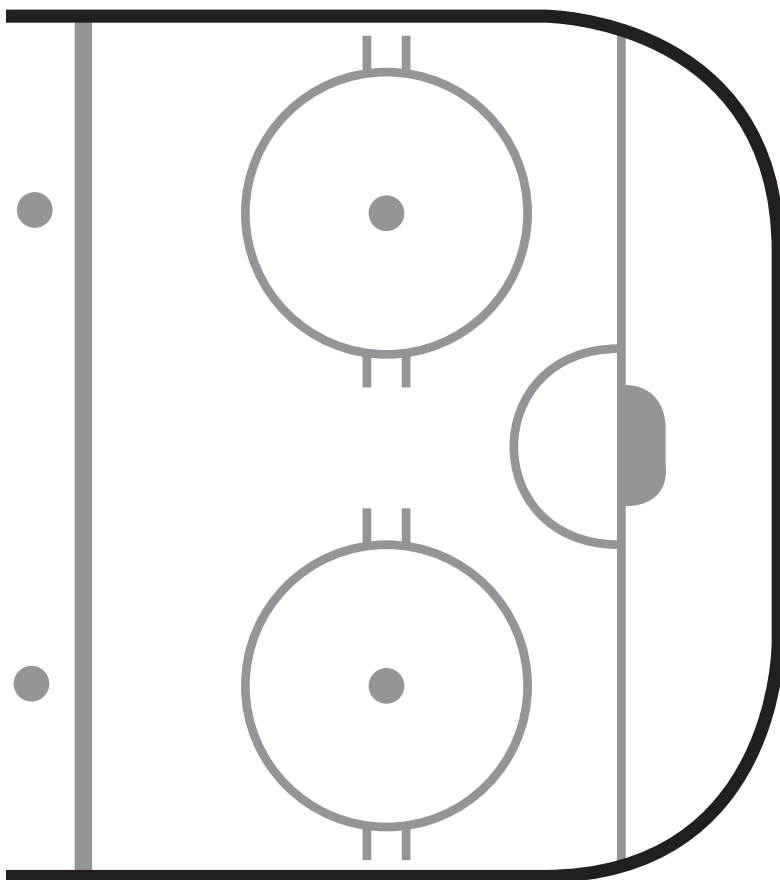
#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops give-and-go skills.



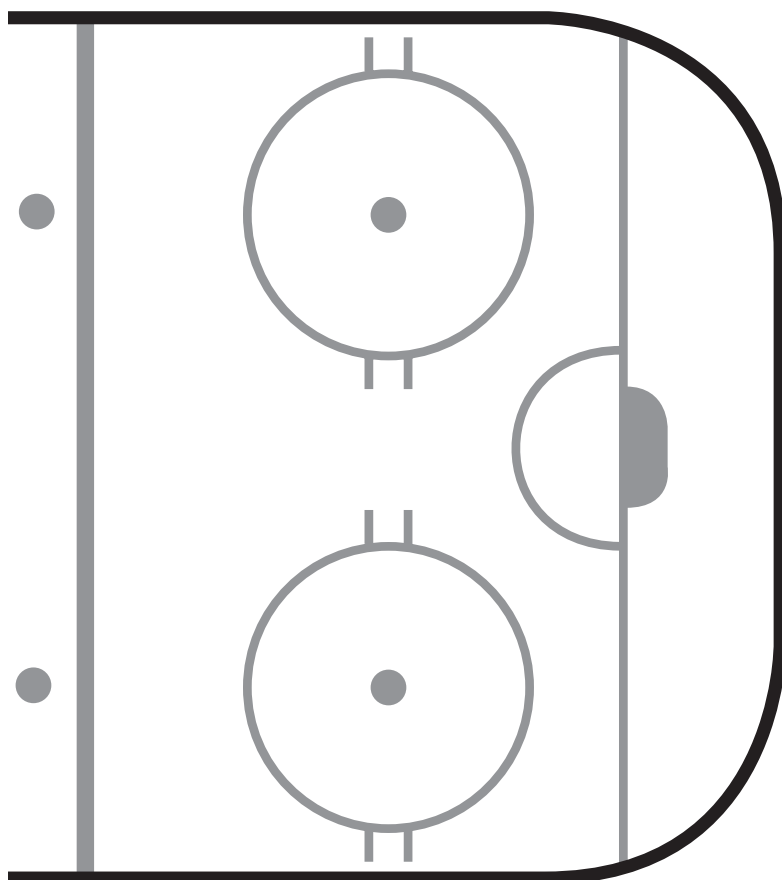
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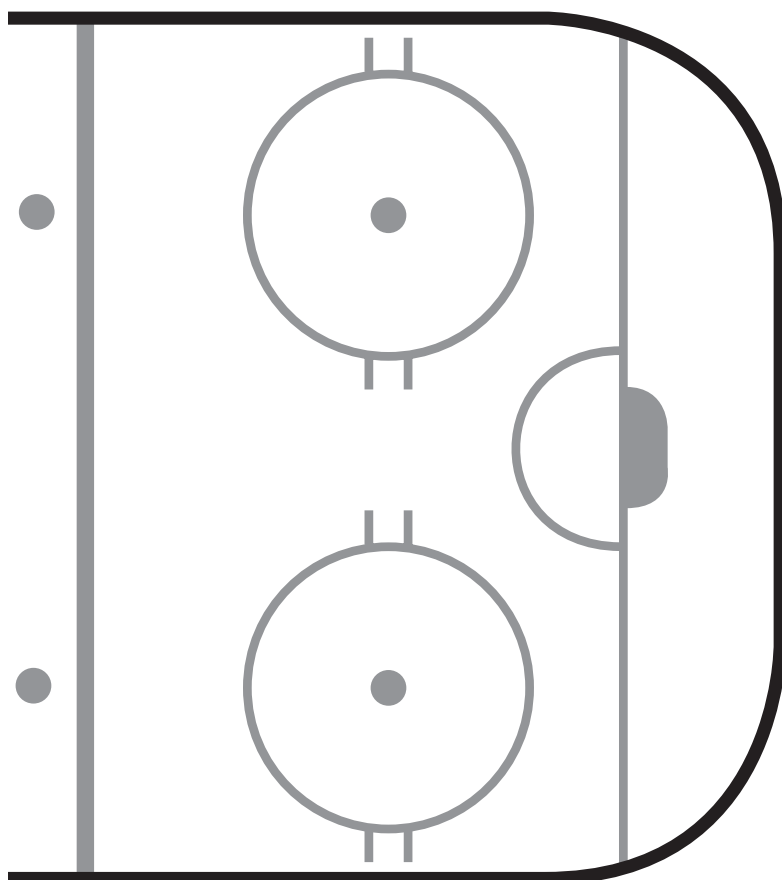
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**My Drill:**

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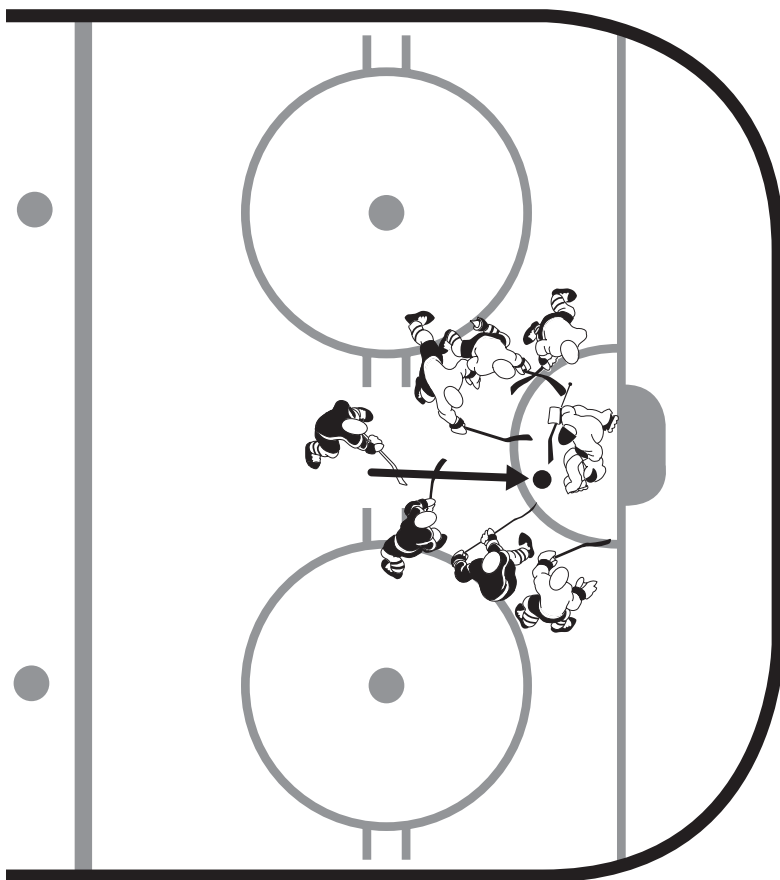
**NOTES/COMMENTS**

**Small Area**  
**Competitive Games For**  
**12-and-Under**







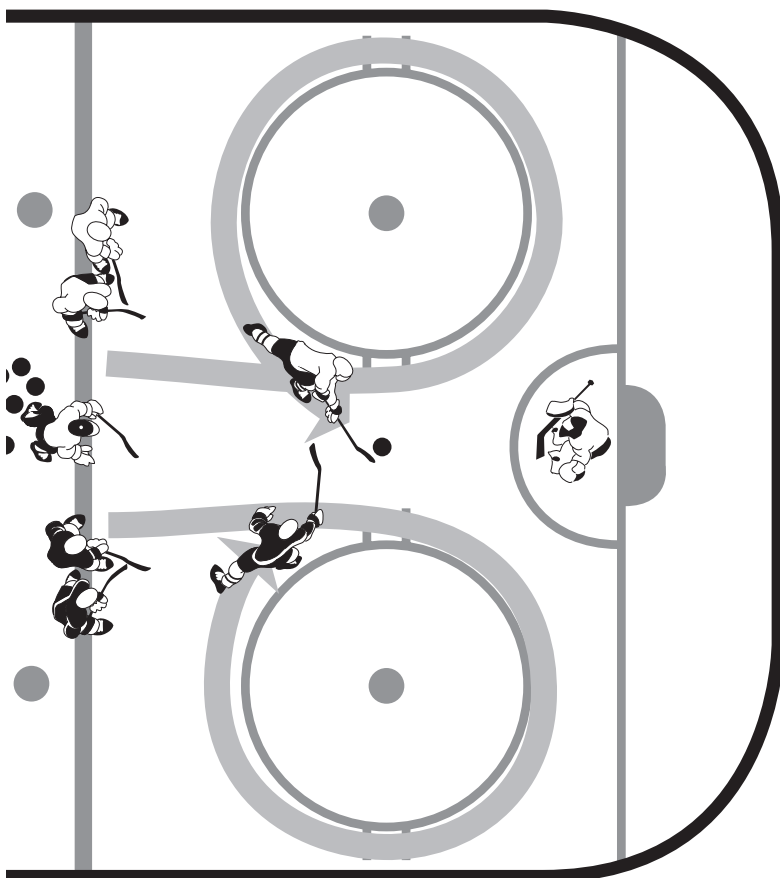


## Rebound Game

Place five or more players around the net and crease area and one player at the top (between the hash marks and the top of the circles). The player at the top is the shooter. The shooter tries to score while the others try to score on the rebound, if any. The game is played to 10. If the goalie covers the puck or the puck goes wide and past the goal line, the goalie gets a point. Each time the goalie earns a point, the players rotate around the crease area.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Fun way to end practice at one or both ends.

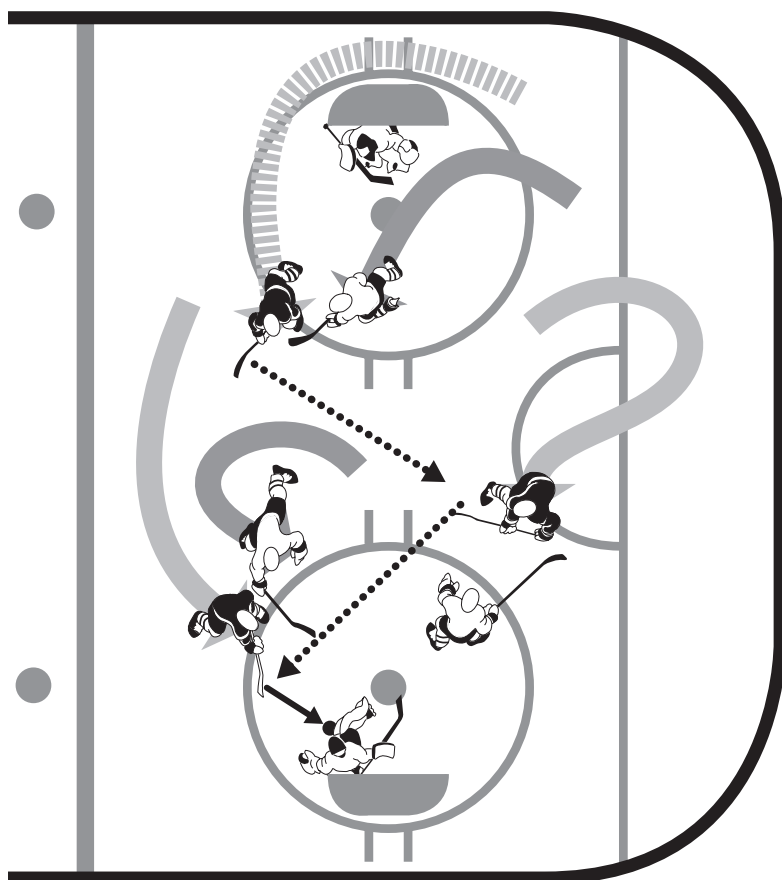


## Crossover Relay Race

Designate two teams. On the whistle, a player from each team skates using crossovers around the circle one complete time and race for the open puck. The first player to the puck tries to score. The other player back checks, trying to prevent a score. Whichever team scores five times first wins. A new puck is placed in the middle each time.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops crossovers at a high tempo.

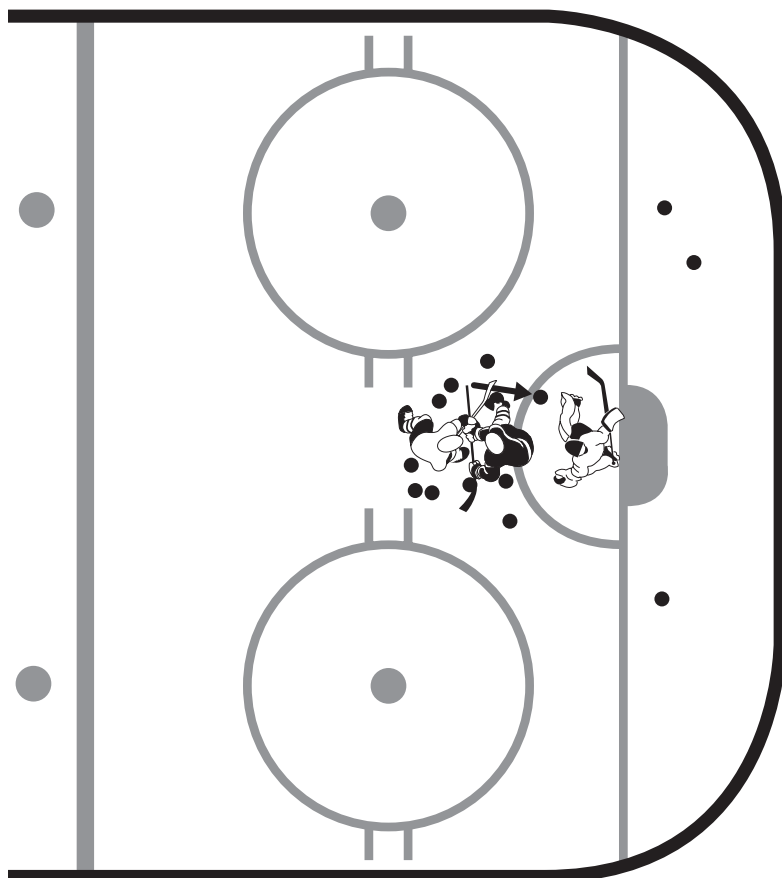


## Decision Maker

Playing 3-on-3 at one end, the coach is responsible for constantly changing the game. The first game requires that teams must complete two passes before shooting. In the next game, teams can only make backhand passes and backhand shots. The third game requires that teams can only make indirect off the boards passes, etc. Be creative with the game requirements. Also alternate the number of players.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops quick thinking anticipation skills.

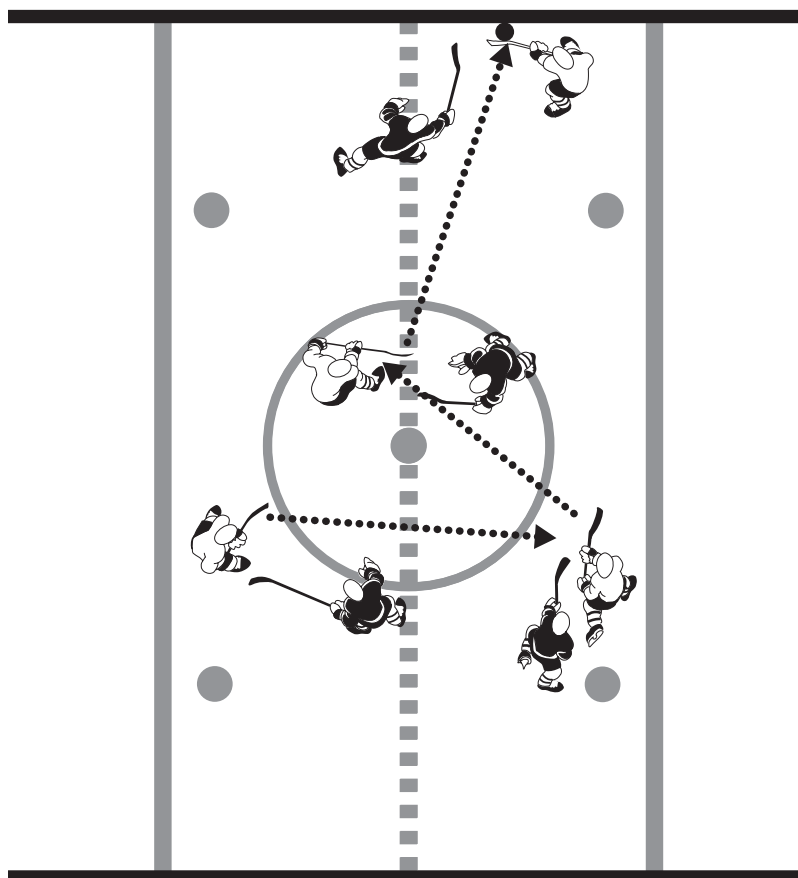


## 1-on-1 Sweep The Porch

Place a handful of pucks in front of the net. The defenseman turns his/her stick over so the butt end is on the ice. The forward tries to shoot the pucks into the net one at a time while the defenseman tries to stop him. The game ends when all the pucks have been used.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops solid 1-on-1 play.

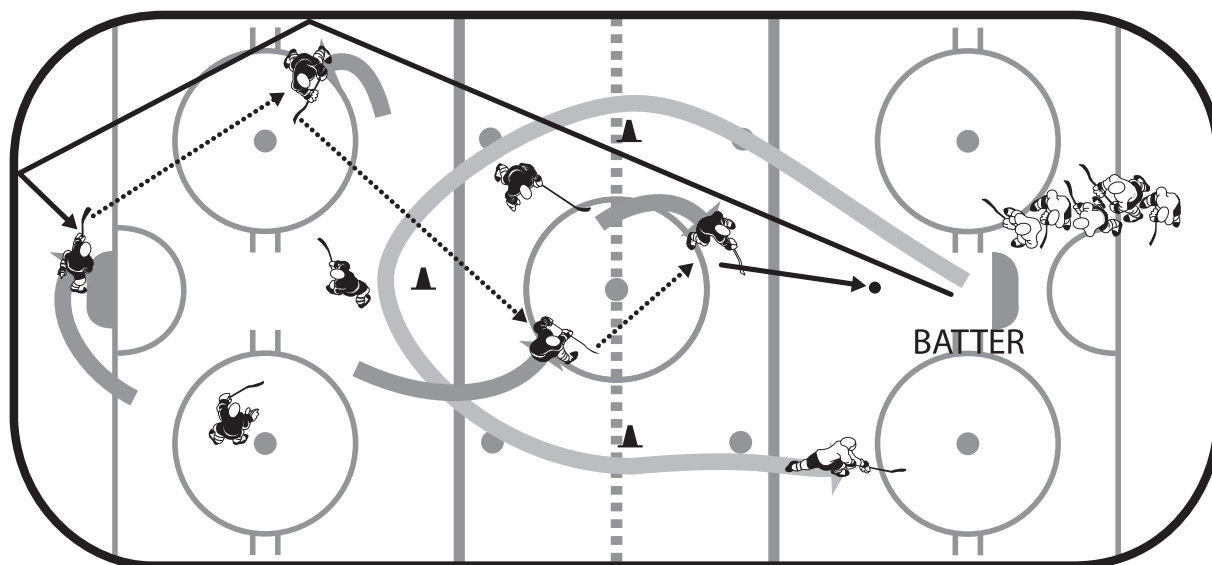


### Cross-Ice Board Scrimmage

Using the neutral zone, divide the players into two teams of 3, 4 or 5. The boards between the blue lines are the goals. The players must complete three passes before scoring. The only way to score is to have the blade of the stick holding the puck against the boards. Players cannot shoot.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Good option while players are doing other drills on each end of the ice.

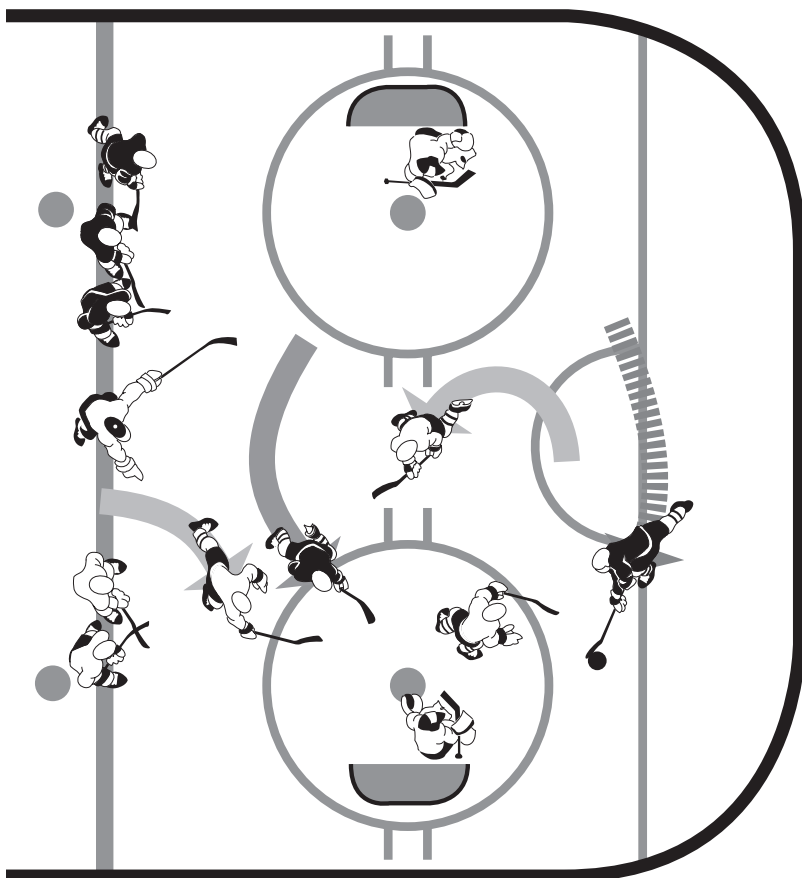


### Baseball

Using three cones and the hash marks at one end, set up a baseball diamond. Divide the players into two teams. The batter takes the puck and shoots it down to the far end. The spread out outfielders have to make three passes and shoot into the open net before the hitter rounds all the bases and passes over the home plate hash marks for an out. Change sides after three outs.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Creates fun and teamwork.

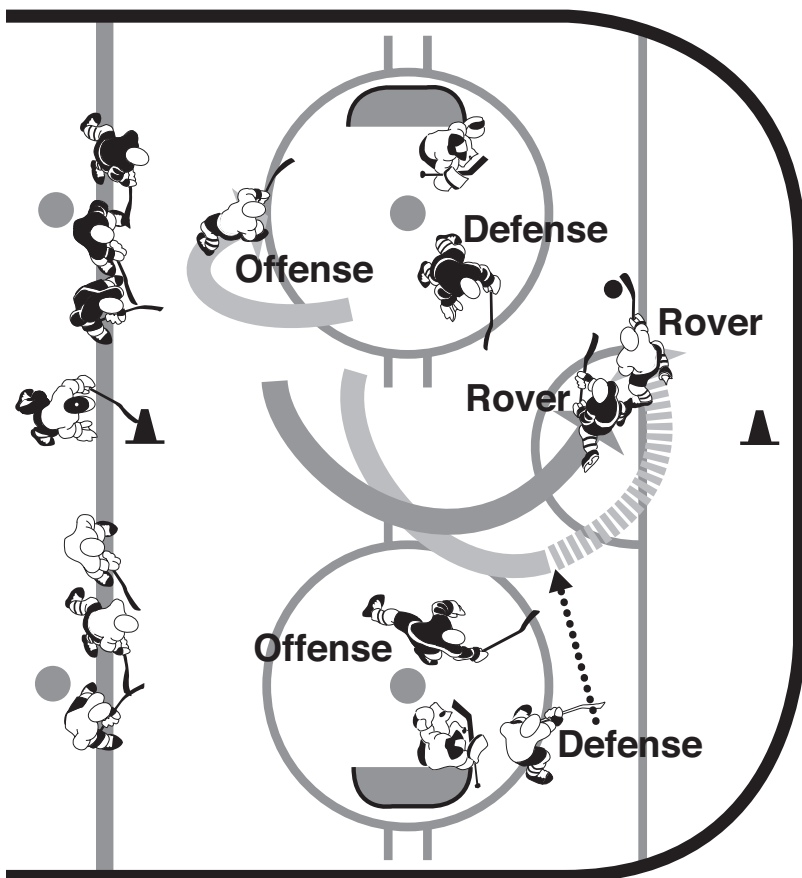


### Odd/Even Game

Start the drill as a 1-on-1. Then add a player to make it a 2-on-1. Continue adding one player at a time, alternately giving each team the player advantage. Continue the drill until you have reached 5-on-5.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops vision when passing.

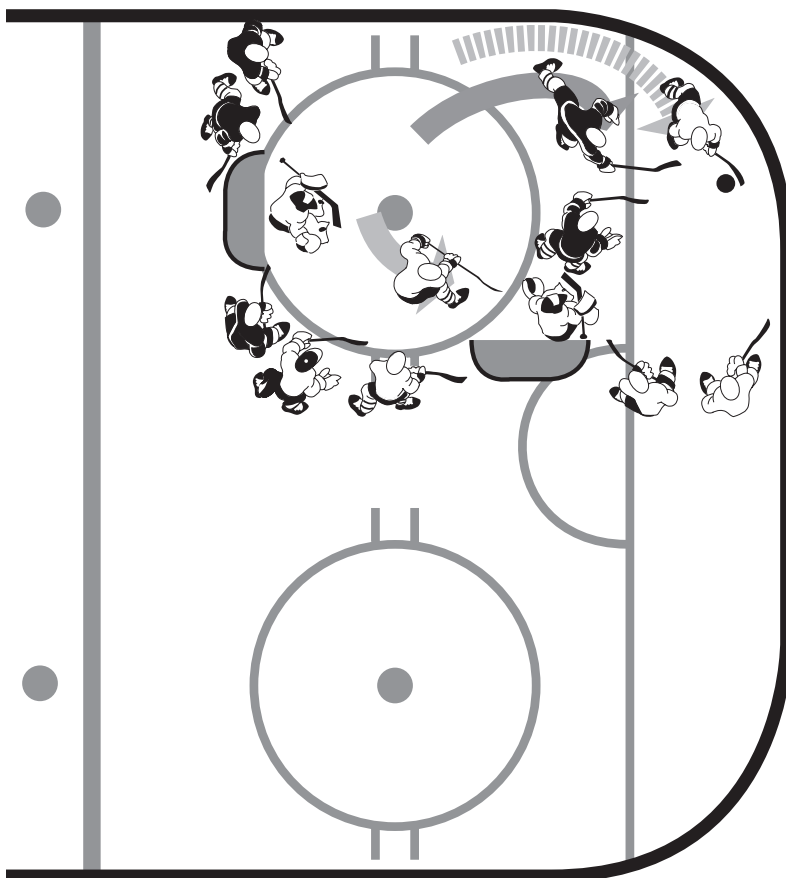


### Rover Transition Game

Each team starts out with one designated defensive and offensive player who must remain on their respective side of the center line. (Use cones to mark the center line.) The third player on each team is a rover who can play on either side of the center line. The game is a continuous 2-on-2. Create a variation by taking out one rover and creating a 2-on-1 allowing the remaining rover to play on offense for both teams.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops quick transition and thinking skills.

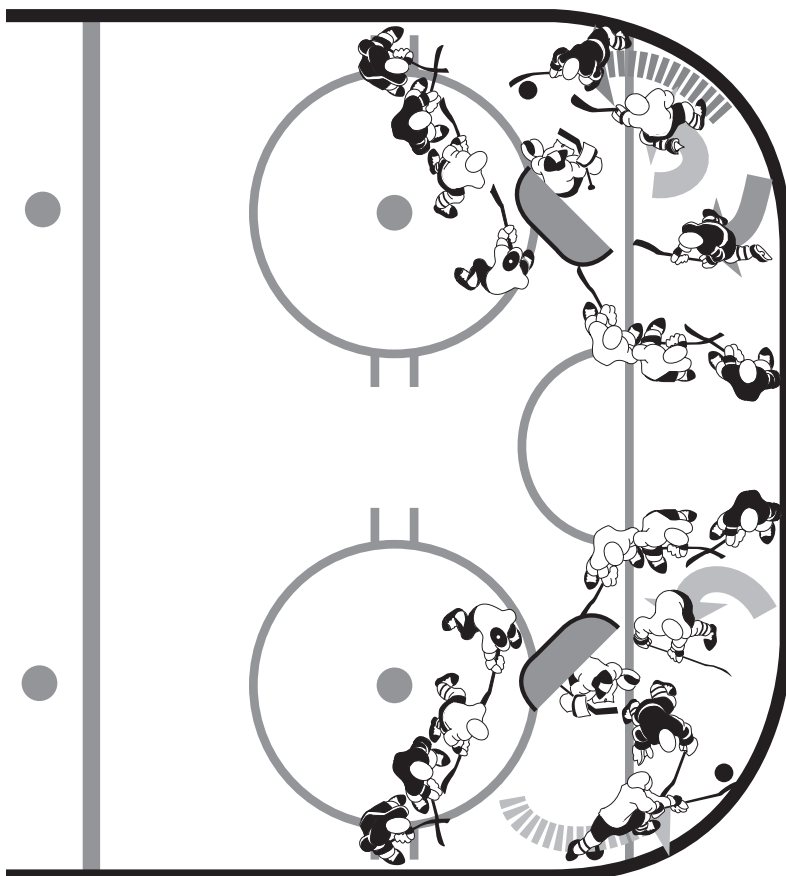


### 2-on-2/3-on-3 Corner Game

Place the nets in the corner face-off area. Players play 2-on-2 and/or 3-on-3. Players not actively in the game surround the nets and keep the puck in play. Keep the shifts 30 - 40 seconds just like in a real game. After a while change the rules and allow both teams to score on either net.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Creates quick thinking and quick plays.

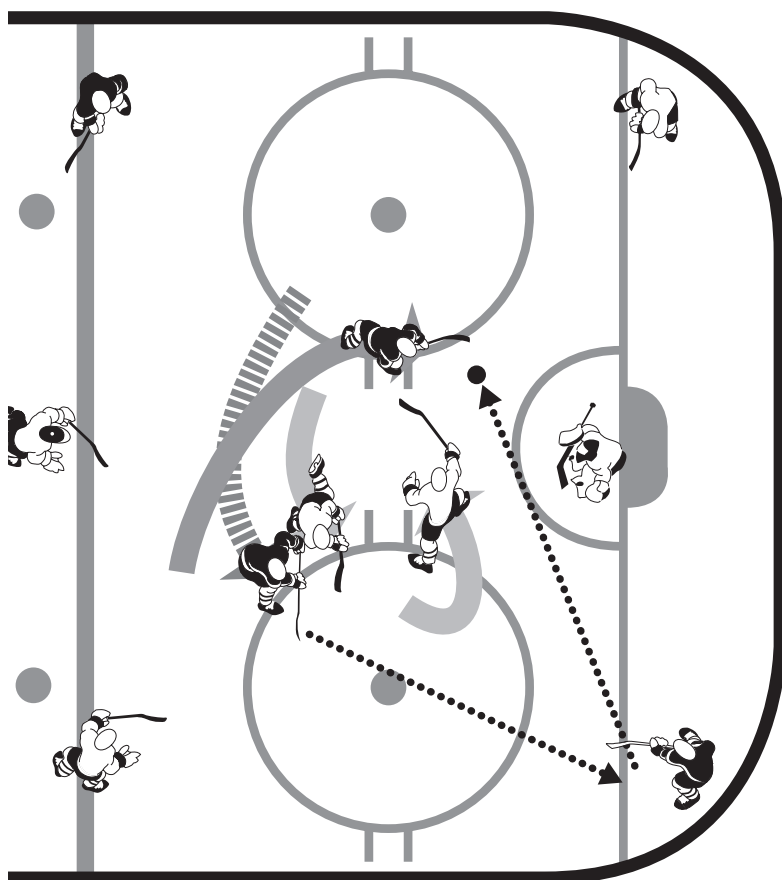


### 2-on-1 Corner Drill

Using both corners play a 2-on-1. The players not actively in the game surround the nets and keep the puck in play. The coach dumps a new puck in when the original puck is either shot in the net or goes out of play. The forwards try to score as many times as they can in the time allowed while the defenseman tries to stop them. Change every 30-40 seconds.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops close, quick passing.

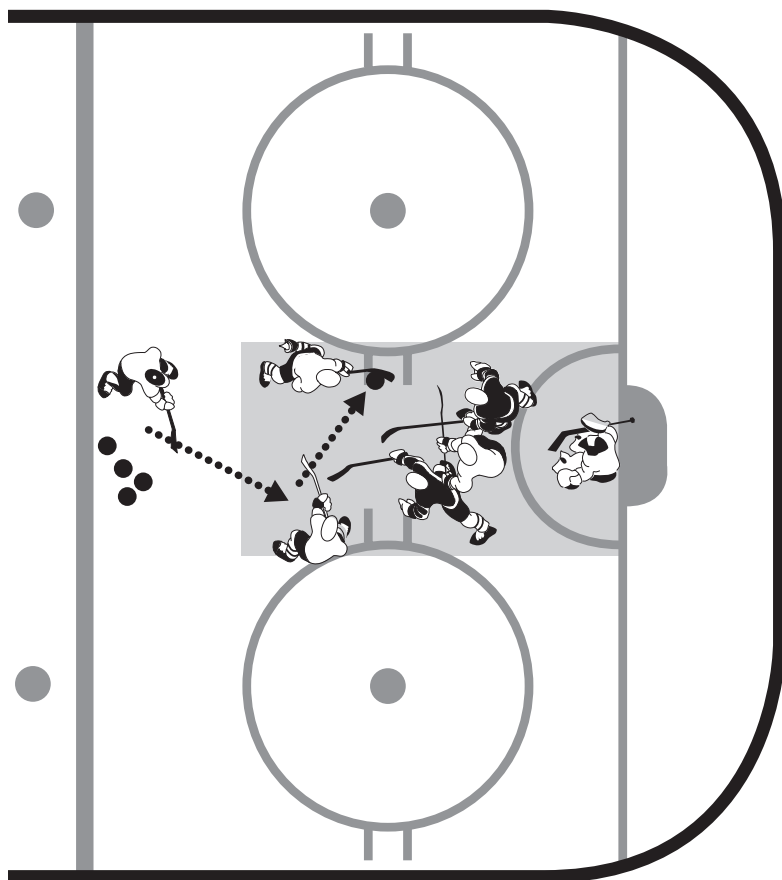


#### 4 Corner Support Drill

Place two players from each team, one at the blue line and one in the opposite corner. Start the game playing 2-on-2. Players must pass to one support player before they can go on offense. After awhile play 3-on-3 or 4-on-4. Change the players every 30-40 seconds. The players can pass to either support player at any time. As a variation, let the players pass to any support player and get it back.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops passing lanes and quick thinking.

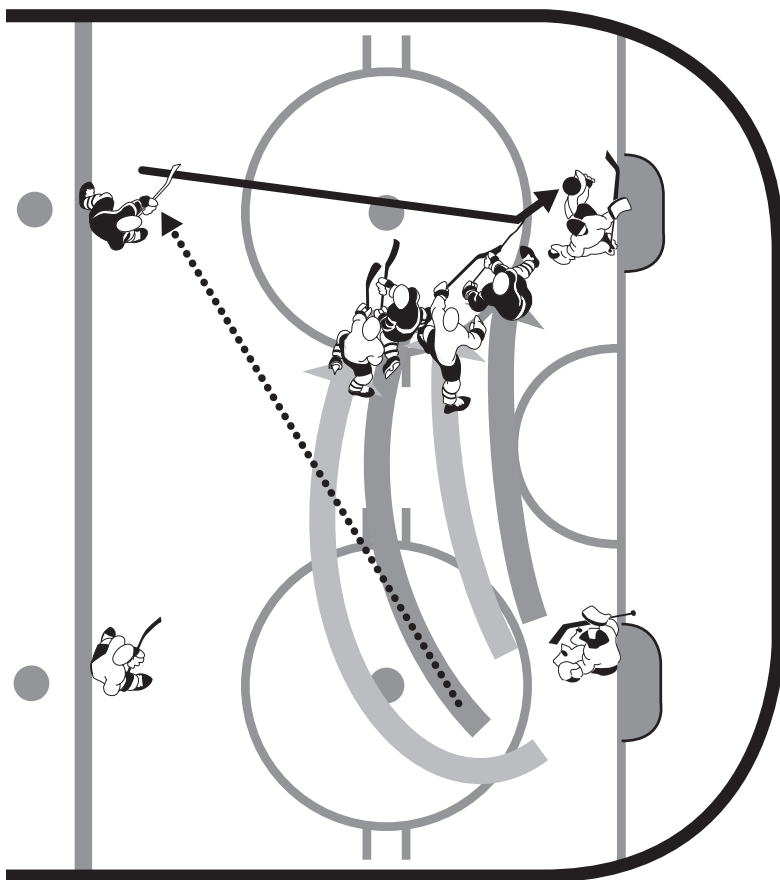


#### Between the Circles 3-on-2

Place the net in its regular crease area. Place three offensive players between the circles and two defensemen. The offensive players try to score with quick puck movement while the defenders try to stop them. After a goal or a puck clearing a new puck is passed in by the coach to the offensive players. Change players after five pucks have been used.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops close, quick passing.

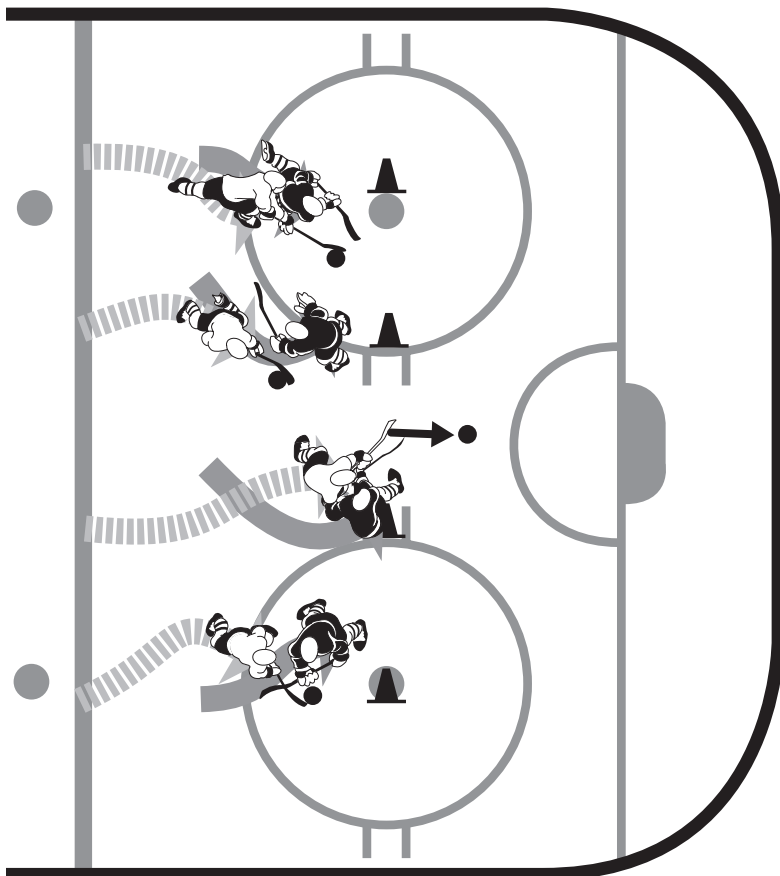


### High/Low 2-on-2 Tip-Ins

Divide the players into two teams and place one player per team at the blue line. Using two nets, players play a 2-on-2 in front. When the top player has the puck, they wait for a teammate to get in front for a tip-in. Goals only count if they are tipped-in. After each goal, the team that scores keeps possession of the puck. Players hustle from side to side playing offense or defense depending which point player has the puck. Change every 40 seconds.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches deflections under game conditions.



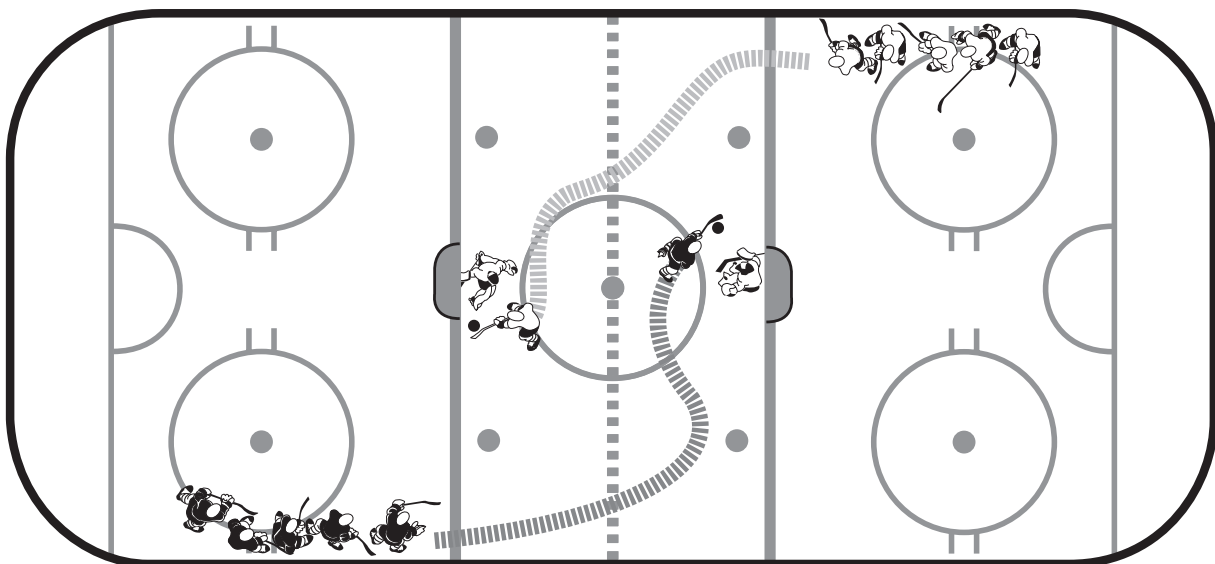
### 1-on-1 Empty Net Game

Place four cones on the ice. Four forwards line up across the blue line with a puck. 10 feet away and facing them are four defensemen. The object is to get to the cones before you can shoot on the empty net while being defended. The first puck in the net gets the point. The game is over when a forward scores three points. Everyone changes positions after three goals so they each work on both offensive and defensive play.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

A fun way to teach 1-on-1 play.



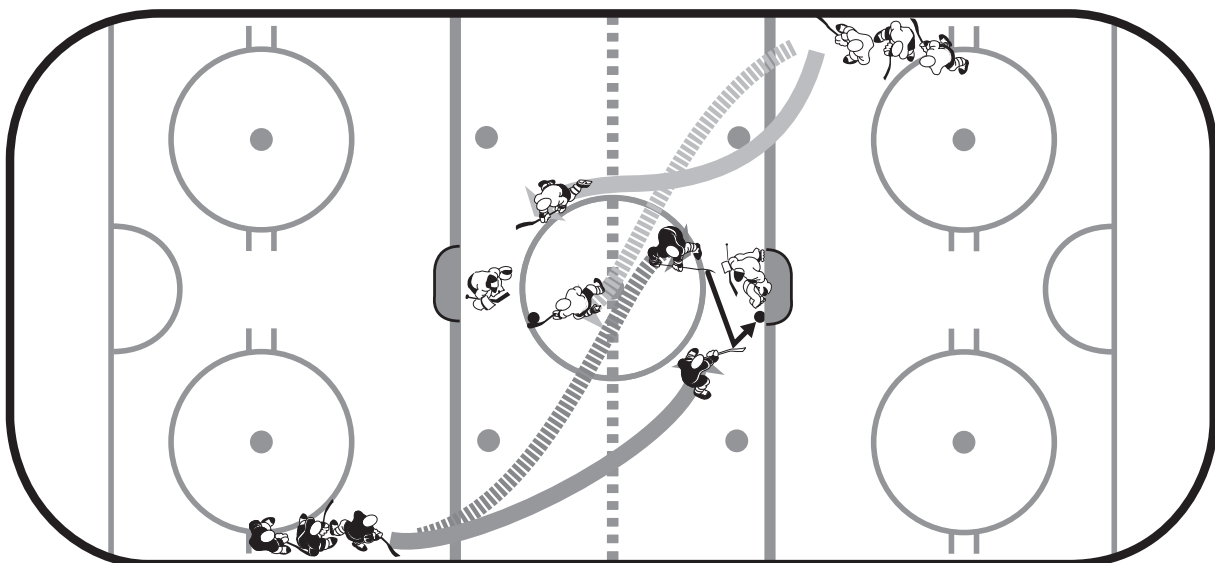


### Breakaway Relay Game

Place two nets in the neutral zone. Two teams are divided up and placed on the boards. The first player in line goes on the whistle. The second player can't go until the first player scores and skates back past the front of the line. After saves, goalies can shoot the puck anywhere they want. The game ends when one team's players have all scored. The losing team does three laps around the nets.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops scoring intensity around the net.



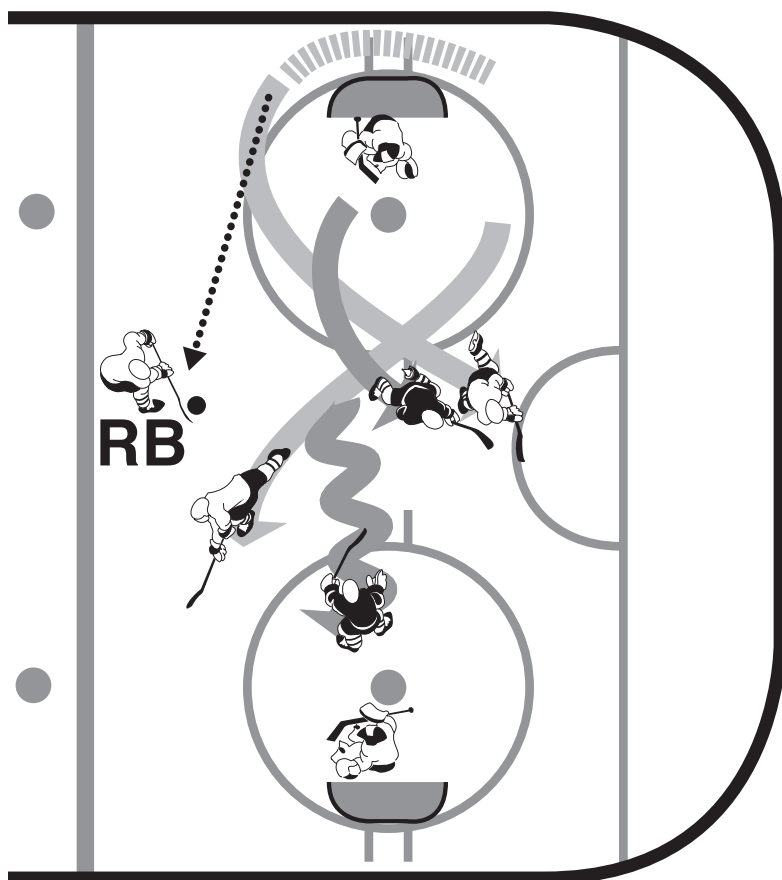
### Breakaway Build-Up Relay

Place two nets in the neutral zone. Two teams are divided up and placed on the boards. The first player in line goes on the whistle. He/She must go until he/she scores. After the player gets back to the line two players go, when they score, three players go. After three players have scored, start back with one player. The game ends when one team uses up all its players and has scored. The losing team does three laps around the nets.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

A competitive and fun drill to end practice with.



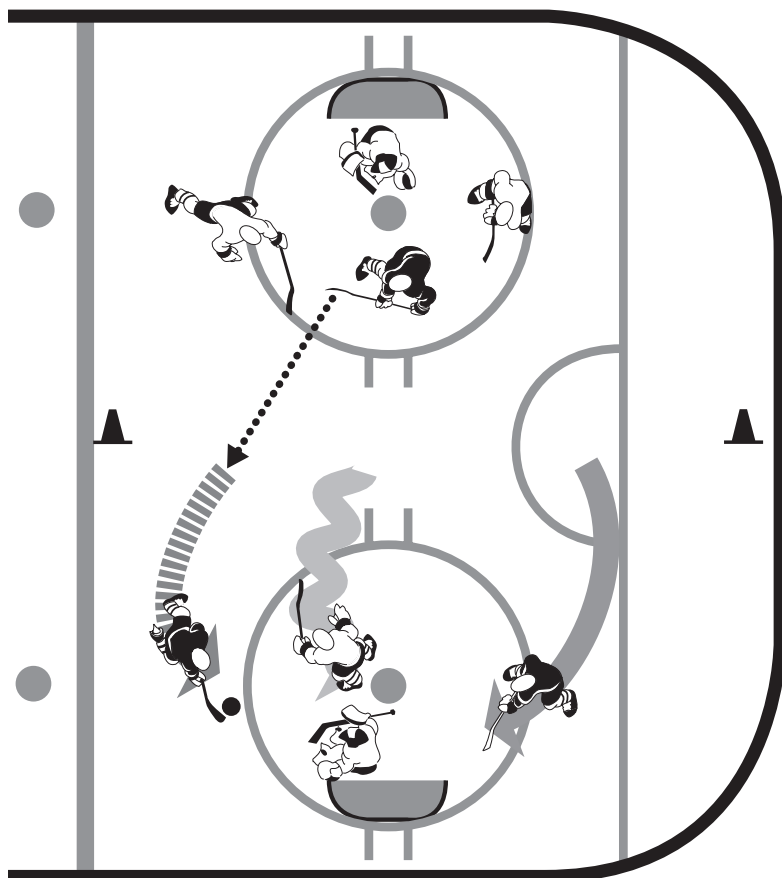


## Red Baron Game

Use five players to start the game —two players on each team and a player who is designated as the Red Baron. The Red Baron is always on offense and can skate anywhere and score for the team that has possession of the puck. This creates a continuous 3-on-2. Create variations of the game by making the Red Baron stationary and requiring the puck be passed to him/her after transition before the other team can go on offense. The third variation allows the Red Baron to move laterally across the blue line and requiring the puck be passed to him/her after transition before the other team can go on offense.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Improves transition awareness.

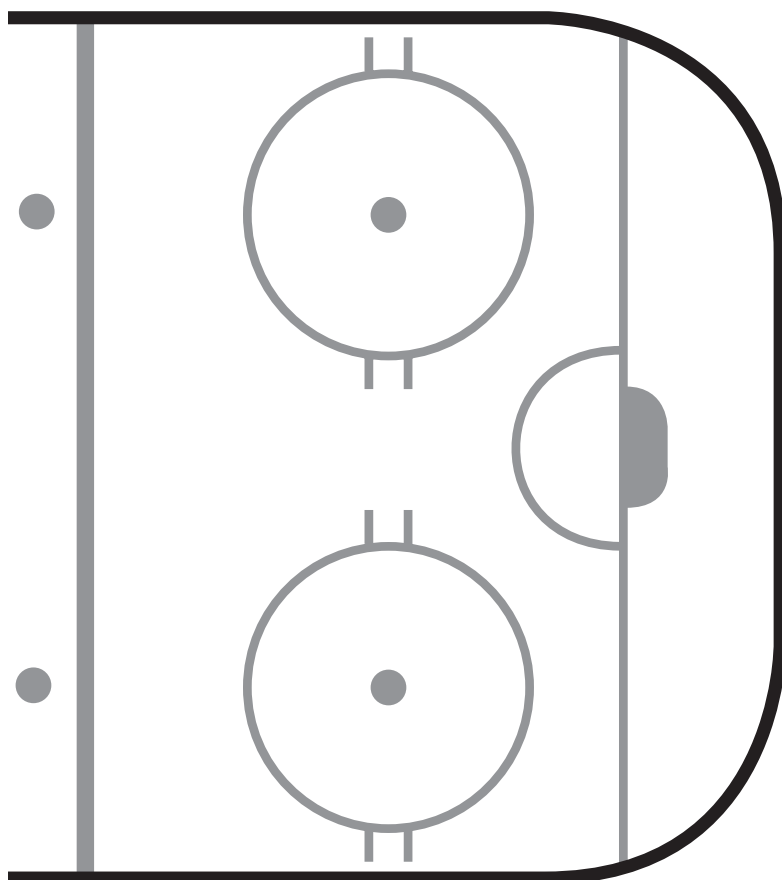


## 2-on-1 Transition Game

Set up a 2-on-1 at both ends. The defending player must try to get the puck to the other side while the two forwards are trying to score. The players must stay on their own end and can't get involved with the play until the defender on the other side passes the puck to them. Continue the drill for 30-40 seconds then change.

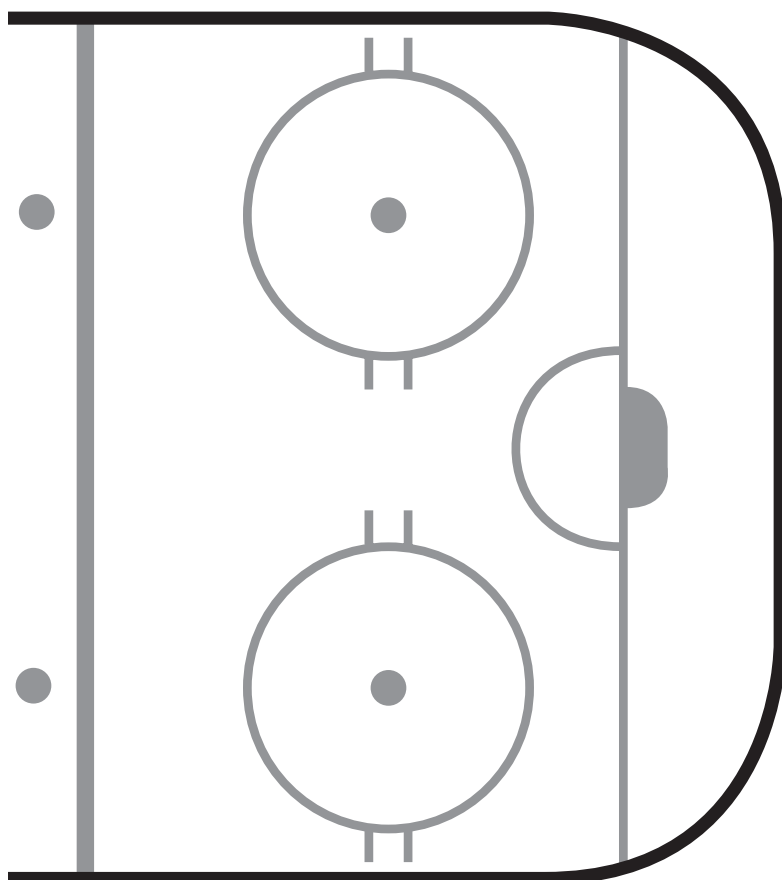
### NOTES/COMMENTS

Fun drill that teaches transition and puck movement.



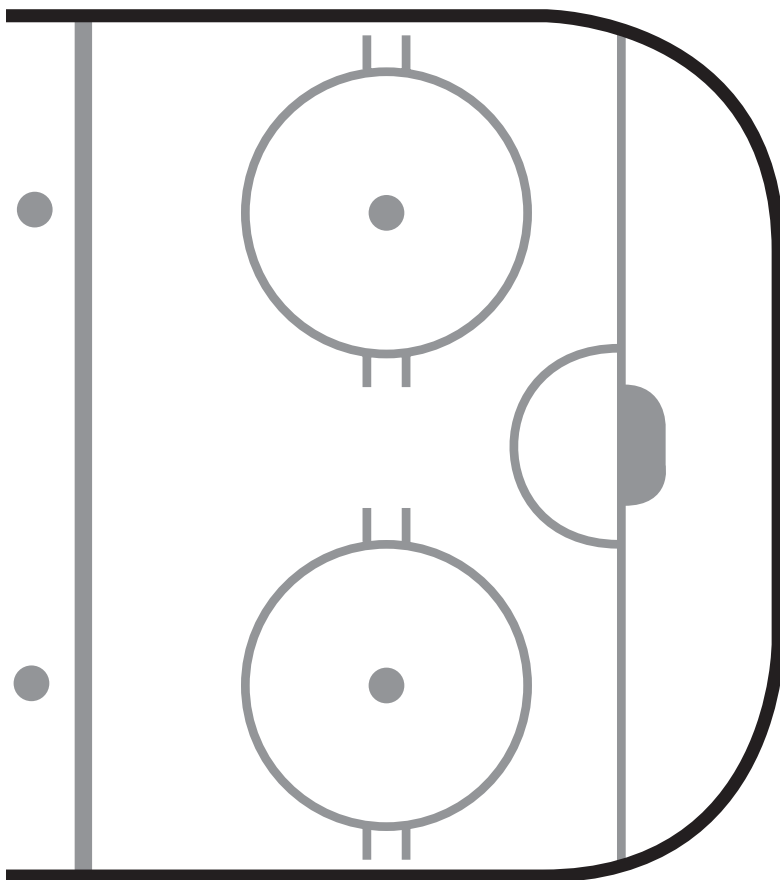
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



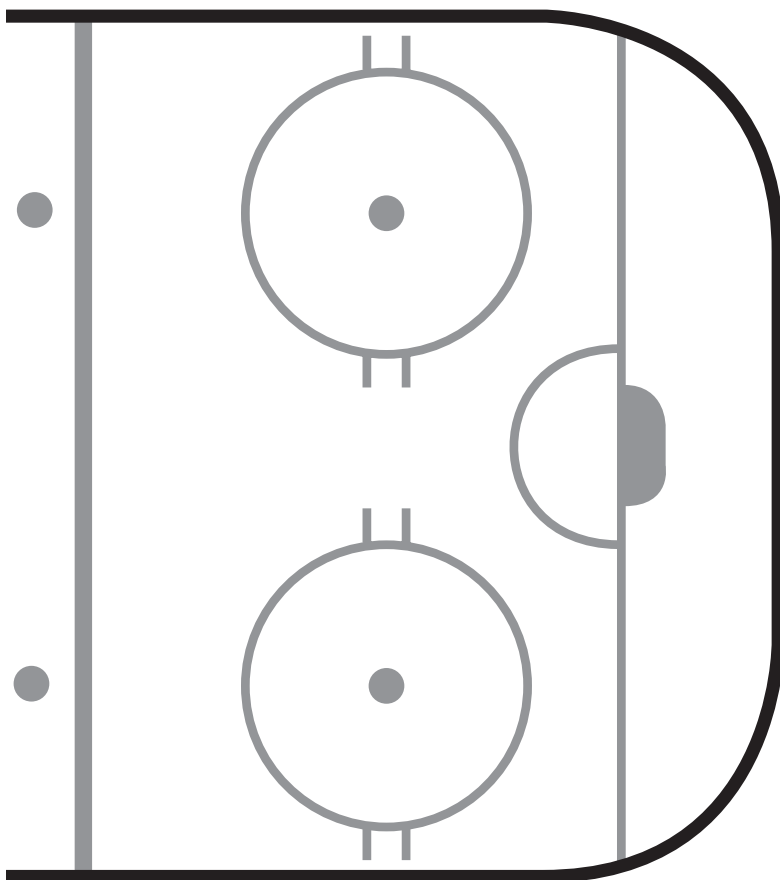
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



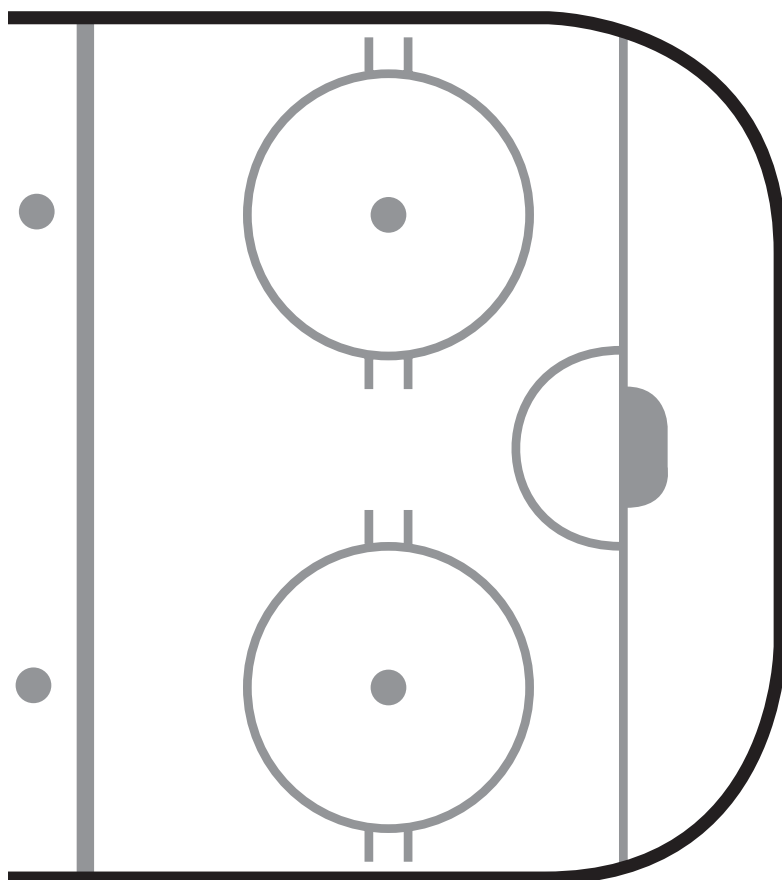
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



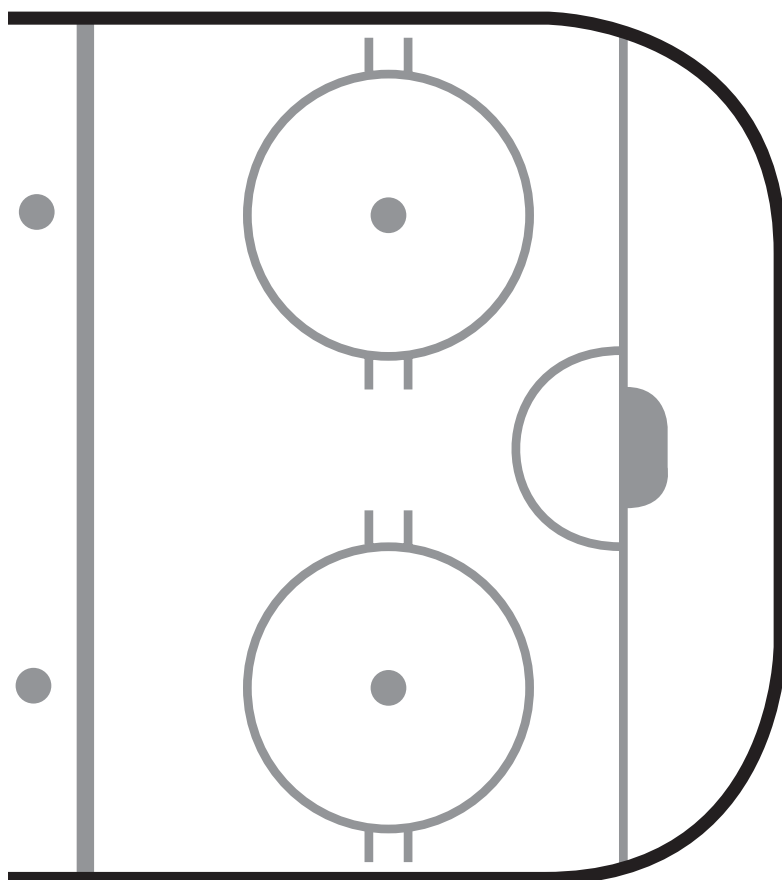
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



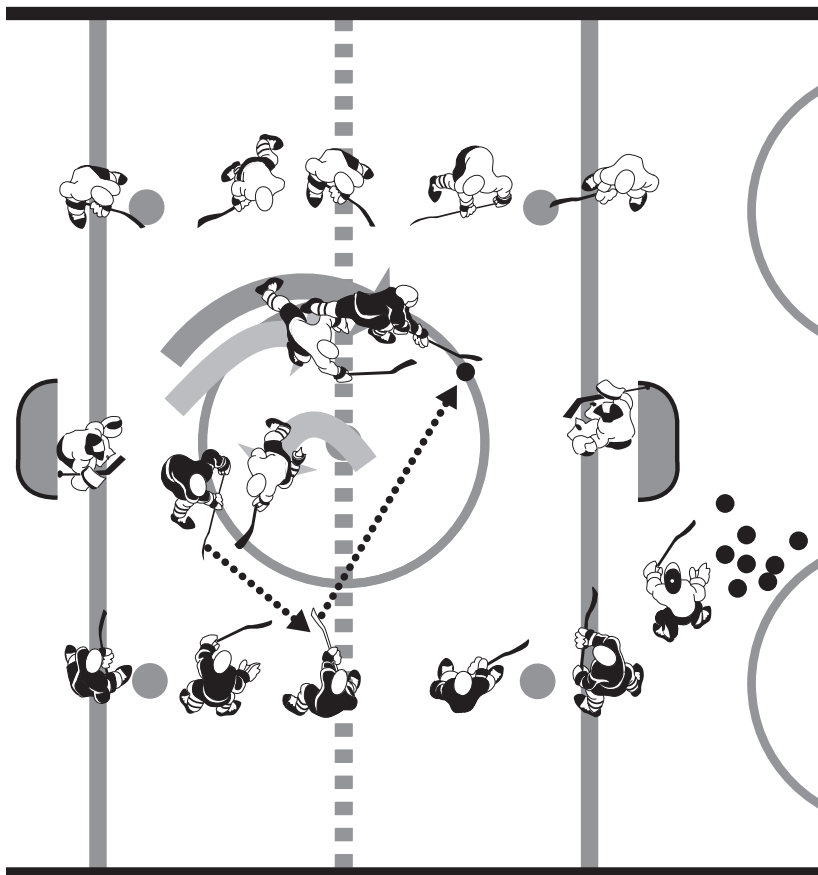
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**

**Small Area**  
**Competitive Games For**  
**14-, 16-, 18-and-Under**





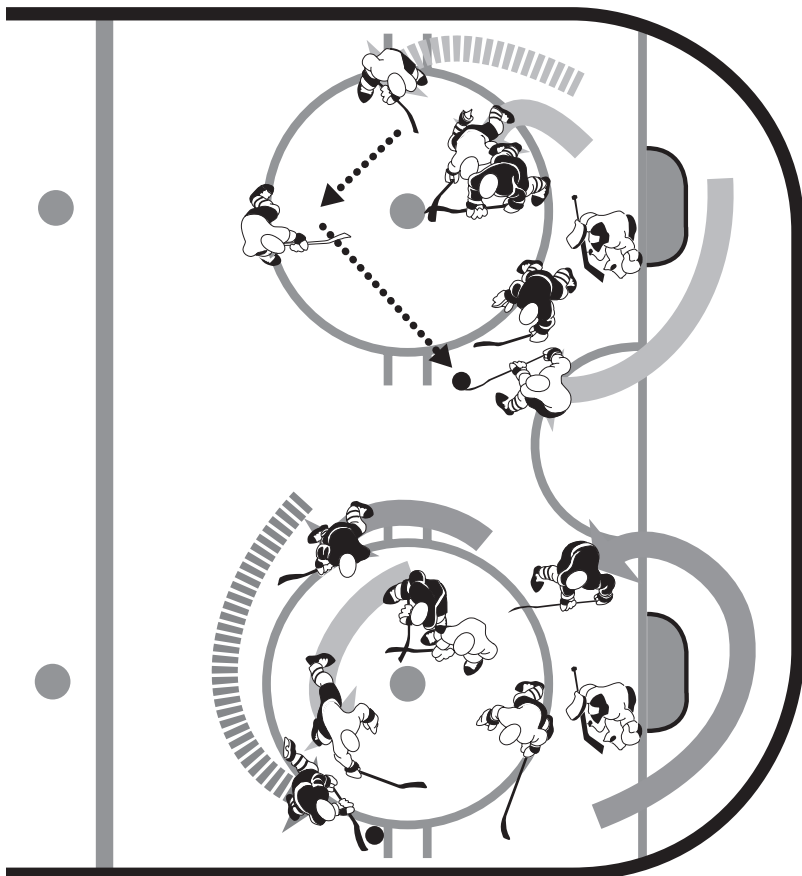


## Sideline Game

Start the game by dividing the players into two teams. Players line up along both sides of the neutral zone. The coach calls out 1-on-1, 2-on-2 or 3-on-3, and that number of players begin play. The other players remain active with their sticks on the ice and are part of the game. The players in the middle can pass to them, and they can shoot, pass it back or even pass down the line to their teammates. Everybody is eligible to score. Change it up every 30-40 seconds. If the puck goes out of play, the coach dumps a new one in immediately and the play continues until the next change.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Make the game competitive by playing to 3. The losing team does laps around the nets.

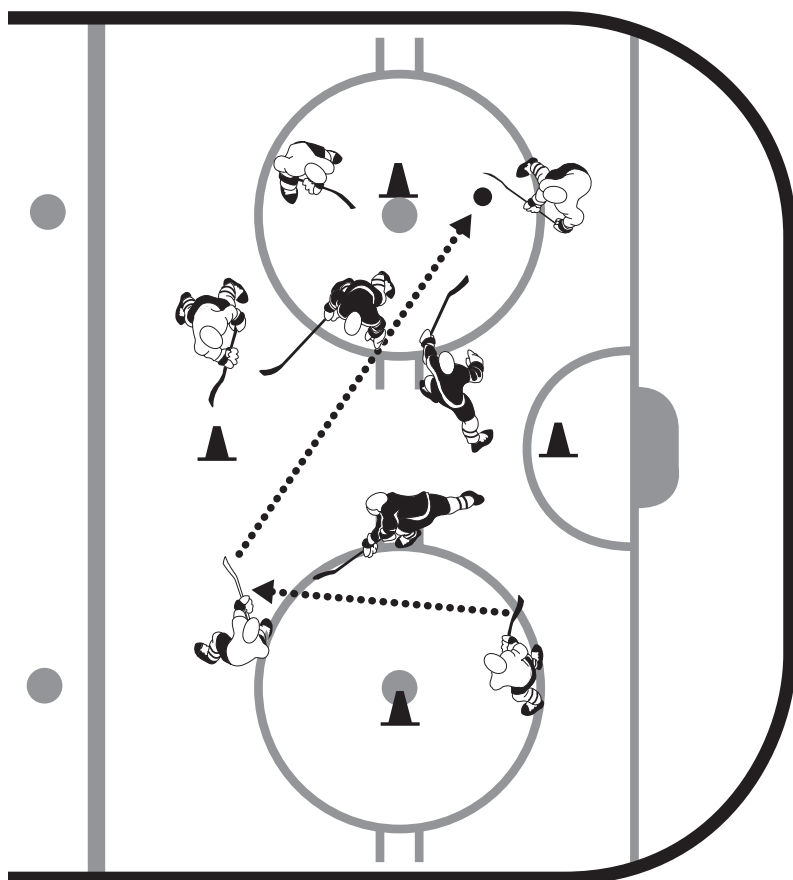


## 4-on-2/4-on-3 Special Teams

Divide the players into two teams with a coach monitoring each side. On one side, the players play 4-on-2 and on the other side they play 4-on-3. Players move the puck around and try to score while the defending players check them. The remaining players are out of the way but ready to go in on the next change. Change both sides every minute. If the puck goes out of play, dump a new one in immediately and continue playing until the next change.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Encourages close, quick puck movement.

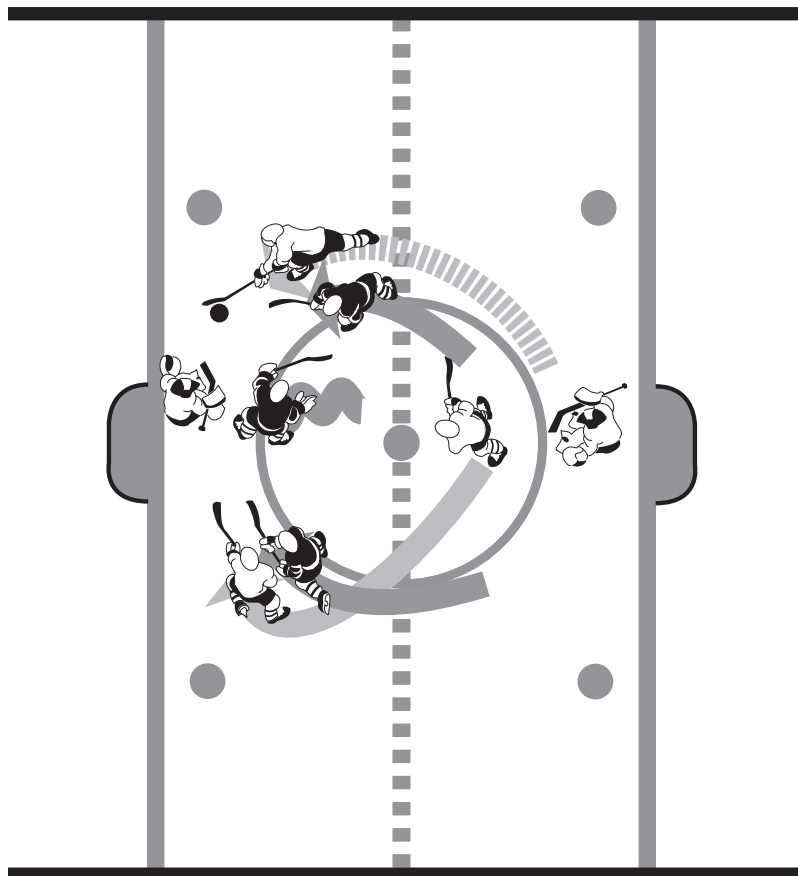


### 5-on-3 Player in the Middle

Set up four cones in a diamond formation. Three defensive players start in the middle and five offensive players surround the cones. The object is to move the puck around passing through the coned-off areas and through the defenders to a teammate. Change the game up using only on-ice passes and then only flip or saucer passes. After three pucks have been cleared (one at a time) change it up.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops heads-up passing and passing through seams.



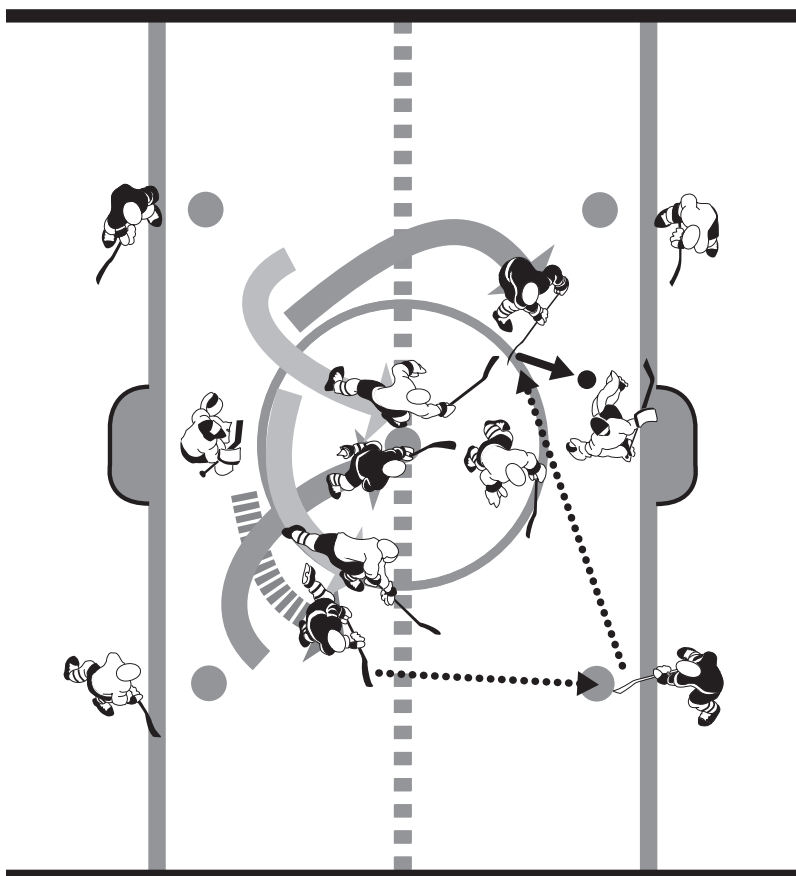
### 3-on-3 Support Drill

Place players on the ice in a 3-on-3. One player from each team must stay on the defensive side of the red line. The play becomes 2-on-3 in the offensive zone after transition. The game is played both ways with a constant 2-on-3 developing wherever the puck is. The players determine which of them is the one to stay back and play defense while the other two go into the offensive zone for a scoring chance.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

2-on-3 forces players to battle through checks to score. Play in situations where you do not have a numerical advantage.



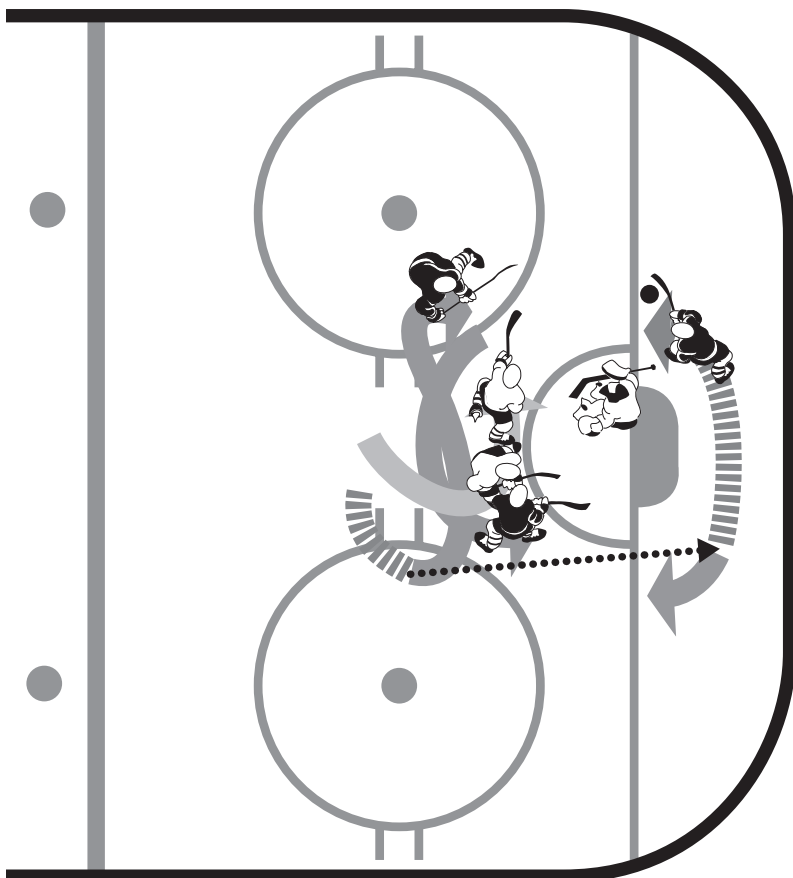


### Mid-Zone 3-on-3/4-on-4

Set up two teams playing either 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 in the neutral zone. Place one support player from each team in opposite corners behind the net. The players must pass to the support player behind the net from their team before they can score. Change it up every 30-40 seconds.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Players must pass the puck and move to get open as the drill quickly becomes an odd-man advantage.

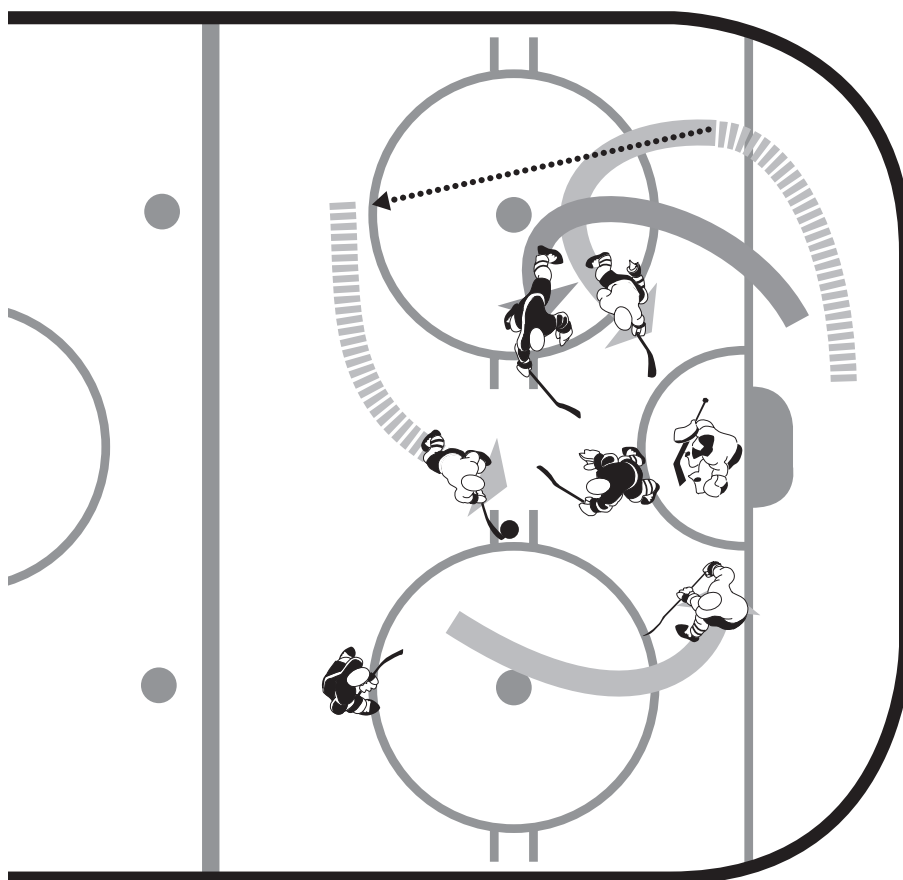


### 2-on-2 Behind the Net Rover Game

Players play 2-on-2 and battle for the puck in front of the net. A separate player behind the net known as the "Rover" can skate to either side to set up the offensive team. The team that passes the puck to the Rover is on offense. If the other team gains control of the puck, they must pass the puck to the Rover and they are now on offense.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Creates fast transitions.

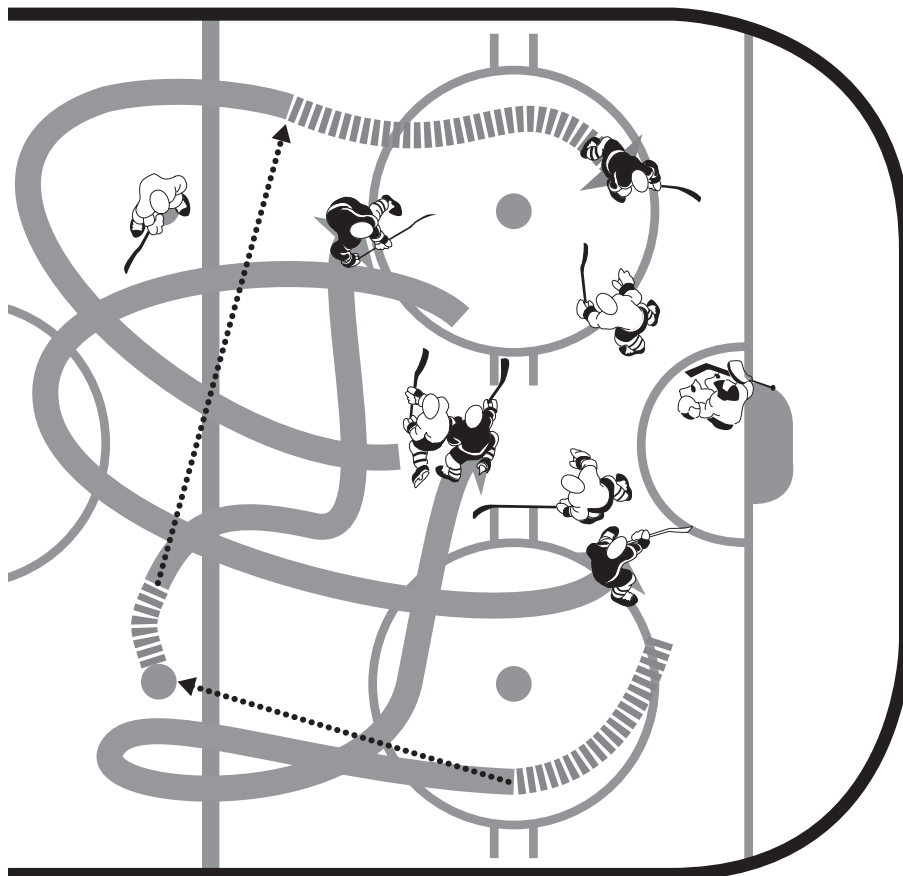


### 3-on-2 Activate Game

Place one stationary player from each team at the top of the face-off circle. The game starts out 2-on-2. The team with the puck passes to their stationary player who then enters the game, making it a 3-on-2. After a turnover the stationary player must return to the top of the circle, allowing the other team to utilize their stationary player for their own 3-on-2.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops heads-up plays.

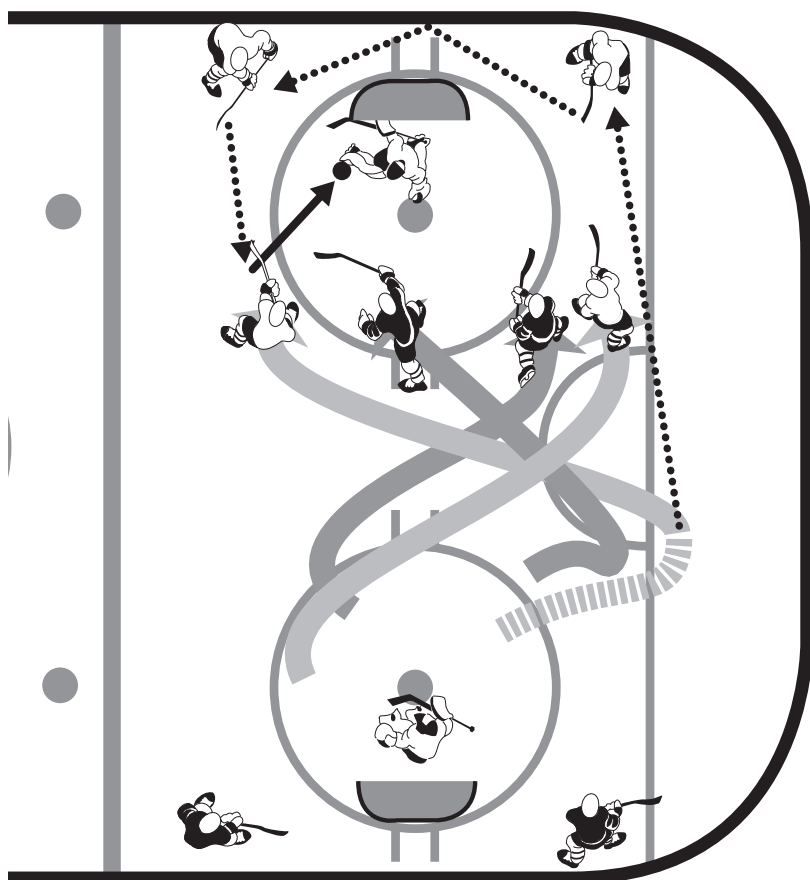


### 4-on-3/5-on-4 Activate Special Teams Game

Place one stationary player from each team outside the blue line on each face-off dot. The game starts out 3-on-3 or 4-on-4. The team with the puck comes out of their end, passes to their stationary player, re-groups and it now becomes a 4-on-3 or 5-on-4. After a turnover, the stationary player must return to the face-off dot outside the blue line, allowing the other team to utilize their stationary player for their own 4-on-3 or 5-on-4.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Designed to enhance special team transition and attacking the zone.

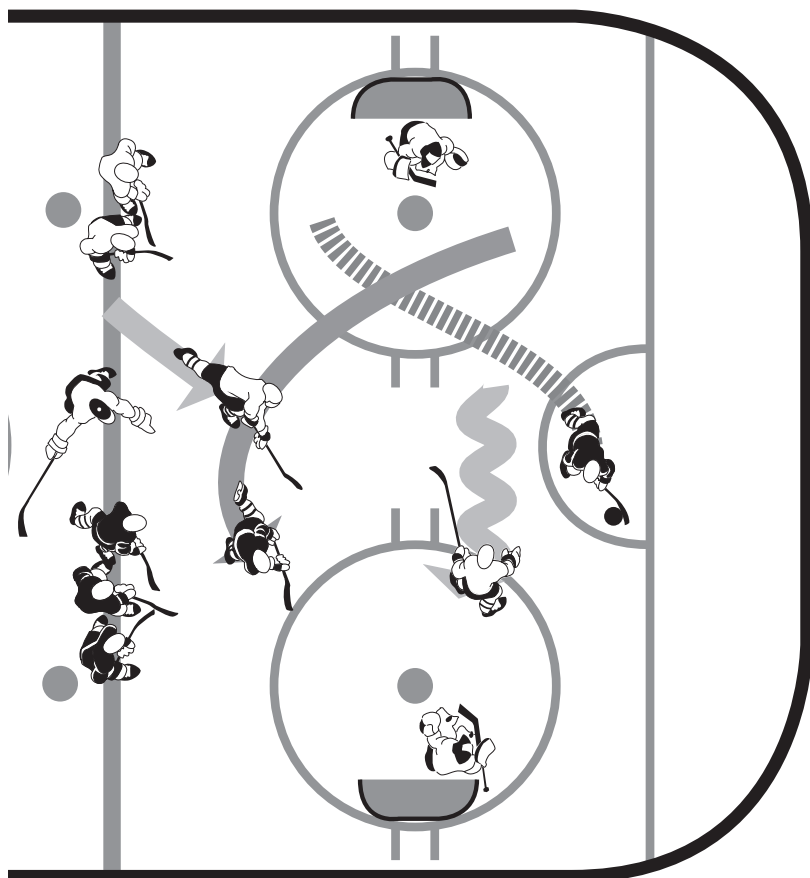


### 4-on-2 Behind the Net

Place two stationary players from each team behind opposite nets. The game starts 2-on-2. The player with the puck passes to either teammate behind the opposing net where they can pass to anyone on their team creating a 4-on-2. After one pass is made to a teammate behind the net the offensive team can then score. Change it up every 30-40 seconds.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Special teams transition drill.

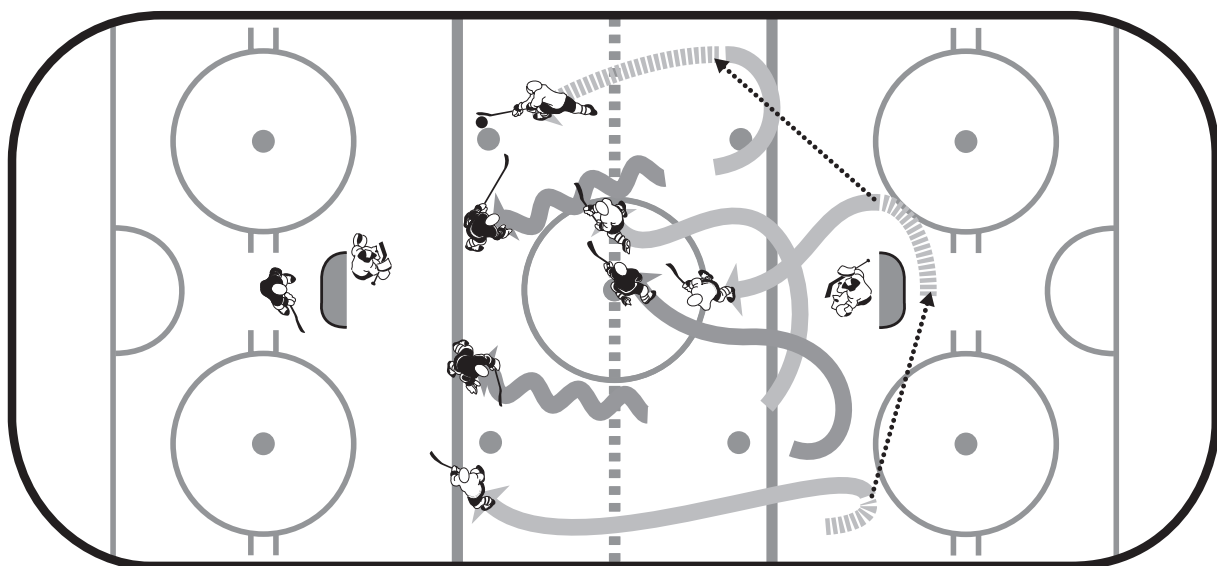


### Progressive 4-on-4

Divide the players into two teams using different colored uniforms. The game begins as a 1-on-1. Every 10 seconds a new player enters the game creating a 2-on-1 then 2-on-2, etc. until you get to 4-on-4. Once you reach 4-on-4, remove a player every 10 seconds until you're back to a 1-on-1. Change teams and go again.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Heads up progression identification drill.

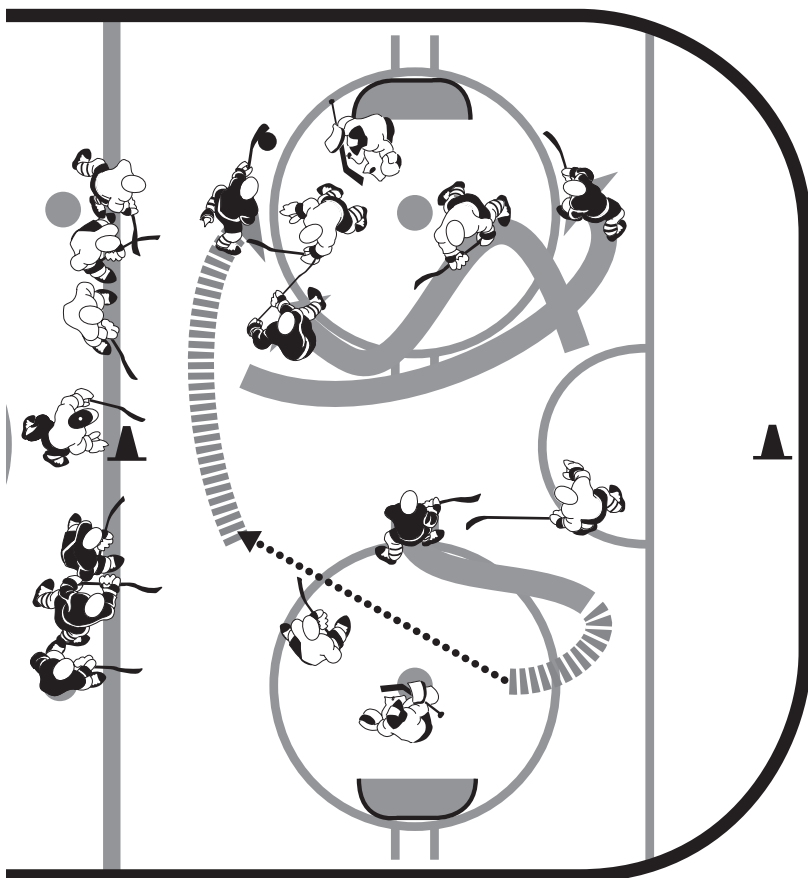


### Mid-Ice 4-on-3 Breakout

Place a stationary player from each team behind their net. The game starts 3-on-3. The player with the puck passes to their teammate behind the net and then breaks out. The player with the puck can pass, skate or shoot the puck but cannot cross the red line. A quick 4-on-3 develops and the team with the puck plays it out until they score or the puck is turned over. After the play is over the other team repeats the drill going the other direction. Change after every two breakouts.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Quick transition  
breakout drill.

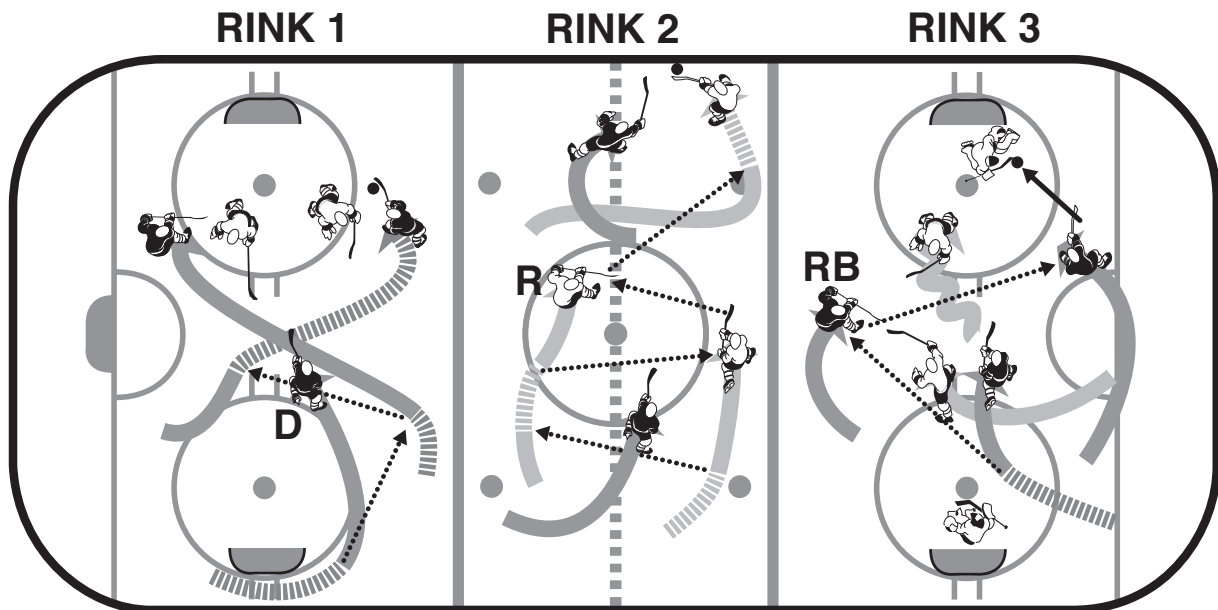


### Breakout Forecheck 3-on-2

Divide the players into two teams. The game starts out with eight players 2-on-2 at both ends. The coach dumps the puck in and the defensive team gets it. They turn to offense and make one pass. The player who receives the pass can then skate it out or pass to the other side and follow the play creating a 3-on-2. Teams can only go on offense when they have created a turnover and made one successful pass in their own end.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Quick transition  
defense to offense.



## Town Carnival

Divide the rink into three zones. Depending on your numbers the games may need to be altered. (This is based on 15 players, two goalies and a shooter tutor).

**Rink #1:** 3-on-2 cross-ice breakout drill. One player is designated as the breakout defenseman. This player is rotated every two breakouts, one from behind each net so both teams play a 3-on-2. After breaking out, use a shooter tutor to shoot on.

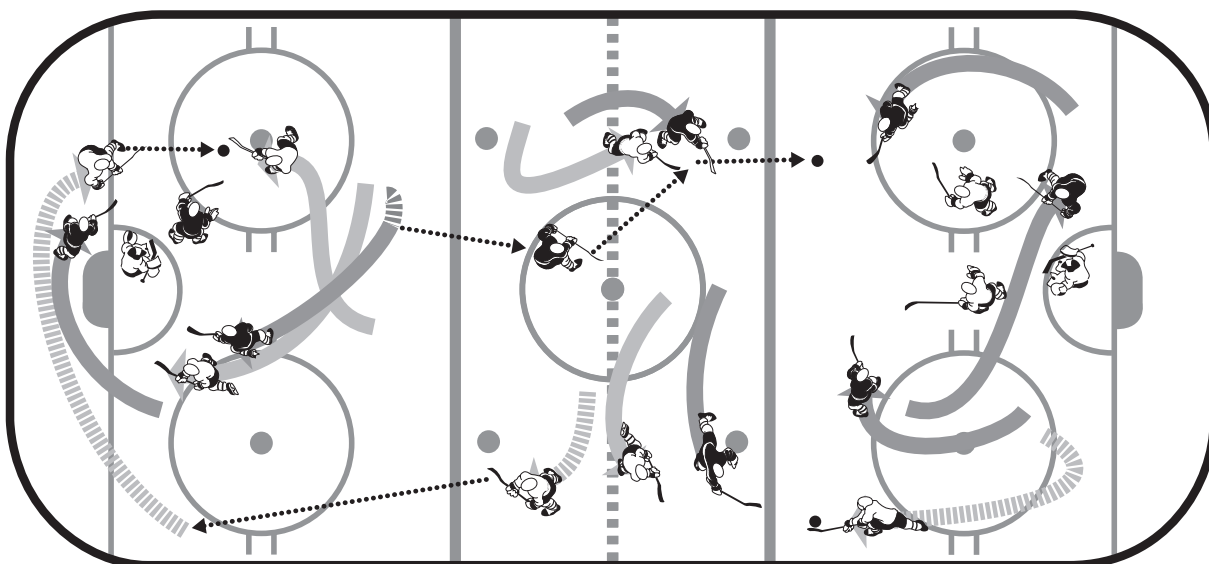
**Rink #2:** Cross-ice board scrimmage. The players staying inside the two blue lines play 2-on-2 with a Rover. They must complete two passes to the designated Rover before they can score. (The Rover plays for whichever team is on offense). The only way to score is to press the puck against the boards with the blade of your stick, shooting is not allowed.

**Rink #3:** Play the Red Baron game (p. 33) with one player always on offense creating a continuous 3-on-2.

Rotate players through stations every 5-7 minutes.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Drill variation to improve quick thinking.

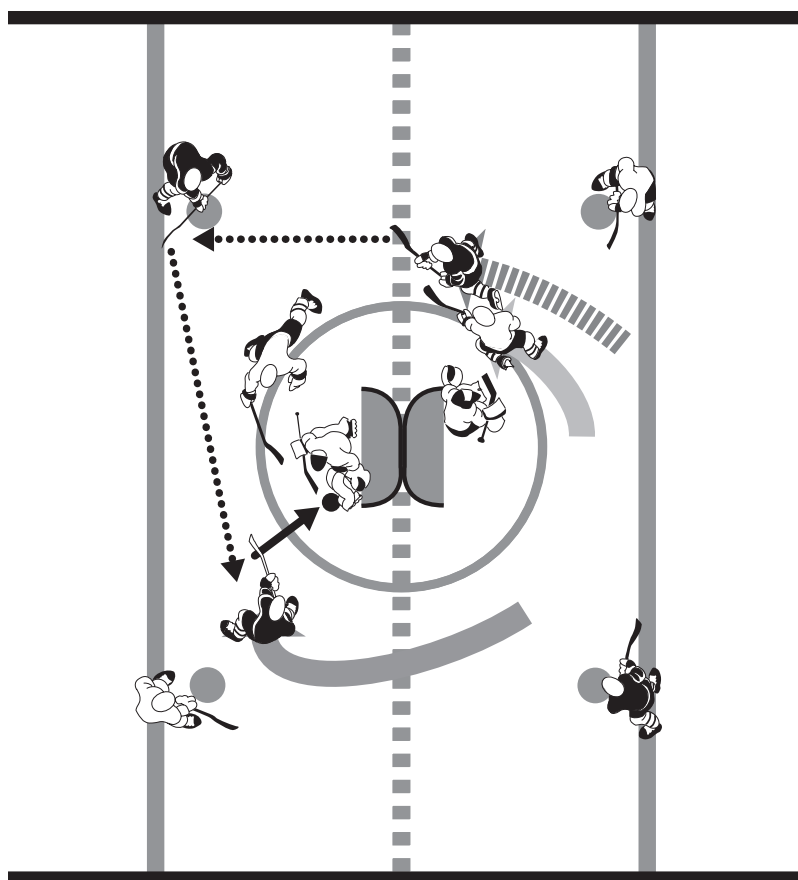


### Full-Ice Team Zone Scrimmage

Set players up depending on how many are at practice. Play 3-on-3 in all three zones on the ice using the blue lines as dividers. The object is to score but the players cannot leave the zone they are playing in. Using three pucks and keeping score, the players in the defensive zone try to move the puck to the players in the neutral zone who then try to move the puck up to their teammates in the offensive zone. Only players in the offensive zone can score. Switch zones every 3-5 minutes.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Promotes teamwork in all three zones.

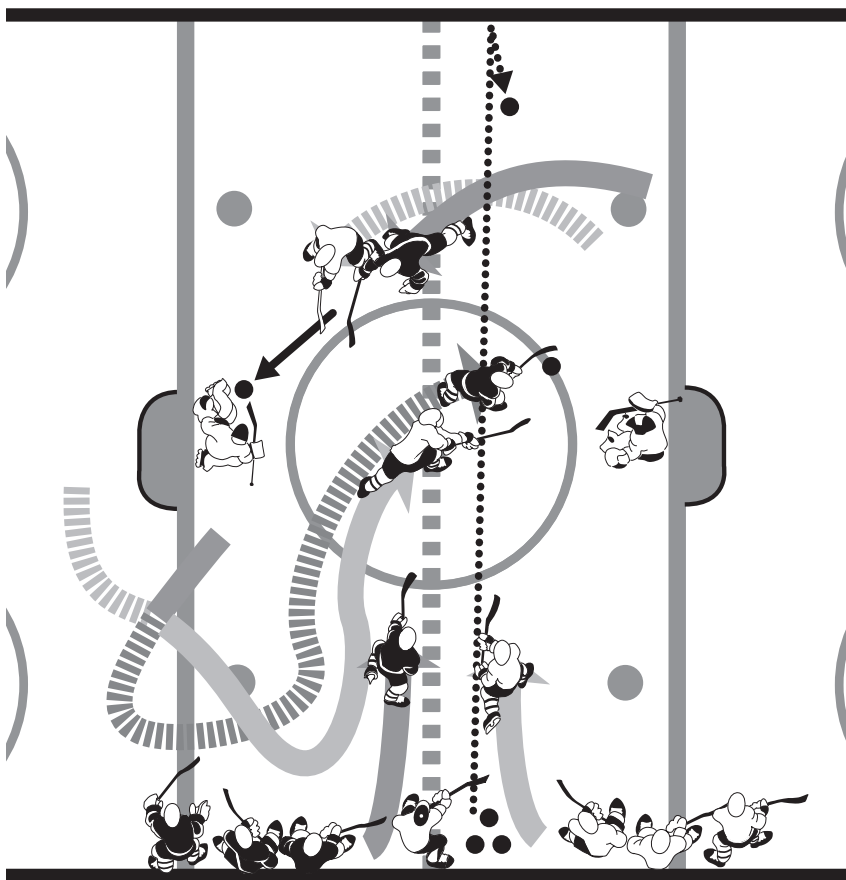


### 4-on-4 Support Drill

Set the nets up in the neutral zone back to back. One support player from each team is placed off to the side of both nets. The teams play 2-on-2 in the middle but must pass to a support player before being able to score. The support player can also shoot. Players can score on either net.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Heads-up scoring drill.

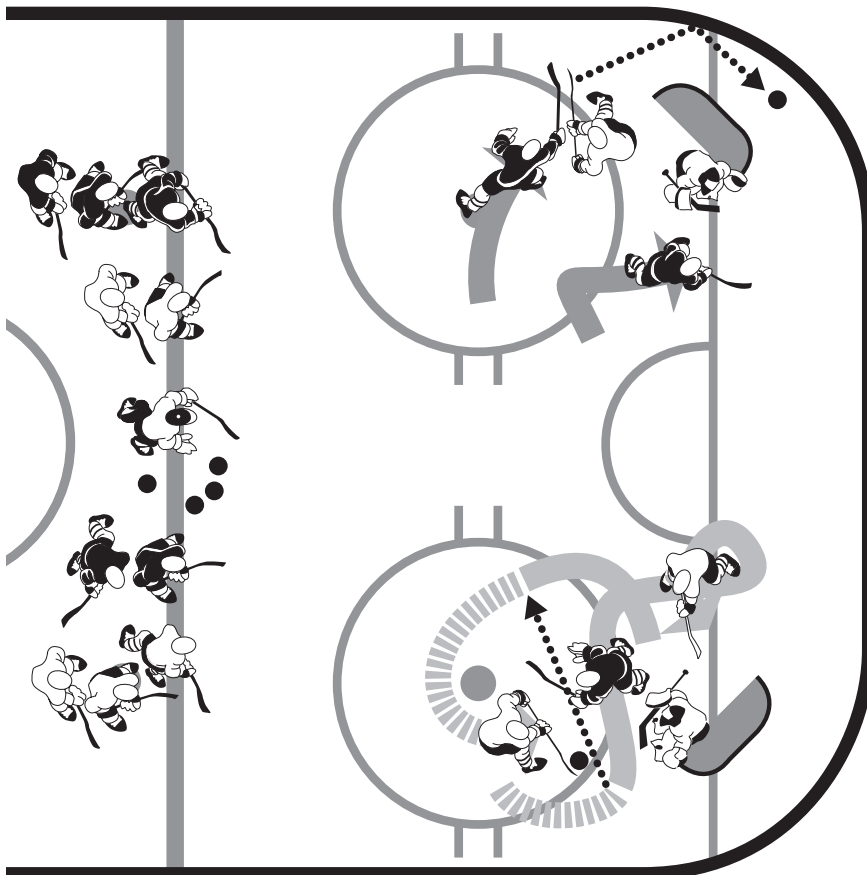


### 1-on-1 Survivor Drill

Place the nets on the two blue lines. Players try to score on their opponents' net while playing a 1-on-1. Players cannot return to their line until someone has scored. Three 1-on-1s are being played at the same time. Once a goal is scored another puck is shot to the far boards and two new players enter the drill.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Heads-up goalie and shooter drill.



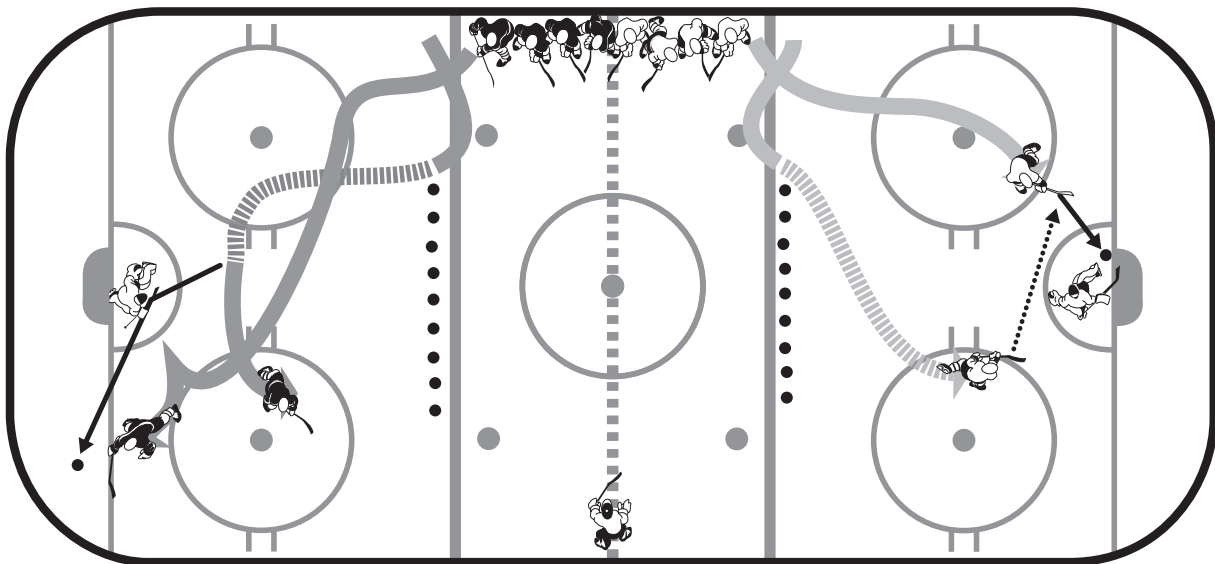
### 2-on-1 Relay

Set the nets up in both corners in one zone. Divide the players into two teams. They play 2-on-1 until they score. After scoring, all players race back into line and the next players go. The defensive player can check but only he/she is allowed to push the puck behind the net to kill time.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Great way to start or end practice.





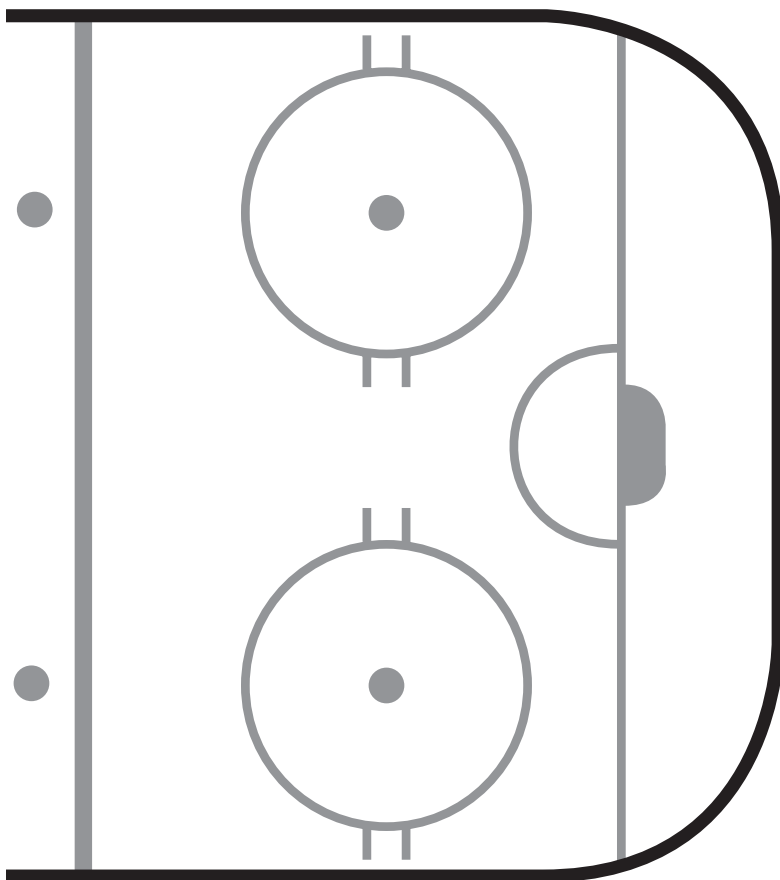
### Ten Puck Relay

Set up ten pucks on each blue line. Play 3-on-0 or 2-on-0 depending on how many players you have. After scoring the next players in line can't go until the first two players skate hard back and pass the blue line. The winning team is identified after they have shot the last puck in the net and skated back crossing their blue line.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

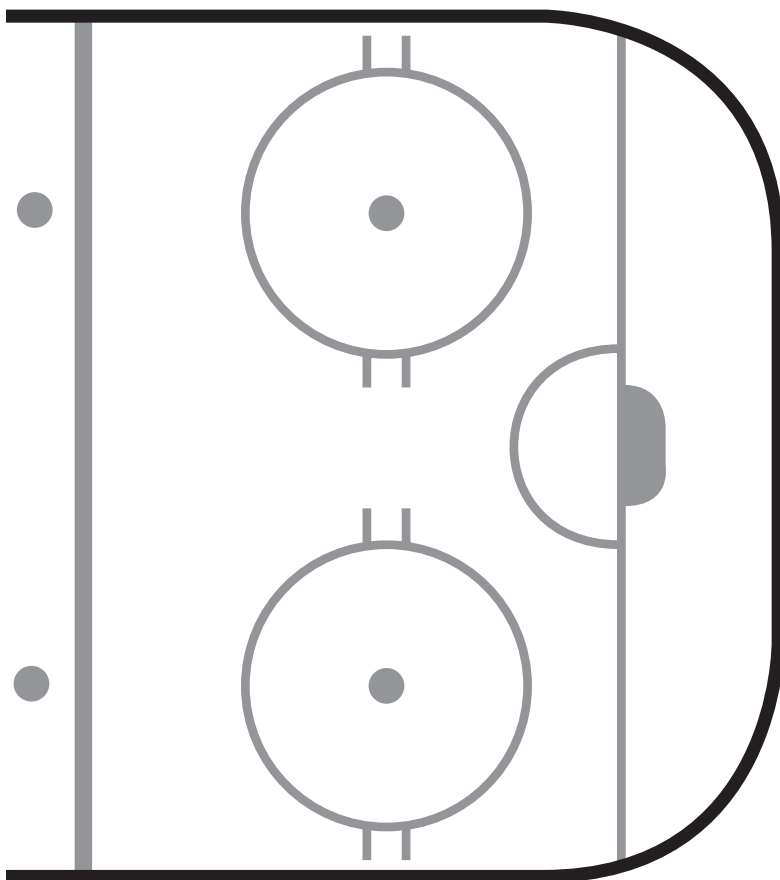
Fun way to end or bring competition to practice.





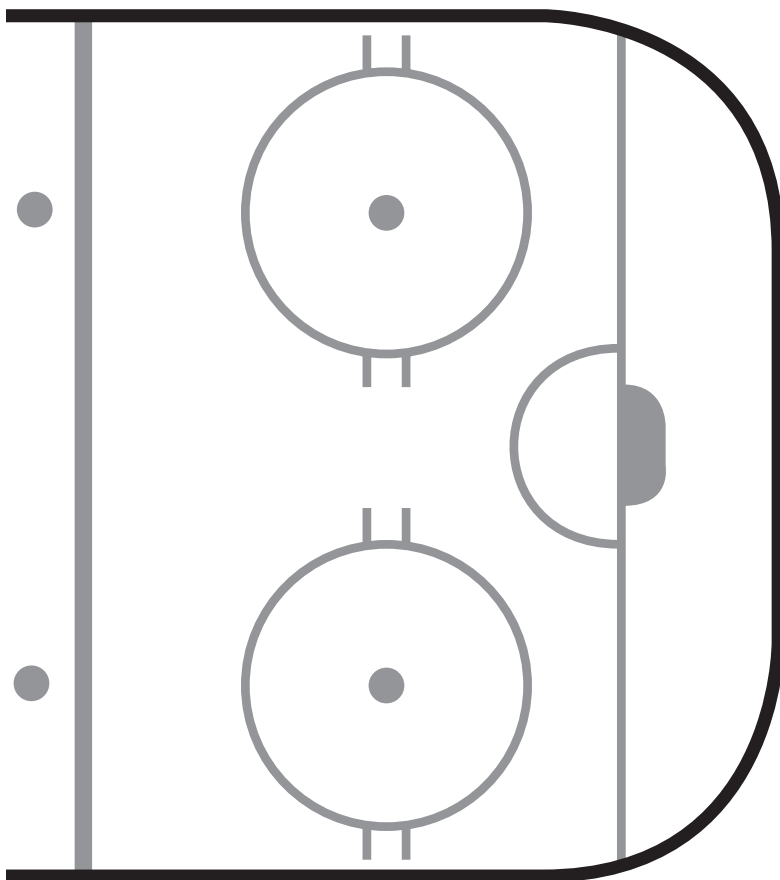
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



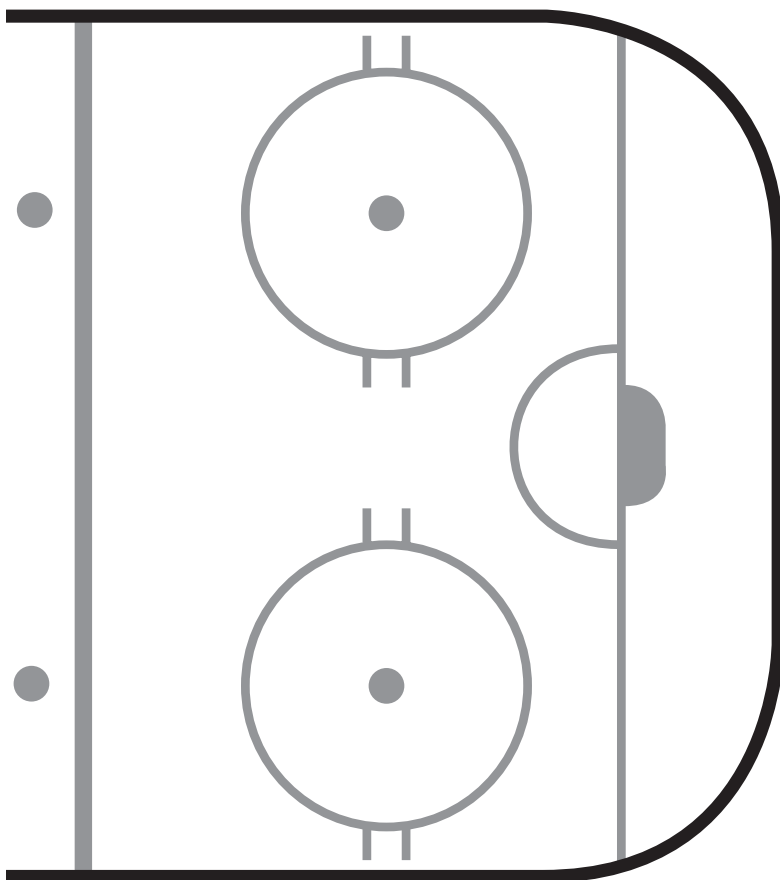
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



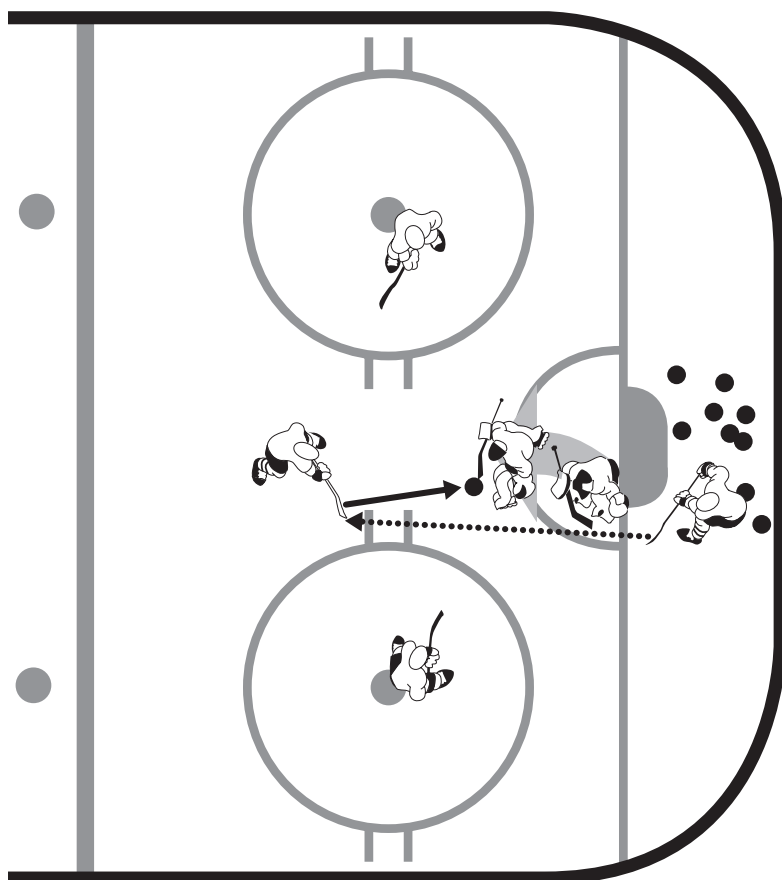
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**

**Small Area**  
**Competitive Games For**  
**Goaltenders**





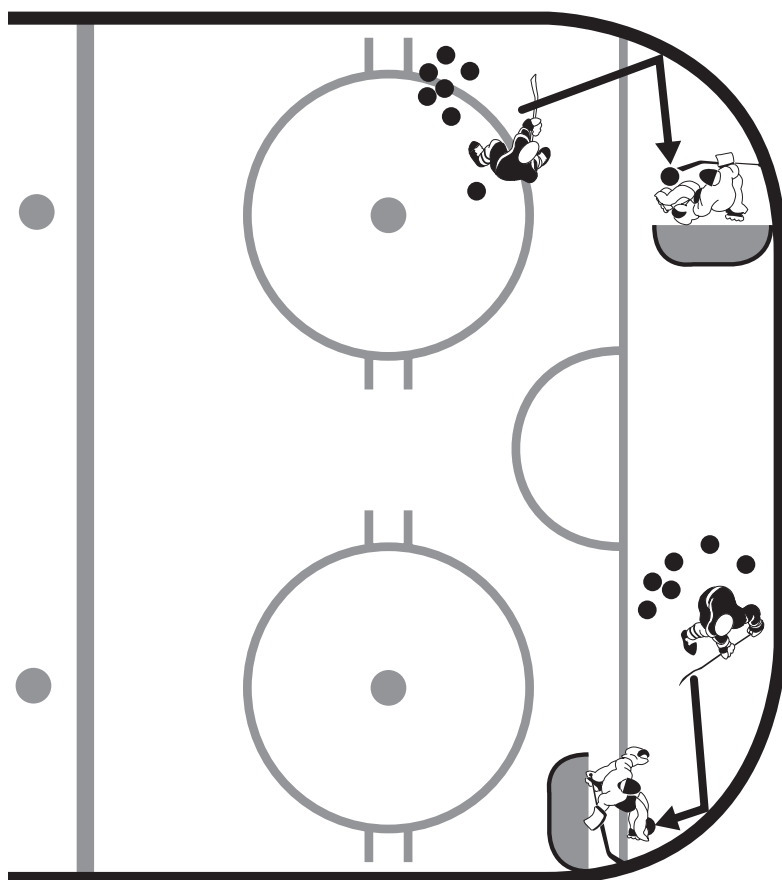


### Three Pass to Slot Shot

Place three players in the slot. One player has the pucks behind the net and can pass to any one of the three players for the shot. The goalie must look behind the net and then decide which player to stop after the pass. The player allows the goalie time after every shot to get set just like game conditions. There is no rapid fire.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Helps goalies read and react to the puck from behind the net.

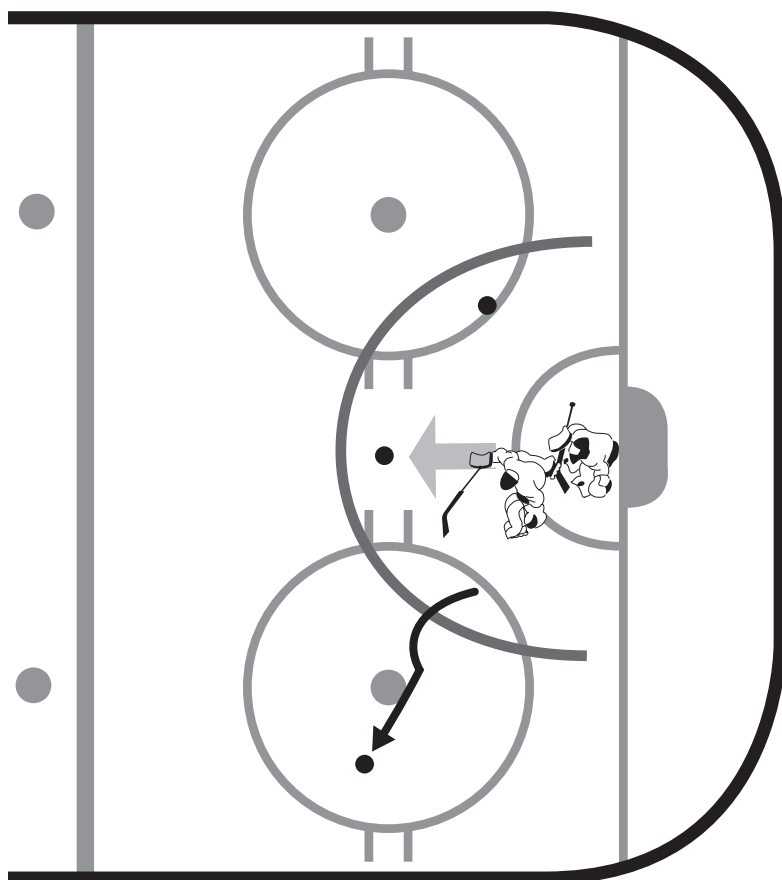


### Board Bank Shots

Set up a net in both corners on an angle beside the boards. The player shoots off the boards at the net. After multiple shots turn the net to face the other way and shoot again. Make sure the goaltender has time to get set before the shot is taken. This drill simulates deflections. It is not a rapid fire drill.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Helps goalies' reaction time to tip-ins.

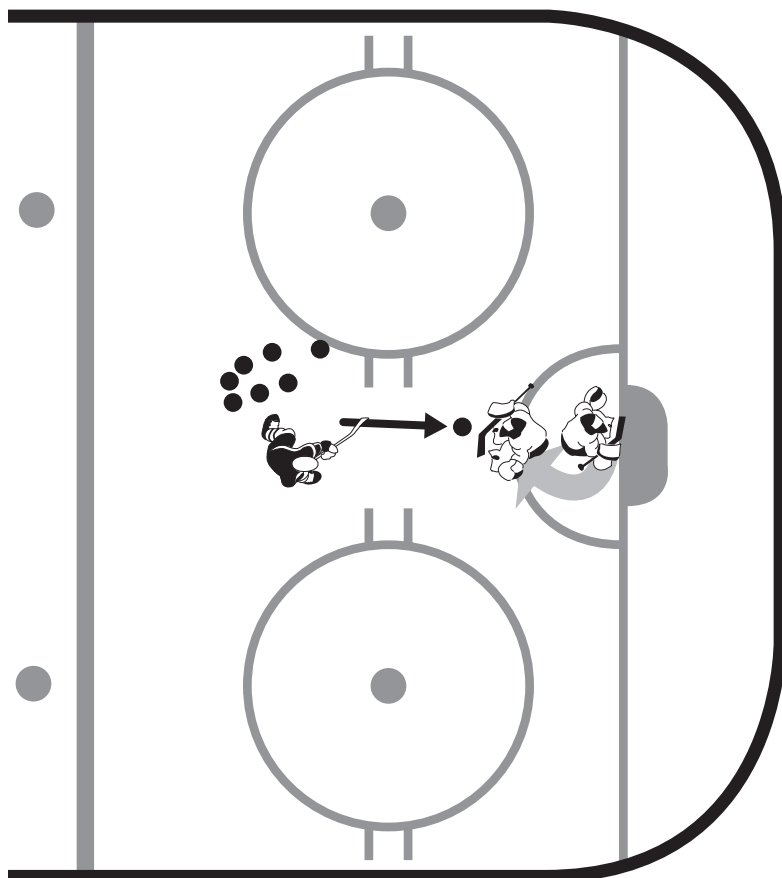


### Three Puck Poke Check

Set up a garden or old fire hose in the slot in a semi-circle. The goalie must dive out and poke the pucks over the hose. After each poke the goalie must return to the crease, get set and do the drill again. Set three pucks up in different angles. Change goalies after three poke checks.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops agility and anticipation.

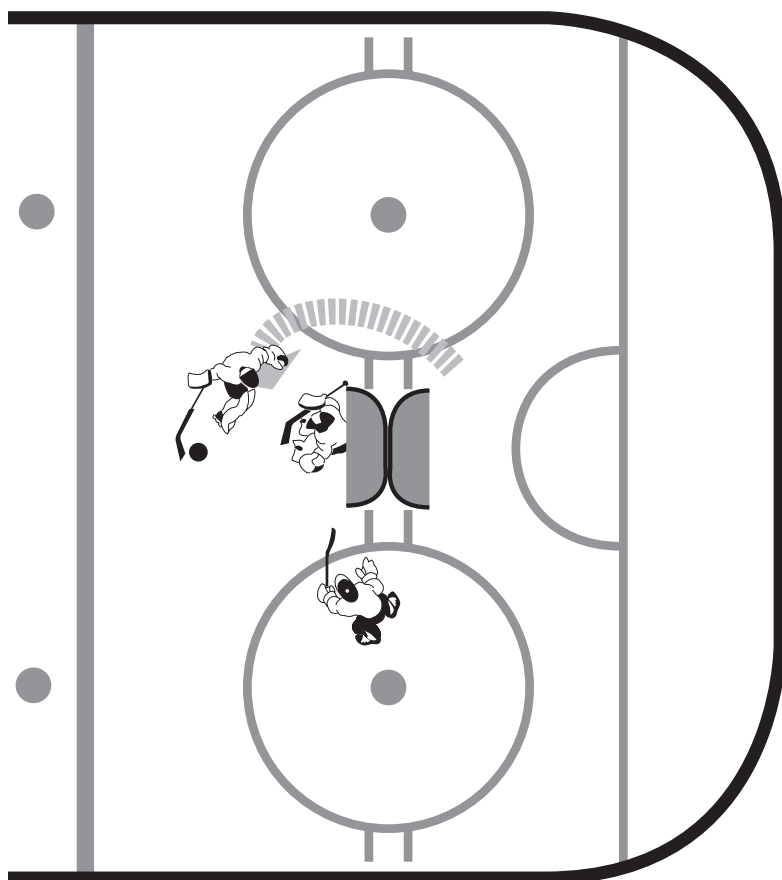


### Stick Tap and Spin

The goalie begins the drill with his/her back to the shooter. When the shooter taps their stick on the ice, the goalie spins around to face the shot. Give the goalie time to get set before the next shot. Repeat the drill from different angles.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops agility and anticipation.

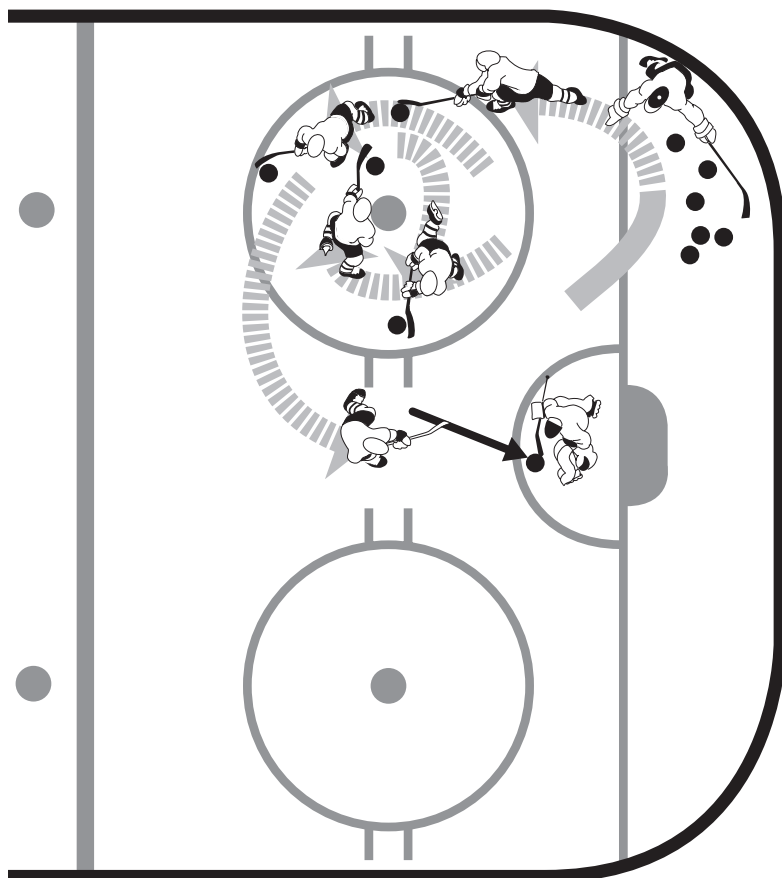


### Back-to-Back 1-on-1

Set the nets up back-to-back. The goalies battle for the loose puck and try to score on the other goalies net. Play to three with the loser having to pick up all the pucks after practice.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Fun game for the goalies to handle the puck.

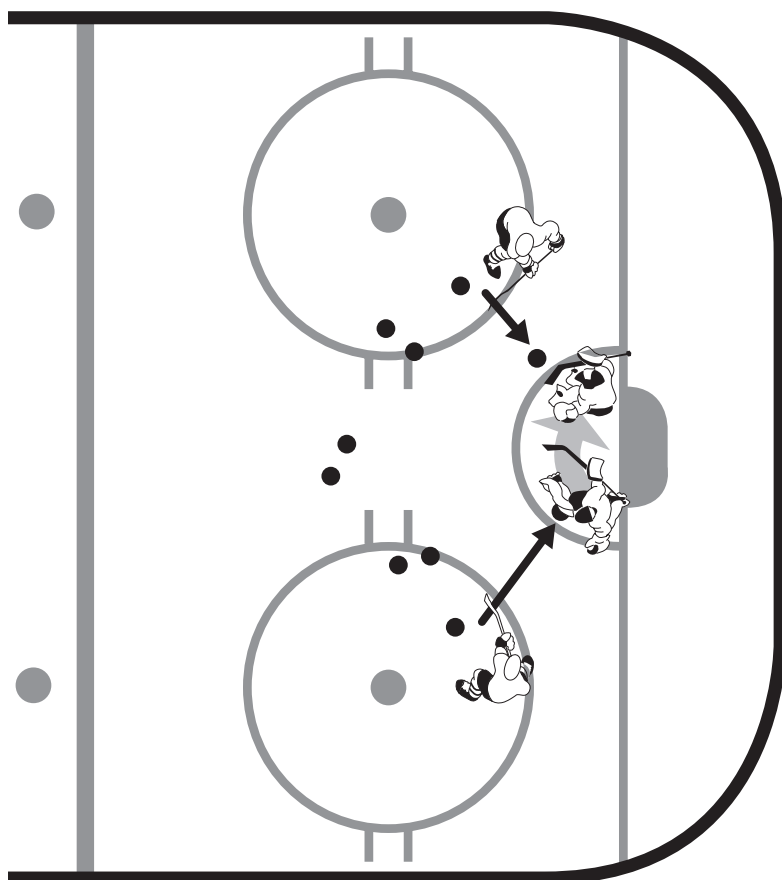


### Beehive Game

Five players with pucks are positioned inside the face-off circle skating quickly in any direction. On the coach's command a player's name or number is called. That player skates out of the circle and goes in for the shot or deke. After shooting, that player picks up another puck and returns to the circle. The coach must wait until the goalie is set and ready before calling out the next player. Once all five players have gone change circles.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches goalies to read and react in traffic.

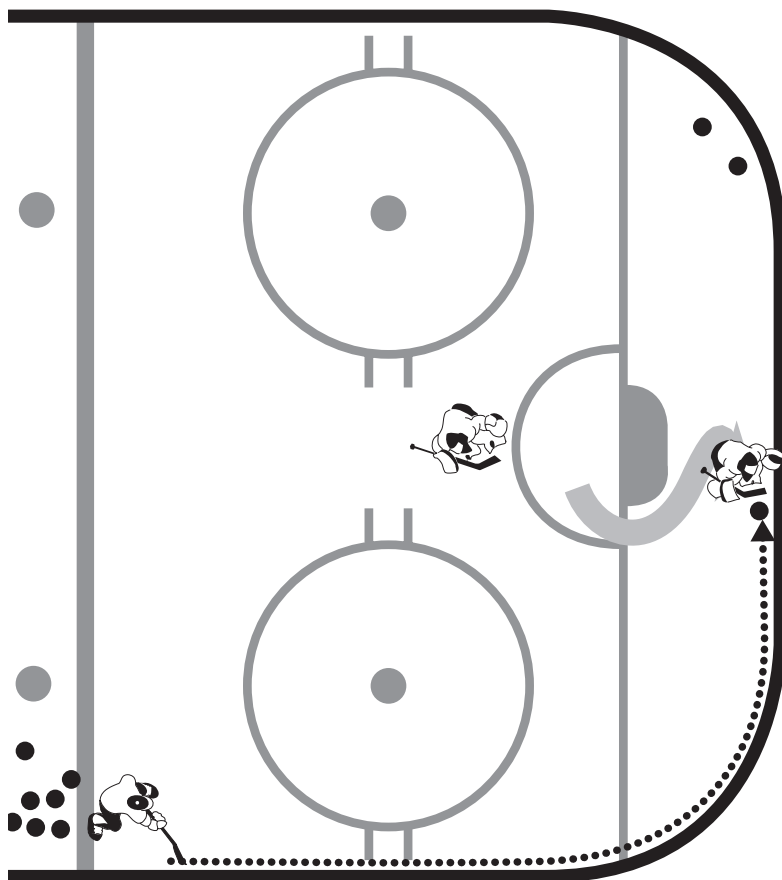


### Around the World Shooters

Place two pucks in five different spots in the slot. The goalie moves side-to-side while two players – one on each side – take turns shooting from each position. The players must wait until the goalie is set to face the puck.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Fun read and react angle drill.



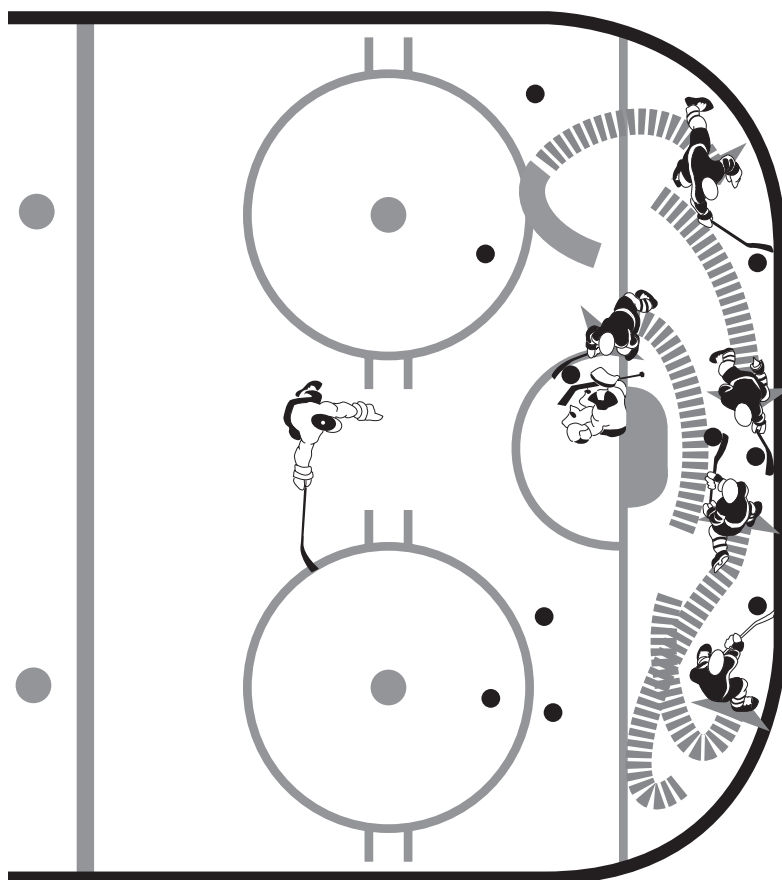
### Behind the Net Puck Stop

The coach lines up on the side boards inside the blue line. Using two goalies they take turns going behind the net to stop the puck. The coach or player rims the puck around the boards, first with low shots then with high ones. The goalie who lets five pucks pass first loses the game. Change sides and play again. Give the goalie time to trap the puck and set it up like a game situation for a defenseman before the next goalie's turn. This is not a race.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches goalies anticipation and trapping.



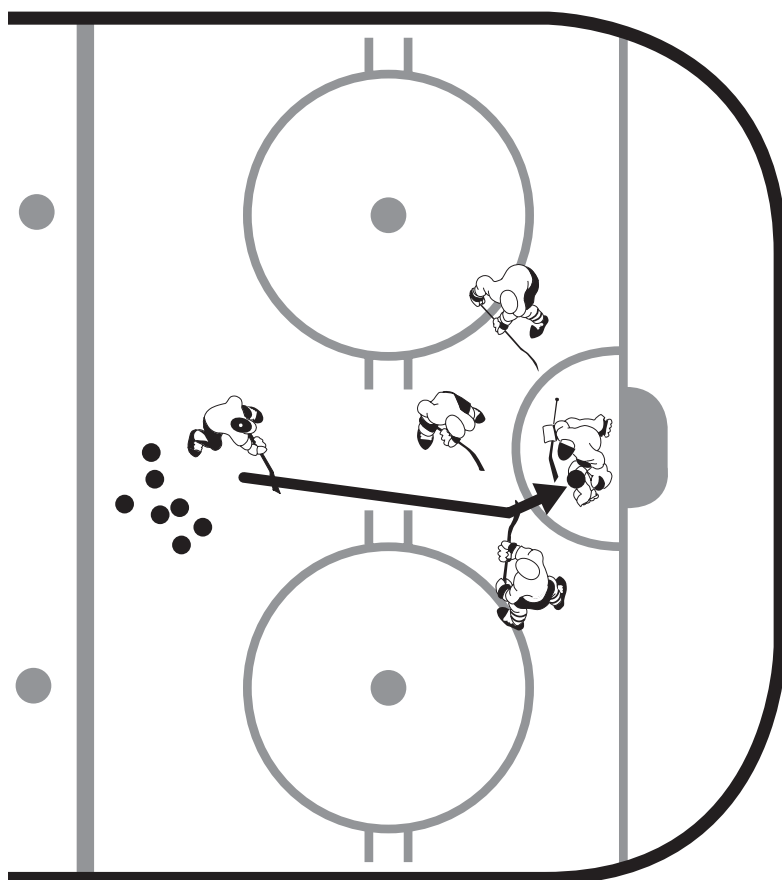


## Wrap-Around Beehive Game

Place five players behind the net skating from the goal line to the boards in any direction. The coach points to a player and that player tries to score on a wrap-around from either side. After shooting, that player grabs a puck and returns to the mix. The same player can be used at any time.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Solid drill to anticipate wrap-arounds.

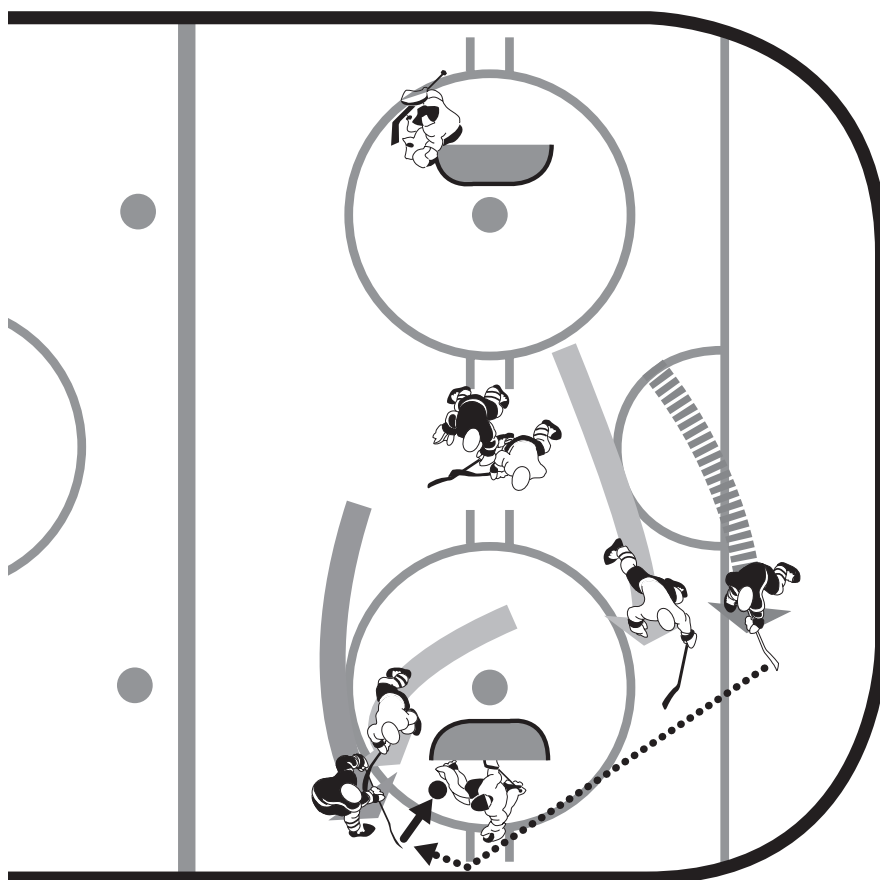


## Coach Tip-In Game

Set three players up in front of the net. The coach or another player then shoots from the high slot or the blue line while the players all try to tip the puck. After the shot the rebound is live and all three players can score.

### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops vision in traffic.

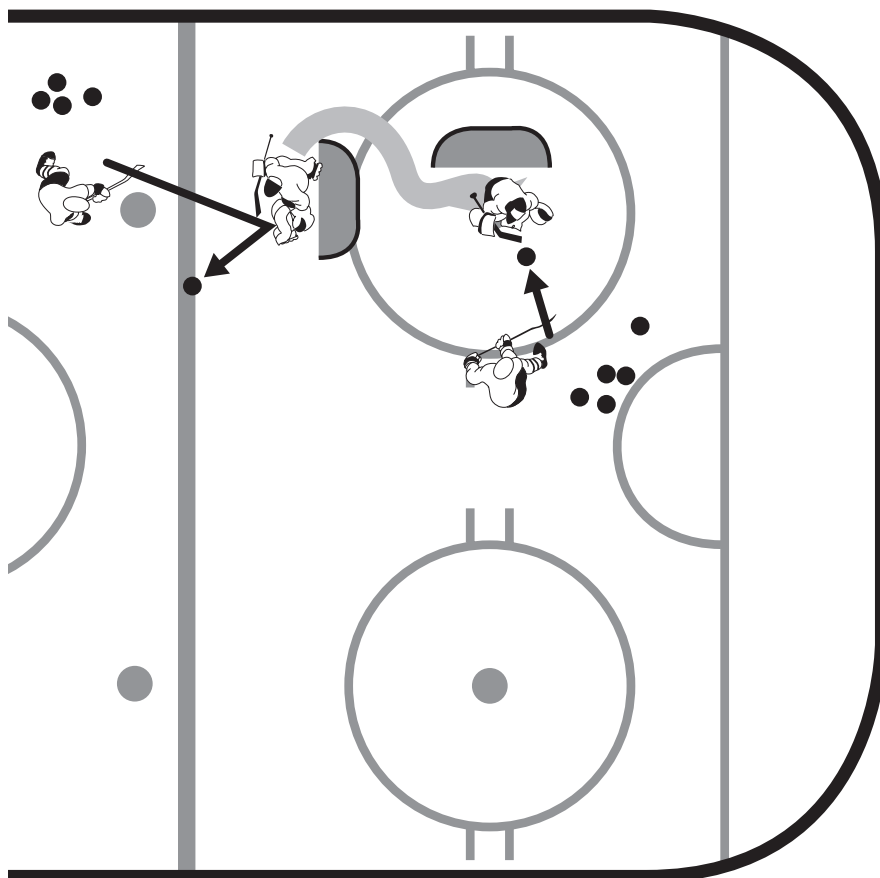


### 3-on-3 Reverse Net

Turn the nets around facing the boards on both sides. The game is played 3-on-3 and both teams can score on either net. The game starts with the coach dumping the puck to the boards and the players battle for it. Change the skaters up every 30-40 seconds.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops vision and quick passing.

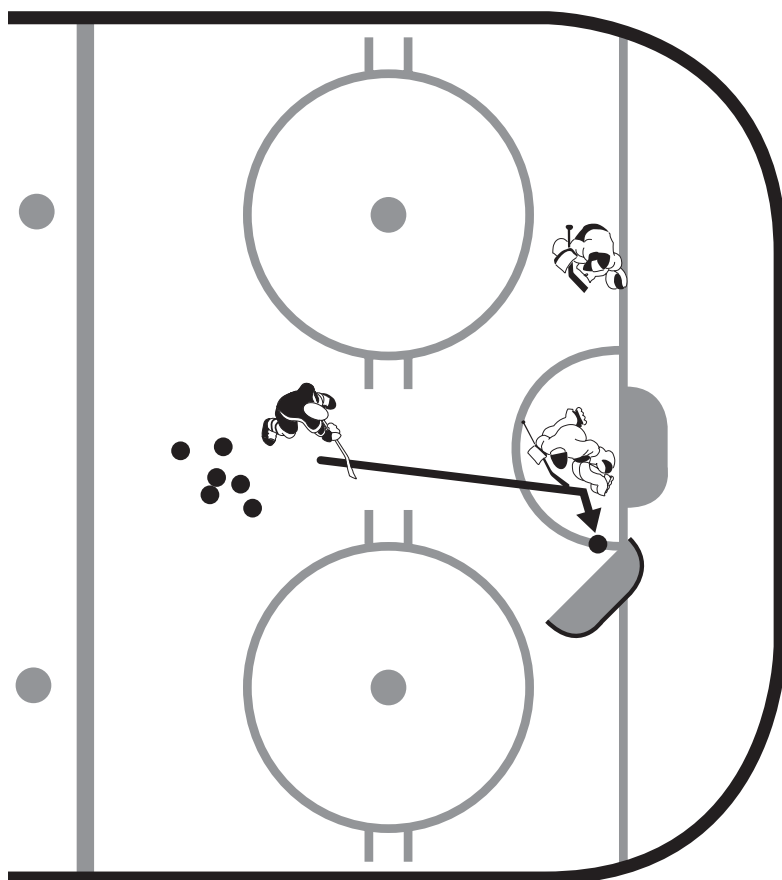


### Two Nets – Two Shots

Set two nets close together with two shooters, one in front of each net. The goalie faces the first shooter and then quickly skates to the other net to face the next shooter. Repeat the drill and then change the goalie. This can be done with more goalies by bringing four nets onto the ice.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Develops movement and skating skills.

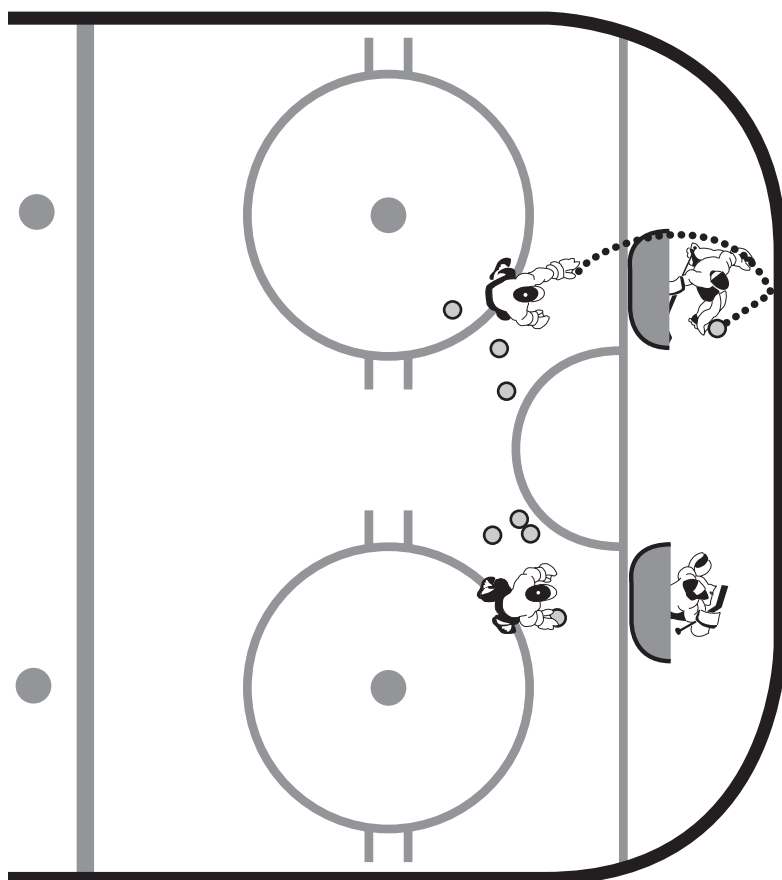


### Rebound Goal Game

Add another net to the left of the one already in place. Using one shooter in the slot, the object for the goalie is to direct the shots into the open net off to the side. Using two goalies let them compete by receiving one goal every time they deflect a puck into the open net. The goalies rotate after each shot. When the game is over move the net to the right side and play again.

#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Teaches rebound control.

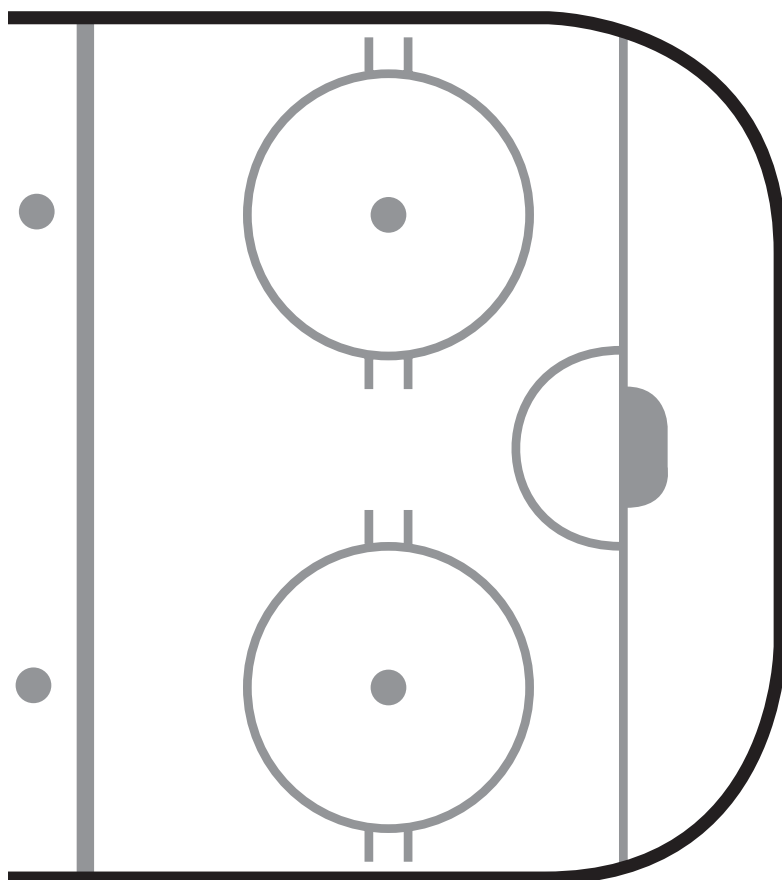


### Goaltender Tennis

Line up two nets facing the boards. Two coaches with tennis balls are placed behind the nets. The coaches take turns throwing the tennis balls off the boards or glass. If a tennis ball beats the goalie the other goalie gets a point. You can play to five or ten or even use the tennis scoring system and play a three game set.

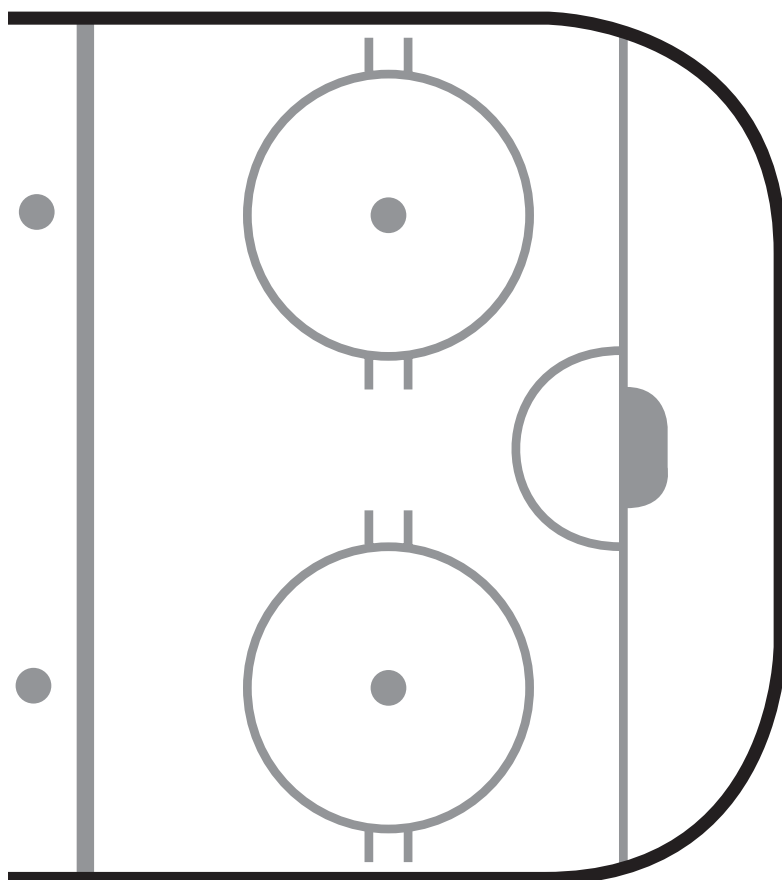
#### NOTES/COMMENTS

Fun way to develop agility and anticipation.



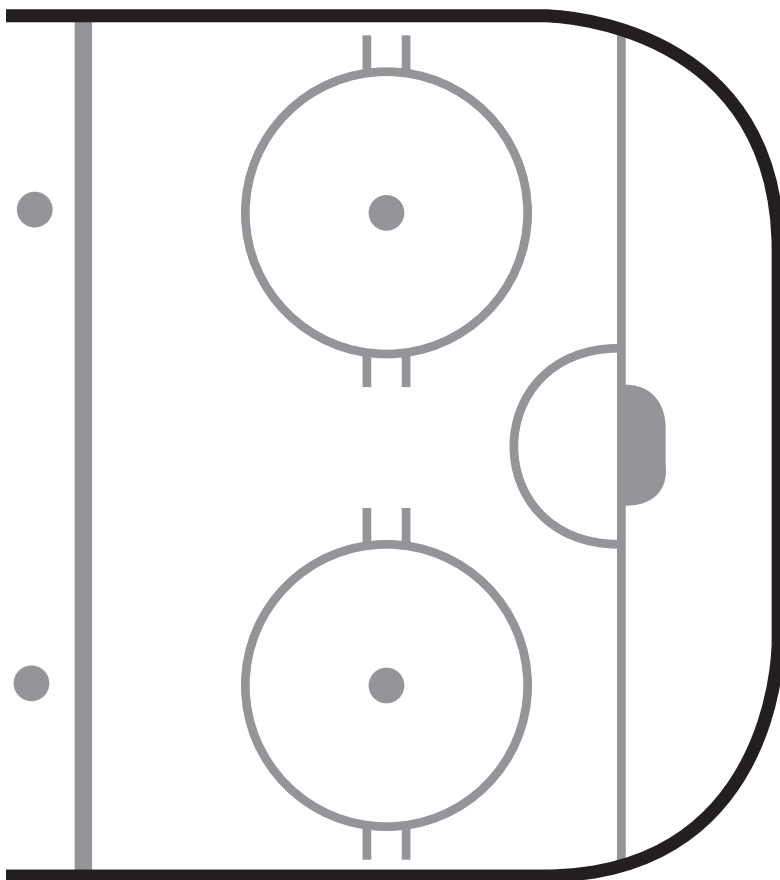
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



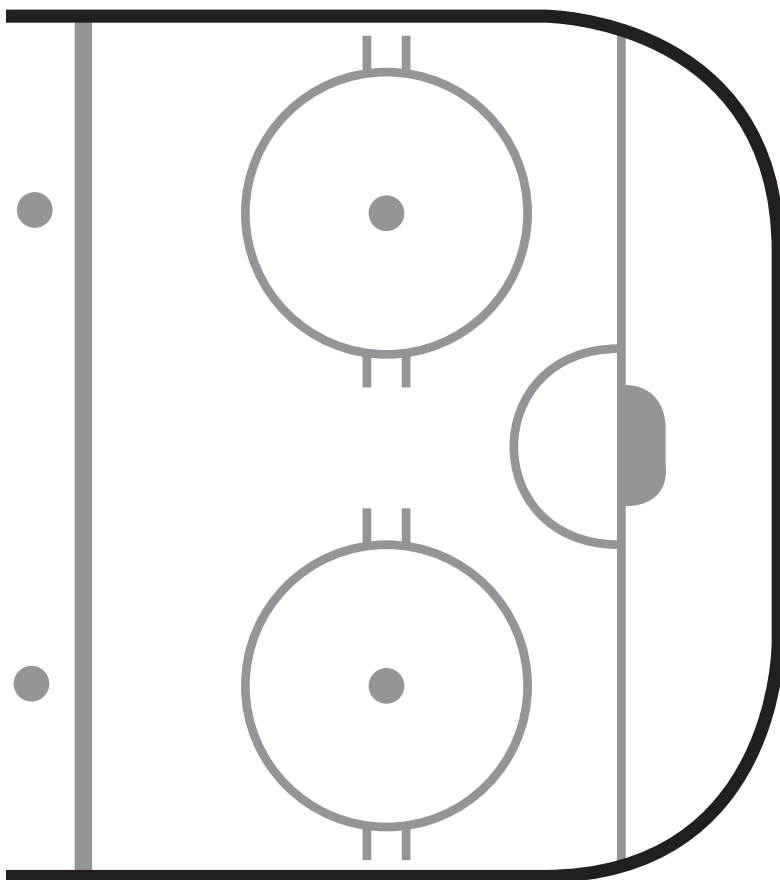
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



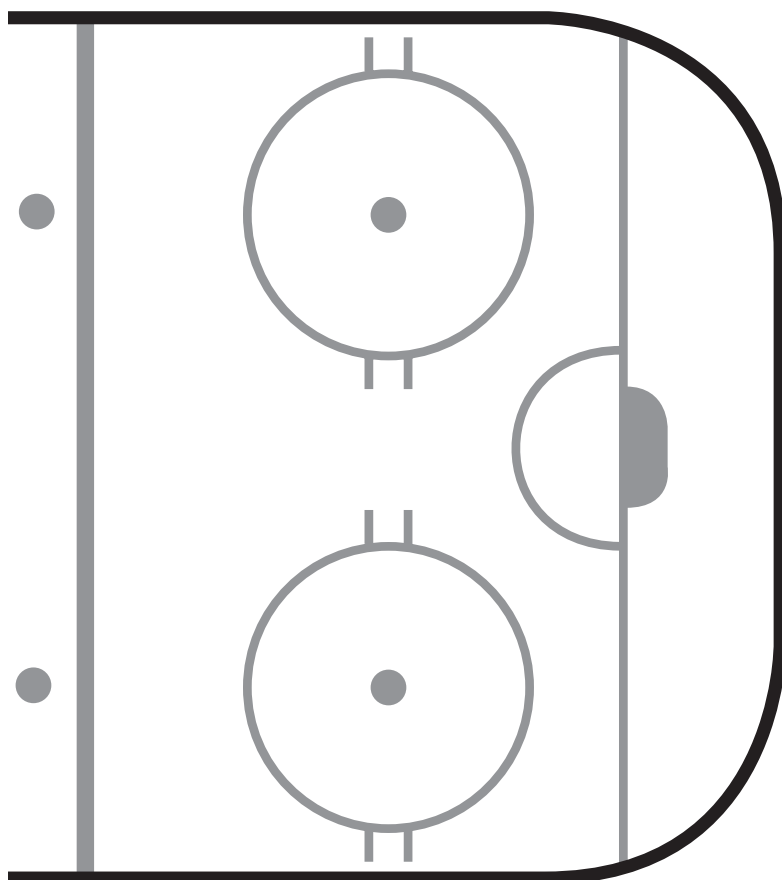
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



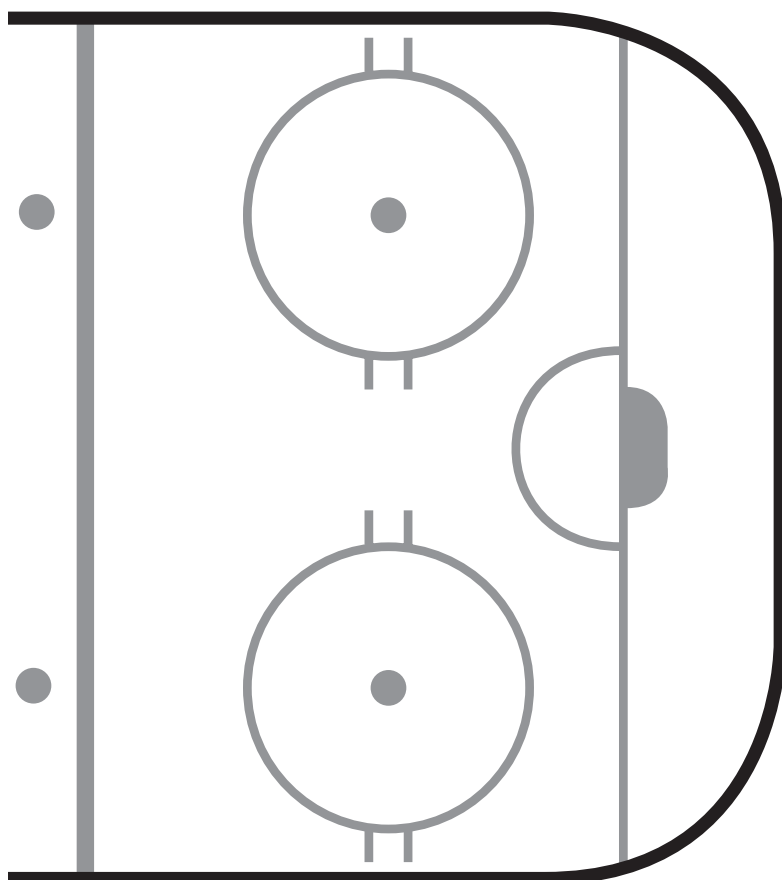
**My Drill:**

**NOTES/COMMENTS**



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**NOTES/COMMENTS**



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**NOTES/COMMENTS**





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