



CEP Level 2 Manual

A Publication Of The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program

ROLE OF
THE COACH

PREPARING FOR
THE SEASON

AMERICAN
DEVELOPMENT
MODEL

SKILL
DEVELOPMENT

GOALTENDING

TEAM PLAY

OFF-ICE
TRAINING

APPENDICES

The USA Hockey Coaching Education Program is Presented By



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USA Hockey Coaching Education Program

Level 2 Manual

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Preface

Throughout the United States, the sport of ice hockey has grown in interest and participation. With an attempt to meet the coaching education demands of all our volunteer coaches, USA Hockey provides a comprehensive Coaching Education Program. Since 1974 the Coaching Education Program has been evolving on an ongoing basis, and during that time USA Hockey has concluded the following:

1. Quality coaching is the single most important factor in the development of our athletes as well as the sport itself.
2. The experience a player will gain through participation in ice hockey is directly influenced by the coaches' qualifications as well as their coaching education background.
3. The curriculum, materials, and manuals of the coaching education program must be kept simple, practical, age specific, and user friendly.

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This is USA Hockey

USA Hockey provides the foundation for the sport of ice hockey in America; helps young people become leaders, even Olympic heroes; and connects the game at every level while promoting a lifelong love of the sport.

USA Hockey's primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. In January 2009, the organization launched the American Development Model, which - for the first time ever - provides associations nationwide with a blueprint for optimal athlete development. Always a leader in safety, USA Hockey furthered the enhancement of those efforts by advancing the USA Hockey SafeSport Program in June 2012.

While youth hockey is a main focus, USA Hockey also has vibrant junior and adult hockey programs that provide opportunities for players of all ability levels. The organization also supports a growing disabled hockey program.

Beyond serving those who play the game at the amateur level, USA Hockey has certification programs for coaches and officials to ensure education standards are met that coincide with the level of play. In September 2011, USA Hockey became the first youth sports organization in the U.S. to offer its coaches online, age-specific coaching education modules. Furthermore, a large focus is put on parent education with equipment needs, rules of the game and parental roles in youth sports among common topics.

Members of the organization are entitled to many benefits, including a subscription to *USA Hockey Magazine*, the most widely circulated hockey publication in the world; excess accident, general liability and catastrophic insurance coverage; access to USAHockey.com; and opportunities to participate in USA Hockey National Championships, as well as player development camps.

As the National Governing Body for the sport of ice hockey in the United States, USA Hockey is the official representative to the United States Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation. In this role, USA Hockey is responsible for organizing and training men's and women's teams for international tournaments, including the IIHF World Championships and the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Closer to home, USA Hockey works closely with the National Hockey League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association on matters of mutual interest.

USA Hockey is divided into 12 geographical districts throughout the United States. Each district has a registrar to register teams; a referee-in-chief to register officials and organize clinics; a coach-in-chief to administer education programs for coaches; a risk manager to oversee liability and safety programs; and a skill development program administrator to facilitate learn-to-play programs for youth players and their parents.

USA Hockey Coaching Education Program

COACH REGISTRATION

All ice hockey coaches as well as instructors of USA Hockey programs shall be registered for the current season (before the start of the season) in order to be eligible to coach/instruct in any regular-season activities (practices, clinics, games, tournaments, tryouts, etc.); state, district or regional playoffs; national championships; or in the USA Hockey Player Development Programs. There will be an annual fee to register the coaches (head and assistants) and instructors. Coaches who also play on a USA Hockey registered team are required to pay this registration fee only once per year. Coaches may register as participants online at USAHockey.com or through a local association/member program (refer to Section I Participant Registration). Junior coaches shall register with and through their teams with the junior registrar.

Note 1: All USA Hockey Coaching Education Program Instructors and National Player Development Camp coaches will be exempt from the annual participant registration fee, but must complete the participant registration process.

Note 2: The head coach of each disabled hockey team must complete the required CEP registration (including attending a Level 1 clinic) and complete the online disabled hockey module(s). Assistant coaches and student coaches of each disabled hockey team must register as a coach with USA Hockey, and are strongly encouraged, but not required, to attend a Level 1 coaching clinic and take the online disabled module(s). Those volunteers or employees who assist with helping disabled hockey teams (i.e. interpreters, pushers, on-ice mentors, etc.) must be properly registered with

USA Hockey as volunteers, but are not required to attend a CEP clinic and otherwise comply with these rules and regulations.

All ice hockey coaches and instructors of registered USA Hockey Youth 18 & Under and below, high school, girls'/women's 19 & under and below, and disabled programs must properly wear an approved ice hockey helmet during all on-ice sessions, including practices, controlled scrimmages and all Coaching Education Program clinics and/or workshops.

COACHING EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Required Coaching Education Program Levels for Ice Hockey

USA Hockey requires that all affiliates and/or districts shall establish the following requirements without modifications for all coaches (head and assistant).

All coaches must have the required certification level by January 1 of the current season.

- All coaches must enter USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program at Level 1, and must continue their education with a coaching clinic each year until, at a minimum, they achieve Level 3, except that coaches of **ONLY** 8U or younger players may remain at Level 1 or other certification level, even if expired, until such time as they are coaching any older age level of play. A coach may attend only one certification clinic per year (not including age-specific requirements). Coaches who do not coach in continuous years must re-

enter the program at the next level when they resume coaching responsibilities. Once Level 3 is achieved, periodic renewal [as outlined in Paragraph (c) below] is required for coaches who have not achieved Level 4. Coaches of national tournament bound teams (Tier I 14U, 16U and 18/19U and Tier II 16U and 18/19U) must complete Level 4 in their fourth season of coaching or first season of eligibility regardless of expiration date. Coaches who attain Level 4 certification are not required to attend any further certification clinics but must adhere to the age-specific requirement as outlined in Paragraph (b) below.

- In addition to the training in Paragraph (a) above, coaches must also complete age-specific training components specific to the level of play they are coaching, if they have not already taken that component. This requirement applies to all coaches at all levels, 1 through 5. Coaches may complete more than one age-specific component in any given season.
- Coaching certification at Level 3 is valid for two (2) seasons, as indicated by the expiration date on the Level 3 sticker.
 - A coach whose Level 3 is due to expire must take the online Level 3 Track 1 Recertification curriculum or they may move up to Level 4. Level 3 Track 1

Recertification is valid for two (2) seasons.

- A coach whose Level 3 Track 1 recertification is due to expire must take the online Level 3 Track 2 Recertification curriculum or move up to Level 4. Level 3 Track 2 Recertification is valid for two (2) seasons.
- Coaches whose Level 3 Track 2 Recertification is due to expire must attend a Level 4 clinic prior to the expiration of their Level 3 Recertification.
- Coaches must complete the online recertification program in order to recertify their Level 3 certifications. Attending a clinic or workshop is no longer valid for recertifying any certification level.
- **Grandfather Clause**
For coaches who enrolled in the Coaching Education Program prior to May 1, 2011, their entry into the above program will be at their current certification level. Level 1 and 2 coaches must adhere to Paragraphs (a) and (b) above, effective May 1, 2011. Current Level 3 coaches must adhere to Paragraph (b) and (c) above; effective with the season their Level 3 expires. Any previous Level 3 certifications in excess of one will count toward the maximum of two Level 3 recertifications.

This chart outlines the progression for a new coach. Coaches with pre-existing certifications will enter the new program at their current certification level and must adhere to Paragraphs 1 (a) and (b) above.

YEARS OF COACHING	CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS
Year 1 (ex: 2011-12)	Level 1 clinic + age-specific component
Year 2 (ex: 2012-13)	Level 2 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 3 (ex: 2013-14)	Level 3 clinic (expires Dec. 31, 2015) + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 4 (ex: 2014-15)	No Level certification required (for non-national tournament bound teams) but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level. Coaches of Tier I and Tier II

	(national tournament bound) 14U, 16U and 18/19U teams must complete Level 4 in their fourth season of coaching.
Year 5 (ex: 2015-16)	Complete the online Level 3 Track 1 Recertification (expires Dec. 31, 2017), or attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 6 (ex: 2016-17)	No Level certification required but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 7 (ex: 2017-18)	Complete the online Level 3 Track 2 Recertification (expires Dec. 31, 2019), or attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 8 (ex: 2018-19)	No Level certification required but can attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 9 (ex: 2019-20)	Must attend a Level 4 clinic + age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level
Year 10 and beyond	No Level recertification required but must complete age-specific component if not previously taken for current age level. Coaches are highly encouraged to attend a continuing education course every two years.

Evidence of Level

All USA Hockey coaches will possess a USA Hockey Coaching Education Program card with valid certification stickers, or printout from the USA Hockey online certification list.

It is the responsibility of the local association to identify those coaches who do not meet the certification requirements. All coaches have until December 31 of the current season to attend a USA Hockey coaching clinic and complete the online playing level component to become properly certified.

Prior to the start of all games throughout the season all coaches are required to indicate their current certification status on the scoresheet, regardless of their certification level. All coaches (except for juniors) must legibly print their USA Hockey Coaching Education Program (CEP) card number, their CEP level (levels 1-5), their online playing level component and the year their CEP level was attained. If a coach cannot produce his/her current

USA Hockey Coaching Education Program card prior to the start of the game, it must be noted on the official game scoresheet.

Beginning January 1 of the current season, prior to the start of each game, all coaches present are required to sign the designated area of the scoresheet in order to verify the accuracy of the playing roster, as it appears on the scoresheet, for that game.

Penalty and Enforcement

All coaches must have current certification and online component verification beginning January 1 of the current playing season. Any coach not in possession of these requirements will be ineligible to coach for the remainder of the season. Districts and/or affiliates are required to uphold this penalty. It will be the responsibility of the local association registering the team to enforce the national policy.

Non-compliance penalties for junior coaches will be determined by the Junior Council.

UNDER-AGE COACHES

Student Coach

A player age 13 through 17 who is currently properly registered with USA Hockey may serve as a Student Coach.

Qualifications

- Must attend a training session conducted by the local hockey association or audit a Level 1 clinic (not required to pay nor will they receive certification credit).
- Must always be under the supervision of a carded, screened adult coach during all practices, clinics, tryouts and in the locker room.
- May help out at practices, clinics, tryouts only. (May not participate as a player in scrimmages or games when acting as a student coach).
- May not act as a head coach or an assistant coach during practices or games.
- May be on the bench during games with an adult. The student coach will count as one of the maximum of four Team Officials allowed on the bench.
- Must wear a helmet with full face shield, gloves and skates while on the ice. Must wear helmet during games while on the bench.
- May only work with players at least one full playing age level below the student coach (e.g., a Bantam age player may act as a student coach at the Pee Wee, Squirt or Mite level).
- The organization that is using the student coach must provide a form indicating on the team on which he/she is participating as a student coach, and, if applicable, what team he/she is properly registered/rostered as a player. A model form is available on USAHockey.com.
- Upon reaching the age of 18, the student coach must comply with the USA Hockey Screening Program and meet the USA Hockey Coaching Education Program requirements which will qualify him/her to act as an assistant or head coach.

Section 1

Role of the Coach



Chapter 1

Player Selection & Evaluation

OBJECTIVES

- To develop different evaluation methods
- To design outline for tryout sessions
- To assign evaluators responsibilities for player evaluation
- To develop a plan for releasing players

INITIAL CONSIDERATION IN DEVELOPING A PLAYER SELECTION PLAN

In most youth hockey situations, coaches are faced with the task of choosing from a large pool of players to fill a limited number of positions on a team. Coaches are usually expected to complete this task in a relatively short period of time. Therefore, it is very important for the coach to be organized in advance with a plan for the player selection process. To properly develop this plan, the coach must take into consideration a number of significant factors. The answers to the following questions will assist the coach in designing the most effective player selection plan.

How Many Players will Attend the Team Tryouts?

Ideally, there should be some form of pre-registration so that the coach can be given a complete list of players in advance of the first tryout session. This may not always be possible and, thus, a coach may have to be prepared to make some last minute adjustments for the initial session. Having a reasonable estimate of how many players will attend will greatly assist the coach in deciding how to use the available ice time. For example, it may be unrealistic to plan for a 30 minute scrimmage if there are only 22 players. On the other hand, a

number greater than 50 may require splitting into two separate groups for the first few sessions.

How Much Ice Time is Available?

The amount of ice time available for the tryouts is another important consideration. Knowing how much time you have to get down to the final team will affect not only the content of the individual tryout sessions but also the timeline for the release of players. The norm in youth hockey is a relatively brief tryout period with about five to eight hours of ice time. Thus, the coach must plan the tryout sessions to be as efficient as possible.

How Many Players Do You Plan to Keep?

Obviously you must determine in advance the desired make-up of your team. Do you plan to keep 12 or 17 players on a team? Nevertheless, in youth hockey you must consider how many players you can effectively use in games to ensure they receive sufficient opportunity to play. Very little benefit will be gained by marginal players who see limited ice time. You have a responsibility to play the players you choose.

In addition to the absolute number, the coach must also consider what special qualities to look for in

players. For example, it may be desirable to have at least a few players with the versatility to play both forward and defense positions.

Criteria for Evaluation

In order to select the best players from a talent pool, it is necessary to establish criteria on which to make comparisons among players. Thus, the first step in player evaluation is to determine what variables to measure. What qualities are you looking for in your players? Are some of these more important than others? The answers to these questions will depend to a great extent on the age category as well as the competitive level of your team.

The following is a list of some of the player qualities that might be evaluated during the tryout period:

Individual Skills

- skating
- passing
- pass receiving
- shooting
- puck control
- checking

Team Skills

- offensive ability
- defensive ability
- ability to play with others

Mental Qualities

- hockey sense
- reading and reacting
- concentration

Physical Qualities

- strength
- endurance
- balance
- agility
- coordination
- power
- quickness

Individual Characteristics

- self-control
- coachability
- patience
- desire
- attitude

What About Goaltenders?

As you might expect, the characteristics that should be evaluated for goaltenders will differ significantly from those for players at other positions. In addition to individual skills, such as skating, puck handling and passing, goaltenders must be evaluated on their ability to stop the puck, using the stick, gloves, pads and body. Physical and mental characteristics should also be evaluated.

Evaluating

Once you have determined what to evaluate, the next step is to organize your tryout sessions in such a way that the players can be assessed on the identified variables. This assessment may be carried out using the following methods:

- **Specific Skill Drills** – Individual skills such as skating and passing can be evaluated using combination skill drills. Initially these drills may be very artificial with little or no resistance. However, there should be an attempt made to simulate game conditions in a progressive manner.
- **Skill Testing** – A number of skill tests are now available, particularly for skating speed and agility. These can be used by coaches as a means of comparing players. As a cautionary note, however, it must be remembered these tests are typically far removed from actual game situations. In addition, they can use up a great deal of ice time, particularly for a large group of players.
- **Competitive Drills** – Paired races and other drills that pit two players against one another in a confined space with a specific objective (e.g., beat your partner to the loose puck) are excellent methods of evaluating individual skills as well as mental and physical abilities. Although competitive evaluation drills can be used throughout the tryouts (and during the season as practice drills), they are particularly useful in the latter stages of the tryouts when the coach wishes to create specific pairings to compare players being considered for final positions on the team.
- **Scrimmage** – Naturally, the best way of evaluating a player's ability to play the game is to evaluate the individual under game conditions. Such conditions can be

easily simulated in scrimmages.

Scrimmages can be effectively used throughout the tryout period, beginning with the first session. You can evaluate most of the previously listed player characteristics during these scrimmages.

Here are a few additional considerations related to the use of scrimmages and exhibition games in your evaluation of players:

- Change line combinations and defense pairings in order to observe players under different situations.
- Use exhibition games to help you make decisions about borderline or marginal players.
- Unless skill deficiencies are extremely obvious, you should not release a player prior to seeing that individual under game conditions (i.e., scrimmage and/or exhibition game).

An important task for any coach, then, is to plan the tryout sessions in such a way as to make the most efficient use of the available player assessment methods.

DESIGNING THE TRYOUT SESSIONS

A constructive way to approach a tryout is to see it as a way of placing athletes on teams on which they will benefit the most, not as a dead-end experience in which players are cut away from hockey.

The tryout is a good opportunity to get some preseason skill observations that can tell both you and the athlete in what areas work may be needed. It should be as well thought out and organized as other parts of your program.

Planning for the First Tryout Session

Proper planning will eliminate a lot of potential problems at the first tryout session. Therefore, the coach should ensure that the administrative details are taken care of in advance. In many situations, the youth hockey association will assume responsibility for some of these tasks, but the coach should be aware of them in any case. The following are some guidelines related to the first tryout session.

Inform Parents/Players of Tryout Details in Advance

Parents and players should be advised, well in advance, about the requirements for the tryouts. This is particularly important at the younger age levels at which parents may not be aware of the need, for example, of full and proper protective equipment. In addition to informing them about the association's policies regarding such aspects as protective equipment, medical examinations and age classifications, they should also be provided with a complete schedule of sessions and other pertinent information regarding the conduct of the tryouts. Where feasible, this information should be provided at a parent meeting in order to permit parents to ask any additional questions. This meeting format will also provide you with an opportunity to outline your player selection process.

Ensure that Necessary Resources are Available

To be able to plan the content of the sessions, it is necessary to know what resources will be available. You should have sufficient pucks (at least one for every player), pylons, scrimmage vests and water bottles. A first aid kit should also be available for all sessions, along with a qualified first aid person or trainer.

Obtain Required Support

You must anticipate your needs in terms of human support to ensure that the required assistance is available to handle any last minute details. For example, it may be necessary to have someone available to handle late registration and collection of registration fees. Support might also be required to assign identification jersey numbers to players. As already mentioned, a trainer or first aid person should also be available. By assigning these responsibilities to others, you will be able to concentrate on the more immediate tasks of coordinating and conducting the sessions. A coach should also have a minimum of two other individuals to assist with the on-ice sessions. A large number of assistants may be required depending on the number of players in attendance.

Locker Room Supervision

USA Hockey is concerned with locker room activities between minor players; minor players and adult players; adults being alone with individual minor players in locker rooms; and with non-official

or non-related adults having unsupervised access to minor participants at sanctioned team events.

It is the policy of USA Hockey that all affiliates, districts, leagues, and local hockey programs have at least one responsible adult present directly monitoring the locker room during all team events to assure that only participants (coaches and players), approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the locker room and to supervise the conduct in the locker room. Any individual meetings with a minor participant and a coach in a locker room shall require a responsible adult be with the coach.

Further, responsible adults must personally monitor the locker room environment at all times while participants are present and also make sure the locker room is appropriately secured during times when minor participants are on the ice.

Arrive at the Rink Early

Although proper planning should eliminate most problems, it is advisable to arrive at the rink well in advance of the actual starting time. This will provide you with ample time to check that everything is in place and to answer any questions from parents, players or your support staff. Since most of the administrative tasks have been assigned to others, you should also have time to review the tryout plan with your assistants and make any last minute adjustments.

Prepare the Players

Prior to going on the ice, you should outline the tryout process to the players. This session should include the following information:

- what player qualities you are looking for
- explanation of the drills to be run and their purposes
- objectives of scrimmage sessions
- target timeline for team selection

In addition, you should stress the importance of stretching and a proper warm-up. The players should be led through a series of stretching exercises in the dressing room or corridor and on the ice. The first few ice sessions should include a good 15-20 minutes warm-up period to ensure that players are physically ready to go through the evaluation drills and scrimmages without risking injury.

ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PLAYER EVALUATION

The third step in the player evaluation process is the recruitment of other personnel to assist in the assessment of players.

On-Ice Assistants

You should have two or more on-ice assistants to help conduct the tryout sessions. These individuals can assist in player evaluation for specific positions (forwards, defensemen, goaltenders), by carrying out evaluation drills with small groups of players. In drills involving a larger number, they can also focus on specific individuals.

Impartial Observers

Another means of obtaining player assessment information is to use “expert” observers in the stands who are assigned the task of rating players on specific criteria. In addition to providing you with a second opinion on borderline players, observers can also be used to record more detailed player assessment information for later analysis.

Does a certain player win consistently against all other players? Where you have three relatively equal players, is there one who comes out on top of most match-ups with the other two? If possible, try to get a rating of every player at the end of each session.

Coaching Staff

In the end, final decisions for player selection rest with you, the coach. In some cases you may be familiar with a number of players, having observed them in previous seasons. Such prior information, combined with player assessments from observers and on-ice assistants, is invaluable. However, it is also essential that you create opportunities for yourself during tryouts to screen and evaluate all players as effectively as possible.

Although it is probably more efficient to assess players from the stands since this usually affords a wider view of the various drills and scrimmages, you should also spend some time on the ice in order to get closer to the action and observe some of the more subtle aspects (e.g, emotional characteristics, passing and receiving skills, soft hands in handling the puck and the ability to understand instructions). As a general guideline, however, you should spend considerably more time observing from the stands during the player selection period.

RELEASING PLAYERS

Once decisions have been made regarding the release or cutting of players during the tryout period, you must have a plan for informing these players. Although the details of this plan will vary from coach to coach, and will depend to some extent on the age level of the players, the following guidelines should be adhered to as much as possible:

Avoid Public Announcements – Do not post a list of player cuts or read the names of players to be released in front of the rest of the team. Instead, whenever possible, you should try to take individual players aside briefly towards the end of the session and ask them to meet privately with you afterwards.

Speak with the Player Individually – Talk to each player individually and briefly explain the player's weaknesses as well as pointing out some strengths. Be honest and straightforward.

Invite Questions from the Player – Provide the player with an opportunity to ask further questions about the evaluation. In addition to helping you select the team, a major objective of the evaluation process should be to provide the player with constructive feedback to guide improvement.

Direct the Player to Another Team – If your association has teams at other levels of competition, ensure that released players are provided with a schedule of their tryouts. Ideally, the coach of this team should also be at the arena in order to personally meet the players. Where no such tiering system exists, you should make the player aware of whatever options do exist (e.g., recreational league, school league).

Leave on a Positive Note – Thank the player for participating in the team tryouts and encourage the individual to continue working to improve in areas of weaknesses.

Chapter 2

A Model for Effective Instruction

OBJECTIVES

- To develop a model for proper instruction
- To understand how to effectively communicate
- To understand the different levels of learning

A MODEL FOR INSTRUCTION

Although there are many ways to instruct young hockey players, the following approach has proven to be both easy to use and effective in teaching and/or refining skills.

1. Get the attention of the players.
2. Communicate precisely what needs to be learned.
3. Provide time for practice and feedback.
4. Evaluate results and take appropriate action.

STEP 1: ESTABLISH ATTENTION AND CONTENT CREDIBILITY

The attention of the players must be directed at the coach before instruction can occur. Be sure to arrange the players so that each one can see your actions and hear your instructions. Choose where you stand in relation to the players so that you specifically avoid competing with other distractions in the background. Often it is good strategy to have the players on one knee as you introduce a skill.

Immediately establish the precedent that when you speak, important information is being communicated. Point out that the team cannot maximize its practice

opportunity when several people are talking at the same time.

As you begin your comments, establish the need for competence of the skill (why this skill is important) by relating it to some phase of successful team and/or individual play. An excellent way to gain your players' attention and motivate players to want to learn the skill is to mention how a local, regional or national-level player or team has mastered the skill and has used it to great advantage. The objective of your comments is to establish the idea that mastery of this skill is very important to individual and team play and that the key elements of its execution are achievable.

***Establish and maintain the precedent that
when you speak, important useful
information is being communicated.***

The next and perhaps even more important task is to clearly establish in the minds of the players that they need instruction on this skill. This can be accomplished with the following steps:

1. Briefly describe the new skill and then let them try it several times in a quick-paced drill setting.

2. Carefully observe their performance and identify their strengths and weaknesses. Use the key elements of the skill as a basis for your observations.
3. Call them back together and report your observations.

This approach will allow you to point out weaknesses in performance on one or more key elements that were common to many, if not all, of the players. Using this approach will enhance your credibility and motivate the players to listen to and follow your instruction. Also, your subsequent teaching can be specifically matched to the needs (weaknesses) you observed. Of course, if in your observation of the players' abilities you determine that they have already achieved the desired skill level, then you should shift your focus to another skill. This could involve moving on to the next phase of your practice plan.

Individuals learn most effectively by focusing their practice attempts on one clearly understood element of skill performance.

When your players are at two or three different levels of ability, you may want to establish two or three instructional groups. This can be accomplished using the following three divisions:

Early Learning: focus on learning the key elements of the skill

Intermediate Learning: focus on coordination of all key elements

Later Learning: automatic use of the skill in game-like conditions

STEP 2: COMMUNICATE PRECISELY WHAT NEEDS TO BE LEARNED

When you and your players know their status on a given skill (strengths and weaknesses of their performance), conditions are well established for both teaching and learning. Because individuals learn most efficiently when they focus on one aspect of a skill at a time, it is important to communicate precisely the one key element of the skill on which you want the individual, pair, group or team to concentrate. Demonstrate the key element visually (and explain it verbally) so that all players know exactly what they are trying to achieve.

STEP 3: PROVIDE FOR PRACTICE AND FEEDBACK

Organize your practice time and select your drills or practice activity:

1. Provide as many repetitions (trials) as possible within the allotted time for instruction. Minimize standing in lines.
2. Provide specific, immediate and positive feedback on what they did correctly and then on what they can do to improve. Follow this with some encouragement to continue the learning effort.

Repetitions and feedback are essential to effective coaching. You can expect a direct relationship between the gains in player performance and the degree to which you find ways to maximize these two dimensions of instruction. John Wooden, famed UCLA basketball coach, was found to provide over 2,000 acts of teaching during 30 total hours of practice, of which 75 percent pertained directly to skill instruction. This converts to more than one incidence of feedback for every minute of coaching activity!

Repeated trials and specific feedback on what was right, followed by what can be improved, with an encouraging "try again," produces results.

Feedback can be dramatically increased by using volunteers and/or players as instructional aids. Where instruction is focused on one key element of performance and the important aspects of performing the skill have been effectively communicated to the players, they are often as good (and sometimes better) at seeing discrepancies in a partner's performance as some adults. Working in pairs or small groups can thus be very effective in increasing both the number of trials and the amount of feedback that individuals get within a given amount of practice time. Also, by providing feedback, players are improving their mental understanding of how the skill should be performed.

STEP 4: EVALUATE RESULTS AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION

Evaluation of player performance must occur on a continuing basis during practices and in the games. This is the only valid means to answer the question,

“Are the players achieving the skills?” If they are, you have two appropriate actions to take:

1. First, enjoy it. You are making an important contribution to your players.
2. Second, consider how you can be even more efficient. Are there ways that you can get the same results in less time? Can even higher gains in skill be achieved within the same time allotment?

If the players are not achieving the instructional objectives, it is important to ask, “why?” Although it is possible that you have a cluster of players who are slower learners, this is seldom the case. First, assume that you are using inappropriate instructional techniques or that you simply did not provide enough instructional time. A good approach to answering the “why” question is to go back through the instructional factors related to effective planning, teaching, communicating, discipline and/or conditioning and determine which of the guidelines or steps was missed and/or inappropriately implemented. Then alter your subsequent practices accordingly. Continuous trial, error and revisions will usually result in improved coaching effectiveness, which then translates into increased achievement by the players. In instances where you cannot determine what to alter, seek help from a fellow coach whose team is consistently

strong in the skill(s) that are causing you difficulty. This is an excellent way to obtain some good ideas for alterations in your approach.

SUMMARY

Effective instruction is the foundation of successful coaching. It requires practices that include a clear communication of what is to be learned, a continuous evaluation of player performance on the objectives included in the practices, a systematic method of instruction, and the use of guidelines for instruction that have been associated with player achievement.

Systematic instruction includes establishing attention and content credibility, precise communication of what needs to be learned, providing many practice trials and plenty of feedback and evaluation of player achievement. Use of the guidelines for effective instruction (realistic expectations, structured instruction, order, grouping, maximizing time, success, monitoring and providing a sense of control) will maximize the results of instruction. Systematic instruction based upon these guidelines of effective instruction, incorporated into effective practice plans, will result in player achievement of the essentials of the game.

Chapter 3

Evaluation of Coaching Effectiveness

OBJECTIVES

- To identify ways to evaluate your coaching
- To learn to evaluate your effectiveness
- To learn to use self-evaluation to help yourself become better coach

INTRODUCTION

All coaches should evaluate the results of their coaching activity. Evaluation allows the coach to determine the effects of coaching and, when necessary, alter coaching practices to obtain better results. The results of an end-of-the-season evaluation can be used to improve coaching effectiveness for the next season. Evaluation(s) during the mid-season and at the end of the season can result in making important changes in coaching action for the remainder of the season, plus the following season. Generally, more frequent evaluations, followed by appropriate changes in coaching actions, results in more rapid improvements in coaching competence.

Evaluation can be defined as making a judgment of merit. Evaluative judgments can be formal or informal, based upon many or no facts, and either accurate or inaccurate. In order to make accurate decisions, it is helpful to follow several evaluation guidelines. The guidelines suggested in this chapter are easy to implement and useful in determining coaching effectiveness. They can be used to evaluate the entire season, a portion of the season, a practice or even part of a practice. The guidelines

provide a flexible and systematic way for you to improve your coaching actions that will help you obtain better results.

Evaluation of the results of our coaching actions is a prerequisite to making needed improvements.

EVALUATING PLAYER OUTCOMES

Making an evaluative judgment requires comparing the results and actions of coaching with an acceptable set of standards. Two sets of standards are appropriate. The first is based upon player outcomes (skills, knowledge and attitudes) and the second on coaching actions (organization, implementation and evaluation).

The first and most important information you can obtain to determine the degree to which your coaching activities were effective is revealed in the degree to which your players achieved the objectives set for the season. Your evaluation should include all of the players on the team and all of the season's objectives.

*Even if every player mastered every skill,
knowledge or attitude you taught, there is
still room for coaching improvement.*

For example, all of your players may have improved in one or more of the skills included in one of the performance areas of the form, but you may feel that several of those players did not achieve enough to receive a “yes”. A “no,” however, may also seem to be an inappropriate entry. To resolve this difficulty, it is important for you to consider the amount of player achievement in each performance area that you are willing to accept as evidence of effective coaching. Achievement of a significant and important improvement (or refinement and/or maintenance of a pre-existing highly refined ability) on at least 80% of the objectives included in your season plan is a common standard for making this determination. Extending that standard to obtain an evaluation of the entire team requires 80% of the players achieving 80% of the objectives.

Initially, you should evaluate your effectiveness in facilitating player competence using the form described above. Self-evaluation is usually the most important source of information for improving coaching actions. Although it is an important input for making changes, some changes that are apparent to others are often missed in a self-evaluation. There are several ways that you can obtain additional insight. This will require identifying a person who is familiar with your coaching actions and the progress of your players, and whose judgment you respect. This person(s) could be an assistant coach, parent, official, league supervisor, other coach or a local hockey expert. One or more players could also rate the status and improvement of an individual player or the team relative to other players in the league. The results of this type of evaluation can be very helpful to you because it identifies player strength and weaknesses, as perceived by others.

How do you rate as a coach?

Checklist of Effective Coaching Actions

The real benefits of evaluating player achievement on the objectives of the season in each of the performance areas listed comes with evaluating the reasons why, “no” or “few” top 25% responses are

recorded for your players. It is the answer(s) to the “why?” question that reveals the changes you can make to improve your coaching effectiveness. To help you determine the reasons why you were not effective in certain player performance areas, a “Checklist of Effective Coaching Actions” was developed. The checklist provides a guide for you to use when considering some of the characteristics associated with effective coaching. For example, if Johnny made insufficient progress in his puck control skills, you could review the checklist to determine which coaching actions you could change in order to get players like Johnny to be more successful with puck control. As you identify coaching actions that may have detracted from player performance, check the chapter reference and read the information included in that portion of the manual. Based on the information contained in that chapter, alter your subsequent coaching actions accordingly. The Checklist For Effective Coaching Actions is included in the appendices.

Interpreting Unmet Expectations

The previous suggestions provide a positive way to improve your coaching ability. There are, however, ways to interpret a lack of improved performance. One often-used excuse is to blame lack of performance on lack of interest. Although it is commonly done, there is seldom justification for claiming this excuse. Effective youth hockey coaches significantly alter player skill, knowledge, fitness and attitudes regularly, and even with below average talent, rarely finish in the lower division of their league. The most helpful approach you can use to improve your coaching effectiveness is to assume that when results do not meet expectations, the solution to the problem will be found in your coaching actions. This may prove to be the wrong reason, but you must be absolutely sure that you have considered all possibilities for self-improvement prior to accepting other reasons for unmet expectations.

You must also evaluate the performance standards that you expect your players to attain. If you determine that poor player performance cannot be attributed to ineffective coaching actions, it is possible that the level of expectation you hold for your players is unrealistic. Remember, motivation is enhanced when players are achieving performance expectations that are self-imposed or communicated by the coach. If these expectations

are too high, they can have a negative effect on achievement. There are many valid reasons why the vast majority of Mites will not perform as well as Squirts or Bantams. Although it is appropriate to hold high expectations for your players, they must also be realistic. A combination of high expectations that are divided into achievable and sequential performance steps is the creative alternative that is most likely to yield appropriate and effective standards of performance.

The allotment of insufficient time to the practice of the season's objectives can result in poor player achievement, even when performance expectations and coaching actions are appropriate. Players must have sufficient time to attempt a task, make errors, obtain feedback, refine their attempt, and habituate abilities before it is reasonable to expect these abilities to be used within the context of a game. Attempting to cover too many skills within a limited amount of practice time is a major cause of delayed achievement. Even when the quality of coaching is excellent in all other areas, player performance expectations may not be met simply because the amount of coaching and practice time was too short.

Taking Appropriate Actions

The reason for conducting an evaluation of your coaching effectiveness is to learn what you can do to improve your contribution to your players. Coaches would all like to receive excellent ratings in all categories, but no one attains that status. We all can find ways to improve our effectiveness. It may be in-season or practice planning, implementation of plans, knowledge of the game, or even in our

ability to evaluate ourselves. Regardless of our level of expertise, by systematically relating high and low levels of player achievement to our coaching actions, we can find ways to be more effective and/or efficient coaches.

What changes can you make to improve your effectiveness?

Merely identifying what changes can lead to improvements is a waste of time if those changes are not acted upon. As you discover answers to the following questions, revise your coaching actions accordingly and then re-evaluate the results. You may be surprised at how effective you can become.

- Are your expectations of player performance appropriate?
- Are your coaching actions effective?
- What changes can you implement to increase your effectiveness?

SUMMARY

By evaluating player outcomes on the objectives of the season, you can estimate the effectiveness of your coaching actions. Limited achievement by some players in some performance areas usually signals the need for change in some of your coaching actions. Use of the "Checklist of Effective Coaching Actions" may reveal what changes are needed and where in the manual you can find information that can help you make the appropriate change. By taking action on the changes identified, you can take giant steps toward becoming a more effective coach.

Chapter 4

Game Day Preparation: Locker Room & Bench Management

OBJECTIVES

- To provide coaches with an idea of what it takes to prepare
- To provide coaches with game statistical sheets
- To provide an outline of game day responsibilities

INTRODUCTION

The second most important preparation task of a coach is game preparation. Your preparation or lack thereof can set the team up for a win or loss. This part of coaching is your “bread and butter,” so no stones should be left unturned. A coach should prepare his team for what will be expected during a game, so there are no surprises for the players and coaches. Proper preparation will enable the coaches and players to focus on the task at hand.

Preparation will vary with a coach depending upon:

- age group he or she is coaching
- level of play he or she is coaching (professional, college, junior, high school, etc.)
- resources available
- man power
- job type (full time, part time, amateur, paid, volunteer)
- time available to prepare

Having your team and individual players well prepared will:

- give your players confidence
- send a message to your team that you, as a coach, are well prepared

STATISTICS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PREPARATION

The use of statistics is very helpful for you in your game preparation:

- show the tendencies of your opponent
- reaffirm your thoughts on your opponent’s strengths and weaknesses (team and individuals)
- give necessary feedback to coaches
- give necessary feedback to players
- give valuable information to coaches during the game
 - modify strategy
 - shift time of players
 - line matching /combinations
 - scoring chances
 - specialty teams

Also, remember to keep statistics in perspective when talking to your players about their own statistics.

Facts to Consider

- ice time logged
- their experience
- their role on the team

GAME DAY PREPARATION

Considerations

- home game or away game
- two game series with the same team
- two game series with two different teams
- single game
- number of games in a number of nights
- distance traveled/mode of transportation
- day of the week
- time in the season
- type of game: exhibition, conference, play-off
- size of rink/type of building

Information Needed to Gather

- opponent's scouting report (team breakdown, key players' tendencies)
- opponent's tendency tape
- statistics on opponent
- opponent's last game information
- line-up/specialty teams
- opponent's tendencies on when they pull their goaltender
- opponent's line changes (on the fly, after a goal, after a penalty, after a power play, etc.)
- tendencies during the first and last two minutes of a period

Game Plan

- style
- how your team will start the game
- line rotations (match, units, short bench, 3/2, etc.)
- tempo
- putting right players on the ice at the right time and in the right situation
- bench game plan
 - who's up
 - who's next
 - who's up after a power play
 - who's up after a penalty kill
 - who's on the checking line
- what to do
 - when they pull their goalie
 - when we pull our goalie
 - when do we pull our goalie
 - in the last five minutes (down by one and two goals)
 - in the last five minutes (up by one and two goals)

Game Day Outline

TIME	AGENDA
	coaches preparation meeting
	team breakfast
	pregame skate
	individual meetings
	coaches detail meeting
	pregame meal
	team meeting
	depart for arena
	team stretch
	pregame warm-up
	game time
	postgame meal
	depart for home/motel

LOCKER ROOM MANAGEMENT

When to Report to the Rink

- staff
- players
- trainer/equipment manager

Responsibilities and Assigned Areas at Rink

- head coach
- assistant coaches
- equipment manager
- trainer
- players playing tonight
- players not playing tonight
- locker room cubicle assignments for players
- trainer location
- equipment/skate sharpener

Locker Room Policy

- Personnel is allowed in the locker room before, during and after the game
- talking/no talking
- trainer roles
- individual player reinforcement
- team discussion
- assistants make individual adjustments
- head coach makes team adjustments

- need quiet time
- If the team needs a stern talking to:
 - speak to the team in a direct tone of voice
 - leave the team alone
 - go back in the locker room and be positive

End of Game

- cool down
- be positive
- look ahead to the next challenge
- support personnel role

BENCH MANAGEMENT

Arena Layout

- size of rink
- size of zones
- location of benches
- location of penalty box
- arena entrances/exits
- location of scoreboard
- location of press box/video
- location/electrical outlets
- type of lighting in arena
- normal temperature of rink

Utilization of Assistant Coaches

- bench/press box; one in each area for the whole game
- define their roles
- the assistant on the bench makes individual small corrections, answers player questions, keeps coach informed regarding pertinent information.
- the assistant in the press box watches individual players, opponents, systems and affirms preparation details.
- the head coach gives pats, watches the ice at all times, makes unit changes and makes specialty team changes.

Bench Configuration

- two tier bench
- one level bench/open front/no behind
- one level bench/open front and back
- two gates vs. one gate
- neutral zone gates
- two zone gates
- glass in back vs. no glass
- area size
- zone sizes

Operation of Bench During Game

- The most important element is the lines of communication.
- Support personnel and their responsibilities
 - trainer
 - equipment manager
 - stick boys
 - gate operators
- on ice/hop over; off ice/through gates
- defense/forwards sides
- move toward the middle
- penalty over change/position of player
- pull the goaltender play
- special plays
- change lines: regular; goal for; goal against
- stall time/player; goalie

Head Coaching - Game Time

- Define personnel roles.
- Keep the lines of communication open.
- Your system on the bench:
 - no notes
 - index cards
 - plastic plan sheets
 - tape recorder
 - steno pads
 - preparation notes
 - line-ups
 - specialty teams
 - notes
 - between period remarks
- The players must know all of the personnel's roles, and the system and lines of communication.
- Tone of the bench:
 - players sit or stand
 - getting ready for the next shift
 - keep the confusion down
 - tone of the head coach
- The head coach sets the atmosphere
- Rotation of the line:
 - do you get the last change
 - who plays best on the road
 - who plays best at home
 - matching/not to match
 - units of five
- Late in the game:
 - short bench
 - down a goal
 - up a goal
 - goalie pulled
 - time outs

Section 2

Preparing for the Season



Chapter 5

Planning for the Season

OBJECTIVES

- To discuss why planning for the entire season has significant advantages over day to day planning
- Steps a coach should follow when organizing for the season
- Skills, knowledge, aspects of fitness, and/or personal social skills should be selected as objectives for the season
- To show how the season should be divided to be most effective from a coaching/learning point of view

INTRODUCTION

Planning for the season involves selecting the season's content (objectives that involve skills, rules, strategies, conditioning and attitudes) and organizing it into a plan from which practices, games, and other events can be efficiently managed. This chapter provides some reasons why planning will be useful to you. It covers the steps you can use to develop a season plan, gives helpful examples of season objectives, and provides useful forms and examples for completing a season plan.

WHY PLAN?

Coaches agree that teaching the skills, rules, and strategies essential to the game of hockey are among their primary responsibilities. Most coaches would also agree that improving the physical condition of the players, promoting enjoyment of the game, sportsmanship, and attempting to avoid physical and psychological injury are also outcomes they wish to achieve. Many coaches fail, however, to recognize the importance of planning to accomplish these goals.

The achievement of goals (business, professional or sports) requires effective planning.

Organized practices are vital to maximizing the benefits of hockey and minimizing potentially negative effects. Disorganized practices often result in a failure to learn appropriate skills, rules, and/or strategies, and often contributes to injuries and the learning of incorrect information or skills.

Organizing your season and planning your practices prior to going on the ice can avoid these problems and can result in the following benefits:

- maximize valuable ice time
- ensure that the season objectives judged most essential will be included at appropriate times during the season
- match practice activities with your coaching role and season goals
- reduce the time devoted to planning practices
- effectively prepare the team for competition
- facilitate making day-to-day adjustments in practice objectives
- provide an important deterrent to liability lawsuits

DEVELOPING A SEASON PLAN

Several steps that are directly related to your role as coach can be used to develop a season plan. They involve:

1. identifying the goals and objectives of the season
2. sequencing the objectives into those that you wish to achieve in the pre, early, mid, and late season
3. identifying practice objectives

Identify Your Goals and Objectives for the Season

Your primary role as a youth hockey coach is to maximize the benefits your players obtain through participation in hockey while, at the same time, minimizing the costs. This single statement provides the basis for identifying the specific goals and objectives for your coaching effort. You will influence your players either positively or negatively in each of the following four areas:

- skill (skating, passing, shooting, etc.)
- knowledge (rules, strategies, training guidelines)
- physical fitness (muscular and energy systems)
- attitude (personal or social feelings about hockey, self and others)

By thinking of these four areas as goals to develop skills, knowledge, fitness and appropriate attitudes, you are taking the initial step toward fulfilling your major role of “maximizing the benefits” of participation in hockey. You are also acting to fulfill your secondary role of “minimizing the costs” (psychological and/or physical injury being the major ones) by providing a specified purpose for the season. Although the identification of goals is an important first step, it is the selection of specific objectives within each goal area that provides the direction necessary to organize the season and plan effective practices. Each of the above goal areas include several objectives.

Selection of Skill Objectives

USA Hockey has recommended appropriate objectives for players at all levels of play. Key elements are the components of an objective that must be learned to achieve mastery of the skill. Key elements are the basis, therefore, of assessing player performance and for focusing our coaching efforts.

Selection of specific objectives within each goal area provides the direction necessary to organize for the season and plan effective practices.

Selection of Knowledge Objectives

Cognitive information such as rules, strategies of team play and information related to physical conditioning may be appropriate for your players to know. When you identify information that you want your players to know, it is important to treat that information as an objective. Rules pertaining to “offsides” and “icing,” how to warm up and cool down, what to eat for a pregame meal and exercises to avoid are all appropriate objectives because they can influence a player’s performance. By identifying these as objectives, it is more likely that they will be taught at an appropriate time during the season and at an appropriate level of understanding.

Attitudes

A primary objective in the season plan should be to have all players feel increasingly better about their ability as the season progresses. This should occur not only in the areas of skill, knowledge and fitness, but should also include qualities of character such as persistence, self-control, tolerance, respect for authority, encouragement of teammates, concentration on the task, commitment to best efforts and cooperation. Athletes need guidance (modeling, direction, encouragement, gentle rebuking, etc.) to develop such attributes. When achieved, these qualities contribute to performance in athletics and in life itself. Moreover, unlike the opponent, officials, and/or the “breaks of the game,” these qualities are within the control of individual players. The opportunity for individual control has been strongly linked to motivation and motivation is strongly linked to performance.

Coaches are responsible for developing socially desirable traits like cooperation, persistence, loyalty, and respect for authority.

As coaches, perhaps the most important and lasting contribution we can leave with our players is improved feelings of self-worth and other socially desirable traits of character. By focusing on controllable qualities like “effort” versus uncontrollable “outcomes,” which are often

dependent on others (e.g., an official's call, the ability of another team, or the final score), we have a unique opportunity to make a significant and lasting contribution to the personal character of our athletes.

Contributing to team membership is another worthy objective that coaches should set for every player. Athletes, especially those who engage in team sports such as ice hockey, must learn to suppress the natural tendency to blame others for a loss or even a bad performance. Players must be taught that their role is to play as well as they can and to think, do, and say those things that will help their teammates do the same. The team will only be as good as its weakest link and often an otherwise excellent team only performs at a mediocre level due to the dissension created by "put downs," making excuses or blaming others.

Coaches should reward the effort, rather than the outcome, as they review their team's accomplishments.

Identify Practice Objectives

As you place objectives into season divisions and adjust the number of weeks assigned to each division, typically you will find that you have chosen to cover more objectives than your available practice time will allow. A good guide in such situations is to devote sufficient time to the instruction and practice of each objective so that the majority of players are able to make significant improvements. Reviewing the amount of practice time spent on objectives included in the play may reveal why many athletes did not substantially improve on some of the skills taught.

Select, teach and practice objectives that are essential to the game at your level of play.

Merely exposing your team to many skills without sufficient time for them to be learned results in frustration for you and the players. They must sufficiently master the objectives so that they can be used in a game situation. Rather, select, teach and practice only the objectives that are essential to the game at your level of play. You can always add objectives to your plan as it is implemented, but you cannot recover time wasted on objectives that are not achieved.

Generally, the allotment of time to an objective should be based upon the following instructional needs and should be distributed across several practices. You should allow time:

1. to introduce the objective—tell the players what you want them to learn and why it is important
2. for the players to try the skill and for you to assess their levels of performance
3. for you to teach the key elements of the skill and for them to practice these elements
4. for skill refinement and automation such that the skill can be used in a game situation

EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Effective practices are those sessions that meet the needs of the players to carry out the objectives that are listed in the plan for the season. The keys to effective practices are careful planning and sound instruction. Both ingredients are under the control of the coach. Therefore, each of your practices should:

- be based upon previous planning, seasonal organization, the needs of the team, and the needs of the players
- list the objectives and key points that will be the focus of instruction for that practice
- show the amount of time allotted to each objective during the practice
- identify the activities (instructional, drill or scrimmage) that will be used to teach or practice the objectives
- apply the guidelines for effective instruction
- include an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the practice

PRACTICE TIME NEEDED

The amount of time that players can attend to your instruction depends on their ages and developmental levels. Generally, players aged 10 and under cannot effectively tolerate more than one hour of concentrated practice. As age advances and the abilities of players improve, the practices, too, can be slightly longer. The primary problem in youth ice hockey is to use effectively the time that is available.

Another common problem in youth ice hockey is defining far too many objectives and then teaching for exposure rather than mastery. When insufficient time

is devoted to important skills, the result is incompetence and frustration. A good rule is to distribute your practice time across several objectives. Then devote sufficient time to each objective so that a meaningful change in the performance of 80 percent of the players has occurred. Devote time in additional practices to the objective until the players are able to transfer the skill into game-like drills. At that point, they can be expected to transfer the skills of practice into their games.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD DRILL

The two most important components of your practices are the development of individual skills and the translation of these skills into game-like situations through drills. Therefore, the drills that you select must be related to your objectives. Too often coaches use drills that are traditional or favorites of the players but that have no relevance to the skills to be learned. Such drills waste valuable time. Drills should be selected or developed according to the following features. Drills should:

- have a meaningful objective
- require a relatively short explanation
- provide an excellent opportunity for players to master the skill or concept
- be easily modified to accommodate skilled and unskilled players
- provide opportunity for skill analysis and feedback to players
- be challenging and fun

Write your drills on single sheets or cards. After the practice, write your comments about the drill's usefulness directly on the card and file the card for future use. Good drills can be used many times during a season. Share your drills with fellow coaches.

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH

8 & Under Through 18 & Under

1. Team schedules should include at least three practices for every game.
2. The recommended maximum number of games per season is:
 - 20 cross-ice games for 8 & Under
 - 20-25 games for 10 & Under
 - 30-35 games for 12 & Under
 - 35-40 games for 14 & Under
 - 40-50 games for 16 & Under
 - 50-60 games for 18 & Under
3. Starting times for games should be no later than:
 - 7:00 p.m. for 10 & Under
 - 8:00 p.m. for 12 & Under
 - 9:00 p.m. for 14- & Under
 - 10:00 p.m. for 16 & Under
 - 10:00 p.m. for 18 & Under
4. Any practice time scheduled before 3:00 p.m. should be set so that the earliest times are reserved for the older age classifications.

SUMMARY

Your role as a coach can be most appropriately filled through the leadership and instruction you provide within the context of practices and games. Clearly, those coaches who are most effective in facilitating their players' achievement of appropriate skills, knowledge, fitness, and attitudes are those who have clear objectives that pertain to these achievements. Organization of the season by selecting and then teaching objectives in an appropriate order, and for an appropriate amount of time, is a major step toward helping players acquire the benefits of hockey. This same planning effort is an essential step in reducing some of hockey's unwanted costs.

Chapter 6

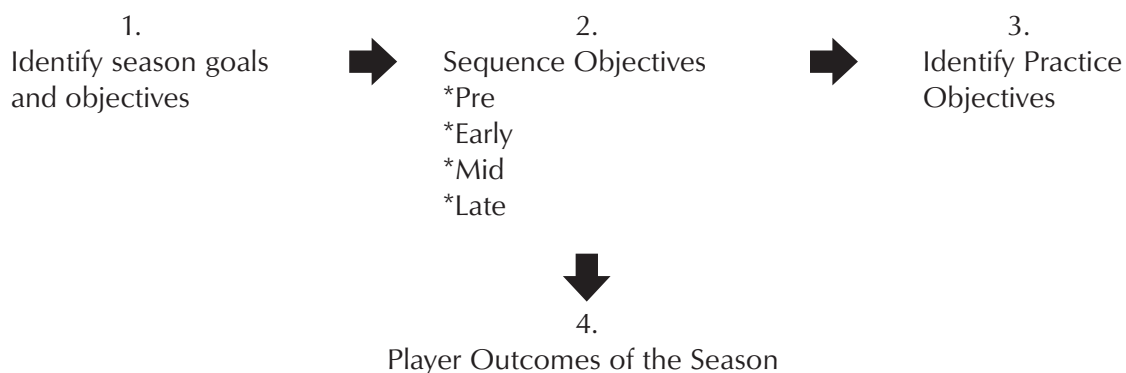
Developing a Season Plan

OBJECTIVES

- To develop a season plan
- To identify the steps in season planning
- To develop short- and long-range goals
- To divide your season into sections

The organized coach realizes the importance of planning beyond the daily practice plan. To be effective and to ensure that both short- and long-range goals are accomplished, one must map out an overall season plan with a complete schedule that includes practices, competitions and training for the entire season.

SEASON PLANNING STEPS



Sequence the Season's Objectives

After you have selected the objectives most important to your players, you should divide these objectives into categories that you will attempt to achieve in the pre, early, mid and late season. If preseason activity is possible, it can save you valuable practice time. Many of the objectives pertaining to knowledge of the rules, strategies of team or individual play and some of those involving conditioning can be all or partially achieved before formal practice begins.

The early season should be devoted to teaching, re-teaching and practicing the season's objectives. The mid-season continues with a heavy focus on teaching, but should also devote a lot of time to executing and refining skills within game-like drills or controlled scrimmages. The late season should focus on the maintenance and refinement of early and mid-season skills, and refining team offensive and defensive play. Figure 6-1 provides an example of the worksheet that can be used to sequence the season's objectives.

Deciding what objectives should be achieved in pre, early, middle and late season is the basis for all subsequent planning.

Preseason

Objectives should be placed in the preseason when they involve skills, knowledge or attitudes that can be achieved independently (all or in part) by the player in a safe and efficient manner. This could include learning the basic rules, infractions,

SEASON PLAN WORKSHEET					
Goals & Performance Areas	Objectives	Season Division			
		PRE	EARLY	MID	LATE
	(1) _____				
	(2) _____				
	(3) _____				
	(4) _____				
	(5) _____				
	(6) _____				
	(7) _____				
	(8) _____				
	(9) _____				
	(10) _____				
	(11) _____				
	(12) _____				
	(13) _____				
	(14) _____				
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	(25) _____				
	(26) _____				
	(27) _____				
	(28) _____				
	(29) _____				
	(30) _____				

Figure 6-1. Example of a season plan worksheet.

penalties and strategies; obtaining appropriate equipment; and developing strength and aerobic fitness.

Early Season

Objectives should be placed in the early season if they contain abilities that are prerequisite to attaining other identified objectives. For example, players must be able to skate before they can be expected to skate and stickhandle, or skate, stickhandle, and shoot. This attention to the sequence of skills is particularly important for the inexperienced player, who should spend more time on learning skills.

Mid- and Late Season

Generally, you should focus on individual skills in the early season, skill combinations in the mid-season and combinations of both within systems of play in the latter portion of the season. There are no hard and fast divisions among these three phases of the season. In fact, they should blend or overlap into good transitions. However, you should have them clearly in mind as you view the entire season in terms of what you wish to accomplish and the time in which it must be done.

Identify Practice Objectives

As you place objectives into season divisions and adjust the number of weeks assigned to each division, typically you will find that you have chosen to cover more objectives than your available practice time will allow. A good guide in such situations is to devote sufficient time to the instruction and practice of each objective so that the majority of players are able to make significant improvements. Reviewing the amount of practice time spent on objectives included in the plan may reveal why many athletes did not substantially improve on some of the skills “taught.”

Select, teach and practice objectives that are essential to the game at your level of play.

Merely exposing your team to many skills without sufficient time for them to be learned results in frustration for both you and the players. The players must sufficiently master the objectives so that they can be used in a game situation. Rather, select, teach and practice only the objectives that are

essential to the game at your level of play. You can always add objectives to your plan as it is implemented, but you cannot recover time wasted on objectives that are not achieved.

Generally, the allotment of time to an objective should be based upon the following instructional needs and should be distributed across several practices. You should allow time:

1. to introduce the objective (tell the players what you want them to learn and why it is important)
2. for the players to try the skill and for you to assess their levels of performance
3. to teach the key elements of the skill and for the players to practice these elements
4. for skill refinement and automation so that the skill can be used in a game situation

Place the Objectives on a Season Calendar

Integrating the results of your planning decisions into a season calendar will give you a master plan of everything you need to effectively manage your coaching activities. The season calendar will convert your plans to practice outlines. It is the guide from which specific practice plans can be developed. Items that should be included on the calendar are listed in Figure 6-2.

SEASON CALENDAR ENTRIES

1. registration
2. team rosters
3. equipment distribution
4. game days and times
5. practice days and times
6. practice objectives
7. parent orientation
8. tournament dates
9. recognition banquet
10. special events

Figure 6-2. Items to include on a season calendar.

The most important part of developing a season calendar is the decision you make about what objective to teach and how much practice time you devote to each objective on a practice-by-practice basis. Using your season plan worksheet, select three to six objectives listed in the early season division that you wish to work on during your first

practice and enter them in the space labeled “Practice #1” on your season calendar. This process should be repeated for your second, third and subsequent practices through the early, mid and late season divisions. A season calendar worksheet you can reproduce is included on the last page of this chapter.

The two most important decisions in planning the season are deciding what objectives to teach and how much time you should spend teaching them.

You will spend less time in planning your season if you use the approach suggested here than if the task is done practice-by-practice throughout the season. The recommended process will also help you verify which skills you believe are most important as you run out of available practice time and are forced to either omit objectives from your plan or find ways to achieve them outside of the normal practice time.

In addition to the good feeling and confidence that comes with completing a season calendar, you will have developed the base necessary to systematically change your plans as unexpected

events develop. More importantly, you will know before the mid to late portions of the season whether or not your initial practices allocated too much time to some objectives in the early season, which left insufficient time for equally important objectives later on. A completed plan that has been implemented and refined is also an invaluable resource for next year’s coaching assignment or for new coaches coming into the program.

SUMMARY

Your role as a coach can be most appropriately filled through the leadership and instruction you provide within the context of practices and games. Clearly, those coaches who are most effective in facilitating their players’ achievement of appropriate skills, knowledge, fitness and attitudes are those who have clear objectives that pertain to these achievements. Organization of the season by selecting and then teaching objectives in an appropriate order, and for an appropriate amount of time, is a major step toward helping players enjoy the benefits of hockey. This same planning effort is an essential step in reducing some of hockey’s unwanted costs.

Section 3

American Development Model



Chapter 7

American Development Model

OBJECTIVE

- To understand USA Hockey's American Development Model

INTRODUCTION

The American Development Model is a nationwide initiative that provides local associations across the country with a blueprint for optimal athlete development that focuses on age-appropriate training utilizing long-term athlete development principles.

Recommendations have come from experts in ice hockey, child development, physical education and cognitive and emotional development. The ADM is about designing, implementing and committing to continual improvement of a world leading, age-appropriate training and competition model for kids. The ADM is about raising the bar for our players, coaches and administrators. We want our young players exposed to world class coaching at every level!

A complete overview of the American Development Model can be found at the end of this chapter.

WINDOWS OF OPTIMAL TRAINABILITY

Diagram 7-1 illustrates windows of optimal trainability for male and female athletes. These critical windows provide accelerated adaptation to

training. If a window is skipped or missed, the young athlete's chance to reach his or her full potential are decreased. Keep in mind that all systems are always trainable, yet with smaller degrees of adaptation to training over time. These critical periods vary among individuals, as each child is unique in his or her genetic makeup.

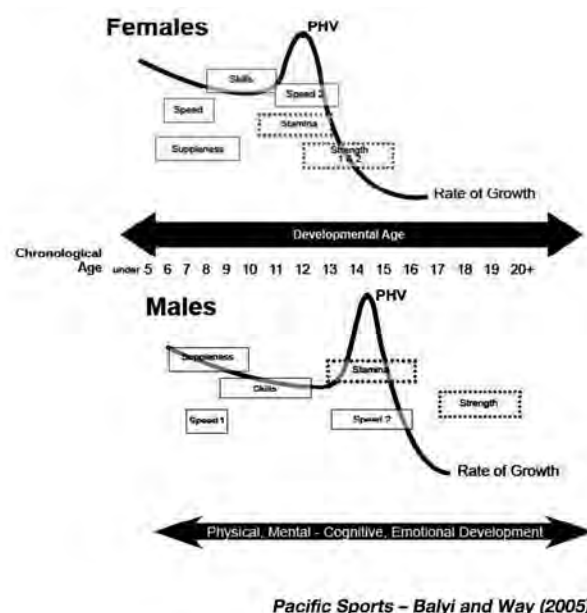


Diagram 7-1. Windows of optimal trainability.

The five trainable physical capacities and windows of optimal trainability are:

- **Stamina (Endurance):** The optimal window of trainability occurs at the onset of peak height velocity (PHV). This is more commonly known as the adolescent growth spurt. Aerobic capacity training is recommended before athletes reach PHV. Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.
- **Strength:** The optimal window of trainability for girls is immediately after PHV or at the onset of the menarche, while for boys it is 12-to-18 months after PHV.
- **Speed:** For boys, the first speed training window occurs between the ages of 7 and 9 years and the second window occurs between the ages of 13 and 16. For girls, the first speed training window occurs between the ages of 6 and 8 years and the second window occurs between the ages of 11 and 13 years.
- **Skill:** The window for optimal skill training for boys takes place between the ages of 9 and 12 and between the ages of 8 and 11 for girls.
- **Suppleness (Flexibility):** The optimal window of trainability for suppleness for both genders occurs between the ages of 6 and 10. Special attention should be paid to flexibility during PHV.

STAGE BREAKDOWNS

There are six key phases of growth and development in relation to physical activity.

Below is the all-important Learn to Train stage. Although there will be significant differences between individuals, all young people follow the same patterns of growth and development. The stage breakdowns that follow will provide an overview of each developmental stage. This includes (but is not limited to) vital information related to physical development, psychological development, USA Hockey's key focus, stage components, LTAD window of opportunity, training and competitive environment, coaching considerations and technical development.

The Level 1 manual will focus on the two introductory stages of long term athlete

development: Active Start and FUNdamentals. The Level 2 manual focuses on the Learn to Train phase of development. This phase is for players between the ages of 8 and 12. The Level 3 manual features the Train to Train, Learn to Compete, Train to Compete and Hockey for Life stages. As a coach, it will help you to be familiar with all phases of development. This will provide a base of knowledge as to where these athletes are coming from and where they are headed in relation to overall athletic development. For detailed information on the other stages of development, please visit admkids.com.

LEARN TO TRAIN

Ages 8-11 females • Ages 9-12 males

The objective of the Learn to Train stage is to refine overall sport skills and develop sports specific skills.

General Description of the Learn to Train Stage

This is the period of accelerated learning of coordination and fine motor control and is the critical stage for the acquisition of hockey skills. At this stage participants are developmentally ready to acquire the sports skills that are the cornerstones of all athletic development.

In late specialization sports such as ice hockey, early specialization can be detrimental to later stages of skill development and refinement of the fundamental sports skills. Participants should develop a solid base in a variety of sports in each of the physical literacy environments (e.g. swimming, athletics, gymnastics and skiing/skating).

USA Hockey's Key Focus for this Stage

- Continue to develop physical literacy.
- Continue to participate in three complimentary sports.
- Participants at this stage should learn solid basic skills in skating and puck control.
- There is no need at this stage to specialize at a specific skater position. However goalies may begin to focus on their position.

Programs

USA Hockey member clubs offer 10 & Under (Squirt) and 12 & Under (Peewee) programs at this stage.

Monitoring

Children in this stage are often beginning their growth spurt. Coaches and parents should keep track of regular height measurements (every 3 months at 10 and Under (Squirt), every six weeks at 12 & Under (Peewee)) to provide an indicator for the onset of peak height velocity (PHV). At the same time, flexibility, especially in the hamstrings and lower back, should be monitored. The growth spurt typically lasts 18 to 24 months.

Coach and Instructor Recommendations

Coaches must progress through the Coaching Education Program in accordance with the new rules effective with the 2011-12 season, and complete the online age-specific module(s) that corresponds to the age-level of play they are coaching. Additional CEP training is encouraged for coaches working within these two levels as this is one of the two most important LTAD stages.

LTAD Window of Opportunity

The Learn to Train and Train to Train stages are the most important stages in athletic preparation. During these stages we make or break an athlete.

- 'sports skills' window of trainability
- second 'speed' window for girls (ages 11-13+)
- beginning of window for aerobic 'stamina' (girls 11-14, boys 12+)

Components of the Hockey Learn to Train Stage Physical Development

Mastering of fundamental sport skills:

- Continue to encourage daily physical activity (formal and informal).
- Narrow focus to a minimum of three sports.
- At this stage participants are ready to acquire the general sports skills and hockey skills that are the cornerstone of all athletic development.
- Maintain and refine ambidextrous sports or sport movements (e.g. gymnastics, swimming, throwing with both hands, kicking with both feet).
- Participate in sports that require similar movement patterns

Monitor Growth

- Keep track of growth spurts by regularly measuring height (three months) and looking for a sudden increase.
- A growth spurt can last 18 to 24 months.

Early in the stage, at 10 & Under (Squirt), introduce a general fitness framework:

1. Warm-up
2. Rhythm and coordination runs both on and off the ice
3. Spatial awareness (jump distance with a number of changes in direction)
4. Rest and recovery (fuel breaks, meals and sleep)
5. Reaction time and agility
6. Focus on skill and execution
7. Cool down with a short stretch and muscle rebalance. This is important because of rapid growth of players' bones and soft tissues.

Later in stage, at 12 & Under (Peewee), use the same framework as 1-7 plus the following:

8. More speed work
9. Explosive strength in players' upper and lower bodies through jumping and gymnastic maneuvers
10. Develop general lower body and core stability.
11. More stretching at the end of training
12. Monitor the volume, intensity, quality and duration of training.

Throughout the stage:

- Develop strength using exercises that incorporate the player's own body weight, as well as medicine balls and Swiss balls.
- Continue to develop endurance through small area games and relays and develop flexibility through exercises.
- Speed can be developed by using activities that focus on agility, quickness and change of direction. Activities should be of short duration (less than five seconds).

Psychological Development

This is the sampling stage. Provide opportunities for the participant to try activities that focus on fun, pleasure and socialization.

Encourage goal setting that is process orientated:

- long-term goals (dream ahead)
- short-term goals based on skill development and not competitive results

Important psychological skills to develop:

- development of abilities to concentrate
- development of visualization skills
- deliberate effort: the ability to deliver effort and enjoy the feeling of the effort during the activity
- responsibility: the ability to associate joy with effort and competition
- success: the ability to take risk and accept failure as a normal occurrence of sport development
- begin to introduce mental preparation.

At this stage it is important to create an environment where participants want to play ice hockey. Practices must be varied, interesting and fun so they will want to continue. It is important to build interest in our sport, self-confidence and an enjoyment of performing.

Training and Competitive Environment

Formal competition can be introduced in this stage, although it must not divert the focus from training. Competitions should be limited to the local geographic area. Competition should be fun, and structured to address differences in training age and abilities. Athletes should be recognized for their success and achievement. Training should include small area games to encourage the application of skill techniques in game play. Small area games help develop a player's decision-making abilities.

10 & Under (Squirts)

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 70% training, 10% competition specific training (exhibitions/scrimmages), and 20% competition
- **Training Volume:** 3 to 4 times per week, with hockey session lengths of 60 minutes
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks per month, 7 months per year – a double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest
- **Team Composition:** Team composition will include a roster of 10-12 skaters and one goaltender. The physiological aptitudes of players at this age can easily handle the playing requirements of competing every other shift. This will increase each player's

individual puck touches within the competition and make the individual game more productive in player development terms.

- **Team Structure:** All players within the club should be grouped into teams of like abilities at two different levels, with the overall focus on evenly distributing the player ability pool across teams within in their skill levels. Teams should be divided into two groups of equal abilities for competition purposes (top 50%, bottom 50%). Training/practice sessions can include teams from both levels.
- **Competition Format:** This is the stage when club-to-club competition can be introduced. Competitions are played on full-ice with game lengths of 60 minutes.
- **Overall Activity Ratios:** 25% hockey, 25% fitness through sport, 50% other sports

10 & Under (Squirts)

- 95-100 total ice touches per year
- 3-4 times per week for 60 minutes
- 7 month season
- 75-80 practices and 20-25 games
- 10-12 skaters and one goalie per team

12 & Under (Peewee)

- **Training/Competition Ratio:** 70% training, 10% competition specific training and 20% competition
- **Training Volume:** Hockey four times per week
- **Training Year:** 4 weeks per month, 7 months per year – a double periodization calendar will aid structuring and help maintain player interest
- **Team Composition:** The roster size can expand to 15 skaters and two goalies.
- **Team Structure:** The club may begin to group players onto teams of like ability. While separation on ability is now allowed, the club should field more than one team at the higher levels in which the club participates. For example, if a club has enough players for three Peewee teams, it would need to field two or more Peewee A teams before fielding a B team. The club should balance the A teams in regards to talent level. The goal at this level is still the maximum individual development with a development process-driven model, not an outcome-based model.

- **Competition Format:** Full-ice competitions with game lengths of 60 minutes.
- **Overall Activity Ratios:** 25% hockey, 25% fitness through sport, 50% other sports

12 & Under (Peewee)

- 105-120 total ice touches per year
- 4 times per week for 60 minutes
- 7 month season
- 80-90 practices and 30-35 games
- 15 skaters and two goalies per team

Coaching Considerations

- Coaches must be cognizant that this is the critical stage for sports skill acquisition.
 - Players must be exposed to quality skill demonstrations, as this creates a mental picture for them to emulate.
 - Players must practice a high volume of skills training at a reduced intensity in order to achieve successful repetitions. As the success rate increases, intensity can increase. However, coaches must understand that performing skills incorrectly at a high rate of speed will only reinforce poor skills through this stage.
 - Coaches must understand that skill acquisition is reduced as fatigue level increases.
 - Coaches must manage the flow of information to their players. Limit instruction to four or five key points, as additional information will not be processed by the athletes.
 - Provide opportunities for the players to execute their skills in game situations. Players must begin to gain an understanding of how skills and tactics are applied within different playing situations.
 - Provide opportunities for repeated decision-making in practice. Solutions to common tactical situations must be developed.
 - Coaches must provide concise, specific feedback to the athletes. Tell them what you want done, not what not to do.
 - Monitor players' growth for the onset of growth spurts, especially at the Peewee level.
 - Introduce interval training.
- This is the window of optimal trainability for peak skill development of core hockey skills.
 - Emphasis is placed upon refining skating and puck control skills throughout the stage with a clear focus on correct technical execution.
 - agility in skating skills with and without the puck
 - refining edge control skills for balance and coordination
 - combined refined skating skills with puck control skills (multi-tasking)
 - attacking skills, 1-on-1 and 1-on-2 or more defenders (1-on-3)
 - Use small area games to apply core skills in decision-making situations.
 - Added emphasis on passing and receiving skills should be incorporated at the 12 and Under (Peewee) level with special concentration on receiving skills.
 - Add emphasis on shooting and scoring skills, including shooting off of a pass (one-timing the puck).
 - Body contact and angling basics should be refined.
 - Body checking skills are introduced at 14 & Under (Bantam) including the ability to deliver a check as well as receive a check. It is important not to overemphasize checking as to detract from core hockey skills development.
 - Offensive body positioning and puck protection skills.
 - Deception skills should be incorporated in all facets of the player's development:
 - skating (change of pace, change of direction, spins, etc.)
 - puck control (fakes and dekes on goalie)
 - passing (look off pass receiver, fake pass, etc.)
 - shooting (shooting off either foot, cadence, shoot in stride, camouflage, screen shots and looking off a shot, fake shot)

Tactical Skills

- Continue to encourage unstructured play at 10 & Under (Squirt). Emphasis should be on competing at the puck and winning 1-on-1 battles and loose puck races
- Introduce the four game situation roles: puck carrier, offensive support player,

Technical Development

Ensure motor learning issues are adopted into your coaching practice.

defender at the puck and defender away from the puck

- Develop basic situational role knowledge and experience in small area game play and specific situational drills.
- Apply core skills in basic hockey decision-making situations.
- At 12 & Under, basic team systems are introduced. However, the on-ice time spent should be minimal as to continue to take advantage of the skill development window of trainability.
- Introduce elements of coordinated attacks: 2-on-1, 2-on-2, 3-on-2, 2-on-3, etc.
- Encourage vocal communication between players both offensively and defensively.
- Reinforce ethics and rules (e.g. no hitting from behind).

Ancillary Skills

At this stage, participants should understand the importance of warm-up and cool down, hydration and of the proper fit and use of equipment.

- Off-season participation in two to three other sports (soccer, lacrosse, gymnastics, skating, tumbling, etc.) is recommended to develop core strength and balance.
- Players should be able to dress themselves in their hockey gear and tighten their own skates at 10 & Under (Squirt).

- Participants should be learning how to listen to and follow instructions.

Lifestyle (Fun, Adventure, Social, Music and Art)

Expose the participant to a wide range of cultural and lifestyle opportunities.

Instill an understanding of healthy training habits:

- warm-up and cool down
- staying hydrated
- rules and ethics of ice hockey
- healthy diet

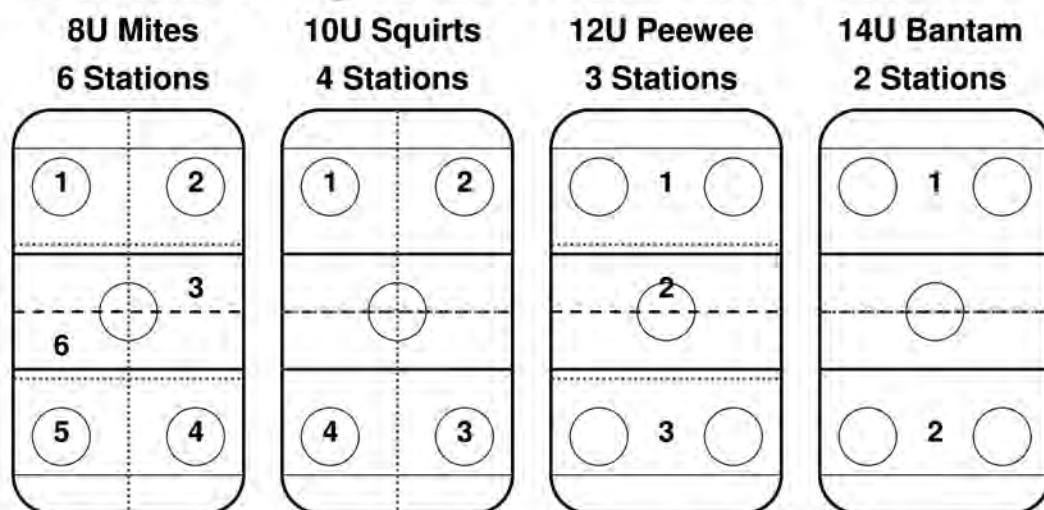
Instill an appreciation for healthy lifestyle:

- importance of school and education
- importance of family and friends
- importance of daily physical education and sports

PRACTICE PROGRESSION ICE UTILIZATION

Diagram 7-2 shows some of the recommended methods for dividing the ice into stations. Station work will help your players get more puck touches and the necessary repetitions to continually develop and refine basic skills. Ice time is your most valuable resource as a coach and skill-based practices featuring small area games and a variety of stations will help you run efficient practices with a high energy level.

Practice Progression – Ice Utilization



Older age groups can incorporate stations breakdowns from younger groups

Diagram 7-2. Recommended ice utilization.

REVIEW: *American Development Model*

A PLAN FOR LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT

The ADM was endorsed by the USA Hockey Board of Directors at its 2009 Winter Meeting and has also been endorsed by the National Hockey League. The ADM furthers our growth and development efforts as it will provide our member associations, for the first time ever, an optimal development blueprint for youth players that will lead to a better experience for our current players and also help attract new players to our sport.

It's hard to put into words the excitement and buzz that has been and will continue to be generated by this new initiative. It will take time for local associations around the country to educate their constituents on the merits of adopting the American Development Model, but there's no doubt that the principles of the program are right for kids.
— Ron DeGregorio, USA Hockey President

As Americans, we are a competitive people and our country places a tremendous importance on winning. In some cases it is to our detriment, but there can be no doubt that our society rewards and cherishes excellence. In ice hockey, we have grown from our seat at the kids' table to one with the grown-ups. As a hockey nation we are now competitive at every event that we enter. Yet for Americans, second best has never been good enough. Our enrollment numbers are the second most among all hockey-playing nations and yet we have not grown into our full potential.

The developmental system in the U.S. has evolved over time. Our current structure is not one that was planned; it is one that evolved into a multi-faceted organization with many different avenues. While diversity is one of our great attributes as a nation, a clear pathway to excellence has never been defined by USA Hockey. Over a decade ago, to address some of the issues within our system, USA Hockey took a bold step with the creation of the National Team Development Program (NTDP). The NTDP has raised the bar on elite player development within the United States. Ten years ago one rarely heard the word "development" within the hockey

community, but now it is the buzz word. The NTDP has played an important role as we have grown into a challenger at each event. However, as Americans we are not content with second place and it is now time to move from challenger to champion.

Change is the only path that will move us towards our goal. As the old saying goes, "If you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you have always got."

Rationale Behind the American Development Model

USA Hockey started with a review of research that has taken place in child and athletic development around the globe. Elite performance studies from multiple sport bodies, governments as well as other endeavors such as music and the arts were evaluated. Through the review of current research, it was quickly concluded that to truly address player development, a completely new way of looking at USA Hockey's structure must be undertaken. Critical development begins at a very early age. As children mature, they each progress during the same developmental stages through the growth and maturation process. Along this path, certain aspects of these stages must be addressed at the appropriate time intervals. Without developing skills and certain physical and mental attributes at the proper time, the long-term prospects of becoming a truly elite athlete are diminished.

Research has shown that we cannot just focus on a few older players; an encompassing strategy must be followed. As we evaluated the current research, variations of Istvan Balyi's long-term athlete development (LTAD) principles are being employed around the globe by more than 100 government health ministries and sport National Governing Bodies. Within hockey, there is no doubt that countries like Sweden, Finland and the Czech Republic produce high-end NHL players. Their numbers are especially impressive when one considers the populations and player numbers from those countries. In each of those countries, long-term athlete development principles are at the core of their development model.

REVIEW: American Development Model

Long-term athlete development is a generic, conceptual framework for athlete development in sport that can be used as a basis on which to ‘re-align,’ or make more consistent, existing systems and structures. It has been developed by Istvan Balyi, an internationally recognized coach educator, and is based upon a consensus of evidenced research about how young people develop sporting ability, linking more closely the coaching and development of players to their physical and psychological growth.

The ADM is a long-term athlete development plan for the sport of ice hockey. It takes into consideration the guiding LTAD principles that are widely accepted around the globe. Consistent with LTAD, the ADM:

- 1. integrates training, competition and recovery programming with relation to biological development and maturation
- 2. offers equal opportunity for recreation and competition
- 3. is participant/athlete centered; coach driven; and parents, officials, administration, sport medicine & sport science supported

It should be recognized that much of LTAD is nothing new. The majority of the research on which it is based is widely accepted, and has been used to underpin physical education teaching for many years. The difference that LTAD brings is a ‘packaging’ of this theory for mass understanding and a mechanism for applying the theory to better integrate whole sports development systems (i.e. coaching, training, playing, competition, etc). It is also important that our USA Hockey membership understand that it is not just our hockey people that endorse a LTAD plan, but that sports science and development experts from around the globe endorse this model and are adopting this methodology for their own sports.

All young people follow the same pattern of growth and development, although there are significant differences between individuals in the timing and magnitude of these changes. In relation to physical activity, there are seven key phases of growth and development. The relevant ‘stage’ of the LTAD hockey model for each phase of growth and development is described below.

LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT HOCKEY MODEL

PHASE	STAGE	AGE
Early Childhood	Active Start	Male 0-6 years Female 0-6 years
Late Childhood	FUNDamentals	Male 6-9 years Female 6-8 years
Adolescence Early Puberty	Learn to Train	Male 9-12 years Female 8-11 years
Adolescence Late Puberty	Train to Train	Male 12-16 years Female 11-15 years
Early Adulthood	Learn to Compete	Male 16-18 years Female 15-18 years
Early Adulthood	Train to Compete	Male 19-23 years Female 18-21 years
Adulthood	Train to Win	Male 19+ years Female 18+ years

Chart adopted from Canadian Sports Centers (2006)

LTAD Foundation of Research, Principles and Tools

Long-term athlete development has at its foundation 10 different elements of sport science and child development research. When considering the structure of any athlete development program, these elements must also be considered.

10 Year – 10,000 Hour Rule

It takes years of organized practice to become an expert performer. Research shows this is true of developing any skill, such as learning to play an instrument or playing sport. This is sometimes referred to as the ‘10 year – 10,000-hour rule’ relating to the need to practice for three hours a day for 10 years. Many researchers believe this is just a minimum. The bottom line is that it takes an enormous amount of work and time to become an elite athlete. This is done through a diverse sports movement and sports skills background. Once this foundation is laid, it takes years of deliberate practice to develop an elite performer at the highest level.

A significant number of players that play in the NHL were never drafted. This means that, at 18 and 19 years of age, nobody was even willing to take a late-round chance on their potential to make it. Hockey is not an early specialization sport and our programs

REVIEW: American Development Model

must include a long-term developmental pathway that provides opportunities for our elite players into their early 20s. This is why USA Hockey endorses the college hockey path, as it provides the widest range of developmental opportunity over time. Many players don't reach their potential until their early to mid-20s.

FUNDamentals

All sports begin with basic fundamental movement and core sports skills. The ABCs of movement include agility, balance, coordination and speed, while core sports skills include running, jumping, skating and throwing. It has been shown that children who have a strong, broad-based foundation in the fundamental movements and sports skills from a variety of sports increase their potential for future success in sports. Whether this is confidence to lead a healthy and active life in sport or to become an elite athlete, this strong foundation in the fundamentals will help children reach their full potential. Without this foundation, children may never reach their genetic capacity.

Specialization

Sports are classified as either early or late specialization sports. An example of an early specialization sport is women's gymnastics in which, due to growth, girls are potentially retiring from their sport at 14, 15 or 16 years of age. As with other contact/collision sports, ice hockey is classified as a late specialization sport. Hockey players don't reach their full potential until after full growth maturity. Specialization at an early age limits children from acquiring a broad spectrum of athletic movements and skills that may limit or put a cap on their overall athletic potential. When players specialize too early they can create imbalances in musculature, increase the potential for burn out and limit their athletic potential by not developing a broad base of athletic movement skills.

"Young athletes who participate in a variety of sports have fewer injuries and play sports longer than those who specialize before puberty. Well-rounded, multi-sport athletes have the highest potential to achieve."

— Journal of American Academy of Pediatrics

AAP Guidelines:

- Encourage athletes to strive to have at least one to two days off per week from competitive athletics, sports specific training and competitive practice (scrimmage) to allow them to recover both physically and psychologically.
- Encourage the athlete to take at least two to three months away from a specific sport during the year.

Windows of Optimal Trainability

There are identifiable stages during a child's physical and psychological development that offer optimum opportunities to develop particular attributes, such as basic movement skills (agility, balance, coordination and speed), basic sports skills (running, jumping, throwing, skating and striking) and physical capacities (flexibility, endurance, and strength). Missing these optimum opportunities has been shown to significantly affect a child's ability to reach his or her full potential.

In our current system, training in early years focuses on outcomes (winning) rather than the developmental process (optimal training). As Balyi states, "Damage done between ages 6-10 and 10-16 cannot be fully corrected (players/athletes will never reach their genetic potential) and national training or sport centers receiving mediocre athletes, regardless of funding and expertise, cannot recover from the 'damages' of earlier training."

Elite player development and a sound structure at the 12 & Under level for broad-based skill development are not mutually exclusive. What do we currently produce in the U.S.? We have an over abundance of average players and very few truly elite players at the highest levels (NHL), especially when our numbers are taken into consideration. This is due to a lack of the proper focus on training through the appropriate 'windows of optimal trainability.'

Diagram 7-3 illustrates windows of optimal trainability for male and female athletes. These critical windows provide accelerated adaptation to training and, if skipped or missed, decrease a child's chance to reach his or her full potential. It must be kept in mind that all systems are always trainable, yet with smaller degrees of adaptation to training over time. In our current system, the window of

REVIEW: American Development Model

opportunity on skills development (9-12) for male players is missed through over-competition and under-training.

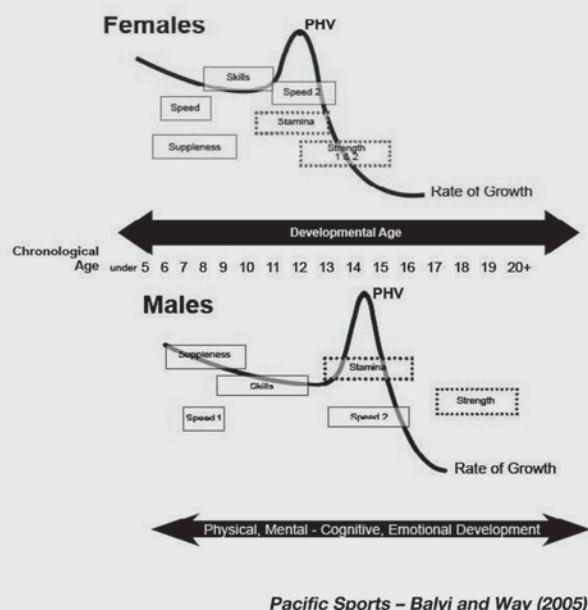


Diagram 7-3. Windows of optimal trainability.

These critical periods vary between individuals as each child is unique in his or her genetic makeup. While these critical periods follow general stages of human growth and maturation, scientific evidence shows that humans vary considerably in the magnitude and rate of response to different training stimuli at all stages. Some players may show potential for excellence at age 11, while others may not indicate their promise until age 15 or 16. Consequently, a long-term approach to player development is needed to ensure that players who respond slowly to training stimuli are not 'shortchanged' in their development.

The five trainable physical capacities and windows of optimal trainability are:

- **Stamina (Endurance):** The optimal window of trainability occurs at the onset of peak height velocity (PHV). This is more commonly known as the adolescent growth spurt. Aerobic capacity training is recommended before athletes reach PHV. Aerobic power should be introduced progressively after growth rate decelerates.
- **Strength:** The optimal window of trainability for girls is immediately after

PHV or at the onset of the menarche, while for boys it is 12-to-18 months after PHV.

- **Speed:** For boys, the first speed training window occurs between the ages of 7 and 9 years and the second window occurs between the ages of 13 and 16. For girls, the first speed training window occurs between the ages of 6 and 8 years and the second window occurs between the ages of 11 and 13 years.
- **Skill:** The window for optimal skill training for boys takes place between the ages of 9 and 12 and between the ages of 8 and 11 for girls.
- **Suppleness (Flexibility):** The optimal window of trainability for suppleness for both genders occurs between the ages of 6 and 10. Special attention should be paid to flexibility during PHV, due to rapid growth.

Additional capacities have been identified that must also be considered throughout an athlete's development and, in addition to the five physical capacities, make up a holistic approach to training.

- **Structure/Stature:** The height of a person before, during and after maturation can be utilized by a coach or parent. Tracking growth as a guideline for developmental age can allow for planning to take advantage of the critical 'windows of optimal trainability.'
- **Psychology:** Sport is a physical and mental challenge. The ability to maintain high levels of concentration, yet remain relaxed with the confidence to succeed, is a skill essential to long-term performance in sport. This skill also has the potential to transcend sport and affect our everyday lives. To develop the mental toughness for success at the highest levels, training programs are required that address the specific gender and LTAD stage of players. The training programs should include key mental components identified by sport psychologists: concentration, confidence, motivation and handling pressure. As a player progresses through LTAD stages, the mental training aspect will evolve from having fun and respecting opponents; to visualization and self-awareness; to goal setting, relaxation, and positive self-talk. To master the mental challenge of sport, these

REVIEW: American Development Model

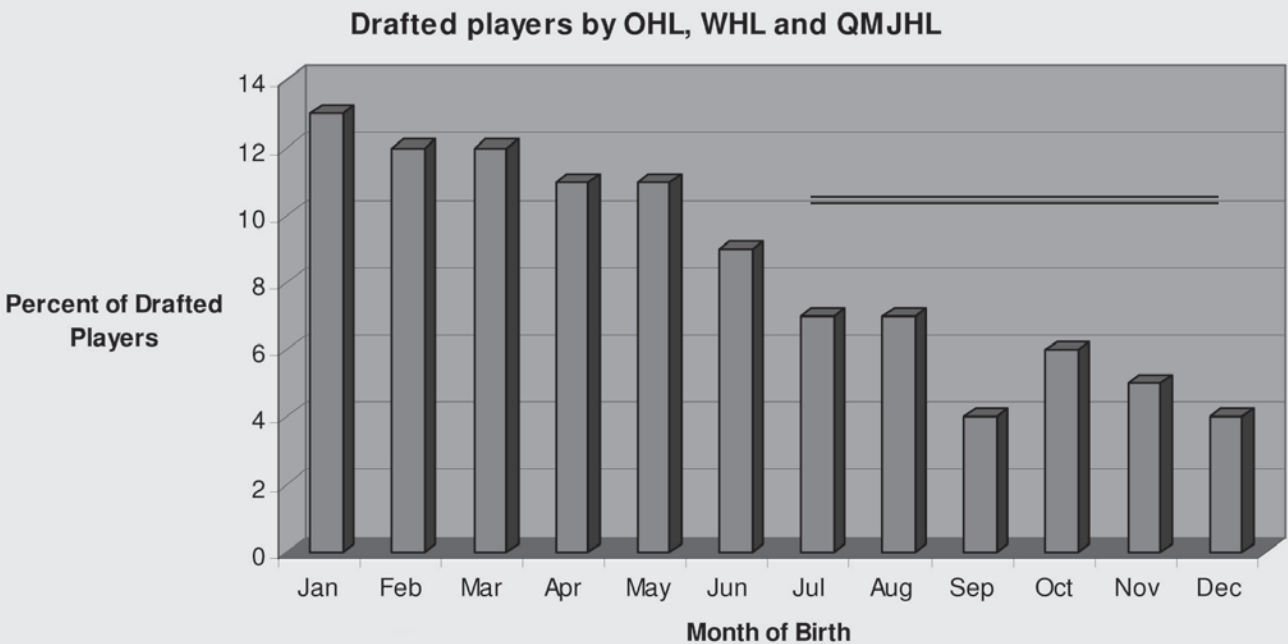
basic skills are then tested in increasingly difficult competitive environments. Ultimately, the planning, implementation and refining of mental strategies for high-level competition will have a large impact on elite performance. Consequently, the mental training program is critical at all stages of LTAD, as dealing with success and failure will determine continuation in the game and physical activity in general.

- **Sustenance:** This category refers to all aspects of replenishing the body for sports and general health. It covers a wide range of topics from nutrition and hydration to rest and recovery. Fatigue, whether it comes from a single practice/competition or builds up over time through a lengthy schedule, can be combated through a proper lifestyle. Whether our children become elite athletes, or we look for better performance in school or just to lead a healthier life, we will all thrive with better education and following a plan that replenishes our physical and mental needs.
- **School:** Sports schedules must consider the demands placed upon children from an academic perspective. Education must be emphasized, and the demands of sport

should complement the academic schedule, not conflict with it. The stress of class work, examinations, boyfriend and girlfriend issues, and school peer groups play a role in the fatigue and stress levels on our athletes. Coaches and parents must monitor these factors to balance the sports schedule to allow for maximum development both on the ice and in the classroom.

Biological Age vs. Chronological Age

Biological age should be considered through our development and identification process. As an example, one only need look at the number of early month birth dates that make up our Under-17 and Under-18 National Teams. Our current system forces players into a compete-to-win, 'peak by the weekend' system that rewards early maturing players who may not have the ability to be elite performers. Late developing players are excluded and cut, consequently leaving the sport or being segregated to a recreation program that limits their training opportunities. These late developers may have huge long-term potential but are eliminated from our system.



Canadian Sports Centre: Developing Physical Literacy (2008)

Diagram 7-4. Drafted players in the Canadian Developmental System.

REVIEW: American Development Model

Currently, most athletic training and competition programs are based on chronological age. However, athletes of the same age between ages 10 and 16 can be four-to-five years apart developmentally. Thus, chronological age is a poor guide to segregate adolescents for competitions. Because hockey is a contact sport, early maturing players are favored within our youth structure. The late developer is eliminated when he or she may possess better long-term athletic ability.

Looking at Diagram 7-4, it is obvious that in the Canadian developmental system and ours, potential late month birth date players have been excluded from the high-performance track. It is highly unlikely that there are fewer players with long-term athletic potential born in the last quarter of the year than in the first quarter.

“Training Age” refers to the age at which athletes begin planned, regular, serious involvement in training. The tempo of a child’s growth has significant implications for athletic training because children who mature at an early age have a major advantage during the Training to Train stage compared to average or late maturers. However, after all athletes have gone through their growth spurt, it is often later maturers who have greater potential to become top athletes provided that they

experience quality coaching throughout that period (see Diagram 7-5).

Not all players have the potential to become elite players. The American Development Model recognizes this by offering two levels of content from the Train to Train stage forward. The high performance content is aimed at those players who have been identified and who choose to attempt to be potential elite performers, while the standard content offers a reduced level of commitment more appropriate to the majority of players who will form the basis of club teams of the future. The split between the levels of content at the early part of the Train to Train stage are relatively small as it is deemed to be such an important stage in developing a broader base of potential elite players. However, the differentiation between hockey and other sports may necessitate the divergence at this stage. It is important to note that research suggests that there can be numerous players who follow the standard track through the Train to Train and into the Train to Compete stages who will have the potential to become elite performers. This is especially true if they have a diverse sports movement background through playing multiple sports during the FUNdamental and Learn to Train stages.

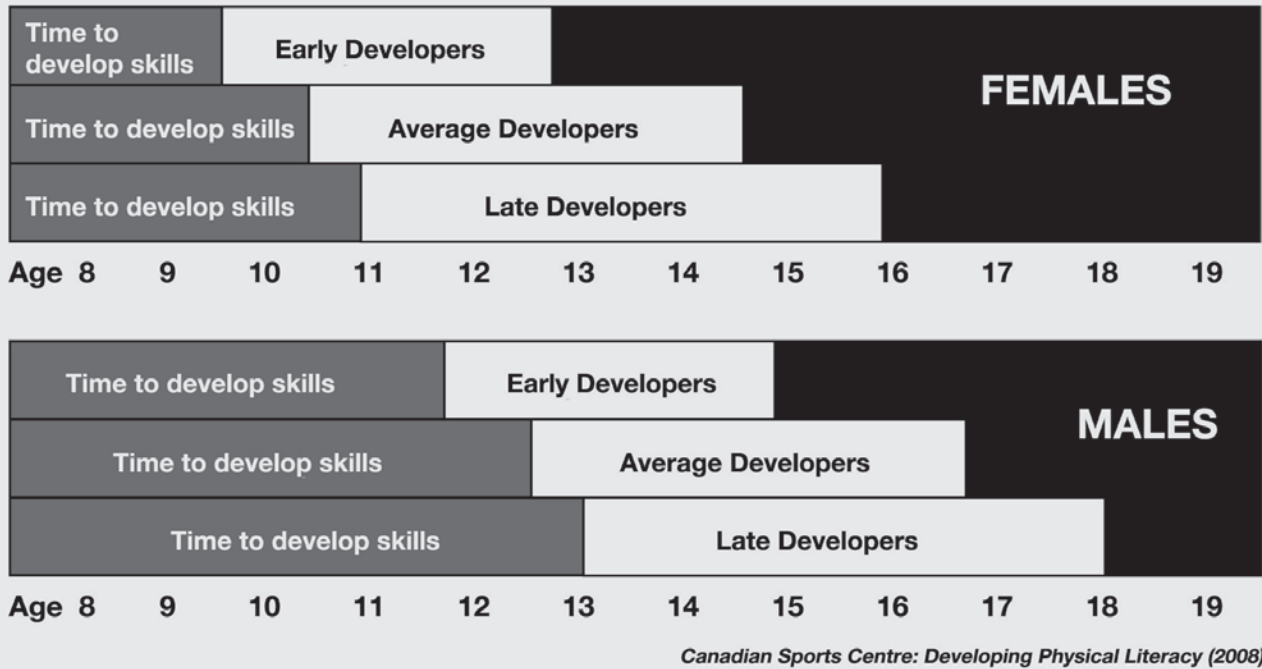


Diagram 7-5. Training age.

Periodization

Periodization is the practice of segmenting the calendar year into appropriate time intervals for preparation, competition and rest and recovery. Athletes at different stages of their development require different training plans to optimize their development through their growth and maturation. The science behind periodization has been used on the international stage with great success in many, many sports. Unfortunately, sometimes a sport's traditions are placed in front of the athlete's needs when planning a periodization schedule. This has an impact on maximizing the player's development.

The Great One's Message to Parents:
Let Your Kids Have Fun

"In youth hockey, in most cases, it's really important for kids to play other sports, whether it's indoor lacrosse or soccer or baseball. I think what that does is two things. One, each sport helps the other sport. And then I think taking time off in the off-season - that three or four month window really rejuvenates kids so when they come back at the end of August, they're more excited. They think, 'All right, hockey's back, I'm ready to go.'" — Wayne Gretzky.

Gretzky was a multi-sport athlete himself growing up, as he also excelled in baseball and lacrosse, quoted from "Great One's Message to Parents: Let Your Kids Have Fun" (*Globe and Mail*, 9/26/2008 - Eric Duhatschek).

Training to Competition Ratios

Through a child's growth and maturation, the athletic development model needs change through different stages. The appropriate training-to-competition ratios need to be adhered to in order to maximize a player's time and potential. When a heavy emphasis is placed on competition at an early age, two situations occur. First, ice time is directed toward games, which reduces the amount of quality deliberate practice time. And second, the focus becomes more outcome based (winning) and less process driven (learning the game). There are all kinds of arguments put forth as to why we must allow the imbalance in our training-to-competition ratios to continue, and certainly the one-to-one ratio has its place within the recreational Hockey for Life track. However, for our Tier I, Tier II and high performance players that are part of our elite development path, the correct ratios must be adhered to at the appropriate ages.

System Alignment

The framework for long-term athlete development is influenced by many factors. We have clubs, schools and ice arena facilities all with varying interests. To maximize a player's development needs, it is important those entities work together and become mutually supportive as each has its part to play in advancing our game. Players will best develop in a system that is clearly defined, logically structured and based upon consistent principles. We need a structure that is athlete centered and looks at the individual player's development.

In a team sport, it is appropriate to look at the collective whole and to provide the direction and lessons that only a team sport can provide. However, we must always consider that each individual is at a different point through the stages of his or her development (early maturer or late maturer, for example). The goal is to define our sports system with a pathway that addresses the needs of each individual and maximizes their development as they progress through our system. The LTAD principles show us that at the earlier ages, both the Hockey for Life group and the ones that end up as high-performance player, should initially be held to the same pathway. Our current sport system mistakenly allows for the separation of the perceived Hockey for Life group and the perceived high-performance group before any reliable determination can possibly be made. To maximize each player's potential, we need the major parties to re-evaluate current practices and base new practices on current legitimate research instead of commonly held beliefs in sports myths and the old "that's the way it has always been done" attitude.

Physical, Mental, Cognitive
and Emotional Development

Training should consider the mental, cognitive and emotional development of the athlete, in addition to the physical, technical and tactical (including decision making skills) components of development.

A major objective of LTAD is a holistic approach. This includes ethics, fair play and character building through the various stages. Programming should be designed to consider the athlete's cognitive ability to address these concepts.

REVIEW: *American Development Model*

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is a key underlying principle of long-term athlete development. This ensures that we are always evaluating our sport and are readily able to respond and implement new sports science innovations and observations. LTAD provides a continuously evolving vehicle for change for all emerging facets of physical education, sport and recreation to ensure systematic and logical delivery of programs to all ages.

Long-Term Goals for USA Hockey and the ADM

USA Hockey has a core goal to grow the game of ice hockey within the United States. We believe that the ADM will provide a pathway to excellence for those who have the ability, as well as a greater overall hockey experience for all of our players. The LTAD principles on which our model is founded address the core needs of all of our players.

Along with the National Hockey League, USA Hockey has the mutual goal of seeing more American players compete at the highest level of the game.

LTAD Stages for the American Development Model

See the individual LTAD stages of development for specifics to the American Development Model.

- Active Start
- FUNdamentals
- Learn to Train
- Train to Train
- Learn to Compete
- Train to Compete
- Train to Win
- Hockey for Life

Special acknowledgement goes to LTAD expert, **Istvan Balyi and Canadian Sport For Life**. The two have been the principal developers of LTAD.

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LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- www.admkids.com

Chapter 8

Growth & Development: Modifying Your Practice By Age

OBJECTIVES

- To provide coaches with an understanding of basic ice hockey and motor movement skills that are age specific
- To provide coaches with a plan to design their practices and drills to be age specific
- To point out to coaches that players must have the opportunity to progress according to their own physical, mental, and social rates of development

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental idea of development in the younger age groups is to emphasize the basic skills of skating, passing, stickhandling, shooting, goaltending, etc., as well as to improve motor movement skills and promote the fun of playing ice hockey.

Learning a variety of systems and tactics should be limited. If complicated systems and tactics are introduced too early in a player's development, it may cause frustration and stress along with these negative effects:

- not developing skills properly
- stifling creativity
- not developing proper technique
- not giving the player the opportunity to fully understand the game
- not enhancing long-range player development
- not developing the total athlete

Understanding age-adjusted practices and drills will enable the coach to systematically develop a player's skill progression and evaluate exactly where that player is in terms of his or her ability level. Age-adjusted practices and drills will also help the

coach determine when to introduce new skills and game-like drills into practice.

The primary goals of youth ice hockey coaches should be aimed at developing the players comprehensively (physically, mentally, socially and emotionally), and to give them an environment in which to build self-esteem as well as a love for the game.

Coaches must be able to recognize players' ability levels in order to make good sound judgements about practice planning, teaching and drill designing. By learning the main elements of age-adjusted practices and continually evaluating the athlete's progress, the coach can determine whether the child is mature enough for new skills and concepts of the game.

AGE-ADJUSTED PRACTICES

With a well-adapted practice plan and properly selected drills, players have the best opportunity to improve. Once a coach understands and appreciates age-adjusted practice components, she or he will be able to determine if her or his teaching is adjusted correctly according to the difference in the physiological development of the players.

The following is a list of the most common traits of youth development for ages 10 and under.

Child's Development (6-10 years of age)

- relatively small height, weight, and strength growth
- little capacity to stretch muscles
- motor combinations start to become automated
- movements flow very easily
- learning is best achieved by seeing the right execution and later imitating
- have difficulty comprehending complex and multi-task skills
- strong feelings for fairness and fair play
- willingly practice but have very little patience
- contact with friends and the coach leads to positive results in practice and acceptance in a group

Aim of Practice

Developing fundamental practice techniques in:

- skating (forward, backward, crossovers, crossunders, turns, starts and stops)
- puck control
- passing and receiving
- shooting (wrist, backhand, flip)
- stick checking
- small games and creative play
- understanding positional play
- one-on-one situations at the basic stages
- fun drills
- emphasis on coordination training

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT (AGES 6-10 YEARS)

Physical Development

Physical growth (i.e., development of strength, endurance, running speed, coordination, and balance abilities) occurs continuously.

Motor Movements

The part of motor movement that becomes combination movement ability is developed quickly in the 6-12 year olds. Those movements enable catching and hitting a ball, being able to avoid obstacles, kicking a ball, shooting a puck, etc.

Levels of Ability 6-8 Year Olds

Drills should focus on balance and motor movement. Motor movement skills include hopping, running, jumping, throwing, catching, rolling and hitting.

Suitable Drills: (to help the athlete understand how the body functions)

- coordination drills: alternating hand-foot, hand-eye, foot-hand, foot-eye rhythms
- balance drills: different types of balancing, jumps, hops, skipping, etc.
- motor movement combinations: obstacle course (steeple chase), shipwreck, somersaults, combination movements, etc.
- eye-hand (foot) motor drills: throwing and catching, juggling a balloon with different body parts (hands, feet, knees, elbows), and dribbling drills with hands and feet

Level of Ability 9-10 Year Olds

Motor movement combinations include running, throwing and catching.

Suitable Drills:

- eye-body motor movement combinations: high jump and running long jumps, relays of different types, reaction games, apparatus drills (obstacle course, balance training)
- eye-hand (foot) motor movement combinations: throwing, running, skipping, hopping, passing and shooting

COMPONENTS OF AGE-ADJUSTED PRACTICES

Motor

Children's body movements vary. Sometimes it is simple and relaxed, and occasionally the child makes unnecessary movements. The development improves by using effective coordination between eye and hand, and quickness in the motor movements.

Psychologically/Socially

Children can often develop their own games and take on new challenges. They are at the stage when they need a variety of activities to keep their interest in practices.

Objectives in Training

Fundamentally, one who has learned “to discover his or her body” finds it easier to learn new technical elements. For example, it is hardly profitable to devote time to teach an 8-year-old to skate on the outside edge when crossing over if he or she hasn’t experienced the feeling of gliding on the outside edge. Also, teaching the correct positioning of the feet, pushing-off, etc. is ineffective when the youth’s physical development is insufficient. This is not to say that it is wrong to teach the correct positioning of the feet in skating at this age. However, the coach should devote an equal amount of time to working with the players on coordination, balance and experiences of space.

Shooting the puck reasonably well requires strength and timing often not developed in 8- to 10-year-old players. So teach technique, but do not be discouraged by results.

Eye-Body Coordination

Children of this age have difficulty orienting themselves in “space” situations and distinguishing right and left. This is noticed in faceoff formation when there is no circle. Some players have great difficulty remembering their previous positioning.

Players may also have difficulty “looking” around the rink and, therefore, have trouble understanding how they should position themselves. As their skills

mature, coaches should teach them elementary concepts.

Aims of Practice

Small games, fun drills, creative free time and skill development should dominate practice sessions and be cross-ice in nature. Lighter pucks and smaller nets may be used to make meaningful instruction of the technical elements easier, which are very important elements in development at this age. Fun should be a major component of every practice session.

Other elements in practice should include:

- instruction and a great deal of practice on the basic fundamental skills
- introduction to small games in restricted areas
- instruction and numerous drills in puck control, passing/receiving, and movement
- general physical drills that promote coordination and balance

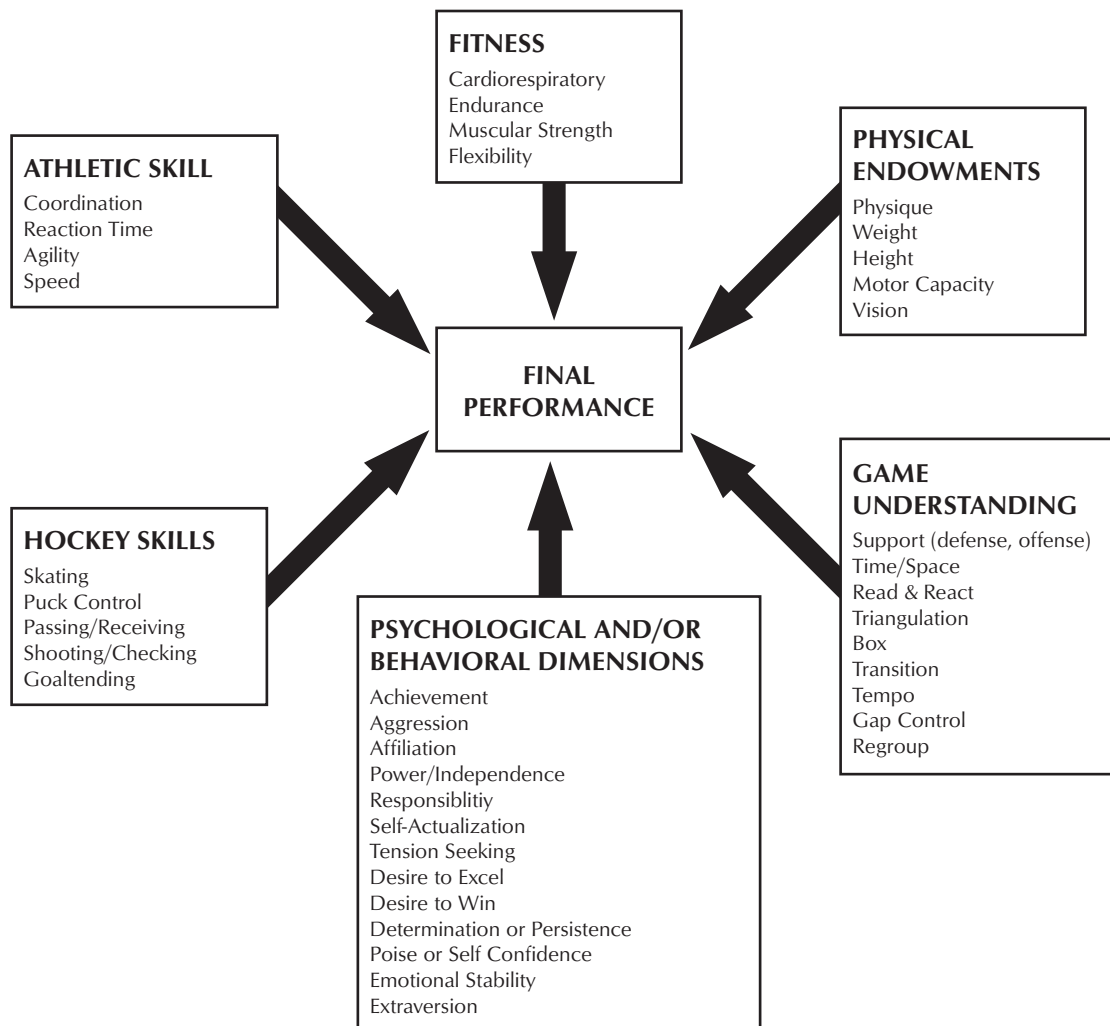
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AGE GROUPING IN SKILL DEVELOPMENT

ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE



ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE IS MAINLY DEPENDENT ON FOUR MAJOR GROUPS OR FACTORS

- the specific type and level of physical fitness mandatory for that sport
- the acquisition of the specific skill required for excellence in a specific sport
- the natural ability, capacity and physical endowment that an individual receives via genetic inheritance
- the general psychological make-up of the person in terms of his or her personality, motivational and emotional strengths

These factors and the performances resulting from an interaction of them are also definitely influenced

by the general environment in which the person lives and the specific conditions under which the situation is occurring.

This applies to all levels of performance, from novice through skilled.

Coach must be aware of individual differences in each player. When all factors are at optimal level, then performance will be optimal.

Regardless of how much ability, skill or fitness a player possesses for a sport, the success or quality of his or her performance will, in the final analysis, probably depend on his or her particular psychological make-up, personality structure, motivation and emotional control that he or she possesses.

SKILL DYNAMICS

CHILD

*Awaken Interest
Have Fun
Learn Basic Skills*

6-10 YEARS OF AGE

Develop the whole person

1. mentally, physically, socially
2. by beginning to teach players to become their own coaches

New movements

Introduction to new skills

Love of hockey – love of feeling good

Primary Skills:

1. Ready Position – weight shift, edge balance, push down, push out, rhythm, push-touch, coast, almost touch, stationary slide board movement

Introduce Hockey Skills:

1. Skating – forward, forward stops, forward control turns, forward crossovers, backward C - cut swizzles, backward stops, backward crossovers, mohawk, forward to backward, mohawk backward to forward using heel to heel stepouts
2. Puck Handling – eyes up, wrist roll, short/long combinations of puck movement, yoyo, fake to backhand then pull to forehand, advanced slip through, slip around, slip across, sit - show - stick, small games
3. Passing – pass with slide, guide, spin from heel to toe, point stick toe on follow through, forehand, backhand
4. Shooting – shoot-slide-guide-spin puck from heel to toe, and point stick toe on follow through, forehand, backhand; shoot-slide-guide-spin puck from heel to toe, shift weight, roll wrist, point toe of stick, wrist, backhand shot
5. Small games across the width of the rink
6. Races
7. Competition skill drills
8. Development – competition first, winning second

LEVEL 1

EARLY PRE-PUBERTY

*Versatility
Proper Technique*

10-12 YEARS OF AGE

Develop the whole person

1. mentally, physically, socially
2. by beginning to teach players to become their own coaches

Refinement – better execution

Fun – define fun

Love of hockey

Elevate speed skills

Enjoyment is fun with a purpose

Read – React:

1. Skate – posture, weight shift, balance, edge control, smooth stride forward and backward, good push-underers on control turns, forward and backward crossovers, two foot stop, one foot stop forward and backward
2. Puck Handling – eyes up, review and refine
3. Stickhandling – fake shot forward, escapes, protect the puck, review learned moves
4. Shooting – eyes up
5. Passing – eyes up
6. Flip pass, board pass, drop pass, surround the puck to forehand
7. Teach offense first
8. Showdown on goalie
9. 1-on-1 concept
10. 1-on-2 concept
11. 2-on-2 concept
12. 3-on-2 concept
13. Introduce support
14. Teach plays – trailer, trailer-off wing, drop pass, back pass, give-and-go pass, pass-return pass
15. Triangle concept
16. Breakout concept
17. Attack concept
18. Back check concept
19. Stick check
20. Rub-out
21. Box defense
22. Development is first, competition is second
23. Game understanding
24. Ice time is a great coach
25. Competition skill drills
26. Small games, races teach offensive skills; offense is spontaneous creation, defense is coordinated discipline and hard work
27. Time alone working by yourself and developing skills is the incubator of great skills

LEVEL 2

LATE PRE-PUBERTY

*Preparation for Increased Training
Increased Training*

12-14 YEARS OF AGE

Develop the whole person

1. mentally, physically, socially
2. by beginning to teach players to become their own coaches

Enjoyment – fun with a purpose

Working with a new body – fine tune new abilities by learning new skills

Quality execution

Quality repetition

Faster execution with quality

Love of game

Love of finesse

Primary Skills:

- The Right Way is always the right way. Repetition the right way is skill development. Complacency is the enemy of development.
1. Aggressive skating with edges, puck handling, refine giving and taking pass, snap shot, slap shot, checking better, faster, stronger, teach checking as a skill
 2. Team play review
 3. Team support tactics
 4. Expand offensive plays
 5. Build a house in the offensive zone
 6. Cycle
 7. Cycling in man advantages
 8. Regrouping
 9. Forechecking systems – conservative, aggressive
 10. Box defense
 11. Learn to read and react
 12. A player must work by him or herself:
 - a. watch hockey games, analyze plays
 - b. watch the best player on the ice
 - c. improve your skating by open skating
 - d. shoot pucks at a target
 - e. use inline skates, ball and a stick in the driveway for improved eye-hand coordination
 13. Game understanding
 14. Ice time is a great coach
 15. Teach athleticism – play other sports

LEVEL 3

Section 4

Skill Development



Chapter 9

Puck Control

OBJECTIVES

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

INTRODUCTION

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

FOREHAND SHIFT

The forehand shift is one of the most important ways you can teach your players to stickhandle around an opponent. The characteristics of this move are described below and illustrated in Figure 9-1.

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

- slowing down when approaching the defender
- not using the body to shield the puck from the defender



Figure 9-1. Forehand shift.

Suggestions for Coaching

- Teach your players to set up the move with a slight move to the backhand (and/or a

head and shoulders fake to the backhand side). This move should be strong enough to get the defender to react. As the defender reacts, initiate the shift in the other direction.

- As the players advance in skill, allow them to use the lower hand only to hold the stick. This frees the upper hand so that it can be used to ward off the defender.



Figure 9-2. Backhand shift.

BACKHAND SHIFT

The backhand shift must be developed to compliment the skill developed in the forehand shift. As your players master both of these skills and can reliably use them at full speed, they can create enormous difficulties for the defensemen. This move is illustrated in Figure 9-2.

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

- keeping the puck too close to the body
- watching the puck rather than the defender

Suggestions for Coaching

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



CHANGE OF PACE

In this move, players skate under control at moderate speed. Just as they reach the defender, they accelerate to full speed. Figure 9-3 shows the sequence of events involved in the change-of-pace move. Puck carriers should approach the defender at moderate speed, then accelerate and cut around the defender carrying the puck on his or her forehand side. Note that the puck is kept far away from defenders, and that the puck carriers should use the arm closest to the defender to aid in brushing past them. The combination of timing and fast skating will allow the puck carrier to beat the defender. This maneuver may also be done to the backhand side.

Key Elements

- Use distinct acceleration.
- Shift the puck to the backhand and/or forehand side.

- Shield the puck with the arm closest to the defender.

Common Errors

- accelerating prior to reaching the defender
- failing to execute the forehand and/or backhand shift
- leaving the puck too close to the defender



Figure 9-3. Sequence involved in the change-of-pace move.

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

SLIP THROUGH

In this move, the puck is pushed through the defender's stick and skates or between the skates. This move is illustrated in Figure 9-4.

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

- inappropriate timing for pushing the puck through

Suggestions for Coaching

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



Figure 9-4. Executing the slip through.

SLIP ACROSS

The slip across is another important move to teach your players to help them beat a defender one-on-one. To execute this skill, shift the puck to one side and then slip the puck between the skates and the heel of the stick of the defender. The slip across is illustrated in Figure 9-5.

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

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

Suggestions for Coaching

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



Figure 9-5. Execution of the slip across.

SLIP AROUND

The slip around should be executed in the following manner. First, fake right, and slip the puck around the defender's right side. Pull the stick back and skate around the left side of the defender. Pick up the puck and be ready to jump over the defender's stick. This series of moves is illustrated in Figure 9-6.



Figure 9-6. Slip around.

Key Elements

- Make a good fake to commit the defensive player.

Common Errors

- getting the defensive player to commit before executing the move

Suggestions for Coaching

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

FAKE SHOT

The fake shot is used to slow down or freeze the defender, allowing the offensive player to advance around him or her easily. It is initiated by shifting the puck to the forehand side and initiating a wrist or slap shot motion. A shoulder drop or lower hand slide is beneficial to create the deception. The puck is then shifted to the forehand or backhand side. This is illustrated in Figure 9-7.

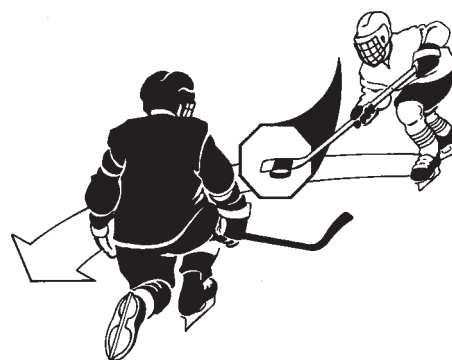


Figure 9-7. *Executing the fake shot.*

Key Elements

- an effective fake shot

Common Errors

- telegraphing that the shot is a fake

**Suggestions for Coaching**

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

THE MAGIC WAND

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

This fake movement of the puck, combined with a head or shoulder fake, often catches the defender leaning or committing to one direction or the other. At this moment, the attacker may play the puck to his or her forehand or backhand and accelerate around the opposition (Figure 9-8).

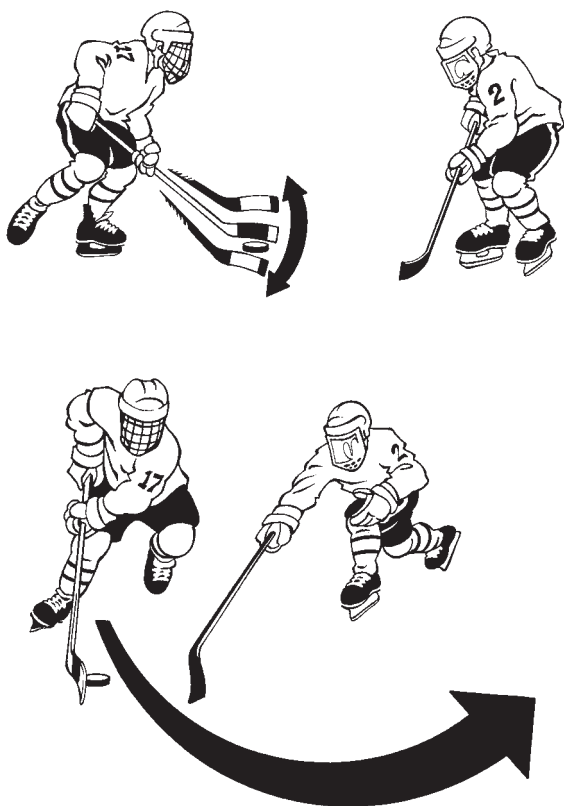


Figure 9-8. *The magic wand.*

Key Elements

- waving the stick above the puck as if to dribble it
- utilizing a head or shoulder fake to get the defender to commit to one direction
- accelerating around the defender

Common Errors

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

Suggestions for Coaching

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

PUCK OFF THE BOARDS

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



Figure 9-9a. *Puck off the boards.*

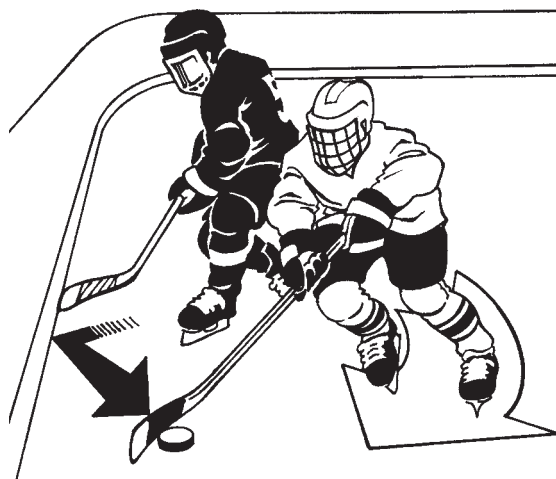


Figure 9-9b. *Puck off the boards.*

Key Elements

- The puck should be shot off the boards at approximately a 45 degree angle at only moderate speed. The puck will come off the boards at the same angle at which it hits the boards. Angle of incidence = angle of reflection.

Common Errors

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

Suggestions for Coaching

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

STOP AND GO

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

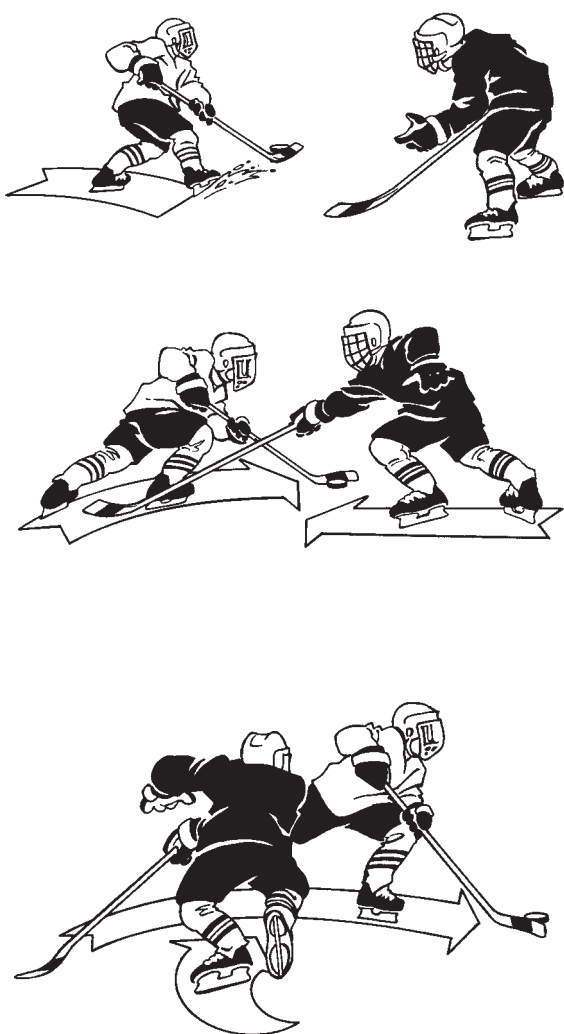


Figure 9-10. Executing the stop and go.

Key Elements

- the ability to accelerate quickly from a virtual standstill

Common Errors

- stopping too close to the defender
- not accelerating quickly after hesitating

Suggestions for Coaching

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

DOUBLE SHIFT

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



Figure 9-11. Double shift.

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

- trying to complete this maneuver too close to the defender

Suggestions for Coaching

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

GRANDSTAND

This is an advanced maneuver. It is executed as follows: Crossover to the right, with the puck and stick extended to the left. Crossover to the left, with

the puck and stick extended to left. Pull the puck back to the skates, deflecting it from the blade of the skate to the blade of the stick. Shift left, and go.

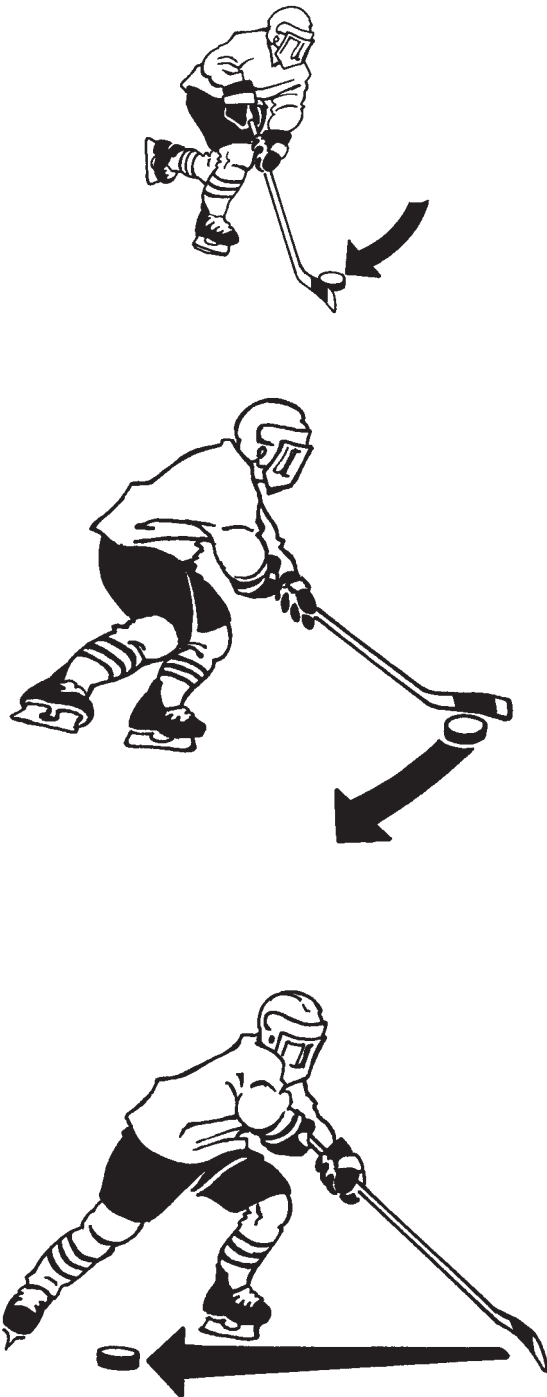


Figure 9-12. *Executing the grandstand.*

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

- slowing down in order to complete the maneuver

Suggestions for Coaching

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

SKATE CONTROL

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

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



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



3. Control the puck along the boards with the skates.



Figure 9-13. Skate control.

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

SPIN AROUND

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

The spin around may be done to both the backhand and forehand sides, as illustrated in Figure 9-15.

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

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

Suggestions for Coaching

The players must master the art of shielding the puck from the defender with their bodies.

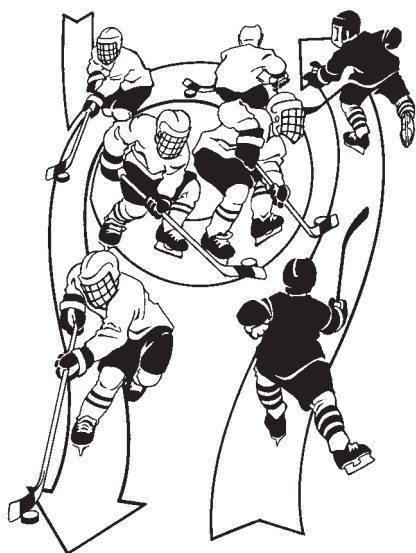


Figure 9-14. Executing the backhand spin around.

SLIP THROUGH AND SPIN

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

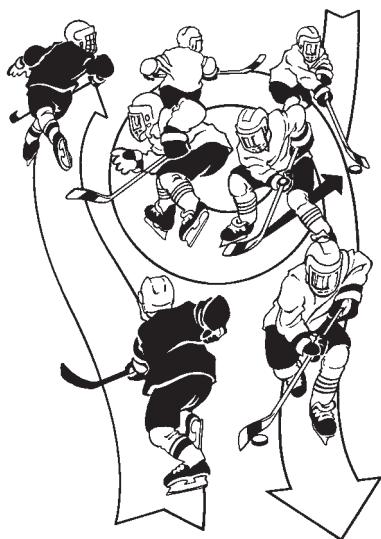


Figure 9-15. Executing the slip through and spin.

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

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

ESCAPE TO AVOID A CHECK

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

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

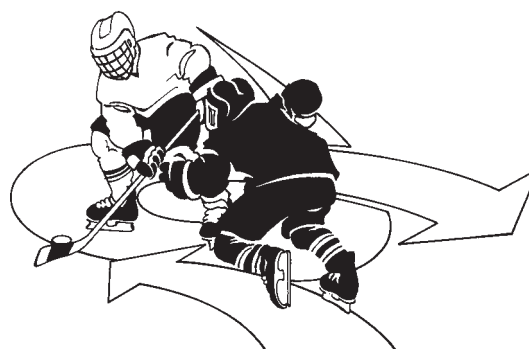


Figure 9-16. Executing the escape to avoid a check.

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

- turning into the defender instead of away

Suggestions for Coaching

All of these escape maneuvers should be practiced in a stationary position to begin with. As the players begin to gain confidence in each maneuver, they should increase speed and then go against passive resistance.

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html

Chapter 10

Shooting

OBJECTIVES

- To describe various shots
- To describe proper shooting areas of the net
- To describe various ways of attacking the net

SHOOTING

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

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

Consider the following statement by Valeri Kharlamov, the great Russian player: “When one

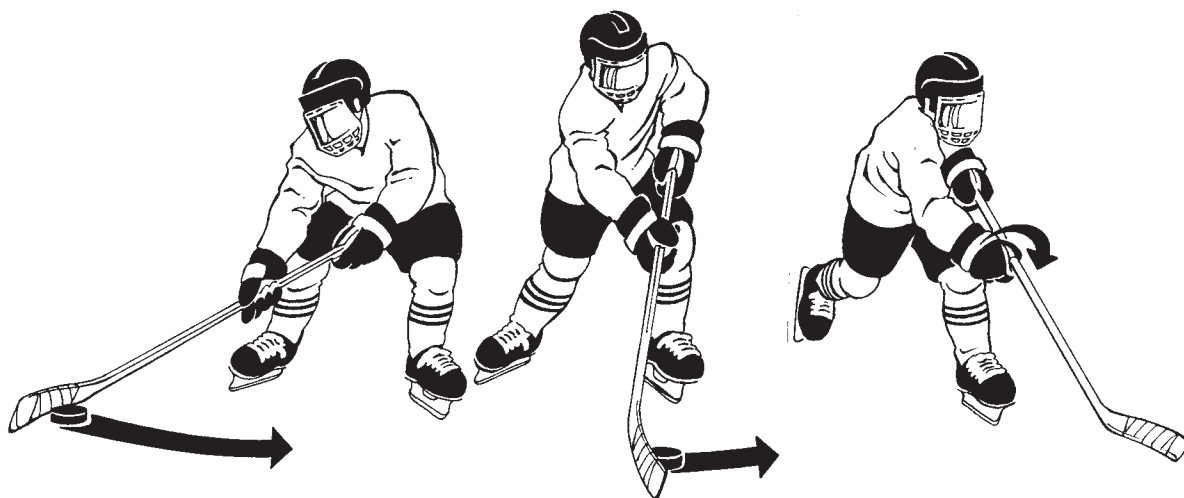
shoots, there are three things needed for a successful shot: precision, power and suddenness.”

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

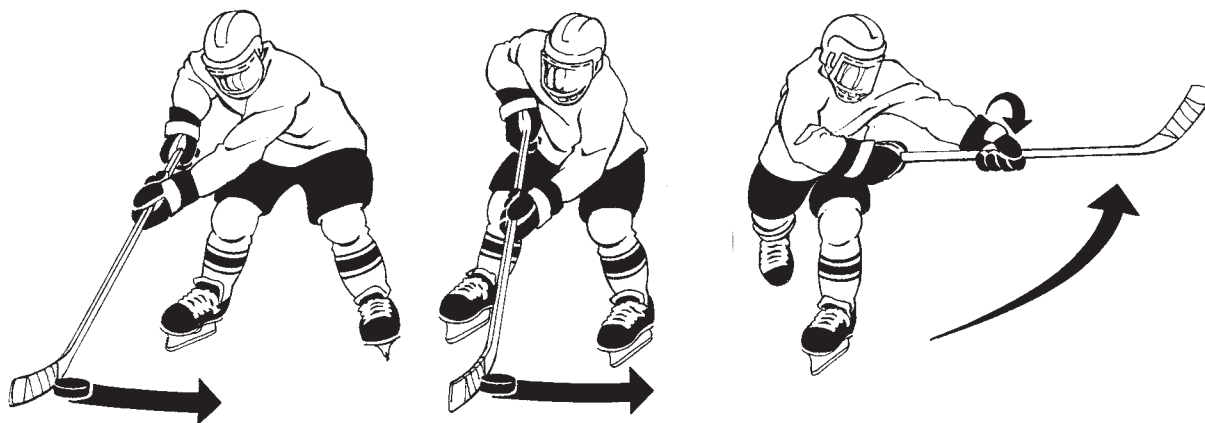
The potential goal scorer’s repertoire should consist of the following types of shots:

- Wrist Shot — forehand and backhand
- Snap Shot
- Flip Shot
- Slap Shot
- Tip-in or Deflection

FOREHAND WRIST (OR SWEEP) SHOT



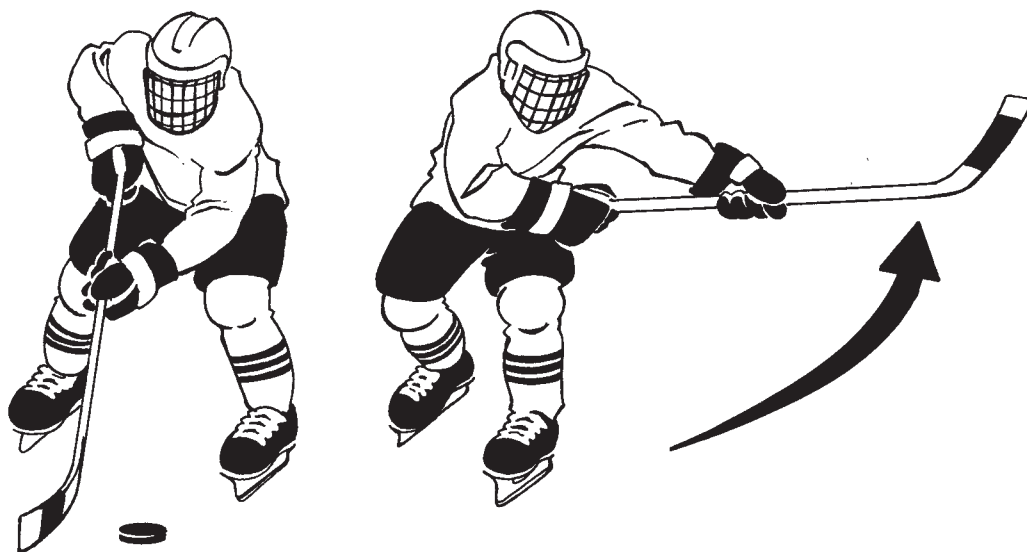
BACKHAND WRIST (OR SWEEP) SHOT



FOREHAND SNAP SHOT



BACKHAND SNAP SHOT



FOREHAND FLIP SHOT



BACKHAND FLIP SHOT



SLAP SHOT



TIP-IN OR DEFLECTION



KEY ELEMENTS FOR SHOOTING

Wrist Shot

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

Backhand Wrist Shot

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

Snap Shot (Forehand and Backhand)

- The blade of the stick is brought back slightly behind the puck.
- The blade of the stick is snapped through the puck toward the target, striking the ice just behind the puck.
- push - pull hard wrist action
- weight transfer in the direction of the shot

Flip Shot (Forehand and Backhand)

- initial puck position in front of the body
- quick wrist snap that results in blade rotation from straight to an open position
- exaggerated upward movement of the blade

Slap Shot

- stick drawn back and upward
- weight transfers to the front
- The blade of the stick strikes the ice just behind the puck.
- puck contact in the middle of the blade

SHOOTING ON THE NET

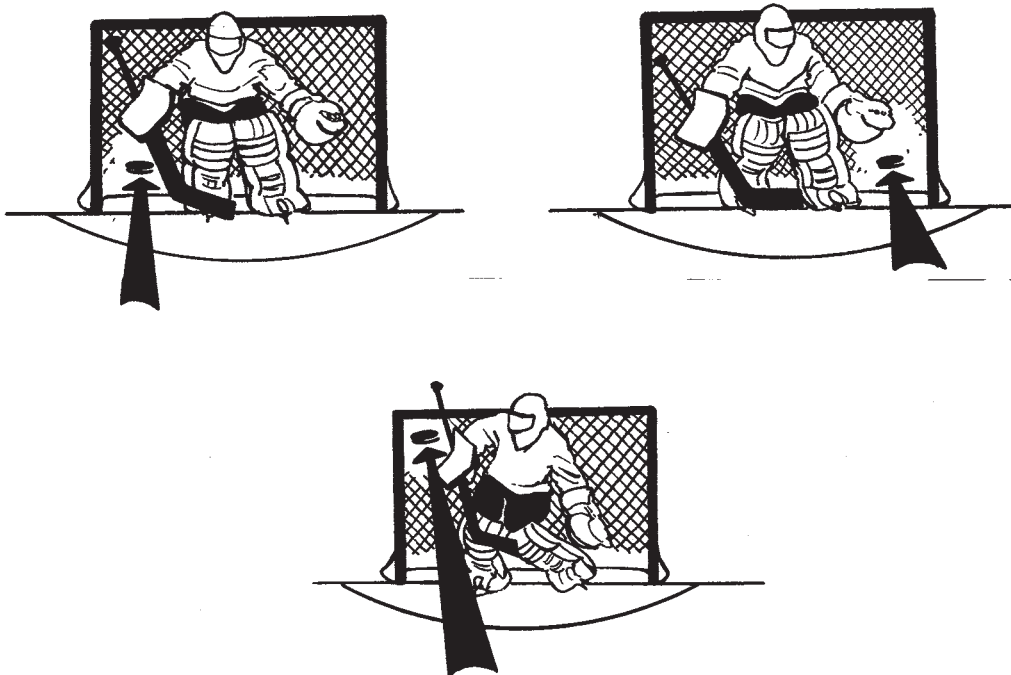
For a moment, let us consider the opponent — the goalie. The goalie is perhaps the most dedicated to his or her position of all of the players on the ice. Most goalies consider a goal scored against him or her as a personal violation; they do not give up easily. Goalies have one thing in mind: get as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

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

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



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



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

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

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

movement of the goalie’s eyes, and possibly the goalie’s body.

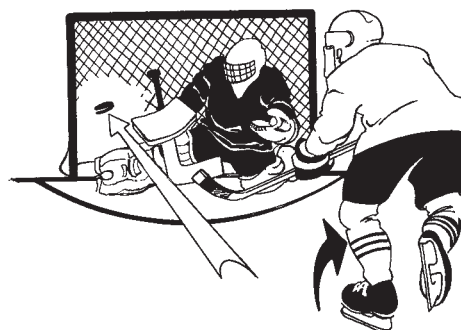
It is also worthwhile to study the goalie, both in warm-up and throughout the game, to see if he or she has obvious weaknesses or plays in such a way as to encourage the attacker to try an unusual shot. An example of this might be a goalie who holds his or her hand extremely low. This might encourage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

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

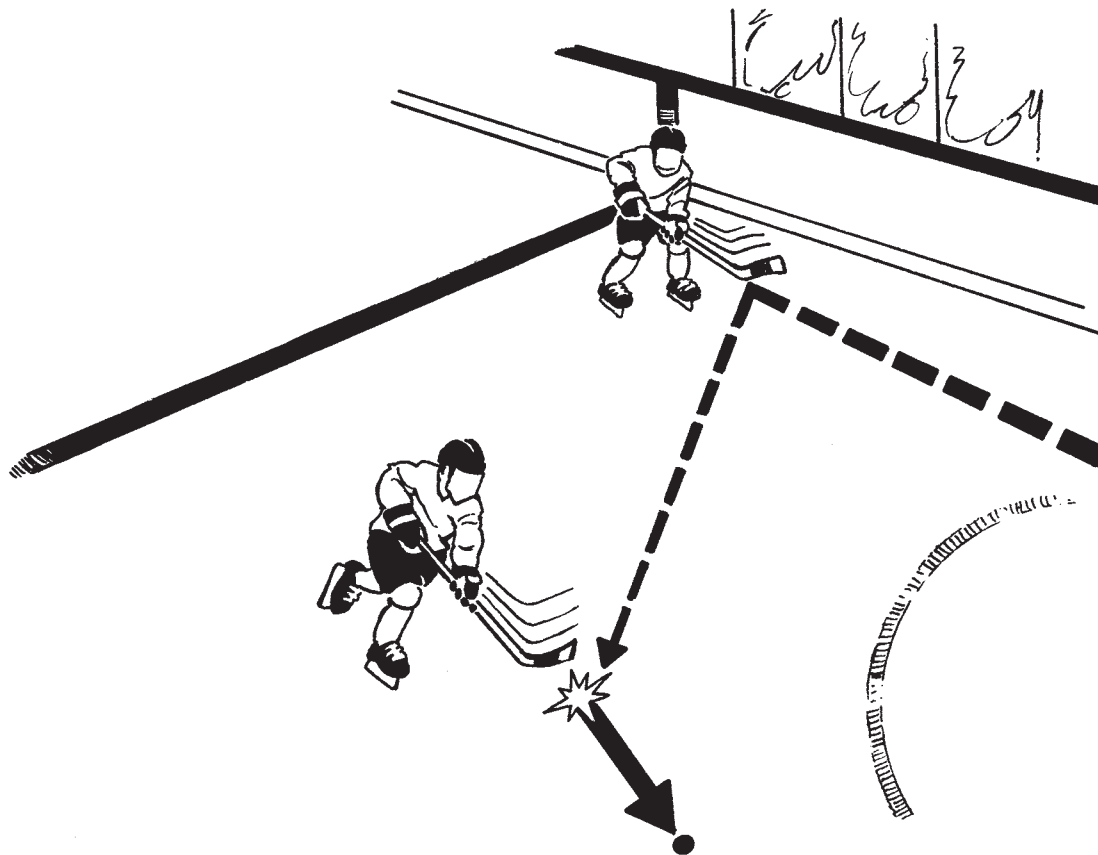
1. Shoot while continuing to elude defenders (in stride)



2. Shoot off either leg



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



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



5. Shoot while being checked or closely defended



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

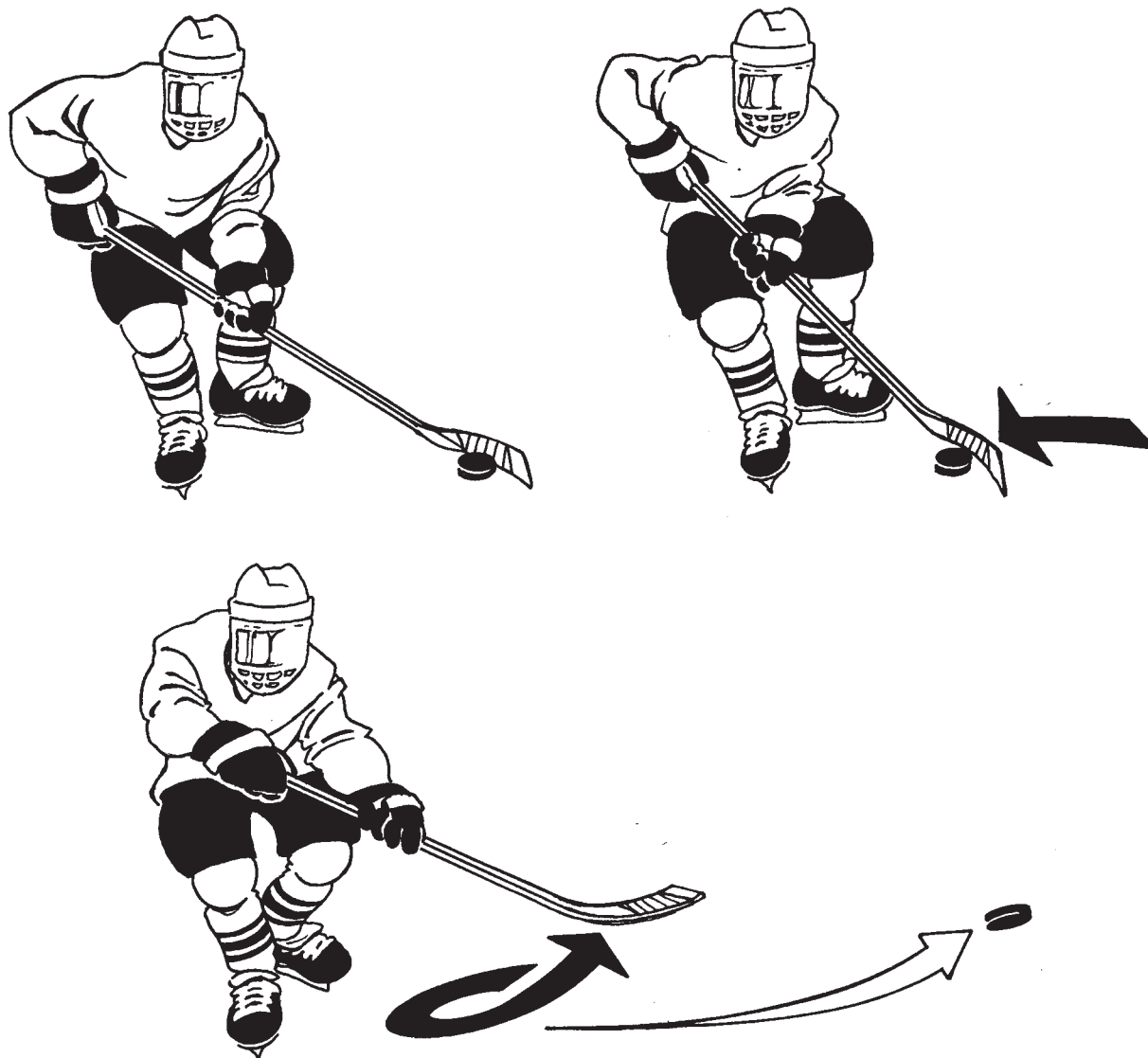
While the attacker must be prepared to shoot immediately when a good opportunity presents itself, the best shot is from in front of the goal, 12 to 15 feet from the goal line. Thus, faking and other preparatory moves must occur 20 to 25 feet up ice.

In order to get the most power into a shot, a player must use his or her body. This is best accomplished by striding off the foot nearest the puck and onto the foot away from the puck as the shot is made. This is called shooting “in stride.” However, as

mentioned above, don’t lose a shooting opportunity simply because you are not “in stride.”

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

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



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

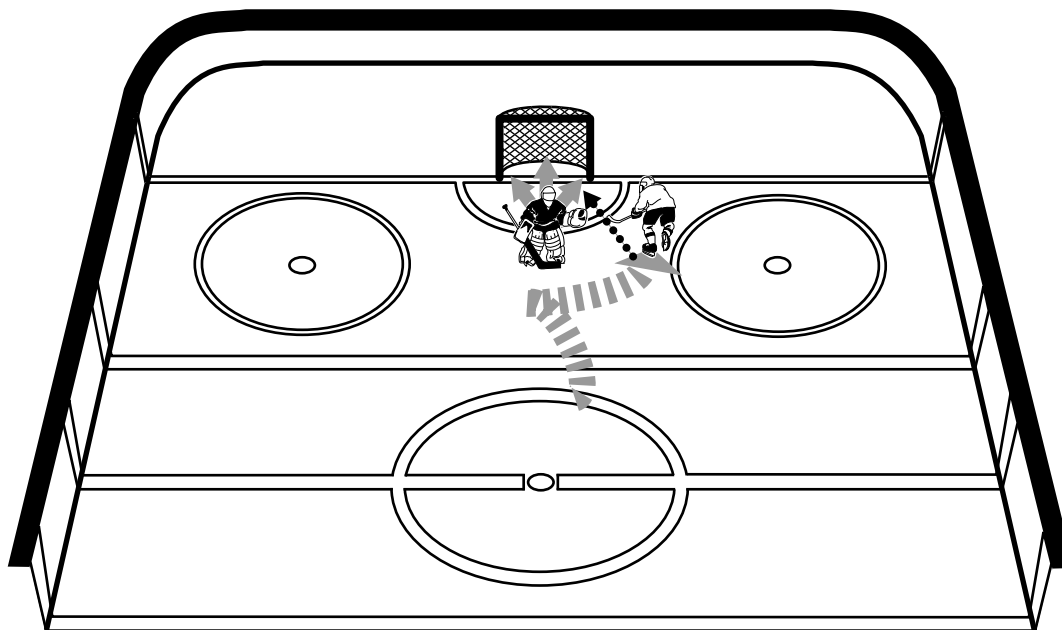
Should a player shoot or deke? If the opportunity to shoot is good, players should take advantage with a quick shot. Deking provides more opportunities for error by the offensive player as well as decreases the

angles needed to be covered by the goalie. Nonetheless, a properly-executed deception by the attacker can fake out the goalie and produce a beautiful, exciting play.

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

Two things are of great importance to the attacker:

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



Let us consider the attack from three points:

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

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

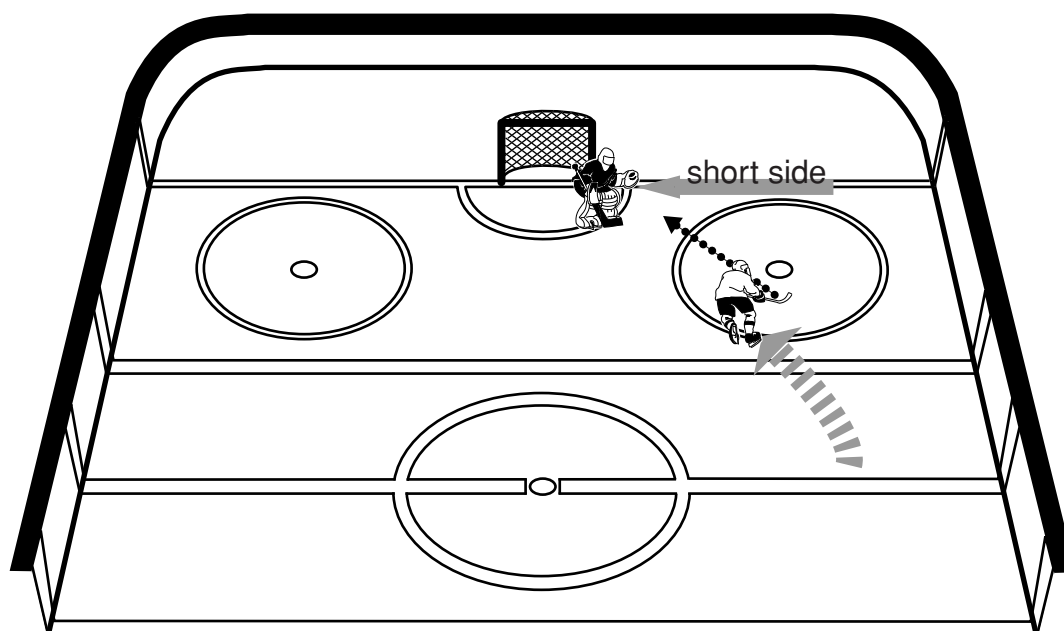
Front Attack on Goal

By moving the puck, the attacker should make the goalie adjust his or her position laterally in the goal. Be sure to maintain the speed of the attack. Faking

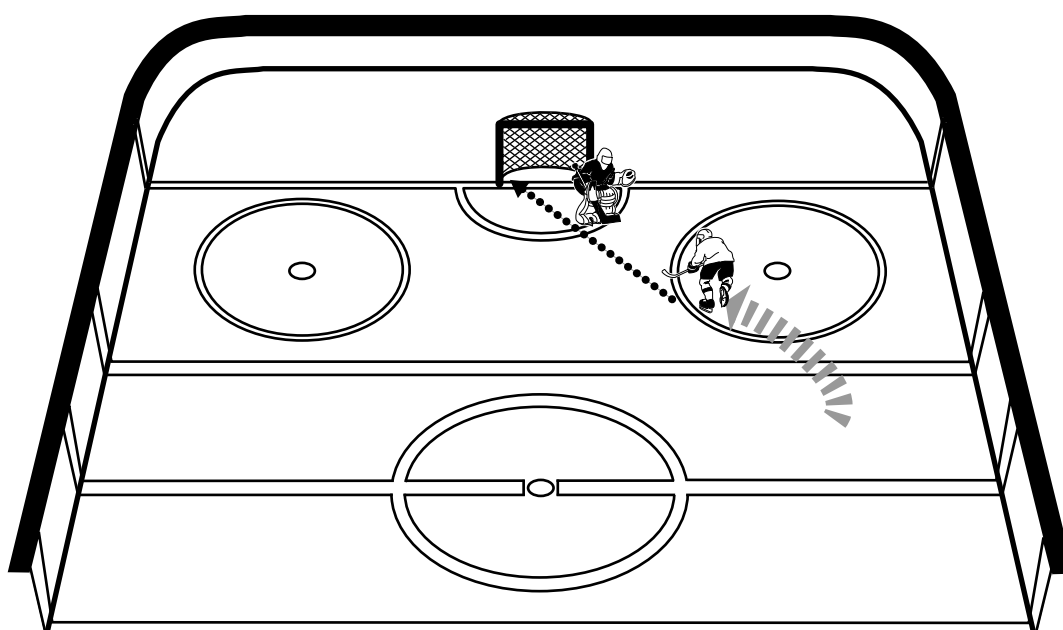
one direction, shifting quickly to the other side and shooting can be effective, but may also give the goaltender the best opportunity to react and stop the shot. Faking and going to the same side, or a double fake, is likely to be a more effective attack. Faking a shot, pulling back and then quickly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

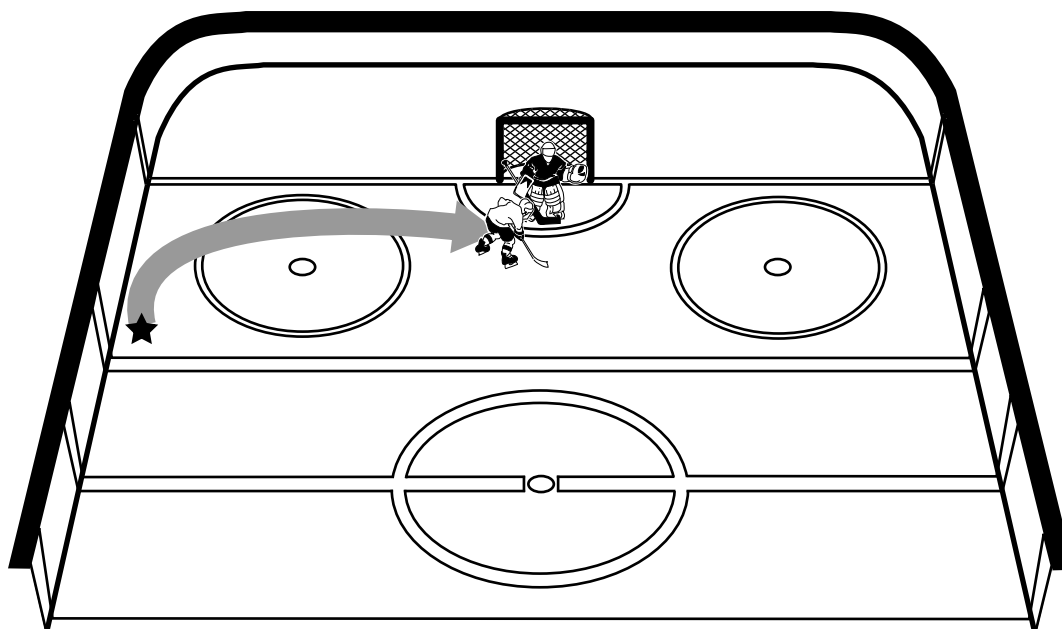
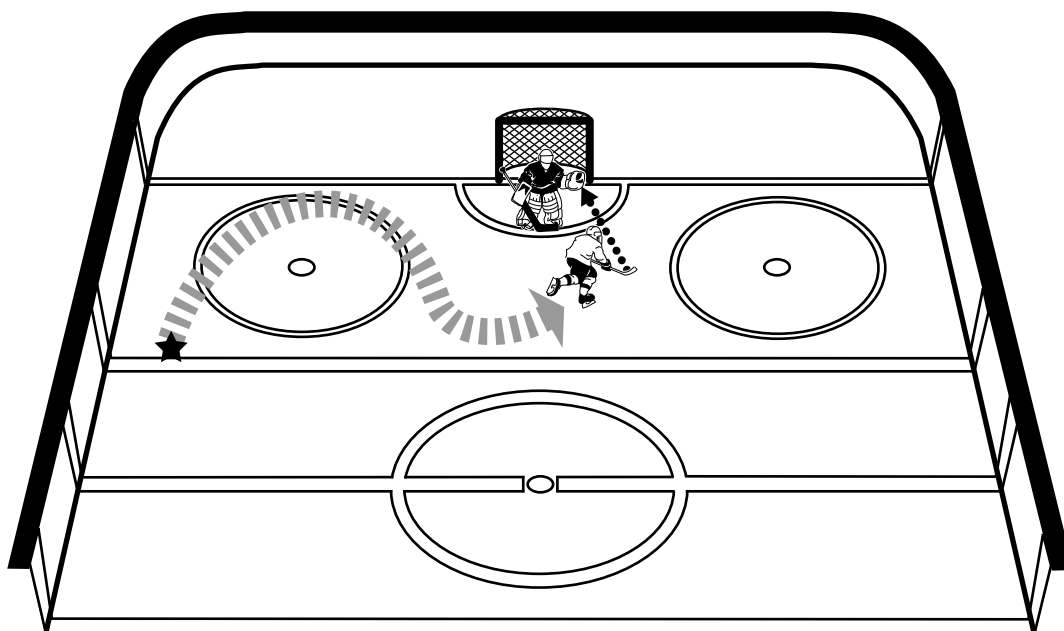
Side or Angle Approach to Goal

As the attacker comes on the angle, most goalies try to take away the “short side.” In this way, only a good shot to the far side of the goal will score. The attacker must try to fake or pull the goalie away from the post to increase the opening to score on the short side. The off wing is provided a unique opportunity because of the angle from which the shot can be taken. This is demonstrated in the diagram below.



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





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

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- www.usahockeyskillsanddrills.com/index.html

Chapter 11

Body Contact and Stick Checks

OBJECTIVES

- To describe the principles of body checking
- To outline the types of body checks
- To teach the players how to protect themselves when checked

BODY CHECKING

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

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

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

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

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

- shoulder check
- hip check
- checking along the boards

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

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

When teaching body checking, you should emphasize to your players that the purpose of the body check is to block the progress of the puck carrier by legally getting in their way. Too many players and coaches feel that a body check must knock the opponent down or hard into the boards every time. This type of attitude leads to

unnecessary rough play and injuries to either of the players involved in the collision. The individual who learns how to block or angle the puck carrier out of the play will be much more effective.

PRINCIPLES OF BODY CHECKING

1. **Velocity.** When intending to check in a one-on-one situation, the velocity of the offensive and defensive players should be the same. This will prevent the attacking player from skating around the defensive player. To play defense, speed in skating backwards is a key requirement.
2. **Rhythm.** The defensive player should be taught to watch the offensive player to catch the rhythm and movement of the puck carrier in order to anticipate his movement. Defensemen should be taught to watch the chest of the opposing player, because it is the most difficult part of the human body to shift quickly. For instance, a player's legs can maneuver quickly around another player, as can the stick. A good head fake can stymie and outmaneuver a player quite easily. It is imperative that the defensive player play the body of the puck carrier, not the puck.
3. **Anticipation of Fakes.** A player must learn to anticipate the primary and secondary movements in every fake.
4. **Ability to Rotate.** The defensive player must learn to turn quickly both left and right effectively in order to keep pace. For example, a younger player cannot skate backward as rapidly as a player skating forward. Therefore, in order to defend against a fast forward skater, the defender may have to start in forward motion, pick up speed, and then rotate into the backward position.
5. **Selection of Position.** The primary task of the defender is to cut off the main direction of the opposing player to the net by watching the center movement of the player. When against the boards, the defender should angle his body a half-turn toward the boards and use the boards to his advantage. A defender may push the player off the puck, separate the puck from the player by employing a hip check or pin the player along the boards with a solid body check. The most important aspect in selecting a checking position to always make the player

move towards the boards by skating at the player from an angle. This cuts off the central ice area.

6. **Compulsory Leg Work.** When the body check is taking place, most players stop using their legs. This is a drawback because it cuts down the speed along with the momentum of the check. A defender should keep his legs moving at all times.
7. **Quickness.** The defender must learn to cut down the puck carrier's reasoning time by attacking suddenly. This comes through timing and instinct. For maximum results, a player must use his stick, shoulder and full body when checking.

SHOULDER CHECK

The shoulder check is most typically used by a defenseman when taking out an on-rushing attacker. The defenseman must anticipate where he intends to make contact with the attacking player, then time his backward skating so that contact is made at the appropriate time. An example of proper shoulder checking technique is illustrated in Figure 11-1.

The defensive player should attempt to aim his shoulder at the offensive player's chest, then make contact with the shoulder and side of the body. Skates must be shoulder width apart with the knees bent to provide a strong foundation. Leg power is used to drive the shoulder into the opponent's chest. Players may find it helpful to keep only the top hand on the stick with the free hand up, both for protection and also to push the offensive player. Remember, players are allowed only two steps before hitting the opponent. There is often a tendency to use the elbows in shoulder checking. Do not let your players develop this bad habit.

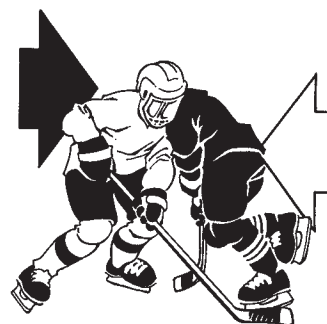


Figure 11-1. The shoulder check.

Key Elements

- skates shoulder width apart
- knees bent with the weight on the inside edges of the blade
- head up at all times
- shoulder contact with the opponent's chest
- stick and elbows down
- two or fewer steps before hitting the opponent

Common Errors

- skating too slow (allows attacker to skate around him)
- legs are straight (resulting in poor balance and insufficient power to make a good check)
- raising of the arms (resulting in elbowing penalties)
- watching the puck, not the player

HIP CHECK

The hip check is somewhat more difficult to execute because the timing required is precise. It is important to have the offensive player committed to a course which he will have difficulty changing (see Figure 11-2a). This provides a good checking angle. The defensive player “lines up” the offensive player in a way similar to executing a shoulder check but, at the last moment, the head and shoulders are dropped (bending at the waist), then the hip is turned into the stomach area of the offensive player. The leg closest to the check should remain bent. The hips must rotate into the puck carrier (see Figure 11-3). This action will result in the defender being positioned under the attacker, forcing him up and over the defender's hip (see Figure 11-4). Hip checks may be performed in open ice or along the boards (as indicated in Figures 11-5 and 11-6).



Figure 11-2a. Forcing the offensive player to a specific course.



Figure 11-2b. Maintaining a good checking angle.



Figure 11-3. Rotating the hip.



Figure 11-4. Completing the hip check.

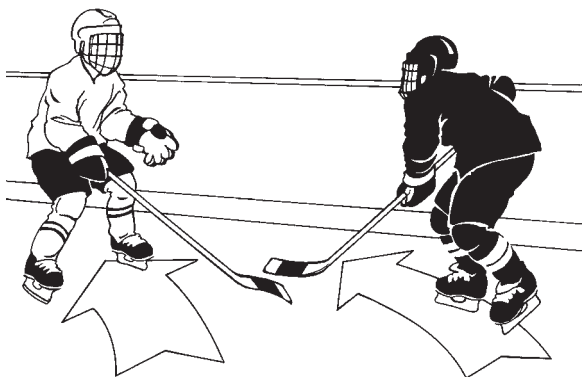


Figure 11-5. Angling the puck carrier towards the boards.

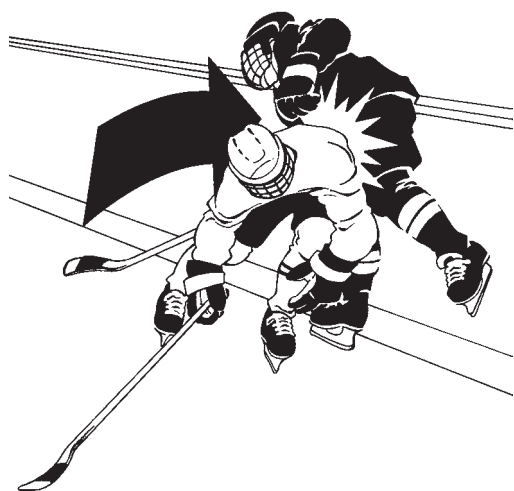


Figure 11-6. Executing the "hip check along the boards."

Key Elements

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

Common Errors

- looking at the puck instead of watching the puck carrier's body
- knees are not flexed when initiating the check
- poor timing (allows the attacker to skate by as if there was no defense)

CHECKING ALONG THE BOARDS

The ability to check properly along the boards will enable a team to regain possession of the puck without receiving a penalty. The defender must concentrate on the puck carrier, not the puck, using timing to angle the attacker towards the boards. As he approaches the puck carrier from an angle, the checker reduces the amount of space between himself, the puck carrier and the boards. The checker must have two hands on the stick with the blade on or near the ice (see Figure 11-7). Coaches must emphasize that the stick must be kept down. The checker should aim to hit a point on the boards in front of the puck carrier. Typically, the defender should not attempt to retrieve the puck himself, as this is usually done by a teammate.

To successfully check an opponent along the boards, the checker must angle the puck carrier into the boards under controlled speed. He gives the puck carrier only one option, not two (see Figure 11-8). He forces the puck carrier in the direction he wants him to go, squeezing the opponent on the boards using his arms and body. Push, with your inside arm, down and across your opponents chest, then move your body in front of the attacker, blocking his path (see Figure 11-9). After contact, be sure to keep your body low and well-balanced (see Figure 11-10).

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



Figure 11-7. The checker must approach the puck carrier with two hands on the stick.



Figure 11-8. Angling the puck carrier to the boards.



Figure 11-9. The checker must move his or her body in front of the puck carrier.



Figure 11-10. Maintain good body balance in completing the check.

Key Elements

- angling your opponent
- controlled speed at the point of contact
- Use the inside arm to pinch your opponent into the boards.
- Keep your body low with legs spread for balance.

Common Errors

- approaching the puck carrier straight on, not at an angle
- banging your opponent rather than pinching him into the boards
- failing to maintain good body balance

PROTECTING YOURSELF ALONG THE BOARDS

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

Accept checks when playing the puck along the boards. Keep the head up, get a good, stable position, feet apart, knees bent, body in a low position, and forearm and hands on the boards for protection (see Figure 11-14).

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

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

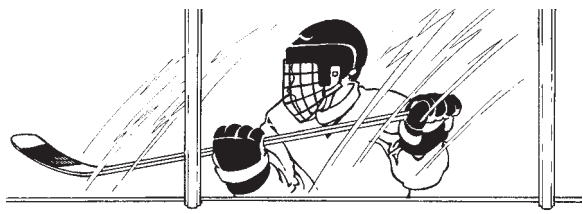


Figure 11-11. Getting the stick and gloves up to absorb the force of the check.

The above technique is used when already in direct contact with the opponent, not when anticipating contact.



Figure 11-12. Maintain a low center of gravity.



Figure 11-13. Avoid hitting the boards with the shoulder.

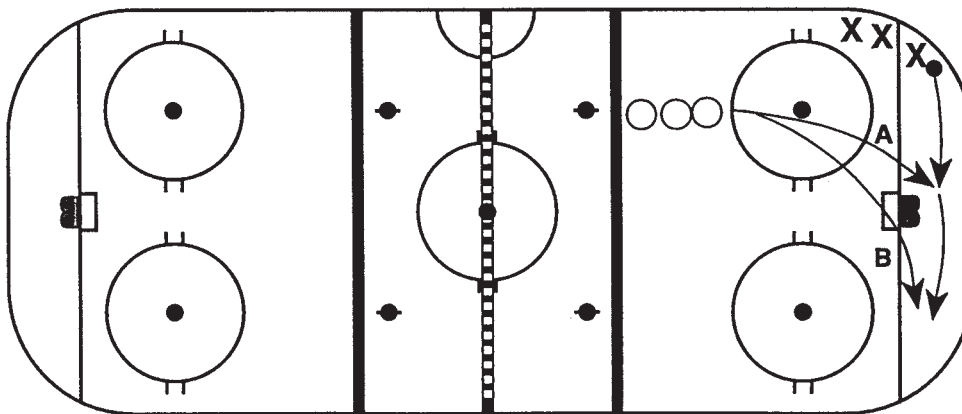


Figure 11-14. Positioning to avoid injury for check along the boards.

SKILL DRILLS

The following skill drills are presented in a suggested progression. They progress from stationary, to moving, to simple, to complex.

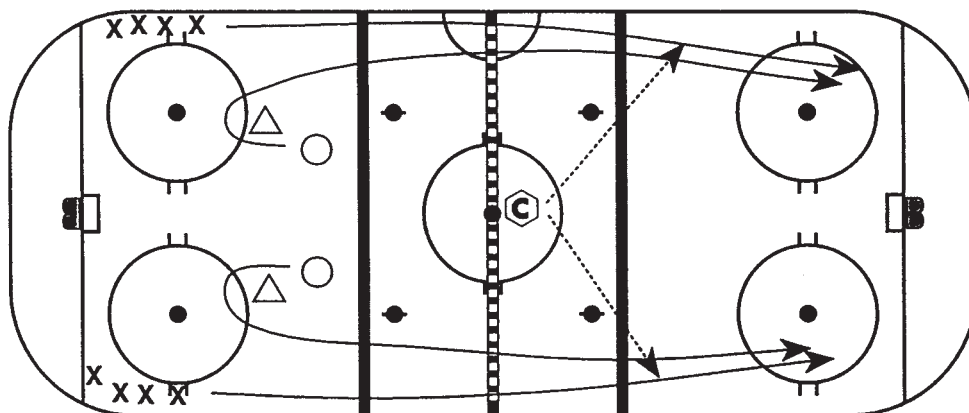
BODY PLAY



Angling on Strong Side

1. Forecheckers start at the top of the circles, while puck carriers are in the corner.
2. On the whistle, the puck carrier skates hard behind the net and out the weak side.
3. The forechecker tries to play the puck carrier before he goes behind the net (A). Or he cuts the puck carrier off on the other side of the net (B).

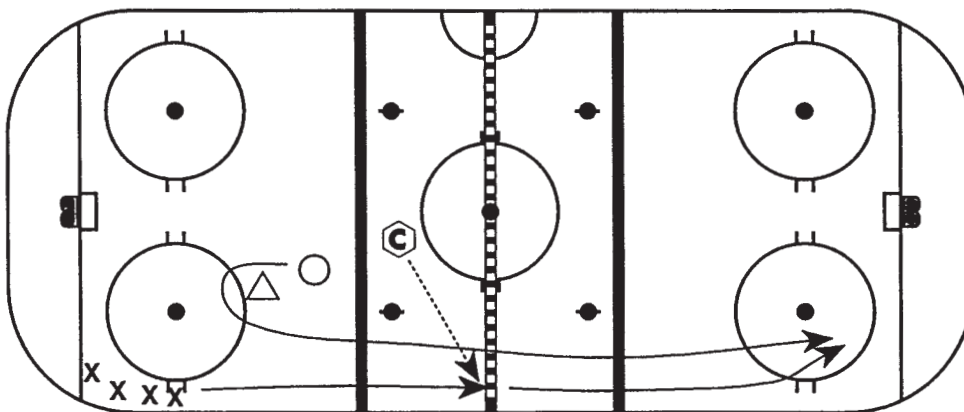
BODY PLAY



Backchecking Zone

1. Potential puck carriers line up on both sides of the rink starting at the hash marks.
2. The backcheckers line up at the blue line facing the cones.
3. On the whistle:
 - a. The potential puck carriers skate down the boards waiting to receive a pass from the coach.
 - b. The backcheckers cut around the cone and pick up their checks.
4. The backcheckers must keep their checks to the outside and block passing lanes.

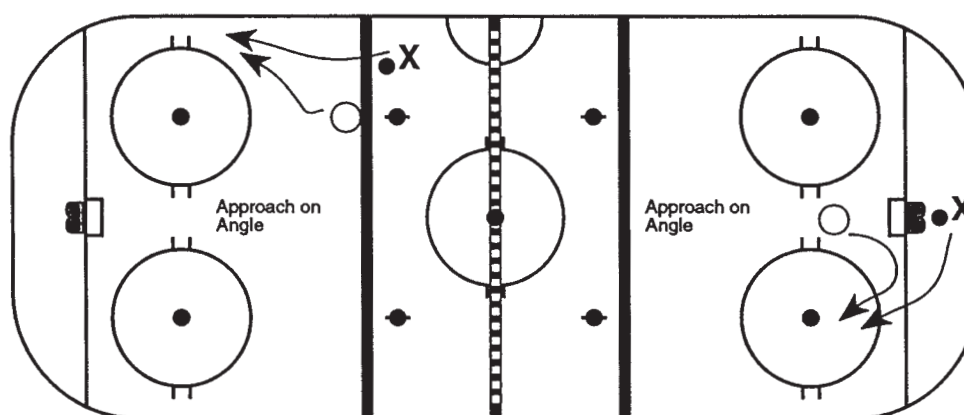
BODY PLAY



Backchecking Opponent Away From Puck (1-on-1)

1. Line up the puck carriers along the boards starting at the hash marks.
2. The backcheckers will be at the blue line behind the cone.
3. On the whistle, the puck carrier skates forward to receive a pass from the coach.
4. The backchecker cuts around the cone, picks up his check and tries to block a passing lane while keeping his man to the outside.

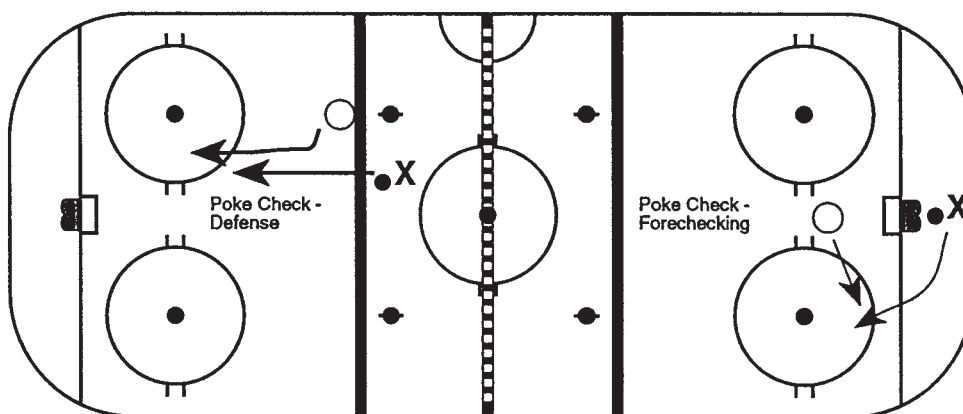
CHECKING



Lift the Stick Check

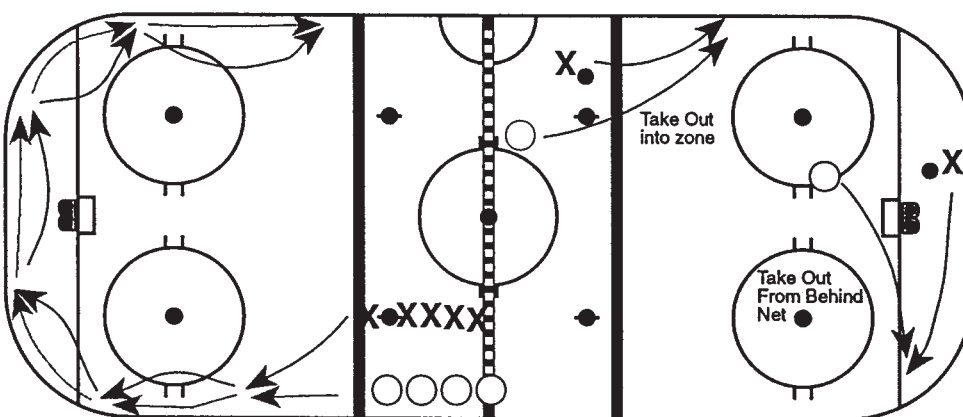
1. Divide your team into two stations.
2. The checker should approach the puck carrier from an angle and must get his stick under the opponent's stick and then lift.
3. The checker must make sure he has control of his body and control body position of his opponent before the stick is lifted.
4. Make sure the checker keeps skating during the execution of the skill.

CHECKING

**Poke Checking**

1. Divide the group into two poke checking drills at either side of the rink with puck carriers and poke checkers.
2. The puck carrier should carry the puck in a confined area, allowing the poke checker to practice the skill.
3. Key elements to remember:
 - stick arm is held close to the body.
 - quickly extend the arm and stick toward the puck without lunging.
 - defender must maintain good body position in front of the puck carrier.

CHECKING

**Take Outs**

1. Divide the team into three checking stations. Players will be rotated from station to station on the coach's signal.
2. The checker should move at the puck carrier at an angle.
3. The checker should accelerate to stay slightly in front of the puck carrier.
4. The checker must maintain control of his body and stick at all times.

SUMMARY

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

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

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. *(Internet access is required).*

- www.usahockey.com/coaches/checking_materials.aspx

Section 5

Goaltending



Chapter 12

Goaltending

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the two types of recovery skills needed by goaltenders
- To understand when the various save techniques should be used
- To understand the different fundamental save techniques available to a goaltender

INTRODUCTION

The areas covered in this chapter will build on what was introduced in the Level 1 Manual. It is important for coaches to ensure that all details covered in Level 1 are reinforced during the coaching of Level 2. This chapter will introduce recovery, save selection and fundamental saves.

RECOVERY

After going down in a butterfly, goaltenders must be able to recover efficiently in order to get into position for the next shot. There are two types of recovery: full recovery and on-ice recovery. A goaltender selects his or her recovery based on the position of the puck and the shooter. The following will cover each recovery technique and when to use it.

Full Recovery

The purpose of the full recovery is to efficiently recover onto the feet after dropping into the butterfly or extended butterfly (half butterfly) position to make a save.

Terminology

- “Drive” Leg
 - the opposite leg of the intended direction

- “Lead” Leg
 - the leg of the intended direction

Proper Use

- Used when the play and puck go to the outside after the goaltender drops to the ice to make a save.

Technique

- The “drive” leg is always the first leg up onto the ice.
- When recovering to the right, the left leg is the “drive” leg.
- When recovering to the left, the right leg is the “drive” leg.
- Rotate the waist and bring the “drive” leg in front of the “lead” leg knee. This will rotate the goaltender.
- Lift the “drive” leg skate onto the ice and place your weight on the inside edge of the “drive” leg skate.
- Quickly rotate and keep the “lead” leg extended when moving in order to fill space.

On-Ice Recovery

The purpose of the on-ice recovery is to efficiently recover across the ice after dropping into the

butterfly or extended butterfly (half butterfly) position to make a save.

- o minimize body movements

Terminology

- “Drive” Leg
 - the opposite leg of the intended direction
- “Lead” Leg
 - the leg of the intended direction

Proper Use

- Used when the puck is in tight after the goaltender drops to the ice to make a save.

Technique:

- The “drive” leg is always the first leg up onto the ice.
- When recovering to the right, the left leg is the “drive” leg.
- When recovering to the left, the right leg is the “drive” leg.
- Rotate the waist and bring the “drive” leg in front of the “lead” leg knee. This will rotate the goaltender.
- Lift the “drive” leg skate onto the ice and place your weight on the inside edge of the “drive” leg skate.
- Quickly rotate and keep the “lead” leg extended and flush on the ice in order to fill space.
- After pushing off, bring the “drive” leg flush onto the ice and together with the “lead” leg.

SAVE SELECTION

It is important for goaltenders to work on and use proper save selection. Save selection is determined on the location of the shot. Too many goaltenders rely on one save technique on all shots. For example, many goaltenders rely strictly on the butterfly save technique. Using incorrect save selection will limit net coverage, rebound control and second-chance save ability. Goaltenders need to learn when to select each save technique. Having patience and using his or her eyes will increase a goaltender’s ability to make proper save selection.

FUNDAMENTAL SAVES

Save techniques are fundamental saves. A majority of chances a goaltender faces during a game

requires him or her to perform the proper save selection/fundamental save. At times, a goaltender will have to play outside of the box and make sprawling saves, but a majority of a goaltender’s work require him or her to make saves with proper fundamentals. It is important for goaltenders to practice all fundamental saves so that they are able to perform each efficiently and under control. The ability to perform saves with proper fundamentals will increase rebound control and recover ability. The following will cover proper technique for fundamental saves.

Butterfly Stick Saves

Butterfly stick saves are used when shots are along the ice in order to give the goaltender control of the rebound.

Body Position

- The chest up so shooters can see the logo of the jersey.
 - improves balance and net coverage.
- The shoulders are parallel to each other and level to maintain proper chest positioning.
- The pads are extended to the sides with inside of pads flush on the ice and knees together.
 - When dropping into a butterfly, the goaltender should quickly drive his or her knees onto the ice.
- Keeping the butt up helps with the following:
 - keeps chest up and maintain balance
 - improves net coverage and keeps knees on the ice
 - maintains positioning for proper and quick on ice or full recoveries
- The stick remains 6–8 inches in front of the goaltender’s pads.
- The blocker hand steers the stick in the same motion as turning a door knob to deflect the puck into the corner.
- The gloves, shoulders and eyes stay on the puck.

Tendencies

- Goaltenders will poke out at the puck. They need to let the puck come to them and simply deflect it into the corner.
- Goalies will reach too far outside of the bodies. The butterfly stick save is effective because the pads and the stick protect

against the puck going in. If the goaltender has to reach too far with the stick to make the save, he or she is not in the optimal depth. Reaching causes poor balance and stick control, which leads to bad recoveries and bad goals against.

- Goaltenders tend to not utilize their sticks and rely too much on blocking with their pads. This habit limits rebound control and net coverage.

Glove Saves

The glove save is used for stopping and controlling shots that are elevated off of the ice.

Technique

- Move the center of gravity toward the puck line.
- Watch the puck all the way into the glove and receive it on its way up.
- Try to always catch the puck in the mesh part of the glove.

Tendencies

- Goaltenders tend to punch out at the puck before it gets to the glove. The goaltender must be patient and let the puck come to him or her, making it easier to maintain control.
- Goaltenders tend to reach only their arms at the puck and not bring their center of gravity toward the puck.

Blocker Saves

The blocker is a great tool for controlling rebounds and maximizing net coverage.

Technique

- The goaltender transfers his or her center of gravity toward the blocker side and tracks the puck.
- The goaltender turns his or her blocker hand as if he or she was opening a door.
- The goaltender tracks the puck as it deflects off the blocker and into the corner.

Tendencies

- Goaltenders will punch at the puck. Punching will put the rebound in front of the net, which is not ideal. It also makes it harder to make the save. Think of a baseball player swinging at a pitch or bunting. The player who bunts almost

always makes contact and deflects the ball; it is much easier to wait for the ball than to swing at it. Goaltenders should wait for the puck and deflect it. Do not punch at it!

Chest Saves

The chest save is used for any shot that is 12 inches off the ice or higher and is toward the goaltender's torso. These are the pucks that will hit the goaltender's hockey pants or chest protector while in the standing set position or in a butterfly position.

Technique

- Watch the puck into the body.
- If the shot is below the shoulders, drop into a good butterfly.
- Bring the elbows tight to the sides of the body.
- Slightly drop the butt down to receive the puck and minimize the bounce.
- Use the catching glove as a basket, allowing the puck to fall into the glove after it has hit the body.

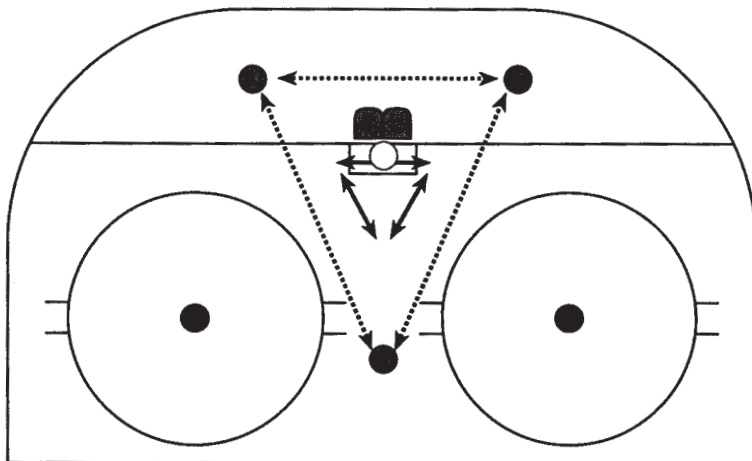
Tendencies

- Goalies will overuse their hands. It is a natural reaction to use the hands to block something from hitting the body. A goaltender must allow the puck to hit him or her in the chest or midsection and keep his or her arms tight to the outside of his or her body. This will maximize net coverage and make rebound control much easier.
- In an attempt to cover more net, the goaltender will hold his or her upper body too straight, creating a board-like upper body that is difficult to control rebounds. When the goaltender practices these saves, he or she must receive the puck with a slight dip in his or her butt as the puck hits him or her. This will provide a cushion to control the rebounds.
- Goaltenders will take their eyes off the puck. Often when a goaltender thinks he or she has the save made, he or she will stop watching the puck. For all saves the goaltender must watch the puck all the way into the body and continue watching it until the whistle goes. These habits help to eliminate pucks that slip through, and provide a good start to recovery if the puck bounces off the body and out.

SKILL DRILLS

The following skill drills are presented in a suggested progression. They progress from stationary, to moving, to simple, to complex.

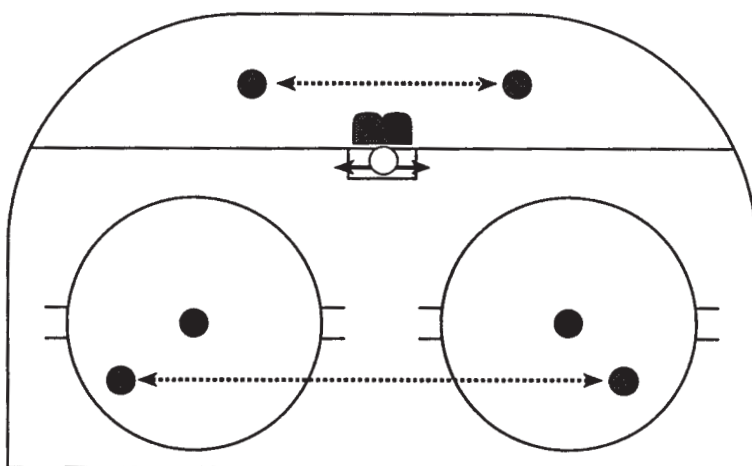
GOALTENDING



Triangle Drill

1. Two players are at the sides of the net behind the goal line.
2. One player is in front.
3. The puck is being passed and the goalkeeper changes position accordingly.
4. The player in front can shoot occasionally.

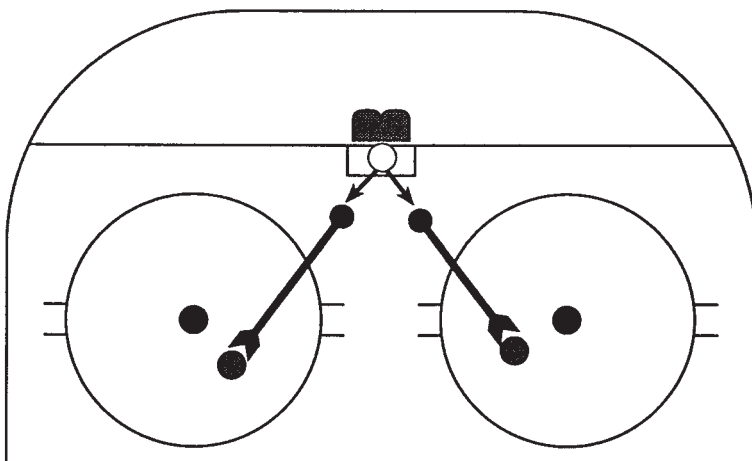
GOALTENDING



Stance and Movement

1. Two players pass the puck to one another in front of the net while the goalkeeper moves laterally along with the puck.
2. Passing is also done behind the net with another group of players. They pass straight or off the boards while the goalkeeper moves between the posts.
3. One group of players pass at a time.

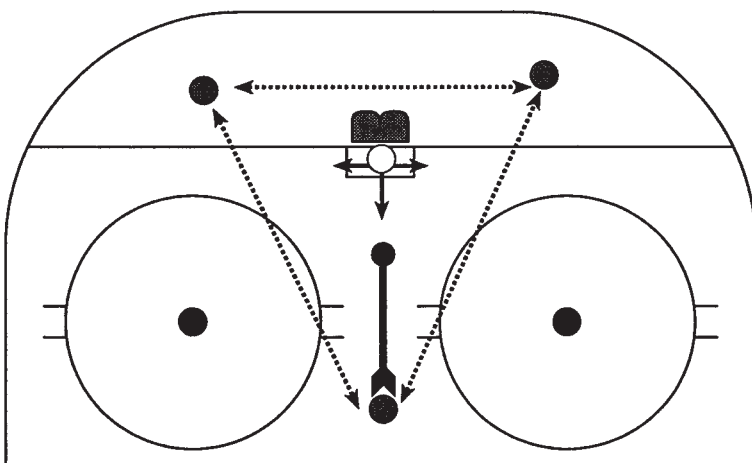
GOALTENDING



“V” Drill with Shooters

1. Two shooters are placed off each post, faceoff dot high with six pucks each.
2. One shooter shoots at a time.
3. Shooters should make sure the goalkeeper is set to react to the shot.
4. The goalkeeper concentrates on one shooter at a time and should be fundamentally correct in his or her movement.

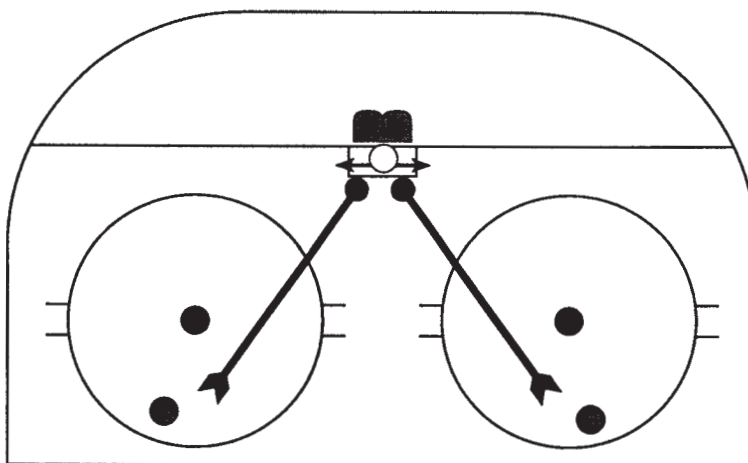
GOALTENDING



Slot Shot

1. Two players are on the side of the net behind the goal line.
2. One player is in the high slot.
3. The three players pass the puck around, and the goalkeeper moves with the puck.
4. The slot player can occasionally take a shot on the net.

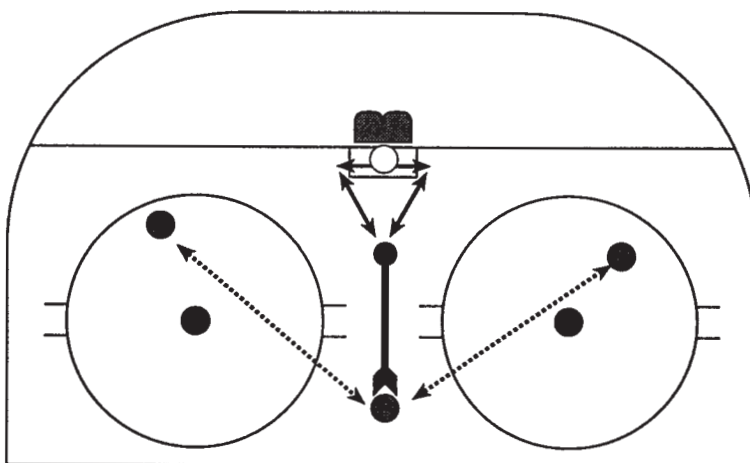
GOALTENDING



Special Spot Drill

1. Six pucks are placed in a line halfway between the faceoff dot and the inner edge of the circle on both sides of the net.
2. One shooter is placed in each circle.
3. The shooter to the goalie's right shoots first. As soon as he or she shoots, the shooter on the left shoots, etc. One shot is taken at a time per side.
4. The goalie should be given time to make the first save before the second shot is taken.

GOALTENDING



Semi Circle

1. Two players are placed at either side of the net at the bottom of the faceoff circles.
2. One player is high in the slot.
3. The players pass the puck around, with the slot player taking the occasional shot.

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. *(Internet access is required).*

- www.usahockey.com/usahgoalies/default.aspx

Section 6

Team Play



Chapter 13

Basic Concepts of Play

OBJECTIVES

- To introduce the conceptual aspect of ice hockey
- To point out that the game can teach the players
- To help coaches teach the players the game as a whole
- To show coaches how to use small games to teach the players in a progressive manner

INTRODUCTION

The most important part of this chapter is the reason a player plays ice hockey—something we, as coaches, sometimes fail to remember or never find out. A player plays hockey because it is fun. It then becomes our job as coaches, parents and administrators to make sure that players don't lose sight of this.

For that reason, we wish to take a different approach to the way we work with beginning players. Let the game teach the player rather than the coach. We have to trust that we are laying the ground work for the player; trying to give the best possible base for him or her to become a good hockey player.

OFFENSE AND DEFENSE

We often talk about practice and the game in terms of offense and defense, as though they are independent parts of the game. We need, instead, to think of offense and defense as a whole or as being the same. We need to teach beginning players that offense works like defense and vice versa.

Let's think about what we try to accomplish on offense or on the attack. One player has the puck.

That player must decide to pass the puck or carry the puck. Player number two is looking to be available for a pass or to support player number one. The third player is looking to find space to be available for a pass or to create space for the first two players.

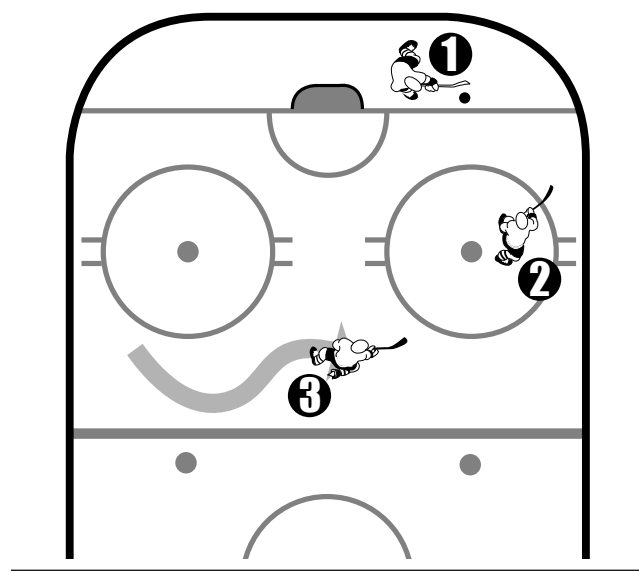


Figure 13-1. 3-on-0 in zone puck and player movement.

If we reverse roles and move to defense, player number one must be concerned with the puck. He must attack or steer the puck to one side, but the focus is the puck, as it is for player number one on offense. Player number two on defense must be concerned with the closest player to the puck who is able to receive a pass. Player number three is looking to cover dangerous areas or players in that area as prime scoring area is an area used to create an attack.

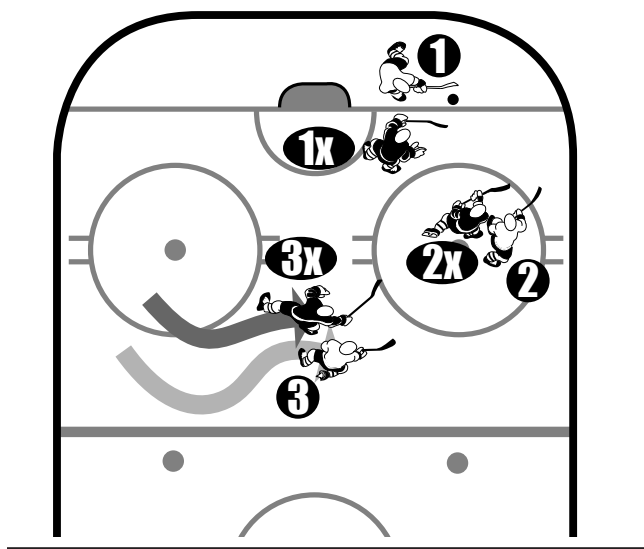


Figure 13-2. 3-on-3 in zone defensive coverage.

If 3-on-3 possession changes, then the roles reverse. Our goal is to create a method of practice to enable beginners to learn what role they must play and how best to accomplish this role while having fun. We can call this the concept of support.

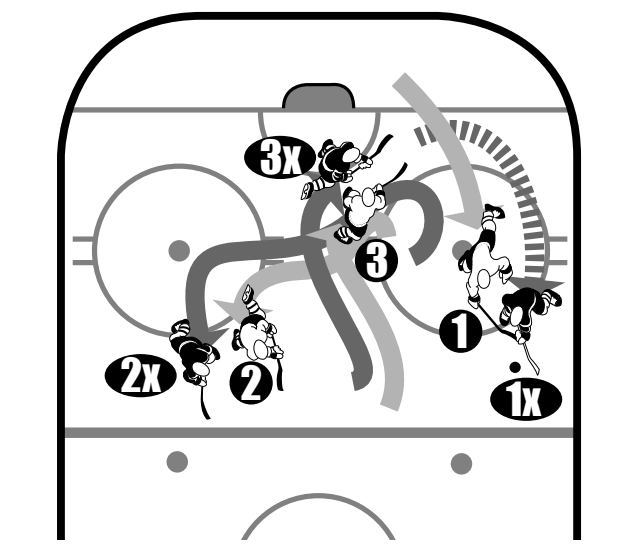


Figure 13-3. 3-on-3 in zone offensive and defensive movement.

SUPPORT

If we try to teach beginners support using the whole ice surface, we will find some big problems. First, some players skate at a higher level and it will be easy for them. It will be difficult for the poor skater, as he or she will not be able to get to the puck. To make this better for all players, we need to move to a small space. This gives us our method of practice. As we said earlier, we were going to let the game be the teacher.

So the game becomes small-sided games in a small space. An example might be placing the net on the side boards and playing 3-on-3. What we can accomplish with these games is more players touching the puck and more possession changes, which result in quicker transitions from offense to defense. This also results in the players seeing more opportunities. But even more important is the fact that more players have the opportunity to score goals. If you are the parent of a beginner or have the opportunity to be around after practice, players can all tell you how many goals they have scored. You only have to look in their eyes to know how much they love to score. If we can allow the game to be fun, then we may see more success at higher levels.

PROGRESSIONS

Let's take a look at the way that we may want to build our games in a teaching progression.

If we start by playing 2-on-0 within a faceoff circle, with no rules, then move to 3-on-0 with no rules except to stay inside the circle, we have started to move the players together in a group with no rules.

Next, by playing keep-away 2-on-1 inside a faceoff circle with a pylon at the edge of the circle, we have introduced defense. The goal of the game is to carry the puck and touch the pylon. We can then start teaching that two players must work together to keep the puck from one player. You may want to add a point system or announce that the player who wins the puck can move to the offensive side. We should talk to the players about their individual roles. If we think about the roles, we would discover that the role of the first player with the puck is to get the puck to player two or to get free. Player two is trying to find an open space to receive a pass or to draw the defensive player over to cover him and give player one a chance to be free. The defensive

player is, of course, trying to gain the puck, and he or she will be taking space away.

We have started our players thinking about space and support with a simple small game. We can then add or subtract players within the same game.

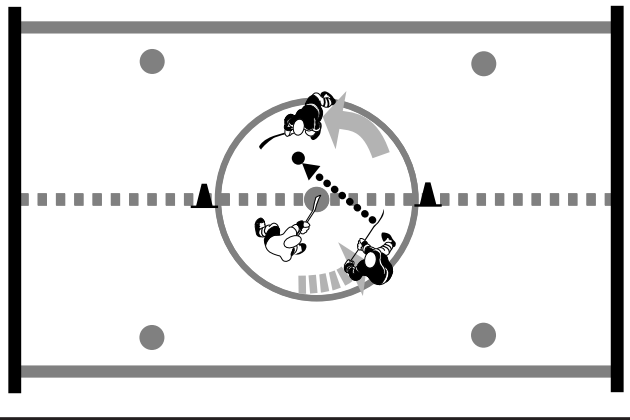


Figure 13-4. 2-on-1 in the faceoff circle.

We can then play 5-on-5 keep-away with three pucks. For scoring, the team that has two or more pucks would receive a point.

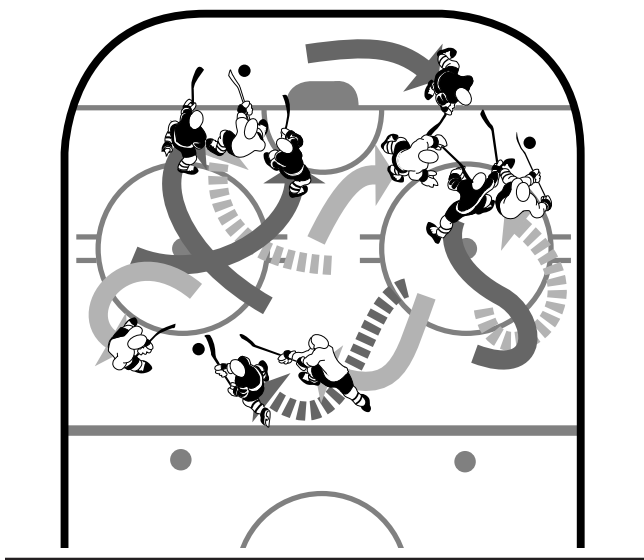


Figure 13-5. 5-on-5 in the zone, using three pucks.

Our next game, 6-on-3, arranged in the end zone, places three players on one board and three on the opposite side with a field made using four pylons. The object of the game is for the three offensive players on one side to pass the puck through the

pylons to the three players on the other side. The rules for the defensive players are:

- two players must always be in the rectangle formed by the pylons
- one player may chase the puck
- As the puck changes sides, the chaser may come back in the rectangle and replace one teammate, who then chases.

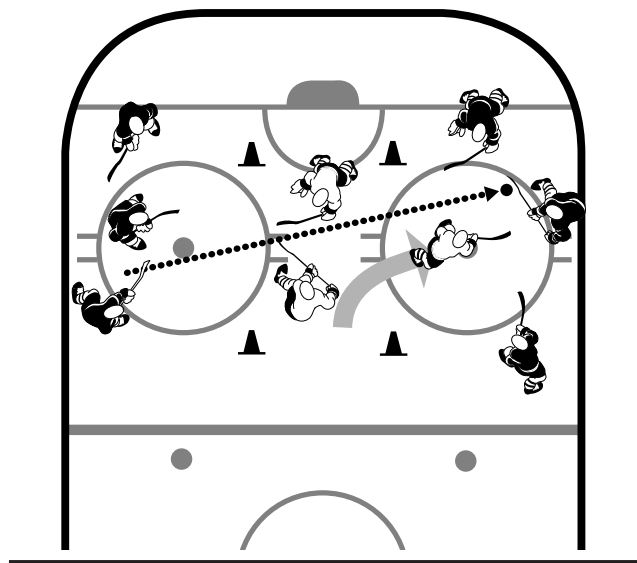


Figure 13-6. 6-on-3 in the zone, using one puck and four obstacles.

GAME-LIKE CONDITIONS

We now need to allow players to play with more game-like conditions. We can move the nets to an area close to the boards, perhaps to the corner. We will now play 2-on-1 with a goal, but the area must be small. You can control the game by keeping a puck in play at all times. When a goal is scored or a puck is out of play, put a new puck into play right away. You can add players to make a 3-on-2 scenario or whatever combination you wish. You may wish to make certain players stationary passers only. On the defensive side, try 1-on-2 and 2-on-3 to let the defensive players learn who to react to as a group.

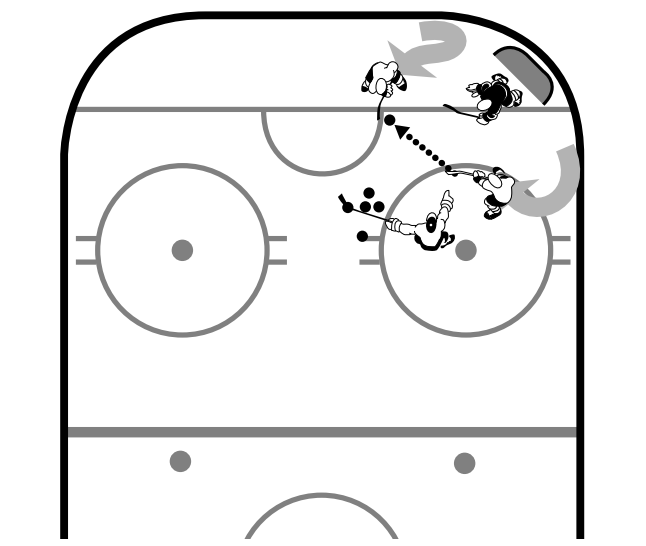


Figure 13-7. 2-on-1 confined to a restricted space (corner).

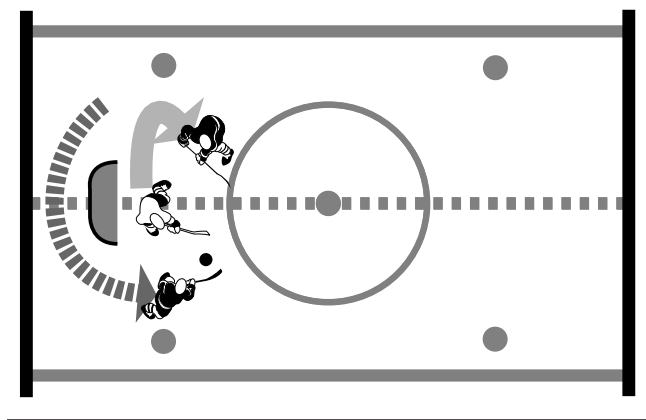


Figure 13-8. 2-on-1 confined to a restricted area (center ice).

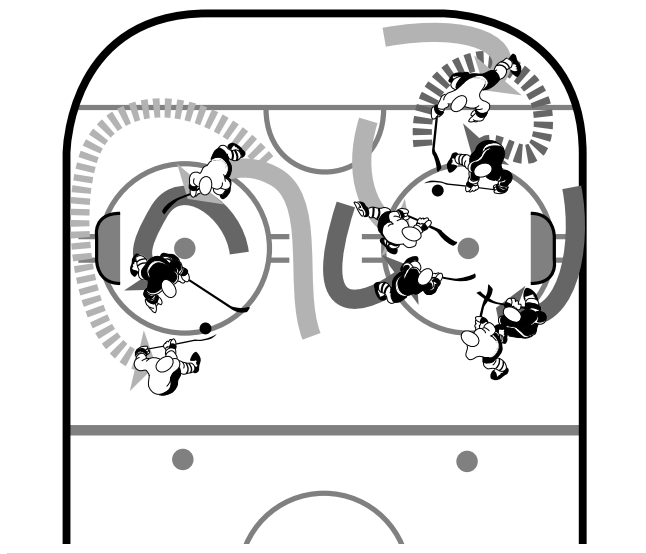


Figure 13-9. 2-on-1 and 3-on-3 in the same zone, each using half of a zone.

If we now consider our play zone from the blue line in, we can start to play games with two nets. For the first game, we will place our nets on the faceoff dots facing each other. We will play 2-on-2 the players can score on either net. You may wish to get some old fire hoses and run them behind the net to keep the puck in play or you may place players along an imaginary line extending out from the goal to keep the puck in play. You again will be controlling the game by feeding new pucks in as they go out of play or are scored. Allow play to go for 30 seconds to one minute. You may wish to add players to this game. In all of these games in which we use two nets, you may want to have the players touch the puck twice and then they must pass the puck.

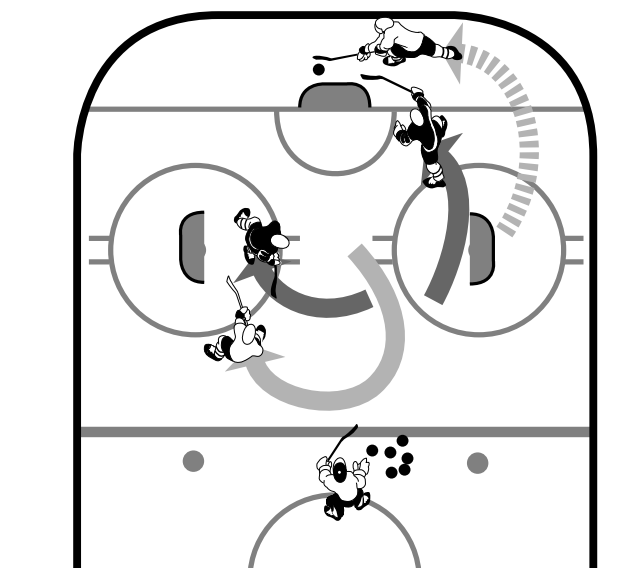


Figure 13-10. 2-on-2 in zone using three nets.

Next we can move to a game of 3-on-3. In this game, one team is placed along the blue line and the other along the goal line extended. We play a regular game, with one rule change: players may use their teammates on the side lines to pass to. You may want to institute the two-touch rule.

The last game is 3-on-3 with the nets back-to-back. If you place the nets in the middle of any zone with the goal mouth facing the boards, you can then play 3-on-3, with scoring on either net, or any other rules you may wish to use. The value of this game lies in the decisions that must be made to play offense or defense, the kinds of passes that must be made, and the fun of scoring.

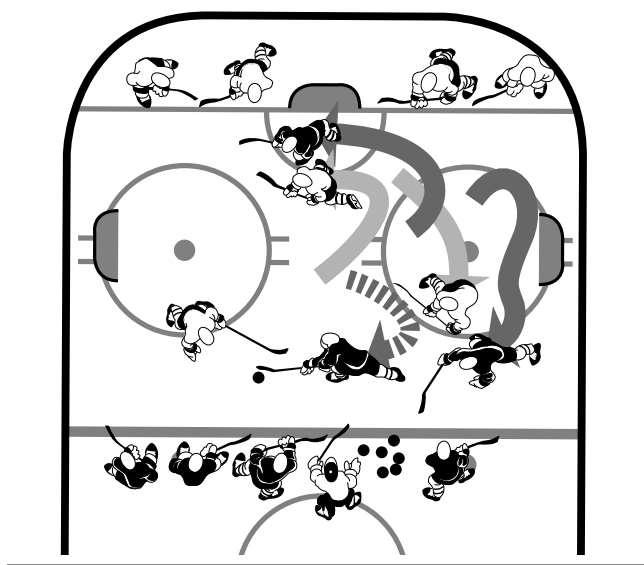


Figure 13-11. 3-on-3 in zone using three nets.

SUMMARY

These are examples of the types of games that can be played. If we look at them closely, we find that we have not placed a lot of rules on the players and have allowed them to learn through playing. This is the real secret to developing players. Place them in situations that allow the player to make the choice to think and develop skills. While developing your games, remember that it is important to set goals for your games and to stay close to those goals. In other words, don't change your mind in the middle of the game.

Remember, what we suggested are the basic building blocks of team play for an ice hockey player. We have used all of the skills necessary to be a good hockey player. We have placed the player in a position of having to move from offense to defense quickly and to make decisions on how to support each other. At the intermediate level, we will build on this. These concepts are extremely important and, once mastered, any system of team play can be implemented.

Chapter 14

Offensive Positional Play

OBJECTIVES

- To describe the potential responsibilities of players
- To describe both offensive side of positional play
- To outline the importance of individual positional skill development

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This chapter will provide a foundation to team play. In today's game, especially at the upper levels, it is necessary to create an environment in which players flow from Area of Responsibility to Area of Responsibility. It is more important for a player to be in the Area of Responsibility, regardless of their position, than to be in their Position of Responsibility (e.g. right wing in right wing lane).*

INTRODUCTION

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

Developing the Forward

Today's swift, wide-open style of hockey makes playing the forward position exciting. It is a position at which a player receives a lot of attention. However, playing forward has a lot of responsibilities attached to it, and it is a position you

need to master. In selecting forwards, many coaches select the athlete that can score, skate fast and handle the puck well. However, there is more to the position than skating fast and scoring goals. They not only need to know how to play with the puck but, just as important, play without the puck.

Characteristics of a Forward

- solid in the fundamental skills
- ability to read and react to situations
- understands the game at both ends of the rink
- patient and confident
- a good two-way player
- very creative
- intelligent with the puck
- strong on his or her skates
- aggressive instinct around the net

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

the players' minds during a game. It is another part of the systematic approach to the game of hockey.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR FORWARDS

Offensive Points of Emphasis

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

Defensive Points of Emphasis

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

1-on-1 Points of Emphasis

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

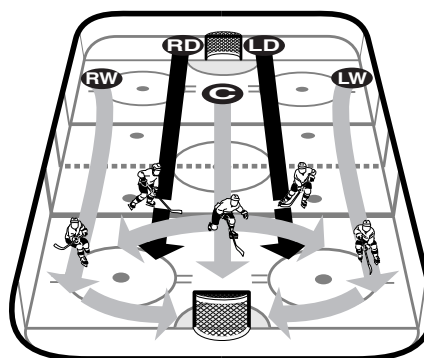
2-on-1 Points of Emphasis

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

3-on-2 Points of Emphasis

- Attack the offensive blue line with speed.
- Get the puck deep into the attacking zone quickly.
- Penetration to the net with the puck is of the utmost importance.
- Use a variety of attacks.
- Be creative.
- Move the puck quickly around the zone.
- Isolate your attack on one defenseman, creating a 2-on-1 situation on one side.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

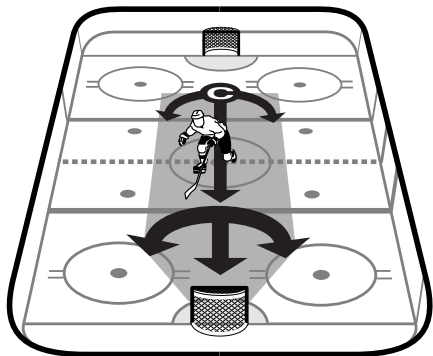


Offense – The phase of the game during which a team is in possession of the puck. The aim is to get the puck down the ice in a systematic way and into the opponent's net.

Key Elements

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

CENTER – OFFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITIES



Breakout Zone

1. The center stays between the circles close to the top of the circle.
2. Always angle toward side boards when receiving a pass.

Neutral Zone

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

Attack Zone

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

WING – OFFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Breakout Zone

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

Neutral Zone

1. Both wings should stay in the outside lanes.

Attack Zone

1. Puck carrier:
 - Quickly penetrate the zone on top of the circle.

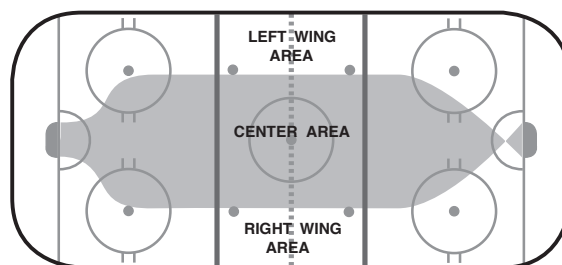
- Go to net and shoot, pass back to a trailer (center) or pass to the weak-side wing in front.
2. Weak-side wing:
 - Stay wide when coming into the zone
 - Skate into the faceoff circle and angle to the net

OFFENSIVE TEAM PLAY

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

A basic (or least complex) offensive pattern is “everybody play his position.” This is the first offensive concept that should be taught. In simple terms - spread out! The wingers skate up and down his or her respective side of the rink. This creates territorial division of the ice surface. If your players maintain these lanes or areas and do one more thing - pass the puck to the open man - you will have a reasonably acceptable offensive system. Figure 14-1 illustrates the areas of play appropriate for forwards and defensemen.

Forwards



Defensemen

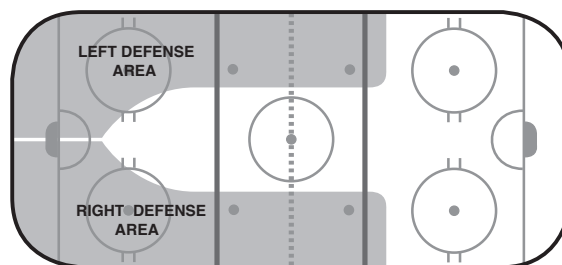


Figure 14-1. Areas of play in position offense.

OFFENSE IN YOUR DEFENSIVE ZONE

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

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

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

We will start by assuming recovery of the puck by a defenseman. As illustrated in Figure 14-3, the wings go quickly to their breakout positions along the boards and inside the hash marks on the faceoff circle, never turning their backs to the puck. The center starts in the middle by moving away from the puck side (or strong side) and then skates across, or curls, toward the puck side. The defenseman then has the options illustrated in Figures 14-2, 14-3, 14-4, and 14-5 open to him:

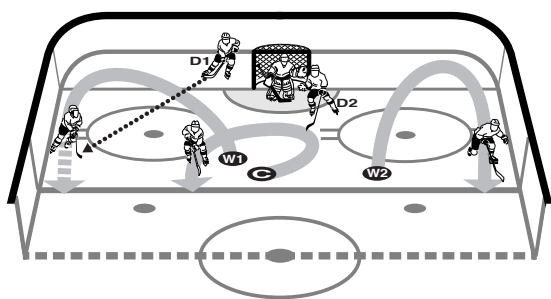


Figure 14-2. Breakout pass to the wing.

In the first option (Figure 14-2), W1, after receiving the initial pass, can pass to C, carry the puck or return a back pass to D1.

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

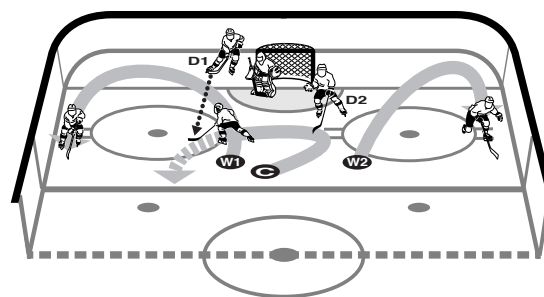


Figure 14-3. Breakout pass to the center.

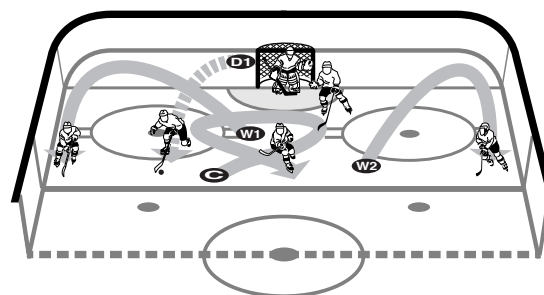


Figure 14-4. Defenseman carries the puck up the ice.

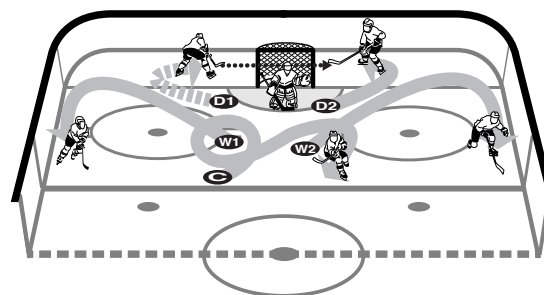


Figure 14-5. Breakout pass to the other defenseman.

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

NOTES: Offense in the Defensive Zone

- This breakout system has one forward that is always in position to move quickly to defense, should control of the puck be lost.

- The system emphasizes high percentage passes (short, direct, and quick).
- The defenseman “quarterbacks” the play.
- All three forwards are utilized, although specific roles may change.

OFFENSE IN THE NEUTRAL ZONE

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

The primary objective of neutral zone offense is to set up the attack and enter the offensive zone with possession of the puck. You should teach simple guidelines that give a sense of direction to the offensive unit while at the same time allowing your players to be creative and innovative. The most important offensive guideline you can teach your players is to create a 2-on-1 situation. The middle zone is the place to initiate strategy. In this zone, players need to learn how to “read” which side lacks backchecking. As this is determined, they should then move to attack the defenseman on that side and move him away from his defensive alley. To initiate this situation, teach your puck carrier to enter the offensive zone near the boards (see Figure 14-6).

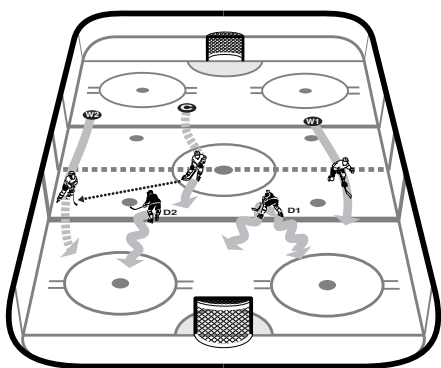


Figure 14-6. Offense in the neutral zone.

The situation illustrated in Figure 14-6 is usually referred to as 3-on-2. Moving the puck to W2 provides the opportunity to create a 2-on-1 and forces D1 to make a decision: Does he want to stay 1-on-1 with W1 or should he move over to help D2 and thus leave that area open? Even if W1 is covered by a backchecking forward, D1 will wonder about

leaving the area open. In this case, D1 will have to ask the question, “Can I really trust the backchecker to defend the area alone?”

By isolating defensive players in a 2-on-1 situation, you put tremendous pressure on them mentally and physically. This creates an opportunity for them and their teammates to make mental errors and, therefore, provide offensive opportunities for your team.

While following the basic premise of entering the offensive zone near the boards, provide some flexibility by allowing your players to change lanes. This creates many options. Some of the more common ones are lane changes illustrated in Figure 14-7.

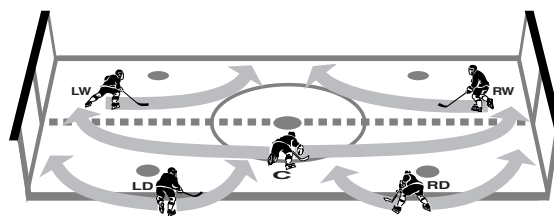


Figure 14-7. Player lane change options.

Normally the wings stay in their lanes. However, if a wing moves to another lane, several options exist (see Figure 14-8):

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

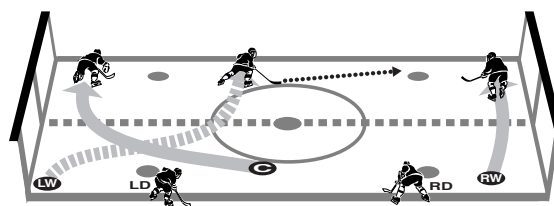


Figure 14-8. Lane change options when a wing moves to another lane.

When the center is the puck carrier and has one or both wings ahead of the play, the puck should be passed to either wing who stays in his or her lane or moves to the middle lane. Teach the center to react to the wing’s movement. The puck-side defenseman

has the option to fill a lane or remain at his position. These options are illustrated in Figure 14-9.

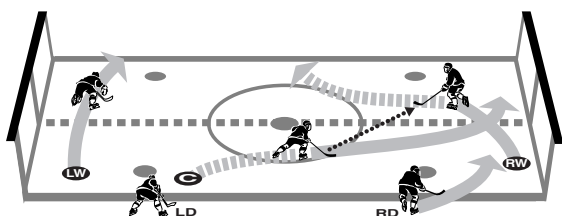


Figure 14-9. Lane change options when the wings are ahead of the center.

If the center is the puck carrier and the wings are behind the play, the center then has the following options (see Figures 14-10, 14-11, 14-12 and 14-13).

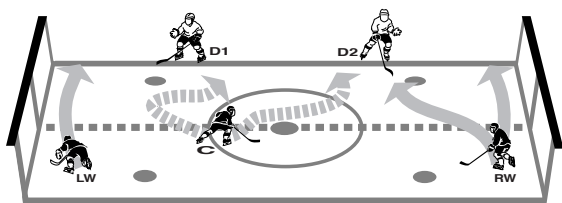


Figure 14-10. Hold the puck.

Hold the puck and set up a 2-on-1 situation against a defenseman (D2). In this situation the wings must break.

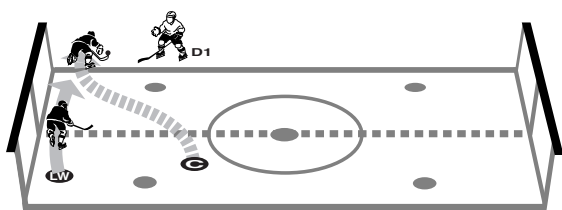


Figure 14-11. Swing wide and carry the puck.

Swing wide and carry the puck deep along the boards with the wing (LW) following. This creates a 2-on-1 situation on a defenseman (D1) in a vertical alignment.

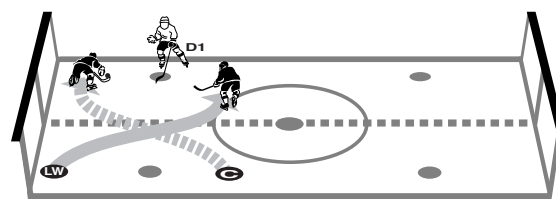


Figure 14-12. Cut to the boards.

Cut to the boards. The wing (LW) cuts to the middle, creating a 2-on-1 situation on a defenseman (D1).

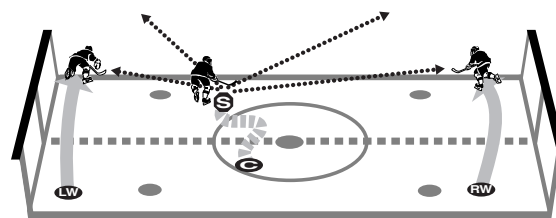


Figure 14-13. Wings breaking toward the blue line.

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

Defenseman should never keep the puck and force their forwards to stop skating. Their responsibility is to move the puck and keep the play moving toward the offensive zone. The forwards can move up the ice or move to another lane. These options are illustrated in Figure 14-14.

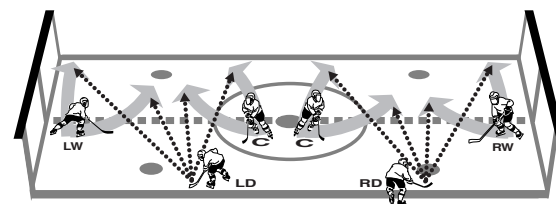


Figure 14-14. Defensemen options to keep the forwards skating.

Defensemen can also work a give-and-go as illustrated in Figure 14-15. The defenseman (LD) passes to a wing (LW) and moves up to receive a

return pass. They will create a 2-on-1 situation on the defensemen (D1) for the LD and the Center.

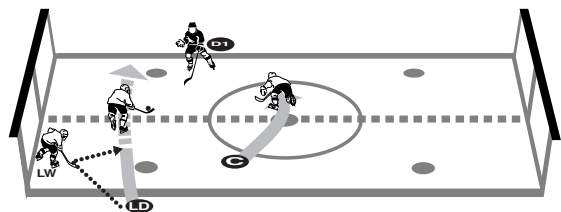


Figure 14-15. A defenseman initiated give-and-go.

If the forwards are covered but skating, the defenseman (LD) can pass the puck into the corner ("dump the puck") so that two forwards (LW and C) can converge on it. This is illustrated in Figure 14-16.

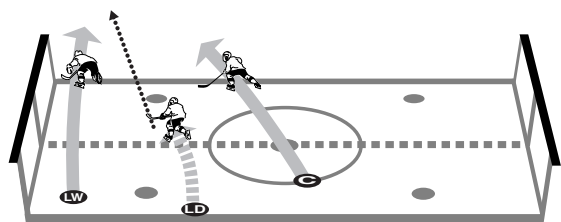


Figure 14-16. "Dumping" the puck into the corner.

NOTES: Offense in the Neutral Zone

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

OFFENSE IN THE OFFENSIVE ZONE

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

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

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

1. Attempt to create 2-on-1 situations.
2. Enter the offensive zone with the puck near the boards.
3. The first player into the zone is the puck carrier.
4. The second player into the zone breaks to the net.
5. The third player into the zone curls to the high slot.
6. Have the wings skate one of the three basic patterns (illustrated in Figure 14-17):
 - a. belly curve
 - b. break
 - c. inside cut

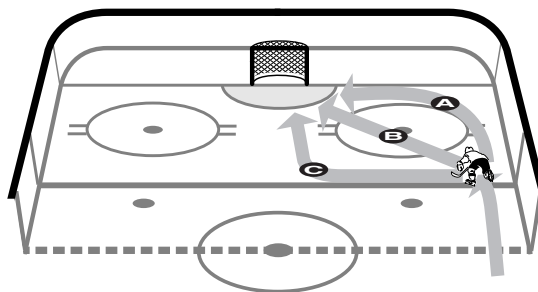


Figure 14-17. Three basic patterns for the wings.

BACK PASS

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

Try to set up one of the options illustrated in Figures 14-18 through 14-21.

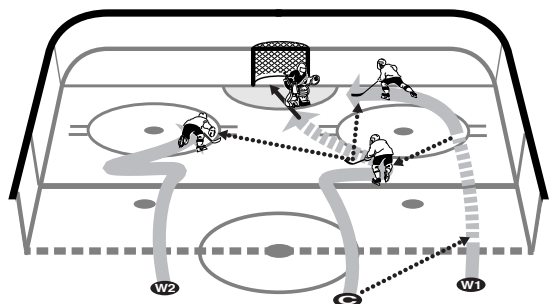


Figure 14-18. Teaching the back pass option.

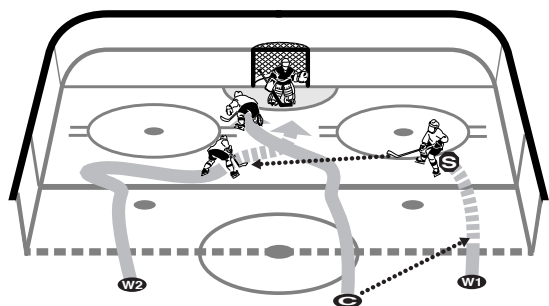


Figure 14-19. Teaching the wing set option.

WING SET

1. This option is the same as the back pass option until W1 gets to the top of the faceoff circle. At this point, W1 stops.

2. C breaks for the net.
3. W2 makes an inside cut across the blue line and up the center lane.
4. W1 passes to W2.
5. W1 moves behind W2 as a safety measure.

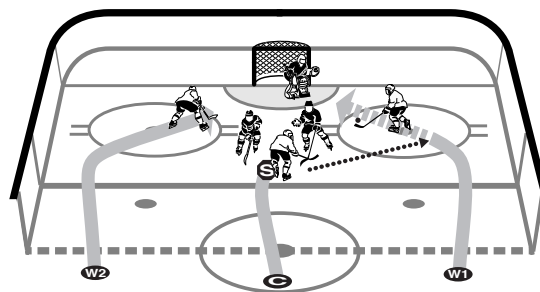


Figure 14-20. Teaching the center set option.

CENTER SET

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

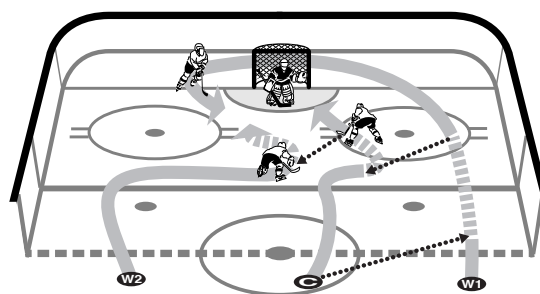


Figure 14-21. Teaching the double back pass option.

DOUBLE BACK PASS

1. This option requires agreement by the forward line that on a specific rush (first time, or every time this shift, etc.) they will play for a double back pass.

2. It is the same as the back pass, except W2 moves across the ice and accepts the second back pass from C, and W1 curls behind the net to look for a pass from W2 or a rebound.

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

NOTES: Offense in the Offensive Zone

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

Chapter 15

Defensive Positional Play

OBJECTIVES

- To describe the potential responsibilities of defensemen
- To describe the defensive side of positional play
- To outline the importance of individual positional skill development

DEVELOPING DEFENSEMEN

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

Defenseman Characteristics

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

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

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

Methods for Playing Various Situations

1-on-1 – Skate backward, one hand on the stick, with the elbow cocked next to your hip, blade open to forehand, and the stick out in front without leaning too far forward. Face the on-rushing forward and watch his or her upper body (chest), not the puck. Let the attacker make the first move. If you over-play him or her to the inside, his or her only option is to go outside off of the shooting angle. Keep your body between the attacker and the net. Play the attacker and not the puck, and keep a good gap (distance between you and the

puck carrier). Maintain the same speed as the forward and force the player to his or her backhand. Do not cross your feet.

1-on-2 – The first defenseman who can play the forward to his or her backhand side moves on the attacker and forces him or her to the outside, therefore limiting his or her mobility to one side of the ice. The second defenseman moves to back up his or her partner and picks up the loose puck.

2-on-1 – Position yourself between the two forwards and try to force them off the shooting angle. Stay in the middle of the ice to prevent attempted passes. Never let the puck carrier get behind you or cut in on the goal. Keep the puck out of the prime scoring area in front of the net. The defenseman's prime responsibility here is to prevent a pass, force a bad-angle shot and let the goalie play the puck.

2-on-2 No Backchecker – Play this scenario just like the 1-on-1. The defense pair does not cross if the forwards criss-cross; only player coverage may change. Talk with your partner and know your assignment. Protect the middle of the ice. Don't allow the attacking forwards to split you or create a 2-on-1 situation. Don't back in too far on the goalie. Keep a tight gap, and try to prevent your opponents from gaining the blue line.

3-on-1 No Backchecker – Stay in the middle of the ice and try to stall or slow down their attack or force a shot from a poor angle. Don't become physically tangled with any of the attackers. Avoid picks, interference and checks. Try to position yourself so that the puck carrier will have to pass the puck through you to reach a teammate. Don't back in too far on your goaltender.

3-on-2 – There can be two ways to play this scenario. (1) Try to force the play at the blue line with a 1-on-1 situation involving the puck carrier and one defenseman. The other defenseman plays the open attackers like a 2-on-1, with the player closest to the net receiving the most attention. (2) One defenseman plays the puck carrier side, establishing a 2-on-1 situation and forcing the puck carrier to the outside and a bad shooting angle. The other defenseman plays a 1-on-1 situation with the off-side attacker. Play a delaying game but threaten any puck carrier coming into the prime scoring area in front of the goal. Do not allow yourself to be drawn out of position.

General Tips

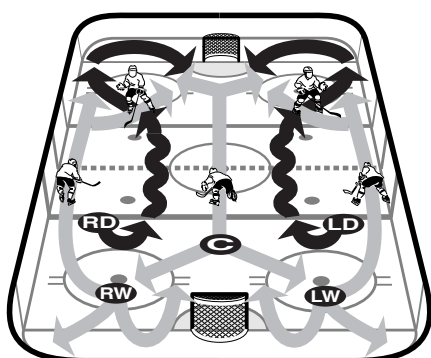
- Remember that the defensemen should be staggered, and they must work together as a pair.
- Always gauge the speed of the attackers coming at you. Your backward speed must be the same as the attacker's speed.
- When stick or poke checking, never reach out so far that you are off balance — a forward can easily turn you if you have shifted the wrong way.
- Don't body check when you are in a situation where the opposition has a numerical advantage. Check when you have an even or numerical advantage, or the player has his or her head down.
- Communicate with and back up your teammates in your zone.
- Blocking shots (not recommended for younger players) – If you have to block a shot, make sure the attacker is about to shoot. Look for the clues: head drops, hand slips down the stick or he or she drops his or her arm and shoulder on his or her shooting side. Do not drop too soon or the attacker will carry the puck around you. Don't commit yourself too early. Another method sometimes used is the sliding block. The player must leave his or her feet and slide the body in front of the puck as close to the shooter as possible. This method is very dangerous and must be perfectly timed. It should only be used by advanced players.

Defensive Zone Tips

- Always try to stay between the puck carrier and the goal.
- Coverage in the corner – Move in under control and force your opponents to go in the direction you want them to move. Cautiously play the body. Always create a good angle to eliminate the puck carrier's options.
- Coverage in front of the net – Block all opposing players out of the prime scoring area. Cover their sticks without losing sight of the puck. Be prepared to intercept passes, clear rebounds and check opponents attempting to shoot on goal. No one should be left uncovered in this area.

Defensemen should stand off the goal posts facing up ice with a full view of the ice surface. They should turn their heads, not their bodies, when looking into the corners and maintain physical contact (use the stick or your arm, etc.) with the opponent in the slot area. Don't get into a pushing and shoving match in front of the net with an opponent who doesn't have the puck. Keep your body position.

AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

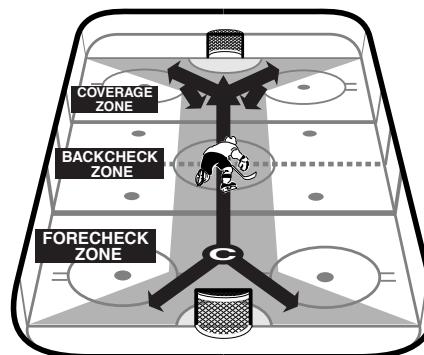


Defense – The phase of the game during which your team is not in possession of the puck. It begins when your team loses possession of the puck and ends when your team regains control of the puck.

Key Elements

- Individual skills
 - checking the puck carrier and angling
 - intercepting passes or cutting off passing lanes
 - covering opponents
 - blocking shots
- Team skills
 - carrying out lane responsibilities in all three zones
 - pressuring and outnumbering opponents at the puck
- Defense is a matter of pride
 - Be proud of maintaining your defensive responsibilities.
- Give 100 percent
 - Effort and energy are a matter of will.

DEFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITY



Offensive Zone – Forecheck

- Defensemen hold the blue line until the puck is between the faceoff dot and the top of the circle.
- The middle defenseman plays like a free safety, keeping all five of the opponents in front of him or her.

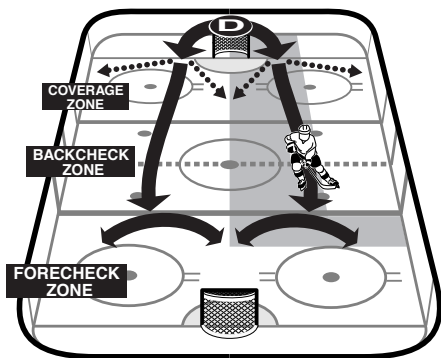
Neutral Zone – Backcheck

- Each defenseman plays the seam (imaginary line drawn through the faceoff dot), to the middle of the ice).

Defensive Zone – Coverage

- Force play to outside
- The strong-side defensemen should, block out the puck carrier from going to the net.
- The weak-side defensemen should cover the front of the net. Start on the weak-side post.

OFFENSIVE RESPONSIBILITY



Breakout Zone

1. Move the puck quickly up the ice.
2. The puck carrier is between the faceoff dots when making a breakout pass.

Neutral Zone

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

Attack Zone

1. The strong-side defenseman moves to the top of circle.
2. The weak-side defenseman moves to just inside blue line.

Chapter 16

Gap Control

OBJECTIVES

- To provide a basic understanding of gap control
- To review the governing principles of hockey
- To describe the effects of gap control offensively and defensively

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

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

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

Definition

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

Types of Gaps

- **Tight Gap:** players within a stick length of each other
- **Loose Gap:** players more than a stick length apart

Governing Principles

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

Defensive and Offensive Gap Control

Gap control applies to all players on the ice (offensive and defensive) from 1-on-1 situations to 5-on-5 situations. In the past, the talk of gap control (closing the gap, etc.) has focused too much on the defensive segments of the game when, in reality, its influence is equally as important in the offensive segment of hockey.

Objectives

- control of situation offensively and defensively
- influence play offensively and defensively
- reduce time/space/force of an attack
- create time/space/force of an attack
- regain puck possession
- retain puck possession
- prevent scoring opportunities
- gain scoring opportunities

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

Key Components

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

Coach's Question:

1. Are you one of those coaches who questions the contribution of certain players because they can't execute within the system?

2. Are you a coach who knows the value of continually providing time to develop the skills of your players throughout the season so that they may meet the skill necessary to achieve total peak performance within a system?

Small Game Activities/Drills

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

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

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

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

Mental Attitude

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

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

- positive self-talk
- positive mental imagery
- psych-up technique
- goal setting
- relaxation technique
- deep breathing technique
- task focus technique

Defensively

- Reduce the time/space/force of an attack.
- Limit the speed and velocity of play.

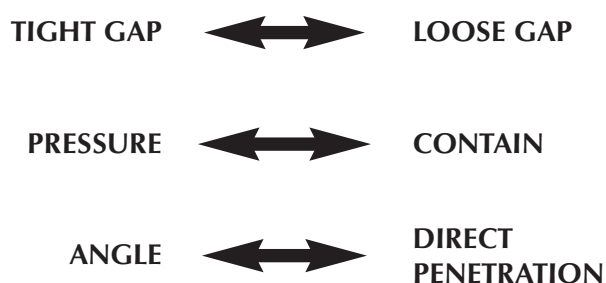
- Prevent penetration to the prime scoring areas.
- Isolate game situations and avoid getting outnumbered.
- Control.
- Be pro-active.

Offensively

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

Basic Concepts for Sound Gap Control

- Communicate both verbally and visually.
- Protect or attack critical areas of the ice.
- Create or eliminate offensive and defensive options.
- defensive or offensive side positioning
- angling - steering - deflecting
- creating/controlling multiple speeds for the attack
- stick-on-stick — body-on-body principle
- Effective use of body, stick, boards and areas of the ice



Factors in Decision Making

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

- Defensively, look through or beyond the attack.
- Offensively, look beyond or through your attack.

- Know what support you have offensively or defensively.
- Who is controlling the puck and what type of control do they have?
- Where is the situation in relationship to the ice surface (ice position)? Close to the boards? In open ice? What zone? Defensive blue line? Offensive blue line? Prime scoring area?
- speed and direction of the play
- total game awareness (score, period, type of game, specialty teams, etc.)

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

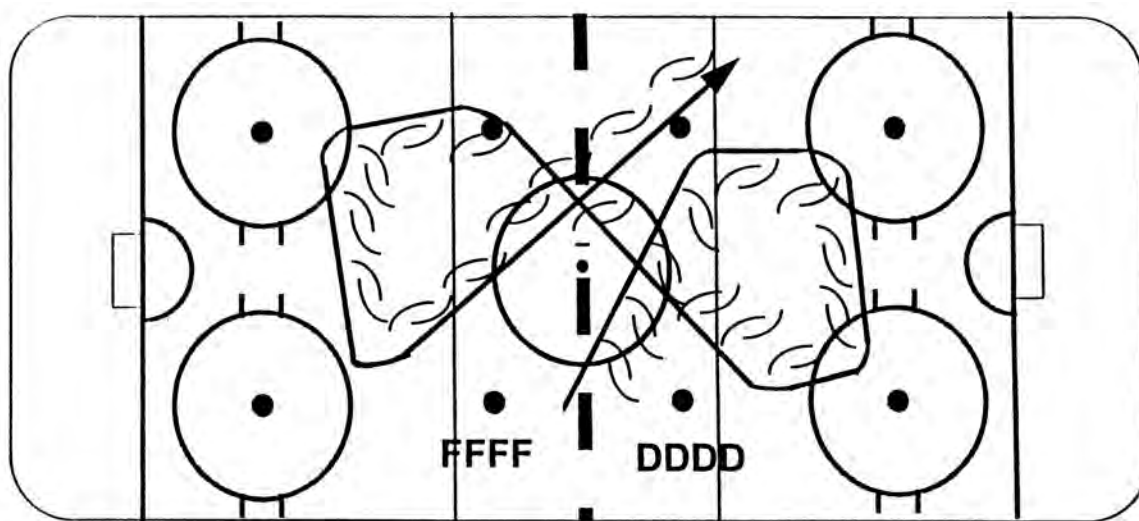
Tight Gap Control – Defensive Reads

1. Approaching the backside of a puck carrier
2. When a puck carrier moves across the ice or along your defensive blue line
3. The skating speed of both players and the situation is the same
4. The offensive player has not established solid control of the puck
5. When you numerically outnumber the offensive opponent
6. When you have isolated the situation down to 1-on-1
7. When the puck carrier is attempting to penetrate the prime scoring area
8. The puck carrier is in a “threat” to score position

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

- skating
- open-ice checking
- play away from the puck
- 1-on-1 confrontation
- angling/steering/deflecting
- body positioning
- body contact
- decision making
- pinching

DRILLS FOR IMPROVING THE SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES OF “GAP CONTROL”

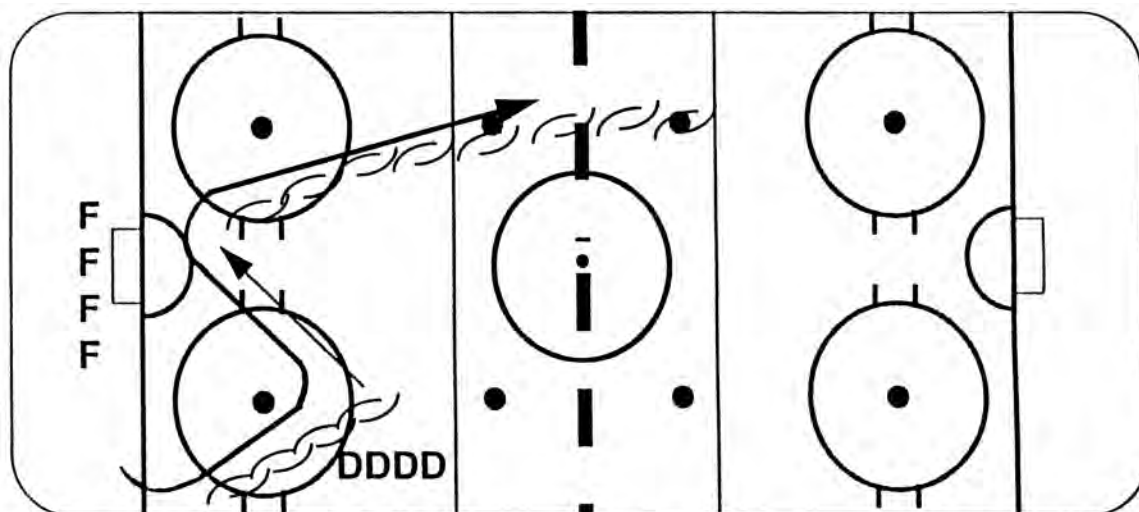


Skating: Pursuit Sprints — D mirrors F

The defenseman skates backward.

The forward skates forward.

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

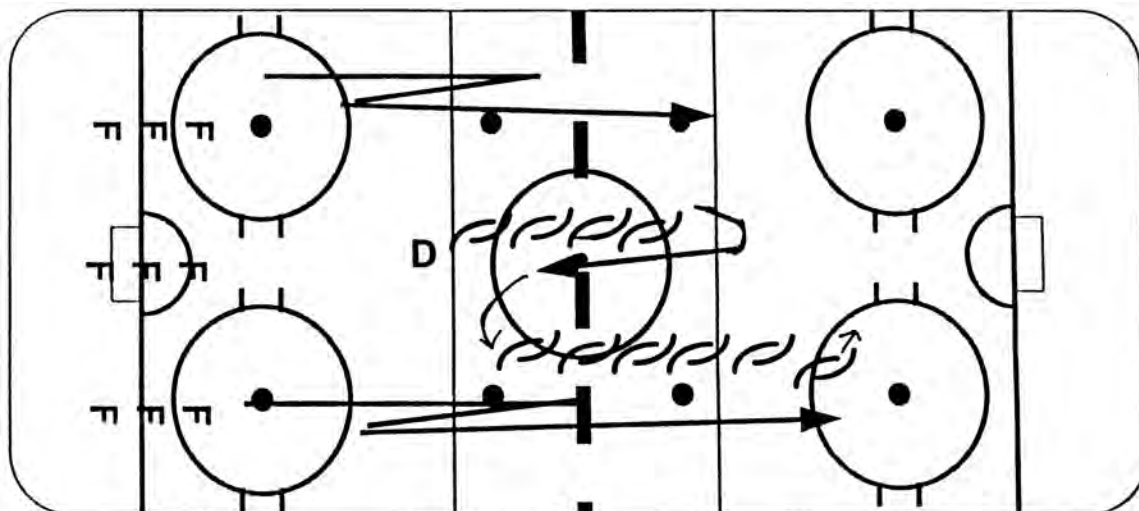


Skating: Pursuit Sprints — D mirrors F

The defenseman skates backward, forward and backward.

Mirror the forward; keep him or her in front of you.

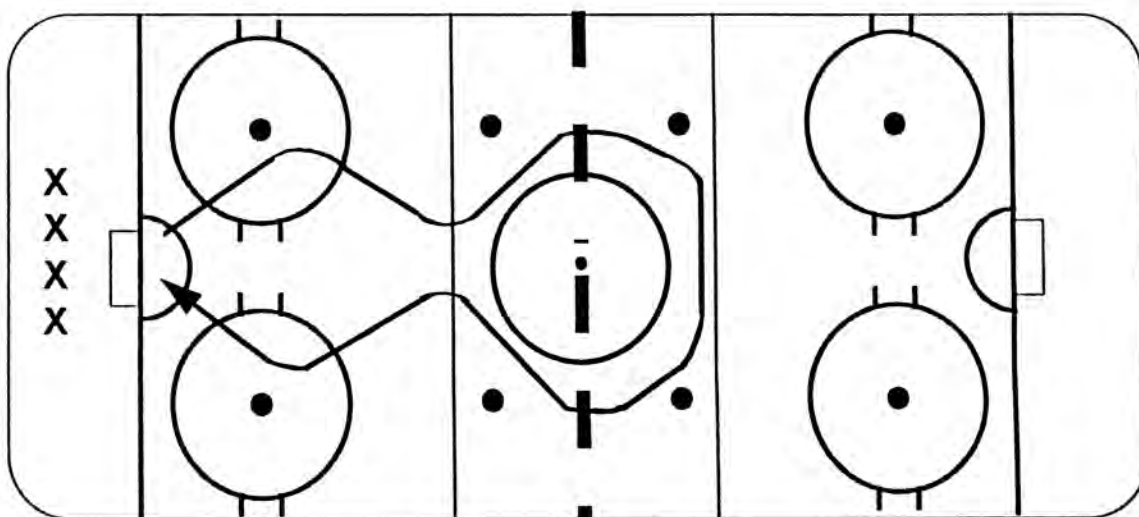
Take away space.



Skating: Pursuit Sprints — D mirrors F

Three forwards do stops and starts, all forward.

Two defensemen skate backward, forward, then backward.

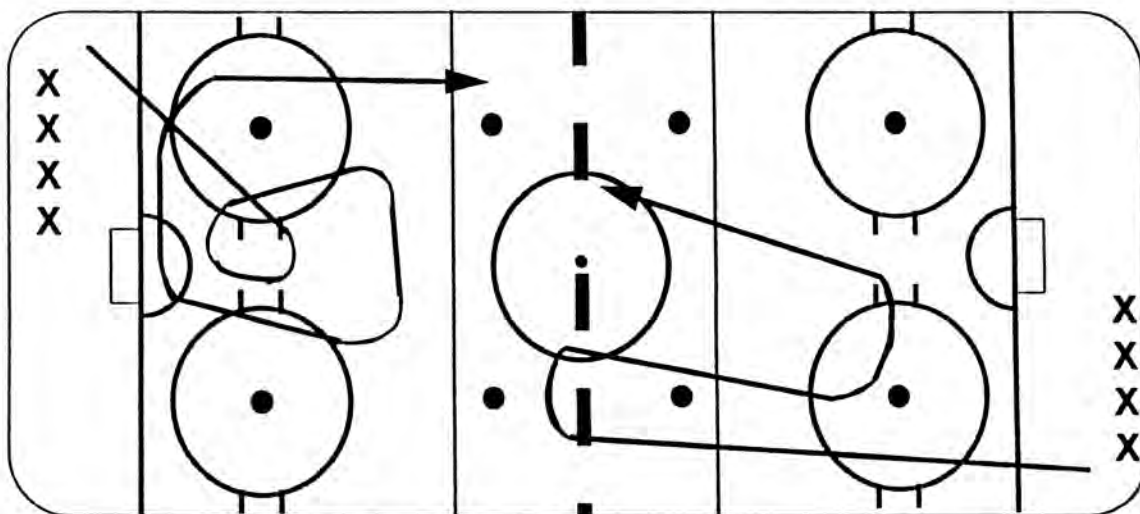


Skating: Cornering

Players skate twice around the course.

Five players go at a time.

Start every 75 seconds.

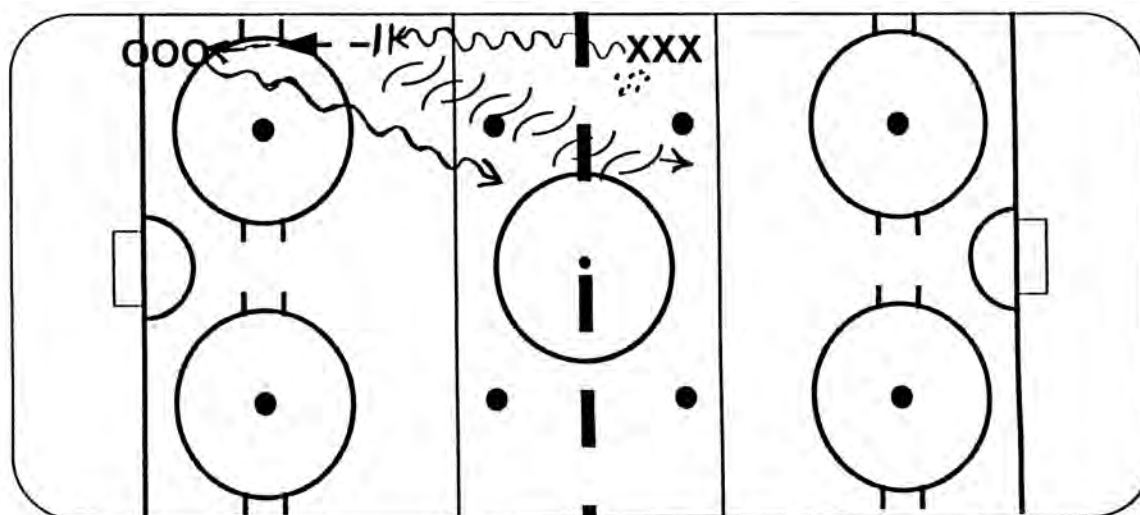


Skating: Cornering

Start every 60-75 seconds.

Five players go at a time.

Each player goes through once.

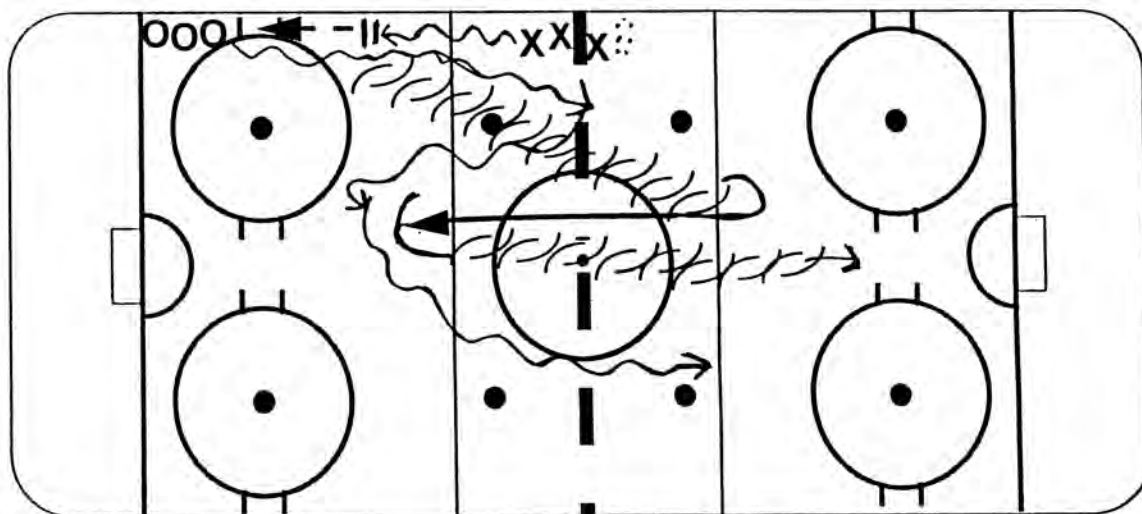


Basic 1-on-1 Drill For Tight Gap Control

Purpose: Defending 1-on-1

X skates to the top of the faceoff circle, passes to O and pivots to backward skating to play 1-on-1 with tight gap control tactics.

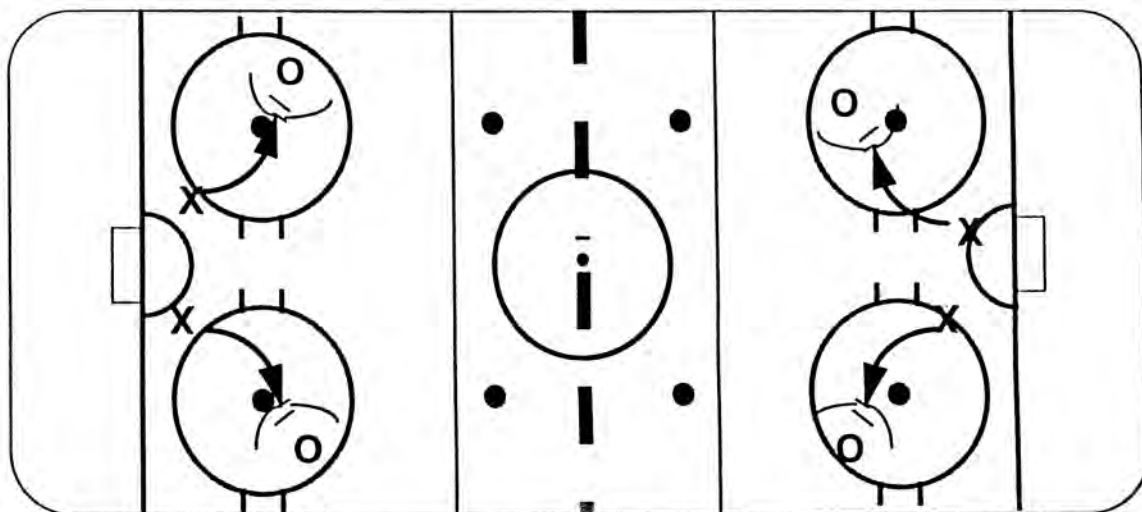
O receives the pass and attacks 1-on-1 using a variety of individual tactics – drive, delay, cross, carry behind, etc.



Regroup 1-on-1 Drill For Tight Gap Control

Purpose: Tight Gap Control

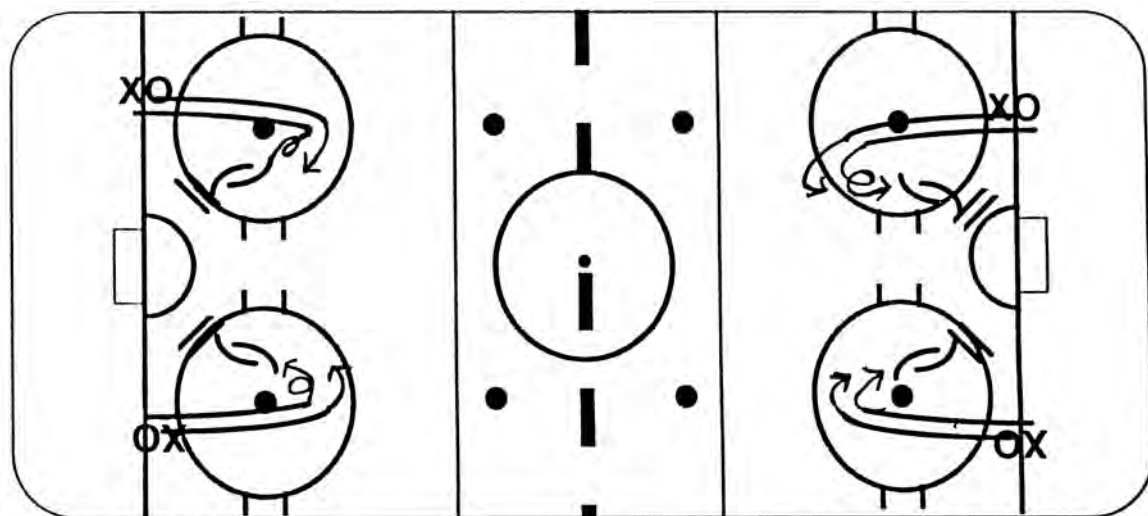
Same idea as the basic 1-on-1 drill with the addition of one or more regroup to force defensemen to pressure up and play tight gap control versus a regroup. O uses a variety of attacking tactics. The coach can blow a whistle to control the time of regroup and the gap control drill can go in both directions on the ice.



Circle Drill

Purpose: Angling/defense side positioning

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



Defensive Side Positioning Drill

Purpose: Defensive side positioning

O and X skate forward toward blue line with X in a tight gap.

O turns and attacks X, who maintains defensive side positioning and boxes out O.

Section 7

Off-Ice Training



Chapter 17

Dry Land Training

OBJECTIVES

- To provide an understanding of dry land training
- To provide a variety of dry land training activities
- To outline the value that dry land training has on the development of hockey skills

INTRODUCTION

There are three basic cycles of training: off-season, preseason, and active season. Let's look at the two basic age groups and their age characteristics:

9-12 Years of Age

- large muscles
- organic systemic development
- purposeful thinking

13-15 Years of Age

- age of sexual development
- jumping ability increases
- body grows larger
- growth of major muscle groups
- development of major muscle groups
- joints become stronger and firmer
- functional disharmony
- techniques not stable
- improvement of braking reactions
- abstract thinking
- ability to analyze

For these age groups, we should emphasize the development of agility, speed and cooperation. When one thinks of dry land training, the first thought that usually enters the mind is hard work,

running for miles and general drudgery. This should not be the case at all, especially with the younger age groups. Coaches have the responsibility of providing a program that will not only enhance the physical development of a young player, but also will create a healthy environment rich in fun activities. Most of our youngsters participate in sports other than hockey. This is healthy and should be encouraged. To be a good hockey player, one must be a good athlete.

Not all players will want to participate in a dry land training program, especially during the off-season. This program is for those who wish to participate. The equipment you will need for a reasonably successful program is usually available in your home town:

- basketballs
- baseballs
- hockey sticks
- jump ropes
- medicine balls
- rubber suspenders
- soccer balls
- tennis balls

We all know what the qualities are of agility and speed. How about the quality of cooperation?

Hockey is a game of cooperation, and this quality can be developed through various off-ice training exercises. This is an important quality in the development of youth hockey players. We have some fine players who are agile, fast and strong, but who refuse to cooperate with their teammates. Teamwork should be developed through team games and partner drills in off-ice training. When players are exposed to this type of training at a young age, they soon become accustomed to it. If presented properly, they will enjoy it and continue in team sports. If a player dislikes it, he or she should not be forced to continue. We want the players to enjoy the programs.

Off-Season Dry Land Training

(June, July and August)

12 & Under (Peewee):
Once per week for 45 minutes

14 & Under (Bantam):
Once per week for 60 minutes

16/18 & Under (Midget):
Once per week for 60 minutes

Preseason Dry Land Training

(September until start of season)

12 & Under (Peewee):
Twice per week for 45 minutes each

14 & Under (Bantam):
Twice per week for 60 minutes each

16/18 & Under (Midget):
Twice per week for 60 minutes each

Active Season Dry Land Training

(During Season)

12-and-Under (Peewee):
Once per week for 45 minutes

14-and-Under (Bantam):
Once per week for 60 minutes

16/18-and-Under (Midget):
Once per week for 60 minutes

Exercises can be done in grassy outdoor areas in the evening or in a local gym. Provide water for your players while avoiding direct hot or humid periods of the day or evening.

STRETCHING

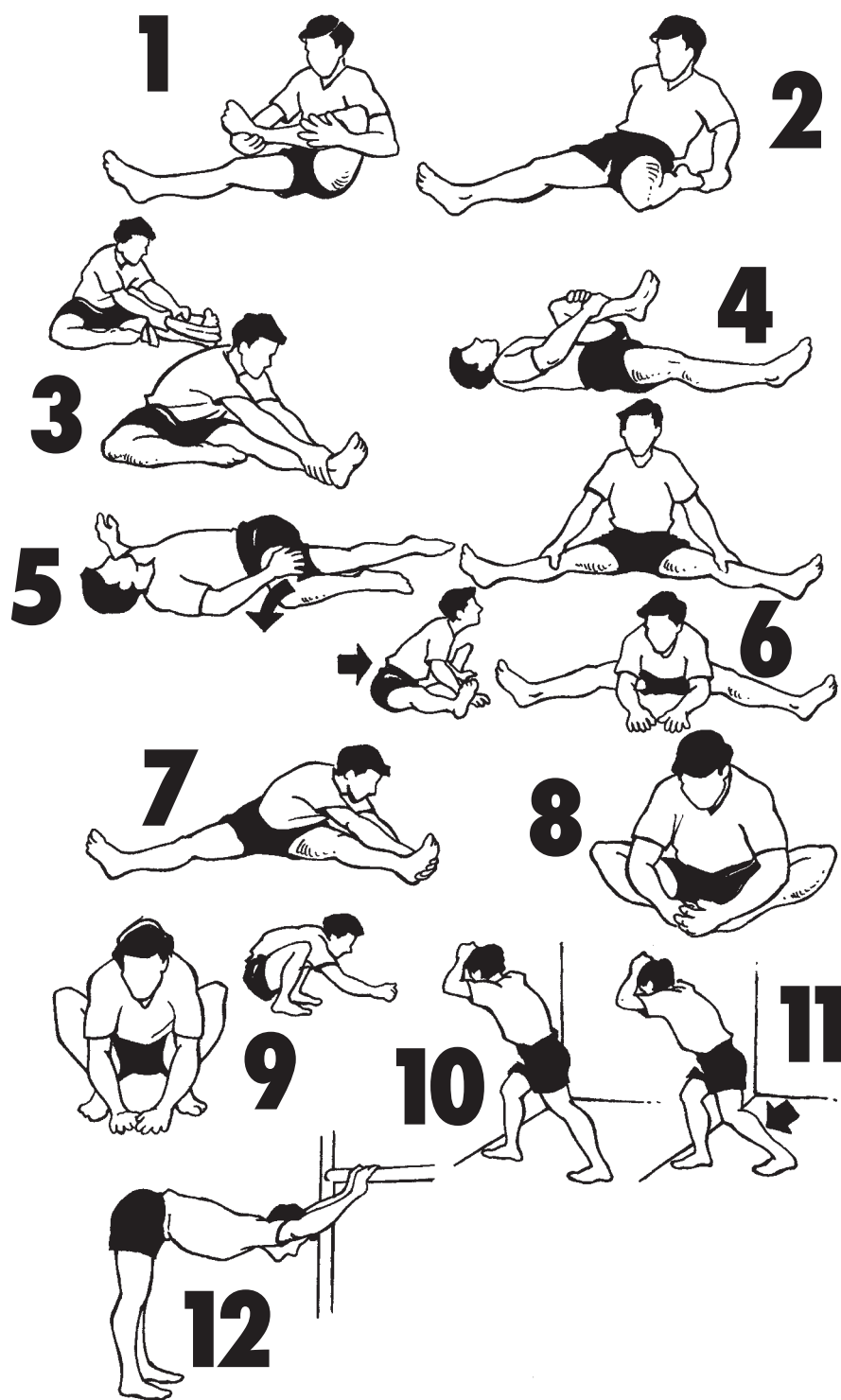
How to Stretch

Stretching should be done slowly with no bouncing or jerky movements. Move to where you feel a slight, easy stretch. Hold this feeling for 15-30 seconds, then slowly increase the stretch as you feel yourself relax. Hold this development stretch for another 15-30 seconds. Do not strain or hold a stretch that is drastic or painful. Stretch the muscles slowly and with control. The key is to be relaxed. Don't worry about flexibility. Stretch relaxed, and limberness will increase.

The Series of Stretches Takes

Approximately 10 Minutes

1. Pull one leg to your chest with both hands. Hold as easy stretch. Stretch the legs as one unit. This stretches the upper hamstrings, gluteus maximus and gluteus minimus. If you need more stability in this stretch, lean back against something. Hold the stretch for 20 seconds.
2. Sit up and place the leg that you have been stretching behind you in the hurdles stretch position. Slowly lean back to stretch your quadriceps further. Hold a relaxed stretch for 50 seconds.
3. Straighten your bent leg and bring the sole of your other foot to rest next to the inside, upper part of your straightened leg. Lean slightly forward and stretch the hamstring of the leg that is straightened out in front of you. Find an easy stretch and relax. Hold it for 30 seconds. If necessary, use a towel to help stretch. Repeat stretches 1,2 and 3 with the other leg.
4. Next, while lying on your back, bend one knee and pull it toward your chest. For this stretch, keep the back of your head on the mat, if possible, but don't strain. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds on each side.
5. From the previous stretch position, with your opposite hand pull your bent leg up and over your other leg. Make sure that both of your shoulders are on the floor. Turn your head to look toward the hand of the arm that is straight. With your other hand on your thigh (resting just above the knee), control the stretch in your lower back and butt muscles by pulling your leg down toward the floor. Repeat the stretch



to your other side. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds on each side.

6. In a sitting position, open your legs as far as comfortably possible. With the legs straight, feet upright and relaxed ankles, slowly lean forward at the hips until you feel a good, even

stretch on the inside of the upper legs. Keep your back straight. This is a difficult way to stretch for many people. The muscles need time and regularity with stretching to loosen up, so have patience. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.

7. To stretch your left hamstring and the right side of your back, slowly bend forward from the hips toward the foot of your left leg. Keep your head forward and back straight. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds on each side.
8. Put the soles of your feet together. With your hands around your feet, pull yourself forward to stretch your groin and back. Keep your elbows on the inside of your legs to give you stability in the stretch. Do not bounce. Hold the stretch for 30 seconds.
9. With your feet shoulder-width apart and pointed out to about a 15 degree angle, squat down keeping your heels on the ground. If you have trouble staying in this position, hold onto something for support. This is a great stretch for your ankles, achilles tendons, groin and low back. Hold stretch for 30 seconds.
10. To stretch your calf, stand an arms-length from a solid support and lean on it with your forearms, your head resting on your hands.

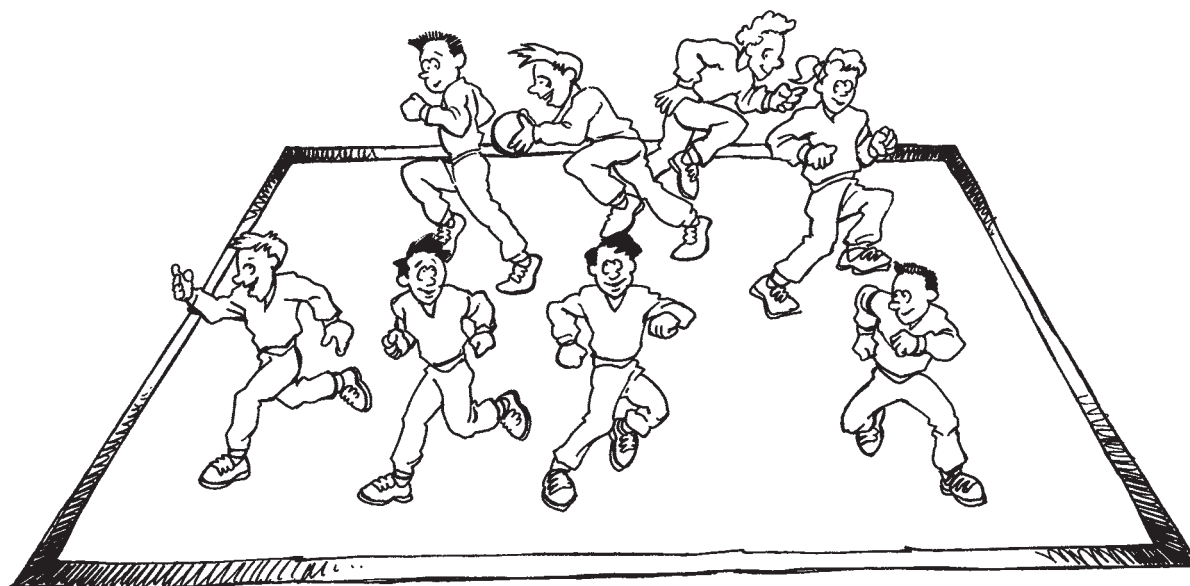
Bend one leg and place your foot on the ground in front of you leaving the other leg straight, behind you. Slowly move your hips forward until you feel a stretch in the calf of your straight leg. Be sure to keep the heel of the foot of the straight leg on the ground and your toes pointed straight ahead. Hold an easy stretch for 30 seconds. Do not bounce. Stretch both legs.

11. To stretch the soleus and achilles tendon, slightly bend the back knee, keeping the foot flat. This gives you a lower stretch, which is also good for maintaining or regaining ankle flexibility. Hold the stretch for 15 seconds on each leg.
12. Here's a stretch for the arms, shoulder and back. Hold onto something that is about shoulder height. With your hands shoulder-width apart on this support, relax, keeping your arms straight, your chest moving downward and your feet under your hips. Hold this stretch for 30 seconds.

INTERMEDIATE OFF-SEASON DRY LAND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

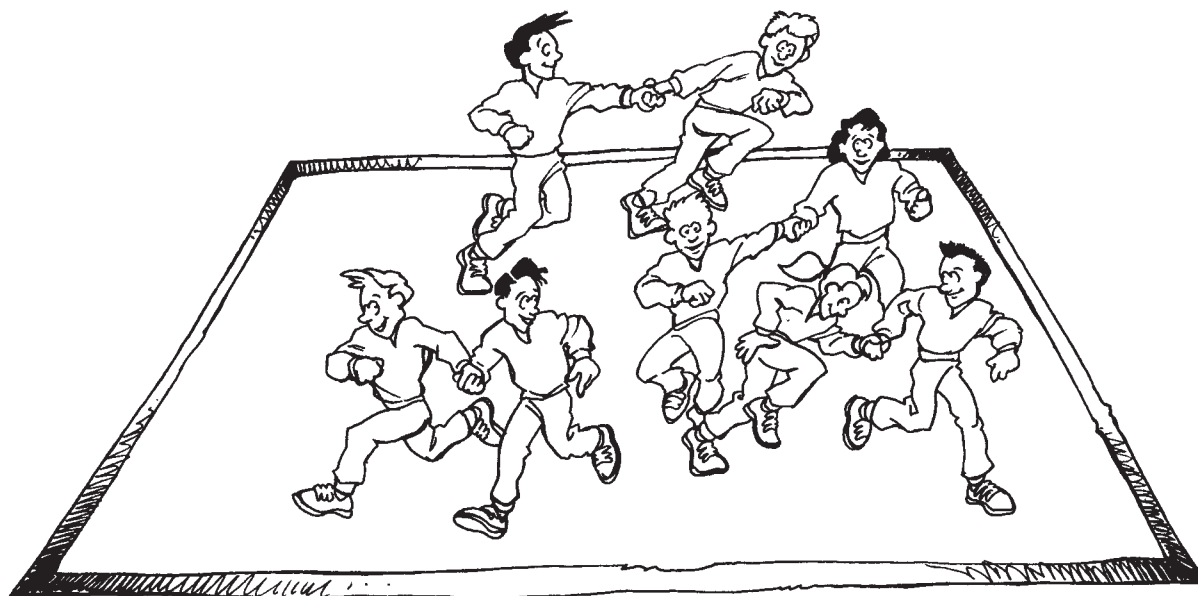
Tag within a specified area

Variation: Tag with a medicine ball or basketball

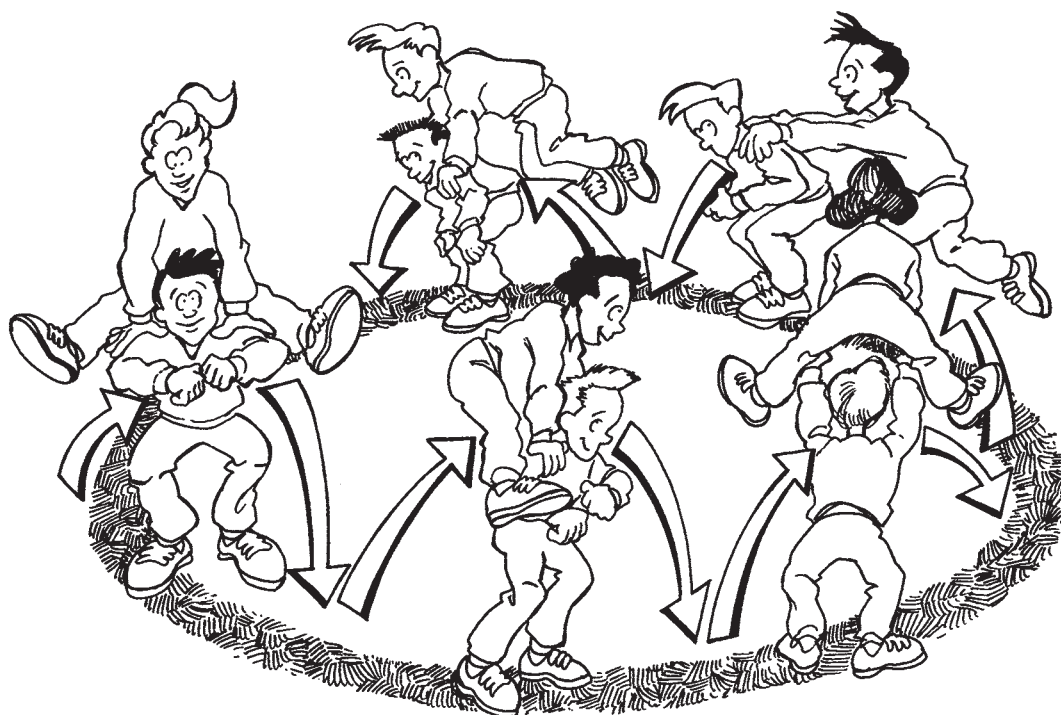


Tag within a specified area

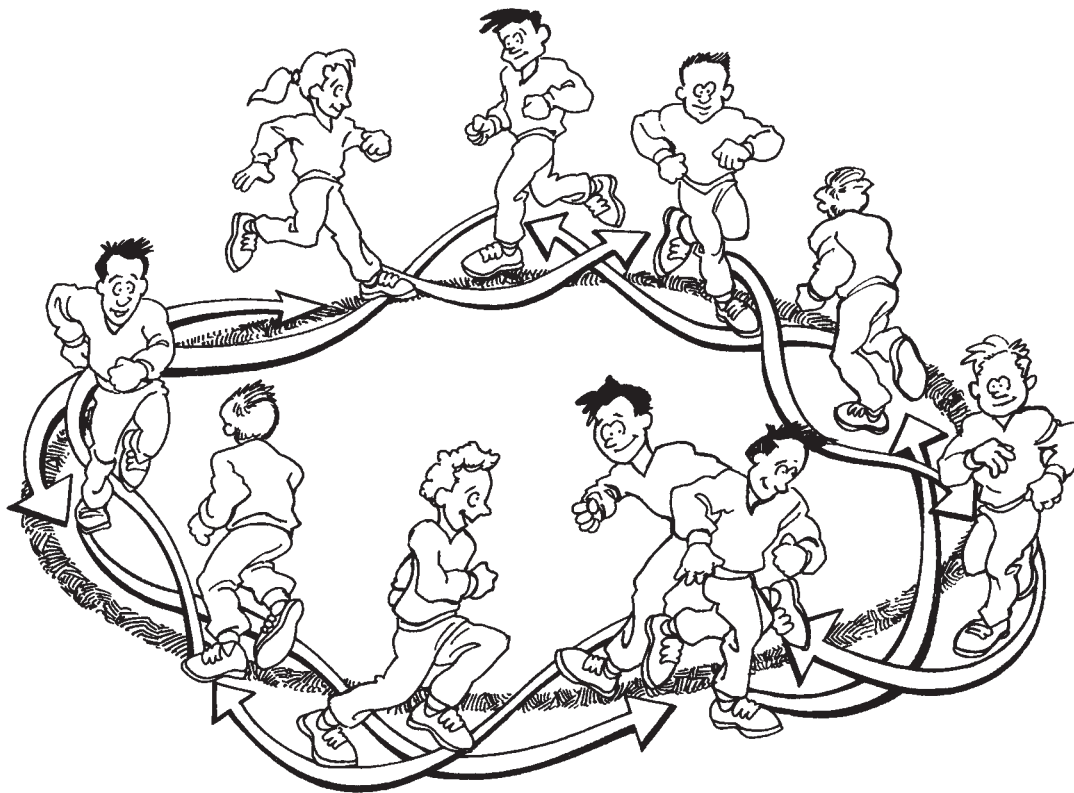
Variation: Tag with partners (everyone pairs off holding hands)



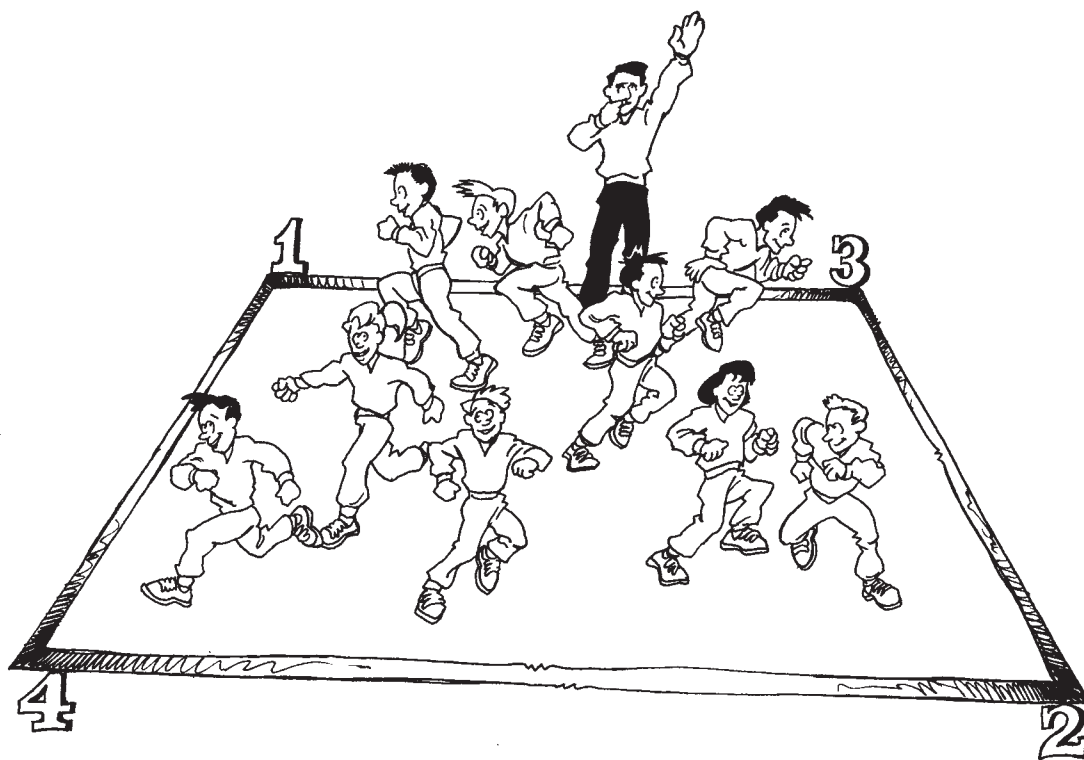
Leap frog in a circle



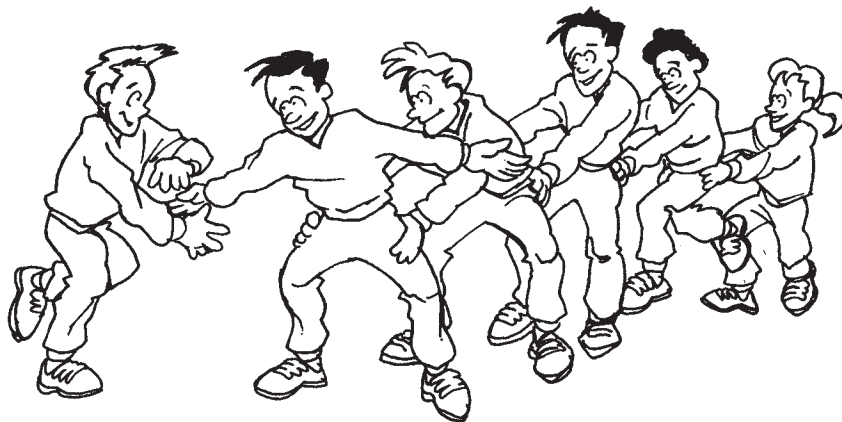
Run in a circle from two directions. Players should avoid each other as they run.



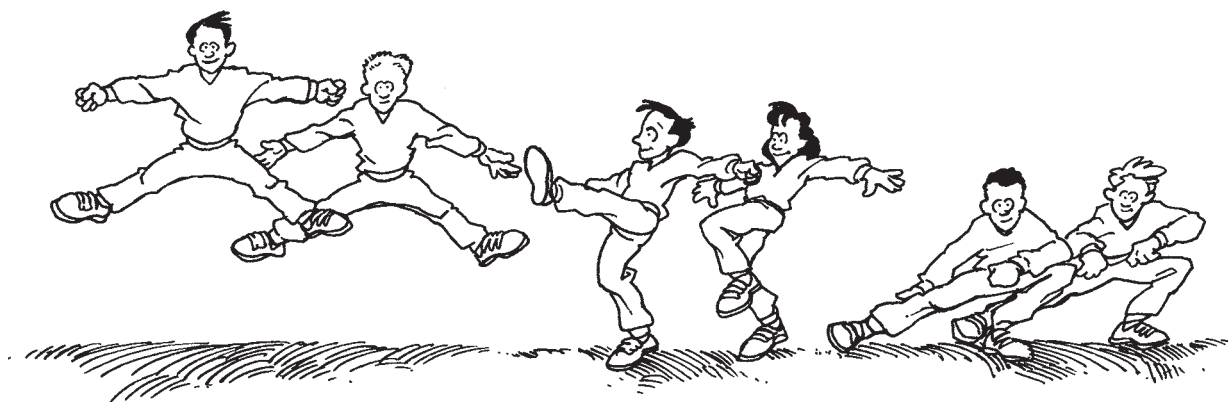
All players in a specified area run in different directions. The players are numbered one through four. Each corner of the specified area is numbered. When the coach gives the signal, all of the players race to their corner.



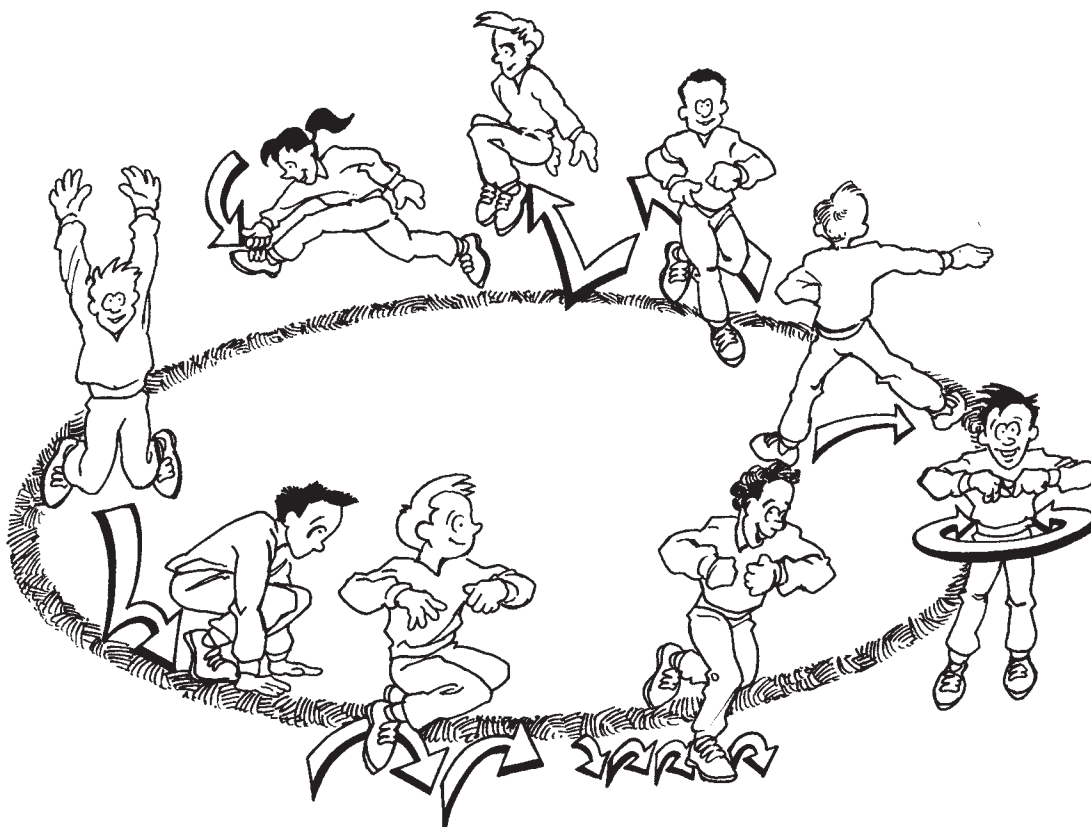
Players form a line of approximately five players. The first player in line uses his or her arms to block another player who attempts to tag the last player in the line. All of the players in the line place their hands on the hips of the player in front of them, and they must hold on.



Follow the Leader: Pair off. One player follows the other, imitating his or her partner's moves. Stress agility and acrobatics.



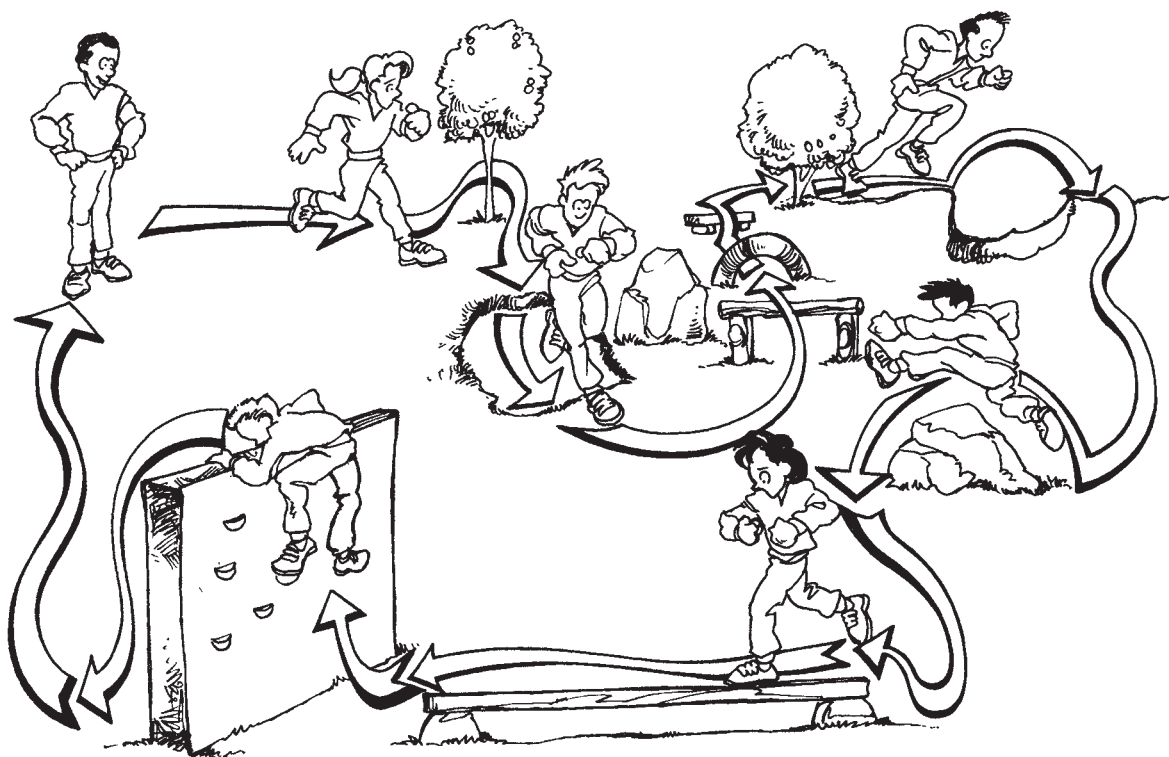
While running around the perimeter of a circle, players execute the following moves: hopping on one leg, hopping on two legs, turning different ways, exaggerated cross-overs, backward running, side hops, high knees, high heels, touching the opposite foot with their hands, etc. Use your imagination.



Stickhandle with a ball (e.g. baseball, tennis ball, golf ball), from any position: on your knees, on one or both legs while hopping, sitting with your feet raised off the ground, etc. Use forward, backward and lateral moves. Use one or more balls.

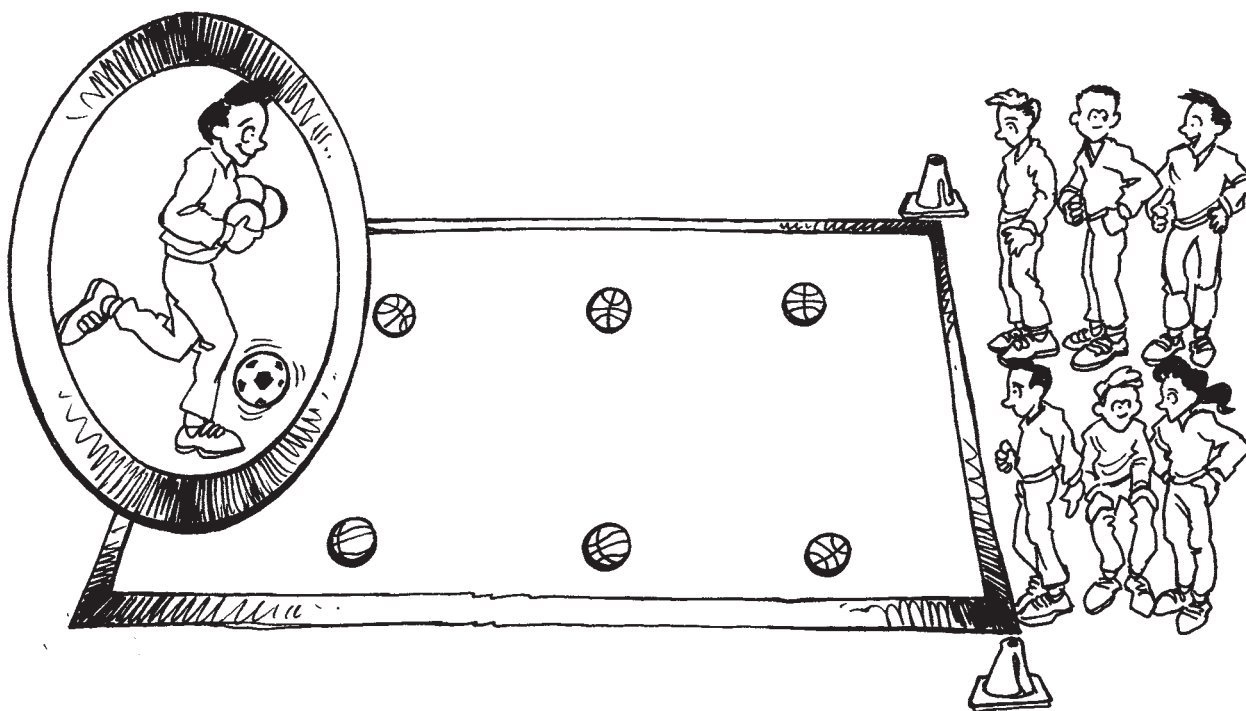


Run through an obstacle course.

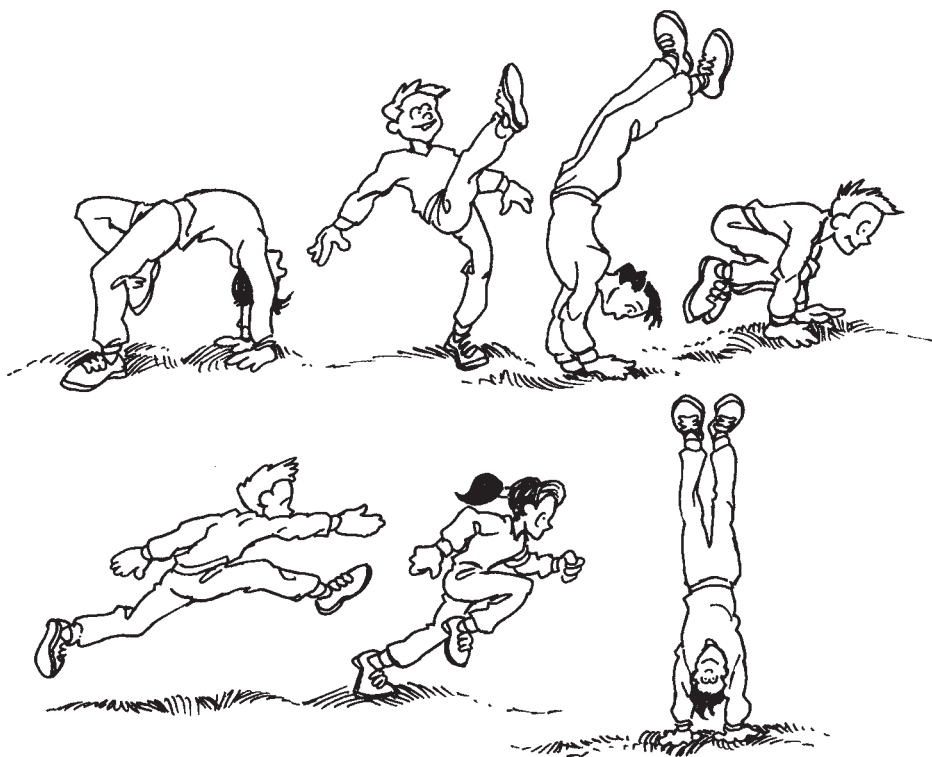


The first player in each line takes off on a signal. He or she must retrieve all of the balls, returning to the starting line after picking up each ball, or retrieve all of the balls at once. When accomplished, the next player goes and has to put all the balls back in the same manner in which they were originally laid out.

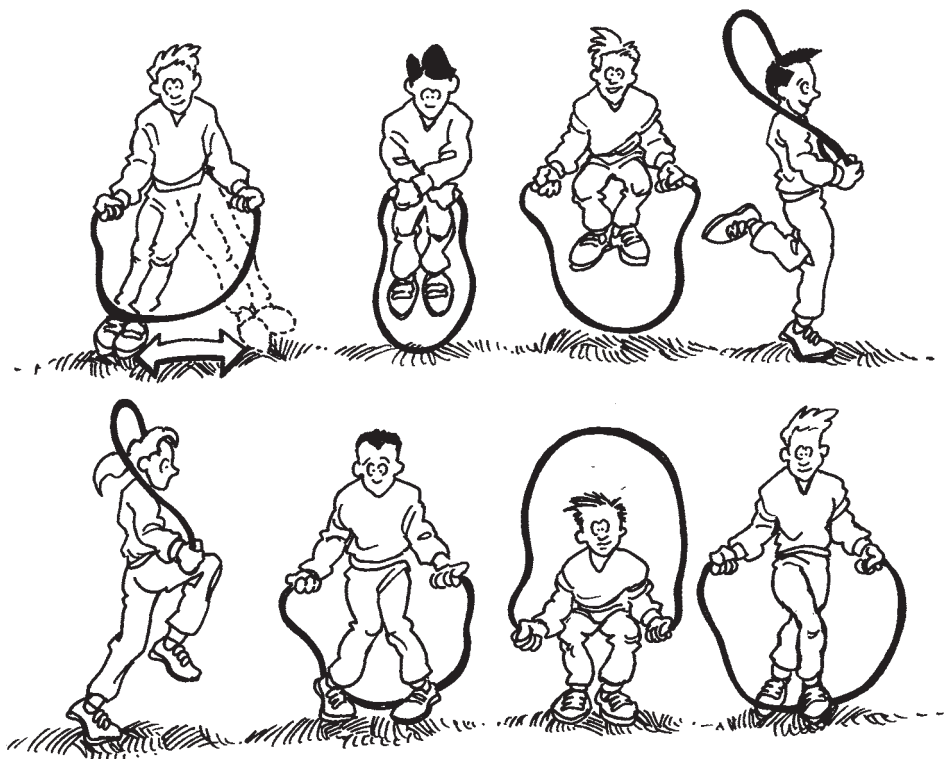
Variations: Include dribbling a soccer ball with your feet at the same time. Use your imagination.



Acrobatics: tumbling, hand stands, walking on your hands and broken field running using all types of quick and explosive movements



Jump rope: forward, backward, etc.



Play with a soccer ball and basketball together. Dribble and play soccer at the same time.



Stickhandle with a ball (e.g. baseball, tennis ball, golf ball) and play soccer at the same time.



Play all kinds of games including soccer, basketball, dry land hockey, etc. Use your imagination and make sure your players enjoy these activities. Utilize different exercises in each practice session. Make it fun. Remember, for 12 & Under (Peewee), do not use weights other than a light medicine ball. Agility and dexterity are to be developed.



INTERMEDIATE PRESEASON DRY LAND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

The imitation of on-ice hockey skills:

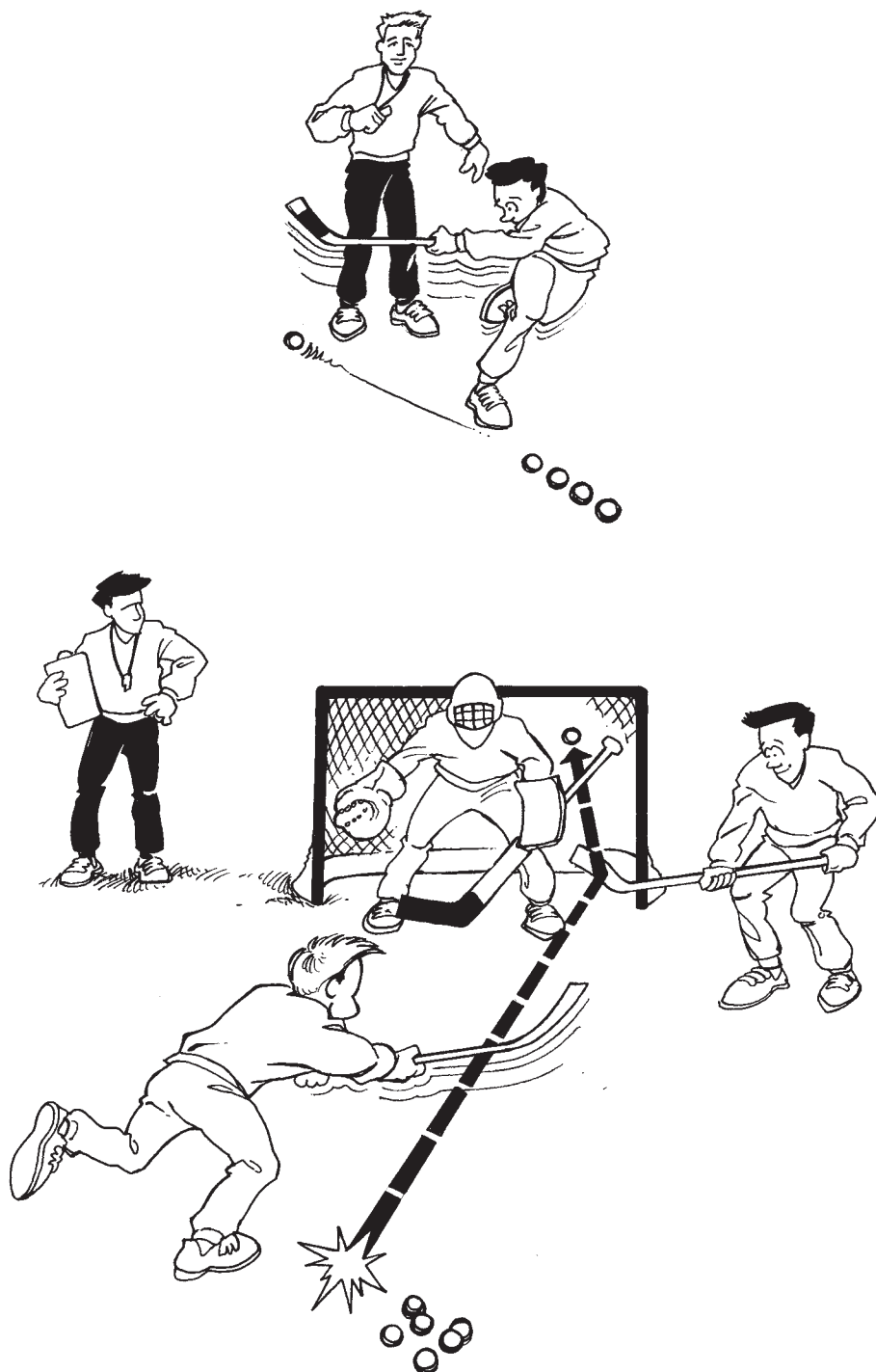
- skating
- puck handling
- shooting
- passing

The coach should review the basic skills necessary to be a good hockey player. As an example, use your associate level manual and go over each aspect of skating. You can do this on dry land. The players will learn the basic stance and the principles involved. When you do go on the ice, your players will already understand the basic principles. Explain and demonstrate puck handling, passing, receiving and shooting. You can work on all of these aspects and more. Your goaltenders should receive separate instruction.



INTERMEDIATE ACTIVE SEASON DRY LAND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

The improvement of skills can be accomplished using off-ice areas such as gyms or any outdoor playing field (tennis courts, basketball courts, football field, etc.). This also allows for work on team skills, emphasizing cooperation among players. Basketball, soccer and floor hockey emphasize cooperative team play. Create challenges for your players. Play basketball on one leg, always hopping. Play in a semi-squatting position. Play hockey while emphasizing passing. Again, use your imagination and encourage your players to use theirs.



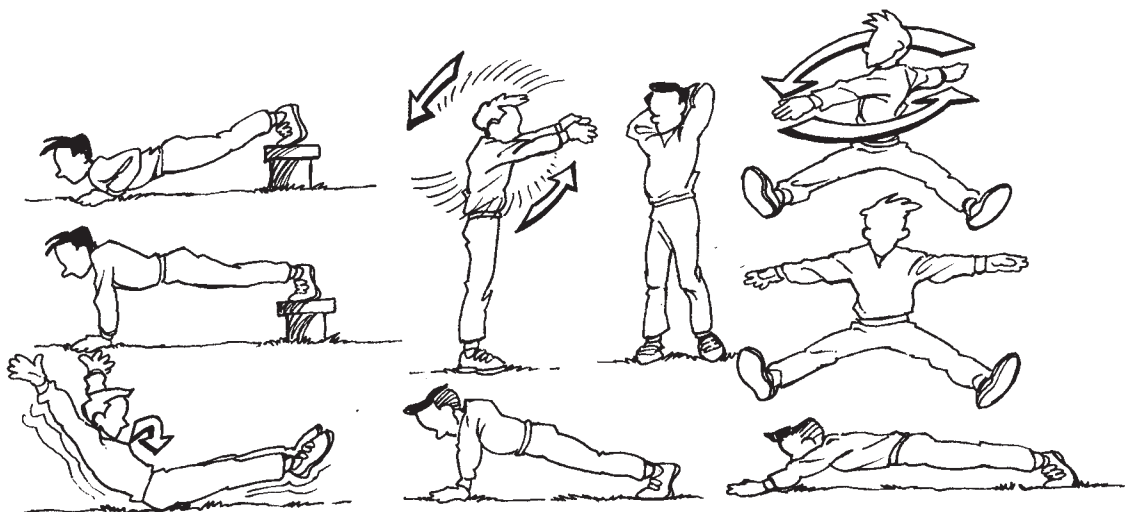


ADVANCED OFF-SEASON DRY LAND TRAINING PROGRAM

For players 13-15 years of age, the emphasis should be on developing speed. When you plan your program, use exercises that enhance speed, but also incorporate agility and player cooperation.

Begin and end each session with stretching exercises.

Basic calisthenics: pushups, sit-ups, toe touches, etc.

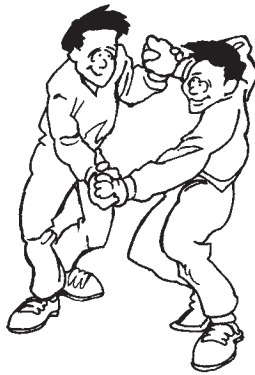


Partner Exercises

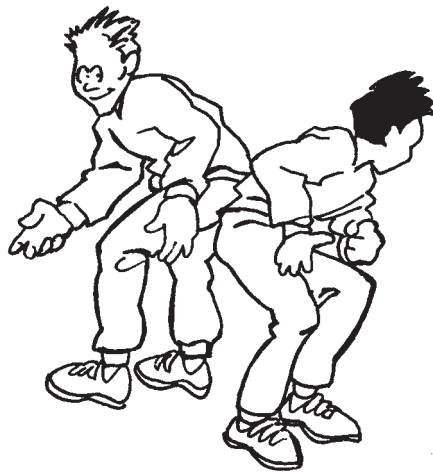
Players face each other with a stick on the floor between them. On the whistle, each player attempts to pull the other over the stick. Play best of five.



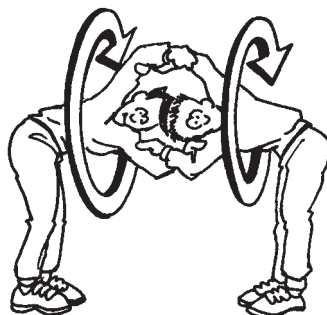
Same thing, except now the players lock hands and attempt to push the other player off his or her footing. Play best of five.



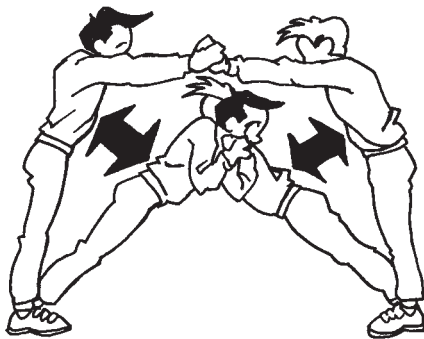
Players line up back-to-back. On the whistle, try to bump the other player off his footing using your buttocks.



Face-to-face resistance



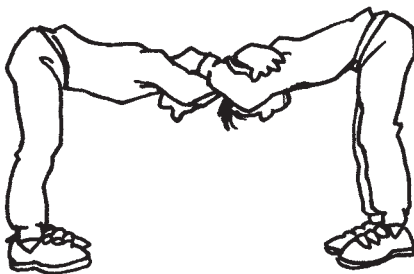
Face-to-face, up-and-down resistance



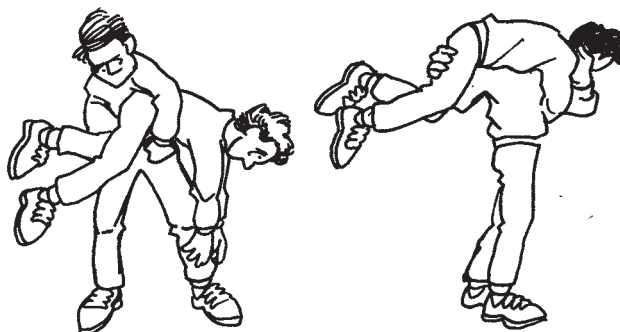
While standing back-to-back, lift your partner and hold that position.



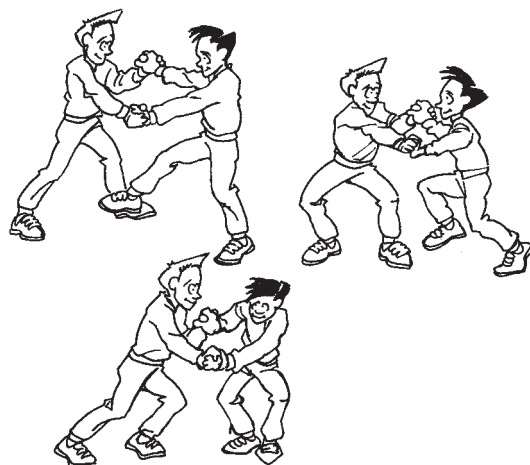
Face-to-face, heads-down legs stretch



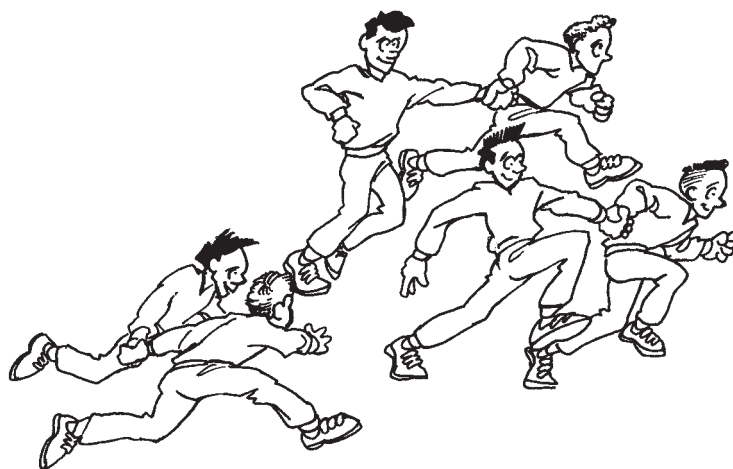
Carry your partner.



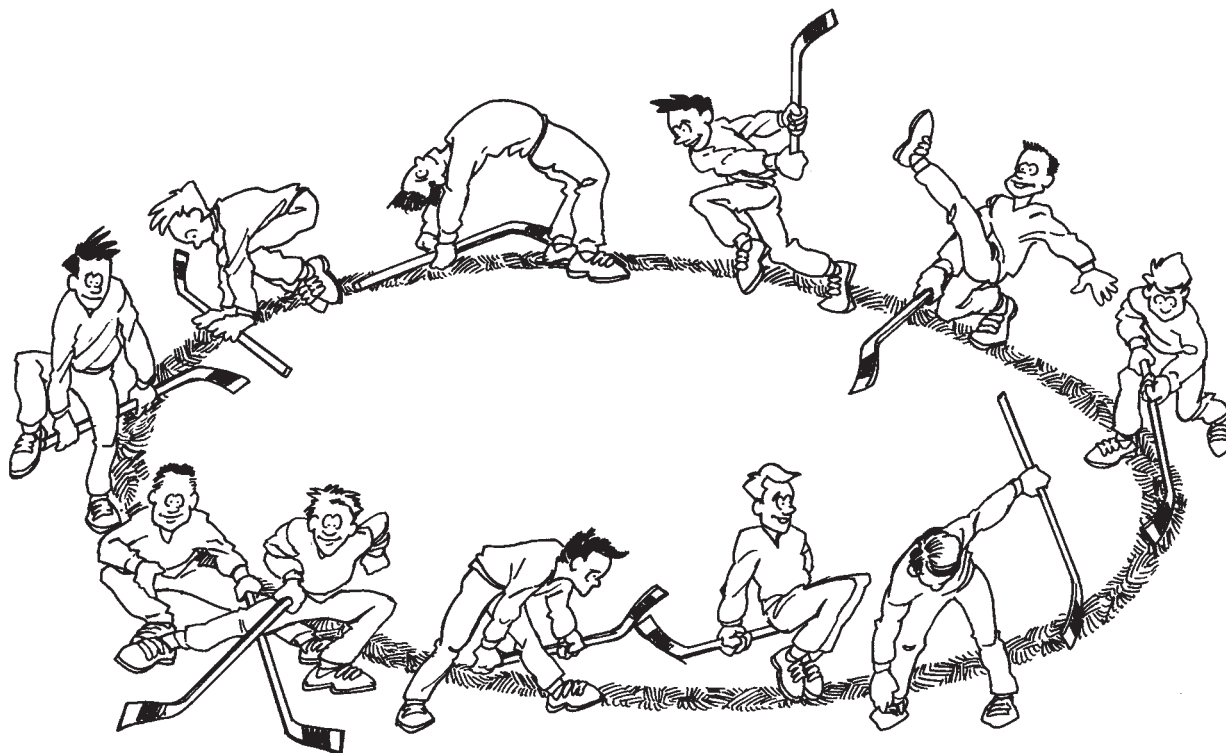
Step on your partners feet while holding hands.



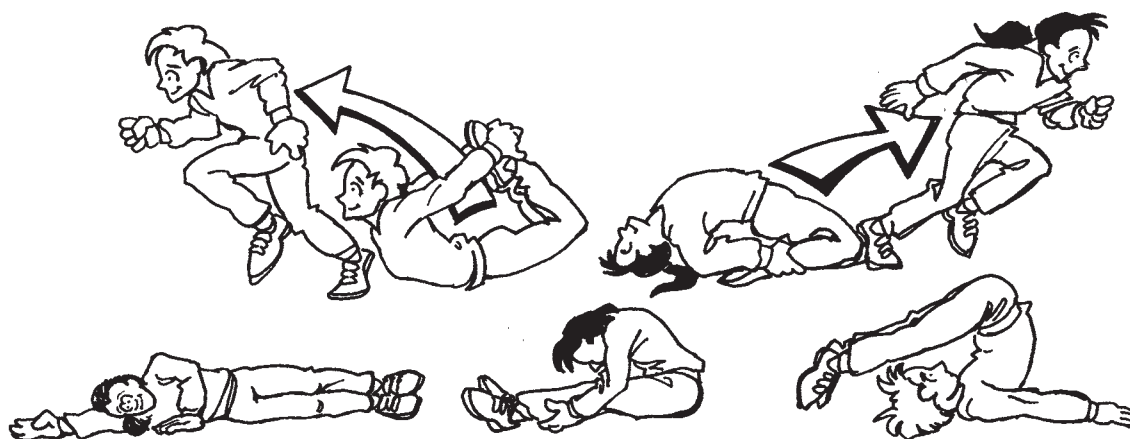
Agility running in small groups



With sticks, jog in a large circle. Players imitate all types of moves with their sticks: two-handed stickhandling, stretching out low and one-handed sweeps wide, hopping over their sticks, moving their sticks in and out of their bodies, putting their sticks between their legs, putting their sticks behind their back, etc.



Use games that emphasize explosive speed. Use sprints (relays) starting from different positions: sitting, lying on their bellies, lying on their backs, etc.



Diversified team games



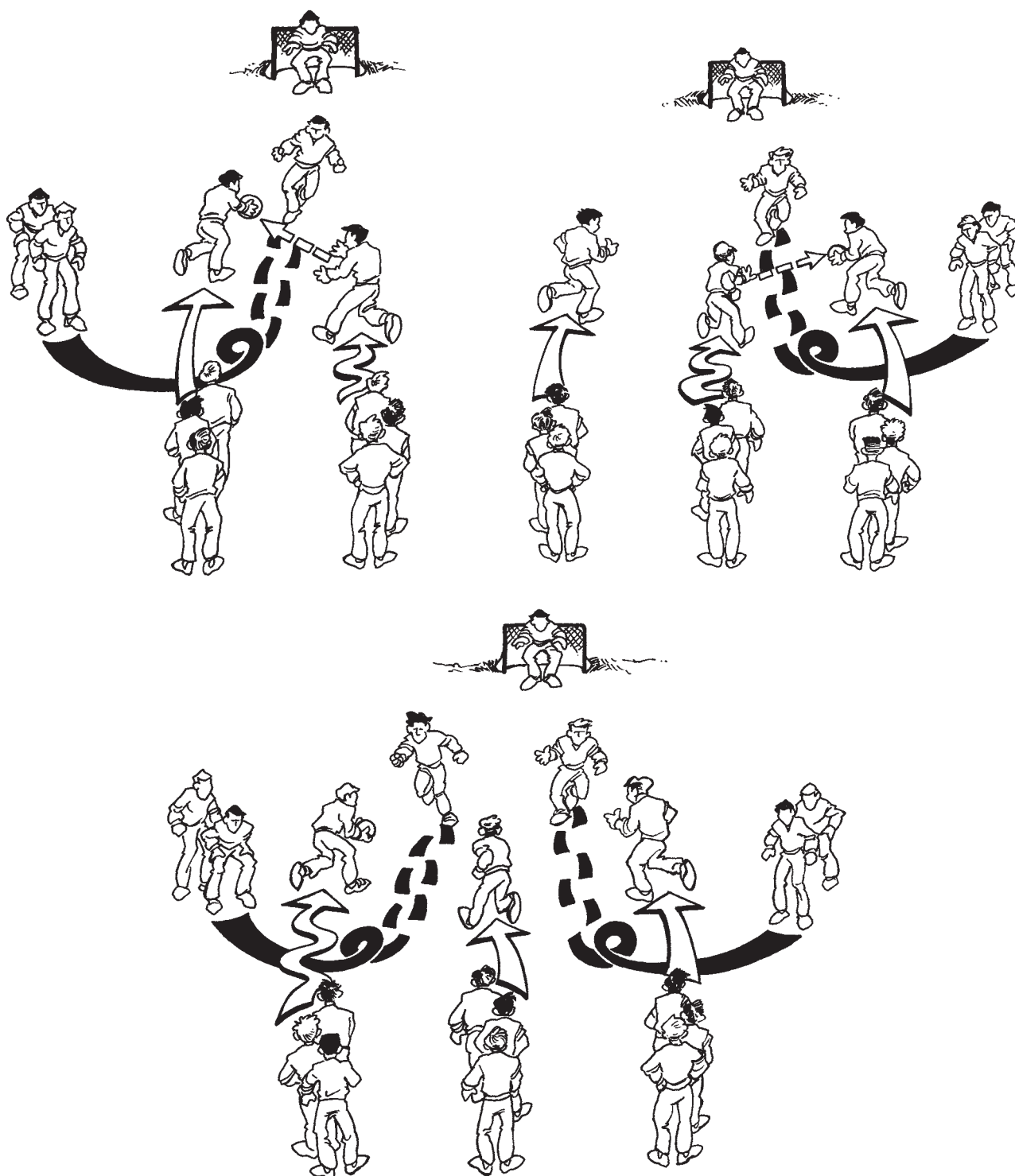
Circuit training - Set up a large circle with various stations. Place players at each station. After each station is completed, move counter-clockwise to the next station. Players work at full intensity for 15 seconds and rest for 30 seconds before they begin at the next station.

- jumping over a bench sideways
- acrobatics and tumbling
- hockey and soccer
- medicine ball (all types of moves)
- suspender – stickhandling
- hop off a chair (hop three times)
- sprints (different directions)
- jump rope
- basketball dribbling and soccer with a tennis ball at the same time
- broken field running (sprint)



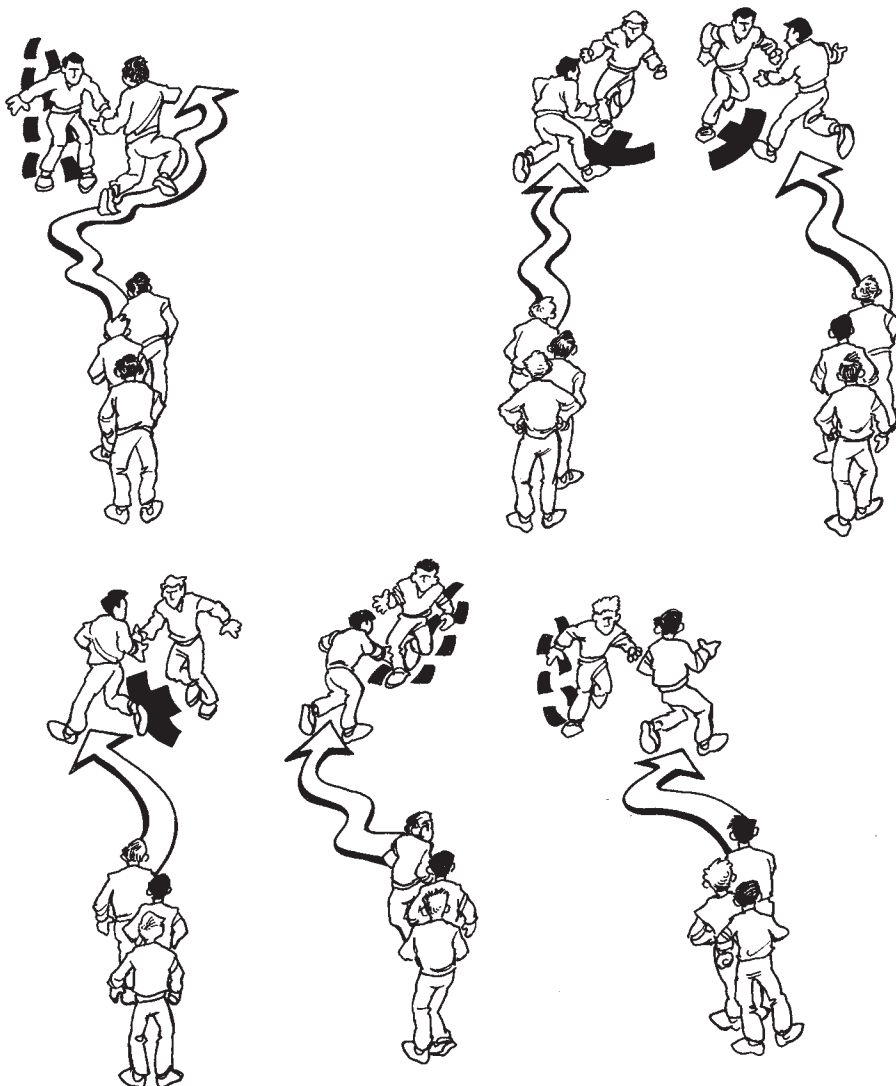
Hockey team skills with basketball

- 2-on-1
- 3-on-1
- 3-on-2



Checking drills

- 1-on-1
- 2-on-2
- 3-on-3



Imitation of hockey skills (all done at high speed)



Play team games at high speed such as basketball, soccer or floor hockey. These games can be played with hockey rules and hockey formations.

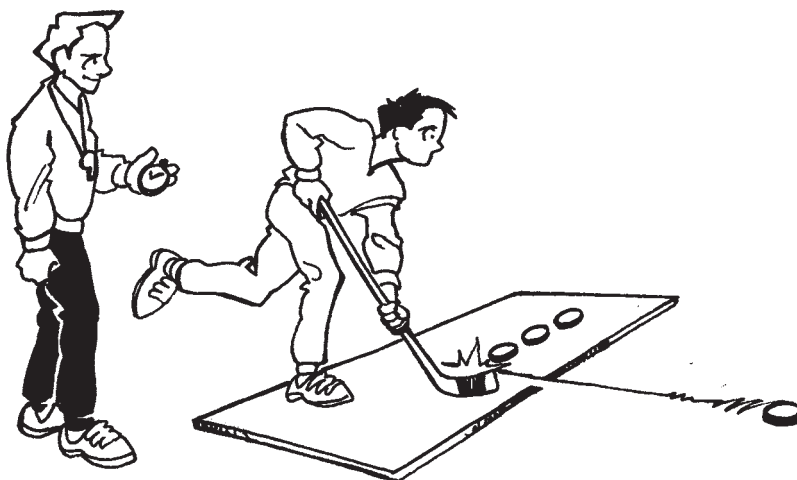
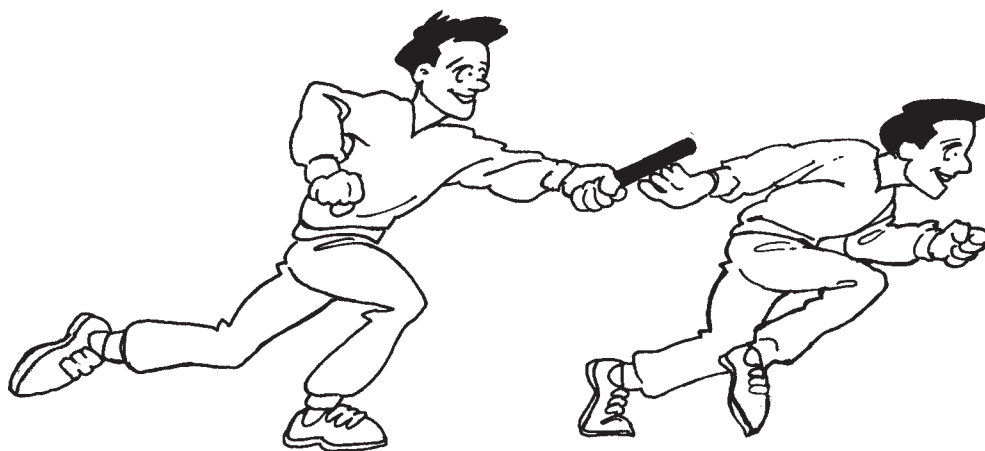
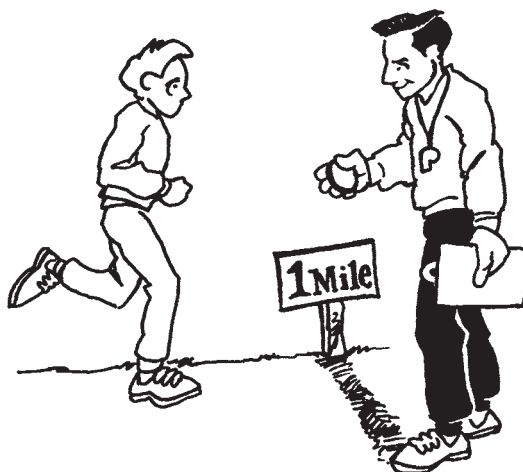


ADVANCED PRESEASON DRY LAND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Short runs: one mile

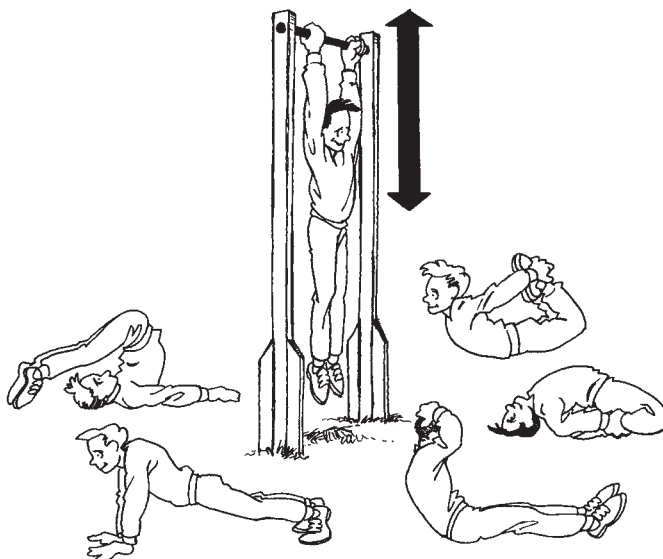
Sprints: relay races, etc.

Individual skills: shooting, etc. After players have mastered the skill correctly, create difficulties for them (e.g., shoot quickly, shoot with another player interfering with you, shoot off balance).

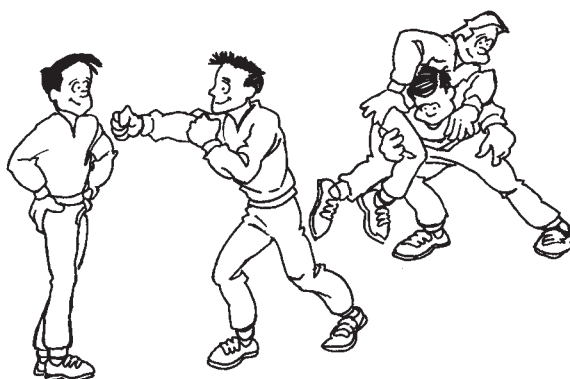


ADVANCED ACTIVE SEASON DRY LAND TRAINING ACTIVITIES

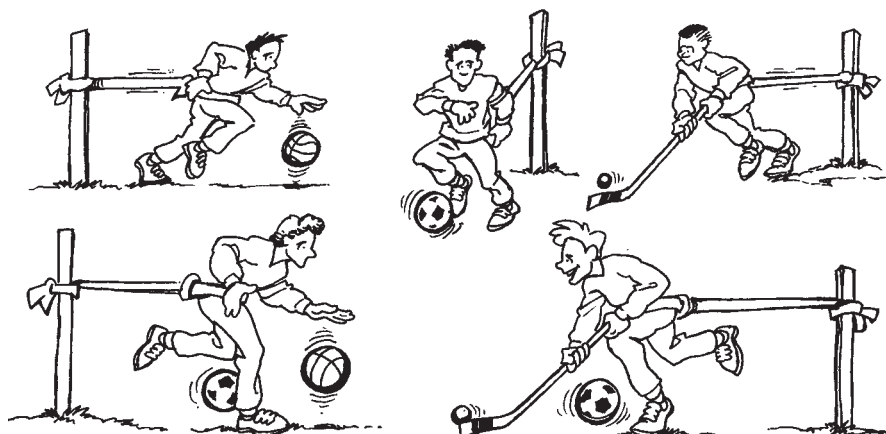
Calisthenics: push-ups, sit-ups, pull-ups, etc.



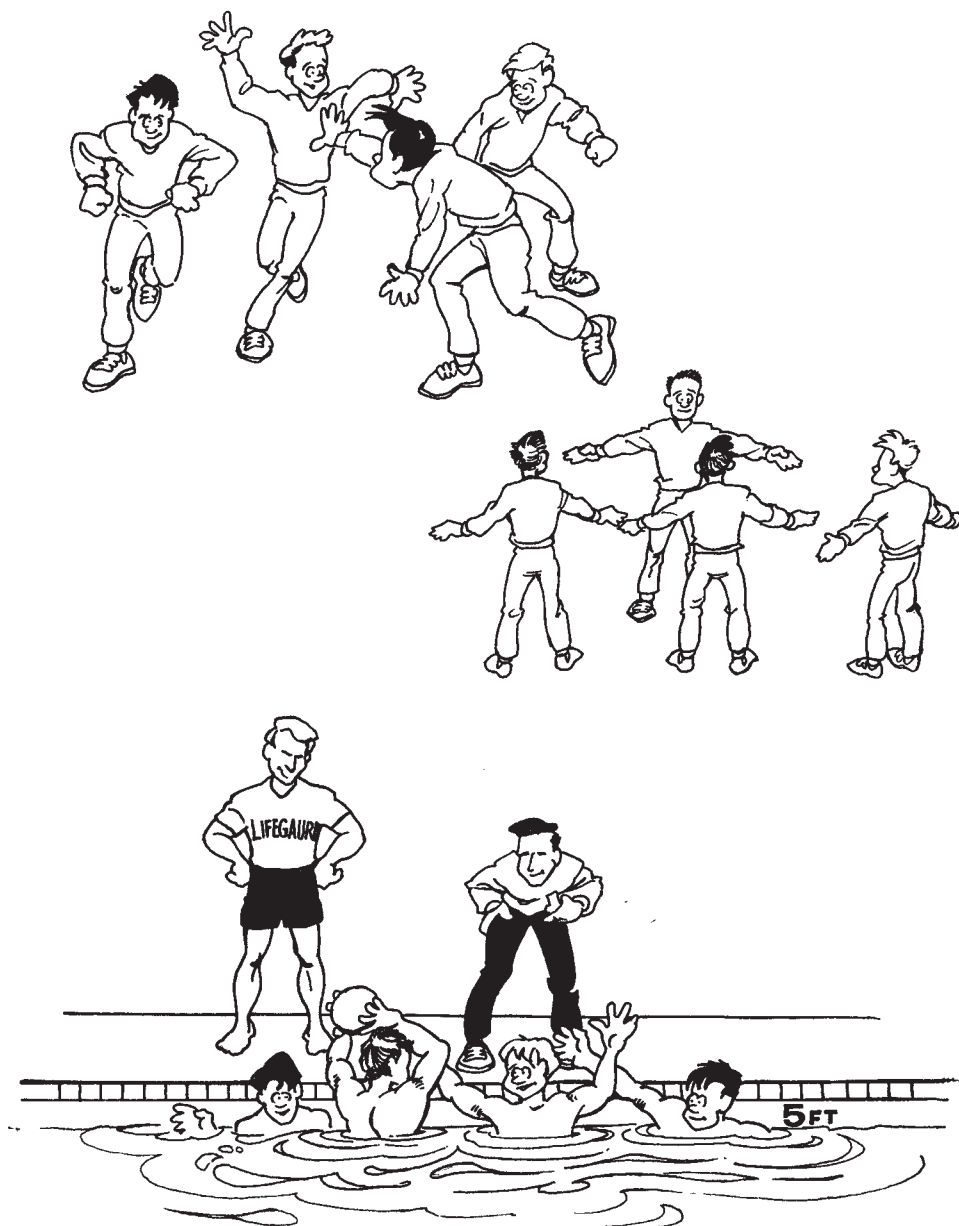
Shadow boxing, wrestling



Suspender drills



Fun games like tag, “Simon Says” and, if available, water hockey. Use a local pool and have a lifeguard present. The coach supervises and you play hockey in the water. It’s fun, a change of pace, and good for endurance and team cooperation.



These are just a few ideas. Use your imagination and always create a fun atmosphere and an interesting schedule of exercises. Use different means each week to accomplish the same goals.

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- www.usahockey.com/USANTDP/Drills.aspx

Chapter 18

Dry Land Training for Goaltenders

OBJECTIVES

- To provide dry land activities for goaltenders
- To provide off-ice games for goaltenders
- To give a variety of activities for all levels of goaltenders

INTRODUCTION

Goalkeepers can improve their games tremendously with off-ice training. Almost every move can be imitated off the ice that is utilized on the ice. Equipment for a successful off-ice training program for goalkeepers is inexpensive and almost always available.

The most important qualities needed for a goalkeeper are courage and dedication. Given the natural physical makeup necessary to be a goalkeeper, one can learn to play the position well.

Goalkeepers can work alone, with a friend, teammate or family member. It is preferable to work with another goalkeeper, especially a teammate. The goalkeeper can work in a basement, gym, schoolyard, backyard, and/or play area.

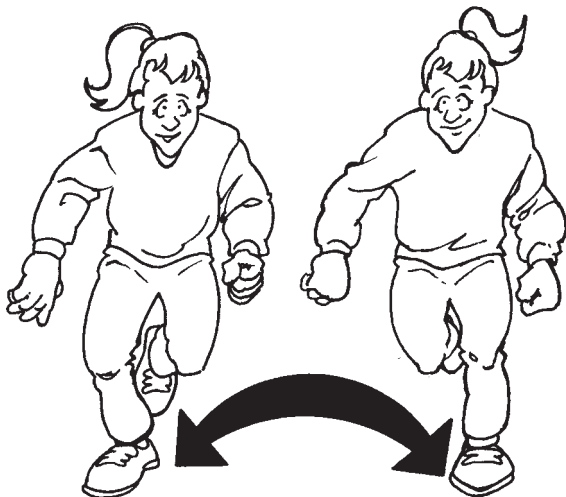
Equipment needed for a complex program are: a jump rope, tennis balls, medicine balls, a soccer ball, a volleyball, a goal (hand-made), goalie equipment and a tennis racquet. Again, use your imagination. Be creative and devise your own program based on the principles of goalkeeping. Here are some of the exercises a goalkeeper can utilize to improve his or

her game. It is important that all exercises be done in the basic stance of the goalkeeper. The following exercises should be done without goalkeeper equipment.

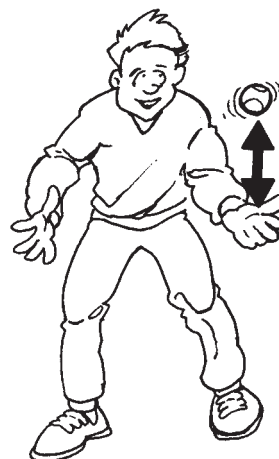
1. Stretching
2. Light jog in a small area



3. Alternating hops on the right and left legs.



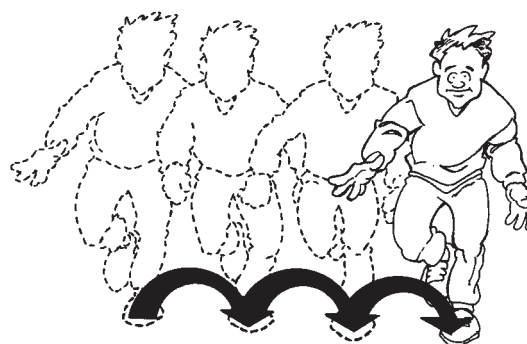
5. From the basic stance, walk with the feet wide apart, bouncing a tennis ball in the catching hand. Variations: bounce two tennis balls or juggle three tennis balls.



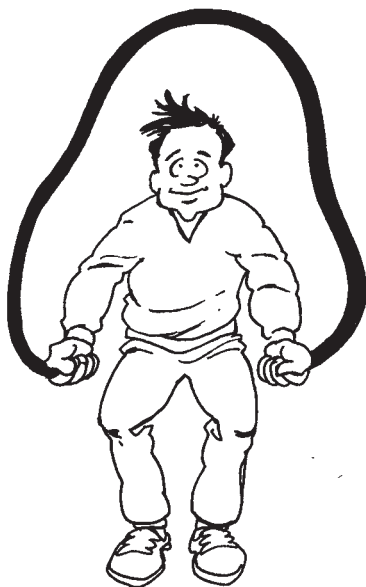
4. Lateral jog on both the left and the right.



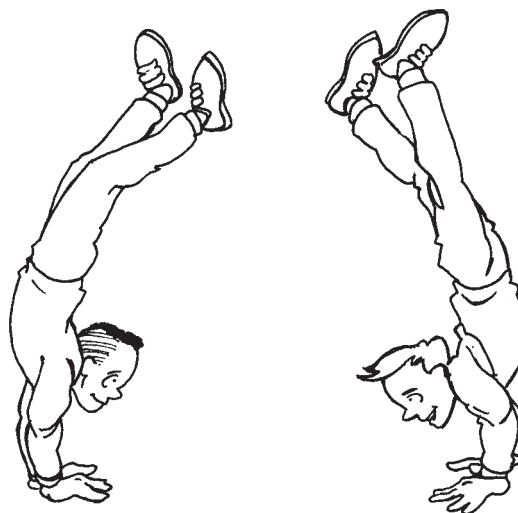
6. Lateral hopping from the basic stance doing three hops on the left foot and three on the right foot.



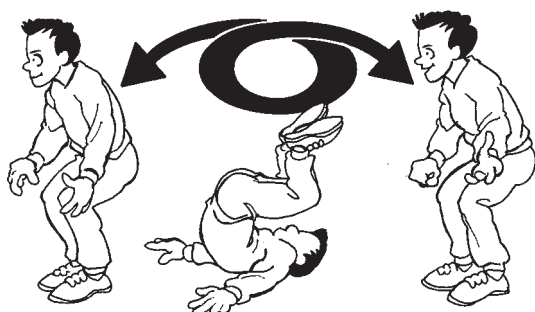
7. Jump rope on both feet, then on one foot. This is good for hand-eye coordination.



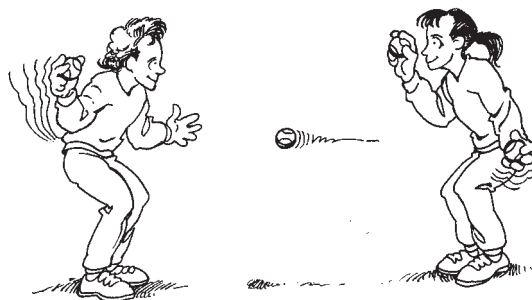
9. Practice the mirror drill with a partner, taking turns. One partner (always in the basic stance) makes a move and the other imitates as quickly as possible. Use all types of moves, including tumbles, etc.



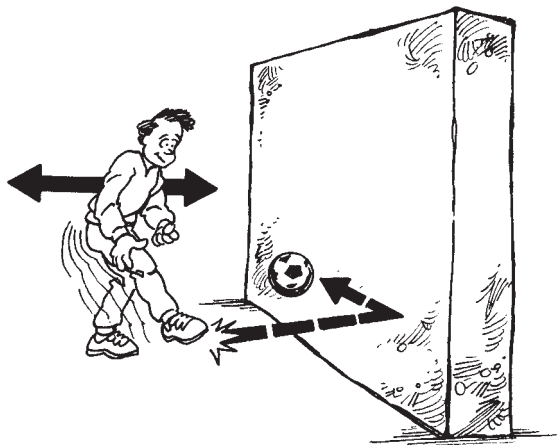
8. Tumble forward and backward, always beginning and ending in the basic stance.



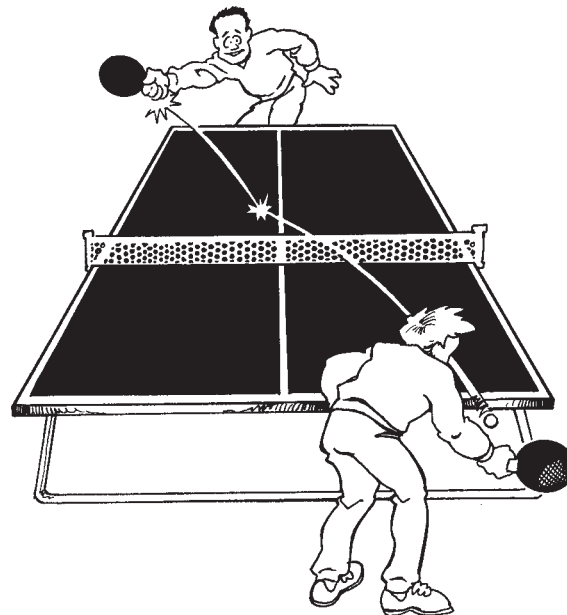
10. Face a partner and toss a tennis ball back and forth to each other. Use your catching hand. Add balls to increase difficulty.



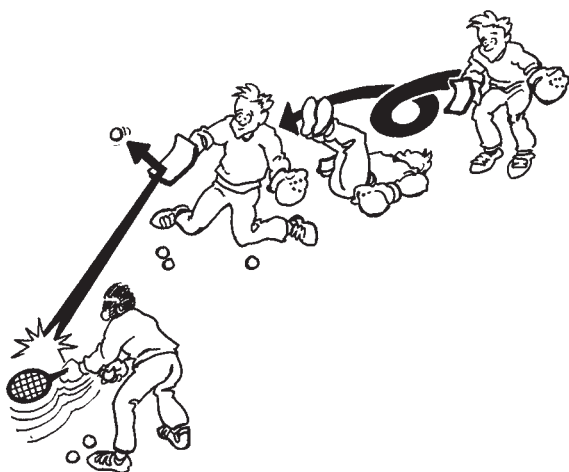
11. Play soccer against a wall, using a soccer ball or tennis ball. Practice foot-eye coordination, moving forward and backward in the basic stance.



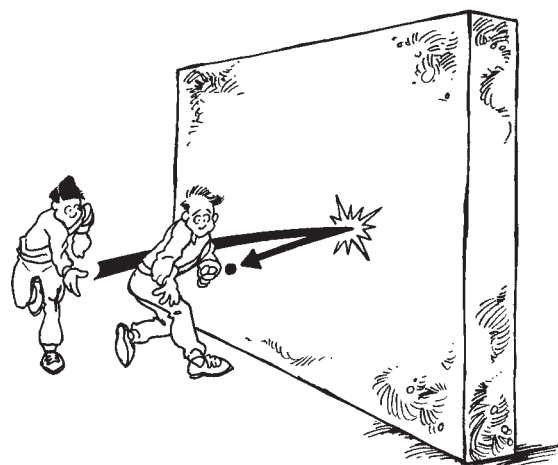
13. Table tennis



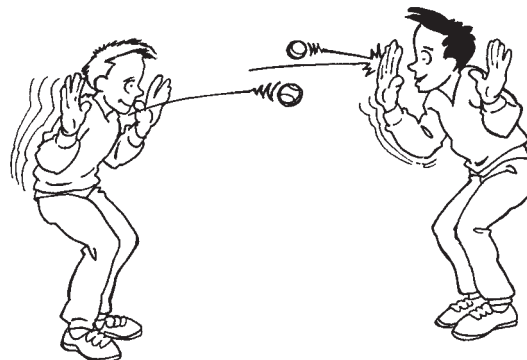
12. From the basic stance using the blocking glove and catching glove, jog forward and roll over (somersault). Come up in the butterfly position while your partner rapidly hits tennis balls at you. Use a tennis racquet.



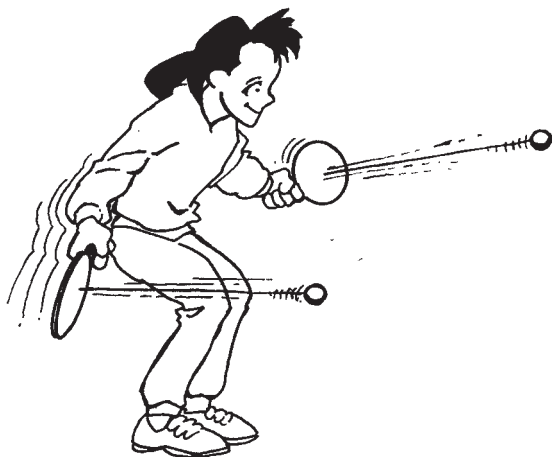
14. Handball



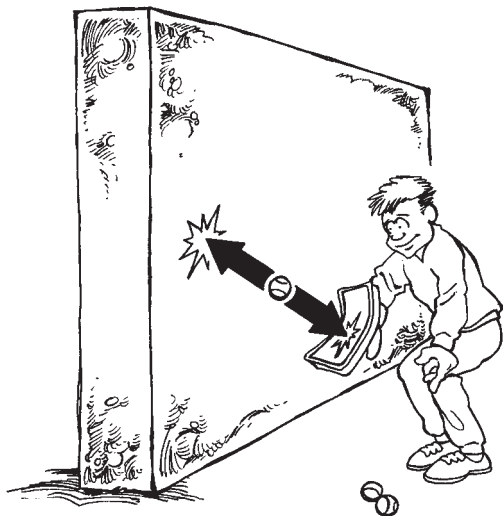
15. Face your partner and keep one or two tennis balls in play by slapping them back and forth to each other.



16. Use a wooden paddle with a rubber ball attached to paddle by rubberband. Keep the ball in play. Use two paddles using both hands.



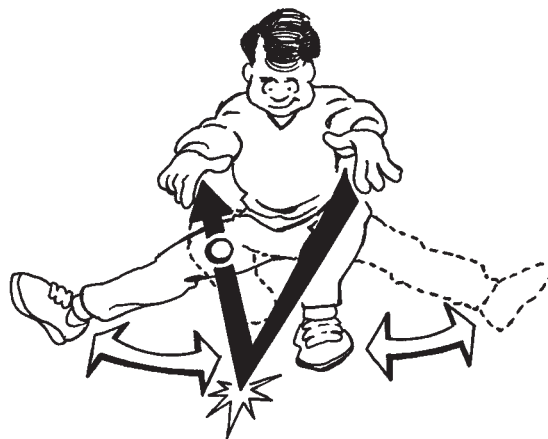
17. Using the back of your blocker glove, keep a tennis ball in play against a wall.



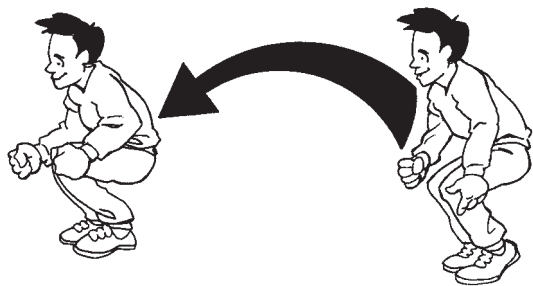
18. With a group of players on their knees and facing the middle of a circle, drop a tennis ball in the circle while everyone tries to grab it. This is similar to a faceoff.



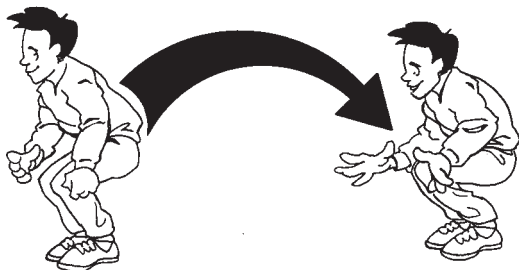
19. The goalie, while bouncing a tennis ball from a crouched position, throws one leg straight out to the side and then the other leg straight out to the side. His or her head should be forward and the ball should be bounced as quickly as possible from one hand to the other.



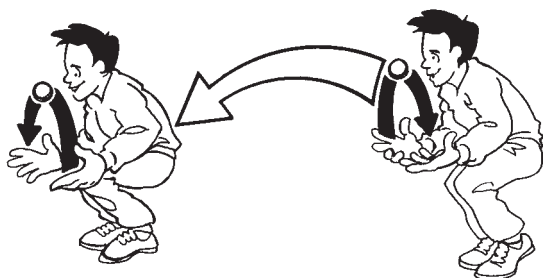
20. Kangaroo jumps from squat position forward (remain in the squat position throughout the exercise)



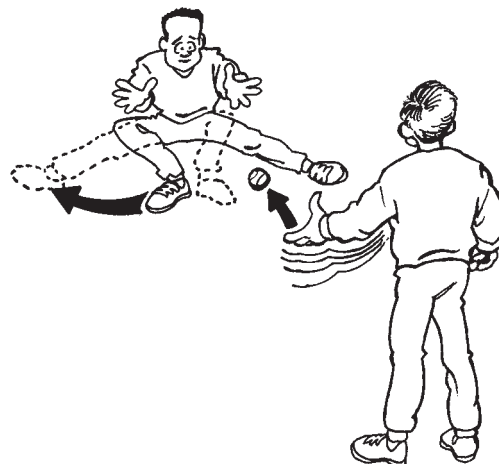
21. Same exercise going backward



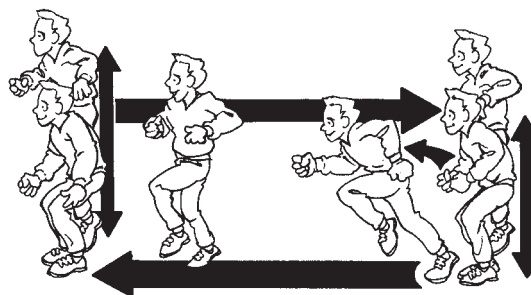
22. Same exercise going forward while tossing a tennis ball from one hand to the other



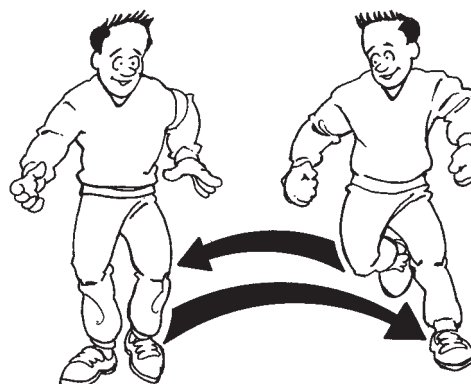
23. From a crouched position, throw one leg to the side, then the other while a partner, standing in front of you, throws a tennis ball. Try to catch each thrown ball.



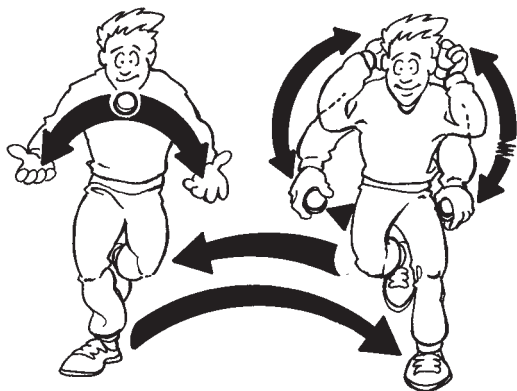
24. From a standing position, jump straight up as high as you can. As soon as you land, take off on a short sprint. Then jump and run backward as fast as you can for a short sprint.



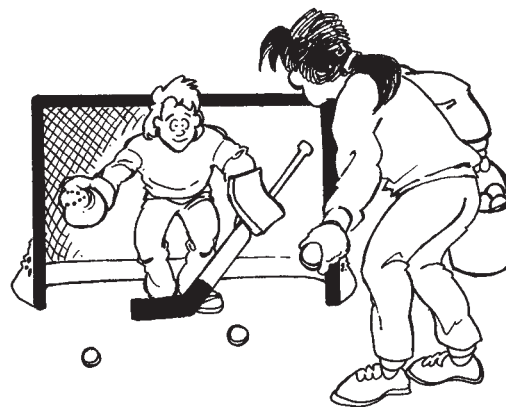
25. From an upright position, jump as far to the right as possible, landing on one leg. From that leg jump to the left as far as possible and repeat.



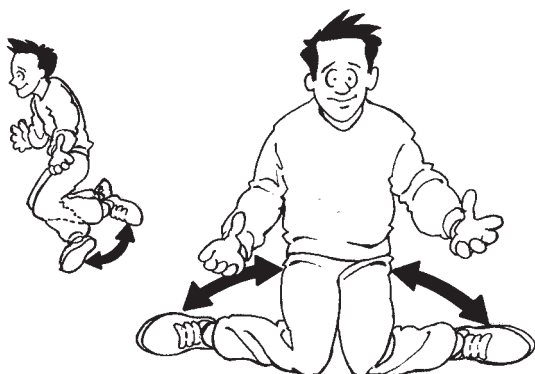
26. Perform the same exercise as #25, but add a moving tennis ball around the body and over the shoulders. In general, handle it in all positions as well as tossing it back and forth from hand-to-hand.



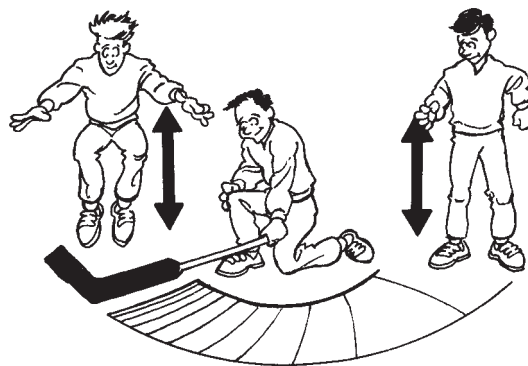
28. A partner with tennis balls moves in close to the net and places a ball in front of the goalkeeper at various positions on floor as quickly as possible. The goalie must react and clear the balls with his or her stick.



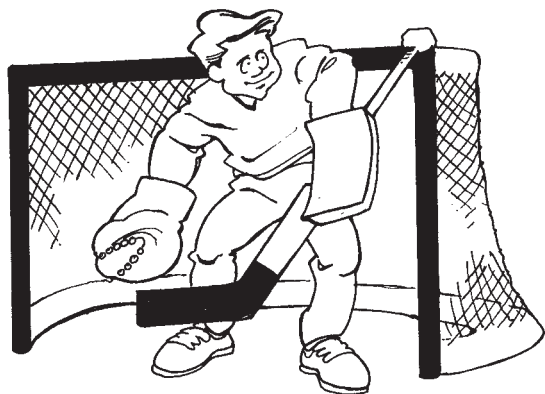
27. Get in the butterfly position: your knees together and on the ground with the legs flat on the floor and extended as far as possible to the side. From this position move around in a semi-squat position. Your legs move out and in but always return to the butterfly position. This stretches the muscles so that this position becomes natural and easy for the goalkeeper. **NOTE:** The inside of the feet should be flat to the floor.



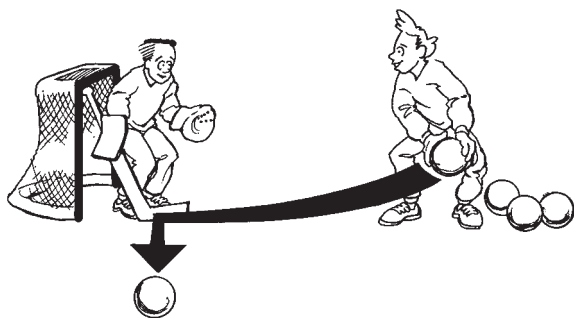
29. A partner stands between two goalkeepers and, keeping the goalie stick on the ground, swings it in a circle. The goalkeepers have to react by jumping over the stick. The partner can swing faster and faster so the goaltenders are forced to jump quicker.



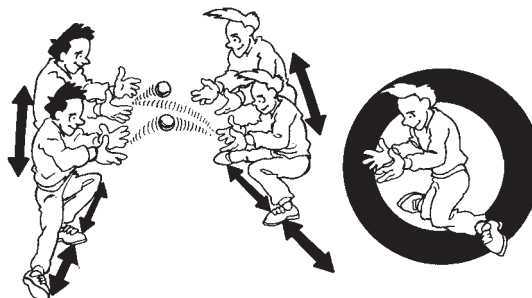
30. A goalkeeper with a stick in his hand exercises by clearing shots with his stick on the left hand side, starting with an imaginary shot on the ice and moving up to head level. Move the stick from the front of the pads out and then go higher and higher, back and forth as quickly as possible. The same thing should be done on the opposite side.



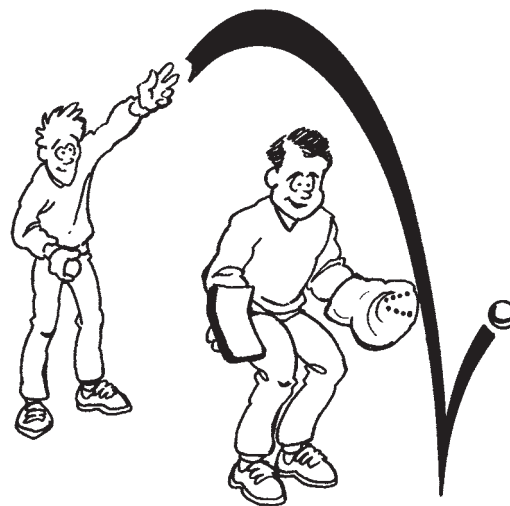
31. Using a team handball or volleyball, a partner rolls a ball at the goalkeeper, who has to stop the ball with the stick and then clear it to the side. You can increase the speed of the rolls as the goalie becomes more proficient.



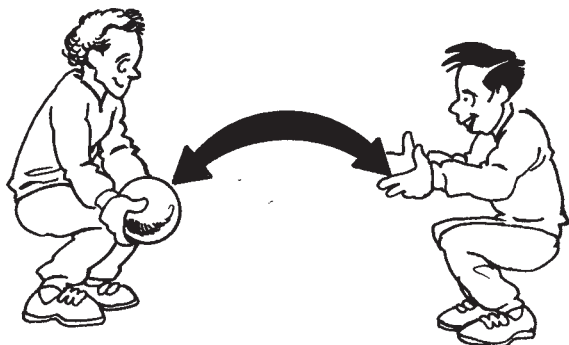
32. Two goalkeepers squat facing one another and throw two tennis balls back and forth. The goalkeepers should move from the squat position to have one leg out, then the other leg out, to the butterfly position, to standing up, then to the crouch.



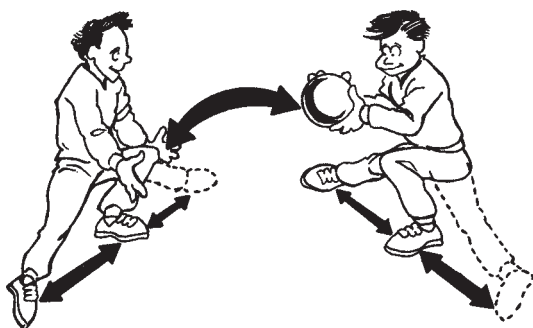
33. A goalkeeper is without his or her stick but has goalie gloves. A partner stands behind the goalkeeper, both facing the same way, and drops the ball over the goalie's shoulder or head. The goalie has to react to the bounce, grab the ball and clear it to the side. The goalie's eyes should remain forward.



34. Using a medicine ball, two players squat facing each other five feet apart. Throw the medicine ball back and forth from a squat position.



35. Throw a medicine ball back and forth from a squat position while throwing one leg out to the side, then the other.



For the following exercises, the goalie should have his or her stick and glove and a partner should have tennis balls and a racquet. All moves by the goalkeeper should be practiced with gloves and the stick on the ground.

Shadow Drill

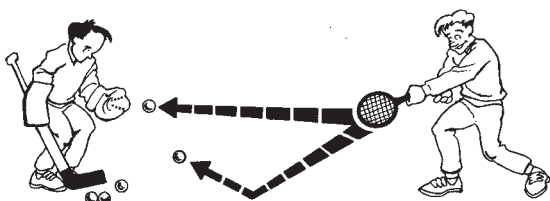
1. The goalie moves in response to his or her partner's hand or racquet movement. Moves should be done as quickly as possible by both the partner and the goalie.



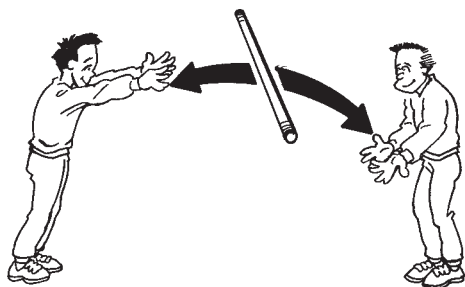
2. Move closer to the goalie and, using the handle of your tennis racquet as a pointer, put the handle as quickly as possible on the ground. Have the goalie react with his or her stick. The idea is for him or her to make contact with the handle while you're trying to move the handle as quickly as possible.



3. A partner moves about 15 feet from the goaltender and hits tennis balls at the goalie. Start out at medium speed, trying to get the ball up around the hands so the goalkeeper can react to both sides with his hands. You can hit them straight at the goalkeeper or with a bounce in front.



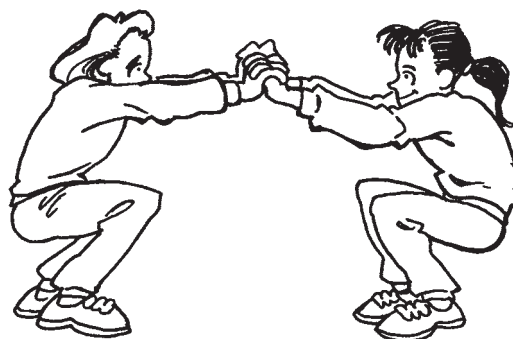
4. Two goalkeepers facing one another throw a bar back and forth, underhand and overhand.



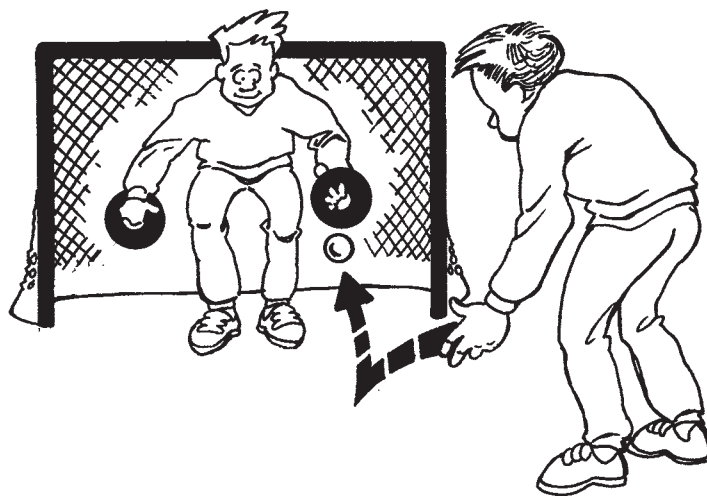
5. Using the fireman's carry, one goalie carries another goalie on his or her shoulders using relatively long strides across the floor, forward and backward. Naturally, the length of stride will be reduced when moving backward.



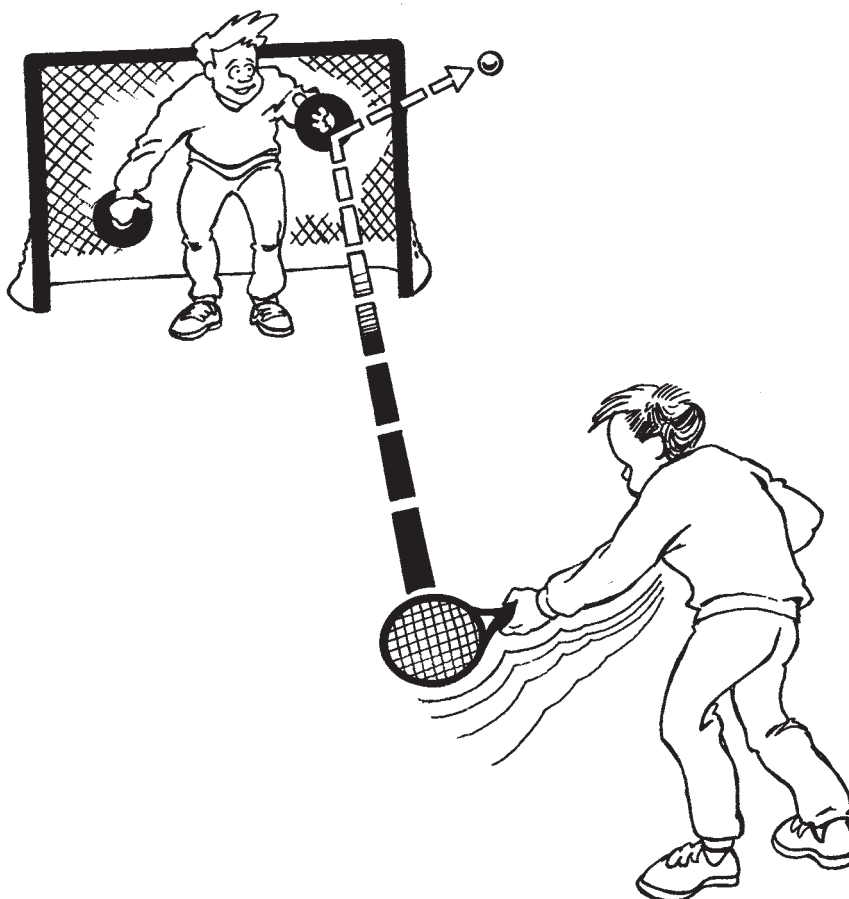
6. Goalies face one another, putting their hands forward and wrestling to push the other goalie from his or her stance. This can be done in a squat position, in a crouch position and standing up. Variations: hands on shoulder, hands in hands



7. A partner standing in front of the goalkeeper will bounce a tennis ball at the goalie. The goalie, with 10# weights on each hand, will try to deflect the ball from the net. Use circular weights so that the goalie can put his or her fingers in both and put the back of his or her stick hand and the front of his or her catching hand facing out.



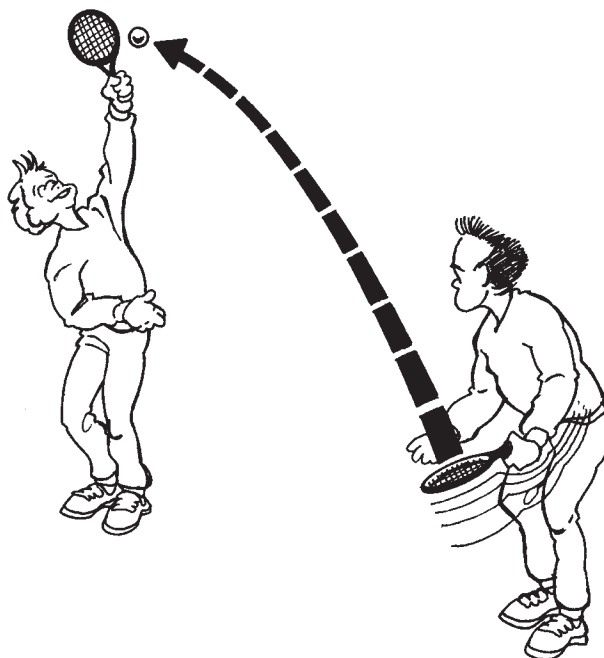
8. Move backward and, with the use of a tennis racquet, drive the ball harder. Have the goalie react with weights in his or her hands.



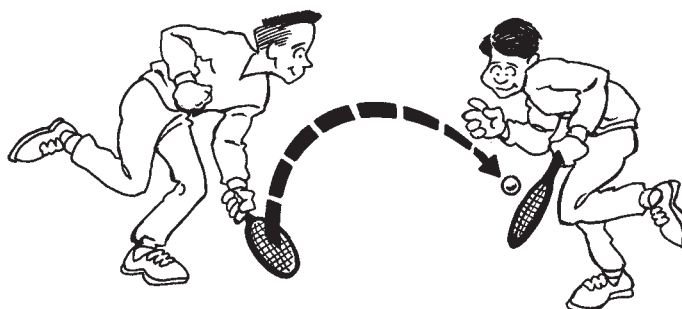
9. With sticks and gloves, put one goalie in the net in a crouch position, and have the other goalie stand five to six feet in front to act as a screen. A partner then stands 10 to 15 feet out and bounces a ball through the screen or drives it straight by the screen. The goalie will react.



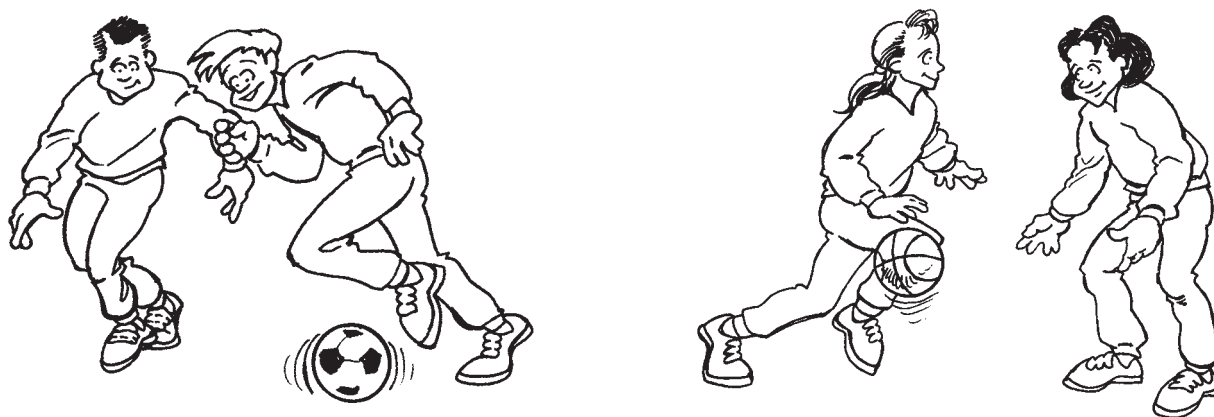
10. Have goalkeepers stand six feet apart with tennis racquets and hit tennis balls back and forth in the air.



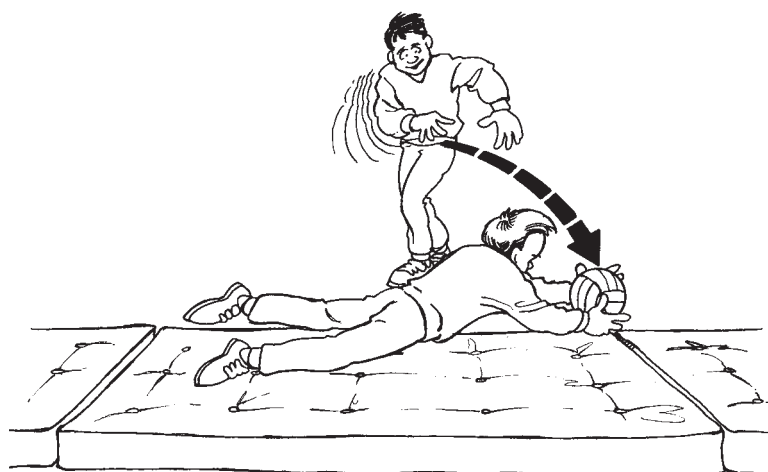
11. Perform the same drill as above while on one foot, then on the other.



12. Using a volleyball or a team handball, have goalies play 1-on-1 basketball or 1-on-1 soccer.

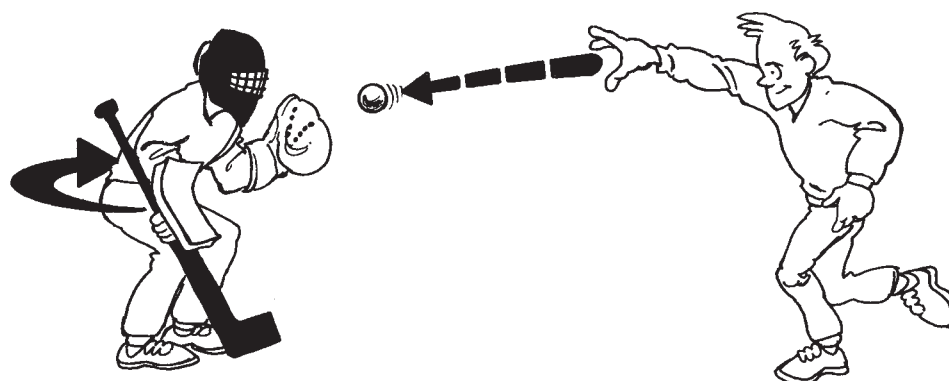


13. Using a mat or soft turf, one partner throws a volleyball or team handball to either side of the goalie and has him or her leave his or her feet to catch the ball.

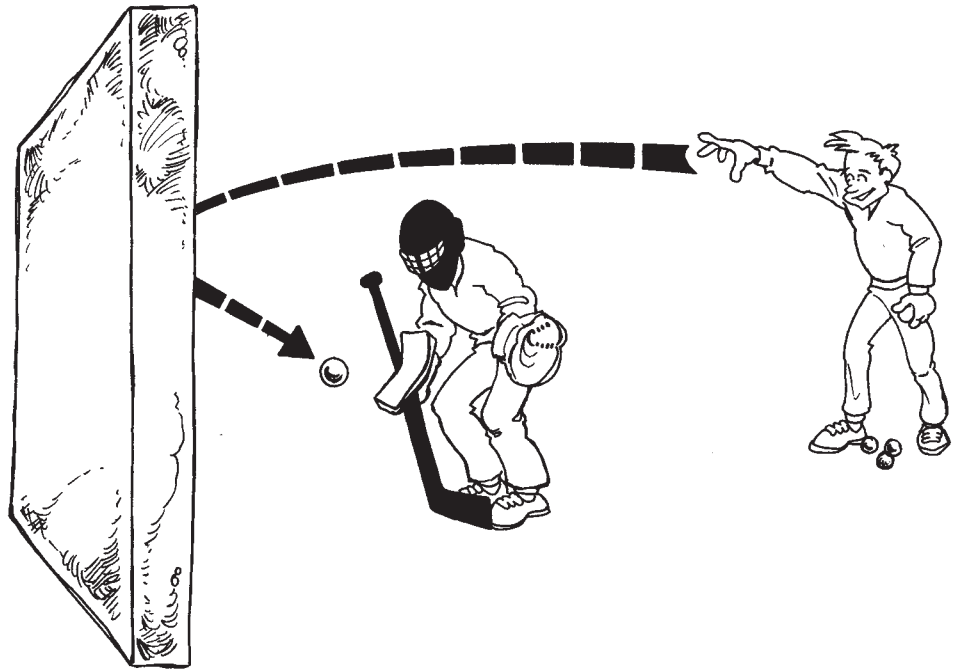


WITH FULL EQUIPMENT - STICKS, GLOVES AND MASK

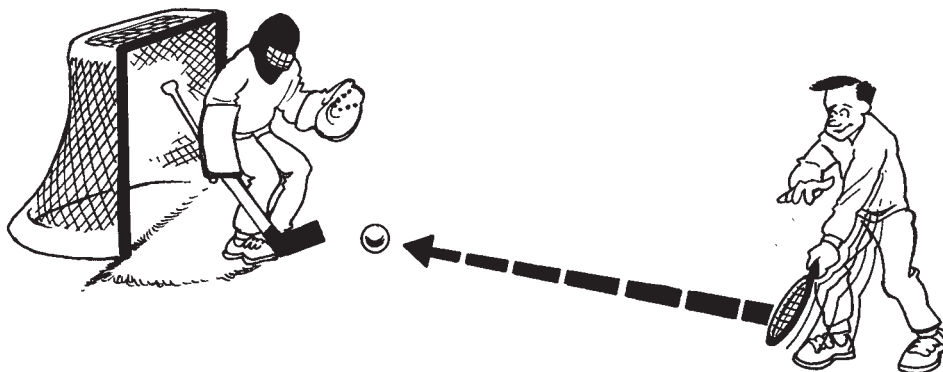
1. The goalie turns on command and deflects, catches or blocks a tennis ball.



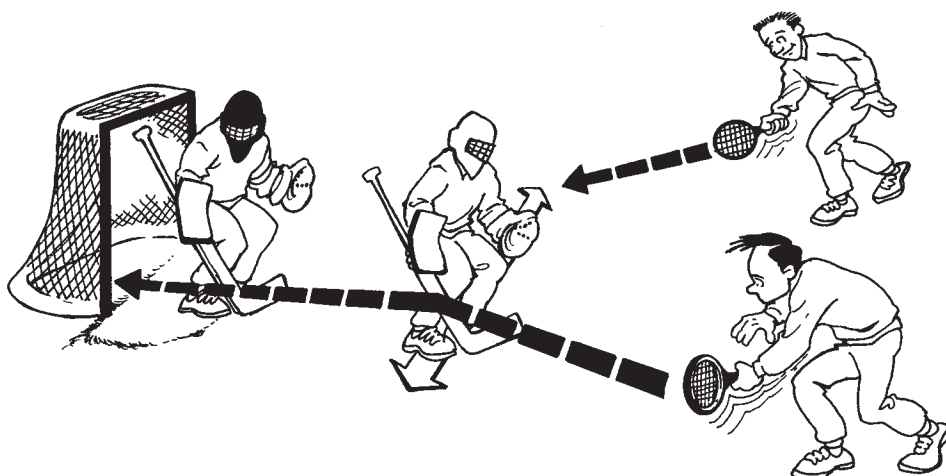
2. The goalie faces a wall from 10 feet out with his or her back to a partner. The partner throws a tennis ball off of the wall and the goalie reacts.



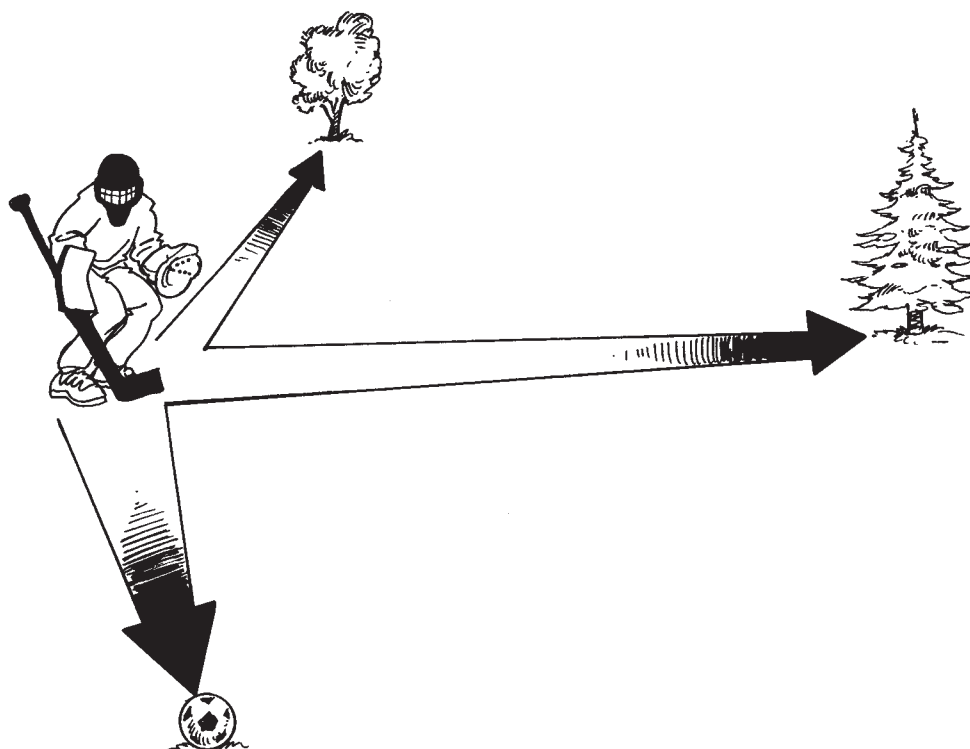
3. A partner fires tennis balls from various angles while the goalie moves and adjusts to the angles.



4. Screen shots and deflections



5. Adjusting eye focus to objects



6. A partner fires tennis balls, one at a time at the goalie. Balls should be easy at first and get progressively more difficult. It is important that the goalkeeper use correct technique.



There are hundreds of exercises that one can utilize. These are just a few. Use your imagination. Goalkeepers should also be included with the rest of the squad in its dry land training program.

LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- www.usahockey.com/USANTDP/Drills.aspx

Chapter 19

Plyometrics & Agilities

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the importance of athleticism
- To determine what activities can enhance performance
- To provide guidelines for a safe conditioning environment

PLYOMETRICS

Plyometrics is the movement or activity that bridges the gap between strength and speed by utilizing the Myotatic Stretch Reflex. This reflex is called upon when the muscles are loaded in an eccentric contraction (muscle lengthening) and then immediately followed by a concentric contraction (muscle shortening). By performing plyometrics, the hips, knees and ankles are worked. It is imperative that a strong base strength is developed before a program is started. Exercises include jumps, hops, bounds, leaps, skips, throws and pushes. When performing these exercises, the goal is to train the nervous system to react explosively with maximal force production. Teaching muscles how to absorb shock also aids in injury prevention.

- All plyometric and agility drills should be supervised.
- Drills should be done for quality, not quantity (minimal foot/skate contacts, maximum intensity and quality of movement should be emphasized).
- Athletes should be able to squat 1.5 times their body weight before engaging in an intense plyometric program.

- Low-level, double leg exercises must precede any higher-level single leg movements.
- As strength level increases, plyometric intensities should increase.
- Do not perform to fatigue. Allow for complete recovery time.
- Maintain core stability and perfect posture during exercises.
- When dry land training, be sure to wear the proper foot wear and have a shock-absorbing surface.
- Movements should be as sport specific as possible.
- Plyometrics for the same body part should not be performed on consecutive days.
- Always perform a proper warm up and flexibility program.

There is a long list of plyometrics that an athlete can perform. The following are basic and very productive as long as they are performed correctly. Know your limitations and the stage of training that you are at.

Low Level

1. **Jump Rope** — Use different variations and patterns to get the most out of this exercise. Start double legged and proceed to single leg variations.
2. **Squat Jumps** — Same as a regular squat, but now we are leaving the ground, with perfect form, and performing the jumps continuously.
3. **Tuck Jumps** — Standing with feet together, jump up bringing the knees to the chest. Variations: heels to butt; include 90, 180, 270 degree turns; performed continuously, etc.
4. **Box Jumps** — Start with a low box (18 inches) and proceed to a higher one (24-36 inches), Jump onto the box making sure the landing is soft and quiet. Try not to bottom out.
5. **Skiping** — A basic fundamental movement that involves coordination and explosiveness, and involves jumping from one foot to the other.

Medium/High Intensity

1. **Explosive Step Ups** — Start with one foot on the box and drive up as high as possible, switching feet in air. Use variations such as alternating lateral step ups.
2. **Ice Skaters** — Perform lateral hops from one leg to the other. Use different variations such as “stick and hold”, continuous and “two bounces and go”.
3. **Lateral & Forward Cone/Hurdle Hops** — Set up cones or hurdles. Start with two feet hopping forward, then switch to one foot landings as you progress. Change to a lateral direction on two feet, changing direction and alternating one foot or two feet.
4. **Broad Jumps** — Jump on two feet for distance. Use variations such as “stick and hold” and continuous.
5. **Hurdle/Barrier Hops** — Try jumping for height off of two feet, landing softly and holding the landing. More advanced players should try continuous hops.
6. **Lunge Jumps/Slip Squat Jumps** — Out of a lunge position, try to get as vertical as possible.

AGILITIES

Agilities are drills that emphasize the ability to rapidly and efficiently change direction while controlling the body's center of gravity.

- Drills should be as sport specific as possible.
 - Emphasize quality, not quantity. The drills should not be conditioning drills.
 - Combine agility training with balance, reflexes, anticipation and hand-eye coordination.
 - Drills should be monitored by a coach or other instructor.
 - Begin with a proper warm-up and flexibility program.
1. **Agility Ladder Drills** — Work on foot quickness, changes of directions, body awareness and control. These serve as a great warm-up. Use a variation of slides, twists, skips, crossover steps and shuffles. Let the imagination adjust the movements to as sport specific as possible.
 2. **W Drill** — Five cones are set up in the shape of a “W,” with varied spacing between the cones. Start out looking at all cones. Move by shuffling, sliding, sprinting, backpedaling, and/or any other desired movement. Control the body's center of gravity as each cone is reached and then change direction to the next cone.
 3. **Pro Agility/“NFL Shuttle”** — Use three cones, tape, lines on a field/ice spaced five yards apart. Start on the middle line/cone/tape. On command, sprint to either side, touch the line and change direction. Sprint 10 yards back to the other side, touch, change direction, and cross the middle line again. Sprint, shuffle or backpedal. Try to improve your time on each rep.
 4. **Jump Rope/Dot Drill** — This is also a great agility workout, adding different foot work and combinations. It is great for the improvement of coordination.

PLYOMETRIC EXERCISES

Double Leg Hops

Equipment: none

Start: Stand with the feet shoulder-width apart

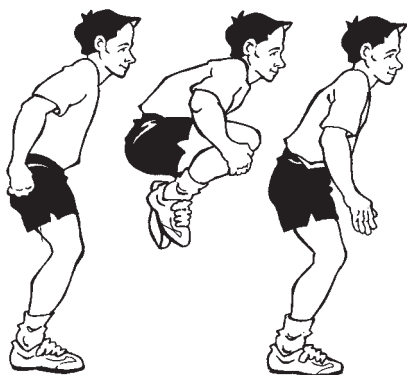
Action: Squat down and jump as far forward as possible. Immediately upon touching down, jump forward again. Use quick, double arm swings and keep the landings short. Do in multiples of three to five jumps.

Tuck Jump with Knees Up

Equipment: none

Start: Stand with the feet shoulder-width apart and the body in a vertical position; do not bend at the hips.

Action: Jump up, bringing the knees up to the chest and grasping the knees with the hands before the feet return to the floor. Land in a standing vertical position, without any forward bend. Repeat the jump immediately.



Tuck Jump with Heel Kick

Equipment: none

Start: Stand with the feet shoulder-width apart and the body in a straight vertical position with the arms by your sides.

Action: Keeping the knees pointed down but still in line with the body, jump and kick the buttocks with the heels. Repeat the jump immediately. This is a quick-stepping action from the knees and lower legs. Swing the arms up as you jump.

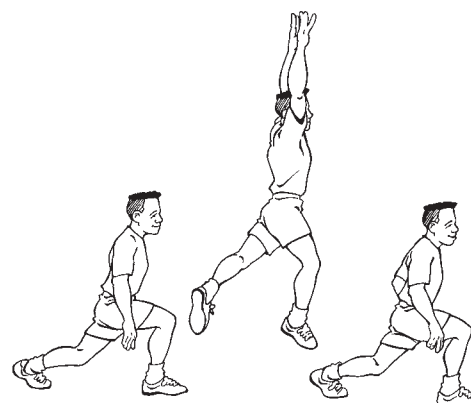


Split Squat Jump

Equipment: none

Start: Spread the feet far apart, front to back, and bend the front leg 90 degrees at the hip and 90 degrees at the knee.

Action: Jump up, using the arms to help lift and then hold the split-squat position. Land in the same position and immediately repeat the jump.

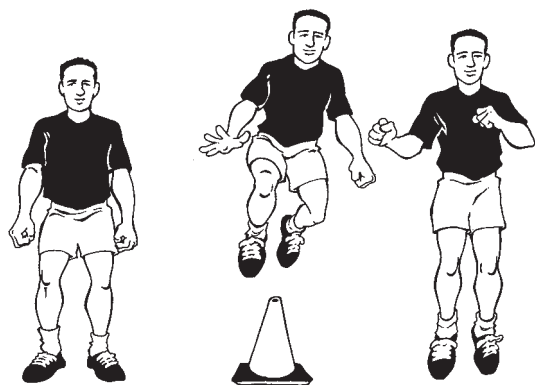


Lateral Jump Over Barrier

Equipment: one cone or hurdle

Start: Stand alongside the object to be cleared.

Action: Jumping vertically but pushing sideways off the ground, bring the knees up to jump sideways over the barrier.

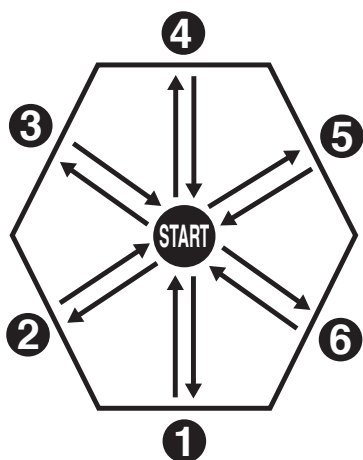


Hexagon Drill

Equipment: a hexagon of tape on the floor with sides about 24 inches long

Start: Stand in the center of the hexagon with feet shoulder-width apart.

Action: Jump across one side of the hexagon and back to the center, then proceed around each side of the hexagon. This may be done for a specific number of complete trips around the hexagon or for set amount of time.

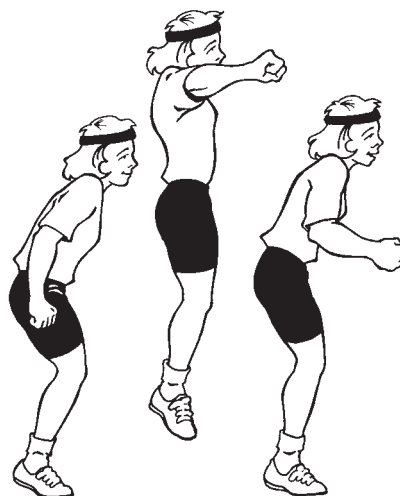


Two-Foot Ankle Hop

Equipment: none

Start: Stand with the feet shoulder-width apart and the body in a vertical position.

Action: Using only the ankles for momentum, hop continuously in one place. Extend the ankles to their maximum range on each vertical hop.

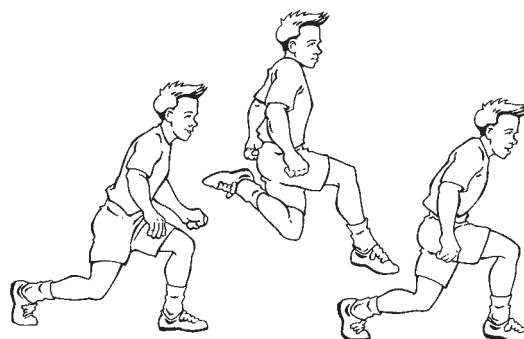


Split Squat with Cycle

Equipment: none

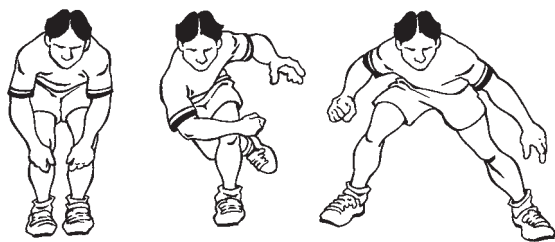
Start: Standing upright, spread the feet far apart, front to back, and bend the front leg 90 degrees at the hip and 90 degrees at the knee.

Action: Jumping up, switch leg positions - the front leg kicks to the back position and the back leg bends up and comes through to the front. While bringing the back leg through, try to flex the knee so that it comes close to the buttock. Land in the split-squat position and jump again immediately.



Lateral Bounds

Perform a skating motion between two marks on ground, one yard apart. Work on lateral movement. The swing leg should come behind planted leg.

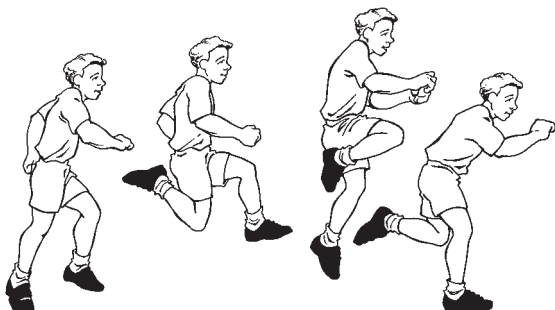


Single Leg Hops

Equipment: none

Start: Stand on one leg.

Action: Push off with the leg you are standing on and jump forward, landing on the same leg. Your opposite leg should swing to increase momentum. Once you land, take off again. Your feet should move as if you were on a hot plate. The movement is very similar to running on one leg. Perform sets on both legs.



SPEED/SPRINTS/CONDITIONING

Speed Training

- The only way to get fast is to run fast.
- However, there are many other ways of improving your speed and efficiency of movement.

Means of Speed Training

1. Run sprints really fast!
2. Over speed training (down hill sprints, cords, more advanced techniques)
3. Resistive runs (uphill, cords, tire pulls, partner resistive)
4. Slide board

Starts

1. **Leaf Falls** (straight, 90 degree, laterally)
 - Start standing with torso erect and hands down along your side.
 - Lean forward as far as possible.
 - Your first step should be short and powerful.
 - Think about driving the ground down and back.
 - Try to avoid reaching with the first step.
 - Finish by sprinting 10 yards.
 - 90 degree — Start the same way but bend at the hips 90 degrees.
2. **Ball Drops**
Work on reaction, first step explosion and hand-eye coordination. A partner stands approximately 10 feet away, holds a tennis ball at shoulder height and then drops it. On the action of the hand releasing the ball, sprint as fast as possible and try to catch it before it bounces twice.
3. **Conditioning**
 - Be as sport specific as possible.
 - Vary the modes to avoid boredom but allow enough time for enhancement.
 - Emphasize anaerobic conditioning.
 - Alter work/rest ratios throughout offseason, preseason and in-season.

Time on/off	Work:Rest	Season
:30 on/1:30 off	1:3	early OFF
:30 on/1:00 off	1:2	late OFF
:30 on/:30 off	1:1	Preseason

Means of Conditioning

1. Intervals (can be both aerobic and anaerobic depending on work to rest ratios)
2. Slide boards (aerobic as well as anaerobic)
3. Tempo runs
4. Wind sprints
5. On-ice sprints
6. Bike/treadmills

It is important to remember that work-to-rest ratios will be the determining factor in the systems

worked. The intensities along with the volume should also vary when conditioning for the different systems.

LEARN MORE

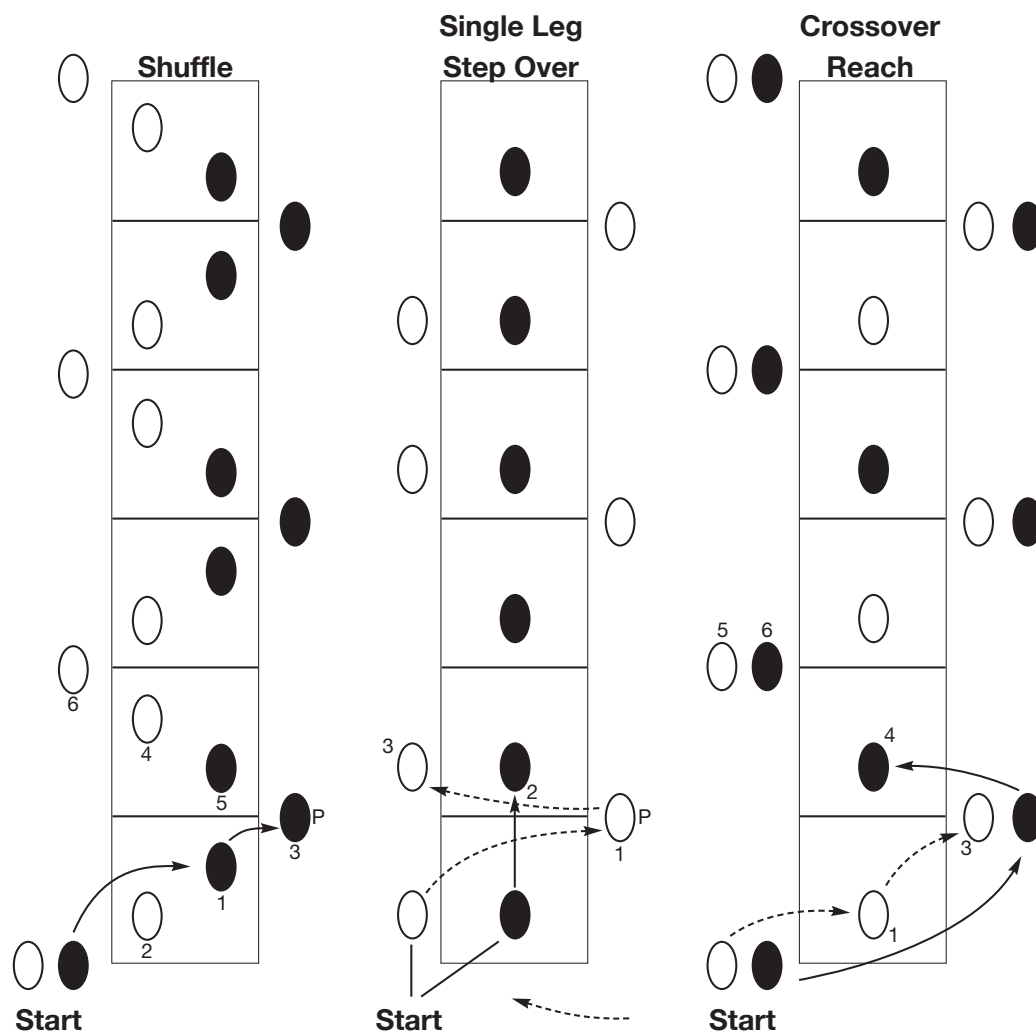
Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (*Internet access is required*).

- www.usahockey.com/USANTDP/Drills.aspx

AGILITY LADDER EXAMPLES

● = RIGHT FOOT ○ = LEFT FOOT P = PLANT ON SINGLE LEG

--- = LEFT FOOT MOVEMENT — = RIGHT FOOT MOVEMENT



Section 8

Appendices



Appendix 1: Forms

The following pages contain forms that you may find useful throughout the season. Please utilize them as you see fit for your program.

- Season Plan Schedule
- Practice Plan Worksheet
- Drill Form
- Scouting Report
- Game Lineups
- Controlled Faceoffs
- Giveaways – Our End
- Goaltender Player Evaluation
- Player Evaluation
- Checklist of Effective Coaching Actions
- Coach's Evaluation of Player Outcomes
 - Recommendations for Improvement
- Player Performance Relative to Others
 - Recommendations for Improvement

PRACTICE PLAN

Day _____ Date ____/____/____

Today's Objectives:

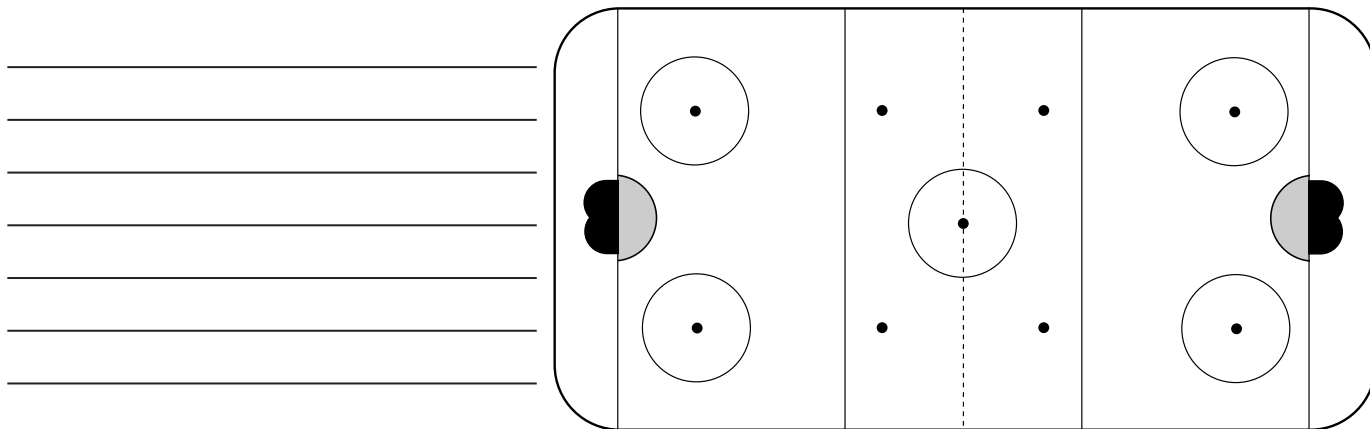
<i>Skill Work</i>	<i>Team Play</i>	<i>Concepts</i>	<i>Specialty Work</i>	<i>Small Games/Fun</i>
___ Skating	___ 1 on 1	Defensive Concepts	Goaltender Drills	
___ Puck Control	___ 2 on 0	___ Offensive Zone	___ _____	___ Full Rink Games
___ Pass/Receive	___ 2 on 1	___ Defensive Zone	___ _____	___ Zone Games
___ Shooting	___ 2 on 2	___ Neutral Zone	___ _____	___ Restricted Area Games
___ Body Contact	___ 3 on 0		___ _____	
___ Body Position	___ 3 on 1	Offensive Concepts	Other	
___ Stick Checking	___ 3 on 2	___ Offensive Zone	___ _____	
___ Agility Work	___ 3 on 3	___ Defensive Zone	___ _____	
	___ 5 on 5	___ Neutral Zone	___ _____	

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity/Drill Notes</i>	<i>Key Points</i>
5 min.	1. WARM UP	
5 min.	2.	
5 min.	3.	
5 min.	4.	
5 min.	5.	
5 min.	6.	
5 min.	7.	
5 min.	8.	
5 min.	9.	
5 min.	10. COOL DOWN	

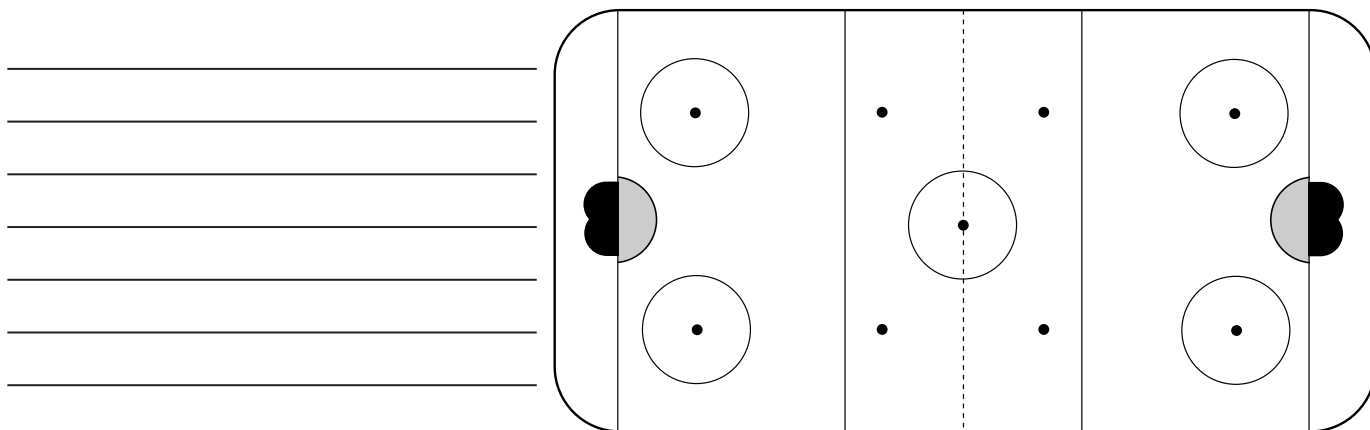
<i>Evaluation/Comments</i>	<i>Equipment</i>

DRILL FORM

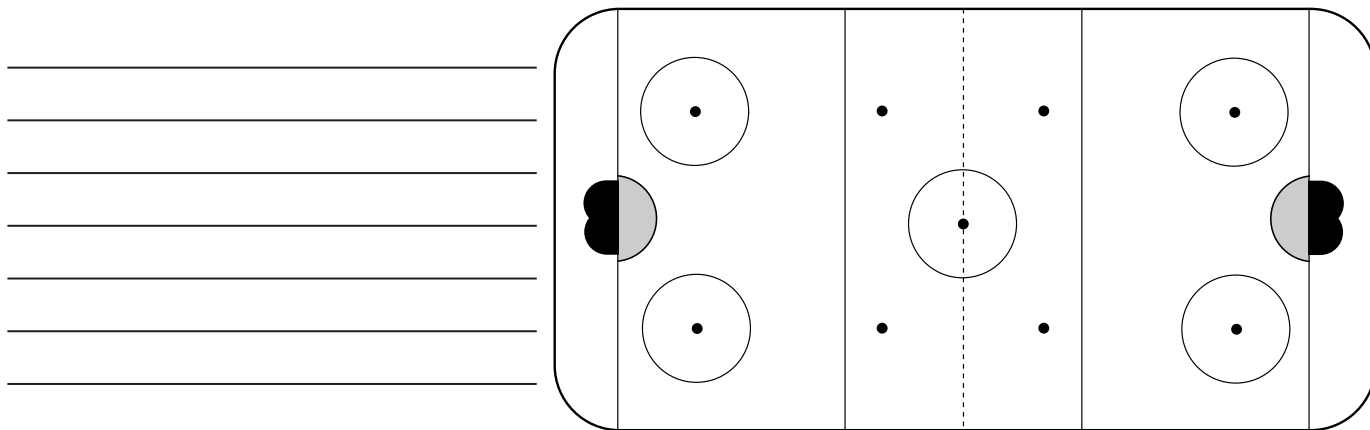
DRILL NAME _____



DRILL NAME _____



DRILL NAME _____



SCOUTING REPORT

DATE / /

GAME

ENTER OPPONENT NAME			STRENGTHS	
LW	C	RW		
LD	RD	13 th FWD	WEAKNESSES	
NOTES: 			TENDENCIES	
			GOALTENDING	
OFFENSIVE ZONE & FORECHECK			DEFENSIVE ZONE & BREAKOUT	
NEUTRAL ZONE OFFENSE & DEFENSE				

SCOUTING REPORT (continued)

POWER PLAY				
1 st UNIT				
2 nd UNIT				
LINE AFTER PP				
PENALTY KILL				
1 st UNIT	2 nd UNIT	3 rd UNIT		
	LINE AFTER PK			
FACEOFFS & ADDITIONAL NOTES				

GAME LINEUPS

Home Team	Visiting Team
Forwards (Player's name and number)	Forwards (Player's name and number)
() <u> </u> LW () <u> </u> C () <u> </u> RW	() <u> </u> LW () <u> </u> C () <u> </u> RW
<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
() <u> </u> LW () <u> </u> C () <u> </u> RW	() <u> </u> LW () <u> </u> C () <u> </u> RW
<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
() <u> </u> LW () <u> </u> C () <u> </u> RW	() <u> </u> LW () <u> </u> C () <u> </u> RW
<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>
Defensemen (Player's name and number)	Defensemen (Player's name and number)
() <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD	() <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD
<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u>
() <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD	() <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD
<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u>
() <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD	() <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD
<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u>
Extras (Player's name and number)	
() ()	() ()
<u> </u> <u> </u>	<u> </u> <u> </u>
Opposition Power Play (Player's name and number)	
() <u> </u> LW () <u> </u> C () <u> </u> RW () <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD	
<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	
Home Power Play (Player's name and number)	
() <u> </u> LW () <u> </u> C () <u> </u> RW () <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD	
<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	
Opposition Penalty Killing (Player's name and number)	
() <u> </u> C () <u> </u> W () <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD	
<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	
Home Penalty Killing (Player's name and number)	
() <u> </u> C () <u> </u> W () <u> </u> LD () <u> </u> RD	
<u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u> <u> </u>	
Home injured players _____	
Visitors injured players _____	

CONTROLLED FACEOFFS

Players' Names		First Period				
		Def.	Neut.	Off.	Total	Remarks
1.	Won					
	Lost					
2.	Won					
	Lost					
3.	Won					
	Lost					
4.	Won					
	Lost					
Team Total	Won					
	Lost					

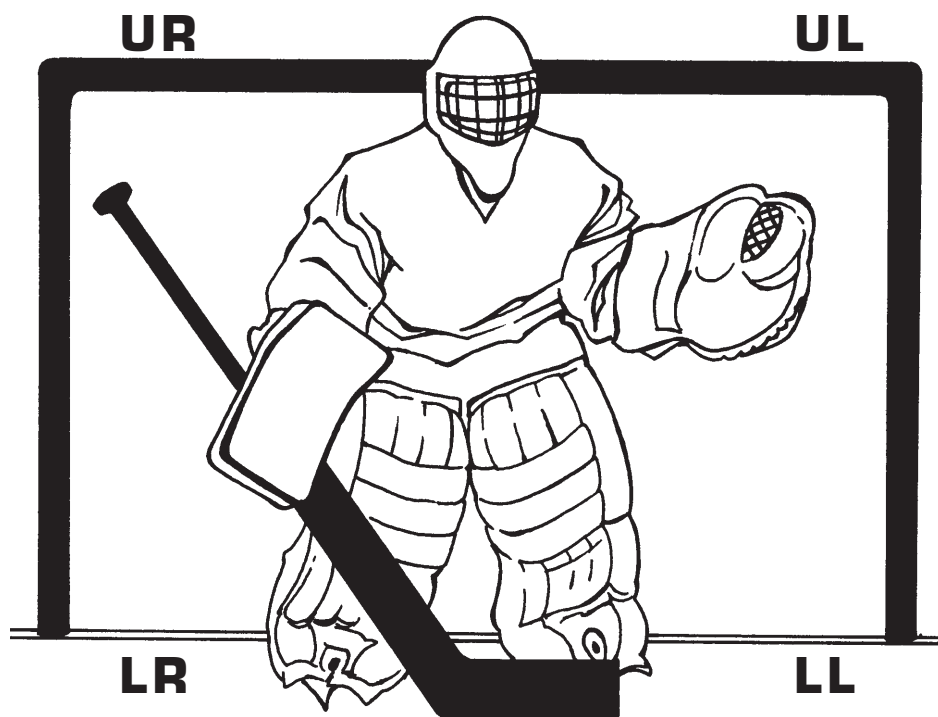
Players' Names		Second Period				
		Def.	Neut.	Off.	Total	Remarks
1.	Won					
	Lost					
2.	Won					
	Lost					
3.	Won					
	Lost					
4.	Won					
	Lost					
Team Total	Won					
	Lost					

Players' Names		Third Period				
		Def.	Neut.	Off.	Total	Remarks
1.	Won					
	Lost					
2.	Won					
	Lost					
3.	Won					
	Lost					
4.	Won					
	Lost					
Team Total	Won					
	Lost					

GIVEAWAYS — OUR END

Date _____ vs. _____ at _____							
No.	Players	Bad Pass	Bad Clearing	Stick Handling	Out-Fought	Missed Pass	TOTALS
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							
16							
17							
18							
19							
20							
21							
22							
23							
24							
25							
26							
27							
28							

PRACTICE GOALTENDER CHART



Date _____

Goaltender _____

Lower Left _____

Lower Right _____

Upper Left _____

Upper Right _____

Drill GPSG

Shots:

Scrimmage GPSG

Total for Day

Shots:

Comments:

- An X is placed wherever a goal is scored during drills; an (X) when a goal is scored during scrimmages.
- To determine goals per shot on goal (GPSG): $\text{shots} \div \text{goals}$
For example: $35 \div 4 = 8.75$, which is 1 goal for every 8.75 shots.

GOALTENDER PLAYER EVALUATION

Name: _____ Team: _____ League: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Stick: _____ Catch: _____ Ht: _____ Wt: _____

<u>Overview</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>
Mobility	0	1	2	3	4	5
Positional Play	0	1	2	3	4	5
Skills	0	1	2	3	4	5
Reaction	0	1	2	3	4	5
Rebound Control	0	1	2	3	4	5
Competitiveness	0	1	2	3	4	5
Character	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

<u>Category</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Avg</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>VG</u>	<u>Exc</u>
Mobility							
• Balance/agility	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Challenge/retreat	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Lateral movement	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Timing	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Positional Play

• Alignment	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Body	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Horizontal angle	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Vertical angle	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments: _____							

Skills

• Feet/pads	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Glove/blocker	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Stick/blocking	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Stick/moving	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments: _____							

Reaction

• Anticipation	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Quickness	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Recovery	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Reflexes	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments: _____							

Rebound Control

• Controlling	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Covering	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Cushioning	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Placement	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments: _____							

Competitiveness

• Communication	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Crease movement	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Work ethic	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments: _____							

Character

• Consistency	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Discipline	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Leadership	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
Comments: _____							

PLAYER EVALUATION

Name: _____ Team: _____ League: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Position: _____ Shot: _____ Ht: _____ Wt: _____

Player

<u>Overview</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Very Good</u>	<u>Excellent</u>
Skating	0	1	2	3	4	5
Hands	0	1	2	3	4	5
Shooting	0	1	2	3	4	5
Sense	0	1	2	3	4	5
Competitiveness	0	1	2	3	4	5
Toughness	0	1	2	3	4	5
Character	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

<u>Category</u>	<u>NR</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Avg</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>VG</u>	<u>Exc</u>
Skating							
• Balance	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Mobility	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Quickness	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Speed	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Hands

• Puck handling	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Passing	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Receiving	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Shooting

• Accuracy	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Release	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Scoring	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Velocity	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Sense

• Anticipation/instinct	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Defensive awareness	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Offensive awareness	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Competitiveness

• Communication	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Intensity	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Work ethic	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Toughness

• Aggressiveness	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Grit	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Nastiness	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

Character

• Consistency	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Discipline	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5
• Leadership	NR	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: _____

CHECKLIST OF EFFECTIVE COACHING ACTIONS

Introduction

The following checklist can serve two useful purposes. First, it can be used to review coaching actions that are related to player achievement of desired outcomes. Second, it can be used as an aid to identify the reason(s) why a player(s) did not achieve one or more of the expected outcomes.

Use of the Checklist as an Overview of Desirable Coaching Actions

Using the checklist as an overview of appropriate coaching actions is an excellent way to acquaint yourself with the content of this coaching manual. Items on the checklist that are familiar to you can be ignored or briefly reviewed. Those with which you are not familiar will require study if they are to help you make decisions that improve your coaching effectiveness. To use the checklist in this way, ignore the columns provided for rating the degree to which you have used the stated or implied coaching action(s). Instead, use the chapter reference information to guide your reading.

Use of the Checklist to Improve Coaching Actions

Subsequent to completing your evaluation of player outcomes as suggested earlier in this chapter, **the checklist can be used as an aid to identifying, “why” one or more player(s) did not meet a performance expectation.** To use the checklist in this way, go through the instrument and read the questions in each content category (i.e., Organization, Effective Instruction, etc.) and ask yourself the question: “Could my coaching action (and/or inaction) have contributed to the undesirable result obtained? Answer the question by responding with a “yes” or “no.” If you wish to rate the degree to which your actions (or inactions) were consistent with the guidelines implied by the item, use the rating scale. Items which result in “no” or “low” ratings indicate where you are in discord with effective coaching actions. As you go through the checklist, seek to identify your coaching deficiencies. This process of seeking answers to specific concerns is an excellent way to obtain the coaching information most important to you.

Directions: Rate the degree to which each of the listed actions occurred during practices and/or game situations. Use a simple (yes), (no), or the following five point scale where: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree.

Coaching Role	(NO)					(YES)				
1. The benefits (skill, knowledge, fitness and costs (time, money, injury, etc.) of participation in hockey were clearly in mind during planning and coaching time.	1	2	3	4	5					
2. My primary purpose for coaching was to maximize the benefits of participation in hockey for all of the players.	1	2	3	4	5					
3. I used the information on benefits of participation and costs of participation to clarify my goals for the season.	1	2	3	4	5					

Organization

4. I completed a written draft of season goals and objectives to guide the conduct of my practices.	1	2	3	4	5					
5. I consciously decided which objectives must be emphasized in the pre, early, mid and late season.	1	2	3	4	5					

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. Objectives for developing each practice were drawn from those identified and sequenced from pre to late season, and entered on a season calendar. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. The objectives selected for my season plan were consistent with the USA Hockey age recommendations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. The amount of practice time allocated to each objective was appropriate. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Hockey Skills, Strategies

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. I was sufficiently familiar with the need for each skill included in my practices and clearly communicated its purpose and described how it is to be executed to my players. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I was able to visualize and recognize the key elements of performance that were present or missing in my players and used them as the basis for my instruction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I was familiar with the common errors of skill execution and used the players' suggestions for coaching to plan my practices. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I clearly communicated the key points or key elements to be learned for each objective included in my practices. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Practice on an objective was initiated with a brief rationale for why perfecting that skill was important. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. Instruction on one or more "key elements" of an objective was preceded by an evaluation of player abilities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. Instruction did not continue without player attention. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. Practice on an objective provided each player with many practice trials. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Accurate feedback was closely associated with each practice trial and was regularly given. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. Monitoring player achievement of objectives continued through all practices and games. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Performance expectations set for the players were realistic and attainable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I communicated through actions and words that I expected each player to succeed in improving their levels of play. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. My practices would be characterized by others as orderly, safe, businesslike and enjoyable. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

22. I grouped my players in accordance with their different abilities to practice the objectives and appropriate “key elements” included in the practices.	1	2	3	4	5
23. Practice sessions were organized to maximize the amount of time that players were practicing “key elements” of skill.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Objectives were broken down as necessary to allow players to achieve them in several successful small steps.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I asked my players questions to determine if they understood the objectives and/or instruction.	1	2	3	4	5
26. Players sensed a feeling of control over their learning that resulted from my emphasis on effort and encouragement.	1	2	3	4	5
27. My practices were pre-planned and included written objectives, times, activities, drills and equipment needs.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I evaluated my practices and incorporated appropriate changes for subsequent practices.	1	2	3	4	5
29. The instructional activities and/or drills that I used were selected to provide a setting for achieving one or more objectives.	1	2	3	4	5

Motivation

30. My practices and games resulted in the players achieving many of their goals for participation in hockey.	1	2	3	4	5
31. I taught the players how to realistically define success in hockey.	1	2	3	4	5
32. An expert would agree (upon observing my practices) that I effectively use a positive (rather than a negative) coaching approach.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I helped my players set realistic goals.	1	2	3	4	5

Communication

34. There was no conflict between the verbal and non-verbal messages that I communicated to my players.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I facilitated communication with the players by being a good listener.	1	2	3	4	5

Discipline

36. Accepted behaviors (and consequences of misbehavior) were communicated to players at the beginning of the season.	1	2	3	4	5
37. Players were involved in developing or confirming team rules.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Enforcement of team rules was consistent for all players throughout the season.	1	2	3	4	5

Involvement with Parents

39. Parents of the players were a positive, rather than a negative, influence on player achievement of the season objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
40. When asked to help with a specific task, the parents of the players responded positively.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Each parent learned something significant about their child and/or the game of hockey.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I communicated to the parents my purpose for coaching and the responsibilities I have to the team.	1	2	3	4	5
43. I communicated to the parents the responsibilities of parents and players to the team.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Parents were well informed of the purpose of hockey, potential injuries, practice and game schedules, equipment needs and other information necessary to successful play.	1	2	3	4	5

Conditioning

45. The physical conditioning procedures I used were appropriate for the age of the players.	1	2	3	4	5
46. Where appropriate, I conducted practices to improve the aerobic and anaerobic energy production systems of the players.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Where appropriate, I conducted practices to improve the muscular system fitness of the players.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I routinely used a systematic warm-up prior to practices and games.	1	2	3	4	5
49. I routinely used a systematic cool down after practices and games.	1	2	3	4	5
50. Where appropriate, the intensity, duration and frequency of my practices overloaded the players' muscular and energy systems in a progressive manner.	1	2	3	4	5
51. My conditioning work appropriately simulated the conditions of practice and play.	1	2	3	4	5

Injury Prevention

52. I followed all recommended procedures designed to prevent injuries associated with the use of improper equipment.	1	2	3	4	5
53. I implemented the recommendations for preventing injuries associated with facilities.	1	2	3	4	5

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 54. I maintained good control of my players while they were in the arena. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 55. I did not use contraindicated exercises in the warm-up and cool-down periods. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Care of Common Injuries

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 56. I effectively administered first aid as needed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 57. I established and followed appropriate emergency procedures as they were needed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 58. I obtained the information necessary to appropriately care for individual players. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 59. I had a well stocked first aid kit at each practice and game, including player medical history information. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 60. I have a record of each injury that occurred during the season. | | | | | |

Rehabilitation of Injuries

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 61. I appropriately supervised the rehabilitation of those players who did not need the services of a physician. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 62. None of the players experienced a recurrence of an injury that could be attributed to inappropriate rehabilitation. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Prevention of Liability Events

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 63. I completed the six obligations I have as a coach to preclude liability from hockey injuries. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 64. I am knowledgeable about the type and frequency of hockey injuries that commonly occur. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Evaluation

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 65. I completed an evaluation of player improvement in the performance areas included in my season plan. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 66. I identified the coaching actions (or inactions) that appeared most closely related to unmet player expectations. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 67. I made the changes in coaching action needed to improve my coaching effectiveness. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

COACH'S EVALUATION OF PLAYER OUTCOMES

Date _____

EVALUATIVE QUESTION:		Did significant, positive results occur on the objectives included in the performance areas listed below?													
PERFORMANCE AREA	Player Name														Yes responses (%)
SKILLS															
Skating															
Puck Control															
Passing/Receiving															
Shooting															
Checking															
Goalkeeping															
Team Play															
KNOWLEDGE															
Rules															
Common Infractions															
Penalties															
Nutrition															
Conditioning															
FITNESS															
Energy Systems															
Muscular Systems															
ATTITUDES															
Personal															
Social															
Yes Responses (%)															
EVALUATIVE RESPONSES: Record your assessment of player outcomes in each performance area by answering the evaluative questions with a YES or NO response.															

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Record your assessment of player outcomes in each performance area by answering the evaluative questions with a YES or NO response.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____
- (6) _____
- (7) _____
- (8) _____
- (9) _____
- (10) _____
- (11) _____
- (12) _____
- (13) _____
- (14) _____
- (15) _____
- (16) _____
- (17) _____
- (18) _____
- (19) _____
- (20) _____
- (21) _____
- (22) _____
- (23) _____
- (24) _____
- (25) _____

Appendix 2: Sample Practice Plans

The following pages contain pre-planned practice sessions that show the planning, recording and drill selection on all aspects of a coach's task for designing and developing practice sessions.

Mites

- Practice Plan #1
- Practice Plan #2
- Practice Plan #3
- Practice Plan #4
- Practice Plan #5

Squirts

- Practice Plan #1
- Practice Plan #2
- Practice Plan #3
- Practice Plan #4
- Practice Plan #5

Pewees

- Practice Plan #1
- Practice Plan #2
- Practice Plan #3
- Practice Plan #4
- Practice Plan #5

Bantams

- Practice Plan #1
- Practice Plan #2
- Practice Plan #3
- Practice Plan #4
- Practice Plan #5

Midgets

- Practice Plan #1
- Practice Plan #2
- Practice Plan #3
- Practice Plan #4
- Practice Plan #5

MITE PRACTICE PLAN #1

Goals: Skill Development/Fun

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

FREE PUCK TIME (5 minutes) – Players are free to do what they want for the first five minutes.

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Puck Handling – Players skate around the rink handling a puck. On a whistle, they jump into the nearest circle and stickhandle, then exit on the next whistle.

STATIONS (6 stations x 8 minutes) – Players do five jumping jacks before changing stations. Work on proper stride and mechanics.

Station 1: Agility Skating – Have players put their sticks down in a row. They line up facing the sticks and perform a number of different agility movements like running over the sticks, stepping over them sideways, and using their edges to slalom between them. This works on edges, agility, balance and coordination.

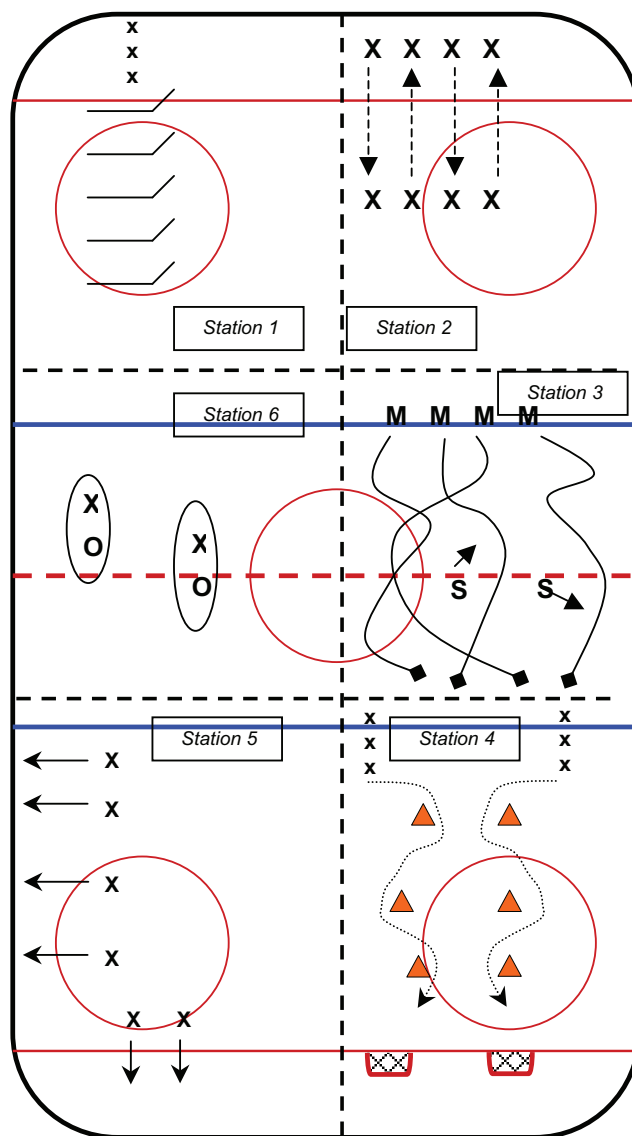
Station 2: Stationary Passing – Players partner up and stand 8-10 feet apart passing the puck back and forth. Work on proper technique, and emphasize keeping their hands away from their bodies. This works on passing, receiving, stick skills and team play.

Station 3: Sharks and Minnows (Tag) – A game of tag in which two players are designated as the sharks to start. The minnows must skate from blue line to blue line without being tagged. If they are tagged, they become sharks, too. This works on skating, edge work, agility, balance and coordination.

Station 4: Slalom Puck Handling/Shot – Players carry a puck in and out of a slalom course, ending with a shot on net. Emphasize proper shooting technique at the end. This works on edges, puck handling, agility, shooting and scoring.

Station 5: Shooting against the Boards – Have players spread out along the boards and let them shoot against the boards as many times as they can. Work on proper wrist shot technique, shooting off the proper foot and weight distribution. This works on shooting, stick skills, balance and scoring.

Station 6: 1-on-1 Keep Away (multiple) – Have players play 1-on-1 keep away in a tight area. Try to have them go 20 seconds and rest for 40 seconds. Have multiple 1-on-1's going at once to encourage playing in traffic areas. Works on skating, agility, puck handling, puck protection, playing with the eyes up and competing.



MITE PRACTICE PLAN #2

Goals: Skill Development/Fun

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

FREE PUCK TIME (5 minutes) – Players are free to do what they want for the first five minutes.

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Agility Skating – Players skate around rink with a puck and, on a whistle, players perform agility moves as instructed by the coach. Examples: somersaults, one foot jumps, etc.

STATIONS (5 stations x 8 minutes) – Players do five jumping jacks before changing stations.

Station 1: Skating Lane – Have players line up in three lines on the goal line and work on skating fundamentals. Focus on C cuts, stride/glide and agility/balance work (rolls, knee drops, etc.). This works on skating, edges and agility.

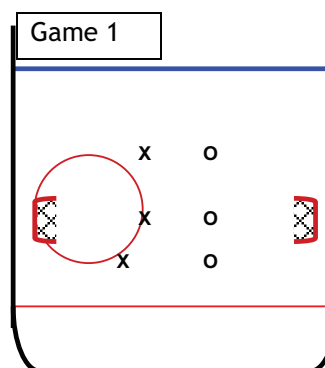
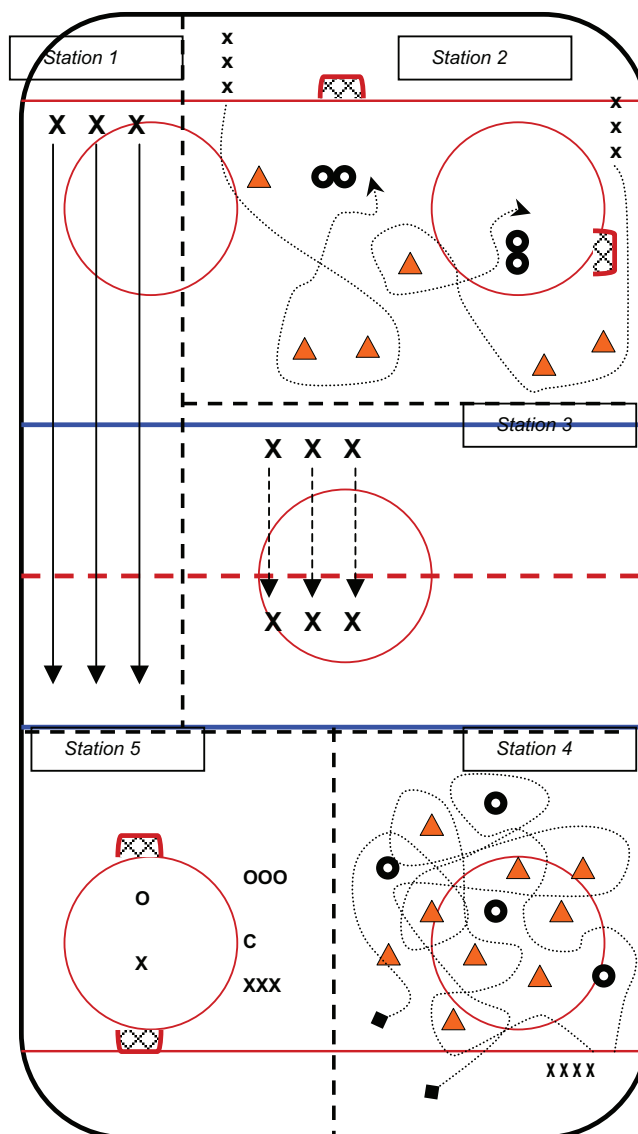
Station 2: Puck Handling/Shooting – Players carry a puck around the cones and then attack the tire, where they perform a deke to their forehand followed by a wrist shot on net. Emphasize proper shooting mechanics. This works on skating, puck handling, deception, shooting and scoring.

Station 3: Stationary Passing – Players partner up and stand 8-10 feet apart and pass the puck back and forth. Work on proper technique and emphasize keeping the hands away from the body. This works on passing, receiving, stick skills and team play.

Station 4: Chaos Stickhandling – Have cones, tires, nets, etc., scattered around the station. Players are to stickhandle in and around all of the obstacles in any direction they choose. Have multiple players going at once so that they must move in all directions and have their heads and eyes up. This works on puck handling, stick skills, skating, agility, balance and playing with the eyes up.

Station 5: 1-on-1 or 2-on-2 Tight Area – Players play 1-on-1 or 2-on-2 in a tight confined area. If pucks go out of the area, the coach throws a new one in. Have reps be around 20 seconds with at least equal rest if possible. This works on puck handling, tight area play, scoring, competing and hockey sense. It can be done with two nets or one turned facing the corner (depending on the number of goalies) as well.

GAME (10 minutes): 3-on-3 Cross-Ice – Players play 3-on-3 cross-ice, shooting at a designated net. Have the players who aren't going line up across the blue line to create a barrier to keep pucks in the zone. Have shifts be 30 seconds with close to equal rest. This works on skating, puck handling, passing, receiving, competing and hockey sense.



MITE PRACTICE PLAN #3

Goals: Skill Development/Fun

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

FREE PUCK TIME (5 minutes) – Players are free to do what they want for the first five minutes.

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Passing with Coaches – Players skate around the perimeter of the rink with a puck and make passes to any coach who is stationed along on each side of the rink.

STATIONS (5 stations x 8 minutes) – Players do five somersaults before changing stations.

Station 1: Skating Lane – Have players line up in three lines on the goal line and work on skating fundamentals. Focus on stride and recover, edges and agility/balance work (rolls, knee drops, etc.). This works on skating, edges and agility.

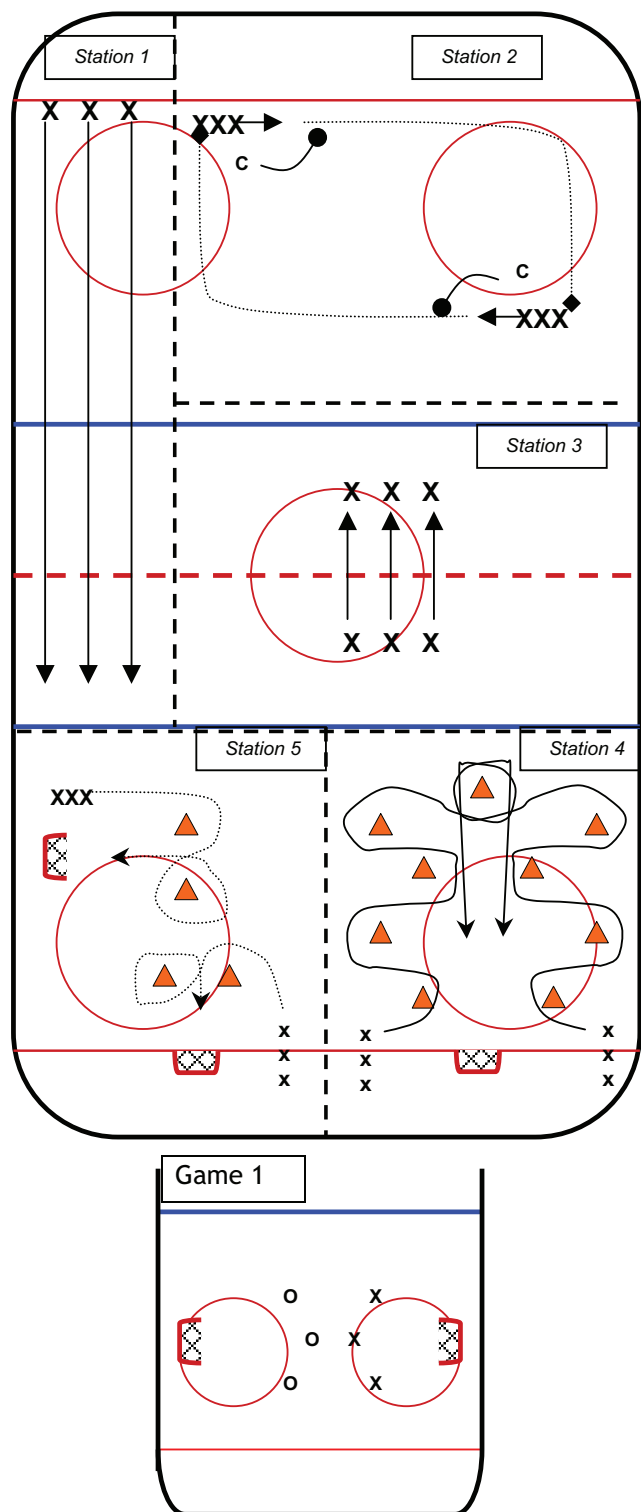
Station 2: Puck Toss (Starts) – The coach kneels down next to the players in line with a bunch of pucks. Draw a line where players can start. As the coach tosses a puck into the air, players employ an explosive start to race out to try and catch the puck. Emphasize proper starting technique and quick feet. This works on starts, edges, agility, explosiveness and coordination.

Station 3: Stationary Passing – Players partner up, stand 8-10 feet apart and pass the puck back and forth. Work on proper technique. Emphasize keeping the hands away from the body. This works on passing, receiving, stick skills and team play.

Station 4: Loose Puck Races – Players skate through an obstacle course and finish with a battle for a loose puck left 10-15 feet in front of the net. Be creative with the course, by throwing in some jumps, slides, etc. This works on skating, edges, agility, balance, loose puck battles and scoring.

Station 5: Puck Handling/Shooting – Players carry a puck around the cones and then attack the net and take a wrist shot on net. Emphasize proper shooting mechanics. This works on skating, edges, puck handling, deception, shooting and scoring.

GAME (10 minutes): 3-on-3 Soccer – Players drop their sticks and pile them up along the boards in the neutral zone. They play 3-on-3 with a soccer ball. Tell players not to kick wildly in a scrum for safety. Have shifts be 30 seconds with close to equal rest. This works on agility, balance, coordination, edges, team play and competition. **Variation:** Players play with a soccer ball but use their hands to bat the ball around the ice. The ball must stay on the ice; no lifting or throwing. Emphasize bending the knees and keeping the head up instead of bending at the waist.



MITE PRACTICE PLAN #4

Goals: Skill Development/Fun

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

FREE PUCK TIME (5 minutes) – Players are free to do what they want for the first five minutes.

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Puck Handling – Players skate around the rink handling a puck. On a whistle, they jump into the nearest circle and stickhandle, then exit on next whistle.

STATIONS (5 stations x 8 minutes) – Players do five somersaults before changing stations.

Station 1: Skating Lane – Have players line up in three lines on the goal line and work on skating fundamentals. Focus on stride and recover, edges and agility/balance work (rolls, knee drops, etc.). This works on skating, edges and agility.

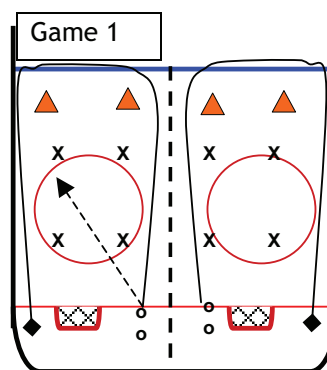
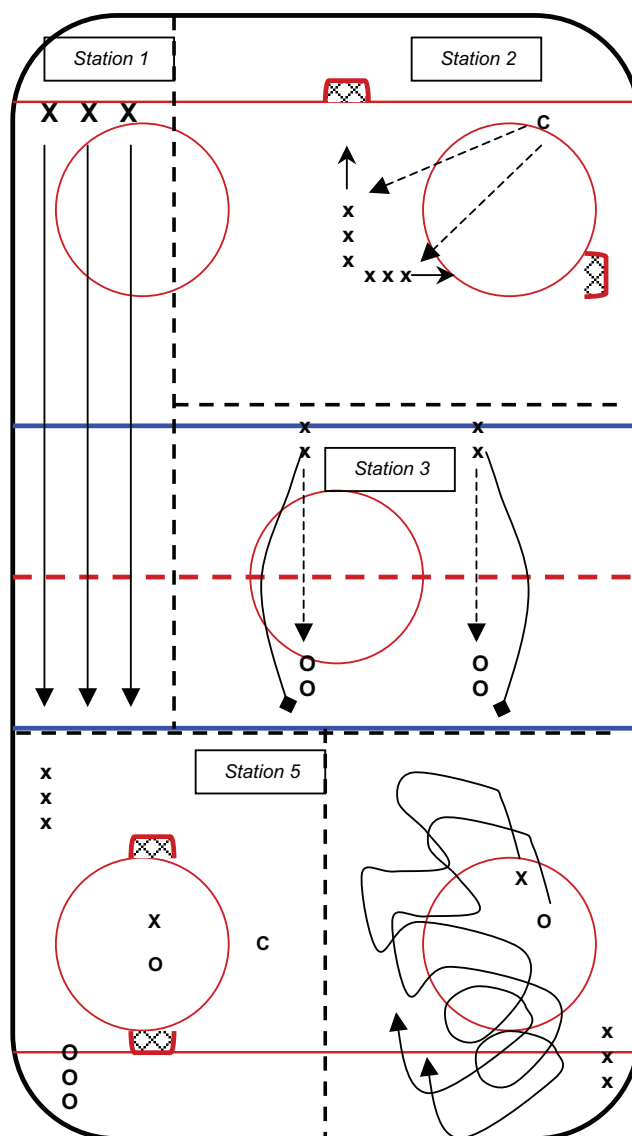
Station 2: Catch and Shoot – Players line up facing the net. The coach is off to the side of the net and passes to a player who catches the puck and shoots on net. Players switch lines so that they get passes from both sides of their bodies. This works on passing, receiving, shooting, scoring, team play, release and footwork.

Station 3: Pass and Follow Progression – Two lines stand opposite each other. X passes to O and sprints to the back of the O line. O then passes to the next X and sprints to the X line. Add variations in, e.g. catch on forehand, passing on backhand, etc. This works on passing, receiving, skating and team play.

Station 4: Russian Shadows (Follow the Leader) – Two players go together and play follow the leader. Encourage them to be creative with their movements. They can carry pucks as well and can have multiple groups going at once. This works on skating, edges, agility, coordination and balance.

Station 5: 2-on-2 Tight Area with Coach Support (3-on-2) – Players play 2-on-2 in a tight area. They can use the coach to create a 3-on-2 situation anytime they want to. Shoot at the opposite net. This works on skating, passing, receiving, team play, hockey sense, scoring and competing.

GAME (10 minutes): Baseball in Each Corner – O passes to an X. All of the Xs must make passes so that each one of them touches the puck. Once they have all touched the puck, they must attempt to score and get the runner out. While the Xs are trying to score, O skates up and around the tires and back to the goal line. If O hits the goal line before a goal is scored, he is safe. If the Xs score first, O is out. This works on passing, receiving, skating, puck handling, shooting, team play and scoring.



MITE PRACTICE PLAN #5

Goals: Skill Development/Fun

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

FREE PUCK TIME (5 minutes) – Players are free to do what they want for the first five minutes.

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Edges Around Sticks – Divide players into three groups for more direct instruction. Players drop their sticks lengthwise in front of them. Inside edge around stick, outside edge around stick, two laps inside edge around stick, two laps outside edge, inside edge figure 8, outside edge figure 8, two-foot side jumps over stick, one-foot side hop over stick. Perform all exercises on both the right and left feet.

STATIONS (6 stations x 6 minutes)

Station 1: 1-on-1 Attack the Net – The coach spots a puck into the corner. Two players compete for puck possession. The player that gains the puck attacks the net to score while the other player defends.

Station 2: Ringette Keep Away – Play keep away with the ringette rings. Have three fewer rings than the number of players. The coach can add a time limit and, on the whistle, whoever doesn't have a ring does five power jumps.

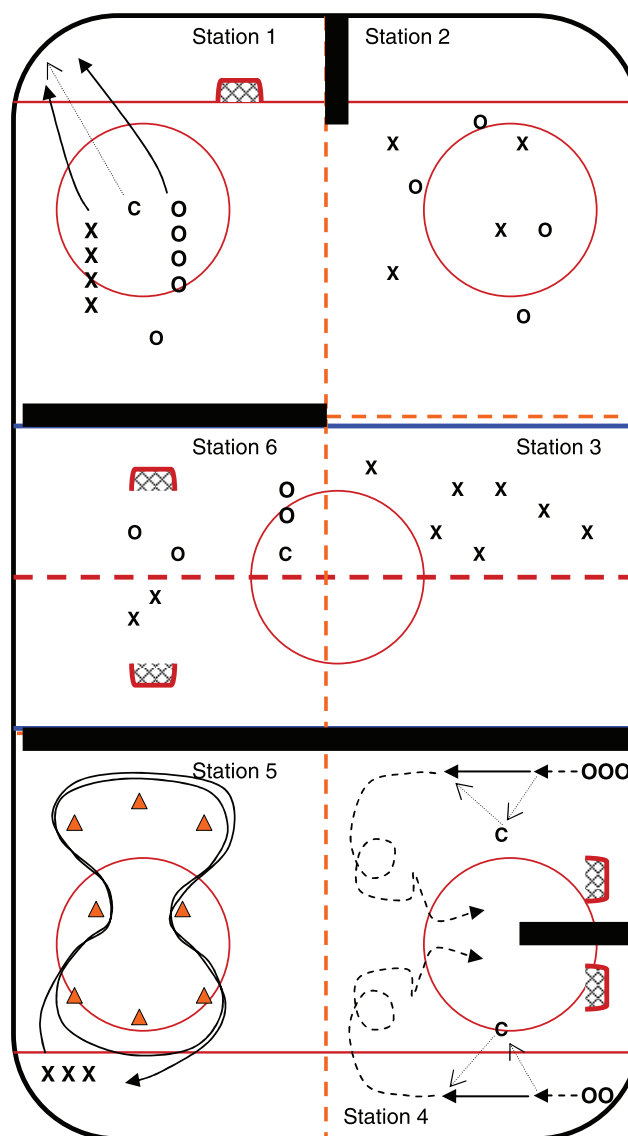
Station 3: Tarasov Agility (ABCs) – Players follow the coach's lead, with high knee runs in place, then side to side and forward and backward. The coach can be creative and have the players move in multiple directions. Have players pass during rest periods.

Station 4: Puck Control, Give and Go – Players give and go with the coach, finishing off with a fake and a shot on goal. Have the players begin skating before making the pass to the coach. Pass and receive on the backhand when on the backhand side.

Station 5: Crossovers and Turns – Have players make three laps through the peanut skating pattern using both crossovers and tight turns. Have players skate both to the right and left, then switch to skating backward.

Station 6: 2-on-2 Tight Space – Play 2-on-2 in a small area for 30-40 second shifts.

GAME (10 minutes): Submarine Tag – On the whistle, players must skate the length of the ice without being tagged. If tagged, the player stands still with legs spread apart wide. To become free again, a teammate must slide between their legs.



SQUIRT PRACTICE PLAN #1

Goals: Skating ABCs, Early Season Acclimation to Ice

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Ice Marker, Three Soccer Balls, Dividers, Tires, Cones

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Free Play – Let the kids play with a variety of objects (black pucks, blue pucks, tennis balls, soft balls, ringette rings, etc.).

EDGE CONTROL AROUND STICKS (10 minutes) – Split players into two groups for better communication. Have the players place their sticks on the ice lengthwise in front of them as obstacle. **Keys:** head and chest are up, good knee bend on the glide leg.

- inside edges around stick L/R
- inside edges around stick L/R, hold edge - two laps
- outside edges around stick L/R
- outside edges around stick L/R, hold edge - two laps
- figure 8 inside edges around ends of stick
- figure 8 outside edges around ends of stick
- two-foot side jumps over stick
- one-foot side jumps over stick L/R

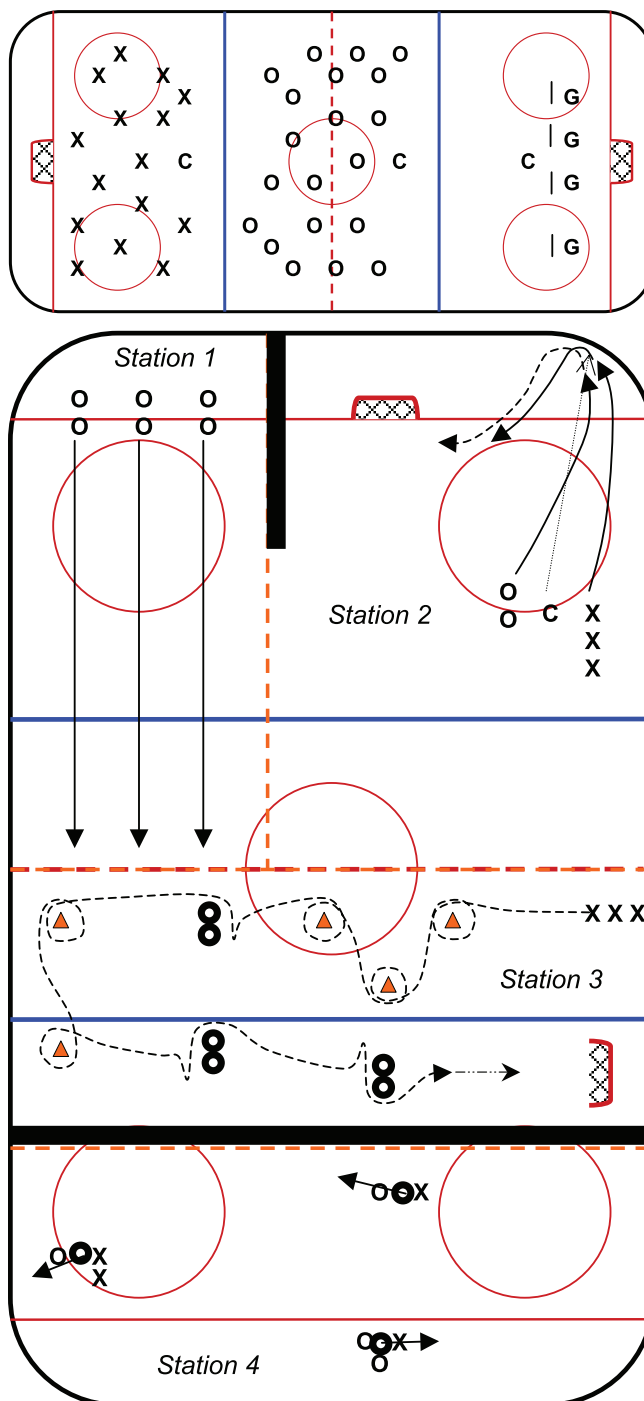
STATIONS (4 stations x 9 minutes) – On the whistle to change stations, players do five jumps before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: ABCs – While skating forward, perform arm circles forward, arm circles backward and arm circles with one arm forward and one arm backward. Repeat this sequence skating backward. While skating forward, step over with the stick in your left hand, then step over with the stick in your right hand. Repeat this sequence skating backward. Pass the stick through your legs in a figure 8 while moving forward and repeat the sequence skating backward.

Station 2: 1-on-1 Competition – The inside line attempts to gain the puck and attack the net, while the outside line attempts to gain puck and carry it above the top of the circle. Use angling skills.

Station 3: Puck Control with Fakes – Players skate through an obstacle course using fakes at the tires. Emphasis should be placed on exaggerating the fakes and players should be corrected if they do not extend themselves.

Station 4: Tire Push Game – Each team scores a point when they push a tire to touch the opposite boards. Keep two to three tires in play, dropping a new one at the center ice after a point is scored. Players should focus on driving with their legs and using their inside edges to push the tires.



GAME (9 minutes): Soccer (ABCs) – Use all three zones. Play soccer 5-on-5 or 4-on-4 cross-ice in 40-second shifts in whatever number that allows players to participate every other shift. Kick the ball with side of the foot only.

SQUIRT PRACTICE PLAN #2

Goals: Basic Skills, Early Season Acclimation to Ice

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Ice Marker, Cones, Tires

WARM-UP (10 minutes): Players pair up with one puck per pair. On the whistle, players play 1-on-1 keep away with their partners. Have players stay in a confined area while attempting to stickhandle around or through their partner. Play for 40 seconds, then rest for 40 seconds. On the whistle to rest, players stand 15 feet apart and pass to one another. Use forehand passes, backhand passes and bullet passes (pass as hard as possible). Have players pass across their bodies and sweep the puck. Coaches correct technique.

Goaltenders Warm-Up and Movement – Goalies pair up and play catch with a medium-sized ball while doing lateral steps. During rest time, practice stationary passing.

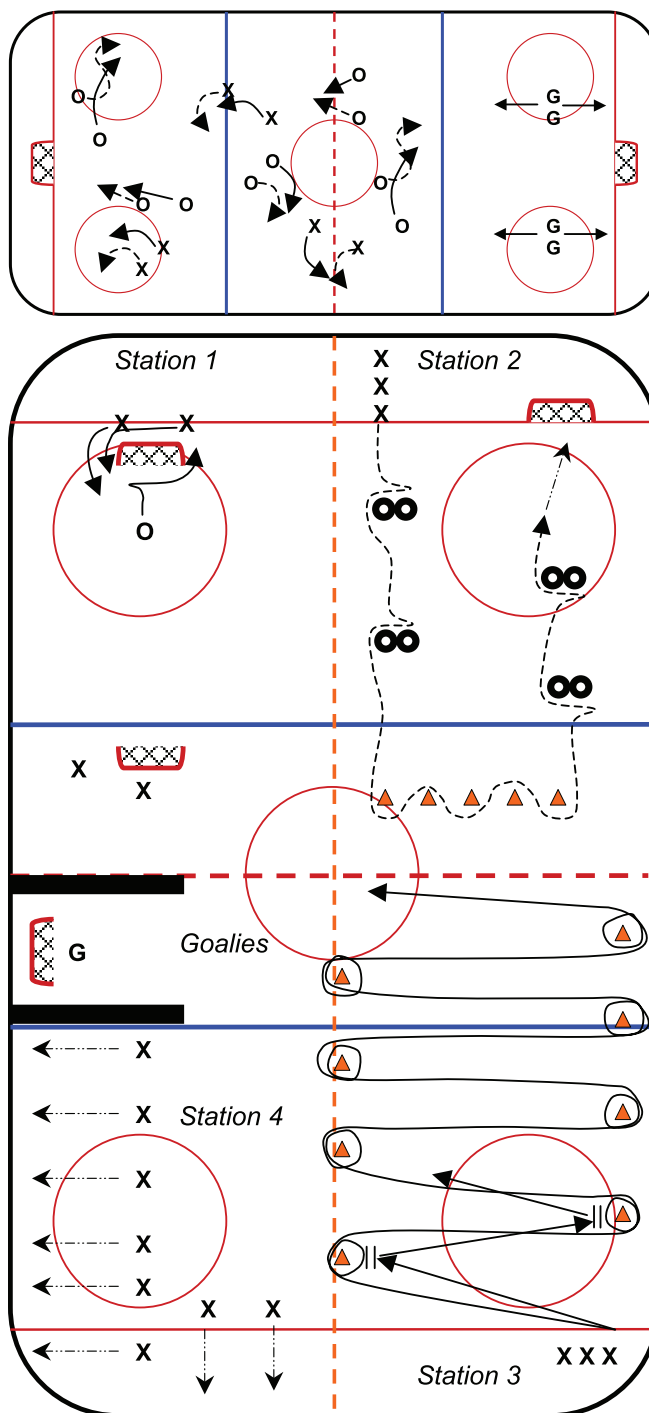
STATIONS (4 Stations x 9 minutes) – On the whistle to change stations, players do five jumping jacks before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station arrive.

Station 1: Net Tag – Player X attempts to evade player O using the nets or tires as a screen. This activity can be done with multiple players at the same time. A puck can also be given to the evading players to work on puck control while reading the opponents' position.

Station 2: Stops, Starts & Turns – Have the players stop and start at each cone. Have them spray the cone with snow, attempting to turn it white! Work on correct technique. Halfway through, have the players carry pucks. Progress to tight turns.

Station 3: Puck Control and Deception – Players carry a puck through the designated course. Use a very wide dribble and fake at each set of tires and finish off with a shot on net. First fake, wide to the forehand, then fake wide to the backhand. Coaches must hold the players accountable to exaggerate the fakes.

Station 4: Player Shooting (Wrist Shots) – Have players spread out within the zone and shoot against the boards. To work on proper technique, have the players begin by facing away from the board and taking a backward stride. If the player is a left shot, step out to forward with the right foot and follow through with a shot against the boards. This technique forces proper weight transfer. Two-thirds of the way through, switch to having the players try a slap shot. Don't worry too much about technique; have them strike the puck as hard as possible (upper body speed training). Goalies remain at the goalie station.



GAME: Ringette – Play cross-ice ringette in all three zones. Use 40-second shifts and try to utilize the player numbers 3-on-3, 4-on-4, 5-on-5 so that the players participate every other shift.

SQUIRT PRACTICE PLAN #3

Goals: Basic Skills, Early Season Acclimation to Ice

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Ice Marker, Tires, Cones

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Free Play – Let the kids play with a variety of objects (black pucks, blue pucks, tennis balls, soft balls, ringette rings, etc.).

EDGE CONTROL (10 minutes) – Have the players divide into six lines. Players must use controlled movements and strive for quality technique. Speed is not a factor – quality is the goal. Use extra coaches to instruct individually when needed.

- inside edges forward (2X)
- outside edges forward without crossovers (2X)
- inside edges backward (2X)
- outside edges backward with crossover (2X)
- single leg inside/outside edge forward L/R
- single leg inside/outside edge backward L/R
- two-foot power jumps (2X)
- one-foot hop L/R

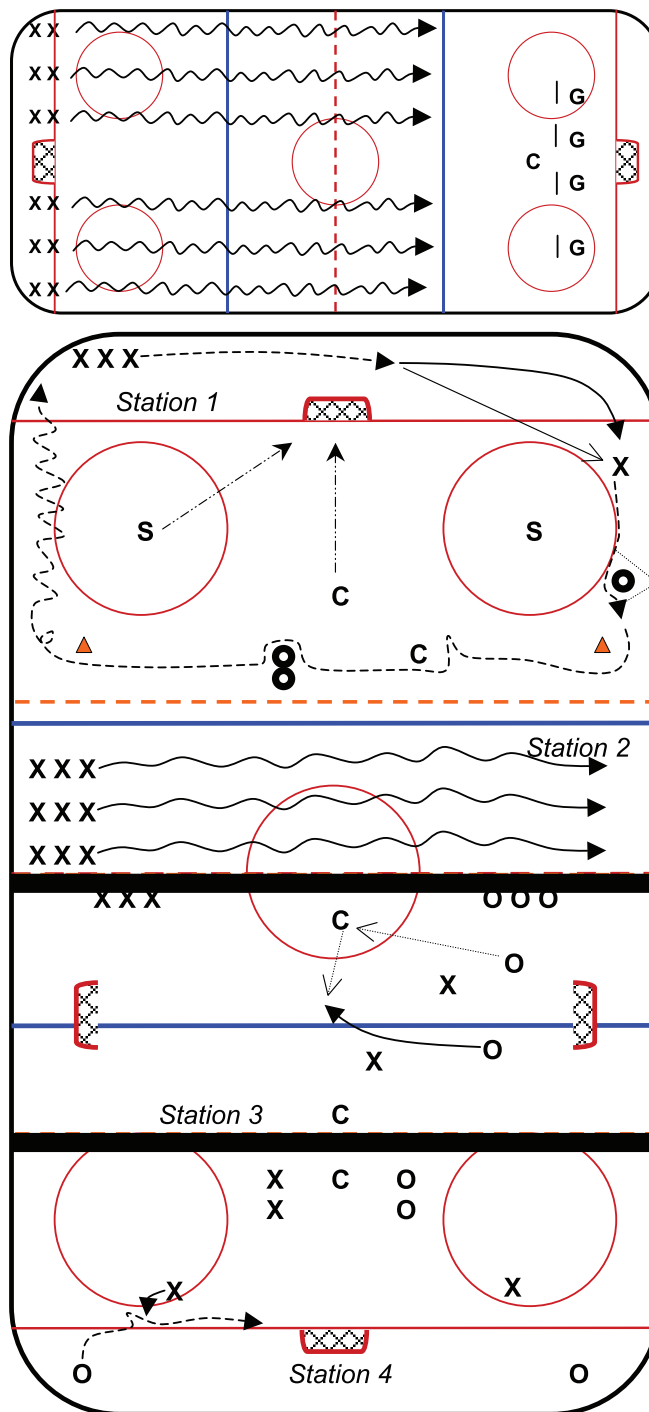
STATIONS (4 Stations x 9 minutes) – On the whistle to change stations, players do two forward rolls before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station.

Station 1: Puck Control – X1 carries a puck around the net and passes to X2. X1 takes X2's position. X2 receives the pass and banks puck back to himself at the tire. X2 then attacks the coach (attack triangle), jumps the tires and pivots to backward at the far cone. Halfway through the drill, switch sides. **Goalie Instruction:** Goalies rotate with their groups.

Station 2: ABCs – Drop to your knees and get back up, moving forward with head and chest up. Drop to your knees and get back up, moving backward. Drop to a single knee and get back up, alternating knees and moving forward. Drop to a single knee and get back up, alternating knees and moving backward. High knee run on skates forward. High knee run on skates backward. High knee run on skates side-to-side. Repeat all drills with pucks.

Station 3: 2-on-2 with Outlets – Play 2-on-2 cross-ice. On a change of possession, players must pass to a coach before they can attack the net.

Station 4: 1-on-1 Out of Corner – Player O starts in the corner with a puck (from his or her knees, on stomach, etc.). On the whistle, O jumps up and attacks the net with X defending. Play until O scores, the goalie covers the puck or X steals puck and passes it back to the coach.



GAME (9 minutes): Team Handball – Without sticks and using a soccer ball, players pass the ball to each other and attempt to score on the opponent's net. They can only carry the ball a maximum of three strides before a pass. The goal is to not let the ball touch the ice.

SQUIRT PRACTICE PLAN #4

Goals: Skating Skills

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Cones or Tires

WARM-UP (12 minutes): ABC Controlled Movements –

While skating forward, arm circles forward, arm circles backward and arm circles with one arm forward and one arm backward. Repeat this sequence skating backward. While skating forward, step over with the stick in your left hand, step over with the stick in your right hand. Repeat this sequence skating backward. Pass the stick through your legs in a figure 8, moving forward. Repeat this sequence moving backward. Power jumps using two feet, moving forward, (head and chest up). Power jumps using two feet, moving backward. Power jump 180 degrees, two-foot jump, land backward, then jump 180 degrees land forward, all turns to the left. Repeat this sequence with all jumps to the right.

STATIONS (6 Stations x 8 minutes) – On the whistle to change stations, players do five hops on each foot before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station.

Station 1: Net Tag with Pucks – Player X attempts to evade player O using the nets or tires as a screen. This activity can be done with multiple players at the same time. Player X has a puck, while player O attempts to steal it.

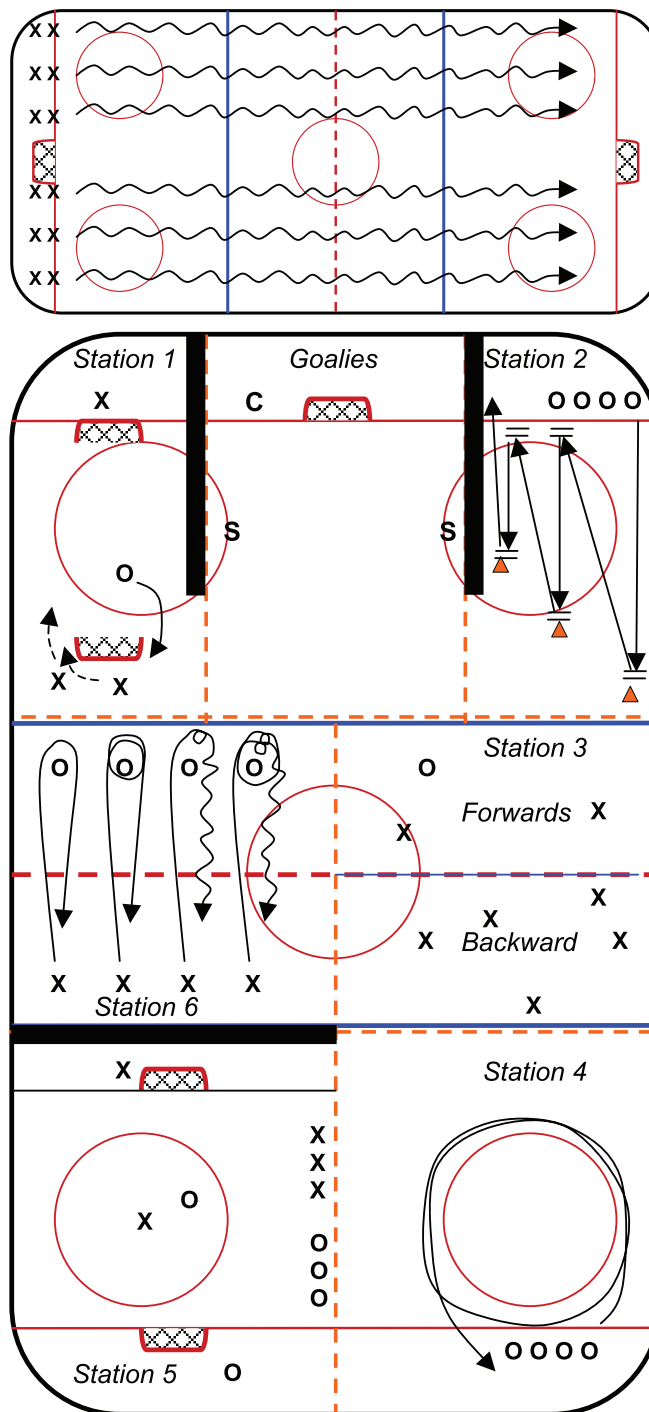
Station 2: Skating Stops & Starts – Players stop and start at the cones and the goal line. Coaches work individually when possible with players that need technique assistance. Add pucks.

Station 3: Forward and Backward Tag – Players play tag within a confined area. When a player has been tagged, that player becomes the tagger. Using the center red line to divide the ice, all players must skate forward on one side of the red line and pivot to skate backward on the opposite side.

Station 4: Skating Technique Crossovers – Work on skating technique. Each player skates two laps around the circle with the next player in line starting as player one passes in front on his or her first lap. Coaches should work individually with players on technique as needed. Keep the stick to the middle.

Station 5: 1-on-1 with Low Outlet – Play 1-on-1 in a small area. Outlet players are below the goal lines and can't score. Players in the middle must make a pass to their outlet before they can score. Play 40-second shifts.

Station 6: Skating Tight Turns and Pivots – Players use their partners as an obstacle to skate around. Coaches



work with players on technique and turns to both the right and the left. Add pucks and repeat the sequence. Finish with a puck control race through the opposite line and back to where the player started.

SQUIRT PRACTICE PLAN #5

Goals: Basic Skating Skills, Puck Control with Deception

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Cones, Tires, Dividers, Ringette Rings, Sticks

WARM-UP (8 minutes) – Players pair up with one puck per pair. On the whistle, players play 1-on-1 keep away with their partners. Have players stay in a confined area while attempting to stickhandle around or through their partner. Play for 40 seconds then rest for 40 seconds. On the whistle to rest, players stand 15 feet apart and pass to one another. Use forehand passes, backhand passes and bullet passes (pass as hard as possible). Have players pass across their bodies and sweep the puck. Coaches correct technique.

STATIONS: 3 Stations x 10 minutes – On the whistle to change stations, players do five jumps before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

Station 1: Puck Control/Deception – Use rings, pucks and controlled, exaggerated movements.

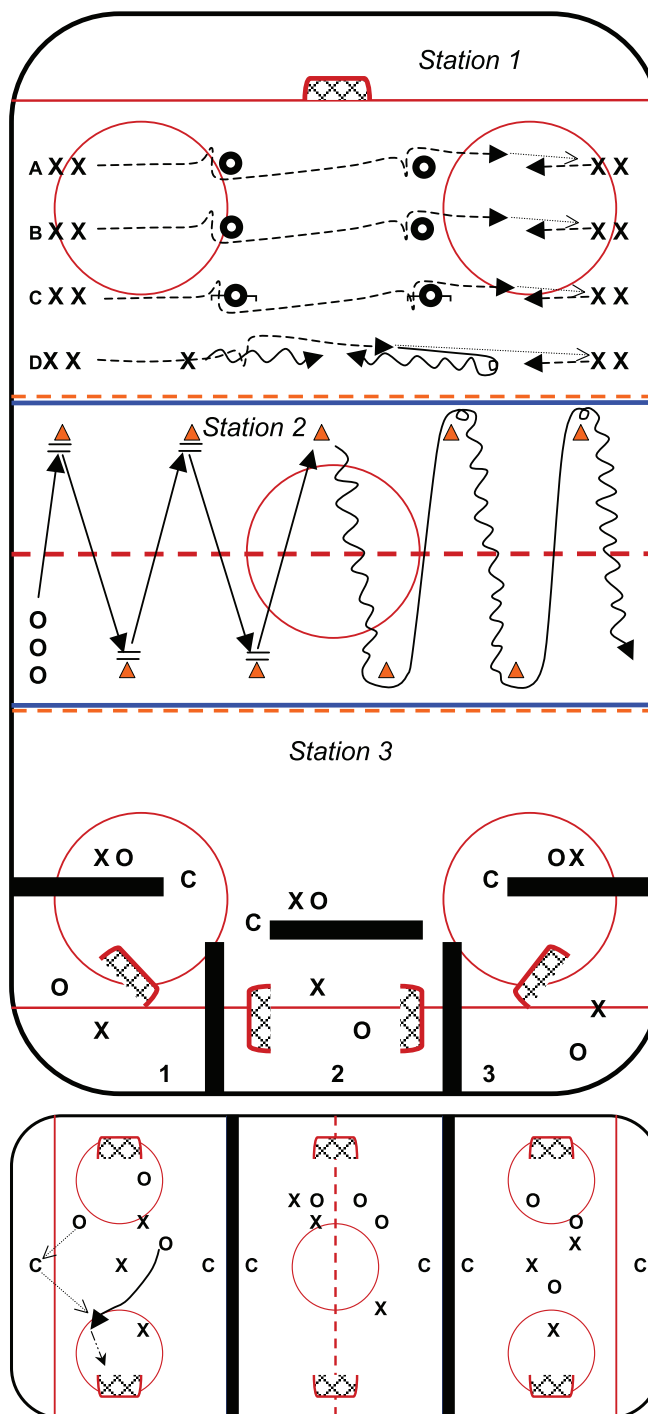
- Using rings, make wide, exaggerated moves to forehand and backhand. Emphasize knee bend and loading the legs.
- Make exaggerated moves using pucks.
- Make exaggerated moves sliding under the stick.
- 1-on-1 shuttle and attack the triangle against passive players.

Station 2: Stops, Starts and Transition Skating – In these skating technique, stop and start at each cone with your head and chest up. Progress to forward to backward pivots. Add in agility at the red line (drop to your knees and back up) and then add in pucks.

Station 3: 1-on-1 Competitions – Players compete 1-on-1 for 30-second shifts. Coaches add in additional pucks if a goal is scored or if the goalie covers it. Rotate the players after each shift to next area.

FORWARD AND BACKWARD TAG (8 minutes) – Using the whole ice surface, play tag with the middle zone as the forward skating zone and each end zone for skating backwards. Each time a player is tagged, he or she joins the tagging group. All players pivot at the blue line.

GAME (12 minutes): 3-on-3 with Outlets – Play 3-on-3 cross-ice for 40-second shifts. Players must make a pass to one of the coaches (outlets) on transition before they can score.



PEEWEE PRACTICE PLAN #1

Goals: Skills, Skating, ABCs, Competing, Fun

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Four Nets, Cones, Tires, Soccer Balls, Borders

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Free Play – Let the kids play with a variety of objects (black pucks, blue pucks, tennis balls, soft balls, ringette rings, etc.).

EDGE CONTROL AROUND STICKS (10 minutes) – Split into two groups for better communication. Have the players place their sticks on the ice lengthwise in front of them as obstacles. **Keys:** head and chest are up, with a good knee bend on the glide leg.

- inside edges around stick L/R
- inside edges around stick L/R, hold edge - two laps
- outside edges around stick L/R
- outside edges around stick L/R, hold two laps
- figure 8 inside edges around ends of stick
- figure 8 outside edges around ends of stick
- two-foot side jumps over stick
- one-foot side jumps over stick L/R

STATIONS (3 stations x 10 minutes):

Station 1: Stick Skills – X skates on the inside of the cones and makes two indirect passes to himself, then skates behind the net and performs and give-and-go with the coach. X then skates around the two outside cones, slaloms down the middle cones and shoots to score. Switch lines' sides each time.

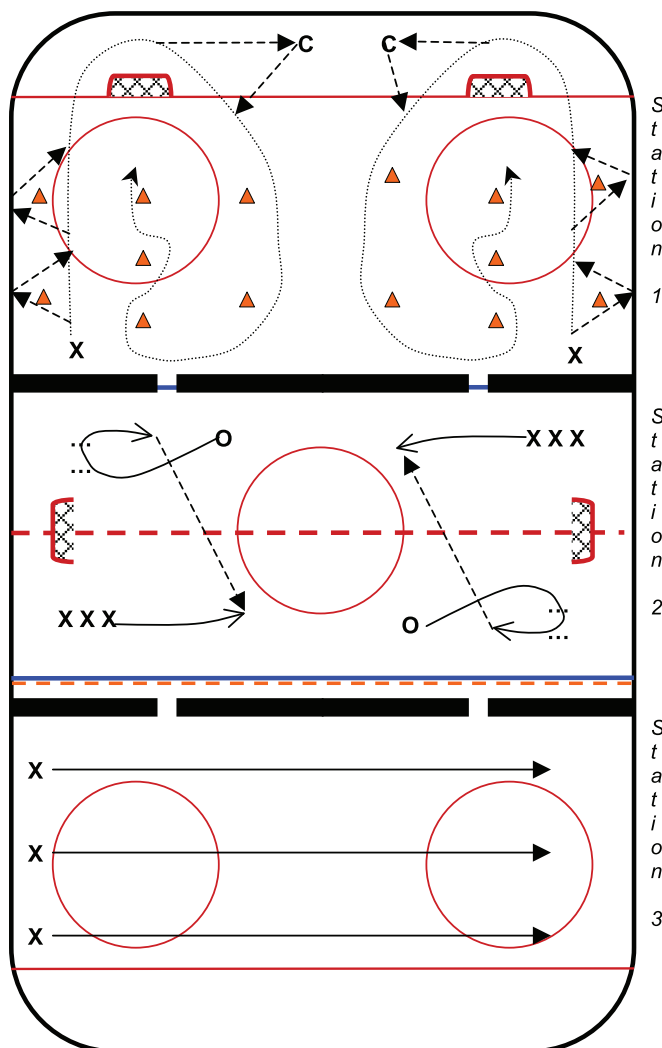
Station 2: Passing/Timing – X breaks as O retrieves a puck after shooting on net. O passes to X, who goes down and shoots to score. After X shoots, X curls and picks up a puck to restart the timing, activating the next player. Players need to keep their heads and eyes up to maintain the same timing on both sides of the ice. Tell them not to hurry, but to make sure they execute the drill. Timing is a skill as well.

Station 3: Skating – Players work on skating fundamentals and technique. Enforce edge control and move into a forward stride with good technique and recovery. Add pucks in as well. Be creative to make it fun and competitive. Mix in some short burst races or toss-and-catch drills.

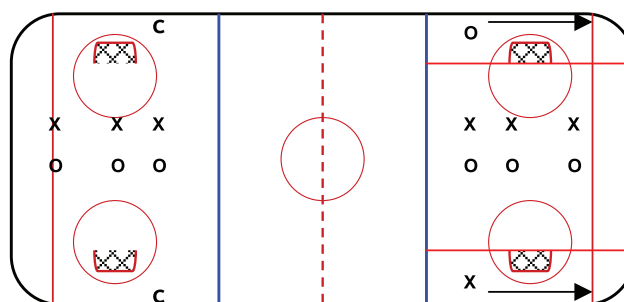
SMALL AREA GAMES (15 minutes):

Game 1: Regroup/Breakout Game – Players must regroup and breakout with the coach behind the net they are defending before they can go on offense.

Game 2: Gretzky Game – Players must pass to a teammate behind their attacking net before being able to attempt to score. The player behind the net (Gretzky) can move laterally behind the net but must not cross the goal line. Emphasize moving to get open!



Games with concepts



Game 1

Game 2

PEEWEE PRACTICE PLAN #2

Goals: Skills, Skating, ABCs, Competing, Fun

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Five Nets, Cones, Tires, Soccer Balls, Borders

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Free Play – Let the kids play with a variety of objects (black pucks, blue pucks, tennis balls, soft balls, ringette rings, etc.).

EDGE CONTROL AROUND STICKS (10 minutes) – Split the players into two groups for better communication. Have the players place their sticks on the ice lengthwise in front of them as obstacles. **Keys:** head and chest are up with a good knee bend on the glide leg.

- inside edges around stick L/R
- inside edges around stick L/R, hold edge - two laps
- outside edges around stick L/R
- outside edges around stick L/R, hold edge - two laps
- figure 8 inside edges around ends of stick
- figure 8 outside edges around ends of stick
- two-foot side jumps over stick
- one-foot side jumps over stick L/R

STATIONS (4 stations x 8 minutes) – On the whistle to change stations, players do five jumps before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

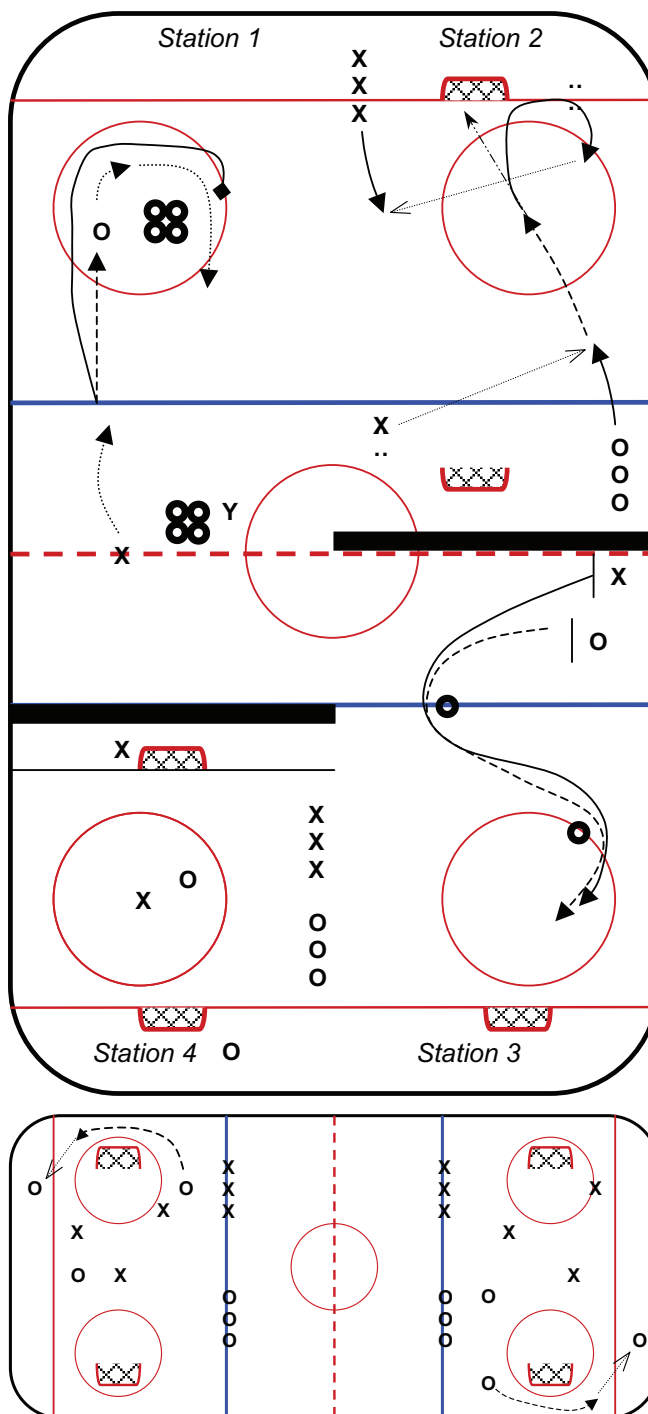
Station 1: Pass and Chase Tag – Player X passes to player O, who has to skate around the tires and attempts to evade player X. Player O then passes to player Y, and the rotations continue. Each player is finished after he or she receives a pass, goes around the tires, and then gives a pass and becomes the chaser.

Station 2: Stretch Pass Short Version – Player O breaks as Player X retrieves a puck. X passes to O, who shoots on goal and then picks up a new puck to activate the next player. Try to keep both sides going. Let the players monitor the ice and get them to judge when to break for a pass.

Station 3: Attack Under Pressure – Player O begins with a puck five feet in front of player X. On the coach's signal, player X chases player O around the tires and attempts to stop player O before he can score. Vary the start distances so that player O is forced to skate at top speed.

Station 4: 1-on-1 with Low Outlet – Play 1-on-1 in a small area. Outlet players are below the goal lines and can't score. Players in the middle must make a pass to their outlet man before they can score. Play 40-second shifts.

GAME (13 minutes): 3-on-3 Breakout Game – Play 3-on-3 cross-ice for 40-second shifts. On each change of possession, a team must either carry the puck or pass the puck behind their own net before they can attack.



PEEWEE PRACTICE PLAN #3

Goals: Skills, Skating, ABCs, Competing, Fun

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Four Nets, Cones, Tires, Soccer Balls, Borders

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Free Play – Let the kids play with a variety of objects (black pucks, blue pucks, tennis balls, soft balls, ringette rings, etc.).

SKATING/PUCK HANDLING (10 minutes):

- Players skate around the rink handling a puck while the coach yells out different agility drills to perform (e.g. drop to knees, Russian walk, pull puck through legs, jumps).
- Players skate around the rink with the puck and, on a whistle, enter the nearest circle and stickhandle in traffic within that circle. On the next whistle, players exit the circle and continue the rotation. Players go each direction.
- **Ducks on the Pond** – Split players into two ends. Have roughly half of the amount of pucks in an end as there are players. Players play keep away from each other.

STATIONS (3 stations x 8 minutes) – On the whistle to change stations, players do an ABC move (jump, somersault, etc.) between stations.

Station 1: Keep Away – 2-on-2 game with the support of a coach (makes it 3-on-2) where players play keep away. Emphasize moving without the puck, covering your man and communication. Explain odd-man situations both offensively and defensively.

Station 2: Pass and Backcheck – X passes to Y, who catches the pass and skates to the tire. After reaching the tire, Y can cut to the net or shoot. X must backcheck Y to make Y skate hard with the puck. X should aim for the tire to create a good angle. If X beats Y, use proper angle and body contact to separate the puck.

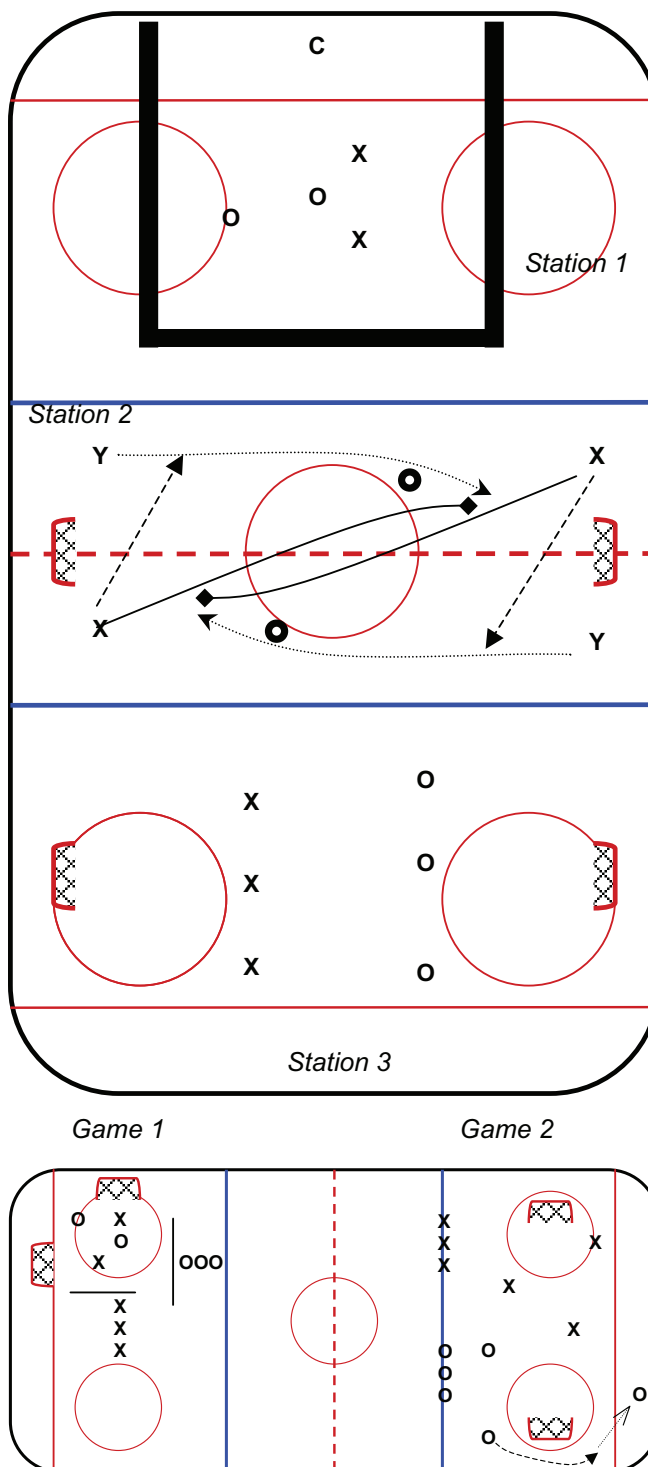
Station 3: Handball – Players play 3-on-3 with a soccer ball and no sticks. Players must use their hands to throw and catch the ball. No goalies! Goalies play as regular skaters. Players must make three passes before they can shoot on net. Emphasize puck support and short passes!

GAMES (20 minutes):

Game 1: 2-on-2 with Point – 2-on-2 game in a tight area where the players must pass back to their point man before they can go on offense. The points can pass or shoot when they receive puck. This works on hockey sense, puck handling, puck support, skating, loose pucks, competing and team play.

Game2: 3-on-3 Breakout Game

Play 3-on-3 cross-ice for 40-second shifts. After each



change of possession, a team must either carry the puck or pass the puck behind their own nets before they can attack.

PEEWEE PRACTICE PLAN #4

Goals: Skills, Skating, ABCs, Competing, Fun

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Four Nets, Cones, Tires, Soccer Balls, Borders

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Free Play – Let the kids play with a variety of objects (black pucks, blue pucks, tennis balls, soft balls, ringette rings, etc.).

SKATING/PUCK HANDLING (10 minutes):

- Players skate around the rink handling a puck while the coach yells out different agility drills to perform (e.g. drop to knees, Russian walk, pull puck through legs, jumps).
- Players skate around the rink with the puck and, on a whistle, enter the nearest circle and stickhandle in traffic within that circle. On the next whistle, the players exit the circle and continue the rotation. The players go each direction.

STATIONS (3 stations x 8 minutes) – On the whistle to change stations, players do an ABC move (jump, somersault, etc.) between stations.

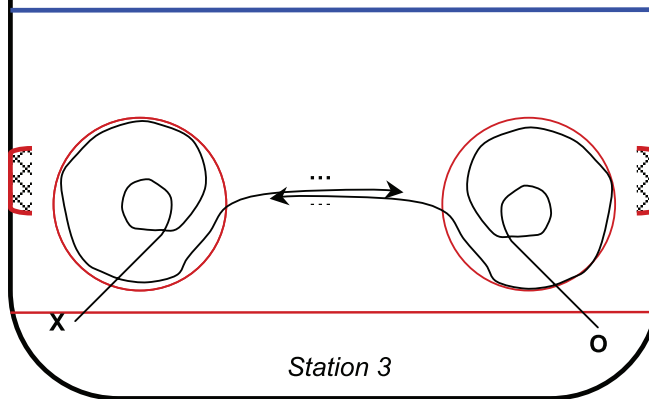
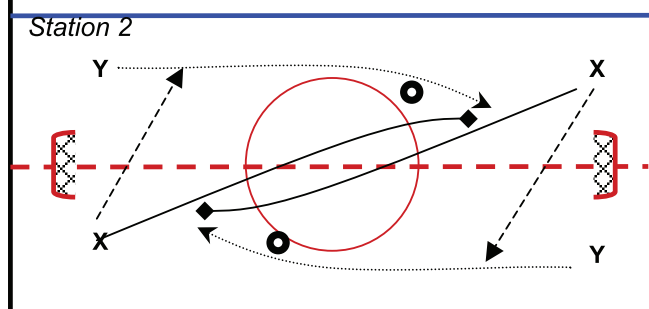
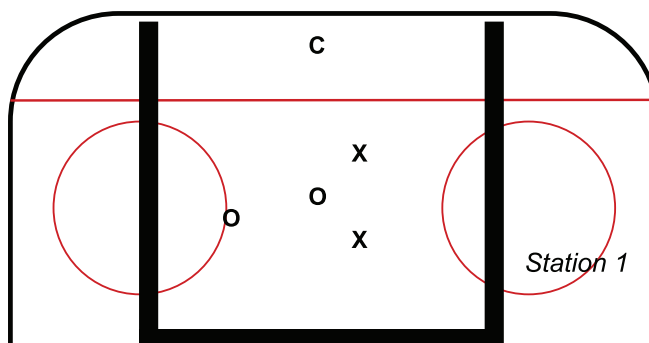
Station 1: Keep Away/Passing/Puck Handling – A 2-on-2 game with the support of a coach (makes it 3-on-2) in which players play keep away. Emphasize moving without the puck, covering your man and communication. Explain odd-man situations offensively and defensively. This works on puck possession, passing, receiving, puck handling, loose puck battles, hockey sense and team play.

Station 2: Pass and Backcheck – X passes to Y, who catches the pass and skates to the tire. After reaching the tire, Y can cut to the net or shoot. X must backcheck Y to make Y skate hard with the puck. X should aim for the tire to create a good angle. If X beats Y, use proper angle and body contact to separate the puck. This works on passing, receiving, shooting, angling, body contact and team concepts.

Station 3: Power Skating/Overspeed – X does overspeed crossovers around the dot, then overspeed crossovers around the circle. After completing the circle, X proceeds to pick up a puck and shoots at the net on the opposite side from where X started. O does the same in the reverse direction. Do this with and without pucks. This works on skating, shooting and speed training.

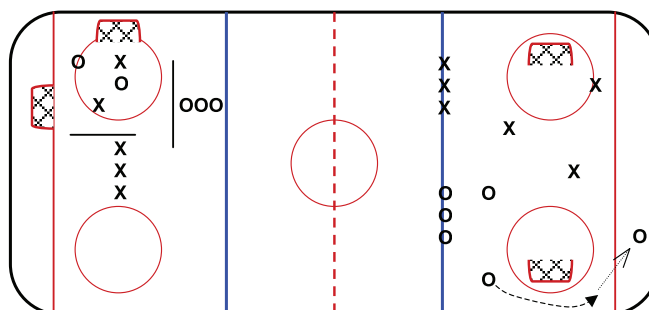
GAMES (20 minutes):

Game 1: 2-on-2 with Point – 2-on-2 game in a tight area in which the players must pass back to their point man before they can go on offense. The points can pass or shoot when they receive the puck. This works on hockey sense, puck handling, puck support, skating, loose pucks, competing and team play.



Game 1

Game 2



Game2: 3-on-3 Breakout Game – Play 3-on-3 cross-ice for 40-second shifts. After each change of possession, a team must either carry the puck or pass the puck behind its own net if they can attack.

PEEWEE PRACTICE PLAN #5

Goals: Skating, Puck Protection, Scoring, 1-on-1 Play, Body Contact, Fun

Equipment Required/Set-Up: Four Nets, Cones, Tires, Soccer Balls, Borders

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Free Play – Let the kids play with a variety of objects (black pucks, blue pucks, tennis balls, soft balls, ringette rings, etc.).

SKATING (7 minutes): Crossovers – Skate forward and backward crossovers, pivoting each time you cross center ice. No gliding on the turns. Focus on keeping the feet moving and acceleration through turns.

SKATING AGILITY AND PUCK CONTROL (7 minutes) – Boards pass to your self and jump the dividers. Players finish with a shot on goal. 2-on-0 passing back down the middle.

STATIONS (3 stations x 8 minutes):

Station 1A: 1-on-1 Angle Through Dot – Player X begins skating through the faceoff dot. Once player X is over the dot, player O begins skating down the wall and tries to attack the net. Players O and X play 1-on-1 until the whistle, at which time player O becomes the new X and starts the next sequence by skating through the faceoff dot. Switch sides halfway through.

Station 1B: 1-on-1 Defend the House – The defensive player X begins on the faceoff dot. Throughout the drill player X must stay inside the faceoff circle. The offensive player O must attack the prime scoring area by moving inside the faceoff circle. Player O can only shoot from inside the circle.

Station 2: 1-on-1 Forward and Defenseman – Player X carries the puck around the net and makes a breakout pass to player O. Player O carries the puck around the tire and attacks back against player X, who has gapped up. Play the 1-on-1 and then start the drill from the opposite side.

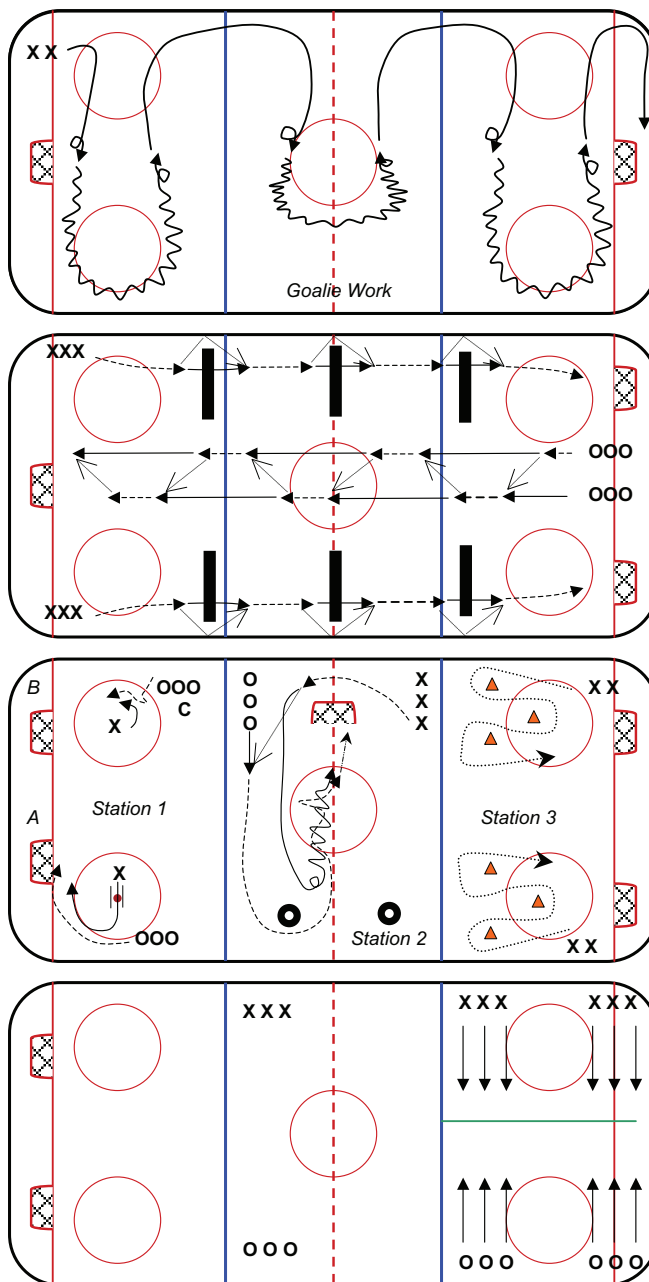
Station 3: Puck Control – Players carry the puck through the course and finish with a shot on goal. Begin with tight turns at each cone, then progress to 360-degree turns around each cone. If there is no goalie, place one of the dividers in front of the goal to force the kids to shoot over it in order to score.

GAMES (17 minutes)

Game 1: Quick Score – Teams line up along the boards at each blue line. Ten pucks are laid out on the blue line for each team. Players attack the net 2-on-0 and go until they score. Once they score, they sprint out of the zone and over the blue line, at which point the next 2-on-0 begins. Teams play until all 10 pucks

are scored. The first team to score with all 10 of its pucks wins!

Game 2: Dodgeball – Players play dodgeball in an area cordoned off with borders. Draw a line down the middle so that they know where they can't cross. Rules of dodgeball apply. This works on athleticism, balance, agility, coordination and edge control.



BANTAM PRACTICE PLAN #1

Goals: Skating, Puck Protection, Passing, Shooting, Team Play

WARM-UP (7 minutes): Butterfly skate down the middle to the outside. Stretch in the middle and perform agility moves that the coach calls out on the outside (crossovers, 360s, etc.). The coach warms up the goalies while Drills #1 and #2 are going on.

DRILL #1 (10 minutes): Three Stations of Puck Control

Station 1 Three-Player Figure 8s – The player in the middle handles the puck in a figure 8 and protects it from the two others on outside.

Station 2 Chaos stickhandling in the neutral zone.

Station 3 One-on-two keep away within the circle.

DRILL #2 (10 minutes): Three Stations of Passing

Station 1 Man in the Middle – Players on the outside attempt to keep the puck away from one man in the middle.

Station 2 Three-players passing two pucks.

Station 3 Full-length paired-up passing progression (paired-up passing, changing lanes, one touches, etc.).

DRILL #3 (10 minutes): Three-Part Passing/Shooting

Part 1 Pass to a player at the other blue line. He or she passes across the rink to a third player, who passes back to the original passer as he or she skates around the circle.

Part 2 Two players go and make it a 2-on-0.

Part 3 Two players go and make it a 1-on-1.

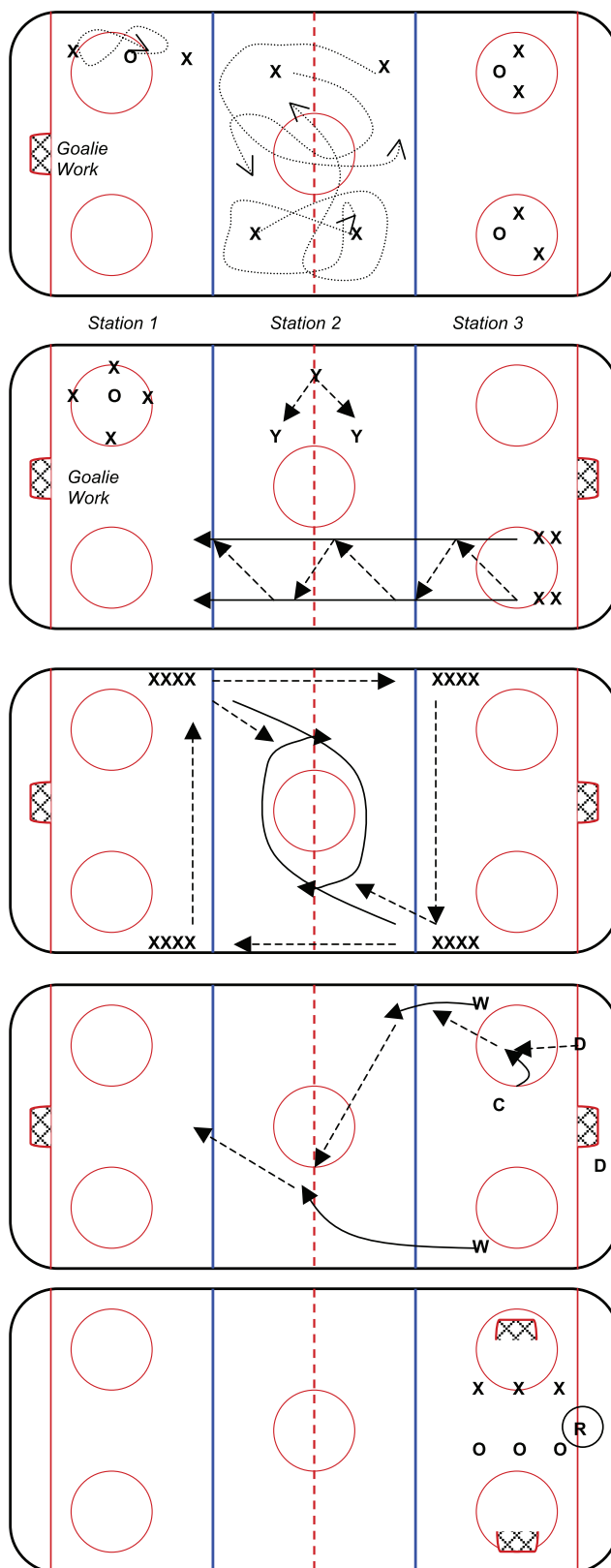
DRILL #4 (10 minutes): Breakout/Regroup/Attack

The coach dumps a puck in and a five-man unit goes back to break it out. After the breakout, the forwards regroup with the coach and counterattack against the two defensemen who broke them out. Play out the three-on-two until a goal is scored or the puck is covered or cleared.

DRILL #5 (10 minutes): Small Area Game – Rover

Divide the players into two teams and play three-on-three cross-ice with a rover. The rover is always on offense. Whichever team possesses the puck always has a four-on-three situation. Change players and rover every 40-50 seconds.

If there is extra time, allow free play to work on skills of the players' choice.



BANTAM PRACTICE PLAN #2

Goals: Skating, Puck Protection, Passing, Shooting, Team Play

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Free Play – Players have five minutes of free play to do whatever they want and to work on whichever skills they choose.

DRILL #1 (10 minutes): Small Area Games

Play five-on-five or four-on-four in each end. Whichever team has the puck is on offense. All rebounds are live, and each team is trying to score on one net. Goalies had better be awake and ready!

DRILL #2 (20 minutes): Flow Shooting Progression

Part 1 Three players come out of the corner staggered. Each shoots on net as they come around the top of the circle. At the bottom of the other circle they all pick up a puck and go down for a second shot on net. They fan out in the neutral zone with timing so that the goalie sees all three shots. The first player goes down the near wall, the second player cuts through the center circle and down the middle, while the third player cuts across blue line to the far wall.

Part 2 Same as the first part, but the players only pick up one puck at the bottom of the second circle and go down 3-on-0 for an outside shot on the goalie and a rebound chance.

Part 3 Same as the second part, but the first shooter backs off and skates backward to become a defenseman while the others play 2-on-1. Both ends go at same time.

DRILL #3 (20 minutes): Three Stations of Puck Protection

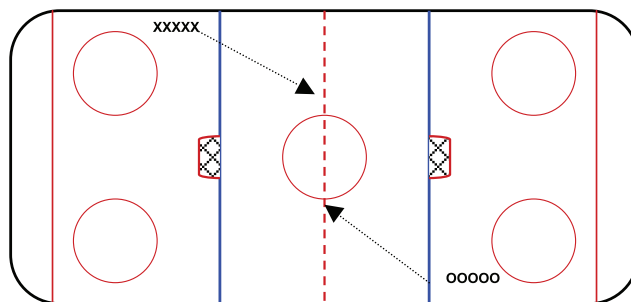
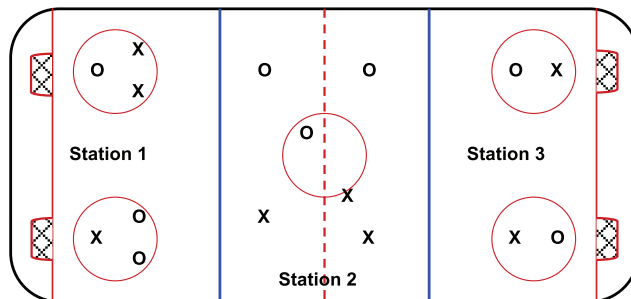
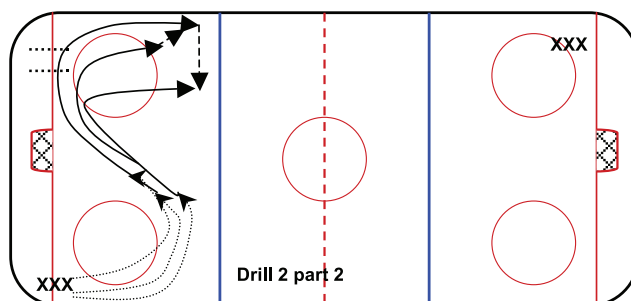
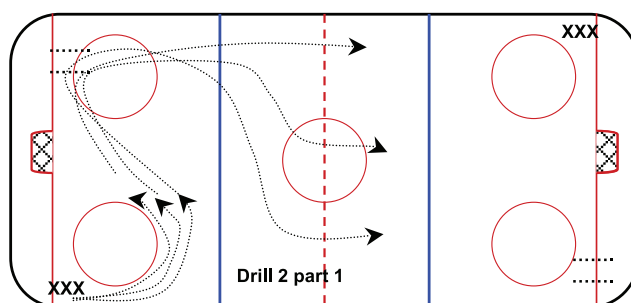
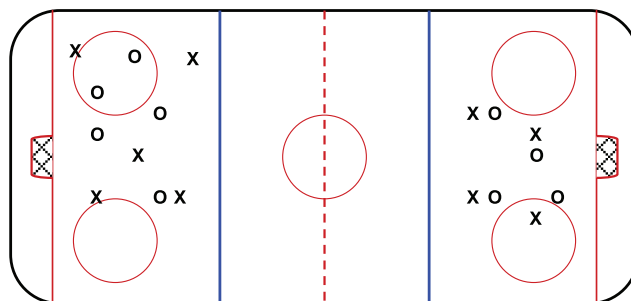
Part 1 Play 2-on-1 inside the circles. If the puck exits the circle, the coach puts a new one in.

Part 2 Play 3-on-3 in the neutral zone. Teams score points by skating the puck to the opposite boards and pressing it up against the boards. All three players must touch the puck before you can score.

Part 3 Play 1-on-1 in the circle. The defenseman has his or her stick upside down or has no stick at all. The offense is trying to score.

DRILL #4 (5 minutes): Breakaway Relay Game

Each player goes on a breakaway until he or she scores. Once he or she scores, the next player on his or her team goes. The team that has all of its players score first wins. Make it competitive and fun! Play for something, e.g. losers pick up pucks, an extra sprint, etc.



BANTAM PRACTICE PLAN #3

Goals: Skating, Puck Protection, Passing, Shooting, Team Play

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Overspeed Warm-Up – Players skate around each of the neutral zone faceoff circles as fast as they can, working on coming out of their comfort zones. Progress to backward skating as well as carrying pucks.

The coach can warm up goalies at one end.

DRILL #1 (5 minutes): Overspeed Warm-Up 2

Players skate in a big circle going as fast as they can, again working on coming out of their comfort zones. Mix in backward skating, pivoting, and puck carrying.

DRILL #2 (10 minutes): Three-Part Passing and Shooting Progression

Part 1 The player carries the puck to the edge of the circle and drops it. A second player skates around the circle to pick up the puck that was left on the other side and skates down for a shot on net.

Part 2 Same as part one, but instead of simply going down for a shot on net, the players exchange passes with each other before going in for a shot.

Part 3 Two players go from each side and do the same thing as in part one, but the first player (who picked up the puck) skates down, escapes and passes to the second player, who is buying time for a shot on net.

DRILL #3 (10 minutes): 1-on-1s

The pucks begin in opposite circles. The defensemen line up in the center circle and the forwards line up at opposite blue lines. The defensemen skate backward to pick up a puck and pass to the forwards who are coming across. The forwards collect the passes and attack the opposite end. The defensemen gaps up after making the pass and play the opposite forward coming down on a 1-on-1. Both pairs end at the same time.

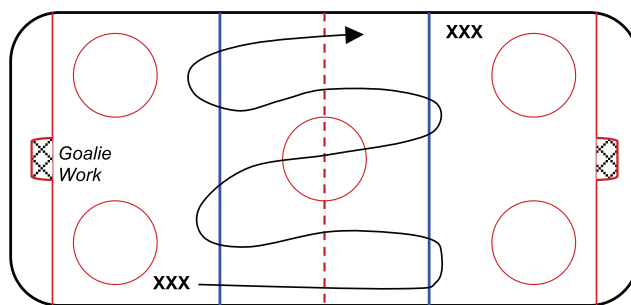
DRILL #4 (20 minutes): Concepts and Skills

Split the players into two ends. At one end, players work on defensive coverage (five players on offense, five on defense). The players on offense start with puck. On the whistle, the defensive players roll over and get into coverage while the offensive team attacks.

Skill Work – The player skates to the top of circle, receives a pass from the same line and shoots. He or she then skates around the bottom of the other circle, gets pass from that line and shoots.

DRILL #5 (10 minutes): Concepts and Skills

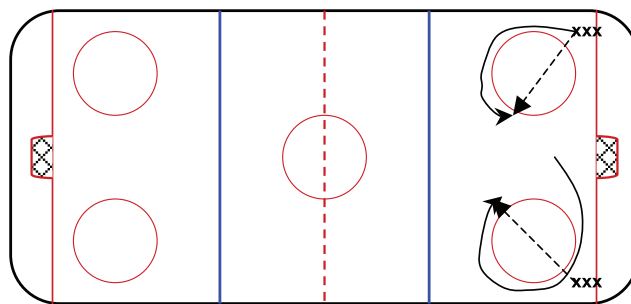
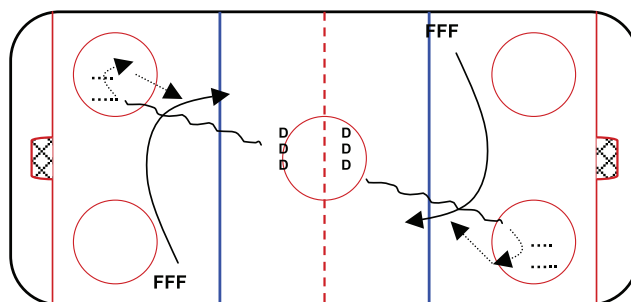
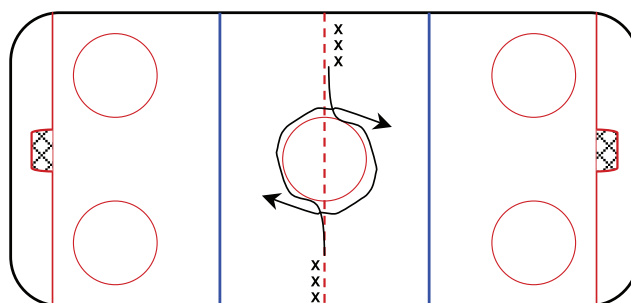
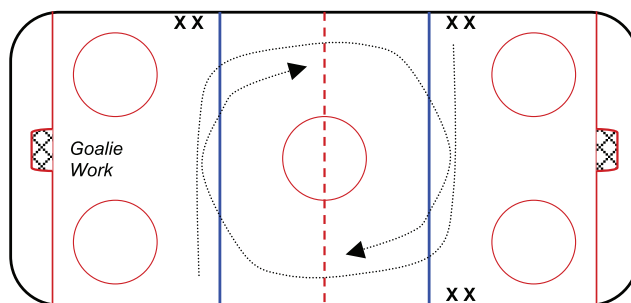
Split the players into two ends. At one end, the players work on faceoffs. At the other end, set up two nets for breakaways.



Station 1

Station 2

Station 3



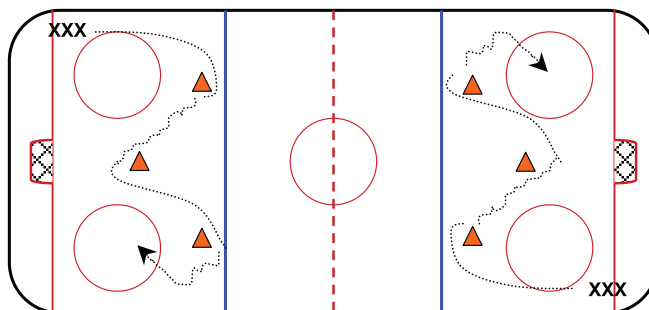
BANTAM PRACTICE PLAN #4

Goals: Skating, Puck Protection, Passing, Shooting, Team Play

WARM-UP (10 minutes): Figure 8 Warm-Ups – Players pair up and alternate skating figure 8s with pucks every 30 seconds. Players should carry the pucks for the first half and the constant give and go's for the second half. Coach warms up goalie at same time.

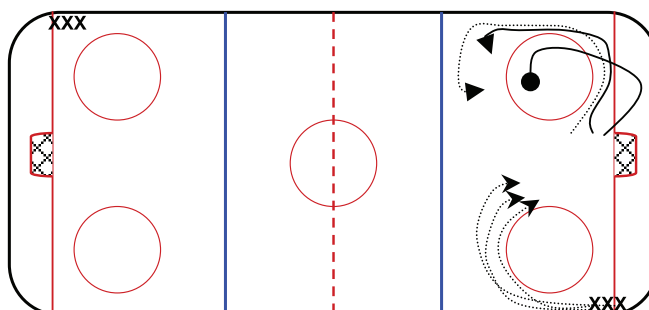
DRILL #1 (10 minutes): Agility Shooting

Players carry a puck up to cone, pivot around it, skate backward to the next cone, pivot forward to next cone and perform a 360 around the last cone before going in for a shot on net. Progress to adding a pass from a coach for a give and go before the shot on net.



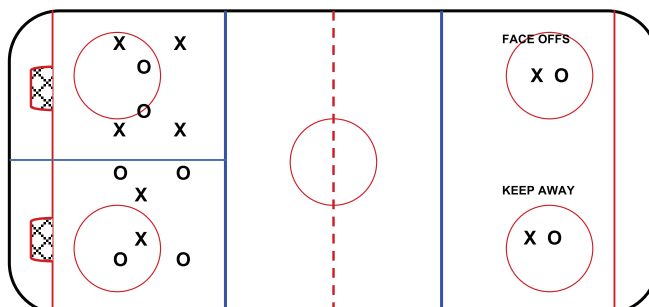
DRILL #2 (10 minutes): Three Shot Double Back 2-on-1

Three players come out of the corner, around the top of the circle staggered and take a shot on net. The first two players go into the opposite corner where they pick up a puck and skate around the circle. The third shooter skates to the bottom of the circle and pivots to play a quick 2-on-1 against them. Go out of both ends and switch sides halfway through.



DRILL #3 (10 minutes): Special Teams and Faceoffs

Split the team in half. One half of the team plays a small area special team game. Draw a line down the middle of the zone, teams must stay on their half of the ice. Each half plays a 4-on-2. The Xs all work together and so do the Os. On the other half of the rink, split the group again so that half work on draws and the other half play 1-on-1 keep away inside the circle.

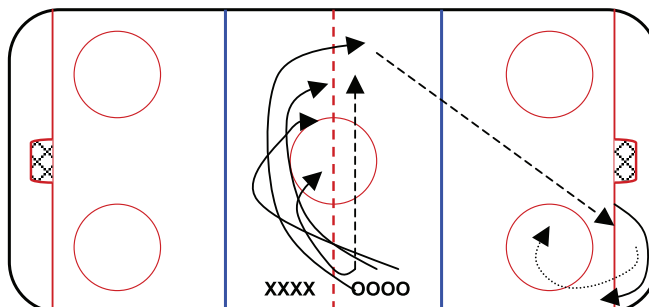


DRILL #4 (15 minutes): Cycle Progression

Part 1 Four players skate around the center circle as coach dumps a puck in. They pick it up and cycle where all four touch the puck before a shot on net. Coach then dumps one into the other end where four new guys go.

Part 2 Same as above but after the first player cycles the puck, becomes a defenseman and plays a 3-on-1 against him.

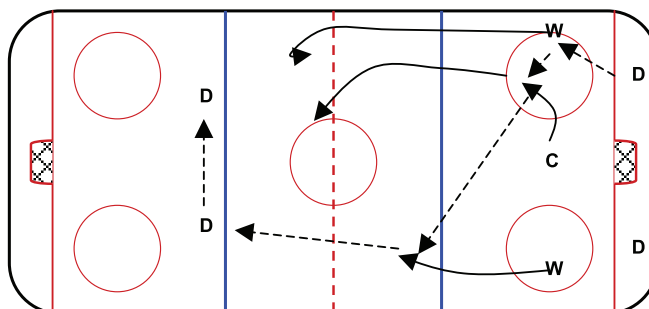
Part 3 Same as part 1 but first two players become defensemen and play a 2-on-2 against them.



DRILL #5 (10 minutes): Breakout/Double Regroup/Attack

Coach dumps a puck in to three forwards and two defensemen in a break out 5-on-0. Once the forwards cross the red line, they regroup with two defenders already out in the far zone. The forwards then regroup again with the original defenseman that broke them out and they attack the first set of regroup defensemen 3-on-2.

If extra time, allow for five minutes of free play to work on anything the players want!



BANTAM PRACTICE PLAN #5

Goals: Skating, Puck Protection, Passing, Shooting, Team Play

WARM-UP (10 minutes): Skating Two Parts – Players skate a giant M shape both with and without pucks; forward and backward. During the second part, neutral zone chaos with multiple players skating in the neutral zone and carrying pucks at the same time. Coach warms up goalies in one zone.

DRILL #1 (5 minutes): Agility Shooting

Four players begin at once, two from each line. Players stagger themselves so that they aren't on top of each other. They skate all the way around the circle and then head in for a shot on net. Make sure that they switch directions so that they turn both directions.

DRILL #2 (10 minutes): Split Groups

Defensemen line up at the blue line and in the corners. A player in the corner passes a puck up the boards for the defenseman at the blueline to catch. The defenseman walks the line and takes a shot on net. Players switch lines every time.

Forwards play a half-ice game where they must pass to the coach after each turnover before they transition to offense.

DRILL #3 (10 minutes): Breakouts vs. Regroup Pressure

Three forwards and two defensemen breakout versus two forecheckers. Once they have broken out, the forwards regroup with another set of defensemen and then attack the defensemen who broke them out 3-on-2. Use both ends as rotations, so the defensemen who were the regroupers now are the breakout defensemen.

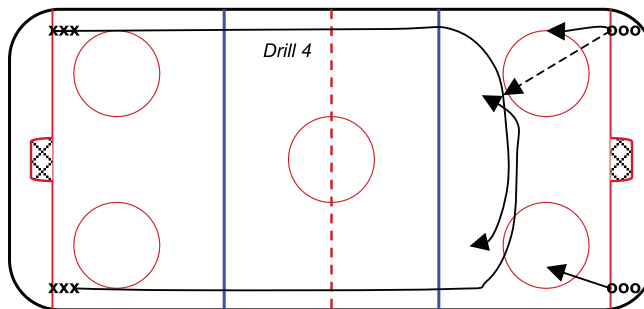
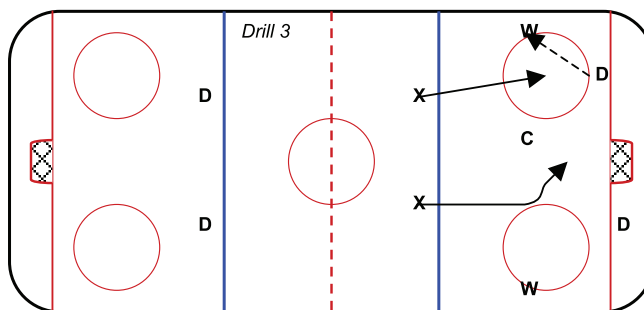
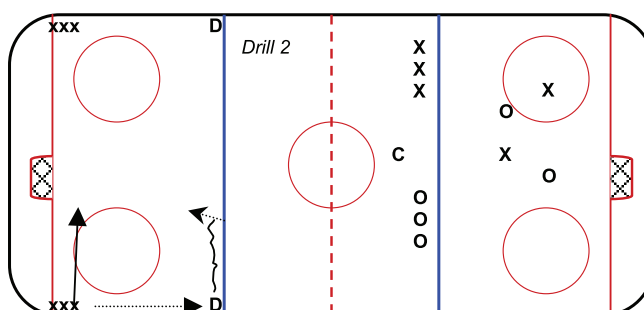
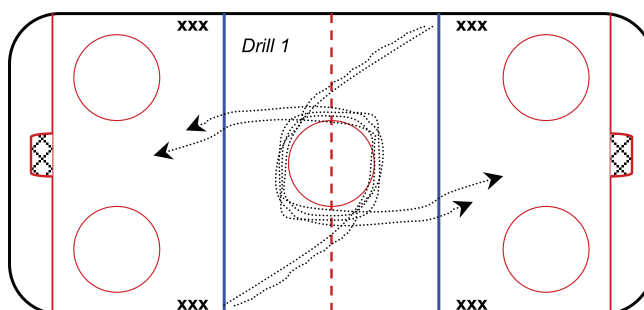
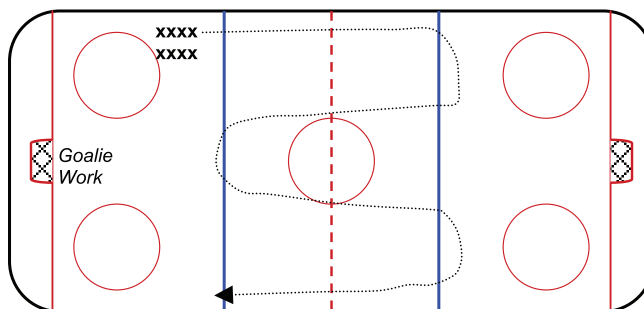
DRILL #4 (10 minutes): 2-on-0 With Backcheckers

The drill begins with two players who swing all the way down the rink. They turn up ice and receive a pass from one of the corners. The player who passed the puck and the player across from him backcheck those two as they attempt to go 2-on-0 down the ice. The two backcheckers then receive a pass from the other end and they go on offense. The continuous rotation is backcheck to offense to back of line.

DRILL #5 (10 minutes): Controlled Scrimmage

Allow the players to play in different situations (5-on-5, 4-on-4, 5-on-4,) in a scrimmage situation. Tell them that they are to stop on a whistle for teaching purposes. Try to create controlled situations that need attention.

If time remains afterward, allow the players to play the rebound game or have free time for the last five minutes.



MIDGET PRACTICE PLAN #1

Goals: Skating, Puckhandling, Offensive Concepts, Team Play

WARM-UP (7 minutes): Begin with six lines, three on each side inside both blue lines. On the whistle the first player in each line skates between the blue lines with a puck. They must handle the puck and move in the neutral zone while keeping their heads up. Work on deception skills and creative puckhandling. On the next whistle they pass to the player in their opposite line and the drill continues.

An assistant coach warms up the goalies.

DRILL #1 (15 minutes): Four Blue Progression

Rotate sides and passes on the whistle:

- 1-on-0
- 2-on-0 – then send two (player who makes the pass joins the rush)
- 1-on-1 – one player pivots to backward skating
- 3-on-0
- 2-on-1 – first player becomes defender

DRILL #2 (10 minutes): Small Game Breakout 2-on-2

After every turnover the puck has to go back to the defense and the team without the puck has to back check to their blue line before going on the forecheck. The players behind the net can't be checked and execute a breakout play with their teammates.

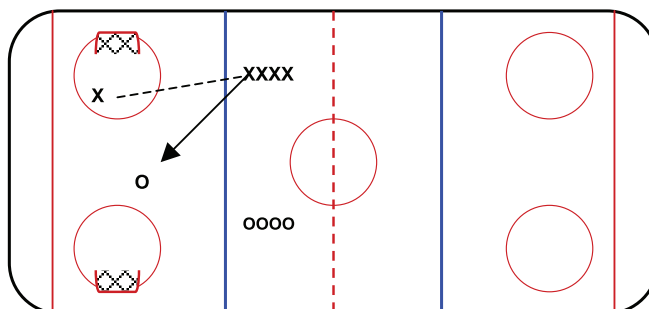
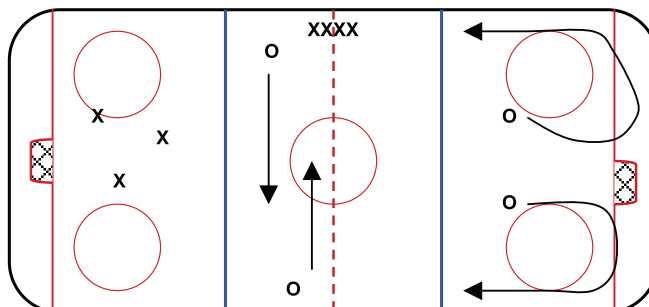
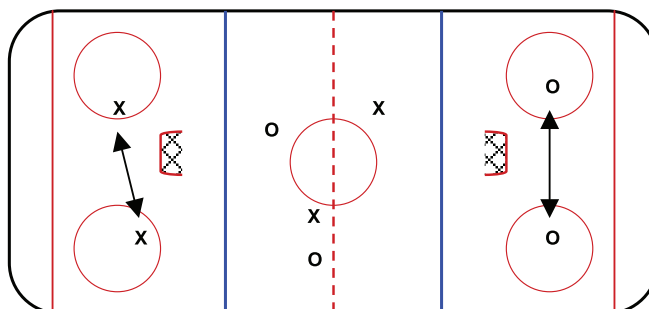
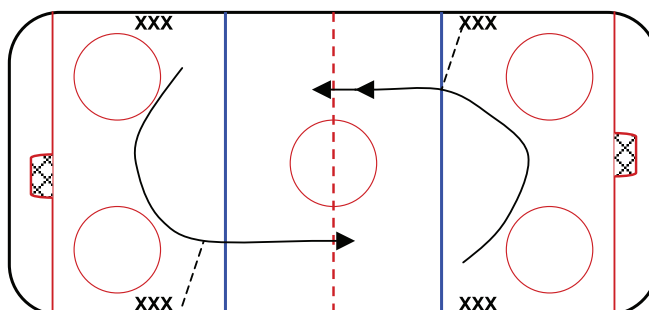
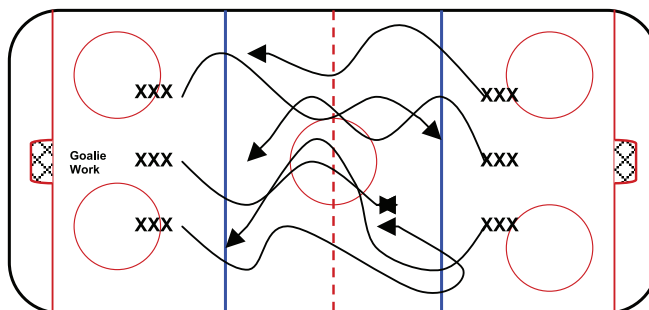
DRILL #3 (20 minutes): Power Play Breakout

The coach dumps the puck without resistance. The players use the power play breakout to get the puck into the offensive zone and play a 5-on-3. Attack the zone with speed, maximizing time and space in order to create scoring opportunities.

After 10 minutes, use two forecheckers who back off at the blue line.

DRILL #4 (8 minutes): Build Up Small Game

The puck carrier passes to a teammate at the blue line and that player now joins the game. Everyone can be activated. Start a new rotation every 45-60 seconds.



MIDGET PRACTICE PLAN #2

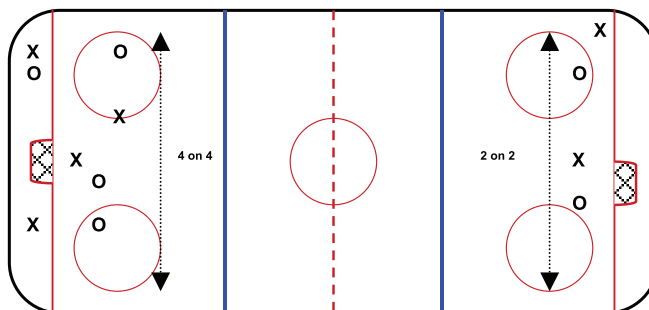
Goals: Skating, Shooting, Puck Protection, Team Play

WARM-UP (5 minutes): Skating/Chaos Puckhandling

Players in three lines out of one corner

1. Tight turns
2. Forward to backward to forward
3. Repeat with pucks
4. Neutral zone 3-on-0 passing with tight turns
5. Chaos puckhandling in the neutral zone

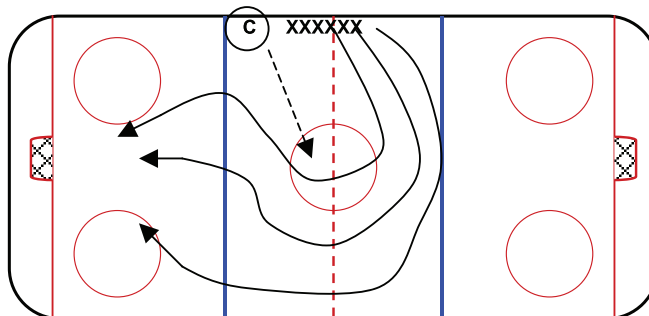
Assistant coach warms up the goalies.



DRILL #1 (10 minutes): Small Games

1. 4-on-4 below the circles
2. 2-on-2 below the dots

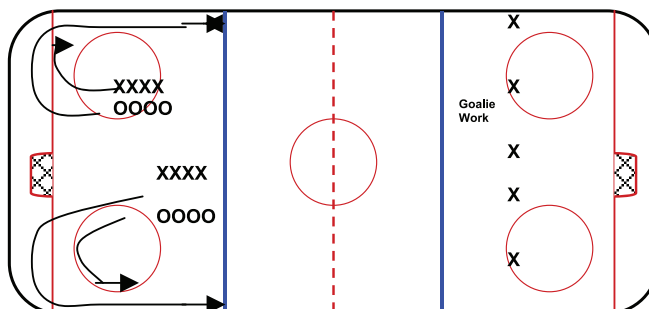
Both teams play offense and defense. Rotate players to both ends.



DRILL #2 (10 minutes): Neutral Zone Rushes

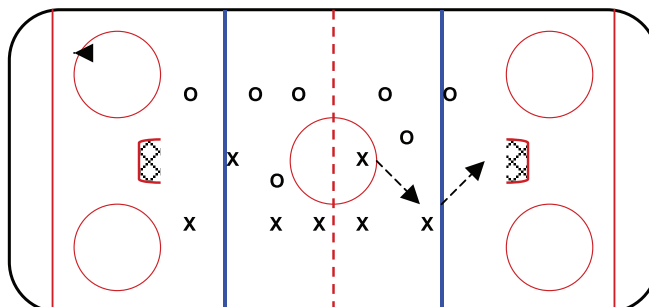
1. 3-on-0 to start
2. 2-on-1 is the next progression

Players come off the wall, three at a time and go around the circle. One player accepts a pass and they attack 3-on-0. Progress to 2-on-1 with the first player becoming the defender. He transitions to backward skating and accepts the rush, maintaining proper gap control.



DRILL #3 (10 minutes): Angling

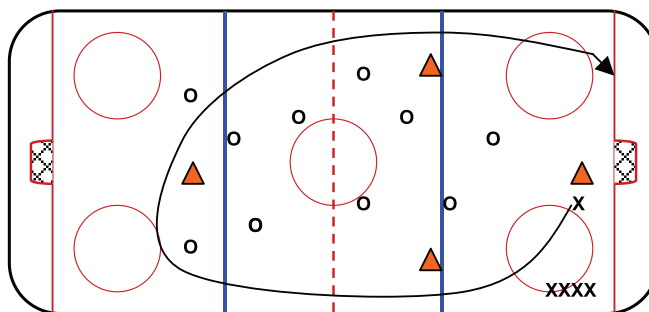
1. Player 1 picks up the dumped puck in the corner. Player 2 angles player 1 to the boards. Switch sides. Players should work on both positions.
2. Players and assistant coach work with the goalies. Switch ends after five minutes.



DRILL #4 (10 minutes): 2-on-2 Neutral Zone

All players are active and can pass and shoot. Players must be quick and move to open ice with urgency, using their teammates on the perimeter. Goaltenders must be ready to accept shots from everyone.

Change the players in the middle every 30 seconds.



MIDGET PRACTICE PLAN #3

Goals: Offensive Concepts, Passing, Power Play

WARM-UP (10 minutes):

Circles

1. Circles
2. Dots
3. With pucks
4. Forward – Backward

Blue to Blue

1. Start on knees
2. Start on stomach
3. Start on back

On the whistle, get up and start hard to opposite blue line.

DRILL #1 (10 minutes): 3-on-3 Behind Net

P plays for both teams from behind the net. P can't be checked and stays below the goal line.

Player P must get the puck after every turnover for the game to be live. After moving the puck to player P, players on offense must work to get open and create chances at the net. Defenders must protect the house without taking penalties.

DRILL #2 (10 minutes): Three Pass 1-on-1

From the four blues, the first player passes across the ice then becomes the defenseman. The second player passes and becomes the forward. After he makes the pass, he skates through the neutral zone, accepts a pass and attacks the net with speed. The defenseman gaps up and accepts the rush. Alternate all four sides.

DRILL #3 (20 minutes): Odd-Man Situations

5-on-4 Defensive Coverage

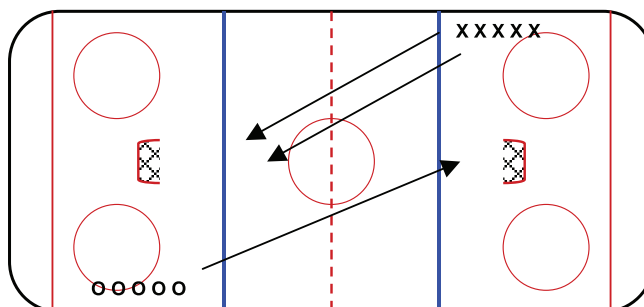
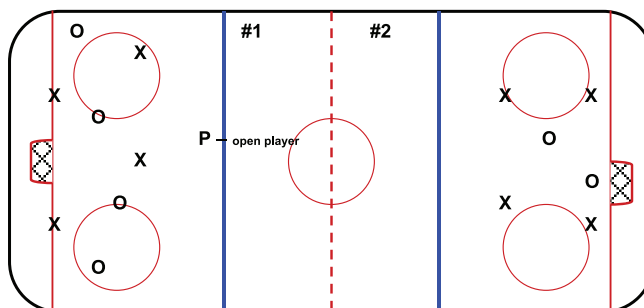
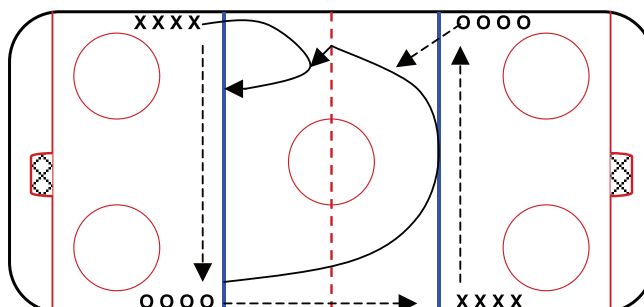
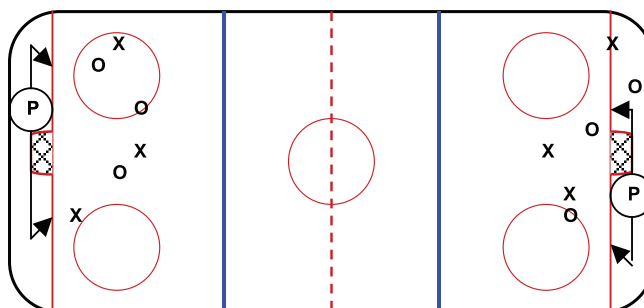
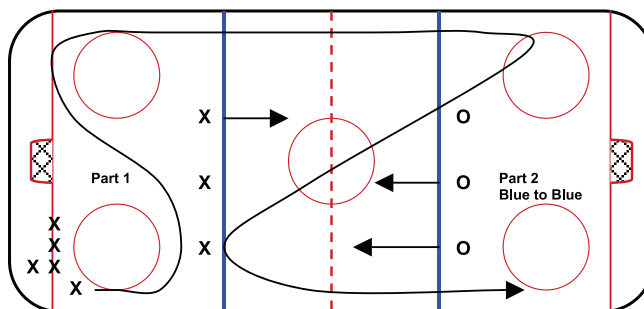
No one covers the open player. The open player can go anywhere and is part of the offense. The others play tight defense. The coach can spot a new puck when a goal is scored or the puck is cleared. Change every 30 seconds.

4-on-2 Power Play Drill

The offensive players use quick passes to isolate defenders and create scoring chances. Change every 30 seconds.

DRILL #4 (10 minutes): Build Up Breakaway Game

The game starts with a 1-on-0 breakaway from both sides. The players can't come back into line until they have scored, then 2-on-0, then 3-on-0. Play to 10, with the losing team doing three laps around the net.



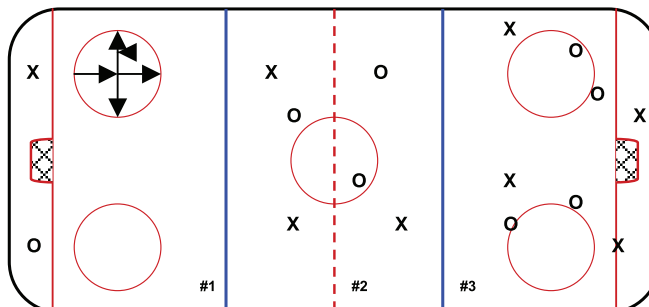
MIDGET PRACTICE PLAN #4

Goals: Skating, Passing, Offensive Concepts, Power Play

WARM-UP (15 minutes): Town Carnival

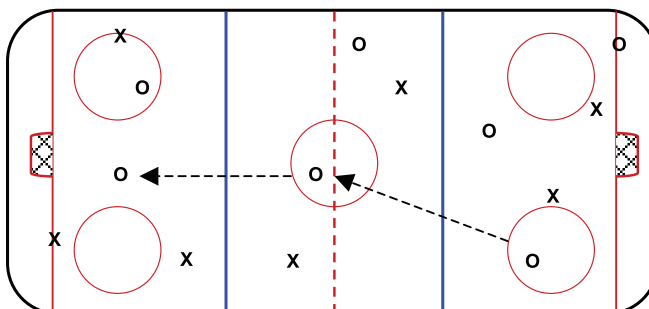
1. Dot edge work – forward, backward (inside the circle to the dot and back)
2. 3-on-3 warm up – between the blues, must make three passes before pressing the puck against the boards for a goal.
3. 4-on-4 in one zone

Goalies and players rotate – five minutes in each zone.



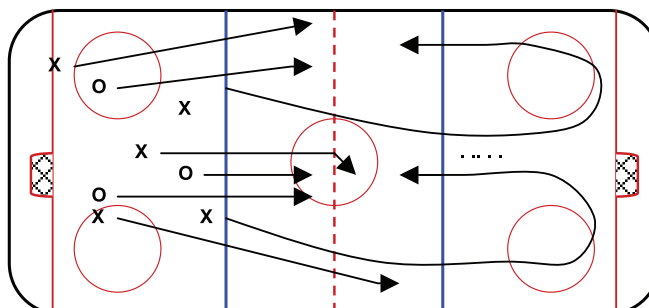
DRILL #1 (15 minutes): Three Zone Scrimmage

Players stay in their zones. Advance the puck to the offensive zone where a 3-on-2 ensues. Defenders should focus on making a quality pass instead of simply clearing the puck out of the zone. Change every 40 seconds.



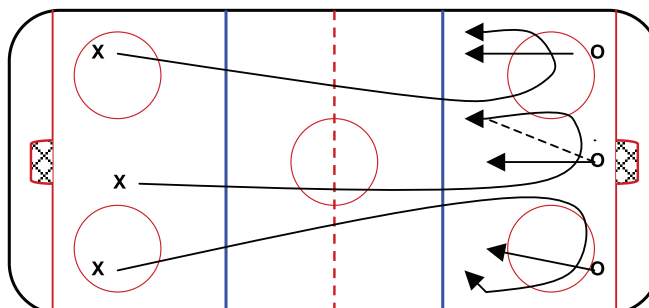
DRILL #2 (20 minutes): Power Play Competition

After a puck is shot out of the zone, the power play players must regroup and go back to get another puck. Defenders should gap up and accept the rush with speed after clearing a puck. The game ends when all five pucks are used. Rotate players so everyone plays in both situations.



DRILL #4 (10 minutes): 3-on-0 Continuous Backcheck

Three players start in one end zone, skate to the far end and regroup 3-on-0. The three in the opposite lines backcheck hard to the end, then re-group back as the drill continues.



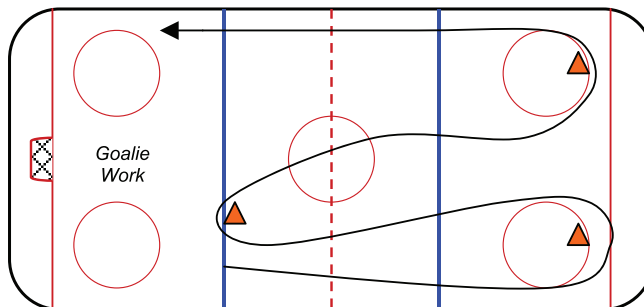
MIDGET PRACTICE PLAN #5

Goals: Offensive Concepts, Defensive Zone Play, Angling

WARM-UP (10 minutes): Overspeed

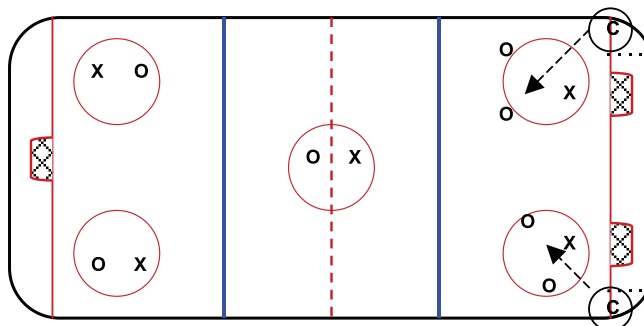
1. Forward
2. Backward
3. Three-quarter zone
4. High tempo neutral zone
5. With pucks
6. With tailgater

Assistant coach warms up the goalies



DRILL #1 (20 minutes): 2-on-1

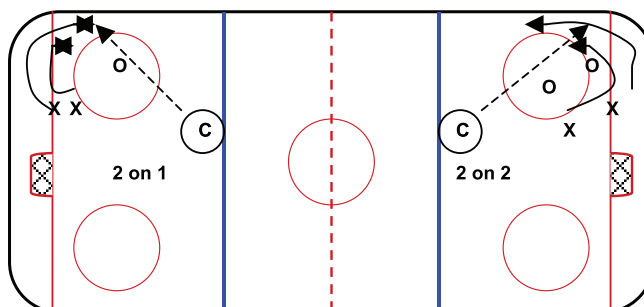
From the circles, one of the offensive players receives a pass from the coach. 30 second shifts, the coach can feed new pucks when a goal is scored or puck is cleared. Offensive players must move to get open, calling for the puck. Other players work on faceoffs. Rotate players through different drills and positions.



DRILL #2 (10 minutes): Corner Battles

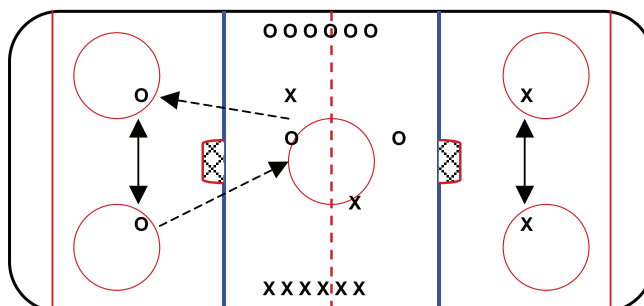
- 2-on-1 cycle at one end
- 2-on-2 cycle at one end

Both cycles come from a dump in by the coach. 30 second shifts. The coach can spot a new puck when a goal is scored or the puck is cleared. Switch ends after five minutes. Players should play both offense and defense.



DRILL #3 (10 minutes): 2-on-2 with Support

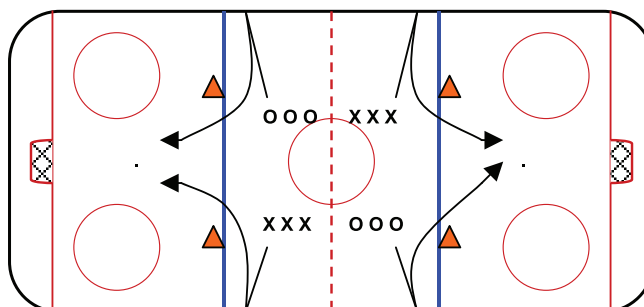
Offensive players must pass behind the net and get open before they can shoot. The players behind the net cannot be checked. Offensive players should work on give-and-go plays and battling through checks to get to the net. Change every 40 seconds.



DRILL #4 (10 minutes): 1-on-1 Battles

Coaches place puck in the middle of the zone. Players get up, tap the boards, come back around the cone and pursue the puck. Players need to compete and battle for the puck. Play to the whistle.

1. Normal start
2. On knees
3. On stomach
4. On back



LEARN MORE

Click on the following link(s) for more information on the topics covered in this chapter. (Internet access is required).

- www.usahockey.com/coaches/practice_plans.aspx

Appendix 3: Suggested Readings

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