



Puck Protection Stations

Tuesday, October 3rd, 2023

Please Note: The Practice of the Week is usually designed to be utilized across multiple age levels. With that being said, we highly encourage you to adjust the drills based on your team's age and skill levels. IHS should always be used as a starting point and you can add/remove constraints to fit your team.

Practice Theme: This practice plan is focused on puck protection skills for players' to develop confidence in their ability to possess pucks under pressure. This is a "position-less" practice where players should play both offensive and defensive roles in every situation.

Key Coaching Points

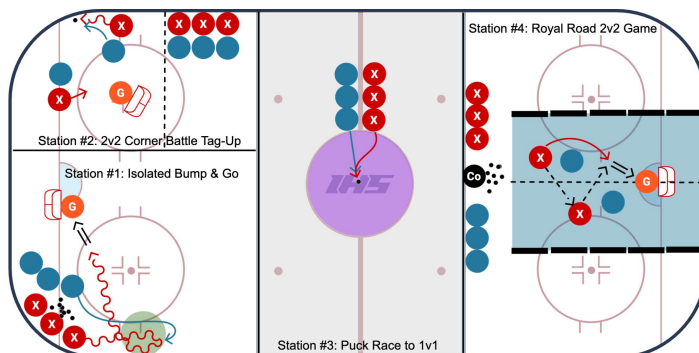
Puck protection is a skill that should be utilized to create more time and space to make a play

Offensively, players are working to understand how they can use their positioning, puck skills, edgework and awareness to protect and possess pucks in various areas of the ice.

Defensively, players are working to separate the puck carrier from the puck and regain possession as quickly as possible.

The 3 key fundamentals of puck protection:

1. Be aware and recognize where pressure is coming from
2. Use your body position to shield the puck from pressure
3. Keep your head up to see your teammates and the opposition to **make a play after protecting the puck**



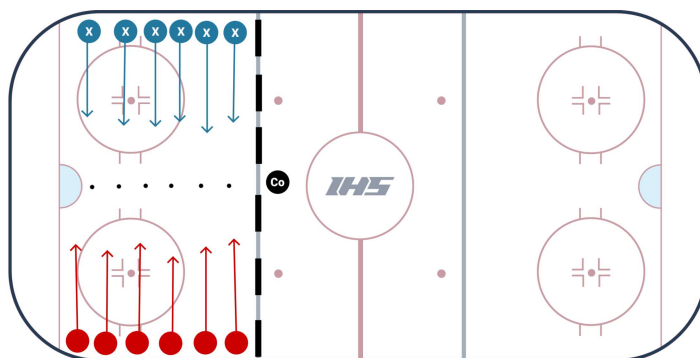
Finders Keepers (Teams) - Passing and Puck Control Drill

Details:

This drill is great for working on awareness and puck support. It is a variation of the original "Finders Keepers" drill but now players are divided up into two teams. Players will need to communicate, protect the puck, support the puck, and pass in order to be successful.

Set Up

To set up the drill divide the players into 2 teams and use an odd number of pucks and less than half as many players. For example, if you have two teams of 7 players then use 7 pucks. If you have two teams of 6 players then use 5 pucks. You can play in one end from the blue line down, half-ice, or even full ice depending on the amount of players.



How to Play

Each team will start on the wall or on the end line. The coach will blow the whistle and shoot the pucks into play. The players will work in their teams to possess as many pucks as possible. The coach will decide on a length of time to play and then blow the whistle. On the whistle all the players must stop. The team that is in possession of the most pucks wins that round.

Players need to communicate and have good awareness. When they have the puck they need to be looking to make a pass to a teammate that will not have pressure when they receive it. When they do not have the puck they can work with teammates to surround the puck or force passes into crowded areas.

Length of Time: 10 mins

Station Number: Everyone

Coach's Notes:

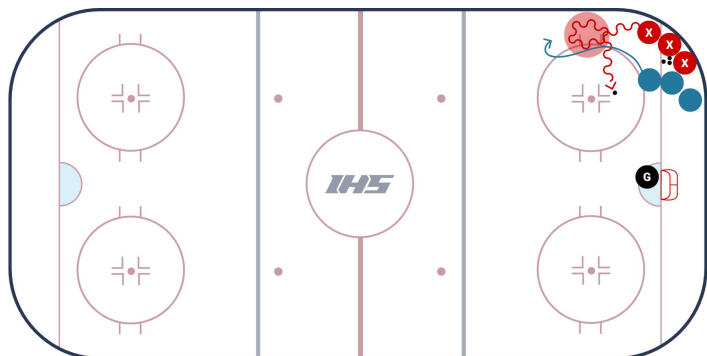
This is a fun game to start practice with before breaking into stations. You can break the team up however you see fit, can always do 4 teams (2 in each end) at the same time and then have the winners play each other.

Isolated Bump & Go

Details:

Drill Setup:

- 2 lines in the corner. Both players skate up the wall. Offensive player hits the defensive player and then turns toward wall and attacks net.



Drill Purpose:

- Purpose of the drill is too focus on the puck carrier using checking to nullify the defender and open an opportunity for them to get off the wall and away from the defender.
- In addition it is also meant to reiterate the point that using checking on the offensive side of the puck is the best way to protect oneself as well as the puck.

Variations:

- Can create the bump & go situation in different areas of the ice.
- Can do a continuous version of the drill.

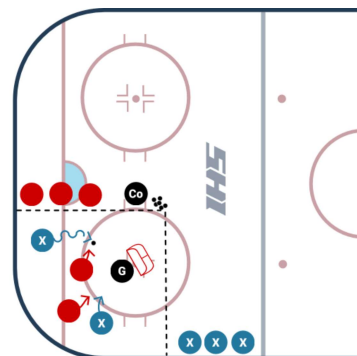
Length of Time: 10 mins

Station Number: 1

2 vs 2 Corner Battle Tag Up

Details:

The 2 vs. 2 Corner Battle Tag up is a competitive game that requires to players protect the puck and utilize their teammates in a small area. This game has one major item to remember, during a change of possession, the team that got the puck must tag up at the goal line before they can try to score. Below we will discuss the setup, coaching points & variations.



Setup

- Place the net by the corner face-off dot and have it face the corner (as shown in the video & diagram).
- Start the game by having a coach chip the puck into the corner while 2 players from each line jump into the playing area.
- Both teams are trying to score a goal and if the defensive team gets the puck, they MUST tag up at the red line before they can shoot on net.
- Have players that are not participating be on the lookout for loose pucks (they can push pucks back into the playing area) and be aware of shots.
- Let players battle for 15 - 45 seconds before switching to next group.
- Keep score so teams are more competitive!

Coaching Points

- Get low to be strong on your skates.
- Protect the puck with your body.
- Communicate with your teammates.
- Defenders need to keep sticks on the ice at all time.
- Forwards without the puck need to jump to open space to be an outlet for their teammates.

Variations

- This setup can be 1 v 1 or 2 v 2. View a 1 on 1 example.
- Can move the net in other areas to give the players more or less space.

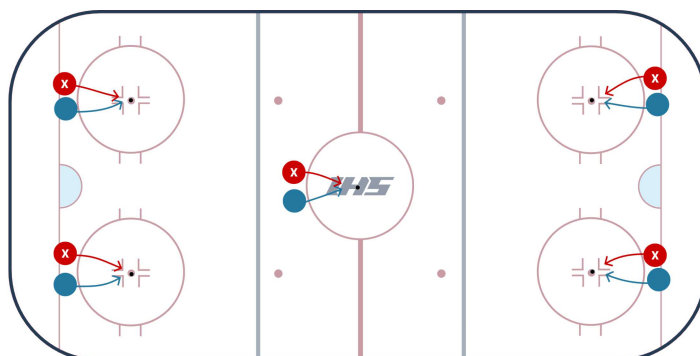
Station Number: 2

Puck Race to 1 v 1

Details:

Drill Setup:

- Puck placed on the dot.
- 2 players start on the goal line.
- When coach says "go," the 2 players race for the puck. Whoever wins the puck is on offense the defender must either toss their stick aside or turn it over.
- Players continue to play keep away in the circle until coach says stop.



Drill Purpose:

- This is very similar to drill done day #1 except now we are adding the puck race and looking for players to gain position before possession to win the puck.
- By having the defender have to get rid of their stick or turn it over you are putting something on the line which will pick up the compete of the drill as well as rewards the puck race winner. In addition by having the defender have to get rid of their stick or turn it over you are forcing them to have to play the body as they do not have a stick to use.

Variations:

- Depending on your players level of proficiency allowing the defender to have a stick or no stick changes the drill.
- If wanting to really focus in on body contact I suggest having the defender without a stick or it be turned over.
- Once players show willingness and consistency in being physical and using their bodies then you can have both players use their stick the whole time. In that scenario I suggest turning it into a game. Puck race is worth 1 point. Each time the player steals the puck from the other player they get a point for stealing the puck. The offensive player gets no points (other than winning the puck race). The offensive players incentive is to not allow the other player to steal the puck and in turn get points.

Length of Time: 10 mins

Station Number: 3

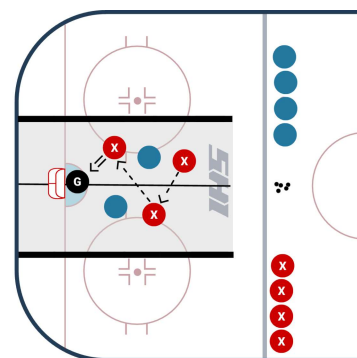
Royal Road Drill

Details:

The Royal Road Drill is a very competitive 2 v 2 battle drill that starts with a face-off and only awards goals that are scored off of a pass that crosses the royal road (the royal road is the middle of the ice).

Setup

- Coaches add boundaries and can draw a line down the middle of the crease up to the blue line that designates where the Royal Road is. If you are unable to mark up the ice, coaches can use cones or tires.
- The game starts with a face-off and both teams are trying to score.
- The only goals that are counted are when players make a pass to their teammate across the royal road, and their teammate scores off of a quick release (one timer, two touch, or quick release shot).
- Shifts should be no more than 30 seconds.



Coaching Points

- Players on both sides of the ice should compete and work hard to gain puck possession.
- Offensive team: puck carrier should work on puck protection concepts, and the player without the puck needs to work to jump to get open to support their teammate as an outlet or put themselves in a position for a one timer.
- Defensive team: keep sticks on the ice to block passing lanes. Keep your head on a swivel to make sure you do not leave a player open for a one time shot. Tie up sticks when in tight.

Length of Time: 10 mins

Station Number: 4

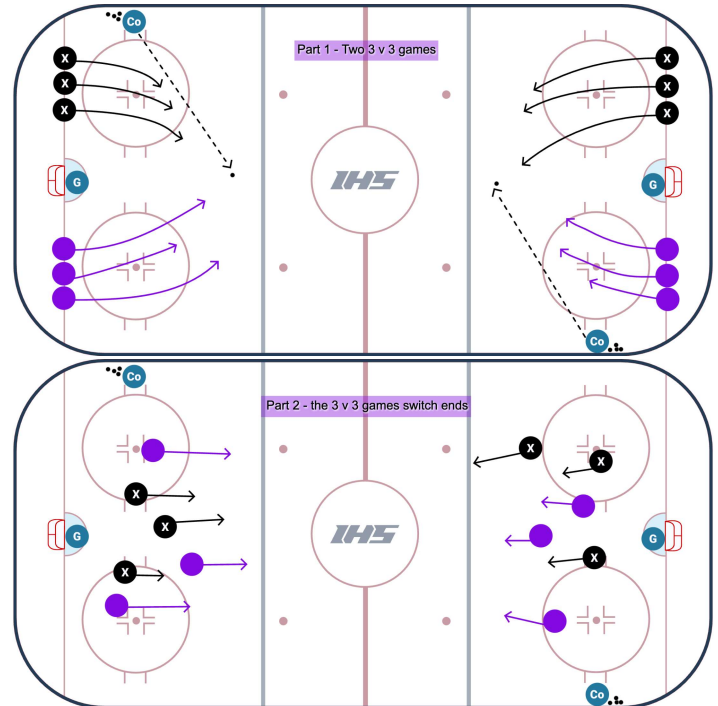
Ramsay 3 V 3 Race

Details:

Jason Lammers describes the Ramsay 3 V 3 Race. This competitive small area game incorporates racing to the puck to determine which team is on offense.

Setup

- Full ice setup with goalies in both nets.
- On each half of the ice, put 6 players on the goal line (so each side of the ice can play 3 V 3).
- On the whistle, the coach places a puck somewhere in the zone, and all 6 players race to the puck.
- Whoever gets the puck first, their team is on offense and the other team is on defense.
- Offense is trying to score. If the defense gets the puck, they work to keep puck possession before the next whistle.
- Play out 3 V 3 inside the blueline.
- On the second whistle, all 6 players on each half of the ice skate down to the other end of the ice to race for another puck. Coaches can have the players race for the previous puck that the other group was playing with, or the coach can collect the old puck and place it in a different part of the zone.
- Whoever gets that puck, their team is on offense and the other team is on defense.
- Keep score!



Coaching Points

- Race hard to get the puck!
- Offense - support your teammates and be an outlet when you do not have the puck
- Defense - keep sticks on the ice to block passing lanes
- Everyone - communicate with your teammates

Variations

- Can make this game 2 v 2, 3 v 3, or 4 v 4.
- Can create different variations within the game:
 - Can have the offensive team be all time offense and if the defense gets the puck, the defensive team tries to keep puck possession and they get a point if they make 4 consecutive passes.
 - Can have the offensive team start on offense if defense gets the puck they can tag up at the blue line and then that allows them to attack on offense.
- Can be half ice instead of full ice. Just divide the zone into two halves and put the nets by the half-wall by the face-off circles.

Length of Time: 10 mins
Station Number: Everyone

Additional Puck Protection Resources

Coach's Notes:

We have a number of puck protection resources for you to access on IHS. Feel free to browse these and swap in and out drills based on your age/skill level. Remember you can save this practice into your own library and edit it from there. Just select the **Save To My Practice Library** Button on the top of the page.

103 Drills with Puck Protection Elements

Puck Protection Coaching Clips

5 Course Body Contact & Checking Course

Deep Dive: Ryan O'Reilly Puck Protection

Puck Protection Practices

- U10 Puck Protection Skills
- U12 Puck Protection Practice
- U14 Puck Protection Practice
- U16 Gaining & Maintaining Possession