

COACHES' PLAYBOOK

Presented by

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MIKE CURTI



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WHETHER YOU'RE A PLAYER OR A COACH, CHECK OUT THESE TIPS AND DRILLS FOR BOTH ICE AND INLINE HOCKEY.

ANGLING AND PUCK PROTECTION

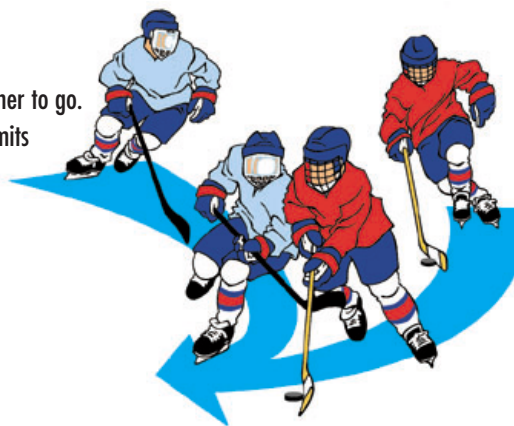
Like skating, passing and shooting, checking is an important part of the game. It's a skill used to gain control of the puck, not intimidate an opponent. At every USA Hockey coaching clinic this season, we are stressing angling and puck protection.

ANGLING

Angling simply means forcing your opponent to go in the direction you want him or her to go. In defensive hockey, this usually means forcing the player toward the boards. This limits the player's options and takes space away.

Key Elements

- Skate parallel to or in an arc toward the opponent.
- Continually take away the opponent's space and options.
- Adjust speed to match your opponent's.
- Keep your stick on the ice.



Common Errors

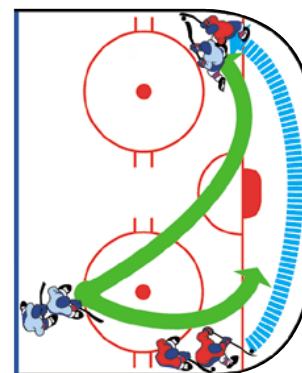
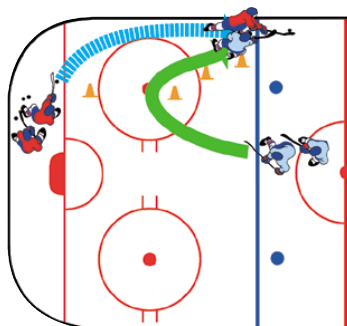
- Gliding when at side of opponent
- Approaching opponent "head on"
- Not accelerating once opponent is in a contained area

ANGLING DRILLS

Angle Behind Net, Stick Check

- One group of players starts in the corner with pucks; another group starts near the top of the face-off circle on the same side.
- On the whistle, both players go. The puck carrier skates around the net. The defensive player skates in front of the net and angles the puck carrier into the corner.
- The defensive player can execute a stick lift or take-out check.

Option: The defensive player can confront puck carrier either before or after going around the net.



Angle/Check – Open Ice One-on-One Angling and Stick Lift

- Put a cone at the bottom of the face-off circle with pucks. Put three cones in an arc starting above the face-off dot and moving toward the blue line. Defensive players will skate around the cones to take the proper open-ice angle approach to the puck carrier.
- On the whistle, a puck carrier skates up the left boards.
- At the same time, a defender takes off from the neutral zone, skates around the cones and tries to angle the puck carrier toward the boards.

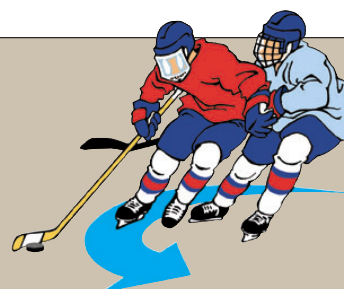
Stick Check — One-on-One Race to the Cone

- Put out three cones, one on the face-off dot near the blue line, a second halfway between the blue and red lines and the third below the goal line.
- A group of checkers lines up near center ice; a group of puck carriers starts along the boards.
- On the whistle, the first checker starts out skating backward. The puck carrier takes off skating forward. The defender tries to contain the puck carrier to the outside, pivots forward and angles the puck carrier toward the boards.
- The puck carrier tries to get to the cone at the goal line with control of the puck.

PUCK PROTECTION

Most players in hockey can stickhandle in the open. The good players can handle the puck in traffic. The key to being a good stickhandler is puck protection. Puck protection is the ability to handle a puck when defenders are trying to take it away. The key points to puck protection are:

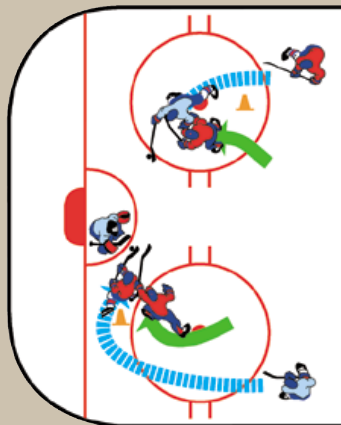
- 1) Staying low with the puck close to your body so you have balance.
- 2) Keeping your feet moving at all times so you can quickly change direction to avoid being checked.
- 3) Keeping your body between the puck and the checker; use it to shield the puck so you can maintain possession.
- 4) When changing direction or the side the puck is on, keep your inside shoulder up so you can keep defenders from reaching around to steal the puck. This will also allow you to absorb any contact during the play.

**PUCK-PROTECTION DRILLS****Guard the Spots**

Using no pucks, one player guards the face-off spot, and the other player tries to touch the dot with his stick.

Keep-Away

With a partner inside one circle, start with one player with a puck and another behind him or her. The players cannot leave the circle. On the whistle, the puck carrier plays keep-away while the defender tries to take the puck away. Encourage the puck handler to keep his/her body between the puck and the checker. After 20 seconds, blow the whistle and switch. The puck carrier now becomes the checker and vice versa.

**Pylon Drill**

This can be done on the driveway or at the rink. Set up a net and two pylons 10 feet out to the side on a sharp angle. The player quickly skates around the pylon, protecting the puck by keeping it to the outside. Once around the pylon, bring the puck back to the middle for a shot on goal. Skate in on both sides so you learn to protect the puck on your forehand and your backhand. If available, use a partner or a coach to line up where the pylon is and repeat the drill. The coach or player will give you a little space, but then try to take it away before you get to the net. A variation of this drill is to move the pylon above the face-off dot. Have the coach or another player try to disrupt the puck carrier as he or she skates around the cone. Use your arm or body to shield the defender from the puck.

USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program has put together a packet of information on "Introduction To Body Contact" that will be handed out at all Associate Level clinics. This program teaches Body Play Skills through Skating, Angling, Puck Protection, Stick Checks and Contact Confidence. We are not promoting Body Checking at the Mite and Squirt levels, but taking a progressive approach so players are prepared when Body Checking is introduced at the Peeewe level.