

# Down Low Play

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Tuesday, January 28th, 2025

**Please Note:**

The Practice of the Week is designed to bring value across multiple age levels. You can use this to build ideas to develop your own practice. 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:**

The drills and games in this practice are designed to help your players improve their down low play offensively, defensively, and in possession battles, both with and away from the puck.

## OFFENSIVE FOCUS POINTS

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1. Will & Determination: Win puck battles and races to gain possession of loose pucks
2. Puck Protection: Use body positioning to shield the puck from defenders & keep your head up to make quick & effective play
3. Get Off the Wall: Move the puck off the boards to open up more space and offensive options
4. Find Soft Ice: When away from the puck, find soft ice where you can be an outlet for the puck carrier in dangerous scoring area

## DEFENSIVE FOCUS POINTS

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1. Body Positioning and Angling: Stay between the puck carrier and the net. Use proper angling to force plays to low-percentage areas.
2. Stick Positioning: Keep your stick on the ice to disrupt passing and shooting lanes and to win puck battles.
3. Smart Pressure and Support: Apply pressure on the puck carrier when appropriate, but avoid overcommitting. Support teammates by covering open players or dangerous areas.
4. Awareness: Work on identifying and being aware of where the opposing threats are at all times.

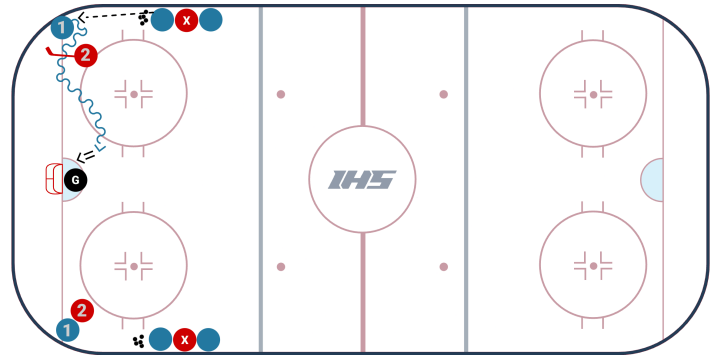
# Out Of The Corner

## Details:

The Out of the Corner drill from TJ Manastersky, the Head Coach of Brock University, helps players practice collecting a puck along the boards, protecting it, and cutting the defenders hands while they attack the net.

## Setup

- Setup two lines along the boards as shown in the diagram with two players in each corner.
- On the whistle, one player sends a puck into the corner to begin the drill.
- #1 in blue picks up short rim, gets off the wall, initiates contact with defender (#2), cuts back and attacks net, cut hands on defender on way to net.
- Player 1 goes to end of the line, player 2 becomes the new player along the boards, and a new player from line becomes the new defender. Alternate corners.
- Progression: Players can start from different areas of the ice, like the front of the net as explained in the whiteboard video and showed in the drill demonstration.



## Coaching Points

- Offensive player should initiate contact with the defender and work to get off of the boards and cut their hands on the way to the net.
- Defending player should use token pressure to allow the forward to practice cutting hands. Coaches can progress to allow the defender to fully play. In this case make sure to keep your stick on the ice at all times and work to angle and deter the player from getting to the net.

## Variations

- Coaches can line up players in different areas of the zone to practice collecting the puck from different areas.
- After players get used to the token pressure from the defender, coaches can progress this drill to be a 1 v 1 battle where the defender is working to take the puck away and skate to the stop of the circles while the forward is trying to score.

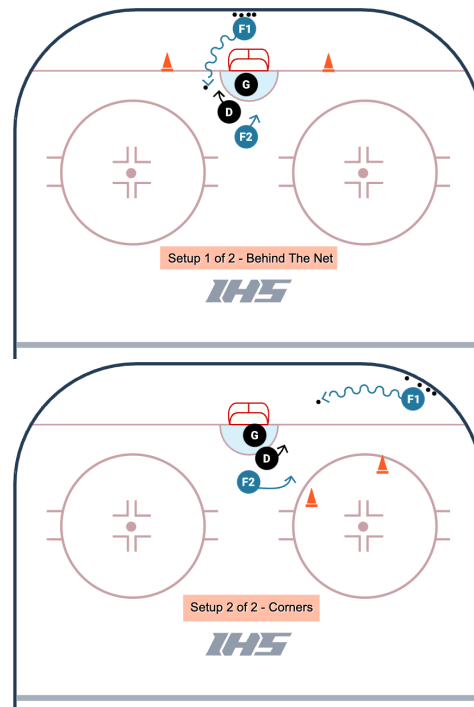
# 2 v 1 Net Play Drills for Defenseman

## Details:

2 v 1 Net Play Drills for Defenseman from Marty Wilford gives coaches 3 different setups that allows defenders to practice their net front skills and forwards to practice attacking from down low.

## Setup

- Setup 1 - Behind the Net:
  - Pucks start behind the net. One forward behind the net, one in front of the net, with a defender out in front.
  - On the whistle, F1 takes a puck and drives the front of the net. F1 and F2 both try to score on the defender. After the coach blows the whistle, F2 skates behind the net to get a puck and F1 is the forward in front. They try to score while the defender tries to stop the play.
- Setup 2 - Corners:
  - Same idea as the first setup, but the game is starting out of the corners.
- Setup 3 - Opposite Corner:
  - Same idea as setup 1 and 2, but the game starts out of the opposite corner.



## Coaching Points

- Defenders should keep sticks on the ice to block passing lanes and also keep their head on a swivel to know where both forwards are at all times.
- Defenders should keep a good strong hockey position to protect the front of the net
- Forwards without the puck should work to find open ice in front of the net.
- Forwards with the puck should try to get the puck to the front of the net and also use their teammate when they are open.

## Variations

- Can set this up in the 3 locations discussed above, and can also make this a 2 v 1 game or 2 v 2 game.

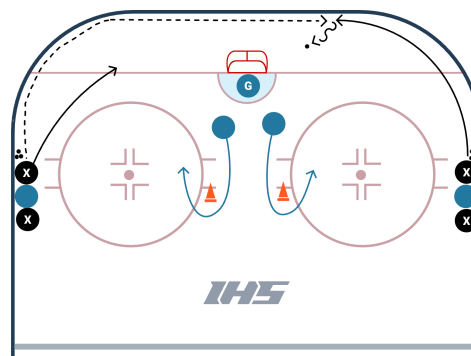
## 2 on 2 Down Low Rim

### Details:

The 2 on 2 Down Low Rim drill from Marty Wilford helps teams practice rims and down low play.

### Setup

- Two defenders in front of the net.
- Line up extra players along both sides of the half-wall.
- On the whistle, a player from one of the boards rims the puck along the wall to their teammate. Once they get the puck they are allowed to attack the net.
- When the drill starts, the two defenders skate up and pivot around the cones and are able to start defending.
- After the 2 v 2 plays out (either with a goal, a coaches whistle, or the defending team passes to their next players in line) the players that were on offense are now on defense and must go around the cones while the next rim starts.



### Coaching Points

- Offensive players should work on making clean rims so that their teammate can collect them.
- The player receiving the rim should be strong on their stick and if the puck is bouncing they should make sure to get in front of it with their skate or body.
- Defending players should keep their sticks on the ice to block passing lanes and angle the forwards to the outside of the ice.

### Variations

- Can line the forwards up at the half wall (as shown in the diagram) or at the blue line if you would like to practice larger rims and have the players skate more.
- Can make this 2 on 2 (as shown in the video) or can add additional players to make it a 3 on 2, or 3 on 3.



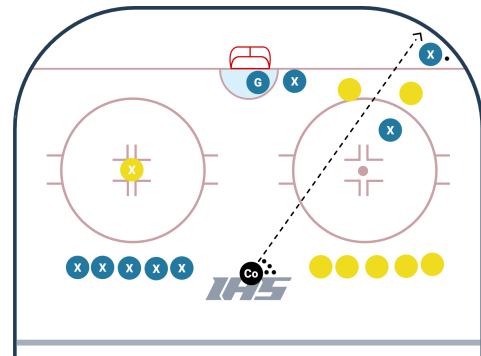
# 3 v 2 Puck Protection Game

## Details:

The 3 v 2 Puck Protection Game shared by Daniel Paille helps players practice down low offensive zone concepts.

## Setup

- Teams line up above top of the circle with O on one side and X on the other side.
- O will start on offense with 3 players vs 2 X defensive players. O's try to score staying on one half of the ice. If the defensive X players get the puck, they try to rim to their X teammate on weak side. The X player player can not release until puck reaches the weakside.
- When the defensive X's get it over to their weakside X player, the O's will change and new line of 2 O players play defense while another O waits weak side.
- The 2 X's join player on weak side for offense.
- The play continues if the offensive team scores, or the offensive team gets a shot on net.
- Offense is out if they miss the net on their shot or the defense rims the puck to their weakside player.



## Coaching Points

- Offense:
  - The high forward should jump in for support to outnumber the 2 defenders.
  - The forwards should support each other with close triangle support.
  - When offense gets the puck they should attack the net quickly.
- Defense:
  - Keep sticks on ice to block passing lanes and angle forward to the outside, away from the front of the net.

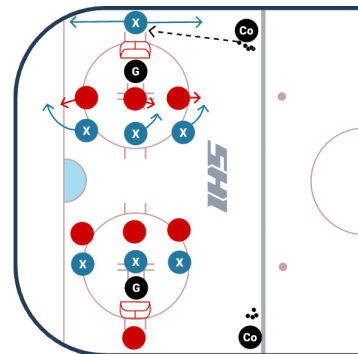
# 3 v 3 with Down Low Passer

## Details:

The 3 v 3 with Down Low Passer is a competitive small area game allows teams to practice getting open in front of the net, and defending the front of the net.

## Setup

- Puck is behind the net with passer.
- Passer can move side to side to make pass to teammates in front of net.
- The 3 defensive players cannot pressure or play the passer behind the net.
- The 3 defensive players need to play 1 vs 1 with the offensive players in front of net.
- If you have a game on the other side (like shown in the diagram), when the defense gets the puck, they rim puck around to other side to passer behind the net, which will start the other 3 v 3 game.



## Coaching Points

- The focus of the drill is for offensive players trying to get open in front of the net while defensive players work on covering players in front.
- Defense should keep sticks on the ice to block passing lanes.

## Variations

- Can make it 2 v 2 or 3 v 3 in front.
- Can play the game on both sides, where the defending team rims the puck to their player behind the net on the other side, or you can play the game on one side (like shown in the video).