

# Backward Crossovers

The ability to crossover while skating backward is an essential skill for both defensemen and forwards. Defensemen spend the majority of the game in transition skating, moving from forward to backward or backward to forward or laterally across the ice, and they need to be very comfortable on the outside edges of their skates. They also need to be able to start backwards and generate backward skating speed, which requires them to utilize the backward crossover. Forwards use the backward crossover while pivoting, whether it is in a defensive posture while providing coverage, or while maintaining sight of the puck while moving into a position for a pass.

As with forward crossovers, backward crossovers require a good command of the outside edges of the skates along with excellent balance and body control to be able to perform at top speed.

Quick feet are essential as well as long, powerful pushes from the inside edge of the outside skate and the outside edge of the inside skate. The following are some points of emphasis in teaching backward skating along with some drills that you can work with your players on in practice to improve their ability to crossover backwards.

## Inside edge – outside skate

Much of the power is generated from pushing off with the inside edge of the outside skate. The puck needs to be made to the outside of the turn – not back. Sometimes players get their weight too far out over the toes of their skates and end up leaning too far forward, which results in kicking their skates up behind them. To generate the most power, they need to push to the outside, ending up pushing off with the toe of their skate blade. It is also important that they return their skate as far as possible back underneath their body to begin the next push. To try to maintain balance, many players do backward crossovers with a very wide base, taking very short strides, making them slower than they could be.

## Outside edge – inside skate

The longer a player can balance and push with the outside edge of their inside skate, the more power and speed they will have moving backward. Again, the push is to the outside of the turn, not back. Players need to be able to extend their leg fully across their body to the outside. Obviously, the more knee bend a player has on their glide leg (outside leg when pushing with the inside leg), the more push and extension they will be able to achieve with the inside leg.

## Body posture

To have the best balance and control, the head, shoulders and upper body and stick should be turned to the inside of the turn. Good knee bend is required to achieve a good low center of gravity resulting in better balance and longer, more powerful pushes.

## Foot movement

Quick feet make quick skaters. Quick skaters win the short races to the puck or to a position on the ice, but you also need to have speed and power to move the length of the ice. To be quick and fast you need to have quick feet while not sacrificing good, long pushes. It is also important to keep the skates as close as possible to the ice. Bringing the skates up high off the ice only wastes time and effort.

## #1 – Quick feet 1-on-1

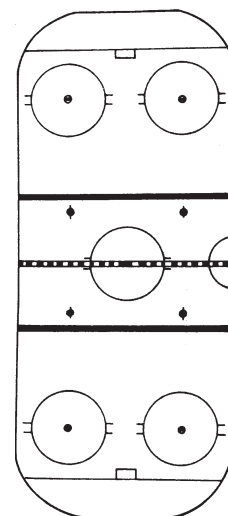
Done from both ends of the rink at the same time. On the whistle, forwards do a figure 8 moving forward and backward through the cones, doing backward crossovers to pick up speed while receiving a pass from the coach before moving up-ice. At the same time, the defensemen move in a figure 8 laterally through the neutral zone around the cones as shown, always facing the forwards and then picking up the onrushing forwards to complete the 1-on-1.

## #2 – 1-on-1 around the cone

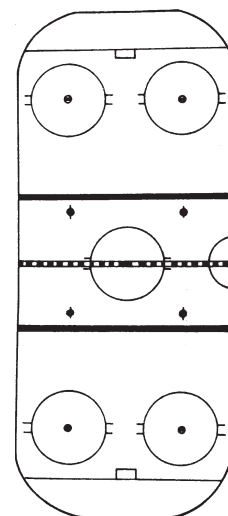
Forwards start at the hash marks with pucks, defensemen are on their knees on the faceoff dots outside the blue line. On the whistle, the forward sprints up the ice with the puck while the defenseman gets up and skates backwards, crossing over, around the cone to meet the forward and play the 1-on-1 rush.

## #3 – Full ice 1-on-1

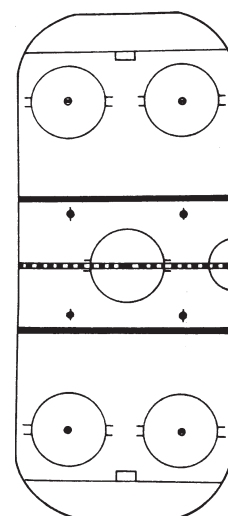
Forwards start on the hash mark without a puck, while defensemen are on the faceoff dot outside the blue line. On the whistle, the forward moves around behind the net and heads wide toward the boards receiving a pass from the coach and moves up-ice at full speed. The defenseman must move in the same pattern as the forward, skating forward down to the hash marks before pivoting and doing backward crossovers to generate speed to play the 1-on-1 rush.



#1



#2



#3