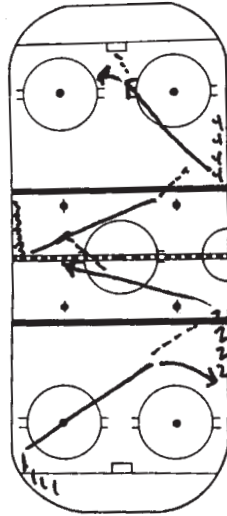


Drills to Develop Team Consistency

In order to develop a team's consistent performance throughout a hockey season, a coach must first be concerned about developing each player's physical and mental skills. One of the ways that can be accomplished is by the effective use of practice drills. Practice drills can be designed to work on one or a number of individual or team skills.

DRILL #1 — Z Pass Drill

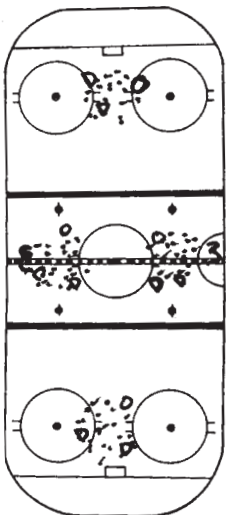
Players are divided up equally in the five areas on the ice surface as shown. Player 1 skates from the corner with the puck and passes to player 2, he then follows and positions himself in the 2 line. Player number 2 does not begin to move laterally across the ice until player 1 has initiated his movement towards number 2. As number 2 receives the pass, he begins to look to pass to player number 3. Player number 3 cannot begin moving until player number 2 has received the pass successfully. Once player number 3 has received the pass, he looks to pass to player number 4. Again player number 4 cannot begin to move laterally across the ice until player number 3 receives the pass. Player number 4 receives the pass and moves in to shoot on goal. Once player number 4 has shot on goal, he can place himself in a rebound lane in preparation for the next player who is going to shoot, simulating an actual game-like situation. The key to this drill is timing on the part of the skaters away from the puck. Once understood, the drill can be done from both ends at the same time so that more players can be involved. Caution must be used to avoid any collisions that might occur in and around the red line. Coach your players to keep their heads up as well as call for the puck from their teammates.



The "Z Pass" Drill

DRILL #2 — The Crusher Drill

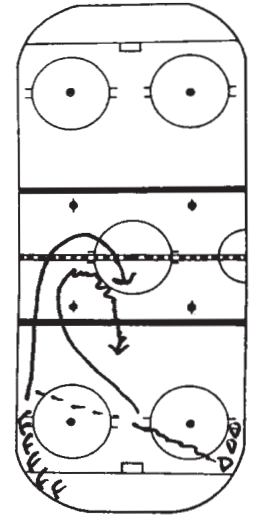
This drill is designed to develop a player's ability to shoot quickly and accurately while under resistance. Ideally there should be four stations set up for this drill. The pucks should be spread in the area bordered by the imaginary lines joining the tops of the circles and then the imaginary lines going from the tops of the circles going through the face off zone to the goal line (scoring area). One offensive player is needed as well as two defensive players without their sticks. On signal the offensive player tries to attack the net shooting as many pucks as quickly as he can on the net within a specified amount of time (10-20 seconds). The two defensive players must keep the offensive player from scoring by trying to knock him off-balance and keep him away from any of the pucks. The defensive players must play within the rules of the game and any holding, tripping, tackling, etc. can be penalized. Teach the offensive player to shoot the puck on net as quickly as possible and then quickly move to avoid going through the two defensive people. This is a highly competitive drill, a fun drill, and at the same time a great conditioning drill. Everyone should get a chance to be an offensive player as well as a defensive player.



The Crusher Drill

DRILL #3— The Loop One on One

This drill is designed to develop a defenseman's ability to pivot while at top speed and at the same time make the transition from attacking phase to the defending phase of this game. The drill is also designed to develop the forward's use of space and acceleration in order to gain an advantage over defensemen in a one-on-one type situation. The drill is set up as shown. It can be done from both ends, however, the players must be alerted to alternate between one end going and then the other, so that no collisions will occur in the neutral area. The defenseman starts with the puck across the ice and passes to a forward who is breaking out of the zone. Once the forward crosses the blue line he decides when he should turn and attack the same zone he just left. The defenseman must: a) skate with the forward as far up the ice as the forward wants to go in order that the defenseman "take back his ice" in order to keep the space between him and the forward consistent and small; b) the defenseman must turn from forward to backward skating in the same direction as the forward in order to keep the space at a small distance. This is an excellent drill for the footwork of a defenseman as well as helping him develop timing and agility.



The Loop One on One

All three of these drills are designed to develop different aspects of either an individual or team's skills. They may have to be altered somewhat to be best used by the skill level you may possess on your team.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Make the drill as game-like (realistic) as possible;
- Make the drill consistent with your team's system of play;
- Make the drill challenging and yet remember your team's skill level so that they may have success doing the drill;
- Design the drill so that the entire ice surface is being utilized at one time and as many players as possible are involved ... avoid drills where two players are involved and the remainder of the team is standing and waiting their turn;
- Try to keep the drills simple, competitive and fun;
- Design the drill so that once learned, the player can do it at a high rate of speed best simulating game tempo thereby ensuring game-like conditioning;
- Remind players that what they are trying to accomplish in the drill and what they are expected to do to be successful in the drill.