PRACTICE PLANNING

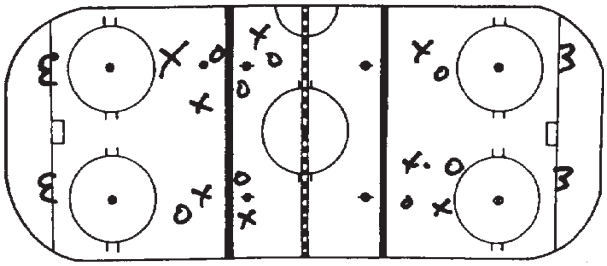
Making Practices Fun

In the last issue of Chalk Talk, we discussed the challenge coaches face of making half-ice practice fun and interesting for the players. Here are some full-ice scrimmage options that can be utilized and adaped for players of all ages.

Full-ice 3 on 3, 4 on 4, 5 on 5, 6 on 6, 7 on 7, 8 on 8

Any number of players can be utilized, and one, two or three pucks used at a time. Remind your players to look before they shoot for the safety of your goaltenders. Players who are not participating should be on their respective benches. All players should be "around a puck" and involved in the play. For 2 or more pucks, and 4 or more players per side, encourage your players to break into "groups" to attack and defend, meaning you will actually have two or three separate games of 2 on 2 or 3 on 3 or 4 on 4 going at the same time. Concepts of teamwork, give and go, quick puck movement and defensive responsibilities should be reinforced.

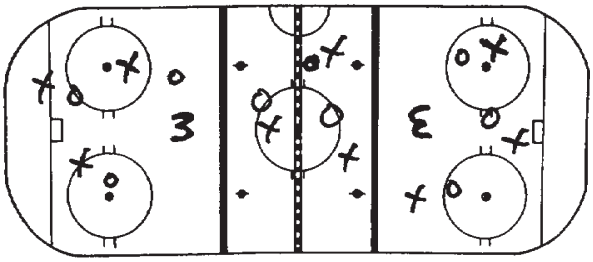
Full-ice Zone Scrimmage



This scrimmage takes a little time to explain the first time and is best utilized with 11 year olds and up. Take the nets and move them 10 feet inside each blue line facing the ends of the rink. Separate each team and place them in each of the three zones of the ice. You can have as few as 2 players and as many as 4-5 players from each team in each zone. Players must stay in their assigned zone but can go anywhere they want within that zone. Be sure to match up players of similar skill in each zone. The puck must be passed from zone to zone and can not be shot all the way down the ice. Each team tries to score at one end and defend the other end, meaning the players in the defensive zone try to defend and move the puck to the neutral zone players who try to move it to the offensive zone where those players try to score. Three pucks are utilized at a time, and if a goal is scored the defending team quickly digs it out and gets it moving. If a shot misses the net, there will be no rebound and it will be a turnover out of the zone. Play for 3 minutes and total up the goals scored. Then rotate the players from zone to zone, so they all get a chance to play in each zone. Excellent for teaching playing without the puck both offensively and defensively, passing skills, the concept of give and go, stickhandling skills and patience with the puck until a passing option is available and ice awareness.

Full-ice 1 on 1

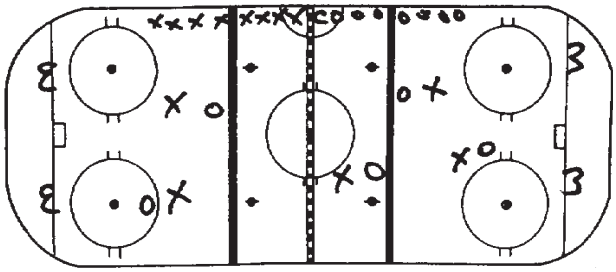
Depending on the number of goalies or shooter tutors you have, you can use two nets, or four nets for this set-up.



Four nets means you can get more players involved and it will be somewhat safer for your goaltenders. Same format as the cross-ice 1 on 1 except the players are lined up along the side boards and the coach throw the puck across the ice to start the play. Players need to keep their heads up as more speed is created in a full-ice set-up than in the half-ice version.

Full-ice 2 on 2

Same set-up with players working in pairs to promote passing and playmaking skills and the concept of defensive



responsibilities. It is probably a good idea to limit it to a maximum of four, 2 on 2's going at the same time.