

HOCKEY



CANADA

Checking Resource Guide
Guide ressource pour la mise en échec

Teaching
Checking

A Progressive Approach

Enseigner la
mise en échec

Une approche progressive

CHECK IT OUT

FORWARD

Children learn best when expectations are explained, demonstrated, and practiced in a positive atmosphere, especially when there is a logical progression of skills suited to their skill level and needs. This introduction to body checking is a series of progressive drills developed by Hockey Canada to provide a sound curriculum for coaches to follow. It may be applied as presented or simply used as a guideline by the more experienced coach. Review this material carefully and you will find it very useful in assuring that your players successfully develop over the course of a hockey season.

Enjoy the coaching experience and be proud of your contribution to Canada's great game.

ENDORSEMENT STATEMENT

The sport of hockey has long been an institution in Canada and the continued provision of qualified, competent coaches is crucial to the ongoing success of the game. After all, it is the players who benefit from quality coaching, and therefore, any hockey series that will allow coaches to do a better job is of great merit. It is for these reasons that we are proud to support the creation of this valuable resource.

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO CHECKING

WHY A CHECKING MANUAL?

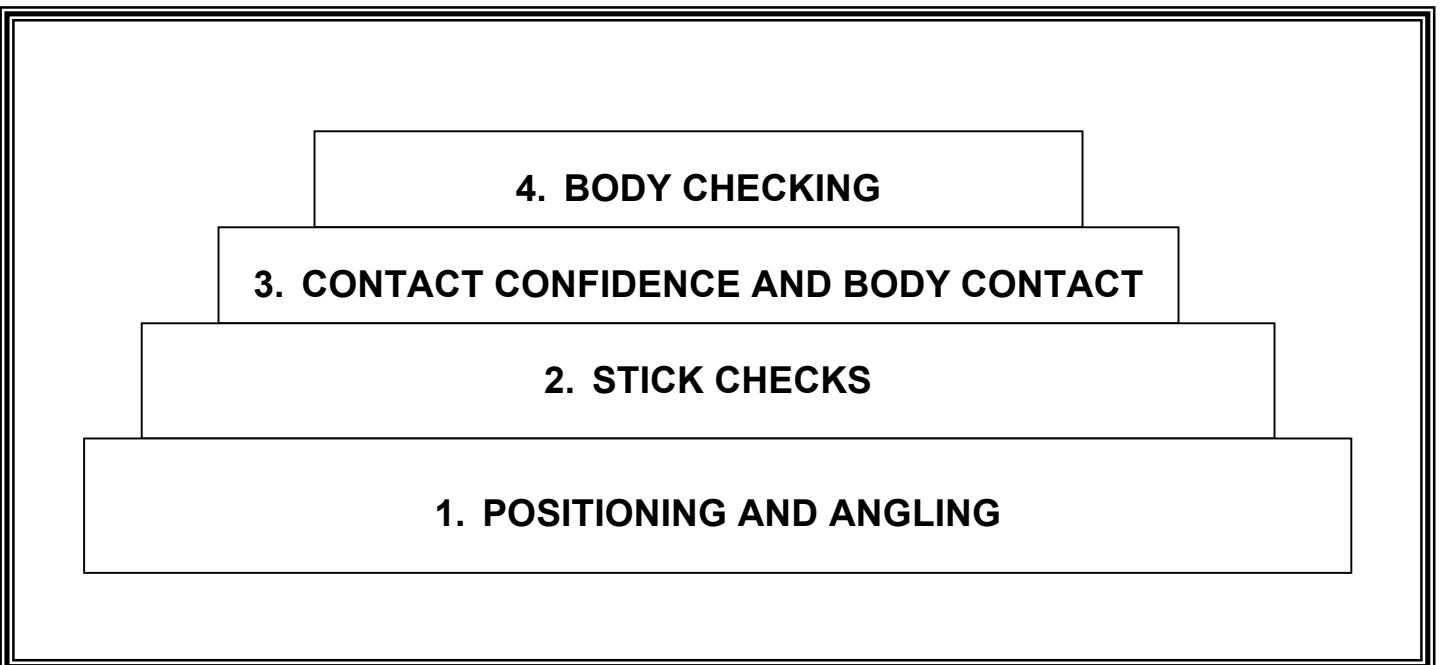
Checking is a critical skill in the game of hockey that when performed properly can create quality scoring opportunities or help a team regain control of the puck. Just like skating, puck control, passing and shooting there are key progressions to the skill of checking when taught effectively, can greatly enhance a player's enjoyment of the great game of hockey.

A common misconception is that the skill of checking begins at a certain age or age category of play. In fact, checking is a 4-step progression that begins the first time a young player steps on the ice. Body checking is the fourth and final step of a four step teaching progression.

The purpose of this manual is to provide coaches with an introductory package of information, which contains progressions for beginning to teach checking skills. The transition from non-contact to contact hockey can be very uncomfortable for young players but if coaches are able to effectively put the building blocks in place, players will be able to make a smoother transition.

Coaches are encouraged to take the time to become familiar with the material in this manual and to adopt the progressions that are presented. After all, it is the players who benefit from quality coaching and if we develop as coaches, then our players will improve. Remember, checking is a **4 STEP PROGRESSION**.

NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



OBJECTIVES OF THE MANUAL

1. To provide the logical progressions necessary for learning the skill of checking (Steps 1-4).
2. To enhance the safety of each player by ensuring that all those who play the game learn to give and receive body checks properly (Step 3-4).
3. To emphasize the importance of playing and staying within the rules of the game.
4. To improve the quality of hockey being played in the rinks across Canada and to place a focus on players demonstrating respect for one another.

HOW TO USE THE MANUAL

The manual is divided into 3 sections:

SECTION I . . .

. . . provides each coach with insight into a number of functional elements to this manual. Key areas covered include definitions, glossary of terms, coaching tips and off-ice drills to support player's ability to perform the key skills as related to checking.

SECTION II . . .

. . . introduces the 4-step model to teaching checking and explains each progression step by step. For each of the four steps there is an introduction to the skills, key teaching points, and the progression drills that can be used in teaching the skills.

SECTION III . . .

. . . provides each coach with access to additional valuable resources that will assist in the coach development process.

Please note: Please check with your local minor hockey association as to what age category of hockey and/or level of play body checking (Step 4) is permitted.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Angling | The ability to force an opponent to go in a desired direction. This would normally be towards the boards or to the outside. |
| Body Checking | A player's attempt at gaining the advantage on the opponent with the use of the body. Checking results when two opposing players collide while skating in opposite directions or when positioning and angling allow the checker to use the force of the body to gain the advantage. |
| Body Contact | Incidental contact of two opposing players in pursuit of the puck or position on the ice in the same direction. Body contact occurs as a result of movement by the offensive player. |
| Box the Hips | A pinning technique used to control the opponent's hips along the boards. Pressure is placed on both hips to eliminate movement and seal the player to the boards. |
| Bump and Roll | A technique used by a player who is about to be checked in order to roll off the pressure of the checker and maintain possession of the puck. |
| Closing the Gap | A retreating defender adjusts speed and skating pattern so the distance between the defender and the puck carrier is lessened in order to get the puck carrier within poke checking range. |
| Contact Confidence | A player's ability to play physical while maintaining safety in the play. |
| Contain | A defensive position/tactic which ensures the defensive player maintains a proper defensive position on the opponent (remaining between the offensive player and the net or between the offensive player and the net). |
| Control Skating | A method of skating used by a defensive player to ensure proper body positioning while maintaining a defensive side on the opponent. |
| Defensive Side | The checker always tries to maintain a position which keeps his/her body between the opponent, the puck and the checker's own net. |
| Gap Control | Maintaining a desired distance between the offensive and defensive players. A tight gap refers to very little distance between players. A loose gap refers to significant distance between players. |

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Head on a Swivel | A technique utilized to observe and to read the entire ice surface, by quickly rotating the head and glancing over both shoulders. |
| Inside Out | Refers to defensive positioning where the defensive player keeps the offensive player to the outside. |
| Lasso | A technique used to wrap the opponent after a checker has angled him/her by steering into a no ice situation along the boards and the pin technique is used to contain the check. |
| Lift Check | A stick check used while checking the puck carrier from the side or from behind. The checker attempts to lift the opponent's stick on the shaft near the blade enough to sweep the puck and gain possession. |
| Mid Lane | An imaginary lane on the ice which extends from end to end and is the centre of three equal divisions running the length of ice. |
| Pressure | Eliminating the time and space of the opponent in both offensive and defensive situations. |
| Pin Technique | Used along the boards after a check has been made to control the movement of an offensive player by steering the player parallel to the boards, driving one knee between the player's knees, pressuring up with the power leg and boxing the hips with pressure. |
| Poke Check | A stick check used while facing the opponent and allowing the opponent inside the range to reach them with the stick. Top hand elbow is tucked in and then is extended with quickness straight to the exposed stick and puck of the opponent. |
| Press Check | A stick check used to stop movement of the opponent's stick by placing stick pressure over top of the opponent's stick shaft and blade. |
| Puck Protection | A strategy used to keep the puck as far away from the opponent as possible. Puck protection ensures that a player's body and stick are positioned between the opponent and the puck and that the puck is not exposed to the opponent. |
| Support | An offensive or defensive concept where players away from the puck position themselves to be available for a pass or take away attacking options for the opponent. |

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

- Steering** To shadow the offensive player forcing him/her into an area where the checker may eliminate time and space in order to angle the opponent to be checked.
- Sweep Check** A stick check used to check the puck from the opponent using a sweeping action by the checking player.
- Tracking** The individual skill of pursuing the puck utilizing the shortest possible distance.

COMMUNICATING WITH PLAYERS

Ongoing communication with players will be easier if time is spent at the beginning of the season to talk about goals, provide a outline, and to answer questions. The same type of meeting should be done with the parents on team.

Here are a few simple communication tips to help communicate effectively with players during practices and games:

- Arrange players in a semi-circle.
- Arrange players in a kneeling position to better control their actions and attention.
- Position them so there are no distractions behind the speaker.
- Scan the group while talking. Make eye contact with all players.
- Ask questions to make sure players understand and know what is expected of them.
- Give players an opportunity to speak or ask questions.
- Listen to what players say and how they say it. Use active listening techniques.
- Speak to players using words they understand (keep it simple).
- Bend down, kneel or crouch to speak to players at their level.
- Make an effort to speak to every player at every session.

GIVING FEEDBACK

Providing feedback to players is critical in developing skills. Keep these five points in mind at all times:

- Give the “good” picture. Demonstrate/explain what is required, not what the player is doing incorrectly.
- Be positive. Acknowledge what is being done well, then point out what should be worked on.
- Be specific. Demonstrate exactly what it is expected.
- Don’t forget goaltender(s), they require equal feedback.
- Be patient and allow players to make mistakes at times and encourage creativity. It is a learning process.

SKILL LEARNING

Here is a good teaching sequence to follow:

1. *Explain the skill*
 - name the skill and describe it
 - tell why it's important and when it's used. Highlight the key teaching points (key words or phrases used in instructing and giving feedback to your players)
2. *Show how it is done*
 - demonstrate
 - state key points again
3. *Give time to practice*
 - get players to practice the skill right away
 - get everyone involved
4. *Tell them how they're doing*
 - move around to each player
 - give individual feedback
 - get assistants to help

PLYOMETRICS

by Cathie Filyk, M.Kin.

Brandon Bobcats, CIAU (Canada West)

Brandon Wheat Kings, WHL

1. **Skaters low power stride:** Stride side to side, keeping their body low (the length of stride will depend on their leg length). The players can stay on the spot or move forward or backward. For variety and added intensity, these can be done on a hill.
2. **Skaters power leap:** As above, but this time the players will leap up and over to the other side. They will explode up and land in a squat. Watch the landing – make sure that they are tracking their ankles, knees and hips just like they would when performing squats in a gym**.
3. **Running up and down on a platform or stairs** – Try to find a platform that is about 4 – 6 inches off the ground (or use a stair) and have the players run up and down as fast as they can. Try to ensure that they land softly with their feet to absorb the impact. Have them land only on the balls of their feet, both stepping up and down. Have the players stay close to the platform and keep their chest and head up**.
4. **Two-footed hop over a hockey stick** - anywhere from 2 - 12 inches off the ground (depending on the age of the player). Have the players bend their knees upon landing, to absorb the impact, tuck their knees up as they jump over the sticks. For added intensity, do this exercise one foot at a time**.
5. **Forward lunges**– Lunge forward, one leg at a time. The movement is much like a cross-country ski motion. The weight on landing should be through the heel of their front foot. The knee, ankle and toes should be in alignment, travelling forward as they do these. To increase intensity for this exercise, add power to the movement.
6. **Reverse lunges** – As above, but lunging backwards. Watch their alignment. Have the players land with their weight going through the heel of their front foot. This exercise is advanced and is not recommended for younger players.
7. **3, 2, 1 Tuck jump** – Have the players start off standing, with knees soft (slightly bent). They should pulse down for a count of 3, 2, 1 and then tuck jump (knees to your chest). Land quietly and absorb the impact by bending into the landing.
8. **Quick taps on a platform or stair** - Instead of running up and down, the player taps the ball of their foot up on the platform - alternating each foot as they do it. The players should try to keep as quick a pace with this as they can. This is much like running on the spot.
9. **Skipping** - As fast as the players can.
10. **Squat thrusts** – Have the players start in an upright position, then drop to all fours and thrust their legs out behind them (they are now in a push-up position), then quickly pull their legs back in and return to an upright position.
11. **Leap frogs** – Just as the title says. Go for height or go for distance**.
12. **Crossovers** – Staying low, cross one leg in front of the other and travel for 10 – 15 crossovers in one direction. Walk back to the start point and repeat with the other leg. These can be done on a hill for variety and intensity.

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

13. **Stair running** – Find a long flight of stairs (a stadium, arena, etc.). The players can run up and down them; bound two by two; three by three; one-legged; hop up; use both feet; or the crossover technique**.
14. **Cones** - Set up 6 to 10 cones or pylons (6 to 18 inches in height - depending on the age of the players) in a row and have them tuck jump forward over each cone with both feet. To add variety to this exercise, arrange the cones (pylons) in different patterns, space them farther apart (more distance in the jump for strength), closer (more for quick feet and agility)*.
15. **Directional Change Shuffle Drill** – Have the players stand in a “ready position” (eyes looking forward, knees bent and butt down). The idea of this drill is to get the players shuffling back and forth, side to side and diagonally as fast as possible, to enhance their foot speed. They are to keep low during the drill. A coach instructs the players on what direction they are to be moving. Keep the drill moving at a quick pace. This is good for reaction work. Stick handling with a tennis ball can also be done with this drill.

** Any of these exercises can be done backwards, as hockey players should develop strength and agility in both directions.

Note: The duration of each of these exercises will depend on the age and fitness levels of your players.

SAFETY TIPS

PLAYING AREA

Before each ice session, game or practice, carefully check the playing area to ensure that:

- ✓ there is no debris, dangerous ruts, bumps or bare spots on the ice surface.
- ✓ there are no protrusions from the boards, glass or screen.
- ✓ supporting struts for glass or upright posts for fencing are padded.
- ✓ there is no garbage on the floor of the player's bench area that may become stuck on the blades of player's skates ((e.g. tape) or other matter that may damage skate blades.
- ✓ the entire arena lighting system is turned on and functioning; always practice in lighting conditions similar to those which exist for games.
- ✓ all gates are securely and properly closed.
- ✓ the arena management staff has been monitoring air quality in the arena for dangerous gases.

As a coach you are responsible to:

- ✓ educate your players about the dangers of checking from behind; players should **NEVER** check, bump or shove an opponent from behind, especially one who is in the danger zone, the 3-4 metres in front of the boards.
- ✓ teach your players to always be aware on the ice, especially when in the danger zone; players should always keep moving when in the danger zone, and never stand still in this area. If ever checked from behind, players should extend their arms to cushion the impact.
- ✓ ensure that players are wearing proper full protective equipment, including CSA approved helmets, face masks and, where applicable, throat protectors, for all games and practices. Players who are required to wear face masks and throat protectors during competition must wear them during practices.
- ✓ prepare players for practices and games with proper stretching and warm-up routines, and encourage players to stretch following on-ice sessions.
- ✓ never allow players to go onto the ice until the ice resurfacing machine is completely off the ice surface and its gates are securely closed.

At all times during practices ensure:

- ✓ at least one coach is on the ice to supervise the players and that the coaching staff control all activities.
- ✓ that all drills are appropriate for the age and skill level of the players and utilize proper teaching progressions, especially while teaching difficult skills like body checking and backward skating.
- ✓ players play within the rules and that team rules are developed and consistently applied for a more effective and efficient practice.
- ✓ frequent rest periods are scheduled to allow players to drink from their own water bottles; remember, tired, dehydrated players are not alert or attentive and are more susceptible to injury.
- ✓ all drills are organized with safety of the players of prime concern, i.e. players should be positioned at least 10 metres from the net during shooting drills; backward skating drills must be done in an organized method to avoid collisions.

OFF-ICE SAFETY

- ✓ that clear dressing room rules are established to prevent horseplay and other careless behaviour which could lead to injuries, and that the dressing room is well lit and the floor is kept free of tape or other debris. Players should never walk around the dressing room wearing skates while other players are still getting dressed.
- ✓ that the hallways leading to the playing area are well lit and that there is no debris, ruts or bumps on the floor. Ideally, there should be a rubber mat or other non-slip surface to lead participants from the dressing room area to the ice surface.
- ✓ that players are supervised at all times, including in the dressing room and while proceeding to the ice surface.

SECTION 2

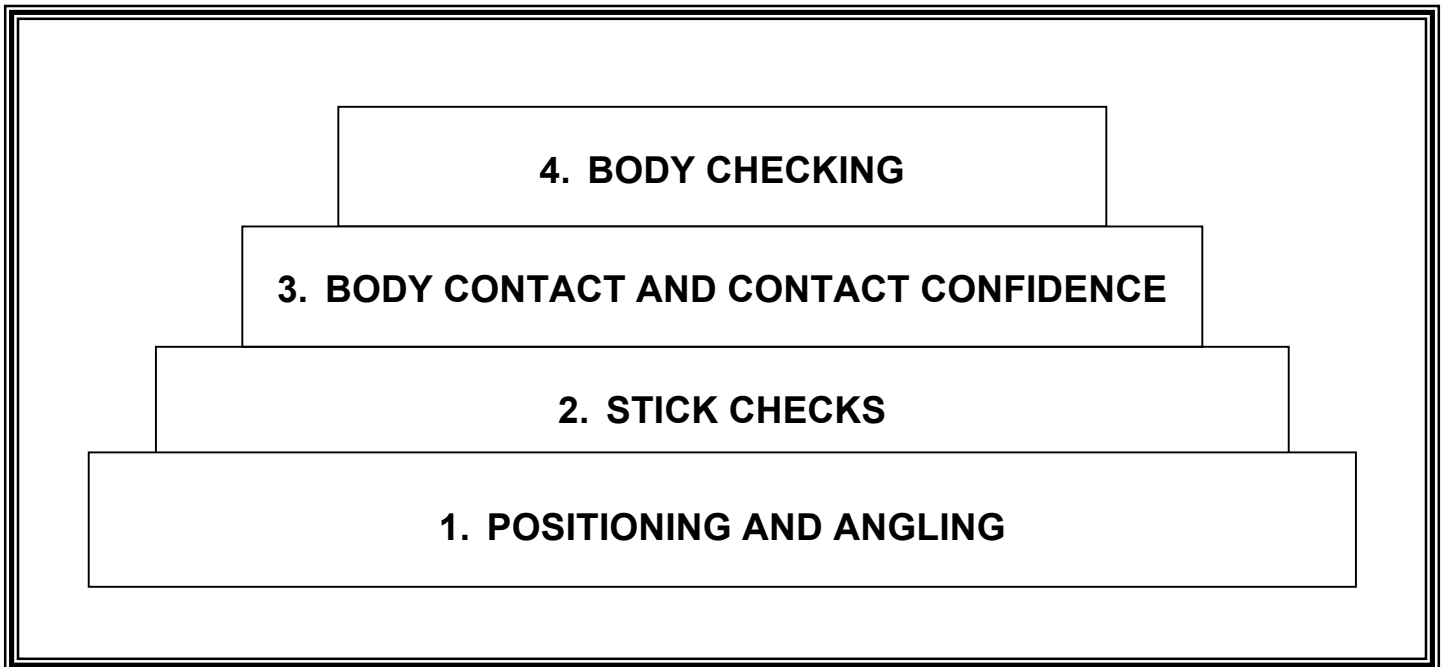
TEACHING CHECKING FUNDAMENTALS

CHECKING - THE 4-STEP PROGRESSION

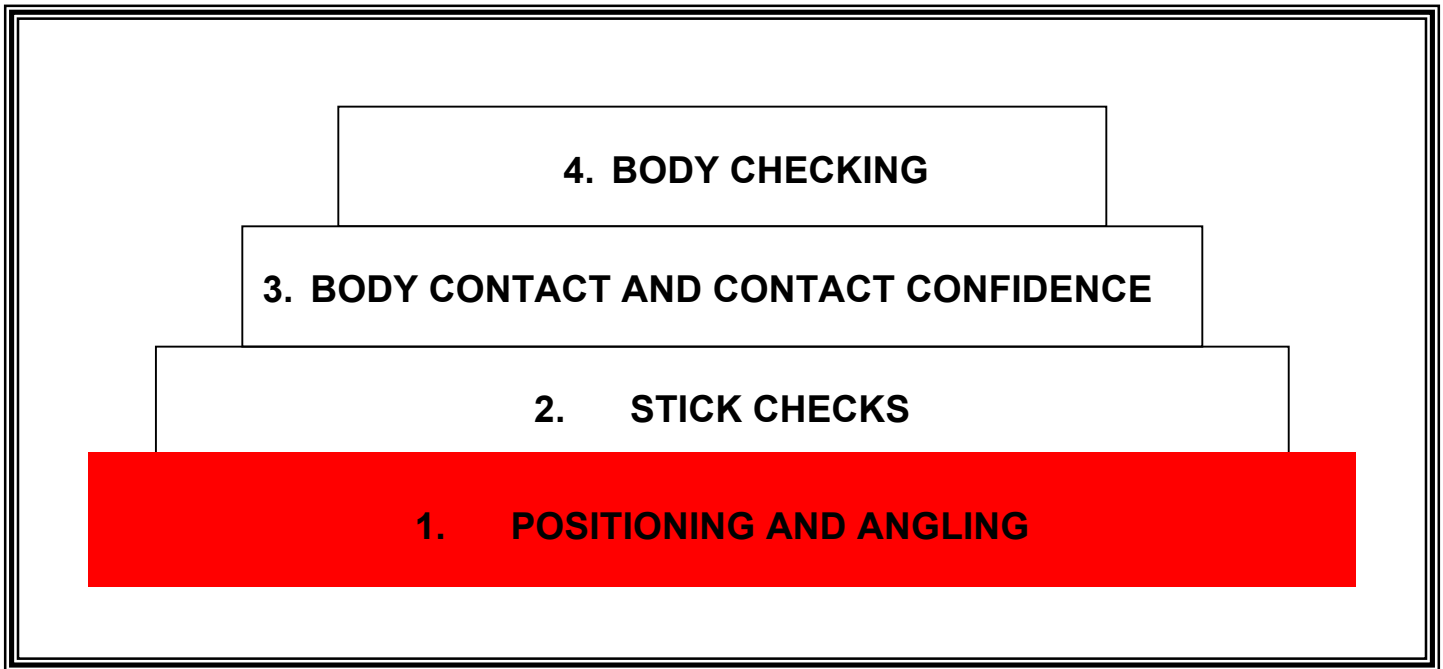
The most essential skill in hockey, which is the prerequisite to most others, is **skating**. The ability to skate efficiently and effectively allows a player to begin to effectively develop all other skills involved with the game of hockey. Players will be unable to grasp and execute skills such as positioning and angling if they are unable to skate comfortably and control the edges of their skates with ease. It is vital for a coach to ensure that the foundation of all other skills, skating, is mastered before moving on to more advanced skills.

The skill of checking is most easily taught and understood by following the National Coach Certification Program (NCCP) 4-step progression model. A diagram of this model can be seen below. The NCCP checking model is based on the principle that checking should be taught in four logical steps. Each step builds upon the previous step and brings the hockey player that much closer to being able to give and receive body checks competently and confidently. The NCCP checking model is further explained in detail in the pages that follow.

NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



STEP 1 - POSITIONING AND ANGLING

Angling can be considered the first line of defense for a player. Body and stick positions are important in checking without making contact. This section will examine angling as one technique of checking (Step 1) without making contact.

Angling is the ability to force your opponent to go in the direction that you want. This normally would be towards the boards or to the outside of you.

Some key points for coaches to consider throughout this section on angling:

- Players should remain between the puck carrier and the pass receiver, gradually reducing the puck carriers space
- Players should skate parallel to the opponent or in an arc or circular movement but not in a straight line toward the opponent
- Players should skate slightly behind the opponent thus not allowing the opponent to turn up ice to the inside of them
- Players need to learn to control skate so that they can adjust their speed to their opponent's speed
- A player's stick should always be in position to intercept a pass and as a decoy to force the opposition to the desired direction.

POSITIONING AND ANGLING

STEP 1

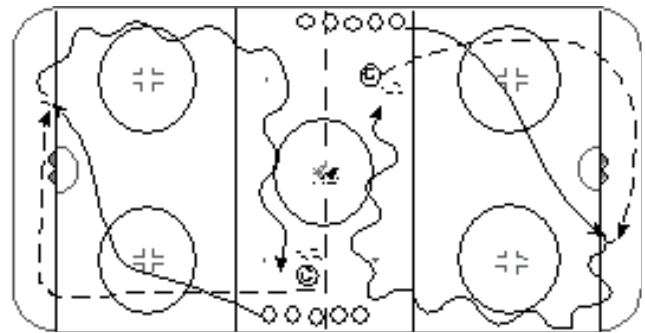
Angling - Read and React to the Play

Drill Objective

Players will be able to read and react to the speed and route of the puck using the quickest most efficient route

Drill Explanation

- Coach rims the puck into the end zone, player reads the direction and speed of the puck to retrieve
- Player has head on a swivel to vacate zone and return to the back of the line



Key Teaching Points

- Read the speed of the puck and location of entry
- Take the easiest/quickest route to reach the puck
- "Head on a swivel" to read any outside pressure

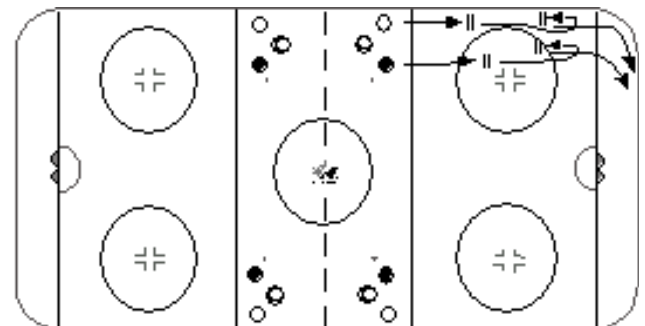
Angling - Shadowing

Drill Objective

Players will be able to control skate, mirroring the player that they are angling

Drill Explanation

- Players should pair up with a player of similar skating skill
- Player 1 skates along the boards making quick starts and stops and changes of direction
- Player 2 must control skate and mirror Player 1 keeping the player to the outside in the "bad ice"



Key Teaching Points

- Mirroring the players you are checking
- Use the term "Hip pocket" to describe to players where they need to be.
- Add a puck once players have an understanding of drill and focus carrier on puck protection

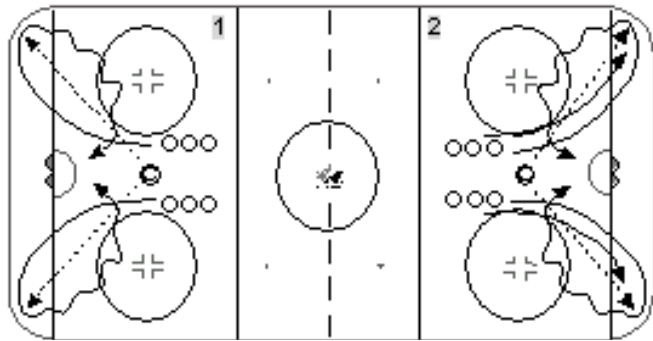
Angling and Head on Swivel

Drill Objective

When in pursuit of the puck, awareness of opposing players as well as supporting teammates is critical to safety and the decision making process

Drill Explanation

- Start with proper offensive angle to the puck in the corner. Demonstrate inside out, head up, head on swivel
- Coach dumps puck to corner, player retrieves the puck focussing on a proper angle. Once the player has the puck they should drive the circle for a shot on net
- Progress to the 2nd player in line following the first player in and putting some passive pressure on the player to execute a good angle to the puck and drive around the circle to the net. 2nd player should also focus on getting good angling position and controlling their skating



Key Teaching Points

- Head on Swivel
- Inside, Out path

Open Ice Angling

Drill Objective

Players should start to be able to control the player they are checking without assistance from the boards

Drill Explanation

1. Facing Goal

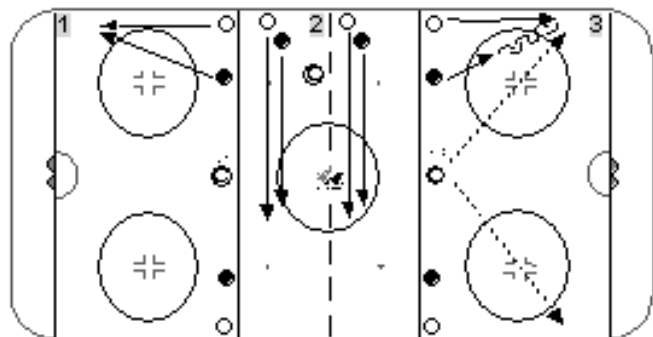
- Players pair up with both facing the goal. Defender inside position and forces player to move board side.
- Defender keeps player to the board side, attacks his stick where blade meets shaft and squeezes angled player out while getting the puck.

2. Defensive Positioning - 1 on 1

- Players partner up, work on defensive positioning, outside shoulder of defender with inside shoulder of attacker

3. Facing Inside Shoulder

- Players pair up with attacker facing the goal and defender facing attacking player. Defender's helmet lines up with inside shoulder of attacker and while skating backward, forces player to move board side.



Key Teaching Points

- Defensive positioning, hip pocket

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

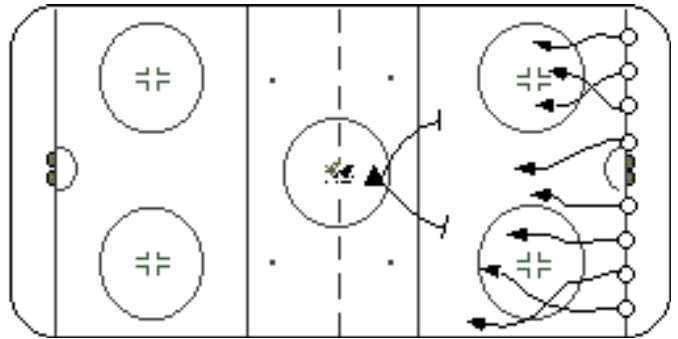
British Bulldog

Drill Objective

Put the skills of angling and positioning into a game scenario where the players continue to receive the opportunity to polish the skill

Drill Description

- Players line up at one end of ice, on coaches signal, players skate to other end, trying not to get caught. If players get caught, they then go to centre and help coaches catch other players.
- Can also be done with pucks



Key Teaching Points

- Emphasize angling tips from previous drills

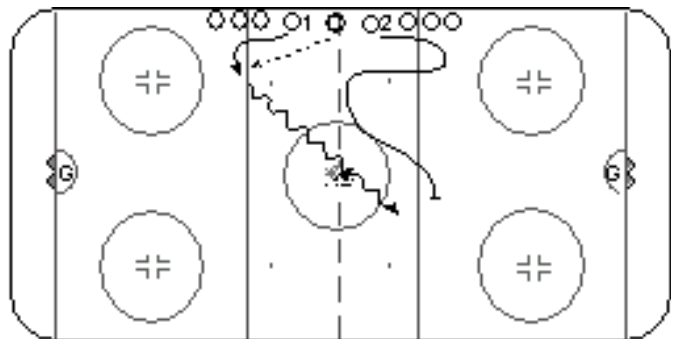
Angling - Open Ice

Drill Objective

Players should gain the ability to read and react and increase their ability to "smart skate" angle

Drill Explanation

- 01 and 02 leave from the red line on go from coach
- both players skate down the boards to the blueline and turn
- coach passes to one player
- Other player angles the puck carrier to the middle, continues angle and pursuit across the neutral zone



Key Teaching Points

- Smart skating
- React quickly to receiving or not receiving the pass

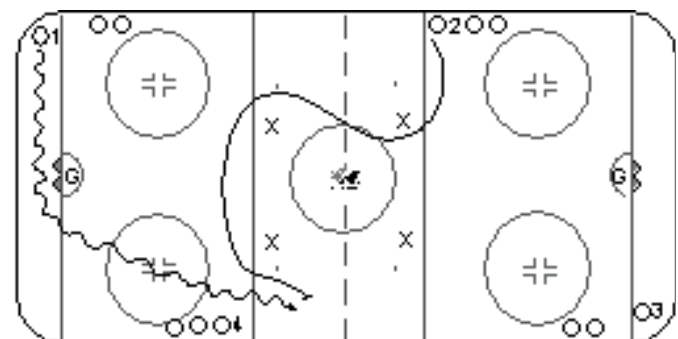
Angling Gate Drill

Drill Objective

Teach defensive player to save ice skating off the puck, limiting the puck carrier to one option

Drill Explanation

- 01 and 02 begin on the whistle
- 01 picks up loose puck and skates behind the net and must skate between the pylons for a shot on goal
- 02 closes the gap, saving ice in the neutral zone, before angling toward 01
- 02 attempts to force 01 outside the pylons, not giving up the middle lane



Key Teaching Points

- maintain middle lane
- control skating

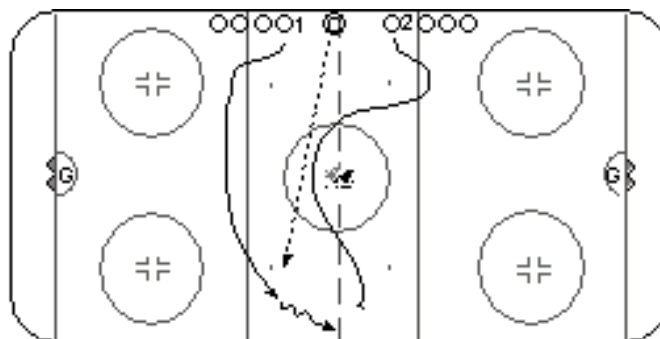
Stampede Angling

Drill Objective

Close quickly and angle the puck carrier to the outside and maintain speed

Drill Explanation

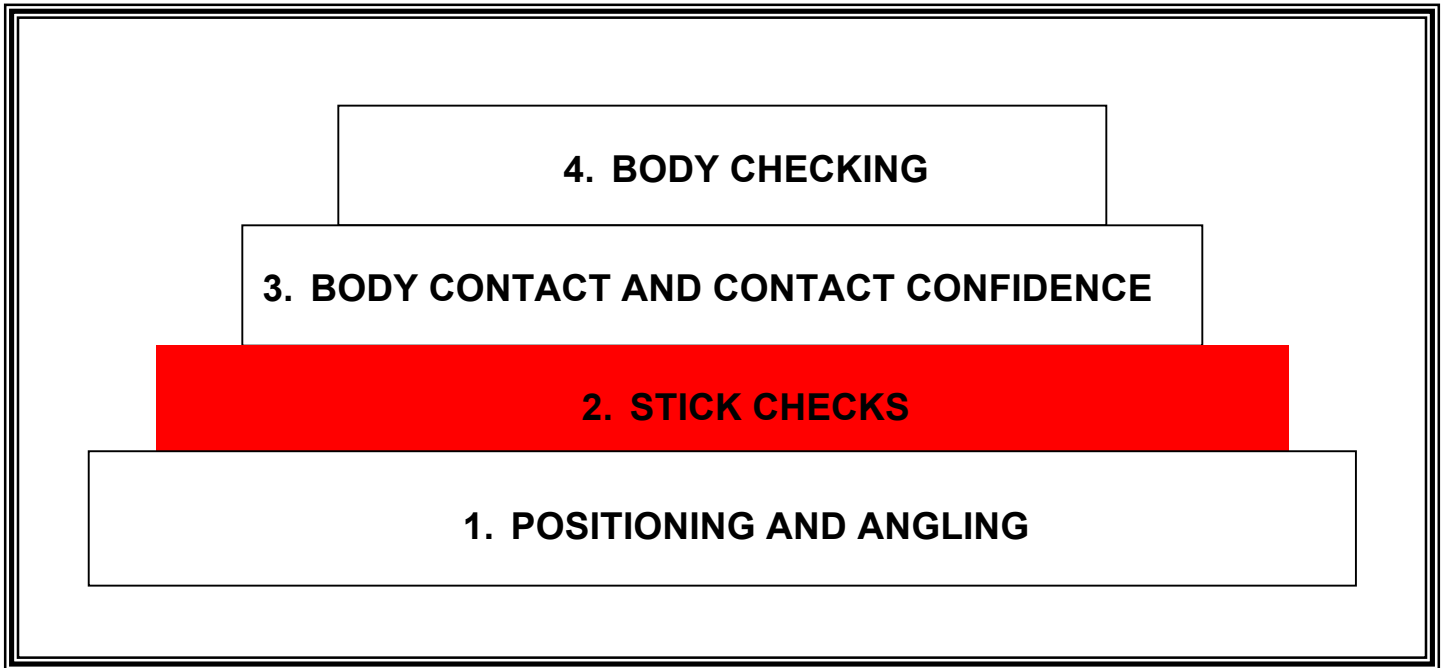
- Coach passes the puck anywhere on one side of the ice
- 01 retrieves the puck, 02 double touches the blueline, then closes the gap on 02
- 02 plays 01 but if a turnover occurs, 02 can move onto offence



Key Teaching Points

- close quickly, angle to outside
- no backward skating
- use speed and controlled skating

NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



STEP 2 - STICK CHECKS

Stick checking may be considered the second line of defense as angling forces the opposition to a position where contact can be made with the stick.

When a player stick-checks, he/she must maintain control of both their stick and the opponent's stick. Stick checks are effective to:

- delay the advancement of the opposition
- force a loss of puck control by the opposition
- control the puck yourself or gain possession for one of your teammates

This section will discuss the teaching progressions for stick checking and provide an explanation for the following 5 stick checks:

- Poke Check
- Sweep Check
- Tap Check
- Lift Check
- Press Check

and discussion the teaching progressions for stick checking.

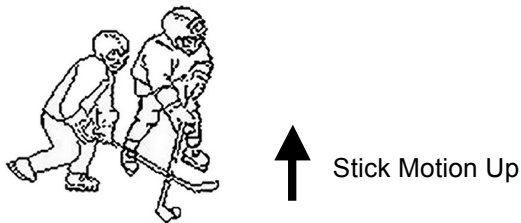
INTRODUCTION TO STICK CHECKS

The second step/phase of the teaching progression for checking is Stick Checks. This is a very important stage that players should master very early. Players should be able to use this effectively as their second line of defense once they have positioned themselves correctly and angled effectively. With the ability to angle and stick check in place these serve as a strong foundation for the progression into body contact, contact confidence and body checking.

Types of Stick Checks

Checking with the stick can be categorized into five categories:

1. Lift Check

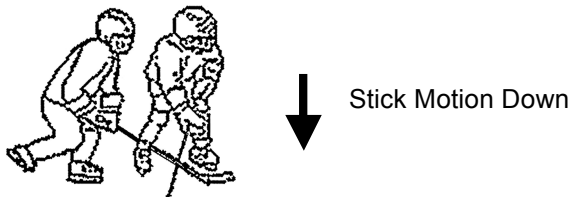


The lift check can be used anywhere on the ice. It is an excellent check often used when players are backchecking and attempting to regain possession of the puck.

Key Teaching Points

- Checker approaches the puck carrier from behind or from an angle behind them
- Lift the opponent's stick on the shaft near the heel of the stick enough to retrieve the puck under the stick on the exposed side of the player's body.
- Sealing off the puck carrier or isolating the puck carrier's arms and hands with pressure is effective prior to the lift check.

2. Press Check



The press check is used a lot in the neutral and defensive zones of the rink. It requires strength and timing on the part of the checker, who attempts to immobilize the opponent's stick momentarily

Key Teaching Points

- Close proximity beside opponent is necessary
- Place the stick over the shaft of the opponent's stick below the bottom hand
- Downward pressure timed just prior to or at the moment the opponent is to receive the puck for a scoring chance makes this check effective.

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

3. Sweep Check

The sweep check is used to check the puck from the opponent from the side or behind the puck carrier in a circular reach motion.

Key Teaching Points

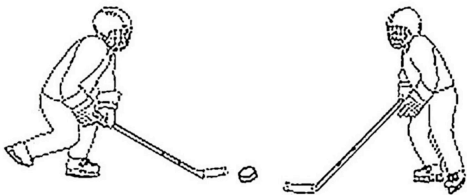
- Top hand on the stick
- The shaft of the blade lays flat on the ice
- Make this check while moving as it allows the checker to regain position if successful
- Bend over forward or lower body to one knee to reach ahead sweeping in a circular motion
- Last choice is to dive onto belly for further reach. Only used to try to check a breakaway attempt

4. Tap Check

The tap check is used to hit the opponent's stick to force them to lose puck control while carrying the puck

- Skate beside the puck carrier maintaining inside-out position
- While the puck is protected on the opposite side of the puck carriers blade, tap the blade firmly so as to cause loss of control of the puck
- Target the top near the heel of the stick
- Ensure that it is not a slashing motion

5. Poke Check



The poke check is primarily used while playing a 1 on 1. This check is effective to make attacking player make a decision with the puck. Unfortunately, players often tend to linger with this checking resulting in the player being off balance and out of position.

Key Teaching Points

- Player remains in a strong ready position stance
- Tuck elbow with top hand only on the stick
- Perform a quick extension of the arm and the stick straight out when the puck carrier is in the range of the check
- Maintain the ready balanced position at all times

REMEMBER: The following elements should be taken into consideration when deciding which stick check to use;

- Location and position of the checker
- Degree of puck control of the puck carrier
- Amount of defensive support

STICK CHECKS

STEP 2

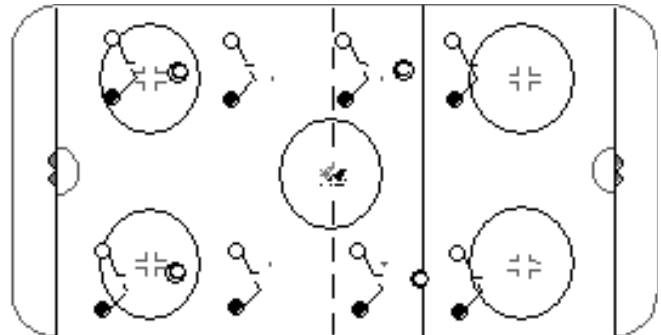
Stationary Stick Checks

Drill Objective

Players should be able to technically perform a stick lift and a stick press

Drill Explanation

- Demonstrate for players the press and the lift.
- Players pair up side by side.
- On whistle Player 1 handles the puck stationary. Player 2 stands beside Player 1 and on the second whistle traps or lifts the stick.



Key Teaching Points

- Demonstrate the skill
- Run at 50% so that players can have success at implementing the proper technique

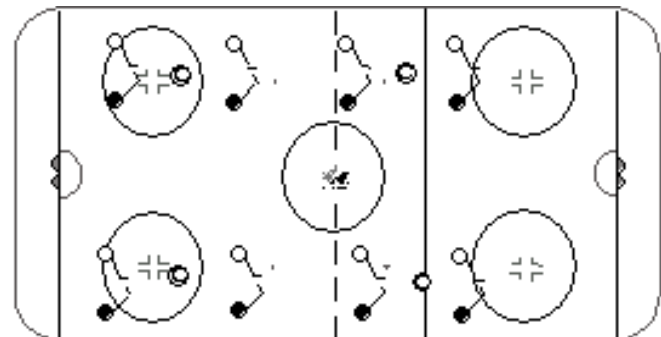
Stick Check Leap Frog

Drill Objective

To allow the players multiple repetitions to be successful in executing the stick checks while working with a partner

Drill Explanation

- Coach indicates the type of stick check - provide key teaching points
- O1 and O2 play at half speed
- O1 exposes the puck for O2 to stick check
- Reverse roles



Key Teaching Points

- Focus on the target area for the checker to check the stick
- Keep feet active, control skating

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

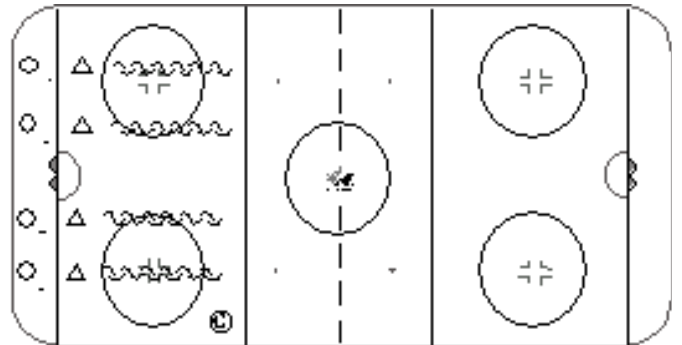
Partner Poke Sweep

Drill Objective

To allow players the opportunity to practice gap control and the basics of the sweep check and poke check in a 1 on 1 situation.

Drill Explanation

- Player 1 skates backwards facing O to execute poke or sweep check
- Coach reviews the key teaching points
- Play at 1/2 speed for 4-6 repetitions
- Alternate roles



Key Teaching Points

- Keep balanced, don't lunge
- Focus on the chest/crest with peripheral vision to puck
- Allow puck carrier into the poke/sweep check area

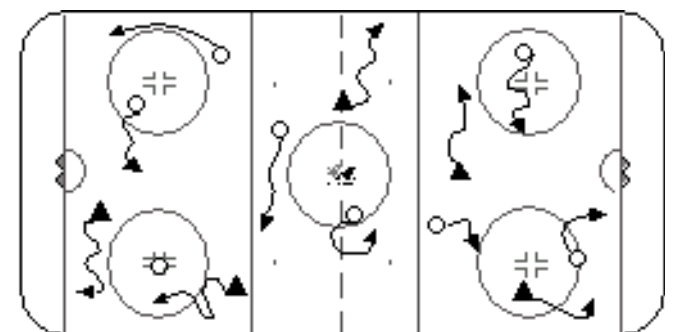
Puck Handle Keep Away with Confined Space

Drill Objective

Players should be able to technically perform a stick lift and a stick press

Drill Explanation

- Demonstrate for players the press and the lift.
- Players pair up side by side.
- On whistle Player 1 handles the puck stationary. Player 2 stands beside Player 1 and on the second whistle traps or lifts the stick.



Key Teaching Points

- Demonstrate the skill
- Run at 50% so that players can have success at implementing the proper technique

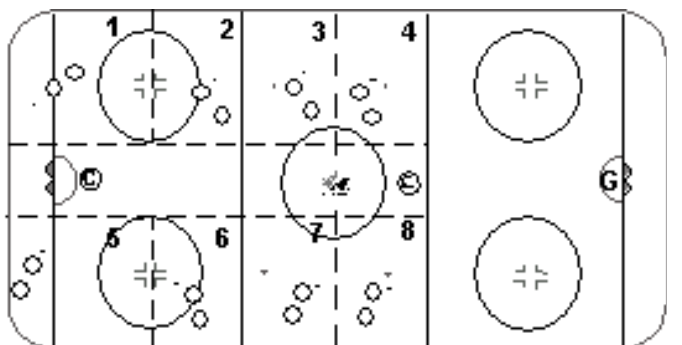
Head to Head 1 on 1 Confined Space

Drill Objective

To play 1 on 1 keep away, facing the opponent, with emphasis on checking skills

Drill Explanation

- Coach controls the drill with 20-30 second intervals
- Players stay within the confined space and play one on one keep away



Key Teaching Points

- Checker to focus on the crest
- Close the gap to the puck carrier

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

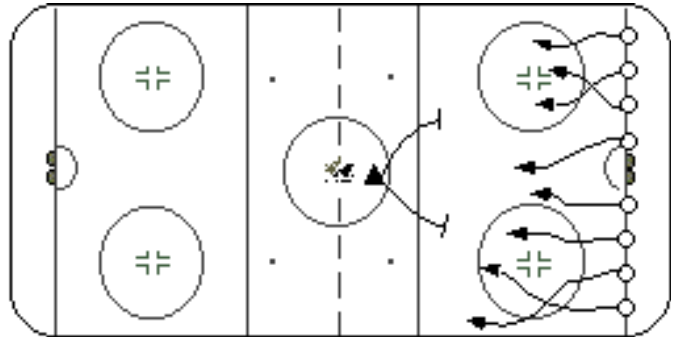
British Bulldog

Drill Objective

Game play fun activity to practice stick checking skills

Drill Explanation

- O carries the puck through the neutral zone - player at centre ice must attempt a stick check to cause O to lose control of the puck
- Any O that loses their puck goes to centre to become a checker
- Last O with the puck wins



Key Teaching Points

- Head up and down on puck for control
- Proper balanced position for checker
- Use angling and positioning to get in effective position to make stick check.

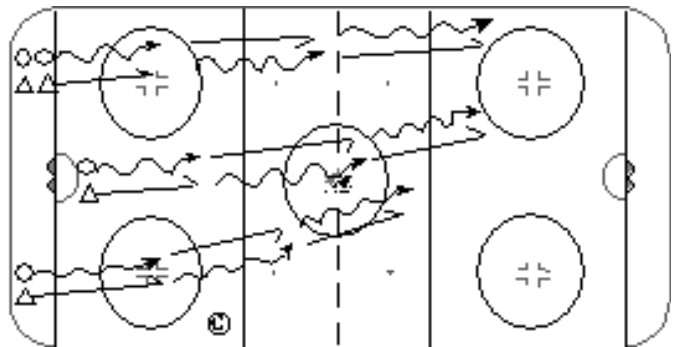
Partner Sweep Hook

Drill Objective

To allow the players the opportunity of multiple repetitions to execute hook/sweep checks in pairs

Drill Explanation

- O skates with the puck at 1/2 speed
- 2nd player skates parallel or slightly behind to execute sweep or hook check
- attempt several repetitions going down the ice
- alternate once control is gained



Key Teaching Points

- place shaft and blade flat
- sweep in a circular motion
- keep stick moving through the check

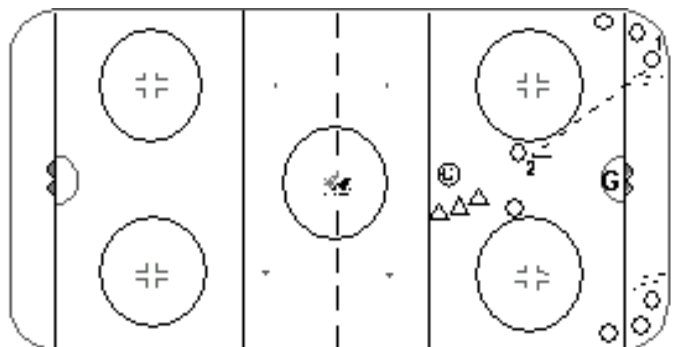
Stick Control Checking

Drill Objective

To allow game-like checking using lift and press techniques in front of the offensive/defensive net

Drill Explanation

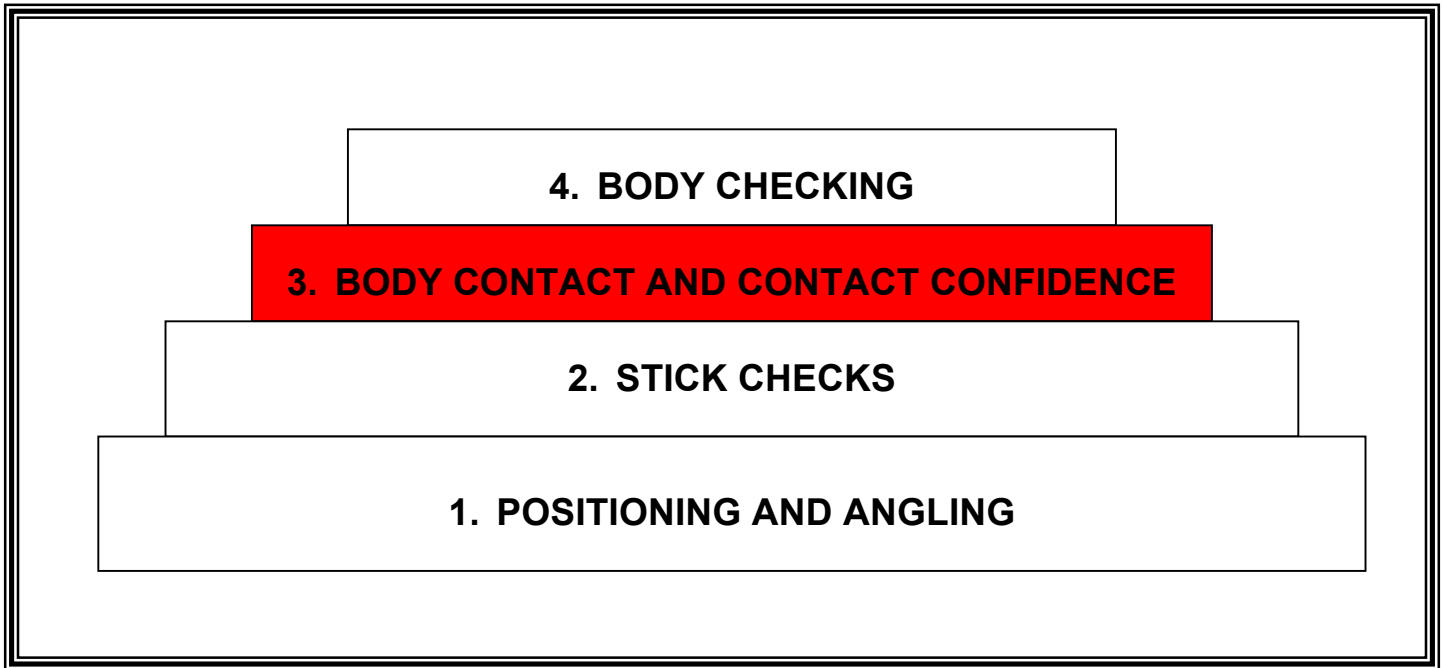
- player in the corner passes to O2 in front of the net
- Δ1 attempts to time and lift or press check
- O1 and O2 rotate
- Use both ends of the rink



Key Teaching Points

- Keep defensive side positioning
- Control the stick of the offensive player
- Take away the forehand

NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



STEP 3 - BODY CONTACT

Defensive play begins the instant the opposing team possession of the puck. Checking is used to regain possession of the puck. To review the steps in the progression – skating, positioning and angling are used to direct the puck carrier. This is accomplished by using the stick as an active line of defense in attempting to further control the opponent. Body contact is the third step in the progression and is used to gain separation, when a player positions his/her body between the puck and the puck carrier.

Body contact, by definition, must result only from the active movement of the puck carrier.

Key Teaching Points for Body Contact

- Reinforce angling/positioning skills as well as further enhancing the required skating skills
- Emphasize and further enhance the concept of controlling and the containing of your opponent
- Give contact confidence
- Inversely enhance the offensive players puck handling and puck protection skills
- Allow for teaching, stressing and reinforcing puck carrier/opponent safety tactics and the mature attitudes of respect
- Provide fun and enjoyment while learning in a competitive but safe environment

How to use body contact

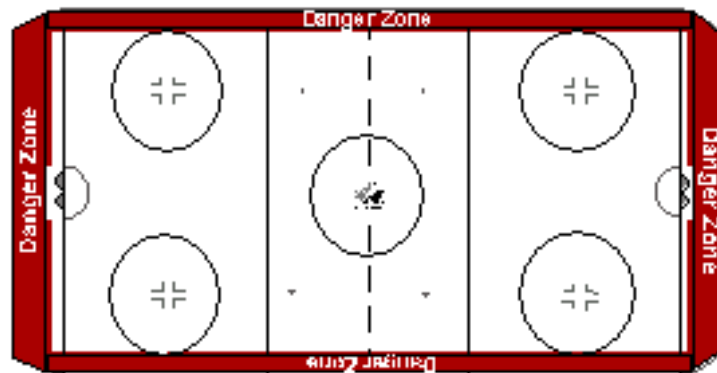
There are two main categories of drill progression for body contact;

1. Contact Confidence
 - Falling activities
 - Combative activities
 - Bumping drills
2. Angling and Positioning with Checking

THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF BEING CHECKED

1. Don't get caught in the danger zone – Do stay close to the boards

A player standing still 2 to 4 feet from the boards is extremely vulnerable. If checked, from either the side or behind, the player could go head first into the boards. There would be no time to recover from the check before hitting the boards. If the player is moving, he/she will be better able to react to a check than if standing still. Encourage players to stay in tight to the boards for better support. A player can use the long bones of the body - legs, arms, hips, and shoulders - to absorb the impact of the body check.



2. Know where opponents are

Skating into the corner to retrieve a loose puck, the player should use a quick shoulder check to see where the other players are. "Head on a swivel" is often used to describe the player's action. Knowing where the pressure is coming from helps to prepare for a potential body check. This quick check will also help sort out where teammates are, making it easier to make a quick outlet pass.

3. Use hands and arms as a cushion

When a player is checked, raised arms and hands so can help cushion the collision with the boards. It can also assist in protecting the head and allow the player to push off the boards after the check, springing out and back into action.

4. Keep the head up

This rule applies throughout the game, but especially when being checked. Going into the boards with the head down, will increase the odds of a serious neck injury. Players should be instructed not to duck, scrunch their head down into your shoulders, or stick out your chin before impact. These are dangerous positions. **KEEP THE HEAD UP!!**

5. Turn the body so the shoulders hit first

Players should be instructed that if they are hurtling head first into the boards, their first move should be to get their arms up, and try to turn their body so that the shoulders will hit the boards instead of your head.

BODY CONTACT

STEP 3

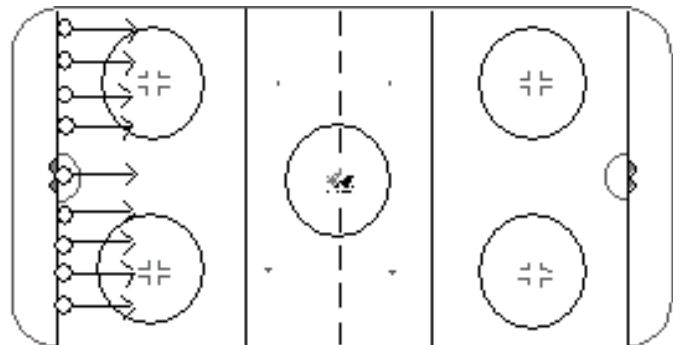
Diving and Sliding with Recovery

Drill Objective

To give the players the opportunity to be comfortable with falling and to learn to recover quickly to the skating position.

Drill Explanation

- On whistle the first line moves slowly forward and falls forward on 2nd whistle.
- On the 3rd whistle the 2nd line proceeds to do the same, sliding on every whistle
- Add falling on side, falling and rolling and controlled summersaults



Key Teaching Points

- Cushion fall
- Spread contact over as much body surface as possible
- Bring knees back up under chest to recover as quickly as possible

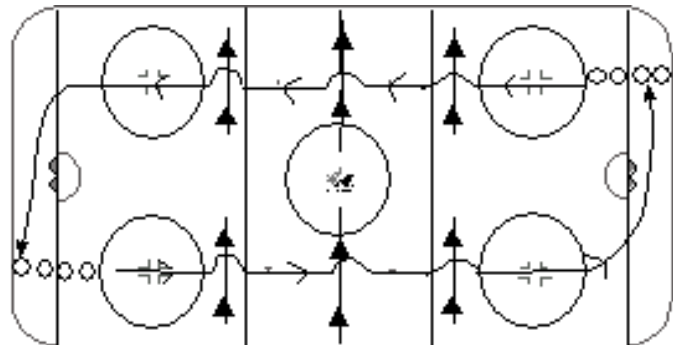
Jumping Sticks

Drill Objective

To improve balance while becoming comfortable with falling and contacting the ice

Drill Explanation

- Players proceed through the jumps one at a time.
- Next player proceeds after first player has jumped last stick
- Add 2 foot jumps, 1 foot jumps, increased speed, increased height of jump, low squat jumps etc.



Key Teaching Points

- Jump preparation with feet shoulder width apart and knees bent
- Quick recovery if player falls
- Low centre of gravity

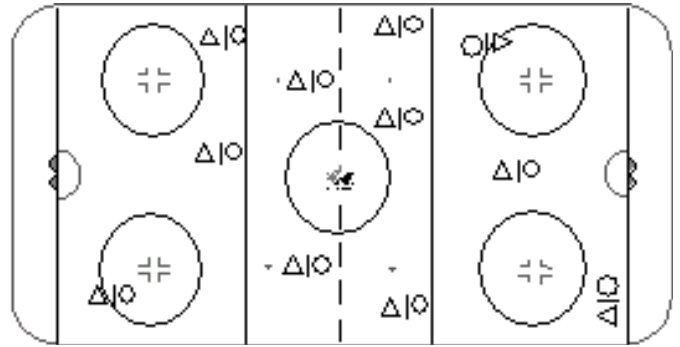
Stick Wrestling

Drill Objective

Gives the player a feel for good, strong, effective body position and to develop balance and agility

Drill Explanation

- Use one stick between each pair of players.
- On the whistle players wrestle to throw their opponent off balance
- A player is considered off balance when a body part other than the skates touch the ice
- Other variations can include no stick, 2 sticks or start on the knees



Key Teaching Points

- Solid and strong - wide stance
- Get low
- Use strong legs as the base

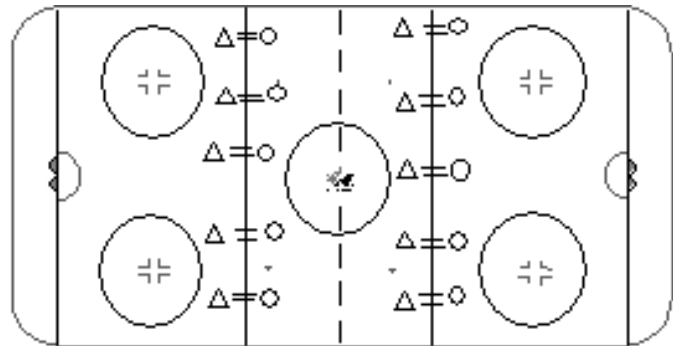
Tug of War

Drill Objective

To emphasize the ready position and the use of the body and legs for strength.

Drill Explanation

- On the whistle each player tries to pull their opponent over the blueline
- Use one stick or two sticks



Key Teaching Points

- Wide and low
- Drive with legs
- Short power strides

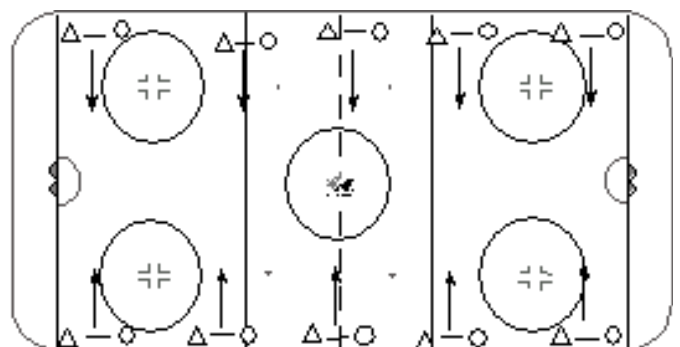
Partner Bumping

Drill Objective

To develop a solid base, to develop contact confidence and to develop the use of leg power

Drill Explanation

- Players interlock elbows
- Pairs move across ice bumping each other with shoulders
- Also implement bumping hips, bumping hips and shoulders and elbows not locked



Key Teaching Points

- Low, wide, strong position
- Initiate the bump with drive from the legs

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

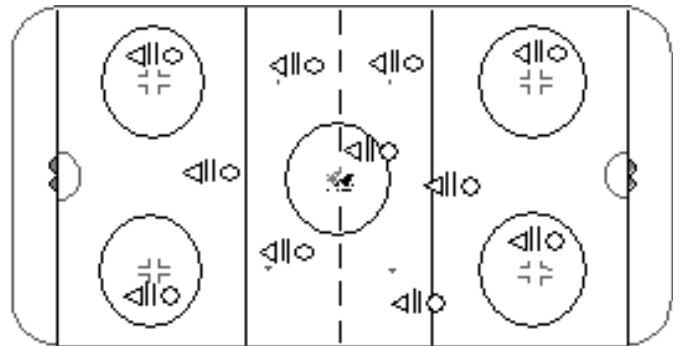
Own the Dot

Drill Objective

To develop balance, stability and strength. Focus on use of leg power and developing contact confidence

Drill Explanation

- Players position themselves at the dots
- On whistle players bump each other trying to drive the other off of the dot
- Other options include side by side, protect the puck on the dot, face to face and back to face



Key Teaching Points

- Elbows down and arms crossed
- Good low stable body position
- Drive with the legs

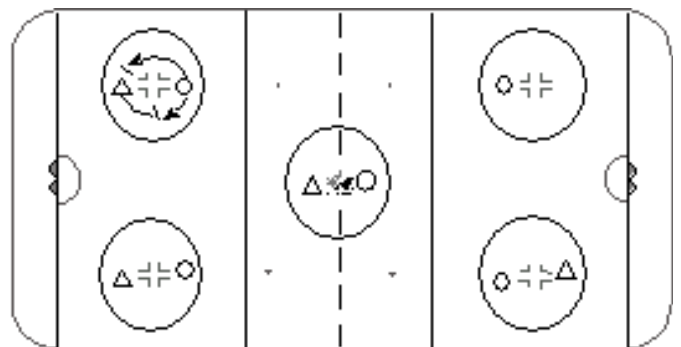
Bull in the Ring (moving contact)

Drill Objective

To introduce movement with contact, develop proper positioning and to reinforce driving through

Drill Explanation

- No sticks
- On whistle O tries to drive though Δ to get to edge of circle
- Δ protects the path and attempts to drive O back
- Switch roles



Key Teaching Points

- Play chest when facing, hips when seeing back
- Leg drive and defensive side positioning

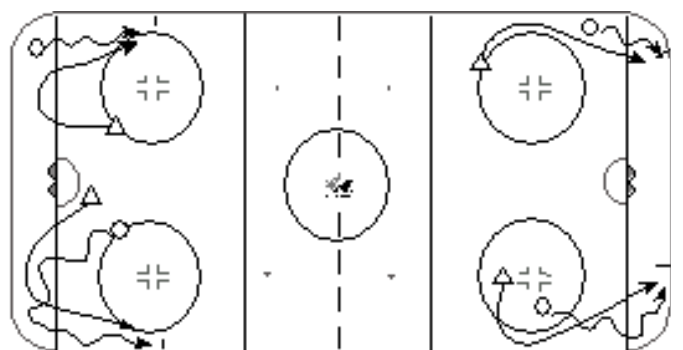
Angle Up, Angle Down with Puck Separation

Drill Objective

To work on angling skills and work on positioning to separate puck carrier from the puck

Drill Explanation

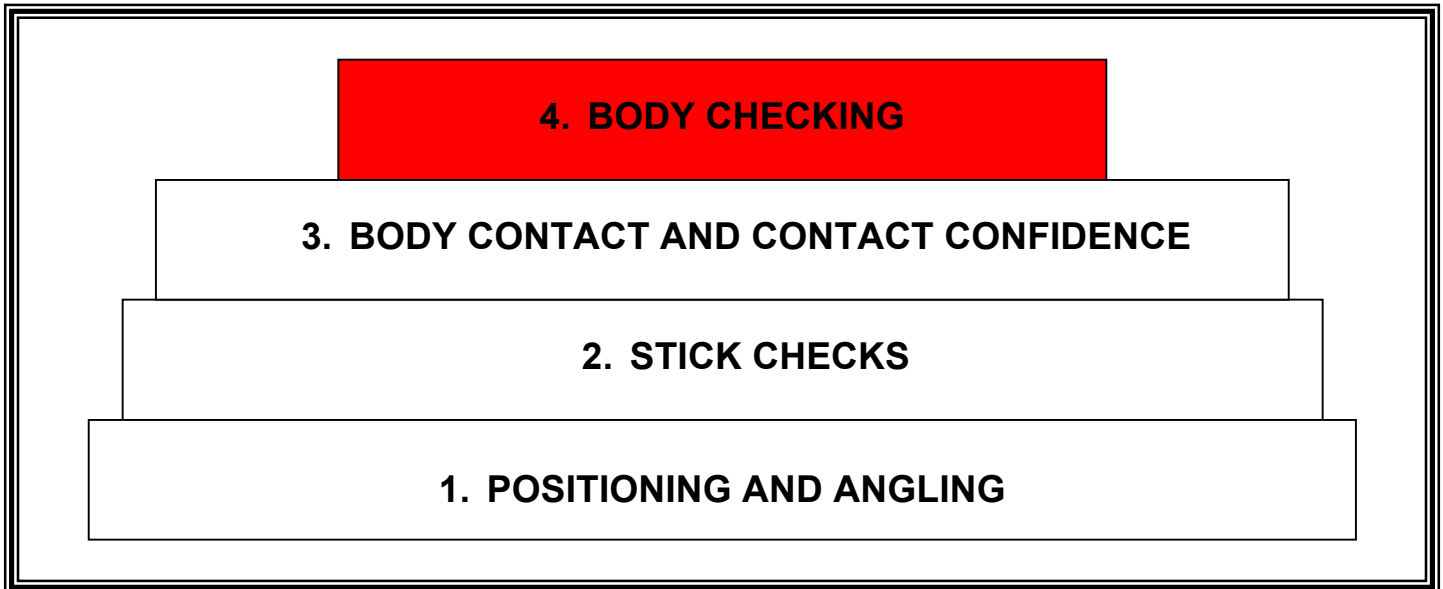
- Δ positions with various gaps from O who has the puck
- On whistle, Δ j-skates quickly and controlled and steers O in desired direction
- Δ drives body between O and puck - aim for the stick shaft
- Separate O from the puck



Key Teaching Points

- Inside shoulder just ahead of puck carrier's inside shoulder
- Drive body in front of the puck carrier

NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



STEP 4 - BODY CHECKING

Body checking is the final step in the 4 step checking progression. A body check can be defined as body contact primarily caused by the movement of the checker. That movement can be and often is, in a direction different than that of the puck carrier. The checker uses their body for the purpose of stopping the attacking progress of the puck carrier and/or to separate the carrier from the puck.

The skills needed for body checking are the effective mastery of the first three steps in the checking progression. First of all the checker must be a strong skater with particularly good balance on their skates.

In summary the fundamental skills of checking are:

- **SKATING**
 - Forward
 - Backward
 - Lateral
 - Pivots
 - Cross overs and t-push
- **POSITIONING AND ANGLING**
 - Body positioning
 - Reading and reacting
 - Inside-out position
 - Tracking
- **STICK CHECKS**
 - Lift
 - Press
 - Poke
 - Sweep
 - Tap
- **CONTACT CONFIDENCE**
- **BODY CONTACT**
- **BODY CHECKING**

BODY CHECKING

STEP 4

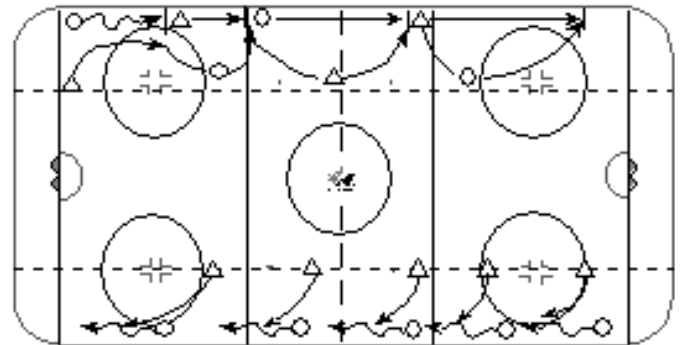
Partner Bump and Roll Flow - No sticks

Drill Objective

To develop angling and positioning and to practice the execution of the shoulder or block check

Drill Explanation

- Players divided into pairs and placed spaciouly around the ice without sticks
- O against the boards, Δ by the faceoff dots
- O moves slowly along the boards while Δ angles and closes the gap
- Δ makes chosen body check then moves slowly along the boards. O rolls to the boards, rotates out and becomes the checker



Key Teaching Points

- Approach under control and at a good angle
- O collapses shoulder/body from check, rolls into wall
- Use the terms coil/uncoil as a description of the motion
- Add sticks and pucks, increase speed, add a pin as players become more proficient

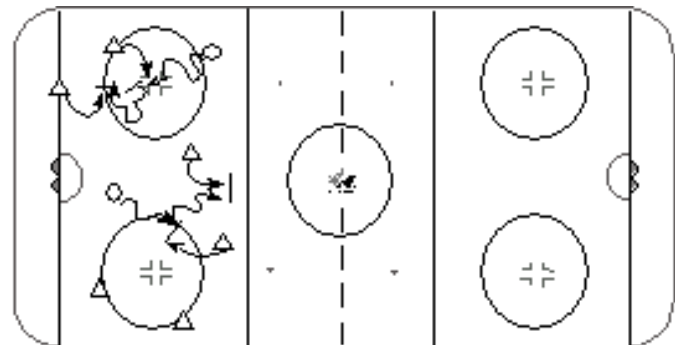
Open Ice Body Check - No sticks

Drill Objective

To work on angling and positioning skills and to teach checking from a balanced position

Drill Explanation

- At each end divide players into 4 groups - 1 group with pucks. Other groups have no sticks
- Group with the pucks cycles around inside the blue line while checkers attempt to bump carriers - if carrier gets bumped off puck they regain the puck and continue
- Keep score to see which group gets bumped off the puck the least



Key Teaching Points

- Approach under control - eyes on contact area
- Arms crossed at chest
- Use leg drive

Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

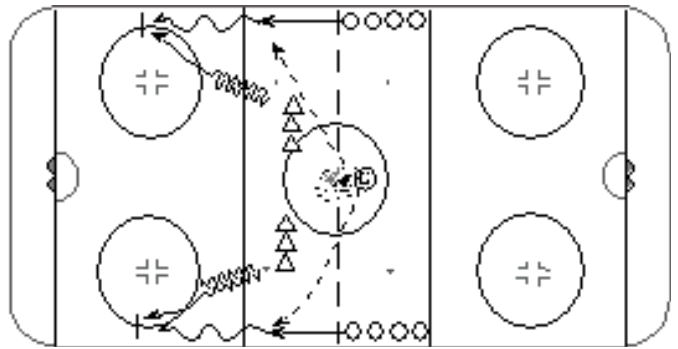
1 on 1 Body Checking

Drill Objective

To develop angling skills while working on lateral motion with a turn and go. To practice executing body checks

Drill Explanation

- O starts from behind the redline
- Coach passes puck and at the same time Δ starts backward from face off dot outside the blue line.
- O must stay along the boards, Δ angles and makes body check
- Both players go back to respective lines on opposite side of ice from original starting point



Key Teaching Points

- Angle, use a controlled approach
- Hard but controlled, timing is key

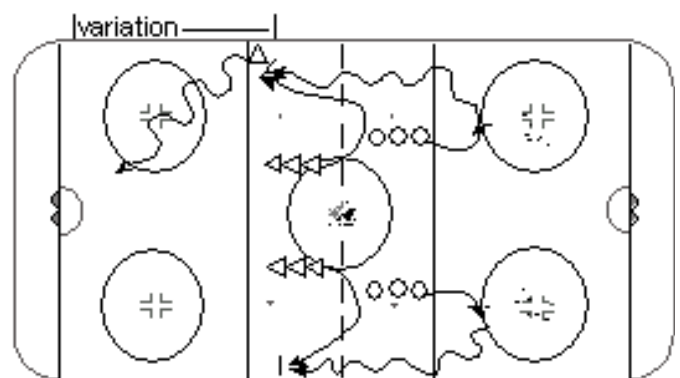
Neutral Zone Forecheck

Drill Objective

To work on angling, steering, positioning and body checks.

Drill Explanation

- On the whistle the O's start and swing to get the puck
- As O picks up the puck Δ starts.
- Δ steers/angles O outside to the boards and makes the check.
- Rotate players through all four positions
- Use variations such as Δ with no stick, O can regroup or Δ regains puck and goes for shot



Key Teaching Points

- Angle defensive side
- Close gap under control

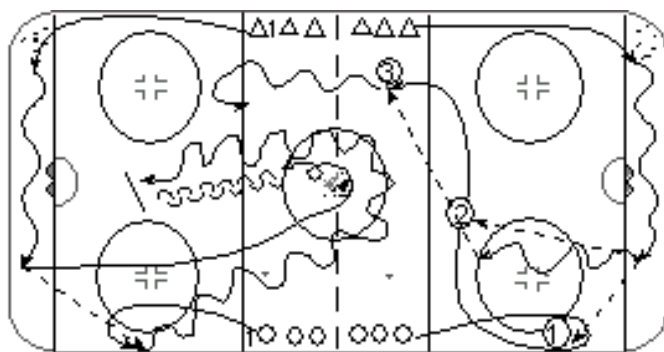
One on One

Drill Objective

To develop angling/steering/positioning and gap control in the neutral zone. To work on body checking along the boards and in open ice.

Drill Explanation

- O starts with a puck, takes a shot low from the outside and button hooks to the corner
- Δ starts when forward starts and goes to the corner for a puck
- Δ carries around the net and passes to O: O breaks for far blue line with Δ pursuing and maintaining a tight gap.
- O horseshoes and comes back 1 on 1, Δ angles and attempts to make body check at blueline



Key Teaching Points

- Angle - make the decision for the puck carrier
- Control check with follow through

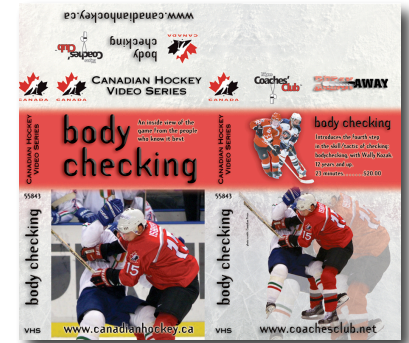
SECTION 3

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following 2 pages breakdown the Hockey Canada Checking Video and the Right Start Checking Video (Part of the package available at the Coach Level clinic)

“BODY CHECKING” (HOCKEY CANADA VIDEO)

| Time | Topic |
|-------------|--|
| 0:00 - 1:00 | Introduction |
| 1:10 | 4 Step Progression - Position and Angling, Stick checks, Body Contact, Body Checking |
| 1:35 | Body Checking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of checking • Advanced contact confidence drills • Body checking in the 3 zones • How to receive and avoid a body check |
| 1:45 | Overview of checking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect the middle, limit space and time, prevent scoring, read and react to puck control, position and support |
| 2:25 | Skating, speed, balance and agility |
| 2:45 | Angling, controlled skating, eyes up, feet shoulder width apart, stick on ice |
| 3:00 | 1 on 1 - good puck control and support corner - angle away from mid ice |
| 3:30 | 1 on 1 - poor puck control and support - quick pressure |
| 4:00 | 1 on 1 - good puck control and support - stall and contain |
| 4:45 | Contact Confidence drills - strength, agility and balance |
| 5:35 | Mirror drills, follow drills with stick, dot tag, dot football, get puck to pylon |
| 7:30 | 2 on 2 drills, teamwork, to the net |
| 8:10 | Body Checking in the 3 zones Neutralize skating, reduce passing, limit play, pin, shoulder check, body block |
| 9:00 | 1 on 1 position and angling - gap control, defensive pressure |
| 9:20 | Positioning for body check Maintain skating stride, feet shoulder width, legs flexed, eyes on chest, stick steering, coiled power |
| 10:20 | Open ice - high risk |
| 10:30 | Progressions, half speed, 1 on 1 lock arm and knees drive through the pin |
| 11:20 | 1 on 1 - behind the net, facing |
| 12:15 | 1 on 2 |
| 13:20 | Hit from behind |
| 13:30 | Neutral zone - body check when supported Drills, mark an opponent, 1on 1, 1 on 2, gap control, boards |
| 16:25 | Defensive zone - angling at boards, corners, lasso, 2 hand pin |
| 18:00 | Walkouts |
| 19:25 | How to Receive and Avoid Body Check Skating, swivel head, evasive skating, roll from pressure, boards, hit from behind |
| 21:00 | Summary and review |



“RIGHT START CHECKING” VIDEO (PART OF THE COACH LEVEL CLINIC PACKAGE)

| Time | Topic |
|---------------|---|
| 00:00 - 00:45 | Introduction |
| 00:45 | 4 Step Progression (Position-angling, stick, body contact, body check) |
| 1:50 | Position - angling |
| 6:00 | Stick Checks |
| 7:30 | Body Contact (definition and examples) |
| 9:20 | Lead up games for introduction to body checking - dot tag with puck dot tag without puck, elbow lock and bump, unlock and bump, own the dot |
| 10:50 | Body checking how to and positioning |
| 12:00 | Shoulder check - how to |
| 13:40 | Open Ice, on boards - how to |
| 14:00 | Defensive zone, hip check |
| 14:50 | Roller check |
| 15:00 | Danger zone |
| 15:30 | Review - degree of puck control and pressure |
| 17:00 | Integrity of delivery of body check |
| 19:10 | Summary |

To purchase Hockey Canada's Body Checking video call Hockey Canada's BreakAway store at 1-800-667-2242 or go on-line at <http://www.hockeycanada.ca/e/breakaway/index.html> The Right Start Checking Video is available to coaches who attend the National Coaching Certification Program Coach Level

HOCKEY CANADA INITIATION PROGRAM AND COACHING PROGRAM

Initiation Program

Hockey Canada developed the Initiation Program to make children's first contact with hockey a safe and positive experience. It's a structured, learn to play hockey program designed to introduce beginners to the game's basic skills.

The goals of the program are as follows:

- To have fun while playing hockey and engaging in physical activity.
- To learn the basic skills required to play the game of hockey.
- To develop an understanding of teamwork through participation in a variety of activities and adapted game situations.
- To be introduced to the concepts of cooperation and fair play.

Coach Level

This is the entry-level program for the coach who has little or no experience as a coach. Upon successful completion of this 14-hour course, each coach receives a six digit national number and card indicating that he/she has acquired Technical 1 and Practical 1 of the National Coaching Certification Program. Coach Level teaches coaches to:

- Organize and implement an effective practice.
- Design a safety program.
- Teach individual skills such as skating, puck control, and checking.

Intermediate Level

This course is designed for coaches working with players entering the competitive levels of hockey. After successful completion of this 21-hour course, which includes an assessment workbook, the coach's certification is updated to include Technical 2, Practical 2, and Theory 1. Coaches at this level learn:

- The concepts of effective leadership.
- How to communicate with parents, referees, support staff, and hockey administrators.
- How to teach individual tactics, team tactics, and goaltending.
- The principles of growth and development.

Advanced Level

Advanced Level certification is acquired by successfully completing a 30-hour course, an assessment workbook, and a field evaluation. Once completed, the coach's certification is updated to Technical 3, Practical 3, and Theory 2. Advanced Level prepares coaches to:

- Design a nutrition program, a stress management program, and learn about player motivation.
- Analyze skills and interpret statistics.
- Design a yearly plan.
- Teach team play systems and special situations (power play and penalty killing).

Advanced II Level

Coaches attending this national seminar must have successfully completed all requirements at the Advanced Level as well as Level 3 Theory. In addition, all coaches making applications to attend Advanced II Level seminars must have the recommendation of their respective Branch. The information presented at the Advanced II Level, the corresponding group work, the take home assignment, and the field evaluation are directly linked to Hockey Canada's Level 4 Program which consists of twelve tasks designed to prepare candidates for coaching at national and international levels.

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