

SMALL AND MODIFIED GAMES: A TOOL TO LEARN TO PLAY ICE HOCKEY

The small games method signifies an alternative approach to the traditional way of running a class or practice in goal centered games. The teaching style is a tool in learning to play. This method is based on the traditional and natural methods of pick-up games and shinny. Lining players up is avoided, and the different modified games take care of teaching the rules and skills of the sport. The instructor or coach organizes the process through a progression of games. The leagues and playoffs generate the situations that cause the players themselves to analyze ways to win the games. The game situations put the players into challenging situations they find difficult to handle, and encourages them to learn how to succeed. When the players "need to know," it's the time for skill drills. The techniques that are learned in the drills are now relevant to the players' needs and are eagerly performed by the players.



Through the use of small games players can learn the various "playing roles" while they practice essential skills and improve their stamina. Players enjoy learning the game by playing small games. This method of practice makes sense to the players and most importantly, the team gets better. The clear goal of a hockey practice is "to learn to play better."

Small games can be played using six basic methods of utilizing the ice (See section D of the basic on-ice formations). All of these methods can use two or more goals and one or more balls or pucks.



Sample Formation: D6

Use one zone play in a small area of the rink to practice movement and the use of space. Add rules to practice individual and team thinking (playing roles) skills. In another zone, have another game or a skill drill.

When players play on two nets either cross-ice or full-ice, they automatically learn to position themselves both in offense and defense, and react to the transition from defense to offense and visa versa.