

Teaching Defense, the Link to Offense, with little regard for "Systems"

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Defensive Play Justification

- "Knocks" on emphasizing Defensive Play; "Defensive Systems & Philosophies are Ruining the Game"; Playing Defense is NOT FUN!; IT'S HARD WORK; BORING; and so on...
- The fact is, only 1 team can have the puck (offense), so if you do not have it, YOU BETTER GET IT!



Defensive Play Philosophy

- Defense is the Genesis of Offense: players need to be great with skills/tactics needed to defend & get puck back = time with puck (offense)
- Ensure a balance between Offensive emphasis & Defensive emphasis. (skill work, verbage, drill emphasis); relate the impact of transition



Defensive Play Philosophy

- Challenge for Coach to ID Skills/Indiv Tactics required to play the "SYSTEM" you want to play. At what age/level of play is a "SYSTEM" required??
- Coach needs to sell "taking chances in our end to create the turnovers & loose pucks (Pressure/Support) so we gain possession, exit through the middle of the ice" etc.



Defensive Play Philosophy

- Hard to create offense so we require more discipline with the puck(VALUE the puck).
- Once we possess puck, hold onto it until you can the make the play you want to make.



Defensive Play Philosophy

- **WORK!!!!**
- THE CRITICAL COMPONENT

Defensive Play Philosophy

- "Protect the Middle of the Ice" – but be ready & prepared to aggressively get outside the dots, check, & create transition. Remember, defensive structure is designed to acquire puck possession, so if all you do is check to give puck back so you can check again, how do you score enough to win? (offense, transition skills)
- Players who are properly taught & possess defensive skills required, should feel confident in being aggressive outside the dots (trust, support, layers)



Defensive Play Principles

- Pressure - Time & Space factor: Can't give good players either; stick position, skating agility, quickness, reads, awareness
- Contain/Stall – Hold 'em off until help arrives; body position, skating agility, stick position



Defensive Play Principles

- Support –critical component; "layers to your net", creating +ve numbers at the right time at/around the puck; hockey sense, awareness, skating quickness, agility, stick position (next best passing lane).



Defensive Play Principles

- Transition – players are in or can move quickly to a strong defensive posture preparing to regain the puck; avoid being overly exposed to an opp's quick strike offensive transition (5 hard strides, reload, tracking, high F3 shooter, avoid flat offensive postures etc).



Defensive Play Player Skills & Characteristics

- Skater – edge control, speed, quickness
- Balance – core strength, leg strength = body position
- Awareness – hockey sense
- Angling Skills – spatial awareness, teach it
- Checking Skills (stick position, body position, control, contact, understand the objective)
- Puck Skills – ability to make plays under pressure and in small spaces



Player Development:

- Before you can expect execution & performance in any skill or tactical area...



Player Development:

- Practice, Practice, Practice! – create environment, competitive opp's so player's are sold on value of good defense
- Talent is **OVERRATED!** "oh, it's god given"; "he's a natural": **NOPE - COMMIT TO TEACH** and give your highest **VALUE** to **PRACTICE**



Player Development:

- **DELIBERATE PRACTICE** is different from other types of practice in three important ways:
1) clearly define the task, drill, skill to be performed with the proper level of challenge for the athlete or team = **FOCUS** by the **COACH(s)** (if coaching PeeWee, can't do same drill you saw Midget team use)



Player Development:

- 2) provide very clear, simple, appropriate feedback (skills req'd by a coach); "stick position on inside, move your feet, eyes up finish through the hands"



Player Development:

- 3) **REPEAT** to allow for error correction in players & coaching, teaching adjustments; if it's too easy **OR** too hard...



Player Development:

- With training – a lot of reps, time spent – the player typically is able to perform the skill fairly consistently with minimal **THINKING** (*not thinking, just performing*)
- At this point the player has reached the stage of learning, where skill execution becomes increasingly 'automatic'



Player Development:

- Then the challenge is to continually redesign the practice & training to counter the "performing without thinking", keep stretching their ability(ies). Avoid letting it become too "easy".
- **NOTE:** there is benefit to "mindless" reps for purpose of execution, but to see improvement in skill & indiv tactics, need to challenge them



Blues Defensive Team Play

Al MacInnis has coached minor hockey for years, and for years he's not had a system, but his team's win & his players play hockey!

- Forecheck
- Track and Reload
- NZ Forecheck
- DZC



Forecheck

- FORWARDS:
- SAME SIDE CHIP, 2 ON PUCK
- STICKS TAKE AWAY NEXT PASS
- F1 PURSUIT, SEPARATE MAN/PUCK
- ON WHEEL 1 CHASES; don't lose 2 FCers
- PRESSURE D to D, F3 TAKES AWAY NEXT PASS



Forecheck

- DMEN:
- PINCH 2nd PASS ON BOARDS (either D-D or Reverse)
- PINCH THE PUCK NOT THE MAN
- PUNCH THE PUCK BACK DOWN
- STRONG PUCK SIDE GAP
- WSD SKTG TO HOLD GAP, DENY EXIT



Track/Reload

- 5 HARD STRIDES OVER TOP
- ALL 5 PLAYERS ON ½ OF ICE
- ALL 5 PLAYERS IN THE PICTURE
- F'S CHASE ALL THE WAY BACK
- IF FWD CAN CATCH PUCK CARRIER KEEP COMING
- D HAVE 1 VS 1 FROM OUR BLUE LINE BACK
- TRACKING F TAKES "LADDER", D MAN TAKES THE TIGHT TURN
- F's RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL TRAILING PLAYERS
- WEAK SIDE D-man HAS MIDDLE DRIVE



NZ Forecheck

- F1 QUICK UP ICE, STRAIGHT LINE TO PUCK-SIDE 'D', PRESSURE 'D TO D' HARD; DENY THE HINGE
- F2 UP ICE QUICKLY TO DENY BOARDS/REDLINE
- F3 LOCK MIDDLE ABOVE THEIR MIDDLE OPTION STAY INSIDE THE DOTS
- WEAK SIDE D GAPS UP TO TAKE AWAY WEAK SIDE PASS



NZ Forecheck

- ON DEEP COUNTERS:
- COUNTERS BY OPPONENT, F1 MUST STAY CONNECTED TO F2 & F3
- STAY TIGHT AS A GROUP OF 5



Defensive Zone Coverage

- DENY THE BACK OF THE NET, CUT OFF THE TOP & BOTTOM
- D PUSH PUCK CARRIER UP THE WALL
- LET 1VS1 TAKE PLACE; 2nd MAN QUICK ON CONTACT
- RIDE CHECK BACK TO NET; DON'T CHECK & RE-CHECK
- D-man EARLY BOX OUT & FRONT PUCKS/SHOTS
- ALL PLAYERS STICKS ON ICE, DENY ALL PASSES



Video Support

- Forecheck
- Track and Reload
- DZC to Transition

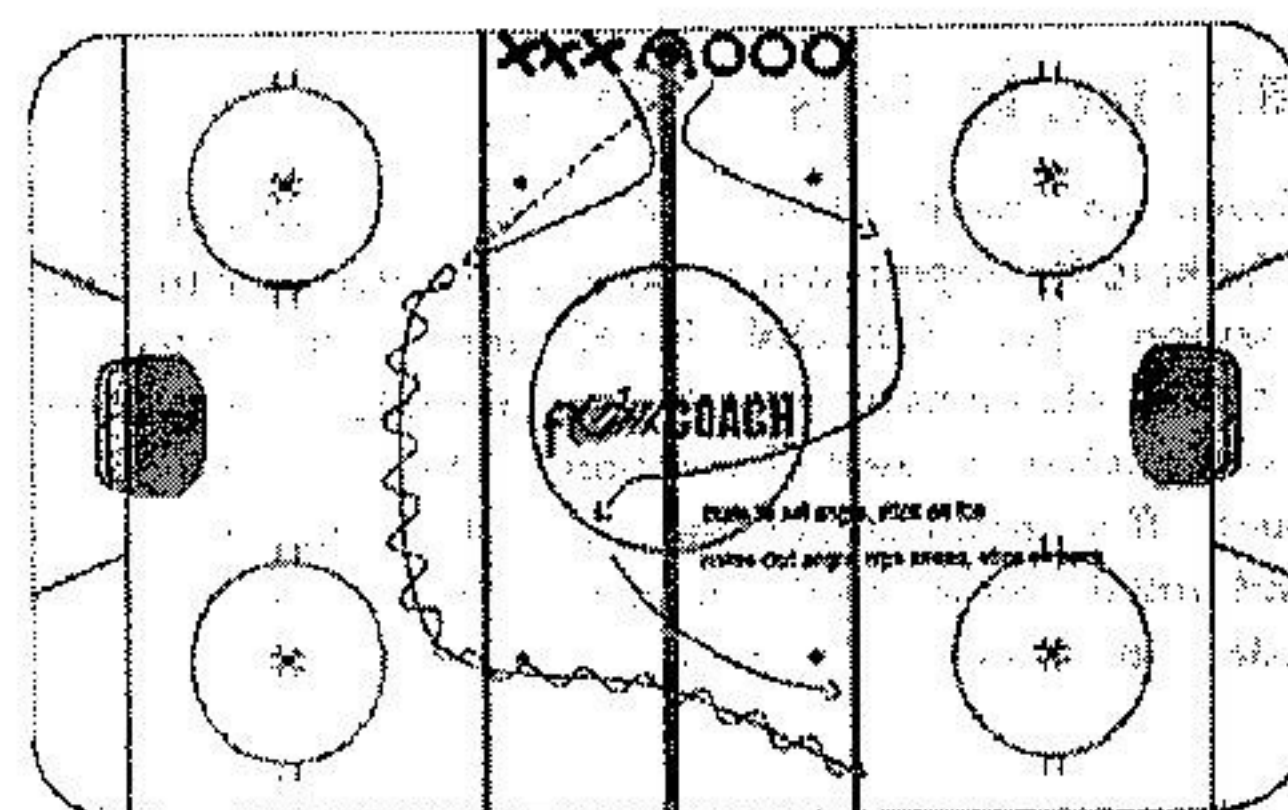


Develop Drills to Develop Skills

- Neutral Zone Angling
- Bassen 1vs1's
- Shark 1vs1; 2vs2



Neutral Zone Angling



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Red Deer Sport Council/Awards

28

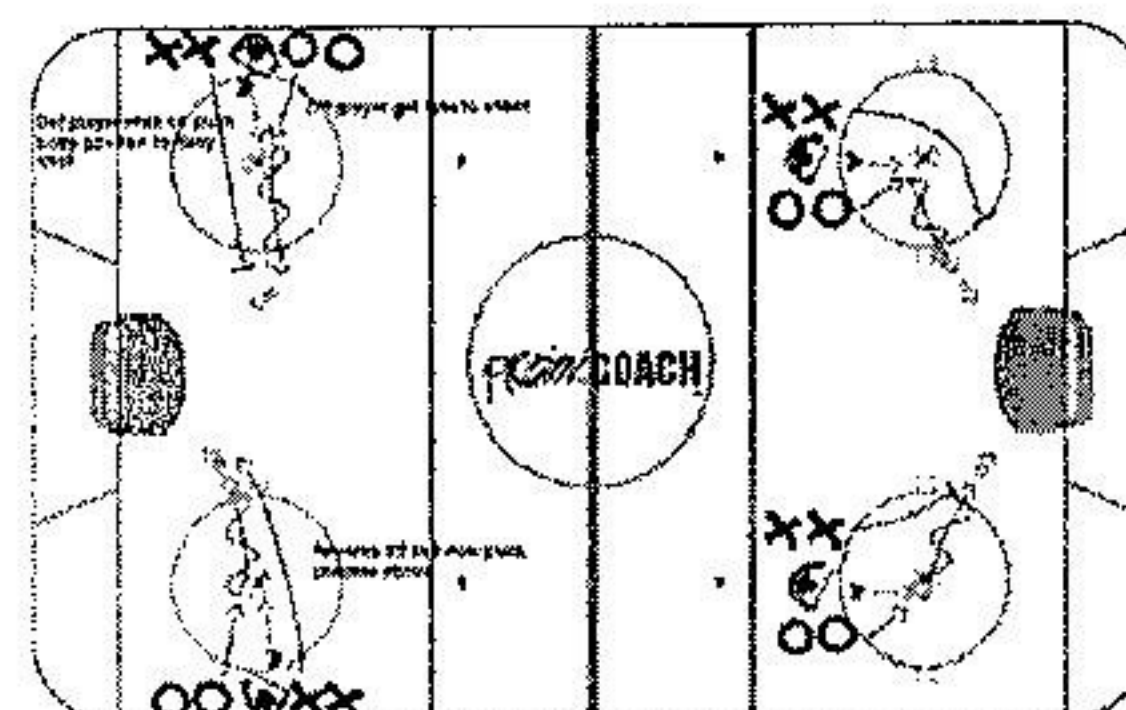
Develop Drills to Develop Skills

■ Neutral Zone Angling

- Great drill for teaching and re-teaching checking technique. Skills = skating, edge work, acceleration, learning proper angling reads, getting hips ahead of puck carrier before contact, stick on puck to deny puck movement and get puck stopped.
- Coach alternates spotting puck 1 way or other, skate routes as shown for puck carrier or checker. Whistle stop when puck is transitioned OR allow checker to separate puck and man and then transition to attack other end? Can make drill a 1vs2 to allow transition; or 2vs2; or have mirror image of the drill set up on other side and stagger starts so there is potentially 2 reps happening at same time, raising hockey sense & awareness.



Bassen 1 v 1



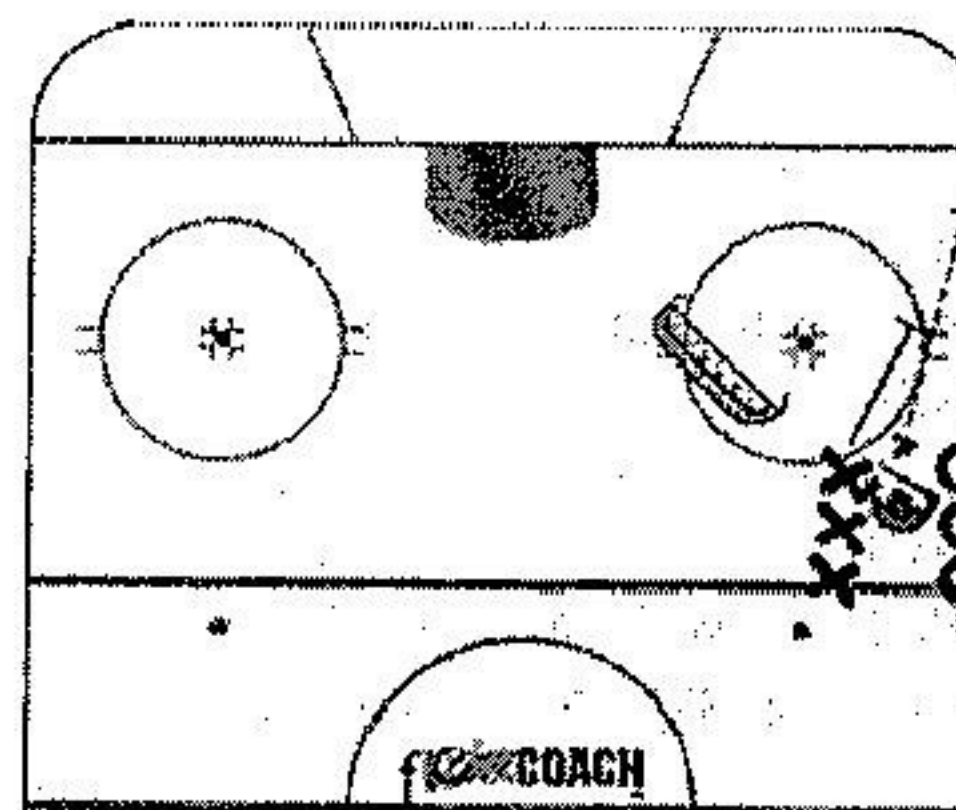
Develop Drills to Develop Skills

■Bassen 1vs1's

Focus on 1vs1 play. Defensive emphasis on angling, stick on puck, body position, stay in battle until whistle. Drill emphasis changes by switching puck position to above or below C or Inside or boardside when pucks are at top of circle. Offensively take attack lane, puck protect and shoot with opportunity.



Shark 1 v 1/ 2 v 2



Develop Drills to Develop Skills

■Shark 1vs1; 2vs2

Coach spots puck, offensive player controls puck and protects it looking for opportunity to attack; defensively maintain body position, "2 HANDS ON STICK" until puck is exposed, stay off the back, focus on hips, 1 hand on stick, stick on puck when puck is exposed. Transition to offense by bouncing puck off boards. Can become a 2vs2 also with same principles and drill dynamics apply, in terms of transitioning, defensive side, with addition of support.



Develop Drills to Apply Skills

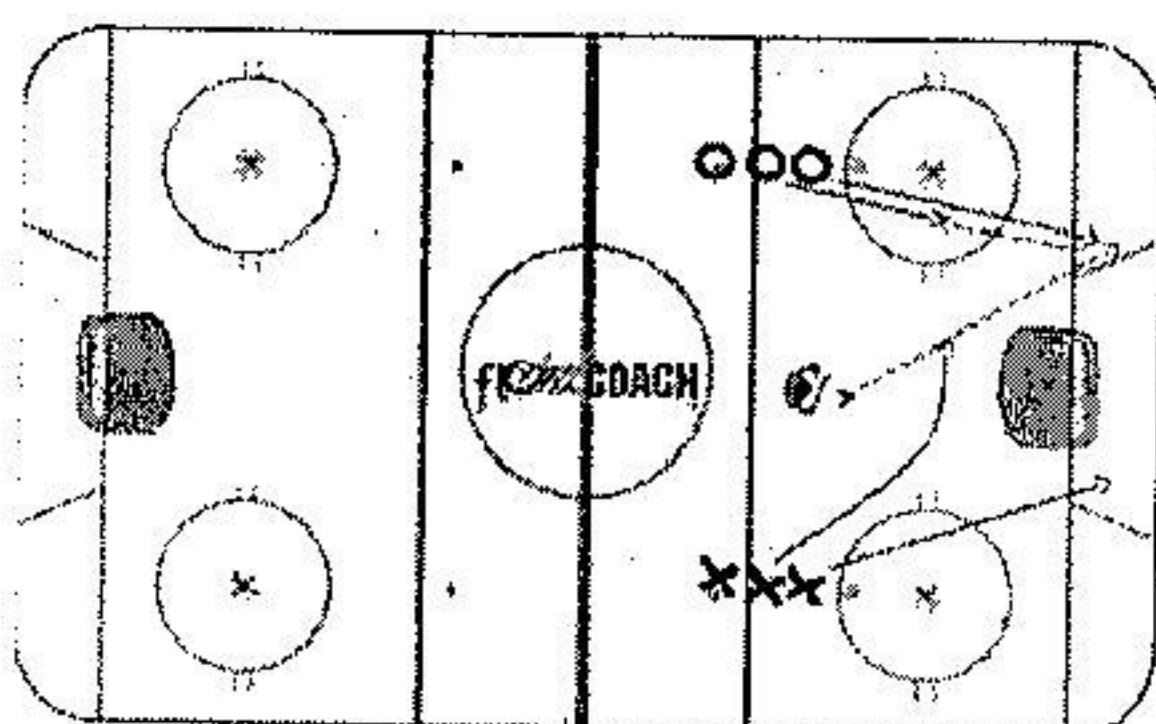
■2vs2 Transition

■1vs1 Funnel with Transition

■2vs2 "Bill" Game



2 v 2 Transition



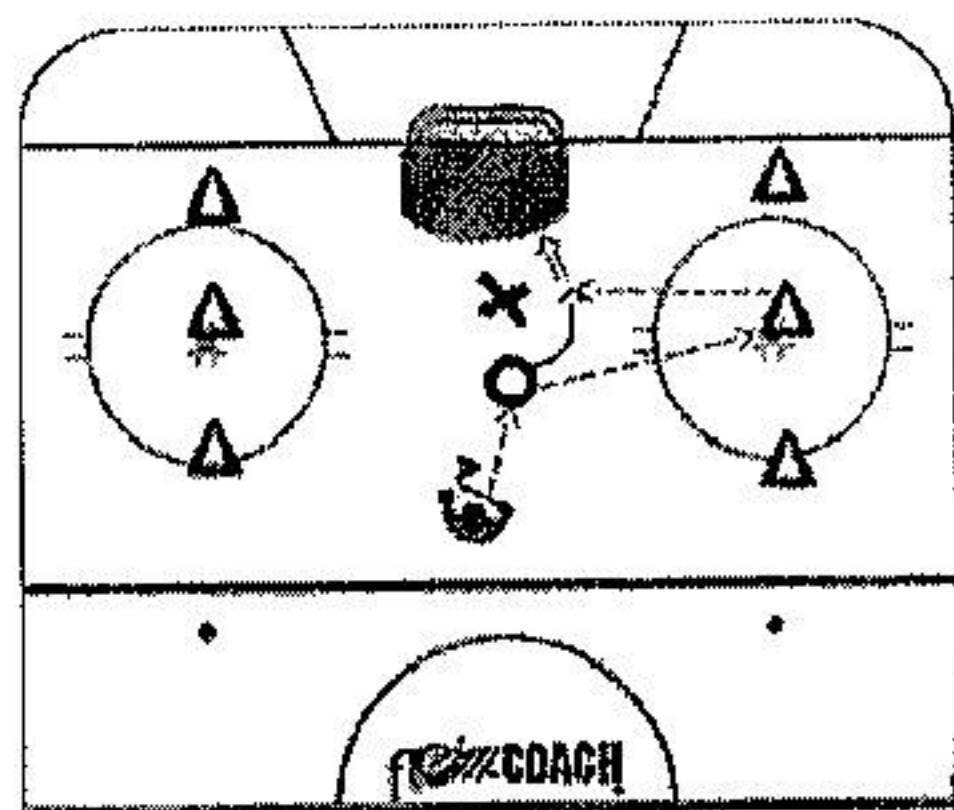
Develop Drills to Apply Skills

■2vs2 Transition

Divide grp into 2 teams starting pt at top of circles in zone, dot line. 2 players each tm into zone; Co spots puck into zone, tms react to puck, tm getting possession 1st can attack right away, other tm defends. If defending tm gains possession they transition to offense with pass to 1st player in their line & then move to get open; player in line can shoot or pass. Players change on Co's whistle, must hustle out of zone, leaving puck; teammates can't enter until players on tm get beyond starting line. Notes: if offensive tm loses possession, they can check puck back & then not required to pass to line to transition to offense; if new players entering gm change before exiting players get past starting pt - Co takes away a pt/goal. Play gm to a set # ie 1st tm to 5 goals wins OR play a timed gm, eg 5 mins.



1v1 Funnel with Transition



Red Deer Sport Council Awards



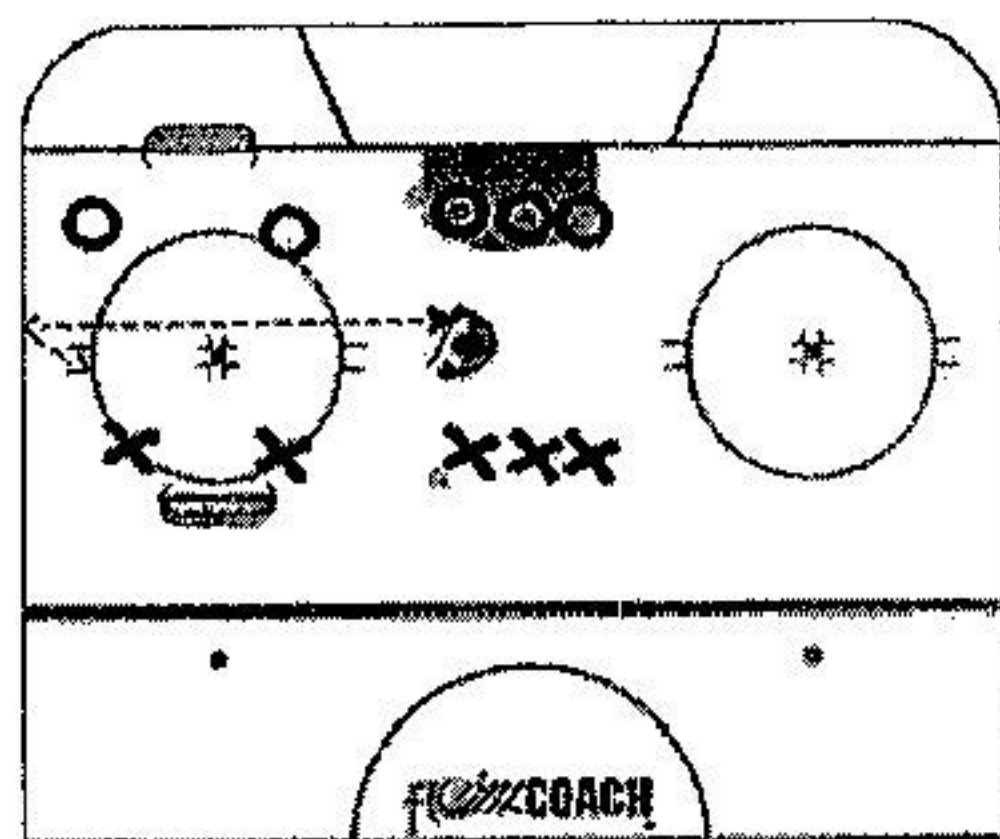
Develop Drills to Apply Skills

■ 1vs1 Funnel with Transition

1vs1 in confined area, designate 1 player as offensive player through set of 5 puck game. Other player defends whole set. Co passes to O player who can use players outlining play area for passing support, move to get open. X defends O; if puck goes outside perimeter or below goalline, puck is dead, new puck passed to O. NB: during set of 5 pucks, a player on perimeter can shoot 1 time (but only 1 player = 1 perimeter shot/5puck set), creating potential for a rhd, pass off pads etc; players on perimeter can pass to other perimeter players LX before puck has to go back to O. Defender has to move feet, stick on ice, defend with body position and stick position, box out on rhd etc. Rotate all players thru so each plays off/def



2v2 Bill Game



Develop Drills to Apply Skills

■ 2vs2 "Bill" Game

Small confined area, competition gm; 2 players per side, start behind a designated starting pt, Co spots puck in & it's gm on. If puck goes beyond perimeter Co spots new puck in; 15-20 shifts, Co whistle for change, new players can't enter gm until players coming off get past the cones, loss of pt for early changes; play gm for time (eg 7 mins gm) or for score (eg gm to 5). Co decides if contact is allowed or focus on stick, angling, body position etc; Goalies can shoot at opp's net;



Thank You

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