

# **RINGETTE**

## **THE FUNdAMENTAL SPORT**



## **U10 COACHING MANUAL**

**BY LARRY WAY**

Dear Coach:

Thank you for volunteering to become a ringette coach. Coaching is for anyone who enjoys sports and cares about people. It takes coaches who are sensitive, caring and dedicated to helping young people have fun while learning the skills of their sport. Sports are a way for young people to develop the life skills that they will need to be successful in school and in the workforce. They can learn to trust and respect each other and learn to work together to achieve common goals. They can develop self-esteem, confidence, good work habits and a positive outlook to life in general. The most important thing coaches can do for their players is to help them learn these life-skills.

This coaching manual has been prepared to help you design a program for your U10 team. Each team is different in terms of age, size, skills and attitude so it will be up to each coach to design a program which will best suit their team. The information contained in this manual has worked well for the teams I have coached over the years, but I wish to stress that there are many other ways to instruct ringette skills. I have included more drills than you would need to design a U10 program so you will have several choices to choose from. I hope that some of the information in this manual will be of some value to you when you design your ringette program.

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# TEAM SELECTION

The most important day in your playing year is the day you pick your team. Team selection is vitally important to the overall success of your team and for your year. Most ringette organizations have policies in regard to the drafting of players for their teams but you must do your homework and be prepared to pick your team. The following are some suggestions that will help you pick your team:

-If your ringette association has a coach mentoring program, sign up for a mentoring coach to help you with your season. Working with an experienced coach will benefit your team a great deal and you will become a more knowledgeable coach through their guidance. If your ringette association does not have a mentoring program then ask someone to help you. This person should be familiar with the players in your division or an experienced ringette coach. You will want to start with a team that is equally skilled as the other teams in your division. A good person to ask would be a coach who has coached in your division for the past two years but has now moved up to the next division. Most coaches will be glad to help you.

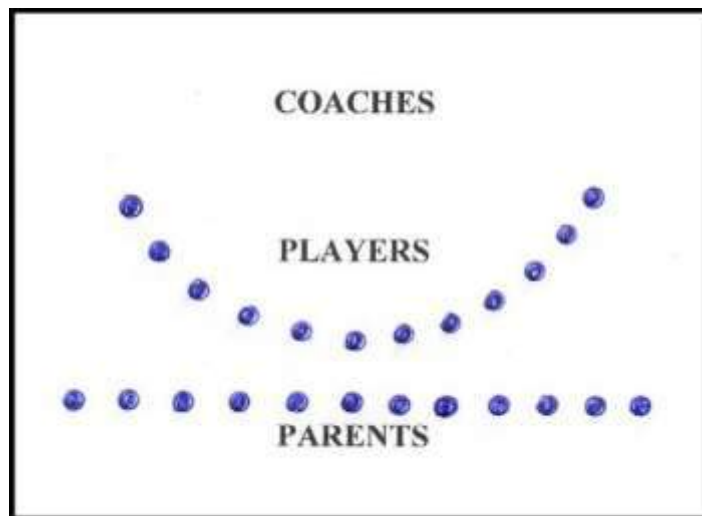
- If you know which Division you are going to coach next year you should go and watch the players now to become familiar with them. Try-outs are only one method of assessing players and in some ways not the best. The more familiar you are with the player's abilities, the better chance you will have of drafting a more balanced team. After the end of the season most coaches will give you an evaluation of their last year's players if you approach them for one. Pre-season skills camps are another way of learning more about the players that will be in your division.

- In U10 many players are uncertain which position they would like to play. Players prefer to play certain positions so if players state their preferred positions then try to draft your team with the positions in mind. Try not to end up with too many players who play one position because it disrupts a team when you have to change several players to new positions. Many players need almost the whole year to learn a new position correctly and there is little point in doing this unless you can see that this player is better suited for the new position. More physically and mentally mature players tend to be the better choice overall.

- Your first choice always has to be a goalie. This is the key player on any team and has to be your first priority. In the younger divisions where there may not be any established goalies, you will have to train one or two players for this position. If possible you should try to find someone to work with your goalie(s) on a regular basis at your practices. Typically it is best to use your next two or three picks to obtain the stronger scorers in the draft who in most cases will become centers. Next you should try and pick the stronger defensive players followed by the forwards. Less experienced players typically are placed into the forward positions to develop their skills. Your more experienced players will help your team more if you place them in the center and defense positions.

## TEAM MEETING-PLAYERS

Your first meeting with your players and team parents is very important and will determine how the players and parents view you initially. Reserve a meeting room at a recreational center or an activity room at a rink, for your first player or parent meeting. Dressing rooms are not the best place to hold an initial meeting with players or parents due to the size and atmosphere of the room. I would recommend that you have your first talk with the players in front of the parents. This will give the parents a chance to see how you respond to their children and to see the enthusiasm you have for their team. A lot of the parent's concerns can be addressed in your talk to the players.



The above format works very well. The coaches and the players sit on the floor or in chairs facing each other with the parents sitting behind the players on chairs. You will want to speak to the players in a calm and positive manner because they will be nervous around you initially and you will want to project the image that you are friendly and approachable. The first talk you have with the players and parents is very important so you should be very prepared for this meeting. Prepare name tags for the coaching staff and for each of the players. Have some blank name tags for the team parents to fill in for themselves. In most cases you will not be familiar with most of your team so it is a good idea to be able to identify the name to the face.

The following items are some of the things you may want to discuss with your players.

- Welcome and introductions. Ask them introduce themselves using the name or names they wish to be called. Tell the players what name or names the coaching staff want to be called.

- Your coaching philosophy in regards to the players and what you expect of them.

-What goals the team should set for the year and what individual goals the players hope to accomplish. Making new friends, improving Ringette skills, developing work ethic, developing life-skills, doing well at tournaments and having fun overall are examples of goals for the year.

-Your philosophy on respect for opponents, officials and teammates.

-Team rules. Remember some rules have to be a joint decision between the coaches and the players. If you set a rule there must be a penalty attached to the rule and you must enforce it if the rule is broken. The best penalties are set by the players themselves because they have ownership of the penalty and they will accept it more readily than if the coach imposed it. Try to set the least amount of rules that you can because too many rules can affect the harmony of the team.

Some examples of rules you can set for the team are:

1. Leaving dressing room clean after a game or practice.
2. Dressed with helmets on fifteen minutes before a game. If they come late for a game they must listen to the pre-game talk and then dress after the team is on the ice. Your pre-game talk is very important and cannot be interrupted by late coming players. This is an example of how you can remind the parents to bring their players early to a game by mentioning it during the players talk.
3. After a game the players come into the dressing room and remove only their helmets until the coaches come in and deliver their post-game talk. Post-game talks should be short and you should only talk about the positives from the game.
4. Cannot miss games and practices without having a valid reason. You have to be flexible in this area because there are many things more important than a Ringette game or practice to your players. If you make your practices interesting and fun for the players they will want to come.
5. Goalie leaves the dressing room before a game first. This is because she has extra stretches to do before her warm-up. Discuss which team cheers the team wants to use or make up.
6. Coaches will only encourage positive comments from the players.
7. Players are expected to behave in a sportsmanlike manner while involved in team activities. Saying negative statements to teammates, throwing water bottles, sticks or playing the game in an unsportsmanlike manner will not be accepted by the team.

-Captains badges. Designating captains can lead to problems within a team so I do not recommend singling out players to fill these roles. You should treat all your players the same without designation some as more special than others. Many leagues do not allow teams to affix badges to the newer style of jerseys where damage to the jersey will occur.

- Philosophy on equal ice time/power lining. When you talk about equal ice remember to equate it to the position they play. If you have one goalie and your typical game time is forty minutes then your goalie will play for forty minutes per game. If you have four defense and two centers then each player would receive twenty minutes of playing time. If you have six forwards or three centers, each would receive a little over thirteen minutes per game. These times are based on the team playing a whole game without taking a penalty which is unlikely in most games. Forwards receive less ice in penalty situations because most coaches will still put out two defense and a center during penalties.

- Tournaments. You will want to discuss things you may do different at tournaments then you would in league games. See the tournament preparation section of this manual.

- Team structure in terms of positions played and the style of play you wish to develop for your team. Players have more fun if they are able play the position they like. You may have to change some of the positions during the year but you should have the majority of the players designated to positions at the start of the year.



- Practice and league game schedules. You should discuss how many teams are in your league Division and what your practice schedule will be and your rules for practices. Refer to the organizing a practice section.

- Social activities planned for the year. Sleepovers, Christmas parties, birthday celebrations, activities at tournaments, year-end wind up activities or any other social event you may have planned for your team.

-If you prepare play books, hand them out and go over the material in them. Refer to the playbook section of the manual.

-Have a member of your coaching staff take the players to a separate room or area and give out their sweaters. Ask one of the team mothers to help so the players receive a jersey that fits them, rather than letting them pick a particular number they like, that does not fit them. It is a good idea to keep the players entertained while you are having your parents meeting. I usually bring a cake that has the team name on it and some treats for the players so the team starts the year with a fun activity. This is the first chance your players have to meet each other and to start developing friendships.

# **TEAM MEETING-PARENTS**

There should be several meetings with your team parents throughout the year but the first one is the most important. This meeting is your first chance to meet and start developing a relationship with the team parents. Introduce yourself to the team parents as they come into the meeting room and get them to fill in a name tag so you will be familiar with their names. They already should have a good idea about your philosophy on coaching, your goals for the team and how you relate to your players from listening to your player talk. Many of their concerns and questions will be answered during your player talk which is why it is important to have your initial meeting with the players in front of their parents.

## **Welcome and introductions.**

Introduce your coaching staff and then ask the team parents to introduce themselves. The following are some items that you may want to discuss at this time.

- Experience and training of the coaching staff.
- Ask the team parents if there are any questions arising from the team handouts (coaches Philosophy, team goals, league structure for your Division for example).
- Ask the team parents what their expectations may be for the team.
- Ask if any of the players have any medical conditions that you should be aware of and that the parent can speak to you in private about this issue. Handing out a medical form to the parents is a good idea as well.
- Decide which tournaments the team would like to attend.
- Discuss the budget and possible fundraising activities.
- Ask for parent volunteers. Managers, treasurers, video people, on ice helpers, a fundraising committee, phoning tree committee and statisticians are the positions most teams require.

## **Handouts**

It is a good idea to prepare a handout which will cover areas like the following:

1. Your philosophy, goals and program.
2. Your team rules and code of conduct.
3. Parents and coaches names, addresses and phone numbers
4. Proposed budget.
5. List of tournaments available for your division.
6. Game and practice schedules.
7. Basic ringette playing rules.
8. A copy of the officials calls.

Here is an example of a team handout.



# **HI AND WELCOME TO THE BRAND X RINGETTE TEAM**

## **COACHES**

**JOE COACH 555-1212**

**SUSAN COACH 555-4567**

## **OUR PHILOSOPHY:**

We believe in the fair play philosophy of coaching. This philosophy includes respect for the rules, the officials, our opponents and our team mates. We believe that each of the girls should have an equal opportunity to learn ringette skills, receive fair ice time, develop life-skills and be able to have fun while enjoying the game of ringette. We stress team concepts where all the girls work toward common goals and to learn to develop self-discipline.

## **COACHING PROGRAM:**

I will describe our basic program, which has been successful for teams we have coached in the past. All coaching programs, however, have to be modified to fit each individual team and age group.

## **DRYLAND TRAINING:**

We will use the less expensive gym facility to introduce the girls to several of the skills and concepts that will be used during the year and practiced on ice. Some of these skills and concepts are:

-How to stretch correctly.

-Team talks. This is where the girls and their coaches can talk over Ringette patterns, ideas, and other items that are important to them. This where the team first gets to know each other, where they can talk about team goals and where the coaches and players start to bond as a team.

.-Visual skills program. This is a program that uses visual aids to help the girls learn to use their vision correctly, in relation to ring pick-up and being able to shoot accurately at the net.

-Stick handling and shooting. Backhand, forehand, backhand sweeps and wrist shots. -How to tuck and protect the ring.

-How to line change

-Confidence course. This program demonstrates to the girls how your mind affects your physical performance and how to have and retain positive thoughts as opposed to negative thoughts. These techniques will help them play better under/the stress of a game.

- Mental skills training. We will introduce some basic mental skills training techniques. The purpose of this program is to enhance their ability to relax, to concentrate, and learn to refocus after losing control, to build self-esteem and to enhance their ability to excel.
- Fun games and contests including Halloween, Christmas and birthday activities.
- Parent and child skills contests and games.

## **ICE PRACTICES:**

Over the course of the year we will try to introduce the following:

- Goalie ring breakout patterns.
- Several defensive systems.
- Free-pass patterns.
- Blue line weaves.
- Shooting techniques.
- Line changing.
- Scoring techniques.
- How to protect against injuries.
- Basic skating program-stops, stride, pivot turns, backwards skating, crossovers and Mohawk turns.
- How to check a ring carrier and how to protect the ring.
- Ice talking techniques.
- Ring-kill patterns.
- Goalie program.

## **SOCIAL PROGRAM**

- Dryland talks, games and celebrations.
- One or more sleepovers and social functions.
- Possible pizza and Laser Quest parties.
- Tournaments and related activities while there.
- Year-end wind up and presentations.

Here are some basic concepts that have worked for us on previous teams that we have coached before.

We stress performance over winning. If you only stress winning and they lose, the kids will not gain a positive outcome from the game. In the long term the kids will win more games using this philosophy because they have learned to give everything they have during a game.

We rarely will single out a player for praise in the dressing room and we will never single out a player for criticism. They are praised for a good effort as a group or for their positions. e.g. the

defense did these things well tonight. We believe in working with the girls on a one to one basis where adjustments are needed. This would include talking to them on the bench quietly, aside in a rink or phoning them at home to talk with them about praise, goal setting or things they need to work on.

We believe in allowing the players to develop self-discipline. We set most of the rules together as a group (like tournament activities and curfews) and we hope to create an environment where the players want to stick to the rules rather than being forced to.

We expect the players to be dressed and ready for our pre-game talk at least 15 minutes before a game and on the ice 5 minutes ahead in the case of a practice. If a player comes to a game late they must wait until the coaches do their pre-game talk and then dress after the coaches leave the room.

We do not accept out of control behavior like throwing water bottles, sticks, equipment and unsportsmanlike acts.

We encourage and expect a 100% effort from the players.

We believe in total team play and the players being coached by the coaching staff only. Please do not offer the players scoring incentives like a loonie for each goal because it forces them play more individually, which really hurts the team.

If you have a concern with any part our program, please discuss it with us in private. If we are approached in an angry manner we will insist that you honor a twenty four hour cooling off period before we discuss the issue. We are willing to alter our program to create team harmony where it is warranted.

We believe that creating a fun environment for the kids that will bring out the best in them and will lead to a more enjoyable year for the whole team.

## **Typical budget handout**

### **No name U10 Team**

#### **Budget Estimate**

<b>Practice ice</b>	<b>2800.00</b>
<b>Team pictures</b>	<b>180.00</b>
<b>Socks</b>	<b>190.00</b>
<b>Wind up costs</b>	<b>500.00</b>
<b>Tournament fees</b>	<b><u>2400.00</u></b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>6190.00</b>

## Possible tournament dates

<b>Nokomis</b>	<b>Nov. 23</b>
<b>Buffalo Plains</b>	<b>Dec. 3-5</b>
<b>Winnipeg</b>	<b>Jan. 21-23</b>
<b>Portage</b>	<b>Jan. 21-23</b>
<b>Calgary</b>	<b>Jan. 21-23</b>
<b>Medicine Hat</b>	<b>Feb. 11-13</b>
<b>Regina</b>	<b>Feb. 4-6</b>
<b>Saskatoon</b>	<b>Feb. 18-20</b>
<b>Provincials</b>	<b>Mar. 12-14</b>

## WORKING WITH TEAM PARENTS

The primary role of a coach is that as a problem solver. The key to having a fun year with a team is to avoid creating unnecessary problems and to solve any problems that arise quickly. Developing a working relationship with your team parents is vitally important to the success of your team. You need their support to ensure that their child and the team will have an enjoyable year. The following are some suggestions of how to build a good relationship with team parents:

Do not isolate yourself from the parents. You cannot develop a working relationship with the parents if you do not spend time with them. Give them an opportunity to get to know you and to learn about your programs. Team parents play a large role in creating fun and enjoyment for you and your team. If you feel there is a small problem developing with a parent, deal with it immediately before it becomes a big problem. In most cases problems start with a misunderstanding. These normally can be cleared up by discussing the problem and explaining the situation to the parent.

At some point during the year you may wish to change how a player performs a skill or to discuss their attitude toward some aspect of the game. Talk to their parents and explain why you think this change is necessary. If the player complains about the change to her parents then they can support you in your effort to make improvements. There can only be one set of coaches on a team so make sure the parents agree to your program and reinforce it.

Involve as many parents as you can in the operation of the team. They will become more interested in the team and will become more supportive of the teams activities. Positive encouragement from the parents goes a long ways toward helping the players and the coaches have a fun year.

If a player is doing well in some area let the parents know. Parents need positive encouragement just like the players and coaches. Talk to all the parents as often as you can and always thank them for anything they do for the team. Parents generally focus only on their child so praise for their children really helps create team harmony.

Remember to praise the player to her parents in private so other players and parents do not get the impression you are picking favorites.

Evaluate criticism before you react. It is hard to satisfy every person on a team so do not be surprised if you receive some critical remarks during the year. Whether or not the criticism is valid, you can learn and grow as a coach from receiving it. Do not be discouraged about coaching because of a critical remark. We would not have any experienced coaches if they had all quit the sport after receiving criticism in their beginning coaching years. Coaching becomes more enjoyable with experience.

Some team parents will not understand some of the playing rules or some of the techniques and strategies you use with the team. Take the time to explain these areas to the parents. You can give them a written explanation in a handout or have short meeting after a game or practice. It is a good idea to issue handouts to the parents on a regular basis so you can keep them informed of your programs and how you feel the team is responding to them. I will include a sample of this type of handout below that you could sent out early in the year.

### **COACHES CORNER BY LARRY CHERRY**

This will be the first of several articles that I will be writing for the world famous Panthers News Publication. I must inform you, however, that my editorial pay has to equal the huge salary I receive as one of your coaches. We would like to keep you informed of what skills and programs we are introducing to the girls and how they are responding to them. On ice drills generally fall into three categories:

1. Concept drills. These are skills like introducing a free pass or a breakout play. You can only maintain an activity rate of 30% to 50% of the players involved. You have to introduce these patterns slowly so the players can absorb the concept of the drill.
2. Skill drills. This is when you are practicing a specific skill like a power skating technique like parallel stops and pivot turns. You can maintain an activity rate of 50% to 70% of the players involved.
3. Activity drills. These are drills where several activity stations are set up or a long course is set up that will involve most of the players. You can maintain an activity rate of 80% to 90% of the players involved. We will be using all three of these drill techniques this year. In our first dry-land session we inspected the player's equipment to see if any of their equipment was unsafe. We were looking for Holes in the palms of gloves and skate blades that are bent or have lost the correct factory radius (I have included an article explaining skate radius). We were looking for elbow pads that are too small or under padded, shin pads that have the plastic caps broken, necks guards that do not extend well below the neck area and helmets that do not have the correct mask or parts. At this level of play the girls must have quality equipment to help protect them from injury. In dry-land we introduced our vision program that will help the players learn to pick up the ring and to score more effectively. We also worked on how to correctly pass and receive a ring. In this week's dry-land we will work on more stick skills and will be introducing the first stage of our mental training program. We used the first ice practice to evaluate the girls overall ringette and skating skills. We tested their ring pick-up, passing and skating skills (stops, tight turns, mohawks, basic stance and stride). We observed their general attitude in terms of listening to the instructions from the coaches, their enthusiasm and their work ethic. In the first few ice practices we will be introducing the basic goalie warm-up, goalie ring

breakout, the hi-low breakout system, the defensive triangle, an offensive center free pass and a defensive center free-pass pattern.

We will be going with four defense, six forwards, three centers and our goalie. One of our forwards can also play defense and will play defense when we are short defensive players or in a penalty situation. This year's Panther's team has the potential to be an outstanding Tween team. They have overall good skating skills, excellent ring pick up, good ice sense and above average desire to learn and excel. Normally a team's success depends on how well the players work together and how good the harmony is on the team. This team already gets along well and the players are very friendly and positive. We very much appreciate the support and the enthusiasm the parents and the players are bringing to this team. We feel this year will be a fun and exciting one for the girls, parents and coaches.

Your coaches

This type of handout keeps your team informed of your programs, how your players are responding to your programs, and gives you a chance to express your enthusiasm for your team.



## TEAM STRUCTURE

Team size and structure will depend on many factors and can change during the season due to injuries and positional changes. Team size ideally changes with the age and the skill level of the players. At the Bunny, Novice, Petite B/C, and Tween B/C level it is best to go with smaller teams (12 skaters and one/two goalies) so the players receive maximum ice time to develop their skills. At the A and AA level, larger teams are necessary because of the endurance factor. At some tournaments these teams could play up to six and seven games in a week-end, which would exhaust a smaller team. Larger teams (15 skaters and one/two goalies) also gives the coaching staff more options in regards to strategy, matching lines and specialty plays. The size of most ringette teams is usually determined by the number of players in each division. Most ringette associations will try to place 11 to 14 players on each team. I have listed below various options you can use in terms of setting up your team.

## TEAM SIZE

(Code. Goalkeeper-GK, Defense-D, Center-C, Forward -F)

Most teams will have only one goalkeeper so I will list only one GK for each team. If you have two goalkeepers then you would add one more player to each of the team rosters listed below.

### 11 Players

I-GK, 4-D, 2-C, and 4-F. This allows you to keep the defense and forward lines together except during penalties. A team of 11 players gives you the easiest system for giving all the players' equal ice time and allowing them more opportunity to learn the skills. Many drills involve two groups of five players so a team that has four defense and six forwards/centers works out well for practicing purposes. Free pass plays, breakout patterns and one on one checking would be examples. In practices you should strive for the highest activity ratio for your players that you can.

### 12 Players

I-GK, 5-D, 2C, and 4-F. Defense lines tend to function better in mixed lines than forward lines do. If you go with five defense you will keep your forward lines together and your defense will not tire out as easy because of the extra player. One of the defense will have to be trained to play forward in case one of the forwards are missing. This pattern works well if you are short one of your players on a regular basis.

I-GK, 4-D, 2-C, and 5-F. The other pattern you can use is the 5 forwards system. This system allows equal ice time for the forwards and centers. You give each of the forwards and centers a number in this order:

1. Center - plays center three times.
2. Forward - plays forward three times
3. Forward - plays forward three times
4. Forward - plays forward two times, center one time.
5. Center - plays center three times.
6. Forward - plays forward three times
7. Forward - plays forward three times

Rotation: The forward players line up in the bench and go out using this rotation. 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-1-2-3-4-5-6-7-1 2-3-4-5-6-7 start over with 1-2-3

When you use this pattern you will always have a center and two forwards on a line. You have to match your players a little more carefully with this system because you end up with several different line match-ups. This system is used when you need more endurance from your offense. The big disadvantage of this system is that there is very little line chemistry established because the offensive lines are mixed up each time they go out.

### 13 Players

I-GK, 4-D, 2-C, and 6-F. This number of players is also ideal for a younger ringette team. Your defense and forward pairings stay the same with only the centers rotating with different lines. The two extra forwards give you more options to use during games and help to maintain and increase team endurance. Again you need to train forwards to play center and defense in the case of penalties or players missing. A team of 13 can be divided into two groups of six at a practice plus the goalie. Defense triangle (three on three), scoring plays and the goalie ring breakout would be examples.

### 14 Players

I-GK, 5-D, 2-C, and 6-F. Same pattern as above with 13 players but you have an extra defense to provide more endurance for the defense group. This system works well if you have two very strong centers.

I-GK, 4-D, 3-C, and 6-F. With this system you go with three forward lines. This is the best choice when you have a team of thirteen skaters and a goalie. The main advantage is that the three offensive lines stay together on a regular basis as does the two lines of defensive players. Line chemistry is a very important aspect of the game. Players who play on the same line develop a sense of where each of them will be on the ice which leads to good play structure.

You can design patterns and plays that fit the skills and abilities of the players on each line as opposed to forcing all the players to adapt to one system. Some players are very creative when they are on a line together and you should encourage this creativity where possible. One of the most effective strategies a team can have is to have all three forward lines perform different plays and patterns. This makes it difficult for the opposing team to counteract your attack patterns when each line has a different pattern.

### 15 and 16 Players

I-GK, three forward lines and 5 or 6 defense. Teams over 16 players are difficult to work with unless several players are missing on a regular basis due to work and other commitments (Belle, Deb. and Master's teams).





# MAKING LINES UP

In the U9 and U10 divisions the players should be encouraged to try all the positions so they can find out which one they like the best and it gives the coaching staff a chance to see which position the player is best suited for. In the higher divisions most of players will be accustomed to playing a certain position but changes can still be made. Try to place the players into a playing position as soon as you can. It takes several months for a U10 player to learn and become comfortable with a position so leave them in one position and avoid moving their position around from game to game. If they are playing forward in one game you will be encouraging them to stay up high and attack and in the next game if they are playing defense you will be telling them to stay back and defend. This just confuses the players and increase the time needed for them to learn a playing position.

How you make up your lines will depend on many factors:

1. How many new players are on your team?
2. Skill variation between players.
3. How many position changes are required due to a shortage or a surplus of players that play either defense, forward or center.
4. How many players you have that are left or right handed.
5. How well do the players work together on their line. Line chemistry is very important.

Many of these decisions are made somewhat by trial and error but certain patterns do work better than others. Each group of players however, can be different so you will have to make your decisions based on the players on your team.

## DEFENSE LINES

### 4 And 6 Defense Players

Rate your players on a scale of 1 being the strongest down to 4, your less experienced player (in the case of 4 players) or 1 to 6 (in the case of 6 players)

Pair 1 and 4 together and 1 and 6 together (your most experienced defense with your least experienced defense). The stronger defense can cover for the weaker defense until she improves. The stronger defense will serve as a good role model for the weaker defense in terms of technique.

If you have a new player do not place her on defense but rather as a forward so she has a better chance at learning skating and ring handling skills. An inexperienced player or skater is vulnerable playing defense and is far less intimidated as a forward. She can be more valuable to the team playing forward and can improve her skills quicker.

Pair your 2 and 3 together if you have 4 defense. They will be fairly even in skill and will work well as a team.

Pair 2 with 5, and 3 with 4 if you have 6 defense. There are many other factors that you will have to consider when you put pairings together (personality, size, left or right handed, do they work well together, etc) and skill levels of the players can change as the year goes on. Do not be afraid to make changes during the year if you think it will help the team.

Designate one of the players to be a defensive D (stay homer) and one to be an offensive D (go upper). After a game or two it will be easy to pick out which is which. If you have two offensively minded D together they tend to give up too many break a-ways to the other team. If you place two defensively minded D together you tend to give up scoring opportunities or lose the advantage of the D carrying the ring into the offensive zone. Always place a left and a right hand shooter together on a defensive line where possible. Most players are left handed with an average of 7 left hand shooters and 3 right hand shooters out of 10 players. See explanation in the defensive triangle section of this manual.

### **Five Defense players**

With five defense you simply play them all equally. If they understand the basic defense patterns and movements they will be able to work together well as units. If two defense players work exceptionally together you could use them for penalty killing situations. You would use a 1 – 5 rotation system that would best for the players you have. You may want certain players to be together or not together and you can generally arrange that by assigning specific numbers to the players.

## **FORWARD LINES**

### **Six Forward Players**

In the younger divisions it would be ideal to place the 3 most experienced players on one line and the 3 least experienced players on the other line. This would give each line the best opportunity to develop and grow as players. It would however require the cooperation of the other coaches in the division. This system only works when all the coaches match their lines

And play each line against players of their skill level. Again rate your centers and forwards using 1 as the most experienced and 4 the least experienced.

Place C-1 with F-1 and F-4. The best approach with two forward lines is to make them both fairly equal in strength. This makes it tougher for opposition teams to play their stronger line against your weaker line and it takes away this responsibility away from you because you will feel comfortable with both lines on the ice. This grouping will also help the newer players learn skills while the more experienced players are protecting her. You do however have to encourage the more experienced players to include the less experienced player in the play. If this becomes a problem have the less experienced player become the neutral ice player (the player playing the high position of the high-low breakout system) on that line. This is the player who will receive the ring in the neutral zone and will pass it up to the more experienced player, who is skating into the other team's defensive end. In this way the experienced player will involve the less experienced player in the play knowing that she will get the pass back.

The less experienced player playing in the high position will have more time and open ice to enable them to have a better chance of gaining control of the ring.

Place C-2 with F-2 and F-3. These players will be more even in skills and will develop well together as a group.

## **7 Forward Players**

Use the 7 player rotation system as explained under the 12 player team structure section.

## **8 Forward Players**

This system uses 2 centers and 6 forwards. Rate your centers and forwards using 1 as the most experienced and 6 as the least experienced.

Pair F-1 with F-6 Pair F-2  
with F-5 Pair F-3 with F-  
4.

Your two centers will rotate every second shift. This system will make all your lines fairly even and will allow all the players to develop and will make the team stronger overall. If possible match up forwards who are left and right hand shooters together. If possible match up forwards who are left and right hand shooters. This gives them a better chance of setting up scoring plays because they can position themselves on the side of the net that gives them their stronger forehand shot.

## **9 Forward Players**

This system uses 3 centers and 6 forwards. Place C-1 with F-1 and F-6. Place C-2 with F-2 and F-5. Place C-3 with F-3 and F-4. You will have to experiment with your line match-ups until you find which groups of three work best together. There are two schools of thought in making up lines. One theory is to make all three lines similar in skill so you do not have a line that is considerably weaker than the other lines, which makes them too easy to score on by the other teams. The second theory is to put together a scoring line that would score most of your goals and your other line(s) would become checking lines or a line that you hope can just keep the other team from scoring on them. I find you are better to make all your lines similar in skill to promote team harmony and by not indicating that some players are more valuable than others. It makes it difficult for opposing teams when all three lines are able to score against them. If you only have one scoring line it makes it easier for an opposing team to shut down this line and limit your goal scoring.

## **EQUIPMENT AND COACHING AIDS**

There are several coaching aids and equipment parts you will need to obtain for your team. An equipment bag with some storage pockets will work well to store and carry your equipment in. There are some basic items you will need to obtain in your first year of coaching.

**RULEBOOK** - Be familiar with league and Ringette Canada playing rules.

**PYLONS** - 5 to 10 are required depending on age group.

**RINGS** - You need at least 2 per player. Many drills require the players to pass or shoot several rings at a time. You waste valuable ice time when players have to retrieve one ring at a time.

**WHISTLE**- Use a cord so the whistle will hang around your neck for easy access.

**COACHES BOARD** - A whiteboard with a rink drawn on it works best. You can use a whiteboard marker to display information to the players during games and practices.

**FIRST AID KIT** - There are a number of models and sizes available. Find out what the ambulance response time is in your community.

**BASIC REPAIR KIT** - Should include screwdriver and helmet screws.

**RINGETTE STICK** - You will need a spare stick for the bench during games and practices. **TAPE**

- Clear tape for shin pads, pants and black for sticks.

**WATER BOTTLES** - Use the model that has a small pouring spout instead of the one with a large straw type pouring spout. Players have to be instructed to not place their mouth on the spout of the bottles but rather to spray the water into their mouth. You will want to prevent the spread of infectious diseases among your players. Encourage the players to bring their own bottles. You will still need to bring a set of water bottles for those who do not have their own or forget to bring them.

There are some other items that you may want to add to your equipment kit in future years:

**LARGER REPAIR KIT**- Neck guard, mask support clips, elbow pads and chin straps.

**STOP WATCH** - Useful for the evaluation of performance and for putting lines together based on skating speed.

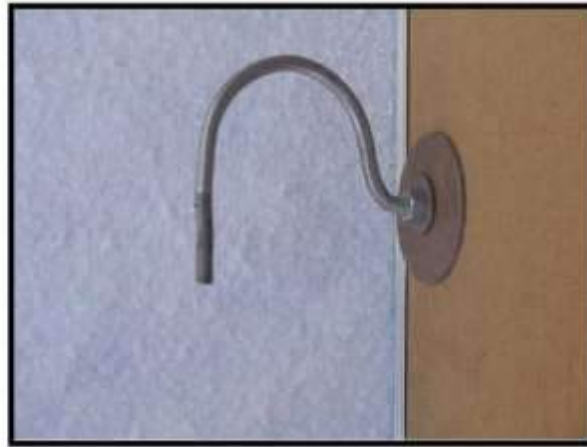
**HONING STONE** – This is used for removing burrs from a skate blade or from a metal tip on the stick and to hone dull skate blades.

**LARGER WHITEBOARD OR CHAUKBOARD FOR PRACTICES** - A larger board makes it easier for the players to receive instruction during practices. Put hooks on the back so it can hang from the net bar. See pictures below.

**SET OF BIBS** - If you do not have a second set of jerseys for your team you will find a set of bibs useful. Players learn the team patterns and drills easier if each group of players is dressed in different colored jerseys. If you have eleven players have a forward line and a defense line wear one color of jersey and the other two lines wear another color. If you have three forward lines have each line wear a different color of jersey or bibs.

**COACHING AIDS** - You may wish make some teaching aids to help the players learn skills in a more interesting and effective way. Using teaching aids provides greater motivation for the players to practice the skill for a longer period. They can also be used to introduce a new skill or concept to the players. Examples of how teaching aids can be used are explained in the ring pick-up, shooting and mental training sections in this manual.

Example of a large whiteboard that hangs on the crossbar of the net



## PLANNING A PRACTICE

The first step is to develop a practice program for your team that you can use as a guideline for the entire season. The second step is to plan out how to divide the skills you wish to instruct into the number of practices you have available. The third step is to produce the maximum benefit for your players out of each practice you run.

The following are some suggestions you may want to use to plan and run your practices: - Encourage the players to be ready five to ten minutes before practice time.

- Have your practice plan well organized and always include more material or drills than you think you will need for each session. It is important to move on to a new drill when the players lose interest in the one they are doing or if a drill does not suit your team's needs.
- Check out your practice ice or gym for possible safety hazards. Look for tape or other debris on the ice and repair any major gouges in the ice surface.
- Check to see if all the players are wearing their basic equipment.
- Make sure all the rink enclosure doors are closed during a ice practice.
- Avoid drills that require players to race or stop near the boards.
- Have water available for the players to augment what they bring to ensure there is water available for all the players. Have the players place their water bottles on top of the net along with your bottles. They can drink while you are explaining the next drill which will save several minutes during each practice.
- Explain to the players what your signals for instruction will be. E.g. One whistle blow will mean you are starting or stopping a drill. Two quick whistle blows will mean the players are to come to where you are or where you are pointing to, with your hand or stick.
- Explain each drill carefully using demonstrations where necessary, so the players have a clear understanding of what they are to do before they start the drill. Explain why they are

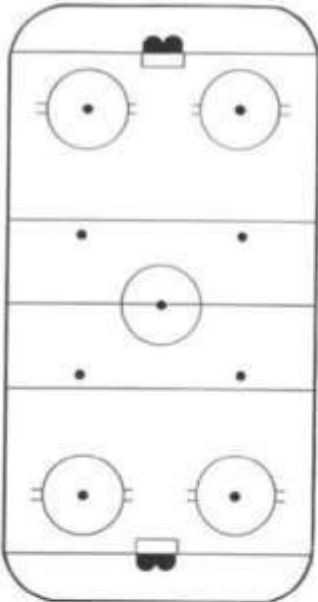
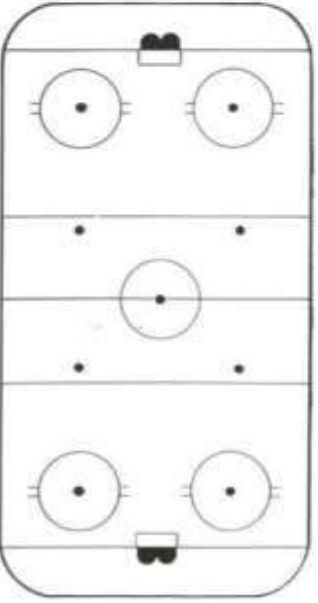
doing a particular drill and how the skills learned from this drill will help them in a game situation.

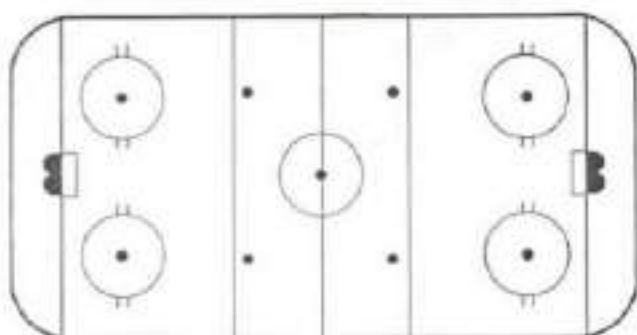
- Do not allow horseplay or lying on the ice or the gym floor.
- You will need a minimum of at least twenty rings.
- Select drills so that a maximum number of players can participate at once. Avoid drills where one or two players are active while the other ten watch. If you are using full ice, divide your team into groups and use both ends of the ice.
- Set up a separate program for your goaltender and designate someone on your coaching staff or ask someone experienced to come in and work with them. You will want to design your practices so your goaltender/s will receive instruction that is relevant to their position and that they will have an opportunity to be active during a practice.-Avoid drills where the players have to compete with each other in a confrontational way.
- Always start with a basic drill and work up to more complex ones. Most skills are difficult to instruct without using a progressive drill system
- .-You should review the skills you worked on in the last practice. Players have to continue practicing new skills on a regular basis or they will be unable to retain the knowledge of the skill. It is best to allow your players to learn fewer skills well than to introduce numerous skills that they do not do well.- Introduce new skills early in the practice so the players will be more fresh and receptive to learning the skills.- Alternate endurance or very active drills with less active drills. This will allow time for the players to recover between drills.
- Work on making practices fun and interesting for the players. Use games, coaching aids or any new approach that may make learning the skills more exciting for the players.



**What do you mean “slashing” we are just wiping the snow off our sticks**

## SAMPLE PRACTICE PLAN FORMS

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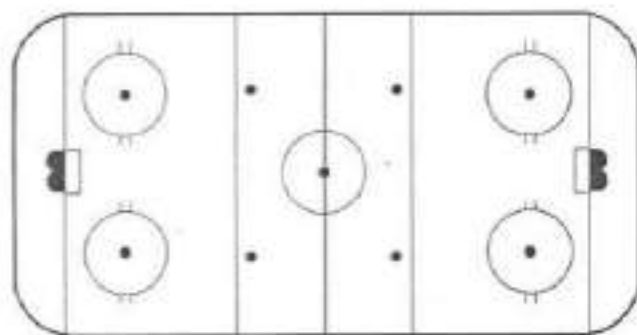
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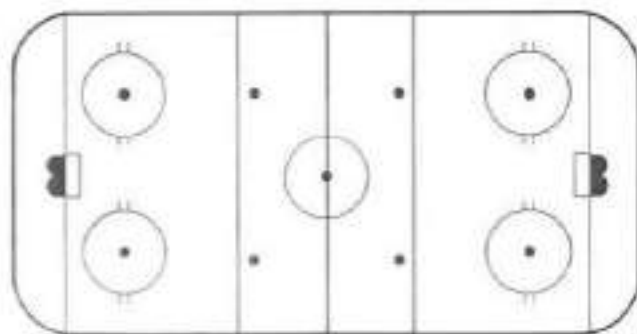
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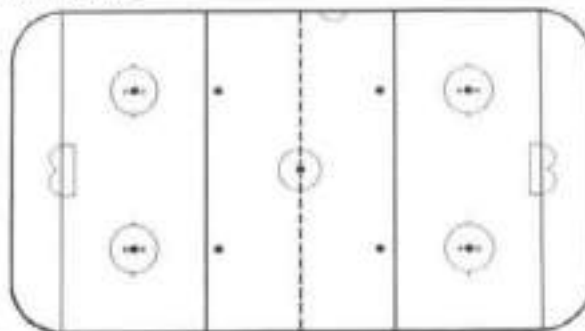
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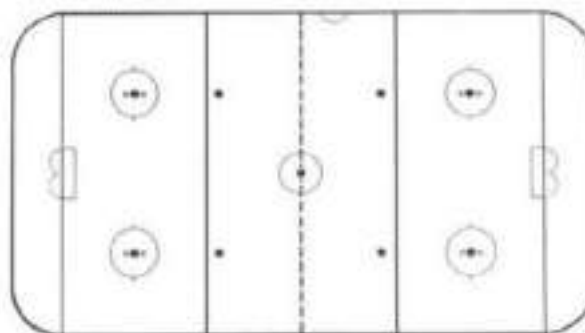


## Drill Form

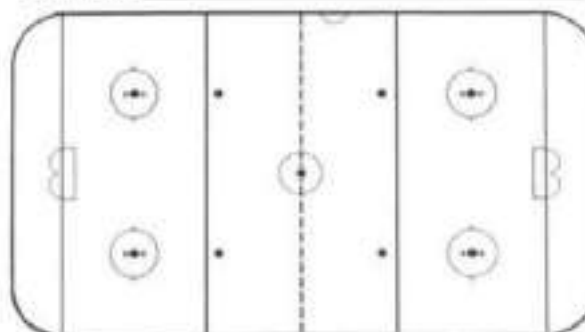
Drill Name \_\_\_\_\_



Drill Name \_\_\_\_\_

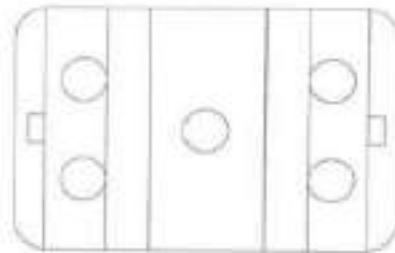


Drill Name \_\_\_\_\_



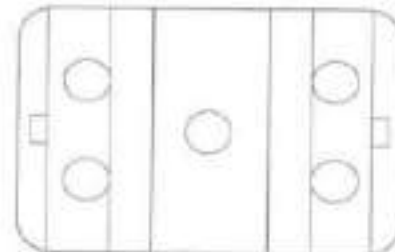
**Drill**

Handwriting practice lines for the first drill, consisting of eight horizontal lines.



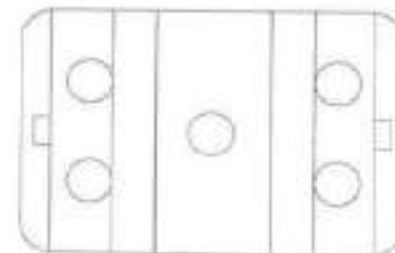
**Drill**

Handwriting practice lines for the second drill, consisting of eight horizontal lines.



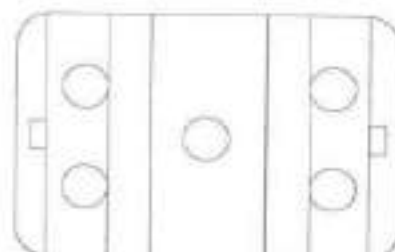
**Drill**

Handwriting practice lines for the third drill, consisting of eight horizontal lines.



**Drill**

Handwriting practice lines for the fourth drill, consisting of eight horizontal lines.



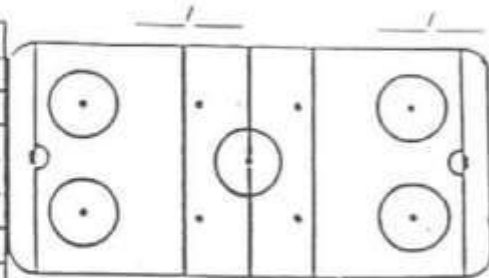
PRACTICE PLAN

WARMUP:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

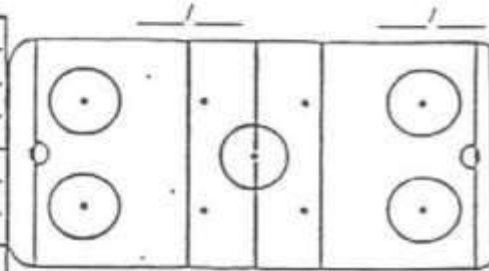
SKILL:

NOTES:



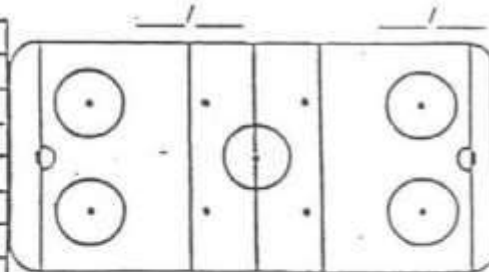
SKILL:

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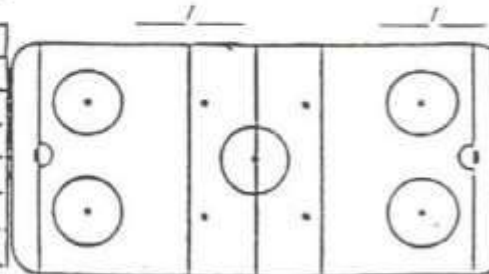
SKILL:

NOTES:



SKILL:

NOTES:



COOL DOWN:

## DRY-LAND PROGRAM

Booking practices at a gym or recreational center should be a part of your overall program for your team. The rental costs are a fraction of what ice rental costs are and there are many benefits of having gym based practices. Almost all your on ice practice drills can be practiced or introduced in a gym setting which reduces your time spent on ice explaining the drills. Ice rental is very expensive so you must get the maximum use of your ice time. I would use seven or eight one hour gym practices for a U10 age team. In the gym because the players are all wearing running shoes, they all are equal skaters. On the ice this is not the case so many of your drills can be more successfully practiced in the gym. The ring travels on most gym floors similar to how a ring travels on dirty ice so the passing and ring pick up drills work well in a gym setting. Some of the on ice drills will not work well in a gym setting but at least you can introduce the basic concept of the skill and the drill you will be using.

**Equipment inspection:** In the first gym session I have all the players bring their equipment and lay it out on the gym floor. The coaching staff looks over the equipment to see if there are any pieces of equipment that needs to be replaced. This is a safety issue for your players and it is best to replace equipment at the start of the year. Parents will appreciate your concern for their children and they will replace the equipment as soon as possible. I ask the players to bring their gloves to the gym practices in case we are doing checking drills or other drills where their hands may be hit by a stick.

**Team bonding:** The gym setting allows time for your players to get to know each other in a more relaxed environment than they will have in ice practices. I recommend that the players form a semi-circle formation in front of the coaches (coaches sitting next to a wall) at the start of each session. At the start of these sessions I like to discuss things that happened during the week in Ringette, at home, at school or any topic the players want to talk about. If any of the players have jokes to tell, let them. Team chemistry and bonding is the basis of all great teams so do not be afraid to use a lot of your gym time for the players to have fun and get to know and like each other. This is also the setting to discuss situations that may have happened in a prior game or practice. Some issues should not be discussed in a dressing room after a game if the players have become upset for some reason. Discuss the issue in this setting because the players will be more receptive to change after a few days have passed. You want to create an atmosphere where the players are willing to discuss issues that are important to them and they are allowed to make decisions as a team and feel that they are a part of the team.

## DEVELOPING TEAM SPIRIT AND HARMONY

Team spirit and harmony is characterized by the following:

- Mutual respect for each other and for the coaches.
- Good communication.
- Closeness with each other.

- Acceptance of each other.
- Trust.
- Encouragement.

The performance potential of a team, as a unit, is much greater than the addition of each player's level of talent individually. Many times a team with few individually talented players will win over a team with more individual talented players, because they work together better as a team. Team spirit draws players out and makes them feel that they are part of something greater than themselves. Team spirit builds inspiration, confidence and intensity among the players. Team spirit encourages players to play at a level beyond their normal limits. The following are some suggestions of how to build team spirit and harmony on a team:

Treat all players equally. Many players will look up to the coach as a surrogate parent. They will compete with each other for your attention and approval. When coaches favor some players over others, they set up a competition among the players on their team. The players who feel slighted will resent the players who are the coach's favorites. Nothing will destroy team spirit and harmony faster than picking favorites on your team. Do not show favoritism on your team.

Have the team spend time together. The more time a team spends together in a positive environment, the more they will bond together and create team spirit among themselves. A facility like a gym or a community meeting room is a good place to start getting a team together and the rental cost is minimal compared to ice rental. You can teach ringette skills in a gym and the players and parents can get to know each other through team talks, games and other activities. Arrange to have the team together as much as possible at the start of the season (sleep-over, bottle drives and other activities they may be interested in). Encourage the players to mix together during activities so they will get to know each other better.

Stick to team rules. Once you and your players have set team rules, do not allow individuals to break the rules. Again this will appear as you are picking favorites. If an exception is made, explain why.

Ice time: Play them all equally. Excessive power lining will destroy a team quicker than any other factor. When you do not play one of the players as much, you are telling them they are not as valuable or as worthy to the team as another player. This leads to resentment toward you and the players that are played more. If you wish to win the big games near the end of the season, you have to develop all the players on the team and you cannot develop a player's technical skills or confidence if they are sitting on the bench. One of the most rewarding things

you can do as a coach is to help your developmental players improve so they become confident and strong players. There will be situations where you will want to have your more experienced players on the ice (e.g. tournament overtime), especially if you are coaching an A or AA team where winning is more of a priority. Power lining must be discussed with your players. Your team has to have an understanding of how it is going to work and which players will be played. It has to be structured and if you are going to put together specialty lines, you have to give them time to practice together. If you normally give all the players equal ice time and treat them fairly, the less experienced players will gladly give up some of their ice time for the good of the

team. Discuss it with your players during one of your talks and decide as a group how the team is going to deal with this issue.

Captain's badges: I do not recommend giving out captains badges because they tend to create rivalry between players competing for them. You can develop better harmony on a team if you never single out players as being more valuable to the team than others. Officials will respond to a player asking a question in a polite way whether they have a captain's badge or not. If you want to give them out then do not be in a hurry to give them out and use three captains instead of one captain and two assistants. When you give out three captain's badges, it makes them all equal, rather than one is more important than the other two. Discuss with your team what qualities you are looking for in a captain (leadership, ability to talk to the officials, cheerleader for the team) and let them vote for whom they want. Wait for at least a month so you and the team have a chance to see who would be best suited for these important roles. If you give them out too soon it looks like you are picking favorites. In the younger divisions it would be a good idea for the players to take turns wearing the captain's badges.

Do not praise individual players in front of the team unless they did something special for the team. A player who cheered for her teammates during a game or a player who worked extra hard to help her teammates during a game or practice would be an example. Praise the team as a whole for their performance or as a unit of the team (e.g. all the defense as a group). You have to talk team to your players at all times so they will only think in terms of the team. Ask your players after a game what they felt they did well as a team and why? You can also ask them what areas do they think the team should improve in and why? Encourage team effort at all times.

You should keep statistics for your team but do not release the scoring results to your players. You can give them their statistics (goals and assists) on wind-up night in a sealed envelope. It is their choice then if they want to compare their stats with others. If you release the scoring stats throughout the year, two negative things usually happen:

1. The top scorers will start to compete with each other for points which will lower overall scoring because they will not want to pass and give the other player the goal. It also sets up a comparison of worth of each player to the team based on scoring only. This can lower the confidence of the players who score less but work hard at creating scoring opportunities for others.
2. The defense will start to feel that they are not contributing to the team as much as the scorers are. Defensive play is extremely important to a team and a goal saved is worth as much to team as a goal scored. A player who scores three goals is praised for getting a hat trick but what about the defensive player who saved three sure goals. Never set up comparison situations among your players.
3. When you design your program try to avoid drills and activities that force the players to compete against each other in a stressful way. Some coaches feel that their players will become more competitive if they have to challenge each other on a regular basis. This may be true in some cases but creating competition among your players usually creates hard feelings which in the long run will lessen team spirit.

4. Set goals. It is important that your players set individual goals and that the players as a group set team goals. You should encourage the players to stress performance goals such as improving their technical skills over result goals such as winning a gold medal at a certain competition. When you set performance goals the players can still feel they reached their goal even if they lost the game or a tournament. In this way they grow in confidence, keep a positive attitude and work harder to improve more. If winning is their only goal and they lose, they may feel they have failed and as a consequence will not have a learning experience from the loss. You should set up three types of goals: long term, intermediate and short term. The best goals to set are ones that are just out of reach but are obtainable with work and are replaced with a new goal after the first is reached. A dog will continue to chase a rabbit as long as the rabbit is close to the dog but if the rabbit gets too far ahead the dog will stop chasing. The same thing will happen with an athlete if the goal or the “rabbit” is out of reach.
5. Team encouragement: Enthusiasm and positive encouragement is contagious. As a coach you have to be the first person to show enthusiasm and encouragement from the bench, the dressing room or anywhere you are with the team. Encourage your players and team parents to cheer on each other and support each other in all your activities. Team banners and cheers work well to build team moral. Make sure that any team cheer you use is not negative in nature toward other teams or players.

**Mental training skills:** The gym is a better setting to instruct mental training skills than in a dressing room because of the larger area and the atmosphere. Players enjoy practices at a gym more than on ice because it is more relaxed and they are learning new things that are interesting to them. You want to break down the mental skills training course into segments and instruct portions of it in each session. If your players are full of energy at the start of the session you could do the physical part of the practice session first and then the mental skills session near the end when they are more receptive to being relaxed and able to absorb the mental skills instruction.

## MENTAL SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

A mental skills training program is more than just a course you can instruct in a short period of time. It is a long term philosophy that encourages:

1. Positive thinking
2. Self-esteem building
3. The ability to stay calm and to avoid panicking
4. The ability to perform physical skills in a consistent manner

It is important for a coach to develop the person as well as the player. I feel that a mental skills program is the most important set of skills that a coach can pass on to their players. It is a set of skills they can use to live a more positive, healthy and happy lifestyle.

There are four main psychological reasons why people participate in sports:

1. The need for stimulation or fun.
2. The need to affiliate with other people.
3. The need to feel worthy (self-esteem)

4. The need for success and approval.

These four reasons apply to people of all ages but are especially important to youngsters who are still developing their physical and mental skills. A good mental training program can help your players develop and satisfy some of these basic needs.

There are three components to a good mental training program.

1. Creating a positive learning environment.
2. Developing team spirit and harmony
3. Specific mental training techniques.

## **CREATING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

There seems to be two basic types of coaches in ringette.

**COMMAND STYLE COACH:** Coaches who believe in the command style of coaching will set many restrictions, rules and penalties for their players. The players have little input in the setting of rules, programs and activities for the team. These types of coaches are rigid, strict and stress winning as more important than player enjoyment or development. Players become so afraid of making errors and getting a lecture from the coach that they lose their spontaneity on the ice and do not develop to their full potential. These coaches create discipline problems for themselves because they fail to fulfill the player's basic need to have fun. Some of the players on this type of team will be motivated by fear which is neither good for the player or a suitable long lasting motivation for the team. Many of these players will leave the sport because they simply do not enjoy themselves and are not comfortable with this style of coaching.

**COOPERATIVE STYLE COACH:** Coaches who believe in the cooperative style of coaching will discuss team rules, programs and activities with their players, thus allowing them to be a part of the decision making process. These coaches normally have three main rules:

1. Team members have to give 100% effort and enthusiasm to the team
2. Team members have to respect their teammates, opponents, officials and themselves.
3. Team members will try to enjoy themselves and have fun at all times.

This coach believes in an athlete first attitude that allows maximum enjoyment for the players. This philosophy allows the players to grow and become responsible to themselves and their team. The coach will allow the players to take ownership of their actions. Self-motivated teams are more successful in sports than teams that are externally motivated. Most big games are won by teams with heart and teams with heart are developed by this type of coach. Always remember, that in future years the players will not remember if they lost or won a game but they will remember how you treated them and if they had fun on your team. The self-worth of a confident coach is not judged on the basis of their team winning or losing. Be proud when your team plays well win or lose. Coaches influence the life of an athlete in many ways and the most profound way is by shaping athlete's values. A coach can bring their own philosophy of coaching and of life to the athlete by living it and communicating it.





The following suggestions are ways you can create a positive learning environment for your team.

Always try to speak to each player at games and practices. Call each one by their name but be sure it is the name they want to be called. You can discuss this at your first player/team meeting and by having the player fill out an information questionnaire. Be especially careful when you use nicknames to make sure it is a name they wish to be called. Always be friendly to your players and team parents.

Never yell at an individual player or at the team as a group. You may have to raise your voice to get their attention on the ice but they will understand that you are only trying to help them during a game. Players who are yelled at will become afraid of the coach and afraid of making mistakes. Mistakes are a natural and essential part of learning and should be looked at only in this manner. Learn to speak in a soft and calm manner.

Always use words that are understandable for the age group you are coaching. Do not assume that they understand what you are saying just because they do not ask you questions. Many of the players, especially younger ones, may be afraid to say that they do not understand you. Encourage them to ask questions and make suggestions.

Try to use only positive statements when you talk to players. e.g. "Suzy you made a horrible play on that last shift, can't you get it right". Instead of a negative statement like this use a positive statement to get your point across. "Suzy the play you made last shift worked well but there is a way you can do it even better" (explain in an encouraging way). Encourage the players to give each other positive comments. Work on always being positive.

Always listen to what your Players are saying to you. This is where communication starts with your players and you must take time to develop this relationship. Your players have to feel that you respect them by listening to their ideas. If a player brings up an idea during a game that you do not understand or you are too busy to discuss at the time, make sure that you discuss it with them after the game

Be observant. If you see that one of your players appears to be ill or upset, talk to them in private. They may be ill or have an injury that is affecting their performance or they may have a problem you can help them with. Always find out why a player's performance level is down before you react. Try to develop empathy with your Players.

Speak to the Players at their level (sit or kneel). An eye level discussion makes the players more comfortable, more attentive and makes them feel more equal in the discussion. Players will work harder if you get them more involved in decision making and goal setting.

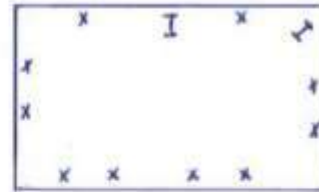
Praise your players often. It is most effective when you do it on a one to one basis. This way you can praise the players who need more reassurance and self-esteem building than others. You take a risk when you praise individual players in front of the team because it is hard to praise everyone equally. Some players will feel slighted. There are many opportunities during practices, games or by phone to praise your players individually. Make sure your praise is specific, honest and emphasizes performance rather than results. Try to relate to what the player has accomplished rather than what you think they should have done. Praise works wonders in building a player's confidence, self-esteem and willingness to work harder. A poor performance is not a failure if something is learned from the defeat. Remember that muscles run on glycogen but minds run on praise.



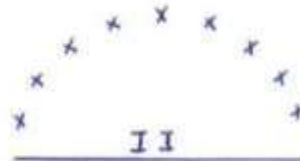
This isn't "hooking" she just carries an extra stick with her in case she breaks one.

## EXAMPLES OF INSTRUCTION FORMATIONS ARE:

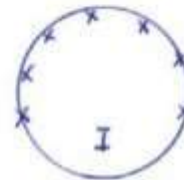
**DRESSING ROOM.** Sit in the middle or the corner of the room where you can see all of your players and they can see you.



**GYM OR DRYLAND SETTING.** Make sure your players sit in the semi-circle spaced, so players can't hide behind each other.



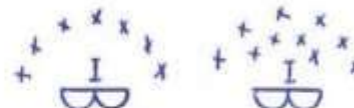
**ICE SETTINGS. FACE OFF CIRCLE.** Players should stand and space themselves evenly.



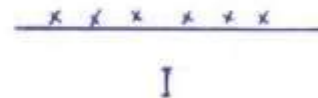
**STAR.** Good for small groups. Players standing with sticks in the center touching.



**AROUND NET.** Players can stand or kneel to form a smaller circle.



**GOAL, FREE PLAY OR BLUE LINE.** Players standing.



**PARTNER DRILLS.**



One of the most important things a coach can do for their players is to help them develop life skills. A mental skills training program can help the players increase their level of concentration, to remain in control in a crisis situation, to help them change negative thought processes to positive ones and to develop greater self-esteem. The main advantage of developing a mental skills training program for sports is that it will also help the players become more consistent in their performances. Remember that mental skills have to be practiced like physical skills and that they follow a similar pattern of learning. There are many books that deal with mental skills training programs but most are written in a complex manner.

Teaching mental skills is a very complex subject so you must present your program in a manner that the players can understand and relate too. I am going to describe how I teach my mental skills training program to my players but I want to stress that this is just how I instruct my program and that you may want to use a different instructional approach. There are many manuals and books available that describe the various mental training techniques that a coach can use to design a program.

The follow mental skills program is the one that I use for U10 age players who are eight and nine years old. This program is designed for this age group but it will adapt for other age groups if you make changes that reflect the age group you are working with. There are many approaches you can use, this is just the one I use.

Providing a positive learning environment for your players is the first step to any mental training program. At U10 level this should be your main emphasis and will prepare the players for specific mental training when they are older. U10 aged players (eight and nine years old) are able to understand and practice the concept of positive and negative thoughts. You will need to use age appropriate words and examples that they will understand. The maturity level and attention span of your team will determine how many mental skills you will be able to introduce to them. I found that it was beneficial to introduce as many mental skills as possible to this age group to prepare them for more advanced mental skills training in later years. Players twelve years and older can understand a full mental skills program and will be able to use these skills effectively. You have to remember that not all of your players will be able or willing to learn all of the mental skills but the great majority will try to learn these valuable life-skills.

### Environment for learning mental skills

A quiet classroom setting is the best environment to instruct mental skills. A gym, a meeting room or a large dressing room will work well as long as there are not any distractions to disrupt your program. I incorporate the mental skills program along with my basic Ringette skills program that I conduct in a large gym. Coaches and players must believe that a mental training program is useful and relevant to their individual and team success. Some players will not be ready or willing to accept mental skills training so you must be prepared to encourage these players to respect the ones who are. Try to do some demonstrations to illustrate to the players how their mind affects their physical performance or how their body reacts to perceived thoughts. The one I use with the younger players is the “walking the plank” demonstration that I will describe at the end of this section. If you can capture their attention in an interesting manner they will more receptive to learning mental skills.

I start my mental skills program by having the players form a semi-circle formation in front of me with the coaches and players sitting on the floor of the gym. I ask the players questions and use their interaction to help present the program. The introduction to mental training for the U10 aged players could use questions like these or you can use others that may be more suitable for your team. U10 aged players have a fairly short attention span so you can only go as far in each sessions as their interest will take it. Be prepared to take several sessions to go over mental training concepts.

What does respect mean to you?

What does it mean to respect someone?

Is it the same as liking someone? You can respect someone without liking them.

Not everyone will want to learn or is able to learn a mental training program but you have to respect your teammates who want to learn it. You can't interrupt the course or prevent someone from learning. This will be the best skill you can learn from our team this year, If you learn the mental skills you can use them all your life not just for ringette. Learning how to be positive and in control under pressure is a very valuable skill to learn. Learning and maintaining a mental skill is just like any other skill, it takes work and practice.

You need three things to become a great ringette player:

1. Ringette skills-how to hold the stick, how to raise the ring, skating etc
2. Fitness-You need to be physically fit to play hard all the time
3. Mental skills-You need to learn how to stay positive and to concentrate on ringette skills.

When we talk about ringette mental skills we mean:

- a. The ability to control our emotions. Not to lose your confidence or your temper.
- b. The ability to focus our thoughts. To be able to perform the skills of the game without being distracted by other factors.

There is little sense to worry about things you cannot control because you cannot control them (dirty ice, officials, and early morning games). There is little sense to worry about things you can control because you can control them (how hard you work, positive thoughts, playing as a team). Remember pressure is something you put on yourself. People and situations can only put pressure on you if you allow them to.

Let's talk about positive and negative statements.

How does a positive statement make you feel?

- happy
- makes you feel good about yourself
- makes you more positive with other people around

What would be some positive statements about ringette?

- it is fun to play ringette
- your team sure gets along well
- we will win this game

-I have great teammates

What would be some positive statements about a person? -

they are nice

-they have a nice smile

-they are friendly

Who can tell me how a negative statement makes you feel? -

a downer

-makes you feel bad

-can affect you in a negative way and the people around you

Give me an example of a negative ringette statement.

-We can't beat this team ,

-If I get a break away I will not score.

-We are going to lose

-My teammates suck.

How would these comments affect a team? They would affect a team in a very negative manner. Most negative thoughts come from false thoughts.

Examples:

You may say that your team will not win their game tonight. Why would you say that when the game has not even started. You would be making a negative statement based on the idea that you think your team cannot win.

It is easier to say a positive statement than to correct a negative statement. It is hard not to think about a negative statement.

I'm going to make a statement but I do not want you to think about it. Do not think of a skunk.

How many of you saw the skunk in your mind? What color was it? How many of you thought you could smell the skunk?

Changing negative thoughts to positive thoughts is as hard as not trying to think of the skunk.

This is how you practice this skill.

At this point I try to introduce the concept of the "little Lady".

Do you think that your mind has a voice? Yes.

Say this statement to yourself without talking out loud. I am a great ringette player.

So who said those words to you?

This is the person who talks to you inside your mind. Because you are a group of young ladies I would like you to call her that little voice inside your head your "little lady".

I use the “little lady” in a word association manner which makes easier for the players to know what I am referring to. Some of your players will think the term is funny to begin with but they

will soon relate it to the “voice inside their mind”. If I were working with a group of adults I would also refer to this section as “positive self-talk”.

So if I use the words little lady it means your thoughts or the voice in your head that talks to you.

How many of you have a best friend?

Your little lady will be with you the rest of your life. She will always there to talk to you.

Should your little lady be your best friend or should she be your enemy?

She should be your friend so you have to teach her how to talk to you in a positive manner. The trouble is what your little lady sometimes will say awful things to you. Would you tell your best friend that she sucks, that she can't do things right and she is going to fail? Then why would you let your little lady say these negative things to you?

This is how you help your little lady become your friend so she will always say positive things to you.

Every time your little lady says a negative statement you must counter it with a positive statement. She says you will not play well today. You say I will play well today.

She says-you can't stab the ring today. You say to her, no I have missed a few rings because I was not using my eyes correctly but I will focus harder and I will stab the rings.

You will not do well on your test. I will do well because I will study more.

This is a skill you have to practice. We want you to work on thinking of a positive statement every time your little lady says a negative statement. Let us practice a few. I will say a negative statement to you and I want you to say a positive one back.

-The ice is dirty I will not be able to pass well. I will be able to pass well because I will shoot the ring harder.

-We cannot beat this team. Sure we can we just have to work harder.

-I do not think I will be able to score a goal in this game. Yes I can score a goal in this game because I am going to be patient when I have a chance to score on their goalie.

I ask the players at different times during the presentation if they have any questions or if there any areas they do not understand. Do not assume because they do not ask questions that they fully understand the program because they may be shy to ask on their own.

This normally is the material that I would introduce to the U10 aged players. During the season you will work with the players to practice making positive statements to counteract negative

statements. Ask for examples. Make up several negative statements and have the players give you a positive statement for each one. They have to practice the mental skills the same as you do a physical skill. You have to stress that your thoughts or your little lady can view situations either in a negative or a positive way. The purpose of the mental skills program is to help them learn to see the positive side of all situations.

I will describe a demonstration that you can use to show the players how your mind or your “little lady” and another person’s comments can affect your physical performance. The mind rules the body. There are many other methods you can use and you may want to design one that may suit your team better. I start this session of the mental skills program by asking the following questions:

Can your thoughts change how your body works? Yes or no. Some will agree with you and some will not. Then I ask if the little lady can change how your body works so they become more accustomed to the term. Again some will agree and some will not.

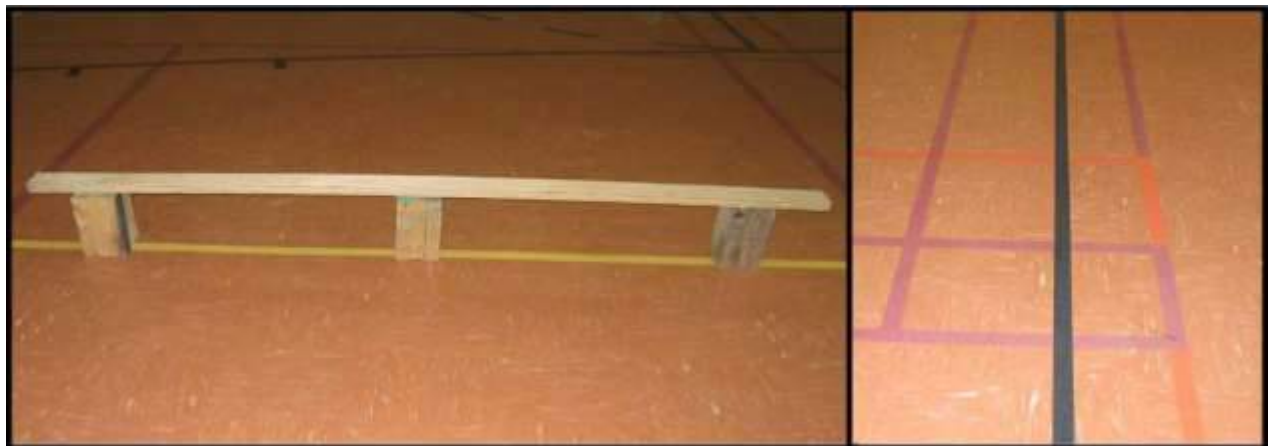
Can the little lady change how you do a physical skill like walking?

Who has control of what the little lady says to you?

Can she change how you perform a skill? She can if you let her.

I will show you how your little lady can change how your body works.

At this point I ask for a volunteer to come forward. You are best to pick someone who you feel may be best suited to illustrate the point you are trying to make. I do my mental skills program in a gym that has several straight lines marked on the floor but if your room does not have markings you could stick some masking tape to the floor. For this demonstration I have brought a plank eight feet long and four and one half inches wide made of two layers of three quarter inch plywood for strength. I also have three blocks of wood twelve inches or 30 cm high.



I have my volunteer walk forward on one of the lines marked on the floor and then backward. I ask the following questions after she has finished.

-Was our volunteer able to walk straight forward and backward on the line marked on the floor? Yes



-Why? You want to point out that our volunteer was confident that she could perform this skill. Her little lady said she could do it, that it was easy.

Next I place the board on the floor and ask my volunteer to walk forward and backward on the plank. I ask the following questions:

-Was our volunteer able to walk on the plank? Yes.

-Did our volunteer walk slower on the plank than on the floor? Why slower. Your little lady is starting to think in a negative way. It is telling you it is more difficult because you are restricted to walking on the plank instead of the floor.

I ask the volunteer to walk the plank again but with her eyes closed. The player will panic a bit because her eyes are closed and you have placed a doubt in her mind that she can fail at this task. Fear of failure is a real concern to most people and this fear normally becomes a hindrance to performing tasks well. If you acknowledge the "I can fail" thought, you will actually be saying you can fail, and the chances of not doing well will be multiplied by a factor you don't even want to think about.

I ask the players why the volunteer performed the walking skill even slower with their eyes closed than with their eyes open. The fear of failure at performing the task would be the normal answer. I ask them why we are we afraid to fail. We feel that our self-worth is based on success. This means that you may think that someone will think less of you because you cannot do a skill well.

Their little lady is talking to them in a negative way. They may be afraid of looking foolish to the team by falling or by not being able to walk straight on the plank. You want to stress to the players that nothing really has changed except how the volunteer perceives the task. They have become negative about performing the task or skill correctly and only they have created this situation.

I then place the plank on top of three wooden blocks that are 12 inches or 30 cm high. I ask the volunteer to step up on the plank and walk forward and backward again. This time I walk along with them to catch them if case they lose their balance and fall off of the plank. I ask the players why the volunteer walked the plank even slower than last time they walked the plank. The added height to the plank will make the volunteer more negative about performing the skill because the risk of failure and possibly of getting hurt becomes greater in their mind. You want to stress that the pressure the volunteer placed on themselves was almost totally caused by how they reacted to the situation. A person can only feel pressure if they allow it to happen. Their little lady was not talking to them in a positive way which did not give them the confidence to perform this task. Your mind can make you fail or be unable to perform a skill.

I give the players some other examples to think about. There are two very tall buildings that are both twenty stories high and someone has placed a long plank across the two buildings. Could any of you walk across this plank?

Why not? The main fear would be falling. If the building you were standing on was burning and your only escape was to walk across the plank, could you? In this case the fear of burning would

be greater than the fear of falling. Could you walk across the plank to save a friend or your little brother or sister? In this case your fear of falling would be overcome by your desire to save your friend, brother or sister. Can your mind or your little lady control how your body works? Yes, very much so.



**We have to go into the crease when we want to visit the other team's goalie**

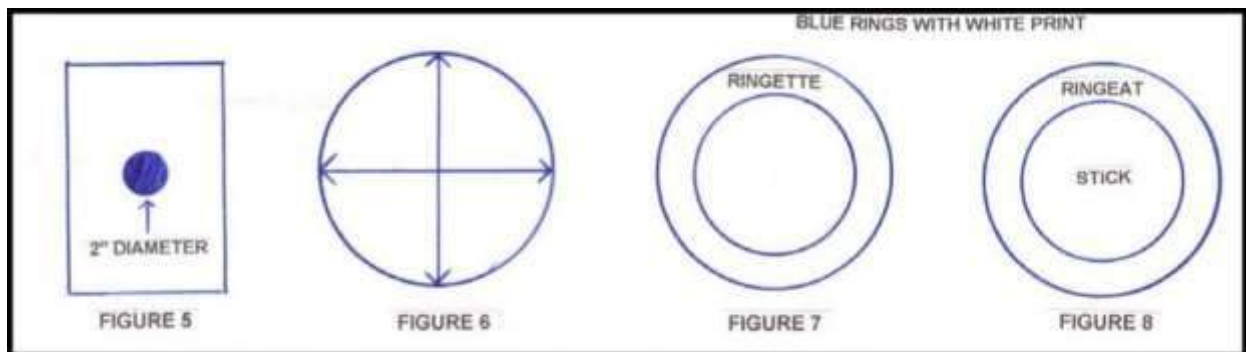
## **VISUAL TRAINING**

The skill of picking up a ring depends largely on the eye/hand coordination of the player. The first step in this process is the eye. Eyes are wonderful organs and account for 80% of our awareness of the environment. Superior eyesight is a great asset to an athlete and is a requirement for most athletes to become world class in their sport. Eyes are essential for sport performance but are often neglected in sports training programs. The clarity of the image the eye sends to the brain is called visual acuity and that is where the familiar 20/20 comes in. It is an asset to a player to have 20/20 visual acuity but the main function of the eye that is most useful in sports, is the focusing mechanism.

The eye has several muscles that control the movement of the eye and the ciliary muscle which controls the focusing ability of the lens. Eyes can be trained and conditioned for specific sports activities. Ringette is a fast moving game that requires players to react quickly, physically and visually. Ring pick up is one of the areas where the eye lens is required to go from wide vision (peripheral or court vision) to narrow vision (focus) in an instant or the other way around.

In a game situation a player will be using wide vision to see the play of the game and in the next instant narrow vision to pick up the ring. Once she has stabbed the ring she has to use wide vision again to see the play of the game. A visual program for ring pickup should stress practicing this skill. The following are some suggestions and drills to help your players. I will briefly describe part of the program that I use to help my players improve in this area. The use of teaching aids or props make learning ringette skills easier and more interesting for the players. Players will work harder at learning skills if you present the material in an interesting and fun way. The use of props can illustrate a concept to them much more effectively than just describing it.

**Visual skills training:** This is the first area that I instruct in the gym and it leads into a session on how to give and receive a pass, ring pickup and how to hold the stick. I use a semi-circle formation in the gym for the vision talk but you can use a dressing room at the rink. I start out by asking the players which set of muscles used in playing ringette, are the most important. Most of the players will say that leg and arm muscles are the most important muscles used in Ringette. I then ask them if they know of any Ringette players that are blind. After they say they do not know any Ringette players who are blind I ask them again which set of muscles are the most important. I say that all muscle groups are important to a Ringette player including eye muscles. I tell them that the eye has six muscles that allow the eye to move and function normally. I ask them if you can focus on an object far away and at the same time focus on an object close up. I had previously taped a piece of cardboard on the wall that has a black circle colored in the center (figure 5).

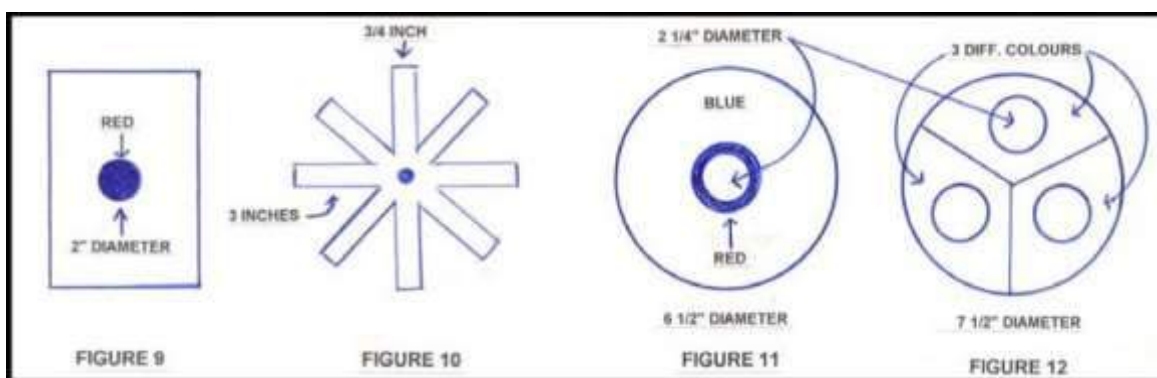


I have the players focus on the dot which is placed approx. 15 to 20 ft. from them. Next I ask them to bring one of their thumbs slowly up until it is just under the black circle visually. I tell them to look at their thumb and then tell me what happened to the dot. The answer is that they lost the focus on the dot and it became fuzzy. I have them try it by looking at their thumb that is placed just under the dot, and then looking at the dot. In this case their thumb will appear fuzzy. The fact is, you cannot focus on two objects at the same time where one is close up and one is far away. The point to emphasize is that you cannot focus on the ring and the play of the game at the same time. Most rings are missed in ringette because the player moved her narrow focus from the ring too soon in order to see the play of the game. Where do you focus on the ring? If you focus on the leading edge of the ring you tend to stab in front or on top of the ring which will result in missing the ring. If you focus on the following edge you will usually stab behind or on top of the back of the ring. The best place is to narrow your focus to the inside area of the ring. You do not focus on any part of the ring but rather on the whole diameter area of the ring and focus on the ice moving inside of the ring. (figure 6). I demonstrate this principle by having the players focus on two drawings of a ring. I hold up the first drawing for a short time and ask them to look at it and tell me

what word what is printed on the ring (figure 7). When you first hold it up they will be using a wide focus that will cover the whole page and then they will narrow their focus to read the word. Next tell them that there will be a word placed inside the center of the ring on the next drawing.

I show them figure 8. Hold it up for a very short time and ask them which word was printed in the center. The players will narrow their focus immediately because I have told them to look in the center for the word stick. Then I ask them what word was written on the side of the ring. Most will not know or will assume the word is ringette instead of ringeat. The purpose of this example is to demonstrate that it is difficult to focus on two objects, even when they are at the same distance.

I hold up the card again (figure 8) and ask them to focus on the whole page and then on the ring diameter. I then have them focus on the word stick and then on the dot over the letter I. Have them do it in reverse to give them an idea of how the range of their focus can vary and how they can control it. The visual skill that has to be practiced is the ability to focus on the inside diameter area of the ring as opposed to a wider or more narrow focus on the ring. They also have to work on maintaining their focus until they have stabbed the ring. You have to encourage them to practice these visual skills every time they are passing or picking up rings. Sometimes players will say they cannot pick up rings during a game. Remind them to focus harder on the diameter area and to maintain their focus until they stab the ring.



The next area I introduce to the players is how movement affects their ability to pick up a ring. I have a card prepared that has a red circle in the center (figure 9). I hold up the figure 8 card higher in the air and ask them to look at the diameter area of the ring. With my other hand I pick up the other card (figure 9) and move it quickly across their sight of vision but under the first card. What happens is that the red dot will cause the players to lose focus on the original card and their eyes will be attracted to the red dot. Through the evolutionary process, humans have learned to visually respond to movement quickly as a survival tool. This natural ability can be a disadvantage to a player in terms of picking up a ring and they have to work on not letting movement disturb their focus on the ring. The point to be stressed is that they must work hard on developing a program for maintaining focus on the ring.

I ask them next, if they have heard stories that claim an athlete like Wayne Gretzky can see the game in slow motion? I then ask the players, do you think a person can slow down a game, they will say no. I then ask the players, do you think a person can make an object appear slower visually, they will usually say no also. I tell them that you can make an object appear to slow down if you use your eye focus correctly. I use the following demonstration to illustrate this principle. I have constructed an eight bladed propeller by using a 1/4 inch thick piece of wood

with the shape cut out as shown in figure 10. I have attached a 1/4 inch diameter bolt through center of the propeller and have secured it with a nut on the other side. Use a bolt that is about 2 inches long so it will fit into a 1/4 inch variable speed drill. Place the propeller into the drill chuck and preset the speed of the drill so that the propeller is spinning just a little faster than the human eye could focus on only one blade.

I hold the spinning propeller in front of the players and ask them if any of them can pick out one blade on the propeller. Most will feel that it is impossible. I tell them I can show them how all of them can focus on only one blade. I have a piece of red tape the width and length of one blade, which I then attach to the front of one blade. I start the propeller spinning at a speed that is slower than I had before and ask them if they can see one blade now. They all can see it now because the red tape catches their attention visually and they are able to focus on only the one blade. The single blade will appear to be turning at a very slow rate which will illustrate how you can appear to slow down an object visually. I take the tape off and hold the spinning propeller up. I ask the players to see if they can focus on only one blade without the tape. It is a good idea to spin the propeller at a slightly slower speed this time so most of the players can see one blade. The point to make is that well maintained eye focus makes it easier to pick up a moving ring.

There are two more teaching aids that I use and find very effective. I have constructed these by using 3/4 inch plywood material and cutting them into the shapes described in figure 11 and figure 12. These wooden rings help players learn to narrow and widen their focus quicker than any other technique I have tried. The colors make it easier for the players to see the rings and they learn to focus more carefully on the wooden rings because they have smaller holes than the regular rings. These rings can be used for most of the ring pick up and passing drills and it makes it more fun for the players to practice these skills. Players will want to practice shooting and other stick skills if they have an interesting shooting board. I will show some examples of ones I use. This one is the board I use in the gym (figure #1). One section of the board has a spinner which will spin when hit by a ring. The other diagrams show shooting boards that can be used in the gym or on ice.



**Diagram 2**



**Diagram 3**





**Figure 1**



**Diagram 4**



**Diagram 5**

In the ring pick up section of this manual I described how players have to use wide and narrow focusing to help them pick up rings. The same principle has to be used for a player to be efficient at shooting. A player skating toward the net must use very wide focus (to see the play of the game), then they have to narrow their focus to an area slightly larger than the net (to look for the scoring opportunity) and finally they narrow their focus to see the specific spot they are shooting at. Using the correct focus at the correct time is a skill you have to encourage them to practice often.

One method I use to help the players practice this skill involves the use of colored wooden disks. **Diagram #4** shows a wooden disk (diameter of approximately 7 inches), with two holes drilled through the wood to allow for twine or cord. You need two of these to attach

to the upper corners of the net. **Diagram #3** shows the back of a bottom wooden disk and **Diagram #5** shows the same disk from the front. You need the bracket (bracket sits flat on the ice) on the back so it will stay in place when you tie it to the bottom corners of the net. **Diagram #2** shows where you hang the disks on the net. Paint each of the four disks a different color.

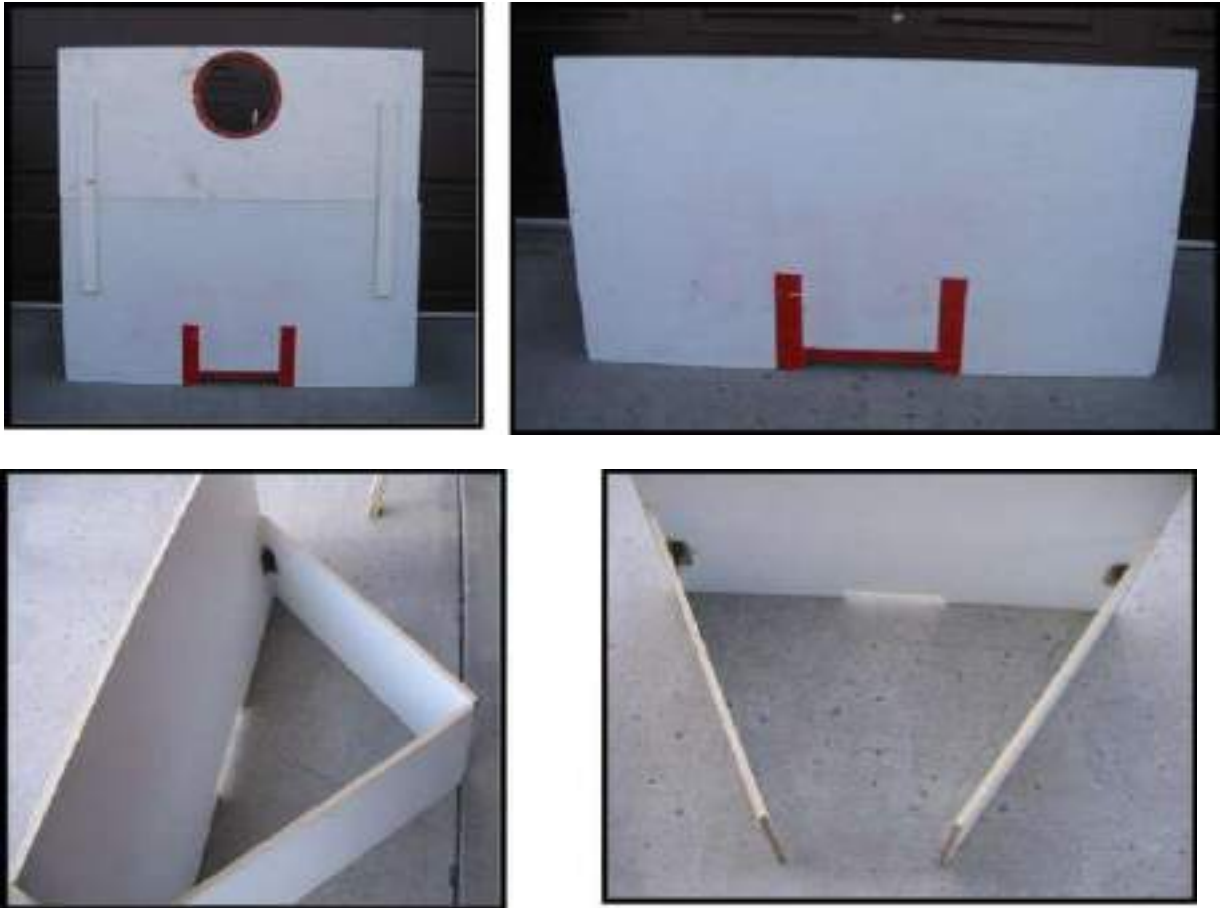
The above shooting aids can be used in the gym or on ice. The best way to use the colored disks on the net is to have the players line up in single file on the blue line and skate toward the net one at a time. As they cross the free play line call out the color of the disk you want them to shoot at. This forces them to use wide focus to locate the colored disk they are looking for. This wide focus should be slightly larger than the area of the net because in a game situation the ring carrier also has to contend with defense players in the way or in front of the goal. Once they have located the disk using wide focus they will then have to narrow their visual focus on the disk in order to shoot at it. Every so often call out a color that is not on the net to observe their reaction when they cannot find it and to give them more practice varying their focus.



This diagram shows the five areas where the majority of the goals are scored in ringette. Instruct your players to become familiar with this numbering system because it is easier for them to understand than other methods. Some coaches tell their players to shoot by a goalies block side or their glove side. It becomes confusing when you run into a goalie who wears two blockers or holds the stick with her other hand. This numbering system is simple and applies to all situations. E.g. If you tell the players to shoot at the number three position on the net, they will know exactly where you mean.



**Figure A**



These are a set of shooting boards that I have used to use in the gym and on ice. I have included them as an example of shooting boards that you can make easier than the one with the spinner. I constructed these boards from plywood material that is 5/8's of an inch thick. I have constructed them in two sections for easier handling and in the case I only use the bottom section. The bottom board is approximately 30 inches high by forty eight inches wide. The top piece is 18 inches high by forty-eight inches wide. The bottom opening has been cut to a size ten inches wide and one and one half inches high. The top opening has a diameter of approximately eleven inches. The top fits over the bottom piece. I use the bottom section when I am instructing ring passing skills. If the ring is not shot at the bottom section of the shooting board, flat on the gym floor or on an ice surface, the ring will not pass through the opening. I use the upper section when I am instructing shooting technique especially the forehand and forehand raise shot. Players will practice the shooting techniques more often if you use the shooting boards and have the players participate a shooting game or contest. The bottom pictures show how the plywood wings are attached to the bottom section and how they swing in or out to accommodate corner or wall placement. The wings are made from the same plywood material that the other sections are made from. I have used ordinary door hinges to attach the plywood wings to the bottom sections.



Shots on the ice will work fine if the goalie isn't protecting that area or they have the stick off the ice but a better place to learn to shoot is the general area between the goalie's ankles and the top of the net and as close to the side of the net as possible. This is a more difficult area for a goalie to defend against than shots more at the center of the net. Players tend to shoot more at the center of the net because their eyes see the goalie move and they shoot at the movement. At one of first practices I attach two shooting boards the sides of the net as shown above (Figure A). I explain to the players that these shooting boards will help them shoot more accurately and will become better scorers because of the increased accuracy. I instruct them that they are not allowed to shoot on the center of the net but rather have to shoot inside the two areas outlined by the shooting boards. Normally within three or four weeks the players learn to look for and to shoot at only this area of the net. This will cut down on the number of ineffectual shots they take directly at the goalie. These shooting boards are made from a sheet of one-half inch plywood material, four feet high by eighteen inches, with the center cut out eight inches from the bottom and the other three sides three inches wide. I have attached two inch by four inch material to the vertical section closest to the center of the net and to the bottom section for added strength. The two most important shooting strategies a player can use are accuracy and the element of surprise. A goalie cannot cover all areas of the net at once so learning to shoot with accuracy can enable the shooter to put the ring into those small unprotected areas. You can surprise a goalie by using fakes or feigns and shooting the ring where she does not expect it or by shooting the ring extremely fast (quick release). Goalies rely on timing to help them stop the ring and they become accustomed to the speed that the players in their division normally shoot the ring. When the shooter speeds up or slows down the shooting speed of the ring, the shooter affects the goalies timing which can lead to a goal.

## **PASSING**

Passing and picking up the ring are two of the most basic skills of ringette. Without these skills a Team would find it difficult to cross the blue line, perform breakouts or score. The following are some basic drills you can use in a gym setting to teach ring pick-up and passing skills. Several other drills are included in the on-ice skills section. If you do not have the wooden rings that I described above you can use the orange turbo rings that are available. Most of the shooting, passing and ring pick-up drills shown in the on-ice section can be adapted to the gym. The main skills you need to teach in the gym are:

- Team harmony
- How to hold the stick
- How to pass the ring and keep it flat on the ice/floor
- Backhand and forehand shots
- Ring pick-up
- Vision course and mental skills if possible

Passing and picking up the ring are two of the most basic skills of ringette. Without these skills a team would find it difficult to cross the blue line, perform breakouts or score. Players have to develop these skills as soon as possible and must practice them on a regular basis. There are several different skills that have to be learned in order to be able to pass and receive a ring proficiently in ringette. Some of them are

## 1. BASIC TECHNIQUES AND STICK MOVEMENTS REQUIRED TO PASS A RING.

The first step is to show the players the normal position of their skates and stick during the various stages of passing.

**Diagram #1** shows the position of a player who has just stabbed the ring. This player shoots from the left side and her left hand is placed lowest on the stick.

**Diagram #2** and **Figure #6** shows the position of the ring before it is passed. The ring normally should be brought behind the trailing skate to give the player more stability while passing. It also makes it easier for her to pass the ring with more force and with more accuracy. If the player is skating backwards she will need to bring the ring further back behind her trailing skate so she can shoot it harder to allow for backward motion.

**Diagram #3** shows the release point which is just past the lead skate.

**Diagram #4, figure #7** and **figure #8** shows the tip of a ringette stick. The corner of the metal tip is the part of the stick that controls the angle or height of the ring when shot or passed with the correct wrist and arm technique. While passing the ring, you want to avoid lifting or bouncing the ring on the ice because it makes picking up the ring more difficult.

**Diagram #5** and **Figure 9, 10 & 11** below shows the rolling motion of the stick on the ring as it is being passed. This follow through motion will keep the ring flat on the ice surface while it is being passed. A left hand shooter is passing the ring in the bottom three figures.

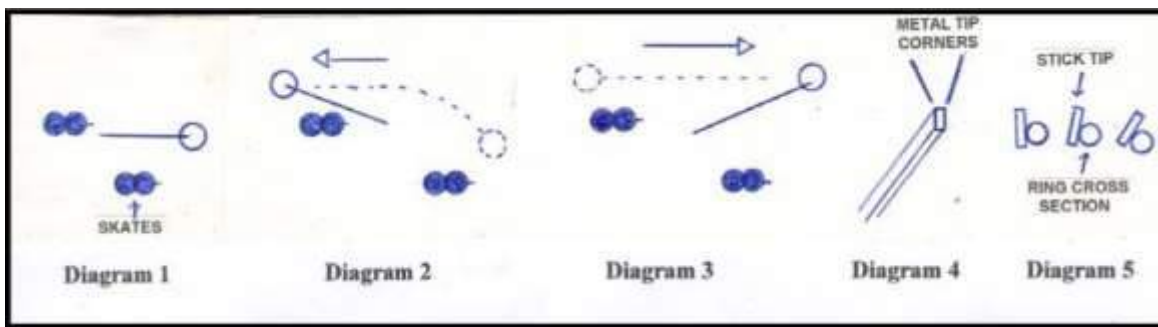


Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 6



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

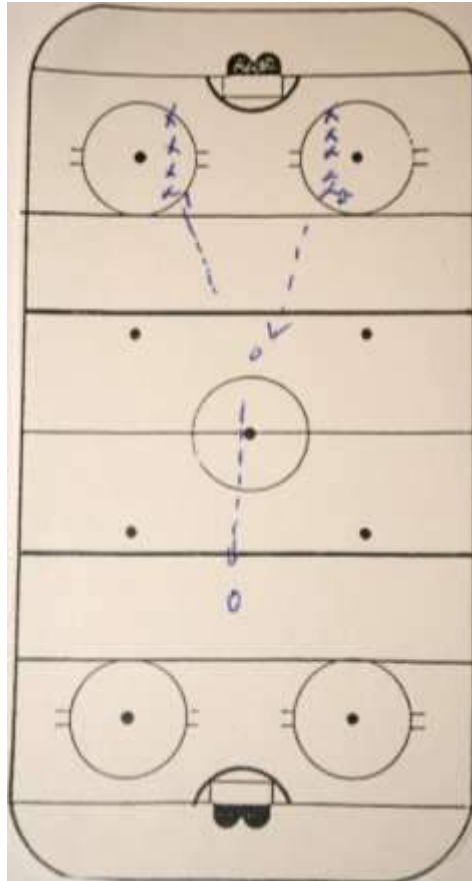






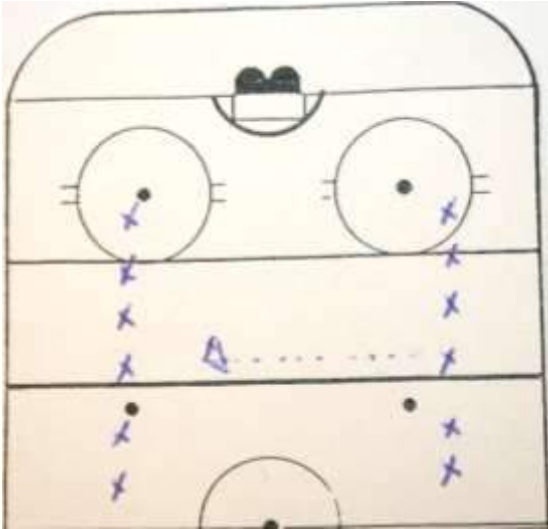
## **2. PASSING OR PLACING THE RING IN FRONT OF THE PLAYER WHO WILL RECEIVE THE RING (LEADING) AND HOW TO ASK FOR THE RING (POINTING).**

It is important that the players learn to pass the ring to a point where the ring receiver is going to be at, rather than where she is at the time. A ring passed directly at a player tends to slow down the flow of the play because the player who is receiving the ring must slow down or turn her body to stab the ring. A ring passed in front of a player will allow her room to skate toward the ring and to gain skating speed. If a player is in the open and is able to receive a ring she can ask for a pass by pointing her stick toward the area she would like to receive the ring in. Players have to be encouraged to talk to their teammates while they are playing the game. Players who wish to receive the ring must call out to the player with the ring to get her attention and then point to where she would like the ring passed. This picture shows a player assuming the pointing stance.

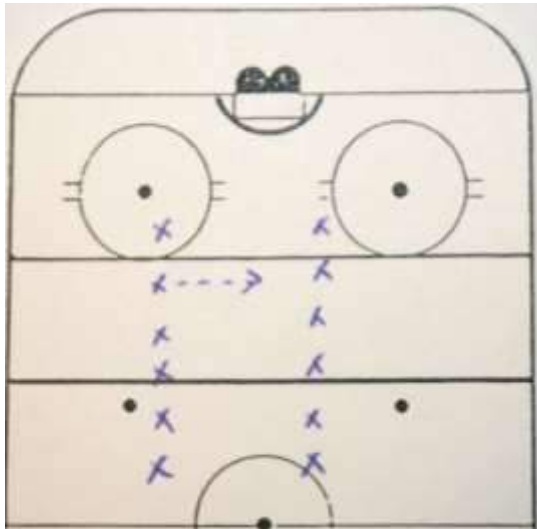


One of the most difficult skills to teach players is for them to learn to pass to where the player, that will receive the pass, will be rather than where she is at. Players need to learn to pass the ring in front of the ring receiver so they can maintain their skating speed and still be able to pick up the ring. The last pass should be passed so the ring stops in front of the net. The quickest way to the net is straight up the ice so passing to side to a player just slows down the time it takes to get to the net. Players tend to pass at the receivers legs which causes the player to slow down or miss picking up the ring. Players need to be trained to pass an easy to pick up pass to the receiver. Receivers cannot consistently pick-up rings unless they are correctly passed to them.

## GYM RING PASSING AND RING PICK-UP DRILLS



This is a basic ring passing drill and can be used in the gym or on the ice. All the gym drills can also be used on ice. Line the players up into two groups about seven meters apart. Work with each player so they can learn to hold the stick correctly with narrow side up and to curl their wrist as they release the ring. Work with each player to help them develop the correct ring pick move again with the narrow side up.



This is the same line up for the players except place them only about three meters apart. Give one line of players the rings and have the other line of players without the rings to turn and face the wall so their back is facing the players with the rings. When you blow the whistle the players without the ring turn and pick up the rings that the players with the rings passed when the whistle blew. Repeat the drill with the players that just passed the rings by having them face the wall and then have them turn to pick up the rings at the sound of the whistle. Repeat often as it teaches the players to pick-up the ring while only focusing on the ring for a short time.

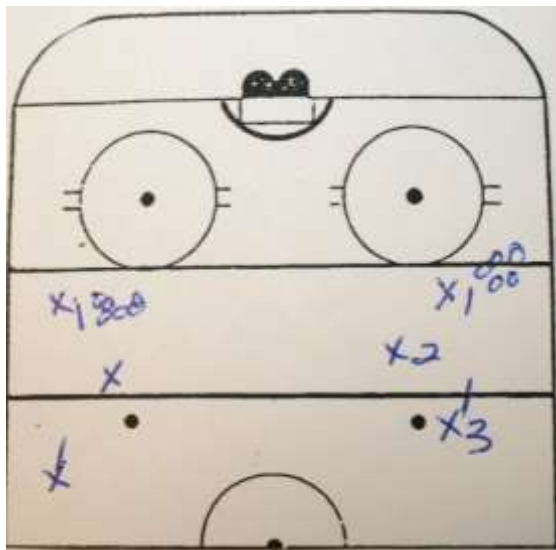


Form groups of three players or four depending on the number of players at the session. Instruct them that they cannot turn their bodies to make a backhand or forehand shot. The purpose of the drill is to increase ring pick-up skills as well as practicing backhands and forehands. They pass the rings to each other either clockwise or anti-clockwise using either a backhand or forehand pass. It will vary with how many left hand and right hand shooters you have on your team. Each time you blow the whistle they change direction of passing. To make it more fun for them have them count each time they pick up a ring, 1-2-3 etc.

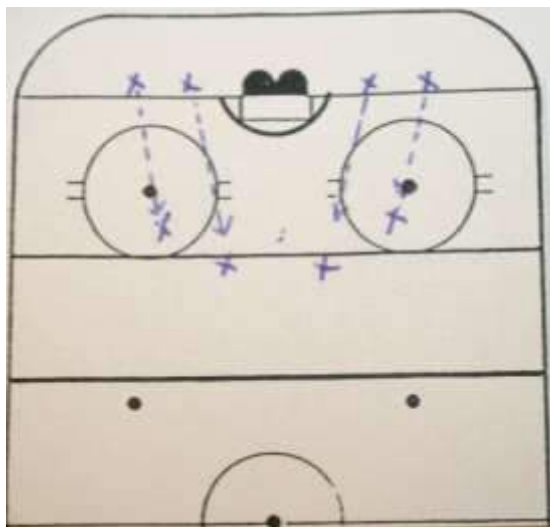


Make it a game to see who can pass the most times without missing the ring.

One timer drill. Set the players up near the wall in groups of two giving one player several rings. The player with the rings passes to the player without the rings and the player without the rings picks up the ring and shoots it against the wall. You can practice this drill using both backhand and forehand shots against the wall.



One timer drill using three players. Set three players up against a wall in the position shown. X1 with the rings passes to X2 who passes to X3 who does the one timer against the wall. The best combination is to have X2 have the rings and they pass to X1 and X1 passes to X3 who does the one timer against the wall.



Set up the players as shown. You can use three to five rows of players depending on the number of players you have using both ends of the gym. Have the girls from behind with the rings pass to the girls in front without the rings in order so the players have a little more space to shoot at the net. If your goalie(s) is in the net it will make it easier for them to set up for each shot. Have them practice their forehand, wrist and backhand shots by specifying which type of shot you want them to do with each rotation.

# RING PICK-UP

One of the most important skills in ringette is the ability to pick up or stab the ring. This skill requires correct technique and many hours of practice to master. The first step to instruct this skill is to check to see if the player's sticks are the correct length (Figure 1). This measurement is done with the player on skates. Have the players place one of their fingers on the bottom of their sternum (flat bony structure to which most of the ribs are attached in the front of the chest). Stand the player's stick next to her finger. Mark the stick at the height of her finger and cut it off there.

A stick that is too long causes the following problems:

1. Players will have difficulty executing forehand, backhand and wrist shots efficiently. These shots require mobility because normally they are taken while close to the net. A player with a long stick lacks mobility because they require more space to shoot. A long stick forces the player to place her hands too high on the stick which makes it awkward for her to shoot or tuck the ring (Figure 2).
2. A long stick can draw high sticking and hooking penalties. The follow through of a long stick can more easily extend over the shoulders than a shorter stick. Players will reach more with a long stick to check which can lead to hooking the opposition player.
3. A player with a long stick tends to skate more upright with the ring, which lowers the efficiency of her skating stride. A stick that is extremely short will force the player to skate too low to the ice and will reduce her shooting power and balance.
4. A long stick also makes it difficult for a player to tuck and protect the ring while being checked. The longer stick makes it easier for other players to check her because the ring is further away from her body.



**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**



The approximate position for placing your lower hand on a stick is shown in Figure 3. The bottom of the stick should be level with your elbow when you hold the stick up in a vertical position. This will vary a little between players because of body proportions and shooting techniques.

Figures 4-6. This player is showing the correct way of holding a stick with the narrow side up and the thumbs on top of the stick. If you ask a player to point at you most will point at you using their fore finger and their thumb, directly at you. This same principle applies to holding a ringette stick and pointing toward the ring. The stick should be held with the narrow edge up and this seems easier to do when you place the thumbs on top of the stick.



**Figure 4**



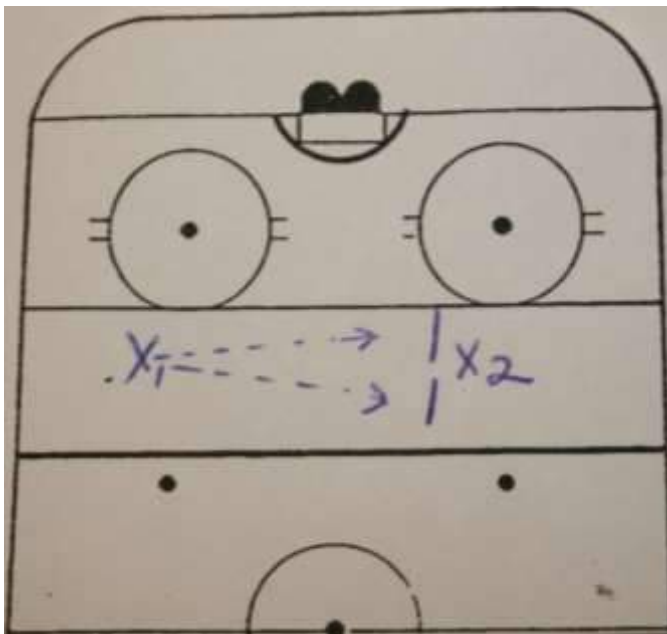
**Figure 5**



**Figure 6**

There are two main advantages to holding the stick with the narrow side up as opposed to holding the stick flat side up:

1. If you pick up the ring with the stick on the flat side, you will force the ring to travel up the stick. This will not allow you a quick release of the ring if you have to shoot quickly (e.g. side-shooter shot).
2. If the narrow side of the stick is up you can execute any type of shot with the ring quickly. If you catch a ring with the flat side up, you will have to turn the stick back on the narrow side to use a backhand, forehand or wrist shot correctly. This takes time and in ringette the quick release is essential. See shooting section.



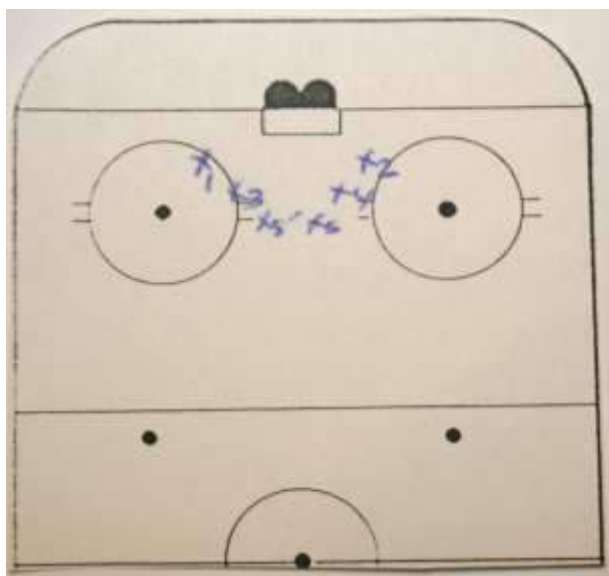
This drill teaches the players to stop a ring that has been shot too fast or a ring that is not close to their body. Demonstrate to the players by having someone pass you a ring that is to the left or right of your body. Touch the ring with the end of your stick to show how easy it is to stop a ring with the end of your stick. Line up your players as shown and have the passer shoot the ring to the receivers left or right side. Once the receiver has stopped the ring they pass the ring back to the left or right side of their partners and they stop and pick up the ring.

## ON ICE PROGRAM

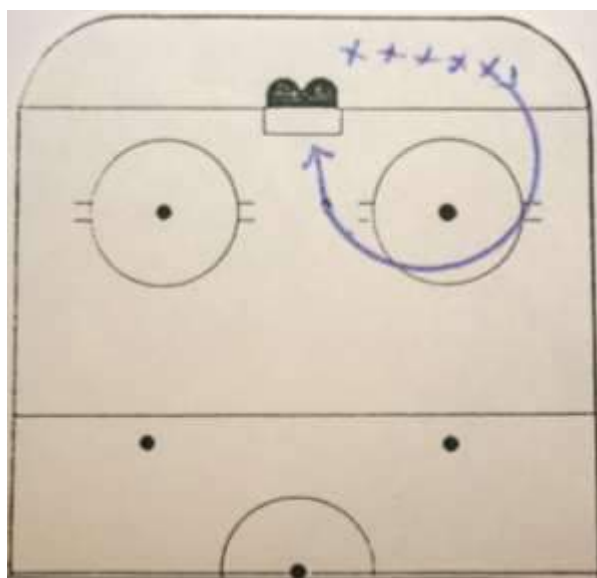
All of the skills you are teaching a gym setting will work on ice. The first time you are on the ice with your players set some basic rules for them. First of all make sure the ice is safe for them. No obstructions or items laying on the ice. Make sure that all the time keepers and bench doors are closed. Always carry a supply of water bottles for all your practices and games as a lot of players will not have their own water. Place all water bottles on the main net that you are going to instruct from. Setting the water bottles on the players benches just waste ice time when the players go over to get water from that location. They can drink water around your net as you are explaining the next drill to them. Tell the players that when you blow your whistle once it means that there is a change in the drill. For example a single whistle would mean the next player in line would do the drill. Two quick whistle blows would indicate you want the players to go to a specific location on the ice. After you blow the whistle raising your stick over your head which would indicate that you want the players to come to where you are. Pointing your stick in the direction of a corner would indicate you want them to go into that corner. Use a white board for all your instructions as many players need the drill drawn out for them to understand what you want them to do. Try not to talk too much when you are instructing as many players will tune out after a while which recuse their learning the drill or concept. As they say a picture is worth a thousand words. Try to get as large of a white board as you can.

At the start of the season concentrate on systems and patterns rather than a lot skating. It is important that your team starts their first games with some basic knowledge of the patterns of the game. They will have more success in their first league games if they understand some basic patterns. Early success for a team builds confidence in the players and with their parents. I will describe below some basic patterns that you should instruct to your players at the first few practices. They include goalie warm-up, defense triangle, goalie ring breakout, center free-pass, offensive free-pass and the post/point scoring system.

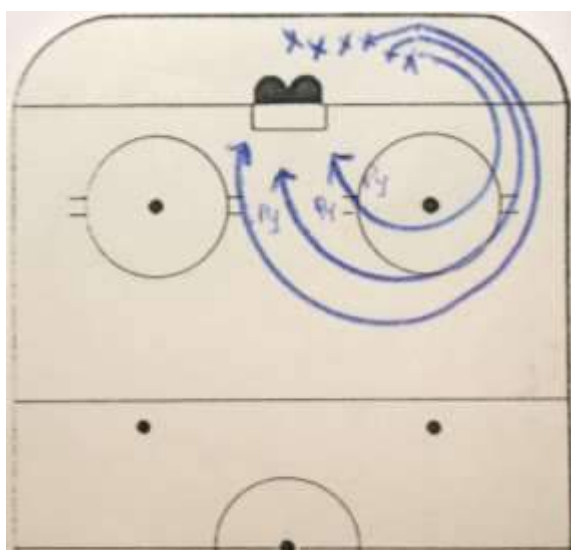
## GOALIE WARM-UP



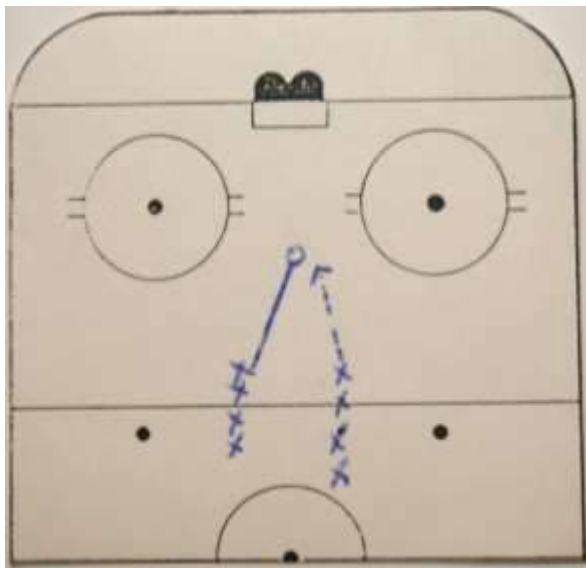
Position the players around the net as shown with rings. You can start from one end X2 and have each player shoot in order-X4, X6 etc. The goalie will only move one way as each of the players shoot at the goalie. A better warm up is to have X2 shoot first and then X1 shoot next and so on. In this way the goalie has to move from side to side which will warm them up quicker than moving just in one direction. Remember that goalie warm-up is for the goalie, instruct your players not to try and score on their goalie.



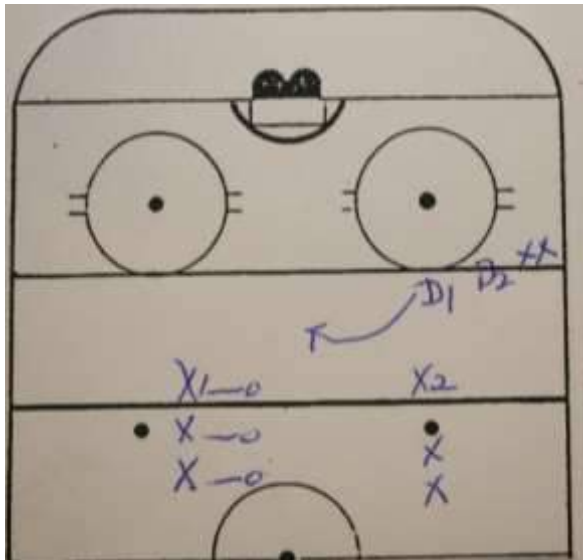
Line up the players as shown with rings. Have each player go one at a time about two stick lengths apart. This drill helps the goalie practice on ring focus.



Line up the players as shown with rings. Set up pylons when you first teach this pattern so the players will know where to go when they shoot on the net. A group of three will start about one stick length apart and each will shoot at a different spot on the goalie. This drill is good for the goalie to practice shuffling from side to side.



Line up the players as shown with rings. The first player with the ring passes the ring straight up to the front of the net. The next player that does not have a ring skates ahead picks up the ring and shoots at the goalie and so on. Do not use the horseshoe drill where a ring is passed from the corner up to a player skating toward the net. At U10 level the players will not be able to pick up the ring on a regular basis and will lose their confidence just before the game. Use the drill I show above because all the players can pick up the ring as it has slowed down or has stopped.



If there is a delay in starting the game you can use this two on one drill. The defense and forwards line up as shown. D1 defends against X1 and X2 who try to pass and try to get a shot on the goalie. The defense tries to prevent that from happening.



What do you mean tripping, she just she just accidentally fell over my stick

# DEFENSE TRIANGLE

Developing a strong defensive program for your team is essential and should be one of your first priorities. All positions are very important on a team but none more important than defense. You have to teach your players to see defensive play as pro-active, not just reactive. Defense becomes fun when the team realizes that success is directly related to its defensive play and that each successful defensive play is the beginning of an offensive play. A quality goalkeeper is the anchor of any defensive triangle but only if they have patterned defensive players in front of them. A very strong and well patterned defense can help a team in the following ways:

1. A strong defense prevents the other team from scoring goals easily on your goaltender which will normally frustrate the other team's players. When players become frustrated, they tend to make mistakes that your team can capitalize on.
2. Sound defensive patterns can make it easier to maintain a lead during the end of a game. It is easier to save a lead then having to score 2 or more goals to win a game.
3. Sound defensive patterns will keep your team in the game if you are playing a stronger team. A team becomes discouraged if they have too many goals scored on them thus lessening their willingness to learn from the game and keep trying.

There are two main areas you have to work on in developing a strong defense:

## BASIC DEFENSE STANCE

All of your players should learn the basic defensive stance, arm and stick movements. Forwards can use this stance when they are trying to get the ring from the other team in checking, passing and free play situations. Use your assistant or a player to help you demonstrate how the various stances work.

If a player is too upright they will not be able to stop a ring being passed around them. If they are too low to the ice they will not be able to check a player who will try to skate around them to get a shot on the net. The ideal situation is a stance that allows a player to be able stop a ring or to check player with the ring.

This player is standing too upright to be effective. She will have upward mobility and will be able to move fast to check a player but the ring can be passed around and through her skates easily by the opposition.



a





This player is crouching too low to be effective. This player will be able to stop rings that are passed around or through her but she will not have any upward mobility to check a player. The opposition players will go around this player easily.



This player has the best stance. She is low enough to stop rings on the ice but is high enough to check a skating player if she has to.

This is a front view of the correct stance. Note the player has her hand (the left hand if she is a left hand shooter or the right hand if she is a right hand shooter) between her legs to prevent a ring from passing through. Her other hand is on the end of the stick so she can move her stick back and forth in front of her. If she has to place both her hands on the stick quickly, it is an easy motion to place her lower hand on her stick. From this position the player can place her gloves and stick down to block a shot or she can move quickly to check a player who is trying to skate around her.



If a player wishes to block a shot on the net, she would place both of her gloves and her stick between her legs to prevent the ring from passing through. The two players shown below are both left hand shooters and are demonstrating how their sticks and gloves can be used from either side of their bodies to stop rings.




The same technique can be used for two players to block a shot on three on two situations.



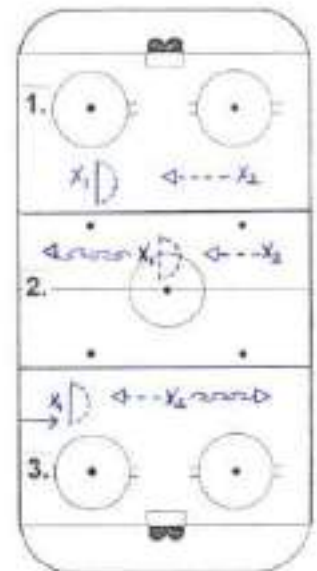


This is the front view of a player placing her stick on the ice to stop a ring. Notice she has thumbs up on her stick as is illustrated and explained in the ring pick up section of this manual. When you grip the stick in this manner you will create a small space near the glove, which will allow a ring to pass through. This is normally not a problem because most rings are stopped at the end of the stick (see other figure) or are stopped by the player's other glove. If you lay the stick totally flat on the ice you will lose control of the stick if a ring hits it hard. You will also have a problem picking the stick up quickly to check a player. You need to maintain a strong grip on the stick at all times.

The following are some drills you can use to help the players learn to move using the basic stance.

The symbol  indicates the range of movement of the player's stick. It is important to encourage the players to maintain the correct stance position as they do the drills. These games and drills will help them learn to move on the ice using the defense stance.

1. X1 and X2 are stationary. X2 passes to X1 who stops the ring with her stick and returns the ring to X2 who does the same.
2. X1 is skating backwards while X2 is skating forward. X2 passes to X1. X1 stops the ring while skating backwards, stops and then skates forward passing the ring to X2 who now is skating backwards. Repeat.
3. X2 passes to X1 while skating backwards. X1 who is skating forward stops the ring and starts to skate backwards. X1 passes to X2 who has stopped and is now skating forward. Repeat.

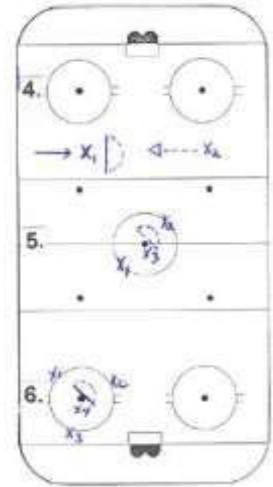




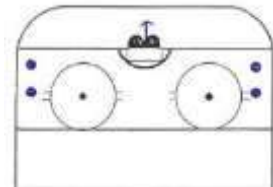
4. X2 skates forward and passes to X1 who also is skating forward. X1 stops the ring, picks up the ring and tries to avoid being checked by X2. They take turns passing to each other. This drill forces them increase the speed of their ring pickup.

5. X1 and X2 must stay on the lines of the face-off circle. They try to pass around X3. If X3 stops the ring then the player who passed the ring takes her place inside the circle.

6. Same drill as 5 except you place three players on the outside of the circle.



Basketball ringette. Move the net against the boards and have the players put their sticks away in the net. Set out two sets of pylons that will act as goal posts so each team will have a goal. Bring out a basketball and explain to the girls that they can only use their hands to move and pass the ball around. All the other rules of ringette apply. This is a game that will encourage the players to move around the ice using the basic stance positions.



**What do you mean “charging” she shouldn’t been standing in my way.**

## DEFENSE MOVEMENT PATTERNS

The first defense movement pattern you will want to teach your players is the basic three on three pattern. This is when the opposition team has three offensive players attacking your three defensive players, in your defensive zone.

The basic principle and use of the defensive triangle is to prevent the opposition players from doing the following three things.

1. Skating around your defense players and getting a shot on your net.
2. Passing the ring through your triangle to a player (side-shooter), who is waiting by the side of your net.
3. Forcing one of your players to screen your goalie so she cannot see a shot coming.

The correct basic stance combined with good movement patterns can stop or make it very difficult for the opposition team to score. The key thing is that your players must be able to assume the basic stance and work as a team to execute the patterns.

These two players are assuming the basic wall pattern (center and defense forming a wall that is square to the ring carrier). There should be no more than one stick length between the two players. This is so either player can place their stick on the ice to stop a ring or they can move together to check a player who is trying to go between them with the ring. The goalie can see over and between the defensive players easily because they are not screening her.



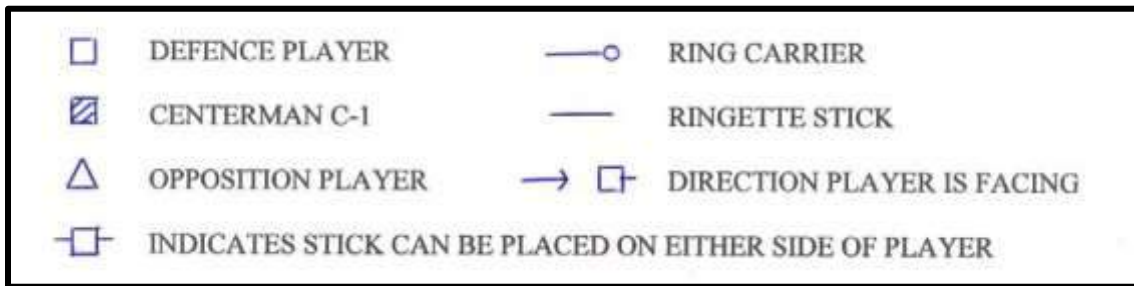
If an opposition player tries to skate between the two defense players, they should move together to check the player with the ring. The two defensive players must be in a legal stationary position with their sticks not interfering with the attacking player. This means they can't move out of their defensive position and hit the attacking player or they will receive a body penalty. They must use their sticks to check rather than to hook or trip the attacking player. If the two defensive players stay as a unit it is very difficult for an attacking player to get a ring through them without losing it.

This is the position the left wing defense would assume to prevent an attacking player from skating around the net and passing out front to a teammate. This player is a right handed shooter so you would have her play left wing. This allows the defensive player to stay square with the attacking player and gives her more mobility to attack the player with the ring.



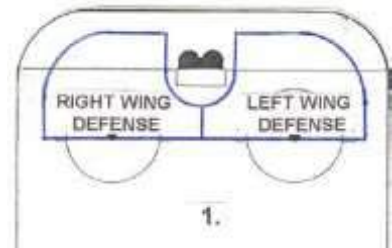
This is an example of a left handed shooter playing left wing. This stance places her in an awkward position where she isn't square with the ring carrier. This position is still o.k., but it is just harder for the player to be as mobile. If you have an equal number of left and right handed shooters let them play the side which allows them to stay square with the attacker. A left hand shooter would play right wing defense and a right hand shooter would play left wing defense.



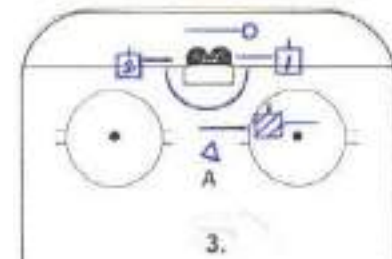
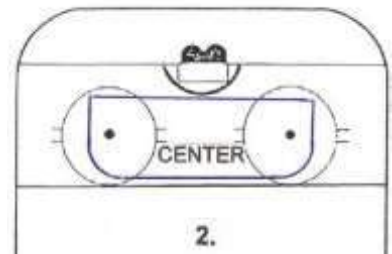


The following diagrams illustrate the basic 3 on 3 patterns

**Diagram #1:** This diagram outlines the general area in which the defense can move. How far your defense can challenge will depend on the skill of your players. The best approach is to have them challenge as much as they can without being so far out they get skated around by the ring carrier.

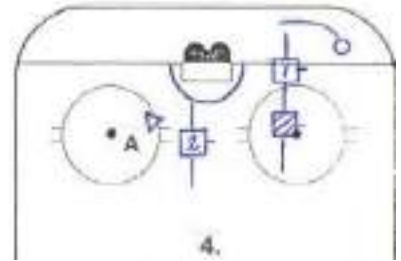


**Diagram #2:** This diagram outlines the general area in which your center can move in. Your center must push out at all times so your triangle stays large. If she moves back so will the defense, which creates a small defensive triangle. A small defensive triangle gives the other team too many scoring chances. It is hard for an opposition player to shoot or pass when your player is attacking them. Encourage your players to be aggressive in the defensive triangle.

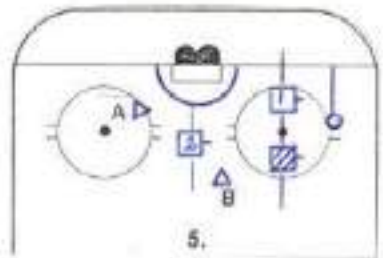


**Diagram #3:** You want to prevent the ring carrier from passing from behind your net to their point person (A). D1 and C1 can prevent this. Another way to stop the ring carrier from passing from behind the net is to have D1 attack the ring carrier behind the net. Normally the ring carrier will have to protect the ring from D1 which would mean they would be unable pass the ring to their point person. Your center must have their stick down in case the opponent does get the ring pass you're the attacking defensive player.

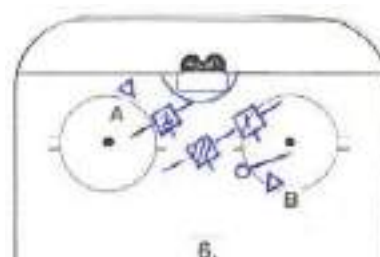




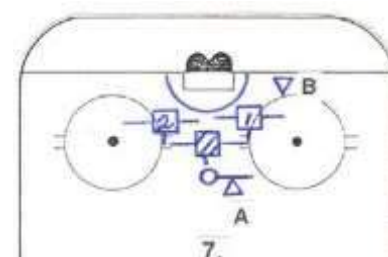
**Diagram #4:** D1 and C1 form together to form a wall one stick length apart. D2 has to prevent any ring that passes through D1 or C1 from reaching the other team's side-shooter (A). D2 has to alternate between watching the ring carrier and the side-shooter.



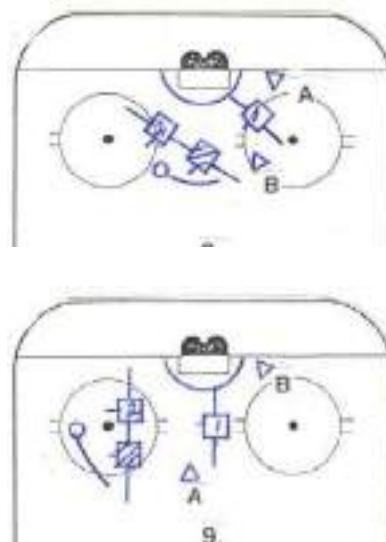
**Diagram #5:** D1 and C1 stay as a wall in case the ring carrier tries to go between them. C1 has to prevent the ring carrier from passing to player B. D1 and D2 has to prevent the pass to player A.



**Diagram #6:** C1 and D1 stay together. D2 starts to move ahead to join up with C1. C1 and D1 have to ready for drop or exchange passes that normally occur here (player B). D1 still has to cover player A.

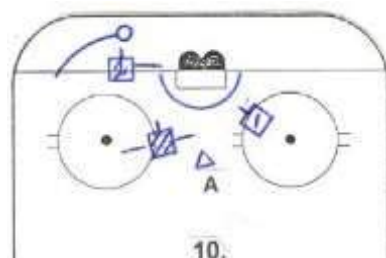


**Diagram #7:** D2 moves further up to meet C1. D1 moves back to cover side shooter B, or the point player on her wing (A). When your players are in the center of the triangle, the wall is not in place, so the defense has to guard against players trying to break through the triangle.



**Diagram #8:** D2 and C1 form a wall on D2's wing. D1 drops back to keep covering side-shooter A. D-1 must also be prepared to check player B if she receives the ring and breaks to the net.

**Diagram #9:** C1 tries to prevent a pass to player A. D1 tries to prevent a pass to player B. D1 has to be prepared to attack player A if she gets the ring.



**Diagram #10.** D2 and C1 try to prevent the pass to point player A. D2 could also attack the ring carrier and force the ring carrier to protect the ring and prevent the pass to the point player.

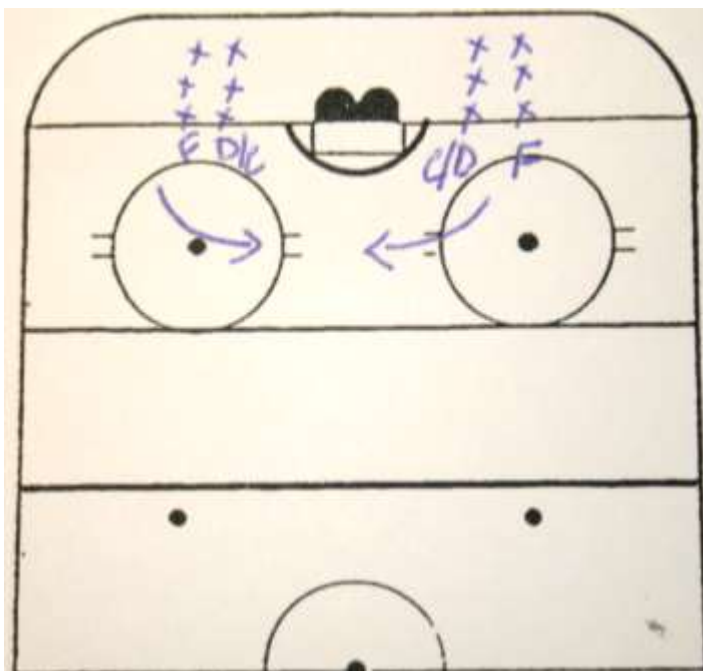


The above diagrams show the defensive positions in regard to having sticks down. In the U10 division you will need to teach your players how to defend standing more upright when an opposition player tries to enter your defensive triangle. The diagram below shows where a player needs to place her hand and stick while defending off an opposition player.



Number 7 player is a left hand shooter so she places her left hand on the opposition player number 5's hip. The player cannot push so hard that the opposition player falls down as it will create a penalty. She just needs to apply pressure at the opposition player's hip to keep them from going around her and to keep the opposition player a little off balanced. Number 7 defense will place her stick over top of the opposing player to interfere with the opposition's ability to pass or to shoot. A good way to show your players how a stick slows down passes and shots is to give a demonstration. Have one of your players to shoot a ring on the ice into the net. Next let them do the same shot only you place your stick so just before she releases the ring her stick has to hit your stick. Their shot will be now be at one half the speed or less than it was before their stick hit yours. This stance will allow your defense to keep the opposition player from cutting around them as well as restricting their ability to shoot or pass. Below is a drill where the players can practice this skill.

This diagram shows the technique for a left hand shooter coming from the opposite side of the net. Their right hand presses against the opposition player's hip while still holding their stick. Their left hand holding the stick and sets it on top of the opposition's stick. As long as the defense/center doesn't push the opposition's player too much or too quickly where they fall it is legal by the rules to push against her body.



Line up your players as shown in the diagram. Centers and defense are closest to the net, forwards are on the outside with rings. On whistle one defense or one center and one forward move ahead. The forward tries to force their way around the center or the defense player to get a shot on the goalie. The defense/center tries to prevent that. Watch for technique to see that the defense/center players are doing it correctly. After one side has gone blow the whistle for the other pairing to go from the other side. Once a pairing is done they should go to the opposite side that they started on.

## LIST OF DRILL SYMBOLS

PLAYERS ON YOUR TEAM	X
PLAYERS ON OPPOSITION TEAM	O
CENTERS	CX & CO
FORWARDS	FX & FO
DEFENSE	DX & DO
INSTRUCTOR / COACH	I
RING	O
PASS	-----▷
STOP	—————
CHECKING	—————C
PILON	▲
FORWARD SKATING WITHOUT THE RING	—————→
FORWARD SKATING WITH THE RING	—————○
BACKWARD SKATING WITHOUT THE RING	~~~~~▷
BACKWARD SKATING WITH THE RING	~~~~~○
PIVOT/TIGHT TURN	—————o
SHOT ON NET	—————→
MOHAWKS	
-BACKWARD TO FORWARD TURNING	~~~~~→
-FORWARD TO BACKWARD TURNING	————~▷

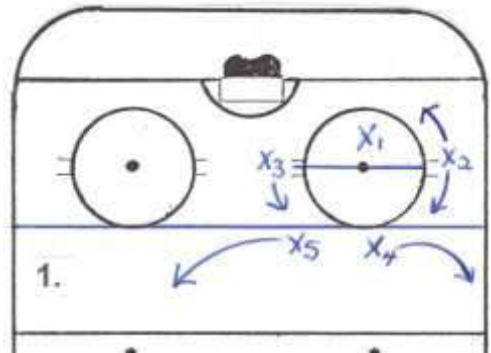
## FREE PASSES

A free pass is an opportunity for your team to retain possession of the ring. If your team is behind late in a game you may want to gamble on a free pass play to try to score, but normally the objective of a free pass is for your team to keep possession of the ring. There are many free pass plays that you can use for your team and you should instruct several to your players. This will allow your team to change their free pass plays if you find that one of your free pass patterns is not working well against a team. There are three zones where a free pass can occur.

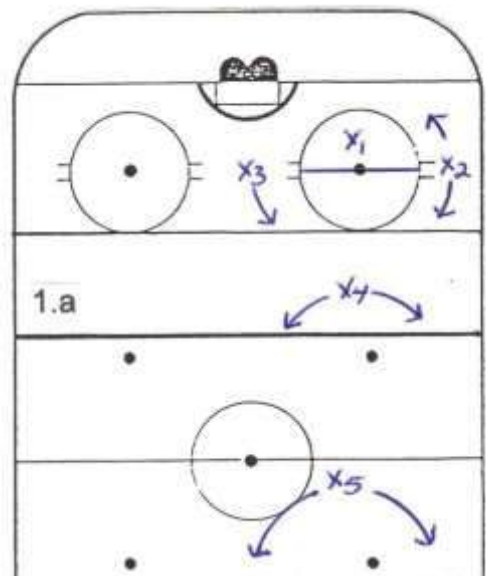
### DEFENSIVE ZONE

The main objective of this free pass is to keep possession of the ring while still getting the ring out of your zone.

**Pattern #1.** X1 a defense will try to pass the ring to X2, X3, X4 or X5 who are skating toward open ice. X1 can also pass the ring back to their goalie and the goalie can use one of the team's breakout plays.

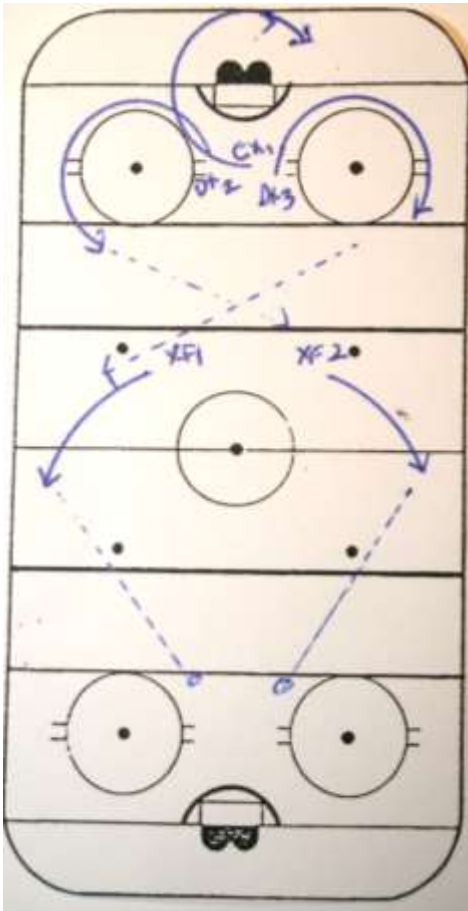


**Pattern #1.a.** If you use a high-low system X4 would assume the low position and X5 would assume the high position.

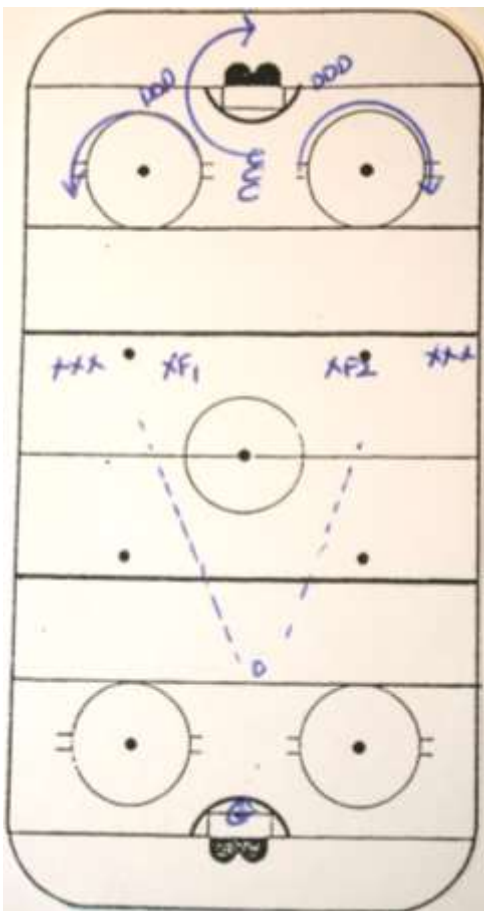




## GOALIE BREAK-OUT



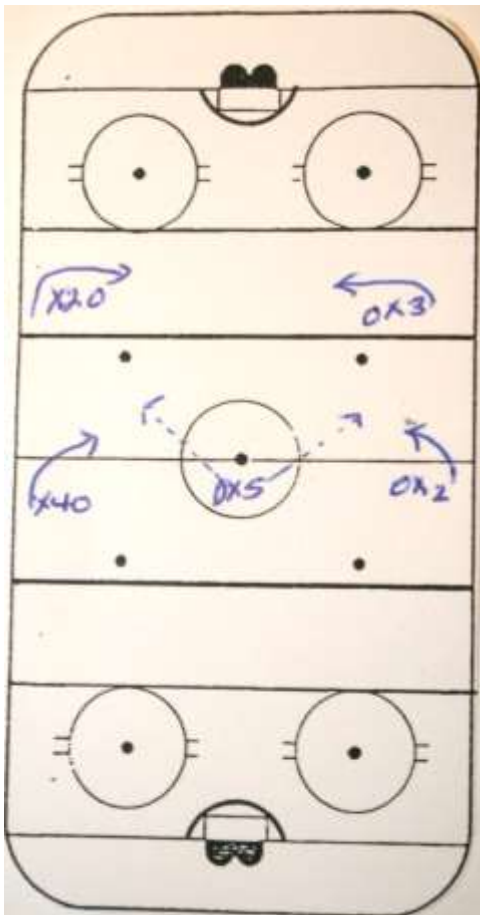
This is the goalie breakout that has worked the best for my teams in the past. The Defense curl the way they are shown. The center waits until the defense player on their side moves out of the way and then the center skates around behind the net. The direction that the center goes behind the net will be determined by which hand your goalie throws with. In this case the goalie throws with their left hand. The key point with this goalie breakout is that the ring carrier (center or defense) passes to the opposite side of the rink that she is skating up. So if they are skating up the left side of the rink then they will pass to the forward skating up the right side of the net. This always fools the opposition because they assume that the player will pass up the side of the rink that they are skating on. The forward on the side that the ring carrier is skating knows that they are now the scorer and will head directly to the front of the opposition's net to receive a pass from their other forward



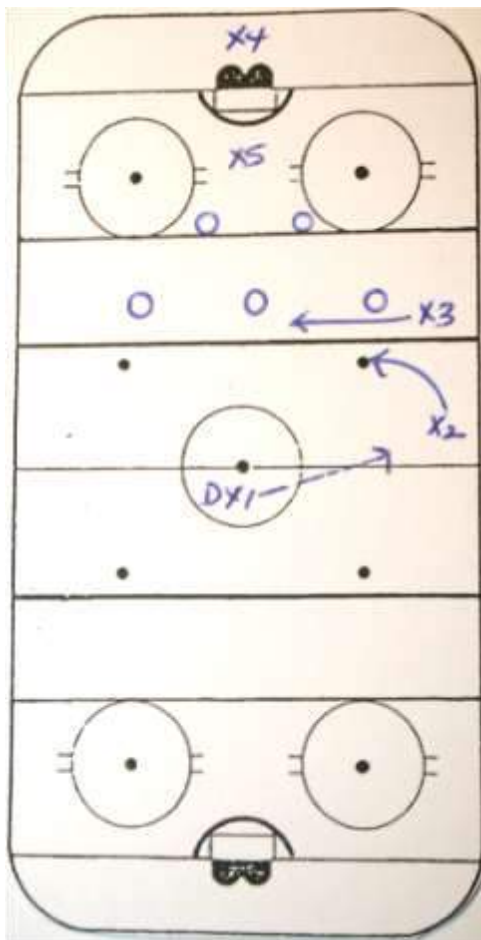
This is how you line up your players to practice this free pass. This requires a full ice practice session. I mentioned earlier in the manual that it is a good idea to have your players wear different color jerseys when they practice. If you have three forward lines then have each of the players on their line wear the same color of jerseys. I dress my goalies and defense in white. The forwards are in green, blue and red jerseys. In practicing a drill like this you want to develop line chemistry so you should have each separate line practice this drill together along with the defense pairings.

## CENTER FREE PASS

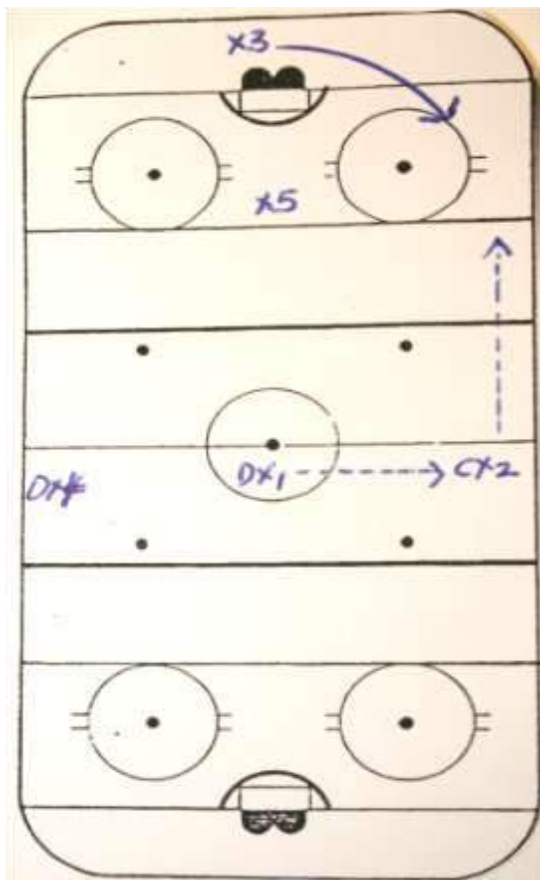
There are two ways you can design a center free pass play. The first is for the player inside the circle to pass to a teammate in the neutral zone. Your team then has lots of time to carry the ring across the blue line or to pass safely to a teammate in the offensive zone. The second way is for the player inside the circle to pass directly to a teammate in the offensive zone. The player inside of the circle has only five seconds to pass the ring out so they have to be careful when they are passing.). The following are some examples of center free pass plays. The first four shown work the best for U10 but I have included other center passes that you can use.



**This can be a center free pass that you can use when the opposition team is covering you, player on player. All of your players need to skate away from their checks in order for one of them to be in open ice to receive a pass**

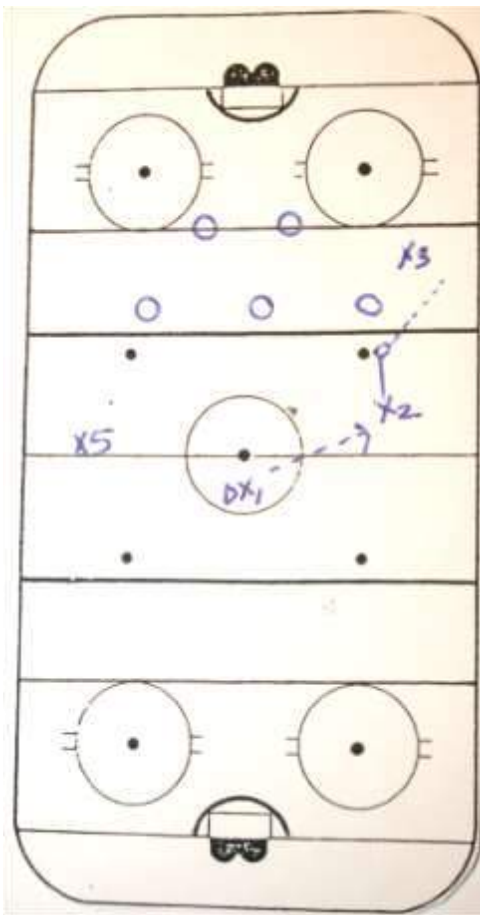


If you play a team that uses the five person zone defense but leaves a space between their front three players and the blue line, use this center freepass. X1 passes to X2 who skates parallel with X3 and gives a little pass to X3.



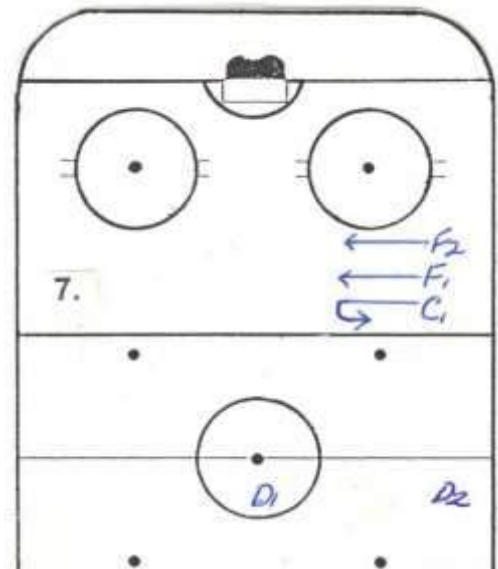
If the team you play uses the five person zone but the players stay close to the blue line. X1 passes to X2 who is a left hand shooter. If this player was a right hand shooter you would place this player on the other side of the rink. This play works well if X2 can pick up the ring and shoot it quickly toward the corner that X3 is coming out of. If X1 has a strong arm they can lift the ring up over the opposition's players and drop it into the corner that X3 is skating into.



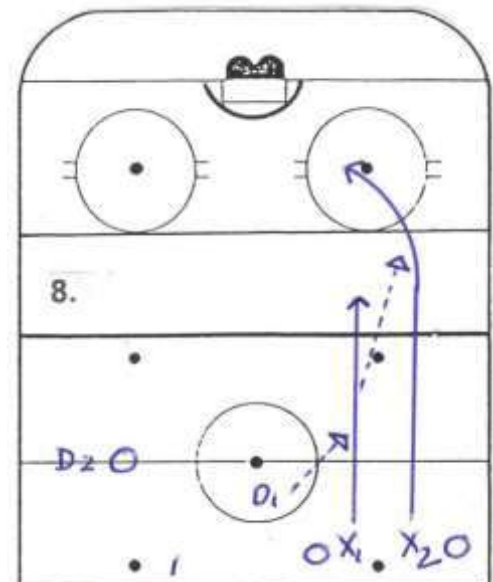


This is another center free pass you can use if the opposition team uses the five person zone defense. X1 passes to X2. X2 skates fast toward one of the opposition team's players. This player will think that your player is going to her right side but instead X2 passes over to X3 directly or off the boards.

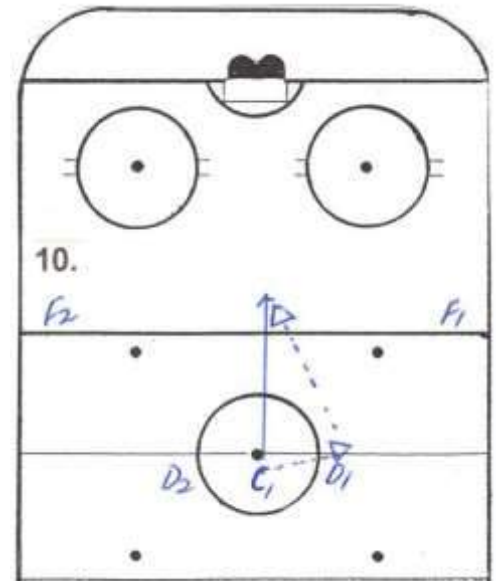
F1 and C1 line up as shown all facing the same direction. At the sound of the whistle all three skate forward but C1 stops returns to the blue line corner to receive a pass from D1.



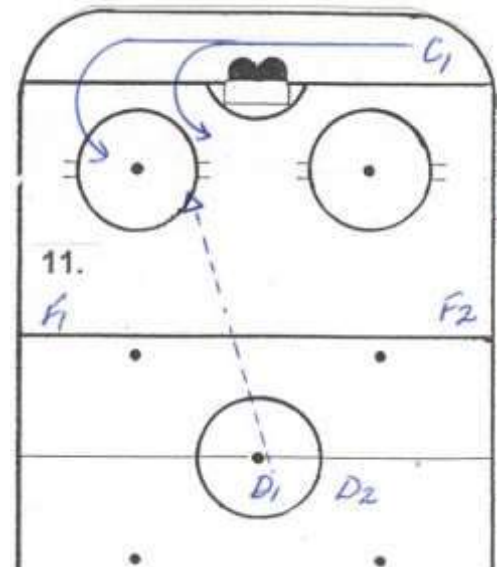
You would use this play against a slower skating team who likes to cover your players one on one. X1 and X2 would be two of your fastest skaters and would try to skate faster than the opposition to the



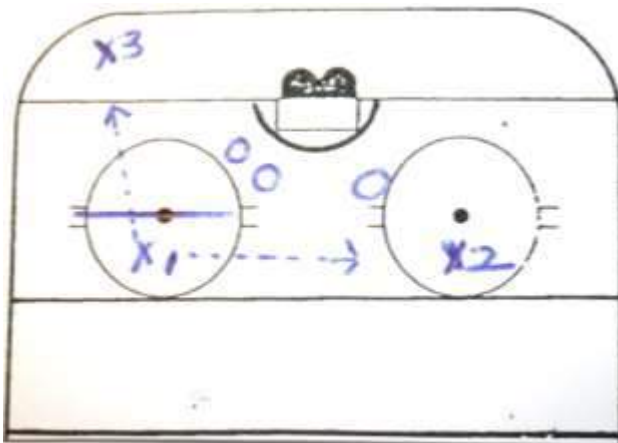
Give and go. The one player that few teams ever cover is the player with the ring inside the circle. In this play D1 passes to C1 and breaks over the other teams blue line where C1 receives the pass back from D 1.



C1 sets up near the corner to attract a checker to come over to cover her. On the sound of the whistle C1 skates around the back of the net to be able to receive the pass. If D1 cannot get a pass to F1 or F2 then they can shoot into the corner for C1 to pick up.



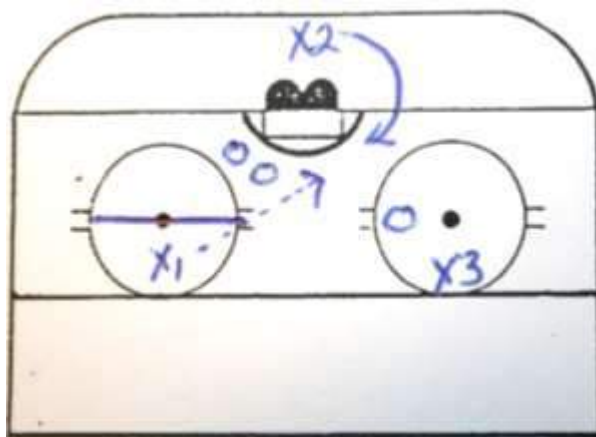
## OFFENSIVE ZONE PLAYS



This is a good safe offensive free-pass for the U10 division. Place X3 in the corner rather than closer to the free-pass circle. If X3 is covered by an opposition player they can move the opposite way that the opposition player is covering them to get free to receive the ring. If the opposition center leaves a big space between them and X2 then X1 can also pass to X2. Tell the player with the ring in the offensive or center free-pass circle to determine

where they will pass the ring before the whistle blows. Remember you only have 5 seconds to get the ring out of the circle.

This free pass works well because it makes the opposition center have to decide if they are going to cover X3 close or stay next to their defense triangle. If the center stays close to their defense triangle then X1 can safely pass to X3. If the opposition center moves close to X3 then they will leave a gap between them and their defense players. Then X1 can pass to X2 skating around the net and will have a good chance to score.



## SHOOTING AND SCORING PATTERNS

There are basically three patterns or techniques that players can use to score on a goalie. They are: side-shooter/point shooting patterns, frontal attack patterns/offensive plays and screen/pick patterns. It is important that players learn scoring patterns and it is easier to instruct scoring patterns to younger players by making the pattern a play. Have the players decide which name, color or number they want to use to identify the play. Younger players enjoy doing this because it makes learning the pattern more like a game and it becomes their secret against the other team. This concept builds team unity and helps them develop the concept of working together toward a common goal. Elite players will not be able to utilize plays as much because at this level players are forced to read and react to the constantly changing flow of the game. They do, however, have to be able to recognize when a pattern is developing and to take advantage of it.

### SIDE-SHOOTER AND POINT PATTERNS

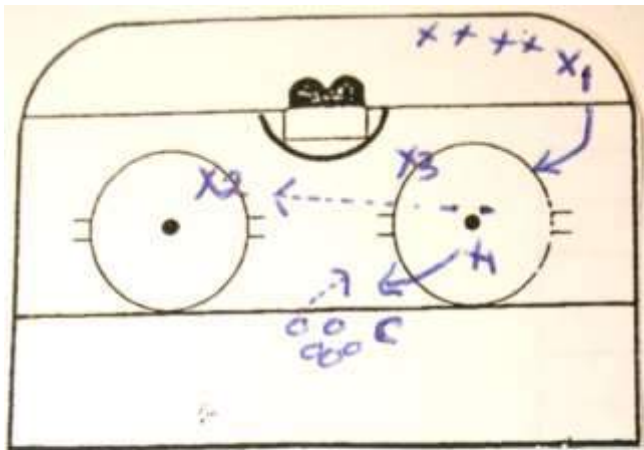
The players shown in the three pictures on this page are assuming the side-shooter position from three different areas. They are in the ready position waiting to receive a pass and to instantly shoot the ring once they have received it. Side-shooters do not have to be in a particular position at all times but rather they should vary their position in relation to where the ring carrier is located. The side-shooter has to help the ring carrier get the pass to her by being in the open to receive the pass. A point shooter is a player who positions themselves in the front



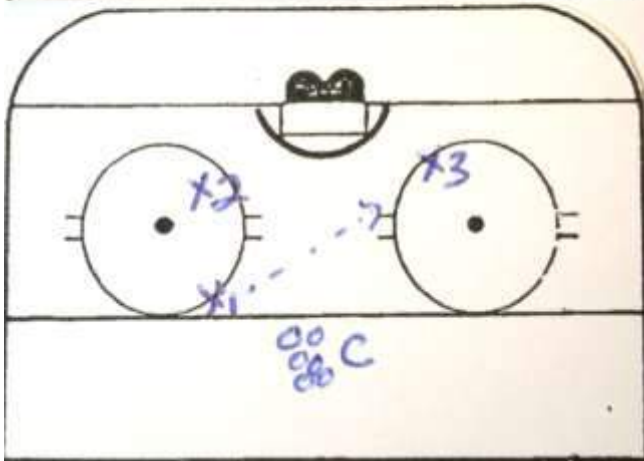


between the hash marks and the free play line. This player has to assume the ready position and be ready to shoot or pass the moment they receive the ring. The point player will want to stay inside the free play line to avoid being checked by the other team's forward.

## SCORING PATTERNS AND PLAYS



The best scoring system for all ages of ringette players is the post-point system. Basically it is a system where the players set up a triangle or a L shaped pattern around the opposition's net. The idea is to move around the opposition's defense triangle to get one of their defensive players out of position so that either your point player or one of your two post players get a quality shot on goal.



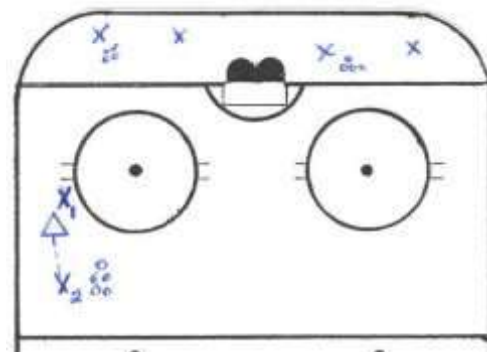
This is a basic practice pattern that introduces the concept of the offensive triangle or the L pattern. The players line up in the corner and each has a ring. X1 starts out and skates around X3 and passes to X2. X2 shoots on the net. After X1 passes the ring to X2 a coach passes X1 another ring. X1 skates further around and passes the ring to X3. X3 shoots on the net. X3 goes back to the end of the player line. X1 takes X2's position and X2 takes X3's position.

## SIDE-SHOOTER AND POINT PATTERN DRILLS

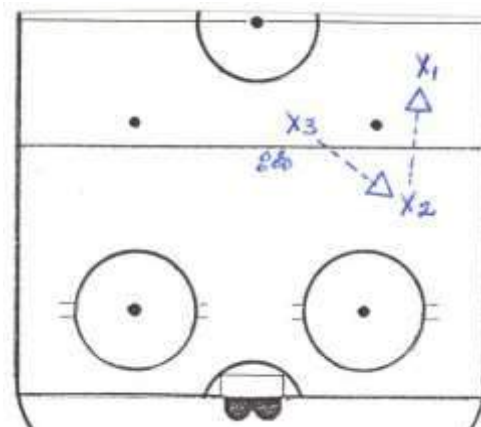
Most of the drills in this manual show the players starting from either the left or right side of the rink. Always set up your drills so the players have to execute the skills from both sides.

This will give them experience in using both forehand and backhand motions as well learning to approach the net from both sides. When you have drills that involve two lines of players, always set them up so that the players don't return to the line they started from so they get to perform the drill from both sides.

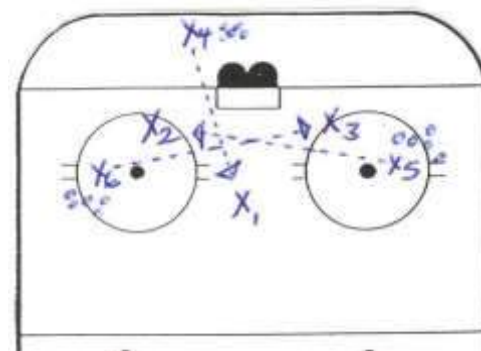
**Drill #1.** Line up the players 8 to 10 feet from the boards and from each other. X2, who has the rings will pass to X1. X1 will pick up the ring and with one motion shoot the ring against the boards. Have the players switch positions, the side they shoot from and the height of the shot. It is important that the players learn to shoot the ring using only one motion from the side-shooter position. These drills are included in the gym section as well.



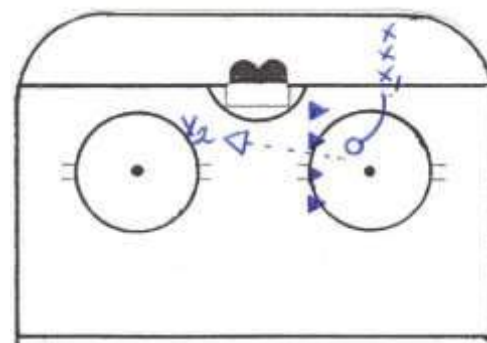
**Drill #2.** Same as drill #1 only you add one more player X3. X3 passes the ring to X2 who with one motion picks up the ring and passes to X1. X1 shoots the ring against the boards. Have them switch positions as before.



**Drill #3.** This drill will teach the players the positions of the side-shooter and point. X4 has several rings (I have my players shoot five rings at a time) and passes them to X1 one at a time. X1 shoots toward the net instantly. X5 has a group of rings and passes them to X2 who shoots. X6 has a group of rings and passes to X3 who shoots. After they have passed and shot five rings the players exchange positions.

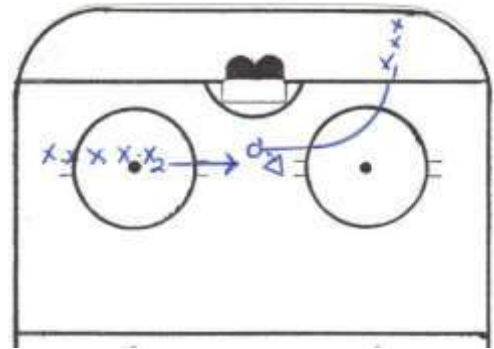


**Drill #4.** Set up four pylons 2 feet apart in the general area that the opposition defense and center would occupy (these pylons represent their skates). The purpose of the drill is to show your players that they do not need a large open space to pass to a side-shooter but rather any space that is available to them. This technique works well against a team who does not protect this area with their sticks or gloves.

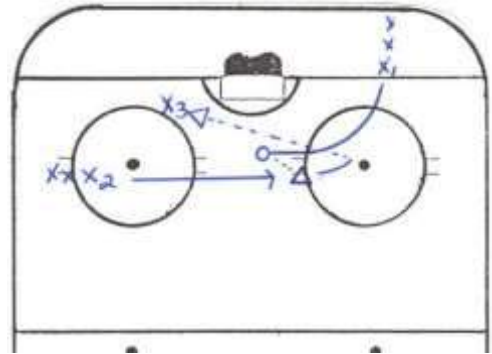




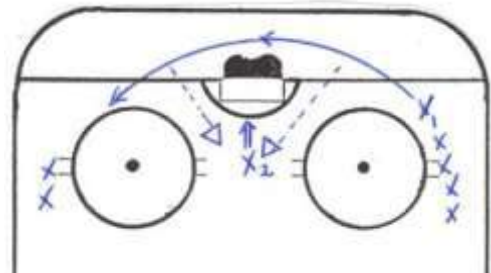
**Drill #5.** Players line up as shown. X1 exchanges the ring with X2. X2 shoots on net. When you instruct the exchange pass make sure the players learn to not just lift their stick out of the ring but to pass the ring backward in the same direction that their teammate is skating. In other words pass back the ring in the direction the moving player is going to stab the ring. Ring exchanges have to be made quickly to fool the opposition's defensive players. It is quicker for a player to pick up a ring that is moving in the same direction that they are skating.



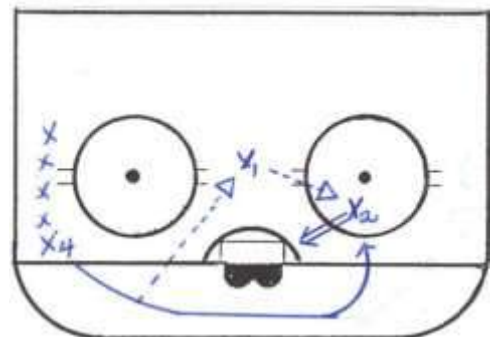
**Drill #6.** X1 exchanges the ring with X2 who passes it to X3 who shoots. X2 would the other side of the net to act as the 2nd side-shooter. Instruct the players to always exchange the ring on the side farthest from the net. If they interchange the ring on side closest to the net, the defense or center will be able check the ring away. You also want to disguise the ring exchange so that the opposition players do not see who has the ring.



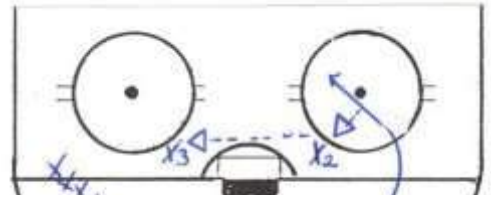
**Drill #7.** X1 skates behind the net and passes out to the point person X2. X2 shoots. X1 takes X2 place and X2 takes goes back to the end of the line. Point person must learn to shoot quickly with one motion. Have the players pass from both sides of the net.



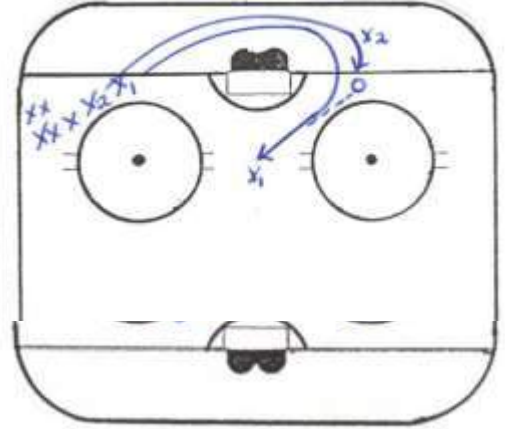
**Drill #8.** Same as drill #8 except you add X2 a side-shooter. X4 passes to X1 who passes to X2. X2 shoots. X4 takes X2's position and X2 takes X1's position.



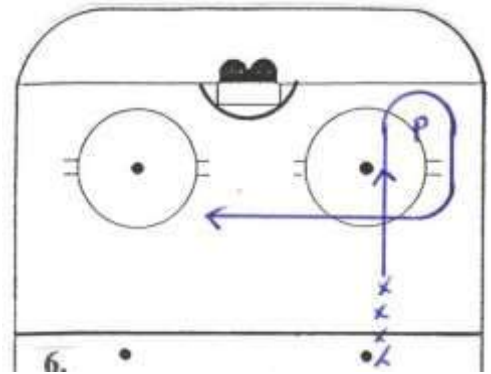
**Drill #9.** X3 and X2 are side-shooters on each side of the net. X1 passes to X2 who passes to X3 and shoots. Double side-shooter plays are very effective because X2 can pass a lot faster to X3 than the goalie can move to stop the shot from X3.



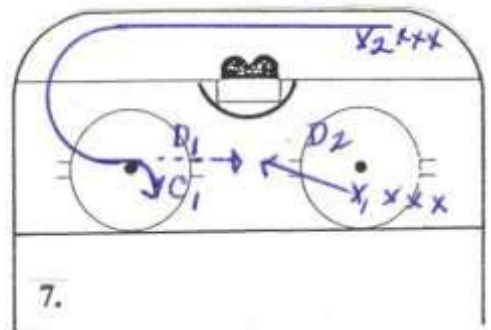
**Drill #10.** Same drill as drill #9 except X1 starts from a different position on the ice. X1 tries to pull the center and defense away from X2 as she goes by. This gives X2 more room to shoot or pass to X3.



**Drill #11.** Many scoring plays are designed to have the players skate parallel to the goal in order to execute the scoring pattern correctly. An easy way to teach your players this concept is to have them start the drill using the pattern shown in diagram #6. It puts them in a position to be able to skate parallel to the goal line and they can perform this same pattern in a game situation.



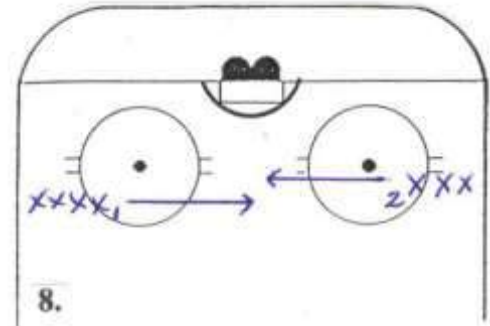
**Drill #12.** Diagram #7 shows how to teach this play to your players during practice. X2 skates in a wide loop and skates toward D1 and C1 who have formed a defensive wall. D1 and C1 normally will be in a low stance with their sticks low to the ice to prevent X2 from passing through them. When it appears that X2 is going to try and go between them, D1 and C1 will stand up more to block X2 from going between them. As soon as this happens X2 cuts around and passes to X1 who will skate in to get a quality shot on net. X3 (not shown in this diagram) would stand by the post so D2 would go over and cover X3 and leave the space open in the middle for X1 to go in.



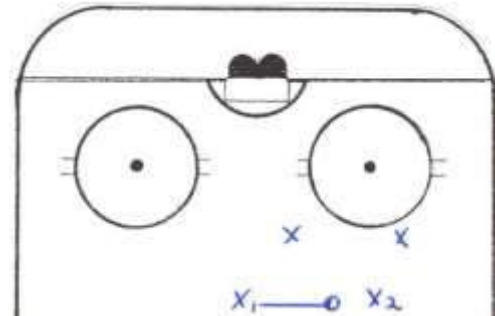


## FRONTAL ATTACK PATTERN DRILLS

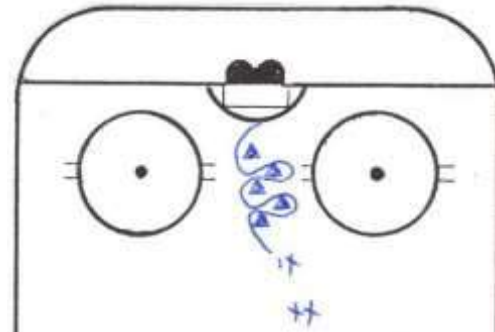
**Drill #13.** Diagram #8 shows the basic way of teaching the players to cross in front of the net and parallel to the goal line. There are several scoring plays that involve variations of this crossing move. A good basic scoring play is to cross the front of the net and do a strong backhand or forehand at the net. The scorer will try to Fake the goalie into think they are going to shoot in one area but shoots in a different area of the net. Have the players go to the opposite line they started from so they can practice forehands and backhands



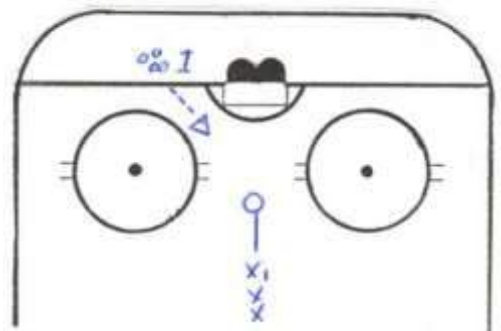
**Drill #14.** Line up the players in pairs about 10 feet apart. X2 is stationary and X1 skates toward X2 with the ring. X1 practices body and head dekes and tries to go around X2



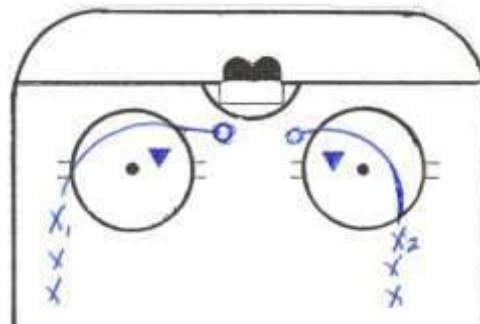
**Drill #15.** This drill will help the players learn to move the ring around quickly to deke a goaltender. Set up a group of pylons about 18 inches apart and staggered as shown. X1 has a ring and approaches the pylons. The player starts to glide while widening their stance so the pylons pass between their skates and under their body. As the players glide over the pylons they must weave the ring around the pylons in front of them and then try the same moves on their goaltender, who is in the net closest to the pylons.



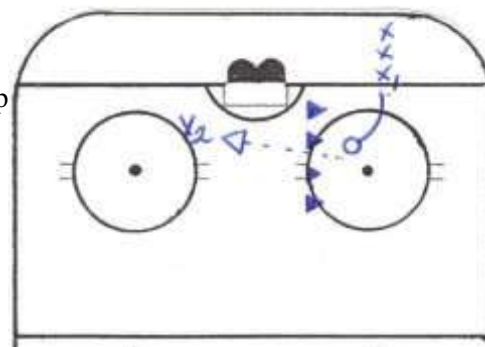
**Drill #16.** X1 the ring carrier skates toward the goal with a ring and shoots before the hash marks. As soon as she shoots the coach passes X1 another ring and X1 shoots again... X1 returns to the line. This drill helps them learn to look *for* rebounds and to shoot fast.



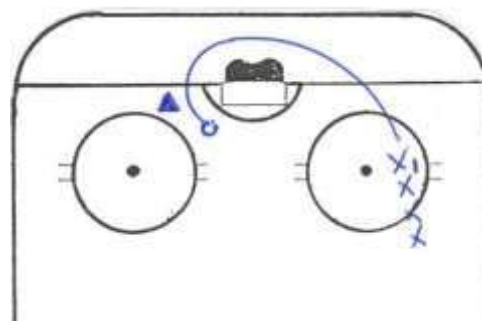
**Drill #17.** X1 skates around the pylon and shoots while skating across the front of the net. X1 goes to the back of X2's line. X2 skates forward after X1 shoots. This drill will encourage the players to cross in front of the net as they shoot.



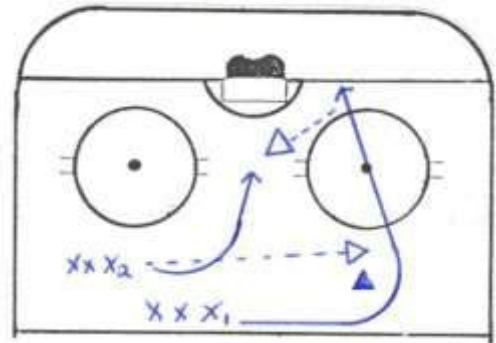
**Drill 18.** Players skate with the ring and learn to pass between the p which represent defensive players legs. This teaches the players to learn that you can pass through a defense triangle.



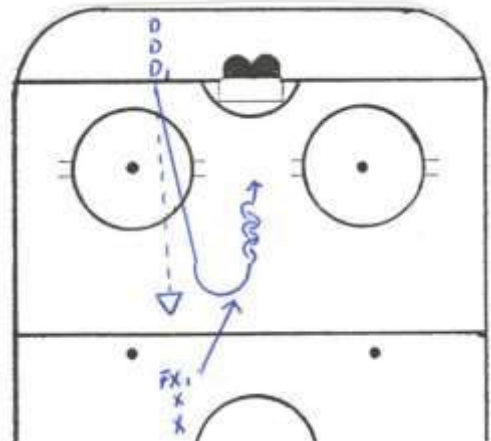
**Drill #19.** If a defense player leaves a space open by her net, an attacking player can skate into this opening and try to score. Players, have to be careful not to extend their stick into the crease area as they shoot. Instruct the players to continue to skate around the goalie crease until there is an opening to score. Patience is the key when it comes to scoring goals.



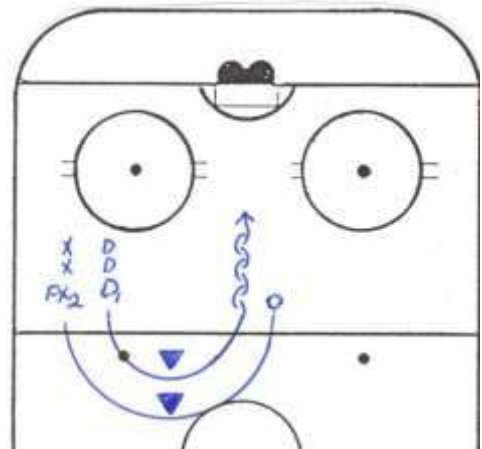
**Drill #20.** Players line up in two rows. X2 passes to X1. X2 receives the pass from X1 and shoots. Players return to the opposite line from where they started.



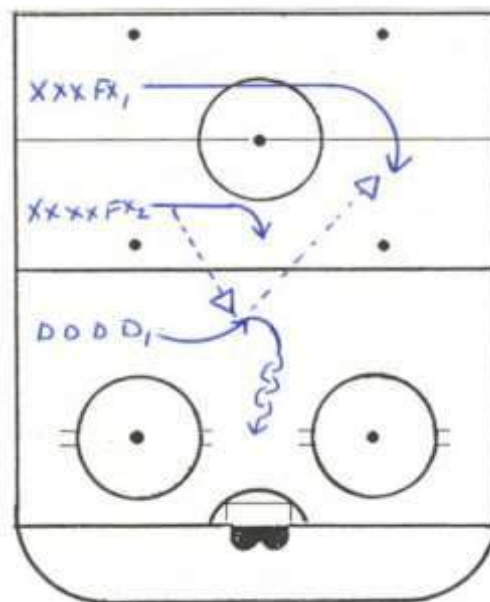
**Drill #21.** Defense and forward players form lines as shown. D1 skates forward and passes the ring to F1. F1 picks up the ring and tries to skate around D1 to score while D1 tries to stop F1 from skating around them and scoring. You are trying to teach the forwards to go around a defensive player and score while at the same time teaching your defense how to prevent that from happening.



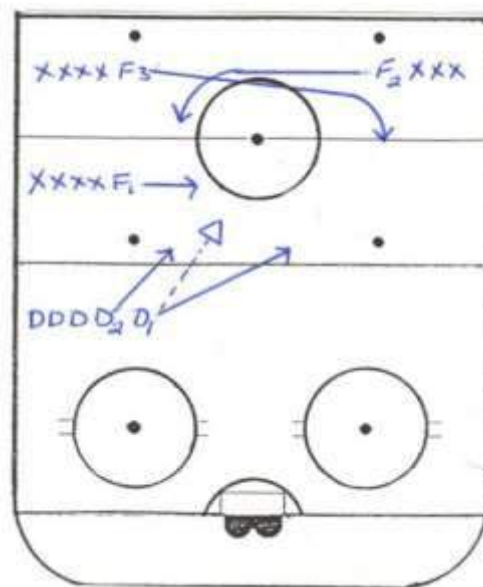
**Drill #22.** Forwards and defense form two lines. FX2 and DI skate around pylons. X2 tries to go around DI and shoot on net. DI defends.



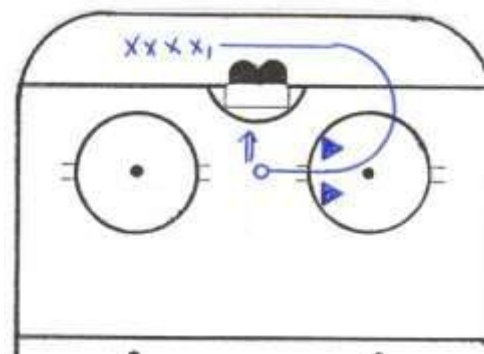
**Drill #23.** Players line up in three lines. F1, F2 and D1 skate forward. FX2 passes to D1. D1 passes to FX1. FX1 and FX2 attack and D1 defends. D1 will try to stop FX1 and FX2 from passing to each other in front of D1's net. FX1 or FX2 will try to draw D1 and the goalie to one side of the net and pass to FX1 or FX2 on the other side of the net.



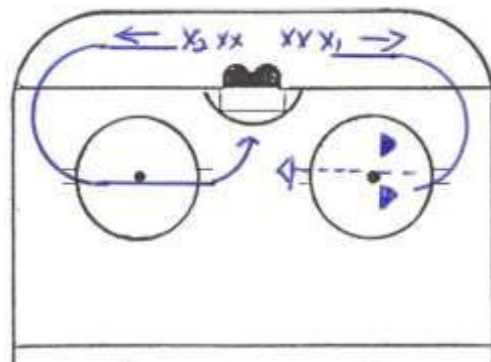
**Drill #24.** Same concept as in drill #25 except you will use three forwards and two defense. D1 will pass to F3 or F2. F1, F2 and F3 will attack while D1 and D2 defend.



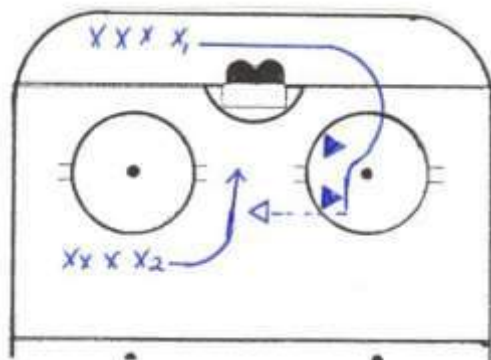
**Drill #25.** The next three drills can be used to practice skating in between two players. This situation will occur in a game situation when the opposition defense and center become too far apart. X1 skates around the net and goes between the two pylons. Use coaches or players instead of the pylons to make it more realistic.



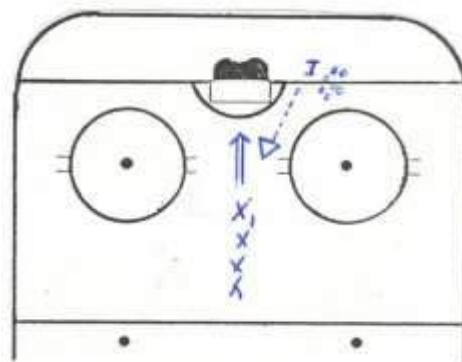
**Drill #26.** Players form two lines. X1 skates around and tries to go between the two pylons but passes between the pylons to X2 instead. Use coaches or players instead of the pylons. The purpose of this drill is for the players to practice making the opposition defense and center believe that they are going to skate in between them (faking). This tricks the opposition players into lifting their sticks off the ice as they stand up to try and check the ring carrier. This gives the ring carrier X1 the chance to pass to X2.



**Drill #27.** Same concept as drill #32 except X1 fakes but keeps skating forward and passes to X2. The fake is used to momentarily slow down the center so X1 can get the pass to X2. This drill shows X2's line starting from a different position so they approach the net from a different angle.



**Drill #28.** Rebound drill. Players line up in a single line each with a ring. X1 skates forward and shoots as they cross the hash marks. After they shoot the coach passes them another ring which they shoot again. Have them vary the type of shots they take (wrist, backhand etc.).



# CHECKING

Checking is one of the key elements of defensive and offensive play in ringette. Players must learn to accept checking not as a chore, but as one of the essential conditions of success. Ringette is a game of possession and when a team controls the ring, they control the game. Checking is one method a team can use to gain possession of the ring. Checking can be divide into three areas.

1. Basic techniques of checking.
2. Protecting the ring.
3. Angling.

## BASIC TECHNIQUES OF CHECKING

Figures 1 and 2 show two players demonstrating the stick check. Players should check using an outward and slightly upward motion of the stick instead of a totally upward motion. It is easier to knock the ring away with an outward motion because you can apply more force directly to the stick that holds the ring. If a player checks using only an upward motion they may hit the other player's gloves or body on the follow through, which will create a penalty. All checking must be directed at the bottom third of the ring carrier's stick. The opponent's stick must be hit with sufficient power to force their stick off the ring so you can possession of the ring or to force the ring away your opponent.



**Figure 1**

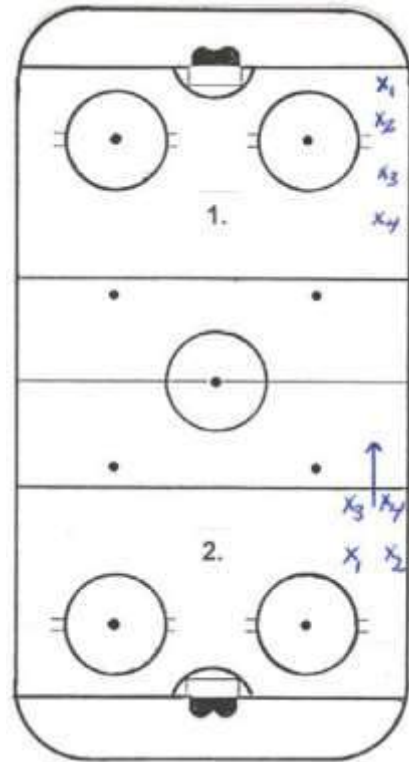


**Figure 2**



**DRILL #1.** Have the players line up two meters away from the boards and facing each other close enough that they can check each other. The player without the ring will practice checking the player with the ring. Have them do it slowly so they can learn the outward motion correctly. Have them take turns checking each other. The reason you have them by the boards is to make it easier for them to recover rings that are checked toward the boards, thus giving them more time to practice the skill.

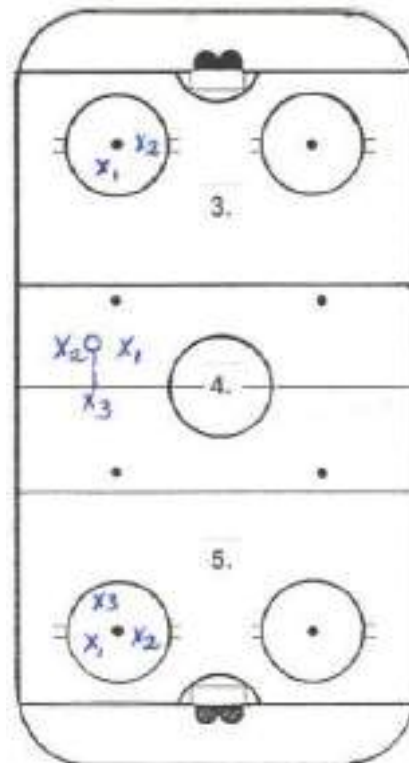
**DRILL #2.** Have the players line up 2 meters away from the boards and at a distance close enough for them to check each other. X3 checks the ring from X4 and then X4 will check X3. The purpose of this drill is to help the players to learn the technique of checking while skating.



**DRILL #3.** Place two players in a free pass circle. The one without the ring tries to check the one with the ring. Neither can move out of the circle. Try to match the skill of the players in each of the circles and use all the face off circles so all the players can be active.

**DRILL #4.** Have two players (X2 & X1) line up together with enough distance between them for X3 to pass through. X3 has the ring and tries to go between X2 and X1. X3 should move the ring away from one checker and let the other check her. The purpose of this drill is to teach X2 & X1 how to work together to check a player. X2 would force X3 to commit to moving the ring to the right side of her body where X1 is waiting to check X3. Working together in this manner is called double teaming.

**DRILL #5.** Put 3 players in a free pass circle and give one of them a ring. The other two try to take the ring away from her by using a stick check. They must stay within the free pass circle.





## POKE AND SWEEP CHECKS

Poke and sweep checks are checking techniques used primarily by defense players while skating backwards. An attacking player skating forward has an advantage in skating mobility over a defense player skating backwards. The attacking player will try to skate around the defensive player in order to get a shot on net or to pass. If the defensive player gets too close to the attacking player, to check her with a stick check, she may allow the attacking player to go around her. It is an advantage for the defensive player to keep the attacking player at a stick length away from her because it gives her room to react if the attacking player tries to go around her. The sweep check is more effective than the poke check and is easier for younger players to learn.



**Figure 3a**



**Figure 3b**



**Figure 3c**

Figure 3 (a, b & c) shows a player assuming the poke check position and then completing the poke check. The arm that she uses to hold the stick should be held back to give her flexibility to poke check. The stick must be kept on the ice in order to poke check the ring away successfully.



**Figure 4a**



**Figure 4b**

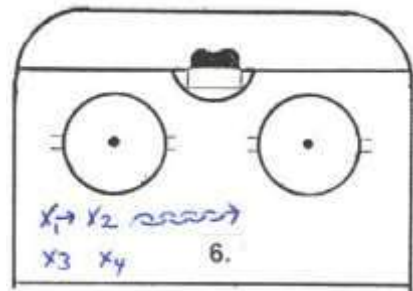


**Figure 4c**

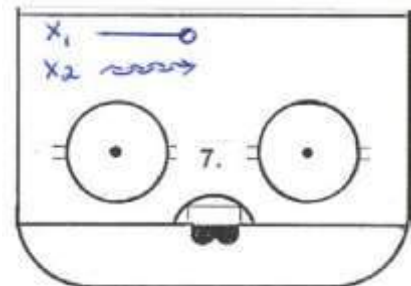
Figure #4 (a, b & c) shows a player executing a sweep pass. The defensive player should stay in front of the ring carrier and leave her stick on the ice at all times. The defensive player should not watch the ring but rather the sternum and chest area of the attacking player. If she watches the ring she can easily be fooled by the attacking player. The motion of the arms and hands originate from the chest area so the defensive player can get the best indication of which way the attacking player is going to go by watching this area.

**The following drills are for developing the poke and sweep checking technique.**

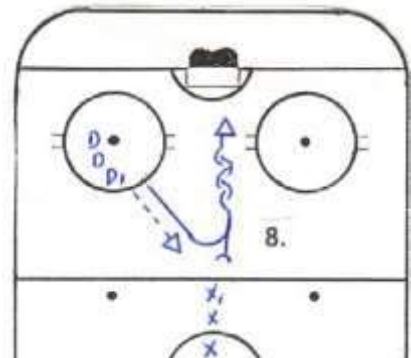
**DRILL #6.** Players line up in pairs and face each other. X1 has the ring and D1s skating forward. X2 is skating backward and tries to poke or sweep check X1. The player with the ring must allow the checker the opportunity to practice checking. Rotate positions.



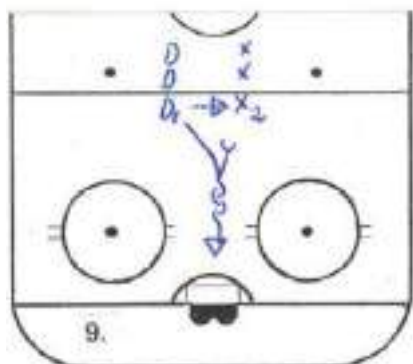
**DRILL #7.** Players line up side by side a stick length apart. X2 tries to check X1 who has the ring. A defensive player should try to stay in front of the ring carrier but there will be times when the ring carrier will be trying to skate around the defensive player. This drill will give them some practice while skating forward and backward.



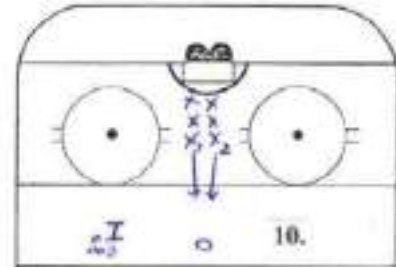
**DRILL #8.** Line up the forwards outside the blue near the free pass center circle. Have the defense line up in one of the defensive free pass circles. D1 skates forward and passes to X1. X1 pick ups the ring and skates toward the net. D1 meets X1 and starts skating backwards trying to poke or sweep check X1.



**DRILL #9.** Line up the players between the center free pass circle and the blue line about 10 feet apart. D1 skates toward and passes to X2. X2 picks up the ring and skates toward the net. D1 turns and skates backward trying to check X2. Let X2 try to shoot on the net.



**DRILL #10.** Line up the players in front of the net. A ring is placed about a meter inside the blue line. X1 and X2 race toward the ring and the first to reach the ring taps or pushes the ring over the blue line. The players continue up the ice with the ring as a 2 on 0 and shoot on your goalie. This drill is good practice for the players to learn ring tapping as well as learning another method have getting the ring out of their zone without having to stab it.



## PROTECTING THE RING

There are several techniques that the players can use to protect the ring from checkers. Figure #5 shows the technique of protecting the ring with the ring carrier's body. When the ring carrier is being checked from the side by an opposing player, she can protect the ring by moving the ring to the other side of her body. In other words she puts her body between the checker and the ring. She must avoid hitting the opposing player with any force or she will receive a body penalty. When the player moves the ring to her other side, however, she takes the chance that there are no checkers on that side.



Figure 5a



Figure 5b



Figure 5c



Another technique of protecting the ring is to push the ring away using only one hand (the hand that is highest on the stick) and follow the ring with the rest of your body. This allows the player room to skate away adjacent to the checker at a faster pace than if she had two hands on the stick. This technique is used mostly when the ring carrier is surprised by a checker and she has to react quickly or lose the ring. Forwards being checked by defensive players would be an example.

Figure #6. This player is protecting the ring by pushing it away with one hand.



Another technique of protecting the ring is to tuck the ring between the skates or close to the skates while gliding or doing pivot turns. This can be used to protect the ring when there are checkers on both sides of the ring carrier. This will protect the ring from being checked away and will discourage opposing players from checking around your feet for fear of causing a tripping penalty. Figure #7 shows how to make the tucking motion with the stick and hands. This motion allows for a quick movement of the ring and stick into the tuck position.

**Figure 7a**



**Figure 7b**





Figure #8 shows the position of the ring in relation to the player's skates when she is executing a pivot or tight turn to her left side. Figure #9 shows the player tucking the ring between her skates while gliding forward. Figure #10 shows the position of the ring in relation to the player's skates when she is executing a pivot or tight turn to her right side.



**Figure 8**

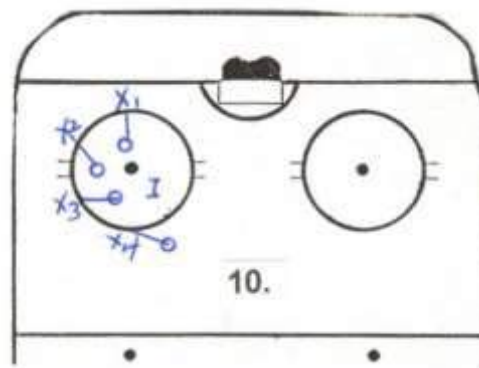


**Figure 9**

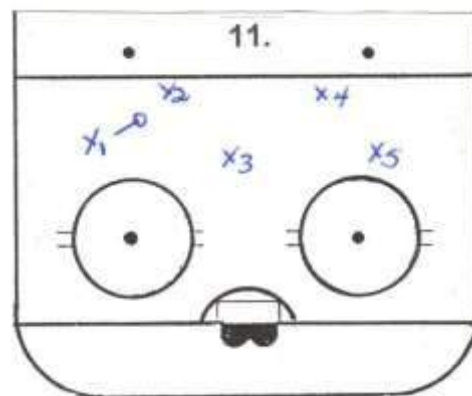


**Figure 10**

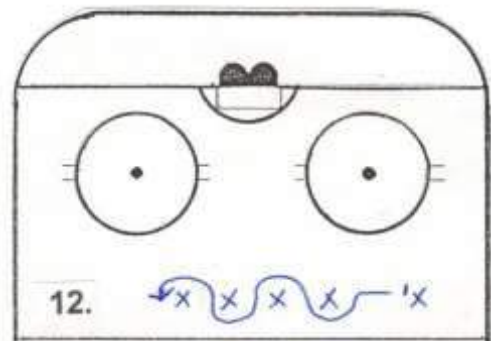
**DRILL #10.** This drill will allow the players to practice moving the ring to the side of their bodies. A group of players skate crossovers around the outside of a free pass circle with the ring inside the circle. An instructor stands inside the circle and tries to check the ring away from the players. This will force the players to place their body between the checker and the ring. Change direction.



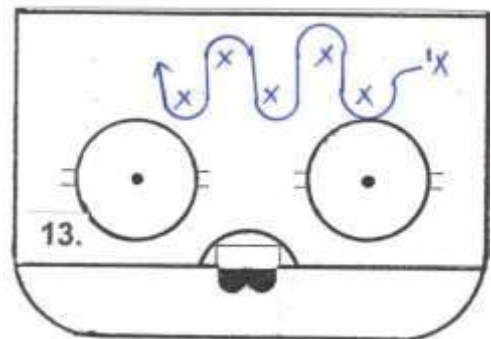
**Drill #11.** X1 has the ring and skates toward X2 who tries to check X1. X1 puts the ring to the right side of her body and goes by X2. X1 then does the same move to X3 only on the other side of her body. Space the players out so they have to move quickly to order to place the ring to either side. After X1 has gone through the line have her take up a position at the end of the line.



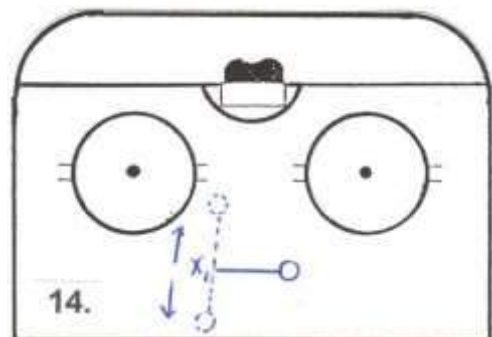
**DRILL #12.** X1 weaves through the line of players. Players in the line must stay in one place. Space out the players so they have to move quickly. How far away you space them will depend on their age and their skill. X1 goes to the end of the line.



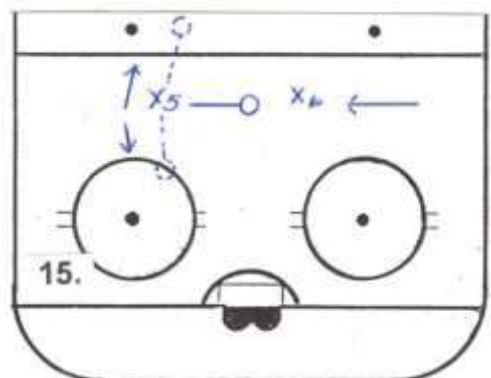
**DRILL #13.** X1 weaves through the line of players. This drill will force the players to use ring tucks as well as the body rolls. X1 sets up at the end of the line.



**DRILL #14.** Push away drill. Have the players find a spot on the ice that gives them room to skate. Have them put the ring in front of them until you blow the whistle. Tell them which direction you want them to skate so players are not running in to each other. At the sound of your whistle the players push the ring in the direction you want, with one hand (the hand that is highest on the stick) and skate in that direction as fast as they can.

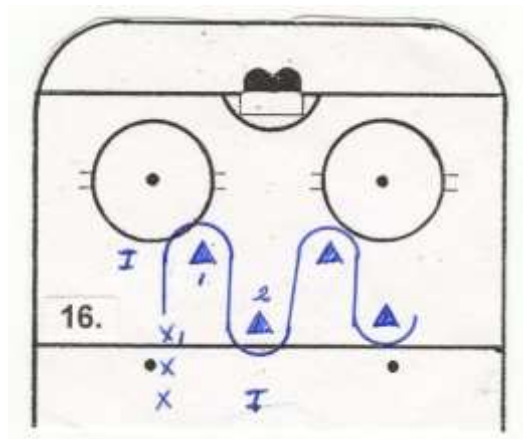


**DRILL #15.** Push away drill. Have two players line up facing each other. Space them so they have room to skate. At the sound of your whistle X6 attacks X5. X5 will push the ring to the direction you want and will skate fast in that direction. Let X6 chase a little ways. Repeat and exchange positions.

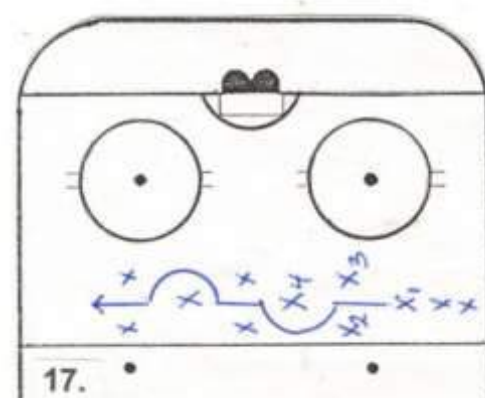




**DRILL #16.** Set up pylons as shown. The purpose of this drill is for the players to practice tucking the ring by or between their feet. The pylons represent one checker and the instructor will be the second checker. X 1 has to tuck the ring to prevent the instructor from checking the ring as she turns right using a tight turn or pivot around pylon #1. The same applies to pylon #2 only she will be making a left turn.



**DRILL #17.** The purpose of this drill is to force the players to go from a body roll to a tuck between her legs and back again. X1 glides through X2 and X3 using the between the skates tuck. X 1 then has to do a body roll, or to the side of her skate tuck, to avoid being checked by X4. Skaters at the end become part of the line.



## ANGLING

Angling is the ability to force an opponent to go in the direction you want them to go rather than where they want to go. Angling is important for the following reasons:

1. The opposition team's regular patterns will be disrupted when you force their players to skate in a different direction than they want to go. This will make it easier for your team to gain possession of the ring.
2. When you angle a player in a different direction, then they want to go, you slow down the speed of their team and their play making ability. This will give your team more time to cover the players that they will try to pass to.
3. You do not need to physically check the ring from a ring carrier to get possession of the ring, you need only to trap the ring carrier and use the 2<sup>nd</sup> in rule to gain possession.

The best place to trap players is to force them into a blue line corner. This ice area is like a corner because the ring carrier cannot carry the ring across the blue line nor can she escape easily from this area. When players approach these corners they tend to slow down while looking for someone to pass to, which makes them easier to trap. Diagram #1 shows the blue line corners which are marked C.

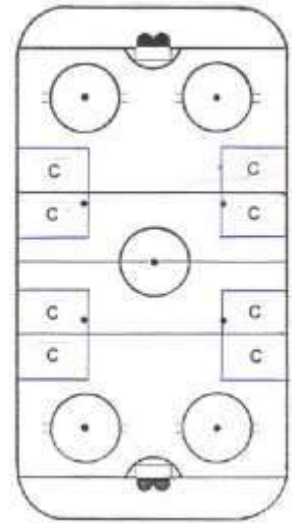


Diagram #1

Figure 11c



Figure 11a



Figure 11b



**Figure #11.** shows a player attacking the ring carrier from the ring carrier's left side. The ring carrier skates to her right and moves the ring to the right side of her body to protect the ring from the attacking player. The attacking player's partner checks the ring away from the ring carrier.

Players should also learn to use angling to approach the boards. **Figure #12** shows a player skating directly towards the boards to stab the ring. She is holding the stick directly in front of her body. This can be very dangerous if the player cannot stop in time and the stick is driven into her body.



**Figure #13.** Shows a player skating directly towards the boards but is holding the stick away from her body. This will prevent the stick from being driven into her body if she cannot stop.



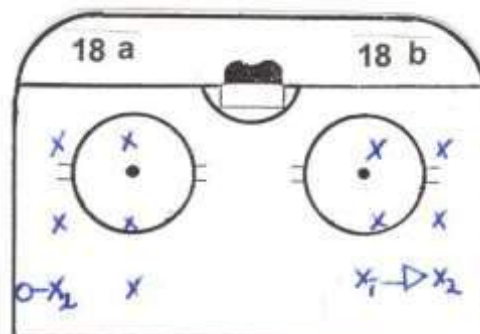
**Figure 13**



**Figure 14**

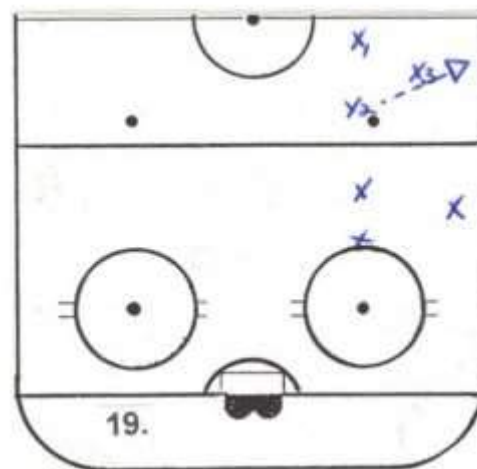
**Figure #14** shows a player who has angled into the boards so she is parallel to the boards as she skates by or does a pivot turn to pick up the ring. Instruct the players to approach the boards with their stick away from the front of their body or to try to pick up the ring by angling parallel to the boards.

**Drill #18a.** Have the players line up about 5 feet apart. X2 should face the boards 2 feet away and have the ring. The purpose of this drill is to teach the players to force the ring carrier to commit to the direction you want her to go. In this case we will say that X2 is in her defensive zone and X 1 wants to stop her from turning right and entering the neutral zone. X 1 should approach her from her right side. On the whistle X2 tries to escape and X1 tries to angle her back into her defensive zone.

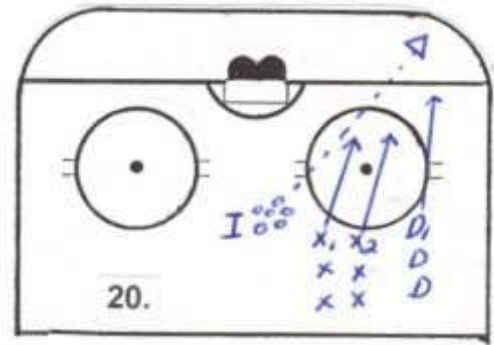


**Drill #18b.** Same drill as 18a. except X1 passes the ring to X2 on the whistle. X tries to angle X2 to one direction or another.

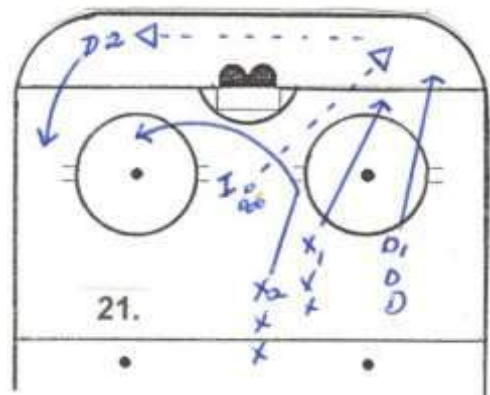
**Drill #19.** X1 and X2 are 5 feet apart and 10 feet behind X3 who is 3 feet from the boards. On whistle, X2 passes to X3 and X2 and X1 attack X3. Two on one checking requires timing and must be practiced. X2 will force X3 to commit to the direction where X1 will be able to check X3. The first attacking player in should try to always place herself between the ring carrier and her net especially if she plays defense.



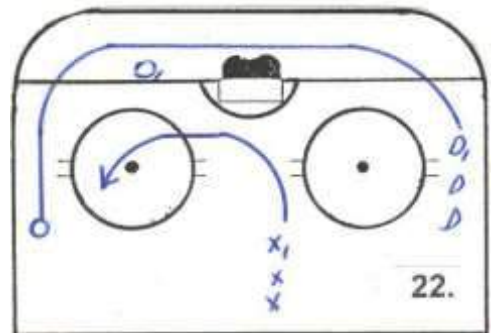
**Drill #20.** Players line up as shown. The forwards (Xs) should be about 10 feet back from the defense (Ds). On the whistle the instructor shoots a ring in the corner for D1. X1 and X2 attack her. Caution the players about avoiding going into the boards with their sticks pointed towards their body. The same forcing procedure used in Drill #19 is used here also.



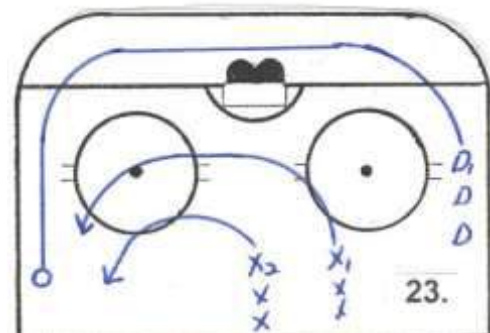
**Drill #21.** Players line as shown with X2's line further back than X1's line. On the whistle the instructor passes the ring into the corner for D1. Most defense players put into this situation will pass behind the net to their partner. This drill will also reinforce this concept for your defense. X2 seeing that D1 is going to pass to D2 starts angling toward D2. Have D2 go toward the blue line corner so your forwards practice angling players to that area.



**Drill #22.** Have the players form 2 lines as shown. D1 and all the players in her line have a ring. On the sound of the whistle D1 skates around the net and tries to leave her zone. X1 starts to angle her towards the boards X1 has to time her skating angle so D1 can not go between the crease and the official which will allow her to go up the center. Again the purpose of this drill is to teach the attacking player to force the ring carrier into a specific area. Reverse direction of drill.



**Drill #23.** Have the players form 3 lines. On the whistle D1 skates around the net and tries to leave her zone. X1 is responsible for not letting D1 go through the crease area and X2 tries to angle D1 to the boards. X1 and X2 double team D1. Reverse direction.





# OFFICIALS

**Officials come in all sizes, ages, gender and smiles**



## OFFICIALS

Sport programs require both coaches and officials to interact in a positive way for maximum benefit of the athletes involved. The majority of the officials involved in Ringette are young ladies who play the game of Ringette and officiate to earn some extra spending money. The minimum age for starting to officiate varies from province to province but many allow officials to start as young as the age of thirteen. Officials make learning mistakes just like coaches do. How you react as a coach will dictate how understanding your team will be toward these young officials who are trying to do the best job they can.

At the first mental skills training session I have with my team I start out with a discussion on positive and negative thoughts and how these thoughts affect a person or a team. I tell this story about officials. I ask the players if they can tell me in which direction the sun rises in the morning? They will say in the East. I then ask them which direction will the sun set in the evening? They will say in the West. I ask them can you change the fact that the sun rises in the East and sets in the West? They reply no you cannot. I then ask them if it would serve any purpose to get upset and angry because of how the sun rises and sets? They agree that it would be foolish to get upset over something that you cannot control. At this point I say to them, this year we are going to consider the officials like the sun. We cannot change their decisions in most cases so we are going to let them do their job without criticism and we are going to focus on the things that are really important to our team.

Your players will emulate your actions on the bench so if you as a coach, are positive and supportive of the officials, the players will be also. One of the first rules of coaching is to remain in control at all times when you are around your players. You cannot expect your players to be in control and focused if you are not. Criticizing officials in front

of your players is inappropriate behavior for several reasons. One is that you are sending a negative message to your players that the team is not doing well because of something beyond their control. This is never the case because a team can always control their destiny by performing the skills/work ethic that the team does have control over. The other main reason is that you have to use all of your time on the bench to encourage and develop skills among your players. It is during game situations that you as their coach can reinforce and encourage the skills that you have taught them in practice. Spend all your time on the bench helping your players develop rather than concentrating on the officiating of the game.

Experienced coaches rarely question an officials' call. They are so involved with helping their players learn, that they do not notice small errors in ring placement or if a penalty call was warranted or not. The spectators are quite willing to yell out to the officials when there are too many players on the ice, too many players in a zone or that they feel a penalty should have or should not have been called. There are situations where your team is being disadvantaged, where you must bring it to the official's attention. One example would be if the other team pulled their goalie with six minutes left in the game and they scored while having an extra attacker on the ice. If the officials failed to see that the other team pulled their goalie before the rules allow them to, then you would have to bring it to the attention of the officials. In this case the goal would be disallowed and the other team would receive a penalty for too many players on the ice.

How do you get the attention of one of the officials during a game? The correct way is to send over a one of your captains (if your team has captains) or a player you have designated for that role, to approach the official during a stoppage in play. The player explains to the official what your team question or concern is. The official will give her/his answer or decision to your player and your player will come to the bench and give you their answer. Many times a coach will know the official well and may have coached them in the past. Do not call them by their first name. If the other team hears that you are on a first name basis with one of the officials they will assume that there may be favoritism involved during the game. Do not place an official in this uncomfortable position where they may be exposed to unfair accusations. Respect is the basis for all good relationships and you as a coach should set the example for your team in every area including officiating. Respect is one of those areas where the more you give, the more you receive.





# TOURNAMENTS

Coaches and players love going to tournaments because they are a lot of fun for both. Players like tournaments especially out of town tournaments because they get to stay in hotels, get to shop and hang out with the team. Coaches like tournaments because normally all their players are there, they have control of the player's activities and the players all work harder at a tournament. Coaches have to plan ahead for tournaments and prepare their team for competition to have a successful and fun tournament. The following are some areas you will want to look after before and during a tournament.

## **Pre-tournament routine:**

If you are planning to do something different at the tournament that you are not currently doing, you should practice it now so the players will get used to it. For example if you want the players to have a pre-game run and warm-up routine at the tournament you should have your players come early to a league game so you can practice this routine.

## **Buses:**

Are you taking a bus to your tournament? Have the players sit at the front of the bus while you are traveling. It allows the coaches to set up the bus games, spend time with the players and to keep them busy with activities. Your team parents will appreciate the opportunity to spend time together at the back of the bus where they can socialize and play cards. When you are in the tournament city allow the players to have the back of the bus so they can do their cheers and get ready for the game. If your players are junior aged and under you will need to entertain the players while they are on the bus. If it is a six to eight hour trip the following ideas work well. In the first hour the players work on any homework they have to complete. The next two hours can be used to play games such as bingo, Ringette puzzles and brain teasers. Many games can be obtained from internet sites such as [Discoveryschool.com](http://Discoveryschool.com) where you can make up your own puzzles and games using ideas from your team and from Ringette in general. The other time on the bus can be filled up with movies that the players bring with them. Allow the players to decide which movie they want to view. It is good idea to bring a selection of healthy snacks, juice boxes and water on the bus for the players to use during the trip.

## **Breakfast:**

If your team has an early tournament game it is a good idea to prepare breakfast for the team in a parent's, coaches or a hotel breakfast room. In this way you will ensure they all have something to eat before the game and it gives you a chance to get them together and focused on Ringette. You can find out from the players which cereal, fruit, juices and other breakfast items they like before the tournament. It is a lot easier to get the team on the bus and to the rink on time if you meet as a group for breakfast.

## **Itinerary:**

Have it prepared before the tournament and give it out on the bus or at your last team function if the parents/players are driving to the tournament with their own vehicle. The following team itinerary is an example:

## PANTHERS ITINERARY CALGARY

### Thursday, Jan 20

10:00 AM	Leave Regina Homework/games to Moose Jaw Bus games for the players to Swift Current Dinner in Swift Current Games/Movies to Calgary
6:00 – 7:00 PM	Arrive in Calgary and pick up coaches package Arrive at motel
8:00 PM	Parents get together in coaches room
9:00 PM	Curfew for the girls

### Friday, Jan. 21

6:00 AM	Breakfast in coaches room for the girls
6:45 AM	Bus leaves motel for Triwood Arena
8:15 AM	Game vs Fort Sask. Dentyne Ice
10:00 AM	Leave for the Crowchild Arena Stop for a light dinner/mall on the way
1:00 PM	Game vs S Calgary Velocity
2:30 PM	Leave to return to the motel.
3:00 – 4:30 PM	Free time
4:30 PM	Leave for the Hospitality Night at the Marlborough Hall.
7:30 – 8:00 PM	Leave to return to the motel
9:00 PM	Curfew for the girls Hospitality room social

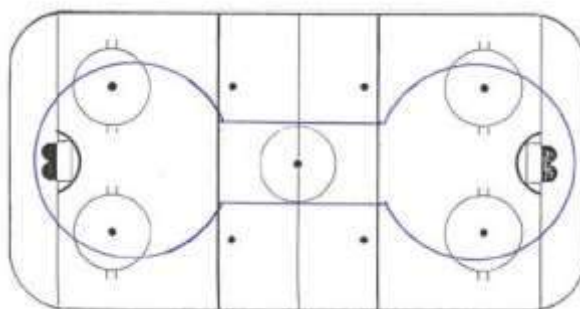
You have to be flexible in setting your itinerary for your team to accommodate your players and parents wishes so keep free time open or discuss with everyone how they would like spend their time. Remember the focus for the players still should be Ringette so try to plan your activities around your games in a manner that will not adversely affect your team's performance.



# TIPS

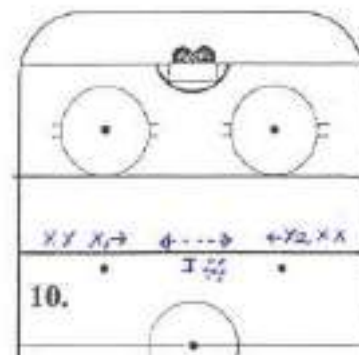
After a coach has coached for a number of years they notice that many players exhibit similar patterns. Some are good and need to be encouraged while others can be detrimental to the player's enjoyment of the game and of their team. This tips section addresses some of these issues as well some general tips and drills that were missed in the earlier sections of the manual or did not fit into a certain area.

--Players who play the position of center are very important players on a team. Centers however need to understand that the center position is a defensive position more than it is an offensive position. Centers cannot allow themselves to be caught or trapped in an area of the ice that will prevent them from returning to their defensive zone to defend. The diagram shown has an area marked off which resembles a dog bone and represents the safety zone for a center. As soon as the other team appears to be gaining possession of the ring the center must return as quickly as they can to their defensive zone. Along the way the center should try to prevent an opposition player in the center person's zone (the dog bone shape area) from receiving a pass. The centers defense teammates should be covering the opposition's team's forwards and the opposition's defense are the furthest away from the center's defensive zone. The player that the center normally will cover on the way back to their defensive zone will be the other team's center. Your centers need to be encouraged to not to stray to far out of the dog bone area. I use the word bone as a word association for my centers to remind them on the ice that they are straying out of their safety zone.



--The main role of a coach is that of a problem solver. Work on solving little problems quickly before they become large problems.

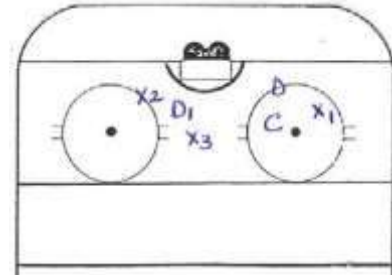
--Some players want to wait for a ring to reach them as opposed skating toward the ring to pick it up. This habit starts when they are young players and they are unsure or lack the confidence to pick up the ring while skating. Drill 10 is a good drill to teach this skill. The coach has a group of rings in the center and passes them to the players one at a time and alternating players from each line. The players have to skate ahead to receive the ring. Start all your drills, with the players skating toward the ring. Do not let them stand still to receive a ring.



--Teach your players to remove the glove off the hand that they will shake hands with the opposing team, after a game. Have them place this glove over the top of their stick and hold it with their other hand. It is very unsportsmanlike to shake an opponent's hand with your glove on.

--Some players tend to will only watch the movement of the ring rather than watching where the opposition players are located. This is especially true for defensive players while they are defending in their defensive triangle. I use the word association story from page 113 where one of the coaches bark when they see a player only watching the ring or I call the defensive player's name and say post,

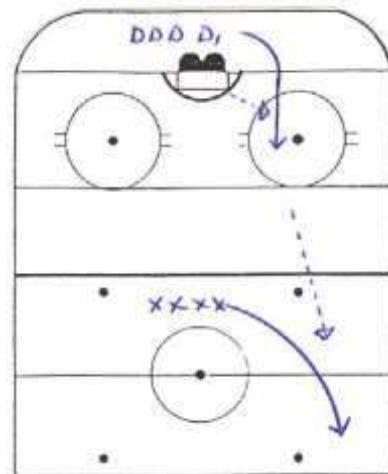
which means they are only watching the ring and not the opposition player who is positioned next to their net. Rather than watching only the ring, defensive players must learn to split the distance between attackers in the hope of preventing a pass to them or to be close enough to them to check them. D1 should move up to split the difference



between X2 and X3. This makes it hard for X1 to pass over to either X2 or X3. Defensive players have to be proactive not reactive and watching the ring only is certainly a reactive move. As a general rule of thumb a defensive player defending in front their net should look at the opposition players three times more than they look for the location of the ring. I tell my defensive players that the ring will come to you without them looking for it. Passing plays can only work when players are allowed room to pass so the best way of defending your net is to not allow the opposition players to pass by covering them closely.

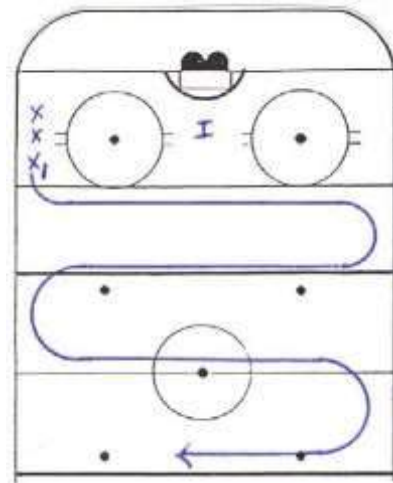
--Some defensive players tend to want to skate to their defensive blue line before they pass the ring. This tendency is usually caused by two factors. The defensive player has been on teams that have had a poor defensive break-out pattern, where the forwards were not open and the defensive player had to continue to skate with the ring. The other reason this occurs is the defensive player wants to rush up the ice to score. The easiest way for them to receive the ring in the offensive end is to skate to the defensive blue line and then pass to a close forward. The defensive player crosses the offensive blue line and receives the pass from the forward. The problem with skating to the blue with the ring is that it is too easy to be checked in the defensive zone and it slows down a fast break away to the other team's defensive end.

Using fast breakout systems, like the high/low system (page 49) allows the defensive players to pass the ring into the neutral immediately without skating to the blue line. All players need to be encouraged to pass to where the intended receiver is going to be rather than waiting to pass to the intended receiver to get there before they pass. The diagram shown would be an example of a drill that encourages the defensive players to pass into an open space that a player will enter.

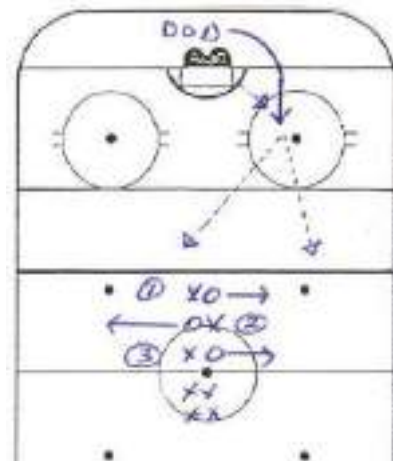


D1 skates from behind the net and receives a ring from their goalie. D1 skates ahead but must pass the ring into the open space before or just after they have reached the free-play line. Gently reminding players to follow sound patterns is still the best way to help them develop good habits.

--Some players find it difficult to get into open ice. This is another problem that can be caused by the intended receiver watching where the ring is rather than skating to an open area of the ice. Tell your players that if they skate into an open area they do not need to look for the ring because it will most cases it will suddenly turn up right in front of them. I ask my players if they can look at a ring and skate at the same time and they will say yes they can. I say lets see if you can. One of the habits that some players have is that they will turn their back to the ring as they are skating and not see it coming into the open space they are skating into. The diagram shown is a drill you can use to teach players to skate to open ice but still be able to always see the ring. The coach (I) holds their stick up in the air and tells the players they must skate the pattern shown all the way down to the other end without losing sight of the coach's stick. All the players have to do to accomplish this is to use front to back and back to front turns when they approach the boards. The problem is that very few players have learned this technique and most of them will turn their backs to the coach's stick to make the turn. Practice this drill at several practices until the players can understand and execute the technique.



The diagram shown is an example of a drill you can use to help your players learn to find open ice. Your defensive players receive a pass from their goalie and they skate ahead but they have to pass before or at the free-play line into the open space that O is skating toward. Line up your players as shown. O is the player that is trying to get into open ice and X is the checking player. Tell your players, that getting to open ice is easy just go the opposite direction your checker is going. If the opposition player is on your left side then you skate away on your right side as in example 1 and if the checker is on your right side then you skate away on your left side as in example 2. Before the whistle blows the player has to figure out which way they are going to skate so when the whistle does blow they will get ahead of the checking player quickly. Your players have to learn to get into open ice first and worry about where the ring is later. It is amazing how many times the ring will just show up in front of a player who is skating toward open ice.



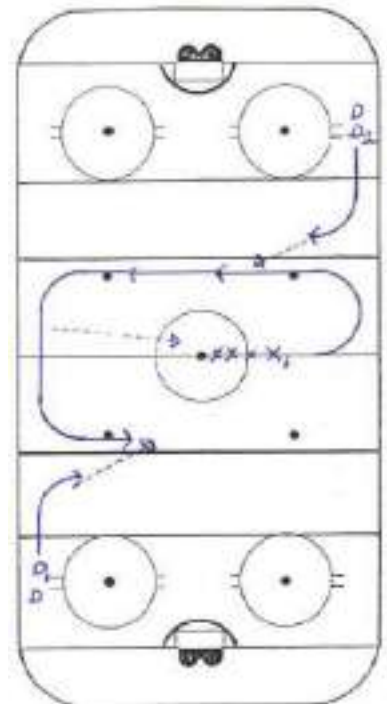
-What do you do if you walk into your dressing room and your players are out of control for some reason and they do not want to listen to you. The worst thing you can do is to raise your voice to get them to calm down. Some players will become scared of you and others will resent being yelled at. The best technique is to simply shut off the lights in the dressing room and talk to the players in a soft voice. As soon as it is dark they will react but quickly they will calm down and listen to your voice. This is especially effective if they have already received some mental skills training and are accustomed to the sound of your voice when you are speaking in a calm manner.



--Some players want to stand too close to the net when they are in the side-shooter or post position. Pages 166-167 shows a player assuming three different positions as a side-shooter or post player. I ask my players if they can shoot the ring into an open net. They will all say yes. I ask one of the players to shoot a ring into the side of the open net from the position of the side-shooter or post player. I ask them to stand three meters away from the net and shoot. I move the player back six meters and they shoot and then I have them shoot from the free-play line. I ask the players if it is much harder to score further back than it is up close. They will say that they can score from further back as easily as up close. I then ask them which position, up close or far away, is the easiest to receive a pass from a teammate. They usually will say further away because the other team's defensive players will not be covering them if they are further away from the net. You want to stress to your players that standing close to the net makes it more difficult to get the ring to score not easier. When you are practicing side-shooter drills place pylons around the net to indicate to your players where you want them to position themselves. In a gym or on ice you can put three players on the outside of a face-off circle with a ring and a player inside the face-off circle without a ring. The purpose of the game is to pass the ring around to the players who are on the outside of the circle to prevent the player inside from getting the ring. This game can reinforce the concept to the players that they can receive a pass easier if they are further away from a checking player. I call out the word "back" to my side-shooters if they are too close to the net and they know that I want them to move further away from the net.

--Some players tend to shoot right at a goaltender's pads or stick instead of picking a corner. This habit normally starts when the players are very young and drive to the front of the net and just shoot. They hit the goalie mainly because the goalie moves and the shooter sees the movement and shoots at the movement. The best way I have found to help the players learn to not shoot at the goalie is to use the colored side boards pictured on page 23 and to use the colored disks used on the net pictured on page 234. Patience is hard to teach but all good scorers are patient with the ring. The more your players learn scoring techniques and learn patience the less they will tend to shoot at the goalie.

--The best way of moving to receive a pass and to get into open ice is to learn to skate parallel the blue lines. This allows a player to skate and be able to see the ring coming into the open ice area. You want the defensive players to learn to pass quickly out of their zone but there are times where this is not possible due to strong checking by the opposition team. The best way for the defensive players to skate is also parallel to the defensive blue line. If they skate straight to the blue line they will get trapped in a blue line corner so they should learn to turn and skate parallel with their blue line. This drill is a good drill for your players to learn this technique. D2 and X1 skate toward the blue line and travel parallel to each other as D2 passes to X1. X1 passes their ring into the center free pass circle and skates toward their offensive blue line to receive a pass from D1. X1, D1 and D2 go back to the end of the lines they started from.



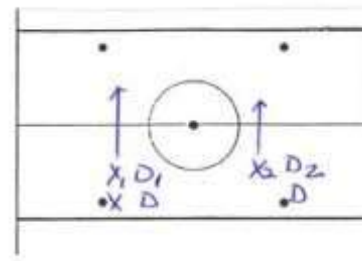


### Drill 1

--Some defensive players pull back into their zone without attacking on the blue line. Players who go back into their defensive zone without attacking become pylons because the attackers can come into the zone unchecked with speed and can go around the defensive players easily. The better technique is to attack the player with the ring or cover the player without the ring, at the blue line. The defensive players must stay with the other team's forwards as they skate toward their end. If all the opposition players are covered they cannot get a player open to receive a pass in the defensive end. Players are easier



to check at the blue line than in open ice or attacking at the net. This is a tough concept for most players who play defense because attacking at the blue is out of their comfort zone. Drill 1 is an example of a drill you can use to get the defense used to attacking on their blue line. D1 skates ahead and covers X2 who does not have the ring from receiving the ring from X1. In drill 2 X1 has a ring and X2 does not. D1 attacks X1 and tries to check the ring from X1. D2 stays with X2 and tries to prevent X2 from receiving the ring from X1 across the blue line. D1 and D2 stay with X1 and X2 no matter where they go. Your defense can save a lot of goals by not allowing the opposition team's players in their zone in the first place.

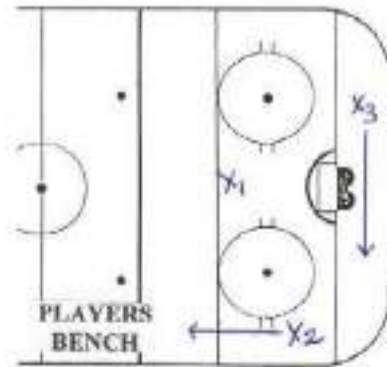


### Drill 2

--Quality shots are worth more to a team than quantity of shots. I ask my players if they had possession of the ring for a whole game, how many goals would you need to win the game. They will say one after they think about it for a while. I then ask what would the least amount of shots they would need to score this one goal. They answer one. I say to them, possession of the ring is far more important than a lot shots on goal that stand little chance of scoring. There are only two reasons to give up possession of the ring, an opposition team's player takes it from you or the opposition team's goalie takes it out their net. It is foolish to give up possession of the ring by shooting a lot of low percentage shots on net. I have found that a team has a better chance of being successful when they shoot on average around twenty-five shots per game. You will find the number of shots on net become less as your players become more skilled and patient at scoring. Players need to be shown and encouraged how to recognize scoring opportunities and to be patient with the ring.

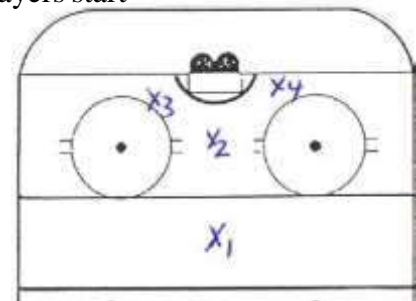
-- Some players tend to hog the ring and not want to pass to their teammates. This is one of the toughest habits to change in players. In most cases they were the stronger players when they were younger and their coaches relied on them to score for the team so they got used to scoring by individual effort rather than by team play. You have to make it plain to the team at the start of the year that you will not accept selfish play on the part of any of the players. If you praise the players for teamwork the players will soon start to play as a team because selfish players will realize that their coaches and teammates will not give them praise if they play that way. It also helps a player learn to pass more if you put them with two other players are unselfish passers. Teams can double their goal scoring by working as a team rather than as individuals.

--Line changing. It is very important to change your lines at regular intervals so your players do not become over tired. Tired players tend to make mistakes and get injured more than rested players. Each age group and skill level requires slightly different shift times. I ask my players at the start of the year who gets more playing time on the ice, a player who plays a three minute shift or a player who plays three one minute shifts. The answer is they both get the same playing time. You want to stress to them that they will be required to line change often to help them rest and be able to play better.



I prefer shifts of forty-five to fifty-five seconds for my teams which seems to work the best for energy conservation and maximum efficiency. I use this system changing my forward player lines when they are in the offensive end attacking. I use the words pull away to tell my players on the ice that I want them to line change. The player with the ring (X3 in the diagram) skates into the corner closest to their player's bench. X2 skates to the bench and the player coming out (a center) exchanges to ring with X3 and X3 goes to the bench. The next player coming out exchanges with X1 and X1 comes to the bench. When the third player comes onto the ice the three players start

attacking again. X1 stays in front of the net as a scoring threat in case the opposition players start to attack the player that has the ring. This player would pass to X1 who would be a scoring treat in front of the net. If you are line changing players that are trapped in your defensive end (defense and centers) you would call your forward X1 (the low player in the high/low system)



To come to your bench and you would send out a player to exchange with the tired player. If you wanted to replace the

center you would send out another center or a player who plays defense to replace a defensive player. The replacement player would stand on the free-play line and wait for the tired player to exchange with them when it was safe. Remember to always have the players coming in wait away from the gate until the new players go out, before they come in. Players coming off a shift have to return to the bench as fast as they can so you can get the fresh players out quicker.

--Some goalies tend to stay back into their nets too far. I have made a wooden jig out of plywood that has the same radius as the blue Ringette goalie crease. I place this behind my goalie to mark the spot where they must stop going back into the net and defend. As the goalie backs up they can feel the board touch the back of their skates and they stop backing into the net. The board is not attached to the net and slides so the goalie will not fall backwards over it. Another way of helping the goalie learn not to back into the net is to stand behind them and place your hands on the back of their shoulders to indicate that they should stop and defend.

