

Everyone likes tournaments! Here's an easy way to set up a tournament, perhaps using specific rules of the game at a regular hockey practice. This was shown to me by my good friend, Tom Molloy. I've used it repeatedly, usually at the end of practice because it creates so much intensity.

First decide how many teams you want or can make up with your team. Are the skills you'd like to teach more conducive to 2 v 2, 3 v 3, 4 v 4 or more? Let's say you want to establish 8 teams and want to play 4 games, 8 nets cross-ice. And, you'd like to make each game 2 minutes in length. Adding a time element in itself, creates intensity, communication and teamwork. And, with the time you have remaining in practice you'd like each team to play all teams once. There is an easy way to figure out game progression. First, number each team, 1 - 8. Then, fit them into the following pattern. Team 1 plays Team 8, and so on. Numbers are assigned working down the 1st column and up the second.

GAME 1

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | v | 8 |
| 2 | v | 7 |
| 3 | v | 6 |
| 4 | v | 5 |

After 2 minutes, team captains report the score. Award 2 points for a win, 1 point for a tie and 0 points for a loss. Then line up for the second game as follows. Numbers are again assigned working down the first column and working up the second, only, after 1, you go to 3. And as you arrive at the top of column 2, you start, in numerical order, the teams you omitted going down the first column.

GAME 2

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | v | 2 |
| 3 | v | 8 |
| 4 | v | 7 |
| 5 | v | 6 |

GAME 5

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | v | 5 |
| 6 | v | 4 |
| 7 | v | 3 |
| 8 | v | 2 |

GAME 3

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | v | 3 |
| 4 | v | 2 |
| 5 | v | 8 |
| 6 | v | 7 |

GAME 6

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | v | 6 |
| 7 | v | 5 |
| 8 | v | 4 |
| 2 | v | 3 |

GAME 4

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | v | 4 |
| 5 | v | 3 |
| 6 | v | 2 |
| 7 | v | 8 |

GAME 7

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | v | 7 |
| 8 | v | 6 |
| 2 | v | 5 |
| 3 | v | 4 |

The beauty of this, is that you can do the same for any number of teams, and it doesn't have to be even. If you have an odd number of teams, say 7, simply replace team 8 with an X, signifying that the team that would normally play team 8 will now draw a 'bye'.

Try it! Try any number of teams. It works and it's easy!