

## THE NAME OF THE GAME

In any discussion concerning hockey in the 90's, key words and catch phrases abound. To mention a few, we could include: time, space, movement, transition, support, creating 2 on 1's, creativity, making good decisions, playing with tempo and general skill development. We also use these and other terms to describe the best players in the game and why they are so effective. A lot of these terms were not used ten and fifteen years ago in describing players or teams.

What we should do as coaches is to enhance the players' ability to perform in these terms. As the game continues to evolve so should the methods of coaching. We will all use our tried and true methods to teach specifics but I think it's what we do in addition to this that will have the most profound effect on players of the 90's and beyond. Instead of lamenting the fact that players don't play pond hockey or ball hockey and lack Hockey sense, we need to be more creative with the practice time we have and help them learn these game skills.

With these thoughts in mind, it is my hope that these and other small games become an important part of every practice. Games can be created to teach any technique or concept determined to be a priority.

### Why use small games?

The reasons are many. Players like the idea of competition and the challenges it brings. Games keep more players moving than the traditional drills that bring a lot of waiting in line during precious practice time. Players learn best when moving and confronting different situations. With the use of games, we can challenge each player to participate at his own level and also stimulate the growth of the multi-level players on each team. It creates a practice intensity that is only matched during actual contests. Lastly, your players will develop game strategies, make better decisions and have greater enthusiasm for practices.

### Organizing modified games.

The games can be very simple with few players and emphasis on one or two specifics, to complex and including the full team. However, what is

consistent with most games is that technique and skill intertwine to help players improve all aspects of their game. It is important to understand that the game itself is the most important teacher. Allow for failure. The challenge for the coach will be to decide what role to take, how much will you control the game, will you keep score, do you stop play to illustrate a point or reinforce concepts. These are important questions that help shape your coaching style.

What is the purpose of the game? Decide what the theme of the game is and stay on task (Be sure the players know what your goals are and why you have modified the game. This should help players understand the game and play more within the framework you've established). Hopefully this will improve the skill performed.

Examples of conditions you can put on a game include: 1.) Increase or decrease the area of play 2.) Put restrictions on touches or time with the puck 3.) Increase number of pucks 4.) Increase the number and relocate the goals 5.) confine players to specific areas to create numerical situations and transition opportunities 6.) specific types of passes 7.) use support players outside area of play. There are several other conditions that you can put into a game to create the desired result. The only limit to the number of games is the coaches creativity.

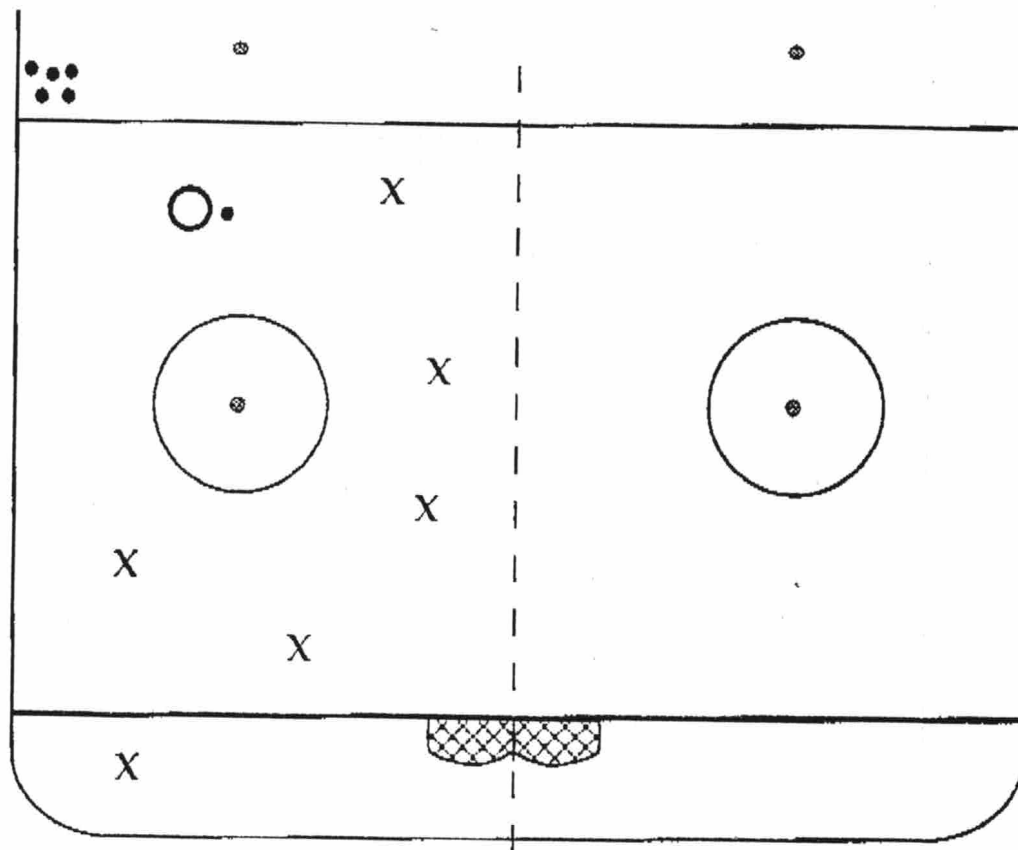
Lastly, try to keep in mind a Russian training philosophy that is applicable to all continuous action sports. A player should train in a small area, for a short duration at high tempo. This will help to bring about the desired skill development.

In conclusion, I think that we have a tendency to overcoach players up to the age of 13 and maybe undercoach players through the college age. Hockey is learned by moving. "The players are the ones that need to learn to play the game, learn to be in the right place at the right time. When we have the players practice skills in gamelike situations over all parts of the ice they will gain the ability to read and react in creative and effective ways" (a paraphrase from Juhani Wahlsten).

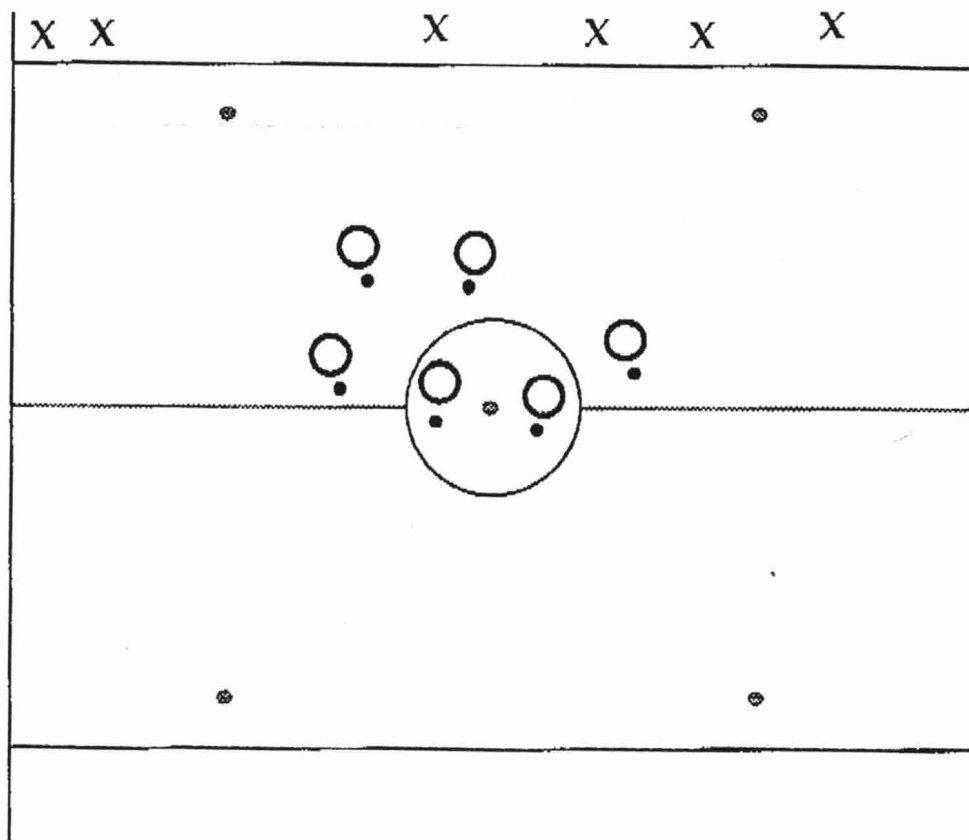
I have been fortunate to have gathered a lot of these games from many different sources. Most of these games can be done by all ages of players.

The name of the game is Game.

Puck Tag - Confined Area



<b>Organization:</b>	One player with puck. All others skate freely to avoid the passed puck. (Must be passed on the ice.) Once player is hit, he gets a puck and becomes a tagger.
<b>Purpose:</b>	All levels of player are challenged in dribbling, passing, edge control, and attacking someone with the puck.
<b>Notes:</b>	

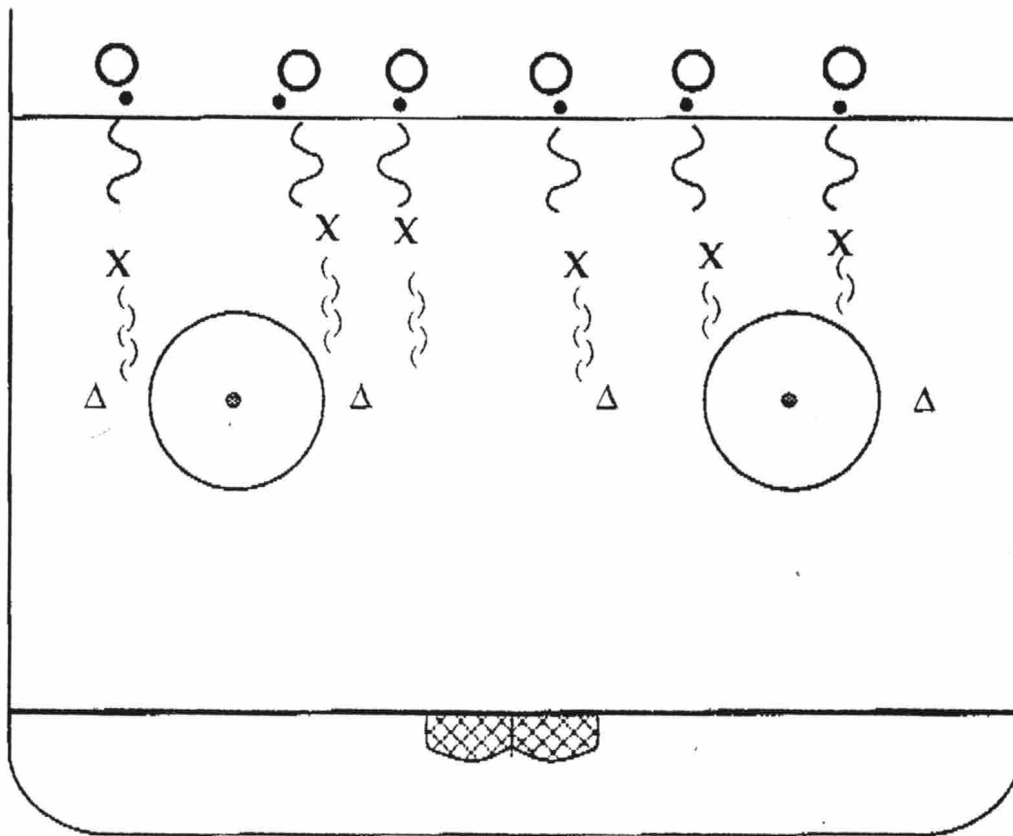
Team Knockout

**Organization:** Two teams in the neutral zone. Team O with pucks and Team X without. Team X comes onto the ice and tries to clear all the pucks out of the area. Team O players who lose their pucks can become a target for a pass. The coach times how long it takes Team X to clear all the pucks out of the area. Maybe you can use goals to clear to.

**Purpose:** Dribbling skills, passing, receiving.  
This will progress from 1v1, 2v1, 2v2, all the way to 5v5 or more..

**Notes:**

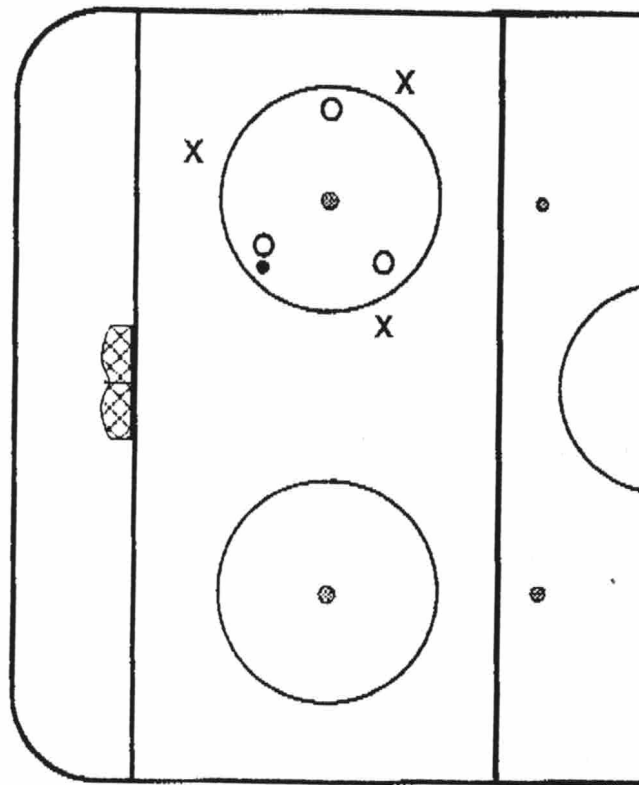


Attack the Goal

**Organization:** Two equal teams. Attacking team starts at the blue line, each player with a puck. They carry and try to avoid opposite team (which can only skate backwards - that's one option) and get past the cones to shoot into the open net. Count the number of goals in 45 seconds. Players can get a second puck after scoring or losing the first puck.

**Purpose:** Dribbling, individual moves, reading the situation, challenging the goal, develops solid attack attitude.

**Notes:**

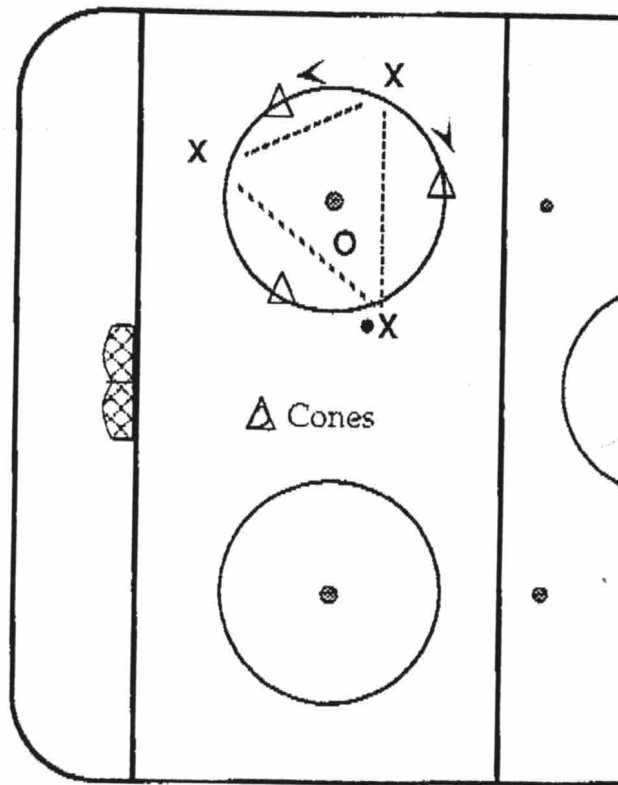
Use of the Circle: 1 Touch

**Organization:** Groups of six, 3 in the circle with a puck and 3 outside (to keep the puck in play). On the whistle, inside three play continuous 1 touch while moving inside the circle at high speed. Don't let the puck stop rolling. (You can count and see how many dead pucks in 30 seconds. Can add pucks to make the drill more challenging.

**Purpose:** Improve 1 touch skill, hand speed, soft touch, vision.

**Notes:**

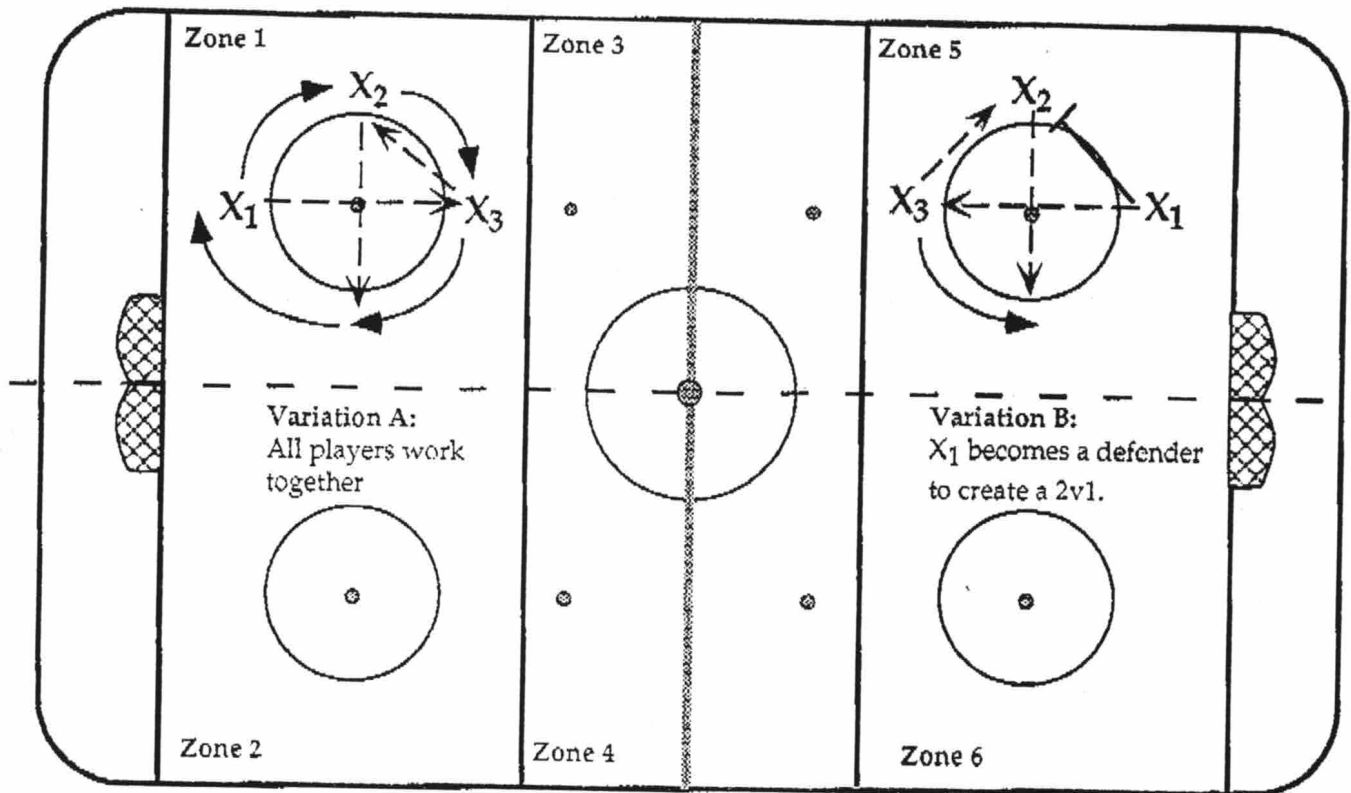
### Use of the Circle: Everybody is a Goalie



**Organization:** Groups of four with goalie. 3 cones on the circle. These cones make 3 goals. Play 3v1 keepaway except now you keep score for a short time or 20 to 30 seconds. Just switch the "goalie" and continue. the whole rotation will take only 2 minutes

**Purpose:** Good defensive posture by the "goalie", movement without the puck, penetrating passes.

**Notes:**

Rotation, Read & React

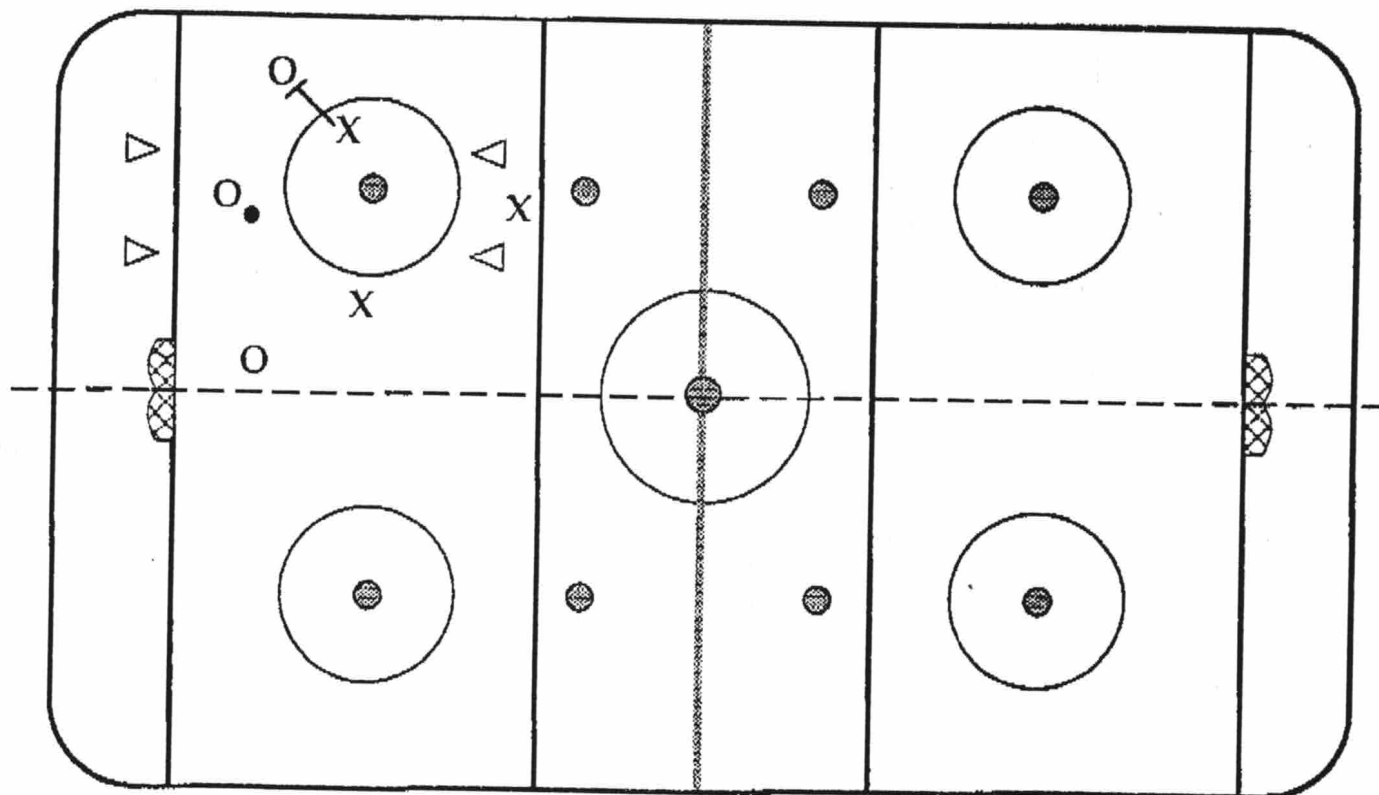
**Organization:** Break ice into 6 groups with four players in each group.

A). Clockwise rotation with three players and four receiving areas. All players work together on this three man rotation passing drill.

B). Option that X<sub>1</sub> original passer becomes the defender (creating 2v1). Have defender create different options and angles for the offensive player to solve. Offense must get the puck back to the starting point. (X<sub>1</sub> moves to X<sub>2</sub> to X<sub>3</sub>).

**Purpose:** Movement, passing skills, read and react, puck control in a small space, learn when to carry, use one and two touch passing, support angles.

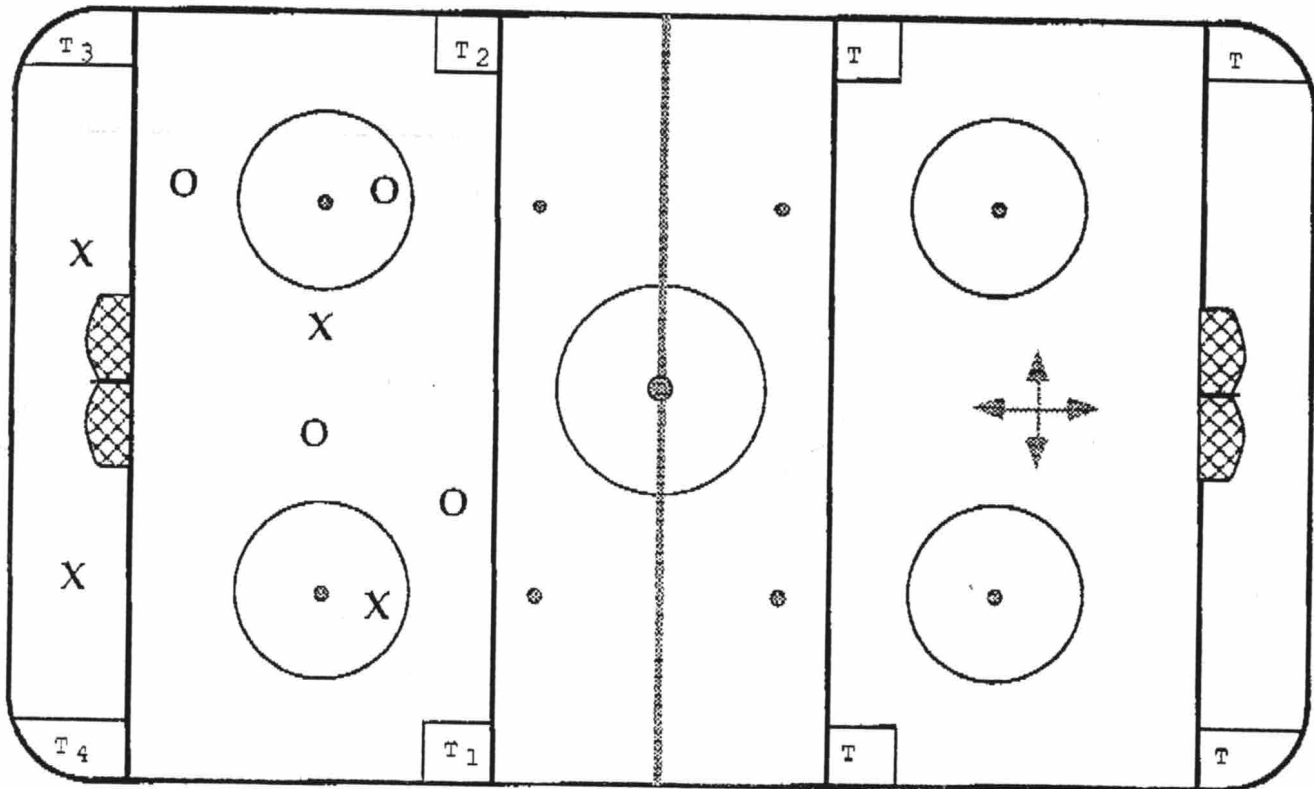
**Notes:**

Always on the Power Play

**Organization:** The rink is split into 4 to 6 areas, with 6 players in each area. When your team is on offense, you use all three to work the puck between the cones. Defensive team uses two defenders with the third player behind the cones to receive any puck played through the cones. If there is a turnover, the transition occurs. Encourage defense to be aggressive.

**Purpose:** find the open man, use specific moves or passes, smart movement off the puck. Works well as a warm up.

**Notes:**

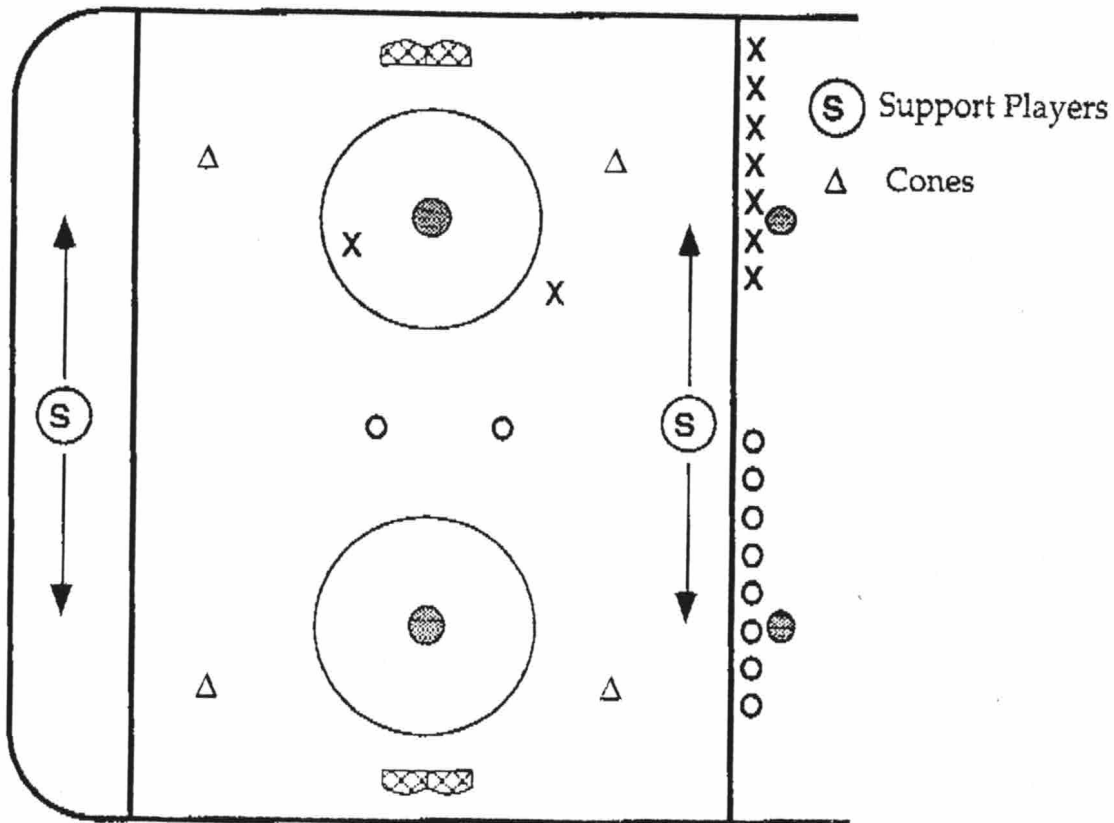
4 v 4 Keep Away

**Organization:** Two ends of the ice with 12 players in each group.  
 4v4 Keep away, with 4 target players in the corners. (Those players cannot be pressured when they have the puck.) Object of the game is to get points by a) 5 consecutive passes or b) get the puck to a target. If point is scored at one end, have team score the next point at the opposite end. (opens things up)  
 4 targets rotate in after specified time, e.g. 90 seconds.

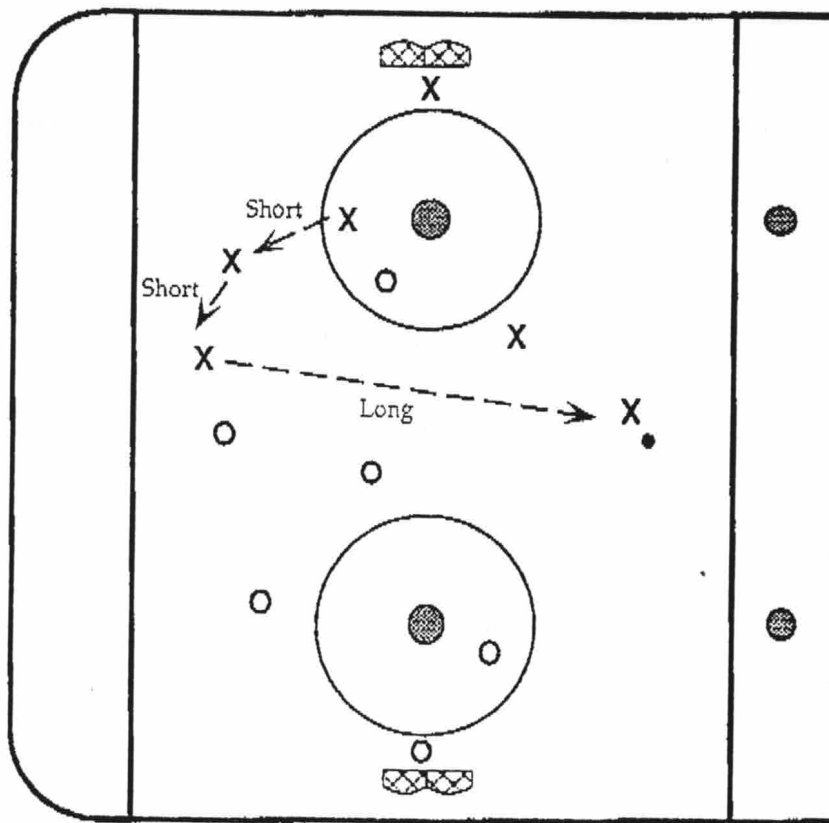
**Purpose:** Support, puck movement, defending, playing swivel headed, tempo, competition, put any conditions in the game to meet your goals.

**Notes:**

Small Game of 2 v 2 + 2



	<p><b>Organization:</b> Cross ice game of 2v2 +2 with goalies. If a goal is scored, goalie takes one out at the other end. Mark off the area w/cones or use the goal line and blue line to create "safe" area for the two support players. (They can't be pressured). These two players are always on the offense. Keep score, have the groups change in no more than 30 seconds. Have extra players ready to go on the whistle and keep the errant pucks in play.</p>
<p><b>Purpose:</b></p>	<p>Great game to teach support both offensively and defensively, good for getting players to go to the net, shooting under pressure, having goalies move the puck.</p>
<p><b>Notes:</b></p>	

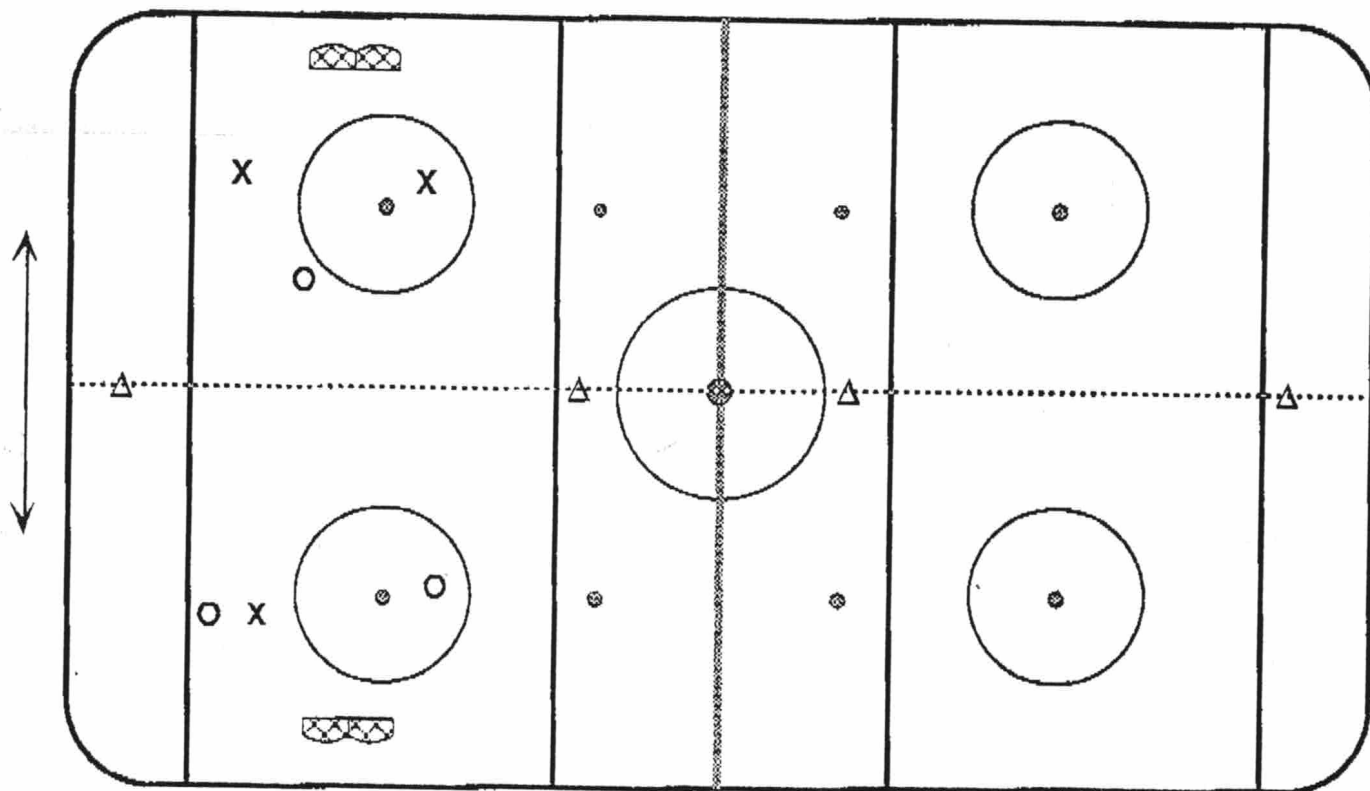
Short-Short-Long

**Organization:** Use any numbers you want for two teams, e.g. 5v5 half ice. Play to goals or keep away. Passing pattern is two short passes and one long. Award a point if team can play 3 short-short-long passing sequences.

**Purpose:** Skills, changing the point of attack, support, teamwork.

**Notes:**

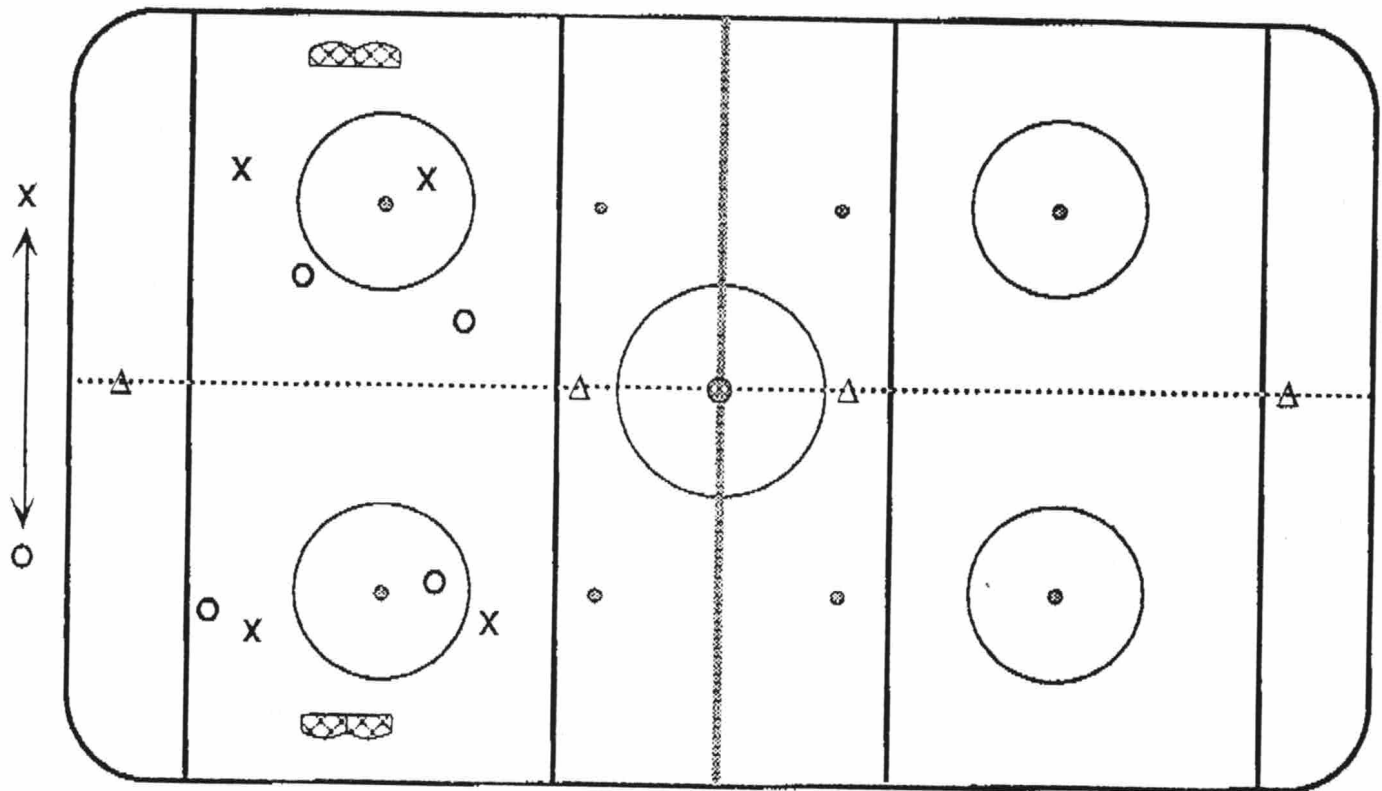


3 v 3 with Conditions

**Organization:** Cross ice game of 3v3 played with blue line and boards as boundaries. We have added conditions to include a center line (offensive line) using cones to help players get used to this idea. Each has 2 defenders and 1 attacker. Attackers stay in own half. Defenders can only cross the center line if the puck is passed by his partner. (Puck can't be carried across the line). If the attacker loses the puck, his defender must return to original end. We are creating game situations of 2v1 breakout, 2v2 in zone and offensive play. The defender becomes the 2nd wave of the attack, but a quick counter attack could leave his team defending a 2v1 situation. Change every 20-30 seconds. Be sure to have goalie handle the puck and leave room behind the net for creative play.

**Purpose:** These conditions are only a few of what you can use. This is a great format for teaching concepts of play, good puck support and defending principles. One important point is how hard the attacker has to work to get open and see where his support is coming from.

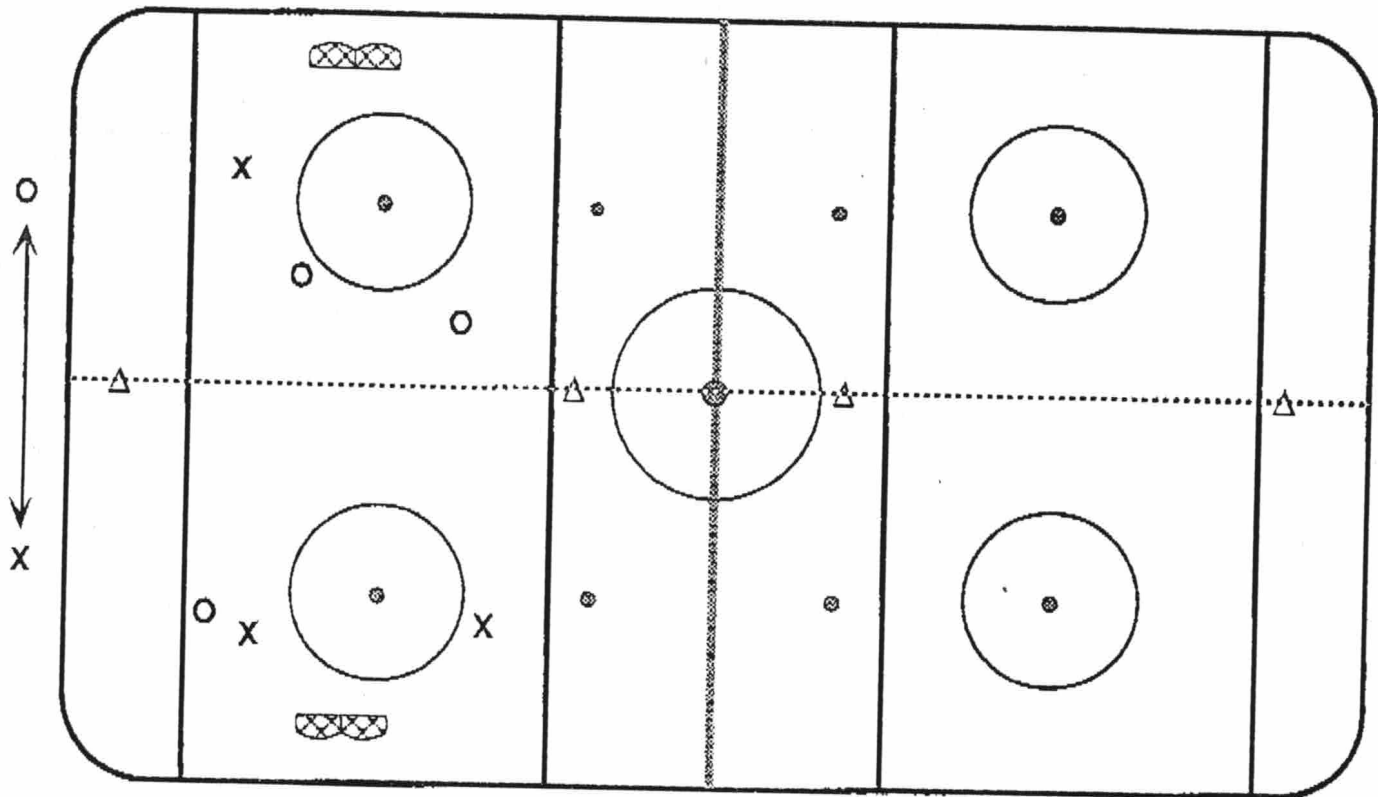
**Notes:**

4 v 4 With Conditions

**Organization:** Progression of 3v3 game. Same rules apply, but with extra attacker on each team, new situations occur. The defender that enters the offensive zone creates a 3v2. He should read where the open ice is created by his two forwards. When attacking, if the team loses the puck, defender retreats and attackers should forecheck 1v1. This again is up to the coaches discretion. You can change which defender is the 2nd wave of attack and the type of forecheck the attackers use. Create the situation.

**Purpose:** Everything that happens in a full sized game happens here, just a lot more often.

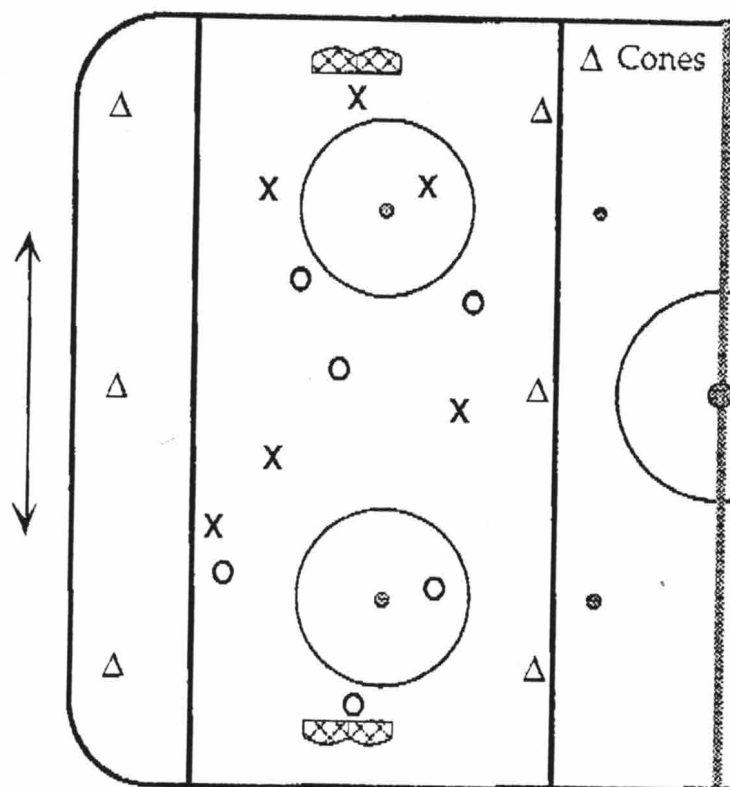
**Notes:**

5 v 5 Fifth Player Center

**Organization:** Use the center as a link between the attackers and defenders. Same rules apply as in 3v3, 4v4, with these additions. The center only crosses the center line when his team has possession. Two passes should be made prior to pass or carry to the attacking end. This situation creates a 3v2 breakout to 3v3 in the attack zone, 1 defender is allowed to join the offense and create a 4v3. Look for quick transition, possible 3v1 if both center and defenseman are trapped in the offensive end. (Center and defenseman can't forecheck on loss of possession.)

**Purpose:** Premium on puck protection, quick puck movement, balance onto defense and quick decision making.

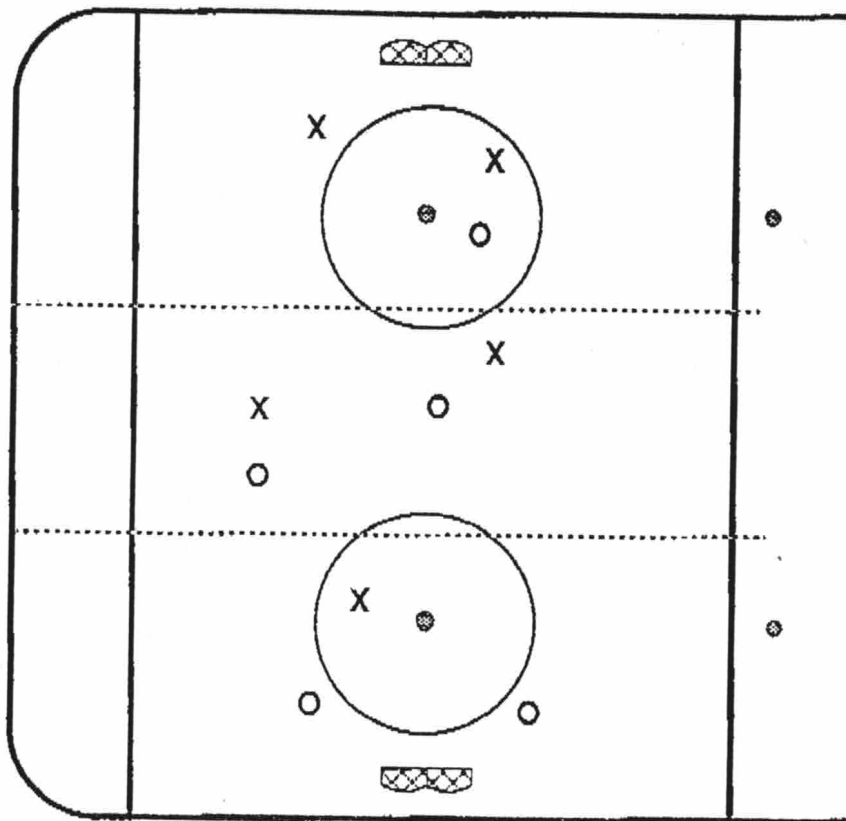
**Notes:**

Touch the Cones

**Organization:** Small sided game to alleviate the bunching of players. Half ice, 6v6 regular game except after a player makes a pass, he must go and touch a cone that you put all around the perimeter of the area.

**Purpose:** Game situation skills and forcing players to spread out. Good youth hockey game.

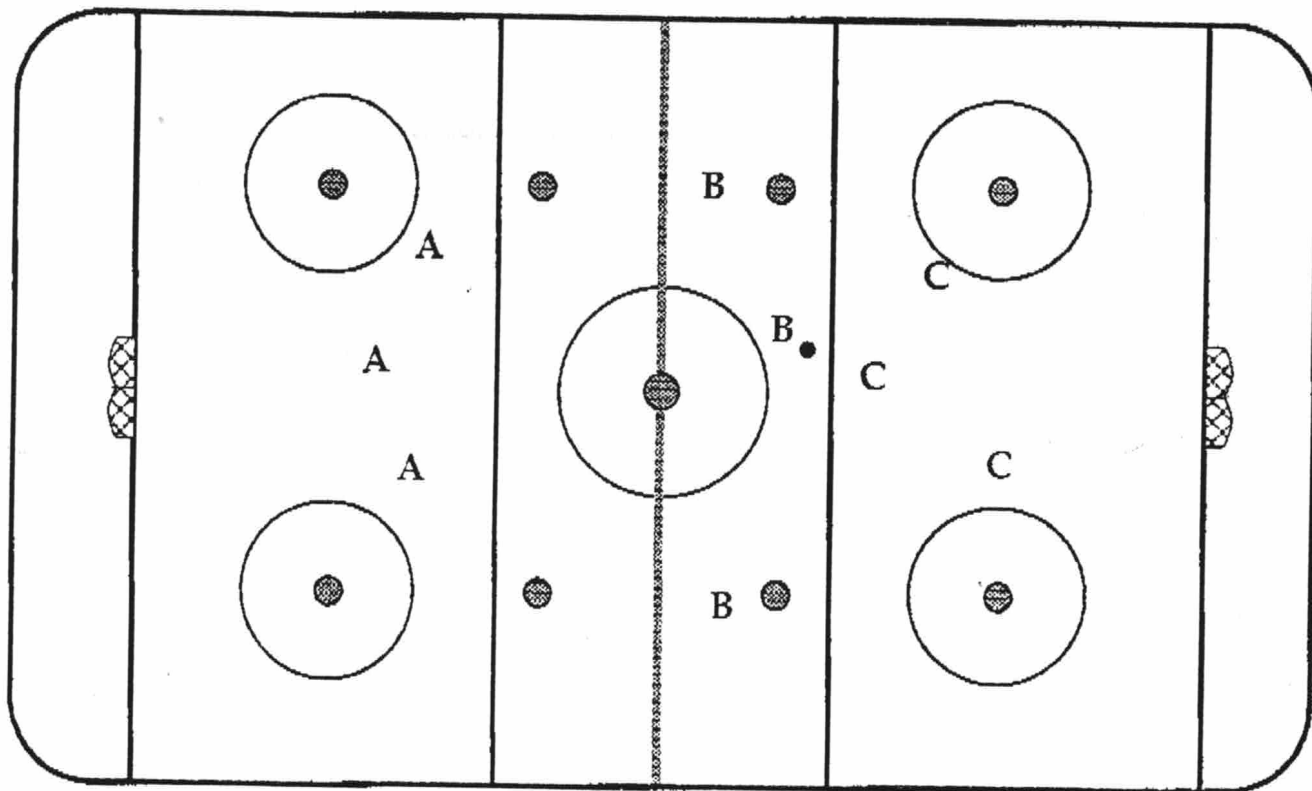
**Notes:**

Transition

**Organization:** Set up 5v5 cross ice with the ice split into thirds (offensive, defensive and neutral). Each team plays 2 in the neutral zone, 2 in the defensive zone and 1 attacker. This creates a situation where the attacking team reads when to move up to support the players in the next zone. Same rules apply that only 1 player from the previous zone can join the attack - this sets up 2v1, 3v2 and ultimately a 2v3 in the attacking zone. Overlap players have to return to original zone when control is lost.

**Purpose:** To create intelligent support off transition, offensive end you are challenging the attackers to play in difficult situations, such as, 2v2 or 1v2. Creates realistic game situations and creates a lot of scoring chances.

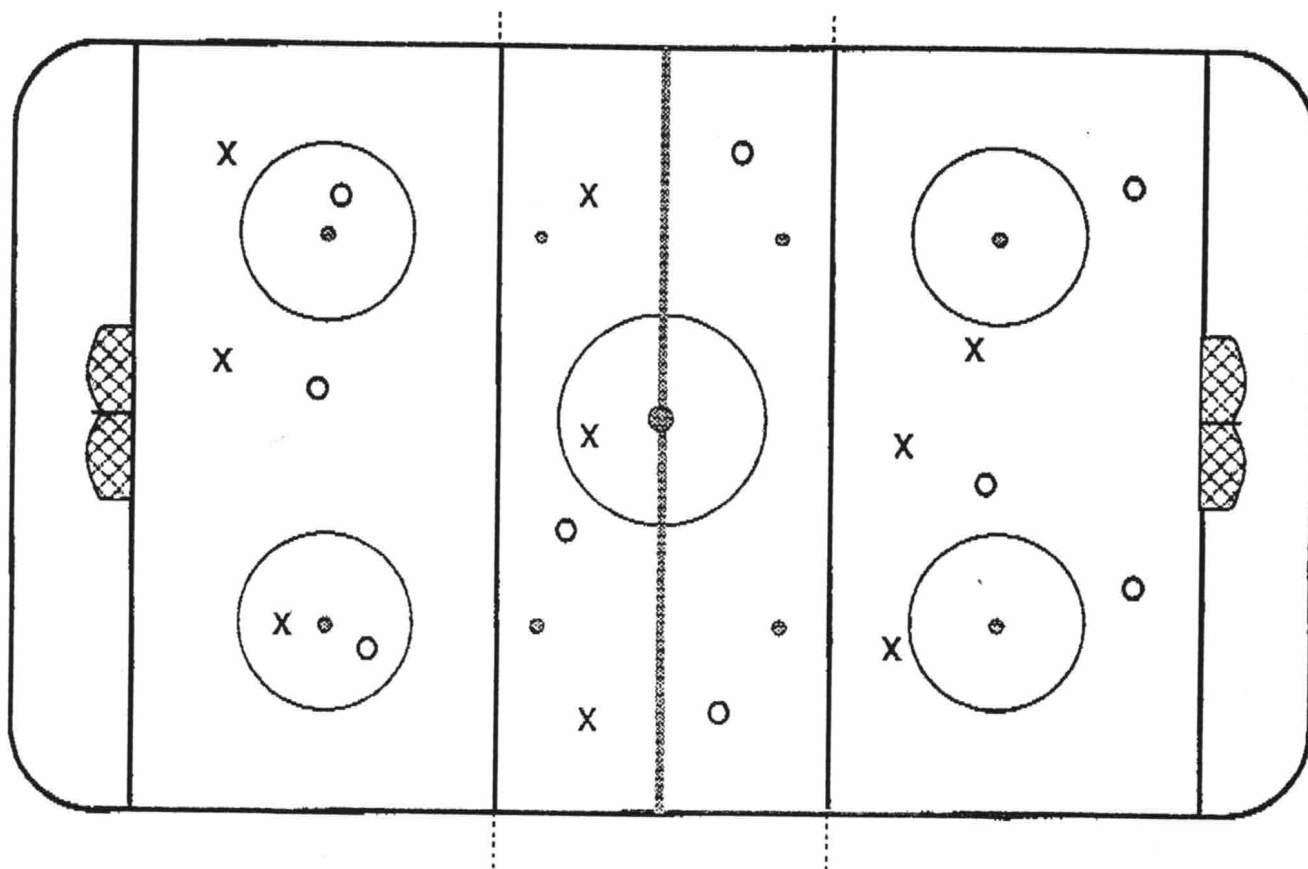
**Notes:**

Three Team Game

**Organization:** Divide the rink into thirds. Cross ice if you want two games, full ice if you want one. Three equal teams, one in each zone. Team in the neutral zone attacks either end with the puck. You can play no offsides and the defensive team cannot force outside its zone. Try to score. If the attacking team scores, they get the puck and attack the third team at the other end. If the defensive team gets the puck to the neutral zone, they then attack. Encourages one and two touch passing. Works well with 3 teams of three.

**Purpose:** Fun, all aspects of attack, transition and defensive coordination.

**Notes:**

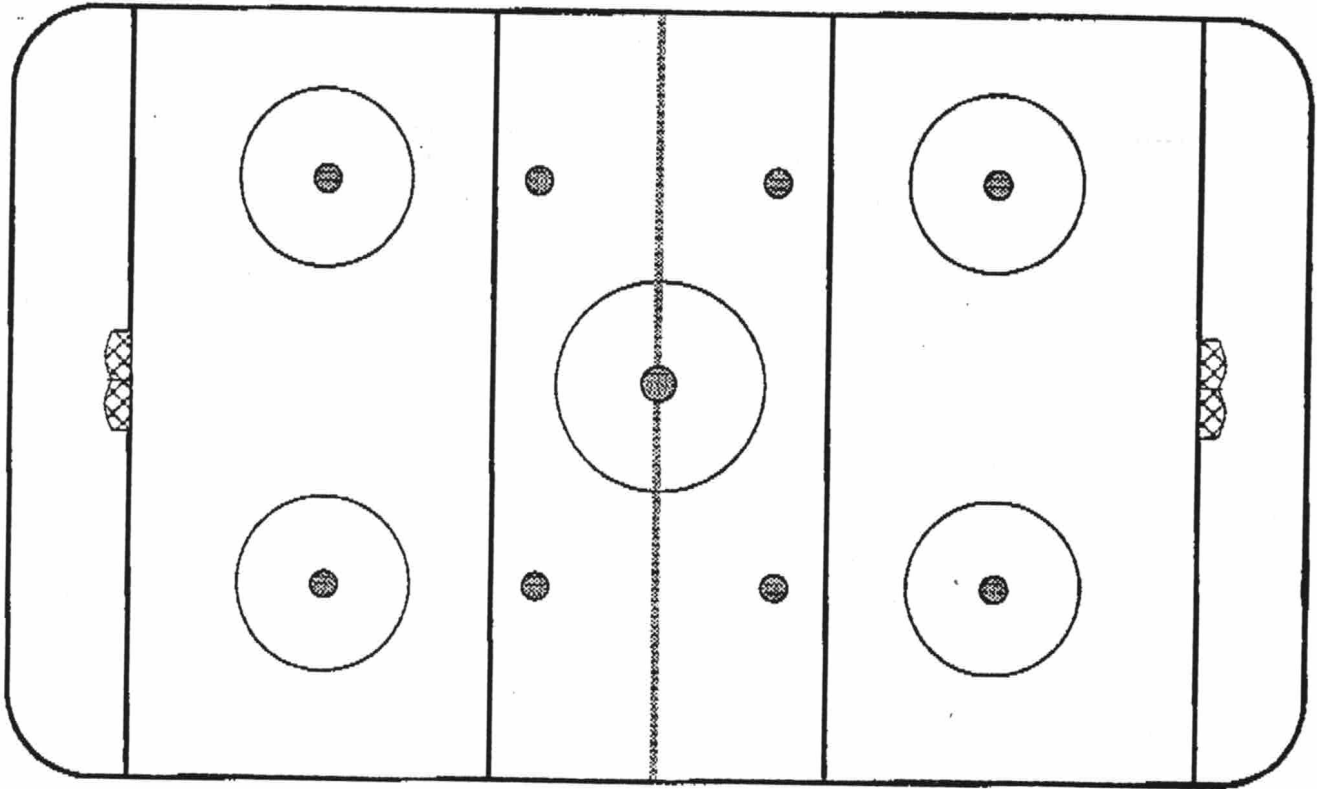
Transition Full Team

**Organization:** Split the team into three groups - each group must stay in their zone. Work together to score - use three pucks and keep score. Rotate the groups every game. Can be used in the warm-up section of practice. No slap shots.

**Purpose:** Play heads up, work together, forces players to make decisions.

**Notes:**

You Name the Game



Organization:
Purpose:
Notes:



