



International Floorball Federation

TEAM TACTICS

Teaching Team Tactics in Floorball;
Instructions and Drills



Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
Tactical learning process	6
What to emphasise in team tactics?.....	7
Play book.....	7
Terms and figures used	8
Offensive play.....	9
Openings (Offensive play in the defensive zone – lifting up the game)	9
Level 1	9
Level 2	10
Level 3	13
Attacking (Offensive play in the offensive zone)	19
Level 1	19
Level 2	21
Level 3	23
Transition (Counter attacks).....	25
Level 1	25
Level 2	27
Level 3	30
Defensive play.....	32
Fore Checking (Defensive play in the offensive zone)	32
Level 1	32
Level 2	34
Level 3	37
Defensive play on the defensive zone	43
Level 1	43
Level 2	43
Level 3	44
Transition from offence to defence.....	47
Level 1	47
Level 2	48
Level 3	49
Conclusion.....	51

Acknowledgements

The material for this manual is collected from the education material of the International Floorball Federation and its member associations. This manual is written in co-operation with some of the experts of Floorball in the world. I would like to thank Mika Ahonen, Jari Oksanen, Juha Jäntti and John Liljelund from Finland, and Grant Mead and Jürg Khim from the Australian women's national team for the consulting. I would also like to thank Merita Bruun for sharing opinions and encouragement.

In Helsinki, the 20th of September, 2007
Anniina Paavilainen, the author

Introduction



Team tactics is the team's tactical play system that the team uses in order to gain structure and discipline in its play, as well as provide safe ways to act in given situations for the players.

Team tactics is the team's tactical play system that the team uses in order to gain order and discipline in its play, as well as provide safe ways to act in given situations for the players. When five players are on the court at the same time, they should know what to do in different situations, and with given tactics, it is easier to make them aware of team mate's next actions. Team tactics are also important for the coach to bring out the best in each player. By determining positions according to each player's capacities, whether it's physical or mental, is the best way of utilizing the recourses.

Trends in Floorball

In floorball, the determined play positions are more or less passed in the history. Positions are changed and rotated all the time during the game, a defender can lift up the play and end up scoring in the opponents slot which forces one forward to stay and back the defender up. Therefore young players should be taught to play all different positions. Every player should also at least once try as a goalkeeper.

Some other characteristics in floorball today can be seen in the team play system of the top leagues.

A winning team bases its tactics on offensive play. There are practically two different ways to attack; organised attacks and transition (counter attacks).

Some teams rely on holding the possession of the ball by slow and strictly organised attacks but the trend in the top leagues is to base the offensive play on straight forward attacks with short distances and one time passes using all five players in a unified front. When the defensive team is standing still in the fore checking figure, they are easily outplayed by speed and quick ball moving. This demands a lot from the players, such as technical capacity to execute accurate one time passes and ability to read the game.

Another offensive tactic is transition. Transition from defence to offence demands a lot of skill and reaction speed, but can be a weapon that the opponent has

no chance to beat, with no time to organize the defence. Counterattacks can only be beaten with quick return from offence to defence which also should be practiced.

In the defensive play the most used fore checking figures are 1-2-2 with a directing top player and man cover in the defensive zone, and the classical 2-1-2.

Progression and the levels

The aim of this material is not to give the optimal solution to the question which team tactic is the best. The objective is neither to give an answer which system a team should use but more or less help the coach to come up with the optimal system for the team and explaining the factors affecting that decision. The coach should be aware of all the tactical matters and should be able to give objectives to create motivation even when the players question the chosen tactic.

Different offensive and defensive system are handled at a basic level. Also exercises to practice these systems are included. The main emphasis on these exercises is on the individual skills needed in the specific system and on developing those skills and the ability to make decisions in specific team tactical situations. The drills are planned to be as game like as possible.

The exercises are divided in three levels according to the level of the players. On the first level, the individual technical skills needed in the system are practiced. These drills are much like the drills on the first part; Individual technique and tactics. The second level provides exercises with individual tactical skills when more than one decision is to be made. The third level consist of game situations exercises with five players each side.

The line between the levels is thin and the exercises might overlap, but the objective is to divide the progression according to the level of difficulty and development. The team should naturally practice the things needed in the tactic, but it is up to the coach whether to strengthen weaknesses or make strengths even stronger.

Tactical learning process



Team tactic is based on game understanding, discipline, trust and the coaches and players' ability to read the game. All these skills can, and should be trained constantly during practice. Of course the players' ability to comprehend and adopt tactical skills has a strong influence on the learning process as well. Coaches should always take into consideration the level of the players' mental and physical capacity and keep in mind that the learning process is different among players.

With children, the coach should be more considerate towards the individual skill development and proceed in a certain order, when it comes to both individual and team tactics. This order of the progression can also be used during each practice session.

Teaching tactical knowledge can be divided in three parts: Individual, in small units and team tactics. To gain the maximal results in each player, these parts should be introduced in this order.

1. Individual

Players will adopt individual tactics at a young age without acknowledging it. They will automatically learn with lots of repetitions, how to behave in certain situation. They will learn to make the best decision from all given options if they are just provided with the right learning environment. Floorball, just like any other sport, is not just about individual technical skills and team tactics. The individual ability to react fast with right decision in a given situation is extremely important and should be at least in the background of each practice from the beginning of a young player's career. Therefore the individual tactics should be priority number one in the beginning. If team tactics is emphasised too much at an early stage, it might destroy a young player's creativity and technique. Tactical terms, such as fore checking, angling, man cover, space cover, however should be used in order to make the terms familiar to the players. Also the rules and the nature of the game should be internalized at an early stage

2. In small units

With slightly older players (13-15 years) or older players just starting to play floorball, the tactics can be introduced in smaller units, such as three against three games. At the same time the technical abilities are learned. Also the tactical terms should be clear for the players before moving on to the next level.

3. Team tactics

With adolescence and adult players (16 years and up) team tactics should be emphasised during each practice. Technical and individual tactical skills should be at such level that they are not to be enforced anymore.

What to emphasise in team tactics?



When choosing the team play system, the coach should carefully think what are the players' strengths and weaknesses. It would not be wise to base the team tactics on quick passing if the player's technical skills are inadequate, or if the physical capacity of the player's is below average, to use man to man defence against more physically superior team. The material is the most important thing to consider when choosing the tactics. The tactic should therefore be created for the players not vice versa. However if the aim is to constantly develop players and the tactical knowledge; all skills, even those not fully mastered should be trained during practice. This will create a basis for the players to adopt other technical and tactical skills in the future.

The external factors also have an effect when choosing the tactics. For example the size of the home rink might determine whether the team uses straightforward attacks (narrow rink) or organized attacks (wide rink).

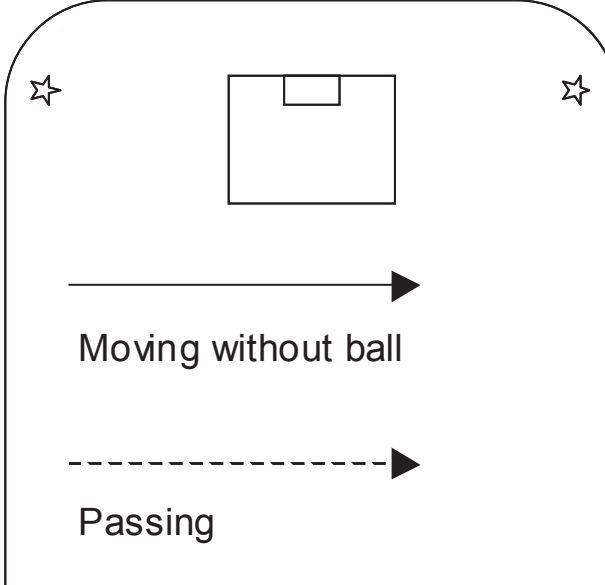
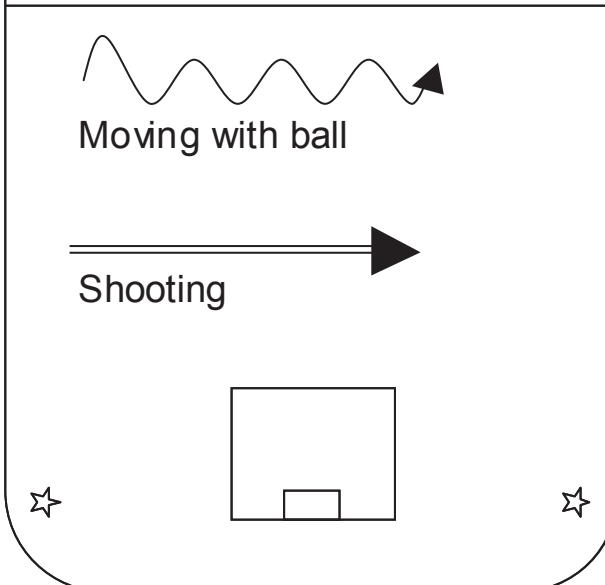
When building up the team tactics, the players' skills should be strictly evaluated. The offensive tactics should be considered so that the material used would be taken advantage of. To win games demands scoring, and scoring is the result of controlling the game as an offensive party. Therefore in a winning team, offensive play is always prioritised.

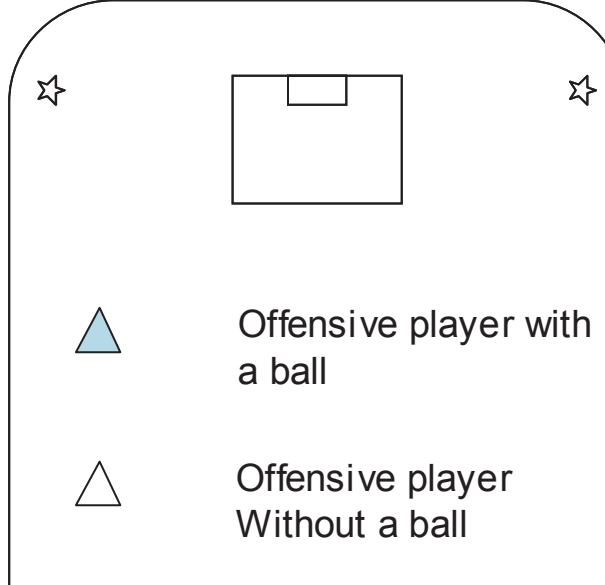




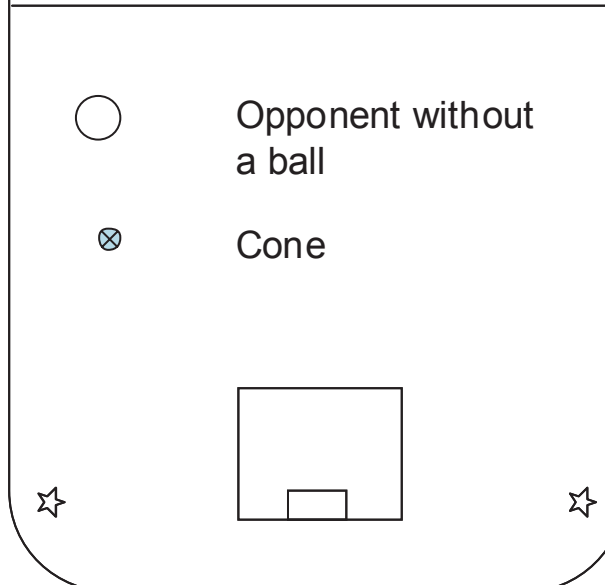
In the defensive play it is best to teach one system at a time or at least choose one system as a basic system for the team. Team tactics should also be there to make an individual player feel safe especially if the same tactic is used throughout the season. In this case it should be clear to the players in which position they are in, and if practiced thoroughly, also the options in each situation should be provided and trained. In the continuation, when the players are skilled enough to adopt many different play systems, the team is able to change the tactic between games and periods or even inside one period.

Play book

The coach can and should make a use of a play book. The play book should be used as a tool to give written instructions and ideas to the players and to give motivation and objective for the players to practice according to the chosen system. It should include topics such as: Slogans, tactics in offensive and defensive system, certain individual responsibilities in each play position, team rules and perhaps the practice schedule. Before planning a play book, certain topics should be considered, such as the material and the level of the players, the type of players, the size of the home rink etc. The play book should be alive during the season according to different variables. The opponents play system and the changes in the line-ups can make a difference during the season so the coach should always leave some room for the plans to change.

Terms and figures used

 <p>☆</p> <p>☆</p> <p>Moving without ball</p> <p>Passing</p>
 <p>Moving with ball</p> <p>Shooting</p> <p>☆</p> <p>☆</p>

 <p>☆</p> <p>☆</p>
 Offensive player with a ball
 Offensive player Without a ball
 Opponent without a ball
 Cone
 <p>☆</p> <p>☆</p>

Offensive play

Some might say that the defensive team play system is the only thing that determines a team's tactic. But as already mentioned in the previous paragraph, winning team bases its team play on offence. Things like the length of attacks, openings and ball movement can be practiced so that they become common and known for the players. The basic factors in offensive play are the openings, finishing attacks and counterattacks (quick transition from defence to offence). Different variations should be practiced, so that also unpredictable situations are considered. If the players are provided with options to change the system, for example in openings, the opponent is more easily outplayed.

Openings (Offensive play in the defensive zone - lifting up the game)

Level 1

The individual technique of each player is one of the most important factors in all offensive play including openings. The basic individual technical skills required in the openings, using both defender-defender and libero play are passing and receiving, standing still and in movement. These skills are usually practiced during warm-up drills but can and should also be emphasised when practicing tactical topics. The importance of accurate passes and especially skilful receiving should not be neglected. Both one time passes using short forehand passes and longer distance passes using forehand pass with follow through should be practiced. Both can easily be done in pairs. Soft hands can be emphasised in aerial passes which are more difficult to receive. With short forehand passes the short distance of the players should also correlate with the forced used in passing.

When using defender-defender in the openings the distance of the two lowest players is usually longer and in libero play the distance is shorter. Therefore suitable passing techniques should be practised according to the tactic used. The players should be encouraged to pass and receive a pass while moving and always to an open space instead of a player standing still. If the player is standing still, the opponent is more likely to read the passing direction and cut the passing lane.

Also maintaining possession of the ball is important in the offensive play as the opponent might direct the ball carrier into the corner or by the rink if there is no quick chance to open up the play. Protecting the ball becomes important when the ball carrier is covered by the opponent.

The players without the ball have to keep moving around the court in order to create passing lanes for the ball carrier. Drills with lots of movement and speed need to be practiced.

Drills to practice technical skills can also be found in the material; Individual Technique and Tactics.

Drill 1

Objective:

- To practice passing and receiving standing still and while moving

Organisation:

- Players divided in groups of six persons forming a "diamond"
- One ball each group

Execution:

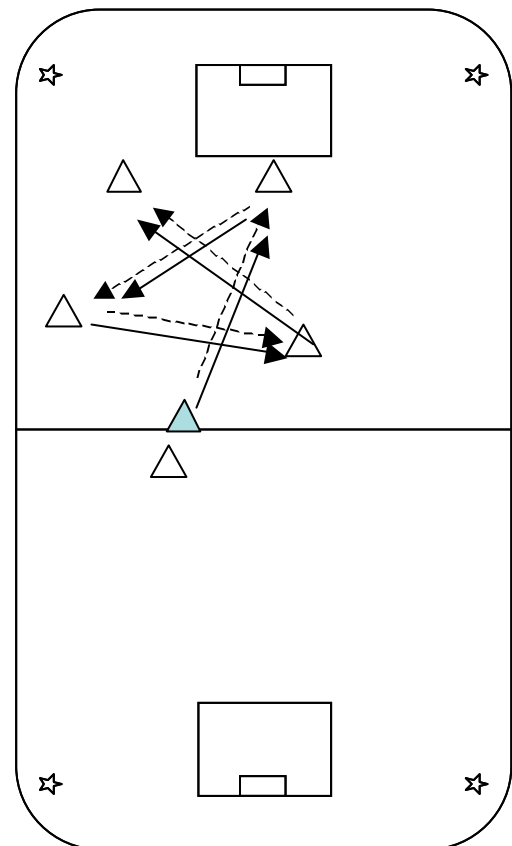
- Players start passing the ball around first just standing still (one timers)
- After a while they will start moving by following one's own pass

Modifications:

- One player can be added in the middle to make the passing more difficult
- If the player in the middle cuts the pass, the one who passed will go to the middle

Key points:

- Passing one timers
- The players should be in constant movement
- Head up
- Passing to the fore hand side



Drill 2

Objective:

- To practice passing and receiving while moving
- To practice moving through the whole court as in an opening

Organisation:

- Players form a line behind the goal
- One player in the corner, one player in the centre and one player by the rink in the other end

Execution:

- A1 passes the ball to A2 in the corner
- A2 takes control of the ball and continues the movement along the rink
- A2 passes to A3 who passes a one timer back
- A2 passes to A4 who is positioned by the rink at the other end and continues the movement towards the middle and the goal with a slight angle
- A2 receives a pass from A4 in front of the goal and shoots
- A1 becomes A2, A2 becomes A4 and A4 becomes A3

Modifications:

- The positions of A3 and A4 can vary according to the coaches choices
- A3 and A4 can also be replaced by coaches

Key points:

- Head up
- Game like posture and movement of the ball carrier
- The situation simulates an opening and it should be emphasised to the players
- When receiving the first pass the player (A2) should be in side-way movement keeping head up and searching for a passing possibility
- The movement should be constant when passing and receiving a pass
- The executing player should head towards the goal with a slight angle to the middle to get a better scoring position (pass coming from the side, not from behind)

Level 2

On the second level, the terms and concepts are good to go through with the team. With a younger team it is enough if the players are aware of the terminology the coach is using. The individual tactics should be emphasised, so that each player knows the responsibilities in each position. The drills and objectives should be kept as simple as possible so that the player's ability to transform the knowledge into game like situations remains. With more experienced players the terms are known, so the coach should emphasise the main points, like the aim of the openings or the movement of each individual player. Also the options a player has can be varied so decision making becomes more relevant.

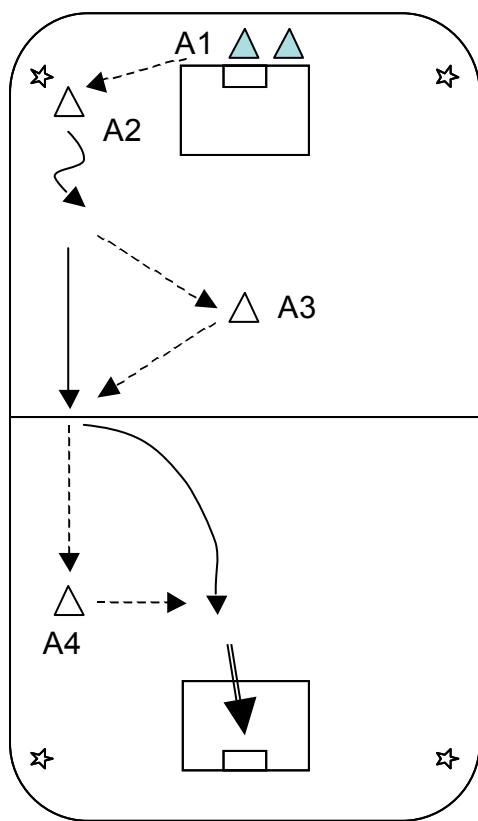
Opening the game is the first thing a team has to consider after gaining the ball from the opponent, whether after interception or stealing the ball. The way a team decides to open the game depends on many other factors, such as the chosen tactic, the opponent, and the situation in hand. The level of the players plays a big part when determining the opening style. The decision making of the ball carrier determines the actions of the non ball carriers; whether to pass forward or backward, or maintain the possession of the ball. When choosing to pass, the player should always support the pass in case the receiver of the pass is unable to control the ball or the pass is intercepted by the opponent.

Individual skills needed in openings:

- Readiness to pass and receive

Movement

- Supporting one's own pass
- Reaction speed
- Decision making (whether to make fast counter attack or an organised attack)



Drill 3

Objective:

- To practice passing past an opponent
- To practice difficult passes

Organisation:

- Players form groups of three players with one ball each group

Execution:

- Two players in five to seven meters distance passing to each other as in defender-defender opening
- The third player as a top striker trying to cut the passing lane
- The players with the ball are trying to execute successful passes with the top striker harassing the players
- If the top striker succeeds on intercepting the pass, the players will switch

Modifications:

- The players with the ball can make it even more game like by trying to maintain a sideways position
- The coach can determine how close the top striker goes towards the one with the ball which will describe the level of the fore checking and makes it more difficult for the ball carrier

Key points:

- Players should use all kind of passes, also backhand and aerial
- Players should be encouraged to pass even in tight situations and not to back up or turn their back to the opponent
- Players should avoid using one time passes in order to maintain the objective of the exercise

Drill 4

Objective:

- To practice the movement in the openings
- To practice readiness to pass and receive a pass while moving
- To practice gaining a scoring chance

Organisation:

- Players form a line in the corner (A1)
- One player in the middle area by the middle line (A2)
- One player in the opposite corner (A3)
- Executed in both sides of the court

Execution:

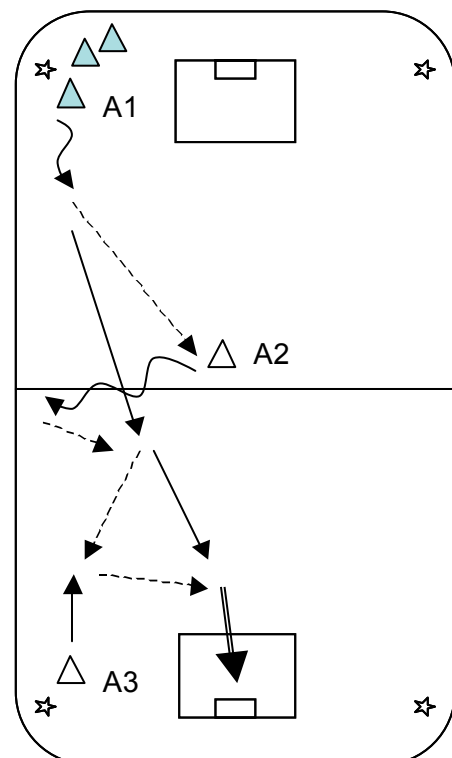
- A1 starts from the corner with the ball passing to A2
- A2 will take control of the ball and moves towards the rink
- A1 follows the pass crossing with A2 from the middle
- A1 receives a drop pass from A2
- A1 continues with the ball and passes to A3 who has moved towards the middle line
- A3 gives a one time pass to A1 who shoots
- A1 becomes A3, A3 becomes A2 and A2 becomes A1

Modifications:

- Can start with shorter distances
- A2 can be stationary in the beginning and A1 run along the rink to pass and receive a pass from A2 before the middle line

Key points:

- Game likeness should be emphasised
- Players should be constantly moving and the blade should almost touch the floor all the time for the readiness to receive a pass
- A2 should make a clear move towards the rink and pass from protection (in a game situation the player is most likely to be covered by an opponent which also can be included and played by the coach)
- A3 should come towards A1 to receive a pass and not stand in the corner
- A3 can also start the movement from the slot and empty the space for a shot by moving towards the rink



Drill 5

Objective:

- To practice the movement of the forwards during openings
- For the ball carrier to practice decision making

Organisation:

- One player in the middle on the defensive zone as a centre forward (A2)
- One player on the middle line by the rink as a wing forward (A3)
- One player in the middle on the offensive zone as a top striker(A4)
- One player behind defensive zone's goal as a defender (A1) with rest of the players and balls

Execution:

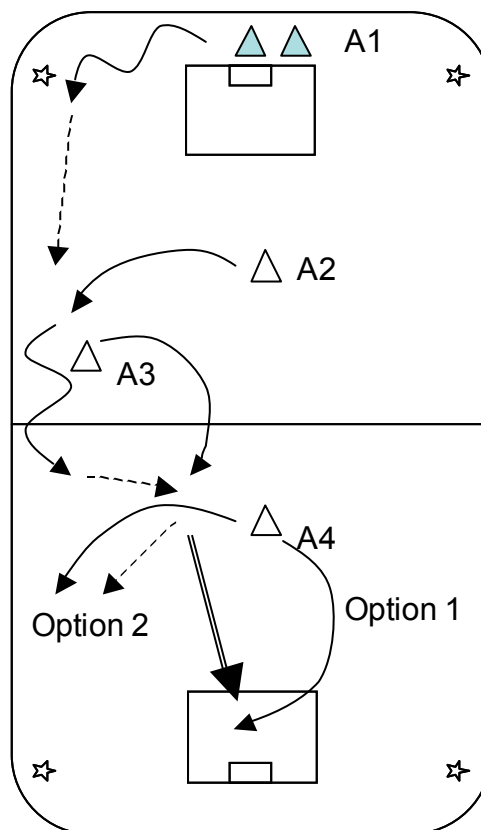
- A1 starts moving sideways with the ball from behind the goal
- At the same time A2 will move towards the rink
- A1 passes to A2
- Simultaneously with A2's movement A3 empties the side by the rink by moving up and towards the centre
- A2 takes possession of the ball and passes to A3
- A3 has to make a decision depending on the movement of A4
- A4 can either:
 - rush to the slot to screen the goalkeeper (option 1)-> A3 shoots or
 - empty the centre area by moving towards the rink (option 2) -> A3 passes to A4, where after A4 can pass a one timer to A3 or shoot him/herself
- After the execution A1 becomes A2, A2 becomes A3, A3 becomes A4 and A4 becomes the last one in line

Modifications:

- The coach can come up with different variations
- Also the goalkeeper can be used in the start of the opening by throwing the first pass
- The coach can harass A3 and therefore force him/her to make a decision

Key points:

- The timing of movement should match the passes
- Game like posture and movement
- A3 should keep head up and pay attention to the action of A4 to make a decision
- A3 can also shoot without A4 screening the goalkeeper, but it is more useful to have someone in front of the goal if there is a shot from a long distance
- The movement of the highest player is crucial in the game even when the ball is still on the defensive zone to lure the opponent and empty space for the ball carrier or a shot



Level 3

To give hard tactical instructions usually works better for younger players and beginners but with more experienced and older players, creativity and ability to read the game plays a more important role in the offensive play. First the coach should plan and instruct the opening system so that all players are aware of their positions, the movement of the ball and other players. Thereafter the players should be aware of the aim of the attack which can be for example:

1. Safe lifts up by the sides, where the whole team is giving pressure on the offensive zone.
2. Lifting the ball up towards the opponents slot to make fast finish of the attack by directing the shot or hitting in possible rebounds. This might be appropriate during the last minutes of the game while trying to even the score.
3. High lifts towards the offensive corners to the top striker to fight for when the team is playing shorthanded or when the team is winning and does not want to lose players in the offensive zone (defensive play).
4. Fast and direct attacks after interception in order to create open space for counterattacks.

These decisions are made according to the opponent and game situation. When these aims are made clear to the players, it is much easier to create passing lanes and empty space for the attacks. After defining the aim, the coach should choose few simple figures to open up the passing lanes. The exercises should be made so that a game like situation is created all the way from the opening to the finish. These patterns should then be practiced so that the players know them without having to be shown every time. Also different variations should be practiced, especially after the players are able to read the situation.

There are three different ways to open up the game; organized attacks, improvisation, and counter attacks (see transition).

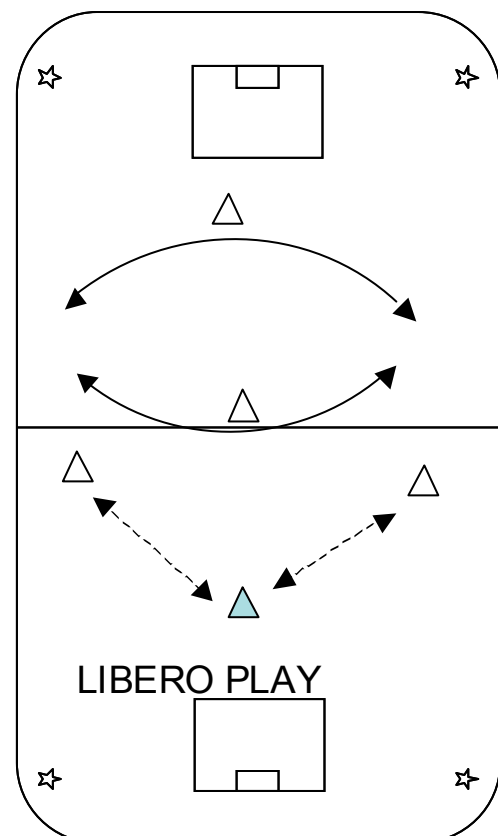
Organized attacks

Organized attacks are used after an interception when the team is about to switch lines or the team has no chance to counter-attack. Therefore the player, who intercepted the ball from the opponent, decides to pass the ball back to the defensive zone in order to calm down the play. Also free-hits and hit-in's from the defensive zone are starting points for organized attacks. Organised attacks give the forwards an option to create passing lanes and chances to shoot in the offensive zone. The negative point is that it also gives a chance for the opponent to organize their defence. Organised attacks works best if the passing lanes and figures are well practiced within the team.

Two different tactics are used in the openings, but also variations of these are possible:

1. Libero play

- When team is using one player in the bottom and two players on the sides as wings
- Rotation and drop passes
- Two forwards up in the offensive zone to create passing lanes
- One of the forwards might create a passing lane in the middle depending on the fore checking figure of the opponent
- The movement of all five players is extremely important to lure the opponent and open up space



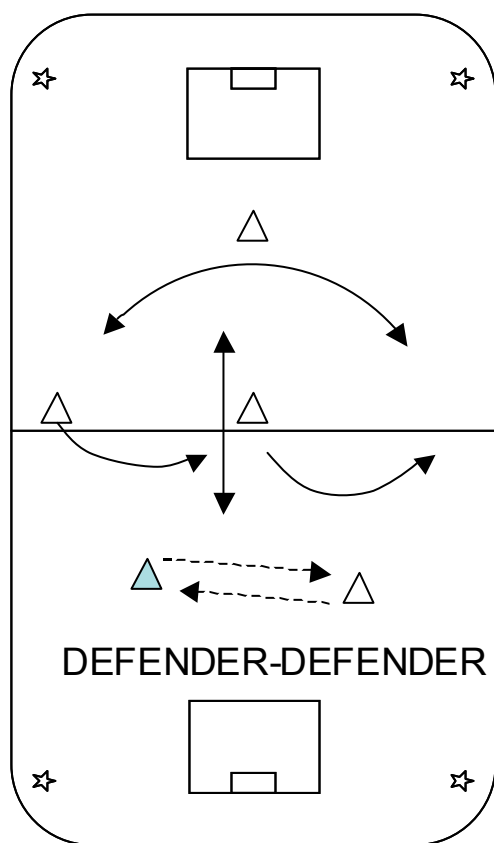
2. Defender-defender

- When team is using two defenders to open up the play
- This is perhaps a more offensive way to open up the play as there are three players in the offensive zone
- Also the risk of a 3 against 2 attack for the opponent is bigger
- The distances should be kept short between the ball- and non ball carriers
- The attackers should always be moving
- Can easily be transferred to back triangle with a libero player
- If the defender, or any other player for that matter is about to shoot from distance, there should always be one player in the slot to screen the goalkeeper and shoot in possible rebounds (when finishing attacks)

play. In organized attacks, players must be aware of the position they need to be in for each situation. They should have the ability to react and adjust if necessary according to the opposing team's movements and positioning. The openings might not always work out as planned but with repetition and constant formation, the players should be aware of different options to adjust the play with. Different ways should be practiced with line-ups using the whole court.

The drills are up to the coach to plan according to the chosen way to open the game. Some examples are included.

When practicing organized attacks, the opposing team has a good opportunity to practice defensive formations.



In both cases the same rules should apply when crossing the middle area.

There should be no passing or dribbling sideways (towards the middle area) to minimize the risk of losing the ball in the most dangerous area for counter attacks. Players should be encouraged to pass only forward and mostly using the sides of the rink.

On the third level, the players should have individual technical skills and tactical knowledge needed to perform as a unity of five players. The cooperation of the players should be seamless, which means that the players should possess the abilities to keep their head up and read the game as they

Drill 6

Objective:

- To practice opening with a libero player
- To practice the cooperation and movement of all five players

Organisation:

- Players positioned as shown in picture 1

Execution:

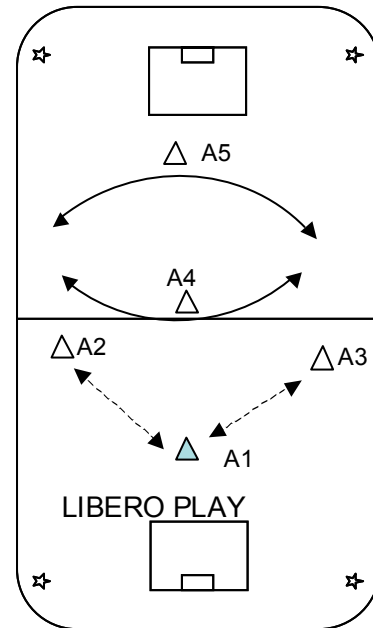
- The lowest player (libero/A1) passes the ball around with the wings of the back triangle while the forwards are constantly moving to open up for a pass (picture 1)
- If the ball is passed to A2, A4 moves towards the slot and A5 moves towards the rink on that side of the rink and vice versa
- The players have decided figures of movement as picture shows
- **Option 1.**
- A1 starts moving towards to side of the rink
- as A1 crosses A3 he will give a drop pass to him/her
- A3 will pass a one timer to A2 who will continue passing to A5 who has moved from the space in front of the net
- A4 has now gained an open space for a shot in front of the net
- **Option 2.**
- A1 can either dribble the ball sideways or pass straight to A4 who has moved from the centre towards the side of the rink
- Simultaneously A2 has moved to the centre to be open for a pass
- A4 can either pass to A2 or A5, who is now positioned in front of the net ready for a shot or a rebound or to screen the goal keeper
- Players should aim for approximately 5 passes before shooting

Modifications:

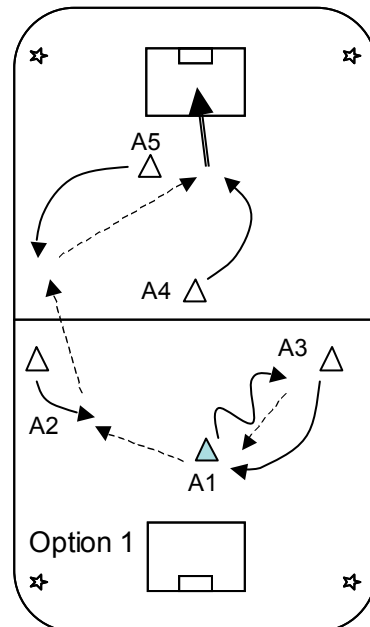
- Can also be executed with the opponent playing with sticks turned upside down

Key points:

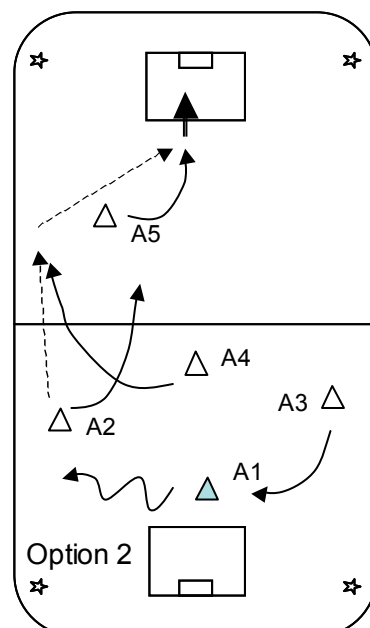
- The quick movement and timing of passes is extremely important
- Players should be encouraged to move away from the slot and in the centre therefore drawing the covering opponent with the movement. This leaves space for another player to get open for a pass or a shot.
- The distances should be kept tight to keep the passes relatively short and accurate
- Accurate drop passes by the defenders



PICTURE 1



PICTURE 2



PICTURE 3



Drill 7

Objective:

- To practice openings using libero play
- To practice openings using the centre player
- Demands good technical skills in passing and receiving
- Opening play for more developed players

Organisation:

- Five players each side
- Both teams stand by the middle line

Execution:

- The predetermined defensive team's player shoots towards the opponent's goal
- After a save the goalkeeper throws the ball to the corner from where the offensive teams libero player picks it up to start up the play
- The defensive team will use fore checking figure 2-1-2
- The offensive team should concentrate on using the centre in the opening
- A1 moves towards the centre with the ball
- A1's next move depends on the fore checkers actions
- **Option 1:** (when both fore checkers are moving towards A1)
- A1 gives a drop pass to A2 who has moved below him/her to secure the slot
- A2 gives a one time pass to A3 who has moved towards the rink
- A3 will pass quickly to A5 who has also moved from the centre
- A5 passes to A4 who has now found his/her way in front of the net
- **Option 2:** (when fore checkers are giving space for A1)
- If A1 has space, he/she can dribble through the centre, A2 securing the slot
- A1 can either continue towards the opponents goal to shoot or pass to A3 who has moved forward along the rink
- A3 can either shoot while A5 has emptied

the slot and A4 is screening the goalkeeper or pass to A4 who shoots

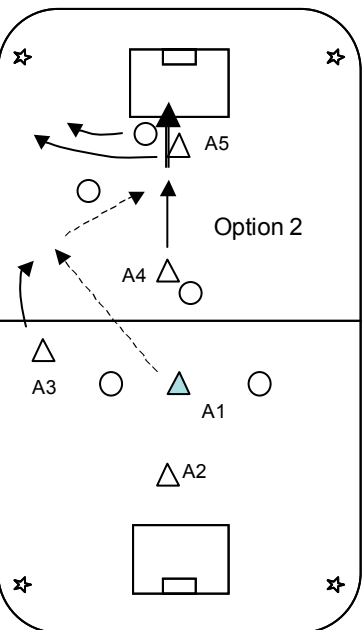
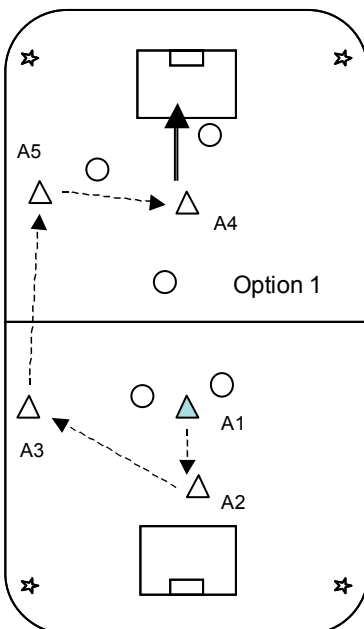
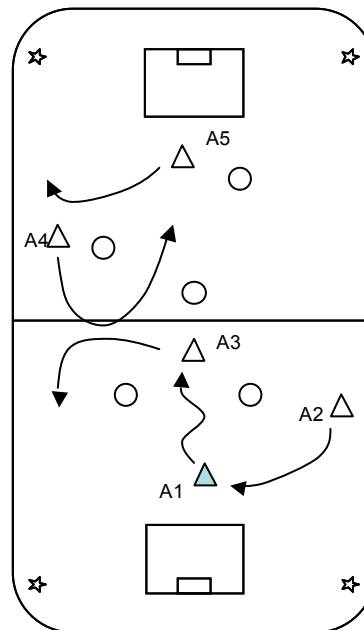
- The coach stops the drill after one attack

Modifications:

- As many variations as the coach comes up with
- The coach should take the players strengths and skill level under consideration

Key points:

- Timing of movement important
- The libero player can make the movement to the centre and drop pass couple of times in the beginning before making the next move
- The forwards should be in constant movement and get familiar with their movement tracks
- Both options should be used alternatively in the game to lure the opponent
- Also the other side of the rink should be used



Drill 8

Objective:

- To practice openings using two defenders
- To practice openings as a unit

Organisation:

- Five players on the field situated as shown
- One of the defenders with the ball
- First can be practised without the opponent and then introduce the opponent once the players have understood the system.

Execution:

- Option 1:** Along the boards
- Both defenders at the corner face-off dot
- A2 passes to A1
- A1 will move sideways behind the goal and then pass back to A2 who continues a one time pass to A4
- A4 passes a one time pass to A3 who passes it back to A4 who has moved forward along the rink into the offensive zone
- A5 is ready in the slot to either screen the goalie or shoot
- Option 2:** Changing the side
- A1 and A2 passing to each other couple of times and the forwards are moving accordingly (moving slightly to the side where the ball is)
- From a designated signal, the opening will start by A3 moving towards the rink simultaneously with A2 passing to A1
- A1 passes a one timer to A3 who either takes control of the ball before passing to A4 or passes a one timer to A4
- At the same time A5 moves towards the ball and receives a pass from A4
- A5 can either pass to A4 who has now moved to the slot to screen the goalkeeper or shoot him/herself

- Option 3:** Through the centre
- Used when the opponent is fore checking with a top striker and leaving the middle unguarded
- A1 passes to A2
- Simultaneously A3 moves to the centre (he/she is not allowed to stay there but has to move in and out)
- A2 passes to A3
- As this happens, A5 will move towards the ball to be open for a pass and A4 moves towards the slot
- A3 passes to A5 who can either shoot or pass to A4
- A3 has to be very certain about receiving and passing in the central area to minimize the risk of losing the ball
- If A3 has no opportunity to pass directly forward, he/she can take control of the ball and then decide what to do but in this case he/she has to protect the ball closely because the risk of losing the ball is quite big
- A3 can also pass back to A2 in case A5 is not at a passing distance
- Same line-up can execute three to five openings after which they will switch
- Other line-ups paying attention
- Different line-ups can practice different opening figures according to the characteristics of the players

Modifications:

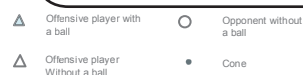
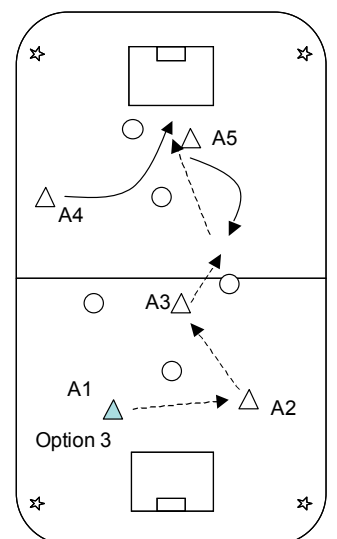
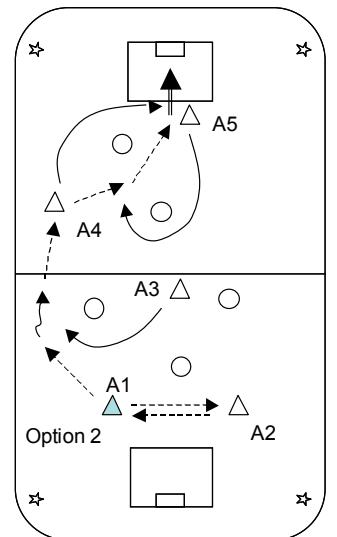
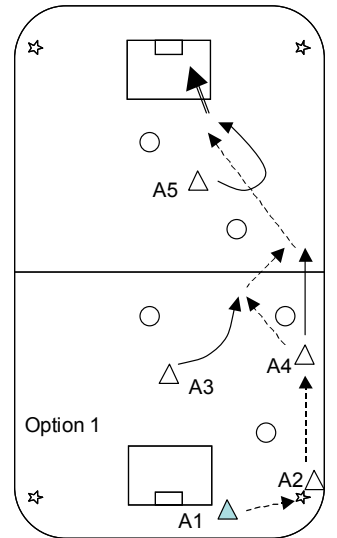
- The drill can and should be modified according to the chosen opening figure
- The players can switch places to get familiar with different positions

Key points:

- The same key points should be emphasised during each opening figure
- No passing or dribbling sideways into the middle area to avoid

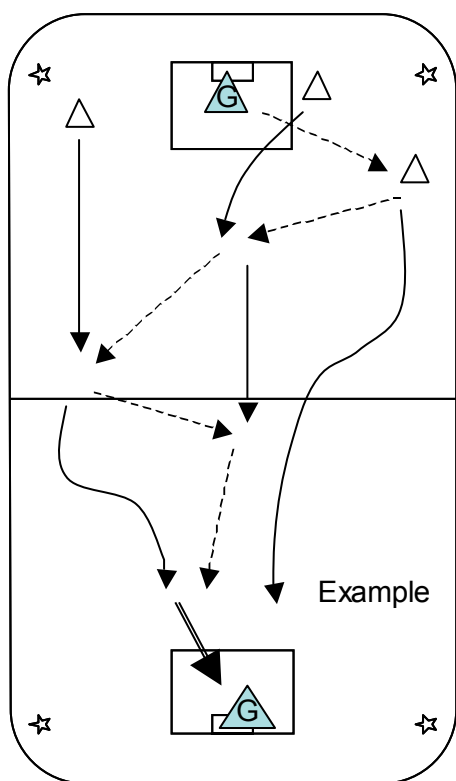
losing the ball in a dangerous zone

- Always aim towards the slot and a shot
- One player in the slot to screen the goalkeeper
- The defenders (A1 and A2) should play game like and lift their positions according to the situation (to assist the forwards in finishing the attack)
- The ball carrier should be encouraged to pass to an open space from where the non ball carrier picks up the ball instead of to a player who stands still and is easily covered by the opponent
- An opening should always end up scoring
- An opening transfers to an attack on the offensive zone as soon as the ball has crossed the opponent's highest fore checker
- Timing of both the passes and the player's movements are critical for success, players must be ready to adapt and adjust if necessary.



Improvisation

The players can also improvise when lifting up the play towards the offensive area. This happens with three to four players and is mostly for more experienced players, when the success depends on the players own creativity and game sense. In case the players are incompetent to read the situation and react on team mates actions, an organised defence can be hard to break. Therefore a team should start with organized attacks, which provide safer ways for the players to open the game. Improvised attacks are good to practice every once and a while to bring out the players own creativity in the attacking. In these drills the coach can also evaluate the development of the player's game reading, movement etc. From the successful variations, the coach should choose the best ones to use in the organised attacks.



Drill 9

Objective:

- To practice attacking with 3 players
- To get familiar with different moving patterns within one line
- To practice decision making

Organisation:

- Players form three lines at one end of the rink
- Balls in the goal

Execution:

- The goalkeeper passes the ball to one of the three players on the line who will then start an attack towards the other end
- The next group of three players can go after the first ones have finished the attacks
- After finishing the attack players should clear the court quickly to leave room for the next group
- If there are two goalkeepers, they should switch to practice both throwing and saves

Modifications:

- Can also be executed from both ends (with two goalkeepers) alternatively
- In this case the players have to wait for the goalkeepers pass after making a save
- To save time also one of the players can start the attack with a pass even before the previous attack is finished
- If there is only one goalkeeper or none at all, the coach can also start the attack by passing the ball
- Can also be executed as a 2 against 0, which reduces the amount of options
- Also opponent can be added so that two of the players stays in the court to defend after finishing the attack which makes the drill a 3 against 2 exercise

Key points:

- Players should not run next to each other
- Creativity should be emphasised but still some rules might be pointed out
- No diagonal movement of the ball, including passing or dribbling, in the middle area to minimize the risk of loosing the ball
- There should always be two passing opportunities for the ball carrier
- The distances should be kept short
- The attack should always end up with a shot
- Players should not get too close to the goal when finishing the attack as most likely it will not happen in a game either
- The shot should be shot from a distance with one player in the slot to screen the goalkeeper and shoot in possible rebounds

Drill 10

Objective:

- To practice fast openings and attacking
- To practice passing while moving

Organisation:

- Players form three lines as in the previous drill
- The line in the middle with the balls

Execution:

- The first player in the middle line (A2) starts by passing the ball to one of the other players A1 or A3 who will continue passing, preferring one time passes
- After each pass the player is supposed to follow the pass

Modifications:

- Can also be started by the goalkeeper

Key points:

- Player should always follow his/her pass
- Non-ball carriers should always move forward after following the pass ready to receive another pass

- This will emphasise the fact that the passing direction is always forward because players are not supposed to run backwards
- No drop passes allowed
- One player should always be ahead of the ball
- The objective of following the pass is emphasising the constant movement and supporting the pass and certain principles in attacking such as levelling, heading for the slot and aiming for a shot
- If the players are not able to follow the pass, they are not moving nor levelling as they should to succeed in scoring
- In the picture it is shown that both the ball and the players are moving forward all the time

Attacking (Offensive play in the offensive zone)



Level 1

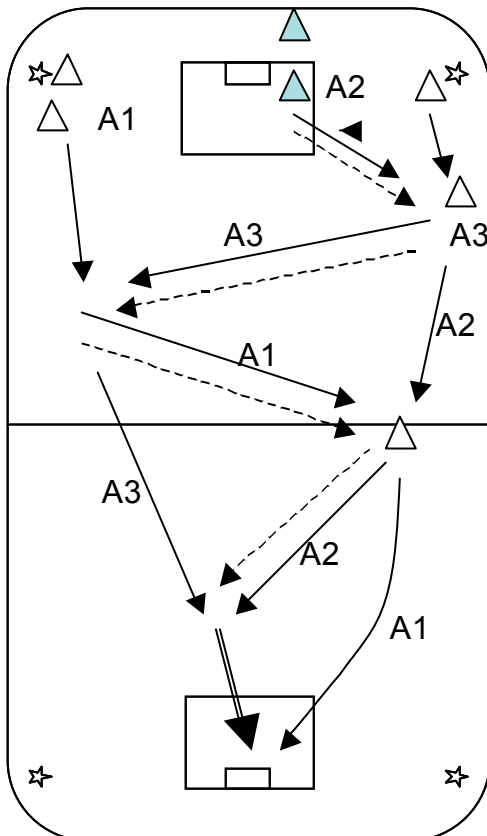
Individual technical skills needed

- passing/receiving
- shooting
- protecting the ball

The most important skill required in attacking is passing and receiving and of course shooting. Passes should be accurate in order to proceed to a scoring situation. The objective of the attack along with the game situation determines the type of the pass; whether passes should be short, long, on the ground or aerial.

The type of the shot should be chosen according to the situation and the objective of the attack. Usually the objective is scoring, but might also be, for example, maintaining the possession of the ball in the offensive zone. This means that all the necessary individual technical skills should be practiced so players possess the ability to use different variations in the game.

Protecting the ball is also an important skill as the opponent might use corner defence and double the ball carrier in the corners or sides of the rink. The width of grip (steady hands) and posture (legs apart) are crucial in ball protection. Protecting the ball using stick is important when dribbling the ball in order to keep the possession of the ball while gaining space to pass or shoot.



Drill 13

Objective:

- To practice passing and receiving while moving: finishing attacks
- To transfer individual skills into game performance
- To practice moving in the offensive zone and scoring

Organisation:

- Players are divided as in drill 12
- A defensive team can be added without sticks or by playing with sticks upside down
- A defensive team can also be simulated by cones in the beginning (as figure dice 5) to emphasise the passing with the attacking team
- In the beginning, and especially with young players, the passing lanes can be practiced so that the players are only passing the ball without movement (figure 1)
- The coach should also make clear before starting where the defensive team is situated, and bring out the best options for the attacking teams players' where to be open for a pass and where are the best places to score by using the tactic board (opponent covering the best scoring sector as figure shows)

Execution:

- A1 and A2 are giving a free-hit by the middle line (figure 2)
- A3 is situated near the rink, A4 in the middle and A5 on the offensive corner on the strong side of the rink
- The forwards can also switch places, in floorball the positions are not designated, especially in the offensive play and the players are encouraged to be creative in attacking situations
- The ball is passed around with the players first still standing

The movement:

- If A1 and A2 are passing to each other (figure 2) the forwards should move to

open spaces (depending on the placed cones, or the opponent) ready to receive a pass

- If in libero play (figure 3) the ball is played to the left side to winger A3, A5 moves to the corner on the left side and A4 moves closer to the centre (either behind or in front of the goal depending on the opponents moves)
- The attack should end with a shot after 5-6 passes
- The same passing figure can be repeated as many times as necessary until the players have understood and remembered The figure, and other variations can be added (also using the creativity of the players themselves)
- after three to four attacks either the positions or the whole line-up should be switched

Modifications:

- Can be modified by changing the number of defensive players (also 5 against 4)
- Also the figure of passing can be modified depending on the chosen play system (using the centre or the corners)

Key Points:

- Using the open space, avoiding dangerous passes and poor scoring zones
- Readiness to pass and receive
- Head up
- Players should be encouraged to also use their own creativity
- The level of the players should be considered

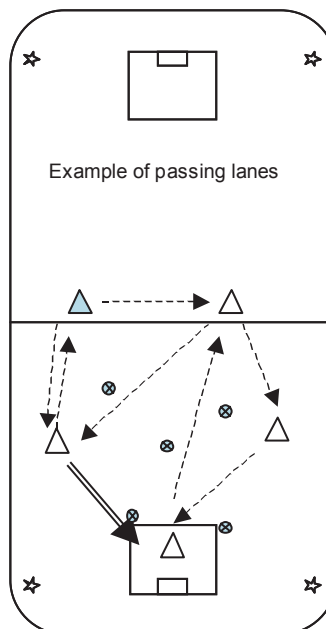


figure 1

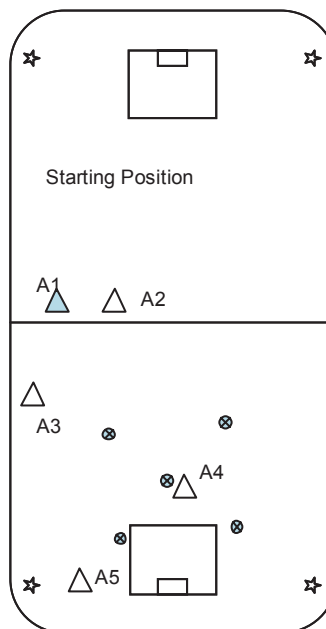


figure 2

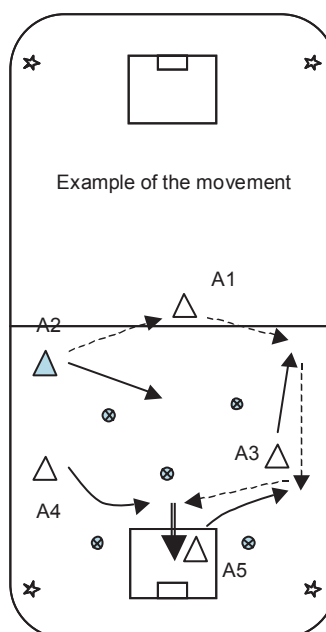


figure 3

Level 2

On the second level individual tactical skills determines how to use the technical skills learned on the first level. Choosing the right technique according to the situation becomes relevant when thinking about succeeding in the team play. Decision making is an important factor, not only as a ball carrier but also as a non ball carrier. After all there are usually 4 players without the ball assisting the ball carrier to make a decision.

Individual tactics needed:

- maintaining the possession of the ball
- creating space for the ball carrier
- creating passing lanes by moving
- creating space in the slot
- screening the goalie
- aiming for the scoring sector

The coach should always consider the player material, which depending on the team can be very varied, and take advantage of the player's individual talent. If there is a player with a perfect slap shot, the coach can encourage him/her to get open for a shot and other players to pass to him/her if there is a chance. Of course the tactics should not be based on one individual but all players should be included.

The decision making should be emphasised in the drills and the exercises should be made as game like as possible and should always contain shooting. The drills included under Improvised attacks can be trained here as well.

Drill 14

Objective:

- to practice passing in the offensive zone
- to practice creating space in opening and finishing attacks
- to practice timing of passing and moving

Organisation:

- A1 behind the goal
- A3 at the middle line near the rink
- A2 in the other corner with the rest of the players and balls
- the coach should make the objective of timing the passes and movement clear beforehand

Execution:

- first part demonstrates an opening in the defensive zone
1. A1 starts running towards the corner while receiving a pass from A2
 2. A1 continues running by the board while A3 moves to the centre
 3. A1 passes a one-timer to A3 and continues running towards the middle line
 - the second part demonstrates an attack in the defensive zone
 4. A1 continues following the middle line, while A2 runs by the board towards the line (after the first pass), A2 receives a pass from A1
 5. A3 waits in the slot, as in game like situation, prepared to receive a pass, but as A1 passes to A2, A3 moves by the board to receive a pass from A2
 6. A1 runs towards the slot to receive a pass from A3
 7. A1 shoots
 - A1 becomes A2, A2 becomes A3 and A3 becomes A1

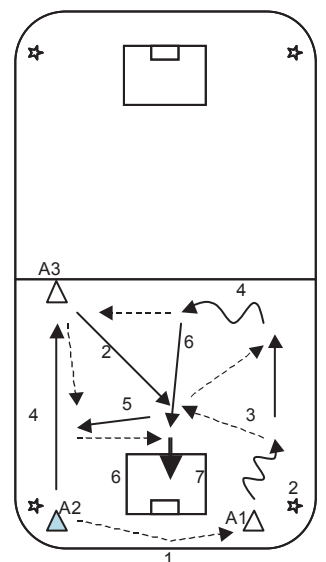
Modifications:

- different variations of running and passing lanes is up to the coach

Key points:

- the coach should pay special attention to the timing of the movement and passing
- A3 empties the slot for A1 to shoot

- movement should be game like
- players should be gathered after the drill to be reminded about the objectives of the drill



Drill 15

Objective:

- To practice movement in the offensive zone
- To practice the cooperation of an offensive line-up
- To practice scoring in 3 against 2 situation
- To practice emptying space and creating space for the ball carrier

Organisation:

- Players divided into forwards and defenders
- Forwards are further divided in groups of three as in offensive line-ups and defenders divided in defending couples
- The players are playing in one end of the rink
- Can be executed in both ends of the rink depending on the amount of players

Execution:

- One group of forwards is trying to keep the possession of the ball while creating a scoring chance and one defending couple is defending
- The defenders are not trying to score and if they get the possession of the ball they will pass the ball to the corner from where the attackers will get it
- If the goalkeeper makes a save or the ball is shot out of boundaries, the goalkeeper will throw another ball in the corner
- The coach signals the shifts that can vary from 45 to 90 seconds
- After one shift, the players will switch in order to recover for the next shift

Modifications:

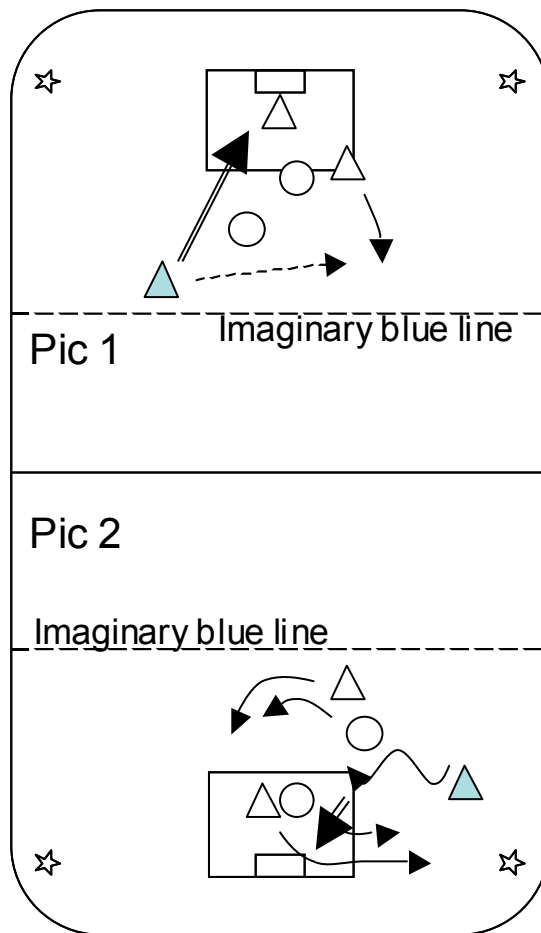
- Also 3 against 3 game which leaves a less chance for the attackers to score but might be more game like situation
- In this case the defenders can play with sticks turned upside down

Key points:

- The forwards should try to format a triangle

where the ball carrier always have two passing lanes (picture 1)

- One of the forwards (the one with the best shot) should stay by the imaginary "blue line" trying to create a chance to shoot from distance and one of the other forwards should then rush to the slot to screen the goalkeeper and shoot in possible rebounds
- The third forward should try to create a passing lane by moving to an empty space
- Movement of the non ball carriers should be emphasised and it should then be transferred to the game as well
- If the defenders are blocking the passing lanes by covering the non ball carriers, the ball carrier should try to get into a shooting position and the non ball carriers should therefore move to empty space for the ball carrier to pass or shoot (picture 2)
- The offensive line-ups should come up with movement patterns that become familiar with all three players
- Players should keep on their toes and keep their head up to see the position of their team mates



Level 3

On the third level, after learning the individual technical and tactical skills, like passing, shooting, screening and creating passing lanes and space, the team tactics used should be introduced. The coach should make clear to the players which factors are crucial in the offensive zone. These factors are for example:

- The length of the attack
- The movement of the players
- The number of players on the offensive zone.

The length of the attack is the most important thing. A short and fast attack is used if the team is unable to hold the possession of the ball in the offensive zone due to lack of technical skills. If the team is highly skilled technically and the opponent is outplayed, the team should hold the possession of the ball aiming for a sure scoring chance. After interception, if the team is capable of performing a fast counter attack, the players should try to attack quickly but might as well end up holding the ball if they are not able to end the attack right away. In this case the ability to read the game is crucial.

The coach can also determine how many players he/she wants on the offensive zone. This can be dependent on the game situation (power play/short handed), level of the players (keeping at least one defender securing own slot, if the risk of loosing the ball is high) or level of the opponent. Usually the main point is to have all the five players on the offensive zone to increase the possibility to score. Also the movement of the players can be practiced so that the ball carrier always knows where to find a team mate to pass to.

If these factors are made clear to the players it is easier to motivate the players when the objectives are same for everybody.

Drill 16

Objective:

- To practice attacking with all five players
- To practice movement of non ball carriers
- To practice emptying space in the slot

Organisation:

- Players are divided in line-ups
- With uneven amount of players, also substitute players possible
- Can be executed in both ends of the rink but if only one coach is available, it is preferred that one line-up is executing the drill at a time
- This will give the coach the best possibility to go through the key points with each line-up
- With two coaches, they should see that the same main points are emphasised

Execution:

- Each line-up will play 5 against 0
- The ball should be passed to each player at least once before a shot
- Shifts can vary from 60 to 120 seconds that the coach signals
- If the coach has a lot of feedback during the shift, the shift can be longer
- Players not executing should pay attention all the time
- The players can practice either play with back triangle or to defenders
- Usually the use of back triangle is more efficient as the opponent is most likely to defend with formation dice 5
- Back triangle also enables more players on the offensive zone which makes the attack more efficient
- The movement of the players is similar to the offensive play in the defensive zone (openings) but the distances are shorter and the readiness to shoot should be emphasised

- Example of the movement pattern (pictures 1 and 2):
- A1 starts moving to his/her right with the ball
- A2 moves towards A1 from whom he/she will receive a drop pass from
- Simultaneously A4 moves towards the middle line
- A2 passes a one time pass to A4
- A5 have emptied the slot by moving towards the rink leaving space for A3
- After the first pass, A1 will move towards the slot ready to receive a pass from A4
- As a ball carrier, A4 has now two options, either he/she can pass to A1 who shoots or pass to A5 who shoots
- If A4 is not able to pass to either A1 or A5, he/she can pass the ball back to A2 or even shoot him/herself
- A2 should stay by the middle to secure the defensive zone in case of an interception
- When the opponent is added, the amount of option decreases which makes the drill more game like and therefore the fast decision making according to the situation should be prioritised
- A1 should pass the ball couple of times with A2 and A4 before starting to move (as in opening with a libero) while A3 and A5 switches places
- If A1 is covered by an opponent, A2 can create space for him/her by blocking the defensive player which will leave space for A1 to move towards the rink and shoot or pass (picture 3)
- In this case A4 has to lower him/herself to secure the defensive zone in case of an interception

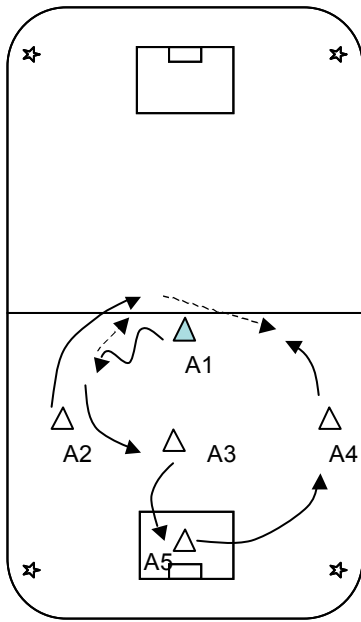
Modifications:

- After a while, when the players have learned the movement patterns, another line-up can be added as an opponent
- The defending team can first have their sticks turned upside down
- If the defending team gets the possession of the ball, they will shoot the ball to the corner, from where the offensive team will get it
- The defending team is mostly trying to cut the passing lanes and intercept passes, they are not trying to steal the ball by giving pressure to the ball carrier
- Also a good way of practicing power play when four defensive players are added

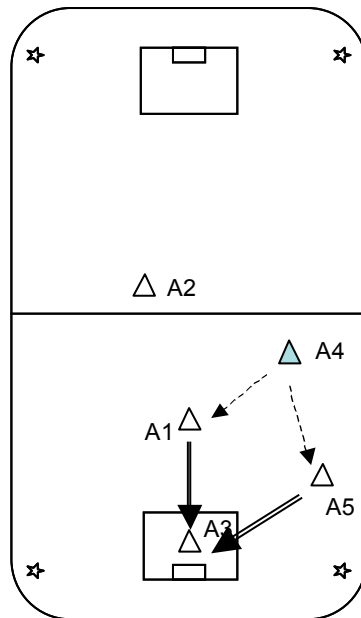
Key points:

- The movement of the non ball carriers should be emphasised
- Emptying space in the slot by moving and therefore drawing the opponent with the movement leaves place for another player to move to the slot, or the ball carrier to shoot
- One player should aim for the slot to screen the goalkeeper especially in case of a shot from distancePiv

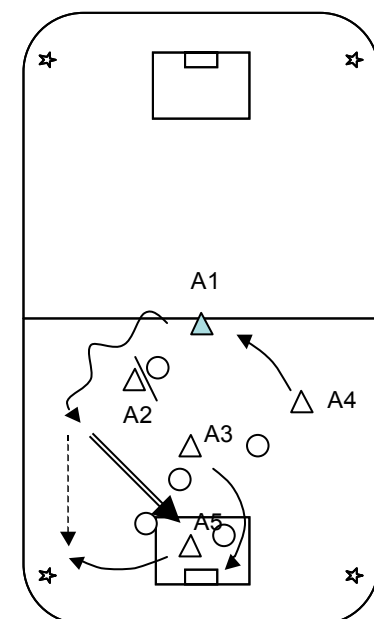
Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Transition (Counter attacks)

Level 1

Another way to lift up the game is based on quick transition from defence to offence (counter attacks). It relies on the players' ability to predict the next move and act accordingly. The most important technical skills are again passing and receiving as well as shooting. Also the change in direction of the movement is extremely important. The players should have the readiness to turn around in full speed from defence to offence. This reaction can be practiced through coordination runs with fast turns, with and without the ball. The reaction speed depends on the speed of the actions in the nervous system, and on how fast the impulse is delivered from the brains to the working muscles. If the nervous system is practiced, the impulse can be turned to an automatic reaction, which will then make the impulse move faster in the body. After all, quick transition is all about the reaction.



Drill 17

Objective:

- To practice change of direction of movement
- To practice short one time passes

Organisation:

- Players divided in groups of three
- Two players with ball each as a stationary in the opposite sides of the rink
- One player in the middle without a ball

Execution:

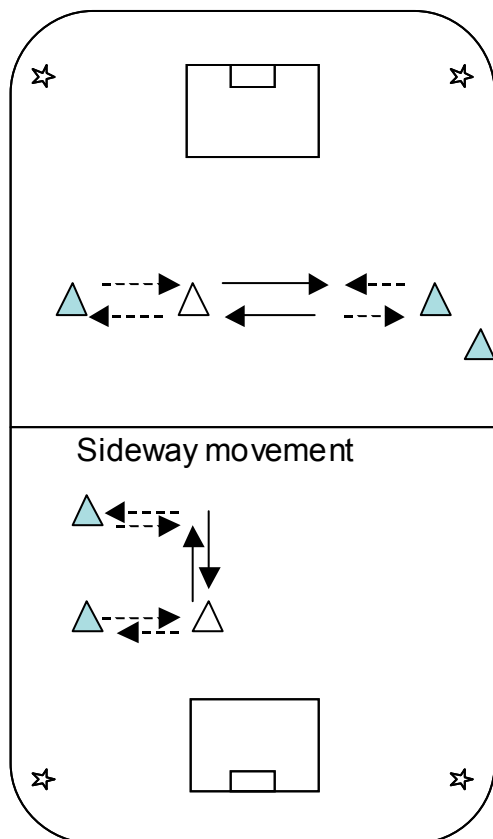
- Third player starts running in the middle while passing a one time pass in each turn
- Coach signals 45 seconds shifts where after the players will switch

Modifications:

- Also sideway running so that the executing player does a sideway movement and passes a one timer in each turn
- Movement and turns as a ball carrier can be practiced so that the player executing has the ball
- Otherwise same execution
- Same shift lengths

Key points:

- Fast turns; no running in a circle
- Accurate passes
- Movement on toes
- Readiness to pass and receive; blade on the floor all the time



Drill 18

Objective:

- To practice fast reaction and change in direction of movement
- To practice reading the opponent and cutting passing lanes
- To practice short, accurate passes
- Also a good warm-up and passing drill

Organisation:

- Players are divided in groups of six
- Four players stationary in a square in about 5 meters distance as in the picture
- Two players inside the square

Execution:

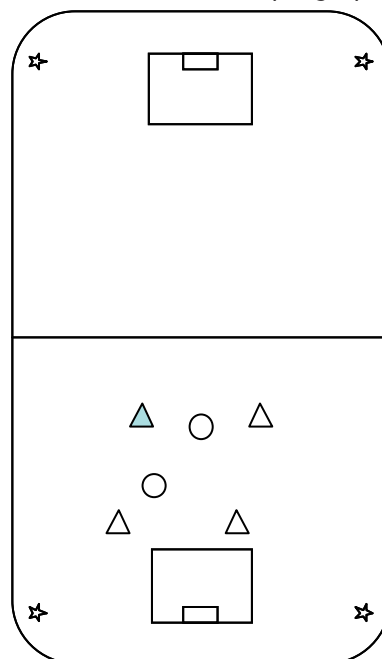
- Players with the ball start to pass the ball with each other
- Players without the ball try to intercept the pass by blocking the passing lanes
- If they manage to intercept a pass, they have to pass the ball as quickly as possible to another player in the square and switch places with the one who made the fail pass
- This will demonstrate the immediate reaction of passing and moving after interception

Modifications:

- Can also be executed with more players
- With more players (for example 4 against 3) also two balls can be used
- In this case the players have to keep awareness of both balls, so that the ball is not passed to the same player at the same time

Key points:

- The reaction followed by the interception should be emphasised
- The passes should be accurate and the movement quick
- The stationary players can move slightly but not take more than few steps
- The players in the middle should only aim for interception using the stick, not harass the ball carrier by getting too close
- The drill is mostly for the two players in the middle cutting the passing lanes
- When a player succeeds on intercepting a pass, he/she should immediately be ready to pass the ball to the next player
- The coach should see that all the players switch places whether the players in the middle succeed in intercepting a pass or not



Level 2

The role of the reaction in different game situations is extremely important in transition. To provide the players with options and to practice these options in a game like environment will also give security to the players on how to react in the moment of transition. For example if a player in the centre intercepts an opponent's pass, where should the winger be in order to receive a one time pass from that player? The player with the ball has the responsibility to make the decision whether to pass or dribble, but the offensive players without the ball have to move quickly to create passing lanes. These skills should be prioritized while practicing transition with the whole unit. The actions of all five players should be considered. The objective of transition phase should be emphasised to the players, which is the power play situation created by transition, and the fast scoring chance followed by it.

The individual tactical skills needed in quick transition are:

- Blocking passing lanes and intercepting a pass
- Change in direction of movement
- Ability to read the game
- Readiness to attack
- Readiness to pass and receive (one time passing)
- Readiness to shoot
- Creating passing lanes (non ball carrier)

The importance of game sense can not be underestimated as the players should keep the awareness of both team mates' and opponents' moves and next actions.

Drill 19

Objective:

- To practice quick transition in smaller units

Organisation:

- The rink is divided in half (or a smaller court used)
- Players are divided in pairs
- Few players are nominated as extra players (the fifth player in the game)
- Players should be provided with different coloured vests

Execution:

- Coach signals for 60 to 90 seconds shifts
- Players play 3 against 2 game so that the extra player always plays on the offensive side
- This means that the offensive team always have a power play situation when they intercept a pass or steal the ball
- The extra players should switch after each shift

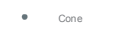
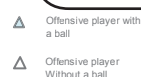
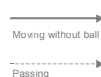
Modifications:

- Also the coach can play as the extra player
- The teams can also consist of more players and players can switch on-the-fly
- The extra player should be kept constant but the coach should see that also the extra player is changed every once a while
- Passing can be emphasised by allowing only two touches with the ball (receiving and passing) or only one time passes
- If the player touches the ball more than once (or dribbles) the other team will get a free-hit
If the extra player makes a mistake, the defensive team is awarded with a free-hit, but not given by the extra player
- In this variation, the pass is more easily intercepted because of the minimal time for the ball carrier to make a decision

- This increases the amount of transitions and makes the game fast which is more suitable for advanced players

Key points:

- The power play situation followed by the interception should be taken advantaged of
- The distances should be kept short and the ball carrier should have the possibility to pass forward
- After the interception, the offensive team (team intercepting a pass) should be immediately ready to change direction and attack
- The objective of using the extra player, which is the constant power play situation of the offensive team, should be made clear to the players as the players might get confused in the beginning
- The levelling of the players important with both offensive and defensive teams



Drill 20

Objective:

- To practice quick transition from defence to offence and the readiness to attack
- For the goalkeeper to practice reaction of passing immediately after a save

Organisation:

- Players are divided in four groups
- One group in each corner
- Two players in front of the other net ready to defend
- Balls in the goal
- Coach can replace the goalkeeper in the other goal if only one goalkeeper is available

Execution:

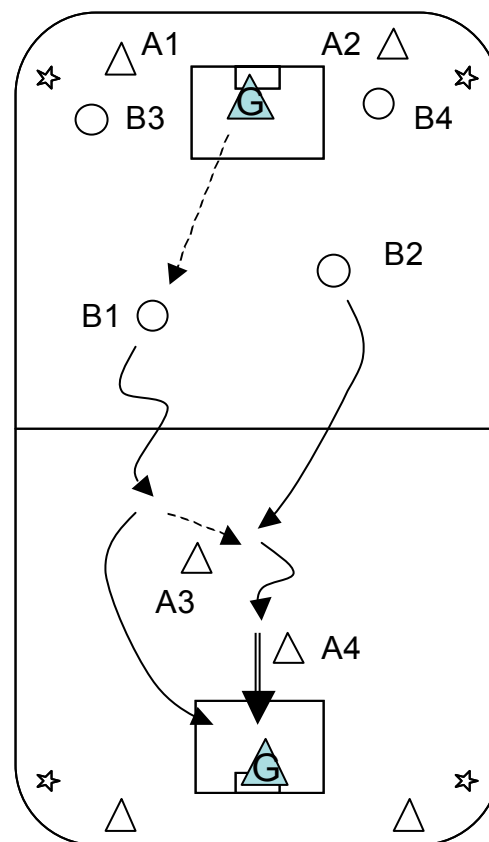
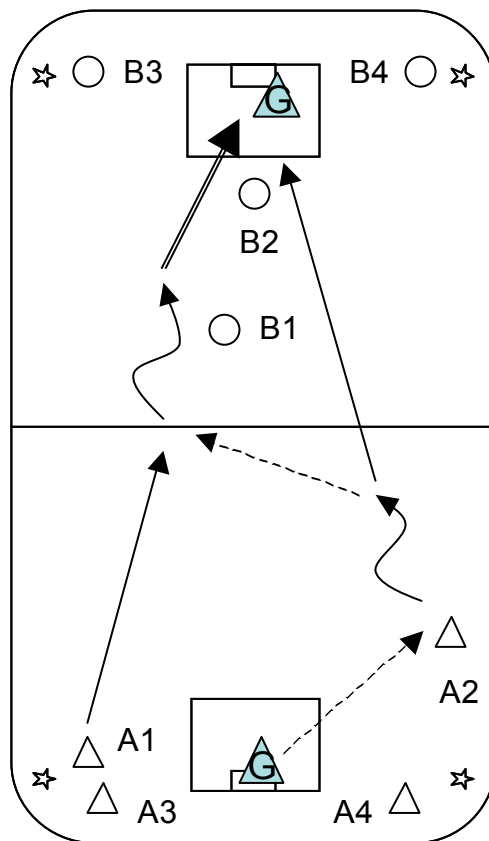
- The first two players (A1 and A2) from the opposite end of the rink where the defenders (B1 and B2) are placed start an attack by receiving a pass from the goalkeeper
- Right after A1 and A2 have started attacking, next ones on the line (A3 and A4) will be ready to defend against B1 and B2
- If the ball is stolen by B1 and B2, they will immediately turn to attack towards the opposite goal using the same ball
- If the ball is saved by the goalkeeper or hit out of boundaries, the goalkeeper will pass another ball to B1 or B2
- After an attack, the players will switch to the other end of the rink

Modifications:

- The drill can be modified to a transition drill from offence to defence when:
- A1 and A2 attack 2 against 0 where after they will turn over to defend against B1 and B2 who have started the attack right after a shot
- In this case the players stay attack and defend the same goal during the whole exercise

Key points:

- The transition phase should be emphasised as well as the readiness to attack
- Fast change of direction
- After interception, or a pass from the goalkeeper, the offensive players should be able to level the attack so that the non ball carrier rushes towards the opponents net while the ball carrier stays a bit lower ready to pass or shoot
- In case the player who intercepted the pass is higher than the non ball carrier, he/she can either advance to a shooting position or pass backwards which is not so recommended because of the risk of losing the ball in more dangerous area (in the middle zone)
- Players should keep awareness of the team mates position



Drill 21

Objective:

- To develop players ability to read the game and outplay the opponent
- To practice quick transition from defence to offence and the readiness to attack
- To increase the amount of options given by increasing the amount of players to three against three
- By decreasing the amount of time, to develop the players ability to make quick decisions

Organisation:

- Players form two (A and B) lines at the middle line near the rink facing their respective goals
- Two players, B1 and B2 in front of their own goal ready to defend
- Balls are in the goal or on top of the goal cage

Execution:

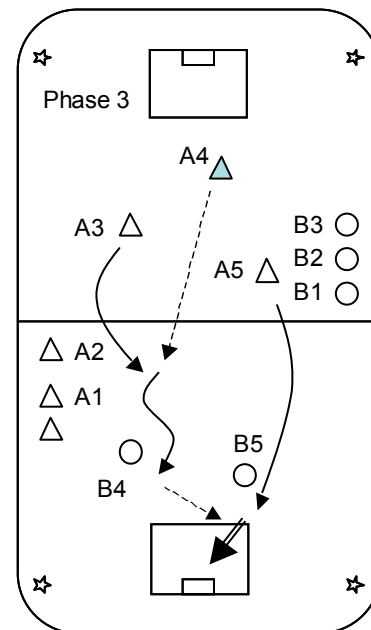
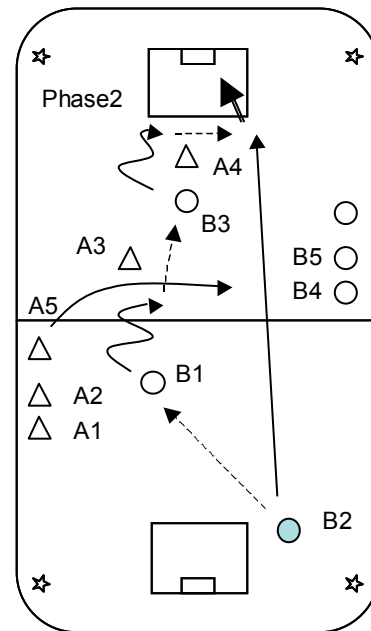
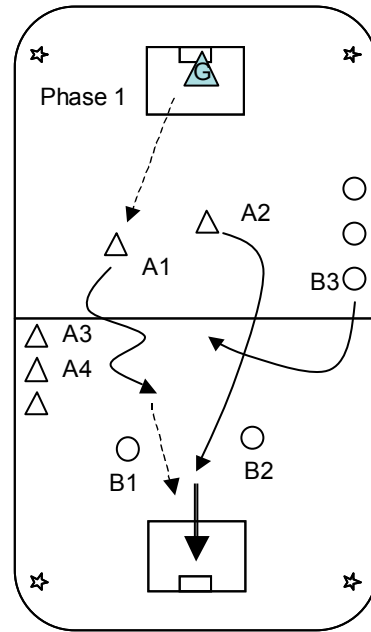
1. First two players in line A, A1 and A2 receives a pass from the goalkeeper and they start an attack against B1 and B2
- as soon as A1 and A2 have passed the middle line, a third defensive player, B3, will back check and the situation is played as a 2 against 3 situation
2. When the ball is saved, hit out of the boundaries or the defensive players, in this case B1, B2 or B3, gets the possession of the ball, they will start an attack towards the other goal
- A3 and A4 have now positioned themselves in front of their own goal to defend the attack
- A1 and A2 join the line
3. As soon as the attackers, A3 or A4, cross the middle line, a back checker, A5, will assist the defenders and if the defenders will get possession of the ball A5 is ready to attack

Modifications:

- The drill can be played as a two against two situation first, to make it more simple for the players to understand
- The third player can be added as soon as the players understand the rotation and the objective of back checking

Key points:

- To back check = When defensive player/s are trying to gain the possession of the ball or giving pressure to the opponent's ball carrier from behind after the ball has passed the highest fore checkers
- The opponent should be outplayed by a fast transition with a power play situation in the offensive zone
- The power play situation is created by the back checker and it should be emphasised that the back checker should really assist in the defence and not just wait for the opening pass
- There are various options players have in each role and they should be encouraged to use their creativity
- The defenders should be ready to defend and they should have the readiness to attack once they gain the possession of the ball
- The back checker should be either ready to receive the opening pass, or be ready to rush to the slot as soon as the defenders get the possession of the ball



Level 3

The main thing to emphasise to the players in transition is that the power play situation created by the interception should be taken advantage of as quickly as possible. The power play situation leaves open space for an attacking team and a scoring chance should always be included in the attack. Transition relies mostly on opponent's mistake so patience is required. The opponent should not have the time to defend and also this unorganized defence should be taken advantaged of. When the ball is intercepted, one forward should be ready to move towards the opponent slot, block the opponent's goalkeeper and shoot in possible rebounds or receive a pass and shoot if possible. If the ball is intercepted by the highest player, he/she can either slow down the game so that the others have time to move forward and then pass, or try to proceed to the scoring sector by playing one against one with the opponent and then shoot. The best option however is that whether there is a possibility to a power play situation (two against one) on the attacking zone the players should take advantage of it and create a passing lane to get the defender and the goalkeeper into a sideway movement. If the defender is able to block both the passing lane and the shot, the ball carrier should try to maintain the possession of the ball and wait for team mate's assistance. All these different actions should be practiced in a game like environment when the moment of transition is not expected by the players.

It plays an important role in which part of the court the interception happens. The best place is obviously closest to the opponent's goal, and the further away from the goal the interception happens, less likely there is a goal scored.

Drill 22

Objective:

- To practice transition phase using all five players
- To practice offensive readiness

Organisation:

- The coach divides the players in two teams or line-ups according to their playing positions
- Players are provided with different coloured vests
- Both teams are spread around the rink passing one ball each team with each other
- It should be made clear which team defends which goal
- The coach should make the objective of the exercise clear to the players already beforehand and then re-enforce the main ideas afterwards

Execution:

- The coach shouts the colour of the attacking team
- The other team defends
- Offensive team attacks once and if the defensive team gets the possession of the ball, they will have one chance to attack
- After these two attacks, players start another round from coaches signal or switch players
- Recovery time if needed

Modifications:

- After the coaches signal, the team with the ball attacks against two players from the defensive team
- In other words there will be 5 against 2 situation created to emphasise the power play and the rest three players leave the rink
- The coach can determine whether the two players staying on the court are the defenders or the two lowest players at the moment of the transition

Key points:

- Main emphasis should be on the transition phase
- The sudden signal for the transition reflects the unpredictable situation in the game environment
- Players should be ready to attack and take advantage of the opponents unorganised defence and the power play situation followed by the transition
- The coach should pay close attention to the moment he/she shouts to start the attack; it should be unpredictable and different zones of the court should be used

Drill 23

Objective:

- To practice quick transition
- To practice finishing attacks
- To get familiar with certain predetermined ways of opening the game in transition
- Continuous drill where the players have to be ready for the next execution

Organisation:

- Players divided by positions, defenders and forwards
- Can also be divided in line-ups with at least 20 players for the drill run smoothly
- Two cones marking an imaginary blue line (both ways about five meters from the middle line)
- Defenders (A1's and B1's) positioned by the imaginary blue line in both ends outside the rink
- Forwards (A2's and B2's) positioned closer to the middle line outside the rink
- **Start of the drill:**
 - Three forwards (B2's) ready to attack
 - Two defenders (A1's) on the other side ready to defend

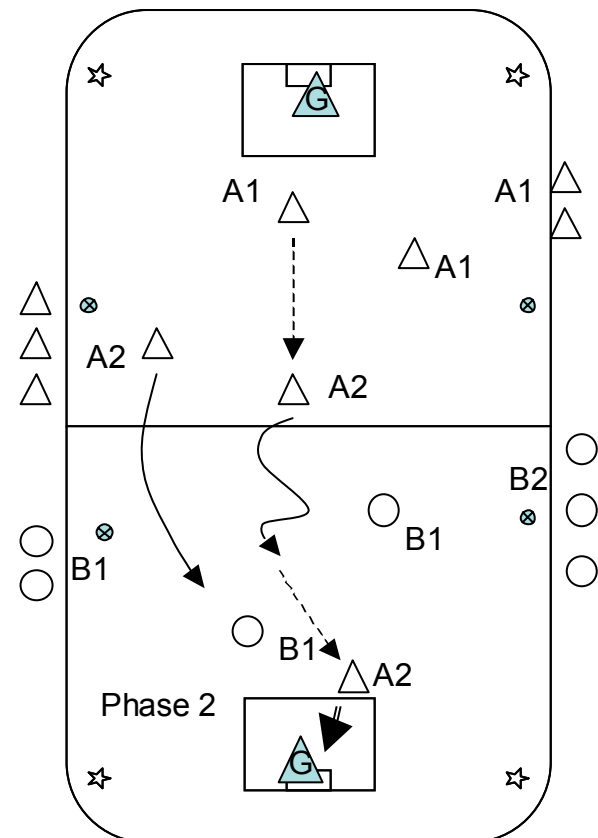
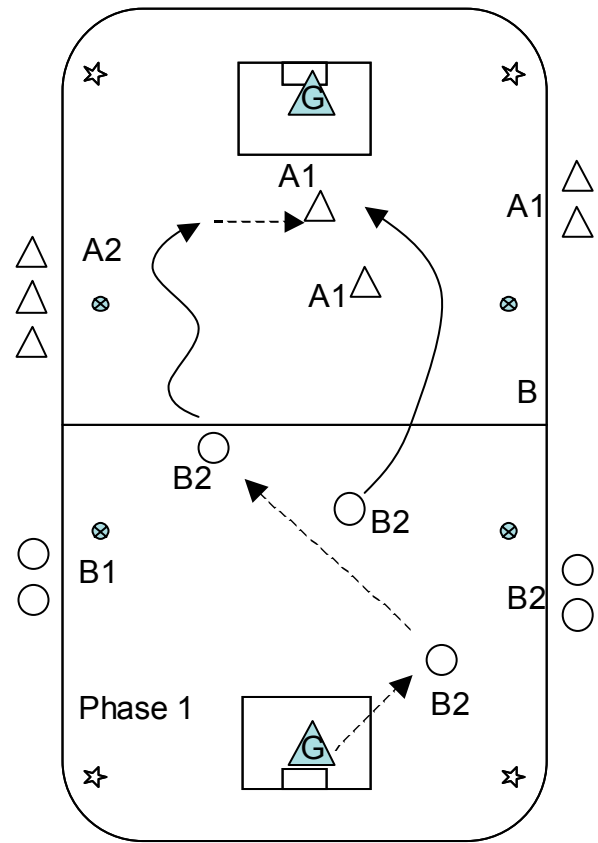
Execution:

- **Phase 1:**
 - The goalkeeper passes the ball to B2's
 - B2's attack against A1's
 - After the ball crosses the imaginary blue line, three forwards (A1's) will back check and assist the defenders (A1's) to get the possession of the ball
- **Phase 2:**
 - When A1's get the possession of the ball they will immediately open up the game by passing to one of A2's
 - A2's will attack against two defenders on the other side (B1's) who have positioned themselves ready in on the other end of the rink
- If the ball is saved by the goalkeeper, a goal is scored or the ball is accidentally hit out of boundaries, the goalkeeper will pass another ball to A2's

- After the execution the positions can either stay the same or rotate so that A1's become A2's and vice versa
- Players should however clear the court quickly in order to avoid failure passes and to be ready for the next execution

Key points:

- The defenders are only defending and then passing the opening; they are not suppose to attack
- The forwards are back checking and then finishing the attack
- The 3 against 2 attack should not be lasting more than couple of seconds
- The objective is to quickly gain a scoring chance, finish the attack and open up the game
- Once the defensive players get the possession of the ball, they should have the possibility to open up the game by passing immediately
- If the goalkeeper has the possession of the ball, he/she should pass the ball to the forwards and preferable to the highest player
- One forward should always go deep to be ready to receive an opening from the goalkeeper, or a defender
- The coach should give some guidelines from where to be positioned in order to receive a pass, for example one forward by the rink and one in the centre
- The forwards should create passing lanes by moving
- The forwards should keep the distances tight to create easy passing lanes except for the one player who should always towards the opponent's goal



Defensive play



Defensive tactics can be divided in three parts: fore checking, defensive zone play and transition from offence to defence. All these parts require discipline and organisation. It demands acknowledging responsibilities and coordination between each individual in the rink to succeed in any defensive action. Also good physical and tactical skills are required for the chosen tactic to work in the most effective way. It is up to the coach to choose the most suitable tactic for the team.

The three main objectives of defensive play are:

1. To prevent the opponent from scoring.
2. To steer the opponent to an area where own team is strongest and the opponent weakest.
3. To regain the possession of the ball and attack.

The ways to achieve these goals are varied and dependent on which part of the court the situation is. The team can either use steering or give pressure to the opponent's ball carrier in order to steal the ball. There are two different tactical systems; zone (space) defence and man (man to man) defence.

Fore Checking (Defensive play in the offensive zone)

Level 1

The most important individual technical skill in defensive play is the posture which should be low. The stick should be used to harass the opponent and block passing lanes. Also the quick change in direction of movement should be practiced to keep up the readiness to move and to attack. Strength is required to win one against one situations, both against a ball carrier and a non-ball carrier. It should be made clear to the players that when the team does not have the ball, each player has the responsibility to defend and play according to the chosen system. So understanding the importance of how to sacrifice oneself can also be included as a basis for a good defence and explaining this to the players should be included on the first level.

These individual technical skills should be included in the drills on the first level:

- Change of direction of movement
- Defensive posture
- Strength (one against one's)
- Using stick to harass the opponent and cut passing lanes

Drill 24

Objective:

- To practice a low, defensive posture
- To practice body control
- Also good warm-up and physical exercises

Organisation:

- Players divided in pairs taking enough space around them
- No sticks needed
- Also goalkeepers should participate

Execution:

- **Knee Catch**
- Players score a point when touching each others knees
- Low posture on toes
- **Shoulder Catch**
- Players score a point when touching each others shoulders
- Fast evasive movement
- **Toe Catch**
- Players score a point when stepping each others toes
- Light steps
- Fast movement on toes
- **Bottom Catch**
- Players score a point when touching each others backside
- Quick turns while facing the opponent
- Coach signals 45 to 60 seconds shifts

Key points:

- Players should be active all the time
- The coaches use of voice is important to keep up the motivation during the execution
- Low posture on toes
- Readiness to move and turn
- No hitting or kicking allowed

Drill 25

Objective:

- To practice ball protection
- To practice low defensive posture
- To practice using body to protect the ball

Organisation:

- Players divided in pairs
- One ball each pair
- No sticks needed

Execution:

- The ball is placed on the ground
- One of the players is protecting the ball using body and the other one is trying to touch it
- The ball is not suppose to be moving
- Coach signals 45 to 60 seconds shifts where after the players will switch

Modifications:

- Also the stick can be used to protect the ball
- In this case the ball is allowed to move but the players should stay inside a small area

Key points:

- Low defensive posture
- Legs wide apart
- The player protecting the ball should rotate in order to keep body between the ball and the opponent

Level 2

After teaching the basic skills to the players, the individual tactical skills should be introduced. In the defensive play on offensive zone the most important individual skills are:

- Blocking passing lanes
- Steering the ball carrier
- Man cover
- Space cover
- Blocking shots
- Doubling (timing)

The aim of fore checking is to control the offensive teams play and make it more difficult for them to open up the game. It can be done by either steering or by giving pressure.

These terms are good to go through with the team before the team tactical issues so that they can internalize the individual tactics before performing them in cooperation with the rest of the line up.

Steering

Steering means to direct the opponent to a certain area of the court. When the opponent is in the wanted area, the defensive team can create pressure by first one player (man to man) forcing the ball carrier either turn back to the court or to loose the control of the ball. Thereafter another player can support by doubling the ball carrier and help to steal the ball. The aim of the defensive team can also be just to keep the opponent in a poor scoring sector (in their defensive zone, by the rink, behind the goal and in the corners).

Pressure

If the ball is lost in the offensive zone, or the defensive team needs to score in order to even the score, they can give pressure to the offensive team. This can be done by one or two, or even three players according to the chosen tactic. The aim is to steal the ball by either creating 1 against 1 situations (man to man defence) or by creating 1 against 2 situations in the offensive zone.

It depends on the player's ability to read the situation and make decision when to steer and when to give pressure. The decision should be made according to the chosen tactic (determined by the coach), the opponent and game situation. Therefore both ways of achieving the objective, to regain the possession of the ball, should be learned.

Drill 26

Objective:

- To practice all the individual tactical skills needed in fore checking

Organisation:

- Players divided in groups of three (or more with substitute players)
- Using small court or half of the court (two goals) as in the picture

Execution:

- Three against three game
- The coach signals for 45-90 second shifts
- With substitute players, players can switch on-the-flow and no shifts needs to be signalled
- Rules according to the fore checking tactic:**
- Man to man defence;** each player has a decided opponent to cover. If their player scores, mandatory execution of push-ups or sit-ups.
- Steering;** when the team gets the possession of the ball, they have to pass backwards once. This gives the defensive team chance and time to reorganise. One player as a top striker keeping the ball carrier in desired area (in the sides)
- Passive fore checking;** the offensive team is not allowed to pass backwards. Therefore the defensive team only has one passing direction to block which also means that they have to stay between the opponent and their own goal.
- Rules in order to practice certain individual tactical skills:**
- Blocking shots;** the offensive team has to shoot after crossing the middle line (marked by cones if played on half of the court) or pass to a player who shoots a one timer. Therefore the defensive team has to be ready to block the shots.
- Blocking passing**

lanes; ball carrier is allowed to have the possession of the ball for 3 seconds (or two touches with the ball) before passing or shooting. Otherwise the coach whistles and the opponent is awarded with a free-hit. This makes it easier for the defensive team to read and block the passing lanes.

- Rules can be defined according to the practiced skill and can be changed after each shift
- Last shift can be played without rules to see whether different rules have influenced the game or whether the players have learned anything
- With younger or less experienced players there is no need to practice more than one or two skills during the same practice to keep the exercise simple

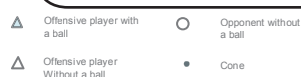
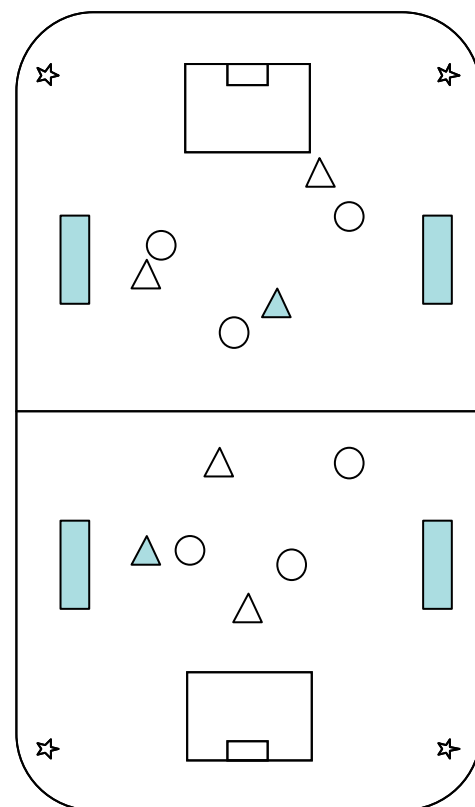
Modifications:

- The coach can come up with more variations according to the skill or tactic that should be developed
- The rules should however be kept simple and the objective should be made clear for the players

Key points:

- The coach should carefully explain the objective of the rule to the players for them to understand the meaning of the game
- If the players do not understand the objective of playing by a certain rule, they might get frustrated and loose motivation (especially with younger players)
- The coach can question the players during and after the exercise to make sure that they have understood the objective
- The players should be able to transfer the objective of the drill to a real game environment

- The players should be constantly encouraged to play according to the rules and the rules should be strictly followed
- In three against three games the situation follows each other fast which makes it difficult for the defensive team to reorganise. This means the players also must react fast which develops the ability to make fast decisions.
- With substitute players, the coach should see that the changes run smoothly and everybody gets to play



Drill 27

Objective:

- To practice doubling (in offensive zone used with high pressure fore checking or when doubling by the boards)
- For the ball carrier to practice ball protection and fakes

Organisation:

- Players divided in half (two equal groups)
- The court divided in half with one group in each end
- Players of each group form two lines on the middle line, each group facing their own goal, defenders (B) and forwards (A)
- Forwards with the balls

Execution:

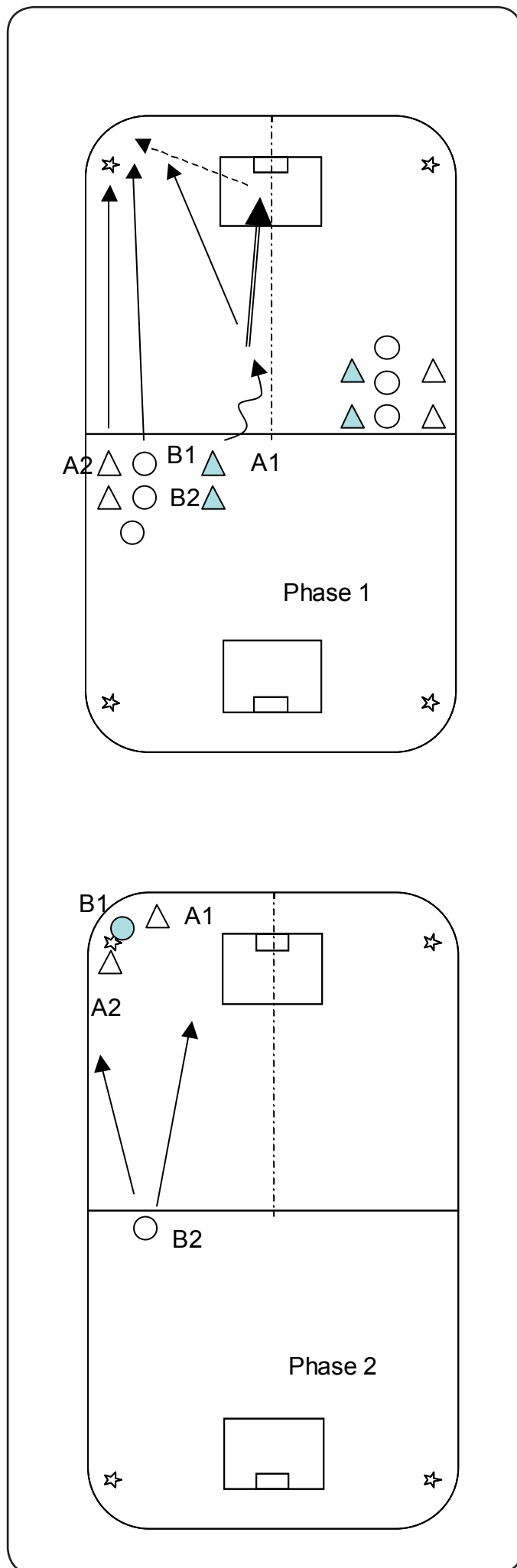
- A1 takes the ball, rushes towards the goal and shoots
- The goalkeeper makes a save and throws the ball into the corner
- B1 goes after the ball and takes possession
- A1 and A2 will double B1 in the corner
- B1 tries to protect the ball and either dribble him/herself out of the corner or pass to B2 who has moved by the rink to assist B1
- B1 and B2 play two against two with A1 and A2 on a small area (quarter of the court)
- The ball carrier has to make a fake before passing to a team mate or shooting which will allow the opponent to double the ball carrier in order to steal the ball
- B1 and B2 defends and tries to carry the ball pass the middle line and A1 and A2 tries to score
- If the defenders succeed to carry the ball pass the middle line or forwards succeed in scoring, the execution ends
- In case there is no solution, the coach will signal after 45 to 60 seconds shift
- After one execution the players will change lines

Modifications:

- Can also be played only as a 2 against 2 game where the ball carrier has to make a fake before passing to a team mate
- Good warm up drill without goalkeepers

Key points:

- The game likeness of the drill should be emphasised
- A1 becomes the highest fore checker after shooting the first shot
- A2 comes to assist A1 in fore checking
- B1 tries to win the 2 against 1 situation by protecting the ball and trying to pass to B2 from a tight space
- B2 tries to receive a pass and carry the ball over the middle line
- If B2 gets the possession of the ball, A1 and A2 should try to back check B2 and regain the possession of the ball (the objective of dribbling the ball pass the middle line)
- If A1 and A2 gets the possession of the ball, B1 and B2 should try to stop them from scoring by doubling the ball carrier, blocking the passing lanes and shots
- Also A1 and A2 have to make a fake before passing or shooting which gives time for B1 and B2 to double the ball carrier (simulates the defensive zone's defence)
- The intensity of doubling; players should be ready to get close to the ball carrier
- Offences, such as hitting the stick or incorrect pushing, should be avoided
- The defenders should be encouraged to make the decision, even with a risk of losing the ball



Level 3

Defence in offensive zone (fore checking) can be divided in two different categories; zone and man to man defence. In zone defence the defensive team's movement is determined by the movement of the ball, where as in man to man defence, the movement is determined by the movement of the opponent's players'. Usually the defensive team tactics is a mixture of the both zone and man to man defence and especially in the defensive zone and in the slot it is very important for each individual player to make the decision when to cover zone and when to cover man. Both of the tactics can be played by steering or by giving pressure but the most important thing is to teach the players the difference between these two tactics and teach them to choose when to steer and when to give pressure according to the situation.

Zone defence

In zone defence the players cover space, which is done by organising the players in certain formation such as 1-2-2, 2-1-2 or 2-2-1 (starting from the offensive, for example 1-2-2 means a top striker, two wingers and two defenders).

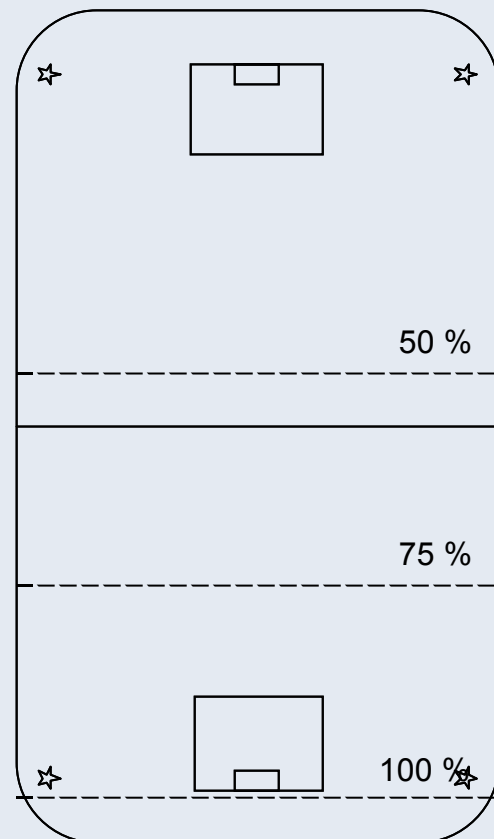
It should be noted that the formations are always starting points for organised defence when the team has time to do so. 1-2-2 can transfer to 2-2-1 or vice versa depending on the situation.

The fore checking ends when the ball passes the highest fore checker where after the defence is referred to defend in the defensive zone. The highest fore checker becomes a back checker.

Level of fore checking

This type of fore checking can be high (100 %), semi high (75 %) or passive (50 %) depending on the level of the intensity. The level indicates the level where the defensive team aims to steal the ball and starts the attack. The higher the transition occurs, the bigger chance there is to score.

The percentage is the level of the highest fore checker and the area between the levels is the optimal zone for interception.



High fore checking (100 %) means creating a strong defensive pressure on the offensive zone in order to regain the possession of the ball immediately after losing it. Another situation when high fore checking is used is when the team needs to score to get even, or against a weaker opponent.

Semi high fore checking (75 %) is used against an equal opponent. If the ball is lost in the offensive zone and the opponent clearly has the ball under control, 75 % is a good level to organise the defence on. From there it is also easy to start giving aggressive pressure again if all the passing lanes are blocked and the opponent does not seem to have the ball under control.

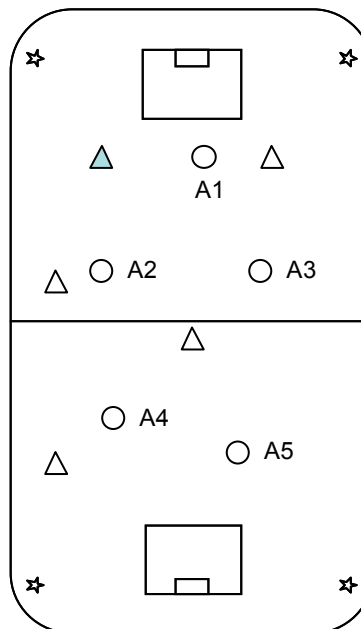
Passive fore checking (50 %) is used against a superior team. The defence is organised in the defensive zone and the aim is to steer the opponent towards the rink, block the passing lanes to the centre and block the shots. The defensive team relies mainly on interceptions to regain the possession of the ball and attack.

The level should vary during the game according to the situation. The players should learn when to give pressure and when to lower down the level of defence. The variation of the intensity level could be determined within the team tactics as well.

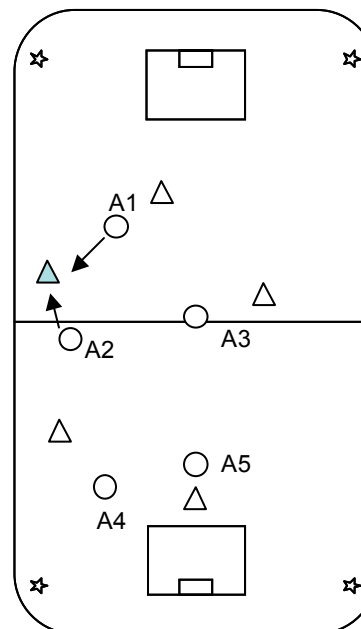
1-2-2

Formation 1-2-2 can be played with steering or by giving pressure. If the aim is to steer, the ball carrier's duty is to cut the opponents play area to half and block the passing lanes to the middle and to the other side. Thus the ball carrier is directed towards areas where the defensive team is strongest or where the offensive team's possibility to score is weakest (picture 1). Usually when the top striker (A1) is directing the ball carrier for example towards the rink on the left side, the left side's winger will lift up to double the ball carrier (picture 2) The weak side's winger (A3) will cover the centre area and stop the ball carrier from passing to their centre forward. The defenders (A4 and A5) will support the fore checking but should stay alert and at least be aware of the opponent's moves on the defensive zone, if not take man cover. Another option would be to double the ball carrier with the strong side's winger (A2) and defender (A4) while the top striker (A1) covers the centre area and the weak side's winger (A3) lowers down to secure the middle area in front of the net. The weak side's defender (A5) will support the doubling by covering the area by the rink (pic 3).

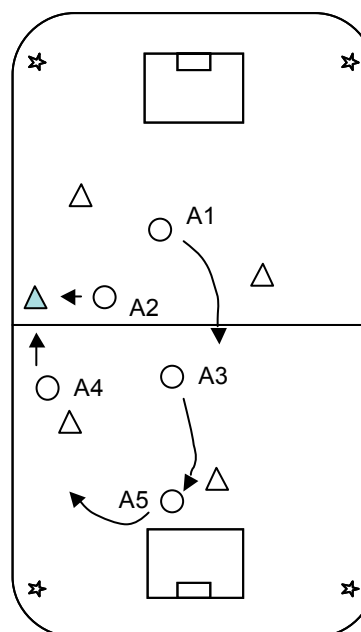
If the aim is to give pressure, the top striker is pressuring the ball carrier, forcing him/her to either turn back against the court or to make a bad pass. This means that the wingers will have to block the passing lanes and keep close distance to the top striker. The defenders also have to support the forwards by keeping ready for a loose ball or a pass. If the team is giving pressure, the level is usually 100 %. The defensive team can also start from 75 % and then lift up the intensity if the ball carrier is insecure with the ball or not able to pass to a team mate. High pressure fore checking can also be performed after the ball is lost in the offensive zone and the aim is to immediately regain the possession of the ball. This decision, when to lower down the defence and when to give pressure, is up to the players to make and is dependent on the game situation and the determined tactic.



Picture 1



Picture 2



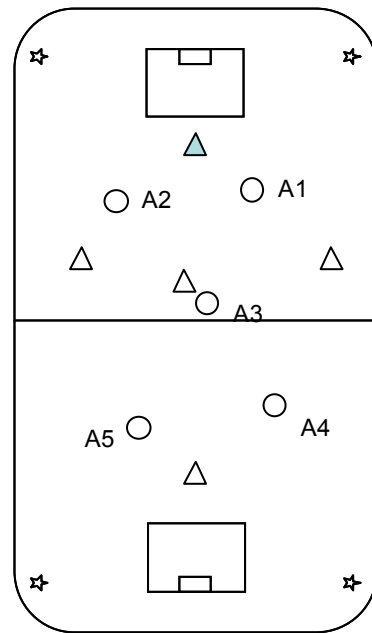
Picture 3

2-1-2

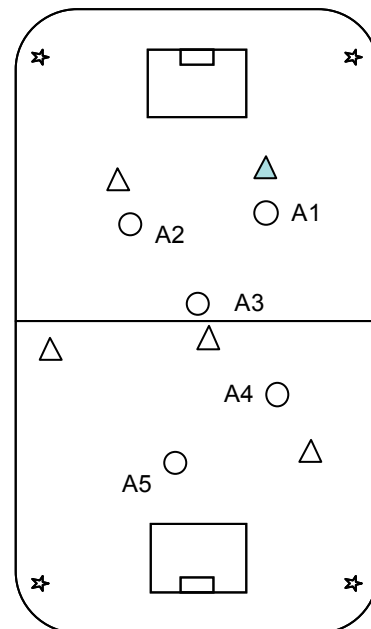
This formation can also be played by steering and by giving pressure. If the aim is to steer the ball carrier, the formation usually transfers to 1-2-2 where the strong sides top checker becomes a top striker and steers the ball carrier towards the weak side. Thereafter the respective side's top checker will assist in doubling if needed. The situation will continue as in formation 1-2-2.

Normally the formation is used to give a more aggressive pressure to the opponent by the two top checkers. The wingers (A1 and A2) are forcing the ball carrier to make a mistake by blocking the passing lanes to the sides (picture 1). The centre forward (A3) is covering the opponent's centre forward on the centre area to block the ball carriers pass to the centre. The offensive team is forced to lower down the other defender to open up the game (picture 2). The ball is moved to the other side which is followed by that side's winger (A1) giving pressure to the ball carrier while the weak side's winger (A2) blocks the passing lane by covering the opponents other defender. The defenders will support the fore checking by levelling. The strong sides defender (A4) will lift towards the ball carrier and the weak side's defender (A5) will secure the slot. The centre forward (A3) will still cover the centre area.

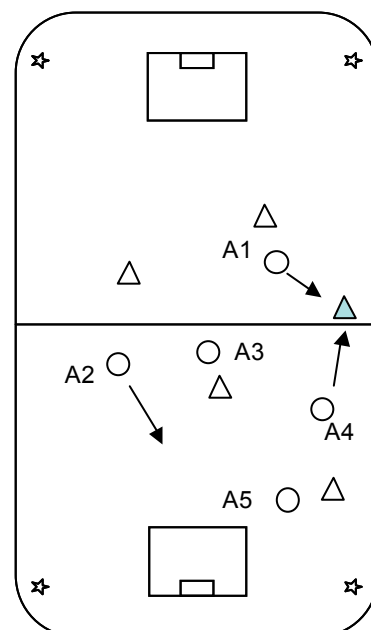
If the ball is passed by the rink (picture 3) that side's winger (A1) will follow the ball. Respective side's defender (A4) will come towards the ball carrier. Centre forward (A3) will block the passing lanes to the middle while the weak side's winger (A2) rushes towards the net to assist in defence. The lowest defender (A5) will cover the highest offensive player.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



2-2-1

Formation 2-2-1 is used either against a weaker opponent or in a game situation when the team is forced to give pressure to the opponent in order to steal the ball and score, for example in a situation when the opponent is leading by one or more goals.

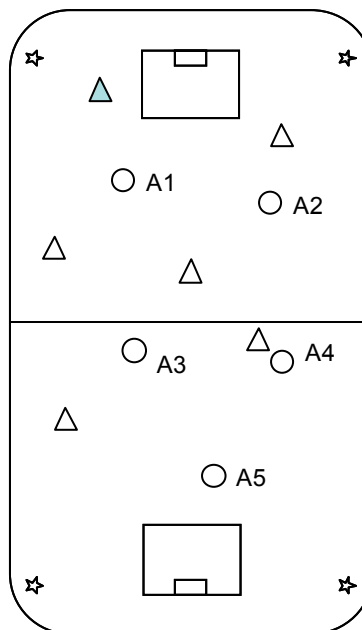
The winger on the strong side of the court (A1) is giving pressure to the ball carrier (picture 1). If the ball is played by the rink (picture 2), the respective side winger (A1) and that side's defensive winger (A3) will give pressure to the ball carrier and double if the ball carrier dribbles. The weak side's winger (A2) will cover the centre and the defensive winger (A4) will support. The lowest player (A5) secures the slot.

All passing lanes to the middle should be blocked but in case the ball is passed to the middle (picture 3) it should be the weak side's defensive winger (A4) who covers the ball carrier. The lowest player (A5) covers the highest offensive player and the other defensive winger (A3) blocks the movement of the offensive player on his/her side. The highest fore checkers (A1 and A2) are cutting the passing lanes to the offensive defenders by man cover.

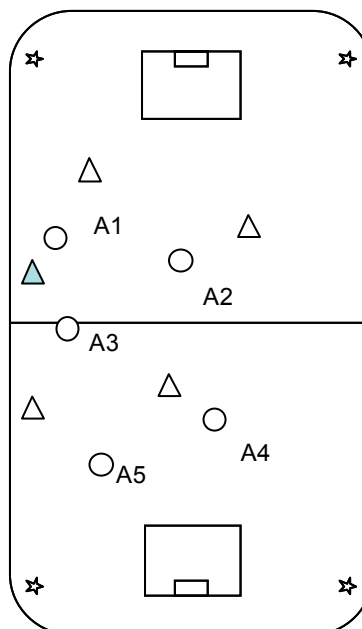
If the aim is to steer, the strong side's winger will direct the ball carrier and the situation continues as in formation 1-2-2. In this case the level of fore checking is higher and the pressure more aggressive. The players in the second level should support the fore checking by keeping close distance to the top checkers as they were giving pressure. They have to keep ready for possible loose ball or a pass in case the top checkers manages to steal the ball. If the ball is played pass the top checkers they have to be ready to slow down the opponent's attack. The lowest player (libero) should secure the defensive zone by first keeping eye contact on the opponent's top striker and then covering him/her close in case the ball is played pass the middle line.

One of the many factors determining the fore checking figure is the way the offensive team is organised. If the opponent is opening with a low triangle, the defensive team usually plays with a top striker. If the opponent is using two defenders in their openings, the recommendation for the defensive team is to use two top fore checkers.

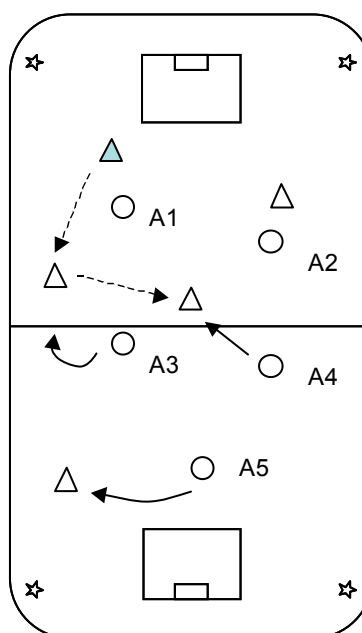
Another affecting factor is the skill level of the opponent. If the opponent is weaker, the defensive pressure should be high and the way to regain the possession of the ball more aggressive. This could also be achieved with man cover. If the opponent is equal or superior, the defensive tactic should be more passive and the opponent should be steered towards the boards. The defensive players should avoid being outplayed by the opponent.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

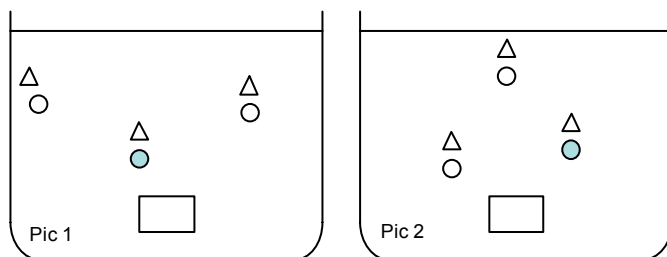
Man to man defence

Other type of defence is man cover, which means that each player has the duty to cover a certain player. Usually the defenders cover the wingers, the centre forward covers the opponent's centre forward and the wingers cover the defenders. Man cover is dependant on the offensive team's moves and against a moving team physically very demanding.

Man cover is however used in combination with zone defence and is highly recommended in certain areas of the rink, especially in the slot. Also if the defensive team aims to give high defensive pressure, the highest fore checkers play man to man to block all the possible passing opportunities and forcing the ball carrier to make a bad decision. The formation naturally depends on the opponents opening figure as shown in the pictures.

The defenders will level and cover space while keeping eye contact on the opponent's forwards.

For a successful man to man defence it is extremely important that the players cover their players close. To switch the player covered with a team mate should only happen under mutual agreement.



Drill 28

Objective:

- To practice zone defence
- To practice different fore checking formations as a unit
- To practice the movement while keeping the formation

Organisation:

- Five players on each side
- The defensive team without sticks (or sticks turned upside down) to emphasise the movement and offensive play and avoiding hitting the stick
- Drill can be started by the offensive team from their corner as a free-hit or the goalkeeper can pass the ball to the corner after a shot from the defensive team

Execution:

- The defensive team will organise themselves according to the chosen tactic
- When sticks are not used, they should try to block the passing lanes only by moving
- The coach can also stop the drill and place the players in right positions in the beginning if the players are not moving correctly
- Different formations should be practiced from different levels (zones of the court)
- The coach can for example determine the percentage from where the fore checking is suppose to happen
- The coach will determine the length of one attack by signalling

Modifications:

- When the players have learned the roles and duties, and are capable to determine which formation to use in which situation, they should be free to do so
- In this case the formation and the level of the fore checking should be decided by the highest fore checker and rest of the team should play accordingly
- The highest fore checker should also use speech to instruct

Key points:

- The offensive team should not be too quick on their actions in the beginning
- It should be made clear to the players which formation is to be practiced especially in the beginning
- In this exercise the objective is mainly to keep the right formation and control the opponents play by moving and covering space, not to steal the ball

Drill 29

Objective:

- To practice zone defence
- To practice fore checking formations as an unit
- To practice levelling of the fore checking formation

Organisation:

- Five players on each side divided by line-ups
- Balls in the goals

Execution:

- The goalkeeper throws the ball to the corner
- The offensive teams player goes after the ball and has to go around the goal cage before starting an attack
- This gives time for the defensive team to position themselves in a fore checking formation
- Whenever the defensive team (the team without the ball) gains the possession of the ball, the ball has to be dribbled around the goal cage before starting an attack
- The coach determines the length of the shifts (45-90 sec)

Modifications:

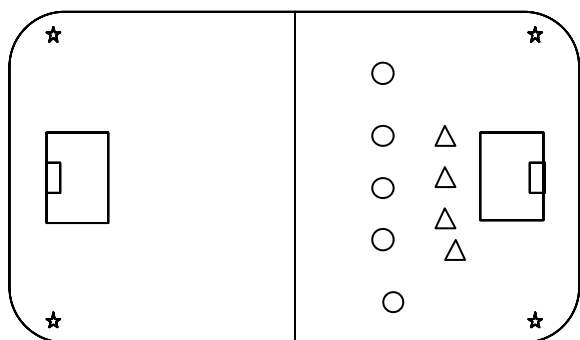
- The drill can also be started so that the teams are lined up so that the offensive team is about five meters from the goal and the defensive team about eight meters from the goal as in picture
- The ball is thrown to the corner by the goalkeeper or the coach where after the teams will position themselves accordingly

Key points:

- The players should be aware which fore checking formation is used
- First the formation used can be determined by the coach but can be decided by the players as they have learned all the basic tactics and are able to play according to the opponents opening formation
- The movement of the players is important
- The highest fore checker/s should be in charge of the intensity and the level of fore checking
- All intensities should be practiced, also high pressure fore checking
- The support of all players; no use of the top striker to give pressure if rest of the team are at distance with no support in case of possible interceptions
- The gaps between players should not get too big
- If the highest fore checkers will gain the possession of the ball but are unable to pass it to anyone, the fore checking is useless

Here are some basic rules to summarize the defensive actions on the offensive zone:

1. Steer the ball carrier towards area where own team is strongest. This way the team has the control over the game even without the ball.
2. Keep the team together. All the players have to participate so that the distances between team mates won't be too far. With high pressure fore checking towards the defender with the ball, the whole team has to give support, otherwise the top striker's work becomes meaningless.
3. Support the top striker. The highest fore checker needs support in case he/she will be outplayed. In directive fore checking, the top striker does not need as much support as in high pressure fore checking because the directive top striker is more angling the ball carrier to a certain area and has no real risk of being outplayed.
4. Don't offend the ball carrier in a way which will lead to a free-hit. That will make you loose the control over the situation and gives the opponent an opportunity to open up the game.
5. Avoid directing the ball carrier behind their goal. This gives the ball carrier a chance to use the goal as a screen and out play the top striker.
6. Think about the technique. The top striker giving pressure to the ball carrier has to have a low centre of gravity, keep moving and keep the blade on the ground all the time in order to harass the opponent.



Defensive play on the defensive zone

Level 1

As soon as the ball has passed the highest defensive player, the defence is referred to defend in the defensive zone. Also passive fore checking happens on the defensive zone, but the difference is that the highest defensive player is still between the ball and the goal.

The objectives of defence should be made clear to the players when introducing defensive tactics. It should also be emphasised that defence consists of cooperation, discipline and willingness to sacrifice oneself. When the players have realized the main idea, it is easier to motivate them to learn the technical skills needed in defensive actions.

The individual technical skills needed in good defence are mostly the same as in defence in offensive zone. The low posture and ability to block passing lanes and shots using both stick and body are crucial when preventing the opponent from scoring. Same drills can be practiced as in the chapter: Fore checking, Level 1.

Level 2

The time and space the opponent has to execute any of offensive actions should be minimized by steering and giving pressure to the ball carrier and covering the non ball carriers.

The most important skills to teach to the players regardless of the chosen tactic are:

- Steering the ball carrier to wanted areas of the court
- Blocking passing lanes and shots
- Covering space in the slot and centre
- Man cover
- Doubling
- Readiness to attack

Defending against the non ball carriers is crucial because usually it is the non ball carriers who are the most dangerous players in the offensive team. After all it is much easier to move without the ball than with the ball. Players should be encouraged to keep eye contact on the opponent and not just stare at the ball which usually happens especially with children and less experienced players.

Also the readiness to attack should be emphasised. When the offensive team loses the ball, it is in its most vulnerable stage. Therefore at least the forwards should have toes pointed towards the opponent's goal in case of interceptions.

Drill 30

Objective:

- To practice the defensive play in 2 against 1 situation
- To practice steering the ball carrier
- To practice blocking passing lanes/man cover

Organisation:

- Players are divided in three lines
- Two lines of forward in the corners and one line of defenders behind the goal with balls
- Two cones near the middle line by the rink

Execution:

- The defender B1 passes a ball to one of the forwards A1 in movement
- B1 moves in front of the goal ready to defend
- A1 with the ball and A2 without a ball will run around the cones and attack against B1
- After the execution the players rotate in clock wise order so that A1 becomes A2, A2 becomes B1 and B1 becomes A1

Modifications:

- The defenders can also line up on the middle spot with the balls
- The defender makes an easy shot towards the goal which the goalkeeper saves and passes to one of the forwards

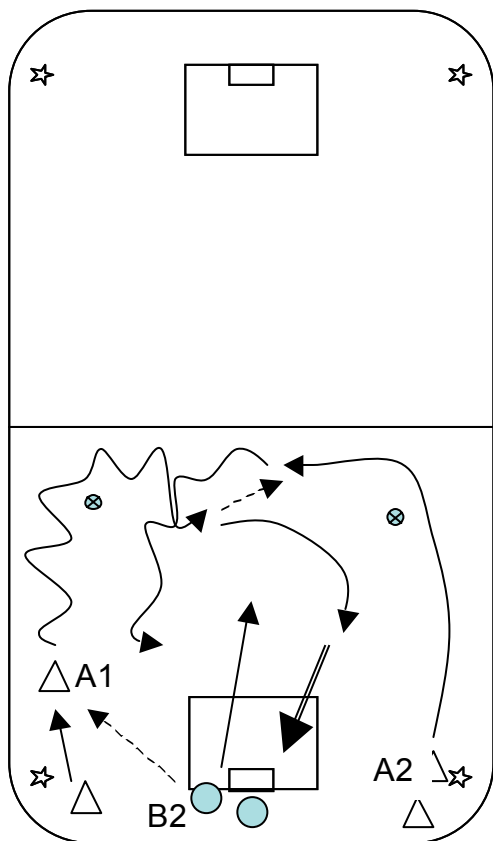
Key points:

- The coach can determine whether the defender should:
- Block the passing lane and stay between the forwards
- Cover the non ball carrier
- Steer the ball carrier to the sides and block the shot
- The most safest way is to block the passing lane and let the goalkeeper take the shot

- If the ball carrier gets near the goal the defender blocks the shot
- Another way is to cover the non ball carrier which is almost the same as previous but it leaves the ball carrier the chance to get into the slot and the defender does not have time to prevent the shot
- The defender can also cover the ball carrier and prevent him/her from passing or shooting by directing the ball carrier to the sides
- For a technically skilful ball carrier it should however be easy to pass the ball to another forward past the defender
- The objectives should be emphasised and the coach should give feedback every time the players are not performing correctly
- Each objective should be performed at a time in the beginning
- After the players have understood the difference of each individual tactic, they can choose one of them according to the situation
- These individual decisions should be transferred to the game as well
- The same principles apply even in situations with more players

Also see drills 26 and 27.

Level 3



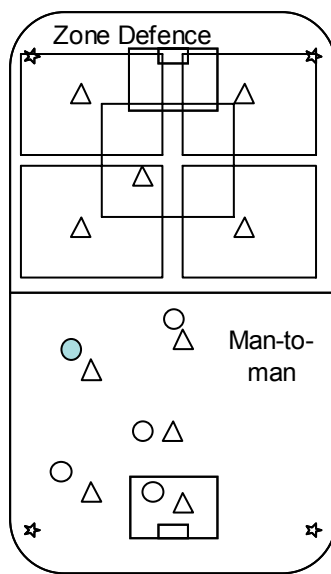
Drill 30

The ways to achieve the objectives of defence in the defensive zone is dependent on the game situation and the skill level of both own team and the opponent. These variables should be taken into consideration when choosing the tactics.

To have an equal and consistent tactic in the defensive zone makes it easier for the players to learn and follow. The players should be able to trust each other and the chosen tactics in order to concentrate on their own responsibilities. Each player should also be aware of team mate's duties regardless of the balls position.

The players should avoid offences which lead to free-hits so that the opponent won't get the chance to turn the play towards the goal. This might happen if the players are trying to steal the ball too aggressively by tackling players or hitting the stick. Better option is to direct the ball carrier towards the rink and prevent the passes and wait for them to make a mistake in order to get the possession of the ball.

Same tactical terms are used as in fore checking. Also the principles of steering and giving pressure are the same, only the distances are shorter. There should be even less time and space given to the opponent to make decision than in the offensive zone.



Zone defence

When players are covering a certain area of the defensive zone, it is called zone defence. This tactic is usually used with formation Dice 5. The defenders are covering the slot and the corners, the centre forward is covering the middle area and the wing forwards are covering respective side's zones below the middle line.

Man-to-man defence

Man-to-man defence is based on each player marking one player to cover. It is physically demanding especially when playing against a moving opponent. The main point is to force the ball carrier to make a mistake by giving pressure to the ball carrier but at the same time to prevent the non ball carriers from receiving the pass.

Dice 5

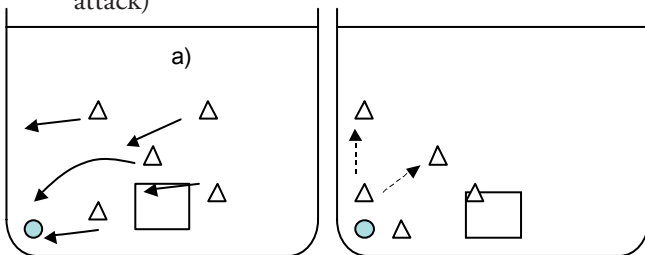
Dice 5 is the most common formation used in defensive zone defence. The middle area is always covered, usually by the centre forward, and when the team is fore checking 2-1-2, the positions are easily found when the team is getting reorganized in the defensive zone.

In passive Dice 5, the team is mostly covering designated areas. The players are steering the ball carrier into less dangerous scoring sectors and waiting for the opponent to make a mistake. In more active Dice 5, the team is aiming to first steer the ball carrier into certain area and then doubling the player. In this case there is one opponent left without cover, but usually it is the weak side's defender.

When the team is doubling:

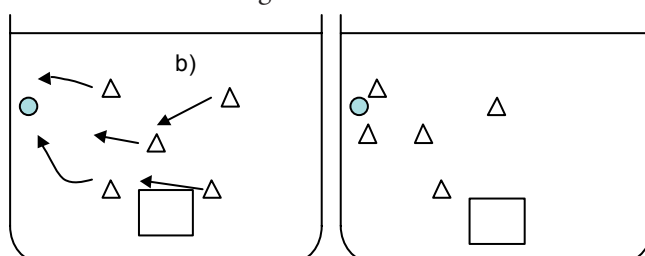
a) in the corners (corner defence)

- strong side's defender is harassing the ball carrier to the corner
- centre forward comes to assist
- weak side's defender covers the slot
- weak sides winger helps covering the slot, ready to attack in case the ball is stolen which will leave the respective sides offensive defender without cover
- strong sides forward moves towards the corner by the rink to create a passing lane in case the ball is stolen and in case of a loose ball (ready to attack)



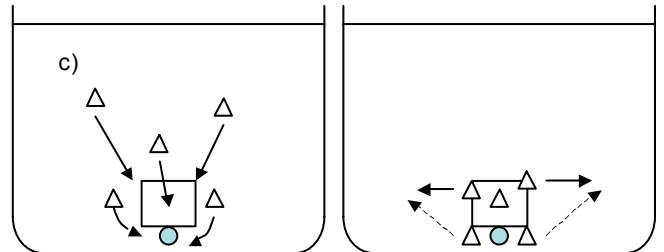
b) by the rink (on the sides)

- strong sides winger directs the ball carrier by the rink
- strong sides defender will move towards the ball carrier to assist in doubling
- centre forward will move closer to create a passing lane or to get the possession in case of loose ball (ready to attack), and to prevent the opponent from passing backwards
- weak sides defender covers the slot and keeps eye contact on the opponent
- weak sides winger moves closer to the ball keeping eye on the offensive defender, blocking possible passing lanes and being ready to attack in case of stealing the ball



c) behind the goal

- defenders will double the ball carrier
- centre forward covers the slot
- wingers move towards the slot covering players and shots also creating passing lanes by the rink in case the ball is stolen
- the doubling has to result in gaining the possession of the ball, otherwise the opponent has a power play situation in the slot
- if doubling fails and the ball is played to the slot the activity of forwards is crucial (covering man, blocking passes and shots, clearing space)



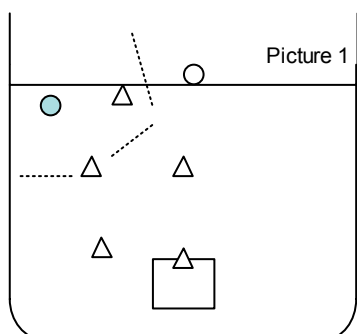
The timing of doubling is very important no matter where the power play situation is created. The ball carrier has to hold the possession of the ball. All passing lanes should be blocked in order for the ball carrier to be forced to dribble, or even better, turn back against the court. Even a small sign of hesitation, such as turning the ball to the backhand side, should trigger the doubling effect. If the ball carrier however has a good opportunity to pass, there is no use of outplaying oneself by giving pressure with two players. Therefore the importance of timing should be emphasised.

After succeeding in stealing the ball, the best option is to pass to create a counter attack. Therefore there should be at least one passing direction near to the situation. These passing direction are marked with arrows in the pictures.

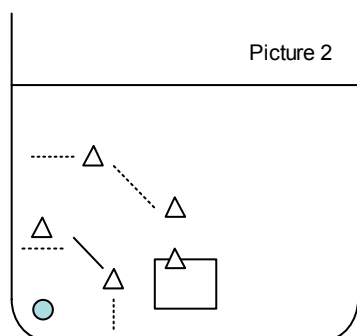
1-2-2

This formation is not so much used in the defensive zone. The risk lies on the empty middle area without coverage from the centre forward. The formation is basically the same as the fore checking figure.

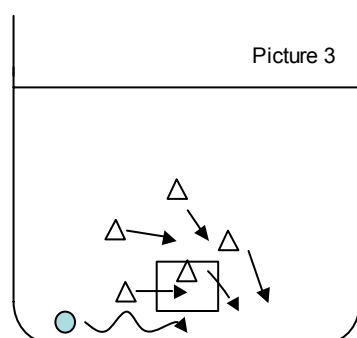
In steering, the top striker directs the ball carrier first to the sides and blocks the passing lane between the opponent's defenders (picture 1). The wingers will block the passing lanes by the rink and to the middle. Strong sides winger directs the ball carrier by blocking the passing lanes to the centre. Weak sides winger directs the ball carrier by blocking the passing lanes to the centre ready for interceptions. The defenders follow the ball carrier in distance to the corners but not behind the goal (picture 2). If the ball carrier is moving behind the goal, the defenders will block the passing lanes to the slot but avoiding collision with the goalkeeper (picture 3). The slot should be strictly covered. The players defending against the non ball carriers should keep awareness of the opponent at all times.



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3

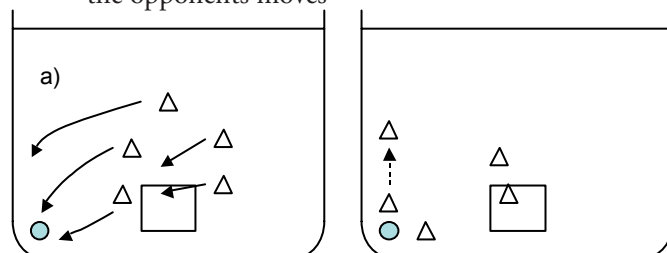
In active play the aim is to steal the ball by creating area power play situations as previous.

When the team is doubling:

- a) in the corners
 - strong sides defender and respective sides winger double the ball carrier
 - top striker moves towards the rink ready to turn to attack in case of a pass, a stolen or a loose ball
 - weak sides defender covers the slot keeping eye

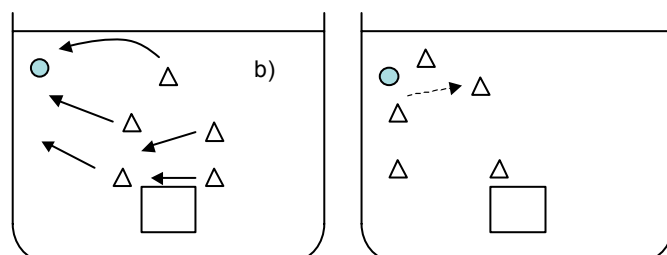
on the opponents' players

- weak sides winger covers the middle area ready to block passing lanes to the centre and to intercept passes and attack
- all defensive players should keep awareness of the opponents moves



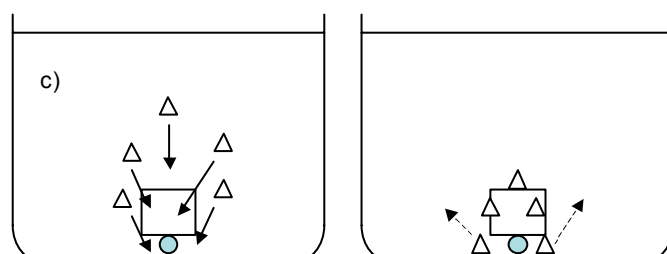
b) by the rink

- top striker directs the ball carrier by the rink
- respective sides winger will move towards the rink and blocking the ball carrier within the rules
- top striker assist in doubling
- weak sides winger covers the middle area ready to turn to attack in case of a pass, a stolen or a loose ball
- weak sides defender covers the slot keeping eye on the opponents' forwards



c) behind the goal

- both defenders double the ball carrier behind the goal
- wingers will cover the slot preventing any passes through the middle and any possible shots if the ball is played in front of the net
- top striker covers the middle area by man cover, blocking passing lanes and being ready to turn to attack in case of a stolen or a loose ball (no passing to the middle area)



The timing of doubling should be emphasised as well as the readiness to attack in case the defensive team gets the possession of the ball.

Other variations

The coach can also come up with own variations how to organise the defence on the defensive zone. As long as the responsibilities that the tactic demands to succeed are clear to the players and the players have learned to play according to the tactic, the defence should be unbeatable.

Drill 31

Objective:

- To practice defensive zones defence in a unit
- To practice different formations and objectives (passive/active)

Organisation:

- The players are divided in line-ups or just groups of five players
- Executed in one end or both ends if enough players and more than one coach
- In the beginning only one line-up in the rink at a time

Execution:

- **Phase 1.**
- Five defensive players on the court positioned according to the chosen tactic
- The coach has the ball by the middle line
- The coach moves with the ball and the players move according to the situation
- All different situations should be covered and options to solve the situations given
- The players should first move without instructions and in case they fail to perform as wanted, the coach gives further instructions
- To emphasise the movement, the players can play without sticks in the beginning
- **Phase 2.**
- Five against five play in one end
- The players are not allowed to run to emphasise the right movement of the defensive team
- The coach should give further instructions in case the players are not making right decisions or moving correctly (according to the tactic)
- If the defensive team gets the possession of the ball, they should return it to the offensive team
- Teams switch when coach signals
- **Phase 3.**
- Five against five play in one end

- Emphasis on certain tactical things determined by the coach
- If the defensive team gets the possession of the ball, they will return it to the offensive team
- After a certain period of time (1-2 minutes), the coach signals and if the defensive team gets the possession of the ball they are allowed to make one counter attack which should end up in a shot
- This emphasises the readiness to attack as well as finishing the attack
- The coach stops the execution with a signal in case there is no interception
- The coach can determine where to start the execution in order to practice doubling: Behind the goal
In the corner

Key points:

- Three phases according to the level of the players
- The coach should determine which tactical issues are emphasised during each execution:
- Active defence by doubling (different areas)
- Passive defence by directing and blocking passing lanes
- Blocking shots etc.
- To motivate players, the objectives should be explained carefully
- The coach should use questioning when instructing players in order to make the players think independently, such as asking the players: "Where should you be if the ball carrier is positioned in the corner?"

Transition from offence to defence

A very dangerous situation is formed when a team loses the ball in the offensive zone and the opponent has the chance to execute a fast counter attack. Therefore the ability to organise the defence quickly after losing ball can be a strength for the team. This has to be explained, and practiced, if the team wants to avoid fast counter attacks. Minimizing the risk of losing the ball is the first thing to emphasise but in case it fails, the two most important things are first to slow down the attack and then to organise the defensive.

Level 1

Players should understand the meaning and objectives of defence when teaching the transition phase. Each player in the court should be aware of the responsibilities they have where after the individual skills can be introduced and developed. The players should be able to change the direction of movement quickly and turn over to defence. Harassing the opponent with stick and body movement should also be practiced. Players should be encouraged to run as fast as possible towards own goal so also speed is needed. These skills can be practiced by coordination runs with and without the stick and with similar drills as in chapters: Fore checking; level 1, and Transition from defence to offence; level 1.

→ Moving without ball

→ Moving with ball

→ Passing

→ Shooting

▲ Offensive player with a ball

○ Opponent without a ball

▲ Offensive player Without a ball

• Cone

Level 2

Individual tactical skills are the same no matter what tactic is used. The main objective is to first slow down the opponents attack by:

- Giving pressure to the ball carrier by the closest player
- Directing ball carrier to a less dangerous area
- Blocking passing lanes especially to the slot and shots
- Covering players and space especially in the slot and the central area

When the player closest to the ball carrier is slowing down the attack, it is up to the rest of the defensive team to organise the defensive figure.

Drill 32

Objective:

- To practice defending against a quick attack
- To practice the individual skills needed in transition to defence

Organisation:

- Players form three lines in the corner
- Two offensive lines and one line of defenders
- Can be executed simultaneously in both corners if enough players
- Cones placed in the centre as in the picture

Execution:

- First ones on the lines; two forwards (A1 and A2) and one defender (B1) will start simultaneously running towards the centre
- They will run around the cones while one of the forwards will receive a pass from the opposite corners second defender (B2) on the line (when executed in both ends, otherwise the coach can be the passer)
- The players will attack 2 against 1 towards the net in the same end of the rink where they left

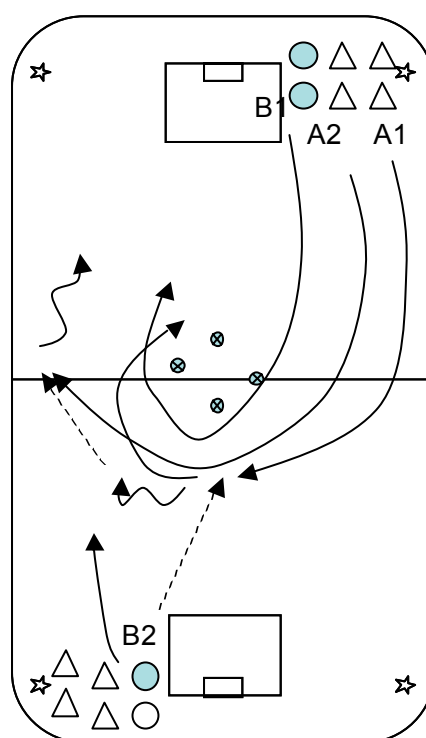
- After the execution the lines will rotate so that A1 becomes A2, A2 becomes B1 and B1 becomes A1

Modifications:

- If executed only in one end, the passer (B2) can become a back checker
- After the pass the passer will assist B1 in the defence
- The lines will rotate so that B1 becomes B2 and B2 becomes A1

Key points:

- The defender should turn around and face the attack
- The defender B1 should make a decision whether to steer the ball carrier and block the passing lane and shot or to cover the non ball carrier
- The main objective however is to slow down the ball carrier and wait for the back checker's support (when the back checker is used)
- The back checker should rush to the net fast as possible to support the defence
- The forwards should be encouraged to use the width of the rink



Drill 33

Objective:

- To practice the individual skills needed in transition from offence to defence
- To practice slowing down the attack

Organisation:

- One line of defenders by the goal (B3)
- One line of forwards by the middle line (A1, A2 and A3)
- Two defenders positioned almost by the middle line ready to defend against B1 and B2

Execution:

- The forwards will start by running towards the middle
- B3 passes to one of the forwards
- B3 will follow the pass and becomes a back checker
- A1, A2 and A3 will attack against B1 and B2
- After the execution the players will rotate so that the defenders become forwards and A1 and A2 become B1 and B2 and A3 becomes B3

Modifications:

- Can also be simplified to a normal 3 against 2 attack

Key points:

- The game situation roles could be revised before the execution in order to remind of the duties in each role
- The situation simulates a counter attack after losing the possession of the ball in the offensive zone
- One of the defenders should steer the ball carrier and the other one should rush to the net to cover space and man in the slot
- Blocking space and shots should be emphasised
- The defenders should be advised to slow down the attack so that the back checker has time to rush and support the defence

Also see drills 19 and 20, modifications.

Level 3

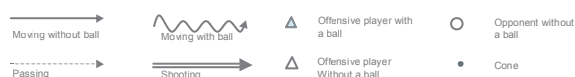
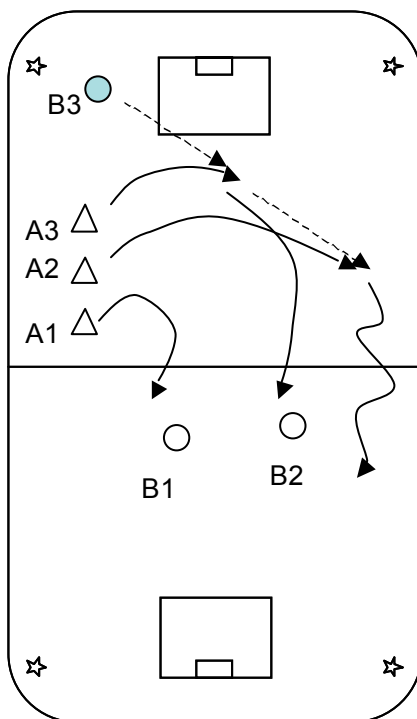
Each player in different position has his/her own duties in the transition phase. These duties are determined by the tactic and should be explained first to the whole team, and then enforced to the players individually.

The place where the ball is lost also determines the responsibilities and options players have.

If the highest player for example loses the ball in the offensive zone, and is not able to immediately regain the possession of the ball, he/she becomes a back checker. If the opponent opens up the play fast by passing, the player should obviously try to block the passing lane. If the ball carrier dribbles, the player should try to slow him/her down in order for the rest of the players to get organised in the defensive formation. The more in the middle the ball is lost, the more dangerous the opponent's attack will become. Therefore the players should be strictly advised to keep the concentration and not lose the ball at least on the defensive or middle zone.

If the player is not sure what to do after losing the ball, the safest action is to rush towards own goal to defend. The defensive players should remain between the ball and own goal.

It is up to the coach which tactic is used in the defensive zone, which will mostly describe the duties and positions of the players.



Drill 34

Objective:

- To practice transition in a unit with all five players
- For the defensive team to practice defending against a power play attack
- For the offensive team to practice fast attack with all five players

Organisation:

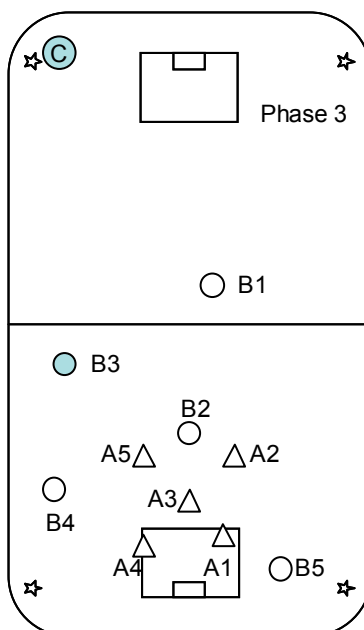
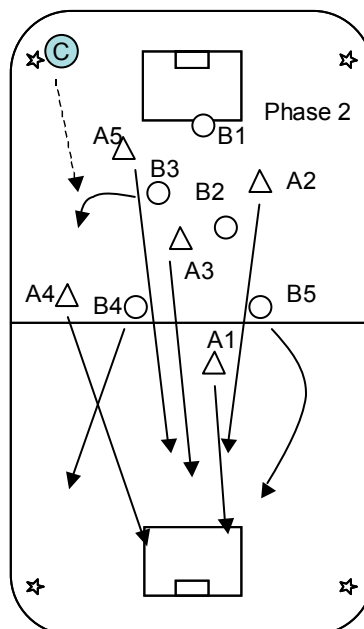
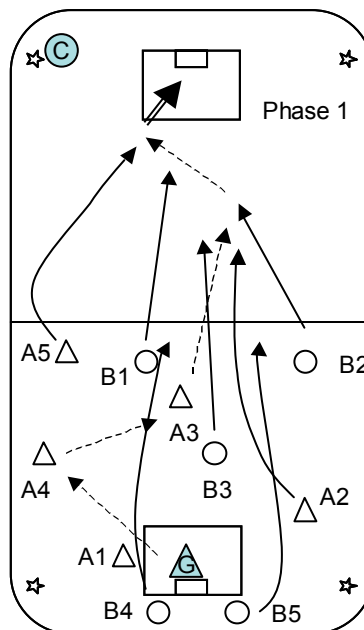
- Five offensive players (A1-5) positioned ready to attack
- Three defensive players (B1-3), from which two are defenders and one is a forward
- Two defensive players (B4 and B5) behind the opponent's goal gage
- Balls in the goal
- A coach (or a player) in the other end of the court with more balls
- The teams can be divided according to players' positions or line-ups or can switch positions (especially in the beginning or if the positions are not determined)

Execution:

- The goalkeeper starts by passing a ball to one of the offensive players
- The offensive team will attack five against three
- The two defensive players, B4 and B5, are supposed to support the defence (back check) after the ball has passed the middle line
- After a goal is scored, the ball is saved by the goalkeeper, ball is shot out of boundaries or the defensive gets the possession of the ball, the coach will pass another ball to the defensive team that will in their turn launch a fast attack five against five
- After the attack the coach will end the execution with a signal

Key points:

- The different game situation roles should be revised
- The player defending against the ball carrier should slow down the ball and steer the player to the sides and block passes and shots
- The players defending against the non ball carriers should cover space and man in the slot by blocking passes and shots
- The defensive players should keep an eye contact also to the offensive non ball carriers and not only look at the ball
- The offensive non ball carriers movement should be followed because they are the one's likely to shoot
- The back checkers should run to the defensive zone as fast as possible to support the attack
- All the defensive players should have the readiness to attack when they get the chance
- The meaning of both defending and attacking with all five players should be emphasised

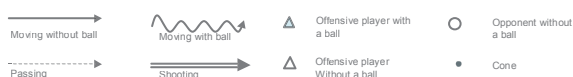


Here are some common rules that should apply in defence against counter attacks:

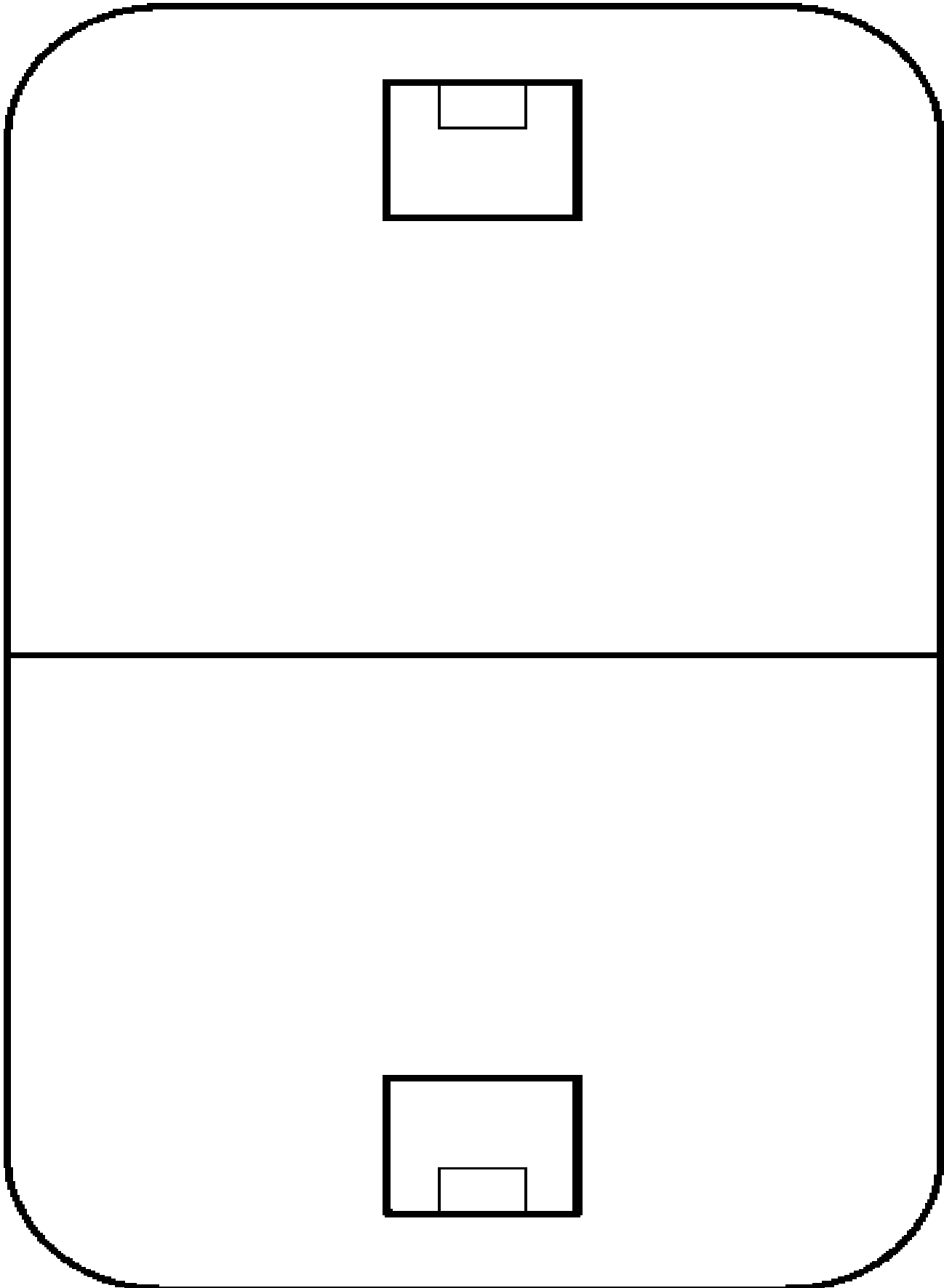
1. Defenders should always head from the centre directing the ball carrier towards the rink. Shots from the sides are far less dangerous and passing alternatives worse than from the centre.
2. Defenders should slow down the opponent by either backing up with the non ball carriers or directing the ball carrier towards the side of the rink. In both cases the defenders are giving time for the other players to organise in defensive formation.
3. In case the opponent has a power play attack, the defensive players should block the passing alternatives while the direct shot is saved by the goalkeeper.
4. The defensive forwards should reach the defensive zone before the opponent to quickly assist the defence by covering space and therefore decreasing the opponents play area.

Conclusion

To perform a working team tactics demands mastering individual tactical skills as well as organized cooperation between the players. The coach is responsible for providing the team such environment that both of these are practiced during each training session. There is not one specific tactic that would be perfect for every team but by teaching the team how to read the game, each tactic can be easily performed and adjusted for every team. By leading the team towards the main goal step by step will make any team perfect.



Floorball COACH





Floorball COACH

