

## Breakout Plays

When a player goes back to break out a puck, his teammates are his number one resource. It is important that his teammates communicate pressure and also make specific calls with regard to the appropriate breakout option to use. Players can make five calls: up, over, wheel, reverse, and rim.

### ■ UP

When D2 calls an "up," D1 knows right away that when he touches the puck his primary option is to turn up the strong side and make a play to the board winger (LW) or center (figure 1.5). D2 has read that the other team is taking away the net or back side, so the best option is to get the puck moving right away up the strong side. C supports low, and RW moves across the ice.

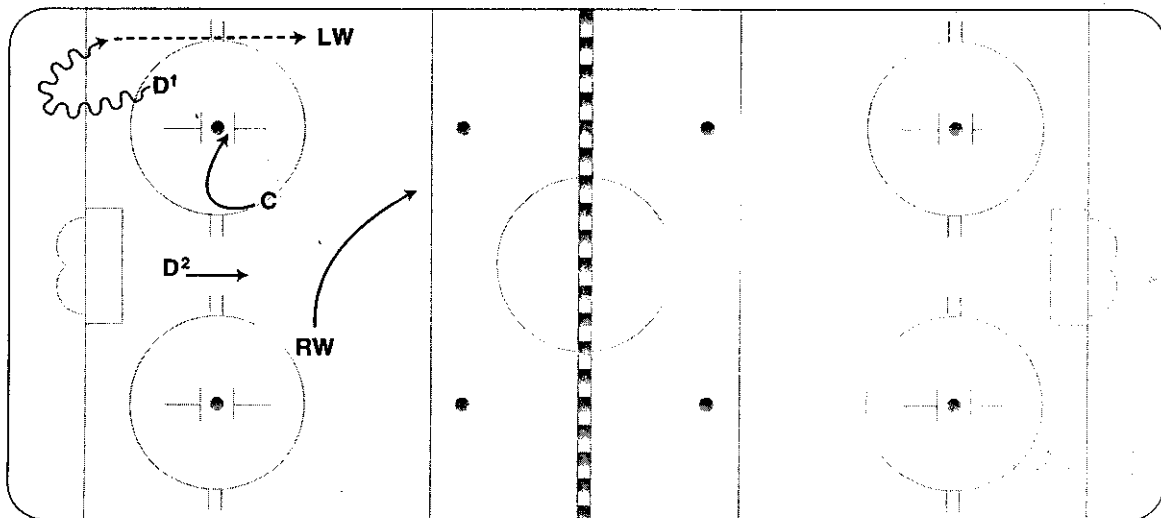


Figure 1.5

## OVER

When D1 picks up the puck, D2 sees that the other team has flooded one side of the ice, so he moves to the opposite corner and calls for an "over" play (figure 1.6). D1 makes a direct pass or banks the puck off the boards to D2. D1 should move the puck quickly and not make the mistake of carrying the pressure toward D2 and then passing. If that were to happen, the forechecker could easily continue through and get on D2—as he receives the pass. C supports low, RW supports the boards, and LW moves across in support.

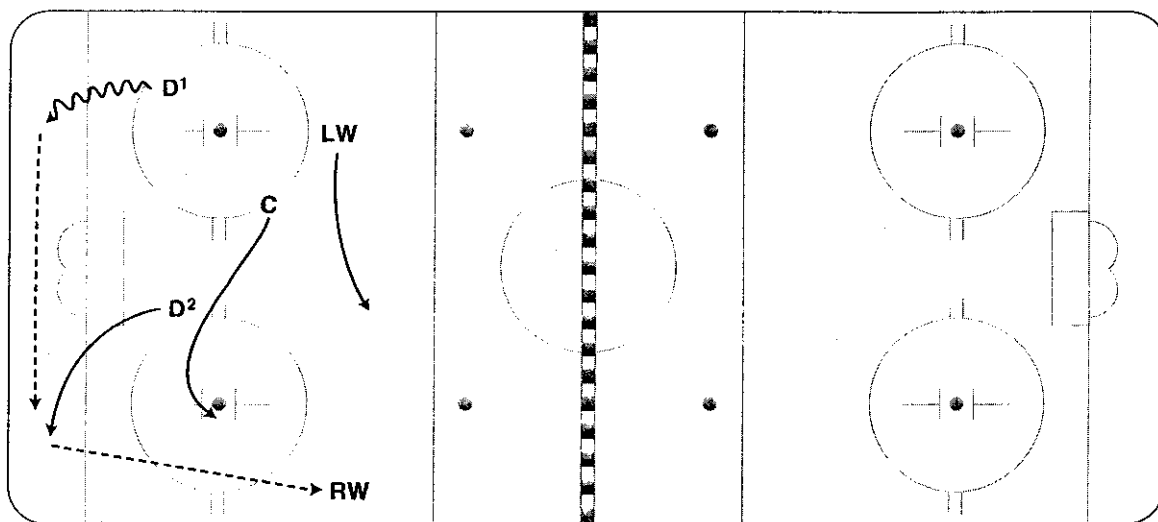


Figure 1.6

## WHEEL

This is where D1 has a step on the forechecker, so D2 calls "wheel" and D1 quickly rounds the net, leaving the forechecker trailing. Use the net as a screen for the forechecker by cutting tight to the net on the wheel. D2 should hold the front of the net until D1 makes a play or skates up ice (figure 1.7). C supports low, LW moves across the ice, while RW provides a boards-pass option.

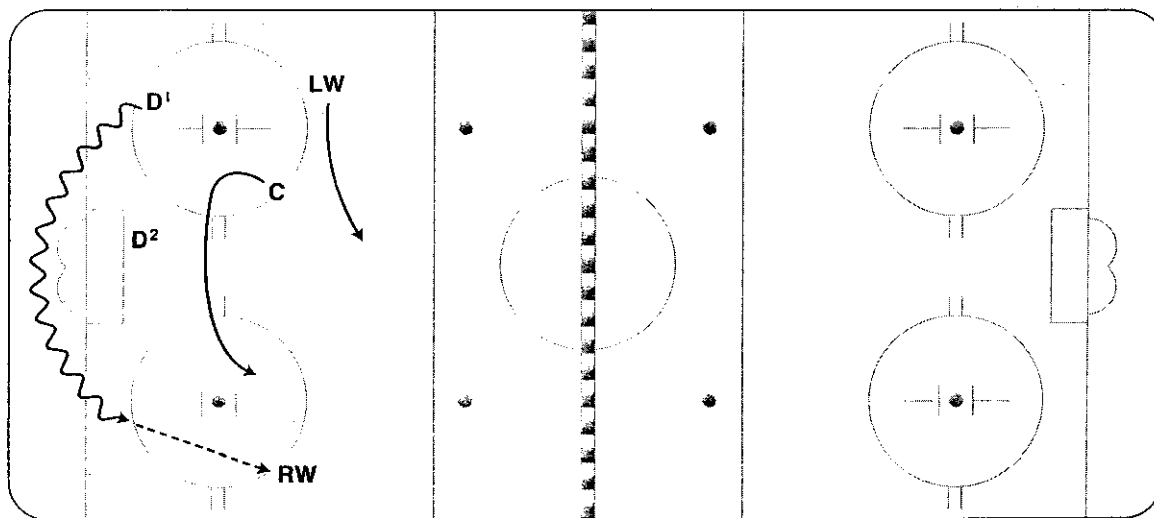


Figure 1.7

## REVERSE

In this situation, D1 picks up the puck and attempts to lose the forechecker by going around the net. D2 sees that the forechecker is right on his partner, so he calls a reverse (figure 1.8). D1 banks the puck off the boards in behind the forechecker to D2. C supports by first moving with D1 and then back low through the slot once the reverse pass is made. LW moves inside and then out to the boards, ready for an outlet pass. RW initially is ready for the up pass from D1, and then when the reverse pass is made, RW moves across the ice to support the break-out. D2 passes to C or LW.

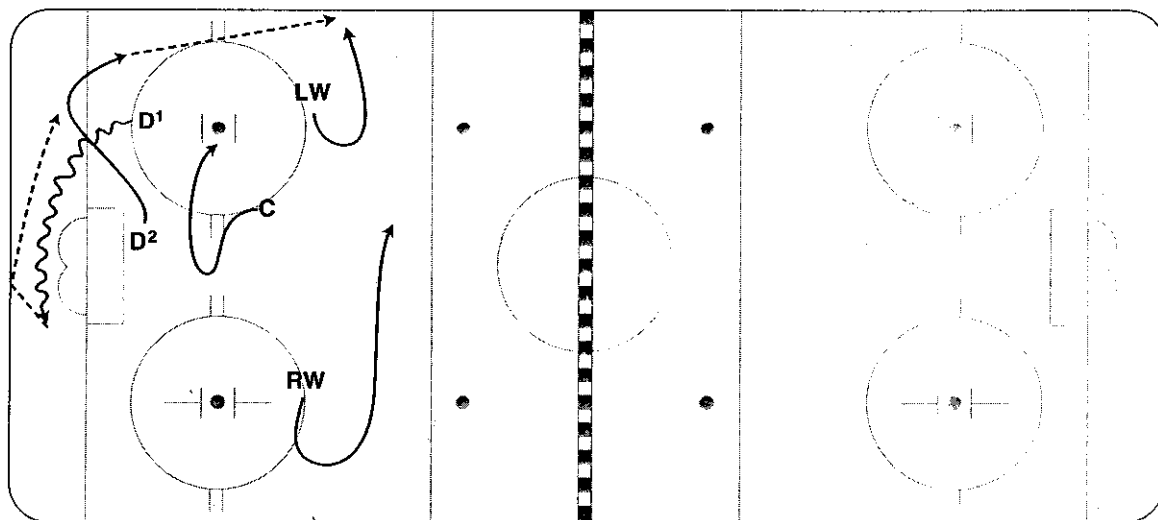


Figure 1.8

Sometimes coaches like the center and the winger to switch on reverse plays, which allows them to maintain speed—teams must make sure the exchange is done quickly so they don't give up defensive position at a time when a turnover may occur. As noted in figure 1.9, when D1 swings behind the net, C moves to support. If D1 reverses the puck, C can continue moving toward the boards, and RW can move to mid-ice to support the reverse pass to D2.

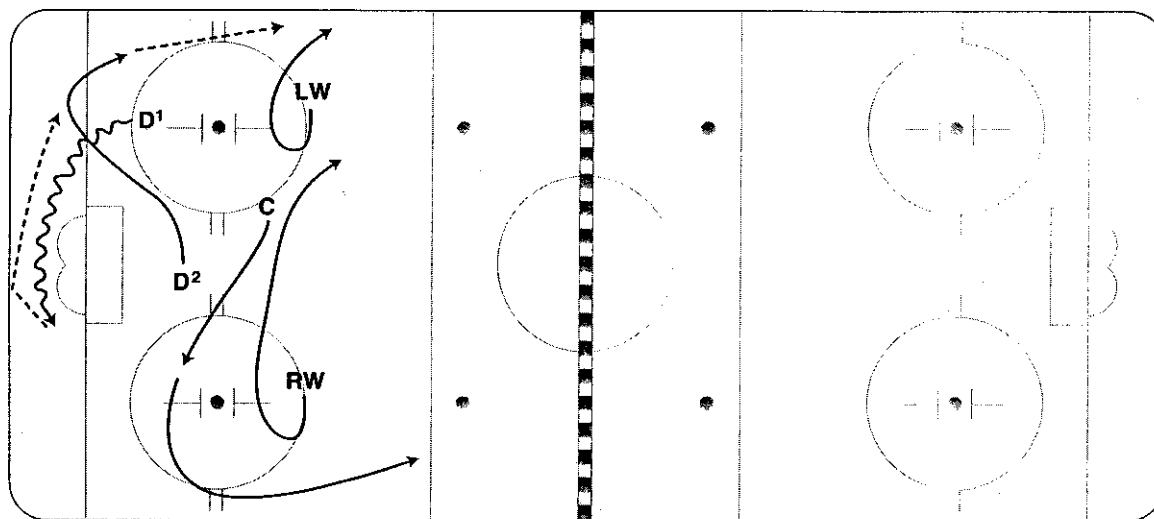


Figure 1.9

The final option for reverse plays is for D1 to reverse the puck to C in the strong-side corner. This allows the breakout team to spread out and makes it difficult for the forecheckers to take away all options. D2 supports the wide side, looking for an over pass, and D1 reverses the puck to C, who should call this option.

## ■ RIM

This option (figure 1.10) is often used when the opposition is forechecking hard and the best choice is to bypass the forecheck by passing the puck hard around the boards. D1 goes back for the puck and quickly rims the puck to RW. C supports from underneath, and LW moves across in support. Against teams who pinch down with their defense on rimmed pucks, the wingers who receive the rim must be able to protect the puck, control it, and then move it to support. In this situation, RW must be able to control the puck and make a play, skate with the puck, or chip it behind the pinching defenseman. As mentioned earlier, the ability to get pucks off the boards under pressure is a skill that also involves a component of toughness—especially if the other team's defensemen pinch down quickly to finish the hit.

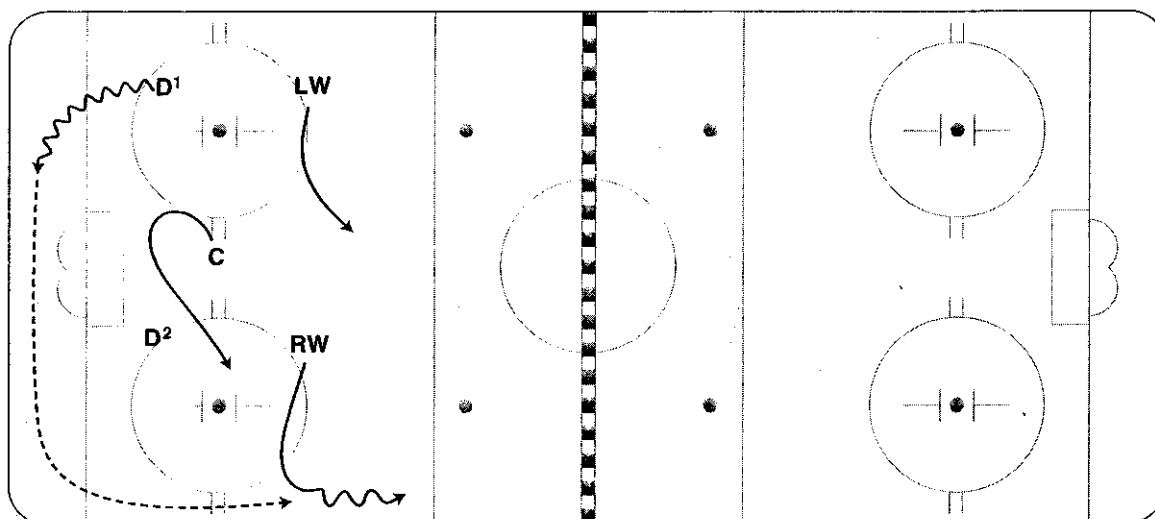


Figure 1.10

## Control Breakouts

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There are times when your team gets the puck and the opposing players have already pulled back into a trap forecheck. They are back toward the neutral zone waiting for the breakout to take place and looking to turn the puck over. Instead of freelancing your way through the trap and many times being unsuccessful, it is better to move out together in a coordinated fashion. This is called a control breakout.

Unless you come out of your zone in a controlled manner with set patterns for the five players, it is too easy for the opponent to create a turnover. There are two key factors in a controlled breakout: (1) the four players without the puck move with speed, and (2) the puck carrier knows the options and picks the best one. In a control setup, the puck carrier is like a quarterback who knows the routes of the receivers and picks which option is open. This section includes diagrams of three control breakouts where the effect of moving in a coordinated fashion will provide you with enough options to break the trap. They are all equally successful, but it is difficult to learn and execute all three, so coaches should pick one and practice it over and over until it becomes automatic. Often when these breakouts are run effectively, they not only result in breaking the trap but also generate a scoring chance.

In all control breakout situations, the idea is to give the defenseman with the puck more options than the opposition can take away. It is up to the defenseman to make the right choice, but the coaching staff must also prepare the team for specific options that may work against certain opponents.

## ■ BLUE-TO-BLUE STRETCH

D1 waits behind the net for C to move back with speed. C swings with speed behind the net. D2 swings into the opposite corner. LW waits at the corner of the close blue line. RW waits at the corner of the far blue line. There are four options available to D1. C can pick up the puck with speed and try to weave his way through the trap or move the puck to LW, RW, or back to D1 and up the other side (figure 1.11a). D1 can allow C to go through and then step out the other side of the net and pass to LW or D2 (figure 1.11b). If D1 passes to D2, the next primary option should be a stretch pass to RW moving across the ice or to LW, who bends his pattern through the center of the ice.

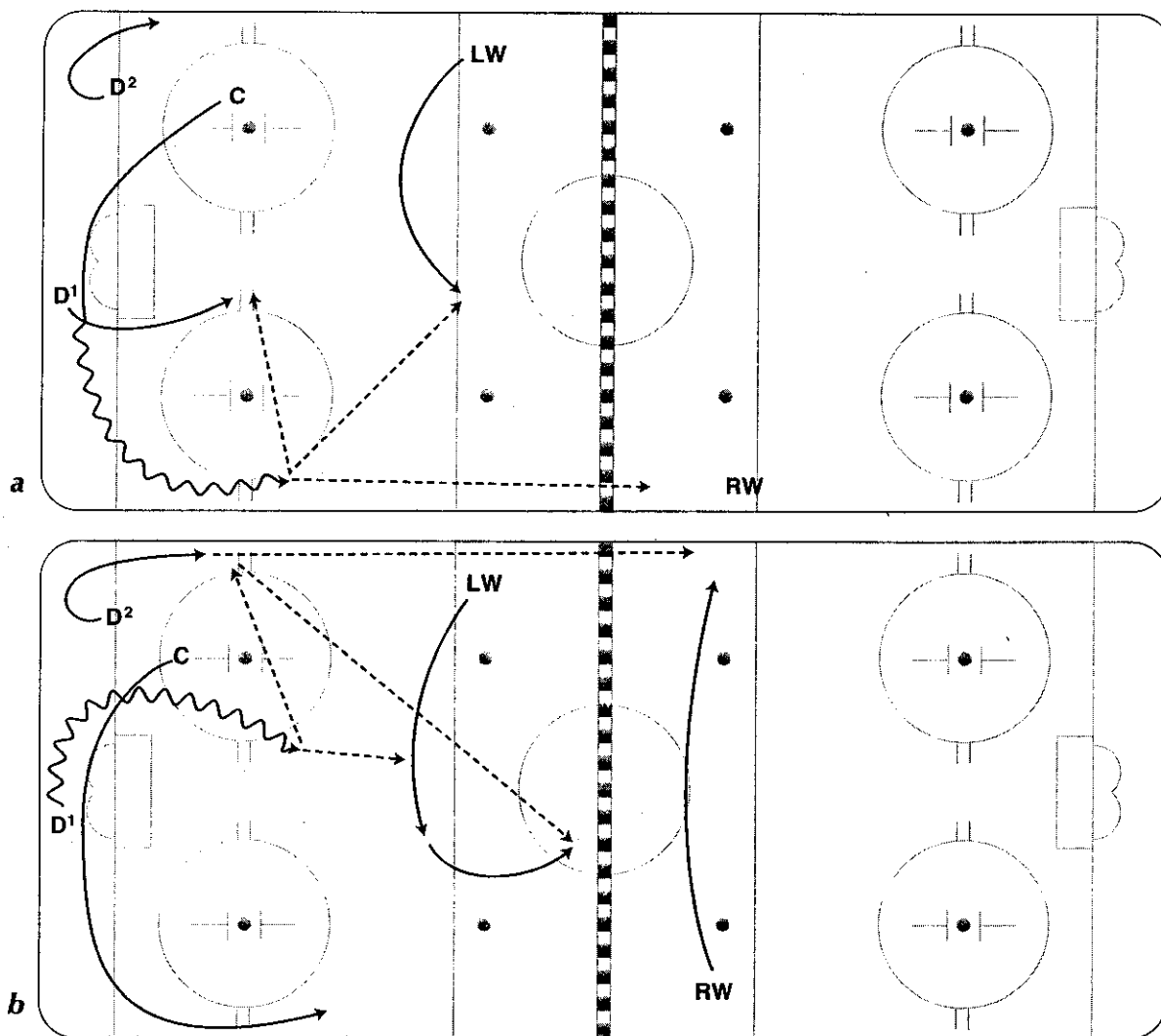


Figure 1.11

### STRONG-SIDE SLANT

D1 waits behind the net for C to swing. C can swing behind the net or into the far corner. RW swings on the same side but a bit higher up than C. LW stations himself at center ice along the boards. D2 waits deep in the corner. D1 now passes to D2, who then has three options as he moves up ice: (1) Pass to LW, who can pass or chip the puck to RW as he slants across mid-ice; (2) pass to RW; (3) pass across to the center on the far side. The key players are RW and C as they move with speed to break through the trap (figure 1.12).

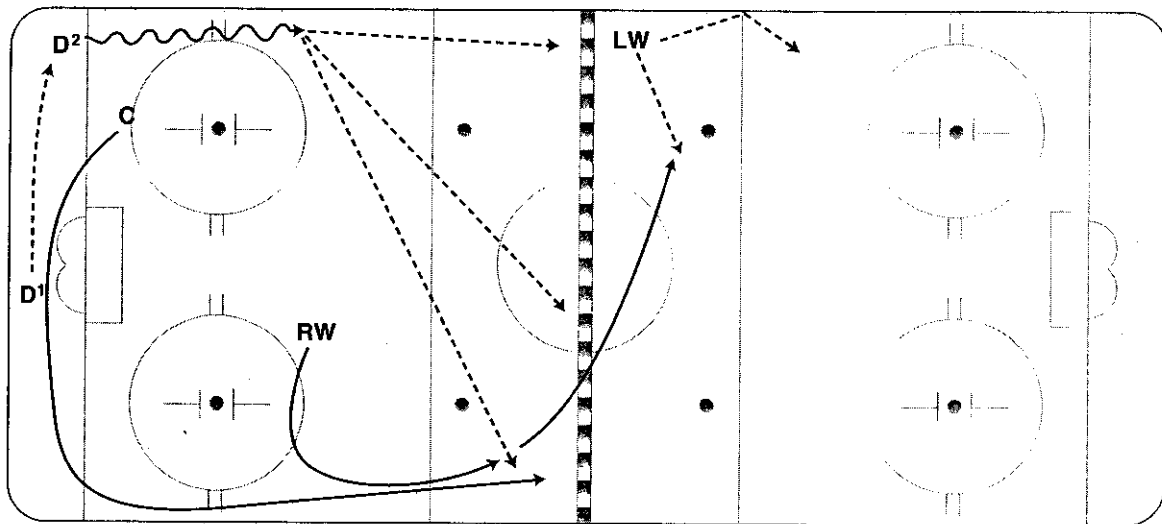


Figure 1.12

### THREE HIGH

D1 waits behind the net for a few seconds. All three forwards stay out high in the neutral zone. D2 supports D1 by moving wide into one of the corners. D1 steps out and passes to C curling in mid-ice or to LW or RW, who are moving or posting up (stationary along the boards by one of the lines). If C is under pressure when he receives the puck, he may chip it by and create a footrace for LW or RW (figure 1.13).

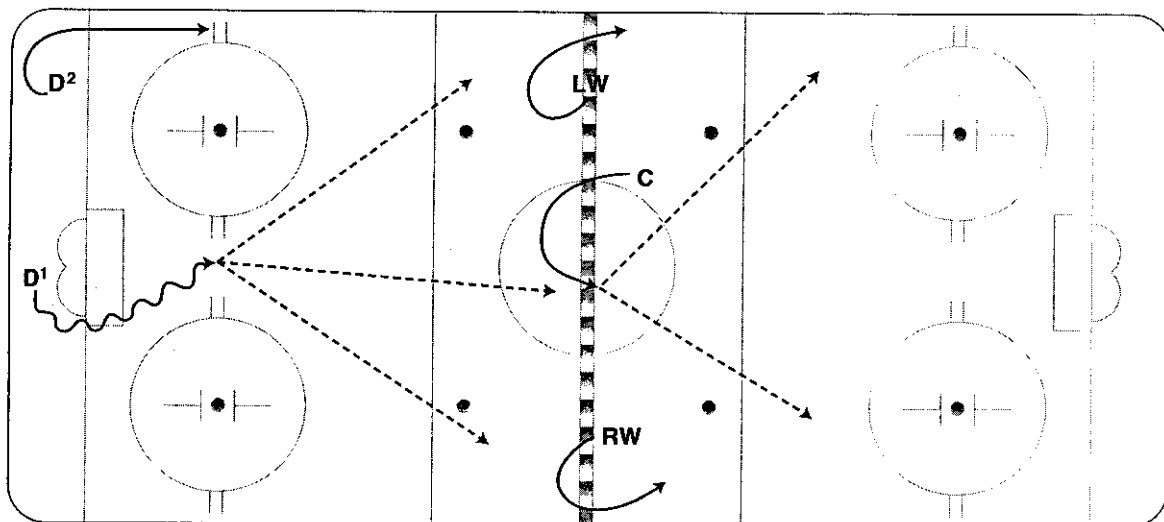


Figure 1.13