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USA Hockey Recertification Program

The Effective Use of the Goaltender in Practice

Lesson Workbook



presented by



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The Effective Use of the Goaltender In Practice

As coaches you will make a connection between what goalies do in a game, how they play and how they practice. The first thing you've got to understand is what the goaltender does at a game before you can decide how to use him at practice. In a game, the goaltender spends very little time making saves. If he plays for an hour and makes 25 saves, he will have spent roughly 25 seconds in the act of making saves. What he does most of the time is prepare for making those saves. He spends a lot of time watching and thinking.

Understanding the Position

1. Time spent making saves vs. preparing for saves

Don't confuse the thinking part of the goalie's game with being too deliberate. Because certainly in a game the goaltender has to be very spontaneous and we all know goalies who think so much that they are a second behind what they should be doing. But goalies should spend a lot of time looking at the play, analyzing what might happen, so when the time comes to make that save we're making it easier, we're in the right place.

2. Finding the puck

A goalkeeper spends a lot of time just trying to find the puck. Bobbing and weaving, looking around, trying to see where the puck is and dealing with the opponent's options.

3. Dealing with opponents' options

Use a computer as an analogy. The goalie looking at the guy with the puck and he's logged in all the guy's options. As the play changes- and the play changes every time the guy moves or your teammates move towards him-the options change. Sometimes they are eliminated, sometimes new options come in, but his mind is working like that.

4. Playing off teammates

A goalie plays off teammates a lot- what they do, how they position themselves, what they might do next. And not only where they are, but who they are-which teammates and what their capabilities are. And I think that's universal. This is true at any level.

5. Following one puck for a long time

Goalies spend a lot of time following one puck—just the ability to stay with that puck while it's being moved around, after it comes off the body, knowing where the puck is. It's a very basic skill. Like the guy that's down and out and somehow, like he has eyes in the back of his head, spins around and makes it look like a spectacular save. A lot of those aren't as spectacular as you think because if a goalie is in a certain position where he can't see the puck and he knows there's an empty net behind him, then he immediately realizes that the one area of risk is over there. So he's just going to spin around and fill that space and somebody shoots it into his arm. How in the world did he see that puck? Well, he didn't see it. Just by process of elimination, if it wasn't there, it must be here.

6. Making decisions

We've all seen goaltenders who are great athletes physically - in great shape. They can do a lot of physical things. But you put them in a situation where they have to think and they are constantly making the wrong decision. A great deal of what we're doing is thinking and then executing and after a goal is scored you might ask, did he get beat because he didn't execute properly or because he made the wrong decision?

7. Two ways of teaching goalies:

- Gather information, make decisions, execute.

The goalie is constantly gathering information that's nothing more than looking, seeing, assessing. And when we say making decisions, you're really making half-decisions. The game isn't that finite. But as you analyze what's out there you'll say to yourself, "If he goes this way, I'm going to do this." Or "if this guy breaks I'm going to throw up two pads." This takes about a second. You scan everything and assessing these options and you're making all these half-decisions and then you execute when they make the first move.

- Before, during, after the "save".

The other way we sometimes describe it is to break down the goalie's task by isolating before the shot, during or at the point of the shot, and what happens after the shot.

Typical Practice

1. Saves, saves, saves...or nothing

In a typical practice, the goalie's chore is reduced to making saves. He gets 200 shots in a typical practice. And the message the goalie gets sometimes is what you give him at practice. If you say it's goalie time and what follows is just this self-defense period where it's nothing but shots, then the message is all you have to do is react well. And they don't get the time in those rapid-fire shooting drills to work on their positioning, their stance and to prepare for those shots. It's been said that we teach our goalies with the **Guilt and Volume Method**. It's where you feel guilty that you haven't done anything with your goalie, so you tell everybody to get a puck and for the next 20 minutes you just shoot on him.

2. Shooters and the goalie

What you'll also see in practice is that there is nothing between the people with the puck and the goalie. As we mentioned, just finding the puck in a game is a chore. And yet at practice, the abundance of the drills make it very easy for the goaltender to see the puck. And there are no options. Usually in practice you describe the drill. It may require a number of passes, but eventually the shot comes from this guy and even the dumbest goalie is going to realize he doesn't have to anticipate the passes, because he knows who is going to finally shoot. So of course you take away the major part of the goalkeeper's work. In the game, he doesn't know who is going to shoot and that indecision changes the whole process.

3. No options

The ability to stay with one puck for a long time during the game is the opposite of staying with many pucks for a short time during practice. Of course, you don't want to do slow drills. You have to keep a pace, doing high tempo drills, etc. You can't mold your practice to just the goalkeeper. But keep in mind that the price of that is the goalie doesn't get a chance to set up between those pucks. He has no incentive to follow the puck after he stops it. He just wants to stop it and move to the next one, then the next one. And goalies can get very sloppy playing that way. Because in the game it's the opposite. In the game it's just one puck and you have to find it and know where it is all the time and stay with it after the shot.

4. Many pucks, each for a short time

We mentioned making decisions. A lot of times the whole practice is reactive for the goaltender. Something happens, the goalie reacts. And that eliminates those times where a goalie can purposely make the first move, feign a move, or force them on with the puck to do something. So they've got to have the chance to work on their decision making and their ability to work under pressure.

5. No decisions; reactions only

In the typical practice, your goaltenders are just not involved when you're talking about team things like penalty killing, power play, breakout, face offs. The goalie is the player in the best position to see. If you have certain rules about where guys are supposed to be. They can make some noise and move people around. A lot of coaches feel that's not goalie stuff. Let them just stay there and stop the puck. They don't need to know all that other stuff. But they can do a lot for the team if you start treating them like hockey player's and not just as goalies.

6. Not included in certain discussions (treated as a goalie, not a hockey player)

We've all heard that you've got to be crazy to be a goalie, and it's great joking material. But it goes beyond joking when you talk to people involved in youth hockey programs and they can't get kids to come out for goalie. It's not very attractive when they start hearing these jokes. Words can hurt individually, and they can also hurt your program, because all of the sudden we've made it very unattractive for them to be there. It seems like they are not included in certain things. And some goalies live up to the reputation-they exclude themselves from the group. In a sense, then, your practice is a reverse of what happens in a game. In a game there is a lot of preparation, indecision, a lot going on in your mind, and then the explosion comes. You watch, you observe, you analyze, you explode. In practice, there is a lot of exploding, physical reaction, and no time to think, no drills that allow you to do that.

Solutions

1. Understand the position

If you as coaches understand the reality of the position a little better, you can drop in some of the drills that make it a little more realistic. You can do drills where there is a deliberate screen, an exaggerated screen, where the whole purpose of that drill is to get them to locate the puck. And get them to do it low. Some kids are standing up high, trying to look over people. An example of a realistic warm-up drill is for players to come out of each corner, they do a give and go, skate to the far blue line and shoot. That's your warm-up, outside, long shot, from an angle. After the guy shoots, instead of sending him to the other corner, tell him to go to the far post and stand there as a rebounder for the next shooter. Because if you don't, the goalie starts the day just kicking shots where ever he wants. He doesn't have to worry about a rebound. So just tell the players, take your shot, go to the far post, if you get a quick rebound then bang it home. But if you don't, go right back in line. You want to create a presence that the goaltender now has to think about what he's doing there. He will now want to control the first shot a little bit better. You're giving him an incentive to play that simple drill in a way that is more realistic and it's not a disruptive change to what you may already be doing.

2. Treat the goalie as another player

If you have meetings, if you use handouts, if you stop a practice to talk about team systems to team concepts, make sure he's listening and he's part of it. And the goalie's part is not just going to the net and stopping it and shooting it the length of the ice, but you need to let the goaltender know, if you're coaching older players, if you have an idea of what power play system the opponent is using, let the goaltender know that before the game. What are the tendencies of the other team? A goalie will want to know these things. On a lot of power plays the goalie can be very helpful if he's aggressive with the stick or in the crease, so he's not giving up that post-to-post goal mouth pass. What does the other team like to do on face-offs? Does the center tie somebody up and somebody comes in off the boards and picks up the puck? The goalie needs to know these things. You've got to treat them just like the other players on the team.

3. Allow for one real drill daily

It makes sense to take ten minutes at the start of every practice or at some point where you want to do things with the rest of your team, where the goalie will know it will be there every day, it's his time. If it's a Monday practice, give them something to work on with their feet. Tuesday they've got to work on something with their gloves. Whatever-feet, gloves, stick, pads. Break things down in four areas. They can do shadow drills, they can pass the puck to each other-but let them know they have a time that is theirs. If you get a goaltender who talks about not being a practice goalie-and you hear that all the time-you've got to make the connection to the kid about what he does at practice and how the rest of the team benefits. Some goalies feel that they can do something less at practice, because they will play better in games. They've got to make the connection that if it's easy to score on them in practice, they're not pushing their teammates to work on their skills to score. Then they get in a game, after beating the goalie at will in practice, and they have trouble putting the puck in the net. They can't figure it out, because everything seems to work okay at practice. It's because the goalie is not working at practice. And if the goalie pushes at practice, it pushes the rest of the team and that shows in the game. It is important that coaches incorporate at least 1 "real" drill for the goalie in each practice.

4. Goalie Days are more than just shots

Another thing to consider is to create a "goalie day" where the focus is on meeting the goalies needs in that particular practice.

5. Set up 10 minute goalie time for them to work alone (with schedule set by days: feet, hands, stick, pads...)

6. Pre-game warm-up

Pre-game warm-ups. The traditional warm-up is to have everybody come in and shoot a puck on the goalie. I don't know why, but it's universally accepted that that's a good warm-up. In a three- to five-minute warm-up, don't just have everybody shoot a puck on the goalie. What good does it do for the guy who gets the two or three shots? And what good is it for the goalie when some of them miss the net, some of them go right into him, and some he may have to move and stretch and touch the puck?

If you've got a short warm-up, skate them a little bit, send them to the goal, have one kid with the pucks, slide pucks. Or maybe two kids, have one guy in deep, have one slide it and have them go up and down. Some goalies are worried about looking bad at warm-ups so they cut the angle down so they don't get beat, which is not the purpose of the warm-up. Tell the goalie to stay back on the goal line so he has to move, and then maybe gradually start to move out and work on that. But when you get in the game, the first shift, he's looking, he's down, he's up, he's poking, diving. Nothing that he did in warm-up prepares him for that. So don't do a warm-up, because everybody is doing it that way, particularly with the goaltender.

Five Ideas to improve your Goaltender

Why five ideas?

- Hockey goalies are the single most important position in all of team sports.
- Many coaches are uncomfortable working with their goalies.
- We have all been to clinics and listened to great discussions regarding the technical aspects of goaltending, hopefully this discussion will give you some concrete practical applications.

1. Skating

"Skating is the key. Goalies must be able to move in all directions, as quickly as possible, to react/recover and make an abrupt, balanced transition from one move to another, while staying in their stance ready to make a save." Mitch Korn

- The single most important skill for playing goal.
- Work on your goalies skating every day.
- Your goalie must move while maintaining a good "ready position", minimizing any holes.
- Concentrate on quality repetitions to create proper muscle memory.

2. Positioning

"When I am on my game, I only need to move an inch in either direction to make a save. If you see me making spectacular saves I am struggling with my game." Bernie Parent

- A well-positioned goalie has the most likely chance to be hit by a shot.
- You want your goalie to be centered, square, and out on the angle.
- You must be constantly aware of your goalies positioning during games and practices.

3. Make your Practices "Goalie Friendly"

"Skill as it pertains to basketball, is the knowledge and the ability to quickly and properly to execute the fundamentals. Being able to do them is not enough. They must be done quickly. And being able to do them quickly isn't enough either. They must be done quickly and precisely at the right time. You must learn in practice to react properly, almost instinctively." John Wooden

- A proper warm-up is important.
- Make shooting drills as game like as possible. Provide traffic, rebound opportunities, shooters under pressure with options, and competition.
- Your whole team will benefit from practicing in this manner.

4. Help your Goalie evaluate his Performance

"Experience is a cruel teacher, it gives you the test first and the lesson after."

- Goals against often offer great lessons, take advantage of them.
- Develop measurable standards or goals for each game.
- Encourage an honest dialogue to get your goalie thinking about and questioning his thought process.
- Analyze situations that arose in the game, what did the goalie see, what if anything might he have done differently?

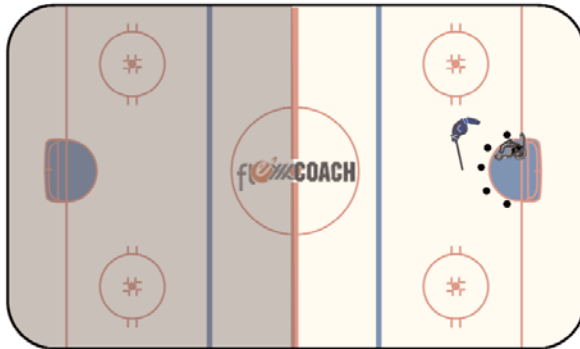
5. Develop a Work Ethic

"How does a goalie go about gaining confidence? There is only one way. And that is from working hard; hard enough to realize you are giving maximum effort and can't be expected to give more. If you cheat on yourself, if you are giving less than your best, you know it. And with this knowledge, it is very difficult to feel confident. There are no short cuts. No magic." Joe Bertagna

- Goaltenders work ethic is often overlooked, many times coaches allow their goalies to be lazy.
- Demand consistency in terms of effort.
- Your goalie must be the team leader in setting the work standards for the team.
- By competing hard for every shot, your goalie challenges his teammates to be better every day.

Drills

Five Puck Goalie Skate



Objective

- Control skating in the crease, centering on puck

Place five pucks in an arc just outside the crease. Goalie skates in the arc stopping and centering on each puck, using a controlled shuffle skate, for about 20 seconds. On coaches whistle the goalie now skates from one puck to the other, using a t-glide. The coach decides which puck the goalie moves to always changing the goalies course, always stopping to be centered and square on the puck.

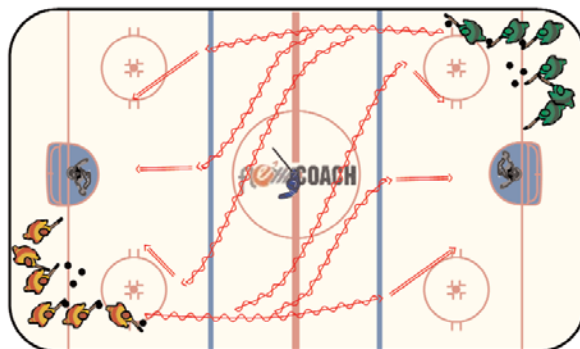
Key Elements

- Shuffle Skate
- T-glide
- Body Control
- Transition Skating

Variations

- At the end of 20 seconds the goalie starts at one post and comes out to poke check the pucks one at a time returning to the post each time until all but one puck remains on the final puck the goalie must cover the puck for whistle.

Wave Shooting Warm up



Objective

- Goalie warm up with shots from different angles

Players in diagonal corners with pucks. On coaches whistle three players leave from each corner. The first player skates up boards and takes a long angle shot. The second player skates up the boards and at center ice cuts to the middle and takes a long shot from the middle. The third player skates up boards at center cuts across ice and takes shot from far angle.

Key Elements

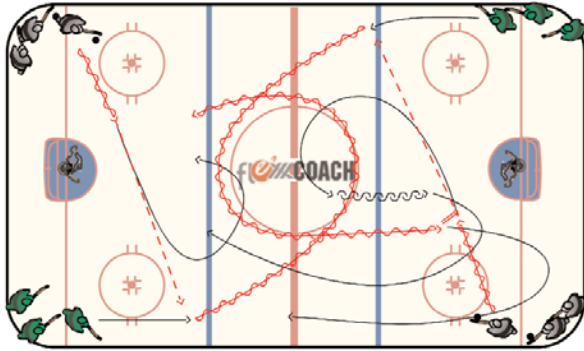
- Long Warm up Shots
- Changing Angles
- High Volume of Shots

Goalie

- Good drill for getting the feel of the puck and rink awareness in terms of angles.

Drills

2 on 2 Read the Rush



Objective

- Reading the rush

2 lines of forwards in diagonal corners of rink and 2 lines of defensemen in the opposite diagonal corners of the rink. On whistle, one end starts by the defenseman skating towards middle of ice and passing to forward skating up boards. Forward skates around center circle and comes back against defenseman 1 on 1. On next whistle, other end begins same sequence. At same time, the defenseman who just played the 1 on 1 tries to join the rush and make a play with forward from the opposite end. The original forward has to backcheck. The drill is continuous with whistle starting the alternate end.

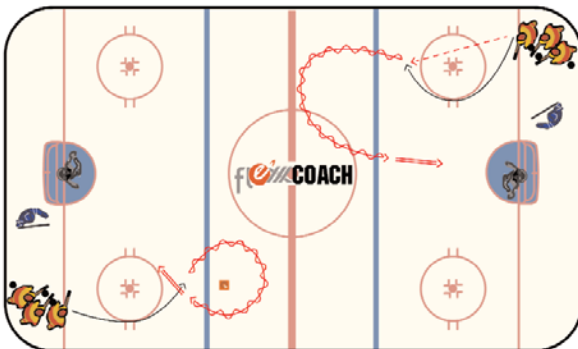
Key Elements

- Defensive Awareness
- Communication
- Offensive Awareness
- Reading the Rush
- Gap Control

Goalie

- Situational awareness; communicate with the defenseman

Variation Outside Shot (C Skate Shooting Warm up)



Objective

- Warm up shot from middle angle

Pucks and players in all four corners. x1 leaves line and skates around the face off circle as shown at the top of the circle he receives pass from the next in line and then circles back the other way into center ice. He then comes down the middle taking a warm up shot on the goalie.

Key Elements

- Skaters turning on to both sides
- Creating proper passing angle
- Controlled shots from middle
- Encourage shots off a move

Variations

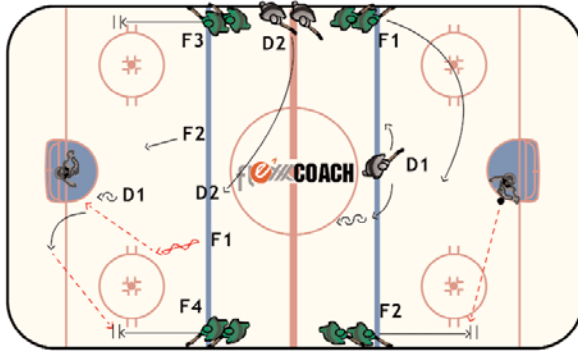
- Players start skating from the boards to the middle of the ice and receive the puck from the next player in line, skating up thru the middle of the ice around a cone placed between the faceoff dot and the red line in the neutral zone, skating down the outside for an angle shot on goal.

Goalie

- Follow player thru center ice, get feel for the puck and mid ice positioning

Drills

One Puck Game Simulation - 2 on 1 (One Puck Continuous Drill 2 on 1)



Objective

- Game Simulation 2 on 1, 3 on 1

Four even groups of forwards positioned at the bluelines, one defenseman starts at one blueline. The goalie starts with a puck on the whistle two forwards at the same end on the blueline as the defenseman skate into position on the half boards to receive the outlet pass from the goalie. The two forwards attack the defenseman 2 on 1 down the ice to the other end as they enter the zone the two forwards at this blue line skate into position along with the next defenseman that will play the following 2 on 1 back the other way.

1. Goalie can make the outlet pass.
2. Loose puck can be taken by waiting forwards.
3. Offensive forwards pressure the puck or continue play until puck clears the blueline.
4. If a goal is scored the puck is retrieved by the defenseman and is to break out the forwards that are on the half boards in position.

Key Elements

- Forwards support each other
- Attack offensive zone, go to the net
- Gap control
- Force Forwards Outside/Poor angle
- Puck Pursuit / Positioning

Variations

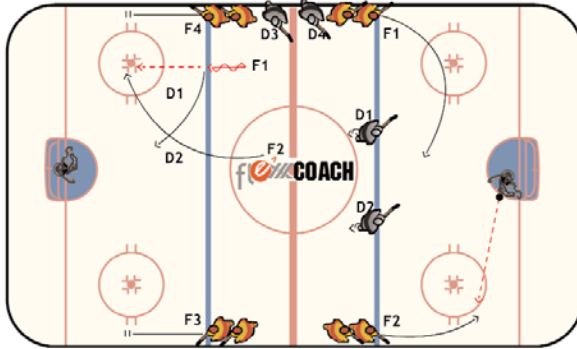
- Can add 3 forwards to make the drill 3 on 1

Goalie

- Game like situation 2 on 1, Goalie can make the outlet pass to the forwards.

Drills

One Puck Game Simulation - 2 on 2 (One Puck Continuous Drill 2 on 2)



Objective

- Game Simulation 2 on 2, 3 on 2

Four even groups of forwards positioned at the bluelines, two defenseman starts at one blueline. The goalie starts with a puck on the whistle two forwards at the same end on the blueline as the defenseman skate into position on the half boards to receive the outlet pass from the goalie. The two forwards attack the defenseman 2 on 2 down the ice to the other end as they enter the zone the two forwards at this blue line skate into position along with the next defenseman that will play the following 2 on 2 back the other way.

1. Goalie can make the outlet pass.
2. Loose puck can be taken by waiting forwards
3. Offensive forwards pressure the puck or continue play until puck clears the blueline.
4. If a goal is scored the puck is retrieved by the defenseman and is to break out the forwards that are on the half boards in position.

Key Elements

- Puck Support/Move puck quickly
- Attack w/speed and at 1 defenseman
- Use of open space and indirects
- Gap control / defense on a hinge
- Outlet pass under pressure

Variations

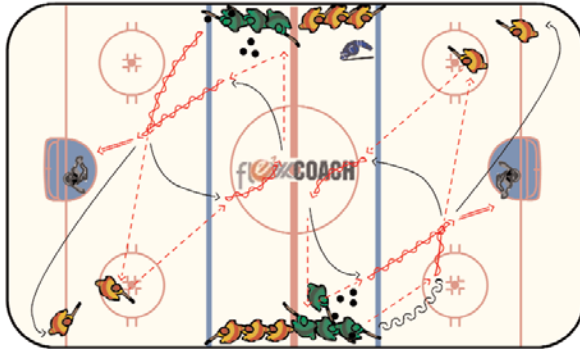
- Add 3 forwards to create 3 on 2 situations

Goalie

- Game like situation 2 on 2, Goalie can make the outlet pass to the forwards.

Drills

Passing 1



Objective

- Passing and puck support with proper positioning

Players are positioned on opposite diagonal blue-lines with one player positioned at the opposite faceoff circle in each end. On the whistle the players at the blue-line start with a puck, skating toward the player positioned at the faceoff dot and passes it to that player and supports the pass to receive the pass back,. Skating up thru the neutral zone with the puck, passing the puck to the last player in the line of where he started. The player now receives the puck back and finishes with an angle shot on goal.

Key Elements

- Passing/Receiving
- Skating
- Puck Support
- Shooting/Scoring
- Goalie Warm up

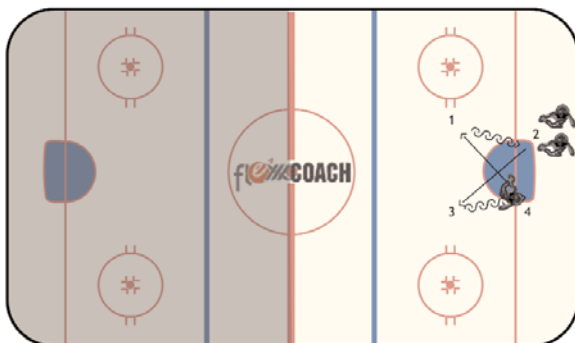
Variations

- The player at the beginning can start backwards, receiving a pass from the next player in line, pivoting to begin the same sequence.

Goalie

- Follow player thru center ice, get feel for the puck and mid ice positioning; adjusting his angles based on the players skating movement for an angle shot.

X Skating Drill



Objective

- Goalie Skating Fundamentals

Start on one post T-Glide out to far opposite side of the crease to get set. Then shuffle back to the near post. Continue to do the same on the opposite side.

Key Elements

- Transition Skating
- Body Control
- T-glide
- Set and square body to the puck
- Conditioning

Drills

4 Spot 1 on 1 - 2 on 1



Objective

- Competition, Create Scoring Chances

1 on 1, four forwards get into position as shown. f1 Passes to the defenseman and the defenseman passes it right back and the two play it 1 on1. Each defenseman plays all four forwards then change the defenseman.

2 on 1, four forwards get into position as shown. f1 Passes to the defenseman and the defenseman passes it right back and the two forwards skate off the boards to attack the defenseman 2 on1. Each defenseman plays all four 2 on 1's then change the defenseman.

Key Elements

- Quick feet drill for defenseman
- Offensive tactics 1 on 1, 2 on 1
- Proper body position
- Competition Battling
- Strong with your stick, take away the passing lanes

Goalie

- Game like situation, fight to find the puck thru traffic, Screen shots. Quick attacks from different angles, read, support and position your self accordingly.

On Ice Presentations









On Ice Presentations









On Ice Presentations





