

RYHA Fall 2008-09 House League Practice Plan

Overview

This document is intended to provide the guidelines for conducting House League practices for the Raleigh Youth Hockey Association (RYHA). The purpose of the House League program is to develop the hockey skills of our players in a fun environment while teaching them the value of life skills such as hard work, sportsmanship, and discipline.

Coaches should focus on developing each player's skills irregardless of which team they play on. Coaches are expected to coach all the players on the ice equally. Chances are that you have had this player on your team in the past or will have them on your team in the future. Focusing only on the players on your team is a disservice to the players and will not benefit you or them in the long run.

This is a living document and will be updated from time to time based on the progress of the season and players. Please do not deviate from these practice plans as this is the core of the RYHA skill development process.

The building blocks of the practice plan fall into three categories. Some drills or games may include more than one of these areas, but all return to these primary categories.

- Individual Skills – Skating, stick handling, passing, shooting
- Team Building – Movement, on ice awareness, team play
- Competition – Battling for pucks, scoring

While some coaches may enjoy the process of developing practice plans, it can be a time consuming process that is can be difficult for some coaches. This document is not intended to remove that aspect of the coaching process, but to give guidelines for creating practice plans that focus on the core of the RYHA program. We hope that by providing this document we allow our coaches to focus on developing our players and their skills rather than developing practice plans.

Practice Format

The practice format for House League teams is designed to focus on core individual skills and allowing the players to develop competitive skills in small area games. At the Pee-Wee and Bantam levels, a combined full ice practice is used every 2-3 weeks to allow players to experience more game like situations.

The order of the drills is flexible as is the order of the practice. Some players and coaches may feel that the amount of skating is tedious, but because skating is such an integral part of the game, it's necessary to continue to reinforce these skills. Perhaps motivating players by performing the stations first with the expectation that they give their best effort during skating drills will allow them to have some control over their practices. If the effort is not there during the skating portion, then skating is done first the next practice.

One coach should take responsibility for the skating drills and one for managing the stations. The coach managing the stations should assign a coach to each station to manage that station, demonstrate the skill, and keep the drill moving. The coach managing the stations portion of the practice should also determine when players should move between stations. Other coaches should be spread out among the stations as evenly as possible so all the stations run smoothly.

Every coach is responsible for working with all the players. Coaches should be engaged with players during drills reinforcing key points for correct execution of the drills and also encouraging and recognizing players for

their efforts. Coaches should stand BEHIND the players when the players are in line. This is so the coach and the players can see the drill being performed so the coach can point out things that are done correctly or that could be improved. The coach should always be facing the drill and should also be in a position to speak to the players that are waiting in line.

Every coach should have the opportunity to run the skating portion, manage the stations, and run the stations through-out the season. It's important that we don't let one or two coaches control all the practices, but that we all work to develop our coaching skills.

Skating

Skating is the most important individual skill for all hockey players. Time should be devoted throughout the season at every age group to improving our players' skating. For the first half of the season, 20 minutes of each practice should be devoted to skating skills. The goal is for our players to demonstrate proficiency at these core skills and then we can add drills that build on the core components. Players should be given control and responsibility for the pace of the practice. If they make an excellent effort and demonstrate proficiency in a certain drill, then they can move on to the next drill. However, if they will continue to perform the drill until the coaches see that it is done correctly. The following skating drills can easily be done in 15-20 minutes providing the players and coaches are focused.

Shortening skating drills to get to the stations because they need to work on the skills in the stations will not be a benefit long term. The drills in the stations all depend on having mastered skating skills. Neglecting the skating portion of the practice will only make it more difficult for the players to master the drills in the stations and frustrate players and coaches.

Skating drills to perform every practice:

- One leg strides forwards
- Alternating strides forwards
- Inside edges
- Outside edges
- One leg strides backwards
- Alternating strides backwards
- Forward crossovers
- Backward crossovers

Starting is an important part of every drill and should be coached as such. Every drill that involves skating should begin with a good start from a good position. Stopping can be practiced during skating drills with players starting and stopping on the coach's whistle. This can be incorporated into conditioning drills.

Coaching Positioning/Breakouts/Zone Coverage

Positioning and breakouts are important to the development of our players. Even the best skater, when out of position will not have much fun because they are frequently out of the play. However, ice time is extremely valuable and should be used to practice skills that are only possible on the ice.

Positioning can be taught effectively off ice in a large room or even the parking lot. Line the players up in the correct spots on the "ice" and work on shifting the players depending on the location of the "puck."

Once positioning is understood by all the players, move on to the basic break out drill, emphasizing the correct movement and patterns.

Finally, move on to offensive and defensive zone coverage and discuss things like cycling and advanced topics.

All of these need not be done the same day, but over the period of several practices. Like other skills they can be done consistently before or after practices or games to guarantee that the players remember. You will be surprised how well they perform after using this method to teach these concepts.

Stations

The stations portion of the practice should take up 40-45 minutes depending on the results of the skating drills. The teams should be broken into 3 groups of roughly 10 players and assigned to each station. Stations will rotate after 10-12 minutes by the coach managing the stations for that practice.

The drills are generally in order from least to most complex. It is important that each drill be **MASTERED** before introducing the next. You may spend several practices executing the same drill until all the players master it. Introducing more complex drills before players have mastered the simpler skills only serves to make the players unconfident. What's more, more complex drills call on the skills that should have been mastered in the first set of drills. Give the players a chance to excel before introducing something that is more difficult and challenging for them.

Full Ice Big Wheel Practice

This practice is designed to be run by the Pee-Wee and Bantam age groups. It is probably not appropriate for the mites and squirts because of the tempo and size of the rink. This drill is designed to be run several different ways, starting out with 2-on-0 and progressing to 1-on-1, 2-on-1, 2-on-2, and finally 3-on-2. It provides the players to practice skating, passing, and shooting as well as positional and team play. As with any drill, it is important for the coaches to be involved standing **BEHIND** the players in line instructing and pointing out positive and negative things about how their teammates perform the drill. Coaches should wait until each variation is mastered before moving on to the next. When getting to the 2-on-2 and 3-on-2 variations, coaches should start the players with a whistle to allow for adequate recovery of the players between runs.

Goalies

Goalies should skate with the other players to develop the athleticism and conditioning required for the position. If there are only two goalies at the practice, the goalies should participate in the Competitive Games station to get experience handling game situations. If there are more than two goalies, they should split time between the shooting stations as well as the competitive games station.

Coaches working with goalies should emphasize good mechanics with relation to stick position, angles, and movement side to side. There are many online resources for goalie coaching online and coaches should take some time to become familiar with basic goalie coaching so that their development is not neglected.

Skill progression

The drills that are included in this document are meant to provide for a progression of the skills required. Generally the skills are first perfected when stationary, then when skating, then in game situations. We have provided sample practice plans that can be used to help you plan the progression of the players as they master the individual drills.

Practice Plan A

Start Time	Phase 1	Phase 2
Skating Drills		
6:45 20 min	1 Leg Strides Forward Alternating Strides Forward Inside Edges Outside Edges	1 Leg Strides Backwards Alternating Strides Backwards Forward Crossovers Backward Crossovers
7:05 1 min	Water Break	Water Break
½ Ice Station Drills (switch stations every 8 min)		
7:06 24 min	Stationary Checking Stationary Passing Horse Shoe Shooting	Stationary Checking Stationary Passing Weave and Shoot
½ Ice Small Games (Add a 3 rd man as a stationary passer)		
7:30 15 min	2 on 2 Give and Go	2 on 2 Give and Go

Option: Substitute the Big Wheel Practice for the ½ ice station drills and small games

Practice Plan B

Start Time		Phase 1	Phase 2
Skating Drills			
6:45	20 min	1 Leg Strides Forward Alternating Strides Forward Inside Edges Outside Edges	1 Leg Strides Backwards Alternating Strides Backwards Forward Crossovers Backward Crossovers
7:05	1 min	Water Break	Water Break
½ Ice Station Drills (switch stations every 8 min)			
7:06	24 min	Skating Checking Moving Passing Wide Escapes	Skating Checking Moving Passing Tight Escapes
½ Ice Small Games			
7:30	15 min	Gretzky	Gretzky

Option: Substitute the Big Wheel Practice for the ½ ice station drills and small games

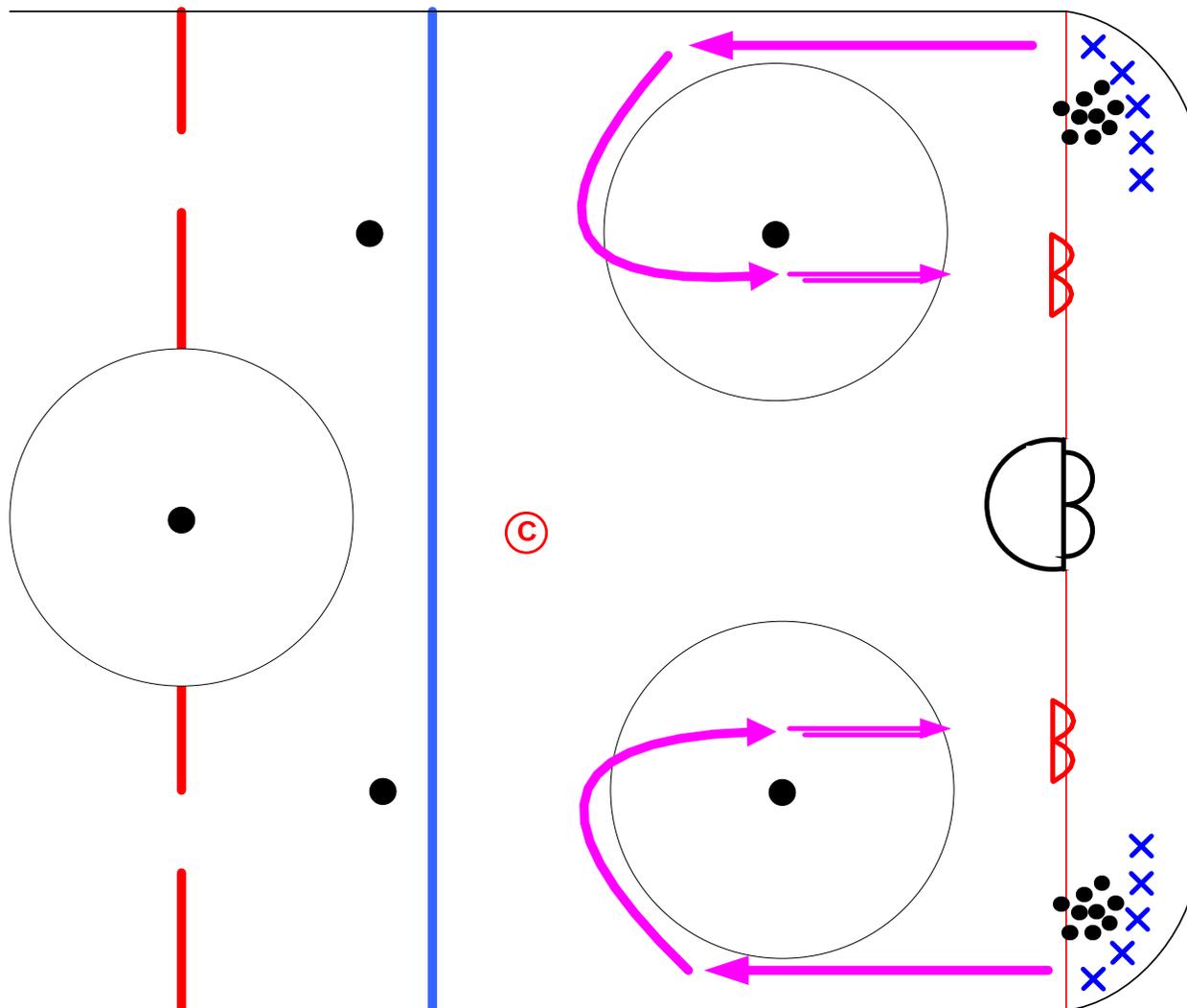
Practice Plan C

Start Time		Phase 1	Phase 2
Skating Drills			
6:45	20 min	1 Leg Strides Forward Alternating Strides Forward Inside Edges Outside Edges	1 Leg Strides Backwards Alternating Strides Backwards Forward Crossovers Backward Crossovers
7:05	1 min	Water Break	Water Break
½ Ice Station Drills (switch stations every 8 min)			
7:10	24 min	Angling and Checking Follow Your Pass Retrieve and Shoot	Angling and Checking Follow Your Pass Wide Escapes
½ Ice Small Games (Add a 3 rd man as a stationary passer)			
7:30	15 min	2 on 2 Odd Man	2 on 2 Odd Man

Option: Substitute the Big Wheel Practice for the ½ ice station drills and small games

Shooting Drills - are designed to provide our players a chance to take many shots in different situations.

Horse Shoe Shooting



Technical Skills:
Skating, Turning, Stick-handling, Shooting

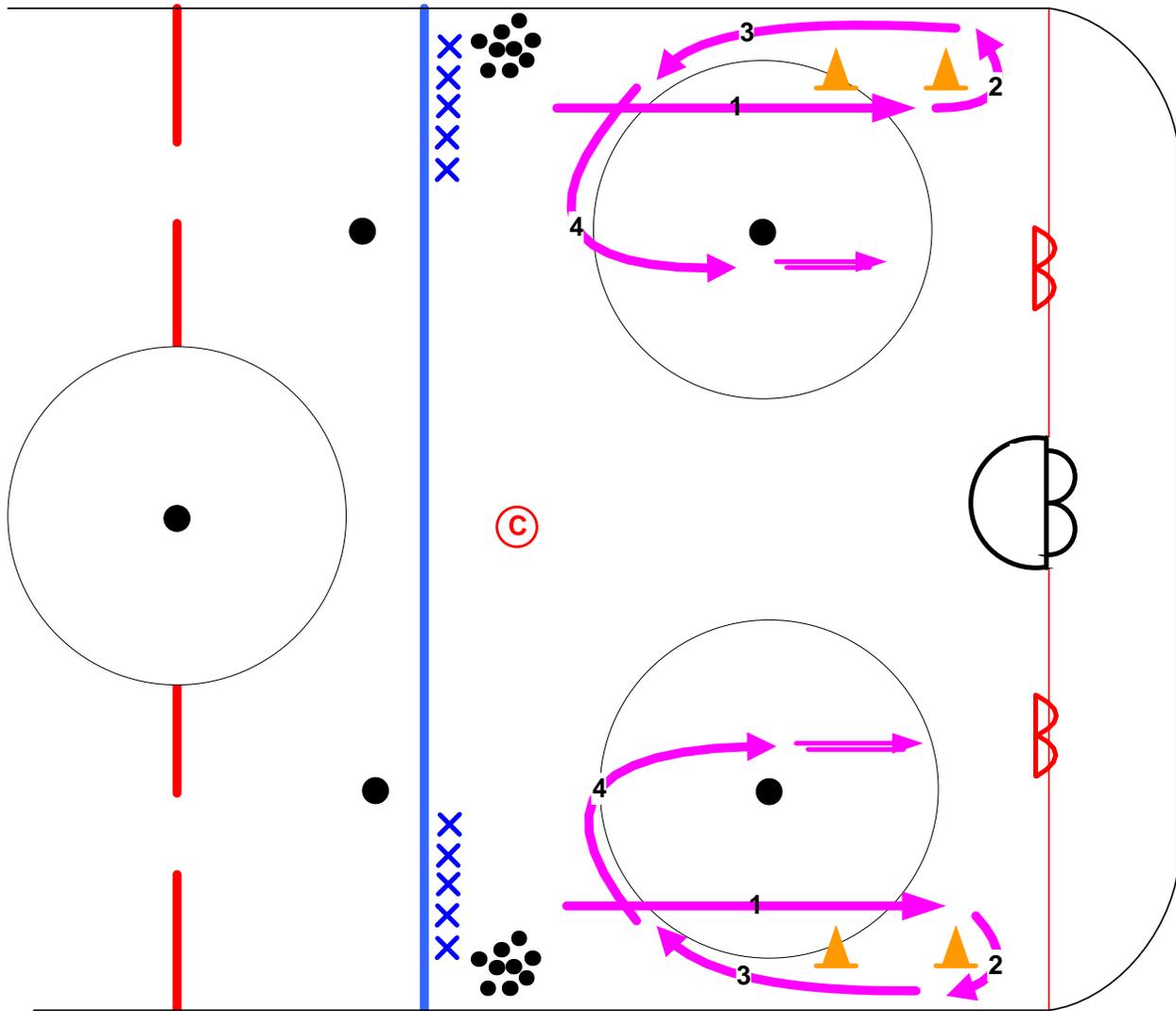
Drill Overview:
Player skates puck out of the corner along the boards. Turns around the top of the circle and shoots from the hash marks.

Key Teaching Points:
Head up. Feet moving. Shoot back foot to front foot.

Key Execution Points:
No STICKHANDLING. Shoot QUICK. Feet moving while turning around top of the circle. Shoot from correct foot. Follow the shot.

Variations:
Switch sides half way through to allow players to shoot from both sides of the ice

Wide Escapes



Technical Skills:

Sharp turns with a puck. Evasive maneuvers. Shooting.

Drill Overview:

Player skates puck along the boards. Turns towards the boards to escape pressure at the second cone and then skates back up along the boards and around the top of the circle. Turns and takes a shot from the hash marks.

Key Teaching Points:

Escape toward the boards to protect the puck. Maintain speed through turn. Head up coming out of the turn. Feet moving around the top of the circle. Shoot back foot to front foot. Follow the shot.

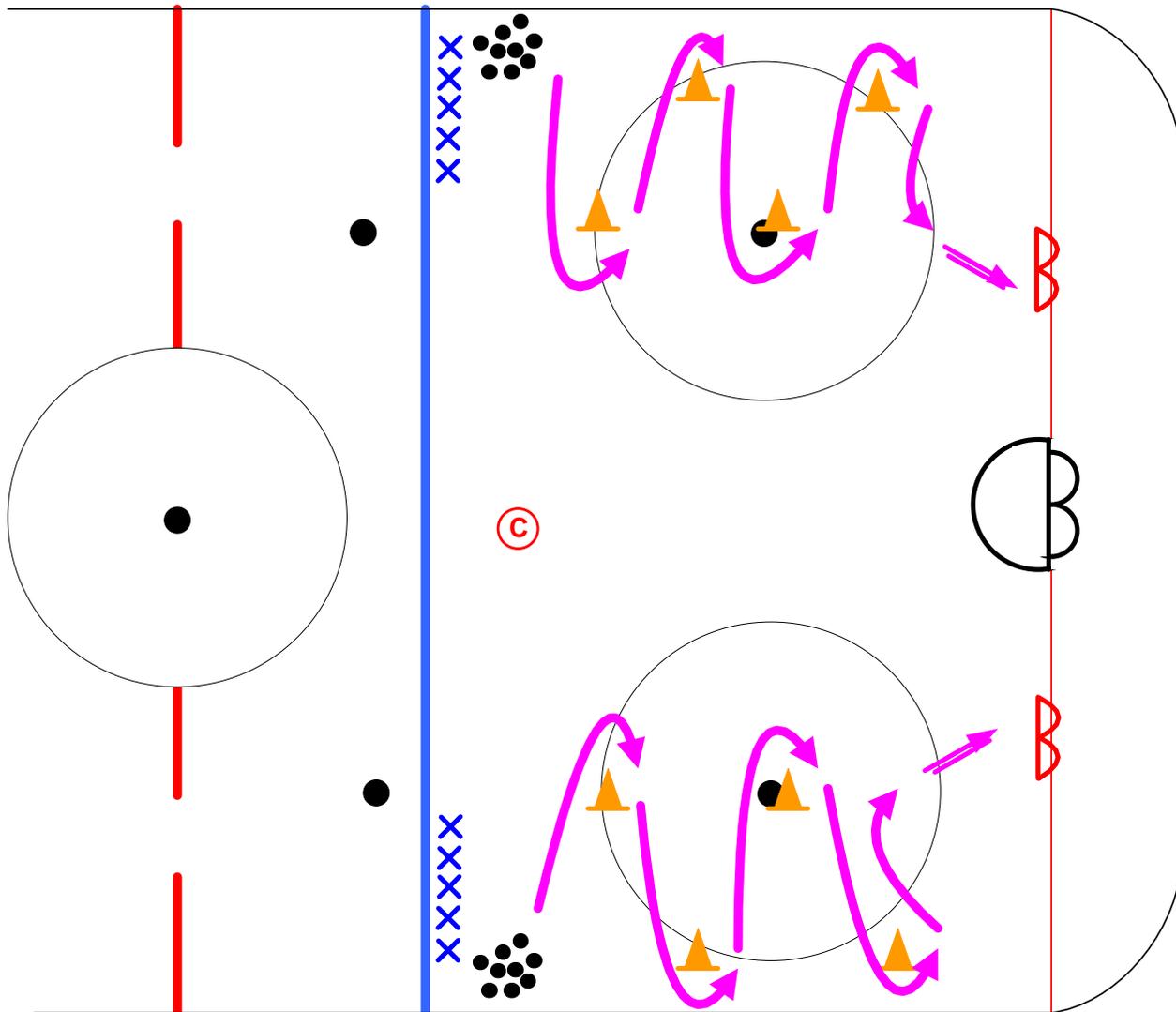
Key Execution Points:

Head up. Control the puck. Maintain speed. QUICK SHOT. Be ready to avoid pressure.

Variations:

Switch sides half way through to allow players to shoot from both sides of the ice. Sharp turn after the second cone and drive towards the net for the shot.

Weave and Shoot



Technical Skills:

Sharp turns with a puck. Skating Shooting.

Drill Overview:

Player skates puck through the cones making tight turns. Then skates the puck out of the corner and takes a shot on net.

Key Teaching Points:

Maintain speed through turns. Head up coming out of the turn. Shoot back foot to front foot. Follow the shot.

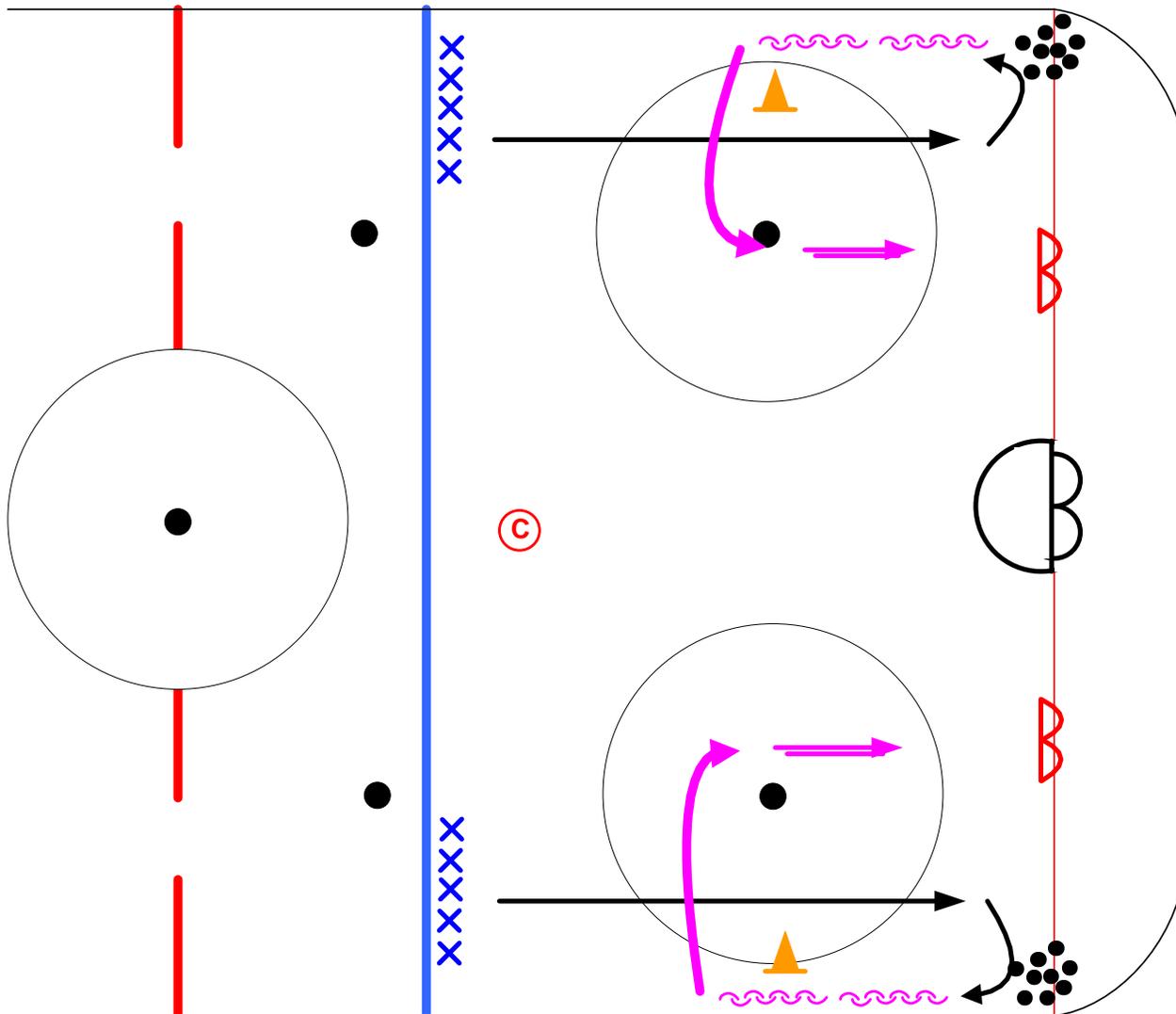
Key Execution Points:

Head up. Control the puck. Maintain speed.

Variations:

Switch sides half way through to allow players to shoot from both sides of the ice.

Retrieve and Shoot



Technical Skills:

Skating. Transitions. Backward stick handling. Walking the puck towards the middle. Shooting.

Drill Overview:

Player skates down along the boards. Stops and collects a puck on their backhand or forehand. Skates the puck backwards up the boards to the cone and either transitions to their forehand or backpedals with the puck on their forehand towards the middle of the ice and takes a QUICK shot.

Key Teaching Points:

Getting speed after collecting the puck. Backward skating with the puck. QUICK shot. Low hard shot. Follow the shot.

Key Execution Points:

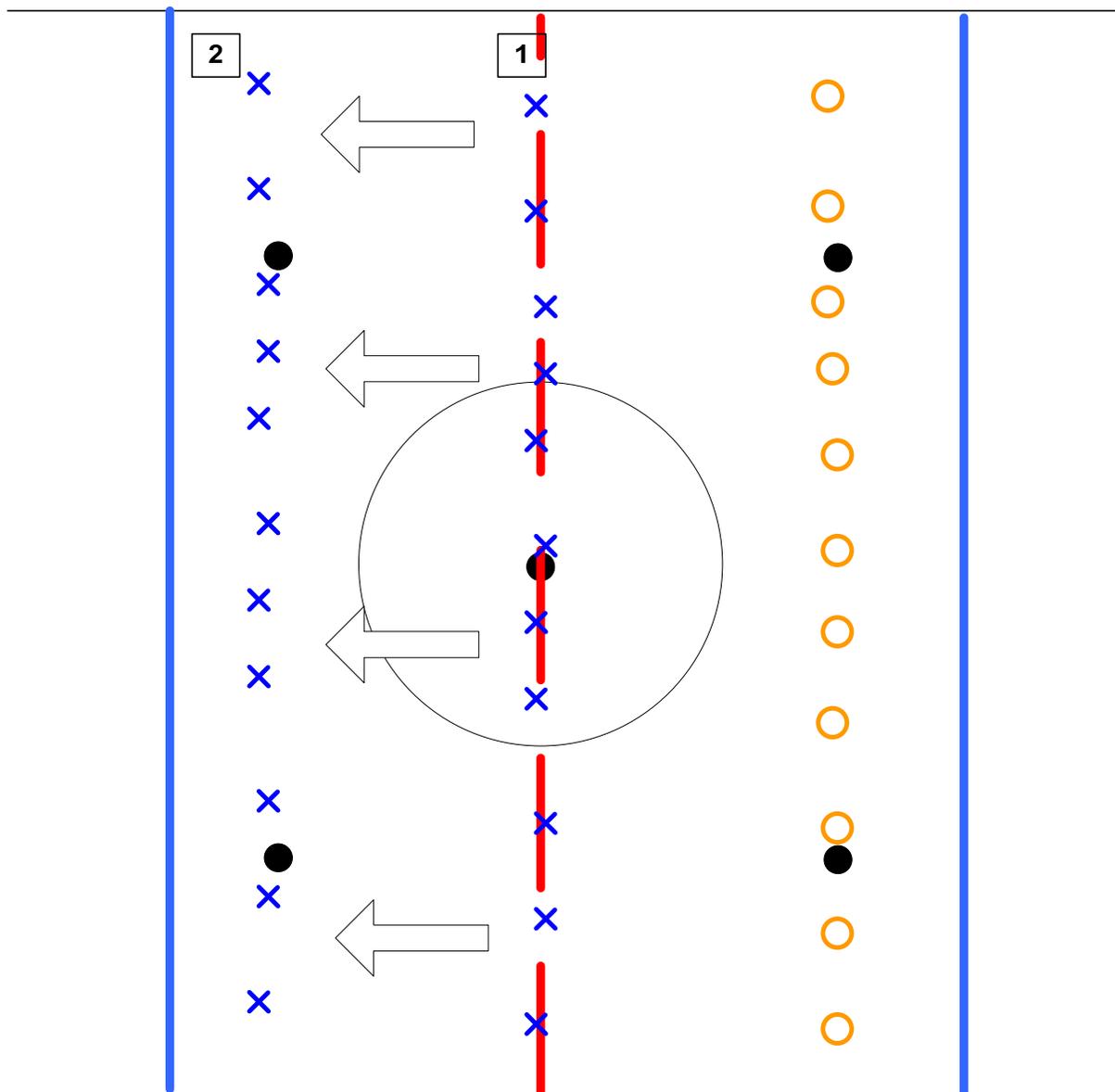
Head up. Control the puck. Maintain speed. Movement with the puck to get a clear shot.

Variations:

Switch sides half way through to allow players to shoot from both sides of the ice. Slapshot from the point for the older players

Passing Drills - are designed to give our players a chance to perfect their passing technique first while stationary and then while skating and finally in a game like situation.

Stationary Passing



Technical Skills:
Passing

Drill Overview:

Make 10 crisp passes to their partner without missing. First forehand, then back hand, increase to 20

Key Teaching Points:

Puck to the side, hands out in front, eyes on the tape, follow through

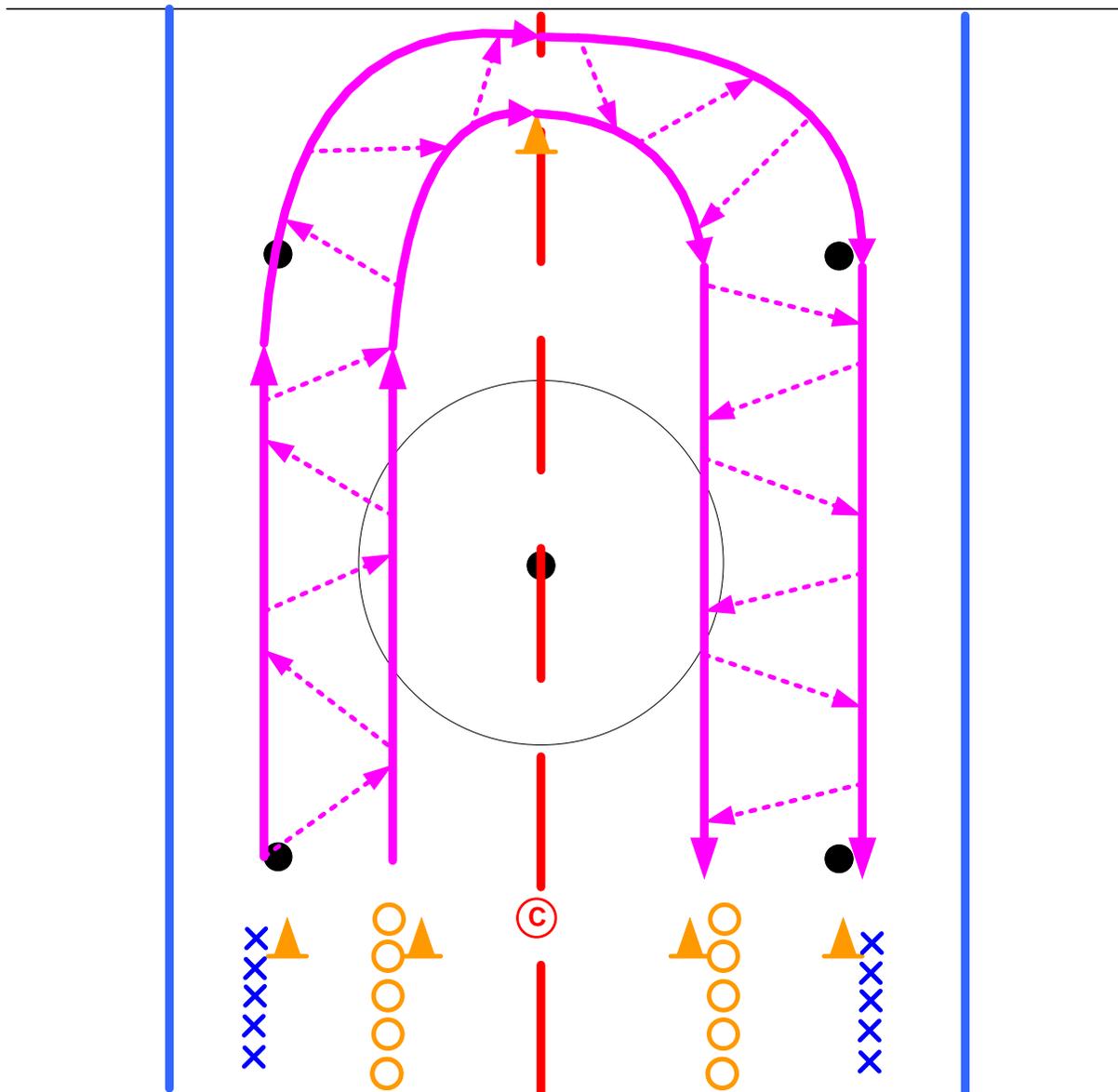
Key Execution Points:

Cup the puck, don't bring the stick all the way back, absorb the pass with your hands, **NO STICKHANDLING** between passes.

Variations:

Forehand, backhand. Start close. One set on red line, one set on dots. Then move back to dots and repeat 10 and 20 passes forehand backhand

Moving Passing



Technical Skills:

Passing – Want as many passes as possible

Drill Overview:

Make crisp passes to their partner while skating up around the far cone. Stay in the same line when they get to the other side so they practice. After returning to the start, switch lines so they are on inside/outside.

Key Teaching Points:

Hands in front, eyes on the tape, lead their partner, crisp passing

Key Execution Points:

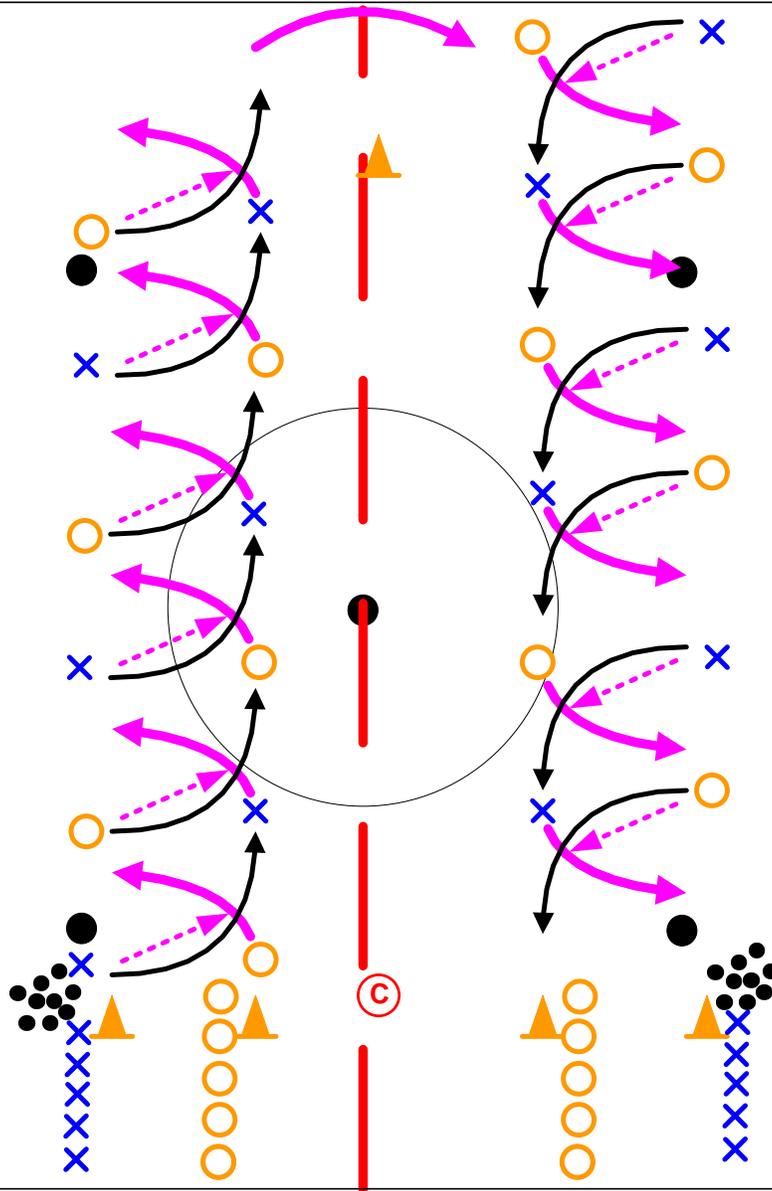
NO STICKHANDLING between passes.

Cup the puck, don't bring the stick all the way back, absorb the pass with your hands,

Variations:

Speed. One line forward, one line backward. Both backward.

Follow Your Pass



Technical Skills:
Passing, on-ice awareness

Drill Overview:
First player passes to partner and follows the pass. Player receiving the pass moves diagonally to “save ice” and allow their partner to catch up. They then repeat the process all the way around the cone.

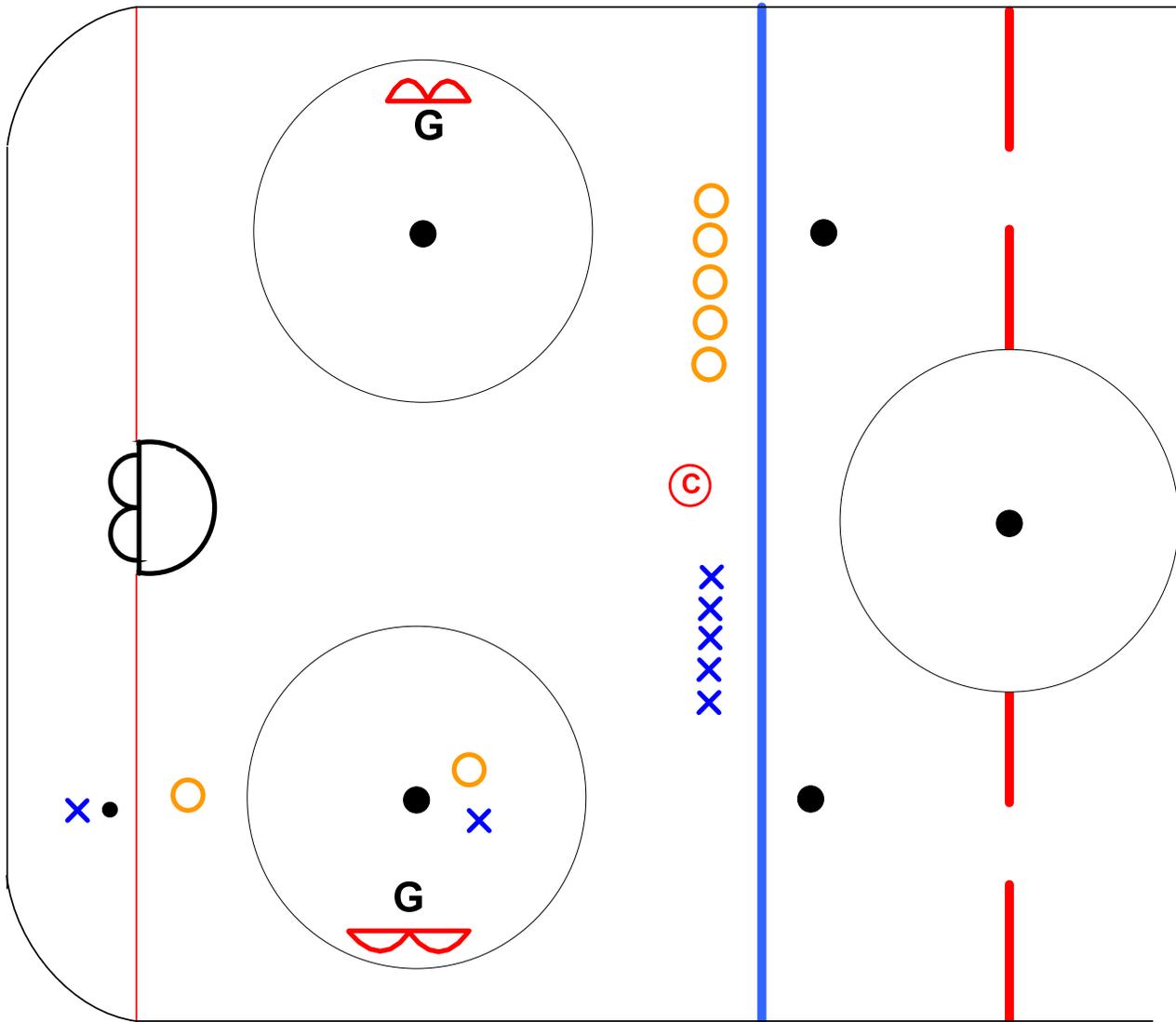
Key Teaching Points:
Hands in front, eyes on the tape, lead their partner, crisp passing, save ice for your partner to catch up, move without the puck.

Key Execution Points:
Lead your partner, no passes behind, keep skating. NO STICKHANDLING, quick passes.

Variations:
Speed. Add a third player.

Competitive Games – are designed to give our players and goalies to develop team skills in game like competitive situations

2-on-2 Give and Go



Technical Skills:

Teach players movement, puck control, give and go, and hunger for the puck.

Drill Overview:

Each player will choose a man and stay with them. Players control the puck while their teammate tries to get open and in a position to score

Key Teaching Points:

Players need to move when they don't have the puck.

Need to pass

Defense needs to shadow their man

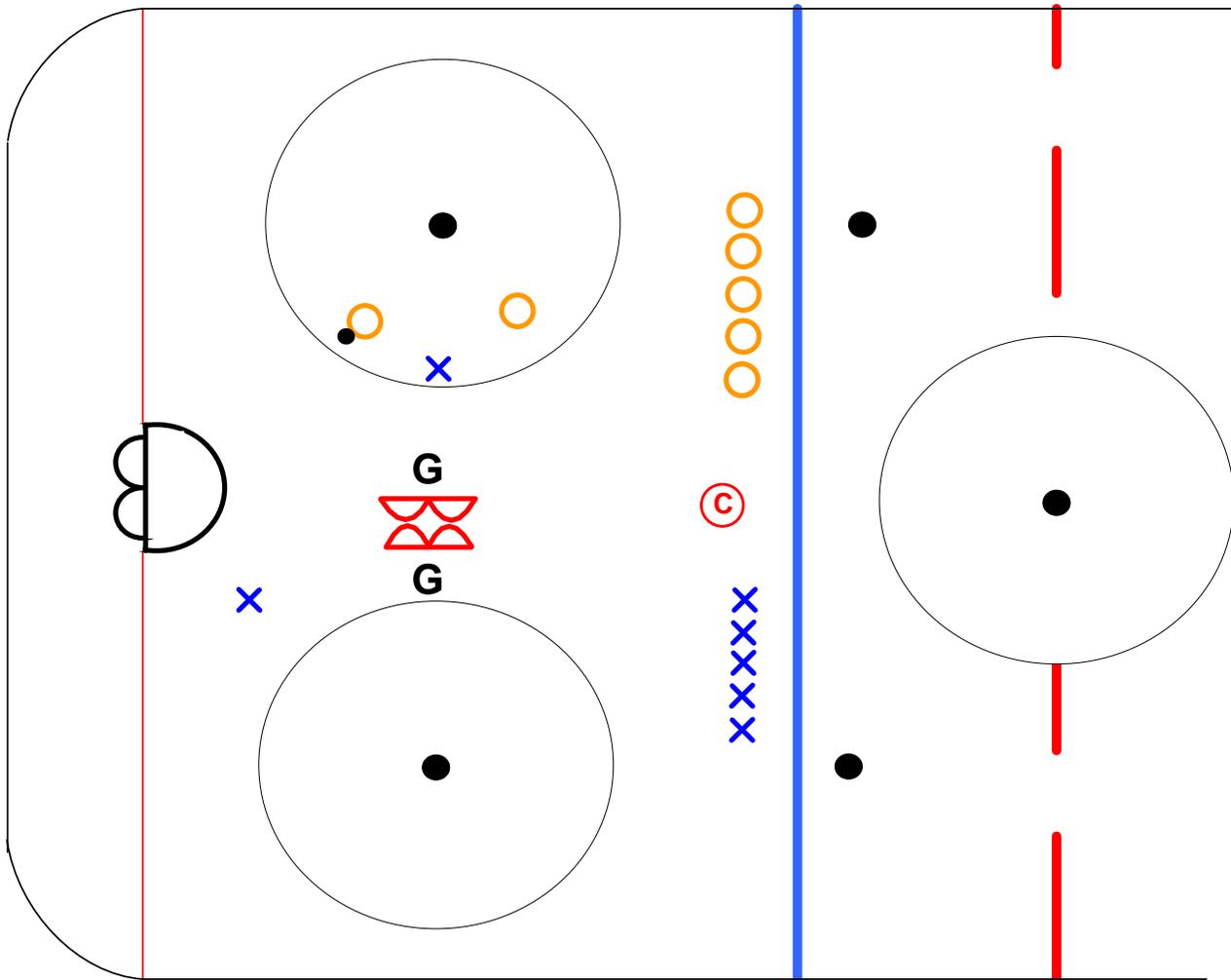
Key Execution Points:

Short passes and quick movement

Variations:

1) 3 on 3 2) Shoot on either net 3) Skate backwards only

2 on 2 Odd Man



Technical Skills:

Teach players movement, puck control, give and go, and hunger for the puck.

Drill Overview:

Each team has a player who cannot leave the offensive zone. When one team has possession of the puck, they can both go to the offensive zone creating a 2 on 1 odd man situation. When the defensive player gets the puck, he has to pass to his offensive player before he can cross over to the other side. They can't skate the puck over to the other side. Offensive player has to move to receive the pass.

Key Teaching Points:

Players need to move when they don't have the puck.

Need to pass

Defense needs to outlet to the player up the ice

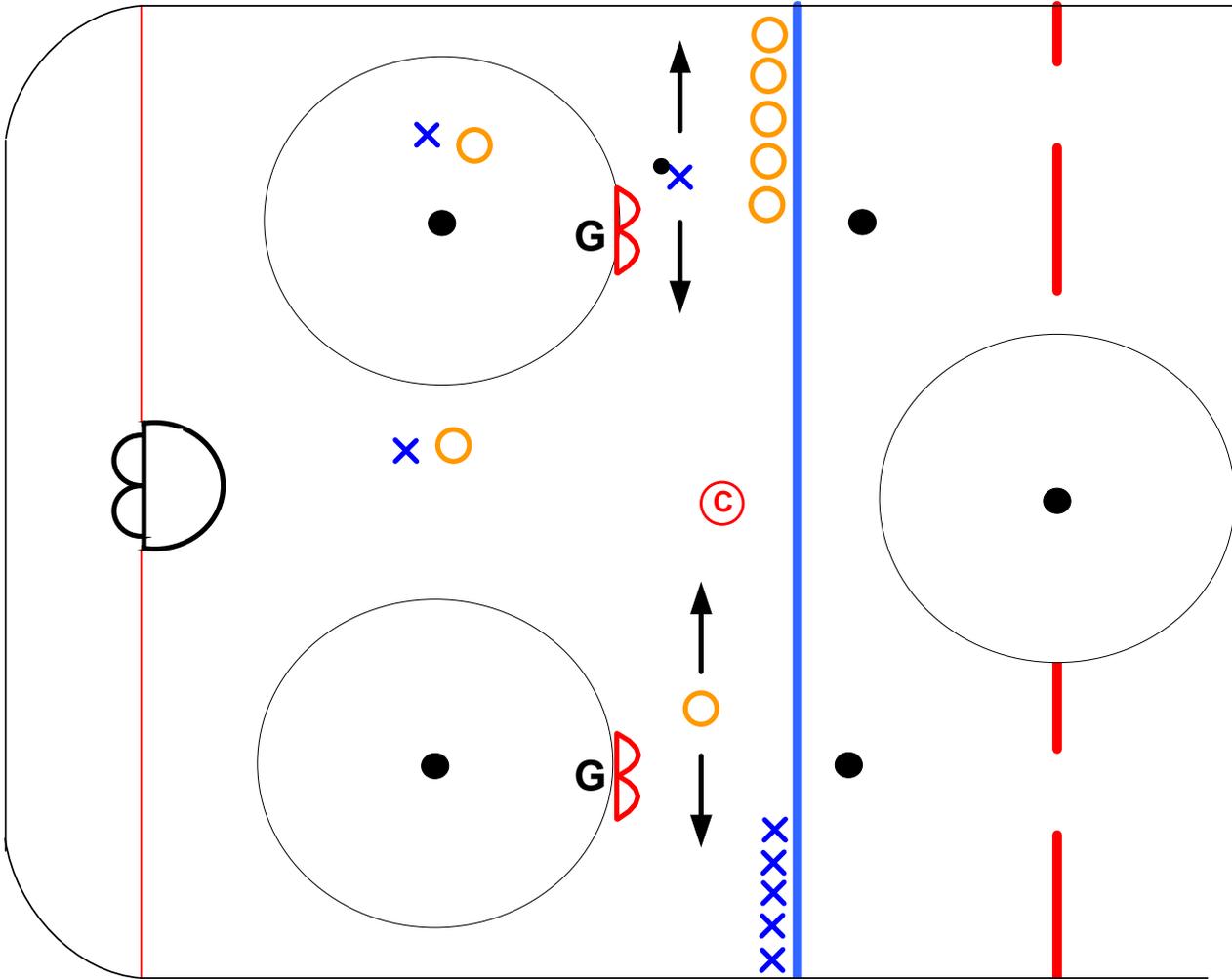
Key Execution Points:

Short passes and quick movement

Variations:

1) 3 on 3 with 1 defense and 2 offense 2) 3 passes before they can shoot

Gretzky



Technical Skills:

Teach players movement, puck control, give and go, man on man defense

Drill Overview:

Each team has a designated Gretzky who has to stay behind the nets. In order to score, the players have to pass to the Gretzky and receive a pass back. The opposing players have to get the puck to their Gretzky. Gretzkys can't interfere with each other when one has the puck. Gretzkys can move the width of the ice to receive a pass.

Key Teaching Points:

Players need to move when they don't have the puck.

Need to pass

Defense needs to outlet to the Gretzky

Key Execution Points:

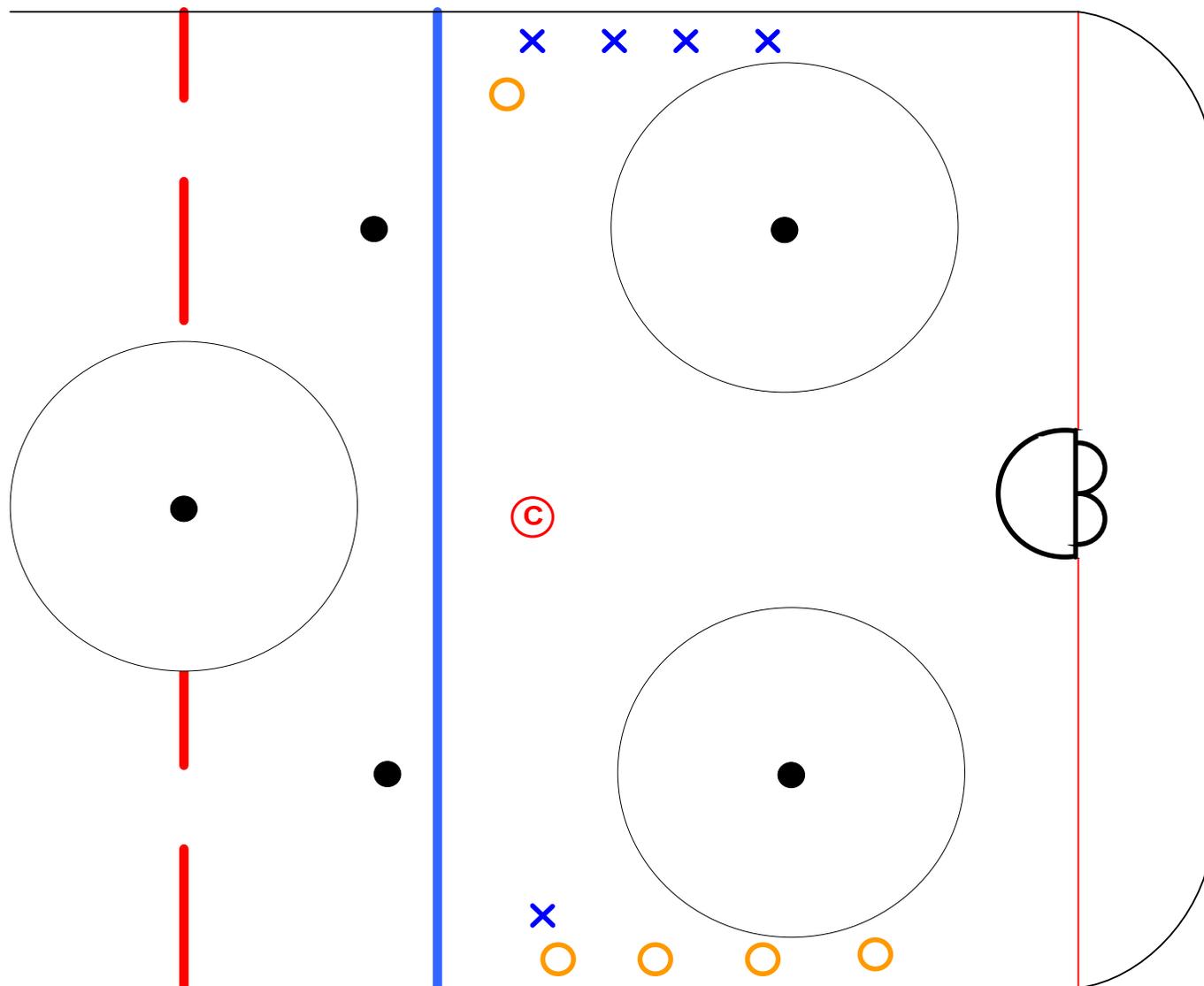
Short passes and quick movement

Variations:

1) 1 timers only 2) Gretzky can change either when another player skates behind the net or the Gretzky skates the puck out. Players need to fill the spot vacated by the player or Gretzky (cycling)

Checking Drills – are designed to teach our players how give and take checks in a safe and sportsmanlike manner.

Stationary Checking



Technical Skills:

Correct way to perform a body check along the boards and correct way to absorb a body check along the boards.

Drill Overview:

Player closest to the blue line skates up beside the player in front and performs a body check and pin along the boards, focusing on making contact with the shoulder and **HOLDING THE CHECK FOR 2 SECONDS**. They release and move up to the next player in the line and repeat. When the first player reaches the front of the line, the last player in line goes until all have gone. The line reverses and they return.

Key Teaching Points:

Knees bent, shoulders low, eyes on the opponent's shoulder, straighten the player, **HOLD THE CHECK**.

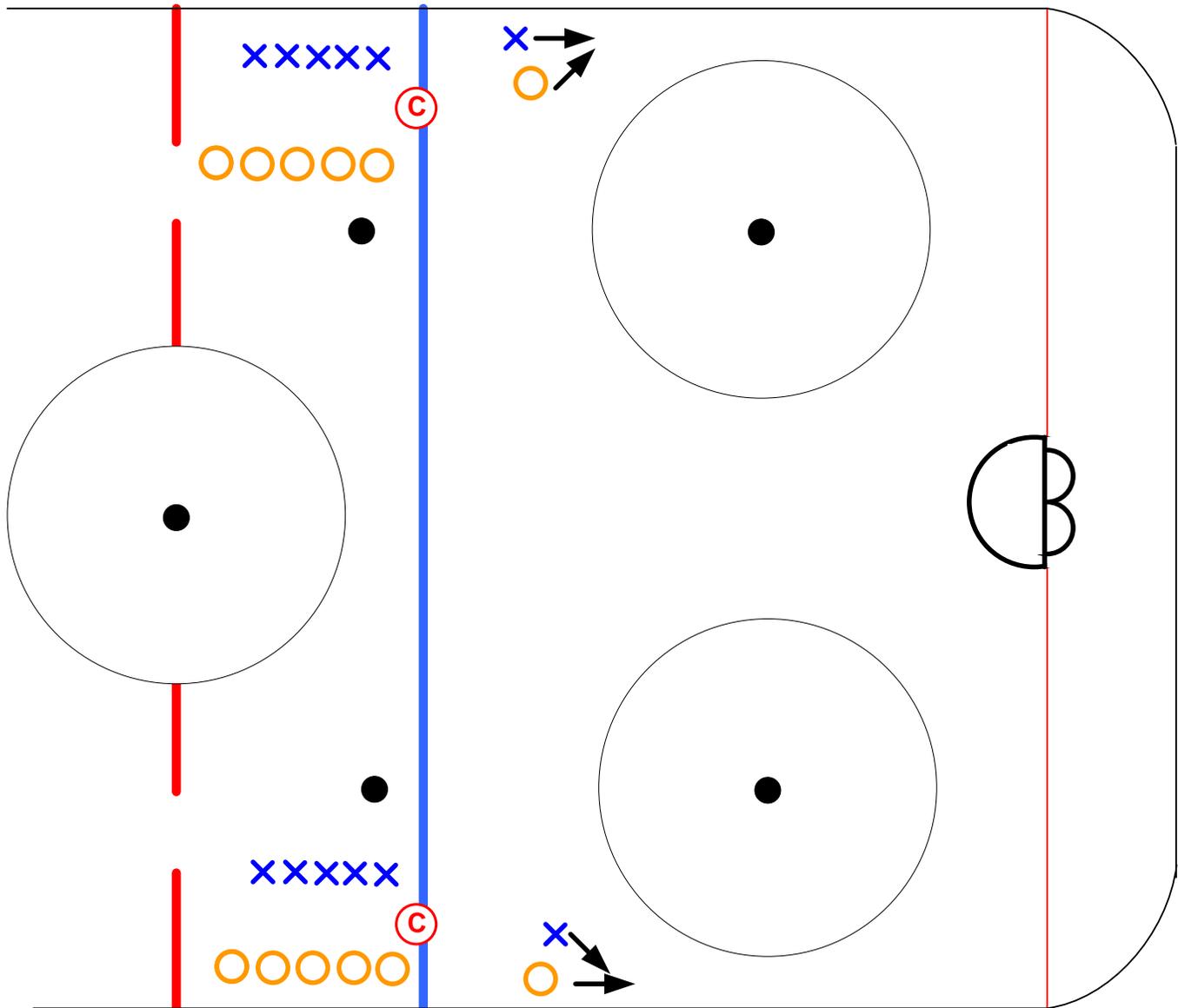
Key Execution Points:

Head up. STICK DOWN. HOLD THE CHECK. Shoulder first. Knees bent. Strong on your skates.

Variations:

Hip check

Skating Check



Technical Skills:

Correct way to perform a body check along the boards and correct way to absorb a body check along the boards when skating.

Drill Overview:

Players in line 1 skate CLOSE to the boards $\frac{1}{2}$ speed. Players in line 2 skate up to the other player also at $\frac{1}{2}$ speed and perform a body check focusing on making contact with the shoulder in front of the other player and HOLDING THE CHECK FOR 2 SECONDS. Players switch lines after each turn and then switch sides.

Key Teaching Points:

Knees bent, shoulders low, eyes on the opponent's shoulder, straighten the player, HOLD THE CHECK. Stay close to the boards. Use the entire body to absorb the check.

Key Execution Points:

Head up. STICK DOWN. HOLD THE CHECK. Shoulder first. Knees bent. Strong on your skates.

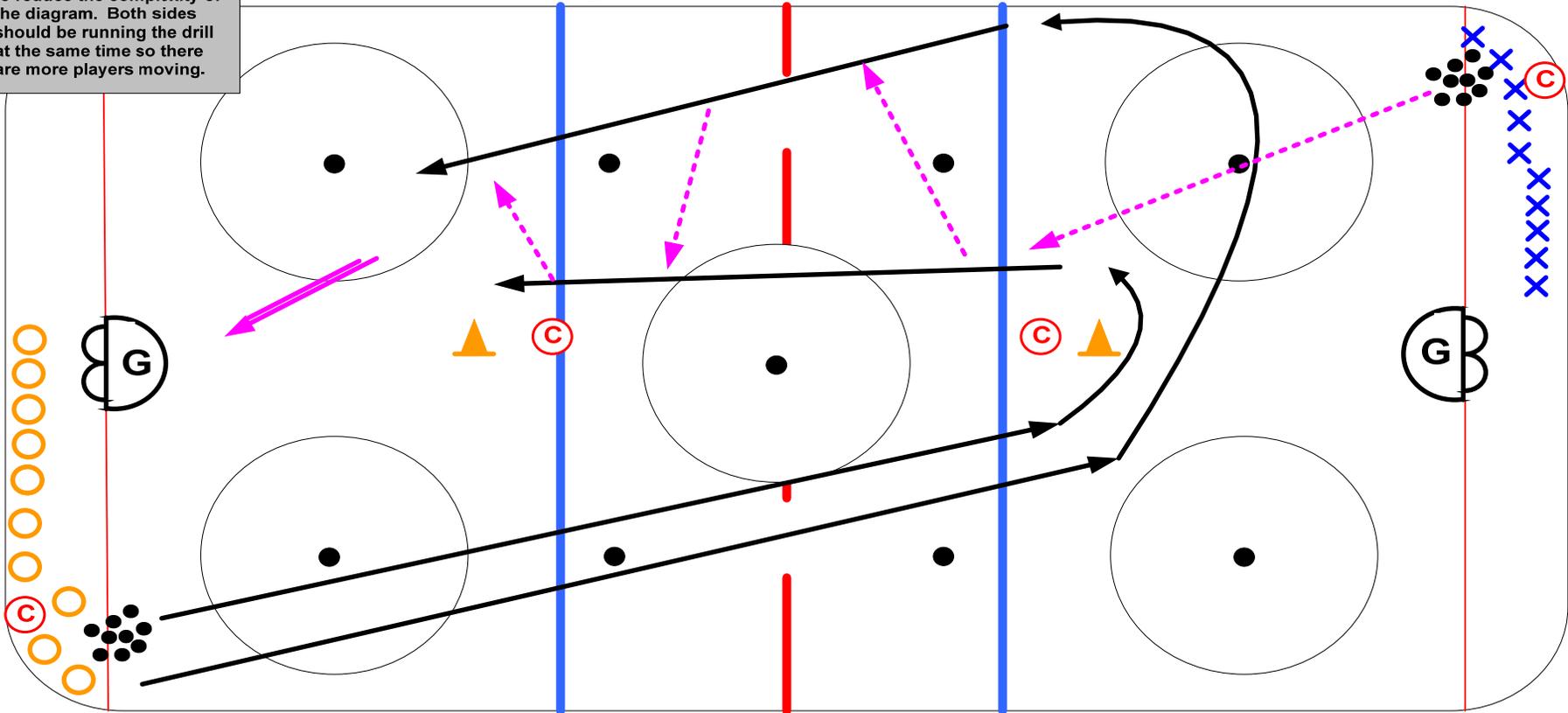
Variations:

Hip check

Combined Full Ice – is designed to teach game situations and combines many of the other drill concepts into a single practice.

Big Wheel Practice

*** This shows only one side to reduce the complexity of the diagram. Both sides should be running the drill at the same time so there are more players moving.



Technical Skills:

Full ice game situations. Passing, skating, shooting

Drill Overview:

Two players in X and two in O lines start out without pucks. The skate down around the cone, first player goes WIDE. Second player goes close around the cone and gets a pass from the next player in line. They advance the puck 2-on-0, shooting from the hash marks. Player without the puck crashes the net.

Next set of players start when the players on their side get to the far blue line. **When doing 2-on-2 and 3-on-2, players wait for the coach's whistle** before starting to allow for adequate recovery.

Key Teaching Points:

Continuous skating. Good passes. Players in line need to be paying attention to what's going on so they make the pass. Players should call for the pass.

Key Execution Points:

Coaches stand BEHIND players and make teaching points for players while they watch. Start the 2-on-2 and 3-on-2 with a whistle.

Variations:

First time: 2-on-0 ONLY.

Second time 2-on-0 until mastered, then 1-on-1. First player around the cone plays defense, second player gets a pass, etc.

Progress to 2-on-1, 2-on-2, 3-on-2 ONLY when they have mastered the others