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SECTION 2

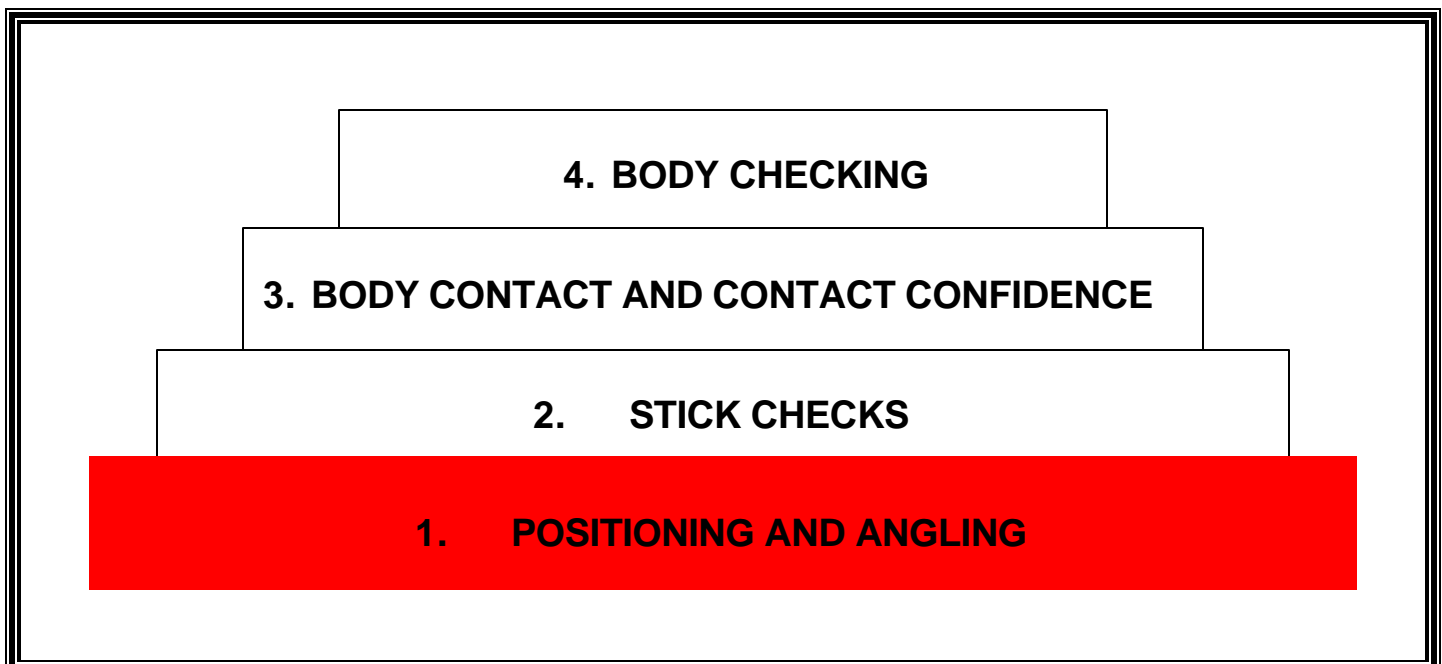
TEACHING CHECKING FUNDAMENTALS

CHECKING - THE 4-STEP PROGRESSION

The most essential skill in hockey, which is the prerequisite to most others, is **skating**. The ability to skate efficiently and effectively allows a player to begin to effectively develop all other skills involved with the game of hockey. Players will be unable to grasp and execute skills such as positioning and angling if they are unable to skate comfortably and control the edges of their skates with ease. It is vital for a coach to ensure that the foundation of all other skills, skating, is mastered before moving on to more advanced skills.

The skill of checking is most easily taught and understood by following the National Coach Certification Program (NCCP) 4-step progression model. A diagram of this model can be seen below. The NCCP checking model is based on the principle that checking should be taught in four logical steps. Each step builds upon the previous step and brings the hockey player that much closer to being able to give and receive body checks competently and confidently. The NCCP checking model is further explained in detail in the pages that follow.

NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



STEP 1 - POSITIONING AND ANGLING

Angling can be considered the first line of defense for a player. Body and stick positions are important in checking without making contact. This section will examine angling as one technique of checking (Step 1) without making contact.

Angling is the ability to force your opponent to go in the direction that you want. This normally would be towards the boards or to the outside of you.

Some key points for coaches to consider throughout this section on angling:

- Players should remain between the puck carrier and the pass receiver, gradually reducing the puck carriers space
- Players should skate parallel to the opponent or in an arc or circular movement but not in a straight line toward the opponent
- Players should skate slightly behind the opponent thus not allowing the opponent to turn up ice to the inside of them
- Players need to learn to control skate so that they can adjust their speed to their opponent's speed
- A player's stick should always be in position to intercept a pass and as a decoy to force the opposition to the desired direction.

POSITIONING AND ANGLING

STEP 1

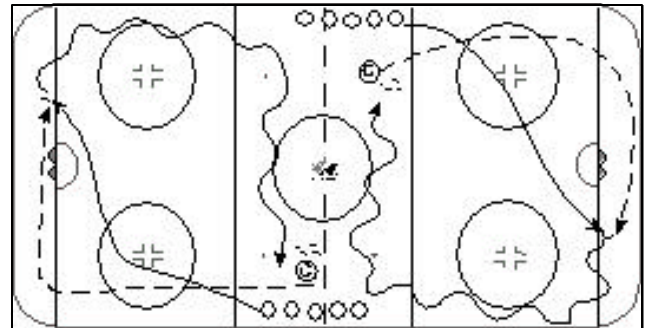
Angling - Read and React to the Play

Drill Objective

Players will be able to read and react to the speed and route of the puck using the quickest most efficient route

Drill Explanation

- Coach rims the puck into the end zone, player reads the direction and speed of the puck to retrieve
- Player has head on a swivel to vacate zone and return to the back of the line



Key Teaching Points

- Read the speed of the puck and location of entry
- Take the easiest/quickest route to reach the puck
- "Head on a swivel" to read any outside pressure

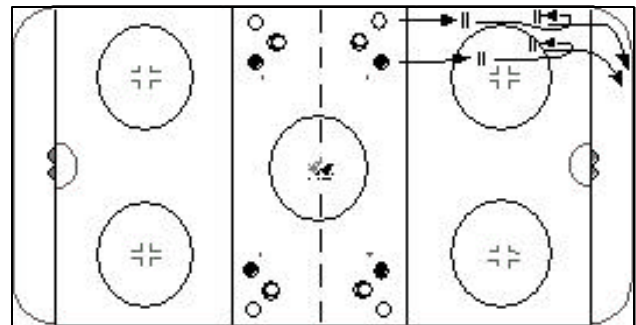
Angling - Shadowing

Drill Objective

Players will be able to control skate, mirroring the player that they are angling

Drill Explanation

- Players should pair up with a player of similar skating skill
- Player 1 skates along the boards making quick starts and stops and changes of direction
- Player 2 must control skate and mirror Player 1 keeping the player to the outside in the "bad ice"



Key Teaching Points

- Mirroring the players you are checking
- Use the term "Hip pocket" to describe to players where they need to be.
- Add a puck once players have an understanding of drill and focus carrier on puck protection

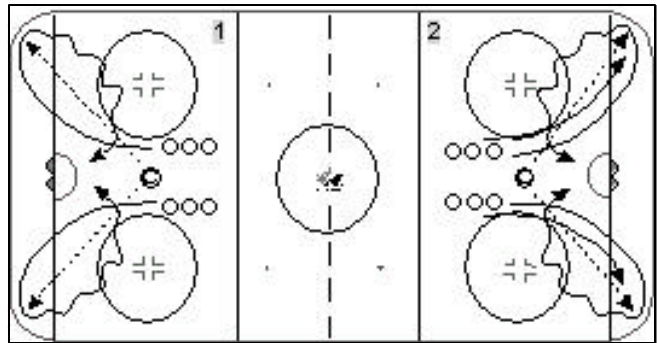
Angling and Head on Swivel

Drill Objective

When in pursuit of the puck, awareness of opposing players as well as supporting teammates is critical to safety and the decision making process

Drill Explanation

- Start with proper offensive angle to the puck in the corner. Demonstrate inside out, head up, head on swivel
- Coach dumps puck to corner, player retrieves the puck focussing on a proper angle. Once the player has the puck they should drive the circle for a shot on net
- Progress to the 2nd player in line following the first player in and putting some passive pressure on the player to execute a good angle to the puck and drive around the circle to the net. 2nd player should also focus on getting good angling position and controlling their skating



Key Teaching Points

- Head on Swivel
- Inside, Out path

Open Ice Angling

Drill Objective

Players should start to be able to control the player they are checking without assistance from the boards

Drill Explanation

1. Facing Goal

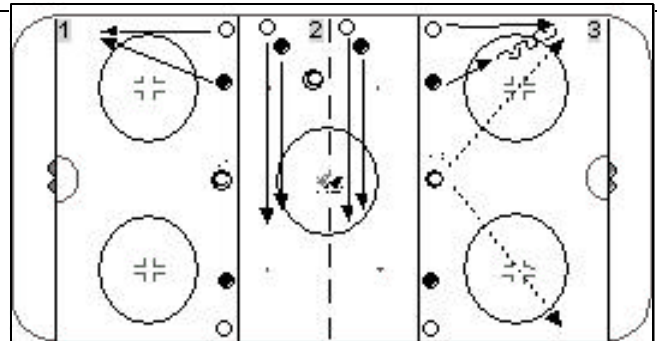
- Players pair up with both facing the goal. Defender inside position and forces player to move board side.
- Defender keeps player to the board side, attacks his stick where blade meets shaft and squeezes angled player out while getting the puck.

2. Defensive Positioning - 1 on 1

- Players partner up, work on defensive positioning, outside shoulder of defender with inside shoulder of attacker

3. Facing Inside Shoulder

- Players pair up with attacker facing the goal and defender facing attacking player. Defender's helmet lines up with inside shoulder of attacker and while skating backward, forces player to move board side.



Key Teaching Points

- Defensive positioning, hip pocket

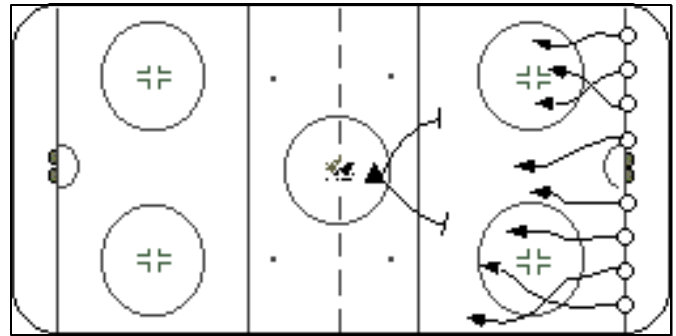
British Bulldog

Drill Objective

Put the skills of angling and positioning into a game scenario where the players continue to receive the opportunity to polish the skill

Drill Description

- Players line up at one end of ice, on coaches signal, players skate to other end, trying not to get caught. If players get caught, they then go to centre and help coaches catch other players.
- Can also be done with pucks



Key Teaching Points

- Emphasize angling tips from previous drills

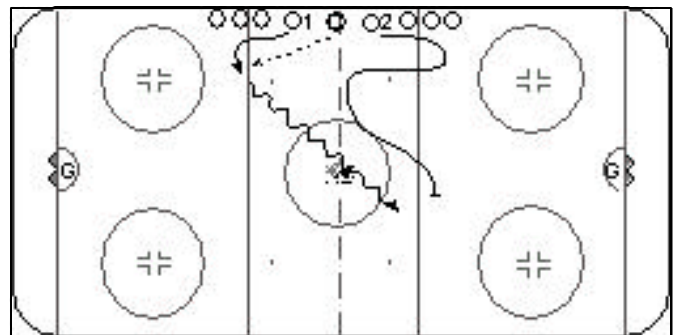
Angling - Open Ice

Drill Objective

Players should gain the ability to read and react and increase their ability to "smart skate" angle

Drill Explanation

- 01 and 02 leave from the red line on go from coach
- both players skate down the boards to the blueline and turn
- coach passes to one player
- Other player angles the puck carrier to the middle, continues angle and pursuit across the neutral zone



Key Teaching Points

- Smart skating
- React quickly to receiving or not receiving the pass

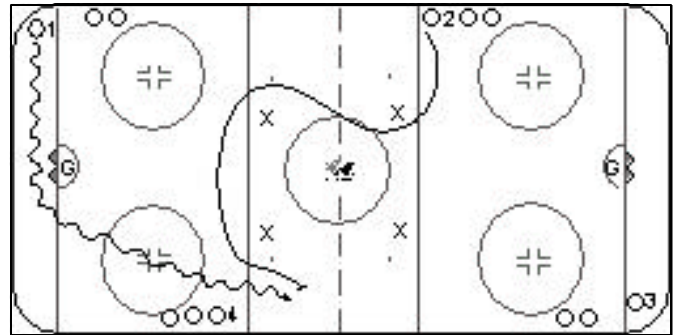
Angling Gate Drill

Drill Objective

Teach defensive player to save ice skating off the puck, limiting the puck carrier to one option

Drill Explanation

- 01 and 02 begin on the whistle
- 01 picks up loose puck and skates behind the net and must skate between the pylons for a shot on goal
- 02 closes the gap, saving ice in the neutral zone, before angling toward 01
- 02 attempts to force 01 outside the pylons, not giving up the middle lane



Key Teaching Points

- maintain middle lane
- control skating

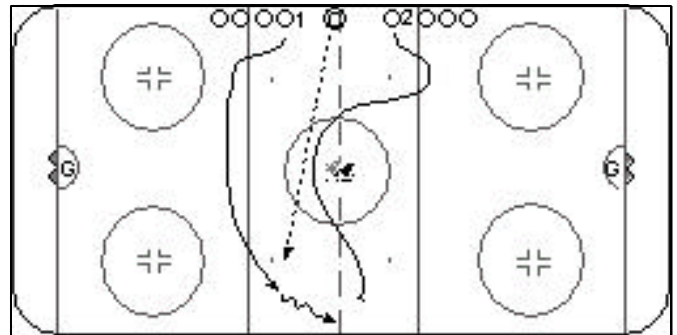
Stampede Angling

Drill Objective

Close quickly and angle the puck carrier to the outside and maintain speed

Drill Explanation

- Coach passes the puck anywhere on one side of the ice
- 01 retrieves the puck, 02 double touches the blueline, then closes the gap on 02
- 02 plays 01 but if a turnover occurs, 02 can move onto offence



Key Teaching Points

- close quickly, angle to outside
- no backward skating
- use speed and controlled skating