

TRYOUT PREP PRACTICE (HALF-ICE)

Tuesday, May 17th, 2022

The practice will comprise of drills and games where score is kept to increase competitive mindset as players head into tryouts or training camps. To make it more competitive, have the players pre-arranged into two teams and keep score throughout with clearly established constraints.

Gates of Buffalo Game: 8-10min - Could have two nets set up in this game to include both goalies at once + make it harder to defender if they earn the opportunity to shoot. Must make at least 2 consecutive passes through gates before they can create a shooting opportunity.

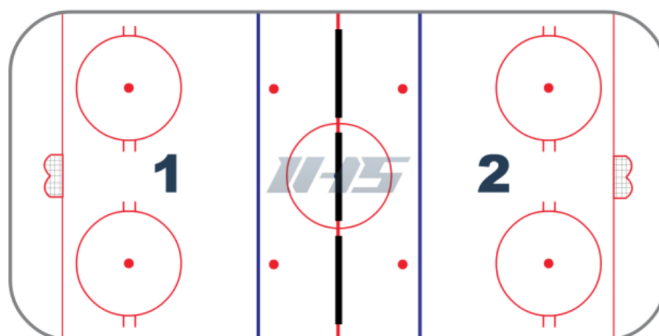
Quick Turn Up - 2v2 with a Twist: 8-10min - Have D start at the top of the circles and forwards start just outside the zone. Coach chooses different variations of 2v2, 3v2 and/or 1v2. Players must recognize the situation and play it out off the rush. Encourage creativity offensively and go through options such as changing speeds upon entry, deception on options, and pulling up on the rush to hit the second wave. D must quickly recognize the situation and communicate.

3v3 In-Zone Transition Game - Offense > Defense
> Out: 8-10min Set up next line on red line so that they have to enter the zone and forces defensive team to gap up.

2v2 with Corner Outlets: 8-10min Start every puck as a rimmed puck that players must go compete for. Must move puck to either outlet in order to change possession and shoot. Option to add constraint such as can only shoot on one-timers. Outlet players can shoot.

2v2 Battle Royale: 8-10min Last 10-min. Keep score. On whistle to change, players sprint through the blue line and next 4 enter the game.

PRACTICE LAYOUT

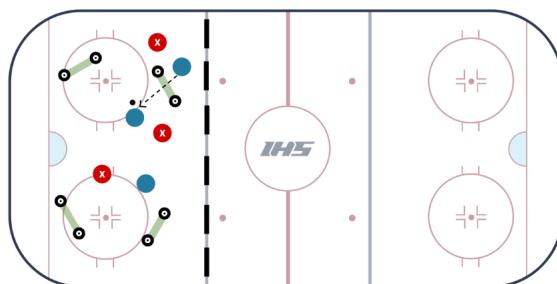


Gates of Buffalo 3 on 3 Game

Details:

Gates of Buffalo 3 on 3 Small Area Hockey Game builds off of the [Gates of Buffalo Passing Game](#) by adding a 3 on 3 game element to it. The goal is to pass the puck through gates to score more goals than the other team. This game is great for practicing puck protection, moving to open space, communicating and passing.

This game framework will help players learn to play with their head up, communicate with teammates and move to open space. This game will look extremely messy at first, but players will get better with each repetition. Moving to open space, and moving the puck will eventually become second nature to the team. As a coach, If you commit to working on games like this instead of memorization drills for a portion of each practice, you will marvel at how your team begins to work together.



GAME OBJECTIVE

- Score goals by passing through the "Gates."
- Score more goals than the opposing team.
- You can not pass through the same gate twice in a row!

SETUP & ACTIVITY VARIABLES

- Players:** great for 2 on 2, 3 on 3, 4 on 4 or 5 on 5 games.
- Time:** You can rotate through groups of players in 30, 45 or 60-second shifts and count how many goals are scored.
- Space:** can be set up to be within a zone, or half of a zone (station) or a smaller area. The smaller the space, the more challenging it will be for the players as they are forced to make quicker decisions.
- Group Competition:** Count the number of successful goals made to naturally bring out the competition between teams.
- With a Goalie:** You can require the players to make 2 (or more) passes through a gate before they can shoot on net. After they shoot on net, they need to make the required number of passes through the gates again. *The goalie should work on tracking the puck when the team is not actively shooting on net.*
- Gates:** You can add 3 or more gates. They can be made of tires, cones, pucks and other materials. Change up the sizes of the gates for an extra challenge. The smaller the gate, the more accurate the pass must be!

Setup Suggestions for Elite Players

- Make the gates much smaller.
- You can add a hockey stick at the bottom of each gate so players must "saucer" through a gate and over the stick for the point.
- Add various obstacles on the ice such as sticks that players must be aware of and pass around or saucer over.
- If you have a goalie, require 2 or more passes through the gates before players are allowed to take a shot on net. Even though the goalie will not get as many shots, they can work on tracking the puck!

COACHING POINTS

- Encourage players to always move to open space on the ice. Do not allow them to stand still and pass the puck back and forth.
- Encourage players to find "passing lanes" for good passes.
- Encourage verbal communication (calling teammate by name, saying you are open, etc).
- Encourage non-verbal communication (good eye contact, showing a passing target, tapping a stick, etc).
- Allow players to make mistakes. It will take time to get comfortable with these activities. But as time goes on you will see them picking their head up to make a decision, which is the goal of this small area game.***

Why do we call this small area game "**Gates of Buffalo 3 on 3 Game**?" The game has been called "gates" in the world of soccer and we decided to add Buffalo to it for two fun reasons: First, IHS has strong ties to Buffalo, NY. Secondly, the imagery of a Buffalo can help drive home to your youth players why you are practicing this game. If you do not pick your head up and use your teammates while playing the game of hockey, you run the risk of getting trampled by the other team. This can feel like getting run over by a Buffalo (physically or on the scoreboard). This game helps prevent both of those situations by forcing players to keep their head up while communicating and working with teammates to score goals.

Length Of Time: 8-10min

Station Number: 1

Coach's Notes:

Passing through Gates = 1 point

Advanced Progression: Have two nets set up in cross-ice positions to include both goalies at once + make it harder to defender if they earn the opportunity to shoot. Team with possession must make at least 2 consecutive passes through gates before they can create a shooting opportunity.

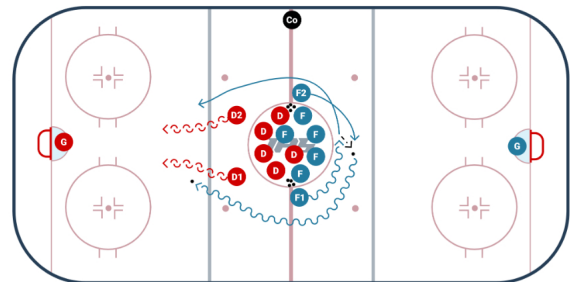
If they make 2 consecutive passes, they have option to go shoot on net, or they can continue to earn points through gates. Goal = 2 points

Quick Turn Up 2 On 2

Details:

This 2 vs 2 drill is excellent for working on high-speed turnovers or transitions in the neutral zone. When a turnover occurs in the neutral zone it is important for the forwards to get up ice quick, find passing lanes and work to generate a scoring opportunity. On the defensive side of things, it is important to work with your partner to keep the forwards to the outside of the ice with good gap control.

The video clip is from Buffalo Sabres Development Camp. The drill is set up to be half-ice situation but it is running out of both sides of the ice for full ice drill. Coaches can easily set up this drill to be full ice (like shown in the video), half ice (with only one side running), full-ice half-width (so the other width can be used for stations) or a 1/4 ice station. The variety of ways this drill can be set up makes this an excellent option for many ages and skill levels.



Setup:

- Have 2 forwards and 2 defensemen ready to go 2 vs 2.
- Can be full ice, half ice, or set up as a 1/4 station.
- When the whistle blows, the two forwards cross to generate speed coming through the neutral zone. You can have the players skate around the players waiting for their turn (like it is shown in the video). This makes it hard for the defense to know which forward is coming out with the puck.
- The forwards go into the zone and the 2 vs 2 begins.
- The forwards work to score a goal. The play goes until a goal is scored, the play is whistled down, or the defense takes the puck out of the zone.
- When the whistle is blown all players need to sprint out of the zone.

Forward Coaching Points:

- Forwards should work to generate speed crossing over at the start of the drill.
- Forwards should be mindful of the defense and consider crossing with their teammate to drop the puck or changing up their skating speed to create space and throw off the defenceman's gap.
- The forward without the puck should be looking to go to open space to be an outlet or driving to the net to bring the defense with them.
- Communicate with your teammate!

Defensive Coaching Points:

- Stick on the ice!
- Use good defensive stick position to steer forwards to the outside and take away dangerous passes.
- Work on keeping a close gap to the forwards. You do not want to be so far back that they can easily shoot.
- Work to angle forwards to the outside of the ice.
- Communicate with your partner!

VARIATIONS:

- Quick Turn Up 3 on 2. Same setup as the drill above but add an additional forward.
- Quick Turn Up 2 on 1
- Quick Turn Up 1 on 1

Length Of Time: 8-10min

Station Number: 2

Coach's Notes:

Have D start at the top of the circles and forwards start just outside the zone. Coach chooses different variations of 2v2, 3v2 and/or 1v2. Players must recognize the situation and play it out off the rush. Let the play go for 8-10 seconds.

To keep score and make it competitive: Offensive team gets 1 point for SOG and 2 points for a Goal. Defensive team gets 1 point for preventing a SOG and 2 points for skating the puck out of the zone.

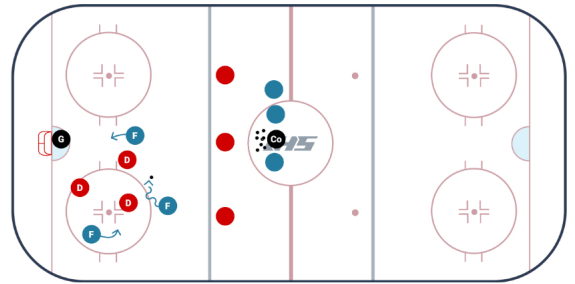
Continuous In Zone 3 vs. 3 Game

Details:

A continuous 3 vs. 3 hockey game that puts the defenders at a big disadvantage since they will be double shifting. Players will be tired so it is important for them to focus on battling, good positioning and habits during this game.

Setup:

- 3 defenders start at the blue line and 3 forwards start in the center ice circle.
- The game starts with the coach passing the puck to one of the 3 forwards (this begins the 3 vs. 3).
- Forwards try to keep possession of the puck and score.
- The defenders can end the game by skating the puck out of the zone or passing the puck to the forwards that are next in line.
- If a goal is scored, or the goalie freezes the puck, or the puck goes out of play, the coach has the option to chip another puck in the zone, or pass to the next forwards in line.
- When the shift ends (either with a goal, the defense getting the puck out of the zone, or a coach's whistle), the forwards switch to defense and the new forwards start the 3 vs. 3.
- **Keep Score:** 3 points for a goal, 2 points for the defense skating the puck out of the zone, 1 point for the defense passing the puck out of the zone, and 0 points if the coach blows the whistle and changes lines.



Coaching Points:

- The defense will be tired since they will be "double shifting." Encourage good positioning and habits. Stick on the ice!
- Both teams should not be afraid to hold on to the puck, and protect it until they are able to make a play.
- Both teams should work on verbal & non-verbal communication with their teammates.
- Compete to score points for your team! Celebrate points!

VARIATIONS:

- Can be set up on 1/4 ice ([view animation here](#)).
- Can be 1v1 ([view example](#)), 2v2 ([view example](#)), 3v3, or 4v4.
- Can add "gates" (like [Picket Fences Game](#)) at the point that the defenders must skate through.

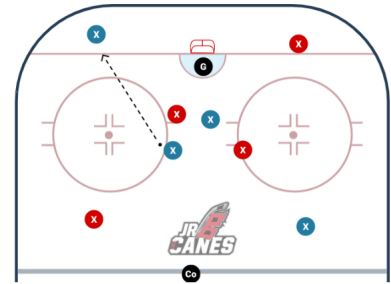
Length Of Time: 8-10min

Station Number: 3

2v2 with Corner Outlets

Details:

2v2 Corner Outlets is an in-zone game that focuses on puck movement, spacing and generating offense. The game is 2v2 in zone but each team has two outlets on opposite corners -- one high outlet and one low outlet. Outlets have the ability to move within 6-8 feet but otherwise must stay in their area. Players in the game must utilize either outlet to change possession and try to score.



You can vary the constraint to allow outlet players to shoot or not. After a few minutes, flip what side each team's outlets are on.

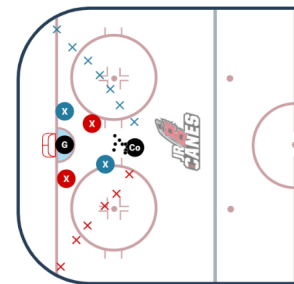
Length Of Time: 10-12min

Station Number: 4

Coach's Notes:

Start every puck as a rimmed puck that players must go compete for. Must move puck to either outlet in order to change possession and shoot. Option to add constraint such as can only shoot on one-timers. Outlet players can shoot.

2v2 Battle Royale



Length Of Time: 10-12min

Station Number: 5

Coach's Notes:

Keep score. On whistle to change, players sprint through the blue line and next 4 enter the game. Players on the outside that are not playing (the x's) should keep the puck in the zone and cheer on their teammates.