The Safe, Fun, and Efficient Way

Bjorn Kinding is a Swedish-Canadian citizen, a graduate from Umeå University, and a professional hockey coach. “Checking- The Right Way” was originally written for Hockey Alberta (2003), and has thereafter been published by USA Hockey (2008), and abbreviated versions by Hockey Canada (2004) and the Swedish Ice Hockey Federation (2006). This updated version was written for The IIHF, March 2010.
### Overview of the Checking Skills and Checking Drills

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IIHF Coaching Symposium 2010
Checking – The Right Way

This manual is intended for all of us who coach hockey. The purpose is to use it as a resource on how to teach and apply checking in the best tactically, technically and ethically responsible way. Developing sound checking skills of all our players is a necessity in today’s hockey. Not only does our team’s defensive ability largely rely on each individual’s ability to check effectively, but the safety of our players is directly dependent on how well they are trained to protect themselves. In addition, the safety of the opponent is also jeopardized if our players are not trained to check the right way. The right way includes physical ability, technical skills, and ethical judgement. Shortcomings in any of these three areas can be very destructive to our team’s results, and it can be right out dangerous to all players on the ice.

Making sure all of our players know how to check the right way gives us added control. Personally, I feel good about my team, the game, and myself when I am in control. On the other hand, losing control is very frustrating. We sometimes say, “things go out of control”, but in reality, it is we, the coaches, who let it slip. Blaming the referee, the other team, or their coach, is just a sign of resignation, and a confirmation that we have really “lost it”.

Improving your players, and teaching them how to check correctly, begins with developing a code of conduct. Consciously, or subconsciously, we all have a code of conduct, but when leading and fostering young people, we must make sure our code is ethically correct and is based on all the values we want our children to obtain. When you work through the “Safety and Ethics” chapter of this manual, I hope you’ll confirm and commit to the responsible code.

In the following chapters, we will work on the right techniques of angling, stick checking, and body contact. We will also work in depth on the right body checking techniques, and demonstrate some appropriate drills. The purpose is that we, as coaches, will improve our skills of instructing players and develop their skills to be the right way of checking.

Checking is not an isolated set of skills. On the contrary, checking skills are intertwined with all the other hockey skills. Skating skills form the foundation for all forms of checking. Stickhandling skills are necessary for proper stick checking and to receive checks correctly. Finally, developing the awareness of where the opponents are situated will improve the ability to see the game and find the passing and shooting target quickly. Consequently, it is important to develop all core skills simultaneously. Delegating a young player to be only a “checker”, and thereby neglecting the development of the other skills will, at best, turn him/her into a poor checker. On the other hand, a well balanced training of all core skills, skating, stickhandling, passing, shooting, and checking, will be very beneficial and give your players the best resources to form a successful team.

Let’s do the right thing!

Bjorn Kinding
The Defensive Skills of the Game, the Other Half of Success

As much as hockey is based around creating plays to score goals, it is as important to disrupt plays to prevent goals. The defensemen and forwards are expected to check, pin, contain, box out, block shots, and work strictly as an organized team to prevent the opponent from scoring. Traditionally, this part of the game has always been prioritized among the coaches, while swift skating, surprising stickhandling moves, deceptive passes and powerful shots fascinated the fans. Playing defence became labelled as boring hockey, except for the hard and heavy body checks. Fans were excited and entertained by watching two players collide, and body checking became a marketable product.

People who grow up watching hockey on TV, are often left with the conception that body checking equals the defence of the game. Effective checking means being brave, tough, solid, strong, and (yes) mean. Talent and skills are rarely used to describe a player’s checking efficiency. Good checkers seldom get credit for their agility, timing, balance, stability, arsenal of checking techniques, ability to anticipate the game, and fair play. Instead, the ability to intimidate, play with an edge, push the envelope, get under one’s skin, and do anything for the team are commonly used to describe a checker’s value. These conceptions make it very challenging for us, as coaches, to build the right checking skills.

To be successful in today’s hockey, teams need highly developed systems for forechecking, neutral zone defence, defensive zone coverage and penalty killing. However, each system is only as effective as the players’ abilities to execute it. Aggressive forechecking demands exceptional skating skills, and a mastery of various body and stick checking skills. A more contained forechecking requires smooth skating skills, the ability to anticipate and steer, a “quick stick” to cut off passes and great communication skills. If you, like most coaches, want to shift back and forth from aggressive to contained strategies, your players will be challenged to develop all these of skills.

In this manual, we will explore which checking skills the modern hockey players need, describe the right way of execution, and explain the best way to help our players develop and master these skills. We will methodically build the separate pieces, preparing the player to play the complete checking game in all three zones. But checking skills are not restricted to the defensive plays. The player carrying the puck, or battling for a good scoring position, also needs skills on how to protect him-/herself and how to avoid being checked.

Developing our players to check the right way will give us the tools we need to make our teams more successful. Setting up and scoring goals is one half of the game, preventing the opponent from scoring is the other half. I would say that our team’s checking skills equals fifty percent of our chance of success. All players need the right checking skills, and as any skill, they can be learned, trained and developed. Checking The Right Way For Youth Hockey will help us.
Are minors mature enough to body check?
(co-authored by Dr. Steve Norris)

Body checking is an integral part of hockey. Body checking is also a potential risk for injuries. Each time children are on the ice to play, or practice, as coaches we are well aware of those risks. The children themselves, however, often have the feeling that they are invulnerable. A lack of experience, an egocentric view of life and a low degree of appreciation of others are common characteristics of young people. These characteristics combined with armoury of equipment, and the fact that those who continue to play most likely did not get injured, combine to create a potentially dangerous and fearless player who is willing to take risks with his own and others’ safety.

**In Alberta, we do not allow children under the age of eleven to body check.** We don’t think they have the fundamental skills to deliver and, more importantly, to protect themselves against body checks. We also know that they do not have the maturity to execute the body checks in a fair and safe manner. Finally, we believe that body checking would dominate the game and hamper the development of all other essential skills.

**So, to answer the initial question is, “No!”** The players are not mature enough to body check, but they are mature enough to be taught body checking. This makes it necessary to rephrase the question, and ask, “Are we mature enough to coach?”

If you are ready, great! Go out and do it because we want our children to take part in a stimulating and developing program, and we don’t want anyone to get hurt. If you feel you’re not ready, this program can assist in you taking the first step in becoming ready. We need you. The children need you to lead them in a safe and fun structure and thereby help them get the utmost out of their talent.

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Who is responsible for a player’s actions?
A. The Coach  
B. The Player  
C. The Referee

Is it safe for an 11-years old to body check?
The risks of body checking do not disappear on the child’s eleventh birthday. Nor does the mere fact that when someone turns eleven, it makes him/her a more responsible individual. Growth and development literature tells us that around this age, we can expect children to be mature enough to be reasonably coachable. This provides us coaches with the pre-requisites to teach our player how to body check the right way.

Are you ready to choose the right way of body checking, regardless of what the players, the parents, the referees, the opponents, as well as sport-entertainment celebrities say?  
[ ] Yes  
[ ] No

“Only we, the coaches, can be expected to be in charge.”
A child’s body is not a miniature version of an adult body
(co-authored by Dr. Steve Norris)

Every parent experiences the incredible development a child goes through and how its body and skills transform from one stage to another. Parents with more than one child also experience how different the development paths can be. Some children mature faster. Others learn new skills faster. Although children reach the development stages in different orders and at different times, we know that by the time the children reach the ages of 20 to 22 years, they will be full-developed adults.

A human’s bones do not harden until the person is finished growing. Soft bones do not protect the internal organs.

Which organs should be protected by:
The Skull? __________
The Spin? __________
The Thorax? __________
The Pelvis? __________

Some stages of the development are hard to see. For example, in order to grow, the skeleton of a child is softer than that of an adult. This characteristic makes it more flexible. It can form, or deform, depending on exterior influences, and it is less likely to break. In addition, a child’s bones heal more quickly. Some coaches might draw the conclusion that this is perfect for a tough game of hockey, thinking, “The bones don’t break easily, and they heal quicker. Great! Let’s crash and bang!”

In reality though, the opposite is true. Because the bones are softer, they don’t protect the vital parts of the body nearly as well as bones that have hardened. The softer, flexible skull for example can’t protect the brain from even moderate impact. If a blow is made to the head, the bones of the skull will bend inwards and the brain itself will absorb the impact. As soon an impact is over, the skull “bounces back” to its original shape. You can’t see anything on the outside, but the brain might be injured, and if not attended correctly, there could be irreparable damage. An adult skull would have withstood the impact of the blow, and the brain would have been protected.

The functions of the two different skulls could be illustrated with the characteristics of a tennis ball and a coconut. If you throw the tennis ball into a wall, it will temporarily flatten and then bounce back without any visual damages to its surface. The coconut, however, won’t flatten nor bounce. Now ask yourself, would you prefer a helmet made of a tennis ball shell or one made of a coconut shell? Our children have no choice. They are equipped with the “tennis ball helmet”.

The illustration with the skull is just one example. This lack of protection also applies to other body parts, such as the spine, the pelvis and the thorax. Moderate force is harmless to these areas of an adult’s body, but a child could suffer severe injuries including lung puncture, heart trauma, torn nerves, or spleen and liver damage.

Since the developmental stages come in different orders and at different ages for all individuals, there is not a “magic age” (peewee, bantam, midget) where everybody’s bodies are strong enough to justify a higher tolerance of the impact of body checking. In fact, nothing justifies exposing a child’s body to excessive blows, and all players in youth hockey are children.
Concussion Quiz

Concussions are caused by trauma to the head. In hockey the trauma is mostly caused through:
- Deliberate blows to the head by a stick, elbow, shoulder or fist
- Unintentional blows to the head by a helmet or a skate
- Sudden impact to the head after contact with the glass, the boards, the goal or the ice
- Whiplash
- Squeeze of the head between other players and boards, glass or ice

To avoid such traumas, these methods are used:
- Protective gear, such as helmet, facemask and mouth piece
- Extensive build-up of neck muscles
- Awareness and quick reactions
- Respect, sportsmanship and fair play
- Rules

True or False

1. In the last few seasons more than a few NHL players have retired due to concussions.  
   True  False

2. During the same time span, compared to the NHL, a much larger number of players in youth hockey have retired the sport due to concussions.  
   True  False

3. Youth hockey arenas have a lower level of safety standards than those in the NHL.  
   True  False

4. Youth hockey games and practices do not require the presence of a doctor nor do they require the presence of an ambulance.  
   True  False

5. The size and weight range of the players in each youth hockey age group (age 12 and up) is much greater than the range in the NHL.  
   True  False

6. The weight of the head is proportionally heavier for a young player than it is for an adult.  
   True  False

7. The strength of the neck muscles is proportionally weaker for a young player than it is for an adult.  
   True  False

8. The skull of a young player is softer than that of an adult.  
   True  False

9. The body checking rules are generally the same for peewee and the NHL.  
   True  False

10. The most important responsibility for all youth hockey coaches is to ensure the safety of all players involved in the practices and games.  
    True  False
The Right Way

Risk Management

The most important responsibility for all coaches in youth hockey is the safety of all players on both teams. Teaching the right techniques about how to receive a body check is only one part of this duty. Continuously keeping the players in line with the right ethics and respect for the human values is the bigger task.

The momentum of a game shifts back and forth, and so does the mental stages of a player. A tired, frustrated, and hurt player is more likely to “step out of line” than a well-rested and balanced player. It is our job as coaches to read our players and act before someone loses his/her focus. What makes this task particularly tough is that when your players are getting frustrated, you are more likely to be frustrated yourself. This is where the character of a leader versus the lack of character of a follower comes into play. The leader has his mindset on where he/she wants the players to go and can lead the way. A follower gets affected by his/her players’ reaction and follows them wherever they go, even if it’s down hill.

All staff members should be trained in First Aid. If an accident happens and someone gets hurt, we, the coaches, need to know the ABC’s of First Aid. The very first treatment, or lack thereof, will decide the seriousness of the injury in many cases.

This course is not authorized to teach you the first aid skills, so we strongly recommend that you and all your staff members attend a special first aid clinic as soon as possible. It is not enough that just one of the staff members has this certification. When an accident strikes, there could be more than one injury and your “First-Aid-guy” might be occupied attending someone else, or he may have already left the arena to go to the hospital.

It is wise to plan every game and training session as if an accident will occur. Here is a checklist of things to do prior to each activity. Even in your home rink things change, so go through this checklist every time. It will only take you a minute once you’ve got into the routine.

Always remember:
Prevention is the best treatment.

First Aid Checklist

1. Who is trained in First Aid?
2. Is any attending parent a doctor or a nurse?
3. Is anyone from the visiting team a doctor or a nurse?
4. Will they stay throughout the entire game/practise?
5. Could they commit to being responsible for first aid?
6. Where is the first aid kit?
7. Where is the first aid room?
8. What is the phone number for the hospital?
9. Who has a phone?
10. Where is a pay phone?
11. Is there change available for the pay phone?
12. Where is the ambulance entrance?
Protective Gear

Protective equipment is continuously being improved. Today’s helmets, shoulder pads, elbow pads and kneepads are built to absorb much higher impact than those made 10 or 20 years ago. In addition, new types of protective gear, such as neck and mouth guards, are now commonly used whereas 30 years ago practically no one wore a facemask or a shield.

With improved protection, the safety, in relation to certain types of impact, has considerably increased. However, since the checker is better protected as well, he/she has become more fearless and is checking with increased impact. At the same time, tolerance levels seem to have increased. A shoulder check to the face gives the illusion of being less dangerous now that the players wear facemasks.

In some cases the new gear actually increases the risks for injury. As good as helmets and facemasks have become in absorbing and protecting against the blow from a puck or a stick, they still cannot give any support to your neck and vertebrae. Rather, the risk of neck injuries has rather increased since the pure weight of the helmet-facemask combination puts more strain to your neck muscles and makes it tougher to protect yourself against the whiplash effect.

The same can be said about the shoulder pads, but in the opposite relation. The new shoulder pads give the checker so much protection that he/she can unload much more force without hurting himself/herself. But the player receiving the blow does not have the same increased protection, especially if the blow is targeted to the chest or ribs. The internal organs are practically unprotected. A child’s thorax has virtually no chance of withstanding the impact of modern shoulder pads.

Finally, the development of the rinks with rock solid boards and tempered glass has made the impact increase. Practically all other sports have gone the other way by increasing the padding on any object that could make contact with the athlete. Downhill skiing has whip posts and safety nets. Car racing has sand pits and walls of tires. Football and basketball has thick padding on the support beams to the goals and baskets. But hockey has tempered glass. This construction make hits from behind, boarding or any contact where the head gets squeezed in between the glass or boards and the opponent much more dangerous. No equipment can ever protect against this kind of impact. And, most vulnerable of all are the children, our youth hockey players.

Do you think that the modern equipment has made the game:

☐ Safer?
☐ More Dangerous?

A child’s thorax has virtually no chance of withstanding the impact from modern shoulder pads.
Rules are there to protect the players
If there are no rules, how do we know who wins?
Rules are the basis for all sports. Before any game can start, one needs clear directions about the purpose of the game and how to get there. The rules set the parameters for which actions are allowed so everybody clearly knows what to expect before entering the game. If you agree to play hockey, you also agree to the fact that the opponent may try to body check you, or you might get hit by a puck. If this happens you cannot complain, since you have already given your consent.

The rules also clarify what not to expect, and to what you have not given your consent. For example, if I agree to play hockey, I will not get a stick in my face, a crosscheck to my throat, a hard check into the boards or a check from behind. All these actions are banned by the rules and should not happen.

Still, some players allow themselves to play “outside the rules” and some coaches encourage their players to “cross the line”, as long as they do not get caught by the referee. If the line that was crossed concerned an offside or an early line change, there is no major impact. But many rules are there to protect the athletes, so playing outside these rules is hazardous to the children’s safety, and this is not acceptable under any circumstances.

The sole purpose of the following rules is to protect children in youth hockey:

| Charging | Cross Checking |
| Boarding | Butt ending |
| High sticking | Spearing |
| Elbowing | Roughing |
| Slashing | Checking from behind |

Playing outside these rules jeopardize the safety of children. Since our prime responsibility is the safety of all the children, how do we make our players play safely?

If you agree to play a game of hockey, you also agree to refrain from all of these actions. If you agree to coach a team in hockey, you also agree to restrain all your players at all times from committing any of these actions. These actions are not meant to be a part of hockey and certainly not a part of youth hockey. If you allow them to be carried out, your team is not playing hockey and you are not a hockey coach.
One Game – Two Sets of Rules

As we all know, there are differences between the NHL and the Olympic rulebooks. The NHL has, for example, a higher tolerance for charging and boarding, less severe penalties for roughing, and allows more physical play in front of the nets. Some fans enjoy this style better whereas others prefer the Olympic rules. It is up to the marketing of these events, as well as the player unions and the insurance companies to agree on what is a good product and what should be tolerated.

When it comes to youth hockey, it is of little concern what the fans at the Olympics or the Stanley Cup prefer. The right tolerance level for youth hockey is a level that enhances the development of the players, and creates a safe and fun environment.

The basis for the youth hockey rules is the Olympic rulebook, not the NHL rulebook. All hockey associations around the world are members of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), and play their highest level of competition under the IIHF rules. This includes the World Championships, the Olympic Games, and all national championships. All youth hockey players are members of their national federation, and thereby members of IIHF. Therefore the youth hockey rules across the world are based on the IIHF rules.

The differences between the youth hockey rules and the NHL rules are sometimes confusing, since what might be a good, clean check on Hockey Night In Canada is likely to be an illegal and hazardous action in a minor hockey game. Spectators, players and sometimes even the coaches are unaware of these differences and act aggressively towards the referees. The solution, however, is not to adopt the NHL rulebook since those rules are intended for adults and are hazardous for children.

Other physical contact sports also have one set of rules for amateurs and another set for the professionals. Amateur boxing, for example, has thicker padding on the gloves, the athletes were helmets, there is more protection on the floor and the matches are considerably shorter. Still every pro-boxer has been developed through amateur boxing, and no one can box under the pro-rules before adult age. Even Mike Tyson was once an Olympic Champion.
What is the “Right Way” of checking?
Whenever you are responsible for children, there is always one priority that overrules all others: “Safety First!” In other leisure activities, it goes without saying. We fully expect that the instructor will guarantee for our children’s safety, if we enrol them in scuba classes, parachuting, wall climbing, swimming, or even the physical education class at school. This means that the right way must be the safe way.

Secondly, playing efficiently means being responsible and accountable within the team to compete in hockey games. This means that the right way must be the efficient way.

Finally, the purpose of body checking in youth hockey is to separate the opponent from the puck. The purpose is not to intimidate, grind out or “make ‘em pay a price”, and it is certainly not to hurt anyone. This means that the right way also is the controlled way.

All the players of youth age are under the supervision and leadership of adult coaches. This makes us coaches responsible for everything our players do. The role of the officials is to determine the severeness of the players’ actions, not to control the players. Even though some exceptionally good referees find a way to do both, the coach alone is liable for all his/her players’ actions.

The right way is:
- the safe way
- the efficient way
- the controlled way

The main goal for any good leader is to take good care of his/her personal. For a hockey coach, that is the players. Since the game requires the participation of another team, the coach also becomes responsible for the welfare of the opposing players. No victory can ever justify the injury of any single player on either team. In fact, a season can never be considered successful if someone gets hurt. True success is never at someone else’s expense.

In other leisure activities, we fully expect the instructor to guarantee our children’s safety

In the courtroom, who is responsible for the defendant’s actions?
- “The Criminal”
- “The Boss”
- The Judge

In the rink, who is responsible for the “defendant’s” actions?
- The Player
- The Coach
- The Referee
Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

Whether or not we have given it a thought; we all have a code of ethics, and we follow a code of conduct. It can be a strong conviction that is built on respect for all living things and the environment, or it can be a weak self-centred position from which nothing has any worth. Our personal code of ethics is made up of the values we believe in often reflected in the way we have been brought up and the experiences we have had growing up. However the code of ethics is useless without a code of conduct. The code of conduct controls our actions. Without conduct that correspond to our ethical beliefs would the same as saying: “I know it is wrong, but I'll do it anyway.”

Test yourself: Is it right to…

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Ethic</th>
<th>Conduct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A set of principles</td>
<td>Distinguish Right from Wrong</td>
<td>The control of your actions</td>
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Is it true that you have never…

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<tr>
<th>...yell at a child?</th>
<th>...hurt a child?</th>
<th>...jeopardize a child’s health?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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I hope you answered “No” to the three first questions. This would indicate a responsible code of ethics. If you answered, “Yes” to any of the next three questions, it would indicate some inconsistency between your code of ethic and your code of conduct. It also proves that it is very difficult to “walk the walk” and not just “talk the talk”.

Children however, are not nearly as effected by the “talk” as they are by the “walk”. What we say has less influence on the child as how we conduct ourselves. Consistency between words and actions will form the base on which our players judge our credibility. If we want them to believe us when we talk about forechecking and power play, we need to have a straight line between our code of ethics and code of conduct.

Take a minute to reflect on your code of ethics when it comes to body checking in youth hockey. Then answer the three questions below and try to justify your answers.

Are you of the opinion that…

1. …the referees lay down the law, and whatever they allow is correct?
2. …any penalty is a fair trade for stopping an opponent from scoring?
3. …regardless of whether the referee allows it or not, there are actions you will never accept?

Who has had an impact on your code of ethic?

- Your parents
- Your coaches
- Your teachers
- TV sport announcers

You now know your answers, and the reasoning behind them. Why do you think you answered the way you did? From whom do you think you've got your code of ethics? Do you think that your answers had anything to do with the persons who formed your code of ethics? Finally, are your codes of ethics different in hockey than they are in the rest of your life (values in the family, conduct towards your colleague at work)?

“A successful coach is not always a good leader.
A good leader’s values never change.
The codes of ethic and conduct are consistently in balance.”

Who has had an impact on your code of ethic?
How Our Codes Apply to Youth Hockey

Checking the right way for youth hockey allows the use of adequate force to separate the opponent from the puck. Any excessive force beyond what’s necessary to achieve this objective is illegal and should be penalized. We know the referees will not see every infraction and will not call every infraction they see. This is where the young players need our strong leadership. This is where the referee’s way is overruled by the right way. Our code of ethics and code of conduct must strongly provide that the acceptable tolerance level of youth hockey is sustained.

As leaders, we must condemn all infractions against the ethics of the game. Since we also represent Hockey Alberta, all our actions are expected to support Hockey Alberta’s core values.

Will you remove your players from the game if they commit any of the following infractions?

- **Contact with head**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Blind Angle Check**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Extend the arms**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Hitting from behind**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Crossing arms**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Low check**
  - Yes
  - No

- **Jumping**
  - Yes
  - No

**Hockey Core Values**

- **Fun & Fair-play based on Respect**
  - To promote positive self-esteem in all our people

- **Safe Environments**
  - By providing training and education for the well being of all

- **Innovation**
  - Creating an environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances

- **Perspective**
  - Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game
My Personal Code of Ethics and My Personal Code of Conduct

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code of Ethics</th>
<th>Code of Conduct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is wrong to use excessive force</td>
<td>1. Always bench a player who is violating the code of ethics</td>
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<td>2.</td>
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Date: ................................ / ................................ / ................................

Signature ..............................................................

Hockey Core Values

- **Fun & Fair-play based on Respect**
  To promote positive self-esteem in all our people
- **Safe Environments**
  By providing training and education for the well being of all
- **Innovation**
  Creating and environment where learning and flexibility are the tools we use to wisely handle our changing circumstances
- **Perspective**
  Maintaining a healthy balance between life and the Game
Developing Checking Skills 1
Reflections on Body-Checking in Youth Hockey

Youth Hockey fulfills many needs and functions. Activating the children in sound physical activities is an important investment in the future public health. Learning to work as a group and appreciate the achievements attained through teamwork are vital experiences that prepare young people for the life ahead. Building life-long friendships improves the spirit in the community in an immeasurable way.

Youth hockey also prepares the players for hockey at a higher level, and since hockey is a contact sport, the young players have to be taught how to body-check and how to protect themselves properly. When practising body-checking, always keep these two goals in mind:
1. Learn how to check
2. Learn how to take a check.

The importance of learning how to take a check by far outweighs the importance of learning to delivering a check. All players do not need to be good checkers, but every player is a potential target and will receive body checks. Therefore all body checking drills must emphasize how to receive and protect oneself, rather than how to apply a body check.

To ensure that our checking drills meet these objectives the players have to work in pairs and work on these goals together. The checker must commit to a code of conduct that directs the relationship between checker and receiver. Through this code, the checker will restrict the impact of the check to a level that is suitable for the receiver to develop his/her receiving skills. Think about checking drills the same way you think about goaltending and scoring drills. The shooter needs the goalie and the goalie needs the shooter. The checking practice works the same way. The checker and the receiver work together to help each other improve.

I will only check you with an impact, suitable for you to work on your receiving skills

The players should commit to the same code of conduct for the games as they do for practices. Everyone in youth hockey should have the opportunity to have fun and develop as hockey players. They can only do so if the code of conduct is reinforced.

Minor hockey is not a competition man vs. man. It’s children playing a game.

Youth Hockey
1. Improves public health
2. Fosters teamwork
3. Builds life-long friendships
4. Prepares the youth for life as an adult
5. Prepares players for higher level of hockey

What other goals do you think that minor hockey has?

Hockey Core Values
• Fun & Fair-play based on Respect
• Safe Environments
Definitions

Youth Hockey identifies two different streams, Body Contact and Body Checking. Younger age groups, female hockey, and no contact leagues play under the Body Contact regulations. Older players play under the Body Checking regulations. Even though both terms are well known and frequently used, it can be difficult to distinguish between them. Below are hockey Alberta’s definitions.

**Official Definitions of Body Contact:**
Body Contact is defined as an individual defensive tactic designed to legally block or impede the progress of an offensive puck carrier. This tactic is a result of movement of the defensive player to restrict movement of the puck carrier anywhere on the ice through skating, angling and positioning. The defensive player may not hit the offensive player by going in opposite direction to that player or by extending toward the offensive player in an effort to initiate contact. There must be no action where the puck carrier is pushed, hit or shoved into

**Official Definitions of Body Checking:**
Body Checking is defined as an individual defensive tactic designed to legally separate the puck carrier from the puck. This tactic is the result of a defensive player (player without the puck) applying physical extension of the body toward the puck carrier moving in an opposite or parallel direction. The action of the defensive player is deliberate and forceful in an opposite direction to which the offensive player is moving and is not solely determined by the movement of the puck carrier.

Stages of implementation for Youth Hockey
Developing Checking Skills
Do it Right, Right from the Start

Successful coaches ensure that every player has a chance to develop all his/her checking skills in a pedagogically functional progression, and allow the player's biological maturity and emotional development to reach certain levels. The Checking Progression Model, used by Hockey Alberta, introduces players to the skills of checking gradually. Steps 1, 2 and 3, include positioning/angling, stick checking and body contact, and they build the players' base during their early levels of hockey, Initiation through Atom. Step 4 introduces the skills of body checking. These skills are eased in throughout the Peewee level.

By the time the players reach the Bantam and Midget levels, all players should have had the opportunity to learn the essential checking skills that allow them to play body-checking hockey without preventable risks for injury. However, it is important to point out, that even in these age groups, the degree of physical development varies immensely from player to player. This leads to unbalanced competition where variations in size, strength, and the body's capability to withstand injuries are dramatic. It is of the utmost importance that players, coaches, and referees keep the tolerance level of the physical impact to a low and safe level for all participants.

### Hockey Alberta's Official Definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Positioning and Angling&lt;br&gt;The first step in teaching checking is to learn how to control skating and to establish position to approach the opponent from an angle that minimizes time and space for the opponent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stick Checking&lt;br&gt;The second step is to effectively use the stick for poke checking, sweep checking, lifting or locking the opponent's stick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Body Contact&lt;br&gt;The third step is to use the body to block the opponent's way or take away his/her skating lanes. The correct stance and effective use of leg strength are important parts of these techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Body Checking&lt;br&gt;The fourth and final step is the actual body check. This step includes teaching techniques to give and receive a body check safely and within the rules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All these four steps rest on a solid base of Attitude, Ethics, and Respect.
Positioning and Angling

The right or wrong position depends on many variables, for example, how you match-up against your opponent, the numbers of team mates and opponents in the area, the score of the game, or the tactic you’re playing. It is important is to know the different options and to understand the advantages and disadvantages of different positions. Here is an overview of this chapter:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Defensive Side Between the opponent and the net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Passing Lane Between two opponents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Shooting Lane Between the puck and the net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Defensive Triangle Defensive side of the puck and the passing lane in front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Offensive Side Between the opponent and the offensive net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Neutral Weak Side Side by side with the opponent on your backhand side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Neutral Strong Side Side by side with the opponent on your forehand side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Steering Approaching in an angle to make the opponent move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Driving Forcing the opponent in one direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing the gap flat Reducing the distance between you and the opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Closing the gap tight Same as “G” but in a tight area</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In teaching checking is to learn how to control skating and to establish position to approach the opponent from an angle that minimizes time and space for the opponent.
Positioning and Angling: Being at the right place at the right time

Good players seem to be in the right position at the right time, and thereby get more involved in the game than others. Why is that? Are they faster so they can get to the right spot before anyone else? Are they more agile so they can switch directions more quickly? Are they smarter, and know where to be better than everybody else? Do they read the evolution of the game better, and can foresee where the puck is going and in which area it will be an advantage to be? Are they better coached? Are they following the system better? Are they more willing to make a difference in the game? Are they more confident? Is it just natural talent? Well the questions are many, but there is only one answer: “They are all of the above.”

One thing is for sure, they were not born with all these qualities. Somewhere and somehow as they matured, they developed these skills. In some way, they have gained experience, drawn conclusions and adapted their game. Coaching certainly played a part in it, but self-coaching played an even bigger part. If coaching made such an impact on these players, does it mean we can train all our players to be as good as the best players? Maybe not, but we can certainly train them to be at the right spot at the right time. To do this successfully, there are three things we need to know: what is the right position, what is the right time, and how can our players get there.

The chapter on positioning and angling shows some ways to develop these skills. Very young players can learn these concepts. Learning them right, right from the start, will make their actions and reactions develop naturally, and become second nature.

Hockey Alberta recommends that positioning and angling drills are introduced early in a player’s career. The best ways to develop these skills is through read and react drills and a variety of games. Players, as young as novice (7-8 years old), can learn the basics of angling. These skills will form a very important base, which will be needed as the players move into body contact and body checking. Take your time building these fundamental skills carefully. In fact, these drills should be reviewed and repeated throughout a player’s career.

In the Positioning and Angling section, players will learn about defensive and offensive sides, passing and shooting lanes, steering and driving an opponent, and how to close the gap. The common denominator for all these skills is, of course, skating.

To be at the right spot at the right time we need to know:

• What the right position is
• What the right time is
• How to get there
Skating and Agility Skills

Positioning yourself in the best position, approaching the opponent from the right angle and keeping your balance during and after the battle for the puck, are the ABC’s to your checking success. It is true to say that your checking ability largely depends on your skating skills. These skating skills are equally important when it comes to avoiding a check, and protecting yourself and the puck. Pure speed can sometimes be enough, but more often it is the agility skills that will make the difference. The continuous training of all skating skills, including quick starts, stops, crossovers, turns, pivots, and lateral movements, is crucial to the development of checking skills. Skills to close the gap when playing man to man are also essential to learn. So, in addition to the skating skills above, every player should learn to master these three skating techniques:

1. Closing the gap flat
2. Closing the gap tight
3. Heel to heel lateral move

Heel to heel lateral move:
If you have backed off and would like to move forward to regain control of the gap, the heel to heel is a good move. Skate backwards, keep your body weight on one skate, and make a ¼ of a circle with this skate so you are now going laterally. Turn the other skate outward, so the heel is pointing in and the toe and knee are pointing out. Step over on this skate, make a forward c-cut and start moving forward.

Closing the gap flat:
After approaching the opponent you need to start moving backwards without losing your momentum. Make a forward c-cut with one skate (illustration shows the right skate). Twist the other foot inward, so the toes and knee are pointing in. Step over to this skate and make a backward c-cut and continue backwards.

Closing the gap tight
If you have limited space, you will have to stop and start backwards. To still keep part of the momentum, do a one-foot snowplough stop (left foot on illustration). Prior to coming to a complete stop, push off with a powerful backward c-cut and continue with a crossover stride.

The better you learn to move laterally with either the heels or the toes pointing inwards, the more able you will be to move laterally and forward/backward with the opponent, keeping him/her contained, and waiting for the best situation to follow up with a check.

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<tr>
<th>Technique Exercises</th>
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<td>Heel to Heel Spiral</td>
<td>3 x Wide Pass + Join the Rush</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-cut Yo-yo, C-cut Step Over C-cut</td>
<td>3 x 1 vs. 1 Neutral Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-3 Clock</td>
<td>3 x 1 vs. 1 Defensive Zone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Defensive Side

When the opponent controls the puck, most defensive tactics demand you to take a position on the defensive side of the player that you are covering. Defensive side means that you position yourself in an area so the opponent has to go through your area before he/she can get to the net. It takes extraordinary skating skills, as well as well-trained read-and-react skills, to perform this task effectively. You try to control the defensive side of your opponent all the time and in all three zones. So developing these skills will enhance your forechecking as well as your neutral zone and defensive zone defence. In penalty killing, defensive side coverage is paramount to the success.

Try to stay square to the opponent and use an active stick to apply pressure without giving up your position. A low centre of gravity will prepare you for body contact, and increase your ability to move. Your objective is to stay in the lane from the opponent’s perspective, not the puck’s. Focusing on the opponent’s chest will facilitate this task.
Passing Lane

Controlling the passing lanes is necessary for successful defence. A player with no passing options is under pressure, exposed for checking, and likely to lose the puck. He/she will need to take bigger risks if attempting a pass, which often leads to intercepted passes and turnovers. Players with well-developed skills for blocking passing lanes and intercept passes are the unsung heroes of every successful hockey team. Not only do they stop the opponent from scoring, but they establish instant puck control and start quick transition attacks.

When playing the passing lanes, you do not want to give up the defensive side. Initially, control the lane with an active stick, and when you close in on the opponent, keep your skates, kneepads, and shaft square across the passing lane to fill as much space as possible. Focus on covering the on-ice lane. This will force the opponent to use saucer passes which tougher to execute and to receive.

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Start from the defensive side of the passing lane
2. Active stick
3. Take away the on-ice lane first
4. Make yourself big (keep skates, kneepads, stick, etc. square)
5. Head on swivel

In The Game

Forechecking
Neutral zone defense
Defensive zone coverage
Penalty Killing

CORE SKILLS
SKATING
STICKHANDLING

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<tr>
<th>Technique Exercises</th>
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<td>Monkey in the Middle</td>
<td>Two Lines Seam Pass Coverage</td>
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<td>Passers and Shooters Coverage</td>
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<td>94</td>
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</table>
Shooting Lane

The goalie tries to stay in the shooting lane for the entire game. To consistently cover each new angle as the puck shifts from one shooting lane to another, he/she rarely steps outside the crease. Still, these rather short distances demands extraordinary skating-agility skills. In addition, all these movements are done by keeping a tight posture with no holes between the arms and the body, a smallest possible five-hole, and the stick solid on the ice. If you are a defenseman or a forward, playing the shooting lane is not much different. Your goal is to position yourself in the lane between the net and the puck, not the lane between the net and the opponent. Stay square so you fill as much of the lane as possible, and use an active stick to stress the opponent. You have to think like a goalie by focusing on the correct angle.

Aligning yourself with the puck, however, means that you are blocking your goalies line of vision. It is important to remember that you and your goalie are working as a team. The purpose is to prevent the puck form going into the net, not necessarily to stop the puck yourself. If you take away the lane along the ice, the goalie can focus on the puck in the air. One method is to lie down and block the shot. This enables the goalie to see the puck, and minimize the risks for deflections. Blocking shots is not an act of desperation, but a well-developed skill that starts with the ability to position yourself correctly in the shooting lane.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Stay square
2. Think like a goalie
3. Take away the on-ice lane first
4. Line up with the puck
5. Active stick

In The Game

Penalty Killing
Defensive zone coverage

Technique Exercises | Situational Drills
---|---
Block Shots On Line | Cover the Shooting Lanes
Defensive Triangle

When you are forechecking or defending the neutral or defensive zones, you cannot narrowly focus on only one opponent and play the passing or shooting lane against him/her. On the contrary, your head always has to be on a swivel to be aware of what is going on in other areas of the ice. In penalty killing, for example, you always have to cover, or be prepared to cover, two opponents. Positioning yourself on the defensive side, and in a not too flat angle to both of them, will make it possible to scan along the passing lane and keep both opponents in your field of vision. Thereby, you will be aware of what one is doing without losing track of the other. The player with the best scoring angle is your primary concern, so position yourself towards him/her, and use an active stick to cover a larger area. This is also true for even-strength situations where a position in a defensive triangle is important, especially when you are playing on the far side to the puck.

Technique Exercises

Situational Drills

2 vs. 1 from the corner

97
Offensive Side

Against a quick transition attack, you might find yourself on the offensive side of the puck carrier. Effectively controlling an opponent from this side is obviously more difficult than being in front of him/her. Nevertheless, the goal is to get control the opponent and it starts with skating as hard as possible to close the gap. This forces the opponent to go full speed as well, and will reduce his/her time to make a play. Secondly, you are not alone. The key is to work together with your goalie to stop the opponent. Your priority is to close the gap from the inside lane. You thereby help your goalie to isolate the opponent’s options to one angle. Finally, be patient with the stick check until the moment of a shot or a play.

Many backchecking systems use a back pressure tactic. A forward is pressuring the puck carrier from the offensive side, and driving him/her into the defenseman. Thereby, the forward and the defenseman work as a team in similar way to what is described in the example above with a backchecker and a goalie.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Work hard to close the gap
2. Pressure the opponent to skate full speed
3. Wait with your stick check until the opponent is about to make a play
4. Make the inside lane a priority
5. Work as a team with your teammate

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<tr>
<th>Technique Exercises</th>
<th>Situational Drills</th>
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<tr>
<td>Keep away with back to defender</td>
<td>Break Away with Chaser</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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IIHF Coaching Symposium 2010
Neutral Weak Side

When battling for the puck, you often end up side-by-side, or neutral with the opponent. As a first step, it is important to limit the area in which the opponent can manoeuvre. Try to get your hands in front of the opponent’s hands. Use your shoulder and upper arm to restrict the opponent’s arm movements. Ideally, you want to have your elbow in front of the opponent’s chest and your hip slightly behind the opponent’s hip. Once in this position, you can execute a tap check or a lift check with your stick.

It’s important to maintain the same speed as the opponent to avoid allowing him/her to cut in behind or in front of you. Keep your support solid on the inside edge of the outside foot to be ready if body contact should occur. Using the butt end is illegal and could be hazardous to the opponent. It should never be tolerated.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Skate hard to position your hands in front of the opponent’s
2. Try to restrict the opponent with your shoulder and upper arm
3. Get your elbow in front and your hip behind the opponent
4. Keep solid support on the inside edge of the outside skate.
5. Never use the butt end
Neutral Strong Side

Skating side-by-side with the opponent on your sticks side is sometimes referred to as neutral strong side. From this side it is easier to use your stick to control the opponent, but do not hook or slash. Your skating skills are paramount. To be able to control the opponent you need to keep the same speed and in the same direction, so he/she cannot cut in front of you or escape behind you. Try to position your hands in front the opponent to either restrict his/her arm motions, or to apply various stick checks. It is important to limit the area in which the opponent can move, so make the inside a priority, and balance your self on the inside edge of the skate farthest away from the opponent. This will give you good support if body contact occurs.

From the neutral strong side, you can separate the opponent from the puck by using:

- Lift Stick Check
- Tap Stick Check
- Press Check
- Side Body Check

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Skate hard to get your hands in front of the opponent’s
2. Try to restrict the opponent with your shoulder and upper arm
3. Position your elbow in front and your hip behind the opponent
4. Keep solid support on the inside edge of the outside skate.
5. Use a press or a lift check to gain puck possession.

In The Game

- Forechecking
- Neutral zone defense
- Defensive zone coverage
- Penalty Killing

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<th>Technique Exercises</th>
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<td>Wide Drive Race</td>
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</table>
Steering

Keeping the opponent to the outside and forcing him/her away from the middle of the ice is one common denominator of all defensive strategies in all areas of the ice. Steering is a low energy, almost passive method of achieving this, and is mainly used in forechecking and the neutral zone defence. Most frequently, steering is used to kill penalties. If you hold the inside of the ice and leave the outside areas open, the opponent is invited to move into these areas. Preferably, you like the opponent to move onto his/her backhand side. When he/she starts moving, continue to hold the inside and isolate the opponent to the outside. The perfect position is slightly behind the opponent. From this angle you should be able to read the opponent's jersey number, and cover a straight line to the centre ice face-off dot. Orientation and skating skills are thus very important. Use your stick to cover passing lanes and to make passing the puck into the middle lane very risky. You will need to co-ordinate the work with your teammates. If the puck is reversed, you should continue in the same direction and your teammate should take over.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Stay slightly behind (you should be able to read the opponent’s number)
2. If possible, steer to the opponent’s backhand side
3. Take the middle and steer to the outside
4. Work as a team with your teammates.
5. Use stick to block passing lanes

Technique Exercises

Situational Drills

The Steering Drill

97
Driving

The more aggressive form of steering is sometimes called driving. By keeping a tight gap and having the opponent constrained by the boards, you can drive the opponent into an area of your choice. The purpose of driving is to contain the opponent in a very small area and follow through with a check.

To achieve this, you have to approach the opponent from an angle that leaves him/her only one option, and that is to move wide. You aim to keep the gap so tight that the opponent cannot turn or stop without making contact with the boards or you. The perfect execution allows you to initially see part the opponent’s jersey number. As you maintain the inside track, you try to cut off the opponent’s line of travel, and end up with your hands and shoulders in front of the opponent, but your hip behind him/her. At the final stage of the drive, you can separate the opponent from the puck with a stick check, by rubbing out or with a side body check.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Close to a tight gap
2. Stay slightly behind (you should be able to just see the opponent’s number)
3. Keep to the inside (defensive side) track
4. Force the opponent wide
5. When making contact, get your shoulder in front and your hip behind the opponent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique Exercises</th>
<th>Situational Drills</th>
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<td>Wheel by the hash mark</td>
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</table>
Closing the gap flat

When closing the gap in open ice, you can use the flat technique. This earlier described technique allows you to bring the momentum from the approach into the backward motion. If the opponent is moving laterally, the flat technique allows you to follow his/her direction and keep a tight gap. If the opponent is coming straight at you, you make the inside of the ice a priority. Always try to stay square to the opponent. Focus on the opponent’s chest, not the puck, and time your approach so there is enough time to accelerate backwards. The purpose is to come out of the turn with the same speed as your opponent.

You could add a poke check or a sweep check to the motion, but keep it controlled so you are not taking yourself out of the play. Once the move is finished, you should end up slightly to the inside. As a rule of thumb, your outside shoulder should line up with the opponent’s inside shoulder. The closer the gap, the higher demand on your skating skills, but the less demand on the timing. Closing the gap flat is often used in steering and trapping tactics, and by closing the gap to a non-puck carrier. More agile defensemen use it even in tighter checking situations such as in the defensive zone’s corners and by pinching in the offensive zone.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Stay square to the opponent
2. If the opponent moves laterally, follow that motion
3. If the opponent moves towards you, turn from outside to inside
4. Close gap as tight as possible
5. Line up to the inside shoulder of the opponent’s body

In The Game

Neutral zone defense
Penalty Killing

Technique Exercises | Situational Drills
--- | ---
C-cut Yo-yo, C-cut Step Over C-cut | 3 x 1 vs. 1 Neutral Zone
86 | 104
Closing the gap tight

When approaching an opponent in the shooting lane, a constrained area or where there is very little room to move laterally, closing the gap with the tight technique is the better option. This technique of closing the gap is used all over the ice, but especially in the defensive zone’s corners and the slot. It will bring you almost to a complete stop and you will only be able to carry over very little momentum, but you will be able to more consistently hold the defensive side and the shooting lane.

Focus on the opponent’s chest, not the puck, and be aware of his/her speed and direction. Stay square so you are facing the opponent the whole time. Make your turn the same direction the opponent is going, and close the gap tight enough to be able to follow through with a poke check or a sweep check. If the opponent is moving towards you, adjust your approach, so you align yourself to end up on the inside of your opponent.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Stay square to the opponent.
2. Close to a tight gap
3. Active stick
4. Turn the same direction as the opponent is moving
5. Turn from the outside to the inside if the opponent is coming straight at you

In The Game

Neutral zone defense
Defensive zone coverage
Penalty Killing

CORE SKILLS
SKATING
CHECKING

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<td>3 x 1 vs. 1 Defensive Zone</td>
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Stick Checking

Stick checks are the most common checks in hockey. Choosing the right check for the right situation is only an option for the players who master them all. This chapter will help you with the following stick checking techniques:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Poke</td>
<td>Hold the stick in one hand and project towards the puck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Lift</td>
<td>Use your stick to lift the opponent’s stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
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<td>Lock the opponent’s stick by pressing your stick down over</td>
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<td>E</td>
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<td>Tap with your stick on the opponent’s stick</td>
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<td>Use your stick to pry the opponent away from the boards</td>
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is to effectively use the stick for poke checking, sweep checking, lifting or locking the opponent’s stick.
Stick Checking: Extended Stickhandling Skills

Have you ever wondered why some players frequently end up with the puck? It is almost as if their sticks had “puck magnets” on the blades when they effortlessly dig out the puck or snap it away from the opponents. These highly skilled players gain puck control without going through the pre-stages of finishing the check and holding the pin. By doing so they save both energy and time which can now be used for the attack. It is not possible to explain all the reasons for these players’ success, but the stick checking techniques presented here will enable your players to obtain instant puck control and launch immediate attacks.

Stick checks are an effective way to separate the opponent from the puck. An active stick will stress the opponent, which might force him/her to lose the puck. Combining the active stick with specific stick checking techniques creates a very effective defence method. In fact, stick checks are by far the most common checking method. For every body check, there are at least 10 stick checks in a hockey game (Stanley Cup 2004).

Good stick checking skills will also enhance your players’ offensive, creative stickhandling ability. Controlling the puck inside the opponent’s stick zone, and making moves such as “under-the-stick-move”, “over-the-stick-move”, or “under-and-lock”, are nothing more than combinations of extreme stickhandling and solid stick checking skills. Face-offs are another area, where stickhandling and stick checking combine. Even though this manual will not focus on these combined stick skills, an improved offensive ability will be an expected outcome of improved stick checking skills.

Stick checking skills are often use in combination with creative stickhandling moves.

The right stick checking techniques are an essential part of your team’s checking ability, and developing these skills is paramount for all players’ success. This section will describe stick-checking skills such as poke check, lift check, press check, sweep check, tap check and pry check.
Poke Check
The most common check is the poke check. The poke check is used all over the ice and by all players, including the goalie. Correctly executed, it is highly effective, but overuse or a poor execution can be very counterproductive. Keep the stick in one hand and the elbow tucked back so blade of the stick is fairly close to the body. Be patient and wait until your opponent moves the puck within striking distance. Focus on the opponent’s chest and hands while still seeing the puck in the periphery of your vision field. Keep the blade flat on the ice. Extend the arm with a powerful push. By stopping and launching your body forwards, you can significantly increase the reach of the poke check. Be aware that an unsuccessful launch will put you in a disadvantageous position, with the risk of being overplayed by the puck carrier.

Chalk Talk
Five Teaching Cues:
1. Keep the stick in one hand
2. Keep the blade flat on the ice
3. Start with the elbow tucked back
4. Be patient
5. Stop, launch the body forward, and extend the arm with a powerful push

In The Game
Neutral zone defense
Defensive zone coverage
Penalty Killing

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|                              | 1 vs. 1 in Narrow Lane            | 100
Lift Check

From the neutral strong side position, the stick lift check is an effective skill to separate the opponent from the puck. When protecting the puck, most players pressure the stick firmly onto the ice. This is often referred to as playing with a lot of weight on the stick. This means that you have to act both powerfully and surprisingly to be successful with a stick lift check. Lowering the lower hand on your stick will increase the power, but decrease the reach. This technique is only useful when you are tight in on the opponent.

Making contact with the opponent’s stick close to the blade will have a similar effect, more power but less reach. The ideal would naturally be to attack the lower part of the opponent’s shaft using a wide grip. However, the ideal situation is rarely an option, so for lack of power you need to increase the element of timing and surprise. Be patient, and wait for the right moment, such as when the opponent makes a play.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Wide Grip
2. Make impact close to opponent’s blade
3. Use an element of surprise
4. Be patient
5. Time your check with the opponent’s action

In The Game

Forechecking
Backchecking
Neutral zone defense
Defensive zone coverage
Penalty Killing

Core Skills
Checking
Stickhandling
Press Check

From the neutral strong side, the press check is an effective way to temporarily lock the opponent’s stick. There are three situations where the press check is used. While battling along the boards, the press check is an effective way to prevent the opponent from getting to the puck. In the slot the press check can obstruct the opponent from receiving a pass, and finally, with a press check the opponent’s stick can be blocked during a face-off.

Hold your stick with a fairly wide grip (lower hand below the middle of the shaft). Apply a lot of weight to the stick and try to block the opponent’s stick two-thirds down the shaft. It is fairly easy for the opponent to release the stick from a press check, so be patient and wait for the decisive moment such as when the opponent is just about to receive a pass. Since you do not know where the puck will end up, try to position yourself to control the opponent after the press check.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Wide Grip
2. Make impact 2/3 down the shaft
3. Apply maximum power
4. Time your check with the opponent’s action
5. Remain in a position where you can control the opponent

In The Game

Neutral zone defense
Defensive zone coverage
Penalty Killing

Technique Exercises | Situational Drills
--- | ---
Stationary Shooting vs. Press Check | 91
Sweep Check
The sweep check is generally considered to be a risky move. If you miss, you often take yourself out of the play. Correctly executed, however, it can be an effective way to break up an attack. The advantage with the sweep check is its reach which can be useful as a last resort for odd-man rushes, or a lose puck in front of the net.

For maximum reach, you should hold the stick in one hand. Make a semi-circular sweeping motion with the stick, keeping the blade flat on the ice, and aiming directly for the puck. Try not to rotate or twist your body, as this might take you out of the play. Even after successfully executing the sweep check, you still need to be in a position to control your opponent. The large motion involved makes it difficult to use the sweep check as a surprise, so it is only effective against loose pucks. Therefore, be patient and wait for the moment when your opponent does not have total control.

Chalk Talk
Five Teaching Cues:
1. Keep the stick in one hand
2. Do the move with your arm only, do not twist or turn your body
3. Keep the blade flat on the ice
4. Wait for your best opportunity
5. Remain in a position where you can control the opponent
Tap Check

The tap check can do two things. First, if the opponent controls the puck on the opposite side of the blade, the tap check will knock his/her stick into the puck and in turn knock the puck away. Secondly, if the puck is on the near side of the stick, the tap check will knock the opponent’s stick away, create separation and leave the puck open to be picked up.

Remember Hockey Alberta’s Core Values!
- Fun & Fair-play based on Respect
- Safe Environments
A tap check is not a slash. Only use force adequate to separate the puck from the opponent’s stick. Never apply the tap close to the opponent’s hands.

With the lift and press checks you apply force to the opponent’s stick from underneath or from above. With the tap check you apply the force from the side. Use a powerful but very short motion, and aim for the lower part of your opponent’s shaft. Try to make contact with the heel area of your stick. Wait for an opportunity where the opponent’s stick is open. One surprising and well-targeted tap check is better than many randomly launched tap checks. Stay in a controlled position so you can either recover the loose puck, control your opponent or continue checking.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Apply the tap to the side of the shaft close to the blade
2. Use the heel area of your stick
3. Use a lot of power, but no swing
4. Wait for a good opportunity
5. Remain in a position where you can control the opponent
Pry Check

The pry check is a rarely used technique, but in forechecking and power play situation it can be an effective way to dig out the puck and gain puck control in the offensive zone.

If you decide to use a pry check, you also decided not to contain your opponent. Since you have to apply the check from the side, the opponent has an “escape route” in the other direction. The pry check is therefore only effective if it is used surprisingly, or if you have a numerical advantage around the puck. Wedge in your stick between the opponent and the boards. Make sure your shaft rests solid against the opponents shin pad, not the thigh. Pry the opponent’s leg away from the boards. Quickly pick up the loose puck, or have a teammate pick it up.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Approach from your strong side
2. Wedge the stick in between the opponent and the boards
3. Make it rest against the shin pads
4. Pry the opponent away from the boards
5. Pull out the puck

In The Game

Forechecking
Power Play

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Developing Body Contact Skills

With twelve players and three or four officials on the ice, there is very little room. Players are certain to run into each other. Body contact is natural to the game. Players, who learn how to use the body to control the opponent, and how to protect themselves and the puck, will have a decisive advantage. In this section we will focus on the following skills:

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<td>Stay tight to the boards and use the arms to brace yourself</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
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<td>Control the opponent against the boards</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Box Out</td>
<td>Move the opponent away from an area</td>
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is to use the body to block the opponent’s way or take away his/her skating lanes. The correct stance and effective use of leg strength are important parts of these techniques.
Body Contact: The Combined Power of Skating Stability and Physical Strength

Often, when two players collide, one falls down and one keeps his/her balance. It is not always the bigger and heavier player that remains standing. Frequently, smaller players are more stable. In hockey, keeping your balance is important since falling down will take you out of the play for a moment, and create an advantage for the other team.

Players who master the skills of body contact know how to position themselves for maximum support. They are less likely to fall down and thereby give more space to the opponents. The higher the level of hockey, the less space there is and the more frequently body contact occurs. Younger players have to learn how to skate, stickhandle, pass, and shoot while being pressured by the opponents. It takes a long time of training before they start to feel comfortable and safe when pressured from behind or along the boards. It is essential they learn how to protect their head, knees, and other injury-sensitive body parts.

The third step of the checking progression deals with contact confidence and safety in body contact situations. It is vital for younger players to develop solid body-contact skills to prepare for body checking later in their hockey careers. This section focuses on the defensive part of body contact and the protective skills when being pressured. Under the concept of body contact, the players should also learn how to safely receive body checks and how to avoid them. Learning these skills will make your players more confident and more reliable when playing both offence and defence.

This icon indicates that this skill is primarily a body checking skill, but it is important to learn, within the concept of body contact since incidental collisions occur.

This chapter will also explain how to use the body to restrict an opponent’s options by using the skills of rubbing out along the boards, pinning, screening and boxing out in front of the net. These body-contact skills make up the base of body-checking. They are the fundamental skills that every player needs and every checking system depends on.
Awareness and Orientation
The game is not solely played with the puck. Still, the puck has an almost magic ability to attract the attention of all players. It is mostly the player who is carrying the puck who seems to develop a very narrow vision. Not only does this prevent him/her from seeing the positions of teammates, but it also makes him/her less aware of the location of the checkers. It is thus critical to the development of young players that they work on their puck-handling skills. Simultaneously controlling the puck and seeing what is going on in other areas of the rink is most important both for making a play and avoiding a check. For this purpose, the following qualities should be developed to their fullest potential.

Split vision:
Without focusing on anything, be aware of everything your eyes catch, from the left corner of the left eye to the right corner of the right eye. Even reflections in the glass can help you see where everybody is.

Scan:
Move the eyes back and forth to increase awareness of everything that is going on in front of you.

Head on swivel:
Turn the head to frequently see what is behind you.

Check your shoulders:
Turn your head and look over your shoulders to make sure you know where thecheckers are.

Communicate:
Make it a habit of always informing your teammates of what you see to help them stay aware of the situation. At the same time, listen to your teammates to take advantage of what they see.

In some areas of the ice, you are more likely to get checked than in other areas. Once in these areas you have to be aware of the fact that a body check might be imminent and you should prepare yourself to absorb it, regardless of when or from which direction it comes. These areas include:
A. The half boards in the defensive zone (where the opponent is likely to pinch)
B. Crossing the centre line and the offensive blue line (where the opponent is likely to stand up)
C. In front of the net in the offensive zone (where the opponent is likely to play very aggressive)
Introduction to Body Contact

Not everybody on a team will need to develop strong body-checking skills, but everybody needs to be capable of safely taking a check or collision. Therefore the initial training focuses on receiving and protecting oneself. The goal is to work on the receiving skills and not to develop checking power.

Whenever you are in a body-contact situation, you want to be in a strong and stable position. This position should allow you to withstand the impact of a collision and remain in good balance to continue the play. Characteristic for every stable construction is a wide base and a low centre of gravity. The Eiffel Tower has been standing for over 100 years and is a good example of a stable construction. A hockey player’s most stable stance is the tripod stance. The feet are wide apart and, together with the stick, they form a wide, triangular base. With two hands holding a firm grip the stick becomes a very sturdy “third leg”. The knees are bent deeply to lower the centre of gravity.

The tripod stance provides additional advantages. First of all, with the stick on the ice, you are ready to pass, deflect a shot, or shoot the puck. Secondly, you will not risk injuring anyone with a high stick, or get a penalty for high sticking. Finally, the wide base enables you to quickly move laterally. This will help you to be stable in a body-contact battle as well as avoid body contact all together.

The tripod stance is the starting position for both checking and absorbing a check, so every player needs to learn how to move around in this position. All players also have to develop a strong lower body to prevent them from fatigue as they operate in this stance throughout the game.

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Contact Areas of the Body

In body-contact situations it is important to let the body part that is best protected, and most solid, absorb the impact. All young players have to learn not to expose any fragile or unprotected areas of the body, but rather turn a safe, protected body part towards the opponent and the boards. Most parts of the body are protected against a high stick or a bouncing puck, but no protection can shield the body from the impact of a high-speed collision or a crash with the boards.

Some parts are more vulnerable than others, but no part is 100% safe. Excessive blows to the head, chest, ribs, back, thighs, and knees can cause severe injuries and be very painful. Exposing any of these parts to the impact with the boards or an opponent should be avoided.

Against moderate impact, the shoulder, elbows, and hips are relatively robust, well protected, and are unlikely to suffer any damages:

- Areas to avoid contact:
  - Head
  - Chest
  - Ribs
  - Back
  - Thighs
  - Knees

- Robust and well-protected areas:
  - Shoulders
  - Elbows
  - Hips

The hands could also be added to this category, but the wrists are easily twisted or even broken, and should not be exposed to the impact of body contact. Secondly, and more importantly, using the hands in a pushing motion is hazardous to the opponent, thus pushing off an opponent should not be used in youth hockey.

Using the elbows is not allowed. This leaves us with two body parts that are suitable for body contact, the shoulders and the hips. The best protection is accomplished by spreading the impact to both these areas. In addition, by tucking in the elbow tight to the body, the ribs will be protected. The shoulder, the upper arm, the elbow, and the hip together form a big surface that spreads out the impact thereby decreasing the risk of being injured.

Finally, the body can only withstand the force of a collision if the player is prepared. First, players need a high fitness level with well-developed muscles, especially around the core. Secondly, they have to learn to tighten up these muscles, to breathe in and to hold the breath at the moment of the impact. Without the support of the muscles, the bones themselves have no stability.
Safely Taking the Impact along the Boards
When you collide with the boards or receive a body check you want to operate from a strong and stable position, and let a well-protected body part take the impact. If you are unprepared, or take the impact with a weaker part of the body, you are setting yourself up for failure. When the collision is evident and no longer avoidable, you cannot simply accept being a receiver. You must play active and become just as much a checker as the person who is trying to check you.

Taking a body check by the boards is, for many young players, a stressful situation. The boards are hard and so is the opponent’s equipment. Most likely it will hurt and the player has no guarantee that he/she will not get injured. It is important to develop a sense of control when an opponent is approaching. Knowing how to react will make the younger player feel that he/she is in charge and can decide how, and to a certain degree, when the impact will occur.

Use forearm to push off after the impact
Place your inside arm on the rim (Smaller players support themselves against the boards)
Get close up against the boards with the skate and hip

Breathe in, hold your breath, and tighten up your muscles
Lean into the impact
Unload the closest foot

Lydman supports himself with his elbow and unloads the closest skate to protect his knee, as he holds Kulakov off.

Chalk Talk
Five Teaching Cues:
1. Hip and skate against the boards
2. Brace with the arm against the glass
3. Lean into the checker
4. Tighten your muscles and hold your breath
5. Unload the inside skate
Safely Taking the Impact in Open Ice

When players are racing for a loose puck, they often run into each other. If they are going in the same general direction, the impact is less vigorous than when going in opposite directions. In the latter case, the priority is to avoid the body contact. For hints on how to do this, see next pages. If the body contact cannot be avoided, it is important to absorb the impact the right way.

Stay in a deep tripod position. Turn your shoulder and hip towards the opponent. Keep the full blade of the outside skate on the ice for maximum support. The stick is your third leg, hence keep it on the ice. Avoid exposing your ribs by tucking in your elbow to protect this area. This posture could expose your inside knee to a vulnerable position, so unload the inside skate at the moment of contact.

Non body-checking rules demand that both players do their best to avoid collisions. Body checking rules only allow adequate force to separate the opponent from the puck.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Stay in a deep tripod stance
2. Absorb the impact with your shoulder and hip
3. Apply power with your outside skate
4. Tuck in the elbow to protect the ribs
5. Unload the inside skate

In The Game

Breakout
Regroup
Entries

CORE SKILLS
SKATING
CHECKING

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Open Ice Body Checking Exercise | 82
Circle Bumps | 82
Safely Taking the Impact when Applied from Behind

Even though checking from behind is strictly prohibited, you still have to learn how to protect yourself if the situation should occur anyway. In addition, successful play in the offensive zone includes controlling the puck along the boards and avoiding getting pinned.

When pressured from behind, hold your stick in two hands and push off the glass. Try to keep your hip away from the boards, and support yourself with your skates and knees. Keep your balance on the middle part of the blade, control the puck with your skates, and do not look down.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Brace yourself with the stick in two hands up against the glass
2. Support yourself with your knees and toes
3. Keep your hip away from the boards
4. Do not look down
5. Control the puck with your skate

In The Game

Breakout
Offensive Zone Attack

CORE SKILLS
PUCK CONTROL
CHECKING

Technique Exercises  Situational Drills
| Holding the Pin Contest | 84 |
Avoiding Body Contact

The only way to completely avoid getting a body check is to not play at all. If you chose to play, you will receive body checks. The safest way to react to the checker is to avoid him/her completely. That method could turn out to be a “catch 22” though, since if you do not manage to escape the check, you are now in a poor position to safely take the impact. It is important to learn when to take the impact and when to escape.

With quickness and good agility skills, you will be able to avoid many body checks. Different techniques will work in different situations.

Quick stop
Just prior to the contact, make a quick stop and let the checker pass by in front of you.

Quick step
Slow down a bit, so the checker adjusts his/her angle. Just prior to the contact, make a quick step and let the checker pass by behind you.

Lean off
If you are in a wide stance, you can lean towards the checker, but at the last moment lean the other way. It is important to unload the weight of your closest skate.

Be careful with ducking.
In some situations, you might want to duck and avoid a body check. The risk is that the checker’s hip or knee will hit your head. Never try this technique close to the boards. First of all you might get your head squeezed in between the checker and the boards. Secondly, you might trip the checker and he/she will fall headfirst into the boards. The only place where ducking is a good option is when you are battling for a position in front of the net.

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Avoiding Body Contact (continue)

Roll off

A very effective way to avoid a check is to roll off it. The principle is the same as that of a revolving door, but one that can rotate in both directions. This technique is especially useful when you find yourself in a too upright position and with too little time to turn your shoulder towards the opponent and get a good solid support with your skate. You can also use this technique after a check has been made to free yourself from the opponent.

Exposé one side of your body. When the checker places his/her check there, you give way for the impact and rotate quickly around your own axis. Bring your feet close together to increase the speed of the rotation and avoid exposing the knees for the impact. Keep your stick in two hands and lift it off the ice, so it does not get tangled into the opponent’s stick.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Expose one side of the body
2. Give way for the impact
3. Keep your feet close together
4. Leave the puck
5. Rotate around your own axis as a revolving door

In The Game

All situations

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Rubbing Out

When no one is in between you and the puck, you can approach the puck and thereby cut off the skating lane for your opponent. As long as your primary drive is towards the puck, you can lean into the opponent to hold your lane. When body contact occurs in the proximity of the boards, you can rub out the opponent and bring him/her to a halt. With good angling skills, you will be able to time your approach so you end up slightly ahead of the opponent, and can rub him/her out prior to picking up the puck.

The rubbing out technique can be used all over the rink. It is particularly effective in the forechecking. Approach the puck using a deep, wide stance. Keep the stick in two hands and on the ice, ready to apply a lift, tap or press check. Use your outside foot for power to hold your lane.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Time your approach to end up slightly ahead of the opponent
2. Maintain a deep, wide stance
3. Keep the stick in two hand and on the ice
4. Prepare to press, lift or tap check
5. Use the outside foot for power to hold your lane

In The Game

Forechecking
Backchecking
Defensive zone coverage

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Screening out is a very important skill in the defensive zone coverage and to defend against an attack on the rush. It is also used in penalty killing and trapping, and can be used both against puck carrier and non puck carrier.

Read the speed and direction of the opponent so you know into which area he/she is moving. Time your approach so you will end up side by side with the opponent. Stay in a wide deep stance, and apply power with the outside skate. Use an active stick and be prepared to poke check.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Read the opponent’s speed and course
2. Approach to line up side by side
3. Use an active stick.
4. Prepare to poke check
5. Use the outside foot for power to hold your lane

Technique Exercises | Situational Drills
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Wide Drive Race | 98
Boxing Out

In professional hockey the gloves and sticks are often used against the opponents’ hips to move the players away from the net. In youth hockey this method is not recommended and can only be used in strict moderation. Within the non body-checking rules, it is not allowed at all. The purpose of boxing out is to help the goaltender get a clear vision of the puck, and to prevent the opponent from deflecting the puck.

The rules do not allow any kind of checking against a non puck-carrying player, so the boxing out can only be executed as a contest for an area, not a battle versus an opponent. Remain in a solid tripod stance and apply force with the outside skate. Use your shoulder and hip to force yourself into the area and to force the opponent out. Be prepared to launch a lift, press, or tap check.

Something to think about!
The area in front of the net is a high-risk area. Hockey Alberta’s Core Values prescribe a Safe Environment. Does this imply that we should decrease the level of physical play in this area?

Goaltending is sometimes referred to as an individual sport within the game, but it takes a lot of teamwork to facilitate their job.

In The Game

Backchecking
Defensive zone coverage

CORE SKILLS
SKATING
CHECKING

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Be aware of the puck at all times
2. Remain in a solid tripod stance
3. Apply power with your outside skate
4. Use your shoulder and hip to force the opponent out of the area
5. Prepare to lift, press and tap check

Technique Exercises

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Pinning

The purpose of the pin is to control the opponent along the boards. The pin is an effective way to defend against the cycle and a safe way to check an opponent. Since exaggerating the pin might result in a holding penalty, it is very important not to grab the opponent, but rather to strictly apply pressure.

To get the opponent in a position where you can pin him/her, close the gap, use your stick actively, and be patient. Wait for a situation where the opponent is close to the boards, has his/her back turned to the play and does not have 100% control of the puck. Apply pressure by extending the knee of the rear leg.

Pressure the opponent’s hip tight up against the board. When the puck leaves the area, release the opponent and remain on the defensive side to control his/her lane to your net.

The T-lock
Place one leg in-between the skates of the opponent and apply pressure with the other leg.

The Lasso
Holding the stick in one hand and wrapping it around the opponent.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Wrap stick around the opponent
2. Place knee between the opponent’s knees
3. Pressure with thigh, hand and shoulder.
4. Apply power with rear skate
5. Remain on the defensive side after releasing the pin.
Body Checking

Body checking is the most aggressive technique used to separate the opponent from the puck. Different techniques of body checking apply to different situations. In this section we will focus on the following skills:

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<td>Lean forward and connect with the top of the shoulder</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>Side Check</td>
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<td>C</td>
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<td>Turn sideways and connect with shoulder and hip</td>
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<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Hip Check</td>
<td>Maintain a solid tripod position</td>
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is the actual body check. This step includes teaching techniques to give and receive a body check safely and within the rules.
Body Checking: The Skill of Separating the Opponent from the Puck

Body checking is much more than just crushing, banging and running into someone. Body checking is a series of different skills which have to be learned, developed and trained. To develop these skills to the fullest potential, your mind has to be unquestionably clear of the objectives about the body check.

Effective body checking skills are controlled motions of launching the body into an opponent. The right body checking techniques describe contact areas, timing, stability, follow through, launching and containing power, direction of the force, in addition to a high level of judgement, risk management, sportsmanship, and respect.

The goal of body checking is to separate the opponent from the puck. Body checking is used for forechecking, neutral zone defence, and defensive zone coverage. It is one way to prevent the opponent from scoring and to regain puck control. This, nothing more or nothing less, is the role of body checking within youth hockey.

The bodies of adult hockey players are much more mature and can better withstand the impact than can the bodies of children. Adults also carry the responsibility for their own actions. In adult leagues, it is not uncommon that body checking is used for the purpose of intimidation. This is not the role of body checking in youth hockey. In youth hockey, we are dealing with children. We are building their characters by teaching them what is right and what is wrong, and we carry the ultimate responsibility for their safety.

Body checking techniques vary depending if you are checking an opponent straight in front of you, beside you, behind you, in open ice or by the boards. Which technique you use also depends if your approach is frontal, from behind or if you are skating parallel to your opponent. There are also various techniques involved in different areas of the ice such as when you are forechecking, pinching, backchecking or playing in the corner. Generally speaking, there are three different techniques: Front Check, Side Check and Hip Check.

Teaching your players the right way of body checking will increase your chances of controlling your opponent, gaining puck control and spending more time attacking. It will also reduce the number of penalties, and increase the safety for both your players and the opponents. The right way includes holding your stick in two hands and on the ice, using hips and shoulders only, no pushing or extending the arms, and never making contact with the opponent’s back, head, or knees.
Balance and Generating Power

Keeping balance and generating power are the common denominators for all type of body checks. Many players rely solely on momentum for power. They need to take a few strides and let their body weight build up the impact. Other players need to use their hands in a pushing motion to create any power. Good body checkers, however, use their leg strength to generate power. From a deep knee bend and solid foot support, they extend the leg farthest from the opponent to generate a consistent force.

- Stick in two hands
- Deep knee bend
- Wide Stance
- Stick on the ice
- Skate anchored into the ice
- Straight line of support
- Extend knee to generate power
- Chalk Talk

The deeper the knee bend is, the more dynamic power the player can generate. The supporting leg, the power generator, needs a good grip on the ice. The skate has to be at a square angle to the direction of the check and firmly rooted into the ice. Thus the cue words “the skate is anchored into the ice”. The wide stance gives a straight line of support from the anchored foot to the contact area, which normally is the shoulder.

The player to the right has taken one step forward and placed his shoulder into the chest of the opponent. Note how the checking player keeps his balance through a tripod stance, and how the contact area (the top of the shoulder) is supported in a straight line by the power generating leg. To prevent exposing his knee the checking player has slightly taken the weight off his leg closest to the opponent.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Wide Stance
2. Deep knee bend
3. Stick in two hands and on the ice
4. Extend knee to generate power
5. Straight line of support

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The Danger Zone

The area closest to the boards is often referred to as the danger zone. With the correct behaviour, however, it doesn't have to be dangerous. Proper respect for other players and for the boards could noticeably reduce the numbers and the severity of injuries caused in this area. So specific training on how to act and react in this zone is of utmost importance.

Here are a few “do’s and don’ts" for the behaviour playing close to the boards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>Do.</th>
<th>Do Not</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approaching the boards with an opponent behind you, but with a small gap</td>
<td>Skate hard all the way to keep the gap as big as possible! Approach the boards in an angle! Check your shoulder on both sides! Make a deceptive move! Get into a ready position! Take the impact prior to playing the puck!</td>
<td>Do not try to stop to take the impact! Do not look down on the puck Do not duck! Do not turn around and face the opponent!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approaching the boards with an opponent right behind you, and no gap</td>
<td>Turn sideways, make a light stop but continue to slide all the way to the boards. Protect yourself in the proper position Shield the puck. Take the impact prior to playing the puck. Use one arm on the glass to support</td>
<td>Do not skate straight at the puck. Do not look down on the puck Do not keep two hands on the puck Do not turn around and face the opponent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are chasing an opponent who is approaching the boards.</td>
<td>Stay in a low position. Follow the opponent with a close gap. Keep the stick on the ice Only use a body check after the opponent has turned.</td>
<td>Do not push or check form behind. Do not reach around the opponent with your stick. Do not lift the opponent. Do not hook or touch the opponent with your arm or stick.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Be aware of what is happening around you, especially behind you, when you are approaching the boards. Check over both your shoulders, look for reflections in the glass and listen for cues from your teammates.

This area should be regarded as the “Respect Zone", where everybody demonstrates sportsmanship and respect.
The Danger Zone (continued)

Do not stop and try to stand still to absorb the impact. Chances are that you cannot hold up the power from your own momentum as well as the opponent’s momentum. You may trip over your own skate and fall head first into the boards.

Do not push the opponent!

If there is no gap and you cannot get away from the checker, turn sideways to the boards and make a light stop. Continue to slide sideways as you reduce some of the opponent's momentum. Absorb the impact in the proper position, with your hip and skate tight against the boards and your elbow up against the glass.

The player on the right is reducing the momentum of the checker by applying a light stop. He should release one hand from the stick and use his free hand to support himself against the boards.

Taking the Check

Applying the Check

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Approach the board at an angle
2. Skate hard to increase the gap
3. Check both shoulders
4. Make a deceptive move
5. Get close to the boards with one arm on the glass

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Do not push.
2. Do not reach your stick around the opponent.
3. Do not lift the opponent.
4. Do not hook or pull the opponent with your arm or stick.
5. Do not check from behind

Technique Exercises
Receiving a Check along the Boards  81

Situational Drills
Playing the Shoot In  84
Front Check

The front check is the least used body check, but is nevertheless a very effective and powerful body check when you are:

1. standing-up the opponent for example on the blue line
2. moving an opponent in front of your net
3. carrying the puck and want to force your way through the defence.

Start in a deep stance, facing the opponent. Lean your upper body forward and aim the top of your shoulder to make contact under the opponent’s shoulder pad. Turn your knees and toes outward and your heels inward, and extend your knees to generate power. Look straight ahead, and make your head pass by the opponent’s upper arm. Keep your stick in two hands and on the ice for additional support. Do not use the front check close to the boards since you are moving with your head first during the launch.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:

1. Deep stance
2. Make contact with top of the shoulder
3. Toes and knees turned outwards
4. Extend knees for power
5. Stick in two hands and on the ice
Using the Front Check

If you have the choice between using a front check or a side check, the side check should be your premier option. The side check takes better advantage of your equipment’s shoulder and hip protection, and it is generally easier to launch the check and to maintain the power. The advantages of the front check are that it has a longer reach, can be launched more quickly, and you can maintain your initial skating direction.

Boxing out in front of the net:
If the opponent is about to make a play in front of the net, you can lean into him/her with the top of your shoulder and use your leg power to drive him/her away.

Standing up on the blue line:
If an opponent is carrying the puck into your defensive zone, there is usually only a narrow lane open where he/she can come through. If you can anticipate where he/she will enter, you can confront him/her and use a front check to bring the attack to a halt.

Driving to the net:
If you are driving to the net and the opponent tries to body check you, you can lean into him/her and use the top of your shoulder to force him/her aside. This check often comes as a surprise for the opponent, and it enables you to continue skating in the same direction.

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Side Check
The side check is the most frequently used body check. You use it all over the ice, and you use it both to deliver a body check and to absorb the impact.

Use your angling skills to approach the opponent. Twist your upper body, so your shoulder is turned towards the opponent. Stay in a low stance and make a c-cut to rotate your body 90 degrees. Tuck in your elbow and hold your stick in two hands and on the ice. Tighten your muscles, breathe in and hold your breath. Make sure you have a good grip on ice with your outside skate, and extend the furthest knee to generate power. Try to divide the impact equally over your shoulder, upper arm, and hip. Unload the closest foot to protect your knee from the opponent’s knee.

Chalk Talk

Five Teaching Cues:
1. Approach the opponent by angling
2. Stay low, keep your stick in two hands and on the ice
3. Make a c-cut to rotate your body and unload the weight on this skate.
4. Tuck in your elbow and disperse the impact to the shoulder, upper arm and hip.
5. Keep a good grip on the ice with your outside skate and extend that knee.

In The Game

Forechecking
Neutral zone defense
Defensive zone coverage

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Using the Side Check

Side checks are by far the most commonly used technique for body checking. Since the sides of the body, shoulders, hips and arms are well protected, it is a natural choice to use these areas for body checking. Compared to the front check, it is considerably safer to use along the boards whereas a front check could result in going head first into the boards. The worse case scenario with the side check is that you will fall into the boards with your shoulder or hip.

Along the boards:
Use angling skills to line up on an inside track so the opponent cannot cut out behind you. Gradually narrow the gap so, you can ideally launch your side check slightly ahead of the opponent and block his/her path and at the same time lock his/her hands.

Open ice:
Approach the opponent from the opposite direction. Stay in the forward stride as long as possible so you can react to any evasive move. Twist your body and turn sideways at the very last second to avoid committing yourself (to one side) too early, and give the opponent an opportunity to react to your check.

Strike first:
A good way to reduce the impact of the contact is to “strike first”, or body check back. When the checker is approaching and just prior to initiating a check, you initiate the contact by launching a body check. This will often catch the checker off guard and significantly reduce the impact of the check.

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Hip Check
The hips are well-protected areas and close to the body’s centre of gravity. Thus using the hips for body checking can be very effective. The classic open-ice hip check where the opponent ends up somersaulting is not frequently used anymore. If this type of check is launched too low, it can cause serious knee injuries, and if it is not done with perfect timing, the checker takes himself/herself out of the play. But using a hip check along the boards is a very effective and safe way to body check.

Approach the opponent, or his/her anticipated skating lane, backwards. Stay in a deep wide stance, and aim to make contact with your hip to the opponent’s centre of gravity! Do not place the check low! Keep your stick in two hands and on the ice for additional support. Your outside skate should solidly grip the ice.

Chalk Talk
Five Teaching Cues:
1. At the moment of impact be in a backwards glide
2. Stay in a low deep stance
3. Aim for the centre of gravity
4. Generate power with your outside leg
5. Keep your stick in two hands and on the ice
Using the Hip Check

Of the three body checks, the hip check might be the technically most difficult to master. This is partly due to the fact that you are skating backwards at the launching moment. Nevertheless, it is a quite effective body check and if used properly is also very safe. Once you have learned the correct execution, the hip check is especially effective along the boards, where you can take full advantage of the opponent’s narrow lane.

Pinching:
Skate forward to approach the opponent. At the ideal moment, rotate your hip and shoulder into the opponent to block his skating lane along the wall. Try to get your hip up against the boards and brace yourself with the outside skate.

Open ice vs. rush attack:
This is the classic hip check that is not frequently used anymore. The reason for that is that it is not a very consistent way to control the opponent, and also because if launched too low, it can afflict serious knee injuries. Always aim for the opponent’s centre of gravity and make a powerful c-cut to turn your hip into the skating lane.

Along the boards vs. rush attack:
A hip check is a good technique to prevent an opponent beating you along the boards. It can be very effective in low speed, battling situations, but it is less reliable when the opponent has full speed. Positioning is the key. When the opponent commits to the outside, make a powerful push with the inside leg and turn your hip towards the boards.

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Off-ice Training Session

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<tr>
<th>Expected Outcome for the Attendees:</th>
<th>Equipment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Teaching Clues for delivering a body check and how to give feedback during practice</td>
<td>✓ Every player were full gear including face mask, mouth guard and neck guard (except skates and goalie kneepads)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Teaching Clues for taking a body check and how to give feedback during practice</td>
<td>✓ Sock to cover the blade of the stick (or a plastic stick) to protect the floor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Being able to safely lead and teach trough 10 different body contact drills.</td>
<td>✓ 10-15 cones (if there are no lines on the floor that could be used as references)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Being able to safely lead and teach trough 2 competitive body contact games.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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| Content                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Warm-up                                                                                       | 15 minutes                                                                                   |
| agility and preparing the shoulders                                                             |                                                                                             |
| 2. Balance and Power                                                                            | 7.5 minutes                                                                                  |
| 3. Body Checking Techniques                                                                      | 20 minutes                                                                                   |
| Football Check (front check), Leg Drive and Check through                                       |                                                                                             |
| Hockey Check (side check), Bump, Power Bump and Hit the wall                                   |                                                                                             |
| Pinning, Lasso and T-lock                                                                       |                                                                                             |
| 4. Taking a Hit,                                                                                 | 12.5 minutes                                                                                 |
| Board protection, Hit Back and Push off                                                           |                                                                                             |
| Avoiding a Hit, Roll off                                                                        |                                                                                             |
| 5. Competitive and Reactive Drills                                                              | 15 minutes                                                                                   |
| "Side Check Reaction" and "React Step Forward and Check"                                         |                                                                                             |
| Break-out from the Prison                                                                        |                                                                                             |
Body Checking
Off-ice Training Session

Warm-up
(15 minutes)

Light Jog:
Run a few laps around the gym to increase the body temperature and loosen up the muscles.

Stretching:
Stretch out the major muscles (Chest, Lats, Thorax, Abs, Back, Gluteus, Abductors, Hip Flexor, Quads, Hamstring and calves) carefully.

Agility:
Take a wide leg stance in a squat position (90° knee bend). Remain in this position and move lateral, forward backward and do quick turns.

Shoulder warm-up:
1. Make various crawling exercises to increase the temperature and the fluid in the joints.

Pair-up
2. Press each other's shoulders together.
3. Hook your elbows together and pull, so the shoulders make contact (illustration 1)
4. Grab each other's over arm and elbow. Pull and hit shoulder against shoulder.
Balance and Power
(7 minutes 30 seconds)

Tripod vs. Pushes:
Take a wide leg stance in a squat position (90° knee bend). Hold the stick firmly in two hands and on the floor, so the feet and stick forms a triangle (tripod).
1. One player pushes on his/her partner's shoulders and tries to knock him/her off balance.
2. Same as above, but this time the player pushes the hips of his/her partner.
3. Stand side-by-side and lean into each other, making a solid contact with the sides of the shoulders, the elbows (which are tucked in tight against the ribs) and the hips. Both players push as hard as possible, without losing the balance.
4. Same as above, but face each other, lean forward and make solid contact with the top of the shoulders.

Demonstrate
Take one pair of players, who have done the drill 1 well and let them perform the drill in front of the group. Point out how the players have
- Solid tripod stance, using the stick as an additional leg
- Solid foot support
- Bending the knee and getting low on the contact side
- Form a straight line with their support leg from the foot to the contact area.
Repeat the demonstration with another pair for the other three drills and note:
- How the player is easier to move when pushing on his/her hips instead of the shoulders (drill 2).
- How the player with the lower target area is more likely to over-power his/her opponent.

Leg Drive:
One player places the top of his/her shoulder right in the chest under the shoulder pad of his/her partner, and his/her head just to the side of the partner’s upper arm. The checker drives with leg power and forces his/her partner to back-up. The partner gives adequate resistance, but makes sure the checker has a chance to drive forward.
Body Checking Techniques
(20 minutes)

Front Check:
The two partners stand in a wide stance, facing each other and a short step length apart. The checker leans forward so the top of his/her shoulder almost touches the partner’s chest, right under his/her shoulder pad. The “receiver” (target) keeps his/her knees bent but the upper body straight. Both players have their hands on their backs and are ready to tighten up their muscles to withstand the impact.

Remember:
All checking drills are partner drills, where two players are working together on developing checking and receiving skills. The emphasis is clearly on the receiving skills, so the checker can never use more force than the receiver is willing to take.

One coach supervises the drill, and when he/she says go, the checker moves his/her closest foot forward, places it between the partner’s feet and makes contact with the shoulder. The checker continues driving with two more steps and checks through the partner, forcing him/her to take a backward step.
Side Check

Bump:
Two players are standing side-by-side in a wide stance, with their knees well bended (90°). The stick is held in two hands with the blade solid on the floor in front of the player. Together with the feet the blade creates a tripod stance. (Alternative: The drill can also be done without sticks). The players touch each other with the closest feet. The players count together: “1, 2, 3”. One “3” they extend the outside leg (the foot is still solid on the floor), lean into the partner and make contact with the side of the shoulders, the upper arms, the elbows (which are tucked tight into the ribs) and the hips. The closest knee stays bent at 90°, so the entire power from the extended leg is directed sideways (into the partner) and not upwards.

Power Bump:
Use the same starting position as described above under “Bump”. From this position both players move short two steps sideways, and bring their feet together. It’s important that the players remain in a deep stance (knee bend 90°). The players now count together: “1, 2, 3” and take sideways steps at the same time.
“1” = Lateral step (knee bend 90°)
“2” = Bring feet together (knee bend 90°)
“3” = Lateral step and make contact the same way as described above under “Bump”.
Hit The Wall:
The player is facing the wall and stands one short step away in a low (knee bend 90°) wide stance. The purpose is to (with a solid side check) hit the wall and hold a powerful pressure against the wall for three seconds. To do this, the player takes one step forward, twists him-/herself 90°, places the foot parallel next to the wall and extend the outside leg. While doing this he/she always remains in the low position. Make contact with the wall, with the outside of the shoulder, the upper arm, the elbow (which is tucked tight into the ribs) and the hip. Hold this position and continue to generate pressure into the wall.

It is important to start slow, and with almost no impact at all. The wall is more solid and the pads less protective, than one might think.

Pinning:
Work in pairs. One player has his/her face up against the wall. The partner places him-/herself in a pinning position. The top hand holds the stick and the free hand is pushing the other player's hip, shoulder, or elbow against the board. Don’t grab and don’t wrap the stick around the other player (lasso technique)! The feet form a “T”, with the front foot in between the other player’s feet (T-lock).

The pinning player tries to hold the pin four 3 seconds. The pinned player is trying to break loose.

Hold the Pin Competition:
Two pairs of players are competing against each other. In Pair 1, the red player is pinning the white, and in pair 2, the white player is pinning the red. If the red player manages to free himself from the pin before the white player, the red team gets a point.
Taking a Check

(12 minutes 30 seconds)

Board Protection:
Get up tight against the boards with your inside foot, knee and hip. Keep your hands in front of your body and the inside elbow resting on the top board. Keep your knees bent, but your back straight, so your head is held high and protected by your shoulder pad. Be aware of what’s happening around you at all times.

In the moment of the hit, turn your shoulder and hip towards the checker, to make sure you’ll use these body parts as your contact area. Do not expose your chest, stomach or rips. Forget the puck for a second. Hold your breath and tighten up your muscles. Don’t leave the boards, but lean into the check, and do not duck. Ducking could expose your head and risk getting it squeezed between the checker and the boards. Finally, unload the weight from the inside leg. This will ease the impact on the knee.

One player is standing in above described position up against the wall. His/her partner is in the ready to check position as executed in the hit-the-wall drill (facing the wall, one short step away). The checker executes the same motion as for the hit-the-wall drill, but instead of hitting the wall, he/she makes contact with his/her partner’s shoulder and hip. Both players keep their elbows tucked in tight against their ribs.

Push Free:
The checker finishes the check by holding the pressure for three seconds, whereas the receiver tries to

Check Back (or strike first):
Same set up and drill as above, but the receiver will not only lean into the hit, but hits back. When the checker makes his/her first move, the receiver pushes off with the elbow on the wall (still keeping his/her foot, knee and hip tight against the wall), and hits back, or more correctly, strikes first. This will take some of the checker’s momentum off, and reduce the impact that has to be absorbed.
Roll off:

There is only one way to completely avoid body checking. Don’t play! If you want to play, you will get hit. The best you can do is to limit the frequency and the impact of the hits you’ll receive.

Two players face each other. A short step apart and slightly leaning forward, so the right shoulders (or left) almost touches each other. Knees are well bent in a ready-to-go position. A coach (or a teammate) calls the name of one of these players. That player takes a powerful step with his/her right foot (left if the left shoulders are touching) forward and executes a front check (football check) and drive through. The other player reacts and rolls off the check.

As an alternative, the coach (teammate) can tag the player with his/her hand, instead of calling out the name.

Begin with using no stick, and then alternate keeping the stick in one hand and in two hands.
Reactive and Competitive Drills
(15 minute)

Side Check Reaction:
Three players are lined up in a straight line, and 2 meters apart. The outside players are facing each other and the middle player is turned so his/her shoulders line up with the two other players. All players are in a deep knee bend, alert and ready to go.

Behind the player in the middle, there is an instructor. He/she will give a sign, which the player in the middle can’t see. The two other players will react to the sign. Whoever is chosen by the instructor will take 1 step forward, anchor the foot, twist and execute a side check on the player in the middle. He/she should react to the checker as quickly as possible, take a lateral step and “hit back”.

The drill could be done with or without sticks. If sticks are used, make sure the stay on the floor at all times.

React, Step Forward and Body Check:
Three players are lined up in an equilateral triangle line, and 2-3 meters apart. Two players are facing the middle player. All players are in a deep knee bend, alert and ready to go.

Behind the player in the middle there is an instructor. He/she will give a sign, which the player in the middle can’t see. The two other players will react to the sign. Whoever is chosen by the instructor will take 2 steps forward and execute a side check or a front check (football check) on the player in the middle. He/she should react to the checker as quickly as possible, take a step forward and “hit back”.

The drill could be done with our without sticks. If sticks are used, make sure the stay on the floor at all times.

Important for both drills;
The distance between the players should not exceed three meters.
That would allow the checker to take a run and build up excessive force and momentum.
Which could be hazardous.
Secondly, it would also give the player in the middle too much time to react, and the purpose of the drill would be lost.
Prison Breakout (off ice):

One player lines up in the middle of a circle. In a gym the basketball circles are of suitable size. All the other players place themselves around the circle with one foot on the circle and the other foot inside the circle. The illustration shows only four players, but up to 10 players works well. Everybody is ready to go and in a deep knee bend position.

The player in the middle starts from the centre dot. He/she tries to break through the line of players, by executing a body check against one of these players. If he/she can’t break through on the initial body check, the player cannot keep on pushing or wrestling his/her way out. He/she has to back up and try again. Before starting a second attempt to break out, the player has to return to the middle, seek a new player and try again. Each attempt starts from the middle. This is to prevent the player from taking a run and build up excessive momentum as well as giving the players on the circle less time to react. For a breakout to be considered successful, the player breaking out has to push the other player’s foot off the circle line.

The purpose of the drill is to be competitive, not to overrun a smaller player. Therefore the player in the middle should seek a challenge and try to make his/her way out by body checking a player bigger or equal in size. The players guarding the circle must hold their ground. Do not duck, roll off or step aside.
## Developing Body Checking Skills, On-ice

### Practical Session, On-ice

(60-90 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected Outcome for the Attendees:</th>
<th>Equipment:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Teaching Clues for delivering a body check and how to give feedback during practice</td>
<td>➢ Every player were full gear including face mask, mouth guard and neck guard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Teaching Clues for taking a body check and how to give feedback during practice</td>
<td>➢ Pucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Being able to safely lead and teach trough 10 different body contact drills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Being able to safely lead and teach trough 2 competitive body contact games.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<td>Front Check <em>(Push, Drive and Stand-up)</em></td>
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<td>Side Check Against the Boards</td>
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<td>3. The basics of taking a hit</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>On the Boards:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Pressure from the side <em>(Take the hit, Hit back and Push off)</em></td>
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<td>- Pressure from behind</td>
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<td>Open ice <em>(Unload closest leg)</em></td>
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<td>Avoiding a Hit <em>(Roll off)</em></td>
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<td>Circle Bumps</td>
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<td><strong>Checking Race</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Prison breakout</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On-ice Training Session

Pre ice
Prior to going on the ice, it is very helpful to share a quick overview with the players’ dressing room, and inform them what we expect from them. This pre-ice briefing includes three sections:

1. Key points
2. Review of the off-ice session
3. Pre-ice warm-up

1. Key points:
   - All players were full equipment, including neck-guards and mouth-guard at all times.
   - Most players will not need to learn how to hit with an Impact, but every player need to learn how to take the impact from a hit.
   - Every drill is done as a pair, where both players are working together on their checking and receiving skills. Only use adequate force.

2. Review the skills worked on off-ice
   Refer to the experiences made off ice to explain how these techniques can be carried over to the on-ice execution:
   - Balance and power is generated from the legs, so stay low and keep your feet wide.
   - Football check (or front check): Use top of the shoulder and keep your stick on the ice!
   - Hockey check (or side check): Use side of shoulder and hip. Keep elbow tight to body and stick on the ice.
   - Take a hit: Stay tight up against boards with your inside skate, hip, elbow and shoulder. Hold you breath and tighten up all your muscles.

3. Pre-ice Warm-up:
   Make a couple of shoulder warm-up exercises before going on the ice.
   - Make various crawling exercises to increase the temperature and the fluid in the joints.

   Pair-up
   - Press each other’s shoulders together.
   - Hook your elbows together and pull, so the shoulders make contact
   - Grab each other’s over arm and elbow. Pull and hit shoulder against shoulder.
Warm-up and the basics of front check and side check  
(15 minutes)

**Agility:**
Divide the team into four groups, and work on different skating agility exercises. The ice is split along the red line and the ringette lines into four equally sizes lanes. The nets are moved off to the sides, to open up more room to skate. The purpose of the drills are to warm-up, get comfortable on the edges and work on specific skating skills used when controlling the gab as well as approaching an opponent before a body check. Each group has one lane for the exercises.  
1. Backward to forward turns  
2. Close the gab and heel to heel turns  
3. Snowplough stop and back up  
   One foot backward stop and move forward  
4. Backward lateral movements (crossovers)

**Side Bumps**
All the players in all the four groups pair up with a partner of equal size, weight and strength. Remind the players how important it is to work together in these drills. The purpose is not to overpower the partner, but to gradually help each other to improve the impact you can take and give. Run bump exercises stationary or across the rink.

1. Arm in arm bumps  
2. Stationary bumps  
3. Moving bumps  
4. Moving bumps with momentum

Remember to simultaneously make contact with hips, upper arms and Shoulders!
Warm-up and the basics of front check and side check
(continue)

Three Steps Front Check Progression:
The players remain with their partners and do front checking exercises. The checking player (red in the illustration below) does a progression of three variations of the front check.
1. Front check push
2. Front check drive
3. Front check stand-up

Side check against the boards
The players line up along the boards, so everybody has a space to work on his/her hitting. Face the boards no farther than two feet away. Make a c-cut with the left skate and hit the boards with your left shoulder and left hip. Apply pressure by extending the right knee. Hold the pressure for 2-3 seconds. Go back to the starting point and repeat the exercises, but this time to the right.

The players should stay together with their partner. Even though this is an individual drill, staying with the partner is important to be able to get quicker into next drill.
The basics of taking a hit
(15 minutes)

Receiving a Check along the Boards:
Have the players go back into their pairs. One player is lining up against the boards, with feet apart, deep knee bend and two hands on the stick. His/her partner lines up, no farther than 2 feet away from the player on the boards. The checker makes a c-cut and places a controlled side check into the player by the boards. The player by the boards, releases his/her stick, places the elbow on the rim, bend his/her knees and tighten up his/her body. In the moment of the hit, he/she unloads the closest foot.

Work on these three skills:
1. Take the hit – Turn the shoulder towards the checker and absorb the hit with the shoulder
2. Hit back – Just prior to the impact, step into the hit and strike first.
3. Push off – After the impact use your arms to push yourself free.

Pressure from the Side Against the Boards:
Work the same drill, but this time the pressure is applied from behind. Make your players understand, that they are applying pressure, not body checks.
The basics of taking a hit
(15 minutes)

Open Ice Body Check Exercise:
The players stay with their partner. One player lines up on a face-off dot in the middle of a circle. His/her partner lines up with both skates on the circle line. The players are facing each other. Remind the players, that this is not a competition. It’s a drill where both players should work on their technique in safely take a hit when checked on open ice.

The instructor makes sure, that both players have two hands on their sticks and the sticks are and stay on the ice. When both players are ready, the instructor says, “check” and the players take one forward stride each, continue with a c-cut, turn the side to the opponent and place a controlled side check. In the instant of the hit, both players should unload the weight from their closest legs.

After the body check, the players roll off, pass each other, line up on the opposite position and get ready for next run.

Circle Bumps:
Have around six players in one circle. They all have two hands on their sticks, the sticks and feet on the ice. In this position, they skate around in all directions, bumping in to each other. By doing so, they pay show respect for each other and take no sticks or skates off the ice, nor any checking from behind. If a player leaves the circle with any body part, he/she does 5 push-ups before returning to the drill.

Reaction Checks:
Two players are lined up, facing each other, with their skates on the blue line or the red line. In the middle, between the two players, a third player is lined up with his/her left shoulder towards one player and his/her right shoulder towards the other. The instructor stands behind the player in the middle and makes signals with the stick. If the instructor points at the player on the red line, that player takes one or two strides forward, turns his/her body and places a controlled side check. The player in the middle reacts as he/she sees the checker coming, gets ready and hits back.
Controlled Checking Situations
(20 minutes)

Divide the team into four groups and run the following four drills in the four corners of the rink. These drills are of more competitive nature than the preceding drills. It is therefore of paramount significance that the body checking is controlled at all times. Sticks should always be on the ice and excessive force is not tolerable. Remember, the main goal is to develop the skills of receiving a check and not checking power.

Carrying the puck vs. forechecker
The puck carrier is trying to carry the puck from behind the net and across the blue line. He thereby has to beat the forechecker on the outside (wide). There are two reasons for this rule. First of all, we are working on the techniques involved in receiving a body check, push oneself free after a body check and delivering a body check. If the puck carrier tries to avoid the check, the purpose of the drill is missed. Secondly, the way the groups are lined up, will make it hazardous if the skaters start to skate into the areas where they are waiting.

The forechecker starts at the inside hash mark. His/her goal is it to place a controlled body check and try to pin the puck carrier.

After each run, the players line up in the opposite line.

The Pinching Drill
The puck carrier starts on the outside hash mark and tries to carry the puck over the blue line. By doing so, he/she has to stay wide and beat the checker on the outside. The checker starts on the neutral zone face-off dot and tries to pinch in and place a controlled body check against the puck carrier.
Holding the Pin Contest
Four players are divided into two pairs. The checker in one pair and the receiver in the other pair are one team. The goal is to hold the pin as until your partner in the other match-up can break free. The competition starts with the hips of both receivers push up against the boards, and when the instructor says “go!”. The nature of this drill is very competitive. The instructor must pay strict attention to the rules, especially holding. If fault play is used, the instructor calls the penalty and the faulting team loses.

Playing the shoot-in (check the shoulders):
One player is standing at the “face-off T” in a circle, facing the corner. Two checkers are standing outside the circle and slightly behind the player in the middle. The instructor gives a sign to one of the checkers. This indicates who will pressure the puck carrier. Thereafter the coach spots a puck in the corner and the player in the middle takes off to pick up the puck and carry it out of the corner. He/she cannot go behind the net, since he/she should learn how to play against pressure and not to skate away from it. Secondly, there is another group doing the same drill in the other corner, and the two groups should not interfere with each other.

The key for the player in the middle is to check both his/her shoulders, to make sure he/she knows where the pressure is coming from.

After you’ve been the checker, you line up in the middle next time, and after being in the middle, you take one of the checker positions next time.
**Checking Race:**
Two players line up across the rink from each other and with one foot on the neutral zone face-off dot (A&B or C&D). The two players start on the whistle. They have to keep their sticks on the ice and check each other shoulder to shoulder. After the check, they race for a puck.

Remember, it is just a race after the check. However gets to the puck first, tries to score and the other player back checks.

Note: You will probably not have goalies during a body checking session, so the players must hit the crossbar or the posts to score.

**Prison Breakout (on ice)**
(see off-ice training session for details)
The “guards” have to keep on skate inside and one skate outside the circle at all times. The “prisoner” has to come back to the face-off dot before trying to break through the wall of guards.
Exercises
The following pages present a number of checking skills exercises. Compared to a drill, an exercise is a way of executing a skill in a repetitive and educational way. The exercise could be done as a “stand alone” activity or integrated in a drill. The purpose is to make the player focus on a certain aspect of the skill execution, by doing a challenging and fun activity.

Checking skill exercises are great for station training, can often be executed on- and off-ice and can be built into chains of progression. By nature, exercises are short-term activities and therefore need to be changed often. In general, you only want to do an exercise for one minute, before changing to something else. Many slightly different exercises, focusing on the same checking skill, can build longer segments of highly focused work and are very effective to develop checking skills.

Heel-to-Heel Spiral
Divide the body weight equally on both skates. Make repeated pushes with the rear skate so you are gliding latterly (forward on one skate and backward on the other). As the exercise continues, try to increase the radius of the circle so you eventually will be skating in a straight line.

C-cut Yo-yo
Start with one skate pointing straight forward and the other in a 90 degree angle touching heels. Make a powerful c-cut forward until the skates end up in 90 degree angle, but this time touching toes. Continue with a powerful c-cut backwards until you are back at the starting position, with the skates in a 90 degree angle touching heels. Repeat continuously!

C-cut, Step Over, C-cut
Start in the same position as the exercise above and do the first powerful forward c-cut (illustrated: right foot). Prior touching toes, lift the supporting leg (illustrated: left leg), twist the toe inwards, place in on the inside edge, in a straight line with the other skate and the toes pointing inwards. Continue with a powerful backward c-cut (illustrated: left foot) until you are back in the starting position again. Repeat continuously!
1-2-3 Clock
Start in the middle of the circle. Skate forward to the circle and do a tight close-the-gap turn, by:

1. Make a one foot snowplough stop (illustrated: right foot)
2. Continue with a powerful c-cut with the same skate (illustrated: right foot)
3. Follow up with a powerful cross-over push (illustration: left foot)

Return backwards to the starting point and repeat to the 12 o’clock, 2 o’clock, 6 o’clock, and 9 o’clock (illustrated) position. Remember to always skate forward going outwards and backwards going inwards in the circle.

Follow The Leader
Follow the partner as close as possible and do the same moves he/she does

The Mirror Exercise
Face your partner and him/her with a close gap
Checking The Right Way

Front Check Leg Drive
Place the top our your shoulder pad into the chest of your partner. Your pad should be slightly under the partner’s shoulder pad and your head should be at the side of the partners shoulder. Keep the stick in two hands and on the ice, to give you a solid support. Twist both skates outwards to an almost 180 degrees angle and push your partner backwards across the rink with powerful, driving, skating steps. Make sure to use the entire blade to push off. The partner gives adequate resistance to force the driving player to work hard to achieve the task.

Side Check and Pin
Start about three feet away from the boards, in a wide stance, with the stick on the ice and firmly in two hands. Make a c-cut forward and then lift the foot (illustrated: left foot) as the body twist. Make contact between the boards, and the shoulder and hip. Continue applying pressure with the outside leg (illustrated: right), to hold a “pin” for 3 seconds.

Side Check Bump
Line up side by side with a partner. Move forward side by side and make a “pretzel pattern” so you will separate and approach. As you approach each other follow through with a controlled side check. Remember the emphasis on the exercise is to develop receiving skills, so never apply more impact than the partner is comfortable with.

Monkey In The Middle
Four to six players are line up around circle and pass the puck to each other. One player is in the circle and tries to intercept the passes. If he/she touches the puck, the player who made the play replaces the player in the circle.
Block Shots On Line

Working on the blocking shots technique along or on a line is a good way to develop the read of the shooting lane. In the exercises below, imagine that the blue line is the shooting lane. The goal is to quickly get into this lane and than pressure the shooter by approaching him/her.

Without shooter:
1. Glide forwards along the line.
2. Drop down on one knee and continue to glide forward.
3. Lean your body over to the side on which your knee is on the ice.
4. Lay down on the side, still in a forward gliding mode.
5. Stand up and return to the starting point. Continuously repeat these steps.

With a shooter:
The exercise includes the points above, but is preceded by a pass to a stationary shooter. The shooter receives the puck, winds up for a slap shot, but only follows through with a soft shot on the kneepads of the player blocking the shot.

Make sure you are square to the line (= the direction of travel and the shooting lane). Support your balance with your elbow and lower arm, and make sure the knees are straight. The lower leg should rest solid on the ice, and the other leg rests solid on top.
Keep Away with Back to Defender
Two players are battling for the puck. By doing so, the puck carrier is always turning his/her back to the opponent. The checker will now be in a situation similar to a backchecker checking from the offensive side, and can work on the specific stick checking techniques used in this situation.

Poke Check/Sweep Check
On Line
Two players are standing stationary on the blue lines. The other players are carrying a puck and skate along the lines. Each time they approach a stationary player, they try to stickhandle through his/her stick zone. The stationary player tries to make a poke check or a sweep check.
Stationary Lift Check
One player is stickhandling and protecting the puck in a small area. The opponent tries to gain the puck possession using lift checks only. This way the puck carrier works on hi/her puck protection skills and to play with more weight on the stick. The opponent works on his/her lift checking techniques.

It is important to protect the puck by turning the back to the opponent. This will force him/her to use lift checks more frequently.

Stationary shooting vs. Press Check
One player is standing still, handling a puck, and shoots it on the net. Another player is standing close by and when the shot is taken, he/she tried to lock the shooter’s stick by the use of a press check. The shooter learns to shoot through the check and play with more weight on his/her stick. The checker develops the timing and technique of the press checking skills.
Stationary Freeze vs. Pry Check
One player is trying to freeze the puck, and another player is trying to dig it loose by the use of the pry check.

King of the Hill
One player is protecting the face-off dot and the other player is trying to place his/her foot on that dot for three seconds.

Tripod vs. Push
Two players are working together to develop the stability. One player plants his/her feet and stick solidly on the ice, and gets ready in the tripod stance. The other player uses the fists, not the stick, and gives adequate pushes on the hips. The purpose is to enhance the stability skills, not to knock the partner over, so use controlled force.
Drills are used to organize parts of the training session. A drill always focuses on one or few areas of the game, and to be a good drill:

- The targeted areas, or skills, should be frequently executed,
- The time and space available should be adequate for the skill level of the players.
- There should be a start, execution and end to the drill.
- It should be safe.
- It should not interfere with other drills or activities going on at the same time.
- It should be self-supplying, which means pucks and players should end up where they start the next run in the drill.
- It should be easy to give feedback.

**Cover the Shooting Lanes**

This is a three vs. two drill with the objective to develop the orientation skill to cover the shooting lanes from the points. Three players are attacking, for example the centre and the two defensemen. Two players, for example the two wings, are defending. To create many read and react situations for the two defending wings, the plays are executed under the following rules:

1. The attacking defensemen (shooters) have to remain on the points and cannot go deeper than the top of the circle. For safety, they keep all shots on the ice.
2. The attacking centre (passer) must pass the puck and cannot carry it to or shoot it on the net.
3. The defending wings cannot go higher up than the top of the circles or outside an area marked by a straight line from the blue line on the boards, through the face off dot, and to the goal line (see illustration below).
4. The wings have to block the shooting lanes from the point and the passing lanes from the passer to the shooters.

With these rules the wings consistently have to move between covering passing lanes to covering shooting lanes.
Cover the Passing Lanes

This is a five vs. two drill with the objective to develop orientation skills to cover the passing lanes in the defensive zone. A unit of five players are attacking against two defenders, for example a defenseman and a wing, or a centre and a wing. To create many read and react situations for the two defenders, the plays are executed under the following rules:

1. Two forwards and one defenseman on the attacking team are passers and may only pass the puck.
2. One forward and one defenseman on the attacking team are shooters and may only shoot the puck.
3. The passers and the shooters must stay outside the “defenders area” (see below) and on opposite half of the zone at all times.
4. The objective for the passer is to set up a “one-time shot” for a shooter.
5. The defenders can only move within the “defenders area”, an area marked by a line from the post to the face off dot, continuing straight out to the blue line, follows the blue line to its middle, and back to the centre of the net (see illustration below)

With these rules the defenders consistently have to move to cover different passing lanes.
Two Lines Seam Pass Coverage (2 vs. 2)

The group is divided into two teams. The teams line up their defensemen in the corner and the forwards on the far blue line. The drill is executed as two connected two-vs.-two situations. It flows both ways, one way at the time.

Each run of the drill starts with the coach’s whistle.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Two forwards “A” are at their positions. They have just finished the previous run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Two Defensemen carry the puck behind the net.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Two forwards are taking positions between the red and blue lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Carry the puck to a good passing position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Move the puck to open a passing lane for a “two-line pass”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Make a “two-line pass”. If the pass does not connect, pick up a new puck and try again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Receive the pass and attack 2 vs. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Two defensemen “J” are waiting inside the blue line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Defend against the forwards “A”, two vs. two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Finnish the two vs. two, and forwards “A” and defensemen “J” return to their lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Coach’s whistle and the drill starts in the opposite direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forwards “P” and Defensemen “D and H” are already at their positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They have just finished the previous run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Two Defensemen carry the puck behind the net.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Two forwards are taking positions between the red and blue lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The drill follows the above flow continuously.

This drill develops the orientation skills to cover the passing lanes in the neutral zone.
## Two Lines Seam Pass Coverage (1 vs. 1)

The group is divided into two teams. The teams line up their defensemen in the corner and the forwards on the far blue line. The drill is executed as two connected one-vs.-one situations. It flows both ways, one way at the time.

Each run of the drill starts with the coach’s whistle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A forward is at his/her position. He/she has just finished the previous run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A defensemen carries the puck behind the net.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>A forward is taking position between the red and blue lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Carry the puck to a good passing position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Make a “two-line pass”. If the pass does not connect, pick up a new puck and try again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Receive the pass and attack 1 vs. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>A defenseman is waiting inside the blue line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Defend against the forward “A”, one vs. one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Finnish the one vs. one, and forward “A” and defenseman “J” return to their lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Coach’s whistle and the drill starts in the opposite direction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forward “O” and Defenseman “G” are already at their positions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They have just finished the previous run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>A defenseman carries the puck behind the net.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>A forward is taking position between the red and blue lines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The drill follows the above flow continuously.

This drill develops the orientation skills to cover the passing lanes in the neutral zone.
The Steering Drill (2 vs. 2)
The group is divided into two teams. The teams line up at opposite sides of the rink. The drill is executed two vs. one, and can progress to three vs. two to further challenge the steering defenders. The area marked “goal” on the illustration below, is an area consisting of the blue line in between the face-off dots. The attackers’ objective is to carry the puck through this area, and for the defenders to steer the attackers away from this area.

Each run of the drill starts with the coach’s whistle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A+B</th>
<th>Two steering defenders are in position when the drill starts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The coach whistles to end the previous run, and passes the puck to start the next run.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Two attackers receive the pass and start attacking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E+F</td>
<td>Steer the puck carrier to the outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-H</td>
<td>Move the puck to open the middle lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I+J</td>
<td>Control the defensive side of your opponent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Continue to move the puck to open the middle lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Replace each other to keep consistent steering pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M+N</td>
<td>Do not carry the puck over the blue line if you are outside the dots.* This will end the drill and you lost. Pass the puck to keep the drill alive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Try to carry the puck over the blue line and in between the face-off dots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Prevent the attackers to carry the puck across the blue line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q+R</td>
<td>The coach whistles to end the run, and passes the puck to start the next run.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This drill develops the orientation and teamwork skills to control the middle land and steer the opponents to the outside.
Two vs. One from the Corner
This drill can be used to develop positioning skills such as holding a defensive triangle, as well as reading and controlling passing lanes.

Each run of the drill starts and ends with the coach’s whistle signal.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The coach blows the whistle and shoots a puck into the corner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The first player in the far-side line closes the gap and play defence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The two first players in the near-side line pick up the puck and attack.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The coach blows the whistle to end this run and start the next one.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This drill will develop positioning skills such as the defensive triangle.

Breakaway with Chaser
One player, the attacker, is standing in the centre circle, and has a puck on his/her stick. A second player, the chaser, is standing behind with his/her hand on the back of the attacker. On any given moment the attacker can take off, try to create enough of a gap so he/she can shoot. The chaser has to react on the chaser’s move, chase the attacker, close the gap, and apply an appropriate check.
Wide Drive Race
On player, the attacker, starts with one foot on the blue lind and touching the boards. The de-
fender starts with one foot on the face off dot. On the coach’s whistle, the attacker tries to
carry the puck wide and get enough separation to take a shot on the net. The defender tries to
close the gap and apply an appropriate check.

Wheel by the Hash Mark
The puck carrier starts with one foot on the face off dot. The fore checker starts with one foot at
the top of the circle. The purpose for the puck carrier is to carry the puck behind the net and
between the hash mark and the face off dot on the opposite side, the area marked “goal” on
the illustration below. The purpose for the forechecker is to drive his/her opponent wide and
force him/her to carry the puck wide (=outside the circle).

The drill gets a better flow if the puck carrier has to skate full speed and is not allowed to stop.
The drill gets more challenging if the puck carrier can chose any speed or rout to get to the
“goal”.

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IIHF Coaching Symposium 2010
One vs. One in a Narrow Lane

A row of pylons restricts an area to a narrow lane. Player may not skate outside this area. The first player in the line skates backwards and receives a pass from the second player in the same line. Once he/she has received the pass, he/she pivots and starts to attack against the player who gave him/her the pass.

Pin and Pry

2 vs. 1

Two players work as a pair to narrow down the puck carrier’s area, pin him/her to the boards, and to pry the puck lose.

Each run of the drill starts and ends with the coach’s whistle signal.

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The coach blows the whistle and shoots a puck into the corner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>One player from the nearest line picks up the puck and tries to control it deep in the zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Two players from the other line try to pin the puck carrier and pry the puck lose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The coach blows the whistle to end this run and start the next one.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This drill will develop teamwork for puck recovery, by using pinning and pry checking skills.
Two vs. Two in the Corner
This drill can be used as a controlled skill development drill or a competitive team. If you chose to use it as a competition the rules could be:
- Attacking players need to score to win
- Defending players have to carry the puck past the top of the circles to win.
The drill does not end until one of the two options has occurred.

Each run of the drill starts and ends with the coach’s whistle signal.

<p>| | |</p>
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<td>The two first players in the far-side line close the gaps and play defence.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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These two drills are generic and can be used to work on most checking skills.

One vs. One in the Corner
Same drill as above, but executed one vs. one.

<p>| | |</p>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 x 1 vs. 1 Defensive Zone

This drill is executed through three continuous one vs. one, were the defenseman close he gap and defend three times against three different forwards. The group is divided into two teams, lined up by the boards behind the top of the circles. The three first players from one team (white in the illustration below) position themselves as follow: one player in the corner, one player in the other corner, and one player behind the top of the circles in the middle of the zone. The first player on the other team (dark in the illustration below) position himself/herself in front of the net.

Each run of the drill starts with the coach’s double whistle signal.

| A | Pass the puck to one of the three players. |
| B | Read and react to the pass                  |
| C | Receive the puck                            |
| D | Close the gap on the puck receiver, and back up to defend the net. |
| E | Attack one vs. one                           |
| F | Coach’s single whistle ends the first attack and starts the second. |
| G | Pass the puck to one of the two remaining players |
| H | Read and react to the pass                  |
| I | Immediately finish the attack with a shot and then get out of the way. |
| J | Receive the pass and start attacking one vs. one |
| K | Close the gap and start defending one vs. one. |

After a short moment the coach gives one more single whistle signal, and this run continues with one more pass to the final player, who attacks one vs. one.

One the next whistle the two players return to their teams and four new players take the positions as described on top of this page. This time hover the other team will line up the defender. The next run starts on the coach’s double whistle signal and follows the above flow continuously.

This drill develops gap control skating techniques.
3 x Wide Pass Plus Join the Rush
(Heel to Heel Turn)
This drill is executed as two wide drives with angle shot, and one wide drive with back pass. It runs simultaneously in both directions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>On the double whistle the defenseman starts skating backwards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>On the single whistle pass a puck to the defenseman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Make a lateral move (heel to heel).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>A forward starts and skates down the ice in the wide lane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Make a pass to the forward, who receives the pass, drives wide and shoot from an angle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Make a flat close-the-gap turn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>On the blue line, receive a pass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Make lateral move (heel to heel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>A forward starts and skates down the ice in the wide lane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Make a pass to the forward, who receives the pass, drives wide and shoot from an angle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Make a flat close-the-gap turn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the defenseman reaches the blue line on, the coach blows one more single whistle signal and a third puck will be passed to the defenseman, who makes a lateral move (heel to heel) and passes the puck to a forward skating in the wide lane. This time however (not diagrammed), the defenseman joins the rush, receives a back pass, and shoots.

The next run starts on the coach’s double whistle signal and follows the above flow continuously.

This drill develops gap control skating techniques.
3 x 1 vs. 1 Neutral Zone
(Close the Gap Flat)

This drill is executed through three continuous one vs. one, were the defenseman close he gap and defend three times against three different forwards. It runs in both directions simultaneously.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Near Side</th>
<th>Each run of the drill starts with the coach’s double whistle signal.</th>
<th>Far Side</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A forward carries the puck in a wide curve.</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>A defenseman close the gap and controls the defensive side of the forward</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Carry the puck outside the face off dot and attack 1 vs. 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Use a Close-The-Gap-Flat Turn and keep the forward on the outside</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>On the coach’s single whistle signal, separate from the puck carrier.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Finish the attack and go back to the end of the line on the opposite side.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>On the coach’s single whistle signal, carry the puck in a wide curve the same way the previous forward did under the points A, C, and F.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Close the gap to forward “G” the same way you just played against forward “A”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As forward “G” reach the blue line on his/her attack, the coach blows one more single whistle signal and a new attacker starts a third attack, identical to Forward “A” and Forward “G”. This time however, the defenseman follows through playing one vs. one all the way to the net.

The next run starts on the coach’s double whistle signal and follows the above flow continuously.

This drill develops gap control skills.
One vs. One with a Point Shot

This drill is executed through three continuous one vs. one, where the defenseman closes the gap and defends three times against three different forwards. It runs in both directions simultaneously.

These two drills develop box out skills.
My Drills
### Safety and Ethics Module

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>I suggest to leave this topic “as is” because of the following:</th>
<th>I suggest to improve this topic in the following way:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIHF</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Hockey</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Growth and Development</td>
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<td>Concussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
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<tr>
<td>Risk Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protective Gear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules for Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro Rules vs. Amateur Rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Right Way</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of Ethics</td>
<td></td>
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### Checking Skills Module

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth Hockey’s Role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doing it right, right from the start</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positioning and Angling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stick Checking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Off-ice Training Session

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**General Suggestion:**