



# DEVELOPING DEFENSE

## INTRODUCTION

There is nothing more exciting to watch than a Bobby Orr or a Paul Coffey and it is this creativity that makes our game so exciting. Certainly there is a place for the stay at home defense, but let's let the kids decide what type of player they want to be after they have been given good coaching and an opportunity to explore all aspects of the position.

By teaching defence the fundamentals of skating, puck control, passing and positional play they will enjoy the position a lot more, because they will have more success and therefore more fun.

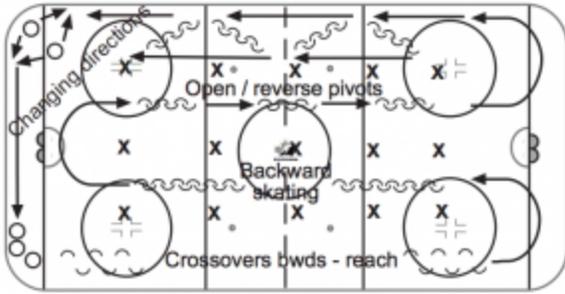
The topics covered in this module are:

- Skating
- One on One Defence
- Defending the Rush
- Offensive Tactics

## SKATING

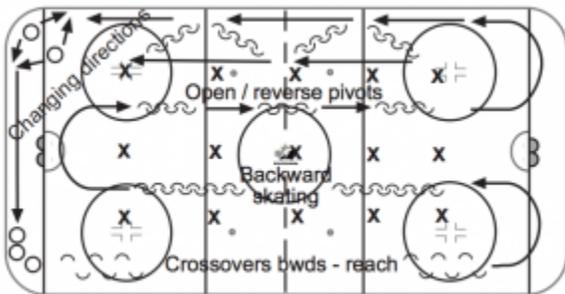
### **1. Backward Crossover Start**

- The backward crossover start is a very effective method of accelerating rapidly from a stationary position.
- Starting from the basic backward stance, the hips and trunk turn slightly toward the direction of the crossover while the head remains facing forward.
- The outside leg starts with a c-cut and then crosses over in front of the inside leg.



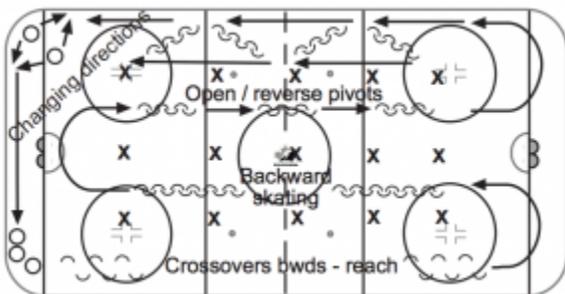
## 2. Crossovers Backward – Reach

- This technique helps to increase a player's speed when skating backward.
- When a player initiates a crossover move the outside foot should reach out as far as possible. -Once the toe is planted, the reaching aspect forces the player to pull the rest of the body to the outside.
- This creates more power and momentum for the player to perform additional crossovers.



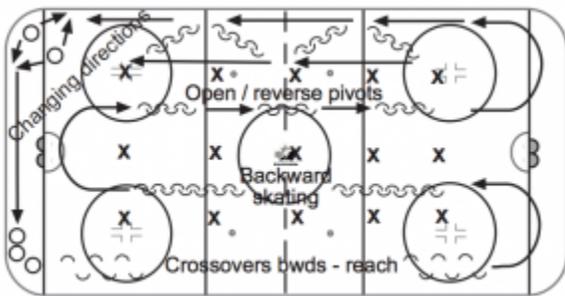
## 3. Backward Skating

- Regardless of the position they play, all players should be strong backward skaters, but especially defencemen.
- Being able to start backwards and quickly get to top speed, as well as having the ability to move laterally, are keys to playing the rush and steering the opponent in the desired direction.



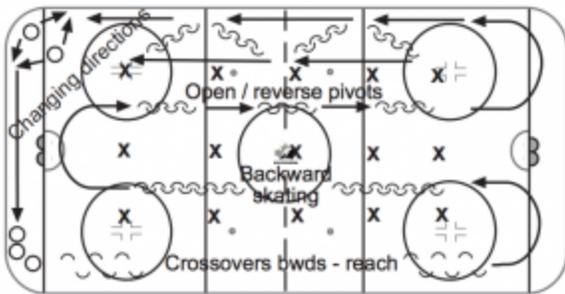
## 4. Pivots – Backward to Forward to Backward

- Backward to forward and forward to backward pivots allow a player to change directions without modifying speed.
- Before a player performs either of these pivots, their weight must be over the glide leg.
- To make a backward to forward pivot, a player must rotate their drive skate 180 degrees outward, and place it down on the ice. Following a simultaneous rotation of the head, shoulders, and hips the weight is then transferred rapidly to the rotating skate while the glide skate rotates 180° becoming parallel to the rotating skate.
- To make a forward to backward pivot the actions are similar except the player will need to rotate their drive skate almost 270 degrees.
- Players will find it easier to first master the backward to forward pivot before they can fully master the forward to backward pivot.



## 5. Reverse and Open Pivots

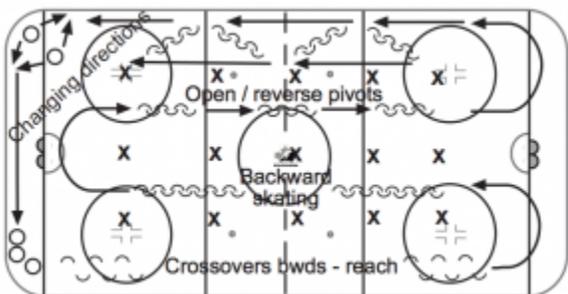
- These types of pivots are used to change direction when carrying momentum into a turn.
- The reverse pivot happens when a player is skating forward and then turns the feet as if to stop, but instead leads with the heels parallel to each other in a short circular glide until the player is skating backward.
- The open pivot occurs when a player is skating backward, then with the weight on the inside leg, reaches forward and sideways with the outside leg to change the momentum from backward to forward.



## 6. Changing Directions

- The ability to quickly change direction gives a defender the advantage of maintaining close contact with an attacker.

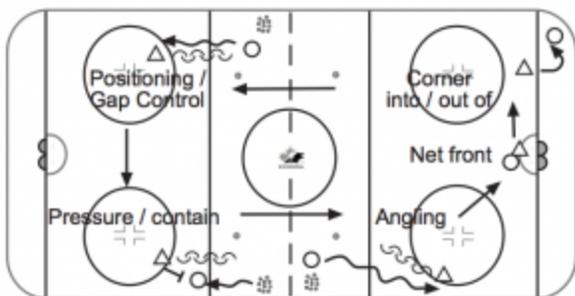
- Pivoting, transitional skating and turning, are keys to sustaining optimal defensive gap while limiting offensive opportunities.



## ONE ON ONE DEFENSE

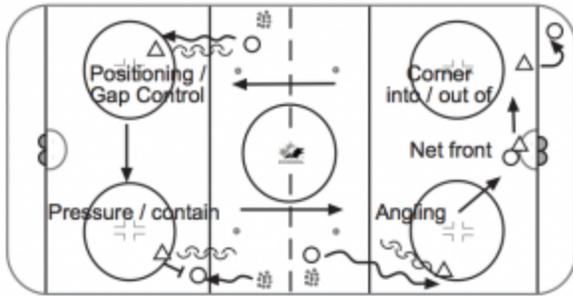
### 1. Positioning

- To properly defend the net defenders should align their bodies with their opponents'.
- When the puck carrier attacks from the outside, the defender here assumes an inside position with his outside shoulder aligned with the puck carrier's inside shoulder.
- When the opponent is attacking down the middle, the defender assumes a head-on position.
- Whenever possible, the defender should attempt to force the puck carrier to the outside, away from the mid-lane, and high percentage scoring areas.



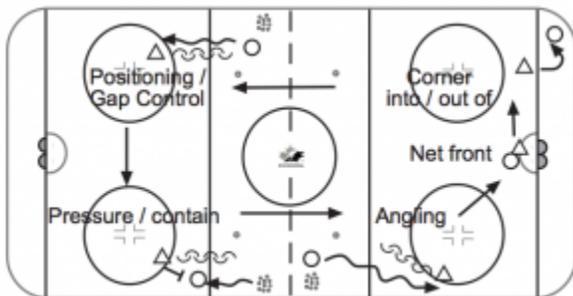
### 2. Gap Control

- Gap is literally the distance between the defender and the attacker.
- Through controlled skating, the defender should try to maintain an optimal gap of no more than 2 stick lengths away from the attacker.
- If the defender plays further away from the attacker, or what is called "loose gap", the defender is giving away the middle lane of the ice.
- On the other hand, if the defender plays too close, or "tight gap", the attacker can take advantage of the outside lane.



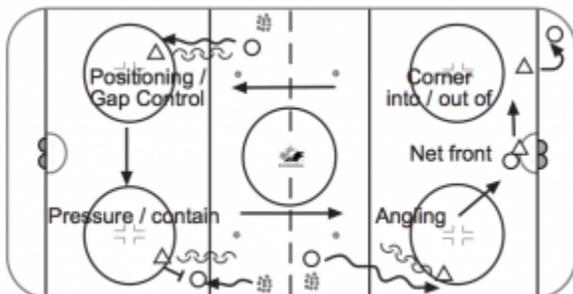
### 3. Pressure or Contain

- Deciding on whether to pressure the puck carrier or simply contain him depends on that player's body positioning and how well he is controlling the puck.
- If the puck carrier has good control of the puck and is facing the defender, so the defender should elect to contain him.
- On the other hand, if the puck carrier has his back to the play or loses the puck, the defender should pressure the puck carrier to try to take the puck away.



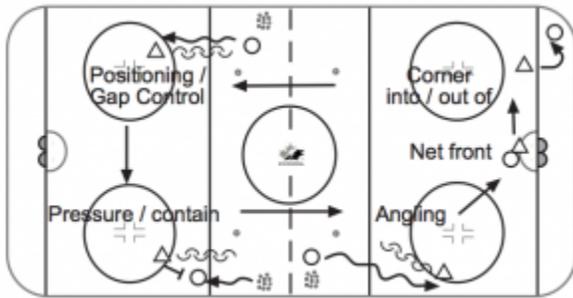
### 4. Angling

- Here's one of the first lines of defense for any player... it's the ability to angle opponents in the direction you want them to go.
- By skating in an arc, and slightly behind the puck carrier the defender gradually reduces the puck carrier's available space.
- The defender should skate with his stick outstretched to help angle off the puck carrier, and to take away passing lanes.



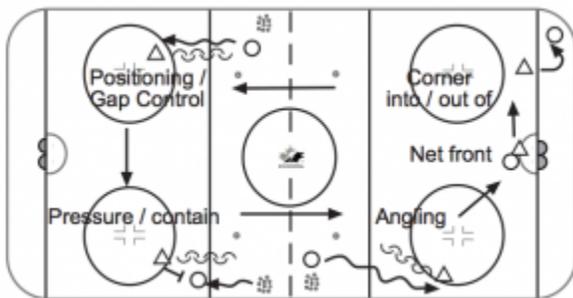
## 5. Corner – Into / Out of

- When playing the puck or any offensive player into the corner, the defender should always take an inside out route, skating in an arc below the circle.
- This move forces the play up the boards and away from the quiet zone behind the net.
- When going back toward his own net, the defender should always maintain defensive side positioning, which is simply, keeping his body between his man and the net.



## 6. Net Front

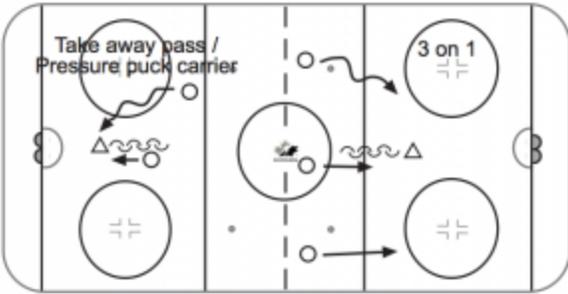
- When checking an opposing player in front of the net the defenseman should attempt to control the attacking player's body and stick without getting tied up.
- The defenseman in front of the net faces up ice with his head on a swivel, while the forward furthest away from the puck sags and provides support in front of the net.



# DEFENDING THE RUSH

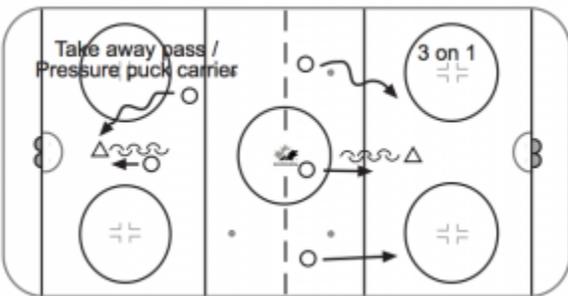
## 1. Play Non-Puck Carrier-Take Away Pass

- On a 2 on 1 rush the defender should maintain middle positioning between the 2 attackers.
- By establishing an optimal gap with the puck carrier and maintaining skating speed, the defender attempts to delay the speed of the attack.
- Doing this takes away the passing option and forces the puck carrier to shoot.
- The goaltender should read this positioning, and play the shooter.



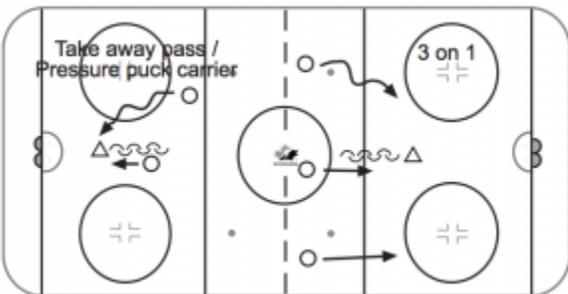
## 2. Play Puck Carrier with Pressure

- The defensive player moves laterally and pressures the puck carrier.
- By moving to play the puck carrier the defender forces the attacker to rush the pass.
- The goalie reads the defensive pressure and moves laterally to play the shot.



## 3. Three on One

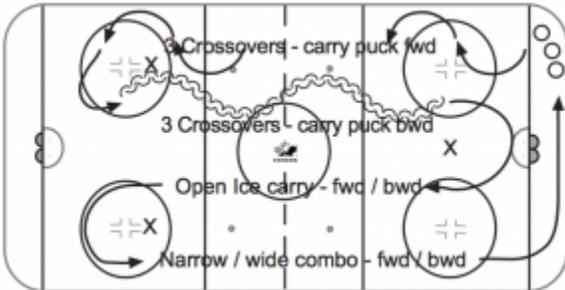
- With more options available to the attackers in a 3 on 1, the defender plays a loose gap in the middle of the ice to buy time for secondary defenders on the back-check.
- The defender should eliminate the cross ice pass and allow the goaltender to play the shooter.



# OFFENSIVE TACTICS

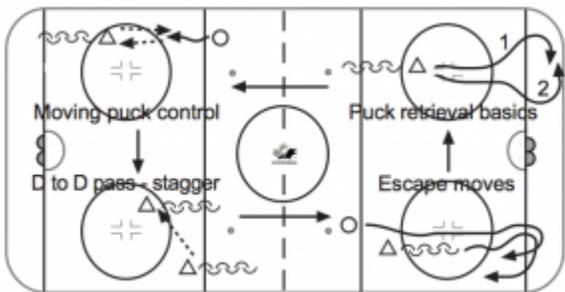
## 1. Moving Puck Control – Three Crossovers – Carry the Puck

- In game situations, this skill is useful for keeping an opponent guessing.
- The three consecutive crossovers cause the player to move quickly from side to side.
- The blade of the stick is used to cup the puck as the player changes directions.



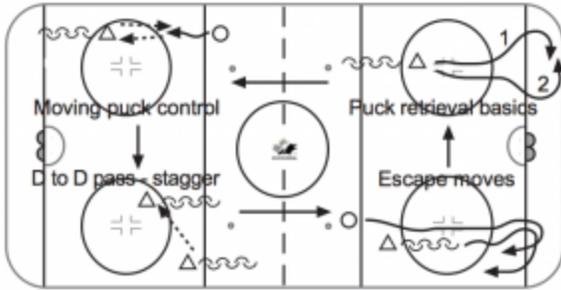
## 2. D to D Pass – Stagger

- If a defenseman has possession of the puck inside his own blueline or in the neutral zone the defense partner should “stagger” to the right or left, and slightly behind the puck carrying defenceman.
- This stagger creates a passing lane for the puck carrier and at the same time makes it more difficult for a forechecking player to take away the passing option.
- This is also a great way to reverse the angle of attack to throw off the forecheck and come back up the weak side.



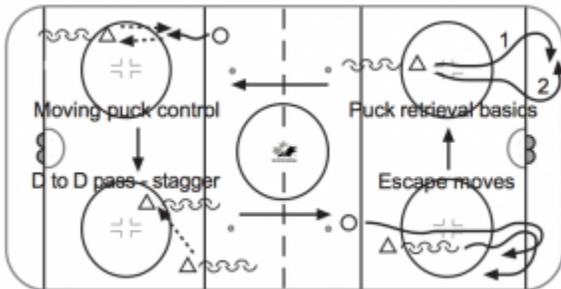
## 3. Escape Moves

- A key tactic used by players controlling the puck in their own defensive zone is an escape move.
- The puck carrier creates time and space by faking, and then tight turning away from pressure.
- Using this maneuver opens up ice for the puck carrier to either skate with the puck or make a pass to a supporting teammate.



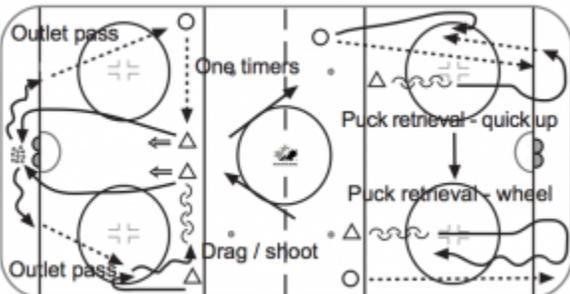
#### 4. Puck Retrieval Basics

- Basic puck retrieval is essential to the beginning of the breakout as well as the safety of the puck retriever.
- Facing up ice, the retriever has to identify where the puck is located, then pivot to begin the retrieval.
- Skating toward the puck, the retriever needs to check over his shoulder to see where checking pressure is coming from, approach the puck on an angle, and then make a good fake before picking up the puck.



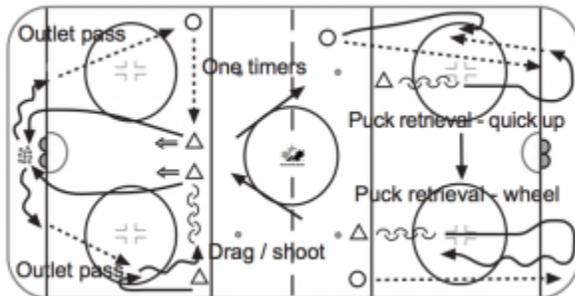
#### 5. Puck Retrieval – Quick Up

- If the checking pressure is coming from the inside, the most suitable evasive move is a tight turn.
- The key point is the defenseman needs to read the pressure from the inside.
- Reading the play correctly, the player executes a tight turn away from the pressure, creating an opportunity to either skate with the puck, or pass to an outlet player.



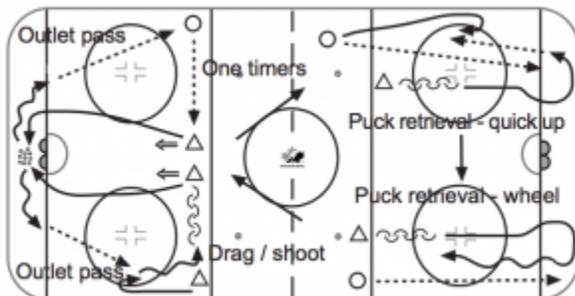
## 6. Puck Retrieval – Wheel

- All great defencemen have the ability to recognize an opening and skate with the puck. The ability to handle the puck while skating with the head up is an essential skill that needs to be worked on.
- If the checking pressure is from the outside and pursuit continues behind the net, the defenseman should quickly round the net and turn up ice.
- The right read is the key – the open space should be used by the defenseman to accelerate up ice with the puck.



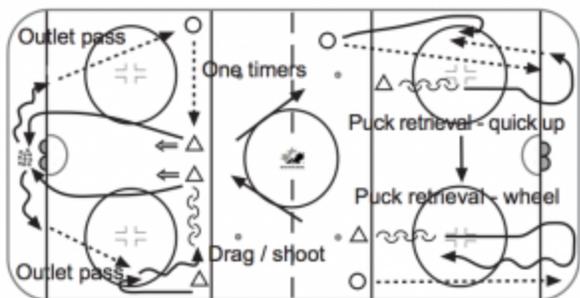
## 7. Outlet Pass

- When a defenseman gains control of the puck in the defensive zone the forward closest to the puck or the strong side forward, must provide low support along the boards.
- The defenseman must make a crisp pass to the stick of the forward.
- The ability to make a good first pass is a critical skill for young defencemen to learn.



## 8. Drag & Shoot

- The drag and shoot skill is one that takes practice and should be worked on, it can be done from a pass or by starting standing still.
- Pulling the puck to the centre of the ice, helps to get a better angle and shooting lane.
- By using the drag and shoot the offensive defenseman creates a better chance for pucks to get to the net.



## 9. One Timers

- A difficult skill to perfect, the one timer is nevertheless an effective shot to use before the defense has an opportunity to set up.
- The shooter reads the timing and angle of the pass and immediately shoots the puck without stopping it.
- This is a difficult shot for the goaltenders and the shot blocking defenders to handle because they have to move laterally to defend against the play.

