

Maximizing Player Activity and Game Application



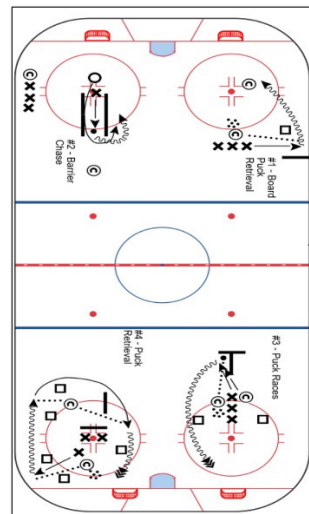
Maximize Player Activity

- Keep players engaged with minimal standing or waiting in lines.
- Use small groups, stations, or staggered starts to increase reps.
- Design drills that do not require a whistle, allow for quick transitions, and maintain a focus on building strong habits.
- Active players learn faster, stay focused, and develop better conditioning.

Emphasize Game Application

- Design drills that replicate game situations, pressures, and decisions.
- Use constraints (e.g., limited space, time, options) to encourage tactical thinking.
- Reinforce habits and tactics players will use in actual games.
- The more practice looks like the game, the more transferable the learning.

Great practices keep players moving with purpose and ensure that every rep reinforces habits that translate directly to game play.



Creative Ways to Start a Drill: Build Reps and Reinforce Habits



What are the three ways you get the puck back in a game?

The three ways to gain puck possession in a game are:

- Receive a pass
- Check an opponent
- Win a race or hunt a loose puck

Start your drills using these actions to make them game-relevant and increase skill reps without added time.

Why It Matters:

- Players might only get 30–40 passing reps in a traditional practice, but creative starts can push that to 70–80.
- Embedding passing, puck support, scanning, and awareness into the start of drills builds habit through repetition.
- Game-like starts improve decision-making and transfer to real play without adding extra drills.

Examples of Creative Drill Starts:

- Win a loose puck from a corner or a 50/50 spot or a rebound
- Pressure and steal the puck from a partner
- Exchange passes before entering the drill pattern



Principles of Effective Drill Progressions



When planning a progression, what's the first element you add to make a drill more challenging?

Where do coaches often go wrong when making drills more complex?

Progress with Purpose

- Add constraints like pressure, players, or limited space to increase challenge and deepen learning.

Mirror Game Demands

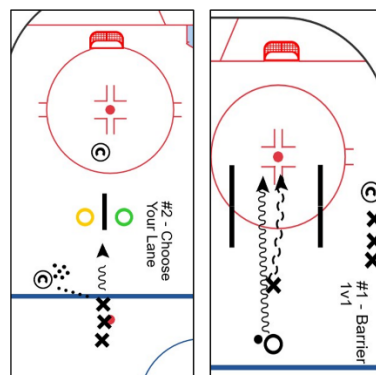
- Progressions should gradually resemble game play — building the habits, reads, and timing needed in real situations.

Develop Cognitive Sharpness

- More decisions and variables mean players must think, react, and adapt — just like in a real game.

Sustain Engagement

- Progressing drills keeps players focused, challenged, and prevents boredom by increasing cognitive engagement and layering decisions.



Principles of Effective Practice Planning



Maximize Ice Time and Space Creatively

- Use small areas, stations, and both ends of the ice to keep players active and engaged. Avoid long lines or idle groups.
 - *“Are all players moving with purpose, or are they watching others work?”*

Link Drills Logically to Reinforce Learning

- Build each drill off the previous one — start with technical skills, progress to individual tactics, then to small-area or team play.
 - *“Does this drill connect to what we just worked on? Will players see the “why?””*

