

# DEVELOPING CHECKING SKILLS

## COACH CLINIC

### *Coach Manual*



*13.08.10.ver.2*

***Adapted From:***  
***TEACHING CHECKING: A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH***

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### FORWARD

Children learn best when expectations are explained, demonstrated, and practiced in a positive atmosphere, especially when there is a logical progression of skills suited to their skill level and needs. This introduction to body checking is a series of progressive drills developed by Hockey Canada to provide a sound curriculum for coaches to follow. It may be applied as presented or simply used as a guideline by the more experienced coach. Review this material carefully and you will find it very useful in assuring that your players successfully develop over the course of a hockey season.

Enjoy the coaching experience and be proud of your contribution to Canada's great game.

### ENDORSEMENT STATEMENT

The sport of hockey has long been an institution in Canada and the continued provision of qualified, competent coaches is crucial to the ongoing success of the game. After all, it is the players who benefit from quality coaching, and therefore, any hockey series that will allow coaches to do a better job is of great merit. It is for these reasons that we are proud to support the creation of this valuable resource.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION TO CHECKING

WHY A CHECKING MANUAL? .....	3
OBJECTIVES OF THE MANUAL .....	4
HOW TO USE THE MANUAL .....	4
GLOSSARY OF TERMS .....	5
COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR PLAYERS .....	7
GIVING FEEDBACK .....	7
SKILL LEARNING .....	8
SAFETY TIPS .....	9
HOCKEY CANADA RULES .....	10

### SECTION 2 – TEACHING CHECKING FUNDAMENTALS

CHECKING – THE 4-STEP PROGRESSION .....	12
STEP 1 – POSITIONING AND ANGLING .....	13
STEP 2 – STICK CHECKS .....	18
STEP 3 – BODY CONTACT .....	25
STEP 4 – BODY CHECKING .....	30

### SECTION 3 – ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

NCCP CHECKING SKILLS (HOCKEY CANADA VIDEO) .....	35
RIGHT START CHECKING (CHECK IT OUT VIDEO) .....	36
OFF ICE TRAINING SESSIONS .....	37
PLYOMETRICS .....	42
BRANCH CONTACT INFORMATION .....	44

## **SECTION 1**

### **INTRODUCTION TO CHECKING**

#### **WHY A CHECKING MANUAL?**

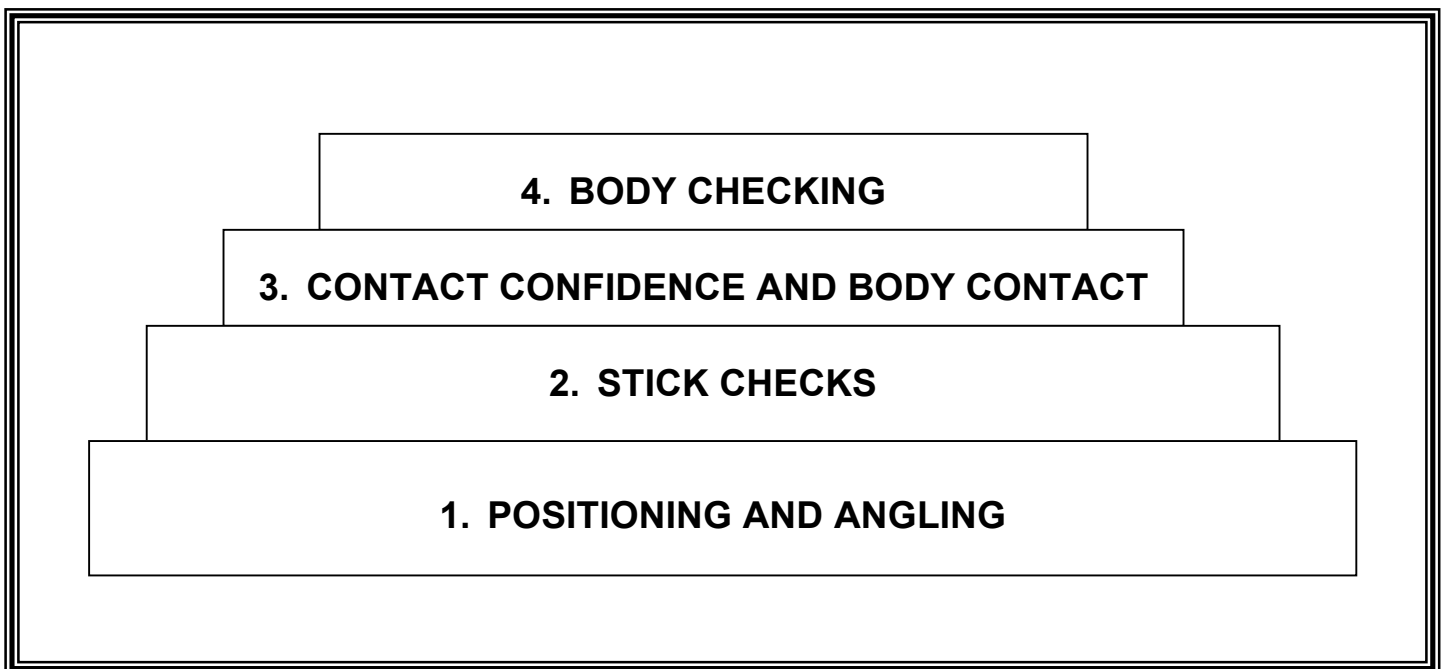
Checking is a critical skill in the game of hockey that when performed properly can create quality scoring opportunities or help a team regain control of the puck. Just like skating, puck control, passing and shooting there are key progressions to the skill of checking when taught effectively, can greatly enhance a player's enjoyment of the great game of hockey.

A common misconception is that the skill of checking begins at a certain age or age category of play. In fact, checking is a 4-step progression that begins the first time a young player steps on the ice. Body checking is the fourth and final step of a four step teaching progression.

The purpose of this manual is to provide coaches with an introductory package of information, which contains progressions for beginning to teach checking skills. The transition from non-contact to contact hockey can be very uncomfortable for young players but if coaches are able to effectively put the building blocks in place, players will be able to make a smoother transition.

Coaches are encouraged to take the time to become familiar with the material in this manual and to adopt the progressions that are presented. After all, it is the players who benefit from quality coaching and if we develop as coaches, then our players will improve. Remember, checking is a **4 STEP PROGRESSION!**

#### **NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL**



### OBJECTIVES OF THE MANUAL

1. To provide the logical progressions necessary for learning the skill of checking (Steps 1-4).
2. To enhance the safety of each player by ensuring that all those who play the game learn to give and receive body checks properly (Step 3-4).
3. To emphasize the importance of playing and staying within the rules of the game.
4. To improve the quality of hockey being played in the rinks across Canada and to place a focus on players demonstrating respect for one another.

### HOW TO USE THE MANUAL

*The manual is divided into 3 sections:*

#### SECTION I . . .

Provides each coach with insight into a number of functional elements to this manual. Key areas covered include definitions, glossary of terms, coaching tips and off-ice drills to support player's ability to perform the key skills as related to checking.

#### SECTION II . . .

Introduces the 4-step model to teaching checking and explains each progression step by step. For each of the four steps there is an introduction to the skills, key teaching points, and the progression drills that can be used in teaching the skills.

#### SECTION III . . .

Provides each coach with access to additional valuable resources that will assist in the coach development process.

**Please note:** *Please check with your local minor hockey association as to what age category of hockey and/or level of play body checking (Step 4) is permitted.*

**New for the 2013-14 Season (see Hockey Canada Rules for more information):**

**Rule 6.2 (b)** In divisions of Peewee and below and Female Hockey, a Minor penalty or, at the discretion of the Referee, a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty shall be assessed any player who, in the opinion of the Referee, intentionally body checks, bumps, shoves or pushes any opposing player. If a player is injured, a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed. When the offensive player is skating towards the defensive player, the defending player may not hit the offensive player by going in the opposite direction to that player. The body contact must be as a result of the movement of the offensive player. There must be no action where the offensive player is pushed, checked or shoved into the boards. Where, in the opinion of the Referee, accidental contact has taken place, no penalty shall be assessed.

### **GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

<b>Angling</b>	The ability to force an opponent to go in a desired direction. This would normally be towards the boards or to the outside.
<b>Body Checking</b>	A player's attempt at gaining the advantage on the opponent with the use of the body. Checking results when two opposing players collide while skating in opposite directions or when positioning and angling allow the checker to use the force of the body to gain the advantage.
<b>Body Contact</b>	Incidental contact of two opposing players in pursuit of the puck or position on the ice in the same direction. Body contact occurs as a result of movement by the offensive player.
<b>Box the Hips</b>	A pinning technique used to control the opponent's hips along the boards. Pressure is placed on both hips to eliminate movement and seal the player to the boards.
<b>Bump and Roll</b>	A technique used by a player who is about to be checked in order to roll off the pressure of the checker and maintain possession of the puck.
<b>Closing the Gap</b>	A retreating defender adjusts speed and skating pattern so the distance between the defender and the puck carrier is lessened in order to get the puck carrier within poke checking range.
<b>Contact Confidence</b>	A player's ability to play physical while maintaining safety in the play.
<b>Contain</b>	A defensive position/tactic which ensures the defensive player maintains a proper defensive position on the opponent (remaining between the offensive player and the net or between the offensive player and the puck carrier).
<b>Control Skating</b>	A method of skating used by a defensive player to ensure proper body positioning while maintaining a defensive side on the opponent.
<b>Defensive Side</b>	The checker always tries to maintain a position which keeps his/her body between the opponent, the puck and the checker's own net.
<b>Gap Control</b>	Maintaining a desired distance between the offensive and defensive players. A tight gap refers to very little distance between players. A loose gap refers to significant distance between players.
<b>Head on a Swivel</b>	A technique utilized to observe and to read the entire ice surface, by quickly rotating the head and glancing over both shoulders.
<b>Inside Out</b>	Refers to defensive positioning where the defensive player keeps the offensive player to the outside.

## ***Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach***

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<b>Lasso</b>	A technique used to wrap the opponent after a checker has angled him/her by steering into a no ice situation along the boards and the pin technique is used to contain the check.
<b>Lift Check</b>	A stick check used while checking the puck carrier from the side or from behind. The checker attempts to lift the opponent's stick on the shaft near the blade enough to sweep the puck and gain possession.
<b>Mid Lane</b>	An imaginary lane on the ice which extends from end to end and is the centre of three equal divisions running the length of ice.
<b>Pin Technique</b>	Used along the boards after a check has been made to control the movement of an offensive player by steering the player parallel to the boards, driving one knee between the player's knees, pressuring up with the power leg and boxing the hips with pressure.
<b>Poke Check</b>	A stick check used while facing the opponent and allowing the opponent inside the range to reach them with the stick. Top hand elbow is tucked in and then is extended with quickness straight to the exposed stick and puck of the opponent.
<b>Press Check</b>	A stick check used to stop movement of the opponent's stick by placing stick pressure over top of the opponent's stick shaft and blade.
<b>Pressure</b>	Eliminating the time and space of the opponent in both offensive and defensive situations.
<b>Puck Protection</b>	A strategy used to keep the puck as far away from the opponent as possible. Puck protection ensures that a player's body and stick are positioned between the opponent and the puck and that the puck is not exposed to the opponent.
<b>Steering</b>	To shadow the offensive player forcing him/her into an area where the checker may eliminate time and space in order to angle the opponent to be checked.
<b>Support</b>	An offensive or defensive concept where players away from the puck position themselves to be available for a pass or take away attacking options for the opponent.
<b>Sweep Check</b>	A stick check used to check the puck from the opponent using a sweeping action by the checking player.
<b>Tracking</b>	The individual skill of pursuing the puck utilizing the shortest possible distance.

### **COMMUNICATING WITH PLAYERS**

Ongoing communication with players will be easier if time is spent at the beginning of the season to talk about goals, provide a outline, and to answer questions. The same type of meeting should be done with the parents on team.

Here are a few simple communication tips to help communicate effectively with players during practices and games:

- Arrange players in a semi-circle.
- Arrange players in a kneeling position to better control their actions and attention.
- Position them so there are no distractions behind the speaker.
- Scan the group while talking. Make eye contact with all players.
- Ask questions to make sure players understand and know what is expected of them.
- Give players an opportunity to speak or ask questions.
- Listen to what players say and how they say it. Use active listening techniques.
- Speak to players using words they understand (keep it simple).
- Bend down, kneel or crouch to speak to players at their level.
- Make an effort to speak to every player at every session.

### **GIVING FEEDBACK**

Providing feedback to players is critical in developing skills. Keep these five points in mind at all times:

- Give the “good” picture. Demonstrate/explain what is required, not what the player is doing incorrectly.
- Be positive. Acknowledge what is being done well, then point out what should be worked on.
- Be specific. Demonstrate exactly what it is expected.
- Don’t forget goaltender(s), they require equal feedback.
- Be patient and allow players to make mistakes at times and encourage creativity. It is a learning process.



**SKILL LEARNING**

*Here is a good teaching sequence to follow:*

**1. Explain the skill**

- Name the skill and describe it
- Tell why it's important and when it's used. Highlight the key teaching points (key words or phrases used in instructing and giving feedback to your players)

**2. Show how it is done**

- Demonstrate
- State key points again

**3. Give time to practice**

- Get players to practice the skill right away
- Get everyone involved

**4. Tell them how they're doing**

- Move around to each player
- Give individual feedback
- Get assistants to help

### SAFETY TIPS

#### PLAYING AREA

**Before each ice session, game or practice, carefully check the playing area to ensure that:**

- ✓ there is no debris, dangerous ruts, bumps or bare spots on the ice surface.
- ✓ there are no protrusions from the boards, glass or screen.
- ✓ supporting struts for glass or upright posts for fencing are padded.
- ✓ there is no garbage on the floor of the player's bench area that may become stuck on the blades of player's skates (e.g. tape) or other matter that may damage skate blades.
- ✓ the entire arena lighting system is turned on and functioning; always practice in lighting conditions similar to those which exist for games.
- ✓ all gates are securely and properly closed.
- ✓ the arena management staff has been monitoring air quality in the arena for dangerous gases.

**As a coach you are responsible to:**

- ✓ educate your players about the dangers of checking from behind; players should **NEVER** check, bump or shove an opponent from behind, especially one who is in the danger zone, the 3-4 metres in front of the boards.
- ✓ teach your players to always be aware on the ice, especially when in the danger zone; players should always keep moving when in the danger zone, and never stand still in this area. If ever checked from behind, players should extend their arms to cushion the impact.
- ✓ ensure that players are wearing proper full protective equipment, including CSA approved helmets, face masks and, where applicable, throat protectors, for all games and practices. Players who are required to wear face masks and throat protectors during competition must wear them during practices.
- ✓ prepare players for practices and games with proper stretching and warm-up routines, and encourage players to stretch following on-ice sessions.
- ✓ never allow players to go onto the ice until the ice resurfacing machine is completely off the ice surface and its gates are securely closed.

**At all times during practices ensure:**

- ✓ at least one coach is on the ice to supervise the players and that the coaching staff control all activities.
- ✓ that all drills are appropriate for the age and skill level of the players and utilize proper teaching progressions, especially while teaching difficult skills like body checking and backward skating.
- ✓ players play within the rules and that team rules are developed and consistently applied for a more effective and efficient practice.
- ✓ frequent rest periods are scheduled to allow players to drink from their own water bottles; remember, tired, dehydrated players are not alert or attentive and are more susceptible to injury.
- ✓ all drills are organized with safety of the players of prime concern, i.e. players should be positioned at least 10 metres from the net during shooting drills; backward skating drills must be done in an organized method to avoid collisions.

#### OFF-ICE SAFETY

- ✓ that clear dressing room rules are established to prevent horseplay and other careless behaviour which could lead to injuries, and that the dressing room is well lit and the floor is kept free of tape or other debris. Players should never walk around the dressing room wearing skates while other players are still getting dressed.
- ✓ that the hallways leading to the playing area are well lit and that there is no debris, ruts or bumps on the floor. Ideally, there should be a rubber mat or other non-slip surface to lead participants from the dressing room area to the ice surface.
- ✓ that players are supervised at all times, including in the dressing room and while proceeding to the ice surface.

### Hockey Canada Rules

#### Rule 6.2 Boarding and Body Checking

- (a) A Minor penalty or, at the discretion of the Referee, a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty, based upon the degree of violence of the impact with the boards, shall be assessed any player who body checks, cross-checks, elbows, charges or trips an opponent in such a manner that causes the opponent to be thrown violently into the boards. If a player is injured a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed.

**NEW**

- (b) In divisions of **Peewee** and below and Female Hockey, a Minor penalty or, at the discretion of the Referee, a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty shall be assessed any player who, in the opinion of the Referee, intentionally body checks, bumps, shoves or pushes any opposing player. If a player is injured, a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed. When the offensive player is skating towards the defensive player, the defending player may not hit the offensive player by going in the opposite direction to that player. The body contact must be as a result of the movement of the offensive player. There must be no action where the offensive player is pushed, checked or shoved into the boards. Where, in the opinion of the Referee, accidental contact has taken place, no penalty shall be assessed.

#### SITUATION 1 Rule 6.2 (b)

*The situation of a player steering or directing an opposing player into the boards, without actually touching him, is acceptable. The most obvious example of this may be seen when a player is coming down the ice with the puck and he has to make a move or play on the defencemen. Quite often the puck carrier will try to go wide along the boards. In this case, we say that the defencemen has the right to close off the boards, in order to force the puck carrier to slow down or towards the middle of the ice. The principle that must prevail is that no player is entitled to use his body to intentionally body check, bump, push, or shove an opponent.*

#### Rule 6.4 Checking from Behind

- (a) A Minor penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty or a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty at the discretion of the Referee, based on the degree of violence of the impact; shall be assessed any player who intentionally pushes, body checks, or hits an opposing player from behind, anywhere on the ice. If a player is injured, a Major penalty and a Game Misconduct penalty must be assessed. A Match penalty could also be assessed under this rule.
- (b) Where a player is high sticked, cross-checked, body-checked, pushed, hit or propelled in any manner from behind into the boards or goal net, in such a way that the player is unable to protect or defend herself, a Match penalty shall be assessed.

*Note: Referees are instructed not to substitute other penalties when a player is checked from behind in any manner. This rule must be strictly enforced.*

## **Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach**

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### CLARIFICATIONS

1. Checking from Behind entails that contact with the player being checked takes place in the back part of the body.
2. Where a player about to be checked turns and, as a result, creates contact with the back, a penalty shall be assessed to the player delivering the check for Checking from Behind.
3. The intent of this interpretation is not to penalize a player who comes up behind an opponent and in the process of playing the puck, makes unintentional contact with the back part of the body of the player being checked.
4. Riding off, pinching or rubbing a player shall be permitted as long as no intentional contact occurs to the back of that player, except as provided under Rule 6.2 (b) - Boarding and Body Checking, in divisions Pee wee and below and Female Hockey.
5. The determining factor for Checking from Behind versus Cross-Checking is whether or not the player applying the check is in motion. If the player is stationary and Cross- Checks an opponent from behind then a penalty for Cross-Checking should be assessed. If the player is in motion and Cross-Checks an opponent from behind, then a penalty for Checking from Behind shall be called. Notwithstanding the aforementioned, if a player is cross-checked from behind into the boards or the goal net, the Checking from Behind shall be called.

### **Rule 6.5 Head Contact**

- (a) In Minor and Female, a Minor Penalty shall be assessed to any player who accidentally contacts an opponent in the head, face or neck with his stick or any part of the player's body or equipment.
- (b) In Minor and Female, a Double Minor Penalty or a Major and a Game Misconduct Penalty, at the discretion of the Referee and based on the degree of violence of impact shall be assessed to any player who intentionally contacts an opponent in the head, face or neck with her stick or any part of the player's body or equipment.
- (c) In Junior and Senior, a Minor and a Misconduct penalty, or a Major and a Game Misconduct penalty, at the discretion of the Referee based on the degree of violence of impact, shall be assessed to any player who checks an opponent in the head in any manner.
- (d) A Major and a Game Misconduct penalty, or a Match penalty shall be assessed any player who injures an opponent under this Rule.
- (e) A Match penalty shall be assessed any player who deliberately attempts to injure or deliberately injures an opponent under this Rule.

*Note: All contact above the shoulders (neck, face and head) is to be called Head Contact under one of the above (In minor and female).*

## SECTION 2

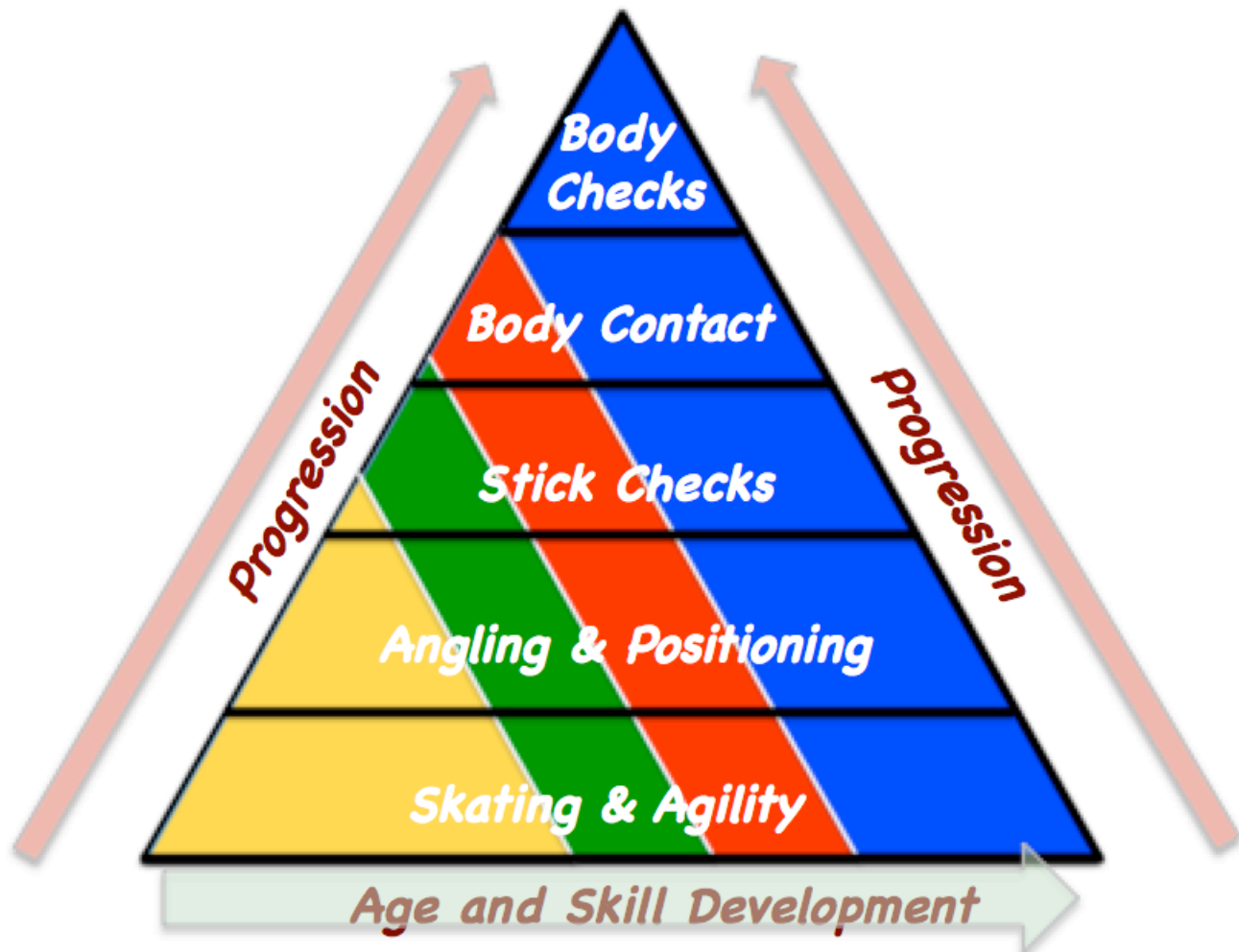
### TEACHING CHECKING FUNDAMENTALS

#### CHECKING - THE 4-STEP PROGRESSION

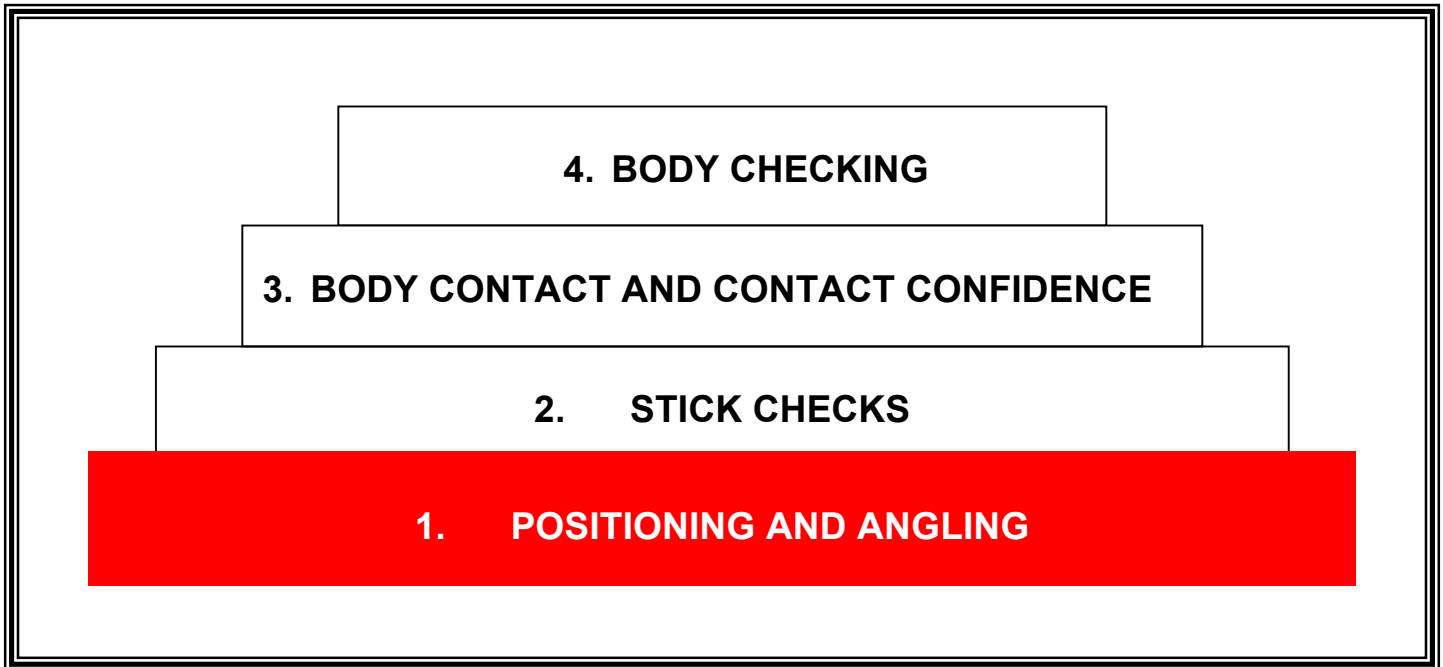
The most essential skill in hockey, which is the prerequisite to most others, is **skating**. The ability to skate efficiently and effectively allows a player to begin to effectively develop all other skills involved with the game of hockey. Players will be unable to grasp and execute skills such as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

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

#### NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



## **NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL**



### **STEP 1 - POSITIONING AND ANGLING**

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

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

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

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

**POSITIONING AND ANGLING**

**STEP 1**

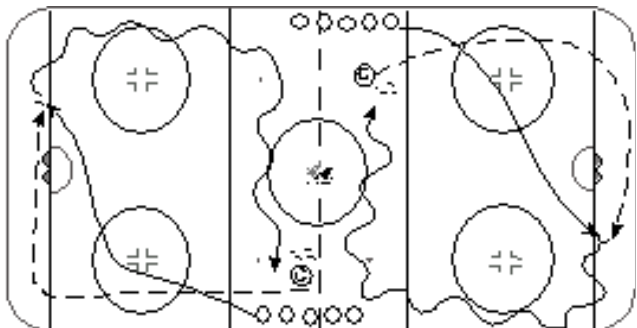
**Angling - Read and React to the Play**

**Drill Objective**

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

**Drill Explanation**

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



**Key Teaching Points**

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

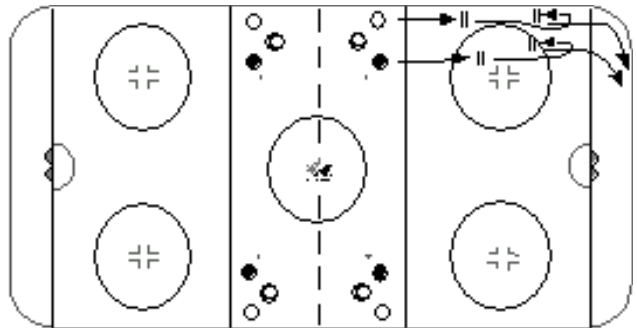
**Angling - Shadowing**

**Drill Objective**

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

**Drill Explanation**

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



**Key Teaching Points**

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

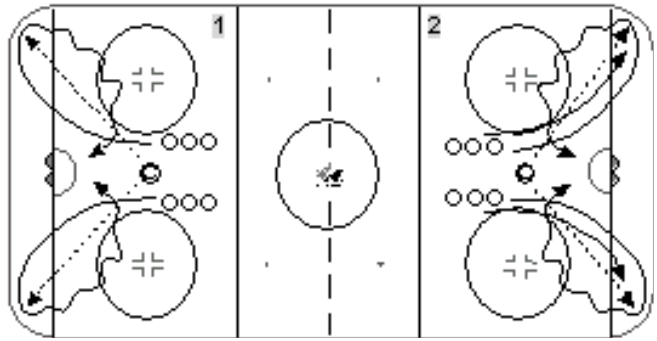
### Angling and Head on Swivel

#### Drill Objective

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

#### Drill Explanation

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



#### Key Teaching Points

- Head on Swivel
- Inside, Out path

### Open Ice Angling

#### Drill Objective

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

#### Drill Explanation

#### 1. Facing Goal

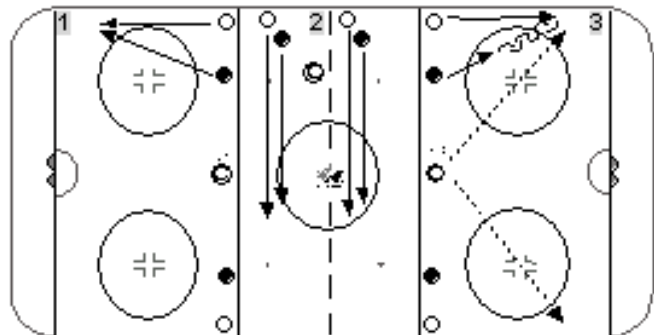
- Players pair up with both facing the goal. Defender inside position and forces player to move board side.
- Defender keeps player to the board side, attacks his stick where blade meets shaft and squeezes angled player out while getting the puck.

#### 2. Defensive Positioning - 1 on 1

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

#### 3. Facing Inside Shoulder

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



#### Key Teaching Points

- Defensive positioning, hip pocket



## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

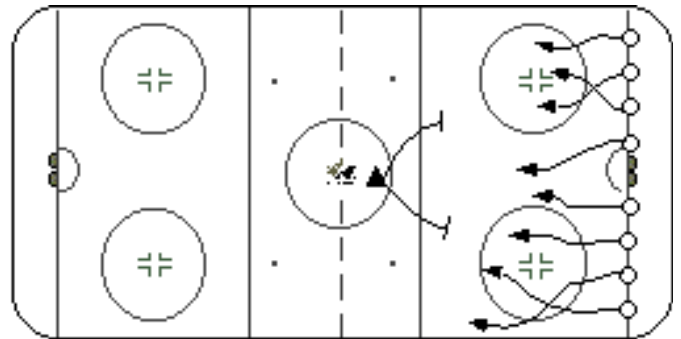
### British Bulldog

#### Drill Objective

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

#### Drill Description

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



#### Key Teaching Points

- Emphasize angling tips from previous drills

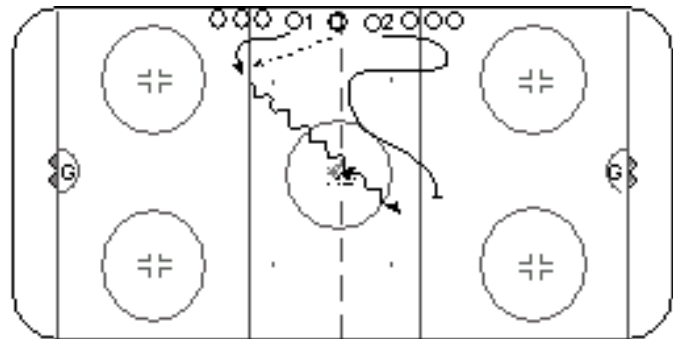
### Angling - Open Ice

#### Drill Objective

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

#### Drill Explanation

- O1 and O2 leave from the red line on go from coach
- both players skate down the boards to the blue line and turn
- coach passes to one player
- Other player angles the puck carrier to the middle, continues angle and pursuit across the neutral zone



#### Key Teaching Points

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

### Notes:

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## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

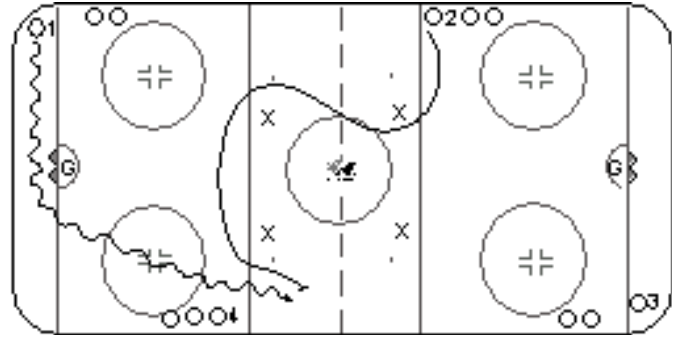
### Angling Gate Drill

#### Drill Objective

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

#### Drill Explanation

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



#### Key Teaching Points

- maintain middle lane
- control skating

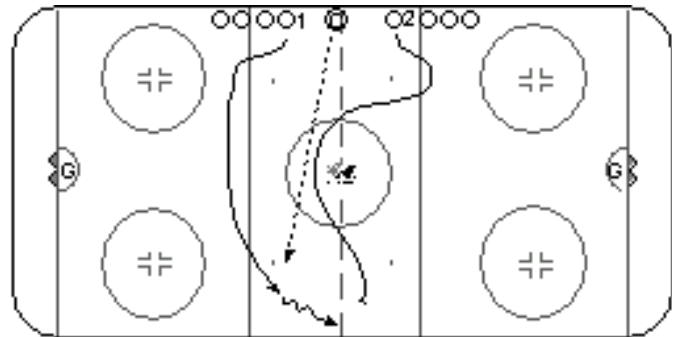
### Stampede Angling

#### Drill Objective

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

#### Drill Explanation

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



#### Key Teaching Points

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

### Notes:

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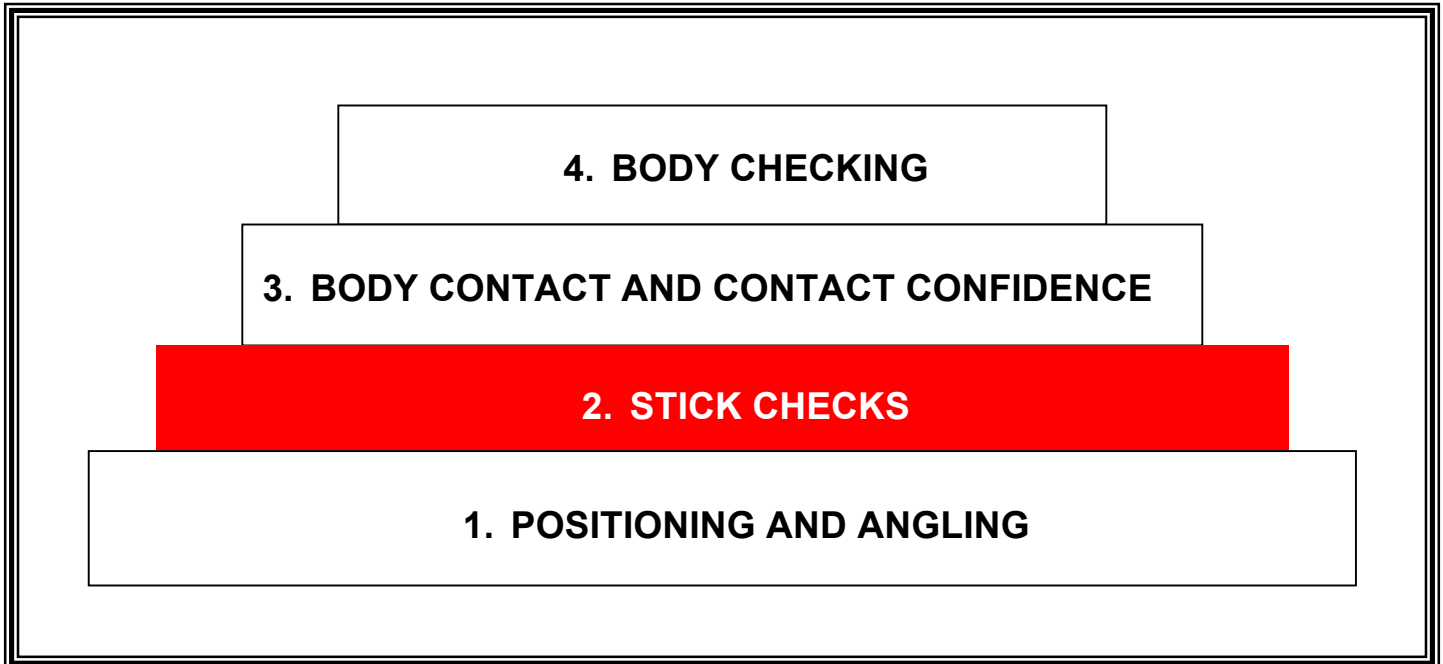


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## **NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL**



### **STEP 2 - STICK CHECKS**

Stick checking may be considered the second line of defense as angling forces the opposition to a position where contact can be made with the stick.

When a player stick-checks, he/she must maintain control of both their stick and the opponent's stick. Stick checks are effective to:

- delay the advancement of the opposition
- force a loss of puck control by the opposition
- control the puck yourself or gain possession for one of your teammates

This section will discuss the teaching progressions for stick checking and provide an explanation for the following 5 stick checks:

- Poke Check
- Sweep Check
- Tap Check
- Lift Check
- Press Check

and discussion the teaching progressions for stick checking.

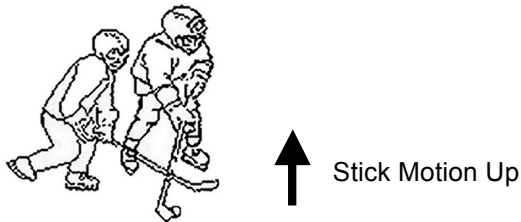
### INTRODUCTION TO STICK CHECKS

The second step/phase of the teaching progression for checking is Stick Checks. This is a very important stage that players should master very early. Players should be able to use this effectively as their second line of defense once they have positioned themselves correctly and angled effectively. With the ability to angle and stick check in place these serve as a strong foundation for the progression into body contact, contact confidence and body checking.

#### Types of Stick Checks

Checking with the stick can be categorized into five categories:

##### 1. Lift Check

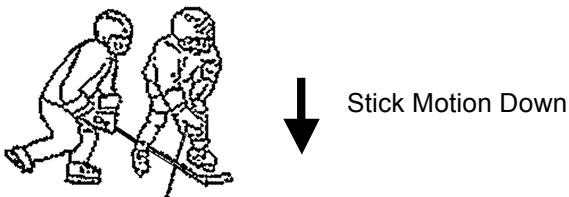


The lift check can be used anywhere on the ice. It is an excellent check often used when players are backchecking and attempting to regain possession of the puck.

##### Key Teaching Points

- Checker approaches the puck carrier from behind or from an angle behind them
- Lift the opponent's stick on the shaft near the heel of the stick enough to retrieve the puck under the stick on the exposed side of the player's body.
- Sealing off the puck carrier or isolating the puck carrier's arms and hands with pressure is effective prior to the lift check.

##### 2. Press Check



The press check is used a lot in the neutral and defensive zones of the rink. It requires strength and timing on the part of the checker, who attempts to immobilize the opponent's stick momentarily

##### Key Teaching Points

- Close proximity beside opponent is necessary
- Place the stick over the shaft of the opponent's stick below the bottom hand
- Downward pressure timed just prior to or at the moment the opponent is to receive the puck for a scoring chance makes this check effective.

## **Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach**

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### **3. Sweep Check**

The sweep check is used to check the puck from the opponent from the side or behind the puck carrier in a circular reach motion.

#### Key Teaching Points

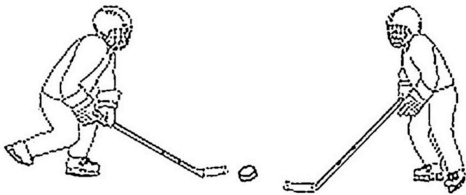
- Top hand on the stick
- The shaft of the blade lays flat on the ice
- Make this check while moving as it allows the checker to regain position if successful
- Bend over forward or lower body to one knee to reach ahead sweeping in a circular motion
- Last choice is to dive onto belly for further reach. Only used to try to check a breakaway attempt

### **4. Tap Check**

The tap check is used to hit the opponent's stick to force them to lose puck control while carrying the puck

- Skate beside the puck carrier maintaining inside-out position
- While the puck is protected on the opposite side of the puck carriers blade, tap the blade firmly so as to cause loss of control of the puck
- Target the top near the heel of the stick
- Ensure that it is not a slashing motion

### **5. Poke Check**



The poke check is primarily used while playing a 1 on 1. This check is effective to make attacking player make a decision with the puck. Unfortunately, players often tend to linger with this checking resulting in the player being off balance and out of position.

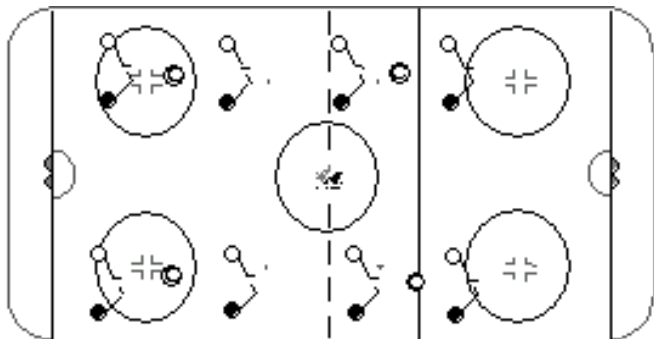
#### Key Teaching Points

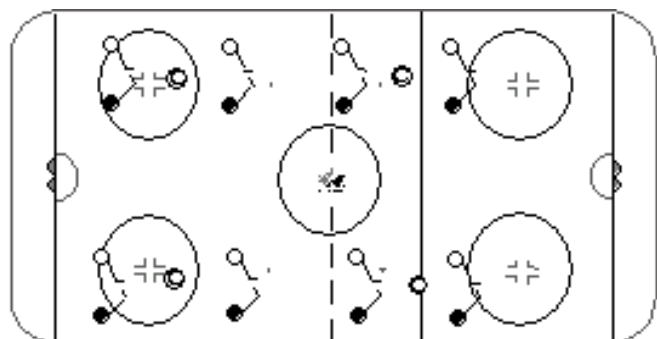
- Player remains in a strong ready position stance
- Tuck elbow with top hand only on the stick
- Perform a quick extension of the arm and the stick straight out when the puck carrier is in the range of the check
- Maintain the ready balanced position at all times

**REMEMBER: The following elements should be taken into consideration when deciding which stick check to use;**

- Location and position of the checker
- Degree of puck control of the puck carrier
- Amount of defensive support

**STICK CHECKS**  
STEP 2

<p><b>Stationary Stick Checks</b></p> <p><b>Drill Objective</b></p> <p>Players should be able to technically perform a stick lift and a stick press</p> <p><b>Drill Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate for players the press and the lift.</li> <li>• Players pair up side by side.</li> <li>• On whistle Player 1 handles the puck stationary. Player 2 stands beside Player 1 and on the second whistle traps or lifts the stick.</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key Teaching Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the skill</li> <li>• Run at 50% so that players can have success at implementing the proper technique</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Stick Check Leap Frog</b></p> <p><b>Drill Objective</b></p> <p>To allow the players multiple repetitions to be successful in executing the stick checks while working with a partner</p> <p><b>Drill Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach indicates the type of stick check - provide key teaching points</li> <li>• O1 and O2 play at half speed</li> <li>• O1 exposes the puck for O2 to stick check</li> <li>• Reverse roles</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key Teaching Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the target area for the checker to check the stick</li> <li>• Keep feet active, control skating</li> </ul>
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**Notes:**

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## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

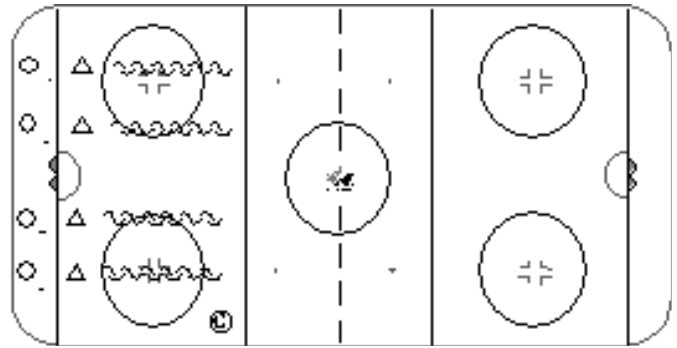
### Partner Poke Sweep

#### Drill Objective

To allow players the opportunity to practice gap control and the basics of the sweep check and poke check in a 1 on 1 situation.

#### Drill Explanation

- Player 1 skates backwards facing O to execute poke or sweep check
- Coach reviews the key teaching points
- Play at 1/2 speed for 4-6 repetitions
- Alternate roles



#### Key Teaching Points

- Keep balanced, don't lunge
- Focus on the chest/crest with peripheral vision to puck
- Allow puck carrier into the poke/sweep check area

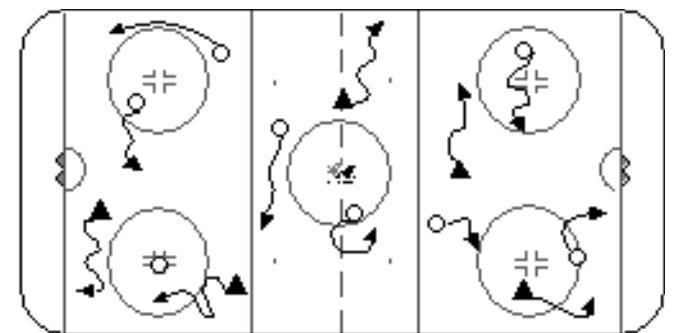
### Puck Handle Keep Away with Confined Space

#### Drill Objective

Players should be able to technically perform a stick lift and a stick press

#### Drill Explanation

- Demonstrate for players the press and the lift.
- Players pair up side by side.
- On whistle Player 1 handles the puck stationary. Player 2 stands beside Player 1 and on the second whistle traps or lifts the stick.



#### Key Teaching Points

- Demonstrate the skill
- Run at 50% so that players can have success at implementing the proper technique

### Notes:

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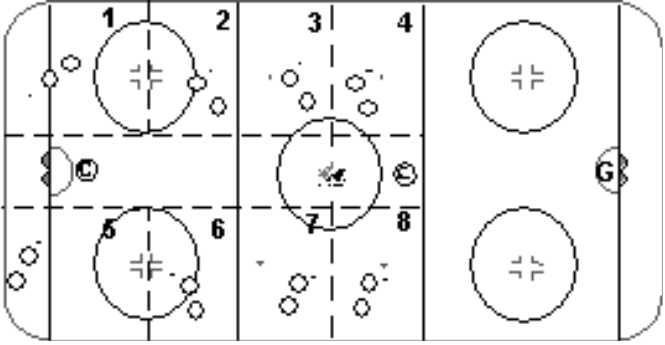
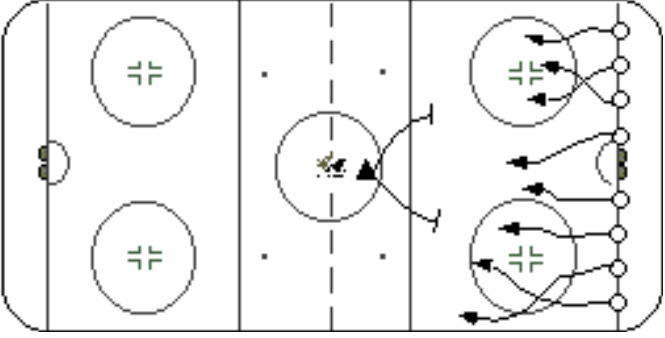


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## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

<p><b>Head to Head 1 on 1 Confined Space</b></p> <p><b>Drill Objective</b></p> <p>To play 1 on 1 keep away, facing the opponent, with emphasis on checking skills</p> <p><b>Drill Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach controls the drill with 20-30 second intervals</li> <li>• Players stay within the confined space and play one on one keep away</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key Teaching Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Checker to focus on the crest</li> <li>• Close the gap to the puck carrier</li> </ul>
<p><b>British Bulldog</b></p> <p><b>Drill Objective</b></p> <p>Game play fun activity to practice stick checking skills</p> <p><b>Drill Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• O carries the puck through the neutral zone - player at centre ice must attempt a stick check to cause O to lose control of the puck</li> <li>• Any O that loses their puck goes to centre to become a checker</li> <li>• Last O with the puck wins</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key Teaching Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head up and down on puck for control</li> <li>• Proper balanced position for checker</li> <li>• Use angling and positioning to get in effective position to make stick check.</li> </ul>

### Notes:

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## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

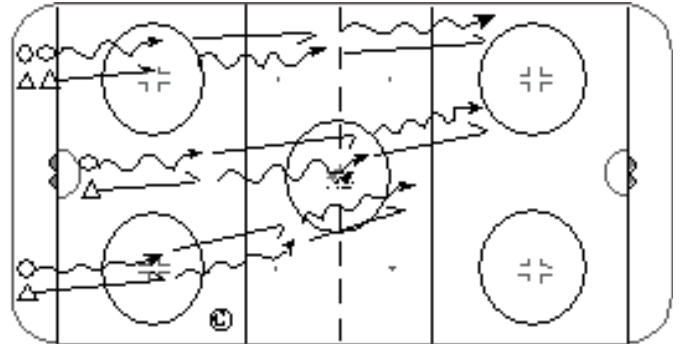
### Partner Sweep Hook

#### Drill Objective

To allow the players the opportunity of multiple repetitions to execute hook/sweep checks in pairs

#### Drill Explanation

- O skates with the puck at 1/2 speed
- 2<sup>nd</sup> player skates parallel or slightly behind to execute sweep or hook check
- attempt several repetitions going down the ice
- alternate once control is gained



#### Key Teaching Points

- place shaft and blade flat
- sweep in a circular motion
- keep stick moving through the check

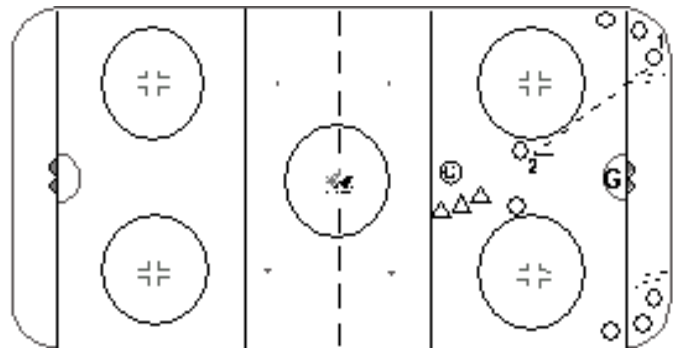
### Stick Control Checking

#### Drill Objective

To allow game-like checking using lift and press techniques in front of the offensive/defensive net

#### Drill Explanation

- player in the corner passes to O2 in front of the net
- Δ1 attempts to time and lift or press check
- O1 and O2 rotate
- Use both ends of the rink



#### Key Teaching Points

- Keep defensive side positioning
- Control the stick of the offensive player
- Take away the forehand

### Notes:

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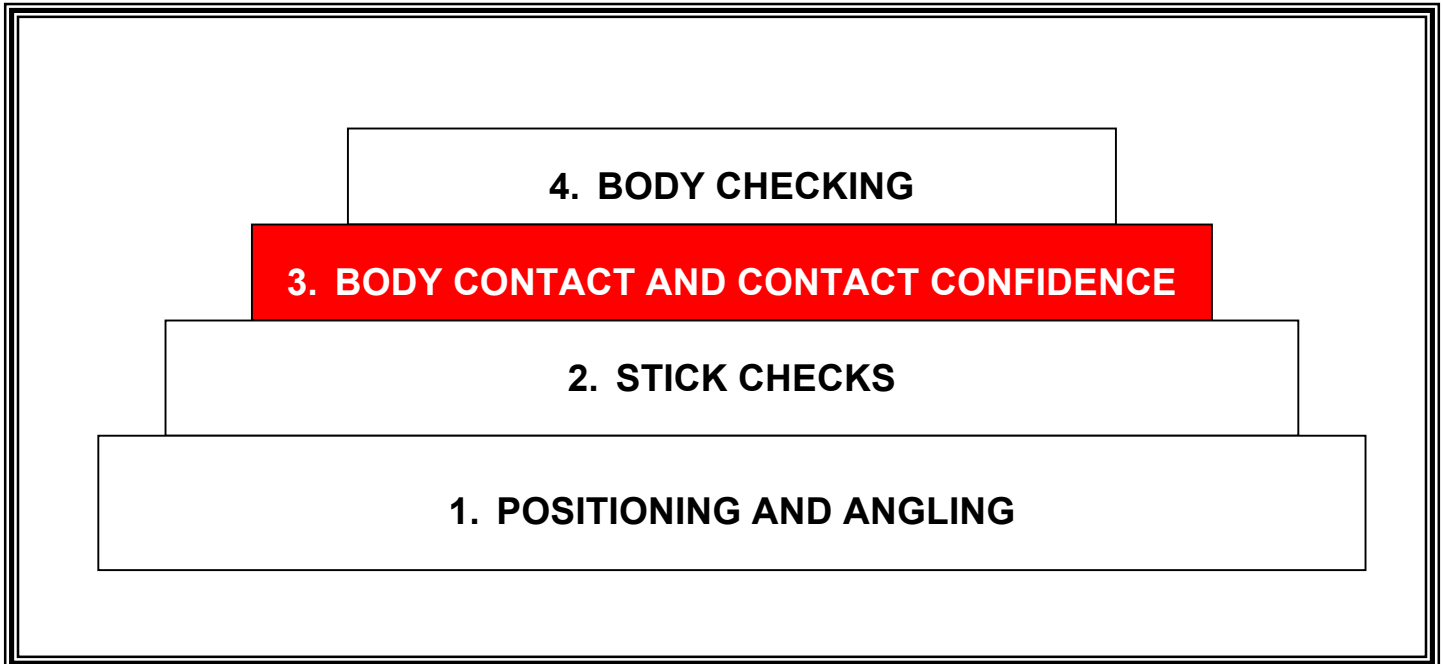
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## **NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL**



### **STEP 3 - BODY CONTACT**

Defensive play begins the instant the opposing team possession of the puck. Checking is used to regain possession of the puck. To review the steps in the progression – skating, positioning and angling are used to direct the puck carrier. This is accomplished by using the stick as an active line of defense in attempting to further control the opponent. Body contact is the third step in the progression and is used to gain separation, when a player positions his/her body between the puck and the puck carrier.

Body contact, by definition, must result only from the active movement of the puck carrier.

#### Key Teaching Points for Body Contact

- Reinforce angling/positioning skills as well as further enhancing the required skating skills
- Emphasize and further enhance the concept of controlling and the containing of your opponent
- Give contact confidence
- Inversely enhance the offensive players puck handling and puck protection skills
- Allow for teaching, stressing and reinforcing puck carrier/opponent safety tactics and the mature attitudes of respect
- Provide fun and enjoyment while learning in a competitive but safe environment

#### How to use body contact

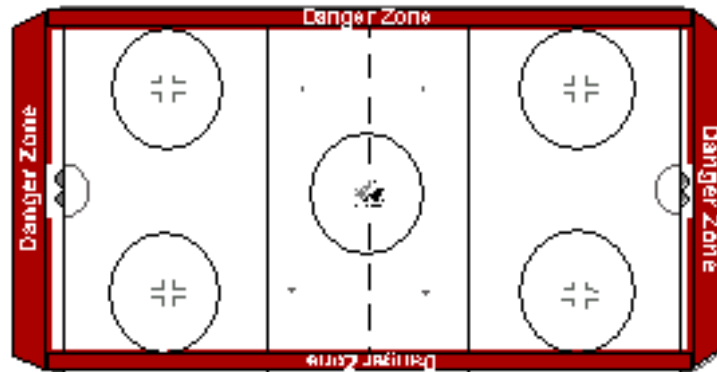
There are two main categories of drill progression for body contact;

1. Contact Confidence
  - Falling activities
  - Combative activities
  - Bumping drills
2. Angling and Positioning with Checking

### THE DO'S AND DON'TS OF BEING CHECKED

#### 1. Don't get caught in the danger zone – Do stay close to the boards

A player standing still 2 to 4 feet from the boards is extremely vulnerable. If checked, from either the side or behind, the player could go head first into the boards. There would be no time to recover from the check before hitting the boards. If the player is moving, he/she will be better able to react to a check than if standing still. Encourage players to stay in tight to the boards for better support. A player can use the long bones of the body - legs, arms, hips, and shoulders - to absorb the impact of the body check.



#### 2. Know where opponents are

Skating into the corner to retrieve a loose puck, the player should use a quick shoulder check to see where the other players are. "Head on a swivel" is often used to describe the player's action. Knowing where the pressure is coming from helps to prepare for a potential body check. This quick check will also help sort out where teammates are, making it easier to make a quick outlet pass.

#### 3. Use hands and arms as a cushion

When a player is checked, raised arms and hands so can help cushion the collision with the boards. It can also assist in protecting the head and allow the player to push off the boards after the check, springing out and back into action.

#### 4. Keep the head up

This rule applies throughout the game, but especially when being checked. Going into the boards with the head down, will increase the odds of a serious neck injury. Players should be instructed no to duck, scrunch their head down into your shoulders, or stick out your chin before impact. These are dangerous positions. KEEP THE HEAD UP!!

#### 5. Turn the body so the shoulders hit first

Players should be instructed that if they are hurtling head first into the boards, their first move should be to get their arms up, and try to turn their body so that the shoulders will hit the boards instead of your head.

**BODY CONTACT**  
STEP 3

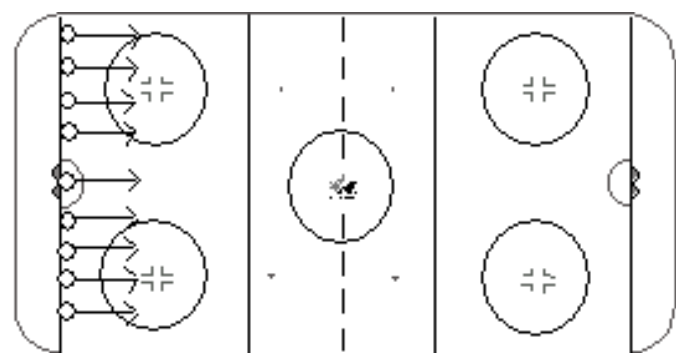
**Diving and Sliding with Recovery**

**Drill Objective**

To give the players the opportunity to be comfortable with falling and to learn to recover quickly to the skating position.

**Drill Explanation**

- On whistle the first line moves slowly forward and falls forward on 2<sup>nd</sup> whistle.
- On the 3<sup>rd</sup> whistle the 2<sup>nd</sup> line proceeds to do the same, sliding on every whistle
- Add falling on side, falling and rolling and controlled summersaults



**Key Teaching Points**

- Cushion fall
- Spread contact over as much body surface as possible
- Bring knees back up under chest to recover as quickly as possible

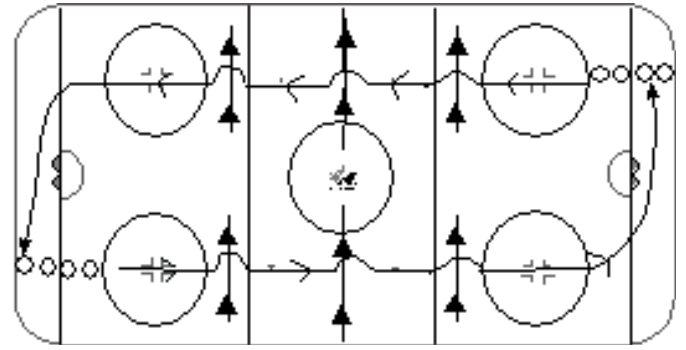
**Jumping Sticks**

**Drill Objective**

To improve balance while becoming comfortable with falling and contacting the ice

**Drill Explanation**

- Players proceed through the jumps one at a time.
- Next player proceeds after first player has jumped last stick
- Add 2 foot jumps, 1 foot jumps, increased speed, increased height of jump, low squat jumps etc.



**Key Teaching Points**

- Jump preparation with feet shoulder width apart and knees bent
- Quick recovery if player falls
- Low centre of gravity

## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

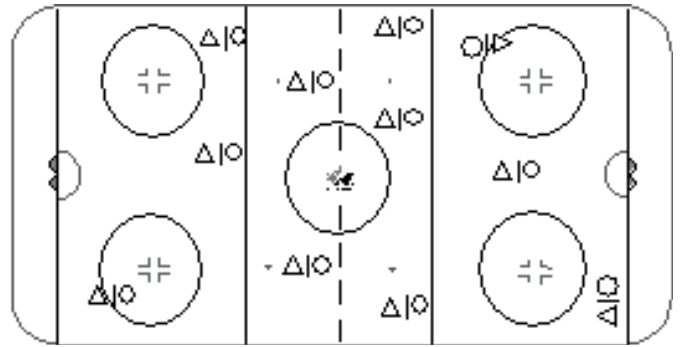
### Stick Wrestling

#### Drill Objective

Gives the player a feel for good, strong, effective body position and to develop balance and agility

#### Drill Explanation

- Use one stick between each pair of players.
- On the whistle players wrestle to throw their opponent off balance
- A player is considered off balance when a body part other than the skates touch the ice
- Other variations can include no stick, 2 sticks or start on the knees



#### Key Teaching Points

- Solid and strong - wide stance
- Get low
- Use strong legs as the base

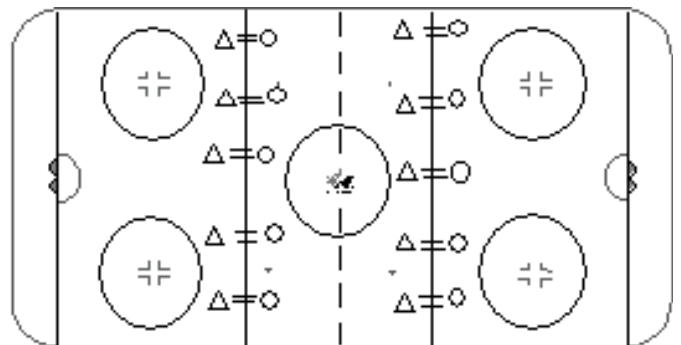
### Tug of War

#### Drill Objective

To emphasize the ready position and the use of the body and legs for strength.

#### Drill Explanation

- On the whistle each player tries to pull their opponent over the blue line
- Use one stick or two sticks



#### Key Teaching Points

- Wide and low
- Drive with legs
- Short power strides

#### Notes:

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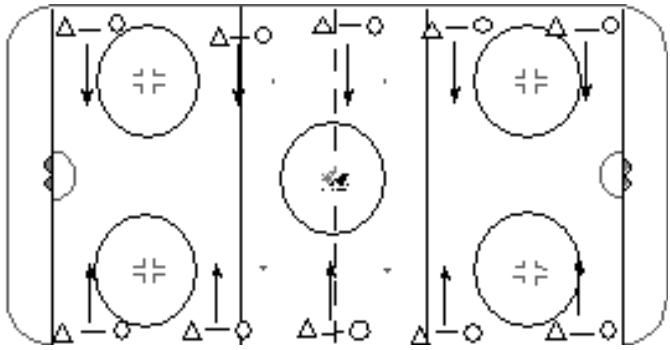
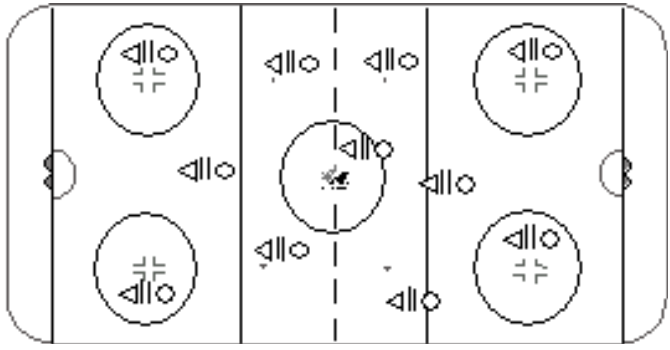


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## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

<p><b>Partner Bumping</b></p> <p><b>Drill Objective</b></p> <p>To develop a solid base, to develop contact confidence and to develop the use of leg power</p> <p><b>Drill Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players interlock elbows</li> <li>• Pairs move across ice bumping each other with shoulders</li> <li>• Also implement bumping hips, bumping hips and shoulders and elbows not locked</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key Teaching Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low, wide, strong position</li> <li>• Initiate the bump with drive from the legs</li> </ul>
<p><b>Own the Dot</b></p> <p><b>Drill Objective</b></p> <p>To develop balance, stability and strength. Focus on use of leg power and developing contact confidence</p> <p><b>Drill Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Players position themselves at the dots</li> <li>• On whistle players bump each other trying to drive the other off of the dot</li> <li>• Other options include side by side, protect the puck on the dot, face to face and back to face</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key Teaching Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elbows down and arms crossed</li> <li>• Good low stable body position</li> <li>• Drive with the legs</li> </ul>

### Notes:

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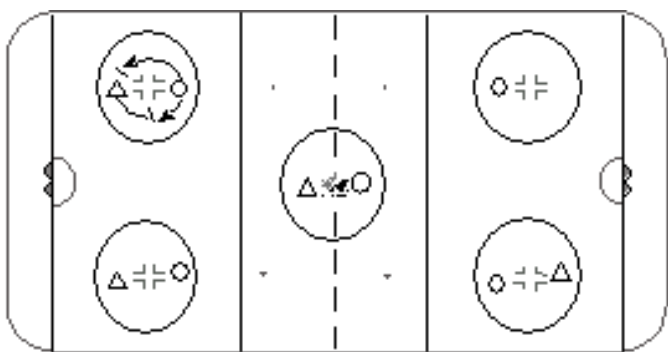


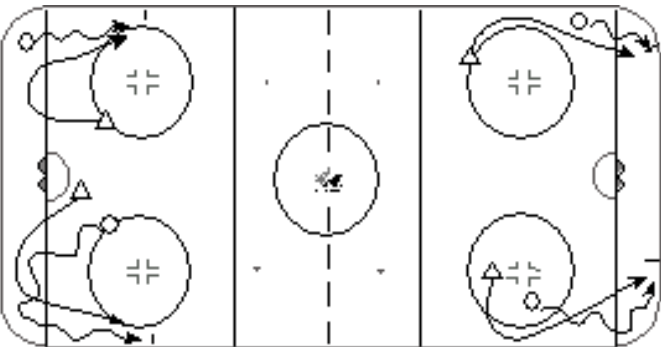
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## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

<p><b>Bull in the Ring (moving contact)</b></p> <p><b>Drill Objective</b></p> <p>To introduce movement with contact, develop proper positioning and to reinforce driving through</p> <p><b>Drill Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No sticks</li> <li>• On whistle O tries to drive through <math>\Delta</math> to get to edge of circle</li> <li>• <math>\Delta</math> protects the path and attempts to drive O back</li> <li>• Switch roles</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key Teaching Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play chest when facing, hips when seeing back</li> <li>• Leg drive and defensive side positioning</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Angle Up, Angle Down with Puck Separation</b></p> <p><b>Drill Objective</b></p> <p>To work on angling skills and work on positioning to separate puck carrier from the puck</p> <p><b>Drill Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>\Delta</math> positions with various gaps from O who has the puck</li> <li>• On whistle, <math>\Delta</math> j-skates quickly and controlled and steers O in desired direction</li> <li>• <math>\Delta</math> drives body between O and puck - aim for the stick shaft</li> <li>• Separate O from the puck</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Key Teaching Points</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inside shoulder just ahead of puck carrier's inside shoulder</li> <li>• Drive body in front of the puck carrier</li> </ul>
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**Notes:**

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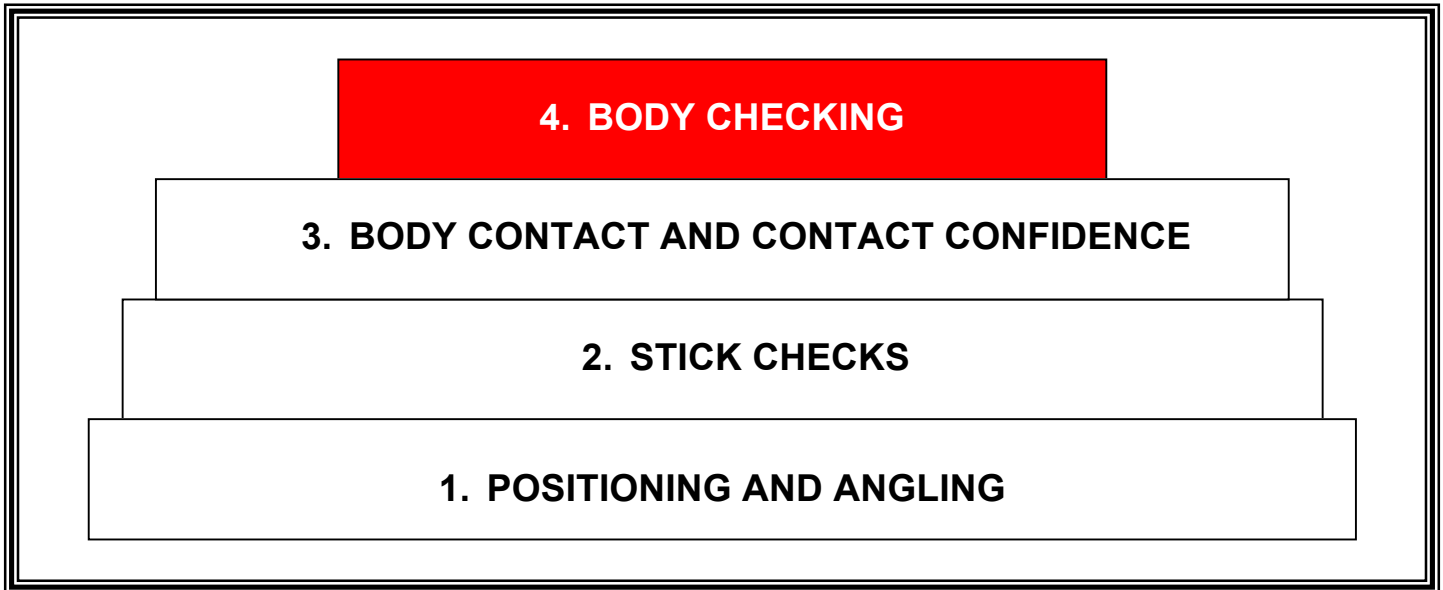


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## NCCP CHECKING PROGRESSION MODEL



### STEP 4 - BODY CHECKING

Body checking is the final step in the 4 step checking progression. A body check can be defined as body contact primarily caused by the movement of the checker. That movement can be and often is, in a direction different than that of the puck carrier. The checker uses their body for the purpose of stopping the attacking progress of the puck carrier and/or to separate the carrier from the puck.

The skills needed for body checking are the effective mastery of the first three steps in the checking progression. First of all the checker must be a strong skater with particularly good balance on their skates.

**In summary the fundamental skills of checking are:**

- **SKATING**
  - Forward
  - Backward
  - Lateral
  - Pivots
  - Cross overs and t-push
- **POSITIONING AND ANGLING**
  - Body positioning
  - Reading and reacting
  - Inside-out position
  - Tracking
- **STICK CHECKS**
  - Lift
  - Press
  - Poke
  - Sweep
  - Tap
- **CONTACT CONFIDENCE**
- **BODY CONTACT**
- **BODY CHECKING**



**BODY CHECKING**  
STEP 4

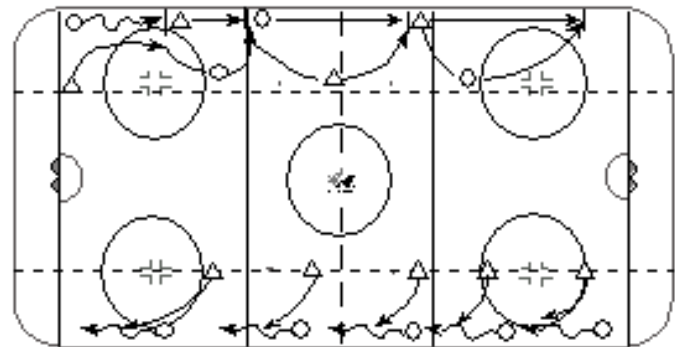
**Partner Bump and Roll Flow - No sticks**

**Drill Objective**

To develop angling and positioning and to practice the execution of the shoulder or block check

**Drill Explanation**

- Players divided into pairs and placed spaciouly around the ice without sticks
- O against the boards, Δ by the faceoff dots
- O moves slowly along the boards while Δ angles and closes the gap
- Δ makes chosen body check then moves slowly along the boards. O rolls to the boards, rotates out and becomes the checker



**Key Teaching Points**

- Approach under control and at a good angle
- O collapses shoulder/body from check, rolls into wall
- Use the terms coil/uncoil as a description of the motion
- Add sticks and pucks, increase speed, add a pin as players become more proficient

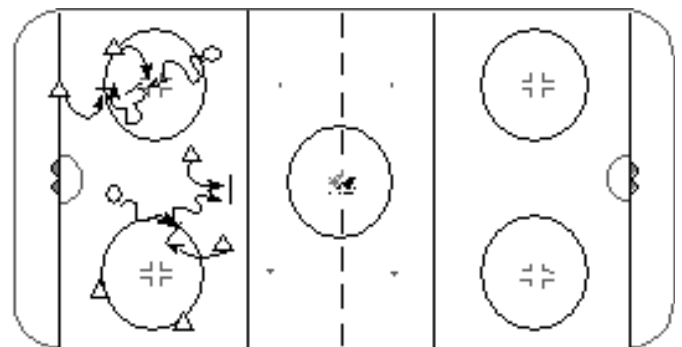
**Open Ice Body Check - No sticks**

**Drill Objective**

To work on angling and positioning skills and to teach checking from a balanced position

**Drill Explanation**

- At each end divide players into 4 groups - 1 group with pucks. Other groups have no sticks
- Group with the pucks cycles around inside the blueline while checkers attempt to bump carriers - if carrier gets bumped off puck they regain the puck and continue
- Keep score to see which group gets bumped off the puck the least



**Key Teaching Points**

- Approach under control - eyes on contact area
- Arms crossed at chest
- Use leg drive

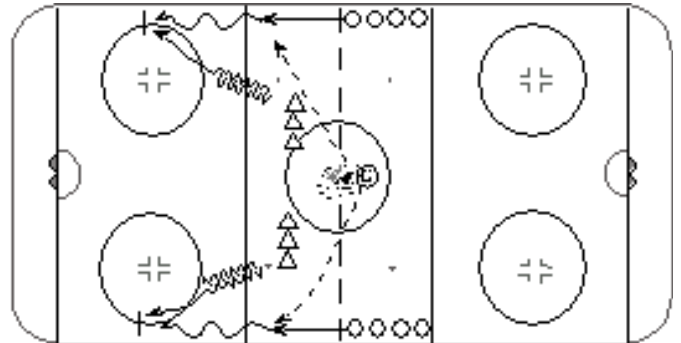
## 1 on 1 Body Checking

### Drill Objective

To develop angling skills while working on lateral motion with a turn and go. To practice executing body checks

### Drill Explanation

- O starts from behind the redline
- Coach passes puck and at the same time Δ starts backward from face off dot outside the blueline.
- O must stay along the boards, Δ angles and makes body check
- Both players go back to respective lines on opposite side of ice from original starting point



### Key Teaching Points

- Angle, use a controlled approach
- Hard but controlled, timing is key

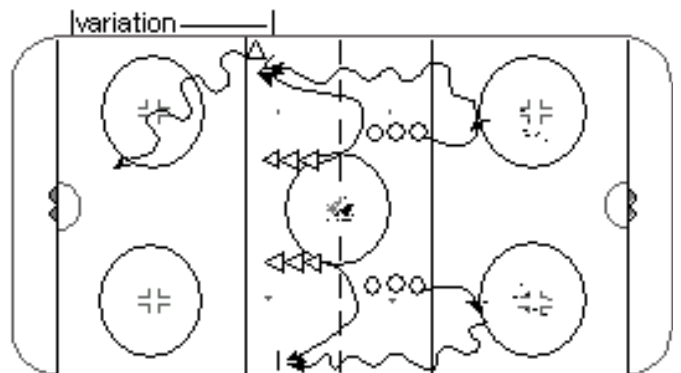
## Neutral Zone Forecheck

### Drill Objective

To work on angling, steering, positioning and body checks.

### Drill Explanation

- On the whistle the O's start and swing to get the puck
- As O picks up the puck Δ starts.
- Δ steers/angles O outside to the boards and makes the check.
- Rotate players through all four positions
- Use variations such as Δ with no stick, O can regroup or Δ regains puck and goes for shot



### Key Teaching Points

- Angle defensive side
- Close gap under control



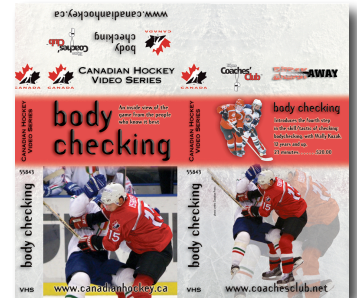
### SECTION 3

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Hockey Canada Checking Video available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFOISUMYmGU>

#### "NCCP CHECKING SKILLS" (HOCKEY CANADA VIDEO)

<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>
0:00 - 1:00	Introduction
1:10	<b>4 Step Progression -</b> Position and Angling, Stick Checks, Body Contact, Body Checking
1:35	<b>Body Checking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overview of checking</li><li>• Advanced contact confidence drills</li><li>• Body checking in the 3 zones</li><li>• How to receive and avoid a body check</li></ul>
1:45	<b>Overview of checking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protect the middle, limit space and time, prevent scoring, read and react to puck control, position and support</li></ul>
2:25	<b>Skating, speed, balance and agility</b>
2:45	Angling, controlled skating, eyes up, feet shoulder width apart, stick on ice
3:00	1 on 1 - good puck control and support corner - angle away from mid ice
3:30	1 on 1 - poor puck control and support - quick pressure
4:00	1 on 1 - good puck control and support - stall and contain
4:45	<b>Contact Confidence drills - strength, agility and balance</b>
5:35	Mirror drills, follow drills with stick, dot tag, dot football, get puck to pylon
7:30	2 on 2 drills, teamwork, to the net
8:10	<b>Body Checking in the 3 zones</b> Neutralize skating; reduce passing, limit play, pin, shoulder check and body block
9:00	1 on 1 position and angling - gap control, defensive pressure
9:20	Positioning for body check Maintain skating stride, feet shoulder width, legs flexed, eyes on chest, stick steering, coiled power
10:20	Open ice - high risk
10:30	Progressions, half speed, 1 on 1 lock arm and knees drive through the pin
11:20	1 on 1 - behind the net, facing
12:15	1 on 2
13:20	Hit from behind
13:30	Neutral zone - body check when supported Drills, mark an opponent, 1on 1, 1 on 2, gap control, boards
16:25	Defensive zone - angling at boards, corners, lasso, 2 hand pin
18:00	Walkouts
19:25	<b>How to Receive and Avoid Body Check</b> Skating, swivel head, evasive skating, roll from pressure, boards, hit from behind
21:00	<b>Summary and review</b>



### **"RIGHT START CHECKING" VIDEO (PART 4 OF THE COACH STREAM: "SKILLS OF GOLD" DVD SERIES)**

Hockey Canada Check It Out Video available at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i1bXZgxp2w>

<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>
00:00 - 00:45	Introduction
00:45	4 Step Progression (Position-angling, stick, body contact, body check)
1:50	Position - angling
6:00	Stick Checks
7:30	Body Contact (definition and examples)
	Lead up games for introduction to body checking - dot tag with puck dot tag without puck, elbow lock and bump, unlock and bump, own the dot
10:50	Body checking how to and positioning
12:00	Shoulder check - how to
13:40	Open Ice, on boards - how to
14:00	Defensive zone, hip check
14:50	Roller check
15:00	Danger zone
15:30	Review - degree of puck control and pressure
17:00	Integrity of delivery of body check
19:10	Summary

### OFF ICE CHECKING SKILL DEVELOPMENT

by Bjorn Kinding  
Hockey Alberta

#### WARM-UP

##### Light Jog

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

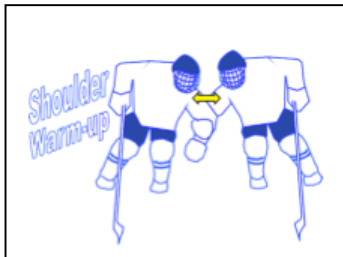
##### Stretching

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



- Make various crawling exercises to increase the temperature and the fluid in the joints.
- Pair-up, press each other's shoulders together.
- Hook elbows together and pull, so the shoulders make contact (illustration 1)
- Grab each other's over arm and elbow. Pull and hit shoulder against shoulder.

#### BALANCE AND POWER

##### Tripod vs. Pushes

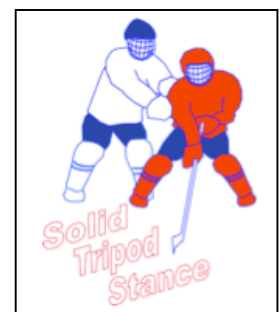
Take a wide leg stance in a squat position (90° knee bend). Hold the stick firmly in two hands and on the floor, so the feet and stick forms a triangle (tripod).

- One player pushes on the shoulders and tries to the opponent off balance.
- Same as above, but this time the player pushes the hips.
- 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, with- out losing the balance.
- 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 first drill well to demo the drill. 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.



## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

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**Repeat the demonstration with another pair for the other three drills and note:**

- How much easier it is to move when pushing on the hips instead of the shoulders (drill 2).
- How the player with the lower target area is more likely to overpower the opponent.

### Leg Drive

Place the top of the shoulder right in the chest under the shoulder pad of the opponent with the head just to the side of the partner's upper arm. The checker drives with leg power and forces the opponent to back-up. The partner gives adequate resistance, but makes sure the checker has a chance to drive forward.

### BODY CHECKING TECHNIQUES

#### Front Check

The two partners stand in a wide stance, facing each other and a short step length apart. The checker leans forward so that the shoulder top almost touches the partner's chest, right under the shoulder pad. The "receiver" (target) has bent knees but a straight upper body. 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 on the go, the checker moves the 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 a backward step.

#### Side Check

##### Bump

Two players are standing side-by-side in a wide stance, with their knees well bent (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". On "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

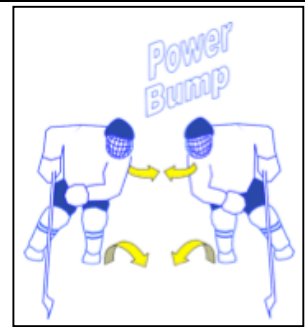
## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

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°)

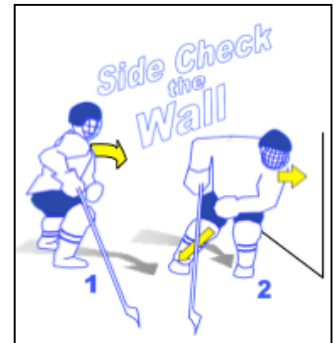
“3” = Lateral step and make contact the same way as described above under “Bump”.



### 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, rotates 90°, places the foot parallel next to the wall and extend the outside leg while remaining 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 faces the wall. The partner tries to pin. Hold the stick with two hands and press it against the upper leg of the opponent. 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.

## ABSORBING A CHECK

### 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.

At the moment of the contact, turn the shoulders and hip towards the checker to make use of these body parts as our contact areas. We do not want to expose our chest, stomach or ribs. Forget the puck for a second. We should hold our breath and tighten up muscles. Don’t leave the boards,





## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

but lean into the check, and do not duck. Ducking could expose our 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. A 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, contact is made with the 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 break free.

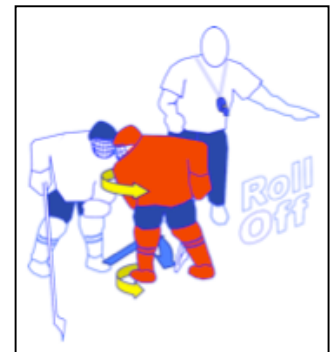
### Check Back (or strike first)

Same set up the drill as above, but the receiver will not only lean into the hit, but checks back. When the checker makes the first move, the receiver pushes off with the elbow on the wall (still keeping the foot, knee and hip tight against the wall), and pushes 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 contact. Don't play! If we want to play, we will experience contact. The best we can do is to limit the frequency and the impact of the contacts and checks we will receive.

Two players face each other. A short step apart and slightly leaning forward, so the right shoulders (or left shoulders) almost touch 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 the right foot (left if the left shoulders are touching) forward and executes a front check (football check) and drives through. The other player reacts and rolls off the check.

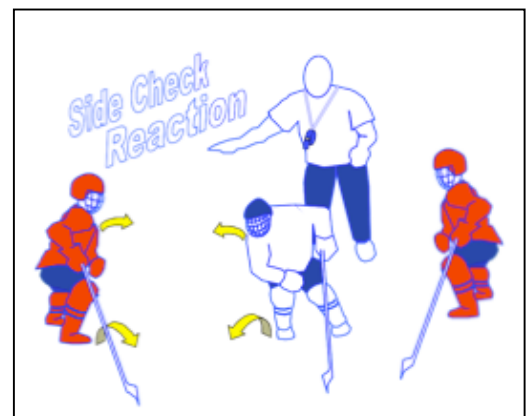


As an alternative, the coach (teammate) can tag the player with the hand, instead of calling out the name. Begin with using no stick, and then alternate keeping the stick in one hand and in two hands.

## REACTIVE AND COMPETITIVE DRILLS

### Side Check Reaction

Three players are lined up in a straight line, and 2-3 meters apart. The outside players are facing each other and the middle player is turned so the shoulders line up with the two other players. All players are in a deep knee bend, alert and ready to go.



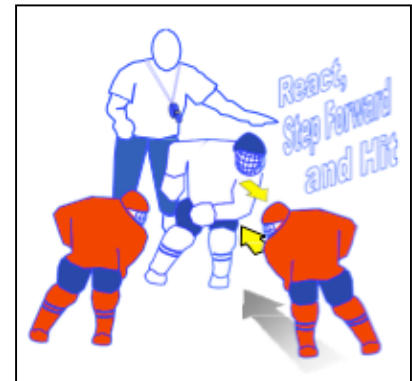
## Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach

Behind the player in the middle there is an instructor who will give a sign that the player in the middle cannot see. The two other players will react to the sign. Whoever is chosen by the instructor will take 2 – 3 steps forward and execute a side check on the player in the middle who reacts as quickly as possible to the checker, take a lateral step and “checks back”. The drill could be done with or without sticks. If sticks are used, make sure they stay on the floor at all times.

### React, Step Forward and Body Check

Three players are lined up in a 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 who will give a sign that 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 – 3 steps forward and execute a side check or a front check on the player in the middle who should react to the checker as quickly as possible, take a step forward and “check back”.

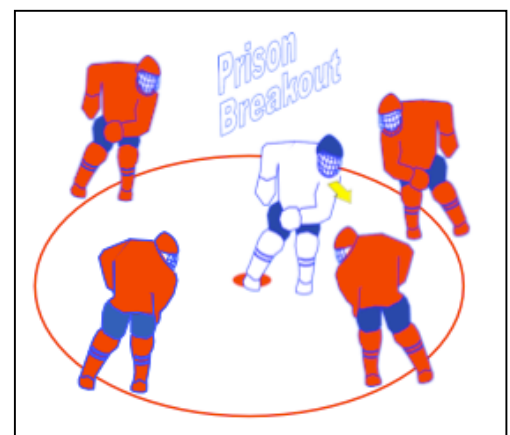


The drill could be done with or without sticks. If sticks are used, make sure they stay on the floor at all times. The distance between the players should not exceed three meters to prevent runs and or the use of excessive force and momentum. Secondly, it would also give the player in the middle too much time to react, and the purpose of the drill would be lost.

### Prison Breakout

One player lines up in the middle of a circle. In a gym the basketball circles are of suitable size. All the others place themselves around the circle with one foot inside and one foot outside. The illustration shows only four players, but 10 or 12 players work better. Everybody is ready to go in a deep knee bend position.

The player in the middle starts from the centre dot and tries to break through the line of players by executing a body check against one of these players. If there is no breakthrough on the initial body check, the player cannot continue, but rather 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 be able to place both feet outside the circle.



The purpose of the drill is to be competitive not to run over a smaller player. Therefore the player in the middle should seek a challenge and try to body check a player bigger or equal in size. The players guarding the circle must hold their ground. Do not duck, roll off or step aside.

### PLYOMETRICS

by Cathie Filyk, M.Kin.

Brandon Bobcats, CIAU (Canada West)

Brandon Wheat Kings, WHL

1. **Skaters low power stride:** Stride side to side, keeping their body low (the length of stride will depend on their leg length). The players can stay on the spot or move forward or backward. For variety and added intensity, these can be done on a hill.
2. **Skaters power leap:** As above, but this time the players will leap up and over to the other side. They will explode up and land in a squat. Watch the landing – make sure that they are tracking their ankles, knees and hips just like they would when performing squats in a gym\*\*.
3. **Running up and down on a platform or stairs** – Try to find a platform that is about 4 – 6 inches off the ground ( or use a stair) and have the players run up and down as fast as they can. Try to ensure that they land softly with their feet to absorb the impact. Have them land only on the balls of their feet, both stepping up and down. Have the players stay close to the platform and keep their chest and head up\*\*.
4. **Two-footed hop over a hockey stick** - anywhere from 2 - 12 inches off the ground (depending on the age of the player). Have the players bend their knees upon landing, to absorb the impact, tuck their knees up as they jump over the sticks. For added intensity, do this exercise one foot at a time\*\*.
5. **Forward lunges**– Lunge forward, one leg at a time. The movement is much like a cross-country ski motion. The weight on landing should be through the heel of their front foot. The knee, ankle and toes should be in alignment, travelling forward as they do these. To increase intensity for this exercise, add power to the movement.
6. **Reverse lunges** – As above, but lunging backwards. Watch their alignment. Have the players land with their weight going through the heel of their front foot. This exercise is advanced and is not recommended for younger players.
7. **3, 2, 1 Tuck jump** – Have the players start off standing, with knees soft (slightly bent). They should pulse down for a count of 3, 2, 1 and then tuck jump (knees to your chest). Land quietly and absorb the impact by bending into the landing.
8. **Quick taps on a platform or stair** - Instead of running up and down, the player taps the ball of their foot up on the platform - alternating each foot as they do it. The players should try to keep as quick a pace with this as they can. This is much like running on the spot.
9. **Skipping** - As fast as the players can.
10. **Squat thrusts** – Have the players start in an upright position, then drop to all fours and thrust their legs out behind them (they are now in a push-up position), then quickly pull their legs back in and return to an upright position.

## ***Teaching Checking: A Progressive Approach***

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- 11. Leap frogs** – Just as the title says. Go for height or go for distance\*\*.
- 12. Crossovers** – Staying low, cross one leg in front of the other and travel for 10 – 15 crossovers in one direction. Walk back to the start point and repeat with the other leg. These can be done on a hill for variety and intensity.
- 13. Stair running** – Find a long flight of stairs (a stadium, arena, etc.). The players can run up and down them; bound two by two; three by three; one-legged; hop up; use both feet; or the crossover technique\*\*.
- 14. Cones** - Set up 6 to 10 cones or pylons (6 to 18 inches in height - depending on the age of the players) in a row and have them tuck jump forward over each cone with both feet. To add variety to this exercise, arrange the cones (pylons) in different patterns, space them farther apart (more distance in the jump for strength), closer (more for quick feet and agility)\*.
- 15. Directional Change Shuffle Drill** – Have the players stand in a “ready position” (eyes looking forward, knees bent and butt down). The idea of this drill is to get the players shuffling back and forth, side to side and diagonally as fast as possible, to enhance their foot speed. They are to keep low during the drill. A coach instructs the players on what direction they are to be moving. Keep the drill moving at a quick pace. This is good for reaction work. Stick handling with a tennis ball can also be done with this drill.

\*\* Any of these exercises can be done backwards, as hockey players should develop strength and agility in both directions.

**Note:** The duration of each of these exercises will depend on the age and fitness levels of your players.

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