



Special Olympics Coaching Quick Start Guide

# FLOOR HOCKEY



**Special Olympics**

July 2007



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## Acknowledgements

Special Olympics wishes to thank the professionals, volunteers, coaches and athletes who helped in the production of the *Floor Hockey Coaching Guide*. They have helped fulfill the mission of Special Olympics: to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 8 years of age and older with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if, for any reason, an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

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## Special Thanks To the Following for All of Your Help and Support

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## Planning a Floor Hockey Season

There will be many different skills to teach players during the course of a season. A season-long training plan will help coaches present skills in a systematic and effective way. The sessions in the plan below are organized in a twice-a-week format. Make time at each practice to work individually with your goalkeepers for 10-15 minutes. If you do not have an assistant coach, you may have to do this before or after the practice session.

<b>Basic Practice</b>	
Athletes put equipment on Warm-ups Drill 1 Water break Drill 2/scrimmage Cool-downs Athletes put equipment away	
<b>Preseason</b>	
<b>Week #1</b>	Athlete/parent meeting Drill 1: Use the Individual Skills contest to assess your athletes Drill 2/scrimmage: Finish Individual Skills contest assessment
<b>Week #2</b>	Drill 1: Passing and Receiving Drill 2/scrimmage: Dodge Puck
<b>Competition Season</b>	
<b>Week #3</b>	Drill 1: Stick Checking and Face-offs Drill 2/scrimmage: Two on Two Drill
<b>Week #4</b>	Drill 1: Red Light, Green Light & Steal the Bacon Drill 2/scrimmage: Shoot Around the Goal
<b>Week #5</b>	Drill 1: Assess athletes: play a mini game, playing all athletes Drill 2/scrimmage: Using assessment, repeat a previous practice drill to reinforce a skill team needs to work on
<b>Week #6</b>	Drill 1: Screening Drill Drill 2/scrimmage: Give and Go Drill
<b>Week #7</b>	Drill 1: Triangle Drill Drill 2/scrimmage: Play a full game
<b>Week #8</b>	Drill 1: Four Corner Drill Drill 2/scrimmage: Play a full game



## Essential Components of a Floor Hockey Training Session

Special Olympics athletes respond well to a simple, well-structured training routine with which they can become familiar. An organized plan, prepared before you get to the facility, will help establish such a routine and help make the best use of your limited time. A basic training plan is outlined below.

### Warming Up

- Every athlete warms up.
- Stretch each muscle group.
- Have athletes lead the stretching while coaches assist individual athletes when necessary.

### Skills Instruction

- Quickly review previously taught skills.
- Introduce the theme of the skills activity.
- Demonstrate skills simply and with enthusiasm.
- Divide into smaller groups, if possible.
- Physically assist and prompt lower ability athletes when necessary.
- Introduce and practice new skills early in the training session.

### Competition Experience

- Athletes learn a lot by simply playing the game.
- Use drills (i.e. One on One / Three on Two) to teach basic skills.
- Use scrimmages to teach game mechanics and teamwork.
- Try to end the training with a fun competitive activity.

### Cooling Down

- Slow run/walk/stretch.
- As the athletes cool down, comment on the session and the next training session and/or competition.
- Finish with a team cheer.



## Considerations for Training

- When designing trainings, exercises and drills, consider the strengths and weaknesses of each athlete and your team as a whole. Choose activities that allow your athletes to improve.
- Make trainings fun. Design trainings that hold the athletes' attention. Use exercises and drills that your athletes enjoy. Use these exercises to lighten the load of hard work and to establish positive team attitude. When practicing drills, do enough to improve technique, yet not so much as to bore your athletes.
- Keep your talking to a minimum. Short, concise instructions are better than long explanations.
- Be willing to create or adapt drills to meet unique needs of your team. Skilled athletes master drills fairly quickly, so add some new twists to challenge these athletes.
- As you introduce new skills and techniques, you also need to review fundamental ones. Drills are a good way to improve your athletes' skills.
- Introduce new skills early in the training session, when athletes are fresh and attentive. Practice new skills for several sessions before incorporating them into more complex drills and game scenarios.
- Use drills and scrimmages that encourage communication and teamwork among athletes.
- Above all, be organized.

## Tips for Conducting Safe Training Sessions

Though the risks can be few, coaches have a responsibility to ensure that athletes know, understand and appreciate the risks of floor hockey. The safety and well-being of athletes are the coaches' primary concerns. Floor hockey is typically not a dangerous sport, but injuries do occur. It is the head coach's responsibility to minimize the occurrence of injuries by providing safe conditions.

1. Establish clear rules for behavior at your first training and enforce them.  
Keep your hands and sticks to yourself.  
Listen to the coach.  
When you hear the whistle, "Stop, look, and listen."  
Ask the coach before you leave the court/facility.
2. When the weather is poor, have a plan to immediately remove athletes from a training facility in inclement weather.
3. Encourage the athletes to bring water to each training session.
4. Keep a fully stocked first-aid kit with equipment; restock supplies as necessary.
5. Train all athletes and coaches on emergency procedures.
6. Review your first aid and emergency procedures. It is recommended to have someone who is trained in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on or very near to the facility during trainings and games.
7. Check the facility and remove unsafe objects. Be particularly vigilant when you are playing in cluttered indoor gyms. Remove anything that an athlete might run into.
8. Warm up and stretch properly at the beginning of each training to prevent muscle injuries. Cool down at the end of each training session.
9. Train to improve the general fitness level of your athletes. Physically fit athletes are less likely to get injured. Make your trainings active.
10. Make sure that athletes are of equal ability in games where they play against each other head-to-head (e.g., one-on-one drills).
11. Require all your athletes to wear mandatory equipment. The use of athletic supporters and fitted mouth guards is recommended.



## Selecting Team Members

The key to the successful development of a traditional Special Olympics or Special Olympics Unified Sports® team is the proper selection of team members. We have provided some primary considerations below.

### Ability Grouping

Traditional or Unified Sports Floor Hockey teams work best when all team members have similar sports skills. Floor hockey teams should be composed of athletes with similar skills and abilities. Athletes or Unified Sports partners with abilities that are far superior to other teammates will control competition. In both situations, the goals of interaction and teamwork are diminished and a true competitive experience is not achieved.

### Age Grouping

All team members should be closely matched in age when possible.

- Within 3-5 years of age for athletes 21 years of age and under.
- Within 10-15 years for athletes 22 years of age and over.

## Creating Meaningful Involvement in Unified Sports

Unified Sports embraces the philosophy and principles of Special Olympics. Unified Sports teams are organized to provide meaningful involvement for both athletes and partners. Every teammate should play a role and have the opportunity to contribute to the team. Meaningful involvement also refers to the quality of interaction and competition within a Unified Sports team. Achieving meaningful involvement by all teammates on the team ensures a positive and rewarding experience for everyone.

### Indicators of Meaningful Involvement

- Teammates compete without causing undue risk of injury to themselves or others.
- Teammates compete according to the rules of competition.
- Teammates have the ability and opportunity to contribute to the performance of the team.
- Teammates understand how to blend their skills with those of other athletes, resulting in improved performance by athletes with lesser ability.

### Meaningful Involvement Is Not Achieved When Team Members

- Have superior sports skills in comparison to their fellow team members.
- Act as on-field coaches rather than teammates.
- Control most aspects of the competition during critical periods of the game.
- Do not train regularly and only show up on the day of competition.
- Lower their level of ability dramatically, so that they do not hurt others or control the entire game.



## Floor Hockey Attire

Appropriate floor hockey attire is required for all competitors. As a coach, discuss the types of sport clothes that are acceptable and not acceptable for training and competition. Discuss the importance of wearing properly fitted clothing, along with the advantages and disadvantages of certain types of clothing worn during training and competitions. A coach should set the example by wearing appropriate attire to training and competitions.



### Shirts

For training, the athlete should wear a T-shirt that is comfortable and allows freedom of movement in the shoulders. For competition, the athlete should wear a clean uniform shirt that has a number on the back (see rules for proper numbering of uniforms). All shirts should be long enough to keep tucked into the athlete's shorts/ pants.

### Pants/ Shorts

Coaches should encourage athletes to wear appropriate athletic attire such as sweatpants, warm-up pants or shorts. For example, jeans or jean shorts are not proper floor hockey attire for either training or competition. Explain that the athletes should not perform while wearing jeans that restrict their movement.

### Shoes and Socks

Probably the most important article of clothing an athlete wears when playing floor hockey is properly fitting shoes. High-top basketball or athletic shoes are recommended because they provide the athlete with the best foot and ankle support. A cushioned insole and good arch and heel support are things to look for in a quality athletic shoe. Make sure laces are laced to the top. Discourage black-soled shoes that may leave marks on the playing surface. Socks should be worn to help prevent blisters.

### Outerwear

The athlete should wear appropriate outerwear for warming up before, and for staying warm after, a floor hockey training or game. Teams sometimes wear warm-up pants during a game for more protection. A medium-weight cotton sweatshirt and sweatpants are excellent and inexpensive outerwear. Encourage your athletes to bring appropriate outerwear that may keep them warm after training.





## Floor Hockey Equipment

The sport of floor hockey requires the type of sporting equipment described below. It is recommended that programs provide equipment that is in good working order, a minimum of one per athlete and if possible an adequate number of spares. Equipment should be checked regularly for damage and replaced as needed.



### Helmets (Mandatory)

The most important piece of protective equipment a hockey player wears is a floor hockey helmet. The helmet must cover the entire head with a full mask. It is mandatory for all players. A chinstrap is necessary. The helmet must be worn at ALL times during training and competition, and it should fit snugly (not too tight, not too loose).



### Shin Guards (Mandatory)

Floor hockey shin guards come in three styles: sponge padding that slides into the socks (not recommended), an ankle wrap with plastic sleeve inserts or a full-length knee-to-ankle shin guard. Higher skill level teams should use the full-length knee-to-ankle shin guard.





### Gloves

Street hockey/ roller hockey style gloves with padding on tops of fingers and hand are strongly recommended to prevent hand injuries from sticks. Higher skill level teams should consider making gloves mandatory for their athletes.



### Goalie Equipment

Goalie equipment includes a regulation ice/street/roller hockey goalie stick. The goalie is also required to wear a goalie helmet with full face mask. A goalie is allowed to wear regulation-size ice/street/roller hockey goalie pads and gloves or some reasonable facsimile thereof (e.g., cricket pads, baseball catcher's glove). Goalie pads cannot be any larger than regulation ice hockey pads. Goalies need proper equipment, and the equipment must fit well. The style of equipment chosen depends on individual preference.





### Sticks

Floor hockey sticks are rods or dowels of uniform thickness. Sticks consist of wood and/or fiberglass with a circumference from 7.5cm to 10cm (3 to 4 inches) and length from 90cm to 150cm (3 to 5 feet). The floor end of the stick is rounded. No tape, string or other object is allowed that increases the diameter of the bottom of the stick. Some sticks have a felt tip on the end of the stick to lessen friction between the stick and the playing surface and to prevent damage to wooden playing surfaces.



### Pucks

Floor hockey pucks are “donut” shaped felt pucks with a center hole of 10cm (4 inches), a diameter of 20cm (8 inches), a thickness of 2.5cm (1inch) and a weight of 140 to 225 grams (5 to 8 ounces).





### Goals/ Nets

Floor hockey goals are 1.8 meters wide, 1.2 meters high and .6 meters deep (6 x 4 x 2 feet). The sides and back of a goal should have appropriate netting. Regulation ice/street/roller hockey nets are also permitted. See supplier list below.



### Additional Equipment

Instructional equipment may be needed during the course of a floor hockey training program. The coach will find some of this equipment essential to teach the skills effectively:

- Whistles
- Cones or pylons
- Stopwatches and/or electric timers
- Equipment bags
- Tape (floor tape, masking tape and/or duct tape)
- Scrimmage vests
- Clipboards
- Pens/pencils or felt tip markers
- Labels (to label athletes' helmets with their names)
- Minor tools (screwdriver, pliers etc.)
- First aid kit



## Teaching Floor Hockey Rules

Good coaches begin teaching floor hockey rules the minute the athletes step into the first training of the season. The head coach should begin the season with a meeting for all athletes, coaches and parents/guardians. The head coach should be prepared to discuss the upcoming season and his/her expectations concerning the athletes' behavior during the season. The coach must establish an expectation of good sportsmanship and good participation by each and every athlete in the program for the entire season. Teaching the rules of floor hockey begins at this meeting. A general discussion of the rules of floor hockey may be included; however, teaching the rules will be a process that happens during each and every training.

The coach should begin training by having athletes put on their "mandatory equipment." This is the first opportunity to begin teaching the rules. Mandatory equipment is just what it says: **mandatory** under the rules. This includes, at a minimum, a helmet (with a full face mask) and shin guards. Recommended equipment also includes gloves, elbow pads and kneepads. No activity should be undertaken until the athletes have their equipment on. This will send a message that safety is the most important factor for everyone in the program. It will also force the athletes to become comfortable competing while wearing their equipment. This will set the tone for the season. It is up to the coaching staff, however, to be consistent throughout the season and maintain the expectations set during this opening meeting.

## Rules for Floor Hockey Competition

Injuries can occur in floor hockey, and a majority of these injuries are caused by the floor hockey stick. The floor hockey stick is also the cause of the majority of penalties received in competition. There are no statistics to know the percentage of injuries caused by the illegal use of the stick versus inadvertent injuries that happen during normal play. What is known is that if the coaches are diligent with their players during training, many of these injuries and the related penalties can be avoided.

For example, training begins with the athletes warming up and stretching. Athletes should begin jogging (walking is acceptable depending on ability level) around the training facility with their equipment on and carrying a floor hockey stick. This will give each athlete the opportunity to become familiar with carrying / using the stick properly. It will also give you, as the coach, the chance to re-enforce the proper use of the stick, including the grip, using two hands and carrying the stick with the tip as low to the ground as possible when not in the process of shooting. Teaching the athletes to know what they are doing with their sticks at all times will avoid injuries and unnecessary penalties in the future.

The most common penalties called are for the improper use of the stick: high sticking, slashing, charging and tripping. High sticking is the most strictly called rule in floor hockey because of the injuries that can occur. However, each of the stick penalties can and do cause injuries.

A high sticking penalty occurs when the stick is at or above a player's shoulder. The stick must be held below shoulder level at all times. The athletes should be taught to keep the tip of their sticks as low to the ground as possible at all times. The only time the stick should go above waist level is on the follow-through when shooting or in some instances when passing the puck.

The slashing penalty is caused when an athlete slashes down or across with the stick in an attempt to gain possession of the puck from the opposing player. The correct method to take possession of the puck is a technique called a stick check.

Charging penalties occur when an athlete holds the stick in both hands and runs into the opposing player in an attempt to move him/her away from the puck.

The tripping penalty may or may not be caused by use of the stick. Many tripping penalties are called when a player puts the stick between the opposing player's legs and causes the player to trip.

If coaches are diligent about teaching the proper use of the stick at each and every training session, you will notice fewer penalties and greater stick and puck control demonstrated by your athletes. Teaching floor hockey rules should become an integral part of training.



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There are many other rules that should be taught during training. Some examples include:

1. Proper face-off techniques
2. The goal crease
3. Proper stick checking techniques
4. Proper body checking
5. Interference

## Special Olympics Unified Sports® Rules

There are few differences in the general Floor Hockey rules for Special Olympics Unified Sports® competition, as stipulated in the official *Special Olympics Sports Rules*. The differences are highlighted below:

1. A roster consists of a proportionate number of athletes and partners. The goal of Unified Sports Floor Hockey is to field a team that consists of an equal number of Special Olympics athletes and partners of equal playing ability who compliment each other to form a team.
2. During competition, the line-up can contain no more than three partners on the court at any time. By the end of game, equal playing rules as stated in the rules (Section E, 1) shall apply.
3. Team sports must have an adult, non-playing coach. Player-coaches are not allowed in team sports.

## Protest Procedures

Protest procedures are governed by the rules of competition and may change from competition to competition. Only rules violations can be protested. Judgment calls made by officials or divisioning decisions cannot be protested. The protest must site specific violations from the rulebook and a clear definition of why the coach feels the rule was not followed.

The role of the competition management team is to enforce the rules. As a coach, your duty to your athletes and team is to protest any action or events while your athlete is competing that you think violated the Official Floor Hockey Rules. It is extremely important that you do not make protests because you and your athlete did not get your desired outcome of an event. Protests are serious matters that impact a competition's schedule. Check with the competition team prior to competition to learn the protest procedures for that competition.



## Floor Hockey Glossary

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Backhand Pass	Passing puck by moving stick across the body with palm of bottom hand going in the backward direction (pull with bottom hand).
Backhand Shot	Shot made with the stick from the left side by a right-handed player or from the right side by a left-handed player.
Boards	The wall or boundaries around a floor hockey rink.
Body Check	Placing yourself between your opponent and the puck to gain advantage while both players have their sticks in the puck. Usually done by the defensive player to the offensive player. Body check does not involve hard physical contact between the players.
Charging	Running, jumping into or colliding into an opponent who has a clearly established position, regardless of whether either player has the puck.
Clearing the Puck	When an athlete gets the puck out of his or her own defensive zone.
Cross Checking	When a player holds the stick horizontally and shoves another player with it.
Defense	Players trying to prevent the other team from scoring.
Deflection	Changing the direction of shot with stick or body.
Face-off	The method of starting play; the dropping of the puck by the official between the sticks of two opposing players standing one stick length apart; used to begin each period or to resume play when it has stopped for other reasons.
Fake	Pretending to shoot in one direction and actually shooting in another direction.
Fast Break	Offensive strategy in which a team attempts to bring the puck into scoring position before the defense can set up.
Floor	Playing area that may be a gymnasium or other smooth, hard surface.
Forehand Pass	Passing puck by moving stick across the body with palm of bottom hand going in forward direction (pushing with bottom hand).
Forehand Shot	Shot made with the stick from the right side of a right-handed player or from the left side of a left-handed player.
Foul	Infraction that causes a stoppage of play without causing a penalty.
Give-and-Go	Passing to teammate and receiving a return pass down court.
Goal/ Net	The informal term used to refer to the area made up of the goalposts and the net guarded by the goalie and into which a puck must enter to score a point.
Goal Crease	Area for the goalie that is defined by a line on the court (goalies must remain inside this area and all other players outside of this area).
Goal Scoring	Act of the puck passing completely over the goal line into the goal/ net.

# Special Olympics Floor Hockey

## Coaches Quick Start Guide



Goalie	Player in goal crease trying to prevent the other team from scoring.
Goalie Pads	Pads or protective equipment worn by the goalie.
Goalie Stick	Stick for the goalie only (a regulation ice/street/roller hockey goalkeeper's stick is acceptable).
Helmet	A hard, plastic-type hat with chin strap. All players are required to have a full face mask.
High Sticking	Carrying the stick above shoulder level.
Holding	Impeding the progress of an opponent.
Interference	Impeding or preventing the progress of an opponent who is not in possession of the puck.
Jersey	A uniform shirt numbered on the back.
Lift Shot	A shot in which the puck rises off the floor.
Offense	Players trying to score goals using various passing combinations and shots.
Overtime	Continuation of a tied game after regulation play.
Pass	Advancing the puck to a teammate.
Penalty	An infraction of any rule resulting in a 1-minute penalty (minor), 2-minute penalty (major) or game expulsion.
Position Player	Forwards, center, defense and goalie.
Puck	A felt disk shaped like a donut.
Rebound	When a puck bounces off the goalie's body or equipment or off the goal posts.
Referee	On-court official who is in charge of the game and who calls penalties.
Roughing	Using any part of the body, such as elbow, to hit or modify the direction of an opponent.
Screen	Standing in the line of sight between puck and goalie.
Shooting	Shooting the puck at the goal.
Shooting Angle	The angle determined by the position of the shooting player in relation to the goal at the moment he or she shoots the puck.
Stick	Rod or dowel with rounded tip on bottom used to control puck.
Stick Check	Lifting an opponent's stick out of the puck.
Stick Handling	Controlling and moving the puck with a stick.
Switching	Player moving to another player's position.
Tripping	Causing an opponent to fall or stumble by using a stick or any part of the body.
Wall Passing	Using the boards to assist with passing.





## Appendix: Skill Development Tips

### Stick Handling

The most important aspect of floor hockey is stick control. Without stick control, the coach cannot teach any of the other aspects of the game.



### Athlete Readiness

Beginning athletes will have very limited control with their stick. They will rarely catch the puck with their stick and when, passing the puck to another athlete, will have just as much chance to pass it as to leave it at their feet. Their grip will change with every exercise and from one side of the body to the other. When they have possession of the puck, they will always be looking at the puck and not at any other athletes on the court. When you ask them to pass the puck, they will generally not look at the athlete whom they are supposed to pass to. When passing a puck, it will always remain on the ground. Also, when following through on a pass, they may have a high stick.



Intermediate athletes will have moderate control with their stick. They will usually catch the puck with their stick and can pass the puck in the correct direction, but not always directly to the person intended. They will have their own grip, but usually from only one side of the body. They cannot tell if their stick has the puck without looking, but they can move with the puck and pass while looking up about half of the time and at the puck the other half. If they concentrate hard enough, they can do a lift shot, but never under pressure. At this level, they will be aware of their high sticks and work on keeping them down.

Advanced athletes will have complete control with their stick. They will always catch the puck with their stick and can pass the puck directly to the feet of their intended receiver. They can move the puck without having to look down to see if they still have it and can pass using their stick on either side of the body. They will always perform a lift shot and will have several grips to use as needed to aid them in getting the puck where they want it to go (corners of goal, etc.).



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## The Grip

### Teaching the Skill

Before athletes can learn any pass, they must first learn to hold the stick properly. Teach the basic grip: the dominant hand should be the lower hand. If the athlete is right handed, the right hand should be under the left hand. Have athlete “shake hands” with the stick, with the palms facing up as though they were shoveling. Hands should be a couple of inches apart, with elbows loose and bent and arms hanging loosely, ready for any action. If this grip is uncomfortable, try reversing hands, putting the dominant hand on top. Also, move hands so that the palms face down as though they were sweeping, and see if this grip is more comfortable.



## Moving with the puck

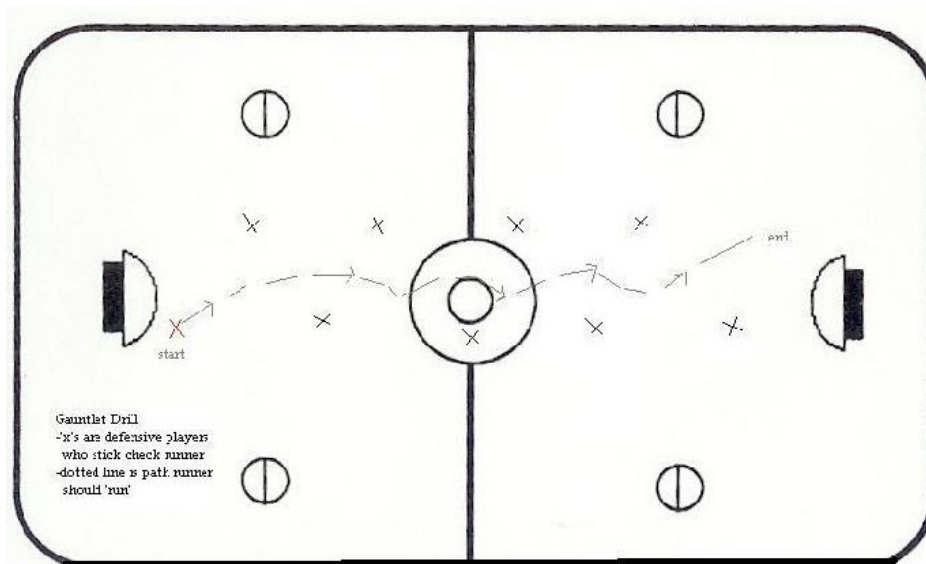
### Teaching the Skill

“Moving with the puck” allows an athlete to move the puck from one area of the court to another without giving up control. Your athletes need to be aware of several things at the same time: where they are on the court in relationship to their teammates and those on the opposing team, and where the goal is. In this case, “practice makes perfect” – that is to say, the more hands-on experience your athletes get in this area, the better they will be. Have the athletes concentrate on where they want to go first, and then add in obstacles as they master control of this skill. Use drills to hone this skill.



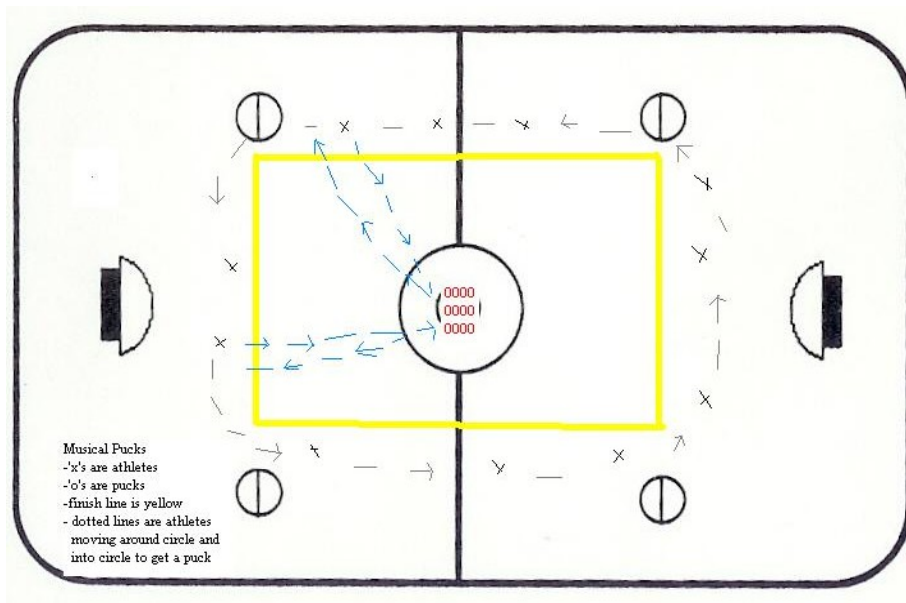
## Stick Handling Drills

1. **Gauntlet Drill:** Athlete stick handles a puck in a straight line past a double line of teammates, which are staggered at 2-meter intervals on either side. The stick handling lane should be a minimum of 2 meters wide. If a teammate is successful in stick checking the athlete who is running the gauntlet, that teammate becomes the next runner of the gauntlet, from the beginning. The athlete who was stick checked takes the place of the new runner in the line. The teammates on the line should not step into the lane; they should only stick check as the runner passes through their area on the line. **NOTE:** The line will not be able to steal the puck, only dislodge it from the runner's stick.





2. **Musical Pucks Drill:** Athletes run outside a circle of cones or a line on the court. On a whistle, each athlete has to retrieve a puck from the center and stick handle it to a cone or outside the lined area. There are fewer pucks than athletes. Whoever doesn't get a puck is out. The drill can be varied with the number of pucks and can continue until one or more athletes are left controlling pucks.



**NOTE: For more Stick Handling Drills please refer to the full Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**



## Passing

Passing is the act of moving the puck from one athlete to another across the court.



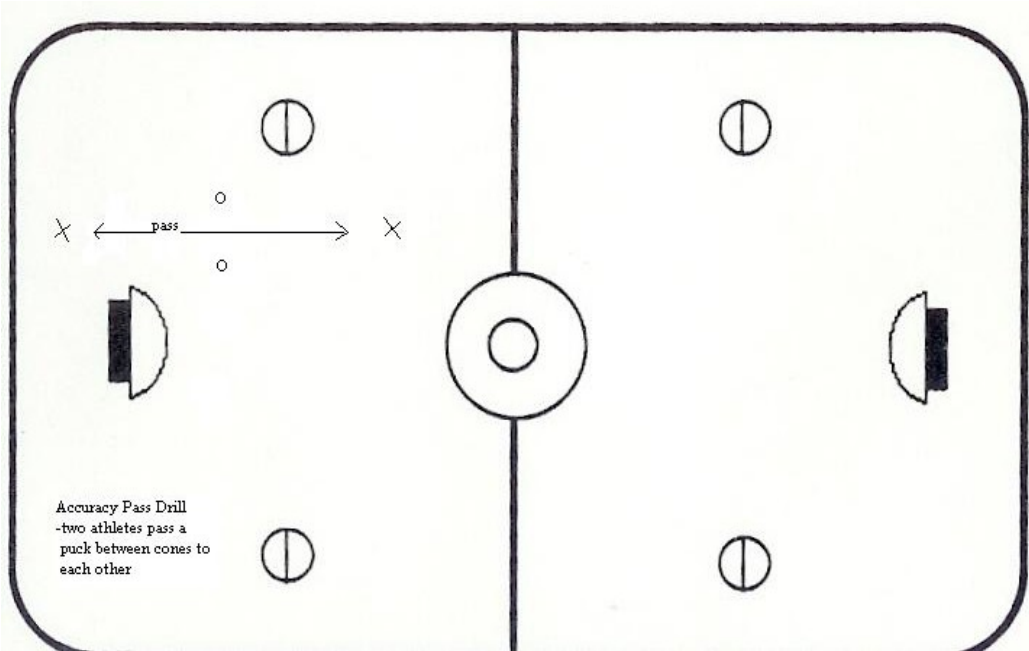
### Teaching the Skill

For passing, athletes can use any acceptable grip. Coaches should demonstrate the basic grip and adapt as necessary. The athletes will need to step forward as they release the puck. Their follow-through should have the tip of the stick pointing in the direction of the target. As the athletes gain confidence, have them move farther away from the target, trying to double the distance from where they first started. As they gain even more confidence, have them pass faster and harder, emphasizing speed and accuracy.



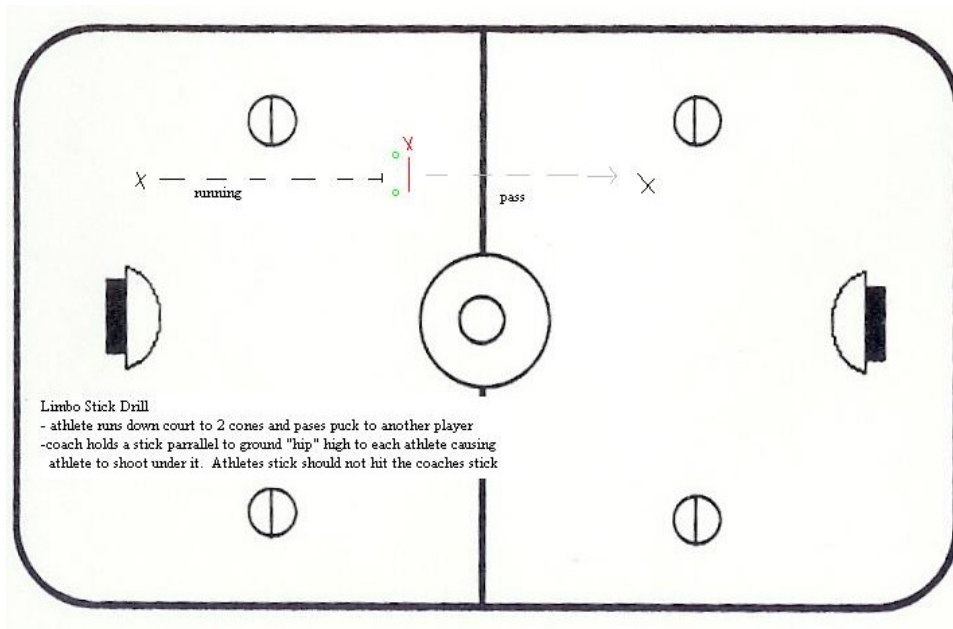
Passing Drills

- 1. **Accuracy Pass Drill:** Have athletes pass the puck back and forth between markers. Instruct them to pass soft and slow when they start. As their skill increases, move the athletes farther apart and have them make their passes harder and faster.





- 2. Limbo Stick Drill:** The purpose of this drill is to emphasize stick control (high sticking) after a pass. Standing just past two cones, a coach holds a stick parallel to the ground at the height of the athlete's hips (adjust to accommodate each athlete's height). The athletes form a single line. One at a time, they run toward the cones and pass the puck to a designated target or another athlete while keeping their stick from striking the coach's stick (limbo stick).



- 3. Two on Two Drill:** Athletes form two lines at one end of the facility. Four athletes step forward (two athletes on offense and two athletes on defense). On the coach's whistle, the athletes on offense pass to each other while running the length of the facility. The athletes on defense a) try to impede the forward movement of the athletes on offense; b) try to block the view of the athletes on offense; or c) try to stick check the puck away from the athletes on offense. When the athletes on defense properly gain control of the puck from the athletes on offense, those athletes switch to offense and the athletes who lost control of the puck switch to defense. This is the same drill as the One on One Drill, except the athletes work in pairs.

**NOTE: For more Passing Drills please refer to the full Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**



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## Receiving

Receiving is the act of stopping the puck and taking possession/control from a pass.



### Teaching the Skill

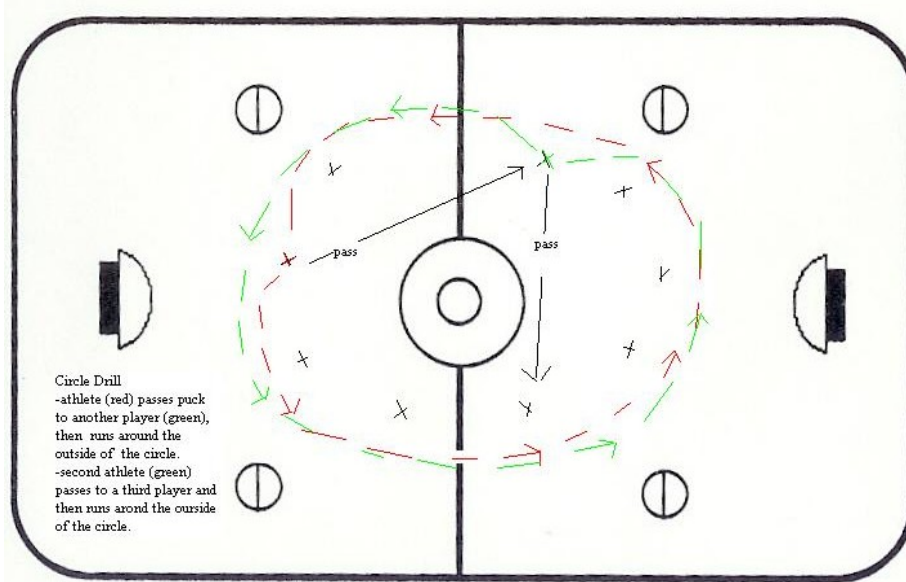
The receiver will need to keep focused on the puck as it moves toward him/her. The coach will need to show the athlete how to step toward the moving puck and “catch it” by putting the stick inside the puck, or by stopping it with the foot. If necessary, the athlete can slap it down with the hand.



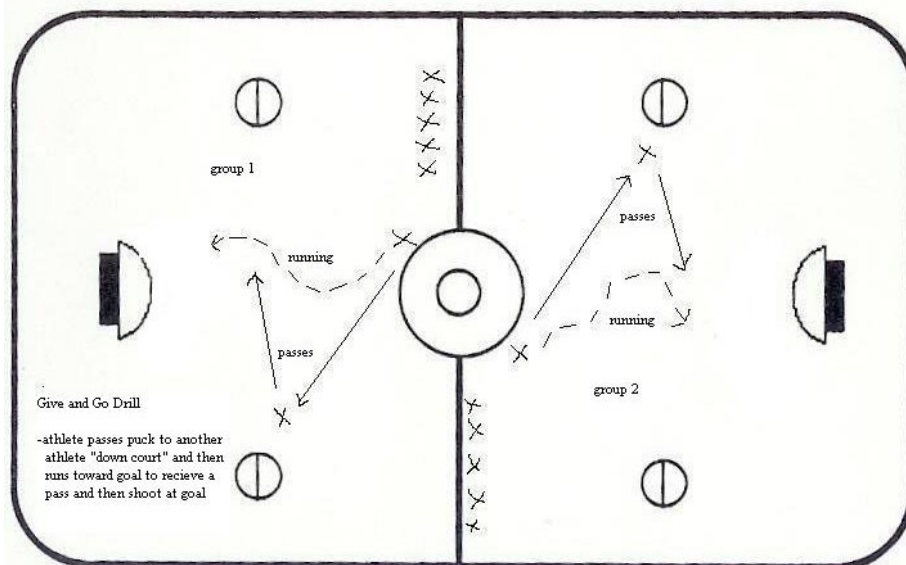


## Receiving Drills

1. **Circle Drill:** Arrange athletes in a circle. An athlete with the puck passes to another athlete who then runs around the outside of a circle while stick handling and returns to his/her space. That athlete then passes the puck to another teammate. Make sure that every athlete has a chance to practice the drill.



2. **Give and Go Drill:** Divide athletes into groups. Working in pairs, one athlete passes down court to the second athlete and then runs past the teammate to receive a pass. Athletes should continue passing and running ahead until they reach the other end of the court. This encourages passing and staying aware of teammate position.  
NOTE: Passing should always be in front (between the receiver and the goal) of the intended athlete so that the athlete does not have to slow down or stop forward motion to gain control of the puck. It is important that the athletes understand this concept.



**NOTE: For more Receiving Drills please refer to the full Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**



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## Stick Checking

Stick checking is the act of momentarily jarring the opponent's stick out of the puck to let the athlete put his or her own stick inside of the puck. Stick checking is the most effective way to take the puck away from an opponent.

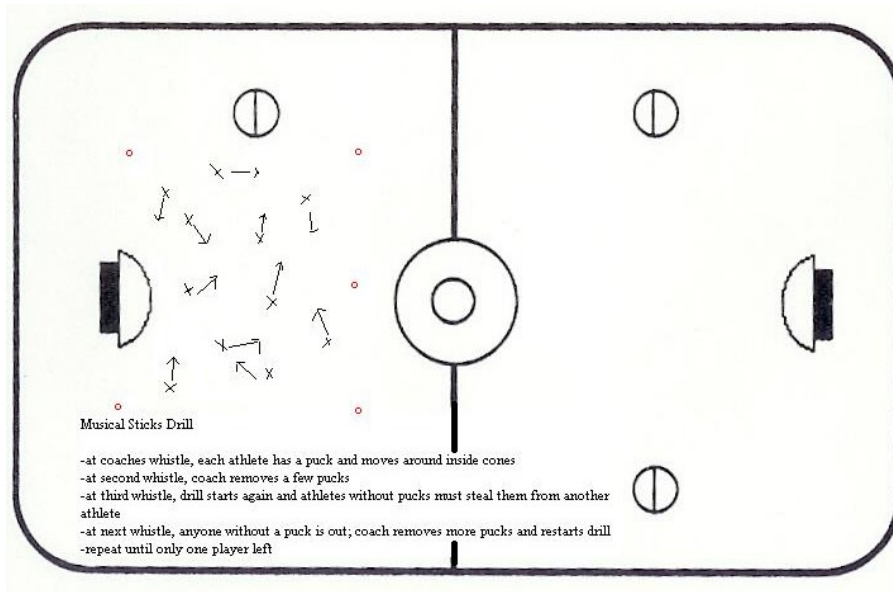
### Teaching the Skill

Instruct your athlete to move toward the athlete with the puck. Have the athlete move the bottom of his or her stick under the opposing athlete's stick and make a short upward or sideways movement, dislodging the other athlete's stick from the center of the puck. The athlete then places his or her own stick in the puck, gaining control from the other athlete/team. Sometimes the puck will travel away from the athletes after the controlling stick is dislodged. Show your athlete how to follow it and take possession on the "move."



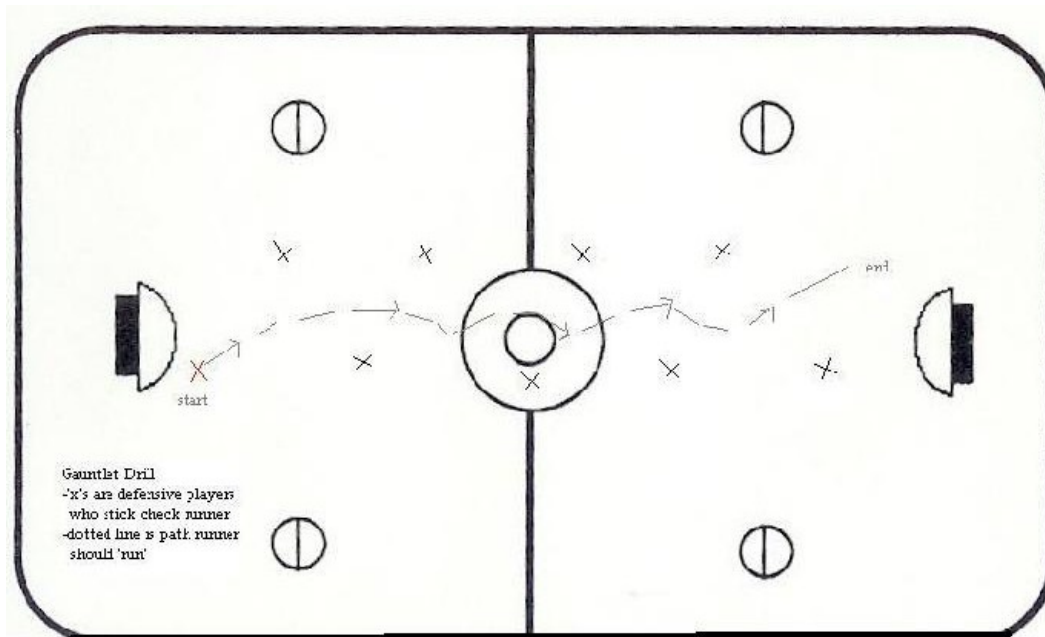
## Stick Checking Drills

1. **Musical Sticks Drill:** Athletes run outside a circle of cones or a line on the court. On the coach's whistle, each athlete has to retrieve a puck from the center and stick handle it to a cone or outside the lined area. There are fewer pucks than there are athletes, so an athlete can stick check a puck before another athlete gets it to a cone or outside of the lined area, designated as a "safe zone." Whoever doesn't retrieve a puck and make it to the "safe zone" is out.





2. **Gauntlet Drill:** Athlete stick handles a puck in a straight line past a double line of teammates, who are staggered at 2-meter intervals on either side. The stick handling lane should be a minimum of 2 meters wide. If a teammate is successful in stick checking the athlete who is running the gauntlet, that teammate becomes the next runner of the gauntlet, from the beginning. The athlete who was stick checked takes the place of the new runner in the line. The teammates on the line should not step into the lane; they should only stick check as the runner passes through their area on the line. NOTE: The teammates will not be able to steal the puck, only dislodge it from the runner's stick.



**NOTE: For more Stick Checking Drills please refer to the full Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**



## Face-off

Face-off is the act of starting play after each stoppage of play.



### Teaching the Skill

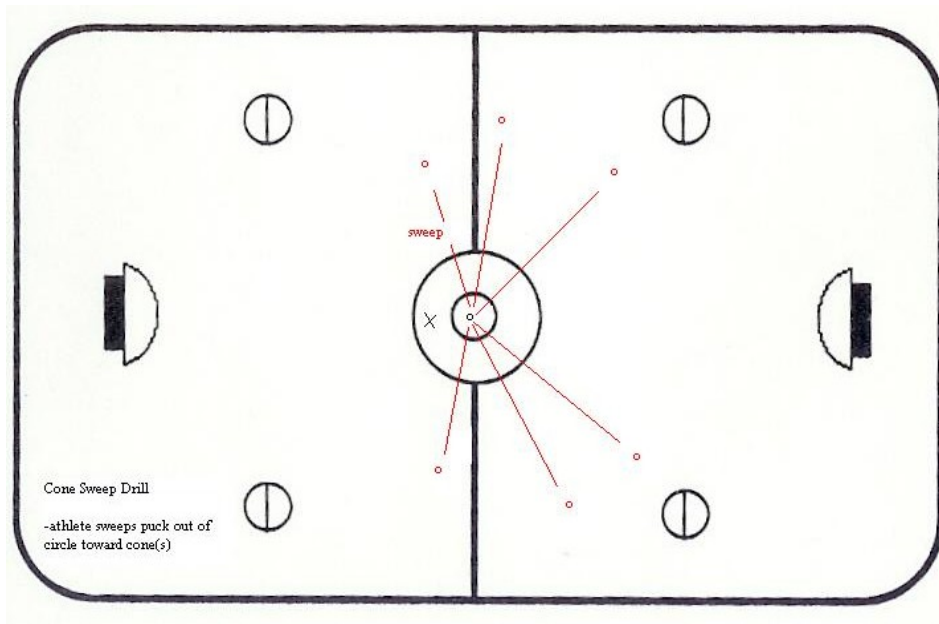
Use one of the face-off circles on the court. Have your center stand on one side of the line, with an opposing center on the other side. Show the centers where to put their sticks (anywhere on the circle on their side of the line) and then help them sweep the puck from the circle so they understand what they are supposed to do. Explain to the athletes that they will do this “on the whistle” and that they cannot take control of the puck, but must sweep it to another athlete. After an athlete does this for the first time, the coach should make any corrections to the athlete’s stance (too far away, too close, etc.), hands, feet and body positions. Repeat exercise until each athlete has a firm grasp of his or her own responsibility.





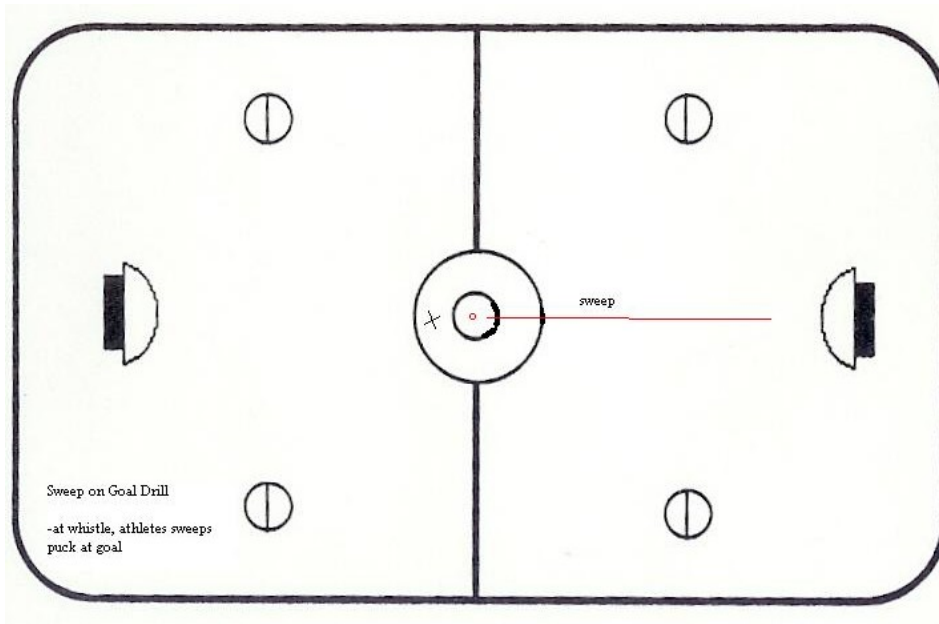
## Face-off Drills

1. **Sweeper Pass Drill:** On the coach's whistle, the athlete sweeps the puck to a stationary teammate; score a point for an accurate sweep to teammate.
2. **Swiftest Sweeper Drill:** On the coach's whistle, two athletes attempt to sweep the puck out of circle. Round 2: winners play each other and losers play each other.
3. **Cone Sweep Drill:** On the coach's whistle, the athlete sweeps the puck out of circle toward designated targets that are set up at various angles around the face-off circle. The objective of this drill is to improve the athletes' accuracy while sweeping the puck.





4. **Sweep on Goal Drill:** On the coach's whistle, the athlete sweeps the puck toward the goal as a shot.



**NOTE: For more Face-off Drills please refer to the full Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**



## Shooting on Goal

Shooting on goal is the act of moving the puck forward in an attempt to score a goal.

### Teaching the Skill

Athletes will need to place the tip of the stick inside the puck. Have them focus their eyes on the goal. While taking steps forward, have them sweep stick across the body, shooting puck toward the goal. Make sure they follow through with stick pointing toward desired target area. Coaches should teach the athletes to shoot:

1. In front of the net
2. At various angles from the net
3. At various corners of the net
4. While moving toward the net
5. While moving and receiving a pass
6. While being guarded
7. While screening the goalie and staying out of the crease
8. Off of a deflected shot, staying out of the crease
9. While faking a shot in another direction
10. As accurately and as hard as they can

### Forehand Shot

Athlete stands facing the goal, with the stick in the puck on his or her dominant side. Dominant hand should be lower on the stick, arm almost fully extended and the palm should be facing up. The other hand should be near the top of the stick and the palm should be facing down. With eyes focused on target, athlete should move the puck back a few inches and then forward again, following through to make a “shot,” while stepping forward with the non-dominant foot. On the follow-through, the stick tip should be pointing at the target, no higher than waist level. A snap of the wrist will produce more power on the shot.



### Lift Shot (Forehand)

NOTE: The forehand lift shot is very similar in technique to the forehand shot, with a few exceptions.

1. The tip of the stick must catch the lower front lip of the inside of the puck to obtain the necessary lift.
2. The forehand lift shot will usually not flip through the air as is often the case with the basic backhand shot. This allows for potentially more power and is normally more difficult to master.
3. Obtaining maximum lifting potential is aided by a strong wrist snap from the lower right hand.
4. Depending on shooting style, some athletes find it effective to lower the upper torso over the puck to some degree before bringing the arms forward and snapping the wrist to create lift.





### Backhand Shot

Athlete stands facing the goal, with the stick in the puck on his or her non-dominant side. Dominant hand should be lower on the stick, arm almost fully extended and the palm should be facing up. The other hand should be near the top of the stick and the palm should be facing down. With eyes focused on target, athlete should move the puck back a few inches and then forward again, following through to make a “shot,” while stepping forward with the dominant foot. On the follow-through, the stick tip should be pointing at the target, no higher than waist level. A snap of the wrist will produce more power on the shot.

NOTE: If shooting the puck from the right side, the left foot steps forward; if shooting the puck from the left side, the right foot steps forward.



### Lift Shot (Backhand)

Taught the same as the backhand shot, but with more wrist snap and arm whip. Often the puck is shot in more of a round sweeping motion, as opposed to the back and forth motion of the stick when shooting the basic backhand shot. Focus is on getting the tip of the stick to catch the front of the puck at the bottom to achieve lift. Once athletes have developed a strong stationary backhand lift shot, they will be ready to learn how to create lift and power simultaneously. The difference in this shot is that the puck will not flip when lifted, but will fly as a saucer with much improved aerodynamics.



### Advanced Skills

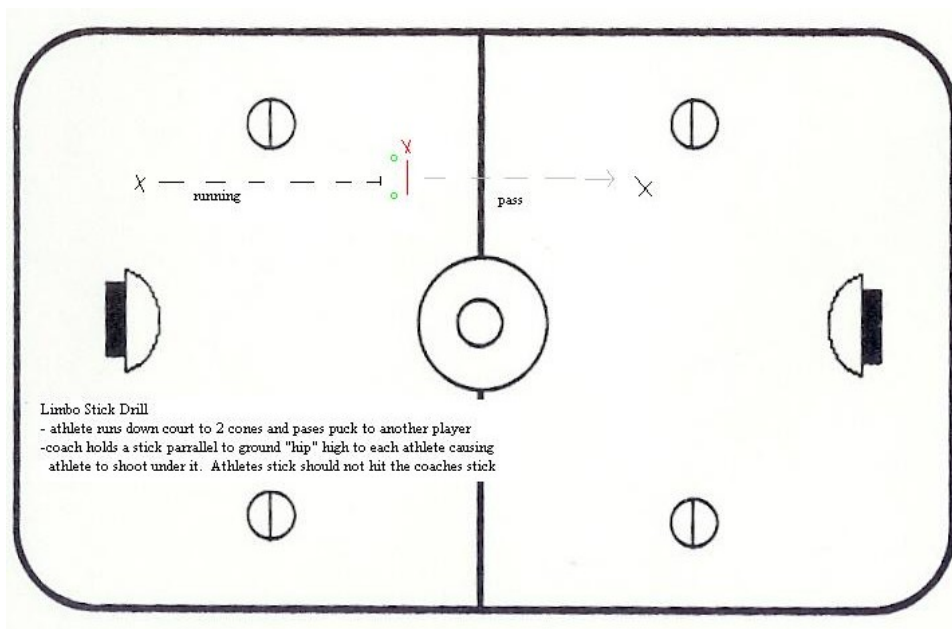
As athletes’ shooting skills develop, introduction of the following is appropriate:

- ♦ Dynamic shot – Shooting on the run is most common and should be encouraged.
- ♦ Sliding forehand – Shooting puck while body is sliding to shooting side (i.e. sliding into base in baseball).
- ♦ Blind backhand – Shooting with back to goal target; no visual contact with goal.
- ♦ Between legs – Shooting as backhand normally, flip puck between legs toward goal; no visual contact with target.
- ♦ Re-direction – Re-directing puck that is moving toward goal area. Usually comes from a pass or another shot. Stick strikes outside edge of moving puck and re-directs it towards goal.



## Shooting on Goal Drills

1. **Limbo Stick Drill:** The purpose of this drill is to emphasize stick control (no high sticking) after a shot. A coach holds a stick parallel to the ground at the height of the athlete's hips (adjust to accommodate each athlete's height), just past two cones. The athletes form a single line. One at a time, they run, toward the cones where the coach is holding the stick and shoot the puck on goal while keeping their stick from striking the coach's stick (limbo stick). An additional modification to this drill is to add a goalie.

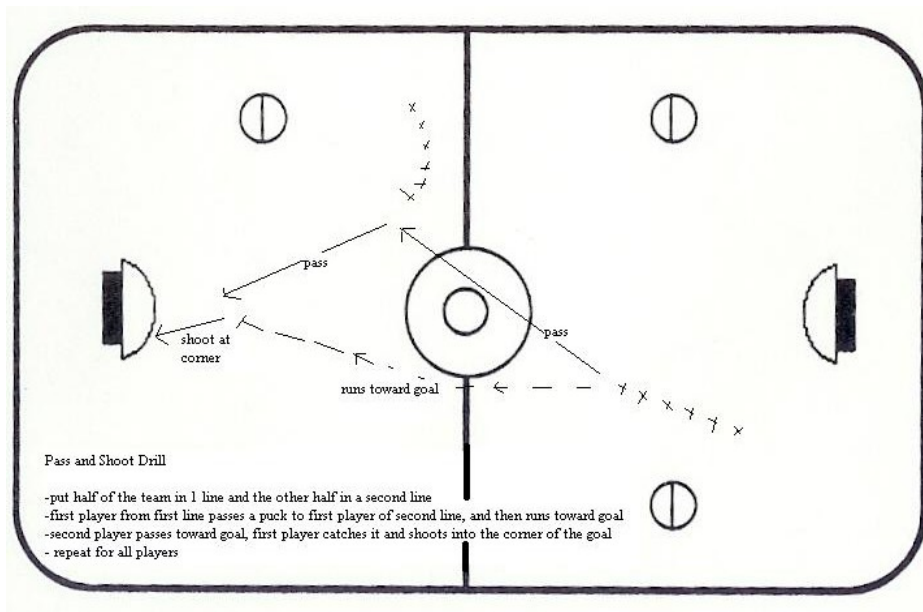


### Limbo Stick Drill

- athlete runs down court to 2 cones and passes puck to another player
- coach holds a stick parallel to ground "hip" high to each athlete causing athlete to shoot under it. Athletes stick should not hit the coaches stick

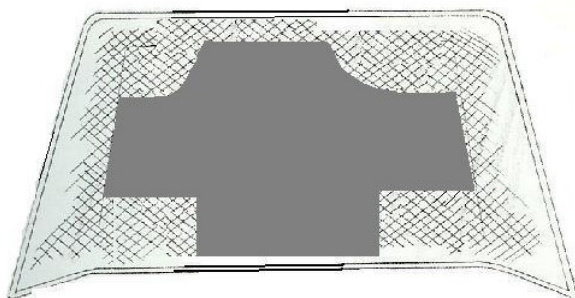


2. **Pass and Shoot Drill:** One line of athletes faces the goal and advances, one at a time, toward the goal. Another line of athletes is off to the side. The athlete at the head of the first line passes to the athlete at head of the second line, runs toward the goal to receive the return pass and then shoots for corner of goal. Have athletes return to the opposite line to continue the drill. Make sure each athlete does the drill from both lines at least once.





3. **Sieve Shooting Drill:** A vinyl or plastic sieve is attached to the goal. The sieve has the corners cut out to give the athletes a target at which to shoot.



Sieve Shooting Drill

-put vinyl or plastic sieve in front of goal,  
athletes shoot at holes to make a goal

**NOTE: For more Shooting on Goal Drills please refer to the full Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**



## Defense

Defense is the act of assisting your team's goalie in protecting the goal.

### Teaching the Skill

The easiest way to take the puck back is to intercept a pass. This is an excellent method of stopping the opponent's scoring threat. The athlete has to use both the eyes and body to get in position to intercept a pass. Once in position, the athlete only has to place the body or stick in front of the puck to intercept it. By anticipating where the opponents are going to pass, the athlete can move into a strategic intercepting position. Some opponents have certain patterns that they always seem to follow. If your athletes know the pattern, they can then intercept the pass.

Be sure your athletes know that stick checking is the optimal way to steal the puck. (Refer back to Stick Handling – Stick Checking for skill). Forwards should also be taught to look for opportunities to “trap” the opposing athlete with the puck. “Trapping” involves a guard delaying the athlete on offense while a forward moves in on the other side and “traps”/steals the puck, like a double team.

Maintaining proper position is important in minimizing goal scoring opportunities by the opponents. That is why each athlete should know where to be and what to do at any given time. Teammates should work together to try to stop the opponents from scoring. Positioning gives order to otherwise random play.

## GUARDS

The right defenseman stays on the right half of the court while the left defenseman stays on the left half of the court. When an opponent gains control of the puck, the right defenseman should be positioned on the right side in front of the goal crease, and the left defenseman should be in the middle protecting the front of the goal and watching for a pass across court. The right defenseman should be positioned between the opponent with the puck and the goal. If the puck is in the middle, the right and left defensemen should be next to each other between the opponent with the puck and the goal. If the puck is on the left side, the right defenseman should be in the middle protecting the front of the goal crease and watching for a pass. The right and left defensemen must work together, playing a zone defense outside the goal crease.

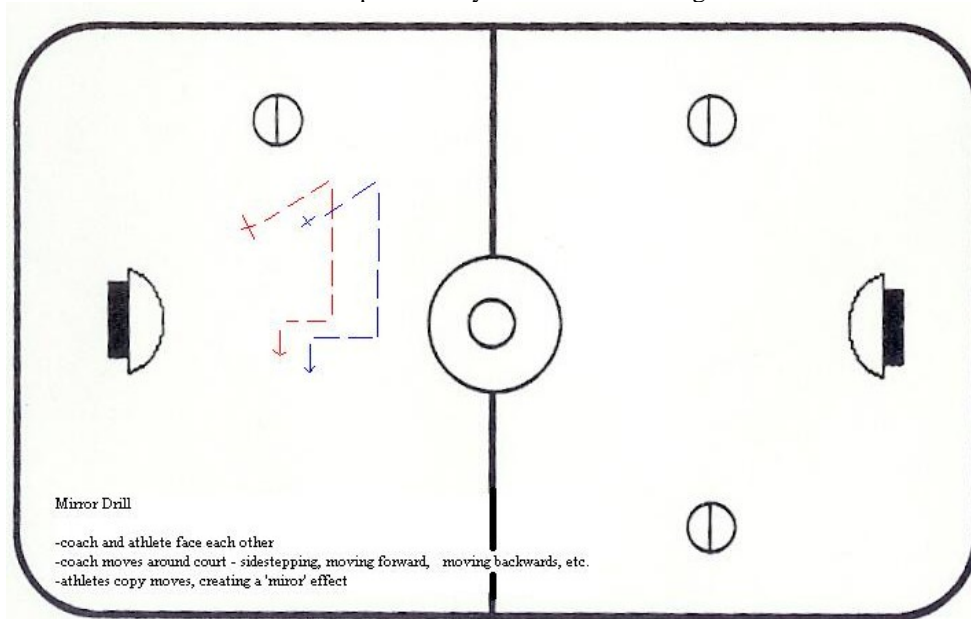
## FORWARDS

The center plays the whole court. When an opponent gains control of the puck, the center should be positioned in the middle and in front of the goal. The center works with the two defensemen in defending the opponents and trying to steal the puck. The right wing can help out on defense if needed. The left wing does exactly the same, but on the left side of the court. There is no rule requiring athletes to maintain these positions, as they can go anywhere on the court except in the goal crease area. In general, the athletes should maintain these positions. Only the athletes of the team on offense may put their sticks in the goal crease to clear the puck. No athlete (except the goalie) can put his or her body inside of the goal crease.

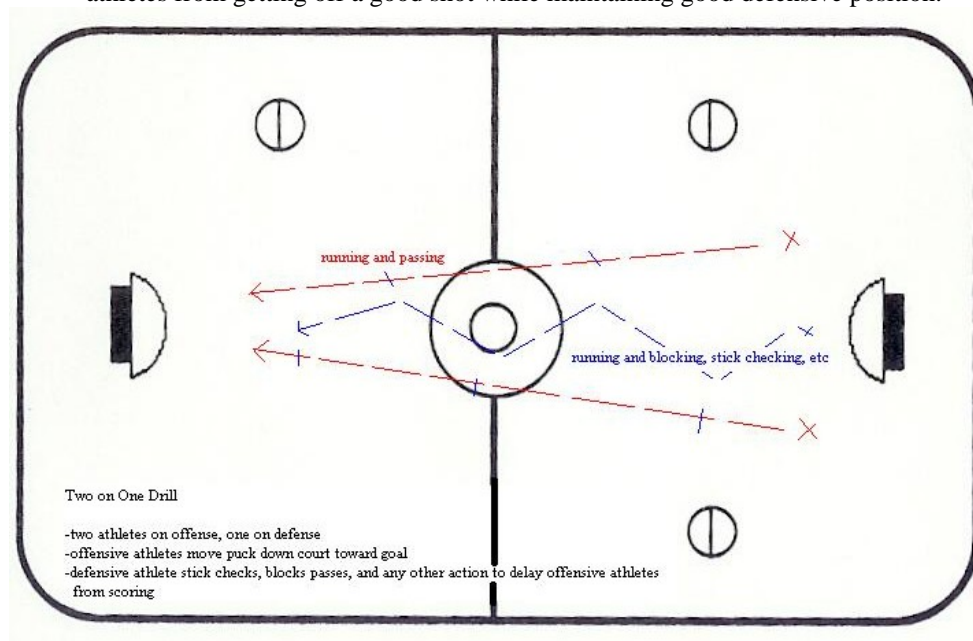


## Defense Drills

1. **Mirror Drill:** Place athlete between goal and coach. As the coach slides left or right with the puck, have the athlete slide in the same direction. As the coach slides forward or backward with the puck, have the athlete slide in same direction. Coach can point or say which direction to go if the athlete does not follow.

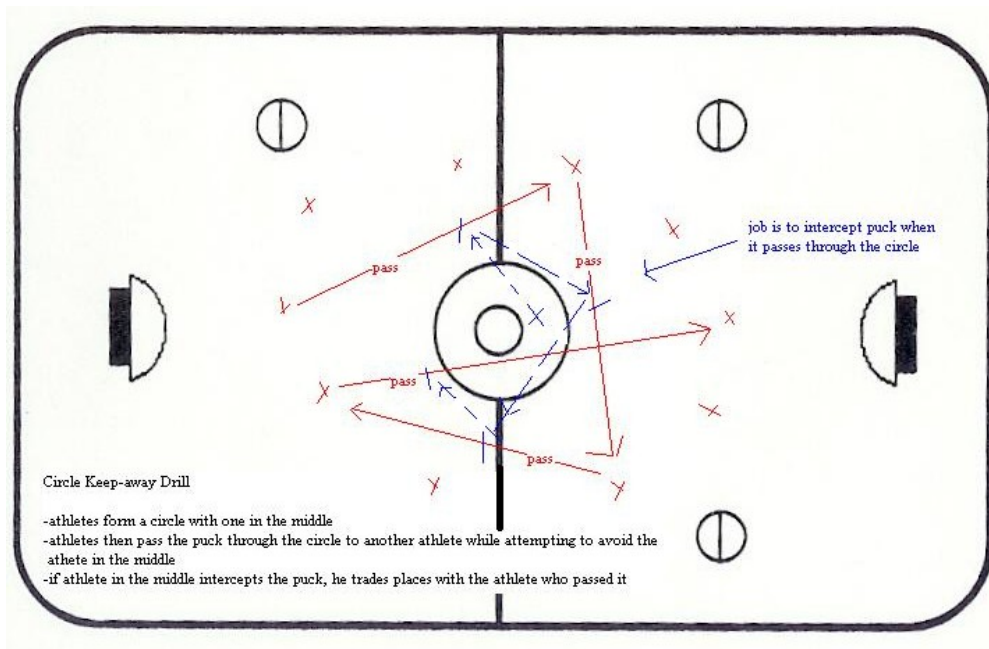


2. **Two on One Drill:** Athletes form a single line at one end of the facility. Three athletes step forward (two athletes on offense and one on defense). On the coach's whistle, the athletes run the length of the facility while the defensive athlete tries to: a) delay the athletes on offense, b) gain control of the puck or c) prevent the athletes from getting off a good shot while maintaining good defensive position.





3. **Circle Keep-Away Drill:** Athletes form a circle and pass around an athlete who tries to intercept the puck. Athlete whose pass gets intercepted goes in the middle, and the athlete who intercepts returns to the circle. Variations: a) Add more people in the middle. b) Add more pucks. c) Person in middle only has to touch the puck. d) If athlete makes a bad pass out of the circle or bad block or pass, then the athlete goes in the middle.



**NOTE: For more Defense Drills please refer to the full Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**

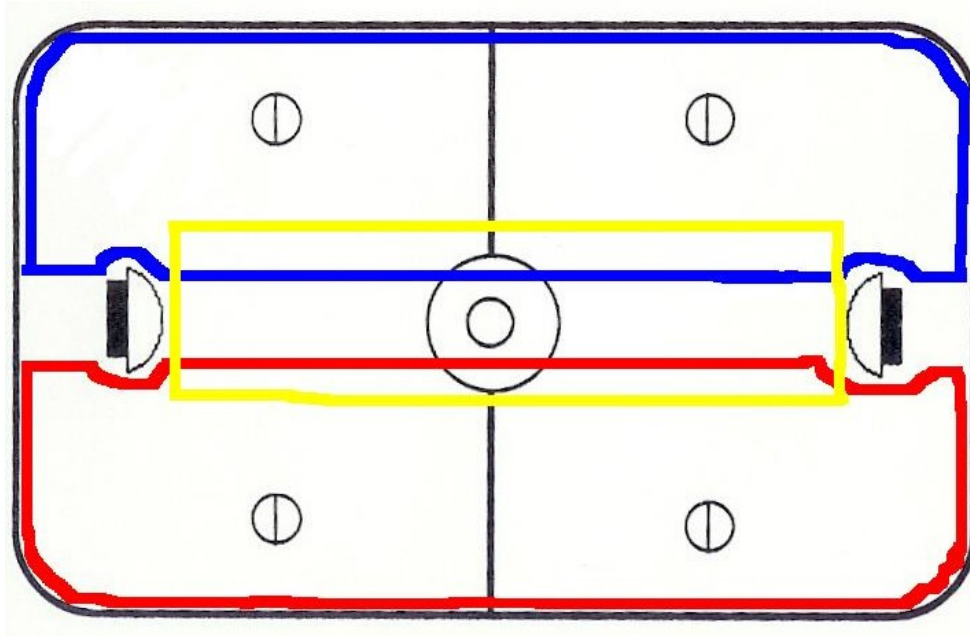


## Offense

Offense is the act of controlling the puck with the intention of shooting on goal and scoring.

### Teaching the Skill

In order to control the puck, the three forwards, from the same team, need to use teamwork. Since everyone is constantly moving, they need to be aware of where each of them is on the court and where the opposing athletes are located. Walking the areas of the court with each athlete should be the first thing you teach. While athletes are doing the drills, keep reminding them to “stay in their lanes.” The wings should cover 1/2 of the court each, so that between them, they cover the entire court. The center will have his or her “lane” down the middle.



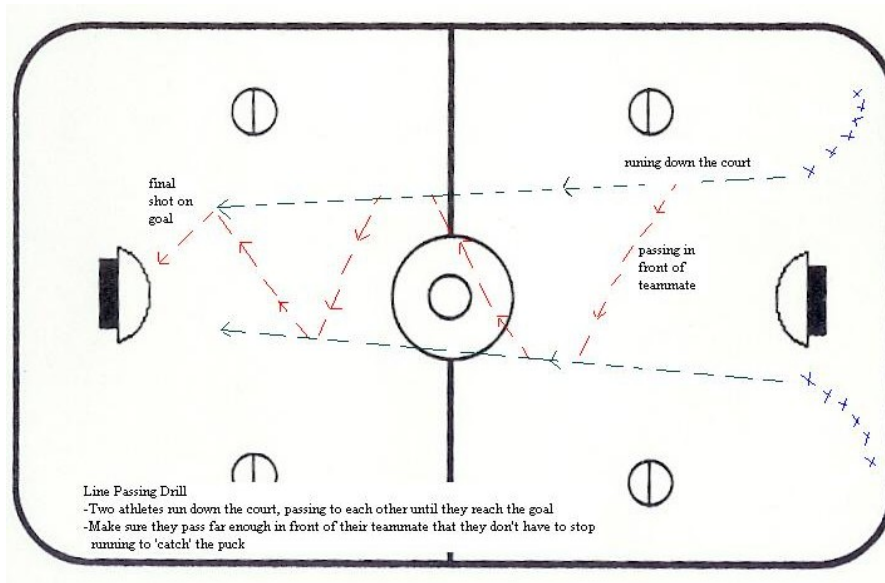
Break the passing combinations into individual components. After athletes learn one segment, add another until the athletes learn the entire sequence. If necessary, physically assist athlete through the sequence. After awhile, point or tell the athlete which direction to go. If the passing combination involves several choices based on the previous segment, review those choices with the athlete just before starting the passing combination. Placing cones at the various spots where the athletes will go helps the athletes locate them. Start with the easier passing combinations and progress to the harder ones according to each athlete’s ability level. These passing combinations are to simulate game passing combinations. During controlled game situations, assist the athletes through some of these passing combinations.





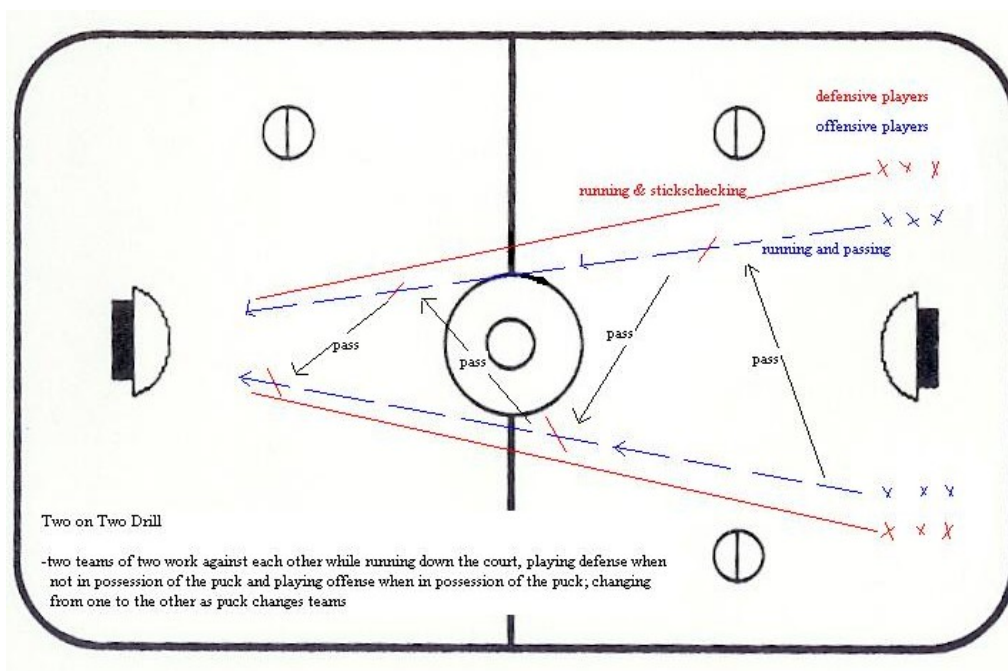
## Offense Drills

1. **Line Passing Drill:** Athletes form two lines with the athletes in the front going together. Left athlete passes the puck in front of right athlete. While running, right athlete receives the pass and passes in front of the left athlete. While running, left athlete receives the pass and passes in front of right athlete. Continue until athletes reach far goal, at which time one athlete shoots on goal. For variations, add: a) a goalie, b) time limit, c) defender (passive at first), d) third offensive athlete, or e) a second defender.





2. **Two on Two Drill:** Athletes form two lines at one end of the facility. Four athletes step forward (two athletes on offense and two on defense). On the coach's whistle, the athletes on offense pass to each other while running the length of the facility. The athletes on defense: a) slow down and impede the forward movement of the athletes on offense, b) block their view and c) stick check or capture the puck. When the athletes on defense properly gain control of the puck from the athletes on offense, those athletes switch to offense and the two athletes who lost control of the puck switch to defense. This is the same drill as the One on One Drill, except the athletes work in pairs.



3. **Pass Around the Goal Drill:** Athlete "A" stick handles from right corner behind the goal to left corner. Teammate "B" runs from right side to area in front of goal and receives a pass from athlete "A." Athlete "A" runs back behind goal and receives a pass in right corner from teammate "B." Teammate "B" runs to left corner and receives a pass from athlete "A." Athlete "A" runs to area in front of goal, receives a pass from teammate "B" and then shoots on goal. Set a time limit for the event. Repeat drill, switching the athlete and teammate. Add a chase defender.

**NOTE: For more Offense Drills please refer to the full Floor Hockey Coaching Guide**



## Goal Tending

Goal tending is the act of defending the goal from within the goal crease and preventing the puck from entering the net.

### Teaching the Skill

#### The Basic Goalie Stance (“Set” position)

- ◆ Feet are shoulder-width apart or with the pads touching.
- ◆ Knees and waist are bent slightly, with the weight forward on the balls of the feet.
- ◆ Back is kept straight with head up, always watching the play in front of the goal.
- ◆ Blade of stick is kept flat on the floor at all times.
- ◆ The stick is held firmly with one hand.
- ◆ The catching hand is held to the side, knee high, open, level with the stick glove and ready for a shot.



### Teaching Points

- ◆ Focus eyes on puck at all times.
- ◆ Play the puck and the offensive athlete.
- ◆ Keep pads centered on the puck. Always try to keep legs TOGETHER – never apart.
- ◆ Recover from floor as quickly as possible.
- ◆ Catch puck whenever possible, and then release it to teammate as quickly as possible.
- ◆ After making a save, freeze the puck, place it where only teammates can get it or put it to a teammate.
- ◆ Keep feet in the goal crease at all times.
- ◆ Communicate with teammates.

A goalie should be taught two basic types of movements:

1. For moving short distances quickly and from side-to-side to keep position in front of the puck, use the side step. Take short steps without turning the foot. When side-stepping, the goalie is always in basic stance. The foot is never turned on this move. This move is also used when the puck carrier is behind the net and when the goalie must move from post to post.
2. For staying in line with a shooter, use the pivot. The goalie pivots his/her upper body to face the shooter when the shooter moves from the middle of the court to the outside.
3. The goalie may need to pivot and then side-step, or vice versa, to stay in position between the shooter and the goal.



## Goal Tending Drills

1. **New Goalie Drill:** Roll a volleyball at the goalie, who should try to stop it with the stick.



2. **Angle Drill:** Move out from the net to challenge the shooter so that he/she has a smaller target area. In practice, the coach can tie two ropes of equal length to each goal post and hold the ends of ropes together to form a triangle. The ropes reflect where the goalie should be to cover the angle.
3. **Goalie Warm-up Drill:** Goalie takes shots from teammates. Line teammates up in a semicircle 6-8 meters (20-26 feet) in front of the net, each with two pucks. Athletes shoot one puck in sequence around the semicircle, then reverse shooting their second puck. Variations: Run up and shoot, coach calls on athletes to shoot, etc.

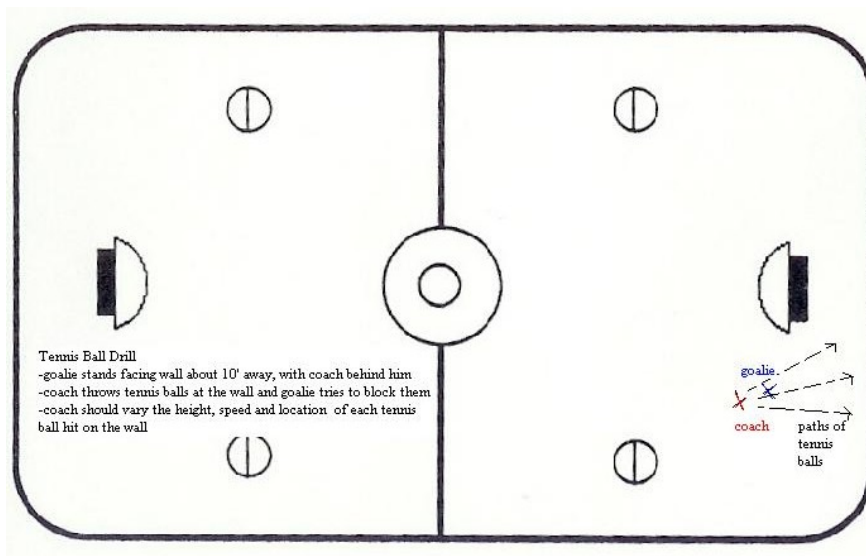


4. **Goalie Positioning Drill:** Two coaches or athletes, each on opposite sides of the goal 6-8 meters away, take turns shooting at the goal.
5. **Puck Tracking Drill:** Two or three coaches or athletes pass puck around goal, shooting randomly.





6. **Tennis Ball Drill:** Goalie faces wall from 3 meters (10 feet) out, with back to coach. Coach throws a tennis ball off the wall, and goalie reacts.



7. **Goalie Mirror Drill:** Coach (always in basic stance) makes a move, and the goalie follows and imitates as quickly as possible. Use moves in all directions.
8. **Reaction Drill:** On a whistle, the goalie should go to ground as if making a save. On a second whistle, the goalie gets back onto the feet and into a set position. Coaches should vary the time between whistles.



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**Special Olympics**

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