# Field Hockey Drills and Practice Plans

Making you a better coach one practice at a time!

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## How to Use this Guide

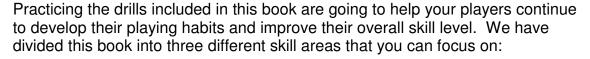
## Introduction – How to Use this book!

Field Hockey coaches are constantly on the lookout for drills and skills that are going to make their players better. Further, being able to put those drills together with a practice plan to reinforce those skills makes it all the more effective. That's going to be the goal of this guide.

#### Practice makes perfect

We have all heard that saying, and it really is true. Repetition of skills is the best way to get your players to perform better. Knowing what to do when the opportunity presents itself is one of the hallmarks of a good player. The more practice, the more inclined your players are to do the right thing at the right time. Skill

development in essential to having a good field hockey team.



- Ball Control Drills
- Passing, Shooting and Attacking
- Offensive and Defensive drills and tactics.

The drills included in this book will range in skill / age level based on their difficulty. Some of the more advanced drills you certainly aren't going to use for the younger ages. Likewise, the more basic skills, like the basics of passing and shooting the ball, you aren't going to be teaching those to your older, more experienced players.

Each drill's skill level will be denoted by the following symbols:

Beginner:



Intermediate:



#### Advanced:



#### Planning practices

After you have a few more drills under your belt, it is important to structure those drills into an effective practice. We will also include 25 different practice plans to use throughout a season. Each of these practice plans will be geared towards a specific skill or set of skills and each will continue to build off one another.

You don't have to use all of the practice plans! We have included several different ones so you can choose the ones that work best for you and your team. As a coach, you will probably only choose the ones where your team needs the most attention. With our practice plans, you can simply print the ones you want off your computer and you will be ready to go!

#### Ready to go!

The first section of this book will be the various drills, divided into three separate sections. Then you will notice those drills included in the practice plans we have provided for you in the second half of the book.

Once you have gone through this book, you will be armed with a number of great drills and an idea of how to implement them for your team! Then, you watch as their skills get better and you become more confident as a coach!

#### Best of luck!

#### **Ball Control Drills**



## **The Control Zone**

This is the first step to teaching younger players the proper stance when controlling the ball.

What you need – Each player should have a stick and a ball to do this exercise.

**How this drill works** – In order to learn to proper distance the ball should be away from the player for optimum control, the ball will be dropped from the person's hand.

The players take a regular stance, with their feet just over shoulder width apart, and hold out their left hand directly in front of them. With a slight lean forward the player should then drop the ball in front of them. At this point, the player should grab the stick in the proper form, and address the ball. This should be the proper point that a player must learn to handle the ball, pass the ball and shoot the ball.

This is called the control zone.

**Result** – A player is going to understand their control area.



# Stealing the Bacon

Racing to the ball and then keeping control of it are an important element of field hockey.

**What you need** – In groups of six, divide them into teams of three. One team will line up on the 25 yard line, and the other team on the 50 yard line and they are facing each other. The coach puts the ball in the absolute middle between the two teams and then blows the whistle. Two pylons are placed about 10 yards apart on both the 25 and 50-yard lines.

Members of the two sides sprint towards the ball (using the proper footwork to approach the ball), and the first side to get it goes on offense and the other side on defense. The team on offense tries to control the ball long enough to dribble it between the other side's pylons.

**Result** – This is a good game for control and position when handling the ball.



## Controlled, Loose and Indian

This drill teaches a player the three main kinds of dribbling.

**What you need** – Set up a pylon course where players can learn each of the different dribbling styles. You can set this drill up with three different stations, and at each station the players work on each type of dribbling.

**How this drill works** – At each station, the players will work on controlling the ball with the three main types of dribbling: controlled, loose (speed dribble), and Indian dribble.

The controlled dribble is used to keep the ball in tight to the body, so the player can maneuver in tight spaces.

The loose, or speed dribble, is used when a player is in the open, and they need to breakout quickly. Players should try to do this dribble with only one hand on the stick and the other used to pump the arms for running.

The Indian dribble is a diagonal dribble that helps you pull and push the ball from front right to close left (or the opposite, depending on the dribble).

**Result** – Dribbling around the pylons is going to help the players learn to control the ball no matter how they have to dribble.



## **Dodge Drill**

Dodges are quick fakes that help a player in control of the ball, elude the defense.

**What you need** – Pair up players of similar skill, and give them one ball between the two of them.

**How this drill works** – The first player will start and control the ball using the various types of dribbles learned in the above drill. Along with that, the controlling player will use dodges – juke techniques to avoid defenders. The goal with each 'dodge' or fake is to get the defender to commit to the direction your player fakes, in order to dribble the ball around them.

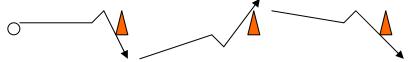
**Result** – Matching ball control with the ability to dodge is going to make your players more effective on offense. It will also give defenders the chance to learn dodge defense.



## Change speed, change direction

This is another drill to help players with basic ball control and dodges

**What you need** – Line up three pylons in a straight line, about 5 to 7 yards apart (see diagram below). Set up more than one station. Groups line up at each pylon station.



**How this drill works** – The player will start this drill dribbling the ball ahead of them, and upon reach the first pylon they will dodge, change speed and then go the other way. Then go to the next cone.

As players gain confidence and experience, they can start developing their own change of pace to elude defenders.

Once player get a little more experienced, replace the pylons with passive defenders.

**Result** – More work on ball control and eluding defenders.



#### **Pull Back Drill**

The pull back helps a player slow down the play and regain close control of the ball.

**What you need** – Create three lines of players and place three cones 10 yards in front of them. Each line has a ball.

**How this drill works** – When the coach blows the whistle the players from each line will sprint towards the cone with the speed dribble. About 3 yards away from the cone (can be marked off), the player must break down and reach out for the ball and pull it back toward them.

After more experience is gained, change the pylons to real defenders.

**Result** – Pull back skill will be practiced and perfected.



## Combo Dribble Dodge Drill

Helps put players into a 'game-like' situation with different consecutive movements.

What you need - See diagram below



**How this drill works** – Instead of the basic drill where players are just working on single dribbling maneuvers, this one combines the different dribbles into one drill.

When the player starts out, they speed dribble, dodge, then control dribble, dodge, then Indian dribble, pull back, then speed dribble past the final cone.

**Result** – This drill will help players with all facets of ball control, and executing maneuvers in succession.



#### Dodge and slide

Getting the body in the way after a dodge is key in keeping control of the ball

What you need – See diagram below



**How this drill works** – This is another ball control variation of previous drills. However, in this one, after each dodge, the player shuffles (slides) in front of the pylon. This simulates getting the body back in front of the defender to prevent them from reaching for the ball.

As players get more experience, change from pylons to defenders.

**Result** – One more basic skill is added to your players' ball control.



This drill will help players control the ball in tighter situations

**What you need** – See diagram below. Run this with two or more stations.



**How this drill works** – As you can see from the diagram, this is a straight ahead ball control drill as the player negotiates their way through the course. They must alternate the sides they go to on their way down.

When they turn, the player must control the ball around the final pylon, and then start on their way back. This drill can be run as a relay with four or five players at each station.

**Result** – Increased ball control skills.



## King (or Queen) of the circle

This is a great competitive ball control drill for players.

**What you need** – Create a circle with pylons that is about 15 yards across. Put all of the players in the circle, each with a ball they must control and protect.

**How this drill works** – The players have two challenges during this drill – they must protect their ball, but then they must try to put the ball of others players out of play.

When the coach blows his or her whistle, all of the players must move around the circle dribbling the ball. Along with maintaining good control of their own ball, players must try to knock others' ball from the circle. As a player's ball is knocked from the circle, they are eliminated. The last one standing is the king or queen of the circle.

**Result** – Great offensive and defensive ball control drill.



## **Heads Up Dribble**

This drill will teach players to control the ball, while keeping their head

**What you need** – You can start this drill with 5 lines of players all starting at the 25-yard line. The coach will stand on the Center line in the middle.

**How this drill works** – The players will be in the 'triple threat' or ready position and the coach will then blow the whistle for the first players to begin.

The players will work from the 25-yard line to the center line, with their heads up, and watching which way the coach is pointing his or her arm. When the coach points left or right, the players must change their direction at a 45-degree angle.

To add an extra element to this drill, each time a player is supposed to change direction, they must make a dodge move before switching direction.

**Result** – Better control with the head up; this will allow players to make passes and see open areas where they can dribble to.



#### Shifting Gears

To be able to go from full sprint to a pull back for control is an effective ball control skill

**What you need** – You can line players up on the 25-yard line similar to the above drill. The coach will stand on the center line.

**How this drill works** – When the coach blows the whistle, the players will loose dribble the ball while sprinting. The coach will blows the whistle again and the player must pull back the ball, gain control and then speed dribble again.

The coach will continue to blow the whistle each time he or she wants the players to pull back from a speed dribble. The players must keep control of the ball, or they will be eliminated from the drill.

**Results** – the players will learn to change speeds while controlling the ball during the game.



This will help players develop their one on one skills.

What you need – Pair up players of equal skill and ability.

**How this drill works** – in this drill, the player should be using all of the dribbles they have learned up to this point. At first, the defender will not try to take the ball away from the offensive player. The focus at this time will be on the offensive player's ability to keep the ball away from the defender using the various dribbling techniques.

During this drill player should be using the speed dribble, but controlled dribble and the Indian dribble. Along with those skills they should also be using their dodging maneuvers to avoid the defenders.

As players become more skilled at dribbling the ball you can add two defenders.

**Result** – one on ones are very important part of field hockey. At any point during the game a one on one situation can occur.



#### Spin around the cones

A spin move can be very effective in eluding defenders

**What you need** – see diagram below for details. You can run several stations for this drill.



**How this drill works** – the player will dribble the ball approaching the first cone. They will make a quick jab step, and, while maintaining control of the ball spin around and go to the other side of the pylon.

The player will alternate this side of the spin at each cone.

**Results** – this is an advanced ball control skill for players to learn.



This is another ball control tool that players can use.

**What you need** – Put players together in groups of two or three. Each group will have a ball.

**How this drill works** – players can work one on one together, learning the scoop method. As the player approaches, he or she will slow the ball down and as it reaches his or her stick, they will drop their right shoulder and lower the left hand so the stick is angled back with the face of this stick toward the sky.

Once the ball reaches the player, the toe of the stick is just below the lower half of the ball. The ball is lifted up over the defender's stick just high enough to avoid the pressure, but not too high to lose control.

**Results** – Once again, another tool in a player's ball control arsenal. This one can be particularly effective against players who are trying a horizontal tackle.



#### One on five

This ball control drill is like a glorified game of keep away.

**What you need** – Create a square with pylons, with each pylon about 10 yards apart. Five defenders will be in the square. One player will be on offense.

**How this drill works** – The defenders will be prepared for the offensive player to come into the square. At first, the defenders will offer little resistance as the offensive player uses several different methods of evading tackles and other defensive maneuvers.

The offensive player will only meet one player at a time, however, they will be simultaneous – once he or she is past the first one, the next defender will go after the player.

As all players gain a little more confidence, the drill can get more intense. As one of the defenders take the ball away from the offensive player, he or she will then get to be the offensive player.

**Result** – This is a pressure ball control drill that players will have to help them build their offense versus defense skills.



#### One hand speed dribble

The best speed dribble is one done with one arm, as the other is used for pumping during the sprint.

**What you need** – See diagram below. You will need a pylon with a flag put up in it about 20 yards away from the player. You can run several stations of this drill.



**How this drill works** – This drill is done from start to finish with one hand, except when the non-stick hand is used to grab the flag from the pylon.

The player will sprint as hard as they can, controlling the ball in front of them with a one-handed speed dribble. They must move the ball down the field with one hand, and then once the reach the pylon, they must continue to control the ball with one hand only and then grab the flag with their non-stick hand and then speed dribble back.

**Result** – Players will become more comfortable with using only one hand on their stick for a speed dribble.



## Spin and speed

A quick spin to beat defenders, and then quickly move into a speed dribble up the sideline.

What you need – See diagram below.



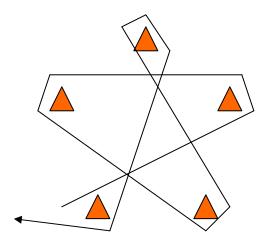
**How this drill works** – The player will approach the first pylon, spin, and then go immediately into a speed dribble up the sideline (with one hand). The player must touch the flag with their non-stick hand.

**Result** – Putting different moves together is essential for controlling the ball and keeping it from defenders.



This is a quick drill that will continue to work on different ball control skills.

**What you need –** See the diagram below.



**How this drill works** – As you can see from the diagram, the player will start at the first pylon, and then go to the top right one, then to the top left one, and so on. They must maintain good control of the ball during this drill.

**Result** – Your players will develop excellent control skills by negotiating this course.



#### Four corner drill

Works on ball control going in four directions.

**What you need** – Set up a square with pylons, and the players will start at one pylon.

**How this drill works** – Speed dribble to the first cone, breakdown and gain control, then the player will backpedal to the next cone (in control), breakdown at the third pylon, and then shuffle to the third cone, breakdown, and then Indian dribble to the fourth cone.

**Result** – Continued work on a variety of ball control skills. Using all of these ball control skills in one drill will condition a player to use them during a game.

## Passing, Shooting and Attacking



## **Passing Distance**

Learning how much strength to put on a pass is important for players to learn.

**What you need** – Simply match players up to perform this drill.

**How this drill works** – This is a fundamental drill for a beginner that helps them learn the proper strength based on the distance a person is away from the passer.

The players will start off 5 yards apart when they first pass. Coaches will watch for proper passing technique – ball in front, player stepping to the side of the ball, aiming the body at the target and then passing.

Once each player has passed once from the distance, they will each take one giant step backward. Then they pass again. They continue this until they are 25 yards apart.

**Result** – Players will gain confidence with the amount of power each pass needs.



## Push, reverse and hit

These are the three basic passing styles – push pass, reverse push and hit. The best players can do all three.

**What you need** – Pair players up to work on these different passes.

**How this drill works** – There is nothing intricate about this drill, as it is a fundamentals drill for younger players. Coaches should be watching for and coaching proper technique for each type of pass.

Players can pass the ball back and forth during this drill, and increasing their distance along the way. Each pass is used in different situations and distances and younger players will learn the basics with this drill.

**Result** – Good players know how and when to pass the ball. This drill covers the 'how' to pass properly, and in later drills they will learn the when and the where of passing.



Hitting players with passes in stride is important

**What you need** – See the diagram below for set up. You will need a line of passers and a line of pass receivers.



**How this drill works** – This is a very simple drill to help players learn how to pass the ball to players that are moving. It is important during the course of a game for the players to hit their teammates in stride with passes.

The pass receiver (square) will sprint forward, and after about 7 yards, the passer (circle) will pass the ball to the runner. The best pass will be one that the receiver does not have to stop or slow down for.

**Result** – Passers will learn to lead the pass receivers with their passes.



#### Pass receive drill

Players also need to learn to receive a good pass

What you need – You can partner up players for this drill

**How this drill works** – Just like the regular passing drill, players need to focus on receiving ground passes on the forehand and backhand, along with aerial passes.

Coaches should work on the player's proper positioning with the stick, and teach them to cushion the ball and prevent deflections or rebounds when the ball is received. When the ball rebounds or deflects the player has a great chance of losing control of the ball.

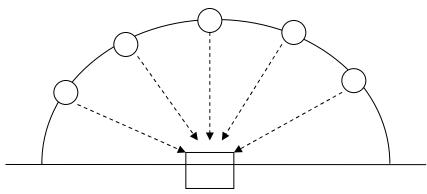
**Result** – Along with the passing skills, players will have a good grasp of the proper technique to receive a pass.



#### Inside the circle

This is a drill that will help players shoot from all angles and give the goalies some work, too.

**What you need** – See diagram for set up. Each player inside the circle should have a ball.



**How this drill works** – The players will line up around the circle and they will take shots on the cage. They should be practicing their flick, hit and push shots during this drill, working on the different shot types.

**Result** – Improved shooting technique and goalies will get a lot of work.



## Dribble, dodge and shoot

Three separate but important moves put into sequence.

**What you need** – A line of players ready to shoot, with a goalie in the cage.

**How this drill works** – As each player approaches the goal from outside the striking circle with a controlled dribble. With a pylon at the penalty circle, the player will execute a dodge move and then shoot the ball on the goal.

The player can experiment with different types of dodges and shots in order to round out their offensive skills.

**Result** – This is more work on stringing together the various skills and building on each of them throughout the season.



# Rapid Fire Push Passing

This is a good drill to work on push passing

**What you need** – See diagram for set up. You will need two sets of two players and two pylons on each side of a 12 yard wide 'field.'



**How this drill works** – The pylons are set up 2 yards apart, and the players stand two yard behind them, about 12 yards apart.

When the whistle blows, the players must forehand push pass the ball through both sets of pylons to gain one point. This drill lasts for 30 seconds. With two teams of two, it is a competition to see how many points you can gain through good passes.

**Result** – This is a great pressure passing drill for players.



# Push pass to target

This drill will aid in developing skill to make passes of different lengths in rapid succession.

**What you need** – Divide into three or four groups of players. Each group will have 5 pylons set out at different angles and distances. Several balls will be at each station.

**How this drill works** – Once the whistle blows a player will have 30 seconds to make as many passes as they can to each of the targets (pylons). A player will receive a point for each ball within two feet of a target. They must attempt all targets in the 30 seconds.

This drill can be made more difficult by changing the pass type.

**Result** – Better control and touch on passes with the extra practice.



This will helps players learn to flick the ball to their target – either as a pass or a shot

**What you need** – Pair up two players of similar skill and give them a 5-gallon bucket.

**How this drill works** – The object of this drill is to work on the flick pass – for both accuracy and power.

Place the bucket 5 yards away from the player to start. They have 10 chances to 'flick' the ball into the bucket. They get a point for each ball that ends up in the bucket. Then their partner goes, and then they compare the point totals for each player.

This drill can be made more difficult by increasing the distance of the bucket from the players.

**Result** – Skill development on this kind of pass is built as the players work on their aerial passes.



## Receive and shoot

Control the pass and then take a shot

**What you need** – One passing line and one line of shooters. You can do this inside the striking circle if you like.

**How this drill works** – The passing player will start beside the goal (to the right or left), and the shooting player just outside the striking circle.

The shooter will break right or left and the passer will send the ball to them. At that point, the shooter will have 3 seconds inside the striking circle to make a move and take a quick shot.

Increase the difficulty of this drill by adding a defender.

**Result –** Players learn to shoot quickly off well-timed passes.



Long accurate hit passes are an essential type of play in field hockey

**What you need** – See the diagram below. Set up a 'passing lane' for the ball with pylons. This will be about 25 yards apart. The cones will be 3 yards apart to start, and at 5 yard intervals.



**How this drill works** – The players will attempt to hit pass the ball through the lane, without crashing into any of the cones. Coaches need to watch for proper technique in this drill.

Each pair of player will attempt 20 total passes, and they will attempt to get at least 15 through to start. Make it more difficult by shrinking the zone to 2 yards between cones.

**Result** – This will increase the accuracy of your players' hit passes.



## Shoot on the run

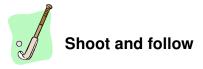
Players need to be able to shoot off the dribble to catch the goalie off guard

**What you need –** Set up two stations at each end of the field.

**How this drill works** – From the 25-yard line, a player will sprint in with a speed dribble, and once they reach the striking circle, he or she will gain control of the ball quickly and take a shot. No more than 3 seconds should elapse from the time the ball passes over the striking circle line to the execution of a shot.

Coaches should encourage many different types of shots during this drill. Also, coaches need to watch the technique for each of the shots.

**Results** – Improved ability shoot off the dribble, which is very important for players to learn in order to be effective offensive players.



Following a shot and getting a rebound will help generate more chances on goal

**What you need** – At each end of the field, a goalie should be set up, along with a line of shooters. They can line up at the edge of the shooting circle.

**How this drill works** – A player will take a quick shot at the goalie, and then he or she will immediately follow the ball in case there is a rebound. This should be done off of a quick dribble, because the players need to learn to shoot quickly, as this will be like a game situation.

The idea is to take a hard shot and then follow the shot. Once the shot is taken, a player will sprint to the goalie and then breakdown in front of them to wait to see where the ball will be cleared. When the goalie clears the rebound, the player will pounce on it to try and get a second shot.

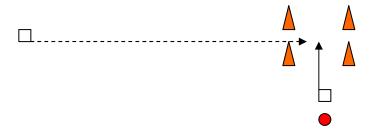
**Result** – Players will begin to realize the value of following their shot to the net to gain valuable scoring opportunities.



## **Pressure reception**

Receiving a pass under pressure is a common occurrence during a game

What you need – See diagram below for details



**How this drill works** – The receiver will have a defender (red) on them as they move into the passing area (pylons). The passer will attempt to time the pass so the receiver gets it in the passing zone while the defender is trying to break the pass up.

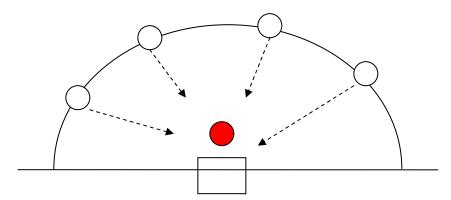
**Result** – Both passers and receivers will realize the importance of timing and accuracy – especially with a defender on their tail.



## Rapid fire and rebound

This is a quick drill that helps with deflections and rebounds

**What you need** – See diagram for details. A station can be set up at each end of the field. Goalies are required at both ends.



**How this drill works** – This drill starts with the first player on the goalie's right taking a shot. The player in the center will do one of two things: first they will try to deflect the shot, and then if the goalie makes a save, they will corral the rebound and try to get another shot.

Once the second shot is attempted, the next player shoots the ball, the center person tries to deflect and get the rebound.

**Result** – A good drill for shooting, goaltending, rebounding and deflecting.



### **Aerial Partner Passing**

Passing and receiving aerial passes will come in handy

What you need – Pair up players with a ball.

**How this drill works** – Players will work on their aerial passes, as each player tries to lift the ball to their partner's waist or chest level. The partner must then knock the ball down and control it with his or her stick.

To make this drill more difficult, you can increase the distance between the two players.

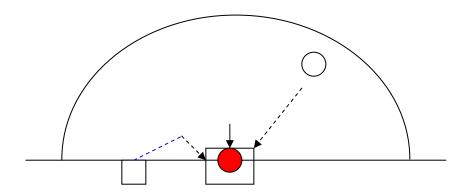
**Result** – Accuracy and control of aerial passes will come in handy in many situations.



#### Quick hit, rebound and dive shot

One shot on goal and then a dive shot rebound.

**What you need** – You will need a goalie, a shooter and then the coach (or another player can make the last pass. See diagram for details.



**How this drill works** – The shooter takes a 'quick' shot, then follows up for the rebound. Once the player gets the rebound and takes a shot, the coach (square), will roll the ball (blue), where the player then executes a dive shot.

**Result** – This is a series of events that could easily happen during a game.



## **Distance shooting**

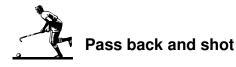
Varying the distance of shooting will help shooters build strength and accuracy from a distance.

**What you need** – Set up 5 pylons at various distances and at various angles.

**How this drill works** – The shooter will change between a short shot and a long shot until they finish all five shots.

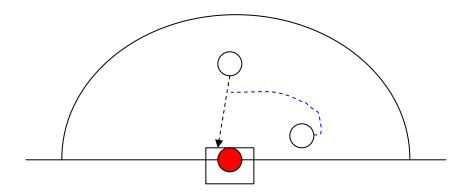
This drill can be made more difficult if the shooter is under pressure, and also, coaches should make the players use a variety of shots in this drill. It will help them develop far more offensive skills.

**Result** – Shooters will have a greater capacity to execute different shots and know the power and accuracy needed for different shots from various parts of the field.



This drill simulates a play inside the striking circle

**What you need** – See diagram below for details in set up.



**How this drill works** – The player that is right and low in this diagram will have his or her back to the goal, and they will execute a forehand or reverse push pass behind them (blue) to the player coming through the middle of the striking area. Then the shooter will take a quick shot. The original passer will circle around and attempt to pick up any rebounds.

**Result** – This will help basic execution of a standard play on offense.



## Quick, flick, hit and dive

This is a four station drill and the shots are done consecutively

**What you need** – Set up four balls about 5 yards apart, across the striking circle about 10 yards away from the goal.

**How this drill works** – Players will start at the first station and execute a quick shot. Then, the player will sprint to the next one and do the flick shot – sprint, then quick shot, then a dive shot.

You can add to this drill by including another station with a push shot or a reverse push shot.

**Result** – This is a drill that should be done as fast as possible. The coaches should be watching for accurate shots along with proper technique. This is going to help your players continue to develop their shot selection.

#### Offensive and Defensive Tactics



#### Jab tackle drill

This is a basic defensive play for young players to learn

What you need – Pair up two players of similar skill

**How this drill works** – One player will control dribble in place. The other player will try to knock the ball away from the dribbler using a jab tackle.

Coaches need to watch for the proper form on the jab tackle. The key to a good tackle is timing it so the ball is between the stick handling, so the dribbler loses control of the ball.

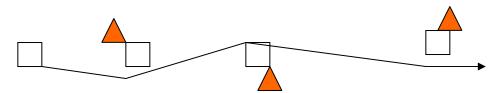
**Result** – This is the first basic tackle that a young player should learn. Tackling skills are important for good defensive play.



## Horizontal vertical blocking

These are two other basic blocks put into a drill

**What you need** – See diagram below for set up.



**How this drill works** – the player will start out by going to the first player at the first pylon. At this point, the player will try to jab tackle the ball. They must get the ball away from the player using jab tackle only.

At the next station, they must do a vertical tackle. Then, at the next, the player must execute a horizontal tackle. Throughout all of the blocks, coaches must watch for proper technique. The player who gets through the fastest is the winner!

**Result** – Greater understanding of the different types of blocks, and when to use them during a game.



## Through pass, flat pass

Two different passes to advance the ball on offense.

What you need – See the diagram below for set up.



**How this drill works** – The player will have the ball, and the coach will act as the defender. If the coach leans one way or another to defend, then the player will make whichever pass is appropriate.

The flat pass is a lateral pass, considered more conservative, to set up a play, while the through pass is a long pass into the offensive zone.

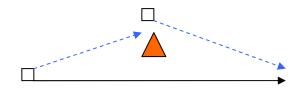
**Result** – A player will get a better idea of which pass to make, depending on where the defender is playing.



#### Give and Go

This is a basic pass play for younger players to learn.

**What you need –** See the diagram below.



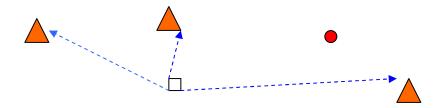
**How this drill works** – This is a basic, give and go play that will be used a lot on offense in a game. In this drill, the first player will pass to the outside of the cone and then sprint forward for a return pass from the player outside the cone. Do this drill 10 times, and try to score 8 out of 10 good passes.

**Result** – Players will have a good understanding of the basic give and go pass.



In field hockey, it is important to always have three passing options.

What you need – See the diagram below for set up.



**How this drill works** – The player with the ball should always try to have three options for passing. If the through pass and the flat pass are being covered by defenders, then they may need to send the pass backward to try and set the play up again.

In this drill, the defender (red) can cover the lanes, and the passer needs to decide which pass to make safely.

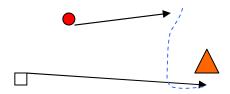
**Result** – This drill will help players understand that they should always put themselves in a position to have three passes available to them.



## **Speed reverse**

A player rushes down the sideline, and passes into the middle

What you need – See diagram below.



**How this drill works** – The player with the ball will rush up the sideline to the outside of the pylon. Once at the pylon, the player will make a reverse push pass to the red player streaking through the middle. This should be a very quick play that catches the goalie off guard.

**Result** – Another basic play to help with understanding offensive tactics.



This drill will focus on teaching players to pass quicker and dribble less

**What you need** – You can set up two drill areas for this game, depending on your numbers. Place the cage (or pylons for goals) on either sideline, in between the center line and the 25-yard line. 5 players will be on each 'team'.

**How this drill works** – This is a game when players must only touch the ball once, without dribbling the ball down the field. Players must also keep their head up to see where they should pass next.

Players must not touch the ball until they are ready to pass. If they touch the ball (as in a dribble) the other team will take over possession from that point. This drill stresses quick passing to advance or move the ball around the field.

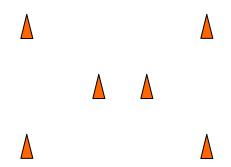
**Result** – Although dribbling is an integral part of field hockey, there is no better way to move the ball quickly than to pass it.



## **Goals Galore**

This is a great teamwork drill in a scrimmage-type setting

What you need – See diagram for set up.



**How this drill works** – Put two team of four into a 20-yard by 20-yard square. Inside the square are two pylons – the 'goal'. The only way to score on the other team is if a player dribbles through, or passes to another player through the two center cones, without being tackled or intercepted. Play this game to 20. Teams cannot block the center area.

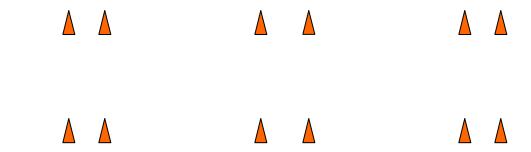
**Result** – Players will begin to develop good teamwork as they try to score on their opponent in this game.



## Three goal game

This drill promotes more teamwork – with passing and ball control important

What you need – See diagram for set up



**How this drill works** – Each set of two cones is spread equally across the 25-yard line and the center line (so, 25-yards apart). Players are split into teams of four, and the object is for each team to defend the three goals on their side, and also try to score on their opponents three goals.

Coaches should emphasize strong defense and good passing to stretch out the opposing team. Play this game to 10, and regular field hockey rules apply.

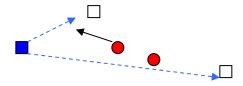
**Result** – Increased teamwork and experience in game situations.



#### Lane cover

This will help players understand the importance of covering passing lanes on defense.

What you need - See diagram for details.



**How this drill works** – This is a drill where the defenders (red) will try to take up the passing lanes in a 3 on 2 situation. The offensive players will move around to complete the pass, with defenders trying to stay in the passing lane and cover the players.

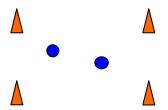


**Result –** Greater understanding of the importance of covering lanes.

#### 4 on 2 Grid

This is a great competitive game that teaches good passing and works on defense.

What you need - See diagram below.



**How this drill works** – There will be four offensive players (one at each cone), with two defenders (blue) in the middle of the square. The pylons should be about 10 to 15 yards apart.

The offensive players on the outside will stay within 5 yards of their pylons, dribbling or passing the ball and getting it to their teammates. Each successful perimeter pass gives them one point, and each pass between the two defenders is two points. If the defenders intercept the pass or tackle and steal the ball, they get one point. Play the game for 10 minutes and keep score.

**Result** – Both sides will get a great workout and learn passing and team skills.



#### Tic Tac Toe

This is a three person, quick passing play

**What you need** – Position one line of players at the center line, one to the left on the 25 yard line and one to the right, just inside the striking circle.

**How this drill works** – The ball will start at the center line, the first player will pass to the second and then sprint forward to the goal. The second player passes to the third, who then passes it to the first player streaking up the middle. Then a shot is taken. The third player can follow up for a rebound, and the second player takes up a defensive position.

**Result** – Players can identify these opening in a defense if they practice them. This practice helps players learn to pass quickly and react.



#### Continuous 3 on 2

This drill will be ongoing, and can also work as a conditioning drill, along with work on skills.

**What you need** – Start with a goalie, two defenders, and three attacking players. This drill takes place just outside the striking circle to start.

**How this drill works** – The first three players will start their attack by making a penetrating pass inside the striking circle. Then it is a full blown three on two play, where the offense tries to score. If they score, then the goes back to the offensive line, and the other two players stay on defense.

As soon as a goal is scored, the two players take up a defensive position, and then the next three attackers are on their way. If the defense takes the ball away, the last two offensive players to touch the ball will be on defense.

**Result** – 3 on 2 plays are common in field hockey, and getting used to scoring on them and defending them are essential.



#### 4 on 3 switch

This helps players learn good transition from offense to defense

**What you need** – Put 7 players into each area from sideline to sideline, and 25-yard line to center line. Mark off a goal area with cones.

**How this drill works** – Four players will start on offense, and they will attack the 3 players on defense. If the four players score, the scorer goes on the attack with the defending three, making it a 4 on 3 the other way. If the defenders take the ball away before the offense scores, then the last three offensive player to touch the ball will go on defense.

You can even go one step further and make this a 5 on 4 if you like. It can be made even more difficult if you want to add the one touch element to it, so the players can only touch the ball once and then pass it.

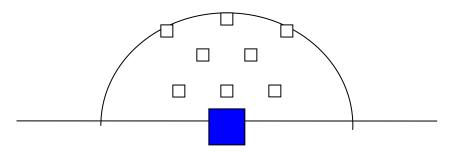
**Result** – This is a drill that helps players with their game play but putting them into situations that simulate game situations. Coaches should watch the players' and their transition from offense to defense. If the transition from offense to defense is weak, then the switch will result in a goal.



#### 8 on 9 Zone

This is to help defenders learn a good zone defense.

What you need – See diagram for set up.



**How this drill works** – This drill is designed to show the defensive players how to run an effective zone. Have 9 offensive players set up around the circle, and then show the defense how to move with the direction of the ball.

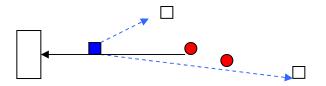
Coaches should make sure each player in the drill knows and understands his or her responsibility.

**Result** – Basic understanding of this zone defense.



## Long hit break

A quick long hit pass can create a great offensive chance



**How this drill works** – An offensive player can take a shot on goal, and then try to get the rebound. They will allow the defensive player to gather control of the ball, with which they will try to make a quick long hit pass to a streaking offensive player.

This is a breakout play. The players that start on offense will try to intercept the long pass. If the defender cannot make a good pass, they will use a flat pass to their defense partner.

Result – This drill will teach players to make the mental transition to offense.



#### Protect the circle

This is a great competitive drill for the team

**What you need** – Divide the team into two 6 person sides. Use only one half of the field. One goalie can be in the net, but very few shots will likely be taken. One side will be on offense, and the other 6 players will be on defense.

**How this drill works** – The six players on defense will try to prevent the offensive player from penetrating inside the striking circle. They will check and tackle aggressively, but they will also have to be mindful of passing lanes that will spread them out.

You can score one point for the offense each time they get into the circle area, and one point if the defense can prevent them. The offensive side will have 15 second to penetrate the defensive zone, or the defense gets a point.

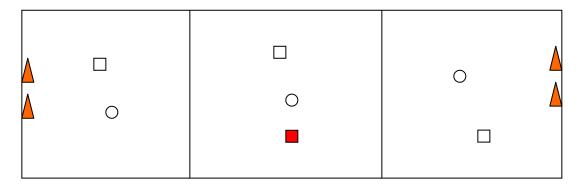
**Result** – This will promote aggressive, but responsible defense, as the sides play for respect and point in this competitive match.



#### Three zone balance game

Good area discipline will be taught in this drill

What you need – See the diagram below.



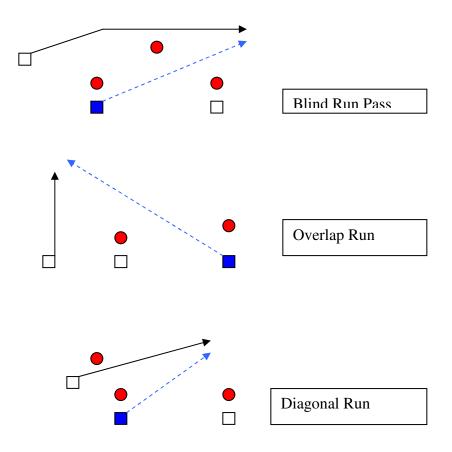
**How this drill works** – One offensive and one defensive player must stay in each zone, as shown above. One team will start with the ball and try to score on their opponent while passing or dribbling through the zones. One player (red) is able to go through all three zones. He or she will help whichever team is on offense. The object is for one side to score more than the other.

**Result** – Players will learn good defense, but also play well through transition in each of the zones.

#### The Runs

This drill will show and reinforce the different 'runs' players can use to get into open area.

**What you need** – You can run this drill with three on three to show the following plays: diagonal run, blind-side run and overlap run. See diagrams for each one.



**How this drill works** – In each of the drills, defense is in red, and blue is the person with the ball. The solid arrows indicate where the person is to run, and the blue dotted line is the pass.

Notice where players go in relation to their defender, and where the ball is passed to.

**Result** – Learning the effectiveness of runs will help your team create open passing lanes when they are on offense.

# **Practice Plans – Use them in Your Practices!**

This is the section where we have constructed 25 general practice plans that you can follow. They are a **minute-by-minute** structured practice that you can take to run your practices. But, before we begin, here are a few tips on using the practice plans, and practices in general.

- The practice plans are a guide for your practices you don't have to use them all, and you can substitute other drills in to each plan if you want.
- While we provide one drill in the practice plans per time slot, you can add drills as you see fit to work with your team.
- It is important for repetition and skill development to keep players moving

   so if you can have several stations of the same drill at one time then
   do it.

## Running a good practice!

Keeping players moving while having the right amount of instruction is key to a successful practice. That's why we have helped you out with running the practices by including these practice plans.

#### More practice tips

- Have enough conditioning time included in all of your practices. Field hockey is a game that is constantly on the go and you need to make sure your players are in great shape. They won't like the extra time included in the practice plans for conditioning, but it will improve their game performance.
- Take enough time during the practice to make sure that proper instruction is given. While our drills keep the practice going, they are placed with the belief that players are being given instruction during this time as well. It takes only doing something twice to develop a bad habit, but seven times to develop a good habit – instruct properly first!
- Give ample rest times and water times. Don't overlook these in the practice plan. Good rest time and replenishing fluids is going to help the body rejuvenate and prevent long-term injuries.
- Keep the practices fun! You don't want players to lose interest because things are too intense. Make sure – especially at younger ages that the children are having fun. That is what keeps them in field hockey programs for the years to come.

Following are practice plans for you to use in your practices!

# Practice Plan – For Beginners #1

Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
00 to :10	Dribbling, shooting and other basic ball control	-	Loosen up and work on shot
:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Control zone	5	Area of best ball control
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Dodge Drill	6	Good fakes are key
:45 to 1:00	Jab Tackle Drill	25	Good jab execution
1:00 to 1:10	Passing Distance	15	Different passing types for distances
1:10 to 1:20	Pass receive drill	16	Work on good cushion and control
1:20 to 1:30	Triangle Pass	27	Always have three passing options
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Pull back drill	7	A good pull back avoid defenders
1:45 to 1:55	Dribble, dodge, shoot	17	Good consecutive moves
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Control, Loose, Indian	6	Perfect each dribble type
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Dodge Drill	6	Good fakes are key
:45 to 1:00	Stealing the Bacon	5	A good drill for solid ball control
1:00 to 1:10	On the Run	16	Hit the runner in stride
1:10 to 1:20	Give and Go	26	Basic tactic in field hockey
1:20 to 1:30	Change speed, change direction	7	These skills help elude defenders
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Scrimmage		Work on learned tactics
1:45 to 1:55			
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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:25 to :35	Control zone	5	Area of best ball control
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Control, Loose, Indian	6	Perfect each dribble type
:45 to 1:00	Pull back drill	7	A good pull back avoid defenders
1:00 to 1:10	On the Run	16	Hit the runner in stride
1:10 to 1:20	Push, reverse, hit	15	Work on all three pass types
1:20 to 1:30	Through pass, flat pass	26	Watch where the defender is
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Jab Tackle Drill	25	Good jab execution
1:45 to 1:55	Dribble, dodge, shoot	17	Good consecutive moves
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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1:00 to 1:10	Triangle Pass	27	Always have three passing options
1:10 to 1:20	Push, reverse, hit	15	Work on all three pass types
1:20 to 1:30	Stealing the Bacon	5	A good drill for solid ball control
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Inside the circle	17	Goalies get some work
1:45 to 1:55	Jab Tackle Drill	25	Good jab execution
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
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:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Control, Loose, Indian	6	Perfect each dribble type
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Dodge Drill	6	Good fakes are key
:45 to 1:00	Change speed, change direction	7	These skills help elude defenders
1:00 to 1:10	Through pass, flat pass	26	Watch where the defender is
1:10 to 1:20	Inside the circle	17	Goalies get some work
1:20 to 1:30	Pass receive drill	16	Work on good cushion and control
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Passing Distance	15	Different passing types for distances
1:45 to 1:55	Dribble, dodge, shoot	17	Good consecutive moves
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Cone weave	9	Ball control is essential
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Basket flicks	19	Accuracy on flick passes
:45 to 1:00	The Runs	34	Watch for proper movement
1:00 to 1:10	One hand speed dribble	13	MUST have only one hand on stick
1:10 to 1:20	Rapid fire push pass	18	Accuracy and quickness
1:20 to 1:30	King of the circle	9	Who can stay in the circle the longest
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Scrimmage		Work on learned tactics
1:45 to 1:55			
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Rapid fire push pass	18	Accuracy and quickness
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Shoot and follow	21	Get the rebound
:45 to 1:00	Three zone balance game	33	Stay on proper zone
1:00 to 1:10	Continuous 3 on 2	31	Keep the play going
1:10 to 1:20	4 on 3 switch	31	Competition to score
1:20 to 1:30	Distance shooting	23	Power, accuracy and proper shot type
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Spin and Speed drill	13	Quick move and one hand on stick
1:45 to 1:55	Shoot on the Run	20	A couple of seconds to shoot, that's all
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
00 to :10	Dribbling, shooting and other basic ball control	-	Loosen up and work on shot
:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	One hand speed dribble	13	MUST have only one hand on stick
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Pressure reception	21	Good timing and use body to shield defender
:45 to 1:00	Rapid Fire Rebound	22	Quick rebounds score goals
1:00 to 1:10	Push pass to target	18	Accuracy on passes is essential
1:10 to 1:20	Heads up passing	10	Always keep the head up to watch the play
1:20 to 1:30	One touch pass	28	Keep heads up, only one touch – no dribble
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Scrimmage		Work on learned tactics
1:45 to 1:55			
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Cone weave	9	Ball control is essential
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Aerial partner passing	22	Knock it down and control
:45 to 1:00	Shifting Gears	10	Speed change aids offense
1:00 to 1:10	Long hit break	32	Speed burst and long pass
1:10 to 1:20	Continuous 3 on 2	31	Keep the play going
1:20 to 1:30	4 on 3 switch	31	Competition to score
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	3 Goal game	29	Protect the goal, but score, too
1:45 to 1:55	Tic Tac Toe	30	Quick passes to score
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Rapid fire push pass	18	Accuracy and quickness
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Driver's Ed	20	Narrow the lane to make harder
:45 to 1:00	One on Five	12	Ball Control made very hard
1:00 to 1:10	Pressure reception	21	Good timing and use body to shield defender
1:10 to 1:20	Quick hit, rebound, dive	23	Three consecutive shots
1:20 to 1:30	4 on 2 grid	30	Passing for points
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Lane Cover	29	Defenders need to stay in passing lanes
1:45 to 1:55	King of the circle	9	Who can stay in the circle the longest
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Cone weave	9	Ball control is essential
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	3 Goal game	29	Protect the goal, but score, too
:45 to 1:00	Tic Tac Toe	30	Quick passes to score
1:00 to 1:10	Star Drill	14	Keep control or do it again
1:10 to 1:20	One on ones	11	Use tackles and various dribbles
1:20 to 1:30	Distance shooting	23	Power, accuracy and proper shot type
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Scrimmage		Work on learned tactics
1:45 to 1:55			
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Aerial partner passing	22	Knock it down and control
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1:00 to 1:10	Long hit break	32	Speed burst and long pass
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Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
00 to :10	Dribbling, shooting and other basic ball control	-	Loosen up and work on shot
:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Cone weave	9	Ball control is essential
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Rapid Fire Rebound	22	Quick rebounds score goals
:45 to 1:00	Push pass to target	18	Accuracy on passes is essential
1:00 to 1:10	Pressure reception	21	Good timing and use body to shield defender
1:10 to 1:20	Spin and Speed drill	13	Quick move and one hand on stick
1:20 to 1:30	Shoot on the Run	20	A couple of seconds to shoot, that's all
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Scrimmage		Work on learned tactics
1:45 to 1:55			
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Rapid fire push pass	18	Accuracy and quickness
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Protect the circle	33	No penetration by offense
:45 to 1:00	8 on 9 zone	32	Help players perfect zone with good position
1:00 to 1:10	Goals Galore	28	Pass or dribble through the middle goal
1:10 to 1:20	Continuous 3 on 2	31	Keep the play going
1:20 to 1:30	4 on 3 switch	31	Competition to score
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Distance shooting	23	Power, accuracy and proper shot type
1:45 to 1:55	King of the circle	9	Who can stay in the circle the longest
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

Time	Drill	Pg.	Coaching Tips
00 to :10	Dribbling, shooting and other basic ball control	-	Loosen up and work on shot
:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Lane Cover	29	Defenders need to stay in passing lanes
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Distance shooting	23	Power, accuracy and proper shot type
:45 to 1:00	Heads up passing	10	Always keep the head up to watch the play
1:00 to 1:10	One touch pass	28	Keep heads up, only one touch – no dribble
1:10 to 1:20	3 Goal game	29	Protect the goal, but score, too
1:20 to 1:30	Tic Tac Toe	30	Quick passes to score
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Basket flicks	19	Accuracy on flick passes
1:45 to 1:55	The Runs	34	Watch for proper movement
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	Cone weave	9	Ball control is essential
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Driver's Ed	20	Narrow the lane to make harder
:45 to 1:00	One on Five	12	Ball Control made very hard
1:00 to 1:10	Quick hit, rebound, dive	23	Three consecutive shots
1:10 to 1:20	4 on 2 grid	30	Passing for points
1:20 to 1:30	Aerial partner passing	22	Knock it down and control
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Basket flicks	19	Accuracy on flick passes
1:45 to 1:55	The Runs	34	Watch for proper movement
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:10 to :15	Team stretch	-	Midsection, legs, groin, lower back and shoulders
:15 to :25	Jog around the field	-	Limbering up and preparing for drills
:25 to :35	One hand speed dribble	13	MUST have only one hand on stick
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Pressure reception	21	Good timing and use body to shield defender
:45 to 1:00	Rapid Fire Rebound	22	Quick rebounds score goals
1:00 to 1:10	Push pass to target	18	Accuracy on passes is essential
1:10 to 1:20	Shoot and follow	21	Get the rebound
1:20 to 1:30	Three zone balance game	33	Stay on proper zone
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Driver's Ed	20	Narrow the lane to make harder
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:25 to :35	Rapid fire push pass	18	Accuracy and quickness
:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Scoop drill	12	Valuable ball control move to perfect
:45 to 1:00	Dodge and slide	8	Get the body in the way of defender
1:00 to 1:10	Shifting Gears	10	Speed change aids offense
1:10 to 1:20	Long hit break	32	Speed burst and long pass
1:20 to 1:30	King of the circle	9	Who can stay in the circle the longest
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
1:35 to 1:45	Scrimmage		Work on learned tactics
1:45 to 1:55			
1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling

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:35 to :38	Water break	-	-
:38 to :45	Distance shooting	23	Power, accuracy and proper shot type
:45 to 1:00	Protect the circle	33	No penetration by offense
1:00 to 1:10	8 on 9 zone	32	Help players perfect zone with good position
1:10 to 1:20	Continuous 3 on 2	31	Keep the play going
1:20 to 1:30	4 on 3 switch	31	Competition to score
1:30 to 1:35	Water break	-	-
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1:55 to 2:00	Cool down	-	Stretch, ball control dribbling