

Part

# 2

Coaching players 7 years and up.



## COACHING PLAYERS 7 YEARS AND UP

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The first two levels of the Hockey Development Model have the responsibility of introducing and drawing the interest of young boys and girls to the game of hockey. Before coaches can apply the games and exercises in each level, however, they must be aware of the specific characteristics and needs of their young players.

### THE HOCKEY PLAYER UNDER AGE 10

Children who are younger than 10 years of age have some significant characteristics:

- They still lack fine motor skills.
- Their movements are usually whole body actions with little accuracy.
- They have short bursts of energy and enthusiasm.
- They are developing coordination and are still clumsy.
- They gain enjoyment from participating.
- Their actions are not very automatic or programmed.
- They are not sure what action will lead to success at a skill.
- They see every detail as being important.
- They are uncertain in the actions and how to achieve desired outcomes.
- They have no clear idea or model of the new skill.
- They cannot follow too many instructions or handle too much information at one time.
- They are unable to use feedback information effectively.

*“The great aim of education isn’t the knowledge, but the action.”*

Herbert Spencer

Through awareness of these traits, coaches can tailor their teaching to meet young players' characteristics and needs. The following table lists additional characteristics of young children and resultant coaching strategies.

### TAILORING COACHING PRACTICES TO MATCH YOUNG PLAYERS' CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Coaching strategy
The boys and girls under 10 have similar characteristics	Therefore boys and girls should train and compete together, because both will benefit from it.
The children are highly motivated and enthusiastic. They like to be active	Maintain their motivation through a wide range of exercises/games. Avoid queues and players being stationary. The coach should listen to what players say.
The children under 10 are generally egocentric and like to possess the ball the maximum time possible. They are very concerned with themselves.	Provide everybody with a ball and plan competitions 1 against 1 (like the Decathlon) in order to make the maximum use of their egocentric phase. Promote fair-play.
The players have not yet established a "motor pattern" to allow the skills to be executed without thinking. Their whole attention is directed towards the ball.	Allow time to learn skills. Improve the skills through a reasonable number of repetitions and vary them before you evaluate the skill level through a competition, which demands a correct execution. Drill practice must be designed to avoid excessive decision-making.
Everybody enjoys scoring. Scoring gives self-esteem and confidence	Practice simplified games as well as Mini Hockey with its variation so that everybody scores and plays the ball frequently.
Their capacity of attention is very limited. They are unable to process a lot of information.	Therefore the activities must be changed frequently. Mix specific hockey exercises/games with multilateral games. Vary almost every 15 minutes the content and let them compete with only one substitute. Don't talk too much, it's better to show without talking at the same time. Introduce one thing only.
They are just starting to learn how to cooperate	Select games in which cooperation leads to winning (like Mini hockey). The on the players should not exceed his present stage of development. Ask questions to involve the young players also mentally
They have no clear idea of an ideal performance and therefore rely entirely on their coach	Demonstrate to allow the young players to have a source of feedback.
They are very sensitive to criticism and failure	Under all circumstances be positive. Praise and reward often to reinforce an effort or an improvement.
They are less tolerant to heat and cold than adults	Ensure that they wear adequate clothing. They lose fluid quickly.

## GAME ALTERATIONS FOR BEGINNERS

In the same way that coaching strategies should be modified when working with young beginning players, so too should certain rules of the game, including the weight of the ball, the dimensions of the playing field, and the size of the goals.

### Weight of the Hockey Ball

Instead of using balls of regular weight (156-163 g.) for all children, regardless of their age, it's recommended to adapt it to the strength of the young hockey player. Children under 8 should play with a mini –hockey ball (about 100 g.) what will instill better and quicker learning . Experiences have shown that even 8 year old players feel more comfortable and capable with a mini ball than with the ball of the official weight, which therefore should be used ideally only from 9 years onwards. This is especially important for schools, clubs and countries where hockey is still practiced on natural grass.!

There are many advantages to using a mini ball. Due to the lesser weight, the balls can be passed over longer distances, which allows children to play more like adults. This will undoubtedly **stimulate to a high degree their important capacity of perception**. Using a mini hockey ball puts higher demands on visual skills, like peripheral vision, dynamic visual acuity and vision in the depth of the field.



The mini ball makes it possible that players who are even more than 10m away from the ball carrier to actively take part in the game. In addition to this, the frequently observed agglomeration of players around the ball, characteristic for the game at these age groups, is less often observed as when using the official ball approved by the FIH. Through **less agglomerations of players around the ball**, the process of observing, analysing and decision making is made easier and will finally result in a higher level of play with less ball losses.

*“Structuring the content of a training session for the beginners can be considered therefore, like tearing off one leaf after another from the 5 existing ones of a daisy, starting and finishing always with the leaf “Simplified Game or multilateral game”*

### The use of the reverse stick

During the first years of practice when the coach of young players instill them to *use frequently the reverse stick*, it's recommendable to train with Mini Balls . The coach should encourage the beginners to pass the ball also with the toe of the reversed stick as well as using as often as possible the "Indian dribble". But after an initial period (about 3 years) of gaining experience with the reverse stick it should be restricted, especially in the competition, due to its less effectiveness compared to the play with the front stick.

Thanks to the introduction of a mini-hockey ball, all activities proposed in the program of "Games of basic abilities and capacities" as well as many exercises and games of the 2nd. level of formation can be carried out with a much wider range of playing options which finally makes the game for them more attractive.

To encourage the young player to perfect even more his play with the reverse stick, competitions in many of the proposed exercises and games should be organised demanding the frequent play with the reverse stick.



### The dimensions of the practice field

The drills and games contained in the first level do not require an entire hockey field. Only an area approximately 20m x 40m is needed , less than a quarter part of the full field or even a basketball court, is needed.

When a simplified game for two teams is organized the coach should always take into consideration that **the less skilled and capable his players are, the wider and deeper the dimensions of the playing area should be**. A small area often doesn't allow the player sufficient time to observe and analyze the game situation and then to make a quick decision on which skill to execute, why to execute it, and when and where to do it best. The smaller the area, the more demands are put on skills and on attention. **Needless to say, a larger playing field facilitates successful play.**

If there is only a small playing area available, the coach is obliged to reduce the number of players taking part in the game, thus compensating with this reduction the lack of space and tailoring the game perfectly to the young players' abilities and capacities. Players who are not directly involved in the practice due to the lack of space may carry out some additional tasks like juggling or balancing the ball outside the training area, shooting it against a fence or wall or even executing exercises for improving their level of coordination and balance with and without the ball.

**It's therefore important for coaches to select the correct dimension of the playing area based on the technical, physical, and intellectual performance level of their players and on the number of players involved in the game.**

### Size of the Goals

The size of the goals also plays an important part in the teaching and learning process of young players. **To create a game of control**, the rules of many simplified games require beginners to control the ball in the opposing wide goal (between 6m and 20m wide). Any wild shooting is not desired, especially not in the first years of hockey due to the danger it may cause. In fact, players should handle the ball gently and with care, without using violent movements.

When the coach emphasizes goal scoring similar to American Football or rugby (carrying the ball close to the stick across the opponent's goal-line), the beginners learn more quickly.

**Wider cone goals will help stimulate players' capacity of perception.** For the beginner (who generally directs most of their attention towards the ball) a wider uncovered space between the cones is much easier to detect during his dribble.

In addition, using wide cone goals gives the wings the same opportunities to score as a center forward, thus leading to the habit of always attacking with sufficient width.

Lastly, with the use of wide goals, **agglomerations of players around the goal will not occur.**

Thanks to the use of wide goals in the practice of the young players, their enjoyment in the game and their self-confidence increases.

*“There is no question that the drills are needed to better the technique, but practising them without referring to the context of the games is from little value. The learner needs a context before the drills make any sense. The game is a tool to learn technique”*

Brenda Read

## HOW TO STRUCTURE A COACHING SESSION

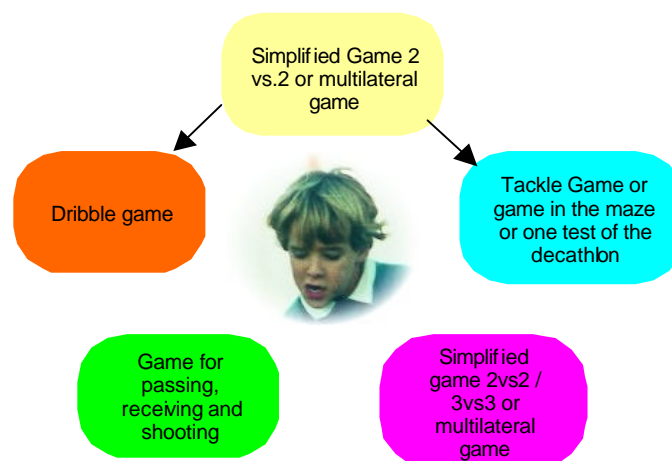
**Not only the quality, also the variety of the proposed activities determine the grade of success and the acceptance of the content of a practice session.**

Like someone orders in a restaurant a tasteful and varied meal after having studied carefully the menu, the teacher/coach of a beginner should program the contents of an attractive and enjoyable coaching session through selecting various activities out of the menu: “Games of basic abilities and capacities”:

- as “aperitif” one of the simplified games for teams formed by two players or in case the beginners are still not capable to play it, a multilateral game,
- as first course a dribbling game with one or two variations,
- as second course a passing, receiving or shooting game,
- as desert a tackling game , a game in the maze or one test of the Decathlon,
- as coffee, a multilateral activity or again a simplified game for teams formed by not more than 3 players.

In order to assure a high level of attention from the beginners, the teacher/coach must change every 15minutes the proposed activity (see also “Ten rules for efficient learning” in the chapter 1).

Besides he should know that **not only the variety of the ingredients of a menu (training session) also the way how it was prepared and presented, decides about the success.** It's obvious that the coach should alternate exercises/games of great intensity with those of less physical demand. Now that you know how to adapt the game to suit the abilities, interests, and expectations of players under 10, it's time to expose them to the games and exercises in level one.



*“Structuring a coaching session for the very young ones is like taking off the petals from a daisy, starting and finishing with a simplified game”*

# Games for Basic Abilities and Capacities

## Level 1



*“Hidden in every human being exists a child that wants to play”*

Friedrich Nietzsche



The first level of the Hockey Development Model has the important task of introducing children from 7 years and up to hockey and developing their interest and love for the game. Youngsters can learn efficiently on their own, without too much instruction. If coaches, during these decisive years of children's development, fail to give their young pupils adequate training tools and stimuli to enable them to play with confidence and enjoyment, they may convert their young charges, now full of potential, into future second-class athletes. Coaches should always aim to support the healthy and harmonious growing and development of the children who start out motivated to practice their favorite sport. The less rigid and more varied their teaching style and the training program they adopt, the more pleasant and comfortable the atmosphere will feel to children.



The length of the stick must fit perfectly to the height of the young player. Instead of reaching hip height, the handle should ideally be level with the lower part of the pocket.

In this chapter, you will be introduced to a variety of games that form Level 1 of the Hockey Development Model. These games are not to be done in any rigid order; instead, you can assemble a variety of games and create a training session that works best for your group of players. With adequate exposure (at least twice a week) to these games, beginners quickly gain their first experiences in such basic game situations as these:

- Dribbling the ball
- Receiving, controlling, passing, and shooting the ball
- Taking the ball away from the opponent
- Considering their teammate(s) or opponent(s) in attack as well as in defense.

Apart from being exposed to special programs that focus on the correct execution of the fundamentals in simplified game situations, the youngsters will take part in the Level 1 competitions—the Decathlon and the 2-on-2 Hockey Triathlon—that have been specially adapted to their developmental phase.

Because they are so egocentric, few seven- and eight-year-old beginners are capable of successfully playing team games. Every player likes to be the protagonist of the game and tries to keep the ball in his or her possession for as much time as possible. The games and exercises in the first level have been designed with this in mind.

Also during their leisure time the young players should spend, without the presence of a coach several hours a week to juggle with the hockey ball.

The early mastery of the "Indian dribble" must be considered as the key to further discovering the beauty of the game of hockey and to reach quickly a satisfactory level of capacity of play. They should touch it with love and tenderness so long until it finally obeys completely to their orders.

As any well known pianist needs through years more or less 4 hours of daily practice to become famous, two training sessions a week in the club or school are completely insufficient to develop a ball sense which is giving the player an extra edge.

## DRIBBLING GAMES

Dribbling games help players develop the ability to carry the ball with different techniques close to the stick combined with and also aid balance, footwork, speed, change of direction, and coordination. These qualities are key to further discovery of the beauty of hockey; possessing them allows players to quickly reach a satisfying level of play.

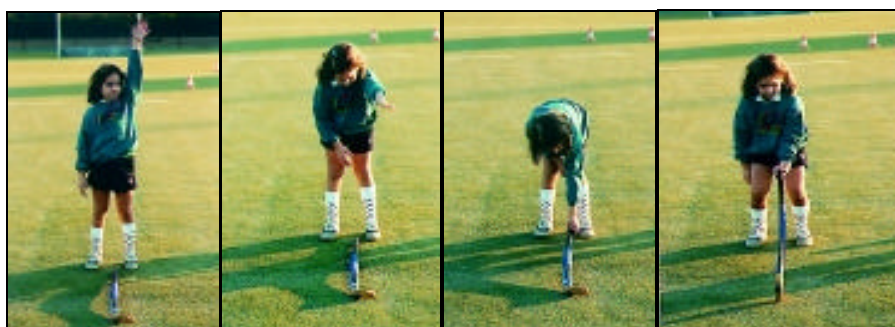
Although you will find the next section of games (as well as later programs) numbered to represent a progression from easier to more difficult or complex exercises and games, that doesn't mean that you must follow the activities in order. Presenting a more complex problem on occasion challenges the more talented players, while using easier exercises gives the less talented youngsters the confidence and motivation to try harder.

### 1. HOLDING THE HOCKEY STICK AND TURNING IT WITH YOUR LEFT HAND ONLY

A simple way to starting with a correct grip is to place the stick flat face downwards on the ground. Pick it up with your left hand only and near to the handle's end.

Then, without changing the position of your left hand, move the stick with an anti-clockwise turn of your left almost outstretched arm until the point (toe) of the curve is directed towards the ground (reverse stick position). With another clockwise turn of your left arm return then to the original position in which the point of the curve is showing up (forehand position).

When you grip your stick, make sure that you can't see your thumb! Being able to see the thumb of your left hand means that your grip isn't the correct one.



*"Love the ball! Consider it as your best friend whom you should treat with tenderness and without violence"*

## 2. HOLDING THE STICK WITH BOTH HANDS, TURNING IT IN YOUR RIGHT HAND

The stick is placed vertically with its flat side on the ground. The handle is close to the feet and the curve furthest away. Pick the stick up with both hands at the same time and make sure that the right one, with an extremely loose (open) grip, is placed in the center of the stick.

Now with the legs slightly bent and the trunk as upright as possible try to move the stick with your left hand only from a forehand position into a reverse stick position (with the curve pointing into the ground).

Make sure that the flat face of the curve is at the end of every turn, always in a vertical position, which allows you to pass the ball or play it in the best way. Did you manage to turn the stick with the left hand only, using the right hand as a ring? It's a serious mistake letting the right hand participate in the turn. Always make sure of the correct position of your left hand!

## 3. WHILST STATIONARY MOVE THE BALL SIDWAYS IN FRONT OF YOUR BODY, TOUCHING THE BALL ALTERNATELY WITH FOREHAND AND WITH THE REVERSE STICK



Make sure that the ball is 1m in front of your feet in order to allow better vision. Therefore don't incline your trunk forward and keep your legs well bent and both arms outstretched. When you touch the ball, the curve of your stick must be in a vertical position.

The educator/coach has to check that the right hand is not participating in the turn of the stick and that the left thumb is hidden.

Organize a competition to establish the players with the best technique in the stationary "Indian dribble".

In another competition wins who touches the ball more often with an alternate touch of forehand and reverse stick in 15 and 30 seconds.

The coach must make sure that the reverse stick touch is carried out always with the curve in a vertical position.

#### 4. THE GAME OF "BULLY"

Two players face each other in a "bully". Wins who manage to push a stationary ball (placed between both), after three successive touches of their curves above the ball, with his reverse stick through the 1m wide cone goal on his right hand side.

In order to be able to turn the stick (after the 3rd touch of the sticks above the ball) in order to play it with reverse, both players have to grip correctly their stick with their left hand.



#### Variation:

Winner is the player who pushes the ball after the execution of the "bully" with his reverse stick through the cone goal on his right and then controls it immediately behind the goal before the opponent can reach it.

### 5. PARALLEL LINES

The coach establishes two parallel lines set 1 meter or 2 meters apart. Two players stand side by side on the first line, facing the second line. When the coach signals, both players pass their ball down to the second line, then turn around and play it back with any technique. The first player to pass the ball 10 times across both parallel lines, without touching the ball inside the zone, wins. Pay attention to the player's footwork and capacity of balance. Which technique assures the quickest turn?



#### Variations:

- The teacher varies the distance between both parallel lines, up to 5 meters and allows the players to touch their ball also in between the central zone formed by the two parallel lines.
- During any change of direction the ball has to be played with the reverse stick.

### 6. THE TUNNEL

Two players face each other at a distance of 1 meter. Player 1 has 30 seconds to pass the ball as many times as possible through the tunnel formed by the separated legs of Player 2. The first player passes the ball with the front stick through the partner's legs and then runs behind Player 2 to return the ball with the reverse stick to the original side. Meanwhile, Player 2 remains still and counts the number of goals scored by the opponent. Then the players switch roles, and Player 2 gets 30 seconds to pass the ball. The winner is the player who, using either the front or the reverse stick, passes the ball more often through the tunnel formed by the opponent. In case of a tie, repeat the test.



#### Variations:

- The player who forms the tunnel stands in a neutral zone of 2 meters. The player with the ball passes it from outside of the zone through the opponent's legs using alternatively the front or the reverse stick. The stationary player counts the

number of goals scored in 30 seconds from outside of the neutral zone. Both players then alternate roles until both have competed twice. The winner is the player who scores the most goals in the two attempts. In the event of a draw, repeat the activity.

- Immediately after a goal is scored, the player who forms the tunnel changes the position of one “goalpost” (one foot) by pivoting and changing directions.

### 7. EYES UP DURING THE “INDIAN DRIBBLE”

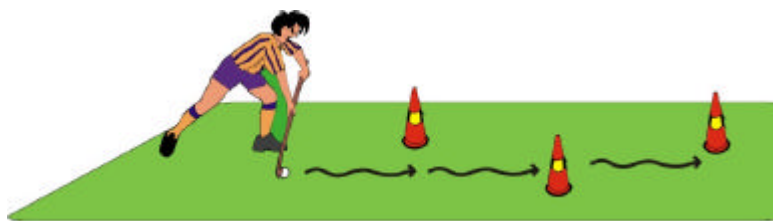


This exercise is done with three players. Player 1, the ball carrier, dribbles to Player 2 who is about 20 meters away. While dribbling the ball, Player 1 touches the ball alternatively with the front and reversed stick in front of his feet, always moving it slightly in front (and never backward), he has to lift his head as often as possible to be able to count the number of fingers shown by his teammate (Player 2) in front of him. The latter, after having received the ball, practices the same dribbling and lifting his head to count, but goes in the opposite direction, while Player 3 indicates (twice) different number of fingers.

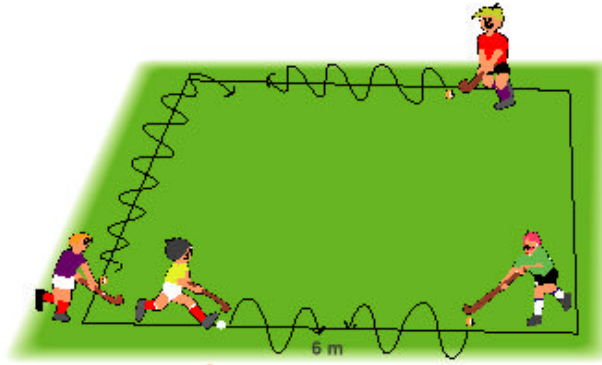
The coach should make sure that players practice different techniques of dribbling the ball. As only with the front stick touching the ball from time to time, with the front stick always in contact with the ball, with the front stick hold with the right hand only and with the reverse stick hold in the left hand only.

#### Variation:

- Now the player dribbles the ball with the front stick only. Every 5 meters cones are placed at both sides of the path of the dribbling player. Every time his ball comes level with one cone, he should turn the stick into his right hand (until the its toe points into the ground) to simulate a reverse stick stop and then continue to dribble the ball until the next cone where he does the same feint.



- Various players dribble their ball in both directions around a square (5 meters per side), going continuously into and then immediately out of it, using the “Indian Dribble”. The goal is to avoid a clash with other players who dribble in and out of the square in the opposite direction.



### 8. OPEN STICK DRIBBLE AND STOPPING THE BALL WITH THE REVERSE STICK

Without changing the angle (45 degrees) which the sticks forms with the ground, the dribbler stops the ball with the reverse stick on his right side, level with the left foot which should be in front at that moment. Make sure that the ball is dribbled at least 0.50m away from the feet.



### 9. DRIBBLE THE BALL IN A FRONTAL POSITION, RESTRAIN ITS SPEED AND PASS IT IN A SIDE-ON POSITION

After having dribbled the ball half way, the player stops it by sudden with his reverse stick (ball is level with the left advanced foot) and then pass it as quickly as possible in a side-on position to the teammate in front of him.

A cone goal between the passer and the receiver could be used for concentrating also on the accuracy of the pass. The team which executes first 10 passes wins.

#### Variation:

The dribbler has to recognize a visual signal given by the opposite player for stopping the ball with his reverse stick.



THE TECHNIQUE OF THE INDIAN DRIBBLE

There are a great variety of techniques to dribble the ball:

- with the front stick only in front of the right foot of the dribbler, with the ball always in contact with the curve or controlled close to it.
- with the front stick only on the right side of the dribbler level
- with the right shoulder, with the ball kept always in contact with the curve or propelled forward with soft touches.
- with the front stick only which is held by the right hand only on the top of the handle to allow the ball to be controlled far away from the right foot
- with reverse stick only, generally with the left hand only holding the stick on the top of the handle to allow a control of the ball far away from the left foot of the dribbler and an opponent.
- with forehand and reverse stick -the so called "Indian dribble"
- with forehand and (or) reverse stick with the back turned to the defender (pivoting or "spinning") in order to protect the ball.





Dependant on the game situation in which the player in possession of the ball is involved, he has to choose between the above 6 main techniques the dribble which best resolves the actual game situation. Therefore all techniques of the dribble are essential to be learned by every hockey player regardless of his age, starting always with the "Indian dribble" first, then introducing progressively the other techniques with the front stick and finishing up with the dribble with the right and then with the left hand only on the top of the handle.

Attention has to be drawn to the fact that whilst teaching the beginners and young players the different techniques of the dribble, as early as possible tactical elements have to be introduced (by the presence of an opponent) to achieve better learning results later and awareness about which technique to choose in a game situation.

#### A good player whilst dribbling the ball, always:

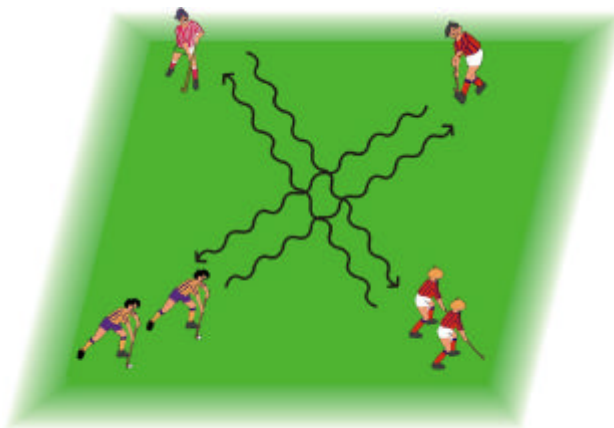
- ensures a correct position of his left hand on the top of the handle. Also when touching the ball with the front stick, he has to keep his thumb always hidden below and the back of his left hand should point upwards and not towards the left side which would allow him to see his thumb. Only a correct position of the left hand allows the stick to be turned into a reverse position any moment.
- keeps his right hand slightly above the center of the stick without gripping it firmly. A loose grip of the right hand allows the stick to be turned easily 180 degrees through the action of the left hand. During the turn, the right hand keeps its position and never takes part in the turning movement because otherwise both arms cross over during the dribble - a mistake often executed by beginners.
- keeps his stick in a 45-degree position with the ground, with the upper left hand always moving close to the thigh and the handle always in extension with the left underarm without bending at the wrist. This would prevent the player from playing the ball precisely.
- keeps it about 1m away from his feet, which will enlarge his field of vision.
- tries to keep the trunk as upright as possible. Most beginners dribble without bending sufficiently their knees and with their trunk inclined too much forward. This has to be considered a serious mistake as it leads to poor vision and a poor preparation for the next move.

#### The most frequent mistakes observed during the "Indian dribble":

- The player can see the thumb of his left hand whilst touching the ball with the front stick.
- The player crosses over both underarms whilst moving the ball alternately with the front stick and reverse. The reason for that is the firm grip of the right hand, which now takes part in the rotation of the stick.
- The player dribbles the ball too close to his feet with the handle pointing to his stomach instead of being directed to his thigh.
- The player inclines his trunk too much with the legs not sufficiently bent.
- The player bends his left wrist.

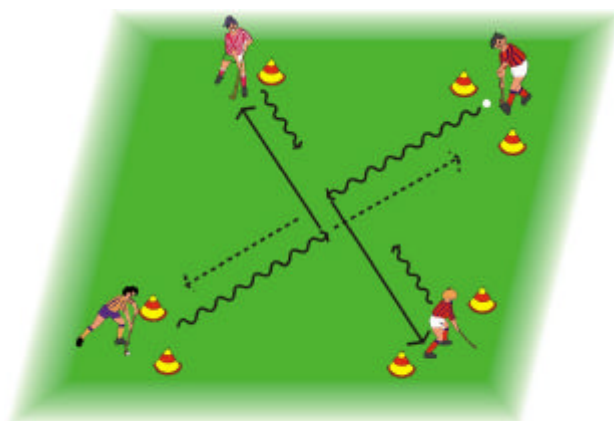
### 10. AVOIDING COLLISIONS

To start, two players must dribble their ball to the opposite corner (about 10 meters away), trying to avoid each other player while crossing the path. The players waiting at the opposite corner return dribble the ball using the same diagonal path. First the practice is carried out with two balls and six players (see illustration) or 4 players, and later the intensity and difficulty are increased by using four balls and involving eight players at the same time. To avoid injuries, do not organize any competition between the teams!



### 11. PRECISE PASSING AFTER DRIBBLING

Four players pair up and form a square, the partners adjacent to one another. The two players in diametrically opposite corners each have a ball. At the same time, they start to dribble the ball on the left “driveway,” or imaginary lane that is left of the cones, until they reach the cone in the center. From there they pass the ball on the run with the front stick to the left through the cone goal of their partner and then carry on to run straight into the opposite unoccupied cone goal. Once their partner controlled the ball behind the cone goal they proceed the same way in the activity. The first pair to score 10 goals wins.



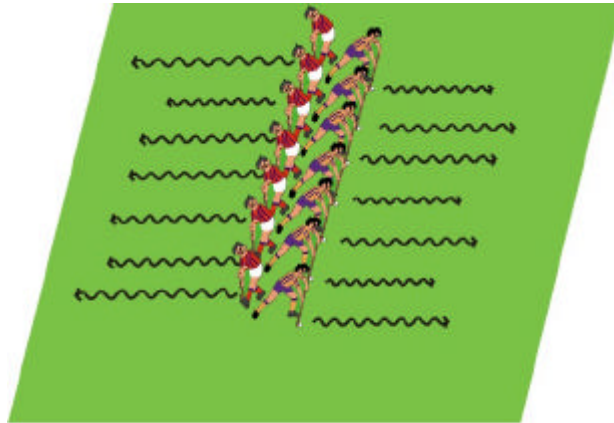
*"To rationalize the teaching and learning process, the number of exercises or games have to be reduced and the number of repetitions have to be increased"*

**Variations:**

- Before executing the pass, the player has to carry out a dummy pass in the opposite direction.
- To introduce triangle play (wall passes), the receiver has to return the ball immediately into the run of the passer who runs into the opposite goal. After 10 triangle passes both players change functions. Later on, both practice with an initial pass to the opposite side.

**12. RED OR YELLOW**

Players line up in a row and are separated into two teams, facing opposite directions, each with a shirt or bib of the same color (for example, either red or yellow). Each player has a ball for this activity. Practice this drill first without the ball, then with it. One team faces one direction; the other team faces the opposite direction. Upon the coach's signal, all players dribble a ball until they cross their far line, 12 meters away from the starting point in either direction. A team wins if all its members are first to cross their end line with the ball under control.

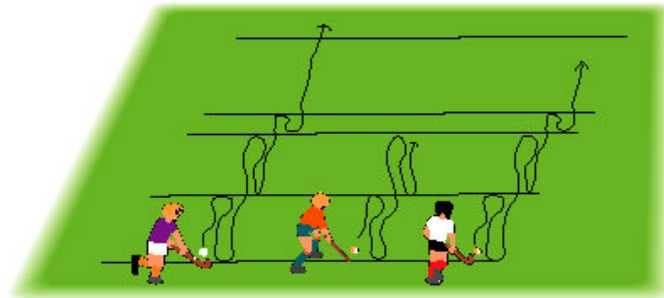
**Variations:**

- The teacher designates one team (with the red or yellow shirts, for example) as dribblers. While the players with shirts of this color try to reach the proper end line dribbling their balls, the other team (not using balls) chases the attackers, trying to prevent them from dribbling their balls across the end line.
- Both teams face each other, from a distance of only 4 meters apart. Whilst the called players have to turn around to reach their end line with the ball, the non-called chase them without their balls.

**13. ZIGZAG**

Set up the field, dividing it with lines (see the illustration). Have the children first practice their running and turning techniques on the field without using a ball. Players run from the starting line to the second line, then return to the starting line and this time run to the third line, returning to the second line before running all the way to the finish line. The turning around gives this activity its name, zigzag. Next have the players train to dribble the ball as they run the same zigzag course, asking them to use any technique for the turn and later on oblige them to use the reverse stick.

Finally you can organize a competition, splitting players into two performance levels in order to motivate them all. All the lines must be passed there and back with the ball under control.

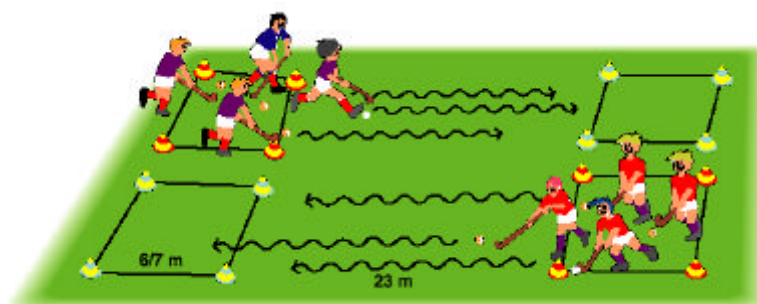


**Variation:**

- Use a relay with teams of three players each. Set up cones at the lines designating the course, using five cones per team, and place a hockey ball at the first cone for each team. Player 1 on each team collects the first ball placed at the first cone (1) and carries it to the third cone (2). After its deposit, he returns without the ball to catch the second ball from the second cone (3) and dribbles it two cones farther to (4) to place it aside the 4th cone. Continue in this fashion to the final line. After having deposited the first ball at the fifth cone, Player 1 runs out of the field to touch her teammate at the opposite side who does the same zigzag path through the cones, running in the opposite direction. The first team to finish its course correctly wins.

#### 14. CHANGING THE SQUARE

Set up teams of four youngsters each, giving each a ball. Form squares (see the illustration), the corners marked by cones. The children should practice this activity first without a ball and later with a ball. Every time the coach gives a visual signal, all a team's players run (without and later with the ball) toward the next square, keeping control of their balls. As coach, give them an instruction or a visual signal to run either in a clockwise or counterclockwise direction. (Be sure to make it clear which way to run, from what square to what square, as most very young children don't know the terms clockwise and counterclockwise). The team that manages to control all their balls first in the next square wins. Running with the ball in opposite directions should be avoided because of danger of head injuries through collisions!

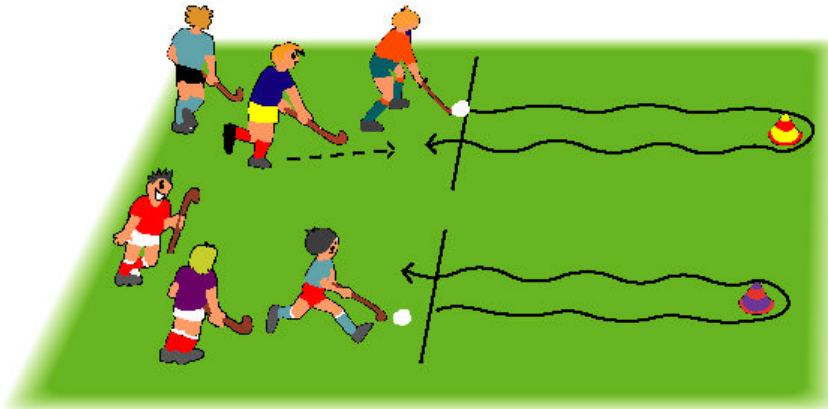


**Variation:**

- Have a defender situated between the squares. This child tries to delay the opponent's attack and conquer at least one ball. He or she then must dribble that ball into the square from which the attack was launched.

### 15. RELAY WITH LEFT HAND AND RIGHT HAND CURVES

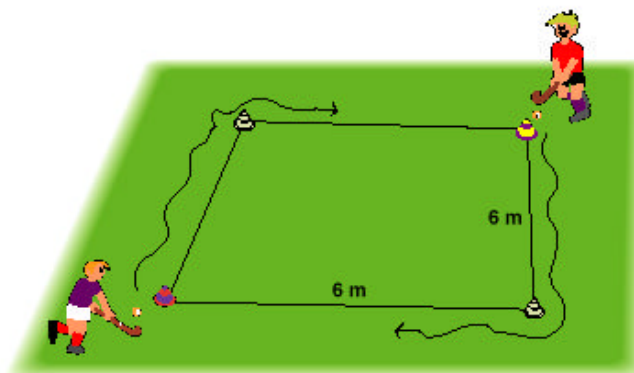
Before various groups of 3 players compete in rounding a cone, placed at a distance of 12 meters, the coach works out the most effective technique for the left and right hand curve. Left hand curve = the ball is dribbled in front of the feet around the cone. Right hand curve = the dribbler overtakes the ball on his right side before he reaches the cone and whilst rounding it, the curve of the stick is kept close to the ball and brought into the new running direction with the left elbow pointing up. During the curve the ball is kept always behind the right foot.



### 16. TWICE AROUND THE SQUARE

Youngsters do this activity in pairs to practice running and dribbling skills around a square (see illustration). Have players first practice the course without the ball and then with the ball. Two players located at opposite corners of the square simultaneously start out to dribble, going twice around the square in the same direction (clockwise or counterclockwise). Practice and competition should be carried out in both directions to ensure that all players learn when to use the front stick and when it's convenient to touch the ball with the reverse stick. The coach should question the players continually about the distance of the ball in relation to the feet while dribbling in a straight line and when dribbling around the cones.

- When the ball should be “carried” close to the feet?
- How might an attacker save time?
- Which foot should be used in the change of direction when running clockwise (counterclockwise)?



**Variation:**

- More advanced players should dribble the ball with the right or left hand only.



- After having completed half of his way around the square, the attacker must turn around at the second cone and return to the starting point.
- Set up a course for Around the Triangle: mark off an equilateral triangle and set up four cones along one (the base) side of it (see illustration). Children compete in pairs. Both competitors start from different locations around the triangle. As they get to the base of the triangle, they must dribble in and out of the four cones before dribbling up the next side. Players who want to win will learn when to dribble best with the front and when with the reversed stick.

**17. BANDIT**

Mark the field with cones and establish 4 “home bases” with 4 balls each. They are at least 10 meters apart from one another. Form up to four teams per playing field, each team made up of just two players. After you give a visual signal to start, each player steals balls from other teams’ home bases and deposits them at their own base. No tackling or defending of the home base is allowed. Whatever team has the highest number of balls after 30 seconds of play wins the game.

*“It’s a mistake to try to transfer without much thought the experience gained in the teaching of adults towards the training of young players”*

### 18. OCCUPYING AN EMPTY GOAL

This activity is something like a hockey version of “Musical Chairs,” a game that most children already know. Mark off a circle, about 15 meters in diameter, using about 10 cones to create the inner and out edges of the path. These cones also designate five goals. Give each player a ball. Six players at a time dribble their ball in any direction around the circle formed by the five goals. After you give a visual signal, all the players try to occupy one of the five empty goals. Whoever doesn't succeed loses a point.

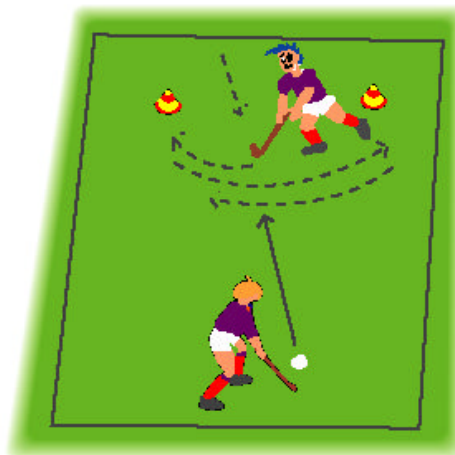


#### Variation:

- Use the same setup as above, but designate a neutral defender who makes the task of the attackers even more difficult.

### 19. PIVOTING

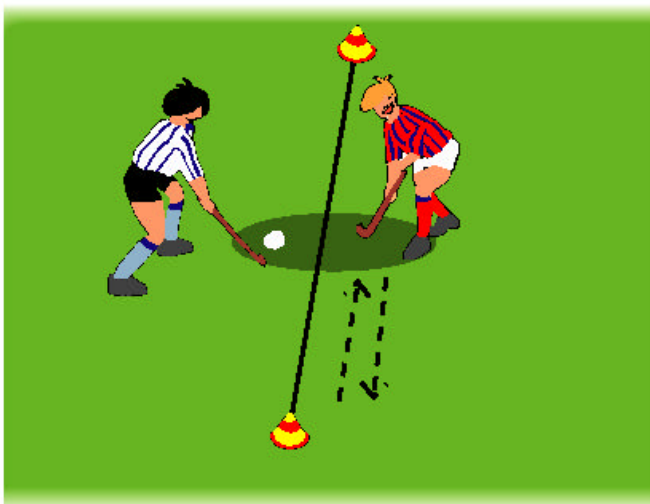
One player, a “receiver,” stands 3 meters behind a 3-meter-wide cone goal, facing a teammate who feeds him a 10-meter pass. The receiver runs toward the traveling ball with the intention of receiving and controlling it with his front stick in front of the goal. Once he gains control, he dribbles the ball sideward to his right cone and then, with a sudden change of speed, turns toward the other cone, making sure he is always placing himself between the ball and the imaginary defender (represented by the cone goal). Once he has rounded the goal, after one or two direction changes, he turns and penetrates behind it.





### 20. STAYING IN THE SHADE

Try this at a practice when there is plenty of sun and the opportunity for objects to create shadows. Pair up children, and have one be an attacker, the other a defender. Designate a line between them. Position the defender so that the sun is directly behind the youngster, producing a good shadow. The attacker tries to maintain the ball for as much time as possible in the shade of the defender, who continuously moves toward the left and right side in front of him but stays beyond a line drawn between them—which the defender is not allowed to cross. It helps the children to first practice this shadowing without the ball to improve their body positioning, balance, and footwork.



#### Variation:

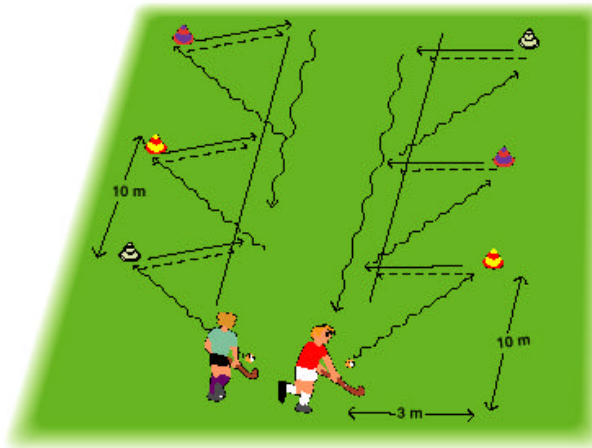
- Have the players switch roles. The attacker dribbles the ball, first slowly and then faster to either side, while the defender without the ball tries to shadow him with the aim of not allowing even a ray of sun to “burn” the skin of the ball.



### 21. PREPARING THE DRAG

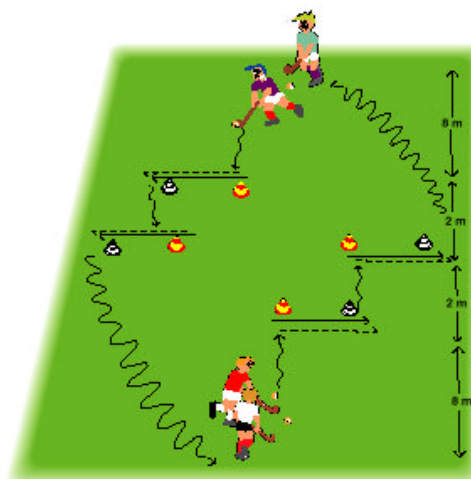
Give each of the players a ball and set up cones in a row for each child to designate a running course (see illustration). Each player carries the ball toward a cone (representing an imaginary defender), then drags it with his reverse stick square to the right side and collecting it after a change of speed and direction at a distance of about 3 meters with his front stick beyond the line drawn at his right side. Explain to the youngsters the idea of dummy moves and feints, and have them practice simulating a dummy pass to the left before playing the ball to the right.

First practice from left to right, later from right to left (side pass with the front stick and control of the pass with the reverse stick at a distance of 3 meters beyond the left side line).



### 22. DRAGS FROM LEFT TO RIGHT

Position eight cones as shown in the illustration to mark off the drag areas. Explain to the children that they should experiment using different techniques to beat an opponent, including different kinds of body or foot dummies during the execution of the drags. To stimulate the young players' fantasy and creativity, the coach declares the player with the finest technique (no technical mistake) or the most original dummy as winner.



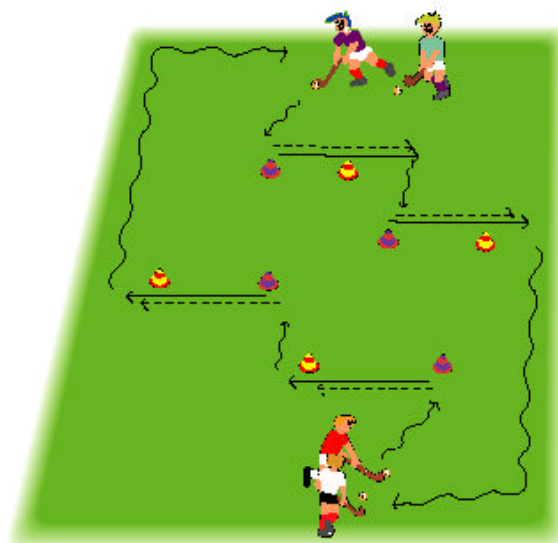
Mistakes are touching the ball more than twice (the first time for changing the direction and the second time for controlling the ball again after the side pass), playing the ball too diagonally in front (so that it runs through the range of a defender), passing the ball too far or

less than 3 meters to one side and not using a change of speed in the moment of changing the direction of the dribble.



**Variations:**

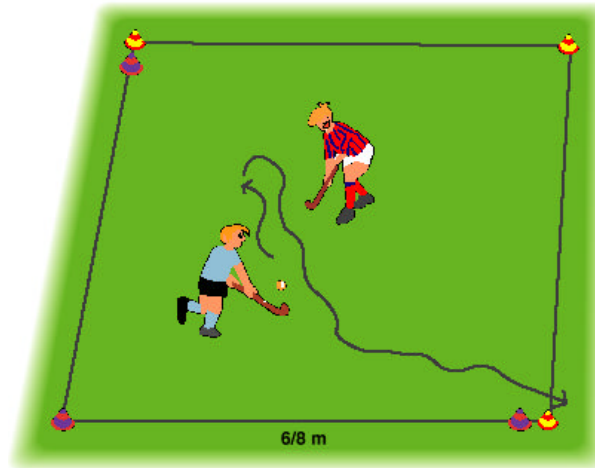
- Practice drags from right to left. The attacker should always dribble the ball first toward the right cone before dragging it suddenly, with one forehand touch only, toward the left one. Once the ball runs beyond the level of the left cone, it should be collected after a quick change of speed with the reverse stick and then carried immediately close to the front stick.





### 23. PLAYING 1-ON-1 IN A 5-METER SQUARE

Mark off 5-meter squares with cones. Pair up the youngsters, designating an attacker and defender for each pair. To start, the attacker and defender stand at diagonally opposite corners of the square. The attacker scores when he manages to dribble the ball across one of the two red goal lines in front of him. Before using the ball, have the children first practice the game without it—as a game of tag—to work out optimal body position, balance, and good footwork.



#### Variation:

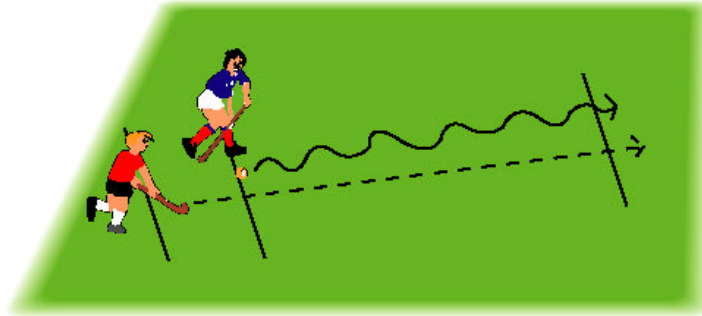
- Give a visual signal for both players to run once around the square, starting from their diagonally opposite corners. The player who first completes the full turn then runs into the center of the square to pick up the stationary ball and dribble it, as in the previous game, across one of the two goal lines.

### 24. AVOIDING THE TACKLE FROM BEHIND

Pair the youngsters, designating an attacker and defender. The playing field should have two lines, set about 15 meters apart. In this game the attacker with the ball has the objective to dribble it across the opposite line without losing possession of it to a defender. To start the play, the defender is 1 meter behind the attacker, aiming to tackle from behind or from a side. But once the attacker dribbles the ball for at least 5 meters, she may choose to go backward and carry the ball across the starting line. In reaching either line, he gets a point. To get free of the defender behind him, the attacker may

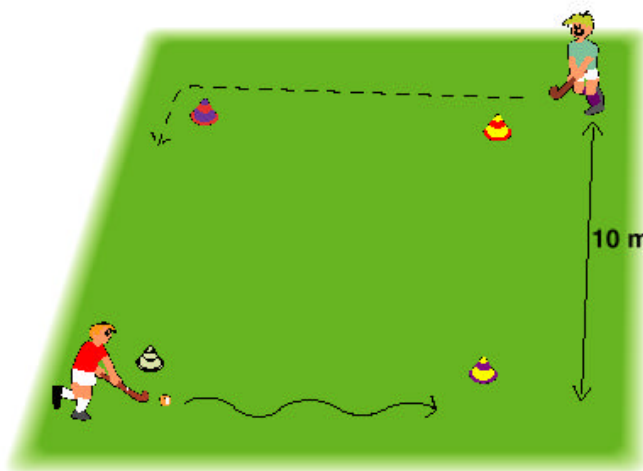
- turn around towards the non covered side of the defender, shielding the ball with his body,
- sell him a ball-stop dummy (turning the stick to simulate a reverse stick stop and at the same time reducing his speed) , and then after an acceleration control the ball on the end line in front of him, or
- cross with the ball into the run of the defender before the latter can reach him and play the ball. In the moment of crossing diagonally in front of the attacker, the

defender must place the ball from a position in front of his right foot completely to his right or left side. This, of course, depends from the position of the defender.



### 25. CHASING THE DRIBBLER

Outline a square on the playing field with four cones. Direct two players to diagonal opposed corners outside of the square. Only one of them has a ball; the other player chases the ball carrier around the square 8 meters x 8 meters. During the first trial (Level 1) the defender has the task to slightly touch the attacker with his stick. Later (Level 2) he is to touch the ball with his stick. For every cone reached with the ball under control, the attacker gets 1 point. The attacker learns to improve his play by dribbling the ball out of the reach of the defender whenever the latter gets near him.



#### Variation:

- Play this game of Chase the Dribbler with four players: two attackers and two defenders. Give a visual signal for each defender to start from the cone directly behind his attacker, aiming to immediately pressure him. The defender should try to prevent the attacker's concluding a run around the square (award 1 point for a successful defense). Defenders and attackers switch functions until one of them scores 5 points.



### 26. HOT PURSUIT

Mark off a trapezoid on the field, with four cones set at slightly uneven distances (between 6 and 10 meters) as in the illustration. A fifth cone serves to form the goal line with the first cone. Children play in pairs, one being the attacker and one the defender. The attacker dribbles the ball around a triangle formed by three cones. As soon as she begins, the defender reacts and follows him, trying to prevent the attacker from keeping the ball under control as he reaches the goal at the end of the circuit. The defender, however, has a handicap: he must run a longer distance (around all four cones) in order to catch the attacker. Every player attacks and defends twice. The winner is the player who, after having completed the dribble around the cones, controls the ball more often in reaching the goal line. In case the result is a draw, hold a playoff.

It's recommended to practice also with running clockwise.

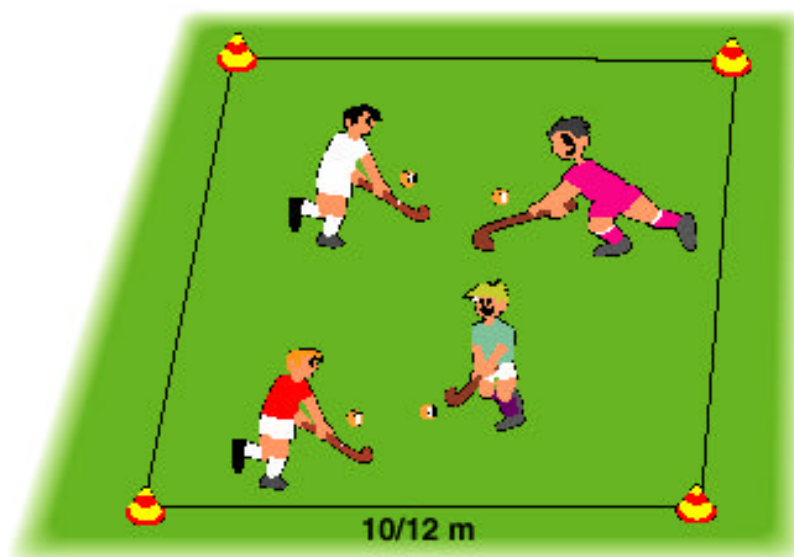


*“Sometimes stepping slightly backward could be a wise solution for moving forward”*



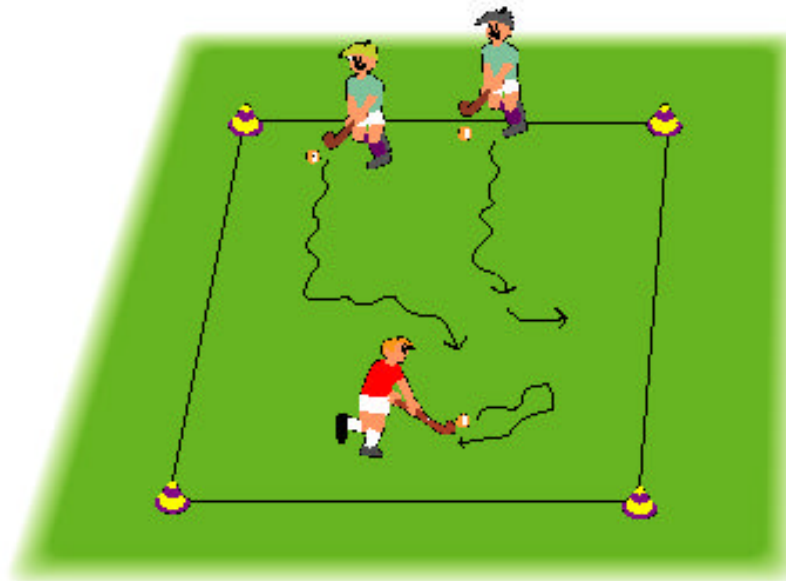
### 27. AVOIDING A TACKLE

Five children can play this game well, which gives drill on tackles. Designate a playing field of the size 15 meters x 15 meters. Each of the 5 children has a ball. While all players are controlling their own ball, they also all try to dispossess any other player with a correct tackle. Any good tackle that disposes an opponent (or plays the ball out of the square) counts as 1 point. In case one player loses his ball, that child returns into the square and continues the game until someone has reached 5 points.



### 28. COPS AND ROBBER

Mark off a square with 22.90-meter lines as shown in the illustration. Group the children into three's, with one called the "robber" and the other two "cops." Children play to see how many seconds the "robber" can control his ball within the delimited playing space against both policemen, who also dribble their balls with the aim to touch the one of the robber. The stress conditions of this game give players the chance to practice lifting the head while dribbling the ball, applying dummies, quick changes of direction, and speed, shielding the ball with the body, as well as their capacity to stay out of the reach of an defender. It's good training to practice first without the balls.



#### Variation:

- Perform Cops and Robbers as a relay in two fields side by side. Team 1 positions its robber in the first field ("A"), while its two policemen chase the robber of Team 2 in the second field ("B"). Team 2 meanwhile positions its two cops in Field A. The two policemen who first catch their assigned robber are called winners.
- Use just one 22.90-meter square and pairs of youngsters, one pair each with a ball. Without leaving the square, the attacker tries to maintain possession of the ball for as many seconds as possible against an active defender. After five trials to establish a record, the attacker and defender switch functions. First try out this game without a ball, as a game of tag; then practice with the ball to learn to systematically apply dummy moves and to protect the ball with the body against a defender. After each turn, the two competitors should have a complete rest.

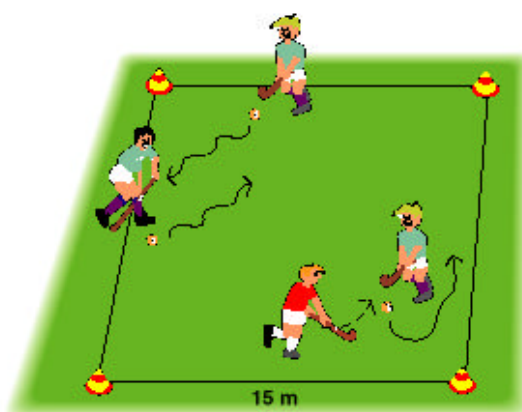
*"Too much drill will kill"*



### 29. MAINTAINING INDIVIDUALLY BALL POSSESSION

Mark off the playing field as in the illustration, at first making it about 15 meters square and later a rectangle of 10 by 15 meters. Divide the youngsters into groups of four players: within a group, three children are attackers, each with a ball, and the fourth is the defender. None of the players may leave the playing area. The defender tries to dispossess the attackers of the ball. The attackers, in turn, try to “escape” or prevent the dispossession. The defender tries get near enough the attackers to push as many balls as possible out of the square within the playing time, which is 30 seconds.

While dribbling, the attackers learn to lift their head to see the defender, change speed and direction to keep away from him, and shield the ball in order to his tackling successfully.



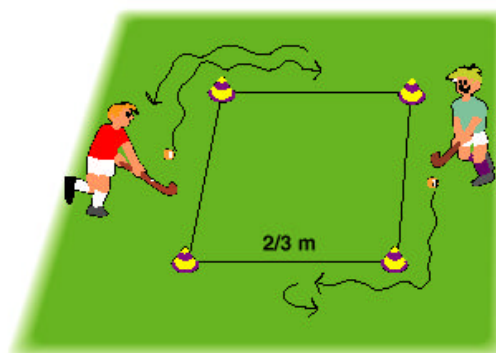
#### Variation:

With only 5 attempts the defender tries to touch in any time as many balls as possible. Through the practice of this exercise the defenders learn to wait for the most suitable moment of tackling an opponent. Any tackle with a complete stretch of the left arm and the stick touching the ground is considered an attempt.

### 30. CAT AND MOUSE

Mark off a small square (2 meters), and pair up the youngsters into “cats” and “mice.” The pair first practices the game without balls. Then give each child a ball. The “mouse,” persecuted by the “cat” (the attacker), tries to remain in possession of the ball for 20 seconds without stepping inside the square. After three rounds of the attacker gaining possession of the ball, the players switch so that the cat becomes the pursued mouse. To make the game more difficult, as players improve, lengthen the playing time to 30 seconds and make the off-limit square only one meter on each side.

This game helps young players recognize how perception and the capacity to execute dummies at the right instant are as essential as dribble techniques to winning. It also helps them develop speed and coordination.



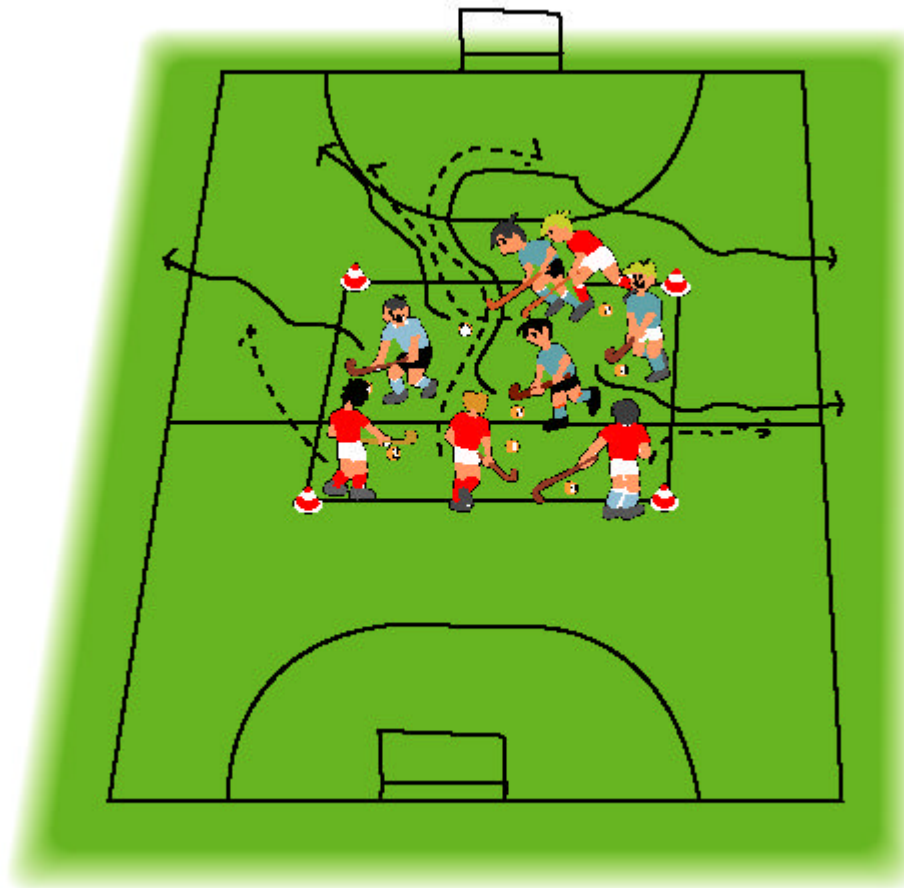
### 31. ESCAPE

This game involves up to seven pairs. Each of the players should be given a ball, which he has to dribble within a marked-off square on the playing field for 6-on-6 (45 to 55 meters long by 30 to 45 meters wide). Each player has to challenge the opponent assigned to him, once you call on a team to start. Each member of that team must then dribble his ball out of the square in the center of the field, trying to control it until getting across one of the 6-on-6 field's sidelines.

The players of the team not called leave their balls behind and instead chase their personal opponents, trying to dispossess the ball carriers and return as many balls as possible to the center square.

#### Variations:

- As coach, give a visual signal (for instance, wave a colored card assigned to one team) to define which team is to attack and which should defend.

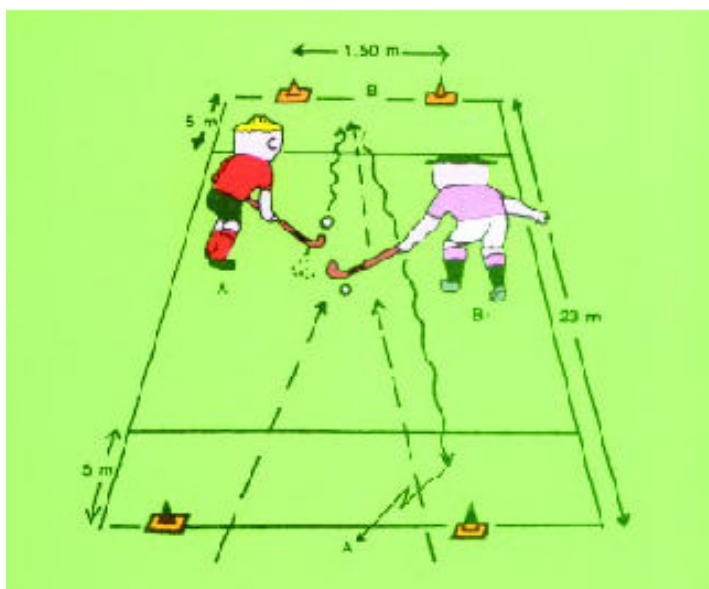


- The attacker tries to penetrate one of the penalty areas and score, while the defender aims to tackle and return the ball to the circle in the center of the field.
- Have as many balls available in the center of the 6-on-6 field as you have pairs of children. Once you have called (announced) the attacking team, each attacker tries to gain possession of one ball and carry it, despite the efforts of his personal opponent, through one of the four or five goals you have set up with cones on different spots of the field.

### 32. THE CHALLENGE

Set up the rectangular field with four cones to mark off the two goal areas; use one ball for every two youngsters. Pair up the children. Two players stand on the same goal line, one on the right post (cone) and the other at the left of a 1.5-meter-wide goal. After you have given a visual signal, both should run toward the ball placed in the center point of the playing area at a distance of 11.5 meters.

The first player to gain its possession must dribble it into the opponent's shooting zone and score. While the red player at the left post (cone) tries to score at the far goal, the pink player at the right post, once he gains the ball, must dribble it through the open goal from which he started. If these and other hockey rules are broken in the midfield, the defender resumes the game without the ball, from half a meter behind the attacker. If the defender infringes the rules in his own shooting zone, he will be penalized with a free pass from the center of the playing area through the opponent's empty goal. Each time a goal is scored or the ball runs across any end line, the two players change their starting places. The winner is the first player to score two goals.



*“Boredom is simply our emotional reaction to monotony. A remedy for boredom is to cut out the soft living. Active people are never bored”*

L.Moorhouse/L.Cross

## GAMES IN THE MAZE

There are two programs referred to as “Games in the Maze”: the Dribbling Maze Game and the Passing Maze Games. The first activity serves to stimulate the young players’ perception capacity, their sense of orientation, their capacity for making quick decisions, and their coordination and, in particular, dribbling techniques with both feet. Because of these many skills to be developed, it is useful to have more variations to ensure plenty of practice and to sustain interest. The second activity in the maze, along with its variations, helps improve the skills of communication and cooperation between the passer and the receiver.

### 1. DRIBBLING MAZE GAME

Set up the playing field of about 15 meters x 12 meters according to the illustration, establishing eight 1.5 meter goal areas that are one meter apart, using two cones for each. Pair up the children and give each a ball. Two players start simultaneously but across from each other at positions outside the maze. Their task is to dribble the ball in any direction through all eight goals of the maze without leaving out any. The winner is the player who returns to the starting point first with the ball under complete control. Have the youngsters practice without the balls at first. Later, more than two players may compete at the same time.



**Variations:**

- Instead of goals, other players will form tunnels.
- What player needs less time to run through six different goals.
- As before but oblige the players to complete a full turn before dribbling the ball across a goal line. You might also ask players to dribble the ball backward through the cone goals.
- To score, the players must pass the ball through a goal and collect it behind it without running through the goal (tunnel).
- To win one of the 4 players has to dribble through as many different goals as possible within 10 seconds.



- To score the ball has to be lifted slightly above an outstretched stick placed in all goals.
- To score a valid goal the ball has to be passed with the reverse stick through the cone goal and then has to be collected behind it without the player running through the goal as well.

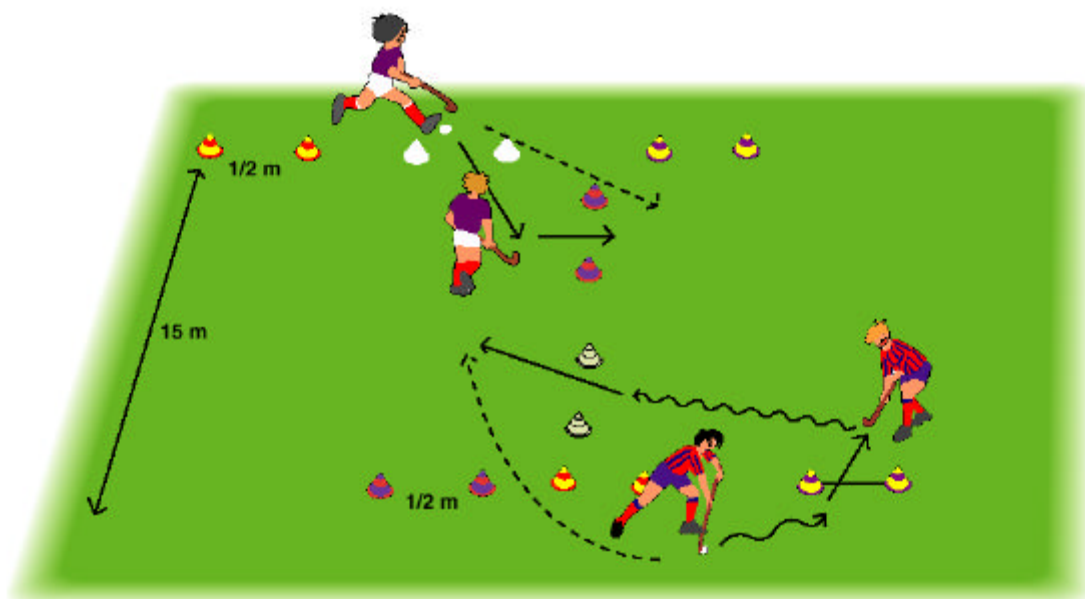


- Set up eight goals with cones of at least three different colors. During the dribble the players have to look out for the position of the goals with the color you call out or designate. The winner is the first player who runs the ball through eight goals without repeating the same one immediately after having scored in it.

- Two or three players dribble their proper ball through any of the eight goals, while two or three other players enter the maze without a ball to modify the position of some cones. This forces the attackers to continuously look up and adapt to the new situation.
- Before the ball is dribbled across a cone goal, the attackers must complete a half turn with the ball (turn until the player's shoulders point toward the goal). After that the player turns half way back (toward the left or the right) into the original position and then dribbles the ball across the goal line. The youngster must be sure that during the pivoting motion his body is always placed between the goal line (two cones) and the ball, thus learning to shield it later from an opponent .
- Three players occupy three of the eight goals, thus demonstrating to the four attackers that they can score only in one of the five unoccupied ones. The defenders may move from one to another goal but may not tackle at all. The winner will be the attacker who first scores at six of the goals without repeating the same one twice in a row.
- Four attackers play against two defenders who may tackle (unlike the previous variation, which prohibited tackling).

## 2. PASSING MAZE GAME

Set up the playing field for a maze, as shown in the illustration, which has different spaces between goals. Divide the youngsters into pairs (a passer and a receiver) who will use passing to score goals. The pair that manages to score in six different goals first will win. Make sure that the player moves behind another goal immediately after the pass to make himself available for the next pass. Explain that the players must establish a visual agreement between passer and receiver before the pass is executed.



**Variations:**

- Set up eight goals using at least three different colors of cones. During play, you should announce or designate what color cones should be the next goal area. The pair of children that first scores eight goals wins. Players may not score in the same goal twice in a row.
- Play as in the previous variation, but limit play to 10 seconds. The winning pair is the team that manages to score most often within 10 seconds, always using a different goal for scoring.
- While a team (pair) is competing and dribbling the ball through any of the eight goals, two or three other players enter the maze without the ball to modify the position of one of the cones. This ensures that the attackers must continuously look up and adapt to the new situation.
- To score a valid goal it's necessary to pass the ball with the reverse stick ( either with the toe of the curve or with the edge of the stick).
- To score, the attackers must slightly lift the ball over an outstretched stick on each goal line.
- Three pairs of youngsters practice simultaneously with the aim to score against two opponents who try to block the attacked goals by positioning themselves on the respective goal lines, continuously moving around the field. Defenders are not allowed to tackle or intercept a pass when they're out of a cone goal. The team or pair that first scores six goals wins the competition.
- Two pairs of children try to score as many goals as possible against an active defender whose play is unlimited. Keep track of how many seconds the defender needs to touch the ball of either pair. Any goal that the attacking pairs score counts for 3 seconds.

*“Because of the fact that today we are all getting used more and more to instant food, instant photos, instant coffee, instant transmission of information, etc., people also start to expect instant success in hockey”*



## PASSING, RECEIVING, AND SHOOTING GAMES

Besides accurate passing with different techniques, good control of the ball with the front and the reversed stick as it is being passed from teammate to teammate is of paramount importance: it provides a team the opportunity to maintain or instigate their attacking moves.



The high percentage of failure in passing is a consequence not only of technique but also of other errors occurring immediately before the ball is passed. These are some typical errors:

- There is no visual agreement between the passer and receiver.
- The receiver doesn't make himself available at the right instant when the passer is "ready" (i.e., poor "timing").
- The receiver waits for the ball instead of running to it.
- The players show poor passing skills (the ball was passed too softly, too high, or imprecisely, or the pass was executed too late).

### 1. AGAINST THE WALL

Station the youngsters near a wall, at a distance of 4 to 5 meters. They have to pass the ball to the wall from this point. How many passes can be executed against the wall without having to move more away from his original position?

Use also the reverse stick or alternate one pass with the forehand and the next one with the reverse stick. Insist that the youngsters use different surfaces (curve and the edges) of the stick when passing. Have them repeat the activity, trying to establish a personal record time.

Have them practice with the forehand and the reverse stick or alternate using both techniques. As another variation, see how many passes they can execute within a time limit,



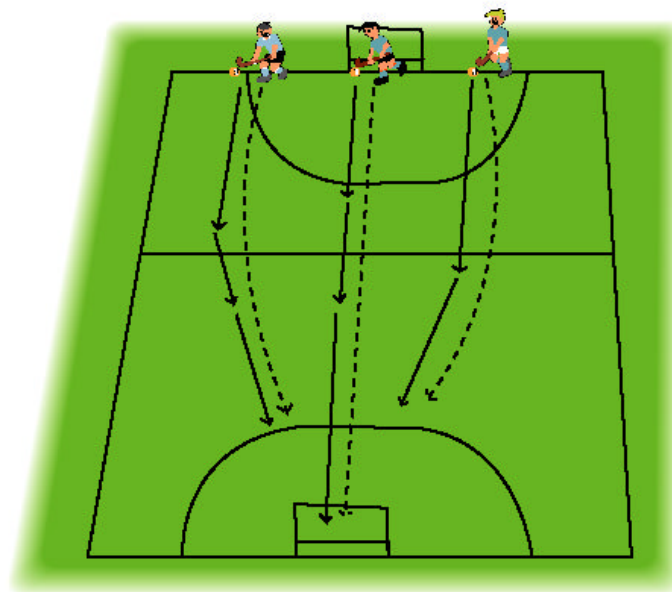
30 seconds or one minute (this requires concentration!) without coming closer than 5 meters towards the wall.

**Variation:**

- Players assume a side position in relation to the wall, standing about 4 meters away from it. They dribble the ball parallel to the wall and pass it along the ground against it for picking up the rebounded ball on the run a few meters later. This way the children simulate a “triangulation,” initiated with a forehand or reverse stick pass against the wall. They should practice running in a direction so that the wall is to their left and then to right side.
- One pair, standing in a 10m wide cone goal 4 meters in front of a wall. In this “rebound game” one player passes the stationary ball with speed in such an angle against the wall, that it rebounds out of the reach from the second player through the 10m wide cone goal.
- Ask the players to invent other exercises for improving their ball sense and acrobatic skills!

**2. GOING FOR DISTANCE**

Position the children at an end line in front of the full hockey field. Every player shoots his ball from the end line into the depth of the full field. Which player's ball travels farthest? Who needs fewer shots for scoring a goal? Lifting the stick before passing the ball is not allowed. Have the youngsters also use different techniques for passing. Ask them to describe their experiences!

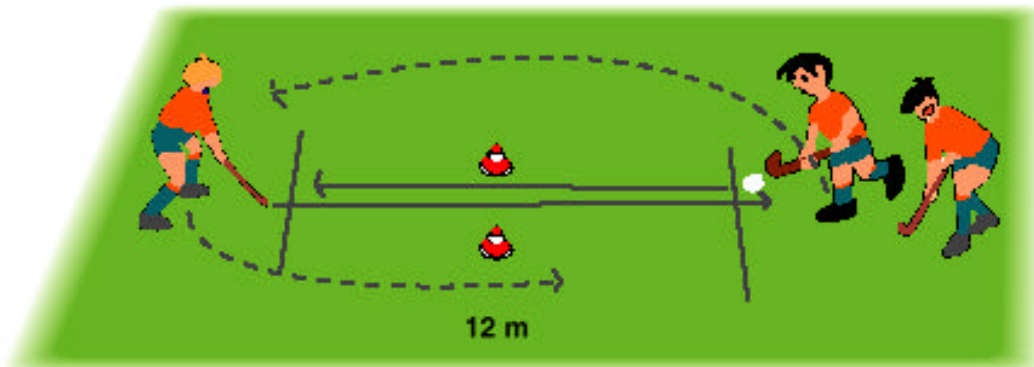


*“The natural order accounts for progressive development through time”*

### 3. ACCURATE PASSING AND CONTROL

This game can be played by individuals or as a team competition with three players per team. Each player has to score from a distance of 6 (later 12) meters through a 2-meter-wide goal area (marked off by cones) and then have a receiver be able to return the pass to the third player. The passer always follows his pass to the other side and awaits a pass from the third player. Whoever first scores 10 goals with the passing technique you instruct them to use is the winner. With a team, the winning three players can be either those who first score 10 goals or those who score the most goals within 30 seconds.

Explore what constitutes the most efficient passing technique by using effective questioning with the players.



#### Variation:

- The third player becomes a defender of a 4-meter-wide goal area (marked by two cones) in the center between his two teammates. The attacker who doesn't manage to score has to switch position with the defender. As coach you may ask the attackers to shoot stationary or moving balls.



### THE PASSING AND SHOOTING TECHNIQUES

There is a great variety of techniques to pass the ball with the front stick and with the reverse :

#### **WITH THE FRONT STICK :** HANDS SEPARATED ON THE STICK:

- push the stationary or moving ball along the ground with the curve close to the ball (with the right and left foot in front),
- slap the ball with a back swing and a follow-through of the stick.

The ball is generally situated in front of the player or in front of his right foot is played with the curve,

- sweep the ball with the upper part of the curve which is always on the ground,
- drag push along the ground with the ball placed inside the inclined curve behind the right foot, which is in front (as pass or for injecting the ball at a penalty corner). The handle of the stick points into the desired direction of the pass (to the receiver).





- flick in a side-on position with the left shoulder pointing into the desired direction of the high pass. The ball is placed slightly on the right side of the body in front of the left foot (top players also manage to flick the ball with the right foot in front),
- scoop the ball during a dribble above a defender. The ball is placed in any position in front of the body,
- drag flick with right-left-right-left steps overrunning the ball (as penalty corner shot).

#### HANDS SEPARATED OR WITH ONE HAND ONLY ON THE STICK:

- deflection with the low forehand or the toe of the curve with different inclinations of the stick and different angles to the oncoming ball as goal shot (tip-ins with the feet on the ground or whilst diving or slipping on the ground) or deflection of the oncoming ball towards a team mate (first time passes),

#### HANDS TOGETHER:

- hit the ball along the ground with a drive (normal, topspin, slice, chop or "Asian" hit) with the left and sometimes also with the right foot in front,
- sweep hit (with lifting the stick from the ground),
- sweep hit (without lifting the curve from the ground).

*“Poor performance at short term doesn’t mean that the long term objectives can not be accomplished”*

**WITH THE REVERSE STICK:**HANDS SEPARATED ON THE STICK:

- push,
- slap (as rebound),
- slap with the edge of the stick (flat side showing up),
- flick with the ball in contact with the toe of the curve,

HANDS SEPARATED OR ONE HAND ONLY:

- deflection with the stick placed almost completely on the ground. (diving or with the feet on the ground).

HANDS TOGETHER

- hit with the toe of the curve (45 degree position of the stick in the moment of impact),
- hit in upright body position with the center of the curve (vertical position of the stick in the moment of impact with the ball very close to the right foot),
- sweep hit with the edge of the stick .

The speed of execution, the possibility to disguise the direction of the pass and its high percentage of success makes the sweep the most common technique used for passing the ball to a team mate and also for scoring goals.

In any game of modern hockey the techniques of sweeping the ball along the ground without lifting the stick is because of its accuracy and ease of execution the most common used passing technique.

All these reasons speak for an early introduction of the sweep into the program of the beginners whilst the ability to flick and to hit the ball have to be developed progressively throughout the following years, when the young player has gained sufficient experience in

passing the ball with less demanding techniques. Any good player should try to pass the ball in a well balanced position with the feet sufficiently separated and the legs bent, using the weight of the body which has to be transferred towards the front leg in the moment of impact what helps to develop more speed of the ball.

When the curve of the stick remains during the execution of a pass on the ground, more accuracy is assured .Furthermore the passer does not allow the opponent to anticipate the pass.

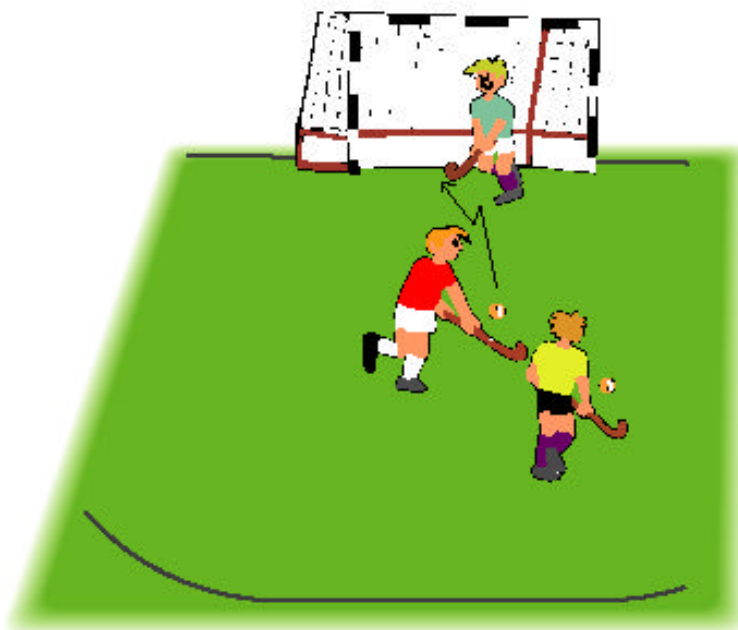
The impact zone is generally (but not for the drags) the area situated above the curved part of the stick. For making use of the wide impact zone, the player has to bend sufficiently his knees and keep the stick in a low a very low position, between 15 and not more than 45 degrees in relation to the field. That is why the left hand of the passer is in most of the passing techniques in the moment of impact - ball-stick below knee level.

Following after the moment of impact with the curve the line of the ball (whilst remaining in a low position body position) assures accuracy of the pass.

*“The traditional coaching which was very much coach orientated concentrated merely on technical aspects, putting aside aspects related to motivation and knowledge”*

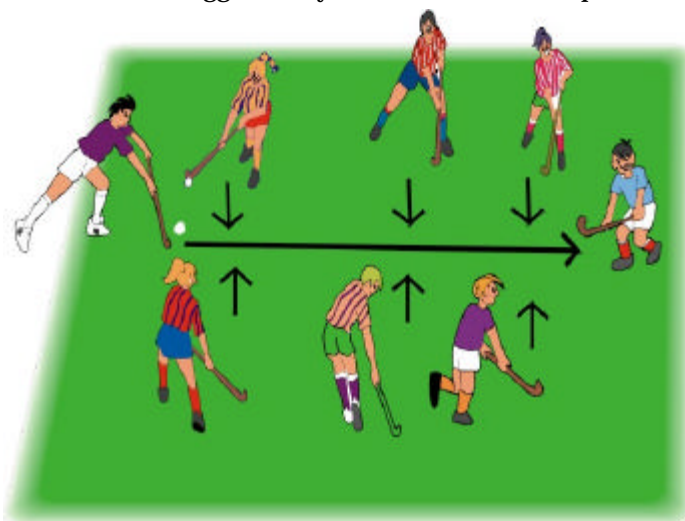
#### 4. KING OF PENALTY

Divide the youngsters into groups of three for this game. You should have a regular hockey goal with the penalty stroke point 7 meters in front of it. The three players involved start with 5 points each. The oldest among them is the first to defend the goal area (without being allowed to kick the ball), while the other two players stand 7 meters away to attempt to push the ball (touching it only once) across the goal line. For every effective goal, the defender loses one point. When an attacker fails to score, however, she changes her position and function with the defender. A player wins when the opponents have lost all their points (caused by the winner's more accurate and powerful shots).



#### 5. TORPEDOS

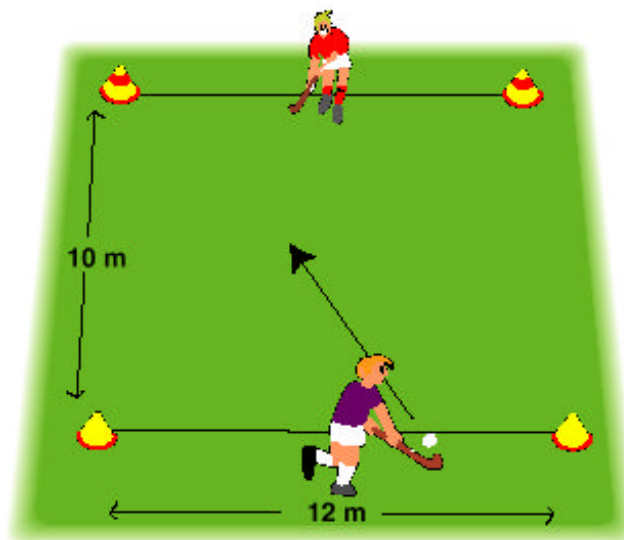
This game takes 10 players and five hockey balls. Choose four players to line up next to each other along a line, each of them in possession of a ball. The same number of players stands facing them at a distance of 8 meters; the children in this other line do not have a ball. Two other players position themselves outside the “tunnel” at either end, like an entrance and exit. One of the end players has a ball (also use a bigger volleyball), and these two pass each other that ball. The players forming the tunnel who are in possession of a ball try to calculate and anticipate the direction and speed of the ball going through the tunnel from end to end. They each try to “torpedo” it by passing their ball at it accurately and with the correct speed. If they miss, the player across the way will receive the pass. The receivers try the torpedo as it returns to the original end player.



### 6. PASSING A STATIONAR BALL AND RECEIVING IT ( 1 ON 1)

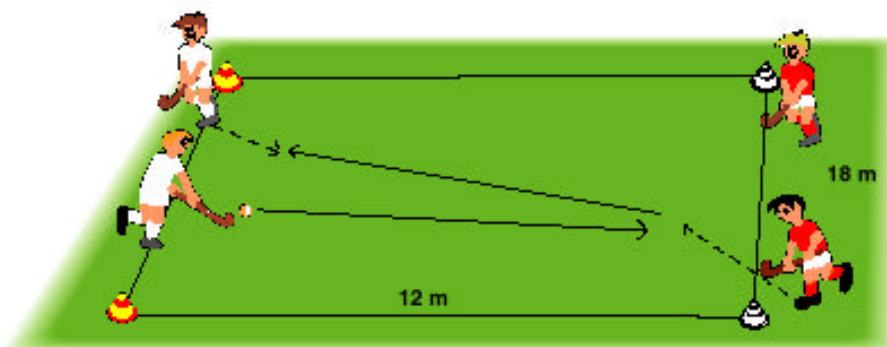
Pair up the players and mark off playing fields (see illustration) for them with cones. Every two players share a ball. The ends of each field should form goal areas (12 meters wide). The players each stand in their own goal area, which they must defend. Player 1 tries to pass the ball along the ground from his goal line toward the opposite goal. To avoid Player 1's scoring a goal, Player 2, the defender, learns to read the direction and speed of the opponent's pass and then use the maximum surface of his stick for controlling the ball. Then they reverse the action to pass the ball back to the original line.

Lifted passes don't score. For any infringement (using the feet, touching the ball with the rounded curve or leaving the goal line) a penalty is awarded from the center of the playing area. The first player to score four goals wins the event.



#### Variation:

- Have the receiver start from a point 2 meters behind his goal line. This helps develop the good habit of running toward the ball before controlling it.
- Have the children practice passing and receiving 2 on 2 in a wider field (18 meters). Pass the ball across the opponent's goal line from the spot where it was controlled. Depending on how much explosive power the four players have, you can mark off the goal areas to measure up to 18 meters wide and the distance between them can be increased to 15 to 20 meters in length.



BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR CONTROLLING THE BALL

A perfect control of the ball - either it is passed from teammate to team mate or intercepted - is of a paramount importance as it assures the possession of the ball and the continuation of the attack.

**Statistics have shown that between 20 and 25% of all losses of the possession of the ball result from poor control!** This high percentage is also a consequence of other **errors**, which occur immediately before the ball is controlled like -no visual agreement between the passer and the receiver, -the receiver doesn't make himself available in the right moment when the passer is "ready" (poor "timing"), -the receiver wait for the ball instead of running to it, or poor passing skills (the ball was passed too softly, inaccurate or executed too late or too early). That is why the quality of the reception and the control of the ball is mainly a product of the quality of the pass.





For a player to control the ball in the particular game situation, even a youngster, he should learn and apply **commonsense principles** to a variety of techniques. Teach your young players the following:

1. Watch the ball carefully until it touches your feet or body. Also pay attention to the position and movement of your teammates and opponents before and after the execution of the control. The more experienced and confident you are, the more you can assimilate and process other relevant information while focusing on the ball.
2. Use the maximum surface of your stick and not only the curve whilst controlling the ball.
3. Try to position your body in line with the ball as soon as possible. If you're an attacker, for example, it is relatively easy to receive the ball as you face the proper goal, but often this isn't effective for creating a goal opportunity: it's too slow, and it limits your ability to play the ball quickly into the opponent's penalty area. Therefore you should learn to receive and control balls from a side position as well, which allows you to perceive your teammates' and the defenders' position and movements in the space between you and the goal.
4. Make a cushion for the ball through not gripping the stick too firmly. Keep your arms slightly bent. Relax and incline the surface of the stick slightly forward. This helps your control. Receive the ball in a balanced position at the point of collection. Being balanced well makes for having successful control with subsequent movements. And it allows a receiver to deceive any opponent nearby with a body feint.
5. Position the ball during the control for the next play. If you are the receiver, you should already know what to do next before the ball is controlled. You must select what technique you'll use for the control of the next move: a dribble, a shot, or a pass. It's paramount to be able to execute an intentional or purposeful control for continuing with the attack. *Learning this principle of ball control well helps any player to perform considerably better.*

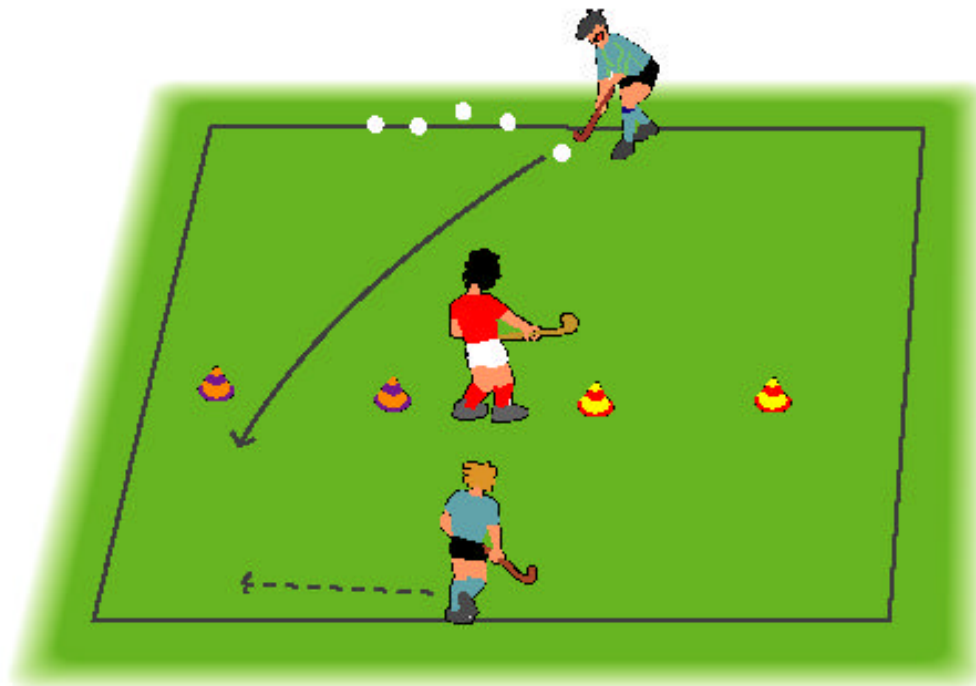
The games in this section are designed to enhance the players' ability to maintain control and make accurate and well timed passes with different techniques. They learn to calculate and anticipate the direction and speed of the ball while receiving and controlling it, including how to read the direction and speed of an opponent's pass. The children practice first passing a stationary and then a moving ball without indicating its direction. They also learn to receive the ball to exploit and utilize it for their next action.

*"The culmination of a good pass is perfect control of the ball."*

### 7. DISGUIISING THE PASS

Set up pairs of cones to mark off two goal areas (each 2 meters wide; see the illustration). These goals should be about 8 meters from the starting line. A receiver stands behind the goals and a third player (designated as the defender) stays just in front of the goals, very close to them and facing the player who is passer. Players have five passes to try to score a maximum number of goals in one of the two goal areas (first with a stationary ball set on the ground). A pass through one of the goals is considered valid only when the second attacker behind the defender can manage to control the well-placed pass.

As the children improve in passing, decrease the distance between the goals (which is, at first, 4 meters). More experienced players can also practice passing with a moving ball (without indicating its direction).

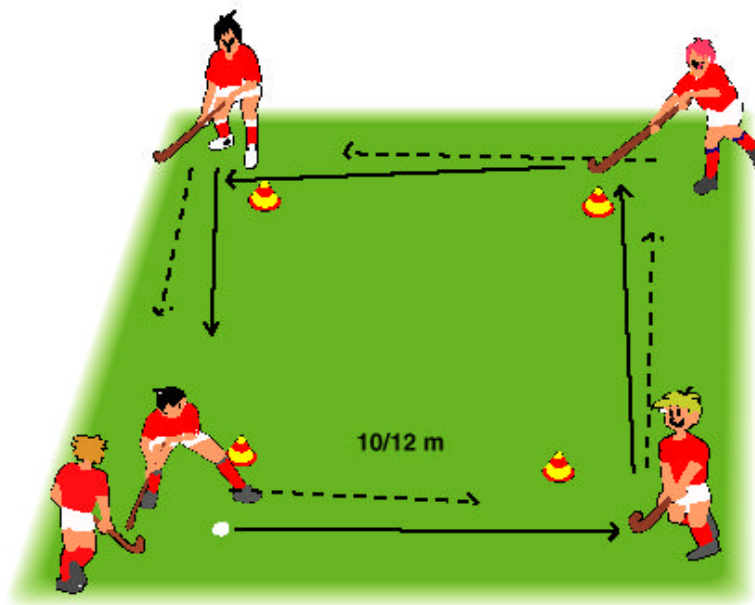


*“Coaches concern more about the contents of the training sessions than about their teaching style”*

### 8.PASSING AROUND THE SQUARE

This game involves groups of five children playing on a square field marked off by four cones. Besides developing accurate passing skills, the players learn to receive the ball in a way that helps their next play (the next pass) and to speed up the ball's movement by their using appropriate positioning in relation to the nearest cone, the execution of "purposeful controls," and hard passes.

For this game, the children stand as in the illustration, to take turns in passing the ball around the square. Competition in either direction with flat (and more advanced players also high passes ) passes, allowing each player any number of—or only two—ball contacts. The passer must always follow the run of the ball. Use a stopwatch to time individual players or set up a timed competition between several teams at a time.



#### Variation:

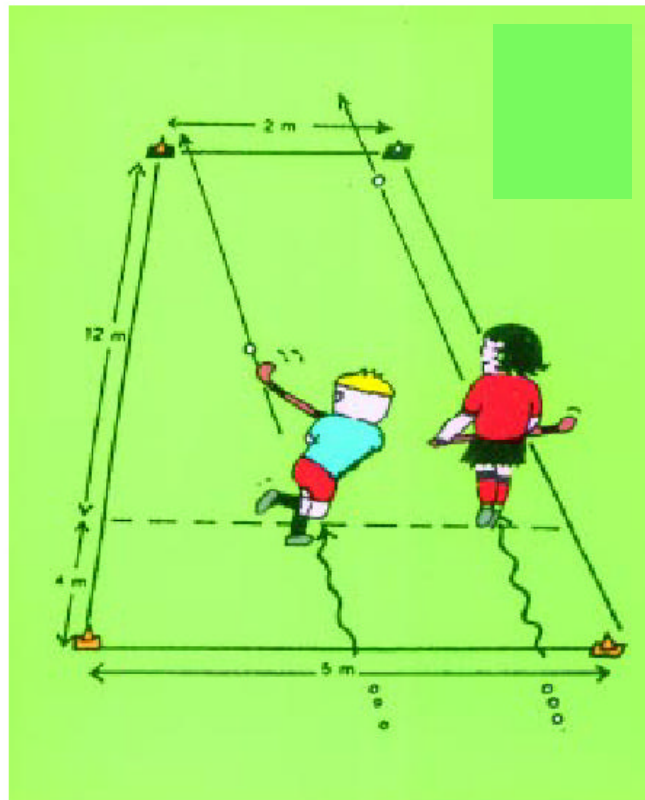
- Add a sixth player to create a competition between the five passers and a sixth player who, in the moment of the first pass, must run twice around the square. The competition is between the runner and the ball to see who completes the two turns sooner! The sixth player is not allowed to play the ball. The six players take turns being the runner to vie against the other five passers. All the children should take a turn at being the runner.

*“Successful coaching at youth level is gauged by the percentage of under 18 players being able to join the representative senior squad”*

### 9. QUICK GOALS

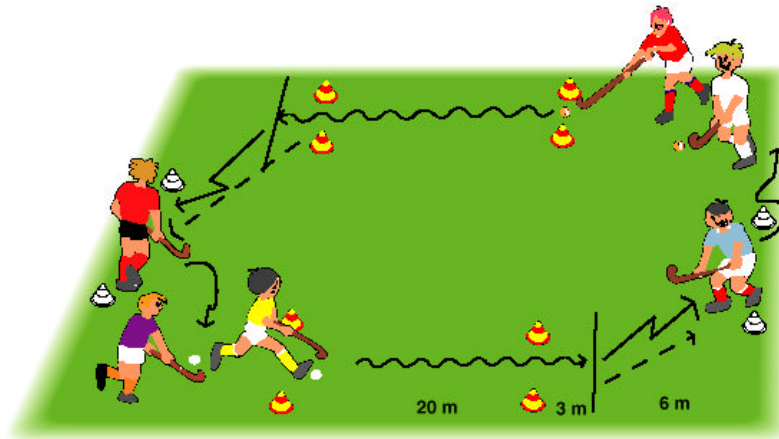
Pair up the children and give each a hockey ball. Set up an area (see illustration), using four cones to mark the corners; the end of the area serves as a goal area and should be only 2 meters wide. Give a visual signal for the two players to set off. They must dribble their ball at least to a 4-meter line and then pass or shoot it from there into the goal area, another 12 meters away. The player who first manages to pass his ball from any point beyond the 4-meter line between the far goal posts scores a point. The winner is the player who scores the highest number of points in five attempts.

When shooting under time pressure, the players ordinarily may choose their technique. As variations, however, you can insist they use a particular technique (see the table “The Passing and Shooting Techniques”).



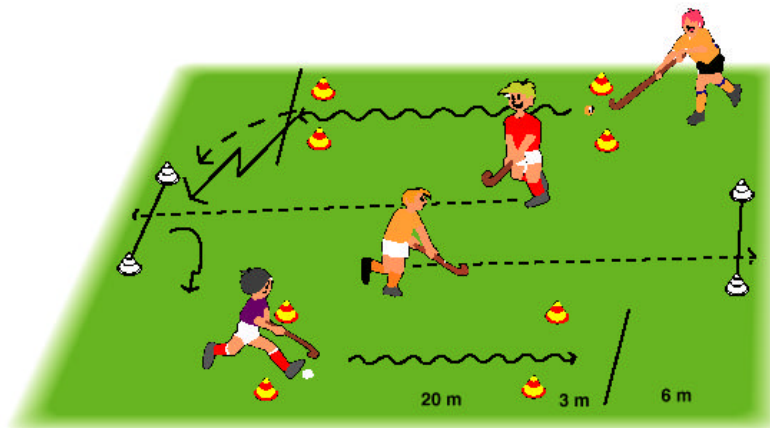
### 10. SHOOTING CIRCUIT

Out of six children four dribble and shoot and two act as “goalkeepers” at the end goal areas. Mark off an area as in the illustration with 2 opposed goal areas that are four meters in width. The players dribble the length (20 meters) to enter the goal area in front of him or her. Once he crosses that line, the player must immediately shoot at the defended goal before the ball crosses a 3 meter-line (shooting zone). After the shot on goal, the attacker becomes “goalkeeper”; this former “goalkeeper” takes the ball (or a reserve ball placed close to the cone goal) and lines up in the next goal area at the right side. He then does the same as the first attacker, dribbling in the opposite direction, again on the right flank. The winner is the player who scores the highest number of goals within five minutes.



#### Variations:

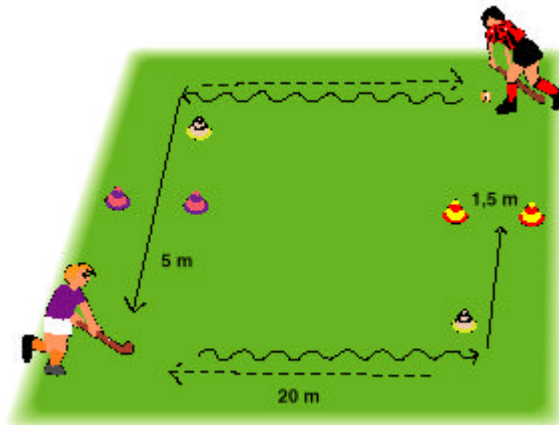
- The attacker dribbles the ball on the left flank going clockwise, finishing the individual attack with a shot from the inside left position.
- Half way to the opposite goal area, the attacker must beat an imaginary defender—a cone goal—on either side before practicing shooting.
- Several pairs compete simultaneously in opposite directions first counter clockwise . One is in possession of the ball and the other one is the “goalkeeper” situated just 4 meters in front of him. When the attacker touches the ball, the “goalkeeper” tries to position himself as quickly as possible at the goal in front of him before the attacker is able to shoot from a point within that shooting area of 3 meters. After the first attack, both players change functions and practice on the other side of the circuit. Whoever scores more goals against his opponent within 5 minutes wins.



- Instead of running counterclockwise and shooting from a right-inside position, the players now reverse the direction and practice shooting from a left-inside position .
- Only for more advanced players. Here the defender places himself 3 meters (after some experience with this game, you can decrease the distance to 1 meters) behind the attacker to his *right* side. When the attacker starts, the defender reacts and follows him with the objective to clear or take the ball before it can be shot from a point inside the shooting zone toward the next undefended goal.

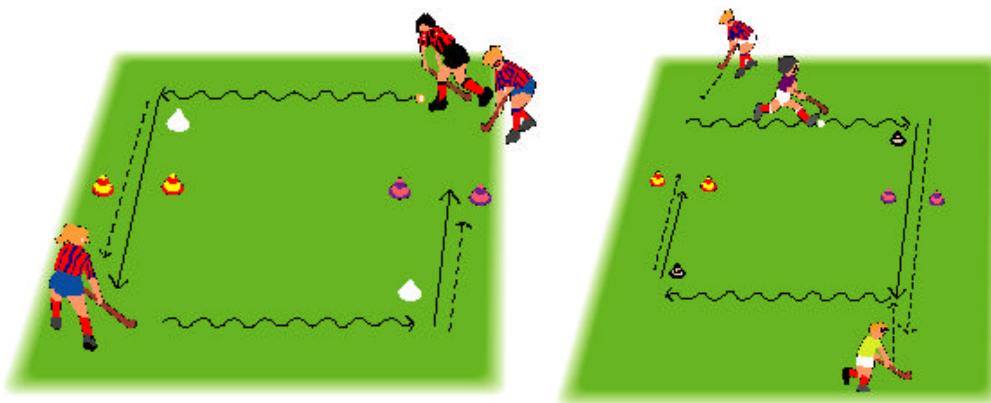
### 11. PRECISE PASSING TO BOTH SIDES

Set up the playing field with two pairs of cones marking off goal areas about midway on either side (see illustration). Pair up the players and give each pair a ball. Indicate what technique you want the players to use for passing. Player 1 starts out with a 20-meter dribble, taking his level with the cone goal. There, he centers the ball through the cone goal still at a distance of 5 meters only. Player 2 at a distance of 10 meters, meanwhile, waits there to receive the ball behind the goal. Then the receiver (Player 2) dribbles and centers through the other cone goal. After every pass the player returns to his starting point (see the dotted arrow) and receives the other player's pass. Whoever first scores 10 goals wins.



#### Variation:

- Play the same game with three players and also reverse directions to practice centers from the left to the right. After each pass of the ball through the center, the passer follows the direction of the ball (see illustration's dotted and solid lines) and awaits a pass from where his receiver awaited his pass. The players take turns as indicated by the numbers in the illustration. Instill passing with the reverse stick and with the ball on the run. The distances for passing have to be adapted to the skill level of the children.



*"Those who don't apply new remedies should expect to suffer new troubles"*

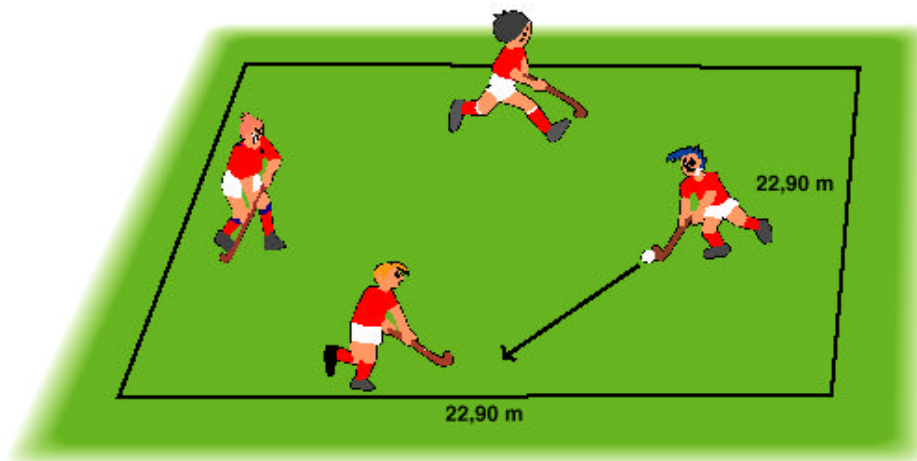
Henry Ford

### 12. PASSING ACROSS A WIDE ZONE

Group the youngsters in teams of three players. Set up the field to indicate lines about 10-20 meters apart, and explain that the area between is a neutral zone. Two players, one with a ball, stand on one line facing a third teammate standing on the other line. Player 1 passes the ball across the neutral zone to Player 3 who should immediately return it to Player 2. None of the players may step into the neutral zone to pass. After a pass, each player must follow the ball. Among the different teams, the winning one is whichever can make 10 passes across its neutral zone.

### 13. PASSING BETWEEN FOUR PLAYERS

Play in a  $\frac{1}{4}$  part of the full field or a Mini Hockey field. Group the youngsters in fours, giving each group one ball. The four players run continuously inside the delimited area. The player in possession of the ball has to pass it as quickly as possible to the player whose name you, as coach, will call out. The ball should be received—preferably on the run. Inaccurate passes and those that a player delays in executing count as a negative point.



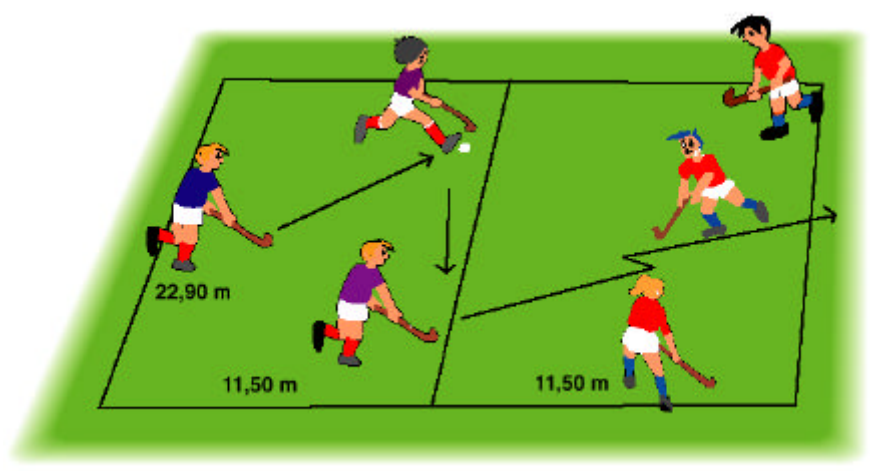
#### Variation:

- The same exercise is practiced with one defender who has the right to intercept the ball, but should never tackle the ball carrier or come very close to him.

### 14. PLAYING 3 ON 3 ACROSS THE OPPOSING END LINE

Form two teams of three players each and set up the square playing field with a line down its middle. The teams face each other in the separated playing areas (as in volleyball). Without leaving the team's part of the playing area and without dribbling the ball, one of the three players tries to pass the ball along the ground across the opposing end line, despite the defense efforts of the three opponents in the other team's part of the playing area.

No high passes are allowed. When the ball runs out of the playing area, it should be reintroduced at the spot where it went out. Touching the ball more than twice or with the rounded side of the stick or with the feet is penalized with a goal.

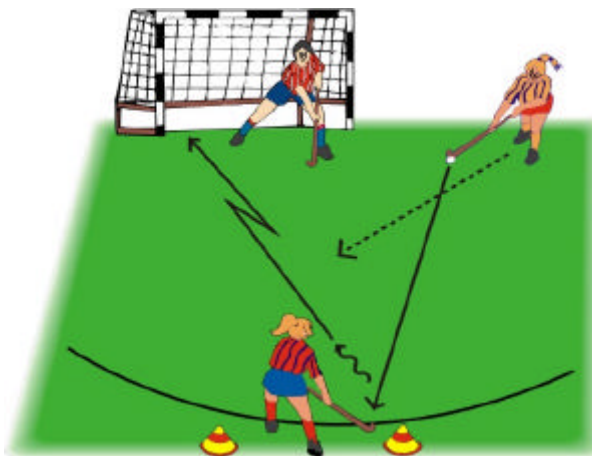


**Variation:**

- A goal is considered valid only when the last pass from the depth of the field is a first-time (direct) pass.

**15. SCORING AGAINST ONE DEFENDER**

Have the children pair up and practice on either side of the hockey goal. Place cones to form a 3-meter-wide goal 3 meters outside of the top of the shooting circle. The defender passes the ball with speed from the end line toward the cones forming that goal. Once the attacker has managed to control the ball in front of the cone goal, he should score against a goalkeeper and the defender who followed his initial pass.



Question the youngsters frequently to help them understand

1. the best way to receive the ball (ideally, the ball should rebound into a position that allows a quick shot toward the goal),
2. how to best play out the defender (on his reverse stick side, with a well-tempered pass past him, with a tunnel between his spread legs, or when he is stationary and in a frontal position), and

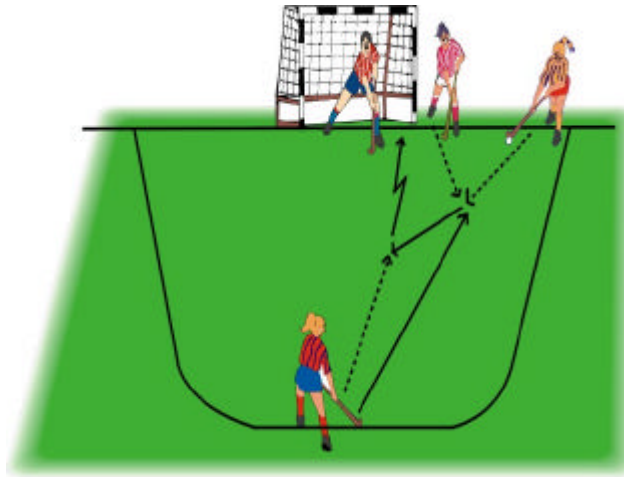


3. the most efficient way to defend in this situation (to close down the attacker and force him to go to the defender's forehand side).

After every 3 attacks, the two players change positions and functions. You might later have the attacker start from 1 meter behind the cone goal to encourage his or her running toward the oncoming ball.

#### 16. SCORING WITH 2 ON 1

Again use the same setup as in the game 15 but have the children form groups of three. At the instant a pass is made by the attacker from the top of the shooting circle to his teammate situated on the end line, the defender near the receiver tries to distract him from receiving, controlling, and playing the ball on his own or with a return pass. The 2-on-1 situation finishes with the ball running out of the circle or a goal being scored despite the presence of a constant, active goalkeeper. All the players practice five times in each of the three positions. For every goal scored, both attackers gain a point.



#### Variation:

- For more advanced players a second defender is added. In the moment of the pass to the marked forward on the end line, he is allowed to establish the 2-on-2 –situation.

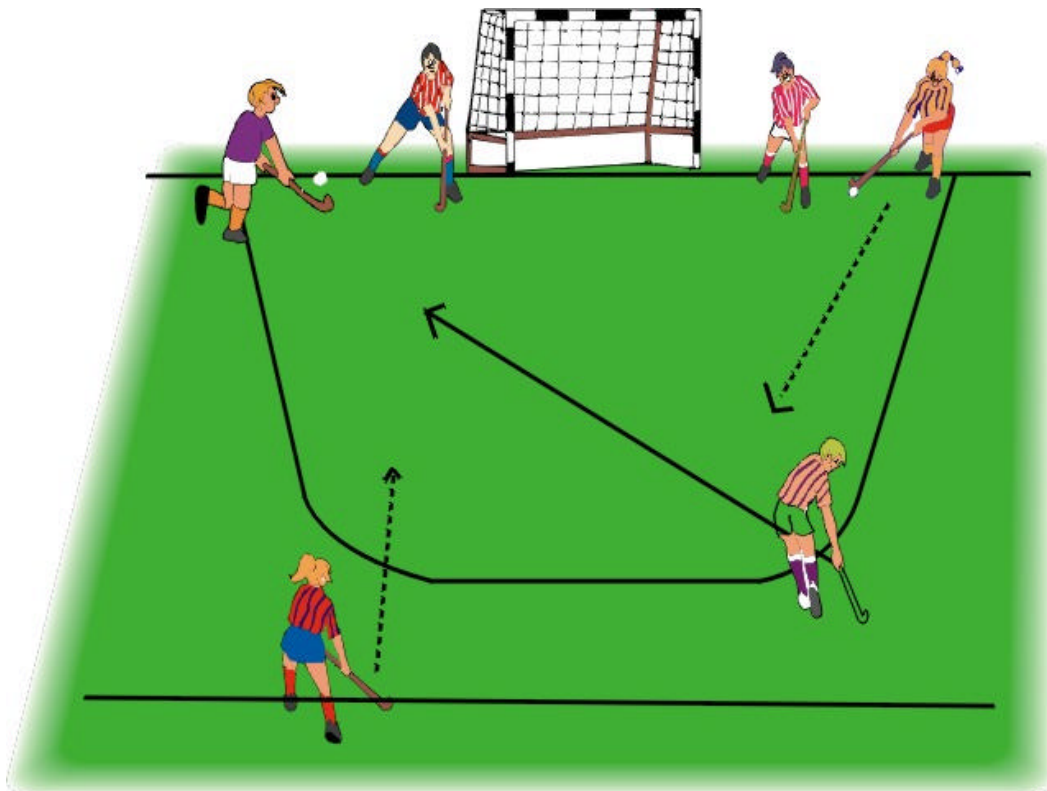
*“With frequency the best scoring opportunities appear by accident”*

**17. SCORING WITH 3 ON 2**

Use one half of a 6-on-6 hockey field. Designate three youngsters as attackers and position them on the center line. They should assume the wing and center forward positions. Designate two youngsters as defenders and a goalkeeper. Players less than 11 years practice without time limit whilst players more than 12 years should be given only 10 seconds to score.

**Variation:**

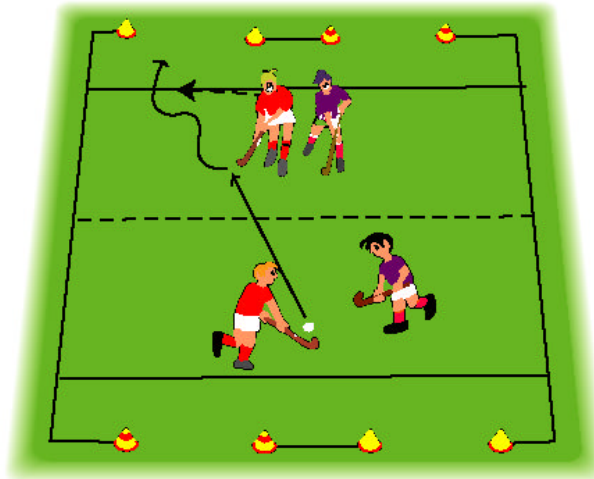
- The coach, situated with the ball outside the circle, passes to one of the two attackers who are close to the end line and marked by two defenders. Once the ball is passed, both attackers with help of a third one who joins them from the midfield try to resolve the 3-on-2 situation to their advantage and score a goal. Of course, at the same time the two defenders, with help from the goalkeeper, do everything to gain possession of the ball and pass it back to the coach.



*“Poor performance at short term doesn’t mean that the long term objectives can not be accomplished”*

**18. TWICE 1-ON-1 WITH SCORING**

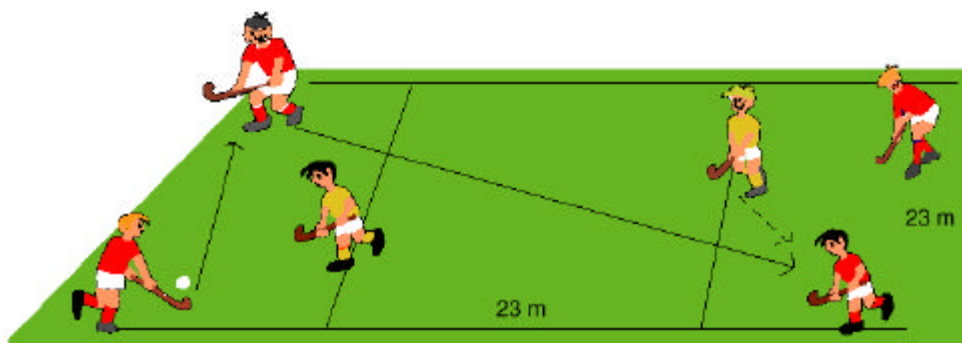
The game is played on a basketball or Mini-Hockey (use dimensions of 20 to 25 meters by 35 to 40 meters). Form two teams of two players, using just one hockey ball. Each player is given one half of the field for attacking or defending at the same time two-cone goals. None is allowed to leave the area assigned to him. Every two minutes the defenders change their positions and functions with the field players.

**Variations:**

- Play on a basketball field, and involve four players on each team for playing this variation. One player per team is the “goalkeeper”( without pads) . Each team’s sole attacker gets support from two teammates, who stand beside each goalpost of the opponent’s goal. They are only allowed to play the ball with two touches (with more advanced player one touch only) , and they may not enter the field. After every 3 goals scored by any team, the 4 players change positions and functions.
- Play the game as 3 on 3, with goalkeepers but without restrictions.

### 19. ACCURATE PASSING

Set up two small squares (see illustration) on the playing field. Two players are stationed in one of the two squares where they maintain possession of the ball against one defender until one of them is able to pass the ball across a neutral zone (about 10 to 23 meters, dependant on the age and level of explosive strength of the players) to a second square. The two teammates of the attackers are offering themselves for a pass, which that square's defender tries to intercept. Once an attacker managed to receive and control the ball his team works to return the ball to one of the two attackers in the opposite square. Count up the number of successful passes in a two-minute game. The less experienced the young players are, the larger the playing area should be.



### 20. 3:3 WITH GOALKEEPER

The game is played between the end line and the centerline of the 6-on-6-hockey field. A second goal with a shooting circle has to be put opposite the regular one. After a bully each team tries to score a maximum number of goals within 3 minutes. After each goal or a shot outside of the goal, the ball or reserve ball is brought into the game by the goalkeeper. Penalty corners as results from infringements of the defenders have to be replaced for free hits in front of the circle. The corners are taken from the spot demanded by the official rules of the game of hockey.



#### Variation:

- Both teams dispose of one outlet player who remains besides one goal post offering himself for a pass but without leaving the end line.

## TACKLING GAMES

### COACHING MODEL FOR TACKLING

#### 1st level

Preliminary exercises without ball to learn a correct succession of movements (see exercises 1+2).

#### 2nd level

Exercises with a stationary ball (see exercises 3+4).

#### 3rd level

Exercises with the moving ball and an attacker not yet active (see exercises 5 - 6).

#### 4th level

Exercises/games with the moving ball and an active defender (see exercises and games 7 - 12).

#### 5th level

Simplified games for learning to consider before tackling also the position of the teammate or teammates (see games 13+14).



The tackling games in this section encourage young players to experiment as well as to develop correct execution of the techniques for dispossessing an opponent from the ball—and to surprise the opponent with determination and speed. They'll learn to position themselves correctly in relation to the attacker, to tackle with precise timing and with patience. Furthermore, they'll learn to execute dummies and switch quickly to attack after making a successful tackle. By doing these activities in the progressive order you find here, players develop their defensive fundamentals step by step, before engaging in more complex situations.

*1st level:***1. TOUCH THE KNEE OF THE OPPONENT**

One defender is facing an attacker. Both of his feet are touching a line, which is drawn 1.50m away from the attacker. No hockey stick is used in this exercise. The objective of the defender is, after having made one step forward with his left foot, to touch with the back of his left hand (!) one knee of the attacker. The attacker tries to avoid the touch and moves his leg backwards which is supposed to be touched. The other leg has to remain in its position. The defender has 5 tries to reach out. After a try he waits at least 5 seconds before he carries out his next attempt. After 5 attempts both players change positions and functions.

In this exercise the defender will quickly learn to assume an optimal basic position for tackling, to bend his legs sufficiently and to keep his point of gravity low. Apart from learning a correct succession of movements (simultaneous step and lunge forward with the left foot and left arm) he realizes that quickness and surprise are important factors for success in tackling.

**2. TOUCH THE LINE FIRST**

From a position 2m in front of a line, any of the players, situated one beside another with the curve of the stick touching the ground, try to touch first the line with their stick. The teacher in front of them gives a visual signal (through letting a ball fall down or through a simulation of a tackle). The tackle is not considered valid,

- when the defender keeps, during the execution of the lunge, his right hand on the handle,
- his feet remain on the same level (left foot doesn't step forward), or
- in case his stick isn't always touching the ground.

**Variation:**

- The players stand to the left of the line about 1.5m away, ready to execute a quick and correct tackle to the right side. The players must learn to make quick crossover steps to extend their reach in order to touch the line.
- The same, but now the line on their left side has to be touched with a reverse stick tackle, trying to use the bring the whole flat side of the stick which parallel to the ground and as close as possible to it.



trying to use the bring the whole flat side of the stick which parallel to the ground and as close as possible to it.

## *2nd level with a stationary ball*

### 3. TOUCH THE LOOSE BALL FIRST



Two players face each other at a distance of 3.50m with a hockey ball between them. The ball is placed on a line which runs between their legs. After an acoustical signal of the coach, both try to tackle with a correct technique (the left foot is put in front and the left hand alone grips the stick at the moment of impact). The player who manages to move the ball towards the left side of the dividing line, wins.

The educator/coach discusses with the players of the disadvantage of assuming a flat-footed position before tackling and of not moving the curve along the ground. The same exercise should be also executed when both defenders assume a position with their left shoulder pointing to the ball in between them. In this case a quick reverse stick tackle

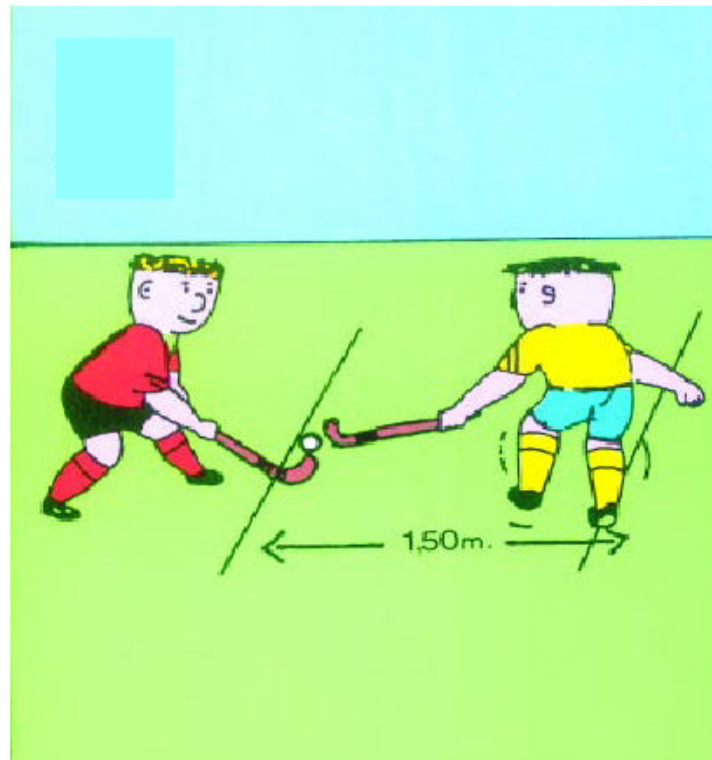
is practiced with the winner being the defender who moves the ball towards the right side of the dividing line on which both players stand.

**Variation:**

More advanced players practice in this exercise the "jab" , the quickest and most surprising tackle technique.

**4.TACKLE GAME (see test no.5 of the Decathlon)**

Mark two parallel lines 1.50 meters apart , and have the children play in pairs. A defender stands on the first line with the attacker , at a distance of 1.50 meters, faces him with the stationary ball close to his curve on the second line. The attacker, without looking at the ball but instead at the defender's stick, should move the ball aside and out of the defender's reach in the instant the defender starts to lunge forward to play the ball with speed and surprise The winner is the defender who touches the stationary ball more often with 5 tackles.



*“I insist in the importance of the details. It’s necessary to perfect each small basic aspect of a business (of a technique or of the game of hockey) when you intend that things function well”*

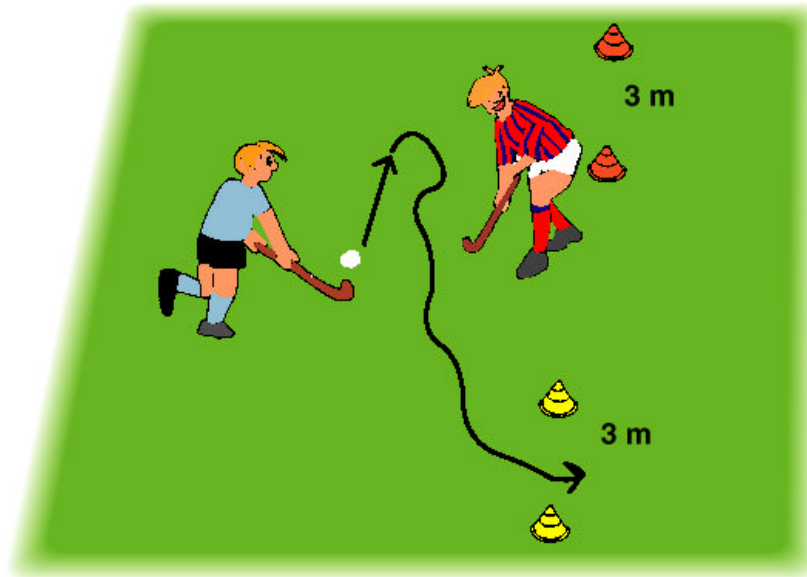
Ray Kroc



**Variation:**

With two 3 meter wide cone goals on both sides of the defender. In case the attacker avoid the success of the defender's tackle, he dribbles it through one of the two goal areas on his right or left side, separated by a zone of 6 meters. As soon as the defender in between the two cone goals has failed with his first frontal tackle to play the stationary ball, he must quickly recover his basic position and try to tackle (this time in a side position) for a second time—and prevent the attacker from controlling the ball in one of the two cone goals.

Each player must defend his goals during five attacks. Between two tackle attempts there should be a rest of at least 5 seconds.



*3<sup>rd</sup> level with a moving ball*

**5. TACKLING AGAINST A "LIMITED" ATTACKER**

Group the children in pairs, giving each two one ball. A defender faces an attacker who dribbles the ball straight to him. When the attacker is about 3 meters in front of the defender, the latter steps slightly to the left until his right shoulder "faces" the right shoulder of the ball carrier who dribbles the ball straight to his right side without being allowed to dodge him.

Once the ball enters is level with him, the defender, now in an optimal side position, executes a quick and technically correct tackle with the curve of the stick always remaining on the ground. Defenders should take care to first touch the ball, and not the stick of the attacker.

In this activity, the defender gains experience in optical-motor assessment. The child learns to tackle at the very best instant, not too early and not too late.

*"You can help a player a lot by correcting him, but more by encouraging him"*



**Variations:**

- The defender must carry out a step-in feint once the attacker is about 3 meters in front of him or her. Immediately after this obvious dummy, the defender recovers, again assumes an optimal basic position (but no longer in front of the attacker), tackles quickly, and tries to surprise the opponent from a side position.
- The defender steps completely to one side, allowing the opponent to penetrate. After this quick turnaround, the defender adapts to the attacker's speed and stays with the opponent, shoulder-to-shoulder, until the ideal instant arises for tackling. This usually is when the ball is away from the attacker's feet.

Tackling in retreat against a "limited" attacker should be taught while having the attacker on defender's left (and also on the right) side. It's best to practice this activity first without a ball and then with it to help improve the basic position, the channeling of the opponent, and the retreat side-on-side with the attacker.

## 6. INTERCEPTING PASSES

Gather the players in groups of fours. Two players face each other at a distance of 15 meters, passing the ball between them on a line. Three defenders, at either side of the running line of the ball and always about 2 meters away from it, try to intercept the pass. The interception should be practiced from different positions (i.e., with the left or right shoulder of the defenders pointing to the ball carrier, with the defenders facing the passers).



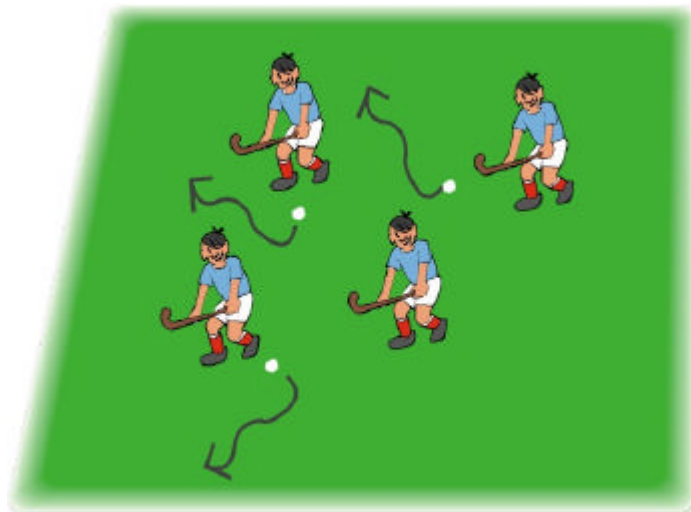
*“Learning starts when the coach transfers to his players the decisions which up to that moment were taken by himself”*

#### *4<sup>th</sup> level with a moving ball and an active opponent*

A smart player attempts to tackle an attacker in possession of the ball only when he is almost certain of success. If there is any doubt, he or she delays the tackle or executes a dummy while retreating and waiting for a more convenient instant to recover the ball.

#### 7. FIVE TACKLES

The children again work in groups of four players. Three players each dribble a ball within a small square (8 meters x 8 meters), while a fourth child without a ball has five chances to tackle. The defender's aim is to clear as many balls as possible out of the square within these five tackles. The defender's aim is to clear as many balls as possible out of the square within these five tackles. Any full extension of the left arm is considered a tackle. Besides observing the attackers carefully during their dribbling, the defender must have the patience to tackle only when a good opportunity arises. Executing dummy tackles will allow the defender to achieve a higher percentage of success. The player with the highest percentage of successful tackles (out of the five possible ones) wins.



#### Variation:

- All four players are in possession of a ball, and they all try to tackle the ball of any of their three opponents while controlling their own ball. When a player loses the ball, he or she must quickly collect it to continue participating in the game. Whoever executes the highest number of correct tackles within a given time (e.g., two minutes) wins. Besides tackling, the participants learn to shield the ball, placing the body between ball and defender, to execute dummies, and to lift the head during the dribble.

*“Don’t give up too early! It’s happening quite often that the last key of the key ring opens the door”*

### 8. PRESSING DEFENSE 1 ON 1

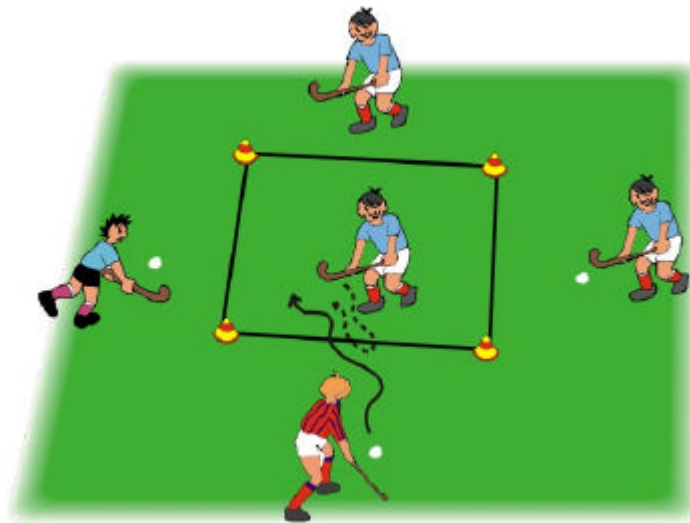
Group the players in pairs, one with and the other one without a ball, and mark off a square 15 meters per side. Three pairs start the competition within this square. The tacklers try to push their attacker's ball out of the square as quickly as possible.

#### Variation:

- You can involve eight players in this game, having the four defenders start from outside the square once you give a visual signal. They may follow any attacker—or you may set it up so that they may tackle only one particular (their personal) attacker. The defender who last clears a ball out of the square is the loser.

### 9. THE CAGE

Group the youngsters in sets of five and set up several 10-meter squares. Four of the players are attacker positioned outside the square, each with a ball. To score a point, each of the four attackers must manage to run with the ball under control through the square. The defender remains inside the square throughout the game. Call on the attackers, one after another, until they all have attacked twice. After the player inside the square has defended one on one for these eight times, players switch positions until everyone has been a defender. The player who allows fewest goals to be scored wins. As teacher or coach, you should educate the attackers waiting their turn on the sidelines around the square to spot any mistakes on the part of the defender.

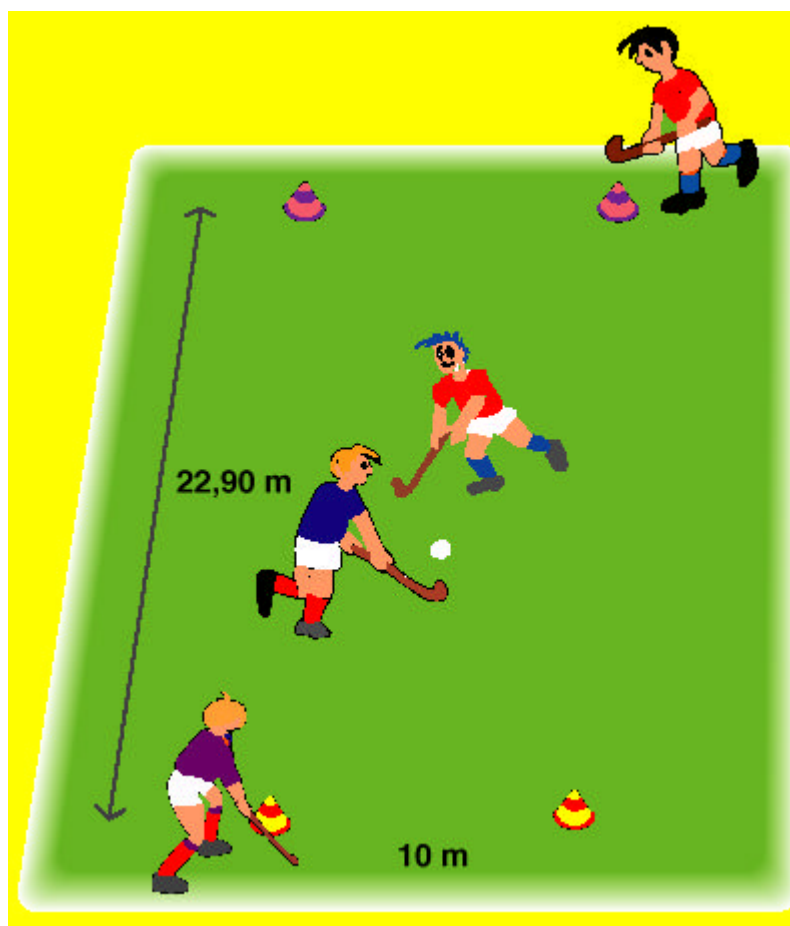


*“To cure a disease, it’s not sufficient to undergo a diagnosis. It’s imperative to look for the roots of the problem and to apply the pertinent remedies”*

### 10. SUBSTITUTES AND 1 ON 1

Set up a playing field 10 meters wide by 22.90 meters long, with goals marked by the cones at the ends. Have two youngsters stationed within the field and two waiting beyond the goals on the ends of the field. The two players within the playing area face each other until one of them is able to control the ball into the opposing goal area (10 meters wide) on the end line. After a goal is scored or after the ball has run across any goal line, both attackers must return to their respective goal (to rest). Meanwhile, the two substitutes step in from behind their respective goal areas and continue the game. The practice is over when one team (or one player) manages to score 6 goals.

The defender learns to assume a correct basic position for tackling (with the knees well bent), to keep the curve of the stick throughout the tackle on the ground and to place himself in a way that his right shoulder is opposite the right one of the attacker. This position in relation to the attacker will enable him to use his stronger forehand for tackling and to channel the attacker towards his right. He may also execute dummies with the body and the stick and switch immediately to attack once he gained complete control over the ball. Dependent on the speed and technical ability of the attacker, he gains experience in using different tackling techniques with forehand as well as with the reversed stick (lunge tackle, block tackle with the stick completely on the ground, tackling in retreat or the jab tackle).



#### Variation with three players:

- One teammate of the attacker positions himself behind the opponent's goal whilst the second one defends the proper one. Once the attacker has managed to go around the defender, he is asked to pass the ball through the defended goal (by the second opponent) to his teammate who offers himself for a pass behind it.

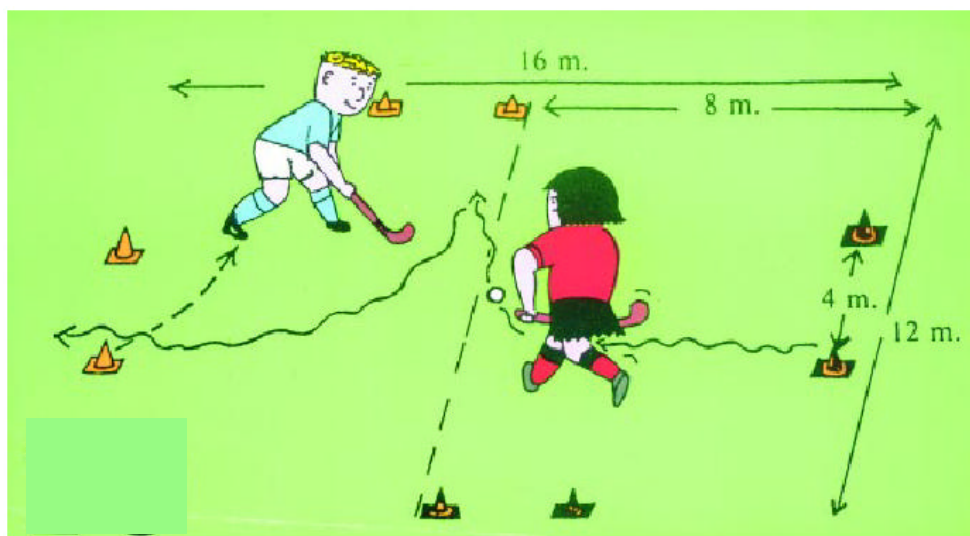
### 11. GAME WITH 4 GOALS

Set up a playing field as shown in the illustration, with cones set out to leave four-meter gaps. Have two youngsters at a time play in each playing area; there should be a ball for each pair that plays. They try to dribble the ball through one of two wide goals set up to the left (or right) and opposite him or her at the other end of the playing area. The coach assigns the two goals. And the player without the ball tries to defend these two goals.

When the attacker starts to dribble the ball out of his goal, the defender in the opposite goal area should react immediately, leaving it and trying to prevent the opponent from dribbling the ball through either of the two goals you assigned him (the goal behind and the other one to his right (or left) side) . If the ball runs out of the playing area or if a goal is scored, the game resumes, but with the players switching roles.

After an infringement, the attacker is awarded a free dribble—with the defender no closer than 2 meters' distance. The defender may interfere only after the attacker resumes play. The winner is the player who scores the most goals in 10 attempts.

During the practice of this game the attacker will learn to shield the ball with his body , not to enter the reach of the defender, to penetrate always in the space less covered by opponent and use his fantasy and imagination to tease the him with feints and sudden changes of speed and direction whilst lifting his head to be able to observe and analyze perfectly the game situation.



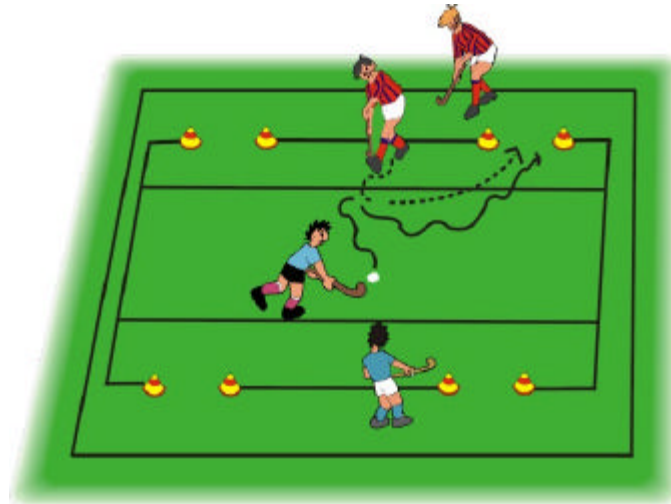
On the other side the defender learns to condition the attacker, to force him through his body and stick position to go where he wants him to go and to improve his footwork and basic position before tackling.

Before putting this game to the test, have the two players experiment in tag games on the same field without using a ball. They should practice trying out the rules, how to get away from the opponent without getting touched , through the use of dummies and employing sudden changes of direction and speed.

*“The difference between good and excellent is a little more effort”*

**12. 1 ON 1 ON THE MINI-HOCKEY FIELD**

Use a Mini-Hockey or Basketball field that is 20 to 25 meters by 35 to 40 meters, with pairs of goals set up on either end. Four children participate, forming two pairs to practice the 1-on-1 situation. The game is started with a bully or with both players behind their respective end lines and the ball placed in the center of the field. The object is to prevent the opponent from dribbling the ball through either of the team's two goals. Once the defense is successful, a counterattack is launched, with the former attacker tackling back. In order to encourage a defender to channel an attacker deliberately to the right or left side, you (as coach) may award fewer points for scoring a goal on the defender's right-hand side than for scoring a goal on the left-hand side (or vice versa).



*5th level:*

**13. ALL GAMES 1:2, 2:2, 2:3, 3:2, 3:3, etc.**

(see the programs of the simplified games 2:2,3:3 and 4:4)

**14. MINI-HOCKEY 3:3 on 4 goals** as well as the preparatory or corrective exercises/games

for Mini Hockey ( and here the different games 3:1 and 3:2).

*“There is no greater power on the playing field than the player’s intelligence.”*

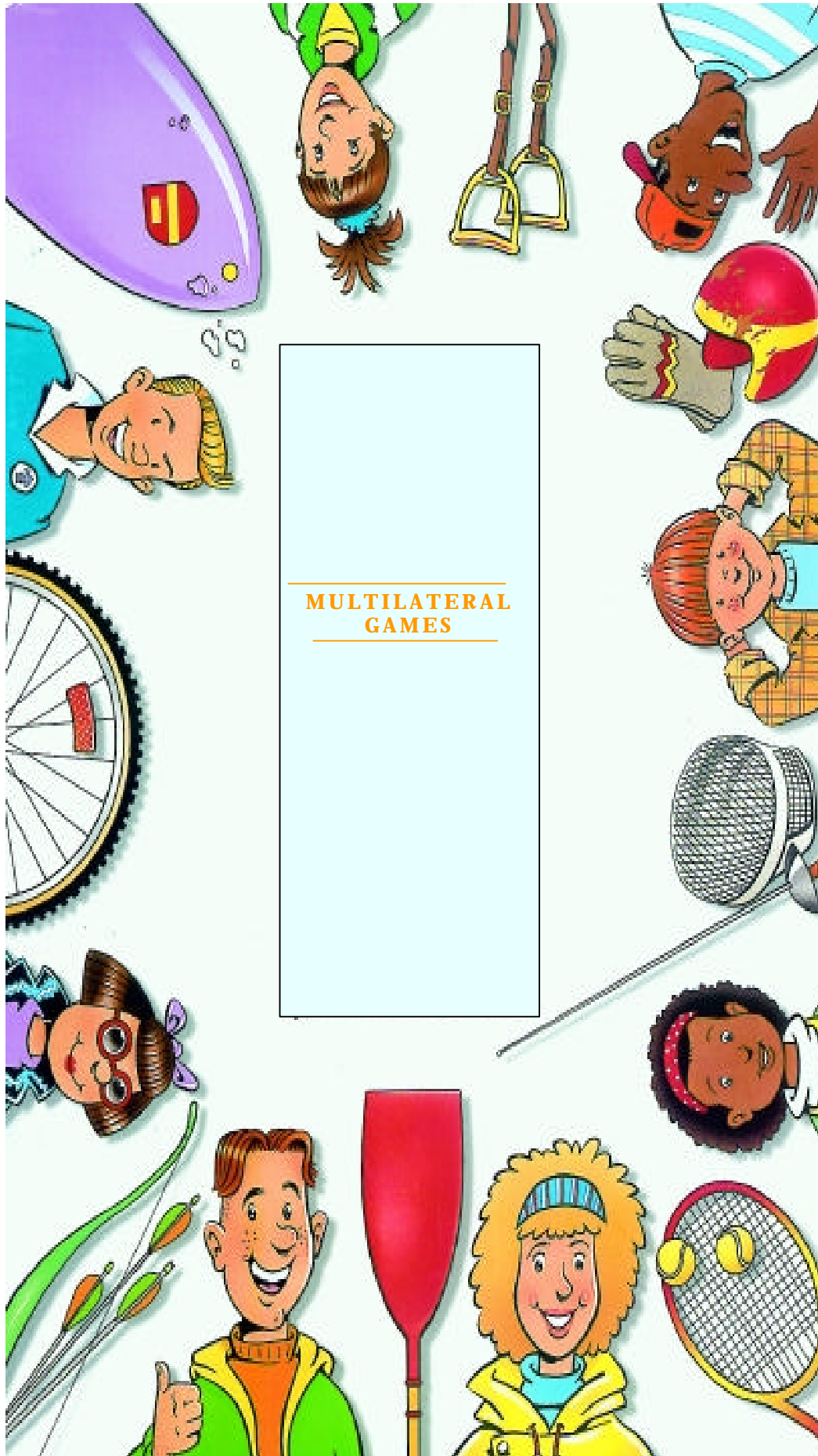
C.L. Menotti



The defender should not only exercise patience and assiduously study what tackling methods lend the highest percentage of success in particular game situations but also develop these tactics:

1. Avoid running toward and into an attacker who controls the ball
2. Use dummies to generate situations that give you an advantage
3. Carefully observe the speed and trajectory of the ball
4. Select the best line of approach, placing yourself closer to the goal than the attacker
5. Use the maximum possible flat surface of his stick including the inside and outside edge when playing with forehand or with the reverse stick,
6. Don't indicate through certain movements (grip or position of the curve) which method or type of tackle he is going to execute,
7. Vary the method or type of tackle
8. Avoid being flatfooted before and during the tackling
9. Make sure, in case of necessity, that a second or a third tackle could be executed
10. Keep the legs and arms bent before executing the tackle
11. Reduce the speed of the attacker who has complete control over the ball
12. Be mentally prepared to attack in case your tackling succeeds
13. Surprise the opponent (a slow tackle lacks surprise)
14. Deprive the attacker of time and space, forcing the player to make mistakes
15. Remain in a balanced position when defending, without crossing one leg over the other.





## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING MULTILATERAL GAMES

The early infancy is characterized by the orderly appearance and subsequent disappearance of numerous reflexes on which later, from 8 months onwards, rudimentary movement patterns are based. During the childhood years (at the age between 2 1/2 and 5 1/2 years) competence in performing fundamental motor skills such as throwing, catching, kicking, jumping, hopping, skipping and galloping begin to develop.

When by the age of 6 years, most children are proficient enough (but not yet matured) in these fundamental motor skills they are starting during the elementary school years (ages 6 to 10) not only to use these **basic motor skills** until they **improve both qualitatively and quantitatively**, they also **learn to vary, modify and combine them into transitional motor activities** (for instance combining running with jumping, running with kicking the ball in different ways or running like a sprinter, a football or a hockey player with the ball under control).

According to the HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT MODEL children of this age should be exposed first to the "Games of basic abilities and capacities" and then follow the suggested plan step by step and in the time indicated.

On the 1st. level of formation ( "Games for basic abilities and capacities") the coaches must provide the children with a proper environment and sufficient opportunities to practice and discover a great variety of motor skills prior and during their acquisition of the first hockey-specific skills.



**Those who, at this stage of their development, are not exposed to a great variety of multilateral motor stimuli may encounter a proficiency barrier.** Participating in and learning more complex skills could later become more difficult for them in case their fundamental skills and transitional motor activities were poorly developed. **The more the beginners progress in the acquisition of hockey-specific skills and capacities (tactics), the less time of the training session the teacher/coach is dedicated to the practice of multilateral games** in which the children vary, modify and combine their treasure of basic and transitional motor skills.

*"The most powerful man is who is master of himself"*

Séneca



Generally in the first year of hockey training **more or less 50% of the beginner's program is made up by multilateral activities** in order to let the young players gain through a rich variety of stimuli experiences in motor learning. This will enable them later to learn the specific hockey techniques much quicker. Following the different levels of formation in the HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT MODEL the percentage of general-purpose exercises/games diminish in favor of a hockey-specific based program.

Like the schools offer to all pupils a wide selection of subjects to study, the formation of a young hockey player must guarantee a very rich variety of stimuli in order to achieve with the progress of time optimum performance levels of the player. Besides, thanks to the consideration of multilateral games in the hockey training and learning process, the sessions become more varied, intense and attractive for the children and furthermore ensure better learning.

In order to be able to select suitable multilateral games for the children of various age groups, a table of the sensitivity phases of the children (according to Grosser) is added.

Physical capacities to train	Age						
	5-8	8-10	10-12	12-14	14-16	16-18	18-20
Max. strength				W	M WW	MM WWW	MMM WWW
Explosive strength			W	M WW	MM WWW	MMM WWW	MMM WWW
Strength resistance				W	M WW	MM WWW	MMM WWW
Aerobic resistance		M W	M W	MM WW	MM WW	MMM WWW	MMM WWW
Anaerobic resistance				W	M WW	MM WWW	MMM WWW
Speed of reaction		M W	M W	MM WW	MM WW	MMM WWW	MMM WWW
Max. cyclical /acyclical speed			W	M WW	MM WW	MMM WWW	MMM WWW
Flexibility	MM WW	MM WW	MM WW	MMM WWW	MMM WWW	MMM WWW	MMM WWW

Explanations:

M=man, W=woman

M/W initiation with care (one or twice a week)

MM/WW training between 2 until 5 times a week

MMM/WWW performance training from this age onwards continuous training

EXAMPLES**HUNT THE STICK**

Competition between 2 players between the end line and the 22.90m line. Place stick halfway between two lines and players start at opposite ends behind each line. Winner is determined by whoever picks up the stick first and crosses the opponent's line (2 points) or his starting line (1 point).

**SURPRISE ESCAPE**

Players stand on the 22.90 m line facing the end line with their sticks above their shoulders with the coach behind them. The coach touches a player who then immediately sets off for the end line and the others try to touch him.

**RUN UNDER THE ROPE**

A straight relay with the runner passing under a rope held at waist height.

**KING OF THIEVES**

Played in a confined area. Colored tape is stuck on the back of each player .Attempt to steal tape from other player who then exits the area or, alternately, remain in and continue. Winner is last player in area or one with the most tape stolen.



**MUSICAL BEACONS**

Ten players jog around the demarcated area and on command race for one of the 9 cones with the player not getting a cone losing a point.

**GET THE UNOCCUPIED STICK**

Five players stand in a circle with their feet astride their hockey stick. One player “vacates” his sticks and runs in any direction around the group of players and tries to conquer an unoccupied stick but without stepping into the inside of the circle. Whilst looking out for a free or unoccupied stick, the other 4 players cooperate, anticipate the play of the runner and run to the left or right to prevent him from getting a stick which hasn't been occupied by the four.



*“Listening is forgetting, seeing is understanding and practicing is assimilating”*

Chinese proverb

## LEVEL-1 COMPETITIONS

Decathlon and 2-on-2 Triathlon competitions should be organized periodically as part of the training program for the very young beginners. At Level 1 youngsters are not yet ready to compete with other clubs or institutions, which might create unnecessarily stressful situations.

### HOCKEY DECATHLON

The Hockey Decathlon is a simplified competition for beginners. You can also use it as a test to establish the performance level of each player compared with his or her peers. The Decathlon ensures that young players encounter the most important hockey fundamentals in real-game situations: how to execute a skill well is as important as when and where to play the ball. The following ten activities have been pulled from the "Games for Basic Abilities and Capacities".

#### 1. THE TUNNEL

One player passes the ball alternately with his open (front) and reverse stick, through the tunnel formed by the legs of a second player who remains stationary and counts the opponent's goals scored in 30 seconds. Both players alternate their functions after 30 seconds until both have completed twice.



The winner is the player who scores the most goals in the two attempts. The exercise is repeated in the event of a draw.

#### Variation:

The player passes the ball alternately from outside of a 2m zone formed by 2 parallel lines through the legs of the opponent who is positioned in the center of the zone. Any pass executed from inside the area doesn't count.

#### Training objectives:

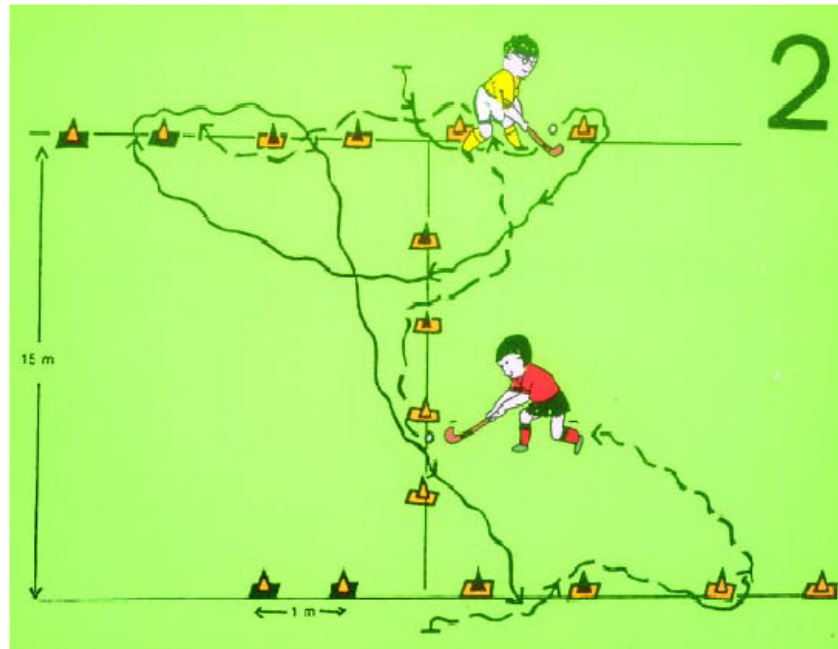
1. After having ensured a correct grip of both hands (attention that the left hand comes from above and grips the stick with the thumb being hidden), play the ball in a technically correct way with forehand and reverse stick.
2. Transfer slightly the weight of the body from the left foot towards the right foot in order to synchronize the movement of the ball and the stick with that of the body.
3. Do not pass the ball too hard and not too soft through the legs of the opponent in order to recover it as quickly as possible.
4. To improve footwork and keep the point of gravity relatively low to enhance quick chances of directions.

#### Note:

To protect the shinbone, which faces the attacker, the "defender" is asked to put his stick in front of it.

## 2.THE LABYRINTH

Two players start simultaneously from diametrically opposed positions outside of the labyrinth. Their task is to dribble the ball through all 8 goals of the labyrinth without leaving any out. The winner is the player who returns first, with the ball under control, to the starting point. Both players face each other twice and in case of a draw a tiebreak is played.



### Training objectives:

1. To dribble the ball according to the game situation with the open (forehand) or reverse stick.
2. In order to be able to collect information raise the view (head) frequently whilst dribbling.
3. To change the direction of dribbling according to the next goal to be crossed.
4. To find the shortest route, that is, to anticipate mentally the next action.

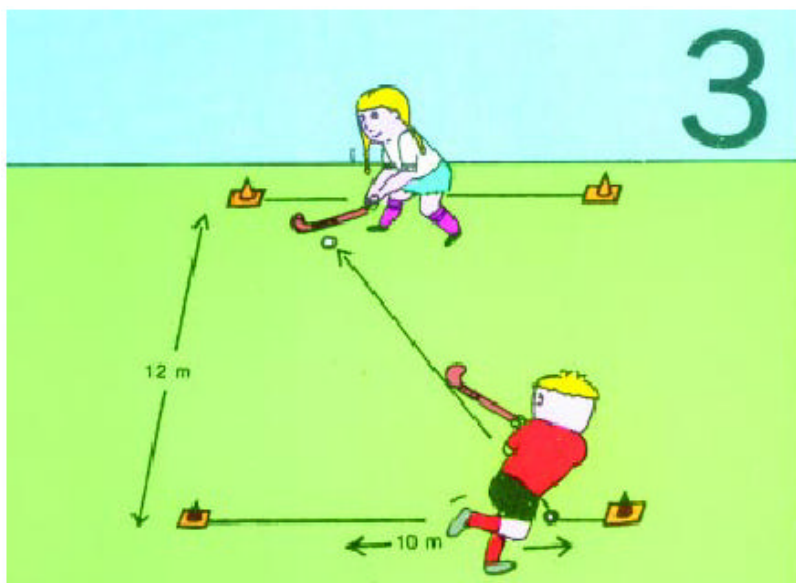
*“Conditioning for winning is mainly a process of positive reinforcement.”*

L. Moorhouse/L. Cross



### 3.PASSING AND TRAPPING

Two players face each other at a distance of 10m. Every one defends a goal 12m wide. The first player pushes the Mini Hockey ball (100 grs.) from his goal line along the ground into the opposite goal whilst the opponent does everything to prevent him from scoring. During the pass it's compulsory to have both hands separated on the handle. After having trapped the ball or after a goal was scored, it's the turn of the second player to score.



In case of an infringement of the rules (touching the ball with one foot or with the rounded side of the curve or lifting the stick before its impact with the ball), the "offender" is penalized with a penalty shot from the center of the field. The first player to score 4 goals wins the event.

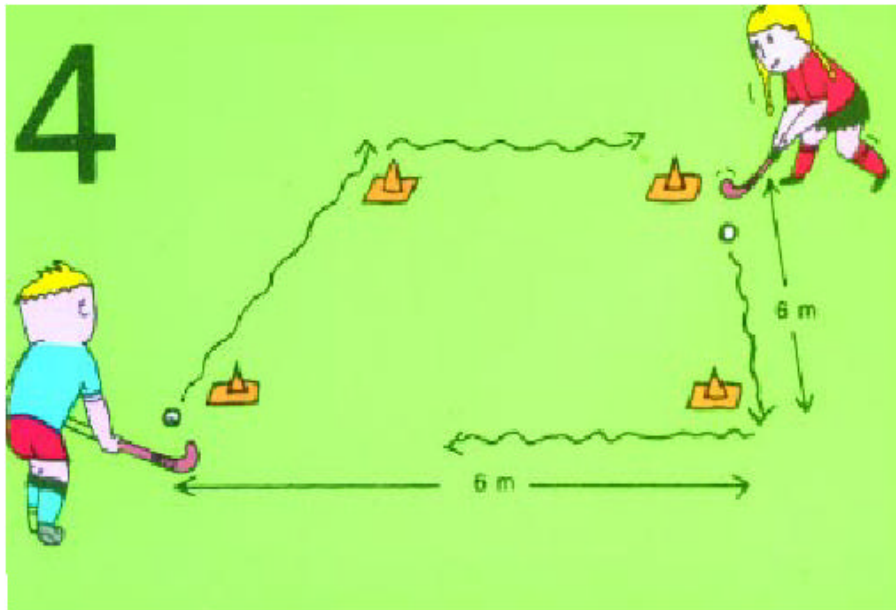
#### *Training objectives:*

1. To execute the push or slap in a technically correct way, with the curve always sweeping along the ground.
2. To learn how to disguise the direction of the pass.
3. To trap (intercept) the ball in a correct basic position with the legs sufficiently bent and using as much of the surface of the stick as possible.
4. To intercept the ball in motion with either forehand or the reverse stick (low or horizontal position when the ball is running smoothly along the ground or high or vertical position of the stick when the ball bounces).
5. To anticipate or to read the direction of the pass of the opponent.

#### 4. AROUND THE SQUARE

In a square with 6m sides, two players start at the same time from opposite corners, each dribbles a ball in a clockwise direction along the perimeter of the square. The winner is the player who completes two clockwise circuits and stops the ball with the reverse stick at the starting point. Both players have two goes, and if the result is a draw there is a play-off.

After the competition the teacher stimulates the players with several questions about the most efficient use of different dribble techniques to achieve the desired objective.



#### Variation:

- The players dribble the ball once around the square and then run with it in the opposite direction to reach their starting point before the opponent can achieve it.

#### Training objectives:

1. To dribble the ball at speed without losing control of it in spite of several changes of direction.
2. Use the appropriate technique of dribbling when dribbling on a straight line (forehand) and when changing direction close to a cone (only one touch with the reverse stick).
3. When changing the direction of the dribble, first lower the center of gravity and then push the body with a full extension of the outside leg into the new direction. At the same time the ball is played either with the reverse or the open stick.

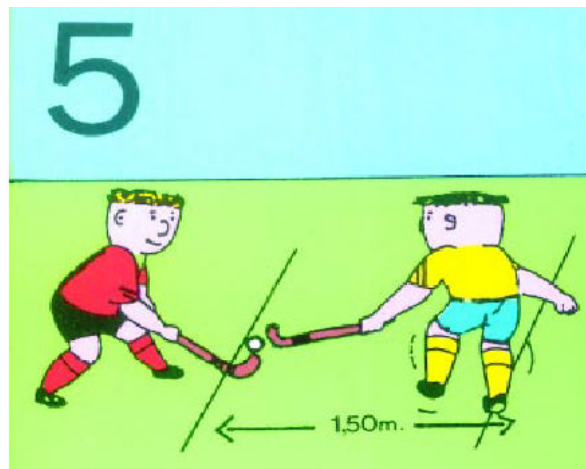
## 5. THE TACKLE

The ball, placed on a line, is in touch with the curve of an attacker's stick. An opponent is facing him with his feet touching a second line, which is drawn parallel to and 1.50 m away from the first. The defender's objective is to make a fast surprise lunge or jab tackle in a technically correct way and touch the ball before the attacker can anticipate his tackle. The attacker can only move the ball sideways and along the line when the defender reaches out with a tackle.

Between each tackle there is an interval of at least 5 seconds. Each defender has 5 tackles. After five tries, both competitors switch positions and functions. The winner is the defender who manages to touch his opponent's ball the greater number of times with 5 attempts. To score it is necessary to move the left foot forward and grip the stick with only the left hand when playing the ball.

### Variation:

- On each side of the defender, 3m away from him, a 3m wide goal is marked with cones. In the moment the defender, situated 1.50m in front of the attacker in possession of the stationary ball, tries to tackle it with speed and surprise, the attacker plays the ball sideways out of the range of action of the defender and then tries to dribble it through one of the 2 cone goals. Once the defender fails with his frontal



tackle, he must quickly recover his basic position so as to try to tackle (this time in a side position) for a second time and prevent the attacker from controlling the ball in one of the two cone goals. Each player has to defend his goals during 5 attacks. The winner is the defender who allows the attacker to score fewer goals. After each tackle there will be an interval of at least 5 seconds.

### Training objectives:

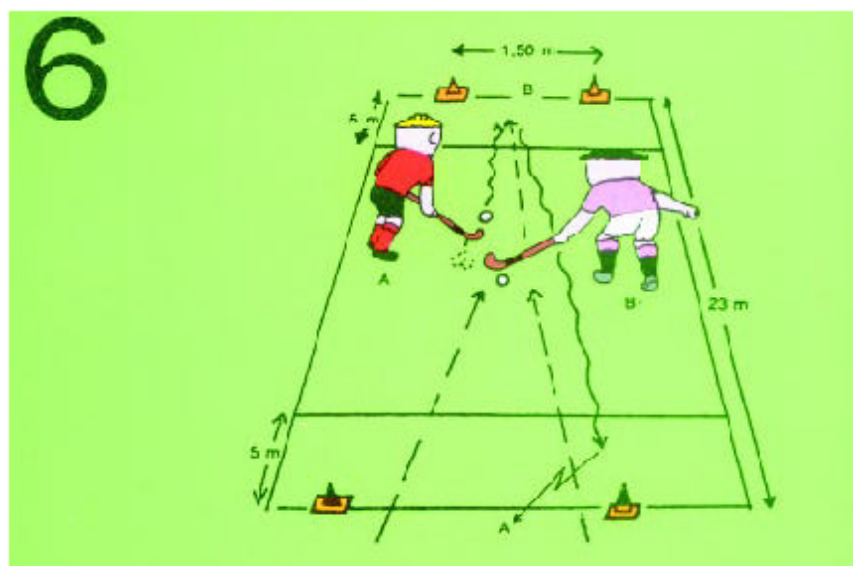
1. To assume, before executing the tackle, an optimal basic ready-position.
2. To learn to execute a lunge or a jab tackle with speed and surprise for the opponent.
3. To make feints with the body or the stick before making a decisive move.
4. To anticipate the opponent's move, that is, the direction in which his ball is played.
5. To recover quickly the basic position for tackling in order to be able to tackle a second or third time.
6. To observe attentively, as an attacker, the preparation and execution of the opponent's tackle so as to move the ball out of his range of action.
7. To teach the defender to tackle, especially when the ball is away from the attacker's stick.

## 6. THE CHALLENGE

Two players meet on the same goal line, one at the right post and the other at the left, inside a 1.50m wide goal. When they are given a visual signal, they both run towards a ball placed in the center point of the field. The first player to take possession of it must dribble it into the opponent's shooting zone and score. Whilst the player at the left post (cone) tries to score at the far goal, the player at the right post, once in possession of the ball, must dribble it into the goal from which he started.

If these rules are broken in midfield, the "offender" resumes the game without the ball, from a distance of 1/2 m behind the attacker. If the defender infringes the rules in his own shooting zone, he gets penalized with a penalty stroke executed with a push, slap or flick from the center of the field through the empty goal of the opponent.

Each time a goal is scored or the ball leaves the field over an end line, the two players change switch their places at the start. The winner is the first player to score two goals.



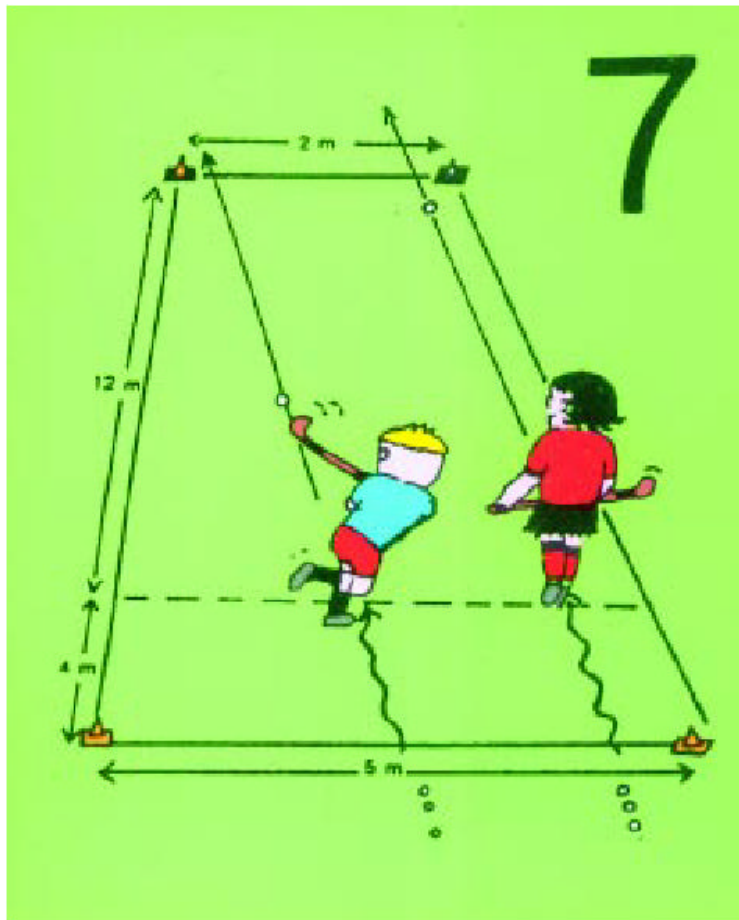
### Training objectives

1. To run quickly on to the ball with only the right hand gripping the center of the stick in order to gain the best position to play the ball first.
2. To dribble and keep possession of the ball against an opponent defending from behind.
3. To defend from behind or from a sideways position in relation to the attacker.
4. To score in spite of the presence of an opponent.
5. To ensure a quick transition from attacking to defending and vice-versa.
6. To execute an accurate pass when a penalty stroke is awarded.
7. Not to dribble the ball into the range of the defender.

## 7. QUICK GOALS

Two players, each in possession of a ball, set off after having recognized a visual signal. They have to dribble their ball beyond a 4m line and shoot it at a goal (only 2m wide), which was set up 12m away from them. When shooting, the player may choose either technique or the coach can demand a particular one or even oblige a beginner to pass the ball with both hands being separated on the stick.

The first player who manages to pass his ball between the goal-posts (after crossing the 4m line) scores a point. The winner is the player who scores the highest number of points in 5 competitions.



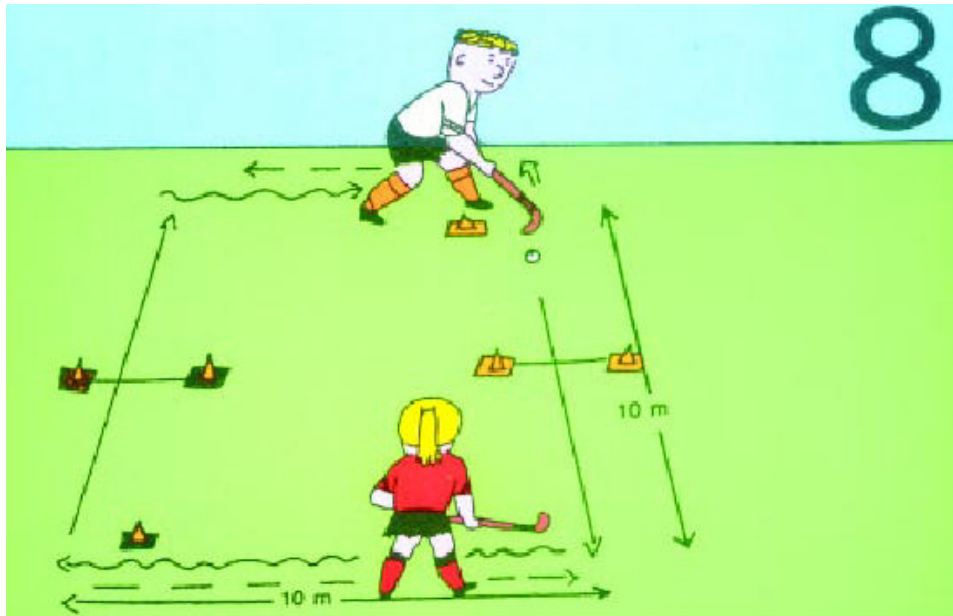
### *Training objectives*

1. To accelerate from a stationary position with the ball.
2. To combine two basic technical moves, such as the dribble in front of the body and executing a push or slap in a side-on position (for advanced players also in a frontal position), quickly and with good synchronization of movements.
3. To execute the push or slap not only quickly and accurately, but also with explosive power so that the ball travels through the goal first, faster than that of the opponent.
4. To lower the center of gravity before passing the ball so as to make sure better accuracy and also more speed.

### 8. REVERSE STICK PASSING

After dribbling the ball for 10m, the player must push it on the move through a wide goal (1-1.5m). Goals scored with the stationary ball are not considered valid. After the pass, the player returns to his starting point and waits 5m behind the second goal to receive the next pass of the second player who does the same as the first one.

The winner is the first player to score five goals with the ball being on the move. The distances may be altered depending on the performance level of the player involved. It's recommendable to use Mini Hockey balls with a weight of approximately 100 grs.



#### Training objectives:

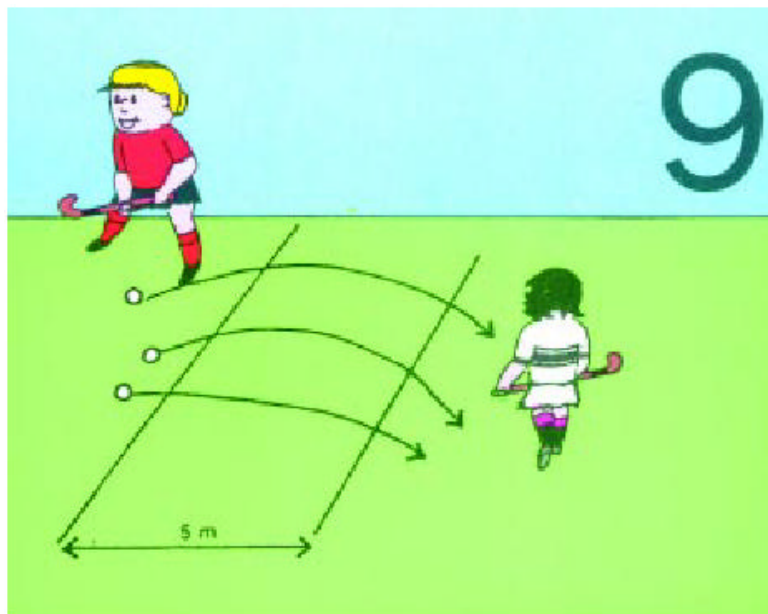
1. To ensure accuracy when passing with the reverse stick.
2. When passing with the reverse stick, don't lift the curve before the impact of the ball with the stick. This could lead to inaccuracy of the pass and besides could give the opponent information about the moment and the direction of your pass.

*“With his exercises and games the coach should guarantee a simplification which enables the player to transfer to the real game”*

### 9.FLICK OVER THE RIVER

Two players are separated by a neutral zone between 5m and 10m wide (dependant on their performance level in the flick). None is allowed to enter the zone. The younger player is given first three balls which he has to flick one after another over the "river" in such a way that none of them drop between the two parallel lines. Then it's the other player's turn.

The winner is the first player to execute three consecutive valid "flicks over the river", unless the other player achieves the same result in the same turn. In this case there is a play-off for which the "river" is made wider.



*Training objectives:*

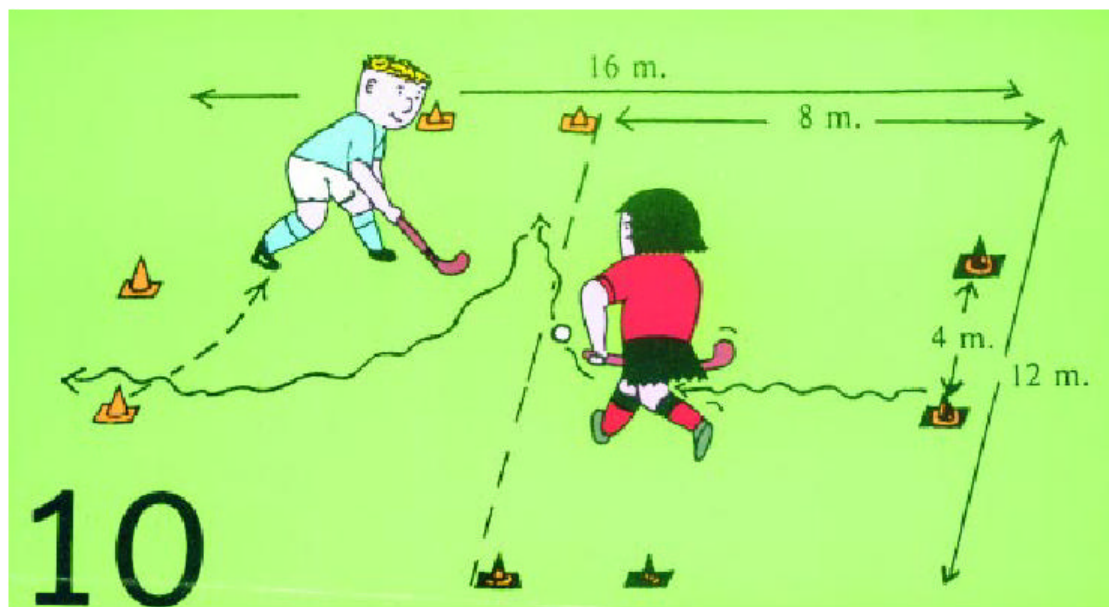
1. To execute a flick with the correct technique over a distance of between 5 and 10m.

*"If at first you don't succeed you are doing about average"*

### 10. GAME WITH FOUR GOALS

The aim of each player is to score a goal, controlling the ball in one of the two wide goals set up to his left (right) and at the opposite end. The player without the ball defends his two goals, that is to say, one goal behind him and another to his right (left). The attacker starts the game. The defender in the opposite goal reacts, leaves his goal and tries to prevent the attacker from scoring in either of the two goals assigned to him. When the ball goes off field or when a goal is scored, the game is resumed as already described, but the players change roles. After an infringement of one player, the other is awarded a free dribble with the defender at a distance of at least 3m. He may only interfere when the attacker resumes play and touches the ball (see next page).

The winner is the player who scores the most goals in 3 minutes (or two 3-minute periods).



#### *Training objectives:*

1. While dribbling the ball, look up to be able to observe and analyze the opponent's position and play.
2. To learn not to dribble the ball into the reach of the defender.
3. By dribbling the ball to one side, to force the defender to move into that direction, and then enter the space thus created with a sudden change of speed and direction.
4. To improve the technique of changing speed and direction with the ball.
5. As defenders, to learn to force the attacker to dribble the ball into a desired space.



*Rules modifications for more advanced players:*

**1ST. TEST:**

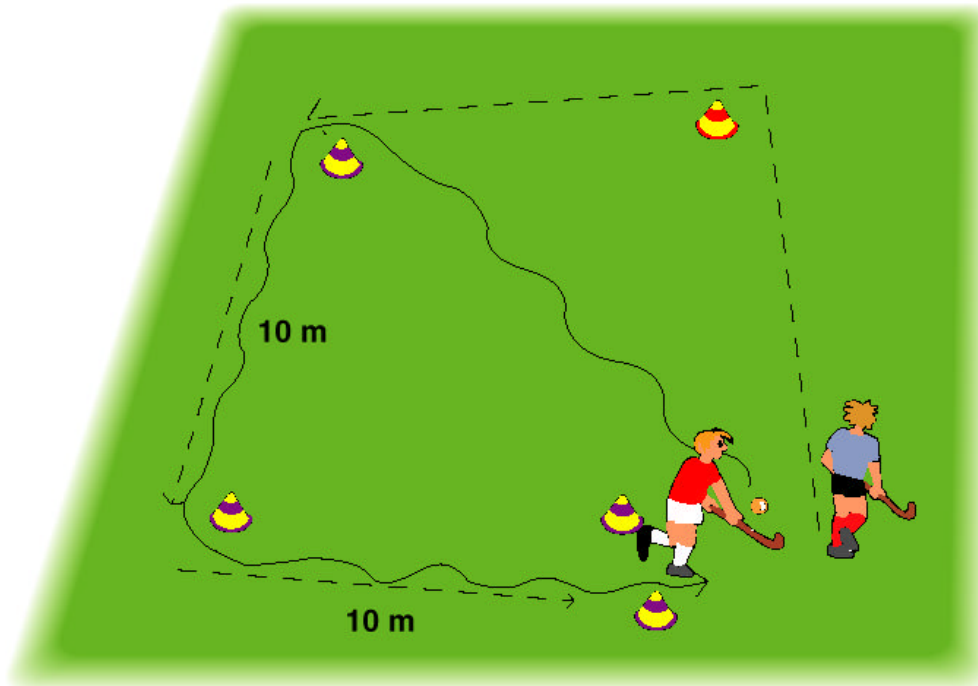
See the variation of "THE TUNNEL". The winner is the player who, in 30 seconds, passes the ball most times through the separated legs and across two parallel lines which form a 2m wide zone. The ball has to be touched alternately with forehand and reverse, without being played inside the 2m zone.

**4TH. TEST:**

Two players start at the same time. The one who is in control of the ball must dribble it along a triangular route keeping to the outside. Meanwhile, his opponent without the ball must run around the field marked by the four cones with the aim of chasing the attacker and touching his ball before he can dribble it into the cone goal.

Each player has two turns as attacker and two as defender. Once the ball is dribbled in a clockwise and once in an anti-clockwise direction. Whilst defending, the players learn to wait for the exact moment to tackle without touching the opponent's stick.

The winner is the player who manages the greater number of times to keep possession of the ball until he gets to the starting point.

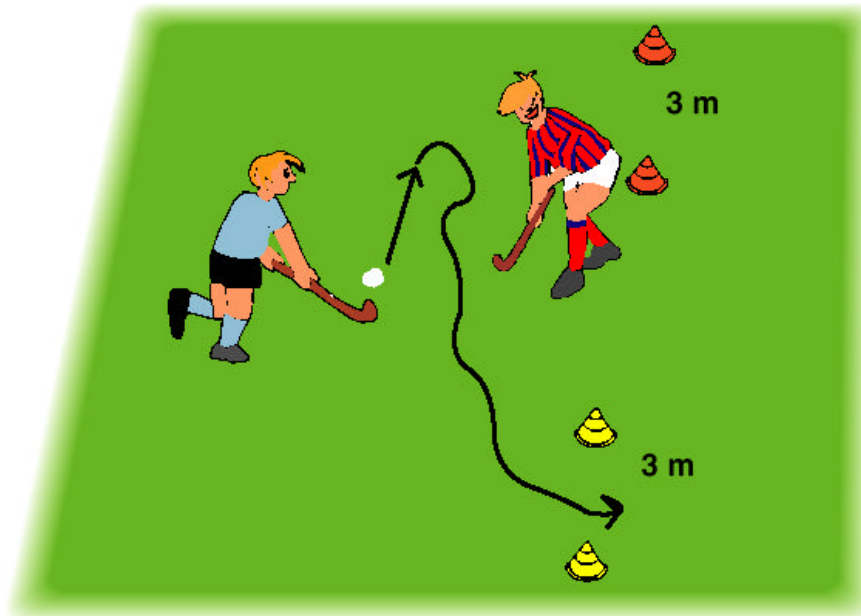


*"A superior player looks for virtuosity, a vulgar one thinks of convenience and ease"*

Confucius

**5TH.TEST:**

See the variation of the exercise. On each side of the defender, 3m away from him, a 3m wide goal is marked with cones. The moment the defender tries to tackle the attacker's stationary ball, situated at a distance of 1.50m, the attacker moves it quickly to one side, out of the range of his opponent and then dribbles it into the goal, which is the less well defended.



In this test the defender has at least two opportunities to tackle and to achieve his objective: to touch the ball and thus to prevent the attacker from scoring. If he fails with his first tackle (a tackle in a frontal position), he must quickly recover his basic ready-position so as to try again, but this time being situated sideways in relation to the attacker. Each player attacks and defends five times.

**7TH.TEST:**

Modifying the test no.7, in each of his 5 attempts, each player must use a different technique to pass the ball through a 3m goal from a distance of 22.90m.

1st attempt: push

2nd attempt: sweep hit with the hands together

3rd attempt: sweep-slap with the hands together

4th attempt: reverse sweep-slap with the edge of the stick (hands together)

5th attempt: hit with the right foot in front.

In their efforts to win, the players learn to consider, before and after the attempt, the present result of the competition and their opponent's capabilities.

**8TH.TEST:**

After dribbling the ball quickly over a distance of 10m, the player hits the moving ball with sufficient speed through a 2m wide goal placed on his left at a distance of 15m. For every goal scored a point is awarded. The younger player starts the test. In the second leg the players compete in the accurate hit towards the right ("sweep hit" or "reverse sweep slap" with the edge of the stick).

To win the test a player has to score more goals than his opponent.

**9TH.TEST:**

Each of the two players has three balls. After a visible signal is given, each dribbles his first ball from a position 8m away from the 22.90m line. Before touching the line (no crossing is allowed), the player flicks his ball from any distance over the 22.90m zone. Once the flick was executed, he returns to fetch the next ball.

The winner is the player who first master 3 consecutive flicks over the 22.90m wide area.

*“The only way to make strong people is through struggle. The best comes from difficulties”*

## *Organizing the Decathlon*

There are various possibilities for organizing a decathlon competition. Two of the best options are to structure the decathlon as either a 2-day or 10-day competition.

**Two-day competition:** an unlimited number of participants run through five tests each day. You can organize the games so that the decathlon is an individual competition or a team competition. To create an **individual competition**, choose between these options:

1. In each test a player meets a different opponent. Players draw lots to choose the pairings for each of the 10 tests. The winner of the decathlon challenge is the player who wins the most tests. If there is a draw between two or more players, use Test 10 or Test 2 as a tiebreaker.
2. In each test a player meets the same opponent. The coach or teacher checks on the pairs to ensure that two players of very similar technical, tactical, physical, and constitutional level face each other in all 10 tests. The winner of the decathlon challenge is the player who wins the most tests against his personal opponent.

In a **team competition**, two teams (clubs or schools) compete, both with the same number of players. In each event, a player from one team meets a player from the other team, changing opponents for each of the 10 tests. The winning team is the one that wins the most tests.

**Ten-day competition:** only one of the 10 tests will be organized during each training session, and the winner will be sought from among all the participants. If there are fewer than 7 participants, have them all compete against each other until the winner is established. If there are between 8 and 14 participants, divide them into two groups, the winners of which meet in the final.

If there are 16 or more players, a knockout tournament is organized, and both the winners and the losers play their final rounds.

### Introducing Each Event

To introduce one of the 10 tests in the training session for the beginners do the following:

1. First prepare the playing area and select two players for demonstration. Then explain step by step the rules of the game (test), slowly demonstrating how the game develops, until all players are clear about the rules. Ask several questions to the players to be sure that the rules are understood and everybody knows how to win the test. Finally, a full demonstration of the test takes place.
2. Give all players the opportunity to practice with a chosen partner for three to five minutes to gain experience in the game (test).
3. After the practice, the beginners should explain in a short dialogue with you their first experiences for winning the test.
4. As coach, you should select who is playing against whom and where (what playing area) their first competition will occur.
5. The first competition takes place.
6. Discuss why one player won and the other lost the first game or test. Discover together the reasons for the win or loss.
7. Use a couple of corrective exercises to isolate an important aspect of the test (for instance the technique and tactics of tackling in the 1-on-1 situation, different dribbling techniques) that adversely affected the performance of the players. Then help the children practice that aspect.
8. Second competition takes place (the winners play against the winners, and the losers play the consolation round).
9. Together with the young players, work out the necessary skills and capacities to win the test. The aim is for all players to have a complete understanding of what to do in every moment of undergoing the competition test (game). That is why one or two more corrective exercises should be practiced to help to overcome any deficiencies observed in the beginners. Sometimes taking one step backward can be the best way to advance.
10. Third competition takes place to establish the most skillful players in this test.

## 2-ON-2 TRIATHLON

The triathlon competition focuses on different basic, collective situations of the hockey game. Players experiment not only with how to pass, dribble, receive, or tackle but also with when, where, and why to do it, always considering the play of another teammate as well as one or two defenders. By practicing the three simplified games here, players learn to read the situations and react accordingly, despite the increasing complexity of the games. The following figure shows how a triathlon competition can be organized. In this example the different teams designated as Europe compete against the teams designated as Africa until a winner is decided. You can use the blank spaces next to each triathlon game to record scores.

COMPETITION FOR TEAMS FORMED BY 2 PLAYERS:

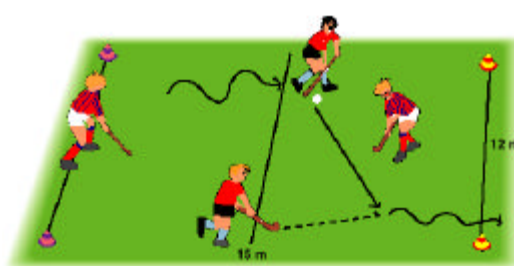
**EUROPE AGAINST AFRICA**

Teams	ITALY	GERMANY	BELGIUM	WALES	ENGLAND	SPAIN
Names of players						

Teams	Sth AFRICA	KENYA	ZIMBAWE	GHANA	TANZANIA	EGYPT
Names of players						

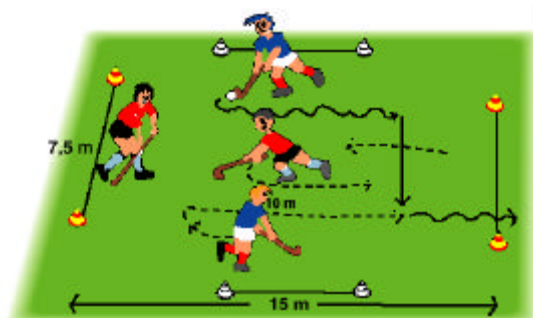
**1st GAME: TWO AGAINST ONE WITH COUNTER-ATTACK (4x2 min.)**

Match	Result
ITA – KEN	
GER – ZIM	
BEL – EGY	
GAL – GHA	
ESP – TAN	
ENG – RSA	



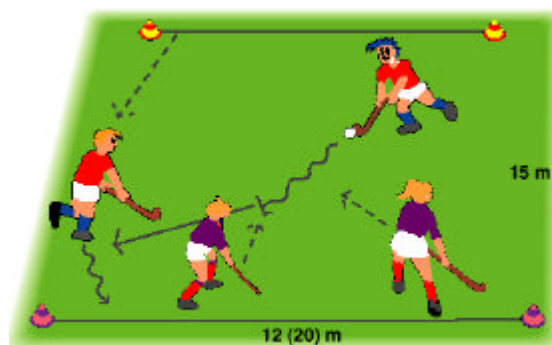
**2nd GAME: TWO AGAINST TWO WITH 4 INTERSECTING GOALS (3x3min.)**

Match	Result
ITA - ZIM	
GER - EGY	
BEL - GHA	
GAL - TAN	
ESP - RSA	
ENG - KEN	



**3rd GAME: TWO AGAINST TWO WITH TWO WIDE GOALS (3x3min.)**

Match	Result
ITA - EGY	
GER - GHA	
BEL - TAN	
GAL - RSA	
ESP - KEN	
ENG - ZIM	



**FINAL RESULT:**  
(sum of victories)

**EUROPE** against **AFRICA**

— : —

Technical Delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

### ***2 on 1 with counterattack***

- During the two minutes of play for each trial, two players alternately attack the 10-meter-wide goals defended by one opponent.
- After a successful defense, the ball is passed by the opponent to the other defender at the opposite goal, who tries to score.
- After having lost the ball, the attackers should tackle back in their own half of the playing area.
- To score a player must dribble the ball across the opponent's goal line.
- After two minutes, switch the attackers with the defenders.
- Free hits or dribbles should be executed no less than 3 meters from the end line or centerline.
- Playing time: 4 times, 2 minute each trial, for 8 minutes.

### ***2 on 2 with four intersecting goals***

- The field should have four goal areas, each 7.5 meters wide.
- Each team attacks the two goals assigned to it and defends the other two.
- Free hits and free dribbles should be executed no less than 3 meters away from the goal lines.
- To score, the ball has to be dribbled across one of the opposing goals.
- Playing time: 3 times, 3 minute each trial, with 1 minute's rest in between trials.

### ***2 on 2 with two wide goals***

- Set up the field to be 15 meters in length and the goal cones to be 12 meters (width) apart.
- Free kicks or free dribbles should be taken from no less than 3 meters' distance from the goal line.
- To score, the player must have the ball under control in the goal area.
- Playing time: 3 trials of 3 minutes, with rest intervals of 1 minute between trials.

---

**NOTE:** It's not permitted to change the composition of any team during the competition in the TRIATHLON 2 on 2.

The basic game situations of Level 1 provide children with a solid foundation. Having played and practiced these games, the young players have had adequate stimuli to make their training both effective and enjoyable: they are starting out on the right foot. Coaches can continue to build on this foundation by exposing their players to the simplified games in the next chapter—Level 2.



*“There is a little to be gained, and much to be lost, by attempting to force young players into the full game before they are physiologically, biomechanically and cognitively ready for the activity. One of the fundamental goals of teaching is to ensure that every player has a high level of success. Therefore we need to assess the development readiness of the players in each group”*

David Hemery in ‘the Pursuit of sporting excellence’



## Games for Mini-Hockey Level 2



**D**uring a hockey game players face a succession of more than a hundred problems that they must solve as best they can. They must correctly observe and analyze each particular game situation to make wise decisions about these problems. Once the decision is taken, they must quickly carry out the appropriate technique without any loss of time. **The speed in the decision-making process and in the execution of the skill frequently distinguishes skilled players from less talented or capable ones.**

*“The game of hockey doesn’t progress through an accumulation of many championships or tournaments, but through a continuous development of original ideas.”*

Spectators and journalists often explain the poor performance of young players by pointing to a lack of experience. Too often, this missing experience is because the players have not been given sufficient opportunities in the learning process to read the game and respond to different game situations. Furthermore, in the beginning years of hockey many young players have faced competitions that were too complex and didn't allow them to gain valuable experience. **A coach too often forgets in training sessions that hockey is played against opponents and, to a large extent, those opponents condition the players' next moves.**

The traditional methods of using repetitive practices of passing, receiving, or shooting drills that don't involve any opposition players have failed to take into account the contextual and cognitive nature of the game. They have tended to coach mainly "how to do it" and neglected "when to" and "why" do it. Instead of spending excessive practice time on controlling, passing, or recovering the ball, coaches should dedicate at least half of the time on understanding the game. It's essential to choose, especially when working with youths older than 10 years of age, methods that don't give priority to technique! Instead of copying and obeying the instructions of the coach, players should learn to understand, then solve on their own the different problems in the context of a simplified game.

**Unfortunately, the decision making all too often remains with the coach**, who continues to confront young players with stereotyped practices that don't demand an active participation of the right hemisphere of the brain (Thorpe, Bunker, Almond 1988).

Instead of continuing to concentrate on predictable practices, which doesn't help the players learn to **cope with the unpredictability of game play**, youth coaches should present the game to children as early as possible in order to allow them to enjoy and understand it. They will thereby stimulate such important capacities as vision, creativity, imagination, decision making, and anticipation. Acquiring these and other important playing capacities doesn't come from practicing just isolated skills, but rather through also participating in simple game situations in which players can learn to respond to the cognitive and physical demands of the game. The coach continuously modifies the rules and the conditions of the simplified game to ensure that all players gain an insight into the game they play. Assuredly, the simplified game preserves the contextual nature of the full game, but without placing too great a technical demand on players still in the early stage of their playing careers.

The following table reveals the advantages and disadvantages of using the analytical method of coaching (concentrating on technique) or the global method of coaching (focusing on real game situations). It is clear that for success both methods must be used in balance.

*"The genuine coach generates ideas and opens the mind of his players. His far-reaching task is to let the others think, instead of thinking for them."*

**ANALYTICAL VERSUS GLOBAL METHOD**

	Analytical method	Global method
<i>Characteristics</i>	Presents one isolated aspect of the game that mainly considers the execution of a technique.	Simulates situations of the real game that are determined by the play of the opponents, the teammates, and the ball carrier.
<i>Advantages</i>	The coach has no difficulty in improving the few aspects that are fundamental to performance of the task. Training this way achieves quick, satisfactory results. It's easy to repeat the same situation again and again until success is assured.	The coach focuses not only on technical aspects but also on tactical, physical, and mental aspects. It takes time to achieve good performance levels.
<i>Disadvantages</i>	An analytic exercise emphasizes only one important aspect of the game or one skill at a time. Although improvement is achieved in this particular aspect of the game or skill, it doesn't guarantee overall development.	Mastery of the fundamental skills is often neglected.
<i>Motivation</i>	In relation to the global method, players show lower levels of motivation.	Because of the total involvement of the young players in the activity, a high level of motivation is observed.
<i>Grades of incidents of the different capacities that interfere in play</i>	<p><u>Capacities of perception:</u> The training situations, little modified, demand little input from the pupils.</p> <p><u>Capacities of decision making:</u> As the tasks are already fixed and known in advance, the players are not asked to make decisions.</p> <p><u>Capacities of skill execution:</u> By concentrating on only one isolated skill, the players quickly learn to execute it, but without knowing where, when, and why to use it.</p>	<p><u>Capacities of perception:</u> Teammates and opponents often face unpredictable situations. Therefore the demands on perception are far greater than those when using the analytical method.</p> <p><u>Capacities of decision making:</u> Following the great variety of different stimuli or problems perceived, the player must first understand and then resolve them as quickly and as efficiently as possible.</p> <p><u>Capacities of skill execution:</u> With the many aspects, less emphasis is put on skill improvement in a game.</p>

*“Give the players access to the game in the first instance, then, as soon as they progress, adjust the focus towards technical precision”*

Brenda Read

## WHAT ARE SIMPLIFIED GAMES?

Understanding the complex game of hockey can be best achieved through the practice of a logical progression of simplified games, with a gradual increase in the numbers of players on the teams. Just as young players are growing physically and mentally, the difficulty and complexity of the simplified games are growing as well.

The games in this chapter are called “simplified” because they have these characteristics:

- **Reduced number of participants**
- **Reduced dimensions of the playing field**
- **Simplified rules that are flexible and adaptable to the existing conditions**
- **Limited numbers of game situations**
- **Simplification of the problems**
- **Easier contexts for coaches to be able to observe, analyze, evaluate, and correct the performance of all players in the game**

These qualities that characterize the simplified games on this CD will have a positive impact on both coaches and players for several reasons, including these:

- Exposing children to simplified games with teams of only two, three, or four players leads to far fewer technical and tactical errors when later competing in more complex games (e.g., 6-on-6 or 8-on-8 Hockey).
- Frequent execution of the same techniques **stimulates the acquisition and perfection of skills**, as does having less distraction by many other teammates and opponents. Moreover, with fewer players, there is more time and space available, facilitating correct execution of techniques.
- To become a good hockey player, a child must learn to perceive with acuity and a wide field of vision the current game situation: the position of the ball, teammates and opponents on the move, location of the goals, and lines on the field. The simplified games not only aid the **progressive development of perception** but also enable young players to analyze game situations and make correct decisions—thanks to the hockey knowledge they have gained through game practice.
- The frequent appearance of the same basic game situations allows players to experiment with different solutions until they are able to resolve on their own the problems presented in the simplified game. Later, when the same or similar game situation reappears in a more complex competition, the player is likely to recognize it and instantly recall a good solution.
- The reduced number of players allows less-skilled youngsters to become intensively involved in the game.



- Because each team consists of just two to four players, the simplified games progressively **develop the capacities of communication and cooperation between players**. These are essential aspects of top hockey performance that have often been underestimated in the past.
- No premature specialization for any playing position occurs; the simplified games make every player play defense as well as offense or attack, on the right and on the left as well as in the center of the field. **Simplified games help develop complete and intelligent hockey players.**

Simplified games contain a reduced number of players, which allows each child to play an intensive role in the game.

Children don't need a high level of ability and capacity or specific hockey knowledge to enjoy training and competing with simplified games. The simplicity of the game itself immediately attracts young players and encourages them to resolve the problems they find in it. After a certain amount of practice, if the coach observes a deficiency (technical or tactical) that is limiting the children's playing capacity, he or she interrupts the game, isolates the problem aspect, and presents the children with corrective activities or exercises. The goal is to overcome the deficiency discovered in the global game.

**For the children, practice appears in a completely different light. Instead of simply working on a skill that the coach has predetermined, the child—having discovered that he or she still lacks something to win the simplified game—is motivated to learn a particular skill determined from the context of the game.** The youngster *wants* to master it to a certain degree. So the mastering of a skill is perceived not so much a prerequisite for playing a game but as a complementary part of it; the training has the clear purpose of raising the level of performance in the game in order to win it. This way drill practice does not "kill" the enthusiasm of the young players whose main wish is always to play, and also win games, rather than mastering a determined skill. **By using simplified games, a bridge is built between the learning of a new skill and its application in a complex game situation.**



Here's a procedure to follow at a training session for introducing a simplified game to your players:

1. Decide on a problem or topic to be investigated (e.g., keeping possession of the ball through passes or running toward the ball when receiving).
2. Set up an appropriate simplified game form to provide the context for exploration and development of the topic.
3. Demonstrate the game with the players as you explain the rules step by step.
4. Give all the players several minutes for practice during which you check whether everybody understands the rules.
5. Set up an appropriate competition for all of the teams.
6. Observe and analyze how they play.
7. Investigate, through frequent effective questioning of all players, the tactical problems and solutions. (See the following section entitled "Effective Questioning.")
8. In order to overcome the deficiencies you discover in observing the game and to convert these into correct habits, present two or three corrective exercises that all teams carry out on their competition fields. You'll find these mainly in the "Dribble Games," "Tackling Games," and "Passing, Receiving, and Shooting Games" sections of this chapter.
9. When the game resumes, once again observe the level of play.
10. Intervene to further develop understanding (demonstrations are often necessary) and present more questions or corrective exercises (games).
11. Again observe critically the development of the play and evaluate the final performance.

## EFFECTIVE QUESTIONING

Coaching is an interaction between the coach and the players. **The teaching and learning process**, therefore, **is a dialogue rather than a monologue**. To enhance performance, develop this dialogue to recognize, value, and utilize the attributes and experience of the players. Questioning demands a commitment from the coach to experiment—because most people have a natural inclination to simply tell! While most of the young players live in an environment dominated by telling, when you coach youth hockey players, you help them much more by trying to involve them in the decision-making process during the practice of simplified games; ask them to apply their knowledge and experience.

Once effective questioning is skillfully employed, it allows many game situations (previously approached through telling or instructing) to be tackled differently and, ultimately, more effectively. These are some suggestions to introduce more questioning in training:

- Develop your own sound knowledge of the simplified game and all its objectives.
- Use as few **"closed" questions** as possible. **Open questions** demand information, whereas closed questions merely call for "yes" or "no" answers.
- Start most of the questions with "What?" "When?" "Where?" or "How much?"
- Ask questions that follow the interests of the player.
- Ask follow-up questions after listening to the different answers.

Here are examples of questions for the first simplified game, "2 on 1 With Two Wide Goals":

- When does the ideal moment arise for passing the ball? Explain!
- When should the ball carrier *not* pass the ball?
- What is the disadvantage of an early pass? Why?
- Where, ideally, should the teammate receive the ball (in relation to the defender)?
- What is your opinion about the distance between the ball carrier and the receiver? Explain your opinion to us with more detail.
- Which attacker should ideally be in the possession of the ball when the 2- on-1 situation arises? Explain why!
- Describe the target of your pass to the teammate.
- What is the outcome if the pass is directed straight into the teammate's stick?
- What happens when the ball arrives behind the target?

- What happens to the target when both attackers move forward?
- What happens when the defender delays his tackle and retreats?
- How does the speed of the pass influence the situation?
- Is it true that the pass has to be faster the closer the ball carrier gets to the defender? Why?
- What is the most natural attacking move to be carried out by the ball carrier?
- How might the technique of the pass vary as the ball carrier gets closer to the defender before passing?
- How would the defender like the attacker to play?



In the same way, you should ask numerous questions about the defense. Coaches are encouraged to revise or adapt these sample questions to the other simplified games.

*“It’s the intelligence which really makes the difference between one player and the others”*



## SIMPLIFIED GAMES FOR 2 ON 2

The simplified game situations in this chapter should be included as part of the young players' training to stimulate and help develop their decision-making abilities and to improve the correct execution and application of the most fundamental technical skills.

### *1st Simplified Game:*

#### **2 ON 1 WITH TWO WIDE GOALS**

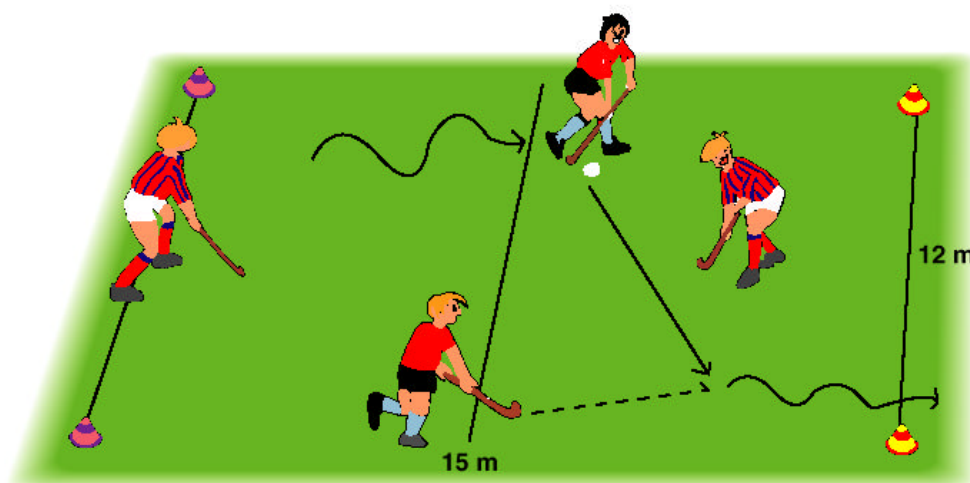
Despite the game's title, four players participate. Two players with a ball, situated in the center of the playing area, alternately attack the goals, each defended by one opponent only. The objective of the attacker is to dribble the ball across the opposing goal line despite the opponent's active defense of it.

The attack toward one goal finishes when

- the defender has touched the ball three times,
- one of the attackers has managed to dribble the ball across the goal-line,
- one attacker infringes the rules, or
- the ball runs across any end line.

In case of an infringement of the rules by the defender, a "free" attack is awarded to the attacking pair. The free attack can be started with a pass or a dribble, with the defender staying no closer than 5 meters.

After 10 attacks (5 toward each goal) or 90 seconds of attacking, both teams switch roles and positions. The pair that scores more goals wins. In case of a draw, a tiebreaker takes place with only two attacks for every team.



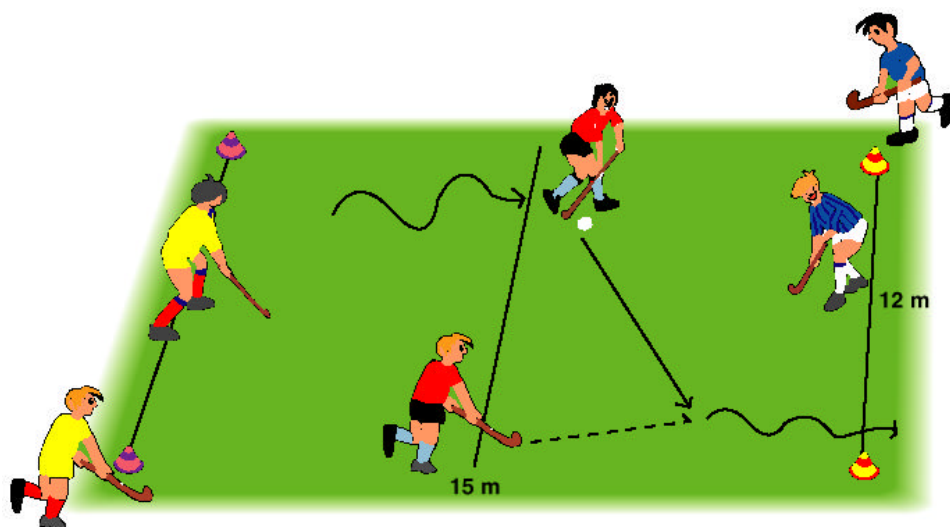
#### **Variation:**

- Use the same rules, except increase the number of players to six. Two players attack one goal, which is defended by an opponent whose teammate waits behind the goal without any rights to defend. The positions and roles of the two attackers and defenders are reversed as soon as a goal is scored (the ball must be dribbled across the

goal line), the ball runs behind any end line, or the defender wins the ball (after three consecutive ball touches). A third pair of players positions itself with one youngster in front and the other behind the opposite goal. The team that scores more goals in four minutes of play wins.

You can use other options to determine the winner:

- The team that manages to score with a dribble continues to alternately attack the two wide goals.
- The team that scores more goals in a row within a playing time of five minutes is the winner.



### Training Objectives:

	Techniques	Tactics
1	Dribble the ball with forehand only without watching the ball.	Lift the view whilst dribbling in order to be able to analyse the game situation.
2	Beat the defender on his reverse stick side, on his forehand or with a tunnel.	Wait for the precise moment of passing (not too early and not too late), without entering into the range of action of the defender.
3	Beat the defender after having carried out a dummy pass to the left or to the right.	Know when to pass and when to dribble.
4	Pass the ball on the run towards the right with forehand.	Communicate with the teammate before passing.
5	Pass the ball on the run towards the right with the reverse stick.	Pass the ball with speed and accuracy.
6	Pass the ball on the run towards the left.	Adapt to the behavior of the teammate.
7	Receive the ball on the run from either side with forehand or with reverse stick.	Look for a correct positioning before receiving the ball.
8	Execute a lunge tackle, a block tackle, a tackle in retreat or a jab tackle.	Select the precise moment of tackle and know how to delay it.
9	Simulate a tackle with a move of the body weight and/or the stick towards the ball.	Tackle in a side-on position and look out for the one-to-one situation.
10		Anticipate the attacker's play, considering the position of the player without the ball as well as the position of the ball in relation to the feet of the ball carrier.

To improve the youngsters' understanding and learning, the functions of attacking and defending are separated in this first simplified game. Depending on the level of the players, the width of the goal may have to be made wider or narrower. Once the attackers are able to score 7 or more times in 10 attacks, a more difficult and complex game or problem should be presented to them (see the following simplified games). **After introducing the game, it's good to organize a practice of at least five minutes, thus allowing the players to face some of the game's potential problems without experiencing the pressure of a competition.**

After the children have practiced one simplified game sufficiently, that activity may serve in one of the following training sessions as an internal competition in which several teams play, somewhat like a tennis tournament with the knockout system. The winners of the first matches advance to the winners' round; the group of losers determine the winners among them in a consolation tournament (see the sample organization chart for such a tournament).

### Modifying the Rules

As you coach a simplified game, it's sometimes good to change one or even two of the given rules slightly—once the players have gained experience in the practice and in the competition of the original game. The modification of any rule will undoubtedly vary the possible responses of the players, technically, tactically, or physically. Coaches should have the capacity to modify the rules of any activity depending what their intentions are in following up on the changes.

These 10 modifications of rules might be applied to the first simplified game:

1. Every team disposes of 10 attacks without time limits.

*Training objective:* to understand what to do in attack as well as in defense.

2. The attacks use only 90 seconds of the playing time.

*Training objective:* to gain more experience in all positions.

3. The right attacker may execute only one pass to the left or dribble past the defender after a dummy pass.

*Training objective:* to be able to overcome the defender with a single action (a pass or a dodge with or without preceding dummy pass).

4. The left attacker may choose between a pass to the right with the reverse stick or with the forehand or a dodge.

*Training objective:* to know the most efficient way to resolve the 2-on-1 situation.

5. A goal is considered valid only when the last control of the ball was executed on the run.

*Training objective:* to receive and control the ball on the run.

- 6.** Every team uses 20 seconds for attacking both goals as often as possible with a recovery of two minutes before a new attempt is launched. Every team has four chances to score a maximum number of goals.

*Training objective:* to launch quick attacks.

- 7.** Both attackers must play the ball at least once with the reverse stick .

*Training objective:* to stimulate the play with the the reverse stick.

- 8.** During the development of the attacks, both forwards must switch positions.

*Training objective:* to use the switch systematically.

- 9.** Both defenders may tackle in any part of the playing area. The attackers start from the center and may score in either goal area. Attackers and defenders switch functions after 10 attacks.

*Training objective:* to create an intentional 2-on-1 situation.

- 10.** Each team attacks and defends two 1-meter-wide cone goals. To score, a player must control the ball inside one of the opponent's two goals, set 12 meters away from each other.

*Training objective:* to ascertain the width in attack.

By asking the attackers *to score after the control of the ball inside the wide cone goal* with a shot into a regular goal placed 12 meters behind the cone goal, the attackers will gain additionally experience in the conclusion of their attacks.

### Corrective Exercises

It is important to wisely select and apply one or two corrective exercises or games after youngster compete in the simplified game. **Learning, consolidating, and perfecting at least some technical, tactical, or physical aspects of the simplified game is best accomplished by training outside of the context of the global game—and with the help of various specific corrective activities.** It is not enough that a coach diagnose what the players did wrong. The coach must find the roots of the players' problems and apply appropriate remedies as soon as possible (almost immediately) after the error or problem occurs. With systematic and repetitive application of corrective activities (always right after the competition in a simplified game), the coach can transform the player's spontaneous or natural behavior (often not the correct or most efficient one) into a better one (usually similar to those seen in the adult game).

*“When a simplified game is introduced more than one variation must be offered with different grades of difficulty and complexity in order to achieve effective learning”*

<b>Spontaneous, Natural and Incorrect Behavior</b>	<b>Elaborated and Correct Behavior</b>
The attacker without the ball is situated too close to the ball carrier.	The attacker without the ball has to stay as wide as possible to make the defense more difficult.
Only for beginners: The attacker without the ball is situated in front of the ball, inducing the ball carrier to play a diagonal pass that is easy to intercept.	The attacker without the ball generally should stay behind the ball for no encouraging the ball carrier to pass the ball through the range of action of the defender.
The attacker without the ball receives it in a stationary position and enables the defender to face and channel him.	The attacker without the ball must receive the ball while running with full speed in order to make optimal use of the space in front of him.
The direction of the pass is conditioning the running free of the receiver.	The position of the receiver always conditions the direction of the pass.
The pass is directed into the feet of the receiver.	Before passing the next moves of the receiver should be anticipated (pass into the run of the receiver).
The moment of the pass is not the precise one. Passing the ball too early or too late results often in the loss of possession.	It's important to select the best moment of passing and to know when to pass and when to dribble.
The attack develops too slowly.	In the shortest time possible the two attackers should profit from their supremacy of numbers (2 against 1).
The attacker with the ball indicates the direction of his pass.	The attacker must learn not to indicate the direction of the pass.
The pass doesn't have sufficient speed.	The ball should be passed also with maximum speed for allowing the defense less time to intercept the ball.
The attackers need more than one pass to play out the defender.	Both attackers should play out the defender with the least possible number of actions (one pass or one penetration only).
In most of the attacks the right attacker is in possession of the ball.	Generally it's easier to play out the defender when the ball is in possession of the left attacker.
The defender runs towards the attacker who has the ball under control.	The defender has to close down the attacker in possession of the ball without carrying out a precipitated tackle.
The defender tackles in a frontal position (shoulder parallel to the goal line)	For being able to condition the attacker and to execute more than one tackle, the defender should assume a side position.
The defender remains on the goal line, leaving all initiative to the attacker.	The defender should act and not react to the attacker's moves.
The defender precipitates his tackle and don't execute any dummy.	For distracting and obliging the attacker, the defender should carry out dummies.
The defender doesn't position himself between the two attackers for inducing the ball carrier to become engaged in a 1:1 situation.	With an optimal position play and dummies the defender should create a 1 against 1 situation.

Every corrective exercise or game proposed here is designed to improve only one or two aspects (see coaching objectives) of the game, aspects that have marred or negatively conditioned the performance of the four players in the previous competition. Consider every simplified game with its specific program of corrective exercises or games as a teaching unit. You can look on the whole program of simplified games for two-player teams as a full season's program, adding only one of the variations in a single training session.

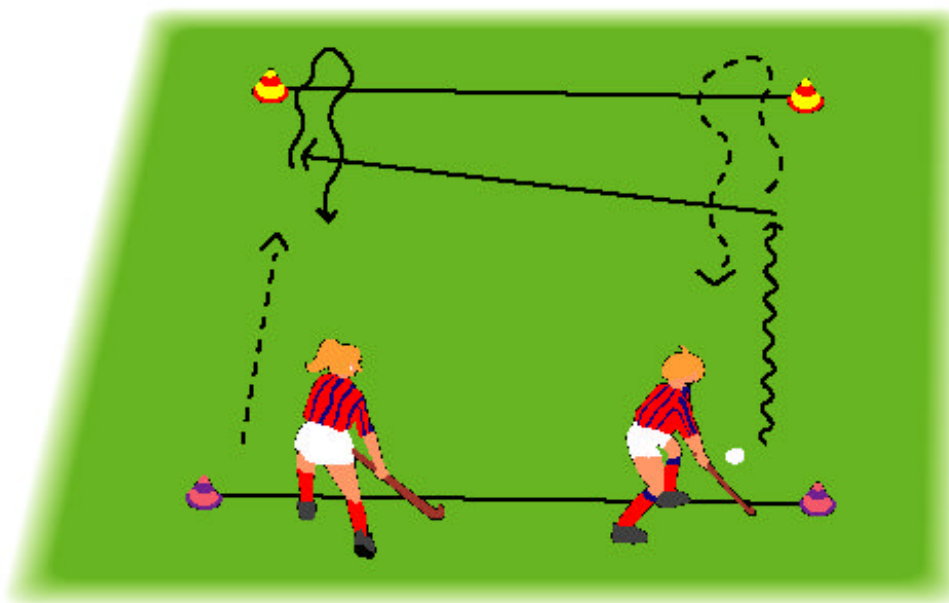
### 1. Pass and Receive on the Run

Use the same playing area of the simplified game "2 on 1 on two wide goals". Two players on the same team, always staying more than 10 meters apart, attack the opposing goal. As a pair, they pass and receive the ball on the run. After they manage to control the ball at one empty goal, they should turn around without delay to attack the opposite goal and so on. The objective is to score 10 valid goals with 10 attacks.

As a variation, two pairs start at the same time from opposite goals, trying to score 10 valid goals first. A goal is not considered valid if

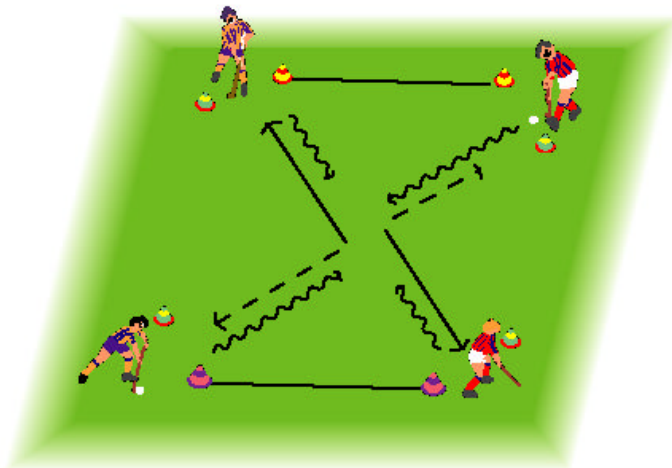
- the distance between the two attackers has been less than 10 meters or
- the player without the ball places himself in front of the ball.

The coach may ask players to mainly use their reverse stick for passing the ball to the right



## 2. Look Left and Pass Right

Use the same playing area but mark off four goals as shown in the illustration. Two players from different teams dribble the ball from diagonally opposed positions to the center of the playing area. From there, each has to pass the ball on the run (with the forehand and also with the toe or the edge of the reversed stick) toward their teammate waiting behind the goal on the right side. Then, it is the receiver's turn to dribble and to pass the ball from the center of the playing area through the goal on his right side to where the former passer ran. In 10 trials every player should be able to score eight times. Before actually executing the pass through the cone goal, the passer must carry out a feint or a dummy pass to the other player at the left side. Care has to be taken, that the reverse stick pass is played without indicating its trajectory through lifting the head of the stick. (see next page)

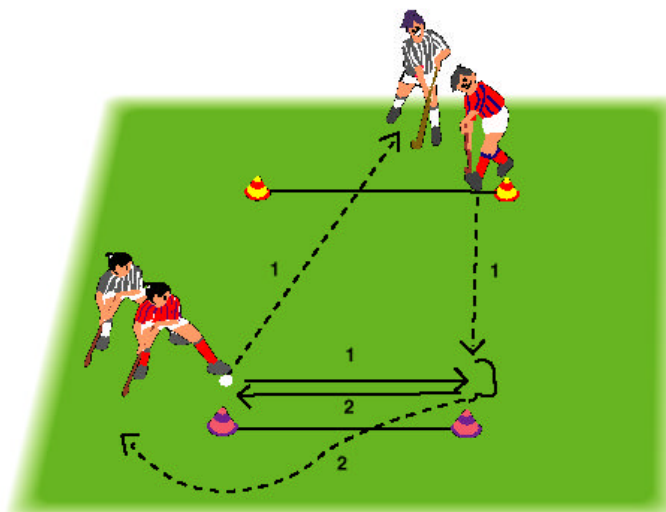


stick pass is played without indicating its trajectory through lifting the head of the stick. (see next page)

## 3. Reception on the Run

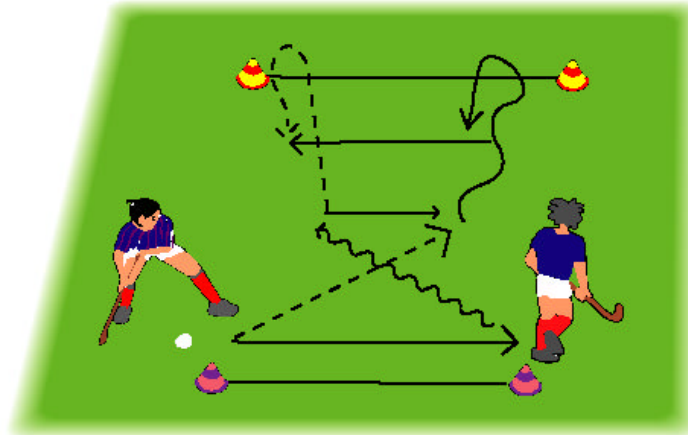
Practice on the same playing field which was used for the simplified game "2 on 1 on two wide goals". Four players occupy the areas at two cones diametrically opposite each other. Player 1, in possession of the ball, receives a visual cue from the receiver, Player 2, in the upper corner of the field, then passes the ball along the goal line toward the unoccupied cone 12 meters across from him. There his timed pass must be received and controlled on the run by Player 2, who then returns the ball, passing it along the same goal line back toward where Player 1 had been. A third player awaits the pass in that corner and does the same procedure as Player 1, passing to the fourth player, who starts from the same corner as Player 2. Meanwhile, after their passes, Player 1 runs behind the fourth player to proceed from that corner and Player 2 runs behind the third player to continue from that corner.

Dependant on where the oncoming ball reaches the receiver (far ahead in front of him, close to his feet or behind him), it has to be controlled with different techniques (with the reverse stick using one or both hands or with the front stick).



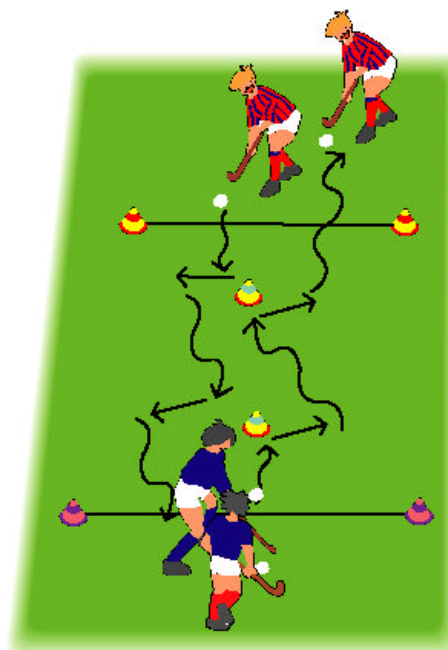
#### 4. The Switch

Again the same playing area is used. Pair up the players. Player 1 sends a pass, and Player 2, having received the initial horizontal pass, dribbles the ball diagonally into the position near his teammate. To avoid having two players be in the same position, the teammate moves behind the ball carrier in the opposite direction and receives the return pass as the player appears behind his shoulder on his right (or left) side. After every switch or dummy switch, the ball is carried across the goal line to start the same process or combination of moves going in the opposite direction.



#### 5. Beating the Defender

Set up the same playing area but put in front of each cone goal a third cone, of a different color or design if possible, to represent an imaginary defender. You create two such goal areas on its right and left side. Call on four youngsters, giving each a ball to start. The four players each dribble a ball toward the first cone (representing an imaginary defender) placed in the center of a goal area, carry out a drag going 2 meters to the right (left), again control the ball, and finally run with the ball under control across the goal line. Then repeat the same procedure on the way back.





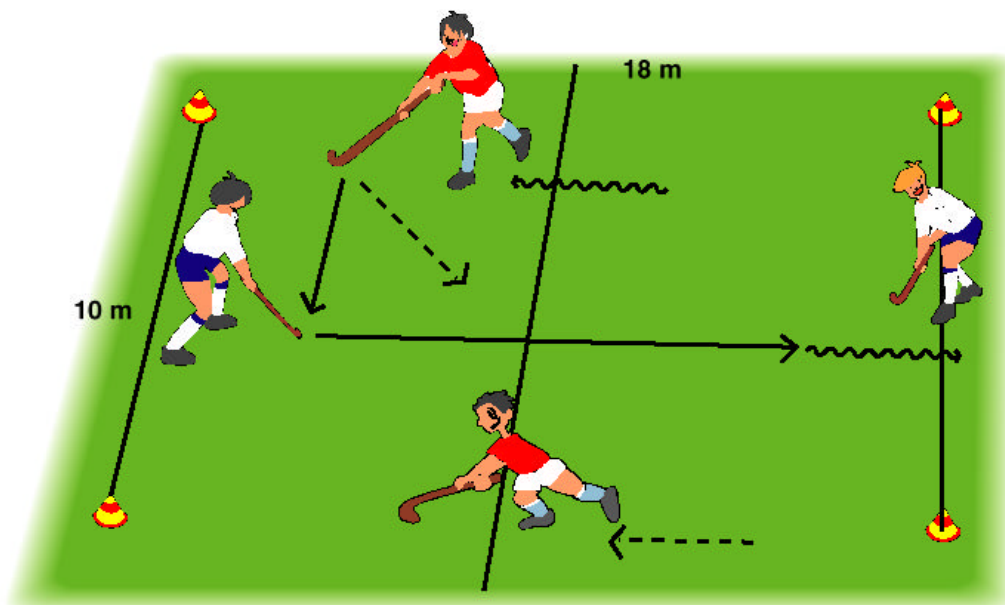
*2<sup>nd</sup>.Simplified Game***2 ON 1 WITH COUNTERATTACK**

Set up two wide goals (about 8-10 meters in width and about 18 meters away from each other) for each field. Divide the children into two-player teams. Each play lasts three minutes, during which two players of one team alternately attack the goals opposite each other. Each goal is defended by one opponent only. To score, one of the two attackers has to dribble (control) the ball across the goal line. The attack is concluded when

- a goal is scored,
- a defender (who has managed to gain possession of the ball ) passes toward his teammate in the opposite goal (after receiving the ball, he should dribble it into “his” goal), or
- there is an infringement by the attackers (after an infringement, a free hit is awarded to the defender, whose task is to pass the ball to his outlet player in the opposite goal).

After an infringement by a defender, the attackers choose between a pass to the teammate or a penetration dribble (in the event that his partner is marked closely). Independent of the result of the counterattack, the next 2 on 1 should be directed toward the opposite wide goal.

The duration of the game is two attacking and two defending periods of 3 minutes for each team.



*“Nothing can be understood completely as long as it wasn't experienced”*

*Training Objectives*

- To look up during the dribble to be able to observe and analyze the game situation and take correct decisions.
- To pass the ball with the front or the reversed stick accurately and with sufficient speed.
- To select the best instant for the pass.
- To understand whether it is more effective to pass or dribble into a less defended area.
- To execute a dummy pass, then suddenly accelerate and dribble past the surprised defender.
- To receive and control the ball on the run and to avoid receptions and controls while stationary.
- To always be available for a pass, adapting to the play of the ball carrier.
- To execute a tackle in a side position both correctly and quickly.
- To adapt the tackle technique (frontal tackle, block tackle, tackle in a side-position, “jab” or tackling in retreat) to the game situation; to know which technique is the most efficient one.
- As defender, to read and anticipate the opponent's play.
- Through maintaining a correct position in relation to the ball carrier, to force that player to do what you want him or her to do.
- As defender, to use dummies to distract the opponent.
- To ensure a quick transition from playing defense to attack and vice versa; to execute a free hit as quickly as possible without indicating the trajectory of the pass.

**Corrective Exercises**

The first three corrective activities are designed to improve the defense, whereas the last three apply to the attack.

**1. Tackling 1 on 1**

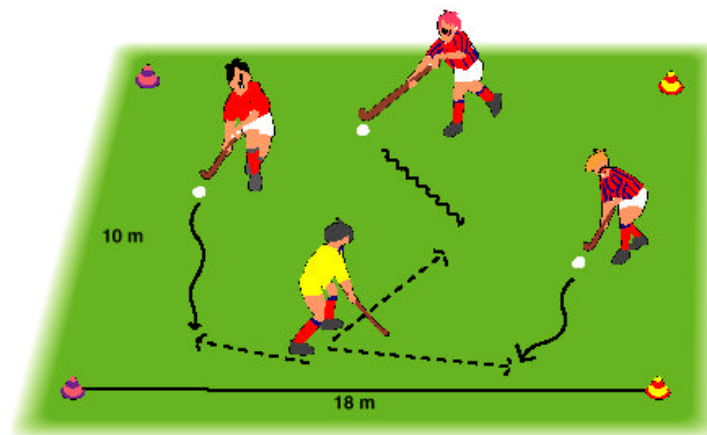
Practice on the same field where the simplified game “2 on 1 with counterattack” was played.. One player of each team enters the playing area, while the other two remain behind their goals (one acts as referee). They substitute for their teammates when one scores with a dribble into the opposing goal or if the ball runs out of the playing area. Have the players draw lots to decide who

gets first possession of the ball, with the defender initially at least 3 meters away. After a goal is scored, the substitute for the defender behind that goal launches the next attack against the substitute for the former attacker.

**Variation:** Start the game as described in Test 5 of the Decathlon.

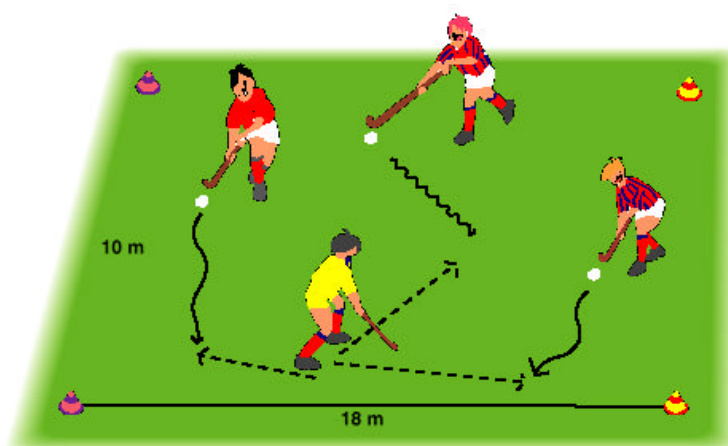
## 2. Best of Six Tackles

Use the same playing area. Give a hockey ball to each of three attackers; designate a defender. The three attackers must keep possession of the ball for as long as possible without leaving the playing area. The defender may only tackle six times. How many times was the defender's attempt to tackle (moving the curve with speed toward the ball) successful? After every player has had a turn at making six tackles, the one with the best percentage wins.



## 3. One Defender Versus Three Attackers

Use the same playing field as in the previous game, and again three attackers and one defender. Practice a tag game in the width of the field first without balls, with attacker trying to get from one side line (18 meters) to the other one at a distance of 10 meters without getting tagged. Then give each of three attackers a ball. All attackers start from one end line with their respective ball and the aim to dribble it to the opposite end line without losing it. Meanwhile, however, the defender may tackle in any part of the playing area. Keep track of how many balls the defender was able to clear out of the area during five attacks.

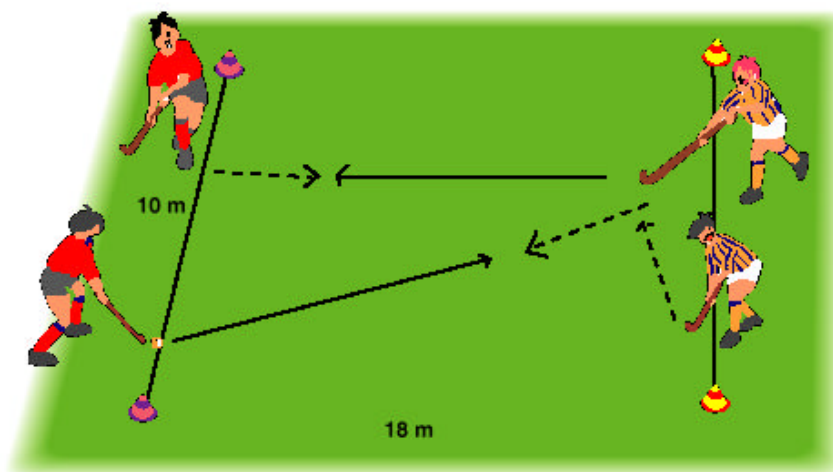


#### 4. Three-Minute Shooting

Use the same playing field dimensions (see illustration) as in the previous two games. Form teams of two players, and have a supply of reserve balls on hand. The team which scores more goals within three minutes is declared the winning team. In order to practice correct habits in the reception and the control of the ball, receivers, in the moment of the execution of the pass, should run from their 10 meter line into the field. Their return pass has to be taken from the same spot where the ball was controlled.

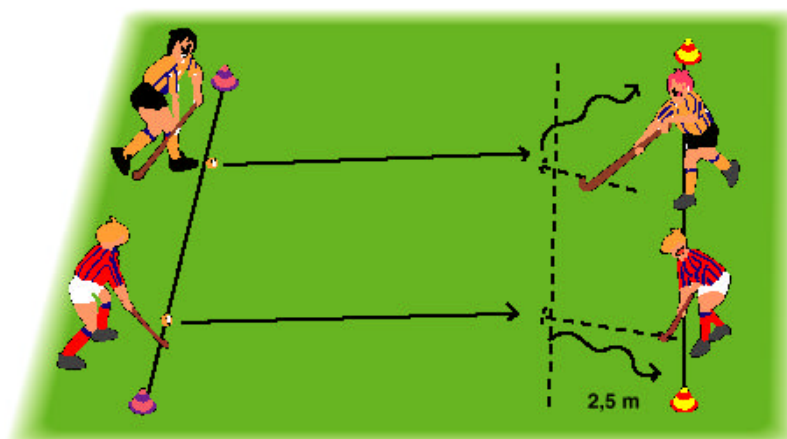
#### Variation:

- Play with two balls.



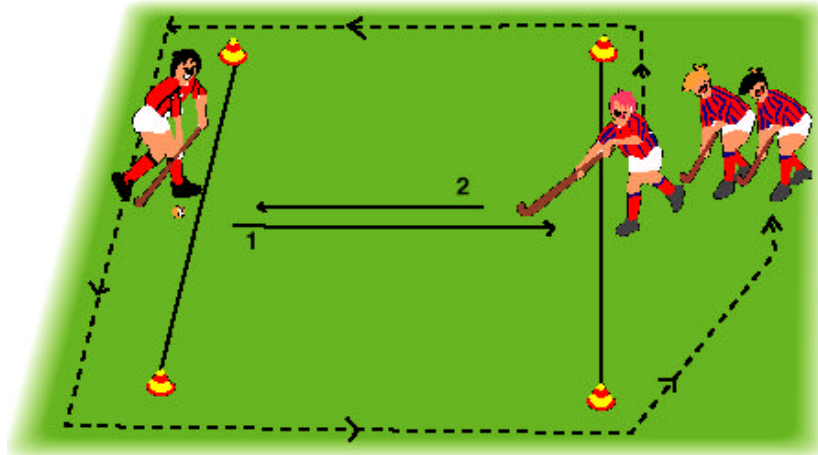
#### 5. Receive and Control on the Run

Set up the field, marking lines as shown in the illustration. After you give a visual signal, one player of each team passes his ball from the goal line toward a teammate. This teammate runs 25 meters into the field (up to the line you have indicated on the field), receives the ball, turns around, and controls it in the wide goal before the second player of the other team can get that team's ball there. After 8 passes the players are asked to exchange roles.



## 6. Relays

Form teams of four players for this competition between various teams. As coach, you should indicate what technique the players should use for passing. One “captain,” without leaving his position in one goal area, passes the ball toward the opposite goal where one teammate (Player 2) receives and passes it back from his goal line. Then Player 2 runs once around the playing area to rejoin his teammates, now being at the end of the line (see illustration). No player may enter the field. The competition finishes when Player 3 has returned the ball to the captain for the second time.

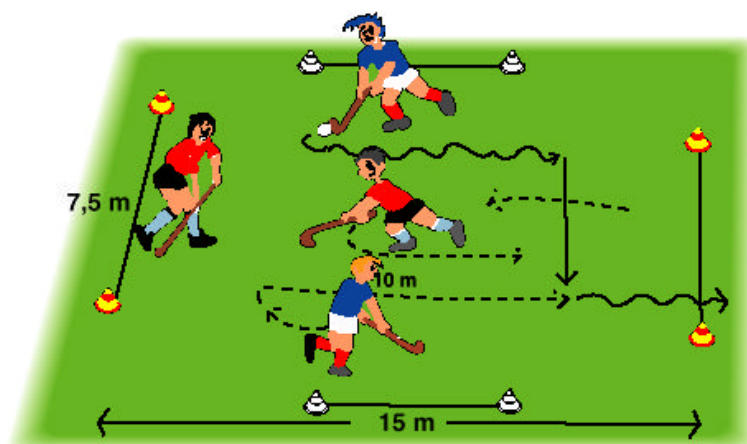


*“Playing without thinking is like shooting without aiming”*

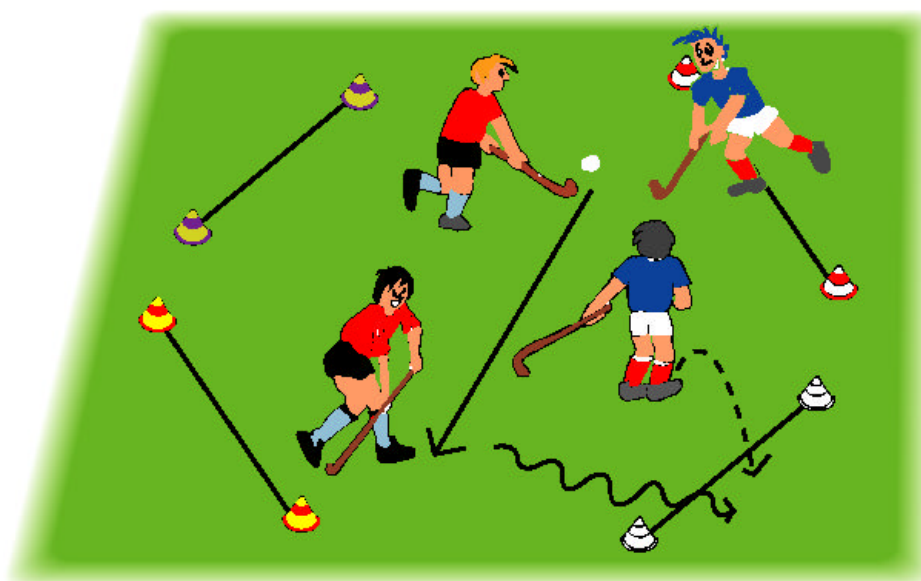
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*3<sup>rd</sup> Simplified Game***2 ON 2 WITH FOUR INTERSECTING GOALS**

Set up four goals that are 7.5 meters wide, as shown in the illustration. Each team of two players defends two opposite goals and attacks the other two. The game is started and restarted with a ball toss at the center of the 15-meter square. When the ball runs out of the playing area or a player commits an infringement, a free hit or "free dribble" is awarded to the other team—with the opponent's and the nearest goal at least 3 meters away. A goal is scored by a dribble across one of the two opposing goal lines. The game's duration should be four periods of 3 minutes each.

**Variations:**

- The cones forming goal areas remain as above, but each team attacks and defends two of the goals that are side by side (rather than opposite).
- Using the same field setup, the goals are defined across the corner cones instead of across the linear cones (see the illustration). Players defend neighboring goals.



**Training Objectives:**

- To know at each moment of the game what is going on (to “read” the game) in order to make correct decisions in attacks as well as in defenses.
- To be capable of systematically creating a numerical superiority in attack by frequently changing direction and speed.
- To be aware of the less-controlled zones of the playing area and systematically use them to your advantage.
- As defender, to force the attackers to play to their counterparts.
- To consolidate the technical-tactical skills of attack and defense that players experienced in the first two simplified games.

**Corrective Exercises:**

Choose and apply the following corrective exercises between two competitions in the simplified game:

**1. Change of Direction**

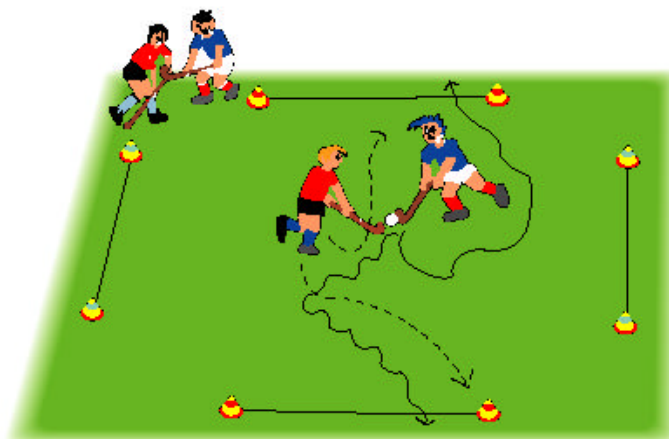
After a signal of the coach one player of each team dribbles the ball between the two cones of one goal. Meanwhile, one of the two resting players loudly counts the number of runs completed. Then the other two opponents practice the same task. Whoever first completes six runs gains a point for his team.

The coach should draw the players' attention to the various techniques for changing direction when arriving level with the post or cone (play the ball with the reverse stick or turn around using only the front stick) as well as to the particular footwork and low body position during the turn.

You can also arrange an individual competition between the four players.

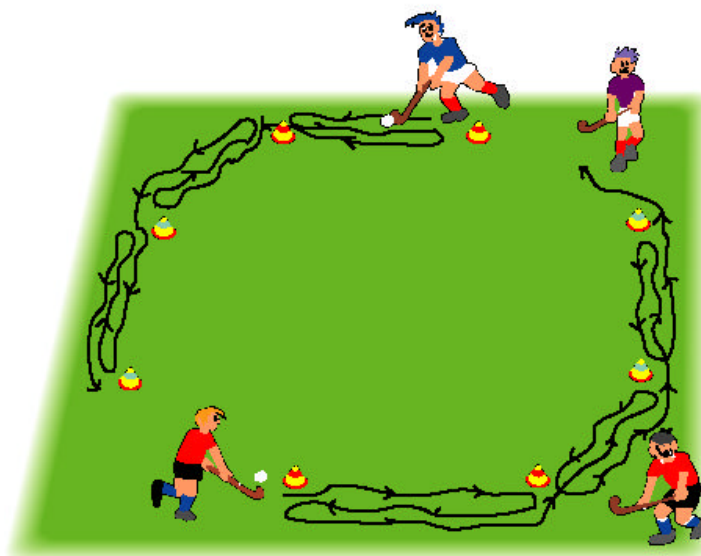
**2. 1 ON 1**

This corrective game begins with a ball toss. The assignment of the goals is the same as in the main game "2 on 2 With 4 Intersecting Goals," but it works best to assign to each player two goals that are side by side. In case of an infringement of the rules, there is a "free attack," with the defender 1 meter away. After each goal the two players are replaced by two others, so they have time to recover.



### 3. Zigzag Dribbling

The practice is carried out on the same field which was used for competing in “2 on 1 With Four Intersecting Goals”. Two players from opposite teams start to dribble from the left post of their respective goals to the right (second) cone, return to the first and from there run to the third, back to the second, then to the fourth, back to the third and finally from there to the fifth cone (the starting point from the opponent). The winner is whoever is first to arrive at the other team’s goal (fifth cone from the start). Work out the quickest way to change direction. While one player practices the dribble, the other player rests and watches the opponent’s run.



### 4. Slalom 8

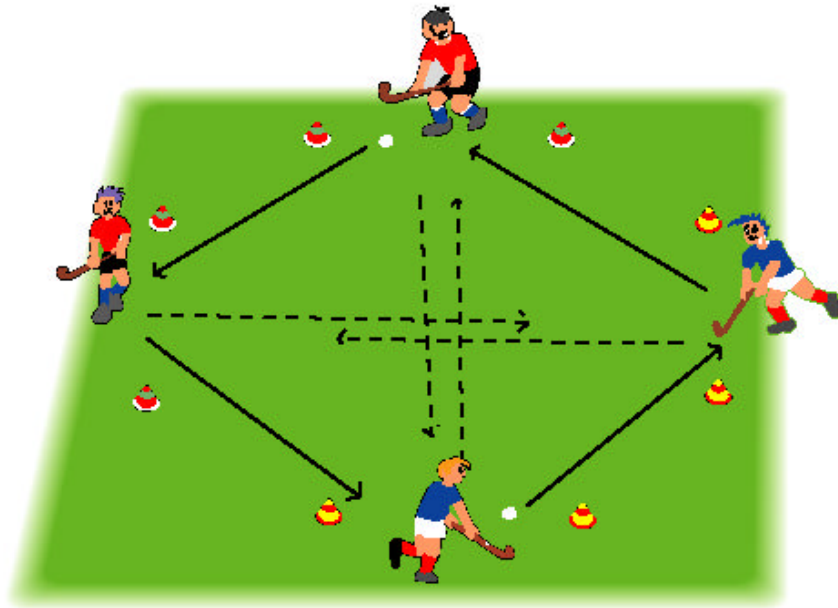
You can use the same setup for the field as with the Zigzag activity. Two players compete at a time, each having a ball to dribble between one goal area, making a figure eight with the dribble around the two cones. The first player to complete a figure eight five full times is declared the winner. While two players compete, the other two should rest. In order to run quicker with the ball, the coach recommends the use of the reverse stick in certain moments of the dribbling. More advanced players should practice with the reverse stick or front stick only with only one hand gripping the handle.





### 5. Give and Go

The same playing area is used. The four players do the activity at a time, making up the same teams. Each player occupies one goal. The two players of one team are situated in neighboring goals (see illustration). This allows them to pass the ball counterclockwise (go clockwise as a variation) through the goal to the teammate. After the pass, the child runs into the opposite goal. Once there, the player establishes a visual agreement with his or her teammate and then receives the ball behind the goal line before passing it again. The pair that first completes one or two rounds wins the competition.



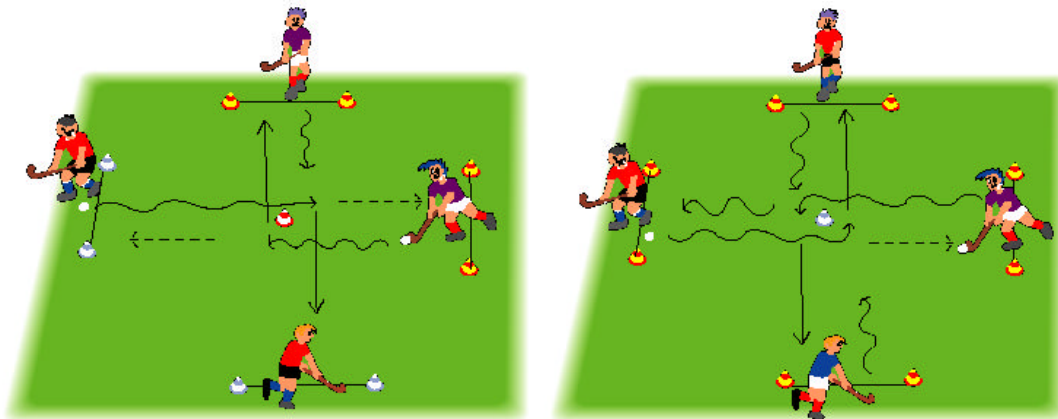
### 6. Quick Dribbling

All four youngsters which played some minutes before the simplified game “2 on 2 With Four Intersecting Goals”, start dribbling their ball from the center of the square through any of the cone goals. The player who first enters all four goals on the field with the ball under control is winner. The goal is considered valid only when the players dribble the ball from inside the field through the goal (see illustration).



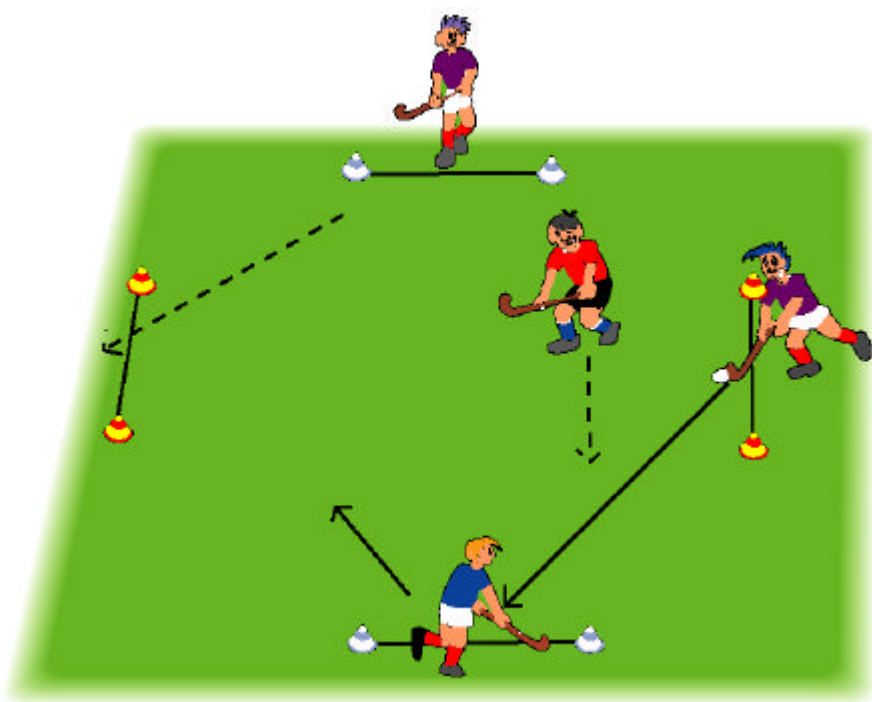
### 7. Pass With the the Reverse Stick and/or the Front Stick

Each player occupies one goal. The two players in possession of the ball, facing each other in opposite goals, dribble their balls past the cone in the center of the playing area. First they run to the left (right) **of the cone**. After having passed the cone, they must pass the ball **to the right (left)** toward their teammate. This game gives youngsters experience in passing the ball with the reverse stick (with the toe as well as with the edge of the stick) as well as with the front stick. After the pass, the player positions himself in the opposite goal to await the next pass from the receiver.



### 8. 3 ON 1

Use the same playing field with four 3-meter-wide goal areas. Designate one defender and three attackers, using one ball. How many successive passes can be executed between the three players against the one defender in the middle without their being forced to play the ball outside of any of the four cone goals?



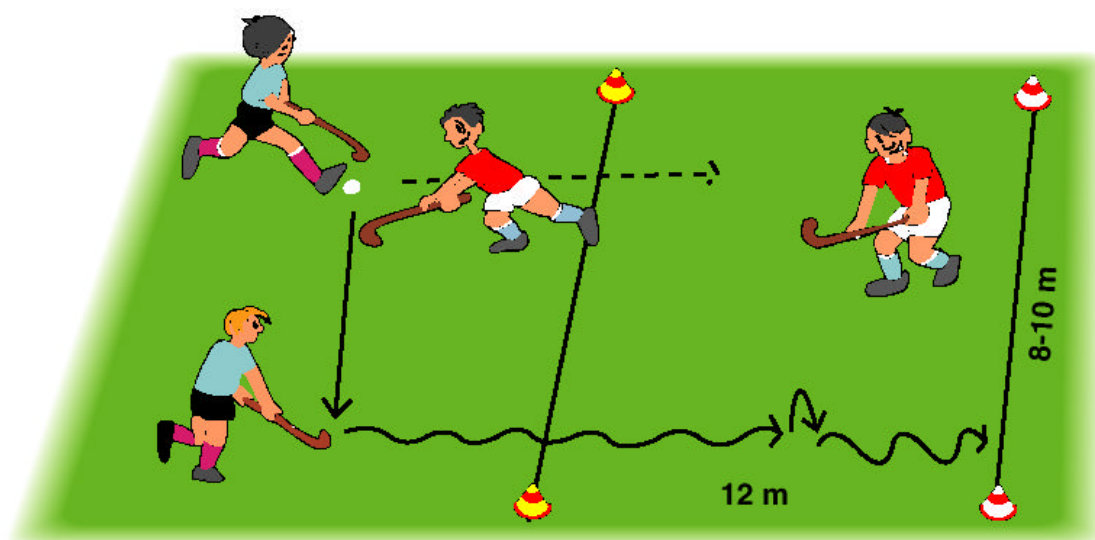
*4<sup>th</sup> Simplified Game***2 ON 1 TWICE IN A GAME**

For this game, set up the playing field as shown in the illustration, using six cones (having two colors of cones if possible to indicate the different end goal areas, each 8-10 meters wide). Designate two teams of two players each. How many times do two attackers manage to play out, one after another, the two opponents who defend individually in front of their respective goal? To score the ball must be controlled by the attackers on each end line.

Use a coin toss to decide which team starts to attack and which defends individually the two goals situated in a row. No defender may tackle behind his goal line, but the second defenders may come forward of the goal when his teammate in front of him has been passed by the attackers. An attack finishes when

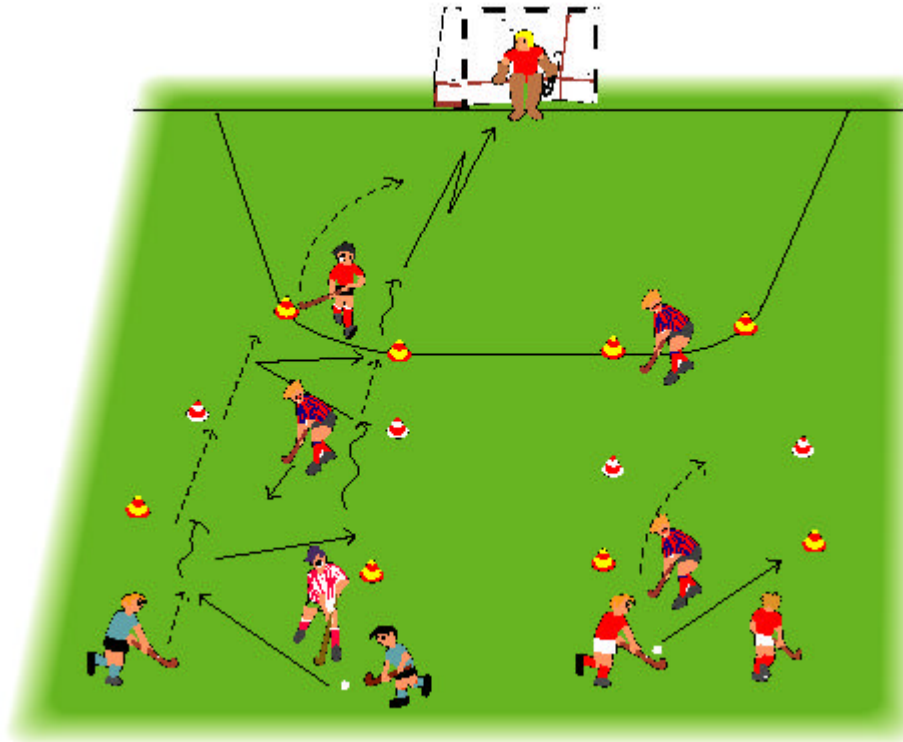
- two goals are scored,
- one of the two defenders manages to take the ball away from the attackers,
- the ball runs out of the playing area, or
- one of the attackers commits an infringement of the rules.

In case of an infringement of the defenders, the same rule may be applied as in the previous games.

**Variations:**

- Propose a time limit for the execution of the attack.
- A goalkeeper may play in the position of the second defender. He must defend a goal area (set the cones only 3.66 meters apart, as a regular goal). Once the attackers manage to play out the first (or "last") defender, the goalkeeper may run out from the goal line to avoid being beaten individually with a pass to the second attacker or with a push from any distance through the goal. Choosing the most appropriate instant for running out from goal is crucial for good performance by the goalkeeper.

- For more advanced players: youngsters play "2 on 1" three times in front of the penalty area, with the third goal line being part of the circle line of the 6-on-6 Hockey field. Once all three defenders are outplayed, the two attackers practice goal scoring without any delay against a goalkeeper who defends the regular goal.



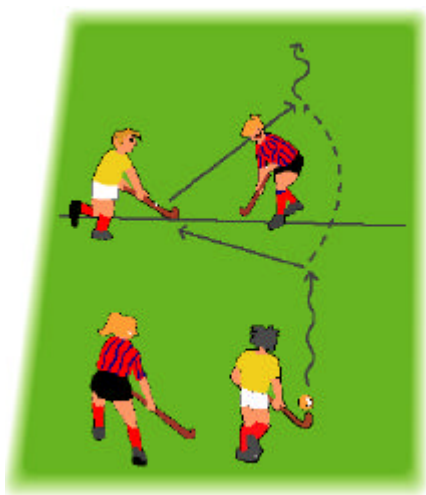
- Use three defenders, but only one of the defenders intervenes at a time as seen on the right side of the above illustration. The first defender begins his tackling in front of the first goal line, and in case the initial tackle is unsuccessful, retreats to also defend the second goal. The second defender, meanwhile, is situated at the top of the penalty area and intervenes after the attackers cross the second goal. The second defender covers the back area together with the third defender, who is the goalkeeper.
- Instead of supporting the ball carrier on one side, now the attacker without the ball, at the start of the attack, positions himself for a through pass. Here he may expect a pass or may wait for the ball carrier to join him after play with the defender in front of the first goal has succeeded. The second defender is not allowed to mark the teammate of the ball carrier; he must remain in his goal until the ball has crossed the first goal line.

*Training Objectives:*

The objectives are the same as in the first and second simplified games for two on two.

**Corrective Exercise:**

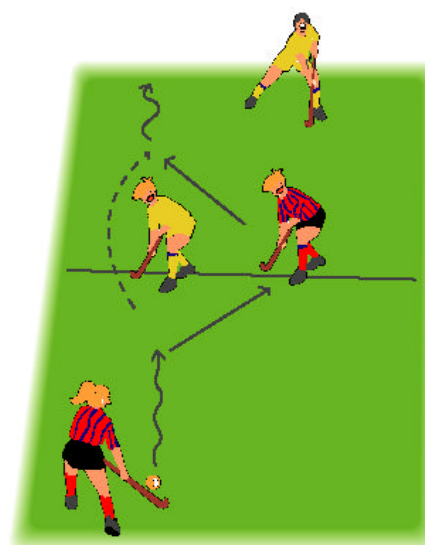
Apply the following corrective exercise to the fourth simplified game.

**Pass or Beat the Defender:**

**Phase 1:** two players, an attacker and a defender, are situated on the goal line. Ten meters in front of the defender, a second attacker dribbles the ball toward him with the intention of beating him individually or passing the ball to his teammate on the left. With a triangular pass (direct or with not more than two ball touches), the attacker on the goal line returns the ball immediately into the run of his teammate who positions herself behind the defender. The latter, without leaving the goal line, tries to intercept the first or the return pass.



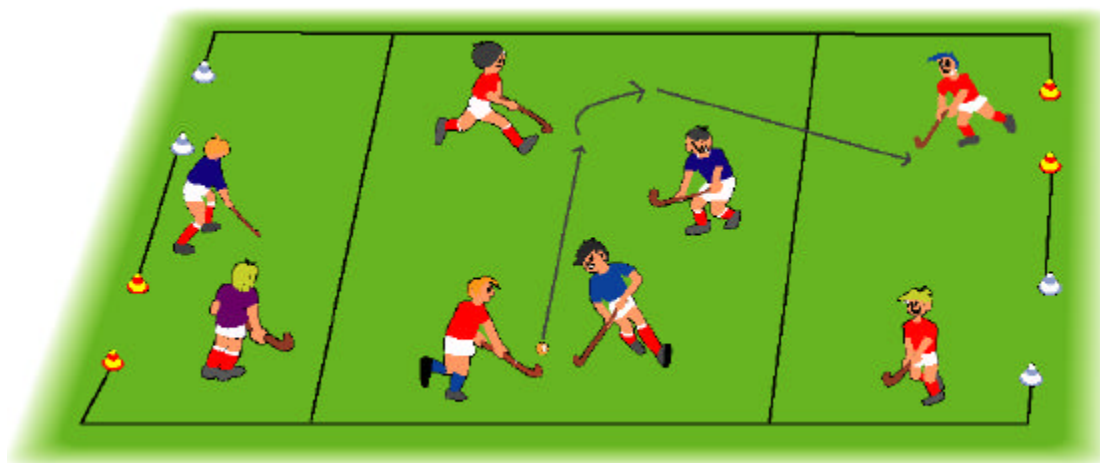
**Phase 2:** after completing the first attack, the second player in possession of the ball dribbles toward the goal to the former passer, beats him individually with or without a dummy—or passes the ball to his teammate on the right. Without delay she (this teammate) returns the ball with a maximum of two touches to the attacker who collects it on the run behind the defender. After 10 attacks of both attackers, carried out alternatively from the right and left sides of the goal, the four players switch positions and functions.



*5<sup>th</sup>. Simplified Game***THROUGH PASSES TO THE FRONT RUNNER**

The game is played on the Mini-Hockey field (see the illustration for the setup) with two teams formed of four players each. Two of the players must always remain in the opposing shooting zone (which is 6 meters deep), waiting for a pass from their two teammates in the midfield. After having received and controlled the ball within their shooting zone, they try to score in either goal. Once the ball enters the shooting zone, all midfield players (attackers as well as defenders) are allowed to join the two front runners. After every goal or any time the ball goes outside of the field, the former defenders restart the game from the 6-meter-line with either a short pass to the teammate or a dribble, the defenders at a distance of at least 3 meters.

Duration of the game: four periods of 3 minutes, with 2 minutes' rest to work out the deficiencies. After every 3 minutes the midfield players switch positions and functions with the front runners.

**Variations:**

- Only those goals scored by one of the midfield players are considered valid. This rule helps all midfield players learn to support the outlet players after a successful through pass.

**Training Objectives:**

- Players learn that before a through pass is played, passer and receiver should connect visually.
- Players learn that during the dribble and reception of the ball, the ball carrier should always be aware of the positions of the two teammates in the depth of the field and the support of the other midfield player.
- Players learn to execute a free hit quickly and before the opposing team has reorganized its defense. They understand that a through pass is preferable to a horizontal pass.

- Players learn to switch quickly from defense to attack and vice versa and to watch for the through pass immediately after having recovered the ball.
- Players learn to hide the direction of the through pass.



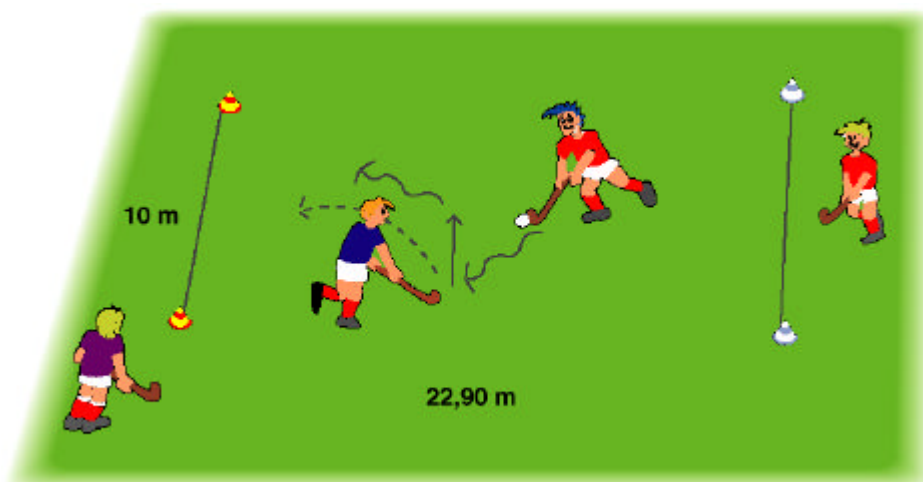
**Corrective Exercises:**

See the last variation of the fourth simplified game (as well as the ninth simplified game, later in this chapter). Other good activities are found in the program's " Receiving, Passing, and Shooting Games", which lists exercises for improving the accuracy and speed of the pass.

*"It's not correct to help the players a lot and do for them the things that they should and can do on their own"*

*6<sup>th</sup> Simplified Game***1 ON 1 WITH SUBSTITUTIONS**

Two opposing players face each other in the middle of a playing area 10m x 22.90 meters with the objective to dribble the ball through the opponent's goal. The younger player attacks first. After a goal or the ball's going beyond any end line, both players must leave the playing area and return behind their respective goals. Meanwhile, the two other players, who have so far been behind the goals, now substitute for them, entering the field for a new one-on-one situation with the partner of the former defender in possession of the ball. The winning team is the pair of players who first manage to dribble the ball through the opposing goal six times.

*Training Objectives:*

There are three objectives for the attackers.

- Keep the ball out of the defender's range of action and protect the ball with the body.
- Vary the play, outbalance the defender, and use speed (especially changes of speed).
- While attacking stay alert and aware of the basic position, the positional play, and the defensive actions of your opponent.





There are three objectives for the defenders:

- Get close to the attacker, generally, with the right shoulder opposite the right one of the attacker and the left foot placed slightly in front. This position allows a defender to channel the attacker to his strong (forehand) side.
- Tackle with speed and aim to surprise the attacker.
- Use dummies to oblige the attacker to show his intention. (Also review the general recommendations or rules for tackling.)

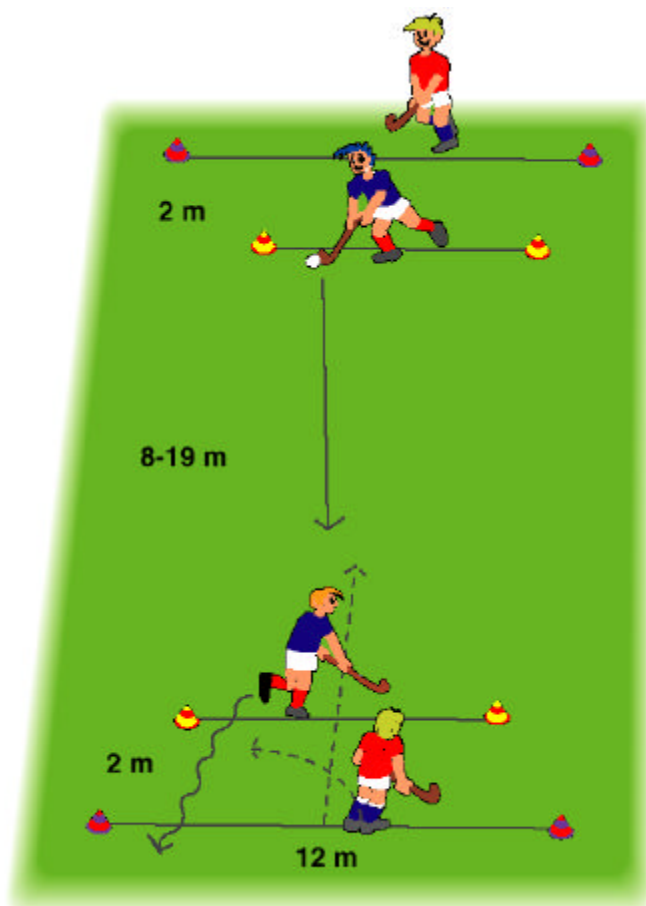
**Corrective Exercises:**

There are many activities to choose among for corrective exercise. See the "Dribble Games," "Tackling Games," and playing one on one on a Mini-Hockey field.

*"We should aim to avoid making mistakes and the secret is not to be in a hurry"*

*7<sup>th</sup>. Simplified Game***CONTROL THE BALL AND BEAT YOUR OPPONENT**

Set up the field as shown in the illustration, with cones set 12 meters apart to mark goal areas. The game is played between two goals at opposite ends of a field that is 12 meters long for the youngest players and 22.90 meters long for the more experienced ones. Behind and parallel to the goal lines you should draw a second line, 2 meters away from the first one. At the instant that the blue attacker passes the ball to his teammate, the latter runs quickly with the red defender toward the ball to receive and control it in front of the cone goal outside the 2-meter zone. The defender is not allowed to tackle in front of the cone goal, but tries to



prevent the attacker from dribbling the ball through the 2-meter zone and across the back line. In case the attacker is successful, the attackers remain in attack and do the same play in the opposite direction. But if the defender gains possession of the ball, touching it three times consecutively, or if the ball runs out of the playing area, the defender gets to switch positions and function as an attacker. The pair that manages to score 10 goals wins. If you have more than four players, you may organize a tournament to establish the best team in passing, receiving under simplified conditions, and dribbling with an opponent.

**Variations:**

- Ask for passes directed into the reverse stick of the receiver to improve the skill of receiving and controlling the ball with the reverse stick and then bring it immediately to the front stick. Players should know and experiment with an “oriented” or “purposeful” and planned control of the ball, anticipating during the reception their next attacking move.
- The defender may intervene beyond the goal line, thus reducing the attacker’s time and space for controlling the ball and to try to win the point.

*Training Objectives:*

- Perfect the communication skills between the passer and receiver.
- Learn to run to the ball, rather than waiting for it to come to your stick, to avoid the defender's anticipating your play.
- Put your body between the defender and the oncoming ball before you receive and control it.
- While beating the defender, try to force him to move to one side; then pass him on the opposite side, using a change of speed and direction.
- Execute as often as possible a control of the ball that will facilitate your next attacking move.
- As a defender, learn to not rush when the attacker manages to control the ball completely. Understand how it is better to move back some steps to help delay your tackle until the ball is a little loose and more available.
- Anticipate the opponent's play.
- Assume an optimal basic position before tackling; always place yourself in a correct line to the attacker.

*Corrective Exercises:*

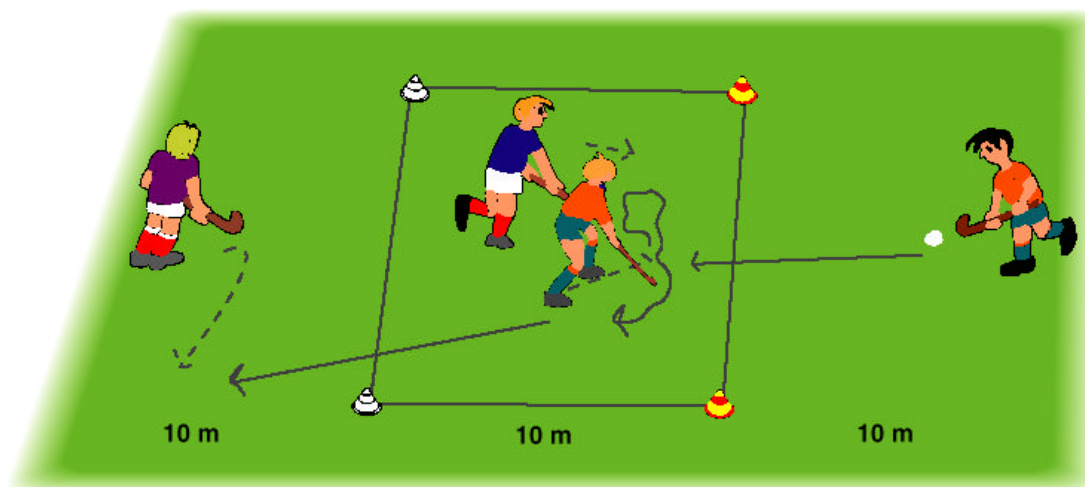
Choose among the tackling games or the fifth corrective exercise given for the Second Simplified Game 2 on 2.

*"The coach or player who doesn't learn from a defeat, will always be a beginner"*

*8<sup>th</sup>.Simplified Game***FREE HIT TO A MARKED ATTACKER**

Four players participate: two play inside a 10-meter square and two are stationed outside, one in front and the other behind the square. Toss a coin to determine which team attacks and which defends. The attacker outside the square executes a free hit to his teammate in the center of the square, who tries to receive the ball despite the presence and defense of an opponent.

For practice purposes the defender should position himself on either side of the attacker or behind him; he may not position himself in front. To avoid the defender's anticipating the opponent's play, the attacker, in the moment of executing the pass, must run toward the ball. Then the attacker tries to receive the ball, control it, and, protecting it with his body, pass it as quickly as possible through the wide goal to the third player behind the square. Player 3 now repeats the actions of the first player, passing the ball to the former defender who is closely marked by the former attacker. The attack is over when the attacker is successful (this scores one point), the ball is run out of the square, or the attacker makes a rules infringement. If the defender breaks the rules, the attackers also get a point. The team (pair of players) that first manages to complete 10 correct controls with subsequent pass to the other player outside the square wins. After completing the first competition, both players of both teams change positions and functions.

**Variations:**

- The receiver may return the ball to the passer, who then restarts the game from any position outside the square.
- The passer and receiver gain two points if the receiver is able to deflect the oncoming ball with one touch directly into the run of the third player.
- Practice with only three players. After every three free hit, the players switch positions. When the defender recovers possession of the ball, he is asked to return it to the passer.

*Training Objectives:*

- Learn to establish mutual agreement between the passer and receiver.
- Be able to “read” how the defender marks his opponent. In case the defender marks him from behind, the pass should be directed into the attacker’s front stick; a marking from any side of the attacker requires a pass to the side uncovered by the defender.
- Improve in choosing the optimal instant to pass the ball to the receiver.
- Learn to facilitate ball control by the receiver’s gaining an optimal position in relation to the defender, putting his body between him and the ball, thus protecting the ball and not allowing the defender to anticipate the attacking play.
- Learn to select the best technique for reception, depending on the successive play. The angle of the stick in relation to the direction of the oncoming ball (90, 60, or 120 degrees) will determine whether the attacker looks first for assuring possession of the ball or to continue the attack from a side-on position as quickly as possible.
- Learn to deflect oncoming balls directly to the teammate.
- Learn to delay the pass after receiving the ball in case playing it would be very risky.

*Corrective Exercises:*

See the Seventh Simplified Game, “Control the Ball and Beat Your Opponent.”

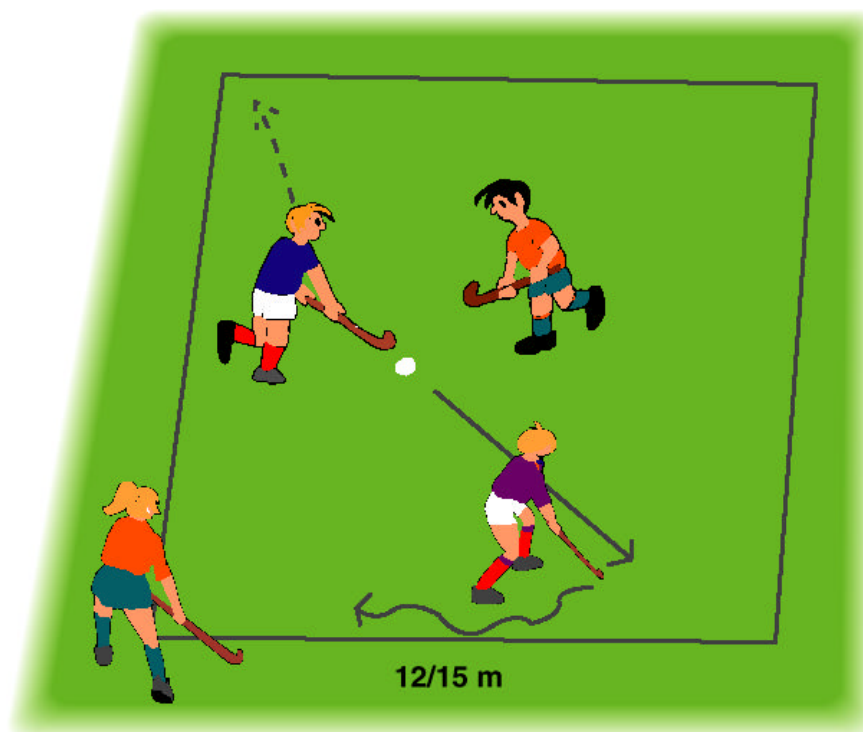
*“The aim of education is not only the acquisition of knowledge; it’s the capacity to undertake actions at an appropriate moment”*

*9<sup>th</sup>. Simplified Game***MAINTAINING BALL POSSESSION 2 ON 1**

In this game, which actually involves four players, two players try to keep possession of the ball inside a square for as long as possible or for 15 seconds. A defender, always starting from the center of the square, does everything to prevent them from achieving their aim. His function is to play the attacker's ball out of the square while his teammate outside of the square (the fourth player) counts the seconds until the ball runs out of the square, or the attackers infringe on the rules. In any of these cases, the defender inside the square switches positions and functions with the fourth player (and teammate) until both have defended five times each in this 1-on-2 situation. After 10 trials the attackers established their record time.

Next, both teams change functions. The first set of (former) defenders now have the chance to improve the result of the former attackers. Whenever a defender infringes on the rules, the time is stopped until the attackers restart the game with a pass or a dribble (!). If there are more than two teams, you might organize a tournament to determine which pair of players can best keep possession of the ball. Players younger than 10 years of age should play in a square that is 15 meters per side. The more advanced the players are, the smaller the playing area should be.

If you have only three players available, the attacker who loses possession of the ball three times becomes defender.



*“Look at your pass from the opponent’s point of view”*

**Training Objectives:**

- Know when to pass and when to keep possession of the ball.
- Learn to continually be ready and open for a pass, to run out of the shadow of the defender, when you don't have the ball.
- While in possession of the ball keep an eye on your teammate as well as on the defender.
- Keep the ball close to the stick to be able to pass it quickly if necessary.
- Look out and make use of the zones that the defender isn't covering. Understand that the greater the distance between the passer and receiver, the more difficult is the defender's job.
- Learn to hide your intentions (the moment of the pass and its direction). Use frequently dummies or feints.
- Avoid entering the defender's range of action; learn to put your body between the ball and the defender in case no pass is possible and the defender is close.
- As defender, learn to reduce the space and time at the disposal of the attackers. Show will power until you succeed.
- Anticipate the attackers' play.
- Execute dummies to condition and direct the attacker's play.

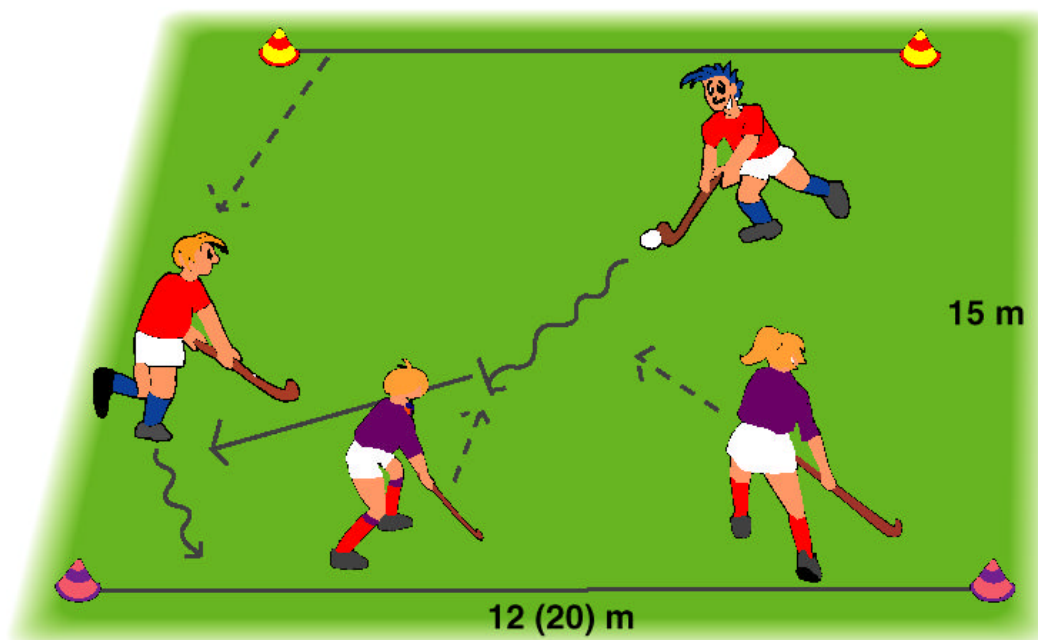
**Corrective Exercises:**

- Offer a tag game with both attackers trying to run from any direction across the playing area without getting tagged by one defender in the field's center.
- Review the first five simplified games for teams of two players.
- Review the dribbling games "Robber and Policeman," "Keep Possession of the Ball," "Cat and Mouse," and "Escape."

*10<sup>th</sup>. Simplified Game***2 ON 2 WITH TWO WIDE GOALS**

Start the game with a ball toss at the center of the playing area (set up as shown in the illustration with wide goal areas, 12 to 20 meters, dependant on the capacity of play of the children ). Divide players into two teams of two players. To score a goal, an attacker must control the ball in the opponent's goal. Usually there are no sidelines. A rules infringement is penalized with a free hit or "free dribble" from a point at least 3 meters away from the opponents and their goal.

Duration of the game: four periods of 2 minutes each.

**Variations:**

- The same game is played using four goals (6 meters wide) , one at the left and one at the right side of both original 12-20 meter wide cone goals. To score, the ball must be dribbled across one of the two opponents' goals.
- The youngsters play the game around an open, 6-meter-wide goal area marked off by cones. The team that does not have the ball uses one of its two players as goalkeeper, and this player may not leave the goal line. But once that team manages to win or capture the ball, the goalkeeper may go off the line. After one successful pass between the defenders, they obtain the right to attack the goal from any side, with one former attacker defending it. A goal can be scored from any distance.

*"It's important to possess the ball, but more important is to know what to do with it"*



*Training Objectives:*

- In attack, learn to look out systematically for the 2-on-1 situation by frequently dribbling the ball straight to the other defender who marks the second attacker. When this defender turns her interest to the ball carrier, the latter passes the ball to the second attacker who stays wide and controls the ball on the run to give the defense less time to interfere.
- Learn the switch: after a diagonal penetration by the ball carrier, her teammate stays slightly back and then positions himself for a pass with a sudden run behind the ball carrier (see the illustration for the first variation of the 10<sup>th</sup>. Simplified Game).
- Review and continue to work on the coaching objectives for the previous simplified games.



*“As the strictest application of the rules of the game doesn’t mean good umpiring, the correct application of all basic principles of play doesn’t result in the best possible plays”*

## COACHING SIMPLIFIED GAMES

- **Be aware of the progression in the program** of the simplified games for teams of two, three, and then four players.
- **Know the training or coaching objectives of every single simplified game**—as well as how its grade of difficulty and complexity compares with the previous and next games in the program. This enables you as a coach to link the exercise or game with the technical-tactical experience players have gained in the previous games. And by progressing this way, the children, on their own, can resolve most of the problems contained in the game.
- **Consider the players' capacity level** as well as their actual mental and physical state to be able to adapt the dimensions of the playing area, the goals, and the rules to their state of development.
- Objectively **face the actual playing level** you find in your players **with the level they should eventually achieve in their age group.**
- **Offer feedback** and simplified games, preferably in which every player learns the result of the execution of a skill immediately after his effort and knows the reasons why he failed or succeeded.
- **Identify any aspects that are restricting the performance levels of the players,** the causes of an error, and the necessary remedies (corrective exercises or games) to help youngsters form correct habits.
- **Consider the motivation of every player** and create the positive atmosphere during a training session that is essential for learning. Provide every player with sufficient opportunities to experiment with successful moves; present slightly modified situations to consolidate the new experiences players have gained. Always consider youngsters as *active* learners during the training session: psychologists tell us that players learn better when they are given the opportunity to resolve the problems on their own without the help of their coach or teacher.

*"All of us live under the same sky, but none of us have the same horizon"*

Konrad Adenauer

**MODEL FOR A TRAINING SESSION BUILT AROUND THE COMPETITION IN A SIMPLIFIED GAME****0 MINUTE: INTRODUCTION OF THE SIMPLIFIED GAME**

- Rules of the game
- Explanations of the functions of every player during the demonstration of the game
- Finally allow the players time for practice, to understand the game, to ask questions, to respond to the questions of the teacher and to gain their first experience in this particular game.

**25 MINUTES:**

- Quarter finals of the competition

**35 MINUTES:**

- Presentation and execution of two corrective exercises/games which are carried out on the same playing area with the same teams

**50 MINUTES:**

- Semi finals of the competition (winners vs. winners and losers vs. losers)

**60 MINUTES:**

- Presentation and execution of two corrective exercises/games (train in function of the simplified game)

**75 MINUTES:**

- COMPETITIONS FINALS for 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th position.

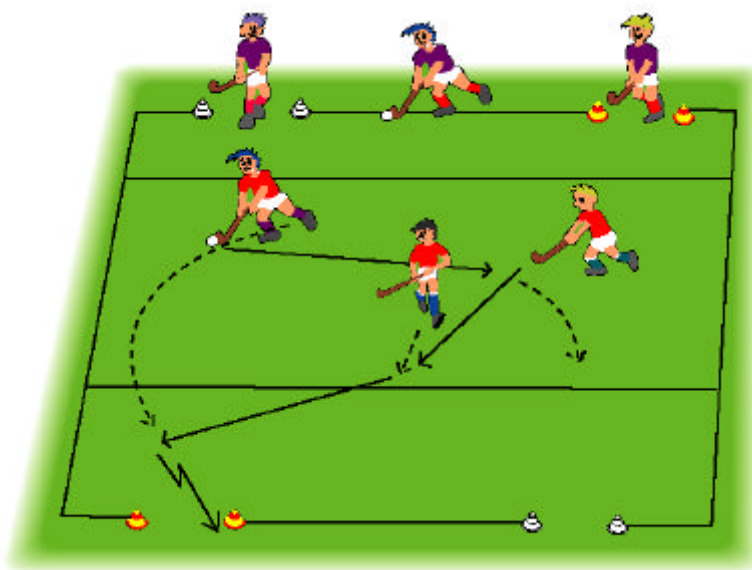
*“When the coaches of today tend to teach the way they were taught in the past, how we can expect progress?”*

## PREPARATORY OR CORRECTIVE GAMES FOR MINI-HOCKEY

The following preparatory or corrective games let the children experiment the most important capacities needed for playing Mini Hockey.

### 1. ATTACKS OF 3 PLAYERS WITHOUT DEFENSE (3 on 0)

Set up a Mini -Hockey or Basketball field, with four goal areas as shown in the illustration and the two shooting zones of 5.8 meters. Choose up several teams, each having three players, that will compete against each other. Each team starts its attack from one end line. Before the team members score in either goal area from inside the shooting zone, every player must have touched the ball at least once. Each team tries to score five goals with five attacks. An attack finishes when the ball leaves the field, enters the goal, or simply misses its aim.



#### Variations:

- Consider a goal valid only if the three players have attacked in a *triangular formation* with a distance of at least 5 meters between them.
- Each player has to touch the ball at least once with his reverse stick.
- All receptions of the ball must be executed on the run. Controlling the ball when stationary is considered a mistake.
- A goal counts only when all attackers conclude the attack in a different attacking position.
- To win the team must score its goal in the least time.
- All variations can be executed, adding a goalkeeper to defend both goals to be attacked by the three players.

To “polish off” and eliminate any deficiencies in the dribble, passing, or receiving skills, the coach should consult the exercise activities or games proposed in “Games for Basic Abilities and Capacities—Level 1” (chapter 3), allowing players ample opportunities to review and practice their developing skills.

## 2. ATTACK 3 ON 1

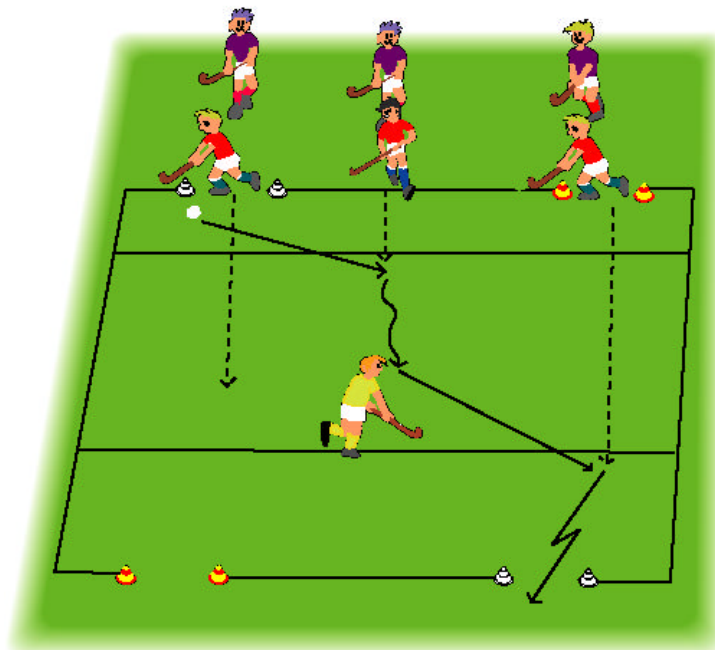
Three attackers start with the ball from one end line of the Mini-Hockey field, but now they must overcome a defender before penetrating into the area to score a goal in one of the two goal areas. Here the attackers learn to

- attack with sufficient width,
- ensure that when they face the defender, the ball is with the center forward (who has the best options for passing),
- execute the pass at the right instant without coming within the reach of the opponent or revealing the direction in which the pass is going,
- execute the pass to the best-situated teammate,
- overcome the defender individually after having carried out a dummy pass, and
- attack in a triangular formation.

The team that scores the highest number of goals within five attacks is the winner. An attack concludes

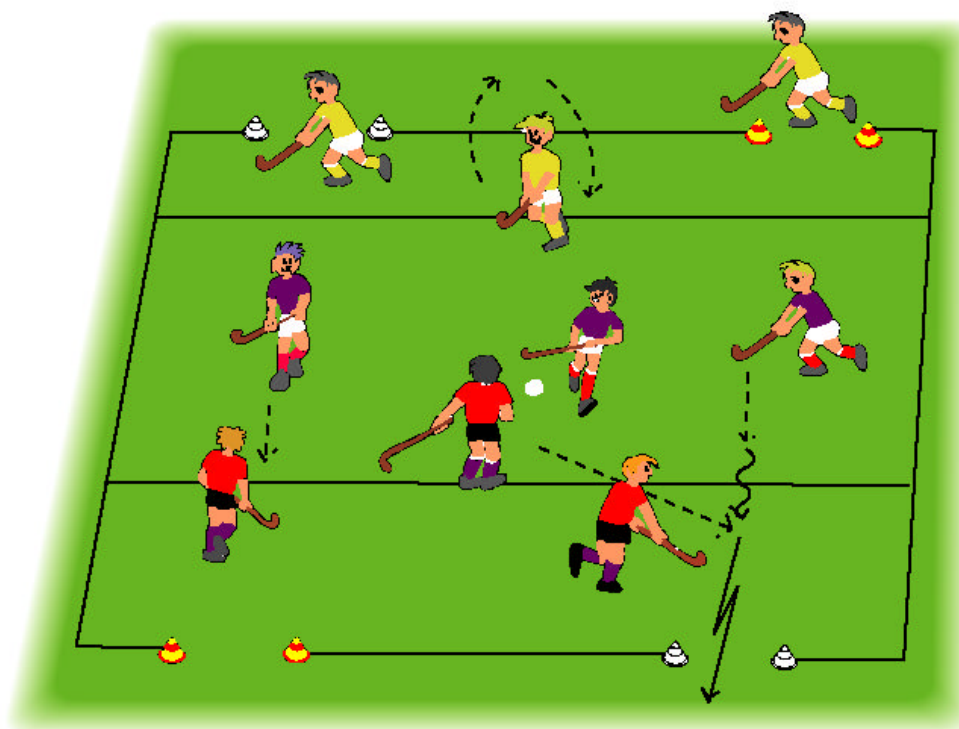
- when the opponent manages to touch the ball three consecutive times,
- when the ball runs across the opposing goal line or any side line,
- when the attackers infringe on the rules, or
- when a goal is scored.

After five attacks, the teams switch places, and one of the former attackers can be defender.



**Variations:**

- After every five attacks, the defender must be substituted by a former attacker. The defender who allows fewest goals to be scored is the winner. To help improve performance, ask the attackers or the defender about the reason(s) for their (or his) failure.
- When the defender manages to recover the ball, he has to score a goal with a pass from any distance through one of the two opposite goals.
- The team needing the least time to score is winner. Question the players to lead them to work out more effective strategies or combinations for attacking.
- The three attackers play against one defender *and* a goalkeeper who has to defend both goals.
- Use three teams to play a 3 on 1 game. The team initially situated in the center of the field alternately attacks both goals on the end lines during 2 minutes (or 10 times). After each attack the defender changes place and function with another teammate, who had been observing the last attack from a position outside of the field. Whichever team scores most goals is the winner.



- See the first variation. A second defender stands 6 to 8 meters behind the three attackers or 6 meters away from any side line of the Mini-Hockey field. When the attackers start from the end line, the second defender runs into the field to help his fellow defender in the opposite shooting zone stop the attack. If the attack is carried out without speed, the 3 on 1 turns into a 3-on-2-situation because the slower action allows the second defender into the play. The attack must be carried out with high speed to maintain the advantage.
- Add a goalkeeper to the last variation.

### 3. ATTACK 3 ON 2

For practicing the 3-on-2 situation, repeat all the variations proposed for the previous two games (1 and 2), first without and later with a goalkeeper joining the defenders.



**Variation:**

- This variation is a game between two teams. The team in possession of the ball alternately attacks the goals on the two end lines. These are defended on one end by two defenders (creating a 3-on-2 situation) and on the other one by a single defender (creating a 3-on-1 situation). After 10 attacks, the teams switch positions and functions.

*“No practice waste the talent”*

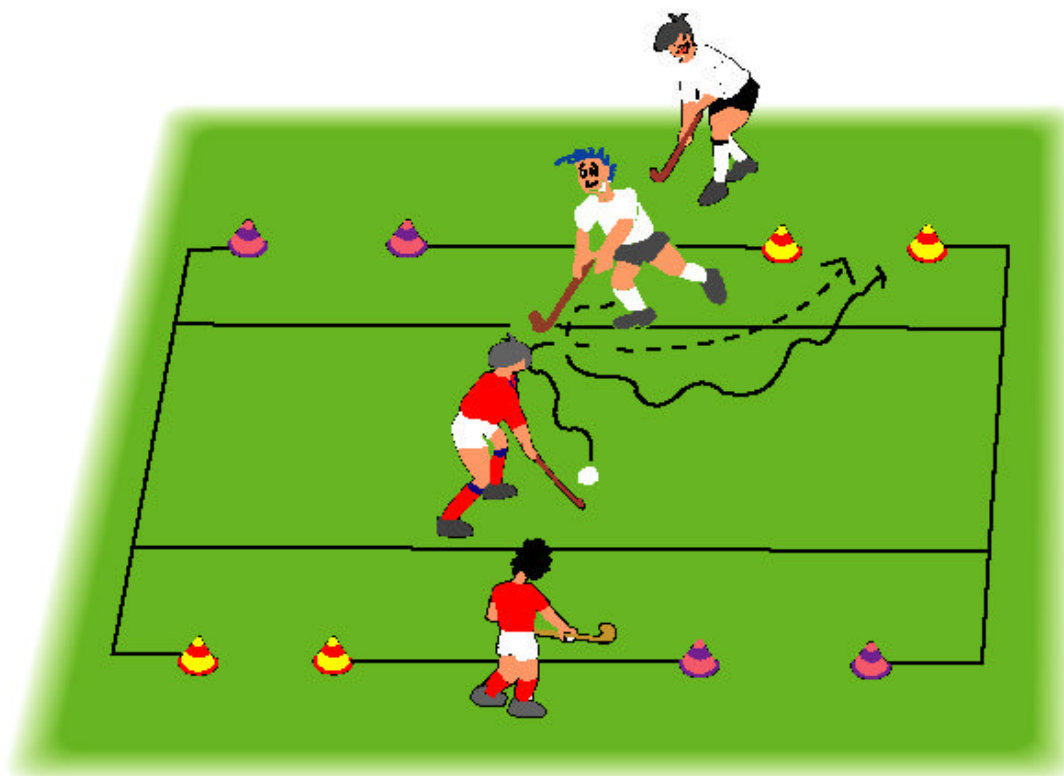
Leonardo da Vinci

## TESTING AN INDIVIDUAL'S PLAYING CAPACITY

Ordinarily, during hockey sessions, you will expose the young players to a varied program of activities, proposed in Levels 1 and 2 level of the Hockey Development Model. For contrast and motivational challenge, however, as well as for your own checking of progress, pick three times during the season to organize a test of their capacity to play Mini-Hockey well. Before you propose the following test, group the youngsters in sets of six players and assign every boy or girl a number.

### 1. 1-ON-1 CHALLENGE

Player 1 challenges Player 2, Player 3 plays against Player 4, and Player 5 competes against Player 6. The game is played on the Mini-Hockey field, applying Mini-Hockey rules. The game starts with a ball toss. While two players compete, the other four wait behind the end lines. When a goal is scored or the ball runs across one end line, two other players substitute for these first two players. In the following challenges between the same players, the one who lost the first competition will attack, from the center of the field, the opponent from a minimum distance of 3 meters. The player who finally manages to score three goals against the same opponent is the winner of the 1-on-1 Challenge and accumulates 1 point for the test. Always have one of the players who is not involved in playing the game act as referee. The official rules of Mini-Hockey without a goalkeeper apply.



*“Playing is essential as sleeping –necessary for your health and your mind- “*



### 2. 2-ON-2 CHALLENGE

A team of Players 1, 2, and 3 plays against a team of Players 4, 5, and 6; that is two teams of three players are formed. Only two of the team's members, however, may play simultaneously. Every time a goal is scored, one player of each team goes off and the third player comes in as the substitute. The team that scores more goals within 5 minutes is the winner. Every player from the winning team gets 2 points for the test.



### 3. MINI-HOCKEY 3-ON-3

Players 1, 2, and 4 form one team that faces Players 3, 5, and 6 as the other team. The game is played with the official rules of Mini-Hockey, without a goalkeeper, during three periods of 3 minutes each. Every player of the winning team will gain 3 points for the test.



The test is won by the player with the highest number of points. If you have 12 players available, form two groups. The first three and the last three will face each other in "playoffs" for the final individual rankings of 1–6 and 7–12.

## LEVEL-2 COMPETITIONS

The variations of Mini-Hockey (without and later with goalkeeper), the Mini-Hockey-Pentathlon, and 3-on-3 Triathlon are **taylor-made competitions for youngsters under 10 years of age**. They all help to unlock, stimulate, and develop the innate potential of the young boys and girls, and in these competitions the coach can ( and should) be more an organizer than an instructor. Because there are fewer players and a playing field of smaller dimensions, the eight- and nine-year old players (but also older ones) will always feel capable. This sense of self-esteem is an important experience for them that can also promote hockey, perhaps instilling this game as their lifetime choice of sport.

Taylor-made competitions in which players can demonstrate their decision-making skills will foster feelings of capability and self-esteem.

### *Mini-Hockey 3 on 3 (Without Goalkeepers)*

Mini-Hockey without a goalkeeper is considered the ideal competition for eight-year-old players. It should prepare these boys and girls to successfully play competitive mini-hockey with goalkeepers the following year. It helps prepare the children to approach the 6-on-6 game. Boys and girls may still play together on the same team.

#### Playing Field

Mini-Hockey is played in an area measuring 20 to 25 meters by 35 to 40 meters, a basketball court (14 by 26 meters), or a handball or indoor hockey or hockey field (20 by 40 meters). On each end line, there should be two 2-meter-wide goals set up with two posts, each 1-meter-high. Usually the goals are set 12 meters apart (on a basketball court this can be 6 meters). The shooting zones are generally determined by straight lines, drawn parallel to the goal lines and set 5.8 meters inside the field (see the free throw line of the basketball court). On handball fields, the circles with interrupted lines in front of both goals will be used.

A goal is scored when the ball, played by an attacker from inside the opponent's shooting zone, completely crosses the goal line between the two posts of either of the two mini-goals. If, the posts have been moved during the match and the ball, in the referee's opinion, completely crosses the goal line at the goal's original position, the goal still is valid.



### Teams

A Mini-Hockey team is made up of only four players, three of them being allowed to play at the same time on the field. The competition should not be played with fewer than three players per team. After either team scores a goal, one player of each team has to be substituted. These players must always enter the playing area at the centerline, after the teammate has left the field at the same spot. In case of an infringement of this rule, the other team will be awarded a free hit or dribble in front of the opponent's shooting area—but at least 3 meters away from it.

### Duration

Include three 10-minute periods when only one match a day is played, with a 5-minute break between the periods. If several matches are played on the same day, the recommended duration of play is two 10-minute periods.

### Technical Rules

A player may not

- kick the ball or play it with any other part of his body,
- use violence, or
- be in an offside position (hockey doesn't use an offside rule).
- pass the ball with a hit (lifting the stick above the ground and use both hands together at the top of the handle).

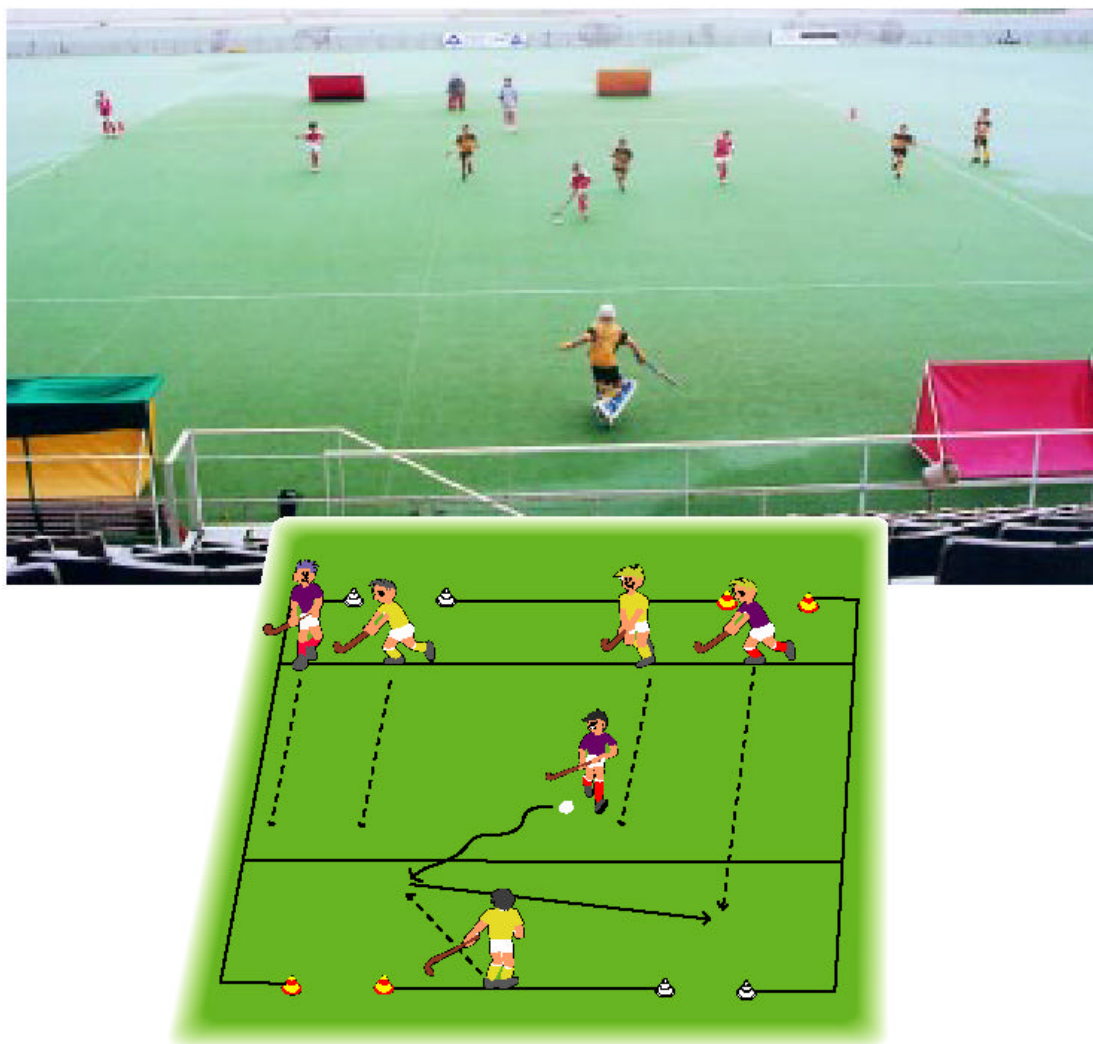
**Free hit:** For any breach of rules in any part of the field (with the exception of the defenders in their own defensive zone), a free hit or dribble is awarded for the other side. To put the ball into play, the young player may choose either to pass the ball to a teammate or to dribble it. All free hits must be taken at a distance no less than 3 meters away from the shooting zone and with the defenders also more than 3 meters off the ball.

**Penalty :** There are no penalty strokes or penalty corners for an intentional breach of the rules inside of a team's own 5.80-meter zone, but the opponent will be awarded a "penalty attack," starting from the center of the field. In a penalty attack all the players, except one defender on the end line, must remain 5 meters behind the attacker in possession of the ball. After the referee has given permission for the attack, they all may interfere in defense as well as in support. The defender starts from the end line. In case of an infringement of the rules by any defender, the free attack must be repeated.



**Comers:** There aren't any corners in Mini-Hockey.

**Push-in and side-out:** The ball is brought into play with a free hit from the sideline or from the 5.80-meter line.



**Start and restart of the game:** Always start or restart the game with a bully in the center of the field.

**Disciplinary sanctions:** Temporary expulsion from play is the penalty for unsporting behavior.

#### Equipment

**Balls:** Using a Mini-Hockey ball for the 8 year old players can help avoid congestion of play and also improve the youngsters' technical abilities.

**Attire:** All players of one team must wear the same color shirt, shorts, and socks.

**Protective clothing:** All players are required to wear shin guards.

#### Referee:

A single referee supervises the match and applies the rules. To promote and school future umpires, children under 16 years of age umpire the Mini-Hockey matches.



Eight Mini-Hockey fields can fit easily into one official-sized hockey field, thus allowing anywhere from 64 to 80 players to enjoy the game at the same time.

*“The game is an integrated element of various dimensions (technique, tactics and physiques) which unfortunately are still taught and trained, in hockey, too often separately and without any context to the competition”*

### ***Mini-Hockey 3 on 3 (With Goalkeepers)***

Mini-Hockey with a goalkeeper is considered the ideal team competition for the nine-year old players. It allows them to spend an entire season preparing for the greater demands of the 6-on-6 game, which they will play the following year. In Mini-Hockey, boys and girls may still play together on the same team.



#### **Playing Field**

This game uses the same field dimensions as in Mini-Hockey without a goalkeeper.

#### **Teams**

A Mini-Hockey team is made up by only five players, four of them being allowed to play at the same time on the field, with one of them playing as goalkeeper. The goalie isn't allowed to leave the shooting area. The competition should not be played with fewer than four players per team.

After either team scores a goal, both teams must substitute one player! These players must enter at the centerline, after their teammates have left the field from the same spot. If this rule is broken, the other side will be awarded a "penalty attack" from the center of the Mini-Hockey field against the opponent's goalkeeper. For more information see the rules on the penalty attack in Mini-Hockey 3-on-3 (Without a Goalkeeper).



**Duration:**

If only one match takes place for the nine-year-old players, the competition should last for three 10-minute periods, with 5-minute breaks between the periods. If several matches are played on the same day (for instance, in a tournament or festival), the recommended duration of play is two 10-minute periods.

**Technical Rules**

A player may not

- kick the ball or play with any other part of his body,
- be in an offside position, or
- use violence.
- hit the ball with two hands at the top of the handle

**Free Hit:** For any breach of rules in any part of the field (except for the defenders in their own defensive zone), a free hit is awarded for the other side. To put the ball into play, the player may choose either to pass the ball to a teammate or to dribble it. All free kicks must be taken at a distance of no less than 3 meters away from the shooting zone, with the defenders also more than 3 meters off the ball.

**Penalty:** There are no penalty strokes or penalty corners for an intentional breach of the rules inside a team's own 5.80-meter zone, but the opponent will be awarded a "penalty attack," which starts from the center of the field. In a penalty attack all the players, except the goalkeepers, must remain 5 meters behind the attacker in possession of the ball. After the referee has given permission for the attack, they all may interfere in defense as well as in support. The goalkeeper starts his defense from the end line. In case of an infringement of the rules by any defender, the free attack is repeated.

**Corners:** Mini-Hockey with goalkeepers has no corners.

**Hit ins and side-outs:** The ball is brought into play with a free hit from the sideline or from the 5.80-meter line.

**Start and restart of the game:** Always start or restart the game with a ball toss in the center of the field.

**Equipment**

The equipment needs ( shin guards, attire, etc.) and the referee recommendations are the same as given in the rules of "Mini-Hockey Without Goalkeepers." A hockey ball with the official weight should be used.

## **Mini-Hockey 3-on-3 Variations**

To add even more variety to the training program, you should let experiment and enjoy your boys and girls these eight Mini-Hockey variations.

### **1. MAKE IT, TAKE IT**

The team that scores with a dribble through one of the 6-meter-wide goals, continues attacking but must now play to the opposite two goals. Immediately after the score, no tackle is allowed in the shooting zone.

### **2. CHOOSE ANY GOAL**

A goal can be scored by dribbling the ball through any of the four 6-meter-wide goals.

### **3. ATTACK DIAGONALLY OPPOSITE GOALS**

Each team defends two diagonally opposite goals and scores through the two remaining ones with a dribble or a shot from inside the shooting zone.

### **4. THREE TEAMS**

One team in the center of the field attacks in both directions. It alternately approaches the two 6-meter-wide goals of the other two teams. These defend, with two players in front of the shooting zone and a third one always inside the zone to be able to cover them in case of necessity.

### **5. THROUGH PASSING**

A goal can be scored only with a pass from outside the shooting zone through the less-defended goal of the opponents. None of the players may enter the two 5.80-meter shooting zones. It's smart to use reserve balls; although accuracy is the objective, that doesn't always occur.

### **6. ADDITIONAL SHOOTING**

The Mini-Hockey field is drawn between the offside line and the center line of the 6-on-6 Hockey field. After one team manages to dribble the ball across one of the two opposing 6-meter-wide goals on the offside line or centerline, *within 2 seconds* the same attacker must execute a shot toward a regular size goal. The shot must be from a distance less than of 14.63 meters (shooting circle), and a neutral goalkeeper should be defending.

### **7. THREE TIMES "1-ON-1"**

One player of each team faces the other in a one-on-one-situation. All pairs play at the same time, with the objective being to dribble the ball across one of the opponent's 6-meter-wide goals. Whoever scores more often in 2 minutes wins. After a goal is scored, the game is restarted from the center of the field by the opponent, with the other player at a distance of at least 3 meters. It's also possible to determine the winning team by adding up the goals scored by the three team members.

### **8. CHANNELLING**

This is a variation to develop an aspect of Mini-Hockey. To encourage the defenders to practice the channeling of the opponent toward an agreed zone of the field, different number of points are awarded for scoring in the left goal (for instance, only 1 point) or the right goal (for instance, 3 points).



## ***Taking Mini-Hockey Further Toward 6-on 6 Hockey***

### **PROGRESSION OF MINI-HOCKEY COMPETITIONS**

1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3-on-3 Mini-Hockey Without Goalkeeper*:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">One player on each side must remain in his or her own shooting area.</p>
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3-on-3 Mini-Hockey Without Goalkeeper:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">One player on each side must remain in the opposing shooting area.</p>
3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3-on-3 Mini-Hockey Without Goalkeeper**:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A goal may be scored only by dribbling the ball across one of the two wider goal areas.</p>
4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3-on-3 Mini-Hockey Without Goalkeeper **::</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A goal may be scored only from inside the opposing shooting area.</p>
5	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3-on-3 Mini-Hockey Without Goalkeeper:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A goal may be scored only from some point in the center of the field.</p>
6	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3-on-3 Mini-Hockey with Goalkeeper ***:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A goal may be scored only from inside the opposing shooting area.</p>
7	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3-on-3 Mini-Hockey With Goalkeeper:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">A goal may be scored only from some point of the center of the field.</p>
8	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3 on 3 on the Mini-Hockey Field With Two Front Runners:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Positioned inside the two opposite goals on the end line, two front runners wait for through passes out of the midfield played by their three teammates.</p>
9	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>3 on 3 on the Mini-Hockey Field With 2 Front Runners and an additional defender (6 on 6):</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The front runners are positioned in the opposing goal area, and an opposing defender is there to intercept the through passes made to them. If this defender can't intercept the pass inside his area, he recovers and prevents the two attackers from further developing the attack (this, then, becomes a 2-on-1 situation, with scoring in a regular goal, established on the 6-a-side field.</p>
10	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>6-on-6 Hockey****:</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Play a free game, without limiting what the players can do, that is, their positions and functions (as in the previous games).</p>

\* The first three games form part of the Mini-Hockey Pentathlon. \*\* See the official rules of Mini-Hockey Without Goalkeepers.

\*\*\* See the official rules of Mini-Hockey With Goalkeepers. \*\*\*\* See the official rules of 6-on-6 Hockey.

## ***Mini-Hockey Pentathlon***

There is no doubt that a young player's versatile preparation is a prerequisite for successfully developing more complex skills later. **The learning of hockey-specific skills becomes extremely difficult if fundamental skills and coordination have been poorly developed.**

As most youth coaches have an enormous desire to win the next match (they hope to become better recognized by the parents and their club), they generally focus the teaching and learning processes exclusively on those hockey-specific skills that, to a high extent, determine the competition's result. They train what the competition obviously demands. Because a competition demands that players execute and apply basic hockey skills, the coaches concentrate exclusively on the players' acquiring and consolidating these skills. There is no time left for creating a rich and varied activity program that forms a solid base for future successes, fewer injuries, fewer dropouts, and greater motivation in hockey.

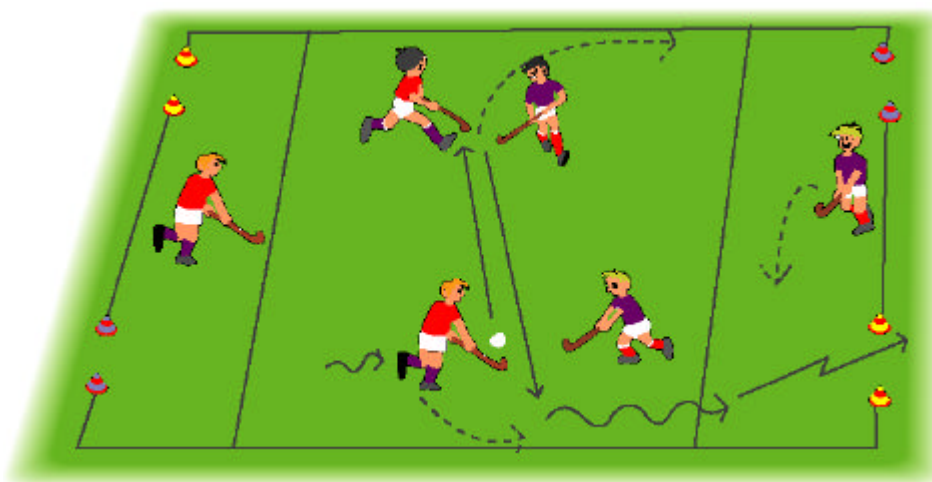
To encourage (or even oblige) youth coaches to include multilateral activities in the training they offer, it's essential to change how we structure official competitions for beginners. **When the actual competition demands only hockey knowledge and specific skills, it's logical that coaches concentrate the players' efforts on practicing them again and again. However, when this competition is replaced by a multilateral one that demands many other abilities—capacities essential for a complete hockey player—it becomes an entirely different matter.**

A Mini-Hockey Hockey Pentathlon springs from these ideas and convictions. To help players win the pentathlon, their coaches will prepare the young players not only with specific skills for the three mini-hockey matches but also with a multilateral training program for the two other games that are inserted between the Mini-Hockey games.

### **1. MINI-HOCKEY 3 ON 3 (Variation I)**

One player of each team must remain within the team's proper shooting zone until one or the other team manages to score a goal. After a goal is scored, all players of both teams must rotate. With the exception of this rule and having no substitutes, the official rules of Mini-Hockey are in force.

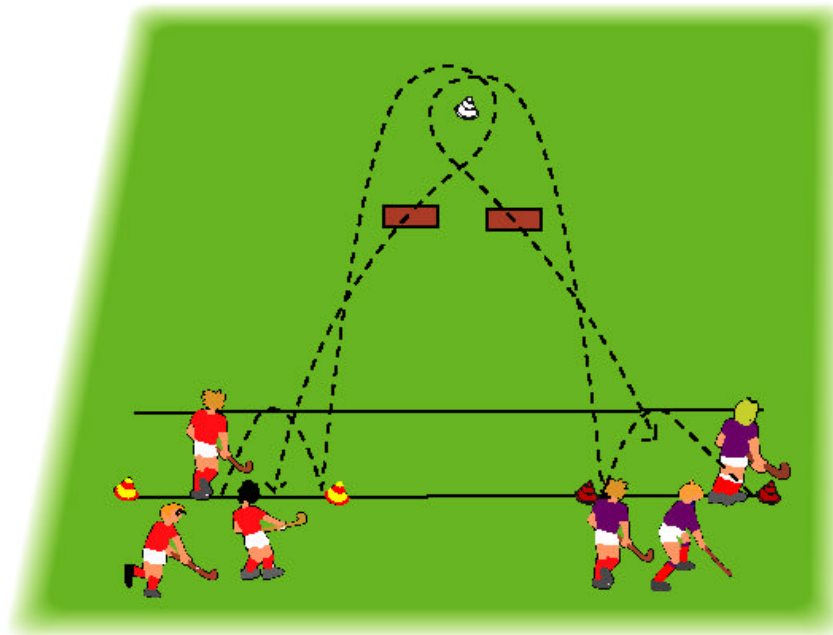
Duration of the game: two periods of 7.5 minutes.



## 2. COORDINATION RELAY

Each team lines up in one of the two goals of one shooting area. Give a visual signal for the first player of each team to do the following:

- Run 6 meters to the limit of the shooting area in order to reach out and touch the line with the stick (1).
- Return to the starting line, where he touches with the stick one of the two cones of his goal (2).
- Turn to the cone situated in the center of the Mini-Hockey field (3), run around it, and head toward the two sticks (which lie square to the running direction on the ground forming a 1.5-meter-wide "river") (4).
- Jump over the "river" (4).
- Continue to run toward the starting line to touch with the stick again a cone of the goal (5).
- Once the cone has been touched, the next player starts doing the same routine. Each player has to run twice.
- The team wins that manages to first complete two relays.



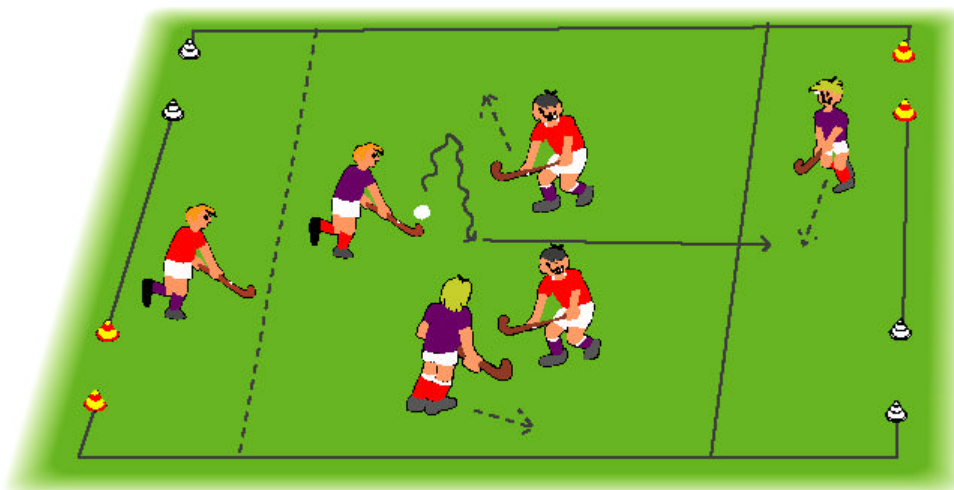
*“Too frequently we give the young players solutions to remember instead of problems to be resolved”*

R.Lewin

### 3. MINI-HOCKEY 3 ON 3 (Variation II)

One player of each team must remain in the opposing shooting zone where he stays open to receive through passes and then score in either goal. After every goal, the three players from each team must rotate positions. Once the ball enters one of the shooting areas, all four midfield players may move into these zones for defending or for giving support.

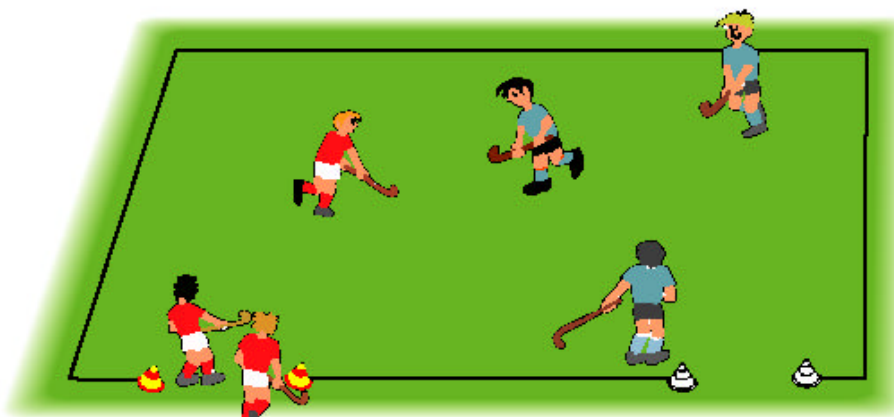
Duration of the game: two periods of 7.5 minutes.



### 4. TAG TWO ROBBERS

One team, made up of three "police officers," is stationed in its headquarters (one of the two goals of one shooting zone). The coach signals the start of play, and they run one after another into the shooting zone where three robbers have to avoid being tagged by a police officer (cop). Once a cop has managed to touch two different opponents, he returns quickly to his headquarters to give his fellow cop (tag him or her with a touch) the right to chase two of the three escaping robbers. The relay or tag is over when all three police officers have done their job and have returned to the starting point. If one of the three escaping players moves out of the shooting zone, this counts as a successful tag by the cop. To establish the winner keep track of the time each team needs to "arrest" the thieves with two touches. Every team has to tag and escape twice.

The players practice running without or with the stick which they should carry in the right hand only.



**5. MINI-HOCKEY 3-ON-3 (Variation III)**

The official rules of Mini-Hockey Without Goalkeepers (and without substitutes) apply. Duration of the game: two periods of 7.5 minutes.



The duration of the entire pentathlon is about 70 minutes like an official game of hockey. The team that wins at least three of the five tests is declared grand winner of the Mini-Hockey Pentathlon.

*“The natural order accounts for progressive development through time”*

### 3-ON-3 TRIATHLON

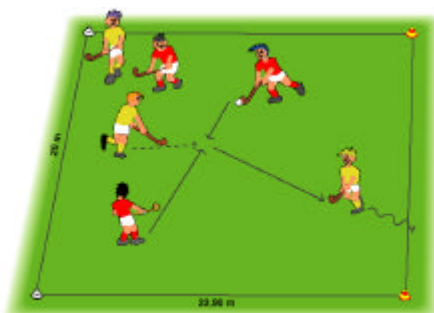
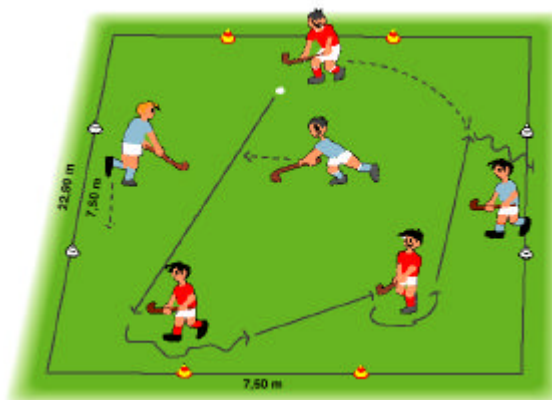
#### ASIA AGAINST AMERICA

Teams	INDIA	PAKISTAN	JAPAN	MALAYSIA
Names of players				

Teams	ARGENTINA	CHILE	USA	CANADA
Names of players				

**1st GAME: 3-ON-3 WITH 4 INTERSECTING GOALS (4x3min)**

Field	Match	Result
1	IND-ARG	
2	PAK-CHI	
3	JPN-USA	
4	MAL-CAN	



**2nd GAME: 3-ON-2 WITH COUNTER-ATTACK (4x3 min.)**

Field	Match	Result
1	IND-CHI	
2	PAK.USA	
3	JPN-CAN	
4	MAL-ARG	

**3rd GAME: 3-ON-3 WITH TWO WIDE GOALS (4x3 min.)**

Field	Match	Result
1	MAL-CHI	
2	JPN-ARG	
3	PAK-CAN	
4	IND-USA	



**FINAL RESULT:**  
(sum of victories)

**ASIA against AMERICA**

\_\_\_ : \_\_\_

Technical Delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3-ON-3 WITH 4 INTERSECTING GOALS

- Each team attacks the two wide goals assigned to them and defends the other two.
- there are no side-outs.
- free hits should be taken not less than 3m from the goal line.
- bully at the start of the game.
- to score a player has to dribble the ball from a spot inside the field across one of the two opposing goals.
- duration of the game: 4 x 3 min. with 1 min.rest..

### 3-ON-3 WITH COUNTERATTACK

Duration: 4 times of 3 min.

- During 3 min. One team attacks alternately the two 20m-wide goals.
- Two opponents defend the goal whilst the third is placed in the opposite one,waiting for a pass from his team mates.
- After each attack the defenders have to rotate :one of the two joins his team mate in the next goal for a two against three-defence.
- Once the ball has been lost by the attackers, these should tackle back immediately but never behind the centre line.
- A goal is scored with a dribble across the goal line. Both teams may score .
- Every 3 min. Change between attackers and defenders.
- The free hits should be taken not less than 3m from the goal-line.

### 3-ON-3 WITH TWO WIDE GOALS

- Dimensions of the field:20m x 20m with goals 20m wide.
- Bully to start the game
- Free hits should be taken not less than 3m from the goal lines.
- To score the ball has to be carried across the opposing goal line.

Duration of the game: 4 x 3 min.

**Note:** it's not permitted to change the composition of any team during the triathlon competition.

All activities proposed in Levels 1 and 2 have as the objective that players under 10 years of age can learn to enjoy and successfully play mini-hockey. All the games (of basic abilities, as well as the simplified games) presented in this chapter together with their tailor-made competitions, are seen as so many pieces forming a complete puzzle, one called Mini-Hockey. As the youngsters play Mini-Hockey, your reviewing with them the games for basic abilities in Level 1 and the more difficult and complex ones of level 2 (all of these should be considered as corrective exercises for Mini-Hockey) will help them improve and consolidate most of the hockey fundamentals. In addition, having the players practice the different variations of Mini-Hockey (including the Mini-Hockey-Pentathlon), thanks to the two goals to attack and to defend, further consolidates these basic skills. And players gain new experience in such important capacities as perception, anticipation, and decision making, essential for the preparation of the 6-on-6 Hockey game.

