



Date: Squirt Practice 43 & 44

Number of Players: 30 to 40

Practice Theme / Goals: Defensive Skills

Equipment Required / Set-up: Cones or tires, dividers

Time: 60 Minutes

**Warm Up: 5 minutes**

Have the players identify their favorite NHL player. For 5 minutes have the players pretend that they are that NHL player. They can do whatever they want that emulates their favorite player...be creative.

**Skating: Y Pivot Drill – 7 minutes**

Divide up into 5 groups, one at each face-off circle. Player starts at the bottom of a circle and skates backward to the dot. At the dot they pivot at 45 degree angle and skate forward to the edge of the circle. At the edge of the circle they stop and transition backwards to the dot again. At the dot, they pivot and skate to the bottom of the circle where they started. The player then repeats that on the other side of the circle. Teaching points: players always skate backward into the circle, forwards to the edge of the circle. Emphasize using their sticks to lead them in pivot direction. Discourage crossing over.

**Passing: Forward/Backwards – 8 minutes**

Pass the length of the ice with one player skating forwards and one player skating backwards. Finish off with a shot on goal.

**Stations: 3 Stations x 9 minutes**

On the whistle to change station, players do 5 jumps before moving on to the next activity. Coaches distribute water at each station as the players arrive.

**Station 1: Skating Skills**

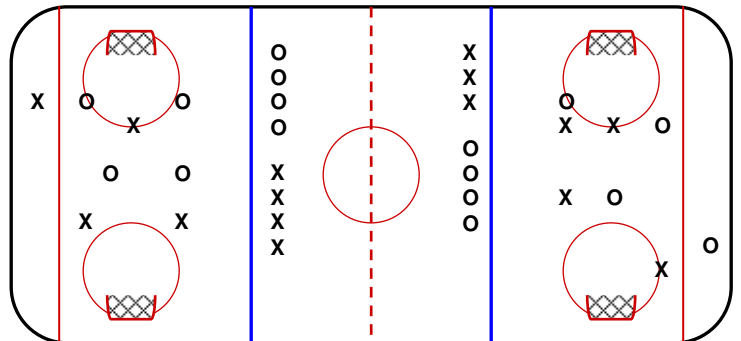
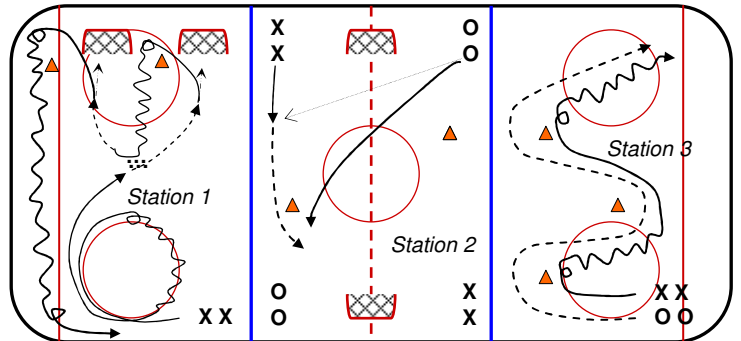
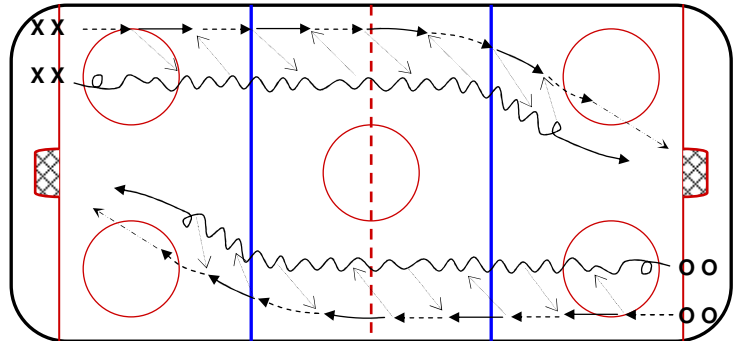
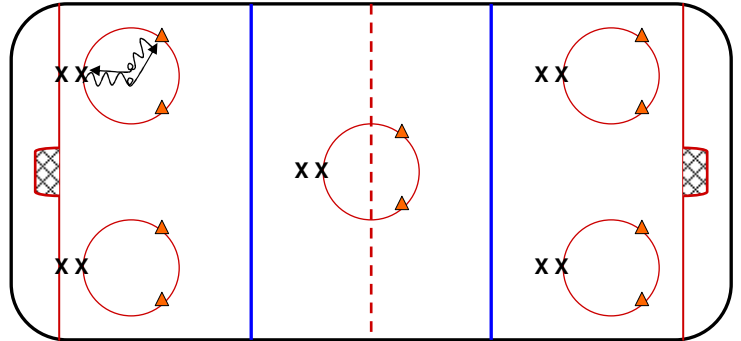
Players skate forward and backwards through the course, picking up pucks and shooting on each net. If short goalies place a divider in front of the goal. Focus on agility and pivoting forwards to backwards.

**Station 2: Back Pressure Shooting**

Player O passes to player X who must stay wide until the cone. After passing player O chases down X. Focus for player X is on driving the net and backchecking for player O. Encourage body contact.

**Station 3: Defensive Skating**

Player O carries a puck around the cones while player X attempts to mirror the movements of player O. Focus on staying with the puck carrier, transition skating and maintaining defensive side body position.



**Game: Backwards Only – 12 minutes**

Play 4v4 cross-ice for 40 second shifts. The players can only skate backwards during the game. This forces them to keep their head on a swivel as they must look to where they are skating. The game improves skating and puck control skills.