



Coach Rex's Favourite Drill

Outside Edge Control Around the Pylons

The Outside Edge is the weak edge in skating. It is truly amazing how many players progress through the minor hockey system often up to the midget level and above without having good control of his or her outside edges. As a result, it adversely affects a player's stopping, turning, crossovers and overall skating agility. Many minor hockey coaches do not teach this skating skill well enough and often players as well do not practice outside edge skating skills properly. Players will often practice an outside edge drill without getting out of his or her comfort zone. A player is reluctant to push on the outside edge to the point of falling so as to stretch his or her game. As a result, a player will develop a deficiency in his or her overall skating which continues to follow the player through out his or her hockey career. Many players are cut during try outs due to inadequate skating which is supported by a weak outside edge!

Balancing on the outside edge is initially more difficult than balancing on either the flat or the inside edge. Regardless of difficulty, it is an essential aspect of skating on a curve.

One of Coach Rex's favorite skating drills is to have players practice and hone their outside edges by slalomming through a

group of pylons. Players approach the pylons on their inside skate to the pylon. For the player to get on his or her outside edge and navigate tightly around the pylon the player must do the following:

Start balancing on one skate early, bent the knee, keep the butt down, open up the hip to get on the curvature. To navigate the turn tighter, a player will need to push down on his or her knee more and gain more control of the outside edge. If the player is making a wide turn, or slipping / sleighing - they are on the flat of the skate blade.

A progression to this drill is to have the players go forwards around the pylons with a puck on their stick, for even more extreme edge control – have the players go around the pylons backwards or touch the ice with their inside glove to the pylon while keeping their butt down and the head up.

The outside edge, the neglected weak edge in skating, must be mastered in order for a player to become a balance and strong skater. An excellent skater has in his or her skating tool box strong tight turns, forward crossovers, backward crossovers and forward two foot stops in either direction.