

Quality On Ice Instruction – Progression of Drills

Tucker Tips

Editor's Note:

Tucker Hockey has identified 16 components to ensure Quality on ice hockey instruction.

The complete write up on quality instruction can be found within the 2006 Spring/Summer Hockey Zones edition on our website: www.tuckerhockey.com/newsletter

For this article we will focus on the progression of drills within quality instruction. The on ice curriculum needs to be presented with a “building block” approach. An instructor should start with drills that provide confidence and then advance to those that will challenge and stretch the players. If the drills are too advanced for the skill level of the players they will get frustrated and give up on learning / improving. Conversely if the drills are too easy the players may not feel challenged and just go through the motions. There’s an art and a science to instruction consisting of the right progression of drills to ensure players take their game, especially skating, to the next level.

To illustrate the progression of drills we will focus on the power skating skill of tight / glide turns. Tight / glide turns are very important to enable players to change direction smoothly and quickly in a game situation.

The overall skill level of the group will determine your starting, progression and ending points for the drills. A progression for teaching tight/glide turns could be as follows.

Progression 1: Have each player make tight / glide turns i.e. figure eights around two gloves or pylons.

Progression 2: Have each player make tight / glide turns i.e. slalom around 2 straight lines of 6 to 8 pylons down the ice.

Progression 3: Have each player make tight / glide turns i.e. slalom around 2 straight lines of 6 to 8 pylons down the ice with a puck.

Note: During the above progressions, the instructors should demo each drill and provide feedback / correction of errors to the players while they are performing the drill. The level of detail regarding the teaching points listed below should be determined by the skill level of the players. For beginner players only a couple of the first basic points will be introduced, for more advanced skaters it’s a tweaking

process of identifying and correcting various bad habits to become a more efficient and polished skater.

From reading one’s audience (determine the skill level of the overall group), reinforcing proper skating technique, recognizing and correcting skating errors with a good progression of drills - players will gain confidence, success, and improved skills to take their skating and hockey to another level.

Progression of Teaching Points for Glide Turns include:

- Hockey Stance – head up and knees bent
- Lead with the stick around each pylon
- Keep the stick close to the ice - it helps the player turn with greater ease and efficiency
- The inside skate leads the player through the turn.
- Distribute weight to the outside edge of the inside skate and inside edge of the outside skate – equal weight on the middle part of each blade.
- Avoid twisting the inside skate / ankle over to get on the outside edge
- Rather sit more, place the knee over the toe and open up the hip
- Rotate the head and shoulders into the turn
- Shoulders should be level - dropping the inside shoulder may cause the player to fall.
- If the inside skate scrapes the ice on the turn (chatters) - the player is on the flat of the blade not the outside edge. This causes a slowing down / stopping motion rather than a quick turning motion.
- Players need to be more efficient with their edges – “ feel their edges “ on the turns.
- Extend the arms out from the body when carrying the puck
- Guide and close the blade on the puck when going around the turn
- For better control keep the puck on the middle part of the blade
- Identify strong side turn (backhand – stick side) vs. weak side turn (forehand)

Progression of Turns:

- Glide Turns to
- Crossover Turns to
- Power Turns

Note: Above progression of turns require additional teaching points.