

Coach Rex's Corner

1 - on - 2 Games

As coaches we are always looking for new drills and ways to teach skating and hockey skills. We desire to provide a positive learning environment so players can have fun training and enhancing their enjoyment from the game.

Over the years I have tried different teaching methods, innovative drills, skating games and varied scrimmages to accomplish the above. One of my favourite games is 1 vs. 2 player scrimmages.

Setup:

- This game can be played in a defined area on the ice – defensive zone, neutral zone, offensive zone, below the ringette line, below the circle hash marks, below the goal line or on a circle etc.
- Having 1 group or many groups going at the same time factoring in the number of players on the ice and rest to work ratios etc. As a coach, you decide the dynamics of space and players active at any one time.
- Players can compete to keep the puck away from their opponents, try to score on an empty net, skate with the puck to a designated finish line or try to score on a goalie in the net. With timbits and novice players, I have had them play with a sponge puck and I play in net for a little fun!!
- Play - who scores first, three or five goal games etc.

Purpose:

- So much of hockey today involves the short game. Playing in a small area on the ice. So this scrimmage teaches short game tactics.
- Short game tactics such as 1 on 1 battles, and evasive skating.
- Evasive skating involves being unpredictable / changing directions – turning, stopping, and pivoting etc.
- The game provides opportunities for players to use defensive tactics such as stick checking – poke, lift, and press to secure the puck from their opponents.
- Offensive tactics such as puck protection, being strong on the puck, keep away, fakes, dekes and toe drags etc

can be honed.

- Besides enhancing the tactical part of skating, this game teaches competitiveness and a no quit attitude which is very important at any age especially at the early stages of development. Bragging rights!
- With a game dynamic of every player for his or her self, it creates continuous 2 vs. 1 battles most of the time in the scrimmage.
- Exposing and training players in this type of scrimmage / games will better prepare and elevate players in real games when it counts!
- Players will have increased exposure and more tools in the tool box to excel and have success in real game situations.
- Learning when to use pressure or when to use containment against the puck carrier.

Final Comments:

These 1 vs. 2 player games do not replace deliberate practice. The value of deliberate practice cannot be understated or undervalued with regards to overall player technical skills development. Players still need to be taught good technical skills such as proper skating and puck control. However, 1 vs. 2 player games provide opportunities for players of all ages to test their technical skills while under pressure (two other players competing for the same puck in a scrimmage environment) as well as have some fun. Game on - enjoy!!

