



Capital Community Hockey  
Small Sticks Coaching Resource

# CAPITAL COMMUNITY HOCKEY



## SMALL STICKS COACHING RESOURCE



Wellington Hockey Association  
9 Mt Albert Road  
(PO Box 2891)  
Berhampore  
Wellington

Phone: 04 389 3337  
Fax: 04 389 3130  
Website: [www.wellingtonhockey.org.nz](http://www.wellingtonhockey.org.nz)  
Email: [community.hockey@wellingtonhockey.org.nz](mailto:community.hockey@wellingtonhockey.org.nz)



# INTRODUCTION

The Small Sticks coaching resource is for coaches at small sticks level (**years 3-8**). This resource can be used for any small sticks grade (**Mini, Kiwi & Kwik sticks**) and for any ability. The programme focuses on introducing fundamental hockey skills required to play the game of hockey, as well non hockey specific skills learnt through various small games. This resource is to be used in conjunction with the skill videos.

## SESSION FORMAT

Activity	Time	Coaching points	Learning outcomes
<b>Welcome</b> (Off turf)	2 minutes	Welcome all players, and give a quick run-down of what skills you will cover in the session, why you are doing it and what you hope to achieve	Welcome and settle players To make players aware of the activities planned for this session
<b>Warm up</b>	10 minutes	Running and fundamental movement focused games Can include dynamic stretches for older players – high knees, bum flicks, squats, lunges, leg swings, star jumps, fast feet	Get muscles warm Start to create good athlete habits
<b>Skill development/ Drill</b>	25 minutes	Demonstration Introductory individual learning activities Small group exercises to bring in element of competition	To cover fundamental coaching points Provide opportunities for demonstration and individual or group practice of a skill Tailor activities and exercises to players' level of development
<b>Small games</b>	25 minutes	Application of skills in game situations	To practice skills in fun and competitive games Encourage players to make smart decisions
<b>Coach wrap-up</b> (Off turf)	2 minutes	Positive comments about the session Reiterate the skills you have covered Reminders for next session	Encouragement Share information



# HOCKEY SESSIONS

## SESSION 1:

### Hockey grip, hockey position and ball carrying

#### WARM UP GAME

#### Cops & Robbers

##### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark out a defined area
- All players tuck a band/bib into their waistband with the majority of it hanging out
- One player is designated as the robber and their band is removed

##### INSTRUCTIONS:

- All players to start within the area
- On the coaches command players move around the area
- Players must stay within the area
- The robber tries to get the bib off the cops by chasing and ripping the band out of the waistband
- If the robber is successful, the cop who lost their ball becomes the new robber

#### FUNDAMENTAL - HOCKEY GRIP AND HOCKEY POSITION

##### HOCKEY GRIP COACHING POINTS:

- The **V-grip** is used for ball carrying, push passing and receiving
- The name was given due to the 'V' formed between the forefinger and thumb by both hands on the hockey stick
- Hands should be approximately 30 cm apart
- The left hand is at the top of the stick – this is the **strong hand** and controls the turning of the stick
- The right hand is at the bottom of the grip – this is the **guiding hand** and just supports the movement of the stick, so it should only have a loose grip

##### HOCKEY POSITION COACHING POINTS:

- Knees bent, back straight, bum down (sitting on the toilet)
- Head and eyes up with good vision forward
- Ball should remain between shoulders to ensure good control and strength on the ball, and should be a comfortable distance out in front of their feet
- Hook of the stick should be touching the ground, with left hand level with knees

##### Common Errors:

- Hands should not be on the shaft of the hockey stick – always on the grip

#### DRILL



1. Briefly explain and demonstrate the correct hockey grip and hockey position.
2. Get the players to spread out and put their sticks on the ground, flat side down. They then need to pick up their stick, with their left hand curled around the top of the stick and their right hand down at the end of the grip. Get them to hold their stick out in front and turn it backwards and forwards – their left hand should be the one turning the stick, and their right hand just needs to guide this movement.

## SKILL - BALL CARRYING

**Open dribbling** – Ball is tapped out in front, with the stick guiding the ball and bringing it under control when necessary. This style of dribbling is used when you are in lots of space, and it allows you to carry the ball at pace and raise your eyes to see what your passing options are.

**Closed dribbling** – Ball stays in contact with the stick at all times, ensuring good control. The closed dribble is used when there are lots of other players around and so more control is required to retain ball possession.

### OPEN AND CLOSED DRIBBLING COACHING POINTS:

- Hands in the V-grip
- Carry the ball outside of the right foot and out in front of the body in order to maintain good vision (1 O'clock)
- The left elbow should be extended (not tucked in), as this will help players keep the ball away from their feet and for vision purposes.
- Body position must always be low and strong when carrying the ball for greater control.

## DRILL

1. Explain and demonstrate open and closed dribble and so that players gain an understanding of how the types of dribbling vary and when to use each type of ball carrying.
2. Get the players to start on the baseline and practice open and closed dribbling out to cones lined up about 15-20m away.
3. To extend this activity hold up your hands displaying a number of fingers. The players need to identify how many fingers were held up while still keeping their ball under control as they dribble towards you – this promotes good vision and awareness while carrying the ball with different types of dribbling.
4. To give players the opportunity to practice these skills in a fun and competitive exercise set up some team relays. Split the players into teams, and give each team a ball. Line the teams up along the sideline and place cones approximately 15m away. One at a time, the team members to dribble out to their cone, performing different dribbling skills as instructed by you:
  - Use a mixture of open and closed
  - Have to stop and start the ball on the sound of a whistle/sound
  - Can get players to dribble to their cone, and then pass the ball back to the next person in their team
  - Can also add other skills to make the relays more fun and stimulating – e.g. have to do five star jumps or dribble around the cone three times before dribbling back to the team – you could even get the players to suggest some activities that they would like to include

If you find that players are focusing on speed rather than accuracy then you can add in a rule that if their ball hits one of the cones then they have to start their turn again – this will help ensure that they complete the various skills correctly



## SMALL GAMES

### TRAFFIC LIGHT GAME

Purpose = Ball Control, Vision, listening

#### SET UP:

- Using cones, set up a large square
- Each player needs a stick and a ball

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- The aim of this game is for players to maintain possession of their own ball while using different ball carrying techniques and being aware of other players within the square.
- The coach will call out Green = "Open Dribble", Orange = "Closed Dribble" or Red = Stop.
- Dependent on the coaches call, players move around the square using the different techniques.
- As a variation, the coach can play a knockout traffic light game to see if any players are performing the incorrect dribbling technique for the light colour or have no control of the ball when it is red light.

### NUMBERS HOCKEY

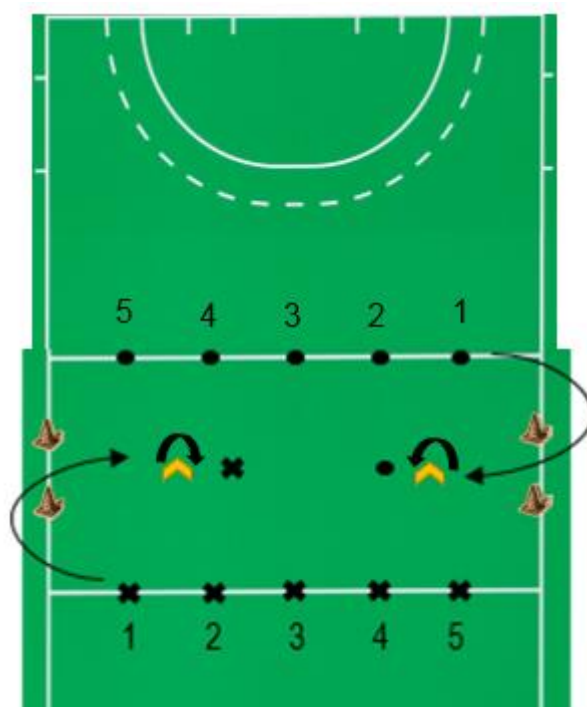
Purpose = Change of pace, Change of Direction, Agility, 1-2 passing to eliminate, spatial awareness, vision, team work

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to set up a playing area with a goal at either end
- Divide players into two teams and assign a number to each player
- Coach starts with the ball

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Call out one, two or three numbers and then the players from each team with those numbers run behind their team mates and through the goal they are defending to enter the field of play
- Players have to hop/jump over the hurdle with two feet together before competing for the ball.
- As the players are running through the field and then the players need to try to get control of the ball and dribble or push it towards their goal
- The team without the ball tries to win or steal back the ball or deny the other team the chance to score
- The player with the ball can use stationary players in their team on the side.
- Keep the game going until one of the team scores, and then the players return to their starting positions in preparation for the next round





## SESSION 2: Push Passing and Receiving

### WARM UP GAME

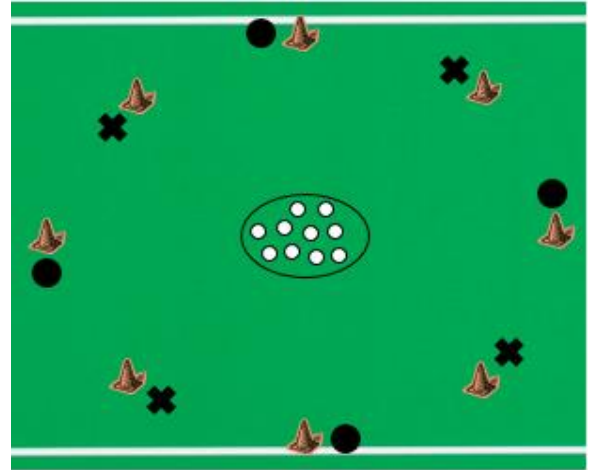
#### ROB THE NEST

##### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark a circle or square shaped area
- Place 25-30 hockey balls in the centre of the area
- Players stand on the outline of the area, by a cone

##### INSTRUCTIONS:

- When the coach says “go” the players run into the centre to collect one ball, and then take it back to their cone
- Players keep doing this until there are no balls left in the centre
- The coach checks to see how many balls each player has collected by their cone
- Coach selects how to retrieve the balls (skipping, jumping, hopping, side running, running)
- Repeat the game, but this time once all of the balls have gone from the middle, players can then go and “rob” balls from anyone’s cone (still only taking one at a time)



##### VARIATIONS:

- The game can be played with sticks as a hockey extension
- If there are players of significantly differing abilities then you can set up two playing areas
- To encourage team work you can play this game in teams – only one player is allowed to collect a ball at any time, and then they tag the next person in their team so that they can have a turn
- Additional cones can be placed between the nest and the circle edge to act as an obstacle for players to manoeuvre around which will help their vision also.

### SKILL - PUSH PASSING AND RECEIVING

The [push pass](#) is a passing movement where you do not lift the stick off the ground or strike the ball. This is the best type of pass to use to allow quick play through congested areas. This is the primary type of pass we should be promoting in this age bracket.

##### PUSH PASSING COACHING POINTS:

- Hands in the V-grip
- Start with the stick touching the ball (no back swing is needed) and the ball in line with your back foot
- Players need to take a step forward with their front foot, towards where they want their pass to go
- Hips open with left foot at 45 degrees.
- Transfer of weight from the back foot to the front foot during the passing motion is important for good ball speed
- Ball to be released in line with front foot.





- Low body position and follow through with stick pointing and feet stepping towards the direction of the pass as the ball is being released.

**Common Errors:**

- If ball is released after front foot the player may come under the ball and it frequently results in a bouncy pass.
- If issues with accuracy, draw invisible line between front and back foot and shoulders. If these are not in the direction of the pass you will need to adjust.
- Look out for “donkey kick” – right foot kicks up and around when pass is released.

**Receiving** is the term for when you stop a ball that has been passed to you, whether it is stopped completely or still moving but under control.

**RECEIVING COACHING POINTS:**

- Hands in the V-grip
- Low body position and stick must be on the ground
- The players need to keep their eyes on the ball as it comes towards their stick
- Players should let the ball drift across their body so that they can receive it by their right foot
- The stick should move backwards slightly and the right hand needs to be relaxed (soft hands) in order to cushion the ball as it is received (this stops it hitting the stick and then bouncing away)
  - Discuss the motion of catching a cricket ball – emphasise that you need to have a little ‘give’ when you catch the ball. This motion should be replicated when ‘catching’ a hockey ball with the stick. Practice in pairs passing the ball in the air with the partner receiving the ball and cushioning the ball coming into their body.
- Foot work is important – players need to readjust their feet as the ball comes towards them in order to get into the correct position to receive the ball on their strong side (forehand).

## **DRILL**

1. Briefly explain and demonstrate the correct technique receiving. Demonstrate what soft hands look like e.g. receive the ball with ball glued to the stick. Demonstrate what soft hands don’t look like, receive the ball and allow ball to bounce off the stick.
2. Briefly explain and demonstrate the correct technique for pushing.
3. Get players into pairs, standing about 10-15m from each other and with two cones set up (about 1m between the cones) in front of them. Players must try to push the ball between the cones, focusing on delivering flat, firm and accurate push passes
  - As players get more consistent with their push passing you can either reduce the space between the cones to work on accuracy, or you can make the players move further apart to work on ball speed
  - To make the exercise more competitive, see how many passes each pair can get through the cones in a set period of time. Get the pairs to remember their score so that if you revisit push passing later in the programme they will be able to see how much they have improved
  - Swap player pairs after first round of competition and start again.
4. Put players into groups of four or five. One player stands in the centre of the others, who are all about 10m away from the central player and an equal distance from each other. The player in the middle starts with the ball, and for 1 minute needs to pass the ball clockwise around the outside players, continuously passing and receiving until the time is up. See how



many times each player can go around the circle in the set amount of time. Players with good footwork, soft hands and accuracy should receive a faster time.

- This activity will mean that players have to constantly readjust their footwork, as opposed to practicing in pairs standing opposite each other where young players often keep their feet planted in one position for both passing and receiving
- Include a communication aspect – the person around the outside of the circle can only pass if their name has been called out.

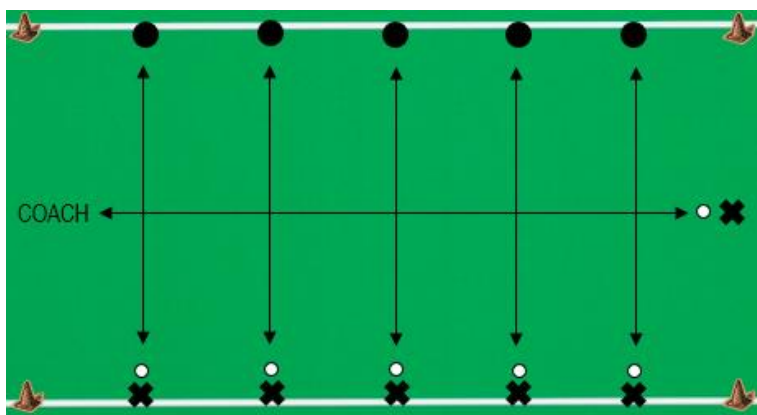
## SMALL GAMES

### TUNNEL BALL

**Purpose = Timing, Accuracy, Spatial Awareness**

#### SET UP:

- Half of the players stand next to each other in a line with a ball each
- The other players line up opposite them, about 10m away, so that a “tunnel” is formed
- The coach and one player position themselves at either end of the tunnel with one ball



#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- The coach and a partner have a ball between them, and they pass to each other through the tunnel
- The players on the outside of the tunnel push pass their ball back and forwards to each other, trying to make contact with the coach/partners ball as it moves through the tunnel
- When a players' ball hits the coach/partners ball the game stops, the successful pair of players swap positions with the coach/partner and the game restarts

#### VARIATIONS:

- A large soccer ball or basketball can replace the hockey ball being passed down the middle of the tunnel in order to provide a bigger target. The large ball could be rolled or kicked
- The space between partners can be widened as the players become better at pushing

### Hot Potato

**Purpose = Spatial Awareness, Possession, Vision, Passing & receiving**

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark the playing area and goals
- Split players into two teams, each with 6 players

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

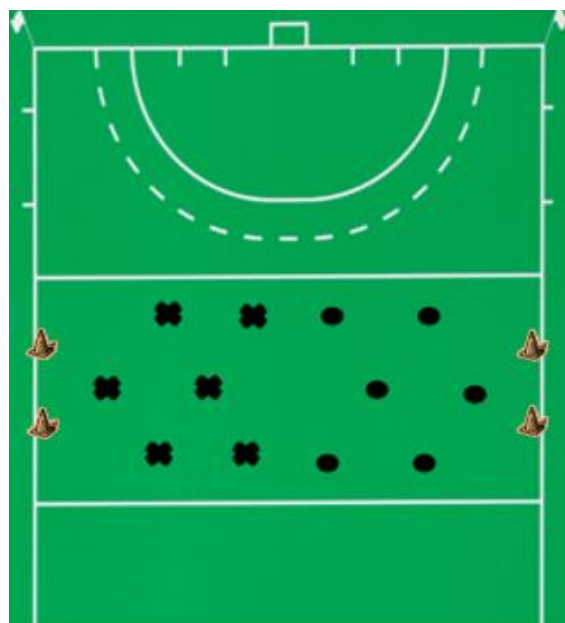
- This is a standard 6 vs 6 game, the only difference being that players are only allowed to carry the ball for five seconds before they must pass it to one of their team mates, otherwise their team will lose possession
- This game promotes a short passing playing style, and players must have awareness and vision when carrying the ball so that they can see their passing options





**VARIATIONS:**

- You can extend or reduce the amount of time that players are allowed to carry the ball depending on their ability





## SESSION 3: Ball Carrying Extension

### WARM UP GAME

#### STUCK IN THE MUD

##### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark out a defined area
- Choose one player to be the tagger, and all other players need to spread out in the area

##### INSTRUCTIONS:

- The tagger must try and tag as many players as possible
- When tagged, players are “stuck in the mud” – they must freeze and stand with their legs and arms apart
- The only way for them to be freed is for a non-tagged player to crawl through their legs
- Players are safe while crawling through legs (they cannot be tagged when in this position)
- The game ends when all players have been tagged and are “stuck in the mud”

### SKILL - BALL CARRYING

**Indian dribble** – Ball is moved quickly from side to side by turning the stick over the ball. Changing the direction of the ball like this is used to eliminate a defender or get out of a congested area.

##### INDIAN DRIBBLING COACHING POINTS:

- The right hand must not be too tight, as this is what allows the stick to be rotated easily across the ball
- When moving the ball side to side the stick should be touching the bottom half of the ball, and the feet should mirror the movements of the ball. This ensures that the ball stays central to the body and increases control and strength on the ball
- It is important that the stick head turns over the ball – i.e. across the front of the ball and not behind the ball
- As the ball is being moved, body weight should be transferred from left foot to right foot, and vice versa.

### DRILL

1. Explain and demonstrate the Indian dribble so that players gain an understanding of how this type varies from the others and when to use this type of ball carrying technique.
2. Get the players to start on the baseline and practice Indian dribbling out to cones lined up about 15-20m away. For an extension of this activity, hold up your hands displaying a number of fingers. The players need to identify how many fingers were held up while still keeping their ball under control as they dribble towards you – this promotes good vision and awareness while carrying the ball with different types of dribbling.



## SMALL GAMES

### FOUR GOALS GAME

Purpose = Possession, Passing, Spatial Awareness,

#### SET UP:

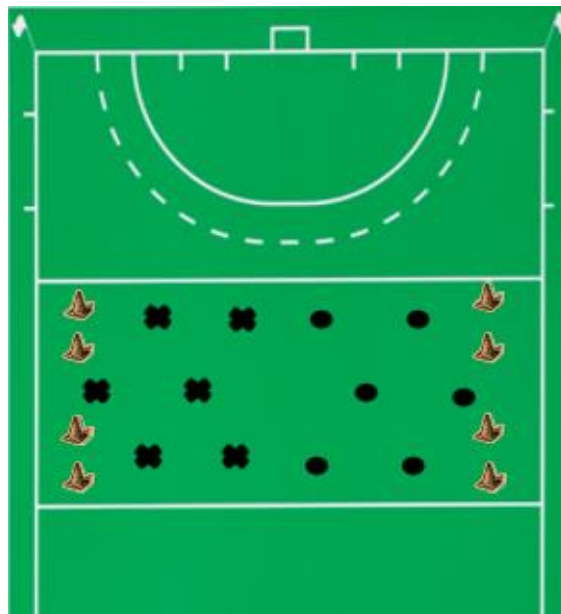
- Set up a playing area with four goals inside the field
- Split players into two teams, each with 6 players
- Assign each team two goals – one at either end of the field

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- This is a normal 6 vs 6 game, the only difference being that teams have two goals each
- This game will start to develop players' tactical thinking and game awareness, and will also encourage players to create overload situations e.g. 2 on 1

#### VARIATION:

- Players have to pass the ball through the cones and someone else from their team has to receive the ball in order for a goal to be scored





## SESSION 4: Elimination Skills 1

### WARM UP GAME

#### CIRCLE DODGE BALL

##### SET UP:

- 2 x Large soft balls required
- Groups of 6-7 forms a large circle with a dodger standing in the centre
- The individuals on the outside are throwers

##### ACTIVITY:

- The dodger tries to keep away from the ball, as the thrower try to hit the dodger below the knees.  
Variations:
- Add another ball to the outside
- Individuals on the outside can pass to others to catch the dodger off guard

### FUNDAMENTAL – DODGING

Dodging involves quick, deceptive changes in direction to evade, chase or flee from an opponent. When dodging, knees are bent and the body shifts rapidly in a sideways direction.

As applied to sport, the skill of dodging is evident in moving the shoulders, head, eyes or other body parts to deceive or 'fake' the opposition as a way of getting free to receive a pass or getting around your opponent.

##### DODGING COACHING POINTS:

- Head up and low body position
- Plant one foot and quickly change direction (plant & go)
- Step/lean one way, go the other – fake
- Move quickly and then bend knees to stop

##### CHASING COACHING POINTS:

- Watching the hips of the runner in front to anticipate what their next move will be

### SKILL – ELIMINATION SKILLS (with space)

**Dragging** is an elimination skill that is used to change the direction of the ball in order to beat a defender.

##### COACHING POINTS:

- As you move the ball you need to transfer your weight from side to side – this will convince your opponent that you are going to move one way so they will plant their feet in preparation to make a tackle, and then you can pull the ball back to the other side to eliminate them



- Keep the ball in line with your head (don't let it go outside the line of your feet) – this ensures that you have good control of the ball
- Ensure that you start the drag movement before you get too close to the defender – this will give them less chance of being able to reach the ball
- Athletes to slide stick with one hand in a circle to realise how big an athlete's reach can be to give them an understanding of the space they need to be able to eliminate a player.

#### Left to right drag:

1. As you approach the defender slightly drag the ball from right to left (this is the dummy movement)
2. Then drag the ball from left to right (on a slight forward angle) when you are about 1m in front of the defender
3. Run with the ball past the defender on their reverse stick side

#### Right to left drag:

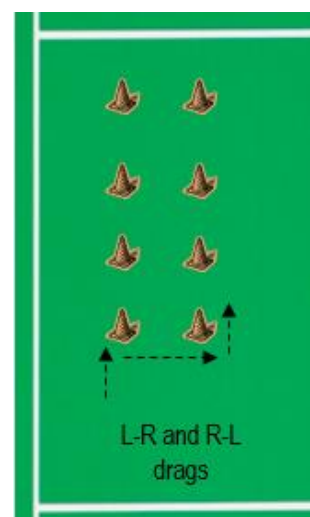
1. Run towards the left foot of the defender (this is the dummy movement)
2. Then drag the ball square from right to left when you are about 1m in front of the defender
4. Run with the ball past the defender on their forehand side but encourage the player to put the ball back onto their forehand after the dragging (side step) action.

#### Extension

Encourage the player to cut off the line of the opposition player after the elimination action to force them wide to re-enter the tackle.

## DRILL

1. Explain the differences between the L-R and R-L drags. The players should practice this without a stick and ball to understand the transfer of weight (side step) by trying it on the spot
2. Progress the skill by getting players to take a run up and then perform a side step (L-R or R-L), again without a stick and ball. Please Note\* only once players understand the weight transfer, move on to stick and ball.
3. Go over the yard stick first to emphasise how the basic dragging movement works. Set up two cones (about 1m apart) for each player. Get them to practise the yard stick – where they continuously move the ball from the left cone to the right cone and back again by turning their stick over the ball. Make sure that you wander around all players to ensure that they have good technique and that they shift their body weight as they move the ball from side to side
4. Set out spare sticks or cones for the players to practice dragging around. Remind them that the sticks/cones are pretend defenders so they have to drag the ball before they get too close and they have to make sure that they 'sell' the drag by shifting their body weight.
5. For players who pick up these skills quite quickly, you can challenge them to see how many L-R, R-L they can do in 1 minute, and then they can try and beat their score for each drag.





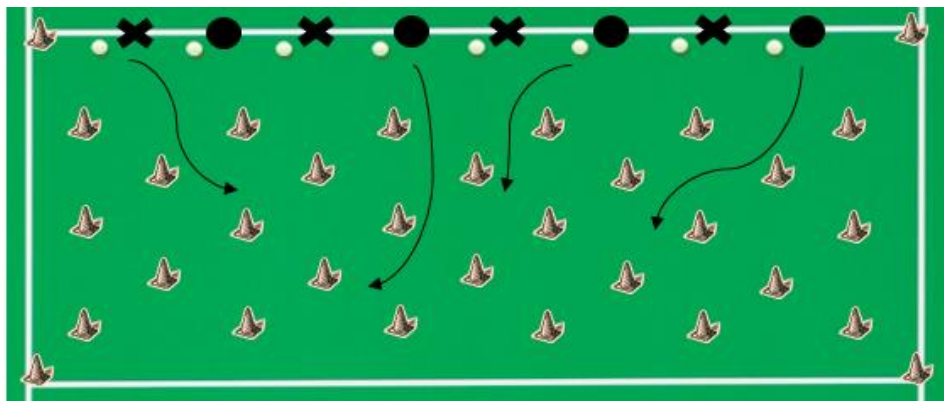
## SMALL GAMES

### MINEFIELD

Purpose = Vision, Ball Control, Spatial Awareness & Use of Multiple Techniques

#### SET UP:

- Approximately 30 cones placed randomly to act as mines
- Players have a hockey stick and ball and are lined up at one edge of the area
- One player is chosen to be the chaser and stands 5m behind the other players without a ball



#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- When the coach says “go” the dribblers need to dribble their ball through to the other side of the area as quickly as they can, without being tackled by the chaser before they reach the line
- Dribbling players need to use the ball carrying and dragging skills that have been developed over the past few weeks to avoid disturbing any of the mines
- Any dribbler tackled by the chaser, or blown up by a mine, joins in as a chaser for the next round
- Players should change position so they are taking a different route through the minefield each time





## SESSION 5: Elimination Skills 2

### WARM UP GAME

### DRIBBLERS AND ROBBERS

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark out a defined area
- All players need a stick and a ball
- One player is designated as the robber and their ball is removed (you can add more robbers if you want)

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Players dribble their ball around within the defined area
- The robber tries to get a ball off one of the dribblers by using their hockey stick to gain control of the dribblers ball
- If the robber is successful, the dribbler who lost their ball becomes the new robber

### SKILL – ELIMINATION SKILLS (limited space)

#### V-drag:

1. Run towards the defender in order to engage them
2. When you are about 1m in front of the defender prop and drag the ball backwards on a slight angle towards your right foot
3. Move the ball forward on a slight angle as you take a step forward with your right foot, and then step with your left foot – this will put your body between the defender and the ball
4. Start accelerating in order to cleanly eliminate the defender
5. Encourage the player to cut off the line of the opposition player after the elimination action to force them wide to re-enter the tackle.

#### Double drag:

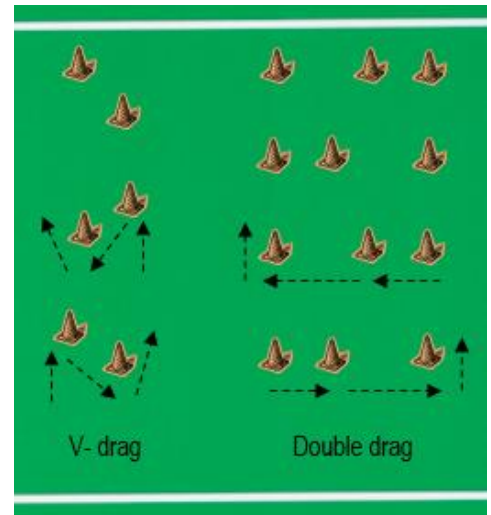
1. As you approach the defender do a short first drag, and then a wide second drag (in the same direction)
2. Move the ball forward and accelerate past the defender in order to eliminate them
3. The attacker may need to execute the first drag earlier than they would do as they are intending to execute 2 drags

### DRILL

1. Progress this skill by explaining the differences between double drag and V- drag. The players should practice this without a stick and ball to understand the transfer of weight (side step).
2. Set out spare sticks or cones for the players to practice dragging around. Remind them that the sticks/cones are pretend defenders so they have to drag the ball before they get too close and they have to make sure that they 'sell' the drag by shifting their body weight.



- For players who pick up these skills quite quickly, you can challenge them to see how many L-R, R-L they can do in 1 minute, and then they can try and beat their score for each



## SMALL GAMES

### FOUR GOALS GAME

Purpose = Possession, Passing, Spatial Awareness,

#### SET UP:

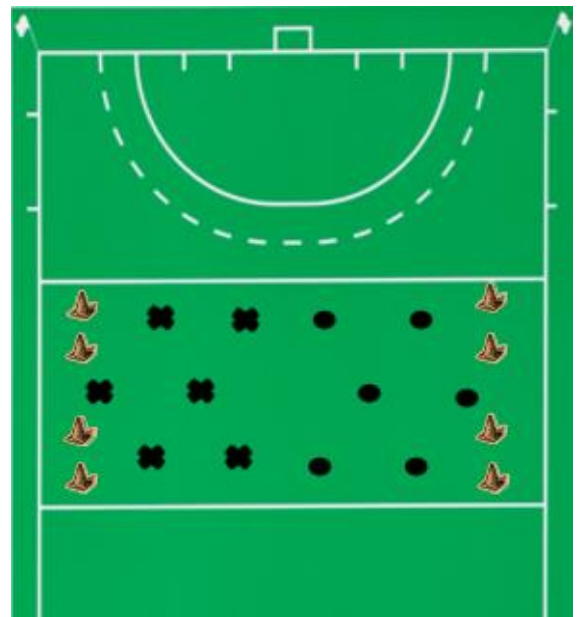
- Set up a playing area with four goals inside the field
- Split players into two teams, each with 6 players
- Assign each team two goals – one at either end of the field

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- This is a normal 6 vs 6 game, the only difference being that teams have two goals each
- To score, players have to eliminate the goal and stop the ball on the line
- This game will start to develop players' tactical thinking and game awareness, and will also encourage players to create overload situations e.g. 2 on 1

#### VARIATION:

Players have to pass the ball through the cones and someone else from their team has to receive the ball in order for a goal to be scored.





## SESSION 6: Tackling – Right & Left Side Steal

### WARM UP GAME

### SAFE ZONES GAME

Purpose = Spatial awareness, vision, team work, leading

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark the playing area, goals and two 1m x 1m “safe zones”
- Split players into two teams, each with 6 players

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- This is a standard 6 vs 6 game, the only difference being that in the “safe zones” the player with the ball cannot be tackled
- Players to use safe zone when under pressure and they need to protect the ball.
- Once in safe zone, player only has 3 seconds to find a pass otherwise it is the other team’s ball.
- This game will help players understand the concept of protecting the ball, as well as ensuring that when a player is positioned in one of the safe zones the other players in their team lead and get into a good position to receive a pass



### SKILL – RIGHT & LEFT SIDE STEAL

**Right side steal** is a technique where the stick is used to take the ball off (dispossess) an opponent from right (forehand).

**Left side steal** is a technique where the stick is used to take the ball off (dispossess) an opponent from left (reverse).

#### COACHING POINTS:

- Stick to be held with the V grip and in the neutral possession to protect feet
- Running next to the opponent with the ball reach in and pull out the ball without touching their stick or the player themselves
- Keep stick low to the ground with no swinging action
- Keep mobile– a good side on position ensures that you do not end up flat footed and easily eliminated
- Do not attempt to steal the ball from behind for safety reasons.

### DRILL

1. For this one-on-one right side steal/left side steal players need to be in pairs (try and match up players of roughly equal ability) and cones need to be used to create a small field for each pair  
→ One of the players starts with the ball and tries to dribble towards the small goal at the opposite end of the marked area - this is a good opportunity for them to practice the ball carrying that they have learnt earlier in the programme



- The other player starts next to them on the right (try left also) and on the coaches call the defender will try and make a steal.
- If they win the ball then they try to score in the other goal and so on – keep playing until someone scores a goal
- Let the players have a few practice turns before they start to keep score – first to five goals wins, and then get the players to swap partners

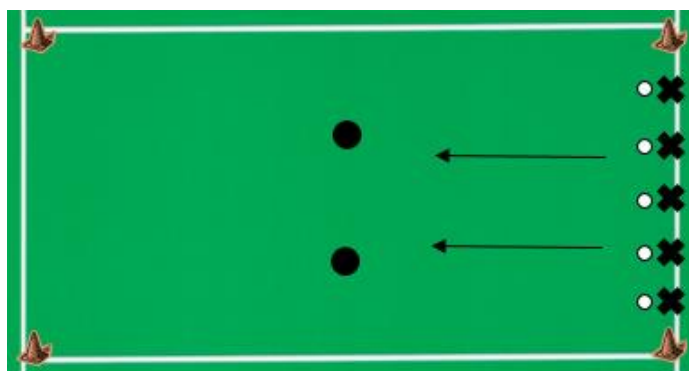
## SMALL GAMES

### HOCKEY BULLRUSH

**Purpose = Application of Skill (steal), ball control**

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to set up a large rectangle-shaped zone
- Select two players to be defenders – these players start in the middle of the zone
- The rest of the players are attackers, and need to line up on one edge of the zone with a ball



#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- The defenders identify a group of attacking players to start off the game – i.e. everyone wearing blue clothing, everyone with a red stick – these players start dribbling through the zone, attempting to reach the opposite edge
- When the coach says “bullrush” all the other attackers are allowed to start, also trying to reach the opposite edge
- Defenders attempt to tackle the attackers and knock their balls out of the zone
- Attackers who lose possession of their ball become extra defenders, but they are not allowed to move from the position where they are tackled (i.e. their feet are stuck)
- When attackers still in possession of their ball reach the end of the channel they stop and then the game continues in the opposite direction
- The game continues until one player is left as the winner
- New defenders are introduced for each game so that all players get a turn defending and attacking
- Mobile defenders can only dispose using only a right or left hand steal
- Safety conditions – make sure to space players out along line and to keep the zoned area large.



## SESSION 7: Hitting

### WARM UP GAME

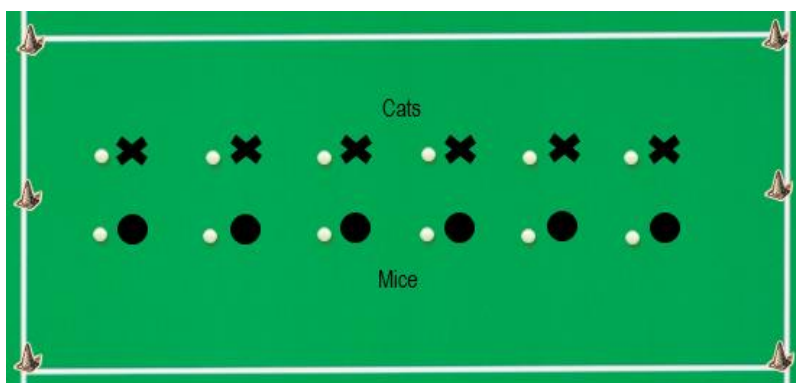
#### CATS & MICE

##### SET UP:

- Players line up in two rows about 2m apart, one row called “cats” and the other called “mice”
- Use cones to mark a line 10m away from each row

##### ACTIVITY:

- When the coach calls “mice” the mice all try to get across the nearest line, and the cats have try to catch the mice, attempting to tag them before they reach the line
- If the coach calls “cats” then the roles are reversed, with the cats trying to get across the line, and the mice chasing
- The winner is the player who makes it over the line without being caught, or is the chasing player if they catch their partner before they reach the line
- After each attempt, the players return to the starting position and prepare for the next round
- Coach uses different modes of movement (children could select them) e.g. hopping, skipping, jumping, side-ways running, crossovers.

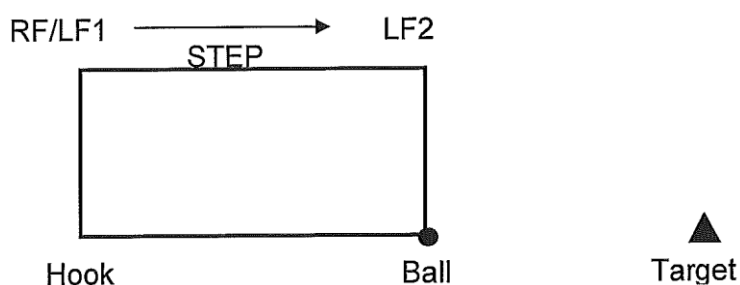


### SKILL – HITTING

Please Note\* this should only be taught when players are transitioning from 6 a-side to full field 11a-side.

##### COACHING POINTS:

- Slide the right hand up from the receiving grip, so that hands are together a hand length away from the top of the stick (short handle). – promotes safety & better execution
- Basic **box hitting technique**: Feet start together; stick hook is on the ground with stick face vertical; hook, ball and target are all on the same line
- It is important to start the right distance away from the ball.
- Step with the left foot towards the ball, and turn the left shoulder towards the ball with hips and shoulder down.
- Before the backswing, make sure the athletes are cocking their wrists which will allow them to bend their arms.
- During the backswing the stick goes around the body (not up and then down) and it is important to keep your hips open, left foot at 45 degrees and head and shoulders over the ball until the ball has moved.





## Capital Community Hockey

### Small Sticks Coaching Resource

- During the forward swing athletes should break (twist) their wrists before making contact with the ball. This allows a quicker swinging action.
- Make contact with the back face of the ball, and at this point the body weight should be over the bent left leg, with the right knee close to touching the turf. Eyes to remain on the turf until the ball left
- For the follow through the wrists cross over and the stick goes around the body to the left side and right foot step forward to carry on momentum.

#### Common Errors

- If you are too far away from the ball when you try to hit it then the ball will raise,
- If you are too close to the ball then you will hit the ground, not making a clean connection with the ball
- If you are too upright, you will top the ball.
- Stepping inside the box with your left foot, should be on the perimeter of the box
- Not breaking wrists – straight arms

## DRILL

1. Introduce the box hitting technique and demonstrate a couple of times, highlighting the key coaching points.
2. Get your players to practice hitting on their knees against a fence/wall – this will help them get the correct swinging action, with the stick rotating around the body (as in a softball swing). During the back swing the left shoulder will point towards the ball, and then during the follow it will be the right shoulder pointing at the ball
  - First practice with both knees together
  - Then progress to kneeling on the right knee, with left leg bent in front of the body with foot pointing towards target
3. The next step is for the players to stand up and practice the full technique, still hitting against the fence/wall. Since there are a number of coaching points for this skill it is important to provide all players with feedback at this stage, and remember to re-emphasise the softball swing action. Ensure players are a good distance away from each other for safety reasons.
4. Put players into groups of four, and use cones to mark a 15m square area for each group. One player stands by each corner of their group's marked square. The players need to hit the ball around the square in a clockwise direction – they should focus on hitting the ball accurately and along the ground to their team mates. They will need to have good footwork so that they can transition smoothly from the receiving movement into the hitting movement. Once the groups are capable of doing this with minimal mistakes you can add in an extra ball to keep challenging them

## SMALL GAMES

### HOCKEY BASEBALL

Purpose = Accuracy, Application of the skill, Hitting Speed

#### SET UP:

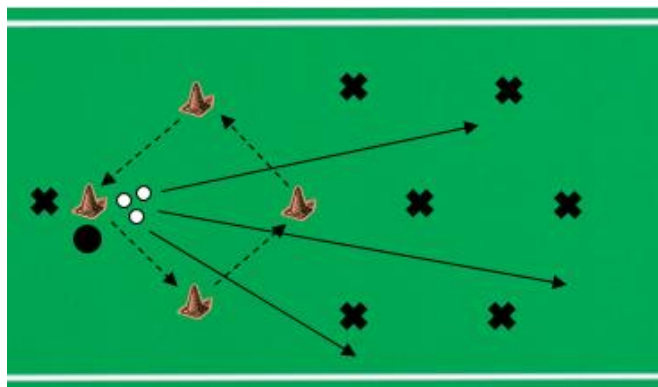
- Set up a box to allow athletes to practice their hitting technique
- Place cones in a diamond shape to act as the bases
- Select one player to start as the batter, one to start as the keeper, and the rest of the players will be fielders





**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- The batter hits three balls wherever they like and everyone else must field them. The three balls must all be **hit along the ground** and not go outside the 'no ball' zone (i.e. must stay within the angle of the bases)
- The batsperson runs around the bases until all balls have been returned to the home base scoring 1 point for every base they pass
- Fielding players collect the balls by pushing the ball to ensure they don't hit the batsperson or other fielders.
- Remember to keep swapping over the positions, so that everyone gets a turn at batting, fielding and keeping
- Encourage kids to not rush their hits – focus on technique, placement and keeping it on the floor. The speed element is the running component.





## SESSION 8: Goal Scoring

### WARM UP GAME

#### STRIKE ZONE

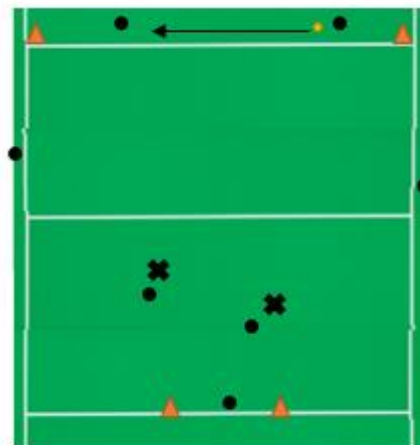
Purpose = vision, spatial awareness, team work and goal scoring

##### SET UP:

- Tennis ball
- Use cones to mark the playing area and goals
- Select 2 defenders (markers), 1 goal scorer, 2 midfielders, 2 at the back and 2 on the side

##### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Objective is for the 2 at the back to keep possession by throwing the ball to each other to try to get a pass through to the players in the middle. The 2 at the back cannot move over the line.
- The defenders job is to deny the ball getting to the midfield by marking them.
- The Midfielders are to move around (lead) to get the ball. They cannot move over the half line. If they receive the ball, it is their job to pass to the striker to score a goal.
- Once players get the hang of the game you can encourage to add 2 on the sides who can by pass the midfield to the striker however they are not allowed to pass to the midfield so if no option on, they will pass it back to the 2 at the back.
- Switch the players around so they all have a turn at a different position.



### SKILL – GOAL SCORING

##### COACHING POINTS:

- If the **ball, your body and your momentum** are all moving in the direction of your shot then you will find it easier to develop accuracy and timing when shooting at goal
- Get the ball going goalwards as early as possible to give the defence, and particularly the goalkeeper, less time to prepare and react, as soon as the ball enters the circle players need to **pull the trigger** and release the ball
- Body position in the circle must be **low and strong**, with stick always on the ground. Players must be on their toes (**mobile**) and ready to move in any direction
- Players must always have good awareness of where the goal is in relation to their positioning – this will help them make good shot selection if they do receive the ball, as well as ensuring that they can quickly put the ball on target

### DRILL

#### 1. Goal scoring from priority positions

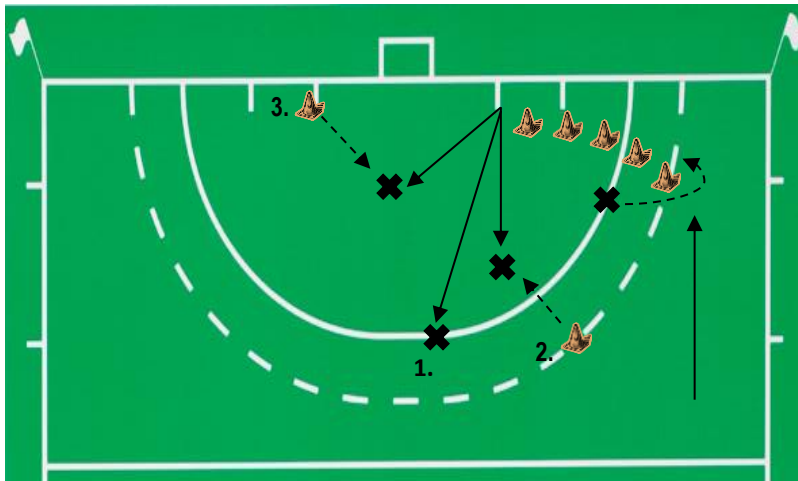
This drill is designed to give players an opportunity to practise a wide range of goal scoring techniques from the priority positions in the attacking circle. The ball starts with the players on the 25 – they push a flat and hard straight ball forward



for the attacker by the cones to lead onto and **receive going forward**. This player dribbles at speed along the baseline and then makes a pass to a player in one of the priority positions. The delivery of this pass needs to be flat and accurate – quality delivery is key to achieving a high percentage shot at goal. Players follow their pass.

We would suggest that you start the drill off with the pass always going to the player at the top of the circle (#1). Once you have gone through this a few times you can switch to the guard pass (#2), and then the spot (#3). This will allow you to cover off the specific coaching points for each of these areas, as well as ensure that players understand which type of goal scoring technique(s) is best suited to these positions (i.e. #1 – short handled hit; #2 – short handled hit; #3 – push, flick or squeeze shot).

Once you have gone through each of these positions separately you can swap over to the left hand side of the field and have all three positions occupied – this will mean that the player dribbling along the baseline has to make a decision about which player to pass to, requiring them to have good vision and footwork (so that they can get their feet around to make any of the three passes).



## SMALL GAMES

### SIDELINE HOCKEY

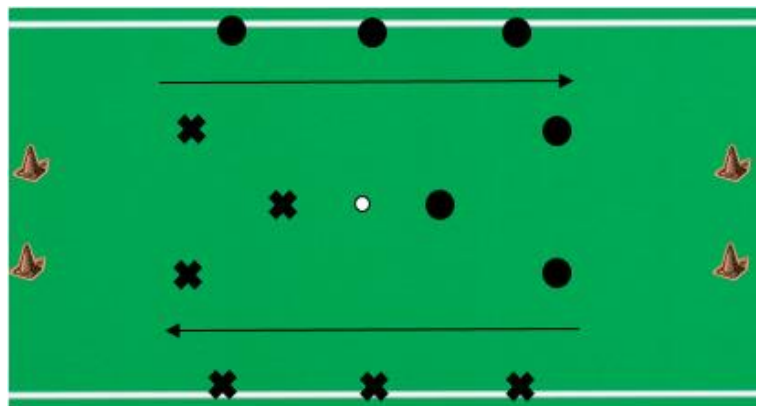
Purpose = Spatial Awareness, possession, goal scoring, team work, communication

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to set up a playing area with a goal at either end
- Split players into two teams

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- Select three players from each team to start on the field – they will play 3 vs 3 for a set time or until a goal is scored
- The spare players start on the sideline, one team on either side of the field. The ball can be





## **Capital Community Hockey**

### Small Sticks Coaching Resource

kept in play by the sideline players who can 'wall pass' the ball back onto the field to their team mates

- Players on the field can deliberately pass the ball to sideline players, but sideline players cannot tackle or enter the field
- At the end of time or when a goal is scored the players rotate – those on the field swap positions with those on the sideline.



**Please Note\***

The following skills are considered extension basic skills. It is good for athletes to know them however a bigger emphasis on the above skills is more important.

## SESSION 9: Sweep Hitting

### WARM UP GAME

### BALL TAG

**Purpose:** Teamwork, Anticipation, Spatial Awareness

**SET UP:**

**Soft ball and cones**

- Use cones to mark out a defined area
- One player is chosen to be the dodger, all other players spread out in the area

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- This game is like normal tag, the only difference being that players use a large soft ball to tag people by hitting them with a moving ball.
- Throwers are not allowed to walk or run with the ball, must be stationary when ball is caught
- Everyone must work together by passing to each other to get close to the dodger to throw the ball in order to tag them, but the ball must stay below shoulder height –
- If you have a bigger group of players then you can select two or three dodgers or set up multiple games in a smaller area.

### SKILL - SWEEP HITTING

**COACHING POINTS:**

- Low body position is key
- Hands together at the top of the stick
- Ball starts to the right of the body and in line with the left foot
- Step with the left foot (45 degrees) towards the ball, and turn the left shoulder towards the ball
- During the backswing the stick goes along the ground and it is important to keep the head still and eyes on the ball
- The stick face needs to be flat and you should make contact with the back face of the ball
- At the point of contact the knuckles should be almost scraping the turf (a left hand glove should be recommended to athletes); body weight should be over the bent left leg and the right knee will be close to touching the turf and the arms will be almost fully extended with the hands over the left foot
- For the follow through the wrists cross over in a quick knocking motion and right foot to follow through with momentum.
- Where on the shaft of the stick – 15 -20cm from the head.



## DRILL

1. Introduce the sweep hit and demonstrate a couple of times
2. So that your players can get familiar with the sweep hitting technique, start off with them lined up along the fence line and get them to practice sweeping the ball at the fence. Remind them that at this stage they should be focussing on learning the correct technique, rather than sweeping the ball as hard as they can
3. Then get your players into groups of three, and they need to practice sweep hitting to each other. They should start off about 10-15m apart and then they can move further away as their accuracy and ball speed improves

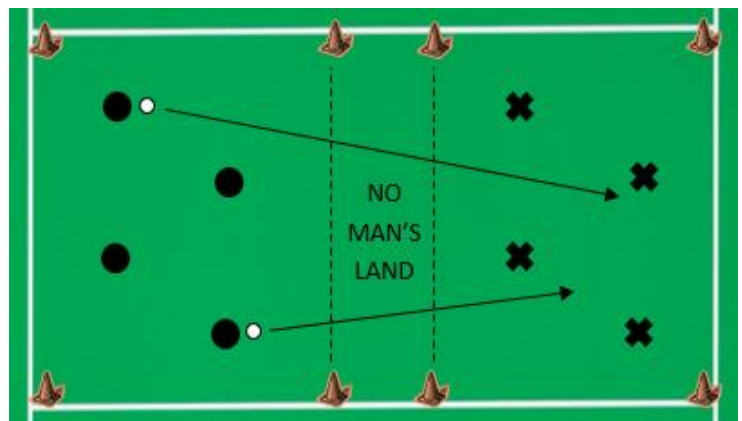
## SMALL GAMES

### FORCEBACK

**Purpose = Accuracy, Hitting Speed, Receiving, Spatial awareness, team work and vision.**

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to set up playing area – the cones at either end form the backline, and the ones in the middle mark out 'no man's land'
- The size of the playing area will depend on the sweeping ability of the players and the amount of space available
- Split players into two teams



#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- One team starts with the ball and they sweep the ball across the playing area, trying to get the ball past the other team and across their backline
- The other team is trying to stop them from scoring by trapping the ball before it passes over their backline
- If the team traps the ball they are allowed to do one push pass forward to a team mate in a better position before attempting to score (no dribbling allowed) with a sweep hit
- Once the game is flowing well you can add extra balls to keep it challenging and competitive





## HOCKEY CRICKET

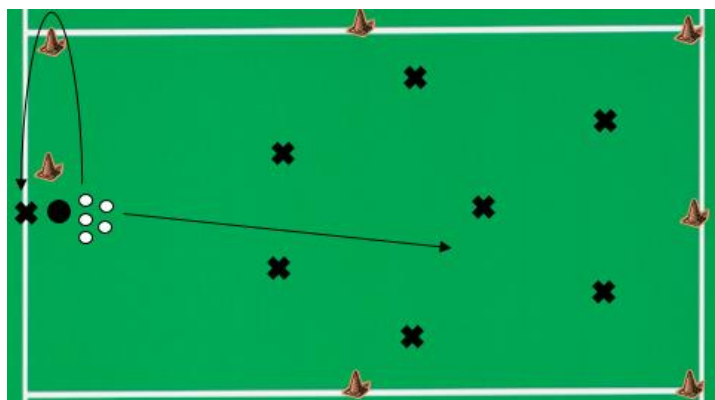
Purpose = spatial awareness, Accuracy, sweeping  
Speed, Receiving with soft hands,

### SET UP:

- Use cones to set up the playing area
- Select one player to start as the batter, one to start as the keeper, and then the rest of the players will be fielders

### INSTRUCTIONS:

- The batter sweeps one ball out into the defined area. They then run around the cones to score as many runs as possible while the ball is being fielded
- The fielders field the ball and return the ball to the keeper, either directly or gradually by passing it forward to other players
- After the batter has had five turns, there will be a position swap – the keeper becomes the batter and the batter becomes a fielder, and a new keeper needs to be selected
- Safety – encourage fielder to be a good distance away so they don't get hit.
- Encourage athletes to use push passes when retrieving ball so that the hitter or the fielders do not get hurt.





## SESSION 10: 3D skills - Jinking

### WARM UP GAME

#### KNEE TAG

Purpose = Low body position, Dodging, Anticipating, Reacting.

##### SET UP:

- Players are in pairs and stand facing each other, about two steps apart – it is best to have players who are of similar age/size together

##### INSTRUCTIONS:

- The aim is for each player to try and touch their partner's knees with their hands – right hand to right knee and left hand to left knee
- Play for 30 seconds and see who can get the most touches, then swap partners and play again



### SKILL – JINKING

**Indian dribble** – Ball is moved quickly from side to side by turning the stick over the ball. Changing the direction of the ball like this is used to eliminate a defender or get out of a congested area.

**Jinking** is when you lift the ball over an opponent's stick in order to eliminate them, while still maintaining control of the ball.

##### COACHING POINTS:

- The face of the stick needs to be open
- Use the momentum of the ball to get the ball to roll onto the hook of the stick slightly
- Keep the lift controlled so that you can run onto it after eliminating the defender, and the ball must stay below knees so that it is not deemed dangerous.

The movement pattern for both the forehand and reverse jinks are below, but for players that have not previously practiced this skill it is a good idea to just focus on the forehand jink. Conversely, for those that are familiar with this skill, extend them by getting them to focus more on the reverse jink.

##### Left to right (forehand) jink:

1. As you approach the defender drag the ball square from left to right
2. Drop your right shoulder and rotate your stick slightly more to the right so that the flat side is facing up, allowing the ball to roll onto the hook of the stick
3. Pop the ball over the defender's stick and accelerate forward to regain control quickly

##### Right to left (reverse) jink:

1. As you approach the defender drag the ball square from right to left



2. Drop your left shoulder and rotate your stick slightly more to the left so that the flat side is facing up, allowing the ball to roll onto the hook of the stick
3. Pop the ball over the defender's stick and accelerate forward to regain control quickly

## DRILL

1. Introduce the jinking technique by slowly demonstrating the skill.
2. Players have a ball each and they need to practice jinking over a stick or cones by themselves, focusing on keeping the ball under tight control. Building on the dragging skills practiced earlier in the programme, ideally the players should drag the ball to the left, then drag it right and use the ball's momentum to help them jink it over the stick in front of them.

## SMALL GAMES

### WALL GAME

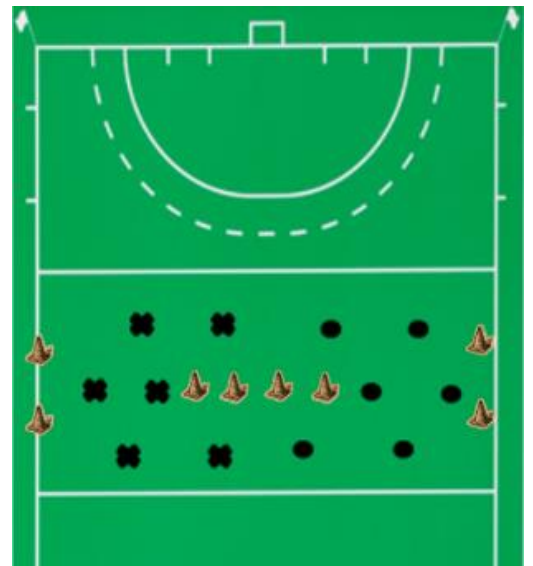
**Purpose = Possession, Application of skill (jink/flick)**

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark the playing area and goals
- Set up a row of cones in the middle of the field – you can make it as long or as short as you like
- Split players into two teams, each with six players

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- This is a standard 6 vs 6 game, the only difference being that players cannot dribble or pass the ball through the line of cones, instead they must flick it over the top of them or pass back and go around the cones
- Players are still allowed to run through the cones
- 2 points for a jink & 1 point for a goal





## SESSION 11: TAKEOVER TACKLE, CHANELLING & BLOCK TACKLE

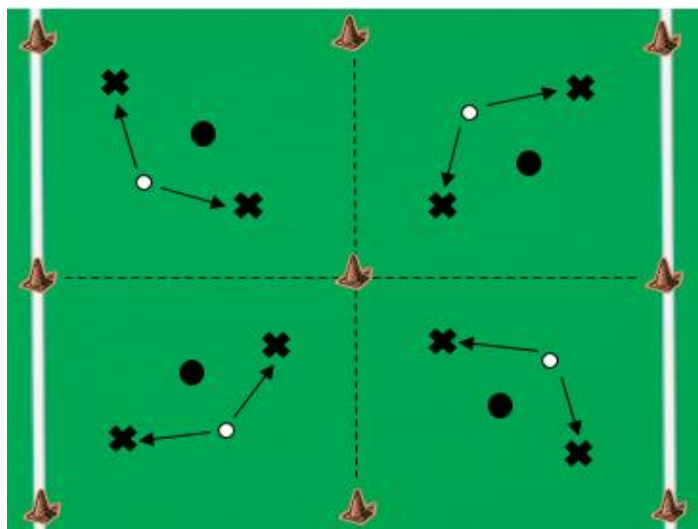
### WARM UP GAME

#### PIGGY IN THE MIDDLE

Purpose = Spatial Awareness, Anticipation, Intercepting, Deception

##### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark out four small boxes (approximately 5m x 5m)
- Split players into groups of three, and then assign each group to one of the boxes
- Each group needs one ball, and all players need to have a hockey stick
- Choose one player in each box to start off as the “piggy in the middle” (get them to put a coloured bib on), and the other two players will start as the passers



##### INSTRUCTIONS:

- The passers need to focus on tight ball control and movement off the ball in order to pass the ball between themselves without the piggy making an intercept
- If the piggy makes an intercept then they swap positions with the player who made the last pass
- After a few minutes call out “swap!” and then all of the piggy’s need to rotate clockwise to the next box
- To challenge the passers, get them to count how many passes they can make without the piggy intercepting the ball
- Extension – discuss with the passers and the piggy’s how they can utilise deception to either win the ball back or maintain possession e.g. the piggy could do a stick faint, passers could do a body faint.

### SKILL – CHANNEL & BLOCK TACKLE

The “6 P’s” are a good way to remember the key tactical points for tackling:

- Positioning - Set yourself in a position that enables you to make the tackle and not be easily beaten
- Posture - Correct posture ensures the right type of tackle can be made, it also ensures good vision so that you can see your passing options
- Patience - Do not rush in, be patient
- Persistence - Stay in the contest – this may give you another opportunity to tackle the ball carrier when they get their head down or ball comes off their stick
- Pressure – Initial Pressure on the ball carrier may force an error allowing a tackle to be made
- Possession - Once the tackle has been made ensure possession is retained and make the obvious pass early



### COACHING POINTS:

- Low body position, good balance and tidy footwork are important
- Change the angle of your upper body to force your opponent in the direction that you want them (away from the middle/goal)
- Keep stick low to the ground with no swinging action, and tackle using the shaft of the stick
- Keep mobile with one foot in front of the other – a good side on position ensures that you do not end up flat footed and unable to change direction quickly to react to an attackers movement
- Do not get ahead of the ball carrier and over commit on the tackle as this give the attacker the opportunity to cut in
- Use the stick, positioned inside left knee to protect feet while channelling.

## SKILL – TAKEOVER TACKLE

### COACHING POINTS:

- Stick to be held with the V grip and in the neutral possession to protect feet
- Running next to the opponent reach in and pull out the ball without touching their stick or the player
- Keep stick low to the ground with no swinging action
- Keep mobile– a good side on position ensures that you do not end up flat footed and easily eliminated

## DRILL

### 1. Backwards shuffle

All players line up along the side line to practice the backwards shuffle – two small steps backwards on a 45° angle to the left, then two small steps backwards on a 45° angle to the right, and so on – until they reach the other side of the field. Players must have a low, well balanced body position and their head should be up so that they have good vision forward.

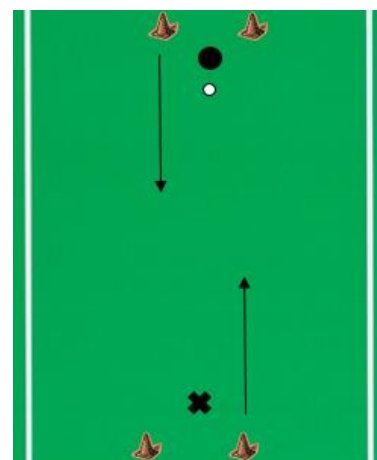
### 2. Shadow tackling

Players get into pairs, one starting as the attacker and the other as the defender. Starting on the side line again, the attacker runs forward, moving from side to side pretending that they are dribbling a ball. The defender has to react to the attacker's movements, trying to shadow whatever they do. Once they reach the other side the two players should swap roles, with each player having two turns at the defensive role.

### 3. Block tackle boxes

Set up three tackle boxes, and choose three players to start as defenders. The attacker in each box starts the exercise by passing the ball to the defender, who then passes it straight back to the attacker. The attacker then tries to use their ball carrying and elimination skills to get through to the other side of the tackle box, while the defender is focusing on having good footwork and body positioning so that they can make a block tackle and dispossess the attacker.

The defenders stay in their box for about 3 minutes before swapping roles with three of the attacking players – make sure everyone has a go at attacking and defending. To make it more of a competition you can get the defenders to keep score of how many tackles they make, and the attackers to keep score of how many times they safely reach the end of the boxes.





#### 4. Tackle over tackle boxes.

Set up three tackle boxes, and choose three players to start as defenders. The attacker in each box starts the exercise by next to the defender. On the coaches call, the attacker tries to use their ball carrying skills to get through to the other side of the tackle box, while the defender is focusing on having good footwork, stick position, body positioning and technique so that they can make a takeover tackle and dispossess the attacker.

The defenders stay in their box for about 2 minutes before swapping roles with three of the attacking players – make sure everyone has a go at attacking and defending. To make it more of a competition you can get the defenders to keep score of how many tackles they make, and the attackers to keep score of how many times they safely reach the end of the boxes.

## SMALL GAMES

### DEFEND THE ZONE

**Purpose = Team work, tackling, intercepting, passing accuracy**

#### SET UP:

- Use cones to mark out a large playing area, and two small boxes (approximately 1.5m x 1.5m) within it
- Put a large different coloured cone within the small boxes to act as targets
- Split players into two teams, either four or five players per team

#### INSTRUCTIONS:

- The team with the ball is trying to score by pushing the ball into one of the targets
- The team without the ball is trying to prevent them from scoring by making a tackle or an intercept to win possession, and then they can try and hit one of the targets
- Players are not allowed inside the small boxes, but they can pass the ball through them to one of their team mates on the other side
- 1 point for a goal, 2 points for a takeover tackle.

