

Jasper Camp 2017

This year the camp was a huge success as far as the players having fun, developing skills and game sense.

We had 25 skaters and one hurt his shoulder the second day, so down to 24. There were 7 girl's and three of them were Ringuette players there to improve their skating and learn about hockey. We divided them into a younger group of 13 with ages ranging from 5-11 and an older group of 12 ages 12-15. There were 4 girl's in the older group and 2 were ringuette players. Phil Wood who coaches U18 AA in Calgary skated with the older group in the games. The three 15 year old boy's were very good with the two best players in Jasper and two from Calgary, one who just got drafted in the Bantam draft and was the best skater in the Hockey Alberta U16 camp.

So the players were all over the place in age and hockey experience and ability.

Every morning all of the players skated with Gaston from 9-10 and 75' later had another ice time alternating days with skating and hockey with me and Phil. In the afternoon the younger players had a 60' ice time and 3 of the 15 year olds helped me and we did the skills in 3 small groups. After that the older group had a 75' session and Phil helped me with that and played the games with the stronger players. My son Jim usually coaches the camp but he just started to article for his Law degree and couldn't ask for the third week working off.

No diagrams were drawn on the whiteboard during this camp. Simple instructions. Drill demonstration and then 'get at er.'

Everyone played the end of the week game the second morning ice time on Friday because some players had to leave for the long drive home, a baseball tournament and vacation. Game was full ice with one minute shifts. Younger group was 6-6. They watched the game clock and changed every minute and the player with the puck passed to his younger or older teammate.

Twenty were left for a one hour session after lunch and the younger ones played a one net clear the zone game and a cross ice game with modified rules.

Gaston teaches about the edges, weight transfer, stride, turns, and creating tension with the blade on the ice. It is fantastic. The hockey sessions were based on the ABC themes of 'Enjoy the Game' and 'The Game is the Greatest Coach'

There were zero goalies so we use 6 small nets and move them around so we can play games full ice, cross ice, half ice, third ice, 1/6 cross ice, 1/4 ice, etc.

Skill topics covered:

Puck handling all around the body with big moves.

Puck protection.

Wrist pass both on the forehand and backhand.

Wrist shots progressing to 'catch and release' without handling the puck. One time and one touch shots.

Playing the game in the 'triple threat position'.

Puck support, getting open and giving a target.

Going to the net with the puck.

Quick transition between offense, defense, loose puck situations.

Teaching Method

We introduce the skill one of two ways.

'Create a Need to Know' by playing a game with a rule such as you must make at least three passes before a goal and only wrist passes are allowed or the other team gets the puck. After the players try it you have a 'corrective lesson' on how to wrist pass and then play the game again. I was amazed at how the young group used the wrist pass, instead of slapping the puck like most players, during the games the rest of the camp, without me saying anything. (get them before puberty and the learning is really accelerated.) *Method two is to teach and practice a skill and then use it in a game.*

The younger players did simple games like cross ice or transition games as bounce the puck off the far boards to go onto offense. The older group did the same thing plus a lot of one zone transition games. They were usually in two groups because the 15 yr. olds skill is much higher and Phil played the games with them.

Modified rules: All games had rules or game structure so the players practiced the skills in game situations.

Day one games with different kinds of pucks, balls, rings to overload the nervous system with changing weights, bounce, etc. to help with rolling the wrists when handling the puck.

1-1 games - In the small groups the 6 nets are on one side. 12 players and 6 games of 1-1 at once. When you regain the puck or after a goal bounce the puck to yourself off the far boards to go onto offense. You have to have good moves and protect the puck to be successful.

1-1 with three or 4 players - instead of bouncing the puck off the boards the defender passes to a player waiting at the far wall, he goes onto offense vs. the player who was just on offense. So attack-defend-pass-rest rotation. You can do this with 6 or 8 players and play 2-2. You can also have tournaments and keep score, either King's Court or round robin. (similar skilled players. I couldn't have the 5 year old play a 10 year old. Instead the 5-6-7 year olds were playing each other.)

1-1 with 3 goals on each goal line and either carry to the blue line to be on offense or with 3 or more players pass to the next player.

1-1, 2-2, keepaway inside the circle.

2-2 to up to 6-6 cross ice games.

2-2 to 6-6 cross ice games with a Joker behind the net who you have to regroup with to go onto offense.

2-2 to 6-6 Half ice game at each end where you must carry the puck out of the zone and get outside to go on offense.

2-2 and 3-3 Half ice Perry Pearn transition game where defenders must carry the puck over the blue line before passing to players waiting at the red line. Can be done with either two teams or even 3 sets of 2 or 3 players, depending on how many are on ice.

1-1, 2-2, 3-3 game of quick transition. Pass to next group who attack right away vs. the players who were just on offense. Players either wait at the blue line or for low zone at the top of the circle.

Skill Rules:

Full ice games with skill rules:

Puck support: At least one pass in each zone, only 2" with the puck.

Triple threat position: all passes must be with the forehand and progress to either forehand or backhand but with shoulders facing the play.

Ringuette rules with a ring and with a puck. The ring or puck must be passed over each blue line.

- At least 2 passes needed before you can score.

- only forehand wrist passes allowed.

- only backhand wrist passes allowed.

- goals only count on one timer.

- goals only count with catch and release shots. (both games require the puck carrier to see the ice, pass and the teammate to get open, give a target, shoot right away.)

- you must take 3 hard stride with the puck before you can pass or shoot.

- you must make an escape move before you can pass or shoot.

- you must do a Crosby heel to heel glide.

- you must make a tight turn.

- Everyone must score before you can score again. (weaker players are now needed and this activates them.)

- You must get two assists before you can score again. (this was for the 15 year olds to make plays instead of just beat everyone.

Players got 7 x 60' session of skating with Gaston. Younger players 8 x 60' hockey, Older 4 x 75', 4 x 60' of hockey.

Parents were really happy about the camp and Phil said he was going to change the way he coaches to progress from drill to game based practices. (he was 'coach of the year for the NW Calgary association. You don't throw out drills but use them to focus on individual or team skill and then the players must use the skill under game pressure. Common sense but as my dad used to say. "Common sense is a most uncommon thing.")

Most important: the kid's had fun and learned a lot from [b]'The Game who is the Greatest Coach'

These are some of the ways we use the ice at our camp.





