



Developing Hockey Sense ...

Larry Huras - Head Coach - HC Lugano, Swiss Elite League

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

1. Light The Fire
2. Perfect Practice Makes Perfect
3. Can You See It?
4. The Mental Part of The Game
5. Summary
6. Small Ice Games
7. Transition / Option Drills
8. Larry's 12 Rules For Leadership

Larry Huras was born in Listowel, Ontario and is married with two sons and one daughter. Huras played his minor and Junior 'B' hockey in Elmira. He played 3 years of Major Junior 'A' with the Kitchener Rangers and was drafted by NY Rangers in 1975. After 2 years and limited NHL exposure with NY, Huras signed with St. Louis Blues and spent 3 years in their organization. Huras played mostly in the AHL and in the old Central Hockey League. Huras has been playing and coaching in Europe since 1980. He started coaching in Rouen, France and attained 4 national championships, 3 Continental Cups and 2 European Cup finals with Zurich and Ambri. In 1994, Huras moved to Switzerland and has coached Zurich, Ambri, Bern and Lugano. In addition to a Continental Cup with Zurich and 3 National Titles with Zurich, Lugano and Bern, Huras was selected twice as "Coach of The Year" and was assistant coach with Team Canada in Europe on two different occasions. Huras was former coach for NHLers **Mark Streit** (NYI) and **Roman Josi** (Nashville Predators).





● LIGHT THE FIRE

What is "Hockey Sense?"

- Are you born with it ... or can it be developed?

Good decision making!

- Understand the game.

- Read the situation.

- Make a good decision.

- React quickly.

"The Talent Code"

- Daniel Coyle ... Myelin ... creating genius is a lot of work!!!! ... 10,000 hours!

- How did Gretzky become Gretz?



First Coaches

- The first responsibility of youth coaches is to develop a love of the game in their young players!

- Love versus Fear ... **Love** makes us bigger and more enthusiastic about what we are doing ... **Fear** makes us small and shy away from perceived negative experiences.

Create a Positive Atmosphere

- Work Ethic - **Fun!**

- Challenge your players ... **X-Box Generation** ... The challenge is to *continually* find new ways of attacking the same subjects.

The Hockey News



● **PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT**

- What do players think about when they are in **"The Zone?"** *Practice-Think ... Game-Play!* **Eddie Bush - R.I.P.!**

- Players in **"The Zone"** are playing on instincts that have been developed from previous experiences.

- Most top level athletes, when asked about what they are thinking about when they are playing at their best will respond ... ***"Nothing special ... I just focus and play."***

- Europe versus North America. Practice-Game Ratio?
 - ❖ 1 to 1?

 - ❖ 2 or 3 to 1 or better?

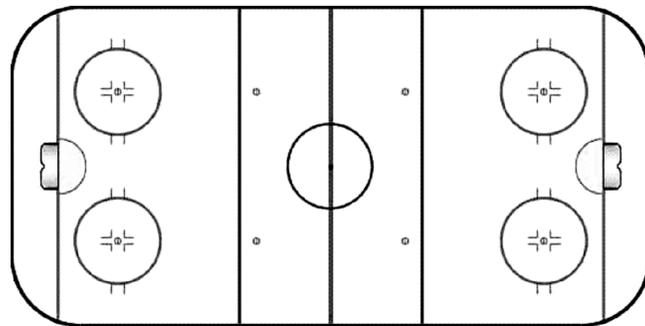
- How much time does a player have a puck on his stick in a 60 minute game?

- Young Players - 5-9 years old
 - ❖ **Kusnacht** ... Perfect Practice

 - ❖ **Mosquitos** ... Good Technique ... Fun ... just **PLAY!!**

➤ **Perfect Practice: 24 players**

- ❖ 4 goalies.
- ❖ 3 Zones.
- ❖ 2-3 Coaches.
- ❖ 8 skaters in each zone.



Zone 1: 4-ON-4 with 2 Goalies.

Zone 2: Skating with and without pucks.

Zone 3: Two Nets with goalies ... Stick-handling, Shooting, Stick Technique.

Note: Change zones every 10 ... finish with a scrimmage if ice-time allows.

Coaching Quips ...

"The less time the puck is in your defensive zone, the better your chances of winning."

Roger Neilson

- Senior Players - 16-39 years old ... at Game Speed
 - ❖ 1/3 Technical
 - ❖ 1/3 Tactical
 - ❖ 1/3 Game Situation

- Practices should mirror how your games look as much as possible and the drills you use should develop skills and patterns of play that you want in your games.

- Drills with built-in Options make them more game like.

- Force Reads and more Communication! *Loud Teams are Good Teams!*

- Insist on The Holy Trinity of Practice ...



- We would like our players to be self motivated and drive themselves to be at their best all of the time, but human nature plays against them a lot of the times. That is where coaches have to help them to stay focused to push themselves and their team mates.

- **The Pyramid of Success**



- Insist on doing the little things right all the time!!!!
 - ❖ Doing the little things right brings **big results**.
 - ❖ Stay on your players to execute in practice until it becomes a **habit**.
 - ❖ It takes time to develop good habits ... but only a very short time to develop bad habits!



➤ **Deep Practice ... or ... Practicing with a Purpose!**

- ❖ Practices should have specific goals and themes.

- ❖ Make your players aware of what the goals are for the day. It helps them to focus.

- ❖ It is not enough to tell a player to do something. They want to know and should know why they are doing something a certain way.

➤ **The Power Play**

- ❖ Break it down.

- ❖ Practice the parts slowly.

- ❖ Practice the parts at game speed.

- ❖ Put it all together.



- ❖ Play against minimum resistance.

- ❖ Full game situation.

- ❖ Whole-Parts ... Whole teaching method.

- **Banjo Practice ... "Do it right ... then do it Fast!"**

- **Small Area Drills**
 - ❖ These are Battle Drills.

 - ❖ There are Winners and Non-winners.

 - ❖ **Focus:** Many repetitions in a Small Space.



- ❖ **Futsal?** - It is a type of Brazilian soccer game played in a small indoor gymnasium type of setting. Things happen very quickly in a confined space.

- ❖ Players must learn to react and make their plays very quickly. There are many cases of top Futsal players going on to become great soccer players in Brazil.

➤ **It's a Transition Game**

- ❖ Your Drills should mirror the game. How many Transition opportunities per game?

- ❖ You are constantly in a state of transition in a game.

- ❖ The goal is to reduce the reaction time in changing from offensive mode to defensive mode and back to offense.

- ❖ Anticipation and Reading skills are crucial to quick transition.

- ❖ Work these every day in practice.

- ❖ Your transition game will improve as your players make better decisions quicker and your game will speed up.

- Break the game down to its smallest of elements. (1-on-1, 2-on-1, 2-on-2, 3-on-2, etc.)

"It is a simple game...there are two players and only one puck. It is about who wants it more?"

- Maurice Richard

- "On deviens forgerant en forgeront" = _____
 - ❖ *People learn by doing.*

- **The Cycle of Learning:**
 - ❖ Explanation

 - ❖ Demonstration

 - ❖ Participation

 - ❖ Correction

- Playing the game in reduced areas increases everyone's intensity and creates more repetitions of game like situations. This enhances the reading and decision making process ... and ... it is **FUN!!!**

- Small Ice Games...Playing with a **purpose!**
 - ❖ Choose games that develop the parts of the game and skills that you want to work on.

● CAN YOU SEE IT?

"A picture is worth a 1.000 words." ??????

"Video is worth 10,000 words!" ??????

- If you cannot see the play in your mind you will not be able to execute at a high level on the ice.

- Being able to see the play in your mind speeds up the process on the ice and helps you to make better decisions quickly.

- What do the players want to see? Needs?



- Pre-game preparation involves analyzing your opponent but should focus on what your team is going to do to be successful in the game.

- Pre-game preparation video break down should consider the basics:
 - ❖ Their aggressive fore-check pressure.

 - ❖ Their passive neutral zone checking when not forcing.

 - ❖ Low-Zone Offense and Defense tendencies.

 - ❖ Face-off plays, Power-play breakouts and LZD.

 - ❖ Penalty Kill Forechecks and LZD.

 - ❖ Their Key Players and tendencies.



- Build up your Mental Muscles ... how many times can you show a breakout under pressure until it is too many times?
 - ❖ Positive examples ... emphasize the positive when using video.
 - ❖ Keep painting the positive picture of the way you want your players to play.
 - ❖ Repetition builds strength in your mental muscles.

- Challenge your players ... *who is the smartest person in this room?* The answer is that together as a group, they are much smarter than any one individual on their team.

- Ask questions ... encourage debate ... think the game!!

"I finally get it! It is so easy!!" - Nummi

Coaching Quips ...

"Backchecking is the most difficult part of the game for coaches and players."

Roger Neilson

● THE MENTAL PART OF THE GAME

"50 % of this game is mental ... the other 50% is being mental!"

- Basil McCrae

- Dr. Saul Miller / Dr. David Scott ... great coaches!
 - ❖ If we can all agree that the mental part of the game is so great, why is it that we do not allocate more of resources to developing that part of our player's talents? Budgets are a concern, but we can all do something to improve ourselves as coaches and players.

- Mental Abilities ... Mental Toughness ... Hockey Sense and Performing Under Pressure.
 - ❖ The greatest gains that our athletes will make in the near future will be in the development of their mental game.

 - ❖ Our future players will have more emotional control, be able to better direct their powers of imagination and speed up their processing abilities.



- **Imagery** ... developing hockey instincts. *Types?* How do you see yourselves shooting the puck?
 - ❖ **Goal Imagery** ... what we are working towards? ➡ **“Raising the Cup!”**
 - ❖ **Stimulating Imagery** ... seeing yourself as an aggressive animal.
 - ❖ **Mental Rehearsal** ... playing the game in your mind ... see it through your own eyes.
 - ❖ **Performance Imagery** ... great passes, closing the gap, tough one-on-one, finishing. (*50 Goals a day*)

- The Ability to Focus and Re-Focus. Good start? Bad Start? Good shift? Bad shift? Take a drink ... take a breath ... positive self talk ... reload..... See it ... Do it!
 - ❖ Whatever happens ... use it. Winners use everything.

- Recognizing the situation ... First minute / Last minute of period. Third period ... up a goal / down a goal. Understanding how the **“Big Mo”** works.



- **Experience** ... *"It is what you get 15 seconds after you really needed it."* The Two Greatest Teachers ... Pain and Reward!

- Develop those **"Mental Muscles."** Repetition builds strength ... see it ... dream it ... do it!
 - ❖ What will you take away from this presentation?

 - ❖ What parts of it will impact on you in a way that the information will stay with you?

- Paralysis by too much Analysis ... **A-B-C's** ... Chunking the information ... Break Out, LZD, PP... Every situation has it's **A-B-C's**.
 - ❖ The bigger the game ... the bigger the pressure to perform. During preparation in this case, shortly before game time, less is more.

 - ❖ *"I play my best hockey when I..."* - 3 or 5 things that each player has to do to be successful. Have them make a list and post it in their stall. It makes for a quick mental check list and helps the players to stay focused in stressful moments.

- Positive Examples ... Positive Talk.
 - ❖ Instead of *"Do not pass the puck up the middle of the ice!"* use ... *"Pass the puck to the wingers on the boards!"*

● SUMMARY

- Having great hockey sense is no more than having the ability to make good decisions quickly and under pressure. This requires a good understanding of game basics as well as an understanding of how your team plays as a group in various situations.
- Hockey sense can be developed just like any other skill. It takes specific practice and much repetition to develop the good habits and hockey instincts that allow our players to quickly read a situation then react correctly.
- Training our player's mental muscles will allow them to better control their emotions under stress, increase their hockey knowledge, speed up their decision making process and better utilize their imaginative powers.

Some Thoughts from Roger ...

"We want to 'Think Big' and become a confident team".

"There is no better feeling in sports than playing on a team where guys know they have what it takes and can make it happen."

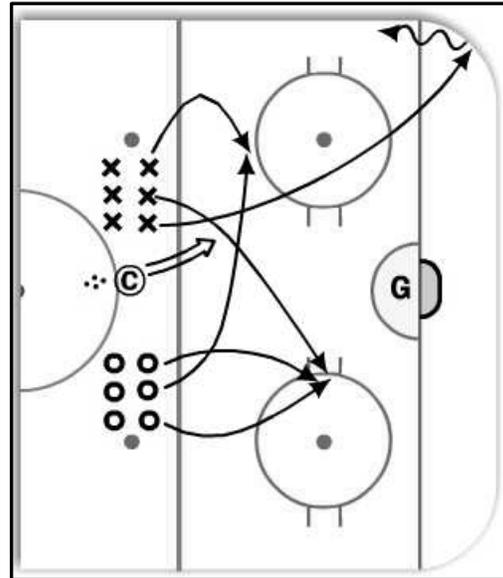
"(You) need to create a place or organization where guys want to be!"

SMALL ICE GAMES

1. 3-ON-3 END ZONE - ONE NET ... 1 OR 2 PASSES

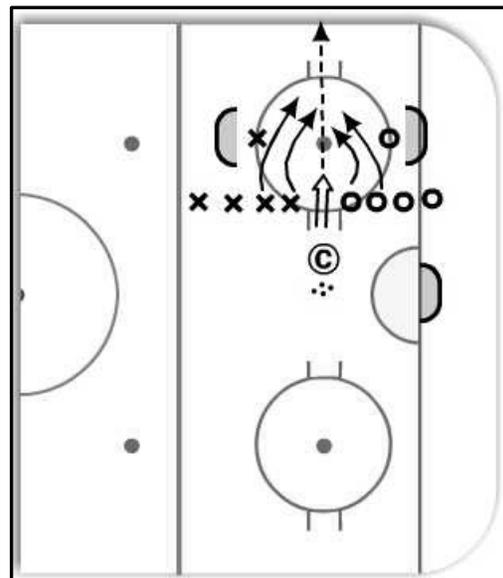
"Low 3 Against 3"

- Both teams attack the same net.
- On turnover, the team that recovers the puck must make one or two passes before they can attack the net.



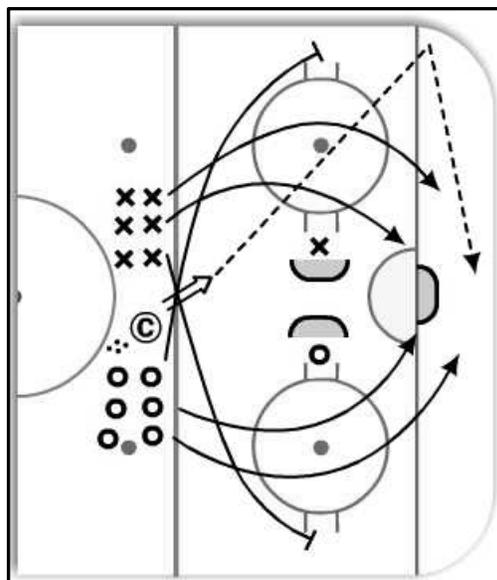
2. 2-ON-2 ... SMALL SPACE

- Two teams line up horizontally outside hash marks of circle.
- **Coach** starts game by chipping puck off of boards.
- Two players from each team jump in and play 2-on-2.
- Goalie may shoot as well.
- If pucks clear playing area, coach spots a new puck.
- Play 20 seconds then spot new puck for 4 new players.
- Automatic change when goal is scored.



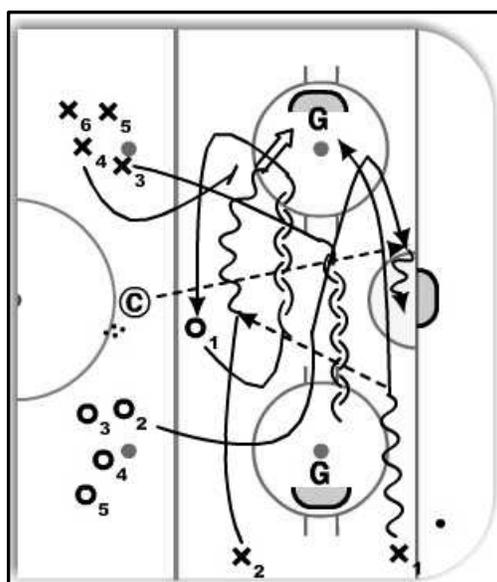
3. HANNU – 3-ON-3 – NETS BACK-TO-BACK

- Two teams of players line up outside of blueline.
- Place 2 nets back-to-back in middle of zone.
- **Coach** starts game with rim around boards (*alternate sides*).
- Two players from each side battle for puck, one player from each side goes to “shooter” position.
- Players can score directly or work puck up to their shooter for shot, with screen and tips.
- Standard goal = **1 point**. Goal off screen-shot, deflection or rebound = **2 points**.



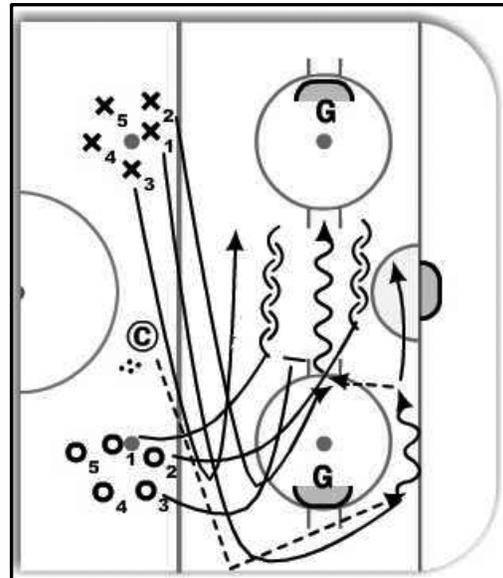
4. VILLE 2-ON-2 BACK PRESSURE & PROGRESS TO 3-ON-3

- **X₁** and **X₂** go 2-on-1 on **O₁**.
- After they cross mid-ice, **O₂** jumps in to apply back pressure and create 2-on-2.
- **X₃** leaves face-off spot to position himself to take 2-on-1 coming back to him.
- On whistle, **Coach** passes puck to **O₁** or **O₂** to start 2-on-1 back other way against **X₃**.
- **X₄** jumps in to back-check.



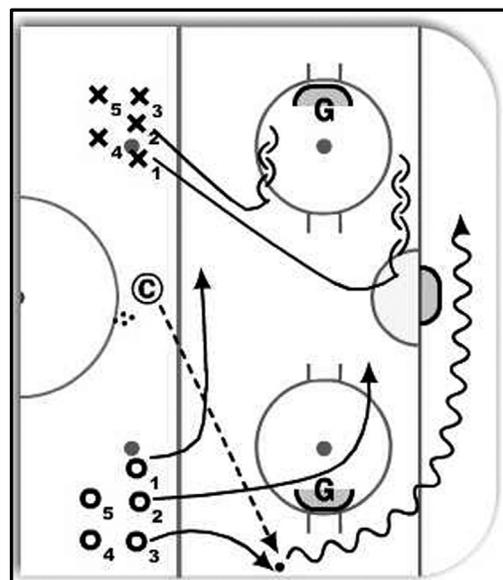
5. 3-ON-2 GAME ... CHASER

- Same game as 2-on-1 Chaser with 2 extra players.
- After **X₁**, **X₂** and **X₃** attack ... **O₁**, **O₂** and **O₃** backchecking.
- **X₄** and **X₅** jump behind them into defensive position to counter **O₁**, **O₂** and **O₃** when they counter-attack.
- Continuous play.
- Most goals in given time or number of reps wins.



6. CROSS-ICE 3-ON-2

- Coach chips puck low for **O₁**, **O₂** and **O₃** to retrieve.
- **X₁** and **X₂** move into zone with defencemen to create 3-on-2.
- Let play continue for about 20 seconds, then Coach whistle and chips new puck for **X₃**, **X₄** and **X₅** behind their net.
- **O₄** and **O₅** move out to challenge.
- Continuous play.
- Most goals in set time or number of reps won.



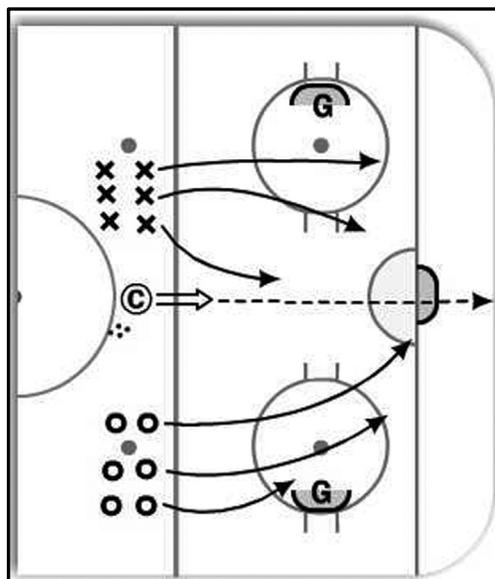
7. DEIGO'S 3-ON-2 TIMES 2

- **Coach** starts game with pass to **O₁**. You can also start with shoot-in battle or face-off on one side.
- There is only one puck, so defenders (**X₁** and **X₂**) must recover puck and pass to **X₃**, **X₄** and **X₅** for them to attack.
- Best played with with a divider down the middle of zone (*rope, heavy hose, etc.*) ... but not necessary.
- Set-up is for 4 complete blocks of 5 players.



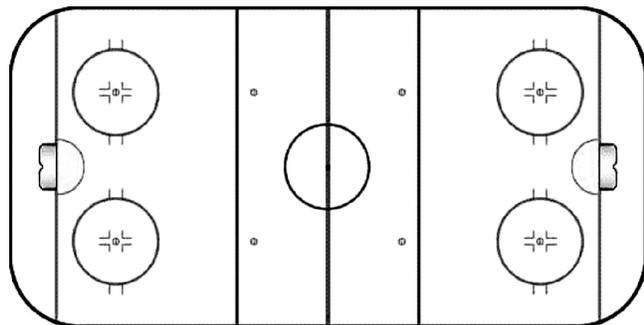
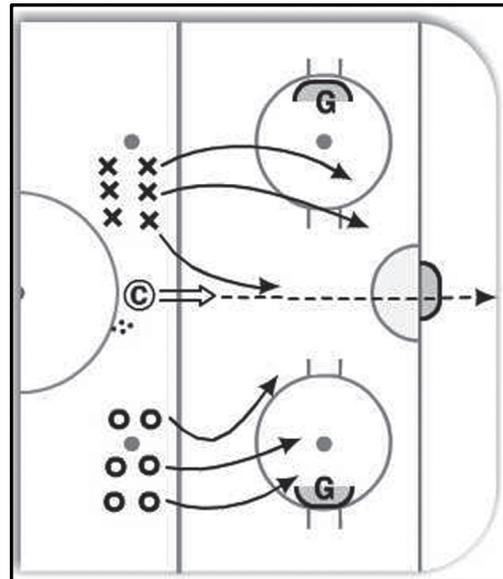
8. CROSS-ICE 3-ON-3

- **Coach** starts game with shoot-in off end boards (*no net there*).
- 3 players from each side play 3-on-3 to whistle.
- If puck goes out of zone, **Coach** spots new puck in front of him or shoots off of end boards.
- **Options: (A)** On whistle, players must stop playing puck and new players retrieve it. **(B)** On whistle, shoot in new puck with 6 new players.
- Game is to set number of goals.



9. CROSS-ICE 3-ON-3 ... CHAOS

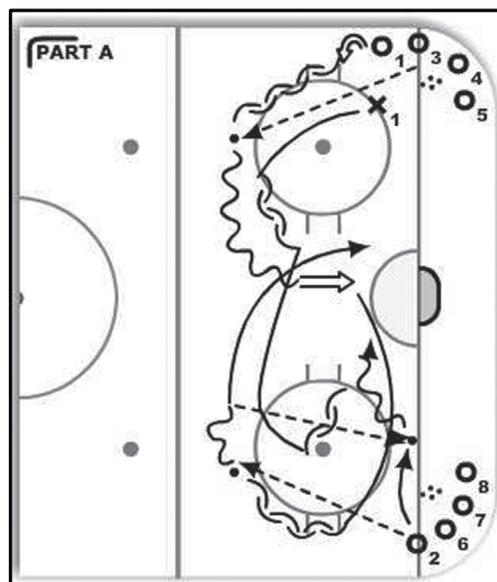
- Same start as 3-on-3 Cross-Ice (**Drill #8**) but now the players can score on either goalie!!
- **Key Rules:**
 - ❖ If a team recovers a rebound from their shot, they can score immediately.
 - ❖ If they recover the other team's rebound, they must make at least one pass before attacking the same goalie or head back other way against other goalie.



TRANSITION / OPTION DRILLS

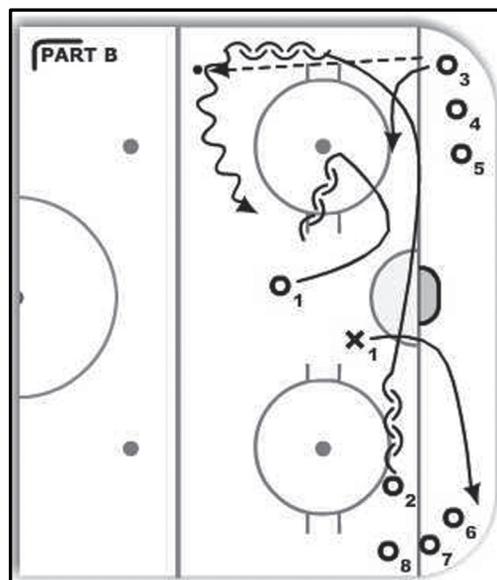
1A. MALKOV 2-ON-1 ... CONTINUOUS 2-ON-1 ... (PART A)

- **O₁** pivots and backs out of corner to receive pass from **O₃**.
- **O₁** now attacks **X₁** defender.
- **X₁** goes 1-on-1 against **O₁**.
- **O₁** now swings to other side ... pivots in front of **O₂** ... receives pass and now attacks **X₁** 2-on-1 with **O₂**.



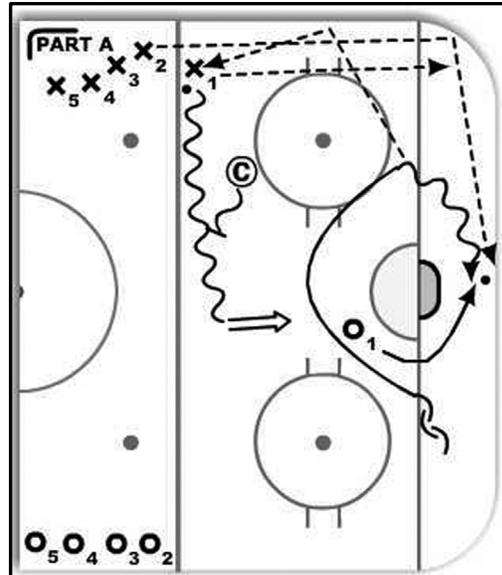
1B. MALKOV 2-ON-1 ... CONTINUOUS 2-ON-1 ... (PART B)

- After 2-on-1 attack **X₁** drops out ... **O₁** now becomes the defender.
- **O₂** now pivots in front of **O₃** ... receives pass and they both attack **O₁**.
- **Key to Rotations** ... attack twice, defend once and then change.



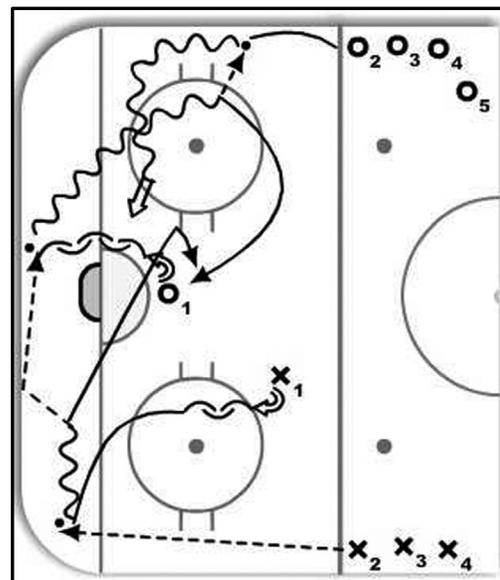
2A. SATOR 2-ON-1 ... PART A

- Defenseman **X₁** rims puck behind net for **O₁**.
- **O₁** steps from behind net and banks pass past **Coach** to **X₁** who walks the blueline for wrist shot with **O₁** now screening.

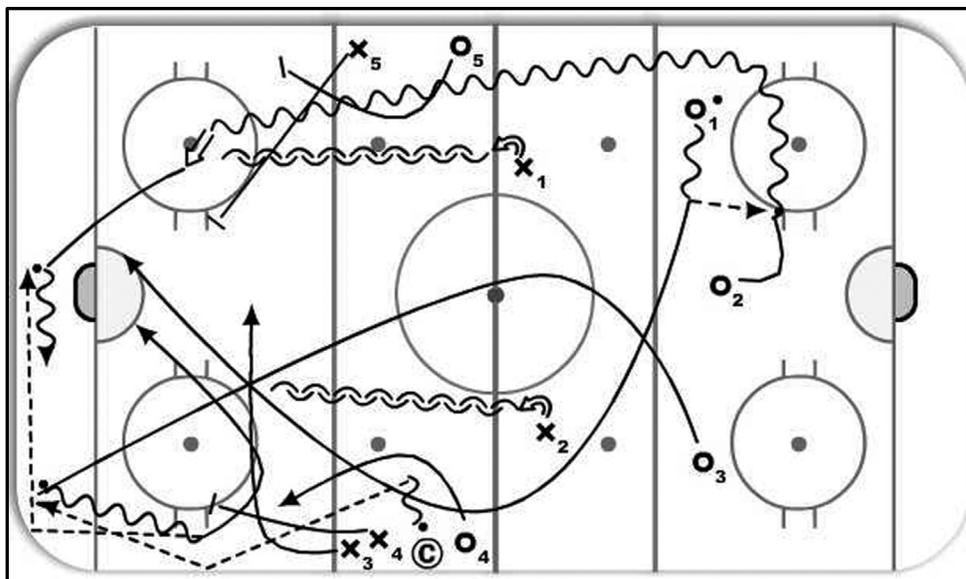


2B. SATOR 2-ON-1 ... PART B

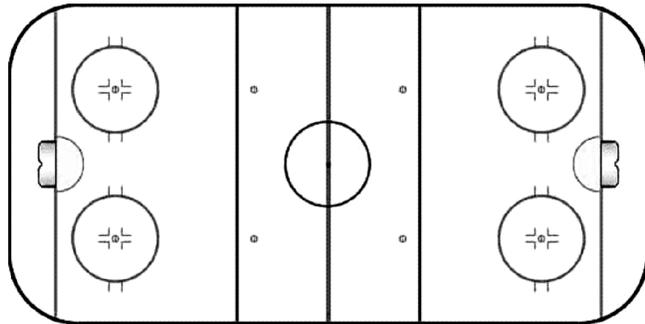
- **X₂** now chips a puck into corner for **X₁** who pivots, then retrieves puck.
- **O₁** drops down into far corner.
- **X₁** now banks pass behind net to **O₁** who heads up boards ... then drops pass to **O₂** coming down the boards.
- **O₁** and **O₂** now attack 2-on-1 against **X₁**.
- After attack, **O₂** now posts up in front of far post ... ready for a hard net cycle rim from **X₂**.

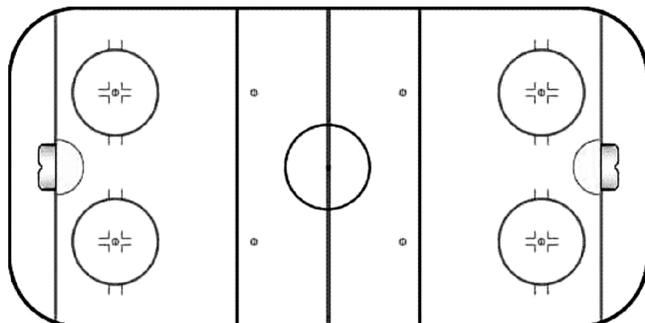


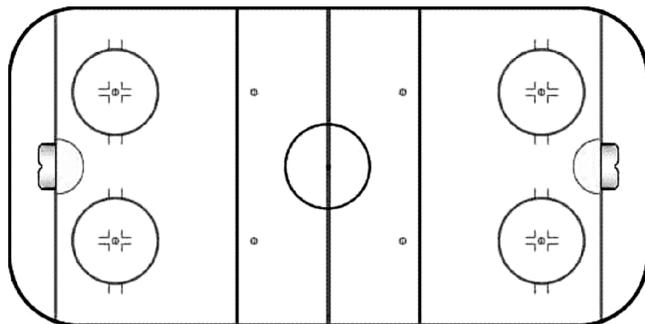
3. 3-ON-2 PLUS LOW ZONE 5-ON-3



- **O₁**, **O₂** and **O₃** weave around in the zone and on whistle they attack up ice against **X₁** and **X₂**.
- After direct attack, **Coach** chips second puck low to corner ... **O₃** retrieves it and carries it up the boards to hash marks.)The next 3 forwards move into defensive position.)
- **O₃** then makes a hard net cycle pass back behind net for **O₂**.
- Here, **O₂** has options ...
 - (A) To attack low 3-on-3.
 - (B) To bank-pass up to defenseman **O₄** who has a defensive position on blueline.
- **O₂** can bank-pass past forward **X₄** who has collapsed to top of circle.
- After this attack, **X₃**, **X₄** and **X₅** attack back against two new defensemen.









LARRY'S 12 RULES FOR LEADERSHIP

1. Get Angry ... then get over it.
2. Admit your mistake and take immediate action to correct it.
3. If you take advice from someone ... make sure they are an expert.
4. Be more prepared than your opponent.
5. Optimism is a force multiplier ... *"Things tend to move towards and become what you think they are going to be."*
6. When you lose ... do not lose the lesson.
7. Strive for perfection in everything that you do.
8. Improve the path you walk.
9. Concentrate on the things that you can control.
10. Laughter Kills Stress.
11. Do what is right ... not what is the most popular.