Exercise 4 **APPROACH ON A CARRIER**

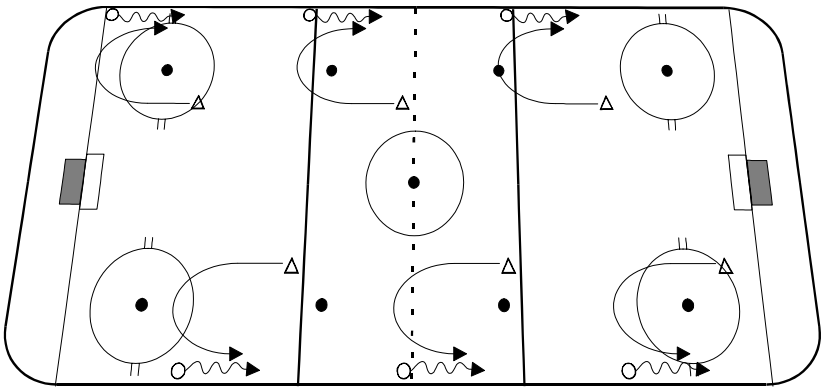


Figure 19.

ORGANIZATION:

- The players are divided into two groups. One group skates around the ice at a medium speed in one direction close to the boards, with each player in possession of a puck. The second group moves around the ice in the opposite direction, 7m from the boards without a puck. Have the players alternate directions and change roles.

PROCEDURE:

- The players far from the boards must focus on a carrier then execute forward crossovers to skate alongside him for two seconds. After the approach, they draw away from the boards once again (7m) then set their sights on another carrier and so on. It is not necessary to take the puck from the carrier.

INTERVENTION:

- Players should synchronize their approaching speed with that of the carrier (adjustment).
- Check that each player approaches the carrier from an angle.

COMMENTS:

- By synchronizing their movements with those of the carriers, the defensive players will realize how it may seem simple to neutralize an opponent when it is possible to skate alongside him.

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- Later on, this exercise can be used as a regular part of the warm-up. It will help the defensive players to pinpoint the exact moment to begin their crossovers (usually when they are equal to the carrier.)
- Why exactly must the carrier be directed towards the boards? This question could certainly use some explaining. Young players must be aware of the consequences of an effective approach on the carrier. This way, they can apply the principles more often because they understand what they are doing. The reason for driving the carrier towards the boards is simple. When a player controls the puck in the centre of the ice, three options are available: skating straight ahead or to the left or the right (forgetting the diagonals and skating backwards for the moment). Defensive players have one chance in three of anticipating the carrier's movements or the direction of his pass. If the player has control while along the boards, on the left side for example, one of the three options is eliminated. He cannot skate towards his left side because he would crash headlong into the boards. (The inverse holds true if the carrier is on the right side.) He can only move forward or towards the centre. The defensive players have one chance in two of predicting the carrier's movement or the direction of his pass. If in addition to this, the defensive player approaches the carrier at an angle from the centre, the carrier will be hesitant to skate towards the centre from the boards because the defensive player's body (and eventually his stick) are in the way. He only has one choice — to move straight ahead. This is how the defensive players can easily predict the carrier's movement or the direction of his pass. Furthermore, the defensive player will approach the carrier gradually until he checks him. The carrier will feel increasingly cornered and will have barely any options left.

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Exercise 5 **APPROACH ON A CARRIER**

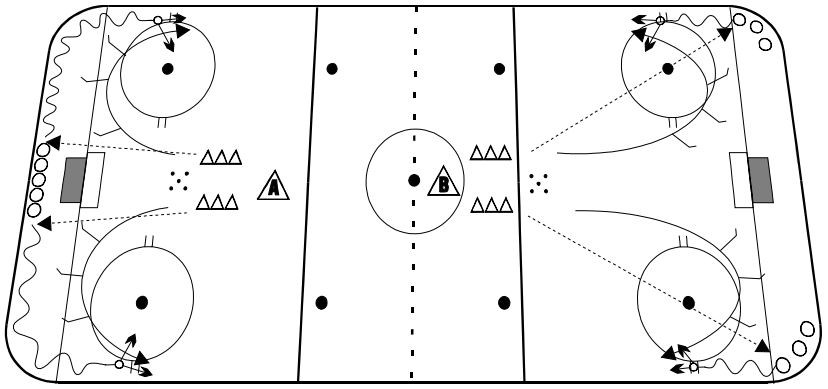


Figure 20.

ORGANIZATION:

- Use one end of the ice for this exercise. It can, however, take place elsewhere on the ice, such as in the neutral zone. Divide the players into three groups: one behind the net (attackers) and the two others in front of the net (defenders). The groups in front of the net are in possession of the pucks. Have the players change roles.

PROCEDURE:

- The defensive player must block the offensive player's progression after he receives the puck when:
  a) The offensive player starts from behind the net and the defensive player starts from the slot.
  b) The offensive player starts from the corner and the defensive player starts from the blue line.
- In both cases, all options are available to the offensive player (the carrier). He must cross the blue line. After a few tries and observations, the coach calls the players together for discussion. He explains why it is so important to direct the carrier towards the boards (limiting options). He adds that sometimes the angled approach is not enough to do this successfully. When asked what else they can use to help them guide the carrier towards the boards, the players must answer, "My stick." The coach then explains the third governing principle. After a discussion, the players continue with the exercise.

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INTERVENTION:

- In addition to synchronizing their speeds and angled approaches, ensure that the defensive players are placing their sticks on the ice so the centre is blocked.

COMMENTS:

- The defensive players should now be getting increasingly adept at guiding the carrier towards the boards.
- Placing the stick on the ice to block the path to the centre may also cause the carrier to decide against passing to the centre.
- In addition to carrying out this exercise in different areas of the ice, the coach should include tips on the approach on a carrier in mini-games of 3-on-3 across the width of the ice to create increasingly realistic scenarios.

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Exercise 6 **APPROACH ON A CARRIER**

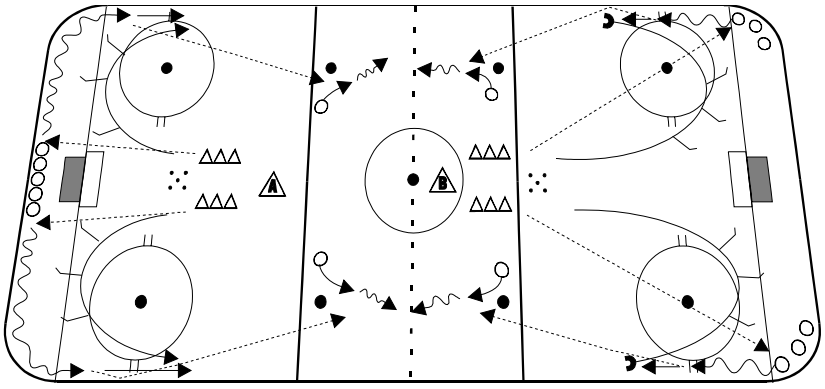


Figure 21.

ORGANIZATION:

- Use one end, or any other area of the ice for this exercise. Divide the players into three groups: one behind the net (attackers) and the two others in front of the net (defenders). The groups in front of the net are in possession of the pucks. Two additional offensive players (non-carriers) move about in the neutral zone.

PROCEDURE:

- The defensive player must block the offensive player's progression after he receives the puck when:
  a) The offensive player starts from behind the net and the defensive player starts from the slot.
  b) The offensive player starts from the corner and the defensive player starts from the blue line.
- In both cases, the offensive player (the carrier) can try to cross the blue line on his own or pass the puck to a non-carrier skating in the neutral zone. After a few tries and observations, the coach calls the players together for discussion. He asks if the presence of a non-carrier should change how the carrier is approached. The answer is **NO** (because he will eventually be covered by another defensive player). The fourth governing principle is then explained. After a demonstration, the players continue with the exercise.

INTERVENTION:

- The approach on a carrier should end with a body check so that the opponent is immobilized and taken out of the game. This applies if the player is still the carrier or if he just made a pass. If body checking is impossible or forbidden, the player should stay with his

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man. Physical contact is allowed in the Pee-Wee division in certain areas.

COMMENTS:

- This governing principle is without doubt the most difficult to apply and requires the most discipline. The carrier usually passes the puck after the first three governing principles have been applied because he feels cornered; rarely will he keep the puck. The defensive player should not be concerned with the puck when executing an approach on a carrier because it is a 1-on-1 situation. He has to play his man and take him out of the play (see the learning steps for body checking). The danger is the defensive player skating in the direction of the puck instead of his man after passing or getting rid of the puck, which opens the possibility of executing a give-and-go. This player is the responsibility of the defensive player approaching the carrier. He must **TAKE HIM OUT OF THE PLAY**, or at least **REMAIN WITH HIM** if body checking or physical contact cannot be used. This is called "**completing your body check**".
- An approach on the carrier is considered effective if the carrier was unable to return to the centre alone and in control of the puck. **As far as efficiency is concerned, how this was achieved is of little importance; it is the result that counts**. The defensive player must be made aware that if all governing principles are respected, the chances of succeeding are very high. On the other hand, if not all principles are respected, the chances of failure are proportional to the number of disregarded principles. This same logic applies to all elements that are taught with governing principles.
- Excluding a few penalty killing situations, the opponent must always be taken out of the play.

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Exercise 7 **APPROACH ON A CARRIER**

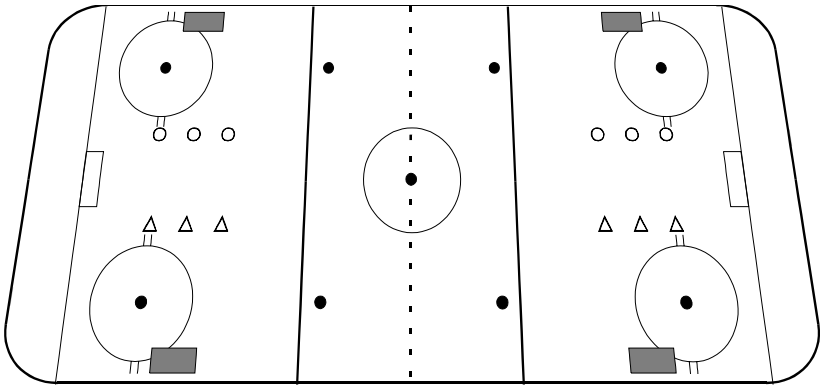


Figure 22.

ORGANIZATION:

- Use an area for six players with two nets and a puck.

PROCEDURE:

- Organize a game of 3-on-3 across the width on the ice.

INTERVENTION:

- Check that the carrier is guided towards the extremities of the play area through the application of the first three governing principles of the approach on a carrier.
- Look for full application of the fourth governing principle. If a defensive plays neglects to take his man out of the play after an approach, whistle immediately and correct where appropriate.

COMMENTS:

- Repeat this 3-on-3 exercise regularly. Later increase to 4-on-4, then 5-on-5.
- You should also plan on offering follow-up for real games with goals expressed in the percentage of successful approaches.
- The approach on a carrier is one of the key elements of a solid defense. Patience is essential.

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Exercise 8 **APPROACH ON A CARRIER**

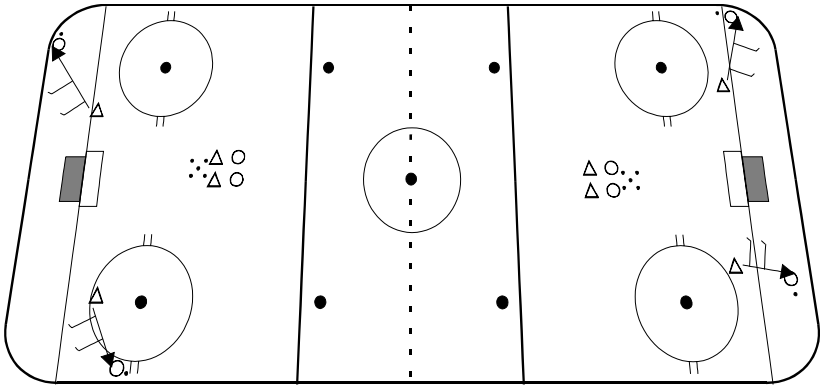


Figure 23.

ORGANIZATION:

- Players are in groups of two (one attacker and one defender) to the left or to the right of the defended net.

PROCEDURE:

- The defender tries to keep the attacker from scoring a goal when the attacker has full control of the puck. The two players are facing each other, the attacker situated in various places close to the boards and the defender closer to the centre, but also in various places. The defender hands the puck over to the attacker and moves towards him.
- The defenders must apply the governing principles for the approach on a carrier, but now in a restricted space and close to the defended net.
- After a few tries, the coach calls the players together for discussion. He asks them which governing principle needs to be slightly modified to meet the needs of the situation. After fielding responses from the players, he states that the angle of approach must be reduced to a simple shoulder-to-shoulder stance, but the other governing principles remain unchanged. After a demonstration, the players continue with the exercise.

INTERVENTION:

- Check that the defensive player moves slowly (caution) with the knees bent towards the attacker in control of the puck.
- The defender must place his left shoulder across from the attacker's left shoulder (the carrier) on the right side of goal or the attacker's right shoulder (the carrier) on the left side of the goal to keep the carrier further away from the defended goal.

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- The defender must place his stick on the ice so that the attacker (the carrier) is guided in the desired direction.
- Ensure that the defender completes his body check.

COMMENTS:

- This situation is frequently seen in the defensive territory. The approach on a carrier in a restricted space, face-to-face, requires a great deal of caution. The defender must constantly try to distance the carrier from the defended net by placing his body and stick in such a way that the carrier is guided towards the blue line. In a regular situation, however, the angle of approach must be done as usual.
- The other governing principles must all be applied.
- Repeat this exercise several times for all players. The coach will insist on this point during exercises of 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 across the width of the ice.

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