



# Loose Puck Battles

Tuesday, February 6th, 2024

**Please Note: The Practice of the Week is designed to bring value across multiple age levels. You can use this to build ideas to develop your own practice. With that being said, we highly encourage you to adjust the drills based on your team's age and skill levels. IHS should always be used as a starting point and you can add/remove constraints to fit your team.**

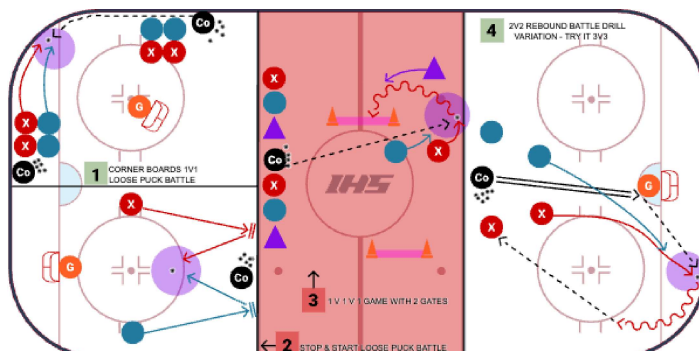
**Practice Theme:** The drills and games in this practice are designed to help your players work on the skills and will to win loose puck battles in different situations.

We encourage you to match up players to similar abilities when possible to create scenarios.

We also encourage you to add/remove constraints to **make some of the battles 60/40 pucks or 70/30 pucks by moving starting points**, etc. Get creative with it and see if players are able to problem solve and find ways to gain control of the puck

## 3 Key Focus Points

1. Gain a Step: In close puck races players need to compete and problem solve to find a way to gain a step on their opponent to gain body positioning.
2. Angling: Players should be working on taking proper angles to the puck, cut through the hands of their opponent and to cleanly retrieve the puck when beating their opponent to it.
3. Be Ready to Make a Play: Winning the puck race is meaningless if you aren't ready to make a play. Encourage players to be aware of their surroundings and be ready to make a play once they win their race.

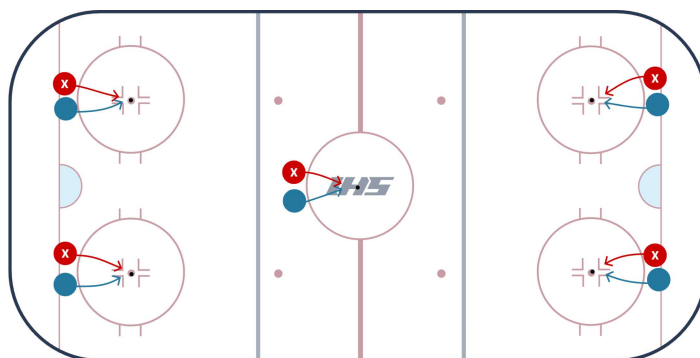


# Puck Race to 1 v 1

## Details:

## Drill Setup:

- Puck placed on the dot.
- 2 players start on the goal line.
- When coach says "go," the 2 players race for the puck. Whoever wins the puck is on offense the defender must either toss their stick aside or turn it over.
- Players continue to play keep away in the circle until coach says stop.



## Drill Purpose:

- This is very similar to drill done day #1 except now we are adding the puck race and looking for players to gain position before possession to win the puck.
- By having the defender have to get rid of their stick or turn it over you are putting something on the line which will pick up the compete of the drill as well as rewards the puck race winner. In addition by having the defender have to get rid of their stick or turn it over you are forcing them to have to play the body as they do not have a stick to use.

## Variations:

- Depending on your players level of proficiency allowing the defender to have a stick or no stick changes the drill.
- If wanting to really focus in on body contact I suggest having the defender without a stick or it be turned over.
- Once players show willingness and consistency in being physical and using their bodies then you can have both players use their stick the whole time. In that scenario I suggest turning it into a game. Puck race is worth 1 point. Each time the player steals the puck from the other player they get a point for stealing the puck. The offensive player gets no points (other than winning the puck race). The offensive players incentive is to not allow the other player to steal the puck and in turn get points.

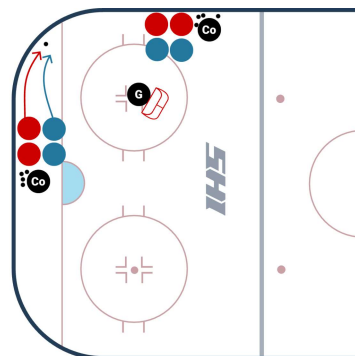
## Corner Boards 1 V 1 Loose Puck Battle

### Details:

Corner Boards 1 V 1 Loose Puck Battle allows players & coaches to work on a very common play during the game, a loose puck battle along the boards. This is a competitive drill that can also progress to 2 V 2.

### Setup

- On the whistle, 2 players battle in the corner for a loose puck.
- Whoever gets the puck off of the boards first is on offense and tries to score a goal while the other player defends.
- Defenders can knock the puck out of play or they can steal the puck, tag up at the goal line and then become an offensive player.



### Variations

- Can make the battle 1 V 1 and progress to 2 V 2. View 2 V 2 Tag Up Example.
- Can allow the defending team to tag up at the goal line to become offense.

### Coaching Points

- Defending players need to keep their sticks on the ice and play the body.
- Offensive players should work to protect the puck with their body and utilize their edges to be strong on the puck and create space with tight turns.

**Station Number:** Station #1

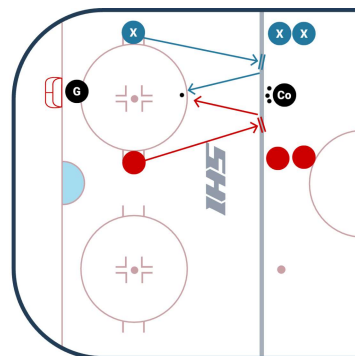
# Start & Stop Loose Puck Battle

## Details:

The Start & Stop loose puck battle is a competitive drill that sets up two players to race for a puck. Whoever gets the puck first is on offense and works to score a goal while the other player is defending.

## Setup

- Set up a net on the goal line with 2 players on the hash marks.
- On the whistle, the two players on the hash marks explode to the blue line, stop and race to the puck that is on the top of the circle.
- Whoever gets the puck first is on offense and is trying to score. The other player is on defense and looking to deny scoring chances.



## Coaching Points

- Players should focus on quick starts and stops to get a jump on the puck.
- Player that gets the puck first should work on protecting the puck with the body from the defender
- The defender should work to get stick on puck or lift the stick to create a turnover.

## Variations

- Can set up in different areas of the ice to mimic different game situations.
- Can allow players to make a tight turn instead of a complete stop.
- Can play 1v1 or 2v2.
- If one player is much faster than the other player, you can line up the players in different spots to make the race even.

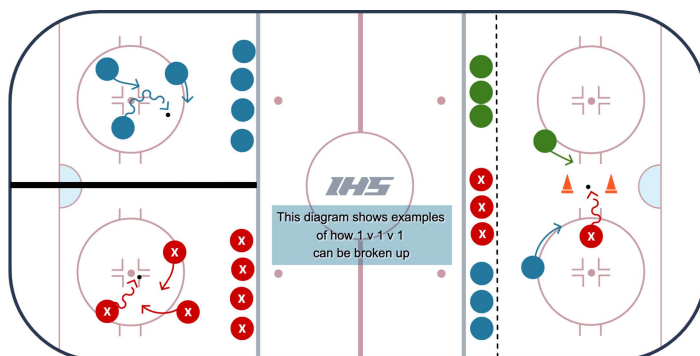
**Station Number:** Station #2

# 1 v 1 v 1 Game

## Details:

## Drill Setup:

- Coach designates a playing area.
- No Goal Version: Basic version of the drill is 3 players and 1 puck are in the area. The 3 players play keep away until coach says change.
- Gate Version: If doing the gate game variation, split players into 3 teams. Put 2 cones in the middle of the rink. To score points when you have the puck you are trying to skate between the 2 cones. If able to do so your team gets a point. The game is still 1 v 1 v 1. This is just a way to make it competitive and get players to try and get to the middle of the rink when they have the puck.



## Drill Purpose:

- The purpose of the drill is now when the player has the puck they have be watching for 2 other players and not just one. This is more game like and forces the player to intake more information to make decisions how they are going to protect the puck. Wanting to see all the playing in contact and checking skills talked about in this drill.
- Details to talk through are when you have the puck you want to try and stay toward the middle of the ice. Do not allow the defenders to push you toward the wall. When you are in the middle you have more space to work with and can go any direction. When near the wall you have less space and limited options making it difficult to maintain puck possession. Can also reiterate skills of fake/deceptive turns, changes of speed as well.

## Variations:

- Diagram shows 2 different ways how you can setup the playing area for this drill. It could be 1/4 ice, tops circles down, full zone ect. The smaller the area the harder the drill becomes to maintain possession. Suggestion is start with bigger area and decrease the playing area size as you move through the drill and/or over the course of time.

**Station Number:** Station #3

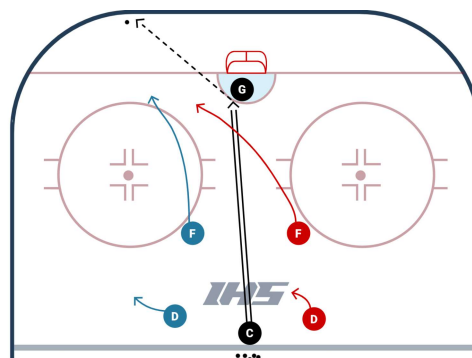
## 2 vs 2 Rebound Battle Drill

### Details:

Winning loose puck battles is a major deciding factor in the outcome of a game. This battle drill challenges players to compete for a loose puck after a rebound and have the awareness to pass the puck to their teammate at the point. After the loose puck battle is won, the player passes it back to their teammate at the point, which will begin a 2 vs 1.

### Setup:

- This can be setup to be a station, or a half ice drill.
- A coach or player dumps the puck on net and the goalie plays it to either corner.
- 2 players are spread out and charge into the corner to compete for the puck. Whoever comes out with the puck must pass it to their point player to begin a 2 vs 1.
- The drill is stopped after a goal, the goalie freezes it, or the puck is moved out of the zone.



### Offensive Coaching Points:

- Players who arrive at the puck first should work on deceptive fakes with their body to escape from the corner. Fakes with your hips and pointing your skates in the opposite direction are extremely effective in this situation.
- Once you have the puck, protect it, get your head up and make a pass to the point.
- The point should be active calling for the puck and moving to space.

### Defending Coaching Points:

- The defender should work on playing the body in the corner with stick on puck.
- When 2 vs. 1 begins, the defender should hold the middle and try to force a bad angle shot.
- Have good stick position. Do not swing your stick as it will open up passing lanes and make you off balance.

### Variations:

- You can allow the point player that does not receive the pass to jump into the play so it is a full 2 vs 2.
- You can have only one point player, which is demonstrated in the 2 vs 1 Rebound Battle.

**Station Number:** Station #4



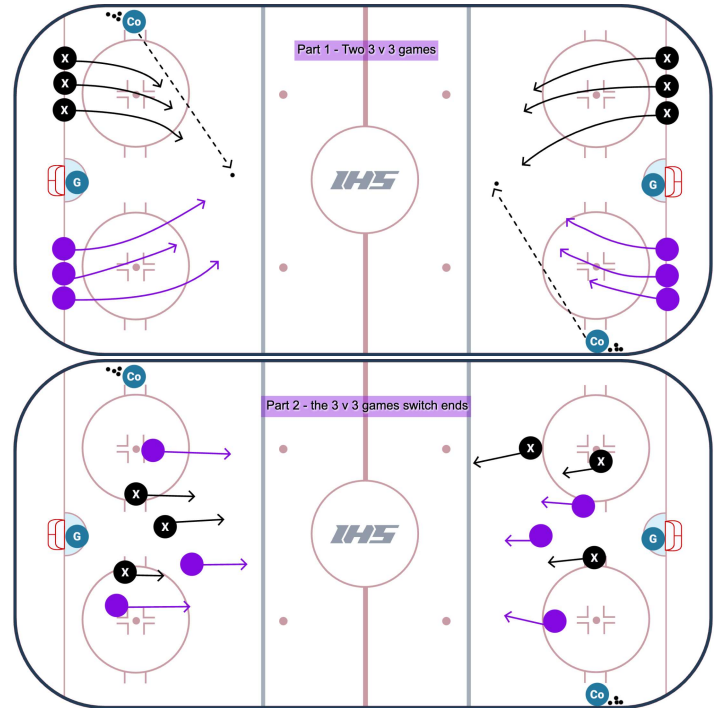
# Ramsay 3 V 3 Race

## Details:

Jason Lammers describes the Ramsay 3 V 3 Race. This competitive small area game incorporates racing to the puck to determine which team is on offense.

## Setup

- Full ice setup with goalies in both nets.
- On each half of the ice, put 6 players on the goal line (so each side of the ice can play 3 V 3).
- On the whistle, the coach places a puck somewhere in the zone, and all 6 players race to the puck.
- Whoever gets the puck first, their team is on offense and the other team is on defense.
- Offense is trying to score. If the defense gets the puck, they work to keep puck possession before the next whistle.
- Play out 3 V 3 inside the blueline.
- On the second whistle, all 6 players on each half of the ice skate down to the other end of the ice to race for another puck. Coaches can have the players race for the previous puck that the other group was playing with, or the coach can collect the old puck and place it in a different part of the zone.
- Whoever gets that puck, their team is on offense and the other team is on defense.
- Keep score!



## Coaching Points

- Race hard to get the puck!
- Offense - support your teammates and be an outlet when you do not have the puck
- Defense - keep sticks on the ice to block passing lanes
- Everyone - communicate with your teammates

## Variations

- Can make this game 2 v 2, 3 v 3, or 4 v 4.
- Can create different variations within the game:
  - Can have the offensive team be all time offense and if the defense gets the puck, the defensive team tries to keep puck possession and they get a point if they make 4 consecutive passes.
  - Can have the offensive team start on offense if defense gets the puck they can tag up at the blue line and then that allows them to attack on offense.
- Can be half ice instead of full ice. Just divide the zone into two halves and put the nets by the half-wall by the face-off circles.

