



Basic Structure for 6U Mite Practices

The 6U Mite group consists of players ranging in age from 4 to 6 years old. This assumes that the players have first followed USA Hockey recommendations and taken a basic learn to skate and learn to play program. These two foundational programs will provide the rudimentary skills needed for the 6U program. In the case of some smaller youth associations it may be necessary to group the 6U and the 8U players into practice sessions. This can still be done efficiently with proper planning and be very beneficial to all involved.

Skating is a primary skill for ice hockey and although players must continue to master skating technique throughout their career, there must be a special emphasis placed on the ABC elements of skating in the early years of development. Players at the Mite age have a harder time processing technical skills instruction and their bodies lack some of the fine motor control required. At this age large muscle groups and multiple joint movements should be incorporated into the practice sessions. Agility, balance and coordination (ABC's) on the ice surface are at the foundation of LTAD for 6U Mites.

Activity volume plays a significant role in development at the 6U age group. Little kids are doers so keep instruction short and activity high.

Practices have a preparatory phase followed by the main body of the practice. The main body of the practice session includes station work so that kids are developing their skills in an efficient manner. The recommended breakdown is with six stations so that there is enough variety to hold the interest of players at this age. Training should be structured so that a large part of the skill repetition is done in a games format. Players at all levels must be mentally engaged in order to best acquire new skills. When skills repetition lacks an emotional element, children at this age quickly become bored. If the skills repetition is hidden in the form of a game, children are capable of extended periods of focused effort. Play is the key to emotional engagement in the skills repetition.

Young kids are comfortable with repetition and like familiarity in the drills that they are asked to perform. Similar drills are rotated down the progression from practice to practice. This give each practice a slightly different look and feel without changing too much. For example each practice's warm-up is then used within the station setup in the following practice. Thus the players are familiar with the game, but the spatial requirements have changed.

The basic 6U Mite practice structure is for a 50 minute hour block of ice as this is common across the country (50 minutes of ice with the cost of a 10 minute ice cut included). If your local associating gets the full 60 minutes out of their hour block of ice the practice sessions are easily modified by adding one additional minute to each station and four minutes to the game activity at the conclusion of practice.



Free Puck Time: 5 Minutes

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

Warm Up: 5 min- Sharks & Minnows

Two players are designated as the sharks to start. The minnows must skate from side boards to side boards without being tagged. If they are tagged, they become sharks too.

Stations: 6 Stations x 5 minutes

On the whistle, players do 3 two foot jumps before changing stations. Be sure to give each player water after chanaina stations.

Station 1: ABC's - Wave Skating

2 foot glide, 2 foot glide with butt to heels, run on skates, glide & 2 foot jump, drop to knees & get up.

Station 2: Activity - Freeze Tag

Select one player to be the tagger. When a player gets tagged they must stand still (frozen) until a teammate touches them to become free again.

Station 3: Stationary Passing

Players partner up, stand 8-10' apart and pass back and forth. Work on proper technique, emphasize keeping the hands away from the body and sweeping the puck. Players should stand sideways so that they pass cross body.

Station 4: Relay Race

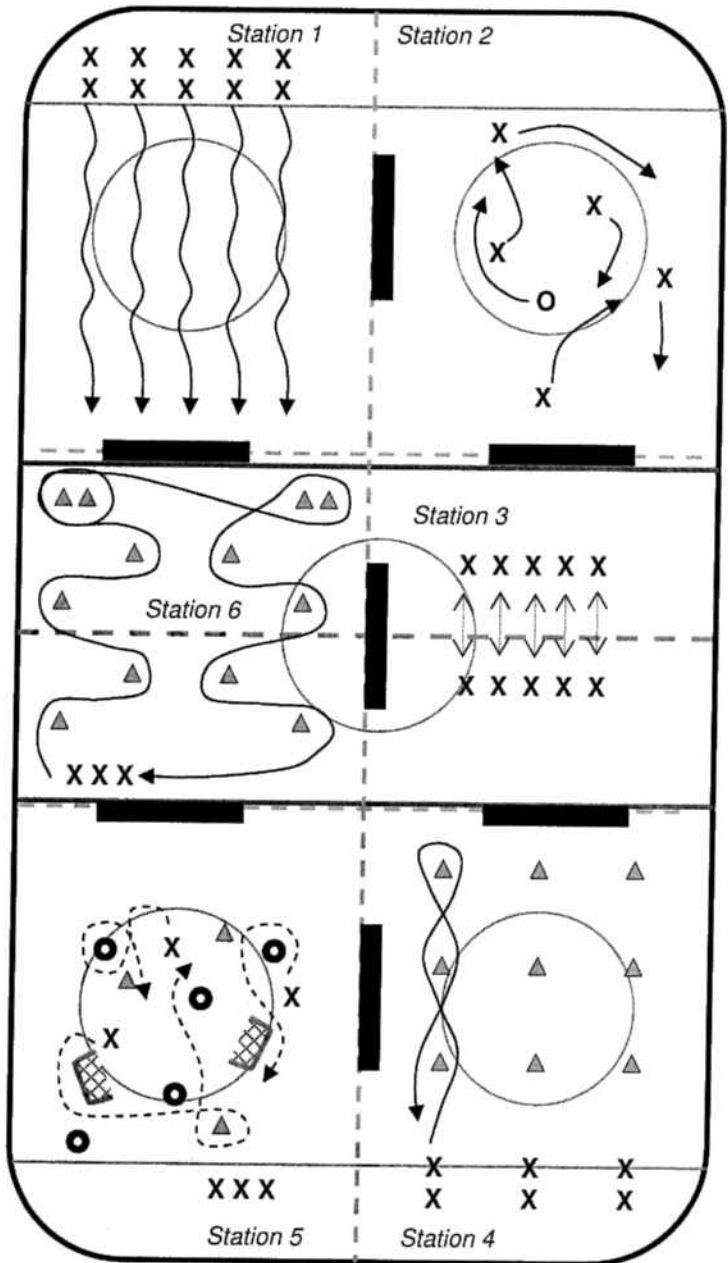
As shown or create your own. Variation: 360 around each obstacle.

Station 5: Chaos Puck-handling

Players stickhandle skating around obstacles. All players are involved. Check to see that each player is holding their stick properly. Hands about shoulder width apart and top hand at the end of the stick partially held in the palm with the V between thumb and forefinger on top of the stick like you would hold a hammer. Use ringette rings instead of pucks.

Station 6: Obstacle Course

Players skate through the course with emphasis on turns and edges. Have players maintain good control of their stick by leading with the stick blade around each cone.



Game: 2v2 Hit the Tire - 10 minutes

Have the players stay and play in each of the six zones. Play 2v2 for 30 to 40 second shifts. Use one tire in each zone as the goal. Teams score by hitting the tire with the puck.



Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, cones, tires, hockey balls, soccer balls

Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Free Puck Time: 5 Minutes

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

Warm Up: Ball Tag – 5 Minutes

Coaches throw soccer balls at players who attempt to dodge out of the way. If hit, the player must drop to their knees and get back up 3 times before they can rejoin the action.

Stations: 6 Stations x 5 minutes

On the whistle, players do 3 jumping jacks before changing stations. Be sure to give each player water after changing stations

Station 1: Obstacle Course

Players skate through the course with an emphasis on getting up and falling down.

Station 2: A,B,C's - Wave Skating

2 foot glide, 2 foot glide with butt to heels, run on skates, glide & 2 foot jump, drop to knees & get up, drop to single knee and up alternate knees.

Station 3: Activity - Sharks & Minnows

Two players are designated as the sharks to start. The minnows must skate from blue line to blue line without being tagged. If they are tagged, they become sharks too.

Station 4: Stationary Shooting

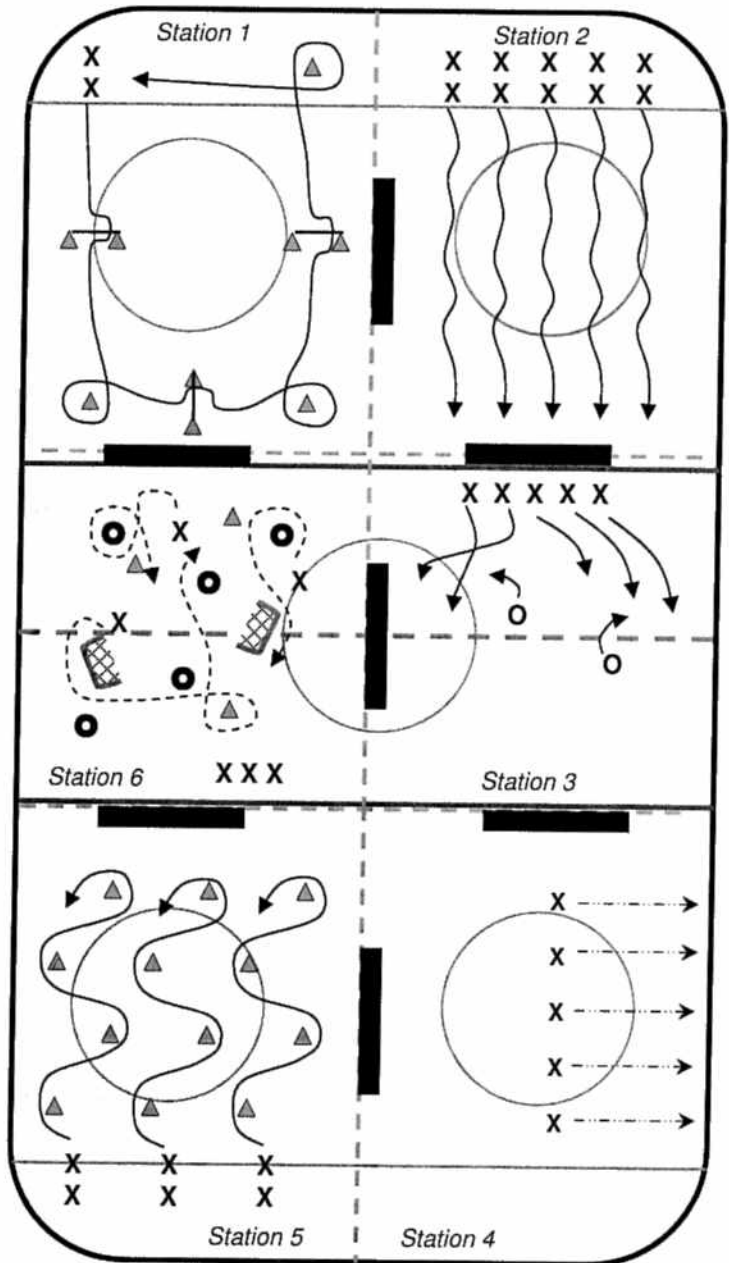
Player work on wrist shot technique shooting against the boards. Players should stand sideways to boards so that proper weight transfer is used. Start with puck behind back foot and sweep puck towards target.

Station 5: Relay Race

As shown or create your own. Variation: 360 around each obstacle.

Station 6: Chaos Puck-handling

Players stickhandle skating around obstacles. All players are involved. Check to see that each player is holding their stick properly. Hands about shoulder width apart and top hand at the end of the stick partially held in the palm with the V between thumb and forefinger on top of the stick like you would hold a hammer. Use hockey balls instead of pucks.



Game 3v3 Cross-Ice – 10 Minutes

Play 3v3 (or 4v4) Cross-Ice in all 3 zones. Change groups every 45 to 60 seconds.



Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, cones, tires, extra sticks Ice Time: 50 Minutes
Soccer balls

Free Puck Time: 5 Minutes

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

Warm Up: Safety Tag – 5 Minutes

Using the whole ice surface, play tag with the coaches as the taggers and the players using the face-off circles as safety zones. On the whistle, players must move to a new circle without being tagged. If tagged, players must do three, 2 foot jumps before they can rejoin the action.

Stations: 6 Stations x 5 minutes

On the whistle, players stop, drop and roll, get up before changing stations. Be sure to give each player water after changing stations.

Station 1: Hockey Skill

Chaos Puck-handling with obstacles and BLUE pucks

Station 2: Obstacle Course

Players skate through the obstacle course jumping over the hockey sticks.

Station 3: ABC's - Wave Skating

Skating forward without sticks, move the arms in large circles forward, arm circles backward, one arm forward and one arm backward. Superman dive, superman dive with log role to left, superman dive with log role to right.

Station 4: Activity - Ball Tag

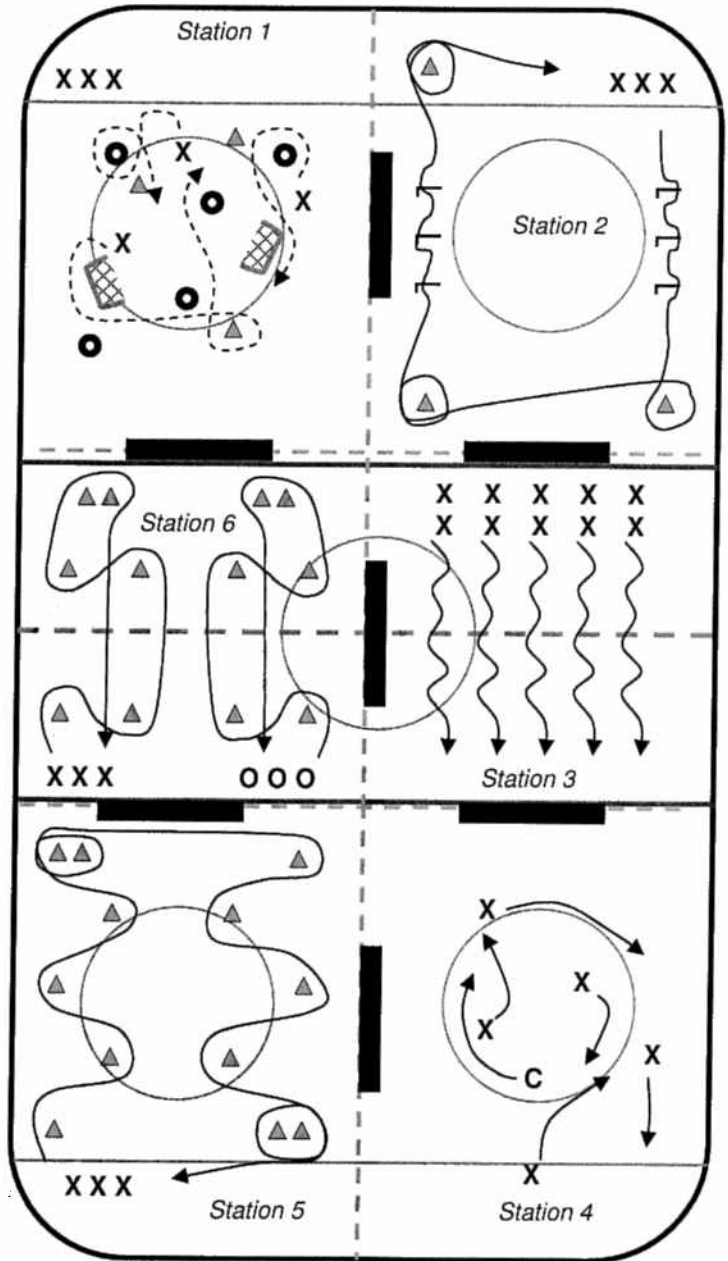
Coaches throw soccer balls at players who attempt to dodge out of the way. If hit, the player must drop to their knees and get back up 3 times before they can rejoin the action.

Station 5: Slalom Puck-handling

Players handle a BLUE puck through the designated course.

Station 6: Relay Race

As shown or create your own. Variation: 360 around each obstacle.



Game: Keep Away – 10 minutes

Play 1 or 2 games of 1v1 or 2v2 keep away with a hockey ball in all 6 stations. Keep as many players involved as possible.



Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, cones, tires, hockey balls, rings Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Free Puck Time: 5 Minutes

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

Warm Up: Partner Tag – 5 Minutes

Players pair up and lock arms with their partner. Coaches try to tag the players. If tagged both players must do 3 spins before they can rejoin the action.

Stations: 6 Stations x 5 minutes

On the whistle, players do 3 two foot jumps before changing stations. Be sure to give each player water after changing stations.

Station 1: Relay Race

As shown or create your own. Variation: 360 around each obstacle.

Station 2: Chaos Puck-handling (balls)

Players stickhandle hockey balls avoiding contact with the other skaters. All players are involved. Check to see that each player is holding their stick properly. Hands about shoulder width apart and top hand at the end of the stick partially held in the palm with the V between thumb and forefinger on top of the stick like you would hold a hammer.

Station 3: Obstacle Course

Players skate through the obstacle course with emphasis on turns and edges. Players carry ringette rings.

Station 4: ABC's - Wave Skating

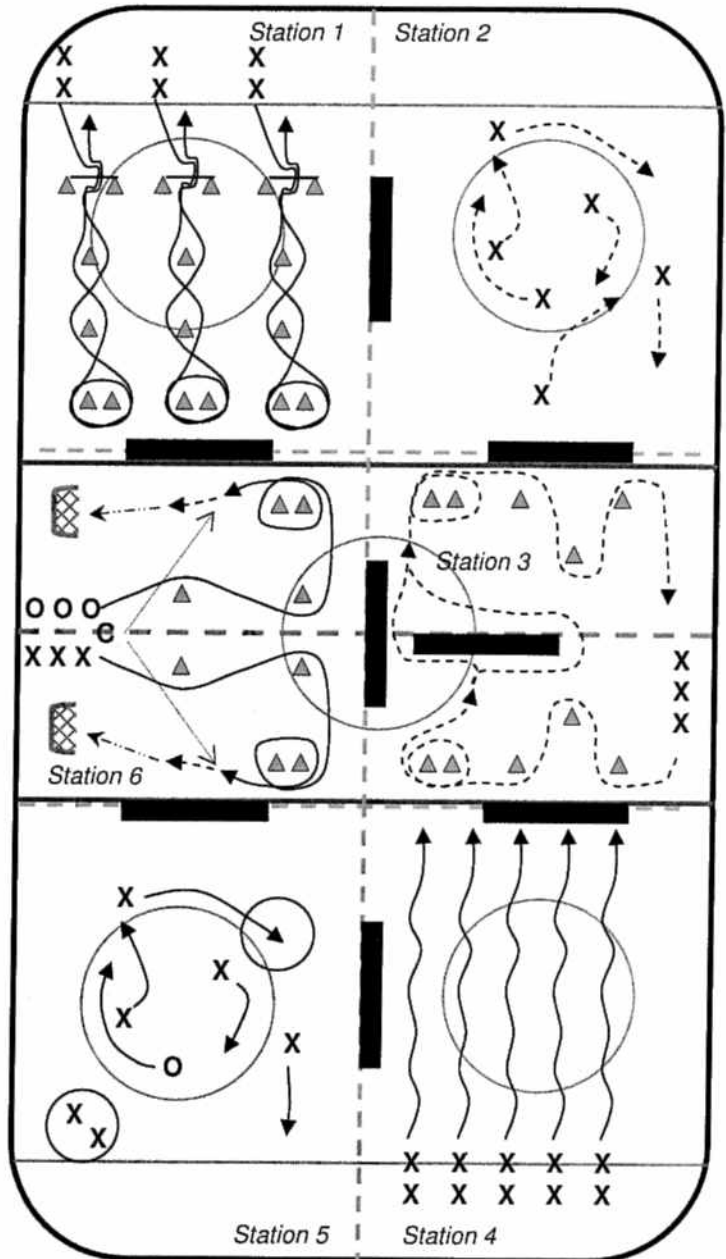
2 foot glide, 2 foot glide with butt to heels, run on skates, glide & 2 foot jump, drop to knees & get up, drop to single knee and up alternate knees. Drop to knees 360 degree spin and get up.

Station 5: Activity - Safety Tag

Play tag with the coaches as the taggers and the players using the marked-off circles as safety zones. On the whistle, players must move to a new circle without being tagged. If tagged, players must do three, 2 foot jumps before they can rejoin the action.

Station 6: Receiving Passes & Shooting

Players skate through the course, receive pass from coach and take a shot on goal. Keep players moving.



Game 3v3 Cross-Ice – 10 Minutes

Play 3v3 (or 4v4) Cross-Ice in all 3 zones. Change groups every 45 to 60 seconds.



Free Puck Time: 5 Minutes

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

Warm Up: Follow the leader – 5 Minutes

Break up into groups with a coach starting as the leader. Players can then take turns being the leader. Do what the leader does, encourage creativity.

Stations: 6 Stations x 5 minutes

On the whistle, players do 3 two foot jumps before changing stations. Be sure to give each player water after changing stations.

Station 1: Slalom Puckhandling

Players stickhandle through the course and finish off with a shot on goal.

Station 2: Chaos Puck-handling (rings)

Players stickhandle using ringette rings avoiding contact with the other skaters. All players are involved.

Station 3: Obstacle Course

Players dribble a softball through the course (no sticks) using their feet. Emphasis is on agility and coordination.

Station 4: Relay Race - Speed

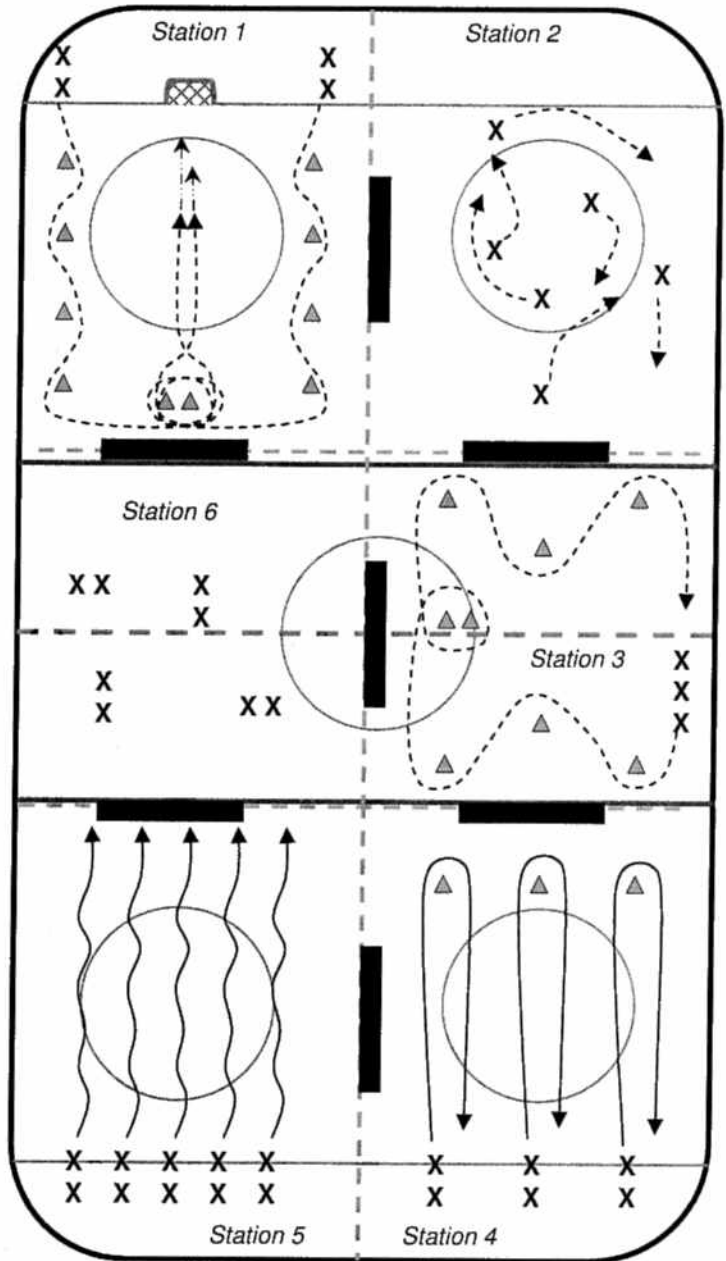
As shown in diagram or create your own. Emphasis is on speed.

Station 5: ABC's - Wave Skating

Skating forward without sticks, move the arms in large circles forward, arm circles backward, one arm forward and one arm backward. Superman dive, superman dive with log role to left, superman dive with log role to right.

Station 6: Activity - Partner Tag

Players pair up and lock arms with their partner. Coaches try to tag the players. If tagged both players must do 3 spins before they can rejoin the action.



Game: 2v2 Hit the Tire – 10 Minutes

Play 2v2 (or 1v1 depending upon numbers) in each of the six zones. Use one tire as the goal playing for 40 second shifts. Try to have players involved every other shift.



Equipment Required / Set-up: Borders, cones, sticks

Ice Time: 50 Minutes

Free Puck Time: 5 Minutes

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

Warm Up: Puck-handling – 5 Minutes

Players skate around the rink handling a puck. On whistle they jump into nearest circle and stick-handle, exit on next whistle.

Stations: 6 Stations x 5 minutes

On the whistle, players do 3 two foot jumps before changing stations. Be sure to give each player water after changing stations

Station 1: Follow the Leader

Begin with the coach as the leader. Players can then take turns being the leader. Do what the leader does, encourage creativity.

Station 2: Slalom Puckhandling

Skate with puck through the course, give and go with coach before shooting on goal.

Station 3: Relay Race

As shown or create your own. Variation: 360 around each obstacle.

Station 4: Chaos Puck-handling

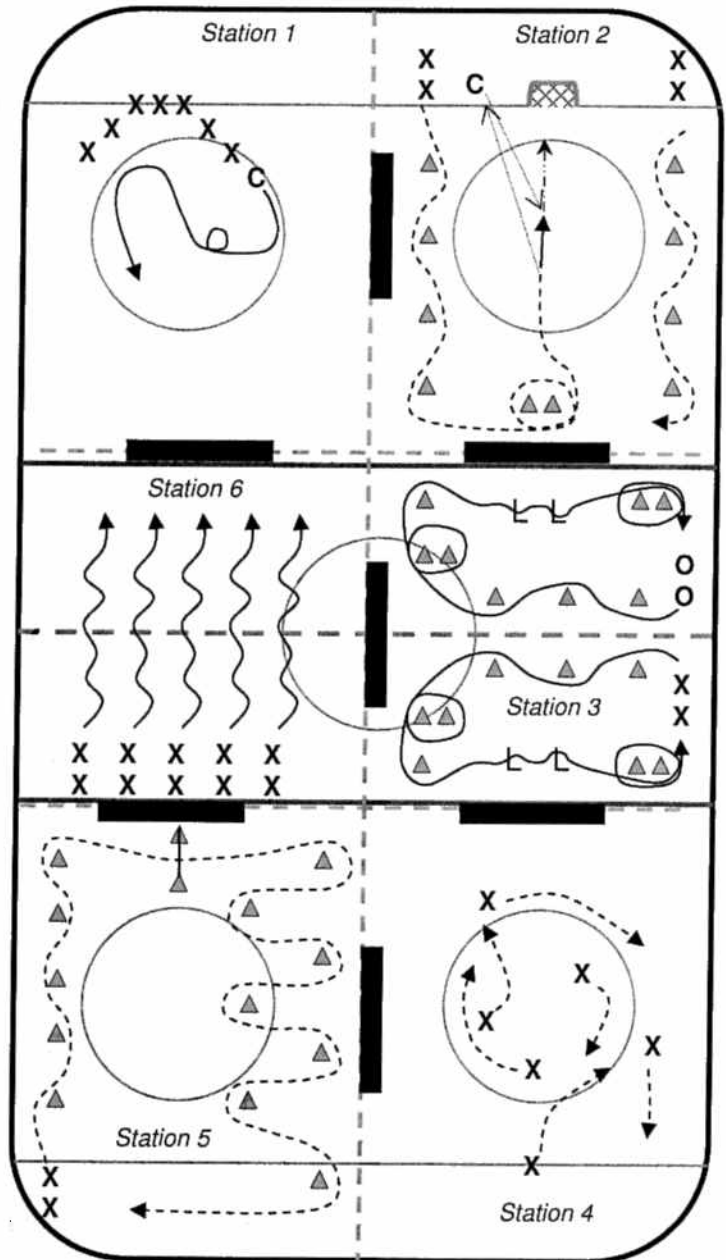
Players stickhandle blue pucks avoiding contact with the other skaters. All players are involved.

Station 5: Obstacle Course

Players skate through the obstacle course with emphasis on turns and edges. Players carry blue puck.

Station 6: ABC's with Pucks

2 foot glide, 2 foot glide with butt to heels, run on skates, glide & 2 foot jump, drop to knees & get up, drop to single knee and up alternate knees.



Game: Cross Ice Hockey – 10 Minutes

Play 3v3 or 4v4 Cross-Ice with blue puck in all three zones. Try to utilize the player numbers so that the players participate every other shift.