

## BREAKOUTS

*Authored By: Terry Bangen*

In order for a team to generate a successful and productive offensive attack, it must possess an efficient method of securing puck possession in the defensive zone and proceeding up ice in a coordinated, timely fashion.

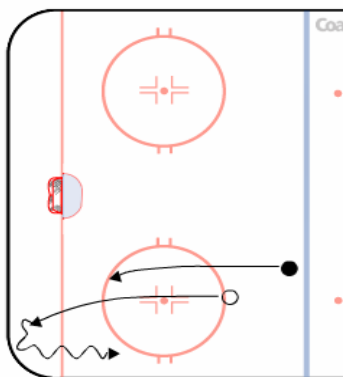
**\*Note:** too often inexperienced coaches are in a hurry to progress to systems of play at the expense of skill development (passing), tactics (evasive moves) and principles of play (support).

Quick retrieval of the puck (pivoting skills are important here), an accurate read of the opponents' checking pressure and initiation of the breakout via a good "first pass" to the most appropriate option are keys. Proper coordinated movement by the off-puck players (support) and communication assistance (often referred to as breakout "calls" and usually performed by the offside D) as to the preferred initial skating/passing route of the puck retriever are also important.

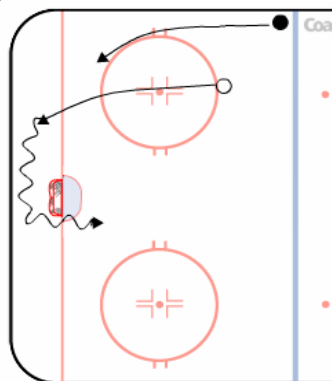
The puck retriever should also help his/her own cause by "taking a peek" to locate where the checkers are coming from as well as offering a form of deception to the checker(s) via a fake of some type (this process is defined as "evasion"). The ability of the puck retriever to quickly perform a tight turn maneuver or round the net and turn sharply up ice at full speed is very important.

**Basic Evasion Moves for the Puck Retriever** (see diagrams) after "taking a peek" and performing a skating/stick fake well before arriving at the puck.

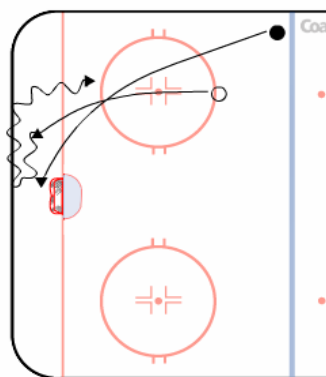
1. Checking pressure from the inside – tight turn



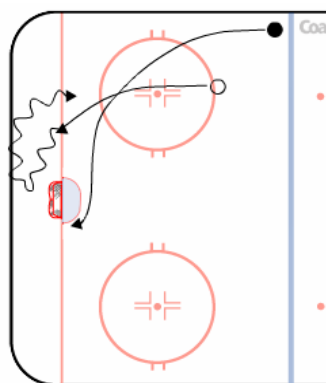
2. Checking pressure from the outside that continues behind the net – round the net and “scrape the checker off by turning up ice sharply



3. Checking pressure from the outside that continues behind the net and over-commits – tight turn or stop (facing the boards) and go



4. Checking pressure from the outside that continues in front of the net and over-commits – tight turn or stop (facing up ice) and go



## Breakout “Calls” (see diagrams)

- Offside D “reads” the checking pressure and makes the appropriate call to his/her partner who is the puck retriever/breakout initiator. \*note – the offside D must face up ice when making breakout decisions/calls

### *Read*

(Checking Pressure is coming from)

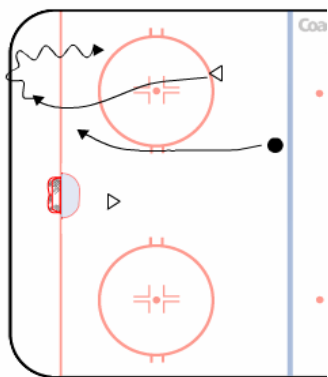
- inside
- outside
- straight on
- outside and over-committed

### *Reaction*

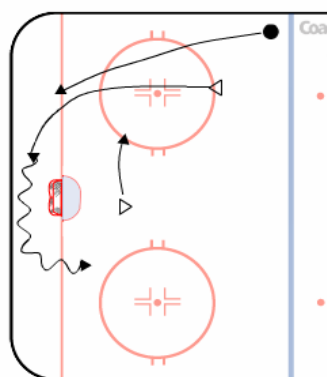
(Most appropriate breakout option)

- “up”
- “wheel”
- “over”
- “reverse”

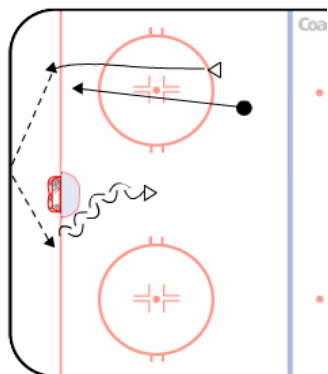
UP



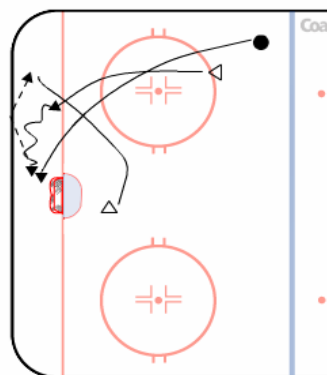
WHEEL



OVER



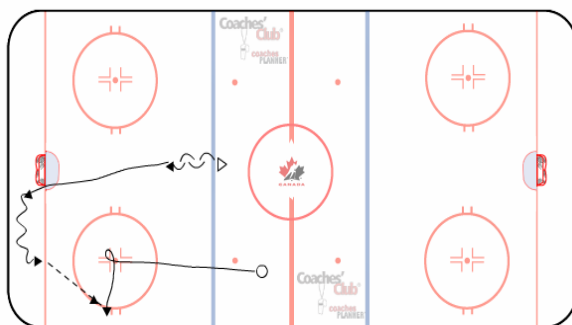
REVERSE



**\*Note** – offside D and the forwards can “hold up” checkers by briefly and temporarily getting in their way and impeding their progress. Proper body positioning is important to avoid penalties – accomplish this by continuing to skate in the same direction as the checker (keep the feet moving).

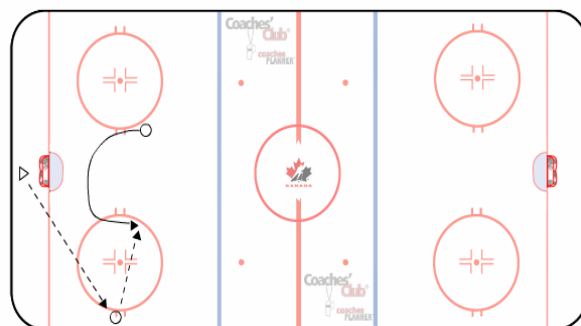
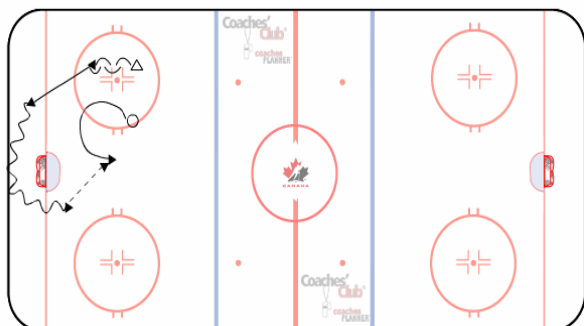
### Forward Positioning, Support (movement), Timing and Second/Third Passes

- Anchor – breakout initiator must have low support on the boards or wall (hash marks) by the strong-side W (use reverse pivot to maintain eye contact with puck carrier and speed). This provides the passer with a low risk option.

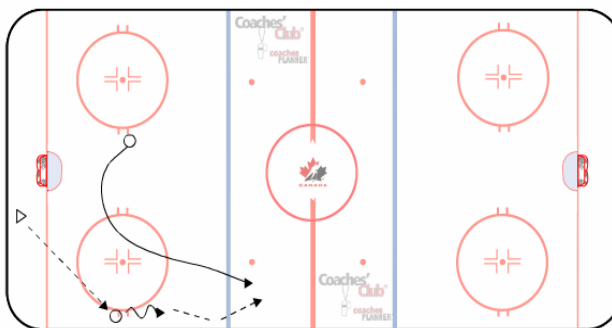


- Mid-lane – a center or middle lane passing option is necessary. Timing is critical – a good rule is “mirror the flow of the puck, 1 stride behind”. This passing option must also be available to receive a direct relay pass/chip from the anchor. May need to “save ice” to allow proper timing via control skating and taking a deeper and/or wider skating route.

#### Mid Lane

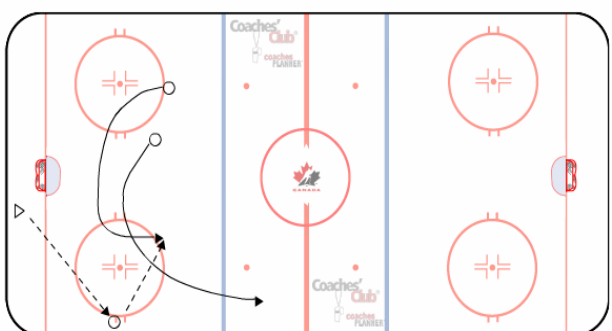


## Mid Lane Chip



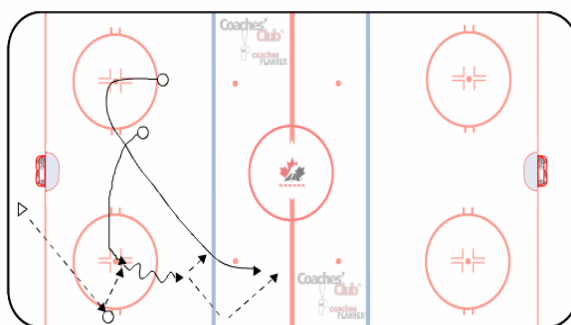
- Offside W – provides support via a “slash” skating route. Can be a pass option (support underneath) for the anchor if the mid-lane support is ahead of the play or for the mid-lane player via a direct relay/chip pass.

## Slash



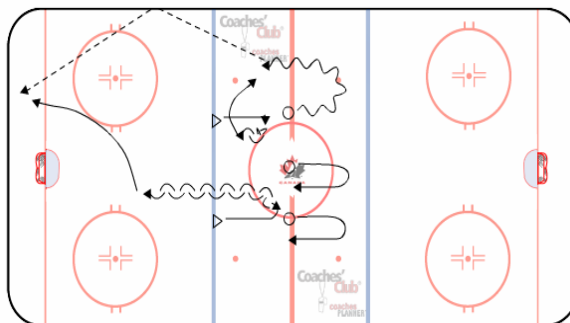
- Indirect Passes, Relay Passes, Chips – if the breakout initiator is under extreme checking pressure he/she may have to pass the puck indirectly around the boards to the anchor (rim). Anchors (usually wingers) must practice receiving this pass with proper technique in order to do so quickly and efficiently. Often a second and even third pass (termed “relay”) is necessary to complete a successful breakout and provide speed out of the defensive zone and difficult to defend. Very effective in creating 2/1's and foot races for the puck where the attacker has the advantage.

## Relay



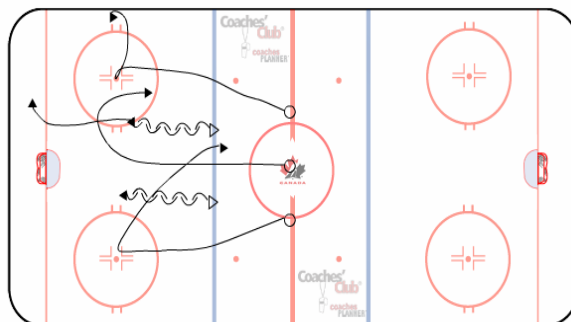
## Drill Rules That Support Quality Breakout Execution

- **Tag-up by F's, 1 D forces the dump.** Prevents laziness on behalf of the F's (work habits) as they have to skate hard to get to their breakout positions in time. Allows for practice under game-like conditions for the D: forcing the puck carrier to dump the puck, holding up the leader forechecker, reading the forechecking pressure (lead checker only), making the proper call, retrieving the puck (no cheating) and initiating the breakout as directed. Note: D's pivot to the middle of the ice when changing to backward skating at the red line. F dumping the puck is the only player to temporarily forecheck (releases to breakout position at appropriate time).



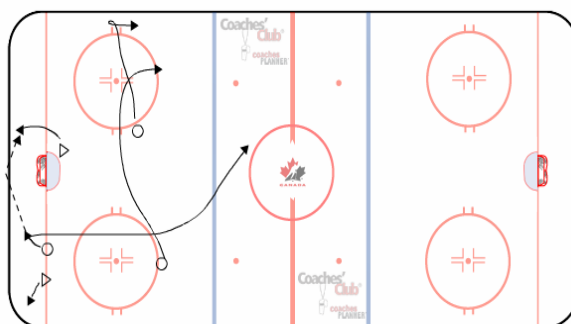


- **W's returning to Defensive Zone via "Dots"** (defensive zone coverage positions). Rather than returning into the defensive zone along the boards, wingers should do so via the "dots" (end zone faceoff circles) for 2 reasons:
  1. Protects mid-ice corridor – if there is a turnover, W's are much closer to their defensive zone positions (slot, point) and can arrive there very quickly if necessary.
  2. Anchor can use a reverse pivot to maintain speed and the offside W has a shorter distance to travel to provide slash support.



### Breakout from Defensive Zone Positions (transition)

A common game occurrence in the defensive zone is the defending team turning the puck over low in the corner (D1 takes attacker off the puck, F1 – low support- gains possession of the puck). At that point the usual situation is for the 10 skaters (5/team) to all be on half of the ice in the defensive zone. For a successful breakout to occur on that crowded half of the ice is a very difficult, if not impossible, proposition – too much traffic! An attempt, therefore, should be made to move the puck out on the open side of the ice ("out the other side"). The net D (D2) needs to be alert and communicate this intent to the low support forward (F1) and release for an "over" pass. F2 from the slot and F3 from the point act as anchor and mid-lane support passing options. F1 (low support) then fills the role of the offside W.



## Control Breakouts

- use “up/back/over” concept vs. the trap forecheck if the forechecking team sets up into a “trap” formation usually the opponent that is attempting to breakout decides to set up behind the net
- the objective of the trap is to steer the puck carrier to one side of the ice and then close off all puck carrying and passing options
- to counter, the breakout team needs to carry the puck “up” with speed to one side, pass the puck “back” to a teammate offering staggered support and then relay pass the puck “over” to another team-mate on the far side of the ice
- other tactics vs. the trap include the use of speed to beat it before proper positioning is established; use of chip passes down the wall to diagonal support; and, stretch pass options, which can be particularly effective when the stretch pass option comes back toward the puck carrier through the middle and deflects the pass to one side or the other to support (called a “jackhammer” pass)

