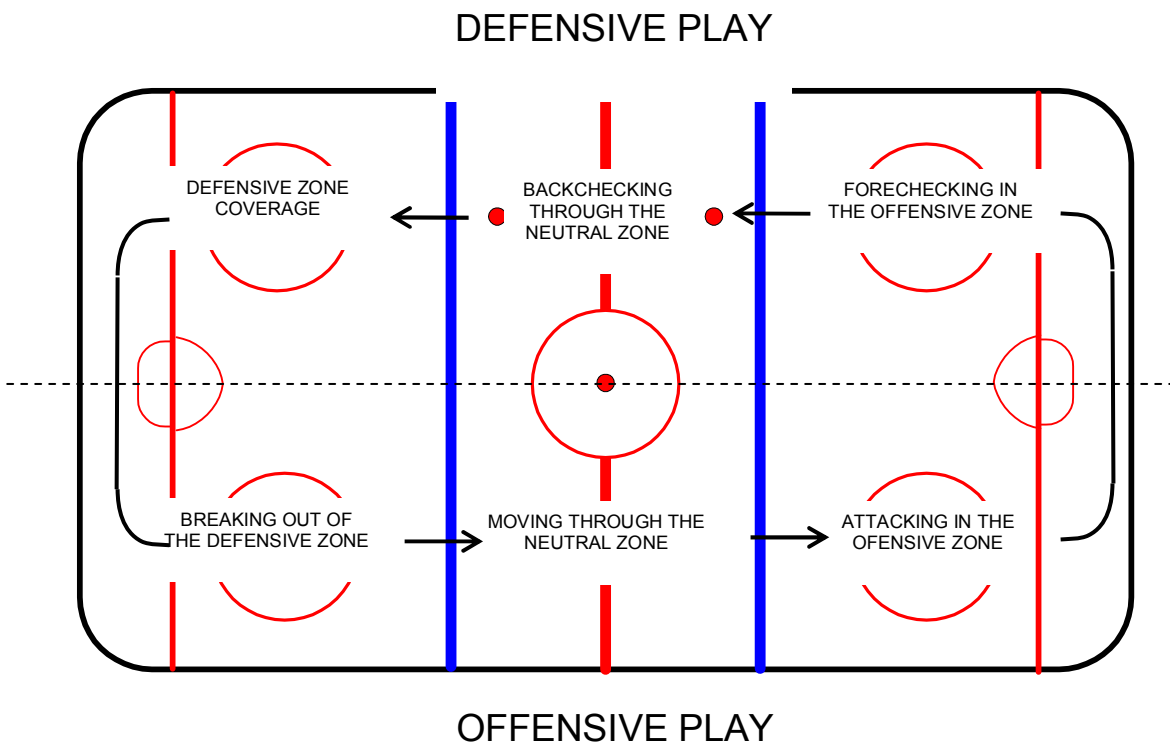


As described in the team defense section of the coaches handbook the game of hockey can be broken down into 6 basic scenarios, three defensive and three offensive. These are described in the diagram below. All are important parts of the game and all must be practiced until they are executed well.

The offensive portion of a team's game begins with the all-important breakout of the zone. If a team cannot successfully execute a good breakout, then they will rarely be successful in winning games. Movement through the Neutral zone and into the offensive zone follows a quick breakout.

As opposed to the defensive zone, the play in the offensive zone may be less disciplined and more creative with players exchanging positions. The forwards may be constantly changing positions in order to stay open and provide the puck carrier with an open man to pass to.



Breakouts

An important aspect of all breakouts is that we must make sure that we have possession of the puck prior to beginning to breakout. The transition from defense to offense does not occur until we gain possession. Only after this time do the wingers move into the zone deeper as they begin their breakout pattern.

Breakouts should be executed to the side of the ice with the least defensive pressure. Next follows the strongside breakout pass to a wing on the hash marks creating a rapid acceleration out of the zone.

Below are basic breakout patterns that begin with a strongside breakout and progress to a defense to defense breakout and finally a reverse.

Strongside

The simple breakout begins with the defense gaining possession of the puck behind net. The other defenseman plays in front of the net to protect if we lose possession. The wingers move from the points down the ice and perform a Mohawk turn to the hashmarks, the center plays in the high slot.

The defenseman passes the puck to an open winger on the boards. The center curls low to the same side that the pass is made. The center must curl low enough to maintain a horizontal position (even) with the puck. He must also skate close enough to the wing to avoid a long cross ice pass in our zone which are easily picked off by defensemen! At this point, the winger has 4 options with the main priority to get the puck out of the zone.

1. If the defenseman backs up, the wing skates the puck.
2. If the defenseman stands still the wing has the option of bouncing the puck off the boards or passing to the center.
3. If the defenseman pinches our wing, then the wing can use the boards to get the puck out of the zone to the center who is moving up ice. The center should help the wing by letting him know what to do.

If the center takes the far lane, the off

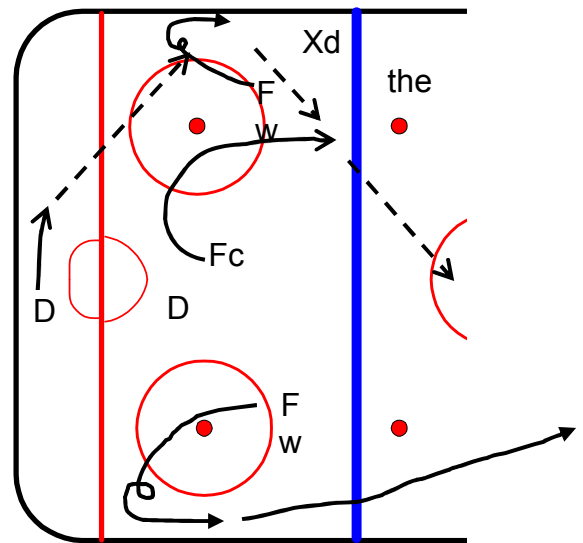


Figure 1 Defense to Wing

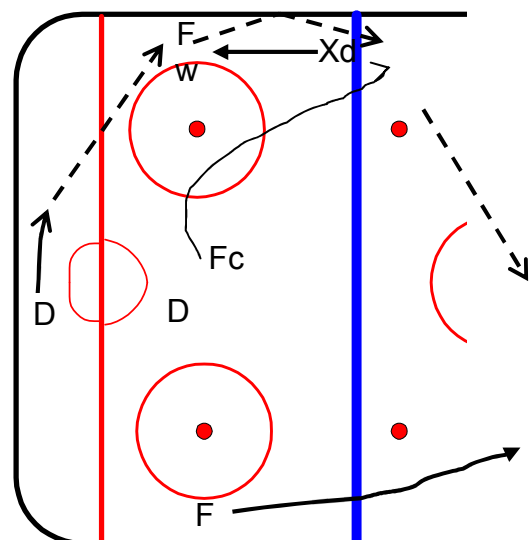


Figure 2 Wing Board Pass

wing skates a pattern up the boards and then diagonally across the middle. This provides a short outlet pass for the center. Our defenseman always follows the play up the ice to provide support in the event that there is no place to head man the puck. See Figure 2.

Reversing the Play

Should the defenseman with the puck find that his wing is covered or that an opponent is pressuring him, he may reverse the puck behind the net. The rest of the breakout remains the same.

Defensive Support

In the situation where the defenseman is getting pressure from the opposition, it is important that his defensive partner supports him by providing an outlet for the puck. The defenseman with possession seeing that he is receiving pressure turns towards the boards and bounce passes the puck to his partner who has moved in below the goal line.

Another supporting play is to make a direct pass from defenseman to defenseman behind the net. The play is then quickly reversed to the weak side and a quick breakout can be achieved.

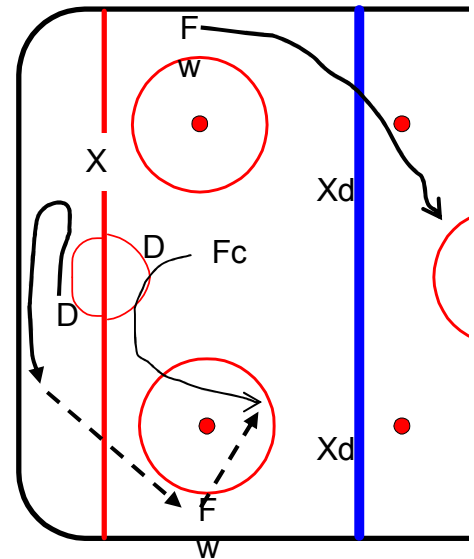


Figure 3 Reversing the play

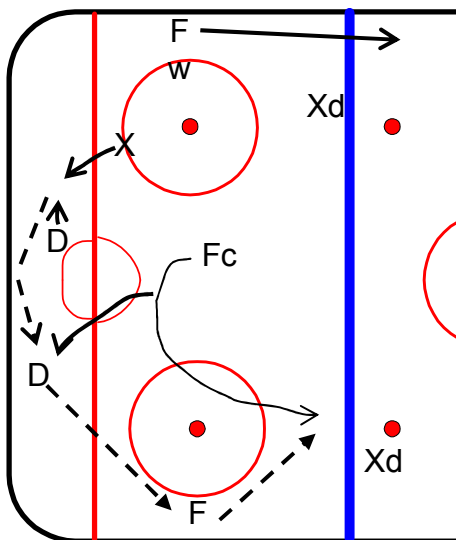


Figure 5 Reverse with Bump

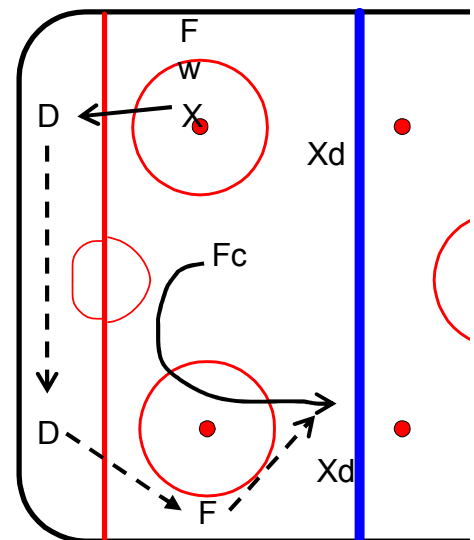


Figure 4 D to D Pass

Defense to Center

The positioning for this breakout is the same as defense to wing. If the wing is covered by a pinching defenseman, our defenseman has the option of passing to the curling center. The center can then pass to the off-wing who has moved up the far boards and angled to the center. Again the defenseman follows the puck up ice for support. This play is a bit riskier than the defenseman to wing breakout as the puck is being moved up the ice closer towards the middle lane and potential traffic. The defeneseman must make sure that the center is open and will get the puck.

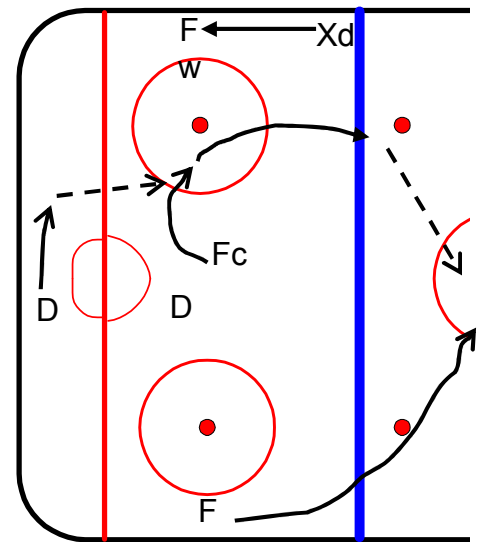


Figure 6 Defense to Center

Drill Progression for Breakouts

There are many skills important to achieving good breakouts. Some of these are:

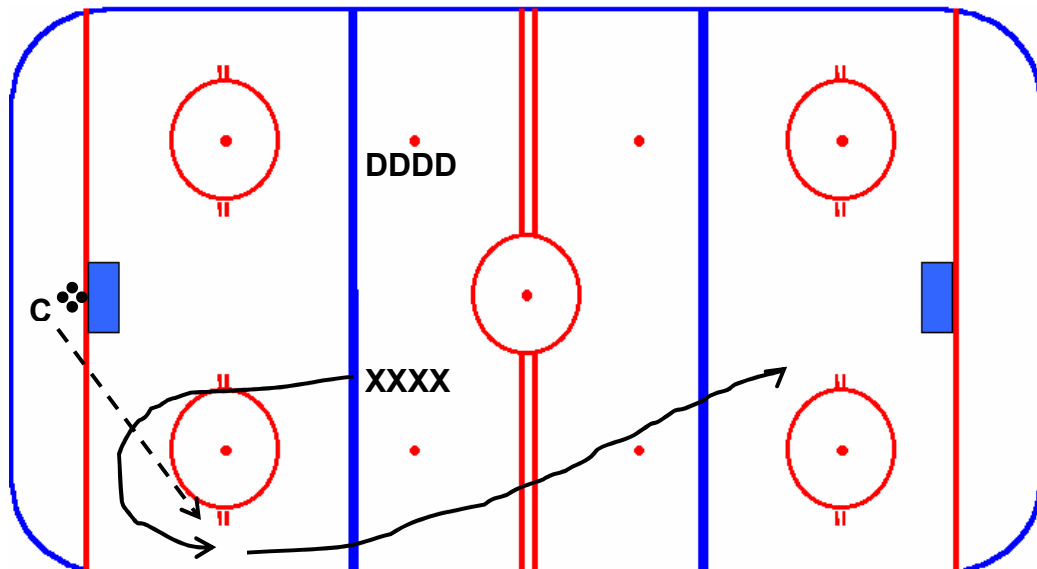
Mohawk turns
Catching passes while changing directions
Escapes with the puck
Catching passes on the backhand
Board passing
Cross-ice passing

Here are some drills that can be used to practice these skills. The drills may be modified to combine the skills and create a complete breakout.

Drill 1: Mohawk Turn

Purpose: Practice Mohawk turns and catching a pass while moving

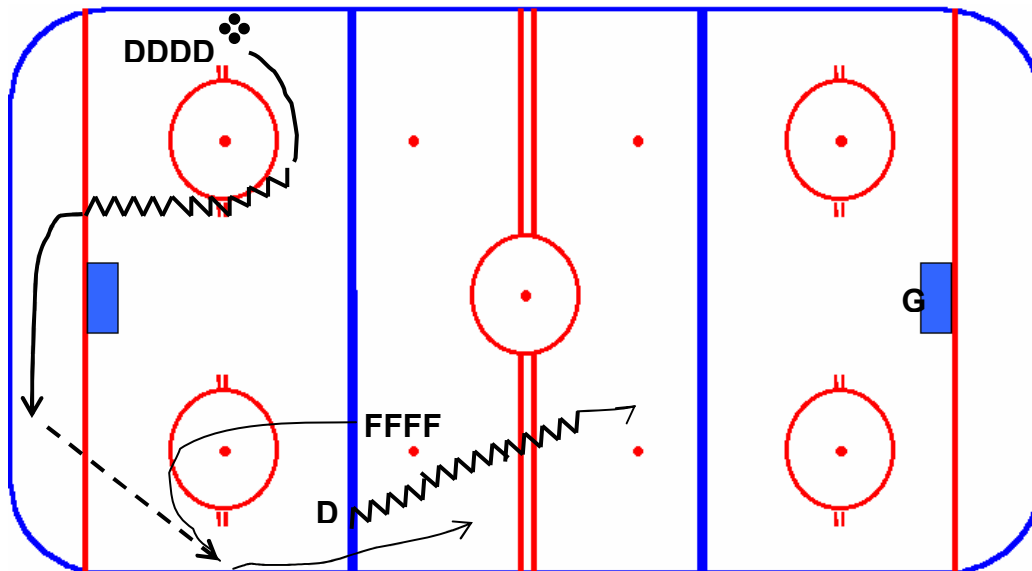
1. Players line up on the blue line in two lines. Coach behind the net with pucks.
2. Alternating lines, each player skates to a position about the bottom of the circle and then performs a Mohawk turn while continuing to face the coach and the puck.
3. Coach makes a pass to the player as he is moving up the boards.
4. Player continues down the ice to shoot on net and returns to the opposite line.



Drill 2: Breakout pass, Defense to Wing

Purpose: Defense puck control, breakout pass to wing, wing positioning.

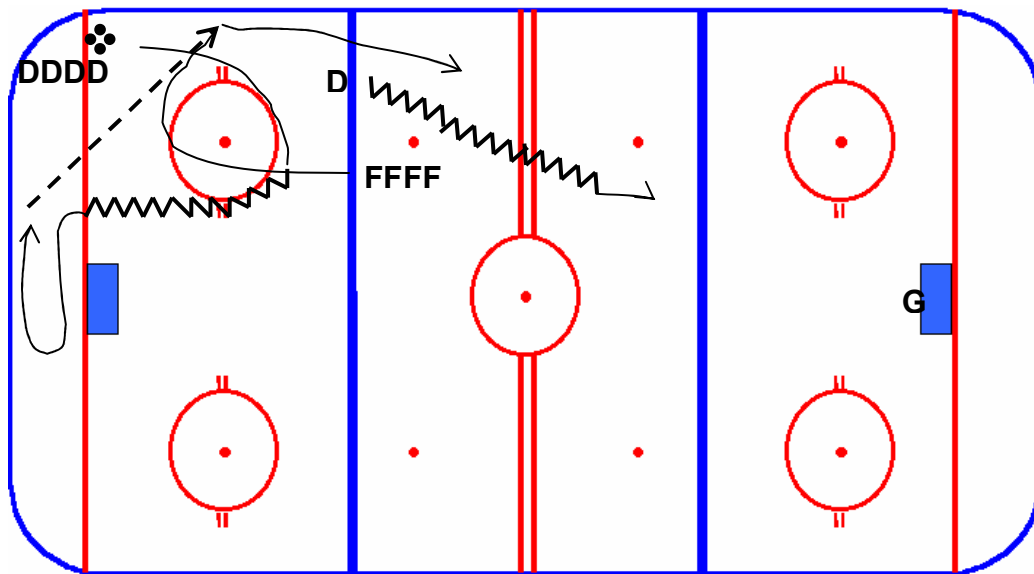
1. Forwards on blue line. Defense on hash marks in opposite corner with pucks. Start with on D on the blue line as shown
2. Defenseman starts by skating around the circle with the puck. Must face same direction all the way around the circle and behind the net.
3. Forward skates hard to the breakout spot, making Mohawk turn at the bottom of the circle and starts moving to boards. Forward must time movement to get there at the right time and face the puck carrier at all times.
4. D makes pass to the forward. Forward moves up ice to go 1 on 1 against the defenseman on the blue line.
5. Defenseman that just made the pass then moves to the blue line to be the next D for 1 on 1.



Drill 3: Escapes

Purpose: Practice defenseman escapes, breakout passes, 1on 1

1. Defensemen line up in corner with pucks. Forwards on blue line as show. 1 D on blue line to begin
2. Defenseman skates with puck around the circle facing one direction, then behind the net. Performs escape on far post
3. Forward times his move to get to the hash marks at the correct time. Performs Mohawk turn at the bottom of the circle.
4. Defenseman makes breakout pass to forward and forward goes 1 on 1 against forward on the blue line.
5. Defenseman that just passed is the next D on the blue line.



Drill 4: Defense Support

Purpose: Practice defensive support in the breakout.

1. Two defensemen on the hash marks, three forwards on the red line. Two D waiting at red line. Coach with pucks
2. On whistle, two defensmen skate hard out to the blue line, stop and skate backwards. Coach dumps the puck in the corner.
3. One D chases and retrieves the puck moving behind the net. Defensive partner moves to support. Once possession established, forwards move in for breakout.
4. D with puck board passes back to supporting D. D must turn towards the boards to make the pass. D partner retrieves the puck and breaks the puck out on the weak side.
5. Forwards move down the ice 3 on 2 against 2 D waiting at blue line.
6. D that broke out the puck are the next D on the blue line.
7. This drill can be done with the bump pass also.

