



Physical Distancing

Running a fun and effective practice - with proper spacing

As a coach, it is important to come prepared with a plan that will suit the type of session you are running. During the Development Season, you may be required to run sessions where Physical Distancing is required. That means that skill drills, stations and games need to be tailored for proper spacing. Here are some tips and tricks that should make your Physical Distancing on-ice session effective and fun for players and coaches:

- ✓ **Pre-Practice Talk:** Before the session starts, address your group in the locker room or common area and outline the rules and guidelines for the session.
- ✓ **Going on the Ice:** Have players remain in staging area/dressing room until a coach can escort them to the ice surface. This helps maintain order and the coach can give reminders to distance when needed.
- ✓ **Water Bottles:** When players enter the ice, have them spread their water bottles out on top of the dasher across both benches so players will not need to convene on the bench for water breaks.
- ✓ **Water Breaks:** Schedule alternating water breaks so no more than half the players on the ice are taking a water break at the same time.
- ✓ **Taking a Knee:** When addressing the players on the ice have them spread out and reinforce the importance of spacing during all aspects of the practice. Taking a knee can help with spacing.
- ✓ **Pylons for Spacing:** With younger groups, pylons can be used to help players with spacing as they wait their turn for a skill drill. Bingo dabbers and hula hoops can help with spacing as well.
- ✓ **Spacing, Spacing, Spacing:** Coaches and players tend to gravitate towards each other. It is important to be mindful of spacing as the session goes on.
- ✓ **Loud and Clear:** When explaining drills or giving feedback using a loud and clear voice can help to maintain the distance while on the ice.
- ✓ **Demonstrate, don't Draw:** Design your practice plan to avoid using a rink board to explain the drills. Instead, plan drills that can be demonstrated to players. This helps keep players spaced rather than in a small group at the board trying to see what is being diagrammed.
- ✓ **Types of Drills:** Station-based or lane-type drills are encouraged as there will be fewer players waiting in line to worry about spacing issues. Consider finding ways to get multiple players running through a drill at a time or set up the drill to allow players to start the drill quicker.
- ✓ **Small Area Games:** Certain Small Area Games can be modified to allow distancing to occur. Coaches are reminded to keep players not playing in the games distanced while waiting in lines. Consider putting "teams" on opposite sides of the playing area to help with this.
- ✓ **"Spacing" Coach:** Identify one coach to take the lead on ensuring physical distancing is being followed. This could be the on-ice lead who is controlling the practice and the whistle, allowing the support coaches to lead a station or drill.
- ✓ **Use your Stick:** Utilize your stick as a measurement tool to ensure you are always physical distancing and encourage players to do the same with an outstretched arm.
- ✓ **Roles in Drills:** For drills that involve offensive and defensive players, have the defensive player play a passive role utilizing only stick checks to maintain physical distancing.
- ✓ **One shot, no Rebounds:** If a drill is finishing with a shot on net, encourage players to shoot to score utilizing a one and done philosophy that will discourage rebound and close net play.
- ✓ **Coach cleans up:** Any equipment is to be set up and collected by the staff to help reduce the number of people touching the equipment.