



# **National Skills Standards & Testing Program**

## **Handbook**



## National Skills Standards & Testing Program

### Testing Your Players

#### Introduction

During the 1999 Molson **Open Ice Summit on Player Development** in Canada, delegates close to the game at the grassroots level recommended that Hockey Canada investigate ways to celebrate skill development in hockey. In Canada today there is no nationally organized program that tests or recognizes skill acquisition and skill improvement within the Canadian hockey system. In Canadian minor hockey, coaches should be encouraged to foster the development of the fundamental skills required to play the game at the minor levels by measuring and providing positive individual feedback on skill development. It is essential that minor hockey associations and parents have a method of measuring success beyond wins and losses.

Hockey Canada created the **National Skills Standards and Testing Program (NSST)** for minor hockey aged players in Canada. This program is based on the fundamental philosophy that skill development should be fun and challenging and at the same time accessible to all players in the Canadian minor hockey system. Hockey Canada believes in celebrating skill achievement.

#### **PROGRAM GOAL**

*“Raise awareness of the importance of skill development and establish a system to measure and celebrate skills.”*

#### Accessible To:

- Any Hockey Canada member team has access to the program.
- Coaches can collect the test data and keep it within the team or the testing results can be centralized through the use of the Hockey Canada national web site database at [www.hockeycanada.ca](http://www.hockeycanada.ca).

A series of 6 individual skill tests have been designed to measure the skill level of players. These tests can be administered by team coaches requiring very little equipment, expense and set up time.

It is ideal to test players 2 times per season, but if ice time is available it is recommended that players be tested 3 times per season. Testing 2 or 3 times in a season will help to establish performance levels and demonstrate the amount of improvement that takes place. It is very important that the testing environment is set up in the same manner each time to ensure that the comparisons of test results from each session are meaningful and accurate.



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If testing were to take place 3 times throughout the season, the best times would be:

1. The beginning of the season: sets a baseline for each player and the team
2. Mid – season: demonstrates the amount of skill improvement of each player and the team
3. End of season: demonstrates improvement from the start of the season to the end of the season

### **Conducting the Test**

With the right number of assistants (6) on the ice, the 6 station test can be administered during one ice session with all stations active simultaneously. A second option would be to incorporate the test into a series of practices by setting up and executing one or two stations over several ice sessions.

Equipment required:

- ❖ (30) Pucks
- ❖ (1) Tape Measure – 100 feet
- ❖ (1) Spray paint
- ❖ (3) Stop watches
- ❖ (10) Pylons
- ❖ Shooter Tutor
- ❖ (6) Clipboards / pens

Personnel required:

- ❖ (1) Lead Tester – to coordinate all on ice activities
- ❖ (6) Assistant Testers – to lead individual testing stations
- ❖ (6) Recorders – optional (can assist with recording scores at each station)

### **Standards**

- Over time (beginning November 2004) a set of age division standards will accumulate in the database of test results. Players and teams will be able to compare scores and judge strengths, weaknesses and areas in need of improvement.

### **Education**

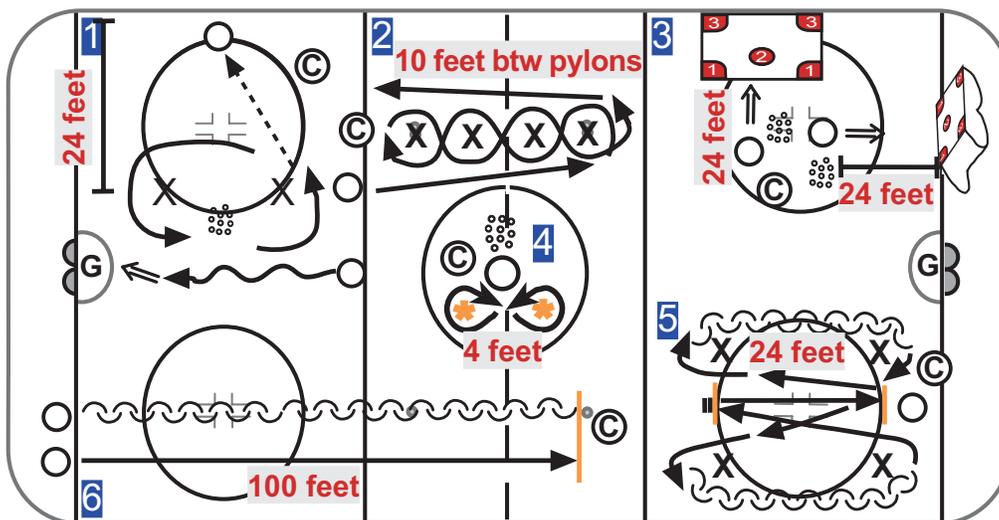
- One of the most important aspects of the NSST program is that once coaches have tested their players and the results have been uploaded on to the NSST website, coaches will receive a series of drills designed to help improve weaknesses of the team as a whole, or individual player weaknesses.



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### Setting Up the Stations

#### 6 Station Skills Testing Set-Up

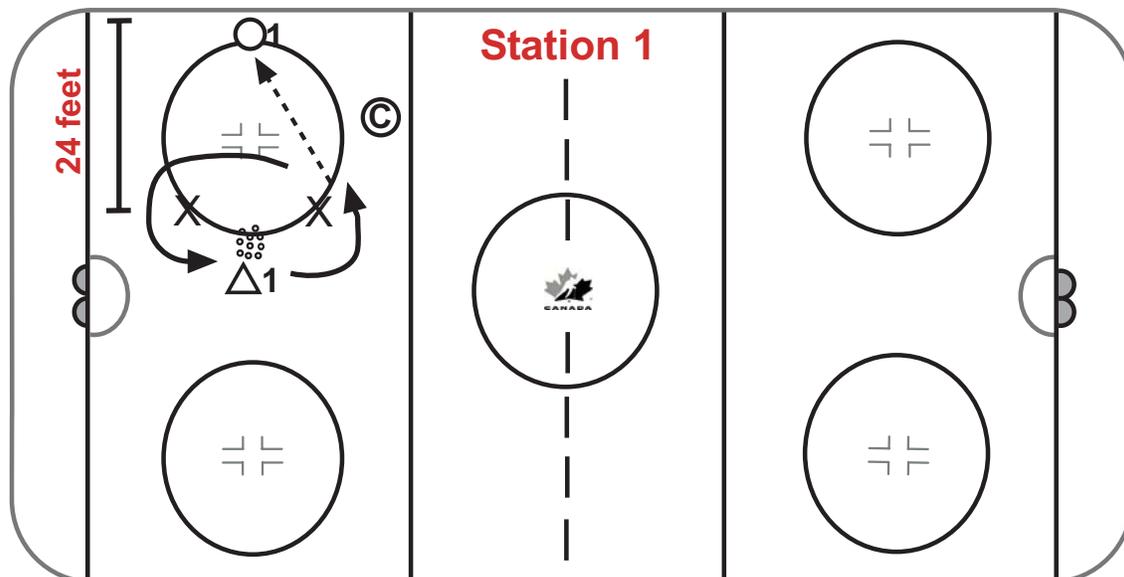


Time	Description
60 MIN	6 Station Skills Testing Set Up
<p><b>Option 1</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ All 6 stations can be run in one practice. It takes approximately 10 minutes to set up, leaving about 8 minutes per station to complete the testing.</li> <li>❖ During the set up period, players can warm up and be given an overview of how the session will work.</li> <li>❖ Depending how many players there are they can be divided into groups as small as two (1 team on the ice) or as many as 6 (2 teams on the ice). Option 1 requires 6 coaches or testing assistants, one for each test station.</li> </ul> <p><b>Option 2</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 3 stations can be run one practice, and another 3 stations can be run the next.</li> <li>❖ Option 2 requires at least 3 coaches or testing assistants.</li> </ul>	
Key Execution Points (KEP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Use parents to act as recorders when entering the scores on the data sheet.</li> <li>❖ Ensure the necessary equipment is on hand.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ (30) Pucks</li> <li>➤ (1) Tape Measure – 100 ft</li> <li>➤ (1) Can of spray paint</li> <li>➤ (3) Stop watches</li> <li>➤ (10) Pylons</li> <li>➤ (6) Clipboards</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>If players fall or perform the skill incorrectly, give them another chance to complete the skill.</p>	



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**STATION ONE: Forehand / Backhand Passing**

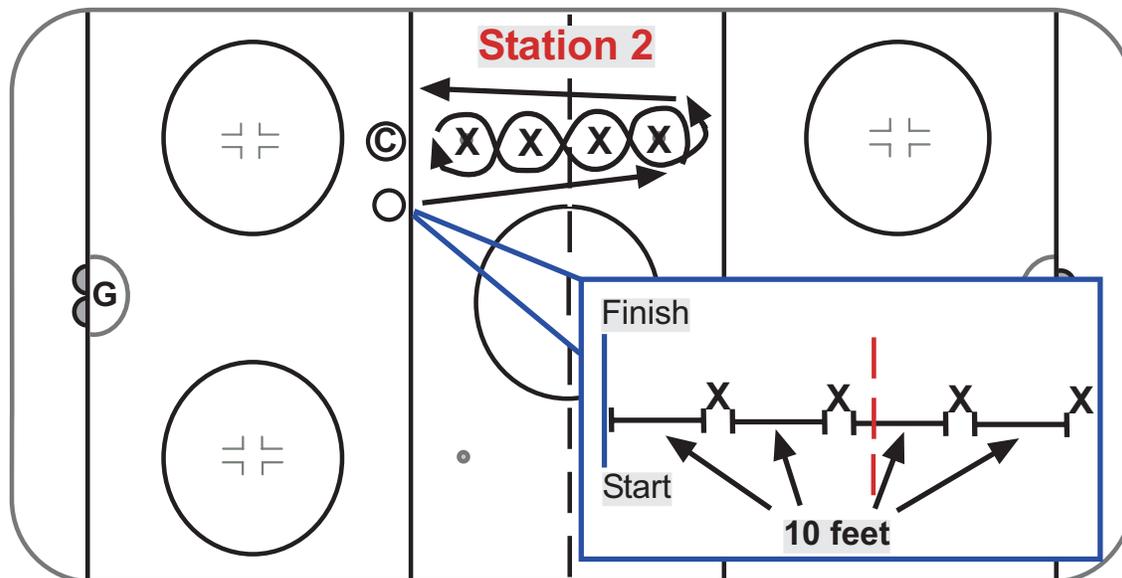


Time	Description
8 MIN	Forehand / Backhand Passing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ 1 player starts with puck standing on edge of circle, a receiver is standing straight across from the passer near the boards.</li> <li>❖ The passer makes a total of 10 passes, 5 forehand and 5 backhand.</li> <li>❖ Receivers are 24 feet from passer. At the point where the receiver is located, place two spray paint dots on the ice 1 foot apart.</li> <li>❖ The passer skates around the pylon on the forehand side, makes a pass to the receiver, then skates around the pylons to pick up another puck to make another moving pass. 5 passes are made on the forehand then change direction and make 5 passes on the backhand.</li> <li>❖ The receiver is not scored for pass reception. A successful pass is one that goes through the 2 dots on the ice.</li> </ul>	
Key Execution Points (KEP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Score is recorded as number of successful passes out of 5 (5 forehand &amp; 5 backhand) by passer only.</li> <li>❖ There is no time limit.</li> <li>❖ Can split into two groups.</li> </ul>	



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**STATION TWO: Forward Weave Agility Skate**

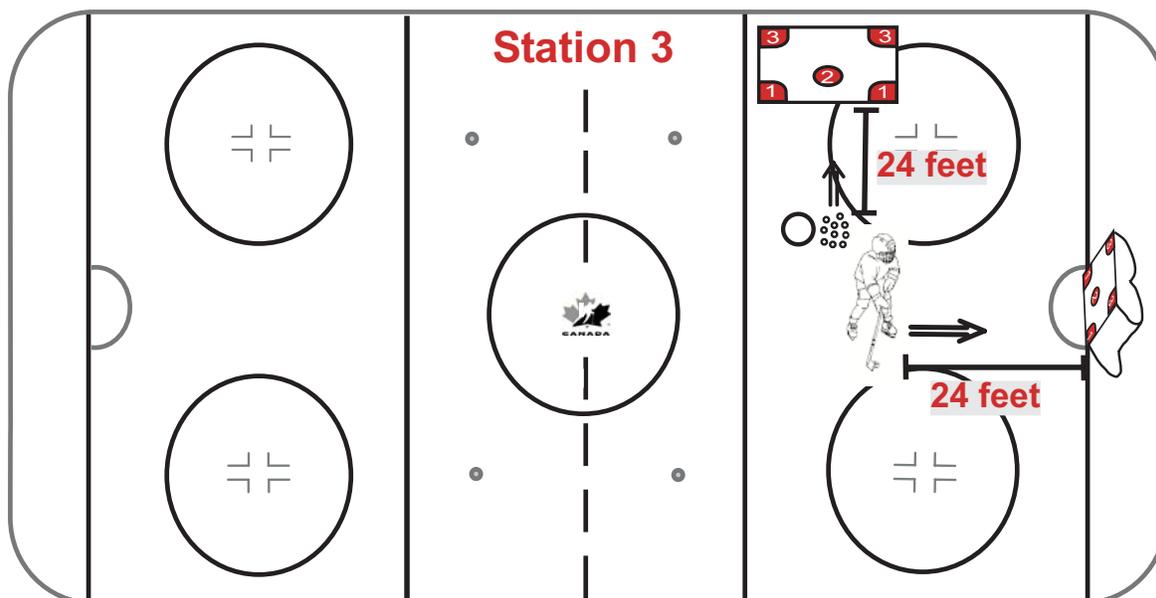


Time	Description
6 MIN	Forward Weave Agility Skate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Start at the blue line, skate forward towards the far pylon and make a tight turn around first pylon. Weave back through the pylons, making a tight turn around the last pylon (closest to start line), and weave back through the pylons, making a tight turn around the last one. Sprint back to the blue line which is both the start and finish line.</li> <li>❖ The first pylon is 10 feet from blue line. (Starting point)</li> <li>❖ Pylons are set 10 feet apart.</li> </ul>	
Key Execution Points (KEP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ This is a timed drill.</li> <li>❖ Do the test without a puck first, then repeat the test with a puck.</li> <li>❖ Measure distances for pylon placement and use spray paint to mark the spot. Place a pylon over top of each spray painted dots. This ensures that if a pylon gets knocked off down, it will be easy to replace it to the exact spot.</li> </ul>	



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**STATION THREE: Shooting Accuracy / Shooting Speed (option – speed puck)**

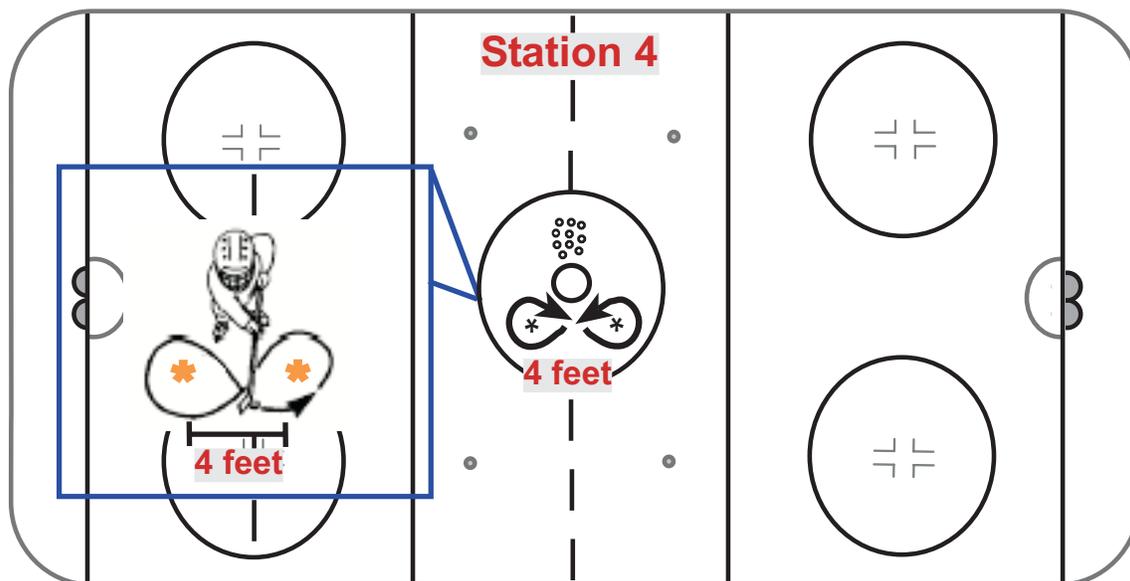


Time	Description
8 MIN	Shooting Accuracy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Players line up 24 feet from the boards or net. A standard shooter tutor can be used as the target. Players take 10 forehand shots and 10 backhand shots at the target. 3 points are awarded for hitting the top two corners, 2 points for hitting the five hole and 1 point for hitting the bottom two corners. 30 points is the maximum points to be awarded. NOTE: A series of 5 targets could also be placed on the boards, or a comparable target system to that of a shooter tutor that has 5 shooting areas can also be used.</li> <li>❖ A way of saving time is to split this station into forehand and backhand stations and have two people recording simultaneously – 1 forehand, and 1 backhand.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shooting Speed Option</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ A speed puck is required. After each shot, the speed on the puck is noted with the highest speed of the 10 shots being recorded.</li> </ul>
Key Execution Points (KEP)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Have 10 pucks ready for each player to shoot.</li> <li>❖ Have all players go through on forehand first, then on backhand.</li> <li>❖ Measure the distances, and use spray paint to mark the spot.</li> </ul>



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**STATION FOUR: Figure "8" Stickhandling**

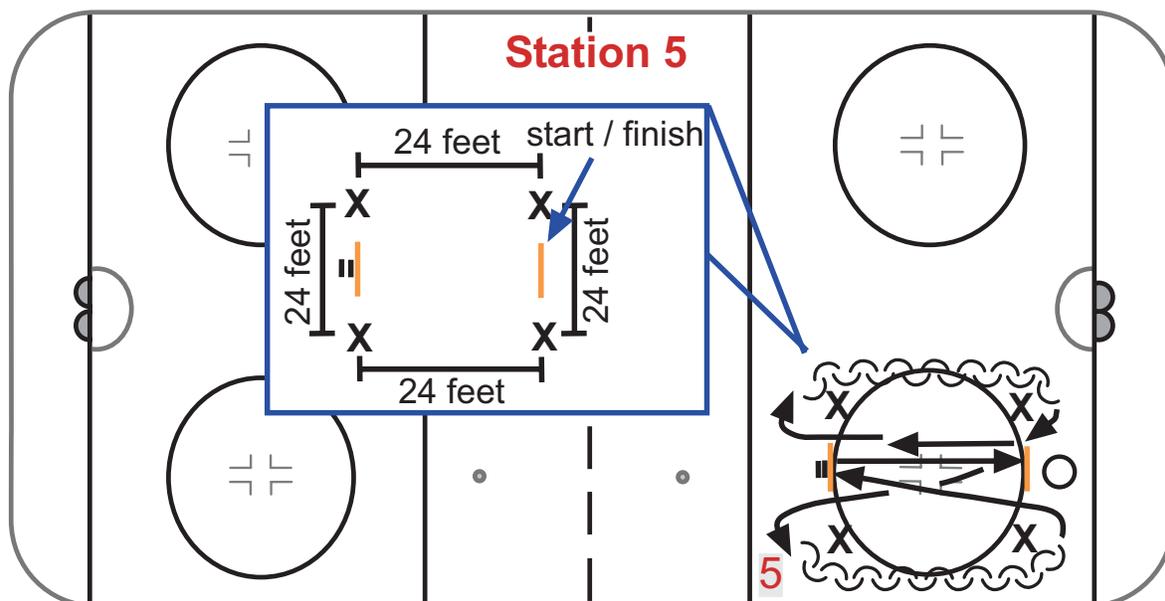


Time	Description
8 MIN	Figure "8" Stickhandling
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Two spray painted dots, or pucks are placed 4 feet apart.</li> <li>❖ Each player is timed to see how long it takes to do 5 figure 8's around the dots with the puck.</li> <li>❖ Player is stationary, and only the puck does the figure 8's around the dots.</li> <li>❖ One complete figure 8 is going around both dots / pucks and crossing the middle starting point.</li> <li>❖ For players 8 years old and under place the dots 3 feet apart instead of 4.</li> </ul>
Key Execution Points (KEP)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ This is a timed drill.</li> <li>❖ Use water to freeze pucks in place so they don't move if touched by the player.</li> </ul>



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**STATION FIVE: Transition - Agility Skate**

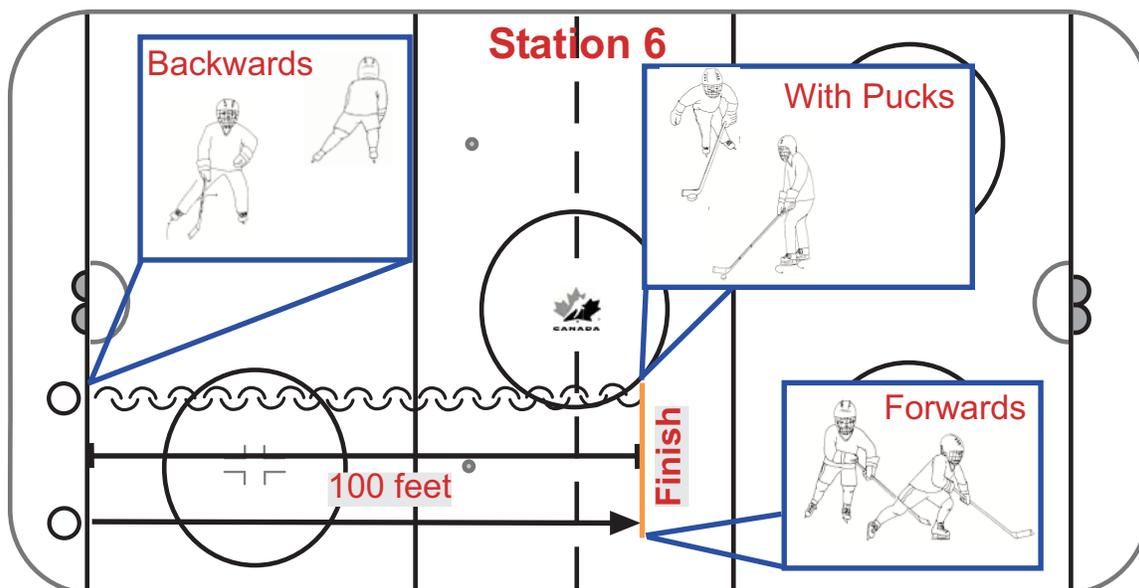


Time	Description
8 MIN	Transition - Agility Skate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Each player starts on line at the bottom of circle. The player skates forward to far right side pylon, pivots and skates backwards to lower right side pylon.</li> <li>❖ The player then pivots and skates forward to far left side pylon, pivots and skates backwards to lower left side pylon.</li> <li>❖ The player then pivots and skates forward to designated line, stops, and then skates forward back to starting line.</li> <li>❖ Complete the test without a puck. Then complete the test with a puck.</li> </ul>	
Key Execution Points (KEP)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Players must transition from forward to backward and forward to backward at the pylons.</li> <li>❖ Measure distances, and use spray paint to mark the spot. Place a pylon over top of each spray painted dot. This will ensure accurate placement of the pylon without having to re-measure when pylons are knocked over.</li> </ul>	



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**STATION SIX: Forward / Backward - Speed Skate**

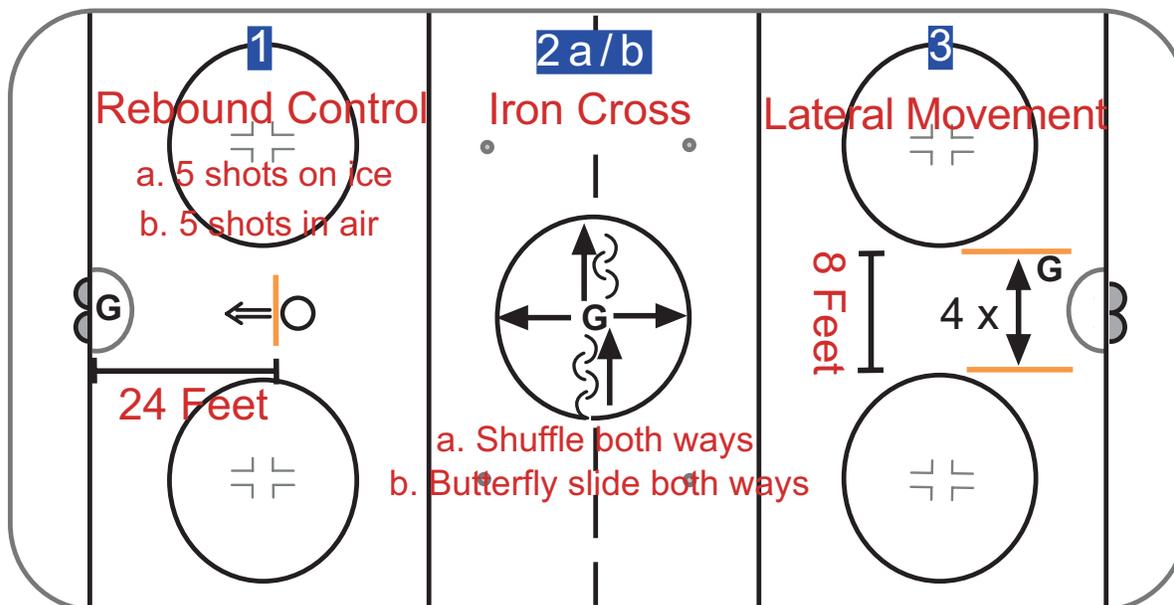


Time	Description
8 MIN	Forward / Backward - Speed Skate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Players skate as fast as they can straight ahead, first forwards and then backwards.</li> <li>❖ The distance is 100 feet.</li> <li>❖ Measure 100 feet starting at the goal line. Use spray paint to draw a line to indicate the finish line.</li> <li>❖ Complete first without a puck. Then add a puck for the second trial.</li> </ul>
Key Execution Points (KEP)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Complete forward skating without a puck then add a puck. Repeat the test backwards first without a puck and then with a puck.</li> <li>❖ Encourage players to skate through finish line (discourage players from stopping at the finish line).</li> </ul>



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Goaltender Tests



Time	Description
8 MIN	Rebound Control – Iron Cross – Lateral Movement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Rebound control is done from 24 feet out measured from the goal line, 10 shots total are taken. 5 in the air, 5 on the ice. The following point system is used to record score. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 point for trapping or catching the puck ( possession )</li> <li>2 points for deflecting the puck to the corners with elevation.</li> <li>3 points for rebound back in direction of the shot</li> <li>4 points for a rebound to the weakside</li> <li>5 points for a goal</li> </ul> <p><b>(The lower the point total, the better the score )</b></p> </li> <li>❖ The Iron Cross is a timed drill with two separate tests. The forward and backward portions are the same, with the difference being the first one utilizes a shuffle to go sideways and the second one uses a Butterfly slide to go sideways. (Based on standardized circle width of 30 feet, if circle is not standard size, then mark off 30 feet distance both vertically and horizontally).</li> <li>❖ The Lateral Movement test is done by moving sideways 8 feet for 4 repetitions, while keeping the outside pad (slide pad) on the ice the entire time (over and back is counted as 1 repetition).</li> </ul>
Key Execution Points (KEP)	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Can be done anywhere on the ice as part of regular team testing or in a separate session.</li> <li>❖ For Rebound control drill try to ensure the shots are consistent for each goalie.</li> <li>❖ Best to do when the ice is fresh, for less pad friction.</li> </ul>