



Developing Defenseman:

More than Just Cones Drills

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Part I. The Basics

- Stance- The biggest problem at the youth/MS level
 - Hand placement→ hips-width apart→ bottom hand always on the butt end→ in front of body
 - Foot alignment/ Posture

Drill 1: [Heavy Stick Warm-Up](#) (M's, W's, Circles, Figure 8's →proper checking)

Teaching Points:

- Stay in stance → quick violent movements
- Limit movement of the bottom hand → must stay in front of the body

Drill 2: Dodge → Bounce → Redodge (Properly engaging dodgers and disrupting hands)

Teaching points:

- The push is more important than the check
- Let the dodger come to you → don't chase
- Never push with your stick parallel to the ground
- Hand placement/ arm extension on the push
- Variations: [Push → check](#), [Push → Lift](#), [Push → Wrap check](#)

Part II. Approaching the Ball

Drill 1: Lancing Drill (Approach and Close)

[Skewer → Stick Behind](#) [Skewer → V-Hold](#) [Skewer → Crosscheck](#)

Teaching Points:

- Arrive with the head of your stick and skewer through to hands
- Slide up the stick to push the dodger or disrupt hands

Drill 2: Three-man Approach Drill ([Take away high side](#)/ [take away middle](#))

Teaching points:

- Jab step and trace the flight of the ball with your stick
- Foot/ stick alignment → make sure they're in agreement
- Turn vs Trail → Taking away high side vs trail technique
- Understand the cushion → up top vs playing behind

Drill 3: [Figure 8 Powerball](#)

Teaching Points:

- Foot alignment → right to right or left to left → defend the drift
- Poke to the upfield shoulder
- Trail through X → two steps past X then run the rail → close high side

Part III: Goal line work

Drill 1: Advantage drill from X (Turning dodgers at GLE) → Powerball (10 min)

Teaching Points:

- Run the rails → can use a stick or cones to force younger kids to take good angles
- Pass block vs run block → look in the earhole
- Hips to corner vs hips to end line
- [Cross check side](#) → always arrive with hands first not stick
- [Stick behind](#) → turning vs driving upfield
- [V-hold](#) → complicated but necessary
 - Two-step process → rushed becomes a hold
 - Set hook early → backhand down
 - Let the dodger come to you
 - Forearm up and avoid being shoulder-to-shoulder

Drill 2: [Double trouble Approaches](#) (Putting approaches and GLE work together)

Teaching points:

- Approach correctly with poke check
- Understand your distance to the goal → V-hold vs stick behind

Drill 3: [Squeeze and Trail](#) (Defending dodgers underneath)

Teaching points:

- The defender should be aiming for the top of the crease as his angle point
- Keep the stick on 45 and maintain contact with your hands
- Trail check to the inside → wait for the stick to come to you → don't chase the stick
- Squeeze first don't just wait for trail check

Drill 4: [Squeeze and Pop](#) → Powerball (Defending dodgers underneath and preventing rollback)

Teaching points:

- Maintain trail position and prevent rollback → pop through X
- At X we're flat to the back of the net and run the rail on the far side → don't hop over the back of the net

Drill 5: [Bounce Drill](#) (Defending the bounce/ resquare)

Teaching points:

- When they bounce, step upfield and get your stick out → be ready to poke on next move
- Reengage the dodger and keep him underneath

Drill 6: [Powerball Canadian 1 v 1s](#) (Defending the 5 x 5)

Teaching points:

- Hand placement on hip strikes → punch bottom hand on COD
- Step upfield against dodgers who bounce → squeeze

Additional Topics:

Covering lanes: Two-man radar drill, Blue Devil Drill, Scope Drill

Stickwork- Three-man breakouts, Harvard Clearing Drill, Rabbit Clearing Drill

Two-man games- Picket Fence Drill, Rapid Fire Picks, Red Fox Drill

Slide and Recover Drills- Red light/Green light, Pass the Torch, Hedge → Hedge → Go

