



## Basic Structure for 6U Mite Practices

The 6U Mite group consists of players ranging in age from 4 to 6 years old. This assumes that the players have first followed USA Hockey recommendations and taken a basic learn to skate and learn to play program. These two foundational programs will provide the rudimentary skills needed for the 6U program. In the case of some smaller youth associations it may be necessary to group the 6U and the 8U players into practice sessions. This can still be done efficiently with proper planning and be very beneficial to all involved.

Skating is a primary skill for ice hockey and although players must continue to master skating technique throughout their career, there must be a special emphasis placed on the ABC elements of skating in the early years of development. Players at the Mite age have a harder time processing technical skills instruction and their bodies lack some of the fine motor control required. At this age large muscle groups and multiple joint movements should be incorporated into the practice sessions. Agility, balance and coordination (ABC's) on the ice surface are at the foundation of LTAD for 6U Mites.

Activity volume plays a significant role in development at the 6U age group. Little kids are doers so keep instruction short and activity high.

Practices have a preparatory phase followed by the main body of the practice. The main body of the practice session includes station work so that kids are developing their skills in an efficient manner. The recommended breakdown is with six stations so that there is enough variety to hold the interest of players at this age. Training should be structured so that a large part of the skill repetition is done in a games format. Players at all levels must be mentally engaged in order to best acquire new skills. When skills repetition lacks an emotional element, children at this age quickly become bored. If the skills repetition is hidden in the form of a game, children are capable of extended periods of focused effort. Play is the key to emotional engagement in the skills repetition.

Young kids are comfortable with repetition and like familiarity in the drills that they are asked to perform. Similar drills are rotated down the progression from practice to practice. This give each practice a slightly different look and feel without changing too much. For example each practice's warm-up is then used within the station setup in the following practice. Thus the players are familiar with the game, but the spatial requirements have changed.

The basic 6U Mite practice structure is for a 50 minute hour block of ice as this is common across the country (50 minutes of ice with the cost of a 10 minute ice cut included). If your local associating gets the full 60 minutes out of their hour block of ice the practice sessions are easily modified by adding one additional minute to each station and four minutes to the game activity at the conclusion of practice.



# Transition Program Practice: 1 & 2 Theme/Goals: Fun/Skill development:

**Equipment Required:** Borders, Nets, Cones, Tires & Toy Bag **Ice Time: 60 minutes**

### Warm Up: 6 minutes

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, softballs, nerf balls, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

### Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes

On the whistle, players do 3 two foot jumps before changing stations. Be sure to give players water after changing stations.

### Stations 1: ABC's - Wave Skating

2 foot glide, 2 foot glide with butt on heels, run on skates, glide & 2 foot jump, drop to knees & get up.

### Station 2: Activity - Freeze Tag

Select one player to be the tagger. When a player gets tagged they must stand still (frozen) until a teammate touches them to become free again.

### Station 3: Stationary Passing

Players partner up, stand 8-10' apart and pass back and forth. Work on proper technique, emphasize keeping the hands away from the body and sweeping the puck. Players should stand sideways so that they pass cross body.

### Station 4: Relay Race

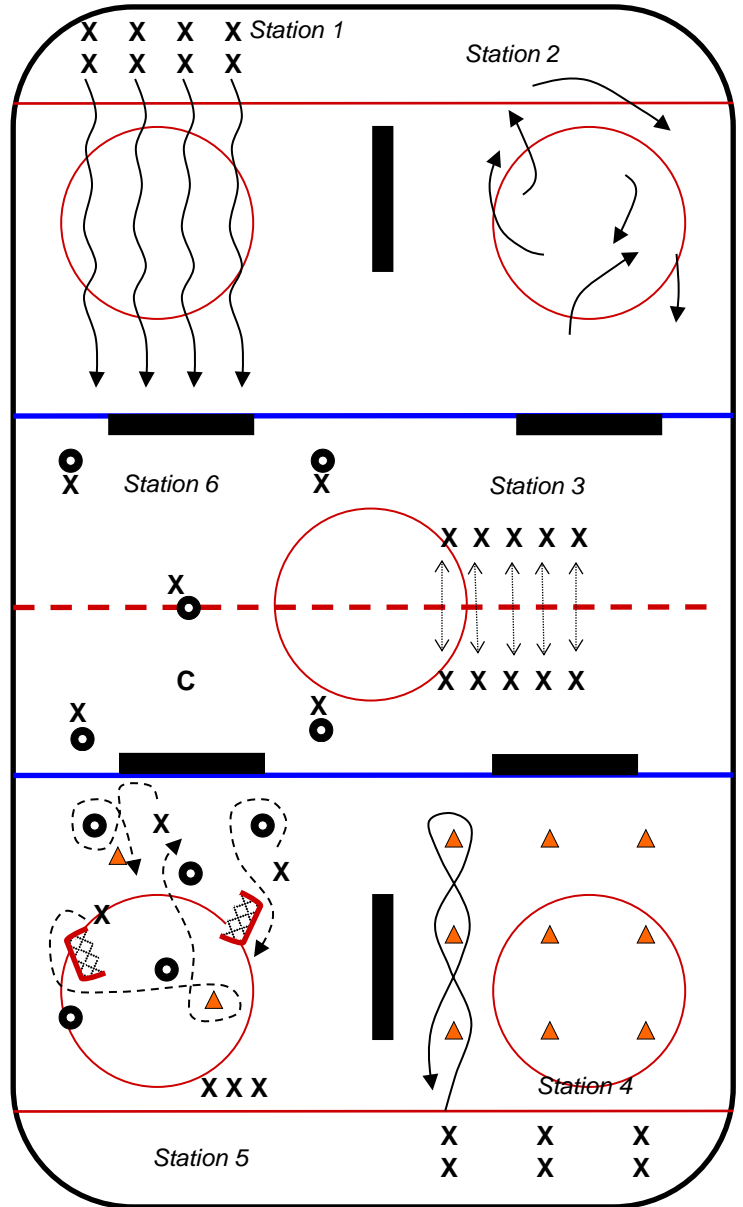
Perform as shown or create your own. You can draw the skating route using a magnum marker to direct the players.

### Station 5: Chaos Puck-handling

Players stick handle skating around obstacles. All players are involved. Use ringette rings instead of pucks. Player turns stick upside down & puts butt end into ring. Check to see that each player is holding their stick properly. Hands about shoulder width apart and top hand at the end of the stick (not on blade) partially held in the palm with the V between thumb and forefinger on the stick like you would hold a hammer.

### Station 6: Glove Tag

Coach puts one glove on the blade of his stick. Players skate in designated area avoiding being tagged by coach. Players start with their stick touching a tire, on coaches command go players have to skate to a different tire without being tagged- no more than 2 kids per a tire. Half way thru have the kid who gets caught be it.



### Competitive Game: 9 Minutes

#### 2v2 Hit the Tire

Have the players stay and play in each of the six zones. Play 2v2 for 40 second shifts. Use one tire in each zone as the goal. Teams score by hitting the tire with the puck.

### FUN Game: 9 Minutes

#### British Bulldog

Players stand in line along boards. 1-3 players stand in the middle of the rink. Players along the boards try to skate to cross ice without being tagged by the bulldog. If tagged they remain in center to help. Play until you have a winner. Repeat.



Equipment: Borders, Nets, Cones, Tires, Nerf Balls & Toy Bag Ice Time: 60 minutes

**Warm Up: 6 minutes**

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, nerf balls, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

**Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes**

On the whistle, players fall to knees & get up 3 times before changing stations. Be sure to give players water after changing stations.

**Stations 1: ABC's - Wave Skating**

2 foot glide, squat & reach high, touch toes & reach high, march with high knees, drop to single knee up alternate knees, fall to knees spin...

**Station 2: Activity - Sharks & Minnows**

Two players are designated as the sharks to start. The minnows must skate from goal line to blue line without being tagged. If they are tagged, they become sharks too.

**Station 3: Skill- Chaos**

Chaos Puck-handling with obstacles and BLUE pucks. Have players pass pucks off tires and continue stick handling around obstacles. Have players rotate through every 45 seconds. On changes allow them to shoot the puck into a net, then the next group starts. Coaches draw numbers on the ice and the players waiting in line use the side of their skate blade to scrape number off using their edges.

**Station 4: Relay Race**

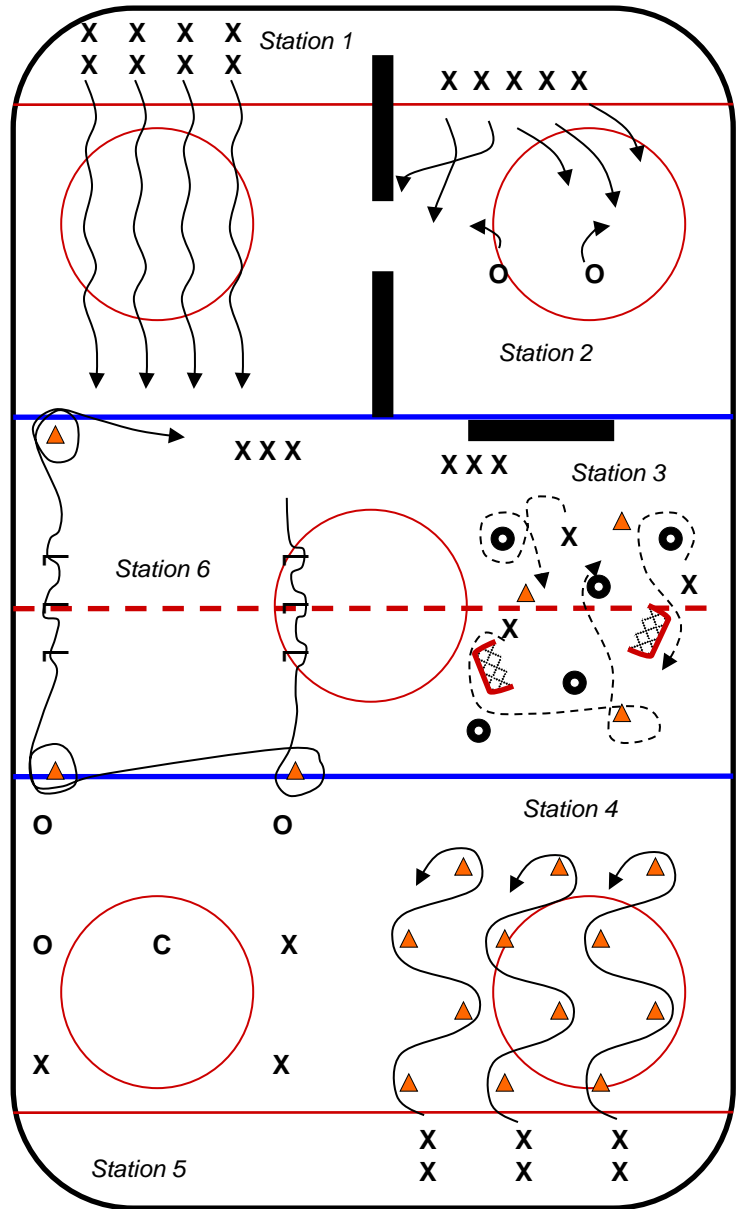
As shown or create your own. You may need to draw the route for players to follow by using a magnum marker.

**Station 5: Stationary Puck-handling**

Every player has a puck and faces coach. Players stand in basic hockey stance with knees bent, feet shoulder width apart. Coach demonstrates each stickhandle drill: narrow (skate to skate), wide, forehand diagonal...repeat. Make sure their top hand is holding the stick like a hammer & both wrists rotate during wide dribble. Use quick, light touches and bend knees to shift weight on wide dribbles.

**Station 6: Obstacle Course**

Players skate through the obstacle course jumping over the hockey sticks.



**Competitive Game: 9 minutes**

**3v3 Cross-Ice Ringette**

Play 3v3 (or 4v4) Cross-Ice in all 3 zones. Use 1-2 ringettes in each zone. Change every 45 to 60 seconds

**FUN Game: Tag - 9 Minutes**

Players start on goal line. Players try to skate through neutral zone without being tagged. Coaches are waiting in neutral zone with nerf balls. If coach tags a player the player must fall to their knees and get up 3 times before they can rejoin the game. Players try to skate to far goal line without being tagged.



**Warm Up: 6 minutes**

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, nerf balls, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

**Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes**

On the whistle, players do 3 star jumps (crouch down into a turtle and explode into a star) before changing stations. Be sure to give players water after changing stations.

**Stations 1: ABC's - Wave Skating**

Skating forward without sticks, move the arms in large circles forward, arm circles backward, one arm forward and one arm backward. Superman dive, superman dive with log role to left, superman dive with log role to right

**Station 2: Chaos Puck-handling**

Use tenni/softballs instead of pucks. Players stickhandle skating around obstacles. All players are involved. Check to see that each player is holding their stick properly. Hands about shoulder width apart and top hand at the end of the stick partially held in the palm with the V between thumb and forefinger on to of the stick like you would hold a hammer. Bottom hand is loose gripping stick.

**Station 3: Stationary Shooting**

Player work on wrist shot technique shooting against the boards. Players should stand sideways to boards so that proper weight transfer is used. Start with puck behind back foot and sweep puck towards target.

**Station 4: Obstacle Course**

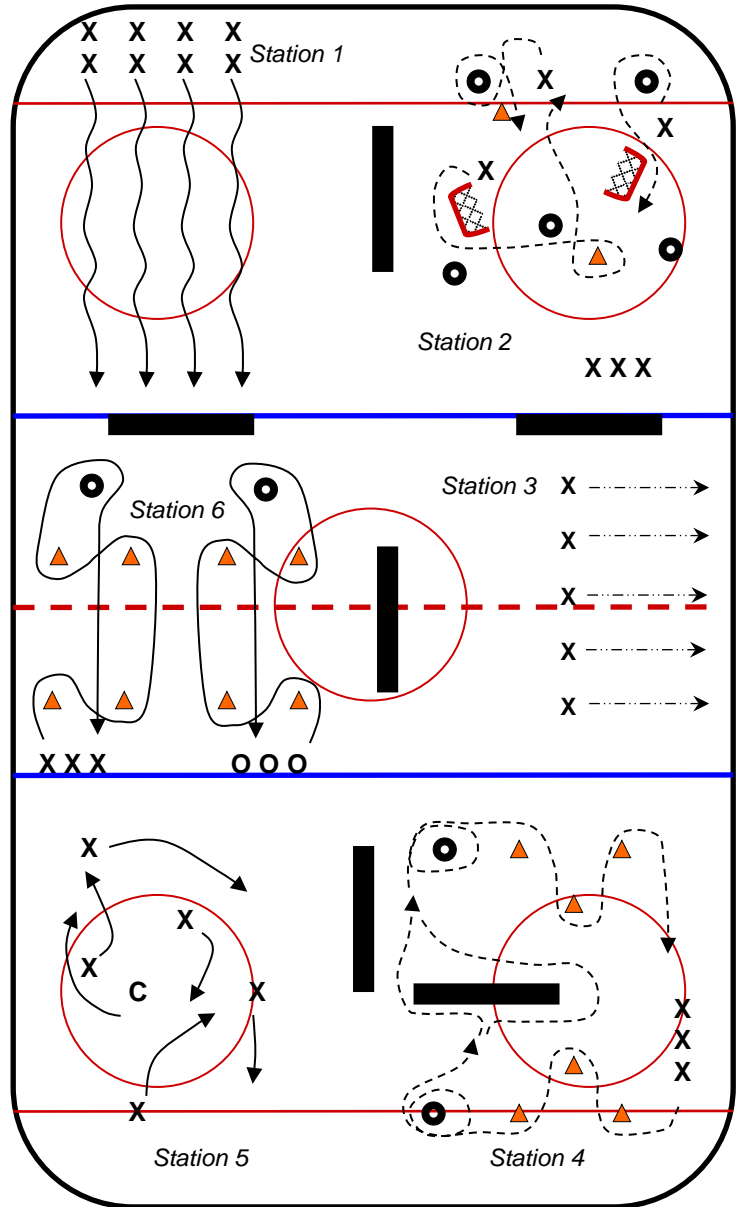
Players skate through the obstacle course with emphasis on turns and edges. You may need to draw route for players to follow by using a magnum marker. Advance: Players carry ringette rings.

**Station 5: Activity - Ball Tag**

Coaches throw nerf or soccer balls at players who attempt to dodge out of the way. If hit, the player must drop to their knees and get back up 3 times before they can rejoin the action.

**Station 6: Relay Race**

As shown or create your own. May need to draw route for players to follow by using a magnum marker.



**Competitive Game: 9 minutes**

**4v4 Cross-Ice**

Using a tennis ball play 4v4 cross ice hockey in all three zones.

**FUN Game: 9 minutes**

**Kick the Can 3v3 or 4v4**

Create 2 goals using nets. Throw out 1 puck, 1 soccer ball and 1 tennis ball and play 3 v 3 with designated goals. When goals are scored coach replaces "Can" with another object. Make sure kids bend their knees and use inside of foot while in kicking motion. Rotate every 60 seconds.



**Transition Program Practice: 7 & 8 Theme/Goals: Fun/Skill development:**

**Equipment:** Borders, Nets, Cones, Tires & Toy Bag

**Ice Time: 60 minutes**

**Warm Up: 6 minutes**

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, nerf balls, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

**Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes**

On the whistle, players do four 180 jumps before changing stations. Be sure to give players water after changing stations.

**Stations 1: ABC's - Wave Skating**

Take a few strides for momentum- one leg glide: left then right, Drop to knees 360 degree spin and get up, place stick on back and rotate left and right while gliding, 3 strides then basic hockey stance glide, T-Push

**Station 2: Relay Race**

Start with a 2 foot low jump followed by weaving in & out of the course and ending with another low 2 foot jump. May need to draw route for players to follow by using a magnum marker, at this age they will not see the course pattern.

**Station 3: Stationary Passing**

Have players set up in a triangle formation and pass clockwise to teammates, counter clockwise, & in any order.

**Station 4: Activity - Safety Tag**

Play tag with the coaches as the taggers and the players using the marked-off circles as safety zones. On the whistle, players must move to a new circle without being tagged. If tagged, players must do three, 2 foot jumps before they can rejoin the action

**Station 5: Slalom Puck-handling**

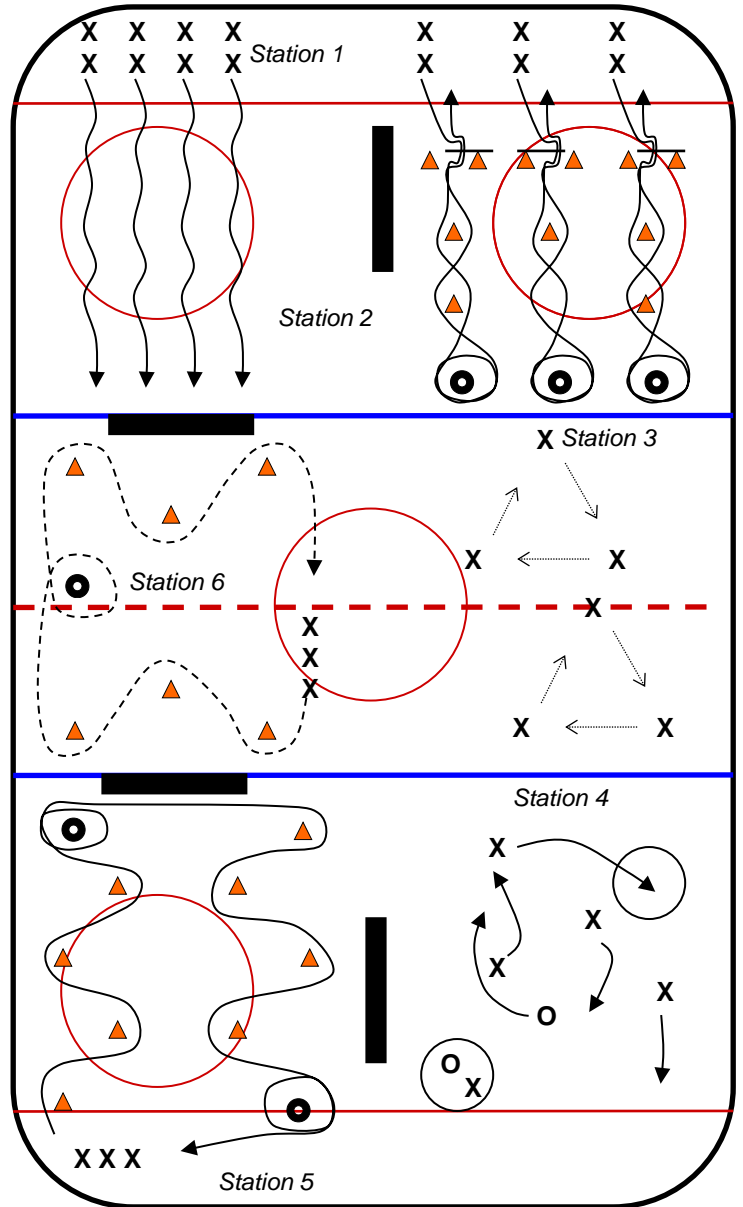
Players handle a BLUE puck through the designated course. Use a Magnum marker to draw line for players to follow...at this age they will not see the course pattern.

**Station 6: Obstacle Course**

Players dribble a softball through the course (no sticks) using their feet. Emphasis is on agility and coordination.

**Competitive Game: 9 minutes**

Cross ice Soccer in all three zones. Play without sticks and remind players to bend their knees and only kick ball with the inside of their skate and not their toe.



**FUN: 9 Minutes**

**Red Light Green Light Game**

Players start on goal line. Players skate towards red line (center ice) where the policeman (coach) is holding a red painted puck and a green painted puck. If coach holds up a red painted puck player must stop moving. If player is caught moving on a red light they must return to goal line. First player to policeman is the winner.



**Warm Up: 6 minutes**

Let the players have the first five minutes of time as free play. Dump as many items as possible onto the ice and let kids experiment. (ringette rings, blue pucks, black pucks, softballs, nerf balls, tennis balls, etc.) Coaches set up stations.

**Stations: 6 Stations x 6 minutes**

On the whistle, players do 2 log rolls each way before changing stations. Be sure to give players water after changing stations.

**Stations 1: ABC's - Wave Skating**

C-cuts left leg, C-cuts right leg, 180 jumps, stick on shoulders twist left & right, glide on 1 leg and swing opposite leg, switch legs

**Station 2: Activity - Follow the Leader**

Begin with the coach as the leader. Players can then take turns being the leader. Do what the leader does, encourage creativity.

**Station 3: Stationary Passing**

Have players set up in a square formation and pass clockwise to teammates, counter clockwise, & in any order.

**Station 4: Chaos Puck-handling (balls)**

Players stickhandle tennis balls avoiding contact with the other skaters. All players are involved. On coaches command player does a 360 and continues stickhandling. Check to see that each player is holding their stick properly. Hands about shoulder width apart and top hand at the end of the stick partially held in the palm with the V between thumb and forefinger on top of the stick like you would hold a hammer.

**Station 5: Obstacle Course**

Players skate through the obstacle course with emphasis on turns and edges. Players carry blue puck.

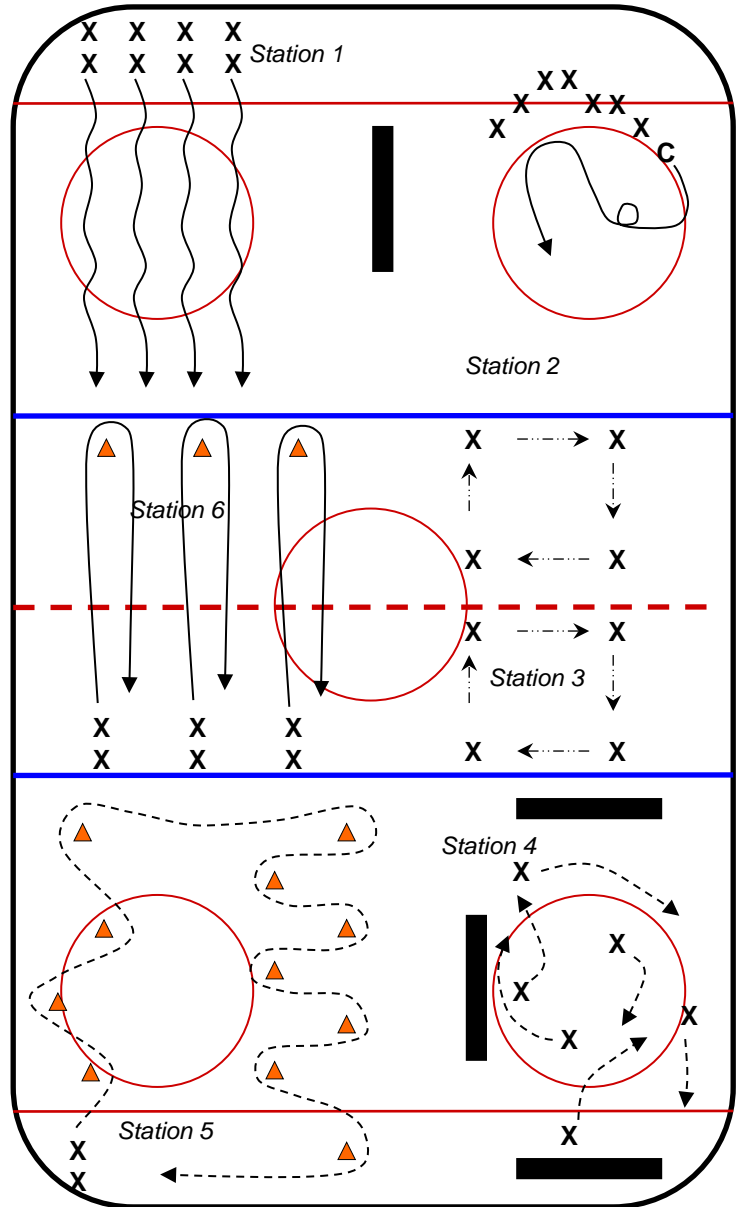
**Station 6: Relay Race - Speed**

As shown in diagram or create your own. Emphasis is on speed. Halfway through have players reverse direction...lead with stick around cone.

**Competitive Game: 9 minutes**

**Keep Away**

Play 1 or 2 games of 1v1 or 2v2 keep away with a tennis ball in all 6 stations. Keep as many players involved as possible.



**FUN Game: 9 Minutes**

**Cops and Robbers**

Coaches are the cops and players are the robbers. Play tag on full ice service. To start game everyone stands in prison (neutral zone circle). Safe zones are the other 4 circles or neutral zone face off dots- no more than 2 players can be in a safe at a time. Players can only stay in one safe zone for 5 seconds. If tagged by a cop you have to go to prison. Captured robbers can be freed by a robber tagging them.