

Hockey Skills Challenge for Mite and 8 & Under



COACH'S MANUAL



Skills Challenge

**Mite
8 & under**

This coach’s manual is intended to provide the instructions and tools to conduct the Mite and 8 & Under Minnesota Hockey - HEP (Hockey Education Program) Skills Challenge.

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Introduction

Coach, you have a unique opportunity and responsibility because you are charged with teaching and developing your players' hockey skills. A player's success and ultimate enjoyment of the game is directly related as to how well you do that. The HEP "Skill Challenge" provides a guide for teaching and developing the skills required to play the game. There are three components to the skill challenge program.

- Coach's Manual - provides the instructions for the Skills Challenge program, instructions for the skill tests and a skill checklist.
- Player Evaluation Form - Each player receives a report of his test times at the beginning of the season and the end of the season and can compare his or her times with those at his or her level on a state-wide basis.
- "Skills Challenge" Website - Times for each players will be entered on the website and in real-time one can view the state-wide average time, top 10% time and best time for each classification of play.

A player's enjoyment of the game will be a direct result of how well they master the basic hockey skills. The "Skill Challenge" provides a guide as well as a measure as to how well a player is doing and the areas needing work. Practice makes permanent. Teach your player the proper techniques. Most importantly you are a skill instructor and not a drill instructor.

Practice the basic skills at every practice. Using the "Skills Challenge" checklist, plan your season so that you cover each of the skills. Use the "Skills Challenge" to communicate with the parents of your team. In the long run it is not your win-loss record that really counts, but whether or not you have been able to help your players learn and develop. Practice can be FUN if your players continue to get better.

Instructions

1. Introduce the Hockey Education Program Skills Challenge at your "Parent Meeting".
2. Conduct "Early Season" skill tests during first two weeks of practice.
3. Enter results of "Early Season" skill tests on the HEP Skills Challenge website.
4. Distribute "Participation Helmet Decal" to players having completed the "Early Season" skill tests.
5. Practice skills at every practice.
6. Conduct "Mid Season" skill tests (optional)
7. Conduct "Late Season" skill tests at the end of the season.
8. Enter results of "Late Season" skill tests on the HEP Skills Challenge website.
9. Complete the "Player Evaluation form" and distribute to players. Association, District and State results are available from the HEP Skills Challenge website.

Skill Test Procedure

The skill tests in this program are outlined on the following pages.

EACH TEST MUST BE SET UP ACCORDING TO ITS DIAGRAM

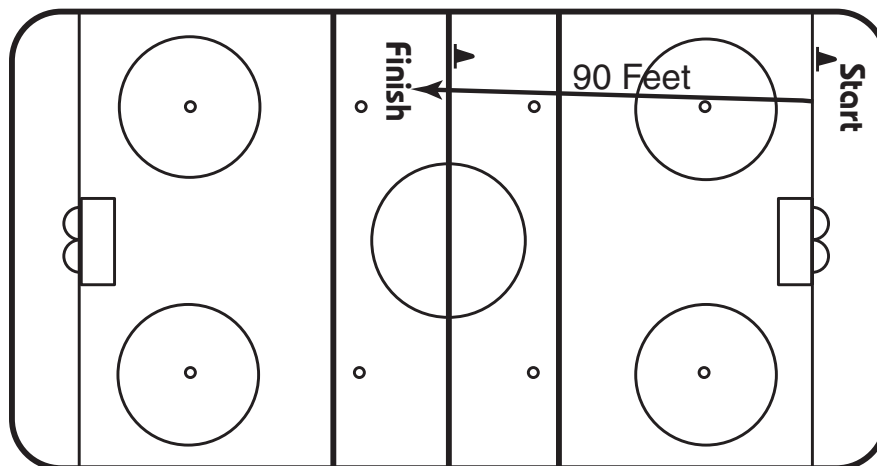
Testing Guidelines

1. Players must wear full protective equipment, including helmets and facemasks, for all tests. They always carry their stick.
2. Before doing each skills test, give a demonstration.
3. Have a starter at the starting line and signal the start with a whistle or a drop of the arm.
4. Where pylons are positioned. Use red magnum permanent marker to mark the exact location. Make sure the player skates around the pylon as outlined in each skills test.
5. If a player falls or loses the puck the first time, let them repeat. If a player falls or loses the puck the second time, they must get up and continue the test.
6. Make sure the player does not start to slow down until after he/she has crossed the finish line.
7. The timer starts the watch when the player begins movement. The timer stops the watch as soon as the first skate crosses the finish line.
8. To ensure uniform accuracy, time must be recorded to hundredths of a second.

Testing Equipment Required

- * Whistles
- * Stopwatches
- * 18 pylons
- * 100 foot measuring tape
- * Red Magnum permanent marker
- * Clipboards for each station
- * Pencils for recording scores
- * Hockey Skills Result Worksheet each station

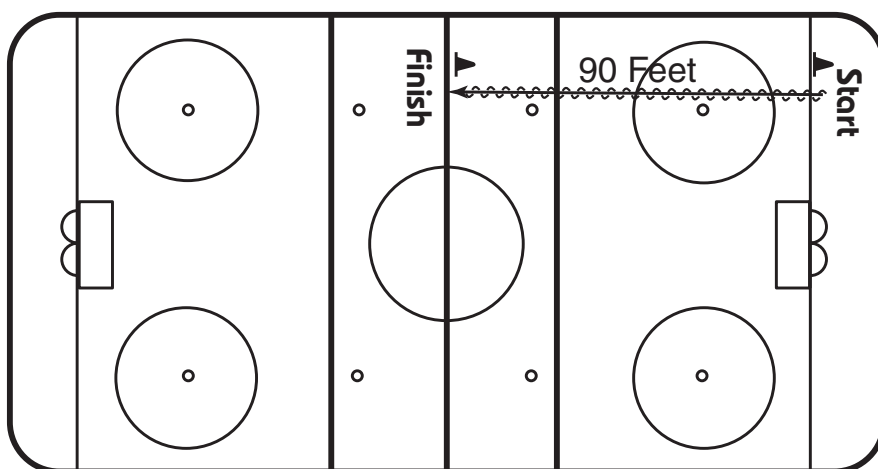
Skater Skill Test #1 - Forward Acceleration (90 Feet)



Forward Skating Acceleration

1. Distance - 90 feet. Place pylons at start & finish Lines.
2. Starter at start line & Timer at finish line.
3. Player starts with both skates behind the start line.
4. Timer stops watch when player's first skate crosses the finish line.
5. Players will have 2 attempts at this test. Record both scores.

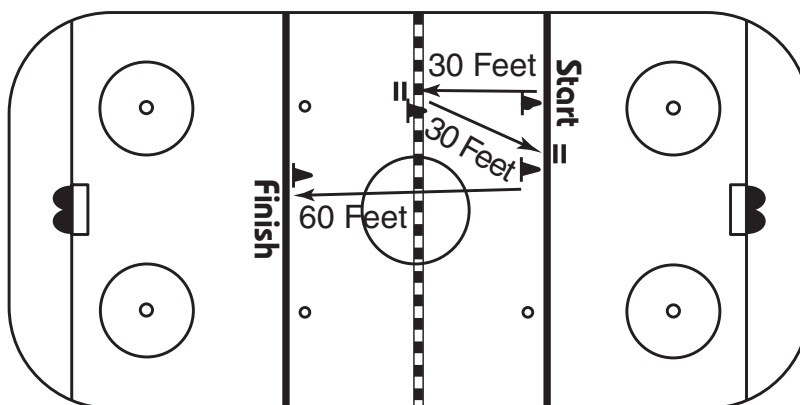
Skater Skill Test #2 - Backward Acceleration (90 Feet)



Backward Skating Acceleration

1. Distance - 90 feet. Place pylons at start & finish lines.
2. Starter at start line & Timer at finish line.
3. Player starts with both skates behind the start line.
4. Timer stops watch when player's first skate crosses the finish line.
5. Players will have 2 attempts at this test. Record both scores.

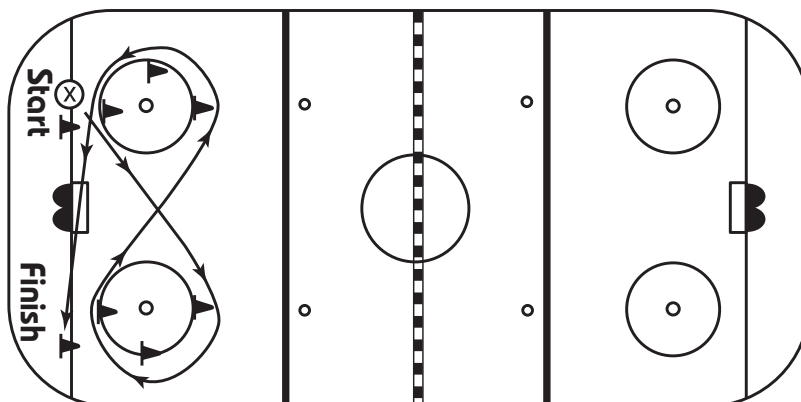
Skater Skill Test #3 - Stops & Starts (Top of Circle, Red Line, Near Blue Line, Far Blue Line)



Forward Stops & Starts

1. Distance - 30 to 60 feet. Place pylons at start & finish lines and at the 2 places player does stops & starts. NOTE: At many rinks the neutral zone is shortened. There must be 30 ft. between each stop & start location. The finish line is 60 ft. from 2nd stop & start location.
2. Starter at start line & Timer at finish line.
3. Player starts with both skates behind the start line.
4. Player must stop behind each pylon, not in front of it.
5. Timer stops watch when player's first skate crosses the finish line.
6. Players will have 2 attempts at this test. Record both scores.

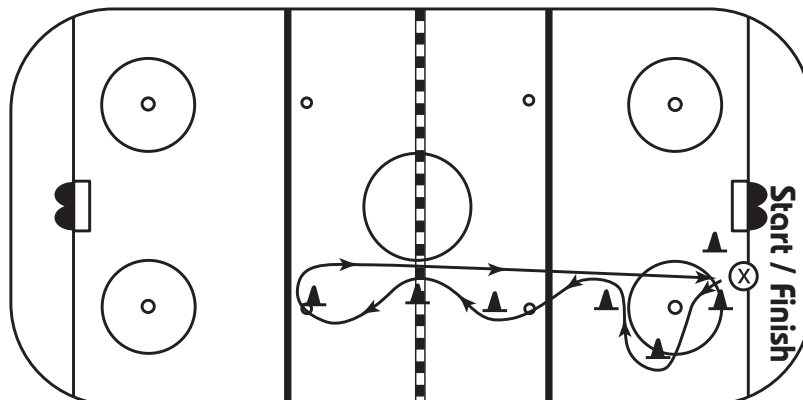
Skater Skill Test #4 - Circle Figure 8 Forward Crossovers



Circle Figure 8 Forward Crossovers

1. Distance - Figure "8" pattern on two face-off circles at one end of rink. Place pylons for start and finish in line with face-off dots and behind the goal line. Place 3 pylons on edge of face-off circle as shown in the above diagram.
2. Starter at start line & Timer at finish line.
3. Player starts with both skates behind the start line.
4. Timer stops watch when player's first skate crosses the finish line.
5. Players will have 2 attempts at this test. Record both scores.

Skater Skill Test #5 - Puck Control Weave and Acceleration

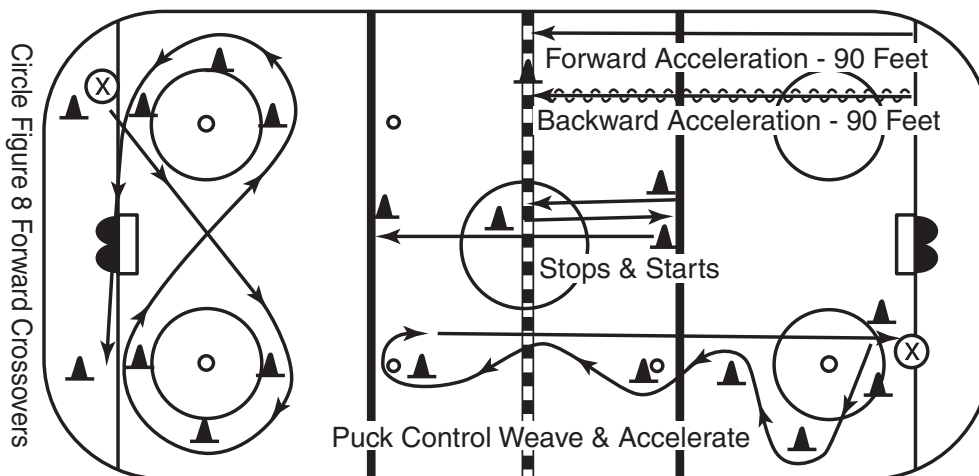


Puck Control - Weave & Acceleration

1. Distance - 110 feet. Place 2 pylons at start/finish line. Place 2nd pylon at "hash mark" on circle, 3rd pylon at top of circle, place pylons 4th,5th,6th - 20 feet apart.
2. Starter & timer at start/finish line.
3. Player starts with both skates and puck behind the start line.
4. Timer stops watch when player's first skate crosses the finish line (not the puck).
5. Player weaves a pattern up to the 6th pylon, then does a tight turn and accelerates forward as fast as possible back to start/finish line.
6. Players will have 2 attempts at this test. Record both scores.

Tips to Speed Up Testing

To complete the drills quickly, it is possible to run 3-5 skills tests at the same time. This requires the assistance of extra people (starters, timers and possible recorders). Depending on how many teams are sharing the ice, please try and follow one of the sequences listed below.



1. All five stations set up at one time. Use red magnum permanent marker to mark the spot where each cone is placed.
2. There can be one to three teams on the ice at a time. Divide the players up into 5 groups. Make sure that the player's names for each team are on the correct score sheets.
3. You will need 5 starters and 5 timers/recorders.
4. Use tag board and number each station on the ice. This will make it easier for players to rotate from station to station.
5. Plan on 5 to 10 minutes at each station (depending on how many teams are being tested at one time).
6. Keep players in the same order when moving from one station to the next. Also, the clip board with the group skills score sheet travels with the players as they go from one station to the next station.
7. Stations #1 & #2 (Forward & Backward Acceleration) can be combined into one station.
8. Hold each group of players till everyone in all the groups is finished at their station. When all station areas are finished, rotate groups.
9. Demonstrate each drill when the players rotate to the next station.
10. Warm-up players for 5 minutes before any drills are started.

Skaters Skills Checklist

SKATING

1. **Forward Basic Stance**
"Ready Position - Chest up, knees well bent, 2 hands on stick w/no wt."
2. **Inside Edge Control**
"Ankles Control the Edge"... "Good Knee Bend of Glide Foot"
3. **Weight & Stick Shift**
4. **Forward Stride**
"Shift Weight, Stick & Hands to Bent Knee"
"Full Extension"... "Complete Recovery"
5. **Forward Start**
"V-Start"... "L-start both Right & Left"
6. **Control Stops**
____ "Two Skate Ready Position Stop"
____ "One Foot Power Stop - L Position"
7. **Control Turn**
"Pivot Skate - inside leg is bent"....
"Brace Skate - outside leg is straight"
8. **Backward Basic Stance**
"One Hand on Stick Ready Position, "Knees Well Bent & Butt Low"
9. **Backward Stride**
"Push-Heel Out-Toe In to Full Extension,
"Transfer Wt. to Glide Skate, Recover Under Hip"
10. **Backward "Snow Plow" Stop**
"Heels In & Toes Out, Weight on Inside Edges, Knees Well Bent"
11. **Backward/Forward Turns**
"Mohawk Pivots - One Skate Balance, Open Hip, 180 degree Step Out"
12. **Forward Crossovers**
"One Skate Balance, Knee Up-Skate Over, Push Inside Skate Under"

PUCK CONTROL

1. **Stick - Stance - Grip**
"Stick - Under Chin & No Lower than Neckline"
"Stance - Stick in Front of Body, Elbows & Arms Move Freely"... "Grip - Hands 6-10 Inches Apart, 'V'Formation Grip"
2. **Wrist Roll**
"Roll Wrist - Enables Blade of Stick to 'Cup' the Puck"
3. **Split Vision**
"Eyes Up, Indirectly See Puck Out of Bottom of the Eyes"
4. **Basic Dribbling Skills**
"Lateral Dribble - In Front of Body, Short & Wide Pulls to Forehand & Backhand Sides"
"Front to Back Dribble-Puck Moves Forward/Backward on Side"
"Diagonal Dribble-Pull Puck from Front to Diagonally to Side"
5. **Forward Stride With "Pulls"**
"Pull the Puck as wide as possible with every Stride"
6. **Weave & Control Pulls**
"Crossover Weaving - Pulling Puck on Each Cone"
7. **One Hand Puck Acceleration**
"One Hand on Stick, Arm Extended Straight, Push Flip/Flop"
8. **Attacking the Triangle**
"Triangle - Avoiding the area between the Skates & Stick"
9. **Forehand & Backhand Shifts**
"Head-Shoulder-Stick Shift (Fake), Pull Puck Across & Skate"

PASSING & RECEIVING

1. **Basic Elements**
"Passing: Look-Slide-Guide-Point" - Eyes Up, Start Puck on Heel, Start Puck Near Back Skate, Sweep Puck Forward Towards Front Skate, Release Follow Through With Blade.
"Receive: Rt. Angle-Cup & Give" - 'Rt. Angle': Move Blade to Front Skate for Receiving Pass, 'Cup': Blade is Cupped Over Puck on Contact, 'Give': Relax the Wrist Upon Contact.
2. **Forehand Pass**
"Puck is Released Smoothly with Rotation, Accurate Pass to Blade"
3. **Backhand Pass**
"Puck Starts on Heel of Blade, Sweep Puck, Blade Pointing at Target After Release"
4. **Stationary Passing**
"Pass - Accurately, Smoothly & Hard"
5. **Continuous Moving Passes**
"Pass Puck Diagonally in Front of Receiver"

SHOOTING

1. **Mechanics of Shooting**
 - Start Puck on Heel to Middle of Blade
 - Start Puck Towards Back Skate (wt. on back leg)
 - Release Puck at 90 degree angle to Net
 - Lower Arm Provides the Pushing Action
 - Upper Arm Provides the Pulling Motion
 - Force Exerted on Stick is Forward & Downward
 - Stress the Technique of the Shot (young players will have difficulty in strength for speed & power)
 - Follow Through Towards Net, Be Ready for Rebound
2. **Forehand Sweep Shot**
"Body at 45 degree angle to net, Hands 12-15 inches apart, Blade Cupped Over Puck, When Sweeping Puck Forward - Transfer Wt. From Back to Front Leg"
3. **Backhand Sweep Shot**
"Puck at Side of Body Behind Back Skate, Blade Cupped Over Puck, Sweep Puck Forward - Weight Transfer to Front Skate, Upper body Rotates Quickly"

Skaters Skills Checklist - Continued

CHECKING

1. _____ **Poke check**
"Stick Hand/Arm Held Close to Body, Extend Stick Contacting Puck, DO NOT LUNGE! Finish check by Sliding Stick between Attacker's Legs, then Block Out"
2. _____ **Stick Lift**
"Approach Puck Carrier Behind & side, Skate with PC, Slide Stick Under PC's Stick & Lift Quickly, Retrieve Puck"
3. _____ **Stick Press**
"Close 1 on 1 Situation, Place Stick Over Lower Part of Opponent's Stick, Press Down Hard"
4. _____ **Angling**
Key Elements:
 - a. The checker must learn to play the angles of pursuit
 - b. Stick on Stick, Body on Body'
 - c. Play Through Opponent's Hands - this allows you to get the puck while separating the PC from the puck
 - d. Quick Acceleration is important once the PC is contained.
 - e. Continue to skate when close to the PC - DON'T GLIDE

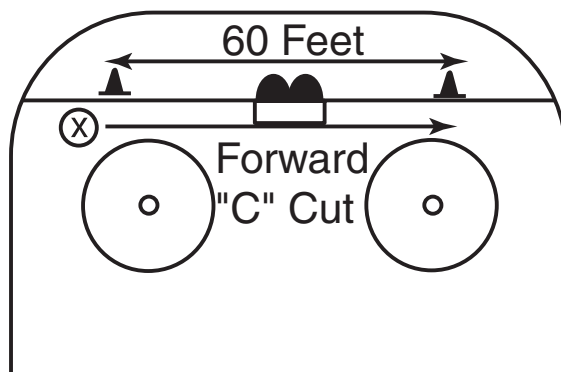
TEAM PLAY

1. _____ **Defensive Team Play**
Key Elements:
 1. Individual Skills
 - Checking the Puck Carrier - ANGLING
 - Intercepting Passes or Cutting Off Passing Lanes
 - Covering Opponent
 2. Team Skills
 - Carrying Out Lane Responsibilities in all 3 Zones
 - Pressure & Outnumber Opponent at Puck
2. _____ **Offensive Team Play**
Key Elements:
 1. Individual Skills
 - Carrying the Puck (stickhandling)
 - Passing & Receiving
 - Shooting
 2. Team Skills
 - 2 Quick Passes When Breaking Out
 - Stay Wide & Move Quickly Through Neutral Zone
 - Set Up Offensive Triangle in Attack Zone

Goalie Skill Testing Procedure

1. Goalies must wear full protective equipment, including helmet and facemask, for all tests.
2. Before doing the test, explain and give a demonstration.
3. Have a Starter at the starting position and signal the start with a whistle or drop of an arm.
4. Where pylons are positioned. Use red magnum permanent marker to mark exact location. Make sure goalies skate right up to the pylon as outlined in each test.
5. Goalies must always do their moves in the goalie stance (goalie ready position). Stick on ice, catch glove open to side, knees bent, and head up.
6. If goalie falls or loses puck on first attempt, let him/her repeat. If goalie falls or loses puck on second attempt he/she must get up and complete the test.
7. Make sure the goalie does not slow down until after he/she has crossed the finish line.
8. The timer starts the watch when the goalie begins movement and stops the watch as soon as he/she crosses the finish line.
9. To ensure uniform accuracy, time must be recorded to hundredths (x.xx) of a second.

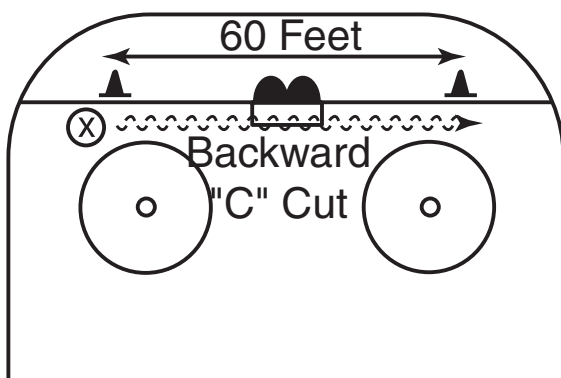
Goalie Skill Test #1 - 60 Feet Forward "C" Cuts



Forward "C" Cuts

1. Distance - 60 feet. 2 pylons: one at start and the other at the finish (do the test along the goal line).
2. Starter at start line & Timer at finish line.
3. Goalie starts with both skates behind the start line.
4. Goalie skates doing "C" Cuts
5. Timer stops watch when player's first skate crosses the finish line.
6. Players will have 2 attempts at this test. Record both scores.

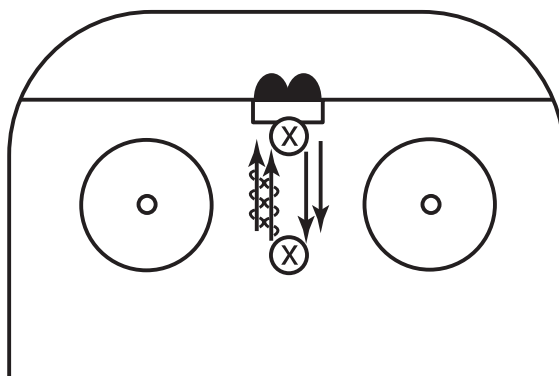
Goalie Skill Test #2 - 60 Feet Backward "C" Cuts



Backward "C" Cuts

1. Distance - 60 feet. 2 pylons: one at start and the other at the finish (do the test along the goal line).
2. Starter at start line & Timer at finish line.
3. Goalie starts with both skates behind the start line.
4. Goalie skates doing "C" Cuts.
5. Timer stops watch when player's first skate crosses the finish line.
6. Players will have 2 attempts at this test. Record both scores.

Goalie Skill Test #3 - Forward & Backward Telescoping



Forward & Backward Telescoping

1. Start by putting an "X" on the ice at top of arch in goal crease.
2. Put another "X" on the ice in line with lowest "hash" mark on face-off circle.
3. Goalie does forward & backward movement in goalie stance.
4. Goalie moves forward to "X" up by "hash" marks, stops and skates backward to "X" at top of goal crease arch.
5. Goalie repeats the movement out & back one more time (do forward & backward 2 times).
6. Timer stops watch once the goalie's skates get back to "X" at top of goal crease arch.

Goalie Skills Checklist

MITES

1. _____ **Basic Stance**
"Skates Shoulder Width Apart & Knees Bent"....
"Hands Ahead of Body"....
"Stick Blade Flat, Ahead of Skates"
2. _____ **Forward & Backward Movement - "C" Cuts**
"Shift the weight from inside edge of one skate to the other"
"Stay low, glove up, stick down, eyes on puck"
"Stopping - Slight snowplow stop with one skate"
"Always keep Body Square to Puck"
3. _____ **Stick Save**
Directly at Goalie - "Position Stick 4-6 inches in front of skate"
"Stay standing & relax, let the puck come to the stick"
"As the puck contacts stick CUSHION the shot, No Rebound"
Shot Just To The Side - "Move stick to one side & back up the stick with skate turned"....
"Stick arm works as a steering wheel & deflects shot to the side"
4. _____ **Catch Glove Save**
"Basic Position - Glove open, around knee high, ahead of body, filling open net"
"Shift body weight towards shot, eyes follow puck into glove"
5. _____ **Blocker Glove Save**
"Basic Position - Stick Glove held at knee height, balanced with the catching glove on the other side"
"Hard shots - Deflect shot to corner by turning the wrist to outside at the moment of contact" or
"On Slower Shots - Bring Catch Glove across & trap shot against the stick glove"

Coaching Tips

1. Plan practices in advance. Share your plan with your assistants.
2. Strive for a practice to game ratio of three practices to every half-ice or cross-ice game.
3. Make best use of the ice by using multiple stations. Keep as many players moving as possible.
4. Keep drills short in duration and change drills every 5 to 7 minutes.
5. Players should execute the drill a minimum of 4 times.
6. Use a white board to explain and diagram the drill.
7. If a drill isn't working, scrap it and go on to the next drill.
8. Be patient and positive.
9. Use the KISS principle (Keep It Simple Silly).
- 10 Use Fun Games, Cross-Ice Scrimmages and Small Area Games as alternatives to drills, which at the same time will develop skills and creativity. Always end practices with one of these.

