



# Small Area Games





# References

- *The Hockey Coach's Guide to Small Area Games*  
By Paul Willett Paul Willett International, LLC  
1-888-881-7042 [Paul@paulwillett.com](mailto:Paul@paulwillett.com)
- *Championship Hockey Drill Series: 15 Cross-Ice Games*. By Bill Beany and Tim Gerrish.  
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- *Championship Hockey Drills Series: 6 Small-Sided Games for Hockey*. By Bruce Crowder.  
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# What Are Small Area Games?

- Small area games are game-like competitive drills that utilize a playing surface that has been reduced in size.
- The number of participants is lowered in small area games.
- Special rules and conditions are applied.
- Small area games are designed to focus on multiple skills and situations, increasing puck touches and situational repetition.



# Puck Touches in Small Area Games

- At any level of play, an average player may only have control of the puck for a few seconds during the course of a game.
- In a small area game, that same player may have over a minute of puck-possession time over 6-7 shifts in one 10 minute game.
- In small area games, players control the puck in tight situations and will typically have more shots on goal than in any normal drills – all while competing at game pace and having fun!



# Advantages for Goaltenders in Small Area Games

- They see live competition.
- They can face as many shots in one 10 minute small area game as they would see in an entire regulation game.



# Who Uses Small Area Games?

- Europeans
- Pro teams
- College teams
- USA Hockey National Team Development Program and other junior programs.
- High school and youth programs.



# Benefits of Small Area Games

- Promote creativity and experimentation.  
“When you teach a child something, you deprive them of the opportunity to discover it for themselves.”
- Promotes a more competitive practice environment.
- Reduce or eliminate the need for traditional conditioning drills. **More...**



# Benefits of Small Area Games

- Reduces lines and keeps players moving.
- Develop individual and team skills.
- Players learn to excel in tight situations.
- Players develop game strategies and make better decisions.
- Players have more fun in practice.



# Small Area Game Skills

- Skating
- Passing
- Shooting
- Stickhandling
- Cycling
- Transition
- Angling
- Breakouts
- Power Plays
- Puck Support
- Hockey Sense



# Organizing Small Area Games

- Be creative.
- Small area game shift times – Regular game shift times
- Small area game time – 8-12 Minutes
- Emphasize a small number of teaching points for each small area game.
- Enforce rules, techniques, and discipline.



# Factors in Small Area Games

- Placement of nets.
- Number of nets.
- Area of play.

Increasing the area allows for more skating, passing, and speed.

Decreasing the area of play requires players to focus on puck protection, puck support, lateral movement, and stops and starts.

- Support players.
- Number of participants.
- Number of puck touches or passes before a scoring opportunity.