



INDIVIDUAL OFFENSIVE TACTICS PART 2

INDIVIDUAL OFFENSIVE TACTICS – PART 2

Players who find themselves in a particular game situation must read the play and act appropriately within a team play framework. Each player should master various individual tactics that can be used to react to the situation.

Individual offensive tactics can create a scoring chance for the individual or a teammate, or to advance the puck to a better offensive position.

In this chapter, the coach will be presented ideas to further enhance their knowledge of individual tactics which were presented in Level I, to allow players to improve their execution of skills and, hence, the system of play.

Offensive Zone

Play in the Scoring Area

Screening the Goalkeeper

A player should always attempt to block the view of the goalkeeper by positioning a close as possible to the goalkeeper in line with the shooter; especially on shots from the point. Using physical strength and determination, the forward should face the shooter, form a tripod with his skates and stick, and hold his ground. In this position the player is also able to deflect shots and pick up rebounds from the goalkeeper. (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Screening the Goalkeeper

Tip-Ins (Deflections)

From his screening position in front of the goalkeeper the player can deflect the incoming shot. Tipping low shots up high or knocking higher shots down requires good hand-eye co-ordination and a lot of practice. Another method of tipping the shot is to move through the scoring area as the shot is being taken (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Deflection

Another method of deflection is for the player to position themselves off to the side of the net and redirect a shot/pass from a teammate defenseman at the point or top of the face-off circle.

Rebounds

Sometimes the forward can anticipate where a rebound might go, but the two keys to controlling rebounds are to position aggressively in the scoring area (based on the angle of original shot) and to concentrate on the puck with the stick on the ice. The determination to hit the rebound into the net is the mark of good goal scorers and should be a main feature of all scoring drills.

One Timer Shooting

This is a difficult skill to master, but well worthwhile teaching. The shooter should be encouraged to find space in the scoring area and be poised to one time a pass from a teammate. The one timer can be executed from a stationary position or on the move, always using a short backswing or quick snap of the wrists and keeping the eyes on the puck. When moving the shooter must get their feet into position to be able to get as much power as possible into the shoot. This can involve opening open the hips into a wider than usual stance.

The pass should be aimed at a spot between the shooter's skates so he can

Shooting In Motion

The primary aim of a shooter moving towards the goal should be to shoot with the feet moving, with a quick release, and skating to the net for a rebound. Every shooting drill should emphasize these ideas and the coach should try to make it a trademark of his team's offensive game ("Drive and Shoot").

Behind the Net and on the Boards

Wrap Around

With the puck in control behind the net, walking out and putting the puck between the goalkeeper and the near post or shooting for the far side, in an option if the opportunity is there. A wrap around on the forehand side is a very difficult stop for the goalkeeper and often results in a rebound. A very strong push and pivot by the shooter is required and the play is often enhanced by a teammate screening the goalkeeper and an opposition defense (Figure 3).

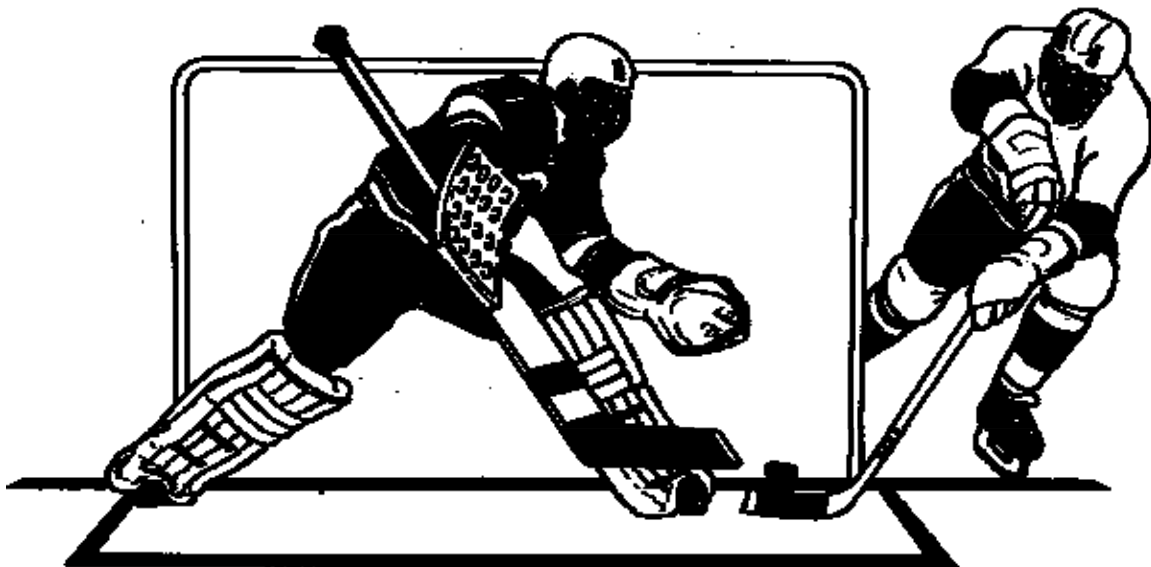


Figure 3: Wrap Around

Evasive Moves

Fake passes, quick escapes, safety turns toward the boards, using soft shoulders to shrug off checkers, and using the give and go, while always protecting the puck with the body, will all increase the amount of puck control time. These maneuvers will also increase chance of the defenders making a mistake and result in good scoring chances. (Figure 4).

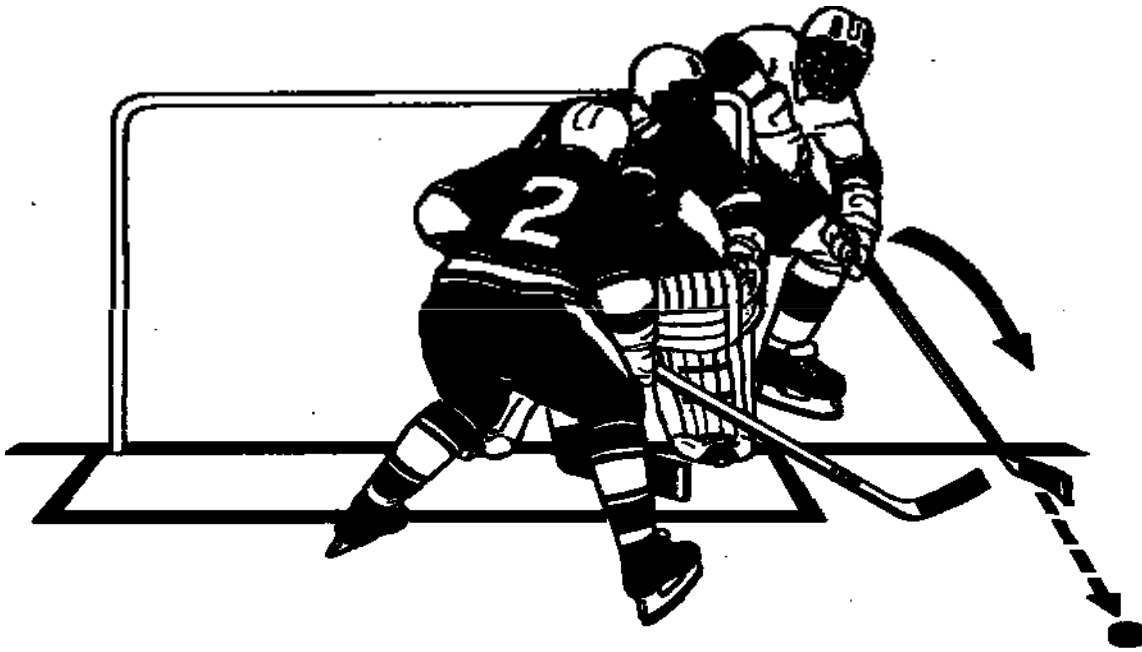


Figure 4: Evasive Moves

Blue Line Play

Pinching

The defenseman on the offensive blue line moves down the boards towards the offensive corner to gain control a loose puck or check an opponent. A good opportunity to “pinch” is when the puck has come around the boards from the far side. The defenseman must be sure to get the puck or the man. An aggressive, early read and reaction is important for successful pinching

A forward should support the defenseman by skating to cover a position behind the defenseman.

Shooting from the Blue Line

The most important thing with any shot from the blue is to hit the net. Any shot, whether it is a slap shot, snap shot wrist shot or one timer can be used but the release must be quick to increase the chances of it making it to the net. And it should not hit a defender Low shots, 10 cm high, are very are the most effective as they will get through for deflections and rebounds. High shots are less accurate and dangerous. One timer slap shots from the point are only effective when the pass is good and to get the shot away quickly for example during a power play.

When there is no clear path visible the player should use other options such as a pass to a teammate or putting the puck into the corner.

Attacking the Net

All five skaters should be involved in the attack in the offensive zone. The proper timing of a defenseman coming off the blue line and entering into the scoring area is a real skill. When properly supported by forwards the defenseman effective in reacting at the correct time and correct place. Forwards away from the puck must anticipate a shot and attack the net for deflections or rebounds.

Neutral Zone

Screening

Forwards should always look for a chance to screen an opposing checker to allow the puck carrier more space to move. Physical contact or blatant interference will draw penalties but establishing position, as in on the offensive blue line, is allowed.

Stretching

Aggressive skating by one forward toward the offensive blue line will force the opposition to have to cover them. This will leave more space for the attack, either through a rush or a pass. A quick pass to the stretch skater can result in a break-away.

Stretching is effective when done by the forward who is farthest up ice and on the same side as the puck or from the other side of the ice across the offensive blue towards the puck.

Moving to Space

All players should be trained to be constantly aware of open space and to move to that area when there is a chance of receiving a pass and in a sudden, explosive movement, ready for the pass.

Using the Mid-Lane

Moving the puck up the ice through the middle gives more options to the puck carrier as they approach the blue line. A wide pass to a breaking teammate, suddenly skating wide around the defense, or dumping the puck into the corner, are all practicable options.

The Half Zone Rule

One defenseman should always try to be involved in the attack by staying within one half zone of the puck and being ready to create a four-man attack when the opportunity is there.

Defense Regroup

When a defenseman retrieves the puck near their blue line they have many options. They can start a rush forward, move towards the middle of the ice, make a pass to any of the forwards or pass to their defense partner opening up these attack options for them. Any of these options will allow a quick attack by four players.

It should be remembered that there should only be one defense to defense pass before the puck moves up the ice.

Defensive Zone

Escapes

Rather than getting rid of the puck under pressure, the defense should be encouraged to protect the puck and escape the checker. An evasive puck control move, such as tight turns, taking a hit and spinning away, using the net to shake off the checker, should be taught.

Defense behind the Net

The defenseman, in control of the puck, stops behind the net with the puck on the forehand just outside the net, ready to pass immediately. The players should also make a fake to move the checker enough to open up a passing lane.

Stretching, Screening, Moving to Space

All those moves described in the Neutral Zone offence apply equally in the Defensive Zone, but only when the puck is clearly in control and no real danger of a turnover.

Puck around the Boards

Depending on the checking pressure, four options are available when the puck is along the boards:

- stopping and protecting the puck with the skates,
- chipping it past the pinching defensemen,
- taking the puck on the stick then moving with it or passing it.
- Reversing the puck and shooting around the boards to the other side of the ice

All four options require the player to keep their eyes on the puck.