

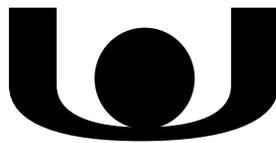
Hockey Workbook

**Mini-Mites, Mites and Squirts
2006 Edition**

The Sports Esteem Guide for Parents and Players

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Edited by: Jeff Farris



www.sportsestem.com

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Foreword

The 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, Utah were truly a celebration of what hockey is all about. The pure joy in the player's eyes and the enthusiasm, passion, and pride for their country that shone through were indeed something special. This is what we hope to see in our children as they develop in their journey as hockey players.

The goal of parents and coaches should be to give each child the best chance to participate, have fun, and succeed at the game. Each child should have the chance to learn the necessary skills and the opportunity to achieve a sense of accomplishment.

If these goals are met, children will develop a passion for the game, enthusiasm for their team, and appreciation of the great values that hockey instills. Children learn best when they are encouraged by their parents and by their coaches, and when they are immersed in a positive and enthusiastic environment .

As adults, we should feel immense pride knowing that we serve as role models for our children. We should embrace this opportunity to provide the guidance and leadership that allow our children to develop into champions both on and off the ice.

I encourage parents and coaches to use this workbook and play an active role in the development of their young hockey players. This workbook will serve as a wonderful resource to assist parents and children in their journey. It is also an ideal format for parents, children and coaches to follow in order to work together effectively.

It is not easy being a great hockey mom or dad or a terrific coach. Nor is it easy for our children. However, with the right perspective, each of us has the opportunity to help make participating in the game of hockey an experience our children will always cherish and remember.

Michael Pelino

Associate Coach, Canada's National Men's and Women's Teams
Assistant Coach, Canada's 2002 Men's Olympic Team





How to Use This Book

Hockey has a lot to offer kids. It helps them develop better self-confidence and teaches them valuable lessons they can use in all areas of their lives. Whether or not a child is destined for the NHL, hockey helps build better kids.

This is a workbook for both parents and players. With limited practice and game time each week, it is often very difficult for a coach to spend quality time with every player. This workbook helps parents talk to their child about hockey. It explains many key concepts for players that can greatly improve their game. Each lesson is laid out simply. They can be done on the way to games or in the locker room just before face-off. It contains lessons broken into worksheets of various topics. Each worksheet can have up to four parts:

Worksheet Contents

- Discussion – A general overview of the subject and diagrams as required. Parents should read this section with their child.
- Key Points for Parents – A quick summary of the information from a parent’s perspective.
- Key Points for Players – A quick summary of the information from a player’s perspective. These points can be used just before game time as a reminder.
- Exercises – Assignments or questions for the player to answer with the help of his parent. Players should mark the answers to each question. Answers to the exercises along with additional discussion can be found at the Sports Esteem web site at: www.sportsesteem.com.

The worksheets are organized by topic, not in suggested work order. Parents should consult with coaches to determine the best order for their team. Worksheets should be spread out over the course of a season with no more than two or three worksheets completed each week.



For reference and progress tracking, the back of this book contains:

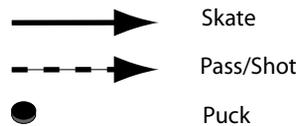
**Workbook
Extras**

- Blank drill diagrams
- Player history worksheets
- Glossary of some common hockey terms

At the end of a full season, this workbook should contain information that can continue to serve as a reference, as well as a scrapbook of player development.

Diagramming

There are many diagrams throughout this workbook. The symbols used are:



A player's team is always shown in black. Opposing teams are shown in gray.

Editorial Note

The use of "he" or "his" throughout this book does not denote that it is written strictly for male players. This was done only to avoid more cumbersome wording such as "he/she" or "his/her" which would distract from the primary focus of this book – instruction and explanation.



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GETTING STARTED



Getting Started

Players at the mini-mite, mite and squirt levels are just beginning their physical development. Muscle mass and heart and lung capacities are not fully developed until after puberty. Therefore, playing sports at early ages is more about building confidence and basic coordination than it is about developing high school or college athletes. Specialization in any sport typically is difficult until after the age of twelve. Before then, a diversity of positive sports experiences is recommended.

A study conducted at Michigan State University of over 10,000 students found that only about half of the kids playing sports at age 10 were still playing sports at age 18. Among the reasons cited for this high dropout rate were:

Sports Dropout Reasons

- Lost interest
- Not fun
- Not enough time
- Too much pressure
- Overemphasis on winning

Hockey is not a sport that can be mastered quickly. The skills and understanding that are required to play hockey take many years of training and study. Attempts to help kids master the sport too quickly, especially at early ages, often lead to frustration for both parent and player. Kids must continue to love the game during this learning process so they will continue focusing their energies on its mastery.

There is more to hockey than just working the puck. At early ages, it is important for players to be initiated to all aspects of the sport, including sportsmanship, nutrition and exercise as well as skills and team strategies.

At all ages, whether mini-mite or professional, hockey is essentially the same game played at different levels of skill and sophistication. The concepts taught at the earliest age are progressively built upon throughout years of learning. From the beginning, fundamentals can be emphasized that set the stage for enhanced performance later. These fundamentals include:

Fundamental Concepts

- Developing a good attitude for hard work and learning
- Developing good habits
- Developing an understanding of team sports



- Enjoying the sport
- Gaining confidence
- Exposure to a diversity of skills through hockey and other sports

These fundamentals are applied in terms of individual skills, individual strategies and then team strategies. This workbook provides worksheets to cover these areas organized in the following sections:

Preparation
Position
Attitude
Skills
Strategies

Starting in the Preparation section, players learn the basics of sports participation. Then, in the Position section, players learn their role as a team member. In the Attitude and Skills sections, players learn how to develop their own mental and physical skills to succeed on the ice. In Strategies, players learn how to react in certain game time situations. There is no need to master one area before moving forward and it is often helpful for players to move around between areas to help develop their confidence and understanding. Building physical skills takes time. Helping young players develop in several areas can give them a sense of accomplishment while they are still working on mastering basic skills.

Parental Involvement

Quite simply, parents are their child's hockey training manager. They oversee their child's overall progress and make sure that their child is:

Parental Checklist

- Having fun
- Properly equipped
- Receiving good training and team experiences
- Understanding the sport
- Approaching practice and games with the right attitude
- Not overdoing
- Learning life lessons

Although there are many people who help a child learn the sport of hockey, only parents can put everything in perspective. While on-ice skills are important, a child's success at hockey is ultimately determined by the values taught and emphasized by parents and then manifested as on-ice commitments.

Finally, parents must help kids "discover" hockey for themselves. Parents can't make children learn something. They can only show them until they "discover" it for themselves. As children learn and become better hockey players, their self confidence improves and carries over into other areas of their lives. While most young players may not have a future NHL career ahead of them, the lessons they learn and the confidence they build will help them become better adults.



Lessons From Hockey

Discussion

Hockey covers many areas and involves working with a variety of people. Thus, playing hockey can often help teach players how to handle other things that happen outside of the sport. Some life lessons learned from hockey include:

Life Lessons from Hockey

- Respecting others (including opponents)
- Self-discipline
- Fair play
- Being a good winner
- Being a good loser
- Teamwork and trust
- Overcoming challenges and frustrations
- Learning to deal with constructive criticism
- Responding positively to disappointments
- Health and physical fitness
- Pride of accomplishment
- Taking responsibility for mistakes
- Leadership
- Making friends
- Learning to resolve conflicts
- Learning to deal with stress
- Goal setting
- Following rules

These lessons can not only be applied on the ice but also as a family member, student, friend and citizen.

Key Points for Parents

- You are going to spend a lot of time with your child taking him to and from practice and games, and helping him dress and undress. This time is positive time for both parents and kids to discuss not only hockey but also the lessons learned from hockey. While the chances of developing the next NHL star are slim, the chances of developing a better kid are 100%.



Key Points for Players

- Attitudes that make you a better hockey player also make you a better person.

Exercises

1. Choose five lessons from the list on the previous page and write them down below. Talk about what each means and how each applies to other areas of life. Then, place a checkmark under each role to which the lesson could apply.

Lessons	Hockey Player	Family Member	Student	Friend	Citizen
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					

2. List three things that you can do or discuss while driving to and from hockey games that you both would enjoy (hockey-related or not).



Coach & Team Selection

Discussion

Through years of hockey, a player is exposed to many different types of coaches and coaching styles. All coaches have different ways of teaching and different parts of the game they like to teach. The more coaches that a player has, the more he learns different parts of the game. Some coaches stress the basics, while others focus more on plays. Over time these differences are beneficial to a player's development.

During beginning levels of hockey, players need those coaches who are coaching to teach instead of those coaching to win. They need coaches who play all players consistently regardless of what is happening in the game. Before joining a team, both parent and player should take time to learn who the coach is and understand the coach's approach to the game. Things to ask the coach include:

Coach Questions

- How much emphasis is there on skills development?
- What is the time commitment for practices, games and travel?
- How do you schedule shifts in a game?
- What is your emphasis on winning games?

Young players may not know if their team won but they know if they played well and had fun. The right kind of coach during a player's first few seasons can greatly improve a player's love of the game.

To give kids the best chance to participate with other kids of a similar age and skill level, different team levels are established. Team classifications by age are:

Age Classifications

- Mini-mite – Ages 6 and under
- Mite – Ages 6, 7 and 8
- Squirt – Ages 9 and 10
- PeeWee – Ages 11 and 12
- Bantam – Ages 13 and 14
- Midget – Ages 15 through 18



Team classifications by skill are:

**Skill
Classifications**

- House – Generally takes all kids that sign up on a first-come, first-in space available basis.
- Select – Requires tryouts and generally plays other select teams from the same area.
- Travel – Requires tryouts and generally plays travel teams from other cities.
- Juniors – For ages 15-21, juniors is the highest level of non-professional play outside of college. There are different levels of teams within juniors.

Select and travel teams can provide more ice time for practices and games and offer a more competitive level of play with more emphasis on winning. A player's skills can develop equally well on a house, select or travel team when the player has a positive attitude.

Key Points for Parents

- Take time to talk with the coach and learn his approach to the game. Don't rely on other parents comments.
- Travel teams often require a huge commitment of time and money especially for travel to and from games. Games may be played out of state requiring a whole weekend. Each family must decide whether this time commitment is appropriate. Talk with the travel team coach about the team's schedule of games and tournaments, and learn in advance what you are committing your family to.

Key Points for Players

- Always work to improve your basic skills such as skating, shooting and position play.
- As you get older and your play improves, you have chances to move up to teams of older kids and/or teams with better-skilled players.
- If you choose to try out for a select or travel team, understand how this affects time you can spend with friends and on other activities.



Exercises

1. Check off the attributes that you would most like to have in your coach.
 - Focuses on learning over winning
 - Makes practices and games fun
 - Challenges players to improve their skills
 - Is well organized and runs good practices
 - Gives positive feedback along with corrections
 - Plays all players an equal amount of time
2. Write down the team level you are playing on now and at which team level you will be playing next based on your age.

Current Team Level (mini-mite, mite, squirt)

Next Team Level (mini-mite, mite, squirt, peewee)





Trying out for Select Teams

Discussion

House teams often have players just starting to skate or play hockey. Select teams are usually made up of players who demonstrate more experience and knowledge of the basic skills. Grouping similarly skilled players in teams and in competition gives players the opportunity for more quality practice time and more competitive play.

During tryouts, coaches evaluate a variety of things. It may not always be obvious why certain players make it and others don't. Generally, coaches are trying to pick the kids who:

Select Team Checklist

- Demonstrate good attitude and leadership on and off the ice
- Demonstrate the ability to listen
- Demonstrate the ability to work hard
- Demonstrate good fundamental skills (stance, stride, speed, stick handling)
- Demonstrate good strategy (know when to pass, how to play zones, think creatively)
- Demonstrate good position knowledge
- Match a need they have on the team since teams need a variety of skills. For example, even though there may be several good centers, they may only need a defenseman.

Although making a select team is always gratifying, not making a team should be kept in perspective. Trying out for a team takes courage and a player should be proud of their attempt. Becoming a better player takes time. Tryouts for a select team are simply a way to measure progress. Players with a good attitude continue to work on their game no matter which team they play for.

Key Points for Parents

- Kids should understand all positions. This gives them flexibility when trying out.
- The best preparation for tryouts is knowledge about hockey and hard work at practices and games. It isn't possible through one private lesson or even a single training camp for players to develop the necessary skills to ensure a place on the team.



Key Points for Players

- During tryouts, the player skating next to you is your competition but you must work with him to show you can work as a team player.
- The best preparation for a tryout is having a good attitude and putting maximum effort into practices.
- Remember how important good rest and nutrition are to a successful tryout.

Exercises

1. Visit team tryouts in advance of your own. Watch various players and pick the ones that you would want on your team. Remember to be sensitive to others who may overhear your comments.
2. List three things that you saw in other players that would make you want to include them on your team.

3. Check each statement that applies. The more statements you check the more you might enjoy trying out for a select or travel team.
 - I want to be challenged to improve my hockey skills.
 - I want to play with other kids who are as good as or better than I am.
 - If I don't make a select team, this will encourage me to try harder on my house team.
 - I am prepared to work hard to improve my game.
 - My parents and I are willing to devote more time and travel to improve my game.
 - I will listen to coaches and parents to help me improve.



4. Calculate the time you will spend in an average week at practices, games, private instruction and open hockey.

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Saturday _____

Sunday _____





Game Time (for Parents)

Discussion

Parents are a child's ultimate role model. Children look to parents as models for how to behave and react. If parents communicate that it is all about winning, children believe that too. Parents must remember that one game is not a life-altering event. Learning how to play hockey is a journey that should be recognized and rewarded. The more children enjoy hockey, the harder they work at it.

Each game should be kept in perspective. This means:

Game Perspective

- Emphasizing positive plays – Parents should not make the primary focus of their conversations about what was done wrong. Parents should encourage players by pointing out what they are doing well and making progress on and surround any criticism with positive comments.
- Emphasizing a positive attitude – The most important thing is for a child to be receptive to learning and hard work. With a good attitude there won't be anything that can't be improved. Every child progresses at his own pace. A good attitude and hard work improves skills.
- Emphasizing effort – Skills come with time. Parents should expect their child to improve as he gains confidence about his role and abilities. However, all of this takes time and is not always constantly improving. Setbacks are a normal part of the learning cycle.
- Emphasizing a positive contribution to the team – Parents should remind their child to help the team with unselfish play and reinforce the importance of team contribution. This keeps players focused on all areas of their game, not just scoring goals.

During the game, parents can't make plays for their children and can't motivate them to try harder. Children have to do that for themselves. However, before and after the game, parents can create an atmosphere that helps young players motivate themselves and inspires them to try their hardest. Enthusiasm is contagious. When it comes to motivation, love for the game transcends all.



Team Participation

In addition to helping their own child, parents also have other opportunities to help the team. The teams that are fun are the ones where parents help the coach in positive ways and provide the coach with more time to focus on training.

Primarily, parents should support the coach and team decisions. However, parents can also fill other roles including:

Parental Team Roles

- Helping coach
- Keeping statistics
- Arranging and providing snacks
- Raising funds (for trophies, travel, etc.)
- Making videos
- Creating photos albums
- Calling the team about special events
- Arranging trophies and recognitions
- Planning and coordinating mid-season or end-of-season parties

Children react strongly to comments made by their parents. An inappropriate comment can damage a child's effort and team relationships. Parents should pay special attention to what is said and discussed in front of their child:

Parental Discussion Concerns

- Don't discuss other parents or the referees in negative ways.
- Don't argue with other parents, referees or coaches.
- Don't discuss the coach's negatives.
- Don't blame a loss on a particular player or attribute a win to a single player. Teams win and lose as a team, not as individuals.
- Don't discuss the amount of ice time or shifts allocated to players. Shifts are often determined by play on the ice, player attendance and many other factors.
- Don't discuss position choice – good coaches routinely give all players a chance to experience all positions. At younger ages, it is just too early to type a player into a particular role.
- Don't bang the glass and yell. Show positive ways to cheer player and team accomplishments.



Key Points for Parents

Know That:

- Kids are going to have bad games just like you have bad days.
- It is okay if your child falls down or loses the puck.

Do:

- Do phone the coach if you can't make the game. Coaches may not have time to check email before a game.
- Do arrive early for games so that your child can be completely dressed before any coaching discussions in the locker room. This gives the coach time to make lineup changes based on attendance.
- Do encourage fun, hard work and team play.
- Do have your kids carry their own equipment and dress themselves as much as possible.
- Do demonstrate good sportsmanship – appreciate that all the kids are trying hard and behave toward them as you want others to behave toward your child. Say positive things about the other team's players.

Don't:

- Don't correct your child on the ice – leave that to the coaches during the game.
- Don't try to resolve frustrating issues with the coaches or other parents right after the game. Wait 24 hours to let things cool down and then call when your child cannot hear the conversation.
- Don't take your child's play as a measure of your parenting or instructing skills.
- Don't pay for a goal or assist. If you must reward your child, base it on something more general like team contribution. Paying for goals or assists often just motivates your child to stand in front of the net waiting for an easy goal.
- Don't go on the bench during practices, games and camp instruction – allow independence.



Exercises

1. List two things that bother you when watching other parents.

2. List two ideas that would help make your team more fun.

3. List two ways your child can help or contribute to a team atmosphere.





PREPARATION



Preparation

A player's level of performance and attitude before a practice or a game is often shaped hours, days or even weeks before. Because there is much to the game, getting a player ready in equipment, body and attitude must be more than a casual thought.

In the pros, off-ice training is given more attention than on-ice training, especially in preseason. Getting a player ready physically for a game takes a lot of work. While younger players are too young for weight lifting and other strenuous exercises, they can make good progress on their stamina and ability to play hard for a full game. Nutrition and rest are critical parts of a younger player's game because they are already using so much energy for normal play and growth.

Right before a practice or game, players must make sure they are ready to play. Key items before a practice or game include:

Game or Practice Checklist

- Focus – Don't choose the minutes before a game to discuss other problems such as bad grades.
- Rest – Be rested and capable of maximum physical effort.
- Energy – Have fuel (food) and water for efforts.
- Equipment – Have all the equipment in good shape.
- Role – Know the role to play and review how to play position.

Getting ready to play hockey is not something to worry about just thirty minutes before a game. In order to be effective, players must adopt a healthy lifestyle that emphasizes good nutrition, exercise and mental preparation.





Equipment Selection

Discussion

Hockey is a very physically intensive sport. Collisions with other players, the boards and the ice are all a part of the game. However, proper equipment greatly minimizes the risks of injury. A player's equipment includes:

Equipment Checklist

- Hockey Bag
- Helmet
- Neck Guard
- Jersey
- Mouth Guard
- Shoulder Pads
- Elbow Pads
- Hockey Gloves
- Jock Strap (boys)
- Pelvic Protector (girls)
- Hockey Pants and Belt or Suspenders
- Garter Belt / Hockey Shorts
- Shin Guards
- Hockey Socks
- Skate Socks (feet)
- Skates
- Skate Guards
- Stick
- Repair Kit
- Water Bottle

For off-ice drills, in addition to appropriate shoes and clothing, players should also have:

Off-ice Checklist

- Street Pucks
- Hard Plastic Balls (Hockey Balls)
- Cones
- Stick only for off-ice use
- Hockey Gloves



Since players may often play other positions besides goalie, goalies will require all the equipment above and also:

**Goalie
Checklist**

- Goalie Pads
- Blocker (stick hand) Glove
- Goalie (catching) Glove
- Goalie Stick
- Goalie Helmet or Throat Protector
- Chest Protector
- Goalie Skates (optional)

The most important things to consider when purchasing hockey equipment are:

**Equipment
Considerations**

- Fit
- Protection
- Mobility
- Comfort
- Durability
- Weight
- Cost
- CSA approved.

It doesn't matter if the equipment is used or new as long as it is in good condition.

Sticks

Hockey sticks are available for right-handed or left-handed players in a wide variety of sizes, lengths, stick flex and curvatures. The length of the stick is cut down to match the height of the player. Curved stick blades and flexible shafts are for more advanced players. Beginning players should use a stick that fits their hands and has very little curvature to enable them to master both their forehand and backhand shots and passes. Cheaper sticks are just as functional as more expensive sticks and younger players aren't strong enough to take advantage of more flexible shafts. Players need a different stick for off-ice practice since off-ice activity is very hard on sticks.





Stick Sizing

When sizing the stick to the player, don't cut the stick too long and wait for the player to grow into it. A proper length is essential for proper stick handling. To measure the stick properly, place the stick on the ground in front of the player with the player in his or her bare feet. Place the stick on its toe and measure to the child's nose. Mark the stick at nose level and cut off any excess.

Skates

Skates should be comfortable and provide good support for the ankle. Hockey skates are usually one to one and one-half sizes smaller than street shoes. Hockey skates that are too large cannot give the foot good support. When laced, the skate should not slip around any on the foot.

Care must be taken with the skate blade. The blade on the skate is very sharp. Skate guards are used to protect the blade from nicks but also to protect from injuries.

Key Points for Parents

- Good equipment selection takes time. Your child must feel comfortable in the equipment and it must fit properly.
- Have someone knowledgeable help with the equipment fitting.

Key Points for Players

- Hockey equipment is not just for games or team practices. Any time you are on the ice working on your hockey skills, you should wear all of your equipment.
- Your skates are very sharp and can be dangerous. When you have your skates on, be very careful where you step.

Exercises

1. Make your own list of hockey equipment and place it in your bag to check when packing your gear before every game or practice.





Taping the Stick

Discussion

A player's stick is often his most uniquely personal piece of equipment. Sticks come in standard sizes and must be cut down and taped before they become custom to a specific player.

Taping a stick should be done with cloth hockey tape that is available where the stick is purchased. Taping a stick can help:

Taping Benefits

- Control the puck while stick handling
- Keep hands from slipping off the end of the stick
- Provide a better grip when shooting, stick handling, stick checking or picking the stick up off the ice.

The blade is taped to help cushion the puck and keep it on the blade while carrying the puck down the ice. Some players prefer white tape on the blade to help them see the puck better. Other players prefer black tape to try to hide the puck from their opponents. Players should stay with either white or black tape for their blade. Taping from the heel to the toe helps hold the puck better on the blade.

The handle is taped to provide a better grip and a knob is created that keeps the hand from slipping off the end of the shaft and makes it easier to pick the stick up when dropped on the ice. The use of color here is strictly a personal preference.

Some players like to tape down the shaft where they place their lower hand. Tape on the middle of the shaft can interfere with sliding the down hand up and down and should only be used if gripping is a problem.

Key Points for Players

- Pick colors that you like or mix them to make it more personal. If your stick is in a big pile of sticks, your taping choice can help you quickly identify your stick.
- Take care of your stick and it will take care of you.



Exercises

1. Using cloth-covered hockey tape, twist a length of tape into a string. Starting at the end of the handle, wrap it down the handle to form a raised grip. (Figure 1)
2. Place one end of tape over the very end of the shaft. Then, wrap several bands of tape at the very end of the stick to form the knob. Don't make the knob too big or it may cause problems controlling the stick. (Figure 2)
3. Now wrap the tape diagonally down the shaft about 6-8 inches. Keep the tape as tight as possible to avoid tape seams. (Figure 3)

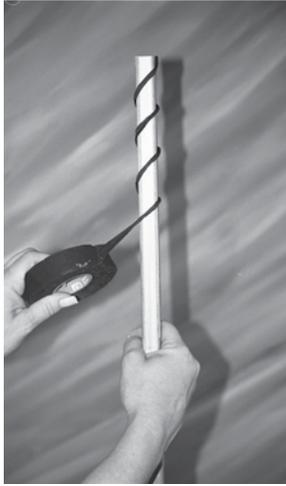


Figure 1 - Grip



Figure 2 - Knob



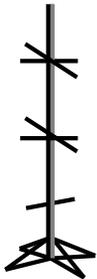
Figure 3 - Cover

4. For the blade, wrap the tape diagonally across the blade. Like the shaft, keep the tape as tight as possible to avoid tape seams.

Equipment Maintenance

Discussion

Young players often outgrow their equipment long before it wears out. However, proper care of the equipment helps make sure that it continues to provide safety in case of an accident and doesn't interfere with making plays.



Hockey
Tree

The most common complaint with hockey equipment is that it can smell bad after usage. Just like clothes left in the washing machine, wet hockey equipment starts to mildew and smell. The easiest fix for this is simply to air the equipment out after every game and let it dry properly. Hockey trees are poles on a stand that help hold the equipment and let it air out properly.

When putting on each piece of equipment, players and parents should inspect it to make sure that:

Equipment Maintenance Checklist

- The equipment still fits
- There are no loose screws on the helmet
- There are no cracks
- There is no rust on rivets
- All clasps are working
- Velcro is still holding well
- All pads are intact and laced as needed.

Some equipment, like helmets and hockey pants can be adjusted to compensate for growth. Other pieces must be replaced.

A basic repair kit kept in the hockey bag can help solve problems when they are most likely to occur -- two minutes before game time. Handy items to have are:

Repair Kit

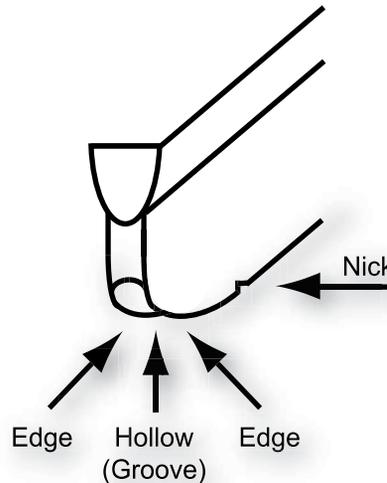
- Extra Laces
- Helmet Screws
- Screwdriver
- Scissors
- Tape
- Towel
- Practice Puck.

Skate Sharpening

In order for the skates to grip (cut into) the ice properly especially while turning, they should be properly sharpened. Skate blades have edges that cut into the



ice and help a skater stay upright while turning. If the edges are nicked, a skater has difficulty making turns and going full speed.



Skate Blade (Front View)

The amount of blade sharpness and hollow are often a matter of skater preference. Sharper blades have a deeper groove in the blade that helps with pushing off, stopping, changing direction, pivoting and turning. However, if a blade is too sharp, a player can have problems gliding and stopping as the overly sharp blade tries to grab the ice. Sharper blades are more dangerous and may also be damaged more easily.

Examining Skates

To see if a skate needs sharpening, hold it sideways up to the light so that only one edge is between the light source and your eye. Look for any nicks along the blade. Flip the skate over and examine the other edge in the same way. Then, look lengthwise down the blade to make sure the edges are level. If you have trouble, place a dime on the edges of the blade and make sure it lies flat. If there are no nicks and the edges are level, then the blade does not need sharpening.

Key Points for Parents

- Don't let your child skate with the wrong sized equipment; make sure that it continues to fit properly.
- Replace any problem equipment immediately.
- Make sure skates are always sharp.
- Use skate guards to protect the blade and guard against injuries.

Key Points for Players

- Always wipe down your skates after use and air out your hockey gear.

Exercises

1. Inspect your equipment for any cracks or loose screws.
2. Inspect your equipment for loose attachments or threads.
3. Examine your skate blades and see if they need sharpening. Check for nicks, rust and uneven edges.
4. List two things you could do to make sure you are safe with the skate edges.





Rules Overview

Discussion

Hockey has rules to let everyone know in advance how to play the game. Game officials make sure the game is played fairly. Coaches provide guidance and show leadership in applying these rules. The officials in a game include:

Game Officials

- Referee – Responsible for general supervision of the game;
- Linesman – Determines any infractions of the rules concerning off-side play at the blue lines or center line, or any icing violations;
- Scorer and/or Timekeeper – Keeps records of the game and tracks game time.

The game is divided into three periods. Play begins with a face-off and continues either until the end of the period or until an off-sides, icing or penalty is called. On some mini-mite teams, play is divided into two minute shifts to allow an orderly change of players.

In a game, the most common rules called by the officials are:

Common Rules

- Off-sides – Occurs when a player crosses the opposing team's blue line (into the offensive zone) before the puck. The linesman at the blue line sticks his arm straight up in the air to indicate that an off-sides will be called if the team continues to try to play the puck and doesn't clear the zone. Off-sides results in a face-off in the neutral zone.
- Icing – Occurs when a player shoots a puck before the center line and it proceeds untouched past the goal line at the opposing end of the ice. Icing is not called if the goalie plays or attempts to play the puck or if a player from the team that iced the puck reaches the puck first. Icing results in face-off in the defensive zone of the team which iced the puck.
- Two Line Passes – Occurs when a player passes to a teammate across two lines such as a blue line and the center line. Two line passes result in a face-off.

In mini-mites, the first two may not be called to reduce the number of face-offs and allow players more playing time.



Key Points for Players

- Officials are there to make sure the game is played fairly and by the rules. Always treat them with respect even when you don't agree with their decisions.
- Remember that it is hard for one pair of eyes to see everything that happens on the ice.

Exercises

1. Before playing your first time, watch a full game at the same age level as your team. Watch how the game is played and how the rules are applied.
2. If you are playing in the U.S., many of the leagues follow the rules set out by USA Hockey. Visit their site at: www.usahockey.com

or

If you are playing in Canada, many of the leagues follow the rules set out by Hockey Canada. Visit their site at: www.hockeycanada.ca.



Penalties

Discussion

When a player does something on the ice that could injure another player or unfairly interferes with another player, he is given a penalty by the referee. For minor penalties, the penalized player must then serve two minutes in the penalty box. During this time his team has one less man on the ice. Major penalties could call for more minutes in the penalty box or ejection from the game. Common minor penalties in youth hockey include:

Common Penalties

- Checking – A checking penalty is given when a player hits another player with his body with the intent of knocking him down or makes no effort to avoid the other player. Accidental collisions are not called.
- Tripping – A tripping penalty is given when a player places his stick, foot, arm, hand or elbow in such a manner that it shall cause his opponent to trip or fall. This penalty is not called when two players collide accidentally and one falls down.
- Holding – A holding penalty is given when a player holds an opponent with his hands or his stick.
- Hooking – A hooking penalty is given when a player uses his stick to wrap around another player and slow him down.

Key Points for Parents

- Penalties are there for safety and to teach kids aggressive but controlled play.
- Let your child handle their own penalties, both those that they commit and those committed against them.

Key Points for Players

- Penalties are often committed when players are outworked by someone on the other team, are out of position or get overly aggressive. Skating fast, staying in position and working hard and smart eliminate most penalties.



Exercises

1. On the Internet, look up and learn the referee's signals for the penalties listed in the discussion. The web site: www.hockeyreferees.com is a good source.

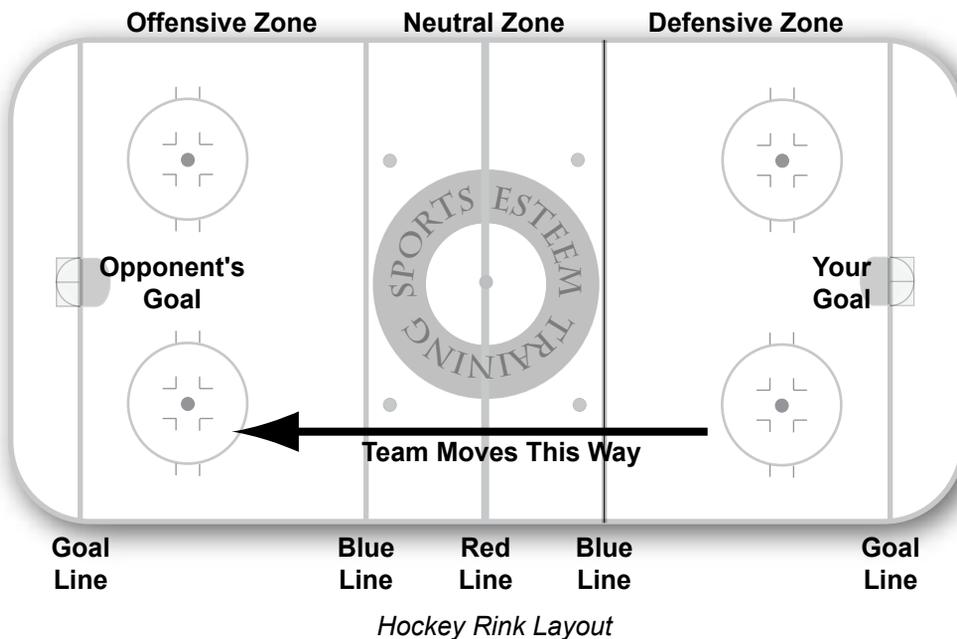


Hockey Rinks

Discussion

Hockey rinks come in a variety of sizes. The most common size of a hockey rink in North America is 200 feet long by 100 feet wide. Many ice rinks are 200 feet long by 85 feet wide. Ice rinks used for invitational tournaments, regional playoffs and national championships should not be smaller than 185 feet long by 85 feet wide.

The boards that surround an ice rink are approximately 42" above the ice with glass continuing upward beyond that. Goals are six feet wide by four feet high.



Zones

The hockey rink can be thought of as three separate zones separated by the blue lines on the ice. The three zones are:

Hockey Zones

- Defensive Zone – The defensive zone is the area behind the blue line where the goal (and goalie) is.
- Offensive Zone – The offensive zone is the area behind the blue line where the opponent's goal (and goalie) is.
- Neutral Zone – The neutral zone is the area in between the blue lines.

Key Points for Players

- The offensive zone is where you score.
- The defensive zone is where you protect the net and regain control of the puck.
- The neutral zone is where you try to get and/or keep control of the puck in order to start an offensive attack or to prepare to start defending your zone.

Exercises

1. Below, draw a hockey rink and mark the three zones. Mark your goalie's position and draw an arrow pointing to the net where you want to score goals.



2. Write down the size of the hockey rink where you normally play.

3. After getting permission, use masking tape to mark a goal of the correct height and width on an outside wall where you can practice taking shots with street pucks or tennis balls.



Nutrition

Discussion

During a game, a player needs lots of energy. To produce this energy, the body needs good food. Eating right is essential to play hard for all three periods. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, young players should always eat healthy foods like:

Good Foods

- Pasta (spaghetti or cheese and macaroni)
- Sandwich
- Bagel
- Fruit (bananas or raisins)
- Rice
- Lean meat
- Oatmeal or cereal
- Cheese and crackers

Although these foods are all good for producing energy, too much of a good thing can make a player feel sluggish during a game. Players should avoid eating big meals too close to game time. To be effective, larger meals should be eaten at least six hours before a game to allow time for digestion. Within two hours of a game, players should have just a light snack.

Some foods are not as good for producing energy. Other foods are harder for the body to convert to energy or can make players nauseous when they are followed by lots of physical activity. At least six hours before a game, players should try to avoid:

Foods to Avoid Before Games

- Fatty, fried or greasy foods
- Dairy products such as milk and ice cream
- Citrus fruits
- Chocolates and candy bars

During and after the game, players should drink water to replace that lost to perspiration. Then, they should eat healthy to replace the energy used on the ice. If the player is feeling light-headed, some fruit juice can help or the player may need to eat closer to game time.



Key Points for Parents

- A nutritious and balanced diet for young players is essential to their ability to perform on the ice.
- Keep track of the food and the time your child eats before a game and observe his energy level during the game. Monitor this over a season to determine the best foods and times.

Key Points for Players

- Eating the right kinds of food gives you energy. Start thinking about what you eat the night before a game or practice.

Exercises

1. List three different meals that you like which would be good to eat the night before a game:

2. List three different kinds of light snacks that you like which would be good to eat a few hours before a game:

3. Check the items your body needs after practice or a game.

- Water
- Candy bar
- Chips
- Healthy foods



4. List a meal that you should eat on a game day.

5. List food that would be good after a game.





Warm Ups and Stretching

Discussion

Although young players are naturally flexible, stretching before a game enables them to play their best. Stretching improves flexibility, which helps with stride and speed. Muscles that are not flexible get tired more quickly and are more easily injured. Without proper stretching, players start the game slowly.

Warm ups are necessary to prepare the muscles for stretching. Stretching makes the muscles flexible and prepares them for hard work. Proper warm up and stretching helps avoid cramps and muscle damage. Hard exercise, like chasing a puck, when the muscles are not ready is difficult and can cause pain.

Warm Ups

Warming up before stretching usually takes five to ten minutes of light exercise such as jogging or running in place. Some parts of the muscles cannot be fully stretched until they are warmed up.

Stretching

Many muscles are used in a hockey game and stretching should help prepare all of them. It takes several different stretching exercises to get all muscles ready. Players should perform as many of these stretching exercises as possible before a practice or game. Each stretch should be held for 30 seconds.

1)



Shoulder & Chest Stretch

- Interlock hands from behind
- Extend arms
- Keep the head and neck relaxed

2)



Shoulder Stretch

- Grasp elbow with opposite hand
- Keep neck relaxed
- Pull slightly to stretch
- Repeat for other arm

3)



Hamstring Stretch

- Place heels together and toes together
- Keep head and neck relaxed
- Don't lock knees
- Slowly bend over and try to touch toes

4)



Calf and Ankle Stretch

- Place outstretched hands on wall
- Keep feet shoulder width apart with the toes pointing forward
- Take one step back with one leg
- Keep back leg straight
- Keep chest and head up
- Repeat for other leg

5)



Lower Back Stretch

- Bring heels toward body
- Spread knees and point outward at 45 degrees
- Extend arms and lean forward
- Keep head up

6)



Groin Stretch

- Keep chest and head up
- Place heels together and toes together
- Bring feet toward body
- Grab ankles with hands
- Place elbows on knees
- Push down slightly with elbows

7)



Torso and Hip Stretch

- Keep left leg straight
- Cross over with right foot and place flat
- Support the body with the right arm
- Use the left elbow to push against right knee
- Repeat for other leg



8)

**Hamstring Stretch**

- Keep chest and head up
- Spread feet apart
- Grab one foot with both hands
- Bend over trying to get chest to leg
- Repeat for the other leg

9)

**Hamstring and Groin Stretch**

- Keep chest and head up
- Spread feet apart
- Grab feet with hands
- Bend over trying to get chest to floor

10)

**Thigh Stretch**

- Lay on side and use arm for support
- Grasp ankle of leg
- Gently bring back
- Repeat for other leg

11)

**Hip Stretch**

- Stand with feet shoulder width apart and toes pointing forward
- Take one long step forward with one leg
- Place forward foot flat on the floor
- Slowly lower body toward floor
- Use hands on knee to support body
- Keep head and chest up
- Repeat for other leg

Mental Preparation

Stretching is also a good time to get mentally ready for the game. Players should start thinking about how fast or hard they are going to play and areas of their game on which they want to focus. Players should see themselves making good passes, working with teammates and hitting the net with every shot.



Key Points for Parents

- Encourage warm ups and stretching before your child plays hockey or participates in other sporting activities.

Key Points for Players

- Before a game, get your mind and body ready for physical effort.
- Warm up then stretch before games and practices so that you can play your best.
- Warm ups are an important part of being a good hockey player and should always be part of a pre-game routine.

Exercises

1. List three things you should think about during stretching and warm ups:

2. Proper stretching and warm ups are also a good idea before other sports activities. List three things you could do to better prepare you for a soccer game:

3. List five stretches you could do before a game:



Off-Ice Conditioning & Stamina

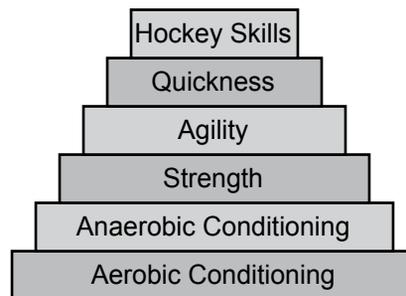
Discussion

Ice hockey is very physically demanding and tests a player's stamina. It requires a player to be in good health, be able to work very hard for short periods of time (anaerobic conditioning) and be able to recover quickly from physical activity (aerobic conditioning). In addition, strength, quickness and agility are also desirable. Players must learn to develop their physical abilities in all areas.

It is not uncommon for players to feel tired during or after a game. Feeling tired is normal and players can overcome much of their tired feeling by focusing their mind on the game and ignoring the fatigue. However, if players are feeling pain they should talk to their coach or parents about it.



Think of building stamina as fighting the Stamina Monster. The more you work, the stronger you become and the weaker it becomes.



Physical Foundations for Hockey Skills

The diagram above shows the foundations for physical development. Without a good aerobic conditioning base, it is difficult to adequately develop the other areas. Each layer builds the necessary physical abilities to improve performance at the next level.

All the skills such as skating and stick handling are dependent on the body's ability to do the work. Good physical conditioning is a foundation for everything else and becomes more important as a player gets older. Playing ability improves as players improve their physical shape. Skating cannot be improved with just on-ice exercises.

Aerobic Conditioning

Aerobic conditioning is the body's ability to convert oxygen into energy. As muscles work, they get energy from two sources: foods and oxygen. The better a body can use oxygen, the quicker it recovers from hard work. Performed for at



least twenty minutes and three times a week, the following activities improve aerobic conditioning:

Aerobic Exercises

- Jogging
- Walking quickly
- Swimming
- Biking
- Ice skating
- Roller skating

Anaerobic Conditioning

Anaerobic conditioning is the body's ability to work very hard for short periods of time. A single shift on the ice should be played at full speed and tests a player's anaerobic conditioning. For example, when players skate as fast as they can down the ice, the longer the time before they feel tired, the better anaerobic shape they are in. It is tougher to develop good anaerobic abilities because the only way to do so is by exercising harder and longer with high intensity and high speed exercises. The following exercises improve anaerobic conditioning:

Anaerobic Exercises

- Sprinting
- Foot racing
- Skating full speed down the length of the ice

Strength, Quickness and Agility

Most doctors agree that children under the age of ten should not weight train. However, exercise that builds stamina such as running and resistance training provide a good way to exercise muscles without risking injury.

Resistance training is using the body like a weight set. Common resistance type exercises that help build strength are:

Strength Exercises

- Push-ups
- Chin-ups
- Sit-ups
- Leg lifts
- Squats

To build quickness, look at exercises that involve rapid feet movement. Good ways to build quickness include:

Quickness Exercises

- Jumping
- Bounding
- Hopping
- Skipping rope



Agility is the ability to start, stop and change direction quickly. Agility is built by moving the feet quickly in a variety of movements such as quick turns and cuts. Agility can be increased by:

Agility Exercises

- Obstacle courses
- Zig-zag running
- Side shuffles
- Tag

Other Sports

In addition to dedicated exercising, playing other sports is a good way to work on all aspects of physical development. Sports to consider include:

Sport Choices

- Baseball – builds hand eye coordination and quickness
- Basketball – builds stamina, passing and team skills
- Golf – builds hand/eye coordination
- Lacrosse – builds stamina and quickness
- Roller hockey – uses most of the same skills as ice hockey
- Soccer – builds stamina, team skills, foot usage and position play
- Tennis – builds feet quickness and hand/eye coordination

Key Points for Parents

- Kids are exposed to a great deal of aerobic and anaerobic conditioning during normal play and sports activities. One of the best ways to build on their physical abilities is to let them play other sports along with hockey. Cross training is essential for body and mind.
- Exercise at early ages should be fun and parents can encourage their children by joining in and exercising with them.
- Rest before a game is important. Parents should monitor their child's activities before the game and adjust as required.
- Young players sometimes complain about fatigue because, for them, getting that tired by working is a new experience. Their tolerance improves as they experience fatigue more and get used to the feeling.

Key Points for Players

- If you are working hard and getting tired during your shift, you are building your anaerobic conditioning.
- If you are very tired at the end of a period or after a game, you are building your aerobic conditioning.
- If you have trouble getting to the puck, you need to work on your quickness and agility.
- Consistent exercise is the best way to stay in shape.



Exercises

1. List three things you could do if you don't have enough energy to complete your shift with full energy (anaerobic).

2. List three things you could do if you feel tired after games or between periods (aerobic).

3. List another sport, besides hockey, that you might like to play to build up your body's aerobic endurance.

4. List three things you could do each day to help make your body stronger for hockey.

5. List three things you could do each day to help improve your quickness for getting to the puck.



6. List three things you could do each day to help your agility.

7. Develop goals for each of the following:

By the end of the season, I hope to complete:

Sit ups _____

Push ups _____

Running _____

8. Develop a daily schedule of exercise (sit-ups, push-ups, running) that would help you reach your goals.

Monday _____

Tuesday _____

Wednesday _____

Thursday _____

Friday _____

Saturday _____

Sunday _____







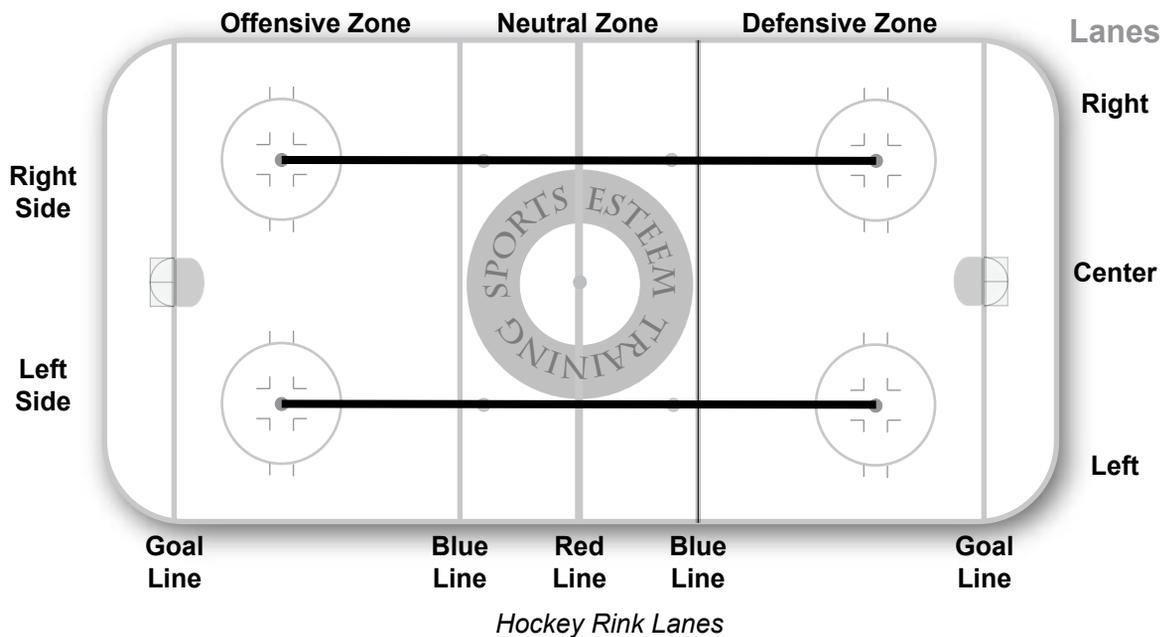
POSITION



Position

There are six players on the ice at one time from each team. Each player is responsible for a certain part of the hockey rink and has special responsibilities for trying to score (offense) and for protecting the goal (defense). By working together, these players make a good team covering all areas of the ice. Each player knows how best he can contribute to the team and what to expect from his teammates.

It is important that every player be in his correct position. Just as it would cause problems if the goalie played his position at the face-off circle instead of in front of the net, it also causes problems when forwards or defensemen are out of their positions. In hockey, team play is one of the most important elements of the game. Through teamwork and good positional play, players can move the puck quicker than by trying to skate through everyone on both offense and defense.



To understand the positions on the ice, it is first necessary to understand how the hockey rink is divided. The first way to look at the hockey rink is by zones. Zones are marked on the ice rink by the blue lines near the middle of the rink. The defensive zone is where a team defends its net. The offensive zone is where a team scores. The neutral zone is the area in the middle where offensive

and defensive strategies develop. Zones are used to help the team know their assignments.

The next way to look at a hockey rink is by dividing it into lanes. Lanes are not marked so players must look at other markings on the ice to see where the lanes are. There are three lanes, left, right and center. These lanes run up and down the ice and the dots in the face-off circles can be used to mark their position. Lanes are used to help forwards stay in their correct position.

The next way to look at the rink is by sides. The left side and right side of the rink are guides for defensemen and forwards to help them stay in their correct position.

The three types of team positions on the ice are:

**Team
Position
Types**

- Goalie – One goalie who is equipped with special pads and equipment and is responsible for blocking shots just in front of the net. The goalie is the last line of defense when the other members of the team have been unable to stop the shot or regain control of the puck.
- Forwards – Three players who are primarily responsible for generating offense and helping clear the puck in the defensive zone.
- Defensemen – Two players who are primarily responsible for defending the net, clearing the puck out of the danger zone and keeping the puck in play in the offensive zone.

Since there are three forwards and two defensemen, their positions on the ice are clarified by lane assignment or side assignment. Of the forwards, the left winger is responsible for the left lane, the center is responsible for the center lane and the right winger is responsible for the right lane. Of the defensemen, a left defenseman is responsible for the left side and a right defenseman is responsible for the right side.

Each position requires the player to have special skills and attitudes in order to be successful. Young players should routinely play as many different positions as possible to help build all of their skills and help them better understand how to play positional hockey.

Every position requires all skills. However, certain skills are used more and developed quicker in some positions. Players should play all positions to develop their skills more completely. The following table summarizes team positions, their role and the skills developed.



Position	Role	Skills Developed
Center	Centers work both ends of the ice. They work the puck and pass to the wingers to setup plays. They handle face-offs. On defense, they work in front of their own net and help defensemen in corners.	Stamina Passing Awareness Agility Speed Stick Handling Communication
Winger	Wingers control the puck along the boards in the neutral and offensive zones. They generate scoring chances by being in good position around the net. On defense, they watch the opposing defensemen and stand by to get the puck out of the zone.	Shooting Skating Speed Communication
Defenseman	Defensemen stay between opponents and their own net to interrupt or block shots on goal. They clear the puck out of the danger zone and protect the goal. They are the last line of defense before the goalie.	Position Play Backwards Skating Pivots Skating Passing Communication
Goalie	When all else goes wrong, the goalie is responsible for trying to prevent the puck from going into the net.	Concentration Attitude Quickness Position Awareness Balance Skating Independence Communication

Team Position Roles and Skills





Center - Overview

Discussion

Centers play in the most popular area of the ice – in the middle lane. If a team is on offense, it wants the puck in the middle to score. If a team is on defense, it wants the puck out of the middle to keep the other team from scoring. Thus, the center (who usually plays in the center of the ice) ends up playing both an offensive and defensive role depending on which zone the puck is in.

Centers find themselves at the center of much activity. They help make passes between wingers and between defensemen and wingers. Because they are in the middle of the ice, they are often an easy pass target to find and have both wingers as passing targets themselves.

Contrary to the popular view, centers are not always the leading scorers for the team. Even in the NHL, the top three scorers for the 2001-2002 season were wingers. However, centers are often the team's leading playmakers, helping set up wingers and directing plays along the ice by passing between wingers and defensemen. In the middle of the ice, they are well positioned to direct the puck to the open winger or take a shot, if open.

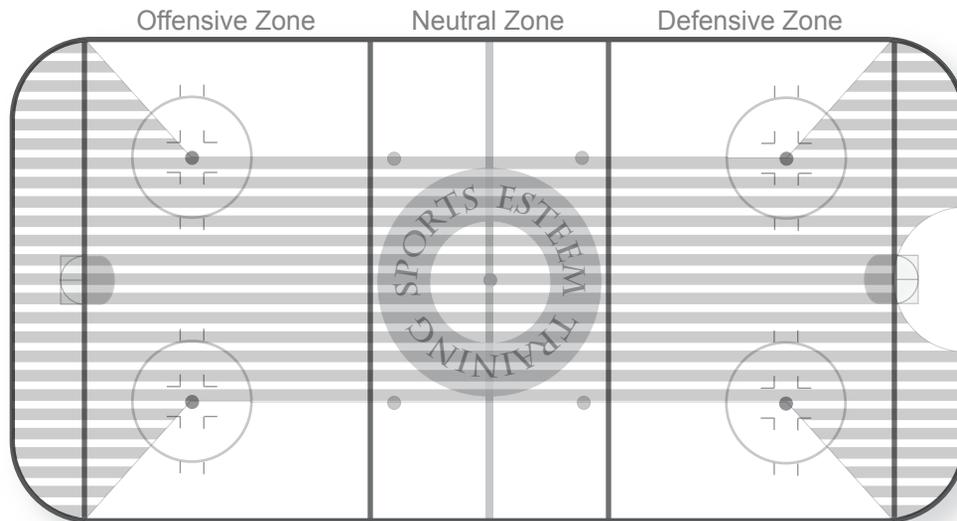
A center does many things on the ice including:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Center Responsibilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps defensemen in the corners • Helps defensemen in front of the net • Supports wingers in the corners • Works with wingers in front of the net and in the neutral zone • Takes face-offs • Helps direct plays. |
|--------------------------------|--|

On offense, centers are playmakers first and scorers second. Centers are in a very important area of the ice and must be willing to share the puck. Centers must work hard on both offense and defense. They should always be closely positioned to other players to help out or provide a good passing opportunity.

On defense, centers help protect the slot area in front of the net by defending any opponent in the danger zone who is not already covered by one of the defensemen. They help block shots and prevent opponents from getting a better angle for a shot or passing between players.





Center Position

Why Not the Back of the Net?

On the diagram above, the area behind the net in the defensive zone is not shaded. The area in front of the net is the most important. Chasing an opponent behind the net actually takes the center out of the play since there is no way to stop a wrap around or centering pass from behind. A center should cut in front of the net to help stop the wrap around shot or intercept a centering pass.

Key Points for Parents

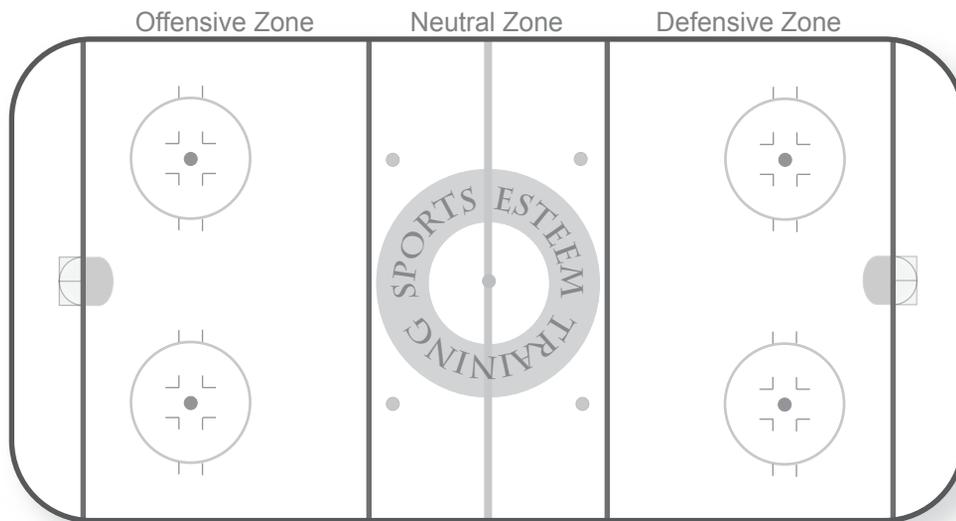
- Kids often want to play center because they think this is the position that scores most often. When your child plays center, encourage him to think about the center position as a playmaking position and not a scoring position. Encourage your child to play all positions.
- Center is also a very important position defensively. Encourage them in this role of their position.

Key Points for Players

- Don't just follow the puck around. Stay in your own area and let the puck do the work.
- You must work hard on both offense and defense.
- Don't get too far ahead of other players.

Exercises

1. Go to a game of more experienced hockey players and carefully watch where the center skates on the ice.
2. On the following diagram, shade the area the center should play.





Center – Defensive Responsibilities

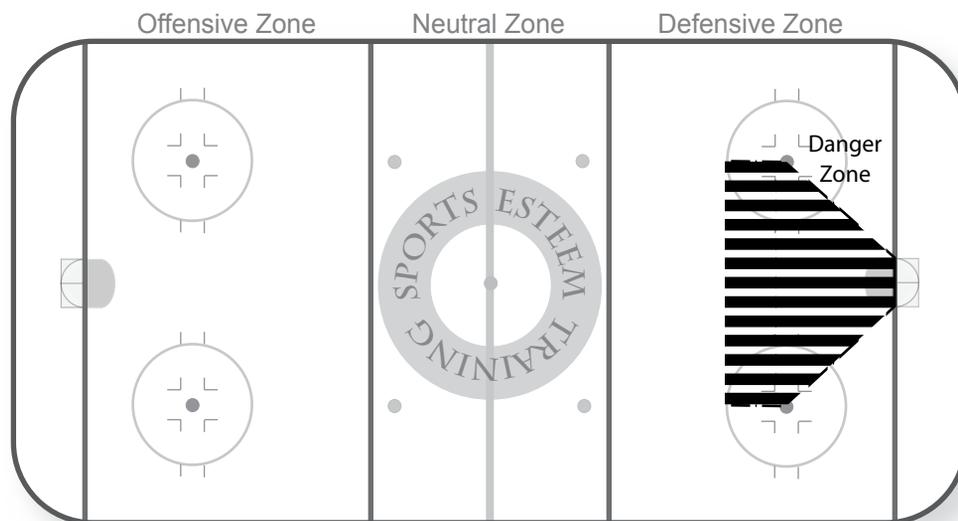
Discussion

In the defensive zone, centers sometimes believe they are supposed to be wherever the puck is. However, chasing the puck can leave the front of the net unprotected and open for a shot. Also, chasing the puck can quickly tire a center and leave him unable to complete his shift. In the defensive zone, centers should:

Center Responsibilities

- Protect the front of the net
- Clear the puck to the boards if it is in the danger zone
- Help the defensemen in the corners
- Collect the puck in the corner from the defenseman if he is successful in tying up an opponent
- Help defensemen in front of the net
- Be in good close position to receive passes when the team regains the puck.

The danger zone in front of the net is the most important part of the ice. This is where all the good shots are made. A center must worry as much about this area of the ice as the defensemen.



Danger Zone

Corners

When the puck moves to the corners of the rink, the center should decide whether he should go to the corner to help regain the puck or stay in the center to protect the net. An opponent cannot score from the corner. He can only pass to an open man in front of the net or try to stick handle it back to the net. If the center is in front of the net he is in a good position to prevent both. To decide whether to help in the corner or stay in front, the center must determine whether the other defenseman is in position in front of the net. If he is not, the center must stay and protect the net. If the defenseman is in good position, the center should go to the corner and try to force a turnover. In summary:

- With the puck in the corner, stay between any opponent and the net to take care of the danger zone.

Points

When the puck moves to the point, the center should be in the middle of the ice to protect against a shot from the opposing defensemen. If the winger can regain control of the puck, the center should start moving to support the winger. He should stay even with the winger to be in good position for a pass. In summary:

- With the puck at the point, be in the middle of the ice to block a shot or receive a pass from the winger.

Neutral Zone Defense

In the neutral zone, the center should cover the middle lane and force the puck carrier to the outside lanes. Then, even if the puck carrier gets the puck into the defensive zone, the defensemen are better able to keep the puck outside the danger zone and prevent a shot on goal. In summary:

- In the neutral zone, protect the middle of the ice and force the puck carrier wide.

Key Points for Players

- The danger zone in front of the net is the most important area. Don't just chase after the puck. If a defenseman is in front of the net, it is safe to try to help out in the corners. Otherwise, protect the front of the net.
- Work hard to be a third defenseman. If behind the play, skate hard to get back to help out. The quicker you get back, the sooner you'll get the puck back.
- When changing from defensive to offense, don't leave the defensive zone too early. You must be in a good support position to get a pass from your defensemen to move on to your wingers.



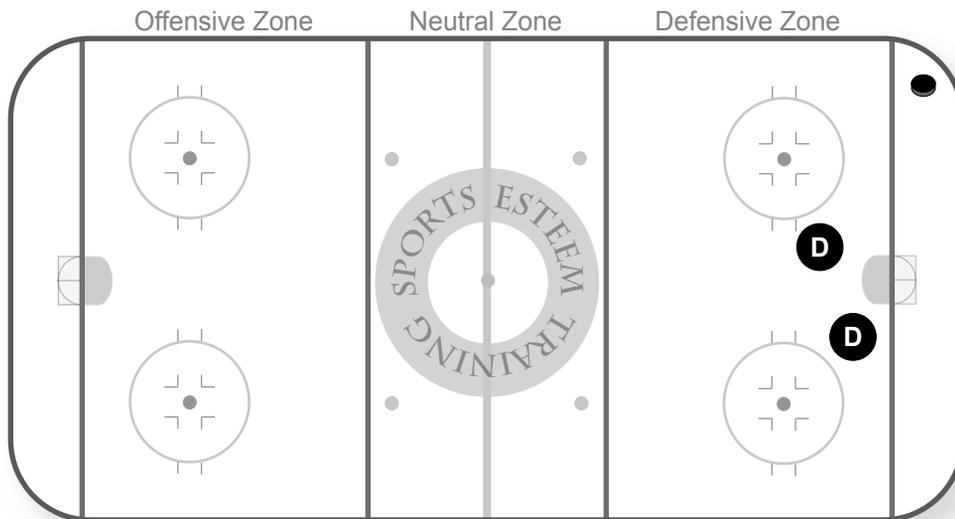
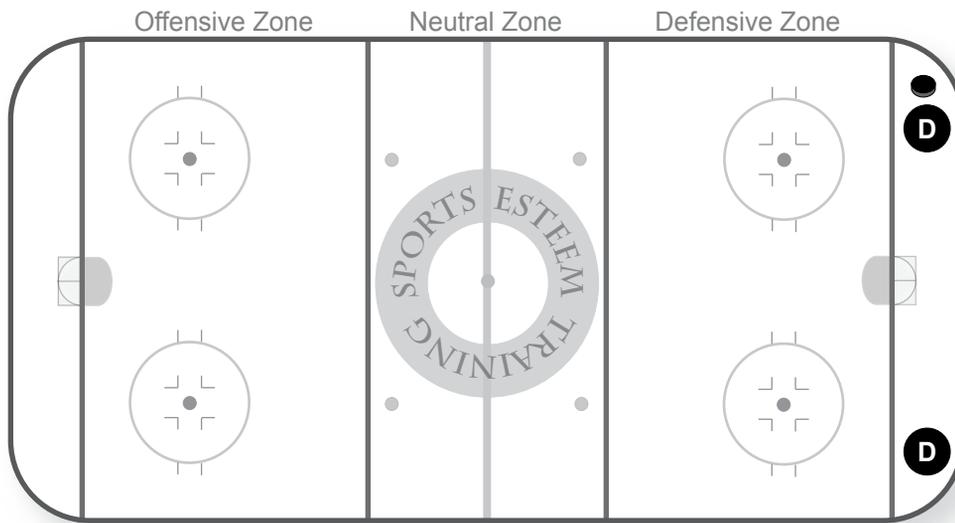
Exercises

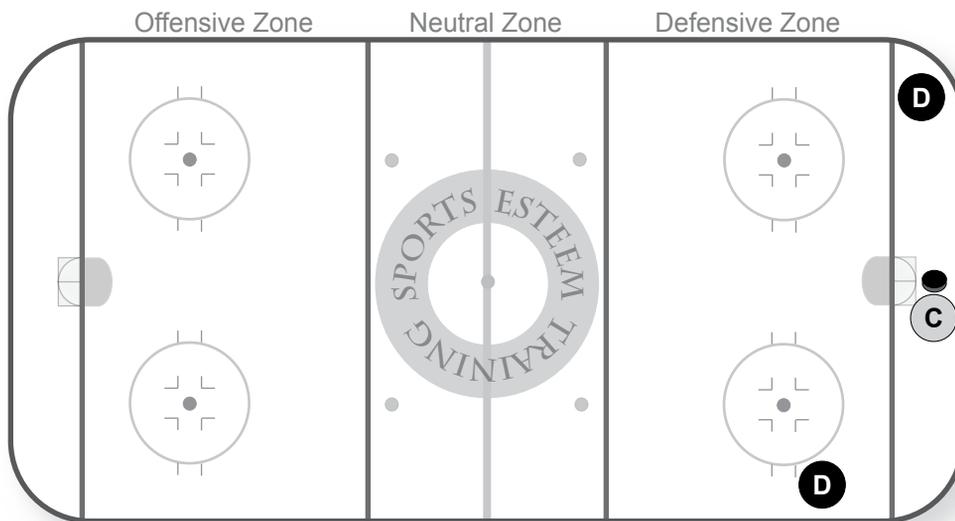
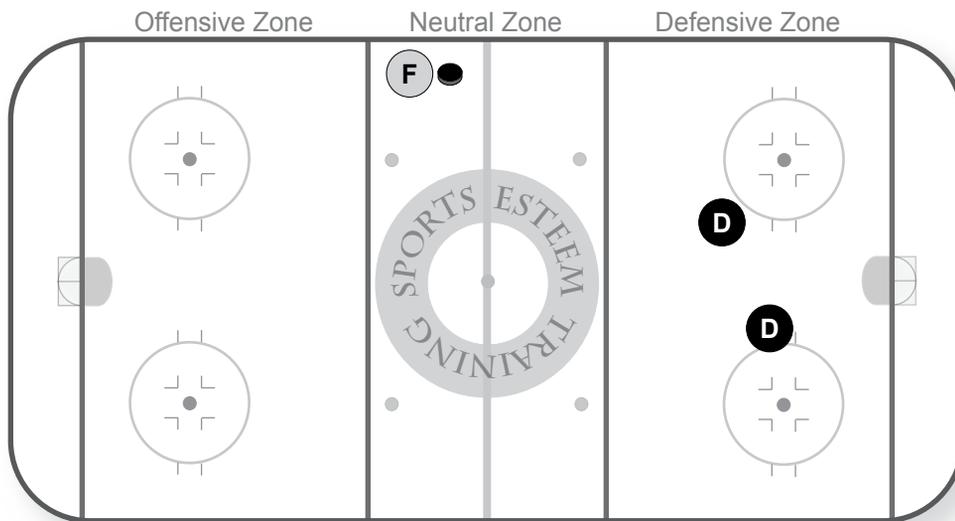
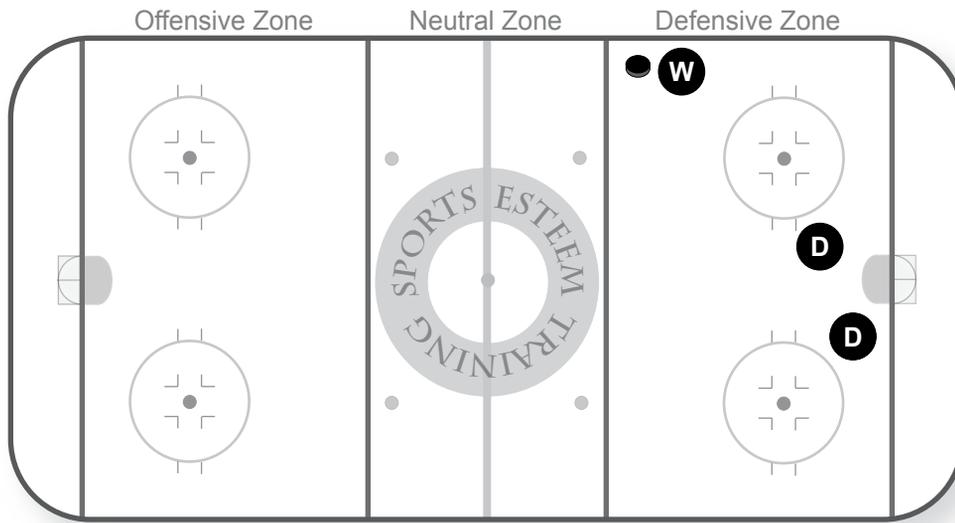
1. Where should the center be if:

Both defensemen are in the corner trying to get the puck?

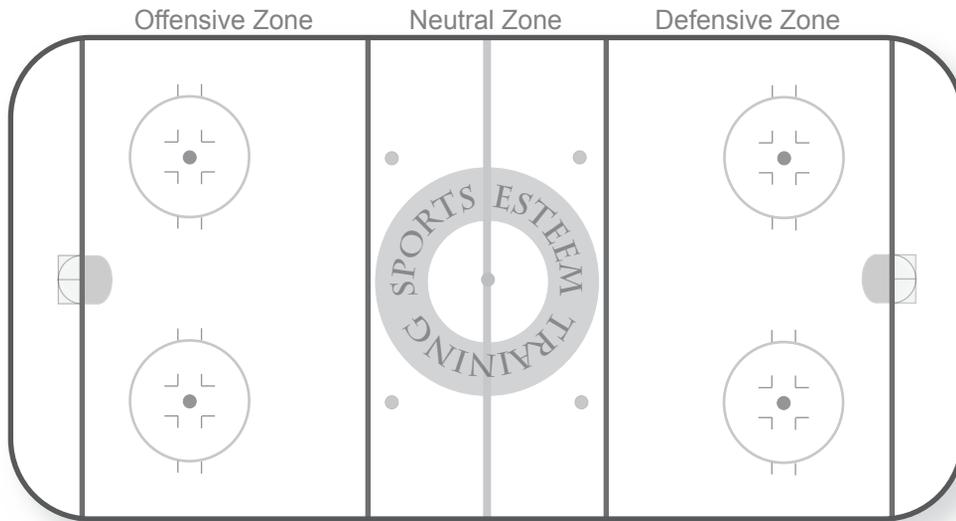
An opponent is moving the puck behind the net?

2. On each diagram, shade the area of defensive zone where the center should be playing based on where the puck and other players are:





3. Draw the danger zone:



POSITION





Center – Offensive Responsibilities

Discussion

In the offensive zone, the center works to support other players. As the puck moves to various areas in the offensive zone, the center tries to be the first man on the puck, helps other players to get the puck or attempts to get open for a pass. As shots are taken, the center goes to the front of the net for a rebound. Or, if both wingers are already there, moves between the face-off circles to protect the middle of the ice.

Puck in the Corners

With the puck in the corner, the center should decide whether to go after the puck himself or back off and support his teammate. To decide what to do and where to play, the center goes through the following checklist:

Corner Checklist

- If no one is going after the puck, the center should be the first one on the puck and look to get the puck to the front of the net.
- If the winger is already getting the puck, the center should stay out in the face-off circle and be available for a pass.
- If the winger is tied up in the corner with a defender, the center can go in and help. Once he gets the puck, he should look for an opportunity to skate or pass the puck to a teammate in front of the net.

The puck won't make it from the corner to the front of the net without hard work by the winger, the center or both of them working together. If the other winger is in front of the net, smart play in the corner can result in a good scoring opportunity.

Puck at the Points

As the puck moves to the points, the center has to determine whether his defensemen can keep the puck in the offensive zone. The center goes through the following mental checklist:

Point Checklist

- If his team can keep the puck in the zone, the center should go to the front of the net with his stick on the ice ready for a pass or shot on goal.
- If it looks like the puck is going to be cleared, the center should skate fast to get back and help out in the middle of the ice.

Although scoring is fun, the first concern is preventing a turnover and a rush by the opposing team.



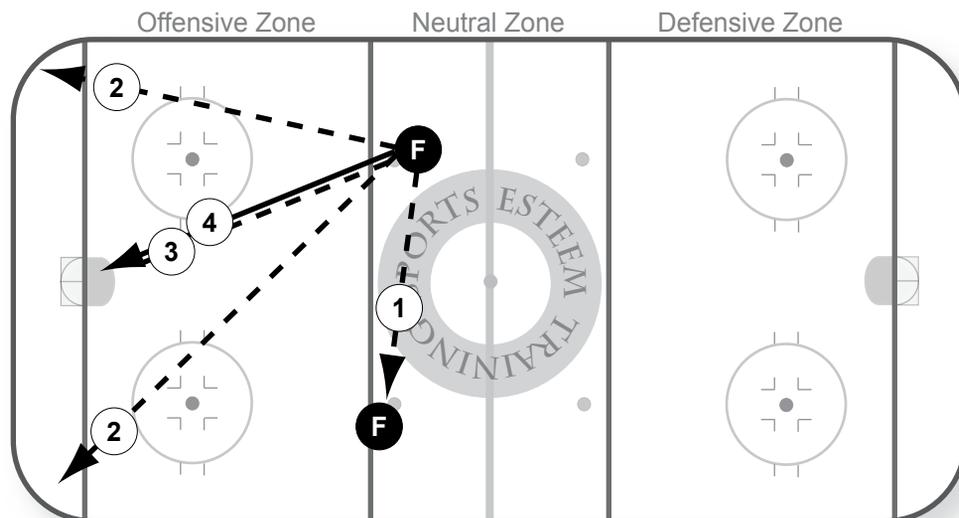
Crossing into the Offensive Zone

At the offensive blue line, a player with the puck faces some of his toughest challenges. Good decisions are important to get the puck to the net. As the puck handler approaches the blue line from the neutral zone, he should be thinking about his options. If a defenseman is in the way, then the player should avoid moving out of his lane and either:

1. Pass to another forward if he has a better lane to the net and then race to the net and prepare to get a pass
2. Dump the puck to the corner for “dump and chase” giving other forwards time to get into the zone.

If there are no defensemen in the way, the player with the puck should speed up and continue into the offensive zone then either:

3. Shoot the puck and race for a rebound
4. Skate the puck to the goal, shoot and position for a rebound.



Blue Line Options

Too often, option four (skate and shoot) is the only option attempted. If there is more than one defender in the way, this is not the best choice. A player should constantly be looking for a passing option.

Neutral Zone

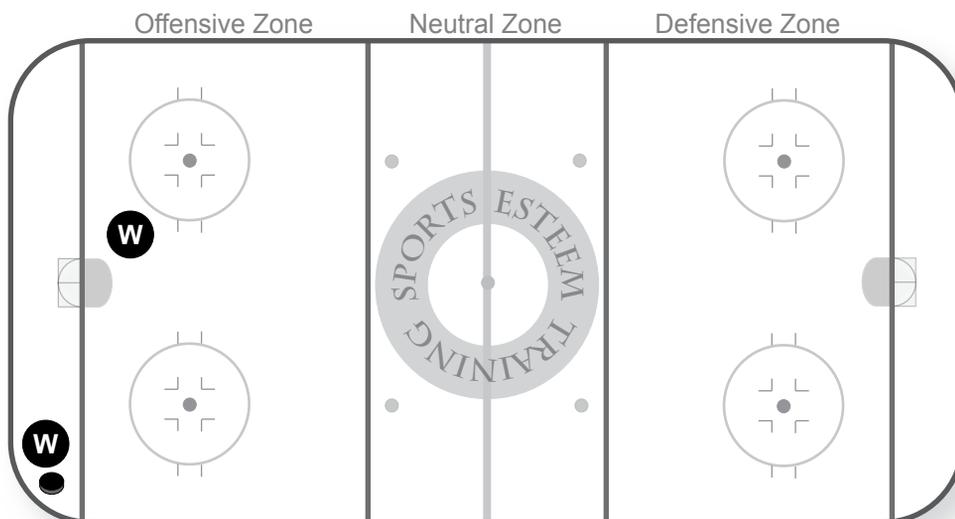
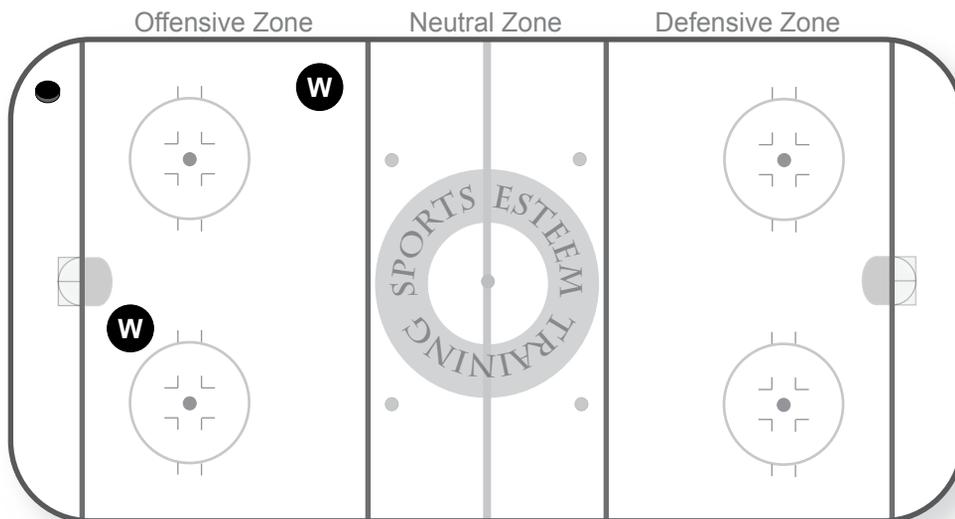
Through the neutral zone, the center should attempt to stay in his lane if he does not have the puck. He should be even with the puck carrier and make himself available for a pass by staying spread out. If the center crowds the puck carrier, he also becomes tangled up with the defense.

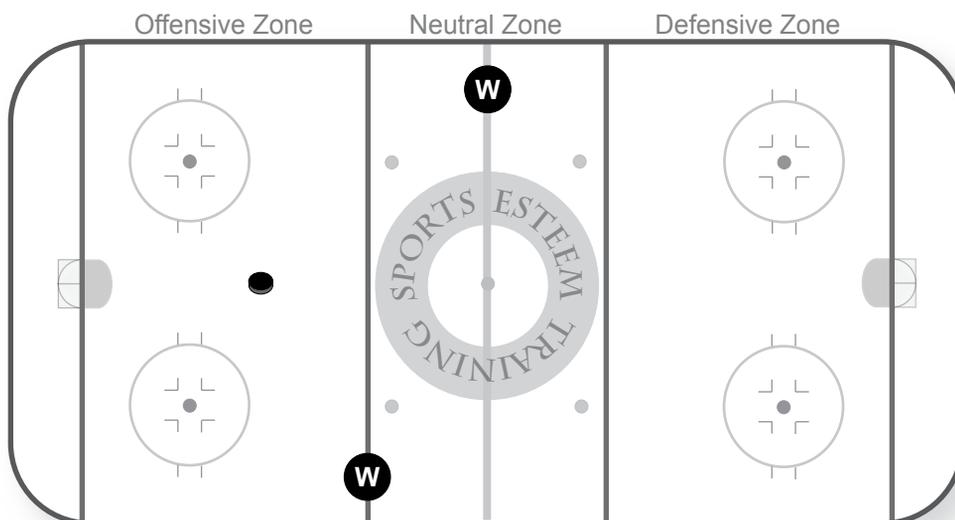
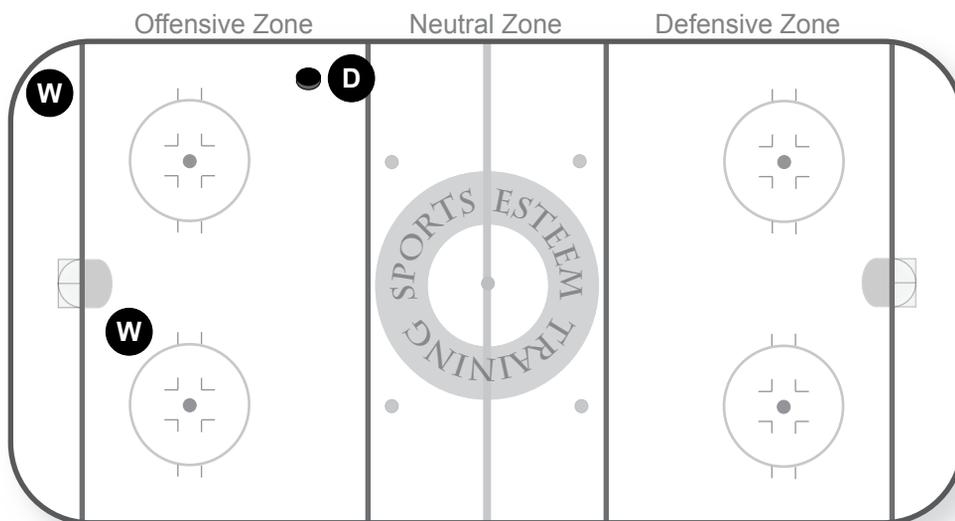
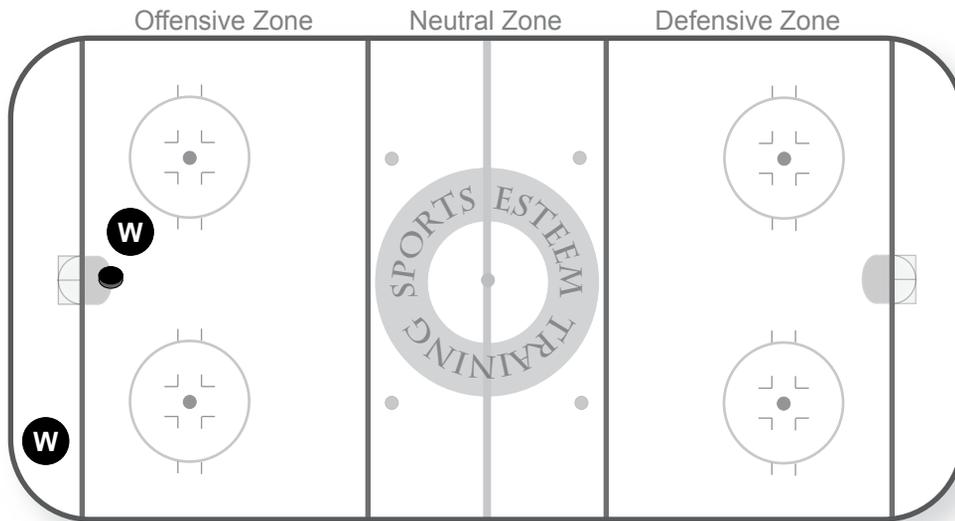
Key Points for Players

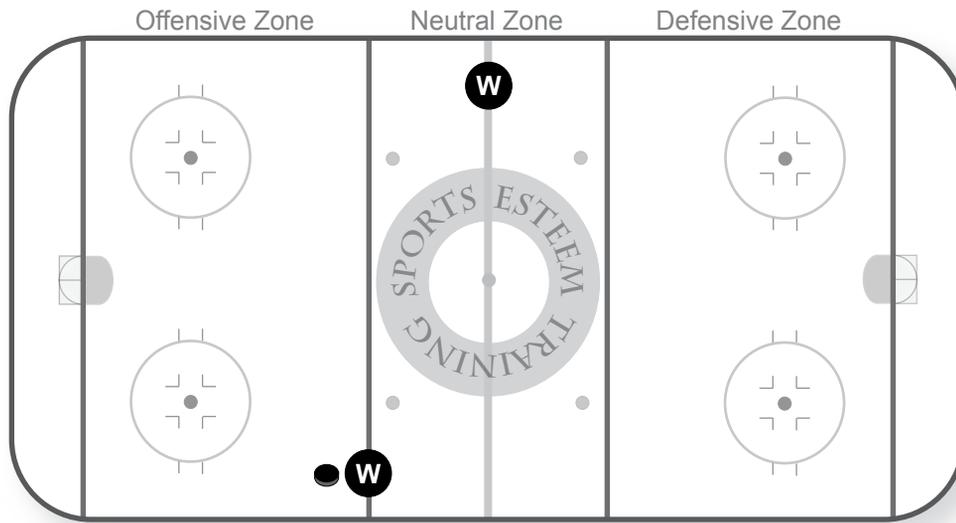
- The center should always be looking for the best way to get the puck to the front of the net either by passing or stick handling.
- The puck moves faster than you can skate. Use good passes to get the puck in the right area in front of the net to shoot.

Exercises

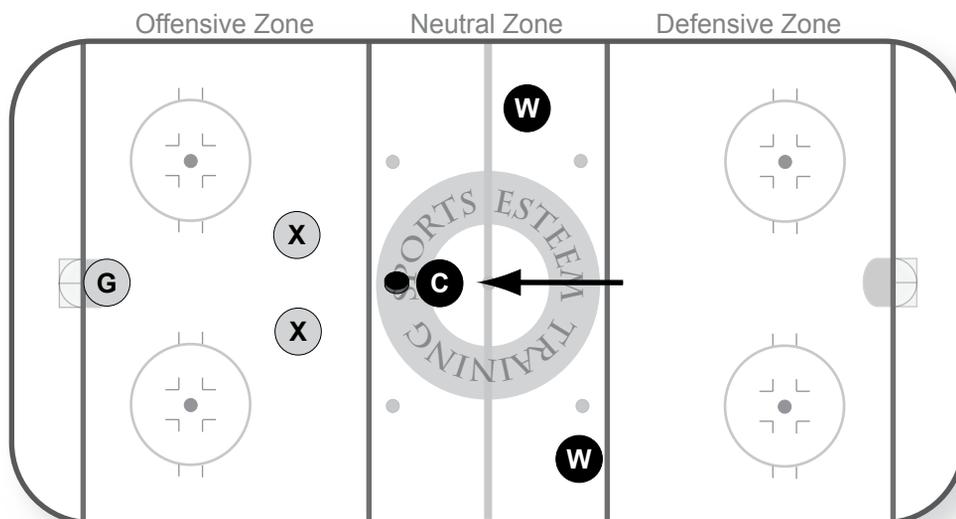
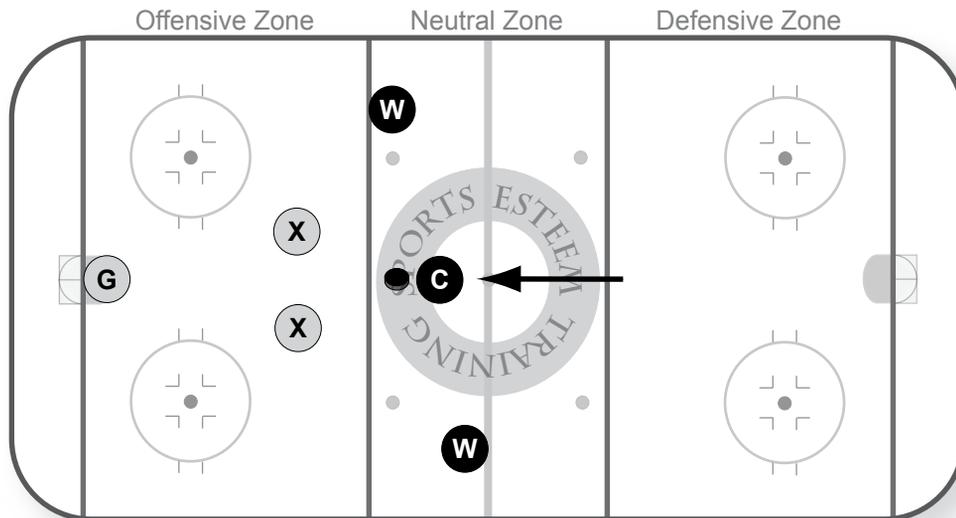
1. On the following diagrams, shade the area of offensive zone where the center should be playing based on where the puck and other players are:

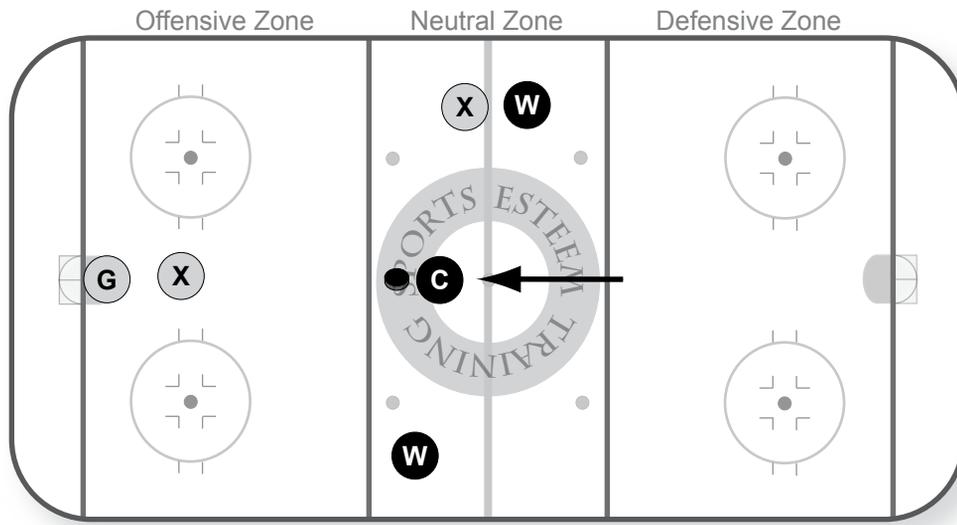






2. On the following diagrams, draw the best choice for getting the puck into the offensive zone if the center has the puck.





Winger - Overview

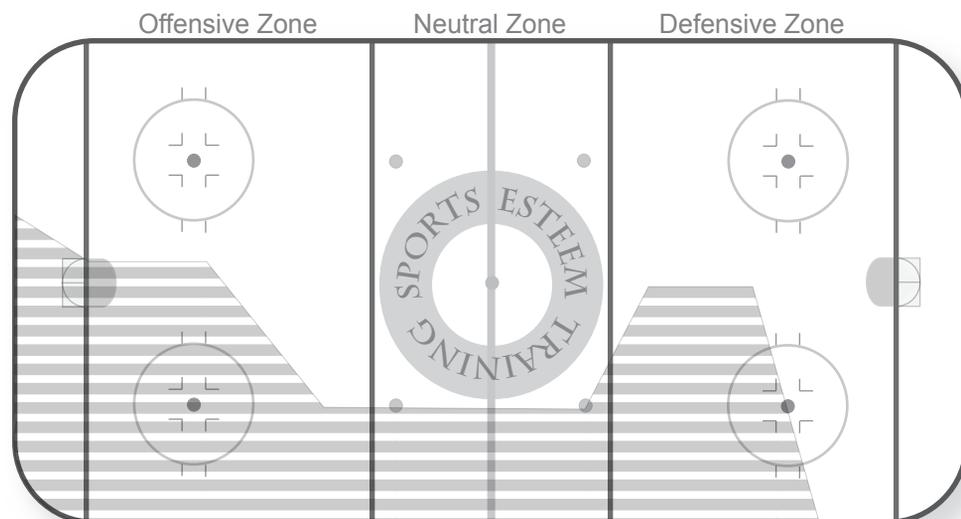
Discussion

Wingers play the outside lanes of the hockey rink. They must be able to battle along the boards and fight for position in front of an opponent's net. Wingers should:

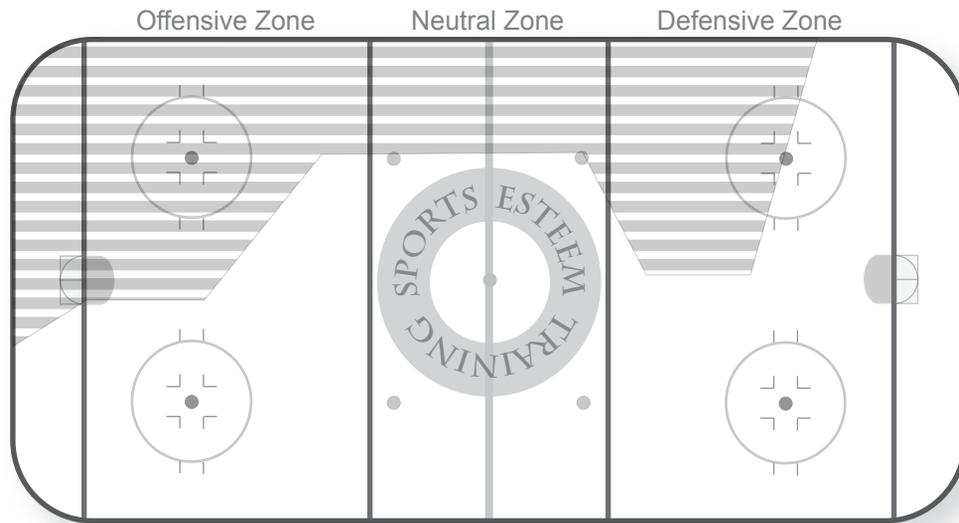
Winger Responsibilities

- Cover the opposing defensemen at the defensive zone points
- Work the outside lanes and boards of the hockey rink
- Pass to the center
- Drive the net and position for passes and rebounds
- Attempt to get between the defensemen and the other team's net.

As shown on the following diagrams, wingers play in defined areas of the ice in order to carry out their assignments.



Left Wing Position



Right Wing Position

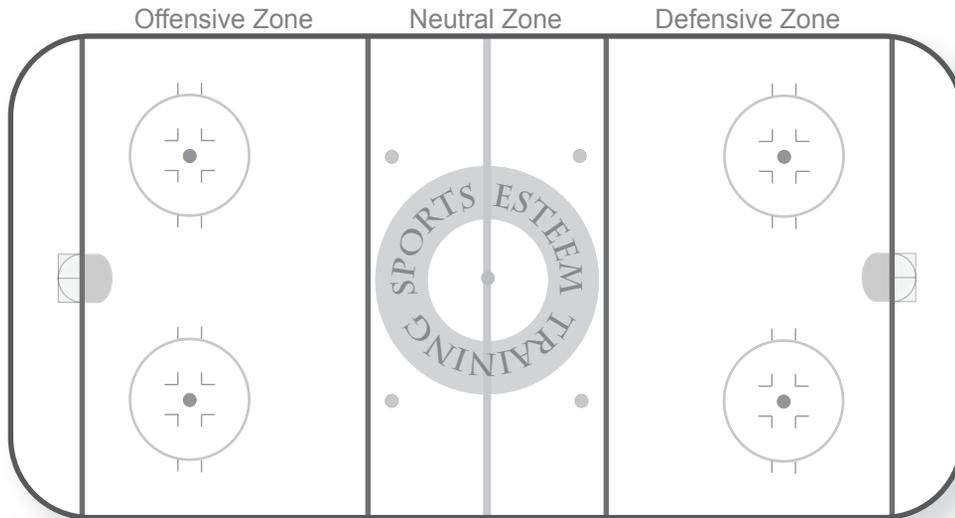
In the defensive zone, the winger's primary responsibility is to cover the opposing defensemen and get the puck from the boards to outside the zone. In the neutral zone, the winger works the boards to either regain control or feed the puck to the center. In the offensive zone, wingers are responsible for their corners when the puck is on their side of the ice or for the front of the net when the puck is in the opposite corner.

Key Points for Players

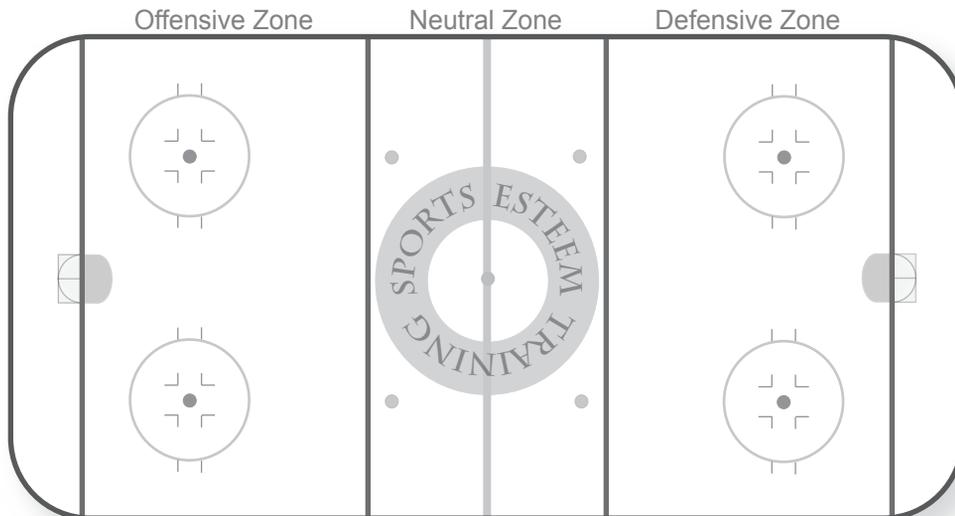
- Smart wingers are always thinking about what can happen next and positioning themselves in the best possible position to help out.
- Work with teammates to move the puck down the ice. Remember, passing moves the puck faster than skating.

Exercises

1. Watch a game of more experienced players and observe how the winger plays his assigned side of the ice.
2. On the following diagram shade where a left winger should play.



3. On the following diagram shade where a right winger should play.

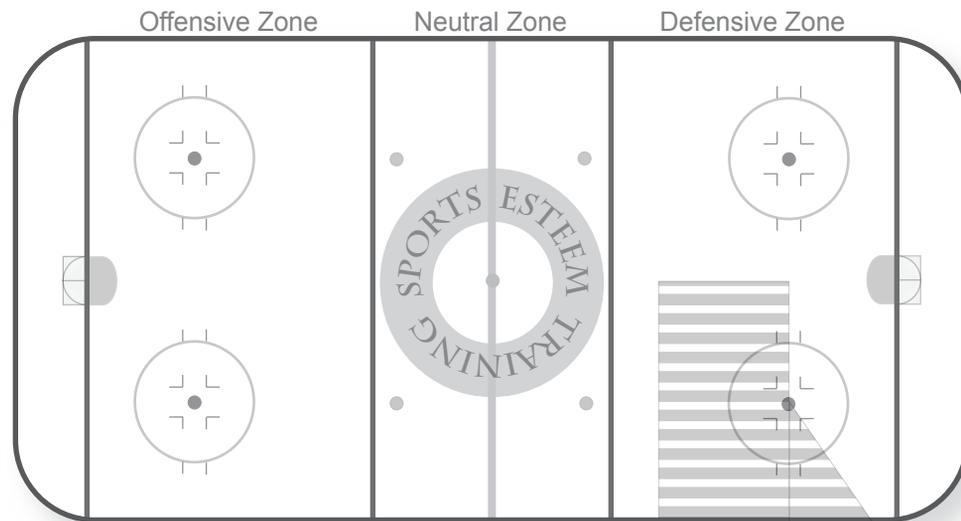




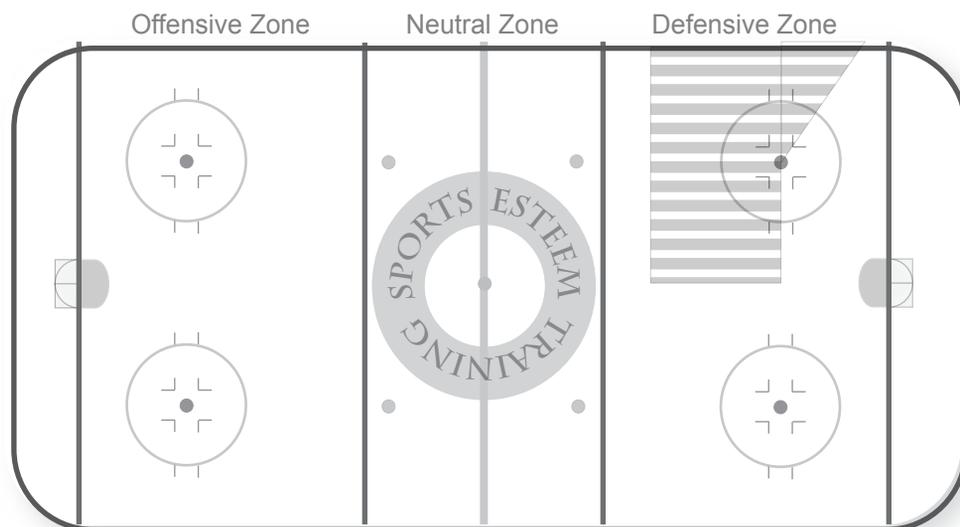
Winger – Defensive Responsibilities

Discussion

In the defensive zone, wingers cover the other team's defensemen. Wingers stay between the defenseman and the goal at all times and prevent them from keeping the puck in the zone.



Left Winger Defensive Position



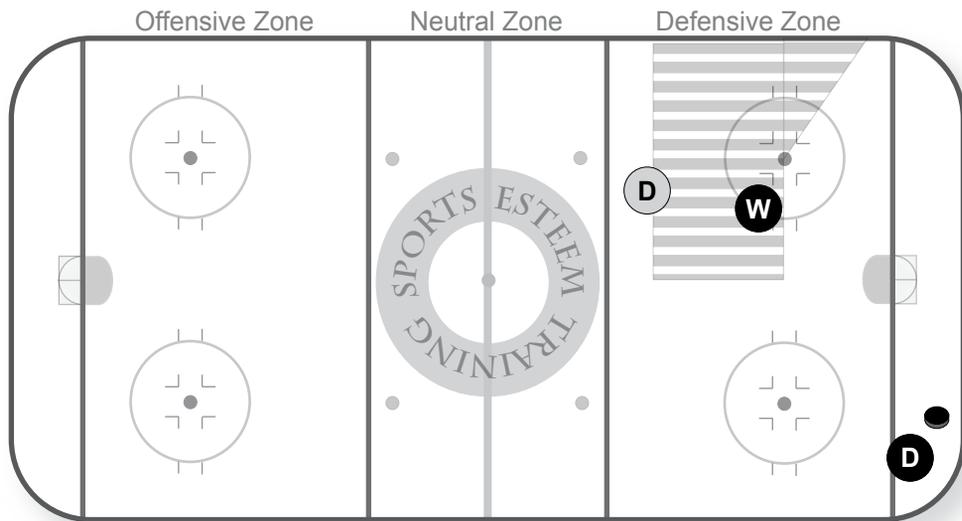
Right Winger Defensive Position

POSITION



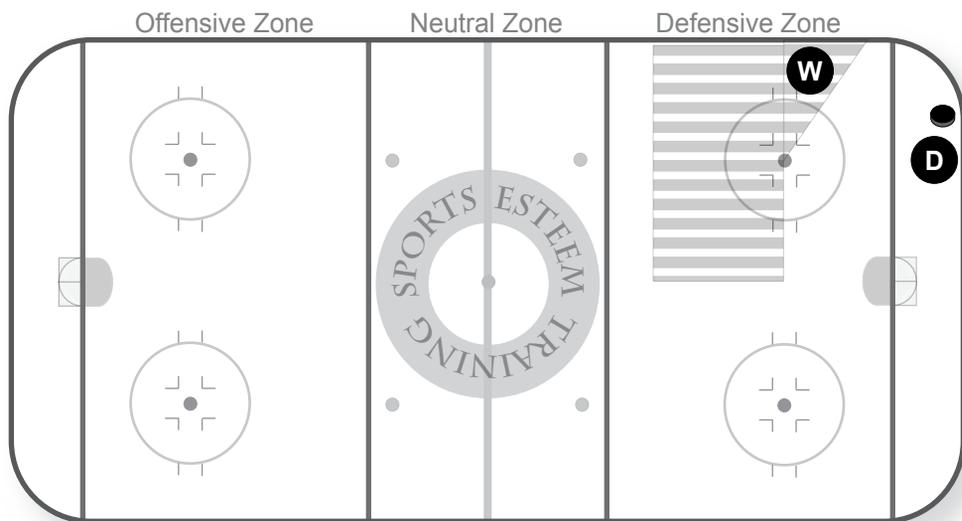
In addition, since wingers are typically outside the danger zone, they provide passing targets for the defensemen and center to start the puck out of the zone.

Inside the defensive zone, wingers are constantly skating and readjusting their position based on where the puck is located. If the puck is in the far corner, a winger's position is close to the center even with the face-off circle between the other team's defenseman and his own net.



Winger Support for Defense in Far Corner

If the puck is in the near corner and controlled by his own team's defensemen, the winger moves close to the boards and comes down to the lower part of their position to provide a good passing target for his defensemen. If the other team controls the puck, the winger must stay between the other team's defenseman and his own net.



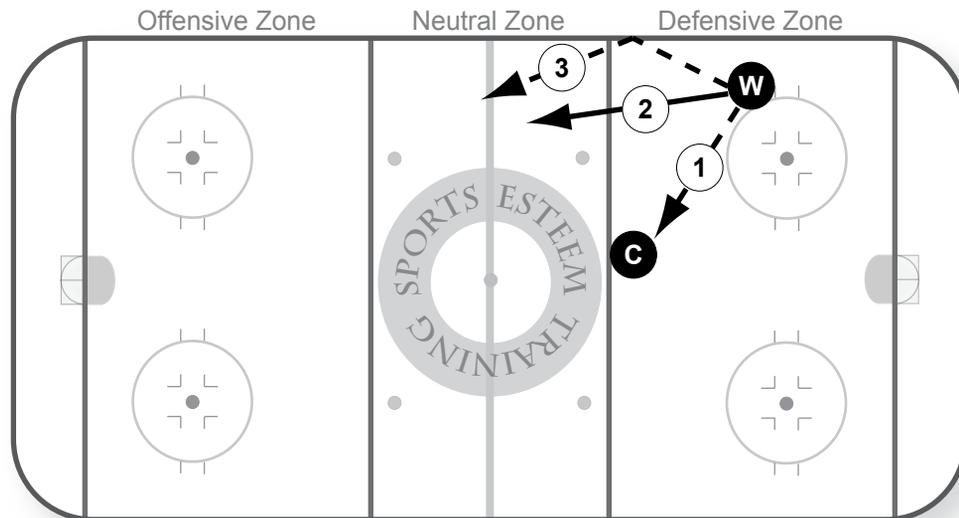
Winger Support for Defense in Near Corner

In both situations, the winger is always skating to find the best position against the other team and stays ready with his stick on the ice to receive a pass from his own team.

Clearing the Puck

If the winger regains possession of the puck, the winger should be looking down ice and to the center to decide his best options. His choices are:

1. Center is open in the middle of the ice, near the blue line. Then, the winger should pass and let the center carry the puck out of the zone.
2. No defenseman is in the way. Then, the winger should try to carry the puck out of the zone himself.
3. There is a defender in his way. Then, the winger should look at shooting the puck along the boards to clear the puck out of the zone and try to regain possession past the blue line.



Winger Clearing Options

The winger should be very careful stick handling the puck to the middle of the ice. If he is around opposing players, a turnover could happen and give the other team a good shot on goal.

Neutral Zone

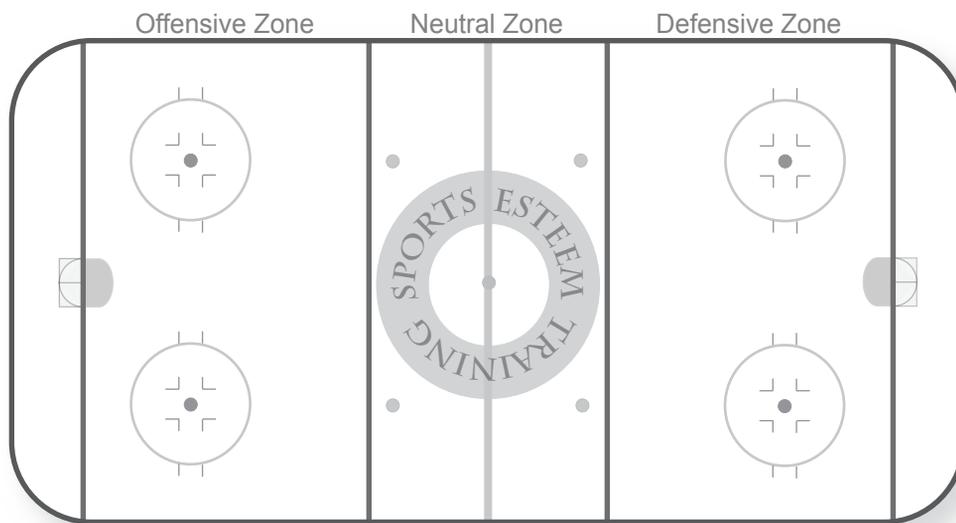
In the neutral zone, wingers attempt to take away the puck if the puck is in their lane and to keep the puck from moving to the center of the ice. Wingers stay near the outer edge of their lane near the middle to keep the puck and puck handler from moving past them. Then, even if the puck enters the defensive zone, it is along the boards where there is less danger of scoring.

Key Points for Players

- Don't get drawn down into the corners. Remember you have to be open to help get the puck out of the defensive zone and also have to cover the other team's defensemen.
- It is important for you to help get the puck out of the defensive zone. You should worry first about getting the puck out before thinking about stick handling or creating an offensive attack.
- In the neutral zone, protect your lane by working to either take away the puck or keep the puck out of the middle of the ice.

Exercises

1. Draw the area where the winger plays in the defensive zone.



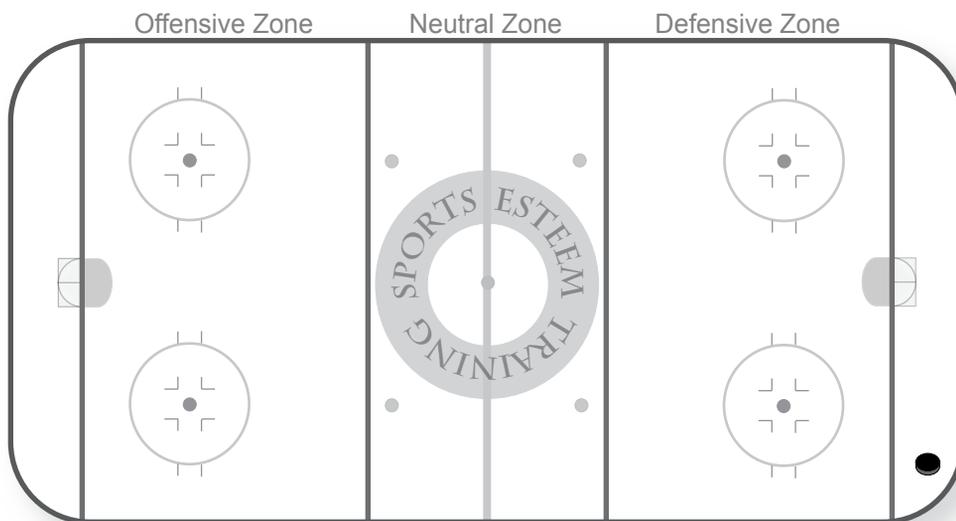
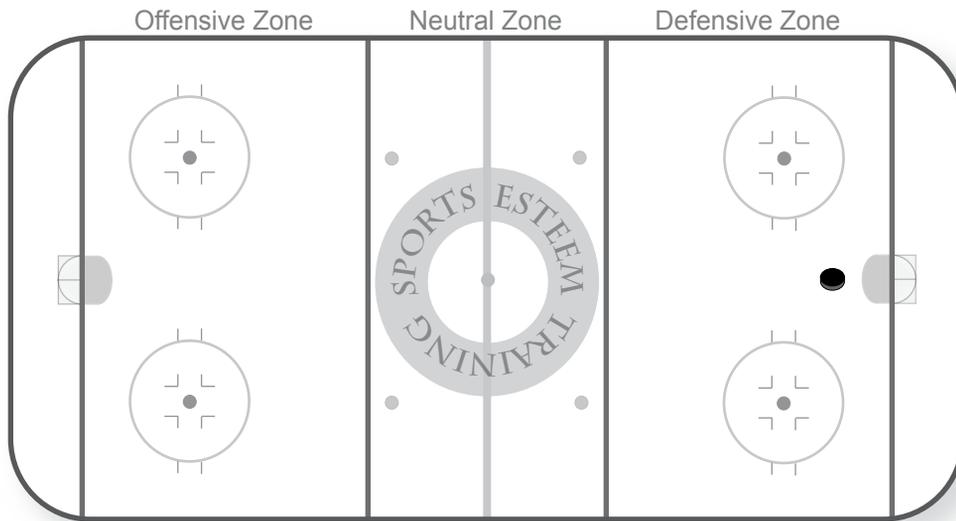
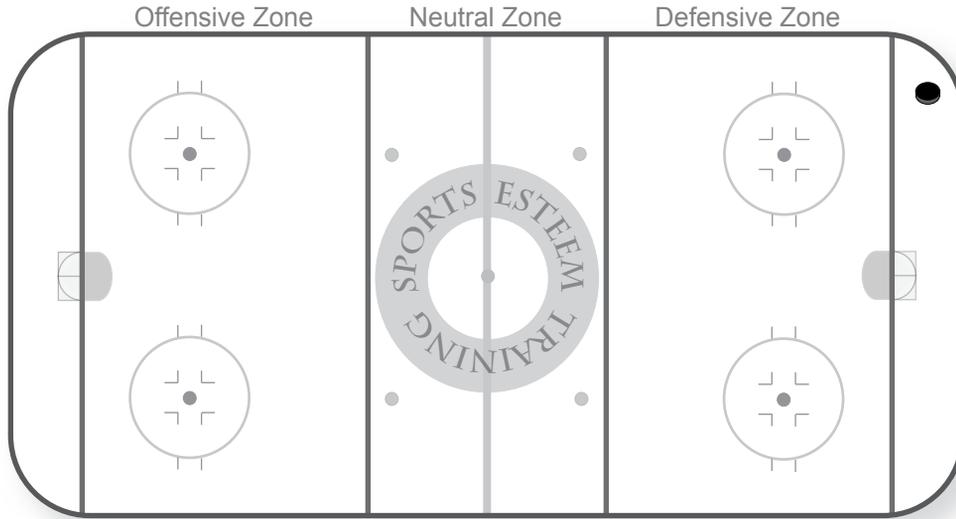
2. Where should the winger be if:

The puck is in the far corner?

The puck is in the near corner?

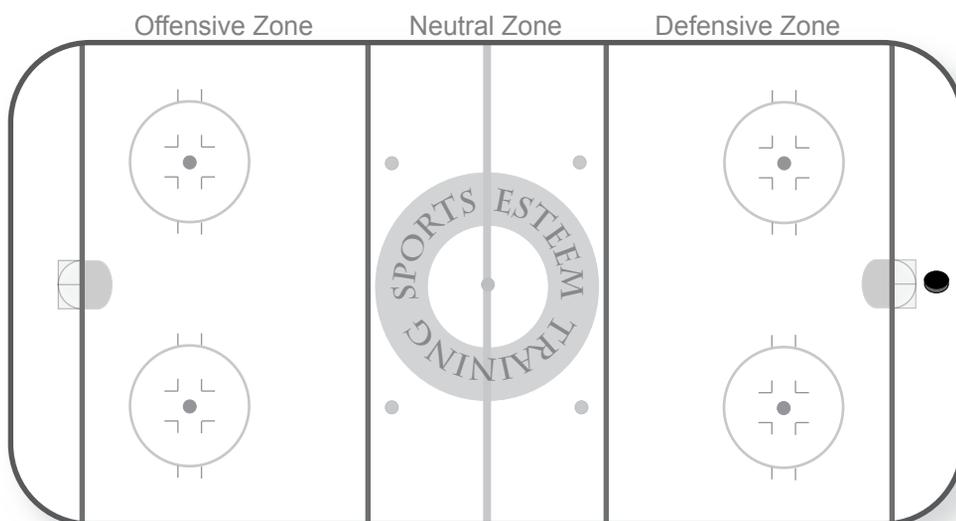
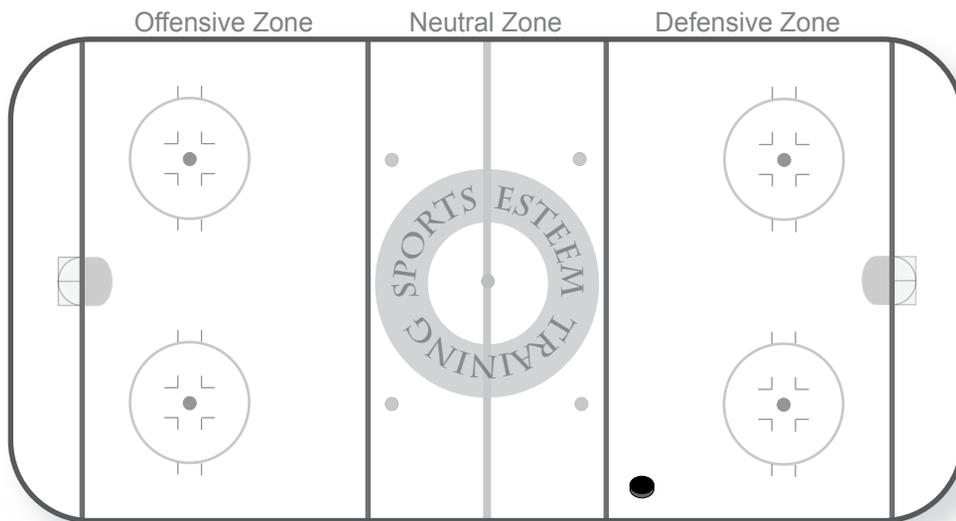
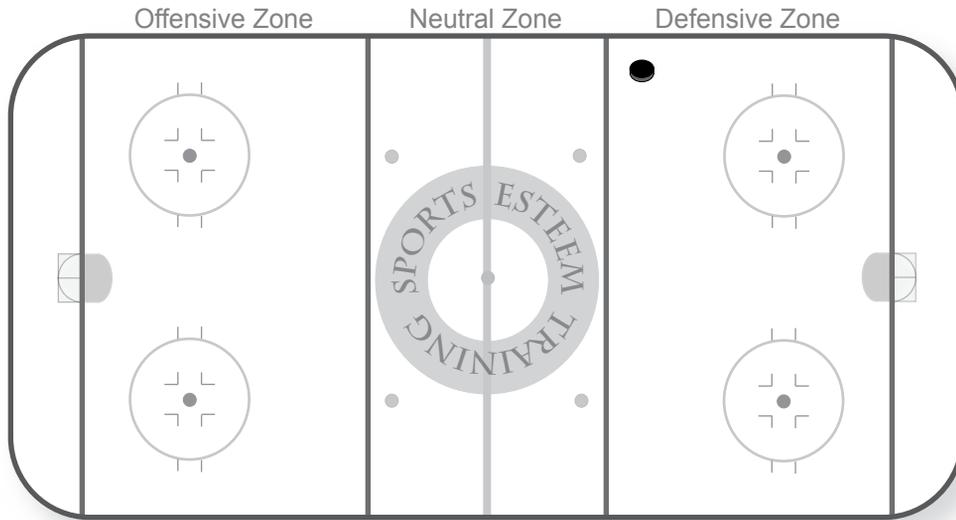
The puck is in the danger zone?

3. Assuming the other team is controlling the puck, shade the area the right winger should be in based on the puck location:

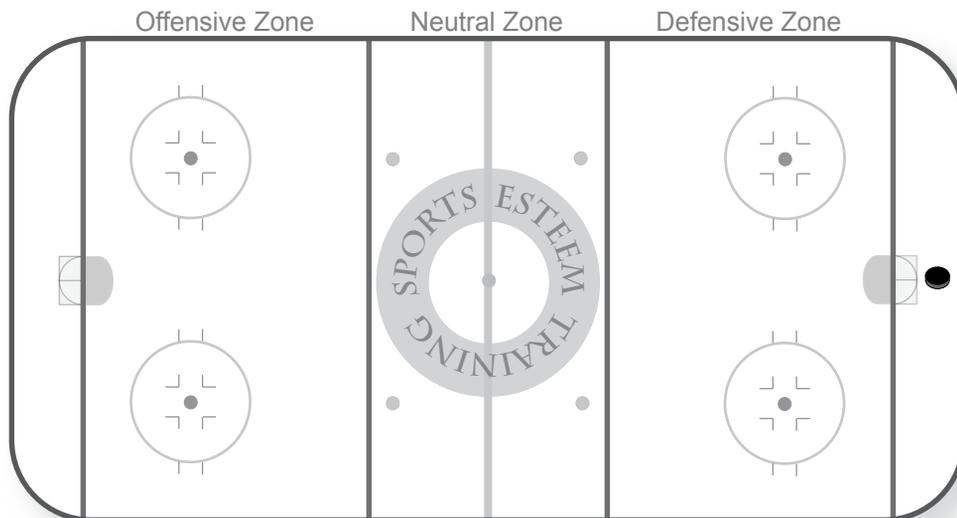
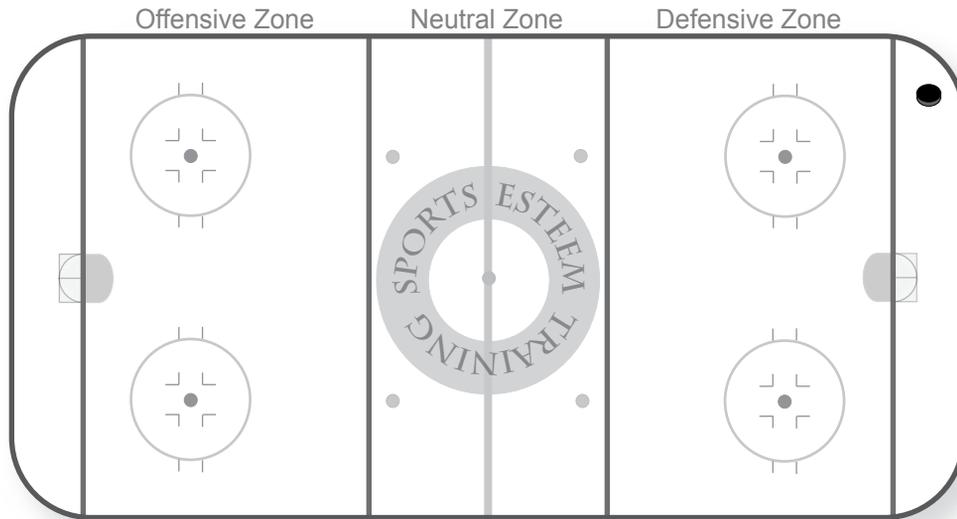


POSITION





4. Assuming your team is controlling the puck, shade the area the right winger should be in based on the puck location:



POSITION





Winger – Offensive Responsibilities

Discussion

The two wingers and the center (together called the forwards) work together in the offensive zone to get shots on goal. Each winger is responsible for the boards and the lane on his side of the ice. In addition, each winger is responsible for an area in front of and behind the net based on where the puck is in play.

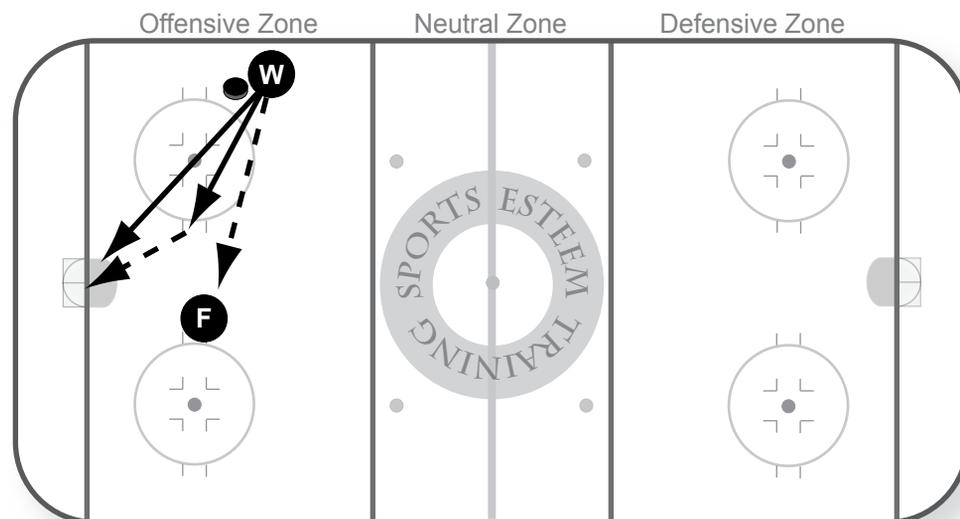
With the center playing the middle of the ice and wingers on the sides, the forwards can work as a team to keep the puck in the offensive zone and attack the net from all sides. In the offensive zone, like the defensive zone, the wingers are constantly skating to reposition themselves based on where the puck is. Wingers should let the puck help them by passing to teammates in a better scoring area.

Along the Near Boards

With the puck along the boards of the winger's side, the winger is responsible for getting or keeping possession of the puck and trying to get the puck to the center of the net. With the puck, the winger should either:

Near Boards Checklist

- Shoot at the net if he has a clear shot
- Look for a teammate in front of the net and pass
- Skate the puck to the face-off circle and shoot
- Carry the puck to the net and pass or shoot if there are no defenders



Winger Options Along the Near Boards

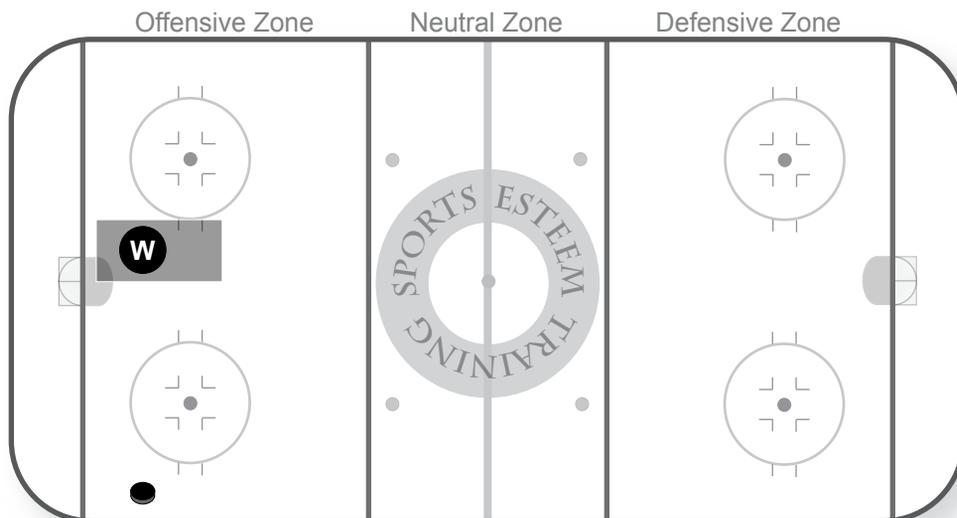
Along the Far Boards

If the puck is on the other side of the ice with another forward, the winger should drive to a position in front of the net and make himself available for a pass by:

Far Boards Checklist

- Keeping his stick down
- Keeping his head up
- Moving around opposing players to create an open path for the passer
- Calling for the puck if open

As the forward on the far boards works the puck, the winger should constantly reposition himself to support the play.



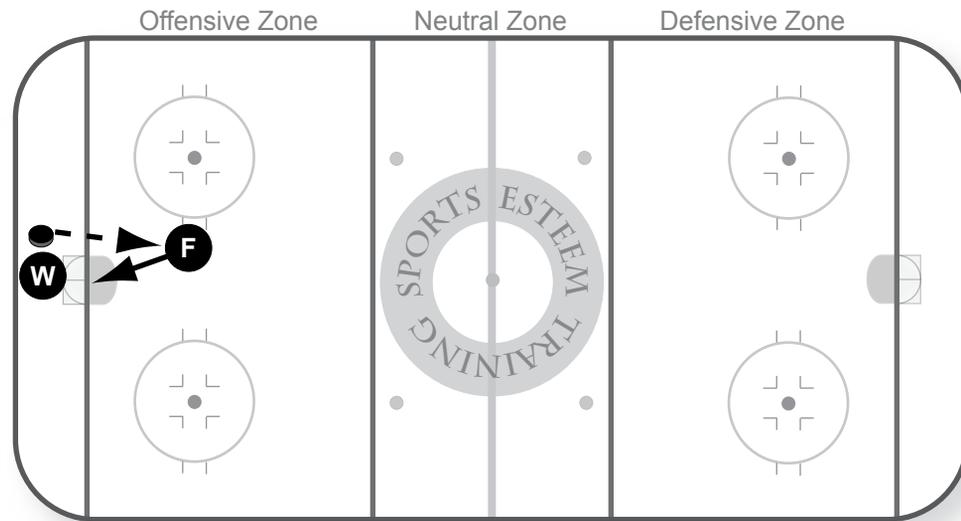
Winger Position with Puck Along the Far Boards

In Front of the Net

If the puck moves to the front of the net, the winger should immediately try to get a quick shot. Stick handling in front of the net can result in a turn over and gives the goalie more time to get into position. Players should be prepared before the puck gets to them with their stick on the ice ready to shoot.

Behind the Net

If the winger can get the puck behind the net, he should immediately attempt to center it to a teammate in front of the net. Although a wrap around shot will be tempting, a centering pass has a better chance of getting a goal. The other forwards must work to position themselves to get open to receive the pass.



Winger Position with Puck Behind the Net

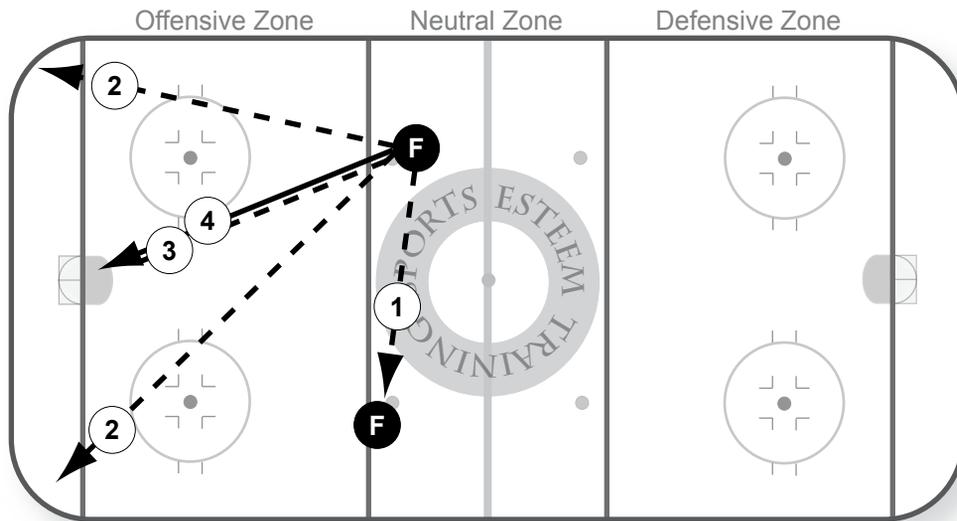
Crossing into the Offensive Zone

At the offensive blue line, a player with the puck faces some of his toughest challenges. Good decisions are important to get the puck to the net. As the puck handler approaches the blue line from the neutral zone, he should be thinking about his options. If a defenseman is in the way, then the player should avoid moving out of his lane and either:

1. Pass to another forward if he has a better lane to the net and then race to the net and prepare to get a pass
2. Dump the puck to the corner for “dump and chase”, giving other forwards time to get into the zone.

If there are no defensemen in the way, the player with the puck should speed up and continue into the offensive zone then either:

3. Shoot the puck and race for a rebound
4. Skate the puck to the goal, shoot and position for a rebound.



Blue Line Options

Too often, option four (skate and shoot) is the only option attempted. If there is more than one defender in the way, this is not the best choice. A player should constantly be looking for a passing option.

Key Points for Players

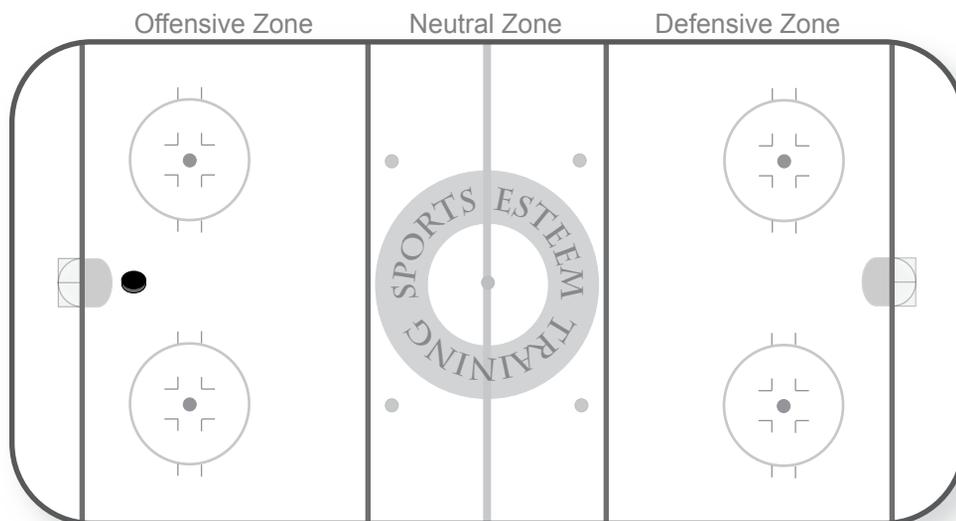
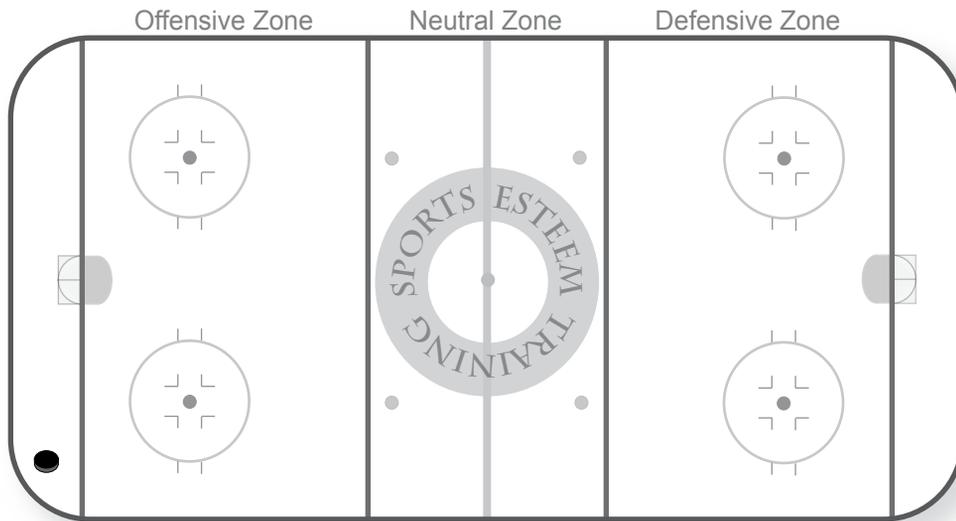
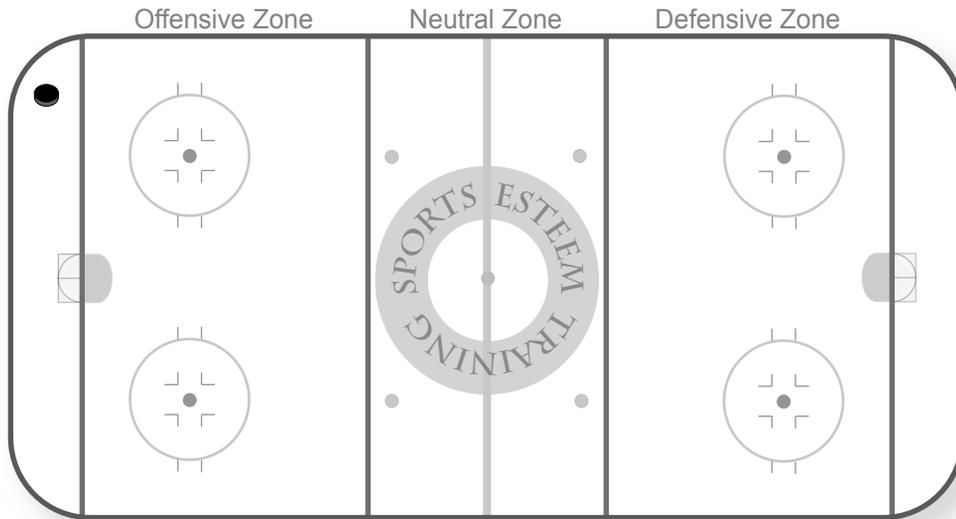
- Don't bunch up. Continue to move around and get open to receive a pass or take a shot.
- When the puck is on your side of the boards, work hard to get the puck to the center of the net and then crash the net to get yourself in position for a rebound.
- If the puck is on the other side of the ice, get to a good support position to receive a pass or crash the net.

Exercises

1. List four things you can do with the puck to get it into the offensive zone:



2. On the following diagrams, shade the area where the right winger should be playing.



POSITION

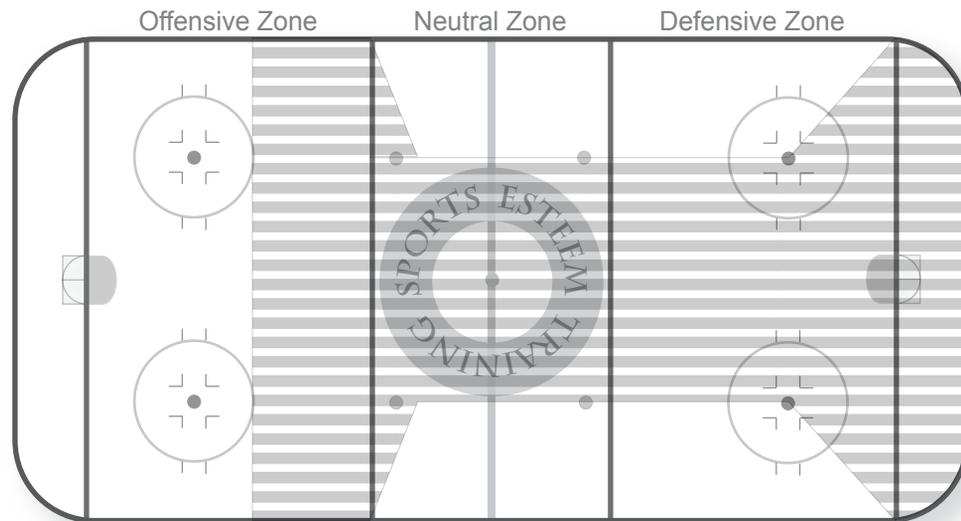




Defense - Overview

Discussion

The defensemen are responsible for working with the goalie to defend the net. In the offensive zone, defensemen also help keep the puck in the zone and prevent breakaway chances by the opposing team. For a player to be a good defenseman, he must constantly play smart by staying in the right position and anticipating what could happen next.



Defense Position

The golden rule for all defensive players is:

- Stay between your opponents and your net.

Following this golden rule of defense, defensemen should try to do the following:

- Force the puck to the sides and keep the puck out of the center of the ice
- Clear the puck out of the danger zone by hitting the puck to the boards for the wingers
- Be prepared for an unexpected breakaway in the offensive and neutral zones.

**Golden
Rule of
Defense**



A defenseman should work closely with his other defenseman. Together, they should:

**Defensive
Teamwork**

- Always have one defenseman in front of the net while the other is working the corner
- Be in a good position to receive a pass from the other in the neutral and offensive zones
- Communicate with each other to help direct efforts.

The forwards on the team are there to help regain control of the puck. Defensemen should focus on protecting the net first and regaining the puck second.

Key Points for Parents

- To play good defense, players should have a solid understanding of position play. With good positioning, even younger players can become great defensemen.
- Help reinforce that defense is as important as scoring goals.

Key Points for Players

- Stay positioned so that you are always between your opponents and your net.
- Defense is just as important to winning games as offense.
- Good defense creates more offensive opportunities.
- Move the puck up to forwards as soon as possible to get the puck out of the danger zone.

Exercises

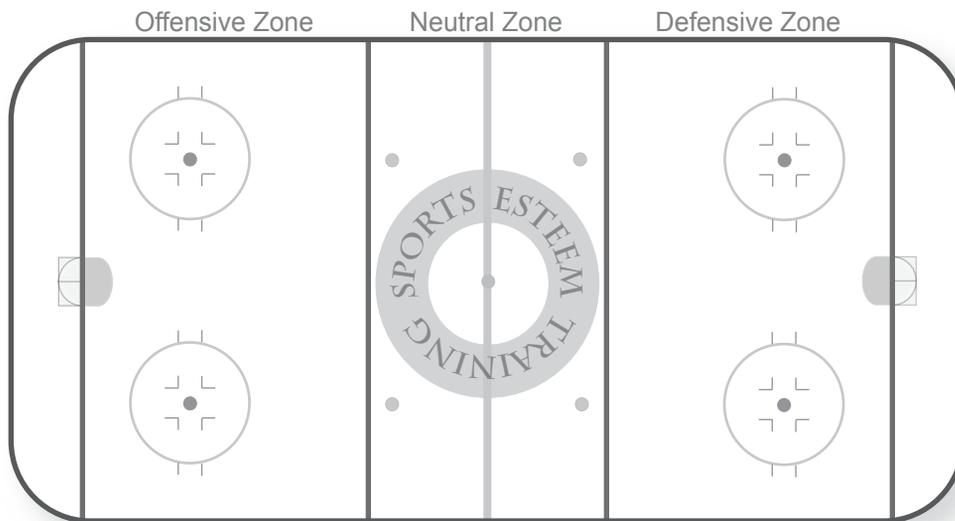
1. What is the golden rule of defense?

2. Check all the following that indicate good defense:

- Puck quickly cleared from danger zone
- Few shots on goal
- Bad angle shots
- Few breakaways by opponents
- More time in the offensive zone
- Better team spirit



3. On the following diagram, shade the area the defensemen should play.



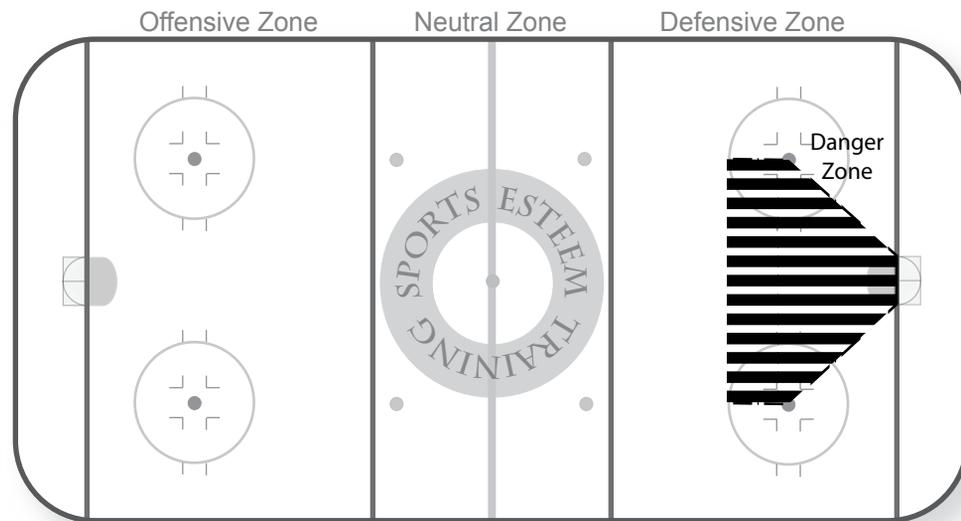
4. Go to a game of more experienced hockey players and carefully watch where the defensemen skate on the ice.



Defense – Defensive Responsibilities

Discussion

Opponents can't score unless they get the puck to the front of net for a shot. If defensemen can prevent the puck from getting to the front of the net, they can prevent scores. Keeping the puck out of the danger zone in front of the net becomes a defenseman's primary responsibility.



Danger Zone

To play good defense in front of the net, a defenseman should:

Defense Responsibilities

- Stay between his opponents and his net (golden rule)
- Clear the puck out of the danger zone
- Force the puck handler wide so that there is no shot with a good angle
- Force the puck to the corners and behind the net where there is no direct shot to the goal
- Cover opponents in front of the net to block or intercept passes

The puck could stay in the defensive zone corners or behind the net all day long and not be a scoring threat. It is only when the puck moves to the front of the net that there is a problem. Protecting the danger zone by not getting out of position is the best way to keep opponents from scoring.



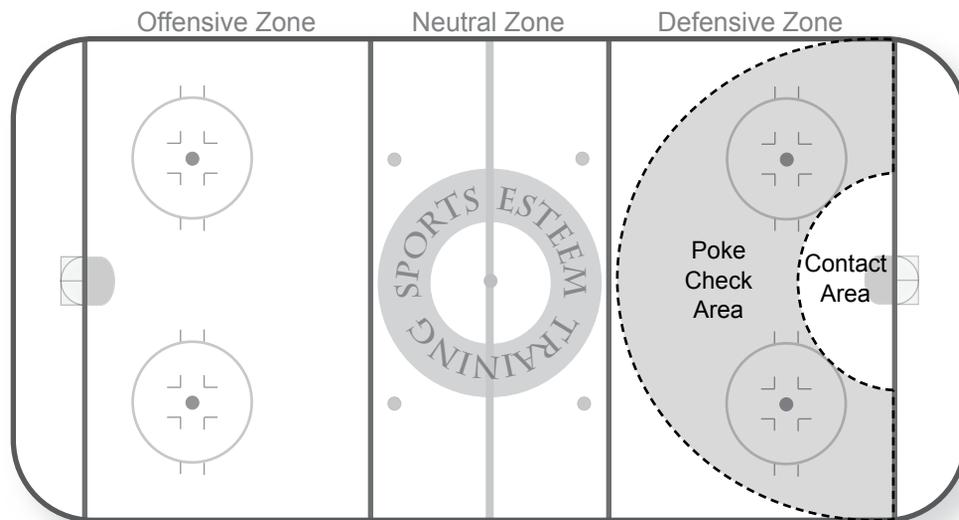
Challenging Opponents

In many game situations, a defenseman must think quickly to prevent a shot on goal. If the other team has control of the puck in the neutral zone or in the corner, a defenseman must decide the best way to challenge the puck carrier.

Deciding when to challenge is based on two problems. The first is that if the puck carrier is challenged too soon, the player may be able to get by the defenseman and have a clear breakaway to the goal. The second is that if the defenseman challenges too late, he might back in too deep and interfere with his own goalie trying to make the save or let the opponent get well positioned in the middle of the ice for a good scoring chance. Knowing how far away to play from the puck handler or how much “gap” to allow helps solve these problems.

The best way for a player to think about gap is to use a couple of areas on the ice to help determine position. The poke check area extends to the blue line. The contact area extends just in front of the goal. Within the poke check area, a defenseman should move to stay between the puck handler and his own net and within distance to poke check the puck. In the contact area, there should be no gap between the defenseman and the puck handler. The defenseman should have the puck handler’s stick tied up and be between the opponent and his own net.

The key is to minimize the gap with the other player through the poke check area and make contact before the net. Players should avoid lunging at the puck in the poke check area and instead let the opponent come to them to close the gap.



Defensive Gap Positioning

The poke check and contact areas don't extend to the area behind the goal line since an opponent can't score from there. The only time a defenseman should be behind the net is when the other defenseman is covering the front of the net and challenging the puck handler can be done without risking the puck handler getting around the defenseman to the front of the net.

In the poke check area, the defender should be in the middle of the ice close to the puck handler. In this position, he can force the puck handler wide away from the middle of the ice. A puck handler forced wide has less chance to score. As the puck handler gets close enough for the defenseman to attempt a poke check, the defenseman must be careful to use just his arm to poke check and not his entire body. Using the entire body can throw the defenseman off balance letting the puck handler get around him.

Approaching

Many times, opponents' offensive attacks begin outside the defensive zone. Then, the defenseman must determine how far away to play from the puck handler.

Generally, a defenseman wants to be in front of the puck handler all the way down the ice to help direct the puck handler away from the middle of the ice. If the puck handler is farther away, the defenseman should actually skate forward to approach the puck carrier and then switch to backward skating to block the puck handler's path to the net. Beyond the poke check area, defensemen should be two to three stick lengths away from the puck handler, based on how fast they can skate backward. A player should move his feet from backward skating to forward skating as necessary to gain and maintain speed.

Clearing the Puck

As defensemen clear the puck out of the danger zone, the wingers and other members of the team should be in position to clear the puck out of the defensive zone. Defensemen should never try to clear the puck by aiming for the blue line but should aim for the boards and let their teammates take the puck out. This not only better protects the danger zone but also helps set up an offensive attack.

Key Points for Parents

- Help your player understand how to protect the danger zone, play position and not simply chase the puck in the defensive zone.

Key Points for Players

- Protect the danger zone. Make sure the front of the net is protected at all times.
- Never let the puck stay in the danger zone, but always clear it to the boards.
- The defenseman must be between the opponents and his own net at all times.
- Wait until you reach the face-off circles to close the gap with the puck handler.
- Don't lunge for the puck. Let the opponent come to you.



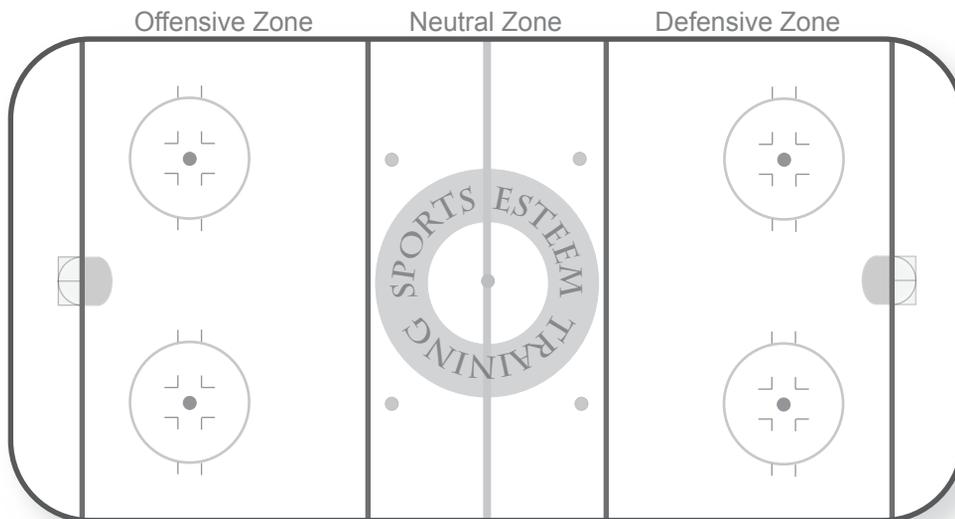
Exercises

1. What is the one area of the ice that the defensemen should most worry about?

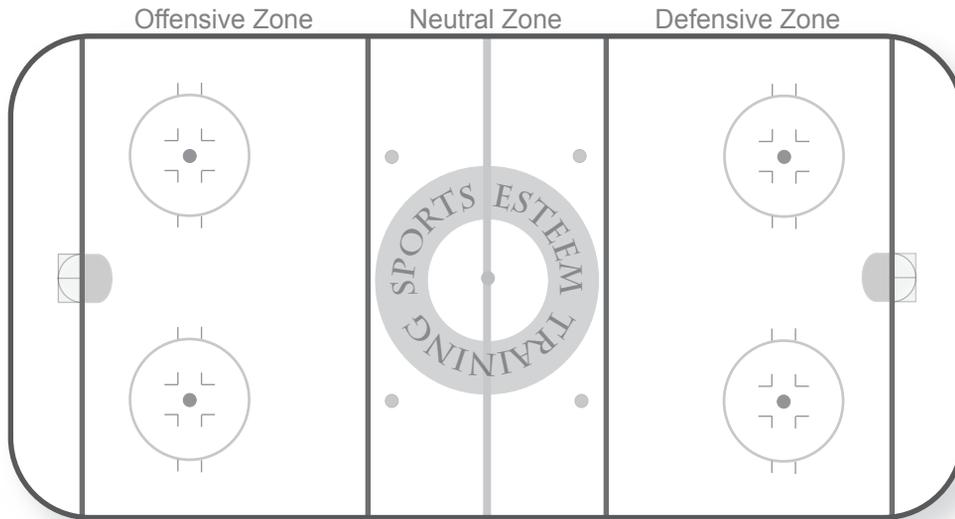
2. Where does a defenseman always want to force the puck carrier in the defensive zone?

3. What is the golden rule of defense?

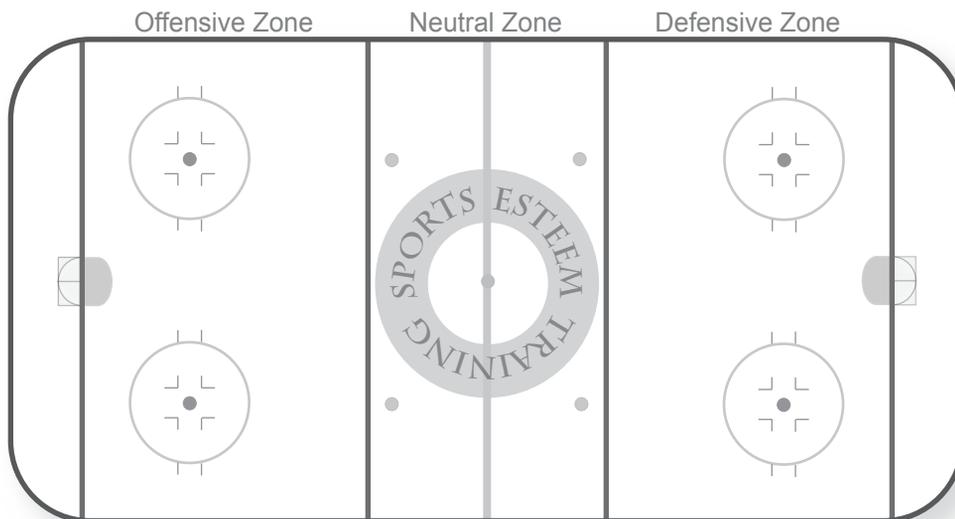
4. On the following diagram, draw the area where the right defenseman should be playing in the defensive zone.



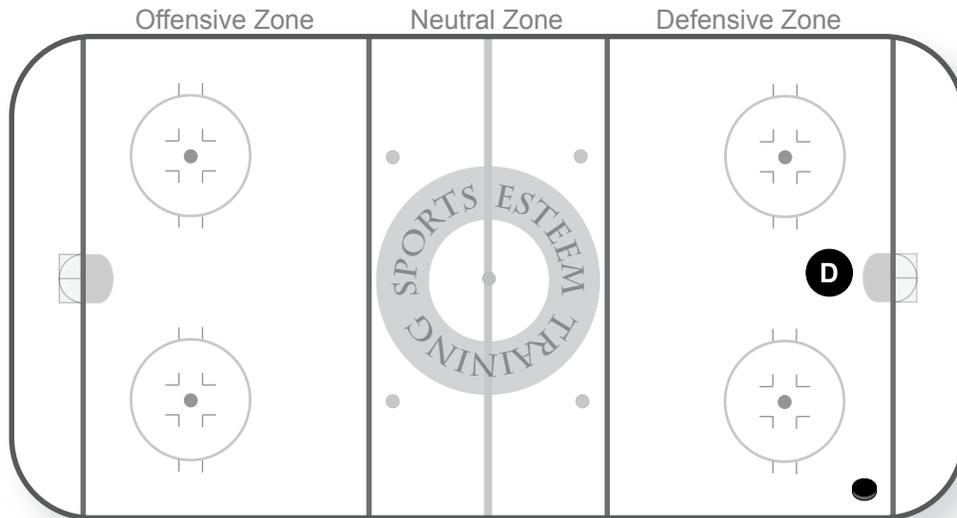
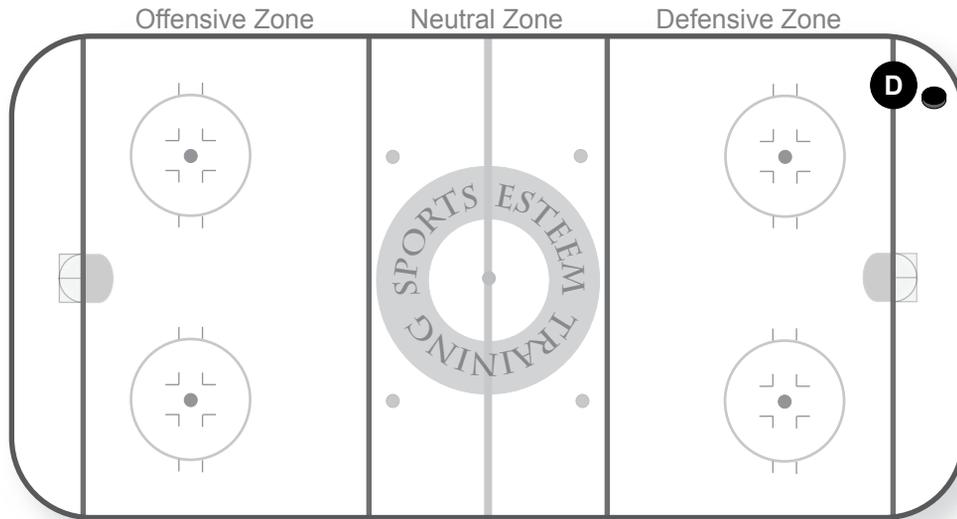
5. On the following diagram, draw the poke check area where defensemen should be within a stick length of his opponent.

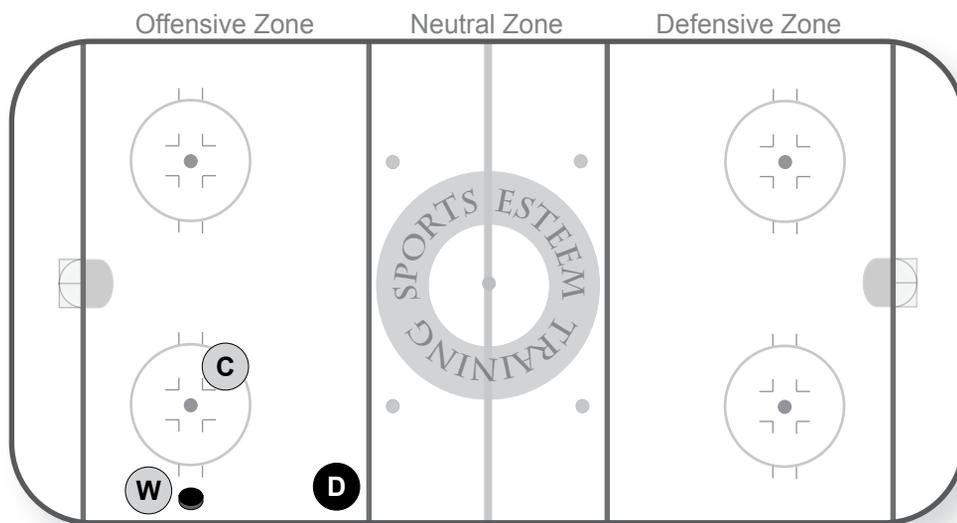
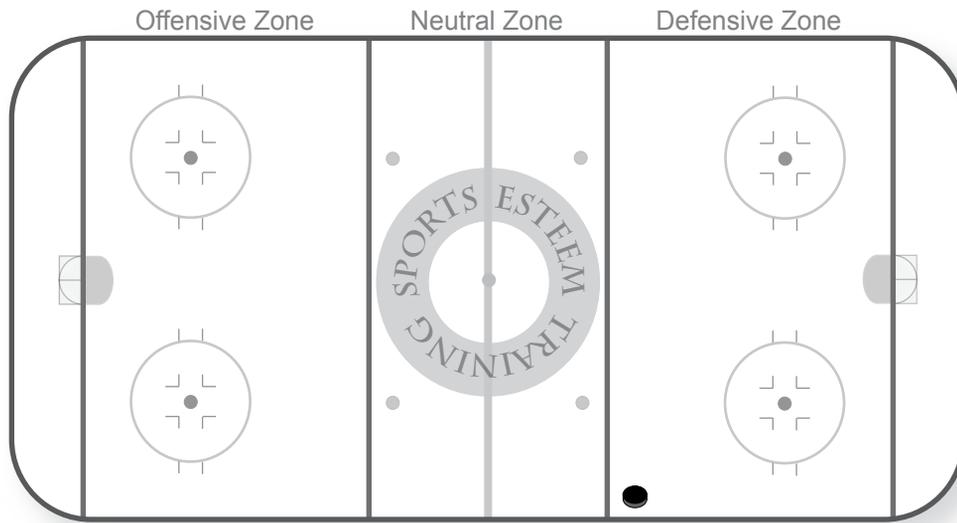


6. On the following diagram, draw the contact area where a defenseman should have his opponent's stick tied up.



7. On the following diagrams, shade the area where the left defenseman should be playing based on where the puck and the other players are located.





POSITION

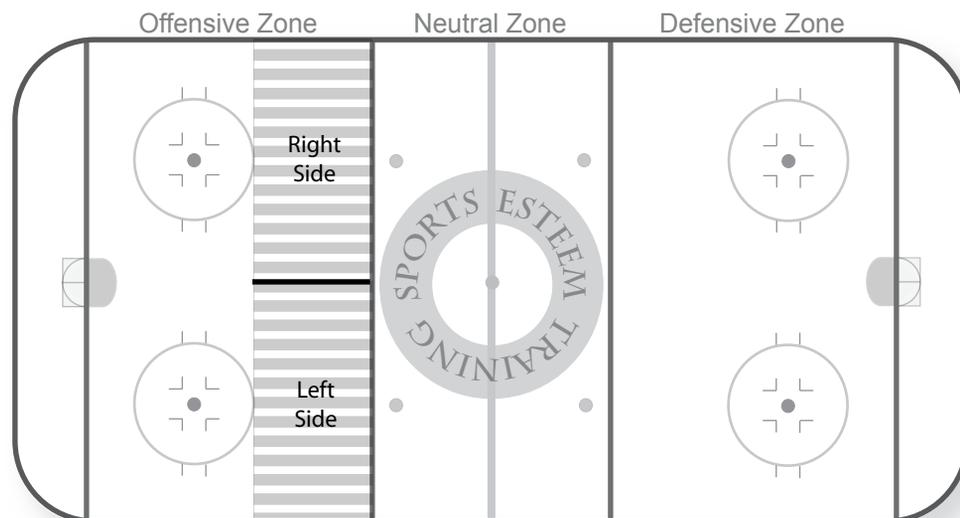




Defense – Offensive Responsibilities

Discussion

In the offensive zone, just like the defensive zone, the defensemen's first responsibility is to protect their own net. In the offensive zone, defensemen move around on either the left side or right side of the ice just inside the blue line to protect against an attack by the opposing team. When they are able, defensemen also try to keep the puck in the zone by passing it to a forward or shooting at the net.



Defensive Positioning in the Offensive Zone

Within his area in the offensive zone, a defenseman moves around based on the location of the puck. If the puck is in the near corner, the defenseman moves near the boards inside the blue line to try to keep the puck from being easily cleared. If the puck is in the far corner, the defenseman moves to the center inside the blue line to protect the middle of the ice in case the puck is turned over to the opposing team.

If it looks like the opposing team has possession of the puck, the defenseman should immediately start getting in position to defend his net. If the puck is behind the opposing net, he should wait until the opposing team starts moving the puck forward. If the puck is near the blue line, he should hurry to get between the puck and his own net.

The defenseman should match speed with his opponent and get ready to begin a defensive play in the defensive zone. Defensemen should not allow too large a gap between themselves and their opponents since this gives the opponents too much room to work. As the defensemen leave the offensive zone, they should stay in the middle of the ice to force the play wide.

If the opposing team does not have possession of the puck as it moves along the boards to the point, a defenseman can attempt to regain the puck and keep it in. However, the other defenseman must immediately move back to back up his partner.

Key Points for Players

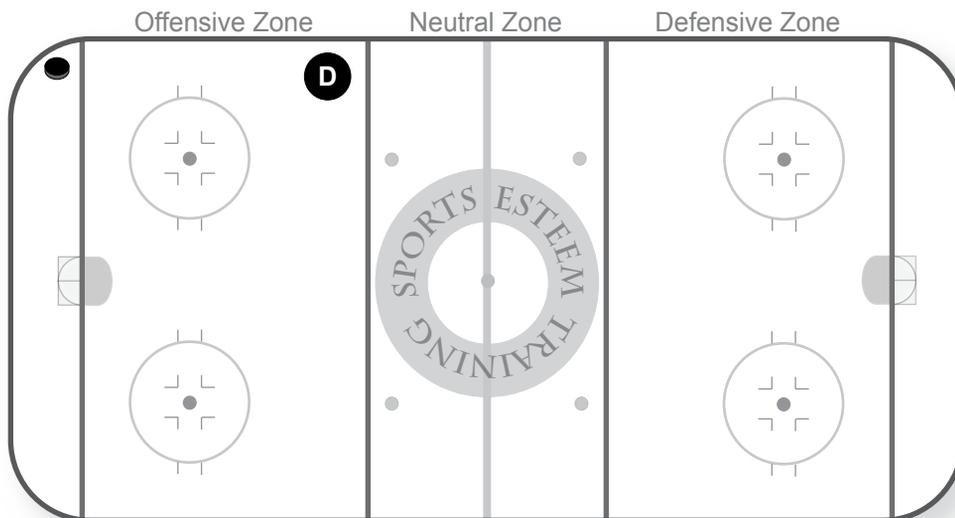
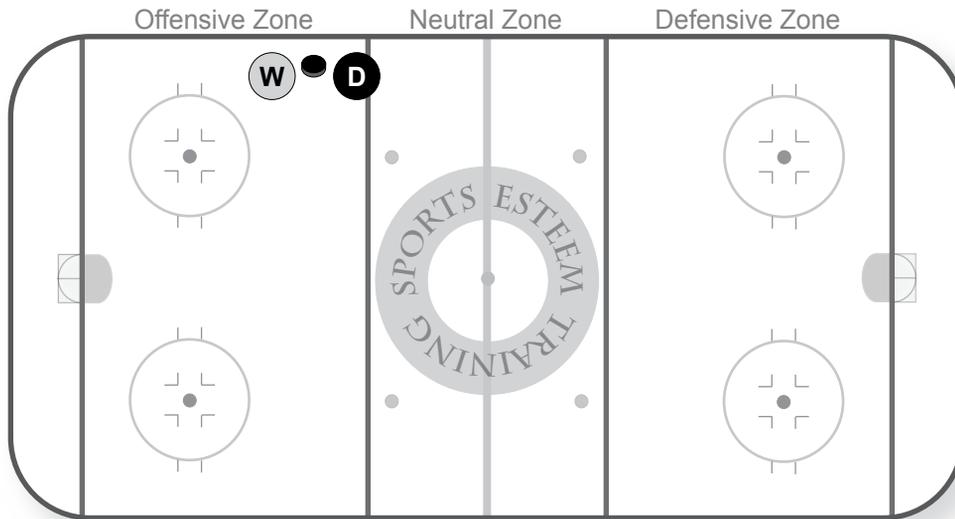
- Only attempt to keep the puck in the offensive zone if you know your other defenseman is backing you up and the other team has not already gotten possession.
- If the other team regains possession of the puck, start backing up down the middle of the ice as the other team moves toward you. Don't leave too early and allow a large gap to exist between yourself and your opponents.
- Keep between your own net and all opposing players.
- If your defensive partner is trying to hold the puck in the zone, move to the center of the ice and out of the zone to back him up.
- If the puck comes to you at the blue line, look for a clear lane to pass it forward or shoot it at the net.

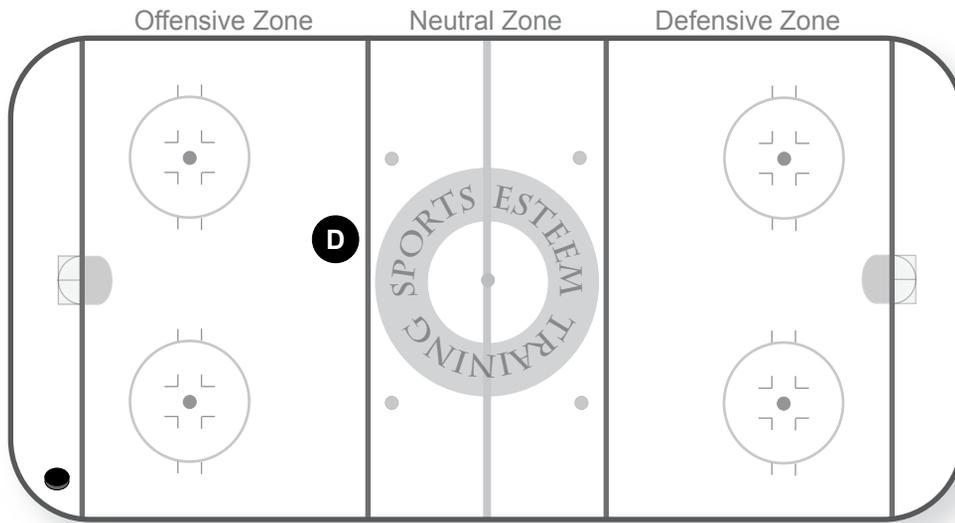


Exercises

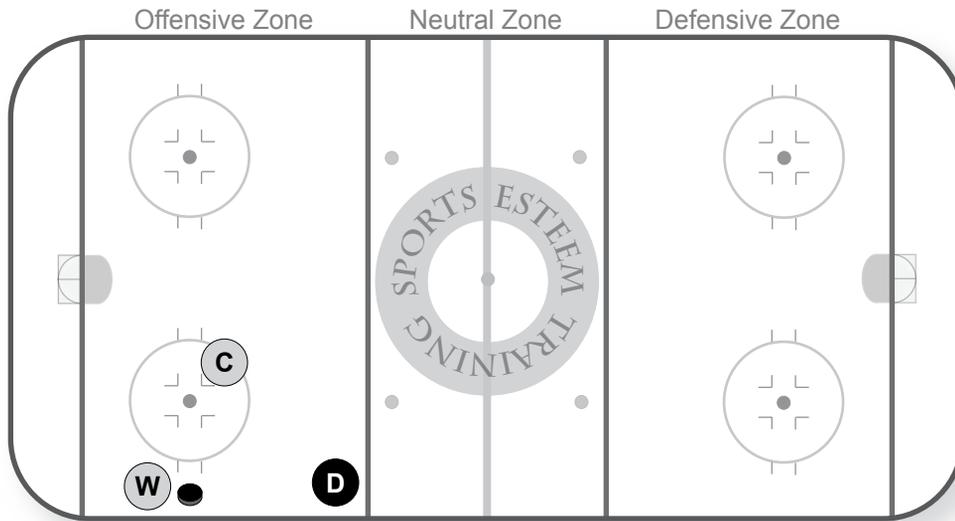
1. Even in the offensive zone, what is the number one thing a defenseman worries about?

2. On the following diagrams, draw where the left defenseman should play based on the location of the puck and of the right defenseman.





3. If the other team has possession of the puck in the following diagram, what should the left defenseman do?



4. If the defensemen must move back into the neutral zone, where should they be?

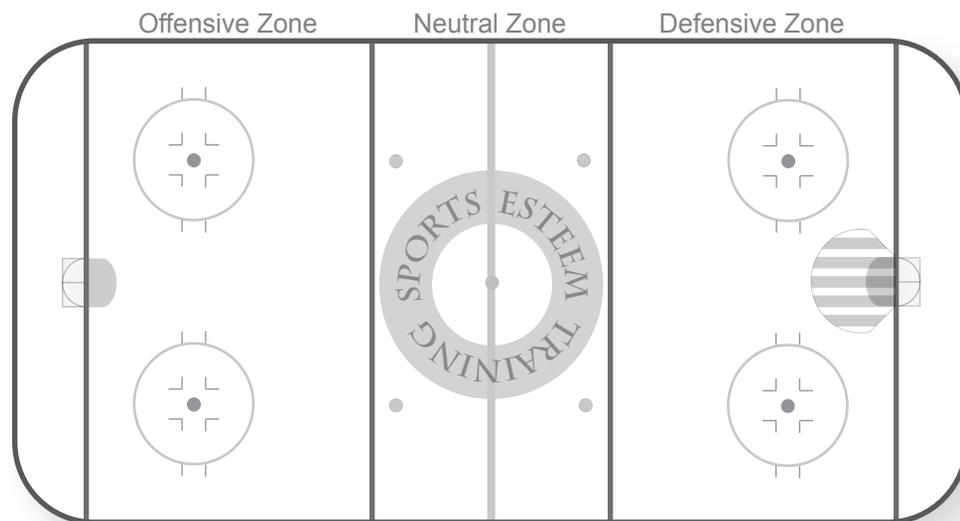


Goalie

Discussion

Goalies have one of the hardest jobs on the team both physically and mentally. Not only does a goalie need quickness and skill to stop shots, but he must also be mentally tough to continue to play well after he is scored against. Although the whole team is responsible for stopping shots, a goalie is the last line of defense for the team.

A goalie's position doesn't cover a lot of ice. His area is from between the cross bars to just outside the goal crease that is marked as the blue area in front of the goal. However, a goalie must constantly move around within his area to block shots. Some goalies use their skates to chop up the crease area to make it less slippery. If the ice is rough in front of the net, it can help slow the puck.



Goalie Position

Most shots saved by a goalie are a result of being in the correct position rather than being quick. For a goalie, position is a combination of stance and location in front of the goal.

To play good position, goalies should:

**Goalie
Positioning**

- Be in a good hockey stance
- Stay square to the puck
- Keep their stick straight and firmly down on the ice
- Have their glove opened up and their blocker facing toward the shooter
- Stay up as long as possible
- Communicate with defensemen
- Cover the puck at every chance to control rebounds

Stay Square to the Puck

Staying square to the puck means a goalie is facing the puck with his chest and legs as well as his head. To stay square with the puck, a goalie needs to:

**Staying
Square to
the Puck**

- Stay between the goal posts
- Stay in his goalie stance
- Face the player with the puck and keep the puck centered between his shoulders
- Be ready to move left and right or in and out

A goalie stance is basically a hockey stance with the goalie stick firmly down on the ice, the glove hand out and ready and the blocker not overlapping the pad.



Goalie Square Position

Keep the Stick on the Ice

The goalie stick is one of the most effective ways to stop shots. The goalie should keep his stick firmly on the ice with the blade facing the puck. Pushing the stick down, instead of just letting it rest on the ice, helps prevent hard shots from getting through and assures the goalie that it has not accidentally been raised.



The shaft should be held straight up so that the puck does not roll up the blade like a ramp and into the net. As the goalie moves around between the goal posts and in and out from the net, he must work to keep his stick down and his blocker and glove in proper position.

Stay Up

Goalies should only drop down to block rebound shots aimed at the other side of the net. Shots at the goalie should always be played standing up to make better use of the goalie stick and to help protect the top of the net.

Movement creates holes for the puck to get past the goalie. Opponents want the goalie to drop down before they shoot so that they can have the top of the net wide open and have areas underneath the goalie. Goalies must be patient and let the opponent show him where he is shooting the puck.

Communicate with Defensemen

Goalies must work as a team with their defensemen. Defensemen need to protect the front of the net to block shots and to clear rebounds out of the danger zone. Goalies should talk to their defensemen to let them know about problems such as when they are blocking a goalie's view or when an opponent is left uncovered in front of the net. Good communication is a skill and should be practiced as much as possible.

Cover the Puck

The first shot a goalie faces is often the easiest. The toughest shot a goalie must face is the rebound. Rebounds in front of the net are great opportunities for the other team to score. As a goalie blocks the shot, he should immediately worry about the rebound. If the puck is in front of the net, the goalie should drop down to cover the puck and stop play. A face-off is always better than a loose puck in front of the net.

Key Points for Parents

- It is hard to see your child scored on. However, it takes many scores for players to master the position. Encourage your child to keep trying.
- Don't blame the rest of the team for shots on goal or goals scored. Each shot at the goalie is a chance for him to develop his skills.
- Goalie is a lonely position. Encourage your child to be creative at practice to improve his skills since coaches don't always have much time to focus on the goalie position.

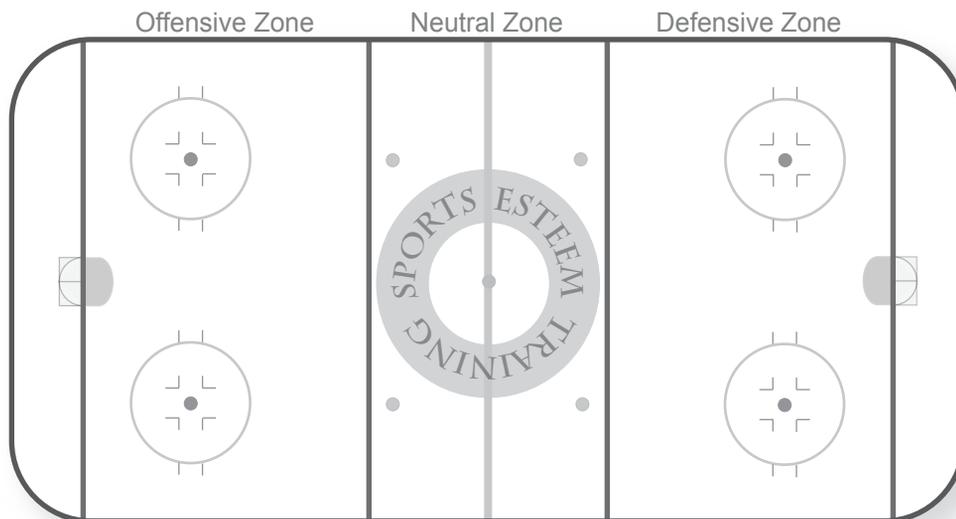


Key Points for Players

- Goalies get scored on no matter how good they are. A positive attitude after letting one in keeps more out.
- Don't quit on any puck. Each shot is an opportunity to learn and improve.
- Always be alert to a shot, even an accidental one from your own players.
- Stay up as long as possible. Once you go down, the top of the net is wide open.
- Keep your body squared to the shooter.
- Keep your stick firmly on the ice at all times, even when moving or dropping down.

Exercises

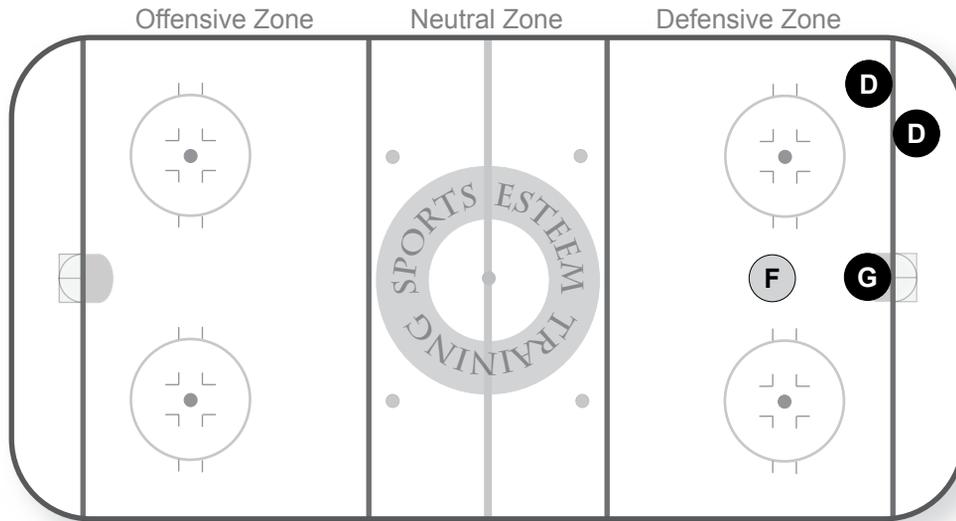
1. On the following diagram, shade the area the goalie should play.



2. At the next practice where you will face a lot of shots, try these challenges to make practice more interesting. Staying in a proper goalie stance, between each shot:
 - Touch each goal post with your stick
 - Touch each goal post with your skates
 - Move your hand up and down the stick
 - Skate around the back of the net



3. Based on the following diagram, as goalie what would you communicate to your defensemen?



POSITION

4. (ICE TIME) Change the way you stop shots at practice by:

- Trying to block shots at different distances from the goal
- Stopping shots with a skate blade
- Stopping shots with the glove
- Stopping shots with the stick using the stick shaft

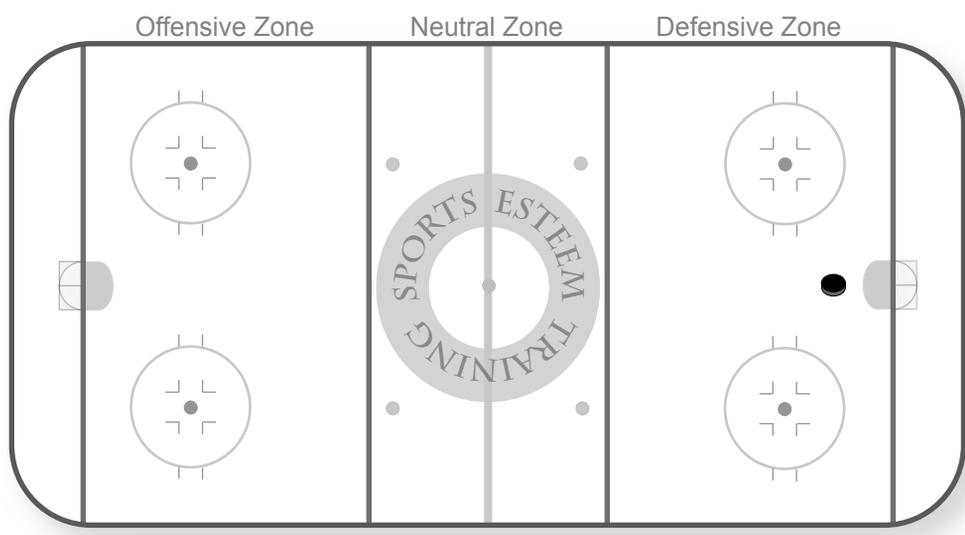
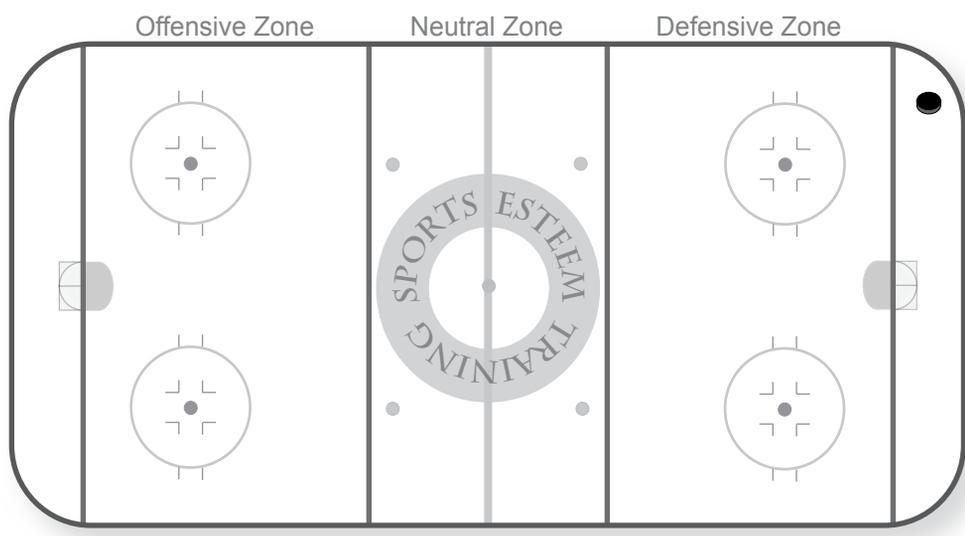




Team Position Exercises

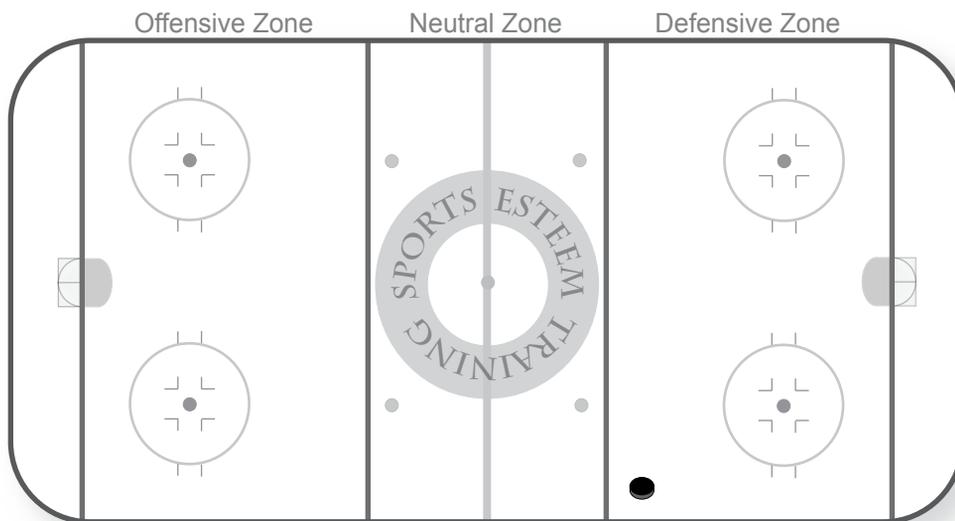
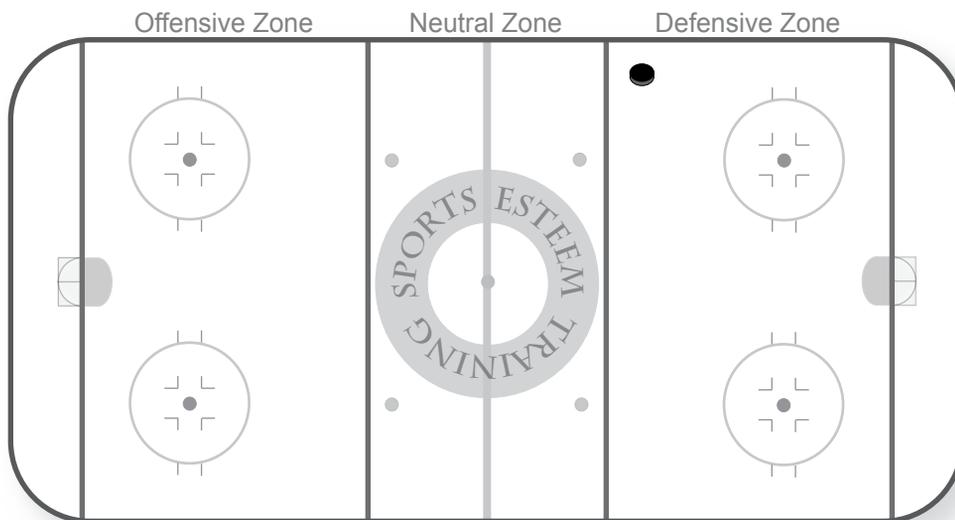
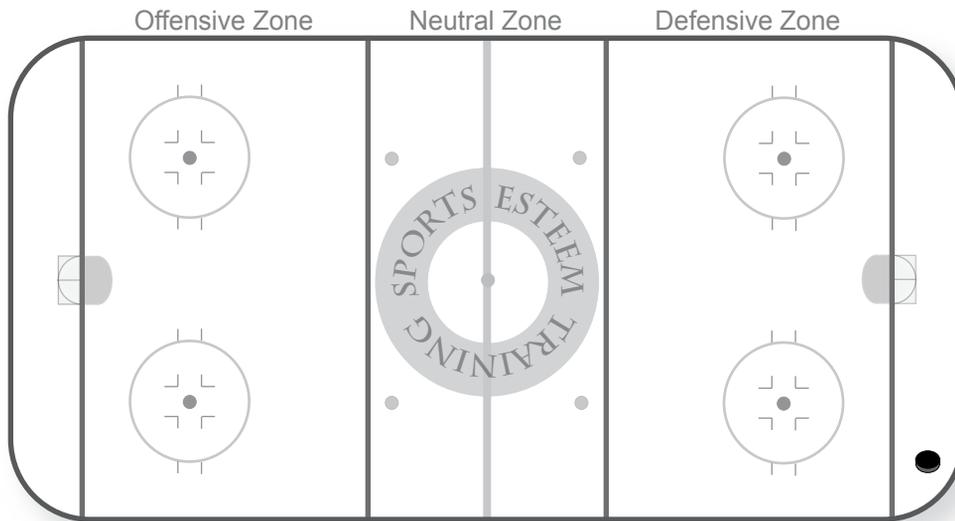
Exercises

1. Assuming your team doesn't have control of the puck, place your team's players in the defensive zone based on the location of the puck.

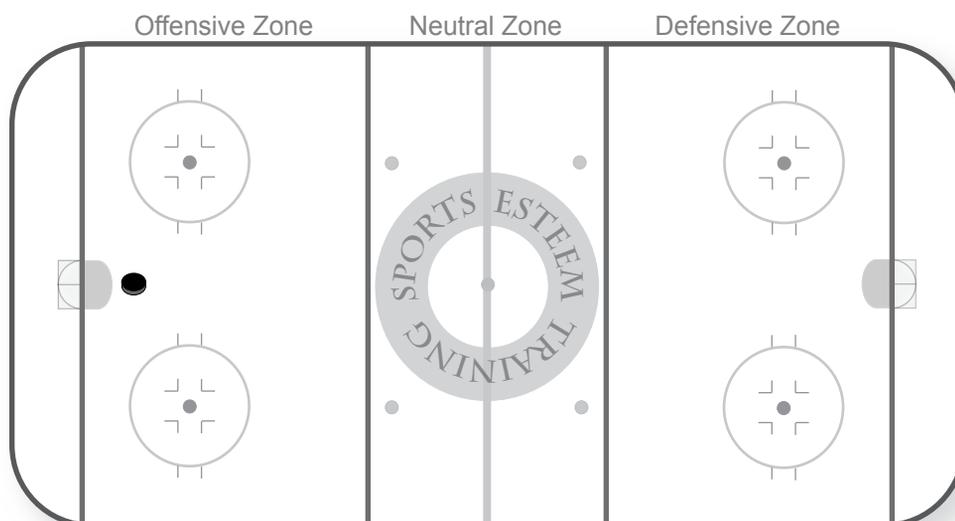
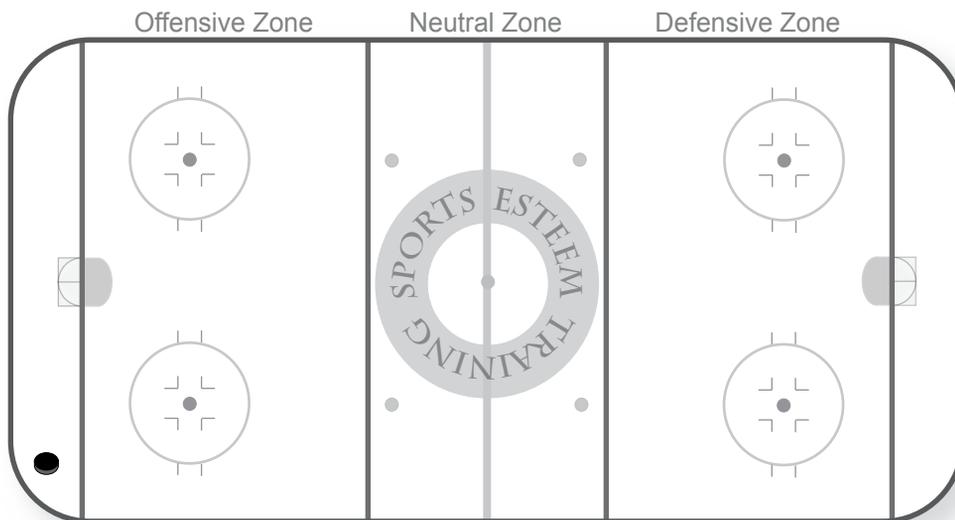
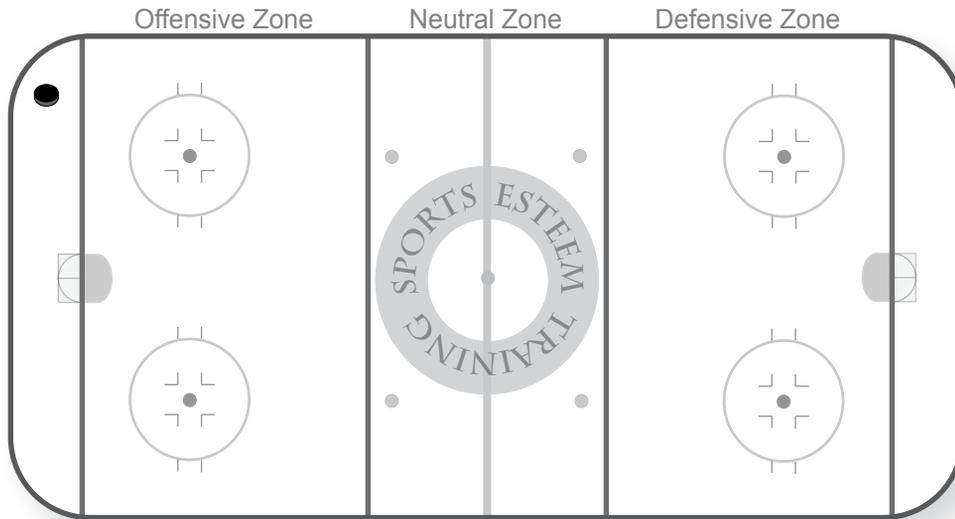


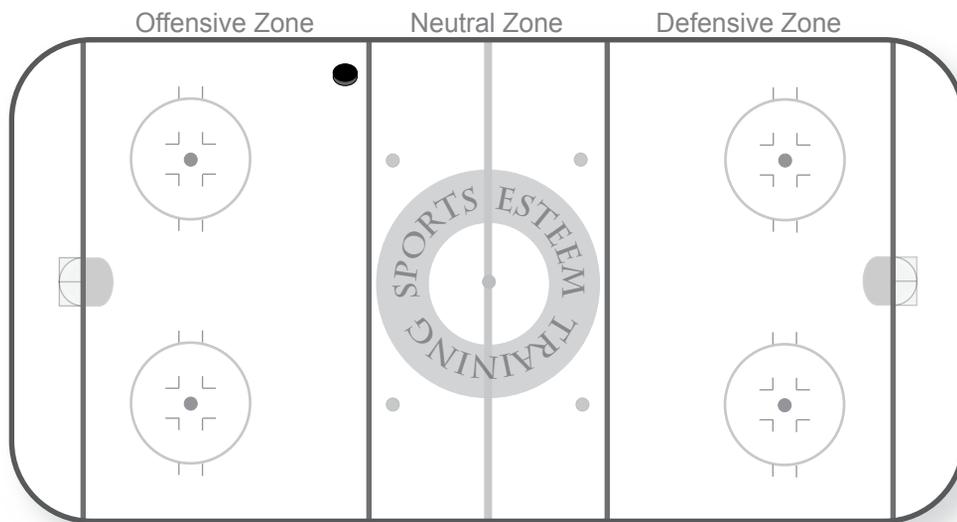
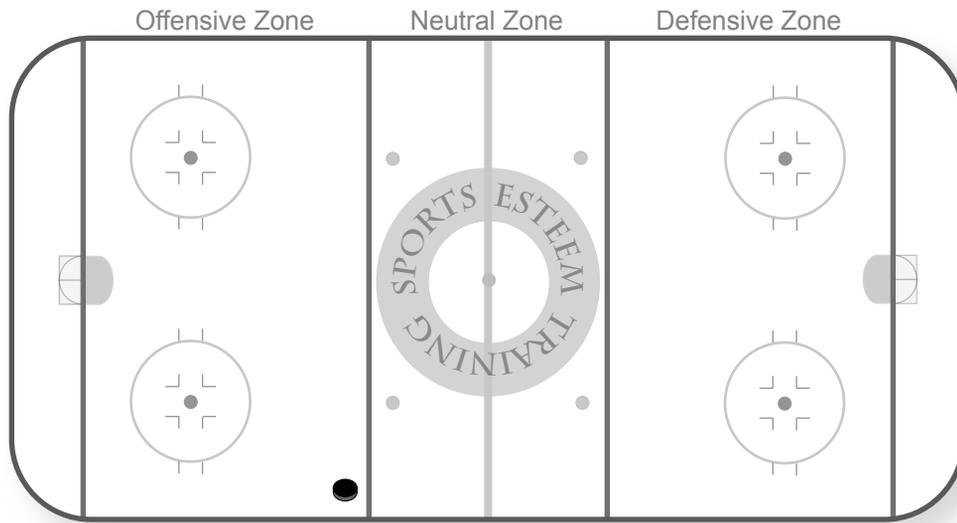
POSITION

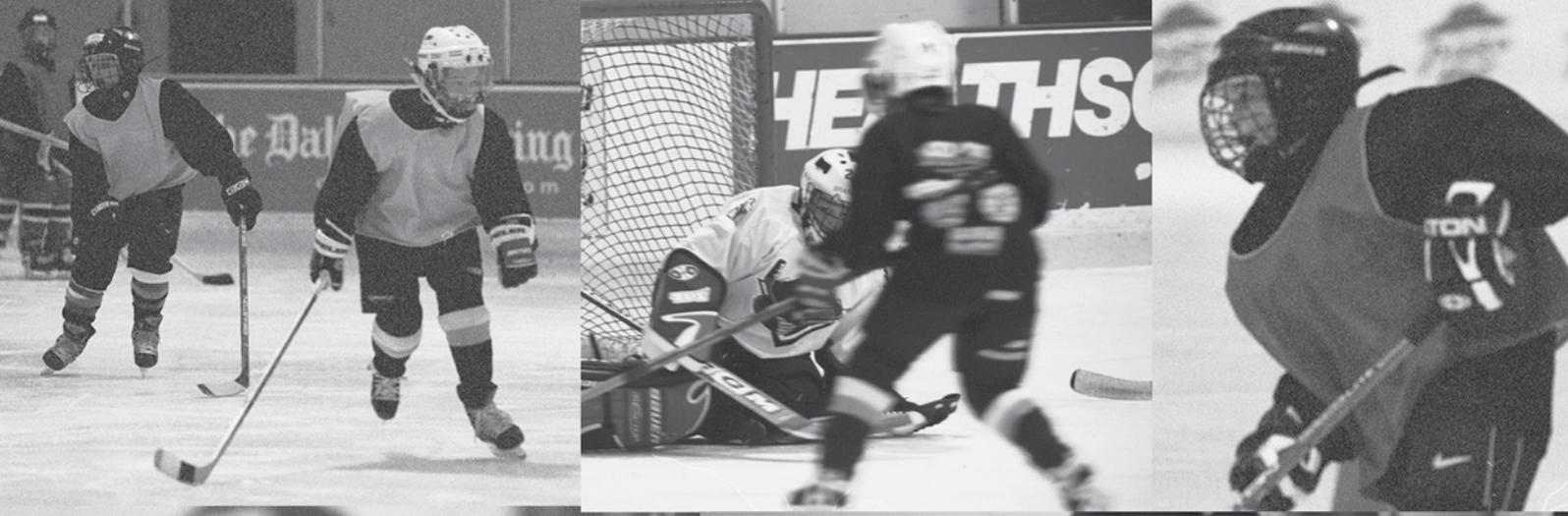




2. Assuming your team has control of the puck, place your team's players in the offensive zone based on the location of the puck.







ATTITUDE



Attitude

No one masters hockey. There is too much to learn and every game presents a new combination of challenges and opportunities. A positive attitude is essential to becoming a better player.

Attitude is a combination of physical and mental approaches. A positive attitude is demonstrated in many ways such as:

Positive Attitude

- Giving maximum physical effort on the ice
- Staying positive no matter what is happening in the game
- Being open to new ideas
- Seeking ways to improve your game
- Being constructive when problems come up
- Focusing on team play and cooperation
- Listening
- Setting and working toward personal goals

Having a good attitude can give a player an edge over someone else who is quicker or faster but lacks a good attitude. Hockey can be a very frustrating sport. When playing against a good opponent, players often encounter constant frustrations trying to pass, stick handle, shoot or block shots. Having a good attitude in the face of frustration is critical to improving skills and having fun.

Kids who work hard and listen always seem to do well. Kids who are gifted athletically but who don't have these skills are eventually overtaken by less gifted players playing as a team.

Good players find a way to contribute no matter what role they are asked to play. Even just sitting on the bench is an opportunity to show encouragement and recognition to the other players on a team and gives you a great chance to watch and learn.





Team Play

Discussion

At the mini-mite age level, games are often determined by the skills of one player who is a little taller, quicker or stronger than the others. However, as players progress and start playing as a team, it becomes much harder for one player to make a difference by himself. Players who learn early to work with their teammates have much greater success than those who focus more on their own efforts. Playing as a team involves several things. These include:

Team Play

- Sharing credit for things that go right
- Not blaming others for things that go wrong
- Winning and losing together
- Making sure everyone is involved in the game
- Helping others improve their play
- Passing to a player in a better position
- Getting open to receive a pass from a player
- Playing a position well
- Trusting teammates to play their positions well

Sometimes players have the opportunity to play with more talented players and sometimes with less talented. Good team play is the same no matter who is playing. Playing position and passing are important elements of hockey. Players with lesser skill need the support and encouragement of those players with better skill in order to improve their game. Better players should share the puck to improve the level of team play and demonstrate their leadership abilities. Teamwork is about sharing and helping the team play well and score goals.

Key Points for Parents

- One of the hardest things to learn as a child is that passing the puck rather than taking the shot is what it takes to demonstrate skill and win games. Always emphasize team play over individual goal scoring.

Key Points for Players

- Every player must contribute and work together for a team to be successful. Lead by example to make the team better.
- Playing as a team is the quickest way to win games. "Team" is another way to say: **T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore.



Exercises

1. List two things you did in your last game that made you a good team player.

2. List two things you can do in your next game to become a better team player.

3. Check all the statements that show examples of good team play:

- Passing around an opponent instead of trying to stick handling through them
- Looking for an open teammate before stick handling the puck
- Backing up your other teammates
- Staying in your position
- Helping a lesser skilled player
- Congratulating players on a good job
- Paying attention to the game while on the bench
- Playing your hardest
- Paying attention to the coach
- Communicating with your teammates
- Not blaming others for mistakes
- Learning the names of your other teammates
- Passing to a lesser skilled player



Listening

Discussion

It is hard for a player to learn when he is not listening. Although it might seem simple, listening is actually hard work and requires good self-discipline. To listen well, a player's mind can't be thinking about something else, his eyes can't be wandering and his body should be still. This allows players to hear what is being said, think about it, understand it, recognize what isn't understood and ask good questions. To really listen well, a player's mind has to work as hard as his body does while skating.

Players should keep their mind open to what is being said. If the coach starts by saying "Let's talk about stick handling" and the player thinks that he already knows all there is to know about stick handling, he won't really be listening to what is said next. Players should always assume that they are about to learn something new or about to learn more about something they already know.

Listening involves using the eyes as well as the ears. Players should watch what the coach and other players are doing to make sure they fully understand what is being said. They should especially look to other players to see if there are ways to do things better.

Key Points for Parents

- It is not unusual for younger players to have trouble staying still and paying attention. But, the more they enjoy the sport, the better they listen.
- Encourage kids not to be shy and to ask questions when they don't understand something.
- Every coach has something to offer. Children who listen always learn and progress faster.

Key Points for Players

- Focus your eyes and ears. Where the eyes are, the ears will follow.
- Watch drills and other players to get better.
- Coaches like having kids who listen on their team.
- If you have trouble standing still, go down on one knee.



Exercises

1. List three times when you think you did a good job of listening to your coach and what you learned as a result of it.

2. Watch a game on television and record information learned during the game concerning:

Positioning: _____

Skating: _____

Passing: _____

3. Start a journal of new things you are learning about hockey.



Leadership

Discussion

Leadership has a special place in hockey. In many of the upper age levels of hockey, teams select their own captains who are officially designated to discuss calls with officials during a game and help communicate with players and the coaches in the locker room.

Ideally, team captains are role models to other players and lead by encouragement and example. Team captains are not necessarily the best player on the team but they are respected. Besides the team captain, other players provide leadership to a team by what they say and what they do. These players not only want to see their own play improve but that of their teammates as well. Leadership is shown by different ways including:

Leadership Examples

- Reaching out and making friends on the team
- Complimenting other players when they play well
- Encouraging other players when they make mistakes
- Encouraging teammates even when behind on the scoreboard
- Demonstrating hard work on the ice
- Sharing the puck
- Never throwing a fit when things don't go right
- Listening to the coaches
- Helping other players on the team to play better

Coaches need players to help provide leadership to the team and set a positive example for the other players.

Key Points for Parents

- Provide leadership and direction to your child as a role model for him to follow.
- Encourage your child to reach out to his teammates and learn their names and basic information such as what school they attend. The more your child knows about his teammates, the more he will enjoy playing on the team. This same point applies to parents.
- Encourage your child to share the puck with lesser skilled players.
- Never say bad things about another player on your child's team. Every player helps the team.



Key Points for Players

- Leaders are leaders because they influence others in a positive way.
- You can be a team leader even if you are not the team's best player.
- Encourage others even when things are bad.
- Only talk about positive things that help.
- Help beginning players become better players.

Exercises

1. Write down three things you can do at your next game to demonstrate team leadership.

2. List the names of three teammates, whose name you didn't know before the season.

3. Show leadership during your next game by going out of your way to pat a player on the back after a bad play or a good play even if he didn't do it for you.



Goal Setting

Discussion

Just like a hockey goal, a personal goal is something for which a player aims. Personal goals should help the team play better and smarter. They shouldn't make the player play more selfishly or distract from contributing to the team. For example, players who set a goal to score more goals may not share the puck or may not focus on playing good defense.

Some goals are best set for a game while others are best for a season. For example, good defensive goals during a game would include:

**Good
Personal
Goals**

- Make good passes to teammates
- Prevent shots on goal by opponents
- Always clear the puck to the boards
- Communicate with the other players

On offense, good goals during a game would include:

- Always look for a passing opportunity
- Win battles for control of the puck
- Be the hardest working player on the ice

If playing goalie, good goals during a game would include:

- Keep proper stance on every shot
- Use the glove hand more
- Never quit on any puck

Players should make their personal game goals reflect something that improves their play while also making the team a better team.



Key Points for Players

- Try to set reasonable goals before the start of every game and every season. Then afterwards, review how you did.
- Keep goals realistic and team oriented.

Exercises

1. Write one goal you would like to accomplish during the next game. After the game, review this goal to see how you did.

2. Write down three goals you would like to accomplish for the season. After the season is completed, review these three goals to see how you did.

3. Write down three goals you would like the team to accomplish for the season that are not winning related. After the season is completed, review these three goals to see how your team did.



Practices

Discussion

During a game, most players have the puck on their stick for only a few seconds. Rarely will a player ever get to make the same pass or shot twice. Because of this limited time and limited repetition, practice is the only way a player can improve his skills. For improving skills, practices are much more important than games.

During practice, players perform a variety of drills to help them:

Practice Objectives

- Stretch and warm up
- Build stamina
- Improve skating skills
- Improve shooting
- Improve position knowledge
- Improve team play

Some drills work on more than one area. Team practices are an essential part of hockey and should be treated just like games. Issues such as rest and nutrition are important for practices because a player usually gets more ice time and works harder during practice than in an actual game.

Key Points for Parents

- Encourage a good attitude at practice and make sure that practices are recognized to be as important as games.
- Encourage your child to enjoy practice and have fun while working hard to improve.
- During practice, log the amount of time your child has the puck. Then, for comparison, log how much time your child has the puck during a game.

Key Points for Players

- Games measure skill development. Practice builds skills.
- Have fun being on the ice and trying to improve your game.
- Work your hardest on every drill just like you would during a game. Coaches like players who take practice seriously and who want to get better.



Exercises

1. At your next practice, list two things you are going to try to improve:

2. Write down two personal goals for your next practice. Afterwards, review how you did.

3. List two things you can do to improve your practice habits:



Handling the Scoreboard

Discussion

Games are won and games are lost. Sometimes the margin of victory or loss is small. Sometimes the margin is large. Over the course of many games, players get the chance to experience all these variations. Players must learn to handle these games correctly by keeping control of their emotions and maintaining a positive attitude.

No matter what the score, there is always a reason to play your hardest. Even when a game looks hopeless, there are still things that can be achieved such as:

**Game
Objectives**

- Working hard to improve and learning not to quit
- Learning how to play against a better team
- Figuring out how to beat a team the next time you meet
- Working on team skills such as passing
- Working on personal skills such as stick handling.

Key Points for Parents

- Although losses are frustrating, they do not mean that the team and players are not learning.
- Encourage teamwork, fun and development. Do not emphasize personal or team standings.

Key Points for Players

- No matter what the score, always play your hardest. You can't control the scoreboard but you can control your attitude and efforts.
- As long as you keep playing, the next game always starts with the score 0-0.
- Whether you lose by one goal or twenty, the loss doesn't count any more or any less.
- Enjoy the challenge of playing a better team and try to learn what it is that makes them better.



Exercises

1. How would you handle the following situations? What would your attitude be towards your teammates, opponents and your own play? Assume there are only five minutes left in the game.

Your team is tied 2-2?

Your team is ahead 3-2?

Your team is ahead 5-2?

Your team is ahead 10-2?

Your team is behind 3-2?

Your team is behind 5-2?

Your team is behind 10-2?



Handling the Officials

Discussion

Officials are an essential part of a hockey game. They are there to keep track of the actions on the ice and provide fairness to both teams. Officials vary in age and experience. During a game, it is not uncommon for a player to disagree with a decision a referee makes or a penalty they don't call. As a player or parent, there is nothing that can be done in one game to alter an official's call.

Players and parents should view officials and the calls they make (both good and bad) as part of the game. Too much attention to an official's call simply lessens the value of learning and skills development.

Key Points for Parents

- An official's perspective on the ice is different from yours in the stands. They are able to see things you can't and won't be able to see things you can.
- There are bad calls made at every level of hockey. Referees are human and thus make mistakes.
- Everything you react to affects you child. Reacting to a bad call distracts your child and takes away from the fun of the sport.
- Coaches and parents should be role models for respecting the officials.

Key Points for Players

- Although you may disagree with an official's call during the game, there is little you can do about it except let it distract you from playing well. Never slam your stick on the ice or yell at a referee.
- Only the team captain or the coach can discuss a call with a referee.



Exercises

1. How would you handle the following situations?

Bad penalty call?

Bad off-sides call?

A disallowed goal?

A missed penalty call?

A quick whistle (before the goalie has the puck covered)?

A slow whistle (allowing play to continue after the goalie has the puck)?





SKILLS



Skills

Beginning players often want to get on the ice and start scoring goals. However, hockey requires a great deal of work even before the first game. For example, players require basic skating skills before ever joining a team.

Good skills are developed by good fundamentals. The very basic elements of hockey, such as stance, skating and grip, affect everything else. Done improperly, they affect a player's game and many player problems can be traced to poor fundamental skills.

Games are not the best way to develop skills. In a typical game an average player:

Typical Game Play

- Handles the puck for less than 15 seconds
- Gets 1 to 2 shots on goal
- Plays less than 12 shifts

Skills development takes a great deal of practice time both on and off the ice. If a player wants to improve his game, he will not get much opportunity to do so during a game. Hockey requires that a player works to become good in many areas. Learning to play different positions helps build all skills and gives kids time to explore their unique abilities.

Players excel at different skills at different times. Especially for young players whose bodies are still developing, muscles and bones are just not capable of advanced play. Early on it is more important for players to have fun, keep a good attitude and learn as much as they can. Unreasonable expectations by parents or players only cause frustration.

Individual Instruction

Although camps and private lessons may be expensive, they are often worth a dozen games for skills development. Take advantage of private instruction, clinics, open hockey times and other training to work on individual needs.





Stance

Discussion

The hockey stance is the most basic element of playing hockey. Everything a player does revolves around good stance. A player should be in his hockey stance from the time of the face-off until the shift is over. A good stance improves a player's:

Stance Benefits

- Strength
- Speed
- Ability to see the ice and other players
- Ability to keep from falling down
- Ability to move quickly from side to side
- Ability in passing, shooting and stick handling
- Balance and safety.

A good hockey stance starts with lacing the skates properly. Skates should be laced tight. The ankles should be supported by the skate but should still be flexible to permit a comfortable stance. Wrapping the laces or taping around the ankles keeps them from being flexible and interferes with skating.



*Don't Bend Over
Proper Stance*



Stay Upright

A hockey stance is not a natural way for the body to stand. Most players attempt to bend over to reach the ice rather than approach it from a hockey stance.



The key points of the stance are:

**Stance
Checklist**

- Feet should be shoulder width apart and upright, not leaning in or out
- Knees should be bent
- Upper body should be upright – Chest up, back straight and head up
- Shoulders should be over the knees and the knees over the toes
- Hands should be in proper position on the stick
- Stick blade should be on the ice in front, forming a triangle with the skates

When in the proper stance, a player should be sitting down on his skates with pressure felt in the laces. The player's weight should be balanced on the forward part of the foot.

Having a bad stance can tire a player out more quickly. If a player is having problems with his back during a game, a bad stance could be the problem.

Key Points for Parents

- Go over the hockey stance checklist with your child and make sure he is in the correct form.
- Be sure the stick is sized correctly for your child. A stick that is too short causes him to lean over too far. A stick that is too long causes him to bend his knees too little.

Key Points for Players

- Stay in your stance at all times while skating, shooting, passing and stick handling.
- When around other players, staying in your stance helps keep you from falling down.

Exercises

1. Practice going from a standing position into a hockey stance 20 times with your stick in both hands as if playing as a forward.
2. Practice going from a standing position into a hockey stance 20 times with your stick only in one hand as if playing as a defenseman.
3. Squats are a great exercise to build muscles for a better stance and also to reinforce the correct position. You should pick a number of squats to do each day and gradually increase the number.
4. Practice wall sits for at least 60 seconds to build leg muscles. Wall sits are done by leaning against the wall as if you were sitting down but with nothing supporting you underneath. The thighs should be level.



5. In front of a full length mirror, get into your hockey stance and have your parent check off the stance checklist below.
- Feet should be shoulder width apart and upright, not leaning in or out
 - Knees should be bent
 - Upper body should be upright – Chest up, back straight and head up
 - Shoulders should be over the knees and the knees over the toes
 - Hands should be in proper position on the stick
 - Stick blade should be on the ice in front, forming a triangle with the skates



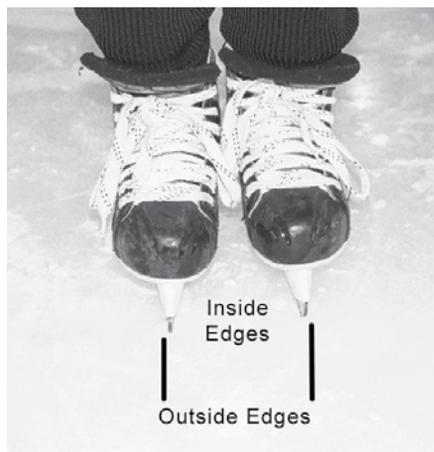


Skating

Discussion

Skating skills are vital to being a good hockey player. The sooner a player can start skating and the more he can do, the better he will play on the ice. Most hockey teams require a player to have basic skating skills before playing. Public skating and skating clinics are good ways for a player to work on their skills. Private lessons can help with specific skating techniques such as crossovers and backwards skating. Other activities can also improve hockey skating skills such as figure skating and rollerblading.

Good skating skills come from knowing how to get the most from the blades and edges of the skates.



Inside Edges for Power



Outside Edges for Control

Skate Edges

The blades of the skate support the player. The width of the blade gives a player balance on the ice. The edges of the blade give the player his ability to move on the ice. Inside edges give a player power and the outside edges give him control. Therefore, it is important to have correctly sharpened skates.

While skating, a player should:

**Skating
Checklist**

- Stay low in his hockey stance. A player should not bob his head and upper body up and down.
- Move his arms forward and backward (like pulling a rope), not side to side.
- Keep his stick on the ice at all times. It should not flop from side to side.
- Fully extend his legs to get maximum speed.
- Keep his knees bent to help with his balance, power and endurance and to help with turns, stops and crossovers.
- Extend his stride from hip to knee to ankle to toes.

A player's ability to skate fast for extended periods of time is directly related to his skating technique and stamina. If a player tires easily while skating, he needs to work on his technique, pay attention to nutrition and continue working on his overall physical abilities.

Key Points for Parents

- If your child has trouble making turns and stops, the skate edges may be nicked and in need of sharpening.
- Watch your child for proper skating technique and encourage good habits early.

Key Points for Players

- Skating ability is the most important part of playing hockey. It is the foundation for helping you become a better skilled hockey player. Improving your skating improves every area of your game.
- Work off of the ice to improve your stance, strength and speed.



Exercises

1. To become a better skater you should skate as much as possible. Check out and list the next skating times that are available through open hockey and public skating at several rinks.

2. (ICE TIME) You should constantly be working on all aspects of skating. While skating, try to work on these areas:

- Forward skating
- Backward skating
- Forward crossovers to the left
- Forward crossovers to the right
- Backward crossovers to the left
- Backward crossovers to the right
- Stopping to the left foot
- Stopping to the right foot
- Switching from forward to backward skating
- Switching from backward to forward skating
- Skating on just the left foot
- Skating on just the right foot
- Starting quickly to the left from a standing hockey stance (Crossover start)
- Starting quickly to the right from a standing hockey stance (Crossover start)
- Starting quickly straight ahead ('V' start)





Falling

Discussion

Falling down is a normal part of a hockey game. However, when player is down on the ice, his team has one less player to help out. When a player falls, he should attempt to quickly get back up and get into the play. On slippery ice, this is sometimes tricky. To quickly get back up, a player should:

Getting Up Checklist

- Roll over on his stomach if he is not already there
- Keep stick under control and allow both hands to grip stick to lean on.
- Use arms and hands to push upper body up
- Pull his knees up
- Place his stick straight out in front
- Push up on his legs and stick and point skates straight ahead
- Keep his head and chest up
- Start skating fast to rejoin play

After falling down, the play with the puck typically moves away from a player. When this happens, a player must skate quickly to rejoin his team and get to his correct position. He should not simply just chase the puck.

If a teammate falls, a player should think about what that means to his team and help cover for the fallen player. For example, if a defenseman falls down, the other defenseman may need to stay in front of the net so that it is not left unprotected.

Falling down may hurt, but unless a player is seriously injured, the play continues whether he is playing or not. However, if a player thinks that he might be seriously hurt, then it is best for the player to stay down until the coach can check on him. Players should not get up if they are feeling:

Falling Concerns

- Dizzy
- Nauseous
- Extreme pain.

Otherwise, a player should attempt to get up and get back in the play. Staying in a hockey stance especially around other players minimizes the number of times a player falls or gets hurt.



Retrieving the Stick

If a player has fallen and also lost his stick, he should first worry about getting up and then about retrieving his stick. To pick up a stick, a player should:

Stick Retrieval Checklist

- Get on his feet
- Look up to avoid running into someone
- Bend with the knees and the back
- Retrieve the stick (do not take off glove)
- Work to get into position

The knob on the end of the stick should be big enough to make it easy to pick up with the hockey glove on.

Key Points for Parents

- Your child may be slow to get up after a fall. Try to let the coach and your child handle the situation. If the child is injured, the coach will call you to the bench.

Key Points for Players

- When you fall down, the other team has a man advantage until you get back up. The faster you get up and get back into position, the faster the other team's advantage will be over.
- If you are falling several times in a game, work on your hockey stance and skating technique to give you better balance and stability around other players.

Exercises

1. In your house, practice falling down and getting back up quickly with and without your stick.
2. (ICE TIME) With full gear, try falling down and getting back up from one knee, two knees, stomach, back and buttocks.
3. (ICE TIME) With your hockey gloves on, place your stick about 10 feet away, skate over to it and pick it up. If you have difficulty picking it up, try making the knob a little larger with tape.
4. Discuss how you would pick up your stick and what you would do after having retrieved it.



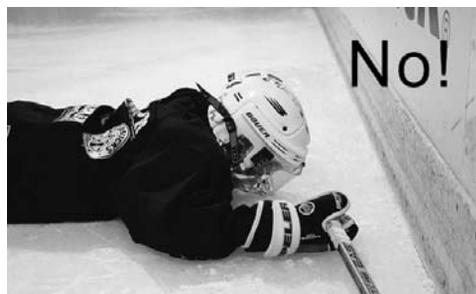
Heads Up Hockey

Discussion

Falling into the boards creates a special set of problems. The head is supported by the spine, a flexible bone structure that runs through the neck. While the helmet protects the head, there is very little equipment that protects the spine.

The spine is very flexible but can be damaged when forced down as in a head-on collision with the boards. With the head down, the spine is lined up straight down the neck and a hit on the top of the head can break it. With the head up, the spine can flex and, though it may be injured, it is much less likely to break.

To avoid serious damage to the spine, a player should always keep his head up when heading into the boards or along side another player. The player's natural instinct is to duck and not look at what he is about to be hit. Instead, a player should keep his head up and use his shoulder to cushion the blow.



Don't Duck!



Heads Up!

Heads up Hockey

Don't Check from Behind

Collisions with the boards are often caused by checks from behind. At early levels of hockey, checking is illegal and often caused by not knowing how to stop properly. Players should be careful to avoid hitting any player standing close to the boards by stopping or changing their angle.

Key Points for Parents

- Go over this issue repeatedly with your child before each game until you are sure he understands it and will do it as required. Make sure he understands the dangers of checking or being checked near the boards.



Key Points for Players

- Heads up! Don't duck!
- Try to twist your body so that you go sideways into the boards. If you can't do this, use your hands, arms or shoulders to try to protect your head. Keep your head up, eyes on the boards and don't duck your head.

Exercises

1. Look at a diagram of the human skeleton and review the location of the spine.
2. With your parents, discuss situations that could occur during a game that would cause you to go into the boards. Show them how you would hold your head and arms to protect your spine.



Gripping the Stick

Discussion

A good grip on the stick helps with any type of puck handling. To ensure a proper grip, the stick shaft must not be too big around and should slide easily through the hockey glove. If the knob of the stick is too large, this can also cause problems with the grip. The knob should be just big enough to keep the top hand from sliding off and to make it easier to pick up if dropped on the ice. A good grip:

Grip Benefits

- Improves power
- Improves accuracy
- Reduces the chances of dropping the stick

If a player is a right-hand shot, the right hand is placed lower on the stick. If he is a left-hand shot, the left hand becomes the lower hand. Even though some players are right-handed, they may be more comfortable holding the stick in a left-handed manner.

To get a good grip on the stick, the upper hand grips the stick with the palm down as if holding a hammer. The thumb and index finger should form a “V” on top of the shaft pointed down. The lower hand cradles the stick with the palm up. The upper hand should be placed just below the knob. The lower hand should be placed about 8-12 inches down the stick, which is approximately the length from the hand to the elbow (the forearm).



Proper Grip

Some players bring their hands together as they stand up or leave their hands too far down the shaft after reaching for the puck. Players should always try to get their hands back into the correct position. A proper stance also helps with the correct hand positioning.

Key Points for Parents

- Be sure the stick is sized correctly for your child. A stick that is too long or too short causes a child to try to compensate with a bad grip.

Key Points for Players

- If you find yourself gripping the stick farther down with your lower hand, check your stance to make sure that it is correct. With proper stance and hand position, the blade of the stick should be flat on the ice.

Exercises

1. Holding the stick, move your lower hand up and down the shaft and notice how it affects your stance.
2. Grip the stick with only your upper hand and wave the stick in the air like a flag to build grip strength. Make sure you are outside or somewhere you won't hit the ceiling.
3. Try the following steps several times to build your comfort with a proper grip:
 - Place your upper hand at the top of the stick (knob)
 - Place the knob next to the elbow of the lower hand
 - Grab the stick with the lower hand
 - Assume a proper stance
 - Lower the stick to the ice so that it is directly in front of you



Shooting

Discussion

Shooting the puck on net is one of the highlights of a shift. Making the right choices in front of the net concerning passing and team play are the highlights of a game. A shot on net should be taken by the player in the best position.

Shooting should always be considered a three-step exercise. The first step is setting up to take the shot. The second is taking the shot. The third is looking for the rebound. Players should always stay focused on the puck after they shoot to watch for a rebound opportunity. Stopping in front of the net for a rebound is a good habit to establish.

Setting up for the Shot

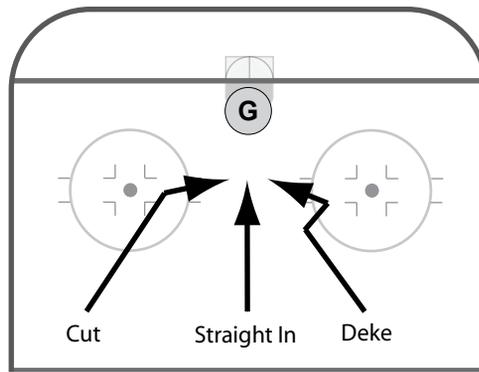
The approach to the net is often an important part of the shot. A good approach balances the fact that the closer a player gets to the goalie, the less net there is to shoot at with the fact that the closer a shot is taken, the less time the goalie has to react. When a player skates to the net he should:

Shooting Checklist

- Get open with the best angle for a shot
- Keep his eyes focused on open net, not on the goalie
- Look around for other teammates to see if they would have a better shot
- Shoot the puck hard
- Get the stick down and position in front of the net for a rebound
- Keep moving to stay away from opponents and get in a good position for a shot

Moving the puck around on the approach or changing the approach path may create a better shot. Cutting in front of the goalie or stick handling the puck from side to side (deking) can create a better scoring chance than a straight approach.



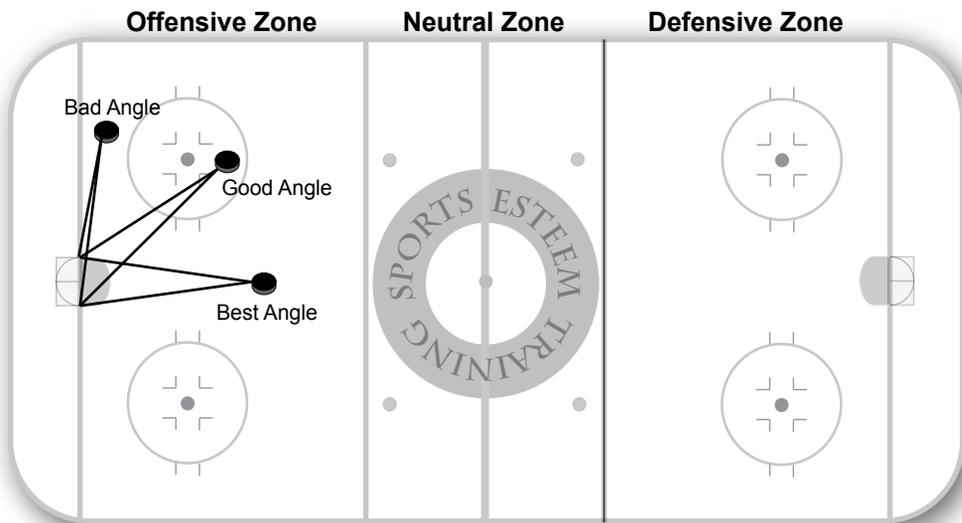


Shooting Angles

Straight approaches work best when players are skating fast and the goalie does not have much time to react. Unless you deke in close to get the goalie to move and create an opening, shooting from further out creates bigger openings at which to shoot.

Getting a Good Angle Shot

On the approach, a player should position himself for the best angle shot at the goal. Shots from in front of the net provide the most choices and the widest possible net. Shots from the side are harder because the shot must be more accurate since there is less net at which to shoot.



Shooting Angles

When a player has a poor angle shot at the net, he should look for an opportunity to pass to another player who has a better angle. If no one is open, then a shot to the net is a good play.

Shooting

When it is time to shoot, the shot should be made as hard as possible. Faster pucks are harder to stop. A player should sweep his arms across his body shifting his weight



as he does so and rolling his wrists to keep the puck on the stick. The transfer of weight adds power to the shot.

Follow-Through

The time the stick touches the puck until the time it stops sweeping is called follow-through. Follow-through determines in what direction the puck is headed and whether it will be a low shot or a high shot. On every shot, a player should pay attention to follow-through and notice how the puck ends up where the stick is pointed.

Speed

There is seldom much time to attempt a shot on net. Someone from the other team is going to try to interfere with or block almost every shot. If no one is between the puck and net, he will be coming quickly from behind. Time is of the essence so players should get off the best shot that they can.

Common Problems

When shooting, players can make mistakes that cause them to miss the puck or the net. Common problems when shooting include:

Problem	Correction
Swinging the stick in a curve.	The stick should be swung straight through.
Not transferring weight from back leg to front leg.	As a player swings, his weight should shift from the back leg to the front leg or he loses his balance and most of his power.
Not using hips and legs for power.	Most of the power from a shot comes from the lower body not from the swinging of the arms.
Standing up during follow-through.	As the stick moves forward, a player must stay low in his stance and avoid raising up in order to keep solid contact with the puck.
Not bringing the puck back far enough.	The puck must be brought back in order to get power through the puck.
Not pointing to the target.	If the stick tip doesn't end up pointing at the target, the puck may not be aimed correctly.
Not following through properly.	The stick must continue to sweep past the puck in order to get power on the shot.

These points provide players with a basic checklist for working on their shooting skills.



Key Points for Players

- If you've got the best shot, shoot! Don't stick handle or wait for a better chance.
- Shots not taken don't score.
- Shoot hard to make the puck go fast and give the goalie less time to make the save.
- The puck goes where your eyes are looking and the tip of the blade is pointing. Keep your eyes focused on open net and not the goalie.
- Weight transfer gives the shot more power than just using your arms. Work hard on and off the ice to improve your style.

Exercises

1. (ICE TIME) The only way to become a better shooter is by shooting a lot of pucks. On the ice, be sure to try various approaches to the net and different types of shots.
2. (ICE TIME) As you shoot the puck, follow-through with the stick up and keep the stick tip pointing at the target until you have developed a better sense of follow-through with the shot.
3. Take a Frisbee and cover it completely with duct tape to keep it from cracking. Then punch two holes near the edge about 6" apart. Tie the Frisbee from the crossbar of a net. Then, use street pucks or hockey balls to practice shooting at the target. Vary the distance the Frisbee hangs to improve in all type of shots.
4. (ICE TIME) If you are practicing by yourself, take your Frisbee target to the rink and hang it from the net to improve your accuracy.
5. Arrange empty soda cans at various distances and locations and try to hit the soda cans with street pucks.
6. Shoot street pucks or hockey balls hard into a wall to develop form and power on your shot. Be sure to check with your parents on which wall can be used.



Face-offs

Discussion

Winning a face-off is always a good way to start a shift. Before attempting to win a face-off, the center should have a plan (see Worksheet #46). Then he can attempt to win control of the puck and get the puck to one of his teammates.

When approaching the face-off circle, the center should make sure all his teammates are in position, feel good about winning the face-off and be ready to react quickly. As the center positions for a face-off, he should:

Face-off Checklist

- Be in a good hockey stance
- Keep his weight on his skates and not rest on his stick
- Bend the knees for stability and power rather than leaning over
- Move his lower hand down the shaft to get more power
- Place the blade on the edge of the circle
- Focus his eyes on the referee's hand and the puck and then follow the puck to the ice as it is dropped.

There are two ways to try to get control of the puck. If a player thinks he is quicker than his opponent, he can try to get control of the puck. If a player thinks he might be slower than his opponent, he can try to attack his opponent's stick to keep him from passing the puck to one of his teammates. The best ways to attack a stick is to lift it before it can contact the puck or by blocking the opponent's stick from sweeping the puck.

Key Points for Players

- Make sure your teammates are in position before entering the face-off circle.
- Know where you want to put the puck and whether you think it is better to attack the puck or the stick of the opposing player. You have to practice this in order to feel comfortable and confident in your decisions.



Exercises

1. Have someone practice dropping pucks in front of you to improve your quickness.
2. As your quickness improves, try getting the puck to the spot where each winger and defenseman would be standing during a game.
3. With a friend try some three touch face-offs. Place the puck (or ball) in the face-off circle and get in face-off positions. Touch your sticks three times above the face-off area and on the third touch try to win the face-off.



Stick Handling

Discussion

The controlled movement of the puck between opposite sides of the blade is called stick handling. Stick handling involves short passes a player makes to himself from the forehand to the backhand side of the stick and back. It is a way to move the puck while also protecting against take-away attempts. While stick handling around an opponent is fun, the best way of getting around him is to pass.

Stick handling builds on previous skills. To stick handle correctly, a player should:

Stick Handling Checklist

- Be in a good hockey stance with his heads up
- Have a good grip on the stick
- Keep the puck in the middle of the blade
- Roll his wrists back and forth with the movement of the puck
- Shift his weight from side to side along with the puck while staying low in a good stance and not bobbing up and down
- Keep his hands in front and away from his body and have a good grip on the stick with the hands the right distance apart.

While stick handling, a player's eyes should spend most of the time looking down the ice for passing opportunities and avoiding traffic. The puck should be worked with a player's peripheral vision or what the player sees out of the lower part of his forward vision. This may seem very awkward to some players at first but becomes easier with practice.

Deking

With the puck on the stick, a player can move the puck from one side of his body to the other covering a distance of almost two stick lengths. Since a player can move the puck faster than another player can reach for it, stick handling can help keep an opponent from reaching the puck.

Deking is tricking another player or a goalie by moving the puck to one side, getting the opponent to move to that side and then quickly moving the puck back to the other side. When stick handling is combined with a head or shoulder fake, the deking can be even more effective. To deke, a player should:

Deking Checklist

- Convince the opponent that he is moving to one side
- Transfer his weight and roll his wrists
- Quickly move the puck across his body
- Be ready to skate, pass or shoot after the deke.



Push and Chase

Sometimes a player needs maximum speed down the ice and doesn't have to worry about a defender, such as when he is on a breakaway. Stick handling is not the fastest way to move the puck. The fastest way is to push the puck forward with the blade of the stick and chase after it. This push and chase is repeated until just before reaching a defender or the net when better puck control is needed. Sometimes push and chase is also called carrying the puck.

Key Points for Players

- If you find yourself stick handling too much, look for an opportunity to pass.
- While stick handling, stay in a good stance with your head up.

Exercises

1. Use a hockey ball to practice stick handling at home. Keep your eyes forward and attempt to work the puck with the lower part of your vision. Types of stick handling you can practice include:
 - Side to side in front of you narrowly between shoulders
 - Side to side in front of you with full stick extensions transferring your weight from side to side
 - Front to back
 - Back to front
 - Front to the left side of your body and back
 - Front to the right side of your body and back
 - Figure 8s using your hockey gloves as markers
 - Circles
2. As you improve standing still with a tennis ball, try performing the above drills while walking then running.
3. As you improve running with the tennis ball, try performing the above drills while circling around pylons.
4. Work on feeling the puck on your stick. Close your eyes and try to stick handle a ball or puck with feeling only. See how long you can stick handle in this way.



Passing

Discussion

Players pass because that moves the puck faster than the other team can skate. A player should be ready to pass the puck if there is:

Passing Opportunities

- An opposing player in the way of skating
- A teammate farther down the ice and in a better position
- A teammate with a better shooting angle at the net
- A player open in front of the net
- A player outside of the defensive zone

Sometimes it is easy for a player to get so busy stick handling that he forgets to look up for a passing opportunity. However, a good stance and practice gives a player the best chance of seeing down the ice while also stick handling the puck. To pass, a player should:

Passing Checklist

- Be in a good stance
- Have a good grip with proper hand position
- Bring the puck back by rolling the wrists and shifting his weight
- Keep his head up and look at where his teammate is headed rather than where his teammate is now
- Place the puck in the middle of the stick
- Stay low and make a sweeping motion with the stick
- Shift his weight from the back leg to the front leg as he sweeps the stick to keep from raising up
- Follow-through and end up pointing at the target
- Be ready for a return pass

Problems that players can have while passing include:

Passing Problems

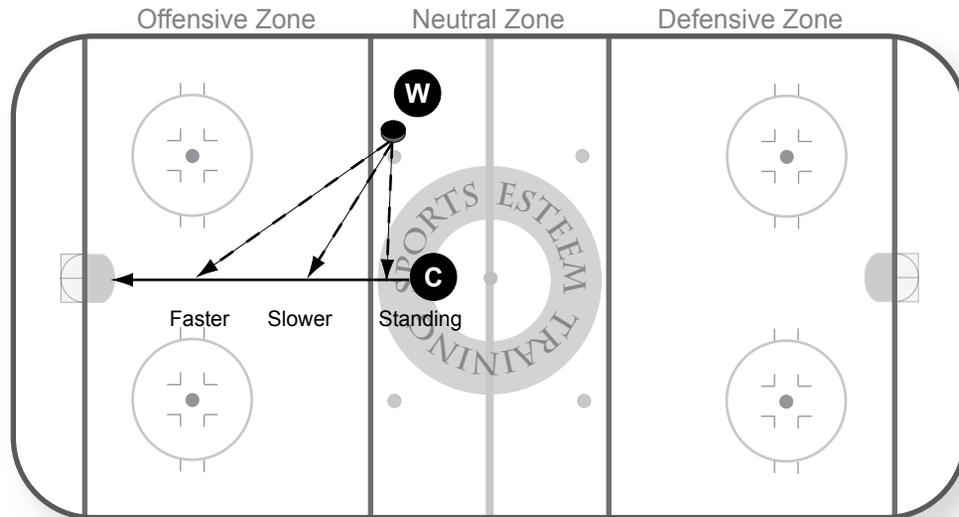
- Not leading the target enough
- Slapping at the puck
- Coming out of the hockey stance during follow-through
- Not pointing at the target
- Keeping the head down

Leading the Pass

For a successful pass, the pass must go to where a player is skating and not where he is at the time the pass is made. The faster two players are skating, the farther ahead of the other player a pass must be made for it to work. During a



game or practice, adjustments must be made if the pass is to be in front or on the stick of the receiving player.



Pass Aiming Points

Receiving the Pass

Getting into position to receive a pass is just as important as passing. A pass can't be made if there is no one available. Players should always be trying to position themselves for a good passing chance. To be ready to receive a pass, a player should:

Receiving Checklist

- Position himself so that there is a good passing lane with no one in the way
- Keep his stick down on the ice to provide a target for the passer
- Stay spread out and not crowd the puck carrier but also stay close enough that a pass can reach him
- Communicate to the puck carrier that he is open by yelling but not by tapping the stick on the ice
- Stay level with the puck carrier and not get too far ahead
- Keep his head up and use his peripheral vision

Upon receiving a pass, a player should skate into the puck and keep his feet moving. Good passes don't force a player to change his speed to receive the pass.

Even if the pass is not made, if a player is in good position to receive it, the other team is forced to worry about the pass. Staying spread out also gives the puck handler more room to work the puck.

Key Points for Parents

- Although it is always fun to watch your child score, it can be more fun to watch him pass. Passing means your child is playing with his team and using his head as well as his body to try to make plays.
- Stick handling through everyone is not being a good hockey player. Players must share the puck.

Key Points for Players

- If you have the puck, you should be looking for an opportunity to pass. If you don't have the puck, you should be getting in a good position with your stick on the ice to receive a pass.
- The player without the puck needs to be as ready as the player making the pass.
- Leading the pass is essential to a good pass while players are moving.

Exercises

1. With a partner, practice passing using a tennis ball and your off-ice stick. Work on your stance and a proper sweeping motion with the stick. As you improve, try spreading out to work on longer passes.
2. (ICE TIME) If by yourself on the ice, use the boards as your passing partner and go up the ice bouncing the puck along the boards so that it bounces to where you are skating. As you improve, skate faster to make it more challenging.





Special Passes

Discussion

Once a player begins looking for good passing opportunities, there are several ways he can move the puck to the receiver. These ways include:

Special Passes

- Forehand pass – A pass using the curved side of the stick in a sweeping and follow-through motion.
- Backhand pass – A pass using the back side of the stick in a sweeping and follow through motion. This pass is more difficult than the forehand pass because the player must also allow for the curve of the blade.
- Board pass – Also called the 7th man pass, a pass along the boards to yourself or to a teammate is good way to move the puck around an opponent.
- Drop pass – This pass allows a player to transfer the puck to another player skating behind him. A drop pass involves skating past the puck and leaving it so that it stands still on the ice for the player behind to pick up.
- Give and go pass – This is a pass to a teammate and then a quick break in front of the teammate so that he can pass the puck right back.
- Saucer pass – This is a pass in which the puck is lifted in the air to a teammate's stick. It is often used to pass over an opponent's stick.

There are many ways to pass between players. Good positioning with the puck and away from the puck gives players the best opportunity.

Forward versus Sideways (Lateral) Passes

The majority of passes will be down the ice towards the opponent's net. However, there may be times when the best pass is sideways. Good times to look across the ice for a receiver are when:

Lateral Passing Opportunities

- The lane to the front of the net is blocked
- The team is about to go off-side and more time is needed to let teammates clear the offensive zone.

All players should support the puck carrier and not get too far ahead. Shorter passes are easier to make and staying close gives the puck handler a better chance of seeing the passing opportunity.



Key Points for Players

- There are many ways to move the puck on the ice but the most important thing is to look for the opportunities to move the puck.
- Sharing the puck helps in all areas of your game.
- Try to stay in your lane at the same level as the puck carrier. Don't get too far ahead. Short passes usually work better than long passes.

Exercises

1. (ICE TIME) Try skating around the rink bouncing the puck to yourself along the boards.

Change the speed at which you do this.

Change the direction in which you do this.

2. (ICE TIME) With a friend, work on and off the ice on each of the following:

- Forehand passing
- Backhand passing
- Board passing
- Drop passing
- Give and go passing
- Saucer passing

3. (ICE TIME) With a friend, practice passing in the following situations:

- While standing still
- While skating up and down the ice (work on forehand and backhand)
- While skating up and down the ice but with one of you skating backwards
- While skating up and down the ice with one of you slightly ahead of the other



Defensive Stick Usage

Discussion

The best way to stop a shot on goal is to regain possession of the puck before the opposing team has a chance to shoot. The stick becomes a player's primary way to regain possession of the puck. There are several ways a player can attempt to regain control either by taking the puck or by interfering with it. Even if the player can't regain the puck, his teammates may be able to.

Lifting the Stick

Lifting an opponent's stick is a very smart way to get control of the puck. By lifting the stick, a player prevents his opponent from stick handling out of his problems. To lift an opponent's stick, a player should:

Lifting Checklist

- Have both hands with a good grip on the stick
- Move the lower hand slightly down the shaft to get more strength
- Skate as close as possible to the player
- Slide his stick under the opposing player's shaft
- Quickly lift up his stick to lift the opponent's stick off the ice
- Quickly lower his stick to try to steal the puck away from the opponent.

Pressing the Stick

Pressing an opponent's stick is very much like lifting except instead of lifting, the player's stick is placed over the opponent's stick and pressed down to prevent the other player from passing, shooting or receiving a pass. The ability to tie up the other player's stick is determined by size, strength and position. To press an opponent's stick, a player should:

Pressing Checklist

- Get his stick over his opponent's stick
- Apply pressure downward on the ice across the opponent's stick.

Pressing is a good tactic to use in front of a goal to prevent a player from receiving a centering pass or taking a shot.

Hitting the Stick

Hitting an opponent's stick is meant to interfere with his stick handling and to force a turnover. A player should aim for the lower portion of the shaft for maximum



advantage. Players should not chop at the stick but instead sweep at it, keeping the stick on the ice.

Poke Checks

Poke checks are most commonly used by defenseman while skating backwards to “poke” at the puck. But, forwards can also poke check while skating beside an opponent. To perform a poke check, a player should:

Poke Check Checklist

- Have only the top hand on the stick
- Keep his elbow close to his body until he is ready to extend his arm and poke at the puck
- Watch for the puck using his peripheral vision while keeping his eyes focused on the other player’s chest
- When the puck is in range, poke at the puck with the stick by rapidly extending the arm.

A player should be careful about keeping his balance and not using his body so that if he misses he is still in good position against the opponent. Players should keep a good stance and not lean into the poke check.

If the arm is kept extended before the poke check, the player must move his entire body to perform the poke check. When this happens, it throws him off balance and allows the puck carrier to get around him. Just jabbing at the puck with the arm is the best way to keep balance and attack the puck. While poking with the stick, the player must continue to keep skating to stay in good position.

Hook Checks

Hook checks allow a player to gain possession of the puck from an opponent. A hook check is performed from behind and on either side of the puck carrier. To perform a hook check a player should:

Hook Check Checklist

- Have only the top hand on the stick.
- Lay the blade almost flat on the ice with toe of the stick pointing at the puck. As the blade is laid on the ice, it will be necessary for the player to either bend over quite a bit or to go down on one knee.
- Reach past the puck and slide the puck away from the opponent.

A hook check should be performed quickly, otherwise, the puck carrier has time to stick handle the puck away. A player must be careful while hook checking not to trip his opponent and cause a penalty.

Sweep Checks

Like the poke check, the sweep check is best done while skating backwards with the puck carrier approaching. Like a hook check, the stick is placed flat on the ice and swung from side to side to clear the puck out of the puck carrier’s path.



Caution

Although the stick is a great tool to get the puck, it can also be very dangerous. Players are responsible for what happens with their stick and should be careful not to hurt another player.

Key Points for Players

- Keep your stick down on the ice at all times ready for use.
- With your stick you can reach a long way. Use this long reach to your advantage by using your stick to interfere with an opposing player's puck handling.
- Don't lunge at the puck with your body, only with your stick.
- Be strong on the stick.
- Establish good body position first and keep your feet moving.
- You are responsible for your stick. Be careful not to slash, crosscheck, spear or hit another player with your stick, even accidentally.

Exercises

1. Have a parent hold a stick and practice the following:

- Lifting the stick from behind
- Pressing the stick from behind
- Lifting the stick from the left and right sides
- Holding the stick from the left and right sides
- Tucking the elbow in and then extending the arm rapidly to perform a poke check





Goalie Saves

Discussion

As goalies face shots, they move into different positions to protect the net. Although the majority of blocked shots are done standing up, other positions are better choices for certain situations. As goalies move into different positions, they must be able to get back to (recover) their original standing position quickly to be ready for the next shot.

Standup Save

Standing up, a goalie can cover more of the net with his body and pads and can move quickly in all directions. A goalie also has all of his pads available to block shots including his mask, chest protector, pants, blocker, goalie glove and pads. However, the goalie stick is still the most often used piece of equipment to block shots. To make good standup saves, a goalie should:

Standup Checklist

- Stay in his goalie stance
- Face the player with the puck and keep the puck centered between his shoulders (stay square to the puck)
- Be ready to move left and right (shuffling) or in and out (telescoping)
- Keep his stick straight and firmly down on the ice
- Stay up as long as possible
- Communicate with defensemen
- Cover the puck at every chance to control rebounds

Goalies should constantly practice moving around in front of the net, keeping the stick firm and the blade flat on the ice.

Butterfly Save

The butterfly save is a good way to protect the lower part of the net without leaving the top of the net completely unprotected. The butterfly position begins with a good goalie stance, then the goalie brings his knees together and drops to the ice keeping his body and head up. The goalie's feet are angled to the goal posts to form a 'V' with his lower legs. A goalie can recover quickly from a butterfly position back into a standing position.





Butterfly Save

Variations on the butterfly save include the half butterfly where only one leg is down on the ice and the other is stretched out to provide a longer reach and the kick save where the foot is used to hit the puck as it makes its way to the net.

Glove Save

For blocking lifted shots to the glove side of the goalie, the goalie glove is the best choice. Goalies can use their glove much like a baseball glove to catch pucks out of mid air. Before the shot, goalies should have their glove ready with their palm facing out. A goalies arm can move quicker going up than going down so the glove should be held below the waist so it can be raised quickly.

Pad Save

“Stacking the pads” is when the goalie is lying on his side with his legs straight out so that the pads are facing out one on top of the other. Stacking the pads is good way to almost completely block the lower part of the net and help block a rebound shot when there is a scramble in front of the net. Being down gives the goalie a good chance to cover the puck to stop additional shots. The drawbacks to the pad save are that it is more difficult for the goalie to move and that the top of the net is wide open unless the goalie can reach the shot with his glove, blocker or stick.



Pad Save

Shaft Save

When a goalie is down on the ice, the goalie stick is still a good way to block shots except that the shaft is used rather than the blade. Since the lower shaft of a goalie stick is larger than that of a standard hockey stick, it can actually cover a larger area than the blade can. Like holding the stick in an upright position, the shaft should be pressed firmly on the ice to make sure there are no gaps.



Shaft Save

Poke Check

If shooters get too close to the goalie without taking a shot, the goalie can use his stick like a defenseman and poke the puck away. The stick is thrust out in a quick motion to hit the puck. However, goalies must be careful not to lift the stick and create a hole underneath the goalie stick.

Key Points for Players

- Being in the correct position both in the upper and lower body is the most important first step in making a save.
- Stay up for as long as possible. Drop down only after the shot is taken or you are trying to block rebounds.
- If you do drop down, get up as quickly as possible to be ready for the next shot.
- As you drop down, keep the stick firmly on the ice.
- Work to improve between saves by doing extra work such as shuffling and telescoping.

Exercises

1. (ICE TIME) During your next practice as goalie, try each of the following saves:

- Standup Save
- Butterfly Save
- Glove Save
- Pad Save
- Shaft Save
- Poke Save

2. Draw lines to match the goalie situation with the best save choice:

Situation	Save
Low shots	Stand up save
First shot on goal	Poke check
Low shot while down on the ice	Butterfly save
Shooter close to goalie	Glove save
Lifted shot	Pad save
Rebound scramble in front of the net	Shaft save



Goalie Skating

Discussion

Although goalies don't move over a large area of the ice, skating is one their most important skills. Not only must goalies have all the skating abilities of other players but they must also know special skating moves that are unique to goalies. These skating moves enable the goalie to move quickly in front of the net.

Shuffles

The most basic goalie skating skill is the shuffle. A shuffle is used to move left and right between the goal posts. With pads, it is difficult for a goalie to cross his feet. Therefore, a shuffle begins by slightly lifting the foot on the side where a goalie wants to move and using the inside skate edge on the other foot to push in the desired direction. While shuffling left and right, the goalie must be careful to keep his stick firmly down on the ice at all times.

T-Glides

Like shuffles, T-Glides are used to move left and right in front of the net. However, T-Glides let a goalie move longer and more quickly. In a T-Glide, the goalie points the foot out on the side of the direction he wants to move then pushes off on the other skate's inside edge. The goalie then glides to his new position continually pushing off on the inside edge of the other foot to cover the distance or build speed. As in shuffling, it is important to keep the stick firmly down on the ice at all times.

C-Cuts

C-Cuts enable a goalie to move in and out from the goal. A C-Cut uses the inside edges of the skates to mark a letter 'C' on the ice. If done with both feet from front to back, the goalie moves backward. If done with both feet from back to front, the goalie moves forward. If done with just one foot, the goalie angles left or right. The more the ankles are pushed to the ice and the more inside edge that is used, the quicker and farther the goalie will move.

Key Points for Players

- Continue to work on your skating skills to become a good goaltender.
- As you move around in front of the net, remember to stay square to the puck and keep the stick firmly down on the ice at all times.



Exercises

1. (ICE TIME) In front of the net, practice the following skating drills while working hard to stay in a goalie stance and keeping the stick firmly down on the ice:
 - Shuffles left
 - Shuffles right
 - T-Glide left
 - T-Glide right
 - C-Cut forward
 - C-Cut backward
 - C-Cut angle left
 - C-Cut angle right

2. (ICE TIME) Work with your parent or another player on moving around in front of the net staying square to the puck. Have them let you know when your body position or stance is wrong.





STRATEGIES



Strategies

Once players have acquired the basic skills and position knowledge, the next step involves putting these together to make the right decisions on the ice. Strategies involve position playing at a team level and using the help available on the ice to score and prevent goals. Strategies are plans that players study in advance and then carry out during a game. Using good strategy during a game can overcome most challenges.

Strategies help players and teams maximize their opportunities on the ice. For strategies to be successful, the team has to work together so that each player not only knows what he should be doing but what other players should be doing also. Because each player has a good idea of what the other players are doing, opportunities for passing and working together improve.

Game Time Strategy

During a game, play away from the puck is as important as play with the puck. A player should constantly be asking himself these five questions in the following order:

Game Time Checklist

1. Am I in the right position to help my team?
2. Am I playing my hardest and winning my battles?
3. Is there an opportunity to help out with the play?
4. Is there an opportunity to pass?
5. Is there an opportunity to take a shot?

If a player works down this list of questions in this order, he will always be thinking first about how to advance the puck before he starts thinking about scoring. The strategies described in the following worksheets detail game time situations and give ideas on how best to deal with these situations or take advantage of them.





Communicating on the Ice

Discussion

For players to work together, they must constantly communicate on the ice. Starting from the face-off, the team should be working together on the ice with the center outlining his strategy for the puck. Then as the puck is in play, players should be yelling out to their teammates or using eye contact concerning their readiness to receive a pass or cover an opposing player who has the puck.

Key times for players to communicate on the ice are when they are:

Times to Communicate

- Able to help a teammate make a play
- Open for a pass
- Going to the corner to get the puck
- Being crowded on the puck by a teammate
- Need help from teammates.

Good communications on the ice help other players know what to expect and allow the team to work together. Good communications are always spoken with words and never by tapping the stick. All sticks sound the same when tapped on the ice, but voices sound different.

Bad communications on the ice cause confusion and result in too many players trying to do the same thing. For example, if both defensemen go to the corner to get the puck, then they are out of position and not communicating.

Key Points for Players

- Keep your head up and be aware of what is going on around you.
- Don't be shy about letting your other teammates know what you are doing.
- Too much talking on the ice is better than not enough.
- Work with each teammate on being in the right position. Good communications helps everyone.



Exercises

1. List three times in your last game that you successfully communicated to a teammate.

2. List three times in your last game that you could have communicated better.

3. List something you can say to help communicate on the ice to a:

Defenseman: _____

Line mate: _____

Goalie: _____

As the goalie to other players: _____



4. List times in the defensive zone when you should communicate with teammates.

5. List times in the offensive zone when you should communicate with teammates.





Face-off Planning

Discussion

Face-offs are a great way for a team to get control of the puck. Any time there is a face-off, every player should know what the center wants to do with the puck and should be ready. Face-offs at different points on the ice require different approaches.

For face-offs in the defensive zone, a successful face-off always gets the puck towards the boards to either the defenseman or winger on the board side of the puck.

For face-offs in the opposing team's zone (the offensive zone), a successful face-off either gets the puck towards the center of the ice to the defenseman or winger for a quick shot or gains possession of the puck to set up offensive opportunities.

Before the face-off, the center should let the other players know what he is going to try to do and then make sure everyone is in position.

Key Points for Players

- When you skate up to the face-off, have a clear idea about what the center is trying to do with the puck. Centers should let their fellow teammates know what he is going to try to do.
- Working together in face-offs and other areas makes your team more successful.



Exercises

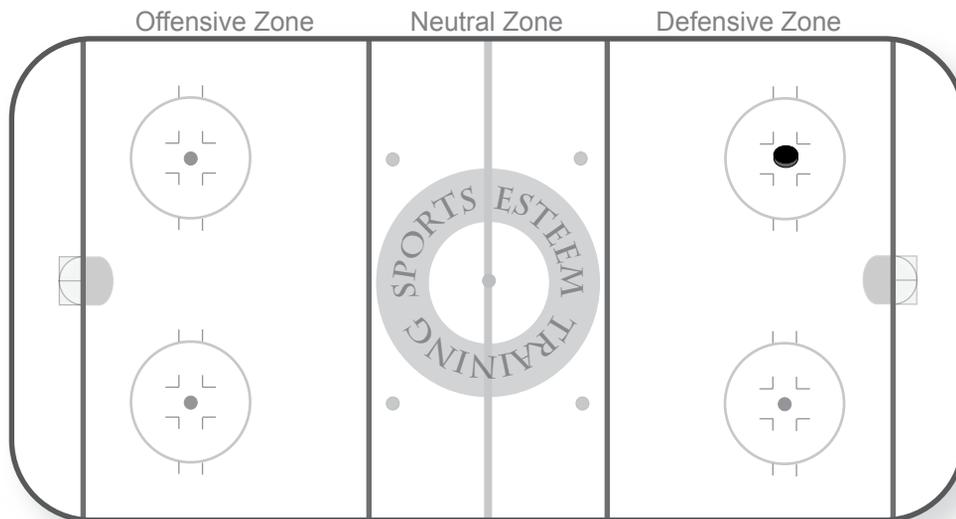
1. If you are the center, explain what you are going to do with the face-off.

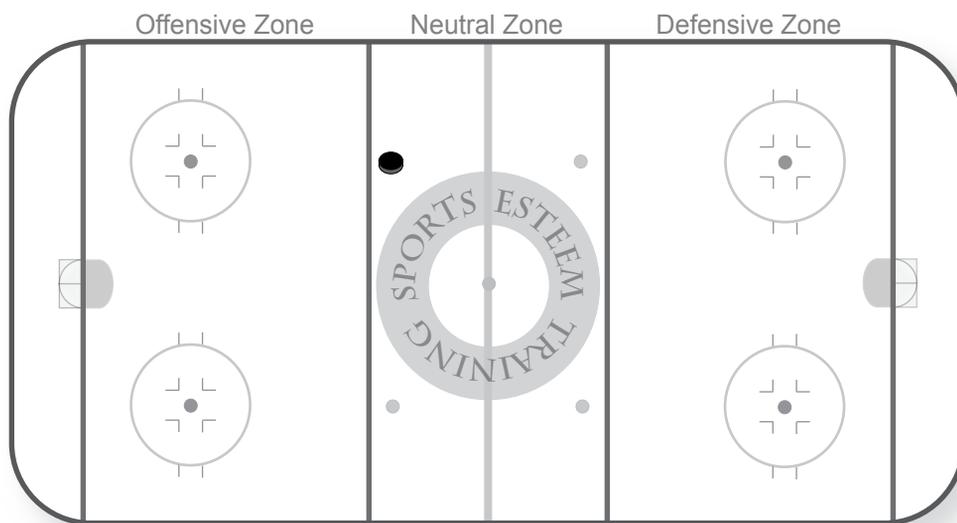
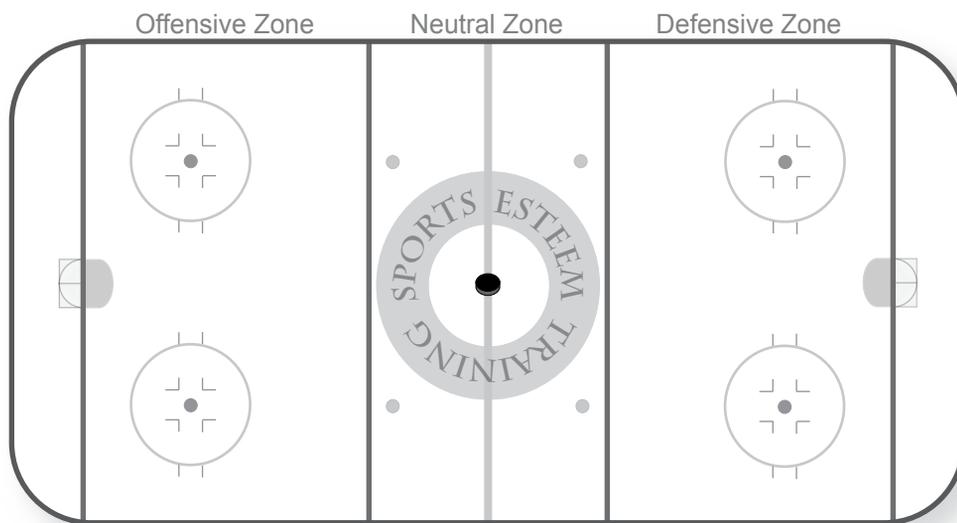
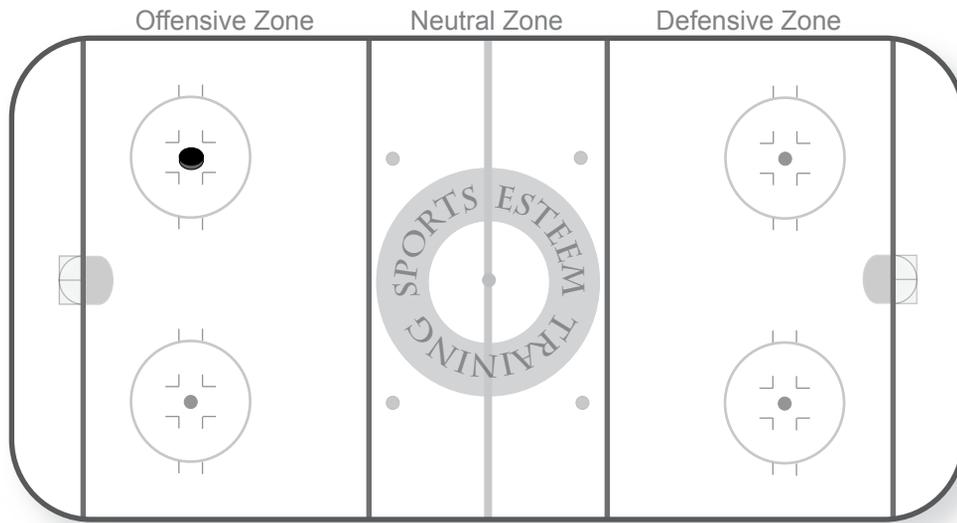
In the defensive zone:

In the offensive zone:

In the neutral zone:

2. On the following diagrams, draw where everyone should be positioned for the face-off based on the puck's location. Then draw an arrow to show where you would want the puck to go.







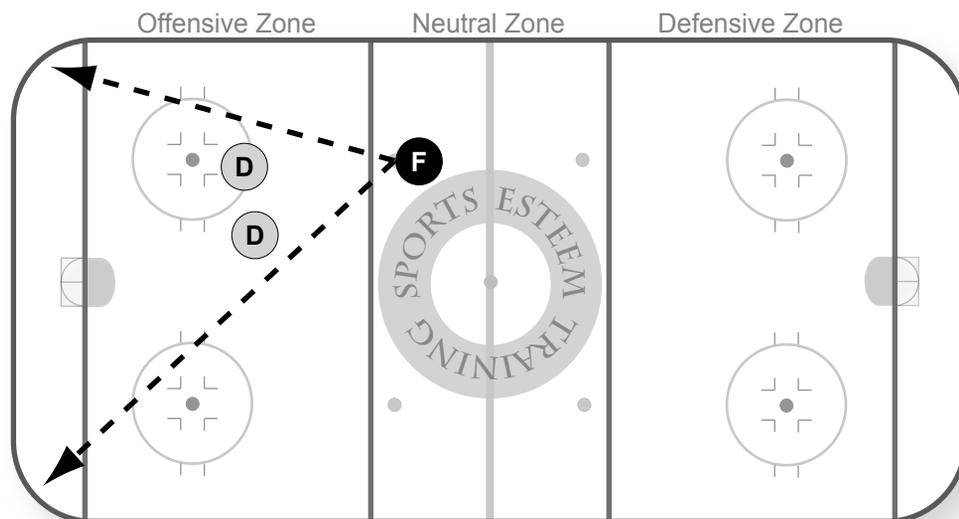
Dumping and Chasing

Discussion

Crossing the offensive blue line with the puck is a busy time for a puck handler. Defensive players attempt to keep the puck out of the zone by challenging the puck handler. When there is more than one defensive player attacking the puck handler, the chances of keeping the puck are very low.

Crossing the blue line with the puck does not always mean that a player has to skate to the goal and shoot. It does mean that the rest of the team can now cross into the offensive zone. Now, five players can attempt to get the puck into the net.

To get your team into the offensive zone many players may often choose to “dump and chase” the puck. “Dumping” the puck is when the puck is shot to one of the corners away from the goalie. Since there is usually no one standing in the corners, this gives all players from both teams a chance to get to the puck first. By skating fast or “chasing” the puck, the forwards have a good chance of getting to the puck first.



Dumping and Chasing

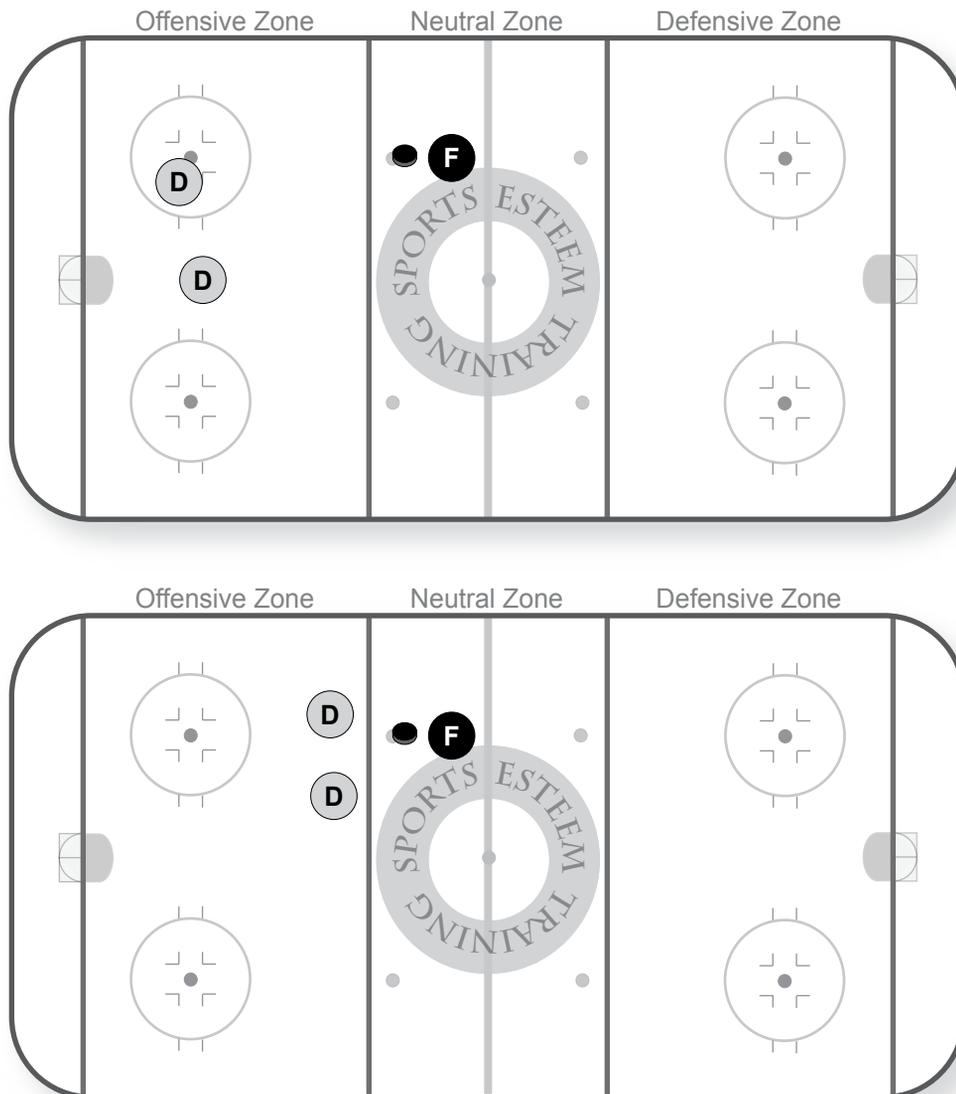
Putting the puck into the corner starts the play for the puck by making the defense turn around. If the player can be the first one to reach the puck, he can quickly center it to another teammate who has had time to get in front of the net.

Key Points for Players

- If you run into a bunch of defensive players at the offensive blue line, don't try to stick handle through them. Instead, dump the puck to the corner, race to it and try to get it to another teammate setting up in front of the net.
- Regaining possession of the puck after it is dumped makes this strategy work. Skate hard to the puck once you have dumped it.

Exercises

1. (ICE TIME) On your own, start just outside the blue line and try hitting the puck hard to the corner. Try it from various locations outside the blue line so you can better understand how hard you need to hit the puck to get it to go where you want.
2. Choose which diagram shows the best time to dump the puck.

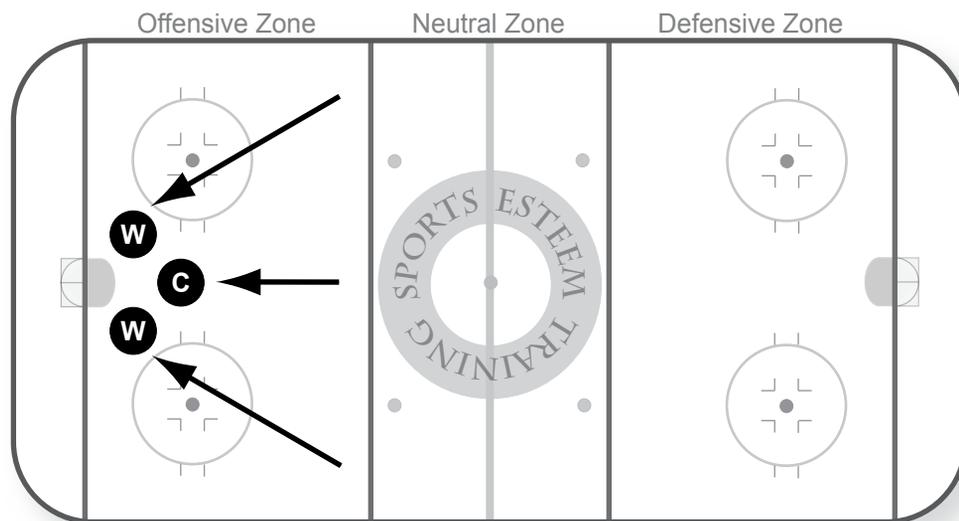


Crashing the Net

Discussion

One of the simplest ways to create a good scoring opportunity is to have all the forwards stay up with the puck as it is brought into the offensive zone and then drive for, or crash, the net. The player with the puck has the opportunity to get the best angle for the shot or pass. Then, after the shot is taken, all the forwards surround the net in a triangle formation in case of a rebound.

When crashing the net, all players need to stay spread out to create passing opportunities and to make sure they don't get tangled up with the defensive players trying to get the puck. When players stop in front of the net, they should be anywhere from 3 feet to 6 feet away from the net (outside the crease but inside the face-off circles) to allow room to get the puck and shoot in case of a rebound.



Crashing the Net

When in front of the net or in their “crash” position, players should:

Crash Checklist

- Be in their hockey stance with their stick on the ice
- Keep their heads up
- Stop in front and be ready to move after the puck
- Battle for a loose puck

The best time for this strategy is when two or more forwards are crossing the blue line at about the same time. As the puck moves its way to the net, every player



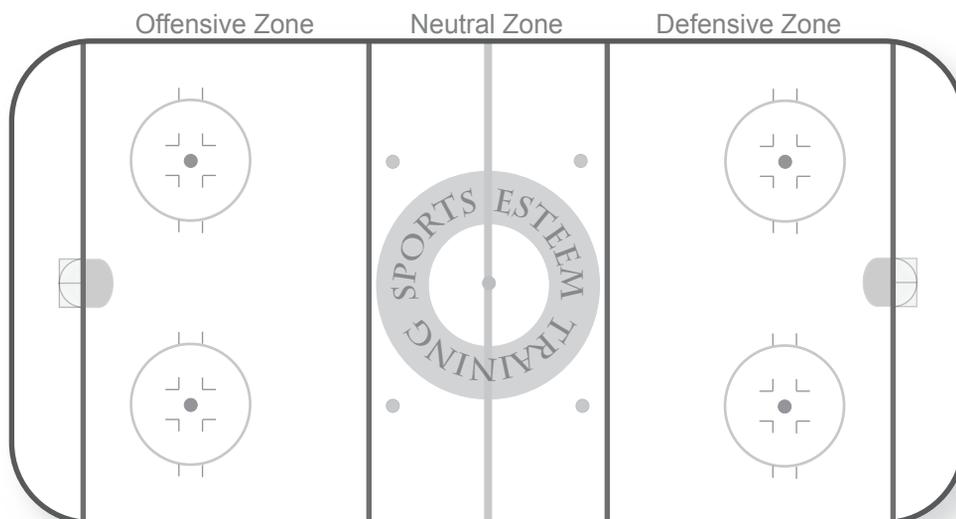
should be moving to his “crash” position in front of the net. The quick way to tell if everyone is performing this properly is to see where every one is standing when the goalie covers the puck or when a score is made.

Key Points for Players

- If needed, be careful about getting ahead of the puck at the blue line and causing an off-side. If you don't have the puck, slow down at the blue line, let the player with the puck cross over and then skate fast to the net to your “crash” position.
- If you have the puck at the blue line, speedup and get the puck to the best shooting angle. Don't slow down or you will cause the other players to go off-side.
- Players must work together to create chances.
- After each shot, all three forwards should be in a triangle in front of the net.

Exercises

1. (ICE TIME) By yourself, start just outside the blue line with the puck, shoot it at the net and then skate as quickly as possible to your “crash” position in front of the net.
2. Check the correct statement:
 - Crossing the offensive blue line means to speed up
 - Crossing the offensive blue line means to slow down
3. On the following diagram, draw where the left winger, right winger and center should end up in front of the net.

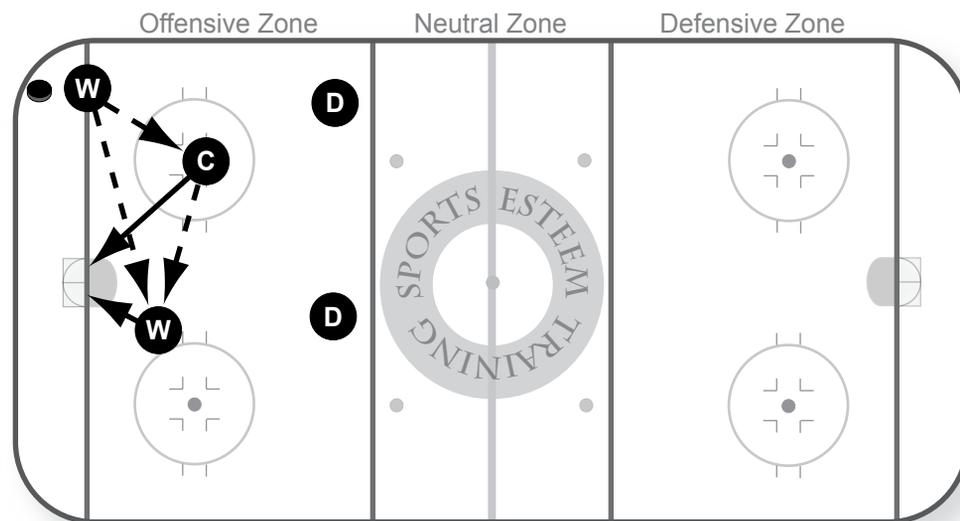


Setting up the Offensive Formation

Discussion

When the puck is in the corner of the offensive zone, and the other forwards are in the zone, the three of them can quickly create a great chance to move the puck and create a scoring opportunity. If players can get into position and get control of the puck, then they create several ways of scoring a goal letting the puck do the work rather than being forced to skate and stick handle to the net.

With the winger getting the puck, he has the option of passing to the center at the face-off circle or the other winger in front of the net, based on who is open. Players should stay spread out. If an opponent is blocking the passing path or shot path, then players should move around to get open or to find a path (lane) in which to move the puck.



Offensive Formation

After the shot, all players should skate fast and crash the net forming a triangle in front, in case of a rebound. To be successful, this play requires that all forwards stay spread out, get in position and look for the best opportunity to pass or score. They should constantly be skating and moving into space where the defending team is not.

The defense should stay between the top of the circle and the blue line and be available for a pass. However, the defense's main objective is to prevent the other team from scoring a goal.

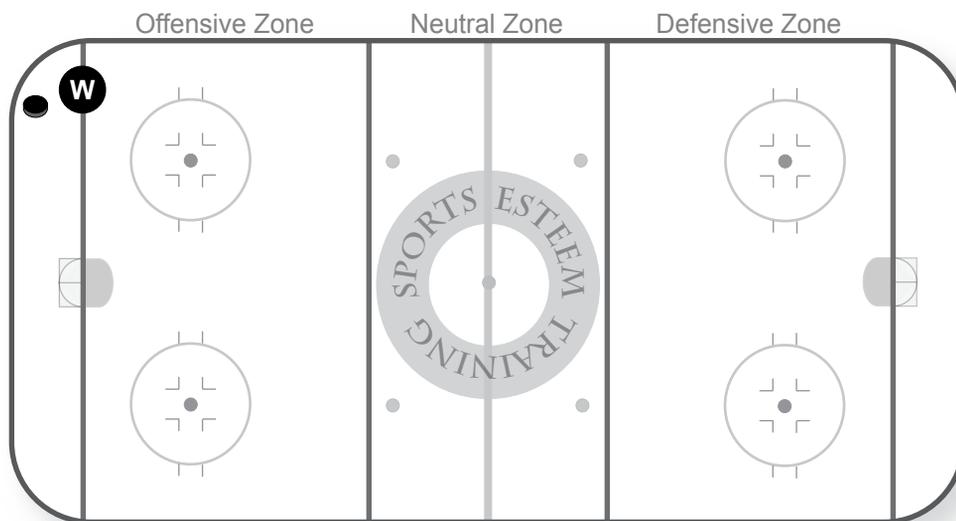


Key Points for Players

- Don't stand still, keep your feet moving.
- Keep spread out and work the puck to the danger zone in front of the net by passing.
- Get open for a pass. Support the player with the puck.
- Communicate to help your teammates.
- Try to get the puck to the best angle to shoot.

Exercises

1. On the following diagram, draw the best positions for the center and the other winger. Then draw dash lines for good passing options and solid lines for good shooting options.



2. With a friend, work on getting open and supporting the pass by placing a cone between you and your friend. Then move in different directions to make yourself open for a pass.
3. (ICE TIME) With a friend, take turns in the different positions and practice a pass before shooting at the net.
4. Check all that show good offensive work.
 - Both wingers and the center in the same corner of the offensive zone.
 - Forwards in crash positions in front of the net after every shot.
 - Forwards staying spread out.
 - Trying to stick handle around the defense rather than passing.
 - Defensemen helping out in the corners of the offensive zone.
 - Defensemen staying in position inside the blue line.

Defending Against Rushes

Discussion

Many times in a game, the defensemen will find themselves facing a rush to their net by one or more of the opposing team. The best chances of breaking up the play come from knowing where to focus.

There are two things a defenseman can concentrate on during the rush - the puck or the opposing player. Forcing the puck carrier wide gives a defenseman the best chance of taking the puck away and also does not allow the puck carrier to trick his way to the net by quickly moving around the defenseman. Focusing on the opposing player by looking at his chest is the best way to stay positioned between the opposing player and the net on a one-on-one.

Rush Options	Attackers vs. Defensemen	Strategy
	1 on 1	Focus on the player
	2 on 1	Stay in the middle of the ice
	1 on 2	Stay in the middle of the ice and force attacker to the sides
	2 on 2	Focus on the player
	3 on 2	Stay in the middle of the ice, force attackers to the sides and prevent a pass back to the middle

The table above gives the best approach for any given rush by the opposing team. When there are more attackers than defensemen, this is called an odd man rush. During the odd man rush, the most dangerous problem is a quick pass between players to an open attacker. Preventing this pass becomes the key job of the defensemen.

When there are the same or more defenders, then the defenders can concentrate on an opposing player and keep him from getting past with the puck. Defenders should communicate as to what they are doing or which player they are covering.

As the attackers get closer, the defenders should pressure the puck handler, trying to move him to the outside. The defenders should let the attackers come to them rather than lunging for the puck, getting off balance and letting the puck get by them.



Key Points for Players

- In any given situation, be aware of other players and know whether you should be focusing on the attacker or the puck.

Exercises

1. In the following table, write down what strategy you should focus on as a defenseman.

Defensemen	Attackers	Strategy
1	1	<hr/> <hr/>
1	2	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2	1	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2	2	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
2	3	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>



Setting up the Defensive Formation

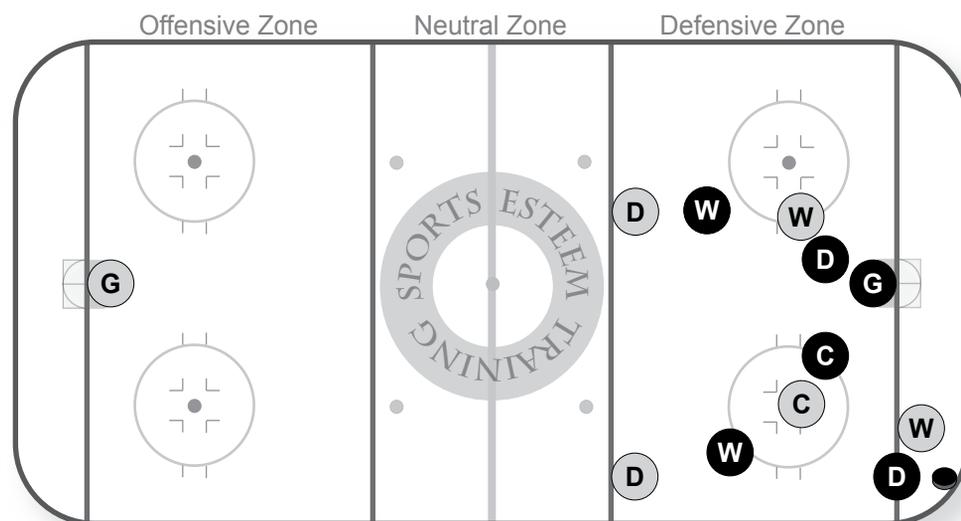
Discussion

If every player is in good position on defense, it will be hard for an opposing player to get a good shot on the net from a good angle. By spreading out, players can do a better job of covering all areas in the defensive zone and keep constant pressure on whoever has the puck. Players should not chase the puck but should focus on their positions and assignments on the ice.

As the puck goes to the corner, coverage should be spread out as follows:

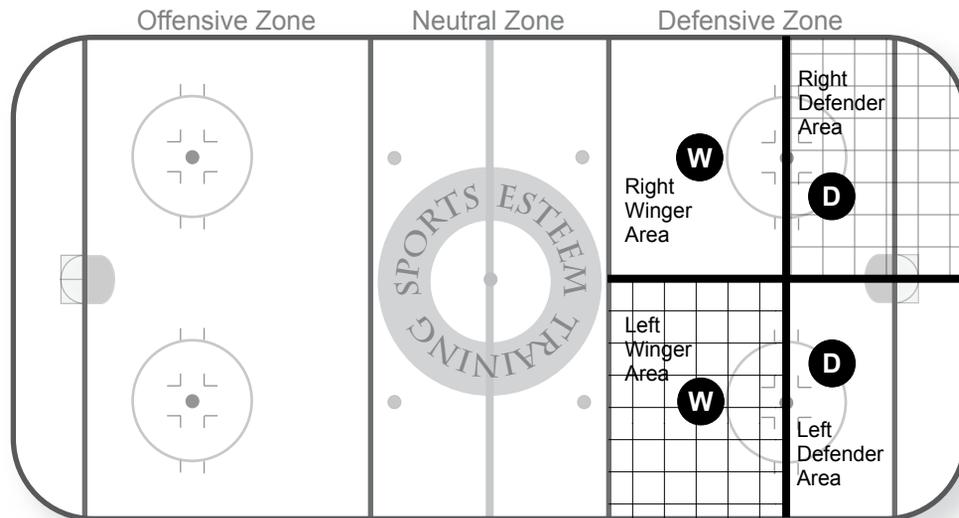
Coverage Checklist

- Defenseman 1 covers the puck carrier in the corner.
- Defenseman 2 covers in front of the net.
- Center covers any player in the slot and picks up any loose puck in the corner.
- Wingers cover the defensemen playing the points and stay between them and the net. Wingers should not go further than the hash marks unless the opposing defensemen do.



Defensive Man-to-Man Coverage

Another way to look at defensive coverage is by areas. The defensemen and wingers each have specific areas on the ice they are responsible for. The center plays in different places depending on where the other team's center plays.



Defensive Coverage Areas

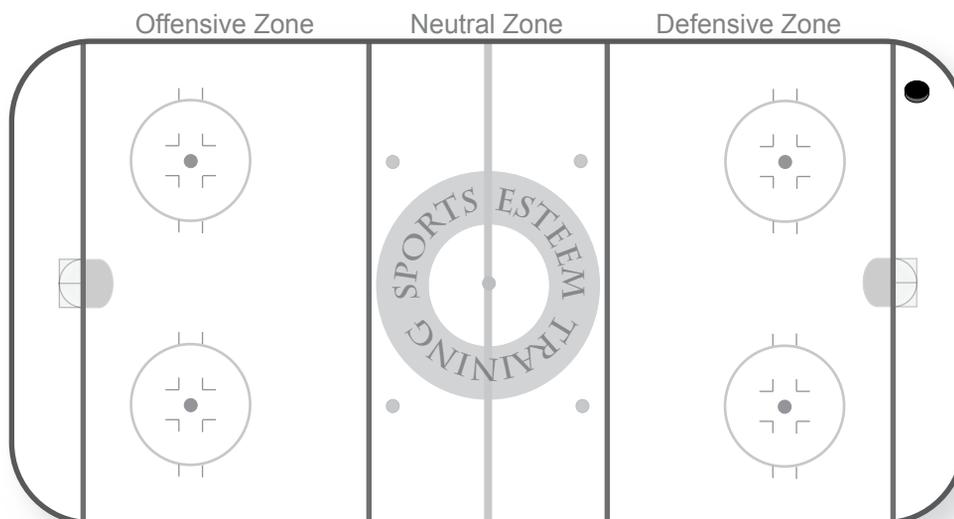
Keeping spread out in the defensive zone not only gives a better opportunity to block shots, but if the puck is turned over, it also gives a better chance of clearing the puck along the boards and out of the zone.

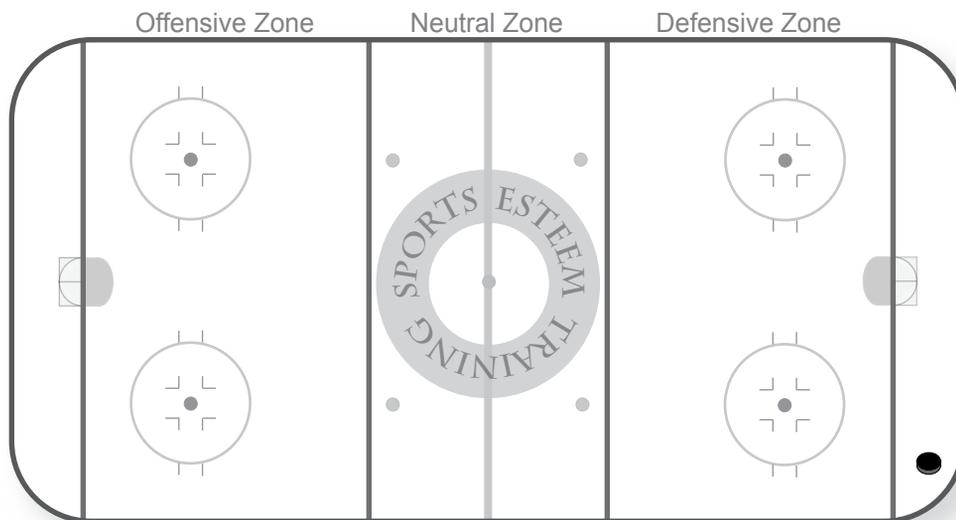
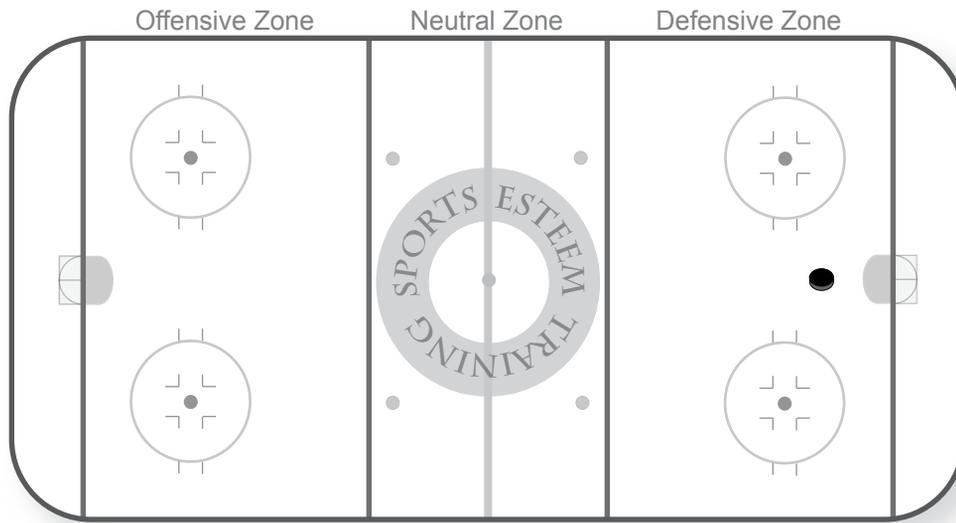
Key Points for Players

- Always protect the middle of the ice in front of the net.
- You should stay spread out in the defensive zone and take responsibility for your area of the ice.
- Watch your man and don't get in someone else's area.
- Communicate to help your teammates out. Working together is the key to good defense.

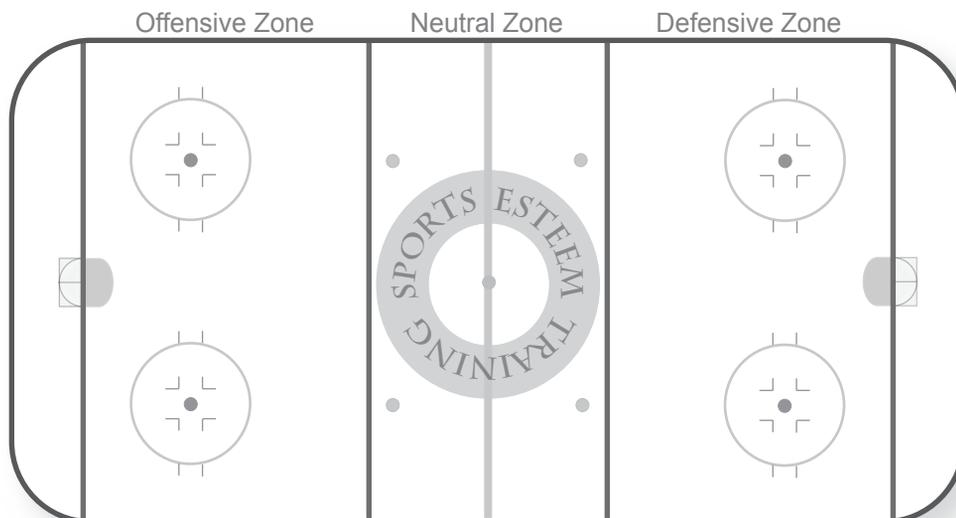
Exercises

1. On the following diagrams, draw the position where each player should be, based on where the puck is located.

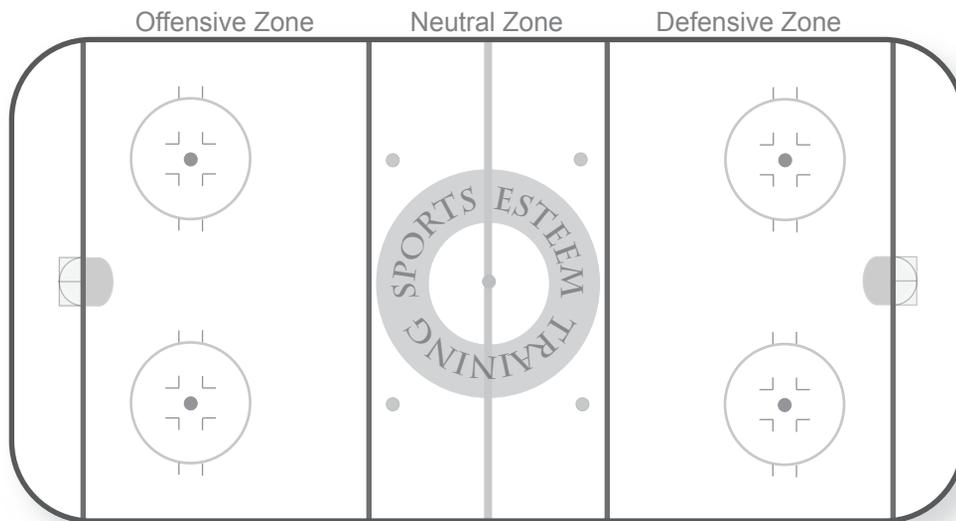




2. Draw the different defensive zones for wingers and defensemen.



3. Draw the area of the ice that should be protected.



Clearing the Puck

Discussion

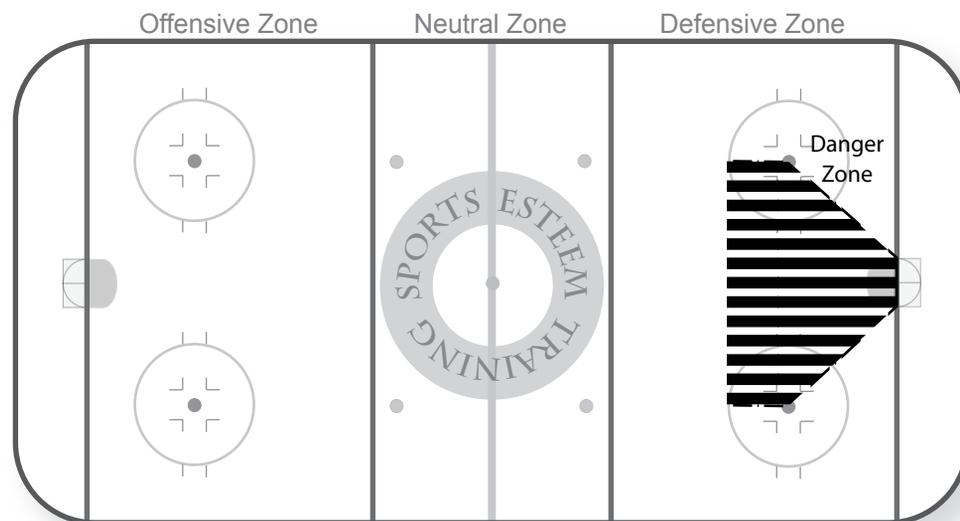
Playing good defense is the responsibility of every player on the team, not just the defensemen and goalie. However, just like offensive strategies, a good defensive strategy has a special role for every player. The two key elements of defense are:

Keeping the puck out of the danger zone (the area right in front of the net)
Clearing the puck out of the defensive zone by passing, skating or by dumping it out

Offensive attacks begin with good defense. As every player plays his position, he not only is playing good defense, he is also setting the stage for a good attack at the other end of the ice.

Danger Zone

The danger zone is the area just in front of the goalie where you would want to have the puck if you were on offense. Keeping the puck out of the danger zone means that the opposing team either has no shot at the goal or a bad angle shot at the goal.



Danger Zone

Sometimes it may be tempting to take the puck down the center when it seems like there are not many opposing players there. However, it will always be safer to



take the puck along the boards outside the danger zone. There is less chance of someone stealing the puck and getting a shot from a great position.

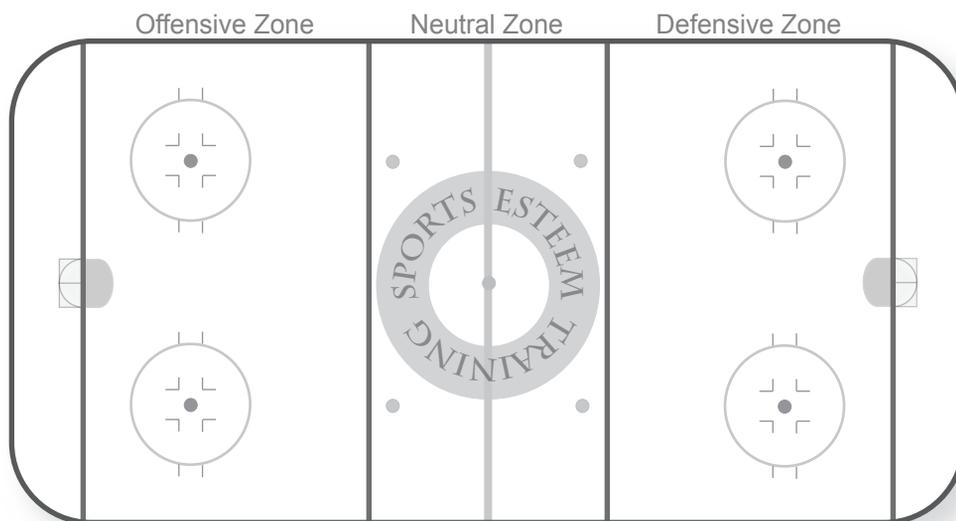
Once the puck is along the boards, it needs to be cleared out of the defensive zone as quickly as possible. If the team's wingers are in position, they should be along the boards and ready to take the puck out of the zone. Any player with the puck should think first about clearing the zone and then second about stick handling down the ice. Players should not leave their defensive zone before the puck is cleared.

Key Points for Players

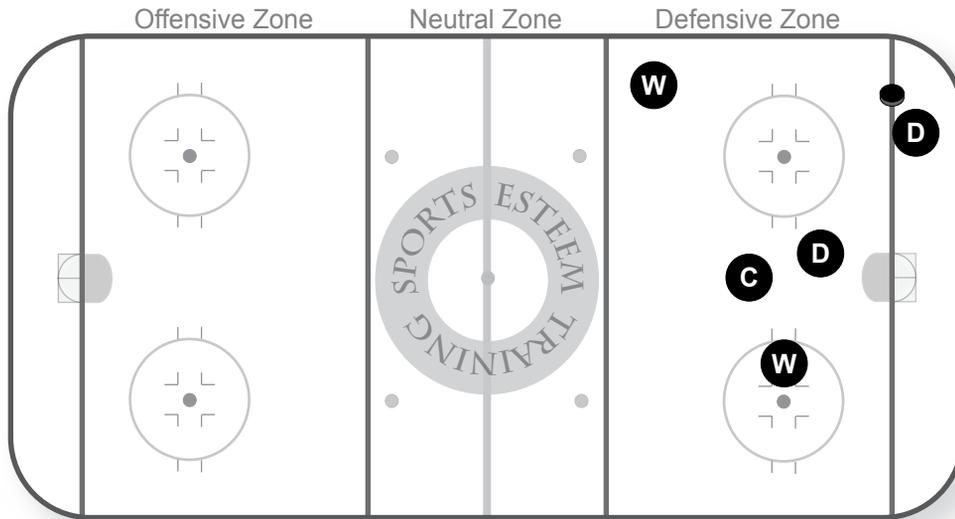
- If the puck is in the danger zone, immediately get it to the outside boards.
- Once the puck is outside the danger zone, get the puck outside the defensive zone as quickly as possible.
- Avoid stick handling the puck in the defensive zone. Pass the puck to more quickly get your team out of danger.

Exercises

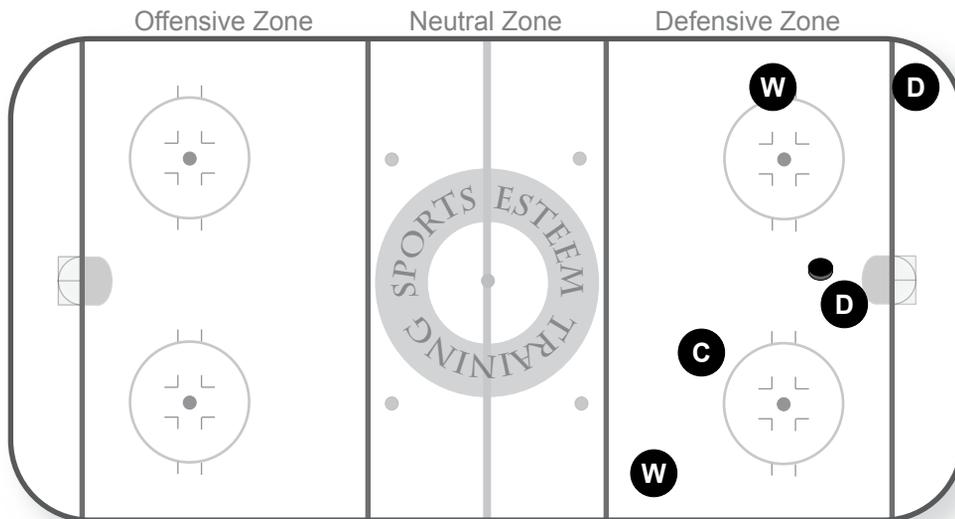
1. On the following diagram, draw the danger zone.



2. On the following diagram, draw the passes that are available to the player in the corner without passing through the danger zone.



3. In the following situation, what should the defenseman do with the puck?



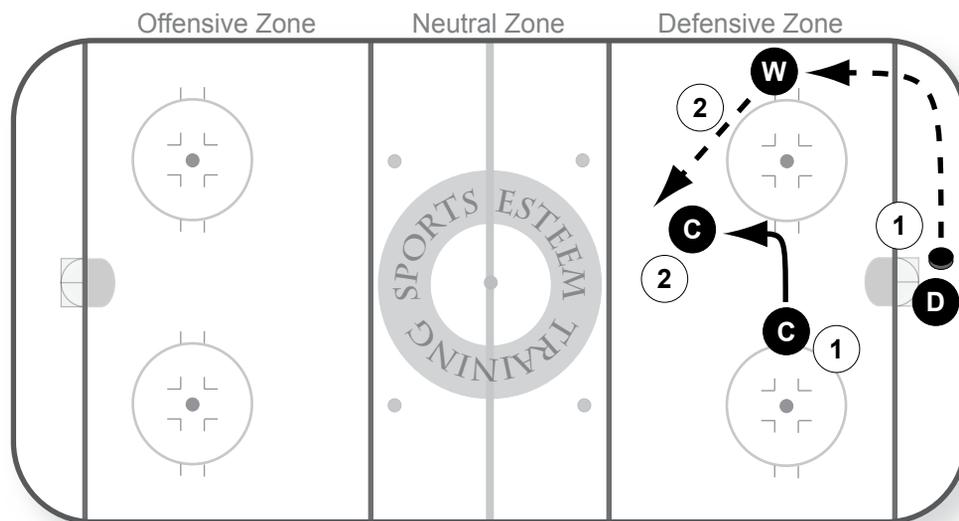


Breakout to Offensive Attack

Discussion

Getting a goal scoring chance or even a breakaway is always an exciting part of the game. Some scoring chances occur because the opposing team is out of position. Other chances occur because the one team uses passing to move the puck quicker than the other team can react.

Assuming the puck is in the corner or behind the net, an offensive attack can start when the defenseman moves the puck along the boards to a winger. When the puck goes to the winger, the center starts supporting the play by staying even with the puck. As the winger gets control of the puck, he passes it to the center when he is moving out of the zone. The center should now have a good lane toward the opposing goal.



Breakout Offensive Attack

If the winger is not able to get control of the puck, the center must stay in front of the net to help out on defense. As the center heads down the ice, the wingers should skate quickly to stay even with the puck and provide passing opportunities for the center. Staying together from the defensive zone to the offensive zone creates more opportunities.

If the center cannot get into position to support the breakout, the winger must try to move the puck out of the zone by himself, either by stick handling the puck out or by dumping the puck out and chasing after it. Players must remember that the most important thing is to get the puck out of the defensive zone.

Key Points for Players

- For a quick offensive attack to work, two things are essential. The first is that as the puck goes to the winger, the center supports the play and gains speed to get open for a pass. The second is that the winger must pass to the center rather than trying to stick handle the puck out of the zone.

Exercises

1. With the puck behind the net in the defensive zone, why wouldn't the defenseman just pass the puck directly to the center in front of the net?

2. What should the winger without the puck do during a breakout?

3. What should the winger do if a defender is blocking his way and the center is not available for a pass?

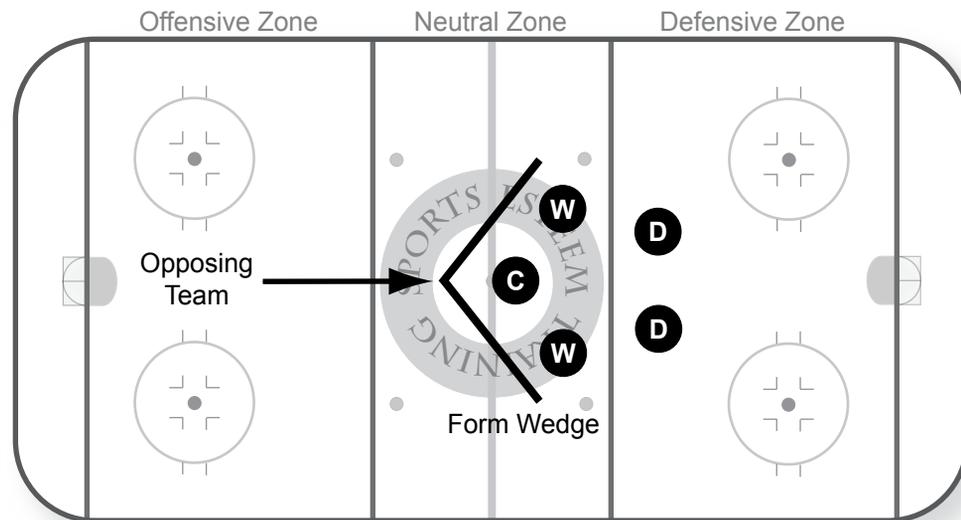


Neutral Zone Coverage

Discussion

Many scoring threats start in the neutral zone. The neutral zone is where opposing players try to speed up to attack the net. Through the neutral zone, the defensemen must be backing up towards their own goal to get in position to push the play to the boards or block a shot. Therefore, good defensive play in the neutral zone must come from a team's forwards working together. Forwards try to move the puck to the sides and also attempt to regain possession.

Teams should either try to hold their own blue line or at least force the puck carrier to the outside and away from the middle of the ice. By keeping the puck out of the middle, players make it difficult for the opposing team to get the puck into the danger zone. Forwards form a triangle (or wedge) to make it hard for the opposition to skate through the middle of the ice with the puck.



Neutral Zone Coverage

In the neutral zone, forwards should:

Forward Checklist

- Work their lanes to prevent an opponent from getting through the middle of the ice
- Stay spread out in the middle to force the puck wide and prevent an opposing player from getting open for a pass
- Try to regain control of the puck
- Close the gap with the opposing team at the blue line and not back into their defensive zone.

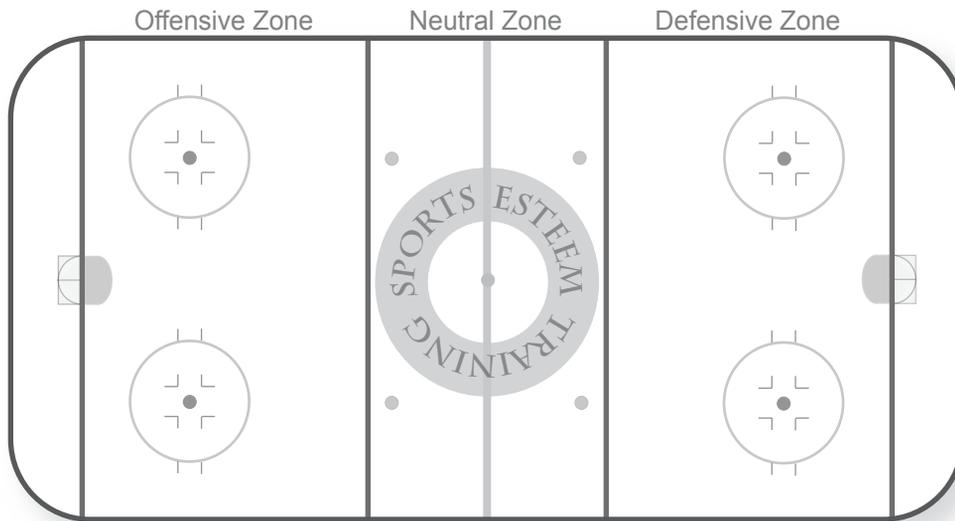


Key Points for Players

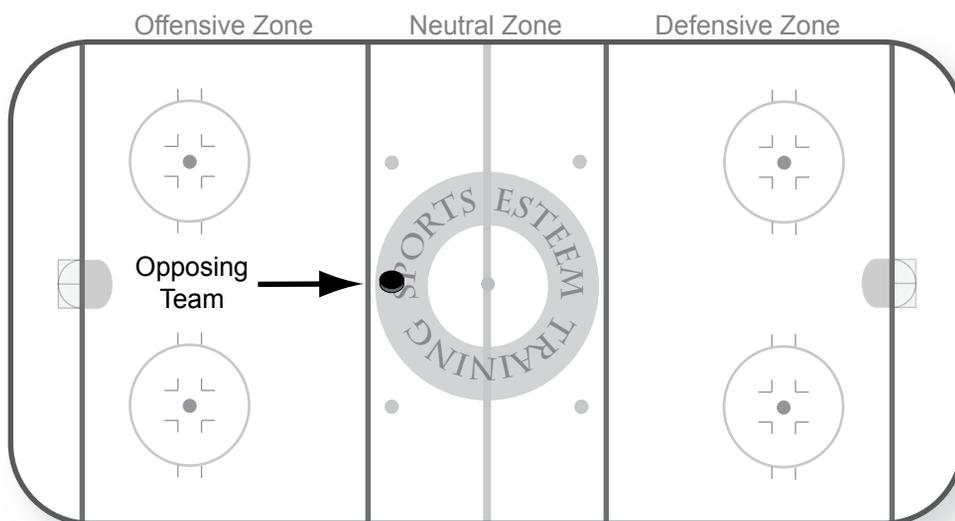
- Forwards should work hard to get back to help in the neutral and defensive zones (this is also called backchecking).
- Opposing players with the puck in the neutral zone should be guided by the forwards to the outside lanes away from the middle of the ice.
- Defensemen should be matching the attackers speed of attack and starting to close the gap moving opponents to a bad angle.

Exercises

1. Draw the areas in the neutral zone where you want the opponent's puck carrier.



2. Draw where your team's players should be if the other team has the puck.

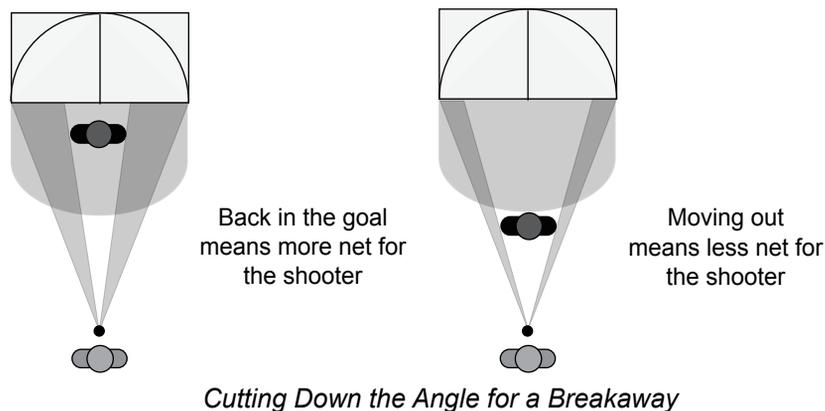


Playing a Breakaway for Goalies

Discussion

For a goalie, one of the most difficult plays is defending against a breakaway shot. A breakaway is when a player from the opposing team races to the net without any defensemen between him and the goalie. The goalie must react quickly to give himself the best chance possible of stopping the shot.

The first thing a goalie should do is move out from his net to give the shooter the appearance of less net to shoot at. This is called cutting down the angle. Typically moving forward to just outside of the crease is enough to make it more difficult for the shooter. The following diagram shows what the shooter sees with the goalie in his net versus what he sees with the goalie playing forward.



As the shooter gets closer to the net, the goalie should move back to his regular position to protect against a shot from behind him. Moving forward and backward is also known as telescoping. Goalies should make small C-Cuts to move in and out (See Worksheet #44).

Key Points for Players

- Goalies won't be able to stop all breakaways. However, by playing smart, a goalie can stop many of them.
- Goalies should move out from the net to cut down the angle on breakaways.



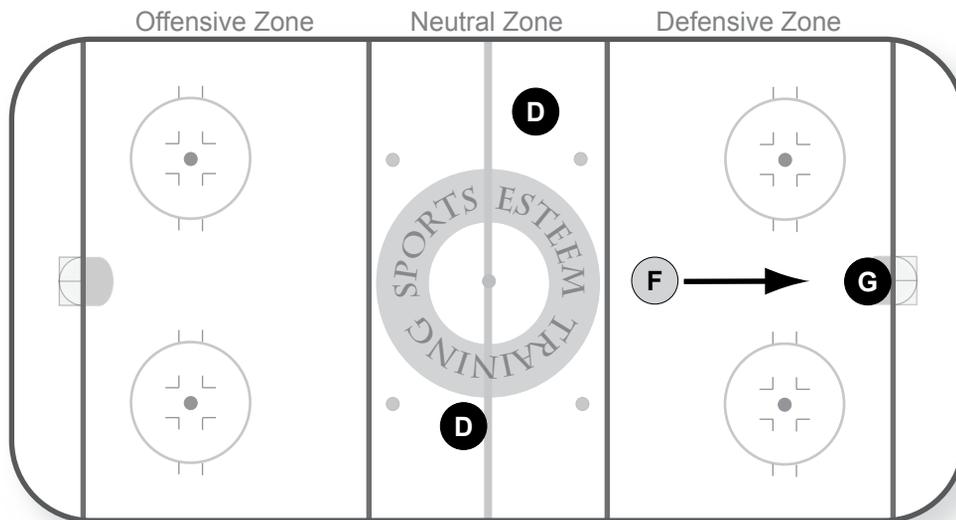
Exercises

1. Watch a professional hockey game and see how the goalie handles a breakaway shot.

Where was he when the player was at the blue line?

Where did he end up as the player got closer?

2. As goalie, describe how you would play the following situation:



3. (ICE TIME) Work on telescoping in and out of the net. Make sure you are always in good stance. Try the following exercises, starting from the net:

- Telescope to the right face-off circle and back
- Telescope to the left face-off circle and back
- Telescope to the right hash mark and back
- Telescope to the left hash mark and back



POST GAME



Post Game

Kids will lose games and they will win games. They will have good games, bad games, good shifts and bad shifts. For parents, immediately after a game is a time to be positive not to tell them things that were done wrong. Emphasize encouragement and approval. Kids who have just played hard and are tired like to hear “good job” whether their team won or lost.

Parents should always reemphasize the basics like sportsmanship, hard work and team play. After the game, bring closure. Don’t keep discussing the game throughout the week. Only parents are 100% focused on their child’s efforts.

Parents should be constructive after the game and give their child tests they can use to measure their own progress in non-subjective ways:

Thoughtful Questions

- Did you have fun?
- Did you win your battles for the puck?
- Did you pass often?
- Were you able to keep from falling down?
- Did you remember to play your position?
- Are you tired? Do you think you got a good workout?
- Do you think you learned anything today?

Parents should avoid generalizations that are often debatable, such as:

Negative Observations

- You didn’t hustle
- You didn’t help score
- You didn’t have a good attitude
- You didn’t share the puck

Kids don’t always know how to correct mistakes that are pointed out to them. For example, saying “you didn’t hustle today” doesn’t provide anything positive for a child to work on. Instead saying “skate faster so that you can be in position for a rebound” gives them something they can work toward.





Post Game Conversations

Discussion

Conversations after a game can be very helpful for players to better help them understand how they are playing and how they can improve their game. In the NHL, coaches take game video and show players ways to improve.

As players play more games, they should learn to evaluate their own play and determine any steps they can take for improvement. Players should ask themselves three questions after each game and even after each shift:

Player Checklist

1. Was I helping support my teammates or was I too far ahead or behind the play or the puck?

If this is true, the player should try skating faster or slower to stay with his teammates. He should always be working to be open for giving and receiving passes.

2. Was I getting the puck taken away from me? (Or, was I often knocked down?)

If this is true, the player should consider looking for opportunities to pass more often.

3. Was the puck in my area of the ice but I was not there to get it?

If this is true, the player should work harder at staying in position.

With these three questions, players can begin evaluating their own play and making their own decisions about how to play better.

Key Points for Parents

- Every game has some positives.
- Help your child learn how to be objective about his own efforts on the ice.
- Encourage having fun and learning.



Key Points for Players

- When talking with your parents after a game, keep an open mind to what they have to say and remember that they are just trying to help you enjoy the game more.
- Parents see the game from different view than what you see on the ice. Use them for good feedback to make you better.

Exercises

1. List three things that your parents could watch for during the game that you would want them to talk to you about afterwards.

2. List any things that you do not want to talk about with your parents after a game.



Drill & Player Worksheets

The worksheets on the following pages are for specific player information. They include:

Drills

These worksheets provide a place to record any drills provided by coaches or instructors.

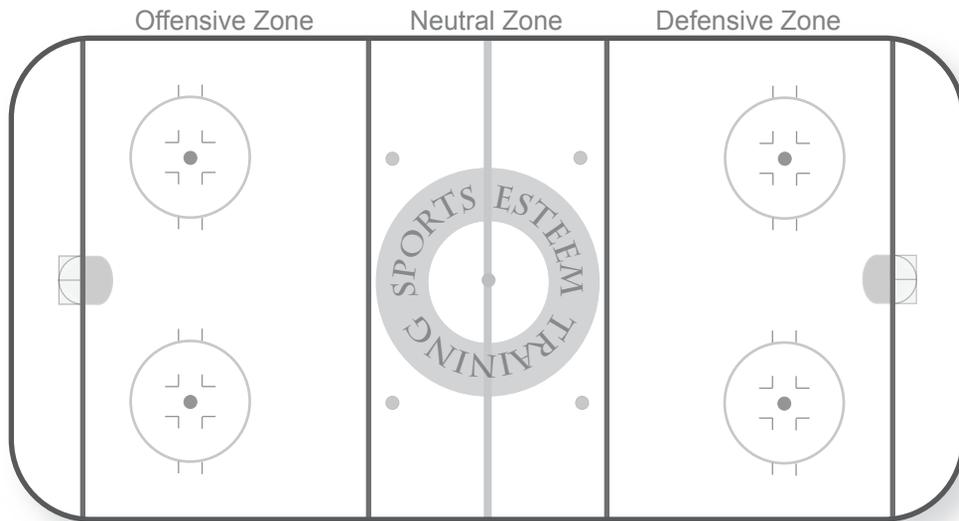
Team Record

This worksheet provides a place to track the teams a player has played on.

Game Highlights

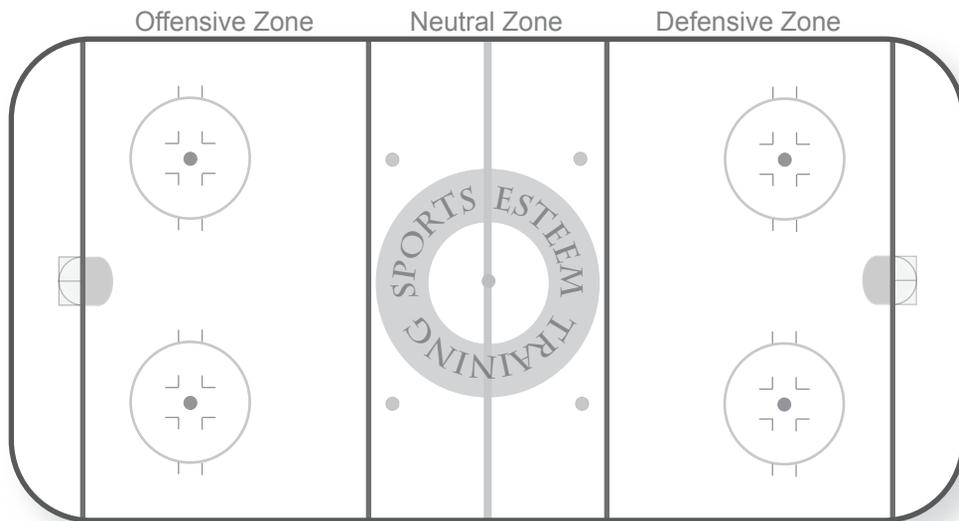
These worksheets provide a place to record memorable games and milestones.





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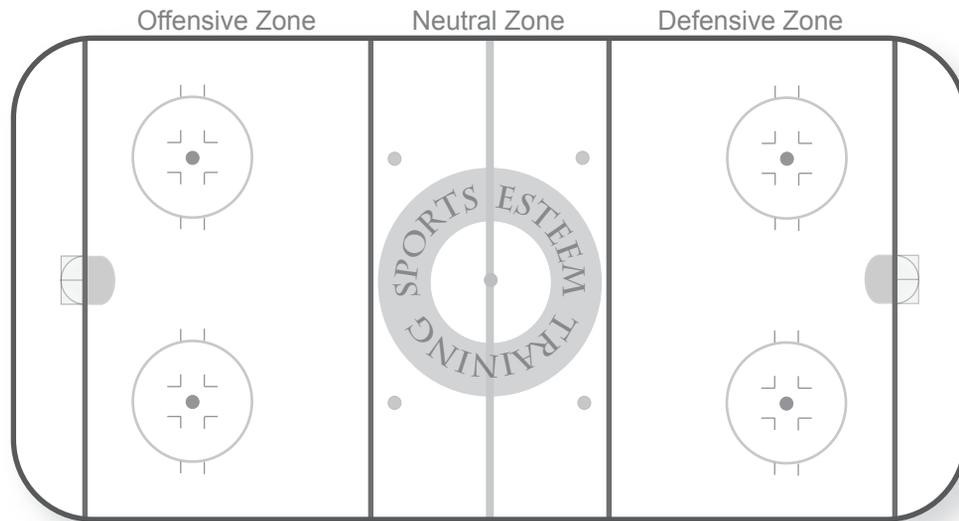
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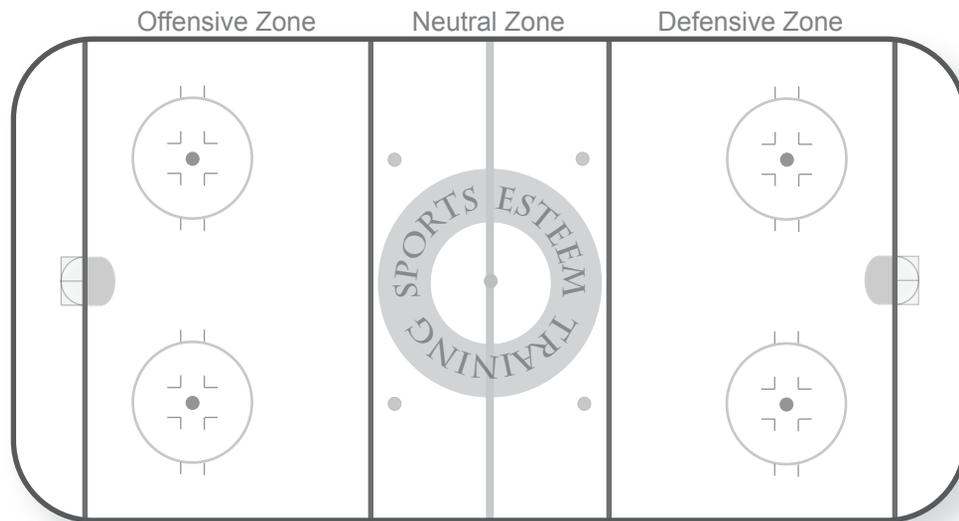
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Title: _____

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Glossary

Assist – Point awarded to a player or players for helping set up a goal; usually the last two offensive players to handle the puck prior to a goal being scored are credited for assists.

Backchecking – The use of forwards to pressure opponents in the neutral and defensive zones.

Boards – The dasher board that surrounds the ice surface.

Body Check – Using the hip or shoulder to slow the progress of an opponent who has the puck.

Breakaway – A scoring opportunity that occurs when there are no defending players between the puck carrier and the opposing goaltender.

Changing On The Fly – Changing players on a line without a stoppage in play.

Captain – A player designated by his teammates or coach to serve as a role model and representative of the players. A captain is one of the players who can talk to the referee.

Clearing – Getting the puck out of the defensive zone

Center the puck – Passing the puck to the middle of the ice.

Crash the net – One or more forwards moving with speed to the front of an opponent's net.

Danger Zone – The area just in front of a team's net that is the most dangerous place for a puck. It is the area where it is easiest for the other team to score.

Deke – A quick movement of the puck and/or body to trick an opponent.

Dump – Shooting the puck into or out of a zone.

Face-Off – To initiate play, the puck is dropped between two opposing players who face each other.

Forechecking – Pressuring the opposition when they control the puck in the neutral or defensive zone.



Forward – An offensive minded player on the team in either a winger or center position.

Gap – The distance between a player and an opponent.

Hash marks – The short parallel lines that extend from the outside of the face-off circles near the goal.

Hat Trick – Three goals scored by one player in a single game.

Icing – When the attacking team shoots the puck into the offensive zone past the goal line before crossing the center red line.

Off-side – When a player enters the offensive zone before the puck.

Penalty Shot – An undefended shot on goal awarded a player as a result of a penalty.

Plus/Minus – A way to measure a shift that takes the number of goals scored and subtracts the number of goals against when a player is on the ice.

Point – (1) A goal or assist. (2) The player at the blue line in the offensive zone (usually a defenseman).

Power Play – When a team has a man advantage because of a penalty call against the opposing team.

Pull The Goalie – In an attempt to tie the score, a team may take its goalie off the ice and send out an extra skater. This usually occurs in the closing minute(s) of a game.

Rebound – When a shot on goal is not controlled by the goalie, but instead goes out in front of the net.

Screen – When a player blocks the goalie's view of the puck.

Shift – A player's time on the ice.

Shootout – A method of resolving a tie where several players from each team are given penalty shots on goal.

Shorthanded – When a team is forced to play with fewer than six players because one or more of them have been sent to the penalty box.

Slap Shot – A sweeping motion with an accentuated back swing to shoot the puck (similar to a drive in golf).

Slot – The area directly in front of a goal. Also known as the danger zone.

Stick Check – Using the stick to interfere with an opponent's stick while he has the puck that prevents him from playing the puck.



Strong Side – The side of the rink with the puck

Weak Side – The side of the rink without the puck

Wrist Shot – The motion of shooting with the puck directly against the blade of the stick with a sweeping motion.

Zone – A way to describe areas of the ice marked by the blue lines.



About Sports Esteem

Sports Esteem, Inc. is a leading provider of youth sports educational materials to hockey leagues and associations. It provides educational materials to help coaches, parents and players better understand the youth sports experience. The Sports Esteem for Hockey program (of which this workbook is a part) includes educational information for coaches and parents that keeps everyone working toward the same goal - building better kids.

Sports Esteem is based in Dallas, Texas. For more information on Sports Esteem, please visit www.sportsestem.com.

