



“Many goals may be prevented by our players lining up shoulder to shoulder with their players or our players going immediately to their designated positions and covering their open players when the puck is dropped in stead of waiting to see how the play develops”

DEFENSIVE ZONE - FACE OFF POSITIONS

Just Inside Our Blue line

Our wingers should be shoulder to shoulder with their wingers. At the drop of the puck their wingers will have to go around ours to go into our zone any further. Our defencemen should be back far enough, stick on the ice and ready so if the puck comes back to them they will have time to make a play either up the ice or to the other open defenceman.

Our centre should always try to go forward and knock the puck out over our blue line, not back to our defence. Get the puck out of our zone.

In the Face Off Circle

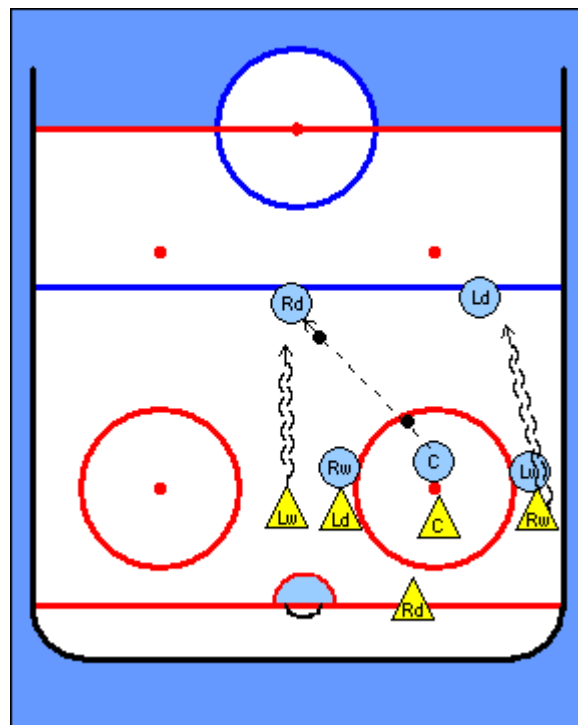
Let's assume the face off is to the right of our net (to our goalie's right) and they line up as usual.

Many different face off positions can be used. The effectiveness of some of the following depend upon the skill, size and level of our players, and others have significant weaknesses that may be exploited by our opposition.



4 High 1 Low Options

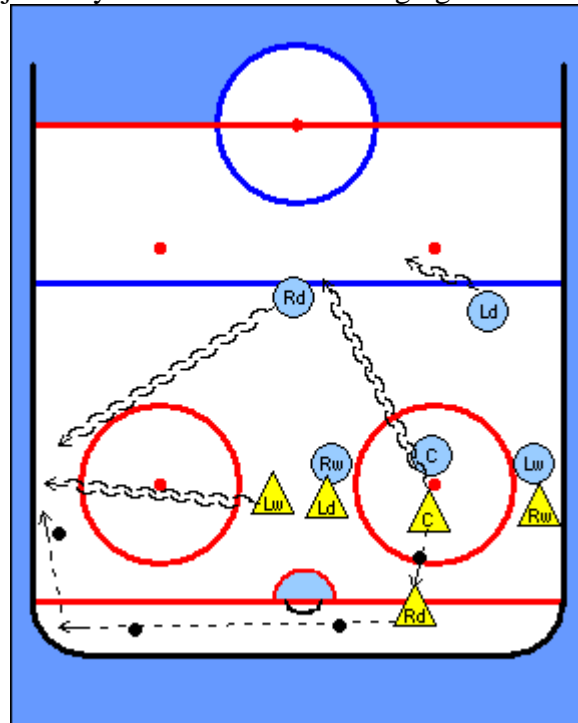
1. Our right winger will be shoulder to shoulder with their left winger, our left defenceman will be shoulder to shoulder with their right winger, our left winger will be to the left of our left defenceman and our right defenceman will be behind our centre outside the circle angling a little towards our net (see diagram below). This is our preferred face off option.
 - The responsibilities of everyone at the drop of the puck are as follows:
 - Our centre – neutralize their centre to prevent the puck from going back to their defenceman, don't try to win the draw, just stop him from getting the puck back – it's easier to neutralize than win the draw (but of course if you can win it do so)
 - Our right winger – Go to their left point hard immediately in case the puck goes to him and use the close to the boards lane because if you use the other inside lane, and their left winger chooses to go to the face off dot immediately upon the drop of the puck or skate slightly back as the puck is coming back, their left winger will legitimately bump into you. The rule around face off obstruction says "Players may "battle" for position as their paths merge if both are in pursuit of the puck" and their and our wingers would be doing just that (see diagram below).
 - Our left winger – Go to their right point hard immediately in case the puck goes to him (see diagram below)



- Our left defenceman – make their right winger go around you if he tries to go to the net and go to the puck if it stays between you and the face off dot or goes towards our net

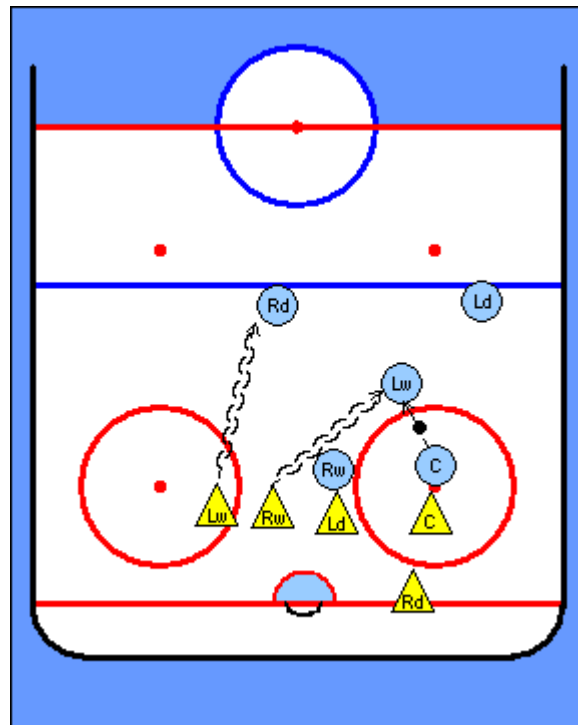


- Our right defenceman – if the puck comes to him, he should pass it around the boards behind the net to our left winger who will anticipate this pass and move to his position at the hash marks at the boards far enough down the boards so their right defenceman if he chooses can't get to the puck before our left winger does (see diagram below). If their defenceman pinches like this our winger should pass the puck directly to or indirectly off the boards to our centre
- if their centre beats our centre and breaks to our net stop him
- if the puck just stays in the face off circle go get it



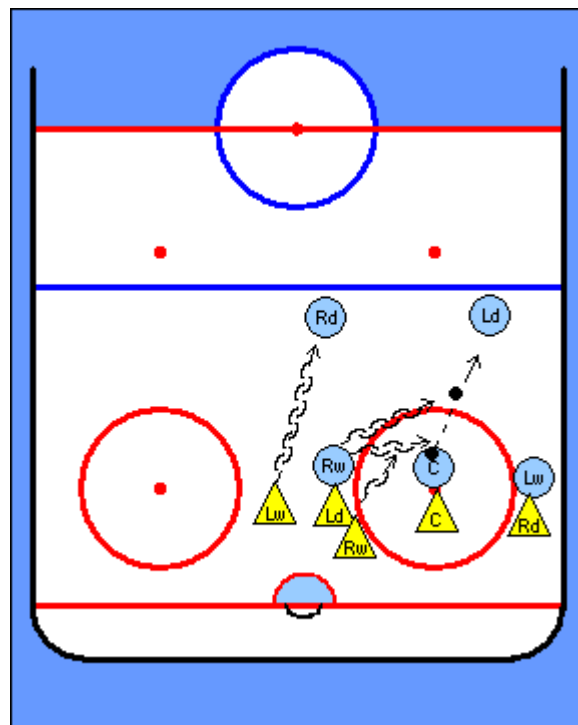


2. If they line up with their left winger behind their centre at the top of the circle, our right winger must move across and line up to the left of our left defenceman who is shoulder to shoulder with their right winger. At the drop of the puck, our right winger must go hard directly to their left winger at the top of the circle in case the puck goes right back to him. If the puck goes to their left defenceman, our right winger goes hard to cover him (see diagram below)





3. A variation of the 4 – 1 face off is as shown in the diagram below where the right defenceman takes the right wingers usual position and the right winger lines up behind the left defenceman on the face off circle. This formation is designed to allow our right winger a lane to skate to the left defenceman and also be in a position to block a shot from this defenceman. It also allows our right defenceman the opportunity to pick up the puck in motion if the puck is pulled back by our centre.
- However, if the play from their centre is to go back on the face off to their left defenceman, their right winger can skate to the puck at the face off dot immediately when the puck is dropped or skate to the puck as the puck goes back to their left defenceman to block our right winger's ice path to their left defenceman. The rule around face off obstruction says "Players may "battle" for position as their paths merge if both are in pursuit of the puck" and we and they would be doing just that (see diagram below). Therefore this formation is not recommended.





4. Still another variation of the 4 – 1 face off is shown in the diagram below. Our right winger is shoulder to shoulder with their right winger and our left defenceman is back behind our right winger on the face off circle. Our right winger will still have difficulty getting a clear lane to their left defenceman if their right winger skates to the puck either at the face off dot or on its way back to their left defenceman, but at least our left defenceman is in position to stop their centre's shot or pass or go to our net play. Our left defenceman is also in position to pick up a puck closer to him than our right boards defenceman (see diagram below).

