



“Winning is often about puck possession and turnovers in your own end”

DEFENSIVE ZONE – KEY STATISTICS

Besides the team and player statistics that are discussed under COACHING LEADERSHIP in this web site, there are some obvious and not so obvious stats that may often determine the outcome of a game and the quality of our defensive play in our zone. They include:

- How many goals do we give up per game on average compared to other teams in our league? 5 on 5? On the penalty kill?
- Who is on the ice when we give up goals?
- How many shots do we get against us?
- How many odd man rushes do we get against us (3 on 2's, 2 on 1's, breakaways), and how often do they result in goals against us?
- How many shots do we get against us that are “good” scoring opportunities and where are they from?
- Are many goals are scored against us on shots from the point?
- How many goals are scored against us on rebounds?
- What is our goalie's save % on the shots he gets – is it more than 90%?
- What % of total game time is in our zone?
- How many puck possession turnovers do we have in a game in our end after we have clear puck possession?
- How many times do we break out of our zone with puck possession?
- How many times do we just shoot the puck out of our zone?

These stats, although quite high level are useful to:

- define the individual and team developmental areas and what to work on in practices or specialty skills clinics
- to determine what tactics and systems we should use for the talent level on our team and against different teams



- to determine who should play what position and with whom to try to help the team the most in our zone

So, we started measuring most of the above areas and found the results quite useful in prioritizing individual and team skills development. Parents were asked to fill in the required information sheets.

Some defensive zone stats I found particularly useful were how many puck possession turnovers to the other team we had in a game in our end when we had clear puck possession, and how many times we broke out of our zone with puck possession, and how many times we just shot the puck out? We called it our “Successful Getting Out %”. We found that in almost all games we won our Successful Getting Out % was greater than 80%.

When this indicator would fall to less than 80% we would spend more practice time on breakout drills with and without resistance. We worked one-on-one with those players having difficulty in their own end on breakouts or handling pucks cleanly rimmed around the boards. We made sure our centres understood and could execute their down low responsibilities like a defencemen picking up their extra forward and choosing the most appropriate option, and that our wingers learned to win the battles at the half boards to get the puck out or to make a good breakout pass only when there was a clear passing lane. We focused on other defensive tactics.

After a while, after games, players started asking what our Successful Getting Out % was along with their +/- and our shots against stats.

We then knew we were definitely on the right track to continuously improve, and we did.