



“Gain puck possession in our corner as quickly as you can, skating as fast as you can – no hesitation.”

DEFENSIVE ZONE – OPPOSITE THE FLOW

If the puck is shot into the corner in our end to the left of our goalie with forechecking pressure from the other team on its way, our left side defenceman normally will go hard into the corner to get the puck.

Our right side defenceman has to quickly decide whether he should go to the front of our net just in case our left side defenceman loses the puck in the corner or go to the other corner for a defenceman to defenceman pass behind our net. This decision depends on whether our left side defenceman in the corner will get to the puck first to be able to make the defenceman to defenceman pass behind our net and whether none of their other players are down low enough to stop the defenceman to defenceman pass behind our net. If it looks like our left side defenceman will get to the puck in our corner first and the passing lane behind our net is clear, the other defenceman should go to the opposite side corner to receive this pass.

Wingers get back inside our blue line on their sides at the hash marks on the boards as soon as they can. This is important. The centre comes all the way back low into his end to cover any player our defencemen haven't covered and goes to the front of our net if our right side defenceman has gone to the opposite corner for the defenceman to defenceman pass behind our net.

AS OUR LEFT SIDE DEFENCEMAN IS GOING INTO THE CORNER, HE MUST FEEL, AND LOOK HOW CLOSELY HE IS BEING PRESSED AND WHERE HIS TEAM MATES ARE BECAUSE THIS WILL DECIDE WHAT HE WILL DO.

Usually, their players will all flow into the side half of the ice where the puck has gone plugging up the boards on that side and the middle in our own end. So, most times the opposite side of the ice is open. Think about it in advance. It makes sense... **GO OPPOSITE THE FLOW WITH THE PUCK AS SOON AS YOU SEE YOUR SIDE OF THE ICE PLUGGED UP BUT NOT IN FRONT OF OUR NET OF COURSE.**

FOCUS HARD ON THE PUCK AND GET IT ON YOUR STICK CLEANLY FAST.

You now have a number of options if you get to the puck first with time to make a play:

- Don't slow down, go into the corner on an angle to allow you to carry the puck at maximum speed to behind your own net, stop if there is time and use the net as protection, let the centre come and get the puck or look for an open winger inside our blue line and pass him the puck or carry the puck yourself if their player has peeled away – this will not work if their player is chasing you.
- Don't slow down, go into the corner on an angle to allow you to carry the puck at maximum speed around your own net, look for our open player inside or outside our blue



line (not up the middle unless 100% sure) and pass him the puck – this works well if their player is chasing you and you are at least as fast as he is. **DON'T SLOW DOWN IT HELPS THEM. BE CONFIDENT.**

- Don't slow down, go into the corner on an angle to allow you to carry the puck at maximum speed and immediately fire the puck hard behind your own net, around the boards the furthest away from you to your winger inside the blue line against the boards at the hash marks. He then passes to the centre who gets open or our winger chips the puck to our centre off the boards past their charging defenceman trying to keep the puck in.
- Don't slow down, go into the corner on an angle to allow you to carry the puck at maximum speed, fake going behind your net, stop, turn the opposite way, and find an open player to pass to or carry the puck up ice yourself.
- Don't slow down, go into the corner on an angle to allow you to pass the puck immediately to your other open defenceman in the other corner.
- Don't slow down, go into the corner on an angle to allow you to carry the puck at maximum speed and carry it out yourself.
- Slow down, get control of the puck, turn around in the direction of the boards closest to you and pass it to a team mate up along the boards if he is open (he probably is covered) or shoot it high off the boards nearest to you and out over the blue line – not a great play because they get the puck again but it is safe because it is out of our end.

PRACTICE DRILL:

1. Run 5 on 5 unit drill with “offensive” forwards and their defencemen starting at the red line in a line across the ice with the centre shooting the puck into the defensive zone. The “defensive” forwards and their defencemen are lined up on the defensive zone blue line so when the puck is shot in they have the advantage in getting to the puck and their positions before the “offensive” 5 player unit.
 - The “offensive” unit forechecks and tries to score, and the defensive unit tries to breakout. Keep score.
 - Give feedback including whistling the play dead in the middle of it having the players freeze in their positions, and then give feedback.
 - When the puck is out of the defensive zone or a goal is scored, repeat the drill.
 - Make sure each unit is wearing different coloured jerseys, and each player in each unit has the same coloured jersey, as we want high speed instant peripheral same team player recognition and it is almost impossible to accomplish this without jersey colour recognition.
 - Vary the starting positions of the offensive and defensive units and players (closer together or further apart) to reduce or increase the time the defensive defencemen will have to get puck control in their defensive corner or to go D to D behind their net. This will replicate “real” hockey conditions.
 - If we are teaching breakout or forechecking systems to players who are not familiar with the options, show them the options off ice on a hockey board, and walk them



through the options on ice. Then run this drill with no resistance, then 1 player, then 2 player, then 3 player, and eventually 5 player resistance.

- Keep running this drill at every practice so the options chosen both defensive and offensive become second nature depending on offensive and defensive positioning and “time and space”.