



“You can really identify key areas for improvement if you are willing to take the time to track more sophisticated stats”

COACHING LEADERSHIP – TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL STATS 2

If you are coaching at quite a competitive level, say AA or above, and the players are at least 12 years old, you may wish to get more analytical and keep stats beyond those discussed in the previous TIP. These basic stats were team per game goals against average; team per game goals for average, individual plus/minuses; individual goals and assists; the number of odd player rushes against us (more of their players with the puck than our players excluding our goalie) coming across our blue line; and team shots for and against us.

More sophisticated game analysis is particularly necessary if your team is underperforming and you just don't know why or think you do but need more objective indicators.

For instance, the number of times we turn over the puck to the opposition when we have possession or turnovers is a key stat. Now tracking this can be a very onerous task if you try to keep this stat by individual player in the offensive, defensive and neutral zones, as the pros do. So, an alternative I have found very useful is to keep a team turnover stat when the puck is in our defensive zone, that is, inside our blue line. These turnovers are critical. Any turnovers here can and often do decide game outcomes. They lead to great scoring chances for the opposition either immediately or eventually when the other team keeps possession in our zone.

After collecting these in our zone turnover stats over a full season for a championship Peewee AA team, I found that we won almost all games against teams that were as good, almost as good or better than we were where our turnover % in 5 player on 5 player play (power plays and penalty kills excluded) was less than 20% when we had puck possession in our zone, no matter whether the total number of puck possessions in our zone was very high or very low. I kept these stats by period to see if any patterns developed by period game-by-game. Of course, the standard of what is a good result here depends on your particular team, the opposition in your league, level of players and so on. So coaches should determine their own team's standards.

Here's an example of what you might consider tracking re successful breakouts, shoot outs and turnovers in our zone. I created simple definitions and a tracking format:

S = we had the puck in our zone and with a pass or without a pass completed in our zone, shot the puck out with us not keeping puck possession

B = we had the puck in our zone and with at least one pass or alone got out of our zone keeping puck possession

X = we had the puck in our zone, tried a passing breakout play or to shoot it out, or lost the puck somehow and they got puck possession in our zone



I simply enter a “S”, “B”, or “X” in each period in the Table below during the game. Then I summarize the results in the next Table, draw conclusions from the data and create action plans for future practices and off ice learning:

1 st Period	2 nd Period	3 rd Period
S S X B X S	S S X X B S B B	S B B B X X B S X X S X

Type	1 st Period	2 nd Period	3 rd Period	Total
S	3	3	3	9
B	1	3	4	8
X	2	2	5	9
Total	6	8	12	26

Conclusions:

There were only 26 5 on 5 opportunities for us “Getting Out” of our zone - very low, compared with other games we played against the best teams in our league. As the game went on, more play was in our end than at the beginning.

65% of the time we got the puck out of our zone with or without possession when we had possession, 35% by shoot out and 30% by breakout with puck possession.

35% of the time they got puck possession in our zone after we had puck possession – very poor. We lost this game 3 – 1 and 2 of their 3 goals came from these 9 turnovers.

Need to work on pressure puck handling, passing and breakouts in our own zone, and when to shoot the puck out more when there are no reasonable risk outlet passes for a break out with puck possession.

Another stat I found useful when my subjective opinion was we were not body checking enough, was to count body checks by individual player. I wasn’t surprised to find some players didn’t have any. They were advised and requested to improve in this area to help the team.

Other stats that may be useful include turnovers in the neutral zone when trying to enter their zone as this may lead to odd man rushes against us; face offs won/lost in our zone and elsewhere; shots that are true scoring chances as opposed to just shots on net; and takeaways.

Be sure to let the players see the results of whatever stats you keep, so they can understand improvement needs and the playing standards you and they are trying to achieve. The players



need to buy-in to the process and the need for change, if any. Stats can be a very useful tool in achieving this buy-in, a key part of any change process.